Implying or implicating ‘not both’ in declaratives and interrogatives

Matthijs Westera
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Aim

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(2) Was John at the party, or Mary? (L%)
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• In (1) this is part of *what is meant*, but not in (2).

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  – e.g., “No, both.” fine in (1), strange in (2). (cf. Destruel et al. ‘15)
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    – e.g., “No, both.” fine in (1), strange in (2). (cf. Destruel et al. ‘15)
• Not clear how existing accounts may explain this.
Ingredients
Declaratives vs. interrogatives
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If you introduce a new QUD to the discourse, you should consider all its propositions possible (e.g., Roberts ‘96).
- i.e., set only goals that are potentially achievable.
Conversational maxims
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- Draw attention to all (and only) relevant propositions you consider possible.
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Attentional Pragmatics (Westera ‘17):
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- Building on Gazdar ‘79; Schulz & Van Rooij ‘06; Groenendijk & Roelofsen ‘08; Biezma & Rawlins ‘12.
Intonation
Focus marking (e.g., Rooth ‘92; Beaver & Clark ‘08):
Focus on the disjuncts (like in (1)/(2)) means that both disjuncts are relevant to a single QUD.
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Intonational Compliance Marking (Westera ‘18):

L%: the speaker takes the utterance to comply with all the maxims (握手, 点赞) wrt. the main QUD.
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- Expanding previous characterizations: ‘completeness’, ‘finishedness’, etc.
Relevance, QUDs
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- Motivation: if a goal is unachievable, say so.
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QUDs are by default 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.

- Motivation: if a goal is unachievable, say so.
- This is typically not the main point (cf. Horn ‘89); $\neg p$ is relevant to a secondary QUD (Westera ‘19).
Summing up
Solving the puzzle

(1) John was at the party, or Mary.  (L%)
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So (1) must draw attention to all relevant possibilities. *If ‘both’ is relevant, that means speaker must not consider it possible, i.e., believes ‘not both’.*
(1) John was at the party, or Mary.  \((\text{L\%})\)

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Each disjunct is relevant to the QUD.
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Hence their conjunction ‘both’ is indeed relevant.
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It follows that the speaker believes ‘not both’.
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It follows that the speaker believes ‘not both’.

Since ‘both’ is relevant, so is ‘not both’ (secondary QUD).
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Since ‘not both’ is relevant and believed to be true, ‘not both’ must be part of what is meant in (1).
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L\%: the maxims are complied with wrt. the main QUD.

So (1) must draw attention to all relevant possibilities.

If ‘both’ is relevant, that means speaker must not consider it possible, i.e., believes ‘not both’.

Each disjunct is relevant to the QUD.

Hence their conjunction ‘both’ is indeed 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%)
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So if ‘both’ is relevant, the speaker must consider it possible.

Accordingly, ‘both’ cannot be relevant.
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So ‘both’ would have been relevant too, unless the speaker didn’t consider it possible(.%/?, ⚠️).
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‘Both’ isn’t relevant, so the speaker must believe ‘not both’.
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If ‘both’ is relevant, the speaker must not consider it possible.

So if ‘both’ is relevant, the speaker must consider it possible. Accordingly, ‘both’ cannot be relevant. Each disjunct is relevant to the QUD. So ‘both’ would have been relevant too, unless the speaker didn’t consider it possible (/.? , ). ‘Both’ isn’t relevant, so the speaker must believe ‘not both’. Since ‘both’ isn’t relevant, ‘not both’ can’t be either.
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If ‘both’ is relevant, the speaker must not consider it possible.

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Accordingly, ‘both’ cannot be relevant.

Each disjunct is relevant to the QUD.

So ‘both’ would have been relevant too, unless the speaker didn’t consider it possible.

‘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).
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In a nutshell

- 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 reason for this difference is that interrogatives introduce new QUDs.
Generalization
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What about other types of exhaustivity?
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(3) *Most* of my friends were there, or *some*. (L%)
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(4) *Were most* of your friends there, or *some*? (L%)
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The following could play the same role as $\wedge$ previously:
Generalization

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

The following could play the same role as \( \land \) previously:

If ‘*some/most*’ is relevant, so is ‘*all*’, insofar as this is compatible with \( \forall \).
Additional predictions
Can an explicit QUD reverse the pattern?
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(5) A: Was John there, or Mary, or Bill? (L%)
B: John was, or Mary. (L%)
Can an *explicit* QUD reverse the pattern?

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• Prediction: ‘not both’ *not* part of what B meant.
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Traditional pragmatic approach (e.g., Geurts ‘10):
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- What about (1)/(2)?
  - Quantity doesn’t apply to questions, like (2).
  - Silent about the contrast (1)/(2), but compatible with current approach.
- Other challenges too (Schulz & Van Rooij ‘06, Chierchia et al. ‘12, Fox ‘14, Westera ‘17).
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- Other challenges (e.g. Geurts ‘13, Poortman ‘16, Westera ms.)
Final remarks
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- Explore the interactions of general pragmatic principles before trying anything else.
References (1/2)

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References (2/2)
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