QUDs, brevity, and the asymmetry of alternatives

Matthijs Westera

Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Amsterdam Colloquium, 2017
This talk

(1) Some of my friends were there.  
\textit{Implied:} Not all of them.
Some of my friends were there.  
*Implied:* Not all of them.

- Exhaustivity is characterized in terms of the exclusion of non-entailed/unmentioned *alternatives.*
Some of my friends were there. *Implied:* Not all of them.

- Exhaustivity is characterized in terms of the exclusion of non-entailed/unmentioned *alternatives*.
- For this, the set of alternatives must be asymmetrical (Kroch, 1972):
  - For instance: \{some, all\},
Some of my friends were there.  

*Implied:* Not all of them.

- Exhaustivity is characterized in terms of the exclusion of non-entailed/unmentioned *alternatives*.
- For this, the set of alternatives must be asymmetrical (Kroch, 1972):
  - For instance: \{some, all\},
  - but not: \{some, some-but-not-all, all\}
(1) Some of my friends were there.  
*Implied:* Not all of them.

- Exhaustivity is characterized in terms of the exclusion of non-entailed/unmentioned *alternatives*.
- For this, the set of alternatives must be asymmetrical (Kroch, 1972):
  - For instance: \{some, all\},
  - but not: \{some, some-but-not-all, all\}  
    ("Symmetry Problem")
This talk

(1) Some of my friends were there.

_implied:_ Not all of them.

- Exhaustivity is characterized in terms of the exclusion of non-entailed/unmentioned _alternatives_.
- For this, the set of alternatives must be asymmetrical (Kroch, 1972):
  - For instance: \{some, all\},
  - but not: \{some, some-but-not-all, all\} ("Symmetry Problem")
- Since exhaustivity occurs regularly, these alternative sets must tend to be asymmetrical.
(1) Some of my friends were there.  
*Implied:* Not all of them.

- Exhaustivity is characterized in terms of the exclusion of non-entailed/unmentioned *alternatives*.
- For this, the set of alternatives must be asymmetrical (Kroch, 1972):
  - For instance: \{some, all\},
  - but not: \{some, some-but-not-all, all\} ("Symmetry Problem")
- Since exhaustivity occurs regularly, these alternative sets must tend to be asymmetrical.

*Why?*
Outline

1. Why not?

2. Previous proposals

3. A new explanation

4. Discussion
1. Why not?

2. Previous proposals

3. A new explanation

4. Discussion
1.1. Why *not*?

I.e., why *wouldn’t* alternative sets be asymmetrical?
1.1. Why not?
I.e., why wouldn’t alternative sets be asymmetrical?

Conceptual argument:
- Alternatives have something to do with relevance;
1.1. Why not?
I.e., why wouldn’t alternative sets be asymmetrical?

**Conceptual argument:**
- Alternatives have something to do with *relevance*;
- Relevance is necessarily symmetrical.
1.1. Why *not*?
I.e., why wouldn’t alternative sets be asymmetrical?

**Conceptual argument:**
- Alternatives have something to do with *relevance*;
- Relevance is necessarily symmetrical.

**Empirical argument:**
- Even if relevance *can be* asymmetrical...
1.1. Why *not*?

I.e., why wouldn’t alternative sets be asymmetrical?

**Conceptual argument:**
- Alternatives have something to do with *relevance*;
- Relevance is necessarily symmetrical.

**Empirical argument:**
- Even if relevance *can be* asymmetrical...
- it is sometimes symmetrical in cases where exhaustivity arises.
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)

E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;
4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;

Really?
Implicatures are separate intents, relevant to a separate, secondary QUD (cf. Potts 2005).
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)

E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)

E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:
1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)

E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   ▶ *But not from others*

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   - But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   - But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
   - But not using different theories

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   ▶ But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
   ▶ But not using different theories – also, no direct mapping between relevance and the meanings of interrogatives needs to be assumed.

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   - But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
   - But not using different theories – also, no direct mapping between relevance and the meanings of interrogatives needs to be assumed.

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;
   - Really?

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)
E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   ▶ But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
   ▶ But not using different theories – also, no direct mapping between relevance and the meanings of interrogatives needs to be assumed.

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;
   ▶ Really? (cf., Horn’s 1989 Asymmetry Thesis)

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)

E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   ▶ *But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.*

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
   ▶ *But not using different theories – also, no direct mapping between relevance and the meanings of interrogatives needs to be assumed.*

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;
   ▶ *Really? (cf., Horn’s 1989 Asymmetry Thesis)*

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
   ▶ *Implicatures are separate intents,*
1.2. The conceptual argument(s)

E.g., Chierchia et al. 2012

Symmetry of relevance would:

1. follow from certain notions of relevance in the literature (e.g., Carnap 1950);
   ▶ But not from others – anyway, most of these notions are not designed for language.

2. follow from modeling relevance in terms of answerhood, using partition theory (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984).
   ▶ But not using different theories – also, no direct mapping between relevance and the meanings of interrogatives needs to be assumed.

3. be a ‘natural’ and ‘hard to avoid’ assumption;
   ▶ Really? (cf., Horn’s 1989 Asymmetry Thesis)

4. be necessary for the exhaustivity implicature itself to be relevant;
   ▶ Implicatures are separate intents, relevant to a separate, secondary QUD (cf. Potts 2005).
1.3. The empirical argument

i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?

B: John was there.

(implied: not Mary, not Bill)

Is relevance symmetrical here?

▶ example (2) doesn't make a very strong case;

▶ but what about (3)?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?

B: (Of J, M, B,) John was there.

(implied: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ Seems possible, but it is an empirical question...

▶ Spoiler: my proposal will predict that (3) is possible.
1.3. The empirical argument

i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?
   B: John was there.  
   (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
1.3. The empirical argument
i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

Is relevance symmetrical here?
1.3. The empirical argument
i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?
   B: John was there.  (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

Is relevance symmetrical here?
   ▶ example (2) doesn’t make a very strong case;
1.3. The empirical argument
i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present? 
   B: *John* was there.  
   *(implied: not Mary, not Bill)*

Is relevance symmetrical here?
   - example (2) doesn’t make a very strong case;
   - but what about (3)?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
1.3. The empirical argument

i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?
   B: John was there.              (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

Is relevance symmetrical here?
   ▶ example (2) doesn’t make a very strong case;
   ▶ but what about (3)?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: (Of J, M, B,) John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
1.3. The empirical argument

i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?
   B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

Is relevance symmetrical here?
   ▶ example (2) doesn’t make a very strong case;
   ▶ but what about (3)?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: (Of J, M, B,) John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

   ▶ Seems possible, but it is an empirical question...
1.3. The empirical argument
i.e., that relevance is sometimes symmetrical when exhaustivity arises.

(2) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present?
   B: John was there.  \hspace{1em} (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

Is relevance symmetrical here?

- example (2) doesn’t make a very strong case;
- but what about (3)?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: (Of J, M, B,) John was there.  \hspace{1em} (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

- Seems possible, but it is an empirical question...
- Spoiler: my proposal will predict that (3) is possible.
Outline

1. Why not?

2. Previous proposals

3. A new explanation

4. Discussion
2.1. Scales

Perhaps the alternatives come from (relevance filtered by) *lexical scales* (Gazdar 1979, Chierchia et al. 2012).
2.1. Scales

Perhaps the alternatives come from (relevance filtered by) *lexical scales* (Gazdar 1979, Chierchia et al. 2012).

Criticism: Scales don’t explain the asymmetry they describe (e.g., Russell 2006, Geurts 2010).
2.1. Scales

Perhaps the alternatives come from (relevance filtered by) *lexical scales* (Gazdar 1979, Chierchia et al. 2012).

Criticism: Scales don’t explain the asymmetry they describe (e.g., Russell 2006, Geurts 2010).

What are scales anyway? Possible views (among others?):

- **Horn scale**: (possibly) lexical knowledge about what is *typically* co-relevant.
2.1. Scales

Perhaps the alternatives come from (relevance filtered by) *lexical scales* (Gazdar 1979, Chierchia et al. 2012).

Criticism: Scales don’t explain the asymmetry they describe (e.g., Russell 2006, Geurts 2010).

What are scales anyway? Possible views (among others?):

- **Horn scale**: (possibly) lexical knowledge about what is typically co-relevant.

- **Hirschberg (ad hoc) scale**: representation of what is currently relevant.
2.2. Brevity (1/2)

(1) Some of my friends were there.  

*Implied*: Not all of them.
2.2. Brevity (1/2)

(1) Some of my friends were there.
   *Implied*: Not all of them.

2.2. Brevity (1/2)

(1) Some of my friends were there.  
   *Implied*: Not all of them.


- if both “all” and “some-but-not-all” are relevant,
(1) Some of my friends were there.

*Implied:* Not all of them.


- if both “all” and “some-but-not-all” are relevant,
- “some-but-not-all” may be omitted for brevity’s sake;
(1) Some of my friends were there. 

Answer: Not all of them.


- if both “all” and “some-but-not-all” are relevant,
- “some-but-not-all” may be omitted for brevity’s sake;
- whereas no such excuse exists for omitting “all”.

Some criticism:
2.2. Brevity (1/2)

(1) Some of my friends were there.

*Implied*: Not all of them.


- if both “all” and “some-but-not-all” are relevant,
- “some-but-not-all” may be omitted for brevity’s sake;
- whereas no such excuse exists for omitting “all”.

Some criticism:

- brevity seems as context-dependent as relevance itself (Matsumoto, 1995);
2.2. Brevity (1/2)

(1) Some of my friends were there. 

*Implied*: Not all of them.


- if both “all” and “some-but-not-all” are relevant,
- “some-but-not-all” may be omitted for brevity’s sake;
- whereas no such excuse exists for omitting “all”.

Some criticism:

- brevity seems as context-dependent as relevance itself (Matsumoto, 1995);
- brevity shouldn’t have such a central role (Russell 2006).
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there.
(italic: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John and Mary were at the party.
(italic: → Bill wasn’t.)

▶ And lastly, what about the mirror image of (3)?

(5) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John wasn’t there / was absent.
(italic: → Mary & Bill were present.)
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

- what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John and Mary were at the party. (→ Bill wasn’t.)

And lastly, what about the mirror image of (3)?

A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John wasn’t there / was absent. (→ Mary & Bill were present.)
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”? 

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: John was there.  
   (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there.  
    \(\text{(implied: not Mary, not Bill)}\)

▶ what if the speaker \textit{obviously} isn’t trying to be brief?
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed,
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there. \(\text{(implied: not Mary, not Bill)}\)

▶ what if the speaker *obviously* isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance:
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

- what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

- what if the speaker *obviously* isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends,
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:
- what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

- what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John and Mary were at the party.
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John and Mary were at the party. (→ Bill wasn’t.)
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: John was there.  (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John and Mary were at the party.  (→ Bill wasn’t.)

▶ And lastly, what about the mirror image of (3)?
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?  

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there.  
    (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ what if the speaker obviously isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John and Mary were at the party.  
    (→ Bill wasn’t.)

▶ And lastly, what about the mirror image of (3)?

(5) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John wasn’t there / was absent.
2.3. Brevity (2/2): further criticism

Brevity may seem plausible for “all” vs. “some but not all”, but:

▶ what about “was” vs. “wasn’t”? Or “present” vs. “absent”?

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: *John* was there.  \hfill (implied: not Mary, not Bill)

▶ what if the speaker *obviously* isn’t trying to be brief?

(4) Well, that is a most interesting question indeed, and I’d be delighted
if I could be of humble assistance: of your distinguished friends, John
and *Mary* were at the party.  \hfill (→ *Bill wasn’t*)

▶ And lastly, what about the mirror image of (3)?

(5) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: *John* wasn’t there / was absent. \hfill (→ Mary & Bill were present.)
Outline

1. Why not?
2. Previous proposals
3. A new explanation
4. Discussion
3.1. General framework

goals       beliefs

what is uttered
3.1. General framework

cognitive science

goals    beliefs

what is uttered

syntax, phonology, etc.

observable reality

models

models
3.1. General framework

goals beliefs

what is uttered
3.1. General framework

goals

beliefs

what is uttered
3.1. General framework

goals

beliefs

speaker meaning

sentence meaning

what is uttered
3.1. General framework

- beliefs
- intents
- contents
- what is uttered
- goals
3.1. General framework

- goals
- beliefs
- intents
- contents
- what is uttered
3.1. General framework

- goals
- QUDs
- beliefs
- intents
- contents
- what is uttered
3.1. General framework
3.1. General framework

goals

QUDS

beliefs

intents

MANNER

contents

Semantics

what is uttered
3.1. General framework
3.1. General framework

- **goals**
- **QUDs**
- **beliefs**
- **intents**
- **contents**
- **Semantics**
- **discourse strategies**
  - QUALITY
  - QUANTITY
  - RELATION
- **MANNER**

**what is uttered**
3.2. The symmetry problem

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.2. The symmetry problem

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
    B: John was there.  \hspace{1cm} (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.2. The symmetry problem

"John was there."

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there.  (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.2. The symmetry problem

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: John was there.  
      (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.2. The symmetry problem

"John was there."

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there.  
   (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.3. Towards a solution

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there.  
(implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.3. Towards a solution

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
B: John was there. (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.3. Towards a solution

"John was there."

(3) A: Who (of J, M, B) was present, and who was absent?
   B: John was there.  
   (implied: not Mary, not Bill)
3.4. Completing the account

For a complete explanation, we need to know:
For a complete explanation, we need to know:

1. Why splitting the QUd would be a rational maneuver;
3.4. Completing the account

For a complete explanation, we need to know:

1. Why splitting the QUUD would be a rational maneuver;

2. How an audience can detect it (and accommodate the new QUUDs);
3.4. Completing the account

For a complete explanation, we need to know:

1. Why splitting the QUD would be a rational maneuver;
   - it is an ordinary case of discourse strategy (Roberts, 1996);

2. How an audience can detect it (and accommodate the new QUDs);
3.4. Completing the account

For a complete explanation, we need to know:

1. Why splitting the QUD would be a rational maneuver;
   ▶ it is an ordinary case of *discourse strategy* (Roberts, 1996);

2. How an audience can detect it (and accommodate the new QUDs);
   ▶ accent/focus reflects the QUD that is explicitly addressed.
3.4. Completing the account

For a complete explanation, we need to know:

1. Why splitting the $\text{QU}_\text{D}$ would be a rational maneuver;
   - it is an ordinary case of discourse strategy (Roberts, 1996);
   - it enables exhaustivity, thereby favoring brevity (& clarity).

2. How an audience can detect it (and accommodate the new $\text{QU}_\text{Ds}$);
   - accent/focus reflects the $\text{QU}_\text{D}$ that is explicitly addressed.
3.4. Completing the account

For a complete explanation, we need to know:

1. Why splitting the $QUD$s would be a rational maneuver;
   - it is an ordinary case of discourse strategy (Roberts, 1996);
   - it enables exhaustivity, thereby favoring brevity (& clarity).

2. How an audience can detect it (and accommodate the new $QUD$s);
   - accent/focus reflects the $QUD$ that is explicitly addressed.
   - a symmetrical $QUD$ would predict a contradiction;
Outline

1. Why not?

2. Previous proposals

3. A new explanation

4. Discussion
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

Some crucial differences:
1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on implicature being implicit.
2. In my proposal brevity can explain why the speaker split the QUD; but (s)he did so will be clear regardless.

"John was there."
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

Some crucial differences:

1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on implicature being implicit.
2. In my proposal brevity can explain why the speaker split the QUD; but (s)he did so will be clear regardless.
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

Some crucial differences:

1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on implicature being implicit.
2. In my proposal brevity can explain why the speaker split the QUD; but that (s)he did so will be clear regardless.
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

Some crucial differences:

1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on implicature being implicit.
2. In my proposal brevity can explain why the speaker split the QUD; but that (s)he did so will be clear regardless.

"John was there."
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

- **Contents**
  - **Intents**
  - **Beliefs**
  - **Goals**
- **What is uttered**

Some crucial differences:
1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on 
   implicature being implicit.
2. In my proposal brevity can explain why the speaker split the QUD;
   but (s)he did so will be clear regardless.
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

Some crucial differences:

1. My proposal doesn't rely on lexical brevity differences – only on implicature being implicit.
2. In my proposal brevity can explain why the speaker split the QUD; but (s)he did so will be clear regardless.
4.1. Brief comparison (1/2): Prev. brevity-based accounts

Some crucial differences:

1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on *implicature* being *implicit*. 
Some crucial differences:

1. My proposal doesn’t rely on lexical brevity differences – only on *implicature* being *implicit*.

2. In my proposal brevity can explain *why* the speaker split the QUD; but *that* (s)he did so will be clear regardless.
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:
▶ my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;
▶ scales may help an audience figure out which Qud to accommodate.
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:
▶ my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;
▶ scales may help an audience figure out which QUdS to accommodate.

"John was there."

what is uttered

contents

intents

beliefs

QUdS

goals
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:

- my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;
- scales may help an audience figure out which QUDEs to accommodate.
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:

▶ my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;

▶ scales may help an audience figure out which QUĐ s to accommodate.

"John was there."
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:

- my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;
- scales may help an audience figure out which QUDs to accommodate.
Depending on what scales are supposed to be:...
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:

- my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;
4.2. Brief comparison (2/2): Scales

Depending on what scales are supposed to be:

▷ my account may explain why scales are asymmetrical;
▷ scales may help an audience figure out which QUDs to accommodate.
4.3. Zooming out

In a nutshell:

- If we assume QUDs and discourse strategies, the Symmetry Problem entails a rational preference for asymmetrical QUDs.
4.3. Zooming out

In a nutshell:

▶ If we assume QUDs and discourse strategies, the Symmetry Problem entails a rational preference for asymmetrical QUDs.

Comparison:

▶ Previous accounts consider *alternative answers to the same QUD*;
4.3. Zooming out

In a nutshell:

▶ If we assume QUDs and discourse strategies, the Symmetry Problem entails a rational preference for asymmetrical QUDs.

Comparison:

▶ Previous accounts consider *alternative answers to the same QUD*;
▶ My proposal considers *alternative QUDs*. 
4.3. Zooming out

In a nutshell:

▶ If we assume QUDs and discourse strategies, the Symmetry Problem entails a rational preference for asymmetrical QUDs.

Comparison:

▶ Previous accounts consider alternative answers to the same QUD;
▶ My proposal considers alternative QUDs.

Doing pragmatics requires that we always keep an eye on both.
4.3. Zooming out

In a nutshell:

▶ If we assume QUDs and discourse strategies, the Symmetry Problem entails a rational preference for asymmetrical QUDs.

Comparison:

▶ Previous accounts consider *alternative answers to the same QUD*;
▶ My proposal considers *alternative QUDs*.

**Doing pragmatics requires that we always keep an eye on both.**

And lastly:

▶ various implications for the different pragmatic/grammatical approaches to exhaustivity.
Acknowledgments

Enabled by funding from:

- the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Unions Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 715154; P.I. Gemma Boleda).

- (in an earlier stage) the NWO project the Inquisitive Turn (P.I. Jeroen Groenendijk).
References (1/2)

- Chierchia, G., Fox, D., & Spector, B. (2012). The grammatical view [...]. In Maienborn et al. (Eds.), Semantics: An international handbook [...].
- Geurts, B. Quantity Implicatures. Cambridge University Press.
- Horn, L.R. Towards a new taxonomy of pragmatic inference: [...]. In Meaning, Form, and Use in Context.
References (2/2)


