Clausal and Phrasal Exceptives

Eric Potsdam
University of Florida

Maria Polinsky
University of Maryland

Overview

- Exceptives are constructions that express exclusion

1. Everyone voted, [except/but/ besides [Masha]].
   - Restricted QP
   - Exception phrase

- Connected exceptives (CE): the exception phrase is a nominal modifier, (2a, 3a)
- Free exceptives (FE): the exception phrase is separated from the restricted QP, typically appearing at the periphery of the clause, (2b, 3b)

2. a. Everyone except Vladimir Putin knows there was meddling.
   b. Everyone knows there was meddling, except Vladimir Putin.

3. a. Oni povzali vse xdej krome Maši na prazdnik they called all children, ACC.PL except Masha, GEN on party ‘They invited all the children except Masha to the party.’
   b. Oni povzali vse xdej na prazdnik krome Maši they called all children, ACC.PL except Masha, GEN ‘They invited all the children to the party, except Masha.’

4. The syntax of free exceptives is not uniform cross-linguistically
   - English: Clausal modifier reduced by ellipsis, (4)
   - Russian: Phrasal modifier moved by scrambling, (5)

5. (4) [s: Everyone voted] [i: except [s: Masha = [[vse xdej]]]]
6. (5) [s: [vse xdej]] (= [vse xdej] progresalavali) [i: except Masha, GEN]

Differences between English & Russian FEs

A. Full clause exception

6. All the children cried, except Masha did not cry.
7. ‘Vse deti zaplakali, krome Maša ne zaplakala
   all children cried INCEPT except Masha, NOM NEG cry, INCEPT
   (‘All the children started crying except Masha did not start crying.’)

B. Multiple exceptions

8. Every boy danced with every girl, except [Masha] with [Alex].
9. ‘Na vse x nem naplevat, krome [babušk] [na zabroennogo vnuka] on all, ACC all, DAT except grandma, DAT on forlorn grandson
   ‘Nobody could care less about anyone, except grandma about her neglected grandson.’

C. Non-NP exceptions

10. a. I didn’t think about anything, except [about getting out] or.
    b. [It [the GNP]] can tell us everything about America, except [whether we are proud to be Americans] or.
11. ‘Maša ni o čem ne dumaet krome [o detjax] ne
    Masha NEG about what, ACC except children, LOC.PL
    (‘Masha doesn’t think about anything, except about children.’)

D. Implicit restricted QP

12. He didn’t speak, except in riddles.
13. ‘On ne socinaja krome Jabol he NEG composes except complaints, GEN.PL
    (‘He does not write, except complaint letters.’)

E. Quantifier Constraint

14. Quantifier Constraint (Moltmann 1995:227, but see García Álvarez 2008)

15. a. The judges gave her a standing ovation, except Simon Cowell.
    b. Many animals can count, except cats.
16. a. [vse x stata] frukstov ne jen krome ananasov
    ISG.NOM fruit, GEN.PL NEG except pineapple, GEN.PL
    ‘I don’t eat fruit except pineapples.’
    b. ‘Mnogie podderživajut Putin krome inteligencii
    many support Putin except intelligentsia
    ‘Many support Putin, except the intelligentsia.’

Differences between CEs and FEs

- CEs and FEs differ in their syntax and semantics (Hoeksema 1987, 1995, Reinhart 1991, Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén 2012, Soltan 2016, others)

- English FEs behave as expected but Russian FEs show all the properties of CEs

PROPERTY | FE | CE
--- | --- | ---
A. exception can be a full clause | ✓ | ✓
B. multiple exceptions allowed | ✓ | ✓
C. exception need not be an NP | ✓ | ✓
D. implicit restricted QP allowed | ✓ | ✓
E. Quantifier Constraint violated | ✓ | ✓

Analysis

- English FEs are derived from a clausal source via clausal ellipsis

(17) TP & TP & CP
t1
t2
everyone
Masha C
T VP
voted

(18) a. Except is a coordinating conjunction (Soltan 2016)
   b. Except has a semantically negative piece, glossed NEG
   c. In the exceptive clause, the exception XP undergoes fronting
   d. Restricted QP in the antecedent (if present) undergoes QR at LF
   e. TP inside the exceptive clause is elided under semantic identity with the antecedent TP, (Merchant 2001), indicated by <TP>

(19) **Polarity Generalization** (after García Álvarez 2008:129)

The propositions expressed in the main clause and exceptive clause must have opposite polarity

- Russian FEs are derived from a phrasal CE source via scrambling/extraposition

(20) NP & TP

Conclusions

- **FEs do not have a uniform syntax cross-linguistically**
  - clausal analysis (English, see also Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén 2012 for Spanish, Soltan 2016 for Egyptian Arabic, Potsdam 2018 for Malagasy)
  - phrasal analysis (Russian)

- The phrasal extrapolation analysis is not appropriate for English and the clausal ellipsis analysis is not appropriate for Russian (Russian has a distinct clausal exceptive introduced with the conjunction krome)

- Is it possible to predict whether FEs will be clausal or phrasal in a language based on independent properties of that language?