

# Some ‘Island Constraints’

Suggested Additions Welcome

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## 1 Ross Constraints

### 1.1 The Coordinate Structure Constraint

- (1) a. No conjunct can be extracted from a coordinate structure. (Conjunct Constraint)  
b. No Element within a conjunct of a coordinate structure can be extracted from that structure. (Element Constraint)
- (2) **‘Across-the-Board’ Exception to the Coordinate Structure Constraint:** Uniform extraction of an element from all conjuncts of a coordinate structure is permitted.
- (3) a. \*Which dignitaries do you think [[Sandy photographed the castle] and [Chris visited \_\_\_ ]]?  
b. \*Which dignitaries do you think [[Sandy photographed \_\_\_ ] and [Chris visited the castle]]?  
c. Which dignitaries do you think [[Sandy photographed \_\_\_ ] and [Chris visited \_\_\_ ]]?
- (4) a. Which of her books did you read both [[a review of \_\_\_ ] and [a reply to \_\_\_ ]]?  
b. \*Which of her books did you find both [[a review of Gould] and [a reply to \_\_\_ ]]?  
c. \*Which of her books did you find both [[a reply to \_\_\_ ] and [a review of Gould’s new book]]?

#### Potential Difficulties:

- (5) There are several countries that my boss wants me to go and visit \_\_\_ . (**Asymmetric conjunction** (Ross))
- (6) Goldsmith/Lakoff examples:

- a. [How many courses] can you take \_\_\_ for credit, still remain sane, and get all As in \_\_\_ ?
- b. The book that Dana will drive there and borrow \_\_\_ ...

- (7) a. \*Which of her books did you find both [[a review of \_\_\_] and [\_\_\_]]?
- b. \*Which of her books did you find [[\_\_\_] and [a review of \_\_\_]]?
- c. \*Which rock legend would it be ridiculous to compare [[\_\_\_] and [\_\_\_]]?  
(cf. Which rock legend would it be ridiculous to compare \_\_\_ with himself?)

## 1.2 The Complex NP Constraint

- (8) No element can be extracted from a ‘complex NP’, i.e. an NP consisting of an N, a clause, and perhaps other material
- (9) a. the fact/rumor that the US invaded China...
- b. the book that Sandy gave \_\_\_ to Kim...
- (10) a. \*Which beverage did Leslie regret the fact that people like \_\_\_ ?
- b. \*Which beverage can’t Leslie stand people who like \_\_\_ ?

### Potential Difficulties:

- (11) You’ve been talking with a person that I’ve never met *anyone who doesn’t like* \_\_\_ .
- (12) a. What company does Mike hold *the absurd belief that he can get a job with* \_\_\_ ?
- b. The CIA, I give you *my assurance that I would never accept a penny from* \_\_\_ .
- c. Which East European country did you hear *rumors that we had invaded* \_\_\_ ?
- d. ?There were *several old songs that their 13 year-old daughter and I were the only two who remembered* \_\_\_ .

## 1.3 The Left Branch Constraint

- (13) No element that is a ‘left branch’ of a constituent can be extracted from that constituent. For example, X cannot be extracted from a [X Y] constituent.
- (14) a. \*How is Sandy \_\_\_ *tall*?
- b. How tall is Sandy \_\_\_ ?

- (15) a. \*How did Sandy read \_\_\_ *many books*?  
 b. \*[How many] did Sandy read \_\_\_ *books*?  
 c. [How many books] did Sandy read \_\_\_ ?
- (16) a. \*Whose did you talk about \_\_\_ *book*?  
 b. [Whose book] did you talk about \_\_\_ ?
- (17) **Potential Difficulties:**
- (18) Not universal  
 a. French: Combien as-tu acheté [ \_\_\_ de livres]?  
 b. Serbo-Croatian: Koju si pronašla [ \_\_\_ knjigu]? (Which AUX you-found book?)
- (19) Insufficiently general?  
 a. A friend of Kim's arrived.  
 b. \*Whose did a friend of \_\_\_ arrive?

#### 1.4 The Sentential Subject Constraint

No element can be extracted from a clause that functions as a subject.

- (20) a. \*Which book did *that Sandy read* \_\_\_ surprise Kim?  
 b. Which book did it surprise Kim *that Sandy read* \_\_\_ ?

#### **Potential Difficulties:**

Ad hoc; should be covered by other principles.

#### 1.5 The Right Roof Constraint

Rightward extraction out of sentences is banned.

- (21) a. [For pigs to fly] would be impossible.  
 b. It would be impossible [for pigs to fly].
- (22) a. [[That for pigs to fly] is impossible] is clear.  
 b. [That it is impossible [for pigs to fly]] is clear.  
 c. \*[That it is impossible \_\_\_ ] is clear [for pigs to fly].

- (23) a. [Someone [who can beat you to a pulp]] exists (right here in this room).  
 b. [Someone \_\_\_ ] exists (right here in this room) [who can beat you to a pulp].
- (24) a. [That [someone [who can beat you to a pulp] exists]] is a foregone conclusion.  
 b. [That [someone \_\_\_ ] exists [who can beat you to a pulp]] is a foregone conclusion.  
 c.\*[That [someone \_\_\_ ] exists] is a foregone conclusion [who can beat you to a pulp].

**Potential Difficulties:**

- (25) Depends on what counts as an S??:
- a. I've wanted [to know \_\_\_ ] for many years [exactly what happened to Rosa Luxembourg]. (Andrews 1975)
- b. I've wanted [to meet [someone \_\_\_ ]] for many years [who would be my complete soulmate in life].
- c.?I've known [that she married [someone \_\_\_ ]] for many years now [who is always there for her].
- (26) Violated by Right Node Raising:
- a. Kim asserted that Sandy had visited \_\_\_ and Pat asserted that Dana had visited \_\_\_ , [the same Mediterranean island that Leslie has a villa on].

## 2 Some Other Island Constraints

### 2.1 The Internal S Constraint (Ross 1967)

- (27) **Constituent-Internal Nonfinal S Constraint (Kuno):**  
 A clause cannot be internal to the 'next higher major' constituent.
- (28) a. Archimedes *proved conclusively [that the earth is round]*.  
 b. ??Archimedes *proved [that the earth is round] conclusively*.
- (29) a. *Is it obvious [that the earth is round]?*  
 b. ??*Is [that the earth is round] obvious?*

## 2.2 Fixed Subject Condition

(30) ‘*That*-Trace Effects:

Chomsky and Lasnik’s filter: \**that* \_\_

- a. Who do you think \_\_ left?
- b.\*Who do you think that \_\_ left?

(31) a.\*Who would you prefer for \_\_ to leave?

b.\*Who did you wonder whether/if \_\_ left?

(32) Adverb Amelioration Effect (Bresnan, Culicover):

- a. \*Who do you think that \_\_ would be nominated for the position?
- b. (?)Who do you think that [under normal circumstances] would be nominated for the position?

## 2.3 Negative Island Constraint

(33) No extraction of adverbials out of ‘negative’ environments

(34) a.\*Why don’t you think [we can help him \_\_ ]?

b.\*How did you deny [that you behaved \_\_ ]?

## 2.4 Factive Island Constraint

(35) No extraction out of ‘factive’ environments

(36) a.\*Why did they realize [they could help him \_\_ ]?

b.\*How did you regret [that you behaved \_\_ ]?

## 2.5 Adverbial Island Constraint

(37) No extraction out of an adverbial modifier.

(38)\*Who did you [file the books [after visiting \_\_ ]]?  
but see under parasitic gaps.

## 2.6 WH-Island Condition

No element can be extracted from a *wh*-clause.

- (39) a. \*How did you wonder [*whether we could help Kim* \_\_\_ ]?  
b. ?Who did you wonder *whether they saw* \_\_\_ ?  
c. Who did you wonder *if they saw* \_\_\_ ?  
d. \*What did you wonder *who saw* \_\_\_ ?
- (40) Those are [the people]<sub>j</sub> that I was unsure [*how many presents*]<sub>i</sub> to give \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> to \_\_\_<sub>j</sub>.

## 2.7 Subject Constraint

- (41) No extraction from a subject  
a. \*Who did you say [[my picture of \_\_\_ ] would make everyone upset]?

### Potential Difficulties:

- (42) a. Which cars were [[the hoods of \_\_\_ ] damaged]?  
b. These were the Iranian dignitaries that [[my talking to \_\_\_ ] was considered unacceptable].

## 2.8 Crossover Constraints

An element may not be extracted over a coindexed element (e.g. a coindexed pronoun).

- (43) a. \*Who<sub>i</sub> did he<sub>i</sub> think she liked \_\_\_<sub>i</sub>? (Strong Crossover)  
b. ?\*Who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i</sub> mother think she liked \_\_\_<sub>i</sub>? (Weak Crossover)  
c. ?[Which picture of John<sub>i</sub>] did he<sub>i</sub> think she liked \_\_\_<sub>i</sub>? (Secondary Strong Crossover)

## 2.9 Nested Dependency Constraint

Multiple extractions must be ‘nested’.

- (44) a. [Violins this well crafted]<sub>i</sub>, [the sonatas]<sub>j</sub> are easy to play \_\_\_<sub>j</sub> on \_\_\_<sub>i</sub>.  
b. \*[Sonatas this simple]<sub>j</sub>, [the violins]<sub>i</sub> are easy to play \_\_\_<sub>j</sub> on \_\_\_<sub>i</sub>.

## 2.10 The Superiority Constraint

- (45) Extraction cannot apply to an element if it could have applied to a superior element, i.e. one closer to the root node. (“A is superior to the category B in the phrase marker if every major (N, V, or A) category dominating A dominates B as well, but not conversely.” (Chomsky 1973: 246)).

The superiority condition blocks (46b), but allows both the examples in (47):

- (46) a. Who \_\_\_ saw what?  
b. \*What did who see \_\_\_ ?
- (47) a. John remembers where Bill bought which book.  
b. John remembers to whom Bill gave which book.
- (48) a. I wonder which book *which man* read \_\_\_ .  
b. To which organization did *which people* give money
- (49) a. Who took WHAT WHERE?  
b. What did WHO take WHERE?  
c. Where did WHO take WHAT?

## 2.11 The ‘A-Over-A’ Principle

An element of category A cannot be extracted from a phrase of category A.

Part of an attempt to replace Ross’s constraints with a system that would achieve greater generality. It would subsume, for example, the Conjunct Constraint, the Element Constraint, and the Left Branch Constraint.

## 2.12 The Subjacency Constraint

Extraction can cross only one bounding node (S or NP).

- (50) a. Requires a ‘looping’ conception of leftward extraction.  
b. derives effects of the Right Roof Constraint and the Complex NP Constraint.

### 2.13 Empty Category Principle

- (51) A trace must be ‘properly governed’.  
intended to explain various facts, including ‘*that*-trace’ effects.
- (52) ‘*That*-Trace Effects:
- a. Who do you think \_\_\_ left?
  - b. \*Who do you think that \_\_\_ left?
- (53) Adverb Amelioration Effect (Bresnan, Culicover):
- a. \*Who do you think that \_\_\_ would be nominated for the position?
  - b. (?)Who do you think that [under normal circumstances] would be nominated for the position?

## 3 A Standard View

- (54) Leftward extractions in English are a unified phenomenon exhibiting the following properties:
- a. They contain a visible gap (a ‘*wh*-trace’).
  - b. The structural ‘distance’ between the gap and its binder is unbounded.
  - c. They are island-sensitive.
  - d. They ‘license’ ‘parasitic’ gaps.
  - e. They induce strong crossover violations.
  - f. They determine crossing dependencies in the same way.
  - g. They have ‘across-the-board’ instances.
  - h. They can strand prepositions in the same contexts.
  - i. They are subject to the same specific ‘pure extraction’ constraints.