

## LING819 Spring 2022 Speculations on P-stranding

- (1) As noted earlier, P-stranding violations evidently cannot be repaired by ellipsis. This is rather mysterious, in fact paradoxical if the P-stranding constraint is an "island constraint".
- (2) Abels (2003) shows that in one crucial respect, the P-stranding prohibition (in languages that exhibit it) diverges from standard island constraints: While the complement of the P cannot move, subextraction out of the PP is (sometimes possible).
- (3) Some Russian examples:
  - (4) Ot čego sleduet otkazaťsja  
Of what follows give up-self  
'What should one give up?'
  - (5) \*Čego sleduet otkazaťsja ot  
what follows give up-self
  - (6) ?Na čto sleudet otkazaťsja ot vsjačeskih pretenzij *t*  
on what follows give up-self of whatsoever hopes  
'What should one rid oneself of any kind of hope for?'
  - (7) \*Kakih argumentah protiv ehtoj točki zrenija ty ešče ne slyšal o  
which arguments against this point view you yet not heard about  
'Which arguments against this point of view haven't you heard about?'
  - (8) ?Protiv kakov točki zrenija ty ešče ne slyšal ob argumentah  
against which point view you yet not heard about arguments  
'Against which point of view haven't you heard about arguments?'
- (9) "The existence of examples like [(6)] shows that PPs are not inherently barriers to movement. Moreover, the sharp contrast between [(5)] and [(6)] shows that subextraction out of PP and P-stranding are clearly different phenomena." p. 160
- (10) Standard island violations (at least most of them) do not show this pattern. Rather, extraction from deeper in the island is still bad.
- (11) \*That he'll hire someone is possible, but I won't divulge who that he'll hire is possible  
[Sentential Subject Constraint]
- (12) \*That Mary thinks he'll hire someone is possible, but I won't divulge who that Mary thinks he'll hire is possible
- (13)a \*She kissed a man who one of my friends, but Tom doesn't realize which one of my friends she kissed a man who bit [Complex NP Constraint, relative clause]
- (14)a \*She kissed a man who Bill said bit one of my friends, but Tom doesn't realize which one of my friends she kissed a man who Bill said bit [Complex NP Constraint, relative clause]

- (15) So why can't P-Stranding violations be repaired? I conjecture (roughly following a suggestion of Merchant (2001) for another phenomenon - Superiority - see pp.147-148 of the 1999 original) that there is a distinction between constraints whose violations are marked in the output and those that are more strictly properties of derivations. (See, in this connection, Lasnik (2001) and Boeckx and Lasnik (2006).)
- (16) 'Derivational' constraints can't be repaired (Merchant's suggestion about Superiority).
- (17) Suppose now that the P-stranding constraint is derivational: the A-over-A.
- (18) Chomsky (1973) proposed this in anticipation of Postal's argument against successive cyclic wh-movement (Postal (1972)).
- (19) a To whom do you think (that) John talked  
 b Who do you think (that) John talked to  
 c \*Who do you think to (that) John talked
- (20) To allow (22)a and (22)b, Chomsky proposes that the wh-feature on *who(m)* can 'percolate' to the PP *to whom*.
- (21) (22)c is still not possible, since the initial move of the PP means the feature has percolated, so the second step is impossible, by the A-over-A condition.
- (22) Suppose then that the difference (or one of the differences) between languages that do and don't allow P-stranding in initial position is whether the wh-feature **can** or **must** percolate from DP to immediately dominating PP.
- (23) In the latter type of language, even the first P-stranding step would violate the A-over-A. And if we continue to take that as a constraint on the operation of the transformation, P simply couldn't be stranded, so repair would never be a possibility.
- (24) As Ross (1969) observes, even in English, pied piping is sometimes required:
- (25) a Under what circumstances will the moon implode  
 b \*What circumstances will the moon implode under
- (26) Ross does not point out, though, that this English violation can be repaired by Sluicing:
- (27) The moon will implode under certain circumstances, but I'm not sure exactly what circumstances
- (28) Thus, the English effect does pattern with island constraints. In fact, the CED (which bars extraction out of adjuncts) seems like the relevant island constraint, at least for this example.

#### References

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