FOCUS MOVEMENT AND ASSOCIATION WITH *ONLY* IN RUSSIAN AND CHINESE

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0. Abstract

We explore the behavior of *only* in Russian (Rus) and Chinese (Chn). Rus ***tol'ko*** and Chn ***zhiyou*** share an aggregate of properties that set them apart from English ***only***. The former two must be immediately adjacent to their focalized associate in contrast to English, where focus association can be discontinuous. We argue that this adjacency requirement is a consequence of syntactic focus movement, triggered by a strong [Foc] feature. The movement of this type results in right-adjunction of an F-marked constituent to ***only***, yielding an appropriately local feature-checking configuration. On a more substantial theoretical level, we hypothesize that adjacency to ***only*** is symptomatic of syntactic movement for focus and predict that the adjacency to ***only*** is obligatory in languages with syntactic focus movement. Furthermore, we demonstrate that Rus/Chn ***only*** itself is limited to a handful of positions within the structure. Specifically, it must meet two requirements in order to merge successfully. First, ***only*** adjoins strictly to functional projections. Second, these functional projections themselves must also be phases. Ultimately, the goal is to demonstrate that ***only*** can adjoin to *v*P, CP and FP: i.e. phasal functional projections in the verbal, clausal and nominal domains. Our analysis bears on the issues of verb raising, interpretation, and pied-piping.

1. Facts and preliminaries

[1.1] adjacency

Unlike English (1), where *only* can be associated with either argument in the predicate, yielding distinct truth conditional interpretations (Rooth 1985), Rus *tol'ko* and Chn *zhiyou* impose an adjacency requirement, as demonstrated by ungrammatical (2) and (3). To render (2)/(3) acceptable, *tol'ko* and *zhiyou* must surface next to their F-marked associates (in (4)).

(1) a. John **only** introduced [BILL]$_F$ to Sue.
b. John **only** introduced Bill [to SUE]$_F$.

(2) a. *Andrej **tol'ko** ispek [PIROG]$_F$ dlja sestry. [Rus]
Andrey only baked pie for sister
Intended: 'Andrey only baked [A PIE]$_F$ for his sister.'
b. *Andrej **tol'ko** ispek pirog [DLJA SESTRY]$_F$.

(3) a. *Zhangsan **zhiyou** kao [DANGAO]$_F$ gei jiejie. [Chn]
Zhangsan only bake cake for sister
b. *Zhangsan **zhiyou** kao dangao [GEI JIEJIE]$_F$.

(4) a. Andrej **tol'ko** [PIROG]$_F$ ispek dlja sestry. [Rus]
b. Andrej **tol'ko** [DLJA SESTRY]$_F$ ispek pirog.
c. Zhangsan **zhiyou** [DANGAO]$_F$ kao gei jiejie. [Chn]
d. Zhangsan **zhiyou** [GEI JIEJIE]$_F$ kao dangao.

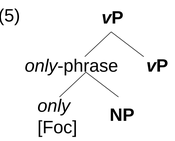
Proposal:

- Rus/Chn *only* has a strong [Foc] feature checked by a focused XP.
- Checking relationship between *only* and its associate must be local.
- In order to establish an appropriate checking configuration, the focused constituent must move to *only.*

FOCUS MOVEMENT:

- right-adjunction to *only*, as in (5): NP adjoins to *only*. On a par with Rudin's (1988) account Bulgarian MWF: right-adjunction forms a constituent, which is not splittable. This prohibition on splitting holds of Rus/Chn *only*+XP as well.
- Movement is A-bar (phrasal) displacement (see, e.g. Wagner 2006).

(5)



[1.2] Rus/Chn *only* = adverbial only

Unlike its English counterpart, Rus/Chn ***only*** is not generated inside the NP (see also Erlewine 2015 for Chn), because it:

- **cannot modify the second adjective if there is more than one**

(6) a. *krasivaja **tol'ko** staraja mašina [Rus]
*piaoliang, **zhiyou** lao-de che [Chn]
pretty only old car
b. krasivaja **očen'** staraja mašina [Rus]
piaoliang, **hen** lao-de che [Chn]
pretty very old car

- **cannot be wedged in between a P and an NP**

(7) a. *v **tol'ko** bol'šoj bank [Rus]
*zai **zhiyou** da yinhang [Chn]
in only big bank
b. v **očen'** bol'šoj bank [Rus]
zai **hen** da-de yinhang [Chn]
in very big bank

➢ *Only* is not generated in the NP → adjacency is a result of movement.

[1.3] position of *only*+XP

Rus-Chn divergence: **surface placement** of the *only*-complex.

Rus word order: *only*+XP > V or V> *only*+XP

(8) a. Andrej **tol'ko** [PIROG]$_F$ ispek dlja sestry.
Andrey only cake baked for sister
b. Andrej **tol'ko** [DLJA SESTRY]$_F$ ispek pirog.
c. Andrej ispek **tol'ko** [PIROG]$_F$ dlja sestry.
d. Andrej ispek pirog **tol'ko** [DLJA SESTRY]$_F$.

Chn word order: *only*+XP>V but ***V>only*+XP**

(9) a. Zhangsan **zhiyou** [DANGAO]$_F$ kao gei iejie.
Zhangsan only cake baked for sister
b. Zhangsan **zhiyou** [GEI JIEJIE]$_F$ kao dangao.
c. *Zhangsan kao **zhiyou** [DANGAO]$_F$ gei jiejie.
d. *Zhangsan kao dangao **zhiyou** [GEI JIEJIE]$_F$.

Proposal:

➢ *only* in both languages is an adjunct to *v*P, as in (5). XP$_F$ must move to it in syntax. The difference stems from the behavior of verbs:

➲ Rus: finite verbs = Pollock's French infinitives. They move optionally to a higher projection (Gribanova 2013 for V-movement in Rus);
➲ Chn: finite verbs are confined to *v*P (Huang 1991). Chn is a good diagnostic language for the base position of *only.*

[1.4] interpretation

Taglicht (1984): in English, if *only* is part of DP, there is ambiguity in (10), otherwise, no ambiguity (11):

(10) I knew that he had learnt only Spanish. [adnominal]
a. *knew* > *only*: I knew he hadn't learnt any other language.
b. *only* > *knew*: I didn't know he had learnt any other language.

(11) a. I knew that he had **only** learnt Spanish. OK*knew* > *only*; **only* > *knew*
b. I **only** knew that he had learnt Spanish. OK*only* > *knew*; **knew* > *only*

Chn:

(12) Wo zhidao ta **zhiyou** [XIBANYAWEN]$_F$ cai xue-guo.
I know he only Spanish then learn-ASP
OK*knew>only; *only>knew*

Rus:

(13) a. Ja ugovoril dočku [vyučit' **tol'ko** [ISPANSKIJ]$_F$].
I convinced daughter to.learn only Spanish
[i] OKconvinced> only: I convinced her to learn no other language.
[ii] *only > convinced: I didn't convince her to learn any other language.
b. Ja ugovoril dočku **tol'ko** [ISPANSKIJ]$_F$ vyučit'.
OK*convinced> only;* OK*only > convinced*
c. Ja **tol'ko** [ISPANSKIJ]$_F$ ugovoril dočku [vyučit'].
**convinced> only;* OK*only > convinced*

➢ *Only* in Rus/Chn is interpreted in the clause, in which it appears. **But** (13b): if *only* is between a matrix and an embed it can be understood to belong in either clause (Rus ≈ German; see Büring & Hartmann 2001).

[1.5] apparent cases of non-compliance with adjacency

Three contexts in which adjacency from [1.1] appears to be violated:

- **Head focus in the presence of modifiers**

(14) a. On **tol'ko** [*medlenno* [XODIT]$_F$]. [Rus]
Ta **zhiyou** [*manman* [ZOU]$_F$]. [Chn]
he only slowly walks
b. Ya **tol'ko** *kompetentnogo* [XIRURGA]$_F$ išču. [Rus]
Wo **zhiyou** *lihai-de* WAIKE.YISHENG hai zai zhao. [Chn]
I only competent surgeon search

- **NPs with multiple adjectives in which the lower one is F-marked**

(15) **tol'ko** [krasivaja [STARAJA]F mašina] [Rus]
zhiyou [piaoliang, [IAO]$_F$-de che] [Chn]
only pretty old car

- **Within Rus genitive complements to nouns:**

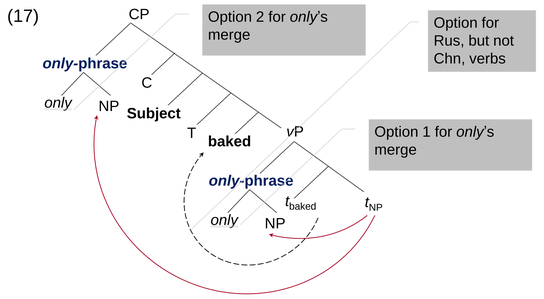
(16) Ja znaju **tol'ko** [studentov [PERVOGO$_F$ kursa]].
I know only students$_{ACC}$ first$_{GEN}$ year$_{GEN}$

2. Analysis and discussion

Structure in (17) captures the analysis thus far:

➢ *only* can be generated either as an adjunct to CP or *v*P.
➢ [XP]$_F$ moves to adjoin to it.
➢ The dotted arrow indicates an option for Rus, but not Chn, verbs

(17)



Objective now: to show that *only* is eligible to adjoin strictly to *v*P, CP or FP, i.e. functional projections and phases within a verbal, sentential, and nominal domain, respectively.

[2.1] why no focus in TP?

Evidence from Rus Y/N questions: the Q-marker *li* is an enclitic with one prosodic word (1W) requirement, so it cannot tolerate more than one word before it (cf. (c) and (d)). The neutral Y/N embed is in (a), (b/c) have a focus construal, "I don't know whether it was Ivan who…".

(18) a. Ja ne znaju, kupil **li** Ivan novuju mašinu.
I neg know bought Q Ivan new car
'I don't know whether Ivan bought a new car.'
b. Ja ne znaju, Ivan **li** kupil mašinu.
c. Ja ne znaju, novuju **li** mašinu Ivan kupil.
d. *Ja ne znaju, novuju mašinu **li** Ivan kupil.

Zanon (2015): *li* is in C^0. V adjoins to C in (18a), serving as a proper host for *li* in PF. XPs move to Spec, CP. If this XP contains several stressed elements, *li is* placed to the left of the first stressed one:

(19) a.... [new car ***li*** ...] → syntax output
b.... [new ***li*** car] → PF rearrangement to satisfy 1W of *li*

Combining this with *only*: suppose Option 1 in (17) is selected and V moves to adjoin to C. Prediction: since there is no position for *only* in TP, objects, but **not** subjects, can be associated with *only.* Borne out:

(20) I don't know…
a. ?*posmotrel li **tol'ko** IVAN$_F$ étot fil'm.
watched Q only Ivan this movie
b. posmotrel li Ivan **tol'ko ÉTOT**$_F$ fil'm.

Option 2 in (17) and XP-fronting, as in (21a). Prediction: both subject and object can associate with CP-adjoined *only here* (movement of XP is followed by PF reordering in (21a). Borne out in (22).

(21) a. [$_{CP}$ *only* + XP **li** [$_{TP}$ …**VERB** [$_{vP}$ …]]
b. *only* **li** XP → PF rearrangement; 1W of *li* is satisfied

(22) a. …tol'ko li IVAN$_F$ posmotrel étot film.
b. …tol'ko li ÉTOT$_F$ Ivan posmotrel fil'm.

➢ Pattern in (13) follows:
(13a): *only* is adjunct to embedded vP; (13c) – adjunct to matrix *v*P
Outlier in (13b) has two potential derivations:

(23) a. [$_{CP1}$… VERB… [**only+NP** infinitive $t_{only+NP}$]]
b. [$_{CP1}$… VERB **only+NP** t_{VERB}… [infinitive t_{NP}]]

CP-adjoined *only* can associate with a clause. In (24), the entire proposition must be in the scope of *only.*

(24) a. **Zhiyou** dajia yiqi nuli, women cai neng chenggong
only we together work.hard we then can succeed
'Only if we/everyone work hard together, then we can succeed.'
b. **Tol'ko** kogda ty stanoviš'sja vzroslym, ty ponimaeš'…
only when you become adult you understand
c. ***Kogda tol'ko**…

[2.2] *only* adjoins to phases that are functional XPs

The obvious commonality between CP and *v*P is phasehood. Or, more generally:

(25) ***only* adjoins to phases**

The objective is to show that (25) holds across the domains: clausal, verbal, and nominal.

Bošković's (2014)'s dynamic approach to phases: the highest phrase in the extended domain of a lexical head functions as a phase. Assuming that Rus has no DP (Bošković 2013):

(26a): NP is the highest phrase in the nominal domain; so a phase.
(26b): FP (functional projection mediating GEN assignment; Bošković 2013) assumes the role of a phase, since it is the highest projection in the domain of N. (26b) is the structure for the *student*-phrase in (16).

(26) a. [V [$_{NP}$ Adj N]] b. [N [$_{FP}$ F [$_{NP}$ Adj N]]]
^phase ^phase

Problem: an NP is a phase under Bošković's (2014) account. But *only* cannot adjoin to NP in Rus/Chn. An amendment for (25):

(27) ***only* adjoins to phases that are also functional projections**

Two options in (28): in (a),*only* is merged with *v*P, the entire *student*-phrase moves to it; in (b), *only* is merged with FP (licit given (27)).

(28) a. Ja znaju **tol'ko** [studentov [PERVOGO$_F$ kursa]]. (=16)
b. Ja znaju [studentov **tol'ko** [PERVOGO$_F$ kursa]].

[2.3] explaining discontinuous association from [1.5]

In each case of felicitous non-adjacency to *only*, the focalized element cannot be extracted → a larger phrase must be pied-piped to *only*.

Table 1

(14)	Head focus	Heads do not undergo phrasal movement (which is what focus movement is)
(15)	Lower adjective focus	In Rus: impossible to extract this adjective skipping over an intervener (Bošković 2016)
(16)	Adj inside Gen complements	Deep LBE is prohibited: *Ja pervogo znaju [studentov [*t* kursa]].

Furthermore, every instance in [1.5] shares a common property: the intervener and the focalized constituent are dominated by the same phrase. The latter is a minimal unit that is eligible for movement. So, while **the F-marked element itself cannot move** (Table 1**), it can tag along with the first movable XP**, which contains the intervener. Hence, there are limits imposed on the weight of the moving constituent. This "weight" requirement is understood in terms of minimal pied-piping (see Bošković 2004, Chomsky 1995, Stateva 2002 on minimal pied-piping).

➢ (14a): *only* is adjoined to *v*P → no need to move;
➢ (14b): the minimal mobile XP, containing the intervener and [N]$_F$ is NP, so that is what moves; the same applies to (15) and (16).

3. Conclusion

- Rus/Chn *only* is adverbial (generated outside of NP);
- Rus *tol'ko* & Chn *zhiyou* must be adjacent to [XP]$_F$ → result of obligatory movement to *only* (for feature checking);
- Apparent violations of adjacency arise when an F-marked element cannot move → minimal pied-piping in this case.
- The positions of merge for *only* are severely restricted: it is eligible to adjoin strictly phases that are also functional projections;
- Hypothesis: adjacency to *only* is expected to be obligatory in languages argued to have syntactic focus movement

References

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