

The syntax of exceptive constructions in Arabic

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the underlying structure of exceptive constructions with the Arabic exceptive marker *'illā* and reveals the existence of two types of constructions: r(estrictive)-exceptives and s(ubtractive)-exceptives. The underlying factor that distinguishes these two constructions relates to the existence of a subtraction domain in s-exceptive constructions and its absence in r-exceptives. This distinction suggests that the exceptive marker *'illā* 'except' has a different syntactic function in these two constructions. Furthermore, this difference in the functional status of *'illā* suggests a different internal and external structure of the *'illā*-XP in each of these constructions. I argue that while the *'illā*-XP in r-exceptive constructions projects a R-ExP, involving a covert antecedent in the form of the NPIs *'ahad* 'one' or *shay* 'thing' and is a nominal adjunct, in s-exceptive constructions the *'illā*-XP forms an S-ExP and can be classified into connected and free exceptives.

KEYWORDS

r-exceptive, s-exceptive, *'illā*, Arabic, negative element, NPI, apposition, connected exceptives, free exceptives

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the syntax of exceptive constructions has caught the attention of several scholars across different languages, such as O'Neill (2011) and Pérez-Jiménez & Mareno-Quibén (2012) for Spanish, Authier (2020) for French, Postdam & Polinsky (2019) for English, Vostrikova (2019, 2021) for Russian, and Jędrzejowski (2022) for Polish. In Arabic, there are a few studies that provide a syntactic analysis of exceptive constructions; three examples are Moutaouakil (2009),

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In Arabic, there are three main types of exceptive constructions that include the exceptive marker *'illā*. These are negative empty exceptives, affirmative exceptives and negative full exceptives (see [Badawi Carter & Gully 2016](#), 748–758; [Abu-Chacra 2007](#), 386–390). *'Illā* can occur, first, in empty exceptive constructions, where it appears with negation, but with no overt DP host. The resulting meaning can be paraphrased with *only*, as in (1a). In addition, *'illā* can occur in full exceptive constructions. An overt DP host is present, and negation may be present or not, as in (1b) and (1c). These are exemplified in (1a–c) from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the focus language of this study:

- The first type, as in (1a), is also referred to as incomplete exceptive because it does not involve a domain from which an exemption is made or subtracted. The second type, (1b), does not include a negative element; hence it is affirmative. The third type, (1c), is introduced by a negative element and includes a domain and is thus called negative full exceptive. The main function of 'illā is to subtract an item, be it animate or inanimate, from a group of items or people. The subtracted item can be referred to as the excepted element; this is the part which follows 'illā, while the part which precedes 'illā is the one from which the exception is made, called the subtraction domain or antecedent (Badawi, Carter & Gully 2016, 748). In a typical exceptive construction, and for convenience in reference, the part that precedes 'illā will be referred to as the main clause, although the excepted element is part of this clause. The constituent that includes 'illā and the excepted element will be termed the Exceptive Phrase, and the excepted element will be called the XP complement (Potsdam & Polinsky 2017; Al-Bataineh 2021). These elements are illustrated in the example below (repeated from (1b)):

- ¹The Arabic data are transliterated according to the Romanisation system of the American Library Association <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/arabic.pdf>.



The distinction proposed between constructions such as (1a) and (1b–c) has not been fully captured on a syntactic basis in traditional Arabic grammars, leading to a limited understanding in the literature of Arabic exceptives. For example, the underlying structure associated with each of the exceptive types given in (1a–c) has not been deeply examined. Moreover, the possibility of a covert subtraction process in (1a) and the syntactic role of *'illā* in the three types exemplified in (1a–c) are still controversial issues even in recent work. For instance, in Moutaouakil (2009) and Al-Bataineh (2021), issues of distinction between types of exceptive constructions and the different case inflections assigned to the DP complement are debated.

In the present paper, a syntactic account of three types of exceptive constructions and their underlying structures is developed. More specifically the distinction between what counts as a restrictive exceptive construction and what involves a subtractive exceptive construction is detailed. It will be shown that while *'illā* in the empty exceptive suggests a restrictive function; in affirmative and negative full exceptives it involves a subtractive meaning. This generalization is not new, but was recognized earlier by Moutaouakil (2009). What this paper does, though, is provide a more adequate syntactic analysis with derivations of the constructions that reflect their underlying structures. In this paper I propose that the exceptive has a different syntactic status in empty and full exceptives. In empty exceptives, it adjoins to the DP. In full exceptives, it usually adjoins at the clausal level. This difference is taken to correlate with a distinction in feature specification, where *'illā* bears a [domain restriction] feature in empty exceptives, and a [domain subtraction] feature in full exceptives, resulting in distinct exceptive projections in the two constructions.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, an overview of the exceptive marker *'illā* is presented. Section 3 lays down the differences between empty exceptive and full exceptive constructions and as a result empty exceptives will be classified as r-exceptive constructions and full exceptives as s-exceptive constructions. Section 4 deals with the underlying structure of r-exceptive constructions and the type of antecedent in the main clause. The syntactic analysis of r-exceptive constructions will be the focus of section 5. Section 6 presents the syntactic analysis of the two types of s-exceptive constructions, affirmative and negative exceptives. Section 7 concludes with a summary.

2. THE EXCEPTIVE MARKER *'ILLĀ*: OVERVIEW

Among exceptive markers in Arabic, *'illā* is very common and widely used.² *'Illā* is a particle which has a negative effect (exclusive) after an affirmative statement, and an affirmative (inclusive) effect after a negative statement (Badawi, Carter & Gully 2016, 748). This should therefore mean that *'illā* can be taken to mean ‘except, but’ and ‘but not’. *'Illā* can be used in the three main exceptive constructions known in Arabic, as shown in the examples in (3a–c), repeated from (1a–c), respectively:³ (A is used for affirmative and N for negative.)

²Other exceptives in Arabic are *siwā*, *ghayr*, *(mā)khalā*, *(mā)'adā*, *hāshā*, *laysa* and *lā*.

³The abbreviations in the glosses are the following: ACC = Accusative case, COP = copular verb, DEF = definite article, DU = dual, F = feminine, GEN = Genitive case, INDF = indefinite article, M = masculine, NEG = negation element, NOM = Nominative case, PST = past, PL = plural, PRS = present, Q = question, SG = singular, 1/2/3 = first/second/third person.



- (3) a. mā jā'a 'illā aḥmed-un [Empty exceptive]
 NEG come.PST.M3SG except Ahmed-NOM
 'Only Ahmed came.'/'There did not come but Ahmed.'
- b. jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-an [Full exceptive/A]
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-ACC
 'The guests came except Ahmed.'
- c. mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-un/an [Full exceptive/N]
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 'No one out of the guests came except Ahmed.'

In (3a), the excepted element *Ahmed* apparently functions as the subject argument of the sentence, as evidenced by the Nominative case. This exceptive construction is most frequently negative and the excepted element will always be the only agent involved in the exception action given in the predicate in case of intransitive constructions. There is the possibility that there is a covert 'one' or 'anyone' there, and the meaning would be 'for all x, did not come x, except Ahmed'. The existence of a covert element will be discussed in section 4. In empty exceptives, negative exceptive constructions with no overt antecedent, the excepted element will be inflected mainly according to its position or reading with reference to the verb. (3b) is an example of an affirmative exceptive where *Ahmed* is excluded from the action of coming and is assigned Accusative case which is the default case in case of affirmative exceptives. It is called affirmative exceptive, although the exception phrase is not affirmative, simply because the main clause does not include a negative element. The excepted element here does not function as the subject argument of the sentence; the antecedent *aḍḍyūfu* 'the guests' does. In (3c), the excepted element can be inflected in the Nominative or Accusative case, a case alternation behavior unique to negative full exceptives. More will be said about this case alternation in section 6 where I present a syntactic analysis of exceptive constructions. Basically, the main apparent distinction between (3a) and (3b–c) relates to the availability of an overt subtractive domain in (3b–c) and its absence in (3a). While in both (3b–c) *Ahmed* is subtracted from a defined set of people, *aḍḍyūfu* 'the guests', no overt set of people is given in (3a). This will be further discussed in the next section.

In Arabic, in addition to this classification, there is also a distinction established between continuous and discontinuous exceptives. The former occurs when the antecedent and the excepted element belong to one class of items, as in (3b–c) above, whereas the latter occurs whenever the antecedent and the excepted element are of two different categories or entities, as in (4).

- (4) ḥaḍara al-musāfir-wn 'illā ḥaqa'b-a-hum
 come.PST.M3PL DEF-passenger-PL.NOM except luggage.PL-ACC-POSS.3PL
 'The passengers arrived except for their luggage.'

In the discontinuous exceptive the excepted element has not been excluded from the antecedent but rather from the whole event expressed in the main clause. For example, in (4) the luggage was not among the entities that have arrived. This shows that subtraction is not a primary component of the meaning of *'illā*. Reference to this distinction will not be made in the rest of this paper and will be left to future studies.



In the literature of exceptives across languages, two types of exceptives are identified: connected exceptives (CEs) and free exceptives (FEs) (see e.g., Hoeksema 1987, 1995; Von Fintel 1993; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén 2012). They differ in that the former combines two DPs and the latter combines two CPs. The data in this paper reflect the distinction between restrictive and subtractive exceptive constructions. As the distinction between connected and free exceptives is semantically relevant only to subtractive constructions (Hoeksema 1995), it will be included only in section 6, which deals with the syntax of subtractive exceptive constructions.

'Illā can be followed by a variety of grammatical categories, such as noun phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases and prepositional phrases, pronominal clitics or clauses. Examples of *'illā* + DP were given in (3a–c), and examples of *'illā* + adjective, adverb, preposition, pronominal clitic and complementizer are presented in (5a–e), respectively, adapted from Badawi, Carter & Gully (2016, 750–753). Discussion of such complements will not be included in this paper and will remain for future studies.

- (5) a. lam yakun 'illā majnwn-an
NEG be.PRS.M3SG except insane-ACC
'He was nothing but insane.'
- b. lā 'artaḥu 'illā hunāk-a
NEG rest.PRS.1SG except there-ACC
'I only rest there.'
- c. 'amrād-un lā tu'alaju 'illā bi-l-dawā'-i l-mustawrad-i
disease.PL-NOM NEG treat.PST.3PL except by-DEF-medicine-GEN DEF-imported-GEN
'Diseases which can only be treated with imported medicine.'
- d. lam 'a'ud 'arā 'illā-ka
NEG longer see.PRS.1SG except-CL.2SG
'I no longer see anyone but you.'
- e. 'inna ad-dyn-a lā yakūnu dyn-an 'illā 'idā
indeed DEF-religion-ACC NEG be.PST.M3SG religion-ACC except if
rabaṭa al-khalq-a bi-l-ḥaqq-i
bind.PST.M3SG DEF-people-ACC to-DEF-truth-GEN
'Religion is not religion unless it binds people to the Truth.'

The last note about *'illā* concerns its categorial status. Soltan (2016) classifies it as a coordinating conjunction linking two DPs or two CPs, refuting any suggestions that it would be a preposition or a focal adverb. In contrast, Al-Bataineh (2021) takes it to be a functional head Ex(ceptive), heading an Exceptive Phrase. More will be said about *'illā* in the following sections in the discussion of the syntactic status of the constructions it occurs in. There, I support the assumption made in Al-Bataineh (2021) that it is a distinct class of functional head in exceptive constructions. However, in empty exceptives or what I will be referring to as r-exceptive constructions, I argue that *'illā* acts as a restrictive exceptive and thus should be recognized as a different functional head. In the discussion that follows, the following questions will be addressed: (a) what type of structure do empty exceptives have; (b) is there a covert antecedent (null indefinite quantifier) in empty exceptives or do they completely lack an antecedent;



(c) what differences do the constructions in (3a–c) exhibit syntactically; and (d) how is the DP complement in the exceptive phrase assigned case in all types discussed above? In the following section I examine the type of construction referred to as empty exceptives in traditional Arabic grammars and show that they are restrictive exceptive constructions. This leads to a reclassification of Arabic exceptive constructions.

3. EMPTY EXCEPTIVES: RESTRICTIVE OR SUBTRACTIVE EXCEPTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

In the literature on Arabic exceptives, the classification of exceptives given in (3a–c) is developed according to two factors: negation (affirmative or negative exceptives) and antecedent (full or empty exceptives). While the negation-based classification is feasible and tied to the availability of a negative element (such as *lā*, *lan*, *lam*, *mā* and *laysa*), the antecedent-based classification is not. In Moutaouakil (2009, 85) empty exceptives are taken to involve restrictive constructions, while full exceptives are suggested to involve exceptive constructions. In order to determine the type of construction expressed by empty exceptives, exceptive or restrictive, a comparison between them and negative full exceptives will be useful.

First, while the combination NEG...*'illā* in full exceptives expresses a subtraction process, in empty exceptives it expresses a restriction. Consider:

- (6) a. *mā jā'a 'illā aḥmed-un*
 NEG come.PST.M3SG except Ahmed-NOM
 'Only Ahmed came.'/'There did not come but Ahmed.'
- b. *mā jā'a ad-dyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-an*
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-ACC
 'No one out of the guests came except Ahmed.'

In both (6a) and (6b) the DP complement *Ahmed* is the only person who came, but while in (6b) the DP complement is subtracted from a defined set of people, *ad-dyūfu* 'the guests', no such set of people is specified phonologically in (6a). The combination NEG...*'illā* in (6a) expresses a more restrictive meaning that corresponds to the same meaning expressed by focusing particles such as *only* in English and *'innamā* or *faqat* 'only, just' in Arabic (Moutaouakil 2009, 86). Although *faqat aḥmed jā'a* 'only Ahmed came' is true for both (6a) and (6b), this restrictive meaning of *faqat* 'only' is more evident in (6a). The combination NEG... 'but/except' is a mechanism used in several languages such as French, Spanish and Greek to express a restrictive meaning similar to 'only'. Moreover, in many other languages the exceptive markers used in examples similar to (6a–b) are different words. For example, in Finnish, the word used for empty exceptives is *kun* or *kuin* 'than' and for full exceptives it is *paiaksi* 'except'; in Turkish, *ama* 'but' is used in (6a) but *hariç* 'except' in (6b); and in Pashto there is the word *kho* 'but' common in restrictive constructions of the type NEG... 'but/except' and *siwa* 'except' in exceptive constructions of the type given in (6b). Similarly, in Spanish distinct words are used in empty



exceptives, (7a–b), and full negative exceptives, (8a–b), as shown below (the relevant words are in bold):⁴

- (7) a. Ana no come **sino** fruta
 Ana NEG eat.3SG.PRS but.not fruit
- b. Ana no besa **sino** a su madre
 Ana NEG kiss.3SG.PRS but.not to-ACC her mother
- (8) a. Ana no come nada, **excepto** fruta
 Ana NEG eat-3SG.PRS nothing, except fruit
- b. Ana come de todo, **excepto** fruta
 Ana eats of all, except fruit

That *'illā* in (6b) does not express a prominent restrictive meaning although a negative element, *mā*, is present suggests that the presence of an overt subtraction domain, *aḍḍyūfu* ‘the guests’, prevents a restrictive meaning to appear with the combination NEG...*'illā*, since a subtraction process takes place.

Second, empty exceptives can be expressed by the combinations NEG...*'illā* or Q...*'illā*, where NEG is expressed by the negative elements *lā*, *lan*, *lam*, *mā* and *laysa* and Q is represented by the interrogative particles *hal* or *'a*. (6a) is an example of an empty exceptive in the form of NEG...*'illā*, and below are examples of empty exceptives in the form of Q...*'illā*, cited from the arabiCorpus:

- (9) a. hal ji'ta 'illā bi-da'wa min jami'at exeter?
 Q bring.PST.2SG except with-invitation.GEN from university.GEN Exeter
 ‘Have you just brought an invitation from University of Exeter?’
- b. hal kān-at 'illā ṭabeebat-an?
 Q be.PST-F3SG except physician-ACC
 ‘Was she just an old woman?’

(9a–b) are examples of polar questions introduced by *hal*. Here, *'illā* has a restrictive meaning although no negative element is present. Instead, the restrictive meaning is licensed by the interrogative element *hal*, represented as Q in the gloss for question, and *'illā*. Replacing *hal* with *'a* is possible in both (9a–b). These two particles are used in yes/no questions (see Ryding 2005, 405). Negative full exceptives are not commonly used in the context of polarity questions of the types given in (9a–b), hence the ill-formedness of (10):

- (10) *hal jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-un
 Q come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-NOM

In addition, the combination *'in...illā* can also be used to express restrictive constructions, although this is mostly unique to classical Arabic.

⁴I am grateful to one of the reviewers for providing these examples.



- (11) a. 'in yaqūl-ūn 'illā kadhib-an (Qur'an, Al-Kahf, verse 5)
 NEG say.PST-M3PL except lie.ACC
 'They say nothing but a lie.'
- b. 'in hiyaa 'illā dhikrā
 NEG it.NOM except memory.NOM/ACC
 'It is nothing but a memory.'

'In is a negative element that can be used in nominal or verbal predicates, and it is mostly used with 'illā to express a restrictive meaning. This 'in is similar to the negative element mā in that it can negate the sentence, be it verbal or nominal.⁵ In contrast, negative full exceptives can only be expressed in contexts introduced by the negative elements lā, lan, lam, mā and laysa.

Third, the DP complement of 'illā in empty exceptives is assigned case according to its position in the sentence, as subject or object, but in negative full exceptives the DP complement either inherits the case assigned to the antecedent DP, or is assigned the default Accusative case. For example, in (6a) Ahmed is assigned Nominative because, as assumed in the literature cited, it functions as the subject of jā'a 'came'. In contrast, in (6b) Ahmed, by virtue of being in apposition with addyūfu 'the guests' either inherits the Nominative case assigned to addyūfu, or is assigned the default Accusative case (see Moutaouakil 2009; Badawi, Carter & Gully 2016; Al-Bataineh 2021).

Fourth, fronting the component 'illā + DP complement is allowed in full exceptives but not in empty exceptives.

- (12) a. 'illā aḥmed-an⁶ mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u
 except Ahmed-ACC NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM
 'Except for Ahmed, the guests did not come.'
- b. *'illā aḥmed-un mā jā'a
 except Ahmed-NOM NEG come.PST.M3SG

This distinction leads to the fifth one, which is that the component 'illā + DP complement functions as an adjunct to the main clause in full exceptives, whereas no such configuration is available in case of empty exceptives.

Finally, semantically (6a) and (6b) involve the following distinct interpretations:

Example (7a) presupposes:

- (a) There is no set S of people.
 (b) Ahmed is a member of an undefined set. Ahmed is someone.

⁵In is used to negate past tense and is followed by verbs in the jussive mood (Abu-Chacra 2007). In its use with nominal sentences, it can either have no syntactic selection effect and what follows will be the subject and predicate in the Nominative case, or it can act similar to laysa by selecting a nominative subject and an accusative predicate, as shown in (11b) with the DP complement dhikrā 'memory' either inflected for Nominative or Accusative (see Badawi, Carter & Gully 2016, 535).

⁶Since the 'illā-DP is fronted, the DP will be assigned the default Accusative case only. No apposition is available for Ahmed to be assigned Nominative case.



Entails:

- (a) Ahmed came.
- (b) There was not anyone other than Ahmed who came.

Example (7b) presupposes:

- (a) There is a set S of people.
- (b) Ahmed is a member of S.

Entails:

- (a) Ahmed came.
- (b) The other members of S didn't come.

In (6a), the event of coming is restricted to Ahmed, hence the restrictive exceptive meaning. In (6b), Ahmed is subtracted from a domain expressed by the guests, hence the subtractive exceptive meaning of the proposition.

To summarize, the discussion so far has shown that while empty exceptives and full exceptives express exception, they are distinguished in terms of the availability of a subtraction process in the latter and its absence in the former. This distinction by itself leads to several other distinctions which markedly distinguish these two types of constructions. More specifically, the combination NEG...*'illā* in empty exceptives can be said to express a restrictive meaning rather than a subtraction exceptive meaning. Therefore, there are two types of exceptive constructions that involve the use of *'illā*: restrictive exceptive (r-exceptive) and subtractive exceptive (s-exceptive). Moreover, contrary to what has been known, empty exceptives can be expressed in other contexts: NEG...*'illā* or Q...*'illā*, where NEG can be expressed by the negative elements *lā*, *lan*, *lam*, *mā* and *laysa* or negative *'in* and Q can be expressed by *hal* or *'a*. Based on this, empty exceptives, classified as a type of exceptive construction in traditional Arabic literature, are nothing but restrictive exceptive constructions. Therefore, for the rest of the paper empty exceptives will be classified and referred to as r-exceptive constructions, while affirmative and negative full exceptives as s-exceptive constructions. In both of them the DP complement is an exception. Accordingly, the question of what type of construction empty exceptives has now been answered. In the next section I will discuss whether there is a covert antecedent (null indefinite quantifier) in r-exceptive constructions or not.

4. THE ANTECEDENT IN R-EXCEPTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS: ABSENT OR COVERT?

We need next to investigate if there is an antecedent in r-exceptive constructions: whether that antecedent is radically absent, or just not phonetically realized. I will argue that there is an antecedent in the form of the NPIs *'ahad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing', based on the animacy feature of the DP complement (*'ahad* 'one' for animate DPs and *shay* 'thing' for inanimate DPs).⁷ Consider the following examples; (13a) is repeated from (6a):

⁷Previously, I assumed that the covert antecedent occurs in the form of the NPI *'ay*-NP 'any', such as *'ay 'ahad* 'anyone' and *'ay shay* 'anything'. However, linguistic data from Spanish and Finnish have revealed the incorrectness of this assumption. For example, when an overt pronoun with the meaning 'anyone' is spelled out, the words *excepto* (Spanish) and *paitsi* (Finnish) are used unique to subtractive exceptive constructions (see Bosque 2005). Thanks to the two anonymous reviewers for highlighting these data.



- (13) a. *mā* *jā'a* *'illā* *aḥmed-un*
 NEG come.PST.M3SG except Ahmed-NOM
 'Only Ahmed came.'/'There did not come but Ahmed.'
- b. *mā* *'akaltu* *'illā* *tufaḥat-an*
 NEG eat.PST.1SG except apple-ACC
 'I did not eat but an apple.'

In both examples, the DP following *'illā* is recognized as the only referent undergoing the event denoted by the verb. The only person who came was *Ahmed* (13a), and the only thing that was eaten by the speaker was the apple (13b). As can be noted, no domain is overtly mentioned, out of which a subtraction is performed. No group of people is mentioned that *Ahmed* could have been subtracted from. Likewise, no set of edible items is mentioned out of which the apple was subtracted. However, it is possible that an antecedent such as the nominal NPIs *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' is present covertly in (13a and b), respectively, which form a referent to whom or to which the DP complement is referring but is not subtracted from.⁸ (14a–b) shows these NPIs inserted:

- (14) a. *mā* *jā'a* (*'aḥad-un*) *'illā* *aḥmed-un*
 NEG come.PST.M3SG one-NOM except Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 'No one came except for Ahmed.'
- b. *mā* *'akaltu* (*shay'-an*) *'illā* *tufaḥat-an*
 NEG eat.PST.1SG thing-ACC except apple-ACC
 'I ate nothing but an apple.'

I argue that with the presence of the NPIs *'aḥadun* 'one' and *shay'an* 'thing' in (13a–b), no domain subtraction is suggested whereby the DP complement is subtracted from a defined set of individuals or items. For example, *Ahmed* in (14a) has not been subtracted from *'aḥad*, and 'an apple' has not been subtracted from *shay*. The use of the NPIs *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' did not alter the meaning of the sentences. In both the only person who came is *Ahmed* and the only item that was eaten is 'the apple'. In other words, (13a) can exactly be interpreted as 'no one except Ahmed came' and (13b) as 'I ate nothing except an apple'. The NPIs *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' do not function as quantifiers that define a set of people or a set of items out of which a subtraction is performed. The use of these NPIs explains the necessity of the c-commanding negative element *mā*. To put it differently, for *'illā* to express a restrictive meaning, it has to be preceded by a negative element such as *mā* to license or c-command the covert NPIs *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' recognized as part of the *'illā*-DP. These covert NPIs can also be licensed in interrogatives introduced by the polarity question particles *hal* and *'a* (see the discussion in the previous section).

⁸For some authors, *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' are not taken as negative polarity items because they can be used in affirmative contexts and display a free distribution (see Al Khalaf 2017, 27). However, Alqassas (2018, 104–130) shows that these indefinite nouns are distinct from nouns such as *kitāb* 'book' and when they occur in affirmative contexts they are recognized as positive polarity items.



Crosslinguistic evidence in support of the existence of covert *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' can be gained from languages such as Vietnamese, Turkish, Pashto, and Kurdish, as represented below with the relevant words in bold:

- (15) a. Hấn chẳng là **gì** ngoài một viên chức quèn Vietnamese
 3SG NEG COP **thing** out one bureaucrat low
 'He is nothing but a low-level bureaucrat.'
- b. Ahmet-ten başka **kimse** gel-me-di Turkish
 Ahmed-ten other **one/person** come-NEG-PST.3SG
 'No one came except Ahmed' (-ten + başka = except)
- c. Hagha hech **shay** na day yo warkotay afsar day Pashto
 He NEG **thing** NEG be.PRS one low-level officer be.PRS
 'He is nothing but a low-level bureaucrat.'
- d. jga la ahmed **kas-i** di na-hat Kurdish
 apart from Ahmed **one-POSS** other NEG-come.PST.3SG
 'No one came apart from Ahmed.'

These examples represent restrictive constructions as reported by the four speakers I asked (all of whom are linguistics scholars). In (15a, c), *gì* 'thing' and *shay* 'thing' function as the referents of *viên chức* 'bureaucrat' and *afsar* 'officer' but not as subtractive domains out of which *viên chức* or *afsar* have been subtracted. A similar interpretation is true for (16b, d); *Ahmet* is the one person who came to whom *kimse* 'one' and *kas* 'one' refers. Furthermore, an analysis of r-exceptives based on covert material has also been proposed in O'Neill (2011) and Homer (2015), who discuss *ne...que* constructions in French. For example, Homer (2015) suggests that (16a) should be parsed as (16b), with a silent occurrence of the existential *personne*. *Personne* is a negative concord item, which might also be analyzed as a strong NPI (glosses are mine).

- (16) a. Paul n'a invité que Marie.
 Paul NEG.have.3SG invite.PPRT than Marie
 'Paul only invited Marie.'
- b. Paul n'a invité PERSONNE AUTRE que Marie.
 Paul NEG.have.3SG invite.PPRT person other than Marie
 'Paul didn't invite anyone other than Marie.'

(Homer 2015, 111, 114)

In addition, the existence of a covert *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' can account for restrictive exceptives in the form of Q...*'illā* where Q is spelled out by the question particle *hal*, as exemplified in (9). As NPIs, they can be licensed in negative and interrogative contexts. Most importantly, these NPIs are not quantifiers to form a subtractive domain. Compare (14a) and (17) below:

- (17) mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-un/an
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 'No one out of the guests came except Ahmed.'



A simple test to show that (14a) is dissimilar to (17) is removing the Neg and *'illā* elements and observe the resulting sentences:

- (18) *jā'a* *'aḥad-un*, *aḥmed-un*
 come.PST.M3SG one-NOM Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 ‘Someone, Ahmed, came.’
- (19) **jā'a* *aḍ-ḍyūf-u* *aḥmed-un/an*
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 ‘*The guests, Ahmed, came.’

(18) is grammatical because it represents an apposition construction, *'aḥad* substitutes *ahmed* and vice versa. Besides, the meaning will be similar to (14a) if we add the focal adverb *faqat* ‘only’ as in (*jā'a 'aḥadun, aḥmedun faqat* ‘Only someone, Ahmed, came’). In contrast, (19) is ungrammatical because *ahmed* cannot substitute the guests from which it has been subtracted. If *'aḥad* forms a subtractive domain and *ahmed* has been extracted or subtracted from *'aḥad*, (18) should have been ungrammatical and semantically unacceptable on par with (19), contrary to fact. Accordingly, *'aḥad* ‘one’ and *shay* ‘thing’ act as anchors with which the DP complements form an appositive construction, which can account for the internal syntax of r-exceptive constructions that include Neg... or Q...*'illā* (more details are given in the next section).

Based on this discussion I assume that the existence of an overt NPI such as *'aḥad* ‘one’ and *shay* ‘thing’ suggests an r-exceptive construction rather than a subtractive one. Hence it is motivated to assume a covert *'aḥad* ‘one’ and *shay* ‘thing’ in the r-exceptive constructions of the types given in (13a–b). It is worth noting that these covert elements are not required when the complement of *'illā* is AdvP or PP, as shown below:

- (20) a. *lā* *'artāḥu* (**shay*’-an) *'illā* *hunāk-a*
 NEG rest.PRS.1SG thing-ACC except there-ACC
 ‘I only rest there.’
- b. *'amrāḍ-un* *lā* *tu'ālaju* (**shay*’-an) *'illā*
 disease.PL-NOM NEG treat.PST.3PL thing-ACC except
 bi-d-dawā'-i *l-mustawrad-i*
 by-DEF-medicine-GEN DEF-imported-GEN
 ‘Diseases which can only be treated with imported medicine.’

(20a–b) present examples of *'illā* followed by an AdvP and PP, respectively. None of these complements allow or require any of the NPIs. For example, the AdvP *hunāka* ‘there’ defines a location and thus cannot refer to a thing (20a), and the PP ‘with imported medicine’ refers to a means. There is a possibility that other covert NPIs such as *'abadan* ‘never’ in (20a) and *bi-shay* ‘by thing’ in (20b) are available in the main clause, but this has to remain for further studies, as the focus of this paper is on DP complements.

So far, the discussion has shown that there is a covert antecedent in r-exceptive constructions in the form of the NPIs *'aḥad* ‘one’ or *shay* ‘thing’, because once these NPIs are used, they do



not turn the construction into a s-exception one. In the next section I present the underlying structure of the *'illā*-DP in r-exception constructions and present more arguments supporting the existence of the NPIs *'aḥad* ‘one’ and *shay* ‘thing’.

5. SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF R-EXCEPTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

In this section, a syntactic analysis is offered for NEG...*'illā* or Q...*'illā* in r-exception constructions. As shown above, in order for *'illā* to express a restrictive meaning, it has to be preceded by either a negative element or a polarity question particle. This suggests that the restrictive meaning is obtained compositionally by the preceding negative element or question particle and *'illā*. In section 4, I showed that *'illā* in r-exception constructions involves the covert NPIs *'aḥad* ‘one’ or *shay* ‘thing’. These NPIs, as is the case with all NPIs, can be licensed either in a negative context or a negative like environment such as *yes–no* question contexts (see Vallduvi 1994; Zeijlstra 2004; Collins & Postal 2014 for NPIs). Accordingly, the covert NPIs *'aḥad* or *shay* need to be licensed or c-commanded by NEG or Q. In other words, *'illā* introduces an entity that is an exception to the event, while NEG or Q has a more syntactic function where it licenses the NPI recognized as part of the *'illā*-XP. Thus, the underlying structure I assume for the *'illā*-XP is as in (21):

- (21) *'aḥad/shay* *'illā* XP
 one/thing except XP
 ‘one/thing except XP’

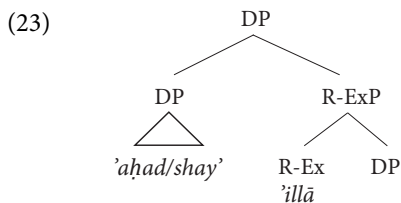
Two issues must be discussed next as part of the syntactic representation given in (21). First, what type of syntactic relation holds between the NPIs *'aḥad* ‘one’ or *shay* ‘thing’ and the *'illā*-XP; second, how the DP complement of *'illā* is assigned case. The second issue is essentially related to and determined by the first one. Given that the *'illā*-XP is preceded by the NPIs *'aḥad* or *shay*, two possibilities can be suggested regarding the relation that holds between the *'illā*-XP and the NPIs: either the latter is in the specifier position of *'illā* or they both occur as sisters in an appositional construction. Out of these two suggestions, the second one seems more appealing since it offers a syntactic solution for the case marking issue of *'illā*-DP complements. Consider the examples in (22a–b) repeated from (14a–b):

- (22) a. *mā jā'a 'aḥad-un 'illā aḥmed-un*
 NEG come.PST.M3SG one-NOM except Ahmed-NOM
 ‘Only Ahmed came.’/‘There did not come but Ahmed.’
 b. *mā 'akaltu shay'-an 'illā tufāḥat-an*
 NEG eat.PST.1SG thing-ACC except apple-ACC
 ‘I ate nothing but an apple.’

The DP complements *aḥmedun* and *tufāḥatan* are marked with the Nominative and Accusative case, respectively. This case assignment cannot be possible in their positions as DP complements of *'illā*, with the latter intervening and blocking case assignment by Tense and the verb. A way out of this puzzle is to assume that the DP complements are appositives to the NPIs *'aḥad*



and *shay*’, the anchor. Thus, they will share the case marking of their anchors, as assumed in nominal appositional constructions (see Potts 2005, 107). Accordingly, *aḥmedun* displays the Nominative case marking by being an appositive to the anchor *’aḥadun* assigned Nominative case by Tense. By the same token, *tufāḥatan* receives the case inflection of the anchor *shay’an* which is assigned Accusative case by the verb. From this perspective, I propose the following configuration for the combination NPI *’illā*-XP exemplified in (22):



Following Collins & Postal (2014), and intricacies aside, I take the NPIs *’aḥad* and *shay*’ to project a DP. This DP is the anchor of the appositive DP complement of *’illā*, which I take to be a functional head projecting the Restrictive Exceptive Phrase (R-ExP). *’illā* can be syntactically represented as a functional head that projects a R-ExP, because its functions and properties in r-exceptive constructions justify creating a syntactic projection of its own, distinct from that of s-exceptive constructions presented in section 6 (recall the distinctive elements used in r-exceptive and s-exceptive constructions crosslinguistically given in (7) and (8)). As can be seen, the projection that governs NPI *’illā*-XP is given as DP because the NPIs *’aḥad* and *shay*’ are the main arguments of the verb in the main clause, whereas the *’illā*-XP is adjoined internally as an adjunct. A proposition such as *mā jā’a ’aḥadun* ‘no one came’ is a well-formed sentence that can stand independently. Thus, once the *’illā*-XP is introduced, it will be added through a right-adjunction procedure. This syntactic procedure is suggested by Potts (2005, 137) for nominal appositions which “always involve right-adjunction of the appositive to the anchor in the syntax”.

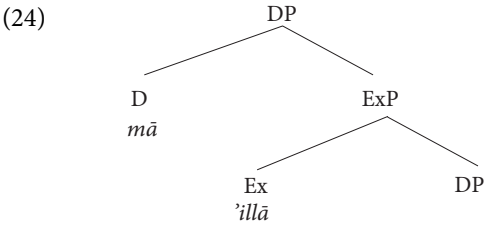
In the structure proposed in (23) it is evident that the elements NEG and Q are not part of the internal structure of the *’illā*-XP. NEG and Q will be introduced higher in the structure. The DP constituent [*’aḥad/shay* *’illā* XP] explains the ungrammaticality of the *’illā*-XP fronting in r-exceptive constructions (recall example (12b)). The ungrammaticality of (12b) seems to be tied to the presence of the covert NPI. Assuming that the covert NPI with the r-exceptive must be c-commanded by an appropriate licensing operator in the surface syntax, the NPI would be anti-licensed if the DP fronts, since fronting would move the NPI out of the scope of *mā*.

In the analysis proposed in this paper, I emphasize that r-exceptive constructions could involve either a negative element or a polarity question particle with *’illā* provided that there is no domain but a covert NPI represented as *’aḥad* or *shay*’, so that *’illā* functions as a restrictive exceptive marker rather than a subtractive exceptive marker. I assume that this ability of *’illā* in r-exceptive constructions is normal because it is associated with an unvalued domain restriction [u-DR] feature which will be valued by the DP complement (see Al-Bataineh 2021, 452). *’illā* restricts the DP complement to a specific property or event and introduces an exception.

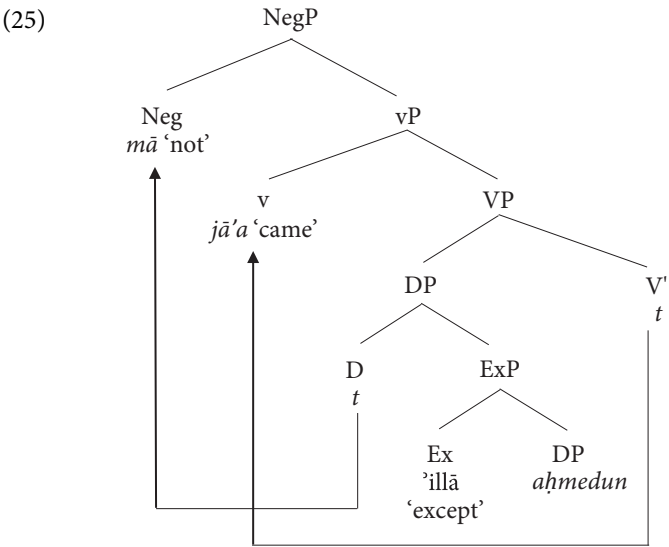
This analysis contrasts with the claims made in Moutaouakil (2009) and Al-Bataineh (2021), where NEG...*’illā* is argued to form a discontinuous morpheme, which Al-Bataineh takes to be



a DP headed by the negative element. To account for this within the minimalist program, Al-Bataineh (2021, 451) proposes the structure in (24).



The structure proposed by Al-Bataineh (2021) is based on the assumption that a negative element such as *mā* is a determiner, which in turn was based on his analysis of *lā*. Al-Bataineh (2021, 454) takes *lā* to be a determiner because it “cannot merge with a nominal with an overt D”, such as the definitive article *al-* and nunation *-n*, hence the ungrammaticality of **lā ar-rajul* ‘no DEF-man’ and **lā rajul-u-n* ‘no man-NOM-INDF’. Moreover, the DP *lā ‘illā* DP is taken to be similar to the English phrase *no one except* DP. He takes *‘illā* to be a functional head projecting into an Exceptive Phrase (ExP) where Ex “stands for an exceptive or restrictive element that is used for specificatory, interpretational (i.e., inclusiveness vs exclusiveness) functions” (Al-Bataineh 2021, 450). He further assumes that *‘illā* carries the unvalued feature of domain subtraction [u-DS] in exceptive constructions that triggers the projection of ExP. He goes on to assume that *‘illā* carries a valued Accusative case [Acc-Case]. Meanwhile, the Ex-complement in an exceptive construction has a valued [DS] and an unvalued case feature. The tree representation of *mā jā’a ‘illā aḥmedun* ‘only Ahmed came’ will be as in (25), adapted from Al-Bataineh (2021, 455):



However, first, the arguments in support of the determiner status of the negative element *lā* do not apply to *mā* or *laysa*. Both can be adjacent to NPs that include *al*- and *-n*, as shown in the examples below:⁹

- (26) a. *mā* *muhammad-u-n* *'illā* *rasūl-u-n* (Qur'an, Al-Omran, verse 144)
 NEG Muhammad-NOM-INDF except messenger-NOM-INDF
 'Muhammad is but a messenger.'
- b. *mā* *al-kitāb-u* *'illā* *musā'id-u-n* *thānawī-u-n*
 NEG DEF-book-NOM except associate-NOM-INDF secondary-NOM-INDF
 'Books are not but a secondary associate.'
- (27) a. *laysa* *ar-rajul-u* *dhā* *kafā'ah* *mumtāza*
 NEG DEF-man-NOM with competence excellent
 'The man is not of excellent competence.'
- b. *laysa* *bait-a-n* *ka-mā* *ḥadath-w-nā*
 NEG house-ACC-INDF as-that tell-3PL-1PL
 'It is not a house as they have told us.'

Second, the phrase *no one except* DP consists of a quantifier *no* merged with a noun *one* and then there is the adjunct *except* DP. Thus, a parallelism between English *no one but or except* DP and Arabic *lā illā* DP is not a valid argument to support the analysis with a determiner phrase headed by the negative elements *lā*, *lan*, *lam*, *mā* and *laysa*. Third, head movement across two heads, V and v, is unlike other known cases of head movement; it violates the classical head movement constraint of Travis (1984). Fourth, the structure in (24) does not account for the new data presented in this paper: a restrictive meaning can be expressed by the combination Q...*'illā* where Q is base generated high in the structure. Accordingly, I reject the analysis that NEG...*'illā* is a DP derived by movement of the negative element, the determiner of the DP which takes the ExP as complement.

Turning back to the structure proposed in (23), the derivation I assume for the representative examples given in (28a–b) will be as in (29a–b), respectively.¹⁰ The NPIs *'aḥadun* and *shay'an* are enclosed in brackets to show that they are covert and need not be spelled out.

- (28) a. *mā* *jā'a* *'illā* *aḥmed-un*
 NEG come.PST.M3SG except Ahmed-NOM
 'Only Ahmed came'/'There did not come but Ahmed.'
- b. *hal* *kān-at* *'illā* *ṭabeebat-an?*
 Q be.PST-F3SG except physician-ACC
 'Was she just an old woman?' Or 'was she anything but an old woman?'

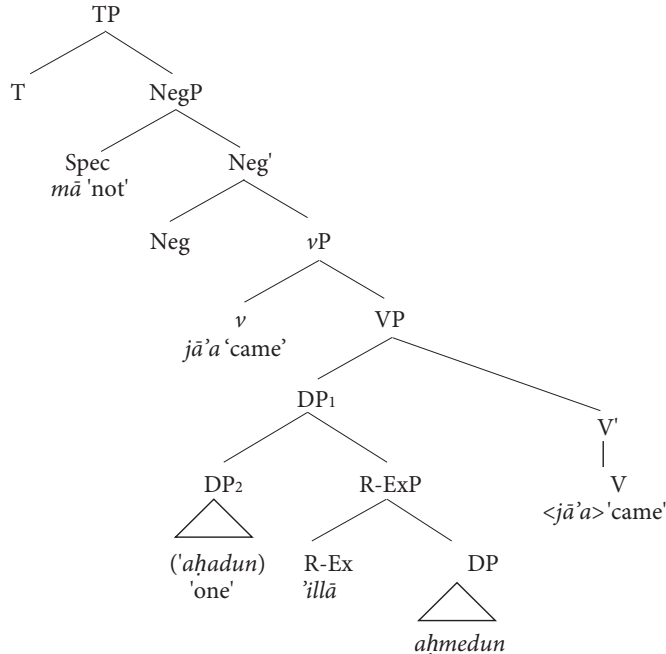
⁹The split between the inflectional cases and nunation shown in (26) and (27) is given in these examples only for explanatory purposes. In the other examples of this paper, nunation is not glossed.

¹⁰The angled brackets in (29a–b) indicate that the item has moved up or remerged and left a copy.

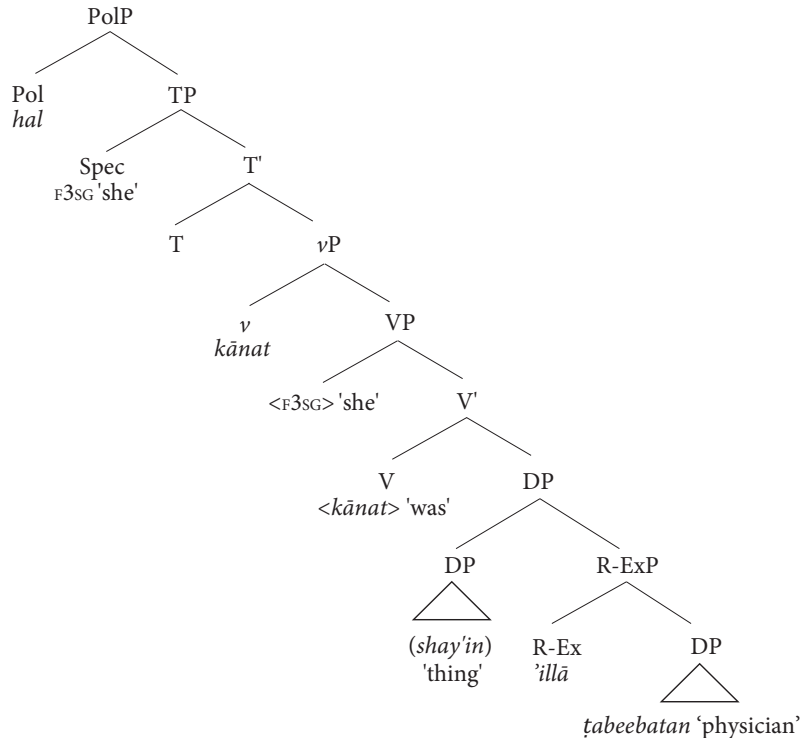


(29)

a.



b.



In (29a), following Benmamoun (2000), I take *mā* to occupy Spec-NegP; *mā* does not inflect for tense or agreement and can merge with lexical subjects. Therefore, it occurs in Spec-NegP while the other negative elements occupy the head position in NegP (see Benmamoun 2000, 94–109). The R-ExP *'illā aḥmedun* and the covert NPI *'aḥadun* ‘one’ are introduced in Spec-VP since the covert NPI functions as the subject argument of the verb.¹¹ (29b) presents an example of a copular sentence introduced by the polarity question particle *hal*. The subject argument is assumed to be a null pronoun, consisting of the features $\text{F}_{3\text{SG}}$ incorporated with the copular verb *kānat* ‘was’. Following Holmberg (2012) and Bailey (2013), I assume that *hal* occupies the head position Pol in Pol(arity)P.¹² The DP (*shay'an*) *'illā ṭabeebatan* ‘thing except physician’ is generated as a VP complement because the covert *shay'an* is the predicate of the copular verb *kānat* ‘was’, hence the Accusative case inflection on *shay'an* and its appositive *ṭabeebatan*.

One last point to comment on regarding *'illā* in r-exceptive constructions relates to its Accusative case property. In its use in s-exceptive constructions, I argue that *'illā* is inherently associated with this property in that it assigns Accusative case only. However, in its use in r-exceptive constructions this property seems to be deactivated by the appositional relation that holds between its DP complement and the covert NPI, which enables the former to share the same case inflection as the latter.¹³

In this section, the syntactic structure of r-exceptive constructions was developed and the *'illā*-XP was placed into the projection R-ExP. It was argued that the combinations NEG...*'illā* or Q...*'illā* do not form a DP as assumed in Al-Bataineh (2021). Instead, I argued that NEG and Q are needed to license the covert NPIs *'aḥad* and *shay'* involved in the internal structure of the *'illā*-XP and the exceptive marker *'illā* functions as a restrictive exceptive marker. Moreover, I have shown that the relation that holds between the NPIs *'aḥad* and *shay'* and the *'illā*-XP is that of appositional construction and that the *'illā*-XP is a nominal adjunct. In this manner, the DP complement of *'illā* will receive the case marking of the anchor represented by the NPIs. Furthermore, it was shown that the negative elements either appear in Spec-NegP or the head of NegP, while the question particles lexicalize the functional head Pol in PolP.

6. THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF S-EXCEPTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

I now turn to the underlying structure of affirmative and negative exceptives that include *'illā*, referred to as s-exceptive constructions in this paper. It will be shown that these exceptive constructions correspond to the two types of exceptives identified by Hoeksema (1987, 1990, 1995): connected exceptives (CEs) and free exceptives (FEs). They mainly differ in that in the former the

¹¹For simplicity, I did not draw FocP and IP.

¹²For discussion and syntactic analysis of the question particles *hal* and *'a* the reader is referred to Fakh (2011) and Alsager (2020). In Fakh (2011), *hal* and *'a* are argued to be base generated in C-CP and they do not undergo movement.

¹³A reviewer suggests that it could be the case that *'illā* does not assign Case: in all cases of apposition the Case of the antecedent is inherited by the DP in the exceptive phrase; in those cases where the exceptive phrase is attached to the CP or other sentence node, the ACC manifests itself as default Case to license the nominal constituent. Arguments in favor or against this will remain for further studies.



connected exceptive appears within the DP, while in the latter the free exceptive appears as a peripheral adjunct. Below are representative examples from Hoeksema (1990, 170).

- (30) a. Everybody but Jamie was invited. (connected)
b. Everybody was invited, except for Jamie. (free)

While the exceptive phrase *but Jamie* adjoins to the universal quantifier phrase *Everybody* in (30a) giving [_{DP} Everybody but Jamie], *except for this Jamie* adjoins to the whole CP in (30b) as they introduce exceptions to generalizations. Furthermore, while in CEs exceptive phrases need to be adjacent to their antecedents (quantifiers), (30a), or extraposed, (31a), exceptive phrases in FEs can be fronted, (31c), extraposed, (31d), or occur in sentence-internal positions, (31e) (see García Álvarez 2008, 4–5).

- (31) a. Everybody was invited but Jamie.
b. *But Jamie, everybody was invited.
c. Except for Jamie, everybody was invited.
d. Everybody was invited, except for Jamie.
e. Everybody, except for Jamie, was invited.

Further asymmetries that are proposed to exist between CEs and FEs relate to the compatibility of FEs with definite noun phrases, (32a), in comparison to CEs' non-compatibility with such antecedents, (32b) (see Hoeksema 1990, 175; Hoeksema 1995, 21). Moreover, while exceptive markers in CEs select DP complements only, in FEs other constituents beside DPs are allowed such as PPs, AdvPs and CPs. Representative examples are given in (33a–c); with English translations of Spanish examples from Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén (2012, 586–587).

- (32) a. Except for Jim, the/these boys were restless.
b. *The/these boys but Jim were ready for action.
- (33) a. Except for the math students, I will meet with most of the students on Monday.
b. You can drive any way you want except faster.
c. He didn't say much with respect to that issue except that he was against it.

Based on these positional preferences and XP complements unique to each type of (subtractive) exceptive constructions, the Arabic examples in (34a–b) under focus in this paper can largely be taken to represent connected and free exceptives, respectively. This is illustrated below.

- (34) a. ja'a ad-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-an
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-ACC
 'The guests came except Ahmed.'



- b. mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-un/an
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 'No one out of the guests came except Ahmed.'

(34a) can be taken to represent an example of a connected exceptive construction (or connected s-exceptive) because the exceptive phrase *'illā aḥmedan* cannot be fronted as shown in (35a), but can be extraposed, (35b). However, since the antecedent is in the form of a definite NP, (34a) should be taken as FE. A better equivalent example would be (35c), where a universal quantifier *kul* 'all' is used. Finally, the exceptive phrase in (34a) cannot be followed by non-DP complements such as PPs (36a), AdvPs (36b), or CPs (36c).

- (35) a. *'illā aḥmed-an jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u
 except Ahmed-ACC come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM
- b. jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u fariḥīn 'illā aḥmed-an
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM happy except Ahmed-ACC
 'The guests came looking happy except Ahmed.'
- c. jā'a kul-u aḍ-ḍyūf-i 'illā aḥmed-an
 come.PST.M3SG all-NOM DEF-guest.PL-GEN except Ahmed-ACC
 'All the guests came except Ahmed.'
- (36) a. jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u *'illā fi l-masā-i
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except at DEF-afternoon-GEN
- b. jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u *'illā al'ān
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except now
- c. jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u *'illā 'indama raḥl-tu
 come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except when leave.PST-1SG

In contrast, (34b) is taken to be a free exceptive proposition (i.e., free s-exceptive), because the exceptive phrase can be fronted (37a); and allows all types of complements (37b–d).

- (37) a. 'illā aḥmed-an mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u
 except Ahmed-ACC NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM
 'Except for Ahmed, the guests did not come.'
- b. mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā fi l-masā-i
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except at DEF-afternoon-GEN
 'No one out of the guests came except in the afternoon.'
- c. mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā al'ān
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except now
 'No one out of the guests came except now.'



- d. mā jā'a ad-ḏyūf-u 'illā 'indama raḥl-tu
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except when leave.PST-1SG
 'No one out of the guests came except when I had left.'

The syntactic analysis proposed for connected and free exceptives in the literature is that of phrasal and clausal conjunctions, respectively (see e.g., [García Álvarez 2008](#); [Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén 2012](#); [Potsdam & Polinsky 2019](#); [Stockwell & Wong 2020](#); [Vostrikova 2019, 2021](#)). In these studies, English *except* and *but* and Spanish *excepto*, *salvo*, *menos* 'except' are argued to function on a par with coordinating conjunctions. For example, in connected exceptives exceptive markers are taken to coordinate two DPs, and in free exceptives they combine the main clause and the exceptive clause, which is proposed to be reduced by ellipsis. Below I show that the conjunction structures proposed and the elliptical analysis of free exceptives cannot be extended to the Arabic data.

Following [Al-Bataineh \(2021\)](#), I do not take 'illā to be a coordinating conjunction, because "exceptive constructions are not equivalent to conjunction phrases" ([Al-Bataineh 2021](#), 448). Evidence in support of this is as follows: (a) conjunctions cannot assign case to the following DP complement, but 'illā assigns Accusative case, as shown in (34a–b); (b) conjunctions cannot be fronted, while exceptive markers, including 'illā, can (cf. (37a) and (38a)); (c) conjunctions cannot co-occur with other conjunctions, but exceptive markers can co-occur with conjunctions (38b); (d) conjunctions can join two full sentences, but exceptive markers cannot (39a–b); (e) 'illā can host a pronominal clitic as its DP complement (recall (5d)), but the conjunctions *wa* 'and'/'*aw* 'or' cannot. For further details see [Al-Bataineh \(2021, 447–450\)](#).

- (38) a. *wa/'aw aḥmed jā'a
 and/or Ahmed come.PST.M3SG
 b. mā ltaqay-tu-hu 'illā wa 'ajidu-hu yu-ṣalli
 not meet-I-him except while I.find-him he-pray
 'Whenever I meet him, I find him praying.'
 c. *mā ltaqay-tu-hu ṭumma wa 'ajidu-hu yu-ṣalli
 not meet-I-him then while I.find-him he-pray
- (39) a. 'abasa wa tawallā
 he.frowned and he.turned away
 'He frowned and turned away.' (Qur'an, 80:1)
 b. *'abasa 'illā tawallā
 he.frowned except he.turned away

In addition, exceptive markers such as Dutch *behalve* do not have the conjunctive use assumed for English *except* and Spanish *excepto* (see [Hoeksema 1990](#), 168). Therefore, exceptive markers in at least some languages, such as Arabic, are distinct categories.

In the constructions (34a–b), 'illa has a subtractive use and thus a subtraction domain has to be available from which the DP complement of 'illa has been subtracted. Therefore, following



Al-Bataineh (2021), I assume that *'illā* here carries the unvalued domain subtraction [u-DS] feature in comparison to the unvalued domain restriction [u-DR] feature associated with *'illā* in r-exceptional constructions (see the previous section). (34a) and (34b) differ in two aspects: (a) the missing negative element in (34a) and its availability in (34b); and (b) the case alternation of *Ahmed* in (34b) in comparison to the individual case inflection of *Ahmed* in (34a). To account for their syntactic structure, I take *'illā* in s-exceptional constructions to be a functional head projecting a Subtractive Exceptional Phrase (S-ExP). It is subtractive because it subtracts the DP complement from a quantificational domain and introduces an exception. Moreover, I assume that *'illā* assigns Accusative case (to the exclusion of other inflection cases) as an inherent property associated with it. Therefore, I reject the idea that *'illā* assigns Accusative case because it incorporates the verb of the expression *'astathny* 'I make an exception' as assumed in e.g., Moutaouakil (2009) and Al-Bataineh (2021). Their assumption is not based on any valid syntactic analysis and does not explain in what way it is incorporated in the syntax of *'illā*. The latter can assign a case without assuming the involvement of a verb. The main clause C *'inna* assigns Accusative case in standard Arabic without any verb or other categories being involved.¹⁴

We have shown above that (34a) is an example of a connected s-exceptional construction, whereas (34b) represents a free s-exceptional construction. In connected exceptional phrases can be adjacent to quantifiers or extraposed; therefore, I suggest the following structures for (34a). The free s-exceptional construction exemplified in (34b) can also be suggested to have two possible structures, one in which the DP complement is assigned Nominative case and one with the Accusative case.

- (40) a. [_{CP} [_{VP} *jā'a* [_{DP} *aḍḍiyūfu* 'the guests' [_{S-ExP} *'illā aḥmedan* 'except Ahmed']]]]
 b. [_{CP1} [_{CP2} *jā'a aḍḍiyūfu* 'the guests came'] [_{S-ExP} *'illā aḥmedan* 'except Ahmed']]
- (41) a. [_{CP} [_{VP} *mā jā'a* [_{DP1} [_{DP2} *aḍḍiyūfu* 'the guests'] [_{S-ExP} *'illā aḥmedun* 'except Ahmed']]]]
 b. [_{CP1} [_{CP2} *mā jā'a aḍḍiyūfu* 'the guests did not come'] [_{S-ExP} *'illā aḥmedan* 'except Ahmed']]

In the derivation given in (40b) and (41b), the S-ExPs are in a right-peripheral position due to their function as sentential adjuncts. They are introduced into the clause by late Merge. Deleting the S-ExPs in (40b) and (41b) does not affect the grammaticality or meaning of the main clause, hence *jā'a aḍḍiyūfu* 'the guests came' and *mā jā'a aḍḍiyūfu* 'the guests did not come' are well-formed sentences. In (40a), the S-ExP is recognized as part of the antecedent *aḍḍiyūfu*

¹⁴A reviewer has asked why case alternation (and therefore the double structure proposed at the end) is only possible in 'full negative exceptions' but not in affirmatives. One possible answer, based on the new distinction I make between affirmative and negative full exceptions belonging to connected and free exceptions, respectively, could be that the S-ExP in affirmative (connected) exceptions appears adjacent to the DP antecedent (but not in apposition relation) allowing the default Accusative case only. However, in negative full (free exceptions) the S-ExP can be sentence-final or fronted (where the DP complement receives the default Accusative case), or can appear in sentence-internal positions (where the DP complement receives the Nominative case via apposition with the antecedent), see examples (34a–b) and the proposed structures in (40) and (41). There could be other motivations and explanations, which I will leave for further research.



acting as a DP modifier, while in (41b), it forms a nominal appositional construction with the DP antecedent (the anchor) added through a right-adjunction procedure. Hence, it shares the Nominative case of the anchor (with the case assignment property of *'illā* deactivated by the appositional relation) (cf. Al-Bataineh 2021). The two alternative cases associated with the free s-exceptive in (34b) can be tied to the different positions available for exceptive phrases in free exceptives. When the S-ExP appears in a sentence-final position, it will attach as a sentential adjunct and *'illā* will independently assign the default Accusative case. This can be clearly seen when an element is inserted between the antecedent and the exceptive phrase, as shown in (42a) with the adjective 'happy'. However, when 'happy' is extraposed and the exceptive phrase is placed sentence-internally, (42b), it will have the option to form an apposition construction with the antecedent and attract the same case.

- (42) a. mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u fariḥīn 'illā aḥmed-an
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM happy except Ahmed-ACC
 'No one out of the guests came happy except Ahmed.'
- b. mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-un fariḥīn
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-NOM happy
 'No one out of the guests, except Ahmed, came happy.'

The last note to be made here is that I do not assume an elliptical structure for *'illā aḥmedan* in the free exceptive example in (34b), primarily because it can neither account for the Accusative case assignment feature associated with *'illā* nor is it acceptable when the S-ExP is in fronted positions, as reflected in the ungrammatical sentences below.

- (43) a. *mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u 'illā aḥmed-an jā'a
 NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-ACC come.PST.M3SG
- b. *'illā aḥmed-an jā'a mā jā'a aḍ-ḍyūf-u
 except Ahmed-ACC come.PST.M3SG NEG come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM

The ellipsis and conjunction analysis have also been taken to be inferior by Hoeksema (1995), Moltman (1995) and Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén (2012), as it cannot account for cases where the exceptive phrase is fronted. In Hoeksema's words (1995, 168):

we cannot simply claim that exception phrases are subcases of Stripping, given that they may appear in sentence-initial position, unlike Stripping or Gapping remnants. In this respect, exception phrases resemble prepositional groups more than conjunction constructions

To sum up, affirmative s-exceptives and negative s-exceptives support the typology of subtractive exceptives, namely connected and free exceptives. Affirmative s-exceptives share most of the properties of connected exceptives, while negative s-exceptives display those of free exceptives. I have also shown that *'illā* in s-exceptive constructions (whether connected or free) acts as an exceptive marker associated with the [u-DS] feature and thus projects as a functional head into the S-ExP. The DP complement is assigned the default Accusative case in affirmative s-exceptives, and the whole S-ExP can either be an adjunct to the main clause or a DP modifier based on its adjacency to the DP antecedent. However, in negative s-exceptives, the DP complement can either



carry Nominative or Accusative case according to the position of the S-ExP; whether sentence internal (Nominative case through apposition), or fronted or sentence-final (Accusative case).

7. CONCLUSION

In this paper a distinction was made between empty exceptives on one hand and negative full exceptives on the other hand. It was shown that empty exceptives are r-exceptive constructions of a unique structure distinct from affirmative and negative full exceptive constructions which involve s-exceptive constructions. New data and examples have been presented regarding the expression of r-exceptive constructions that involve *'illā*. These data include combinations of NEG...*'illā* and Q...*'illā*, where NEG is expressed by the negative elements *lā*, *lan*, *lam*, *mā* and *laysa* or *'in* and Q is represented by the interrogative particles *hal* or *'a*.

The syntactic analysis of r-exceptive and s-exceptive constructions was also presented, displaying distinct structures and readings. These two constructions differ in four key aspects. First, in r-exceptives the *'illā*-XP involves a covert antecedent in the form of the NPIs *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing', which has to be licensed and c-commanded by a negative element or an interrogative element. In contrast, in s-exceptive constructions *'illā* requires a domain out of which an element is subtracted and it does not always require the presence of a negative element as is the case with affirmative exceptives. Second, *'illā* is a domain subtractive exceptive marker in its uses in s-exceptive constructions (it subtracts the exceptive element from a quantifier in the main clause and introduces an exception), but a restrictive exceptive marker in r-exceptive constructions (it restricts the exceptive element to a property or event and introduces an exception). Third, the *'illā*-DP constitutes a R-ExP in r-exceptive constructions, but a S-ExP in s-exceptive constructions. Fourth, the *'illā*-DP is an adjunct to the NPIs *'aḥad* 'one' and *shay* 'thing' in r-exceptive constructions, but in s-exceptive constructions the *'illā*-DP adjoins as an adjunct to the main clause or the DP antecedent. Furthermore, it was shown that s-exceptive constructions can be subdivided into connected (affirmative s-exceptives) and free (negative s-exceptives) types, each with distinct syntactic properties. Generally, the arguments presented in this paper based on the exceptive marker *'illā* in Arabic provide insights about exceptive constructions and contribute to a crosslinguistic understanding of such constructions.

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