

| RESEARCH ARTICLE**Connected and Free Exceptive Constructions in Najdi Arabic****Bader Yousef Alharbi***Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities, Qassim University, Buraidah, Saudi Arabia***Corresponding Author:** Bader Yousef Alharbi, **E-mail:** byhrby@qu.edu.sa**| ABSTRACT**

In the syntactic literature, two types of exceptive constructions have been identified, namely connected exceptives (CEs) and free exceptives (FEs). While the exceptive phrase appears adjacent to its associate in CEs, it appears non-adjacent in FEs. Within the Arabic context, two competing lines of analysis have been proposed. The first treats the exceptive marker as a coordinating conjunction, conjoining two DPs in CEs and two CPs in FEs. The second, by contrast, analyzes the exceptive marker as a functional head projecting either an exceptive phrase (ExP) or a subtractive exceptive phrase (S-ExP), which may adjoin to the main clause or the associate DP either as an adjunct or as an apposition. The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of the two exceptive types in Najdi Arabic (NA). Following the first line of analysis, I argue that the exceptive marker *?illaa* 'except' in NA functions as a coordinating conjunction that conjoins two XPs. Specifically, in NA CEs it conjoins two DPs within a mono-clausal structure, while in NA FEs it conjoins two CPs within a bi-clausal structure. In the latter, the exception XP moves to the left periphery of the exceptive clause before the TP-ellipsis applies. Multiple strands of evidence, such as multiple exceptions and speaker-oriented adverbs, support this analysis, which considers the exceptive phrase as a phrase in CEs but as a clause in FEs. It is hoped that the analysis advanced here contributes to the ongoing discussion on the syntax of exceptive constructions.

| KEYWORDS

Exceptive constructions, connected exceptive, free exceptive, Najdi Arabic, syntax

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An exceptive construction is a construction that denotes the exclusion of an entity from a set of entities participating in an event (Arnold & Choi, 2003; Moutaoukil, 2009; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019). In the syntactic literature, Hoeksema (1987) was the first to distinguish between two types of exceptive constructions: connected exceptives (CEs)¹, as in (1.a), and free exceptives (FEs), as in (1.b). In the former, the exceptive phrase (EP) *except (for) John* occurs immediately adjacent to the associate, generally a quantifier phrase, whereas in the latter it occurs non-adjacently.

(1) a. *Every man except John came.*
b. *Except for John, every man came.*
(Moltmann 1995: 225)

¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: 1 = first person, 3 = third person, Acc = accusative, AdvP = adverb phrase, CE = connected exceptive, COMP = complementizer, CP = clause phrase, DP = determiner phrase, DS = domain subtraction, E = ellipsis, EA = Egyptian Arabic, EM = exceptive marker, EP/ExP = exceptive phrase, Ex = exceptive, FE = free exceptive, Masc = masculine, NA = Najdi Arabic, Neg = negative, NP = noun phrase, PF = phonetic form, Pl = plural, PP = prepositional phrase, QP = quantifier phrase, S = subtractive, SA = Standard Arabic, Sg = singular, Spec = specifier, TP = tense phrase, u = unvalued.

The syntax of these two exceptive types has recently attracted considerable attention across various languages, including English, Spanish, and German. The standard analysis generally holds that the EP is phrasal in CEs but clausal in FEs (e.g., García Álvarez, 2008; Hoeksema, 1995; Moltmann, 1995; O'Neill, 2011; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019). Specifically, the EP in CEs has been analyzed as a determiner phrase (DP) adjoined to the associate, whereas in FEs it has been analyzed as a clause phrase (CP) adjoined to the clause that contains the associate. A range of syntactic evidence has been introduced in support of this analysis.

Within the Arabic context, two main lines of analysis have been proposed for exceptive constructions. As in the standard analysis, the first approach suggests that the exceptive marker (EM) in Egyptian Arabic is a coordinating conjunction, joining two DPs in CEs and two CPs in FEs (Soltan, 2016). By contrast, the second approach holds that the EM in Standard Arabic is a functional head projecting an exceptive phrase (ExP) (Albataineh, 2021) or a subtractive exceptive phrase (S-ExP) (Saeed, 2023). Under this approach, the ExP or S-ExP may adjoin to the main clause or the associate DP, either as an adjunct or as an apposition, depending on the case marking of the exception DP.

This paper aims to provide a theoretical account of the two exceptive types in the dialect of Najdi Arabic (NA)². I first argue that both CE and FE constructions are attested in NA. Adopting the standard analysis, and more specifically Soltan (2016), I propose that the EM *?illaa* 'except' in NA is a coordinating conjunction that conjoins two XPs. In NA CEs, it conjoins two DPs in a mono-clausal structure, whereas in NA FEs it conjoins two CPs, yielding a bi-clausal structure. In the latter structure, the exception XP raises to the left periphery of the conjoined clause before the tense phrase (TP) undergoes ellipsis. Numerous strands of evidence, including multiple exceptions, separate binding domains, and speaker-oriented adverbs, have been provided in support of this analysis, which treats the EP as phrasal in NA CEs but clausal in NA FEs.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 offers a general overview of exceptive constructions in NA. Section 3 examines the CE and FE types in NA. Section 4 reviews the relevant earlier analyses proposed for the two types of exceptives. Section 5 provides my analysis of the two exceptive constructions in NA. Section 6 concludes the paper and outlines directions for future research.

2. Exceptive constructions in NA

In his recent study, Alharbi (2025) points out that the exceptive construction in NA, as in (2), includes three key items: an associate, an EM, and an exception XP. The associate is the phrase, which is generally a quantifier phrase (QP) or a determiner/noun phrase (DP/NP), that the exceptive phrase (EP) associates with. While NA has three EMs, namely *?illaa*, *yeer*, and (*maa*) *fadaa*, the EM *?illaa* is the most common marker used by native NA speakers. The exception XP is the complement phrase that typically follows the EM. The phrase containing the EM and the exception XP is called an EP, and the entire sentence is called an exceptive construction. For the sake of clarity and consistency, these fundamental terms will be adopted in this paper.

(2)	kill	?it-<i>tillaab</i>	{Associate}	<i>?aħżar-uu</i>	<i>?illaa</i>	{EM}	yasser	{Exception XP}
	all	the-students		came-3.Masc.PI	except		Yasser	
'All the students came, except Yasser.' ³								
(Alharbi 2025: 137)								

Alharbi further demonstrates that the NA exceptive constructions can be divided into two types based on the polarity of the sentence: a positive exceptive construction, as in (2), and a negative exceptive construction, as in (3). As can be seen in examples (2) and (3), both of these two types include all the three main items of exceptive constructions, namely the associate, the EM, and the exception XP. The negative type also includes the negative marker *maa* 'not'.

(3)	kill	?it-<i>tillaab</i>	<i>maa</i>	<i>ħżar-uu</i>	<i>?illaa</i>	yasser
	all	the-students	Neg	came-3.Masc.PI	except	Yasser
'All the students did not come, except Yasser.'						
(Alharbi 2025: 137)						

In short, the core characteristics of NA exceptive constructions outlined here are essential for understanding the discussion in this paper. Additional characteristics will be introduced where relevant. The next section presents a detailed discussion of the CE and FE types in NA.

² Najdi Arabic is a local Arabic dialect spoken largely in the central parts of Saudi Arabia. The Najdi Arabic data in this paper were reported based on the speech of people living specifically in the region of Qassim.

³ It should be noted that whenever the glossing differs from the adopted style, the data are cited from a different source, and the original citation is therefore preserved.

3. Connected vs. free exceptives in NA

As stated in Section 1, two syntactic types of exceptive constructions have been identified in crosslinguistic literature: CEs and FEs (see, e.g., García Álvarez, 2008; Hoeksema, 1987, 1995; Moltmann, 1995; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019; Reinhart, 1991; Soltan, 2016; Stockwell & Wong, 2020; von Fintel, 1993; Vostrikova, 2019). These researchers have introduced several distinctions between the two exceptive types. As shown in Table (1), Polinsky et al. (2024) have summarized the main distinctions between these two exceptive types.

Table 1: Differences between CEs and FEs (Polinsky et al. 2024: 278)

	Property	Connected exceptive	Free exceptive
1	Semantics	Subtracts from the domain of a quantifier	Expresses an exception to a generalization
2	Associate types	Certain quantified noun phrases only (universals)	XPs in general statements
3	Syntactic relation in clause	Nominal modifier	Clausal modifier
4	Position in clause	Adjacent to associate	Clause-peripheral or in parenthetical position
5	Constituency	Forms a constituent with the associate	Not a constituent with the associate
6	Category of exception	Nominal only	Not restricted to nominals
7	Realization of associate	Must be syntactically realized	May be implicit

By applying these different diagnostics to NA exceptive constructions, I argue that NA, like other languages such as English (García Álvarez, 2008; Hoeksema, 1987, 1995; von Fintel, 1993), German (Moltmann, 1995), Spanish (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012), and Egyptian Arabic (EA) (Soltan, 2016), exhibits two types of exceptive constructions, namely CE and FE, as shown in (4) and (5), respectively.

(4) kill *?it-tilaab* *?illaa* yasser *?ams* *?aħżar-uu*
 all the-students except Yasser yesterday came-3.Masc.PI
 'All the students, except Yasser, came yesterday.'

(5) kill *?it-tilaab* *?aħżar-uu* *?ams* *?illaa* yasser
 all the-students came-3.Masc.PI yesterday except Yasser
 'All the students came yesterday, except Yasser.'

The first diagnostic is that the semantics of CEs is to subtract an entity (or entities) from the quantifier domain, whereas the semantics of FEs is to express an exception to a generalization (i.e., a generality claim) stated in the antecedent clause (Hoeksema, 1987, 1995; Peters & Westerståhl, 2023; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017; Seguin, 2024; von Fintel, 1993)⁴. To illustrate, the NA CE sentence in (4) denotes that *Yasser* is the only student who did not come yesterday. That is, the exception DP *Yasser* is an entity that has been subtracted from the set of students defined by the QP *kill ?itħillaab* 'all the students'. However, the NA FE sentence in (5) means that *all the students came yesterday, but Yasser did not come yesterday*. This indicates that the first clause (i.e., the antecedent clause) makes the generalization that *all the students came yesterday*, and the exceptive phrase states an exception to this generalization.

The second diagnostic is that the associate in CE is restricted to a universal QP, whereas in FE it is unrestricted; any XP denoting a general statement can serve as an associate in FE. In the literature, this is known as the *Quantifier Constraint*⁵ (Hoeksema, 1987; Moltmann, 1995; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Tahara, 1999; von Fintel, 1993). Alharbi (2025)⁶ argues that the associate in NA CEs must always be a universal QP, as in (4). The non-universal quantifiers, like *?aylab* 'most', and generic DPs can never serve as an associate in NA CEs, as illustrated in (6). However, the associate in NA FEs is almost free; it can be a universal QP as in (5), the quantifier *?aylab* 'most', and a generic DP, as shown in (7), respectively. It should be noted that

⁴ For detailed discussion on the semantics of exceptive constructions, see these various works.

⁵ Polinsky et al. (2024) argue that this constraint is not available in Japanese exceptive constructions. That is, the associate in Japanese CEs may be a non-universal quantifier.

⁶ Alharbi (2025) did not particularly discuss the two syntactic types of exceptive constructions in his descriptive study on NA exceptive constructions.

the existential QP cannot serve as an associate in both types of NA exceptive constructions, as shown in (8). As argued by Moltmann (1995), such these exceptive sentences are ruled out because the existential QP *baṣz ʔit-tillaab* 'some students' includes two sets: one that includes Yasser and the other that does not include Yasser.

(6) a. ***ʔaylab** ʔan-naas ʔillaā hinna saafar-uu
most the-people except we travelled-3.Masc.PI
'Most people, except us, travelled.'

b. ***ʔal-ʕaskar** ʔillaā yasser sumuuman ya-naam-uun badrii
the-soldiers except Yasser generally 3-sleep-Masc.PI early
'Soldiers, except Yasser, generally sleep early.'

(Alharbi 2025: 142)

(7) a. **ʔaylab** ʔan-naas saafar-uu ʔillaā hinna
most the-people travelled-3.Masc.PI except we
'Most people travelled, except us.'

b. **ʔal-ʕaskar** sumuuman ya-naam-uun badrii ʔillaā yasser
the-soldiers generally 3-sleep-Masc.PI early except Yasser
'Soldiers generally sleep early, except Yasser.'

(Alharbi 2025: 142)

(8) a. ***baṣz** ʔit-tillaab ʔillaā yasser ʔaħzar-uu
some the-students except Yasser came-3.Masc.PI
'Some students, except Yasser, came.'

b. ***baṣz** ʔit-tillaab ʔaħzar-uu ʔillaā yasser
some the-students came-3.Masc.PI except Yasser
'Some students came, except Yasser.'

(Alharbi 2025: 142)

The third diagnostic is that the EP in CEs functions as a phrasal modifier, whereas in FEs it functions as a clausal modifier. In Section 4, it will be pointed out that many researchers have proposed this analysis for these two types of exceptive constructions (see, e.g., García Álvarez, 2008; Hoeksema, 1995; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019; Stockwell & Wong, 2020). In Section 5, I will also show that the EP is phrasal in NA CEs but clausal in NA FEs.

The fourth diagnostic is that the EP in CEs must be immediately adjacent to the associate, but in FEs it typically appears at the clause-periphery (Hoeksema, 1987, 1995; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Soltan, 2016; von Fintel, 1993). This may be considered the key distinction⁷ between these two types of exceptive constructions. In NA, this diagnostic is very obvious based on the above examples. More specifically, the examples (4) and (5) indicate that the EP in NA CEs must appear next to the associate, whereas in NA FEs it appears at the right-peripheral position. Alharbi (2025) argues that these are the only canonical positions for EPs in NA exceptive constructions. Thus, it can be concluded that whenever the EP occurs next to the associate, then this is a CE type, but when it occurs at the right-periphery, then this is a FE type.

The fifth diagnostic is that the EP in CEs forms a constituent with the associate, but it does not do so in FEs (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; von Fintel, 1993). This distinction is evident in NA exceptive constructions. By using the constituency test of wh-questions (Santorini & Kroch, 2007) on the NA CE and FE examples in (4) and (5), it appears that the EP *ʔillaā yasser* 'except Yasser' along with the associate can be used as an answer to the wh-question in NA CEs, as illustrated in (9), but they cannot be used together as an answer to the wh-question in NA FEs, as illustrated in (10). It should be noted that the question by itself is ungrammatical in example (10) due to the fact that the EP does not form a constituent with the associate in NA FEs. Thus, this constituency test indicates that while the EP forms a constituent with the associate in NA CEs, it does not do so in NA FEs.

(9) **Q:** min ʔallii ʔams ʔaħzar-uu
who COMP yesterday came-3.Masc.PI

⁷ This distinction may also be used to define the two types of exceptive constructions (see, e.g., Hoeksema, 1987; Moltmann, 1995; von Fintel, 1993).

'Who came yesterday?'

A: kill *?it-ṭillaab* *?illaab* *yasser*
 all the-students except Yasser
 'All the students, except Yasser'

(10) Q: **min* *?allii* *?ahżar-uu* *?ams* *?illaab* *yasser*
 who COMP came-3.Masc.PI yesterday except Yasser
 'Who came yesterday, except Yasser?'
 A: *kill *?it-ṭillaab* *?illaab* *yasser*
 all the-students except Yasser
 'All the students, except Yasser'

The sixth diagnostic is that the syntactic category of the exception XP in CE is always nominal, whereas in FE it is not restricted to nominals (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Soltan, 2016). As shown in (4), the exception XP in NA CEs must always be nominal; it cannot be from other syntactic categories, as demonstrated in (11). In NA FEs, however, the exception XP can be from various syntactic categories, such as an NP as in (5), a prepositional phrase (PP), an adverb phrase (AdvP), and a clause phrase (CP), as illustrated in (12.a-c), respectively⁸. These facts provide evidence that the category of the exception XP in NA CEs is more restricted than that in FEs.

(11) a. **yasser* *yi-ṣtimd* *ṣala* kill *?ixwaan-ih* *?illaab*
 Yasser 3-depend on all brother-his except
ṣala ***saleḥ*** *b-l-bait*
 on Saleh at-the-home
 'Yasser depends on all his brothers, except on Saleh, at home.'
 b. **?anaa* *?a-guum* kill *yuum* *?illaab* *?ams*
 I 1.Sg-wake up all day except yesterday
badrii
 early
 'I wake up every day, except yesterday, early.'
 c. **yasser* *maa* *gaal* *?ayy* *šayy* *?illaab*
 Yasser Neg said.3.Sg any thing except
?inn ***saleḥ*** ***saafar*** *?abādan*
 COMP Saleh travelled.3.Sg at all
 '*Yasser did not say anything, except that Saleh travelled, at all.'
 (Alharbi 2025: 143)

(12) a. *yasser* *yi-ṣtimd* *ṣala* kill *?ixwaan-ih* *b-l-bait*
 Yasser 3-depend on all brother-his at-the-home
?illaab ***ṣala*** ***saleḥ***
 except on Saleh
 'Yasser depends on all his brothers at home, except on Saleh.'
 b. *?anaa* *?a-guum* kill *yuum* *badrii* *?illaab*
 I 1.Sg-wake up all day early except
?ams
 yesterday
 'I wake up every day early, except yesterday.'
 c. *yasser* *maa* *gaal* *?ayy* *šayy* *?abādan*
 Yasser Neg said.3.Sg any thing at all

⁸ Alharbi (2025) argues that when the exception XP is not nominal, the only possible position for EPs in NA is the right-periphery. As pointed out in the fourth diagnostic, this position is available only for EPs in NA FEs.

<i>?illaa</i>	<i>?inn</i>	<i>saleh</i>	<i>saafar</i>
except	COMP	Saleh	travelled.3.Sg
'Yasser did not say anything at all, except that Saleh travelled.'			
(Alharbi 2025: 143)			

The last diagnostic is that the associate may be covert in FE, but in CE it must be overtly realized (Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2019). While this diagnostic is borne out in English FEs, as shown in (13.a), it is not supported in the FEs of other languages. For instance, Potsdam and Polinsky (2019) assert that the FEs in Russian cannot appear without an overt associate, as shown in (13.b).

(13) a. *[We are open], except on Sunday.*
(Potsdam 2018: 260)

b. **Ja rabotaju, krome Voskresen'ja*
I.NOM work except Sunday.GEN
'I work, except Sunday.'

(Potsdam & Polinsky 2019: 2)

This diagnostic is also not supported in NA exceptive constructions. In both types of CEs and FEs, the associate must be overt, as shown in (4) and (5) above. Attempting to delete the associate in any type will yield the NA exceptive sentences ungrammatical, as demonstrated in (14). It should be made clear that Alharbi (2025) argues that the NA restrictive construction, rather than the exceptive construction, generally lacks the associate, as illustrated in (15). He further adds that although both constructions share a number of properties, the NA restrictive construction has a fundamentally different syntax and semantics. Accordingly, NA appears to pattern with Russian in that the associate must be overt in both types of exceptive constructions.

(14) a. *(*kill ?it-tilaab*) *?illaa yasser ?ams ?ahzar-uu*
all the-students except Yasser yesterday came-3.Masc.Pl
'All the students, except Yasser, came yesterday.'

b. *(*kill ?it-tilaab*) *?ahzar-uu ?ams ?illaa yasser*
all the-students came-3.Masc.Pl yesterday except Yasser
'All the students came yesterday, except Yasser.'

(15) *maa h̄zar ?illaa yasser*
Neg came.3.Sg except Yasser
'Only Yasser came.'

(Alharbi 2025: 137)

To summarize, this section has discussed in great depth the diagnostics that have been introduced in the literature to distinguish the two types of exceptive constructions, namely CEs and FEs. It has been argued that almost all these diagnostics are supported in NA exceptive constructions. This then leads to the conclusion that NA is like English, Spanish, and other languages in that its exceptive constructions can be split into two syntactic types: CEs and FEs. The following section deals with the earlier analyses that have been suggested for the two exceptive types.

4. Previous analyses

This section presents an overview of the relevant earlier syntactic analyses proposed for the CE and FE types. It is divided into two main subsections. The first subsection deals with the analyses suggested for the constructions of CE and FE crosslinguistically. The other subsection provides the analyses proposed for these two exceptive types within the Arabic context.

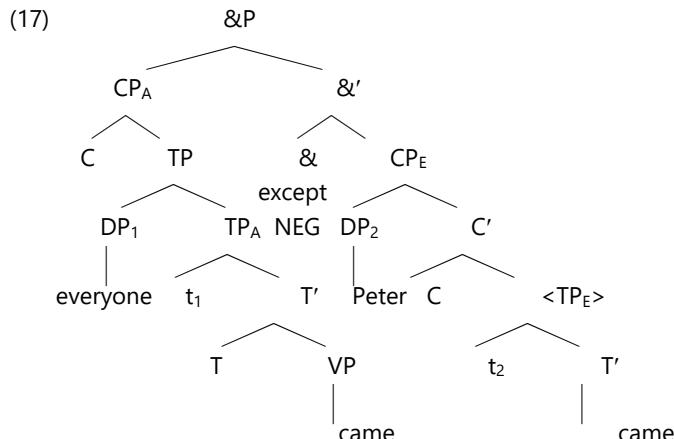
4.1 Analyses of CE and FE crosslinguistically

Despite minor structural differences, the literature suggests that the standard analysis treats the EP in CE constructions as phrasal, while in FE constructions it is analyzed as clausal (García Álvarez, 2008; Hoeksema, 1995; Moltmann, 1995; O'Neill, 2011; Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019; Reinhart, 1991; Seguin, 2024; Soltan, 2016; Stockwell & Wong, 2020; von Fintel, 1993; Vostrikova, 2019). As an illustration, let me explain the analysis of Potsdam and Polinsky (2019) for the CEs and FEs in English. Potsdam and Polinsky suggest that the EP 'except Peter' in the English CE sentence 'Everyone except Peter came' is a phrase adjoined to the associate QP/DP 'everyone' via adjunction. Some

other researchers, like García Álvarez (2008) and Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén (2012), have assumed that the EP is a nominal modifier adjoined to the associate QP/DP via conjunction; that is, the EM functions as a coordinating conjunction that joins two DPs (i.e., the exception DP and the associate DP). Under either assumption, it appears that both the EP and the associate in CEs form a single constituent. This line of analysis has also been suggested by several researchers for CEs in various languages, such as English (Galal et al., 2019; García Álvarez, 2008; Hoeksema, 1995; Potsdam, 2018; Stockwell & Wong, 2020; von Fintel, 1993), Russian (Potsdam & Polinsky, 2019), German (Moltmann, 1995), Japanese (Polinsky et al., 2024), and Spanish (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012). In the literature, there is no any other analysis, different from the standard one, for the syntax of CEs. Several strands of evidence underpinning this analysis will be discussed below.

With respect to the syntax of FEs, Potsdam and Polinsky propose that the EP 'except Peter' in the English FE sentence (16) is an exceptive clause adjoined to the main clause (i.e., the antecedent clause) via conjunction, as illustrated in the derivation (17). They assume that the EM 'except' is a coordinating conjunction that coordinates two clauses: the main and exceptive clauses. The assumption that EMs are coordinating conjunctions has been suggested by some researchers for FEs in several languages, including English (Galal et al., 2019; García Álvarez, 2008; Harris, 1982; Potsdam, 2018), Spanish (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012), Tahitian (Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017), and EA (Soltan, 2016)⁹. Some other researchers, like Polinsky et al. (2024), have assumed that the exceptive clause is adjoined to the main clause via adjunction.

(16) *Everyone came, except Peter.*
(Potsdam & Polinsky 2019: 1)



(Potsdam & Polinsky 2019: 1)

As can be seen in the derivation (17), Potsdam and Polinsky then propose that the exception DP₂ 'Peter' (i.e., the remnant) in the exceptive clause raises to the Spec-CP_E (i.e., the left periphery of the exceptive clause) to escape the ellipsis process of the TP_E, which is licensed under identity with the TP_A in the antecedent clause (Merchant, 2001)¹⁰. As argued by Merchant, the head C in the exceptive clause bears the ellipsis [E] feature that triggers a PF-deletion of the TP. This type of analysis, which suggests that FEs are derived by clausal ellipsis, has been assumed by numerous researchers, for instance in English (Hoeksema, 1995; Potsdam, 2018; Stockwell & Wong, 2020), Spanish (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012), Italian (Seguin, 2024), French (O'Neill, 2011), EA (Soltan, 2016), Tahitian (Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017), Malagasy (Potsdam, 2018), and Japanese (Polinsky et al., 2024). Several kinds of evidence supporting this type of clausal analysis for FEs will be discussed below.

One issue associated with the clausal analysis of FEs is the polarity mismatch, or more specifically the *polarity generalization* first identified by García Álvarez (2008). As pointed out by García Álvarez, the polarity generalization states that "the propositions expressed in the main clause and the exception clause must have opposite polarity" (p. 129). Three perspectives have been introduced in the literature to address the issue of polarity mismatch. First, as illustrated in the derivation in (17), the EM involves a covert (i.e., semantic) instance of negation (Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2019; Potsdam, 2018; Soltan, 2016). Since this instance of negation is outside the ellipsis site, there is no polarity mismatch. Second, the polarity mismatch is generally permissible in the clausal ellipsis (Kroll, 2019). As pointed out by Kroll, there are several sluicing instances where the elided and

⁹ Other approaches have argued that the EM is a preposition (Moltmann, 1995), a postposition (Polinsky et al., 2024), a comparative complementizer (O'Neill, 2011), or a functional head (Ex) (Albataineh, 2021; Saeed, 2023). For further discussion on the categorical status of EMs, see (Alharbi, 2025; Soltan, 2016).

¹⁰ Potsdam (2018) points out that this ellipsis process is like the ellipsis process that occurs in the sluicing structure.

antecedent clauses mismatch in polarity, as shown in (18.a). Lastly, the polarity mismatch is resolved based on the semantics of a sentence (Vostrikova, 2019). Specifically, Vostrikova argues that "the ellipsis resolution is restricted by the meaning of a sentence. In other words, we are free to resolve ellipsis positively or negatively" (p. 431). As an illustration, the ellipsis in example (18.b) is resolved positively because the exceptive clause operates on a negative claim in the antecedent clause.

(18) a. *Either the Board grants the license by December 15 or it explains why [it didn't grant the license by December 15].*
 (Kroll 2019: 27)

b. *Every girl was not there except Eva was there.*
 (Vostrikova 2019: 431)

The standard analysis that treats the EP as phrasal in CEs but clausal in FEs is supported by a set of diagnostics proposed by various researchers (Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019; Soltan, 2016; Stockwell & Wong, 2020). As shown in Table (2), Polinsky et al. (2024) have summarized these diagnostics.

Table 2: Diagnostics differentiating between phrasal and clausal exceptives (Polinsky et al. 2024: 281)

		Phrasal exceptives	Clausal exceptives
1	Exception can be a full clause	no	yes
2	Multiple exceptions	no	yes
3	Fixed form of nominal exception	yes	no
4	Clausal/speaker-oriented adverbs	no	yes
5	Separate binding domains	no	yes
6	Ambiguity in sluicing	no	yes

First, it is possible to have a full (i.e., unreduced or non-elliptical) exceptive clause in FEs, as in (19.a), while this is impossible in CEs. Second, it is possible to have multiple exception XPs in FEs, as in (19.b), but this is impossible in CEs. As argued by Potsdam (2018) and Potsdam and Polinsky (2019), multiple exceptions are allowed in FEs, but not in CEs, because the two exception XPs do not form a single constituent. Third, as discussed in Section 3, while the exception XP must be nominal in CEs, it can be non-nominal in FEs.

(19) a. *Everyone came, except Peter didn't come.*
 b. *Every boy danced with every girl, except Joe with Diane.*
 (Potsdam & Polinsky 2019: 1)

Fourth, speaker-oriented adverbs are allowed in FEs, but disallowed in CEs, as illustrated in (20). Polinsky et al. (2024) argue that speaker-oriented adverbs are possible only in clausal exceptives because they require a clause to modify; they cannot modify nominals. Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén (2012) also point out that since speaker-oriented adverbs are syntactically licensed at the CP level, it is possible to have two sentential adverbs in the structure of FEs — one modifying the first CP and the other modifying the second CP. In contrast, it is impossible to have two sentential adverbs in the structure of CEs since they do not have two CPs.

(20) 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: 284)

Fifth, while FEs allow separate binding domains, CEs do not. As pointed out by Polinsky et al. (2024), since FEs involve two clauses, each clause establishes its local binding domain. That is, binding can be found in either clause, but not in both, as illustrated in (21.a). The corresponding CE is ungrammatical, as in (21.b), because CEs, as discussed above, disallow multiple exceptions.

(21) a. *Nobody made any gains for anyone, except John for himself.* (Clausal)
 b. **Nobody except John for himself made any gains for anyone.* (Phrasal)
 (Polinsky et al. 2024: 286)

Lastly, ambiguity in sluicing structures provides evidence for the elliptical clausal analysis of FEs and the phrasal analysis of CEs. Stockwell and Wong (2020) argue that the FE sentence in (22) is ambiguous between two readings: one that takes the entire main clause as an antecedent and the other that takes only the elided exceptive clause as an antecedent. This second reading is available only when the EP is treated as a clause. In CEs, however, the second reading is not available, as shown in (23), because CEs do not have an elided clausal structure; there is no possible syntactic antecedent to support the second reading.

(22) *Nobody liked the movie, except John, but I don't know why*

- ... *nobody liked the movie, except John.*
- ... *John liked the movie.*

(Stockwell & Wong 2020: 169)

(23) *Nobody except John liked the movie, but I don't know why*

- ... *nobody except John liked the movie.*
- ... **John liked the movie.*

(Stockwell & Wong 2020: 174)

Unlike the standard analysis, Potsdam and Polinsky (2019) propose that FEs in Russian are phrasal, rather than clausal. As illustrated in (24), they propose that Russian FEs are derived from CEs by the extraposition of the exceptive phrase, which modifies the QP/DP. This is because FEs in Russian do not manifest the properties of clausal FEs. For instance, the full exceptive clause is impossible in Russian FEs, as in (25.a), it is impossible to have multiple exception XPs in Russian FEs, as in (25.b), and the exception XP must be nominal, as in (24). Khomchenkova (2020) has also argued that FEs in the languages of Hill Mari and Moksha Mordvin are like their Russian counterparts in which they are derived from CEs through extraposition.

(24)

'Everyone came, except Peter.'

(Potsdam & Polinsky 2019: 1-2)

(25) a. **Vse prišli, krome Petja ne prišel*
 all came except Peter.NOM NEG came
 'Everyone came, except Peter didn't come.'
 b. **Každyj mal'čik priglasil každuju devočku, krome Peti Mašu*
 each boy.NOM invited each girl.ACC except P.GEN M.ACC
 'Each boy invited each girl, except Peter Masha.'

(Potsdam & Polinsky 2019: 2)

To recap, the standard analysis treats the EP as phrasal in CEs but clausal in FEs. It has been suggested that the EP in both types adjoins to the associate phrase or the antecedent clause via either an adjunction or a conjunction. Several diagnostics have been provided to support this line of analysis. It has also been pointed out that the FE in Russian should be analyzed as phrasal, since it fails to show the characteristics of clausal FEs. The next subsection specifically examines the analyses proposed for the two exceptive types in Arabic.

4.2 Analyses of CE and FE in Arabic

Earlier analyses of Arabic exceptive constructions can generally be divided into two main camps. The first camp proposes that the EM is a coordinating conjunction, joining two DPs in CEs and two CPs in FEs (Soltan, 2016). In contrast, the second camp maintains that the EM is a functional head projecting an exceptive phrase (ExP) (Albataineh, 2021) or a subtractive exceptive phrase (S-ExP) (Saeed, 2023), which can be adjoined to the main clause or the associate DP, either as an adjunct or as an apposition, depending on the case marking of the exception DP. The following discussion elaborates on the details of each camp.

Let us start with the analysis of Soltan (2016). As in the standard analysis, Soltan assumes that the EM *?illaa* 'except' in EA exceptive constructions is a coordinating conjunction. In EA CEs, it conjoins two DPs (i.e., the associate DP₁ and the exception DP₂) in a mono-clausal structure, as illustrated in (26). The DP₂ functions as a restrictor on the domain of quantification of the DP₁.

(26) [DP [DP₁ *kull ʔil-talaba* (all the students)] [Conj_P [Conj *ʔillaa*] [DP₂ *Ahmad*]]]]
 (Soltan 2016: 46)

In contrast, Soltan assumes that the EM *?illaa* 'except' in EA FEs conjoins two CPs in a bi-clausal structure, as demonstrated in the derivation (27) for the EA FE sentence (28). After raising the exception DP *Ahmad* to the Spec-CP₂ (i.e., the left periphery of the exceptive clause), the TP in this clause undergoes an ellipsis at phonetic form (PF), which is triggered by the E-feature on the head C, as argued by Merchant (2001).

(27)

CP

CP₁

ConjP

?anaa šuf-t kull ʔil-ṭalaba fi ʔil-muhaadra ʔil-nahaar-da

Conj

?illa

CP₂

DP

Ahmad_i

C'

C

TP

?anaa šuf-t t_i fi ʔil-muhaadra ʔil-nahaar-da

(Soltan 2016: 47)

(28)	<i>?anaa</i>	<i>šuf-t</i>	<i>kull</i>	<i>?il-ṭalaba</i>	<i>fli</i>	<i>?il-muḥaadra</i>
	I	saw-1SG	all	the-students	at	the-lecture
	<i>?il-nahaar-da</i>	<i>?illaa</i>	<i>Ahmad</i>			
	the-day-this	except	Ahmad			
	'I saw all the students at the lecture today, except Ahmad.'					
	(Soltan 2016: 39)					

Soltan's analysis of EA exceptive constructions is substantiated by three lines of evidence. First, the full CP in EA FEs can be overtly spelled out, specifically in situations where the exception DP is linked to a resumptive pronoun, as shown in (29). Second, in the structure of EA FEs, it is ungrammatical for the DP complement of a PP to appear as a remnant without its preposition, as in (30.a). This is in line with Merchant's (2001) generalization, which states that languages that do not allow preposition stranding under wh-movement do not allow preposition stranding in the ellipsis site¹¹. In contrast, since CEs in EA do not have an underlying elliptical structure, the preposition stranding effect does not hold; it is possible to keep or delete the preposition in EA CEs, as shown in (30.b). Lastly, speaker-oriented adverbs are allowed in EA FEs, which have a bi-clausal structure, but disallowed in EA CEs, which have a mono-clausal structure, as illustrated in (31.a–b). As discussed in Subsection 4.1, speaker-oriented adverbs require a clause to modify; they cannot modify nominals.

(29) *?anaa šuf-t kull ?il-ṭalaba ?illaa Ahmad maa-šuf-t-uu-š*
 I saw-1SG all the-students except Ahmad NEG-saw-1SG-him-NEG
 'I saw all the students, except Ahmad I didn't see him.'
 (Soltan 2016: 50)

(30)	a.	<i>kull</i>	<i>?il-wilaad</i>	<i>bi-yihibb-uu</i>	<i>yitkallim-uu</i>	<i>maña</i>	<i>kull</i>
		all	the-boys	ASP-like.IPFV-3PL	talk.IPFV-3PL	with	all
		<i>?il-banaat</i>	<i>?illaal</i>	<i>Ahmad</i>	<i>*(maña)</i>	<i>Maha</i>	
		the-girls	except	Ahmad	(with)	Maha	
		'All the boys like to talk with all the girls, except Ahmad with Maha.'					
	b.	<i>?anaa</i>	<i>?itkallim-t</i>	<i>maña</i>	<i>kull</i>	<i>taalib</i>	<i>?illaal</i>

¹¹ Pérez-Jiménez and Moreno-Quibén (2012) argue that the preposition stranding is ungrammatical in Spanish FEs because Spanish does not allow the preposition stranding under wh-movement.

I	talked-1SG	with	every	student	except
(ma ^{na})	Ahmad	talat	sa ^{naat}		
(with)	Ahmad	three	hours		
'I talked with every student, except Ahmad, for three hours.'					
(Soltan 2016: 52)					

(31) a. *?il-ħamdu-li-laah* *kull* *?il-ṭalaba* *nagaħ-uu* *fii*
 the-thanking-to-Allah all the-students succeeded.3PL in
 ?il-?imtiħaan *?illaa* *Ahmad* *li-l-?asaf*
 the-exam except Ahmad to-the-regret
 'Thank God, all the students passed the test, except for Ahmad, regrettably.'

b. **?il-ħamdu-li-laah* *kull* *?il-ṭalaba* *?illaa* *Ahmad*
 the-thanking-to-Allah all the-students except Ahmad
 nagaħ-uu *fii* *?il-?imtiħaan* *li-l-?asaf*
 succeeded.3PL in the-exam to-the-regret
 'Thank God, all the students, except for Ahmad, passed the test, regrettably.'

(Soltan 2016: 53)

Next, Albataineh (2021) provides a different analysis for affirmative and negative exceptive constructions in Standard Arabic (SA), exemplified in (32.a–b), respectively. He basically considers the SA EM *?illaa* 'except' as a functional head base-generated as an exceptive head (Ex), which merges with the exception XP¹² to form an ExP. This EM enters the derivation with two specific features: a valued accusative case feature [Acc-Case] and an unvalued domain subtraction feature [u-DS], which is used to subtract entities from the domain of quantification. However, the exception DP enters the derivation with opposite features: an unvalued case feature [u-Case] and a valued domain subtraction feature [DS] because it denotes the entity excluded from the domain of quantification.

(32) a. *ħadara* *al-jamii'-u*, *'illā*
 came DEF-all-NOM except
 ṭalib-a-n
 student-ACC-INDEF
 'All came except one student.'

b. *mā* *ħadara* *'aħad-u-n*
 not came one-NOM-INDEF
 'illā *ṭalib-u-n* / *ṭalib-a-n*
 except student-NOM-INDEF / student-ACC-INDEF
 'No one came except a student.'

(Albataineh 2021: 442)

In the structure of SA affirmative and negative exceptive constructions, Albataineh argues that the ExP is an adjunct introduced by late Merge. As illustrated in (33), he suggests that Agree takes place between the exception DP and the EM *?illaa*. This results in that the EM gets its [u-DS] feature valued, and the exception DP gets its [u-Case] feature valued as accusative.

(33) [ExP [Ex *'illā*] [DP]]
 [u-DS] [DS]
 [Acc-Case] [u-Case]
 (Albataineh 2021: 451)

On the contrary, Albataineh treats the ExP as a kind of an apposition construction when the exception DP bears a nominative, rather than accusative, case. As demonstrated in (34), he assumes that the negative determiner *mā* deactivates the [Acc-Case] feature of the EM. Then, Agree takes place between the determiner *mā*, which carries the feature [u-Case], and the head T. This

¹² While Albataineh (2021) assumes that the exception XP can be from various syntactic categories, he has not discussed the syntax of CEs and FEs in SA.

results in that the determiner *mā* gets its [u-Case] feature valued as nominative. Lastly, the nominative case of the determiner *mā* spreads to its extended DP projection and then shows up on the exception DP via the process of feature percolation.

(34)	[_{DP} [_D <i>mā</i>] [Nom-Case]]	[_{ExP} [_{Ex} 'illā] [u-DS] [Acc-Case]]	[_{DP}]]] [DS] [Nom-Case]
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(Albataineh 2021: 451)

Although Albataineh's analysis provides valuable insights into SA exceptive constructions, it is not without problems. First, as pointed out by Saeed (2023), the assumption that the negative marker *mā* is a determiner that takes the ExP as its complement cannot always be maintained in SA. This is because the SA negative marker *mā* can occur adjacent to NPs with definite or indefinite determiners, as shown in (35). Second, this analysis, which hinges on the case morphology of the exception DP, appears to be language-specific; it cannot be extended to the exceptive constructions in the various Arabic varieties, or in other languages, that lack morphological case marking on the exception DP. Lastly, positing the presence of multiple features in the syntax of exceptive constructions makes the analysis more complex.

(35)	<i>mā</i> <i>al-kitāb-u</i> NEG DEF-book-NOM	'illā <i>musā' id-u-n</i> except associate-NOM-INDF	<i>thānawi-u-n</i> secondary-NOM-INDF
'Books are not but a secondary associate.'			

(Saeed 2023: 53)

Finally, Saeed (2023) offers an analysis of exceptive constructions in SA, which appears to integrate the key aspects of Albataineh's (2021) approach. At the outset, Saeed assumes that both affirmative and negative exceptive constructions in SA express a subtractive meaning; the exception XP is subtracted from the domain of quantification introduced by the associate. These constructions are therefore referred to as subtractive exceptive constructions. On this basis, Saeed further proposes that the EM *?illaa* 'except' is a functional subtractive head (S-Ex), projecting a subtractive exceptive phrase (S-ExP). This EM is assumed to bear an inherent accusative case.

Then, Saeed proceeds to argue that the SA affirmative exceptive constructions, as in (36), amount to a type of CEs because they share the properties of CEs. For instance, the exception XP has to be a DP, as shown in (36) and (37), and the EP can be extraposed but not fronted, as illustrated in (38).

(36)	<i>jā'a</i> <i>ad-dyūf-u</i> come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM	'illā <i>aħmed-an</i> except Ahmed-ACC
'The guests came except Ahmed.'		

(Saeed 2023: 56)

(37)	a. <i>jā'a</i> <i>ad-dyūf-u</i> *' <i>illā</i> <i>fi</i> <i>l-masā-i</i> come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except at DEF-afternoon-GEN				
b. <i>jā'a</i> <i>ad-dyūf-u</i> *' <i>illā</i> <i>al'ān</i> come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except now					

(38)	a. <i>jā'a</i> <i>ad-dyūf-u</i> <i>fariħūn</i> 'illā come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM happy except <i>aħmed-an</i> Ahmed-ACC		
'The guests came looking happy except Ahmed.'			

b. *'*illā* *aħmed-an* *jā'a* *ad-dyūf-u*
except Ahmed-ACC come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM

(Saeed 2023: 57)

In contrast, Saeed argues that the SA negative exceptive constructions, as in (39), constitute a type of FEs because they share the properties of FEs. For instance, the exception XP is not restricted to DPs, as illustrated in (39) and (40), and the EP can be fronted, as shown in (41).

(39) *mā jā'a ad-dyūf-u 'illā aħmed-un/an*
 Neg come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except Ahmed-NOM/ACC
 'No one out of the guests came except Ahmed.'
 (Saeed 2023: 57)

(40) a. *mā jā'a ad-dyūf-u 'illā fi l-masā-i*
 Neg come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except at DEF-afternoon-GEN
 'No one out of the guests came except in the afternoon.'
 b. *mā jā'a ad-dyūf-u 'illā al'ān*
 Neg come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM except now
 'No one out of the guests came except in now.'
 (Saeed 2023: 57-58)

(41) *'illā aħmed-an mā jā'a ad-dyūf-u*
 except Ahmed-ACC Neg come.PST.M3SG DEF-guest.PL-NOM
 'Except for Ahmed, the guests did not come.'
 (Saeed 2023: 57)

Regarding their derivations, Saeed puts forward two alternative derivations for each type. First, the S-ExP in both CEs and FEs can be treated as an adjunct introduced to the main clause by late Merge, as demonstrated in (42.a) and (43.a) for the SA CE and FE sentences in (36) and (39). In this derivation, the exception DP receives the accusative case from the EM *?illaa*. Second, the S-ExP in CEs can be analyzed as an adjunct adjoined to the associate DP (i.e., a DP modifier), as illustrated in (42.b) for the SA CE sentence in (36). Again, the exception DP receives the accusative case from the EM *?illaa*. Lastly, the S-ExP in FEs forms a nominal appositional construction with the associate DP, as illustrated in (43.b) for the SA FE sentence in (39). In this latter derivation, the exception DP shares the nominative case of the associate DP since the accusative case of the EM *?illaa* is deactivated by the appositional relation.

(42) a. $[\text{CP}_1 [\text{CP}_2 jā'a \text{ addyūfū} \text{ 'the guests came'}] \text{ [S-ExP } 'illā aħmedan \text{ 'except Ahmed']}]$
 b. $[\text{CP} [\text{VP} jā'a [\text{DP} \text{ addyūfū} \text{ 'the guests'}] \text{ [S-ExP } 'illā aħmedan \text{ 'except Ahmed']}]]$
 (Saeed 2023: 59)

(43) a. $[\text{CP}_1 [\text{CP}_2 mā jā'a \text{ addyūfū} \text{ 'the guests did not come'}] \text{ [S-ExP } 'illā aħmedan \text{ 'except Ahmed']}]$
 b. $[\text{CP} [\text{VP} mā jā'a [\text{DP}_1 [\text{DP}_2 \text{ addyūfū} \text{ 'the guests'}] \text{ [S-ExP } 'illā aħmedun \text{ 'except Ahmed']}]]$
 (Saeed 2023: 59)

As with Albataineh's (2021) analysis, Saeed's (2023) analysis, which appears to depend on the case morphology of the exception DP in SA, cannot be extended to the exceptive constructions in languages that have impoverished case morphology. Also, the assumption that the S-ExP in CEs and FEs has several possible structural positions undermines the uniformity of the analysis.

In summary, this subsection has discussed two salient types of analyses of Arabic exceptive constructions¹³. Soltan's (2016) analysis proposes that the EM in EA exceptives is a coordinating conjunction that conjoins two DPs in CEs and two CPs in FEs. However, the analyses of Albataineh (2021) and Saeed (2023) suggest that the EM in SA exceptives is a functional head projecting an ExP or a S-ExP, which may be adjoined to the main clause or the associate DP, either as an adjunct or as an apposition, based on the case marking of the exception DP. The following section provides my analysis of the CE and FE constructions in NA.

¹³ Khalaily (2019), Moutaoukil (2009), and Zabarah (2017) have provided analyses for exceptive constructions in other Arabic varieties within very different theoretical frameworks. Two of these works are purely descriptive.

5. Analysis of exceptive constructions in NA

This section offers my analysis of the CE and FE constructions in NA. It is split into two major subsections. The first lays out the details of my proposed analysis, while the other discusses the evidence in support of the analysis.

5.1 CEs as phrasal and FEs as clausal

In line with the standard analysis, and more specifically with Soltan (2016) and Alharbi (2025), I first assume that the EM *?illaa* 'except' in NA exceptive constructions is a coordinating conjunction that conjoins two XPs depending on the exceptive construction type. Consider again the NA CE and FE sentences in (4) and (5), repeated in (44) and (45).

(44)	kill	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?illaa</i>	yasser	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?aḥzar-uu</i>
	all	the-students	except	Yasser	yesterday	came-3.Masc.PI
'All the students, except Yasser, came yesterday.'						

(45)	kill	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?aḥzar-uu</i>	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?illaa</i>	yasser
	all	the-students	came-3.Masc.PI	yesterday	except	Yasser
'All the students came yesterday, except Yasser.'						

As argued by Alharbi, two strands of evidence support this assumption. First, the extraction of the second conjunct renders the NA CE and FE sentences ungrammatical, as illustrated in (46.a–b), respectively. This fact is consistent with the *coordinate structure constraint* (Ross, 1967), which disallows the extraction of either conjunct. It should further be emphasized that fronting the EP is not permitted in either CE or FE constructions in NA, as shown in (47. a–b), respectively. This latter observation indicates that NA is like EA (Soltan, 2016) and French (O'Neill, 2011), which both ban the EP movement in their exceptive constructions.

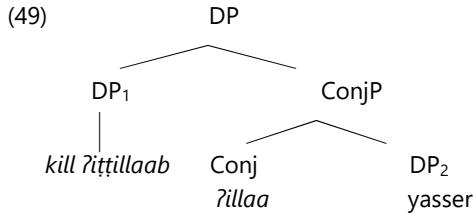
(46)	a.	*yasser	kill	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?illaa</i> ____	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?aḥzar-uu</i>
		Yasser	all	the-students	except	yesterday	came-3.Masc.PI
'*Yasser, all the students except ____ came yesterday.'							
	b.	*yasser	kill	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?aḥzar-uu</i>	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?illaa</i> ____
		Yasser	all	the-students	came-3.Masc.PI	yesterday	except
'*Yasser, all the students came yesterday, except ____.'							

(47)	a.	*?illaa	Yasser ,	kill	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i> ____	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?aḥzar-uu</i>
		except	Yasser	all	the-students	yesterday	came-3.Masc.PI
'Except for Yasser, all the students ____ came yesterday.'							
	b.	*?illaa	Yasser ,	kill	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?aḥzar-uu</i>	<i>?ams</i> ____
		except	Yasser	all	the-students	came-3.Masc.PI	yesterday
'Except for Yasser, all the students came yesterday, ____.'							

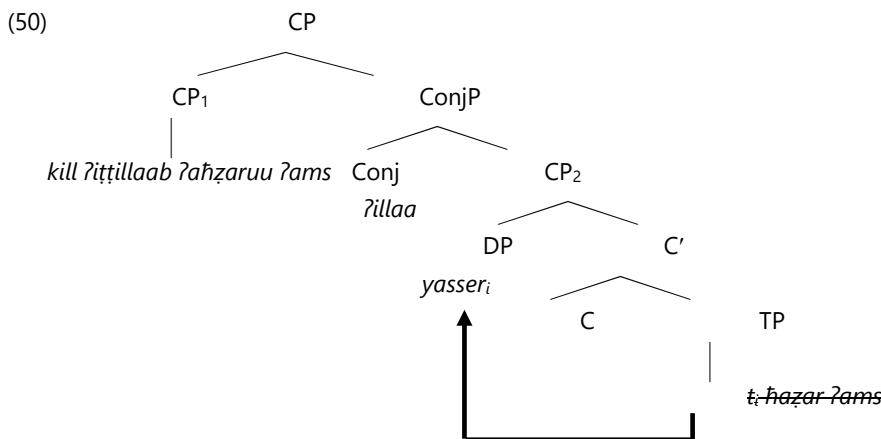
Second, the NA EM *?illaa* parallels the NA coordinating conjunction *wa* 'and' in that both can be followed solely by the strong form of a pronoun, as shown in (48). These two strands of evidence indicate that the EM *?illaa* in NA exceptive constructions is a coordinating conjunction.

(48)	a.	<i>?anaa</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>?ant</i>	vs.	*?anaa	<i>wa-k</i>
		I	and	you		I	and-you
	b.	<i>?illaa</i>	<i>?ant</i>		vs.	*?illaa-k	
except you							
(Alharbi 2025: 140)							

Having argued that the NA EM *?illaa* is a coordinating conjunction, I now turn to the derivations of the CE and FE constructions in NA. Following the standard analysis, and more specifically Soltan (2016), I assume that the EP is phrasal in NA CEs but clausal in FEs. In particular, the EM *?illaa* in NA CE constructions conjoins two phrases, namely the associate and the exception DPs, in a mono-clausal structure. These two DPs must appear adjacent to each other. The derivation in (49) illustrates this for the NA CE sentence in (44).



On the contrary, the EM *ʔilla* in NA FE constructions conjoins two clauses (i.e., a bi-clausal structure). These two clauses are the main (or antecedent) clause, which contains the associate DP, and the exception clause, which contains the exception XP. The derivation in (50) illustrates this for the NA FE sentence in (45).



As can be observed in the derivation (50), the exception DP 'yasser' (i.e., the remnant) raises to the Spec-CP₂ (i.e., the left periphery of the conjoined clause). Once this raising occurs, the entire TP constituent gets elided. This TP ellipsis at PF—licensed under identity with the TP in the antecedent clause—is triggered by the E-feature on the head C, as argued by Merchant (2001) and Aelbrecht (2010).

Since the exception XP in NA FEs can be from various syntactic categories, as discussed in Section 3, the proposed clausal analysis of NA FEs can be extended to these different categories. For instance, the NA FE sentence with an exception PP, as in (12.a) repeated in (51), has the same structure in (50). The only difference is that it is the exception PP *ʕala saleħ* 'on Saleh' that raises to the Spec- CP₂ before the ellipsis process takes place.

(51)

<i>yasser</i>	<i>yi-ʕtimd</i>	<i>ʕala</i>	<i>kill</i>	<i>ʔixwaan-ih</i>	<i>b-l-bait</i>	<i>ʔilla</i>	<i>ʕala</i>	<i>saleħ</i>
Yasser	3-depend	on	all	brother-his	at-the-home	except	on	Saleh

'Yasser depends on all his brothers at home, except on Saleh.'

(Alharbi 2025: 143)

With respect to the polarity mismatch between the antecedent and exception clauses in NA FEs, two of the three perspectives, discussed in Subsection 4.1, can be used to account for this mismatch. To start with, it can be assumed that the polarity mismatch is allowable in the clausal ellipsis, as argued by Kroll (2019). For example, there are several cases in NA sluicing structure where the elided and antecedent clauses can mismatch in polarity, as illustrated in (52). Furthermore, it can be assumed that the polarity mismatch can be resolved based on the semantics of the sentence, as argued by Vostrikova (2019). That is, the polarity of the elided clause, whether negative or positive, is determined by the polarity of the antecedent clause. For instance, the elided exception clause in NA FE sentence (45) has to be resolved negatively because it operates on a positive claim in the antecedent clause. Lastly, the perspective that attempts to resolve the polarity mismatch by positing that the EM, located outside the elided clause, contains a covert negation is untenable. This is because the elided exception clause in NA FEs is not always negative. Within this perspective, it remains unclear how the elided exception clause in sentence (53) can be interpreted positively if the EM is assumed to involve a covert negation. This suggests that the first two perspectives offer a more compelling account of the polarity mismatch in NA FEs.

(52)	<i>laazm</i>	<i>yasser</i>	<i>ya-dfaʃ</i>	<i>l-muxaalfah</i>	<i>gabal</i>	<i>s-sabt</i>	<i>?aw</i>
	must	Yasser	3-pay	the-fine	before	the-Saturday	or
	<i>yi-bayyin</i>	<i>laiš</i>	<i>[maa]</i>	<i>dfaʃ</i>	<i>l-muxaalfah</i>	<i>gabal</i>	<i>s-sabt</i>

'Yasser must pay the fine before Saturday or he explains why [he ~~didn't~~ pay the fine before Saturday].'

(53)	<i>kill</i>	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>maa</i>	<i>?aħżar-uu</i>	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?illaal</i>	<i>yasser</i>
	all	the-students	Neg	came-3.Masc.Pl	yesterday	except	Yasser

'All the students did not come yesterday, except Yasser.'

In summary, this subsection has outlined my analysis of NA exceptive constructions, which basically treats the EM *?illaal* 'except' as a coordinating conjunction that conjoins two XPs. In NA CEs, it conjoins two DPs within a mono-clausal structure, whereas in NA FEs, it conjoins two CPs. In the latter, the exception XP raises to the left periphery of the conjoined clause before the entire TP gets elided. As in the standard analysis, my analysis treats the EP as phrasal in NA CEs but clausal in NA FEs. The following subsection discusses the evidence in support of this analysis.

5.2 Evidence for the analysis

In this subsection, I discuss several strands of evidence in support of the analysis that treats the EP as phrasal in NA CEs but clausal in NA FEs. These different types of evidence have already been extensively discussed in Section 4 (see, e.g., Pérez-Jiménez & Moreno-Quibén, 2012; Polinsky et al., 2024; Potsdam, 2018; Potsdam & Polinsky, 2017, 2019; Soltan, 2016; Stockwell & Wong, 2020). First, while it is possible to have a full (non-elided) exceptive clause in NA FEs, as in (54.a), this is impossible in NA CEs, as in (54.b). Second, multiple exception XPs are possible in NA FEs but disallowed in NA CEs, as illustrated in (55.a–b). Third, as previously discussed in Section 3, the exception XP is restricted to nominal in NA CEs, but may be non-nominal in NA FEs.

(54)	a.	<i>kill</i>	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?aħżar-uu</i>	<i>?ams</i>	<i>?illaal</i>
		all	the-students	came-3.Masc.Pl	yesterday	except
		yasser	maa	ħżar		
		Yasser	Neg	came.3.Sg		
'All the students came yesterday, except Yasser didn't come .'						
	b.	* <i>kill</i>	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?illaal</i>	yasser	maa
		all	the-students	except	Yasser	Neg
		<i>?ams</i>	<i>?aħżar-uu</i>			
		yesterday	came-3.Masc.Pl			
'*All the students, except Yasser didn't come , came yesterday.'						

(55)	a.	<i>kill</i>	<i>mudarris</i>	<i>?ijtimaʃ</i>	<i>miʃ</i>	<i>kill</i>	<i>ṭaallib</i>
		every	teacher	met.3.Sg	with	every	student
		<i>?ams</i>	<i>?illaal</i>	yasser	miʃ	saleħ	
		yesterday	except	Yasser	with	Saleh	
'Every teacher met with every student yesterday, except Yasser with Saleh .'							
	b.	* <i>kill</i>	<i>mudarris</i>	<i>?illaal</i>	yasser	miʃ	saleħ
		every	teacher	except	Yasser	with	Saleh
		<i>?ijtimaʃ</i>	<i>miʃ</i>	<i>kill</i>	<i>ṭaallib</i>	<i>?ams</i>	
		met.3.Sg	with	every	student	yesterday	
'Every teacher, except Yasser with Saleh , met with every student yesterday.'							

Fourth, since speaker-oriented adverbs require a clause to modify, they are allowed in NA FEs, which have a bi-clausal structure, as illustrated in (56.a). They, however, are not allowed in NA CEs, which have a mono-clausal structure, as illustrated in (56.b). Fifth, separate binding domains are permitted in NA FEs, as shown in (57.a), because their structure contains two CPs. In contrast, NA CEs do not permit separate binding domains, as shown in (57.b), since CEs essentially disallow multiple exceptions.

(56)	a.	<i>?al-ħamdu-li-laah</i>	<i>kill</i>	<i>?it-ṭillaab</i>	<i>?aħżar-uu</i>	<i>l-?ijtimaʃ</i>
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	the-thanking-to-Allah ?ams yesterday	all ?illaā except	the-students yasser Yasser	came-3.Masc.PI li-l-?asaf to-the-regret	the-meeting
'Thank God, all the students came to the meeting yesterday, except regrettably Yasser.'					
b.	*?al-ħamdu-li-laah the-thanking-to-Allah ?aħżar-uu came-3.Masc.PI	kill all l-?ijtimaaġ the-meeting	?it-ħillaab the-students ?ams yesterday	?illaā except li-l-?asaf to-the-regret	yasser Yasser
'*Thank God, all the students except Yasser came to the meeting yesterday, regrettably.'					

(57)	a.	maa Neg	ħadd one	tikallam talked.3.Sg	miġ with	?aħħad one	b-l-?ijtimaaġ in-the-meeting	?ams yesterday
'No one talked with anyone in the meeting yesterday, except Yasser with himself.'								
	b.	*maa Neg	ħadd one	?illaā except	yasser Yasser	miġ with	nafsih himself	tikallam talked.3.Sg
'*No one except Yasser with himself talked with anyone in the meeting yesterday.'								

Sixth, ambiguity in sluicing can be taken as evidence for this analysis. To clarify, the NA FE sentence (58) has two possible readings: one that takes the entire main clause as an antecedent and the other that takes only the elided exceptive clause as an antecedent. However, the second reading is not available in NA CE¹⁴, as shown in (59), because CEs do not have an elided clausal structure; there is no possible syntactic antecedent to support the second reading.

(58)	kill all yasser, Yasser	?it-ħillaab the-students maa but Neg	ħabb-uu liked-3.Masc.PI ?a-drii 1.Sg-know	l-film, the-movie laiš why	?illaā
'All the students didn't like the movie, except Yasser, but I don't know why'					
	a. ... kill all ?illaā except	?it-ħillaab the-students yasser Yasser	maa Neg	ħabb-uu liked-3.Masc.PI	l-film, the-movie
'... all the students didn't like the movie, except Yasser.'					
	b. ... yasser Yasser	ħabb liked.3.Sg	l-film the-movie		
'... Yasser liked the movie.'					
(59)	kill all l-film, the-movie	?it-ħillaab the-students maa but Neg	yasser Yasser ?a-drii 1.Sg-know	maa Neg	ħabb-uu liked-3.Masc.PI laiš why
'All the students except Yasser didn't like the movie, but I don't know why'					
	a. ... kill all ħabb-uu liked-3.Masc.PI	?it-ħillaab the-students l-film the-movie	?illaā except yasser Yasser	maa Neg	

¹⁴ Few native NA speakers, however, report that this second reading is available in NA CEs.

'... all the students except Yasser didn't like the movie.'

b. ... **yasser* *habb* *l-film*

Yasser liked.3Sg the-movie

'... *Yasser liked the movie.'

Seventh, like EA (Soltan, 2016), the preposition stranding rule is not allowed in NA FEs, as illustrated in (55.a) repeated in (60.a). This is consistent with Merchant's (2001) generalization, which states that languages that do not allow preposition stranding under wh-movement do not allow preposition stranding in the ellipsis site¹⁵. On the contrary, the preposition stranding rule has no effect in NA CEs since CEs do not have an underlying elliptical structure. As illustrated in (60.b), the preposition in NA CEs may either be retained or omitted.

(60)	a.	<i>kill</i>	<i>mudarris</i>	<i>?ijtimāf</i>	<i>miʃ</i>	<i>kill</i>	<i>taallib</i>
		<i>every</i>	<i>teacher</i>	<i>met.3.Sg</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>every</i>	<i>student</i>
		<i>?ams</i>	<i>?illaa</i>	<i>yasser</i>	<i>*(miʃ)</i>	<i>saleh</i>	
		<i>yesterday</i>	<i>except</i>	<i>Yasser</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>Saleh</i>	
		'Every teacher met with every student yesterday, except Yasser with Saleh.'					
	b.	<i>?al-mudarris</i>	<i>?ijtimāf</i>	<i>miʃ</i>	<i>kill</i>	<i>?it-?illaab</i>	<i>?illaa</i>
		<i>the-teacher</i>	<i>met.3.Sg</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>every</i>	<i>the-students</i>	<i>except</i>
		<i>(miʃ)</i>	<i>yasser</i>	<i>?ams</i>			
		<i>with</i>	<i>Yasser</i>	<i>yesterday</i>			
		'The teacher met with all students, except (with) Yasser, yesterday.'					

Lastly, there appears to be a clear intonational break before the EP *?illaa yasser* 'except Yasser' in the NA FE sentence (45). This break indicates that the EP in FEs belongs to a separate clause, distinct from the one containing the associate item *kill* *?ittillaab* 'all the students', thereby supporting a bi-clausal analysis. By contrast, the NA CE sentence (44) lacks this break, since both the EP and the associate item are contained within the same clause (i.e., a mono-clausal structure).

6. Conclusions

This paper has examined the syntax of exceptive constructions in NA, focusing particularly on the constructions of CEs and FEs. Based on a range of evidence, I have confirmed the availability of both types in NA. Then, I argued that that the EM *7illaa* 'except' functions as a coordinating conjunction that conjoins two XPs: in NA CEs it conjoins two DPs in a mono-clausal structure, while in NA FEs it conjoins two CPs in a bi-clausal structure. In the latter structure, the exception XP raises to the left periphery of the exceptive clause before the TP-ellipsis takes place. Evidence from multiple exceptions, speaker-oriented adverbs, separate binding domains, and other diagnostics supports this analysis, which treats the EP as phrasal in NA CEs but clausal in NA FEs. Hopefully, the analysis developed in this paper contributes valuable insights to the broader cross-linguistic discussion on the syntax of exceptive constructions.

Due to space limitations, two directions are left for future investigation. First, as this study has focused exclusively on the syntax of the two exceptive types in NA, a detailed examination of their semantics is highly recommended. Second, although previous accounts addressing the polarity mismatch between antecedent and exceptive clauses in FEs offer some explanations, these often remain ad hoc. The syntactic nature of negation in the elided clauses thus remains an open issue. An in-depth study on this polarity mismatch between antecedent and elided clauses is therefore strongly encouraged.

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¹⁵ NA, like EA, Hijazi Arabic, and other Arabic varieties, does not allow preposition stranding under wh-movement (see Alaowffi & Alharbi, 2021, Soltan, 2016).

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