

Towards a Propositional Concord Approach for Exclusives in Kasem

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1. Introduction

The syntax-semantic properties of the exclusive focus sensitive particle *only* have been a subject of debate for some time now. Syntactically, *only* can adjoin to different positions in the clause. It can occur in a pre-verbal position away from its focus associate (1-a) & (2-a). It can also adjoin directly to its focus associate as in (1-b) & (2-b). Both cases have been called *adverbial-only* and *adfocal-only* respectively.¹

- (1) a. John **only** bought A CANDY .
b. John bought **only** A CANDY .
- (2) a. [_{TP} John [_{VP} **only** [_{VP} ⟨John⟩ bought [_{DP} a candy_F]]]]
b. [_{TP} John [_{VP} ⟨John⟩ bought [_{DP} **only** [_{DP} a candy_F]]]]

Semantically, on the other hand, *only* composes with a proposition as in (3) (Horn 1969, Rooth 1985: a.o.).² This means that the proposition which *only* composes with is true iff other alternative propositions are false. The focus associate of *only* indicates the presence of alternatives (Krifka 2008), and these alternatives are either sub-constituents of a sentence or the whole sentence itself, depending on the focus.

- (3) **only**^{ALT} = $\lambda p_{st} . \lambda w : p(w) . \forall p' \in \text{ALT}[p'(w) \rightarrow p \subseteq p']$

Adverbial-*only* cases fall within the purview of *only*'s compositional semantics with a proposition because it takes scope over the vP/VP, which can be classified as a form of proposition. Adfocal-*only* on the other hand, poses a challenge to the semantics of *only* given above. This is because *only* adjoins to a DP rather than a VP, as in (2-b) above. This difference in behaviour has led to the proposition of two distinct semantics for *only* (Rooth 1985, 1992): one in which *only* composes with a proposition (the original meaning of *only*), and a second one which involves the type-shifting of *only* in order to be able to compose with the focused DP, forming a quantifier XP in the process (cf. Hirsch 2022).

- (4) **only**_Q^{ALT} = $\lambda Q_{est,st} . \lambda f_{est} . \text{only}(Q(f))$

However, there have been a line of cross-linguistic studies which argue for a uniform treatment of *only* across board. Such studies include Bassi et al. (2022), Bayer (1996), Branau & Erlewine (2023), Hirsch (2019, 2022), Hirsch & Wagner (2019), Lee (2005), Quek & Hirsch (2017), and Sun (2021), among others. All these studies directly or indirectly push for the treatment of *only* as a pure proposition operator.

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¹ This is not only peculiar to DP arguments. When a PP or an adverb is the focus associate, adverbial-*only* remains in a pre-verbal position (i-a) & (ii-a). The adfocal-*only* adjoins to the focus associates directly (i-b) & (ii-b).

- (i) a. John **only** put a candy ON THE TABLE. (ii) a. John **only** bought a candy YESTERDAY.
b. John put a candy **only** ON THE TABLE. b. John bought a candy **only** YESTERDAY.

² As far as I know, Horn (1969) was the first person to propose a propositional analysis for *only* (and *even*).

The constituency of the focus and *mo* is supported by the fact that *mo* also follows adjunct focus as in (10). In fact, time adverbials in Kasem adjoin freely in the preverbal position and can host the focus particle (11); another evidence for the constituency of *mo* and the focus associate. It is important to state here that the preverbal occurrence of the time adverbial is not tied to focus. It can occupy the same position in a neutral context; without *mo*, as in [Adam diim go chworo kom.].

- (10) a. Ma-kɔ **mo** Adam go chworo kom?
 time-which FOC Adam slaughter fowl DEF
 ‘When did Adam slaughter the fowl?’
 b. Adam go chworo kom [diim]_F **mo**.
 Adam slaughter fowl DEF yesterday FOC
 ‘Adam slaughtered the fowl YESTERDAY.’
 c. [Diim]_F **mo** Adam go chworo kom.
 yesterday FOC Adam slaughter fowl DEF
 ‘Adam slaughtered the fowl YESTERDAY.’
- (11) Adam [diim]_F **mo** go chworo kom.
 Adam yesterday FOC slaughter fowl DEF
 ‘Adam slaughtered the fowl YESTERDAY.’

2.2. Association with focus sensitive particle ‘yerane’

The adfocal exclusive particle in Kasem is *yerane*. It follows the focus associate but precedes the focus particle *mo*. Just like the focus particle *mo*, *yerane* forms a constituent with the focus phrase both in an in-situ position (12-b) and an ex-situ position (12-c).

- (12) a. Did Adam slaughter a fowl and a cow yesterday?
 b. Adam go [chworo]_F **yerane mo** diim.
 Adam kill fowl only FOC yesterday
 ‘Adam slaughtered only A FOWL.’
 c. [Chworo]_F **yerane mo** Adam go diim.
 fowl only FOC Adam kill yesterday
 ‘It was only A FOWL that Adam slaughtered yesterday.’

In the preverbal position, association with subject focus also follows the same pattern as the association with object focus above. The focus associate cannot be separated from the focus sensitive particle (13-a). The same can be said of association with adjunct focus as well (13-b).

- (13) a. [Adam]_F ***(yerane) mo** go chworo ***(yerane)** diim ***(yerane)**.
 Adam only FOC kill fowl only yesterday only
 ‘Only ADAM slaughtered only a fowl.’
 b. Adam go chworo kom [diim]_F **yerane mo**.
 Adam slaughter fowl DEF yesterday only FOC
 ‘Adam slaughtered the fowl only YESTERDAY.’

In addition to the adfocal-*yerane*, Kasem also possesses an adverbial or sentential *only* which is realized differently as *weeni* (14). Adverbial-*weeni* constructions are notable due to the presence of an obligatory resumptive pronoun. The construction looks like a bi-clausal structure, but for lack of space, I leave the analysis for a future research. For now, I assume the simple structure in (15) for *weeni*-clauses.

- (14) Adam **weeni** *(o) go [chworo]_F **mo**.
 Adam only 3SG kill.PFV fowl FOC
 ‘Adam only slaughtered A FOWL.’
- (15) [_{TP} Adam [_{VP} **weeni** [_{VP} o go [_{DP} [chworo]_F **mo**]]]]

Apart from the individual occurrences of the adfocal-*yerane* and the adverbial-*weeni* discussed above, the co-occurrence of both particles is also possible in Kasem (16); an unattested phenomenon in English (17).⁵ The reading in (16) is a single *only* reading which means that Adam only slaughtered a fowl and did not slaughter anything else. Otherwise, the sentence in (16) would be false. The same interpretation is derived for single-occurrence cases. This is a situation of form-meaning mismatch that has been discussed in the literature as evidence for a concord analysis (see Deal 2022, Penka 2011, Zeijlstra 2004 on Negative concord; Bayer 2020 on Discourse Particles (DiPs); Cable 2010 on question particles, a.o.).

(16) Adam **weeni** *(o) go [chworɔ]_F **yerane mo**.
 A. only 3_{SG} kill.PFV fowl only FOC
 ‘Adam only slaughtered A FOWL.’

(17) *Adam *only* killed *only* [a fowl]_F.

3. Evidence for the proposition approach

In this section, I provide some evidence supporting the proposition approach claim for the association with adfocal-*yerane* in Kasem. First, I provide an evidence from the possibility of split-scope readings with adfocal-*yerane* (§ 3.1). Secondly, I show that the scope of the exclusive operator does not survive ellipsis; a prediction not made by the quantifier-raising approach (§ 3.2). Thirdly, I show how a prediction made by the proposition approach on the multiple occurrence of adfocal-*yerane*, resulting in a single exclusive reading is confirmed (§3.3).

3.1. Scope ambiguity and split-scope reading

The proposition approach assumes the presence of a null operator (which can be overtly realized as the adverbial-*only*) which is responsible for the semantic contribution of exclusiveness. Therefore, the position of the operator must correspond to a scope-taking position. These positions include adjunction to the vP, TP, or even higher in the clausal spine; specifically, positions which correspond to proposition. However, since adfocal-*yerane* does not occupy such positions, but adjoins to DPs, PPs, it does not take scope in its surface position. This predicts the possibility of scope ambiguity in adfocal-*yerane* cases. This has already been observed by Taglicht (1984) in English whereby adfocal-*only* results in a scope ambiguity in a sentence like (18-a) and (18-b). The adfocal-*only* can either take narrow or broad scope with respect to the modal auxiliary and the higher predicate respectively. For instance, (18-a) could either be read as (i) John is allowed to only eat rice (but can eat other things too) (narrow scope) or (ii) John is only allowed to eat rice (no other allowance) (wide scope). The same thing happens in (18-b) where the adfocal-*only* and its associate can scope below or above the predicate *require*.

- (18) a. John may eat *only* rice. [may > only; only > may]
 (i) John is permitted to only eat rice and nothing else.
 (ii) John is only permitted to eat rice (no other permission).
 b. John is required to eat *only* rice. [require > only; only > require]
 (i) The requirement is for John to eat only rice (and nothing else).
 (ii) The only requirement is that John should eat rice (may eat other things).

3.1.1. Scope ambiguity in Kasem

Replicating such observation to Kasem results in scope ambiguity with respect to adfocal-*yerane* association with focus, and higher scopal operators like the modal and the higher predicate. In the presence of a higher predicate as in (19), or a modal auxiliary as in (20), adfocal-*yerane* and its focus associates *mumuna* ‘rice’ & *chworɔ* ‘fowl’ take both narrow and wide scope.

⁵ Other languages with *only*-doubling include Mandarin Chinese (Hole 2017, Sun 2021), Vietnamese (Erlewine 2017), i.a.

- (19) Adam **jeye** se o di [mumuna]_F **yerane mo**. [require > only; only > require]
 A. require to 3SG eat rice only FOC
 ‘Adam is required to eat only rice.’
 (i) The requirement is for Adam to eat only rice (and nothing else).
 (ii) The only requirement is that Adam should eat rice (may eat other things).
- (20) Adam **wae** *(o) go [chworō]_F **yerane mo**. [may > only; only > may]
 Adam may 3SG kill.PFV fowl only FOC
 ‘Adam may slaughter only A FOWL.’
 (i) It is acceptable for Adam to only slaughter a fowl.
 (ii) Adam is only allowed to slaughter a fowl (no other permission).

However, when the adverbial-*weeni* is present, the scope ambiguity disappears, as in (21). In this case, the overt position of the adverbial-*weeni* determines the scope relation with the higher predicate with or without the presence of the adfocal-*yerane*. Thus, adverbial-*weeni* can be below (21-a) or above (21-b) the higher predicate taking surface scope in relation to the latter.⁶ This is expected since adverbial-*weeni* occupies positions where it can take (surface) scope over a proposition. So, there is no ambiguity. Thus, the descriptive generalization is that *yerane* allows for scope ambiguities, whereas *weeni* is rigid in scope, reminiscent of what we find in English (cf. Branen & Erlewine 2023, Quek & Hirsch 2017). When both are present, the position of *weeni* determines the scope.

- (21) a. N **weeni** n **jeye** [se n ga [Bible dem]_F (**yerane**) mo].
 2SG only 2SG require to 2SG read Bible DEF only FOC
 ‘You are only required to read the Bible.’
 [*require > only; only > require]
- b. N **jeye** [se n **weeni** n ga [Bible dem]_F (**yerane**) mo].
 2SG require to 2SG only 2SG read Bible DEF only FOC
 ‘You are required to only read the Bible.’
 [require > only; *only > require]

Based on the discussion so far, the proposition approach is able to account for the scope ambiguity with respect to adfocal-*yerane* assuming a high exclusive operator in the clausal spine.

3.1.2. Split-scope in *Kasem*

Furthermore, following earlier works like Hirsch (2019, 2022), Lee (2005), Quek & Hirsch (2017), and Sun (2021), if adfocal-*yerane* takes a quantified DP associate, there is the possibility for a split in scope in relation with a high scope operator. This is an argument against adfocal-*yerane* and the associate taking scope together (the quantifier-raising approach). Here is how it works. Assuming we introduce a scope bearing element (the numeral *bana* ‘four’ in this case) to the DP associate as in (22), the prediction of the proposition approach is that the latter should be able to scope independently of adfocal-*yerane* since both are scope-bearing elements. This is in fact borne out from the example in (22).⁷ The scope of the quantified DP is dissociated from the scope of adfocal-*yerane*. While adfocal-*yerane* (although low in the structure) can scope above the higher predicate, the quantified DP scopes below the latter, creating a split in the scope of both adfocal-*yerane* and the quantified DP.

⁶ Recall the presence of a pronoun in the *weeni*-clause in (14) above, here is another interesting case where the pronoun is repeated thrice in the context of a higher predicate. There seems to be a multiple clausal embedding in such structures. Again, I leave this for a future research.

⁷ The context used here is a typical cultural context where you are regarded as wealthy by the number of wives (and children) that you have. In order to get the split-scope reading, I had to create a context that is easily accessible to my language consultant.

- (22) Adam **jege** se o swo kaana bana **yerane mo**. [only > require > four]
 Adam require to 3SG marry woman.PL four only FOC
 ‘(To be considered wealthy) Adam is required to marry *only* four wives.’
Meaning: Adam is only required to marry four wives (not specific).

This is an argument for the proposition approach because the scope position of adfocal-*yerane* is higher than its surface position. This confirms the presence of a covert exclusive operator (which provides the quantificational meaning) above the matrix predicate, as in (23). The quantifier-raising approach does not predict such a split in scope. In the quantifier-raising approach, both adfocal-*yerane* plus the quantified DP associate would have to scope together, either above the embedded predicate (but below the matrix predicate) (24-a), or above the matrix predicate (24-b) (cf. Hirsch 2019). But this does not account for the split-scope that was just presented.

- (23) LF: [_{TP} Adam [_{Op_{only}} [_{VP} **jege** [se o [_{QP} kaana bana **yerane mo**]_i [_{VP} swo t_i]]]]].
 Adam require to 3SG woman.PL four only FOC marry
 ‘Adam is required to marry *only* four wives.’
- (24) a. LF: [_{TP} Adam **jege** [_{TP} se o [_{QP} kaana bana **yerane mo**]_i [_{VP} swo t_i]]].
 Adam require to 3SG woman.PL four only FOC marry
 ‘Adam is required to marry *only* four wives.’
- b. LF: [_{TP} Adam [[_{QP} kaana bana **yerane mo**]_i [_{VP} **jege** [_{TP} se o [_{VP} swo t_i]]]]].
 Adam woman.PL four only FOC req to 3SG marry
 ‘Adam is required to marry *only* four wives.’

3.2. Ellipsis

This section shows that while the proposition approach correctly derives the observed behaviour between Op_{only} and adfocal-*yerane* under ellipsis, the quantifier-raising approach, on the other hand, over-generates. This test was first used by Bassi et al. (2022) to argue in favour of the proposition approach to adfocal-*only* in English.

Beaver & Clark (2008: 177) observe that “*Only* and its associated Foc cannot be separated by a node targeted for ellipsis.” Bassi et al. (2022: 817) call this the ‘Beaver & Clark’s Constraint’. This is a constraint on the c-command relation between (adverbial) *only* and its focus associate. Consider the example in (25) (from Beaver & Clark 2008: 177). The focus associate in the second clause [because Sandy *only* does salute] is elided. The sentence cannot mean Sandy salutes and does nothing else because the exclusive particle *only* is separated from its associate by ellipsis. The latter requires that its focus associate is overtly present in its scope (Tancredi 1990).

- (25) *Kim *only* SALUTES because Sandy *only* does salute.
 [cannot mean: ‘Kim salutes (and does nothing else) because Sandy salutes (and does nothing else).’]

Bassi et al. (2022) gave a modified version of the constraint by Beaver & Clark (2008) in (26).

- (26) **Proposition Approach version of B&C Constraint:**
 Op_{only} and its associated Foc (adfocal-*only*) cannot be separated by a node targeted for ellipsis.

(adapted & modified from Bassi et al. 2022: p.819)

Recall that adfocal-*yerane* shows scope ambiguity in the presence of a modal. But in an ellipsis context (VP-ellipsis), the broad scope (and not the narrow scope) reading is absent (27). This is predicted by the proposition approach which assumes that the quantificational property of *only* resides in a high Op_{only} in the clausal spine (and not the adfocal-*yerane* itself). The narrow scope reading is available in (27) because both Op_{only} and adfocal-*yerane* are part of the ellipsis site (28-a). They are not separated by ellipsis. In contrast, we expect the broad scope reading to be absent if Op_{only} is now above the modal because it is now separated from its associate, as in (28-b).

- (27) John **wae** o yeigi paano **yerane mo**. [Adam de wae o yeigi paano yerane mo].
 John may 3SG buy bread only FOC Adam too may
 ‘John may buy only bread. Adam may ..., too.’
 [may > only, *only > may]
- (28) a. [_{TP} Adam de [_{T'} wae [_{VP} **Op_{only}** [_{VP} o yeigi paano **yerane mo**]]]] too. [may > only]
 b. *[[_{TP} Adam de [_{T'} **Op_{only}** [_{T'} wae [_{VP} o yeigi paano **yerane mo**]]]]] too. [*only > may]

On the other hand, the quantifier-raising approach over-generates by predicting the possibility of a wide scope reading in a VP-ellipsis context, contrary to fact. The structures in (29) show that with the quantifier-raising approach, not only the narrow scope reading (29-a), but also the broad scope reading (29-b) is possible under ellipsis. While in (29-a), adfocal-*yerane* + DP quantifier-raises above VP, the same complex constituent QRs above the modal in (29-b). But we have seen that this is not the case with VP ellipsis in modal constructions (see (27) above): only the narrow scope reading is available. Thus, the proposition approach predicts correctly the behaviour of *only* in relation to other quantificational elements (like modal) under ellipsis.

- (29) a. [_{TP} Adam de [_{T'} **wae** [_{VP} [paano **yerane mo**]_T [_{VP} o yeigi t_r]]]]] [may > only]
 b. [_{TP} Adam de [[paano **yerane mo**]_i T' **wae** [_{VP} [_{VP} o yeigi t_r]]]]] [only > may]

In summary, we have seen that while the quantifier-raising approach both under-generates in split-scope context and over-generates in ellipsis context, the proposition approach correctly predicts or derives the observed behaviours (cf. Bassi et al. 2022, Hirsch 2019, 2022).

3.3. Multiple occurrences of adfocal-*yerane*

The proposition approach predicts a situation where the multiple occurrence of adfocal-*yerane* can result in a single *only*-reading.⁸ Such an instance would have the interpretation dependent on *Op_{only}*, and not adfocal-*yerane*. The latter only performs the function of an agreement exponent (à la Lee 2005). This prediction is borne out in example (30). We can get the reading where Adam is the only person who ate something, and that something is rice. Nobody else ate something, not even rice.⁹ Without making special stipulations, it remains to be seen how the quantifier-raising approach would derive such an interpretation.

- (30) Adam **yerane mo di** mumuna **yerane**.
 Adam only FOC eat rice only
 Lit. ‘Only Adam ate only rice.’
Reading: ‘It is the case that among those who could have eaten something, it is only Adam who ate something *x*, such that *x* is rice.’

4. Analysis

I propose a bipartite analysis for adfocal-*yerane* in Kasem, following earlier works such as Bassi et al. (2022), Branan & Erlewine (2023), Lee (2005), Quek & Hirsch (2017), and Sun (2021), among others. Agreement establishes a link between the high exclusive operator, *Op_{only}*, and the adfocal-*yerane* lower

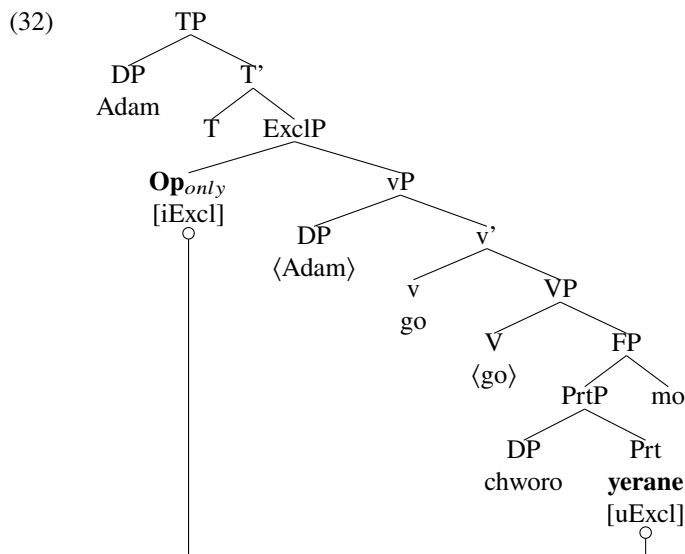
⁸ This is in parallel to what we see in negative concord languages whereby multiple occurrences of n-words Agree with a high NEG-operator which results in a single negative reading. This is the case in Italian, a negative concord language. Zeijlstra (2007: p.513) argued that multiple occurrences of n-words in an example like (i) result in a single negative reading (cf. Zeijlstra 2004).

- (i) Gianni non [_{iNEG}] ha detto niente [_{uNEG}] a nessuno [_{uNEG}]. Italian
 Gianni neg has said n-thing to n-body
 ‘Gianni did not call anybody’

⁹ There is another reading which would indicate the presence of two *Op_{only}*. The reading would be a situation where only Adam ate only rice. There are others who ate other things including rice.

in the clause. Consider the following structure in (32) for the simple focus sensitive sentence in (12-b), repeated below as (31) (without the adverb ‘yesterday’). The uninterpretable feature on adfoal-*yerane* Agrees with the interpretable feature on the exclusive null Op. What Op_{only} does is that it determines the semantic scope of exclusivity.¹⁰

- (31) Adam go [chworō]_F **yerane** mo.
 Adam kill fowl only FOC
 ‘Adam slaughtered only A FOWL.’



The assumption is that the covert Op_{only} can occupy different positions in the clause as long as it takes a proposition (of type *t*) as one of its two semantic arguments (the other argument is the focus associate with its semantic value) (Rooth 1992). In other words, Op_{only} can adjoin to TP or vP as the case may be.

We are left with the question about the relationship between Op_{only} and adverbial-*weeni*. I propose that when adverbial-*weeni* is present, it takes the role of Op_{only}. Unlike adfoal-*yerane*, we have seen that adverbial-*weeni* is scope-rigid and is always pre-verbal. Thus, we can say that Op_{only} can be overtly realized as *weeni*. However, the distribution of adverbial-*weeni* is constrained to the pre-verbal position. Op_{only}, on the other hand, may have a wider distribution as it is predicted to be able to occur above TP for association with subject focus, for example (cf. Lee 2005). Another notable difference between Op_{only} and adverbial-*weeni* is the kind of structure that *weeni* introduces as shown already in the examples (14) and (16) above. As already mentioned above, I leave the proper analysis for such a structure for a future research. Therefore, in cases where only the adfoal-*yerane* occurs, we have agreement between it and Op_{only}. In doubling cases however, the agreement is between adfoal-*yerane* and adverbial-*weeni*.

5. Ex-situ focus and backward association with focus (BAwF)

Finally, I will briefly highlight an interesting area of research which concerns association with ex-situ focus. This is interesting because there is a claim in the literature that *only* cannot associate backwards cross-linguistically (Beaver & Clark 2008, Erlewine 2014a,b, Jackendoff 1972: a.o.). In (33), while BAwF is possible with *even* (33-a), the same is not true for *only* (33-b).

- (33) a. [Mary]_F, John **even** saw at the party.
 b. *[Mary]_F, John **only** saw at the party. (adapted from Erlewine 2014a: 129)

¹⁰Although previous accounts in this approach claim that the adfoal-particle is semantically inert (cf. Branan & Erlewine 2023, Lee 2005, Quek & Hirsch 2017, Sun 2021: a.o.), however, I argue to the contrary in Aremu (to appear).

In a direct contrast, elicited data from Kasem shows the possibility of BA_wF with adverbial-*weeni* in ex-situ focus constructions. Adverbial-*weeni* does not only associate with the in-situ object focus (34-a), but can also associate with the ex-situ counterpart (34-b). This is not possible in English as shown in (33-b) above. The exclusive interpretation in both (34-a) and (34-b) is the same: i.e., it is the case that Adam slaughtered only *x*, and *x* is a fowl. The presence of adfocal-*yerane* is optional.

- (34) a. Adam **weeni** o go [chworo]_F (yerane) **mo**.
 Adam only 3_{SG} kill fowl only FOC
 ‘Adam only slaughtered A FOWL.’
- b. [Chworo]_F (yerane) **mo** Adam **weeni** o goa.
 fowl only FOC Adam only 3_{SG} kill.COMPL
 Lit. ‘A FOWL, Adam only slaughtered. (and nothing else)’

Backward association with leftward subject focus is also possible in Kasem (35); a construction that does not result in a subject focus association in English (36) (cf. Erlewine 2014a, Jackendoff 1972).

- (35) Adam mo **weeni** o di mumuna.
 Adam FOC only 3_{SG} eat rice
 ‘Only Adam ate rice.’
- (36) *[Adam]_F only ate rice.

The example in (37-b) shows that backward association is not clause bound, because it is also present in long distance dependencies. Both sentences in (37) have the same exclusive reading.

- (37) a. Adam we John **weeni** o go Chworo (yerane) mo.
 Adam say John only 3_{SG} kill fowl only FOC
 Adam said that John only slaughtered A FOWL. (and nothing else)’
- b. Chworo (yerane) mo Adam we John **weeni** o go.
 fowl only FOC Adam say John only 3_{SG} kill
 Lit. ‘A FOWL, Adam said that John only slaughtered. (and nothing else)’

The data presented above raises the question of whether *weeni* is truly a focus sensitive particle or not, considering the fact that true (conventional) focus sensitive particles are said to c-command their focus associates (cf. Beaver & Clark 2008, Rooth 1992, Tancredi 1990). But as we have seen so far, *weeni* is indeed a focus sensitive operator. How then do we reconcile the backward association cases with the c-command (scopal) requirement of *weeni*? Due to the want of space, I will not be able to provide an analysis here. But an interested reader can see Aremu (to appear) for a more detailed discussion and an analysis which is based on reconstruction. Evidence for such an analysis comes from the scopal relations between the exclusive particle and other elements such as modals and negation in the language. See also Erlewine’s (2014: §7.4) discussion on German and Dutch (cf. Hirsch & Wagner 2019).¹¹

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has provided a cross-linguistic support for the proposition approach to the analysis of adfocal-*only* from an under-studied language, Kasem. I have argued that in adfocal-*yerane* constructions, the exclusive interpretation comes from a covert Op_{only} higher in the clause, and that the exclusive Op_{only} Agrees with adfocal-*yerane*. Evidence from split-scope shows that the quantifier-raising approach under-generates the scopal possibilities of adfocal-*yerane*. The ellipsis test on the other hand, shows that the quantifier-raising approach over-generates as it predicts the possibility of a wide scope reading under ellipsis, contrary to fact (Bassi et al. 2022). However, the proposition approach is able to account for the scopal behaviours in both cases. Lastly, I presented cases of backward association in

¹¹Aremu (to appear) also discusses backward association with *even* and *also* in Kasem, albeit both do not require the reconstruction of their focus associate.

both ex-situ local and non-local foci cases. The possibility of backward association in Kasem reveals an interesting phenomenon that has been claimed to be absent in English and some other languages such as Vietnamese and Mandarin Chinese (see Erlewine 2014a,b, 2017, Jackendoff 1972). This calls for further (cross-linguistic) research.

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