

On What Anti-Exceptionalism Can Do For the Logic of Conditionals

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In this paper I shall explore the influence of anti-exceptionalism about logic on the formal study of natural language conditionals. The paper is divided into three parts.

I shall begin by presenting the main tenets anti-exceptionalism about logic. Quine (1951) was one of the first modern philosophers to claim that logic is not special, meaning that logic is not *a priori* and logical truths are not analytic truths. Moreover, one can revise logical theories on the same grounds as scientific theories would be revised. Among other proponents of anti-exceptionalism are Hjortland (2017), Maddy (2002), Priest (2006, 2014), Russell (2014), Williamson (2014).

Next part of the paper lays groundwork for discussing the anti-exceptionalist perspective on the problem of logical interpretation of natural language conditionals. I shall address the following question: why do we apply logic to natural language? In particular, why are we interested in applying logic to conditionals? Here, I shall defend two thesis.

First, when planning the development of formal interpretations of natural language structures like conditionals we should pay attention to goals other than representation. In particular, I shall speak against the representation for the sake of representation itself and instead propose that we use the formal representation tools to contribute to answering troubling empirical questions concerning the linguistic structures of interest.

Second, I propose that while looking for tools appropriate for formal interpretation of natural language, we dare to look beyond logic. I shall argue that the narrow-minded approaches requiring that we always incorporate a Tarskian consequence operation into the formal interpretation of natural language impair the effectiveness of formal methods and potentially widen the gap between formal representation and a system capable of addressing interesting empirical questions.

I shall conclude by discussing various solutions which anti-exceptionalism may bring into the conditional analysis. First and foremost, I propose that we develop methods of *testing* the formal interpretations against sets of empirical data. Such general approach provides a strong basis for interdisciplinary research involving empirical linguistics, mathematics (including logic) and programming (both as used for practical implementation of the results and as a source of potential testing methods).

References

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