

Results. Figure 2 shows our experimental results, overlaid on the predictions of (9). Overall, our results are inconsistent with (9) for *other than*, *except*, and *but*; this is demonstrated by results in ‘across-the-board’ (AtB) contexts (where every/no marble has a dot, verifying the test sentence with the EP omitted), as well as by results in the *mid range* (0.2-0.8) of target dot proportions. EPs are rejected, as predicted, in AtB contexts, but here *other than* patterns with *but* and *except*, rather than with NRRs. This grouping is also supported by results in the *every* mid range; both EPs and *other than* are less acceptable than NRRs, but significantly more acceptable than in the AtB context. Results with *no* further problematize a strong negative condition: participants accept prompts that are false according to (9c) at a rate indistinguishable from the acceptance of NRRs and *other than*. These results prompt three empirical questions. (A) What singles out AtB contexts for *other than* and EPs? (B) Why are there 3 distinct levels of acceptability in *every*’s mid-range? (C), why does this gradient emerge under *every* but not under *no*?

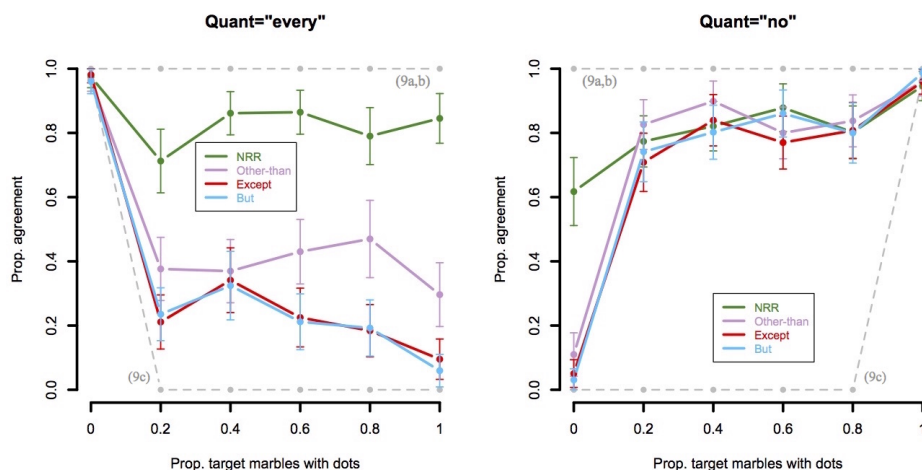


Figure 2: Acceptance rates for EPs, NRRs, *other-than* by proportion of blue marbles with dots.

Proposals. To address (A), we propose that *other than* belongs to the exceptive class, and that the EP negative constraint directly rules out AtB contexts, via the second conjunct in (10). We suspect that this conjunct represents not-at-issue or presuppositional content, on the basis of suggestions in [2]-[3], but our data alone does not rule out the possibility that it is an entailment.

$$(10) Q[C]P \text{ EXCEPTIVE } M := Q[C - M]P \& \neg Q[C \cap M]P$$

Second, we suggest that reduced acceptability of EPs in the mid range results from the falsity of an implicature to the strong negative condition. This is supported by similar results in [6] for the exceptive conditional *unless*; there, reduced mid-range acceptability was argued to follow from a false biconditional implicature. This interpretation moreover recalls [2]’s suggestion that an EP’s role is to defeat particular inferences that otherwise licensed by a (quantified) generalization: e.g. *Every marble has a dot*, absent an EP, licenses the inference that any specific marble has a dot. Gradation in the mid range is expected, for any particular EP, if speakers have variable expectations about the frequency at which the relevant inferences are defeated. The reliable difference between *other than* and *except, but* might on this view represent lexically-derived variation in defeasibility expectations for alternative exceptives.

Question (C) remains. Mid-range differences between *every* and *no* again replicate results in [6], where mid-range *unless* patterned with *if not* under *no*, but was non-categorically degraded under *every*. This pattern suggests a previously unnoticed pragmatic interaction between quantifier polarity and the inferences drawn from quantified generalizations. The precise nature of this interaction, as well as the pragmatics involved in choosing between exceptive alternatives (*other than* vs *except, but*) remain open issues. Our results serve as an advertisement for the usefulness of controlled experiments where subtle semantic/pragmatic judgements are involved. Quantitative data allow us to locate the appropriate empirical foundation (10) for the rough-and-ready intuitions about a negative constraint on EPs that

are expressed in the literature. They also indicate that these judgements involve a previously unnoticed interaction, and set the stage for further empirical study of quantifiers and exceptionality.

References

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