

Reading Response: Stalnaker (1974) 'Pragmatic Presuppositions'

Provide a concise overview (one single-spaced page of targeted prose should be sufficient) of the Stalnaker reading, which addresses the following questions:

- (A) Describe the “pragmatic account” of presupposition that Stalnaker develops in the first pages of the paper. In particular, what is the role played by the “common (back)ground” in conversation, and how does it figure into the pragmatic account?
- (B) On pgs. 53-55, Stalnaker lists four advantages that a pragmatic account of presupposition possesses over a purely semantic account (i.e., one that always takes presupposition to be a relation between the truth-conditional meanings of sentences). Discuss one of these advantages.
- (C) On pgs. 56-60, Stalnaker discusses two sets of facts which his pragmatic account of presupposition can easily explain: the *regret/realize/discover*-examples (pgs. 56-58), and the projection properties of *and* and *if...then...* sentences (pgs. 59-60). Choose one of these sets of facts and summarize Stalnaker’s discussion of them—what sort of explanation does his pragmatic account provide for the facts?

You should also feel free to discuss other points that strike you as interesting or important, to raise any objections to Stalnaker’s claims, or to pose any questions that arose while reading this paper.