

Where are we now with Sluicing?

Over the decades there have been many approaches, including

- WH-mvt + deletion (Ross's original)

- The Sluicing remnant is just what it superficially appears to be on the surface: an NP or AP, or PP, etc., and that is all there is in the syntax. Then an 'interpretive rule' fills in the rest in the semantics. <Ross's straw man>

- The Sluicing remnant is a full clause, but with no content except for the pronounced part, in Spec CP in terms of the last several decades. Then an LF copying rule copies in the antecedent. Something like Ross's straw man, except that LF is a **syntactic** level of rep. Chung, Ladusaw and McCloskey argue for something like this

- In overt syntax, like the preceding. But then it is through 'pragmatic inference' rather than LF copying (the Culicover and Jackendoff 'simpler syntax' story. There is then no syntactic, or even semantic, level where the missing material is filled in.

- Note that on either of the last two views, there is an answer to some of Ross's most powerful arguments, the ones based on number agreement and subcategorization.

The alternatives to Ross's proposal are largely aimed at the mystery of apparent island violation repair under Sluicing. Several scholars completely reject the idea of island repair. Jun Abe, for example, calls it 'magic'. And if island constraints are specifically constraints on the operation of transformations, then, short of globality, there couldn't be repair.

- Merchant give two overwhelmingly powerful arguments for a Ross type approach

 - Case matching (Ross gave this argument for 1 or 2 languages, Merchant for a dozen.)

 - P-stranding correlation (Ross kind of hinted at a related argument, based on cases of obligatory pied-piping in English, but the facts don't seem right.)

- Crucially, Merchant argues that both of the above hold even in island configurations. Why is this important? Because one can imagine a hybrid approach where a Ross type analysis is available if there is no violation, but one of the alternatives is called upon otherwise. The overwhelming majority of Merchant's examples illustrating his point are based on relative clause islands. As I mentioned, this confused me the first time I read the book because, eventually, he claims that relative clause island violations **can't** be repaired, that apparent repair is just Sluicing of a short non-island source. This totally undermines the argument. Or it would if M. were right that rel. clause islands can't be repaired. But there is pretty strong reason to think that they **can**.

 - Situations where there is something in the WH-phrase that needs to be licensed (under 'reconstruction') by something in the island, like

 - Each of the linguists met a philosopher who criticized some of the other linguists, but I'm not sure how many of the other linguists

 - Situations where there is no sensible short source (i.e., the relative clause is promoted to being the whole sentence. I put aside cleft-like sources since, as we discussed last time, there are so many reasons that they can't be the answer.

 - They didn't hire anyone who speaks a certain Balkan language, but I don't remember which

If we sometimes need long sources, then there is island repair. How does it work? And is it magic?

-Chomsky (1972) proposed that when movement crosses an island, a mark (#) is put on the island. A surface structure constraint bans #. A deletion operation eliminating the island eliminates the #, so no violation. I and others sometimes abbreviate all of this as putting * on the island. Merchant rejects this on, as far as I can tell, entirely empirical grounds: VP ellipsis doesn't seem to repair island violations even if on the Chomsky account, the # would be eliminated:

They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don't know which
(Balkan language) [_{IP} they want to hire someone who speaks t]

*They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don't know which
they do [_{CP} want to hire someone who speaks t]

Thus, according to Merchant, deletion can't repair relative clause violations. The source of the sluice is then the short source:

They want to hire someone who speaks a Balkan language, but I don't know which
(Balkan language) [_{IP} she should speak t]

But now we have a near paradox, since short sources are not always available. More on the VP ellipsis facts later. First, some conceptual/technical arguments against Chomsky's approach:

-Inclusiveness. # wasn't in the lexical representation of any item, so can't be inserted into a structure. <Maybe a descendant of Lakoff's early argument against Chomsky's approach: "A new element is introduced".>

-Kitahara has the modern version of the argument, explicitly based on Inclusiveness. K. was specifically concerned with Chomsky's treatment of the adjunct/argument asymmetry wrt island violations (which I'll remind you of today), but it would carry over unchanged to a Chomsky style treatment of island repair. <We will also see a technical solution to this technical problem.>

-Lakoff had another argument too. Deletion under identity requires identity. In the repair situations, the target contains a #. But the antecedent doesn't, as nothing moved. Thus, target ≠ antecedent.

We will look at some revised approaches to repair (Fox&Lasnik, Uriagereka, Fox&Pesetsky) that evade one or both of these problems.