

April 8, 2024

1 Constraints on movement

Observation one: *Wh*-movement seems to be able to carry a *wh*-phrase arbitrarily far.

- (1) a. What will you buy?
- b. What did you say [_{CP} that will you buy]?
- c. What did Mary think [_{CP} that you said [_{CP} that will you buy]]?

Observation two: Some questions cannot be formed.

- (2) a. Moe blames this on the breakdown of society.
- b. What does Moe blame on the breakdown of society?
- c. * What does Moe blame this on the breakdown of?
- (3) a. Bart angered the man who mows the lawn.
- b. Who angered the man who mows the lawn?
- c. * What did Bart anger the man who mows?

Generalization: You can't move something out from inside a DP (a "complex noun phrase").

This is an **island**. The *wh*-phrase is trapped.

There are some nuances—an indefinite DP (*a picture of Bart*) doesn't seem to block movement (*Who did you buy a picture of?*) but definite DPs do (**Who did you buy the/my picture of?*). But **some constituents are barriers to movement** and form **islands**.

Here's another kind: **adjuncts**.

- (4) a. Bart sneezed after Lisa washed the dog.
- b. Who sneezed after Lisa washed the dog?
- c. * What did Bart sneeze after Lisa washed?

Here's another kind: **embedded questions (*wh*-islands)**.

- (5) a. Bart asked what Lisa gave to Maggie.
- b. * Who did Bart ask what Lisa gave to?
- c. * Who did Bart ask what gave to Maggie?

We will not attempt to understand exactly what makes a constituent an island. We will instead make this an IOU: Someday we'll work that out, but for now, we can just make a list of islands. Islands are things you can't move out of.

The basic intuition is: **Moving out of an island is moving further than you are allowed to move.**

That is: Movement can't be too long, can't traverse great distances.

So, there's a kind of paradox: *Wh*-movement can be arbitrarily far, but not too far.

- (6) a. What did Mary think [_{CP} that you said [_{CP} that you will buy —]]?
- b. * What did Bart sneeze after Lisa washed?

With that in mind, recall the conditions on *–self* anaphors:

- (7) a. Lisa thinks [_{CP} that Bart will prefer a picture of himself].
b. * Lisa thinks [_{CP} that Bart will prefer a picture of herself].

Why are these grammatical?

- (8) a. Lisa knows [_{CP} which picture of himself Bart will prefer —].
b. Lisa knows [_{CP} which picture of herself Bart will prefer —].

Why are *these* grammatical?

- (9) a. Which picture of himself does Lisa think [_{CP} Bart will prefer —]?
b. Which picture of herself does Lisa think [_{CP} Bart will prefer —]?

What solution to the paradox does this suggest?

- (10) a. What exactly did you buy?
b. What did you buy exactly?
- (11) a. What exactly did Bart think that you bought?
b. What did Bart think that you bought exactly?
c. What did Bart think exactly that you bought?

What kind of islands are these again?

- (12) a. * Who did Bart ask what Lisa gave to?
b. * Who did Bart ask what gave to Maggie?
- (13) a. Bart asked [_{CP} what Lisa gave — to Maggie].
b. Bart asked [_{CP} who Lisa gave a book to —].
c. Who did Bart say [_{CP} that Lisa gave a book to —]?
d. * Who did Bart ask [_{CP} what Lisa gave — to —]?
e. * What did Bart ask [_{CP} who Lisa gave — to —]?

We have a kind of a way to understand what's happening with *wh*-islands.

One place for *wh*-words to go (specifier of CP).

Moving out of a CP requires stopping there.

If it's already got a *wh*-word in there, you can't put another one in.

So, it can't stop there, forced to make a longer movement, but longer movement is out.

- (14) a. No man from Boston went to the party.
b. * Where did no man from — go to the party?

Islands:

- Complex Noun Phrase island
- Adjunct island
- *Wh*-island
- (Subject island)
- ...

2 Parametric variation

- (15) a. Pat often herds beeves.
b. * Pat herds often beeves.
- (16) a. Pat souvent mange des pommes.
Pat often eats of.the apples
(‘Pat often eats apples.’)
b. Pat mange souvent des pommes.
Pat eats often of.the apples
‘Pat often eats apples.’

Verb raising parameter

French raises V to T—for all verbs.

English raises V to T—for auxiliary verbs only.

- (17) a. John-wa ringo-o tabe-ta.
John-TOP apple-ACC eat-PAST
(‘John ate an apple.’)
b. Bill-ga [John-ga Mary-ni piza-o ageta to] itta.
Bill-NOM John-NOM Mary-to pizza-ACC gave that said
(‘Bill said that John gave Mary pizza.’)

Head paramater

- (18) a. Phóg Máire an lucharachán.
kissed Mary the leprechaun
(‘Mary kissed the leprechaun.’)
b. Tá Máire ag-pógáil an lucharachán.
is Mary ing-kiss Mary the leprechaun
(‘Mary is kissing the leprechaun.’)