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Exceptive constructions in Tundra Nenets

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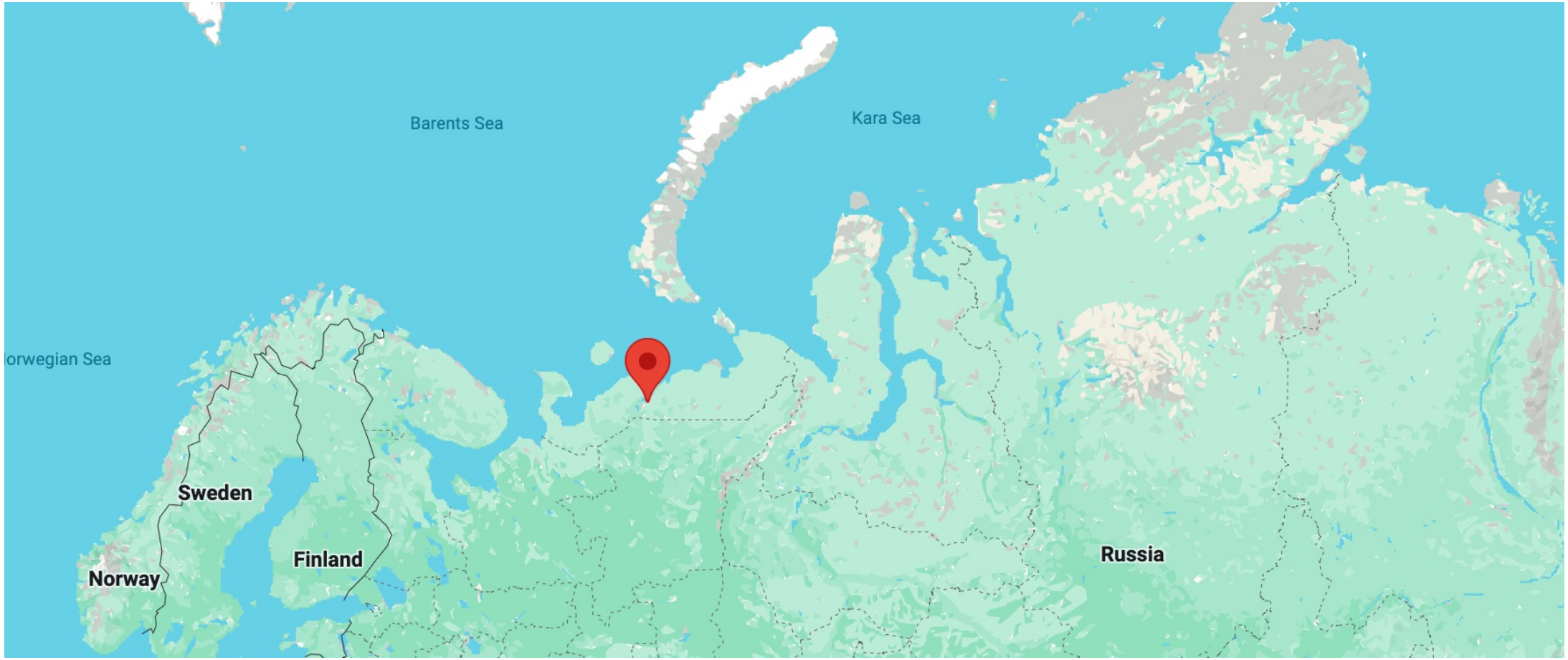
Tundra Nenets

Tundra Nenets is a Uralic, Samoyedic language spoken in the far north of Russia.

map created by the Finno-Ugric Society, Helsinki
from Nikolaeva 2014

Naryan-Mar


Barents Sea
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xavna–exceptives and universal quantifiers

This talk is about exceptive constructions in Tundra Nenets introduced by *xavna.*

Like in English, *xavna* convey an inference of exception when it occurs with a universal or a negative quantifier

(1) Malʔ nje ŋacjeki.ʰ Anja.ʔ xavna то.ʰ. ⇒ Anja did not come
All woman kid.PL Anja.GEN xavna came.Pl
'All girls except/but/besides Anja came'.

(2) Ɒob.kart nje ŋacjeki Anja.ʔ xavna ni ти. ⇒ Anja came
One.even woman kid Anja.GEN xavna NEG came
'No girl except/but/besides Anja came'.

Exceptives and existential quantifers

Exceptives in English can be categorized into two types based on their interaction with existentials.

- Exceptives introduced by *but* and *except* are ungrammatical when they occur with existentials:

(3) *Some girls except/but Ann came.

- Exceptives introduced by *besides* are grammatical with existentials and they contribute the inference of addition in such contexts:

(4) Some girls besides Ann came. $\Rightarrow$ Ann came

xavna and existentials

xavna that differs from both *except/ but* and *besides*-exceptives:

- It differs from *except* and *but* in that it can co-occur with existential quantifiers.

- It also differs from *besides* in that, when doing so, it contributes a negative inference

(5) Xanjany^{h} nje ŋacjeki^{h} Anja^{q} xavna то^{h}. ⇒ Anja did not come
some woman kid.PL Anja.GEN xavna came.Pl
'Some girls other than Anja came'

(6) Tej jalja prazdnik.xana xanjany.^{h} toxodanna^{h} Anja^{q} xavna xyno^{h}na^{h}. ⇒ Anja did not sing
Yesterday day festival.at some.Pl student.Pl Anja.GEN xavna sing.Pl
'Yesterday some students other than Anja sang at the festival'

The standard semantics for exceptives

The standard semantic analyses of exceptives consist of two components (von Fintel 1993, 1994):

- Domain subtraction
- Negation of the alternative quantificational claim that differs from the original only in terms of domain subtraction

It is also common to separate these meaning contributions syntactically (Gajewski 2008).

The most recent version of this idea divides the task between the following two elements (Hirsch 2016, Crnič 2021):

- The exceptive itself, responsible for domain subtraction
- Exh, responsible for negation of the alternatives

The standard semantics for exceptives

$[_{IP2}\ EXH_{Alt}\ [_{IP1}\ [every\ [\ girl\ [\ but\ Anja_F\ ]]]\ came\ ]]$

$[\![but]\!]^{g,w} = \lambda x_e.\lambda f_{<et>}:f(x)=1.\lambda y_e.f(y)=1\ \&\ \neg(x \circ y)$

$[\![girls\ but\ Anja]\!]^{g,w} = \lambda y_e\ .y \text{ is a } girl_w\ \&\ \neg(y \circ Anja)$

$[\![IP_1]\!]^{g,w} = T \text{ iff } \forall x[x \text{ is a girl } \&\neg(x \circ Anja) \rightarrow x\ came_w]$

The standard semantics for exceptives

$[_{IP2}\ EXH_{Alt}\ [_{IP1}\ [every\ [\ girl\ [\ but\ Anja_F\ ]]]\ came\ ]]$

Alt:

*[*IP$_1$ *[every [girl [but Anja]]] came]*

*[*IP$_1$ *[every [girl [but Olga]]] came]*

*[*IP$_1$ *[every [girl [but Matrjona]]] came]*

*[*IP$_1$ *[every [girl [but Sveta]]] came]*

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{g,w} = T$ iff $\forall x[x \in \{Sveta, Olga, Matrjona\} \rightarrow x\ came_w]$ &

$\neg\forall x[x \in \{Anja, Olga, Matrjona\} \rightarrow x\ came_w]$ &

$\neg\forall x[x \in \{Anja, Sveta, Matrjona\} \rightarrow x\ came_w]$ &

$\neg\forall x[x \in \{Anja, Sveta, Olga\} \rightarrow x\ came_w]$

The standard semantics for exceptives

- No girl but Anja came.

- $[_{IP2}\ \text{EXH}_{Alt}\ [_{IP1}$ [no [girl [but Anja_F]]] came]]

Alt:

[IP_1 *[no [girl [but Anja]]] came]*
[IP_1 *[no [girl [but Olga]]] came]*
[IP_1 *[no [girl [but Matrjona]]] came]*
[IP_1 *[no [girl [but Sveta]]] came]*

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{g,w} = \text{T}$ iff $\neg\exists x[x\in\{\text{Sveta, Olga, Matrjona}\}\ \&\ x\ \text{came}_w]\ \&$
$\exists x[x\in\{\text{Anja, Olga, Matrjona}\}\ \&\ x\ \text{came}_w]\ \&$
$\exists x[x\in\{\text{Anja, Sveta, Matrjona}\}\ \&\ x\ \text{came}_w]\ \&$
$\exists x[x\in\{\text{Anja, Sveta, Olga}\}\ \&\ x\ \text{came}_w]$

The standard semantics for exceptives

*Some girl but Anja came.

$[_{IP2}\ EXH_{Alt}\ [_{IP1}\ [some\ [\ girl\ [\ but\ Anja_F\ ]]]\ came\ ]]$

Alt:

/IP_1 *[some [girl [but Anja]]] came]*

/IP_1 *[some [girl [but Olga]]] came]*

/IP_1 *[some [girl [but Matrjona]]] came]*

/IP_1 *[some [girl [but Sveta]]] came]*

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{g,w}$ = T iff $\exists x[x \in \{Sveta, Olga, Matrjona\}\ \&\ x\ came_w]\ \&$

$\neg\ \exists x[x \in \{Anja, Olga, Matrjona\}\ \&\ x\ came_w]\ \&$

$\neg\ \exists x[x \in \{Anja, Sveta, Matrjona\}\ \&\ x\ came_w]\ \&$

$\neg\ \exists x[x \in \{Anja, Sveta, Olga\}\ \&\ x\ came_w]$

Besides

It has been argued that sentences with *besides* have exactly the same structure, but *besides*-exceptives trigger a different set of alternatives, allowing to derive the positive inference with upward monotonic quantifiers (Mayr&Vostrikova 2023)

I will extend a similar approach to *xavna.*

xavna and a universal quantifier

[Exh [[all [girls [Anja^{h} xavna$_{F}$]]]came]]

$[\![\text{xavna}]\!]^{g} = \lambda x.\lambda P_{<e,t>}: P(x).\ \lambda y.\ P(y)\ \&\ \neg y \circ x$

$[\![\text{girls Anja}^{h}\ \text{xavna}]\!]^{g} = \lambda y.$ y is a girl & $\neg y \circ$Anja; is defined only if Anya is a girl

The resulting meaning of the prejacent of Exh:

$[\![\text{all girls Anja}^{h}\ \text{xavna came}]\!]^{g} = \forall x[x \text{ is a girl } \&\ \neg x \circ \text{Anja} \rightarrow x \text{ came}]$

xavna and a universal quantifier

Xavna is marked with focus.

[Exh [[all [girls [Anja^{h} xavna$_{F}$]]]came]]

Given this, the alternatives used by Exh are formed by making a substitution in the position corresponding to *xavna*.

I propose that there is only one alternative for *xavna*: 'including' or 'with'. Below is the translation for 'all girl including Anja came' suggested by my informants:

(7)	Mal.^{q}	ne	ŋaceki.^{h}	Anja	nja	to.^{h}
	All	woman	kid.PL	Anja	with	came.Pl

- ⟦all girls Anya nja came ⟧^{g} = T iff ∀x[x is a girl & x°Anja → x came]

xavna and a universal quantifier

$[_{IP2}$ Exh $[_{IP1}$ [all [girls [Anja^{h} xavna$_{F}$]]]came]]

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{gw}$ =T iff $\forall$x[x is a girl & $\neg$x°Anja $\rightarrow$ x came] & $\neg$ $\forall$x[x is a girl & x°Anja $\rightarrow$ x came]

=

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{gw}$ =T iff $\forall$x[x is a girl & $\neg$x°Anja $\rightarrow$ x came] & $\exists$x[x is a girl & x°Anja & $\neg$x came]

xavna and an existential quantifier

Predictions:

- *xavna* is compatible with an **existential quantifier**
- *xavna* contributes a negative inference in such context.

$[_{IP2}$ Exh $[_{IP1}$ [some [girls [Anja^{h} xavna$_{F}$]]]came]]

$[\![IP_1]\!]^{gw}$ =T iff ∃x[x is a girl & ¬x°Anja & x came]

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{gw}$ =T iff ∃ x[x is a girl & ¬x°Anja & x came] & ¬∃x[x is a girl & ¬x°Anja & x came]

xavna and a negative quantifier

- The motivation for separating Exh and domain subtraction in *xavna* constructions comes from their interaction with negative quantifiers.
- The motivation for deriving the alternative by manipulating the domain of the quantifier also comes from these sentences.

(2) **ƉobkartIPA** nje ŋacjeki Anja.ɥ xavna **ni** ʇu. ⇒ Anja came

One.even woman kid Anja.GEN xavna **NEG** came

'No girl except Anja came'.

- This is a negative concord construction.
- Such constructions are typically analysed as existentials within the scope of negation.
- [[NEG] [one woman came]]

xavna and a negative quantifier

Let's consider a possibility that xavna does the domain subtraction and directly contributes the negative inference about Ann

$[_{IP2}$ [NEG] $[_{IP1}$ [one woman Anja^{q} xavna] came]]

$[\![\text{xavna}]\!]^{gw} = \lambda x.\lambda P_{<et>}.\ \lambda Q_{<<et><<et>t>>}.\ \lambda M_{<et>}.\ Q(\lambda y.P(y) \& \neg(y \circ x))(M) \ \&\ \underline{\neg M(x)}$

$[\![IP_1]\!]^{gw}$ = T iff $\exists x$[x is a girl & $\neg x \circ$Anja & x came] & $\neg$ Anja come

The predicted meaning for the entire sentence is too weak:

$[\![IP_2]\!]^{gw}$ = T iff $\neg\exists x$[x is a girl & $\neg x \circ$Anja & x came] $\vee$ Anja come

xavna and negative quantifiers

Another possibility we can dismiss is the one where the exceptive inference is somehow is derived from the alternative ‘Anya came’

- Let’s consider this possibility:

  $[_{IP2}$ Exh [NEG] $[_{IP1}$ [one woman Anja^{q} xavna] came]]

- And assume that the alternative is somehow ‘Anja came’
- Then we predict the wrong meaning for the entire sentence

$[\![IP_1]\!]^{gw}$ = T iff ¬ ∃x[x is a girl & ¬x°Anja & x came] & ¬ Anja come

Thus,

- The domain subtraction and the derivation of the positive/negative inference must be separated syntactically.
- Alternatives must be derived by manipulating the domain of the quantifier, as with other exceptives.

Exactly-numerals with xavna

We also correctly predict the positive inference contributed by *xavna* in (8) with ***only-n* numerals in Nenets.**

'Only' is a negative quantifier, like 'no one'.

(8) Juᵠ.liᵠ nje ŋacjekiᵠ Anja.ʰ xavna тo.ᵠ. ⇒ Anja came
10.only woman kid.PL Anja.GEN xavna came.Pl
Only 10 girls besides Anja came.

Exactly-numerals with xavna

$[_{IP2}$Exh $[_{IP1}$ only 10 girls Anja^{h} xavna$_{F}$ came]]

- The prejacent of Exh :
  $[\![IP_1]\!]^{g}$ =T iff $\neg\exists x[|x|>10$ & x is a girl &$\neg x°$Anja & x came];
  defined only if $\exists x[|x|\geq 10$ & x is a girl &$\neg x°$Anja & & x came]

- Then the negated alternative for the prejacent is as shown below:
  $\exists x[|x|>10$ & x is a girl & x°Anja & x came]

there is a plural individual with the cardinality bigger than 10 that overlaps with Anja who came.

The presupposition of the prejacent projects.

If there are only 10 girls who came without Anja and more than 10 with her, it follows that Ann came.

Xavna and upward entailing numerals

In general, the negative inference is predicted for any upward monotone quantifier

(9) Njaxar.kad ŋoxarka nje ŋacjekiᵠ Anjaʰ xavna тo.ᵠ. ⇒ Anja did not come
three.from more woman kid Anja.GEN xavna
'More than 3 girls other than Ann came'.

$[\![9]\!]^g$ =T iff ∃d[d>3 & ∃x[|x|=d & x is a girl &¬x°Anja & x came] &
¬∃d[d>3 & ∃x[|x|=d & x is a girl & x°Anja & x came]

- Comers: Olga, Matrjona, Sveta, Nastia

Exh optional?

- Another motivation for using Exh comes from the cancellable nature of these inferences.
- When these sentences are presented in out-of-the-blue contexts, all 6 speakers I consulted provide very systematic judgments about the presence of the exceptive inference.

(10) Malᵠ nje ŋacjeki.ʰ Anja.ᵠ xavna тo.ʰ.
All woman kid.PL Anja.GEN xavna came.Pl
Comment: all girls were came, Anja was absent, she did not show up.

(11) Ɒob.kart nje ŋacjeki Anja.ᵠ xavna ni тu.
One.even woman kid Anja.GEN xavna NEG came
Comment: Anja was there, she came. She was the only one

(12) Xanjanyʰ nje ŋacjekiʰ Anjaᵠ xavna тoʰ.
some woman kid.PL Anja.GEN xavna came.Pl
Comment: Anja did not show up. Only some other girls came.

Exh optional?

But, the inference is cancellable:

(13) Man' sac maimbi.dm, Maša to! Malʠ toxodanna.ʰ Maša.ʠ xavna ŋobtarem to.ʰ
I very glad.1s Masha come! All student.Pl Masha.Gen xavna also came.Pl
I am very glad that Masha came! All students other than Masha also came.

(14) Man' sac maimbidm, Maša to! Xanjanyʰ toxodanna.ʰ Maša.ʠ xavna ŋobtarem to.ʰ
I very glad Masha come! Some student.Pl Masha.Gen xavna also came.Pl
I am very glad that Masha came! Some students other than Masha also came.

(15) Ibkovaʠ Maša ni tu. Xibja.xartʠ Maša.ʠ xavna ŋobtarem ni tu.
Unfortunately Masha not come. Who.even Masha.Gen xavna also not come
Unfortunately, Masha did not come. No one other than Masha came as well.

Exh optional?

- We can model the cases where this inference is not present by stating that Exh is not inserted.
- This would mean that Exh in exceptive constructions optional in Tundra Nenets.
- In contrast, Exh is not optional in English; otherwise, the ungrammaticality of *but* with existentials would not be derived.

Exh optional?

Nenets is not unique in its ability to cancel exceptive inferences.

In German, exceptive inference is triggered by the use of *außer* in out-of-the-blue contexts.

(16) Alle Jungs außer Vanja sind hier ⇒ Vanja is not here
All boys außer Vanja are here
'All boys except Vanja are here'.

However, the inference is reported to be cancellable:

(17) Vanja ist hier. Und alle Jungs außer Vanja sind auch hier.
Vanya is here. And all boys außer Vanja are also here
'Vanya is here. All other boys are also here'.

Parameters of Variation

All exceptive constructions share the following features:

- The exceptive item performs domain subtraction.
- The inference is computed by considering the alternatives with other domains.

Variation arises in:

- The obligatoriness of Exh.
- The method used to compute the alternatives.

Things for future research

DE numerals with *xavna*

(18) Njaxar.kad tjanju.rka nje ŋacjeki^{q} Anja^{h} xavna то.^{q}. ⇒ Anja did not come
three.from few .er woman kid Anja.GEN xavna came.Pl
'Fewer than 3 girls other than Ann came.'

This does derive the desired inference:

¬ ∃d[d≥3 & ∃x[|x|=d & x is a girl &¬x°Anja & x came] &
∃d[d≥3 & ∃x[|x|=d & x is a girl & x°Anja & x came]

The prejacent says that there is 0, 1 or 2 comers without Anya

The negated alternative says: there are 3 or more comers with Anya

Things for future research

- The only case the inference is uncancellable:

(19) Puškin.^{q} xavna, man' Dostoevskoj.m^{q} menje.dm^{q} ⇒ I love Pushkin
Pushkin.Gen *xavna* *I* *Dostoevskij.Acc* *love.1s*
'Besides Pushkin, I love Dostoevskiy'

(20) #Man' Puškin.m^{q} nidm^{q} mene^{h}.
I Pushkin.Acc not love.

Puškin.^{q} xavna, man' Dostoevskoj.m^{q} menje.dm^{q}
Pushkin.Gen *xavna* *I* *Dostoevskij.Acc* *love.1s*
Attempted: 'I don't love Pushkin. Besides Pushkin, I love Dostoevskiy'

(also uncancellable in German, as far as I know…)

(21) Xurka.^{h} padnanaŋa^{h} Puškin^{q} xavna Anja mene? ⇒ Anja does not love Pushkin
Which.Pl *writer.Pl* *Pushkin* *xavna* *Anja* *love?*
'Which writer other than Pushkin does Anya love?'

Conclusion

- This paper describes the empirical properties of exceptive constructions in Tundra Nenets contributing to our understanding of the linguistic variation in this area.
- The proposed analysis attempts to account for the difference between exceptives in Nenets and in English.

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