

Intensionality in the focus – focus-sensitivity of particles viewed from intensional logic

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Focus accents can have impact on the meaning of sentences containing focus sensitive particles. That John only introduced BILL to Sue is a proposition with truth conditions different from that John only introduced Bill to SUE (with focus on the capitalized words). This difference is attributed to the focus sensitivity of *only*. Theories of focus semantics, like the alternative semantics (AS) by Rooth or the structured meaning theory (SMT) by Krifka, describe this impact by semantic effects of the focus in an enriched semantic representation and by focus sensitive operators making use of these enrichments. In AS, e.g., in addition to the ordinary truth conditional meaning a focus meaning is introduced by focus accents. The focus meaning represents a set of alternatives to be taken into account when interpreting focus sensitive constructions. In SMT the meaning of a constituent containing a focus is formally divided in a focus and a background part. Focus sensitive particles have access to the separate meaning parts.

The basic ideas of these approaches can also be implemented in an intensional type-logical system. Meanings of potentially focussed constituents are considered as intensions of intensions α , which yield for every possible world (= alternative interpretation) w the ordinary meaning as $\alpha(w)(w)$. And for every world w there is for every alternative a w' such that $\alpha(w)(w')$ yields this alternative. This can be ensured by two axioms, an axiom of ordinary meaning and an axiom of alternative meanings. The effect of a focus can then be described as a combination of intensor and extensor operations on these meanings. Focus sensitive operators then turn out to be modal operators or to be definable by modal operators. This analysis fits quite well to approaches which motivate limitations on the alternatives to be taken into account when interpreting focus sensitive operators by some ordering on the alternatives, cf. van Rooij's minimal models approach to exhaustification. This ordering can easily be represented by the accessibility relation of the modality introduced by the focus sensitive particle. Cases of multiple focus constructions which cause problems for AS and SMT can be represented solely with the means of intensional type logic.