

Pre-DP *only* is always a propositional operator at LF: A new argument from ellipsis

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- 1 Data and Overview
- 2 The Propositional approach to pre-DP *only*
- 3 The argument

A Scope Ambiguity

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- a. She is allowed to not bring anything else. ($\diamond > \textit{only}$)
- b. She is not allowed to bring anything else. ($\textit{only} > \diamond$)

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Overview

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- **Main Claim** (following Benbaji 2021): the scope freezing effect follows from independent constraints on *only* in ellipsis contexts
- ... but only under a particular analysis of the syntax of pre-DP *only*
- ...According to which pre-DP *only* is a **propositional operator in disguise** which associates with focus from a distance

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(4) **Propositional only:**

$$\llbracket \text{only} \rrbracket^C = \lambda p_{\langle s,t \rangle} . \lambda w : p(w) . \forall p' \in C [p'(w) \rightarrow p \subseteq p']$$

(5) **Two PFs, one LF**

- a. Jill **only** brought wine. (pre-vP)
- b. Jill brought **only** wine. (pre-DP)

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Describing the puzzle

(6) Jill may bring only wine.

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An independent constraint

(8) **Beaver and Clark 2008 (cf. pp. 177)**

Only cannot be separated from *Foc* by a node targeted for ellipsis.

- This generalization is substantiated in baseline data with pre-vP *only*.

(9) I only know he brought WHITE wine. What about you?

a. I do Δ , too. (Δ = only know he brought white_{Foc} wine)

b. *I only know he did Δ , too. (Δ = brought white_{Foc} wine)

- As Benbaji (2021) notes: (8) has impact also with pre-DP *only* on the P-approach.

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Scope Freezing explained

(10) **Beaver & Clark's Constraint, P-approach version**

ONLY cannot be separated from *Foc* by a node targeted for ellipsis.

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The Quantifier Approach to pre-DP *only*

The Quantifier approach

- Pre-DP *only* form a complex quantifier with its surface sister
- *Only* has flexibility in its type, type-shifts to compose with a quantifier.

$$(12) \quad [\text{only}_Q]^{ALT} = \lambda Q_{est,st} \cdot \lambda f_{e,st} \cdot [\text{only}]^{ALT} (Q(f))$$

(Rooth 1985, see also Wagner 2006)

$$(13) \quad [_{TP} \text{ Jill}_1 [_{VP} [\text{only wine}_{Foc}]_2 [_{VP} t_1 \text{ brought } t_2]]]$$

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Quantifier approach over-generates

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- In addition, **no other constraint** generally prohibits a quantifier from taking wide scope out of an ellipsis site, (16) (e.g. Sag 1976, Fox 2000).

(15) a. The duke **may** marry **most** commoners. The prince may, too.
 (✓ *most* > ◇)

b. **A** boy is standing on **every** building. A girl is Δ, too.
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