

**Why exhaustivity is  
sometimes (but not always)  
part of what is meant**

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# Aim

- (1) John was at the party, or Mary. (L%)
- (2) Was John at the party, or Mary? (L%)

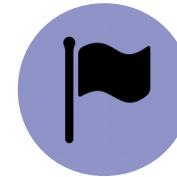
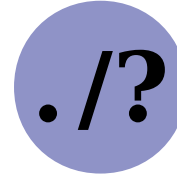
- Both (1) and (2) imply 'not both' (*exhaustivity*).
- This is part of *what is meant* in (1), but not in (2).

(Bartels '99, Aloni & Égré '10, Groenendijk & Roelofsen '09, Biezma & Rawlins '12, among many; cf. Destruel et al. '15)

- Not clear how existing accounts deal with this.

This talk proposes an explanation.

# Ingredients



# Conversational maxims

## The traditional maxims (e.g., Grice '67):



Assert/implicate all (and only) relevant information you consider true.

- Suggests that the contrast in (1)/(2) is due to a difference in relevance of 'not both'.

## Attentional Pragmatics (Westera '17):



Draw attention to all (and only) relevant propositions you consider possible.

- Motivation: deriving exhaustivity from these maxims avoids problems for the traditional approach.

# Intonation

- **Focus marking** (e.g., Rooth '92; Beaver & Clark '08):



Focus on the disjuncts (intended in (1)/(2)) means that both disjuncts are relevant to a single QUD.

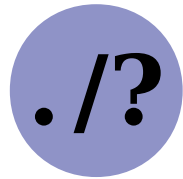
- **Intonational Compliance Marking** (Westera '17):



L%: the speaker takes the utterance to comply with all the maxims wrt. the main QUD.

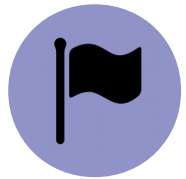
- Other applications: rising declaratives (Westera '18); rise-fall-rise (Westera to appear).

# Declaratives vs. interrogatives



Interrogatives normally introduce a new QUD.  
Declaratives typically address an existing QUD.

- (Westera '18; cf. Farkas & Bruce '10)



One who introduces a new QUD to the discourse should consider all its propositions possible (e.g., Roberts '96).

- i.e., set only goals that are potentially achievable.

# Relevance, QUDs



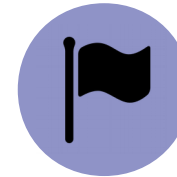
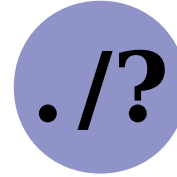
QUDs are closed under conjunction (e.g., Schulz & Van Rooij '06) as far as  allows.



If  $p$  is relevant to some QUD, then  $\neg p$  is also relevant to *some* QUD.

- Reason: this allows removing unachievable goals.
- But tidying-up is typically a *secondary* QUD (cf. Horn '89).
- Doesn't imply that QUDs are closed under negation (cf. Westera '17b).


# Ingredients








(1) John was at the party, or Mary. (L%)


 L%: the maxims are complied with wrt. the main QUD.


 So (1) must draw attention to all relevant possibilities. It doesn't to 'both', so *if* 'both' is relevant, the speaker must not consider it possible, hence believe 'not both'.

 Given the accents, both disjuncts are relevant.

 Hence their conjunction 'both' is relevant.  
(given ./? , this doesn't conflict with .)

It follows that the speaker believes 'not both'.

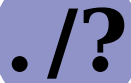
 Since 'both' is relevant, so is 'not both' (secondary QUD).

 Since 'not both' is relevant and believed to be true, 'not both' must be part of what is meant in (1).

## (2) Was John at the party, or Mary? (L%)



Since no attention is drawn to 'both':  
if 'both' is relevant, the speaker must believe 'not both'.



The main QUD of (2) is newly introduced.



So if 'both' is relevant, speaker must deem 'both' possible.  
Accordingly, 'both' cannot be relevant.



Given the accents, each disjunct is relevant.



So if the speaker had considered 'both' possible, then 'both' would have been relevant too (./?, ).

'Both' isn't relevant, so the speaker must believe 'not both'.



Since 'both' isn't relevant, 'not both' can't be either.



Hence, although 'not both' is considered true, since it isn't relevant it *cannot* be part of what is meant in (2).

# Paraphrase

Omitting many details (**risky!**):


- (1) implies 'not both' because 'both' is relevant and yet the speaker didn't draw attention to it.
- (2) implies 'not both' because 'both' can't be relevant, but should've been, had speaker deemed it possible.
- In (1) 'not both' is part of what is meant, because it is relevant, since 'both' is relevant.
- In (2) 'not both' is not part of what is meant, because it isn't relevant, since 'both' isn't either.

# Generalizability

What about other types of exhaustivity?

(3) *Most* of my friends were there, or *some*. (L%)

(4) Were *most* of your friends there, or *some*? (L%)

- For ‘*not both*’ in (1)/(2), closure under conjunction () is what connects ‘*or*’ to ‘*both*’ (or ‘*and*’).
- For ‘*not all*’ in (3)/(4), a ‘scalar’ assumption could play this role:

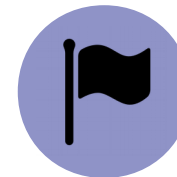
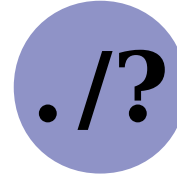
 If ‘*some/most*’ is relevant, so is ‘*all*’, insofar as this is compatible with .

# Summary of the account

Generalizing, and omitting many details (**risky!**):


- For declaratives, exhaustivity is **the exclusion of relevant alternatives**.
  - And since these are relevant, so is their exclusion.
- For interrogatives, exhaustivity is **the exclusion of irrelevant alternatives** that *would have been relevant* had they been considered possible.
  - And since these are irrelevant, so is their exclusion.
- And the crucial factor responsible for this difference is that *interrogatives introduce new QUDs*.

# Ingredients



# Previous work: pragmatics

Traditional pragmatic approach (e.g., Geurts '10):

- Maxim of Quantity  + Opinionatedness assumption.
- What about (1)/(2)?
  - Quantity doesn't apply to questions, like (2).
  - Silent about the contrast (1)/(2), but compatible with current approach.
- Problematic in various other ways (Chierchia et al. '12; Fox '14; Westera '17).

# Previous work: grammar + pragmatics

‘Grammatical’ approach (e.g., Chierchia et al. ‘12):

- Exhaustivity operators + Strongest Meaning Hyp. + Hurford’s Constraint (typically).
- What about (1)/(2)?
  - Makes exhaustivity a semantic entailment, hence *meant*.
  - Could work for (1) (though direct vs. indirect speech act?).
  - Entailments don’t normally ‘project’ out of interrogatives, so more is needed for (2).
- Problematic in various other ways (Geurts ‘13, Poortman ‘16, Westera *ms.*).



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