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Rational Assertibility, the Performative Role of 'Know',
and Pragmatic Encroachment

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I lay out an account of the pragmatics of 'know', and use it to argue against pragmatic encroachment into the semantics of 'know'. In the past couple of decades, there were a couple of major attempts to establish the thesis of pragmatic encroachment. Contextualism and Subject-Sensitive Invariantism offered accounts of knowledge in which standard and/or stakes play a major in the semantics. These accounts were propelled first and foremost by examples that seemed to require a pragmatic component in the truth-conditions of knowledge ascriptions in order to be accounted for. The pragmatic account I propose explains the admittedly pragmatic character of the examples in question within the pragmatic field, obviating the need for pragmatic encroachment into the semantics. The main pragmatic components I employ are the rational assertibility as well as the pragmatic role of the use of 'know' in deliberation that resorts to practical inference. This pragmatic account is fundamentally different than the Gricean approach. It account for the intuitions associated with the paradigmatic examples, and offers new insight about the methodology of using intuitions as semantic evidence.