

Title: The contents of sentences

Abstract: Propositions are said to play several roles in our theories. The most important is to be the primary bearers of truth. Another is to be the contents of sentences. It is controversial whether sentences have such contents. I distinguish two claims. The first is a claim about the psychology of language users. The second is a metaphysical claim. I argue that the psychological claim plausibly entails the metaphysical one, but not **vice versa**. I propose that we should not accept that sentences have propositional contents on the basis of the psychological claim. I give an argument for the metaphysical claim, with premises that those who believe that propositions are the primary bearers of truth will accept. I then raise a puzzle for this defence of sentence contents. We might either think that such propositions play an important theoretical role, or that the propositions themselves are typically interesting to language users, but not both. I resolve this puzzle by describing an alternative theoretical role for sentence contents which is compatible with those contents being interesting to language users. The proposed role is to account for cases where speakers intend to say the content of some sentence, without knowing what that content is.