

Weak Knowledge

Sam Carter

Dianoia-ACU

Guessing
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Knowing
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Objections
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Lucky Guessing
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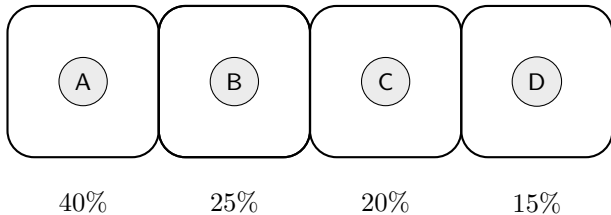
Conclusion
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References

Overview

- ① Guessing
- ② Knowing
- ③ Objections
- ④ Conclusion

Guessing



Guessing

Holguín (2022) and Dorst and Mandelkern (forthcoming) introduce a notion of **cogency**:

Cogency p is a **cogent** answer to Q relative to Pr iff for some $t \in [0, 1]$: p is the union $q \in Q$ such that $Pr(q) \geq t$.

Guessing

Good guesses are cogent answers.

- Guessing** p is a good guess about Q for S iff:
- (i) p is a cogent answer to Q relative to Cr_S
 - (ii) Cr_S is rational over Q .

Knowing

- Knowing** S knows that p relative to Q iff:
- (i) p is a good guess about Q for S;
 - (ii) S correctly guesses that p is the answer to Q ;
 - (iii) S's guess isn't lucky.

Knowing

Suppose that Alice guesses A will win and that her guess turns out to be correct. **Knowing** predicts we could truthfully assert (1)/(2).

- (1) Alice knew who would win the election.
- (2) Alice knew that it would be A who won.

Knowing

① Quiz Shows & Exams

② Constituent Questions

③ Relevance

(3) I only got $\frac{9}{10}$ on the exam because...

- a. ...I didn't know the correct answer to the last question.
- b. ...I wasn't confident about the correct answer to the last question.

(4) Who knew that it would be A who won the election?

(5) a: Did anyone know who would win the election?

- b: i. Yes, Alice guessed that it would be A.
- ii. ?? Yes, Alice hoped that it would be A.

Knowing

Knowing seems like it makes the wrong prediction about (6)-(8).

- (6) Alice knows who will win the election.
- (7) Alice knows that it will be A who wins the election.
- (8) Alice does not know who will win the election.

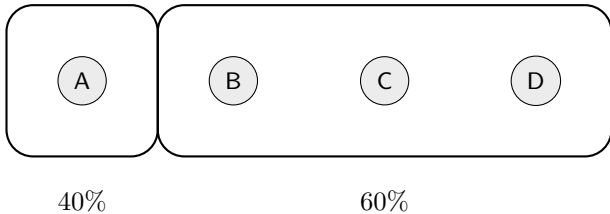
Knowing

I'll assume that knowledge is the norm of assertion.

K-Norm You must: assert p in c only if you know p relative to $_1$
 Q , where Q is under discussion in c .

¹Schaffer (2008)

Knowing



Knowing

Whether you satisfy the primary norms on an activity isn't the only thing that matters.²

G-Norm You must: X only if your guess about whether you satisfy N_X is that you do.

²Littlejohn (forthcominga,f); Williamson (forthcoming)

Knowing

This package of norms makes sense of retraction data.

(9) a: Alice doesn't know who will win the election.

...

...

TV Announcer: And the winner is... A!

a: Huh, I was wrong. It turns out Alice did know after all.

Knowing

It also makes the right predictions about embedded knowledge ascriptions ([Holguín \(2021\)](#)).

- (10) If the polls are right, Alice knows who will win.
- (11) Either A is going to lose or Alice knows who will win.
- (12) Alice might know who will win.

Assertion

K-Norm doesn't explain what's wrong with **b**'s response in (13).

- (13) a: Who will win the election?
b: A.

However, where one's best guess is insufficiently probable, such assertions won't satisfy **G-Norm**.

Ignorance

If knowledge is weak, then denials of knowledge should be correspondingly strong.

Yet, regardless of how likely some candidate is to win, you can always self-ascribe ignorance about the outcome.

(14) I don't know who will win the election.

Ignorance

Where ‘*knows*’ is focused, third-person ascriptions of ignorance are fine (Unger (1975)).

- (15) Alice didn’t *know* that it would be A who won (...she was only guessing).

But this isn’t specific to weak knowledge.

- (16) Alice didn’t *know* that...
- a. ...the bank was open...
 - b. ...the sun will rise tomorrow...
 - c. ...that she is not envatted...
- ...she was merely very confident.

Conclusion

- **Knowing** and **Guessing** imply knowledge is weak.
- Views on which knowledge is weak are better placed to accommodate a range of linguistic data.
- Combined with an appropriate norm on assertion, they can address challenges to do with bare assertions and denials.

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