

New Experimental Evidence Against the Similarity Approach to Conditionals

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Reciprocity

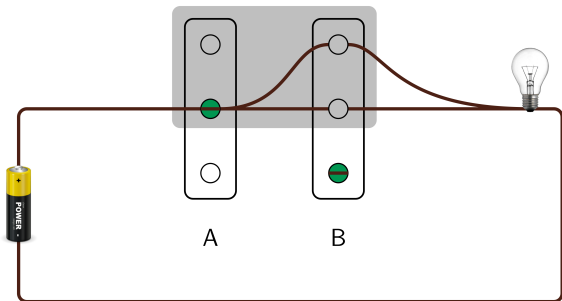
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then
 $A > C$ if and only if $B > C$.

Reciprocity

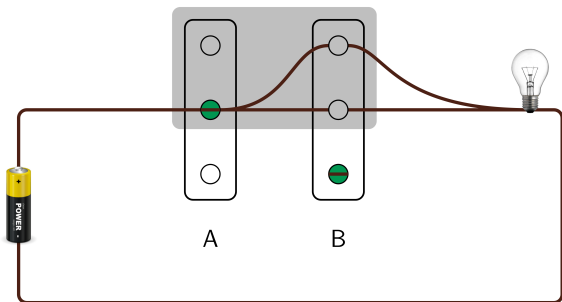
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Semantics of conditionals based on orders validate reciprocity, no matter how the order is intuitively understood (e.g. Stalnaker 1968, Lewis 1973, Kratzer 1981).

Our Experiment



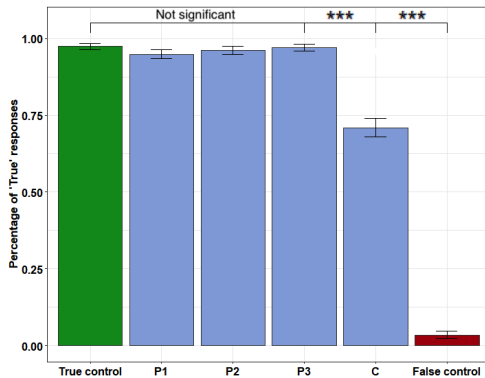
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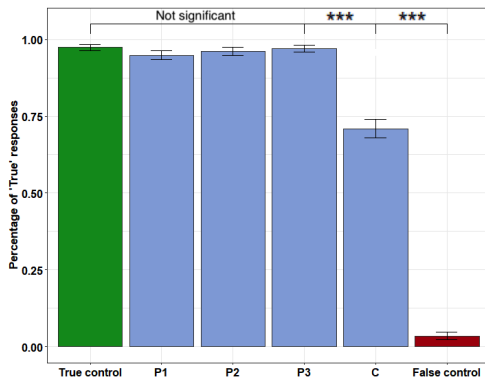
Consider:

- (1) If both switches were in the shaded area, the light would be on.

Results

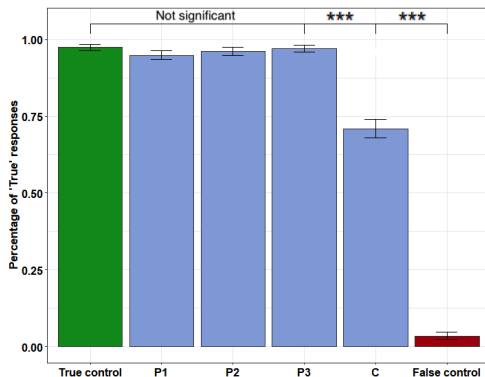


Results



- ▶ 25% of the time when a participant accepted all premises P1–P3 they rejected the conclusion C ($p < 0.0001$).

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- ▶ 25% of the time when a participant accepted all premises P1–P3 they rejected the conclusion C ($p < 0.0001$).
- ▶ Half of the participants judged in at least one scenario that the premises are true but the conclusion is not (42/78).

Conclusion

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and therefore,

conditionals are not evaluated
using any order over worlds.

Predictions

Account	Reciprocity	Conclusion (C)
Stalnaker (1968)	Valid	True
Lewis (1973)	Valid	True
Kratzer (2012)	Valid	True
Ciardelli et al. (2018)	Invalid	True
Fine (2012)	Invalid	False
Santorio (2018, 2019)	Invalid	False
McHugh (2023)	Invalid	Mixed

McHugh's semantics of conditionals (2023)

Core idea

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Truthmaker view

Sentences are about their exact verifiers and falsifiers.

Predicts: Conclusion true.

Subject matter view

Sentences are about their exact verifiers and falsifiers of their *atomics*. Predicts: Conclusion false.

Correctly accounts for the Conclusion's mixed response profile.

Thank you for listening!