Q: Are English relative clauses always strong islands?
A: No; island effects are substantially reduced in certain environments.

**Background**
- RCs are "selective" islands in a handful of other languages (subextraction is tolerated in limited environments).
- Mainland Scandinavian (Danish [5], Swedish [4], Norwegian [9])
- Romance languages [3]
- Hebrew [7]
- Environments that facilitate extraction in above languages:
  - Existential clause
  - Predicates like know (1st pers. subject)
  - DP predicate (Hebrew)

**Why investigate English RCs?**
- Limited earlier work identified unusually acceptable examples of subextraction that seem parallel to examples from the above languages.

**Existential**
*This is the child who there is nobody who is willing to accept.* [6]

**Predicates like know**
*That's one trick that I've known a lot of people who've been taken in by.* [2]

**DP predicate**
*Isn't that the song that Paul and Stevie were the only ones who wanted to record?* [2]

**References**

**Findings & Conclusions**
- DD scores
  - object: 0.62
  - predicate: 0.16
  - existential: 0.26

**Findings**
- Island effects in *object* (*p*<0.001) and existential (*p*<0.038), but not in *predicate* conditions (*p*<0.124).
- Differences-in-differences (DD) scores used as a proxy for island strength ([1]) indicate that RCs are over twice as "porous" in *predicate* and existential environments than in *object* environments.

**Experiment 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment:</th>
<th>acceptability judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-island, existential</td>
<td>3×2×2 design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long, short</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Object**
- Who *thinks that Courtney saw that only one art collector bid on this painting?*
- Which painting do you think that Courtney saw that only one art collector bid on? [7]
- Who *thinks that Courtney saw the only art collector who bid on this painting?*
- Which painting do you think that Courtney saw the only art collector who bid on? [7]

**Predicate**
- Who *thinks that Courtney believes that only one art collector bid on this painting?*
- Which painting do you think that Courtney believes that only one art collector bid on? [7]
- Who *thinks that Courtney believes that she is the only art collector who bid on this painting?*
- Which painting do you think that Courtney believes that she is the only art collector who bid on? [7]

**Existential**
- Who *thinks that there is only one art collector bidding on this painting?*
- Which painting do you think that there is only one art collector bidding on? [7]
- Who *thinks that there is only one art collector who bid on this painting?*
- Which painting do you think that there is only one art collector who bid on? [7]

**Experiments 2 & 3**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Environment:</th>
<th>acceptability judgment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-island, existential</td>
<td>2×2×2 design</td>
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<tr>
<td>island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short, long</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Infinitival**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure:</th>
<th>acceptability judgment</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>non-island</td>
<td>2×2 design</td>
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<tr>
<td>island</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Experiment 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>EXP. 1 (n=46)</th>
<th>EXP. 2 (n=46)</th>
<th>EXP. 3 (n=46)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>object, predicate, existential</td>
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<tr>
<td>LENGTH:</td>
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<tr>
<td>short, long</td>
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</table>

**Findings**

**Experiment 2**
- No island effects for infinitival RCs in either the *predicate* or existential environment (*p*=0.563).

**Experiment 3**
- Equal decrement in *predicate* and *object* (*p*=0.673) ≠ infinitival RCs unselectively allow extraction [1].
- Finite RCs in English are more tolerant of subextraction in environments that facilitate subextraction in Hebrew, Scandinavian, and Romance languages. A unified analysis is warranted (in terms of either structure of processing).