The ECP
November, 2018

(1) ECP (Empty Category Principle) 1st version:
A trace must be governed

(2) *John is illegal [CP[IP t to park here]] (CP is a barrier to government; non-finite Infl isn't a governor)

(3) ECP 2nd version:
A trace must be properly governed (Proper government is government by a lexical head)

(4) *Who do you think [that [t solved the problem]] (t is not properly governed)
(5) Which problem do you think [that [John solved t]] (t is properly governed by solve)

(6) Who do you think [ t [ t solved the problem]] (t is not lexically governed)
(7) α properly governs β if
   i. α governs β and α is lexical ('lexical government')
   or ii. α binds β and β is (zero) subjacent to α ('antecedent government')

(8) *Who do you think [CP t' [C that [IP t solved the problem]]]
(9) Either that somehow blocks antecedent government that somehow turns C' into a barrier for antecedent government

(10) ?*Which car did you leave [before Mary fixed t] Subjacency - an 'adjunct island'
(11) *How did you leave [before Mary fixed the car t] (t is not properly governed, so the ex. violates both Subjacency and the ECP; and maybe ECP causes extreme badness.)
(12) Similarly for all islands: extraction of an adjunct in violation of Subjacency always yields crashingly bad results.

(13) Lasnik and Saito technology: A trace that is properly governed is marked +γ; one that is not is marked -γ. The ECP (which applies at LF) says *[-γ]. Chomsky (1986)
alternative notation: A trace that is not properly governed is marked *.

<<(14) ✓How do you think [ t [(that) [ Mary fixed the car t]]] (Why no "that-trace effect with adjuncts?)
(15) Lasnik and Saito proposal: Adjunct traces are not gamma-marked in overt syntax (maybe because they aren't present yet). In LF (as in overt syntax) that can be deleted.
(16) Argument traces are gamma-marked in overt syntax (or we lose the that-trace effect for subjects).>>

(17)a *How2 do you wonder [when1 [John said t1 [ t2' [ Mary solved the problem t2]]]]
vs.
b ??What problem2 do you wonder [when1 [John said t1 [ t2' [ Mary solved t2]]]]
Intermediate traces must be properly governed. ($t_2$ in (17a) is antecedent governed by $t_2'$; so it must be the latter the is not properly governed in violation of the ECP.)

Further, gamma-marking must be specifically at levels. If $t_2'$ could properly govern $t_2$ and then delete, (17a) would be a 'mere' Subjacency violation like (17b).

**Chomsky's version** of this, from the mid-1980's: Gamma-marking happens in the course of the derivation, and "adjuncts must be fully represented". That is, all the traces in the chain of the moved adjunct must remain, while intermediate traces of the moved argument can delete.

(21) *Who left why        vs. ✓Who bought what

(22) Suppose all WH-phrases move eventually, creating an adjunction structure.

(23) LF: CP
    
    who_1
    why_2       who_1
    IP
    t_1 left  t_2

    ✓

(24) *Who $t_1$ said [] [ John left why]]     Again, intermediate traces must be properly governed.

(25) ?*Which car did you leave [before Mary fixed $t$]

(26) Who left before Mary fixed which car        Subjacency doesn't constrain LF movement. (Huang)

(27) ?*What do you believe the claim that Lisi bought $t$  (Subjacency: 'Complex NP constraint'. There is actually a difficult puzzle here, since by the core Barriers theory, there will actually not be any barriers, assuming that a head N $\theta$-governs its clausal complement. We put this problem aside here.)

(28) ✓Ni xiangxin Lisi mai-le sheme de shuofa     Chinese
    you believe Lisi buy-Asp what claim

(29) *Why do you believe [the claim [that [ Lisi left $t$]]]

(30) *Ni xiangxin [] [ Lisi weisheme likai] de shuofa     Chinese
    you believe Lisi why leave claim

(31) ??What_1 do [you wonder [why_2 [Lisi bought $t_1$ $t_2$]]]     'WH-island constraint'

(32) *Why_2 do [you wonder [what_1 [Lisi bought $t_1$ $t_2$]]]

(33) ni xiang-xhidao [Lisi weisheme mai-le sheme]     Huang
    you wonder Lisi why bought what
(34) OK LF (33) can have the indicated interpretation.

(35) * LF (33) cannot have the indicated interpretation.

(36) And similarly for all islands. This is by far the most powerful argument I know for covert movement.

(37) Mali renwei [[Yuehan weisheme likai]]
Mary thinks John why leave
"Why does Mary think [John left t]"

(38) Long distance interpretation (hence covert movement) of adjuncts is fine when there is no island.