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<td>Uchida, Mitsumi</td>
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Exception Links in English–French Parallel Texts

Mitsumi Uchida
Exception Links in English–French Parallel Texts*

Mitsumi Uchida

1. Introduction

Both English and French have deverbal prepositions and conjunctions (links, hereafter) specifying temporal, logical or causal relations. These include during, concerning, considering, excepting, and excepted in English; and durant, nonobstant, moyennant, cependant, and excepté in French.

In their developmental processes, these links are related to absolute constructions and followed varied paths of progression to become grammaticalised items. As Rissannen (2006:133) states, this class of lexis is worth close examination since “[c]onnectives. . . combine semantics with syntax”. Moreover, the two languages have been in continuous contact with each other, which, according to Rissannen, affected the process of grammaticalisation of the English deverbal links.

The purpose of this paper is to report on the present-day distribution and use of deverbal links representing exception: except in English and sauf in French. To snapshot the current usage of such links in each of these languages, actual examples observed in English–French parallel texts of Le Monde Diplomatique (1997–2006) will be compared and discussed.

1.1 Deverbal links in English and French: past and present

Historical linguistic research shows that some of the English deverbal links representing causal, conditional, and concessive relations (cf. Kortmann 1997) entered the language from French—or from Latin via
French—in the 14th and 15th centuries, when the need for “more varied and more accurate ways of expressing relations between concrete things, abstract concepts and propositions of various kinds” emerged (Rissanen 2002:77) and when French was the major source of “officialese”.

Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the picture is different. English has increasingly come to serve a role as a lingua franca. The changes that have taken place in the last few decades have been particularly remarkable: the number of non-native speakers of English has rapidly increased world-wide, including in France, where francophones used to be most reluctant to admit the influence of English. This change is reflected in the publication of the English edition of the magazine *Le Monde Diplomatique* (LMD, hereafter), which began publication in November 1996. As shown in Table 1, 11% (1998) to 24% (2003) of the articles were written originally in English, while others were translated from other languages—mainly French.

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original text in English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The present situation might well be described as a time when English is the major medium of intercultural and international communications, and when “the need for accurate ways of expressing relations between concrete things, abstract concepts and propositions of various kinds” is growing.

It is therefore worth examining the current use of deverbal links in the two languages, in anticipation of possible future changes that might be
provoked by ongoing language contact.

1.2 *Except* and *sauf*

This paper focuses on English *except* and French *sauf*, which are the most frequently used exception links in each language. Table 2 shows frequencies of English exception links found in the four corpora in the ICAME Collection (A, B, C, J, K, L, M, N, and P categories in the Brown Corpus, the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of British English, the Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English, and the Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English); Table 3 shows distribution of the French expressions in LMD published in the period of 1978–2006.

Table 2: Exception links in ICAME Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>except</th>
<th>excluding</th>
<th>excepting</th>
<th>saving</th>
<th>save</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>367</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Exception links in *Le Monde Diplomatique* 1978–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>excepté</th>
<th>à l’exception de</th>
<th>sauf</th>
<th>à part</th>
<th>hormis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there are other possible pairs that show more obvious parallelism, e.g. *except* and *excepté*, *saving/save* and *sauf*, this preliminary study will focus only on the most frequent items.

A simple survey of corresponding expressions in the bilingual parallel texts also supports the legitimacy of this selection. Tables 4 and 5 indicate that *except* and *sauf* are the commonest options in translation to match each other, although there are cases where other forms are chosen instead.
Table 4: French translation from *except*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>à l’exception de</th>
<th>sauf</th>
<th>others</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: English translation from *sauf*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>except</th>
<th>unless</th>
<th>with exceptions</th>
<th>others</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is expected that observation of these two representative items will provide a convenient starting point for future attempts to give a more comprehensive description of the uses of deverbal links.

1.3 Basic and subjective meanings of links

Uchida (2005) discusses the possible complementation patterns of *except*, in relation to the probable meanings borne by each form of complement, and tentatively concludes that on top of its basic functions of representing logical or referential meanings, *except* can also represent an adversative relation in the speaker’s subjective judgement, in a similar manner to the paratactic clause link *but*.

This extension in function first appears to go against the general unidirectionality in change at the clause level (i.e., in the direction of parataxis > hypotaxis > subordination) hypothesized by Hopper & Traugott (1993, 2003). When we turn attention to both structural and semantic characteristics of this paratactic use, however, it displays the traits that Traugott (2003:638, 642) lists as the hallmarks of early stages in grammaticalisation of lexical items to clause connectives and/or to discourse markers: reduction of syntactic constraint, meaning shift or extension from referential meaning to non-referential subjective meaning, and scope increase. In the following discussion, we will first examine
basic and extended functions of *except* and then investigate whether French *sauf* displays any similar meaning extension.

1.3.1 *Except*

The basic function of *except* is introducing a case that is exceptional to the general statement expressed in the matrix clause. Its complement can take various syntactic forms, as in (1)–(9). Huddleston & Pullum (2002:641–643) refer to these patterns as “matrix-licensed complements”. The semantic mechanism of these examples is accounted for by reference, substitution and polarity change (cf. Uchida 2005). Examples (2)–(9) are cited from Huddleston & Pullum (2002:641–643).

(1) [NP] All *except* the captain were rescued. (Quirk et al. 1985:707)

(2) [PP] I don’t know where to look *except* in the garden.

(3) [AdjP] I have felt every imaginable way *except* proud of myself.

(4) [declarative content clause] He said not a thing *except* that he was sorry.

(5) [AdvP] This thesis treats the topic in every way *except* competently.

(6) [bare infinitival] There is nothing any of us can do *except* be cautious.

(7) [to-infinitival] I don’t intend to do anything *except* to wait for news.

(8) [gerund-participial] I can’t think what to advise *except* staying home.

(9) [interrogative] I asked little *except* what they had been doing.
In addition, there are certain uses that require consideration of pragmatic factors. This is illustrated by examples (10) to (13).

(10) The nuclear war is already being fought, except that the bombs are not being dropped on enemy targets—not yet. (Brown A)

(11) I am a coward. Except that parked outside my house is a 1961 Harley Davidson. (WBOL ukmags¹)

(12) It was like looking into the future. Except that, of course, there is no future now for Nikki Conroy. (WBOL today)

(13) All her credit cards scattered on to the platform. Except she didn’t pick them up. (WBOL sunnow)

The semantic mechanism operating behind these examples cannot be accounted for simply by reference, substitution and polarity change. That is, the covert proposition introduced by the *except*-phrase cannot be reconstructed directly by referring to the host (matrix) clause. Rather, it represents the adversative relation between what has already been said and the content of the complement of the *except*-phrase, according to the belief of the speaker. This subjective use tends to appear with complements in the form of a *that*-clause or a *that*-less (bare) clause, sometimes in an independent structure as in (11) and (13).

1.3.2 *Sauf*

French *sauf* can take various syntactic forms for its complement, as *except* does. Examples (14)–(18) were retrieved from the LMD archive.

(14) [NP] La faune, presque inexistant, *sauf* les oiseaux, a été importée d’Angleterre. . . . (Feb. 1978)²


(18) [que-clause] A l’école, il ne comprenait rien—*sauf* qu’on se moquait de lui. (Oct. 1999)

It is worth noticing here that a *que*-clause, which is the direct syntactic equivalent to an English *that*- (or bare) clause, is not common as the complement of *sauf*. In a sampling survey I conducted on the LMD data, only one among the oldest 100 samples of *sauf* takes a *que*-clause; and only two of the newest 100 samples do. More importantly, these three examples are not used to represent the subjective meaning that *except* plus *that*- (or bare) clause expresses in English.

Instead, for *sauf*, the complementation type that shows certain semantic extension toward subjectivity is the *à*-infinitive. The example in (19) and its translation are from *Harper Collins-Robert French Unabridged Dictionary Sixth Edition*.

(19) Il accepte de nous aider, *sauf* à nous critiquer si nous échouons. ‘He agrees to help us even if he (reserve the right to) criticize us if we fail.’

Here, the meaning cannot be reconstructed by the basic semantic operation of reference, substitution and polarity change, which applies to the examples (14)–(18). Even given the difference in styles between French *sauf* +*à* and relatively less formal English *except*, it is noteworthy that both links appear to be acquiring the function of representing an adversative relation based on the speaker’s subjective judgement.

Despite the similarity in the ranges of possible complement types, the
two links—except and sauf—display a discrepancy in their choice of forms that represent subjective meanings.

2. Survey

To illuminate the uses of except and sauf independently and then in comparison, a survey was designed, based on the observation of the forms and functions of these links discussed in the preceding section.

2.1 Material

The principal source of material for this survey is the CD-ROM version of LMD. From the articles published in the period of 1978–2006, three sets of data were prepared for the present purposes: (i) articles that have no other version than French; (ii) French articles that have only English translated versions; (iii) articles that were originally written in English and were translated to French versions. The first set is for survey of diachronic change in the use of sauf; the latter two are for examination of examples of except and sauf and their corresponding original or translated expressions in the other language.

As supplementary material, the ICAME Collection was also used for diachronic study of except in twentieth century English.

2.2 Classification

After a retrieval procedure performed on the interface provided in the LMD CD-ROM, examples were manually characterised, according to the syntactic status of the complement of the link. For the sake of simplicity, the examples were further classified into either of the two broad categories of S-forms or B-forms. S-forms include, in English, except-phrases with a that- or that-less (bare) clause complement, including cases where the except phrase constitutes an independent clause; in French, sauf-phrases with an à-infinitive. B-forms are all ‘other’ patterns including (for+) NP,
PP, verb forms (base form, infinitive, gerund), and subordinate clauses other than *that*-clauses.

2.3 Result

In this subsection, the distribution of B-forms and S-forms is presented, in terms of percentages of the respective forms of the links. First, each of the links is investigated using the monolingual data set, from a diachronic point of view. A preliminary survey of the links in parallel data will follow in 2.3.3.

2.3.1 *Except*

Table 6 shows the breakdown of *except* examples by complement forms in English corpora representing the 1960s and the 1990s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(for) NP</th>
<th>prep, subordinators</th>
<th><em>that</em>-bare/independent clauses</th>
<th>others</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60s</td>
<td>202 (53%)</td>
<td>111 (29%)</td>
<td>46 (12%)</td>
<td>24 (6%)</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90s</td>
<td>139 (54%)</td>
<td>73 (28%)</td>
<td>33 (13%)</td>
<td>13 (5%)</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spite of the difference in total numbers (383 and 258), the percentages of S-forms (*that*-bare/independent clauses) are surprisingly consistent: 12% in the 1960s and 13% in the 1990s, although the number of *that*-less (bare) clauses may suggest increase: three examples in the 1960s and seven in the 1990s.

2.3.2 *Sauf*

In contrast, in the French data set, which comprises only the articles that have no other language versions, the S-form (*à*-infinitive) appears to be increasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>à-infinitives</th>
<th>others</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 oldest samples starting from 1978</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 newest samples up to 2006</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the 100 oldest samples, which were found in the articles published in 1978-1980, nine examples are accompanied by the *à*-infinitive form, whereas nineteen of the newest 100 samples (1997–2006) are with *à*-infinitives.

2.3.3 *Except* and *sauf* in parallel texts

The results presented in the preceding discussions were drawn from surveys of the monolingual texts. Here *except* and *sauf* are considered in a translation context. Examination of examples in pairs reveals certain interesting tendencies, although the numbers of examples may not be large enough to warrant firm conclusions, and the causes behind the tendencies remain to be explored. Three points are to be noted.

(i) *Except* and *sauf* tend to correspond to each other when they are complemented by B-forms.

(ii) S-forms of *except* tend to correspond to totally different expressions than *sauf* in French, regardless of which language they were originally written in.

(iii) S-form of *sauf* rarely appears in the translation context, either in the original or translated text.

These points will be further illustrated in the following section.
3. Examples in parallel data

In this section, examples retrieved from the database will be presented, to help clarify the points in 2.3.3.

3.1 Examples of except and sauf with B-forms

B-forms tend to be translated using B-forms with sauf or except. In other words, B-form types of except and sauf are most likely to match each other when translated.

3.1.1 Translation from English to French

Sixteen of the 40 examples of except with B-form complements are translated using B-forms with sauf. Following are some typical pairs.

(20) Except in the extreme case of stockpiling germ weapons, the line between defence and offence is hard to define. . . . (Nov. 2001)
(20F) Enfin, sauf dans le cas extrême du stockage d’armes biologiques, il est difficile de distinguer usages défensifs et offensifs. . . . (Nov. 2001)

(21) Israelis are not allowed to enter the areas of the Palestinian Authority except with special authorisation, which the defence establishment refuses to give. (Apr. 2002)
(21F) Les Israéliens n’ont plus le droit d’entrer dans les zones sous contrôle palestinien, sauf avec un laissez-passer spécial, que le ministère de la défense refuse presque systématiquement de délivrer. (Apr. 2002)

(22) In 1966 Indira Gandhi scorned the nuclear non-proliferation treaty because it imposed strict rules on the have-nots, while the haves could do anything except disarm. (Jul. 2002)
(22F) En 1966, Indira Gandhi dénonça le traité de non-prolifération nucléaire qui imposait, selon elle, des règles strictes aux «pauvres» tandis que les «riches» faisaient tout sauf réduire leurs arsenaux. (Jul. 2002)

(23) Nor can they implement Keynesian mechanisms for macro-economic stabilisation and run a counter-cyclical budget policy except under extreme conditions. (May 2003)

(23F) Il leur est tout aussi impossible de recourir aux mécanismes keynésiens de stabilisation macroéconomique, sauf en cas d’absolue nécessité, ou de dévaluer pour protéger la compétitivité de leurs entreprises. (May 2003)

(24) And it contained every security council resolution, programme report, and every other related document, except for those specifically deemed confidential. (Feb. 2005)

(24F) Le site comportait également toutes les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité, tous les rapports et autres documents relatifs au programme, sauf pour quelques-uns demeurés confidentiels. (Feb. 2005)

3.1.2 Translation from French to English

All the fifteen examples of sauf that are accompanied by B-forms are translated using B-forms with except. Pairs in (25) to (27) illustrate typical patterns.

(25) Mais l’OLP n’était pas un Etat, et elle ne pouvait donc en assurer toutes les fonctions, sauf durant de courtes périodes—namely the 1970s in

(25E) But the PLO was not a state, and could not therefore really act like one, except during short periods—namely the 1970s in
(26) Même phénomène dans la plupart des pays voisins, sauf en Hongrie, où les réformes ont été plus progressives. (June 2000)

(26E) The same has happened in most of the neighbouring countries except Hungary, where reforms have been more gradual. (June 2000)

(27) Les machines à sous (que l'on appelle familièrement one-armed bandits, ou bandits manchots) sont partout, sauf dans les hôpitaux et les écoles. (Aug. 2000)

(27E) The slot machines (known as one-armed bandits) are omnipresent, except in schools and hospitals. (Aug. 2000)

In the bilingual texts consisting of French original and English translation, we do find two examples in the form of sauf + à-infinitive. Neither example, however, displays the characteristics of subjective extension discussed earlier. As the corresponding English translation indicates, (28) is a case of the conditional; (29) is an example of the ordinary “matrix licensed” type (cf. 1.3.1).

(28) C’est pourquoi, même s’il y a toujours eu «moins d’État» en Grande-Bretagne qu’en France, on admettra, sauf à confondre la forme et le contenu du pouvoir politique, que l’État n’était pas «faible». (Apr. 2000)

(28E) But unless we fail entirely to distinguish between the form and the content of political power, the British state in the late 19th century can be no means described as “weak”. (Apr. 2000)

(29) Mais l’arme la plus efficace est le matraquage de l’idée que «tout est gagné, il n’y a plus rien à faire». . . sauf à retrousser ses manches et à prouver qu’on est digne de cette égalité. (May
The most effective media weapon is the continual insistence that “it’s all been won, there’s nothing left to do” except for women to prove they deserve their hard-won equality. (May 2004)

These pairs are therefore characterised as members of the *sauv* +B-form category.

### 3.2 Examples of *except* with S-forms

S-form complements of *except* tend to correspond to totally different expressions from *sauv* in French, regardless which language they were written in originally.

#### 3.2.1 Translation from English to French

Only one pair of samples was retrieved from the bilingual parallel texts, although the survey of English corpora indicates that the use of this subjective link is becoming common (cf. 2.3.1).

(30) . . . the repertoire and mindset so far remain the same, *except* that now women are in charge. (Sep. 2005)

(30F) . . . on continue à utiliser la langue traditionnelle, *mais* ce sont les femmes qui la parlent. (Sep. 2005)

Here, the link represented by *except* is interpreted using a simple adversative link (*mais* ‘but’) in the French version.

#### 3.2.2 Translation from French to English

Six examples of the S-form following *except* were found in the English translated texts (31–36).

(31) Poland is similar, *except* that an even larger parliamentary majority is required (two-thirds in both chambers). (May 2005)
(31F) Même cas de figure en Pologne, où la majorité parlementaire requise est encore plus élevée: deux tiers dans chacune des deux assemblées. (Apr. 2005)

(32) This is true, except that nothing in the previous treaties prevented the commission, which has plenty of imagination for creating legal bases when it wants to, from proposing such a directive and having it adopted by member states. (Apr. 2005)

(32F) C’est exact (article III-122), à cela près, que les traités précédents n’empêchaient aucunement qu’une telle directive soit prise si la Commission. . . (Feb. 2005)

(33) It is a real battle for the 21st century, successor to the 19th-century battle between Ancients and Moderns, those defending classical values and those in favour of change. Except that modern does not now mean quite what the “Gallo-Ricans” think it does.

(33F) Un débat géopolitique et culturel. Une vraie «Grande Querelle» de début de siècle, digne de celle des Anciens et des Modernes, mais où la modernité ne se situe pas là où le croient les «Gallo-Ricains». (Jan. 2005)

(34) This could have been an earthly paradise, except that we had just left Papua New Guinea and entered the former Irian Jaya, now West Papua, the 26th province of Indonesia. (Sep. 2002)

(34F) L’endroit pourrait être paradisiaque si le bateau n’avait pas quitté la Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée pour entrer dans l’ancienne Irian Jaya, la Papouasie occidentale, vingt-sixième province de l’Indonésie. (Aug. 2002)

(35) We might be in Hong Kong, Tokyo or Vancouver. Except that we are overlooking a collection of building sites dotted with
cranes. (Aug. 2001)

(35F) On pourrait être aussi bien à Hongkong, Tokyo ou Vancouver. 
*Mais non:* car cette falaise surplombe une plage de terrains 
vagues hérissee de grues. (Aug. 2001)

(36) The CAA remained committed to an ideology of war against 
international communism, except that the term now included 
human rights activists as well as leftwing and clerical 
opponents. (Aug. 2001)

(36F) Quant au contenu idéologique de la CEA, il demeure la guerre 
contre le communisme international. *Seul* changement, on 
trouve désormais sous ce vocable, outre les habituels opposants 
de gauche et les prêtres, les organisations de défense des droits 
de la personne.

However, none of the French original texts (31F–36F) is written with a 
*sauf* link. The information contained in the *except* clause in the English 
translation is always introduced by a full clause with a coordinating or 
subordinating conjunction (*mais, où, à cela près que, si*), or by an 
independent sentence (36F).

### 3.3 Examples of *sauf* with S-forms

S-form complements of *sauf* (i.e., *à*-infinitives) rarely appear in the 
translation context. The French original texts in our bilingual data contain 
no such examples, as stated in 3.1.2. In the French translation texts, five 
ocurrences of *sauf* are found, none of which is accompanied by an 
*à*-infinitive.
4. Concluding remarks

In this preliminary investigation, I have focused on the commonest deverbal links that represent exception in English and French. These links, except and sauf, share a common developmental background such that the French link together with its cognates affected the use of the corresponding English links in various ways.

By the end of the 20th century, English except had started acquiring an additional function of expressing a loose adversative relation between propositions, a development which appears to exemplify a common path of grammaticalisation. On the other hand, French sauf does not show parallel tendencies, despite its syntactic compatibility with the comparable complement type: que-clauses, which apparently correspond to that- or bare clauses in English.

The unavailability of similar constructions for realisation of similar functions in French has been clearly shown by the result of the parallel text study. The semantic extension of the sauf link toward subjectivity appears to be ongoing, in comparatively formal styles and, the present survey seems to suggest, in monolingual (as opposed to bi- or multi-lingual mutual translation) contexts. Further research on the details and causes of this asymmetry is still to be undertaken.

Notes

* Part of this work was presented at the Second Annual International Free Linguistics Conference, Sydney. This research was supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (19520428).
1. WBOL stands for WordbanksOnline. It is followed by the name of the relevant subcorpus.
2. Examples from LMD are accompanied by the month of publication in parentheses.
3. The 200 examples referred to were extracted from the data set of French original texts, for which there are no translated versions in other languages.
4. Rissanen (2002) describes this decrease as “except . . . gradually losing ground to unless in the subordinator role” in the latter half of the 20th century.

Materials

Collins WordbanksOnline.

<http://www.collins.co.uk/books.aspx?group=154>
HarperCollins and/et Dictionnaires Le Robert-VUEF.

References


