Multiple Focus in Hindi-Urdu

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- Bound focus readings involving association with a distant focus\textsuperscript{2} show that \textit{surf} 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 - \textit{surf} and \textit{bas} differ in their syntactic distribution and associated meanings.

1. Introduction

Focus particles corresponding to \textit{only} in Hindi-Urdu

A. Postpositional - \textit{hi}

(1) [rita]\textsubscript{f} \textit{hi} ayi \\
    Rita only come.perf.fs \\
    ‘Only RITA came.’

B. Adverbial - \textit{surf, bas, kewal, matr, khali}

(2) \textit{surf/ bas/khal/kewal/matr} [rita]\textsubscript{f} ayi \\
    only Rita come.perf.fs \\
    ‘Only RITA came.’

\textsuperscript{1} Thanks are due to Sjef Barbiers, Rajesh Bhatt, Kyle Johnson, Ayesha Kidwai, participants of the Syntax Reading Group at UMass for their helpful comments and insights, and to the Hindi speakers at LISSIM 7 for the initial discussion of the data.
\textsuperscript{2} 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) $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^F = \text{the set of values of the same type as } \phi = \{ \llbracket \phi \rrbracket, \llbracket \psi \rrbracket, ... \}$

(5) $\llbracket \text{Rita left} \rrbracket^F = \{ \llbracket \text{Rita left} \rrbracket, \llbracket \text{Mary left} \rrbracket, ... \}$

  Informally, $\{ x \text{ left} \}$

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

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

3. Association at a distance:

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

(8) kabir-ne surf mary-ko kitabē di

  Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fsp

  'Kabir only gave Mary the books.'

(9) Association at a distance preview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association with</th>
<th>Template</th>
<th>Surface string</th>
<th>See</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>immediately adjacent focus</td>
<td>surf$X_F$</td>
<td>surf [mary-ko]$F$</td>
<td>only MARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus across 1 intervening constituent</td>
<td>surf$X Y_F$</td>
<td>surf mary-ko [kitabē]$F$</td>
<td>only BOOKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus across 2 intervening constituents</td>
<td>surf$X Y Z_F$</td>
<td>surf mary-ko kitabē [di]$F$</td>
<td>only GAVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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]$_F$ kitabē 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 [kitabē]$_F$ 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 kitabē [dī]$_F$
   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$^0$/XP in its c-command domain.

  $\Leftrightarrow$ **clausal SIRF**
Pre IO Clausal serif:

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

(13) [Kabir-ne] serif mary-ko kitabē dī
    Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp
    *Only KABIR gave Mary the book.

- This occurrence of serif cannot associate with tense:

(14) Kabir-ne serif mary-ko kitabē dī [thī] serif
    Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.perf.fp be.past.fp
    *Kabir only HAD given Mary the book.

- serif’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 serif which c-commands it.

(15) serif [Kabir-ne] serif mary-ko kitabē dī
    Only Kabir-erg mary-dat books give.perf.fp
    ‘Only KABIR gave Mary the book’

- Prediction – pre-subject serif should be able to associate with any focussed X₀/XP in its c-command domain.

- Instead, there is scope restriction of serif to the subject position

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3 Pre DO clausal serif exhibits the same c-command requirement for bound focus readings:

kabir-ne mary-ko serif kitabē 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) **sɪrf** Kabir-ne [mary-ko]₆ 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 **sɪrf**.

- **sɪrf** 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 sɪrf](image)

- Alternative: clausal **sɪrf** cannot attach over the subject's surface position and the **sɪrf** 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 X₀/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'
  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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Template</th>
<th>Surface string</th>
<th>Exclusive meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. surf X_f hi</td>
<td>surf [mary-ko]_f hi</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. surf X Y_f hi</td>
<td>surf mary-ko [kitabē]_f hi</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. surf_1 X_f1 Y_f2 hi_2</td>
<td>surf_1 [mary-ko]_f1 [kitabē]_f2 hi_2</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. X_f1 hi_1 surf_2 Y_f2</td>
<td>[Kabir ne]_f1 hi_1 surf_2 [mary ko]_f2</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

surf X_f hi

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

(19) rita-ne surf [mary-ko]_f hi kitabē dī
    Rita-erg only Mary-dat only books give.perf.fs
    'Rita gave only MARY books.'

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4 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]_f1 hi_1 [Sita ko]_f2 hi_2 dekha
Ram erg only Sita dat only see.perf.ms
Only Ram saw only Sita.
• *surf cannot associate with a distant focus across hi which functions as a scope marker

(20) *rita-ne 
    \[\text{mary-ko}F_1 \text{ hi}_1 \text{ kitab}eF_2 \text{ di}\]
    Rita-erg only Mary-dat only books give.perf.fs
    *‘Rita gave only MARY only books.’

Analysing surf \(X_R\) hi

• hi is a syntactic double for surf (Verma 1971, Barbiers 2013, Chierchia 2013)

Syntactically, hi is a non-identical double for the focus particle surf (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 surf (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: \(\forall p[[p \in C \land \neg(\phi=p)] \rightarrow \phi>\text{likely } p]\)

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 surf, and surf is another only-like operator, surf 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) \(\text{surf (hi([[X]_R]])}) \quad \text{b. } \text{surf}_2 (\text{hi}_1([[X]_{F_1}],[F_2]))\)

• Need for independent diagnostics for the presence of two layers of focus marking on the same XP.
**srf X Y F 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*:

\[(23)\] kābīr-ne srf mary-ko [kitābē] F hi dī

Kābīr-erg only Mary-dat books only give.perf.fs

‘Kābīr gave Mary only THE BOOK.’

**srf₁ X₁ F₁ Y F₂ hi₂**

- *srf* 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**: Kābīr 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.


Kābīr-erg only Mary-dat books only give.perf.fs

‘Kābīr gave only MARY only THE BOOKS/ Mary was the only person such that Kābīr gave her only books.

**X F₁ hi₁ srf₂ Y F₂**

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

(25) a. **Context 5**: Mary and her colleagues visit Kābīr’s office. Unlike his other colleagues, Kābīr 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. [Kābīr ne] F₁ hi₁ srf₂ [mary ko] F₂ kitāb dī

Kābīr-erg only only Mary-dat book give.perf.fs

‘KABĪR was the only one who gave only MARY a book.’
4.2 Adverbial and Adverbial combinations

(26) Adverbial+Adverbial preview

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Exclusive meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. sirf₁ X₁ sirf₂ Y₂</td>
<td>sirf₁ [Kabir-ne]₁ sirf₂ [mary-ko]₂</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. sirf₁ X₁ hi sirf₂ Y₂ hi</td>
<td>sirf₁ [Kabir-ne]₁ hi sirf₂/bas₂ [mary-ko]₂ hi</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. *sirf sirf X</td>
<td>*sirf sirf [Kabir-ne]₁</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. bas sirf X</td>
<td>bas sirf [Kabir-ne]₁</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. *sirf bas X</td>
<td>*sirf bas [Kabir-ne]₁</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sirf₁ X₁ sirf₂ X₂

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

(27) sirf₁ [Kabir-ne]₁ sirf₂ [mary-ko]₂ ktabē dī

Only Kabir-erg only Mary-dat books give.prf.fp
‘Only KABIR gave books only to MARY.’

sirf₁ X₁ hi sirf₂ Y₂ hi

- We can see the interaction of the single exclusive meaning of sirf X₁ hi (19) and the multiple exclusive meaning of sirf₁ X₁ sirf₂ X₂ (27) below:

(28) sirf₁ [Kabir-ne]₁ hi sirf₂ [mary-ko]₂ hi ktabē dī

Only Kabir-erg only only Mary-dat only books give.prf.fp
‘Only KABIR gave books only to MARY.’

*sirf sirf XP₁

(29) *sirf sirf [Kabir-ne]₁ mary-ko ktabē 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 bas as well, and bas can replace sirf in any and all of the environments discussed so far.
Multiple Focus in Hindi-Urdu

**bəs surf XP**

- *bəs* and *surf* can co-occur so as to give a **single exclusive meaning**

(30)  

* bəs surf [Kabir-ne]₇ mary-ko kitabē dī  

Only only Kabir-erg Mary-dat books give.perf.fp  

‘Only KABIR gave books only to MARY.’

- *bəs surf* here is interchangeable with *surf* in terms of its syntactic distribution.

- Non-truth conditional difference in meaning in terms of the utterance with *bəs surf* 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.  

*surf bəs [Kabir-ne]₇ mary-ko kitabē dī  

Discussion:

How do we characterize this instance of a **single exclusive meaning**

- multiple focus marking on the same XP:  

  bəs surf₁ [[XP₁]₂]  

- *bəs* and *surf* have somehow combined to give a single lexical item corresponding to a single focus operator which binds a focus variable in the prejacent:  

  [bəs surf] [XP₁]  

- one adverb associates with another focussed adverb:  

  bəs₂ [surf₁]₂ [XP₁]  

(32)  

John even₂ drank [only₁]₂ [water]₁ (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.  

* bəs [Kabir-ne]₇ bhi mary-ko kitabē 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 sīrf**

**Additional meaning**

(34) \( vo \ dūkan \ sīrf[^{ppghar ke piche}]F \ hē \)
that shop only house gen behind be.pres.3s

‘The only place where that shop is located is BEHIND THE HOUSE.’

(35) \( vo \ dūkan \ bās[^{ppghar ke piche}]F \ hē \)
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/kewal/sīrf** TV hi kharidiye.
Only TV hi buy.imp.2hon
‘Buy only a TV.’

(37) \( āgār \ ap-ki \ itni \ khwahij \ hē \ to bās/??sīrf/??kewal \ TV kharid lijye \)
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 *sīrf*, *bās* permits **propositional contrast** in the sentence final position:

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

b. \( ānīl \ kāre[la]F \ bās/??sīrf \)
Anil bitter gourd take come.fut.ms only

‘Anil will only BRING the bitter gourd.’

b. ... ∅ ∅ \( [khayega]F \ nōhī \)
... He bitter gourd eat.fut.ms not

‘He won’t eat it.’

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\(^5\) Sentence final *sīrf* can have bound focus readings as well:

\( ānīl \ [kāre[la]F \ le \ ayega \ sīrf \)
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:

\[ \text{surf}_1 \ X_{F1} \ V_{F2} \ \text{bas}/??\text{surf}_2 \]

(39) \text{surf}_1 [\text{mē-ne}]_1 \ \text{tin} \ \text{loRkō-ko} \ [\text{bulay}]_2 \ \text{bas}/??\text{surf}_2 \\
only \ \text{I-erg} \ \text{three boys.obl-acc} \ \text{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 \text{surf}/bas [sita se]_f \ mila \\
he only \ Sita Com \ meet.perf.ms \\
‘He only met SITA.’

Using bas 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 surf.

- Thus, surf 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 surf’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 X⁰/XP in greater depth.

- bas and surf 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.
References


Kaur, Gurmeet. 2013. The Hindi Particle 'hii'. Poster presented at the Workshop on Faculty of Language: Design and Interfaces at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India. 11-12 February 2013.


