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How Can Yes-Or-No Questions Be Informative Before They Are Answered?

Strategic Information in Interrogative Games

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Abstract

We examine a special case of inquiry games inspired by Hintikka's interrogative model of inquiry, to account for the informational import of asking questions. We focus on yes-or-no questions, which carry information about the questioner's strategy, but none about the state of Nature. We show how strategic information reduces uncertainty of players having a partial representation of the game, by facilitating inferences about other players' strategies and goals. This uncertainty cannot always be captured by information structures of classical game theory. We conclude on the connection with Gricean pragmatics and contextual constraints on interpretation.