



Calculating Alternative Sets for Focus Sensitive Operators

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The Scope of “only”

- ▶ “If *only* or *just* is dominated by node X, X and all nodes dominated by X and to the right of *only* or *just* are in the range of *only* or *just*.”
-Jackendoff (1972)
- ▶ “An operator like *only* must be associated with a lexical constituent in its c-command domain.”
-Beaver and Clark (2008)



3 Types of Focus

- ▶ Lambrecht (1996) identifies three types of focus in regards to the phrase size, any of which can associate with *only*.
 - ▶ Argument Focus
 - ▶ Predicate Focus
 - ▶ Sentential Focus

Some Data

- ▶ Kim only runs in the park
(Kim doesn't do anything else at all)
- ▶ Kim only runs in the park
(Kim doesn't play softball there)
- ▶ Kim only runs in the park
(Kim doesn't run anywhere else)
- ▶ Kim only runs in the park
(Kim doesn't run around the park)
- ▶ Kim only runs in the park
(Kim doesn't run in the arboretum)
- ▶ Kim only runs in the park
(The only thing that is true is that Kim runs in the park)
- ▶ *Kim only runs in the park
(Kim and no one else runs in the park)



One interesting exception

- ▶ God only knows what will happen

(God and no one else knows what will happen)

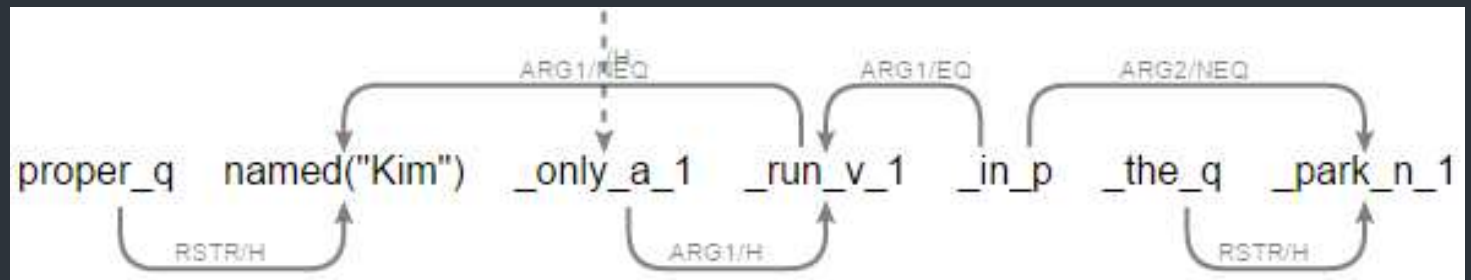
However, this expression is idiomatic. One wouldn't say "Kim only knows what will happen"

Presentational Focus

- ▶ Gussenhoven (2007) identifies the type of focus marking the answer to a wh-question as “presentational focus”
 - ▶ Who only runs in the park?
 - ▶ Kim only runs in the park (Kim is the one who only runs in the park)
- ▶ This type of focus cannot associate with *only*.

Our Problem

- Currently we only get this representation, where *only* scopes over the whole sentence and we access everything from run.





Questions

- ▶ How do we calculate all of the possible the alternative sets?
- ▶ Is there a way to calculate this just from information in the MRS?
 - ▶ Note: The notion of c-command doesn't translate
- ▶ Do we need something from the syntax?
- ▶ Is distinguishing types of focus sufficient?



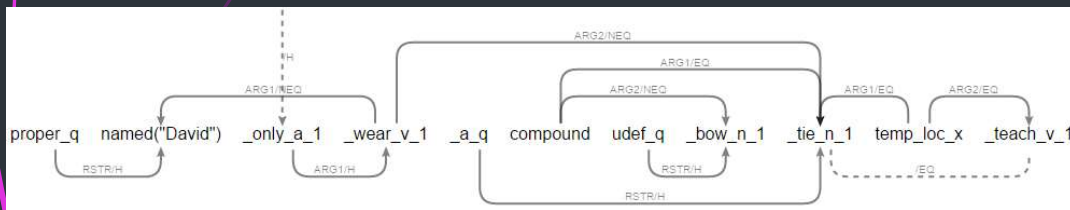
References

- ▶ Beaver, David I. and Clark, Brady Z. 2008. *Sense and Sensitivity: How Focus Determines Meaning*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- ▶ Gussenhoven, Carlos. 2007. Types of Focus in English. In Chungmin Lee, Matthew Gordon and Daniel B'uring (eds.), *Topic and Focus: Cross-Linguistic Perspectives on Meaning and Intonation*, pages 83–100, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- ▶ Jackendoff, Ray S. 1972. *Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- ▶ Lambrecht, Knud. 1996. *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representations of Discourse Referents*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Another Example

Beaver and Clark (2008)

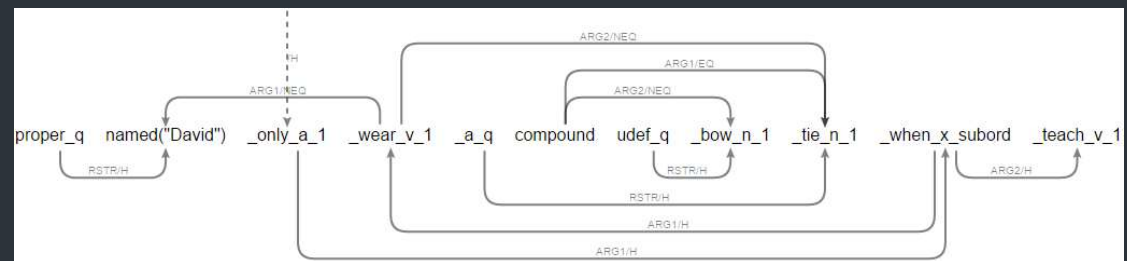
- David only wears a bow tie when teaching.



David only **wears** a bow tie when teaching

David only wears a bow tie when teaching

When has wider scope





Functional Types of Focus

- ▶ Gussenhoven (2007) Identifies seven functional sub-types of focus, including:
 - ▶ Presentational – the answer to a wh-question
 - ▶ Corrective – to correct an item of information
 - ▶ Counterpresupposition – to correct an unspoken item of information
 - ▶ Definitional – focus that does not refer to a change in the world
 - ▶ Contingency - focus that does not refer to a change in the world but is relevant
 - ▶ Reactivating – marks old information
 - ▶ Identificational – used in clefting