

# Introduction to Syntax: 24.951

## Recitation #1

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# Today's topics and goals

- Brief introduction to islands and interrogative sentences in English.
- Condition C and Weak Crossover effects in English interrogative sentences.
- Interrogative sentences in Mongolian.
- Puzzle: properties of interrogative sentences in Mongolian and their Condition C and Weak Crossover properties.

# Island and interrogative sentences in English

- Pesetsky (2013): movement can be blocked by interveners.

- ▶ Domination interveners
- ▶ C-command interveners

(1) ... *intervener*

- a. He wondered [who \_\_ had read what].
- b. \* He wondered [what who had read \_\_].

(2) ... *intervener*

- \* What did she yell at us [because he had put \_\_ under the bed]?

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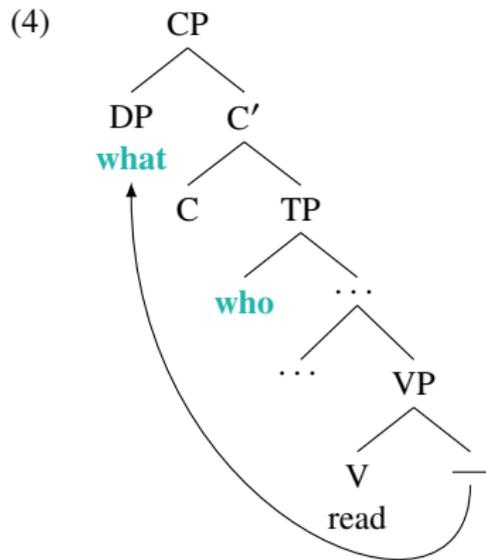
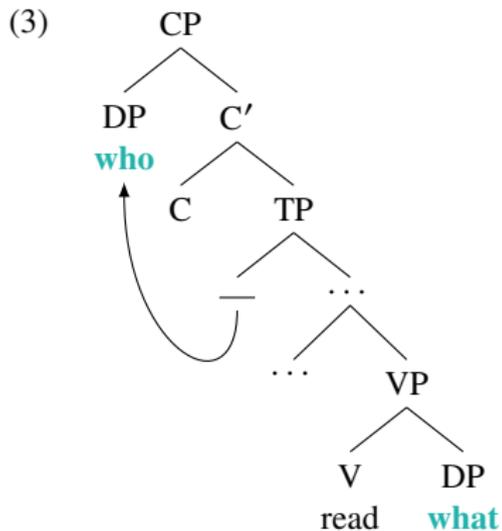
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(2) *Domination intervener*

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# C-command intervener

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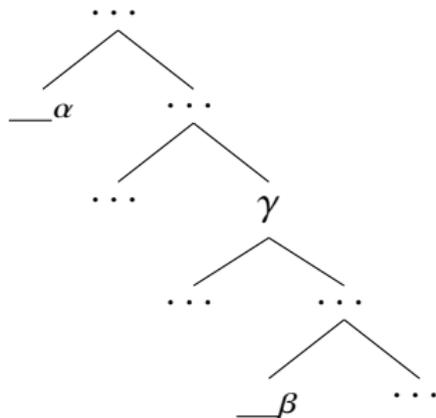


- Working definition of c-command intervention:
  - (5) If the target position  $\alpha$  c-commands X and X commands Y, X and Y being valid candidates to move to  $\alpha$ , move X / X blocks the movement of Y.
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- (6)  $\gamma$  blocks movement from  $\beta$  to  $\alpha$  if  $\gamma$  dominates  $\beta$  but not  $\alpha$  [and  $\gamma$  is defined as an island].

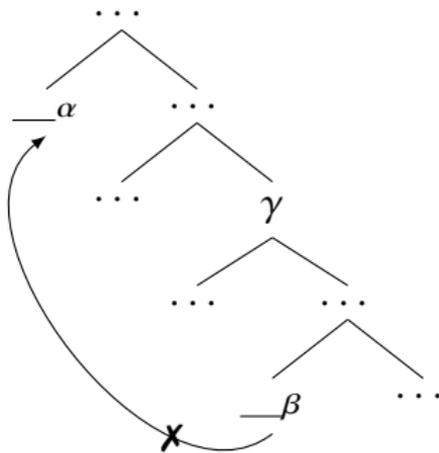
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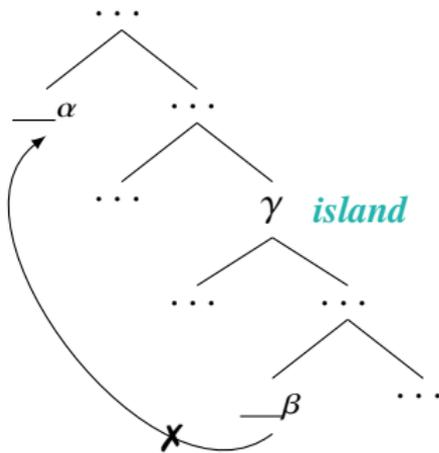
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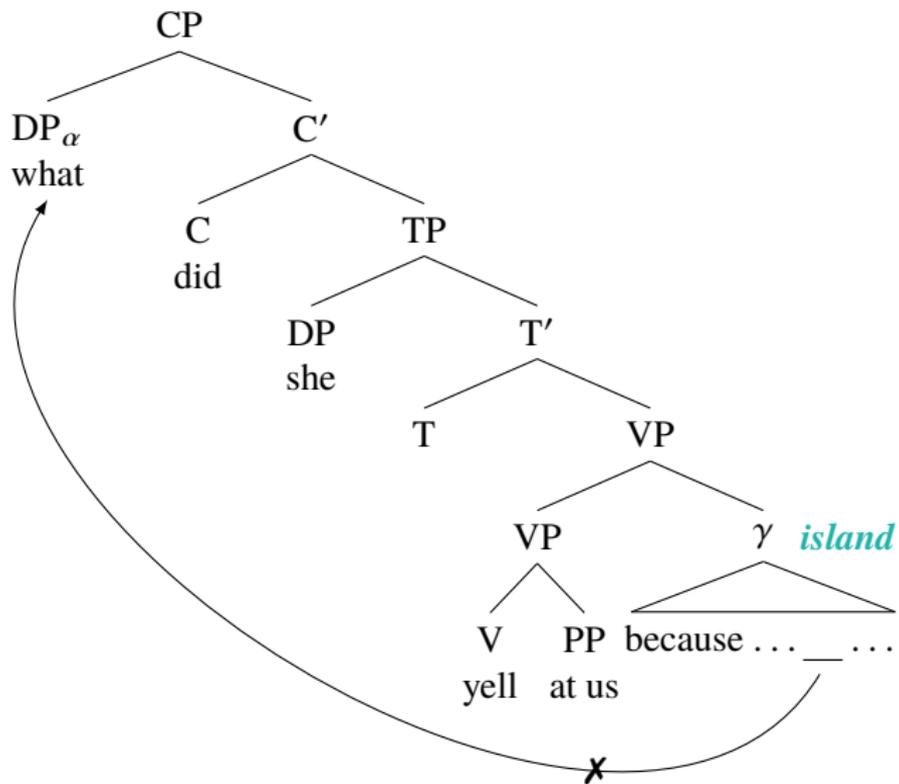
- (6)  $\gamma$  blocks movement from  $\beta$  to  $\alpha$  if  $\gamma$  dominates  $\beta$  but not  $\alpha$  [and  $\gamma$  is defined as an island].

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(2) \* What did she yell at us [because he had put \_\_\_ under the bed]?

(7)



- Some more islands:

(8) a. *Wh-island*

\* What did she ask us [whether he had put \_\_\_ under the bed]?

b. *Conditional Island*

i. If Ashley buys the new book, Sindhu will be happy.

ii. \* What will if Ashley buys \_\_\_ Sindhu be happy?

## Takeaway and looking forward

- Movement, including *Wh*-movement, obeys islands / domination intervention. Thus, it can be used as a diagnostic for movement.
- Coming up: movement can also be diagnosed with Condition C and Weak Crossover effects.
- Coming up later: the same effects in Mongolian.

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## To recall: Condition C effects

- (9) a. \* He<sub>k</sub> will probably mention my proof that John<sub>k</sub> deserved to share the prize.
- b. \* [Whose proof that John<sub>k</sub> deserved to share the prize] do you think he<sub>k</sub> will mention?

Q Why is (9b) an argument that *Whose proof that John deserved to share the prize* moves to the position where it is?

Q Why is Condition C an “everywhere” condition?

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(10) do you think he<sub>k</sub> will mention [whose proof that John<sub>k</sub> ... ]?

c-command

- (11) a. Which mother loves her child?  
b. Which child does his mother love?

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b. Which child<sub>k</sub> does his<sup>\*k/j</sup> mother love?

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Q Could (11b) be analogized to a Condition C effect?

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Q Could (11b) be analogized to a Condition C effect?

- ▶ No, it's a different phenomenon, called **Weak Crossover**.

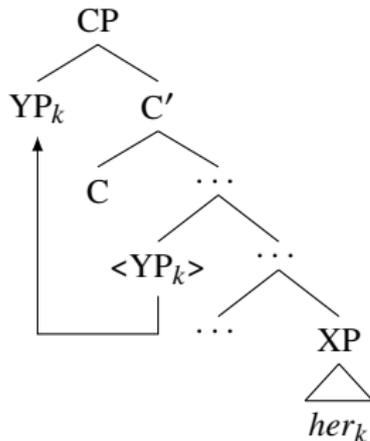
# Weak Crossover

- Informal description of a Weak Crossover violation: don't *Wh*-move a  $YP_k$  across an XP that contains a pronoun $_k$ .

(12) *No weak crossover violation*

a. Which mother $_k$  loves her $_k$  child?

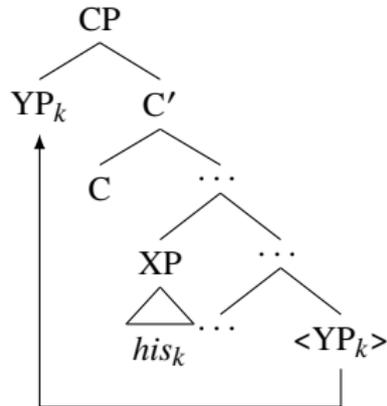
b.



(13) *Yes weak crossover violation*

a. Which child $_k$  does his $_{*k/j}$  mother love?

b. \*



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- *Wh*-movement in English obeys islandhood/domination intervention.
- It exhibits Condition C effects, which diagnoses .
- It also exhibits Weak Crossover effects (don't *Wh*-move a  $YP_k$  across an XP that contains a pronoun $_k$ ).
- Next: how these diagnostics apply to Mongolian.

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- *Wh*-movement in English obeys islandhood/domination intervention.
- It exhibits Condition C effects, which diagnoses the  $\beta$  position/the position the *Wh*-phrase moves from.
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# Interrogative sentences in Mongolian

- Basics of interrogative sentences in Mongolian:

(14) Bat yu id-sen be?  
Bat what eat-PST Q  
‘What did Bat eat?’

- Baseline, non-interrogative example:

(15) Bat ene nom-iig unsh-san.  
Bat this book-ACC read-PST  
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Q Bearing in mind the English sentences we just saw, what is the contrast between (14) and (15) telling us?

- ▶ **Unlike what happens in English, *Wh*-phrases in Mongolian are pronounced in the same position as their non-interrogative counterparts.**

- Given the comparison between English and Mongolian, we could hypothesize that difference between them has to do with movement.
- Which hypotheses would you formulate to account for this difference?

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(16) a. **No movement hypothesis**

In Mongolian, *Wh*-phrases do not move, unlike what happens in English.

b. **“Special” movement hypothesis**

In Mongolian, *Wh*-phrases move, but this movement is silent, unlike what happens in English.

- How would you test each hypothesis?

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- (18) a. Odgerel üdeshiilich-d ilbechin ur-val, Och  
 Odgerel party-DAT magician invite-COND Och  
 bayrla-na.  
 happy-N.PST  
 ‘If Odgerel invites a magician to the party, Och will be  
 happy.’
- b. \* Odgerel **khen-iig** ur-val {be}, Och bayrla-na  
 Odgerel who-ACC invite-COND {Q} Och happy-N.PST  
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 Int.: ‘Who is the person such that, if Odgerel invites that  
 person, Och be happy?’

- Which hypothesis do these data support?

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- (19) a. Och buuz id-sen eseh-iig Bold assu-san.  
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'Bold asked whether Och ate buuz.'
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‘Who does her/his mother said Tuya saw?’

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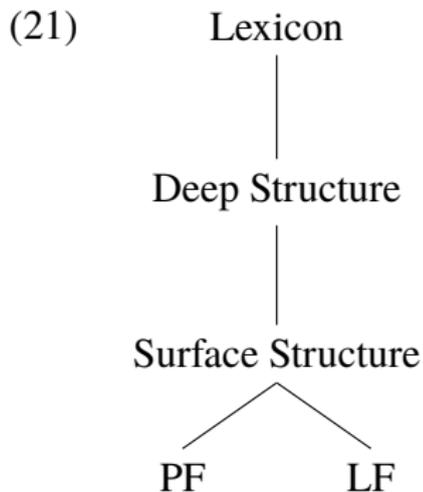
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- But: what do the island and Weak Crossover data suggest: these *Wh*-phrases move, **like** in English.
  - ▶ **Puzzle: how to account for the dual movement and non-movement properties of Mongolian interrogative sentences?**

- **The Mongolian data support the Special movement hypothesis.**
- What is special about this movement:
  - ▶ Movement happens in interrogative sentences in both English and Mongolian.
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- How could movement not have a phonological counterpart?



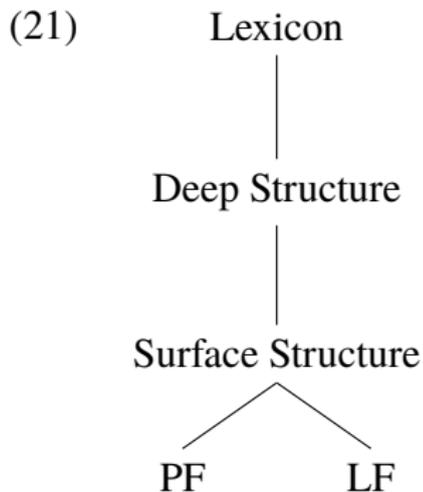
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*English*

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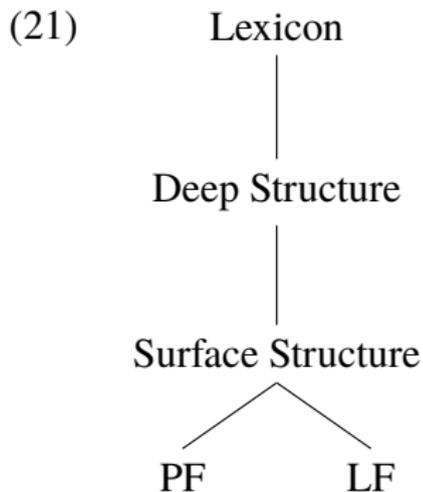
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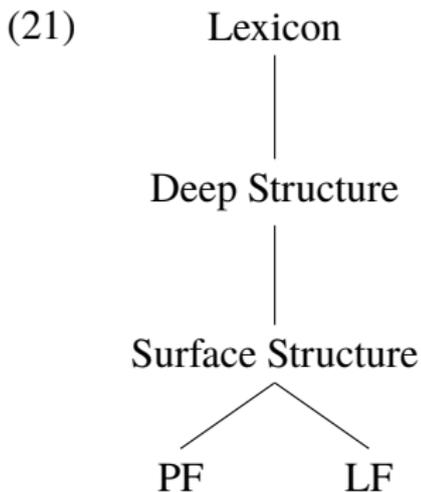
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-  Pesetsky, David (2013) “Phrasal Movement and Its Discontents: Diseases and Diagnoses.” In Cheng, Lisa Lai-Shen and Norbert Corver, eds. *Diagnosing Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 123–157.