

Islands in Sluicing in Polish

1. Preposition Stranding and Sluicing.

Merchant (2001) argues that sluicing cannot strand a proposition in languages where a wh-movement cannot strand a preposition (LF Island). However, consider the following contrast in (1).

Polish does not allow PP stranding in wh-movement of d-linked wh-phrases (1b), and yet sluicing that strands the proposition in (1a) is possible (note that, (1a) can have the interpretation of asking which man of a set of men, and not what kind of man).

Non-d-linked wh-phrases behave as predicted by Merchant (2001). Preposition stranding is impossible in Sluicing and in wh-movement (all the examples below are from Polish) as shown in (2).

The contrast between (1a) and (2a) indicates that as far as preposition stranding sluicing is not bound by the same restrictions as wh-movement, and thus the notion of Preposition Stranding as an LF Island (Merchant 2001) cannot be maintained (see: Almeida&Yoshida 2007, Nevins et. al 2007).

It will be argued that sluicing in Polish can be licensed *both* via wh-movement and other constructions that allow wh-raising via topic/focus movement, and then subsequent deletion.

For example, Polish allows Preposition stranding of d-linked wh-phrases only in a type of cleft construction with no copula and no change in case and number of the wh-word, as shown in (3)

Example (1a) will be argued to be derived by the sluicing of (3a). Whereas example (2a) will be argued to be unacceptable because both possible sluices: (2b) and (1b) are ungrammatical.

2. PF Islands Interacting with LF Islands.

Since Ross (1967) it has been observed that Sluicing alleviates what otherwise would be an ungrammatical wh-movement construction, as shown in (4). Merchant (2001) calls these PF Islands. Lasnik (2001), Fox & Lasnik (2003), Merchant (2006) propose that PF Islands can be alleviated via sluicing because all the offending traces are eliminated during ellipsis. The lack of PF material saves the structure from ungrammaticality. This mechanism is claimed not to be available for LF Islands. However, the contrast in (1) indicates that this cannot be completely correct. Furthermore, LF and PF islands can be alleviated in one single construction. Example (4) is grammatical *even* when the preposition in (4) is omitted. One possibility is that there are two independent mechanisms at work in (4), one alleviating an LF Island, the other a PF Island. Let me show why this is unlikely.

3. Multiple Wh-Sluicing.

Multiple wh-sluicing does not alleviate PF Islands (5a), or d-linked LF Islands (5b):

Note that multiple wh-sluices are possible in Polish (Stjepanovic 2003, Grebenyova 2007), provided they do not alleviate Islands. Thus (5b) is grammatical provided the preposition is not omitted (even though the wh is d-linked, and preposition stranding should be fine as in (1a), or (4)). Maybe PF and LF Island alleviation is a result of independent processes? For example, LF-island violations are instances of pseudo-sluicing (like in Japanese), whereas PF Islands are alleviated because the offending traces are deleted. However, it would be hard to explain why *neither* PF or LF islands can be alleviated in cases of multiple sluicing, whereas single sluicing alleviates both types of Islands. Instead, let us assume that sluicing in Polish can optionally be licensed by wh-movement, or via cleft-like constructions as in (3a). Such a proposal accounts for the possibility of Preposition stranding with d-linked wh-phrases. It predicts that multiple wh-sluices will only be generated via wh-movement (multiple clefts are ungrammatical) and hence cannot alleviate islands of any sort, whereas single wh-sluices can be generated via a cleft and thus can alleviate islands. Finally, it provides an answer why VP ellipsis does not alleviate Islands. This is simply because VP's cannot be clefted.

4. What Licenses Sluicing?

This implies that syntactic identity cannot be a requirement for sluicing in Polish, and most likely, also not in other languages. The proposal eliminates the need to postulate a typology of Islands based on whether they are or are not alleviated via Ellipsis. Moreover, it argues that deletion of phonological material cannot alleviate syntactic violations, thus supporting the idea that ellipsis is just a radical form of de-stressing (Rooth 1992).

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Sluicing, VP Ellipsis, wh-movement, PP stranding, islands.

- (1) a. Maria zatańczyła z jakimś mężczyzną, ale nie wiem którym
 Mary danced with some man but not know which
 ‘Mary danced with some man but I do not know which’ (Polish)
- *b. Którym mężczyzną Maria tańczyła z
 Which man Mary danced with
 ‘Which man did Mary dance with’ (Polish)
- (2) *a. Maria zatańczyła z kimś, ale nie wiem kim
 Mary danced with someone but not know who
 ‘Mary danced with someone but I do not know who’
- *b. Kim Maria tańczyła z?
 Who Mary danced with
 ‘Who did Mary dance with’
- (3) a. Którym to z mężczyzną Maria zatańczyła?
 Which it with man Mary danced
 ‘It was with which man that Mary danced’
- *b. Kim to z Maria tańczyła?
 Who it with Mary danced
 It was with who that Mary danced’
- (4) Opozycja wybierze polityka który dogada się z jakąś grupą ale nie wiem
 opposition choose politician who agree refl with some group but not know
 (z) która grupa—opozycja wybierze polityka który dogada się
 (with) which group—opposition choose politician who agree refl
 ‘The opposition will choose a politician who will agree with some group but I do not know with
 which [group the opposition will chose politician who will agree]’
- (5) *a. Opozycja wybierze jakiegoś polityka który dogada się z jakąś grupą
 Opposition choose some politician who agree refl with some group
 ale nie wiem którego z którą
 but not know which with which
 ‘The opposition will choose some politician who will agree with some group but I do not
 know which politician with which group’
- b. Jakiś polityk dogada się z jakąś grupą ale nie wiem który *(z) którą
 Some politician agree refl with some group but not know which (with) which
 ‘Some politician will agree with some group but I do not know which politician with
 which group’

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