

TITLE: Talk About Luck! (Anti-)Fregeanism and Loar's Puzzle for Communication

ABSTRACT: In the backdrop of a long-standing debate between Direct Reference theorists and sense-based theorists over the right construal of the semantics of language, Loar (1976) presented a case which was meant to score a victory for the Fregeans. Recently, this conclusion has met resistance. As some Russellians have pointed out, they too have a stake in the discussion. A knowledge-based, neo-Russellian approach to communication has recently emerged as a strong contender against the Fregean (Goodman, forthcoming; Onofri, 2019; Peet, 2019), claiming that the significance of Loar's puzzle is due to an element of luck (as in Gettier cases), concluding that communication must be modelled on knowledge.

The aim of my talk is to critically assess the viability of this anti-Fregean approach, by showing that the epistemic Russellians' knowledge-based view faces a problem. By attending to an interesting case devised by Dickie (forthcoming), I show that there can be cases of lucky linguistic understanding. If correct, this shows that drawing an epistemic condition on communicative success from Loar cases is simply unwarranted.

The general upshot of my discussion is that the Fregean approach to communication is still the stronger contender as a general view of communication.

(195 words)