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## Reconsidering identificational focus<sup>1</sup>

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*Identificational focus* is associated with a quantification-like operation that expresses “exhaustive identification on a set of entities given in the context or situation.” (É.Kiss 1998: 245)<sup>2</sup>. On the basis of data drawn from recordings of spontaneous speech, I argue here that English focus constituents in contrast contexts (cf. Halliday 1967, Jackendoff 1972, Rochemont 1986, etc.) are best categorized as identificational focus.

Given other characteristics attributed to identificational focus by É.Kiss 1998, however, the claim that focus constituents in contrast contexts are identificational is not unproblematic. This claim thus forces a reconsideration of the characteristics of identificational focus. I maintain a crucial assumption (of É.Kiss 1998) about identificational focus: that it employs a quantification-like operation to identify the subset of alternatives for which a predicate holds. On the basis of data drawn from recordings of spontaneous speech, however, I argue that other semantic properties attributed to identificational focus, in particular exhaustiveness, restrictions on constituent type and contrastiveness, are derived characteristics of identificational focus, at least in English. These properties can be tied to the semantics of other items in the context or to the nature of alternatives to the item in focus, and thus need not be stipulated as part of the meaning of identificational focus itself.

Section 1 provides a brief background on identificational focus and previous assumptions about it. Section 2 discusses data supporting the claim that focus in contrast is identificational. Section 3 reconsiders these data in light of the problems that arise for this claim, given previous assumptions about identificational focus, and proposes revision of these assumptions.

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<sup>2</sup> *Identificational focus* revises the *focus operator* proposed in É. Kiss 1996.

## 1. Background

É.Kiss (1998) argues for a distinction between *identificational focus* and *information focus*. Identificational focus applies to:

- (1) a constituent bearing the following semantic-communicative role in the sentence: ... [it] represents a subset of the contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate phrase actually holds. (p. 245)

Like other semantic elements that operate on sets, identificational focus can take wide scope and can interact with other operators in a clause. This quantification-like behavior distinguishes it from information focus.

While identificational focus expresses exhaustiveness, information focus does not, expressing instead the nonpresupposed nature of the focused material. É.Kiss argues that while information focus can be marked in English by pitch accent alone (as in (2)), identificational focus is marked by the use of an *it*-cleft (as in (3a)) or by the appearance of an exhaustive focus operator like *only* (as in (3b)). An identificational focus constituent thus appears either within the *it*-cleft (*JOHN* in (3a)), or as the pitch-accented constituent (*JOHN* in (3b)) with which *only* or another exhaustive operator associates.

- (2) Mary invited JOHN for her birthday.
- (3) (a) It was JOHN that Mary invited for her birthday.  
(b) Mary only invited JOHN for her birthday.

On the basis of constructed data, É.Kiss claims that additive particles like *even* or *also* are infelicitous with identificational focus ((4a),(4b)) but felicitous with information focus (4e). Universal and other proportional quantifiers ((4c),(4d)) are also claimed to be infelicitous in identificational focus, but not in information focus (4f).

- (4) (a) It was ?also/\*even JOHN that Mary invited for her birthday.  
(b) Mary only invited \*also/ \*even JOHN for her birthday  
(c) It was ?EVERYBODY that Mary invited for her birthday.  
(d) Mary only invited ?EVERYBODY for her birthday.  
(e) Mary even/also invited JOHN for her birthday.  
(f) Mary invited EVERYBODY for her birthday.

A summary of the characteristics of identificational focus with which the discussion here will be primarily concerned appears in Table 2.1.<sup>3</sup> The characteristics of information focus are presented for comparison.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the semantic properties of identificational focus listed in Table 2.1, É. Kiss 1998 proposes characteristics relevant to her syntactic analysis: specifically, (1) that identificational focus moves to the specifier of a functional projection, while information focus does not involve movement; (2) that identificational focus is "coextensive with an XP available for operator movement", while information focus need not be, and (3) that identificational focus, but not information focus, can iterate. Although the

Table 2.1: Properties of Identificational and Information Focus (É.Kiss 1998)

IDENTIFICATIONAL FOCUS	INFORMATION FOCUS
1) Indicated by <i>it</i> -cleft or presence of exhaustive focus operator (e.g., <i>only</i> ) with pitch accent	Indicated by presence of pitch accent alone
2) Expresses exhaustive identification over a set of contextually determined elements	Expresses non-presupposed nature of information
3) Applies to restricted constituent types: e.g., not proportional quantifiers, <i>even</i> - or <i>also</i> -phrases	Applies to all types of constituents
4) Can enter into scope relations with clause-mate operators	Does not enter into scope relations with clause-mate operators

Focus in contrast contexts, like those that will be examined in Section 2, are crucial to the issue of identificational focus. Both É.Kiss 1998 and É.Kiss 1996 compare identificational focus to “contrastive focus.” Despite its connection with contrastive focus, É.Kiss points out that identificational focus need not have a contrastive interpretation in English (although it may): she thus posits a  $\pm$  contrastive feature for identificational focus.

### 1.1. Problematic issues

On the basis of data drawn from naturally occurring speech to be discussed in Section 2, I argue that focus constituents in contrast contexts are identificational focus, at least in English. If we take this claim seriously, however, several problems arise. First of all, in English, most focused items in contrast do not occur in an *it*-cleft or with an overt exhaustive focus operator like *only* (see Table 2.1, item 1). Secondly, the data to be discussed demonstrate that focused items in contrast frequently occur with focus-sensitive additive particles like *even* and *also*. (see (4a), (4b) also Table 2.1, item 3). Finally, the data indicate that focused items in contrast can also occur with proportional quantifiers (see (4c), (4d); also Table 2.1, item 3).

### 1.2. Previous approaches

Bush and Tevdoradze (1999) previously faced the same issues when they argued that identificational focus can occur in English without benefit of an *it*-cleft or overt exhaustive focus operator.

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claims made in this paper have implications for the syntactic analysis of identificational focus, the discussion here will address only the claims relevant to the interpretation of focus, those listed in Table 2.1.



### 1.2.1. Additive particles

Bush and Tevdoradze assume that the meaning of identificational focus "contributes a non-cancelable (conventional) exhaustiveness implicature" or presupposition of exhaustiveness to a sentence.

- (5) (a) It was ?[ also [a HAT]<sub>F</sub>]<sub>FP</sub> that Mary bought.  
 (b) [Mary also bought [a HAT]<sub>F</sub>]<sub>FP</sub>.

Their approach posits a difference in the breadth of the identificational focus for cleft and non-cleft focus: *it*-clefts have "narrow focus", while non-cleft identificational focus has "broad focus." This difference results in the sentences contributing different presuppositions of exhaustiveness to the discourse. Under their analysis, the exhaustive presupposition of the narrow identificational focus in (5a) is *Mary didn't buy anything other than a hat*, while the exhaustive presupposition of the broad identificational focus (5b) is *Mary didn't also buy anything other than a hat*.

Their approach thus attributes differences in the felicitousness of additive particles with *it*-cleft and non-cleft identificational focus (as in (4a) and (4b)) to the difference in the breadth of the focus constituent in the two constructions. The particle *also* is infelicitous in (5a) because the presupposition that it contributes to the discourse contradicts the exhaustive presupposition of the narrow identificational focus (*Mary didn't buy anything other than a hat*). The sentence in (5b), however, containing broad identificational focus, does not result in contradiction; the presupposition contributed by *also* (*Mary bought something other than a hat*) is entirely compatible with the exhaustive presupposition of the broad identificational focus (*Mary didn't also buy anything other than a hat*).

A consequence of this approach is that different domains or types of identificational focus occur in the sentences *Mary also/even bought a HAT* (broad), *Mary only bought a HAT* (broad<sup>4</sup>) and *It was a HAT that Mary bought* (narrow). I will argue that distinguishing different domains or types of focus for these sentences is unnecessary.

### 1.2.2. Quantifiers

Bush and Tevdoradze argue that quantifiers are infelicitous in *it*-clefts, as in (4c)), because a cleft encodes "a statement of equivalence" (following Heycock and Kroch 1999) at the level of individuals. Since quantifiers specify sets rather than individuals, they are thus infelicitous in a cleft, but will be felicitous in non-cleft identificational focus.

Infelicitousness of quantifiers thus due to characteristics of the *it*-cleft in Bush and Tevdoradze's account, rather than to properties of identificational focus. Since their account allows for quantifiers to be felicitous in identificational focus when the identificational focus does not appear in an *it*-cleft, a further account is necessary for

<sup>4</sup> Bush & Tevdoradze do not specifically discuss their treatment of sentences including *only*. I presume here that the treatment would be analogous to that of the broad identificational focus sentences containing *also*.

infelicitous examples like (4d), in which the focused quantifier *EVERYONE* does not appear in an *it*-cleft. I will argue that the felicitousness of quantifiers in identificational focus depends on the nature of the available alternatives to the focus item. In my account, it is thus unrelated to properties of clefts and is only indirectly related to properties of the focus itself.

## 2. Focus and discourse contrast

Focus in discourse contrast contexts represents an obvious candidate for identificational focus. Focus on items in contrast serves as a long-standing exception to the idea that focus represents new information (Jackendoff 1972, Rochemont 1986, *inter alia*), leading É.Kiss herself to link the notion of identificational focus to the older notion of contrastive focus. An examination of focus data from spontaneous English<sup>5</sup> supports the view that focus constituents in contrast are identificational focus, in the sense that they express (exhaustive) identification over a set of contextually determined elements, as proposed in É.Kiss's definition of identificational focus (see Section 1).

### 2.1. Explicit alternatives

First, contrasts in discourse provide explicitly defined sets of “contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold.” These can be compared to the “alternatives” employed in semantic frameworks that use alternative sets to model the contribution of focus to sentence meaning (Rooth 1986, 1992, Jacobs 1983, Stechow 1990, Krifka 1991, *inter alia*). In contrast contexts, focus indicates the element of that set that makes the assertion of the sentence true.

Consider the discourse segment in (6). The sentence in (6a) provides an example of an *it*-cleft, É.Kiss's prototypical example of identificational focus. We will be concerned here, however, with the sentence in (6b). This contains two intonation phrases, two nuclear pitch accents, and presumably two focus constituents.

- (6) *The producer of a television miniseries is discussing the technical difficulties involved in the production.*
- (a) It was usually [STÚNTMEN]<sub>FP</sub> that were actually in the suits.
  - (b) We had [ÁCTORS]<sub>FP</sub> come down for [very SPECÍFIC scenes]<sub>FP</sub>,
  - (c) so that they would be incorporated into it

One of these focus constituents is the DP *actors*. *Actors* is presupposed in this context, and thus cannot be unproblematically categorized as information focus. It appears in explicit contrast to *stuntmen*, mentioned in (6a). Together, *actors* and *stuntmen* comprise the set of the “contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold,” or alternatives to *actors*. Intuitively, the focus on *actors* represents the (exhaustive) subset of “elements for which the predicate phrase actually holds,” as indicated by the classic *wh*-question test for focus.

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<sup>5</sup>Examples and excerpts come from a corpus collected from interviews prepared for broadcast on the radio program *Fresh Air with Terri Gross*®.

- (7) Of actors and stuntmen, who was it you had come down for SPECIFIC scenes?  
It was ACTORS.

This paraphrase of the clause in (6b) as a question and answer pair is consistent with the meaning of the discourse, in which the speaker reports that the stuntmen were more regularly present during shooting, while the actors appeared for specific scenes. The existence of an explicitly defined set of alternatives, and the fact that the focus, at least intuitively, represents exhaustive identification of the element in this set that makes the proposition *we had x come down for specific scenes* true, suggest that the focus on *actors* is identificational. We will address the question of exhaustiveness in greater detail in Section 2.3.

## 2.2. Scope interaction.

Second, the meaning of focus items appearing in contrast contexts can participate in scope interaction, thus displaying the quantification-like characteristics attributed to identificational focus. The example in (6b) can also serve to demonstrate this. The focus on *actors* interacts with the identificational focus centered on *specific* in (6b).

The second focus constituent of (6b) is *very specific scenes*, as confirmed by the pseudo-cleft paraphrase tests in (8). I employ pseudo-cleft paraphrase tests to identify focus constituents in their discourse context. This test is more natural in on-going discourse than the classic *wh*-question paraphrase used in (7). The smallest constituent that can appear felicitously in the post-cleft portion of the paraphrase, given the context, is taken to be the focus constituent of the original sentence (Cohan 2000). Here, this appears to be the post-cleft constituent in (8b), *very specific scenes*.

- (8) It was usually STUNTMEN that were actually in the SUITS.  
(a) ?The kind of scenes we had ACTORS come down for were [very SPECIFIC]<sub>FP</sub>.  
(b) What we had ACTORS come down for was [very SPECIFIC scenes]<sub>FP</sub>

The constituent *very specific scenes* passes paraphrase tests specifically for identificational focus, too. The paraphrase in (9a) demonstrates that *only* can be included in the sentence without changing its meaning or felicitousness, when *only* associates with the focus constituent centered on *specific*. The paraphrase in (9a) demonstrates that the focus constituent can also appear felicitously in an *it*-cleft. In both cases, *very specific scenes* has an exhaustive interpretation. These paraphrases represent the prototypical syntactic contexts for identificational focus. The fact that the constituent *very specific scenes* can appear in these contexts without altering either meaning or felicitousness indicates that it is functioning as identificational focus in this discourse segment.

- (9) It was usually STUNTMEN that were actually in the SUITS.  
(a) We had ACTORS come down (only) for [very SPECIFIC scenes]<sub>FP</sub>.  
(b) It was [very SPECIFIC scenes]<sub>FP</sub> that we had ACTORS come down for.

The focus centered on *actors* displays quantification-like behavior, in that it interacts with the focus centered on *specific*. We can see this when we consider the following informal semantic representations:

- (10) Background: *We had x come down for y.*  
 Focus: *actors, specific scenes*  
 When *x* ranges over {*actors, stuntmen*};  
 and *y* ranges over {*x* | *x* is a situation in a miniseries shoot};  
 (a) For all *x* and all *y*, if we had *x* come down for *y*, then *x* was an actor and *y* was a specific scene. (*not true in situation*)  
 (b) For all *x* and all *y*, if *x* was an actor and we had *x* come down for *y*, then *y* was a specific scene. (*true in situation*)

The representation in (10b) incorporates the interpretation of the first focus constituent *x* (*actors*) into the background for the interpretation of the second focus constituent *y* (*specific scenes*). The representation in (10a) does not. In (10b), the focus on *actors* is part of background for interpretation of the second focus constituent *very specific scenes*. The background restricts domain of quantification of a sentence (Krifka 1990). The interpretation of the focus on *actors* must be part of the background to result in the meaning the speaker intends ((10b)). *Actors* thus takes scope over *specific scenes*. Scope interaction is claimed to be characteristic of identificational focus, but not information focus (see Table 2.1, (4)). The focus on *actors* thus appears to be identificational.

### 2.3. Exhaustiveness

Finally, tests that explicitly capture the exhaustive interpretation of the identificational focus on *specific scenes* (via addition of *only*) indicate that the focus constituent *actors* also passes proposed tests for exhaustiveness (from Kiss 1998, 1995). An exhaustive interpretation is a crucial characteristic of identificational focus.

The test appearing in (11) is a DP coordination test for exhaustiveness. Ordinarily, a sentence containing a coordinated DP entails the parallel sentence containing either one of the DPs. So, for example, the sentence *We are discussing identificational focus* is a logical consequence of the sentence *We are discussing information focus and identificational focus*. When the interpretation of the coordinated DP within a sentence is exhaustive, however, it does not entail the parallel sentence containing either one of the DPs. That is, the sentence *It is information and identificational focus that we are discussing* does not entail the sentence *It is identificational focus that we are discussing*. The sentence with the coordinated DP asserts that we are discussing both together, and thus the assertion of the second sentence -- that we are discussing only one -- does not hold.

- (11) It was usually STUNTMEN that were actually in the SUITS.  
 (a) We had ACTORS AND STUNTMEN come down only for SPECIFIC scenes.  
 (b) We had ACTORS come down only for SPECIFIC scenes.

When we apply this test in the context of our discourse to the example in question from (6), it becomes clear that the sentence containing the single DP *actors* (11b) is not a logical consequence of the sentence containing the coordinated DP *actors and stuntmen* (11a). These sentences describe two different circumstances. Sentence (11a) would be

falsified only in case there was a scene involving both actors and stuntmen that was not one of the “specific scenes” the speaker mentions, and it thus allows for circumstances in which actors were called down without stuntmen for scenes that were not “specific.” Sentence (11b), however, which reflects the actual discourse situation, does not allow for any circumstances in which actors came down for scenes that were not the “specific scenes” mentioned by the speaker; it would be falsified in such circumstances. The result of this test indicates that the focus on *actors* in (6b)/(11b) has an exhaustive interpretation in its context.

The test appearing (12) is another test for exhaustiveness proposed in É.Kiss 1998 (attributed to D. Farkas). *No* and *too* can appear felicitously in a continuation that substitutes a new item for the focus constituent when the focus is of the original sentence is exhaustive. Thus, the sentence *It was information focus that we were discussing* can be felicitously followed by *No, we were discussing identificational focus, too*. Since the appearance of *too* in the continuation presupposes that we were discussing information focus, *no* must contradict some aspect of the previous sentence’s meaning other than its asserted content: apparently, its exhaustiveness. The same circumstances appear to apply in (12).

- (12) It was usually STUNTMEN that were actually in the SUITS.  
 We had ACTORS come down only for SPECIFIC scenes.  
 No, STUNTMEN came down only for specific scenes, too, but different specific scenes.

The result of the tests in (11) and (12) suggest that the focus constituent *actors* in (6b) does indeed have an exhaustive interpretation once the identificational nature of the focus on *specific scenes* is also taken into account in the tests. Taken with the existence of an explicit alternative set (Section 2.1) and the apparent scope interaction (Section 2.2), these data indicate that the focus on *actors* is also identificational.

### 3. Reconsidering problematic issues

#### 3.1. Pitch accent alone

The discussion in Section 2 provides evidence supporting the claim that focus in contrast context is identificational focus, in so far as it a semantic operator that (exhaustively) selects from an alternative set. This discussion thus also provides evidence that identificational focus can be marked in English by pitch accent alone, and is not limited to sentences including explicitly exhaustive particles like *only* or the syntactic context of an *it*-cleft (see also Bush and Tevdoradze 1999; Bush 2000; Cohan 2000).

#### 3.2. Additive particles

If identificational focus exhaustively identifies the elements of an alternative set for which the assertion of a sentence holds (as in É.Kiss 1998 and Bush and Tevdoradze 1999), then there is a certain logic to the notion that additive particles, which typically come with presuppositions that a predicate also holds for additional arguments, should be infelicitous with identificational focus. The discourse segments in (13) and (14) provide



examples from naturally occurring speech in which focus in contrast occurs with the additive particles *also* (13c) and *even* (14b).

- (13) *A parole officer begins a story to help illustrate the effectiveness of a program to reduce juvenile crime:*
- (a) There was a young *mán* by the name a Fréddy Cardóza
  - (b) who was caught with a *búllet*.
  - (c) He was also caught [*pássing a gún to a JÚVENILE*]<sub>FP</sub> (*contrast: with a bullet*)
  - (d) because the JÚVENILE would get a lesser *séntence*. (*contrast: Freddy Cardoza*)
- (14) *The creator of an animated television series is explaining the problems that arose during a failed attempt to produce a live-action TV spin-off.*
- (a) We couldn't get a trained *beáver* to *gnáw* on the *woód*.
  - (b) [*a STÚFFED beaver*]<sub>FP</sub> was even gonna cost a lot (*contrast: trained beaver*)
  - (c) and for~~gét~~ about a ROBÓTIC beaver (*contrast: stuffed, trained*)
  - (d) If it's a CARTOÓN, you can *dráw* that *beáver* (*contrast: robotic, stuffed, trained*)

These data present a problem, either for my claim that such examples represent identificational focus, or for the notion that exhaustiveness is a presupposition of identificational focus. My solution to this problem takes its cue from the observation of É.Kiss 1998 that there are contexts in which *also* can be felicitous in an *it*-cleft:

... a cleft *also*-phrase appears to be acceptable precisely in a context where it can be understood to identify a member of a relevant set in addition to one or more members identified previously as such for which the predicate holds, with the rest still excluded. (p. 252)

In such circumstances, the exhaustiveness of identificational focus is broadened to include other members of an alternative set. Given this observation, and the data in (13) and (14), I suggest that identificational focus does not in fact convey a presupposition of exhaustiveness.

### 3.2.1. Revising exhaustiveness

I propose instead that identificational focus identifies the subset of possible alternatives for which the assertion of the sentence holds, and that exhaustiveness is an implicature arising from this identification.

Supporting my claim that exhaustiveness connected to identificational focus is an implicature is the fact that, whether or not it is explicitly denied, exhaustiveness can be revised by a continuance that includes an additive particle. The examples in (15)-(17), adapted from the discourse excerpts previously discussed, illustrate this fact.

- (15) Freddy was caught with a BULLET, and he was also caught passing a gun to a JUVENILE — (No, actually,) he was caught destroying EVIDENCE, too. (cf. (13))

- (16) A STUFFED beaver was even gonna cost a lot — (No, actually,) even a paper MACHÈ beaver would have cost a lot. (cf.(14))
- (17) We had ACTORS come down for SPECIFIC scenes — (No, actually,) STUNTMEN came down for SPECIFIC scenes, too. (cf. (6),(12))

Note that the identificational focus constituents in the constructed continuations themselves convey exhaustiveness within the set of alternatives to the focus. In (15), it can be assumed that Freddy was not caught selling drugs, cheating on his taxes or any other illegal act: these all remain excluded from the set of *x* such that *Freddy was caught x*. In (16), the speaker excludes the kinds of beavers less like to cost a lot than a paper mache beaver – for example, a cartoon beaver – from the set of *x* such that *x is a kind of beaver and x is gonna cost a lot*. Finally, in (17), it can be assumed that any relevant alternatives to actors and stuntmen – camera crew, perhaps – did not come down only for “specific scenes,” but rather more regularly.

The effect of discourse correction on the notion of exhaustiveness in (15)-(17) is quite different from its effect on genuine presuppositions in discourse.

- (18) The king of FRANCE is BALD. -- (No, actually,) the king of ENGLAND is bald

Whether or not *no* occurs in (18), the continuation retracts the proposition that the king of France is bald, but it does not cancel the presupposition of the definite noun phrase in the first sentence that there is a king of France. This presupposition, like all presuppositions, must be explicitly denied by the speaker to be corrected (i.e., the speaker must say something like *There is no king of France*) (Beaver 1997).

Because explicit denial, typically necessary to revoke a presupposition, is not necessary to cancel the exhaustiveness of identificational focus, it does not appear to be a genuine presupposition. Exhaustiveness appears instead to be an implicature arising from the existence of alternatives given by the context. Consideration of the factors relevant to the meaning of a sentence containing identificational focus illustrates this. The factors relevant to the meanings of the sentences in (13c) and (14b) appear in Table 4.1. In both cases, the sentence itself contributes the focus, the background relevant for computing the focus subset, and the additive particle. The context contributes the alternative set. When the meaning of the sentence is added to the discourse, the subset of excluded alternatives is updated with the information it conveys. Remaining alternatives continue to be excluded from the set of elements to which the background of the sentence applies. The propositions connected to subset of *included alternatives* reflect assertions made by the speaker, and are presupposed in further discourse. The propositions connected to subset of *excluded alternatives*, on the other hand, function as implicatures and can potentially be cancelled by further information.



TABLE 4.1: FACTORS IN INTERPRETATION FOR SENTENCES WITH ADDITIVE PARTICLES

		He was also caught [passing a gun to a juvenile] <sub>FP</sub> . (cf. )	[A stuffed beaver] <sub>FP</sub> was even gonna cost a lot. (cf. (14))
sentence	Focus	<i>passing a gun to a juvenile</i>	<i>a stuffed beaver</i>
	Background	<i>He was caught x</i>	<i>x was gonna cost a lot</i>
	Additives	<i>also</i>	<i>even</i>
context	Alternatives	{ <u>with a bullet, passing a gun to a juvenile, destroying evidence, cheating on taxes ...</u> }	{ <u>a robotic beaver, a trained beaver, a stuffed beaver, a paper machè beaver, a cartoon beaver ...</u> }
	Focus subset	$x$ such that <i>he was caught</i> $x$ = { <u>passing a gun to a juvenile</u> }	$x$ such that <i>x was gonna cost a lot</i> = { <u>a stuffed beaver</u> }
	Subset of included alternatives	$x$ such that <i>he was caught</i> $x$ = { <u>with a bullet, passing a gun to a juvenile</u> }	$x$ such that <i>x was gonna cost a lot</i> = { <u>a robotic beaver, a trained beaver, a stuffed beaver</u> }
	Subset of excluded alternatives	$x$ such that <i>he was not caught</i> $x$ = { <u>destroying evidence, cheating on taxes...</u> }	$x$ such that <i>x was not gonna cost a lot</i> = { <u>a paper machè beaver, a cartoon beaver</u> }

### 3.2.2. Incompatibility

Additive particles remain, however, infelicitous in many cases with *only* and *it*-clefts. Any infelicitousness can be attributed to the incompatibility of the meaning of additive particles with aspects of the meaning of *only* and *it*-clefts, rather than to properties of the focus with which they associate.

It has already been observed that aspects of the meaning of *only* are understood to conflict with presuppositions of additive particles (König 1991). Representations of these meanings appear in(19)(cf. Krifka 1991):

$$(19) \quad \begin{aligned} \llbracket \text{only} \rrbracket &= \lambda(B, F) \lambda X [B(F)(X) \wedge \forall y \in \text{ALT}(F) [B(y)(X) \rightarrow y = F]] \\ \llbracket \text{also} \rrbracket &= \lambda(B, F) \lambda X [\exists y \in \text{ALT}(F) [B(y)(X) \wedge y \neq F] \mid B(F)(X)] \end{aligned}$$

Part of what *only* asserts is that the sentence background does not apply to any alternative to the focus, while a presupposition of *also* (or *even*) is that the background does in fact apply to some other alternative to the focus. If we extend this understanding of the meaning of *only* to the meaning *it*-clefts, then presuppositional properties of additive particles can be understood to conflict with some property of the meaning of the *it*-cleft construction itself, rather than with properties of the identificational focus within the construction.

An advantage of this understanding is that additive particles like *even* and *also* interact with the same kind of identificational focus as *only* and *it*-clefts do (cf. section 1.2.1, Bush and Tevdoradze 1999). A comparison of the factors in interpretation of the sentences in (20) show that the only factor that differs is the focus operator: the *it*-cleft in (20a) and *even* in (20b). The remaining sentence elements and the context are exactly the same. The most likely source of the differences in the set of included alternatives resulting from these sentences, then, is apparently some property of the meanings of the operators.

(20) Mary finally went shopping for winter clothing ...

		(a) It was [a COAT] <sub>FF</sub> that she bought.	(b) She even bought [a COAT] <sub>FF</sub> .
sentence	Focus	<i>a coat</i>	
	Background	<i>Mary bought y</i>	
	Focus operator	<i>It-cleft</i>	<i>even</i>
context	Alternatives	{ <u>a sweater</u> , long-johns, a hat, <u>a coat</u> , a snowsuit ...}	
	Focus subset	<i>y</i> such that <i>Mary bought y</i> holds = { <u>a coat</u> }	
	Included alternatives	{ <u>a coat</u> }	{ <u>a sweater</u> , long-johns, a hat, <u>a coat</u> }

### 3.3. Quantification

Identificational focus is also claimed to be infelicitous with universal and other proportional quantifiers. Thus, a second problem with the current claim that focus in contrast contrasts is identificational is the fact that universal/proportional quantifiers are not always infelicitous in focus in contrast contexts. The discourse segment in (21) illustrates this fact.

- (21) *The creator of TV series discusses the reasons that a series spin-off has never been developed. During discussions with the network, everyone was "very greedy" –*
- (a) [I said ] if you guys all take the second greediest position,
  - (b) we can do this thing. ... And you'll still [make LOTS and lots of money]<sub>FF</sub>.
  - (c) But they wouldn't take the second greediest position.
  - (d) Everybody wanted [ALL the money]<sub>FF</sub>.

The quantifier *all the money* (21d) contrasts with *lots and lots of money* (21b). The adapted discourse in (22) illustrates further that proportional quantifiers can be felicitous with *only*, as in (22a), and in *it*-clefts, as in (22b). The paraphrase in (22b)

further makes it clear that *it*-clefts need not express a statement of equivalence at the level of individuals (cf. section 1.2.2.).

- (22) ... And they'd still make LOTS of money. But they WOULDN'T take the second greediest position.  
 (a) Everybody (only) wanted [ALL the money]<sub>FP</sub>.  
 (b) It was [ALL the money]<sub>FP</sub> that everybody wanted.

The infelicitousness observed by É.Kiss 1998 (see (4c) and (4d)) and assumed by Bush and Tevdoradze 1999 thus appears to be unrelated to the cleft or to restrictions on what can appear in identificational focus *per se*. I claim instead that the felicitousness of a constituent in identificational focus depends on the nature of the alternatives available: contextually or situationally available alternatives to the item in focus must be of the same semantic type as the identificational focus.

It appears that proportional quantifiers are, in fact, equally infelicitous in *it*-cleft and non-cleft identificational focus when context does not supply an appropriate set of "elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold" (23b).

- (23) Mary finally went shopping for winter clothing ...  
 (a) It was [a COAT]<sub>FP</sub> that she bought. / She (even) bought [a COAT]<sub>FP</sub>.  
 (b) ? It was [every HAT]<sub>FP</sub> that she bought / ? She (even) bought [every hat]<sub>FP</sub>.

In (21)/(22), the context supplies an explicit alternative to the quantifier *ALL the money* that is of the same semantic type: specifically, *lots of money*. In this context *all the money* is felicitous in identificational focus, whether it appears in a cleft (as in (22)) or not (as in (21d)).

The table in These facts, and the explanation for them provided, are consistent with the predictions of semantic frameworks that model the meaning of focus with alternative sets. Frameworks like Alternative Semantics (Rooth 1986, 1992) and Structured Meanings (Jacobs 1983, Stechow 1990, Krifka 1991) assume alternative sets consisting of elements of the same semantic type as the focus.

(24) shows that the alternatives supplied by the context in (23) (say, individual items of winter clothing) are alternatives of the same semantic type as *a coat* in (23a), which is felicitous in this context. These alternatives, however, are of a different semantic type from *every hat* in (23b). Identificational focus thus cannot identify the subset of alternatives for which the assertion of the sentence holds: the focus in (23b) needs to operate over a set of elements comparable to *every hat*, and such a set is not available in the context. The focus operators (the *it*-cleft and *even* in (23b)), furthermore, cannot perform their function in determining the set of included (and excluded) alternatives. The identificational focus of *every hat* is thus infelicitous.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Difficulties in computing the relevant domain for the universal quantifier likely also play a part in the infelicitousness of *every hat* in this context.

These facts, and the explanation for them provided, are consistent with the predictions of semantic frameworks that model the meaning of focus with alternative sets. Frameworks like Alternative Semantics (Rooth 1986, 1992) and Structured Meanings (Jacobs 1983, Stechow 1990, Krifka 1991) assume alternative sets consisting of elements of the same semantic type as the focus.

(24) Mary finally went shopping for winter clothing ...

		? It was [every hat] <sub>FP</sub> that she bought.	? She even bought [every hat] <sub>FP</sub> .
sentence	Focus	<i>every hat</i>	
	Background	<i>Mary bought y</i>	
	Focus operator	<i>It-cleft</i>	<i>even</i>
context	Alternatives	{ <i>every hat, a sweater, long-johns, a hat, a coat, a snowsuit, ...</i> }	
	Focus subset	<i>y</i> such that <i>Mary bought y</i> holds = { <i>every hat</i> }	
	Included alternatives	?	?

### 3.4. Contrastiveness

É.Kiss 1998 proposes [ $\pm$ contrastive] as a variable feature of identificational focus. The data discussed above suggest that contrast is not a real feature of identificational focus, but rather a characteristic derived from the discourse. We need only examine the range of data considered here to observe this. Crucial examples reappear below:

- (20) Mary finally went shopping for winter clothing. It was [a COAT]<sub>FP</sub> that she bought.
- (6a/b) It was usually stuntmen that were actually in the suits. We had [ACTORS]<sub>FP</sub> come down for very specific scenes
- (13a/c) There was a young man named Freddy Cardoza, who was caught with a BULLET. He was also caught [passing a gun to a JUVENILE]<sub>FP</sub>.
- (14a/b) We couldn't get a trained beaver to gnaw on the wood. [A STUFFED beaver]<sub>FP</sub> was even gonna cost a lot.

When alternatives to an identificational focus are determined solely by pragmatic considerations and are not explicitly given, contrast does not typically arise, and identificational focus may not feel intuitively "contrastive": this is the situation in the constructed example in (20). When all potential alternatives to the item in focus are explicitly given in the discourse, contrast is particularly salient, as in (6), where the speaker contrasts *actors* with the previously mentioned *stuntmen*. Perhaps the most typical discourse situations, however, involve both explicitly given and pragmatically



determined alternatives to focus items (e.g., (13),(14)). This is very often precisely the context for sentences with focus-sensitive particles, be they additive, scalar, exhaustive or otherwise (*also, even, too, only, alone, just*, etc.). It thus seems unnecessary to posit a  $\pm$ contrastive feature for identificational focus, at least in English. The contexts for identificational focus in other languages will have to be examined to see if this observation can be extended cross-linguistically.

An implication of this conclusion is that the phenomenon of identificational focus should occur in a much wider range of contexts than those discussed here, not merely in *it*-clefts or discourse contrast contexts. Specifically, any focus constituent occurring with focus-sensitive particles or in other focus-sensitive contexts is predicted to be identificational.

#### 4. Summary

In the course of this discussion, I have put forth a number of claims, arguing on the basis of data from spontaneous English against a number of previous assumptions about identificational focus, put forth in É.Kiss 1998 and taken up by other authors.

First, identificational focus apparently occurs in a wider range of contexts than originally recognized (see also Bush and Tevdoradze 1999 for a similar claim), only one of which is focus in the context of discourse contrast (Section 2, Section 3.4). This conclusion is based on the fact that focus in contexts that evoke a set of alternatives can take scope within its clause and conveys an implicature of exhaustiveness. Second, the apparent exhaustiveness of identificational focus is not a presupposition of its meaning, but an implicature that can be considered to arise from the existence of alternatives to the item in focus (Section 3.2). Identificational focus itself is not, in fact, incompatible with additive particles (Section 3.2) although operators that associate with identificational focus may be incompatible with each other. Identificational focus is also not incompatible with proportional quantifiers (Section 3.3); the felicitousness of constituents in identificational focus depends upon the type of alternatives available in the context – these must be compatible with the semantic type of the focus constituent itself.

Finally, the claims and observations put forth here require reconsidering the list of properties of identificational focus that appear in Table 2.1. Identificational focus is indicated by pitch accent alone, and requires neither an *it*-cleft nor an explicitly exhaustive operator (cf. item 1, Table 2.1). It expresses identification over a set of contextually determined elements with an implicature of exhaustiveness arising from this identification (cf. item 2, Table 2.1). It is also not limited to particular constituent types *per se*, as long as context supplies appropriate alternatives. Certain crucial characteristics of identificational focus as in É.Kiss 1998 have been maintained: (1) its relationship to a set of contextually determined elements, and (2) its propensity for scope interaction with clause-mate operators. This revised set of properties should be considered in attempts to provide syntactic accounts for the semantic behavior of identificational focus.

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