The syntax and semantics of exceptive-exclusive constructions: a case study of Italian *eccetto*

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Abstract

The Italian marker *eccetto* is ambiguous between an exceptive marker and an exclusive marker. When it co-occurs with a universal quantifier, it is has an exceptive reading and removes the exception from the domain of the quantifier. Furthermore, these constructions are underlyingly clausal and involve ellipsis. On the other hand, when *eccetto* co-occurs with an existential quantifier, a numeral, or a wh-phrase, it is phrasal and receives an exclusive interpretation. Syntactically, exclusive *eccetto* constructions are base-generated in the high left periphery of the clause and display the same distribution as Hanging Topics. Semantically, they do the exact opposite of Hanging Topics. I propose a discourse-level analysis of these constructions: exclusive *eccetto* introduces a presupposition that the exclusion is not in the set of available entities in the discourse.

1 Introduction

This paper presents and analyzes the distribution of the Italian marker *eccetto*. *Eccetto* is ambiguous: it can introduce both exceptive and exclusive constructions. Exceptive constructions (1) express an exception to a generalization (Hoeksema, 1987; von Fintel, 1993; Gajewski, 2005; Hirsch, 2016; Vostrikova, 2019). They consist of an exceptive phrase, composed of the exceptive marker, here *except*, and an exception, here *John*. The exceptive subtracts the exception from the domain of the quantified phrase, here *every student*, also referred to as the associate. In addition, (1) has a negative inference and entails that John did not come.

(1) Except John, every student came.
⇒ John did **not** come

These constructions are, in some languages, underlyingly clausal. That is, they involve ellipsis (Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam and Polinsky, 2019; Polinsky et al., 2024). Exclusives, on the other hand, do not carry a negative entailment. They can be paraphrased with *setting aside*, which I will use throughout the paper. In (2), every student came, but the speaker is not making any claim about whether John came or not: maybe he came, maybe he didn't. There is very little literature on the structure and semantics of exclusive constructions, which will thus be explored *ex novo* in this paper.

(2) Excluding/setting aside/not counting John, every student came.
⇏ John did (not) come.

In English, exceptives cannot be e.g. associated with an existential quantifier, a numeral, or a wh-phrase (cf. 1-3)[1] (von Fintel, 1993; Hirsch, 2016; Vostrikova, 2021; Mayr and Vostrikova, 2023), while no such restriction exists with exclusives (4).

(3) **Exceptive**
   a. #Except John, some/three students came.
   b. #Except John, who came?

(4) **Exclusive**
   a. Setting aside John, some/three students came.
   b. Setting aside John, who came?

The Italian counterpart to *except* is *eccetto*.[2] *Eccetto* is not as restricted. In fact, in some varieties of Italian *eccetto* can freely occur with universal (5), existential quantifiers like *alcuni* (6a), *qualche* (6b), *un paio di*, and *la maggior parte di* 'the majority of' (7). Furthermore, it can co-occur with numerals (8) and wh-phrases (9).[3]

[1]There is nonetheless cross speaker variation. While most native speakers of English I have asked reject examples (cf. 1-3), some accept (3), but report that *except John* here receives an exclusive reading, like (4).

[2]I will be using Leipzig glossing rules for non-English examples. In the absence of a standard gloss for exceptive/exclusive markers, I will gloss *eccetto* as EM throughout the paper to avoid confusion between exceptive and exclusive readings. In the English translation, however, I will provide the correct reading.

[3]The data reported in this paper has been elicited from five native speakers, all from the northern regions Aosta Valley and Piedmont, with the use of the questionnaire (https://exceptives.lin.ufl.edu/exceptives-questionnaire/), developed in the project *Variation in Exceptive Structures*.

(5) Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i tutt-i gli
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL all-M.PL the
student-i.
student-M.PL
'Except Yuri all students have arrived.'

(6) a. Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i alcun-i
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL some-M.PL
student-i.
student-M.PL
'Setting aside Yuri, some students have arrived.'

b. Eccetto Yuri, è arriva-t-o qualche studente.
EM Yuri be.PRS.3SG arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL some student
'Setting aside Yuri, some student has arrived.'

(7) Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i un paio di/la maggior
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL a pair of/the major
parte degli student-i.
part of the student-M.PL
'Setting aside Yuri, a few/the majority of the students have arrived.'

(8) Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i tre student-i.
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL three student-M.PL
'Setting aside Yuri, three students have arrived.'

(9) Eccetto Yuri, chi è arriva-t-o?
EM Yuri who be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.SG
'Setting aside Yuri, who has arrived?'

Yet, I will observe that the readings are different. When the associate is a universal quantifier (5), we get an exceptive reading: every student -who isn't Yuri- came and Yuri did not come. When the associate is either an existential quantifier, a numeral, or a wh-phrase, we get an exclusive reading: every student - who isn't Yuri - came, but the speaker isn't committed to whether Yuri came or not.

This paper explores the underlying structure of the *eccetto* constructions in Italian and the semantic and pragmatic contributions. In Section 2 will argue that the constructions in (5) and (6) are syntactically different. *Eccetto* + universal quantifier (UQ) constructions are underlying clausal and involve ellipsis, whereas *eccetto* + existential quantifiers, numerals, and wh-phrases (EQ/n/wh) constructions are phrasal. The structural difference is correlated with a difference in their semantic roles (Section 3). *Eccetto* + UQ are true exceptives, like the English (1), whereas *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh are exclusives. I will argue that the latter share the same distributional properties of Hanging Topics, but play the opposite role, in that they remove and entity from the discourse (Section 4). Section 5 will discuss the implications of the analysis and address open issues.

2 The syntax of eccetto: clausal or phrasal?

Exceptive constructions vary cross-linguistically in their syntax, but we can divide them into two big categories: phrasal and clausal exceptives (Hoeksema, 1987; Potsdam and Polinsky, 2019; Polinsky et al., 2024). Phrasal exceptives are prepositional phrases modifying a DP (10).

(10) $[_{TP}\ [_{DP}$ every student $[_{PP}$ but John$]]_i\ [_{vP}$ came $t_i]]$

Clausal exceptives (15a), on the other hand, have an underlying clausal structure, which has been reduced via ellipsis (Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam and Polinsky, 2019) and *except* is a conjunction connecting two CPs (15b). As shown in (12), the two CPs have opposite polarity, which is captured by the Polarity Generalization postulated by García Álvarez (2009) (11).

(11) Polarity Generalization (García Álvarez, 2009, p. 129)
The propositions expressed in the main clause and exceptive clause must have opposite polarity

There are two possible approaches to this, both with perks and shortcomings. The first possibility is to argue that the negation is contained in the elided clause (Vostrikova, 2021), as in (12). This analysis nicely accounts for the fact that high adverbs, like *possibly* scope over the negation rather than below, as in (13). However, this analysis predicts that Negative Polarity Items should not be licensed in subject position in the exceptive clause, as they would not be in the scope of the negation, contrary to facts (14).

(12) a. Every student came, except John.
b. $[_{EP}\ [_{CP1}$ [Every student$]_i\ [_{TP1}$ came $t_i\ ]]$ except $[_{CP2}$ [John$]_j$ ~~$[_{TP2}$ did not come $t_j\ ]]]]$~~

(13) Everyone will come, except possibly Sue.

Possibly > NEG
*NEG > possibly

(14) Everyone danced with Julie, except anyone from my class.

The second possibility is that the negation is encoded within the lexical entry of the exceptive marker (glossed as NEG), which accounts for the polarity reversal and the negative inference that *John did not come* (Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam and Polinsky, 2019; Polinsky et al., 2024).

(15) a. Every student came, except John.
b. $[_{EP}\ [_{CP1}$ [Every student$]_i\ [_{TP1}$ came $t_i\ ]]$ **except$_{\textbf{NEG}}$** $[_{CP2}$ [John$]_j$ ~~$[_{TP2}$ came $t_j\ ]]]]$~~

The account that includes NEG in the marker itself is optimal for an ellipsis analysis, as it will ensure that TP1 and TP2 have the same polarity, which is necessary in order to have ellipsis under identity (Merchant, 2000; Ranero, 2021, a.o.).[4] In the exceptive clause in (15b), the exception *John* undergoes fronting to SpecCP2 in order to escape ellipsis. In the antecedent clause, on the other hand, the quantifier *every student* undergoes Quantifier Raising (QR) and thus moves out of TP1, leaving behind a variable. Ellipsis of TP2 is then licensed under semantic identity with TP1 in the antecedent clause (Merchant, 2000, 2001; Potsdam, 2018; Ranero, 2021).[5] This analysis accounts for the felicity of NPIs in subject position (14), but fails to account for the scope relations witnessed with high adverbs (13). Finally, a concern that arises in attempting to explain polarity reversal is the contrastive nature of exceptive constructions. In (15a), the fact that John did not come contrasts with the fact that every other student came. An analysis where the negation is not encoded in the exceptive marker but rather in the elided TP is problematic, as contrast is normally expressed by Focus and focalized elements cannot be elided (Takahashi and Fox 2005; a.o.). The central topic of the present paper is not to reanalyze polarity in exceptive constructions nor the nature of polarity particles (see Farkas and Roelofsen (2005) on a discussion on the topic). Thus I leave the question open for future research.

In the following Section, I will resort to several diagnostics proposed by Potsdam (2018), Potsdam and Polinsky (2019), and Polinsky et al. (2024) to establish whether *eccetto* constructions are phrasal or clausal.

2.1 Diagnosing the structure of eccetto constructions

Before moving to the diagnostics proposed in the literature, I would like to point out that the two different *eccetto* constructions have distinct distributions. *Eccetto* + UQ can occur close to the associate, or in peripheral position (16). *Eccetto* + EQ/n/wh, on the other hand, must occur sentence initially (17-18).

(16) a. Ha incontra-to tutt-i eccetto Luca alla conferenza.
have.PRS.3SG meet-PST.PTCP all-PL EM Luca at.the conference
'(S)he met everyone except Luca at the conference.'
b. Eccetto Luca, ha incontrato tutti alla conferenza.
c. Ha incontrato tutti alla conferenza, eccetto Luca.

[4] Identity can be defined as syntactic (Ranero, 2021), semantic (Chung, 2013) or a mix of both Merchant (2000). I am not going to address this further in this paper and refer the reader to the relevant literature just mentioned.

[5] I am not going into details about the semantic identity necessary to license ellipsis and refer the reader to Merchant (2001) and Ranero (2021) for further details.

(17) a. * Ha incontra-to alcuni student-i eccetto Luca
have.PRS.3SG meet-PST.PTCP some student-PL EM Luca
alla conferenza.
at.the conference
'Setting aside Luca, (s)he met some student at the conference.'

b. Eccetto Luca, ha incontrato alcuni studenti alla conferenza.

c. *Ha incontrato alcuni studenti alla conferenza, eccetto Luca.

(18) a. * Chi ha incontra-to alla conferenza, eccetto
who have.PRS.3SG meet-PST.PTCP at.the conference EM
Luca?
Luca
'Setting aside Luca, who did (s)he meet at the conference?'

b. Eccetto Luca, chi ha incontrato alla conferenza?

c. *Chi eccetto Luca ha incontrato alla conferenza?

This asymmetry already suggests that these two constructions are not structurally equivalent. In order to diagnose the underlying structure of *eccetto* constructions, I will resort to several diagnostics, adapted from Polinsky et al. (2024),[6] reported in Table 1.

The first and most straightforward diagnostic is the possibility of spelling out the whole exceptive clause (21). Note that (21) is redundant, but not ruled out.

(21) They did not invite anyone, except (that they invited) Susan.

As far as *eccetto* is concerned, we see that with *eccetto* + UQ (22a) it is possible to spell out the whole clause, albeit it definitely sounds redundant. On the other hand, *eccetto* + EQ/n (22b) and *eccetto* + wh (22c) do not allow spelling out the

[6] One of the original diagnostics, namely the possibility of having separate binding domains in the antecedent and exceptive clause (19), is not included here as it would not be applicable to Italian. In Italian, reflexivity is normally expressed with the clitic *si* (20a). While the language is equipped with the reflexive DP *se stesso*, the latter is used when focalized (20b).

(19) Nobody made any cupcakes for anyone, except John$_j$ for himself$_i$.

(20) a. Gianni si è prepara-to un caffé.
Gianni REFL be.PRS.3SG prepare-PST.PTCP DET.INDEF.M.SG coffee
'Gianni prepared himself a coffee.'

b. Gianni ha prepara-to un caffé solo per sé stesso.
Gianni have.PRS.3SG prepare-PST.PTCP DET.INDEF.M.SG coffee only for REFL
'Gianni prepared a coffee just for himself.'

Furthermore, it is unclear whether *se stesso* must obey Binding Principle A or whether it is possible to get a logophoric reading of the reflexive (Charnavel and Sportiche, 2016). For these reasons, I will not consider binding as a diagnostics for the structure of *eccetto* constructions.

whole clause. Recall that *eccetto* + EQ/n (22b) and *eccetto* + wh (22c) constructions must occur sentence initially.

(22) a. Ha invita-to tutti gli student-i,
have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP all-PL.M DET.DEF.M.PL student-PL
eccetto non ha invita-to Luca.
EM NEG have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP Luca
'(S)he invited all the students, except s(he) did not invite Luca.'

b. * Eccetto non ha invita-to Luca, ha
EM NEG have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP Luca have.PRS.3SG
invita-to alcuni/tre student-i.
invite-PST.PTCP some-PL.M/three student-PL
'(S)he invited some/three students, setting aside s(he) did not invite Luca.'

c. *Eccetto non ha invita-to Luca, chi
EM NEG have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP Luca who
ha invita-to?
have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP
'Setting aside (s)he did not invite Luca, who did (s)he invite?'

The second diagnostic is the possible expression of multiple exceptions, as in (23). Only clausal exceptives allow for multiple exceptions. This follows from the assumption that the mechanism that allows clausal exceptives, namely focus fronting of an XP, is iterative, precisely as in other types of TP ellipsis constructions, like sluicing (Merchant (1999); a.o.).

(23) Every boy danced with every girl, except [Yuri] [with Anna].

(24) This year for Christmas, I will buy a gift for someone in my family, but I don't yet know what for whom.

Eccetto + UQ constructions allow for multiple exceptions (25a). *Eccetto* + wh-phrases cannot be tested, as Italian does not allow multiple wh-phrases, but interestingly we see that *eccetto* + EQ/n numeral is acceptable with what, on the surface, looks like multiple exceptions (25b). Nonetheless, in (25b) the exclusive phrase is interpreted as 'putting aside whatever relation there is between Luca and the Christmas party'. It might be, for instance, that something happened to Luca at the Christmas party, and the speaker wants to move on to the claim that she invited some students to some parties. In (25a), Luca is invited to all other parties, e.g. Eastern, the wedding, Labor Day BBQ etc. It's only the Christmas party that he was not invited to. In 25b, on the other hand, Luca is not under consideration anymore for the *alcune feste* 'some parties' that *alcuni studenti* 'some students' have been invited to, which crucially *can* include the Christmas party. Therefore, it is safe to say that the PP *alla festa di Natale* is not a 'second exception', as it is in (25a).

(25) a. Ha invita-to tutti gli student-i a
have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP all-PL.M DET.DEF.M.PL student-PL to
tutt-e le feste, eccetto Luca alla festa di
all-PL.F DET.DEF.F.PL party-PL EM Luca to a.DET.F.SG party
Natale.
of Christmas.
'(S)he invited all the students to all the parties, except Luca to the Christmas party.'

b. Eccetto Luca alla festa di Natale, ha invita-to
EM Luca to a.DET.F.SG party of Christmas have.PRS.3SG
alcuni/tre student-i ad alcune/tre
invite-PST.PTCP some-PL.M/three student-PL to
feste.
some-PL.F/three party-PL
'Putting aside Luca at the Christmas party (s)he invited some/three students to some/three parties.'

The third diagnostics is the category that the exceptive marker selects. Clausal exceptives, given their nature, do not present any restrictions on the category of the XP exception (26). This follows naturally if the mechanism licensing these clausal exceptive constructions is the same one that licenses ellipsis, which is insensitive to the category of the sluiced element (Merchant (1999); a.o.). On the other hand, phrasal exceptives, being prepositions, select a DP complement.

(26) Except (to) John, I talked to everyone.

As the examples in (27) show, *eccetto* + UQ does not seem to impose any restriction on its XP complement (27a), whereas *eccetto* + EQ/numeral/wh constructions require a DP complement, (27b) and (27c) .

(27) a. Eccetto (a) Luca, ha parla-to a tutti
EM to Luca have.PRS.3SG talk-PST.PTCP to all-PL.M
gli student-i.
DET.DEF.M.PL student-PL
'(S)he talked to all the students except (to) Luca.'

b. Eccetto (*a) Luca, ha parla-to ad alcuni
EM to Luca have.PRS.3SG talk-PST.PTCP to some-PL.M/three
student-i.
student-PL
'setting aside Luca, (s)he talked to all the students.'

c. Eccetto (*a) Luca, a chi ha parla-to?
EM to Luca to whom have.PRS.3SG talk-PST.PTCP
'Setting aside Luca, to whom did (s)he talk?'

The fourth diagnostics is the possibility to have speaker-oriented adverbs in the exception (Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Soltan, 2016; Vostrikova, 2021). Clausal exceptives, because of their underlying clausal structure, allow clause-level adverbs in the exception (28a), while phrasal exceptives do not (28b).

(28) a. I was able to meet everyone, except *regrettably/unfortunately/sadly* Mary.
b. *Everyone except *regrettably* Mary came to the party.
(Polinsky et al., 2024, p. 8)

Only *eccetto* + UQ allows high speaker-oriented adverbs in the exceptive phrase (29a), where they only scope over the exception. Having the high adverb outside of the exceptive phrase is always possible, (29b-c), but in this case they scope over the whole statement. When it comes to *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh (30), on the other hand, speaker-oriented adverbs cannot occur between *eccetto* and the DP *Luca*. They are not restricted from occurring in these sentences, but they must be placed outside of the exceptive phrase, either before or after, where they take scope over the whole statement (30b).

(29) a. Eccetto evidentemente/purtroppo Luca, ha
EM evidently/sadly Luca have.PRS.3SG
invita-to tutti gli student-i.
invite-PST.PTCP all-PL.M DET.DEF.M.PL student-PL
'Except evidently/sadly Luca, (s)he invited all the students.'
b. Evidentemente/purtroppo eccetto Luca, ha invitato tutti gli studenti.
c. Eccetto Luca, evidentemente/purtroppo ha invitato tutti gli studenti.

(30) a. Eccetto (??evidentemente/purtroppo) Luca, ha
EM evidently/sadly Luca have.PRS.3SG
invita-to alcuni/tre student-i.
invite-PST.PTCP some-PL.M/three student-PL
'Setting aside Luca, (s)he evidently/sadly invited some/three the students.'
b. Eccetto Luca, evidentemente/purtroppo ha invita-to solo alcuni/tre sudenti.
c. Evidentemente/purtroppo, eccetto Luca ha invitato solo alcuni/tre sudenti.

The next diagnostic is the interpretation in sprouting constructions, a subset of sluicing (Merchant, 2001). As originally noted by Stockwell and Wong (2020), the example in (31) is ambiguous. Under one reading, which I will call Reading 1 (31a), the antecedent for the ellipsis is the whole clause. On the other hand, in the second reading, Reading 2, the elided material seems to only include the exceptive

phrase *John does not like The Lord of the Rings*. As the authors argue, the second reading can only be available if the exceptive construction *except John* is clausal.

(31) Everyone likes The Lord of the Rings, except John, but I don't know why.
   a. Reading 1: but I don't know why everyone except John likes The Lord of the Rings.
   b. Reading 2: but I don't know why John does not like The Lord of the Rings.

When it comes to sprouting constructions in Italian, we see that only exceptive constructions with *eccetto* + UQ can give rise to ambiguous readings (32): although the predominant reading is Reading 1 (32a), Reading 2 (33b) is available.

(32) Eccetto Luca, ha invita-to tutti gli
EM Luca have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP all-PL.M DET.DEF.M.PL
studenti, ma non so perché.
student-PL but NEG know.PRS.1SG why
'Except Luca, (s)he invited all the students, but I don't know why.'
   a. Reading 1: But I don't know why she invited all the students except Luca.
   b. Reading 2: But I don't know why she did not invite Luca.

In *eccetto* + EQ/n constructions there is no ambiguity and only Reading 1 is available (33).[7] It is not possible to use this diagnostic for *eccetto* + wh-phrase constructions because of the mutual exclusivity of the interrogative phrase *perché* 'why' and wh-phrases (Rizzi, 1997, 2001).

(33) Eccetto Luca, ha invita-to alcuni/tre studenti,
EM Luca have.PRS.3SG invite-PST.PTCP all-PL.M some/three
ma non so perché.
student-PL but NEG know.PRS.1SG why
'Setting aside Luca, (s)he invited some/three students, but I don't know why.'
   a. Reading 1: But I don't know why she invited some/three the students setting aside Luca.
   b. Reading 2: *But I don't know why she did not invite Luca.

The last diagnostics is the ambiguity of the interpretation with *same* and *different* (Beck, 2000). *Different* in (34) can have two readings: a discourse-anaphoric reading, here referred to as the external reading (34a), and a reciprocal-like or Q-bound reading, here defined as the internal reading (34b).

[7] The lack of Reading 2 could also be explained, semantically, by the fact that *perqué* likely carries an existence presupposition that she did not invite Luca for *some* reason. Since *eccetto* + EQ/n does not introduce a negative entailment, then this presupposition is not supported.

(34) Every baker baked a different cake.

a. **External reading**: Every baker baked a cake that is different from a salient cake in the discourse, e.g. carrot cake.

b. **Internal reading**: Every baker baked a cake that is different from the one that any other baker baked.

The ambiguity reported in (34) can be used as a diagnostic for the structure of exceptives, because only phrasal exceptives (35b) are ambiguous and allow both readings.

(35) a. Every baker baked a different cake, except Nicky. **External only**

b. Every baker except Nicky baked a different cake. **Ambiguous**

The absence of ambiguity with the casual exceptive (35a) is due to the fact that it has an underlying clausal structure without a quantifier that can license the Q-bound reading (Beck, 2000), as shown in (36). The only way *different* in the exceptive clause *except Nicky did not bake a different cake* in (36) can be interpreted is as in 'different from a salient one in the context'.

(36) Every baker baked a different cake, except Nicky did not bake a different cake.

In Italian, we see that in *eccetto* + UQ constructions we can only get the external reading (37): all the students read a different book from a salient one in the context, namely *The Hobbit*, except Nicole who indeed read *The Hobbit*. This further confirms the clausal structure of this type of exceptive construction.

(37) Eccetto Nicole, tutti gli student-i ha-nno
EM Nicole all DET.DEF.M.PL student-M.PL have-PRS.3PL
le-tto un libro diverso.
read-PST.PTCP DET.INDEF.M.PL book different
'Except for Nicole, all the students have read a different book.'

In the case of *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh, the readings are not straightforward. As a matter of fact, in both (38-39), we get an external reading, where *un libro diverso* is interpreted with regard to a salient book in the context.

(38) Eccetto Nicole, alcuni/tre student-i ha-nno le-tto
EM Nicole some/three student-M.PL have-PRS.3PL read-PST.PTCP
un libro diverso.
DET.INDEF.M.PL book different
'Setting aside Nicole, some/three students have read a different book.'

(39) Eccetto Nicole, chi ha le-tto un
EM Nicole who have-PRS.3SG read-PST.PTCP DET.INDEF.M.PL
libro diverso?
book different

'Setting aside Nicole, who read a different book?'

The fact that *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions only allow the external reading is unexpected. However, this might be due to distributivity and the nature of the quantifying expression: universal VS non-universal (Beck, 2000). If we take a step back and look at sentences without *eccetto*, we notice that different quantifying expressions behave differently. In the presence of a universal quantifier, it is possible to have both an external and an internal reading (40a). On the other hand, in sentences with an existential quantifier and a numeral (40b), or a wh-phrase (40c), the internal reading is unavailable. (40b-40c) can only have the reading where *una torta diversa* is interpreted with regard to a salient cake in the context.

(40) a. Tutti gli studenti ha-nno porta-to
all DET.DEF.M.PL student-M.PL have-PRS.3PL bring-PST.PTCP
una torta diversa.
DET.INDEF.M.PL cake different
'All the students brought a different cake.'

b. Alcuni/tre studenti ha-nno porta-to
some/three student-M.PL have-PRS.3PL bring-PST.PTCP
una torta diversa.
DET.INDEF.M.PL cake different
'Some/three students brought a different cake.'

c. Chi ha porta-to una torta diversa?
who have.PRS.3SG PST.PTCP DET.INDEF.M.PL cake different
'Who brought a different cake?'

Given these facts, it is not possible to resort to this test to establish whether *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh is phrasal or clausal. However, this test is still viable for *eccetto* + UQ, and it confirms once more that this type of exceptive construction is clausal. For this reason, it will not be disregarded.

In this Section, I have used several diagnostics, summarized in Table 1 to establish the structure of *eccetto* constructions. All the diagnostics show that *eccetto* constructions with a universal quantifier associate (41a) are clausal (41b). Recall that in (41b), the quantifier expression must QR out of TP1.

(41) a. Eccetto Luca, ha invitato tutti gli studenti. **Neg. inference**

b. [$_{EP}$ [$_{CP1}$ [tutti gli studenti]$_i$ [$_{TP1}$ *pro* ha invitato t$_i$]] **eccetto$_{\text{NEG}}$** [$_{CP2}$ [Luca]$_j$ ~~[$_{TP2}$ ha invitato t$_j$]~~]]]

(42) a. Eccetto Luca, ha invitato alcuni/tre studenti. **No neg. inference**

b. [$_{XP}$ [$_{PP}$ **eccetto** Luca]$_k$ [$_{CP}$ [alcuni/tre studenti t$_k$ [$_{TP}$ *pro* ha invitato t$_i$]]]

As far as *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions (42a) are concerned, all diagnostics except for multiple exceptions confirm that they do not have an underlying clausal structure. The exceptive phrase is phrasal and for the time being I propose the structure in (42a), where the PP *eccetto Luca* is generated as a modifier of the quantified expression -which undergoes QR- and is then fronted to a yet undefined XP. We will come back to the exact derivation of examples like (42a) in Sections 4 and 5, while the following Section will discuss the semantic properties of these two constructions.

Table 1: Summary of clausal diagnostics *eccetto*

	Clausal exceptive	*eccetto* + UQ	*eccetto* + EQ/n
full clause can be overt	Yes	Yes	No
allows multiple exceptions	Yes	Yes	Yes (?)
only DPs	No	No	Yes
speaker-oriented adverbs	Yes	Yes	No
ambiguity in sluicing	Yes	Yes	No
ambiguity with same-different	No	No	No

3 The semantics of eccetto

In the previous Section, I have shown that *eccetto* constructions have different syntactic structures: *Eccetto* + UQ (43) constructions are clausal and involve ellipsis, while *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh ones (44) are phrasal. In this section, I will argue that these constructions are also semantically different. *Eccetto* + UQ (43) have an exceptive reading (every student came and Yuri did not come) and their semantics can be captured with Vostrikova's (2021) conditional analysis of exceptives. On the other hand, *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions (44) have an exclusive reading. Therefore previous analyses of exceptive constructions are unsuitable to derive them. In (44a), for instance, some/three students came, and Yuri has been set aside.

(43) Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i tutt-i gli
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL all-M.PL the
student-i.
student-M.PL
'Except Yuri all students have arrived.'

(44) a. Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i alcun-i/tre
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL some-M.PL/three
student-i.
student-M.PL
'Setting aside Yuri, some/three students have arrived.'

b. Eccetto Yuri, chi è arriva-t-o?
EM Yuri who be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.SG
'Setting aside Yuri, who has arrived?'

Exclusive constructions differ from true exceptive constructions (46) in three ways, illustrated here for English.

(45) Setting aside John, everyone came.

(46) Except John, everyone came.

First, exceptive constructions are, in some languages, more restricted and can only occur with a universal quantifier (47). This is the case for English *except*. No such restriction is witnessed with exclusive constructions (48).

(47) a. Except (for) Mary, I saw everyone.
b. #Except Mary, I saw some students.
c. #Except Mary, who did you see?

(48) a. Setting aside Mary, I saw everyone.
b. Setting aside Mary, I saw some students.
c. Setting aside Mary, who did you see?

The second difference is their compatibility with numerals. True exceptives are incompatible with numerals (49), while exclusives are free to co-occur with them (51). Moreover, the size of the set is different. In (50) the set of people under consideration is equal to the set denoted by restrictor of the quantifier. If the set of students under consideration contains three elements, then we subtract Mary from this set and are asserting that two people came. On the other hand, in (51) the set of entities under consideration is equal to the number of pluralities denoted by the numeral, in this case three, plus the cardinality of the exclusion, one (Mary), adding up to a total of -at least- four entities in the discourse.[8]

(49) #Except Mary, I saw three students. **set = N**

(50) Except Mary, I saw everyone. **set = N**

(51) Setting aside Mary, I saw three students. **set = N+1**

[8]There can be more than four entities present in the discourse. Suppose there were seven. Then (51) would state that I saw three of those seven, where Mary is not among the three.

The final difference is in the interpretation of the exceptive and the exclusive phrases. As will be discussed in more detail in the next Section, exceptive phrases carry a negative inference (52). Exclusives, on the other hand, do not (53).

(52) Except John, everyone came.
⇒ John did not come.

(53) Setting aside John, everyone came.
⇏ Jonh did (not) come.

The following section will outline previous semantic accounts of exceptives (Section 3.1) and discuss whether they are suitable for *eccetto* constructions (Section 3.2)

3.1 The semantics of exceptives

Besides the negative inference discussed in the previous section, exceptive constructions contribute two other inferences, outlined in (54) (Keenan and Stavi, 1986; Hoeksema, 1987; von Fintel, 1993). The containment inference conveys that the exception, *Mary*, belongs to the set of students. The domain subtraction states that if the exception were removed from the domain of the quantifier, the statement *every student came* would be true. Finally, the negative inference states that *came* is not true of Mary.

(54) Except Mary, every student came.
   a. Mary is a student **containment inference**
   b. Every student who is not Mary came **domain subtraction**
   c. Mary didn't come **negative inference**

There are three main analyses of exceptive constructions in the literature. The first observations on exceptive constructions date back to Hoeksema (1987), who suggested that exceptive constructions remove an entity from the universe of discourse. Shortly after, this claim was proven inaccurate by von Fintel (1989) and Hoeksema (1990) himself, on the basis of examples like (55), which would be ill formed if John were indeed removed from the discourse.

(55) Except for John, everyone likes John.

This led von Fintel (1993) to treat *except* and *but* as domain subtractors. In (54), *except* subtracts *Mary* from the domain of the quantifier *every student*. Subtraction captures the inference that every student who isn't Mary came (54b), but is silent about Mary coming. Therefore, an additional component is needed to capture the negative inference: the uniqueness condition (what follows ∧) ensures that Mary is the smallest subtraction that still holds the statement true (von Fintel, 1993). Note that, for {Mary} to be the smallest set that can be subtracted to

yield truth, it must be that Mary did not come. Otherwise, the empty set could be subtracted. Under this approach, the LF of (54) is reported in (56) and its set denotation in (57). (56) is true if everyone who is not Mary came and Mary did not come.

(56) [$_{IP}$ [every [student [except Mary$_F$]]] came] LF of (54)

(57) $[\![(56)]\!] = 1 iff C \in \forall(S - M) \wedge \forall D(C \in \forall(S - D) \rightarrow M \subseteq D)$
Where:
C = people who came
M = {Mary}
S = student

Now, let's look at cases like (58). As von Fintel (1993) argues, left upward monotone determiners, like *some* (59), are automatically ruled out in this account. Assuming that C ∈ ∃ (S — M), we can make the inference from (S-M) to its superset S, and therefore to C ∈ ∃ (S), which contradicts the restriction imposed by the uniqueness condition.

(58) #Except Mary, some students came.

(59) Some female human being is an athlete
→ Some human being is an athlete.

The second analysis proposed in the literature (Gajewski, 2013; Hirsch, 2016; Mayr and Vostrikova, 2023) posits that exceptive construction include domain subtraction and an exhaustivity operator, *Exh*, which is responsible for deriving the negative inference (in fact reconceptualizing von Fintel's uniqueness condition). Let's consider example (54) and its LF repeated in (60). The alternatives used by Exh are determined by substituting the focused marked DP in the exceptive phrase, Mary, with other possible DPs from the set. Given the set of students S in (61), the alternatives are listed in (62). The first alternative is the prejacent (Every student except Mary came), and all other alternatives are innocently excludable. The prejacent states that everyone who isn't Mary came, which yields the subtraction inference. Then, Exh entails that e.g not everyone who isn't Susan came. For that to hold, given the prejacent, it must be that Mary did not come. This is how the negative inference is captured by Exh.

(60) [Exh$_{ALT}$ [$_{IP}$ [every [student [except Mary$_F$]]] came]]

(61) S = {Mary, Susan, Lucy, John}

(62) ALT =
a. Every student except Mary came
b. Every student except Susan came
c. Every student except Lucy came

d. Every student except John came

The use of Exh also predicts the unacceptability of examples like (58) with an existential quantifier. Assuming the same set of students in (63), the meaning of the prejacent (58) is reported in (64), which is consistent with the alternatives listed in (65).

(63) S = {Mary, Susan, Lucy, John}

(64) $[\![(58)]\!] = 1 \textit{iff} \exists x[x \in \{Lucy, Susan, John\} \ \& \ x \ came]$

(65) ALT =
   a. $\lambda w.\exists x[x \in \{Mary, Susan, Lucy\} \ \& \ came(x)(w)]$
   b. $\lambda w.\exists x[x \in \{Mary, Susan, John\} \ \& \ came(x)(w)]$
   c. $\lambda w.\exists x[x \in \{Mary, Lucy, John\} \ \& \ came(x)(w)]$

None of the alternatives in (65) is innocently excludable. If we assert the prejacent in (64), then only one of them can be negated. For instance, if we negate (65a), then it means that John came. Negating the other alternatives would give rise to a contradiction. Hirsch (2016) and Vostrikova (2019) argue that, since Exh in (65) has nothing to negate, the LF in (64) is ruled out by the Non-Vacuity Constraint (66) postulated by Gajewski (2013); Fox and Spector (2018). Therefore, if we assume that true exceptives obligatorily co-occur with the Exh operator, then the LF in (64) is the only possible LF for (58) and its ungrammaticality follows from the violation of the Non-Vacuity Constraint (66).

(66) **NON-VACUITY:** Exh[A] is infelicitous if Exh[A] is equivalent to A.
Gajewski (2013)

As far as English is concerned, both von Fintel's (1993) domain subtraction and Gajewski's (2013), Hirsch's (2016), and Mayr and Vostrikova's (2023) *Exh* operator analyses correctly account for the distribution puzzle. However, all of them are problematic for clausal exceptives (67), which have the structure repeated below in (67b).

(67) a. Every student came, except John.
   b. [$_{EP}$ [$_{CP1}$ [Every student]$_i$ [$_{TP1}$ came t$_i$]] **except$_{\textbf{NEG}}$** [$_{CP2}$ [John]$_j$ ~~[$_{TP2}$ came t$_j$]~~]]]

These analyses all entail some version of domain subtraction (von Fintel, 1993; Gajewski, 2013; Hirsch, 2016; Mayr and Vostrikova, 2023). Therefore, for the derivation to proceed, the exceptive phrase must have compositional access to the set denoted by the associate quantifier. In the bi-clausal -coordinating- structure in (67) this is not feasible. Furthermore, clausal exceptives denote a proposition, rather than an entity, so a type-mismatch immediately obtains when the exceptive tries to combine with the DP. Hence, the analyses outlined in this Section are

unsuitable for clausal exceptives, such as Italian *eccetto* +UQ, as well as exceptive constructions in Spanish (Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén, 2012), Egyptian Arabic (Soltan, 2016), and Malagasy (Potsdam, 2018). The following section discusses the conditional analysis of exceptive constructions proposed by Vostrikova (2021).

3.1.1 A conditional analysis of exceptives

The analyses presented in the previous section are unsuitable to capture clausal exceptives, like the Italian *eccetto* + UQ constructions. To address these issues, which also arise with English *except*, Vostrikova (2021) proposes a conditional analysis.

To account for clausal exceptives, Vostrikova (2021) proposes to look at possible situations that minimally differ from a topic situation, in particular S_o, the situation with respect to which the quantificational claim is evaluated. She proposes to derive an example like (68) by looking at possible worlds or situations (Kratzer and Heim, 1998; Kratzer, 2002, 2019), which differ from S_o only in the facts about Mary coming. In her account, exceptions do not introduce a set of individuals, but rather quantification over possible situations, and provide the restriction for this quantification. She calls this part Conditional Domain Subtraction, as it is responsible for the domain subtraction inference. Furthermore, this analysis nicely accounts for the containment (Mary is a girl) and the negative inferences. Let's break down the analysis step by step.

(68) Every girl came except Mary.

Given the set of girls in (69), the quantificational claim -that every girl came- is not true in S_o, as Mary did not come. We thus resort to a strategy similar to modal displacement.

(69) S = {Mary, Luna, Maša, Nika}

The exceptive phrase brings to the table the negative inference (70) and quantifies over possible situations (71). Note that the situation with respect to which containment inference is evaluated is the topic situation, S_o, as the extension of girl must remain constant across all possible situations. In other words, x must actually be a girl in S_o.

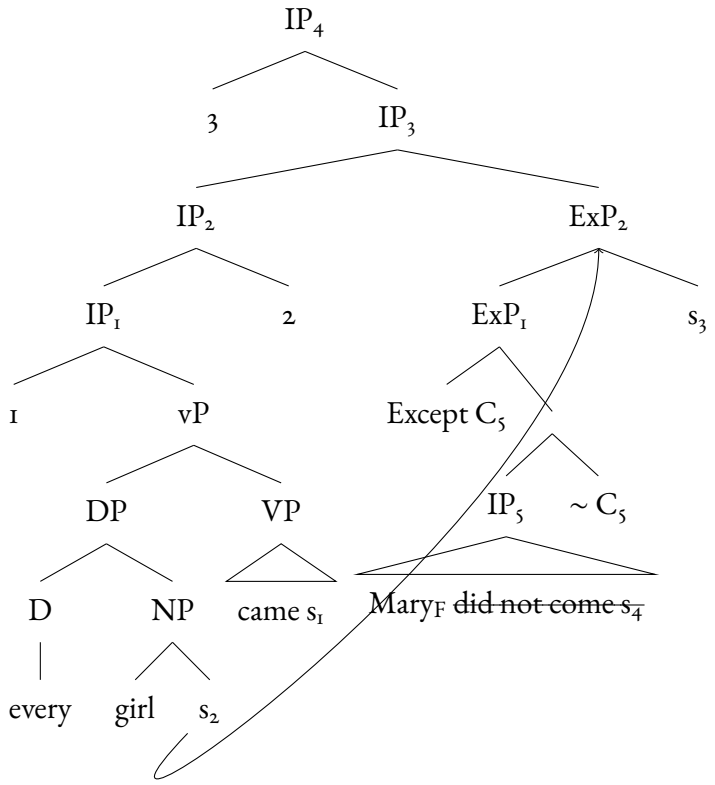
(70) $\neg$ Mary came in s_o

(71) $\forall$ s [$\neg$ Mary came in s $\rightarrow$ $\neg$ $\forall$ x [x is a girl in S_o $\rightarrow$ x came in S]]

(70) captures the negative inference, while (71) captures containment. I will now discuss the LF of (68) to clarify how (70) and (71) are derived and how subtraction arises.

Vostrikova argues that (68) has the LF in (72) and assumes that the exceptive phrase moves rightward from its connected position and leaves the trace s_2. There are three binders: 2 binds the trace s_2; 1 binds the situation variable inside the vP, namely the situation in which the sentence is evaluated; 3 binds the situation variable s_3 in the exceptive phrase.

(72)



IP2 has the denotation in (73). Furthermore, the remnant of ellipsis in IP_5 is marked with focus: $Mary_F$. This operator introduces an anaphor constrained to have its value as a subset of the focus value of the prejacent, outlined in (74) (Rooth, 1992). Finally, the operator ~ in the sister of IP_5 introduces the presupposition that the value of the silent variable it is accompanied by, namely C_5, is a subset of the focus value of IP_5, which is reported in (74), while the sister to C_5 contributes the content in (70).[9]

[9]Note that the structure that Vostrikova (2021) proposes in (72) differs in two crucial ways from the structure discussed in Section 2. First, here the exceptive phrase is generated in the complement of the NP girl and then it gets extraposed to the right, whereas in the structure proposed by Potsdam (2018); Potsdam and Polinsky (2019); Polinsky et al. (2024) the clausal exceptive marker heads its own phrase and conjoins the two clauses. Second, in the syntactic accounts just mentioned, it is argued that the exceptive marker carries a negative element, which is responsible for the polarity reversal García Álvarez (2009). In Vostrikova's analysis, on the other hand, the negation is contained in the elided clause. This aspect is not quintessential for the scope of the present paper, hence I refer the reader to Vostrikova (2021) for an in-depth motivation for this choice.

(73) λs' λs" $\forall$ x [x is a girl in s' $\rightarrow$ x came in s"]

(74) $[\![C_5]\!]^g = g(5) =$
{λs ¬ Mary came in s, λs' ¬ Maša came in s', λs" ¬ Luna came in s", λs"' ¬ Nika came in s"' }

The denotation of *except* is given in (75), where s stands for the topic situation. In short, the first line in (75) includes the presupposition that q (that is the content of the elided clause in the exceptive) that Mary did not come is true. The second line is responsible for the subtraction, namely taking all p in the set of alternatives in (74), as long as p≠q, and we hold the truth value of these p constant in both s and s': p(s) = p(s').[10] It is not the case that everyone came in s and s'. But if we look at the set in (74), take out the presupposition q that Mary did not come and look at other p in the set - which have the same value in s as they are in s'- then there is some situation where every girl came. In other words, in S_o it is not true that everyone came, because Mary -a girl- did not come. But if we put aside just the presupposition that Mary did not come, we can find a situation in which the quantificational claim is true and everyone came.

(75) $[\![except_{Cn}]\!]^g = \lambda q{<}st{>}.\lambda s'.\lambda M{<}s{<}st{»}:q(s') = 1 \,\&\, \forall s[q(s) = 1 \rightarrow \neg M(s')(s) = 1].$
$\exists s[\forall p[(p \neq q \,\&\, p \in g(n)) \rightarrow p(s) = p(s')] \,\&\, M(s')(s) = 1]$

At this point, we can compute conditional domain subtractions and quantification over possible situations as in (76).

(76) a. $[\![72]\!]^g(s_o)$ is defined only if ¬ Mary came in s_o & $\forall$s[¬Mary came in s $\rightarrow$ ¬$\forall$ [x is a girl in s_o $\rightarrow$ x came in s]]

b. if defined, $[\![72]\!]^g(s_o) = 1$ iff $\exists$s[$\forall$p[(p $\neq$ λs'. ¬Mary came in s' & p$\in$g(5)) $\rightarrow$ p(s)=p(s_o)]] & $\forall$x[x is a girl in s_o $\rightarrow$ x came in s]]

In set terms, we can think of the elided clause in (68) picking out a set of all the situations in which Mary didn't come, the bottom half of the set in Figure 1. The assertion says that there is a counterpart to S_o, in the top part of the diagram, which only differs from the latter in the facts about Mary coming and in which every girl came. So it follows that if Mary had came, every girl would have come, and thus that every other girl came - this is the subtraction inference.

One crucial aspect of this analysis is that it does not immediately account for the distribution puzzle, as nothing in this analysis specifically predicts the incompatibility of *except* with existential quantifiers. Therefore, Vostrikova states that the infelicity of (77) follows from the fact that an existential quantifier cannot be used when the conditions for the usage of a definite are met.

(77) #Some girl except Mary came.

[10] M stands for the denotation of IP_2, picking up a relation between situations.

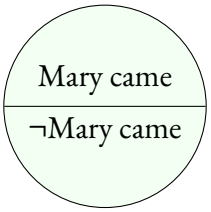


Figure 1: The set of possible situations under consideration

Consider (77). The presupposition (that if Mary did not come then the quantificational claim is false) and the assertion (that some girl came in S_0) can only be true for (77) if Mary is the only girl in S_0. If, on the other hand, Mary is not the only girl in S_0, then it is not clear how (77) is bad. So (77) must be ruled out by another factor. Vostrikova argues that this is due to the restriction on the use of an indefinite or existential when the conditions for a definite are met, as in (78) (provided that John is not polygamous), which follows from Maximize Presupposition (Heim, 1991).

(78) Yesterday, I talked to a wife of John's. (Alonso-Ovalle et al., 2011, p. 31)

Vostrikova (2021) provides a vible compositional semantic analysis of clausal exceptives, which captures the inferences traditionally associated with exceptives. The distribution puzzle, however, follows from the independent principle of Maximize Presupposition. This means that so far, only Vostrikova's analysis provides a desirable account of exceptive constructions, albeit it does not directly account for the distribution puzzle. The analyses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of analyses of exceptive constructions

	von Fintel (1993)	Gajewski (2013), (Hirsch, 2016)	Vostrikova (2021)
mechanism	domain subtraction + uniqueness condition	domain subtraction + Exh operator	Conditional semantics
accounts for distrib. puzzle	Yes	Yes	Not directly
compatible with clausal structure	No	No	Yes

3.2 *The semantics of eccetto + UQ constructions*

When it co-occurs with a universal quantifier (79), *eccetto* yields the same inferences as true exceptives in English: (79) contributes a containment inference, domain subtraction, and a negative inference. The fact that it's impossible to 'contraddict' the content of the exceptive phrase, (80), undeniably proves the presence of the negative inference.

(79) Eccetto Maria sono ven-ut-i tutti gli studenti.
EM Maria be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL all the students
'Except Maria, all students came.'
a. Maria is a student **containment inference**
b. Every student who is not Maria came **domain subtraction**
c. Maria didn't come **negative inference**

(80) # Eccetto Maria sono ven-ut-i tutti, ma poi
EM Maria be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL all but then
è ven-ut-a anche Maria.
be.PRS.3SG come-PST.PTCP-F.SG also Maria
'#Except Maria, everyone came, but then Maria also came.'

As far as previous analyses are concerned, von Fintel's (1993) domain subtraction + uniqueness condition analysis (81) is problematic, as it requires compositional access to the set denoted by the quantifier restrictor in order to compute the domain subtraction, underlined. *Eccetto* + UQ constructions are clausal (see Section 2) and hence the exceptive phrase does not have compositional access to the quantifier phrase.

(81) (56) = 1 iff $C \in \forall(\underline{S - M}) \wedge \forall D(C \in \forall(S - D) \rightarrow MD)$
Where:
C = people who came
M = {Mary}
S = student

Gajewski's (2013) and Hirsch's (2016) *Exh* operator analysis is problematic for the same reason. Even thought *Exh* takes propositional scope, in this analysis the exceptive marker, e.g. *but*, needs compositional access to the quantifier phrase. Since *eccetto* + UQ constructions are clausal, it is impossible.

The only suitable analysis for *eccetto* + UQ constructions is Vostrikova's (2021) conditional analysis of exceptives. Her analysis includes looking at alternative situations that differ from the topic one, S_0, only in the facts about Maria coming. In doing so, it accounts for all three inferences in (79) while still being compatible with a clausal structure. The denotation of (79), identical to the one discussed in Section 3.1.1 for English, is shown in 82.

(82) a. $[\![82]\!]^g(s_0)$ is defined only if ¬ Maria came in s_0 & ∀s[¬Maria came in s → ¬∀x[x is a student in s_0 → x came in s]]

b. is defines, $[\![82]\!]^g(s_0)$ =1 iff ∃s[∀p[(p ≠ λs'. ¬Maria came in s' & p∈g(5)) → p(s)=p(s_0)]] & ∀x[x is a student in s_0 → x came in s]]

In this Section, I have discussed the semantics of the different *eccetto* + constructions + UQ constructions in Italian and shown that the domain subtraction analysis (Hoeksema, 1987; von Fintel, 1993) and the Exh operator analysis (Gajewski, 2013; Hirsch, 2016; Mayr and Vostrikova, 2023) are inappropriate for the clausal *eccetto* + UQ constructions, as they require compositional access to the domain of the quantifier. Vostrikova (2021), however, provides a succesful analysis for clausal exceptives, which is optimal for *eccetto* + UQ.

3.3 The semantics of eccetto +EQ/n/wh

The co-occurrence of *eccetto* with existential quantifiers, numerals (83), and wh-phrases (84) presents an interesting puzzle. We have already shown that they do not include a negative inference. Yet, at first sight, it seems that these constructions include both the containment inference and domain subtraction. Upon closer inspection, however, we notice that this is not the case. Considering (83), Maria is obviously a person, hence it looks like we need domain subtraction to compute the meaning of the sentence. The same holds true of wh-phrase associates (84).

(83) Eccetto Maria sono ven-ut-i in 3.
EM Maria be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL in three
'Setting aside Maria, three people came.'

a. Maria is a person **containment inference**

b. Three people who aren't Maria came **domain subtraction**

(84) Eccetto Maria chi è ven-ut-o?
EM Maria who be.PRS.3SH come-PST.PTCP-SG
'Setting aside Maria, who came?'

a. Mary is a person **containment inference**

b. Which x is not Maria and x came? **domain subtraction**

We can also look at a more straightforward situation, where there is again containment. Imagine that your children went to a remembrance event, attended by several former presidents of the United States. You are telling your friends about it and say (115). In (115), there must be containment, as Obama was a president.

(85) Eccetto Obama, hanno vi-sto tre president-i.
EM Obama have.PRS.3PL see-PST.PTCP three president-PL
'Setting aside Obama, they have seen two presidents.'

Containment is possible, but I will show now that it is not necessary. In (86a), we see that the sentence containing a universal is semantically ill-formed, as ostriches are not mammals. Therefore, there cannot be containment nor domain subtraction, as ostriches do not belong to the set denoted by the quantifier restrictor. (86b), on the other hand, is felicitous, which shows that *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions do not require containment.

(86) a. # Eccetto gli struzz-i abbiamo vi-sto tutti i
EM the ostrich-PL have.PRS.1PL see-PST.PTCP-PL all the
mammifer-i.
mammal-PL
'Except the ostriches, we saw all the mammals.'

b. Eccetto gli struzz-i, abbiamo vi-sto tre
EM the ostrich-PL have.PRS.1PL see-PST.PTCP-PL three
mammifer-i.
mammal-PL
'Setting aside the ostriches, we saw three mammals.'

This means that there is no containment inference, at least not of the sort described by Gajewski (2013), Hirsch (2016), and Vostrikova (2019). If containment is not enforced, then there cannot be subtraction from the domain of the quantifier. Yet, in both (115) and (86) we are putting something aside, therefore performing some sort of subtraction. The question that arises is what set we are subtracting from. Obviously, the subtraction is not from the domain of the quantifier. Instead, the exclusions, *Obama* and *gli struzzi* respectively, seem to be subtracted from the set of salient entities in the contexts, namely 'put aside' for the current discourse. This predicts that it should be impossible to reference back to the exclusion later in the utterance, which is precisely what we find. In (87), if *eccetto* removes *Yuri* from the context, then referring back to him leads to a pragmatically infelicitous sentence.[11] This not only applies to cases of co-reference, like with the possessive in (87), but also when the exclusion is a superset of the set mentioned in the following clause, as in (88).

(87) # Eccetto Yuri$_k$, sono arriva-t-i tre suo-i$_k$
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-PL three POSS-PL
studenti.
students
'#Setting aside Yuri, three of Yuri's students arrived.'

(88) # Eccetto gli uccell-i, hanno vi-sto alcuni mammifer-i
EM the bird-PL have.PRS.3PL see-PST.PTCP some mammal-PL

[11]Note that in (87a) the infelicity cannot be due to a Principle C violation, as *Yuri* in the exclusive phrase does not c-command *Yuri* in the main clause.

e tre struzz-i.
and three ostrich-PL
'#Setting aside the birds, they saw some mammals and three ostriches.'

The present evidence suggests that the exclusion is indeed subtracted, but from the set of available entities in the discourse. A word of caution is necessary at this point. The use of the word discourse is slightly unclear. The ostriches in (86b) are not removed from the whole future conversation, as one of the speakers can refer back to them in following utterances, as in (89). Therefore, what I mean by 'excluded from the set of available entities in the discourse' is that for the present utterance from that speaker, the ostriches are not part of the available entities, and cannot referenced back to.

(89) a. A: Eccetto gli struzz-i, abbiamo vi-sto tre
EM the ostrich-PL have.PRS.IPL see-PST.PTCP-PL three
mammifer-i.
mammal-PL
'Setting aside the ostriches, we saw three mammals.'

b. B: Io ador-o gli struzz-i!
NOM.ISG adore-PRS.ISG DEF.M.PL ostrich-PL
'I adore ostriches!'

Table 3: The possible analyses of *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions

	von Fintel (1993)	Gajewski (2013), (Hirsch, 2016)	Vostrikova (2021)
mechanism	domain subtraction + uniqueness condition	domain subtraction + Exh operator	Conditional semantics
requires compositional access	Yes	Yes	No
'correct' subtraction	No	No	No
suitable	No	No	No

3.3.1 Discussion of previous analyses

As far as *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions are concerned, I have shown that none of the three inferences is present, (90). The negative inference is absent, the lack

of necessary domain subtraction follows from the lack of obligatory containment, and the exclusion is subtracted from the discourse. For this reason, none of the analyses discussed so far are suitable for these constructions.

(90) Eccetto Maria sono ven-ut-i alcuni student-i.
EM Maria be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL some student-PL
'Setting aside Maria, some students came.'
a. ⇏ Maria is a student **No containment inference**
b. ⇏ Some student who is not Maria came **No domain subtraction**
c. ⇏ Maria did not come. **No negative inference**

von Fintel's (1993) domain subtraction + uniqueness condition cannot derive *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh for the reasons discussed in Section 3.1. The uniqueness condition, underlined in (92), rules out left upward monotone determiners, like the existential quantifier *alcuni* (91). Assuming that $C \in \exists (S - M)$, we can make the inference from $(S - M)$ to its superset S, and therefore to $C \in \exists (S)$, which contradicts the restriction imposed by the uniqueness condition. So this analysis predicts Italian example (90) to be ungrammatical, contrary to fact.

(91) a. Alcune donn-e sono ginnast-e.
some woman-PL be.PRS.3PL gymanst-F.PL
'Some women are gymanst.'
b. ⇒ Alcuni esser-i uman-i sono ginnast-i.
some being-PL human-PL be.PRS.3PL gymanst-PL
'Some human beings are gymanst.'

Furthermore, even if we got rid of the uniqueness condition, the denotation in (92) would require us to first compute domain subtraction $(S - M)$, which seems to be absent in *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions. In the latter, I will propose that the subtraction happens from the set of salient elements in the discourse.

(92) Eccetto Maria, sono venuti alcuni studenti.
(56) = 1 iff $C \in \forall(S - M) \wedge \underline{\forall D(C \in \forall(S - D) \rightarrow MD)}$
Where:
C = people who came
M = Mary
S = student

The *Exh* operator analysis (Gajewski, 2013; Hirsch, 2016; Vostrikova, 2019) is also unsuitable for *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions, as *except* requires compositional access to the set defined by the quantifier to subtract Maria from it. However, this is impossible as there containment inference and domain subtraction are not obligatory. Nonetheless, if we did have the containment inference and Maria were a student and we could do domain subtraction from the set {

Marco, Ivana, Yuri, Maria }, we would still run into some issues. The LF of (90) could be sketched as in (93), with the denotation of the prejacent (90) reported in (94), and the alternatives listed in (95).

(93) [Exh_{ALT} [$_{\text{IP}}$ [alcuni [studenti [eccetto Maria]]] sono venuti]] LF of (90)

(94) $[\![TP]\!] = 1$ *iff* $\exists x[x \in \{Marco, Ivana, Yuri\} \ \& \ x \ came]$

(95) ALT =

a. $\lambda w.\exists x[x \in \{Maria, Marco, Ivana\} \ \& \ x \ came]$

b. $\lambda w.\exists x[x \in \{Maria, Ivana, Yuri\} \ \& \ x \ came]$

c. $\lambda w.\exists x[x \in \{Maria, Marco, Yuri\} \ \& \ x \ came]$

As for the English examples, none of the alternatives in (95) is innocently excludable, as negating them would lead to a contradiction and hence a violation of the Non-Vacuity Constraint (66). Therefore, this analysis is also unsuitable for these constructions. Gajewski (2013), Hirsch (2016), and Vostrikova (2019) assume that *but* and *except* obligatorily co-occur with Exh. The present data from Italian challenges this assumption.

Finally, Vostrikova's (2021) conditional analysis of exceptives is also problematic for the Italian data, as her analysis requires a clausal structure. As shown in (75), repeated below as (96), *except* requires access to a set of alternative situations, from which it then subtracts the proposition q that Maria did not come, see (82). This is not possible in *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions, as the latter are phrasal (Section 2). Therefore, we would have a type mismatch, as the argument is of type <s,t> and must be saturated by a proposition. This analysis is problematic for all phrasal exceptive, such as the English *but*.

(96) $[\![except_{\text{Cn}}]\!]^g = \lambda q{<}st{>}.\lambda s'.\lambda M{<}s{<}st{>>}:\underline{q(s') = 1 \ \& \ \forall s[q(s) = 1 \rightarrow \neg M(s')(s) = 1]}.$
$\overline{\exists s[\forall p[(p \ \ q \ \& \ p \in g(n)) \rightarrow p(s) = p(s')]} \ \& \ M(s')(s) = 1]$

Even if in the first part of (96) we strip off the presupposition (solid underlined) the account is still dependent on a clausal analysis. This is because the Roothian semantics, crucial in Vostrikova's account, needs access to a propositional content, in that it takes the focus alternatives generated inside the elided clause (dashed underlined in (96)). This analysis compares propositions, but here there seems to be no proposition in these *eccetto* phrases. Furthermore, this analysis rests on the fact that the exception is focus marked, which is what generates the set of alternative propositions. However, in *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh, the DP is not focus marked, as it does not contrast with any element inside the main clause, if anything it resembles a topic. In *eccetto* + UQ constructions, on the other hand, the exception is focus marked as it contrasts with the DP in the main clause.

To sum up, previous analyses of exceptive constructions are inadequate for *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh, as they either require compositional access to the domain of the quantifier or a clausal structure. The only analysis that is not ruled out is Hoeksema's (1987), who originally proposed that exceptives remove the exception from the discourse. While this approach was wrong for exceptives, it seems to be spot on for *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh and exclusives more in general. In the next section, I will develop a discourse-level analysis of eccetto, and to motivate it, discuss similarities between *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh and another discourse level element: Hanging Topics.

4 *Eccetto* constructions as 'anti-Topics'

As highlighted in the previous section, I argue that *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions remove an entity from the set of available entities in the discourse, as Hoeksema (1987) had originally proposed for exceptives. In this Section, I will further discuss the semantic and pragmatic role of *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions, by highlighting their similarity with other discourse-level elements. In particular, I observe syntactic parallels with Hanging Topics. On that basis, I propose an explicit analysis of *eccetto*+ EQ/n/wh constructions, and exclusives more in general, to cache out the suggestuon that they act at the discourse-level. Their semantic contribution is essentially the opposite to that of Hanging Topics, as they *remove* an entity from the discourse.

4.1 Parallel between with Hanging Topics

Hanging Topics (HTs) or Aboutness Topics are sentence-initial syntactically, and often prosodically, independent constituents that introduce a discourse referent, on which the rest of the utterance makes a comment (Benincà and Poletto 2004; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Greco and Haegeman 2020; Stark 2022; Catasso 2022; a.o.). In some cases, HTs can be coreferential with an element inside the clause (97).

(97) Class$_k$, j' ai prix une photo de
Class NOM.1SG have.PRS.1SG take.PST.PTCP a picture of
ses$_k$ chaussettes.
POSS.3SG.PL socks
'I have taken a picture of Class' socks.'

(Stark, 2022, p. 2)

As first discussed in Section 2, like Hanging Topics, *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions must be sentence-initial (98). Note that no such restriction applies to *eccetto* + UQ (99), which further proves that these are two syntactically different constructions.

(98) a. * Ho vis-to alcuni student-i eccetto Maria
have.PRS.1SG see-PST.PTCP some student-PL EM Maria
ieri sera.
yesterday evening
'Last night I saw some students except Maria.'

b. Eccetto Maria, ho visto alcuni studenti ieri sera.

c. *Ho visto alcuni studenti ieri sera, eccetto Maria.

(99) a. Ho vis-to tutti eccetto Maria ieri sera.
have.PRS.1SG see-PST.PTCP all EM Maria yesterday evening
'Last night I saw everyone except Maria.'

b. Eccetto Maria, ho visto tutti ieri sera.

c. Ho visto tutti ieri sera, eccetto Maria.

Furthermore, HTs are illicit in certain types of embedded clauses. The original claim, made by Cinque (1983) and subsequently confirmed by Zubizarreta (1999) a.o., was that HTs are a root phenomenon and are hence banned in embedded clauses, as illustrated in (100).

(100) * Estoy segura de que Bernardo, nadie confía en ese idiota.
am sure of that Bernard nobody trusts in that idiot
'Bernard, I am pretty sure that nobody trusts that idiot.'
(Zubizarreta, 1999, p. 4221)

More recently, several researchers (Benincà, 2001; Heycock, 2006; Bianchi and Frascarelli, 2010; Jiménez-Fernández, 2018; Stark, 2022) have argued for a more nuanced approach, showing that HTs are also permitted in embedded clauses with a root-like status. The latter, also known as quasi-subordinate clauses, are embedded clauses that participate in the discourse in the same way as main clauses (Dayal and Grimshaw, 2009). This is shown in (101) for Italian, and I refer the reader to Camproux (1958), Lafont (1967), Sauzet (1989), and Faure and Oliviéri (2013) for the pattern in Occitan.

(101) Pens-o, questo libro, che lo legge-rò.
think-PRS.1SG DEM.M.SG book COMP CL.ACC.M.SG read-FUT.1SG
'I think that I will read this book.'
(Stark, 2022, p. 22)

Control clauses are not quasi-subordinates clauses (Rizzi, 1982): they cannot host HTs in their periphery. In (102), *Maria* can only be a familiar Topic (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl, 2007).

(102) Pens-av-o Maria di chiamar-la domani.
think-PST-1SG Maria COMP call-INF-CL.ACC.F.SG tomorrow
'I was thinking of calling Maria tomorrow.'

As we see in (103), *eccetto* +EQ/n constructions[12] are disallowed in the high periphery of control clauses, whereas no such restriction exists for *eccetto* + UQ constructions (104).

(103) * Pens-av-o, eccetto Maria, di invita-re alcuni/tre
think-PST-1SG EM Maria to invite-INF-CL.ACC.M.PL some/three
studenti.
students
'Setting aside Maria, I was thinking of inviting some/three students.'

(104) Pens-av-o, eccetto Maria, di invita-r-li tutti gli
think-PST-1SG EM Maria to invite-INF-CL.ACC.M.PL all the
studenti.
students
'Except Maria I was thinking of inviting all the students.'

The last parallel between exclusives and HTs comes from V2 languages. In German, HTs do not trigger V2 (105) (Catasso, 2022; Stark, 2022).

(105) [$_{HT}$ Der Hans, [$_{ForceP}$ den mag ich nicht.]]
the.NOM.SG Hans that.ACC like.1SG.PRS I.NOM NEG
'(As for) Hans, - I do not like him.' (Catasso, 2022, p. 1622)

Interestingly, exclusives in German do not necessarily trigger V2 (106), whereas exceptives do (107). This data from German, albeit not trivial, is interesting as it further underlines the similarities between exclusive constructions and HTs (see Table 4), as well as the differences between exclusive and exceptive constructions.

(106) a. Mal abgesehen von X9, jeder Roboter **ist** blau.
setting aside X9 every robot be.PRS.3SG blue
'Setting aside X9, every robot is blue.'
b. Mal abgesehen von X9, **ist** jeder Roboter blau.
(Bernhard Schwarz, pers. comm.)

(107) a. Ausser X9, **ist** jeder Roboter blau.
except X9 be.PRS.3SG every robot blue
'Except X9, every robot is blue.'
b. *Ausser X9, jeder Roboter **ist** blau.
(Bernhard Schwarz, pers. comm.)

Finally, HTs are base generated in the high left periphery of the clause and many claim they are above the highest clause projection, ForceP (Stark, 2022;

[12] Wh-phrases cannot be tested as interrogative clauses cannot be embedded under control verbs.

Catasso, 2022). If *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions are syntactically similar to Topics, we would expect them to also be base generated in the high left periphery of the clause. Island sensitivity comes in handy to diagnose whether these constructions are moved or base generated. First, as a baseline, *eccetto* + UQ constructions show island sensitivity, which means that the exceptive phrase in (108b) has been moved out of the adjunct clause and in doing so gives rise to an island violation. This is evidence that *eccetto* + UQ, which are free exceptives and can occur close to the associate or in peripheral positions, are not base generated in the left periphery (pace Potsdam (2018) and Potsdam and Polinsky (2019)).

(108) a. È triste [[perché a-lla fine (eccetto Gianni)
be.PRS.3SG sad because at.DET.DEF.F.SG end EM Gianni
sono parti-t-i tutti (eccetto Gianni)]]
be-PRS.3PL leave-PST.PTCP-M.PL all
'She is sad because except Gianni everyone left.'

b. *Eccetto Gianni, è triste perché sono partiti tutti.

c. [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ è [$_{VP}$ triste [$_{CP}$ perché [$_{TP}$ sono [$_{VP}$ partiti tutti t_k]]]]]]

Eccetto + EQ/n/wh constructions, on the other hand, can occur both in the island periphery (109a) and fronted in the matrix periphery (109b), although the latter is slightly degraded. The fact that (109b) is not ruled out confirms the similarity with HTs and was to be expected. The slight unacceptability might be due to the processing load. While there is no domain subtraction, there is still a relationship between the excluded element and the other elements in the set of salient entities in the context. However, it is not clear at this point *how* this problem arises.

(109) a. È triste [[perché a-lla fine (eccetto Gianni)
be.PRS.3SG sad because at.DET.DEF.F.SG end EM Gianni
sono parti-t-i solo alcuni/tre studenti
be-PRS.3PL leave-PST.PTCP-M.PL only some/three student-PL
(??eccetto Gianni)]]
EM Gianni
'She is sad because setting aside Gianni some/three students left.'

b. ?Eccetto Gianni, è triste perché sono partiti solo alcuni/tre studenti.
'Putting Gianni aside, she is sad because only some/three students left.'

The felicity of *eccetto Gianni* in the periphery of the adjunct clause (109a) is, on the other hand, quite surprising, as it follows the interrogative *perché*. First, interrogative phrases like *perché* are normally claimed to be 'in the middle' of the high left periphery and follow HTs (Rizzi, 2001; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl, 2007; Rizzi and Bocci, 2017). Furthermore, this piece of evidence is problematic for the claim made by Greco and Haegeman (2020), Stark (2022), and Catasso (2022)

a.o. that HTs are located above ForceP. I do not intend to pursue the position of HTs any further in this paper, but I will come back to it in Section 5.

It merits note that HTs have been widely claimed to be restricted to DPs (see Cinque (1997) for extensive evidence from Romance languages). However, *eccetto* constructions are not DPs. As discussed in Section 2, this *eccetto* can only take a DP, e.g. *Yuri*, one of the pieces of evidence that led me to argue that *eccetto* is in fact phrasal and a preposition (cf. Potsdam (2018) and Polinsky et al. (2024)). This, however, should not be an issue for two reasons. First, albeit similar, *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions are not HTs and thus are not necessarily subject to the same categorial restriction as the latter. Furthermore, in some languages HTs can also be non-DPs, as in (110). Prévost (2003), Zafiu (2013), and Stark (2022) a.o. argue that the category of HTs is in fact larger than previously thought and includes Frame Setters, as in (111). The structural similarities between HTs and *eccetto* +EQ/n constructions are summarized in Table 4.

(110) Cât despre cafea este destul de proastă.
as for coffee is quite bad
'As for coffee, it is quite bad.'
(Zafiu, 2013, p. 135)

(111) Sur le Bassin d' Arcachon, on continu-e à trouv-er des galette-s
on the bassin of Arcachon one continue to find.INF of.the wafers
de fuel.
of fuel
'The continue to find tar balls in the Bay of Arcachon'
(Prévost, 2003, 56)

Table 4: Structural similarities between *eccetto* and Hanging Topics

	eccetto + EQ/n/wh	Hanging Topics
must be sentence-initial	yes	yes
can occur in non root-like clauses	no	no
triggers V2 in German	no	no
must be a DP	no	not necessarily

Before moving to the next section, it is important to discuss the differences between these two constructions. While exclusives patterns like HTs in their syntax, they show semantic differences. The first difference between HTs and *eccetto* +EQ/n/wh constructions is the possibility of co-reference. While the latter can be coreferential with an element inside the following clause, (see example (97)),

this is impossible for *eccetto* +EQ/n/wh constructions (112), as discussed in Section 3 (see also example (88)). The impossibility to refer back is expected if *eccetto* +EQ/n/wh in (112) removes *Yuri* from the context. In that case, referring back to him leads to a pragmatically infelicitous sentence. My proposal, sketched in the next subsection, will remove *Yuri* from C, rather than bring up *Yuri* as a topic. *Eccetto* +EQ/n/wh constructions will thus pattern like 'anti-topic'.

(112) # Eccetto Yuri$_k$, sono arriva-t-i tre suo-i$_k$
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-PL three POSS-PL
studenti.
students
'#Setting aside Yuri, three of Yuri's students arrived.'

Furthermore, HTs (113) do not play any role in the truth-condition of the following clause, whereas the situation with *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions is more nuanced and depends on the presence of containment. As discussed in Section 3, containment is possible but not necessary (114a).

(113) John, I don't like him.
= I don't like John.

(114) a. Eccetto gli struzz-i, hanno vi-sto tre
EM the ostrich-PL have.PRS.1PL see-PST.PTCP-PL some
mammifer-i.
mammal-PL
'Setting aside the ostriches, we saw some mammals.'
b. = Hanno visto alcuni mammiferi.

When there is no containment inference, as in (114a), the *eccetto* phrase does not influence the truth-condition of the clause. (114a) would thus be truth-conditionally equivalent to (114b). In cases where there is containment (115), on the other hand, one could argue that the *eccetto* phrase *does* have an influence on the truth-condition of the clause, especially when the clause contains a numeral.

(115) a. Eccetto Obama, hanno vi-sto tre president-i.
EM Obama have.PRS.3PL see-PST.PTCP three president-PL
'Setting aside Obama, they saw three presidents.'
b. ? = Hanno visto tre presidenti.

For instance, if the numeral in (115) is interpreted as 'exactly three' and Obama has been seen (which is not incompatible with exclusives, as discussed in Section 3), it is important that he is set aside in the discourse. Otherwise the statement *hanno visto tre presidenti* would be false. This shows that *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions *can* have a truth-condition effect, but needn't. Notice that true exceptive

constructions, like *eccetto* + UQ, always play a role in the truth condition of the clause (116a-116b), which is expected since there is subtraction from the domain of the quantifier.

(116) a. Eccetto Yuri, ha vi-sto tutti gli student-i.
EM Yuri, have.PRS.3SG see-PST.PTCP all the student-PL
'Except Yuri, (s)he saw some student.'
b. ≠ Ha visto tutti gli studenti.

Table 5: Overall comparison of *eccetto* and Hanging Topics

	eccetto + EQ/n/wh	Hanging Topics
must be sentence-initial	yes	yes
can occur in non root-like clauses	no	no
triggers V2 in German	no	no
must be a DP	no	not necessarily
affects the truth value	not necessarily	no
can be coreferential	no	yes

In short, there are clear syntactic similarities between *eccetto* +EQ/n/wh constructions and HTs. Semantically, however, these two constructions behave quite differently, as I will discuss in the following section. The similarities and differences are summarized in Table 5.

4.2 A discourse-level analysis of exclusive eccetto constructions

In the previous section, I have argued that syntactically HTs and *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions behave very similarly. However, when it comes to the semantics and pragmatics, these constructions play opposite roles. I propose that HTs bring an entity into the discourse, whereas *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions (and exclusives more in general) remove an entity from the discourse. Intuitively, the latter seem to do the exact opposite and act as 'anti-Topics'. Here I am using this term stripped from any syntactic meaning and unlike Lambrecht (1981), who uses it to refer to post-verbal Topic as in (117a), as opposed to pre-verbal ones (117b).

(117) a. Ils sont fous, ces Romain-s.
NOM.3PL be.PRS.3PL crazy.M.PL DEM.M.PL Roman-PL
'These Romans are crazy.'
b. Ces Romains ils sont fous.

Since these two constructions semantically and pragmatically play the exact opposite roles, we expect them to be in complementary distribution. This is exactly what we find: The HT *Yuri* and *eccetto Yuri* cannot co-occur (118), regardless of the order. In what follows, I will propose a derivation for *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions (119).

(118) a. # Yuri, eccetto Yuri, hanno invita-to tre
Yuri EM Yuri have.PRS.3PL invite-PST.PTCP three
student-i.
student-PL
'Yuri, setting Yuri aside, they invited three students.'

b. #Eccetto Yuri, Yuri, hanno invitato tre studenti.

As discussed in Section 3, in *eccetto* +EQ/n/wh constructions containment is possible, yet not obligatory. Therefore, I have argued that there is no subtraction from the domain of the quantifier. Instead, *eccetto* +EQ/n/wh constructions remove an entity from the set of available entities in the discourse. Recall, furthermore, that *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions update the context, without necessarily affecting the truth-condition of the following clause. The (exclusive) *eccetto* function must therefore (i) update the context and (ii) return the truth value of the proposition that follows. Given the LF in (120) for (119), I propose that exclusive *eccetto* is a function that takes two arguments: an individual and a proposition. *Eccetto* introduces a presupposition that the exclusion is not in C ($x \notin C$) and then re-asserts the truth value of the prejacent (121). (119) would thus have the denotation in (122).

(119) Eccetto Yuri sono ven-ut-i tre student-i.
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL three student-PL
'Setting aside Yuri, three students came.'

(120) [eccetto Yuri [$_{IP}$ sono arrivati tre studenti]]

(121) $[\![\text{eccetto}]\!]^C = \lambda x.\lambda p.\lambda w : [x \notin C] . p(w)$

(122) $[\![\text{EXC}]\!]^C$ (Yuri) ($[\![TP]\!]$) = $\lambda w : [\text{Yuri} \notin C] .$ 3 students (in C) came in w

Now consider a situation where there is containment: Yuri is a student. Since there is a strict relation between the set C and the set of students, taking Yuri out of C influences how we interpret *tre studenti*, as discussed in Section 4.
One possible analysis is to argue that quantifying expressions co-occur with a covert restrictor variable (von Fintel, 1994; Stanley and Szabo, 2000; Collins, 2018), which is anaphoric to the set of entities under consideration here. When speakers use universal quantifiers, as in (123a), they do not normally mean every student in the world, but rather every student in a pre-established set in the context. This

can be represented as the covert variable *C*. The same line of reasoning can be applied to other types of quantifying expressions (123b-123c). Another possibility is to depict this restrictor as an elided relative clause (124), where the predicate of students in John's class is established in the context (Schwarzschild, 1991; Collins, 2018).

(123) a. [every [C student]]
b. [some [C student]]
c. [three [C students]]

(124) Every student ~~that sits in John's class~~ came.

The effect of *eccetto* on the quantifier is, then, indirect: it imposes a constraint on the set of entities in the context, by subtracting Yuri in (125), and then the covert pronoun is anaphoric to C.If we adopt this representation and assume that quantifiers come with a covert restrictor, there might be a neat way to depict exclusive constructions.

(125) Eccetto Yuri sono ven-ut-i [tre [C student-i
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL three three
]].
student-PL
'Setting aside Yuri, three students came.'

At this point, a few clarifications are in order. Since exclusive constructions exclude an entity from the discourse, the empirical intuition is that Yuri must have been previously mentioned in the discourse in order for an utterance like (125) to be felicitous. Imagine a situation where three friends are having coffee in a bar and start chatting about an event they attended. One of them (friend 1) leaves the table to go to the restroom, and the two friends who remain at the table start talking about Yuri. When friend 1 comes back, one of the others utters (125). (125) is, in this situation, felicitous for the two friends who remained at the table, but not for friend 1, who did not know Yuri was part of the discourse. However, this seems to follow not from the semantics of *eccetto*, but rather from pragmatics. In fact, if *eccetto* is introducing a presupposition that Yuri is not in C, then (125) should also be felicitous if Yuri was never in C in the first place, in which case it clearly isn't. However, the infelicity comes from the pragmatic oddity of (125) in the given context. While there is no requirement in the semantics of *eccetto* that disallows (125) to be uttered in contexts where Yuri is not part of C, it may be ruled out by more general pragmatic requirements, the same requirements that would rule out other out-of-context statements.

The second clarification is related to the role of the presupposition. Since Yuri must be part of the discourse, at the time of utterance (125), Yuri is assumed by the interlocutor to be in C, as in (126). In this case, the presupposition (*Yuri* $\notin$

C), introduced by *eccetto*, would fail. However, presuppositions can be accommodated (see e.g. von Fintel (2004)), here by updating C as in (127).

(126) C = {Yuri, Maša, Nika, Alex, Chris, Boris}

(127) $C_{updated}$ = {Maša, Nika, Alex, Chris, Boris}

This account feeds upon the presence of a covert domain restrictor, which identifies the set of available entities in the discourse. In the case just described, the restrictor variable in the quantifier of (125) would be anaphoric to the new C with Yuri subtracted, as in (127).

Nevertheless, if the covert domain restrictor always co-occurs with quantifiers, then it is unclear what role it plays in exceptive constructions. The set C can definitely be much larger and, in (128), include all the faculty and admin persons in a given department. However, it could also be equal to the set of students. In this case, the prejacent in (128) would mean 'given a set C of salient students in the context, all of those students came'. As far as existential and numerals are concerned, the situation is slightly different. In (129), the set denoted by the covert restrictor is a superset of that denoted by the overt quantifier: *tre* in fact 'picks' three students out of C.

(128) (Eccetto Yuri,) sono venu-t-i [tutti [C gli studenti]].
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL all the student-PL
'Except Yuri, all the students came.'

(129) (Eccetto Yuri,) sono venu-t-i [tre [C studenti]].
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL come-PST.PTCP-PL three student-PL
'Setting aside Yuri, three students came.'

In other words, the numeral here could be analyzed as denoting the set of all plural entities with three parts. That would then compose with student to yield the set of three-membered student pluralities. In turn, C denotes the set of all salient entities, which can also just contain the three students. The exclusive, then, only acts on the C.

5 Discussion

This paper has presented new data arguing that in Italian there are two types of *eccetto* constructions. When *eccetto* is paired with a universal quantifier, it is interpreted as a true exceptive and enforces all three inferences traditionally associated with ecxeptives: containment, domain subtraction, and the negative inference. These constructions are clausal and involve ellipsis, as in (130) (*eccetto Luca* can

then be fronted, as in (130a)). On the other hand, when *eccetto* is paired with an existential quantifier associate, it gets an exclusive reading. These constructions are phrasal, PPs more specifically, and the *eccetto* phrase is base generated in the left periphery of the clause, as in (131).

(130) a. Eccetto Luca, ha invitato tutti gli studenti.

b. [$_{EP}$ [$_{CP1}$ [tutti gli studenti]$_i$ [$_{TP1}$ *pro* ha invitato t$_i$]] **eccetto$_{\textsc{neg}}$** [$_{CP2}$ [Luca]$_j$ ~~[$_{TP2}$ ha invitato t$_j$]~~]]]

(131) a. Eccetto Luca, ha invitato alcuni/tre studenti.

b. [$_{XP}$ [$_{PP}$ **eccetto** Luca] [$_{CP}$ [alcuni studenti [$_{TP}$ *pro* ha invitato]]]

The data discussed in this paper also proposes a new research question, namely how to analyze exclusive constructions more generally. One key aspect that emerged in the discussion is that exclusives seem to resort to domain subtractions in a different way from exceptives. The latter require the subtraction to be computed from the set denoted by the quantifier, whereas exclusives seem to act on the set of salient entities in the discourse. The proposed analysis raises several questions, as well as implications.

The first question concerns crosslinguistic differences in exceptive constructions. Italian has at least one exceptive marker which is ambiguous and can express both exclusion and exception, depending on the context. The same pattern is reported in Mandarin for the exceptive-exclusive marker *chuwai* (Ying, 2023). By contrast, in English, *except* is unambiguously an exceptive and speakers disallow it with existentials and numerals. However, as reported in Section 1, most speakers I consulted accept *except* with a wh-phrase, in which case it receives an exclusive reading. One is, therefore, led to wonder whether this ambiguity is a property of exceptive constructions crosslinguistically. If this were indeed the case, then languages would differ in the distributional restrictions on the exclusive: Italian and Mandarin allow exceptive markers -with an exclusive reading- to co-occur with existential quantifiers, numerals, and wh-phrases, while English only with wh-phrases. It, however, remains unclear why English is different, a question that requires further investigation.

The follow-up question that arises is whether these *eccettos* (and the Mandarin *chuwai*) are two distinct markers, which happen to be homophonous, or whether we are looking at a single marker, which lends itself to different interpretations. At first sight, the second possibility seems the most probable, as the ambiguity is not only found in Italian, but also in other languages like Mandarin and perhaps English. Nonetheless, as I have shown in Sections 2 and 4, the two constructions differ in their structure, clausal *VS* phrasal, as well as their distribution, with the exclusive *eccetto* being base-generated in clause-initial position, which suggests that we are looking at two different markers, which happen to be homophonous. The structure difference is also problematic from a semantic standpoint. The two *eccettos* take different arguments: clausal *eccetto* takes a

proposition, an argument of type <s,t>, while phrasal *eccetto* takes a DP, namely an argument of type e. If there is one *eccetto*, which is ambiguous, then we would need to explain the type flexibility. For the time being, I will argue that in Italian there are two *eccettos*, that happen to be homophonous, but further research is needed. The questions to be addressed in future research are why we see such ambiguity in Italian and elsewhere, why do certain languages tolerate it while others do not, and what the relation is between these two markers?

The third question concerns the position of exclusive constructions. In Section 4, I have discussed the distributional similarities with another discourse level element, Hanging Topics (HTs). However, even for HTs there are different claims in the literature: some argue they are located within the high left periphery spine (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl, 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli, 2010), whereas others position them above the higher clause projection, technically 'outside' of the clause (Benincà, 2001; Greco and Haegeman, 2020; Stark, 2022; Catasso, 2022). We also see some degree of crosslinguistic difference, whereby in some languages HTs in embedded clauses precede the complementizer (e.g. Italian, see Stark (2022) a.o.), whereas in others they follow the complementizer (e.g. Occitan, see Faure and Oliviéri (2013) a.o.). *Eccetto* constructions display the same distribution as HTs in Italian, but it is not clear yet precisely where they are located. As discussed in Section 2, *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions can precede or follow high speaker oriented adverbs, which indeed suggests that they are positioned really high. Nevertheless, the fact that in adjunct islands *eccetto* + EQ/n/wh constructions can follow the interrogative *perché* (see Section 4) challenges this claim.

The next topic I would like to touch upon is the pragmatic oddity of definite and indefinite determiners in exclusive constructions. In previous Sections, I have focused on existential quantifiers like *alcuni* and numerals, like *tre* 'three', both of which are allowed with *eccetto* and render an exclusive reading. However, I did not discuss in detail the use of determiners. In (132), the sentence is infelicitous with the definite determiner *gli* in the absence of *tutti* 'all' and an exclusive reading is ruled out. The only way to utter (132) is by adding *tutti*, by which means then the only possible reading is an exceptive one. (133), with the indefinite *uno*, is also infelicitous.[13]

(132) Eccetto Maria, sono arriva-t-i #(tutti) gli student-i.
EM Maria, be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-PL all the student-PL
'Except Maria, #(all) the students have arrived.'

(133) #Eccetto Yuri, ha visto uno studente.
EM Yuri, have.PRS.3SG see.PST.PTCP a student
Intended: 'Setting aside Yuri, (s)he saw a/one student.'

[13]Note that in Italian the masculine and feminine *uno* and *una* are ambiguous between an indefinite and a numeral. In both cases, however, the cardinality of the set is one.

The same pattern is found in English (134). These two data points could however be explained from a pragmatic standpoint. Vostrikova (2021) assumes that plural definite descriptions come with a homogeneity presupposition (Schwarzschild, 1994; Löbner, 2000; Gajewski, 2005; Magri, 2014; Büring and Kriz, 2013). Therefore, in (134a) and (132) if it is not the case that all students came, then all of them did not come. The presupposition, thus, requires that in every situation where Yuri did not come, the students (all of them) did not come, which gives rise to a contradiction, as Yuri did not come. It is difficult to extend the argument to exclusives (134b-134c). Definite articles, *the* and *gli*, convey uniqueness, as in (135) (Hawkins 1978; 1991; Abbott 1999; Kadmon 2001; a.o.). If Yuri is a student, then Yuri belongs to the set of salient entities in the discourse as well as the set of students. Yet, (134b) should *not* be ruled out by a homogeneity presupposition, as opposed to the exceptives (132) and (134a). This is because *eccetto* introduces the presupposition that Yuri is not in C. Therefore if the asserted p argument says that she saw all the students in C, this means all the students other than Yuri. Therefore, just like in cases where there is no containment and Yuri does not belong to the set denoted by the quantifier (134c), we expect the sentence to be felicitous, contrary to fact.

(134) a. #Except Yuri, she saw the students.
b. #Setting aside Yuri, she saw the students.
c. #Setting aside Yuri, she saw the dogs.

(135) The/#a Pope walked in.

However, the oddity seems to disappear when the DP is more specified, as in (136), where the DP *the students from New York* contains a PP that further restricts the set of students. The same happens in Italian, (137).

(136) Setting aside Yuri, she saw the students from New York.

(137) Eccetto Yuri, ha visto gli student-i di Pisa.
EM Yuri have.PRS.3SG see.PST.PTCP the student-PL of Pisa
'Setting aside Yuri, she saw the students from Pisa.'

A similar pattern is witnessed with indefinite determiners. Unlike definite ones, indefinite determiners do not necessarily convey uniqueness (Hawkins, 1991), which is why *a* is infelicitous in cases where there is only one referent, (135). However, the use of an indefinite does not presuppose non-uniqueness either (Heim, 1991). Consider (138), which does not mean that the speaker has more than one pathologically curious neighbour, but the exact opposite.

(138) **Ein** krankhaft neugieriger Nachbar von mir ist in
a pathologically curious neighbour of DAT.1SG be.PRS.3SG in
de-n Speicher eingebrochen.
the-ACC.M.SG attich break.in.PST.PTCP

A pathologically curious neighbour of mine broke into my attic.
(Heim, 1991, p. 514)

In the Italian (133) and English (140a), we see that the use of an indefinite determiner is infelicitous. Yet once again, in both languages, the oddity vanishes when the indefinite is in focus, (139a-140b) or the DP is further restricted by e.g. a PP, (139b-140c). In these examples, the indefinite determiner does convey uniqueness.

(139) a. Eccetto Yuri, ha incontra-to UN (solo) studente.
EM Yuri, have.PRS.3SG meet-PST.PTCP a only student
'Setting aside Yuri, (s)he met only one student.'

b. Eccetto Yuri, ha incontra-to UNO studente di Pisa.
EM Yuri, have.PRS.3SG meet-PST.PTCP a student of Pisa
'Setting aside Yuri, (s)he saw met a/one student.'

(140) a. #Setting aside Yuri, she saw a student.

b. Setting aside Yuri, she (only) saw A student.

c. Setting aside Yuri, she saw a student from New York.

It is not entirely clear what is happening in these examples and why focus and a more specific DP ameliorate the pragmatic oddity of definite and indefinite determiners in these examples. One possible explanation could be contrast, as both strategies involve some degree of contrast between the exclusion and the set under consideration.

The last - big - question is the typological mapping of constructions that act as 'count modifiers'. There seems to be a three-way distinction: exception to a generalization (exceptive, e.g. *except*); removal from discourse (exclusive), and 'addition' to a generalization (additive). So far, we only have knowledge of ambiguity between two categories: Italian *a parte* and English *besides* (Mayr and Vostrikova, 2023) can be both additive and exceptive, while *eccetto* and *chuwai* (Mandarin) can be exclusive and exceptive. Ambiguity between all three categories has not been reported. The question for future research, therefore, is whether it is crosslinguistically possible to have a three-way ambiguous marker.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed new data on exceptive-exclusive constructions and have argued that Italian has two *eccettos*, that differ both semantically and syntactically. When *eccetto* co-occurs with a universal quantifier, it is a true exceptive, and has a clausal structure involving ellipsis. On the other hand, when *eccetto* co-occurs with an existential quantifier, a numeral, or a wh-phrase, it has an exclusive interpretation and phrasal structure. I have presented syntactic, semantic,

and pragmatic arguments in favor of a discourse level analysis of exclusive *eccetto* constructions, whereby the latter introduces a presupposition that the exclusion is not in the set of available entities in the discourse. This shows that Hoeksema's (1987) proposal that exceptive constructions remove an entity from the universe of discourse, while inaccurate for true exceptives, was spot on for exclusives. Exclusives are an uncharted territory, and the present analysis consists of a first attempt to empirically and theoretically describe these constructions. Hopefully it is a step in the right direction, but further research is needed to answer the many questions that arise, some of which I have touched upon in the previous section.

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