Unifying “if”-conditionals and unconditionals

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Introduction

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Whether Alfonso comes to the party or not, it will be fun.

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Goal: unified analysis of "if"-conditionals and unconditionals.

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- Similar interaction with a main clause operator. (Gawron 2001)
- In terms of the Lewis/Kratzer/Heim theory of conditionals (LKH): domain (un)restriction.

  (7) If Alfonso comes to the party, you should come.

  (8) Whether or not Alfonso comes to the party, you should come.

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(9) # Whether or not Alfonso comes to the party, if Alfonso comes to the party, you should come.

(10) Whether or not Alfonso comes to the party, if the party is at Joanna’s house, you should come.

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- e.g. counterfactual “had...would”:

(11) (Suppose Alfonso didn’t end up going to Bard, and Harvard or Princeton was his other choice.) Whether he had gone to Harvard or to Princeton, he would have become a banker.

(12) Whatever John had chosen, Mary would have been pleased with it. (Gawron)

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- Multiple “wh”, no correlated proform in main clause, pattern with interrogatives in echo contexts.
- See poster for details of arguments.

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  (14) # If Alfonso goes to the party or not, it will be fun.

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  (14) # If Alfonso goes to the party or not, it will be fun.

  (15) If Alfonso or Joanna goes to the party, it will be fun.

- Consequent entailment.

- Discourse effects.

(16) A: Alfonso is really great at his job.
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- Discourse effects.

(16) A: Alfonso is really great at his job.
B: Whether or not he's great at his job, we have to fire him.

- In contrast:

(17) A: Alfonso is really great at his job.
B: If he's great at his job, we can't fire him.
B′: # If he's not great at his job, we can fire him.
B″: # If he's great at his job or not, we can fire him.

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  - "If"-conditionals: singleton set containing a proposition.
  - Unconditionals: exhaustive set of propositions.

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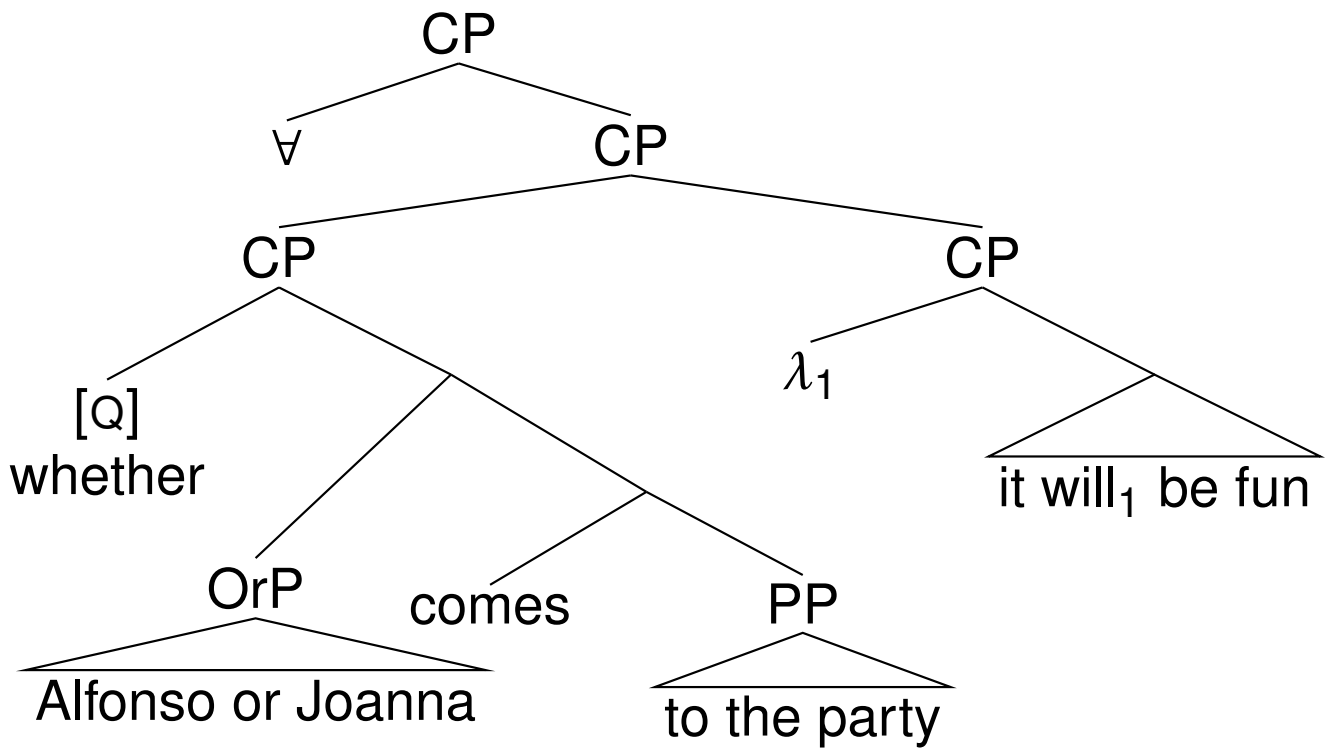
- Analysis similar to Alonso-Ovalle's analysis of disjunction in "if"-conditional antecedents.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whether
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comes
PP
Alfonso or Joanna
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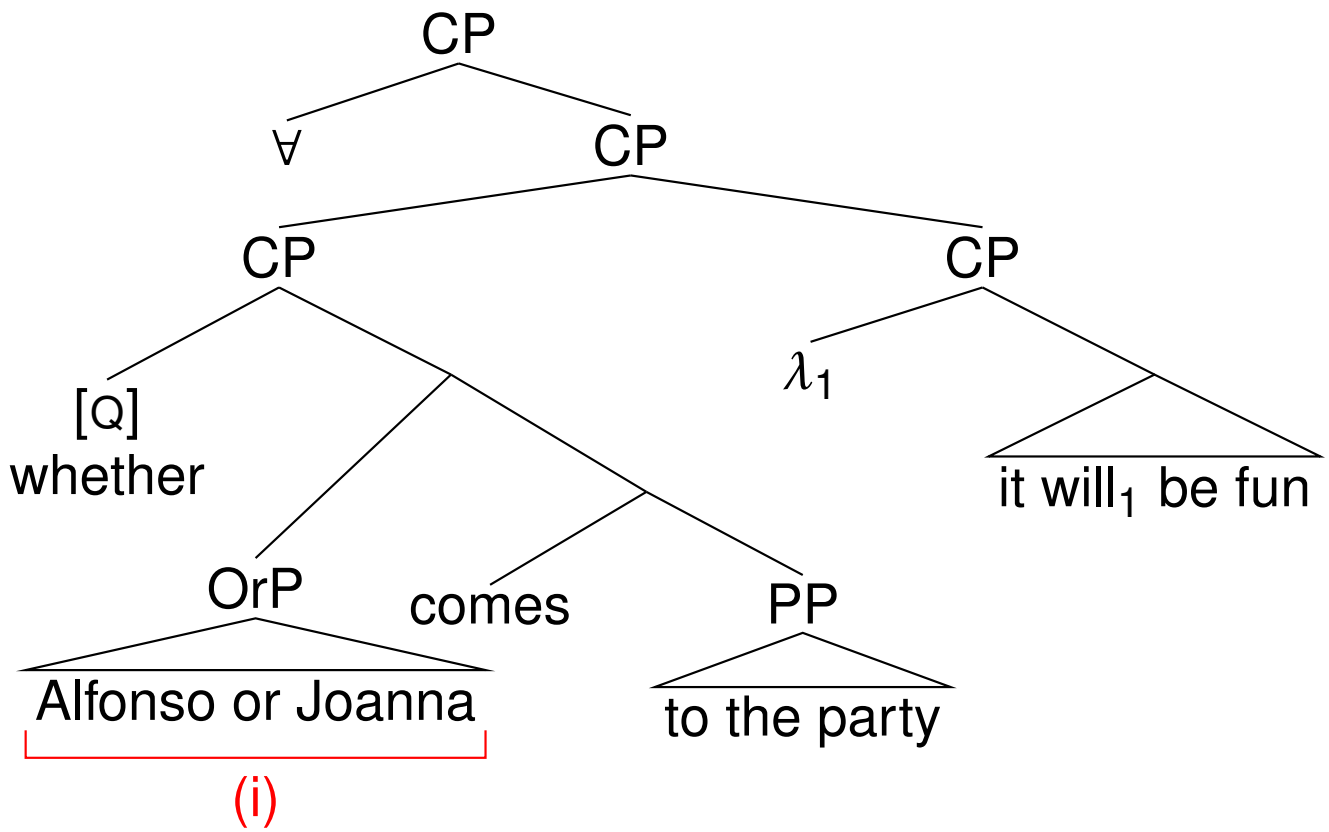
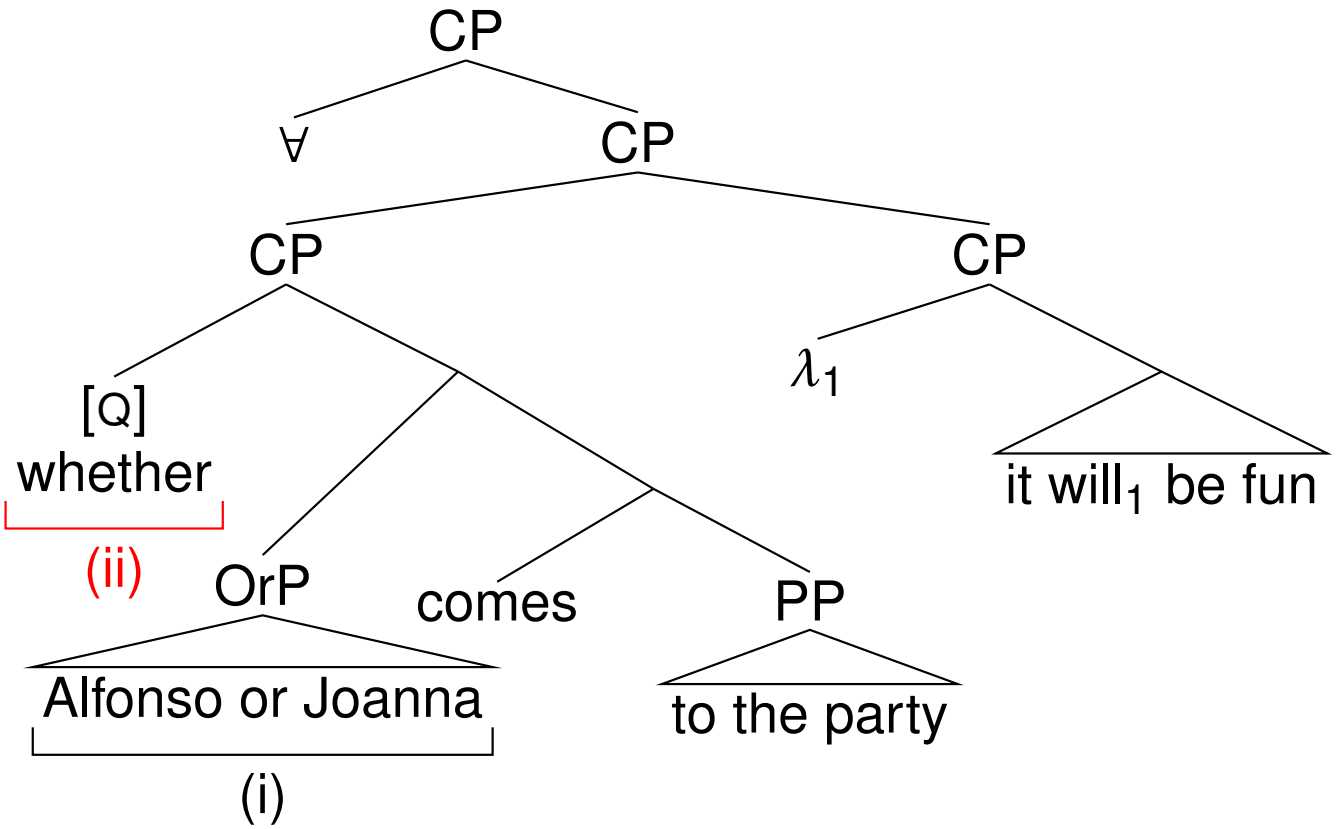
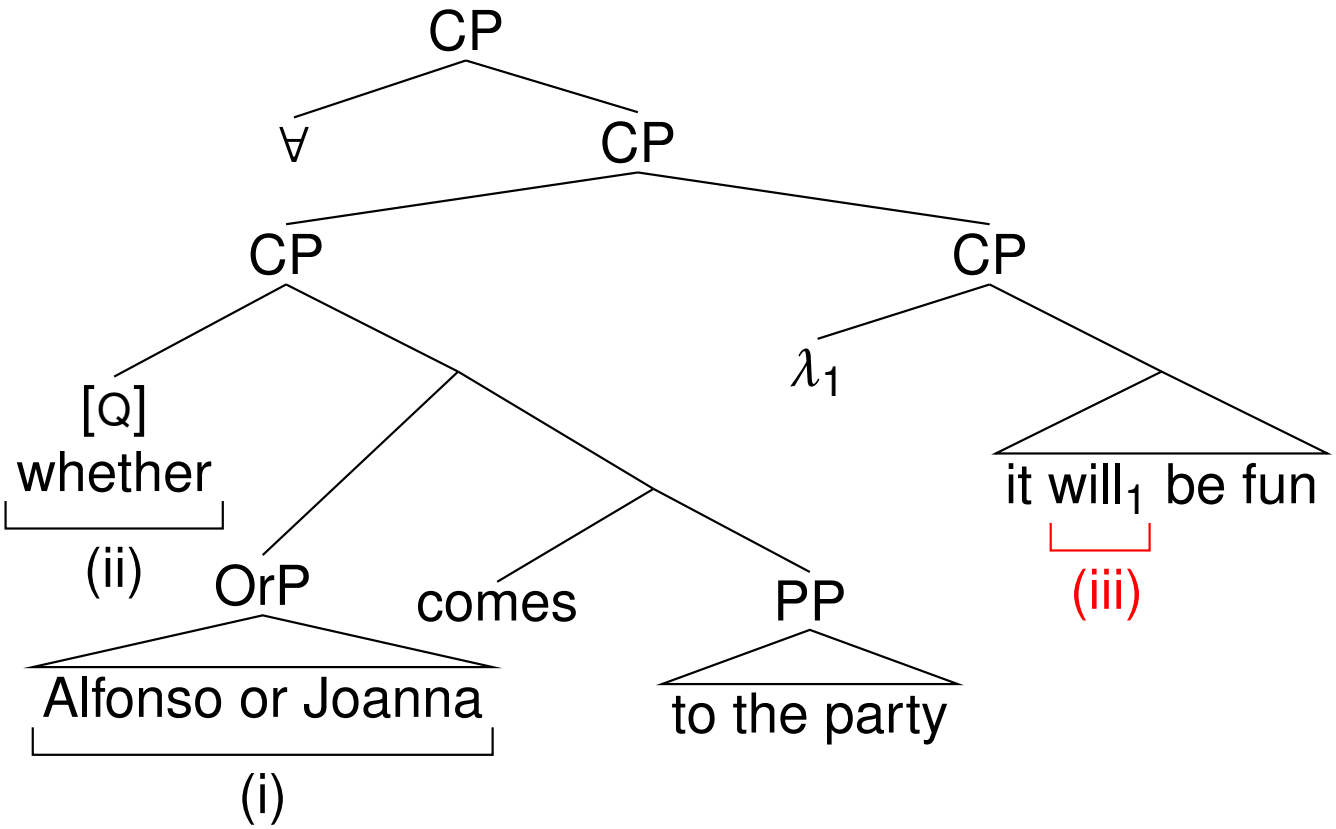


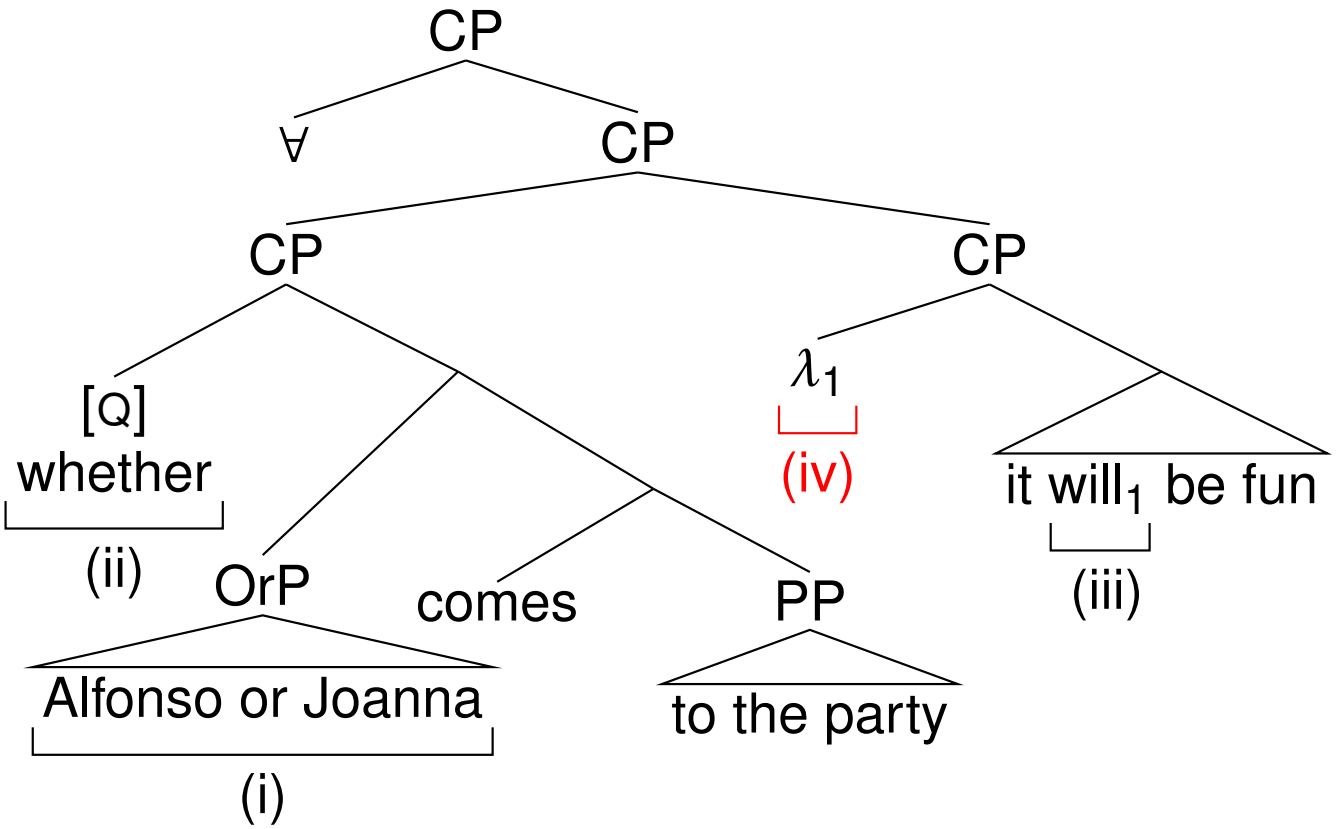
(i) Disjunction or interrogative pronoun introduces alternatives.



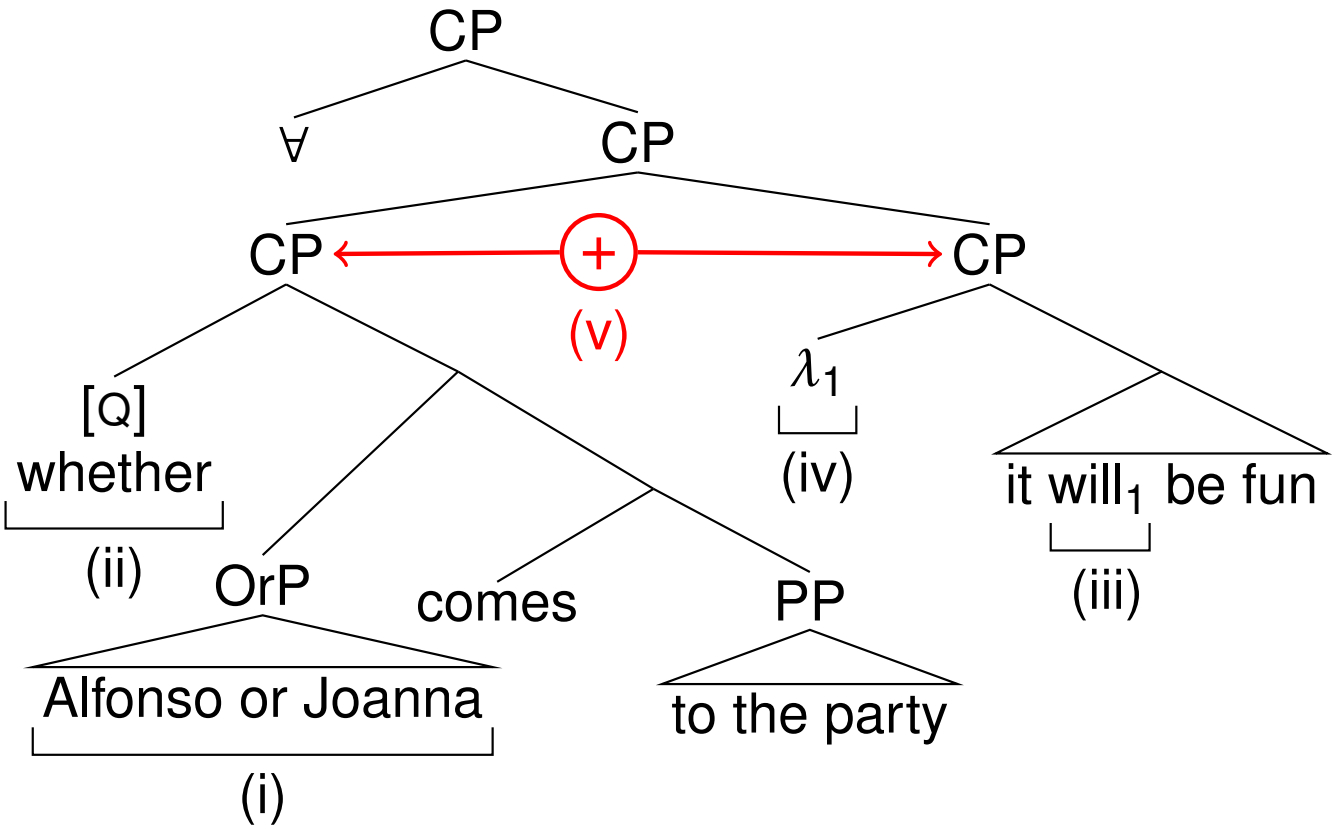
(ii) Question operator introduces exhaustivity presupposition, and lets alternatives through.



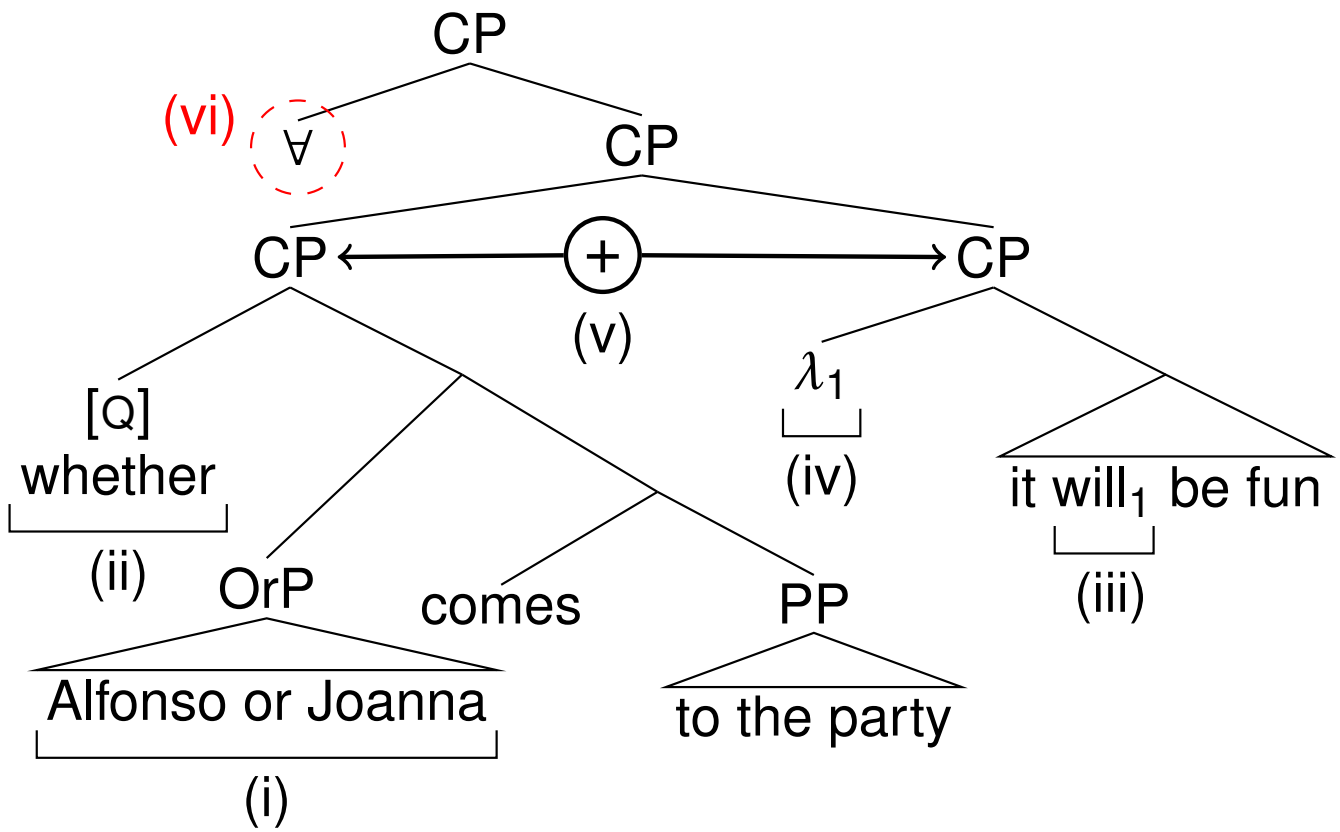
(iii) Main-clause modal presupposes non-triviality.



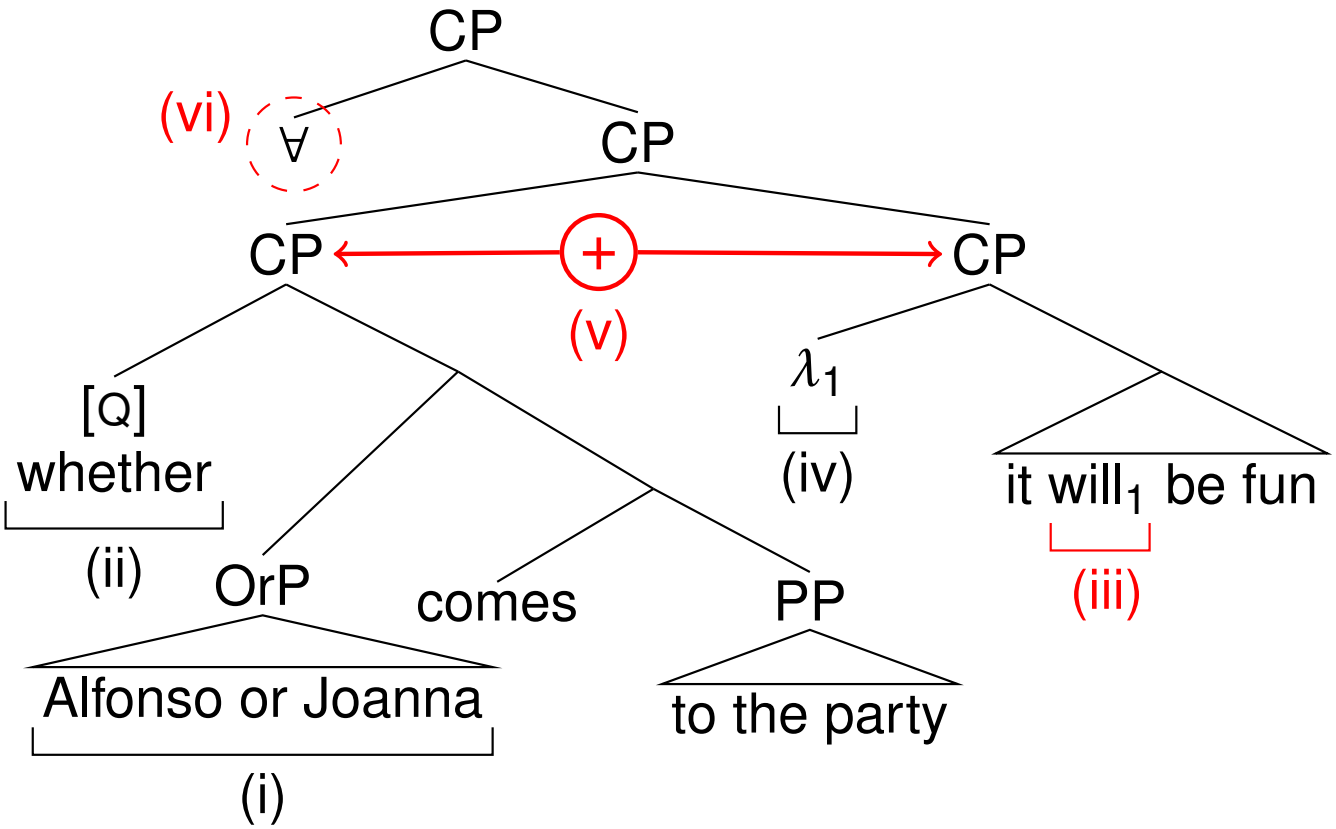
(iv) Conditional adjunct binds domain variable.



(v) Key moment in composition: conditional adjunct composes with main clause via Pointwise Function Application.



(vi) Default Hamblin ∀ operator collects alternatives.



Non-triviality presupposition projects once for each alternative – distribution presupposition.

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- Discourse effect: distribution presupposition.

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- What does it mean to be a conditional?

Any adjunct that restricts the domain of an operator.