

## **Making exceptions: The syntax of exceptive constructions with a special emphasis on ellipsis**

Natural language allows us to make broad universal statements like *All dogs bark*, while also providing ways to express exceptions to these generalizations, via exceptive constructions (e.g., *All dogs bark except basenjis*). An exceptive construction contains two main parts: the associate (*all dogs* in this example) and the exceptive phrase (*except basenjis*). The exceptive phrase itself breaks into the exceptive marker (*except* in the example above; consider also English *but, other than, save, except for*) and the exception itself (*basenjis*).

Linguistic means of expressing exclusion have received modest attention from philosophers of language and semanticists, whose focus has been primarily on English. Beyond that small body of work, little is known about exceptive constructions across the world's languages: how they are built, what their distribution is within and across languages, and how they compare to other constructions expressing comparison or contrast. In this talk, I present and analyze the landscape of exceptive constructions in several natural languages focusing on the structural contrast between free/connected exceptives and phrasal/clausal exceptives. I will then link this exploration to more general issues of ellipsis in exceptive phrases with a special emphasis on formulating the Identity Condition in ellipsis.

Time permitting, I will also consider the difference between exceptives and exclusive constructions (as in *Dogs aside, I did not see any mammals in this zoo*). Unlike exceptives, exclusives do not express negative inferences (that something is not part of a generalization) and they are compatible with more associate types than exceptives. Despite conceptual differences, exceptives and exclusives are often encoded by the same marker, and I will address this homophony by considering the Italian marker *eccetto* that can introduce both constructions in some varieties of Italian (Seguin 2024).