

From exclusion to adversativity

The case of French 'seulement' and Cantonese 'ze1'

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May 18-20, 2016

Outline

- In French, the *exclusive* marker *seulement* (\approx only) can be used as an *adversative* connective :
 - (1) J'aimerais venir, seulement j'ai une réunion.
I'd like to come SEULEMENT I have a meeting.
I'd like to come, but I have a meeting.
- Similar observations can be made in many other unrelated languages (English, German, Romanian, Japanese, Czech, Cantonese, Mandarin...)
- Those uses are usually recognized/recorded
- Adversative markers are often etymologically related to expressions dealing with quantity
 - French *mais* comes from Latin *magis* (\approx more)
 - English *but* comes from *butan* which marks a form of exception
 - ...
- ... but this general tendency remained unnoticed and no explanation has been proposed for it (as far as I know)

1 Empirical Background

Exclusion

- *Exclusive* (or restrictive) particles convey a form of restriction (Horn, 1972).
- Typically, the usage of an exclusive like *only* conveys both an exclusive component (2-a) and the truth of its *prejacent* (2-b)
 - (2) Lemmy only drank JACK DANIELS.
 - a. \rightsquigarrow Lemmy drank nothing apart from JD.
 - b. \rightsquigarrow Lemmy drank JD.
- The exclusion in (2-a) is relative to a set of alternatives determined by the *associate* of the particle.
- A given language usually has more than one exclusive particles, with some differences in meaning which are not straightforward to account for (e.g. *only* vs. *just*)

Adversative connectives

- *Adversative* connectives convey a form of opposition between two discourse segments : *but*, *even though*, *yet*...
- Different types of opposition (Lakoff, 1971) :

- *Formal contrast* between elements :
 - (3) Paul is tall, but John is short.
- Denial of expectation : *direct opposition* (concession); the right conjunct is the negation of an expectation created by the left conjunct
 - (4) Lemmy smokes but he's in good health.
- Denial of expectation : *indirect opposition* (argumentative use); the left and right conjuncts create opposite expectations :
 - (5) This car is nice but expensive.

1.1 French *seulement*

French : *seulement*

- In French, in some contexts, the adverb *seulement* can be replaced by *mais* (*but*) with no major change in meaning :
 - (1) J'aimerais venir, seulement/mais j'ai une réunion.
I'd like to come SEULEMENT/MAIS I have a meeting.
I'd like to come, but I have a meeting.
- The use has been identified at least since the XVIth century (e.g. *Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*)
- The use is described as *oral*, and restricted to spoken discourse
- A look in corpora (Frantext) indeed shows early attestations :
 - (6) le sire Nicolas en fera comme il le vous a promis, et nous avec luy. **Seulement** il y a une difficulté... *Sir Nicolas will do as he promised, and us with him. SEULEMENT there is a difficulty...* (Calvin, Jean ; Lettres à Monsieur et Madame de Falais 1543-1554)

Adversative usage

- To work as an adversative *seulement* needs a full clause as its host :
 - (7) *Cette voiture est belle, seulement chère.
this car is pretty only expensive
- *seulement* associates over its whole host clause and is clause initial :
 - (8) ?J'aimerais venir, j'ai seulement un meeting.
I'd like to come I have SEULEMENT a meeting
I'd like to come, I only have a meeting.
- Adversative *seulement* is usually prosodically detached.
- The use is not compatible with another adversative connective :
 - (9) ??J'aimerais venir, mais seulement j'ai un meeting.
I'd like to come but SEULEMENT I have a meeting
I'd like to come but only I have a meeting.

Other markers

- Like *seulement*, the adverbial *juste* (\approx *just*) has exclusive semantics
 - (10) Lemmy buvait juste du Jack Daniels. *Lemmy just drank Jack Daniels.*

- a. \rightsquigarrow Lemmy drank JD.
- b. \rightsquigarrow Lemmy did not drink anything apart from JD.

— *Juste* also allows the adversative reading :

- (11) J'aimerais venir, c'est **juste** que j'ai une réunion.
 I'd like to come it's just that I have a meeting.
 I'd like to come, it's just that I have a meeting.

— The exclusive adjective *seul* and the exclusive *ne... que* construction cannot be used as adversatives since they cannot associate with a whole utterance.

Exclusives and opposition types

- Not all types of oppositions can be marked with an exclusive.
- Formal contrast :

- (12) #Paul est grand, seulement Jean est petit.
 Paul is tall SEULEMENT Jean is short
 (int.) Paul is tall, but/only Jean is short.

— Direct denial of expectation :

- (13) ??Lemmy fume, seulement il est en bonne santé.
 Lemmy smokes, SEULEMENT he is in good health.
 Lemmy smokes, but/only he's in good health.

— Indirect denial of expectation :

- (14) Cette voiture est belle, seulement elle est chère.
 This car is pretty SEULEMENT it is expensive
 This car is pretty, but/only it's expensive.

Seulement as the « anti-pourtant »

- The distinction between formal contrast and denial of expectations has some typological grounding :
 - Russian and Romanian have a marker that appear to be specific to contrast and another one for DoE (Jasinskaja & Zeevat, 2009; Bîlbiie & Winterstein, 2011)
- Within DoE, some markers appear specific to direct opposition :
 - *pourtant* (\approx *yet*) :

- (15) a. Lemmy fume, pourtant il est en bonne santé. *Lemmy smokes, yet he's healthy.*
 b. #Cette voiture est belle, pourtant elle est chère. *This car is nice, yet it's expensive.*

— Thus, the adversative use of *seulement* can be seen as the complementary of *pourtant*

1.2 Other languages

English

- Like French, the exclusive *only* can be used as an adversative :

- (16) I'd love to join in. Only I don't know how to play. (Halliday & Hasan, 1976)

- The use is also described as oral and restricted to spoken English (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).
- *just* works the same as in French

- (17) I'd love to join in. It's just that I don't know how to play.

— The adversative use of *only* also appears to be limited to an indirect opposition :

- (18) a. ?Lemmy smokes, only he's healthy.
b. This car is nice, only it's expensive.

Chinese : Cantonese and Mandarin

- Cantonese and Mandarin both use the adversative connective 不過 (CAN *bat1gwo3*, MAN *bu4guo4*).
- Literally, BG means *no more than* and it retains an exclusive reading when it's not used as a connective.
- Besides BG, Cantonese also :
 - has a sentence final particle (*ze1*), usually glossed as an exclusive, but which carries an adversative reading.
 - allows its most direct equivalent for *only* to be used as an adversative connective

- (19) Ngo5 soeng2 heoi3 ge2. Zing6hai6 m4 dak1haan4 ze1.
I want go SFP only not free-time ZE1
I want to go, only I'm not free.

— More details on this later.

German

- Rudolph (1996, p. 346) mentions that the German restrictive adverbs *nur* (\approx *only*) and *allein* (\approx *alone*) work like *seulement* :

- (20) Das ist schon richtig, nur dass es dabei eigentlich nichts zu spotten gibt. *That's all right, only that there is nothing to mock..*

Other languages

- Similar observations appear to be true for :
 - Japanese : *tada*
 - Romanian : *numai că, doar că*
 - Czech : *je (nom) že* (Langova, 2011)
 - Spanish, Italian, Portuguese (*solamente, só que*)
 - And probably others... Norwegian, Slovak...?

Taking stock

- Exclusive elements (mostly adverbs) can be used as adversative connectives in a variety of unrelated languages.
- This is only applies to elements that can *associate with clauses/utterances*.
- Usually, these usages cannot co-occur with other adversative markers.
- Their adversative type is restricted to *indirect opposition*.

2 Semantic change of the exclusive meaning

2.1 Meaning shift

Which meaning shift ?

- Which meaning came first : the exclusive or the adversative ?
- Intuitively, the exclusive meaning precedes the adversative
 - The etymology of some of the exclusive/adversative markers is clearly exclusive in some cases (French, Romanian, Chinese)
 - Some of the present adversative connectives started as exclusives (e.g. *but* Nevalainen (1991))
- I argue that there is a semantic change of the exclusive meaning toward the adversative one.

- This raises the question of *which path* was taken to go from exclusion to opposition
- Traugott & Dasher (2002) give nine typical features of the pragmaticalization of meaning
- Five (related ones) seem to apply in the case at hand :
 1. meanings tend to become *increasingly subjective*, i.e. grounded in the speaker subjectivity
 - Adversative meaning, especially indirect opposition uses, typically convey meaning related to the speaker's beliefs :

(21) He's French, but not rude.
 2. meanings tend to become *increasingly procedural*, i.e. indicate constraints on the interpretation of the utterance rather than actual content
 - Adversative meanings are one core example of purely procedural meanings (Blakemore, 2002) (unlike exclusive readings)
 3. the *scope* of items tend to enlarge, up to the *discourse level*
 4. truth-conditional meanings become *non truth-conditional*
 5. meanings bearing on the event described tend to *refer to the speech act* itself (Sweetser, 1990)

Previous analysis : Traugott (1986)

- Traugott (1986) proposes a general constraint on the derivation of « *but connectives* » (including the derivation of *but* itself from *butan*)
- The core property is that element that eventually can mark opposition :
 - express a « proximal-distal » or « linear » configuration.
 - the elements in the prejacents are « other/distant » from those in the other argument.
 - the adversative meaning is metaphorically derived from that latter property
- Exclusives fit that picture by conjuring elements that have/don't have a given property (although Traugott does not mention them).
- However, this account does not give a straightforward account of why exclusives only allow indirect DoE.

Other sources Nevalainen (1991)

- Nevalainen (1991) studies in depth the system of exclusive adverbials in English, from 1500 to 1900.
- *but* is identified as initially serving *exclusive* functions, some which have survived today :

(22) a. Everybody but Paul came.
b. He is but a child.
- However, nothing is said about the shift from the exclusive meaning of *but* to its present adversative reading.

2.2 Path of semantic change

- To identify the path of semantic change, I'll consider the *argumentative* properties of exclusion and adversative conjunction (Anscombe & Ducrot, 1983; Merin, 1999; Winterstein, 2010).
- I'll argue that the change is *metonymic*, which predicts that *bridge cases* (i.e. cases ambiguous between the exclusive and adversative) can be identified.
- I'll argue that the restriction of the adversative to indirect DoE can be accounted for in this way.

Argumentation in language

- Anscombe & Ducrot (1983) : by using an utterance a speaker *argues* for some goal/conclusion.

(23) a. I'm hungry.
b. \rightsquigarrow I want to eat.
arg

- Argumentation is linguistically driven :
 - The argumentative possibilities in a discourse are tied to the global linguistic structure of the utterances and not just to the content they convey.
- The description of some items is best done in argumentative terms rather than truth conditional ones (although those are not mutually exclusive, Merin (1999); Winterstein (2010))

Adversative conjunctions and argumentation

- The meaning of adversative connectives like *but* is often described in terms of *contrast* (Lakoff, 1971).
- *Inferential* approaches consider that the semantics of *but* always involve some kind of pivot inference that is “disputed” by its conjuncts (Anscombe & Ducrot, 1977; Winterstein, 2012b).
 - (24) a. Lemmy smokes but is in very good health.
 - b. Lemmy is tall, but Lars is short.
- Anscombe & Ducrot (1977) : an utterance “*p but q*” conveys an *argumentative opposition* :
 - *p* argues for a pivot conclusion *H*
 - *q* argues against *H*, i.e. for $\neg H$
 - *q* must be a better argument for $\neg H$ than *p* is for *H*
- The pivot is inferred based on contextual information and other considerations.

Exclusion and argumentation

- Ducrot (1973, pp. 272–273) : French *seulement* (=only) is an argumentative operator, it marks an *inversion of the argumentative orientation* of its prejacent.
 - (25) a. Lemmy has a master’s degree. \rightsquigarrow Hire him.
 - b. Lemmy only has a master’s degree. \rightsquigarrow Do not hire him.
- This is a *consequence* of the core meaning of exclusives, rather than an inherent property of these markers (Winterstein, 2012a)
- Inversion only occurs when stronger argumentative alternatives are excluded (which is very frequent, but not systematic)

Path of change : inversion to opposition

- Exclusion can mark an argumentative *inversion*
 - Monadic operation, does not require an antecedent
- Adversative connectives mark argumentative *opposition*
 - Dyadic constraint, is anaphoric (in the broad sense of Berrendonner (1983))
- Both have in common the fact of *arguing against something* :
 - Against what the prejacent argues for in the case of exclusion
 - Against an antecedent for the case of opposition
- The shift from inversion to opposition is a *metonymic* one : it goes from *one part* of an argument (the opposite status of one premise) to the *overall structure* of the argument (the argumentative scheme of opposition).
- When two argumentatively opposed segments are used, it’s more natural to *mark* the opposition :
 - (26) a. ?He arrived late and barely (late).
 - b. He arrived late but barely (late).
- A marker like *only* inverts argumentation, so a discourse of the form *A only B* can either be interpreted as :
 - « *A* » and « *only B* » are co-oriented, i.e.
 - $A \rightsquigarrow H$

- *only* $B \underset{arg}{\rightsquigarrow} H$ (i.e. $B \underset{arg}{\rightsquigarrow} \neg H$)
- « *A* » and « *B* » are opposed and *only* is a connective (this is blocked when an overt adversative is used)
 - $A \underset{arg}{\rightsquigarrow} H$
 - $B \underset{arg}{\rightsquigarrow} \neg H$

Bridge cases

- Metonymic change is *continuous* (unlike metaphoric change)
- This entails that « bridge cases » should exist, i.e. cases such that the use of an exclusive marker is ambiguous between the exclusive reading and the adversative one.
- The following examples appear to fit :

(27) Tu ne quarras pas chose grande, affin que tu soyes honneste. SEULEMENT demande l'esmende de l'offence de Jehan prophete, qu'a dit que je suis deshonneste, palharde, ribaulde, putain. *You shall not ask for a big thing, so that you are honest. Only ask for reparation of the prophet Jean's offense, who said I am dishonest, bawdy, ribald, and a whore.* (Anonymous, La Passion d'Auvergne 1477)

(28) Her face is perfect, only her body is not.

Testing the ambiguity

- In the exclusive reading, it's expected that (by default) the utterance will be argumentative co-oriented with the preceding discourse segment (and contra-oriented for the adversative reading).
- The ambiguity can be tested by trying opposite argumentative continuations :

- (29) a. EXCLUSIVE : Her face is perfect, only her body is not, so we can hire her for the photo shoot.
 b. ADVERSATIVE : Her face is perfect, only her body is not, so we cannot hire her for the photo shoot.

Exclusion and exception

- Usually, exceptive particles allow the same semantic shift as exclusives and can also be used as adversatives (*sauf que* ≈ *except that*) :

(30) J'aimerais venir, sauf que j'ai une réunion.
 I'd like to come SAUF QUE I have a meeting.
 I'd like to come, but I have a meeting.

- The shift can be explained on the same ground as for exclusives since the semantics of these particles are very similar, one being the dual of the other :

- (31) a. Only Lemmy came.
 b. = Nobody came except Lemmy.

2.3 Open Issues

- I. Why does the semantic change only leads to an indirect opposition meaning?
 - II. The proposed path of semantic change could theoretically be applied as soon as an element inverts the argumentative orientation of its host.
- However, this is not the case :
 - Not all exclusives can (e.g. Japanese *dake*)
 - Other elements that invert orientation, cannot be used as adversatives (e.g. French *à peine*, English *barely*).

- III. It's not clear whether the adversative use of exclusive particles is compatible with other overt adversative markers. However, items that underwent semantic change are often found in harmonic contexts (Mosegaard-Hansen, 2008).

Why only indirect opposition ?

- For a sentence *A only B*, marking direct opposition would mean :
 - $A \underset{arg}{\rightsquigarrow} \neg B$
- And if the proposed path is right, it means that originally the exclusive reading should yield an inversion such that :
 - $only\ B \underset{arg}{\rightsquigarrow} \neg B$
- But exclusive markers still convey the truth of their prejacent (as a presupposition)
 - $only\ B \rightarrow B$
- This entails that an utterance *only B* cannot be used as an argument against *B* itself, i.e. the shift does not allow direct opposition.

Why not all items ?

- Only items that can syntactically scope over a whole clause can undergo the shift.
- Those who only associate with sub-sentential phrases are less likely to be interpreted as discourse connectives
- This rules out :
 - Japanese *dake*
 - Adverbs like *barely/à peine*

Harmonic contexts

- Adversative exclusives usually don't co-occur with other adversative marking.
- It's not clear whether forcing co-occurrence is possible
 - French :
 - (32) a. ??J'aimerais venir, mais seulement j'ai un meeting.
 - b. ?J'aimerais, mais c'est seulement que j'ai un meeting.
 - English
 - (33) a. *I'd like to come, but only I have a meeting.
 - b. ?I'd like to come, but it's just that I have a meeting.
- It might be a purely syntactic reason : two discourse connectives cannot co-exist.
- In Chinese, elements of various PoS convey similar functions. Harmonic contexts are frequent, if not the norm.

3 The case of Cantonese

- In its inventory of adversative and exclusive items, Cantonese has :
 - Several adversative connectives *bat1gwo3*, *daan6hai6*...
 - Many ways to convey exclusion/restriction :
 - Adverbs : *zi2hai6*, *zing6hai6*, *dak1*...
 - Sentence Final Particles : *ze1*, *za3*, *ze1 ma3*...
- Here, I will focus on :
 - the adversative *bat1gwo3*, which was originally an exclusive marker
 - the exclusive SFP *ze1* which has now an adversative reading

Chinese : bat1gwo3/bu4guo4

- Cantonese and Mandarin both use the adversative connective 不過 (CAN *bat1gwo3*, MAN *bu4guo4*)
- Sentence initial BG conveys an adversative reading :

(34) ... bat1gwo3 keoi5 dak1 saam1 go3 neoi5pang4jau5.
... BATGWO he has three CL girlfriend
... but he has three girlfriends.

- Literally BG means *no more than* and can still be used as a marker of exclusion when not in clause initial position. However it requires the additional use of exclusive SFP (e.g. *ze1ma3*).

(35) Keoi5 bat1gwo3 dak1 saam1 go3 neoi5pang4jau5. #(ze1ma3).
he BATGWO have three CL girlfriend EXCL. SFP
He only has three girlfriends.

- The shift from the exclusive meaning of BG to an adversative reading can be accounted for by the mechanism proposed above.
- *Problem* : adversative BG is compatible with both direct and indirect DoE :

(36) a. Keoi5 sik6jin1 bat1gwo3 hou2 gin6hong1.
he smoke BG very healthy
He smokes but he's in good health.
b. Ni1 ga3 ce1 hou2 gwai3 bat1gwo3 hou2 leng3.
DEM CL car very expensive BG very pretty
This car is very expensive but very nice.

- *Hypothesis* : BG is at a more advanced stage than *only/seulement* :
 - its exclusive meaning is weakened
 - its adversative meaning is widened
- *Prediction* : *only/seulement* might widen their adversative readings in the same way ?

The SFP *ze1*

- Usually, the Cantonese Sentence Final Particle *ze1* is described as being an equivalent of *only* (Kwok, 1984; Fung, 2000; Matthews & Yip, 2011).
- It associates with full propositions and takes a complete utterance as its argument :

(37) Bob zi1dou3 Ann git3zo2fan1 ze1.
Bob know Ann marry+PFV ZE.
*Bob "only" knows Ann got married. (≈ « that's not a big deal ») * Only Bob knows Ann got married.*

- This distinguishes *ze1* from other exclusive particles, notably *za3* :

(38) Bob zi1dou3 Ann git3zo2fan1 za3.
Bob know Ann marry+PFV ZA3.
Only Bob knows Ann got married. Bob only knows Ann got married.

Non-exclusive *ze1*

- Some uses of *ze1* are not so easily construed as exclusive and involve “downplaying” or adversative readings.

(39) keoi5 ji4ga1 hou2 sai3go3 ze1.
he now very young ZE
He (still) is very young (so it's ok if he cannot walk).

- (40) ngo5 zau3 m4hai6 jiu3 gam3 do3 ge3 ze1.
 I then don't need so many SFP ZE
I don't want that much (after being offered a lot of it).
- (41) gaan2 nguk1 hou2 daai6 ze1.
 CL house very big ZE
The flat is very big (not as small as reported/expected)

⇒ *ze1* acquired an adversative reading, the same way others did

Adversative *ze1*

— *ze1* can be used for indirect DoE, possibly with an additional harmonic adversative connective :

- (42) ni1 ga3 ce1 hou2 leng3 wo3 (bat1gwo3/daan6hai6) hai6 siu2siu2 gwai3 ze1.
 DEM CL car very nice SFP (but) COP a bit expensive ZE
This car is nice but a bit expensive.

— And *ze1* is not compatible with direct DoE :

- (43) #ni1 go3 pai4zi2 m4hai6 gei2 hou2 daan6hai6 hou2 gwai3 ze1.
 DEM CL brand not quite good but very expensive ZE
 (int.) *This is not a very good brand, but it's very expensive.*

Non-symmetric opposition

— Adversative *seulement* appears to be *symmetric* (like *mais*)

- (44) a. Cette voiture est belle, seulement elle est chère.
 b. Cette voiture est chère, seulement elle est belle.

— However, *ze1* is not always symmetrical :

- (45) *ni1 ga3 ce1 siu2siu2 gwai3 bat1gwo3 hou2 leng3 ze1.
 DEM CL car a bit expensive but very nice ZE
- (46) a. ni1 go3 essay m4make-sense (bat1gwo3) hai6 grammar mou5 co3 ze1.
 DEM CL essay not-make-sense (but) COP grammar have-no error ZE
This essay does not make sense, but the grammar is flawless.
 b. ni1 go3 essay grammar mou5 co3, (bat1gwo3) hai6 m4make-sense ze1.
 DEM CL grammar have-no error (but) COP essay not-make-sense ZE
This essay's grammar is flawless, but it does not make sense.

— *ze1* might not be the only non-symmetric adversative exclusive :

- (47) a. ?I don't know how to play, only I'd like to join.
 b. ?This car is expensive, only it's (very) nice.

— This can be related to the ambiguity of sequences « *p only q* » as either :

- « *A* » and « *only B* » are co-oriented
 — « *A* » and « *B* » are opposed and *only* is a connective

— In the above examples the first analysis is not acceptable for reasons inherent to the semantics of exclusives (Winterstein, 2012a), which accounts for the observations cf. :

- (48) a. #It's only nice.
 b. Only the grammar is good.

— This constraint relaxes over time, i.e. the symmetricity of adversative exclusives may be an indication of the advancement of the semantic change.

Cantonese : taking stock

— Cantonese sports 3 distinct exclusive markers which can be used to mark adversativity

- It is hypothesized that these markers are at different stages of their evolution toward adversative markers
 1. the adverb *zing6hai6* is comparable to *only*
 2. the SFP *ze1* is losing its purely exclusive reading
 3. the connective *bat1gwo3* cannot work as an exclusive on its own anymore
- **Future work** : check the diachrony of these elements
 - *bat1gwo3* and *zing6hai6* can be checked in (oral) Mandarin corpora
 - *ze1* is more tricky : there are very few Cantonese corpora, and even less historical ones
 - An initial probe comparing contemporary Cantonese corpora (Luke & Wong, 2015) with Mid-20th century Cantonese (Chin, 2015) shows no significant difference in the Exclusive/Adversative distribution.

Conclusion and perspectives

- Cross-linguistically, exclusive markers tend to acquire adversative properties.
- Different stages of progress might be observable in contemporary Cantonese.
- Traugott & Dasher (2002) discuss the evolution of adverbials toward discourse markers (e.g. *in fact*, *actually*)
- Those markers passed through an adversative stage, and later went on to become fully fledged discourse markers
- ⇒ is there also a next stage for exclusive markers ?
 - Chinese BG seems relatively stable
 - but maybe it'll end up acquiring the versatility of French *mais* (which has uses beyond its purely adversative reading)

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