Two types of exclusive doubling in Vietnamese*

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1 Introduction

- **Exclusive doubling**:

Co-occurrence of exclusive focus particles 'only' with the same focus association.

  – Widely attested across languages: Akan, Cantonese, Dutch, German, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Yoruba, … (see Yip 2024, 2026 and references therein)

- Vietnamese is special in allowing two types of doubling[1]

  (Hole 2013, 2017; Erlewine 2017b; Quek and Hirsch 2017; Park 2020; Sun 2020, 2021; Yip 2025b)

  – Adverbial *chỉ* and adfocal *mỗi* (where Adv is **higher** than the other particle)
  – Adverbial *chỉ* and sentence-final particle (SFP) *thôi* (where Adv is **lower**)

(1) Adverbial-adfocal exclusive doubling in Vietnamese (henceforth **Adfoc Doubling**)

Nam **chỉ** ăn **mỗi** [thịt bò]_F.
Nam only eat only beef
'Nam eats only beef.'   (Hole 2017:394)

(2) Adverbial-SFP exclusive doubling in Vietnamese   (henceforth **SFP Doubling**)

Tôi **chỉ** có [bốn đồng]_F **thôi**.
1SG only have four dong   SFP.only
'I have only four piasters.'   (Thompson 1965:339)

- **Form-meaning mismatches**:

  – Singleton uses of either particle ➜ at-issue exclusivity (see examples in §2)
  – Doubling uses with both particles ➜ same truth condition, at-issue exclusivity
  ➜ A problem for compositionality
  ➜ Resembling negative concord (i.e., two NEG elements, but one logical negation)

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1. The three particles may even co-occur together to form "tripling" (or "quadrupling" with *mới* 'just':

(i) Nam **chỉ** **mỗi** [thịt bò]_F **mới** ăn *t* **thôi**.
     Nam only only beef   just eat   SFP.only
     'Only beef does Nam eat.'   (Hole 2017:390)

- The **operator-particle** approach (Bayer 1996; Y. Lee 2005; Barbiers 2014; Quek and Hirsch 2017; Bassi, Hirsch, and Trinh 2022; Sun 2021; Branan and Erlewine 2023; Yip 2025b; Aremu 2026; *i.a.*)

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

(3) [_TP Subj [**OP-EXCL** [_vP V **Prt-only** [_DP Focused element]]]]]

- Issue ❶: The **syntactic nature** of the dependency is subject to debate:

(4) a. Agree (Quek and Hirsch 2017; Hole 2017; Hirsch 2022)
    b. Covert movement (Bayer 1996; Y. Lee 2005; Barbiers 2014)
    c. Overt movement (Hole 2017; Sun 2021)

- Issue ❷: How about **SFP Doubling**?—largely understudied. (but see Yip 2024, 2025b)

Overview of the talk

• Empirically, I show that Adfoc and SFP doubling in Vietnamese are **not uniform**:
  – They contrast in (i) locality and (ii) intervention effects
• I argue that they involve different dependencies and features:
  – <u>Adfocal Doubling</u>: **covert movement** triggered by a focus **[Foc]** feature
  – <u>SFP Doubling</u>: **Agree** depenedency triggered by an exclusive **[Excl]** feature

- **Road map**

- 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.)
  – Two of the storyboards are attached in the Appendix.

2 Three exclusive particles in Vietnamese

2.1 Focus association

- **Adverbial particle *chỉ*** (Thompson 1965:339; Hole 2013, 2017; Erlewine 2017b; Sun 2021; Yip 2025b)
  - Only adjoins to VP or above
  - May associate with the focus at a distance
- **Adfocal particle *mỗi*** (Hole 2013, 2017; Erlewine 2017b; Sun 2021; Yip 2025b)
  - Only attaches to the outermost shell of a focused DP
  - Occurs before the focus
- **Sentence-final particle (SFP) *thôi*** (Thompson 1965:286,339; Hole 2013; Yip 2025b)[2]
  - Always at a sentence-final position (*modulo* presence of other SFPs)
  - May associate with the focus at a distance

(5) Association with direct objects (Christmas party-6, n=24)
  a. Nam **chỉ** tặng [túi xách]_F cho cô ấy.
  b. Nam tặng **mỗi** [túi xách]_F cho cô ấy.
  c. Nam tặng [túi xách]_F cho cô ấy **thôi**.
  Nam only give only handbag to her SFP.only
  (a-c): 'Nam only gave a *handbag* (but not flowers) to her.'

(6) Association with indirect objects (Christmas party-6, n=24)
  a. Nam **chỉ** tặng hoa cho [cô ấy]_F.
  b. Nam tặng hoa cho **mỗi** [cô ấy]_F.
  c. Nam tặng hoa cho [cô ấy]_F **thôi**.
  Nam only give flower to only her SFP.only
  (a-c): 'Nam gave flowers only to *her* (but not other girls).'

- ***Thôi*** generally **cannot** associate with **a subject focus**, unless with other focus particles and/or *có* 'have', as in (7).
  - For some speakers, the subject focus with singleton *thôi* is improved when the subject has a numeral (e.g., *một người* 'one person'), which facilitates a scalar reading.
  - Similarly, answers to a subject *wh*-question also improve the judgment. (*data not shown*)

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2. Before the discussion, it is important to distinguish the *thôi* under discussion from other non-exclusive-focus uses, such as marking imperatives and agreement with concession as in (i).

(i) a. Đi **thôi**! (imperative)
  go SFP
  'Let's go!'

b. Làm thế cũng tốt **thôi**! (concessive agreement)
  do like.that also good SFP
  'I guess it's also fine to do it this way.' (Tran 2015:176)

(7) Association with subjects (Christmas party-5, n=24)
  a. **Chỉ** (có) Linh_F nói đồng ý.
  b. (Có) **mỗi** Linh_F nói đồng ý.
  c. #Linh_F nói đồng ý **thôi**.
  d. {**Chỉ**/ **có**/ **mỗi**} Linh_F nói đồng ý **thôi**.
  only have only Linh say agree SFP.only
  (a-b, d): 'Only *Linh* (but not other people) said yes.'
  (c): 'The only thing Linh did was to say yes.'; no intended Subj. focus reading

- ***Mỗi*** **cannot** be placed preverbally for association with **a VP focus**.

(8) Association with VPs (Christmas party-10, n=24)
  a. Nam nghĩ mình **chỉ** nên [_VP tặng hoa cho Linh]_F.
  b. *Nam nghĩ mình nên **mỗi** [_VP tặng hoa cho Linh]_F.
  c. Nam nghĩ mình nên [_VP tặng hoa cho Linh]_F **thôi**.
  Nam think self only should only give flowers to Linh SFP.only
  'Nam thinks that he should only give flowers to Linh (and should not give handbags to other girls).'

- ***Mỗi*** also **cannot** be placed **within a DP**, though it may associate with the NP inside.

(9) Nam chỉ đọc (**mỗi**) [mấy (***mỗi***) quyển (***mỗi***) tạp chí_F (***mỗi***) này],
  Nam only read only several only CL only magazine only this,
  không đọc những quyển sách này.
  not read PL CL book this
  'Nam read (only) these several magazines and did not read these books.'

- Interestingly, ***mỗi*** **cannot** occur with the **plural marker *những***.
  (see Cao 2025 and this workshop for *những*)
  - While I do not have a full explanation, I observe that when *những* is used with a numeral, it triggers a surprise/"higher than expectation" reading.
  - I speculate that it conflicts with *mỗi*'s "lower than expectation" reading (see Appendix).

(10) *Nam chỉ đọc **mỗi** [những quyển tạp chí_F này].
  Nam only read only PL CL magazine this
  Int.: 'Nam only read these magazines (and did not read these books).'

(11) [I thought Nam would only read one or even no magazines, but he read several/three.]
  Nam đọc [những ba/mấy quyển tạp chí]!
  Nam read PL three/several CL magazine
  'Nam read three/several magazines! (more than what I expected!)'

2.2   More on the syntax of *thôi*

❶ **Embeddability under CPs**

- Natural to be embedded in doubling (with *chỉ*), less so when occurring alone.

(12)   Embedding *thôi* in relative clauses
[Học sinh mà ??(**chỉ**) đọc sách tiếng Anh **thôi**]   (thì) không thích giáo viên đó.
student REL only   read book English SFP.only TOP NEG   like teacher   that
'The student who only reads English books doesn't like that teacher.'
a. *thôi*: mean=4.6/7, SD=1.39, n=20
b. *chỉ...thôi*: mean=6.45/7, SD=0.89, n=20

(13)   Embedding *thôi* in subject clauses
[Việc (mà) Nam ??(**chỉ**) đọc một cuốn sách **thôi**]   làm tôi ngạc nhiên.
fact REL Nam only   read one CL   book SFP.only make 1SG surprised
'The fact that Nam read only one book surprised me.'
a. *thôi*: mean=5.1/7, SD=1.21, n=20
b. *chỉ...thôi*: mean=6.7/7, SD=0.73, n=20

(14)   Embedding *thôi* in adverbial clauses
[Nếu con ??(**chỉ**) ăn thịt bò **thôi**],   thì mẹ   sẽ   đánh con.
if   2SG only   eat beef SFP.only TOP mother FUT hit   2SG
'If you only eat beef, your mum will beat you up.'
a. *thôi*: mean=5.1/7, SD=1.59, n=20
b. *chỉ...thôi*: mean=6.8/7, SD=0.83, n=20

❷ **Co-occurrence with TAM elements**

- *Thôi* follows **sentence-final modal *được***
  – Lower than TP (e.g., Duffield 1999; Simpson 2001; Simpson and Pham 2026; Trang Phan 2023)

(15)   *Thôi* follows sentence-final modal *được*
Ông Quang mua một cái điện thoại được **thôi**/ ***thôi**   được.
Mr. Quang buy one CL phone   can SFP.only SFP.only can
'Quang could only buy one mobile phone.'

- Interestingly, *thôi* cannot co-occur with **past tense *đã*** and **sentence-final perfect aspect *rồi* 'already'**
  – T head (or moved from Asp) (e.g., Duffield 2017; Trang Phan 2023)

(16)   *Thôi* cannot co-occur with *đã* and *rồi*

a. *Nam đã   mua sách **thôi**.
Nam PAST buy book SFP.only
Int.: 'Nam only bought (the) book(s).'

b. *Nam mua sách rồi   **thôi**/ **thôi**   rồi.
Nam buy book already SFP.only/ SFP.only already
Int.: 'Nam only already bought (the) book(s).'

❸ **Flexible ordering with high SFPs**

- Background: Cartographic syntax of SFPs in Vietnamese (Le 2014, also Trần Phan 2024)

(17)   The cartography of SFPs in Vietnamese (Le 2014)
DiscourseP > MoodP > DeikP (for demonstrative SFPs) > ForceP (=CP) > TP

- Demonstrative SFPs such as *đấy* 'lit. that' are at DeikP
  – Emphatically asserts the proposition and brings out a sense of "persuading" the addressee (Nguyen 2021a, 2021b)

- (18a): *Thôi* may precede *đấy* and take narrow scope under it.

- (18b): However, it can also follow *đấy*!

(18)   *Thôi* may precede or follow SFP *đấy*

a.   Đến tôi đây quần quật suốt ngày, đã   ốm cà xác   mà cũng chỉ
even I   here toil whole   day, PAST sick exhausted MA also   only
được có   ba   lưng **thôi** *đấy* ...
get   have three back SFP.only SFP
'Even if I worked hard for a whole day and ruined my body, I still only got three bowls.'   (Vo 2012:129)

b.   Ấy   tôi chỉ được có bốn sóc   cua hai xu   với   mọt mẹt
INTERJ I   only get   have four basket crab two cent with one tray
tôm   riu năm xu là bảy **đấy** thôi.
shrimp small five cent COP seven SFP SFP.only
'I only earned two cents for four crabs, five cents for a bunch of shrimps, and in total just seven cents.'   (Vo 2012:129)

- SFP *mà* is high up at MoodP (Le 2014, see also Trần Phan 2024)
  – Usually reconfirms a fact that is previously known but it is not clear whether addressee believes it, as in (19).

- Again, *thôi* may either precede or follow *mà* in (20).

(19) Anh ấy biết   e-mail của chị   **mà**.
      he   know e-mail of   yours SFP.
      '(As you know), he knows your email.' (Felicitous in a context where the listener
      believes that a third person does not know their email)   (Le 2014:78)

(20) *Thôi* may precede or follow SFP *mà*

  a. Tôi làm trong chớp mắt là   xong **thôi**   mà.
      1SG do in   blink eye COP finish SFP.only SFP
      'I finished it just in the blink of an eye.'   (Vo 2012:130)

  b. Trước kia cha   thương mẹ   chín, mười thì bây giờ chỉ   còn
      before time father love   mother nine ten TOP now   only remain
      bốn năm mà **thôi**.
      four five SFP SFP.only
      'In the past, father loved mother nine or ten out of ten; now it's only four or
      five.'   (Vo 2012:101)

- Outermost elements like question tag *phải không* 'right?': *thôi* can only precede it.

(21) *Thôi* precedes question tag *phải không*
      Bạn có   hai quyển sách **thôi**   phải không/ *phải không **thôi**?
      2SG have two CL   book SFP.only right not   right not   SFP.only
      'You have two books only, right?'

- I propose that ***thôi*** can either project an **outer FP above MoodP**, or
  an **inner FP below TP** (FP = focus related)

➔ It is not rare to have SFPs projecting on different positions
  – E.g., Cantonese SFP *sin1* 'lit. first': Inner eventive use vs. outer speech act use[3]
    (Tang 2006, see also Tang 2013 for sentence-final perfect aspect *laa1/3* in Cantonese and *le* in
    Mandarin.)
  – See also Erlewine (2017a) for a view that SFPs project on CP or vP phase edges

➔ It is also not rare to have focus in clause-external and clause-internal positions.
  – E.g., Focus in the low periphery in Italian (Belletti 2001, 2004, cf. "high" periphery in Rizzi
    1997), 'even'-focus in Cantonese and Mandarin (Badan and Del Gobbo 2015; Cheung 2015),
    object focalization in Mandarin (Chen 2023, 2025 and references therein), etc.

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3. The two *sin1* may even co-occur, as in (i).

(i) [[Keoi sik **sin1**] mei6 **sin1**]?   [Cantonese]
     3SG eat SFP   SFP SFP
     '(Answer me first:) has s/he eaten first?'   (Tang 2006:230)

- **Inner *thôi*: low periphery**
  ... TP > **FP** > AspP ...
  – Cannot associate with subjects
  – Can be embedded
  – Blocks Asp-to-T movement
    ➔ cannot occur with *đã/rồi*
  – Ordered before high SFPs (e.g., *mà*)

- **Outer *thôi*: high periphery**
  ... DiscourseP > **FP** > MoodP > ... > TP ...
  – Can associate with subjects
  – Cannot be embedded
  – Ordered after high SFPs (e.g., *mà*)

- **Interim summary**:

(22) The syntax of adverbial *chi* 'only'
      [CP Δ [TP Δ [vP Δ [VP Δ [V' V ☒*Δ☒ Obj ☒*Δ☒ ...
           ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
      *Flexible adjunction sites of **chi***

(23) The syntax of adfocal *mỗi* 'only' (gray = optional projection)
      [QP ***mỗi*** [DP [NumP [ClP NP]]]F]

(24) The syntax of SFP *thôi* 'only'
      [DiscourseP ... **[FP-outer *thôi*** [MoodP ... [DeikP ... [ForceP/CP ... [TP ... **[FP-inner *thôi*** [AspP ...

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3 Locality and intervention in exclusive doubling

3.1 Differences in locality effects

- In English (25), adfocal *only* embedded under the attitude verb *know* may take:
  – **Narrow scope** under the verb (=a)
  – **Wide scope** over the verb (=b) (Taglicht 1984; Rooth 1985, *i.a.*)

(25) I knew [(that) he had learnt **only** SPANISH_F].   (Taglicht 1984:150)
  a. I knew that he had only learnt *Spanish*, i.e., hadn't learnt any other language.
      (Narrow scope: knew>only)
  b. I only knew that he had learnt *Spanish*, i.e., didn't know about any other language.
      (Wide scope: only>knew)

- In (26), adfocal *mỗi* also allows both **narrow and wide scope** readings.

- To disambiguate, *chi* may be added to the corresponding scope positions.

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

(26) Adfoc Doubling across finite CP boundaries in Vietnamese

a. Thầy giáo biết [$_{CP}$ là   Nam (**chỉ**) học **mỗi**   [tiếng Pháp]$_F$] (và

teacher know   COMP Nam only study PRT.only French   and

biết Nam không học   tiếng Anh).

know Nam not   study English

'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

(không biết   Nam có   học   tiếng Anh).

not   know Nam have study English

'The teacher only knows that Nam took French (, and doesn't know that Nam

took English).'   (Wide scope: only>know)

• The **wide scope reading** is blocked across a **syntactic island**.

• In (27), adfocal *mỗi* is embedded in a **complex NP island (CNPI)** within a noun

complement clause:

– (27a): Wide scope of *mỗi* unavailable; must be interpreted inside the island.

– (27b): Adding *chỉ* to the matrix clause yields a **multiple-'only'** reading.

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

(27) 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

(#không biết   Nam có   học   tiếng Anh)

not   know Nam have study English

'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

(#không biết   Nam có   học   tiếng Anh)

not   know Nam have study English

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)

• Testing SFP Doubling requires a baseline with matrix IO placed after embedded CP.

– Marked (as compared to V-IO-CP) but acceptable for almost all of my consultants.

(28) Baseline: Association with embedded DO with a V-CP-IO word order

a. Kim **chỉ** nói [$_{CP}$ là   Mai đọc [tiểu thuyết]$_F$] với thầy giáo.

Kim only say   COMP Mai read novel   to teacher

'Kim only told the teacher that Mai read *novels* (and didn't say that Mai also

read textbooks).'   (Wide scope: only>told) (mean=6.5/7, SD=0.92, n=18)

b. Kim nói [$_{CP}$ là   Mai **chỉ** đọc [tiểu thuyết]$_F$] với thầy giáo.

Kim say   COMP Mai only read novel   to teacher

'Kim told the teacher that Mai only read novels (and also said that Mai didn't

read textbooks).' (Narrow scope: told>only) (mean=6.39/7, SD=0.92, n=18)

• In (29), *thôi* is in the matrix clause, associating with the embedded DO focus

(Some speakers (n=5, out of 18) only got a matrix IO focus reading ➜ irrelevant)

– (29a): Only wide scope possible (only > told) (n=13)

– (29b): Embedded *chỉ* ➜ multi-'only' reading for most speakers (n=10, out of 13)

➜ SFP Doubling **cannot** occur across **finite CP boundaries**.

(29) SFP Doubling is banned across finite CPs

a. Kim nói [$_{CP}$ là   Mai đọc [tiểu thuyết]$_F$ với thầy giáo **thôi**.

Kim say   COMP Mai read novels   to teacher SFP.only

ONLY: 'Kim only told the teacher that Mai read *novels*.'

(Wide scope: only>told) (mean=5/7, SD=2.43, n=18)

NOT: 'Kim told the teacher that Mai read only *novels*.'

(Narrow scope: told>only) (mean=2.56/7, SD=1.7, n=18)

b. Kim nói [$_{CP}$ là   Mai **chỉ** đọc [tiểu thuyết]$_F$ với thầy giáo **thôi**.

Kim say   COMP Mai only read novels   to teacher SFP.only

ONLY: 'Kim only said *this* to the teacher, which is that Mai only read *novels*.'

(Multi-'only': only>told>only) (n=10, out of 13)

• (30): Interestingly, *chỉ...thôi* doubling is possible across coordinated VPs, which are

islands smaller than CPs

➜ SFP Doubling **can** occur across (non-clausal) **syntactic islands**.

(30) SFP Doubling across coordinated structures

Nam **[** [$_{VP}$ (**chỉ**) ăn gà rán$_F$] và [$_{VP}$ **chỉ** uống cô ca$_F$] **]** **thôi**

Nam   only eat fried.chicken and   only drink coke   SFP.only

'Nam (only) ate fried chicken and only drank coke.'

3.2   Differences in intervention effects

- With a modal, *mỗi* (in-situ) is **scopally ambiguous**, like English.
  - The scope can be disambiguated by the placement of *chỉ*. (See also Sun 2020, 2021)

➔   In other words, **modals** do **not** trigger intervention effects (IEs) to Adfoc Doubling.

(31)   Adfoc Doubling with modals   (n=19)

i. Context for narrow scope: [This is a wine tasting day. Everyone must bring wine. No other alcohols are allowed. You know Nam will attend the event.]

ii. Context for wide scope: [This is Nam's graduation day. Although everyone is supposed to bring at least two drinks, Nam is the one who graduates so he is free from this limitation. You know that Nam likes wine.]

a.   Nam <u>có thể</u> mang **mỗi** [rượu vang]_F.

Nam may   bring only wine

i. It is allowed that Nam only brings wine.' (though he can also bring other
alcohols)   (◇>only)

ii. 'Nam can only bring wine.' (he cannot bring whisky etc.)   (only>◇)

b.   Nam <u>có thể</u> **chỉ** mang **mỗi** [rượu vang]_F.

Nam may   only bring only wine

i. It is allowed that Nam only brings wine.'   (◇>only)

c.   Nam **chỉ** <u>có thể</u> mang **mỗi** [rượu vang]_F.

Nam only may   bring only wine

ii. 'Nam can only bring wine.'   (only>◇)

- Similarly, Adfoc Doubling across a negation is possible.

➔   **Negation** also does **not** trigger IEs to Adfoc Doubling.

(32)   Adfoc Doubling with negation

a.   *Narrow scope under negation*   (¬>only) (Christmas party-8, n=20)

i.   Nam <u>không</u> **chỉ** tặng túi xách cho   [CÔ ẤY]_F.

ii. Nam <u>không</u>   tặng túi xách cho **mỗi** [CÔ ẤY]_F.

iii. Nam <u>không</u> **chỉ** tặng túi xách cho **mỗi** [CÔ ẤY]_F.

Nam not   only give handbag to   only her

'Nam did not only give a handbag to *her* (but he also gave one to Giang).'

b.   *Wide scope over negation*   (only>¬)

Nam **chỉ** <u>không</u> học **mỗi** [tiếng Pháp]_F.

Nam only not   learn only French

'Nam only does not learn French (i.e., French is not learnt).'

- *Thôi*, however, cannot take narrow scope under a (plain) negation *không*.
- SFP Doubling across a negation is not possible too.

➔   **Negation** triggers **IEs** to SFP Doubling.

(33)   SFP Doubling with an intervening negation   (¬>only) (Karaoke-12, n=9)

a.   Nam [<u>không</u> **chỉ** tặng túi xách cho [cô ấy]_F].   (mean=7/7, SD=0)

b. # Nam [<u>không</u>   tặng túi xách cho [cô ấy]_F] **thôi**.   (mean=1.7/7, SD=1.38)

c. * Nam [<u>không</u> **chỉ** tặng túi xách cho [cô ấy]_F] **thôi**. (mean=3.15/7, SD=2.56)

Nam not   only give handbag to   her   SFP.only

Int. (a-c): 'Nam did not only give a handbag to *her* (but also gave one to Giang).'

(b): ONLY: 'Nam only did not give a handbag to *her* (but gave one to everyone else)'

- The same is observed with modals.

➔   **Modals** trigger **IEs** to SFP Doubling.

(34)   SFP Doubling with an intervening modal

a.   Nam [<u>có thể</u> **chỉ** học   [tiếng Pháp]_F].

b. # Nam [<u>có thể</u>   học   [tiếng Pháp]_F] **thôi**.

c. * Nam [<u>có thể</u> **chỉ** học   [tiếng Pháp]_F] **thôi**.

Nam may   only learn French   SFP.only

Int. (a-c): 'It is allowed that Nam only learns *French*.' (he may also learn German)

(b): ONLY: 'Nam can only learn *French*.' (but not German)

- Subject quantifiers do not trigger IEs to SFP Doubling.
  - As expected if inner *thôi* is lower than SpecTP.

(35)   SFP Doubling with a negative quantifier subject

<u>Không có ai</u> [**chỉ** nộp   một bản tóm tắt   **thôi**].

NEG have who only submit one CL   summary SFP.only

'No one only submits one abstract.' (everyone submits two)

- **Interim summary**:

| Properties	Adfoc Doubling	SFP Doubling
Across CP clauses	✔	✘
Across syntactic islands	✘	✔
IEs by negation	✘	✔
IEs by modals	✘	✔

Table 1: Differences in locality and intervention effects in exclusive doubling

4   A syntactic account

- I propose that the two types of exclusive doubling involve different syntactic dependencies with different features.

(36) a. <u>Adfoc Doubling</u>: **(c)overt movement** triggered by focus **[Foc] features**

   b. <u>SFP Doubling</u>: **Agree** with exclusive **[Excl] features**

- Anticipating a compositional semantic analysis ... (in the Appendix)
   - Only *chỉ*, or its null counterpart OP$_{EXCL}$, carries exclusive semantics
   - Neither *mỗi* nor *thôi* is semantically exclusive (the operator-particle approach, Quek and Hirsch 2017; Sun 2021; Branan and Erlewine 2023, *i.a.*; see arguments in Yip 2025a, 2025b)
   - ➜ They are **scalar** particles instead! (see Appendix, also Hole 2017; Yip 2026; *cf.* Yip 2024)
   - ➜ The form-meaning mismatch problem is also resolved

4.1   Adfoc Doubling as (c)overt movement

- A focus feature [Foc] ➜ relevant for focus (alternatives)
- An exclusive feature [Excl] ➜ maps onto an exclusive operator

(37) <u>The featural composition</u>

   a. *mỗi*: [uExcl:_ , uFoc:_]

   b. Foc: [uExcl:_ , iFoc:+]

   c. *chỉ*/OP$_{EXCL}$: [iExcl:+ , uFoc:_]

- The syntactic derivation of Adfoc Doubling:

① Adfocal *mỗi* first moves to FocP as triggered by [Foc]

② Then *mỗi* Agrees locally with *chỉ* or its null counterpart OP$_{EXCL}$ in [Excl]

   ➜ Singleton *mỗi* cases always have OP$_{EXCL}$ which contributes exclusivity

(38) <u>The syntactic derivation of Adfoc Doubling</u>

① *Focus movement (overt/covert)*
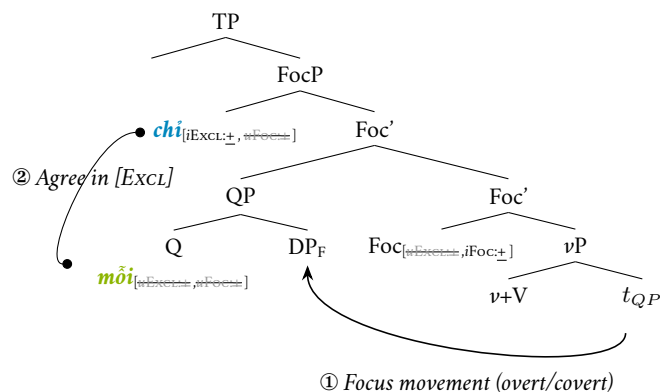
- I assume that movement copies may be pronounced in the highest position or the lowest (Pronounce Lower Copy in Bošković and Nunes 2007) ➜ overt/covert movement
   - The overt mvt. (ex-situ) case: to be discussed (see also Hole 2017; Sun 2020, 2021)
   - The covert mvt. ("in-situ") case is comparable to covert *wh*-movement in *wh*-in-situ languages like Coptic Egyptian (Reintges 2007) or Mongolian (Fong 2019).
      - ➜ NOT simply Agree in [ONLY] and/or [SCAL] (*pace* Quek and Hirsch 2017; Hole 2017)
- **Locality effects** follow:
   - A'-movement can be long-distance (in a successive-cyclic fashion)
      - ➜ wide scope across finite CPs
   - Movement is subject to island effects ➜ no wide scope across islands

(39) <u>Scopal ambiguity</u>

   a. [$_{CP1}$ ... **EXCL**/**chỉ** Foc [$_{VP1}$ V$_{matrix}$ [$_{CP2}$ ... [$_{VP2}$ **mỗi**-DP$_F$ ...   *Wide scope*

   b. [$_{CP1}$ ... [$_{VP1}$ [V$_{matrix}$ [$_{CP2}$ ... **EXCL**/**chỉ** Foc [$_{VP2}$ ... **mỗi**-DP$_F$ ...   *Narrow scope*

(40) <u>No wide scope reading across islands</u>

   [$_{CP1}$ ... **EXCL**/**chỉ** Foc [$_{VP1}$ V$_{matrix}$ ... [$_{island}$ ... [$_{VP2}$ **mỗi**-DP$_F$]] ...   **Wide scope*

- **(Non-)IEs** as **feature-based Relativized Minimality** (fRM) (Rizzi 2001, 2004)

(41) <u>Feature-based Relativized Minimality (fRM)</u>

   X   ...   Z   ...   Y

   [Qu] ... [Qu] ... [Qu]

- With a crucial refinement: **separating [Foc] from [Qu(antificational)]**

   (*Cf.* evidence from Cantonese universal concord by Yip 2022 & verb doubling by T. T.-M. Lee 2024)

   - [Qu:Excl]: same class as negation [Qu:Neg] and modals [Qu:Modal]
   - [Foc]: a different class

(42) <u>The proposed superfeatures in Vietnamese</u>

   a. [A]: [D] (cf. Lee and Yip 2024; Phan and Chou 2025)

   b. [Qu]: *Wh*-adverbs, Neg, measure, focus *operators*, modals, quantified DPs

   c. [Foc]: *Wh*-nominals, focus *associates*, doubled verbs

   d. [Mod]: evaluative, epistemic, Neg, frequentative, celerative, measure, manner, ...

   e. [Top]

➜ No IEs by Qu-elements on the movement path

(43)   No intervention effects by Qu-elements   *Wide scope over* NEG/MOD

   [...chỉ[Qu:EXCL,Foc] **Foc**[Qu:EXCL,**Foc**] [ZP[Qu:NEG/MOD] [VP2 **mỗi**[Qu:EXCL,**Foc**]-DP_F ...

- Since *mỗi* still agrees with *chỉ* in [Qu:EXCL] after movement ...
- Prediction: No Qu-elements may intervene between **overtly** moved *mỗi* and *chỉ*
  - *Mỗi* can be overtly moved, accompanied by scalar adverb *mới* 'just/only if' (Hole 2017).
  - Landing site determines scope (Sun 2020), i.e., the position of *chỉ*/OP_EXCL

➜ Borne out below!

(44)   a. *Nam **chỉ** không [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] (mới) nói   *t*_QP.   (only>¬)
          Nam only not   only English   just speak
          Int.: 'Nam only does not speak *English*. (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)'

       b. Nam **chỉ** [QP **mỗi** [tiếng Anh]_F] mới không nói   *t*_QP.   (only>¬)
          Nam only   only English   just not speak
          'Nam only does not speak *English*. (He speaks German and Vietnamese.)'

(45)   Intervention effects by Qu-elements   *Wide scope over* NEG/MOD

   *[...**chỉ**[Qu:EXCL,Foc] [ZP[Qu:NEG/MOD] [**mỗi**[Qu:EXCL,Foc]-DP_F Foc[Qu:EXCL,Foc] [VP2 *t* ...

4.2   SFP Doubling as syntactic Agree

- I propose that SFP doubling involves **syntactic Agree only**, without movement triggered by [Foc].
- Following Quek and Hirsch (2017), Sun (2021), and Yip (2025b), I suggest the agreeing feature is designated for exclusive operators, labeled as **[EXCL]**.
- I also assume with Baker (2008) that Agree can be downward or upward.
  - Downward in SFP Doubling vs. Upward in Adfoc Doubling

(46)   The syntactic derivation of SFP Doubling
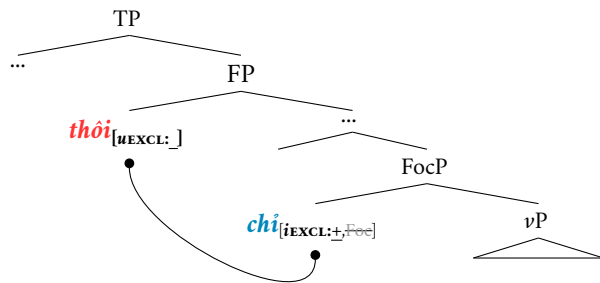
- **Intervention effects** follow:
  - The lack of narrow scope under quantificational elements like modals and negation is a result of fRM

(47)   Intervention effects by Qu-elements

   *[FP **thôi**[Qu:EXCL:_] [AspP ... ZP[Qu:NEG/MOD] ... [chỉ[iQu:EXCL,Foc] ....

- **Locality effects** also follow:
  - Agree is subject to the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) (Chomsky 2000)
    ➜ cannot apply across **phases** (finite clauses)
  - It may apply across an **non-phasal island** boundary
    ➜ Just like closest conjunct agreement

(48)   No narrow scope across finite CPs

   *[FP **thôi**[uQu:EXCL] ... [VP1 V_matrix [CP=phase ... [chỉ[iQu:EXCL,Foc] ...

5   Conclusion

> **Summary of the talk**
>
> - Empirically, I provided novel data to show that Adfocal Doubling and SFP Doubling in Vietnamese are **not uniform**:
>   - Contrast in (i) locality and (ii) intervention effects
> - I argued that they involve different dependencies and features:
>   - Adfocal Doubling: **covert movement** triggered by a focus **[Foc] feature**
>   - SFP Doubling: **Agree** depenedency triggered by an exclusive **[Excl] feature**
> - I also discussed how [Foc] should be separated from [Qu] in fRM.

- This is **only** half of the story ...
  - The operator-particle approach posits that Adfoc particles are semantically vacuous
➜ But *mỗi* has **focus-sensitive, scalar** contribution (Hole 2017), so as *thôi*! (see Appendix)
  - How two focus-sensitive operators can associate with the same focus is a non-trivial issue in Alternative Semantics (see Erlewine 2025 for recent discussion)
  ➜ **See my dissertation (Yip 2026) for a complete semantic account** ☺

6   Appendix: Another half of the story

Scalarity in exclusive doubling

- As argued for by Hole (2017), *mỗi* is linked to scalarity. I provide a range of tests to verify this claim, and extend them to *thôi*.

(49)   a.   Contextual (non-)salience of excluded alternatives

    b.   Listing scenarios

    c.   Equal-to-expectation vs. lower-than-expectation readings

    d.   **Superlatives**: upper bound vs. lower bound on a scale (reported below)   (...)

- Only the superlative test is provided here. For other tests, see Yip (2026).

(50)   A superlative test with the upper bound in Vietnamese   (n=13 for a,c; n=14 for b)

[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)

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

c.#Em ấy   làm   [bài tập   khó   nhất]$_F$ **thôi** (mean=5.77/7, SD=1.48)

    3sg   only do only assignment difficult most only

(a-c): 'He only does the hardest assignment'; (b) *mỗi* ↝ a "not enough" reading

(51)   A superlative test with the lower bound in Vietnamese   (n=13 for a,c; n=14 for b)

[Same school as (50). You ask a teacher who is the worst student. S/he answered: Nam, because ...]

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

b.   Em ấy   làm **mỗi** [bài tập   dễ   nhất]$_F$ (mean=6.64/7, SD=1.08)

c.   Em ấy   làm   [bài tập   dễ   nhất]$_F$ **thôi** (mean=6.77/7, SD=0.6)

    3sg   only do only assignment easy most only

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

- Note that Hole (2017) argues that the scalarity in Adfoc 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.

(52)   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.' ↝ Nam is on his way to 80

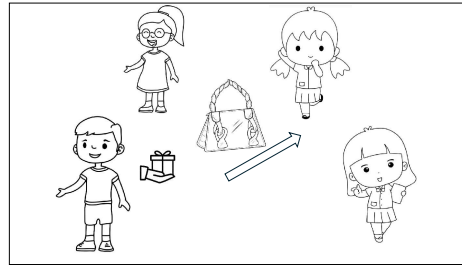*Mỗi*: 'Nam got merely 70 points.' ↝ very low, as compared to 80

A scalar focus approach

- Only *chi* carries at-issue exclusiveness

- Both *mỗi* and *thôi* carry not-at-issue scalarity
    - *Mỗi*: two-place scalar operator
    - *Thôi*: one-place propositional scalar operator

(53) $[\![chi/\text{EXCL}]\!](C_i) = \lambda p_{st} \lambda w_s$ **AI:** $\forall q[(q \in C_i \wedge q(w)) \rightarrow p \subseteq q]$

                  NAI: $p(w)$

(54) $[\![thôi]\!](C_i) = \lambda r_{st} \lambda w_s.$

    AI: $r(w)$; where r is a proposition returned by exclusive operators

    NAI: $\exists p, q \in C_i[(r \cap q = \varnothing \wedge r \cap p \neq \varnothing) \rightarrow p <_s q]$

(55) $[\![mỗi]\!](C_i) = \lambda x_e \lambda P_{\langle e,st \rangle} \lambda w.$ **AI:** $P(x)(w)$

    NAI: $P(x) \in C_i \wedge \forall q \in C_i[P(x) \nsubseteq q \rightarrow P(x) <_s q]$

- Extending Yip (2024)'s approach, I propose there is only one dependency in doubling: **co-indexation of the quantificational domains** between scalar & exclusive particles. (i.e., Roothian C_i variable of a contextually determined alternative set, Rooth 1992)

(56)   Co-indexation of alternatives in exclusive doubling in Vietnamese

a. $[_{TP/vP} ... [_{FocP}$ **chi**$(C_i) \sim C_i [_{QP}$ **mỗi**(C_i) DP$_F]$ Foc $[_{TP/vP} ... \Delta_{QP} ...]]$

                Agree in indices   *Adfoc Doubling*

b. $[_{TP} ... [_{FP\text{-inner}}$ **thôi**$(C_i) [_{AspP} ... [_{vP}$ **chi**$(C_i) [\sim C_i [_{vP} p]]]]]]$

                Agree in indices   *SFP Doubling*

- With the semantics above, the co-indexation of alternatives derives a radical immediate scope constraint between the exclusive and the scalar operators.
    ➜ *mỗi*-QP must move to immediately below *chi* without intervening Qu-elements
    ➜ *thôi* must be immediately above *chi* without intervening Qu-elements

(57)   The radical immediate scope constraint

a.   Let the exclusive proposition (EXCL p) be r, alt. propositions excluded by *chi* be q (i.e., [EXCL $p] \models \neg q$), and {the prejacent of *thôi*/ the proposition formed by *mỗi*-QP} be s.

b.   No elements α may intervene between *chi* & *thôi*/*mỗi*-QP (i.e., takes r & returns s), s.t.: (i) r does not entail s ($r \nsubseteq s$) and (ii) there is no q incompatible with s ($\neg \exists q[q \cap s = \varnothing]$)

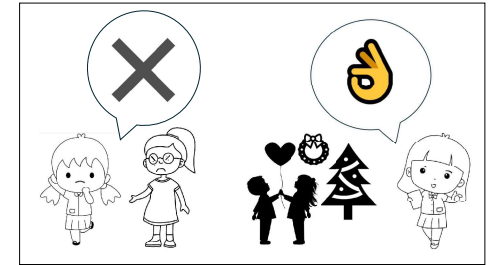- See Yip (2024, 2026) for the semantic composition.
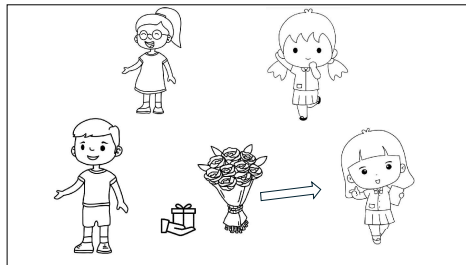
Christmas Party
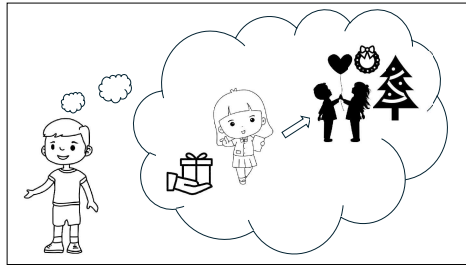
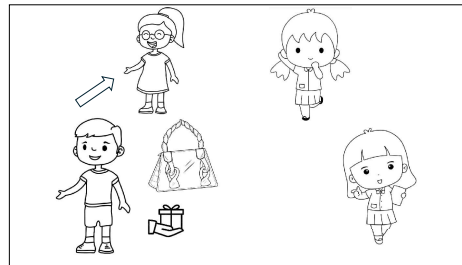[1] Nam plans to give a gift to a girl for inviting her to a Christmas party.

[2] Nam gave flowers to Linh.

[3] Nam gave a handbag to Giang.

[4] Nam also gave a handbag to Tuyết.

[5] Only Linh said yes. Both Giang and Tuyết said no.
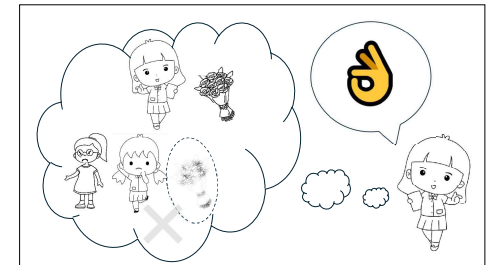
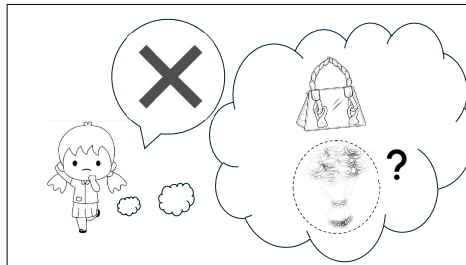[6] Linh say yes because Nam only gave flowers to HER, but not to Giang or Tuyết.

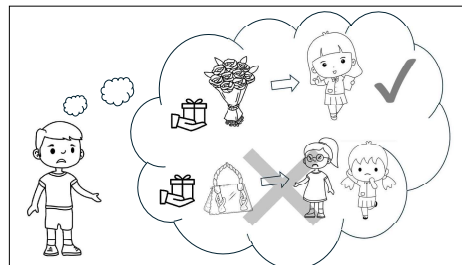[7] Giang said no because Nam only gave a HANDBAG to her, but not flowers.

[8] Tuyết said no because Nam did not only gave a handbag to HER, but he also gave one to Giang.

[9] Nam thinks he wasted money on buying the handbags.

[10] Nam thinks that he should have only given flowers to Linh. He should not have given the handbags to Giang and Tuyết.

1

2

3

4

5

Karaoke

1 Minh's two little sisters want to come with him to Karaoke tonight.

2 The older little sister Châu is already 18 year old.

3 The younger little sister Kim is only 10 year old.
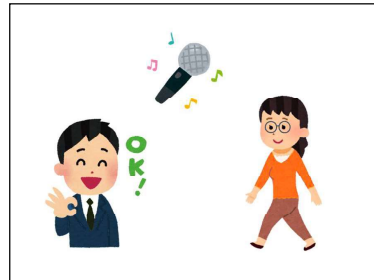
4 Minh says: Châu, you can come with me.

5 Kim, you cannot. You are only a child!

6 Kim is sad, but she does not cry. She only watches her older brother and sister walk out.

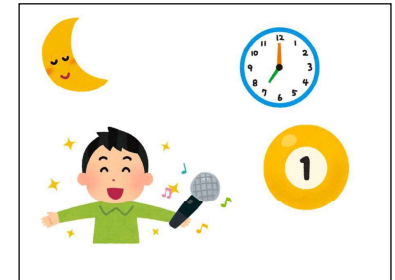7 They arrive at the Karaoke. Minh's friend Phong is already there.

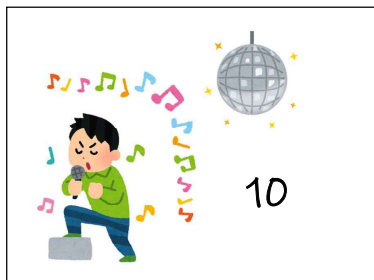8 Phong says: We only have one hour.

9 Minh, you can only sing three songs!

10 Châu, you also can only sing three songs!

11 However, Phong himself sang ten songs.

12 Minh says: You did not only sing three!

13 Phong says: I never said I cannot sing more than three songs!

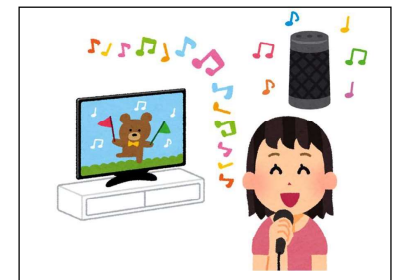14 Minh and Châu are very angry, but the time is already up.
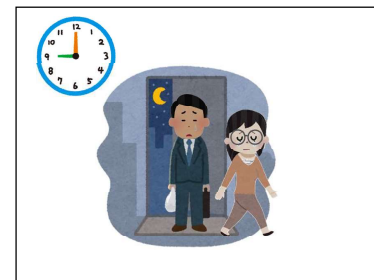
15 Minh and Châu return home sadly.

16 Guess what? Kim is using the TV as a karaoke to sing!

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