

Exception phrases (EP) are headed by exception words (EW) like *except (for)* and *but* in English or *bis auf* and *außer* in German, cf. (1-2).

- (1) [Every man]_{EC} [but/except for John]_{EP} came.
(2) Die Lehrerinnen (...) arbeiten [bis auf ein kleines Spesen-Entgelt]_{EP} [gratis]_{EC}.
The teachers work except for a small expenses payment gratis.
The teachers don't get paid besides receiving a small amount of expenses.

EPs have received little analysis by semanticists (Moltman 1995, Hoeksema 1991, von Fintel 1995). Even less is found on their syntax. An analysis of certain syntactic properties can be found in Reinhart (1991), and even Pasch et al. (2003) only briefly mention one type of EP (with *außer*). I present empirical results regarding the syntax of two types of EPs (with *bis auf* and *außer*), without committing to any specific theory. In my corpus, EPs have a strong tendency to be Vorfeld fillers without their correlates (EC), the co-occurrence of the EP and its EC in the Vorfeld being almost banned. I show that the configuration with the EP in the Vorfeld and the EC in the Mittelfeld is just a special case of an even more preferred configuration where the EP precedes the EC.

For *bis auf* and *außer*, I sampled 100 random sentences each (from the COSMAS 2 corpus). First of all, it was found that 44% of the units have the EP is positioned sentence-initially, alone in the Vorfeld. To check whether this is indeed exceptional, an auxiliary study in recent archives (1999) of the DWDS-Corpus was conducted (using the DWDS, because its query language gave cleaner results than COSMAS) to get an estimate on the Vorfeld affinity of both rare and frequent sample prepositions to which to compare EWs (e.g., *angesichts*, *anstelle*, *in*, *statt*, *von*, *wegen*). The Vorfeld distribution of even the most likely Vorfeld-fillers among these (*angesichts*) is significantly lower than that of EPs. Thus, EPs (without their EC) must be recognized as highly, even disproportionately preferred Vorfeld fillers, while in only 4 of 200 cases the EP occupies the Vorfeld together with the EC.

Then, testing whether there are significant differences in the distribution of the two EWs, we found that *außer* has an even stronger Vorfeld affinity, and *bis auf* is more commonly located in the Mittelfeld. However, looking at the ordering of EC and EP regardless of which field they occupy, we find that 152 units have the EP preceding the EC vs. 36 where the EC precedes the EP. We show that the simple ordering preference is not modelled by the Vorfeld distribution, but that it is even (significantly) stronger. Thus, independently of how likely it is that an EP is located in the Vorfeld, the probability that it is positioned to the left of its EC is even higher. This preference is not (at least not trivially) explained, for example, by the definiteness of the NP contained in the EP (statistically confirmed) or some information-structurally relevant feature like *given-new*. We therefore suggest that it is a preference associated with the specific lexical items, rather than one following from more general constraints.

References.

- von Fintel, K. (1991), A semantics for exception phrases, in D. Bates, ed., 'Proceedings of WCCL 10', Stanford Linguistics Association, Stanford, pp. 493-504.
Hoeksema, J. (1995), The semantics of exception phrases, in J. van der Does & J. van Eijck, ed., 'Quantifiers, Logic and Language', CSLI Publications, Stanford, pp. 145-77.
Moltmann, F. (1995), 'Exception sentences and polyadic quantification', *Linguistics and Philosophy* 18, 223-80.
Pasch, R.; Braue, U. & Breindl, E. (2003), *Handbuch der Deutschen Konnektoren*, de Gruyter, Berlin.
Reinhart, T. (1991), Elliptical Conjunction - Non-quantificational QR; in: A. Kasher, *The Chomskian Turn*, Basil Blackwell: Cambridge, Massachusetts.