

Pedagogical Case & Modality by Lorenzo Patino

Abstract

Von Fintel & Gillies (2007) state that there are a limited number of knowledge perspectives that can be accessed in epistemic modals statements; if we have speakers A & B in a conversation, the knowledge perspectives that can be accessed when making epistemic modal statements can only include an A-only perspective, a B-only perspective, or an A+B shared knowledge pool perspective. They maintain that whichever one is accessed is limited to the speaker's knowledge perspective. So if speaker A is making an epistemic modal statement, then they are limited to an A-only perspective or an A+B perspective. This is formalized as the speaker inclusion constraint, which limits speaker A from taking a B-only perspective. Egan (2005) gave several exceptions where the speaker inclusion constraint does not seem to apply the way Von Fintel & Gillies propose. One such exception is the pedagogical case, which is primarily utilized in teaching.

This paper first isolates what gives license for the non-speaker perspective to be accessed within the pedagogical case by examining teaching as a collaborative speech act. The concept of knowledge authority is identified as the key feature that allows for the non-speaker perspective to be accessed. A broader definition of authority is proposed, one that is not necessarily linked to knowledge, as a way of accounting for the additional contexts where the non-speaker perspective is accessed. One such context is the courtroom, where a key feature of lawyer-witness interaction is the non-speaker perspective. An examination of this context as well as a re-evaluation of Egan's examples will help show how & why the non-speaker perspective is accessed. A modified judge operator, adapted from Stevenson (2008), will be used to account for the interface between the semantic and pragmatic level which allows for the non-speaker perspective to be accessed.