

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

(1) Jill **may** bring **only** wine.

- a. She is allowed to not bring anything else.
- b. She is not allowed to bring anything else.

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

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

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

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(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-yP *only*.

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

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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)

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