Focus: Practice problems

These questions are based on observations made by Phoebe Cheong in her 2016 HT.

1. *Only* **in Singlish:**

   Singlish has a sentence-final *only*. Assume that this *only* adjoins to the right of TP or VP and has the semantics in (1), slightly simplified as compared to the lecture ntoes:

   (1) $\left[\!\left[\ \overset{\frown}{\alpha\quad only}\ \right]\!\right] = 1$ iff $\forall p \in [\![\alpha]\!]^{\text{alt}}\ (p \neq [\![\alpha]\!]^{\text{o}} \to p = 0)$

   $$\rightsquigarrow [\![\alpha]\!]^{\text{o}} = 1$$

   The Singlish sentence in (2) has two readings, informally paraphrased in (a) and (b).

   (2) John don't speak [French]$_F$ only.

       a. <u>Reading 1:</u> John speaks French but also speaks other languages.

       b. <u>Reading 2:</u> (Out of a certain list of languages,) John speaks all languages except for French.

   For each reading of (2), draw a tree and compute its truth conditions and presuppositions. For each node α in the tree, make sure to give its semantic type, rule used, and <u>ordinary and alternative set denotations</u> ($[\![\alpha]\!]^{\text{o}}$ and $[\![\alpha]\!]^{\text{alt}}$). Assume the VP-internal subject hypothesis for Singlish.

2. **Singlish** *confirm...only***:**

   Confirm in Singlish is an epistemic necessity modal. Assume *confirm* is in T. Based on Problem 1, we logically expect (3) to have two readings.

   (3) John confirm speak [English]$_F$ only.[1]

     i. Describe the truth conditions of the two predicted readings of (3). For each reading, if possible, describe a context where that reading is true but the other is false.

     ii. Find a Singaporean (not yourself) and check whether (3) has the two readings predicted. Use the contexts constructed in (i) to test this. Discuss your findings.

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[1]If you prefer, you can use another example instead of (3) for parts (i) and (ii). The essential components are (a) *confirm* between the subject and verb, (b) focus on some subpart of the VP, and (c) sentence-final *only*.