Exclusification in conditional antecedents

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Hurford’s constraint

(1) If switch B was up, or switches A and B were up, the light would be on.

(2) # If John were from Paris or France, he would speak French.

(2) violates Hurford’s constraint
• Typically explained in terms of redundancy (Simons, 2001; Katzir and Singh, 2013; Meyer, 2013, 2014; Clardelli et al., 2017)

Why does (1) not violate Hurford’s constraint?

Exclusification

(3) $\text{exh}(P, a|t) = P \wedge \forall Q \in a|t : \neg(\neg P \rightarrow Q) \rightarrow \neg Q$

(4) $a|t(B \vee (A \wedge B)) = (A, B)$

(5) $\text{exh}(B) \vee \text{exh}(A \wedge B)$

= $(B \wedge \neg A) \vee (A \wedge B)$

(1) If switch B was up, or switches A and B were up, the light would be on.

(6) If switch B was up but not A, the light * would be on.

References

Evidence from conditional antecedents suggests that semantic content is remarkably fine-grained.

If switch B was up, or switches A and B were up, the light would be on.

M-turk experiment

joint work with Alexandre Cremers

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