

On *Except* and *Exceptive But*
Hiroyuki TAHARA

In this study, I will reveal two constraints on *exceptive but* as in (1) by comparison with *except*:

- (1) Finally we had packed everything {but/except} the typewriter.

(Quirk et al. (1985:708))

For the sake of brevity, I will refer to *everything* as "CORRELATE", and *the typewriter* as "EXCEPTION".

Three constraints have been proposed concerning *exceptive but* in the literature. A first constraint on *but* is that a CORRELATE must contain an indefinite pronoun or a determiner of absolute meaning (positive or negative), as exemplified in (2):

- (2) {Every/*Most/*Many/*Some/*Three/No} student(s) but John attended the meeting.

(von Stechow (1992:144))

Every and *no* are determiners of absolute meaning, and the sentences containing them are acceptable, while those with *most*, *many*, *some* and *three* are not. This constraint also holds for *except*, as in (3):

- (3) {Every/*Most/*Many/*Some/*Three/No} student(s) except John attended the meeting.

(Imanishi (1994:384))

A second constraint on *but* is that it cannot occur initially, as (4) shows:

- (4) *But me, everyone was tired.

(Quirk et al. (1985:708))

On the other hand, *except* allows this option, as illustrated in (5):

- (5) Except a few bits of splintered wood on the ground, there was no sign of the accident.

(M.R. Rinehart, *The Circular Staircase*)

A third constraint on *but* is that a break must not intervene between a CORRELATE and an EXCEPTION, as presented in (6):

- (6) *She couldn't eat anything. But cucumbers.

(Higashimori (1992:90))

On the other hand, *except* allows such an intervention, as in (7):

- (7) ... he could not make anybody hear him. Except a spider who came out of a crack in the ceiling and examined the knots critically, from a safe distance.

(B. Potter, *The Great Big Treasury*)

However, this is not a whole story of *exceptive but*. I will clarify other constraints on *exceptive but* by comparison with *except*.

Imanishi (1994) points out that more than one element can occur as EXCEPTIONS in the case of *except*, as presented in (8) (for analytical convenience, I adopt different notations from hers: the CORRELATES are marked by square brackets, and the EXCEPTIONS by angle brackets):

- (8) [At no time]₁ was [any room]₂ occupied in this hotel except <Room A>₂
 <on Sunday>₁. (Imanishi (1994:382))

In this case the *except*-phrase includes two EXCEPTIONs *Room A* and *on Sunday*. The corresponding CORRELATE to the EXCEPTION *Room A* is *any room*, and in the case of *on Sunday*, *At no time*.

This point has never been examined with exceptive *but*. Exceptive *but* does not allow this option, as shown in (9):

- (9) *[At no time]₁ was [any room]₂ occupied in this hotel but <Room A>₂
 <on Sunday>₁.

As we have seen in (1), *but*-headed phrases with one EXCEPTION are acceptable. Therefore, we can say that more than one EXCEPTION cannot be contained in exceptive *but* phrases.

The next constraint concerns the deletability of CORRELATES. Imanishi (1994) provides examples that show the deletability of CORRELATES as in the following (ϕ is a symbol for an implicit element; CORRELATES are again marked by square brackets, and EXCEPTIONs by angle brackets):

- (10) John talked (to his wife)₁ ([about everything]₂) seriously except <about
 money>₂. (Imanishi (1994:385))

The CORRELATE to the EXCEPTION *about money* is *about everything*, and it is deletable. However, CORRELATES are not always deletable, as in (11-12):

- (11) John drinks *([anything]) rapidly except <beer>.
 (12) I can live *([in any place]) except <in Tokyo>. (Imanishi (1994:385))

Note that *anything* in (11) is an argument of the verb *drink*, and *in any place* in (12) is an obligatory adjunct to the verb *live*. On the other hand, *about everything* in (10) is an optional adjunct to the verb *talk*. It is not known whether exceptive *but* allows this option. If we replace the *except*'s in (10-12) with *but*'s, we get (13-15), which are parallel to (10-12):

- (13) John talked (to his wife)₁ ([about everything]₂) seriously but <about
 money>₂.
 (14) John drinks *([anything]) rapidly but <beer>.
 (15) I can live *([in any place]) but <in Tokyo>.

The point to observe is that optional adjuncts to the verb can serve as implicit CORRELATES, as in (13), while obligatory elements, such as arguments or obligatory adjuncts to the verb cannot, as in (14-15).

By presenting the missing distributional data of exceptive *but*, this study has made two further comparisons between the two exceptives possible. It is my hope that these data will bring about a more widespread understanding of them.