Sentential Subject Constraint

(1) a. These are problems which [for us to be able to solve would be wonderful].
   b. This is the way that [for us to be able to solve the drug-problem ] would
      be wonderful.
   c. These are problems that [ (for) to be soluble ] would be wonderful.

(2) a. the candidate who it was clear (that) they wanted to hire
   b. the candidate who they wanted to hire was clear

(3) a. It was clear that they wanted to hire the younger candidate.
   b. That they wanted to hire the younger candidate was clear.

First Statement

(4) No element dominated by an s may be moved out of that s if that node s is
dominated by an np which itself is immediately dominated by $.  (Ross, 1967, 243)

WHY NOT A GENERALIZED SUBJECT CONDITION?

ARGUMENT ONE:

(5) Of which cars were the hoods damaged by the explosion?

COMPLICATING FACTORS:

1. a hanging topic construction?
2. the effect of passive?
3. the effect of d-linking?

ARGUMENT TWO:

(6) a. That piano, which the boy’s loud playing of drove everyone crazy, was
   badly out of tune.
   b. That piano, which the boy’s playing loudly drove everyone crazy, was badly
      out of tune.
The Subject Condition

Chomsky (1977a):

(7) a. Who did friends of kiss Hermes?
   b. He’s the kind of politician that supporters of always vote.
   c. This is the kind of problem that a solution to will cause us to re-think our entire framework of assumptions.

(8) a. Who did you kiss friends of?
   b. He’s the kind of politician that I distrust supporters of.
   c. This is the kind of problem that we must find a solution to.

(9) No rule can involve $x$ and $y$ in the structure:
    … $x$ … [$xp$ … $y$ …] …
    where $xp$ is a subject phrase properly containing $y$

Complications Involving Clause-Internal Clauses

‘Clauses’ like to be peripheral in their containing constituents.

(10) a. [$cp$ That Robinson will resign] is now very clear.
    b. Is that Robinson will resign now clear?
    c. He said that he would resign to me.
    d. Would for me to turn the paper in late bother you?

(11) a. Does what theory you believe in depend on what department you were trained in?
    b. Does his having lied to parliament make it more likely that he will resign?
    c. Does him having lied to parliament make it more likely that he will resign?

Ross (1967, 246):

(12) a. The hat which that I bought seemed strange to the nurse was a fedora.
    b. The nurse who that I bought this hat seemed strange to was also a fashion consultant.

Both of (12) violate the Internal NP over S Constraint, so whatever difference there may be between them must be attributable to some other factor.
Sources of Variability and Gradience

The complement/subject/adjunct distinction aside …

Finiteness

Kuno:

(13)  a. These are problems which [for us to be able to solve] would be wonderful.
    b. These are problems which [that they were able to solve] is fantastic.

Definiteness/Specificity

(14)  a. This is the problem that we have discussed the solution to.
    b. This is the problem that we have discussed Chomsky’s solution to.
    c. This is the problem that we have discussed a solution to.

(15)  a. This is the problem that a solution to would win us the Nobel Prize.
    b. This is the problem that the solution to would win us the Nobel Prize.
    c. This is the problem that Smith’s solution to won her the Nobel Prize.

D Linking

(16)  a. What problem would a solution to win us a Nobel Prize?
    b. Which of these three problems would a solution to win us a Nobel Prize?

(17)  a. What the hell kind of problem would a solution to win us a Nobel Prize?

(18)  a. Which of these two books were you wondering if we should read?
    b. What were you wondering if we should read?
    c. What in God’s name were you wondering if we should read?

Analytical and Theoretical Issues

Unify with Other Island Effects?

Are the Subject Condition and the Adjunct Island Condition reflections of the same phenomenon? Huang (1982, 205): the Condition on Extraction Domains (CED):

(19) A phrase $\lambda$ may be extracted out of a domain $\beta$ only if $\beta$ is properly governed.
(20) Complements are properly governed; specifiers and adjuncts are not.

A delicate empirical issue: are specifiers of complements also properly governed?

(21) a. Is he the guy that you stayed in a friend of’s apartment?
    b. Is he the guy that you weren’t sure how many papers by to assign?
    c. Is he the guy that you watched friends of fighting with each other?
    d. Is he the politician that you consider supporters of to be fascists?

Interaction with Parasitic Gaps

(22) a. He’s the kind of politician that supporters of always vote.
    b. He’s the kind of politician that supporters of always vote for.

See especially Phillips (2006)

Cross-linguistic Variation

1. Japanese: Ross (1967)
2. German: Haider (1983)
3. All vso languages: Chung (1983)

Interaction with Derivational Theories of Subjecthood

Is there an effect by which extraction out of derived subjects is systematically better than extraction out of non-derived subjects?

(23) a. This is a problem that no solution to has ever been found.
    b. They’re the kind of people that children of never become academics.


But wait a minute … Given the Internal Subject Hypothesis, all subjects are derived. Chomsky (2008)
A Residual Issue

Rightward extraposition seems to yield much stronger effects:

(24) A supporter caused a scandal of this ballot initiative.

References


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Jurka, Johannes. 2009. Gradient acceptability and subject islands in German. MS., Department of Linguistics, University of Maryland.


Islands Seminar

Winter 2010

**QUESTION ONE:**
Why is Ross' thesis called *Constraints on Variables in Syntax*?

**QUESTION TWO:**
What are the grammatical operations which are constrained by ‘the constraints of Chapter Four’?

**ROSS’ LAST WORD:**
Variables in chopping rules, feature-changing rules, and unidirectional rules of deletion cannot cross island boundaries; variables in other rules can. Ross 1967: 6.244, p. 480

**A TYPOLOGY OF OPERATIONS**

1. Reordering rules
   (a) those whose statement (structural description) involves a variable other than an end-variable
   (b) those whose statement (structural description) involves only end-variables
   (c) those in which the re-ordered element leaves silence in its original position (‘chopping’ rules)
   (d) those in which a pronominal copy is left in the original position of the re-ordered element

2. Deletion rules

3. Feature-changing rules

**THE INTERNAL TYPOLOGY OF CHOPPING RULES**

**CHOPPING RULES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEFTWARD</th>
<th>RIGHTWARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not upward bounded</td>
<td>upward bounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allow p-stranding in English</td>
<td>do not allow p-stranding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>