

## **Focus adverbs at the vP and higher edges**

Michael Yoshitaka Erlewine (McGill)

Focus-sensitive operators must associate with a focused constituent (the associate) in their c-command domain (Jackendoff, 1972; Rooth, 1985, 1992; Tancredi, 1990). However, I show that this c-command requirement is insufficient to capture the distribution of focus adverbs (e.g. 'only') in Mandarin Chinese and Vietnamese. Focus adverbs in these languages must be as low as possible while c-commanding their focus associate, within a particular extended vP domain. The generalization is similar to what has been described for German by Jacobs (1983) and Buring & Hartmann (2001), but without a formal account.

I present a general analysis which derives the behavior observed in Mandarin and Vietnamese, and can also extend to Romance and Bantu languages where foci are required to be low in the clause. I discuss the relationship between two contrasting views for why the vP is special for these purposes, one based on cartography and one based on phase-level optimality.