

This Kibbitzer is based on an extract from an essay by a Spanish research student of Economics.

Original	Revision
... there are qualitative factors which so far accounting was not be able to reflect satisfactorily.	... there are qualitative factors which so far accounting has been unable to reflect satisfactorily.

The student was interested in the use of **so far** in this context. Could - or should - it be replaced by **hitherto**? Dictionaries did not give much help in distinguishing between them: **so far** in COBUILD, 'means up until the present point in a situation, story, etc.' while **hitherto** in COBUILD, 'is used to refer to something that has been happening until now').

A concordance of the two expressions from 2¼ million words of New Scientist indicated:

1. When a number of 'side meanings' (e.g. "So far as I know") are excluded, the instances of **so far** (300+: a sample based on every tenth is shown below) greatly outnumber those for **hitherto** (11: all shown below).
2. For both expressions, the concordances revealed an association with the Perfect in approximately half the instances (17/31 of the sample for **so far** and 6/11 for **hitherto**) (the auxiliary 'have' is highlighted in red in both concordances). The concordances also show a strong association with the Past Participle for **hitherto** (4/11 citations), an association which seems to be a weaker for **so far** (3/31)
3. The two expressions could not be readily distinguished on the basis of position in the sentence: thus 3/11 instances of **hitherto** and 10/31 of **so far** are sentence-initial.
4. A distinctive minor pattern for **so far** is its collocation with the Non-perfect Present (3/31 citations).¹

The large difference in their relative frequencies (finding 1) persuaded the student to stick to **so far** rather than substitute **hitherto**, while inspection of the citations had the incidental but useful benefit that it led her to correct the (deviant) past tense **was not be able**.

Footnote

¹ Intuition suggests that **hitherto** is extremely unlikely to be used with the Non-perfect Present. This is confirmed by a subsequent examination of 872 citations for **hitherto** from *The Times* and *Guardian* (size of corpus: 80+ million words).

1 cking. Is this "science" in any sense hitherto accepted? In Experts in Uncertainty, Roger
2 not the ones to which academics have hitherto been accustomed. In politics it is often ne
3 ut when it asked for quality that had hitherto been demanded only in the defence industry,
4 its rules on scientific publications. Hitherto, each scientific publishing house was restr
5 ey to robot vision systems which have hitherto existed only in the realms of science ficti
6 eturned to power was a positive move. Hitherto, in-house committees had evaluated the nati
7 nd, where the bulk of formations have hitherto occurred, or from college or university dep
8 trate many of the cognitive abilities hitherto reserved only for language-trained chimpanz
9 cose testing" to screen for diabetes. Hitherto they have been able to make available simpl
10 way to current painkillers, blocking hitherto unknown receptors in the brain.
11 y to naloxone suggests that there are hitherto unsuspected receptors in the brain. He beli

1 ark has raised Pounds Sterling 10 000 so far and Racial Recorders is providing Goodson with
2 if they stop the release of amyloid. So far, they have found five candidates - all of whi
3 esign drugs that outwit the bacteria. So far, isoniazid (also known as INH) is the only dr
4 of microwave scrubbers Cha has built so far, the reactors are measured in centimetres. Th

5 c an properly call it an illness. But so far no type of gene, or combination of genes, **has**
6 , Russia, Switzerland and the US, but so far none **has** received full funding. Another attra
7 of the small clinical tests conducted so far in the US **have** shown gene therapies to be hig
8 in Britain we seem to find difficult. So far, it **has** proved impossible to shift money save
9 ins sceptical about Britain's efforts so far. The six Faraday centres already established
10 l fluid. We also have some evidence, so far purely theoretical, that anyone can form a su
11o receive significant Western funding so far were nuclear scientists who might otherwise h
12 effect just over five years ago, **has** so far failed to have any significant effect on the
13aded in Japan, and the government **has** so far made no plans to ban these.
14o point out that toxicity testing **has** so far been limited to a small number of amphibians
15n - a view which American courts **have** so far upheld. By contrast, medical ethicists remain
16 with nonlinear systems. Studies **have** so far tended to concentrate upon experimental setup
17h he **has** been driving for seven hours so far, he is allowed by law to do another two hours
18 curve of the heavier cobalt isotope. So far, however, the newly launched satellite, the C
19kers may also have done the brewing." So far the excavators **have** exposed only the brewery
20 ety of rodents and sometimes humans. So far, the only clear example of a neural differenc
21, such as loss of nutrients, may not. So far, the scientific community **has** failed to answe
22are prepared to address it seriously. So far the articles published **have** rather underplaye
23hough the findings apply only to mice so far, there is no reason why they should not apply
24 what they **have** discovered about Otze so far. Because the body is so delicate, much of the
25orward, which provided the best proof so far that a particular source is indeed a black ho
26 be removed more quickly. The results so far look promising and the pharmaceuticals compan
27ymer molecules in an organic solvent. So far we **have** treated neutrons as particles, but it
28ing statistics produced at the summit so far, he said that if every nation used energy as
29ty in the area is plausible, but that so far there is no evidence to support it.
30 costed to make a protective vaccine. So far, the protein **has** not been tested in any exper
31aphies, and details of the medals won so far and the records for each sport. Another date

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Consultant: Tilly Warren