Prob 1: SDE is neither necessary nor sufficient
Crimčič (2011) and Gajewski (2011).

Prob 2: Motivation of focus movement
Wagner assumes that focus movement is used to strengthen the \( \exists \)-presupposition of only. This goal, however, can be achieved simply by phonetic markings.

Prob 3: Extension Condition
Chomsky (1995): all movement operations extend the root of the structure that they apply to.

Prob 4: Associating with verbs anti-licenses NPIs
In (2), the direct object should be allowed to evacuate the VP, and the remnant VP subsequently associate with only (John Gajewski p.c. to Wagner 2006).

Prob 5: Associating into islands yields overly strong readings
Sue only invited \( \forall \) John's advisors \( \vdash \)
→ Sue didn’t invite anyone’s advisors except John’s.
\( \nexists \) Sue didn’t invite anyone except John’s advisors.

My Proposal (I): Focus Movement + Grammatical View

- The requirement of avoiding G-triviality motivates focus movement. (P2)
- When necessary, focus moves to the specifier of only. (P3)

If interpreting focus in-situ doesn’t yield a contradiction, focus isn’t moved.

- (14a) Mary only didn’t give any \( \forall \) funding to John’s
d. Only \( \exists \) [John read any \( \forall \) paper] \( \vdash \)

- (1d): Associating into islands is G-trivial (P7)
If and the focus are in the same island, only cannot license any.

- (15) \( \exists \) [any \( \forall \) paper \( \forall \) John read \( \forall \) paper] \( \vdash \)

- (2): Associating only with verbs is G-trivial (P4)
In (2), the only syntactically well-formed way to move any \( \forall \) is as follows. However, interpreting any \( \forall \) under the immediate scope of \( \exists \) also yields a contradiction. (cf. 16)

The Grammatical View of NPI-licensing

- Why is NPI any only acceptable in DE contexts?
Chierchia (2006, 2013): In a non-DE context, all the (proper) sub-domain alternatives of any are not entailed. Applying \( \exists \) negates all of them, resulting in a contradiction to the assertion and making the sentence (Grammatically)-trivial.

\[ D = \{ p_1, p_2 \} \]
\[ D-ALT = \{ \{ p_1, p_2 \}, \{ p_1 \}, \{ p_2 \} \} \]

Why does only license weak NPI any?
The assertion is DE in the unfocused part (Kritka 1995, Lahiri 1998, Chierchia 2013), and the presupposition is irrelevant for weak NPI-licensing (Gajewski 2011).

My Proposal (II): Focus Interpretation

The quantification domain of only =
- the focus value of the c-commanding domain, if focus is in-situ. (Rooth 1985)
- the focus value of the moved phrase, otherwise. (P5, P8)

\[ \forall y \exists x \in D \[ p \vdash q \] \]

\[ \exists x \in D \[ p \vdash q \] \]

\[ \exists x \in D \[ p \vdash q \] \]

\[ \forall y \exists x \in D \[ p \vdash q \] \]

\[ \exists x \in D \[ p \vdash q \] \]

Selected References


Acknowledgements

I thank Gennaro Chierchia, Noah Constant, Michael Erlewine, Danny Fox, Martin Hackl, Andrea Nicole, Hedde Zeylstra, and the audience at LF Reading Group at MIT for helpful suggestions and discussions. All errors in this work are my own responsibility.