

# Multiple Focus in Hindi-Urdu<sup>1</sup>

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- Bound focus readings involving association with a distant focus<sup>2</sup> show that *sirf* and other adverbial focus particles can attach on the clausal spine.
- There is a subject versus non-subject asymmetry with respect to the bound readings.
- Multiple focus particles in a single construction can give rise to both single and multiple exclusive readings. The interaction of postpositional and adverbial focus particles raises the question of when single exclusive meanings are available and necessary.
- The class of adverbial focus particles is non-uniform - *sirf* and *bās* differ in their syntactic distribution and associated meanings.

## 1. Introduction

Focus particles corresponding to *only* in Hindi-Urdu

### A. Postpositional - *hi*

- (1) [rita]<sub>F</sub>hi ayi  
Rita only come.perf.fs  
'Only RITA came.'

### B. Adverbial - *sirf, bās, kewal, matr, khali*

- (2) **sirf/ bās/khali/kewal/matr** [rita]<sub>F</sub> ayi  
only Rita come.perf.fs  
'Only RITA came.'

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Transcriptions and glosses have been unified.

<sup>2</sup> All usages of 'focus' in this paper refer to big/contrastive FOCUS

## 2. Only (Rooth 1992, Chierchia 2013)

- Bidimensional semantics for focus – an expression  $\phi$  has two semantic values:

- (3) a. Ordinary semantic value  $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^O$   
 b. Focus value  $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^F$

- (4)  $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^F =$  the set of values of the same type as  $\phi = \{ \llbracket \phi \rrbracket, \llbracket \psi \rrbracket, \dots \}$

- (5)  $\llbracket Rita_F left \rrbracket^F = \{ \llbracket Rita left \rrbracket, \llbracket Mary left \rrbracket, \dots \}$

Informally,  $\{x left\}$

- The Focus value identifies the set  $C$  serving as a domain of quantification. The alternatives provided are utilized by focus sensitive operators to enrich the meaning of an expression. Thus, the contribution of *only* is to say that the asserted proposition is the only true member of the relevant set of alternatives.

- (6)  $\forall p [p \in C \wedge p \rightarrow p = \phi]$  (Rooth 1992)

- (7)  $\forall p \in C [p \rightarrow \phi \subseteq p]$  (Chierchia 2013)

## 3. Association at a distance:

- The sentence in (8), with *sirf* in the pre-IO position, can have different interpretations, summarized in (9), given different focus marked constituents and the relevant contexts.

- (8)
- |  |           |             |          |        |               |
|--|-----------|-------------|----------|--------|---------------|
|  | S         |             | IO       | DO     | V             |
|  | kabir-ne  | <b>sirf</b> | mary-ko  | kitabē | ḍī            |
|  | Kabir-erg | only        | Mary-dat | books  | give.perf.fsp |
- ‘Kabir only gave Mary the books.’

- (9) **Association at a distance preview**

Association with	Template	Surface string		See
immediately adjacent focus	<b>sirf</b> $X_F$	<b>sirf</b> [mary-ko] <sub>F</sub>	only MARY	10
focus across 1 intervening constituent	<b>sirf</b> $X Y_F$	<b>sirf</b> mary-ko [kitabē] <sub>F</sub>	only BOOKS	11
focus across 2 intervening constituents	<b>sirf</b> $X Y Z_F$	<b>sirf</b> mary-ko kitabē [ḍī] <sub>F</sub>	only GAVE	12

**Association with immediately adjacent focus**

(10) a. Context 1: Kabir had planned to give away many of his books to his friends since he was going to be moving. But finally he decided to give his books only to his closest friend Mary

- b. kabir-ne **sirf** [mary-ko]<sub>F</sub> kitabẽ dī  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 ‘Kabir gave the books only to MARY.’

**Association with focus across 1 intervening constituent**

(11) a. Context 2: Kabir had planned to give many of his belongings to his friend Mary for safekeeping as he was going to be travelling. But finally he realized that he didn’t trust her enough with his valuables and only gave her his books.

- b. kabir-ne **sirf** mary-ko [kitabẽ]<sub>F</sub> dī  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 ‘Kabir gave Mary only THE BOOKS.’

**Association with focus across 2 intervening constituents**

(12) a. Context 3: Kabir was part of a book exchange club. But he was a very forgetful person. He would often lend people books and then forget to ask for them back. This time it was his turn to lend Mary books.

- b. kabir-ne **sirf** mary-ko kitabẽ [dī]<sub>F</sub>  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 ‘Kabir only GAVE Mary the books.’

**Bound focus**

- ‘the focus operator has to c-command its focus.’ (Krifka 1992)
- *sirf* occurs on the clausal spine and associates with a focussed X<sup>0</sup>/XP in its c-command domain.

⇔ *clausal SIRF*

**Pre IO Clausal *sirf*<sup>3</sup>:**

- Given the c-command facts, it is predicted that clausal *sirf* in the pre-indirect object position will not be able to associate with subject focus -

(13) [Kabir-ne]<sub>F</sub> **sirf** mary-ko kitabẽ dī  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 \*'Only KABIR gave Mary the book.'

- This occurrence of *sirf* cannot associate with tense:

(14) Kabir-ne **sirf** mary-ko kitabẽ dī [thī]<sub>F</sub>  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp be.past.fp  
 \*'Kabir only HAD given Mary the book.'

- sirf*'s ability to associate with the DO, the IO and the (perfective) verb, but not subjects or tense (10-14) indicates that it occurs in the clausal spine below TP and above the minimal position that excludes the subject. Assuming subject movement to Spec TP, I take that to be vP.

**Subject focus**

- Association with subject focus requires a high *sirf* which c-commands it.

(15) **sirf** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F</sub> mary-ko kitabẽ dī  
 Only Kabir-erg mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 'Only KABIR gave Mary the book'

- Prediction – pre-subject *sirf* should be able to associate with any focussed X<sup>0</sup>/XP in its c-command domain.
- Instead, there is scope restriction of *sirf* to the subject position

<sup>3</sup> Pre DO clausal **sirf** exhibits the same c-command requirement for bound focus readings:

kabir-ne mary-ko **sirf** kitabẽ dī  
 Kabir-erg Mary-dat only books give.perf.fp  
 Kabir gave only BOOKS to Mary.  
 Kabir only GAVE books to Mary.  
 \*Kabir gave only MARY books./ \*only KABIR gave books to Mary.

- (16) **sirf** Kabir-ne [mary-ko]<sub>F</sub> kitabē dī  
 Only Kabir-erg mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 ‘\*Kabir gave only MARY the book.’

- Locality restrictions imposed by spell out of the vP phase ensure that the IO, DO and V are not accessible for distant association with the high *sirf*.
- *sirf* is a clausal adverb which can merge in two structural positions in the clausal spine: low (above vP) or high (above TP).

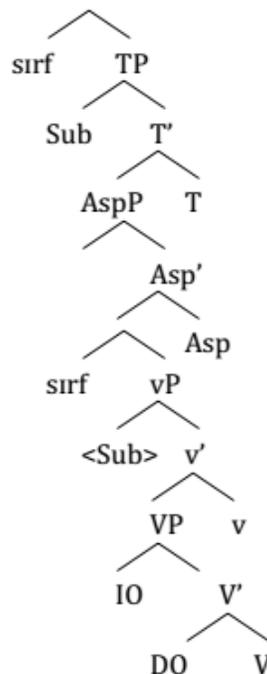


Figure 1. Two structural positions for *sirf*

- Alternative: clausal *sirf* cannot attach over the subject's surface position and the *sirf* preceding the subject is not clausal, and has a DP attachment instead.

### **hi – strict local association**

*hi* has a strictly local association with its sister (the X<sup>0</sup>/XP immediately preceding it linearly):

- (17) kabir-ne mary-ko kitabē **hi** dī  
 Kabir-erg Mary-dat books only give.perf.fp  
 ‘Kabir gave Mary only BOOKS.’  
 \*‘Kabir only GAVE Mary the books.’/ \*‘Kabir gave only MARY the books.’

## 4. Multiple Focus

- Multiple focus particles can occur within the same sentence:
  - a. Many occurrences of the postpositional particle *hi*<sup>4</sup>
  - b. Co-occurrence of adverbial and postpositional particles
  - c. Many occurrences of the adverbial particles
- Each of the focus particles associates with a different focussed constituent
 

⇔ Multiple exclusive meaning
- Many focus particles associate with a single focussed constituent
 

⇔ Single exclusive meaning

### 4.1 Adverbial and Postpositional particle combinations

#### (18) Adverbial+Postpositional preview

	Template	Surface string	Exclusive meaning	Example
a.	sirf X <sub>F</sub> hi	<b>sirf</b> [mary-ko] <sub>F</sub> <b>hi</b>	Single	19
b.	sirf X Y <sub>F</sub> hi	<b>sirf</b> mary-ko [kitabẽ] <sub>F</sub> <b>hi</b>	Single	23
c.	sirf <sub>1</sub> X <sub>F1</sub> Y <sub>F2</sub> hi <sub>2</sub>	<b>sirf</b> <sub>1</sub> [mary-ko] <sub>F1</sub> [kitabẽ] <sub>F2</sub> <b>hi</b> <sub>2</sub>	Multiple	24
d.	X <sub>F1</sub> hi <sub>1</sub> sirf <sub>2</sub> Y <sub>F2</sub>	[Kabir ne] <sub>F1</sub> <b>hi</b> <sub>1</sub> <b>sirf</b> <sub>2</sub> [mary ko] <sub>F2</sub>	Multiple	25

#### **sirf X<sub>F</sub> hi**

- *sirf* and *hi* 'can occur together on the same NP' (Bhatt 1994) so as to give a single exclusive meaning:

(19) rita-ne **sirf** [mary-ko]<sub>F</sub> **hi** kitabẽ dī  
 Rita-erg only Mary-dat only books give.perf.fs  
 'Rita gave only MARY books.'

<sup>4</sup> Bhatt(1994), Bajaj (2013) report that two *hi*'s in the same utterance lead to ungrammaticality. However, there is variation across speakers with respect to the acceptability of multiple *hi*'s in a sentence:

% [Ram ne]<sub>F1</sub>hi<sub>1</sub> [Sita ko]<sub>F2</sub> hi<sub>2</sub> dekha  
 Ram erg only Sita dat only see.perf.ms  
 Only Ram saw only Sita.

- *sirf* cannot associate with a distant focus across *hi* which functions as a scope marker

(20) \*rita-ne **sirf**<sub>2</sub> [mary-ko]<sub>F1</sub> **hi**<sub>1</sub> [kitabẽ]<sub>F2</sub> dī  
 Rita-erg only Mary-dat only books give.perf.fs  
 \*'Rita gave only MARY only books.'

#### *Analysing sirf X<sub>F</sub> hi*

- *hi* is a syntactic double for *sirf* (Verma 1971, Barbiers 2013, Chierchia 2013)

Syntactically, *hi* is a non-identical double for the focus particle *sirf* (or covert  $O_C$ ) which makes the focus variable salient and delimits its right edge. The focus operator would bind this focus variable.

- *hi* is an operator which takes narrow scope with respect to *sirf* (Bajaj 2013)

*Hi* is a truth-conditionally vacuous focus sensitive operator. It encodes two presuppositions – an exclusiveness presupposition and a scalar presupposition.

(21) scalar presupposition of *hi*:  $\forall p[[p \in C \wedge \neg(\phi=p)] \rightarrow \phi >_{\text{likely}} p]$

#### *Discussion:*

- Evaluation by a focus sensitive operator neutralizes the effect of focus and resets the semantic value of the expression for which alternatives were computed to its ordinary semantics. (Beck 2006)
- Given such resetting, if *hi* is an operator which takes narrow scope under *sirf*, and *sirf* is another *only*-like operator, *sirf* is predicted to not have any alternatives to compute over as in the absence of a Focus value the set  $C$  serving as the domain of quantification will be undefined.
- A possible resolution is to stipulate that non-truth conditional/presuppositional evaluation by *hi* either does not neutralize the effect of focus (22a), or that *hi* introduces another layer of focus marking (F2 in 22b):

(22) *sirf*(*hi*([[X]<sub>F</sub>]))                      b. *sirf*<sub>2</sub>(*hi*<sub>1</sub>([[X]<sub>F1</sub>]<sub>F2</sub>))

- Need for independent diagnostics for the presence of two layers of focus marking on the same XP.

**sirf X Y<sub>F</sub> hi**

- Given association at a distance and the fact that *hi* marks the right edge of the focused constituent, *hi* is predicted to mark the right edge of distant focused constituents as well. This gives rise to a single exclusive meaning:

(23) kabir-ne **sirf** mary-ko [kitabē]<sub>F</sub> **hi** dī  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books only give.perf.fs  
 'Kabir gave Mary only THE BOOK.'

**sirf<sub>1</sub> X<sub>F1</sub> Y<sub>F2</sub> hi<sub>2</sub>**

- sirf* and *hi* may associate with the same focus, (19, 23) but they do not necessarily have to. Thus, a multiple exclusive meaning is available in (24).

(24) a. Context 4: Kabir had planned to store his belongings at his friends' houses as he was going to be travelling for months and didn't want to pay rent during that time. Since Mary lived in a small apartment she received books and nothing else. Every other person received books and other things.

b. Kabir-ne **sirf<sub>2</sub>** [mary-ko ]<sub>F2</sub> [kitabē]<sub>F1</sub> **hi<sub>1</sub>** dī  
 Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books only give.perf.fp  
 'Kabir gave only MARY only THE BOOKS/ Mary was the only person such that Kabir gave her only books.'

**X<sub>F1</sub> hi<sub>1</sub> sirf<sub>2</sub> Y<sub>F2</sub>**

- Switching around the surface positions of *hi* and *sirf* can give rise to another multiple exclusive meaning as well.

(25) a. Context 5: Mary and her colleagues visit Kabir's office. Unlike his other colleagues, Kabir is a sycophant. He wants to impress the visitors but because he is also a miser he decides to give a gift to just one of them.

b. [Kabir ne]<sub>F1</sub> **hi<sub>1</sub>** **sirf<sub>2</sub>** [mary ko]<sub>F2</sub> kitab di  
 Kabir-erg only only Mary-dat book give.perf.fs  
 'KABIR was the only one who gave only MARY a book.'

## 4.2 Adverbial and Adverbial combinations

### (26) Adverbial+Adverbial preview

	Template	Surface string	Exclusive meaning	Example
a.	$\text{sirf}_1 X_{F1} \text{sirf}_2 Y_{F2}$	<b>sirf<sub>1</sub></b> [Kabir-ne] <sub>F1</sub> <b>sirf<sub>2</sub></b> [mary-ko] <sub>F2</sub>	Multiple	27
b.	$\text{sirf}_1 X_{F1} \text{hi} \text{sirf}_2 Y_{F2} \text{hi}$	<b>sirf<sub>1</sub></b> [Kabir-ne] <sub>F1</sub> <b>hi</b> <b>sirf/bəs<sub>2</sub></b> [mary-ko] <sub>F2</sub> <b>hi</b>	Multiple	28
c.	* $\text{sirf} \text{sirf} X_F$	* <b>sirf sirf</b> [Kabir-ne] <sub>F</sub>	*	29
d.	$\text{bəs} \text{sirf} X_F$	<b>bəs sirf</b> [Kabir-ne] <sub>F</sub>	single	30
e.	* $\text{sirf} \text{bəs} X_F$	* <b>sirf bəs</b> [Kabir-ne] <sub>F</sub>	*	31

#### **sirf<sub>1</sub> X<sub>F1</sub> sirf<sub>2</sub> X<sub>F2</sub>**

- The distinct merge sites postulated for *sirf* predict the possibility of multiple occurrences of the focus particle and a corresponding multiple exclusive meaning:

(27) **sirf<sub>1</sub>** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F1</sub> **sirf<sub>2</sub>** [mary-ko]<sub>F2</sub> kītabē dī  
 Only Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.prf.fp  
 ‘Only KABIR gave books only to MARY.’

#### **sirf<sub>1</sub> X<sub>F1</sub> hi sirf<sub>2</sub> Y<sub>F2</sub> hi**

- We can see the interaction of the single exclusive meaning of **sirf X<sub>F</sub> hi** (19) and the multiple exclusive meaning of **sirf<sub>1</sub> X<sub>F1</sub> sirf<sub>2</sub> X<sub>F2</sub>** (27) below:

(28) **sirf<sub>1</sub>** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F1</sub> **hi** **sirf<sub>2</sub>** [mary-ko]<sub>F2</sub> **hi** kītabē dī  
 Only Kabir-erg only only Mary-dat only books give.prf.fp  
 ‘Only KABIR gave books only to MARY.’

#### **\*sirf sirf X<sub>F</sub>**

(29) \***sirf sirf** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F</sub> mary-ko kītabē dī  
 Only only Kabir-erg Mary-dat books give.prf.fp  
 ‘Only KABIR gave books to Mary.’

All the generalizations made for *sirf* apply straightforwardly to *bəs* as well, and *bəs* can replace *sirf* in any and all of the environments discussed so far.

**bæs sirf XP<sub>F</sub>**

- *bæs* and *sirf* can co-occur so as to give a single exclusive meaning

(30) **bæs sirf** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F</sub> mary-ko kitabẽ dī  
 Only only Kabir-erg Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 ‘Only KABIR gave books only to MARY.’

- *bæs sirf* here is interchangeable with *sirf* in terms of its syntactic distribution.
- Non-truth conditional difference in meaning in terms of the utterance with *bæs sirf* being a stronger/more emphatic claim about the state of affairs.
- If different adverbial focus particles can come together (30), why is (31) not available?

(31) a. \***sirf bæš** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F</sub> mary-ko kitabẽ dī

*Discussion:*

How do we characterize this instance of a single exclusive meaning

- multiple focus marking on the same XP: **bæs<sub>2</sub> sirf<sub>1</sub>** [[XP]<sub>F1</sub>]<sub>F2</sub>
- *bæs* and *sirf* have somehow combined to give a single lexical item corresponding to a single focus operator which binds a focus variable in the prejacent: **[bæs sirf]** ([XP]<sub>F</sub>)
- one adverb associates with another focussed adverb: **bæs<sub>2</sub> [sirf<sub>1</sub>]<sub>F2</sub>** [XP]<sub>F1</sub>

(32) John even<sub>2</sub> drank [only<sub>1</sub>]<sub>F2</sub> [water]<sub>F1</sub> (Krifka 1992)

Since, the alternatives of *only* include *also*, (33b) is predicted to be well-formed.

(33) a. Context: I know that John gave books to Mary. I ask Rita if there was anyone else who had given Mary books.

b. **bæs** [Kabir-ne]<sub>F</sub> **bhi** mary-ko kitabẽ dī  
 Only only Kabir-erg also Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  
 ‘Only KABIR also gave books only to MARY.’

In the remaining set of people under consideration, Kabir was the only other person who had also given Mary books.

## 5. *bās* is not *sirf*

### Additional meaning

(34) vo dukan **sirf** [ppghər ke piche]<sub>F</sub> hε  
 that shop only house gen behind be.pres.3s  
 ‘The only place where that shop is located is BEHIND THE HOUSE.’

(35) vo dukan **bās** [ppghər ke piche]<sub>F</sub> hε  
 that shop only house gen behind be.pres.3s  
 a. ‘The only place where that shop is located is BEHIND THE HOUSE.’  
 b. ‘The place where that shop is located is right BEHIND THE HOUSE.’

-contrastive focus continuation – don’t worry it’s not far!

### Different distributions:

(36) **bās/kewəl/sirf** TV hi khəridiye.  
 Only TV hi buy.imp.2hon  
 ‘Buy only a TV.’

(37) əgər ap-ki itni khwahif hε to **bās/??sirf/??kewəl** TV khərid lijiye  
 If you-gen this much wish be.pres then only TV buy take.imp.2hon  
 If you are so keen (on a TV), go ahead and buy a TV(itself) Verma(1971)

- Unlike *sirf*, *bās* permits **propositional contrast** in the sentence final position<sup>5</sup>:

(38) a. Context: Priya has asked her son Anil to buy some bitter gourd but he really dislikes it.

b. ənil karela [le ayega]<sub>F</sub> **bās/??sirf**  
 Anil bitter gourd take come.fut.ms only  
 ‘Anil will only BRING the bitter gourd.’

b. ... ∅ ∅ [khayega]<sub>F</sub> nəhī  
 ... He bitter gourd eat.fut.ms not  
 ‘He won’t eat it.’

<sup>5</sup> Sentence final *sirf* can have bound focus readings as well:

ənil [karela]<sub>F</sub> le ayega **sirf**  
 Anil bitter gourd take come.fut.ms only  
 Anil will bring only BITTER GOURD.

- This predicts the following attested contrast in multiple focus constructions with a focused V:

**sirf<sub>1</sub> X<sub>F1</sub> V<sub>F2</sub> bās/??sirf<sub>2</sub>**

(39) **sirf<sub>1</sub>** [mẽ-ne]<sub>1</sub> tin ləRkõ-ko [bulaya]<sub>2</sub> **bās<sub>2</sub>/??sirf<sub>2</sub>**  
 only I-erg three boys.obl-acc call.perf.ms only  
 I am the only one who only CALLED the three boys.

### Unlikely alternatives?

- (40) a. Context: Ramesh had planned to meet Rita, Raj and Sita. Rita was the CEO of the biggest company Ramesh hoped to get a contract from, Raj headed a smaller company and Sita the smallest.
- b. vo **sirf/bās** [sita se]<sub>F</sub> mila  
 he only Sita Com meet.perf.ms  
 'He only met SITA.'

- Using *bās* in this context conveys the speaker's expectations: the fact that Sita is the one person he met is surprising to the speaker.

## 6. Conclusions

- Bound focus readings involving association at a distance are available in Hindi-Urdu for *sirf*.
- Thus, *sirf* is a clausal adverb which can merge in two structural positions (a) c-commanding TP (b) c-commanding vP.
- Having multiple focus particles in a single construction can give rise to both single and multiple exclusive readings.
- The interaction of *sirf*'s association with a distant focus and *hi*'s association with an immediately preceding focus can give rise to both single and multiple exclusive readings.
- The single exclusive meaning of multiple focus particles forces us to investigate the possibility of more than one layer of focus marking on an X<sup>0</sup>/XP in greater depth.
- *bās* and *sirf* differ from each other in subtle ways, the further delineation of which would enable a fuller understanding of the gaps in the paradigm both in terms of attested structures and meanings.

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