

The Only Thesis

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written by

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If you expect nothing...you are never disappointed.

Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the meaning of *only*. This thesis presents a number of puzzling examples drawn from Kai von Fintel's work, as well as a dataset I extracted from an online corpus. Following Zeevat (2009), I argue that the semantic contribution of *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation and extend his analysis of *only* such that I am able to account for the classic exclusive use of *only*, Kai von Fintel's puzzling data, as well as the new data I have collected from an the online corpus.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to provide a detailed account of three different uses of *only* in the attempt to develop a unified meaning for the word. I will argue that the three uses of *only* are: the constituent use, the propositional use, and the non-assertoric use. The topic of this thesis is inspired by Kai von Stechow's course, "The Only Class," which he taught at the 2019 Crete Summer School of Linguistics, also known as CreteLing2019. During the course, von Stechow presented previous work done on the exclusive use of *only*, his work on exceptives (von Stechow (1993)), and the joint work with Sabine Iatridou that explores *only* as a connective and argued for its exceptive nature. He concluded the class by challenging us students to work on reconciling exclusive and connective *only*, and floated one example of a mysterious use of *only*. This thesis is an effort to stand up to that challenge.

The task at hand is to provide a unified analysis of *only* that can account for its uses in the various examples presented below,

- (1) Only [Coriander]_F cleaned the shelf.
- (2) Coriander only [cleaned]_F the shelf.
- (3) They're a nice person, only they talk to much.
- (4) I saw every player, only I didn't see Star Anise.
- (5) Sage is healthy, only they have high blood pressure.
- (6) #They ran everyday, only they get out of breath on the stairs.
- (7) #It's raining, only I'm bringing an umbrella.
- (8) #Sage isn't healthy, only they have normal blood pressure.
- (9) #The house is very dilapidated, only it's in a nice location.
- (10) It's going to rain tomorrow...only don't use that as an excuse to skip class! (otherwise...)

(1) and (2) are examples of the exclusive use of *only* and what some researchers call *only's* "ordinary" use. (1) states that Coriander cleaned the shelf,

and no one but Coriander cleaned the shelf.¹ (2) states that Coriander cleaned the shelf and did nothing else to the shelf; for example, Coriander didn't disinfect the shelf. There is more Coriander could have done, but they decided not to. (2) is an example of *only* being used to produce a scalar reading. First brought onto the scene by Horn (1969), we can state that exclusive *only* has the following properties: it is a form of generalized negation, there is asymmetry in its meaning due to the prejacent being presupposed and the negation of its alternatives asserted, it is cross-categorical, it is focus sensitive, and it has an evaluative/scalar meaning. The research done on this use generally focuses on one of these properties. In this thesis I will not contribute to this already rich debate. Instead, I will take these properties for granted and explore how they compare to the uses of *only* in the other examples.

(3)-(10) are the examples von Fintel presented in *The Only Course* and challenged us to account for. Let's begin with (3). (3) is an example of von Fintel's "connective *only*." Jespersen originally presented this example in Jespersen (1949). The sentence was presented to us in *The Only Class* as puzzling because, here, *only* can be replaceable with an exceptive, such as *but*, and *except*.

(11) They're a nice person, but/except they talk to much.

In fact, in all examples (3)-(5), *but* can replace *only* and the sentence remains felicitous. Why is this the case? Well, it appears these examples are evidence that *only* and *but* share similarities. However, a curious observation is that while *only* is infelicitous in (6)-(9), when replaced with *but*, the sentences become felicitous.

(12) They ran everyday, but they get out of breath on the stairs.

(13) It's raining, but I'm bringing an umbrella.

(14) Sage isn't healthy, but they have normal blood pressure.

(15) The house is very dilapidated, but it's in a nice location.

We can conclude that while (3)-(5) support the claim that *only* and *but* share similarities, (6)-(9) prove that their kinship only runs so deep. But what's the problem with this? During *The Only Class*, von Fintel presented the connective use as being incompatible with the exclusive use because it seemed to be acting as an exceptive. Moreover, unlike the exclusive use, it appears that with the connective use, i) it is unclear what is being negated, ii) the relationship between what is presupposed and what is asserted is blurred, iii) it does not appear to be focus sensitive, and iv) there does not seem to be an evalua-

¹Aside from classic examples, the proper names that occur in this thesis are the names of spices one can find in their kitchen cabinet. I've made the decision to change the proper names in the effort to break the habit semanticists have of using explicitly gendered, often Anglo-conforming, proper names, which tend to facilitate gender stereotypes within examples. When the reader comes across the name of a spice I simply ask them to assume the name still refers to an individual, and not an actual spice. Language exists within society and society has norms. The examples we choose to use in our research can either enforce these social norms of the past or reflect the change we want to see in the future.

tive/scalar meaning as is the case with the exclusive use. Yet, if this observation is true, what can we make of the following examples? The two following examples taken from Oscar Wilde's 1907 publication of *Salomé*,

(16) Why? Kings have but one neck, like other folk.

(17) I will not listen to thee. I listen but to the voice of the Lord God.

This use seldom occurs in current, colloquial, English. We tend to use exceptive *but* more frequently and this exclusive use sounds rather antiquated. Yet this meaning is still accessible, and perhaps is a footprint of an earlier time when the use was more common. Regardless of its frequency, the fact that *but* can be used exclusively should not be ignored. It is known exclusive *but* exists, though the literature on contrastive connectives has yet to reconcile this use.

This observation and the data I present here has lead me to disagree with the idea that the properties of these two uses, the connective use and the exclusive use of *only* are incompatible. In fact, I hope to show that all instances of *only* above share the same use, contrary to von Fintel's observations.

Let's talk about (10). (10) was presented to the students of The Only Class on the last day of the course as a mystery. von Fintel avowed that he did not know what to make of *only*'s purpose in this sentence. At a first glance it seems to share characteristics with (3)-(9), but upon a closer look the two clauses *only* is comparing seem to have a different relation than the previously mentioned examples. What is even more curious is the fact that *only* introduces an imperative. When this example was presented (and for quite some time after) I also did not know what to make of it. In fact, it is because of this state of bewilderment I decided to gather more instances of this use and conduct a corpus study the results of which are presented in the penultimate chapter of the thesis.

In accordance with Zeevat (2009), I argue that the semantic contribution of *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation. I identify three different uses of *only*: a constituent use, a propositional use, and a non-assertoric use. The constituent use refers to the "ordinary" exclusive use, as well as the scalar reading; this refers to instances when *only* focuses a constituent in a clause. The propositional use refers to instances when *only* behaves as a contrastive connective, such as in examples (3)-(9); it refers to those instances where *only* compares two propositions by focusing the second. The last use is the pragmatic, non-assertoric use as in (10). This use refers to instances when *only* compares two propositions, the second of which is a non-assertoric speech act, such as a question or an imperative. Though the content of focus differs between each use, I will show that my extended analysis of *only* can be used to account for each use.

I hope to show that the three different uses are not as irreconcilable as they seem. In Chapter 2, I will present a brief overview of the research done on the exclusive use of *only* and describe its properties in further detail. Chapter 3 will provide the necessary background information on adversative connectives and exceptives, specifically how *but* is analyzed as an exceptive and as an adversative connective. Understanding the research on exceptives and ad-

versative connectives is crucial for extending the findings the analysis of *only*. Chapter 4 will present the outcome of this extension. In Chapter 4 I show how *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation. It is in this chapter that I will present my extended analysis of *only* and take the time to show how it can account for the examples we have seen thus far. It is in this chapter that I will also show how the analysis can account for the differences between *only* and *but*. In Chapter 5 I will discuss *only*'s pragmatic use, the non-assertoric use. Since there is not a great deal of research done on sentences like (10), Chapter 5 will begin with the presentation of sentences I extracted from The Movie Corpus. In the chapter I will present initial observations and conclusions based on the larger dataset and attempt to apply the extended analysis of *only* to capture this mysterious use. The thesis concludes with a summary of my findings and a discussion on possible future work.

Chapter 2

Exclusive *Only*

In this chapter I will briefly review properties of the exclusive use of *only*. When it comes to *only*, its use as an exclusivity marker takes center stage in the research done on the particle. Rightfully so, exclusive *only* has various properties that are worthy of investigation and are quite informative from a semantic perspective. Having said this, this overview is brief because the purpose of this thesis is not to engage in the fruitful discussion of *only*'s exclusive nature. The inclusion of this chapter is meant to be an introduction and review of the work done on the particle thus far. Moreover, I must take a position on this use in order to reconcile it with the *only*'s two uses in my proposal that I will present in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

2.1 *Only*'s Properties

In the Introduction I indirectly mentioned that exclusive *only* has various properties. Below, is a clear list of these properties,

1. it is form of generalized negation
2. it has an asymmetric meaning
3. it is cross-categorial
4. it is focus sensitive - alternatives are generated with focus¹
5. it has an evaluative/scalar meaning

There is a large amount of literature written about the nature of each of these properties, and I am certain that stating that these are the properties of exclusive *only* will cause disagreement among some researchers. However, in general, these properties can be observed in sentences where exclusive *only* appears. Let's take a look at each property in further detail.

¹Whether or not exclusive *only* is always focus sensitive is up for debate. See Vallduví (1993) and De Hoop (1995) who both argue that the semantics of *only* is in principle independent of focus.

2.1.1 The Asymmetric Meaning

The exclusive *only* is described as consisting of two parts. Consider the following example,

(1) Only Muriel voted for Hubert.

(1) can be described as consisting of the following components:

1. Muriel voted for Hubert.
2. Nobody other than Muriel voted for Hubert.

In his 1969 paper, "A Propositional Analysis of Only and Even," Laurence Horn presents (1), which had been discussed previously by Lakoff (1968) and others. Here *Muriel voted for Hubert* is said to be the prejacent, the presupposed content. *Nobody other than Muriel voted for Hubert* is the asserted information that negates the idea that anyone other than Muriel voted for Hubert. In this way, *only* is said to be a form of generalized negation. Support for the idea that the prejacent is presupposed is supported by the "Hey, Wait a Minute" presupposition test, introduced by Shanon (1976) and later used by von Stechow (1997)²,

- (2) Speaker A: Only Muriel voted for Hubert.
Speaker B: Wait a minute, I didn't know Muriel voted for Hubert.

The goal of this test is to show that presupposed information is taken to be "background" information, that is, information that is not the main point of the interpretation of the sentence. Saying "hey, wait a minute..." is evidence that Muriel voting for Hubert was taken to be a known fact at the time of utterance. It is evidence that Speaker A assumed Speaker B knew that Muriel voted for Hubert; it is evidence that such information was presupposed.

2.1.2 Cross-Categoriality

Exclusive *only* is cross-categorial. Consider the following sentences,

- (3) a. Only [the dog]_F knew where the toy was.
b. Only [dancing]_F cures the heart.
c. The flag flies only [when the Queen is home]_F.
d. Ana only [brought a cake]_F.

Only can be used with a variety of grammatical categories; it is not restricted to solely proper names. It is seen in the examples above, *only* may also focus noun phrases such as *the dog*, and adverbs such as *when*. A unified analysis of *only* must take its cross-categoriality into consideration.

²There is a doubt whether the structure of the "Hey! Wait a minute test" accurately proves the existence of a presupposition. von Stechow himself avows that one could reply "hey, wait a minute" to any utterance. However for the sake of this thesis, I believe restricting ourselves only to sentences which contain *only*, this test is adequate.

2.1.3 Focus Sensitivity

Exclusive *only* is focus sensitive. This was seen in example (3), yet its focus sensitivity can be used with the same sentence to produce different interpretations. This means that using the same order and set of lexical items, a speaker may convey different information depending on their intonation. Consider the canonical examples provided by Horn (1969),

- (4)
- a. Muriel only [voted]_F for Hubert. (She didn't campaign for him).
 - b. Muriel only [voted for Hubert]_F. (She didn't go shopping afterwards)
 - c. Muriel only voted for [Hubert]_F. (She didn't vote for anyone else)
 - d. Only [Muriel]_F voted for Hubert. (No one else voted for him)

Each sentence in (4) has a different interpretation depending on which constituents are stressed. Focusing a constituent creates a set of alternatives (depending on the constituent) of which *only* negates and states that the constituent in focus is the unique, and true propositions in the set of alternatives. In (4b) the speaker is highlighting the VP, *voted for Hubert*. In doing so, the speaker creates a contextually restricted set of alternatives of VPs that Muriel could have done. For example, she could have stopped by the library, gone to the grocery store, etc. *Voting for Hubert* is also in this set of alternatives, and *only* selects it and with it marks it as the unique, true VP which Muriel did and, consequently, negates all other options in the set. Authors have debated about the semantics of these alternatives generated by focus. Some notable positions are presented in Alonso-Ovalle and Hirsch (2018) and von Stechow and Iatridou (2007).

2.1.4 The Scalar Meaning

Exclusive *only* is also known for its scalar interpretation. Consider (5)

- (5) Muriel only [voted]_F for Hubert.

By focusing *voted*, *only* creates a set of negated alternatives as was demonstrated in the previous section. Thus, Muriel didn't campaign for Hubert, nor did she fund-raise for him, etc. However, (5) also conveys an evaluative reading. That is, (5) can be read in judgemental sort of way. We can imagine a situation where some of Muriel's acquaintances are at dinner and are talking about her involvement in Hubert's campaign, and a not-so-good-acquaintance of Muriel states, snobbishly, "Well, she only [voted]_F for Hubert. It's not like she was a major player in his campaign...." Not only does the listener identify the set of alternatives that *only* negates, but the listener can also grasp the evaluative tone of the speaker. *Only* presents a set of negated alternatives and states that the exception of the set of alternatives is evaluated low on the list of alternatives. Different researchers have argued about the nature of this "rank" of alternatives that *only* negates. Coppock and Beaver (2014), Clark (1993),

Alonso-Ovalle and Hirsch (2018), Van Rooij (2002), and Greenberg (2018) have all written extensively about this observation.

2.2 *Only's* Translation

How does one choose an adequate analysis of *only*? Given the plethora of literature, it isn't a simple task. Yet, after considering all the data, I believe it is best to base my extended analysis of *only* on Zeevat (2009), while also using features presented in Horn's account and Van Rooij (2002). I hope that by the end of the thesis this decision will be supported by the data I present. Let's now take a moment to review either of the three proposals.

2.2.1 Horn's Analysis

I have already discussed Horn above, but I would like to point out what from his analysis will be used later in the proposal. Specifically, the two part structure of *only*: the presupposed information and the asserted information, and the relation between them. Consider (1), repeated here,

(6) Only Muriel voted for Hubert.

In (6), the presupposed information is *Muriel voted for Hubert*, and the asserted information is, *Nobody other than Muriel voted for Hubert*. Horn concludes that the "main point" of the interpretation of the sentence is the asserted information; the fact that nobody other than Muriel voted for Hubert.

The relationship between (6) and its components is debated. Specifically, researchers argue about the relation between (7b) and (7a) listed here below,

- (7)
- a. Only Muriel voted for Hubert.
 - b. Muriel voted for Hubert.
 - c. Nobody other than Muriel voted for Hubert.

It is generally agreed that (7c) is asserted information, such that (7c) is what is asserted when (7a) is uttered. However, it is not generally agreed that (7b) is presupposed when (7a) is uttered. In "Exclusive Company: Only and the Dynamics of Vertical Inference," Laurence Horn identifies 5 different theories arguing for different relationships between (7a) and (7b). Using the terminology of his paper, in this thesis I support Theory P's claim that (7a) entails (7c), and that (7a) semantically and logically presupposes (7b), and if (7b) is false, (7a) is neither true nor false.

2.2.2 van Rooij's Analysis

In the paper, "Relevance Only," van Rooij works through the semantics of *only's* scalar interpretation. I want to highlight van Rooij's ordering operator $>$. This ordering operator is one of relevance in which " $w, \llbracket B(F) \rrbracket$ " is (one of)

the most relevant true proposition(s) among the alternatives.” His analysis of *only* is as follows,

$$(8) \quad \llbracket \text{only}\langle B, F \rangle \rrbracket = \{w \in \llbracket B(F) \rrbracket : \neg \exists F' [F' \neq F \wedge B(F')(w) \wedge \llbracket B(F') \rrbracket \geq \llbracket B(F) \rrbracket]\}$$

In this analysis, *B* is the background, *F* is the focus. (8) says that *only* $\langle B, F \rangle$ states that there does not exist an *F'* (an alternative to *F*) such that *F'* is not equivalent to *F* whilst also satisfying *B*, and that *B(F')* is more relevant or equally as relevant as *B(F)*. Simply put, if it is the case that $\llbracket \text{only}\langle B, F \rangle \rrbracket$, then there is not alternative to *F*, such that *B(F')* is more, or equally as, relevant as *B(F)*. Moreover, (8) states that *only**B(F)* not only says that *B(F)* is a best answer, but that it is the unique one.

2.2.3 Zeevat’s Analysis

The analysis I propose in Chapter 4 is an extended analysis of *only* presented in Zeevat’s paper, “Only As A Mirative Particle.” The paper defends four theses:

1. The semantic contribution of *only* is only low quantity mirativity: less than expected
2. Other aspects- in particular exhaustivity- are in effect of “focus”: the host has to be interpreted as the exhaustive answer to its topic question³.
3. *Only* forces the host to have that interpretation
4. Except for (2) and (3) an *only*-sentence means the conjunction of *only* and its host.

Zeevat argues that *only* does not mean “to the exclusion of others,” contrary to accounts we have seen thus far. For Zeevat, the fact that *only*-sentences entail exhaustivity is due to disambiguation: “the interpretation as the exhaustive answer to the question corresponding to its topic (2) is a possible meaning of the host, forced by the presence of *only* (3). *Only* itself has a different task, denying an expectation.” The motivation for claiming *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation comes from the following puzzle. A result of Rooth (1985) is that the following two sentences, with focus on *Susan* come out to mean the same thing,

(9) John likes [Susan]_F.

(10) John likes only [Susan]_F.

Zeevat argues that intuitively this is not true. There is something *only* does in (10) that makes the sentence different from the first, namely, the denial of an expectation. Similar reasoning can be used to distinguish question-answer pairs, such as the following,

³For Zeevat, host = preajacent.

- (11) a. Who showed up?
b. Only John
- (12) a. Who showed up?
b. John

If the contribution of *only* is merely to give an exhaustive answer, than answers (11b) and (12b) would have the same meaning and the addition of *only* would be superfluous.

Zeevat's analysis of *only* is as follows:

$$(13) \quad \llbracket \text{only}(\alpha(c)) \rrbracket : \alpha(c), \text{weak}(x, \alpha(c+x)) : \forall x(x \not\subseteq c \rightarrow \neg\alpha(x))$$

In (13), the left side of the colon is presupposed, where $\alpha(c)$ is the host (the prejacent) and *weak* is the operator that states $(x, \alpha(c+x))$ is weakly presupposed. It is presupposed that some individual c has some property α and that it is weakly presupposed that some other disjoint entity x with c , has property α . It is important to note that for Zeevat a weak presupposition is that which is not necessarily part of the common ground, there may be reasons for thinking $(x, \alpha(c+x))$, as well as reasons for thinking $(x, \alpha(c+x))$ is not the case. Weak presupposition allows for expectation without the possibility of arriving at a contradiction. The right side of the colon is the assertion. It states that for all x , if x is disjoint from c or exceeds c , $\alpha(x)$ is false. In other words, the assertion states that "an exhaustive answer can be seen as a non-exhaustive answer together with the statement that other answers, disjoint from c or exceeding c are false.

Since the analysis I propose is an extension of Zeevat's account I'd like to take the time and go through an example. Consider the following example posed by Umbach (2005),

- (14) Yesterday, only Ronald did the shopping.

An analysis of *only* is the following,

$$(15) \quad S(r), \text{weak}(x, S(r+x)) : \forall x(x \not\subseteq r \rightarrow \neg S(x))$$

Here, (15) states that some individual r , Ronald, did the shopping, S , and it is weakly presupposed that some other entity, x , disjoint with r , also satisfies S . *Only* then asserts that for all x , if it is disjoint or exceeds r , it is not the case that x satisfies S . Simply put, Ronald did the shopping and it is weakly presupposed that Ronald plus someone else did the shopping. *Only* asserts that if it is the case that there is indeed someone else who is distinct from Ronald, then that someone else did not do the shopping. *Only* denies the weak presupposition.

Chapter 3

Adversative Connectives

In the Introduction I claimed that there are three uses of *only*, the second of which is a propositional use of *only* that focuses a proposition. I plan to show in the fourth chapter that the propositional use, as well as the non-assertoric use, of *only* behaves like an adversative connective. In order to make that connection later, I will first review the literature on exceptives and adversative connectives from which I develop my argument. This chapter will focus on *but*. I will briefly review the classic analysis of *but* as an exceptive and after, its use as an adversative connective; specifically, its use as an adversative connective that denies an expectation. The primary reason for this is the existence of similarities between *only* and *but* that I highlighted in the Introduction. Based on their similarities one could conclude that perhaps *only* can be used as an exceptive. I will argue later that this is not the case. To reach that conclusion we first need to review the properties of exceptives and those of adversative connectives in order to support that claim.

3.1 An Analysis of *But*

The canonical work on exceptives is von Stechow's 1993 work, *Exceptive Constructions*. In it, the author proposes a recipe for defining exceptives. The question von Stechow sought to answer is: How do we derive the correct truth conditions for quantified sentences that contain *but*? Examples of these sentences are the following,

- (1) a. Every student but John attended the meeting.
b. No student but John attended the meeting.

Notice, that *but* is felicitous with universal quantifiers and infelicitous with existential quantifiers seen below,

- (2) a. #Some student but John attended the meeting.

An adequate analysis of *but* must account for this observation. Following Keenan-Stavi semantics, von Fintel argues that (1a) and (1b) give way to the following entailments¹ respectively,

- (3) a. John is the only student who did not attend the meeting.
 b. John is the only student who attended the meeting.

von Fintel proposes that *but* can be defined as consisting in three parts: i) Domain Subtraction, ii) Restrictiveness, and iii) Uniqueness. In (1a), there are a set of individuals (students) in a domain all of which combine with a predicate, *attended the meeting*. John is also a student, however, *but* tells us that *John* cannot combine with the predicate, *attended the meeting*. It tells us that if we are considering the set of students who attended the meeting, we must exclude John. Thus, Domain Subtraction. Though, subtraction alone is not sufficient. There must also be a way to limit the individuals of the domain under consideration. Going back to our example, this means that there must be something in the formal definition of *but* that restricts the domain to only the students understood in the context of the utterance, not say, faculty or students of a neighboring school. Lastly, consider the following sentence,

- (4) Every student but John or Jill.

(4) entails,

- (5) John or Jill is the only student who did not attend the meeting.

If the definition of *but* only accounts for Domain Subtraction and Restrictiveness it would still be the case that (4) states that not every student attended the meeting. So far as the entailment states that at least and at most one student did not attend the meeting the, the conditions are satisfied. However, this is not what (1a) conveys. A definition of *but* must capture Uniqueness. It has to be the case that At least and at most one student did not attend the meeting and that one student is John. After taking these properties into account, von Fintel presents the following set-theoretic definition of *but*, where $D = \llbracket \text{every} \rrbracket$, $\llbracket \text{no} \rrbracket$; $A = \llbracket \text{student} \rrbracket$; $C = \{\llbracket \text{John} \rrbracket\}$; and $P = \llbracket \text{attended the meeting} \rrbracket$,

- (6) $DA[\llbracket \text{but} \rrbracket]CP = True \leftrightarrow (P \in D(A - C) \wedge P \notin D(A)) \wedge \forall S(P \in D(A - S) \rightarrow C \subseteq S)$

In this definition, Domain Subtraction and Restrictiveness is captured by the first conjunct on the left side of the arrow, $P \in D(A - C) \wedge P \notin D(A)$. C which is a set that contains *John* is subtracted from the set of students, and $P \notin D(A)$ states that not everyone who is a student at all (as in, the world) attended the meeting. The second conjunct captures Uniqueness. In fact, the Uniqueness conjunct actually subsumes Restrictiveness and thus, can be written as so,

- (7) $DA[\llbracket \text{but} \rrbracket]CP = True \leftrightarrow P \in D(A - C) \wedge \forall S(P \in D(A - S) \rightarrow C \subseteq S)$

¹As opposed to implicatures.

Finally, a compositional analysis of *but* is the following,

$$(8) \quad \llbracket \text{but} \rrbracket = x.\lambda A.\lambda Q.P.\neg Q(A)(P) \wedge \forall S : Q(A - S)(p) \rightarrow \{x\} \subseteq S$$

Since its publication, von Fintel’s work was later expanded on and refined in Gajewski (2008), Gajewski (2013), and Hirsch (2016) in order to account for various puzzles that arose from von Fintel’s analysis. For example, the distributivity puzzle: why is *Everybody but x* felicitous, but *Somebody but x* infelicitous?

3.2 Exceptives as Adversative Connectives

We have gone through one of the uses of *but*. However, *but* can also be used as an adversative connective. By reviewing the literature on adversative connectives I hope to make clearer the connection between the use of *but* as an adversative connective, and *only* in the connectives examples mentioned in the Introduction. Similar to the previous section, I will restrict the discussion on adversative connectives to *but*.

3.2.1 Background on Adversatives

Foolen (1991) provides a wonderful overview of the mindset one should be in when studying adversative connectives. The author points out that when studying function words, specifically adversative connectives, “polyfunctionality is found to be the norm, rather than the exception.” Thus, the semanticist must decide how they will tackle a function word’s various uses. For example, should we try and condense all the uses to one general meaning (vagueness)? Should we accept that the several different uses are more or less related (polysemy)? or should we try and maintain that the different uses of a function word are unrelated (homonymy)? Generally, semanticists strive for vagueness or at most polysemy, and the work done on *but* as a connective proves this tendency.

Though it is debated, literature on *but* as a connective recognizes at least two ((1) and (2) below) or three different types,

1. Formal Contrastive Comparison or Semantic Opposition
2. Denial of Expectation/Argumentative
3. Correction

The first kind of adversative connective is what is called the Formal Contrastive Comparison Semantic Opposition (also known as the Semantic Opposition) use. An example of this use can be seen in the following example,

- (9) Oregano is rich, but Thyme is poor.

In the literature (9) is described as comparing two propositions of the same type: Oregano, an individual, is rich, a property describing one extreme of wealth; Thyme, another individual, is poor, a property describing the opposite extreme of wealth.

The second kind of adversative connective is one that is a denial of expectation, or the argumentative use.²

(10) Oregano is short, but they are strong.

In (10), the first clause elicits a number of expectations about shortness, one of which may be the expectation that short people cannot be strong. *But* then denies this expectation and asserts that Oregano, even though they are short, are strong.

The last type of adversative connective is correction.

(11) The potluck dinner is not tomorrow, but the day after.

Here, *but* is used to refute what is said in the preceding clause. This potluck dinner is not tomorrow, the potluck dinner is the day after.

There is ongoing debate as to whether and how one can reduce one meaning to another, for example, reduce the Formal Contrast use to the Denial of Expectation, or the Argumentative use. The question is, which use of *but* is its fundamental use? There are roughly two groups of generalized account of the function of *but*. One is the group that believe the basic function of *but* is the denial of expectation/argumentative use from which its other uses, such as the contrastive use, can be derived. The other group claim the formal contrast is the most basic use of *but* and that its as denial of expectation/argumentative and corrective uses can be derived from this fact. This thesis will adhere to the second group of which Umbach (2001), Umbach (2004), Umbach (2005), and Jasinskaja and Zeevat (2009), are a part of. However, I will focus the review of their accounts on the denial of expectation use of *but* since it appears to be similar, if not the same, use *only* has in the sentence that was presented in the Introduction. For a reminder, here is the example repeated below,

(12) He's a nice man, only he talks too much.

Understanding the relation between the two clauses and what *but* does with the relation is crucial for understanding the argument I make later in the thesis.

3.2.2 Umbach's Account of Denial of Expectation

Consider the following example where *but* is used as a denial of expectation,

(13) Oregano is short but they are strong.

²The literature distinguishes between these two uses, however, for simplicity sake I will only focus on *denial of expectation*.

The question is, what *but* is doing in this sentence? What is the relationship between the two clauses *but* is comparing?

In, Umbach (2005), Umbach provides a detailed analysis for understanding *but* as a denial of expectation. Umbach points out that in (13), there is an adversative force triggering the presupposition that there exists at least one proper alternative. In sentences like (13), the presupposition is an expectation. For example, assume two burglars are discussing who should they should bring their next heist. Burglar A could throw in a name for consideration and suggest their friend Oregano. Burglar B might be surprised at the suggestion after considering Oregano's height. Thus prompting Burglar A to vouch for Oregano by uttering, *Oregano is short but he is strong*. The expectation that shortness is not associated with strength was assumed, thus engendering Burglar's A need to vouch for their friend.

According to Umbach, an adversative relation is not given by i) the meaning of the conjuncts nor ii) induced by common world knowledge, which has been previously argued. The author argues that the expectation conveyed in these types of sentences is provided by a question explicitly or implicitly posed by the preceding discourse. (Perhaps I disagree with this, especially when we think about *but* as adding new information). Following this reasoning we can imagine the implicit question, which led to the expectations the Burglars had, could be the following,

- (14) (Won't Oregano's height put him at a disadvantage? We have to climb all the way to the top of the bank...)
No. Oregano is short, but he is strong.

Moving onto the formal analysis. When concerning sentences with *but* that takes scope over an entire proposition Umbach states, "In these cases [propositional scope] the entire clause has to be regarded as being an alternative with respect to each other. If there is no explicit negation in one of the conjuncts it has to be reconstructed." Let's revisit (13) and present Umbach's formal analysis,

- (15) [Oregano in short] $_{F_{corr}}$ but [they are strong] $_{F_{but}}$.

Umbach argues that here F_{but} is an adversative topic, as opposed to regular focus, and that it represents the expected alternative, (EA). F_{corr} is the Corresponding Focus that contains the (EA) in it's set of alternatives. Given the two types of focus, it is also necessary to introduce a denial condition. The denial condition states that the presupposition resulting from substituting the (EA) for the F_{corr} is false. If we consider (13) to be of the structure "C1 *but* C2," the mean of *but* would be the following,

- (16) [... F_{corr} ...]C1 \wedge [... F_{but} ...]C2 \wedge \neg [... F_{corr}/EA ...]C1

With (13) there is no overt negation; there is simply a comparison of two predicates and the subject. Specifically, *is short*, *are strong* and *Oregano*. Thus, the listener must reconstruct using the predicate's complement. So, the denial con-

dition is entailed by the meaning of the second conjunct.

3.2.3 Jasinskaja and Zeevat's Account

In their paper, "Explaining Additive, Adversative and Contrast Marking in Russian and English," Building on the work of Carla Umbach, specifically Umbach (2004) and Umbach (2005), Jasinskaja and Zeevat present a theory and argue that various adversative markers, *but* among them, can indicate the type of question that their conjuncts give distinct answers to. For example, the sentence *John likes football, but Bill doesn't* answers the question *Who "whether" likes football?* and each conjunct answers the questions, *Does John like football?* and *Does Bill like football?*, respectively. The possible questions that each clause could be referring to are single variable questions such as, *Who like football*, or multiple variable questions, such as, *Who like what?*

Jasinskaja and Zeevat claim that *but* acts as a denial of expectation when "a normal implication of the first conjunct is denied in the second." According to their theory, when it acts as a denial of expectation, *but* answers *why-y/n* questions, where *why* refers to questions that ask for propositions or event descriptions, and *y/n* refer to questions that can be answered with a *yes*, or *no*. "Distinct answers to a *why-y/n* question give an argument and a counterargument for a claim or suggestion, but it is always the one expressed by the second conjunct that wins." Consider the following example,

(17) John is short, but he is good at basketball.

(17) is an example of *but* used as a denial of expectation. Here, given that John is short, we expect that he would be bad at basketball (tall height is an advantage in basketball), nevertheless he is good. The sentence answers the question, *Why "whether" should John be good at basketball?* - [*Why shouldn't John be good at basketball*]- he is short, but [*why should John be good at basketball*]- he is good at basketball. Here, the denial of expectation is achieved because the second conjunct is identical with claim *C*, where *C* refers to the claim or suggestion that is the subject of the argument. Here the subject of the argument is whether John is good basketball. The first conjunct presents a counterargument John's shortness should be evidence that he is not good at basketball. Yet, the second conjunct negates this expectation and argues that he is good at basketball.

We have seen in detail two uses of *but*: its use as a classic exceptive and its use as an adversative connective, specifically, its when it is used as denial of expectation. Moreover, we have seen how the two conjuncts are related when *but* acts as a denial of expectation. Understanding this relation between the conjuncts is crucial for what is presented in the next half of the thesis.

Chapter 4

Propositional *Only*

In the thesis thus far I have presented background information on work done on the exclusive use of *only* as well as adversative connectives. In this chapter I hope to synthesize the two by proposing an extended analysis of *only*. Following Zeevat (2009), I argue that *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation. However, I extend Zeevat's analysis in order to capture the meaning of *only* when it is used a connective. Extending Zeevat's analysis produces an analysis of *only* that can account for its ordinary uses as an exclusivity marker, its ability to produce a scalar interpretation, and its use as a connective when it focuses entire propositions.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: First, I will argue that there is evidence against the idea that *only* can act as an exceptive and that in the cases where it seems *only* is acting as an exceptive, the particle is actually behaving as an adversative connective, specifically a denial of expectation. Then, I will present a collection of examples, including classic examples of *only* as well as its propositional use, those of which I hope to account for with my extended analysis. I will subsequently propose my extended analysis of *only*, building off Zeevat (2009). It is in this section where I will apply my analysis of *only* to the examples presented in the previous section. Since I am interested in finding out why we are so quick to assume *only* acts as an exceptive, I then include a section discussing the similarities and differences between *but* and *only*. Where does their kinship come from? How are they different? The chapter concludes with a section in which I present, what I call, the non-assertoric use of *only*, where *only* focuses a question, an imperative, or an exclamation. This last use has not been previously analysed in literature and will be the bridge that leads us to Chapter 5.

4.1 Charles Dickens' *Only*

In "Principles of the Excluded Muddle," Coppock and Beaver include the following example from which they draw a conclusion,

“I think she would have come oftener, only she did not like to appear to us without gifts in her hands.’ *Charles Dickens, ‘Two Sides of a Story,’ Transatlantic Magazine, 1871*

This *only* is not an exclusive *only*, however, but rather an exceptive (evidence: it can be paraphrased by ‘except’).”

I believe this claim is incorrect. Specifically, I concede that in this sentence *only* can be replaced by *except*, however, I disagree that this observation leads to the conclusion that *only*, in this sentence, is an exceptive. Instead, it seems to be the case that in English *only* used in this way is an adversative connective and the fact that *except*, as well as *but*, can replace *only* is because it can also be used as an adversative connective in this example. Moreover, it seems this instance of *only* (and when replaced, *except*), is a specific type of adversative connective (recall the types of adversative connectives from Chapter 3), namely, a denial of expectation.

Let us suppose that Coppock and Beaver’s claim is correct. If it is correct, then it appears that *only* can be used as an exceptive. However, if this is true, why can’t *only* behave in the same way as other exceptives? For example, why can’t it be used with constituents like *but* and *except* can?

- (1) Everyone but/except Cumin went to the potluck.
- (2) #Everyone only Cumin went to the potluck.

von Fintel (1993) highlights the close relationship exceptives and universal quantification share in English. However, as we see in (2), *only* cannot combine with the universal quantifier *every* to produce the exceptive interpretation. Instead, the sentence is understood to be ungrammatical.

Aside from the case where it can be replaced by exceptives, such as *except*, *but*, as in the Charles Dickens example, *only* does not seem to share the classic properties exceptives have. I believe that in the Charles Dickens case and similar sentences, *only* is not used as an exceptive due to the fact that it can be replaced by *but* and *except*, rather the role of *only* (and *but/except* when it is replaced) is that of an adversative connective. Initial support of this claim comes from the fact that the particle in this example is comparing to propositions instead of focusing constituents within a clause. This observation should prompt the conclusion that we are dealing with a discourse marker, precisely, an adversative connective; the two propositions seem to be in an oppositional relationship. Upon further consideration, it seems that the Charles Dickens example contains a denial of expectation type of adversative connective that it expressed by *but*, *except*, and *only*. Recall the denial of expectation type of adversative connective triggers the negation of a presupposition prompted by the first proposition. The Charles Dickens’ example contains the two propositions: *she would have come oftener* and *she did not like to appear without gifts in her hands*.¹ The denial of expectation analysis works if we assume that the context

¹“I think” is removed because I assume it takes scope over both *she would have come oftener* and

in which the sentence is uttered is one where it is rude for a person to come without gifts in hand. Think about the unspoken social custom, "Don't go to a friend's house empty-handed."

4.2 The Data

A unified analysis of *only* must be able to account for all its uses including its use as an exclusive marker, its ability to produce a scalar reading, and its use as a connective. In order to support my proposed analysis, I will consider examples of each type of use. These examples are presented below.

- (3) Only [Coriander]_F cleaned the shelf.
- (4) Coriander only [cleaned]_F the shelf.

(3) is an example of the traditional exclusive use of *only* and (4) is an example of a classic scalar use of *only*: Coriander only cleaned the shelf, they didn't, for example, also disinfect the shelf. Coriander could have done more, but did not.

Instances of *only* that have not been accounted for are cases where *only* acts as an adversative connective, like the Charles Dickens' example above. Some examples are the following,

- (5) They're a nice person, only they talk too much.
- (6) I saw every player, only I didn't see Star Anise.
- (7) Sage is healthy, only they have high blood pressure.

In such examples, *only* compares to propositions by focusing the second. For example in (5): *they're a nice person* and *they talk too much*.

An analysis of *only* that takes into account its use as an adversative connective must also account for the cases where *only* is infelicitous as an adversative connective. These examples highlight the dissimilarities between *but* and *only* that will be the focus of the second to last section of the chapter. These examples include,

- (8) #They ran everyday, only they get out of breath on the stairs.
- (9) #It's raining, only I'm bringing an umbrella.
- (10) #Sage isn't healthy, only they have normal blood pressure.
- (11) #The house is very dilapidated, only it's in a nice location.

Lastly, I want to bring attention to an additional instance of *only*; what I call the non-assertoric use of *only* whereby it focuses a question, an imperative, or an exclamation. An example of this use is (12),

- (12) It's going to rain tomorrow... only don't use that as an excuse to skip class!

she did not like to appear without gifts in her hands.

Similar to the previous felicitous uses of *only*, this use does not focus a constituent of a clause; it focuses a proposition. However, the proposition is not an assertion but an imperative. The last section of this Chapter will introduce this type of use, which will later be the focus of Chapter 5.

I will now present my analysis of *only* and subsequently show that the analysis is able to account for these examples presented above.

4.3 An Extended Analysis of *Only*

In the Introduction, I mentioned that the goal of this thesis was to present a unified account of *only* that could capture when it is used with a constituent, when it is used with a proposition, and when it is used with a non-assertoric speech act. To achieve this goal, I agree with Zeevat (2009), and argue that *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation. I present an extension of Zeevat’s *only* while borrowing an operator from Van Rooij (2002). With this new extended analysis, I’ll be able to account for classic examples with *only*, as well as other examples of *only* that have not been previously considered.

Only is defined as the following,

- (13) ONLY ($\langle B, F \rangle$):
- a. Given presupposition: $B(F)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(F < x \wedge B(x))$
 - b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec F \rightarrow \neg B(x))$

B, F represent the background and focus, respectively. x is either a constituent, or a proposition. C is a set of contextually determined alternatives. $<$ is a pragmatically given ordering relation that may be a ‘part of’ relation, when ordering individual entities and plurals, or a strict ordering of propositions that are likely to be true. In accordance with traditional analyses of *only*, the definition consists of two parts: presupposition and assertion. There are two types of presuppositions: given presupposition and weak presupposition. The given presupposition is understood according to the traditional definition of a common presupposition, for example, Horn’s definition of a presupposition. A weak presupposition is that which is expected to be in the common ground and may be overruled without bringing about a contradiction. For example, if the given presupposition is, p , the weak presupposition may be accommodated with, *it might be thought that* $\neg p$. *Only* triggers the given presupposition, and the weak presupposition that is expected to be in the common ground. This expectation, or weak presupposition, states that there exists some x , ranked higher than F according to some ordering, which satisfies B . *Only* then asserts that for all x in a set of contextually determined alternatives (for a proposition this set usually consists of the polar alternatives to the proposition in focus), if x is not less or equally likely as F , then it is not the case that $B(x)$. Simply put, *only* triggers an expectation that there is an alternative to F that is more likely to have B , and then asserts that such an expectation is not true. Moreover, since

only triggers an expectation, this means that *only* will be infelicitous in a context where there is no expectation, or in a context where the expectation cannot be satisfied.

4.3.1 Accounting for Data

This analysis of *only* is able to account for the constituent use *only*, the propositional use, and non-assertoric use. Let's see how the analysis can account for the previous examples. First, the *exclusive* case.

(14) Only [Coriander]_F cleaned the shelf.

(14) is similar to the classic examples of the exclusive use of *only*. The sentence conveys the information that Coriander cleaned the shelf and there was no one else who cleaned the shelf. Here, *only* will be analyzed in the following way,

- (15) Only [Coriander]_F cleaned the shelf. \mapsto $\text{only}(\langle \lambda x.S(x), c \rangle)$
- a. Given presupposition: $S(c)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(c < x \wedge S(x))$
 - b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not< c \rightarrow \neg S(x))$

The background, B , is $\lambda x.S(x)$. *Only* triggers the given presupposition that Coriander cleaned the shelf, $S(c)$, where S is *cleaned the shelf* and c refers to *Coriander*. *Only* also triggers the weak presupposition that it might be thought that there exists someone who is more likely to have cleaned the shelf than Coriander, namely, Coriander and someone else, $\exists x(c < x \wedge S(x))$, where $x = \text{Coriander} + \text{someone else}$, and $<$ is the ordering of individuals. Thus, part (a.) contains the presupposed content, consisting of two types of presuppositions. C is the contextually determined alternatives, which is determined by, the question under discussion (QUD). In this case, the QUD is *Who cleaned the shelf?* The information in this case is *someone cleaned the shelf*. Thus, C consists of anyone else who, given the context, could have also cleaned the shelf besides Coriander. The assertion negates the weak presupposition that there is someone else, in addition to Coriander, that cleaned and states that no one but Coriander cleaned the shelf.

It is important to keep in mind that because *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation, a sentence containing *only* is infelicitous when there is no expectation in the context in which it appears. Consider the following example,

(16) Paprika only has [one]_F mother.

Here, *only* triggers the given presupposition that Paprika has a mother and the weak presupposition that it might be thought that Paprika has more than one mother. If we are to assume a context where we uphold the hetero-normative concept of the nuclear family, or if we are referring to biological limits, (16) is infelicitous because such an expectation would not arise from the context, and thus, could not be triggered by *only*. Of course, if (16) is uttered in a context

where it is assumed that someone could have two or three mothers, (16) is fine. It could be that it is in the common ground that Paprika is expected to have two or more mothers and if this is the case than *only* is able to assert the negation of this expectation.

Let's now go through another constituent case; a classic scalarity reading.

(17) Coriander only [cleaned]_F the shelf.

(17) implies that the only thing Coriander did to the shelf was clean it. They didn't for example, disinfect the shelf. Thus, there seems to be a ranking of some sort of all the things Coriander could have done to the shelf, and merely, cleaning the shelf, is less than they could have done. The analysis of *only* in this sentence is as follows,

- (18) Coriander only [cleaned]_F the shelf. \mapsto only($\langle \lambda X.X(c, s), P \rangle$)
- a. Given presupposition: $P(c, s)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(P < X \wedge X(c, s))$
 - b. Assertion: $\forall X \in C(x \not\prec P \rightarrow \neg X(c, s))$

In this example the background is $\lambda x.X(c, s)$, where X is a relation of type $\langle ee, t \rangle$, c is Coriander, and s , is the shelf. The focused content is the property of cleaning, P . The ordering here is given by a scale. *Only* triggers the given presupposition that Coriander cleaned the shelf, $P(c, s)$, and the expectation that there exists some property, X , that Coriander did, that is ranked higher than P according to some scale. This scale says that Coriander not only did nothing else, but that *cleaning* is ranked lowest on the scale of possible alternatives. In this way the scale is similar to previous literature on the scalarity properties of *only*² In this example, the QUD is *What did Coriander do?*, which determines the contextually determined alternatives, C . C could contain, *disinfected the shelf*, for example. *Only* then asserts that the weak presupposition is not true, and that the only thing Coriander did was clean the shelf.

Let's continue onto instances of *only* that have not been accounted for in the literature: the propositional cases. These are instances of *only* that focus an entire proposition. The first two examples I will go through are examples where *only* is an adversative connective. Consider the following example, which is a modified version of Jespersen (1949)'s example,

(19) They're a nice person, only they talk too much.

Contrary to von Stechow's original concerns about focus, the *only* in (19) indeed focuses, however, as it was just mentioned, *only* focuses a proposition instead of a constituent. In (19), *only* can be analyzed in the following way,

(20) (They're a nice person,) only [they talk too much]_F. \mapsto
only($\langle \lambda q.q, T(a) \rangle$)

²See Klinedinst (2005) Coppock and Beaver (2014), Greenberg (2018).

- a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(T(a)) = T(a)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(T(a) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
- b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec T(a) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

The background, B , is simply the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. When combined with the proposition in focus, *they talk too much* it yields $T(a)$, the given presupposition. Contrary to the previous examples, here, the ordering is that of expectation. It is weakly supposed that there exists some x , another proposition, which is more likely to be true. It could be thought that the weak presupposition contradicts the given presupposition, however, I follow Zeevat and claim that the weak presupposition can be accommodated as *it might be thought that...* In this way we can avoid contradiction. In this context, the more likely proposition is *they do not talk too much*. This x is part of C , the set of contextually determined alternatives. In this case the set of contextually determined alternatives contain the alternatives to the focused content: {talk too much, don't talk too much}. Since the focused content is a proposition, it is quite natural to think the contextually determined alternatives to the propositions are the alternatives to the polar question: do they talk too much? The assertion is equivalent to $\neg(\lambda q.q(\neg(T(a))))$, which says, "it is not true that a doesn't talk too much," which can be reduced to $T(a)$.

This analysis can also account for (6) repeated here,

- (21) (I saw every player,) only I didn't see Star Anise.

The definition is as follows,

- (22) I saw every player, only [I didn't see Star Anise]_F. \mapsto
only($\langle \lambda q.q, \neg S(a) \rangle$)
- a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(\neg(S(a))) = \neg S(a)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(\neg S(a) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
 - b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec \neg S(a) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

The analysis of *only* in (22) is similar (20). The background, B , is the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. Again, $<$ here is an ordering on expectation. *Only* triggers the given presupposition that it is true that I didn't see Star Anise, which simply reduces to, $\neg S(a)$. *Only* also triggers the weak presupposition that there is an alternative, x , that is more likely to be true than the proposition in focus, namely, the polar alternative, $\neg\neg S(a)$, which follows from the preceding sentence, *I saw every player*. In this case, the information is *I saw every player*. We can imagine the sentence is uttered in a context where the interlocutors know all the players, and they know that Star Anise is one of them. *Only* then asserts that this weak presupposition is not true. I must point out that this example shows that *only* in its connective use does not constitute conjunctive meaning. That is, from (22), we do not want to derive *I saw every player*. Intuitively, *only* denies an expectation generated from the preceding sentence, and so indirectly denies the preceding sentence. How exactly to account for this is left for further investigation.

Lastly, we are able to account for (7), repeated below,

(23) Sage is healthy, only they have high blood pressure.

Again, (23) is similar to the previous two examples as well.

(24) Sage is healthy, only [they have high blood pressure]_F. \mapsto
only($\langle \lambda q.q, B(s) \rangle$)

- a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(B(s)) = B(s)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(B(s) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
- b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec B(s) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

The background, B , is, again, the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. The focused content is *they have high blood pressure*, $B(s)$, which also happens to be the given presupposition triggered by *only*. Again, $<$ is an ordering of expectation. *Only* also triggers the weak presupposition that there exists another proposition that is more likely to be true than the proposition in focus. Similar to the previous examples, this proposition is the polar alternative to the proposition in focus, which follows from the preceding sentence. If the speaker utters the information, *Sage is healthy*, the listeners expect that Sage has properties of a healthy person, which includes not high blood pressure. *Only* then states that this more expected true proposition is not true, and thus, negates the weak presupposition, and also indirectly negates the preceding sentence.

Let's go back to the Charles Dickens' example. Does the analysis work for the instance of *only* found in the example? The original sentence is repeated below,

(25) I think she would have come oftener, only she did not like to appear to us without gifts in her hands.

The analysis of *only* would be the following,

(26) (I think she would have come oftener,) only [she did not like to appear to us without gifts in her hands]_F. \mapsto only($\langle \lambda q.q, \neg G(a) \rangle$)

- a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(\neg G(a)) = \neg G(a)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(\neg G(a) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
- b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec \neg G(a) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

This example is curious because it contains a modal, *would*; reasoning within a hypothetical context is something I haven't covered yet in the chapter, but let's try and make sense of it. The background is the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. The focused content is *she did not like to appear...*, $\neg G(a)$, which also happens to be the given presupposition triggered by *only*. $<$ is an ordering of expectation. *Only* triggers the weak presupposition that there exists another proposition that is more likely to be true than the proposition in focus. The details of how to account for the modal in this sentence is rudimentary, however, I think one could reconstruct the information into the form of a conditional: *if she would have come oftener then she would have gifts*. If this is the case then the informa-

tion would determine the set, *C*, of contextually determined alternatives and then *only* would assert that the expectation is not true. Again, the details of accounting for modals within this analysis would have to be refined in further research, however, I do believe reconstructing the information into the form of a conditional is a step in the right direction.

The last example that needs to be analyzed is (12) repeated here,

- (27) It's going to rain tomorrow... only don't use that as an excuse to skip class!

This is an example of what I call the non-assertoric speech act use of *only*. Its name comes from the fact that in this sentence, and others similar to it, the focused content is a non-assertoric speech act. More specifically, in (51), the focused content is a negative imperative. I will show that the definition of *only* can, indeed, account for this use, however, since this use has not been discussed previously in literature, I will reserve the discussion and analysis for the subsequent chapter.

4.4 *But and Only*

I have shown that the analysis of *only* I have presented here can account for its exclusive use, its scalarity property, as well as its use with propositions. I'd like to now return to Coppock and Beaver's conclusion from the Charles Dicken's example. They correctly pointed out that in the example *only* can be replaced by *except*, and I will add here, also *but*. It is worth pointing out that in (19), again, *only* can be replaced by *but/except*.

- (28) They're a nice person, only/but/except they talk too much.

How come? Is it the case that in the adversative connective use the three are always interchangeable? I think it is worth trying to answer these questions because, given what I have shown thus far, it seems reasonable to conclude that the three particles are always interchangeable when they are used as adversative connectives that deny an expectation. However, I will soon show that this is not always the case. For simplicity's sake, I'll restrict my comparison to *but* and *only* in this section and show it is not the case that the two are always interchangeable as connectives. I'll also highlight an interesting observation regarding the history between the two particles with the hopes of shedding light on their relationship and what it means for my analysis of *only*.

To start, here are some sentences where *but* is felicitous and *only* is infelicitous,

- (29) It's raining, but/#only I'm bringing an umbrella.
(30) Sage isn't healthy, but/#only they have normal blood pressure.
(31) The house is very dilapidated, but/#only it's in a nice location.
(32) They ran everyday, but/#only they get out of breath on the stairs.

Let's see why *only* is understood to be infelicitous in these sentences according to the analysis of *only* presented in the previous section. We'll begin with (29), repeated here,

(33) It's raining, but/#only I'm bringing an umbrella.

According to the analysis, *only* is analysed as follows,

- (34) # It's raining, only [I'm bringing an umbrella]_F. \mapsto only($\langle \lambda q.q, B(a) \rangle$)
- a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(B(a)) = B(a)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(B(a) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
 - b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\leq B(a) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

The background is the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. The focused content is *I'm bringing an umbrella*, $B(a)$. *Only* triggers the given presupposition that $B(a)$, and the weak presupposition that there exists another proposition that is more likely to be true, x ; in the case of propositions the set of contextually given alternatives tends to be the polar alternative, thus, $C = \{B(a), \neg B(a)\}$. *Only* then asserts that the weak presupposition is not true. Specifically, it is not the case that $\lambda q.q(\neg B(a))$. The reason this instance of *only* is infelicitous is because upon hearing the information, *It's raining*, bringing an umbrella is more likely to be true than not bringing one, so that the speaker doesn't get wet (generally people don't like getting wet after getting stuck in the rain). The weak presupposition triggered by *only* fails because the focused content is the more likely proposition to be true. Following this reasoning, we would expect the following sentence to be felicitous,

(35) It's raining, only I'm not bringing an umbrella.

Indeed (35) is felicitous. *Only* triggers the weak presupposition that there is some other proposition that is more likely to be true upon hearing, *it's raining*, namely the polar alternative, *It is not the case that I'm not bringing an umbrella*, simply, *I'm bringing an umbrella*. In this context, it does follow that after hearing *it's raining* a listener would expect the speaker to then say they are bringing an umbrella for the reason mentioned in the previous paragraph. The listener expects there to be an alternative that is more likely to be true, namely, $B(a)$. *Only* then asserts that this weak presupposition is not true. The analysis works out.

Let's consider (30) repeated below,

(36) Sage isn't healthy, but/#only they have normal blood pressure.

Only is analyzed as follows,

- (37) # Sage isn't healthy, only [they have normal blood pressure]_F. \mapsto only($\langle \lambda q.q, N(s) \rangle$)
- a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(N(s)) = N(s)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(N(s) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$

- b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec N(s) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

Again, the background is the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. *Only* triggers the given presupposition that, when reduced, is, $N(s)$. Once more we assume $<$ is an ordering of expectation. *Only* also triggers the weak presupposition that there exists another proposition that is more likely to be true, x . In cases where the focused content is a proposition the alternative is the polar alternative, $\neg N(s)$. However, upon acquiring the information *Sage isn't healthy*, it doesn't exactly follow that the listener will expect Sage to have properties of an unhealthy person, such as, irregular oxygen levels, or abnormal blood pressure. It could be the case that Sage is unhealthy because they simply have a common cold or flu. Having normal blood pressure does not necessarily have anything to do with not being healthy. The expectation isn't there. It is for this reason that the sentence containing *only* is infelicitous. The construction of the contextually determined alternatives does not match the polar alternative to the focused content.

Let's take a look at (31), repeated below,

- (38) The house is very dilapidated, but/#only it's in a nice location.

The analysis of *only* in this sentence is the following,

- (39) # The house is very dilapidated, only [it's in a nice location]_F. \mapsto
 $\text{only}(\langle \lambda q.q, L(h) \rangle)$
 a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(L(h)) = L(h)$
 Weak presupposition: $\exists x(L(h) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
 b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\prec L(h) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

This instance of *only* fails for the similar reasons (37) fails. The background is the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. The focused content is the house being in a nice location, $L(h)$. *Only* triggers the given presupposition that, when reduced, is $L(h)$. *Only* also triggers the weak presupposition that there is another proposition that is more likely to be true given the focused content, namely, the polar alternative, *it is not the case that the house is in a nice location*, $\neg L(h)$. However, upon acquiring the information, *the house is very dilapidated*, properties regarding the house' location is not expected to be in the set of contextually determined alternatives. The information consists of properties about the house itself, not properties about the house's location. Therefore, *only* fails.

Lastly, let's consider (32), repeated below,

- (40) They run everyday, but/#only they get out of breath on the stairs.

The analysis of *only* in this sentence will be as follows,

- (41) # They run everyday, only [they get out of breath on the stairs]_F. \mapsto
 $\text{only}(\langle \lambda q.q, O(a) \rangle)$
 a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(O(a)) = O(a)$
 Weak presupposition: $\exists x(O(a) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$

- b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not\leq O(a) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

The failure of this instance of *only* is similar to the previous examples. The background in the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. The focused content is the individual, a , getting out of breath on the stairs, $O(a)$. *Only* triggers the given presupposition, $O(a)$, and the weak presupposition that there exists another proposition that is more likely to be true given the focused content, namely, its polar alternative, $\neg O(a)$. However, upon acquiring the provided information, *they run everyday*, a listener compiles a contextually determined set of alternatives according. For example, a possible alternative could be, *they are in shape*. Yet, the information does not necessarily provoke the focused content's polar alternative, $\neg O(a)$. Thus, *only* fails.

I believe *only* is infelicitous in these examples while *but* is felicitous because *only* is much more restrictive than *but* as a discourse marker. This seems like a natural conclusion provided we have just gone through examples where *but* is felicitous and *only* is infelicitous, and can return to a felicitous use of *only* and see that *but* is replaceable. Consider the niceness example,

- (42) They're a nice person, *only* / *but* they talk too much.

or (23) repeated here,

- (43) Sage is healthy, *only* / *but* they have high blood pressure.

Again, this seems to be a natural assumption. In Chapter two I presented the use of *but* as an adversative connective, highlighting that there are various types of adversative markers, a denial of expectation being one. It seems quite plausible that if *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation and nothing more, then *but* is less restricted and can fulfill more roles as a discourse marker.

I have just argued that *only* may be replaced with *but* in cases where it can be used as a denial of expectation. Yet, I have just shown that there are, indeed, instances where the two particles differ. If *only* is a denial of expectation and can be used as an exclusivity marker, and *but* can be used as denial of expectation, we should expect *but* to also be able to be used as an exclusivity marker. Indeed it can.

But is well-known for being the poster-child for exceptives. However, let's keep in mind that *but* previously had an exclusive use that is seldom used in colloquial speech today.³ Consider the following examples from Oscar Wilde's 1907 play, "Salomé,"

- (44) Why? Kings have *but* one neck, like other folk.

- (45) I will not listen to thee. I listen *but* to the voice of the Lord God.

In these examples *but* is used as an exclusive marker. Indeed one can replace the particle with *only* and obtain the same meaning. I want to emphasize that I still believe, fundamentally, the particles are a denial of expectation, and if

³I suppose this depends on the type of friends a person surrounds themselves with.

one wishes they can analyse these instances of *only* according to my proposed analysis.

4.5 Some Problems and Open Questions

The analysis of *only* I have discussed can account for the examples I presented in Section 4.2, however, there are examples that contain *only* that require extra specifications about the analysis. Consider the following examples,

- (46) We were hungry, *only* all the restaurants were closed.
- (47) The house is in a nice location, *only* it's very dilapidated.
- (48) I was just wondering if there'd been any developments, *only* I'm leaving in a day.

If we were to try and analyse *only* as it occurs in the examples above, we would run into some issues. I believe this is because *only* may trigger an ordering on different kinds of expectation when it focuses propositions. Specifically, in the examples I have worked through in the section, $<$ is an ordering of expectation of a property. For example, in (19), $<$ is an ordering on expectation of the property of niceness. This is how *only* is able to deny the expectation of a property that is usually associated with niceness, i.e. *not talking too much*. However, in (46)- (48), $<$ is an ordering ordering of expectation of an argumentative goal. Consider the first example,

- (49) We were hungry, *only* all the restaurants were closed.

An analysis of *only* would be the following,

- (50) We were hungry, *only* [all the restaurants were closed]_F. \mapsto
 $\text{only}(\langle \lambda q.q, C(r) \rangle)^4$
 - a. Given presupposition: $\lambda q.q(C(r)) = C(r)$
Weak presupposition: $\exists x(C(r) < x \wedge \lambda q.q(x))$
 - b. Assertion: $\forall x \in C(x \not< C(r) \rightarrow \neg(\lambda q.q(x)))$

The background is the property of being true, $\lambda q.q$. The focused content is *all the restaurants were closed*, $C(r)$. Here, $<$, is an ordering of expectation of an argumentative goal; the goal being in this case, eating. Evidence: we were hungry, in order to satisfy hunger one eats. Now, it must be the case that in the context this sentence is uttered the listener knows that the only source of food for the speaker was the restaurants. For example, there wasn't the option of cooking at home. Given the information, *we were hungry*, the contextually determined alternatives, C , contain options of sources of food, not closed restaurants, being among them. The alternative of *not closed restaurants* would

⁴For simplicity sake, I omit the universal quantifier, *all* and assume that in the context, the determiner *the* captures the universal interpretation.

be more to bring us closer to our goal. *Only* then is able to deny this expectation, specifically, the expectation that there existed a not closed restaurant which would satisfy the speaker's hunger. The analysis of *only* in (47) follows similarly, and the goal is buying a house. If the context is one where the speaker is either looking for a house or is helping someone decide on a house, it is quite natural to think that *a nice location* is evidence for buying the house; being dilapidated tends to be evidence against buying the house. (48) works if we assume that upon hearing that there are developments (perhaps with a project, or job) the speaker would help or offer their services. The goal then would be to further the project or job by offering their services. If this is the context, then the speaker leaving in a day would negate such an expectation.

One final note: at the beginning of the Chapter I presented the following example,

(51) It's going to rain tomorrow... *only* don't use that as an excuse to skip class!

I believe in this example *only* has what I have been calling a non-assertoric speech act use. It is still a comparison between two propositions however the proposition in focus is not an assertion, but a speech act. In (51), the focused content is a negative imperative. This example was presented to me as a mystery. In order to explore it further, I decided to devote the next chapter of the thesis to studying this example and others like it.

Chapter 5

Pragmatic *Only*

During the last class of The Only Class at CreteLing2019, von Fintel presented us with numerous examples containing *only*. Some were presented with initial hypothesis, others were left a mystery. The following sentences are some of the mysteries,

- (1) It's going to rain tomorrow...only don't use that as an excuse to skip class!
- (2) I hope you can relax this weekend....only, don't forget about the windows!
- (3) Fine I'll go to Oleanna with you... only, where is it?

What's going on here and how does it compare to how I have been analyzing *only* in the previous chapter? What is the relationship between the two propositions *only* is relating? Is *only* still a denial of expectation here? At first, the use of *only* in these examples does appear quite different from the use we have seen thus far. They are certainly not instances of the constituent use, yet they also seem to differ from the propositional use of *only*. However in this chapter, I hope to show that in cases like those above, *only* is still, fundamentally, a denial of expectation. This chapter begins with a corpus study I did in order to obtain more instances of this unexplored use. When it comes to semantic analysis, I believe a larger set of examples is always better for making observations and arriving at conclusions. From the extracted sentences I have collected I'll present some initial observations and patterns across the examples. The presentation of the data will be followed by a section where I hope to show how my analysis of *only* is able to capture the meaning of *only* in the sentences von Fintel presented as well as examples from the dataset. The chapter will conclude with a possible starting point for further analysis on *only*, *but*, and other similar particles, given the observations that have been made.

5.1 New Data

During The Only Class at CreteLing2019, we were presented with curious examples that, at the time, seemed to “draw a blank.” However, of the three examples that were presented ((1)-(3) above) it seemed to be the case that this particular use of *only* was “pragmatic.” What do I mean by “pragmatic?” The sentences differ from the previous instances of *only* due to the type of relationship the two propositions maintain. The relation between *They’re a nice person* and *they talk too much*, seems quite different from the relation between *it’s going to rain tomorrow* and *don’t use that as an excuse to skip class!*. In ((1)-(3)), *only* is focusing a non-assertoric speech act. They are still propositions, but they are not assertions; they are imperatives and questions. Initially, I wanted to explore whether or not this use was the adversative connective use, or if it was another use all together. Specifically, I was curious to see if the relation between the two propositions arose specifically because the focused content was a non-assertoric speech act, or if the same relation in the adversative connective case, was also present in such examples.

I decided to try and collect examples from an online corpora, and chose The Movie Corpus from the database of English Corpora found on English-Corpora.org online. I selected The Movie Corpus because I figured the dialogue in contemporary movies would closely reflect spontaneous dialogue in reality. I believe this corpus would provide a much more natural occurrence of *only* compared to, say the Wikipedia Corpus, detailing very fact-driven language use. Of course a “more natural occurrence of *only*” depends on the movie. However, from the selection of online corpora I decided the dialogue found in blockbuster movies is the most similar to spontaneous speech. Blockbuster movies tend to reflect the use of language spoken at the time of production (provided it’s not a historical production) in order to appeal to its audience. I searched the occurrences of *only* in the corpora which resulted in 214,613 occurrences from movies released in the year 1930-2009. I then started randomly looking through the data in order to find first, sentences in which *only* focused a proposition, i.e., the adversative connective use, then identify sentences where *only* focused a question, imperative, or an exclamation. Of the examples presented above, there is not an instance of an exclamation, though I wondered whether *only* could focus an exclamation provided it could a question and imperative. In the end I extracted 81 examples in which *only* compared to propositions. 16 of which are instances were *only* focuses a non-assertoric speech act. Below are some examples of the 16 non-assertoric speech act uses.

- (4) Sure I’ll marry you...only don’t be putting me to too many tests, or I might change my mind.
- (5) Oh, hire me a battle ship, if you like. Only, don’t forget I’m a poor working girl.
- (6) I won’t bother you. I promise not to open my mouth. Only, please don’t send me home!

- (7) ...Ought to be able to get 3 for 1 instead of 2 for 1. Only, don't take 'no' for an answer.
- (8) A: airtight alibi, huh?
B: Yeah, and fifty people to prove it. Only, don't ask the boyfriend because he wouldn't know.
- (9) I found the most perfect dress for my party...only promise you won't freak.
- (10) Get 'em off the street. Anywhere. Offer them anything. Only, get 'em.

As one might notice, the presentation of these six examples differ. For example, in (5), *only* begins a second sentence; in (9) *only* is preceded by the ellipsis marker, It should be noted that these distinctions are merely due to the fact that the movies lines are typed. It is assumed that the lines were verbally spoken, and should be considered continuous speech. In other words, I don't think the visual distinctions in presentation as they appear on paper (or on screen) affect the semantic role of *only*.

Let's focus on the content of the sentences. Without knowledge about the plot of the movie, or a description of a scene, it is not difficult to imagine a person being in a certain situation in which they would utter one of the sentences above. For example, in (7), we can imagine a conversation between two business people who are planning the acquisition of some goods. The speaker informs the listener that they ought be to able to purchase three of the wanted items for the price of one, instead of two for the price of one. In (9), we can imagine a situation where a speaker is deciding what to wear to a party they are throwing. From the second proposition we can also assume that perhaps the speaker is a bit eccentric; there is reason for believing a dress they would select would probably be a bit unconventional. We can also deduce from this sentence that, at least the speaker, is an American speaking at the beginning of the 21st century. Evidence: use of the verb *freak*, short for, *to freak out*. Overall, one can reconstruct hypothetical scenarios in which each of these sentences could be uttered without the need for greater detail about the movies they are spoken in. The examples are sentences that could be uttered in colloquial, everyday, discourse.

Another observation to point out in the type of proposition *only* focuses. Each of the examples above contains an instance of *only* that compares two propositions, the second of which is a non-assertoric speech act, specifically, an imperative. Moreover, from this set of examples it is clear that *only* can focus a negative imperative, as in (4) -(8), as well as a positive imperative, as in (9) and (10). Here, I have presented 7 of the 16 extracted non-assertoric speech acts where every example is an example with an imperative, yet we have seen an example where *only* can focus a question, example (3). Of the 81 extracted sentences, only 1 sentence contained *only* focusing a question.

- (11) I guess you know by this time how I feel about you. That's all right with you, isn't it? Or have you got another girl? A steady, I mean.

(Laughs) Hundreds of them, sure. Only...Only, what's the difference?

Again, one can imagine a situation where (11) is uttered. Such a scene probably involves two people where one of the two (the speaker) ends up developing deeper feelings for the other (the listener). The speaker then utters (11) in order to address this new development at the cost of their pride.

The remaining 65 extracted sentences contain instances of the propositional use of *only* as we have seen in the previous chapter. Below are a few of examples,

- (12) Just what I've always wanted. Only not really.
- (13) Life's a circus, Luna. Only the tents get bigger.
- (14) You're gonna be back in television. Only it won't be quite the same as it was before.
- (15) You look like my friend Stuart. Only much braver and better looking.

5.2 An Analysis of *Only* with Speech Acts

I believe the crucial difference in the non-assertoric use and the propositional use is that which provokes the type of ordering. Recall that with the constituent use, the ordering is given by the 'part of' relation. When *only* behaves as an adversative connective, the ordering is triggered by an expectation of a property. Recall further that I have proposed that the ordering can also be triggered by the expectation of an argumentative goal. For this non-assertoric use of *only*, I propose that the ordering is triggered by an expectation of action. Consider (5), repeated here,

- (16) Oh, hire me a battle ship, if you like. Only, don't forget I'm a poor working girl.

The focused content is *don't forget I'm a poor working girl*. What would elicit such an imperative? A speaker would utter a command if they were expecting their listener to do, or not do, something that they wanted that listener to do, or not do. To put more clearly, in (16), the speaker orders the listener to buy them a battleship (whether figuratively, or actually). We can assume that upon hearing the command the listener will then proceed to buy the speaker a battleship; there is an expectation of an action (the buying of a battleship). However, what *only* does is deny this expectation of action. *Only* focuses the condition that prevents the action from being fulfilled; the speaker doesn't have a lot of money. Thus, the listener can't just go buy any battleship, willy-nilly, as is implied by the command *buy me a battleship*. Yet, we can assume that once the condition is stated and understood, the action can then be carried out; the listener will go buy a battleship so long as it is within budget, or reject the action all together.

Let's consider an example containing a positive imperative. For example, (10), repeated here,

(17) Get 'em off the street. Anywhere. Offer them anything. Only, get 'em.

The focused content is *get 'em*. Here the speaker is ordering the listener to acquire whatever it is that refers to *'em* (short for *them*). We can deduce that the speaker utters (17) in a context where they desperately want to get a hold of what ever it is they are requesting. Evidence: *anywhere, offer them anything*, in other words, *get 'em* any means necessary. The information is *offer them anything*. The information could also be *get 'em off the street, anywhere* as well, depending on the flow of conversation and whether or not the three clauses, separated here with full-stops, are uttered as a type of conjoined list. Regardless of how *get 'em off the street, anywhere* and *offer them anything*, are spoken, *only* triggers an expectation of action that the listener may not be able to acquire the desired goods easily. This is strengthened by *anywhere* and *offer them anything*. The expectation is that the action, acquiring the goods, may not be fulfilled. Hence the action is expected to be negated. *Only* then focuses the condition that negates this expectation (the negation of the negated action), resulting in the affirmative command.

This type of expectation is not only restricted to imperative. Such similar reasoning can also account for instances of *only* that focus a question, such as the example von Fintel provided at the end of his course, repeated here,

(18) Fine I'll go to Oleanna with you... only, where is it?

It is not unreasonable to imagine that (18) is uttered in a context where the listener actually does expect the speaker to accompany them to Oleanna. The evidence: the speaker had just uttered, *I'll go to Oleanna with you*. *Only* here denies this expectation; the speaker has a condition that prevents them from fulfilling the action. In (18), the condition preventing the fulfilment of the expected action is the fact that the speaker does not know where Oleanna is. We can assume that once the speaker learns where Oleanna is located, they will go there.

In the dataset of extracted sentences an example of *only* focusing an exclamation did not occur. I later went back to the source corpus, all 214,613 instances of *only* to try and locate an instance of *only* used with an exclamation and was unsuccessful. However, if I claim that *only* has a non-assertoric use, it follows that it should be able to be used with imperatives, questions, and also, exclamations, such as *how great!* Is this really the case? If this is not the case, why? In order for *only* to successfully focus an exclamation it has to be the case that doing so would trigger the weak presupposition that there exists an action more likely to follow upon hearing the information. *Only* would then state that such an expectation of an action is false.

(19) ?It really sucks that I won't be able to make it to your wedding...only, how great (that you're getting married)!

I'm not sure this is felicitous. I'm also not certain that this is an instance of *only* with an ordering on an expectation of an action. I tend to believe that *how great* is short for *I think it's great that your getting married*, or *it's great that you're getting married*. Indeed, solving this problem would involve a study into exclamations in general. Even if this is the case, I am still left wondering what this means for my analysis. Nevertheless, I'd to point out that the sentence does seem better if *only* is replaced with *but*, and even better when it is replaced with *anyway*.

- (20) ?It really sucks that I won't be able to make it to your wedding...but how great (that you're getting married)!
- (21) ?It really sucks that I won't be able to make it to your wedding...anyway, how great (that you're getting married)!

Further research is required in order to sort out the intuitions that come about with each substitution. However, I believe the fact that *but* sounds better in this sentence than *only* is due to the restrictiveness of *only*, compared to *but*, and the fact that as a discourse marker *but* is able to take on more roles than *only*. Moreover, it has been mentioned in previous literature that *but* is able to be used as a marker of topic change and perhaps this is why *but* sounds better and even better with *anyway* (a marker of topic change).

5.3 Curious Observations and Further Research

The goal of this chapter was to extend the limit of research on *only*. Presented with a curious example, I simply wanted to gather more information about *only*'s use and present some initial thoughts given my observations. To conclude I would like to present observations that can directly serve as the starting point of future research.

Though my dataset was small, and limited to English sentences, from the extracted sentences, the negative imperative seemed to occur more frequently than the positive. Why would this be the case? Do negative imperatives make the processing of *only* easier than positive ones? Obviously in order to test this hypothesis, one would need a much larger sample, and ideally, corpora from various languages.¹

Another interesting observation from the dataset is that the non-assertoric use of *only* occurred more frequently in movies released in 1930s than the early 2000s. In fact, of the 81 occurrences of the connective *only*, 53 occurred in 1930-1931. The exclusive use occurred more frequently from 2000-2009. I find this observation the most exciting given what we know about the change of use of *but*. We know that *but* can be used as an exclusivity marker, yet the interpretation sounds antiquated. The exclusive *but* really isn't used in colloquial English anymore. Could it be that *only* as a connective is also susceptible to diachronic change? There really isn't any reason to believe the change of frequency of *but*'s exclusive use and *only*'s connective use is related unless the source of change

¹Of course, the analysis I present in this thesis would also benefit from cross-linguistic analysis.

has to do with being a particle that is a denial of expectation. A very intriguing topic for future research is a diachronic study of *only*, a diachronic study of *but*, and perhaps a combine study of the two.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the meaning of *only*. The motivation for the thesis was sparked by puzzling data that was present by Kai von Fintel in his course, The Only Class, which was part of the 3rd Crete Summer School of Linguistics. Following, Zeevat (2009), I have argued that *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation and have extended his analysis of *only* to account for new data, going beyond the classic exclusive use of *only*. Based on this analysis I identify three uses of *only*: a constituent use, which refers to the particle's exclusive use and its ability to produce a scalar reading; a propositional use that refers to *only* when it is used as an adversative connective; and a non-assertoric use of *only*, which refers to when *only* compares two propositions, the second of which is either a question or an imperative. I was able to account for the puzzling data that was presented during The Only Class, as well as further investigate *only*'s non-assertoric use. Since not much has been done to account for and explain *only*'s non-assertoric use, I decided to gather more instances of the use by conducting a corpus study, in which I extracted sentences containing *only* from The Movie Corpus online. I then presented my observations from the newly extracted data later on in the thesis and attempted to show how my extended analysis could potentially account for such instances.

The analysis is not without flaws. For example, there is work to be done in order to account for modals and hypothetical statements as in the Charles Dickens' example. What type of expectations are triggered by sentences that contain a modal? What is the QUD in these cases? Does the sentence being hypothetical affect how expectations are triggered and what type of expectations can be triggered? Additionally, I would like to be able to give a formal analysis of *only* when it focuses a question or an imperative. Again, the QUD in these cases is unclear to me. I suspect the expectation is one of action, but am left wondering exactly what the alternatives are in the contextually determined set of alternatives. However, I am hopeful in the sense that I suspect that working through a formal analysis of *only* when it focuses a question or an imperative will shed some light on why it seems *only* cannot focus and exclamation.

Concerning future research, there are several topics that would be interesting to investigate further. The first is something that was mentioned in a previous chapter. Specifically, the possible diachronic change of *only*. We have seen that *but* has gone through a semantic change; its exclusive use is seldom used in colloquial English and is often used to mark antiquated speech. In my dataset from The Movie Corpus, the propositional use of *only* occurs much less frequently in movies from the 2000s. In fact the majority of instances of propositional, and non-assertoric *only* occurred in movies from 1930 and 1931. Could it be that one of *only*'s use is also going through a use change? Is the change of use of *but*, and (if it exists) of *only* related? The first step to answer these question would be to conduct a corpus studying and extract a much larger set of sentences. Lastly, semantic analysis has traditionally focused on English examples and English data. In the future, a cross-linguistic study of *only* would be ideal in order to confirm or deny the analysis I presented here. Specifically, it would be extremely interesting to investigate the lexical markers of *but* and *only* and their uses across a variety of languages, spanning language families. Indeed, evidence that languages use the same lexical item for an exclusive marker, as well as an adversative connective would be exciting, for it would support the claim that they share a similar meaning.

I would like to take the time to mention one last observation that perhaps could be the starting point for further investigation. Recall the following example,

- (1) They're a nice person, *only* they talk too much.

We have seen that here *only* can be replaced with *but* and the sentence remains felicitous. It appears *only* can also be replaced with *it's just that* and remain felicitous as well,

- (2) They're a nice person, *it's just that* they talk too much.

However, the sentence is interpreted ungrammatical if *only* is replaced with *just*, another exclusive marker.

- (3) #They're a nice person, *just* they talk too much.

Now consider the following sentence,

- (4) ?It's going to rain tomorrow...*just* don't use that as an excuse to skip class!

It is intriguing that a replacement with *just* is rendered infelicitous, while *it's just that* is comes to be felicitous in the propositional use as an adversative connective. *It's just that* appears to be a higher type of *just*. Perhaps investigation into this observation could tell us more about exclusivity and and adversative connectives in general. Indeed, the relation between exclusivity markers and denial of expectation opens up after considering the data I have presented in this thesis. If *only* is fundamentally a denial of expectation then how does it

relate to other exclusivity markers, such as *just*? There must be something in common that causes both of them to be used in the same way as exclusivity markers, why? Is the same thing that distinguishes *it's just that* from *just* the thing that distinguishes *only* from *just*? Of course these readings are based on English examples. In order to answer these questions, again, there must be cross-linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, from what we have seen it is clear that we have to change our expectations of what we think the meaning of *only* is and what it is able to do. Hopefully, further research will continue to expand our understanding of *only*.

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