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COMMONLY KNOWING WHETHER

A PREPRINT

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces ‘commonly knowing whether’, a non-standard version of classical common knowledge which is defined on the basis of ‘knowing whether’, instead of classical ‘knowing that’. After giving five possible definitions of this concept, we explore the logical relations among them both in the multi-agent case and in the single-agent case. We focus on one definition and treat it as a modal operator. It is found that the expressivity of this operator is incomparable with the classical common knowledge operator. Moreover, some special properties of it over binary-tree models and $KD45$-models are investigated.

1 Introduction

Common knowledge, as the strongest concept among group epistemic notions, has been studied extensively in artificial intelligence [13], epistemic logic [12], epistemology [10] and philosophy of language [2]. Over Kripke semantics, common knowledge among group $G$ that $p$, formulated as $C_G p$, is interpreted as: on every node that can be reached from the current node via the reflexive-transitive closure of relation $R_G^2$, $p$ is satisfied. As the definition suggests, common knowledge is defined on the basis of classical knowledge, ‘knowing that’, to represent propositional knowledge in a group.

There also exists a large amount of ‘wh-’style knowledge in natural language. To describe them formally, several works on epistemic logic have been undertaken, such as the logic of ‘knowing whether’ [5], the logic of ‘knowing how’ [15] [6], and the logic of ‘knowing why’ [17]. Especially the notion of ‘knowing whether’, which means that an agent knows that $p$ is true or knows that $p$ is false, has been studied from distinct perspectives [7] [11] [8].

Considering that classical common knowledge is based on ‘knowing that’, the natural question arises of what the common knowledge based on ‘knowing whether’ is. There is no agreement on the definition of ‘commonly knowing whether’ yet and some possible definitions can currently only be expressed with an infinite language. In this paper, we suggest one of the definitions is the most plausible and deserves specific study.

In this paper, we give alternative definitions of ‘commonly knowing whether’ based on different intuitions and prove that they are not equivalent, following with a further study on one of them on its logical properties. In detail, Section 2 gives five different definitions of ‘commonly knowing whether’. Section 3 studies how these definitions are logically related over different frames. Section 4 discusses the expressivity of the language $KwCw^δ L$. Some properties of $Cw^5$ over two special classes of frames are investigated in Section 5. Due to the limitation on pages, we only show full proofs for these vital conclusions and proof sketches for some important results. As for other facts and lemmas, proof details are omitted.

2 Definitions of ‘Commonly Knowing Whether’ ($Cw$)

One way of approaching standard common knowledge is an infinite conjunction of all finite iterations of ‘everyone knowing’. Before defining ‘commonly knowing whether’, two different definitions of ‘everyone knowing whether’...
will be introduced. The following definitions of ‘everyone knowing whether’ and ‘commonly knowing whether’ are due to Yanjing Wang [16]. The group $G$ concerned in this paper is finite. Since only one group is considered, we omit $G$ in notations for group knowledge in the remainder of the paper. Infinite conjunctions are temporarily used to define some of the following notions since they have not been expressed in any finite language yet. And $K$, $T$, $S5$ refer to the classes of all Kripke frames, reflexive frames and equivalence relation frames, respectively. $KD45$ refers to the class of serial, transitive and Euclidean frames. $G^{+}$ refers to the set of finite sequences only consisting of agents from $G$, excluding the empty sequence. Let $P$ be a fixed set of propositional variables. An infinite language is introduced to define ‘commonly knowing whether’.

**Definition 1** Given $P$ and $G$, the infinite language $KwEL^\infty$ is given as follows:

$$\varphi ::= p \mid \neg \varphi \mid (\varphi \land \varphi) \mid Kw_i \varphi \mid E \varphi \mid C \varphi \mid \bigwedge \Phi$$

where $i \in G$, $p \in P$, and $\Phi$ is a countably infinite set of formulas.

**Definition 2** $Ew^1 \varphi ::= E \varphi \lor E \neg \varphi$

Intuitively, this definition imitates the definition of ‘knowing whether’, describing ‘everyone knows whether $\varphi$’ as ‘everyone knows $\varphi$ or everyone knows not $\varphi$’.

**Definition 3** $Ew^2 \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{i \in G} Kw_i \varphi$, where the semantics of $Kw \varphi$ is defined over Kripke pointed models $(M, s)$ as: $M, s \models Kw_i \varphi$ iff for any $t_1$ and $t_2$ with $s \rightarrow t_1$ and $s \rightarrow t_2$, $M, t_1 \models \varphi \leftrightarrow M, t_2 \models \varphi$.

This definition is inspired by classical ‘everyone knows’, defining ‘everyone knows whether’ as ‘everyone in the group knows whether the proposition’.

On the basis of these definitions of ‘everyone knows whether’, five definitions of ‘commonly knows whether’ are given based on distinct interpretations.

**Definition 4** $Cw^1 \varphi ::= C \varphi \lor C \neg \varphi$

A group commonly knows whether $\varphi$ is possibly interpreted as they have common knowledge that $\varphi$ or they have common knowledge that $\neg \varphi$.

**Definition 5** $Cw^2 \varphi ::= CEw \varphi$

A group commonly knows whether $\varphi$ plausibly means that everyone knows whether $\varphi$ and it is a common knowledge of the group that everyone knows whether $\varphi$. Since there are two different definitions of ‘everyone knows whether’, we should separate $Cw^2 \varphi$ into $Cw^{2,1} \varphi ::= CEw^1 \varphi$ and $Cw^{2,2} \varphi ::= CEw^2 \varphi$.

**Definition 6** $Cw^3 \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{k \geq 1} (Ew)^k \varphi$

‘Commonly knowing whether $\varphi$’ can also be defined as everyone knows whether $\varphi$ and everyone knows whether everyone knows whether $\varphi$, etc. We should again separate $Cw^3 \varphi$ into $Cw^{3,1} \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{k \geq 1} (Ew^1)^k \varphi$ and $Cw^{3,2} \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{k \geq 1} (Ew^2)^k \varphi$. As mentioned in Section 1, this is an infinitary form corresponding to intuition.

**Definition 7** $Cw^4 \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{i \in G} Cw^1 Kw_i \varphi$, that is $Cw^4 \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{i \in G} (CKw_i \varphi \lor C \neg Kw_i \varphi)$

A group commonly knows whether $\varphi$ possibly means for every member in the group, it is common knowledge of the group that she knows whether $\varphi$ or it is common knowledge of the group that she does not know whether $\varphi$.

**Definition 8** $Cw^5 \varphi ::= \bigwedge_{s \in G^+} Kw_s \varphi$. For instance: if $s = (i, j, l)$, then $Kw_s \varphi = Kw_i Kw_j Kw_l \varphi$.

Listing all the possible inter-‘knowing whether’ states among every subset of the group is an alternative way to define ‘commonly knowing whether’.

\footnote{For any set $T$, $T^+$ contains all finite sequences only consisting of elements in $T$.}
When

The above five definitions of 'commonly knowing whether' do not boil down to the same thing, especially over $\mathcal{K}$ and $\mathcal{KD}45$. In this section, we show how these definitions are related. The semantics presented in this paper uses Kripke models. A Kripke model is generally defined as $M = \langle W, R_i, R_j, \ldots, R_m, V \rangle$, where $W$ is a non-empty set of nodes, $R_i, R_j, \ldots, R_m$ are accessibility relations for the agents in group $G$ and $V$ is the valuation which is a function $V : P \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(W)$. If $(s, t) \in R_i$, we write $s \rightarrow_i t$; if $(s, t) \in R_i \cup R_j \cup \ldots \cup R_m$, we write $s \rightarrow t$; $\rightarrow$ is the reflexive-transitive closure of $\rightarrow$.

### 3.1 Over $\mathcal{K}$

In order to clarify the relations among definitions of 'commonly knowing whether', we first give the logical relations between $Ew^1$ and $Ew^2$.

**Fact 1** The following statements hold:

- $\mathcal{K} \models Ew^1 \varphi \rightarrow Ew^2 \varphi$;
- $\mathcal{K} \not\models Ew^2 \varphi \rightarrow Ew^1 \varphi$;
- $\mathcal{K} \models Ew^1 \varphi \leftrightarrow Ew^1 \neg \varphi$;
- $\mathcal{K} \models Ew^2 \varphi \leftrightarrow Ew^2 \neg \varphi$.

**Theorem 1** Over $\mathcal{K}$, the logical relationships among $Cw^1$, $Cw^2$, $Cw^3$, $Cw^4$ and $Cw^5$ are shown in Figure 1.

![Logical relationships over $\mathcal{K}$](image)

Figure 1: Logical relationships over $\mathcal{K}$

Every pair of these definitions are not equivalent over $\mathcal{K}$. Conversely, the 'knowing that'-versions of $Cw^2$, $Cw^3$ and $Cw^5$ exactly correspond to three approaches to common knowledge which are logically equivalent.

We will show the proof sketches on an interesting case where $Ew^2 \varphi$ implies $Cw^5 \varphi$ but the converse does not hold.

$\mathcal{K} \models Ew^2 \varphi \rightarrow Cw^5 \varphi$ \hspace{0.5cm} Proof Sketch: prove by induction.

Consider $Ew^2 \varphi$ in two cases:

The first case is $Cw^2 \varphi := Cw^2 \varphi$. Let $(M, r)$ be an arbitrary pointed model, such that $M = \langle W, R_i, R_j, \ldots, R_m, V \rangle$ and $M, r \models Cw^2 \varphi$. Then, for any node $t$ with $r \rightarrow t$, we have $M, t \models \bigwedge_{i \in G} Kw_i \varphi$. For arbitrary $s \in G^+$, let $s = \langle i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_k \rangle$, where $\{i_n \mid 1 \leq n \leq k\} \subseteq G$. We show a stronger result: $M, r \models Kw_s \varphi$ and for any $t$ such that $r \rightarrow t$, we have that $M, t \models Kw_s \varphi$.

By induction on the length $n = |s|$ of $s$:

- When $n = 1$, $s = \langle i_1 \rangle$, where $i_1$ is an arbitrary agent. By $M, r \models Cw^2 \varphi$, we have $M, r \models Kw_{i_1} \varphi$. And since for any $t$ with $r \rightarrow t$, there is $M, t \models Ew^2 \varphi$. Thus there is $M, t \models Kw_i \varphi$.

- Induction hypothesis: when $n = k$, $s = \langle i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_k \rangle$, there is $M, r \models Kw_s \varphi$ and for any $t$ with $r \rightarrow t$, there is $M, t \models Kw_s \varphi$.

- When $n = k + 1$, $s = \langle i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_k, i_{k+1} \rangle$. By induction hypothesis, for any $t$ such that $r \rightarrow t$, for any $|s_k| = k$, there is $M, t \models Kw_{s_k} \varphi$. Thus, for any $i \in G$, there is $M, r \models Kw_{i} Kw_{s_k} \varphi$, saying, for any $|s_{k+1}| = k + 1$, we have

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In the following figures, the directed arrows between two definitions refer to the strict implications. The logical relations are surely transitive.
Therefore, we proved that, for arbitrary $s \in G$ and arbitrary $r \rightarrow t$, there are $M, r \models K w_{s} \varphi$ and $M, t \models K w_{s} \varphi$, which means $M, r \models \bigwedge_{s \in G} K w_{s} \varphi$. Thus, we have $M, r \models C w^{5} \varphi$. Above all, we obtain $K \models C w^{2,2} \varphi \rightarrow C w^{5} \varphi$.

For the second case where $C w^{2} \varphi := C w^{2,1} \varphi$, since $K \models C w^{2,1} \varphi \rightarrow C w^{2,2} \varphi$, we have $K \models C w^{2,1} \varphi \rightarrow C w^{5} \varphi$. Therefore, we proved $K \models C w^{5} \varphi \rightarrow C w^{2,2} \varphi$.

$K \not\models C w^{5} \varphi \rightarrow C w^{2,2} \varphi$ Proof Sketch: find a counter-model.

Consider the following model $M$:

$$r : p \longrightarrow t_{1} : p \longrightarrow t_{2} : p \longrightarrow t_{3} : \neg p$$

In this model, there is only one successor of $r$. By semantics, we have $M, r \models C w^{5} p$. And since $M, t_{1} \not\models E w^{1} p$ and $M, t_{1} \not\models E w^{2} p$, it follows that $M, r \not\models C w^{2} p$. Thus, $K \not\models C w^{5} \varphi \rightarrow C w^{2} \varphi$.

### 3.2 Over $K D 45$

$K D 45$ is considered to be the usual class of frames for doxastic (belief) logic $[9][14]$. The implication relations over $K D 45$ among these five definitions are the same as those over $K$.

**Theorem 2** Over $K D 45$, the implication relations are shown as Figure 1.

### 3.3 Over $T$ and $S 5$

The model of knowledge is generally defined over $S 5$ $[3][14]$, which commits knowledge must be true via axiom $T$. The implication relations among five definitions over $T$ or $S 5$ are given in Theorem 3.

**Theorem 3** Over $T$ and $S 5$, the implication relations are shown in Figure 2.

$C w^{1} \varphi, C w^{2} \varphi, C w^{3} \varphi$ and $C w^{5} \varphi$ boil down to the same thing once the frame is reflexive, which should be attributed to agents’ agreements on the values of $\varphi$. For example, if there is $M, s \models K w_{i} \varphi \land K w_{j} \varphi$ where $M$ is reflexive, the values of $\varphi$ on all $i$-successors must agree with those on all $j$-successors since they share a common successor $s$. Comparatively, if $M$ is not reflexive, the case of $M, s \models K w_{i} \varphi \land K w_{j} \neg \varphi$ is possible.

### 3.4 Single-agent Case

The results above concern the multi-agent case. Considering the single-agent case, observe that $K \models E w^{1} \varphi \leftrightarrow E w^{2} \varphi$ which implies that $C w^{21} \varphi$ is equivalent to $C w^{22} \varphi$ and that $C w^{31} \varphi$ is equivalent to $C w^{32} \varphi$. Moreover, since only one agent is involved, it is trivial to find that $C w^{3} \varphi$ is equivalent to $C w^{5} \varphi$.

In terms of logical relationships, the five definitions share the same relations with the multi-agent case over $K, K D 45, T$ and $S 5$, respectively.
The following sections concentrate on $Cw^5$ in the single-agent case.

4 The Case of $Cw^5$

We focus on $Cw^5$ since the idea of it is inspired by the hierarchy of inter-knowledge of a group given in [13]. The language of ‘commonly knowing whether’ is defined in the same way as $KwL$ except introducing a new operator $Cw^5$. We will investigate the expressivity between $Cw^5$ and $C$ in Section 4.3, so the language of classical common knowledge is also given here.

Definition 9 Given $P$ and $G$, the language $KwCw^5L$ is given as follows:
\[ \varphi := p \mid \neg \varphi \mid (\varphi \land \varphi) \mid Kw_i \varphi \mid Cw^5 \varphi \]
where $p \in P$, $i \in G$.

Definition 10 Given $P$ and $G$, the language $KCL$ is given as follows:
\[ \varphi := p \mid \neg \varphi \mid (\varphi \land \varphi) \mid Ki \varphi \mid C\varphi \]
where $p \in P$, $i \in G$.

4.1 Some Valid or Invalid $KwCw^5L$-formulas

In the single-agent case, we consider some validities and invalidities over $K$:

Fact 2 $K \models Cw^5 \varphi \rightarrow Kw_i Cw^5 \varphi$

This valid formula illustrates that when $Cw^5 \varphi$ is true at the current node, all successors of it agree the values of $Cw^5 \varphi$. However, the reverse formula is invalid, saying $K \nvdash Kw_i Cw^5 \varphi \rightarrow Cw^5 \varphi$.

Fact 3 $K \models \neg Kw_i \psi \rightarrow (Kw_i Cw^5 \varphi \land Kw_i (\psi \rightarrow Cw^5 \varphi))$ and $Kw_i Cw^5 \varphi \rightarrow Cw^5 \varphi$

This valid formula is established in the light of Almost Definability (AD) from [4], which is $\neg Kw_i \psi \rightarrow (Kw_i \psi \leftrightarrow Kw_i (\psi \rightarrow \varphi))$. AD shows that under the precondition $\neg Kw_i \psi$ for some $\psi$, the classical knowledge operator $K_i$ can be defined in terms of $Kw_i$. Since $K \models Kw_i Cw^5 \varphi \land Kw_i \varphi \rightarrow Cw^5 \varphi$, we can replace $K_i Cw^5 \varphi$ with AD.

Fact 4 $K \nvdash Cw^5 (\chi \rightarrow \varphi) \land Cw^5 (\neg \chi \rightarrow \varphi) \rightarrow Cw^5 \varphi$

Although $Kw_i (\chi \rightarrow \varphi) \land Kw_i (\neg \chi \rightarrow \varphi) \rightarrow Kw_i \varphi$ is the basic axiom of $KwL$ according to [5], its $Cw^5$-version is not valid.

Fact 5 $K \nvdash Cw^5 \varphi \rightarrow Cw^5 (\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \lor Cw^5 (\neg \varphi \rightarrow \chi)$

Similarly, for another basic axiom $Kw_i \varphi \rightarrow Kw_i (\varphi \rightarrow \psi) \lor Kw_i (\neg \varphi \rightarrow \chi)$ in $KwL$, the $Cw^5$-version is invalid.

Fact 6 $K \nvdash Cw^5 \varphi \land Cw^5 \psi \rightarrow Cw^5 (\varphi \land \psi)$

This formula is invalid, which leads to the failure in defining $Cw^5$ with accessibility relations.

4.2 $KwCw^5L$ is Bisimulation Invariant

Definition 11 Let $M = (W, R, V)$ and $M' = (W', R', V')$ be two Kripke models. A non-empty binary relation $Z \subseteq W \times W'$ is called bisimulation between $M$ and $M'$, written as $M \equiv M'$, if the following conditions are satisfied:

(i) If $wZw'$, then $w$ and $w'$ satisfy the same proposition letters.
(ii) If $wZw'$ and $wRv$, then there is a $v' \in W'$ such that $vZv'$ and $w'Rv'$.

6The language for the logic of ‘knowing whether’ defined in [5].
(iii) If \(\phi'\) and \(\psi'\), then there exists \(\psi \in W\) such that \(\phi' \bowtie \psi\) and \(w \psi\).

When \(Z\) is a bisimulation linking two states \(w\) in \(M\) and \(w'\) in \(M'\), we say that two pointed models are bisimilar and write \(Z : (M, w) \cong (M', w')\). If a language \(L\) cannot distinguish any pair of bisimilar models, \(L\) is bisimulation invariant.

**Theorem 4**  
\(K_w C w^5 L\) is bisimulation invariant.

**Proof 1**  
By induction on formulas \(\psi\) of \(K_w C w^5 L\).

When \(\psi = K w_1 \psi\), we prove it in three cases. For arbitrary two bisimilar models \((M, r)\) and \((N, t)\), we have:

- If \(M, r \models K w_1 \psi\) and for all \(r_n\) with \(r \rightarrow_M r_n\), \(M, r_n \models \psi\). Since \(M, r \equiv N, t\), for any \(t_n\) with \(t \rightarrow_N t_n\), there is an \(r_n\) such that \(r \rightarrow_M r_n\) and \(M, r_n \models N, t_n\). By induction hypothesis, \(\psi\) is bisimulation invariant. Thus \(N, t_n \models \psi\). So \(N, t \models K w_1 \psi\).
- If \(M, r \models \neg K w_1 \psi\) and for all \(r_n\) with \(r \rightarrow_M r_n\), \(M, r_n \not\models \psi\), similar to above case.
- If \(M, r \models \neg K w_1 \psi\), that means there are \(r_1\) with \(r \rightarrow_M r_1\) and \(r_2\) with \(r \rightarrow_M r_2\), such that \(M, r_1 \models \psi\) and \(M, r_2 \models \neg \psi\). Since \(M, r \equiv N, t\), there are \(t_1\) with \(t \rightarrow_N t_1\) and \(t_2\) with \(t \rightarrow_N t_2\), such that \(M, r_1 \equiv N, t_1\) and \(M, r_2 \equiv N, t_2\). By induction hypothesis, \(\psi\) is bisimulation invariant. Thus \(N, t_1 \models \psi\) and \(N, t_2 \models \neg \psi\). Thus \(N, t \models \neg K w_1 \psi\).

Thus, \(K w_1 \psi\) is bisimulation invariant.

When \(\psi = C w^5 \psi\), assume two bisimilar models \((M, r)\) and \((N, t)\), such that \(M, r \models C w^5 \psi\) and \(N, t \models \neg C w^5 \psi\). That means there exists a sequence \(s\), such that \(M, r \models K w s \psi\) and \(N, t \models \neg K w s \psi\). Let \(s = (i_1, t_2, ..., i_n)\). So \(M, r \models K w s \psi\) and \(N, t \models \neg K w s \psi\), where \(\gamma = K w_{(i_2, i_3, ..., i_n)} \psi\). However, we have proved that for any formula of the form \(K w_{i_1} \gamma\), they are bisimulation invariant. Thus, if \(M, r \models K w_{i_1} \gamma\), there must be \(N, t \models K w_{i_1} \gamma\). Contradiction.

Therefore, we proved that \(K w C w^5 L\) is bisimulation invariant.

### 4.3 \(K w C w^5 L\) and \(KCL\)

Although \(C w^5\) is formed merely with \(K w\), which can be defined by classical operator \(K_1\), surprisingly, \(C w^5\) cannot be defined with \(K_1\) and \(C\).

**Theorem 5**  
Over \(K\), \(K w C w^5 L\) is not weaker than \(KCL\) in expressivity.

We prove Theorem 5 by defining two classes of models, which no \(KCL\)-formula can distinguish while there exists one \(K w C w^5 L\)-formula that can distinguish them.

**Definition 12**  
For every \(n \geq 1\), define two sets of possible worlds \(T_n\) and \(Z_n\) with induction:

- \(t_0 \in T_n; z_0 \in Z_n\)
- If \(t_i \in T_n\), then \(t_{i0} \in T_n\) and \(t_{i1} \in T_n\); if \(z_i \in Z_n\), then \(z_{i0} \in Z_n\) and \(z_{i1} \in Z_n\)
- For every \(t_j \in T_n\), \(|j| \leq n + 2\); for every \(z_j \in Z_n\), \(|j| \leq n + 1\)
- Besides \(t_i\) defined above, \(T_n\) has no more possible worlds; besides \(z_i\) defined above, \(Z_n\) has no more possible worlds.

Then define the class of models \(M = \{M_n = \langle W_n, R_n, V_n \rangle \mid n \in \mathbb{N}\}\) as follows: for every \(n \geq 1\),

- \(W_n = \{r\} \cup T_n \cup \{t_0\}\)
- \(R_n = \{\langle t_i, t_{i0} \rangle, \langle t_i, t_{i1} \rangle \mid t_i \in T_n, t_{i0} \in T_n\} \cup \{\langle r, t_0 \rangle, \langle t_0, t_{00} \rangle\}\)
- \(V_n(p) = W_n - \{t_{00}\}\), where \(|p| = n + 1, i \in \{0\}^+\).

Define the class of models \(N = \{N_n = \langle W', R'_n, V'_n \rangle \mid n \in \mathbb{N}\}\) with \(M\): for every \(n \geq 1\):
• \( W'_n = W_n \cup Z_n \)
• \( R'_n = R_n \cup \{ \langle z_i, z_{i0} \rangle, \langle z_i, z_{1i} \rangle \mid z_i \in Z_n, z_{i0} \in Z_n \} \)
• \( V'_n(p) = V_n(p) \cup Z_n - \{ z_{0i} \} \), where \(|i| = n, i \in \{ 0 \}^+\)

The first model \( M_1 \) and \( N_1 \) in \( M \) and \( N \) are shown as Figure 3.

![Figure 3: \( M_1 \) (left) and \( N_1 \) (right)](image)

The model \( N_n \) is constructed by adding a new subtree rooted with \( z_0 \) to the root \( r \) and just make \( p \) unsatisfied on the leaf node whose index only consists of 0.

We will prove that no \( KCL \)-formula can distinguish \( M \) and \( N \) with the \( CL \)-game. \(^7\) If there is a winning strategy for duplicator in \( n \)-round games, \( (M_n, r) \) and \( (N_n, r) \) agree on all \( KCL \)-formulas whose modal depth is \( n \).

**Theorem 6** For arbitrary \( n \in \mathbb{N} \), duplicator has a winning strategy in the \( CL \)-game on \( (M_n, r) \) and \( (N_n, r) \) in \( n \) rounds.

**Proof 2** We describe Duplicator’s winning strategy case by case. Starting with the initial state \( (r, r) \), we mainly concerns the case where spoiler does a \( K \)-move. Otherwise, duplicator can move to a isomorphic sub-model such that there must be a winning strategy in following rounds. Thus, the cases below exhaust all possibilities.

• **The initial state is \( (r, r) \):**
  - If spoiler does a \( K \)-move or a \( C \)-move on \( M_n \) reaching \( t_i \), then duplicator does a \( K \)-move or a \( C \)-move on \( N_n \) to reach the corresponding \( t_i \). Since \( (M_n, t_i) \cong (N_n, t_i) \), there is a winning strategy after this move.
  - If spoiler does a \( K \)-move or a \( C \)-move on \( N_n \) reaching \( t_i \), then duplicator does a \( K \)-move or a \( C \)-move on \( M_n \) to reach the corresponding \( t_i \). Since \( (M_n, t_i) \cong (N_n, t_i) \), there is a winning strategy after this move.
  - If spoiler does a \( K \)-move on \( N_n \) reaching \( z_{0i} \), duplicator moves to \( t_0 \).
  - If spoiler does a \( C \)-move on \( N_n \) reaching an arbitrary node \( z_{i(i\neq 0)} \) in \( Z_n \), then duplicator does a \( C \)-move to reach \( t_{0i} \). Since \( (M_n, t_{0i}) \cong (N_n, z_i) \), there is a winning strategy after this move.

• **The current state is \( (z_0, t_0) \):**
  - If spoiler does a \( K \)-move reaching \( z_{00} \) or \( z_{01} \), then duplicator moves on \( M_n \). If spoiler does a \( K \)-move reaching \( t_{00} \) on \( M_n \), then duplicator moves to \( z_{00} \) on \( N_n \).
  - If spoiler does a \( C \)-move reaching \( z_{i(i\neq 0)} \), then duplicator moves to \( t_{0i} \). Since \( (M_n, t_{0i}) \cong (N_n, z_i) \), there is a winning strategy after this move.
  - If spoiler does a \( C \)-move reaching \( t_{00} \) on \( M_n \), then duplicator moves to \( z_{00} \) on \( N_n \).
  - If spoiler does a \( C \)-move reaching \( t_{0i(i\neq 0)} \), then duplicator moves to \( z_i \) on \( N_n \). Since \( (M_n, t_{0i}) \cong (N_n, z_i) \), there is a winning strategy after this move.

• **The current state is \( (z_i, t_i) \) and \( i \neq 0 \):** this means before the game gets to this state, both players have only done \( K \)-moves. In the current state, there have been at most \( (n - 1) \) rounds. Thus, \( i \leq (n - 1) \) and players can do next round as follows:

\(^7\)The definition of the \( CL \)-game is given in Appendix.

\(^8\)The notation \( t_{0i} \) is correct since the index for every node in \( T_n \) begins with 0.
We can find a KCL

The above proof shows the nonexistence of some KCL

Therefore, together with Theorem 5, the following theorem is obtained:

Because of the invalidity of the formula

Proof sketch By induction on n:

When n = 1, it is trivial.

(Induction Hypothesis) When n = k, it holds.

When n = k + 1, suppose M, v_m \models K w_i^{k+1} \varphi, which is equivalent to M, v_m \models K w_i^k K w_i \varphi. Then we can use induction hypothesis. Suppose M, v_m \not\models K w_i^{k+1} \varphi, which means on one successor, K w_i^k \varphi is satisfied, and on another one successor, K w_i^k \varphi is not satisfied. Then we can use induction hypothesis.

Proof details are shown in Appendix.
Remark 1 Theorem 8 can be extended into a more general conclusion considering the multi-agent case: on any G-binary-tree model $\langle M, r \rangle$ where $r$ is the root, $M, r \models Cw^{\delta} \varphi$ iff for any sequence of agents $s$ in $G$, on every layer of the subtree of $\langle M, r \rangle$ generated with $s^{10}$, the number of the $\varphi$-satisfied nodes is even.

5.2 $KwCw^{\delta}L$ over $KD45$

By conclusions drawn in Section 3.2, $Cw^{\delta} \varphi$ is not equivalent to $Cw^{1} \varphi$ over $KD45$, where $Cw^{\delta}$ still preserves its non-triviality.

Single-agent Case When the group concerned is a singleton, there is nestings reducing for operator $Kw_{i}$ over $KD45$. The proof idea of Theorem 10 is similar to the classical case proved in [12] where the nestings of operator $K$ can also be reduced over $S5$.

Theorem 10 Over $KD45$, every $KwL_{\{i\}}$-formula $^{11}$ is equivalent to some formula without nestings of the modal operator $Kw_{i}$.

Corollary 1 In the single-agent case, $KD45 \models Cw^{\delta} \varphi \leftrightarrow Kw_{i} \varphi$

Multi-agent Case However, when more than one agent are involved, we cannot reduce nestings. Fortunately, there are still some interesting findings.

Theorem 11 For any sequence $s = \langle i_{1}, i_{2}, \cdots, i_{n} \rangle$ $\text{n} \geq 2$ of agents, if there exists $m$ such that $1 \leq m < n$ and $i_{m} = i_{m+1}$, then $KD45 \models Kw_{s} \varphi$ for any formula $\varphi$.

The proof of Theorem 11 is given in Appendix.

Corollary 2 Over $KD45$, $Cw^{\delta} \varphi = \bigwedge_{s \in G^{+}} Kw_{s} \varphi$ where $s = \langle i_{1}, i_{2}, \cdots, i_{n} \rangle$ is a sequence of agents and there is no $m$ $\text{n} \geq 2$ such that $i_{m} = i_{m+1}$.

6 Conclusions

In this paper, we provide some initial results on definitions of ‘commonly knowing whether’, their relationships and properties, with special focus on $Cw^{\delta}$. We also show that over $K$, the languages $KCL$ and $KwCw^{\delta}L$ are incomparable with respect to expressivity.

There is much more expected work to be done in terms of ‘commonly knowing whether’. For instance, giving a Kripke semantics of $Cw^{\delta}$, axiomatizing $KwCw^{\delta}L$, proving the completeness of that axiomatization with respect to models of $KwCw^{\delta}L$, studying other definitions of ‘commonly knowing whether’ ($Cw^{2}$ is also a good choice), etc.

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References


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$^{9}$A $G$-binary-tree model is a tree model where every node exactly has two $R_{i}$-successors for every $i \in G$.

$^{10}$A subtree (of some tree model $\langle M, r \rangle$) generated with a sequence of agents $s$ is a subtree rooted with $r$ which only consists of all $s$-paths starting with $r$ in $\langle M, r \rangle$.

$^{11}$$KwL_{\{i\}}$ is the language of $KwL$ with only one agent.


A Proof of Theorem \[9\]

**Proof 3** Given a binary tree \((M, v_0)\), where \(v_0\) is the root, we firstly define the index of \(M\) as follows: if there are nodes \(v_m, t, r \in M\) and \(v_m \rightarrow t, v_m \rightarrow r\), then define the index of \(t\) as \(v_{m0}\) and the index of \(r\) as \(v_{m1}\).

Let \(v_m\) be an arbitrary node in \(M\). Do induction on \(n\):

- When \(n = 1\),
  - Assume \(M, v_m \models Kw^1\varphi\). Since \(M\) is a binary tree, there must be two nodes, \(v_{m0}\) and \(v_{m1}\) such that \(v_m \rightarrow t, v_m \rightarrow r\). Since \(M, v_m \models Kw^1\varphi\), we have \((M, v_{m0} \models \varphi\) and \(M, v_{m1} \models \varphi\) or \((M, v_{m0} \models \neg \varphi\) or \(M, v_{m1} \models \neg \varphi\). Thus, on the \((|m| + 1)\)th layer, the number of nodes where \(\varphi\) is satisfied is 2 or 0, both of which are even.
  - Assume the number of the nodes on the \((|m| + 1)\)th layer that \(v_m\) can reach is even. That means there are only two possible cases: \((M, v_{m0} \models \varphi\) and \(M, v_{m1} \models \varphi\) or \((M, v_{m0} \models \neg \varphi\) or \(M, v_{m1} \models \neg \varphi\). Thus, we have \(M, v_m \models Kw^1\varphi\).

**Induction hypothesis:** when \(n = k\), \(M, v_m \models Kw^k\varphi(1 \leq n) \iff \) the number of the \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k)\)th layer that \(v_m\) can reach via relation \(\rightarrow\) is even.

- When \(n = k + 1\),
  - Assume \(M, v_m \models Kw^{k+1}\varphi\), which is equivalent to \(M, v_m \models Kw^k Kw^1\varphi\). Let \(T\) be the set of nodes exactly consisting of all \(Kw^1\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k)\)th layer that \(v_m\) can reach via relation \(\rightarrow\). By induction hypothesis, \(|T|\) is even. Let \(|T| = 2a\). Thus, among all the successors of \(T\), the number of \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes is \(2x + y\), where \(x = 2a\). \(2x + y\) is surely an even number. Let \(S\) be a set of nodes only consisting of \(\neg Kw^1\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k)\)th layer that \(v_m\) can reach via relation \(\rightarrow\). Since \(M\) is a binary tree, let \(|S| = 2b\). For every node in \(S\) has only one \(\varphi\)-satisfied successor, among all the successors of \(S\), the number of \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes is \(2b\). Thus, the number of \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k + 1)\)th layer is \(2x + 2b = 2(x + b)\) which must be even.
  - Assume \(M, v_m \not\models Kw^{k+1}\varphi\), which means \(M, v_{m0} \not\models Kw^k\varphi\) and \(M, v_{m1} \not\models Kw^k\varphi\). By induction hypothesis, the number of the \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k + 1)\)th layer that \(v_{m0}\) can reach via relation \(\rightarrow\) is even. And the number of the \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k + 1)\)th layer that \(v_{m1}\) can reach via relation \(\rightarrow\) is odd. That means that the \(\varphi\)-satisfied nodes on the \((|m| + k + 1)\)th layer that \(v_m\) can reach via relation \(\rightarrow\) is an even number plus an odd number, which equals to an odd number.

B The definition of CL-game

The Definition of CL-Game  A CL-game is a game with two players, duplicator and spoiler, playing on a Kripke-model. Given two Kripke models \(M = \langle W, R, V \rangle\) and \(M' = \langle W', R', V' \rangle\), from an arbitrary node \(w\) in \(W\) and an arbitrary node \(w'\) in \(W'\), play games in \(n\) rounds between duplicator and spoiler as following rules:

- When \(n = 0\), if the sets of satisfied formulas on node \(w\) and \(w'\) are the same, then duplicator wins; otherwise, spoiler wins.
- When \(n \neq 0\),
  - \(-K\)-move: If spoiler starting from node \(w\) does \(K\)-move to node \(x\) which can be reached by \(R\), then duplicator starting from \(w'\) does \(K\)-move to a node \(y\) in \(W'\) with the same set of satisfied propositional variables as \(x\). If spoiler starts from \(w'\), then duplicator starts from \(w'\) with similar way to move.
  - \(-C\)-move: If spoiler starting from node \(w\) does \(C\)-move to node \(x\) which can be reached by \(\rightarrow\), then duplicator starting from \(w'\) does \(C\)-move to a node \(y\) in \(W'\) with same set of satisfied propositional variables to \(x\). If spoiler starts from \(w'\), then duplicator starts from \(w\) with similar way to move.

In the game, for arbitrary \(x \in W\) and \(y \in W'\), we say \((x, y)\) or \((y, x)\) is a state of CL-game.

C Proof of Theorem \[11\]

A Corollary  For arbitrary formula \(\varphi\), \(K w_i K w_i \varphi\) is valid over any K4D5, saying \(\mathcal{K} \vdash K w_i K w_i \varphi\).

This is a corollary of the results in \([5]\).
The Proof of Theorem\textsuperscript{11}  Let $s = (i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_n)$ where there is an $m \in N$ such that $1 \leq m < n$ and $i_m = i_{m+1}$. By the corollary above, $KD_{45} \models Kw_{(i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_n)} \varphi$, which means $KD_{45} \models Kw_{(i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_m)} \varphi \leftrightarrow \top$ for an arbitrary formula $\varphi$. Since $KD_{45} \models Kw_{(i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_{m-1})} \top$, we have $KD_{45} \models Kw_{(i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_n)} \varphi$. 