

A scalar focus approach to exclusive doubling in Vietnamese

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1-4 September 2026

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Doubling of exclusive particles

- Exclusive focus particles such as **only** are quantifiers over focus alternatives.
- Two positions of *only* in English

- (1) a. Mary **only** read ONE_F book. (Advverbial/sentential)
 $\leadsto$ Not two, not three ... (=b)
- b. Mary read **only** ONE_F book. (Adfocal/constituent)
 $\leadsto$ Not two, not three ... (=a)

- Despite the availability of the two positions, English does not readily allow co-occurrence of two exclusive particles with the **same focus association**.

- (2) #Mary **only** read **only** ONE_F book.
 Int.: 'The number of book Mary read was only one.'

- ... Except that there are occasions where languages do double *only*!

Doubling of exclusive particles (cont.)

- **Exclusive doubling** (Akan, Bangla, Cantonese, Dutch, Ga, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Thai, **Vietnamese**, Yoruba, ...)
- Erlewine 2017; Hole 2017; Renans 2017; Aremu 2026, *i.a.*; cf. Yip 2026a for references

(3) Doubling of adverbial and adfocal particles in Vietnamese

- a. Nam **chỉ** tặng [túi xách]_F cho cô ấy. (adverbial)
 Nam only give handbag to her
- b. Nam tặng **mỗi** [túi xách]_F cho cô ấy. (adfocal)
 Nam give only handbag to her
- c. Nam **chỉ** tặng **mỗi** [túi xách]_F cho cô ấy. (doubling)
 Nam only give only handbag to her
 (a-c): 'Nam only gave a *handbag* (but not flowers) to her.

(Christmas-Party-7)



➔ Apparent compositionality problems and form-meaning mismatches

Previous accounts of exclusive doubling

- The prevailing **operator-particle** approach

(Bayer 1996; Y. Lee 2005; Barbiers 2014; Quek and Hirsch 2017; Bassi, Hirsch, and Trinh 2022; Sun 2021; Branen and Erlewine 2023; Aremu 2026; *i.a.*)

- Adfocal particles are *semantically vacuous* concord markers, which establish a *syntactic dependency* with an exclusive operator (=Adv/∅)

(4) [TP Subj [**OP-EXCL** [_{VP} V [**Prt-only** [_{DP} Focused element]]]]]

- (C)overt movement of [*môi* + focus] for Vietnamese: in syntax
(overt movement: Hole 2017; Sun 2020, 2021; cf. Yip 2025, 2026b for covert movement)

Two theoretical issues to be addressed

- ① The **doubling** problem: “If one suffices, why two?”
- ② To what extent is **movement** motivated by **semantics**?

① The doubling problem

① Redundancy in doubling?—"If one suffices, why two?" ($1 + 1 \neq 2$)

- Yip (2024): Exclusive doubling in Cantonese with sentence-final particle *zaa3* 'only' is a **scalar** operator dependent on an exclusive operator
- Scalarity is also observed in Vietnamese *ad focal* doubling (Hole 2017)
 - ☛ but no compositional analysis has been carried out

- Non-trivial compositional problems in Alternative Semantics (Rooth 1992)

➔ Higher OP cannot access the focus as $\sim$ resets the focus value (Beck 2006)

(5) * [$\text{OP1}(C_j) \sim C_j [\dots [\text{OP2}(C_i) \sim C_i [\text{XP}_F \dots]]]]$ **focus intervention**

- ☛ Non-resetting approach: $\sim_{pass}$ (Fox 2007; Wagner 2012; Crnić 2013; Bade and Sachs 2019; Erlewine 2025)
- ☛ Co-indexation approach: C_i for both operators (Yip 2024)

② Movement driven by semantics

② To what extent is syntactic movement motivated by semantics?

- A long line of research on how **semantics** constrain and even motivate **syntactic movement** (covert *and* overt) (e.g, weak islands, intervention effects; cf. Swart 1992; Szabolcsi and Zwarts 1992; Kiss 1993; Mayr 2014)
 - Covert movement for **focus association**
 - (Subject to debate, but) supported by abundant evidence (Drubig 1994; Wagner 2006; Erlewine and Kotek 2018, *i.a.*; but see Bassi and Longenbaugh 2020)
 - Wagner (2006): Roothian “contextual domain restriction” is still required
- Why would such movement take place if in-situ configuration is also interpretable? (cf. Wagner 2006)
- Is it syntactically motivated, as claimed for Vietnamese *mỗi*-movement (Hole 2017; Sun 2021)? Or by semantics?

Proposal: a scalar focus approach to Vietnamese

- Exclusive doubling manifests a **scalar focus** structure where:
 - At-issue exclusivity is encoded by one particle, not-at-issue scalarity is encoded by another particle;
 - The scalar particle depends on the exclusive one by sharing its quantificational domain (i.e., alternative set) via co-indexation (comparable to binding).

$$(6) \quad [\dots \text{chi}_{[Exclusivity]}(C_i) \sim C_i [\dots [\text{m\ddot{o}i}_{[Scalarity]}(C_i) \text{DP}_F]]]$$

- Semantically driven** movement
 - Locality effects of $m\ddot{o}i$ -movement follow compositionally to avoid conflicting requirements on co-indexed C_i
 - Not predicted by the non-setting approach ($\sim_{pass}$)
 - there are multiple pathways for higher operators to access lower alternatives

Data note

- Before proceeding, a note on the **data sources**. They are from:
 - (i) Interview sections with four primary consultants in 2023-2025.
 - (ii) Two field trips in Vietnam (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Dalat) using storyboard elicitation, translation, and naturalness judgment task (on a likert scale from 1 to 7). (N=33; between July-August 2024 and December 2024-January 2025.)
 - Most examples were elicited from and/or confirmed by at least 19 speakers (some by more, up to 24), with a few exceptions that will be specified whenever appropriate.

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Background: *Scalar only*

- It is well-known that English *only* has a **quantificational** and a **scalar** use (Klinedinst 2004, 2005; Beaver and Clark 2008; Coppock and Beaver 2014; Alxatib 2020)

- The prejacent is ranked lower than some other alternative(s) on a given scale

- (7) a. Mary **only** invited ALEX_F. (Quantificational) (Klinedinst 2004, ex.1)
 $\leadsto$ {Alex, John, Sue, ...}: Not John, Not Sue, ...
- b. Bill is **only** a JUNIOR_F/#SENIOR. (Scalar) (Klinedinst 2004, ex.14)
 $\leadsto$ <..., junior, senior>: Not senior

Not-at-issue scalarity in exclusive doubling

- *Chi* and *môi* differ in felicity conditions
- *Môi* requires the prejacent proposition to be ranked lower than the excluded alternatives on some contextual scale

(8) Four tests on the not-at-issue scalarity

- ❶. Superlatives: associating with upper vs. lower bound on a scale
- ❷. Equal-to-expectation readings
- ❸. Listing scenarios ➡ [see Appendix A](#)
- ❹. Contextual (non-)salience of excluded alternatives ➡ [see Appendix A](#)

①: Superlatives

- Superlatives: upper bound vs. lower bound of a scale
 - A scale of difficulty of the assignments: <easiest PS, ..., **hardest PS**>_{difficulty}
 Indicating student performance → difficult P-sets are ranked higher
 - Association with the **upper** bound:
Mỗi: infelicitous vs. *chỉ*: felicitous

(9) [This school has a policy of issuing multiple P-sets for each assignment and students only need to submit one set. You ask a teacher who is the best student. S/he answered: Nam, because ...]

a. Em ấy **chỉ** làm [bài tập khó nhất]_F (mean=7/7, SD=0, n=13)

b.# Em ấy làm **mỗi** [bài tập khó nhất]_F (mean=5.43/7, SD=1.28, n=14)

c.# Em ấy **chỉ** làm **mỗi** [bài tập khó nhất]_F (mean=5.57/7, SD=1.09, n=13)

3sg only do only assignment difficult most

(a-c): 'He only does the hardest P-set.'

(b-c) with *mỗi* → a "not enough" reading

①: Superlatives (cont.)

- Superlatives: upper bound vs. lower bound of a scale
 - A scale of difficulty of the assignments: <**easiest PS**, ..., **hardest PS**>_{difficulty}
 Indicating student performance → difficult P-sets are ranked higher
 - Now, when the association is with the **lower** bound, ...
 - *Mỗi*: felicitous! And even (slightly) preferred over *chi*!

(10) [Same school as (9). You ask a teacher who is the worst student. S/he answered: Nam, because ...]

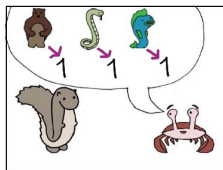
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|------------|-----|------------|------|-----|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. | Em | ấy | chi | làm | [bài | tập | dễ | nhất] _F | (mean=7/7, SD=0, n=13) | |
| b. | Em | ấy | | làm | mỗi | [bài | tập | dễ | nhất] _F | (mean=6.64/7, SD=1.08, n=14) |
| c. | Em | ấy | chi | làm | mỗi | [bài | tập | dễ | nhất] _F | (mean=6.57/7, SD=0.94, n=13) |
- 3sg only do only assignment easy most

(a-c): 'He only does the easiest P-set.'

②: Equal-to-expectation readings

- An equal-to-expectation case:
Suppresses the numerical scale by marking “one” as the expected number
 - *Mỗi*: infelicitous vs. *chỉ*: felicitous

(11)



(Animal-Party-4)

[Context: Bear, Snake, and Fish threw a party. Since very often people/animals overlap in bringing drinks but not food, they planned to each bring one kind of thing. Squirrel asked Crab what they brought. Crab answers, everyone brought one kind of thing. This is as expected.]

- a. Mỗi người **chỉ** mang [một thứ]_F. (mean=6.9/7, SD=0.31, n=20)
- b. #Mỗi người mang **mỗi** [một thứ]_F. (mean=4.2/7, SD=1.51, n=20)
- c. #Mỗi người **chỉ** mang **mỗi** [một thứ]_F. (mean=5.36/7, SD=1.56, n=14)
- each person only bring only one kind
- ‘Each person only brought one kind of thing.’
- (b-c): $\sim$ not enough, should be more

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Covert movement

- In (12), adfocal *mỗi* also allows both **narrow and wide scope** readings.
- To disambiguate, *chỉ* may be added to the corresponding scope positions.

(12) Adfoc Doubling across finite CP boundaries in Vietnamese

- a. Thầy giáo biết [CP là Nam (**chỉ**) học **mỗi** [tiếng Pháp]_F].
 teacher know COMP Nam only study PRT.only French
 'The teacher knows that Nam only took French (, and knows that Nam didn't take English.)'
 (Narrow scope: know > only)
- b. Thầy giáo (**chỉ**) biết [CP là Nam học **mỗi** [tiếng Pháp]_F].
 teacher only know COMP Nam study PRT.only French
 'The teacher only knows that Nam took French (, and doesn't know that Nam took English.)'
 (Wide scope: only > know)

→ Adfoc Doubling can occur across **finite CP boundaries**.

Covert movement (cont.)

- The **wide scope reading** is blocked across a **syntactic island**.
 - (13a): Wide scope of *mỗi* unavailable; must be interpreted inside the island.
 - (13b): Adding *chỉ* to the matrix clause yields a **multiple-‘only’** reading.

(13) Adfoc Doubling is banned across complex NP islands in Vietnamese

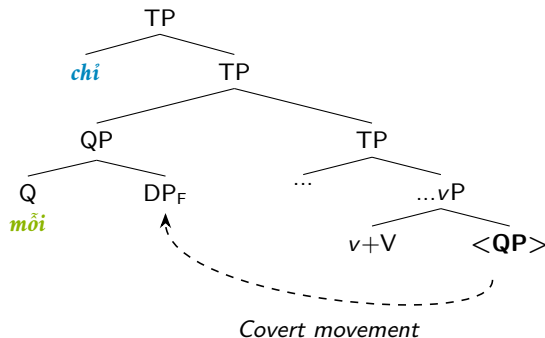
- a. Thầy giáo biết [DP tin [CP Nam (**chỉ**) học **mỗi** tiếng Pháp]].
 teacher know news Nam only study only French
 ‘The teacher knows the news that Nam only took French (#but doesn’t know that Nam took English).’ (Narrow scope: know>only)
- b. Thầy giáo **chỉ** biết [DP tin [CP Nam học **mỗi** tiếng Pháp]].
 teacher only know news Nam study only French
 ONLY: ‘The teacher only knows the news that Nam only took French (#but doesn’t know that Nam took English).’ (Multi-‘only’: only>know>only)
 BUT NOT: ‘The teacher only knows the news that Nam took French (but doesn’t know that Nam took English).’ (*Wide scope: only>know)

→ Adfoc Doubling **cannot** occur across **syntactic islands**.

Covert movement (cont.)

→ There is covert movement of *mỗi*-DP to *chỉ*

(14) Covert movement in Adfocal Doubling in Vietnamese



- The movement may also be overt (Hole 2017; Sun 2021)
 - Usually regarded as syntactically triggered movement
 - E.g., by [SCAL] in Hole (2017) and by [ONLY] (with [EPP]) in Sun (2021)

Locality of the movement

- Overt movement → allows us to examine the landing site better
 - The landing site of the movement must be **immediately** below *chi*!
- Cannot be intervened by quantificational elements like negation

- (15) a. *Nam **chi** không [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] (mới) nói t_{QP} .²
 Nam only not only English just speak
 Int.: 'Nam only does not speak *English*.
 (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)' (only > $\neg$)
- b. Nam **chi** [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] mới không nói t_{QP} .
 Nam only only English just not speak
 'Nam only does not speak *English*.
 (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)' (only > $\neg$)

2. *mới* 'only then, just' is a scalar particle required in overt focus movement (Hole 2017; Nguyen 2013; Tran and Zimmermann 2021), but its scalarity is not the same as *mỗi*'s (see Appendix B).

Locality of the movement (cont.)

- The landing site of the movement must be immediately **below** *chi*!

→ Cannot be higher than *chi*³

- (16) a. *Hôm qua Nam [_{QP} **mộ̃i** thịt bò_F] (mới) **chỉ** (mới) ăn *t*_{QP}.
 yesterday Nam only beef just only just eat
 Int.: 'Nam only ate *beef* yesterday.'
- b. Hôm qua Nam **chỉ** [_{QP} **mộ̃i** thịt bò_F] mới ăn *t*_{QP}.
 yesterday Nam only only beef just eat
 'Nam only ate *beef* yesterday.'

3. Could also be due to the ban of backward association (Erlewine 2014), although it is allowed in other languages (e.g., German, Yoruba, etc.; cf. Bayer 2018; Yip and Adedeji 2024; Hirsch and Wagner 2025; Aremu 2026)

Interim summary

(17) Properties of the QP movement with $m\ddot{o}i$

- ①. It is **obligatory** (cf. island effects in in-situ cases → covert movement must take place);
- ②. It must be **immediately** below chi /EXCL (i.e., there can be no other operators in-between);
- ③. It must **not** land **above** chi .

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Exclusive doubling as scalar focus structures

- I propose that Vietnamese adverbial *chỉ* and its null counterpart EXCL contribute **at-issue exclusiveness**.

(18) The semantics of adverbial *chỉ*

$$\llbracket \text{chỉ/EXCL} \rrbracket(C_i) = \lambda p_{st} \lambda w_s \text{ AI: } \forall q[(q \in C_i \wedge q(w)) \rightarrow p \subseteq q]$$

$$\text{NAI: } p(w)$$

- Mỗi*, on the other hand, contributes **not-at-issue scalarity**.

(19) The semantics of adfocal *mỗi* (attaching to entity-denoting DPs)

a. $\llbracket \text{mỗi} \rrbracket(C_i) = \lambda x_e \lambda P_{\langle e, st \rangle} \lambda w.$
AI: $P(x)(w)$
NAI: $P(x) \in C_i \wedge \forall q \in C_i [P(x) \not\subseteq q \rightarrow P(x) <_s q]$

b. **NAI:** (i) the prejacent $P(x)$ is in C_i , and
(ii) for all propositions q such that q is in C_i , q is ranked higher than the prejacent $P(x)$ on a contextually given scale.

Accessing alternatives with multiple focus operators

- In exclusive doubling, both particles associate with the same focus association
→ Both are focus sensitive **operators**!
- Higher OP cannot access the focus if $\sim$ resets the focus value (cf. Beck 2006)

$$(20) * [\underbrace{OP1(C_j) \sim C_j}_{\times} [\dots [\underbrace{OP2(C_i) \sim C_i}_{\text{focus intervention}} [XP_F \dots]]]]$$

- Either associates with other foci *above* $\sim$ (multiple focus association cases like multi-‘only’, Rooth 1996; Erlewine 2025)
- Or *ungrammaticality* (focus intervention effects, Beck 2006)

Accessing alternatives with multiple focus operators (cont.)

- Proposal: Co-indexation of C
- Instead of introducing another $\sim C$, the scalar operator's C is **co-indexed** with the exclusive operator
 - Conceptually: Similar to binding, because C is a variable
cf. index agreement for binding (Reuland 2001; Hicks 2009; Kratzer 2009), number agreement (Grosz 2015), and honorific agreement (Ikawa 2022), etc.

$$(21) \quad [\text{OP1}(C_i) [\dots [\text{OP2}(C_i) \sim C_i [\text{XP}_F \dots]]]]$$


- Empirically: Motivated by Cantonese exclusive doubling in a **different** scopal configuration: scalar OP is **higher** than exclusive OP (Yip 2024)

$$(22) \quad [\text{zaa3}_{[\text{Scalarity}]}(C_i) [\dots [\text{zinghai}_{[\text{Exclusivity}]}(C_i) \sim C_i [\text{XP}_F \dots]]]]$$


Exclusive doubling as scalar focus structures (cont.)

- In Vietnamese adfocal doubling, the scalar OP is **lower** than the exclusive OP
- I argue that the co-indexation approach extends to this case
 - $M\ddot{o}i$ does not introduce its own $\sim C$, and
 - $M\ddot{o}i$ does not take the DP_F 's alternative value directly.

(23) Co-indexation of alternatives in Adfocal Doubling

$$[\dots \text{ch\ddot{i}}_{[Exclusivity]}(C_i) \sim C_i [\dots [\text{m\ddot{o}i}_{[Scalarity]}(C_i) DP_F]]]$$

- Apart from resolving the issue on accessing alternatives, ...
- This view derives locality in of movement as well, as we will see soon.

A compositional analysis

- Let us consider a sample example below.

(24) [Context: In a school in Vietnam, we are discussing what foreign languages the students speak concerning their difficulty levels. Impressively, Linh can speak German, which is difficult to master due to its complex morphology and limited learning resources as compared to English. Nam, however, can only speak English, which is easier to master.]

a. Nam **chỉ** nói **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F.

Nam only speak only English

Lit.: 'Nam only speak only *English*.'

i.e., 'Nam just speaks *English*.' (not impressive)

b. $C_i = \{^{\wedge} \text{Nam speaks English}, ^{\wedge} \text{Nam speaks German}\}$

where $^{\wedge} \text{Nam speaks English} <_{\text{difficulty/impressiveness}} ^{\wedge} \text{Nam speaks German}$

(25) Simplified LF:

[_{TP} **chỉ**(C_i) [$\sim C_i$ [_{QP} **mỗi**(C_i) [tiếng Anh]_F] [$\lambda 3$ Nam nói t_3]]]

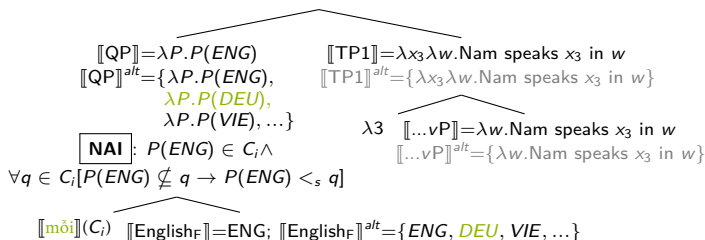
A compositional analysis (cont.)

(26) The composition of (24) ($C_i = \{\lambda w.Nam \text{ speaks English(=ENG) in } w, \lambda w.Nam \text{ speaks German(=DEU) in } w\}$)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \llbracket TP1 \rrbracket &= \lambda x_3 \lambda w. Nam \text{ speaks } x_3 \text{ in } w \\
 \llbracket TP1 \rrbracket^{alt} &= \{ \lambda x_3 \lambda w. Nam \text{ speaks } x_3 \text{ in } w \} \\
 &\quad \swarrow \quad \searrow \\
 \lambda 3 \quad &\llbracket \dots vP \rrbracket = \lambda w. Nam \text{ speaks } x_3 \text{ in } w \\
 &\llbracket \dots vP \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \lambda w. Nam \text{ speaks } x_3 \text{ in } w \}
 \end{aligned}$$

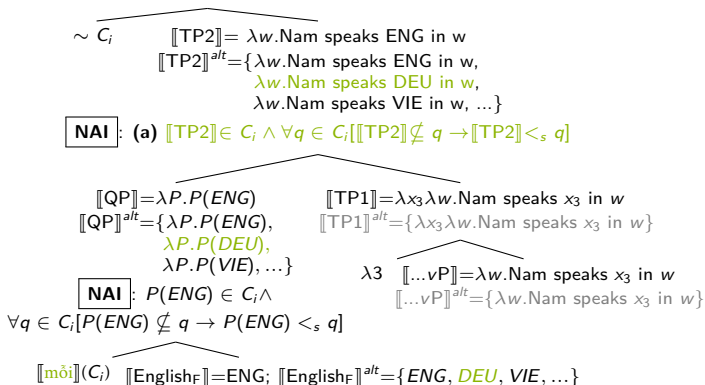
A compositional analysis (cont.)

(26) The composition of (24) ($C_i = \{\lambda w.Nam\ speaks\ English(=ENG)\ in\ w, \lambda w.Nam\ speaks\ German(=DEU)\ in\ w\}$)



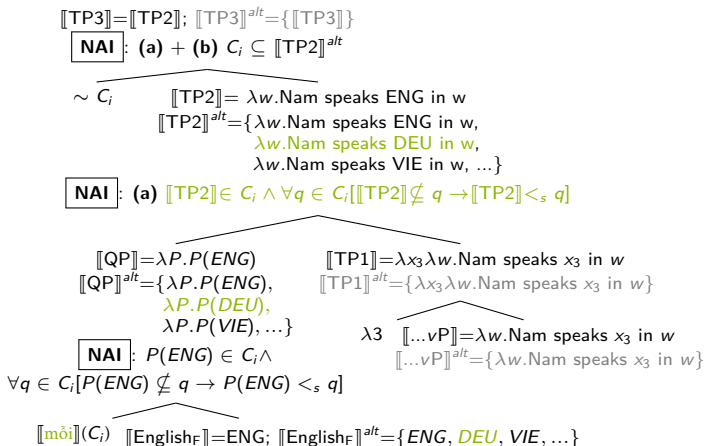
A compositional analysis (cont.)

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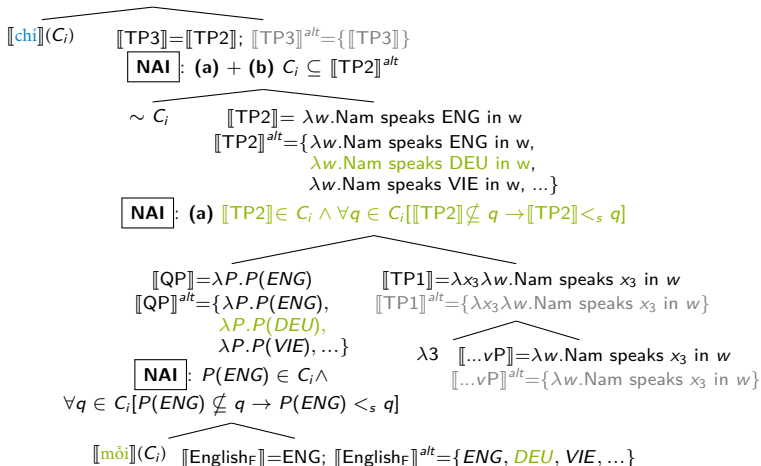
A compositional analysis (cont.)

(26) The composition of (24) ($C_i = \{\lambda w. \text{Nam speaks English}(=ENG) \text{ in } w, \lambda w. \text{Nam speaks German}(=DEU) \text{ in } w\}$)



A compositional analysis (cont.)

(26) The composition of (24) ($C_i = \{\lambda w. \text{Nam speaks English (=ENG) in } w, \lambda w. \text{Nam speaks German (=DEU) in } w\}$)

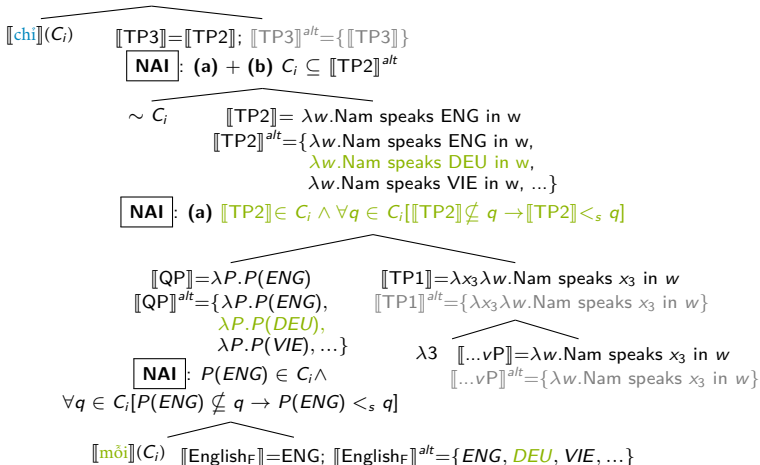


A compositional analysis (cont.)

(26) The composition of (24) ($C_i = \{\lambda w.Nam \text{ speaks English(=ENG) in } w, \lambda w.Nam \text{ speaks German(=DEU) in } w\}$)

$\llbracket TP4 \rrbracket = \lambda w.Nam \text{ only speaks ENG in } w$; $\llbracket TP4 \rrbracket^{alt} = \{\llbracket TP4 \rrbracket\}$

NAI: (a) + (b) + $\lambda w.Nam \text{ speaks ENG in } w \in CG$



Semantically driven movement

- I propose that the movement of $m\tilde{o}i$ -QP is not driven by syntax
- It is a consequence of the proposed semantics of $m\tilde{o}i$ with C_i co-indexation

- $\sim$ triggered by exclusive chi restricts C_i
 → A subset of the alternative value of the prejacent proposition (call it p).

$$(27) \quad a. \quad \llbracket \sim C \alpha \rrbracket = \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket, \text{ with presupposition: } \boxed{C \subseteq \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{alt}}$$

$$b. \quad \llbracket \sim C \alpha \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^o \} \quad (\text{Rooth 1992, formulation from Erlewine 2025:536})$$

- In order to rank the prejacent with excluded alternatives, $m\tilde{o}i$ also makes reference to C_i
 → Output proposition (call it r) must be in C_i

$$(28) \quad \llbracket m\tilde{o}i \rrbracket(C_i) = \mathbf{AI:} \lambda x_e \lambda P_{\langle e, st \rangle}. P(x)$$

$$\mathbf{NAI:} \quad \boxed{P(x) \in C_i} \wedge \forall q \in C_i [P(x) \not\subseteq q \rightarrow P(x) <_s q]$$

Semantically driven movement (cont.)

- When $p = r$ (i.e., Nam speaks English), the meaning composition goes smoothly as we witnessed above.

$$(29) \quad [\text{chi}(C_i) [\sim C_i \underbrace{[\text{QP-}\textcolor{teal}{m\ddot{o}i}(C_i) [\text{TP}_{/VP} \dots]]}_{p=r}]]]]$$

- If there is an intervening operator between $m\ddot{o}i$ and C_i , there will be a **mismatch** between r and p .

$$(30) \quad * [\text{chi}(C_i) [\sim C_i \underbrace{[\underbrace{\text{OP}_{\text{Modal/Neg}/\dots}}_{p} \underbrace{[\text{QP-}\textcolor{teal}{m\ddot{o}i}(C_i) [\text{TP}_{/VP} \dots]]}_{r}]]]]]$$

→ Leading to conflicting requirements on C_i , failing the semantic composition.

Locality of the QP-movement

- Recall the negation case:

- (31) a. *Nam **chỉ** không [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] (mới) nói t_{QP} .
 Nam only not only English just speak
 Int.: 'Nam only does not speak *English*.
 (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)' (only > $\neg$)
- b. Nam **chỉ** [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] mới không nói t_{QP} .
 Nam only only English just not speak
 'Nam only does not speak *English*.
 (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)' (only > $\neg$)

Locality of the QP-movement (cont.)

- Consider the LF of an illicit case with an intervening negation below.

(32) *_[TP3] **chỉ**(C_i) _[TP2] $\sim C_i$ _[NegP=TP1] không _[vP] _[QP] **mỗi**(C_i) _{[tiếng Anh]_F} _{[$\lambda 3$ [Nam nói t_3].}

$$i. \llbracket vP \rrbracket^o = \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \quad ; \quad \llbracket vP \rrbracket^{alt} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG,} \\ \wedge \text{Nam speaks DEU,} \\ \wedge \text{Nam speaks Giang, ...} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\boxed{\text{NAI}} : \boxed{\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \in C_i} \wedge \forall q \in C_i [\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \not\subseteq q \rightarrow \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} <_s q]$$

(This step conflicts with (iii))

Locality of the QP-movement (cont.)

- Consider the LF of an illicit case with an intervening negation below.

(33) * $[_{TP3} \text{ch\ddot{i}}(C_i) [_{TP2} \sim C_i[_{NegP=TP1} \text{không} [_{vP} [_{QP} \text{m\ddot{o}i}(C_i) [\text{tiếng Anh}]_F] [\lambda 3 [_{Nam} \text{nói } t_3].$

$$i. \llbracket vP \rrbracket^o = \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \quad ; \quad \llbracket vP \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG}, \\ \wedge \text{Nam speaks DEU}, \\ \wedge \text{Nam speaks Giang, ...} \}$$

$$\boxed{\text{NAI}}: \boxed{\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \in C_i} \wedge \forall q \in C_i [\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \not\subseteq q \rightarrow \\ \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} <_s q]$$

(This step conflicts with (iii))

$$ii. \llbracket \text{NegP} \rrbracket^o = \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak ENG} \quad ; \quad \llbracket \text{NegP} \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak ENG}, \\ \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak DEU}, \\ \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak VIE, ...} \}$$

$$\boxed{\text{NAI}}: \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \in C_i \wedge \forall q \in C_i [\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \not\subseteq q \rightarrow \\ \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} <_s q]$$

Locality of the QP-movement (cont.)

- Consider the LF of an illicit case with an intervening negation below.

(34) *_{[TP3 **chỉ**(C_i) [TP2 $\sim$ C_i[NegP=TP1 không [_{VP} [_{QP} **mỗi**(C_i) [tiếng Anh]_F] [λ 3 [Nam nói t₃].}

- i. $\llbracket vP \rrbracket^o = \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG}$; $\llbracket vP \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG},$
 $\wedge \text{Nam speaks DEU},$
 $\wedge \text{Nam speaks Giang, ...} \}$

NAI: $\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \in C_i \wedge \forall q \in C_i [\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \not\subseteq q \rightarrow$
 $\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} <_s q]$

(This step conflicts with (iii))

- ii. $\llbracket \text{NegP} \rrbracket^o = \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak ENG}$; $\llbracket \text{NegP} \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak ENG},$
 $\wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak DEU},$
 $\wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak VIE, ...} \}$

NAI: $\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \in C_i \wedge \forall q \in C_i [\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \not\subseteq q \rightarrow$
 $\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} <_s q]$

- iii. $\llbracket \text{TP2} \rrbracket^o = \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak ENG}$; $\llbracket \text{TP2} \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \wedge \text{Nam doesn't speak ENG} \}$

NAI: (a) $\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \in C_i \wedge \forall q \in C_i [\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \not\subseteq q \rightarrow$
 $\wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} <_s q]$

(b) $C_i \subseteq \llbracket \text{TP1/NegP} \rrbracket^{alt}$ ($\leadsto \wedge \text{Nam speaks ENG} \notin C_i$, conflicting with (i))

Locality of the QP-movement (cont.)

→ The locality of the movement is derived by semantics

① It is **obligatory**

→ Immediate consequence of $m\ddot{o}i$'s semantic type, $\langle e, \langle \langle e, st \rangle, st \rangle \rangle$

- (35) a. $*[V_{\langle e, \langle e, st \rangle \rangle} QP_{\langle \langle e, st \rangle, st \rangle}] \leadsto$ Type mismatch, Functional Application fails
 b. $[QP_{\langle \langle e, st \rangle, st \rangle} [\lambda 3 [\dots V_{\langle e, \langle e, st \rangle \rangle} t_{3e}]]] \leadsto$ Movement → type e trace

② It must be **immediately** below chi

→ Conflicting requirement on co-indexed C_i

- (36) $*[chi(C_i) [\sim C_i [\text{Qu}] [\underbrace{[m\ddot{o}i(C_i)\text{-DP } \lambda 3 [TP \dots t_3]]}_{r}]]]$
 $\underbrace{\hspace{15em}}_p$

③ It must **not** land **above** chi .

→ Conflicting requirement on co-indexed C_i

- (37) $*[\underbrace{[m\ddot{o}i(C_i)\text{-DP } \lambda 3 [chi(C_i) [\sim C_i [TP \dots t_3]]]}_r]]]$
 $\underbrace{\hspace{15em}}_p$

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Passing up alternatives

- Passing up alternatives
- There is a variant of $\sim$ that **passes up the alternatives** (Fox 2007; Wagner 2012; Crnić 2013; Bade and Sachs 2019; Erlewine 2025)
 - Motivated by:
 - Recursive exhaustification for free-choice inferences
 - Multiple operators (e.g., ‘even’ and ‘only’) with the same focus association
 - Association with *wh*
 - ...

$$(38) \quad [\text{OP1}(C_j) \sim_{\text{reset}} C_j [\dots [\text{OP2}(C_i) \dots \sim_{\text{pass}} C_i [\text{XP}_F \dots]]]]$$

$$(39) \quad \llbracket \alpha_F \sim_{\text{pass}} C_i \rrbracket^{alt} = \llbracket \alpha_F \rrbracket^{alt} \text{ iff } C_i \subseteq \llbracket \alpha_F \rrbracket^{alt}, \text{ undefined otherwise}$$

$$(40) \quad \text{Cf. } \llbracket \alpha_F \sim_{\text{reset}} C_i \rrbracket^{alt} = \{ \llbracket \alpha_F \rrbracket^o \} \text{ iff } C_i \subseteq \llbracket \alpha_F \rrbracket^{alt}, \text{ undefined otherwise}$$

$\sim_{\text{pass}}$ in exclusive doubling?

- Question: is it possible to apply the non-resetting approach to derive exclusive doubling?
 - Yip (2024): Not in SFP doubling in Cantonese (meaning too strong; not accounting for intervention effects)
- ➔ I argue that the non-resetting approach also does not apply to adfocal doubling in Vietnamese:
 - Fails to account for the locality of movement
 - Wrongly predicts independent association of *mỗĩ* (Mitcho Erlewine p.c.)
 ➔ see [Appendix D](#)
 - Even if we “outsource” the locality to syntax ➔ a syntactic account makes wrong predictions on intervention effects ➔ see [Appendix D](#)
- (NB: I assume the existence of $\sim_{\text{pass}}$, only that we need another mechanism for accessing alternatives in exclusive doubling)

$\sim_{pass}$ in exclusive doubling? (cont.)

- A potential non-resetting analysis

(41) Alternative passing in Vietnamese adfocal doubling
 (boldface = levels where alternatives constrain C)
 $[\dots \textit{chỉ}(C_j) [\sim_{reset} C_j[\mathbf{vP} \dots [_{QP} \textit{m\ddot{o}i}(C_i) [\sim_{pass} C_i[\mathbf{DP} \dots F \dots]] \dots]]]]$

(42) The semantics of adfocal $\textit{m\ddot{o}i}$
 $\llbracket \textit{m\ddot{o}i} \rrbracket(C_i) = \lambda x_e. \mathbf{AI}: x$
 $\mathbf{NAI}: \forall y \in C_i [x \neq y \rightarrow x <_s y]$

👉 **Problem:** does not derive the locality of movement

Failure to derive locality effects (cont.)

- Recall the negation case:

- (43) a. *Nam **chỉ** không [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] (mới) nói t_{QP} .
 Nam only not only English just speak
 Int.: 'Nam only does not speak *English*.
 (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)' (only > $\neg$)
- b. Nam **chỉ** [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] mới không nói t_{QP} .
 Nam only only English just not speak
 'Nam only does not speak *English*.
 (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)' (only > $\neg$)

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Conclusion

① I have argued for a **scalar focus** approach to Vietnamese exclusive doubling, where:

- At-issue exclusivity is encoded by one particle, not-at-issue scalarity is encoded by another particle;
- The scalar particle depends on the exclusive one by sharing its quantificational domain (i.e., alternative set) via **co-indexation** (comparable to binding).

$$(45) \quad [\dots \text{ch\ddot{i}}_{[\text{Exclusivity}]}(C_i) \sim C_i [\dots [\text{m\ddot{o}i}_{[\text{Scalarity}]}(C_i) \text{DP}_F]]]$$

② I have show how **syntactic movement** is driven by **semantics**—even for movement that is island sensitive and overt

- ➔ Locality effects of *m\ddot{o}i*-movement follow compositionally to **avoid conflicting requirements on co-indexed C_i**

Implications for Alternative Semantics

- How do multiple focus operators associate with the same focus?
- There are multiple pathways:
 - By a non-resetting operator $\sim_{pass}$ (e.g. Bade and Sachs 2019; Erlewine 2025)
 - **By co-indexation of the alternative sets C_i** ➡ [the approach proposed here](#)
- Both are needed:
 - Locality of movement in exclusive doubling is not predicted by the non-setting approach

Acknowledgments

This study is part of my dissertation work (Yip 2026a).

I wish to thank my committee members:

Veneeta Dayal, Mitcho Erlewine, Zoltán Szabó, and Raffaella Zanuttini.

I am grateful to the three anonymous SuB reviewers for their valuable comments.

I am very thankful to all my Vietnamese consultants, and many other people—please see the acknowledgment in my dissertation ☺



https://kafai-yip.github.io/assets/docs/Dissertation_Yip.pdf

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③: Listing scenarios

- A listing scenario: The alternatives are **equally salient** and the contextual scale is suppressed (cf. Greenberg 2022 for English)
 - Adverbial *chỉ*: a neutral tone without any the speaker's judgment
 - Adfocal *mỗi*: a sense of the speaker's judgment

(46) [A party is coming. You report each person's dietary restrictions to the organizer:]

a. Nam **chỉ** ăn thịt bò, Minh **chỉ** ăn thịt cừu, Lan ...

b. Nam ăn **mỗi** thịt bò, Minh ăn **mỗi** thịt cừu, Lan ...

c. Nam **chỉ** ăn **mỗi** thịt bò, Minh **chỉ** ăn **mỗi** thịt cừu, Lan ...

Nam only eat only beef Minh only eat only lamb Lan

'Nam only eats beef, Minh only eats lamb, Lan (only eats pork) ...'

(a) $\sim$ Neutral tone (mean=6.93/7, SD=0.26, n=15)

(b) $\sim$ Judgmental tone (mean=6.08/7, SD=0.64, n=13)

(c) $\sim$ Judgmental tone (mean=6.31/7, SD=0.63, n=13)

- Comments from consultants on using *mỗi*: Nam and Minh(, and Lan) are "very picky", "difficult people", "annoying and could only eat one kind of meat; hard to entertain", and the speaker thinks "why don't they eat all the meat"

④: Contextual (non-)salience of excluded alternatives

- Most consultants commented that *mỗi* suggests that the customer “did not buy enough”, “was short of cash”, and gives rise to a certain attitude of “disappointment”, “expectation to buy something else”, and “whining as to why buy just one but not two”, and even “brings up a drama”.

(47) The lack of contextual salient alternatives

You are a cashier in a meat market. You just served a customer, and your colleague seems to be curious about what that person bought. You report in a neutral tone:

- a. Người đó **chỉ** mua [thịt bò]_F (à). (mean=6.8/7, SD=0.56, n=15)
 b. Người đó mua **mỗi** [thịt bò]_F (mean=5.6/7, SD=0.99, n=15)
 c. Người đó **chỉ** mua **mỗi** [thịt bò]_F (mean=5.67/7, SD=1.11, n=15)
 person that only buy only beef

‘That person only bought *beef*.’

(a): $\sim$ Neutral tone

(b-c): $\sim$ Judgmental tone related to “not enough”

Contextual (non-)salience of excluded alternatives (cont.)

- A consultant reported that adding a follow-up sentence *Nghèo nàn tht* “how poor!” renders *mỏi* natural and even more preferred than *chỉ*.

(48) ... Nghèo nàn thật!
 poor really

‘That person only bought *beef*. How poor!’

a. *Chỉ*: 5/7, n=1

b. *Mỏi*: 7/7, n=1

c. *Chỉ...mỏi*: 7/7, n=1

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Appendix B: English scalar *only* vs. Vietnamese doubling

- English scalar *only* is known to differ from quantificational *only* from two truth-conditional-related aspects (Klinedinst 2004, 2005; Beaver and Clark 2008; Coppock and Beaver 2014; Alxatib 2020):

#1 Non-logically weaker alternatives are *not* excluded when being lower ranked

- (49) a. Jess only managed to interview John (quantificational)
 b. Jess only managed to a [first lieutenant]_F (scalar) (Alxatib 2020:30)
 (Jess also interviewed second lieutenants)

#2 The ban on vacuous uses

- (50) a. #Jackie was only born in [Boston]_F (quantificational) (Alxatib 2020:45)
 b. Did Jamie only get a [B]_F on the test? (scalar) (Alxatib 2020:45)

The ban on vacuous uses

- Vietnamese adfocal doubling:

- (51) a. Trong bài kiểm tra này, Lan được 80 điểm. (...)
in CL test this Lan get 80 point
'In this test, Lan got 80 points. (...)'
- b. ... còn Nam **chỉ** được **mỗi** [10 điểm]_F. Nam dốt lắm!
and Nam only get only 10 point Nam stupid very
'Nam only got 10 points. Nam is so stupid!'

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Mới and *cai*: aspectual uses

- Vietnamese *mới*: aspectual particles, indicate temporal recency of a state/event (similar to Mandarin *cai*, Hole 2004)

(52) Anh ấy **mới** (vừa) bước chân ra ngoài. (Vietnamese)
he just step foot outside
'He just stepped outside.' (Tran and Zimmermann 2021:823)

- Temporal ordering:
Time t_1 is ranked before t_2 , where p is true at t_2 but not t_1

Mới and *cai*: focus uses

- Vietnamese *mới* can also associate with an exclusive focus (Hole 2004, 2017; Nguyen 2013; Tran and Zimmermann 2021, among others)
- (Often) required when the adfocal particle moves with the focus

(53) Nam chỉ [mỗi thịt bò] ?*(**mới**) ăn. (Vietnamese)
 Nam only only beef just eat
 'Only beef does Nam eat.' (Hole 2017:394)

- ➔ Necessary condition: being beef is a necessary condition for Akiu to eat it.
- Hole (2017) suggests that *mới* contributes to a scalar reading "eating beef is considered little", but it could be from the adfocal particles.

Mới vs. mỗi

- Hole (2017) argues that the scalarity in adverbial-adfocal doubling is contributed by a SCAL head that can be spelt out as *mới* 'just'.
- However, *mỗi* and *mới* encode different kinds of scalar readings.
 - Mới* below signals a temporal reading that Nam is on his way to reaching the alternative value (i.e., 80 points), whereas *mỗi* emphasizes the lowness of the focus value.

- (54) Trong bài kiểm tra này, Lan được 80 điểm, còn Nam **mới** được 70 điểm.
 Trong bài kiểm tra này, Lan được 80 điểm, còn Nam được **mỗi** 70 điểm.
 in CL test this Lan get 80 point and Nam just get only 70 point
Mới: 'Nam just got 70 points.' $\leadsto$ Nam is on his way to 80
Mỗi: 'Nam got merely 70 points.' $\leadsto$ very low, as compared to 80

- Tran and Zimmermann (2021) analyzes *mới* as an exclusive operating on different scales, without explaining why it can be doubled with *chỉ/mỗi* without changing the truth conditions.

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Whether *mỗi* has independent association under *chỉ*

- There is another argument for the co-indexation approach over the non-resetting approach (Michael Yoshitaka Erlewine p.c.)
 - In Erlewine (2025)'s "passing" squiggle theory, $\sim_{pass}$ and $\sim_{pass}$ can be freely used and it is up to independent grammatical constraints to filter out results from one operator or the other.
- Thus, *mỗi* is not tied to $\sim_{pass}$ and should be able to come with $\sim_{reset}$.
 - This predicts the configuration:
 $[chi_1 \sim_{reset} [... \{F1\} ... [mỗi_2 \sim_{reset} F2] ... \{F1\} ...]]$
 to be possible, where *mỗi* associates with a different focus within *chỉ*'s scope but shields it from *chỉ*.
- Yet, when *mỗi* is below a (clausemate) *chỉ*, they always associate with the same focus → *mỗi* does not come with its own $\sim$ operator.

(55) *Who did Nam give (just) flowers to?*

#Nam **chỉ** tặng Minh_{F1} **mỗi** hoa hồng_{F2} (thôi).

Nam give only Minh only rose SFP.only

ONLY: 'Nam gave Minh only flowers.' NOT: 'Nam gave only Minh flowers.'

$\sim_{\text{pass}}$ + syntax?

- One way to recuse the non-setting approach: maybe the movement is indeed motivated by syntax (Sun 2020, 2021; Hole 2017) → locality explained
 - Triggered by [Foc], for feature checking: Yip 2026a, 2026b

(56) The derivation of focus movement of QP

a. Baseline

[FocP Foc_[uEXCL:_, iFoc:±]] [... [vP ... [QP *mỗi*_[uEXCL:_, uFoc:_] DP_F] ...

b. Feature percolation

[FocP Foc_[uEXCL:_, iFoc:±]] [... [vP ... [QP *mỗi* DP_F]_[uEXCL:_, uFoc:_] ...

c. Movement → checks [Foc] on *mỗi*

[FocP [QP *mỗi* DP_F]_[uEXCL:_, uFoc:±] Foc_[uEXCL:_, iFoc:±]] [... [vP ... *t* ...

d. Merge *chỉ* → checks [EXCL] on *mỗi* and Foc; checks [Foc] on *chỉ*

[FocP *chỉ*_[iEXCL:±, uFoc:±] [QP *mỗi* DP_F]_[uEXCL:±, uFoc:±] [
Foc_[uEXCL:±, iFoc:±]] [... [vP ... *t* ...

$\sim_{\text{pass}}$ + syntax? (cont.)

- The semantic co-indexation and syntactic feature-checking approaches make at least two different empirical predictions:
 - Whether non-truth-condition-altering operators Δ can stay in-between *chi* and *môi*, such as double negation (or potentially 'also', *modulo* focus intervention effects):

Co-indexation: Yes, i.e., [*chi* ... (Δ) ... *môi*-QP ... *t*]

Feature checking: No, i.e., [*chi* ... ($*\Delta$) ... *môi*-QP ... *t*]
 - Whether there will be *syntactic* intervention effects triggered on the movement path of QP *môi*, such as by another focus projection or its kin Δ :

Co-indexation: No, i.e., [*chi* ... *môi*-QP ... (Δ) ... *t*] (as movement $\neq$ feature-triggered here)

Feature checking: Yes, i.e., [*chi* ... *môi*-QP ... ($*\Delta$) ... *t*]

$\sim_{\text{pass}}$ + syntax? (cont.)

- I don't have the data on ❶, but I have data on ❷
- 'also' + its focus associate: focus elements, should carry [Foc]
- On the movement path → No minimality-based IEs arise!

(57) Minh chỉ nộp mỗi một bản tóm tắt. Anh ấy [cũng₁ **chỉ**₂ phản biện]_{F1}
 Minh only submit only one CL summary 3SG also only review
mỗi [*một* bản tóm tắt]_{F2}].
 only one CL summary
 'Minh only submitted one abstract. He also only reviewed one abstract.'

→ Not syntactic movement

- See also Yip 2026b for empirical arguments against using [EXCL/ONLY] syntactic features (cf. Sun 2021) to derive movement (based in (non-)intervention by quantificational elements)

→ Movement is semantically driven; only co-indexation approach accounts for the locality