

Exceptives and Ellipsis

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Syntactic theories of ellipsis have, until recently, been built around English and a small number of constructions, particularly VP ellipsis and sluicing. This paper argues that free exceptives (Hoeksema 1987), as in (1), are derived via clausal ellipsis and have implications for ellipsis theorizing. The data in support of this claim come from Malagasy (Austronesian), a VOS language spoken in Madagascar (see also Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén 2012 on Spanish and Soltan 2016 on Arabic).

- (1) Tonga ny vahiny rehetra omaly, afa-tsy Raso
 arrived DET guest all yesterday except Raso
 ‘All the guests arrived yesterday, except Raso.’

Analysis. Such free exceptives involve a clause expressing a generalization followed by an exceptive phrase which indicates an exception to this generalization. In Malagasy, this exceptive phrase consists of *afa-tsy* ‘except’ and an XP exception. The proposed analysis is that this exception XP is the remnant of a clausal focus construction in which the exception moves to a left-peripheral position followed by deletion of the unfocused material:

- (2) Tonga ny vahiny rehetra omaly, afa-tsy [Raso **no tsy tonga omaly Raso**]_{CP}
 arrived DET guest all yesterday except Raso FOC NEG arrived yesterday
 ‘All the guests arrived yesterday, except Raso.’

Initial evidence for a clausal source is that the shaded elided material in (2) can be pronounced. Further arguments come from variable binding, (3), island sensitivity, (4), multiple exceptions (not shown), and coordination. In (3) the pronominal variable in the exception is bound by the subject QP despite the fact that it does not c-command the material to its right. In (4), the exceptive phrase cannot associate with a QP inside a CNPC island. In both cases, positing a clausal source, with A' movement, accounts for the judgments.

- (3) Niasa mafy **ny zaza tsirairay**, afa-tsy tamin' ny fitsingerin'ny andro nahateraha-ny
 worked hard DET child each except PREP DET birthday-3SG
no tsy niasa mafy tamin'ny — fitsingerin'ny andro nahateraha-ny_i ny zaza tsirairay_i
 FOC NEG work hard PREP DET birthday-3SG DET child each
 ‘Each child_i worked hard, except on his_i birthday.’
- (4) *Nihaona tamin' [ilay vehivavy niantra ny olona rehetra] aho, afa-tsy Rabe
 met PREP DEM woman pity DET person every 1SG except Rabe
no nihaona tamin' [ilay vehivavy tsy niantra Rabe]_{island} aho
 FOC met PREP DEM woman NEG pity Rabe 1SG
 (‘I met that woman who had compassion for everyone, except Rabe.’)

Finally, Malagasy distinguishes two coordinating conjunctions: *sy* coordinates phrases and *ary* coordinates clauses (Rajemisa-Raolison 1969). DPs can only coordinate with *sy*, (5a), but *ary* becomes possible with DPs in exceptives, (5b). This is expected if each exception conjunct can be a reduced clause.

- (5) a. Mihinana ny akondro **sy/*ary** ny manga Rabe
 eat DET banana and DET mango Rabe
 ‘Rabe eats bananas and mangoes.’
- b. Mihinana ny voankazo rehetra Rabe, afa-tsy ny akondro **sy/ary** ny manga
 eat DET fruit all Rabe except DET banana and DET mango
 ‘Rabe eats all fruits except bananas and mangoes.’

Alternatives. The talk argues against an alternative, non-clausal analysis in which the exception phrase originates as a modifier of the QP and extraposes to the right:

- (6) Tonga [ny vahiny rehetra ~~[afa-tsy Rasoa]] omaly, [afa-tsy Rasoa]
 arrive DET guest all except Rasoa yesterday except Rasoa
 ‘All the guests arrived yesterday, except Rasoa.’~~

Evidence against this alternative comes from the coordination facts above, the semantics of extraposition, (7), implicit antecedents, (8), fronting, the range of quantifiers/determiners that license exceptives, and non-DP exceptions. Extraposition in Malagasy backgrounds the extraposed element (Paul & Rabaovololona 1998) but exception XPs are focused. This is most easily seen with wh-phrases, which cannot extrapose, (7a), but can be exceptions, (7b). The focus nature of exceptions is also seen in the fact that the spelled out material in (2), if it is present, must be a focus construction and not a neutral VOS clause.

- (7) a. Nividy ilay boky (taiza) ianao (*taiza)?
 bought DEM book where 2SG where
 ‘You bought that book where?’
 b. Nanakiana ny rehetra (afa-tsy iza) ianao (afa-tsy iza)?
 accused DET all except who 2SG except who
 ‘You accused everyone except who?’

Examples with an implicit antecedent, (8), cannot be generated with an extraposition analysis because the unextraposed version is ungrammatical. The exceptive phrase has no QP to modify.

- (8) Nanao ny enti-mody (*afa-tsy omaly) Rakoto (afa-tsy omaly)
 did DET homework except yesterday Rakoto except yesterday
 ‘Rakoto did the homework, except yesterday.’

Some of these data also argue against the QR analysis of exceptives in Reinhart 1991, which will also be considered and rejected.

Conclusion. If free exceptives, at least in some languages, are derived via clausal ellipsis, they have implications for a wide range of issues discussed in the ellipsis literature. First, such data can be used to help determine the underlying structure of elided material. For Malagasy, the missing clause will be shown to be a focus construction, as in (2). This is theoretically interesting because the focus construction is a (pseudo)cleft (Paul 2001), not an A' fronting construction as in better studied Indo-European languages. Thus, the derivation is rather different from what is traditionally proposed for sluicing or fragments in English-like languages. Following Potsdam's (2007) analysis of Malagasy sluicing, the crucial operation that creates the focus remnant is predicate fronting, which also derives the predicate-initial (VOS) word order. Second, exceptives can inform our understanding of the variable island sensitivity seen in ellipsis constructions. They provide evidence for an approach in which island sensitivity results from focus/contrast of the remnant (Griffiths and Lipták 2014) and not from illicit A' traces at PF (Merchant 2008). As seen above, exceptions are inherently focused but the talk will show that exceptives do not have additional A' traces that could cause the derivation to crash.

Griffiths, J., and A. Lipták. 2014. Contrast and island sensitivity in clausal ellipsis. *Syntax* 17:189-234. **Hoeksema, J. 1987.** The logic of exception. *Proceedings of ESCOL 4*, 100-113. Columbus: OSU. **Merchant, J. 2001.** *The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis*. Oxford: OUP. **Merchant, J. 2008.** Variable island repair under ellipsis. In *Topics in ellipsis*, 132-153. Cambridge: CUP. **Paul, I. 2001.** Concealed pseudoclefts. *Lingua* 111:707-727. **Paul, I., and L. Rabaovololona. 1998.** Raising to object in Malagasy. *UCLA Occasional Papers in Linguistics* 20:50-64. **Pérez-Jiménez, I. and N. Moreno-Quibén. 2012.** On the syntax of exceptions. Evidence from Spanish. *Lingua* 122:582-607. **Potsdam, E. 2007.** Malagasy sluicing and its consequences for the identity requirement on ellipsis. *NLLT* 25:577-613. **Rajemisa-Raolison, R. 1969.** *Grammaire malgache*. Fianarantsoa: Librairie Ambozotany. **Reinhart, T. 1991.** Elliptic conjunctions – Non-quantificational LF. In *The Chomskyan turn*, 360-384. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell. **Soltan, U. 2016.** On the syntax of exceptive constructions in Egyptian Arabic. In *Perspectives on Arabic linguistics XXVII*, 35-57. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.