

Sebastian Löhnner (Düsseldorf): German *nur*

ASSUMPTIONS

- *nur* is associated with focus; there is a wide syntactic variety of focus constituents
- the scope of a *nur* construction includes the focus plus its background ('cofocus')
- *nur* is directly negated as *nicht nur*; it operates on sentence polarity
- *nur* presupposes 'the rest of the sentence' (to be properly qualified)

CENTRAL CLAIM

German *nur* (roughly corresponding to non-temporal *only*) marks its focus as representing an upper limit on an implicational scale. The scale is semantically defined in some cases, but only pragmatically (i.e. contextually) in others. Its negation *nicht nur* (*not only*) is used to express that the limit is exceeded. (makes *only* a 'type-2 phase-quantifier' along with e.g. *still*)

Examples: (transferred to English)

- (1) only [JOHN will quit] vs not only [JOHN will quit] ¹ **quant.**
facts John will quit \Leftarrow John and x will quit ²
quantities John < John + x ³
excluded (negative) alternative entails case asserted

- (2) only [2 PAPERS are enough] vs it's not that only [2 PAPERS are enough] **scalar**
facts 2 papers are enough \Leftarrow less than 2 papers are enough (*in one reading*)
quantities 2 papers > less than 2 papers

ANALYSIS (for cases with semantically defined contrast)

The focus element is interpreted as a predicate F (if it is a term f, apply type shift $\lambda x(x=f)$). Cofocus provides the argument k for F (if cofocus is a predicate K, apply type shift $\iota y Ky$).

- *only* F K is true iff F(k) is true;
it is false iff F'(k) is true for some F' with $F'(k) \Rightarrow F(k)$

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- (3) [it's only a SHORT meeting] vs [it's not only a SHORT meeting]
facts it's a short meeting $\not\Leftarrow$ it's a longer than short meeting
but facts in given context \Leftarrow facts in alternative context

ANALYSIS (for cases with contextually defined contrast)

- *only* F K is true iff F(k) is true;
it is false iff, in the given context C, F'(k) is true for some F' with $C \wedge F'(k) \Rightarrow C \wedge F(k)$ ⁴

for details see S. Löhnner (1990), *Wahr neben Falsch*. (ch. 9). Tübingen, Niemeyer.

¹ [scope of (*not*) *only*], FOCUS within scope

² read \Leftarrow and \Rightarrow as unilateral entailment throughout

³ read < and + as lattice-theoretical 'part of' and sum

⁴ read \wedge as 'dynamic' *and*