

Syntax II Class #3 More on Parameters

Subjacency Parameter

English

Wh-island

- (1) a. ??What_x do you wonder whether John likes t_x?
b. ?* What_x do you wonder who likes t_x?

Complex NP island

- (2) * What_x do you know the man that likes t_x?

Adjunct island

- (3) * What_x did you choose the recipe because Sue likes t_x?

Subject island

- (4) * Who_x did [admirers of t_x] fill the first few rows?

“Left Branch Condition”

- (5) * Whose_x did you play [t_x guitar]?

Subjacency

- (6) In the following structure A and B cannot be related by movement

... A ... [_{BC} ... [_{BC} ... B ...] ...]

Blocking categories for English: NP, S

Aside: wh-islands seem less problematic when extracting from an infinitival

- (7) What_x do you want who to buy t_x?

Apparent cross-language differences

- Some languages have been claimed to show different blocking categories for subjacency (Italian: Rizzi 1982; French: Sportiche 1981; Spanish: Torrego 1984)
- Wh-in-situ: questions with wh-in-situ have been claimed to show an absence of subjacency effects (Huang 1982)

Italian

Wh-islands can be escaped from

- (8) Tuo fratello, [a cui_i mi domando [che storie_j abbiamo raccontato t_i t_j],
your brother, to whom I wonder which stories they-have told,
era molto preoccupato
was very worried
- ‘*Your brother, who I wonder which stories they’ve been telling,
was very worried.’

Complex NPs are islands

- (9) * Tuo fratello, a cui_i temo la possibilita che abbiano raccontato tutto t_i, ...
your brother, to whom I-fear the possibility that they-have told everything
‘*Your brother, who I fear the possibility that they have told everything...’

Double wh-islands cannot be escaped from

- (10) * Questo argomento, [di cui_k mi sto domandando [a chi potrei chiedere
this topic of which I am wondering to whom I-may ask
[quando dovrò parlare t_k]]], mi sembra sempre piu complicato
when I’ll-have-to speak to-me seems ever more complicated
- ‘This topic, which I am wondering who I can ask
when I’ll have to talk about, seems more and more complicated to me.’

Rizzi’s proposal

- (11) In the following structure A and B cannot be related by movement
- ... A ... [_{BC} ... [_{BC} ... B ...] ...]
- Blocking categories for Italian: NP, S’

English again (from Grimshaw 1986)

Wh-island with “what”

- (12) ??What_x did the students forget who_y t_y wrote t_x?

Improvement of wh-island with “which-N” extracted

- (13) Which book_x did the students forget who_y t_y wrote t_x?
- (14) a. Which book_x did the TAs say the students forgot who_y t_y wrote t_x?
b. Which book_x did the TAs tell the students that they shouldn’t forget who_y t_y wrote t_x?

When wh-island is not in same clause as extraction site, sharp degradation

- (15) a. ?*Which book_x did the students forget who_y t_y told them that Dorothy Sayers wrote t_x?
b. ?* Which book_x did the students forget who_y t_y told them who_z t_z wrote t_x?

- Conclusion: English and Italian are not so different after all

Subjacency in a wh-in-situ language: Chinese (Huang 1982)

- (16) a. Zhangsan yiwei Lisi mai-le shenme?
Zhangsan think Lisi buy-ASP what
'What_x does Zhangsan think Lisi bought t_x?'
b. Zhangsan xiang-zhidao Lisi mai-le shenme
Zhangsan wonder Lisi buy-ASP what
'Zhangsan wonders what_x Lisi bought t_x.'
- (17) a. [ni xiang-zhidao [shei mai-le sheme]]
you wonder who buy-ASP what
'Who_x do you wonder what_y t_x bought t_y?'
'What_x do you wonder who_y t_y bought t_x?'
b. [ni xiang-zhidao [shei weisheme mai-le shu]]
you wonder who why buy-ASP book
'Who_x do you wonder why_y t_x bought books t_y?'
* 'Why_x do you wonder who_y t_y bought books t_x?'

- Tentative conclusion: subjacency does not apply to covert movement

English yet again

- (18) a. * What_x did John ask who bought t_x?
b. * What_x did John deny the claim that Mary bought t_x?
c. * What_x did John check the bank balance before Mary bought t_x?
- (19) a. Who asked who bought what?
for which pair (x,y), x asked who bought y
b. Who denied the claim that Mary bought what?
for which pair (x,y), x denied the claim that Mary bought y
c. Who checked the bank balance before Mary bought what?
for which pair (x,y), x checked the bank balance before Mary bought y

- Tentative conclusion: subjacency does not apply to covert movement

Japanese (Watanabe 1992)

- (20) ??John-wa [Mary-ga nani-o katta ka-dooka] siritagatte-iru no?
John-top [Mary-nom what-acc bought whether know-want Q
'What does John want to know whether Mary bought?'
- (21) John-wa [Mary-ga nani-o katta [ka-dooka]] dare-ni tazuneta no
John-top Mary-nom what-acc bought whether who asked Q
'John asked who whether Mary bought what.'
- (22) ??John-wa [Mary-ga nani-o katta [ka-dooka]] Tom-ni tazuneta no
John-top Mary-nom what-acc bought whether Tom-dat asked Q
'John asked Tom whether Mary bought what.'

- Question: why does adding an extra wh-phrase *improve* the sentence?

Bulgarian (Richards 1997)

- (23) a. * Koj kniga_x otrece senatorat [malvata ce iska da zabrani t_x]?
which book denied the-senator the-rumor that wanted to ban
'Which book did the senator deny the rumor that he wanted to ban?'
- b. ? Koj senator koja kniga_x otrece [malvata ce iska da zabrani t_x]?
which senator which book denied the-rumor that wanted to ban
'Which senator denied the rumor that he wanted to ban which book?'

- Question: why does adding an extra wh-phrase *improve* the sentence?

- (24) *Subjacency Tax* (Brody 1995, Richards 1997)
One wh-dependency must satisfy subjacency; subsequent ones need not

[note: abstracting away from additional cross-linguistic variation, see Richards 1997 for discussion.]

Reading

(i) Baker 1996, Ch. 1

(ii) Roberts 1997

pp.197-8 on Italian subjacency

Chapter 1 on constituent structure and word-order

1.0-1.1 should be basic review

1.2 (categories) worthwhile ... but don't take it as gospel

1.3

1.3.1 X-bar theory: should be familiar

1.3.2 DP-hypothesis: presents one argument; again, not gospel

1.3.3 word-order typology: useful

1.3.4 Kayne's recent proposal: a 'hot' but highly controversial idea

1.4 Head-movement: most detailed part of the chapter - read this!