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: Koji si pronasla [ ___ knigu]? (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]$_j$ that I was unsure [how many presents]$_i$ to give ___$_i$ to ___$_j$. 

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$_i$ did he$_i$ think she liked ___$_i$? (Strong Crossover) 
    b. ?*Who$_i$ did his$_i$ mother think she liked ___$_i$? (Weak Crossover) 
    c. ?[Which picture of John$_i$] did he$_i$ think she liked ___$_i$? (Secondary Strong Crossover)

2.9 Nested Dependency Constraint

Multiple extractions must be ‘nested’.

(44) a. [Violins this well crafted]$_i$, [the sonatas]$_j$ are easy to play ___$_j$ on ___$_i$. 
    b. *[Sonatas this simple]$_j$, [the violins]$_i$ are easy to play ___$_j$ on ___$_i$. 

6
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.