Two Pragmatic Notions of What Is Said

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This talk has two parts. In the first part, I draw a contrast between two views of the contents of referential assertions that are both compatible with Stalnaker's (1999; 2016) pragmatic account of conversation: propositional referentialism (PR) and centred referentialism (CR). I argue that PR cannot, but CR can, predict the right truth-conditions for *some* assertions containing referential uses of descriptions. The reason is because PR involves a false claim about the way in which the referent of these assertions is determined. In the second part, I describe the pragmatic roles that CR ascribes to the linguistic content encoded by the description. This content is not part of the truth-conditions of the corresponding assertion, and it does not fix reference. Nevertheless, being presupposed *of* the referent, it is what shapes the *contextual effects* of the assertion by delimiting the possibilities that accepting its content rules out from the context.

References: • Donnellan, K. (1966) Reference and Definite Descriptions. *Philosophical Review* 75(3), 281–304. • Stalnaker, R. (1999) *Context and Content*. Oxford University Press. • Stalnaker, R. (2016) *Context*. Oxford University Press.