

# Parataxis and Coreference in Early Modern English Correlatives

Robert Truswell, Center for Cognitive Studies, Tufts University  
robert.truswell@tufts.edu

## The Data

Early Modern English had a relative-like construction (call it the *Leftward Island Construction*, or LIC) consisting of a *wh*-phrase at the left edge of an island, which itself is at the left edge of a clause.

- (1) a. In the very heat of these hurliments, the English burnt one of the milles beyond the water, and the daie following the other, [[which, when the French endeavoured to save \_\_\_\_], they were so galed by two demie-culveringes from the trenches, that they were constreynded to abandon the enterprise].
- b. Sweet Harte I haue sent by this bearer fourteen woodcockes and a brace of feasants which came to me by chance very fortunately. If you will, you may send them to my Lady Knyvett, [[which if you doe \_\_\_\_], I pray lett this bearer cary them and remember my humble servis to my Lor: and Lady].

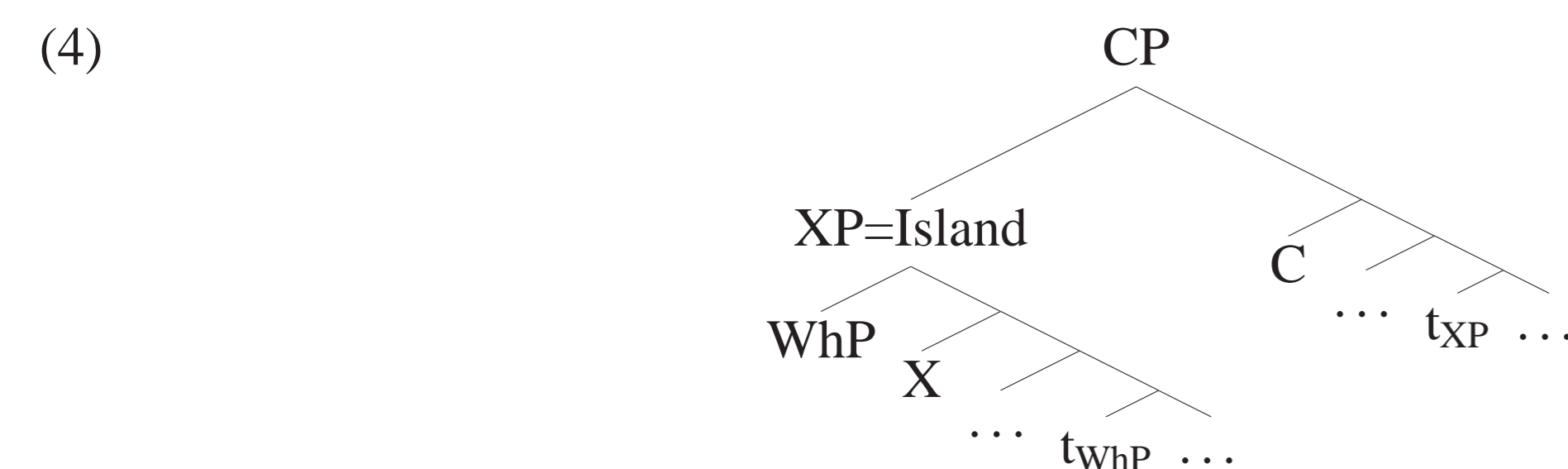
The *wh*-phrase is never separated from the island, which suggests that it remains internal to the island.

- (2) a. \*... which I think that [when the French endeavoured to save \_\_\_\_], ...  
b. \*... which I promise that [if you doe \_\_\_\_], ...

## This Is Not Island Piedpiping

A natural analysis, based on English possessor piedpiping or Basque clausal piedpiping, is this:

- (3) a. The *wh*-phrase moves to [Spec,IslandP];  
b. From there, it passes its [Wh] feature to IslandP via Spec-Head agreement and projection;  
c. IslandP undergoes A'-movement to the left edge of the relative clause.



This analysis overgenerates, and so must be rejected:

- (5) We never find a clear gap corresponding to  $t_{XP}$  in (4). Nothing like this:  
a. \*John, [[who<sub>i</sub> [\_\_\_\_<sub>i</sub> and Bill]]<sub>j</sub> Susan talked to \_\_\_\_<sub>j</sub> last night], ...  
b. \*John, [[who<sub>i</sub> [a friend of \_\_\_\_<sub>i</sub>]]<sub>j</sub> Michael thinks [\_\_\_\_<sub>j</sub> talked to Susan last night]], ...
- (6) The island piedpiping analysis leads us to expect parallel examples across all A'-constructions, but there is nothing similar in, e.g., *wh*-questions:  
a. \*Which married Gentleman (did) a young Gentlewoman seeing \_\_\_\_ {fell/did fall} a laughing?  
b. \*I wonder [which married Gentleman a young Gentlewoman seeing fell a laughing].

This poster aims to propose a more viable alternative to this obvious first pass.

## LICs Are Correlatives

Correlatives are a family of constructions. The central members are comparative correlatives and relative correlatives, as in Hindi:

- (7) a. [[Jitnaa suuraj chamk-aa] [utnii(-hii) ThanD baRh-ii]].  
how.much sun shine.PF that.much(-only) cold increase.PF  
“The more the sun shone, the colder it got.” (den Dikken 2005:499)
- b. [[jo laRkii khaRii hai] [vo lambii hai]]  
REL girl standing is DEM girl tall is  
“The girl who is standing is tall” (Srivastav 1991:639)

Less canonical correlatives are, for example, *if...then* constructions:

- (8) a. If he studies, then he will pass  
b. And because I tell you the truth, therefore ye beleve me not.  
c. And though the upper part of Weredale be not very fertile of corne; yet ys there very fine gresse in the dale self wher the ryver passith.

Even less canonical correlatives omit the *then*:

- (9) a. If he studies, he will pass.  
b. Because I sayde vnto the, I sawe the vnder the fygge tree, thou belevest.  
c. For though that he ne foond no good womman, certes, many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe.

Least canonical of all have no overt element introducing either major constituent:

- (10) a. he being gone a visiting his Friends at Black-Ladies, I writ to him  
b. Male-Carps will follow a Female, and... she putting on a seeming coyness, they force her through weeds and flags  
c. Oronoko coming from the wars (which were now ended) after he had made his court to his grandfather, he thought in honour he ought to make a visit to Imoinda

### (11) Necessary and sufficient conditions for correlativity:

- a. Left-dislocation: two constituents in a loose, base-generated syntactic relation (which I will call *parataxis*), the first of which is syntactically dependent on the second;  
b. (?)The left-dislocated constituent is clausal?

### (12) Optional properties: the more of these a correlative possesses, the more canonical it is:

- a. A pair of semantically linked elements introducing the two constituents;  
b. An A'-dependency within each constituent

On this characterisation, LICs fit clearly within the correlative family, some being more canonical than others. This immediately explains the absence of island traces in LICs (5): left-dislocation constructions are base-generated (Cinque 1990), and so there is no movement of the island which could leave a trace.

## Conclusions

- (18) a. LICs are syntactically unembedded correlatives.  
b. The referential dependency of the *wh*-phrase in an LIC on its antecedent is due to the availability of an E-type interpretation of that phrase.

## Consequences of the Correlative Analysis

If LICs are correlatives, then they **can't** be relatives, at least not in anything like the Modern English sense of the word. This is because the island containing the *wh*-phrase is syntactically subordinate to the second half of the LIC. Treating the entire LIC as a relative on the basis of something contained within this island would be like treating an entire CLLD construction as a topic on the basis of the topichood of the LD constituent.

- (13) a. [CP<sub>Not a Topic</sub> [DP<sub>Topic</sub> ] ]  
b. [CP<sub>Not an A' construction</sub> [CP<sub>A' construction</sub> Wh ... ] ]

Possibly because of this, they also seem to be unembedded: they do not form a constituent with their antecedent. This means that they are frequently separated from their antecedent by a full stop or other “heavy” punctuation (which is very rare in regular LICs).

- (14) they would earnestly contend to maintaine the faith; which was once delivered vnto the Saints. [[Which faith because wee cannot maintaine \_\_\_\_ except wee knowe perfectly, first against whom, secondly in what sort it must be maintained]; therefore in the former three verses of that parcell of Scripture which I haue read, the enimies of the crosse of Christ are plainely described].

Also, LICs never occur anywhere but at the right edge of the sentence containing their antecedent. This makes sense if they are actually not part of that sentence, but an independent sentential unit following that containing their antecedent.

- (15) a. receive then this Draught [[with which when thou art refresh'd \_\_\_\_], thou mayst more strongly proceed to other Matters which yet remain].  
b. \*this Draught [[with which when thou art refresh'd \_\_\_\_], thou mayst more strongly proceed to other Matters which yet remain], contains only water, malt, hops, and yeast.

Conclusion: We can't rely on the syntactic configuration to give us the relative-like interpretation of an LIC, as LICs are possible even when there is no syntactic relation at all between the *wh*-phrase and its antecedent.

## EModE *Wh*-words as E-type Pronouns

The standard tool for describing a referential dependency on a non-c-commanding linguistic antecedent is the E-type analysis, which treats a pronoun as a covert definite description. This leads us to look for constraints on the distribution of LICs outside the syntax, in terms of discourse accessibility and salience. The fronting of the *wh*-phrase to the left edge of the island must be treated as a purely formal operation, with no interpretive consequences, as is common for intermediate stages of successive-cyclic movement.

The transfer of a standard E-type analysis to EModE *wh*-phrases has two wrinkles, neither of them serious:

- (16) We never find LICs with nonlinguistic antecedents. This may not be true of regular E-type pronouns, but is true of surface anaphors (Hankamer & Sag 1976) like *therefore*, which is ungrammatical without an overt antecedent, but doesn't require any syntactic relation to that antecedent.  
a. \*Which was interesting [no linguistic antecedent].  
b. \*Therefore I should leave [no linguistic antecedent].
- (17) The *wh*-constituent in an LIC is not always a bare *wh*-pronoun, but frequently a full phrase (e.g. (14)). This mirrors the well-known analysis of pronouns as intransitive determiners.