"On Wh-Movement"

1. Wh-movement

Some ideas circa 1976:

(1) **SSC/PIC**
   - No movement rule may involve X and Y in
     \[ X \ldots [ \alpha \ldots Y \ldots ] \ldots X \ldots \]
   - where \( \alpha \) contains a [subject that c-commands Y] or is "propositional".

(2) **the COMP escape hatch**
   - where Y is not in COMP of \( \alpha \).

(3) **Free deletion in COMP:**
   - wh-phrase becomes null
   - that becomes null
   - for becomes null

(4) **Doubly-Filled COMP filter**
   - Only one of wh or C may occupy COMP.

(5) **Two Movement Rules**
   a. Move NP.  \([\text{q}-\text{features}!]\)
   b. Move wh-phrase.  \([\text{wh}-\text{features}!]\)

(6) **The rule of wh-movement has the following general characteristics:**
   a. it leaves a gap
   b. where there is a bridge, there is an apparent violation of subjacency, PIC, and SSC
   c. it observes CNPC
   d. it observes wh-island constraints  \([49]\)

(7) **Goal of the paper:**
   - "Where we find the configuration [(6)] in some system of data, can we explain it on the assumption that the configuration results from wh-movement?"

2. Comparatives

- In the literature at the time: perhaps the gap arises from deletion.
- But comparatives show the stigmata of (AP) wh-movement.

(8) **Over wh-word may show up**
   a. John is taller than (what) Mary is.  \([51]\)
   b. John is taller than (what) Mary told us that Bill is.

(9) **Shows bridge/non-bridge and other island contrasts**
   a. Mary isn’t the same as [she was five __ years ago]
   b. Mary isn’t the same as [John believes [that Bill claimed [that she was __
      five years ago] ]]
   c. *Mary isn’t the same as [John believes [Bill’s claim [that she was __
      five years ago]]]
   d. *Mary isn’t the same as [I wonder [whether she was __ five years ago]]

(10) **Strong crossover in comparatives** (Bresnan 1975)
   a. More students flunked than __ thought they __ would flunk.
   b. *More students flunked than they __ thought __ would flunk.

(11) **Analysis:**
   - More students flunked than \([\text{wh}-\text{many} \ \text{students} \ [\ldots \ \text{gap} \ldots]]\)
   - Note: the examples are complicated by
     1. extraposition of the comparative clause; and
     2. non-obvious semantics

3. Topicalization

- Is Topicalization just like left-dislocation?

(12) **Left-dislocation**
   a. This book, I think you should read it.
   b. As for this book, I think you should read it.

- No! Left-dislocation does not look like movement, but topicalization does.

(13) **Topicalization shows bridge/non-bridge and other island contrasts**
   b. This book, I asked Bill to get his students to read.
   c. *This book, I accept the argument that John should read.
4. Indirect Questions and Relative Clauses: finite and infinitival

- The point: $S'$ comes in both finite and non-finite flavors

**Questions**

(20) Finite indirect questions show bridge/non-bridge and other island contrasts
a. I wonder [who John saw].
b. I wonder [who John believed [that Mary would claim [that Bill would visit $t_1$]]].
c. *I wonder [who John believed [the claim [that Bill would visit $t_1$]]].
d. *$Who_{t_2}$ did you wonder [who$_1$$_t_1$ saw $t_2$].

(21) Infinitival indirect questions show bridge/non-bridge and other island contrasts
a. I wonder [who to see].
b1. I wonder [who to order Mary [to promise [to visit $]]].
b2. I wonder [who to persuade Mary [who to persuade Mary [to promise [to visit $]]]].
c. *I wonder [who to insist on [the principle [that Bill should visit]]].
d. *$Who_{t_2}$ do you wonder [what$_1$$_t_1$ to give $t_2$$t_1$].
   *$What_{t_2}$ do you wonder [to whom$_1$$_t_1$ to give $t_2$$t_1$].

- Note: The impossibility of an overt subject for the infinitives in (21) was a mystery for 1976 syntax. Case theory lay 2-3 years in the future.

**Finite Relative clauses**

(22) Finite relative clauses: bare $wh$
- a. *the person [whom that I met ___] $*$wh-that
- b. the person [whom I met ___] ok $wh$
- c. the person [that I met ___] ok that
- d. the person [I met ___] ok zero

(23) Finite relative clauses: PP pied-piping
- a. *the person [with whom that Mary spoke ___ at the party] $*$wh-that
- b. the person [with whom Mary spoke ___ at the party] ok $wh$
- c. *the person [that Mary spoke ___ at the party] $*$that
- d. *the person [Mary spoke ___ at the party] $*$zero
5. Tough-constructions

(27) a. It is easy (for us) to please John
   b. John is easy (for us) to please.

• Movement or deletion? Where does the subject get its θ-role from?

(28) θ-role from downstairs?
   *John is easy to please Mary.

(29) Movement?
   a. %Close tabs are easy (for us) to keep on Bill.
   b. %Headway is easy (for us) to make in this car.

but: c. *There is easy (for us) to believe __ are multiple solutions to the problem.
   compare: d. %The planet is easy (for us) to believe __ exists.

(30) Tough constructions show bridge/non-bridge and other island contrasts
   a. John is easy (for us) to please t
   b. (i) John is easy (for us) to convince Bill to do business with t
      (ii) John is easy (for us) to convince Bill to arrange for Mary to meet t
   c. John is easy (for us) to convince Bill that he should meet t
   d. John is easy (for us) to convince Bill to tell Mary that Tom should meet t
   e. (i) *John is easy (for us) to convince Bill of the need for him to meet t
      (ii) *John is easy (for us) to describe to Bill a plan to assassinate t
   f. (i) *what3 is John fun (for us) [(who1) to give t2 to t1]
      (ii) *who2 are the presents fun (for us) [(which1) to give t1 t2]
      (iii) *[to whom]3 are the presents fun (for us) [(which1) to give t1 t2]

"In short, the basic properties of easy-to-please constructions follow directly from the assumptions we have already made, assuming that here too wh-movement is crucially involved. The latter assumption is particularly natural in this case, since we have analogous forms in which the wh-phrase may directly appear..."

(31) John is an easy person to please.

(32) a. this is an easy violin on which to play sonatas
   b. this is a pleasant room in which to work

"Whatever the correct analysis of these structures may be, it seems clear that they involve, at some level, a phrase such as (33), as an adjectival modifier:

(33) a. easy - on which to play sonatas (violin)
   b. pleasant - in which to work (room)