

**On the (non-) exhaustivity of focus partitioning:  
A cross-linguistic investigation of exhaustivity in Hungarian focus and clefts**

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In this talk, we report on the results of a large-scale cross-linguistic investigation of exhaustivity inferences in Hungarian focus and cleft constructions, using the novel experimental paradigm of Incremental Information Retrieval. We show that speakers' assessment of exhaustivity effects in focus and cleft constructions is by and large parallel in German, English, French, Russian and Hungarian, irrespective of the morpho-syntactic structure of focus/cleft constructions in these languages. In particular, exhaustivity effects are neither robust nor systematic across speakers: whereas some speakers systematically derive exhaustivity inferences (on a par with the exclusive particle 'only'), others do not and interpret focus constructions and clefts on a par with non-exhaustive accent focus. More importantly, participants consistently interpret focus/cleft constructions on a par with definite pseudoclefts. Based on these findings, we propose to derive exhaustivity effects in focus/cleft constructions as a pragmatic inference from an underlying existence presupposition, *sensu* Pollard & Yasavul (2014), plus some speaker reasoning on the cardinality of the presupposed (implicit) discourse antecedent. More generally, the observed cross-linguistic parallels in the interpretation of focus-partitioning constructions suggest that these constructions should receive a unified analysis at the level of discourse structure, rather than at the level of morpho-syntax: All partitioning structures are anaphoric and presuppose the existence of a backgrounded discourse antecedent to be identified with the focus pivot.