

Abstract: Conditionals: Truth and Safety

Abstract: We argue that for conditionals to be *true* is for them to be truth-*preserving* or, for short, *safe*: i.e. for their consequents to be true if their antecedents are true. We start by noting how some of the conditionals we accept affect whether we will or should do something as a means to an end, and how those actions will succeed if and only if those conditionals are safe. This link between instrumental success and conditional safety mirrors that between actual fact and unconditional truth, a coincidence we say is best explained if, for all conditionals, truth *is* safety. We argue for this in two stages: first, by showing how conditionals other than those we act on – third-person, indicative and subjunctive, past-referring, non-contingent, and complex – also have ‘safety values’ that coincide with credible truth values; and secondly, by giving a semantics for conditionals on which their safety values behave like truth values in truth functions with other conditional and unconditional constituents.