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# What Is Said As Lexical Meaning

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## 1 Introduction: The Dominant View on What Is Said, Semantic Content, and Lexical Meaning

Suppose that on Friday March 31, 2006, Inma comes into the room, and, pointing at her, I say:

(1) She has graduated in math.

There is a widely accepted view that concerns, all at once, (i) the semantic value of the pronoun 'she' in (1); (ii) the semantic content associated with, or the proposition expressed by, the sentence uttered in (1) relative to that context of utterance; and (iii) the content that I have asserted by uttering (1), or the "what is said". This dominant view, whose origin we find in Kripke's theory of rigid designation and in Kaplan's theory of direct reference, tells us that: (i) the semantic value of 'she' in (1) is Inma herself; (ii) the semantic content of the sentence in (1), with respect to the context of (1), is the proposition that at some time prior to March 31, 2006 Inma graduated in math; and (iii) that same proposition is also the content asserted, or *what is said*.

While the dominant view identifies the notion of semantic content with the notion of what is said, it is eager to distinguish the two notions from two related notions: the notion of what is conveyed, on the one hand, and the notion of lexical meaning, on the other.

Consider (1) again, as suppose that I utter it while discussing a mathematical problem that you and I were unable to solve. Then the reason why I told you (1) was not necessarily to *inform* you that Inma has graduated in math. In fact, let's suppose that you knew that already. Then my intention in (1) must have been to inform you of something else, like the following:

(2) Inma should be able to help us solve the problem.

My utterance of (1) clearly does not *say* the same thing as (2), but in the context at stake, (1) *conveys* what (2) says. The distinction between what is said and what is conveyed is, of course, due to Paul Grice, and has been very much discussed in the literature. I will have little to say about it here.

More importantly for our purposes, the dominant view draws a distinction between semantic content and lexical meaning (also called *linguistic* meaning, or 'character' in

Kaplan's technical terminology). All that the lexical meaning of the sentence in (1) tells you is that prior to some contextually salient time, some contextually salient female individual graduated in math. Mere lexical knowledge of what the words uttered mean does not enable you to figure out who the woman and what the time at stake are, hence it does not determine what is said. However, 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. In the dominant view, what is said is, then, something that can be obtained more or less directly from the lexical meaning of the words uttered, the syntax of the sentence, and those basic contextual parameters. By contrast, what is conveyed heavily depends on the context, and requires reasoning about speaker's beliefs and intentions, inference to the best explanation, and a fair amount of encyclopedic knowledge.

My goal in this paper is twofold. First, I will present a series of cases that put into jeopardy the dominant view. What those cases show is that both our practices of reporting what is said and our intuitions on what is said do not fit into the Kaplanian model, according to which what is said by an utterance of a sentence containing a personal pronoun is the proposition containing the person referred to with the help of the pronoun. Second, I will suggest that those cases fit better into a simpler, single-level model, according to which the notions of semantic content and what is said are still interchangeable, but are both reduced to, or identified with, the notion of lexical meaning. On that model, what is said in (1) is merely that prior to some contextually salient time, some female individual graduated in math. The semantic value of the pronoun 'she' in (1) will not be Inma herself, but rather the general condition of being female, lexically encoded in the meaning of the pronoun 'she'. Granted, there is the intuition that when I utter (1) pointing at Inma, I say something *about* Inma. This intuition will be preserved, though, through an independently motivated notion of the *subject matter* of a conversation (or of an utterance). The idea is, roughly, that when I utter (1), I am talking about Inma, and I am referring to Inma, but Inma is not part of what I said – rather, what I said is the lexical meaning of the sentence, and I am asserting that meaning of, or about, Inma. After laying down the main tenets of my view, I will reconsider, one by one, the cases that I will have previously shown to be problematic for the dominant view.

## 2 What Is Said: the Data

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. In the second part of my paper, I am going 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, discussed in 2.1. and 2.2. Then, from 2.3. to 2.6., I will discuss new cases, which I hope will motivate the rejection of the dominant view. For simplicity, I am

only considering a small fragment of English, including pronouns, some simple verb phrases, and proper names; although any problems related to proper names (like the Hesperus/Phosphorus puzzle) are going to be entirely ignored.

## 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 lexical meaning. Suppose that I say:

(3) I have graduated in philosophy.

By uttering (3), I may inform you that I have graduated in philosophy. Now, suppose that you want to inform someone else of this. You cannot use the same sentence that I used, because then you would inform your interlocutor that you, not I, have graduated in philosophy. 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:

(4) Isidora has graduated in philosophy.

Or, if I am there and you are pointing at me, you might just say:

(5) She has graduated in philosophy.

The sentences uttered in (3), (4) and (5) 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, for Kaplan and his followers, what you say in (4) or (5) and what I say in (3) is one and the same thing – something like the proposition true in those and only those worlds in which I, Isidora, have graduated in philosophy before the time of my utterance.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 Same Meanings, Different Things Said

The second motivation for the dominant 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. As David Kaplan puts it: “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

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<sup>1</sup> 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” (236)

possible circumstances in which what I said would be true but what you said would be false. Thus we say different things” (1989: 500).<sup>2</sup>

Ever since Kaplan, it has been widely held that once we have indexicals in the language, lexical meaning differs from semantic content, and thereby from what is said, in two respects: (1) there is something in what is said that is not in the lexical meaning, namely, the reference of indexicals; (2) there is something in the lexical meaning that does not reach into what is said, namely, the general, lexically encoded conditions that are there merely to help us fix the reference, such as being the speaker for the indexical 'I', or being female for the pronoun 'she'.

### 2.3 Time in 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 time, presumably 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 propositions expressed by the reported utterances do not coincide on the time picked out by the present tense. To see the point, it is enough to go back to one of our previous examples:

- (6) She has graduated in math. (me, talking of Inma, on Friday, March 31, 2006)
- (7) Inma has graduated in math. (Tarek, talking of Inma, on Tuesday, April 3, 2006).
- (8) That's what Isidora said, too. (a possible reply to Tarek's utterance of (7))

The reply in (8) is intuitively correct.<sup>3</sup> It is natural to take Tarek to have said, in (7), the same thing as I did in (6), even though we spoke on different days, and therefore our utterances have different Kaplanian contents, namely, that Inma has graduated prior to March 31, 2006, the time of my utterance, vs. that she has graduated prior to April 3, 2006, the time of Tarek's utterance.

Note that not only the contents, but the lexical meanings of the sentences uttered are different, too. The meaning of the proper name, to the extent to which proper names have lexical meanings at all, 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 contextually salient female.

Some might think that the reason why we can so easily report me as having said the same thing as Tarek is this. It is a fact that if some event *e* has happened prior to

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<sup>2</sup> 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.*)

<sup>3</sup> A methodological remark is in order. The intuitions that I am reporting have been gathered from several native English speakers, as well as several native French speakers for similar examples in French, and several native Serbian speakers (including myself) for examples in Serbian. Of course, nothing guarantees that a larger, more serious, experimental study of the intuitive judgments of truth and falsity of such speech-reports would give us the same data, but there is every reason to think that it should.

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 my utterance entails the truth of Tarek's utterance. Now, whether or not this is the correct explanation of the intuitive same-saying in (6)-(7), where the tense of the sentence is present perfect, it is easy to devise sentences in present progressive that exhibit the same pattern. Consider:

- (9) Inma is writing a paper on Montague. (said by Tarek, on March 31, 06)
- (10) I am writing a paper on Montague. (said by Inma, on April 3, 06)
- (11) That's what Tarek told me. (a possible reply to Inma's utterance of (10))

Again, the reply in (11), as a report of what Tarek said in (9), is correct, though no explanation in terms of the truth of (9) entailing the truth of (10) seems available. To be sure, there may be other explanations available to the defenders of the dominant view. For instance, one could point out that writing a paper is an action that normally takes several days, even months, so that the time interval picked out by the present progressive in (9) will sufficiently overlap with the time interval picked out by the tense in (10), so that even if the propositions expressed by (9) and (10) are not exactly the same, they will be similar enough to be reported as same.<sup>4</sup>

If we vary the example, we seem to get evidence that supports this explanation. For, suppose that Inma utters (10) at a time very distant from the time at which Tarek utters (9): suppose she says it 5 years from now (i.e. in 2011). Then it does not seem correct to reply (11) on the grounds of Tarek's utterance (9). Or, at least, some qualification would be needed, such as "That's what Tarek told me *five years ago*."

To get to the same point, consider what happens in reports of what is said when the reported action concerns a short period of time:

- (12) Inma is having dinner. (said by Tarek, on March 31, at 7 pm)
- (13) I am having dinner. (said by Inma, on March 31, at 11 pm)
- (14) That's what Tarek told me. (a possible reply to Inma's utterance of (13))

On the one hand, (9)-(10) and (12)-(13) are of the same pattern, but on the other, the report in (11) is much more easily seen as correct than is the report in (14). What to conclude from this? I must ask the reader to wait until section 3.3., where I will give my own analysis of the problem. Meanwhile, let me explain why this is a problem for the dominant view. The view holds that the proposition expressed is what is said by a given utterance. But (6) and (7) express different propositions, because different times are picked out by the tense. And, however largely overlapping time intervals we take to be picked out by the present progressive in (9) and (10), those, too, end up expressing different propositions. The view is therefore committed to holding that what is said in (6) and (7) is different, and that (9) and (10) say different things, too. This, however, is unsatisfactory, because both our intuitions and

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<sup>4</sup> Suggestions along similar lines have been made to me, independently, by Ricardo Santos and Nathan Salmon.

our practice of reporting what is said show that there is an important sense in which (6) and (7) say the same thing, and so do (9) and (10).

At this point, two manoeuvres are available to the defenders of the dominant view. One is to abandon the idea that semantic contents are *eternal* propositions, that is, propositions whose truth only depends on what the *world* is like, and to take them instead to be *temporal* propositions, that is, propositions whose truth may vary also with *times*.<sup>5</sup>

I have no objections to temporal propositions *per se* (in fact, we shall see that in my own account, semantic contents receive their truth value as a function of time, too, among other things). What I want to note here is that conceiving of *what is said* as something that may be true at some times and false at others is already a remarkable departure from the dominant view. Recall the well-known passage from Frege: “But are there not thoughts which are true today but false in six months’ time? The thought, for example, that the tree there is covered with green leaves, will surely be false in six months’ time. No, for it is not the same thought at all. The words ‘This tree is covered with green leaves’ are not sufficient by themselves to constitute the expression of thought, for the time of utterance is involved as well.”(343)<sup>6</sup> Even Kaplan, who, in his formal system, uses contents that are functions of world-time pairs, gives us every reason to think that the contents expressed by natural language sentences are, in his view, time-specific.

More importantly, a switch to temporal propositions may be fine enough to deal with the problematic cases that concern the contribution of tense to what is said, but the manoeuvre cannot be easily generalized to other problematic cases, as we will soon be able to see.

The second manoeuvre that may help you salvage the dominant view is to bite the bullet and insist that because (6) and (7) express different propositions, what is said in them is different, and therefore, the report in (8) is literally false, while those who have the intuition that (6) and (7) say the same thing are simply in mistake. As this manoeuvre, unlike the previous one, may be easily replicated in many of the cases that are yet to come, I must ask the reader to wait until section 3.1., where this “literalist” manoeuvre will be shown to be unsatisfactory.

#### 2.4 *De Se* Assertion (1): Same Meanings, Same Things Said

For our next challenge to the dominant view, we can actually use, and turn against it, a case that had earlier served precisely to motivate it. Suppose that Prof. Feferman says:

(15) I am writing a book on Montague.

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

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<sup>5</sup> Temporal propositions originate in A. Prior's pioneering work on tense logic: Prior (1957).

<sup>6</sup> One of the most elaborate and most influential attacks against temporal propositions may be found in Evans (1979).

(16) I am writing a book on Montague.

Pace Frege's claim that Inma and Prof. Feferman will express different *thoughts*, and Kaplan's echoing claim that different people using the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun *say different things*, there is an equally strong intuition that, in some important sense, what Feferman said in (15) is exactly what Inma said in (16). Each said that he or she was writing a book on Montague. Thus, having heard Prof. Feferman in (16), I may comment as follows on Inma's utterance of (16):

(17) That's what Professor Feferman said, too.

To be sure, as it stands, (17) is ambiguous between reporting Feferman as having said that Inma was writing a book on Montague, vs. that he himself was. This ambiguity, in linguists' jargon, is the ambiguity between *strict* vs. *sloppy* readings.<sup>7</sup> Thus, suppose that Prof. Feferman has never heard of Inma, and that this is common knowledge in the context of my utterance of (17). Then the dominant reading is the sloppy reading, on which what Feferman said is that *he*, not Inma, was writing a book on Montague. The problem, of course, for the dominant view is that the semantic contents of (15) and (16) are different, one involving Feferman and the other Inma, hence either what is said is not semantic content, or else, one must insist that, notwithstanding intuitions, what is said is different.

The move that consists in saying that, after all, what is said is not semantic content amounts to rejecting the dominant view on what is said (even if, admittedly, it does not reject the dominant, Kaplanian view on semantic content). I will come back to this move in 3.1.

Three other moves are still available to the defenders of the dominant view. First, one might redefine propositions that constitute semantic contents. In the same way in which temporal propositions were used to deal with those cases in which the time relevant to the truth value of the utterance appeared not to be part of what is said, what we might call *egocentric* propositions can help us deal with those cases in which the *person* relevant to the truth value of the utterance does not appear to be part of what is said.<sup>8</sup> Egocentric propositions are propositions that may take different truth values relative to different individuals; in other words, they are *properties*.

The suggestion that what is said is, at least sometimes, an egocentric proposition may be found, for instance, in a not well-known article by R. Feldman: "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." (1980: 79) What lends further plausibility to the idea that the content of an assertion is an egocentric proposition, or a property, is that the idea squares very well with the view according to which contents of beliefs and other

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. Lasnik (1989), Lappin (1997), Buring (2003). The sloppy/strict distinction is primarily discussed in the linguistic literature on ellipsis and anaphora.

<sup>8</sup> Unsurprisingly, *egocentric* propositions were also pioneered by Prior: Prior (1977).



"propositional" attitudes are, in fact, properties. This was the view that David Lewis put forward in order to deal with the problem of *de se* attitudes.<sup>9</sup> What sometimes goes unnoticed in Lewis' account of *de se* attitudes is that there are two crucial components to his view. One is that the content of the attitude is a property (rather than an old-fashioned proposition). The other is that to believe such a content is to *self-ascribe* it, that is, to believe that the property applies to *oneself*. This will turn out to be relevant later on, as we shall see that not only in *de se* attitudes, but also in *de se* assertion, this mechanism of *self-ascription* plays a crucial role. In (15), it is not just that Feferman (the speaker) is asserting a certain property, viz. the property of writing a book on Montague. He is asserting this property *of himself*.

Now, whether or not egocentric propositions are the right way to handle *de se* assertion and account for the intuition that Feferman in (15) and Inma in (16) are saying the same thing, what needs to be emphasized is that such a manoeuvre really amounts to giving up the dominant view. The indexical 'I' has been, for Kaplan and his followers, a paradigmatically directly referential expression; that is, an expression that contributes its reference, and nothing but its reference, to the semantic content and to what is said. To say that in (15), Feferman, who is the speaker and hence the reference of the word 'I', is not part of the semantic content, is to give up one of the main tenets of the received wisdom on indexicality and direct reference.

The second manoeuvre to deal with *de se* assertion, which has become something of a standard response made by those who want to account for the sense in which (15) and (16) say the same thing without stepping out of the mainstream tradition, is to point out that the sentences used by Feferman and Inma are the same, and then suggest that when two people use the same sentence or utter the same words, they may be truly reported as having said the same thing. In the next two sections (2.5. and 2.6.) I will show that this manoeuvre is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, it fails to generalize. For, an equally strong intuition of same-saying may be triggered, in *de se* assertion, even when the sentences used are neither the same nor synonymous. Second, it over-generates. For, there are cases that minimally differ from (15)-(16) in which speakers will use the same words, yet one cannot truly report them as having said the same thing (except by adding special qualifications).

Finally, the third, "literalist" manoeuvre consists again in insisting that the report in (17) is, strictly speaking, false, and that the intuition of same-saying is mistaken. As before, I shall postpone the discussion of this manoeuvre until section 3.1.

## 2.5 *De Se* Assertion (2): Different Meanings, Same Things Said

We have seen that when different people say "I am writing a book," there is a sense in which they are saying the same thing, for each is saying that he or she is writing a book. The usual way of dealing with such cases is to point out that those people are all using the same sentence, which would then explain why we are inclined to hear them as saying the same thing – for, after all, they are uttering the same words.

<sup>9</sup> See Lewis (1981). To my knowledge, Lewis did not argue that contents of *assertions* are also properties. Nor did he argue that there were not. He just did not pronounce himself on the issue.

In this and in the next section, I want to show that this is not the right response to the problem of what is said in *de se* assertion. 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. For, 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 intuitively saying the same thing, or for the report that the same thing has been said to come out intuitively true.

Suppose that during Feferman's class on Montague, Inma tells Tarek:

(18) I really like this class.

The following week, Tarek and Mitsuko are talking about the classes that they like or dislike, and Mitsuko says:

(19) I really like Feferman's class on Montague.

Tarek may correctly reply to Mitsuko:

(20) Inma said that, too.

The sentences used by Inma and Mitsuko are obviously different, and so are their lexical meanings. Furthermore, suppose that Tarek and Mitsuko's conversation is taking place during Prof. Lawlor's metaphysics class. Then if Mitsuko were to use the same sentence that Inma used, she would have ended up saying that she really liked Lawlor's metaphysics class, and Tarek's reply that this was also what Inma said would then be false. For, the report in (20) is true to the extent that both Inma and Mitsuko were talking of one and the same class – Feferman's class on Montague – that they said they really liked.

The problem, to sum up, is that the propositional contents that Kaplanian theories assign to (18) and (19) are different, the first being that Inma really likes that class, and the second, that Mitsuko really likes it. But the lexical meanings, or Kaplanian characters, associated with those sentences are also different, hence the truthfulness of Tarek's report in (20) cannot be attributed to Inma and Mitsuko's having uttered the same sentence, since they have not.

## 2.6 Same Meanings, Different Things Said. *De Te* and *De Re* Assertion.

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) *de se* assertion

(21) I am too old for graduate school. (Inma talking to Tarek)

(22) I am too old for graduate school. (Mitsuko talking to Tarek)

(23) That's what Inma said, too. (Tarek's reply to Mitsuko)

(ii) *de te* assertion

(24) You are too old for graduate school. (Prof. Feferman talking to Inma, overheard by Tarek)

(25) You are too old for graduate school. (Tarek talking to Mitsuko)

(26) (?) That's what Prof. Feferman said, too. (still Tarek talking to Mitsuko)

There is a striking asymmetry between the 1<sup>st</sup> person and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun in how they behave in speech reports. Consider (23). As it stands, it has two readings: one on which Inma is reported as having said that *Mitsuko* is too old for graduate school (the *strict* reading), and one on which she is reported as having said that *she herself* is too old for graduate school (the *sloppy* reading). If it is, say, common knowledge in the context of (23) that Inma would have never said such a thing about Mitsuko (say, because she has no idea who Mitsuko is, or because such a comment would have been politically incorrect and Inma would never say such things), then the dominant reading of (23) is its sloppy reading, and (23) comes out true in virtue of Inma's having uttered (21). However, if we try the same sort of sloppy report by simply replacing 'I' by 'you', no such report seems to be available. For, there is a very strong intuition that (26) is not ambiguous, but downright false (assuming that Prof. Feferman never said that *Mitsuko* was too old for graduate school).

This asymmetry between *de se* and what one might call "*de te*" cases raises the following problem. Suppose, as does the dominant view, that propositional contents play the role of what is said. But (21) and (22) have different contents, and still, in an important sense, they say the same thing. For, in both cases, the speaker is saying of herself that she is too old for graduate school. Furthermore, the report in (23), when properly disambiguated, is uncontroversially true. Now, one might think that this is because the sentences uttered in (21) and (22) are the same. But take (24) and (25). Here, too, the sentences uttered are the same, but we do not get a sloppy reading for the report (26). That report is not ambiguous, but false. This shows that something was missing in the account that the dominant view gave us for the *de se* cases in the first place.

But one might object that, after all, there is a sense in which speakers making *de te* assertions and asserting the same thing, not of themselves, but of the person they are talking to, are saying the same thing. For, aren't both Feferman in (24) and Tarek in (25) saying that their *addressee* was too old for graduate school?

Indeed, there is this sense of same-saying for *de te* assertions as well. And, what's more, it is possible to truly report Feferman in (24) as saying the same thing as Tarek in (25), but under certain conditions. Namely, the reporter must *explicitly* mention the relevant addressee:

(27) That's what Prof. Feferman said, too, to Inma. (Tarek talking to Mitsuko)

Unlike (26), which our intuitions tell us is not ambiguous but false, the report in (27) has two readings: one on which Feferman said to Inma that Mitsuko was too old for

graduate school (the *strict* reading), and one on which he told her that *she* was too old for it (the *sloppy* reading). Similarly, consider:

(28) Prof. Feferman told Inma that she was too old for graduate school.

(29) That's what Tarek told Mitsuko, too.

If I tell you (28) and you reply with (29), your reply is ambiguous between reporting Tarek as telling Mitsuko that she was too old for graduate school, and his telling her that Inma was too old for it. Moreover, there is even a third reading, on which what Tarek told Mitsuko is that Feferman told Inma that she was too old for graduate school. But if we put momentarily this third reading aside, what needs to be noted is that the strict/sloppy ambiguity exists for reports of *de te* assertions as well, provided that the person to whom the reportee was talking is explicitly mentioned in the report.<sup>10</sup>

The difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun in how they behave in reported speech is even more striking. Consider the following minimal pair with respect to (i) and (ii):

(iii) *de re* assertion

(30) She is too old for graduate school. (Prof. Feferman, talking of Inma)

(31) She is too old for graduate school. (Tarek, talking of Mitsuko)

(32) (?) That's what Professor Feferman said, too. (in reply to Tarek)

Again, (32) does not appear to be ambiguous. There is a unique, determinate way to understand the report, namely, that Feferman said that Mitsuko was too old for graduate school.

To be sure, one might object that even with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun, there is a sense of same-saying to be accounted for; after all, both Feferman in (30) and Tarek in (31) are saying that the person they are referring to is too old for graduate school. And again, it is possible to truly report Feferman and Tarek as having said the same thing, provided that we make it explicit that the reportee was referring to someone else:

(33) She is too old for graduate school. (Tarek, talking of Mitsuko)

(34) That's what Professor Feferman said, too, about Inma. (in reply to Tarek)

Let me take stock. In 2.4., we saw that in *de se* assertion, that is, in assertions that a speaker makes about himself or herself, there is the intuition that different speakers are saying the same thing. This is a problem for the dominant view, because, on the

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<sup>10</sup> In some cases, there may be a strict/sloppy ambiguity in the report, even if the addressee is not specified. Here is one. On their first date, Tarek tells his girlfriend: "You are terrific." She replies: "Every man says that on a first date." What she is likely to be saying is not that every man says that *she* is terrific, but that they tell the person they are dating "You are terrific." In this sort of case, the sloppy reading is probably available precisely because the strict reading is pragmatically unavailable.

assumption that the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun is indexical *par excellence* and contributes the speaker to the semantic content, we get it that *de se* assertions made by different speakers inevitably have different semantic contents, so that the semantic content cannot be the asserted content, it cannot be *what is said*. In response to this problem, a defender of the dominant view could say that the reason why we have the intuition that the same thing has been said, and why we can truly report such speakers as having said the same thing, is that they have used the same words, or at least, sentences of the same lexical meaning. But this response will not work. First, as we saw in 2.5., it is just as easy to have the same intuition of same-saying when speakers making *de se* assertions are using different, non-synonymous sentences, and to truly report them as having said the same thing. Second, if using the same sentence, or uttering the same words, is supposed to account for certain cases in which we can correctly report that the same thing has been said, namely cases from 2.4., then why is it that in some other cases, such as those involving the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns, discussed in the present section, the prediction turns out to be wrong? Until it gives us a satisfactory answer to this question, the dominant, Kaplanian approach to what is said proves to be extremely limited.

### 3 What Is Said: the Theory.

Although the distinction between lexical meaning and what is said has been thought to be ineliminable and fairly well defined, the usefulness of this distinction has been questioned in the past. There are those who will say that the notion of 'what is said' is just hopelessly pragmatic, and that semantics has little to do with it. In section 3.1., I will briefly look at some evidence that could possibly be interpreted as showing the intuitive notion of what is said to be just too volatile to be captured by the notion of semantic content. I will very briefly talk of two responses to this sort of case. The literalist response is that semantic content is what is said, but our intuitions are not a liable guide to this arguably semantic notion. Though the literalist response might be on the right track with respect to the cases coming up in 3.1., I will, as promised, offer some reasons to think that it is not the right response to the cases discussed in sections 2.3.–2.6. The second response, which may also be said "literalist" with respect to semantic content, while very much "contextualist" with respect to what is said, is the one that gives up the hope of accounting for what is said within semantics. Some of the reasons offered against the straightforward literalist response will also work against this other response. But more importantly, if we *can* provide a semantic theory of what is said that accounts for all the problematic cases discussed here, then there will be little left that is compelling in that negative, skeptical attitude according to which the notion of what is said is just too hopelessly pragmatic to be of any concern to semantics. An outline of such a semantic theory is what I shall seek to provide in sections 3.2. and 3.3.

### 3.1. A Hopeless Enterprise?

Some philosophers, already early on, were doubtful that the notion of what is said was robust and clear enough to be captured within a theory of semantic content. David Lewis thus famously 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" (1980: 97).<sup>11</sup> Paul Ziff put forward 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 Inma and Tarek went to a certain party, to which Mitsuko could not go. Mitsuko now wants to know how the party went. She asks Inma, who says:

(35) Oh, I shouldn't have gone. 'Twas better to stay home and do some needle-work.

Later, Mitsuko asks Tarek, and he tells her:

(36) My goodness! I don't think I've ever been more bored in my whole life.

Mitsuko might well reply:

(37) Yes, Inma said that, too.

Or, talking yet to someone else about the party, Mitsuko might report:

(38) Both Inma and Tarek told me that the party was really boring.

Although the intuitions are not very robust in the case of (37) and (38), it is still true that in everyday life, we often report people as having said the same thing when all that their utterances have in common is a certain implication, and that implication is relevant in the context of the report. Thus, while Inma does not literally say in (35) that the party was really boring, what she does say, viz. that instead of going, she should have stayed home to do some needle-work, *implies*, given enough contextual background (such as the assumption that needle-work is not a particularly exciting activity), that the party was really boring. And similarly for (36).

Is this "implication sense" of what is said, as Ziff calls it, an insuperable obstacle to a semantic approach to what is said? Not for the defenders of the dominant view who will adopt the literalist response, like K. Bach or J. Saul.<sup>12</sup> For, they will say that Mitsuko's reply in (37) is literally false, though it may convey something true. They will also say that the report in (38) is, likewise, literally false, though it is true that, loosely speaking, Inma and Tarek said the same thing, because one could *infer* that the party was boring from what they said strictly speaking.

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<sup>11</sup> Stalnaker's horizontal propositional content is, roughly, the same as Kaplan's content, while the diagonal content comes closer to Kaplan's character.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Bach (2002), Saul (2002).

For once, the literalist view could be on the right track. For, even if we have the intuition that the reports (37) and (38) are not exactly false, and that they would normally communicate something true, we also have the intuition that (35) and (36) do not exactly say the same thing. This intuition, too, is reflected in the way we report what others have said:

- (39) The party was very boring. (said by Tarek)
- (40) Inma said that, too. (Mitsuko, on the basis of Inma's utterance of (35))
- (41) That's not quite true. Inma only said that she shouldn't have gone, and that it was better for her to have stayed home to do some needle-work. (reply to Mitsuko)

Intuitively, the reply in (41) is true. This, in turn, suggests that when we judged (37) to be true, and when we, at a first glance, judged (40) to be true, too, our judgments of truth were not very robust. Indeed, once we ask ourselves what it is *exactly* that Inma said, and once we realize that Inma was maybe trying to finish a piece that she had been knitting, and that that's maybe why she thought she should have stayed home, and if so, that the party maybe wasn't even boring for Inma, then we are actually willing to retract from our earlier judgment that the report was true, and to re-evaluate it as false. According to the literalist, the report had been false all the way long, and the instability of our judgments, they might say, precisely shows that our intuitions on what is said cannot be trusted.<sup>13</sup>

Somewhat ironically, the plausibility of the literalist response in this sort of case is precisely what shows it to be a bad response in the sort of cases previously discussed. For, there is a striking difference between the implication sense of what is said and the sense in which, say, different speakers making same *de se* assertions say the same thing. Consider:

- (42) I am writing a book on Montague. (said by Prof. Feferman)
- (43) I am writing a book on Montague. (said by Inma)

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<sup>13</sup> For the literalist, the reports in (37), (38) and (40) are inevitably false. But my own position, even though I said that in this type of cases, the literalist response could well be on the right track, is more complex. I do not hold that the report in (37) is necessarily false. It might well be true. What "retraction" shows is merely that a report that was true in one context may well turn out false in another context (even if the reported utterances are the same). What accounts for this change of truth value is that the standards for what counts as same-saying are different. In the context of (37), the standards were "low": having one and the same relevant implication in common was thus enough to make the report true. In the context of (41), where the exact wording has been raised to salience and the standards were shifted to high, the report in (37), as well as the report in (40), are seen as false. This is the same phenomenon that we find with knowledge attributions, which has recently received considerable attention and has elicited debates among invariantism, contextualism and relativism. The phenomenon, however, is not directly relevant to the main issues of my paper, and for my purposes, it would work fine enough if we interpreted the data as the literalist does, and if we saw the reports in (37), (38) and (40) as downright false.

(44) Prof. Feferman said that, too. (Tarek's reply to Inma, on the basis of Feferman's utterance of (42))

(45) (?) That's not quite true. He only said that *he* was writing a book on Montague. (Mitsuko's reply to Tarek)

While we were inclined to judge that, in (41), the "that's not quite true" reply was true, making in turn the report in (40) false, the case is very different with (45), where we are inclined to judge Mitsuko's reply false. More precisely, if someone remarks to us that Tarek's report in (44) is false, our reaction is that the person did not properly disambiguate the report, and that they judge it false only because they got the wrong reading. The same is the case with incorrect disambiguations of the strict/sloppy ambiguity of the more usual type, as with VP-ellipsis:

(46) Inma loves her boyfriend.

(47) So does Mitsuko.

(48) (?) That's not quite true. Mitsuko only loves her own boyfriend.

When presented with a reply as in (48) to the pair (46)-(47), we will, of course, say that one who made such a reply did not resolve the ellipsis in (47) correctly. Exactly the same explanation goes for Mitsuko's reply in (45). In none among the cases raised in 2.3., 2.4. and 2.5. are we going to re-evaluate the report as being false, the way we did in the case of the report in (40). We will maintain that the report is true, and discard any "that's not quite true" reply as arising from an incorrect disambiguation of the report.

Let me end this section by mentioning another type of response, which seems to be becoming more and more popular, although it goes back at least to Lewis (1980). It consists in relegating the notion of what is said to pragmatics, and in viewing it as a notion that has little or nothing to do with semantic content.

It goes without saying that this type of response may be endorsed by authors who need not share their views with respect to the notion of semantic content. Among those who seek to banish what is said into the realm of pragmatics (whether they give arguments for this position, or simply endorse it), we find E. Borg, H. Cappelen, E. Lepore, D. Lewis, S. Predelli, N. Salmon, S. Soames. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss their position(s) at length.<sup>14</sup> It is enough to point out that they are missing something crucial in its understanding of the notion of what is said. They are missing the fact that, as we have just shown, there is a sharp difference between *loose* uses of the locution 'what is said', in which utterances with same implicatures may be truly reported as saying the same thing, and *literal* uses of the locution 'what is said', which sometimes (as in 2.1., 2.2. and 2.6.) but not always (as in 2.3., 2.4. and 2.5.) fit the conception of what is said as Kaplanian semantic content.

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<sup>14</sup> In my recent paper (2006), I provide a survey of the theoretical landscape and of the various approaches to the notions of what is said and of semantic content. There, I discuss at greater length the mainstream position, as well as its adversary, the contextualist position (cf. Recanati (2003)), but also some alternatives, such as J. Perry's reflexive-referential theory, K. Bach's theory of implicatures, and the minimalism of E. Borg and of H. Cappelen and E. Lepore.



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

What I want to do in the remainder of my paper is to present, albeit in very rough lines, a theory which takes what is said to be lexical meaning, and identifies the latter with semantic content, and that then show how this theory handles the data presented in this paper.

It will be helpful to start by laying down the main tenets of my proposal:

- a) what is said by a given utterance is nothing more or less than the lexical meaning of the sentence uttered;
- b) the lexical 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 merely assert what the sentence uttered means in virtue of its lexical meaning, but we assert it *of*, or *about*, something;
- d) the lexical meaning of indexicals has certain features associated with presuppositions. In particular, operators such as negation, modality, etc. do not apply to the conditions encoded in the meaning of an indexical, even when the indexical lies in the (syntactic) scope of the operator;<sup>15</sup>
- 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.

Since it is meanings, not propositions, that are presupposed, and since meanings are not true or false simpliciter, but *of* things (times, individual, situations), instead of asking whether a given presupposition associated with an indexical is simply satisfied in a given context, we must ask whether it is satisfied, in a given context, *of* a given thing. But apart from this proviso, our proposal is neutral on the question of how to understand or formally account for the notion of presupposition.

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

(49) This is heavy.

In uttering (49), Inma is referring to the hammer: she is drawing Tarek's attention to it, so that he may identify the hammer as that of which she wants to say something. Since the hammer at stake also satisfies the conditions in the lexical meaning of 'this', viz. being something salient and proximal, Inma will manage to say something *about* that very hammer, namely, that it is heavy.<sup>16</sup> But the hammer itself is not part of the semantic content of (49), nor is it part of what Inma said.

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed exposition and defense of the semantic account of indexicals in line with tenet d), see my monograph (2006).

Now, the lexical 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, it is true of the hammer in Inma's hand and of the situation in which she is uttering (49), but it is false of the same hammer relative to the situation in which Sonia utters (49) while holding up a feather in her hand (because the hammer is no longer salient, it is no longer "a this"), and it is again obviously false of the feather itself.

Let us briefly see what tenet e) amounts to. Reconsider Inma's utterance, made in reference to the hammer, followed by a reply from Tarek:

(50) This is heavy.

(51) That's what Mitsuko said, too.

When Tarek reports Mitsuko as having said what Inma has just said, the issue of what it was that Mitsuko was talking about will be taken for granted in the context of the report. Given that Tarek does not explicitly mention anything as being the thing of which Mitsuko said that it was heavy, it will be understood that Mitsuko said it of the same thing as Inma did, namely, of that same hammer. This is why the report will come out intuitively false when Tarek makes it on the grounds of Mitsuko's uttering the same sentence as Inma did, while referring to something other than the hammer, say, to her suitcase. But the presupposition that Mitsuko was talking of the same thing as Inma can, of course, be explicitly canceled. That is what we saw in section 2.6.:

(52) This is heavy. (Inma, talking of the hammer)

(53) That's what Mitsuko said, too, of her suitcase. (Tarek's reply to Inma)

And if Mitsuko did say that her suitcase was heavy, Tarek's reply is, of course, true.

### 3.3. How It Works

I have presented a proposal that identifies what is said by a given utterance with the lexical meaning of the sentence uttered. Let me now quickly review the key cases from sections 2.1. to 2.6., and show how my account handles them.

#### 1. Different meanings, same things said. The contribution of time.

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

(54) I have graduated in math. (said by Inma)

(55) She has graduated in math. (said by Tarek pointing at Inma)

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<sup>16</sup> I discuss at length this "procedural" role of linguistic meaning in utterance interpretation and in particular in reference resolution in my monograph on indexicals (2005).

How are we going to capture the intuition that, in some important sense, what is said by those utterances is the same, if the meaning of (54) is that the *speaker* has graduated in math, while the meaning of (55) is that *some contextually salient female* has. If lexical meaning = what is said, isn't that a straightforward denial that Inma and Tarek have said the same thing?

Our proposal denies indeed that (54) and (55) say the same thing *tout court*. But that does not mean that there is no sense in which Inma and Tarek may be understood and correctly reported as having said the same thing. We account for this in three steps. First, if we analyze the sentences uttered in (54) and (55), we will see that they contain the same verb phrase, with the same lexical meaning, viz. 'has graduated in math'. The sentences uttered do, then, overlap in their lexical meaning (hence in what is said) to the extent that they *predicate* the same thing. Second, we ought to explain how the parts that have different lexical meanings may be ignored in judging whether the same thing has been said. The parts that are ignored correspond to the words 'I' and 'she'. As noted earlier, and elsewhere in the literature, the conditions lexically associated with indexicals have the features of presuppositions. The fact that a given thing satisfies such a condition, like the fact that Inma is the speaker of (54), or the fact that Inma is the most salient female in the context of (55), are not the sort of facts 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 about whom she is talking. Given that those parts of the lexical meaning of a sentence that correspond to indexicals are only asserted for heuristic purposes, it comes as no surprise that they should often be ignored in assessing or reporting what is said. Finally, the third step in our account of why (54) and (55) are so easily heard as saying the same thing lies in the fact that the person that Inma is talking about is the same as the person that Tarek is talking about: it is Inma herself. Both Inma and Tarek are talking about the same person (Inma), and are asserting about her the same thing, namely, that she has graduated in math.

True enough, our account also predicts that there is a sense in which Inma and Tarek are *not* saying the same thing. If you wish, Inma is, after all, saying of herself that she is a speaker (an "I"), while Tarek is saying of her that she is a contextually salient female (a "she"). But, as already pointed out, this difference in what is said is not significant, because Inma is saying of herself that she is a speaker only so that her audience may figure out that she is talking about herself (as opposed to, say, Tarek).

It is easy to see that the above account of the basic case from 2.1. – a case that had served to motivate the dominant view – applies straightforwardly to the first case from 2.3. – a case that serves to cast doubt on the dominant view –, a variant of which is repeated below:

(56) I have graduated in math. (Inma, on Friday, March 31, 2006)

(57) Inma has graduated in math. (Tarek, talking of Inma, on Tuesday, April 3, 2006).

(58) She said that, too. (a possible reply to Tarek's utterance of (57))

Although time is relevant to the truth of (56) and (57), and although it is possible that their truth values diverge (for instance, if Inma graduated only on Monday April 2, (57) is true but (56) is false), it has been noted that, intuitively, (56) and (57) say the same thing, and that the report in (58) is true. The account that I gave of the same-saying in (54) and (55) can be repeated, to the letter, in the case of (56) and (57). The only thing that is worth adding is that since (56) and (57) are not directly about time, nor are they about events whose time is a subject matter of the conversation, the report in (58) does not come with the presupposition that when Inma said what Tarek said, she was talking of the same time; for, neither Tarek nor Inma were really talking about time. That is what, I think, accounts for the difference with the "dinner" case:

(59) Inma is having dinner. (said by Tarek, on March 31, at 7 pm)

(60) I am having dinner. (said by Inma, on March 31, at 11 pm)

(61) Tarek said that, too. (a possible reply to Inma's utterance of (60))

Putting aside the ambiguity in (61), and the reading on which Tarek said that *he* was having dinner, we are more inclined to judge the report in (61) to be false than we are to judge it to be true. The report will be readily evaluated as true, though, if one explicitly mentions the time:

(62) That's what Tarek said, too, earlier this evening/at 7 pm. (possible replies to (60))

The explanation that I am suggesting of why we are inclined to say that the report in (61) is false is that, since having dinner is an event the time of which seems to be relevant in the context of an utterance such as (60), the report that someone else said the same thing comes with the presupposition that the other person was talking of the same time. That is, remember, the gist of tenet e) of our theory. Now, given that Tarek did not say *about* late evening time, elevenish pm, that Inma was having dinner *then*, we take the report to be false. But so, the falsity of the report would be due to a presupposition that could not be "accommodated", to use linguists' jargon, rather than to a difference in what was actually said. This is further supported by the fact that the presupposition may be explicitly canceled, as in (62).

## 2. *De Se* Assertions

A major challenge to my proposal is to account for the fact that often, even though the same sentence has been uttered, there is the intuition that different things have been said, while reporting that the same thing has been said seems incorrect. Let me start with the case from 2.2. – originally Kaplan's example, which he took to motivate his view. Consider:

(63) I was insulted yesterday. (said by Kaplan, on Friday, March 31, 2006)

(64) I was insulted yesterday. (said by X on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006)

(65) Kaplan said that, too. (a possible reply to X)

Because (63) may be true while (64) is false and vice versa, Kaplan concludes that what is said must be different: what is said in (63) is about Kaplan and about what happened on March 31, while what is said in (64) is about X and about the following day. In my account, what is said in (63) and in (64) is the same thing: it is the lexical meaning of the sentence "I was insulted yesterday" – roughly, that the speaker was insulted on the day before the day of utterance. However, this meaning is not true or false simpliciter, but it is true or false with respect to a person at a time. So (63) can only bear a truth value after being given a person and a time to be evaluated at, and that will presumably be the person and the time that the speaker of the utterance is talking about and referring to. Kaplan is talking about himself on Friday, March 31, while X is talking about herself on Saturday. The difference in their respective subject matters accounts not only for a possible difference in truth values, but also for the intuition that different things have been said. So, to repeat, I submit that what is said in (63) and in (64) is the same, but because it is said of different individuals and of different days, people may get the intuition that what is said is different.

The difference in subject matter is what accounts for the fact that the report in (65) may be false. Recall, that report is ambiguous between a strict and a sloppy reading, but if we put the sloppy reading aside for the moment, the report is false (on the assumption that Kaplan didn't say that X was insulted on April 1<sup>st</sup>). The reason why it is false is that 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 ought to make it explicit that it was said about something or someone else. But if we leave that implicit, then the report will receive its truth value depending on whether the two reportees indeed said the same thing *about one and the same thing*.

Let us now address the issue of the sloppy readings of reports of *de se* assertions, that is, reports of utterances made using the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun. Let me use my example from section 2.4., slightly simpler than Kaplan's, since it does not involve the indexical 'yesterday':

(66) I am writing a book on Montague. (said by Prof. Feferman)

(67) I am writing a book on Montague. (said by Inma)

(68) Prof. Feferman said that, too. (Tarek's reply to Inma, on the basis of Feferman's utterance of (66))

As noted, (68) is ambiguous. Suppose that it is common knowledge between Inma and Tarek that Prof. Feferman does not know of Inma, hence that he could not have been saying anything specifically about Inma. Then (68) will be naturally understood as reporting Feferman as having said that *he* was writing a book on Montague. Tenet e) of our theory predicts that when we report what is said by Inma in (67) as being the same as what Prof. Feferman had said, we presuppose it known in the context what Feferman's reported utterance was about. The presupposition that Feferman's utterance was about the same person as Inma's, namely, about Inma, is pragmatically canceled, since it is common knowledge that Feferman could not have been talking about Inma, of whom he had never even heard. Given that his utterance was not about

Inma, the next most plausible hypothesis was is that his utterance must have been about himself.

More generally, the data on *de se* assertions and our practices of reporting them (but also our practices of reporting *de se* beliefs, for that matter) suggests the following interpretation rule:

- f) when, with respect to a given *de se* assertion  $u_1$ , we report what is said by some other utterance  $u_2$  as being the same as what is said by  $u_1$ , either  $u_2$  is about the same person as  $u_1$ , or it is a *de se* assertion, hence about the utterer of  $u_2$ .

The generalization in f), together with tenet e), makes it possible to account for the same-saying of *de se* assertions with sentences whose lexical meanings are not the same, as in section 2.5. Consider:

(69) I really like Feferman's class on Montague. (said by Inma)

(70) I really like this class. (said by Mitsuko about Feferman's class on Montague)

(71) Inma said that, too. (Tarek's reply to Mitsuko, on the basis of (69))

In (70), we have two subject matters: Mitsuko, and the class she says she likes, namely F.'s class on Montague. But (70) is also a *de se* assertion, as it is about the speaker herself, namely Mitsuko. The report in (71) is, of course, ambiguous, but if we put aside the strict reading (for which we account in the same way as we did for the basic case from section 2.1.), the sloppy reading is accounted for by rule f): the utterance made by Inma and reported as saying the same thing as Mitsuko's was also a *de se* assertion. Moreover, the two *de se* assertions assert the same thing, namely, that there is a class that the agent really likes. Tenet e) further tells us that the report in (71) presupposes that the two assertions, though about different "selves", should otherwise be about the same subject matter, hence about the same class, viz. Feferman's class on Montague.

Finally, for reasons of space, I shall abstain from spelling out the account of the cases from section 2.6. But the account of the previous cases already contains all the elements required to deal with those from 2.6., hence it should be an easy exercise for the reader to run those cases through the machinery that I have put forward.

## 4 Conclusion

One of the central tenets of the dominant view is the distinction between lexical meaning and what is said. We first saw two 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. But then, I presented a series of cases that fit very badly into the dominant view. For, we often get the intuition that the same thing has been said, even though the reported utterances do not have the same Kaplanian content, nor do the sentences uttered have the same lexical meaning.

We have also seen that in certain cases, namely, in *de se* assertions, utterances of sentences that lexically mean the same thing are easily reported as saying the same thing, even when their Kaplan contents are different, yet in some other cases, namely, in *de te* and *de re* assertions, such reports only work either if the assertions are about the same thing (hence their Kaplanian contents will be the same), or if the reporter makes it explicit that the reportees were talking about different things. In the last part of the paper I put forward, albeit in rough lines, my own account of what is said, on which it is nothing less or more than the lexical meaning of the sentence uttered. The two key notions for my account are lexical meanings (which, in turn, *are* semantic contents) and what is talked about, or the subject matter of the utterance. We also 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 do not always support the equation "what is said = lexical meaning." Finally, I tried to illustrate how my account works by applying it, case by case, both to those examples that seem to motivate the dominant view and to those cases that seem to undermine it.<sup>17</sup>

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