

## The Philosophy of the Philosophy of Language

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### **Abstract**

Recent work in “experimental semantics” appears to show that Western and East Asian speakers have significantly different intuitions about the reference of proper names. This raises a methodological question about the theory of reference and the philosophy of language as a whole. How should the discovery of this cross-cultural difference affect future theorizing? Does the result challenge the Kripkean, “causal-historical” theory of reference for names? How central a role do intuitions about reference or other semantic phenomena play in philosophical theorizing about language? How central a role should they play? It will be argued that the role of intuitions has been greatly exaggerated, both by experimental semanticists, and by the more traditional semanticists who are their targets. Furthermore, it will be argued that the normative question of how large a role intuitions *should* play should be: A very minimal one.