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
• Hurford (1974)
• Typically explained in terms of redundancy (Simons, 2001; Katzir and Singh, 2013; Meyer, 2013, 2014; Claudelli et al., 2017)

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

Exclusification
1. If switch B was up, or switches A and B were up, the light would be on.
2. 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.

A mid ∧ B down > on (False)
¬¬(A up ∨ B up) > on (T1)
(A up ∨ B up) > on (T2)
(B up ∧ ¬A) > on (T3)
¬¬B down > on (Control)
¬¬A up > on (True)

Cumulative link mixed model (N = 192):
• T1 and T3 rated significantly lower than control (both z < −2.5, p < .01)
• T2 was rated significantly higher than control (z = 2.1, p = .039)
• Posthoc comparison of targets T1 and T3 revealed no difference between the two (z = −0.5, p = .62)

Semantic frameworks
• Possible worlds (Stalnaker, 1968; Lewis, 1973): [B ∨ (A ∧ B)] = [B]
• Inquisitive semantics (Ciardelli et al., 2018): [B ∨ (A ∧ B)] = [B]
• Alternative semantics (Alonso-Ovalle, 2009): [B ∨ (A ∧ B)] = [B], [A ∧ B] ≠ [B]
• Truthmaker semantics (Fine, 2012)

Counterfactual exhaustification

M-turk experiment
joint work with Alexandre Cremers