

'Only' and 'even' in contrastive coordinations

The following minimal pair of gapping sentences shows that the presence of the focus particle 'only' in the second conjunct of the coordination can produce a positive reading of this conjunct:

- (1) Mary didn't meet up with John and Bill only with Sue.
= 'Bill only met up with Sue.'
- (2) Mary didn't meet up with John and Bill with Sue.
= 'Bill didn't meet up with Sue.'

Upon closer examination, we find that the second conjunct in such gapping sentences receives an interpretation, which from the point of view of a symmetric contrastive coordination is unmarked in a neutral context. In the case of the conjunction 'and', this means that both conjuncts must make the same kind of contribution to a third proposition in the background, i.e. they must both support this proposition, or they must both reject it. Other readings that normally are available in coordinations with 'and', such as commentary readings, implicational readings etc. are not allowed in gapping (also see Kehler 1996, 2000; Hendriks 2004 for similar observations regarding non-symmetric coordinations and ellipsis).

In my talk, I investigate under which circumstances a negative second conjunct with a focus particle is unmarked in the above sense and under which circumstances this holds for a positive second conjunct. A negative second conjunct is unmarked, for instance, if the focus particle 'only' takes smaller than propositional scope or if a scalar reading of the particle is available ('only two'). A positive second conjunct is unmarked if 'only' takes propositional scope and only a non-scalar, exclusive reading is available, see (3) vs. (4).

- (3) John didn't meet up with brilliant students and Mary didn't meet up with only weakly gifted ones.
- (4) John didn't meet up with brilliant students and Mary (only) met up (only) with weakly gifted ones.

I show that these effects are due to the context-sensitive interpretation of the focus particles: the particle must be interpreted within a particular contextual domain of quantification (Rooth 1992; von Stechow 1994), which in the present case is made up of the two conjuncts. Both conjuncts are evaluated for the establishment of the antecedent of the Roothian focus variable *C*. For the sentence in (1), this means that the alternatives to the focus in the second conjunct will be provided by the first conjunct ('Sue' has the alternative 'John'). Now, the coordination of full clauses in (5) contains a negative second conjunct and 'only' takes propositional scope. Due to the semantics of 'only', the second conjunct entails that Bill met up with John so that what is predicated of Bill is the opposite of what is predicated of Mary. The conjuncts are not symmetric and therefore, marked.

- (5) #Mary didn't meet up with John and Bill only didn't meet up with Sue.

Apart from 'only', I shall also look at the focus particle 'even', which cannot reverse the polarity of the second conjunct in gapping because it has a different semantics. Nevertheless, it also occurs in gapping sentences with a negative first and a positive second conjunct and usually improves their grammatical status.

Finally, I shall investigate 'not only' and 'not even' and will argue that they cannot be interpreted in the second conjunct in gapping if the negative marker is left out because they are complex operators.

Hendriks, P. (2004). Coherence relations, ellipsis and contrastive topics. *Journal of Semantics* 21, 133-153.

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