

How the symmetry problem solves the symmetry problem

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Central insight:

- ▶ the Symmetry Problem solves itself once we acknowledge that no piece of pragmatics yields predictions in isolation.

Outline

1. Framework
2. Solving the symmetry problem
3. Discussion

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1.1. Speaker-level vs. discourse-level pragmatics

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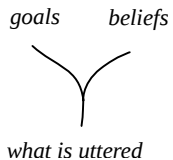
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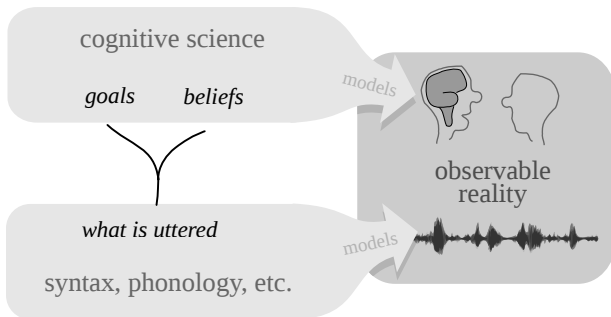
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 6. so B can be taken to implicate that J+M weren't there.

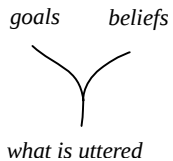
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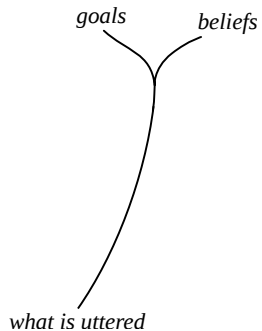
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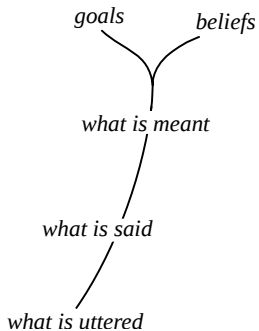
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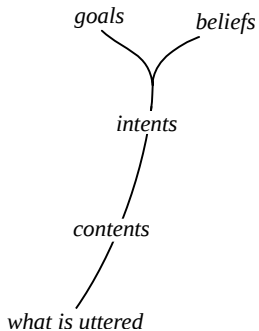
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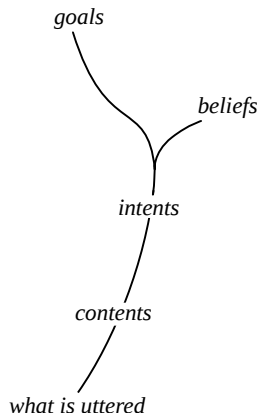
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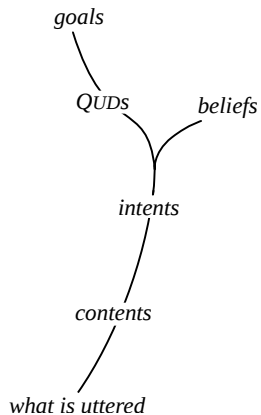
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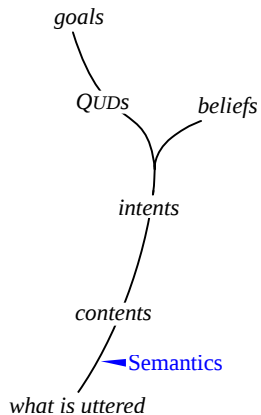
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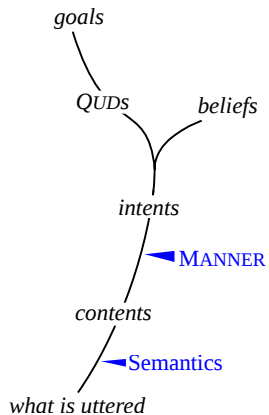
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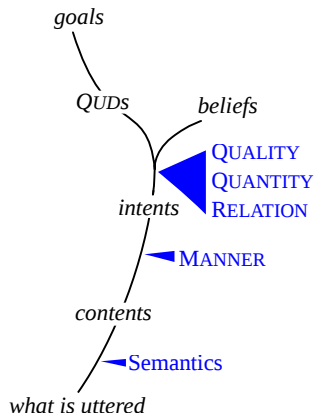
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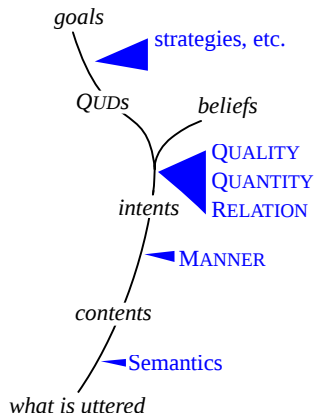
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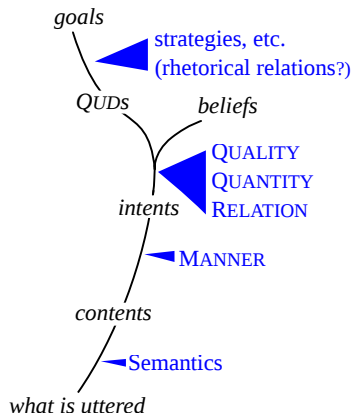
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Part IV: Bridging QUD~coherence

- ▶ **Coherence Relations:** Comprehenders use general inferencing to identify relationships between propositions (Mann & Thompson, 1988; Webber & Joshi, 1998; Hobbs, 1990; Kehler, 2002; Asher & Lascarides, 2003; Webber, 2006; reviews in Knott, 1996 and Hutchinson, 2005)

Mary scolded John. She did so loudly.
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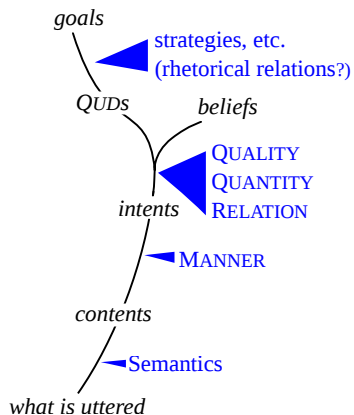
Elaboration
Explanation

- ▶ **Question-Under-Discussion models:** An utterance is coherent insofar as it answers a question relevant to the preceding discourse (Roberts, 1996; Van Kuppevelt, 1995; Büring, 2003; Larsson, 1998; Ginzburg & Sag, 2000)

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Why?

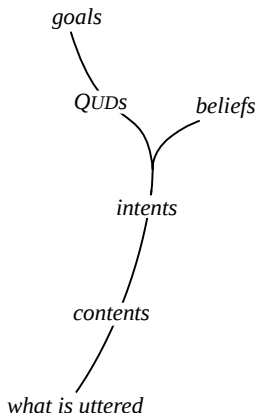
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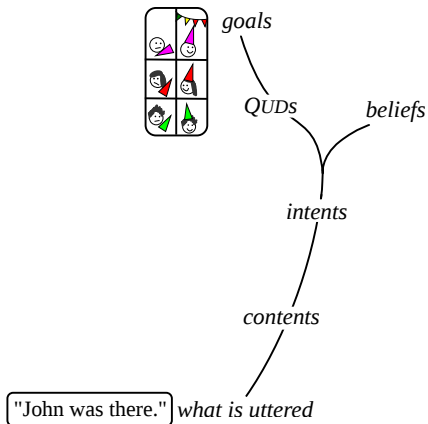


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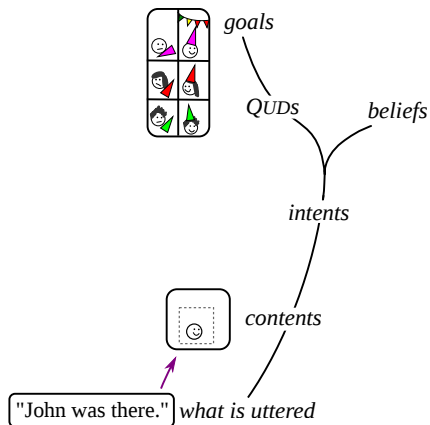


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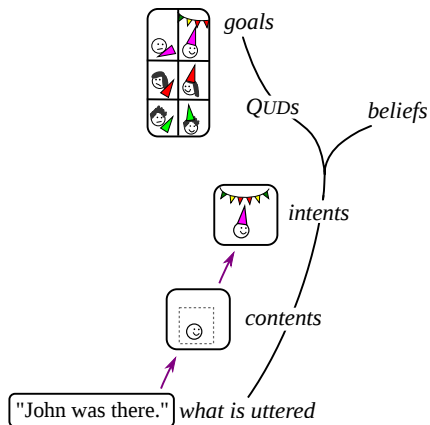


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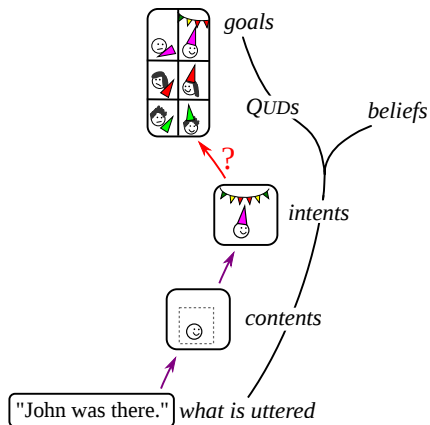


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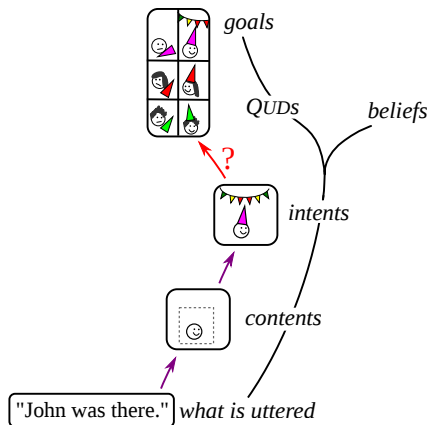


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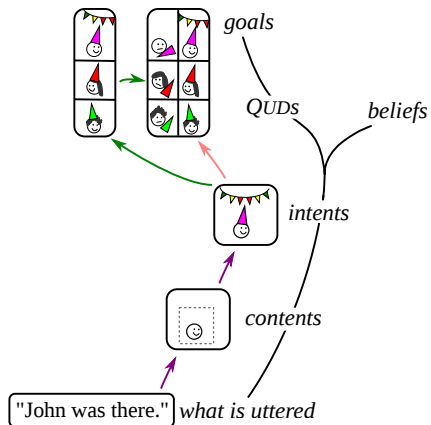


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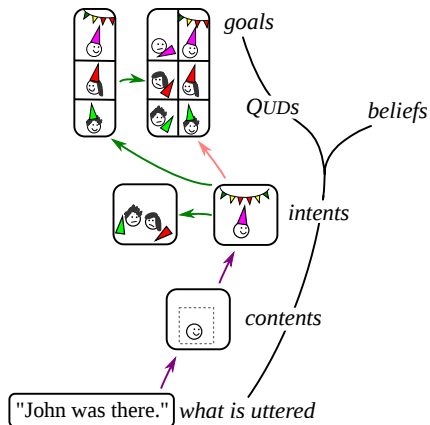


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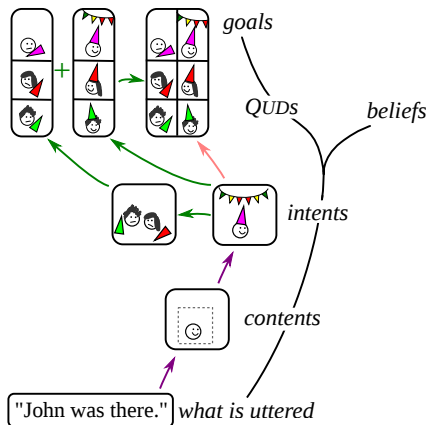


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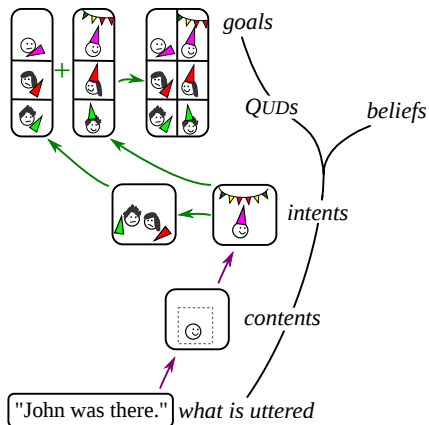


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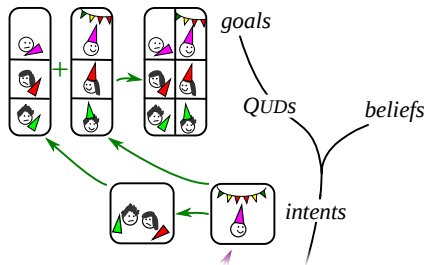


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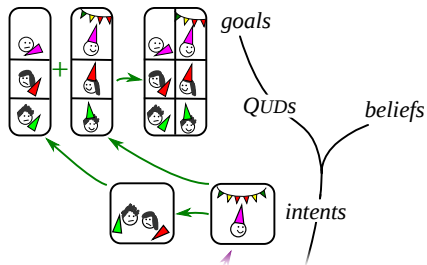
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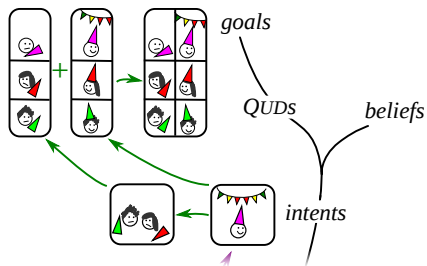
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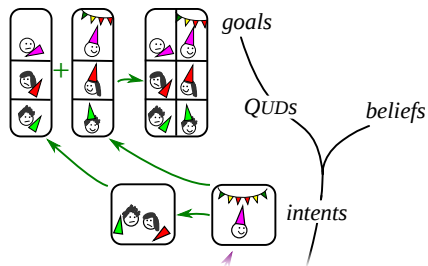
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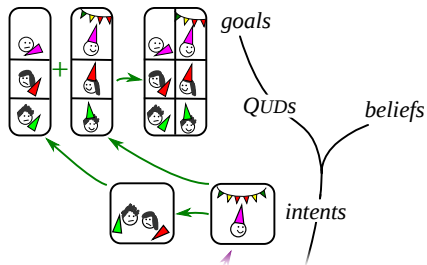
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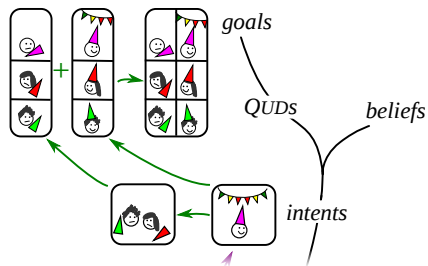
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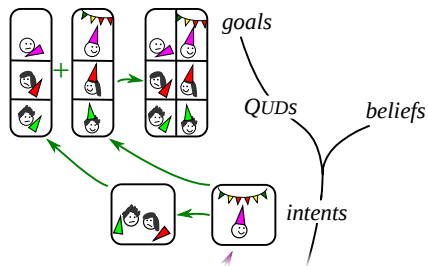
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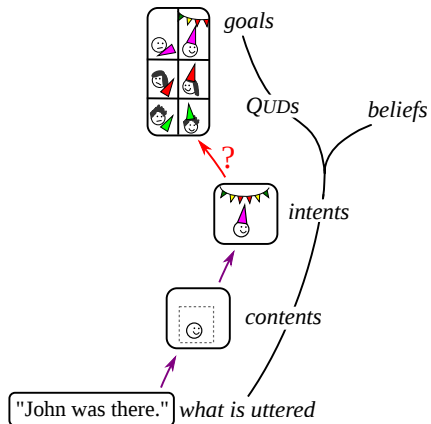
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 - ▶ accent/focus reflects the QUD that is explicitly addressed.
 - ▶ a symmetrical QUD would predict a contradiction;

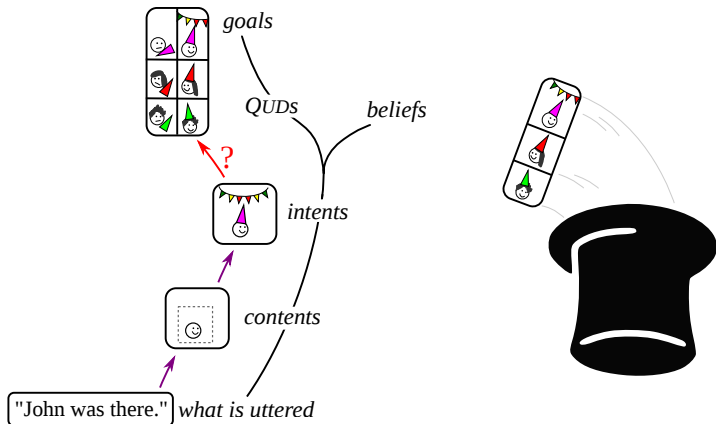
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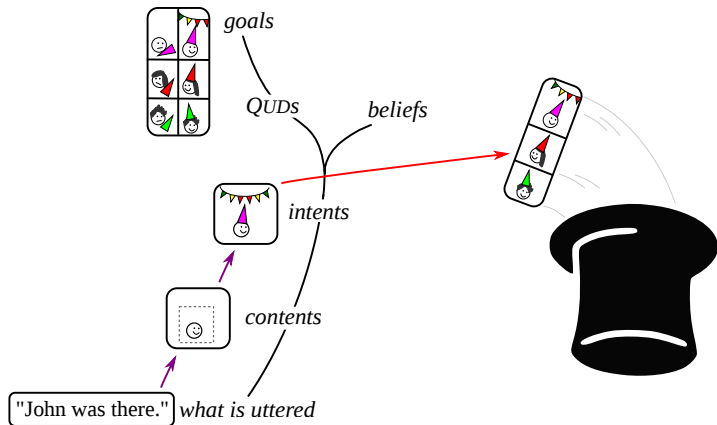
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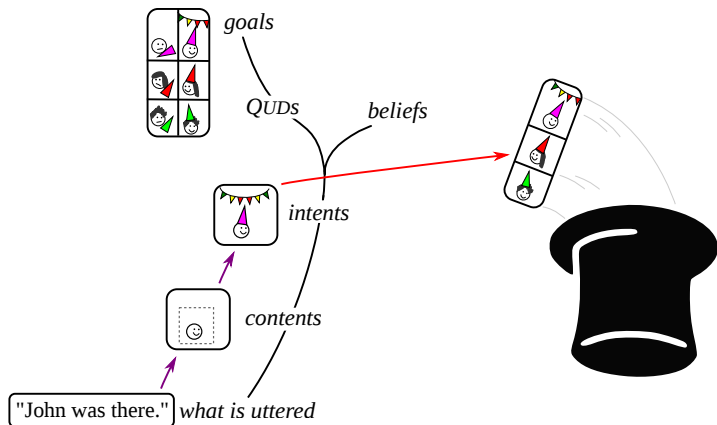
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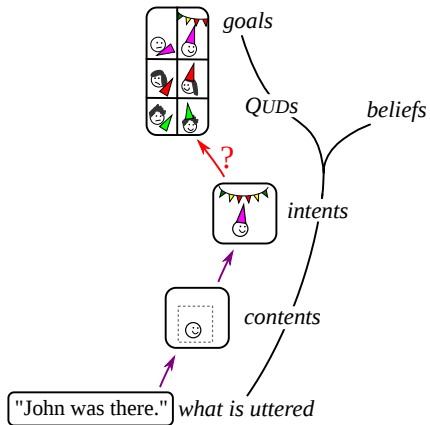


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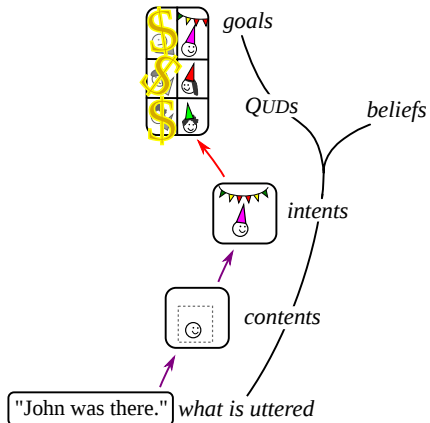


At best, "scales" may help explain how an audience figures out which QUDs to accommodate.

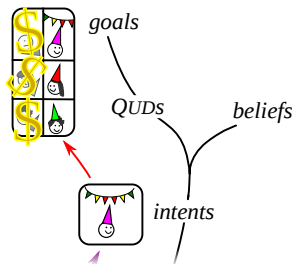
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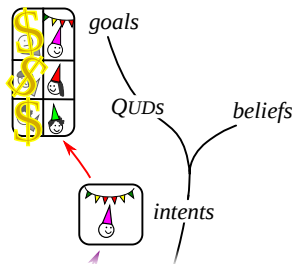
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Some challenges:

- ▶ brevity seems as context-dependent as relevance itself (Matsumoto, 1995);

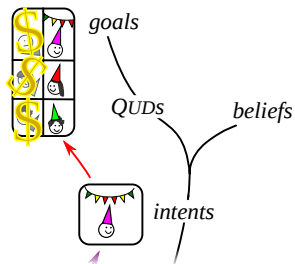
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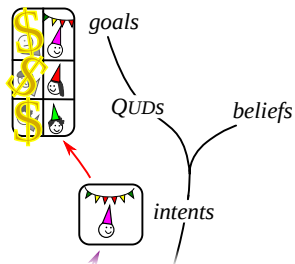
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 - ▶ what about the mirror image:
- (4) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: *John wasn't there / was absent. (implies: Mary & Bill were present.)*

3.3. Take-home messages

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 - ▶ it is a (superficial) problem only *given* a certain QUD;
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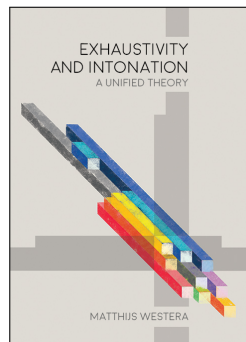
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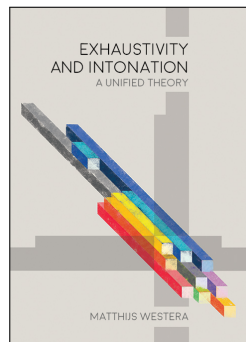
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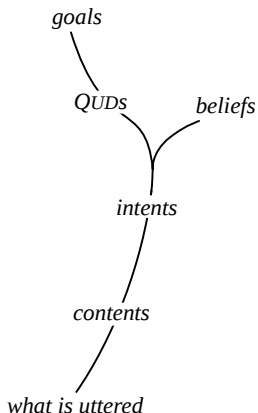
Thank you to the organizers!

Anke Holler, Katja Suckow, Barbara Hemforth, Israel de la Fuente

References

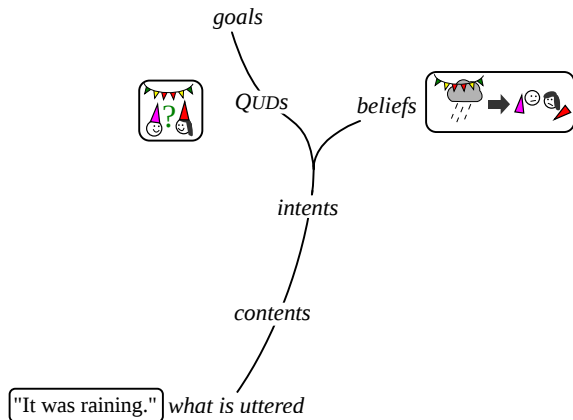
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Appendix: indirect answers



- (3) *(It's common knowledge that J+M never attend rainy parties.)*
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 - B: It was raining.

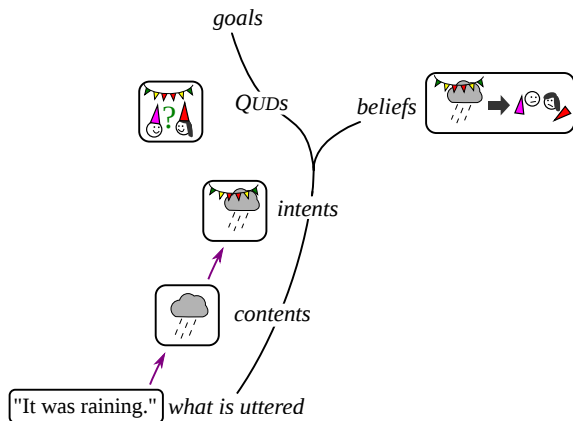
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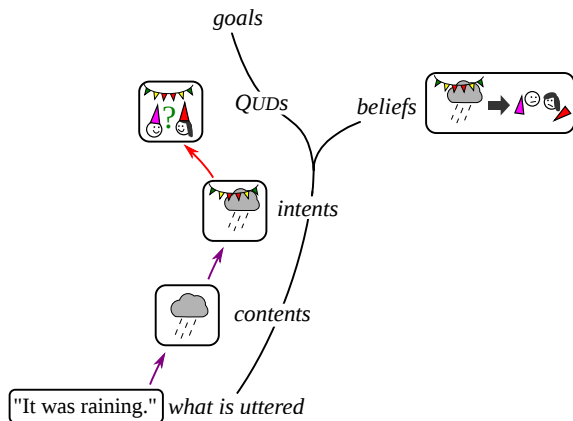
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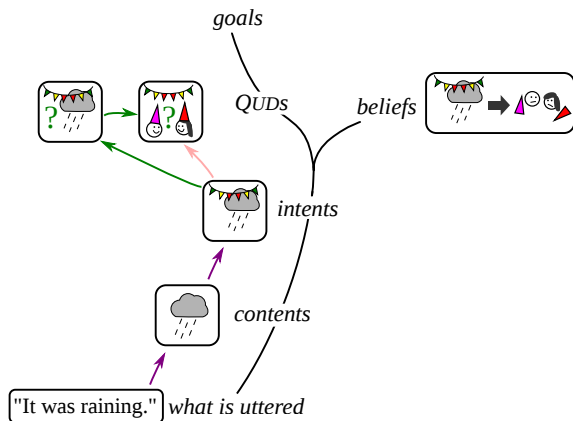
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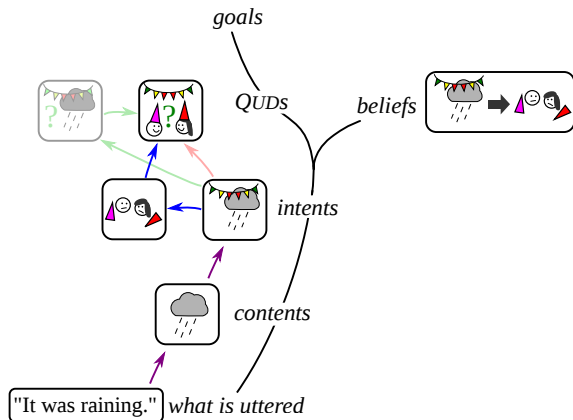
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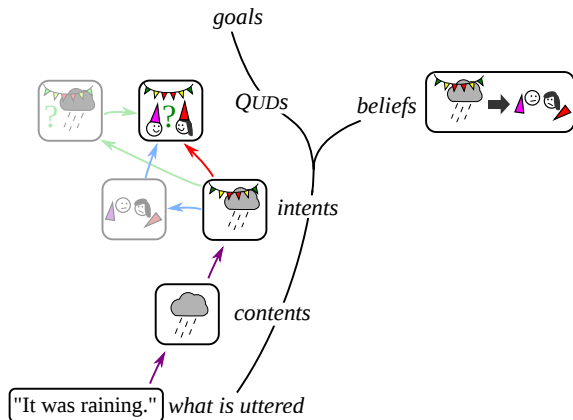
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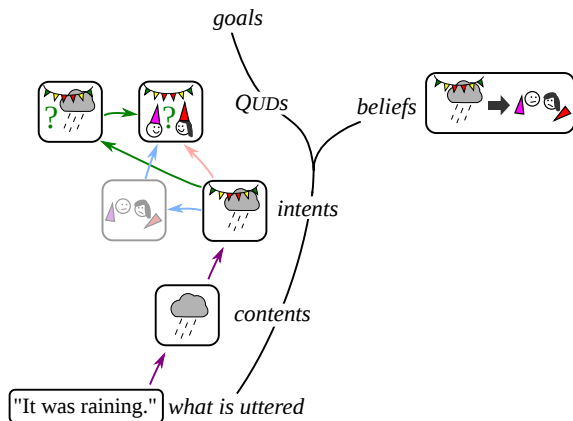
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