

The Syntax of *ne...que* Exceptives in French*

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Abstract

This paper examines the syntax of the French *ne...que* exceptive construction. Although *ne* is typically analyzed as the negative head, and *que* as a complementizer, in this construction, the distribution of these morphemes is anything but typical. In the interest of lexical economy, this paper provides an analysis for *ne...que* that assimilates the construction to the syntax of a reduced clausal comparative. If the exception phrase following *que* is treated as the remnant of an elliptical clause adjoined to an optionally covert NPI, the syntactic properties of *ne...que* cease to be problematic.

1 Introduction

Economy has long been a guiding principle not only in syntactic theory but also in the theory of the lexicon. An economical analysis of a given lexical item seeks to account for its varied syntactic distribution without positing a family of homophonous but syntactically distinct morphemes. The *ne...que* exceptive construction of French presents a puzzle for this approach. In this paper, I consider sentences like the following:

- (1) Je **n'** ai vu **que** le professeur.¹
I NE have see.PP QUE the professor²
'I have not seen anyone but the professor.'

The interpretation of the *ne...que* exceptive construction is similar to English 'only', but (1) demonstrates that, unlike 'only', the French construction consists of two discontinuous elements: *ne*, which is normally analyzed as the head of NegP, and the morpheme *que*, traditionally assumed to be a complementizer or a *wh*-operator. Immediately following *que* is a phrase interpreted as the exception to the domain of predication (henceforth: exception XP). The nature of the negation expressed by *ne*, the syntactic status of *que*, and the source of the exception semantics in *ne...que* sentences have been extensively debated (cf. Baciu 1978, Barbaud 1985, Azoulay-Vicente 1985; 1988, Dekydtspotter 1993, Gaatone 1999, von Stechow & Iatridou 2007), but no analysis has emerged from this literature that is both empirically and theoretically adequate.

A superficial look at the *ne...que* construction reveals that its structure is not straightforward. The exception XP cannot be questioned: it is impossible to extract out of the

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¹Unless otherwise indicated, all examples in this paper are from French, constructed or verified with the assistance of native speakers.

²The following abbreviations are used in this paper: ACC = accusative, CL = clitic, EXPL = expletive, F = feminine, FUT = future, INF = infinitive, IPFV = imperfective, M = masculine, NOM = nominative, PST = past, PP = past participle, SBJV = subjunctive, SG = singular.

que-phrase, and the *que*-phrase itself can also not be fronted. The *que*-phrase distributes like an NPI, but in no other construction does *que* have NPI properties. Although the *que*-phrase distributes like an NPI, it seems to be a scope island for negation. None of its constituents can be NPIs.

It is not immediately apparent that the *ne* and *que* in the exceptive construction are the same *ne* and *que* found in other environments. Are the peculiar syntactic properties of the *ne...que* construction and its two elements the result of special lexical representations, or do they follow from independently motivated principles of the grammar? Since the latter is desirable, this paper proposes a minimalist account of the *ne...que* construction that assimilates it to reduced clausal comparatives, thereby granting no special syntactic or semantic status to either *ne* or *que*. An additional advantage of this analysis is that it can be extended to counterparts of *ne...que* in other languages.

I will address the *ne...que* puzzle as follows: in section 2, I describe the empirical facts of this construction, and highlight the puzzling properties that have led to some earlier, flawed proposals. In section 3, I lay out an alternative, suggesting that *ne...que* sentences involve two clauses: a matrix clause, and an embedded clause introduced by *que*. The embedded clause containing the exception XP is adjoined to an NPI phrase of the form [NPI *d'autre*], which is usually, but not always, covert. An operation analogous to comparative ellipsis generates the PF facts we observe. Section 3 also provides a sketch of how the interpretation of *ne...que* exceptives is derived compositionally from the syntax, without relying on exceptive semantics encoded directly in *que*. The interpretation emerges from a collocation of elements: negation in a dependency with the NPI in the matrix clause, and an operator-variable dependency between an exhaustive identification quantifier and the exception XP in the embedded clause. In section 4, I show how previous attempts to solve the *ne...que* puzzle all leave something to be desired, and demonstrate how this new account solves some of the problems left open by previous analyses. Lastly, in section 5, I present cross-linguistic evidence that the analysis proposed here can be extended to similar exceptive constructions in other languages. Although *ne...que* appears at first to be an oddity, its behavior adheres to independently motivated principles.

2 The Puzzle of *ne...que*

A superficial look at the *ne...que* construction reveals that its structure is not straightforward. Both of its components exhibit different behavior in this environment than they do in others, and at first blush, it is not clear whether the *ne* and *que* in exceptives are the same morphemes found in other environments. I will shed some light on this preliminary question by taking a closer look at *ne* and *que* separately. First I will characterize the distribution of each element outside of the context of this construction, and then I will examine their behavior in it. Section 2.3 outlines the problem of accounting for the semantics of *ne...que*.

2.1 The Distribution of *ne*

The presence of *ne* raises the question of whether or not *ne...que* involves negation. Sentential and non-sentential negation in French normally consists of the negative head *ne* with the sentential negation marker *pas* or an NPI in its c-command domain. The literature on negation in Romance (cf. Belletti & Rizzi 1981, Pollock 1989, Haegeman 1995, Zanuttini 1997, Rowlett 1998) continues to debate the precise nature of the relationship between *ne* and other negative elements, and whether or not it is established in the overt syntax. Since the exact configuration of this relationship is orthogonal to my purpose here, I will not provide a fully articulated structure for the different negative projections. Following the literature, I assume only that *ne* is syntactically weak; it must be licensed in a local configuration with a second negative element in the sentence. An additional complication arises with the fact that *ne* is often omitted in casual spoken French. I will briefly address the implications of the optionality of *ne* for this analysis in section 5.

When *ne* is associated with the sentential negation marker *pas*, the general consensus in the literature is that in the overt syntax, *pas* occupies the specifier position of the NegP headed by *ne* (Pollock 1989):

- (2) a. Je **ne** chante **pas**.
I NE sing.1SG not
'I do not sing.'
- b. Il vaut mieux **ne pas** faire ça.
EXPL value.3SG better NE not do.INF that
'It is better not to do that.'

In sentential negation (2a), *ne* immediately precedes the finite verb and any clitics while *pas* follows it. If the negation applies to a non-finite verb, as in (2b), both *ne* and *pas* precede the verb. Pollock (1989) suggests that finite verb raising in French allows *ne* to cliticize onto the verb as it raises successive-cyclically to a higher position in the split Infl domain. Infinitives do not raise as high, thus deriving the word order difference in (2a) and (2b) with respect to *ne* and *pas*.

Ne can also occur in a dependency with NPIs. In (3), *ne* is related to a family of NPIs sometimes called negative adverbs. These adverbs cannot freely co-occur with *pas*,³ but they can co-occur with each other (Rowlett 1998).

³NPIs can co-occur with *pas* for many speakers of French, particularly for members of non-European francophone communities like those in North America (Rowlett 1998, Giannakidou 2000). I do not consider these cases in detail in this paper, but it is important to note that they are compatible with my analysis, since co-occurrence of NPIs with *pas* for these speakers has no interpretive consequences, while co-occurrence of NPIs with *que* does have interpretive consequences for all speakers. Rowlett (1998) points out that Quebecois speakers normally omit *ne* and that Cajun speakers place *pas* before the finite verb and do not use *ne*, which suggests that in some grammars, *pas* is generated as the Neg head. The analysis I propose in this paper accommodates this variation.

- (3) a. Je **ne** chante **jamais**.
 I NE sing.1SG ever
 ‘I never sing.’
- b. *Je **ne** chante **pas jamais**.
 I NE sing.1SG not ever
 (I don’t never sing.)
- c. Je **ne** chante **plus**.
 I NE sing.1SG anymore
 ‘I don’t sing anymore.’
- d. *Je **ne** chante **pas plus**.
 I NE sing.1SG not anymore
 (I don’t sing no more.)
- e. Je **ne** chante **plus jamais**.
 I NE sing.1SG anymore ever
 ‘I don’t ever sing anymore.’

Nominal NPIs can also be associated with *ne*, yielding constituent negation. The NPIs *personne* ‘anyone’ and *rien* ‘anything’ occur in different positions when they represent the internal argument of the verb. Bare *rien* must follow the finite auxiliary, while *personne* must follow the lexical verb (Pollock 1989).

- (4) a. Je **n’** ai **rien** fait (***rien**).
 I NE have anything do.PP (*anything)
 ‘I haven’t done anything.’
- b. Je **n’** ai (***personne**) vu **personne**.
 I NE have (*anyone) see.PP anyone
 ‘I haven’t seen anyone.’
- c. **Personne n’** est venu.
 Anyone NE is come.PP
 ‘No one came.’

As with the adverbial NPIs, co-occurrence with *pas* is usually impossible for European speakers with argument NPIs, although some speakers accept co-occurrence of *pas* with *rien*, with focal stress on *rien*, with a double negation interpretation, as in (5), below.

- (5) Ce **n’** est **pas rien** que j’ai vu.
 It NE is not anything that I have see.PP
 ‘I didn’t see nothing.’ (I in fact saw something.)

French also contains an NPI conjunction and indefinite determiner that occur with *ne*. Examples are given in (6), below.

- (6) a. Je **n'** ai vu **ni** Jean **ni** Marie.
 I NE have see.PP neither Jean nor Marie
 'I have seen neither Jean nor Marie.'
- b. **Ni** Jean **ni** Marie **ne** sont venus à la fête.
 Neither Jean nor Marie NE are come.PP to the party
 'Neither Jean nor Marie came to the party.'
- c. Je **n'** ai vu **aucun étudiant**.
 I NE have see.PP any.M.SG student
 'I haven't seen any students.'

It is possible for *ne* to occur without a second negative element in certain environments, but since this does not give rise to a negative interpretation, it has been argued that in these cases *ne* is expletive (Giannakidou 2000). Expletive *ne* occurs in comparative clauses, in subjunctive clauses introduced by certain complementizers, and with intensional verbs of doubt.

- (7) a. Jean est plus intelligent que je **ne** croyais.
 Jean is more intelligent QUE I NE believe.IPFV
 'Jean is more intelligent than I thought.'
- b. Avant que tu **n'** écrives une thèse, il faut avoir
 Before QUE you NE write.SBJV a thesis, EXPL is.necessary have.INF
 une bonne idée
 a good idea
 'Before you write a thesis, you have to have a good idea.'
- c. Tu ne peux pas nier qu' il **n'** est intelligent.
 You NE can.2SG not deny.INF QUE he NE is intelligent
 'You can't deny that he's intelligent.'

In a literary register, *ne* alone can contribute the full semantic force of negation with the modal verbs *pouvoir* 'to be able', *savoir* 'to know', *cesser* 'to cease', and *oser* 'to dare', although *pas* is typically present in spoken French.

Given the range of behavior exhibited by *ne*, several options present themselves for treating its syntactic role in the exceptive construction. One possibility is that *ne...que* may be one of the special environments mentioned above, where sentential negation obtains with *ne* alone. This is unsatisfactory for empirical and theoretical reasons. If *ne...que* is like *ne...savoir*, one would predict that the presence or absence of *pas* would have no semantic consequences. This prediction is not borne out: when *pas* occurs with *ne...que*, the exception is negated. A more intuitive problem with this hypothesis is that it makes very little sense to group a phenomenon that only occurs in a literary register with one that is common in spoken French. Such an account is highly stipulative and thus lacks any explanatory power.

Another possibility is that *ne...que* involves expletive *ne* and is not really negative (Gaatone 1999, Grevisse 1993). Or, since the *ne* of *ne...que* does not depend on a concord

relationship with an overt NPI in its domain, perhaps it is *que* that plays this role (von Stechow & Iatridou 2007). The proposal developed in the present analysis is that *ne* stands in a dependency with a covert NPI (Azoulay-Vicente 1985, 1988; Baciu 1978, Dekydtspotter 1993). I will discuss how the latter is superior to the first two hypotheses in section 4.

2.2 The Distribution of *que*

The role of *que* in the exceptive construction is particularly puzzling, since it seems to be very out of character. The following examples illustrate the environments where *que* is normally found. In (8), *que* heads a finite complement clause.

- (8) Il est important **que** tu le fasses.
 It is important QUE you CL= do.SUBJV
 ‘It is important that you do it.’

The sentence in (9), however, is ungrammatical with *que* selecting a non-finite clause. It seems that the complementizer *que* must select a finite clause.

- (9) *Je t’ ai dit **que** ne pas le faire.
 I CL= have say.PP QUE NE not CL= do.INF
 (I told you not to do it.)

The same phonetic form *que* also occurs in *wh*-questions, as in (10). If the variable is the subject of its clause, the *wh*-operator surfaces as *qui* instead of *que*, as in (10c). The alternation between *qui* and *que* in these cases reflects a morphological process rather than a lexical difference. In both cases, *que* must occur in the left periphery of the clause. *Que*, in particular, is never spelled out as a *wh*-in situ, even in an echo question. In these cases, the strong pronominal *quoi* ‘what’ must be used (10d).

- (10) a. **Que**_i n’ a-t’ il pas dit t_i?
 QUE_i NE has he not say.PP t_i
 ‘What didn’t he say?’
 b. **Qu**_i’ est -ce que tu veux faire t_i?
 QUE_i is it QUE you want.2SG do.INF t_i
 ‘What do you want to do?’
 c. **Qui**_i t_i l’ a dit?
 QUE.NOM_i t_i CL=has say.PP
 ‘Who said it?’
 d. Il a dit **(*que)/quoi**?
 He has say.PP QUE/what
 ‘He said what?’

Que also introduces relative clauses (11a). Again, in subject relatives, *qui* appears instead of *que* (11b), but in both cases, this element must occur in the left periphery of the clause.

- (11) a. Il a trouvé le livre_i **que** j' avais perdu t_i.
 He has find.PP the book QUE I have.IMPV lose.PP t_i
 'He found the book that I had lost.'
- b. Il a trouvé le livre_i **qui** t_i était dans le bureau.
 He has find.PP the book QUE.NOM t_i be.IMPV in the office
 'He found the book that was in the office.'

Another environment where *que* can be found is in exclamatives:

- (12) a. **Qu'** elle est belle!
 QUE she is beautiful
 'How beautiful she is!'
- b. **Que** de monde il y a dans les rues!
 QUE of world EXPL CL= has in the roads
 'How many people there are in the streets!'

In these cases, *que* can be identified as the same element that occurs in questions: the same exclamative sentences can be expressed by substituting other *wh*-words for *que*, and the *que*-phrase must occur in the left periphery of the clause (Zannuttini & Portner 2003).

In *ne...que* sentences, however, *que* is always immediately followed by the exception XP, which can be any type of phrase other than a finite clause, as shown in (13), below. If exceptive *que* is the same as the form discussed above, the following distribution is precisely the opposite of what is expected.

- (13) a. Je n' ai vu **que le professeur.** (DP)
 I NE have see.PP QUE the professor
 'I haven't seen anyone but the professor.'
- b. Tu n' as prêté le livre **qu' à Marie.** (PP)
 You NE have lend.PP the book QUE to Marie
 'You lent the book to no one but Marie.'
- c. Le bébé ne fait **que pleurer.** (Non-Finite VP)
 The baby NE do.3SG QUE cry.INF
 'The baby does nothing but cry.'
- d. On n' a **que commencé à l'expliquer.** (Participial VP)
 One NE has QUE begin.PP to CL=explain.INF
 'We've only just begun to explain it.'
- e. Il n' est arrivé **qu' hier.** (Adverb)
 He NE is arrive.PP QUE yesterday
 'He arrived only yesterday.'
- f. La solution n' est **que provisoire.** (AP)
 The solution NE is QUE provisional
 'The solution is only temporary.'

- g. Je ne t'ai demandé que **si tu voulais venir**. (CP)
 I NE CL=have ask.PP QUE if you want.IMPV come.INF
 'I only asked you if you wanted to come.'
- h. *Je n' ai vu que **le professeur est dans son bureau**. (IP)
 I NE have see.PP QUE the professor is in his office
 (I only saw the professor is in his office.)

Some previous accounts use these peculiar distributional facts to motivate granting special status to the *que* that appears in the exceptive construction, suggesting that it is an adverb (Gaatone 1999) or a preposition (Azoulay-Vicente 1985; 1988). Other proposals simply do not address the syntactic relationship between *que* and the exception XP (Baciu 1978, Dekydtspotter 1993, Dekydtspotter & Petrush 2006, Von Fintel & Iatridou 2007).

The analysis of *ne...que* put forth in this paper relies on the crucial observation that the morpheme *que* is the comparative marker in French. In the comparative sentences in (14), it can be followed by a full clause or by a phrasal comparative.

- (14) a. Marie est plus intelligente **que** Jean ne l'est.
 Marie is more intelligent QUE Jean NE CL=is
 'Marie is more intelligent than Jean is.'
- b. J' ai donné plus d' argent à Marie qu' à Jean.
 I have give.PP more of money to Marie QUE to Jean
 'I gave more money to Marie than to Jean.'

It has been argued (see references in Lechner 2004) that phrasal comparatives in French have underlying clausal sources. Identifying the comparative marker with the complementizer avoids the necessity of postulating that the lexicon contains both a comparative marker *que* and a complementizer *que*, which are accidentally homophonous. These two can be conflated under complementizer *que*.

The analysis in this paper will exploit the parallels between the comparative and exceptive constructions, described in Baciu (1978) and implicit in the structure laid out in Kayne (1975: 184), to argue that exceptive *que* is, like comparative *que*, simply the finite complementizer. Thus, it is uniformly the case that *que* must be followed by a finite clause, but in phrasal comparatives and the exceptive construction, this requirement is obscured by ellipsis.

2.2.1 The Interpretation of *ne...que*

An additional challenge posed by *ne...que* is to provide a syntactic structure that is compatible with compositional semantics. It is not immediately clear how the collocation of the (optional) negative head *ne* and the morpheme *que* generates an exceptive interpretation. Assuming that *ne* is negative, von Fintel & Iatridou (2007) propose that the *que*-phrase is directly interpreted as *other than x*:

- (15) [[QUE Jean]] = $\lambda P \exists x (x \neq \text{Jean} \ \& \ P(x) = 1)$ (Von Fintel & Iatridou 2007: 458)

If *ne* is analyzed as semantically vacuous, however, the exception semantics arise from an *only*-type interpretation associated with *que*. Neither of these is desirable, since they do not explain how *que* comes to be associated with special semantics just in case it occurs in a collocation with *ne*. The challenge remains to demonstrate how the exceptive interpretation is derived in an analysis treating *ne...que* as syntactically similar to the comparative.

3 The Proposal

I propose that the structure of *ne...que* sentences is composed of an NPI modified by a *que*-clause containing an operator-variable dependency. The details of the structure are as follows: a quantificational operator with the semantics of exhaustive identification (EI) (É. Kiss 1998, Horvath 2007) merges in the specifier position of the exception XP, and pied-pipes the exception XP to a functional position in the left periphery of the clause under *que*. The operator undergoes QR, thus generating the operator-variable dependency that makes the *que*-clause a predicate. The *que*-clause is adjoined to the NPI phrase in the matrix clause. The remnant IP in the *que*-clause is elided under identity with the matrix IP. While the NPI is usually covert, it can be partially or completely spelled out, with no interpretative effect. In the spirit of Baciú (1978) and Azoulay-Vicente (1985; 1988), I suggest that the NPI contains a quantifier that introduces a set of alternatives to which the predicate could apply. In the scope of negation, these ingredients together yield an exceptive interpretation, but exceptive semantics are not encoded directly in any particular component of the construction.

3.1 The NPI

As I suggested in section 2.1, there is evidence that *ne* is related to an NPI phrase. This claim is supported by the fact that an NPI phrase can be partially or completely spelled out immediately preceding *que* with no effect on the interpretation of the sentence. Thus, the exceptive sentence in (1) alternates with those in (16), below:

- (16) a. Je n' ai vu **personne** d' **autre** que le professeur.
 I NE have see.PP anyone of other QUE the professor
 'I haven't seen anyone but the professor.'
- b. Je n' ai vu **d' autre** que le professeur.
 I NE have see.PP of other QUE the professor
 'I haven't seen anyone but the professor.'
- c. Je n' ai vu **personne** que le professeur.
 I NE have see.PP anyone QUE the professor
 'I haven't seen anyone but the professor.'

Some speakers prefer the NPI phrase [NPI d' autre] to be fully covert or fully overt, while others accept partial spell-out. To keep the analysis of these sentences uniform, I assume that the NPI is always present in *ne...que*. The NPI contains an existentially quantified common

noun modified by *d'autre*. These are interpreted together as 'there exists any other X.' Since the *que*-phrase is embedded inside an NPI, the fact that it must occur in the scope of negation follows straightforwardly.

The alternation between the covert and overt NPI phrase forms the empirical basis for Baciú's (1978) proposal that *ne...que* is related to the comparative, an idea that I will develop further in the present paper. Baciú suggests that *ne...que* is derived from the comparative by ellipsis of *pas d'autre*. To ensure that the unelided counterpart of a given *ne...que* sentence would be grammatical, Baciú proposes that the exact form of the elided *d'autre* phrase varies according to the category of the phrase following *que*. He offers the following possibilities:

- (17) a. *d'autre chose / d'autre personne que + NP*
Paraphrase: anything / anyone other than + NP
- b. *autre chose que + INFINITIVE*
Paraphrase: anything other than + INFINITIVE
- c. *autrement / d'autre part / à d'autre date / pour d'autre raison /
à d'autre condition... que + ADVERBIAL EXPRESSION*
Paraphrase: in any other way / any other place / at any other time /
for any other reason / on any other condition... than + ADVERBIAL
EXPRESSION

The NPI phrase is always nominal, which, in my account, is crucial, since it hosts the *que*-clause, which I will show has the structure of a relative clause. The nominal status of the NPI also reflects speakers' intuitions about the interpretation of a sentence like (1) as, 'I haven't seen anyone other than the professor.'

There is additional, indirect evidence for the presence of the NPI. If *que* were itself an NPI or negative marker like *pas*, we would expect the sentence in (18) to be possible, by analogy with (2b).

- (18) * **Ne que** mentir, c' est déplorable.
NE QUE lie.INF, it is deplorable
(To do nothing but lie is deplorable.)

Instead, the verb *faire* appears between *ne* and *que*, as in (19), and the lexical verb is spelled out directly following *que*.

- (19) **Ne faire que** mentir, c' est déplorable.
NE do.INF QUE lie.INF, it is deplorable
'To do nothing but lie is deplorable.'

I suggest that *faire* occurs with *ne...que* in sentences like (19) in order to supply the argument position into which the NPI is merged. In (19), the interpretation of the NPI as the internal argument of *faire* is crucial to the interpretation of the infinitival exceptive. *Faire* itself makes very little contribution to the interpretation of the sentence, since it simply encodes the most semantically neutral transitive activity verb *do*. If *faire* and the NPI were absent, however, there would be nothing for the *que*-phrase to attach to.

3.1.1 The *que*-phrase

While the idea that *ne...que* contains a null element related to *ne* is not original (cf. Azoulay-Vicente 1985, 1988; Baciu 1978, Dekydtspotter 1993), a novel aspect of the present analysis is that *que* introduces an elliptical clause, whose remnant is the exception XP. Baciu's (1978) assimilation of *ne...que* to the comparative construction with *autre* captures half the story, but a weakness of his proposal is that he implicitly suggests that the comparative marker *que* combines directly with the exception XP, and leaves the internal structure of the *que*-phrase unexplored. His analysis thus cannot derive the ban on extraction from the *que*-phrase, the fact that *ne* does not scope into the *que*-phrase, or the impossibility of a bare IP as the exception XP.

Assimilating *ne...que* to the comparative requires the exception XP to be treated as part of an elliptical clause. Since the purpose of this paper is to account for *ne...que* in a lexically economical way, the null hypothesis is that *que* is a complementizer. Earlier work on *ne...que* has proposed that exceptive *que* is an adverb (Gatone 1999) or a preposition (Azoulay-Vicente 1985; 1988), but these accounts run into serious empirical problems, which I will expose in section 4. Not only is the complementizer analysis of exceptive *que* the most empirically and theoretically satisfying; there is, in fact, no unproblematic way of associating it with any other lexical category. Since this paper treats the *que*-phrase as an elliptical clause, the unexpected distribution in (13) is simply a red herring. The unelided counterpart of the sentence in (1)/(13a) is roughly the following:

- (1') Je n' ai vu personne d' autre [que j' ai vu le professeur].
I NE have see.PP anyone of other [QUE I have see.PP the professor]
'I haven't seen anyone other than the professor.'

I will discuss the details of the structure and interpretation of the *que*-clause in section 3.5.

Some of the strongest empirical support for elliptical structures of the type I invoke in this paper come from connectivity effects, in which a remnant of ellipsis bears morphological or syntactic evidence of the presence of a larger structure. For instance, the remnant of sluicing (Ross 1967) bears a case feature that can only originate from the elliptical clause. In languages with overt case-marking, this feature is spelled out overtly in the morphology on the remnant. While the impoverished case morphology of French does not offer such transparent proof of ellipsis in *ne...que*, I will show in section 5 that its Greek counterpart provides ample case-connectivity evidence.

The nature of ellipsis in *ne...que*, and comparatives in general, can be framed in terms of economy principles. Full Interpretation requires that no uninterpretable features be present at the LF and PF interfaces (Chomsky 1986; 1995). If ellipsis follows from Full Interpretation, it is a condition on economy of representation: the structure must not contain any superfluous features. The content of the IP under exceptive *que* is recoverable from an antecedence relationship with the matrix clause. Ellipsis in *ne...que* is licensed under identity: the elided constituent is "featurally non-distinct" from its correlate in the matrix clause (Bresnan 1973). I do not wish to claim that whenever ellipsis is possible, it is obligatory. It is however the

case that *ne...que* is a member of a family of constructions in which ellipsis is obligatory. Section 3.4 will discuss obligatory ellipsis further.

Azoulay-Vicente (1985; 1988) argues that exceptive *que* cannot be the comparative marker or complementizer, highlighting the fact that, unlike the canonical complementizer, it cannot introduce a finite clause. She gives the following minimal pairs as evidence.

- (20) a. Marie veut que Paul **parte**.
 Marie want.3SG QUE Paul leave.SBJV
 ‘Marie wants Paul to leave.’
 b. * Marie veut que Paul **partir**.
 Marie want.3SG QUE Paul leave.INF
 (Marie wants Paul to leave.) (Azoulay-Vicente 1988: 209)
- (21) a. * Marie ne veut que Paul **parte**.
 Marie NE want.3SG QUE Paul leave.SBJV
 (Marie only wants Paul to leave.)
 b. Marie ne veut que **partir**.
 Marie NE want.3SG QUE leave.INF
 ‘Marie only wants to leave’ (Azoulay-Vicente 1988: 209)

As we have seen, the two *que* appear superficially to have inverse distributions: complementizer *que* requires a finite IP, while exceptive *que* is only grammatical with a non-finite IP or with a different type of phrase altogether.

According to Azoulay-Vicente (1988), an additional problem arises with sentences like (22), below.

- (22) Marie n’ a dit à Paul **que de** sortir.
 Marie NE has say.PP to Paul QUE of go.out.INF
 ‘Marie only told Paul to leave.’

Following the tradition in French syntax of analyzing the *de* that precedes infinitives as a complementizer, Azoulay-Vicente (1988) suggests that, if exceptive *que* were a complementizer, sentences like (22) ought to be ruled out by the ban on two elements (*de* and *que*) simultaneously occupying the head of CP. I suggest, however, that if *que* introduces a full finite clause, these cases are not problematic. The example in (22) is compatible with an analysis of *que* as the complementizer, contra Azoulay-Vicente (1988), if *de sortir* is as deeply embedded as (22’) shows:

- (22’) Marie n’a dit à Paul que [**Marie n’a dit à Paul** de sortir].

The original sentence in (21a) is ungrammatical because the most deeply embedded complementizer in the exception phrase is elided, even though it has no antecedent in the matrix clause. This violates Full Interpretation: the complementizer has no phonological features and no antecedent, so it cannot be interpreted (Chomsky 1986). The grammatical counterpart of (21a), where both *que* are pronounced, is:

- (21) a'. Marie ne veut que [~~Marie ne veut~~ que Paul parte]

3.2 Comparative Ellipsis

A variety of constructions in natural language have been given an analysis that involves ellipsis. Of particular importance to this paper is ellipsis in comparatives (cf. Bresnan 1973, Johnson 2001, Lechner 2004), whereby the clausal complement of the comparative marker in some languages is elided down to *than*-XP, where *than* represents the language-specific comparative marker. English examples of comparative ellipsis (CE) are given below.

- (23) a. I saw more movies [Op_i than John ~~saw t_i movies~~].
 b. I saw more movies [Op_i than I ~~saw t_i TV shows~~]
 c. She is smarter [Op_i than Mary ~~is t_i smart~~]

In these sentences, the comparative marker selects a finite clause containing a phrase that remains after ellipsis. In both CE and *ne...que* sentences, the structure of the embedded clause is consistent with a relative clause: both involve an operator-variable dependency, and both are predicated of an external constituent. The remnant XP must be adjacent to the complementizer in the linear string, and it is the only constituent of the embedded clause without an antecedent in the matrix clause. I suggest that this is not a coincidence; neither is it coincidental that the comparative marker and the exceptive marker have the same phonetic form.

A problem in accounting for ellipsis operations like the one represented in (23b) is that the elided component [I saw] is not a constituent. Ellipsis is expected to target only constituents. An elliptical analysis of *ne...que* paralleling the comparative must confront the same problem. As the introduction to this section suggests, I offer a simple solution to this problem by invoking a movement operation that causes the exception XP to raise to the left periphery of the *que*-clause. Once the exception XP vacates the lower clause, ellipsis can target the whole IP constituent.

3.3 Obligatory Ellipsis

In addition to the issue of apparent non-constituent ellipsis, one might object to the analysis proposed here on the grounds that the unelided counterparts of *ne...que* sentences are ungrammatical.

- (1'') * Je n'ai vu (personne d'autre) [que [le professeur]_i je n'ai vu t_i]

The obligatory nature of the ellipsis in the embedded clause is not, however, restricted to this construction. Other ellipsis operations that are more widely accepted than the one proposed here have been shown to be obligatory. In comparatives like the sentences in (23a) and (23c), the VP must be elided.

- (23) a'. * I saw more movies than John **saw movies**
 c'. * She is smarter than Mary **is smart**

Similarly, den Dikken, Meinunger and Wilder's (2000) analysis of some specificational pseudoclefts involves obligatory ellipsis. To account for case, and NPI connectivity effects in specificational pseudoclefts like those in (24), below, the authors propose that two finite clauses are present underlyingly and that the "counterweight," the clause containing the value of the variable in the *wh*-clause, is maximally elided.

- (24) a. What nobody bought was [~~nobody bought~~ any wine]
 (den Dikken, Meinunger & Wilder 2000: 42)
 b. Was er kaufen wollte, ist [~~er wollte~~ einen Audi **kaufen**].
 What he buy.INF want.IMPV, is [he want.IMPV a.M.ACC Audi buy.INF]
 'What he always wanted to buy is (he always wanted to buy) an Audi.'
 (adapted from den Dikken, Meinunger & Wilder 2000: 73)

Although some variability is reported, most speakers reject such sentences with overt IP counterweights.

Another case of obligatory ellipsis can be found in sentences involving Antecedent Contained Deletion (ACD), like those in (25). In ACD sentences, the elided constituent, represented below by the symbol Δ , contains itself.

- (25) a. I tried every beer that you did [Δ_{VP}]
 b. * I tried every beer that you [$_{VP}$ tried every beer that you [$_{VP}$ tried...]]

The obligatory nature of ACD is less mysterious than the other cases, since its overt counterpart would give rise to infinite regress, but for the other examples in this section, it is not immediately clear why the embedded clause cannot remain overt. This issue remains open to future research, but it is important to note that, although it is not perfectly understood, the obligatory ellipsis of the embedded IP remnant does not instantiate a fatal flaw in my analysis.

3.4 The Interpretation of *ne...que* exceptives

I now go on to describe the structure of the *que*-clause in detail, and to provide a sketch of how the whole construction maps to a semantic representation. I argue that a quantificational operator in the *que*-clause is responsible for the movement of the exception XP out of the embedded IP. Operator movement in the *que*-clause generates the relative clause configuration that allows it to be predicated of the NPI in the matrix clause. This complex stands in the scope of negation such that the interpretation of the sentence in (1) can be informally paraphrased in English as follows:

- (26) I haven't seen anyone other than the unique professor such that I saw him.

The semantics of exception constructions has been discussed in detail in the literature (cf. von Stechow 1993, von Stechow & Iatridou 2007, and references therein), but these theories have not made explicit the mapping between syntax and semantics, particularly for what von Stechow & Iatridou (2007) term NEG + EXCEPTIVE languages. The present proposal borrows from existing theories of focus and quantification to suggest a representation of *ne...que* sentences that may shed some light on the interface with the semantics, although I leave the precise formulation of the semantics of *ne...que* for future research.

For languages that display systematic overt movement of prosodically focused or discourse-focused constituents to a particular A-bar position, a current research agenda is to establish whether these movements are triggered by the need to check a formal feature (cf. Kayne 1999), and if this is the case, whether this feature encodes phonological or pragmatic information. If such a feature exists for languages with overt focus movement, it could be argued that UG makes it available to all languages, a claim that may bear directly on the case of French discussed here.

In *ne...que* sentences, the exception XP bears a focal pitch accent and receives an interpretation of contrastive focus, similar to the interpretation of focused phrases associated with focus particles like *only* (cf. Rooth 1985, Büring & Hartmann 2001, Kayne 1999). The difference between adverbial focus particles like *only* and the NEG + EXCEPTIVE construction is the bi-partite nature of the latter.

I have suggested above that the focused exception XP associates with a null quantificational operator, rather than directly with *que* (contra Von Stechow & Iatridou 2007). Instead of taking a cartographic approach and espousing a discourse-sensitive formal Focus feature, I extend the quantification-based analysis of focus movement in Hungarian due to Horvath (2007) to account not only for the interpretation of the exception XP, but also for the movement of the exception XP out of the embedded IP that avoids the problem of non-constituent ellipsis.

Horvath (2007) argues that a Focus feature is unnecessary to account for the interactions between prosodic stress, discourse (information) focus, and focus movement in Hungarian. Building on the work of É. Kiss (1998), Horvath (2007) exploits an asymmetry between the syntactic behavior of two focus particles in Hungarian, corresponding to English *only* and *even*, to argue that so-called "focus movement" is not due to a focus feature, but to a quantificational operator. I will briefly summarize these arguments and propose that the same quantifier accounts for some of the properties of the French *ne...que* construction.

É. Kiss (1998) and Horvath (2007) point out that in Hungarian, focused phrases associated with *only* must raise to a peripheral position in the clause, while other types of focused phrases can be interpreted in situ. This is not consistent with the earlier hypothesis that focus involves a formal Focus feature that must be checked by overt movement of focused constituents to a Focus projection, because if this were true, all focused phrases would be expected to raise. The authors show that the asymmetry is due to a distinction between two semantic functions of focus. Focus particles like *only* exhaustively identify a constituent in their c-command domain as the unique subset of the set of alternatives for which the proposition is true, while focus particles like *also* and *even* simply add to this set of entities.

É. Kiss (1998) provides the following definition of exhaustive identification:

- (27) An identificational focus represents a subset of the set of contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate phrase actually holds. (É. Kiss 1998: 245)

The interpretation of *ne...que* shares the properties in (27) with the interpretation of focus particle constructions like *only*. In *ne...que* sentences, the exception XP corresponds to the exhaustively identified focus, since it is the only member of the contextually relevant set of alternatives to which the predicate applies.

I suggested in section 3.1 that the NPI in the matrix clause contains an existential quantifier, which, together with the *d'autre* phrase, has the interpretation 'any other N', where N is one of the common nouns listed in (17). The NPI phrase generates the set of contextually salient alternatives (Rooth 1985), and the *que*-phrase picks out the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate holds. The matrix clause negation scopes over the NPI complex, such that for any member of the set of alternatives besides the exhaustively identified exception XP, application of the predicate would yield falsity.

To capture the movement asymmetry between exhaustive identification and non-exhaustive information focus, Horvath (2007) proposes that the former involves a null operator (EI-Op) with an uninterpretable [EI] (Exhaustive Identification) feature and a functional projection of the abstract head EI. EI-Op requires a focused constituent in its immediate c-command domain, so it is base-generated in the specifier position of the focused phrase. EI-Op bears a matching [EI] feature that must be checked, so it raises to the specifier of the EI phrase, pied-piping the focused phrase. Extending Horvath's proposal to *ne...que* sentences, I suggest that the focused phrase in question is the exception XP. The specifier of the EI phrase, where the exception XP is spelled out, is the position traditionally described as the focus position in the left periphery. EI-Op then raises by QR to Spec,CP. EI-Op thereby acts as a relative operator: it binds a variable in its base position that is semantically associated with the external head of the relative clause, which encodes the contextually salient alternatives the EI-Op ranges over.

Since the exception XP always raises with EI-Op to Spec,EI-Op, it always vacates the embedded IP. As I suggested in section 3.3, this fact has the desirable side effect that the ellipsis operation on the embedded IP is always constituent ellipsis and never targets anything smaller than the whole IP.

3.5 A Detailed Derivation

The following provides a sketch of the derivation of the sentence in (1), repeated as (28):

- (28) a. [_{IP} je n'ai vu [_{DP} EI-Op le professeur]]

A functional head bearing an uninterpretable EI feature merges with the IP. The EI-Op in the specifier of the exception DP *le professeur* is attracted to the specifier of the EI head, and pied-pipes the DP.

- b. $[[_{DP} \text{EI-Op le professeur } i \text{ } [_{EIP}[_{EI}][_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } t_i]]]]$

The complementizer *que* merges with the clause and the operator raises to Spec,CP by QR, generating the operator-variable dependency that characterizes canonical relative clauses.

- c. $[_{CP} [_{EI-Op} [_{C'}[_{C} \text{ que}]][_{DP} t_{EI-OP} \text{ le professeur}]_i \text{ } [_{EIP}[_{EI}][_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } t_i]]]]]$

The operator clause is adjoined to the NPI in the matrix clause, which in this sentence has the contextually relevant interpretation of 'any other person'. Since the NPI can be unpronounced, I enclose it in parentheses:

- d. $[_{NP} [_{NP} \exists (\text{personne d'autre}) \text{ } [_{CP} [_{EI-Op} [_{C'}[_{C} \text{ que}]][_{DP} t_{EI-OP} \text{ le professeur}]_i \text{ } [_{EIP}[_{EI}][_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } t_i]]]]]]]]]$

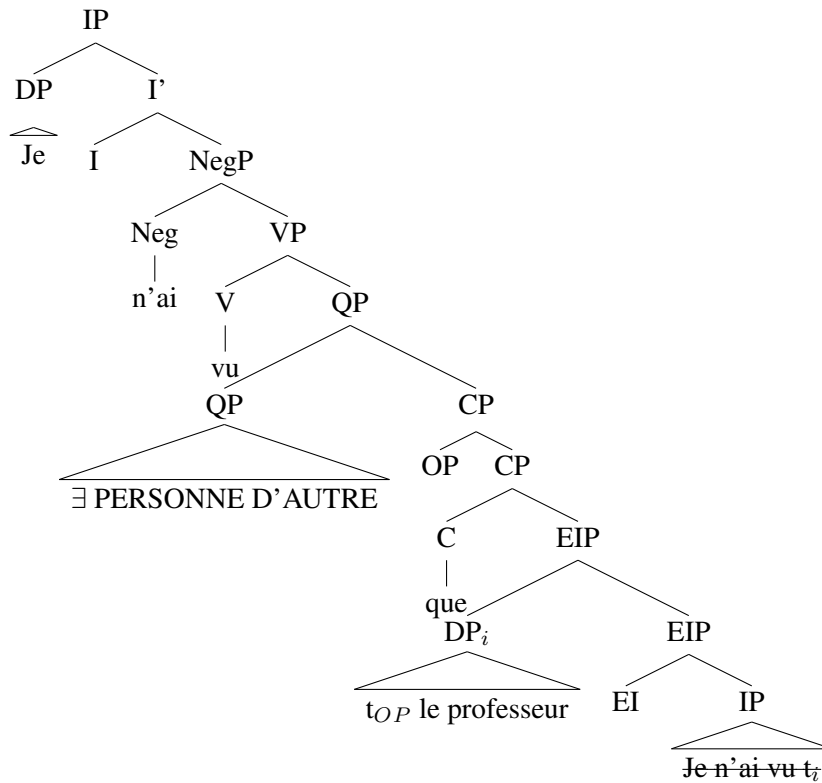
The rest of the matrix clause is derived uneventfully by external and internal merge, such that the resulting structure is the following:

- e. $[_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } [_{NP} [_{NP} \exists (\text{personne d'autre}) \text{ } [_{CP} [_{EI-Op} [_{C'}[_{C} \text{ que}]][_{DP} t_{EI-OP} \text{ le professeur}]_i \text{ } [_{EIP}[_{EI}][_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } t_i]]]]]]]]]$

The embedded IP is identical to the matrix clause, so it can be elided, yielding the spell-out form of the sentence where the embedded IP is not pronounced:

- f. $[_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } [_{NP} [_{NP} \exists (\text{personne d'autre}) \text{ } [_{CP} [_{EI-Op} [_{C'}[_{C} \text{ que}]][_{DP} t_{EI-OP} \text{ le professeur}]_i \text{ } [_{EIP}[_{EI}][_{IP} \text{ je n'ai vu } t_i]]]]]]]]]$

The following tree structure illustrates the full representation of this sentence.



All *ne...que* sentences are derived in the same way. The denotation of the set of alternatives denoted by the common noun in the NPI varies according to the category of the exception XP.

3.6 Advantages of the Proposed Analysis

The advantage of this approach is that it requires no new formal machinery and grants no special status to either *ne* or *que*. Exception XPs of all categories are derived in the same way. The proposal also accounts for the puzzling properties of the construction that have led to other, empirically less satisfying solutions.

One such property is the fact that the *que*-phrase is a scope island for matrix negation. Indefinite DPs in French contain determiners bearing gender and number agreement features, while when the same DPs occur in the scope of negation, they must be introduced by a bare *de* with a negative polarity distribution like English ‘any’.

- (29) a. Je veux **du**/***de**) bon vin rouge.
 I want.1SG some.M.SG/*(any) good wine red
 ‘I want some good red wine.’
- b. Je ne veux pas **de**/***du**) bon vin rouge.
 I NE want.1SG not any/*(some.M.SG) good wine red
 ‘I want any/*(some) good red wine.’

Gaetone (1999) and Grevisse (1993) note that, under *ne...que*, NPI *de* cannot occur; instead, the agreeing indefinite determiner is required:

- (30) Je **ne** veux **que du**/***de** bon vin rouge.
 I NE want.1SG QUE some.M.SG/*any good wine red
 (I want only any good red wine.)

In the same vein, when two exception XPs are conjoined under *ne...que*, the affirmative conjunction *et* occurs, and not the NPI conjunction *ni*, as the minimal pairs in (31) demonstrate.

- (31) a. Je **ne** bois **ni** le vin **ni** la bière.
 I NE drink.1SG neither the wine nor the beer
 ‘I drink neither wine nor beer.’
 b. *Je **ne** bois **pas** le vin **et** la bière.
 I NE drink.1SG not the wine and the beer
 (I don’t drink wine and beer.)
 c. Je **ne** bois **que** le vin **et**/***ni** la bière.
 I NE drink.1SG QUE the wine and/*nor the beer
 ‘I only drink wine and beer.’

These authors take these as evidence that *ne* is expletive; however, the current proposal offers a straightforward explanation. Since the *que*-phrase has the structure of a relative clause, it shares the general property of French relative clauses of being a scope island with respect to matrix negation.

Another feature of *ne...que* is that the exception XP cannot be extracted from the *que*-phrase:

- (32) a. *Qui n’ as-tu vu **que**?
 Who NE have.2SG-you see.PP QUE
 (Who haven’t you seen anyone other than?)
 b. *Le vin, que je ne bois **que**, est très bon.
 The wine, QUE I NE drink.1SG QUE, is very good
 (The wine, which I don’t drink anything other than, is very good.)

Azoulay-Vicente’s (1985; 1988) proposal derives such data by analyzing *que* as a preposition. If *que* is a preposition governing the trace of the exception XP, the PP constitutes a minimality barrier for antecedent-government of the trace. The ban on extraction out of the *que*-phrase in the present analysis follows from the Complex NP Constraint, and need not appeal to a PP. Extraction from a relative clause is generally degraded (Ross 1967). The example in (32) is thus explained in the same way as the more familiar island example in (33).

- (33) *Quel sport_i est-ce que Marie aime [NP I’ homme [CP qui joue
 Which sport_i is-it QUE Marie love.3SG [NP the man [CP who play.3SG
 t_i?]]
 t_i?]]

The *que*-phase itself cannot be fronted, but this fact also follows from locality constraints on adjunct-extraction.

The present proposal also provides a solution to a semantic problem with *ne...que* exceptives. Von Stechow & Iatridou (2007), following Horn's (1969) treatment of sentences with *only*, suggest that NEG + EXCEPTIVES presuppose, but do not directly entail their prejacent propositions. The prejacent is the assertion without the NEG + EXCEPTIVE components. The prejacent of (1), therefore, is (34):

- (34) J' ai vu le professeur.
I have see.PP the professor
'I saw the professor.'

There is, however, evidence that (1) does not merely presuppose (34); it entails it. After uttering (1), the assertion expressed by (34) cannot be canceled:

- (35) *Je n' ai vu que le professeur, et je n' ai pas vu le
I NE have see.PP QUE the professor, and I NE have not see.PP the
professeur.
professor
'I haven't seen anyone but the professor, and I have not seen the professor.'

The current proposal predicts this entailment pattern, since the elided clause asserts the prejacent.

4 Problems with Previous Analyses of *ne...que*

Earlier analyses of *ne...que* tend to fall into two camps. A few (Gaatone 1999, Grevisse 1993) deny that *ne...que* has any syntactic or semantic negative import. Most (Azoulay-Vicente 1985, 1988; Baciu 1978, Dekydtspotter 1993, von Stechow 1993, von Stechow & Iatridou 2007) propose that the construction involves negation, encoded either in a covert negative element dependent on *ne*, or in *que* itself. While I have shown that the latter group is correct in proposing a covert negative element, all of these proposals fail to establish adequately the role that *que* plays in the structure. Some (Dekydtspotter 1993, von Stechow 1993, von Stechow & Iatridou 2007) do not directly address the syntactic status of *que* at all.

4.1 Gaatone (1999)

The hypothesis that *ne* is expletive (Gaatone 1999) has some appeal given the apparent lack of a licenser, and a superficial examination of the facts in (30) and (31), above. Without a complete story for *que*, the fact that the *que*-phrase cannot contain NPIs calls into question the negative status of *ne*. Simply dismissing *ne* as expletive, however, does little to explain its behavior, since expletive *ne* remains poorly understood. As we have seen, there is direct evidence that *ne* is not expletive, since all *ne...que* sentences can be expressed with an overt

NPI phrase. Section 3.7 provides a more appealing explanation for the facts in (30) and (31): the relative clause properties of the *que*-phrase predict that it is a scope island for matrix negation.

Since he treats *ne* as expletive, Gaatone (1999) is led to identify exceptive *que* as an adverb analogous to *seulement* ‘only’. The appeal of this claim is that it captures the interpretive parallels between adverbial *seulement* and *ne...que*. It also allows the diverse distribution of exceptive *que* to be explained, since “adverb” is a sort of catchall category.

Not only is the adverbial analysis incongruent with the economy goals of this paper, but it also raises some empirical questions. If the *que* of *ne...que* is an adverb with the same interpretation as *seulement*, how can the major differences in their syntactic distribution be accounted for? Although Gaatone (1999) points out that there are several asymmetries between *que* and *seulement*, he does not put forth any specific analysis of *que* that captures them.

The examples in (36), below, demonstrate that there is a robust contrast between *seulement* and *que*. An adverb can occur at the right edge of the sentence, while this is never possible for *que*.

- (36) a. Je n’ ai vu **que** le professeur (***que**).
 I NE have see.PP QUE the professor (QUE)
 ‘I only saw the professor.’
- b. J’ ai vu (**seulement**) le professeur (**seulement**).
 I have see.PP (only) the professor (only)
 ‘I only saw the professor.’

Exceptive *que* must immediately precede the exception XP, while *seulement* can associate with any phrase in its c-command domain (Mathieu 2004). Because of this, exceptions with *seulement* can give rise to scopal ambiguities, while with *que* the interpretation is unambiguous. The English translations of (37a) indicate the three possible interpretations.

- (37) a. J’ ai **seulement** prêté le livre à Marie.
 I have only lend.PP the book to Marie
 i. I only **LENT** the book to Marie.
 ii. I only lent **the BOOK** to Marie.
 iii. I only lent the book to **MARIE**.
- b. Je n’ ai que prêté le livre à Marie.
 I NE have QUE lend.PP the book to Marie
 ‘I only **LENT** the book to Marie.’

Additional evidence that *ne...que* and *seulement* must have different syntax is the NPI behavior of the *que*-phrase. For speakers who share the ban on a negative concord interpretation between *pas* and other NPIs, the *que*-phrase must occur in the scope of the Neg head, whether or not *ne* is pronounced. This derives the fact that it is impossible to front the *que*-phrase. The contrast between (38a) and (38b) remains unexplained.

- (38) a. **Seulement** les enfants sont sortis hier soir.
 Only the kids are go.out.PP yesterday evening
 ‘Only the kids went out yesterday evening.’
- b. ***Que** les enfants ne sont sortis hier soir.
 QUE the kids NE are go.out.PP yesterday evening
 (No-one other than the kids went out yesterday evening.)

Gaätone’s analysis of *que* in general leaves the NPI behavior of the *que*-phrase unexplained. The *que*-phrase patterns with NPIs in that it is licensed in questions, as in (39). It is not clear how such a sentence could accommodate the adverbial *seulement*.

- (39) a. Qu’ en savait il **que** ce qu’ on lui avait toujours
 QUE CL= know.IPFV he QUE that which one CL= have.IPFV always
 raconté?
 tell.PP
 ‘What did he know of it but what they had always told him?’

(Grevisse 1993:1455)

- b. *Qu’ en savait il **seulement** ce qu’ on lui avait
 QUE CL= know.IPFV he only that which one CL= have.IPFV
 toujours raconté?
 always tell.PP
 (What did he know of it but what they had always told him?)

In Gaätone’s analysis, as well as in those that take exceptive *que* to be imbued ad hoc with an NPI feature and highly variable selectional requirements, the goal of lexical economy is neglected.

4.2 *Que* is not directly related to *ne*

An unpublished work by Barbaud (1977-78), cited in Azoulay-Vicente (1985), proposes that *que* is akin to the sentential negation marker *pas*. Azoulay-Vicente reports that Barbaud (1977-78) analyzes *que* as a quantifier generated in the projection of NegP like *pas* or any negative adverb. *Que* undergoes a quantifier lowering operation to adjoin to the exception XP. An analysis along these lines is problematic for several reasons. First, it is cumbersome. *Que* in French is not semantically associated with negation in any other environment, so it is rather arbitrary to assign it negative status only when it occurs in the exceptive construction and never elsewhere. Perhaps more importantly, *que* does not seem to bear any feature to trigger this lowering, and downward movement in general cannot be licit under a minimalist understanding of internal merge.

There are also empirical problems with a proposal like Barbaud’s: if we suppose that *que* and *pas* both occupy Spec,NegP, we expect them to be in complementary distribution.

This is not the case, however, as *pas* and *que* can co-occur in a subset of *ne...que* sentences. When this happens, the exception introduced by *que* is negated, as in (40), below.

- (40) Je **ne** sors **pas que** le samedi.
 I NE go.out.1SG not QUE the Saturday
 ‘I don’t ONLY go out on Saturdays.’ (I go out on Fridays too)

We would not expect co-occurrence to be possible if *que* were syntactically equivalent to *pas*. Similarly, *ne...que* sentences can also contain negative adverbs like *jamais*. If *que* is analogous to *pas*, then (41), like (3b) and (3d), is predicted to be impossible.

- (41) Je **ne** sors **jamais que** le samedi.
 I NE go.out.1SG ever QUE the Saturday
 ‘I never go out except on Saturdays.’

Que can also not be treated as a negative adverb like *jamais*, as their distributions are very different. We have already seen in the contrast between (30) and (31) that *que* does not have the effect on indefinites that a negative element would.

Additional word order facts support this. As we have already seen in (2b), when negation applies to a non-finite verb, *ne* and the other negative element, whether *pas* or an adverb, directly precede the verb:

- (42) a. **Ne pas** mentir, c’ est mieux.
 NE not lie.INF EXPL is best
 ‘It is best not to lie’
 b. Le bon mari essaie de **ne jamais** mentir à sa femme.
 The good husband try.3SG of NE ever lie.INF to his wife
 ‘The good husband tries never to lie to his wife.’

When a *ne...que* exceptive applies to a non-finite verb, however, this is not possible, as seen in (18) and (19), repeated as (42a) and (42b). The light verb *faire* must be inserted between *ne* and *que*.

- (43) a. * **Ne que** mentir, c’ est déplorable.
 NE QUE lie.INF, it is deplorable
 (To do nothing but lie is deplorable.)
 b. **Ne faire que** mentir, c’ est déplorable.
 NE do.INF QUE lie.INF, it is deplorable
 ‘To do nothing but lie is deplorable.’

These distributional differences between *que* and negative elements like *pas* and *jamais* show that *que* does not fall into the same class as these licensers of *ne*, which is not surprising given the canonical status of *que* as a complementizer.

4.3 Azoulay-Vicente (1985; 1988)

In her extensive treatment of this construction, Azoulay-Vicente (1985; 1988) suggests that *que* should be treated as a preposition, analogous to *sauf* ‘except’, *excepté* ‘except’, and *hormis* ‘aside from’. She takes as evidence the behavior of pronominal object clitics under *ne...que*. Kayne (1975) and Azoulay-Vicente (1985) point out that pronominal objects are expected to cliticize onto the finite verb if *que* is a typical negative adverb or nominal NPI, but they do not.

- (44) a. Il ne t’**aime** plus (***toi**).
 He NE CL=love.3SG anymore (*you)
 ‘He doesn’t love you anymore.’
 b. Il ne (***t’**) aime que **toi**.
 He NE (*CL=) love.3SG QUE you
 ‘He loves only you.’

Azoulay-Vicente (1985) compares this to the behavior of prepositional phrases, where cliticization is also blocked. Also, *que*, like prepositions, cannot be stranded by movement.

If we continue to compare the distribution of prepositions in French to the distribution of *que*, however, we find that they differ significantly. For example, exceptive *que* can precede a verbal past participle, as in (13d), reproduced as (45a), while prepositions cannot, as shown in (45b). There are other striking distributional differences, contrasted in (46a) and (46b).

- (45) a. On n’ a que commencé à l’expliquer.
 One NE has QUE begin.PP to CL=explain.INF
 ‘We’ve only just begun to explain it.’
 b. On a {*de/*à/par} commencé à l’expliquer.
 One has of/to/by begin.PP to CL=explain.INF
- (46) a. Je n’ ai vu personne {sauf/excepté/hormis} /(#que) Jean.
 I NE have see.PP anyone {except} /(#QUE) Jean
 ‘I haven’t seen anyone except Jean.’
 b. {Sauf/excepté/hormis} /(*que) Jean, personne n’ est venu
 {Except} /(*QUE) Jean, anyone NE is come.PP
 ‘Except for Jean, no one came.’

The ellipsis analysis I advance here can account for (45) without any specialized processes. The detailed structure of the sentence in (13d) is given in (47), where the remnant IP in the embedded clause is elided before spell-out.

- (47) [_{IP} On n’a [_{NP} [_{NP} ∃ (rien d’autre) [_{CP} [_{EI-Op}] [_{CP} [_C que] [_{EIP} [_{VP_i} t_{EI-Op} commencé à l’expliquer] [_{EI} [_{IP} on n’a t_i]]]]]]]]]]

Treating *que* as a preposition is thus not only empirically unsatisfying, but also theoretically unsatisfying, as it misses the fact that, elsewhere, *que* always subcategorizes for a finite clause.

4.4 Dekydtspotter (1993) and Dekydspotter & Petrush (2006)

Dekydtspotter (1993) and Dekydspotter and Petrush (2006) propose that *ne...que* contains a null operator licensed by negation higher in the clause. The operator receives an interpretation by association with the *que*-phrase, which has the semantics of something like "other than". In their analysis, *que* performs the semantic operation of partitioning the relevant domain into two sets: one set contains only the denotation of the exception XP, and the other contains the complement of XP.

Dekydtspotter (1993) gives the semantics for [Op *que* XP] in (48), below, where C represents the contextually relevant set, and the individual *y* is the exception.

$$(48) \quad \lambda\beta \lambda x[C(x) \cap x \neq y \cap \beta(x)] \quad (\text{Dekydtspotter 1993: 48})$$

The string in (48) can be paraphrased as *every contextually relevant x other than y*. Dekydtspotter (1993) claims that the strong locality requirements the null operator obeys with respect to *ne* follow from syntactic constraints on chain composition and null operator movement. When no barriers intervene between *ne* and Op, it can be licensed in situ via chain composition with *ne*.

While (48) is appealing in its simplicity, it leaves some questions unanswered. The proposals above do not describe the internal syntactic structure of the [Op *que* XP] string. They also claim that because of the semantics of the *que*-phrase, the exception can only be an entity-denoting expression, and not a modifier, so sentences like (13e) and (13f) with adjectival or adverbial exception XPs are predicted to be ungrammatical. Indeed, they cite such sentences as ungrammatical, but they are certainly acceptable to many speakers. Dekydtspotter's analysis (1993) cannot account for this variability.

4.5 Baciú (1978)

Baciú's (1978) treatment of *ne...que* cannot accommodate prepositional exception XPs, in which *que* must precede the entire PP. The problematic sentences, derived in Baciú's system, are given in (49).

- (49) a. Max ne compte que **sur Luc**.
 Max NE count.3SG QUE on Luc
 'Max doesn't count on anyone but Luc.'
- b. Max ne compte **sur** personne d' autre que **Luc**.
 Max NE count.3SG on anyone of other QUE Luc
 'Max doesn't count on anyone other than Luc.'
- c. * Max ne compte **sur** ~~personne d' autre~~ que **Luc**.

Following the analysis laid out in earlier in this section, I propose that the underlying structure of (49a) is (50), below.

$$(50) \quad [IP \text{ Max ne compte } [PP [P \text{ sur } [NP [NP \exists (\text{personne d' autre})] [CP [EI-Op] [CP [C \text{ que}] [EIP [PP_i t_{EI-Op} \text{ sur Luc}] [EI [IP \text{ Max ne compte } t_i]]]]]]]]]]$$

Under the present proposal, *ne...que* sentences with prepositional exception XPs can be derived, but an issue for further investigation is how to derive the ungrammaticality of (49c), where *que* intervenes in the linear string between a preposition and its complement. Perhaps it can be related to constraints on preposition stranding in French. The preposition *sur* in the matrix clause is not stranded by syntactic movement, but by PF ellipsis. These facts are not fully understood at this time.

4.6 Reinhart (1991)

For exceptive structures in English, Reinhart (1991) gives a compelling non-elliptical analysis, which seeks to resolve the apparent logical contradiction arising from an ellipsis approach.

(51) * I didn't see anyone, but I saw the professor.

Reinhart proposes a mono-clausal structure wherein the exception XP is base-generated in a position adjoined to IP, and its correlate in the clause adjoins to it by QR at LF such that they form a constituent. The exception XP is assigned Case by *except* or *but* in English. Adjunction of the correlate to the exception XP is permissible provided that they are identical in category and case.

This solution elegantly provides for the interpretation of the exception phrase, since, as Reinhart points out, the exception XP and its correlate would have to be applied to the predicate separately. Her approach, however, cannot be straightforwardly extended to *ne...que*. As we have seen, the *que*-phrase is embedded under an NPI, which, for Reinhart's analysis, sets up a conflict at LF: the NPI must simultaneously undergo QR, and remain in situ to be in the scope of its licenser.⁴ A further problem for the conjunction analysis is the fact that the correlate of the exception is always nominal in French, while the category of the exception XP varies. Reinhart's analysis would thus wrongly predict non-nominal exception XPs to be disallowed. Lastly, it falls short of the goal of this paper: to reconcile the lexical subcategorization requirements of *que* with its behavior in *ne...que*.

5 Cross-Linguistic Comparison

The analysis offered in this paper has certain advantages over previous analyses of *ne...que*; namely, it avoids complicating the lexicon and captures all the distributional facts of the construction without specialized operations. Since the morpho-syntax of French offers little decisive proof of an elided clause, this section presents some cross-linguistic support for my analysis.

The NEG + EXCEPTIVE construction is not unique to French. Von Stechow & Iatridou (2007) point out that it can be found in Spanish, Greek, Irish, and Arabic as well. The fact that it occurs in Spanish is not surprising, but its presence in non-Romance languages and

⁴However, see Merchant (2000) for a possible solution to this conflict for cases of antecedent-contained deletion.

even non-Indo-European languages is more intriguing. First, I will demonstrate that the analysis adopted here for French can be extended to similar constructions in other languages, and then I will exploit an important difference between French and Greek in order to bolster my claim that *ne...que* sentences are bi-clausal.

In Spanish, the equivalent of *ne...que* mirrors the comparative just as it does in French, employing a collocation of *no, más, and que*.

- (52) a. No quiero **(nada) más que** dormir.
 NEG want.1SG (anything) more QUE sleep.INF
 ‘I only want to sleep.’

The difference between the French exceptive construction and the Spanish one is the use of *más* in Spanish, which corresponds to the optional *d’ autre* phrase in French. I suggest that like French, the *más* phrase in the Spanish matrix clause contains an NPI, which is optionally covert, as it is in French. The full structure of (52a) according to my analysis is given in (52b).

- b. [_{IP} pro no quiero [_{NP} [_{NP} (nada) más [_{CP} [_{EI-Op}]_{CP} [C que] [_{EIP} [_{VP} _i t_{EI-Op} dormir]_{EIP} [_{EI} t_j]_{IP} pro-quiero-t_i]]]]]]]]

This structure also accommodates the NEG + EXCEPTIVE construction in Irish, which is similar to French in that the quantifier phrase in the matrix clause tends to remain covert. These languages also share the property that the exceptive is only licensed either under negation or under an interrogative, like any NPI (Von Stechow & Iatridou 2007). The Irish exceptive construction also shares with its English counterpart the property that the embedded clause is introduced with the complementizer that normally means *but* as opposed to *than*, as in (53), below.

- (53) a. **Níl** ann **ach** saighdiúir.
 NEG.is in.him but soldier
 ‘He is only a soldier.’ (von Stechow & Iatridou 2007: 476)
- b. Más cáisatá uait, **níl** agat **ach** a dhul go Co.
 if.COP cheese COMP.is from.you, NEG.is at.you but go-INF to County
 Chorcaigh.
 Cork
 ‘If it’s cheese you want, you only have to go to County Cork.’
 (von Stechow & Iatridou 2007: 447)
- c. Cad a thifeadh sé **ach** a dhearthair fein ar meisce?
 What COMP see.COND he but his brother REFL on drunk
 ‘What should he see but his own brother drunk.’
 (Chung & McCloskey 1987: 183)

In Greek, case-connectivity effects provide evidence for ellipsis of the embedded IP. Exception DPs bear an overt morphological case feature according to their position in the embedded IP. If these constructions were not biclausal, it would not be possible to account for the case feature on DP exception XPs. The exceptive complementizer in Greek is (transliterated as) *para*, and like French *que*, it also occurs in comparatives. If the preposition or adverb analysis were adopted for Greek *para*, case connectivity would not be predicted. In fact, as von Fintel & Iatridou (2007) point out, when the genuinely prepositional exceptive *ektos* is used instead of *para*, a DP exception XP invariably bears accusative case, which occurs more generally on the DP complement of a preposition. The sentences in (54), below, demonstrate these case connectivity effects.

- (54) a. **Dhen** irthe **para o** **Yanis.**
 NEG come.3SG.PST QUE the.NOM Yanis.NOM
 ‘Nobody came except Yanis.’
- b. **Dhen** idha **para ton** **Yani.**
 NEG see.1SG.PST QUE the.ACC Yanis.ACC
 ‘I did not see anyone except Yanis.’
- c. **Dhen** milisa **para me ton** **Yani.**
 NEG talk.1SG.PST QUE to the.ACC Yanis.ACC
 ‘I did not speak to anyone except Yanis.’ (von Fintel & Iatridou 2007: 457)

Some speakers report that they find these sentences more acceptable when *para* is immediately followed by *mono*, which means something like English ‘only’. This is consistent with the fact that the EI-Op encodes the semantics of ‘only’. There is also some speaker variation in Greek with respect to whether an overt NPI host is required. For instance, some speakers find sentences like those in (54) to be awkward without an overt *kanena(n)* ‘anyone’ hosting the *para*-phrase. It is also possible to find a full phrase *kanena(n) allo*, analogous to the French *personne d’autre*, which suggests that the structure of NEG + EXCEPTIVE sentences in these languages is fundamentally the same.

There seems to be a range of variation in NEG + EXCEPTIVE languages with respect to the host of the *que*-phrase. While I do not have a complete explanation for this, it is interesting to note that all the possibilities for the spell-out of this host are attested: in French, it may either be completely covert, partially spelled out as *d’autre*, or completely spelled out as NPI *d’autre*, and for some speakers, spelled out as NPI alone. In Spanish, the host can either be partially spelled out as *más* or completely spelled out as NPI + *más*. In Irish, it seems always to be completely covert. In Greek, all the permutations observed in French are possible. An additional difference between these languages and French is the fact that in French, the negative marker *ne* can be null, such that there is no phonetically overt material at all encoding either negation or the NPI.

The suppression of both the negative head and the host of the relative clause can be found in the (archaic) English exceptive construction, in which the conjunction *but* is the counterpart to the French *que*:

- (55) a. I saw **but** them, saw only them for hours.⁵
 b. I saw (**no one**) **but** them.
 c. They go **but** to return.⁶
 d. They go (**to do nothing**) **but** to return.

The alternation in French between a covert and overt NPI or negative phrase is paralleled in the English construction, but English has lost its preverbal negative marker. An additional parallel is suggested by the fact that in English, as in French, the exceptive marker cannot immediately precede a finite verb, but instead follows a light verb *do*.

- (56) a. * Le bébé **ne que** pleure.
 The baby NE QUE cry.3SG
 (The baby does nothing but cry.)
 b. Le bébé **ne fait que** pleurer.
 The baby NE do.3SG QUE cry.INF
 ‘The baby does nothing but cry.’
 c. * The baby but cries.
 d. The baby does but cry.

Perhaps the absence of *ne* is not problematic for the analysis presented here: regardless of the status of *ne*, the NPI/negative phrase is always present, in both English and French. It seems that to provide a full account for grammars in which both the negative marker and the NPI/negative phrase are phonetically absent, further research is needed.

6 Conclusion

This paper has sought to provide a syntactic treatment for the poorly understood *ne...que* exceptive construction in French that upholds economy principles. Unlike previous analyses, the approach argued for here introduces no novel derivational operations or constraints, nor does it require the proliferation of syntactically distinct but homophonous morphemes in the lexicon. This paper has taken the alternation between an unhosted *que*-phrase and an overt NPI or NPI *d'autre* host for the *que*-phrase in the matrix clause as evidence that an NPI host is always present in *ne...que* sentences.

The similarities between comparative sentences and *ne...que* sentences motivate providing the two constructions with a similar syntactic analysis, in which the morpheme *que* is the canonical complementizer, and the clause it introduces is elided under identity with the matrix clause. The exhaustivity semantics associated with focus movement in Hungarian are straightforwardly extended to NEG + EXCEPTIVES, capturing the requirement that the exception XP raise to the left periphery of the embedded clause. Exceptive semantics

⁵Edgar Allen Poe. 1885. To Helen (I saw thee once...). <http://is.gd/4QrAD>.

⁶John Bedford Leno. 1867. Waterloo. The Library of the University of California Los Angeles. <http://is.gd/4QrDp>

are not encoded directly in any component of *ne...que*; instead, the interpretation proceeds compositionally with the adjunction of the operator clause to the NPI.

Although the morphology of French offers little direct proof of an elided clause, the case-connectivity effects visible in Greek suggest that the ellipsis analysis is accurate. While some questions remain as to the spell-out possibilities of the NPI and the nature of obligatory ellipsis, the proposal in this paper has captured the behavior of a puzzling construction without complicating the grammar.

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