

## Pure Quotations and Use-Conditional Meaning

Some philosophers argue that pure quotations are *referentially flexible*: they can refer to different kinds of objects, including expressions, pronunciations and sounds, and even meanings and concepts (Goldstein 1984; Washington 1992; Reimer 1996; Saka 1998; García-Carpintero 2003, 2017, 2018). For instance, the quotation in (1) refers to a word, and so do the quotations on the left-hand sides of (2) and (3), whereas the quotations on the right-hand sides of (2) and (3) refer respectively to a meaning and a pronunciation:

- (1) 'red' has three letters.
- (2) 'rot' means 'red'.
- (3) The plural of 'woman' is pronounced 'wi-muhn'.

Here is an argument that is often given in support of the referential flexibility of quotations (henceforth, RFQ). If the quotations on the right-hand sides of (2) and (3) referred to words, then (2) and (3) would incorrectly turn out to be false: indeed, the word 'rot' does not mean another word, and the pronunciation of the plural of 'woman' is not a word. One might resist the argument by claiming that (2) and (3) are shorthand for (4) and (5) respectively:

- (4) 'rot' means the same as 'red'.
- (5) The plural of 'woman' is pronounced the same as 'wi-muhn'.

Although I believe that these paraphrases fail (for instance, substituting them in attitude reports does not always preserve the truth-value of the reports), the focus of my talk will not be on the argument for RFQ or on ways of defending it against objections. Rather, I will assume its conclusion and (i) propose an original version of Davidson's (1979) theory of quotations that elegantly accounts for RFQ and (ii) criticise extant theories of quotation – including more canonical versions of Davidson's theory – that aim to explain RFQ.

My proposal consists of two claims:

- A quotation is made up of (i) a demonstrative pronoun (surfacing as the quotation marks) and (ii) a truth-conditionally inert expression that is *displayed* to make itself, or an entity related to it, available for being referred to by the demonstrative pronoun.
- Such predicates as 'has three letters', 'means', and 'is pronounced' shape the contexts of utterance of such sentences as (1), (2), and (3) to the effect that the respective *demonstratum* parameters are supplied by, respectively, the word 'red', the meaning of 'red', and the pronunciation of 'wi-muhn' (to simplify my exposition, I am ignoring the quotations on the left-hand sides of (2) and (3)). In short, it is the predicate which selects the appropriate object of demonstration, and hence the referent of the quotation, on a given occasion.

I will develop these claims in a Kaplan-inspired semantic framework, enriched by a formal apparatus, borrowed from Predelli (2013), that allows me to represent the context-shaping role of the predicates in (1)–(3) as the capacity of imposing appropriate *contextual restrictions*. This capacity will be shown to be a *non-truth-conditional* – more precisely: *use-conditional* – aspect of the meaning of these predicates.

My proposal relies only on the pre-theoretical idea of display and some well-established theoretical resources. These include a standard semantics for demonstratives and the device of contextual restriction. As I will argue, the latter is independently necessary to account for certain extra-semantic regularities in the use of sentences that, unlike (1)–(3), are not instances of metalinguistic discourse.

I will pause on two important consequences of my non-truth-conditional treatment of the predicates in (1)–(3). First, it leads to the somewhat surprising conclusion that certain truth-conditionally idle properties of expressions nonetheless play a role in determining the truth-evaluable content of (utterances of) sentences. Second, it provides support for the idea that the domain of non-truth-conditional meaning extends well beyond the expressions with which this kind of meaning is traditionally associated – i.e., interjections and expressives, illocutionary and attitudinal adverbs, focus particles, and procedural discourse connectives.

Finally, I will argue that my account of RFQ is immune to the problems that I raise against the three main existing accounts of RFQ:

- The first says that the referent of a quotation on a given occasion of use is fixed by the speaker's intention on that occasion (García-Carpintero 2017, 2018; Saka 1998, 2006). I will argue that this account over-generates readings of sentences.
- The second account distinguishes between the *semantic referent* of a quotation, namely, an expression, and the *speaker's referent* of a quotation on a given occasion of use, namely, an entity related to the quotation's semantic referent (Gómez-Torrente 2011). I will show that there are substantial differences between, on the one hand, typical utterances of (2) and (3) and, on the other, typical utterances involving paradigmatic cases of speaker's reference, like Kripke's (1977) Smith/Jones case.
- The third account accounts for RFQ in terms of ambiguity (Johnson 2018). I will argue that this account implies the unwelcome view that the English lexicon contains, for any lexical item, *infinitely many* distinct names spelled the same as that item. I will stress that posing a resemblance relation between each such name and its referent (as Johnson suggests) does not solve the problem.

## References

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