

Inferential conditionals

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Many indicative conditionals seem to convey the existence of an inferential connection between their antecedent and consequent. If this idea, which can be traced back to antiquity, is unpopular among contemporary philosophers, it is probably because its advocates failed to recognize that this inferential link does not always have to be understood in terms of classical deduction. Acknowledging the traditional distinction between deductive, inductive, and abductive reasoning can be a departure point for revisiting some old philosophical issues concerning interpretation of conditional sentences. It can help to explain, for instance, why seemingly contradictory conditionals can both be true, or why some of them constitute a bad advice. Furthermore, it may shed new light on the meaning of certain linguistic markers of evidentiality, which are believed to indicate that a speaker bases his assertion on an inference. The aim of this talk is to provide both theoretical and empirical support for the claim that, for a large class of indicative conditionals, a conditional's consequent should be seen as a deductive, inductive or abductive consequence of that conditional's antecedent.

*Based on the joint work with Sylvia Wenmackers and Igor Douven.