

Because, Focus, and Exhaustification

GLOW 44

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One interesting operator which I am not certain where to classify is the connective because.

— Partee (1991, 176)

Because is focus-sensitive.¹

- (1) *The jumper is cashmere and ruined by ironing. Sam ironed it.*
- a. Ali: The jumper is ruined because Sam [ironed]_F it.
 - b. Ali: # The jumper is ruined because [Sam]_F ironed it.

¹Dretske (1972), Partee (1991), von Stechow (1994), Rooth (1999), Schaffer (2005, 2010), Beaver and Clark (2008).

- (2) *The jumper is cashmere and ruined by ironing. Sam ironed it.*
Ali: # The jumper is ruined because [Sam]_F ironed it.

Free association with focus?

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- Focus on *Sam* signals QUD *Who ironed the jumper?*

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Free association with focus (Beaver and Clark 2008)

- Focus on *Sam* signals QUD *Who ironed the jumper?*
- Presupposes: someone ironed the jumper.

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Ali: # *The jumper is ruined because [Sam]_F ironed it.*

Free association with focus (Beaver and Clark 2008)

- Focus on *Sam* signals QUD *Who ironed the jumper?*
- Presupposes: someone ironed the jumper.
- *Because* has a counterfactual semantics.

- (2) *The jumper is cashmere and ruined by ironing. Sam ironed it.*
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- Focus on *Sam* signals QUD *Who ironed the jumper?*
- Presupposes: someone ironed the jumper.
- *Because* has a counterfactual semantics.
- Presuppositions restrict counterfactual modal bases (Heim 1992).

Free association with focus?

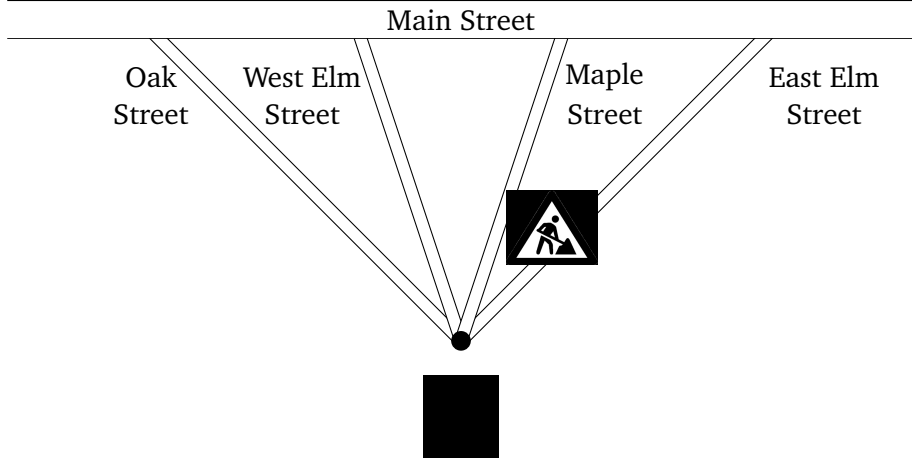
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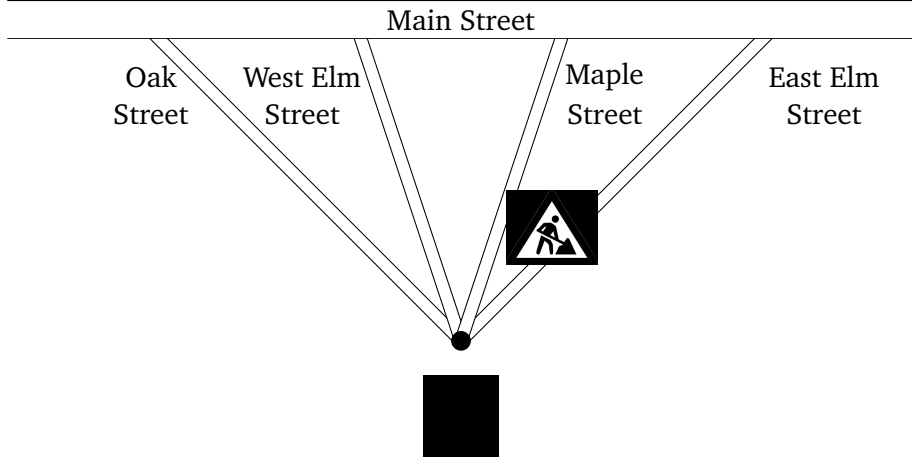
- Focus on *Sam* signals QUD *Who ironed the jumper?*
- Presupposes: someone ironed the jumper.
- *Because* has a counterfactual semantics.
- Presuppositions restrict counterfactual modal bases (Heim 1992).
- If Sam hadn't ironed the jumper, but someone still did, the jumper would not have been ruined.

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Evidence against free association



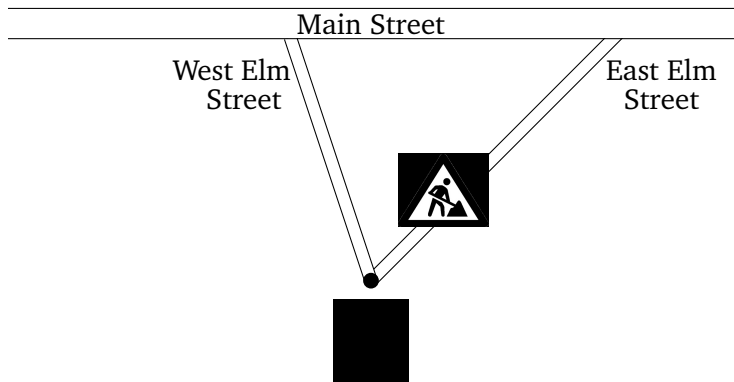
Evidence against free association



Figure

- (3) The robot took [West]_F Elm Street because of the roadworks.

Evidence against free association



Figure

- (4) The robot took [West]_F Elm Street because of the roadworks.

Proposal

Counterfactual dependence in the semantics of *because* is the result of exhaustification.

We will explore two options:

(5) *Alt* associates with focus

$$\llbracket q \text{ because } p \rrbracket = \text{exh}_{alt} \Box(p)(q) = \Box(p)(q) \wedge \neg \Box(r)(q) \wedge \dots$$

(6) Lexical restriction to polar alternatives

$$\llbracket q \text{ because } p \rrbracket = \text{exh}_{\{p, \neg p\}} \Box(p)(q) = \Box(p)(q) \wedge \neg \Box(\neg p)(q)$$

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