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A distributed syntax for evaluative ‘only’ sentences

Abstract: I claim in this article that several operators in different positions interact to yield the meaning of a *nur* sentence in German which may receive an evaluative interpretation such as *Paul aß nur Kekse* ‘Paul only ate cookies (and the speaker considers this little and/or bad)’. The exclusive component of meaning comes from an adverbial particle as in the standard account. For the evaluative component of meaning which is present in many *nur* sentences, I assume an interplay of C/I domain evaluative categories and an operator in ad-focus position. Evidence for the interplay of these operators comes from contexts in German and Dutch in which both the exclusive and the ad-focus operator are pronounced, from topicalization and extraposition data, from subordinate clauses with an impoverished C domain, from a newspaper corpus search and from a blocking effect induced by negation.

Keywords: exclusive focus particles/‘only’, evaluative presupposition, scalarity, doubling of focus particles, decomposition (of focus particles)

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1 Introduction and main claims

German *nur*, just like other ‘only’ words across languages, is frequently analyzed as encapsulating entailed and presupposed components of meaning. The present paper strives to show that what is typically analyzed as a presupposition of adverbial *nur* ‘only’ in German should better be analyzed as the import of at least one more operator which has a different syntactic position than the ‘only’ word with which it interacts.

Specifically, I argue that in German an adverbial exclusive operator in the v domain contributes the exclusive semantics of an ‘only’ sentence as in (1). (The v domain of generative grammar has the event description in its scope, to

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the exclusion of tense, modality and [higher] aspect categories like progressive. The *v* level corresponds to the VP level of previous stages of the theory, with the subject conceived of as base-generated inside the VP. The controversial movement of the inflected verb to an inflectional head is not depicted in [1].)

- (1) ... dass Paul [_v **nur**_{EXCL} [_v *Kekse_F* aß]].
 ‘... that Paul only ate cookies_F.’

Nur ‘only’ in (1) excludes the possibility that Paul ate anything else than cookies. This is an entailment. The *v*-level position of the exclusive operator is compatible with the standard account of German adverbial *nur* (Büring and Hartmann 2001).¹ I dub this the *v-Exclusion Claim*, and in what follows I will abbreviate reference to the exclusive component of meaning, or to the operator which denotes this component, as “EXCL”. The sentence in (1) may signal simultaneously that the speaker considers it little or bad that Paul ate no more than cookies. In these cases, I assume silent functional structure in the C/I domain which contributes this evaluative component of meaning. This is preliminarily depicted in (2). (The C domain is that high syntactic region of a clause that determines clause type and speech-act type and which accommodates preposed topical or focal material as well as sentential adverbs like *unfortunately* or *honestly*; Rizzi 1997; Cinque 1999. The I [or T] domain is right underneath the C domain and hosts temporal, modal and aspectual operators.)

- (2) ... dass [_{EVAL} **Ø**_{LITTLE/BAD} Paul [_v **nur**_{EXCL} [_v *Kekse_F* aß]]].
 ‘... that Paul only ate cookies_F (the speaker considers it little and/or bad that Paul ate no more).’

I dub the assumption of a high evaluative operator interacting with EXCL the *C/I-Evaluation Claim*. For Dutch, we will have opportunity to see pronounced A'-moved structure in the evaluative C/I domain; Section 3.2. In German, I assume interaction across a distance. The German evaluative head Agrees with the focus phrase, which is marked by an empty ad-focus morpheme as in (3). (Agree is that mechanism in current versions of generative syntax which performs the unification of syntactic features across a distance. The featural Probe head EVAL in [3] searches its c-command domain for a Goal. A Goal is an

¹ I will only discuss exclusive particles in adverbial position at the *vP* level in this article. I will leave it open whether those focus XPs which form a constituent together with their focus particles in Sudhoff (2010: 88) are instances of the ad-focus marking structures that are introduced in (3), or if they constitute an independent phenomenon of contrastive foci.

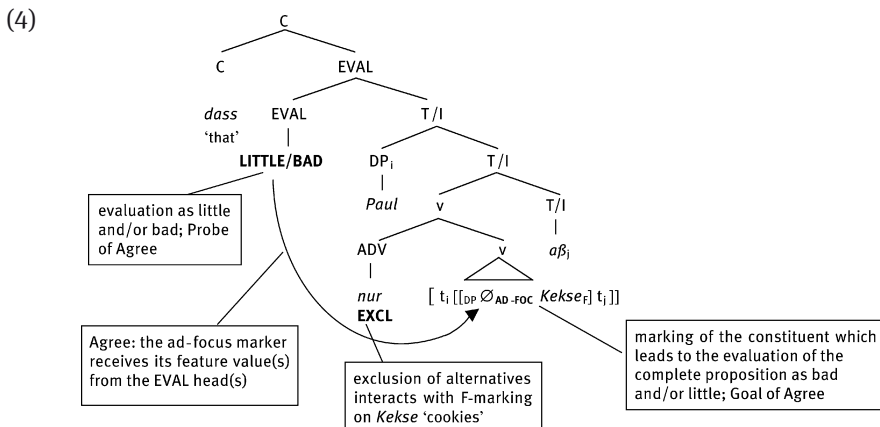
element which has an unspecified feature of the general kind which matches the type of feature that the Probe has. The Goal’s feature value is then determined by the feature value on the Probe. Thus, $\emptyset_{\text{AD-FOC}}$ in [3] will end up having the LITTLE/BAD specification of EVAL after Agree. This is conceived of as a purely syntactic process.²⁾

- (3) ... dass [EVAL **EVAL_{LITTLE/BAD}** Paul [_V nur_{EXCL} [_V [$\emptyset_{\text{AD-FOC}}$ Kekse_F] aß]]].

Agree

‘... that Paul only ate cookies_F (the speaker considers it little and/or bad that Paul ate no more/nothing else).’

Summing up, I assume that $\emptyset_{\text{AD-FOC}}$ introduces an uninterpretable evaluative feature at the focus phrase level (Krifka 2006) which gets valued by EVAL_{LITTLE/BAD}, where EVAL_{BAD} is a low C category, and EVAL_{LITTLE} a high I category. In Sections 3.1, 3.3 and 3.4, we will see German data which renders this ad-focus structure visible. I dub the assumption of ad-focus structure which interacts with the C/I domain via Agree the *Ad-Focus-Marking Claim*. (4) depicts the whole resulting structure as a tree with explanatory annotations added for per-spiciuity. EVAL_{LITTLE} and EVAL_{BAD} are conflated into a single category in (4); see Section 3.4 for arguments which justify it to distinguish two different syntactic positions instead. Not all researchers agree on the movement of the inflected verb to the head T/I position, or on the existence of this head (Haider 2010), but this controversy has no consequences for our account.



² However, the meaning of the EVAL head will add evaluative meaning to (3), and the syntactic AD-FOC marking of the focus constituent will restrict the focus of evaluation. Like this it

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 familiarizes the reader with the discussion about components of meaning in ‘only’ sentences. This section develops some in-depth argumentation to single out the kind of evaluative scalarity that we will be concerned with. It must not be confounded with other kinds of scalarity that likewise play a role in the interpretation of ‘only’ sentences. As the core properties of ‘only’ words are stable across languages (König 1991), Section 2 uses English data for ease of exposition. Section 3 develops four arguments which favor the assumption of articulate evaluative functional structure as proposed in (3) and (4). Section 4 summarizes and concludes.

2 Components of meaning in ‘only’ sentences

This section reviews the components of meaning that are usually discussed in connection with ‘only’ words. Readers with some prior knowledge of the domain may skip Sections 2.1 and 2.2. Sections 2.3 and, most importantly, 2.4 discuss issues which are not necessarily standard and which are needed to make sense of the ensuing sections.

2.1 The truth-conditional core: exclusion of alternatives

Words meaning ‘only’ are analyzed as combining entailed and presuppositional components of meaning (Horn 1969; König 1991; Rooth 1992; Guerzoni 2003; Beaver and Clark 2008; Sudhoff 2010; Coppock and Beaver 2014). The truth-functional core of ‘only’ words entails the falsity of all non-trivial alternatives. This is illustrated in (5) for *only*. Recall that “EXCL” stands for the exclusion of alternatives that ‘only’ words entail.^{3, 4}

will be determined that it is just the eating of cookies, as opposed to, say, the eating of salad and cookies, which is evaluated as bad. Moreover, relevant contrasts will not involve other activities such as baking or drinking, as \emptyset_{AD-FOC} only attaches to the object constituent in (3).

3 To keep things as simple as possible I will adhere to Guerzoni’s (2003) domain restriction, which is brought about by the context set *C* instead of referring to focus meanings in the tradition of Rooth (1992). In Roothian accounts of ‘only’ words, EXCL interacts with a propositional constituent, or with a complete event description. No syntactic division into focus and background is assumed. In those accounts, there exists a component of the semantics which generates alternatives to constituents with foci inside them. EXCL has access to this second layer of meaning, which makes it possible to exclude alternatives differing from the assertion in the position of the focus value. Since I develop no explicit compositional semantics in this article, the perspicuous representations employed by Guerzoni (2003) come in handy for our merely illustrative purposes.

- (5) EXCL (cf. Guerzoni 2003: 173, 175)
- (a) *Paul only ate cookies_F*.
 - (b) $\neg \exists p \in C [p \neq q \ \& \ p(w)=1]$,
where q is the prejacent, i.e. the proposition in the scope of the ‘only’ word
 - (c) ‘There is no proposition in the context which is not equal to the prejacent ‘that Paul ate cookies’ and which is true.’

In a scenario in which Paul ate cookies and nothing else such as, for instance, vegetables, (5b) correctly covers the asserted meaning of *only*.

Without any further specifications, (5b) will lead to contradictions. If Paul only ate cookies, it should, for instance, not be excluded ‘that Paul ate sweets’ is true. Following Guerzoni (2003) I will assume that the context set C made use of in (5b) only has propositions in it which are not entailed by the prejacent. Like this, the statement of non-identity in the scope of the existential quantifier will not lead to contradictions. Beaver and Clark (2008) and Coppock and Beaver (2014) capture EXCL by a maximality requirement. The prejacent is the informationally strongest proposition which is true in a given context. This amounts to the same truth conditions as Guerzoni’s (2003). (We will return to the notion of informational strength in Section 2.4.)

It belongs to the commonly accepted facts about ‘only’ words that EXCL is an entailment, and not a presupposition, as can be seen in antecedents of conditionals. EXCL does not survive in this diagnostic context. *If Paul only ate cookies ...* does not imply that Paul ate nothing apart from cookies.

2.2 Presupposition I: prejacent truth

Apart from EXCL, ‘only’ words signal the truth of their prejacent, i.e. the propositions in their scope. (5a) thus means that Paul ate cookies. Most researchers assume that this component of meaning is not entailed, but presupposed. Prejacent truth is again supported by the diagnostic context of conditional antecedents, where presuppositions survive. For most researchers, *If John only ate cookies ...* preserves the truth of Paul having eaten cookies. There is some debate in the literature on whether presupposition is really the right theoretical notion to characterize the status of meaning of the prejacent (Horn 1996) and whether the status of meaning may change under certain conditions (Guerzoni 2003).

⁴ The “ C ” in (6) is not to be confounded with the C (omplementizer) level of syntactic structure as referred to throughout the article.

Beaver and Clark (2008) and Coppock and Beaver (2014) treat prejacent truth as a minimality presupposition. At least a proposition as strong as the prejacent is presupposed to be true in an ‘only’ sentence. We will not be concerned with the informational status of prejacent truth with ‘only’ words in any detail. In what follows, this component of meaning will be treated as a presupposition, but nothing hinges on this.

2.3 Presupposition II: (Scalar) Evaluation

A sentence like (5a), repeated here as (6a), is frequently understood in such a way that it is considered little, or bad, that Paul ate cookies and nothing else. Guerzoni (2003) states a more general variant of the way to understand this kind of evaluation, viz. in terms of quantification over contextually salient alternatives to the prejacent; cf. (6b).

- (6) EVAL (cf. Guerzoni 2003: 173, 175; preliminary)
- (a) *Paul only ate cookies_F*.
 - (b) $\forall p \in C [p \neq q \rightarrow q >_{\text{likely/insignificant...}} p]$,
where q is the prejacent and the prejacent is assigned the lowest value on the scale (cf. Guerzoni 2003: 175–176)
 - (c) ‘All propositions in the context which do not equal the prejacent are less likely/more insignificant/...’

A first thing to note about (6b) is that the exact dimension with respect to which p and q are ordered is left underspecified by Guerzoni (2003) (cf. the three dots in the index on the “>”-symbol and in the paraphrase). I will repeatedly return to this kind of underspecification in what follows, and will compare it to the more limited ‘little’/‘bad’ presuppositions that are assumed here.

If (6b) is to yield non-contradictory results, C will have to be restricted in such a way that propositions which rank lower on the relevant scale than the prejacent q are not in the domain of quantification. This means that propositions that would, in a given context, be even more likely/insignificant/... than the prejacent are not considered. In our scenario of Paul having eaten cookies, the propositions that Paul ate something that has calories, or that can be categorized as food, will be more likely or less significant than Paul having eaten cookies. Such alternatives are excluded from C by stipulation, such that ‘only’ foci that receive a scalar-evaluative interpretation are always extreme in the

sense just described.⁵ Beaver and Clark (2008) and Coppock and Beaver (2014) capture scalar evaluation in two different ways: either by the contextually determined scale with which prejacent truth interacts, and of which informational strength as in Section 2.1 is just one instantiation; or by the assumption of an evaluative presupposition.⁶

Ever since Lerner and Zimmermann’s (1981) and Jacobs’ (1983) work, scalar evaluation has been included in analyses of ‘only’ words at least for some uses (e.g. by König 1991 or Beaver and Clark 2008). However, there has always been a parallel tradition which aimed at reducing scalar evaluation with ‘only’ pragmatically (e.g. Bayer 1996: 61–66). Seen from this perspective, scalar evaluation with ‘only’ arises in contexts that invite scalar inferencing, but the lexical semantics of ‘only’ words is stated without making reference to scales. Arguments against the pragmatic reduction of scalar evaluation with ‘only’ words can be obtained from data as in (7) through (8) ([7] is taken from Klinedinst [2004: 7], who assumes that all uses of *only* are scalar).

- (7) *Did many people come to the meeting?*
 (a) *Yes. (#Only) John, Mary, ..., and Bill came.*
 (b) *No. Only John, Mary, ..., and Bill came.*
- (8) *Was he among the first to finish the race?*
 (a) *Yes. He (#only) came fourth.*
 (b) *No. He (only) came fourth.*

(7) and (8) show that *only* is infelicitous in contexts in which the scalar evaluation component as little is explicitly excluded. If scalar evaluation was just some kind of non-conventional implicature, no infelicity as in (7b)/(8b) would be expected.

5 The formal implementation of the scalar-evaluative component of meaning by Jacobs (1983) is cast in different terms. In his analysis, the scalar value of the prejacent must be underneath some contextually established threshold value. In our example, the value of Paul having eaten cookies would be lower on the relevant scale than a contextually established threshold like, for instance, that of Paul having eaten a proper meal.

6 Coppock and Beaver (2014) explicitly assume some evaluative predicate for adnominal *mere* and adverbial *merely*. They do not assume it to be part of the lexical endowment of other ‘only’ words, though. We will argue in some detail in the ensuing sections that run-of-the-mill ‘only’ words are typically ambiguous between an evaluative and a non-evaluative use.

2.4 “Scalarity” as a multiply ambiguous term

The use of the term “scalarity” is not uniform in the literature on ‘only’ words. As I see it, at least three distinct notions of scalarity ought to be distinguished. The first is *informational scalarity*. As was stated in Section 2.1 above, an ‘only’ proposition excludes informationally stronger propositions, i.e. sentences that are not entailed by it. This amounts to the EXCL entailment of ‘only’, recast in terms of informational or semantic strength (Gast’s 2004 “primary scalar uses”; cf. also Krifka 1995).

Another use of the term “scalarity” with ‘only’ words is dubbed *secondary scalarity* by Gast (2004). Coppock and Beaver (2014) dub it *rank-ordering use*; cf. (9).

- (9) (a) *Paul is only an employee_F*.
 (b) excluded alternative in a plausible scenario (**incompatible** with the truth of the prejacent):
Paul is a self-employed person.

The problem with such cases is that the propositions which are intuitively excluded by ‘only’ are excluded by the prejacent in most contexts just the same: The truth of *Paul is an employee* is incompatible with the truth of *Paul is a self-employed person* (if it is assumed that one cannot be both at the same time). To ensure that *only* is informative in such cases I assume that what is interpreted in cases like (9) is really as in (10). Like this, secondary scalar uses, or rank-ordering uses, of ‘only’ words can again be captured by EXCL.

- (10) (a) *Paul is only as much as an employee_F*.
 (b) excluded alternative (**compatible** with the truth of the prejacent):
Paul is as much as a self-employed person.

In sum, I assume that surface propositions in the scope of ‘only’ which cannot be ordered in terms of semantic strength vis-à-vis their relevant alternatives have logical forms whose interpretations ensure this kind of ordering. As such, “secondary scalar uses” or “rank-ordering uses” of ‘only’ words are really just special cases of ordering in terms of semantic strength. This assimilates them to EXCL of Section 2.1.

The third relevant notion of scalarity concerns the *evaluation of a proposition* as relating to a low, or the lowest, value on some speaker-dependent scale. It was present in (9) and (10) alongside the informational component. The truth of a proposition is judged to count little compared with relevant alternatives

(this statement will be refined in a moment). This is the notion of scalarity which was provisorily formalized in (6b). The present paper makes consistent use of the terms “evaluation” or “evaluative” (EVAL) for this third notion to avoid any confusion. The term “evaluation” is to remind us of the fact that this kind of scalarity implies a judge and a conversational background which determine the mapping from the domain of quantification to scalar values. The other kinds of scalarity discussed above did not involve the ascription of an evaluative predicate to the prejacent. I argue furthermore that it is necessary to make a subdivision among several evaluative uses of ‘only’ words. This further differentiation has, to the best of my knowledge, never been proposed explicitly in the literature. If one says (9), this does, on the evaluative interpretation, not just presuppose in most contexts that to be an employee is considered little, but also that it is considered bad. The same holds *mutatis mutandis* for (6a). Evaluation as bad and as little are independent of each other, since we find uses of evaluative ‘only’ words with no presupposition or inference that the truth of the prejacent is considered bad; cf. (11), which does presuppose that being four years old is little, but does not presuppose that being four years old is bad.

(11) *You can’t blame him for this. He’s only four years old.*

Section 3.4 will provide examples which show that the notions of ‘little’ and ‘bad’ are not conditionally linked in the other direction – from bad to little – either (cf. [31]/[32]). This yields the three different possible evaluative presuppositions with ‘only’ words in (12a–c), plus the neutral case where no evaluative operator is present (12d). These four different readings correspond to the four different syntactic structures in (13).

- (12) Evaluative spectrum of *Paul aß nur Kekse* ‘Paul only ate cookies_F.’
- (a) ‘That Paul ate no more than cookies is considered little.’
 - (b) ‘That Paul ate no more than cookies is considered bad.’
 - (c) ‘That Paul ate no more than cookies is considered little and bad.’
 - (d) ‘Paul ate no more than cookies.’ (neutral non-evaluative)
- (13) (a) ... *dass* [_{EVAL} **EVAL_{LITTLE}** *Paul* [_V *nur*_{EXCL} [_V [**Ø_{AD-FOC}** *Kekse_F*] *aß*]]].
- (b) ... *dass* [_{EVAL} **EVAL_{BAD}** *Paul* [_V *nur*_{EXCL} [_V [**Ø_{AD-FOC}** *Kekse_F*] *aß*]]].
- (c) ... *dass* [_{EVAL} **EVAL_{BAD}** [**EVAL_{LITTLE}** *Paul* [_V *nur*_{EXCL} [_V [**Ø_{AD-FOC}** *Kekse_F*] *aß*]]]].
- (d) ... *dass* [*Paul* [_V *nur*_{EXCL} [_V *Kekse_F*] *aß*]].

I submit that this evaluative spectrum covers all possible evaluative uses of ‘only’ sentences. This means, then, that I do not assume there to exist a large array of possible scalar predicates which are provided by the context; this was the assumption made by Guerzoni (2003), or Beaver and Clark (2008). Like this, my proposal is a lot more restrictive in its predictions than competing accounts. The falsification criterion for our evaluative analysis is as follows: if the contextualized evaluative meaning of an ‘only’ sentence is not covered by any analogue of (12a–c), then the proposal has been falsified. I have not yet come across such a use of an ‘only’ sentence.

As was argued for in 2.3, evaluative readings of ‘only’ sentences involve presuppositions and are not the result of mere pragmatic inferencing. Readers who are suspicious about the presuppositional status of the ‘little’ and ‘bad’ components of evaluative ‘only’ uses despite the examples in (7) and (8) will find an elaborate argument in Section 3.5.3 which further strengthens the hard-wired presuppositional nature of evaluative ‘little/bad’ components in ‘only’ sentences.

There is one aspect of the way we paraphrased the evaluative array in (12) which will become crucial. The ‘little’ and ‘bad’ predicates in (12) embed the asserted part (‘... ate no more than cookies’) of the ‘only’ proposition, and not the prejacent (‘... ate [at least] cookies’). This flies in the face of standard accounts as in (6), which have the evaluative operator quantify over alternatives to the prejacent proposition. All accounts that I know of treat the evaluative presupposition as a presupposition of the exclusive operator. In the account defended here, the evaluative presupposition will be contributed by an element which is different from the EXCL operator and which takes scope above the EXCL operator. In Section 3 I will repeatedly return to this difference in analytical options and will specify the advantage that the new proposal has over standard implementations.

2.5 Summary of Section 2

Summarizing the discussion in the present section, I assume the components of meaning listed in (14) to be active in sentences with ‘only’ words.

- (14) Components of meaning systematically occurring in sentences with ‘only’ words.
- A sentence with an ‘only’ word ...
- (a) entails the falsity of all contextually relevant non-trivial alternative propositions (EXCL);

- (b) presupposes its prejacent;
- (c) may presuppose the evaluation of the EXCL entailment as little/bad/little and bad depending on whether evaluative C/I-level functional and ad-focus marking structure is present or not (EVAL).

3 Evidence for a distributed syntax of evaluative ‘only’ sentences

In this section I present evidence from various sources to the effect that the articulate structure proposed in (3)/(4) (repeated here as [15]) is needed to predict the behavior of evaluative *nur* sentences in German.

- (15) ... dass [EVAL **EVAL_{LITTLE/BAD}** Paul [_v *nur*_{EXCL} [_v [**Ø_{AD-FOC}** *Kekse_F*] *aß*]]].



Agree

‘... that Paul only ate cookies_F (the speaker considers it little or bad that Paul ate nothing else).’

The v-level position of EXCL is in accordance with the position Sudhoff (2010) assumes for adverbial *nur*, and it is one of the positional options that are predicted by Büring and Hartmann (2001).⁷

7 Büring and Hartmann’s (2001: 266) theory of focus particles (FPs) is summarized in (i). (i’) is Reis’ (2005: 472) perspicuous paraphrase.

- (i) For any node α marked F in a phrase marker P, let the set of f-nodes of α consist of all nodes β such that
 - (a) β is a non-argument
 - (b) β is a maximal projection
 - (c) β dominates α or is identical to α
 - (d) there is no extended projection β' of the same head that β is an extended projection of such that β dominates β' and β' meets b. and c.

An FP must be left-adjoined to an f-node of its focus.

- (i') (a) FPs adjoin to non-arguments.
- (b) FPs adjoin to maximal projections.
- (c) FPs c-command their foci.
- (d) FPs are as close to their foci as possible.

Leaving AP and PP adjunction aside, Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) theory predicts at least adjunction to VP, vP, TP/IP and CP. The purported adjunction to CP will be critically discussed in Section 3.3 below. As far as I can see, Büring and Hartmann (2001) present no univocal TP/IP adjunction evidence. Moreover, they assume no v-V cascade. Lastly, they argue without

To prevent misunderstandings, I would like to remind the reader that the silent Agreement structure in (15) is only projected if the *nur* sentence is to have an evaluative presupposition, i.e. if it has a meaning as in (12a–c), but not if it has a meaning as in (12d).

3.1 Pronouncing EXCL and ad-focus morphemes separately in German

This subsection adduces evidence from German which demonstrates that EXCL and ad-focus marking morphemes may be spelled out simultaneously, each by their own occurrence of the particle *nur*. This kind of data has not been reported on in the literature before, but is attested both in spontaneous language use and in published written sources. The distributed spell-out of EXCL and ad-focus marking categories in such examples hints at an underlying structure of evaluative *nur* sentences which is in accordance with the syntactic proposal made in Section 1. The most acceptable such structures are attested with corrective *nicht* and its polar antonym *verum-doch* ‘Contrary to what is in the context, it IS the case that ...’.⁸ Two examples are provided in (16); (16b) is an attested example from an internet forum. The example in (17) features corrective *nicht* instead of *verum-doch*.⁹

adopting the VP-internal-Subject Hypothesis, which comes out as the **vp**-internal-Subject Hypothesis in a v-V system. Accordingly, subjects are base-generated in Spec, IP in their system, not taking into account the possibility of scrambling. If all of this is taken together, all of Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) adverbial examples are cases which are compatible with a v-level and a C-level position.

8 At the present point, I cannot give any explanation as to why these double-*nur* uses occur in these environments. Still, I believe that the mere existence of these double-*nur* cases is such an elucidating fact that I make use of it in the argumentation without really accounting for it. In the end, the fact that nobody refuses data as in (16) and (17) and that intuitions about these sentences are stable across speakers bears witness of their relevance.

9 An anonymous reviewer points out that *nicht nur* should be treated as a lexical item. If one assumed this, at least the following problems would arise.

- (i) If *nicht nur* was a lexical item, it would be difficult to explain why it forms a distributional and functional paradigm with positive corrective *doch nur* as in (16), which is not susceptible of being a lexical item.
- (ii) If *nicht nur* was a lexical item, one would be hard pressed to explain why it is not feasible to analyze it compositionally, given that its meaning amounts to ‘not + EXCL’. The subtle difference in meaning that may arise between sentences with one and two occurrences of *nur* is derivative of the fact that double *nur* enforces evaluative readings, whereas a single adverbial *nur* is compatible with structures with and without evaluative morphemes.

- (16) (a) [First he said he’s going to eat at least three scoops of ice cream.]
Aber dann hat er DOCH nur nur eine_F Kugel gegessen.
 but then has he VERUM only only one ball eaten.
 ‘But then he only had one_F scoop in the end (where eating one scoop and no more is considered little).’
- (b) [...] *denn gleichzeitig öffnen kann man DOCH nur nur*
 for simultaneously open can one VERUM only only
eine Datenbank oder.
 one database right.¹⁰
 ‘[...] for [contrary to what is in the context] it is only possible to open a single_F database at a time, right? (where being able to open one database at a time and no more is considered little)’
- (17) *Er hat NICHT nur nur eine_F Kugel gegessen, ...*
 ‘He did NOT only eat a single_F scoop (where eating one scoop and no more is considered little).’

The sentences in (16) and (17) mean the same thing as their variants with a single occurrence of *nur*.¹¹ In particular, it is not the case that EXCL applies twice in these examples. (16a), for instance, cannot mean ‘Only of one scoop is it true that he only ate it (instead of commenting on it, too).’ I submit that the first *nur* occurrences in (16) and (17) spell out EXCL; the second *nur* occurrences correspond to the ad-focus marker which relates to the evaluative C/I category via Agree.

A search in sources that were published by professional publishers yielded the result that, for reasons that I am not clear about at this point, more recent publications have few double *nur* occurrences as in (16) or (17). However, older

¹⁰ <http://www.wiso-software.de/forum/index.php?page=Thread&threadID=31037> (26. 08. 2014).

¹¹ Otherwise parallel sentences without polar particles are deviant; cf. (i) and (ii).

- (i) (a) [First he said he’s going to eat at least three scoops of ice cream.]
**Aber dann hat er nur nur eine_F Kugel gegessen.*
 but then has he only only one scoop eaten
 int.: ‘But then he only had one_F scoop in the end (where eating one scoop and no more is considered little).’
- (b) **[...] denn gleichzeitig öffnen kann man nur nur eine Datenbank, oder.*
 for simultaneously open can one only only one database right
 int. ‘[...] for it is only possible to open a single_F database at a time, right? (where being able to open one database at a time and no more is considered little)’
- (ii) **Er ist nur nur Vierter_F geworden, ...*
 int.: ‘He only came fourth_F (where coming fourth and reaching no higher rank is considered little).’

sources from the 19th or early 20th century provide quite a few attestations. (18) presents two examples from original editions of philosophical writings, a branch of literature that may be argued to undergo most rigorous proof-reading. This reduces the probability that the attestations are mere errors.

- (18) (a) *Das unvordenkliche Existiren ist ein [...] nothwendiges, aber doch nur nur zufällig_F-nothwendiges, d. h. ein blindes.*¹² (focus-indexing added; D. H.)
 ‘The unfathomable existence is a ... necessary one, but only a randomly_F-necessary one, i.e. a blind one.’
 (b) *Ihr [...] Erklärungsgrund [...] würde uns [...] doch nur nur halb_F befriedigen können.*¹³ (focus-indexing added; D. H.)
 ‘Its reason would anyway only be able to satisfy us half-way_F.’

Double-*nur* sentences are hence compatible with the conjunction of the v-Exclusion Claim and the Ad-focus-Marking Claim.

3.2 Dutch double ‘only’ words

The distributed syntax of evaluative *nur* sentences proposed here finds an interesting quasi-parallel in Dutch. Structures as in (19) with *alleen* and *maar* ‘only’ have recently been discussed by Barbiers (2010). (In addition to examples as in [19], Barbiers [2010] also presents examples in which two occurrences of *maar* are used.)

- (19) *Hej is [alleen op Marie]_i maar boos t_i geweest.*
 he is only at Marie only angry been
 ‘He was only angry at Mary.’ (Barbiers 2010: 19)

In (19) either of the two particle occurrences of *alleen* and *maar* would suffice to express an evaluative ‘only’ focus, but, crucially, both can be used simultaneously without leading to a stacked EXCL interpretation; the sentence does not mean ‘Only at Mary was he only angry (towards other people he had other

¹² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, p. 347, Stuttgart/Augsburg: Cotta, 1858; Google Booksearch 26.08.2014.

¹³ Johann Gottlieb Fichte und Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft deutscher Gelehrten. Achter Band*, p. 329, Jena/Leipzig: Gabler, 1798; Google Booksearch 10.01.2010.

kinds of feelings in addition to being angry)’. Barbiers (2010) states that the movement target of the bracketed constituent is a functional category between C and T/I, which converges with our assumption of a low evaluative C head, or a high T/I head. The convergence of Barbier’s findings for the overt syntax of Dutch with our hypothesis is remarkable. Restated in our terms, the *alleen* of (19) is the ad-focus marker which has pied-piped its focus phrase. *Maar* corresponds to our v-level EXCL operator, or to the EVAL head whose specifier the dislocated focus phrase occupies. The difference between Dutch and German reduces to the fact that Dutch licenses double particle structures after movement and that Dutch has two different particles for the different structural positions involved, whereas German licenses in-situ double-*nur* structures in the deaccented part of an utterance after a contrastive polar particle (cf. Section 3.1).

3.3 German topicalizations

In the light of the Dutch movement data it is instructive to take a fresh look at an infamous set of German topicalization data with *nur* sentences. Büring and Hartmann (2001) claim in their influential paper that adverbial *nur* can also adjoin to CP; cf. (20a). The problem with this claim, of which the authors are well aware, lies in the fact that *nur* adjoining to CP will defy the V2 property of German root clauses. This property makes one expect that *nur* should form a constituent with its prefield focus; cf. (20b).

- (20) (a) Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) CP adjunction syntax for prefield uses of *nur*
 [_{CP} **Nur** [_{CP} Paul [_C tanzt]]].
 ‘Only Paul is dancing.’
 (b) a syntax which respects V2
 [_{CP} [_{DP} **Nur** Paul] [_C tanzt]]].
 ‘Only Paul is dancing.’

The authors develop what appears to be a very strong argument to corroborate their claim. The strongest form of the argument is stated with the help of examples as in (21) (Büring and Hartmann 2001: 259–263).¹⁴ If *nur* formed a constitu-

¹⁴ Büring and Hartmann (2001) do not make use of the quantifier pair *nur–kein* ‘only–no’ as in (21). They use the expressions *nur–jeder* ‘only–every’ instead. The pair chosen here circumvents a problem pointed out by Meyer and Sauerland (2009). It arises if quantifiers are chosen where one scoping possibility yields truth conditions which are a subset of the truth condi-

ent with the subject DP it would be predicted to reconstruct together with the DP, an option which the authors claim is not available; cf. (21b).

- (21) **Nur** [*ein Bild von seiner_i Frau_F*] *besitzt* [*kein Mann*]_i.
 ‘Only a picture of his wife does no man possess.’
 (a) LF: only ___ possesses [no man]_i a picture of his_i wife
 ‘The only person no man possesses a picture of is his wife.’
 (b) *LF: ___ possesses [no man]_i only a picture of his_i wife.
 ‘No man only possesses a picture of his wife.’

Given standard assumptions about the syntax-semantics mapping, it is clear beyond doubt that, in order to derive a meaning as in the paraphrase of (21a), EXCL must scope above the negated existential quantifier *kein Mann* ‘no man’, and that the negated existential quantifier must scope above the possessive pronoun (EXCL > ¬∃ > Poss). It would appear necessary, then, that *nur* may not reconstruct together with the DP and must take scope in its surface position. This would preclude the possibility that *nur* and its focus form a constituent, because it is impossible to reconstruct parts of constituents (here, the DP *ein Bild von seiner Frau* to the exclusion of *nur*). Moreover, the authors claim that if *nur* formed a constituent with the DP and could reconstruct to a position underneath *kein Mann* ‘no man’, one would have to exclude by stipulation the reading (21b) which the authors claim is unavailable and which has *nur* reconstruct alongside the DP. (There is a problem with the purported unavailability of reading [21b]. I will return to it towards the end of the present subsection.)

In the light of our proposal, a different analysis of this interesting case offers itself. Let us assume that V2 holds in German. *Nur* and the object DP will then form a constituent in (21) in accordance with the structure in (20b). The operator with such a distribution will be the ad-focus marker of the structure in (15). If we assume a principle as in (22), the fact that the ad-focus marker is spelled out as *nur* in (21) and EXCL remains silent will be predicted.¹⁵ (Recall that the ad-focus marker is semantically void.) (21a) will then have the surface structure in (23a), and the reconstructed structure in (23b).

tions of the other scoping possibility. *Nur-jeder*, just like *every-some*, is such a subset pair, whereas *nur-keiner* is not.

15 An anonymous reviewer objects that (22) is a stipulation. It is true that I cannot derive this purported regularity from anything else that I know about the syntax of focus particles. However, it does allow for a better grip on the topicalization data if compared with the focus-in-situ cases, for which an adverbial analysis is feasible. Another domain where the principle in (22) can be put to work will be discussed shortly.

(22) First Come, First Spell-Out

From among EXCL and AD-FOC in a single focus-background structure, the linearly first operator will be pronounced.

(23) (a) PF of (21) with reading a:

[[**nur**_{AD-FOC} [ein Bild von seiner_i Frau]] [\emptyset _{EXCL} [besitzt [_v [\emptyset _{EXCL} [_v [kein Mann]_i [_v ...]]]]]]]

(b) LF of (21) with reading a:

[\emptyset _{EXCL} [_v [\emptyset _{EXCL} [_v [kein Mann]_i [_v [**nur**_{AD-FOC} [ein Bild von seiner_i Frau]] besitzt]]]]]

Abiding by (22), EXCL will remain silent in its v-level position in (21). Like this the scope facts after reconstruction (EXCL > $\neg\exists$ > Poss) are easily derived. This is shown in (23b), which will get the interpretation given in (21a). If (21b) is really unavailable, the only thing that will have to be stipulated is that v-level quantifier raising happens underneath the adjunction site of v-level EXCL. This will exclude the incriminated scope order $\neg\exists$ > EXCL > Poss of (21b) if it is really unavailable.¹⁶

The linear precedence principle in (22) may be of some use to defend the structures in (23), but is there any independent evidence for it? I would like to claim that, indeed, such evidence exists and that it helps us to shed light on an ill-understood phenomenon: the peripheral marking of extraposed and non-extraposed subordinate clauses. Cf. the paradigms in (24) and (25) ([24a] is adapted from Reis [2005: 473]).

(24) Focus in an argument clause

- (a) *Paul hat \emptyset _{EXCL} gesagt, **nur**_{AD-FOC} dass der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist.

int.: ‘Paul only said [that the head of the chancellery is too fat].’

(bracketing indicates the largest intended focus)

¹⁶ Reis (2005) and Meyer and Sauerland (2009) provide many examples in which this scope reading is available. However, these examples invariably involve a contrastive topic accent on the topicalized constituent, and it is not entirely clear if this has an effect on the significance of these readings in the argument at hand. There are at least two interacting factors which render the situation a bit unwieldy. Neither is mentioned by the authors of the replies to Büring and Hartmann (2001). First, it is well-known that inverted scope with contrastive topics does not require LFs that differ from the PFs in terms of order of the involved quantifiers; the semantics of the contrastive topic can do the trick with quantifiers in their PF position (Büring 1997). Second, it is not clear how this first fact interacts with the common assumptions that topicalization in German is never scope-active and that focus particles never interact with traces as foci. While it would appear that the second factor requires reconstruction even with contrastive topic accents, it cannot be excluded that reconstruction may target intermediate landing sites and not base positions. I will not explore these problems further here.

- (b) *Paul hat **nur**_{EXCL} gesagt, \emptyset _{AD-FOC} dass der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist.*
 ‘Paul only said that the head of the chancellor is too fat.’
- (c) **Paul hat \emptyset _{EXCL}, **nur**_{AD-FOC} dass der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist, gesagt.*
 int.: ‘Paul only said [that the head of the chancellor is too fat].’
 (bracketing indicates the largest intended focus)
- (d) ***Nur**_{AD-FOC} dass der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist, hat Paul \emptyset _{EXCL} gesagt.*
 ‘Only that the head of the chancellor is too fat did Paul say.’
- (25) focus in a reason clause
- (a) ??*Paul hat es \emptyset _{EXCL} gesagt, **nur**_{AD-FOC} weil der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist.*
 ‘Paul said it only because the head of the chancellor is too fat.’
- (b) *Paul hat es **nur**_{EXCL} gesagt, \emptyset _{AD-FOC} weil der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist.*
 ‘Paul only said it because the head of the chancellor is too fat.’
- (c) *Paul hat es, **nur**_{AD-FOC} weil der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist, \emptyset _{EXCL} gesagt.*
 ‘Paul said it only because the head of the chancellor is too fat.’
- (d) ***Nur**_{AD-FOC} weil der Kanzleramtsminister zu dick ist, hat Paul es \emptyset _{EXCL} gesagt.*
 ‘Only because the head of the chancellor is too fat did Paul say it.’

The classical descriptive generalization which covers the contrast between (24a) and (25a) is that extraposed argument clauses don’t allow for left-peripheral focus particles, whereas extraposed adjunct clauses do allow for them (Bayer 1996). This contrast plays a role in Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) attempt to justify their claim that focus particles never adjoin to arguments – here, to argument CPs as in (24a) –, but that they may adjoin to adjunct CPs as in (25a). Reis (2005: 473–476) presents ample evidence to the effect that the reason for the contrast between (24a) and (25a) cannot be the argument-adjunct divide. There are adjunct CPs which do not allow *nur* adjunction (e.g. relative clauses), and there are arguments which allow *nur* adjunction (as in *die Teilnahme [nur älterer Studenten] stellt ein Problem dar* ‘the participation of only senior students constitutes a problem’).

With the principle in (22) in place, the data in (24) and (25) appears in a much clearer light. (24a) is ungrammatical because the first operator EXCL receives no phonological spell-out (as it does in [24b]). Note that (25a) is degraded

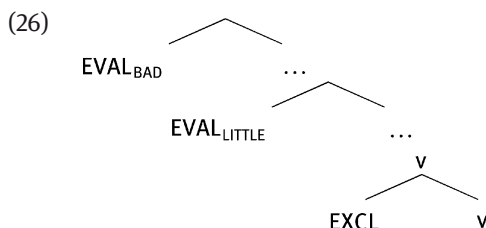
vis-à-vis (25b) in a similar fashion, or has an afterthought character which sets it apart from (25b), a fact which has so far not been mentioned in the literature.¹⁷ The really interesting cases from the point of view of principle (22) are (24c) and (25c). (24c) is bad, because no extraposition has occurred even though this is required for the argument CP. It may also be deviant due to the violation of (22). Crucially, (25c) is predicted to be good by (22), simply because reason clauses are higher in the structure than argument clauses (probably in the higher I domain), thereby granting the pronounced ad-focus particle linear precedence before EXCL, which sits at the vP edge. With topicalization as in (24d) and (25d), the contrast vanishes again, because now the ad-focus particle receives spell-out and precedes EXCL in both structures.

Making use of (21–26), we have established that reading (21a) does not force us to assume that *nur* and *ein Bild von seiner Frau* ‘a picture of his wife’ do not form a constituent, and we have shown this for the strongest data type that Büring and Hartman (2001) discuss, viz. for cases in which the topicalized object contains a variable that must be bound by the negated universal quantifier. To the best of my knowledge, no reply to Büring and Hartmann (2001) has addressed this extreme data type. Reis (2005) concentrates on the syntactic aspects of Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) proposal, and she concludes that only a theory which allows for adverbial EXCL (à la Büring and Hartmann [2001]) alongside EXCL adjunction to all other XPs will be empirically successful. However, I would like to argue that non-v-level *nur* cases as presented by Reis (2005) should better be treated as instances of overt ad-focus markers as proposed in (20b) and (23), and as regulated by the principle in (22). Like this, the core of Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) adverbial syntax claim for focus particles remains intact, while what appear to be clear counterexamples can now be classified as cases involving semantically void ad-focus marking. What is more, I conclude that Büring and Hartmann’s (2001) reconstruction evidence does not force us to assume that EXCL must be able to take scope at the C level. Moreover, in the light of our proposal we are no longer forced to assume that V2 does not hold if the scope-taking facts underlying (21) are acknowledged. We arrived at this desirable result by assuming that the *nur* in the topicalized part of (21) is really the ad-focus marker which pied-pipes its focus phrase to the left periphery. EXCL at the v level remains unpronounced.

17 I am not sure about the reason for the contrast in deviance strength between (24a) and (25a), though. It appears to be related to the fact that the argument clause in (24a) must extrapose, whereas the one in (25b) need not.

3.4 No EVAL_{BAD} readings with degenerate C domains

So far, we have not made a sharp distinction between evaluation as little and evaluation as bad. For the next argument, this distinction will become important. I will assume that separate EVAL heads for the two evaluative subtypes are ordered as in (26).



A sentence as in (27) will then have the possible readings given in (i–iv) depending on whether both, one, or none of these projections has meaningful material in it (cf. [12] and [13] above).

- (27) *Paul isst nur Kuchen_F.*
 ‘Paul is only eating cake_F.’
- (i) ‘Paul is eating nothing but cake.’
 - (ii) ‘Paul is eating nothing but cake, and this is presupposed to be little.’
 - (iii) ‘Paul is eating nothing but cake, and this is presupposed to be bad.’
 - (iv) ‘Paul is eating nothing but cake, and this is presupposed to be little and bad.’

Not all types of adverbial clauses have the same set of C/I heads as part of their functional endowment. Specifically, conditional clauses have been shown to lack (certain) evaluative projections by Haegeman (2010). (She does not distinguish between our two subtypes of evaluation.) Pertinent data is found in (28).

- (28) (a) *Since they (luckily) arrived on time, we will be saved.*
 (reason clause)
- (b) *If they (*luckily) arrived on time, we will be saved.*
 (conditional clause)
 (cf. Haegeman 2010: 630)

The evaluative ‘good’ adverb *luckily* is ungrammatical in conditional clauses with their impoverished C domain, but not in reason clauses. A strikingly parallel contrast arises in our domain, as is evinced by (29).

- (29) (a) *Nur weil deine Mutter kommt, soll ich aus meinem Zimmer?*
 (reason clause)
 ‘I’m to leave my room just because your mother is coming?’
 (easily understood to presuppose: ‘Your mother coming is a bad reason for me to leave my room.’)
- (b) *Nur falls deine Mutter kommt, soll ich aus meinem Zimmer?*
 (conditional clause)
 ‘I’m to leave my room only if your mother is coming?’
 (cannot presuppose: ‘Your mother coming is a bad condition for me to leave my room.’)

(29a) is easily understood to presuppose an evaluation of the reason as bad. The condition given in (29b), however, cannot be understood to be presupposed as bad. In fact, it is unclear what a bad condition would amount to in the first place. It is possible, though, to understand the condition given as little or insignificant. If we relate this profile of readings to our articulate evaluation structure in (26), we can conclude that conditional clauses may have EVAL_{LITTLE} heads, but not higher EVAL_{BAD} ones. Reason clauses may have semantically interpretable elements in either position, or in both positions. This distribution of readings is difficult to predict if, as in standard ‘only’ theories, the scalar-evaluative meaning component is part of the same lexical item that lexicalizes EXCL.

The same kind of contrast arises even more neatly with the two different readings of the infinitival complementizer *um zu*, if combined with *nur* (‘just to’). (30a) illustrates its purposive use, and (30b) the temporal one. Again, (30b) does not have a reading with a ‘bad’ presupposition.

- (30) (a) *Er verließ seine Familie, nur um dem Ruhm nachzurennen.*
 ‘He left his family just to run after fame.’
 (easily understood to presuppose: ‘It is bad that he left his family for this reason.’)
- (b) *Er verließ seine Familie, nur um bald darauf wieder zu ihr zurück-zukehren.*
 ‘He left his family just to return to them soon after.’
 (cannot be understood to presuppose: ‘It is bad that he returned to his family soon after.’)

The examples with complementizers combining with *nur* in (29) and (30) have one drawback. They may sometimes lack ‘bad’ readings due to the absence of high functional C structure, but they never lack the potential to express ‘little’

readings. This can easily be made to follow if we assume that $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ has its position at a low C level, as was implied in (26). Still, to convince ourselves that ‘little’, just like ‘bad’, is a presupposition that may or may not co-occur with EXCL one would like to see a *nur* example which clearly lacks the ‘little’ presupposition. Such an example is provided in (31).

- (31) [Did our patient eat a little more today?]
Nein, er hat wieder nur wénig_F gegessen.
 ‘No, again he only ate little_F.’

In this sentence, the proposition that the patient ate little is asserted. Hence, it cannot be part of the presupposition of the sentence, or of one of its parts, or else the sentence should be degraded. This is so, because one and the same information cannot be asserted and presupposed at the same time. For cases in which such deviance may be observed turn to (32).¹⁸

- (32) (a) *Paul kam schon (#zu) früh an.*
 ‘Paul has already arrived (#too) early.’
 (b) *Paul kam erst (#zu) spät an.*
 ‘Paul only arrived (#too) late. (temporal use of *only*)’

The phasal adverbs *schon* ‘already’ and *erst* ‘not ... until/only’ presuppose, or implicate conventionally, that the described event happens earlier (*schon*), or later (*erst*), than what may be assumed given the context of utterance (Löbner 1989; König 1991). If one adds the particle *zu*, which asserts a very similar meaning, the utterances become deviant, or at least redundant. This shows, in turn, that *nur* as in (31) does not presuppose an evaluation as little, because otherwise (31) should be as marked as (32) with *zu*. The ‘little’ and ‘bad’ components have thus been shown to be mutually independent of each other.

In accordance with our assumptions about the articulate evaluative C/I-domain portions of ‘only’ sentences ($\text{EVAL}_{\text{BAD}} > \text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$), this subsection has shown how the absence of certain evaluative ‘bad’ readings in evaluative *nur* sentences can be tied to the degenerate C domains of conditional and temporal clauses if compared with reason and purpose clauses. This supports the

18 The incriminated structures in (32) have good readings if *schon* and *erst* interact with a focus accent on *an*: *Paul kam schon zu früh an* ‘It was already the case that he arrived too early’. This is of no relevance to the argument in the main text, which requires the phasal adverbs and *zu* to interact with the same time variables.

C/I-Evaluative Claim in its articulate form as presented in (26) if it is assumed that conditional and temporal clauses do not project up to the level of EVAL_{BAD} .

3.5 Blocking of $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ by intervening scale-reversing negation

After presenting corroborating evidence for the distributed syntax of EVAL_{BAD} and EXCL in the previous subsection, the blocking effect analyzed here will provide strong evidence for the distributed syntax of $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ and EXCL. This effect is very valuable for our overall argumentation, but at the same time it is a bit elusive, because it can be overridden under certain circumstances. For this reason we will put some effort into establishing it beyond doubt (Sections 3.5.2–3.5.4) after introducing the argument in Section 3.5.1.

3.5.1 The argument from scale-reversing negation

In the sentences in (33), the scale-reversing nature of negation leads to an interesting effect.

- (33) (a) *Er ist nur [Vierter geworden]_F.*
 ‘He only [came fourth]_F.’
 (scalar-evaluative interpretation dominant:
 ‘that he reached no higher rank is considered little (and bad)’)
- (b) *Er ist nicht nur [Vierter geworden]_F, ...¹⁹*
 ‘He didn’t only [come fourth]_F, ...’
 (scalar-evaluative interpretation blocked:
 *‘that he reached no higher rank is considered little (and bad)’)
- (c) *Es ist nicht so, dass er nur [Vierter geworden]_F ist, ...²⁰*
 ‘It’s not the case that he only [came fourth]_F, ...’
 (scalar-evaluative interpretation available:
 ‘that he came fourth is considered little (and bad)’)

¹⁹ Readers who favor an analysis of *nicht nur* as a single lexical item are referred back to note 9 for arguments against this move.

²⁰ I agree with an anonymous reviewer that subjunctive mood on the copula makes the intended reading more easily available: *Es ist nicht so, dass er nur [Vierter geworden]_F wäre, ...*. I left the example in the main text unchanged, though, since the evaluative reading is clearly available in the indicative mood, too, and because like this the contrast between (33b) and (33c) is minimal.

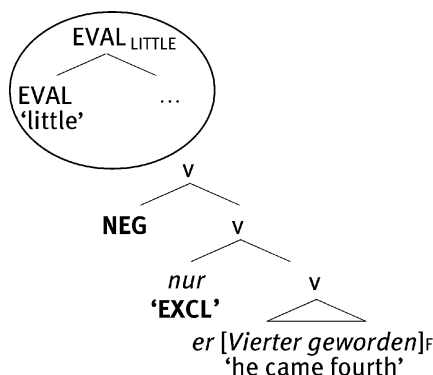
The evaluative presupposition ‘that he reached no higher rank is considered little (and bad)’, which is clearly dominant in (33a), is not available in (33b) if the clause is pronounced with a single nuclear accent on *Vierter* ‘fourth’. (I will discuss a prosodic pattern which makes the presupposition resurface towards the end of the present subsection.) The visible difference between the two sentences concerns the presence of sentential negation in the v domain (Zeijlstra 2004). (33c) shows that the effect is limited to clause-mate negation. It disappears with truth-conditionally indistinguishable negation rooted in an otherwise empty embedding clause.

As said above, the effect is a bit elusive. I will argue deductively and compare the predictions that our account makes with those of standard non-distributed accounts before addressing possible objections concerning the nature of the blocking effect.

(34) and (35) provide simplified trees and paraphrases of (33b)/(33c) which render visible the predictions of our proposal. (As said above, the argument developed here concerns the relationship between $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ and EXCL . For this reason, only marginal reference to EVAL_{BAD} is made in the present subsection.)

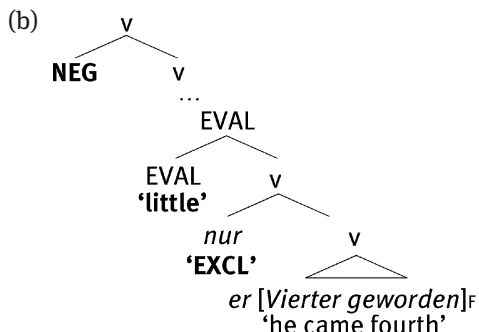
- (34) (a) *Er ist nicht nur [Vierter geworden]_F ...*
 ‘He didn’t only [come fourth]_F, ...’

(b)



- (c) ‘(That) it was **not** the case that he reached **no** higher rank than coming fourth (#is considered **little**).’ \Leftrightarrow ‘(That) he reached **some** higher rank than coming fourth (#is considered **little**).’

- (35) (a) *Es ist nicht so, dass er nur [Vierter geworden]_F ist, ...*
 ‘It’s not the case that he only [came fourth]_F, ...’



- (c) ‘It is **not** the case that he reached **no** higher rank than coming fourth, where for him to come fourth and reaching no higher rank is considered little.’

Let us turn to (35) first, the biclausal variant with a good evaluative interpretation. Here the negation in the embedding clause does not intervene, or take scope, between $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ and EXCL . For this reason, the evaluation as little is in accordance with the exclusion of alternatives brought about by *nur*: no higher rank was reached, and this is considered little. Things are different in (34). What (34a) tries to mean with the encircled structure present is contradictory: it cannot be called little if a higher rank than the fourth rank, maybe even the first rank, was reached. For this reason, the paraphrase with the evaluative presupposition in the paraphrases taking scope above negation in (34b) is deviant. If this is so, then (34a) can only be salvaged by not having EVAL filled with the ‘little’ morpheme. If it is absent, a purely exclusive reading of the rank-ordering type as in the paraphrases without the parentheses is arrived at: no higher rank was reached.

The effect is not limited to lexically scalar foci such as *Vierter werden* ‘come fourth’. This is shown by the parallel paradigm in (36). $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ is easily construable in (36a/c). This can be seen from the fact that, if (36a/c) occurs as a statement in an interview, the journalist may easily continue with a critical question such as *So you would say that having no other misfortune apart from being unemployed counts as little?*

- (36) (a) *Die Leute waren nur arbeitslos_F; gesundheitlich ging es ihnen gut.*
 ‘The people were only unemployed_F; in terms of health they were fine.’
 (scalar-evaluative interpretation available:
 ‘that the people had no other misfortune in addition to being unemployed is considered little’)

- (b) *Die Leute waren nicht nur arbeitslos_F; auch gesundheitlich ging es ihnen schlecht.*
 ‘The people weren’t only unemployed_F; they were in poor health, too.’
 (scalar-evaluative interpretation blocked:
 *‘that the people had no other misfortune in addition to being unemployed is considered little’)
- (b) *Es ist nicht so, dass die Leute nur arbeitslos_F waren; auch gesundheitlich ging es ihnen schlecht.*
 ‘It’s not the case that the people were only unemployed_F; they were in poor health, too.’
 (scalar-evaluative interpretation available:
 ‘that the people had no other misfortune in addition to being unemployed is considered little’)

Again, (36a) and the bi-clausal (36c) render the evaluative ‘little’ presupposition available, whereas (36b) with its clause-mate intervening negation does not.

We have seen that the behaviour of clause-mate negation as an intervener is straightforwardly accounted for by the distributed syntax that is proposed in the present article. It is not predicted by standard accounts, though. If the evaluative presupposition forms part of the same lexical item that simultaneously contributes the exclusion of alternatives, the effects of clause-mate negation and negation in an embedding clause ought to be indistinguishable, because in all cases the scopal relations ought to be NEG > EVAL/EXCL. The analysis defended here makes better predictions.

A certain observation may raise suspicions about the robustness of the intervention effect. The observation concerns the fact that the blocking effect disappears if negation is contrastively stressed, thereby degrading the *nur* focus to a second-occurrence focus (SOF); cf. (37).

- (37) [What you say is not true.]
Die Leute waren NICHT nur arbeitslos_{SOF}; auch gesundheitlich ging es ihnen schlecht.
 ‘The people were NOT only unemployed_{SOF}; they were in poor health, too.’
 (evaluative interpretation available:
 ‘having no other misfortune in addition to being unemployed is considered little’)

In this sentence, an evaluative component is easily available. It is not a counterexample to our generalization, though. Crucially, we stated for (33b) above

that the blocking effect requires a single nuclear accent on the *nur* focus. Why should this be the case, though? The reason is that with a single nuclear accent on the *nur* focus, the *nur* focus is reliably construed as a first occurrence focus. As such, the presuppositions relevant to its interpretation must hold at the time of utterance. This is feasible with a single nuclear accent on the *nur* focus and no negation present. If, however, there is a contrastive accent on the negation as in (37), the sentence without negation and a first occurrence of the *nur* focus is construed as discourse-old. As such, its presuppositions must have been fulfilled upon first asserting it. Therefore, no blocking of evaluation is obtained in (37). In fact, we made use of the altered discourse requirements for evaluation in second-occurrence focus sentences before. In Section 3.1, we discussed double-*nur* occurrences which did not lead to stacked EXCL interpretations. Instead, it was possible to map one *nur* to EXCL, and associate the other one with the ad-focus particle and, indirectly via Agree, with EVAL. This effect only occurred with contrastively stressed polar particles preceding *nur*, i.e. the configuration of (37). Hence it is also possible to use two *nur* occurrences in (37) without causing a change in meaning.

3.5.2 Corpus evidence for the blocking effect

The (non-)use of scare quotes in the written language may be exploited as independent evidence for the existence of the blocking effect under discussion. Language users frequently use scare quotes in the written language – or gesture them accompanying their spoken language – to control for the evaluative ‘little’ and ‘bad’ meaning components of many ‘only’ sentences. In (38), for instance, the use of quotes is to inform the reader that the author does not intend to imply that to have 166 abortions per 1000 deliveries, or to have 166 abortions compared to the previous 180 abortions, is considered little independent of this comparison scenario. Instead, the message to be conveyed is that the number of abortions is down to 166, and no more. This would amount to a merely exclusive use of *nur* without evaluation.

- (38) *So ist [...] festzustellen, dass mittlerweile auf 1000 Geburten „nur noch“ 166 Abtreibungen kommen – vor sieben Jahren waren es noch 180.*
 ‘One may note that for each 1000 deliveries we are down to “only” 166 abortions by now.’
 (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10.03.09)

Tammer (2010) investigates the frequency of such „*nur*“ uses in newspaper texts and compares them with the frequency of *nicht* „*nur*“ tokens. The expecta-

tion is that the frequency of *nicht* „*nur*“ tokens among *nicht nur* tokens should be significantly lower than the frequency of „*nur*“ tokens among *nur* tokens. The reason for this expectation is that authors should not feel a need to control for evaluation with *nur* in blocking configurations. (Note that *nicht* „*nur*“ tokens are not predicted to be completely absent because of factors that may lift the blocking effect as in [16] or [37].) This prediction is borne out with remarkable clarity; cf. Table 1.²¹

Table 1: Frequency of „*nur*“ and *nicht* „*nur*“ relative to *nur* and *nicht nur*, respectively, in the corpus (Frankfurter Rundschau/Berliner Morgenpost 1999 as represented in the COSMAS II corpus run by the Institut für Deutsche Sprache in Mannheim; Tammer [2010], Andrea Tammer [p.c.]).

<i>nur</i> vs. „ <i>nur</i> “		<i>nicht nur</i> vs. <i>nicht</i> „ <i>nur</i> “	
<i>nur</i> + „ <i>nur</i> “ tokens	135,053	<i>nicht nur</i> + <i>nicht</i> „ <i>nur</i> “ tokens	59,113
of which „ <i>nur</i> “	363–618	of which <i>nicht</i> „ <i>nur</i> “	14
ratio „ <i>nur</i> “/ <i>nur</i>	.27 % – .46 %	ratio <i>nicht</i> „ <i>nur</i> “ / <i>nicht nur</i>	.02 %

The frequency of *nicht* „*nur*“ tokens relative to *nicht nur* tokens is between 4 % and 8 % of the expected frequency if the ratio of „*nur*“ vs. *nur* is taken as the standard.²² I take this to be compelling evidence for the hypothesis that (professional) language users do not only control for the evaluative presupposition of many *nur* sentences if deemed necessary, but that they almost never feel a need to do so in the configuration under scrutiny here. I conclude that the blocking effect with *nicht nur* is something which makes itself felt in actual language use.

After this corpus-linguistic argument for the existence of the purported blocking effect, the subsection to follow will corroborate its semantic – if pre-suppositional – nature.

²¹ Chi-square (Yates) 126.49; p < .0001.
²² The relatively large indeterminacy of this figure results from the problem to classify cases as in (i), where the quotes for the larger constituent may simply indicate a quotation, or may, at the same time, indicate that the author does not wish to be held responsible for the possible presupposition that eighty trees being felled are considered little.
(i) „Nur achtzig Bäume“ würden Opfer der Säge.
“Only eighty trees” would fall victim to the saw.’
(Tammer 2010: 33)

3.5.3 The semantic-presuppositional nature of the blocking effect

According to everything we said so far, a global context which encourages a ‘little/bad’ reading of a *nur* sentence will be compatible with negation in an embedding clause which is semantically empty otherwise. This was the case in (33c)/(36c), and it is reinstated in (39b). Interestingly, a global extra-sentential ‘little and bad’ context is compatible with a blocking configuration as in (39a) just the same.

- (39) *War er unter den ersten im Ziel? Und ist sonst noch irgendetwas passiert?*
 ‘Was he among the first to finish the race? And did anything else happen?’
- (a) mono-clausal/blocking configuration
*Nein. Er ist nicht nur [Vierter geworden]_F, er hat sich auch noch den Oberschenkel gezerzt.*²³
 ‘No. He didn’t only come fourth, he also pulled a muscle in his upper thigh.’
- (b) bi-clausal/no blocking configuration
Nein. Es ist nicht so, dass er nur [Vierter geworden]_F ist, er hat sich auch noch den Oberschenkel gezerzt.
 ‘No. It’s not the case that he only came fourth, he also pulled a muscle in his upper thigh.’

Coming fourth in a race may, depending on the context, be considered little and bad, or a lot and good. Given the continuations in (39), coming fourth is obviously considered little and bad in these examples. Now, how is it possible that (39a) with its purported blocking configuration (clause-mate adverbial negation with a single nuclear accent on the focus of *nur*) is coherent (if maybe slightly odd; cf. note 23) even though the evaluation ought to be blocked according to our proposal? The reason for this is that the evaluative presupposition may be blocked in (39a), but this does not mean that such a *nur* clause is incompatible with a global extra-clausal context which encourages a reading where coming fourth is considered little and bad. If evaluation is blocked in the semantics, the result will still be logically compatible with an evaluative

²³ Some speakers of German report an intuition that the answer in (39a) becomes more natural if a second *nur* immediately after the first one is used. This variant is found in (i).

(i) *Er ist nicht nur nur Vierter_F geworden, er hat sich auch noch den Oberschenkel gezerzt.*
 ‘He didn’t only come fourth only, he also pulled a muscle in his upper thigh.’

This is a double-*nur* use as discussed in Section 3.1.

component that is provided by contextual inferencing. I am claiming, then, that (39b) presupposes evaluation, whereas (39a) may not presuppose it, but is logically compatible with a contextual embedding which encourages analogous inferencing. Crucially, this difference can be rendered visible if we change the embedding context in such a way that the prejacent of *nur* is clearly understood as something which is considered a lot and good.

- (40) *War er unter den ersten im Ziel? Und ist sonst noch irgendetwas passiert?*
 ‘Was he among the first to finish the race? And did anything else happen?’
- (a) *Ja. Er ist nicht nur [Vierter geworden]_F, er hat auch noch die Führung in der Wëltrangliste übernommen.*
 ‘Yes. He didn’t only come fourth, he also took the lead in the world ranking list.’
- (b) *Ja. #Es ist nicht so, dass er nur [Vierter geworden]_F ist, er hat auch noch die Führung in der Wëltrangliste übernommen.*
 ‘Yes. #It’s not the case that he only came fourth, he also took the lead in the world ranking list.’

As a result of the blocking configuration in (40a), no evaluative presupposition is active, and the whole reply is coherent. By contrast, the contextual embedding of (40b), together with the bi-clausal construction, leads to a plain contradiction. The contradiction is felt to lie in the fact that the affirmative *ja* ‘yes’ and the continuation in the second conjunct is incompatible with the ‘little and bad’ evaluation of the *nur* focus. This pattern is as predicted if an evaluative presupposition is active in the non-blocking configuration of (40b), but inactive in (40a). Hence the situation in (40) is partly different from the one in (39). In (39) and (40), the ‘little/bad’ evaluation is configurationally blocked in the a-examples and semantically presupposed due to the absence of the blocking configuration and due to the scalar contexts in the b-examples. In (39) the difference leads to no clear contrast, because the evaluation of the global extraclausal context coincides, or is logically compatible with, that of the locally possible readings. In (40) a clear contrast is present. This is because presuppositional evaluation, if present as in the non-blocking configuration of (40b), runs in the opposite direction than the kind of evaluative inferencing that is given by the global context. The relevant facts are summarized in Table 2.

It may be concluded that (i) evaluation in *nur* sentences is presuppositional in nature and cannot be reduced to mere Gricean pragmatic factors – this is demonstrated by the contrast between (39b) and (40b); (ii) the blocking effect makes itself felt by allowing the a-sentences to be used in *more* contexts than

Table 2: Scalar evaluation and monoclausality/biclausality with negation + *nur*.

	mono-clausal	bi-clausal
global context ‘little and bad’	(39a) EVAL _{LITTLE} blocked, but the first clause is compatible with an embedding global context that evaluates coming fourth as little (and bad)	(39b) EVAL _{LITTLE} active, hence the first clause is compatible with an embedding global context that evaluates coming fourth as little (and bad)
global context ‘much and good’	(40a) EVAL _{LITTLE} blocked, hence the first clause is compatible with an embedding global context that evaluates coming fourth as much (and good)	(40b) EVAL _{LITTLE} active, hence the first clause is incompatible with an embedding global context that evaluates coming fourth as much (and good)

if EVAL_{LITTLE} was not blocked as in the b-sentences; (iii) the EVAL_{LITTLE} presupposition leads to contradictions if it is triggered by the overall evaluative flavor of the context, but fails to support the contextually induced direction of evaluation as in (40b). These facts support our overall argumentation. Specifically, they support the assumption of the EVAL_{LITTLE} category, which is not encapsulated in the same lexical item as EXCL.

3.5.4 Summary of the blocking effect

In the previous subsections, I have argued for the existence of a specific blocking effect occurring with *nur*. Adverbial negation preceding adverbial *nur* blocks the evaluative presupposition of *nur* sentences in German if there is a single focus accent on the focus of *nur*. Corpus evidence which determines the (non-)use of scare quotes in blocking contexts and in non-blocking contexts demonstrates that the blocking configuration has highly significant repercussions in the written language of professional language users. A testing configuration with two conditions (simplex vs. complex sentence; context supporting evaluation as little/bad vs. context supporting evaluation as much/good) has shown that the presupposition of little/bad scalar evaluation may only be present in the non-blocking complex sentence configuration, thereby underlining the semantic-presuppositional character of EVAL.

The proposal advocated here with its different syntactic positions for EXCL and EVAL_{LITTLE} makes us expect the blocking effect. This was shown in Sec-

tion 3.5.1. This is so because intervening adverbial negation leads to contradictory readings if $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ in the clausal periphery is present. No such effect is expected if negation takes scope above $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$, as in the biclausal examples. Standard accounts of evaluative components of meaning in ‘only’ sentences encapsulate $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ into the lexical entry which also contributes EXCL. Therefore, the blocking effect under scrutiny in the present section remains enigmatic in those accounts. The differing predictions of standard accounts with $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$ encapsulated in EXCL and of our account with no such encapsulation are visualized once more in (41) and (42), where left-to-right ordering of operators reflects predicted scope-taking relations.

- (41) standard accounts: no import of biclausal vs. monoclausal construal predicted
- (a) biclausal construal
[... **NEG** ... [_{clause boundary} ... $\text{EXCL}_{\text{EVAL}}$... FOC]]
 - (b) monoclausal construal
[... **NEG** ... $\text{EXCL}_{\text{EVAL}}$... FOC]
- (41) the distributed account: difference between biclausal vs. monoclausal construal predicted
- (a) biclausal construal
[... **NEG** ... [_{clause boundary} ... $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$... EXCL ... FOC]]
 - (b) monoclausal construal
[... $\text{EVAL}_{\text{LITTLE}}$... **NEG** ... EXCL ... FOC]

4 Conclusions and outlook

I have argued for an analysis of evaluative *nur* sentences in German which has several syntactic positions interact. The EXCL operator contributes the exclusion of alternatives at the v level. This is compatible with standard accounts relying on an adverbial syntax of *nur* (Jacobs 1983; Büring and Hartmann 2001). The EVAL heads for ‘little’ and ‘bad’ presuppositions have their positions in the C/I domain. In German, they agree across a distance with a focus phrase and its ad-focus phrase particle. In most cases, both the ad-focus phrase particle and the EVAL heads in the C/I domain remain unpronounced in German. However, we have seen the overt spell-out of the ad-focus phrase particle in German double-*nur* sentences, with topicalized *nur* foci and in Dutch double-*maar* sentences. The evidence for our evaluative C/I heads is less direct. The following observations add up to render their assumption plausible for German. (i)

Cinque (1999) assumes evaluative projections in the C/I domain for adverbials which I hypothesize to coincide with our evaluative projections. (ii) Dutch double-*maar* sentences involve overt movement to a low C/high I position. If German double-*nur* sentences and Dutch double-*maar* sentences are to receive analyses which are as uniform as possible, then the movement target of Dutch can be identified with the specifier position of the evaluative probe C/I categories of German evaluative *nur* sentences. (iii) The scope interaction between EVAL, negation and EXCL provides strong evidence for evaluative operators that scope higher than adverbial v-level negation. This further supports the assumption of evaluative C/I heads. Moreover, evidence from degenerate C domains in *if* clauses helped us to establish a higher syntactic position for EVAL_{BAD} than for EVAL_{LITTLE}.

In future work I hope to render plausible the assumption of evaluative C/I categories in evaluative ‘only’ sentences at a broader cross-linguistic level. Chinese has recently been shown to have low and high particles which interact in the derivation of ‘only’ sentences (Hole 2004; Erlewine 2011). From our perspective, the natural hypothesis to test is that the high particles are really evaluative markers. Very much in the same vein, research into focus particles of German Sign Language has shown that exclusion or inclusion of alternatives with focus particle sentences receives syntactically low manual expression; evaluative components of meaning receive syntactically high non-manual expression (Herrmann 2009: 311–314).

Not the least advantage of our articulate structure for evaluative *nur* sentences seems to me to lie in the fact that the successful standard account developed by Büring and Hartmann (2001) remains intact for the EXCL component, while we are no longer forced to assume that German topicalized *nur* foci defy the V2 property.

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