Islands: The Empirical Landscape

WH-Island Condition

(1)   a. This is the kind of problem that I wonder if people will ever solve .
         b. This is the way I wonder if people will ever solve the drug-problem .
         c. These are the kind of people that you never know if will ever solve their problems.

Adjunct Island Condition

(2)   a. This is one problem that I'd go to jail before I'd solve in that way.
         b. This is one way that I'd go to jail before I'd solve that problem .
         c. He's the kind of guy that they'd send to jail before would solve the problem in such a way.

CNPC (N-Complement Case)

(3)   a. The drug problem is one that the administration has made many protestations that it was about to solve .
         b. This is the way that the administration has made many protestations that it was about to solve the drug-problem .
         c. These are the policies that the administration has made many protestations that would help solve the drug-problem.

CNPC (Relative Clause Case)

(4)   a. Is this the problem that Susan was the only one who was able to solve ?
         b. Is this the way that Susan was the only one who was able to solve the problem ?
         c. These are the people that this was the only problem which could solve.

Subject Condition

(5)   This is the kind of problem that [discussion of] makes people nervous.

(6)   a. This is the kind of problem that [our being able to solve] is open to serious doubt.
         b. This is how [our being able to solve the drug-problem] is open to serious doubt.

    c. These are people that [being able to solve the drug-problem] is open to serious doubt.

(7) plan government does to the what do

Some Observations

1. constructable
2. semantically and prosodically interpretable
3. degree of (un)acceptability depends on the extraction site
4. cumulativity?

Other Factors Affecting Acceptability

Finiteness

(8) a. This is the kind of problem which people seldom know what to do about.
    b. This is the kind of problem which people never know whether to try to solve or not.

(9) This is the kind of food that I always throw up after eating.

(10) a. This is the kind of problem that people always object to any attempt to solve.
    b. This is the kind of problem that people always resist any suggestion that we should try to solve.

(11) This is a problem that I don't have anyone to talk to about.

(12) This is a problem that for us to be able to solve would be great.

D-Linking

(13) a. Which of these two books were you wondering if we should read?
    b. What were you wondering if we should read?
    c. What in God's name were you wondering if we should read?

Comorovski (1989), Comorovski (1996), especially Chapter Five.

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