

**Diagnosing a diagnostic:
Revisiting the Quantifier Constraint on exceptives**

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It is often claimed or assumed (see e.g. von Stechow 1993, Moltmann 1995, Dayal 1998, Keenan 2003, Szabolcsi 2004) that DP-internal exceptives introduced with *but*, *save*, *except*, and their analogues can only be hosted by universals: *{everything/nothing/*something/*much} but the kitchen sink*. Based on this claim, the cooccurrence of exceptives with free-choice *any* has led some investigators of polarity to treat FCIs as universals.

This restriction—the QUANTIFIER CONSTRAINT of Moltmann (1995: 227ff.)—has in fact been recognized since the Middle Ages:

An exceptive word [e.g. *præter*] indicates a relationship of a part actually existing in a whole to its whole.

(Peter of Spain, *Synkategoremata*, Tract. IV, 7; de Rijk 1992: 171)

An exceptive proposition is never properly formed unless its non-exceptive counterpart is a universal proposition. Hence, ‘A man except Socrates is running’ is not properly formed.

(Ockham 1980: 144-5: *Summa Logica*, II:18)

But in fact both *anys* host well-formed exceptives—

- (1) a. I'd vote for anyone but W. (FC *any*)
 b. I wouldn't veto anyone but W. (NPI *any*)

—apparently suggesting, contrary to common wisdom, that not only FC *any* but NPI *any* is a universal. Dayal (1998) and others have taken the grammaticality of (1a) as evidence for the universal status of FC *any*, without acknowledging the fact that NPI *any* would also have to be reckoned as a universal by the evidence of (1b). Postal (2000) and Szabolcsi (2003), on the other hand, regard the acceptability of (1b) as evidence that (some) NPIs have a $\neg\exists$ representation, equivalent to a universal, $\forall\neg$.

But how viable is the Quantifier Constraint? In fact (cf. Horn & Bayer 1984: 408), exceptives, while excluded from ordinary wh-questions, occur in rhetorical “queclaratives” (Sadock 1971), i.e. interrogatives standardly used to convey universal negatives. Thus (2a) is impossible, but (2b) is fine, since it induces a short-circuited implicature that nobody other than W would advocate a tax cut.

- (2) a. #Who but Chris is planning to join us for dinner?
b. Who but W would advocate a tax cut at this time?

Another non-universal host of exceptives is *little* (or *few*), as illustrated by the thousands of annual hits in Nexis sampled in (3):

- (3) Landowners could do little but accept their fate.
With little except morbid thoughts to occupy his time,...
...an artful yet provocative cover for her all-Bach CD in which she
appears to be wearing little except her violin.
Does poetry matter? Few but other poets may read it.

Similarly, in (4),

- (4) I wonder whether any Western political leader but Romano Prodi would
discuss the works of Bertolt Brecht with President Khatami.
(Anthony Lewis, "In the Premier League", New York Times op-ed, 7/13/98, A17)

where the reader is invited to infer that no relevant head of government other than the Italian premier would shmooze Brecht with the President of Iran.

On the basis of such facts and others, I proposed (Horn 2000b: 78) that an exceptive proposition can be semantically or pragmatically licensed when its non-exceptive counterpart is **conventionally used to express** a universal, hence predicting the well-formedness of the above examples, including (1b), given the equivalence in (5).

- (5) I wouldn't veto **anyone but W** = I would veto **no one but W**

In fact, however, even this constraint proves too strong. Exceptives co-occur naturally with FC *any* in imperatives, where no universal analysis is plausible,

- (6) Pick any card but the Ace of Spades.

and they also appear in the supplementary *any* cases (Jennings 1994, Horn 2000) that involve syntagmatically widened existentials or indefinites rather than universals:

- (7) Think of a number, any number but zero. Divide it by 2...
A doctor, any doctor but that quack, will tell you Stopsneeze helps.
We need a candidate, any candidate except Kerry.

Note that garden-variety (non-episodic) indefinites are impossible in these frames—

- (8) *Pick a card but the Ace of Spades
 *We need a candidate except Kerry.
 *(Any) owls but very infirm ones catch mice

—indicating that exceptives can be licensed by the scalar endpoints evoked by *any* (Lee & Horn 1994, Horn 2000) but cannot appear with ordinary existentials or simple generics.

As indicated by the googled examples in (9) (emphasis added; translations mine), the unambiguously free-choice indiscriminative indefinite of French, *n'importe qu-*, is equally capable of exception, even in contexts with on-line widening. Here, once again, it is the indiscriminative construction's end-of-scale nature that licenses exceptives, even in the clear absence of universals.

- (9) <http://www.quebecoislibre.org/000219-7.htm>
 Bref, c'est la faute à **n'importe qui, n'importe quoi, sauf moi.**

*[In short, I blame it on **anyone, anything, but me.**]*

<http://www.angelfire.com/music3/lestudio/djbil.htm>

Avis, avant de passer un commentaire au DJ ou de faire une demande spéciale... Ne demande pas "je veut [sic] entendre **quelque chose, n'importe quoi sauf ça**" Ok, allez au bar et dites "je veut [sic] boire **quelque chose, n'importe quoi sauf ça!**" une plainte ne vaut pas grand chose si elle est vague.

*[Warning: Before passing a comment on to the DJ or making a special request, don't ask "I wants to hear **something, anything but that.**" OK, go up to the bartender and say "I wants to drink **something, anything but that!**" A demand isn't worth much if it's vague.]*

Like the distribution of A-adverbs¹ (*almost, absolutely*) and existential *there* constructions (see Horn 2005), exceptives thus prove no impediment to a unified indefinite analysis of *any*.

¹ In fact, not only can A-adverbs co-occur readily with NPI *any*, as extensively documented in Horn (2005), but *almost* and exceptives can appear in the same context:

- (i) I already knew she was pregnant. She paid no attention to her body. She **didn't eat almost anything** except pills...

(<http://www.rutgerhauer.org/stories/03aug30.php>)

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