

It-Clefts, Only, and their Combination

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Introduction

Only

It-Clefts and Identificational Focus

History of Only-Definitions

But

Coordination

Aber

Sondern

It-Clefts and Only Combined

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- ▶ It was MARY whom John invited more than three times.
- ▶ John only invited MARY more than three times.

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- ▶ It was MARY whom John invited more than three times.
- ▶ John only invited MARY more than three times.
- ▶ *Mary was the only person whom John invited more than three times.*

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- ▶ recent contribution: Van Rooij and Schulz (2005)

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- ▶ Negative contribution (assertion): *Nobody besides John came.*

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Mary out picked herself:ACC a hat
'Mary picked for herself A HAT.'

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- ▶ **Identificational Focus**, e.g. Hungarian Preverbal Focus, It-Clefts:

Mari EGY KALAPOT nézett ki magának.

Mary a hat picked out herself:ACC

'It was A HAT that Mary picked for herself.'

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- ▶ It was *[every HAT]/?[also a HAT] that Mary picked for herself.

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- ▶ (7a) John only met [Bill and Mary]_F.
- ▶ (7b) John met Bill and Mary.
- ▶ (7c) John met Bill.

Krifka (1993), Schwarzschild (1994)

Definition (2)

$$\text{only}_K(\langle F, B \rangle) = \{w \in F(B) \mid \forall F' \in \text{Alt}(F) : w \in F'(B) \rightarrow F(B) \subseteq F'(B)\}$$

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- ▶ $[[8d]] \not\subseteq [[8b]]$ & $[[8d]] \not\subseteq [[8c]]$
- ▶ *only*_K gives us the absurd proposition for (8a)

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- ▶ The sentence, therefore, picks among those worlds where $F(B)$ holds those where B is minimal.

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- ▶ Suppose, John met only Bill in w_1 . Then there is no world for which the extension of $\lambda x.[met(John, x)]$ is smaller than in w_1 .

What but can tell us about the difference between only and it-clefts (Umbach, 2004)

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- ▶ Coordinations make use of alternatives.
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- ▶ #John had a DRINK, but Mary had a MARTINI.

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- ▶ Difference: only can exclude more than one alternative.

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- ▶ It was JOHN who sang.

Comparison

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- ▶ **John only went to PARIS.**

- ▶ Did John go to BERLIN?
- ▶ John didn't go to BERLIN but to PARIS.
- ▶ **It was to PARIS that John went.**

Comparison

- ▶ Did John go to BERLIN and PARIS?
- ▶ John didn't go to BERLIN but he went to PARIS.
- ▶ John only went to PARIS.
- ▶ John might have gone to Berlin **additionally**.
- ▶ Did John go to BERLIN?
- ▶ John didn't go to BERLIN but to PARIS.
- ▶ It was to PARIS that John went.
- ▶ John might have gone to Berlin **instead**.

Two Readings

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- ▶ *There is an apple x that John ate, and John didn't eat anything else besides x .*
- ▶ *John ate an apple and nothing more substantial.* **scalar reading**

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- ▶ ?It was only a cobra that lay under my bed.
- ▶ ▶ A: It was FRED who came.
- ▶ ▶ B: No, only BILL came.

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- ▶ Only forced into scalar interpretation.

Open Questions

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- ▶ Proposed way to go: Employ the only-definition by Van Rooij/Schulz to it-clefts, taking the reversed presupposition-assertion distribution into account, cf. Krifka (1993).

Feierabend.