

Conditional Modality

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Abstract

An approach to modality, conditionals, and their interpretation due to David Lewis and Angelika Kratzer has gained widespread acceptance in linguistic circles. Kratzer's version has the linguistic advantage of providing a compositional explanation of how modals (and, in particular, 'ought') combine with conditionals. But it has logical disadvantages: it is linked to a theories of the conditional and 'ought' that deliver questionable truth conditions.

The mostly independent logical literature on conditional oughts produces better truth conditions, as well as explanations of phenomena like the "paradoxes" of conditional obligation. But it makes no attempt to solve the compositional problem.

In this paper I'll elaborate on this background, and will suggest that a relatively minor and well motivated change in the Stalnaker semantics for the conditional can produce a theory that does justice to both the linguistic and the logical demands.