The relationship of the word "only," one of a class of words known as scalar particles, focus adverbs, focus inducers, or focus-sensitive particles, with the "focus" of the sentence is examined. It is suggested, based on analysis of discourse structure, that this "association with focus" is not an inherent property of this scalar particle. The finding is shown to be in agreement with the approach that suggests that the exhaustive "feeling" is a pragmatic implicature, and supports the conclusion that "association with focus" is not part of the semantics of "only," but a pragmatically induced mirage. (Author/MSE)
1 Introduction

A certain class of words, including items like only, even, and also, has been claimed to have an intimate tie with the focus of the sentence. These items, known as scalar particles, are sometimes also called 'focus adverbs' or 'focus inducers' (Karttunen & Peters 1979, Jacobs 1984, 1986) or 'focus-sensitive particles' (Kratzer 1989), and their intimate tie with focus has been named 'association with focus' (Jackendoff 1972, Rooth 1985). A radical variant of this claim argues that focus is not a non-truth-conditional informational notion, as traditionally recognized, but a truth-conditional only-type exhaustive-listing operator (Szabolcsi 1981, 1983, Svoboda & Materna 1987). While it is undeniable that a certain interaction exists between only and focus, this paper shows that 'association with focus' is not an inherent property of this scalar particle. This finding is in agreement with the approach that suggests that the exhaustiveness 'feeling' is a pragmatic implicature (Horn 1981), and supports the conclusion that 'association with focus' is not part of the semantics of only, but a pragmatically induced mirage.

2 Background

2.1 Focus and Ground

It has long been recognized that sentences are structured with respect to non-truth-conditional notions that reflect a 'packaging' of information in discourse (cf. Chafe 1976, Prince 1986). Focus-presupposition or focus/open-proposition structure (Chomsky 1971, Jackendoff 1972, Prince 1981, 1986, Ward 1985) is one of several informational articulations of the sentence that have been proposed in the literature. The presupposition is a variable-containing open structure that represents the old information or discourse-presupposed material in the sentence, i.e. that part of the sentence which is considered known to the hearer at the time of utterance. In what follows, we will use the term GROUND to refer to this material (cf. Chafe's 'background' in Chafe 1976). Its main informational force consists in anchoring the focus appropriately in the discourse model. Its complement, the focus, is the assertion of the utterance in Stalnaker's (1975) or von Stechow's (1981) terms, or its 'informative part' following Halliday (1967). The fact that the focus instantiates the variable in the ground's open-proposition is the only new information in the utterance (cf. Prince 1986). Besides, the focus is always marked by means of intonational prominence.1 Example (1) illustrates this (capitalization stands for intonational prominence):

(1) I sprinkled SALT in the stew.
   GROUND: I sprinkled x in the stew
   FOCUS: x = salt
2.2 Only

*Only* is always semantically associated with some other constituent in the sentence. This semantic association, however, does not have to be necessarily reflected in the overt syntax in a continuous constituent. Thus, while *only*+XP forms a syntactic constituent in (2), it does not do so in (3) (the element semantically associated with *only* is italicized):

(2)  
a. I *only* sprinkled salt in the stew.  
b. I *only* sprinkled salt in the stew.  
c. I sprinkled *only* salt in the stew.  
d. I sprinkled salt *only* in the stew.

(3)  
a. I *only* sprinkled salt in the stew.  
b. I *only* sprinkled salt in the stew.

The association of *only* with different parts of the sentence yields different truth-conditional interpretations. The constituent *only* is associated with has been called the ‘scope’ of *only* (Anderson 1972, Hoeksema 1989), and the ‘focus’ of *only* (Karttunen & Peters 1979, Jacobs 1982, 1984). Rooth (1985) suggests rejecting the term ‘scope’, since it is used differently elsewhere, and I wish to avoid the term ‘focus’ for obvious reasons. Therefore, I shall call the element semantically associated with *only*’s partner.

2.3 Only’s Partner and Focus

Jackendoff (1972) notices that *only*’s partner is generally intonationally prominent, i.e. it seems to be the focus of the sentence. He proposes a rule of ‘association with focus’, by means of which preverbal *only* is linked to the focus of the sentence to form an intimate semantic tie between the two. Rooth (1985) takes up on this proposal and develops it further. For him, the truth-conditional interpretation of *only* requires its association with focus. The focus element provides a p-set, a set of relevant alternates within a given discourse, which represent the quantificational domain for *only*. Rooth’s analysis will be discussed in detail in Section 5. It is clear from this approach that *only*’s partner must be the focus of the sentence. This view is found in Hoeksema (1989) as well, who affirms that the ‘scope’ of ‘focus adverbs’ —his terms— is ‘determined by intonational means, being restricted to a focus constituent’ (1989:106).

Similarly, Jacobs (1984, 1986) argues that, if a scalar particle occurs in a sentence, the focus of that sentence must be the partner of the scalar particle. Remember that, as we mentioned above, Jacobs refers to scalar particles as ‘focus inducers’. He calls the focus in sentences with scalar particles ‘bound focus’ and the focus in sentences without scalar particles ‘free focus’. Even though Jacobs is careful to point out that bound focus belongs to the domain of truth-conditional meaning and free focus to the domain of pragmatics (1986:fn.7), he also states ‘that scalar particles are focus inducers in all of their occurrences’ (1986:107). In other words, the focus of the sentence must be *only*’s partner if *only* is present.3
2.4 Focus is Only Only

These analyses represent quite a conflation of the 'meanings', in the wide sense of the word, of focus and only. It is not uncommon to find treatments that assume that focus has an implicit exhaustiveness property, even in the absence of overt exhaustiveness operators like only. This position has been taken to an extreme in the work of Szabolcsi (1981, 1983) and Svoboda & Materna (1987). It is argued by these authors that focus has nothing to do with the informational articulation of the sentence. Instead, they claim that focus is precisely an exhaustiveness operator. Svoboda & Materna, for example, equate (4)a (their ex. 17) to (4)b, and Szabolcsi (1981) would provide the translation in (4)c (which I have extrapolated from a parallel example):

(4) a. CHARLIE visited Prague.
    b. The only z that visited Prague is Charlie.
    c. For all z, z visited Prague iff z = Charlie.

I will argue below that it is incorrect to assume that only is automatically associated with focus, let alone that focus is only. But before we must look into some related work done on the relationship between exhaustiveness and it-clefts.

3 Exhaustiveness and It-Clefts

The issue of whether it-clefts entail, conventionally implicate, or conversationally implicate exhaustiveness was a matter of debate a few years ago. Halvorsen (1978) claimed that it-clefts conventionally implicate exhaustiveness. However both Horn (1981) and Atlas & Levinson (1981) attacked that position. Conventional implicatures are supposed to survive negation and yes-no questioning, but the putative exhaustiveness conventional implicature associated with it-clefts does not survive under such conditions. While it can be plausibly argued that (5)a conventionally implicates (6), it seems clear that (5)b and (5)c do not (they are, respectively, Horn's (1981) 4a, 4d, 5a, and 5b):

(5) a. It was a pizza that Mary ate.
    b. It wasn't a pizza that Mary ate.
    c. Was it a pizza that Mary ate?

(6) Mary ate nothing (within some contextually defined set) other than a pizza.

Given these and other considerations, Atlas & Levinson argue that it-clefts truth-conditionally entail exhaustiveness (basically, they posit a null only operator). Horn shows that the exhaustiveness 'feeling' cannot be truth-conditional either. If it-clefts entailed exhaustiveness, (7)b should be as felicitous as (7)a is (Horn's 11' and 11c, respectively):

(7) a. I know Mary ate a pizza, but I've just discovered that it was only a pizza that she ate.
    b. # I know Mary ate a pizza, but I've just discovered that it was a pizza that she ate.
Horn concludes that the exhaustiveness 'feeling' that it-clefts emanate is instead a generalized conversational implicature not at all confined to it-clefts.

How is this finding relevant for our purposes here? It has been convincingly argued from Akmajian (1979(1970)), Chomsky (1971) to Prince (1978, 1978) that it-clefts are special focus-ground marking constructions in that the clefted element is always the focus of the sentence. Horn's arguments against truth-conditional exhaustiveness in clefts are, in fact, arguments against truth-conditional exhaustiveness of focus in general. As already pointed out by Horn, sentence (8), where pizza is the focus, also seems to convey an exhaustiveness 'suggestion'.

(8) Mary ate a PIZZA.

This suggestion must be ascribed to pragmatics as a generalized conversational implicature as well, especially after considering the data in the following section.

4. Contrasts between Only and Focus

Following Horn's lead, I will further argue for the position that focus is not an only-type operator and, furthermore, that it is incorrect to assume that only is automatically associated with focus. If we find environments where focus and only contrast, we will have further evidence for their non-identity and, if we find sentences where the focus of the sentence is distinct from only's partner, we will have grounds for arguing that 'association with focus' is not the appropriate way to tackle the logical semantics of only.

4.1 Non-Identity of Only and Focus

First I will present some evidence that, as suggested by Horn (1981), focus is not equivalent to an exhaustiveness operator. It is clear that only and focus are not always interchangeable. One example that immediately comes to mind is the contrast in (9):

(9) a. I met NOBODY at the party.
   b. *I met only NOBODY at the party.

Of course, (9)b is semantically anomalous because only and its partner are incompatible. And that is precisely the point: focus and nobody are not incompatible. Therefore, focus and only must be non-identical. While nobody may be the focus of the sentence, it may not be the partner of only.

The contrast between focus and only need not yield ungrammaticality, as in (9), but may be a matter of infelicity in a given context. With respect to (10), it may be claimed that it is necessary that the speaker has never been to the Brazilian jungle for the sentence to be true,

(10) I've been to the CITIES in Brazil.

but that this is not the case is evident from contextualizations like (11). Notice that (11)b, with an overt only, is indeed infelicitous:
(11)  a. I knew the Amazon quite well and now I've been to the CITIES in Brazil
    b. # I knew the Amazon quite well and now I've only been to the CITIES in Brazil.

We conclude then, without further argument, that Szabolcsi's (1981, 1983) and Svorboda & Materna's (1987) position is incorrect.

4.2 Only in Non-Association with Focus

It is also possible to show that only can occur without any association with focus, in other words, that only's partner need not be the focus of the sentence. Take, for instance, example (12)a. At first blush, it may seem that the only way to utter this sentence is with prosodic prominence on John, contrary to what the capitalization in the example indicates. Rooth (1985:128), for instance, claims that in Only John loves Mary, John is obligatorily focused. But (12)a is perfectly felicitous in a context like (12)b:

(12)  a. Only John's been to the CITIES in Brazil.
    b. John and Mary know the Amazon quite well but only John's been to the CITIES in Brazil.

In (12)b only's partner is non-focal. The focus, cities, is totally independent of only and its partner.5

Also, it is well known that only may appear in the non-clefted part of it-clefts. Example (13)a is from Horn (1969; ex. 20a), and the sentence is equally acceptable with only the second only ((13)b or (13)c):

(13)  a. It's only JOHN who eats only rice.
    b. It's JOHN who eats only rice.
    c. It's JOHN who only eats rice

Since, following the aforementioned work by Prince and others, the non-clefted part of it-clefts is part of the ground, in (13)b/(13)c only and its partner are non-focal. Only's partner is also clearly non-focal in the response to the question in (14):

(14)  a. What food would you only eat if you had to?
    b. LIVER, I would only eat if I had to.

The answer in (14) is an instance of focus-preposing, a construction discussed in Prince (1981, 1986) and Ward (1985). In focus-preposing, as the very name indicates, the focus of the sentence is dislocated to a sentence initial position. It must not be confused with non-focal preposing or topicalization, where the focus of the sentence remains in situ and a subset of the ground is preposed (cf. Gundel 1974, Prince 1981). The meaning of (14)b is that the speaker would not eat liver unless s/he had to. If only were associated with focus, its meaning would be different: if s/he had to, the speaker would eat exclusively liver and no other food.
Gapping is a construction that has also been argued to mark focus-ground relationships (see Prince 1986). It is traditionally recognized that the only non-elidable part of the sentence is the focus, since it represents the only addition of information in the current discourse. If there exist gapping constructions where only and its partner constitute the gapped material, there exists another environment in which only occurs in non-association with focus. Example (15)a is a typical example where only’s partner is the focus of the sentence. The second conjunct in (15)b is an acceptable continuation of (15)a. In (15)b, only scratching is part of the ground, and therefore it is gapped. Again, we witness an example where focus is not associated with only in any way.

(15)  
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Mary only SCRATCHED the Mercedes.
\item b. Mary only SCRATCHED the Mercedes, and John — the BENTLEY.
\end{enumerate}

Finally, we can also find evidence in other languages. In Catalan, right-dislocation removes non-focal material from the clause by means of detaching it to the right, while the focus is left in clause-final position (cf. Vallduví 1988). Only — or, in this case, its Catalan equivalent només — and its partner, however, can appear in the right-dislocation slot, clearly unrelated to the focus of the sentence, as in (16)a. The sentence in (16)b is the corresponding canonical.

(16)  
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Ens en₁ NODRIM, només-d’arròs₁.  
\quad 1p-refl obj 1p-feed only of rice  
\quad Approx.: ‘(We) LIVE only on rice.’
\item b. Només ens nodrim d’arròs.
\end{enumerate}

The focus in (16)a is on the verb, not on the right-dislocated direct object. Again, there is an only that occurs with no association with focus. In fact, a similar sentence can be constructed in English, as shown by (17)b, in a context like (17)a. The relevant construction in (17)b (underlined) is a topicalization, which preposes non-focal material:

(17)  
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. When we were in China, we only lived on rice.
\item b. Boy, I'm glad I wasn't there. I'm not finicky, but only on rice I COULDN'T LIVE.
\end{enumerate}

We must conclude, then, that only’s partner need not be the focus of the sentence, i.e. that association with focus is not a necessary condition for the interpretation of only.

5 Consequences for Rooth’s Semantics of Only

5.1 Background

The fact that only is not necessarily associated with focus has obvious consequences for Rooth’s (1985) analysis of the semantics of only. Rooth sets out to account for the truth-conditional difference between (18)a and (18)b (Rooth’s 5a and 5b, Ch. 2). If John introduced Jim and Bill to Sue, (18)a is false, but (18)b might still be true.
a. John only introduced BILL to Sue.
b. John only introduced Bill to SUE.

He notices that only's partner is the focus of the sentence, i.e. that only must apparently be associated with the focus constituent, and argues that focus furnishes the selection of the domain of quantification to the semantics of only. Expanding on the older proposal in Jackendoff (1972), he proposes that focused constituents are assigned an extra denotation that generates a set of alternatives for this focus. This set of alternatives, the p-set, is obtained by substituting the focus for a variable in the predicate structure. Thus, sentence (19)a generates, along with a normal denotation, the set of propositions in (19)b, where y is the variable substituted for the focus constituent and E stands for some contextually relevant set of individuals:

\[(19)\]
\[a. \text{John introduced BILL to Sue.} \]
\[b. \{ ^\text{introduce}' (y, s)(j) | y \in E \}\]

The p-set represented by (19)b is taken as the domain of quantification needed by the meaning of only; only marks only one of the alternatives as being the case. Sentence (20)a is, then, paraphrased as in (20)b (Rooth's 47, Ch. 2):

\[(20)\]
\[a. \text{John only introduced BILL to Sue.} \]
\[b. \text{If a proposition of the form 'John introduced } x \text{ to Sue' is true, then it is the proposition 'John introduced Bill to Sue'.} \]

In other words, the p-set (alternative propositions) is made available on independent grounds by focus, and only merely uses that p-set as a domain of exhaustiveness quantification.

5.2 Problems

Given the data that we presented in the previous section, Rooth's position regarding the involvement of focus in determining the p-set becomes less plausible. Consider sentence (13)c, repeated here as (21)a. Only requires a p-set of the relevant sort to determine its domain of quantification. For (21)a, it is (21)b, where E is, say, the set of starchy foods \{bread, rice, noodles\}:

\[(21)\]
\[a. \text{It's JOHN who on'}'s eats rice.} \]
\[b. \{ ^\text{eat}' (y)(j) | y \in E \}\]
\[c. \{ ^\text{eat}' ((only)-r)(x) | x \in E \}\]

The problem here is that the p-set cannot be independently provided by focus, since only's partner is not the focus in (21)a. The focus structure of (21)a would provide the p-set in (21)c, where E is the set of, say, housemates \{Rita, John, Margo\}, for which only has no use in this sentence. This is tantamount to saying that only's partner must necessarily be assigned a second denotation that generates the p-set independent of whether it is focus or ground. In other words, only does not require association with focus to have access to the
relevant p-set, since any constituent that ends up being only's partner can generate such a p-set.

In fact, this is not surprising at all. It is well known that almost any term in a sentence can be understood as pertaining to (at least) one set of some kind. This property is by no means restricted to focus. This gives rise to the pervasive conversational and scalar implicatures that accompany almost every utterance (cf. Hirschberg 1985). Given a prosodically neutral sentence like (22)a, a number of different sets can be evoked:

(22) a. The middle-income woman bought the average-sized pick-up.
    b. The middle-income WOMAN bought the average-sized pick-up

Significantly, the same is true if focus is narrowed down to a single constituent. If, for instance, woman in is focused ((22)b), the p-sets for the other constituents do not disappear, provided that the context is such that the alternates are of some interest. See Rubinoff (1987) for some examples of scalar implicatures triggered by non-focal constituents.

Assuming that Rooth's semantics for focus are essentially right in arguing that a second denotation for only's partner is needed, we conclude from the above that the availability of such second intensional translation is not due to the presence of a focus feature at the level of logico-semantic representation. It is, rather, a more general characteristic of any linguistic phrase uttered in the appropriate context. All, or most, constituents in a sentence may generate a p-set that only may use to determine its domain. In turn, this confirms that focus is not needed in accounting for the semantics of only. Finally, all of these suggest that, if the domain selection theory for only is to be maintained (as opposed to the 'scope' theory rejected by Rooth), a new way to establish the association between ad-VP only and its partner must be found.

6 But There's a Large Overlap

While it is clear, then, that the relationship of focus and only is not a necessary one, it is also obvious that there is a large number of cases—a vast majority one should say—in which only's partner is the intonationally prominent element and indeed seems to be the focus of the sentence. In what follows, I will sketch an account of such overlap. I argue that the fact that only's partner is usually the focus of the sentence in which it occurs—although, as we have seen, not necessarily so—follows from independent pragmatic considerations.

6.1 Focus and Ground Revisited

As we mentioned briefly in Section 2.1, the material in the ground is discourse-presupposed material which does not add any information to the current discourse model. The only informational force it has is that of anchoring the informative part of the utterance—the focus—appropriately in the model. For instance, sentence (18)a/(20)a, repeated here as (23),

(23) John only introduced BILL to Sue.
reflects, roughly, the following packaging instruction: 'As for the discourse entity 'John', I direct you to retrieve the relevant open frame He introduced x to Sue and I inform you that '(only) Bill' is what instantiates the variable in it'. In other words, John’s introducing, with Sue being the goal of such introducing, must be already relevant and 'around' somehow at the time of utterance.

Now, consider the apparently semantically anomalous sentence in (24).

(24)  *John only introduced Bill to SUE.

This sentence is claimed to be unacceptable in the intended reading because only is not associated with focus. In other words, if the focus is on Sue, Sue must be interpreted as only's partner. For the sake of the argument, however, we could ask ourselves what the informational load of (24) would be. It would be along the lines of 'As for the discourse entity 'John', I direct you to retrieve the relevant open frame He introduced only Bill to x and I inform you that 'Sue' is what instantiates the variable in it'. In other words, John's introducing only Bill, —not just John's introducing Bill— must be already relevant and 'around' somehow at the time of utterance. So, in the marked cases in which only and its partner are not the informative part of the utterance —the focus— their informational force is in appropriately anchoring the focus in the discourse model. Exhaustiveness must be important for this informational task, or, otherwise, —by Gricean convention— there is no need to include it in the ground: why direct hearers to retrieve a relevant open frame He introduced only Bill to x to instantiate the focus in it, when directing them to retrieve the frame He introduced Bill to x would do the same exact job?

6.2 Semantically Anomalous or Pragmatically Unlikely?

In principle, the state of affairs that the informational structure of (24) requires is not an impossible one. In fact, all the examples of non-association with focus I introduced above represent such a state of affairs. The inclusion of exhaustiveness in the ground may indeed make a difference. However, contextual situations in which exhaustiveness is still relevant for anchoring new information but is not part of it are rare, and, therefore, so are utterances that reflect such a state of affairs. One such context, for instance, is the one in (25):

(25)  a. I know that
      1. John introduced Bill and Barb to Ralph
      2. John introduced Bill (but not Barb) to x
      b. I don’t know that
      3. x =Sue
      c. So I ask Mary
      Who did John only introduce BILL to?

A perfectly acceptable answer to (25)c in such a context —ratified by several native speakers of English— is precisely the putatively unacceptable string in (24) above, which is repeated here for convenience as (26). Notice that SUE here cannot be only’s partner, since John introduced Bill to Ralph too.
John only introduced Bill to SUE.

The contextual sophistication required for the felicity of this utterance, however, is considerably larger than the sophistication required for utterances like (23). So much so, I suggest, that when we are presented with such a string we cling to the reading where the focus is only's partner unless strong contextual pressure forces on us a reading where only's partner is non-focal. It must be concluded from this that the different truth-conditions observed in these sentences are, in principle, completely independent of the location of focus in the sentence.

6.3 Only's Partner in the Discourse History

If we look back into the discourse history previous to every utterance where only is in non-association with focus —let us call it $U_{t-1}$, we notice that, in the majority of cases, only's partner was the focus in some previous utterance $U_{t-n}$. See, as examples, (14), (15), (17), and (26). This fact is, of course, irrelevant for a static propositional semantics of the sort Rooth uses: that only's non-focal partner at $U_t$ was a focus at $U_{t-n}$ cannot be taken into account in the semantic representation of $U_t$. At $U_t$ only's partner is non-focal and still provides a second intensional translation. Discourse history is of no use.

However, a dynamic approach to truth-value computation, à la Kamp (1981) for instance, which makes use of chunks of discourse larger than the proposition, might be able to utilize the fact that only's non-focal partner at $U_t$ was a focus at $U_{t-n}$. It could be argued, for instance, that in the question-answer pair in (25)-(26), repeated here as (27),

(27) a. Who did John only introduce BILL to?
   b. John only introduced Bill to SUE.

the p-set generated by the focus and used by only as a domain of exhaustive quantification in (27)a is 'frozen' and passed down somehow to (27)b, where it is still available as a domain of quantification for only by virtue of its partner having been a focus in the relevant discourse history.

Even if such an approach could be worked out, and leaving aside the problem of disallowing only to quantify over the p-set provided by the real focus in $U_t$, we find examples where there is no explicit mention of only's non-focal partner in the discourse history:

(28) [A last-minute guest arrives at host's house. The host has known the guest's family for years]
   A: I'm glad you could come for dinner. Had I known before, I wouldn't have made pig's feet.
   B: I love pig's feet. It's my SISTER who only eats prime cuts.

Obviously, such example is felicitous only in a context where the host knows that one of the guest's family members eats only prime cuts (although there is a mix-up with respect to exactly which person), and, furthermore, where exhaustiveness is crucial in anchoring the focus in (28)B appropriately, since, presumably, the guest herself eats prime cuts too. But it is nevertheless a flawless example.
Why, then, only's non-focal partners tend to be common only if found in a $U_t$ which follows a $U_{t-1}$ in which they were focal? The answer, is, I think, very straightforward: most non-focal elements found in a $U_t$ were focal in a $U_{t-1}$. Since the focus is the informative part of the utterance, the majority of ground material in a discourse enters it as focal material at a previous time. Not all of it, however. Some of it is shared knowledge, unused material that was already available when the discourse started. Given this, the prediction is that only phrases will be acceptable as non-mentioned ground material when they represent shared knowledge and, as we said above, when exhaustiveness is important to anchor the focus appropriately. I believe example (28) satisfies both these requirements.

7 Conclusion

The approach I sketched out in Section 6 suggests that the tendency—not requirement—to associate only with focus is due to factors which are clearly pragmatic. Situations in which only and its partner are non-focal require a large degree of contextual sophistication. Situations in which exhaustiveness is part of the focus require little contextual sophistication. As a consequence, due to the pragmatic unlikelihood of non-focal exhaustiveness, we only accept only's partner as non-focal in presence of compelling contextual pressure.

Given that, in the appropriate context, cases of non-association with focus are perfectly acceptable, we should not build 'association with focus' into our semantics of only. The notion of p-set proposed by Rooth (1985), or a similar mechanism (cf. Kratzer 1989), and the domain selection theory for only seem to be helpful tools in accounting for only quantification. What I have tried to show here is that association with focus is not the right way to provide only with the correct domain of quantification, since only's partner need not be the focus: the p-set generated by only's partner second denotation, and therefore the second denotation itself, must be provided by only's non-focal partners as well. This conclusion supports the position that focus is a real packaging, informational notion that has no place in truth-conditional logico-semantic interpretation. To conclude, I would like to modestly suggest that Kratzer's (1989) 'The Representation of Focus', an important contribution to the semantics of only, be remembered, contra its title, as 'The Representation of Only's Partner (Whether It Is Focus or Not)'.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to Sharon Cote, Jack Hoeksema, Tony Kroch, Megan Moser, Ellen Prince, and Lyn Walker for an assortment of helpful suggestions, and to audiences at the 1989 LSA Meeting in Washington, D.C. and the 1990 Penn Linguistics Colloquium at the University of Pennsylvania for comments on oral versions of this paper. Still, all shortcomings are my own.

It is worth mentioning that the sense in which we use the term 'focus' here has very little to do with the usage of the same term by Grosz (1977) and Sidner (1979) and
much later work in AI. In fact, they denote precisely opposite notions.

2. In this paper, I make no reference to adjectival or conjunctional only, or to the 'volitional' only, as in If I only had a million. Synonyms of only are just and adverbial alone, as in I sprinkled salt in the stew alone, but the latter does not allow syntactic discontinuity between itself and the element it is semantically associated with.

3. It is possible to have more than one focus in a sentence (cf. She gave a BOOK to MARY, and a TAPE to JOHN). In Rooth's (1985) system, only is associated with both foci. Sentences with more than one focus, however, are not very common, and they are distinguishably marked by prosody.


5. Sentence (12)b could be understood as a double-focus reading, where both John and cities are foci. This reading is still problematic for Rooth 1985, since association with both foci is required. The meaning of (12)b with a double-focus reading, according to Rooth (1985) is 'If a proposition of the form “x has been to y in Brazil” is true, then it is the proposition “John has been to the cities in Brazil”'. In our context this is clearly not the case, since Mary has been to the jungle in Brazil (cf. Section 5 below for greater detail on this). However, in case this example is unclear, the examples that follow in the text are all cases in which only's partner is indubitably non-focal, since it is clearly found in the ground segment of focus/ground marking constructions.

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