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The aim of this presentation is to indicate and critically discuss epistemological foundations of the referential use. Many theorists apply the distinction between the attributive and the referential uses to various linguistic devices such as names, pronouns, and definite descriptions. In loose terms, when a speaker uses an expression referentially, he employs it as a tool of picking out a particular object which he has in mind. Although, the relation of ‘having an object in mind’ implies having a kind of an epistemological access to the object, it is not clear how the relation exactly should be captured. Current proposals explain it in terms of a having a singular thought about the object, nevertheless, the term of “singular thought / proposition” is itself ambiguous in the literature. According to Kaplan’s tradition, a singular thought about *d* is conceived as a thought which has *d* as a constituent. On some other accounts, the term is used to denote a thought which does not have the object itself as a constituent, but only an object-dependent mode of representation of that object.

In my speech, I will argue that each account of the relation of ‘having an object in kind’ employs the concept of *acquaintance*. Roughly, an ability to refer to an object by a speaker is constituted due to his knowledge by acquaintance of certain categories like the object itself, or some (e.g. sensual) representations of it – depending on which account we consider. In the light of the fact that acquaintance is still a problematic issue in the analytic epistemology, the notion of reference has a weak theoretical basis.

Literature:

Bach, K. (2004) “Descriptions: Points of Reference”, in: Bezuidenhout, Reimer (eds.) *Descriptions and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fumerton, R. (1995) “The Acquaintance Theory of Noninferential Justification and the Internalism/Externalism Debate”, in: Fumerton, *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, London: Rowman and Littlefield.