

Syntax 2

Some syntactically pleasing headlines:

Miners Refuse To Work After Death

Enraged Cow Injured Farmer With Axe

Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim

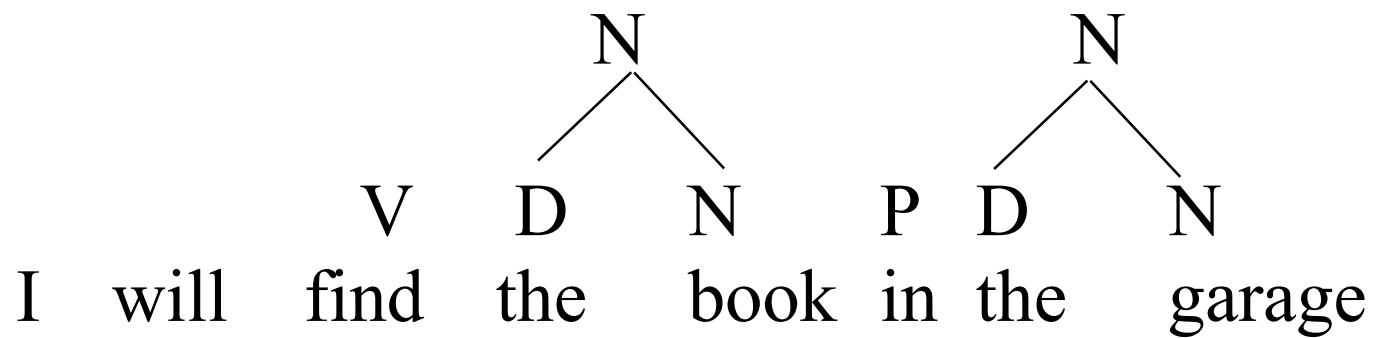
Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter

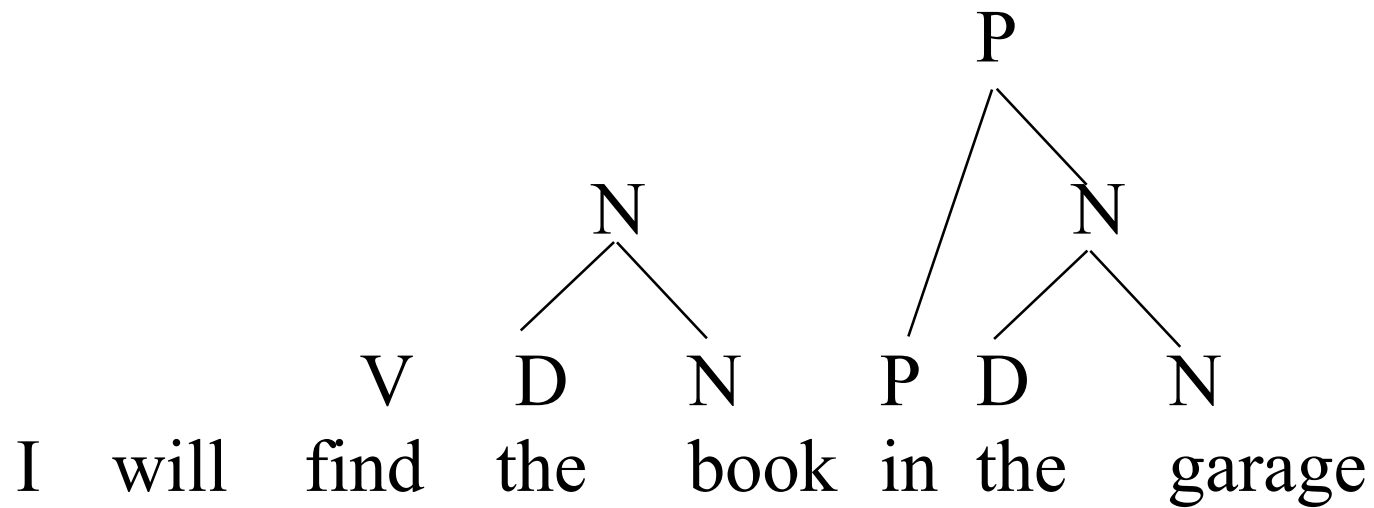
British Left Waffles On Falkland Islands Lansing

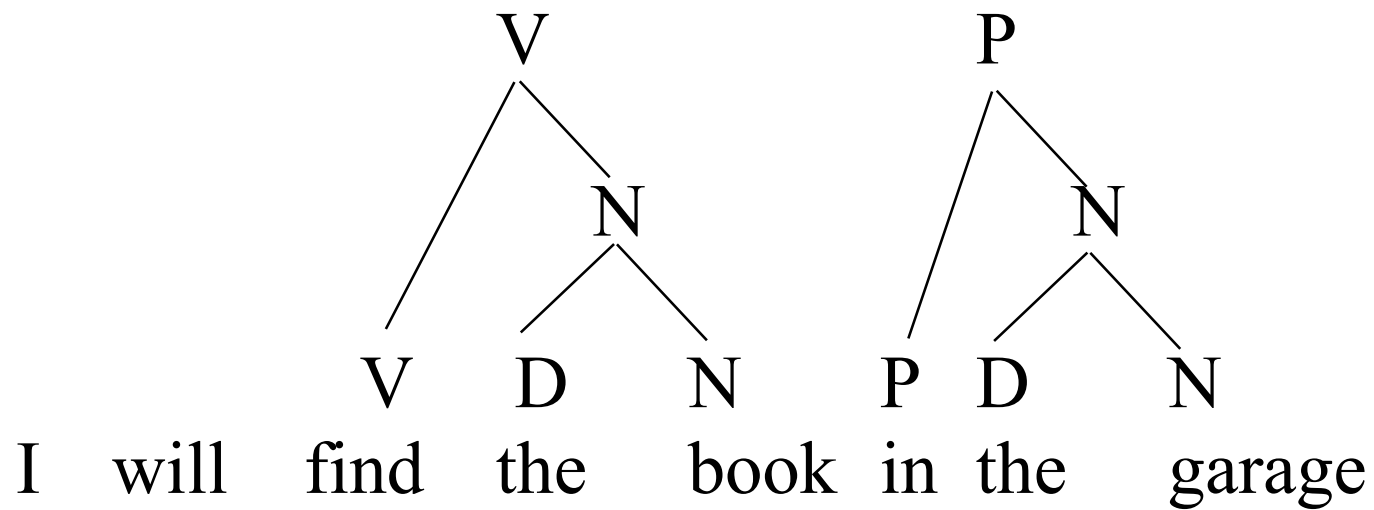
Residents Can Drop Off Trees

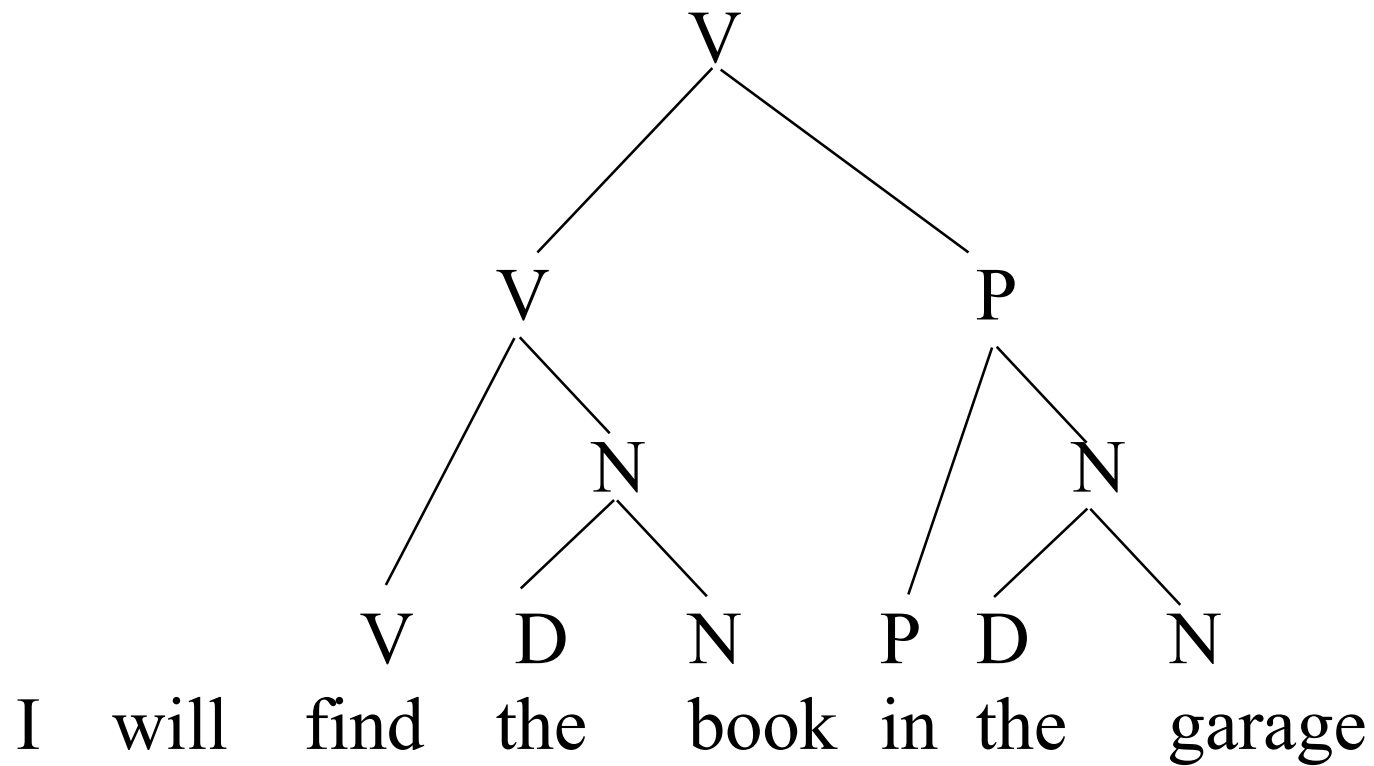
Ban On Soliciting Dead In Trotwood

Kids Make Nutritious Snacks

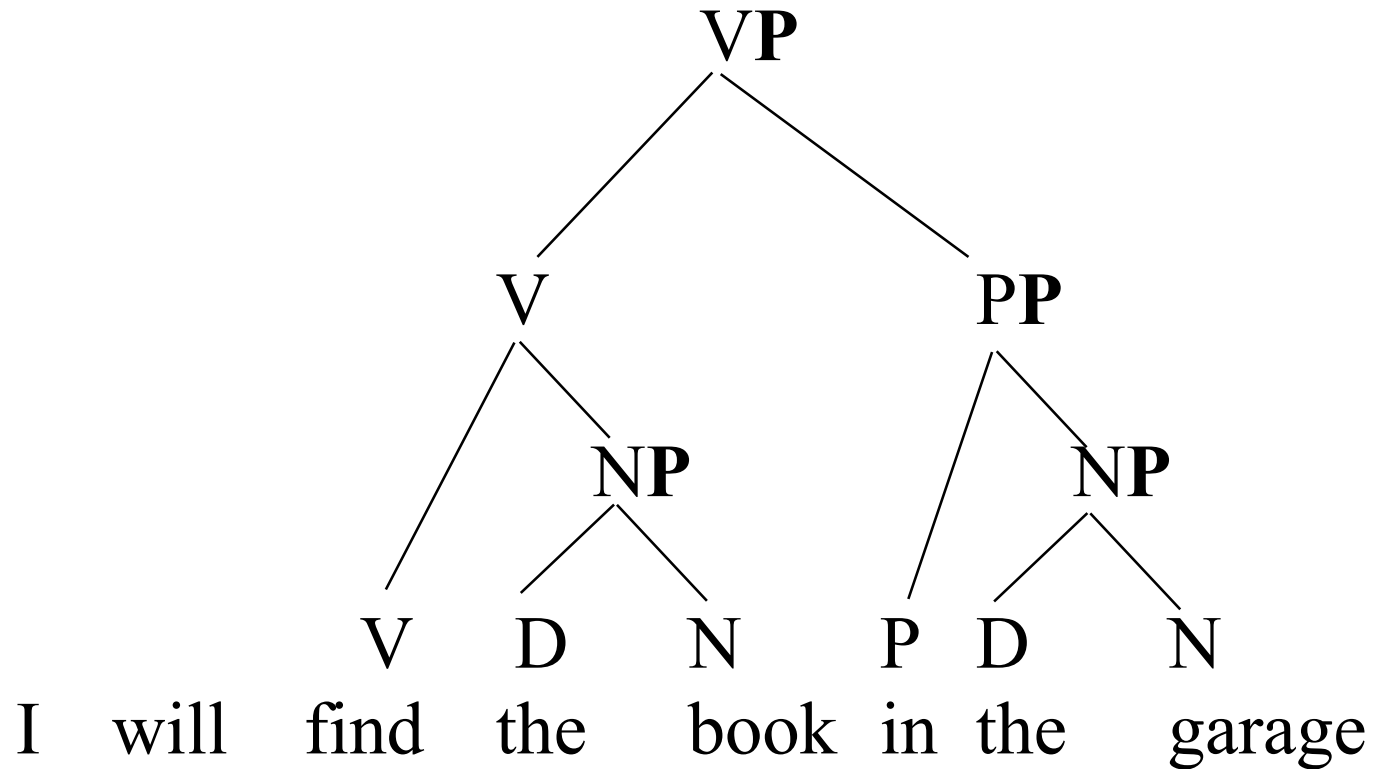






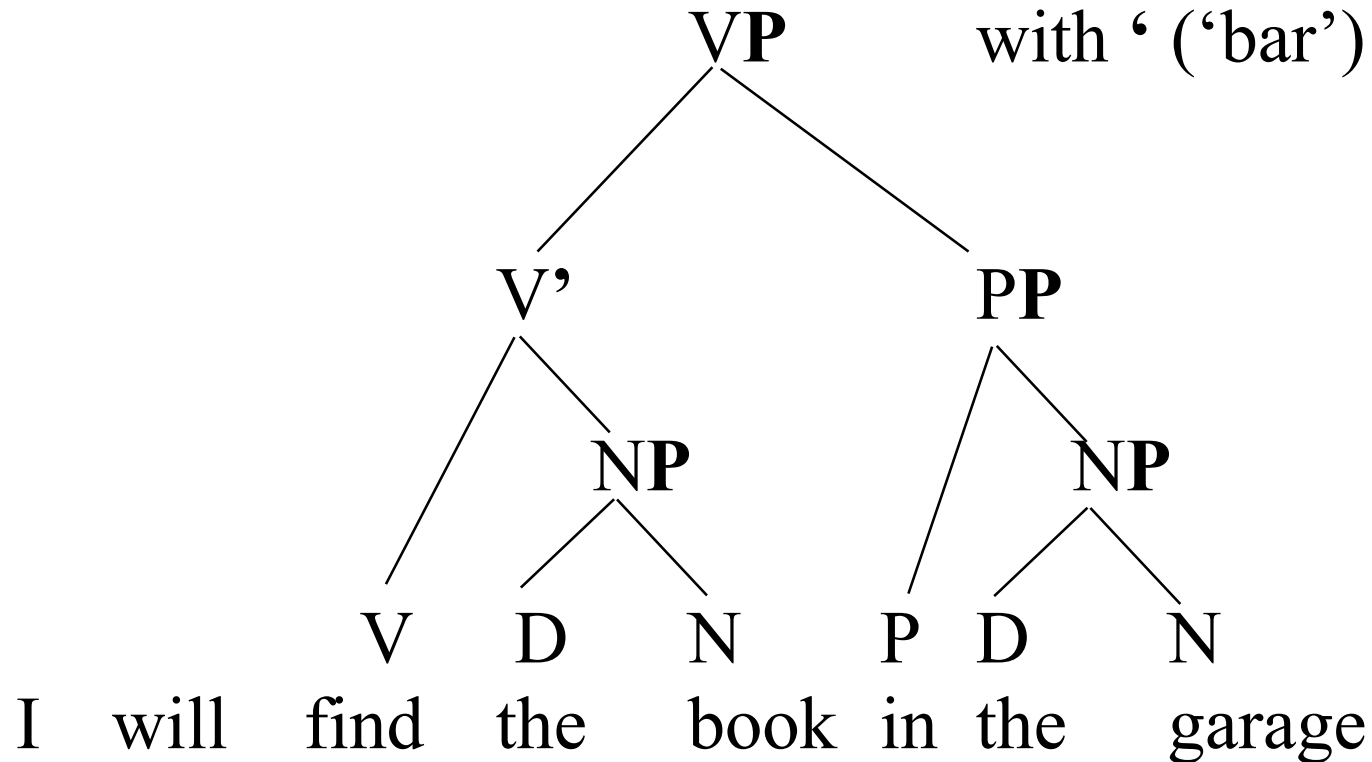


convention: we typically mark the highest node with a given label with **P** (for ‘phrase’)



convention: we typically mark the highest node with a given label with **P** (for ‘phrase’)

Nodes bigger than just N, V, etc. but not **P** are marked with ‘ (‘bar’)



The tree that we just built has a PP modifying a VP.

PP can also modify NP:

I will find books **about syntax**.

Some consequences...

recursion:

Since NP can contain PP, and PP can contain NP, there is no reason to ever stop talking.

recursion:

Since NP can contain PP, and PP can contain NP, there is no reason to ever stop talking.

*books [about islands [on lakes [on islands
[on lakes...]]]]*

competence vs. performance:

You couldn't actually utter an infinitely long noun phrase, but your grammar is capable of producing one.

ambiguity

I shot an elephant in my pajamas.

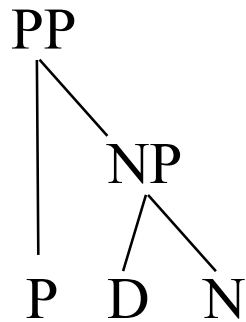
ambiguity

I shot an elephant in my pajamas.
...how he got in my pajamas, I'll never know.

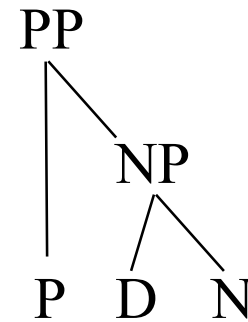
--Groucho Marx, *Animal Crackers*

ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



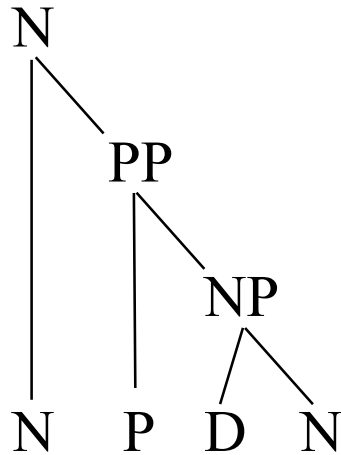
shot an elephant in my pajamas



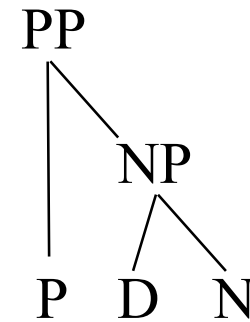
shot an elephant in my pajamas

ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



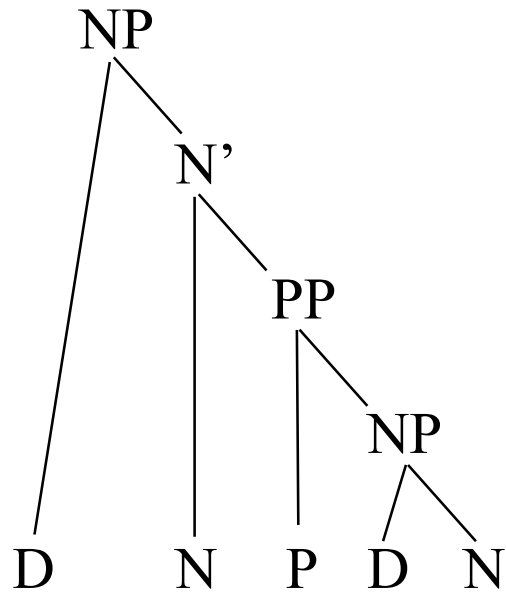
shot an elephant in my pajamas



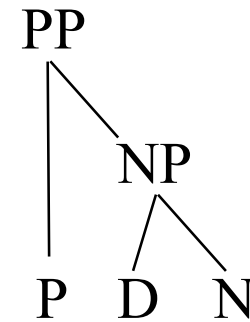
shot an elephant in my pajamas

ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



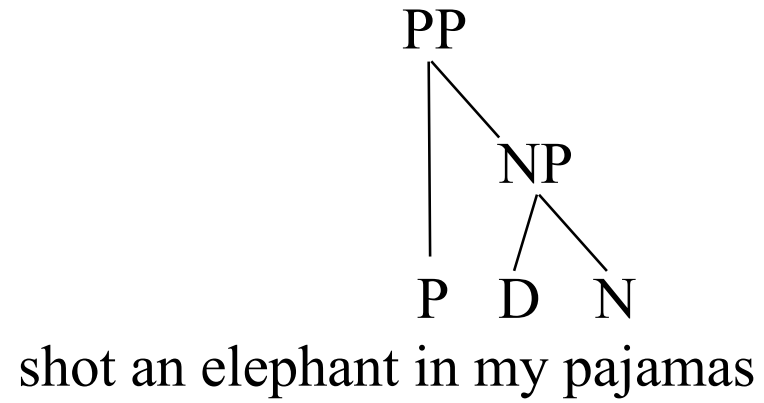
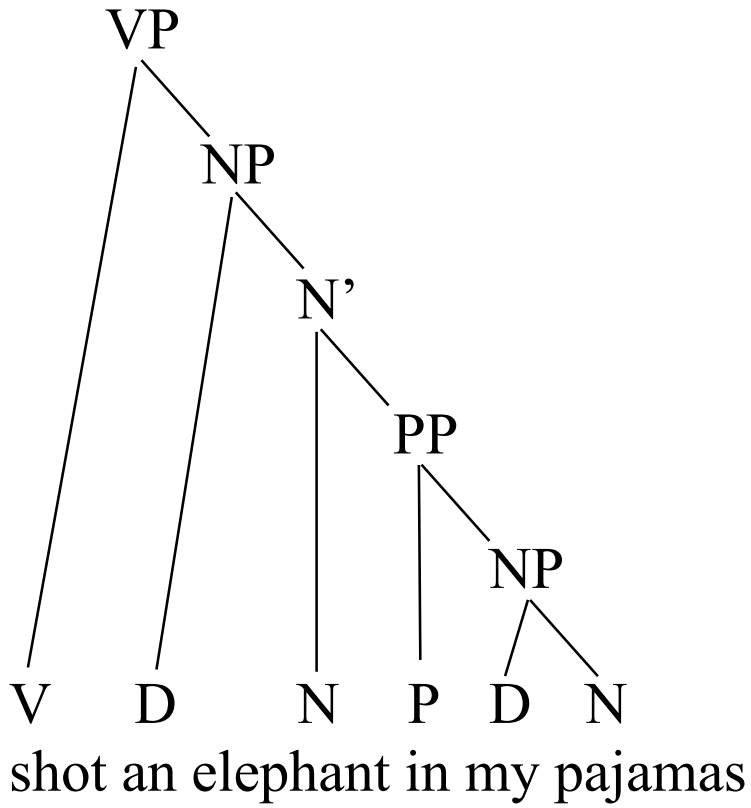
shot an elephant in my pajamas



shot an elephant in my pajamas

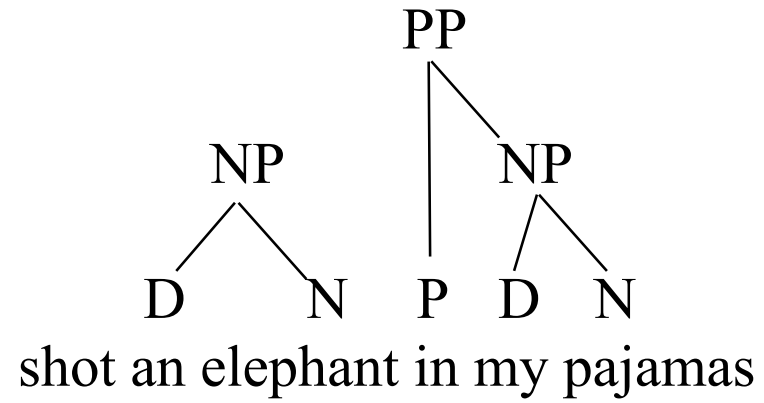
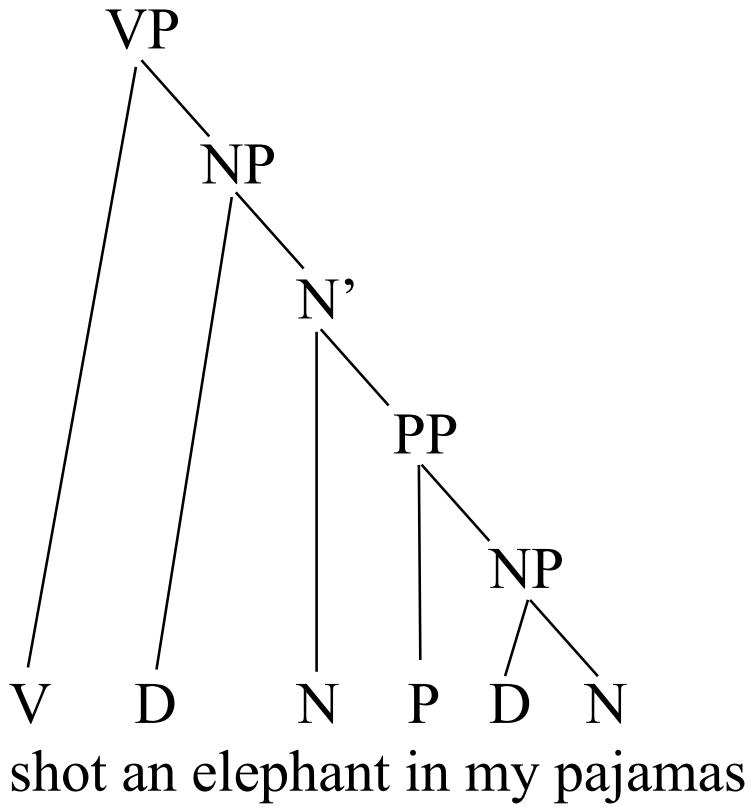
ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



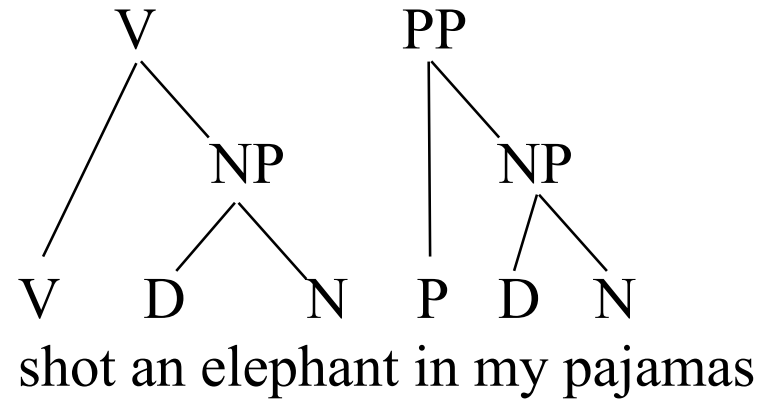
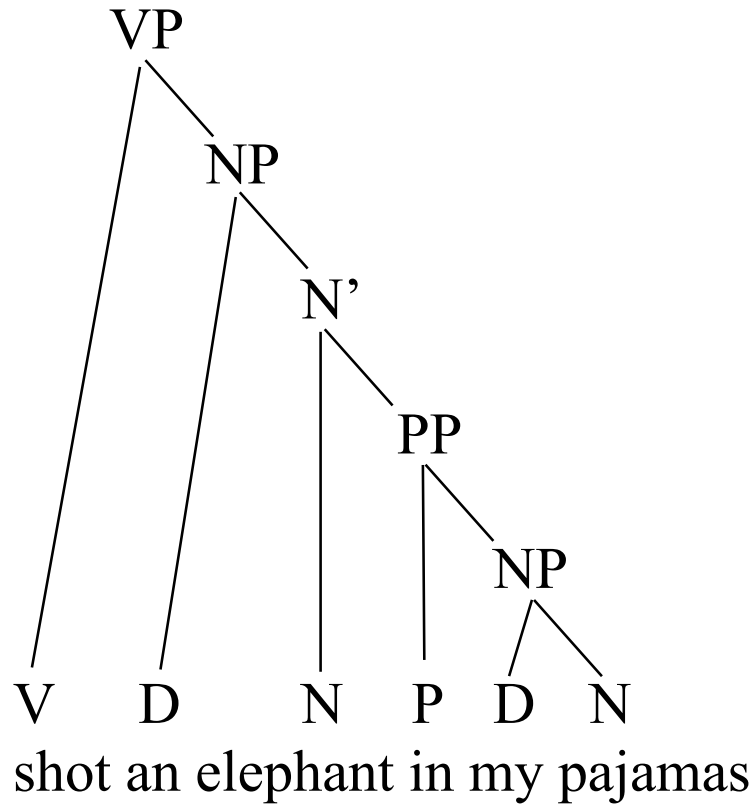
ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



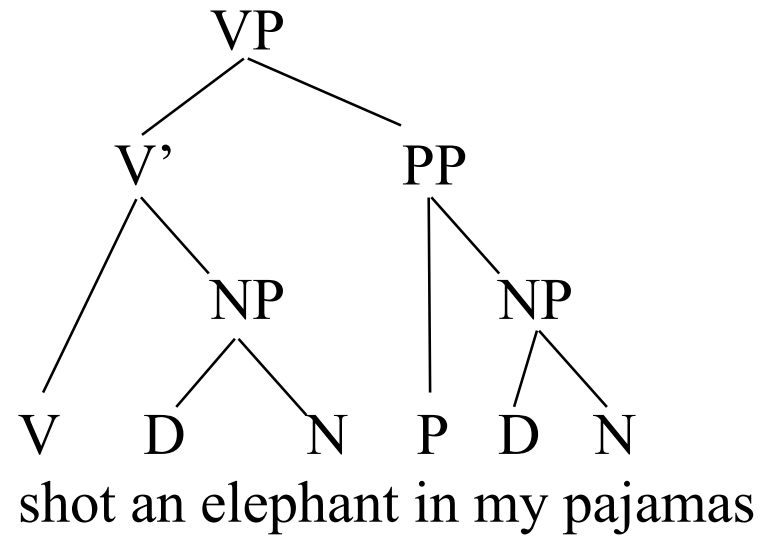
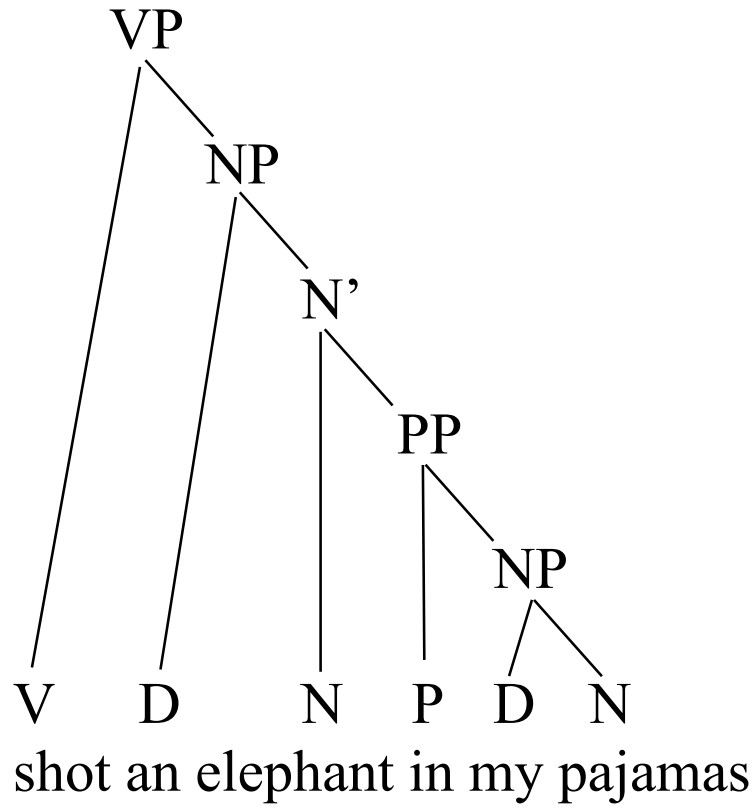
ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



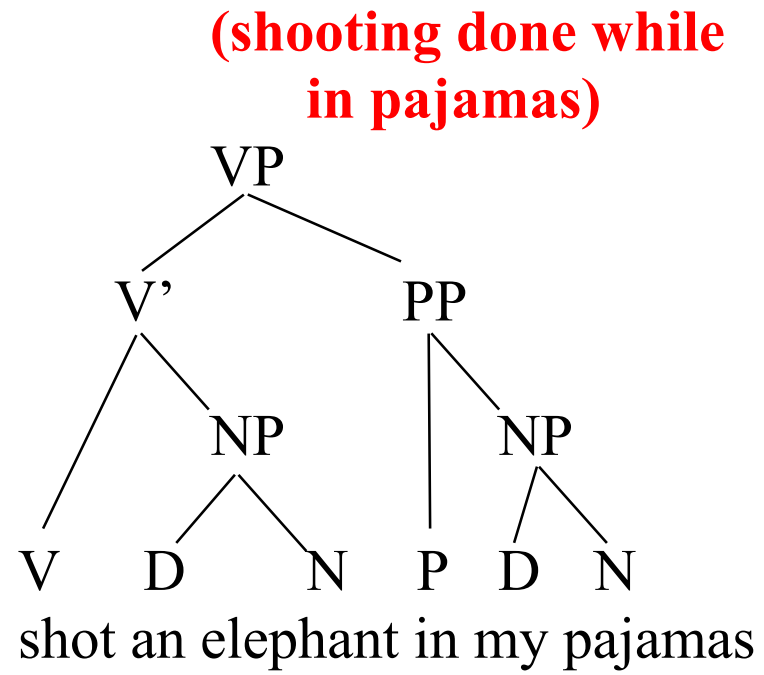
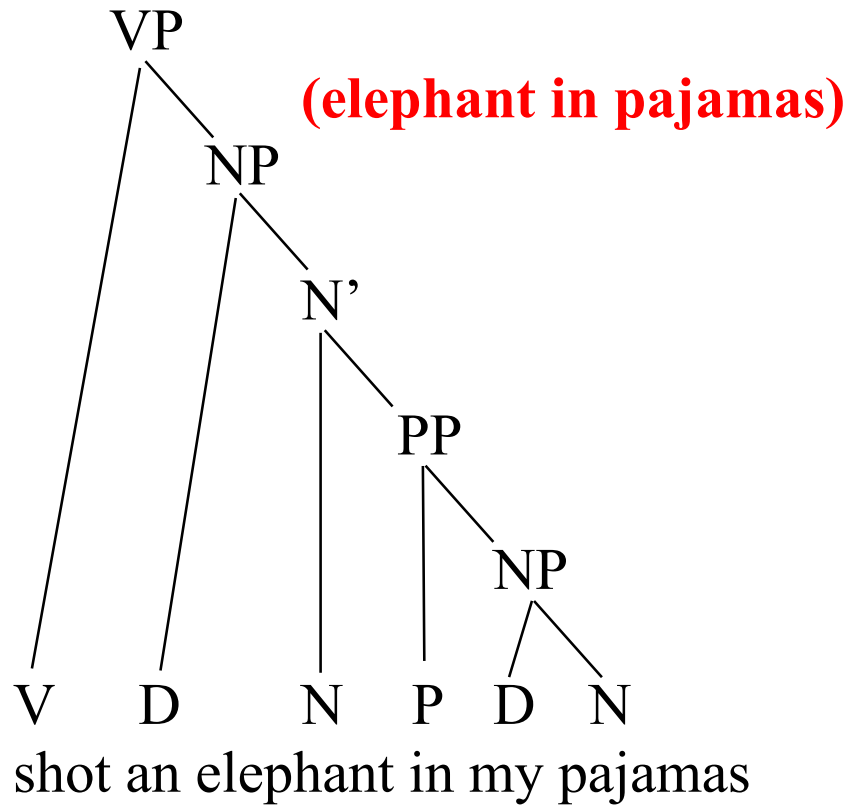
ambiguity

PP can modify NP or VP:



ambiguity

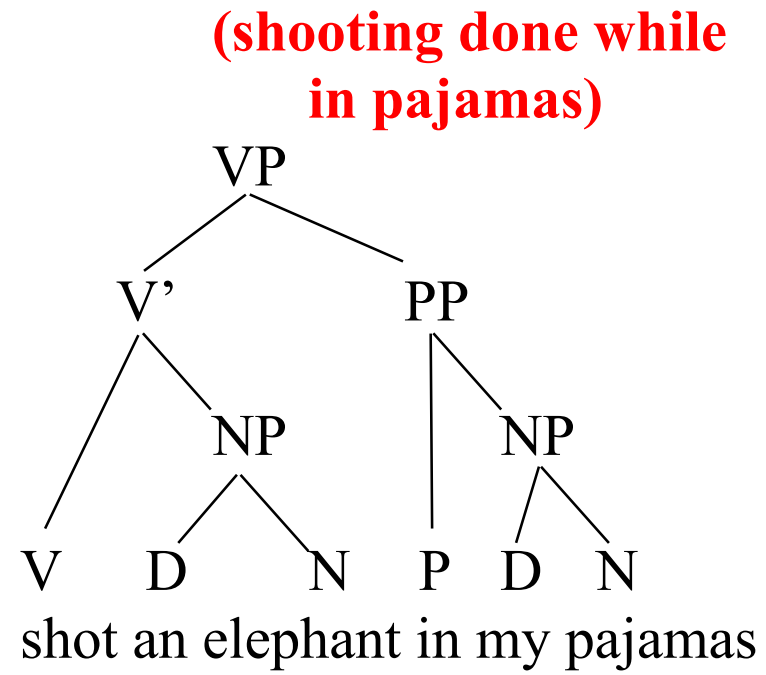
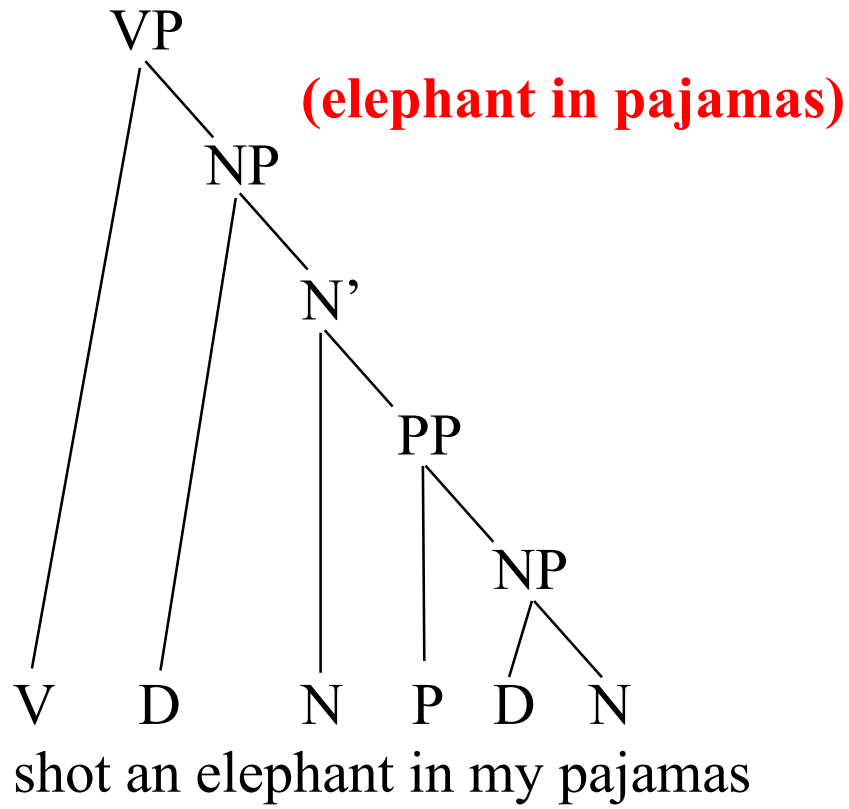
PP can modify NP or VP:



ambiguity

[the elephant], I shot in my pajamas

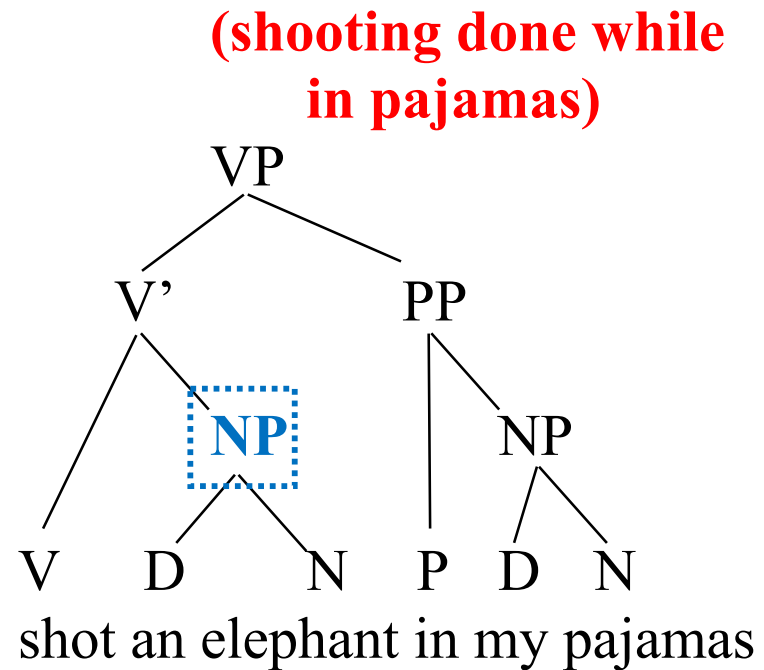
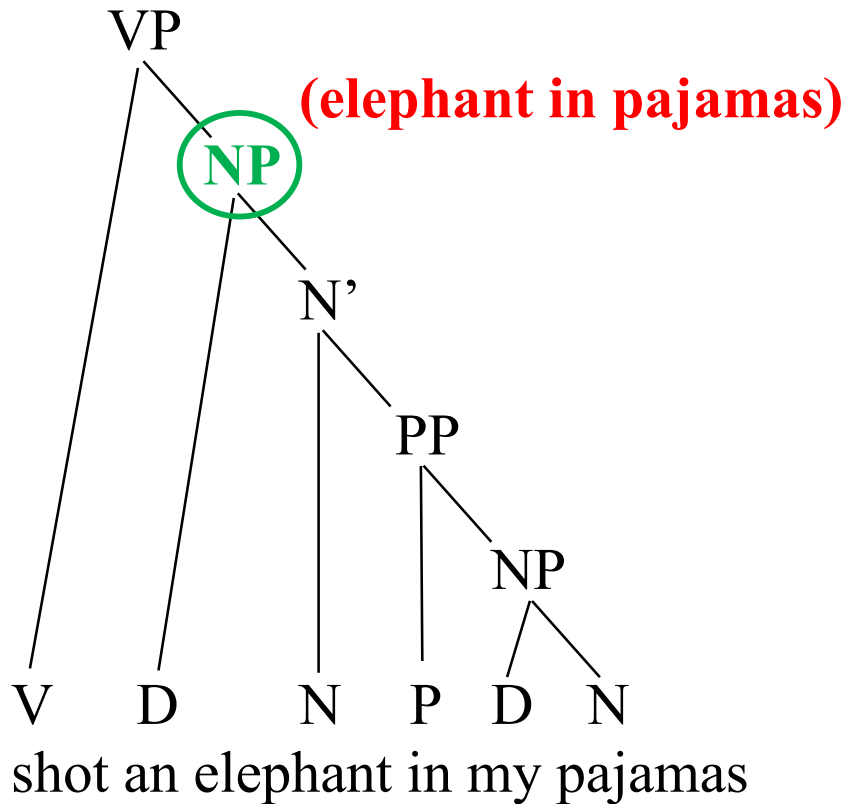
[the elephant in my pajamas], I shot.



ambiguity

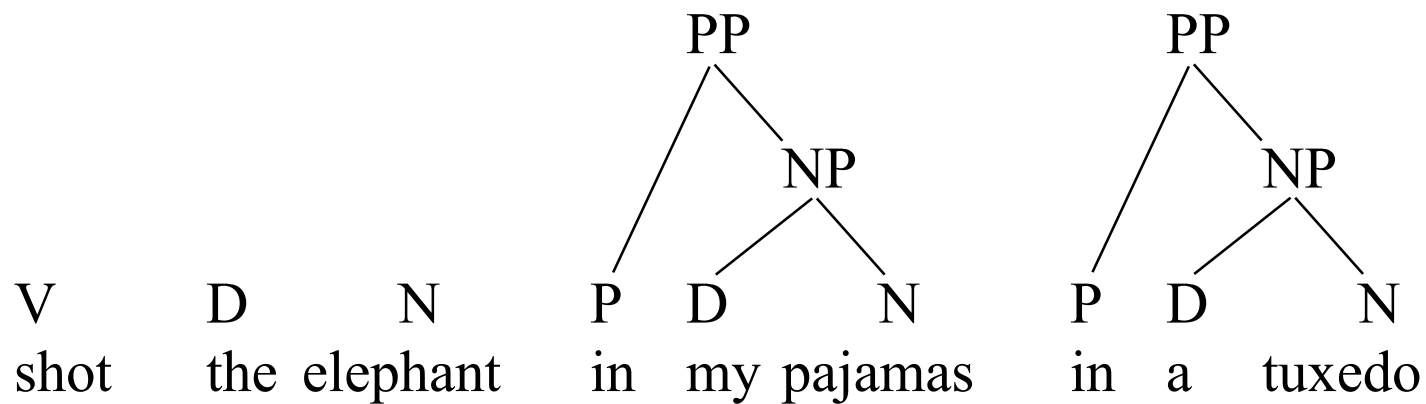
[the elephant], I shot in my pajamas

[the elephant in my pajamas], I shot.

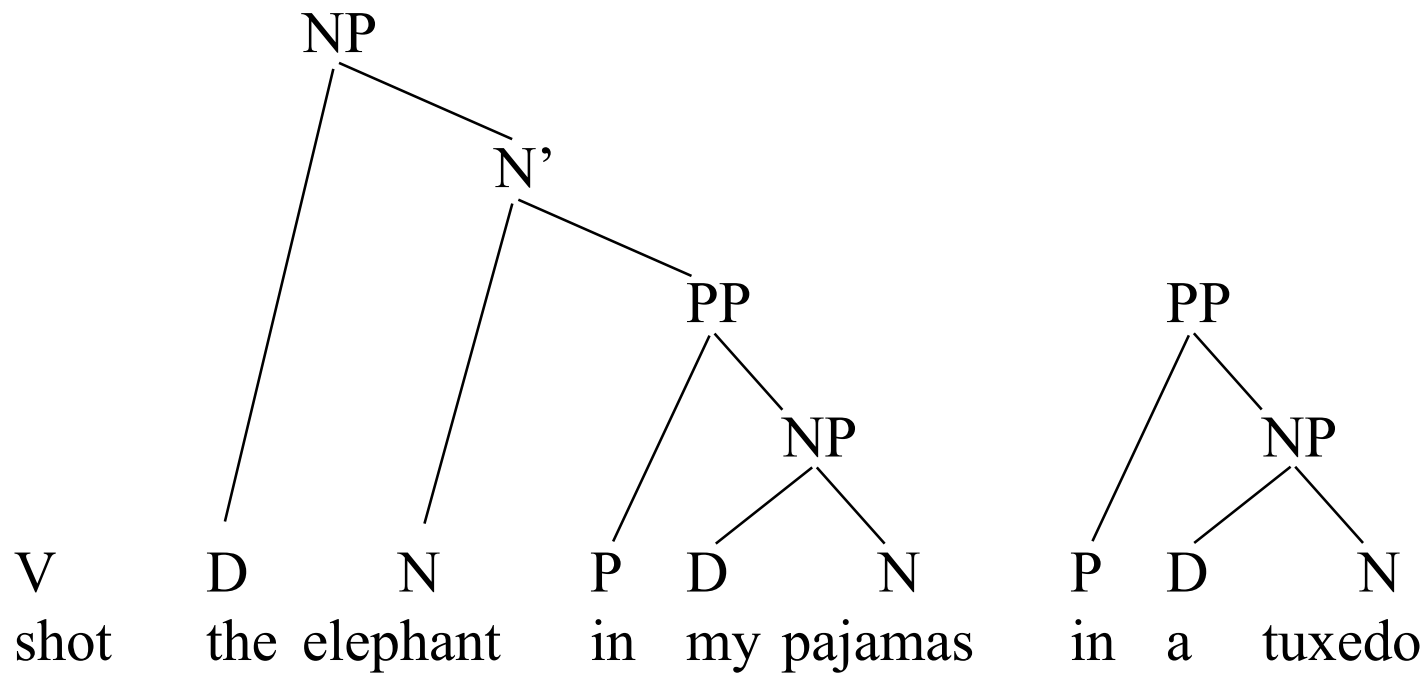


I shot the elephant in my pajamas in a tuxedo

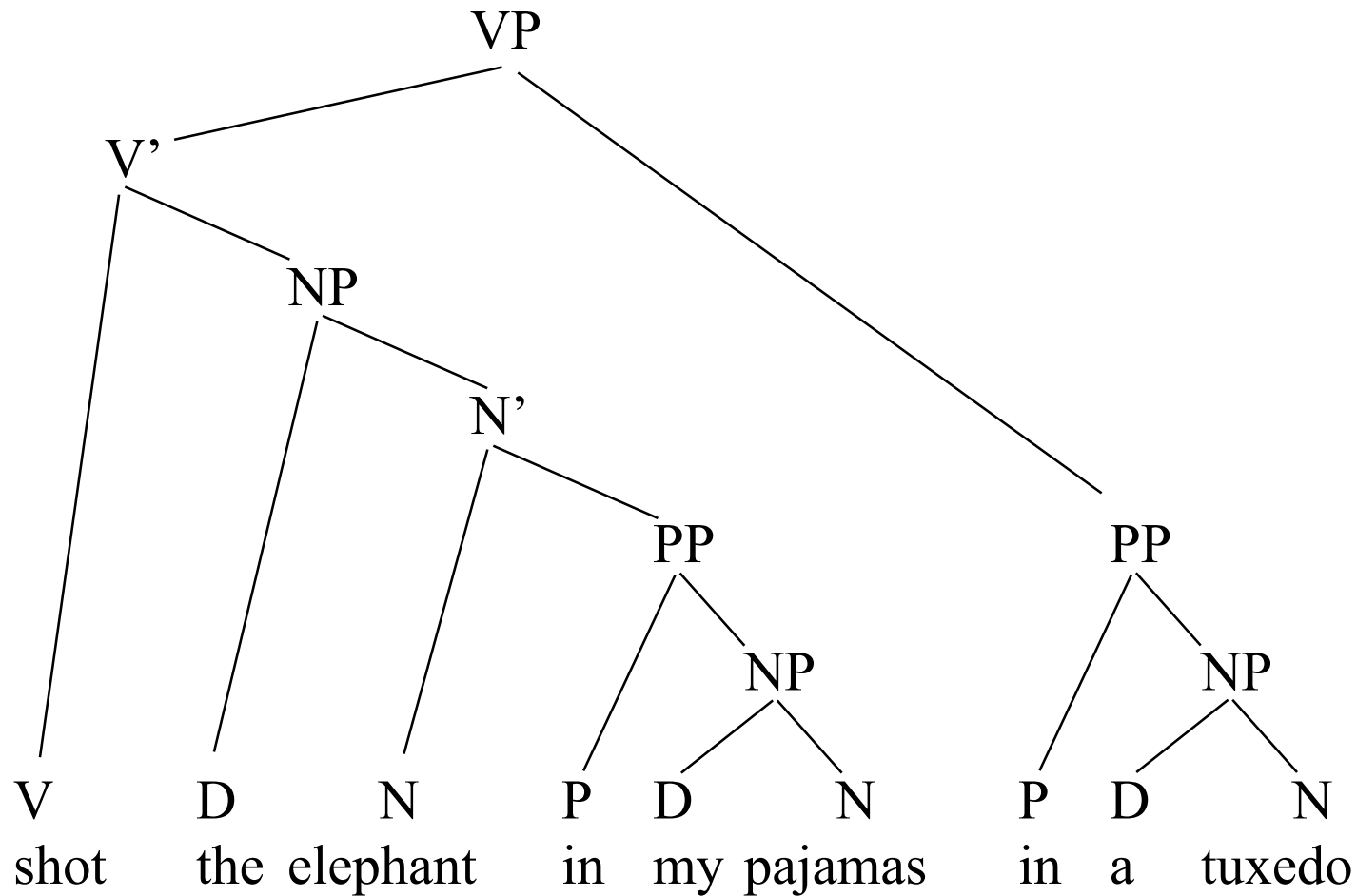
I shot the elephant in my pajamas in a tuxedo



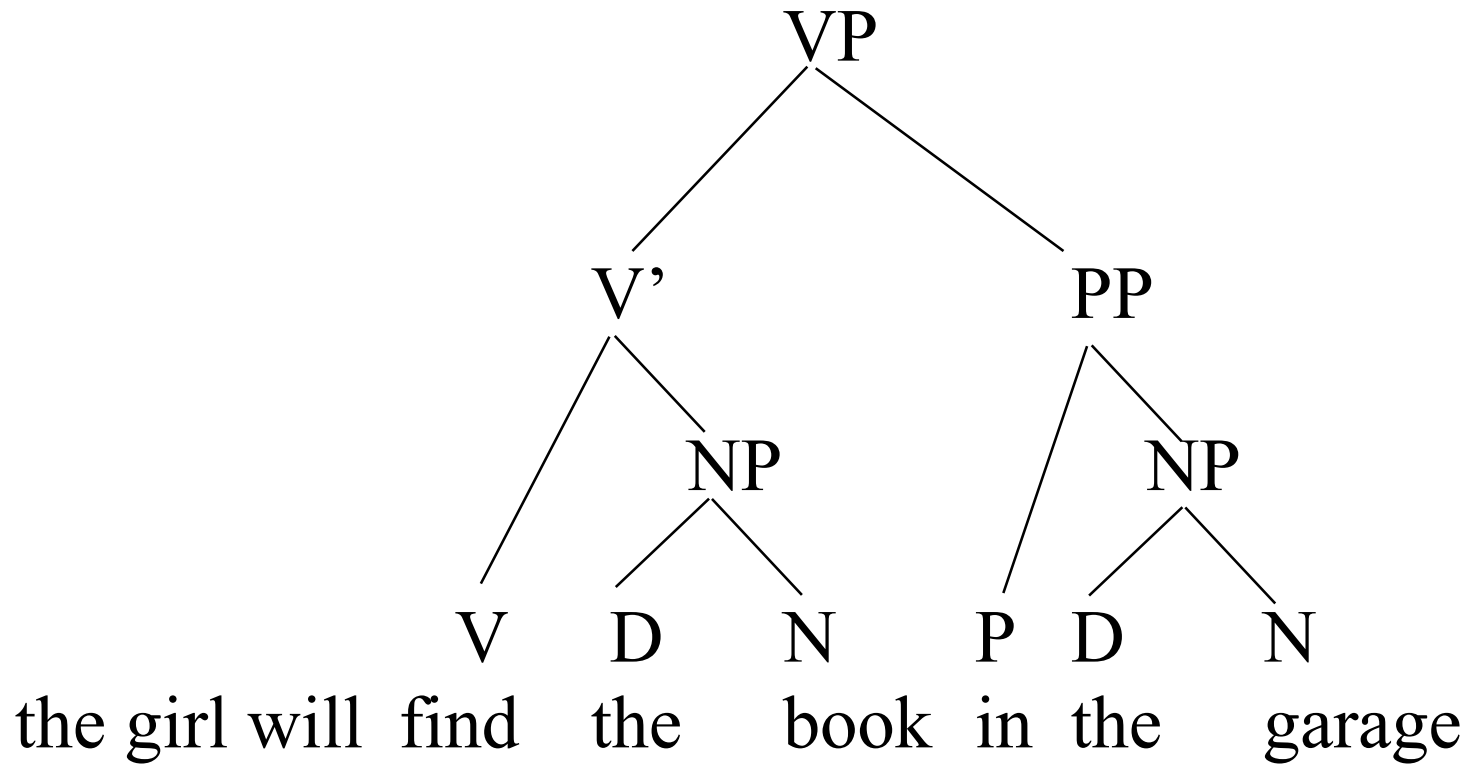
I shot the elephant in my pajamas in a tuxedo



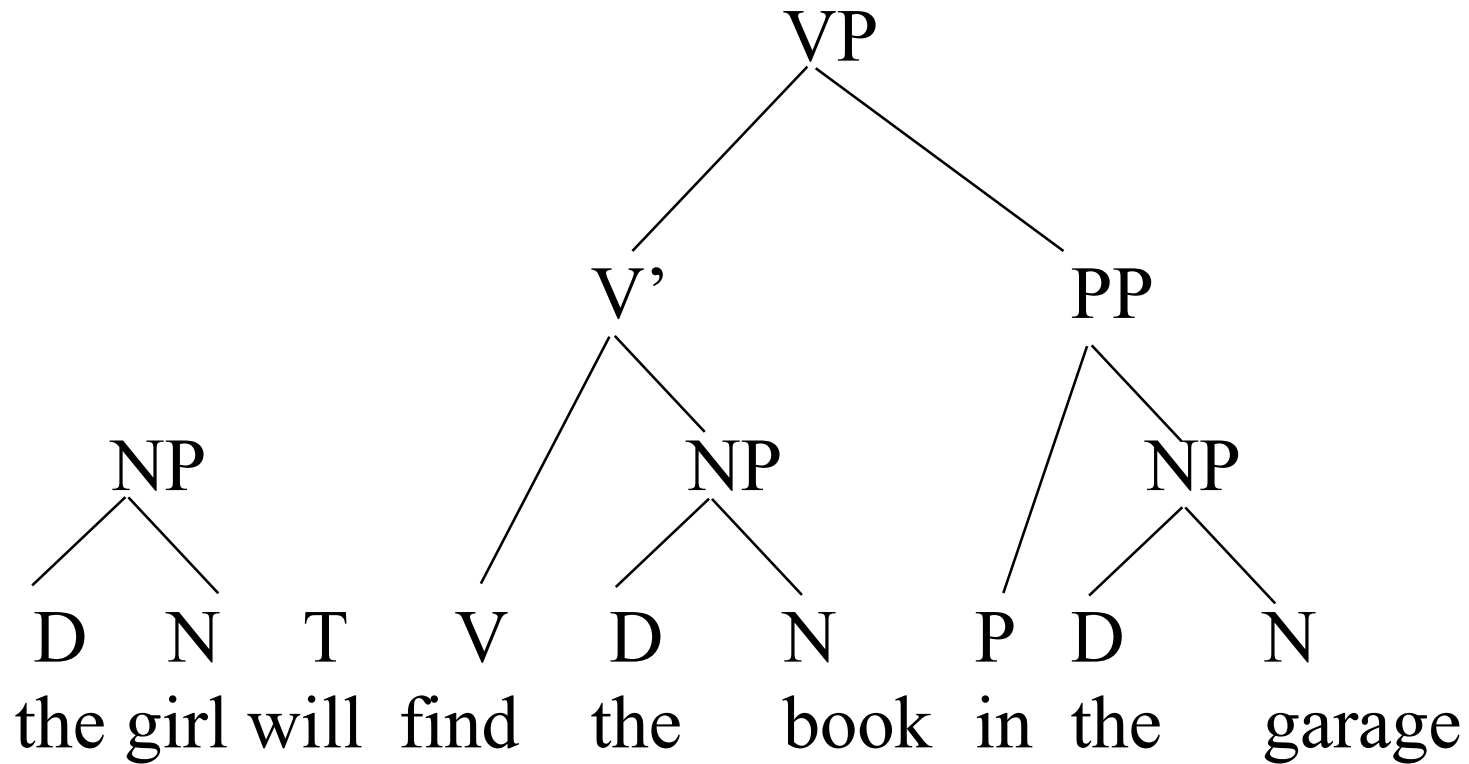
I shot the elephant in my pajamas in a tuxedo



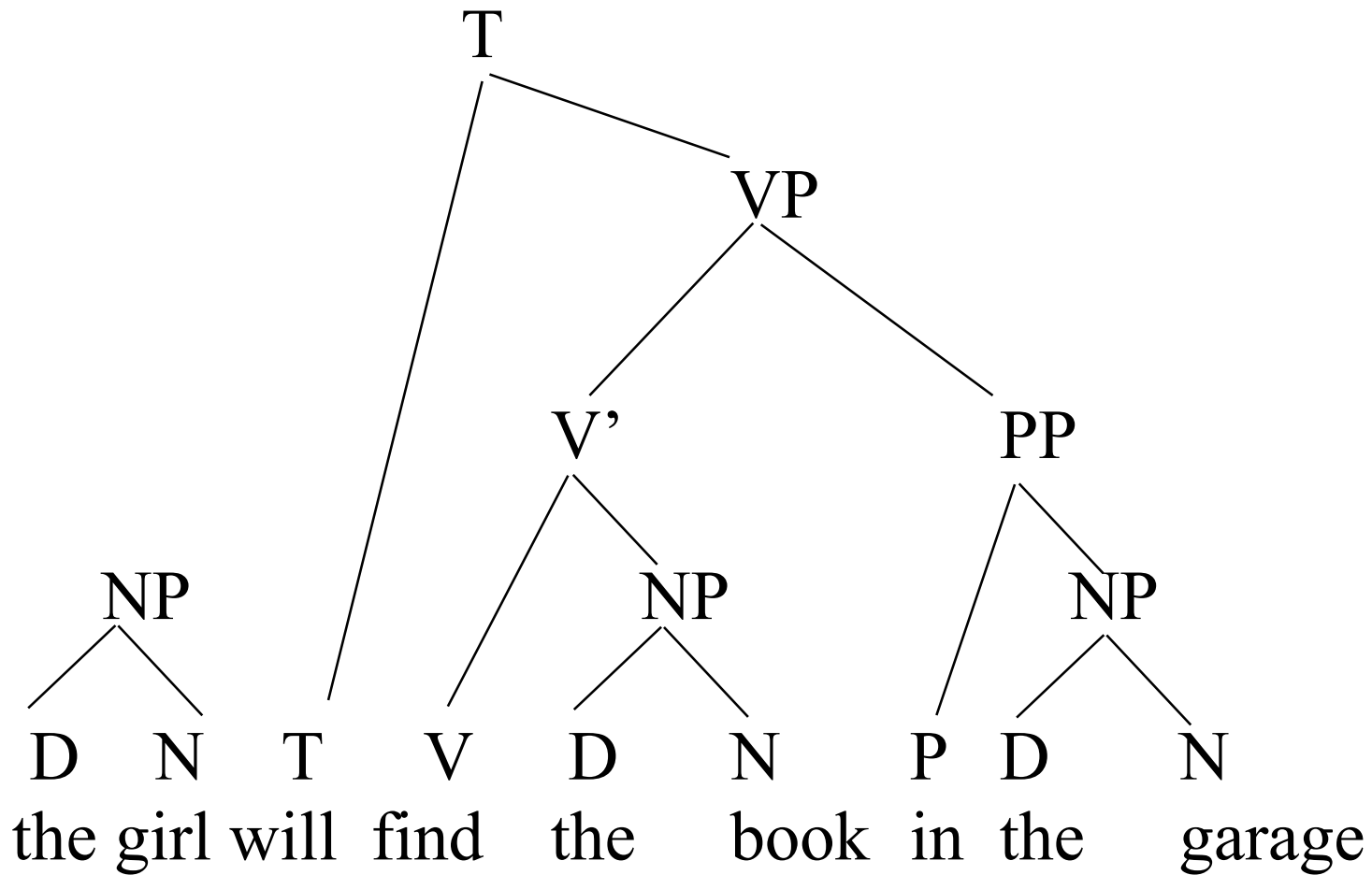
Let's do the rest of the sentence...



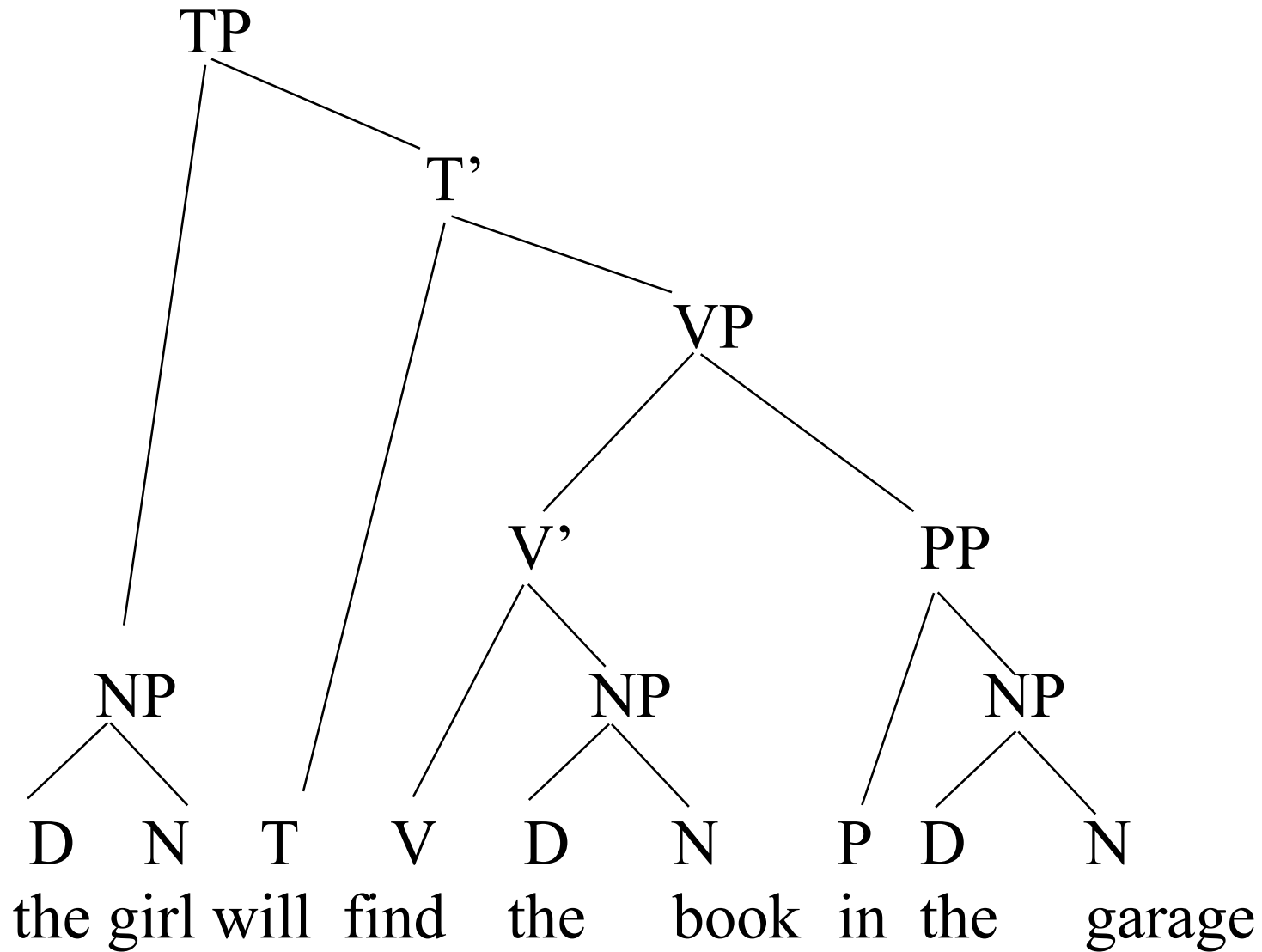
Let's do the rest of the sentence...



Let's do the rest of the sentence...



Let's do the rest of the sentence...



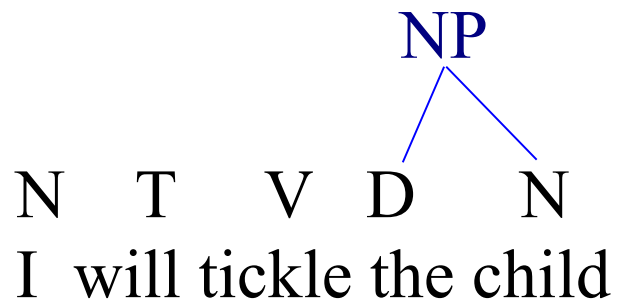
I will tickle the child with the feather

I will tickle the child with the feather

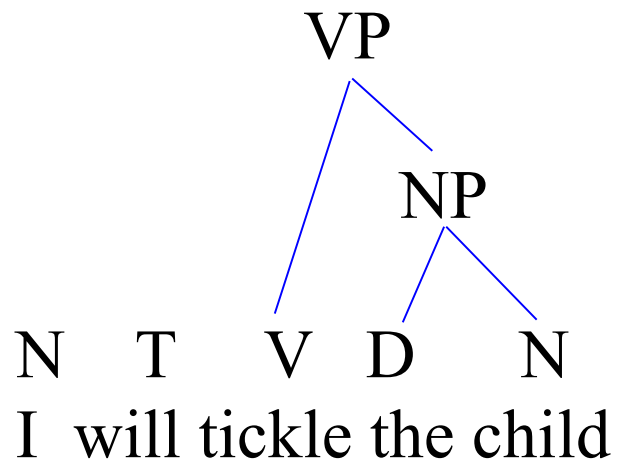
N T V D N
I will tickle the child

(T=Tense, D=Determiner)

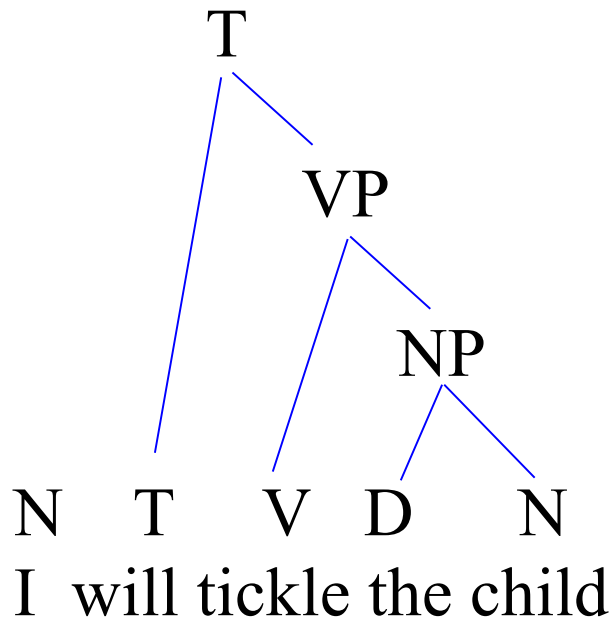
I will tickle the child with the feather



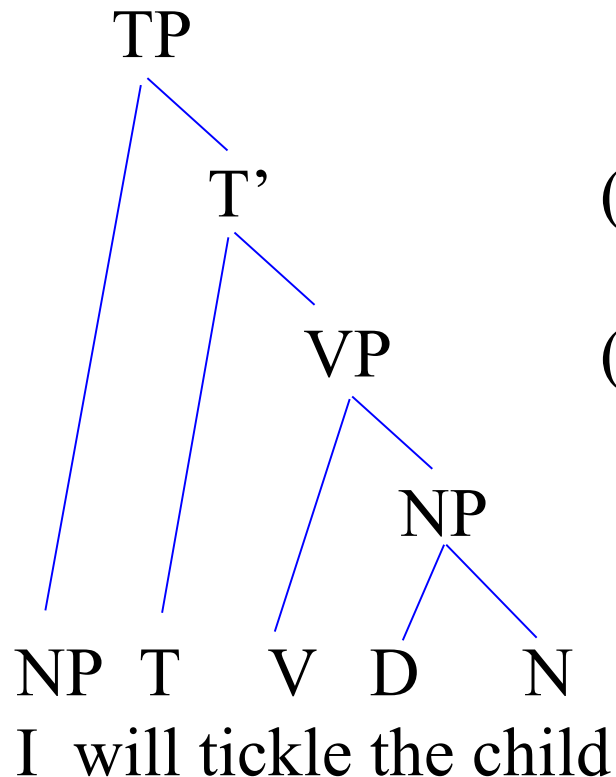
I will tickle the child with the feather



I will tickle the child with the feather



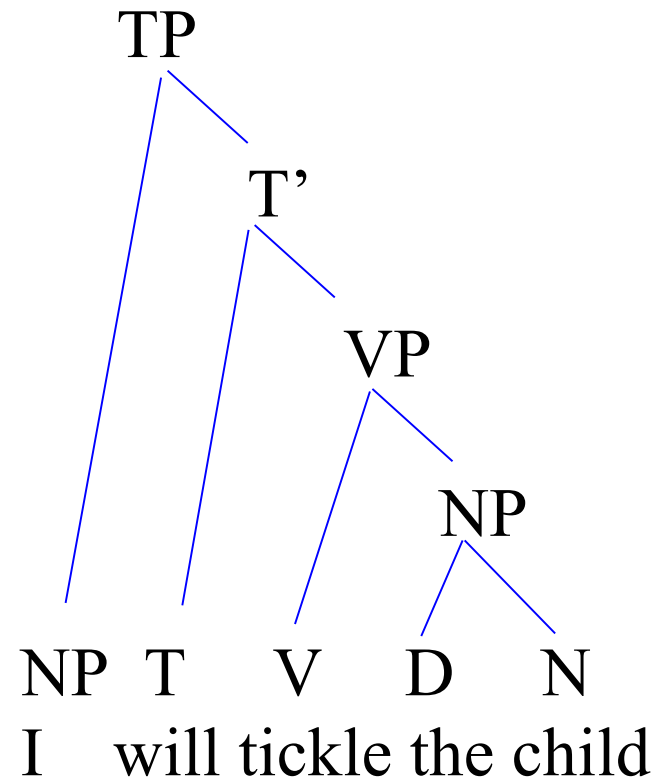
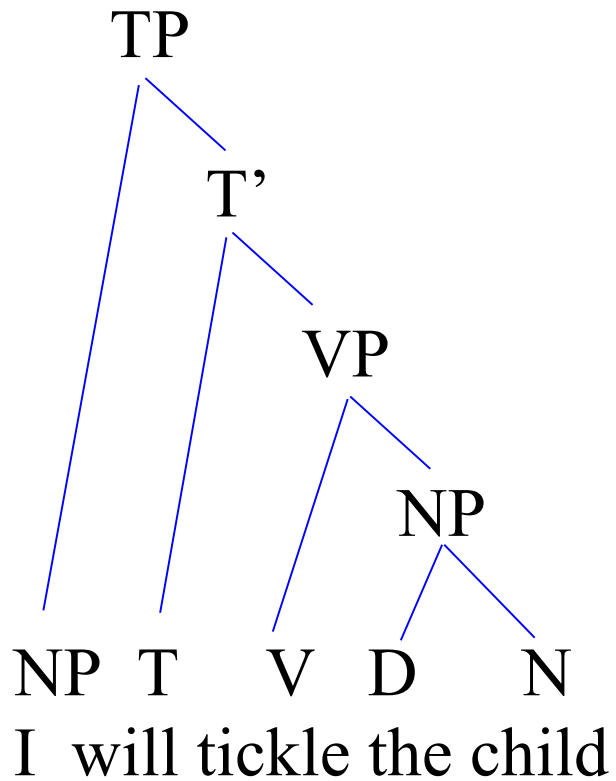
I will tickle the child with the feather



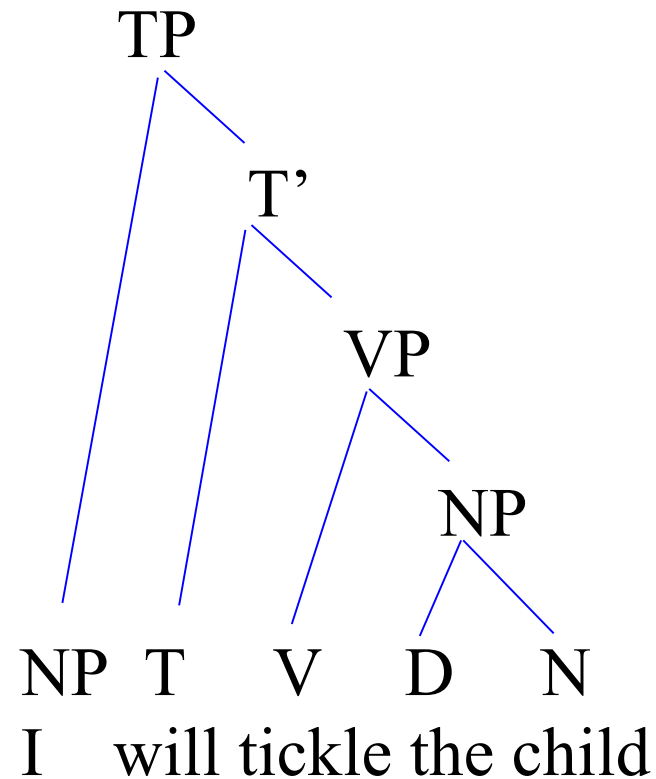
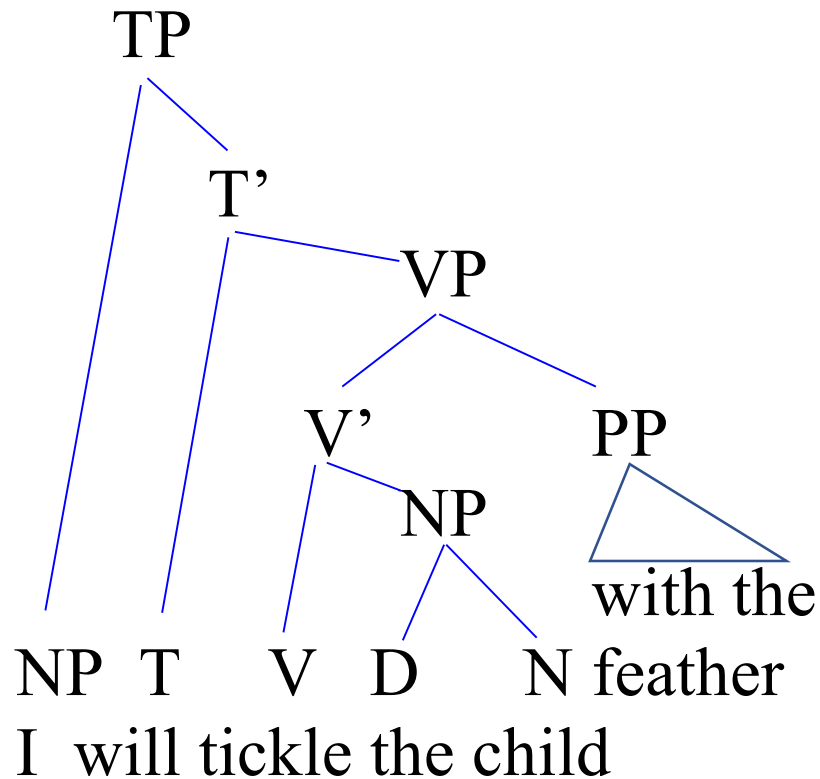
(notice that the N 'I' is also an NP...)

(notice also: we hadn't yet met TP.
various ways you could imagine
building it; we'll see evidence for this
one)

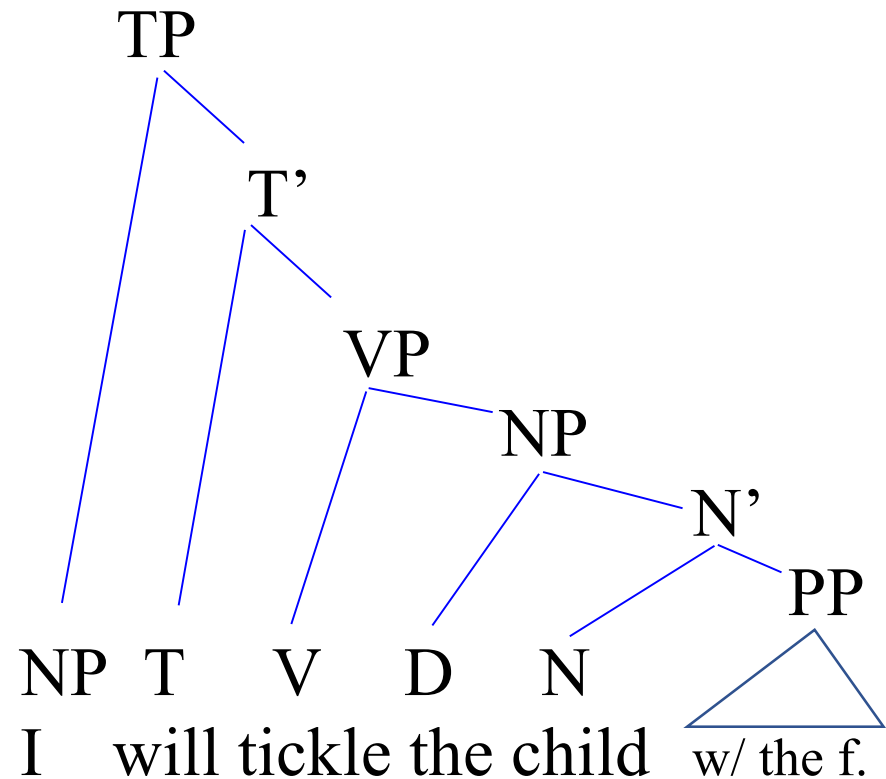
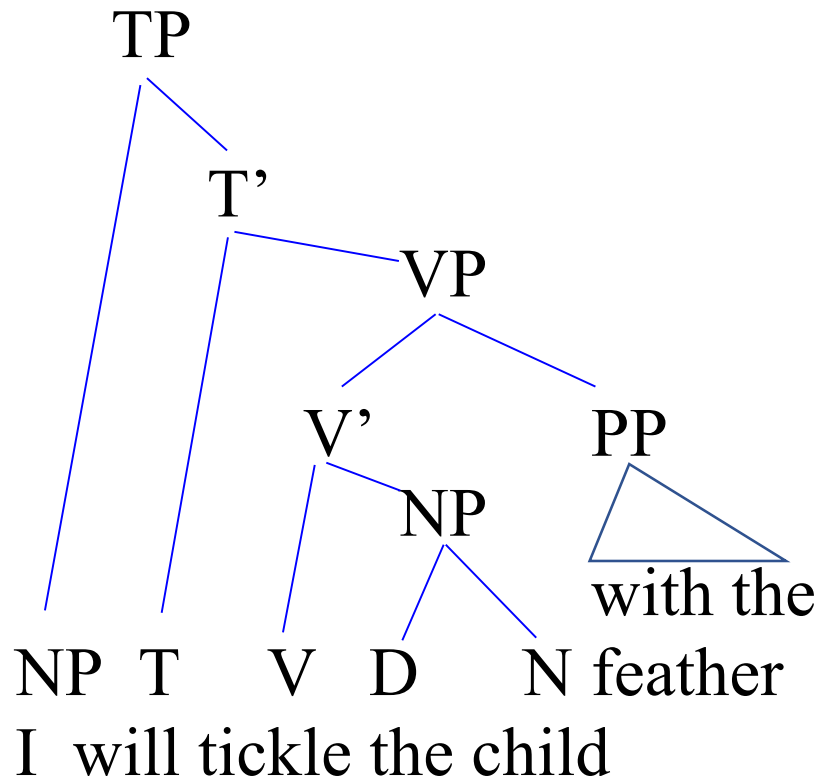
I will tickle the child with the feather



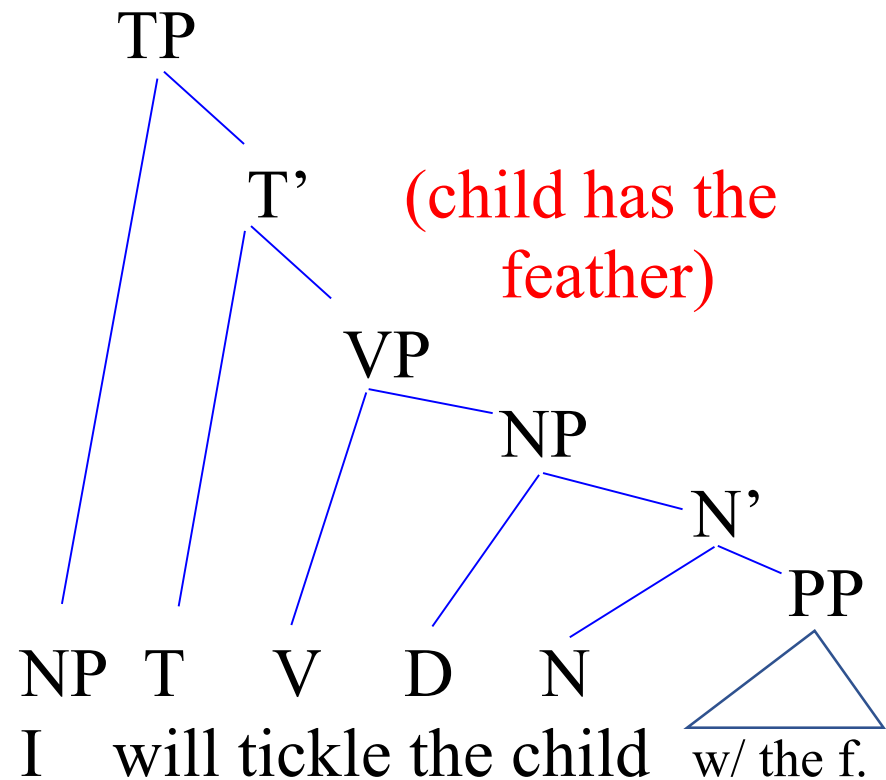
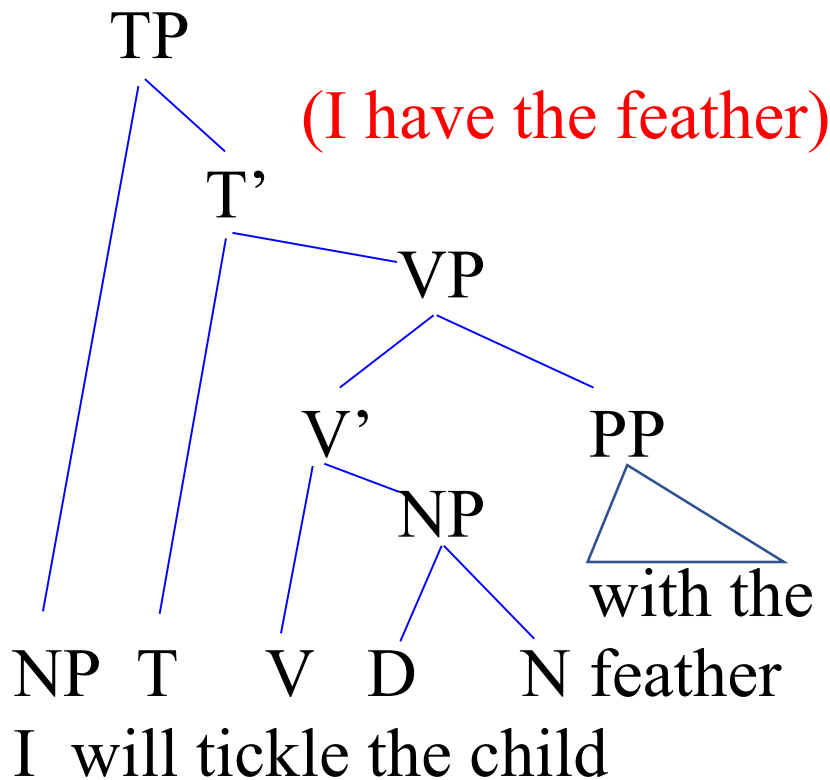
I will tickle the child with the feather



I will tickle the child with the feather



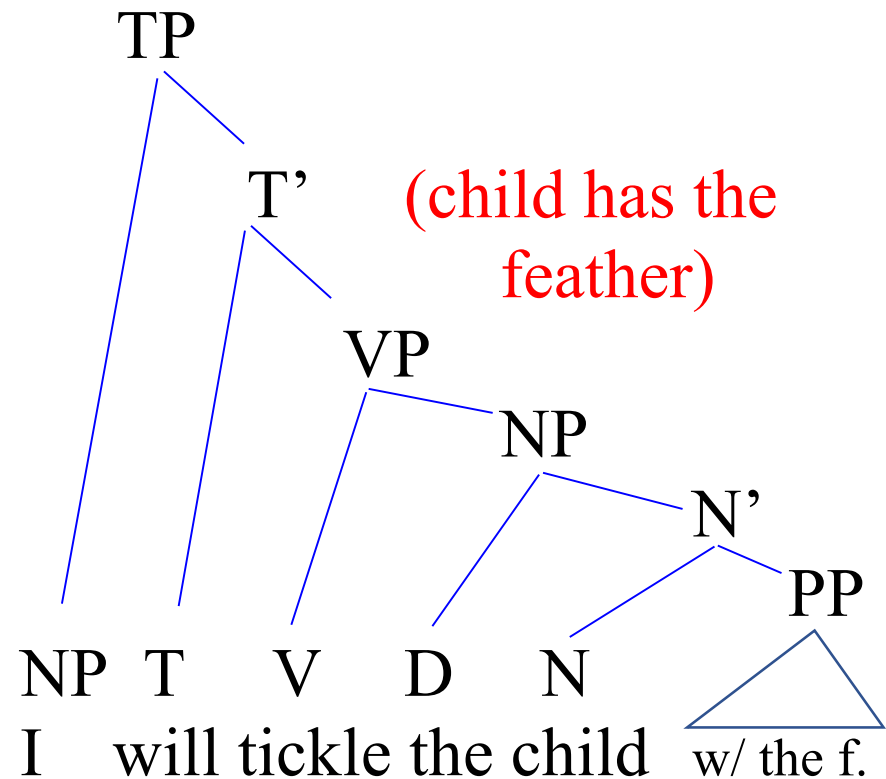
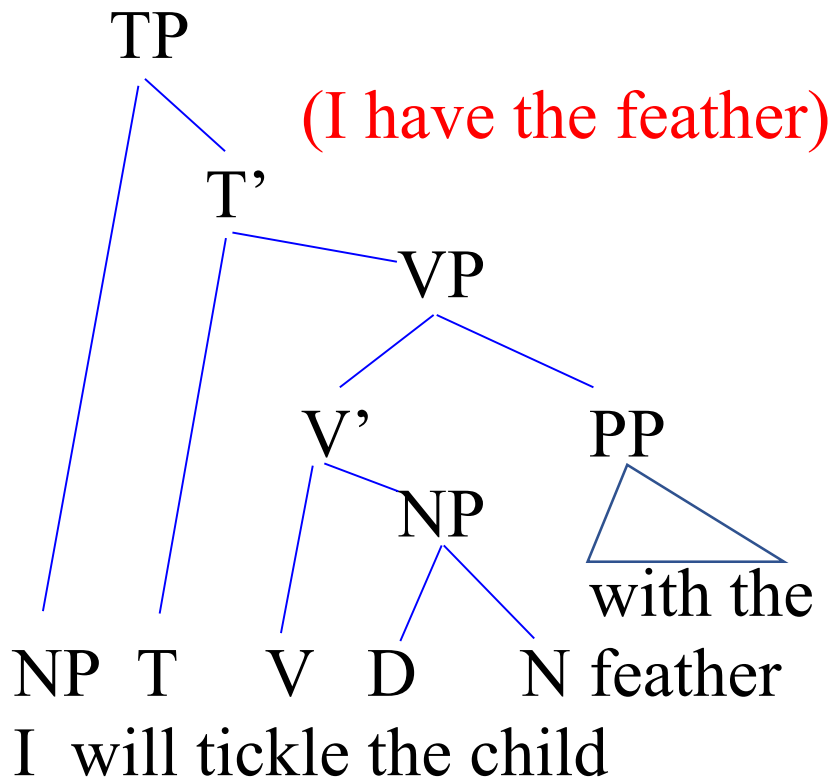
I will tickle the child with the feather



I will tickle the child with the feather

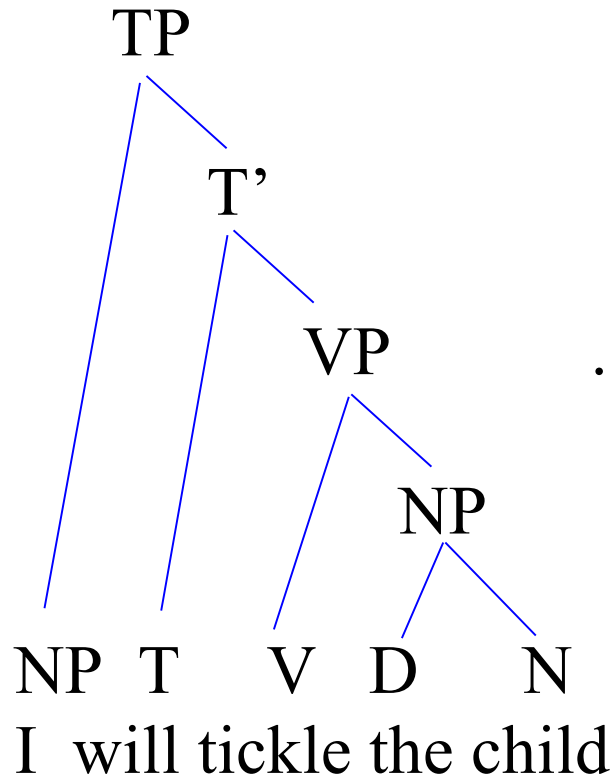
the child with the feather, I will tickle.

the child, I will tickle with the feather.



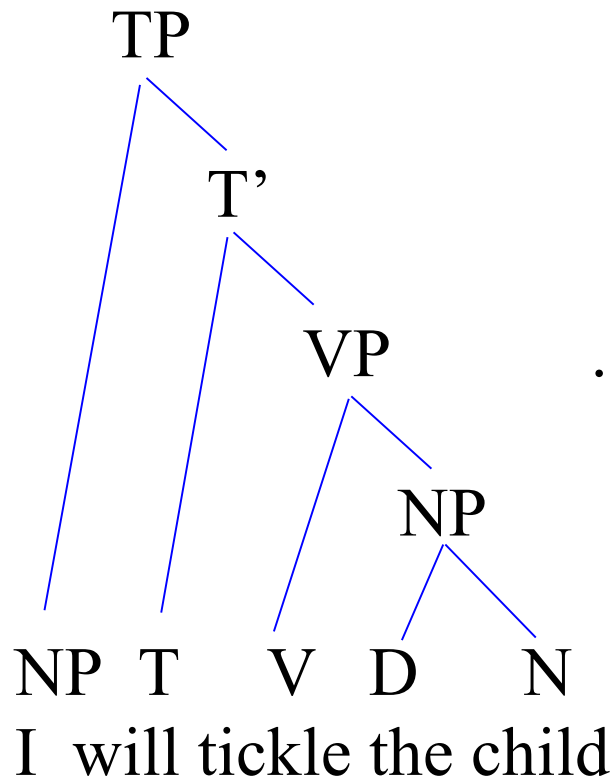
terminology break:

- T and VP are sisters

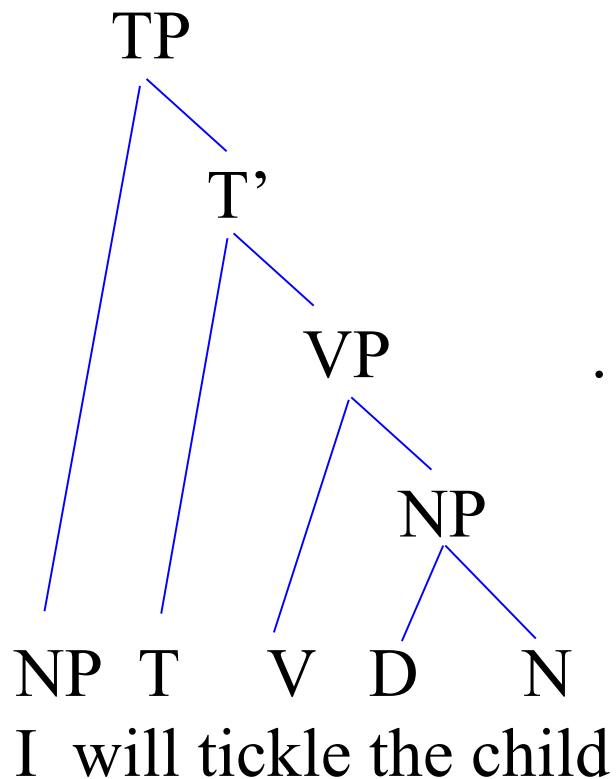


terminology break:

- T and VP are sisters
- VP is the mother of V and NP.

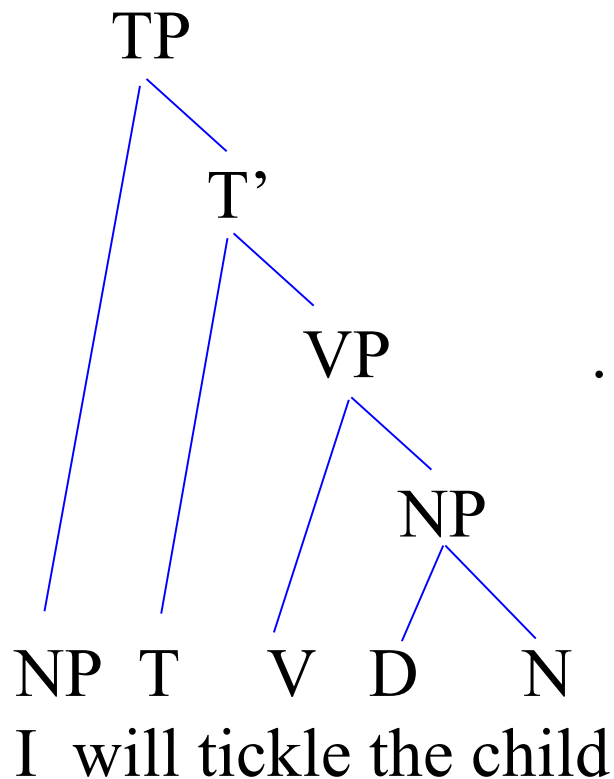


terminology break:



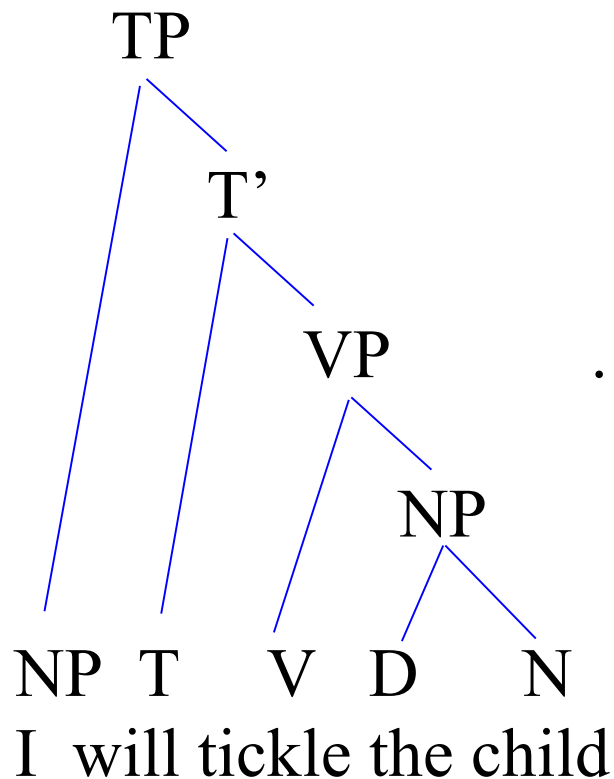
- T and VP are sisters
- VP is the mother of V and NP.
- VP immediately dominates V and NP.

terminology break:



- T and VP are sisters
- VP is the mother of V and NP.
- VP immediately dominates V and NP.
- VP dominates V, NP, D, and N.

terminology break:



- T and VP are sisters
- VP is the mother of V and NP.
- VP immediately dominates V and NP.
- VP dominates V, NP, D, and N.
- α is a constituent if all and only the words in α are dominated by a single node.

MIT OpenCourseWare

<https://ocw.mit.edu>

24.900 Introduction to Linguistics Spring 2022

For more information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.