An assertion is a serious claim, not hypothetical or frivolous

The seriousness of the claim depends on many circumstances

The implicit claim in an assertion is like a claim to a right or to a title. As with a claim to a right, while it may be conceded without argument, its merits depend on the merits of the argument which *could* be produced in its support, the grounds – backing, data, facts, evidence, consideration, features

Arguments serve various purposes – they do not have to be a formal defense of an outright assertion. But this particular aspect of arguments take the most attention.

The main problem with argumentation is deciding at what points and in what ways we assess arguments. What facts and arguments are produced depend on the logical types of facts adduced and conclusions drawn from them. The justificatory arguments we produce for our conclusions can vary and the question is, how can they be addressed in a standardized way given the range of arguments.

Two arguments belong to the same *field* when the data and conclusions in each of the two arguments are of the same logical type. The question now becomes what common standards are applicable across fields, called field-invariant as opposed to field-dependent.

The initial stage is to admit there are multiple candidates worthy of the title of “solution” so they *may* be the choice and *possibility* is the key modal word at this point. We can add adjectives as there are stronger or weaker claims, *possibilities* are more or less *serious.* But every possibility should have *some* time spent on it.

There are cautionary tales when using this modal terms. If answering a counter-claim to a prior assertion, if someone says “it is not possible” and continues to expound upon the subject, that opens up the possibility he is called frivolous or inconsistent. Essentially, the discussion of probability is highly complicated.

There is one consideration to be made at the initial stage. If there is an answer that is always the answer – barring some exceptional circumstance – we must qualify the conclusion. For example, the chairman always sits in his chairperson seat at board meetings, unless he is not at the meeting.

Returning to the main problem, instead of focusing on what is necessary (as this is clouded by preconceptions), let’s focus on the verb *cannot*. There are obvious cases where this word is used – you *cannot* smoke in a non-smoking area, you cannot force a spouse to testify against the other, you cannot lift that heavy weight by yourself, you cannot have a male sister, or you cannot get 10,000 people into a Town Hall. There are of course, objections that can be made to this. You physically can smoke in a non-smoking area, you can tetris persons into a space despite its seating capacity, etc. There are questions of language, meaning, linguistics, physical capacity, legal boundaries, biological definitions. There are also scientific impossibilities as well to consider. The word cannot though, serves to locate each statement in a particular place in an argument with ruling out a relevant possibility

Ruling out follows this pattern: P being what it is, must exclude anything involving Q. To do otherwise would be R, and would invite S.

The modal term has two aspects: force – the practical implications of its use; criteria – standards, grounds, and reasons to which we decide the use of a particular term is appropriate

For impossibilities and improprieties, the answer to the question of which features are field invariant and which are field dependent is clear enough: the force of the conclusion (cannot, impossible) is the same regardless of fields. The criteria to justify a conclusion are field-dependent.

A suggestion can be possible in any context, but genuine consideration requires appropriate context.

Similar to cannot and impossible, can and possible are field invariant force and field dependent standards. Generalized, all canons for criticism and assessment are field dependent while our terms of assessment are field invariant in their force. “How strong is the case” has the same force or implication each time while the standards for evaluating the strength change.