

# Introductory Linguistics

A textbook by

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## Preface

This text has been written by me over the years for the course “Linguistics 20: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis”, which I teach in my home department at UCLA. The course is meant to be a short introduction to “core” linguistics, by which I mean the analysis of language data using theory. (My department covers broader issues, such as language in society, in a separate course, “Introduction to Language”.) To the extent that my text is successful, students will get a clear idea of the goals and character of linguistic analysis and will be well prepared to take on the various subfields of linguistics in later specialized courses.

My text follows mainstream thinking in linguistics in assuming that learning the field is best done through exercises in which students deal with language data, trying to discover the pattern and express it clearly with rules. The course I teach includes weekly homeworks of this kind; these homeworks include the most ambitious problems. In this text there also 90 Study Exercises; some are interspersed at appropriate moments in the presentation; others are placed in Chapters 8 and 15, meant for pre-midterm and pre-final review. I have arranged the page breaks to make it convenient for students to try to solve the exercises themselves before consulting the printed answer.

The main purpose of the exercises is to help students make the essential transition from passive knowledge (material makes perfect sense when the professor or text explains it) to active knowledge (student can apply the theory in new contexts and make independent assessments). In truth, I also hope that the exercises will be not just a way of achieving control over the material but at least occasionally a source of intellectual pleasure. Most linguists I know enjoy the puzzles presented by language data and I hope that for the reader it will be the same.

Over the years I have worked at filling gaps in the material and as a result the book now exceeds the time available for teaching it in the 10-week academic term at UCLA; this leads me sometimes to skip chapters 3, 7, and/or 13. I believe it would not be hard to get through the whole text in a course taught on a semester system.

My thanks go to the many students who have read through earlier versions of this text, often usefully pointing out errors. I also thank my many teaching assistants for their wisdom and first-hand experience, along with my colleagues Sandra Disner, Craig Melchert, and Jessica Rett for expert advice.

## Chapter 1: What is Linguistics?

### 1. What this book will be like

Linguistics is the science of language; it studies the structure of human languages and aims to develop a general theory of how languages work. The field is surprisingly technical; to describe languages in detail requires a fair amount of formal notation. A good parallel would be the field of symbolic logic, which uses a formal notation to understand the processes of reasoning and argumentation.

There are basically three things I hope you will get out of this book.

First, there is the subject matter itself, which is useful to know for people in many different fields, such as education, psychology, and computation. The course is also an introduction to linguistics for those who are going to major in it.

Second, the course involves some mental exercise, involving analysis of data from English and other languages. I doubt that anyone who doesn't go on in linguistics will remember much of the course material five years after they have graduated, but the analytical skills in which you will get practice will be (I hope) both more permanent and more useful.

Third, the course is intended to give a more realistic view of science and how it proceeds. The reason we can do this in linguistics is that it is a fairly primitive science, without an enormous body of well-established results. Because of this, we are less interested in teaching you a body of established knowledge; rather, our focus is on teaching you to decide what is right on your own, by looking at the data. All sciences are in this state of uncertainty at their frontiers; linguistics can give you a more authentically scientific experience in a beginning course.

### 2. Implicit and explicit knowledge of language; working with consultants

Linguists are constantly asked the question "How many languages do you speak?" This question is a little irritating, because it is not all that relevant to what linguists are trying to do. The goals of linguistics are to describe and understand the structure of human languages; to discover the principles by which human languages work, both at the level of specific languages and at the level of language in general. Even if one could speak all 8000 or so of the world's languages, one would not have solved any of the problems of linguistics.

The reason is this: speaking a language and knowing its structure are different things. In speaking a language, one uses thousands of grammatical rules without being aware of them; they are "unconscious knowledge." Linguists attempt to make explicit this unconscious knowledge by looking closely at the data of language. That is, they attempt to make the "implicit knowledge" of native speakers into explicit knowledge.

This goal implies one of the central methods of doing linguistic research, the **consultant session**. Quite often, a linguist will study the structure of language she does not speak; this is done

by finding a native-speaker consultant to provide the data. The linguist normally asks the consultant a great number of questions. Some of them are simple and establish basic knowledge:

(1) “*What is the word for “duck” in your language?*”

Others look for the various different grammatical forms of the same word:

(2) “*How would you say “two ducks”?*”

This would be looking, perhaps, for how plurals are formed. Others involve whole sentences and often their meanings as well.

The crucial idea in a consultant session is that the linguist is *thinking about structure*—is making and checking hypotheses. The native speaker is most often trying simply to provide an honest and accurate report of how she speaks the language, and of her intuitions about meaning and other matters.

Obviously, the lines can be blurred a bit: sometimes the consultant (especially if she knows some linguistics), may want to suggest some hypotheses herself. And linguists sometimes “work on themselves,” so that the dialogue across the consultant table becomes an internal dialogue in the mind of the linguist.<sup>1</sup>

The following example illustrates the method: for one particular area of English grammar, we get some native speaker intuitions, and work out a series of hypotheses for what the rules of English are. We’ll assume without comment that we are working with a native speaker of English, and indeed, I believe that the data below are characteristic of intuitions of English native speakers.

The point of the analysis will be to illustrate a consistent truth about linguistics: *the native speaker consultant doesn’t know the answer*. You cannot effectively ask the consultant to provide the linguistic analysis. However, the native speaker does have the tacit, intuitive knowledge that makes it possible to find the answer, or at least to get closer to it.

### 3. The reference of *each other*

In the sentence (3), a native speaker of English is likely to tell you that *each other* refers to *we*, and that it means something like, “I like you and you like me.”

(3) We like each other.

(4) Alice and Sue like each other.

In linguistics this is often called the **reciprocal reading**; i.e. it says we are in a state of reciprocal liking. Sentence (4) has a similar reciprocal reading.

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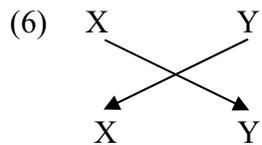
<sup>1</sup> In practice I and probably other linguists find this hard to do; it’s just too much going on in your head at once. More important, it poses methodological problems; the data are likely to be contaminated by wishful thinking.

Sentence (5) is a bizarre sentence, in that *each other* cannot logically refer to *I*.

(5) \*I like each other.

The native speaker responds to it by saying, “That’s weird/that’s bizarre/you can’t say that in English.” We will say for present purposes that (5) is **ungrammatical**; that is, ill-formed. Following standard practice, I will place an asterisk before sentences that are ungrammatical

In (5), the ungrammaticality can be traced to the absence of any plausible interpretation for the sentence; since *each other* describes reciprocal actions, like this:



*Each other* cannot be used unless the agent of the action is plural. But not all cases can be explained in this way. In (7), you can think of a meaning that the sentence could in principle have, but this meaning is not allowed by the rules of English grammar (think through what this meaning would be, then check yourself by reading this footnote<sup>2</sup>):

(7) \*Alice and Sue think I like each other.

In other words, being grammatical and having a sensible meaning are two different things.

Sentence (7) shows the same thing: you can think up two logically possible meanings, but only one meaning is allowed by the rules of English.

(8) We believe they like each other.

Again, reason it through for yourself then read the footnote.<sup>3</sup>

We’ve now reached our basic point: there must be some rule of English that accounts for what *each other* can refer to, but it is a tacit rule. No one can look inside their mind to find out what the rule is; one can only look at the data and try to figure the rule out. Linguists have worked on this particular rule for some time, and have gradually made progress in stating the rule accurately. But we cannot claim to have a final answer.

I will present a partial answer here. We will need two preliminary definitions, both of which will come up later on in the course. Here is the first one:

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<sup>2</sup> Alice thinks I like Sue and Sue thinks I like Alice.

<sup>3</sup> Possible meaning: if *they* refers, for instance to Bill and John, then *We believe that Bill likes John and John likes Bill*. Impossible meaning: *I believe that John and Bill like you and you believe that John and Bill like me*.

(9) *Defn.:* **clause**

A **clause** is either a whole sentence or a sentence within a sentence

You can identify clauses because they generally have a subject and a verb, and they express some sort of proposition. We depict clauses by drawing brackets around them; labeled with subscript “S” for “sentence”.

- (10) [ We like each other. ]<sub>s</sub>  
 (11) [ John and Bill like each other. ]<sub>s</sub>  
 (12) \*[ I like each other. ]<sub>s</sub>  
 (13) \*[ John and Bill think [I like each other. ]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>  
 (14) [ We believe [ they like each other. ]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>

Note that clauses can have clauses inside them. In (13), there is a clause that expresses the content of John and Bill’s thoughts (*I like each other*), and the whole thing is an (ungrammatical) clause that describes a state (John and Bill are having a particular thought.) Typically, but not always, clauses inside clauses will occur when the verb of the main clause is a verb of thinking or saying.

We also need to define **noun phrases**.

(15) *Defn.:* **noun phrase**

A **noun phrase** is a complete syntactic unit that refers to a thing or a set of things.

So, in (10), *we* is a noun phrase, and *each other* is a noun phrase. In (7), *John and Bill* is a noun phrase<sup>4</sup> and again so is *each other*.

With these definitions, we can write a tentative rule for what *each other* refers to:

(16) ***Each Other Reference Rule***

*Each other* must take its reference from a noun phrase that inside the smallest clause containing it.

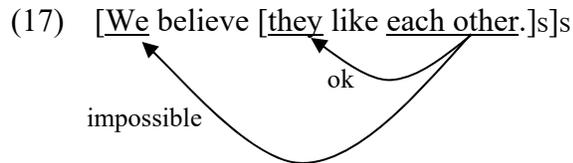
Like all proposed linguistic rules, this should be applied with care, checking to see if it works. We work more carefully by employing appropriate graphics, like underlining the noun phrases<sup>5</sup> and putting brackets around the clauses.

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<sup>4</sup> Also, *John* is a noun phrase, and *Bill* is a noun phrase; they are noun phrases inside a noun phrase. The concept “X forms part of a Y” is everywhere in linguistics.

<sup>5</sup> This is something we will do only in this chapter; later will be develop a more fluent notation.

Consider first (14), *We believe they like each other*. We want *each other* to refer only to *they*, and not to *we*. We can underline and bracket in the appropriate way, and try drawing arrows indicating candidates for the reference of *each other*, like this:



Since the smallest clause containing *each other* is the smaller one, and it contains the noun phrase *they*, the theory predicts that *each other* should be able to refer to *they* and not to *we*. This seems to be correct; i.e. so far the theory is working.

Considering next *John and Bill think I like each other*. I suggest at this point you jot down the structure yourself (brackets, underlines, arrows), and check what you wrote against what you see in (18) on the next page.

(18) \*[John and Bill think [I like each other.]s]s



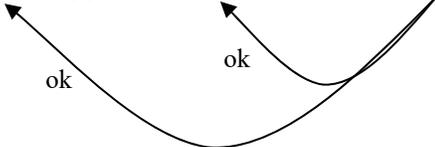
Why is this sentence ungrammatical? The reasoning here is more subtle. *Each other* cannot take its reference from *John and Bill* because of the Each Other Reference Rule, it can only take its reference from noun phrases inside the smallest clause that contains it. But then why not let *each other* refer to *I*? Here, we run into the semantic restriction we saw earlier: *each other* can only refer to plural noun phrases. So no matter how you attempt to interpret *each other*, the sentence gets blocked, and in the end it is simply ungrammatical.

Cases (10)-(12) are easy: there is only one noun phrase for *each other* to refer to, and the rule permits this.

### 3.1 Ambiguous sentences with each other

Notice that in a sentence with just one clause, but two noun phrases in addition to *each other*, there will be two possibilities for what *each other* might refer to:

(19) [We wrapped the ropes around each other.]s



This is just what the Each Other Reference Rule predicts. Because of this, the sentence has two possible meanings. Try making up similar cases (a few are given in the footnote<sup>6</sup>).

### 3.2 Chains of reference

Here is a slightly delicate case; it is special because it contains the following: a full Noun Phrase, *John and Bill*, an ordinary pronoun *they*, and the reciprocal expression *each other*:

(20) [John and Bill say [they like each other.]s]s



The sentence is perfectly fine, but what should we say about the arrow labeled "??"? *John and Bill* is not inside the smallest clause that contains *each other*. So, according to the *Each Other* Reference Rule, *each other* cannot "take its reference from" *John and Bill*. What is special about this sentence is that (under the most typical reading), we get a sort of chain: the pronoun *they* takes its reference from *John and Bill*, and the reflexive pronoun *each other* takes its reference from

<sup>6</sup> *We assigned the representatives to each other. We instructed Fred and Sue on behalf of each other. Alice and Sue introduced the students to each other's mother. We prepared the cannibals for each other.*

*they*. Because of this chain of referring, *each other* ends up referring to the same thing as *John and Bill*. But it does so indirectly, via the intermediate pronoun. The confusion around the “??” arises from the existence of this chain. (My own preference would be to use the label “ok”, noting the special case of the reference chain.)

We will cover the behavior of ordinary pronouns like *they* in Chapter 9.

#### 4. The role of implicit noun phrases

Here are some further relevant data, which are perhaps syntactically the most interesting:

(21) [We consulted two detectives in order [ to find out about each other]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>

(22) [They seem to us [to like each other]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>

These sentences are mysterious: it looks like there is **no noun phrase at all** that occurs inside the smallest clause containing *each other* (other than *each other* itself). You might think that the sentences would be ungrammatical, since the Each Other Reference Rule says that *each other* can only take its reference from within the same clause. No other Noun Phrase from which it could take its reference is apparent.

In cases like this, linguists are often willing to go out on a limb, setting up an *abstract* structure, which has no pronunciation but can be justified more subtly from the behavior of the language.

Consider more carefully the meaning sentences (20) and (21): *someone* is doing the finding out in (20), namely, “we”, and *someone* is doing the liking in (21), namely “they”. Thus, the peculiar clauses *to find out about each other* and *to like each other* appear to have **implicit noun phrases**. They have a meaning, but they’re not pronounced.

Exploring this line of analysis, let us fill them in, inserting overt noun phrases that designate what the implicit noun phrases mean:

(23) [We consulted two detectives in order [(we) to find out about each other]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>

(24) [They seem to us [(they) to like each other]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>

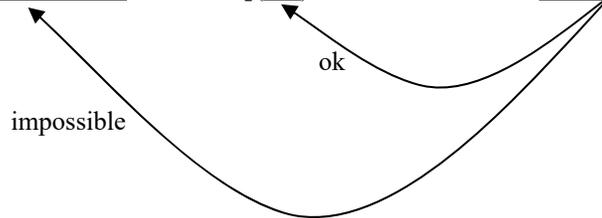
With the implicit subjects filled in, we can explain what is going on. The *Each Other* Reference Rule needs slight revising:

#### (25) Each Other Reference Rule (revised)

*Each other* must take its reference from noun phrases (including implicit noun phrases) that are inside the smallest clause containing it.

So now, to apply the Each Other Reference rule properly, we need to evaluate the reference of implicit noun phrases. Here is an analytic diagram for sentence (20):

(26) [We consulted two detectives in order [(we) to find out about each other]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>



We will do more on this kind of rule later. The major gap in the analysis as given so far is that we haven't said anything at all about what causes the implicit noun phrase to take on a particular meaning—for instance, why does the implicit noun phrase in (25) have to mean *we*, and not *two detectives*? This problem, too, has at least a partial solution in linguistics. But we can't go into it now, for reasons of time and space.<sup>7</sup> A full-scale textbook on syntax would, of course, take on this question.

The analysis of *each other* also makes a general point about analytic practice in linguistics: linguists are, in general, willing to propose structural analyses that include inaudible entities like implicit noun phrases. Such analyses are always more controversial, since they rest on inference rather than directly observable facts. But they can be supported, notably by referring to the meaning of sentences and to the overall coherence of the language system that they make possible.

#### 4.1 *Each other: the bottom line*

The example of *each other* has two purposes here. First, it is meant to give you a flavor of linguistic analysis: we assume that utterances have structure, like clauses and noun phrases and implicit noun phrases. We also assume that the language has rules, like the Each Other Reference Rule. Much of the work of linguistics involves analysis, finding out the structures and rules that can do justice to the facts of a language.

The other main point so far concerns the question of unconscious knowledge. Any native speaker of English will have the intuitions about grammaticality and what refers to what; that is, the crucial information that the linguist will use to justify the analysis. So knowing English means that you “know” the Each Other Reference Rule, in an intuitive, unconscious sense. But it does not mean that you know it explicitly. There is no English speaker on earth who can just “look inside her head” and say what the rule is. The only way to make progress on language structure is the more indirect way laid out here: we make hypotheses about structure and about rules, then refine and improve them as we encounter more language data. The procedure is actually much the same as in other sciences: we gather data (here, from the native speaker) and formulate hypotheses. The hypotheses, if they are any good, will enable us to make predictions about what we should find in *new* data, which we can then gather from a native speaker. Sometimes the new data makes our

<sup>7</sup> If you'd like a one-paragraph answer, here it is: (1) When the verb of the main clause is *persuade* (and other verbs like *tell* or *ask*), the implicit noun phrase must refer to the object of the verb: [*Sue persuaded Alice [(Alice) to go ]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>. (2) When the verb of the main clause is *promise* (at least in some dialects of English), the implicit noun phrase must refer to the subject of the verb: [*Sue promised Alice [(Sue) to go ]<sub>s</sub>]<sub>s</sub>. (3) In the *in order to* construction, the implicit noun phrase must refer to the *subject* of the main clause, as in (23) and (24).**

hypotheses look good, increasing our confidence in them; and sometimes the new data is problematic for our hypotheses, forcing us to modify them or even abandon them and start over. With patience, we can achieve gradual progress. Though we cannot directly access the speaker's unconscious knowledge of her language, our repeated inquiries can achieve an ever better approximation of it.

In the long run, we want linguistics (like any well-established science) to have strong *predictive capacity*. With a really good theory, we can make an accurate prediction about the intuitions of a native speaker about a sentence before we ever elicit it. This is a hard goal and unlikely to be achieved very soon.

## 5. The field of linguistics

With this background, here is a (somewhat narrow) definition of the field of linguistics: it is the study of the (largely implicit) knowledge people have when they speak a language. Some of the subfields of linguistics are the following:

<b>Syntax</b>	study of rules for forming sentences
<b>Semantics</b>	study of rules for meaning
<b>Morphology</b>	study of rules for forming words
<b>Phonology</b>	study of rules of pronunciation

In all cases, the “rules” are of the kind known implicitly by native speakers, as discussed above, not the kind learned in school. Linguistics has two other major subfields that also involve rules but are not as directly focused on them: **phonetics**, which studies how sounds are produced and perceived, and **historical linguistics**, which studies how languages change and evolve.

Linguists attempt to arrive at explicit knowledge of all the world's languages. I should point out that this task will never be completed. First, there are over 8000 different languages, many of which are spoken in remote areas of the world.<sup>8</sup> More important, the amount of explicit knowledge contained in just a single language would fill a whole library. Linguists find it both frustrating and astonishing that a small child can acquire implicitly in just a few years the same knowledge that takes decades of hard work for linguists to figure out explicitly.

Linguists are also interested in developing a general theory of language; a theory of the properties that all languages share. These are called **linguistic universals**. Finding universals is also challenging; many linguists have the experience of having proposed a linguistic universal, only to find out later on about languages that don't fit in.

## 6. What's this about “native speakers”?

I mentioned native speakers at the start of this chapter and would like to fill in a bit of information for why native speakers are considered important in linguistics.

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<sup>8</sup> The best directory to the world's languages is the *Ethnologue*, on line at <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.

A native speaker, to give a very strict definition, is someone who has heard their language continuously since birth, learned it in the natural way from exposure (as we say, “at his mother’s knee”; “at her father’s knee”), and continues to speak it regularly in everyday life, so they stay in practice, as it were. You can be a native speaker of one language, or sometimes of two or more, or of none. The latter usually happens when someone switches languages in mid-childhood.

I wish to emphasize: there are *no value judgments* being made when linguists talk about native speakers! We don’t think native speakers are better (or worse) than other people. However, like scientists everywhere, we want our data to be *replicable*: another scientist should be able to conduct the same research and find out if the original results were correct. The native speaker idea is meant to assist replicability. Linguist #1 can say, “the results of this study come from four native speakers of Language X, all of whom speak the dialect characteristic of middle-class inhabitants of city Y.” Then, if Linguist #2 wants to carry out further study, or check #1’s results, she can go to city Y, find middle-class native speakers, and advance the research program further.

The reason using native speakers as consultants makes this easier is that native speakers tend to be more uniform in their linguistic systems, have more confidence in the forms of their speech, and typically speak their language in its richest and most intricate form. Non-native speakers are more vulnerable to arbitrary, external factors. These include interference from their native language or the accidents of what sort of data they encountered learning their nonnative language.

## Study Exercises for “each other”

The first exercise is a very basic one: finding clauses and implicit subjects. This will matter a lot later on. The others are more directly related to the *each other* phenomenon.

### Study Exercise #1

This exercise simply asks you to find the clauses and the Noun Phrases. Put [ ... ]s brackets around the clauses and underline the Noun Phrases. Be sure to get all of them. If the subject is implicit, put “( )” where the subject would be and say what it stands for.

Examples:

- i. Alice believes that Fred sang. Answer: [ Alice believes that [ Fred sang ]s ]s
- ii. Alice hopes to climb Everest. Answer [ Alice hopes [ (Alice) to climb Everest ]s ]s

Exercises:

- a. I believe that turtles can swim.
- b. The fact that Fred left bothers Alice.
- c. Bill said that Jane sang and Fred danced.
- d. I persuaded Fred to buy a telescope.
- e. I promised Fred to buy a telescope.
- f. To appear on television is her fondest dream.
- g. Joe said that he wants to leave.
- h. That Jane can sing tenor makes no difference.
- i. Bill left because he was tired.
- j. the idea that truth is obtainable

### Answer to Study Exercise #1

- a. [ I believe that [ turtles can swim. ]s ]s  
 b. [ The fact that [ Fred left ]s bothers Alice. ]s

Comment: *the fact that Fred left* is a Noun Phrase with a Noun Phrase inside it; hence double underlines. We'll come back to this; but let's not worry about it for a while.

- c. [ Bill said that [ [ Jane sang ]s and [ Fred danced. ]s ]s ]s

Comment: *Jane sang* and *Fred danced* are two simple sentences; *Jane sang and Fred danced* is a more complex sentence that expresses what Bill said; and the whole thing is a sentence.

- d. [ I persuaded Fred [ (Fred) to buy a telescope. ]s ]s  
 e. [ I promised Fred [ (me) to buy a telescope. ]s ]s  
 f. [[ (her) to appear on television ]s is her fondest dream. ]s  
 g. [ Joe said that [ he wants [ (Joe) to leave. ]s ]s ]s  
 h. [ That [ Jane can sing tenor ]s makes no difference. ]s  
 i. [ Bill left because [ he was tired. ]s ]s  
 j. the idea that [ truth is obtainable ]s

Comment: the whole thing is not a sentence; it's a Noun Phrase; hence the double underlining. When people speak, they use a mixture of sentences, noun phrases, interjections, and various other linguistic forms.

### Study Exercise #2

This sentence is ambiguous:

*My sister and I gave our parents books about each other.*

Explain each possible meaning and illustrate it with a diagram (brackets and arrows) like the ones given above.

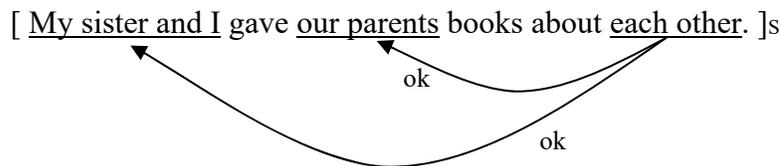
## Answer to Study Exercise #2

My sister and I gave our parents books about each other.

One meaning: “My sister gave our parents books about me and I gave our parents books about my sister.”

Other meaning: “My sister and I gave our mother a book about our father and gave our father a book about our mother.”

Diagram:



## Study Exercise #3

This sentence is ambiguous:

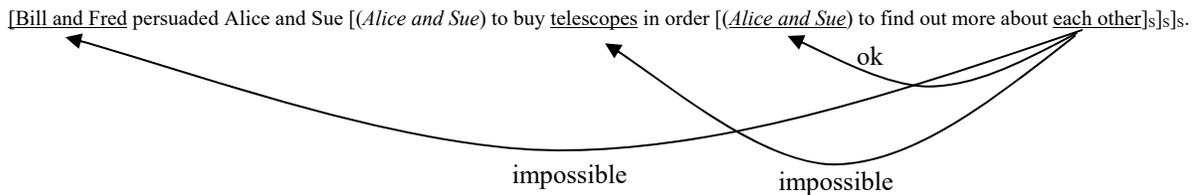
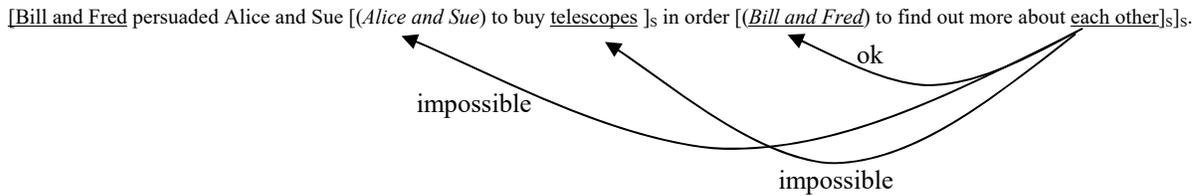
Bill and Fred persuaded Alice and Sue ( ) to buy telescopes in order ( ) to find out more about each other.

For example, in one reading, you could continue: “In fact, as it turned out, Bill succeeded in finding out more about Fred, but Fred did not succeed in finding out more about Bill.” In the other reading, you could continue, “In fact, as it turned out, Alice succeeded in finding out more about Sue, but Sue did not succeed in finding out more about Alice.”

*For each meaning, fill in the implicit subjects shown with ( ). Then draw diagrams for the reference of each other. (So you’ll end up with two diagrams.)*

**Answer to Study Exercise #3:**

The impossible readings are the ones where *each other* refers to something outside the smallest clause containing it.<sup>9</sup>



**Study Exercise #4**

For this sentence:

*My parents tell my sister and me every day to write books about each other.*

there's only one meaning: "My parents tell my sister every day to write a book about me and tell me every day to write a book about my sister." It can't mean "My mother tells my sister and me every day to write a book about my father and my father tells my sister and me every day to write a book about my mother." Explain why, giving diagrams for both the possible and the impossible meaning.

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<sup>9</sup> An additional detail is that the bracketing of the clauses is different in the two sentences. *To find out more about each other* is a purposive clause, and in the first sentence it describes the purpose of persuading, in the second sentence the purpose of buying. This difference does not affect the reference of *each other*, which is confined to its own clause in any event.

**Answer to Study Exercise #4**

The crucial part is to identify the clauses and the implicit subject, which must mean “my sister and me” and not “my parents”. Once you’ve got this, then it follows straightforwardly from the Each Other Reference Rule that *each other* can refer only to *my sister and me*.

[ My parents tell my sister and me every day [ (my sister and me) to write books about each other ]s]s



## Chapter 2: Morphology

### 1. Orientation

In linguistics, “morphology” means “the study of word structure.” We’re interested in the structure of individual words, as well as the grammatical rules with which words are formed.

First, we need terminology to be able to discuss the parts of words. The **stem** of a word is its core, the part that bears its central meaning. In the English word *undeniable*, the stem is *deny*; and in *insincerity* the stem is *sincere*.

Material that is added to the stem, thus modifying its meaning in some way, consists principally of **prefixes** and **suffixes**. The suffix *-able* is suffixed to *deny* to form *deniable*<sup>10</sup>; and the prefix *un-* is added to the result to obtain *undeniable*. Often, multiple prefixes and suffixes can be added to the same stem, producing ever longer and more elaborate words: *undeniability*, *hyperundeniability*.

Sometimes it is useful to have a term that covers both prefixes and suffixes. The standard word for this is **affix**. More generally still, suppose we want a term that generalizes over stems, prefixes, and suffixes — over all the building blocks from which words are assembled. The standard term here is **morpheme**. It is often defined as follows:

(27) *Defn.:* **morpheme**

A **morpheme** is the smallest linguistic unit that bears a meaning.

In *undeniable*, *un-*, *deny*, and *-able* are the three morphemes. *Deniable* is not a morpheme because it can be split into meaningful *deny* and *-able*. *De* and *ny* are not morphemes because they are meaningless. More precisely, the sequence *de* often *is* a morpheme when it appears in other words, for instance *declassify*, *decompose*, and *delouse*; but is it not a morpheme when it appears in *deny*.

Here is a bit of commonly used notation. To show how a word is divided into morphemes, one can separate the morphemes with hyphens: *un-deni-abil-ity*. When discussed by themselves, prefixes and suffixes are indicated with hyphens: prefixes as in *un-*, suffixes as in *-ity*. You can think of the hyphen as a bit of imaginary “glue” with which a morpheme attaches to the stem.

### 2. Two kinds of morphology

Most linguists acknowledge at least a rough distinction between two kinds of morphology: **word formation** vs. **inflectional morphology**. We’ll start with inflectional morphology.

Inflectional morphology is grammatical morphology. Here are some examples to start, from English:

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<sup>10</sup> We’ll ignore the change of *y* to *i*, which follows a rule of English spelling.

- **tense** on verbs (present tense *jumps*, past tense *jumped*)
- **number** on nouns (singular *cow*, plural *cows*)
- a small amount of **person and number agreement** in verbs (*She sings*, vs. *They sing*.)

English is actually not a very good language for studying inflectional morphology, because it doesn't have very much of it (Mandarin is a similar case). But other languages, such as Swahili, Russian, or Turkish, have a great deal, and students of these languages can spend years learning the complete inflectional system.

### 3. Morphological analysis

One of the tasks of linguistic analysis that must be carried out to make sense of any newly-encountered language is to figure out the structure of the morphology. This involves gathering data, determining what morphemes are present, and writing the rules that form the words from their constituent morphemes.

The fundamental method for this is as follows: one must compile a collection of morphologically similar words and their meanings, then scrutinize it to determine *which sound sequences remain the same whenever the meaning remains the same*. It is this criterion that will isolate the meaningful chunks, i.e. morphemes.

We will do this now for a fairly simple case, namely a fragment of the nominal morphology (=morphology for nouns) in Turkish. Here are the data:

(28) *Turkish morphology data*

1. el	'hand'	ev	'house'	zil	'bell'
2. eli	'hand (object)'	evi	'house (object)'	zili	'bell (object)'
3. ele	'to (a) hand'	eve	'to (a) house'	zile	'to (a) bell'
4. elde	'in (a) hand'	evde	'in (a) house'	zilde	'in (a) bell'
5. elim	'my hand'	evim	'my house'	zilim	'my bell'
6. elimi	'my hand (object)'	evimi	'my house (object)'	zilimi	'my bell (object)'
7. elime	'to my hand'	evime	'to my house'	zilime	'to my bell'
8. elimde	'in my hand'	evimde	'in my house'	zilimde	'in my bell'
9. elin	'your hand'	evin	'your house'	zilin	'your bell'
10. elini	'your hand (object)'	evini	'your house (object)'	zilini	'your bell (object)'
11. eline	'to your hand'	evine	'to your house'	ziline	'to your bell'
12. elinde	'in your hand'	evinde	'in your house'	ziline	'in your bell'
13. elimiz	'our hand'	evimiz	'our house'	zilizimiz	'our bell'
14. elimizi	'our hand (object)'	evimizi	'our house (object)'	zilizimizi	'our bell (object)'
15. elimize	'to our hand'	evimize	'to our house'	zilizimize	'to our bell'
16. elimizde	'in our hand'	evimizde	'in our house'	zilizimizde	'in our bell'
17. eliniz	'your (plur.) hand'	eviniz	'your (plur.) house'	ziliniz	'your (plur.) bell'
18. elinizi	'your (pl.) hand (obj.)'	evinizi	'your (pl.) house (obj.)'	zilinizi	'your (pl.) bell (obj.)'
19. elinize	'to your (pl.) hand'	evinize	'to your (pl.) house'	zilinize	'to your (pl.) bell'
20. elinizde	'in your (pl.) hand'	evinizde	'in your (pl.) house'	zilinizde	'in your (pl.) bell'
21. eller	'hands'	evler	'houses'	ziller	'bells'
22. elleri	'hands (object)'	evleri	'houses (object)'	zilleri	'bells (object)'
23. ellere	'to hands'	evlere	'to houses'	zillere	'to bells'
24. ellerde	'in hands'	evlerde	'in houses'	zillerde	'in bells'
25. ellerim	'my hands'	evlerim	'my houses'	zillerim	'my bells'
26. ellerimi	'my hands (obj.)'	evlerimi	'my houses (obj.)'	zillerimi	'my bells (obj.)'
27. ellerime	'to my hands'	evlerime	'to my houses'	zillerime	'to my bells'
28. ellerimde	'in my hands'	evlerimde	'in my houses'	zillerimde	'in my bells'
29. ellerin	'your hands'	evlerin	'your houses'	zillerin	'your bells'
30. ellerini	'your hands (obj.)'	evlerini	'your houses (obj.)'	zillerini	'your bells (obj.)'
31. ellerine	'to your hands'	evlerine	'to your houses'	zillerine	'to your bells'
32. ellerinde	'in your hands'	evlerinde	'in your houses'	zillerinde	'in your bells'
33. ellerimiz	'our hands'	evlerimiz	'our houses'	zillerimiz	'our bells'
34. ellerimizi	'our hands (obj.)'	evlerimizi	'our houses (obj.)'	zillerimizi	'our bells (obj.)'
35. ellerimize	'to our hands'	evlerimize	'to our houses'	zillerimize	'to our bells'
36. ellerimizde	'in our hands'	evlerimizde	'in our houses'	zillerimizde	'in our bells'
37. elleriniz	'your (pl.) hands'	evleriniz	'your (pl.) houses'	zilleriniz	'your (pl.) bells'
38. ellerinizi	'your (pl.) hands (obj.)'	evlerinizi	'your (pl.) houses (obj.)'	zillerinizi	'your (pl.) bells (obj.)'
39. ellerinize	'to your (pl.) hands'	evlerinize	'to your (pl.) houses'	zillerinize	'to your (pl.) bells'
40. ellerinizde	'in your (pl.) hands'	evlerinizde	'in your (pl.) houses'	zillerinizde	'in your (pl.) bells'

We have here three columns, indicating inflected forms of the three nouns meaning “hand”, “house”, and “bell”. Abbreviations and grammatical conventions are as follows:

- “plur.” or “pl.” abbreviate “plural”.
- “your (pl.)” is second person plural. Here, as a possessive, it means “belonging to you, there being more than one of you.”

- (object) or (obj.) means that that form would be used as the **object** of a verb. Thus, if one were to say in Turkish something like “I saw (the) hand”, one would use #3, *eli*,<sup>11</sup> namely *eli gjørdym*.

#### 4. Breaking up the words into morphemes

The search, as always, is for invariant form paired with invariant meaning. In the first column of (27), every single form begins with the sounds *el* and has a meaning involving “hands”. It seems inconceivable that “hand” could be anything other than *el*, or that *el* could be anything other than “hand”—note in particular the first line, where *el* by itself means “hand” by itself.

##### 4.1 Finding the stems

The columns for “house” and “bell” are completely identical to the column for “hand”, except that where column has *el*, columns 2 and 3 have *ev* and *zil* as stems. It is plain that *ev* means “house” and *zil* means “bell”.

Moving on, we can compare:

1. *el* ‘hand’
2. *eli* ‘hand (object)’
3. *ele* ‘to (a) hand’

Subtracting out *el* from the second and third forms, it appears that *-i* and *-e* must be suffixes. We can confirm this by casting an eye over the remainder of the data: *-e* “goes together” with the English word “to” given in the translations; and likewise *-i* with “(object)”.

##### 4.2 Case

The *-e* and *-i* suffixes apparently denote the grammatical role that the noun plays in a Turkish sentence, a phenomenon called **case**. Let’s briefly digress with the basics of case.

- Case is fundamentally an inflectional category of nouns (though often adjectives and articles agree with their noun in case).
- Case tells us, intuitively, *who is doing what to whom* — it identifies the basic semantic roles of the participants in a clause. In many languages, “Man bites dog” is Man-nominative bites dog-accusative”, and “Dog bites man” is “Dog-nominative bites man-accusative.” Nominative and accusative are probably the two most common cases.

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<sup>11</sup> The reference source on Turkish I’m using gives another sentence with *-i* and a verbal object:

Beş adam heykel-**i** kırdı  
 five man statue-**accusative** broke  
 ‘Five men broke the statue’



- “**First person**” refers to pronouns and grammatical endings that involve the speaker, either alone or with others. Thus in English *I* is a first-person singular pronoun, *we* is first person plural.
- “**Second person**” refers to pronouns and grammatical endings that involve the hearer, either alone or with others. In Spanish *tú* is a second-person singular pronoun, used to address one person, and *vosotros* is a second-person plural pronoun, used to address more than one person.<sup>15</sup>
- “**Third person**” refers to pronouns and grammatical endings that involve neither the speaker nor the hearer. Thus *he/she/it* are third-person singular pronouns, *they* third person plural.

#### 4.5 Hyphens and glosses

Once we’ve found all the parts, we can restate the original data, putting in **hyphens** to separate out the morphemes. I’ll do this just for the “hand” forms. I’ve also added a morpheme-by-morpheme translation, also separated out by hyphens; this is called a **gloss**. Glosses are a sort of micro-translation; they are meant to clarify structure, rather than give an idiomatic reading.

	<i>Word</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Idiomatic translation</i>
1.	el	‘hand	‘hand’
2.	el-i	‘hand-acc.	‘hand (object)’
3.	el-e	‘hand-dative	‘to (a) hand’
4.	el-de	‘hand-locative’	‘in (a) hand’
5.	el-im	‘hand-1 sg.	‘my hand’
6.	el-im-i	‘hand-1 sg.-acc.’	‘my hand (object)’
7.	el-im-e	‘hand-1 sg.-dat.’	‘to my hand’
8.	el-im-de	‘hand-1 sg.-loc.’	‘in my hand’
9.	el-in	‘hand-2 sg.’	‘your hand’
10.	el-in-i	‘hand-2 sg.-acc.’	‘your hand (object)’
11.	el-in-e	‘hand-2 sg.-dat.’	‘to your hand’
12.	el-in-de	‘hand-2 sg.-loc.’	‘in your hand’
13.	el-imiz	‘hand-1 plur.’	‘our hand’
14.	el-imiz-i	‘hand-1 plur.-acc.’	‘our hand (object)’
15.	el-imiz-e	‘hand-1 plur.-dat.’	‘to our hand
16.	el-imiz-de	‘hand-1 plur.-loc.’	‘in our hand’
17.	el-iniz	‘hand-2 plur.’	‘your (plur.) hand’
18.	el-iniz-i	‘hand-2 plur.-acc.’	‘your (pl.) hand (obj.)’
19.	el-iniz-e	‘hand-2 plur.-dat.’	‘to your (pl.) hand’
20.	el-iniz-de	‘hand-2 plur. -loc.’	‘in your (pl.) hand’
21.	el-ler	‘hand-plural’	‘hands’

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<sup>15</sup> Standard English doesn’t make the distinction between singular and plural in the second person; though many regional dialects have a special plural pronoun, “yall”, used whenever the addressee is plural.

22. el-ler-i	'hand-plural-acc.'	'hands (object)'
23. el-ler-e	'hand-plural-dat.'	'to hands'
24. el-ler-de	'hand-plural-loc.'	'in hands'
25. el-ler-im-i	'hand-plural-1 sg.-acc.'	'my hands (obj.)'
26. el-ler-im-e	'hand-plural-1 sg.-dat.'	'to my hands'
27. el-ler-im	'hand-plural-1 sg.'	'my hands'
28. el-ler-im-de	'hand-plural-1 sg.-loc.'	'in my hands'
29. el-ler-in	'hand-plural-2 sg.'	'your hands'
30. el-ler-in-i	'hand-plural-2 sg.-acc.'	'your hands (obj.)'
31. el-ler-in-e	'hand-plural-2 sg.-dat.'	'to your hands'
32. el-ler-in-de	'hand-plural-2 sg.-loc.'	'in your hands'
33. el-ler-imiz	'hand-plural-1 plur.'	'our hands'
34. el-ler-imiz-i	'hand-plural-1 plur.-acc.'	'our hands (obj.)'
35. el-ler-imiz-e	'hand-plural-1 plur.-dat.'	'to our hands'
36. el-ler-imiz-de	'hand-plural-1 plur.-loc.'	'in our hands'
37. el-ler-iniz	'hand-plural-2 plur.'	'your (pl.) hands'
38. el-ler-iniz-i	'hand-plural-2 plur.-acc.'	'your (pl.) hands (obj.)'
39. el-ler-iniz-e	'hand-plural-2 plur.-dat.'	'to your (pl.) hands'
40. el-ler-iniz-de	'hand-plural-2 plur.-loc.'	'in your (pl.) hands'

## 5. Classifying the suffixes and discovering order

It is useful at this point to sort all the suffixes discovered according to their function:

### Case endings

-i	accusative
-e	dative
-de	locative

### Possessive suffixes

-im	'my'
-in	'your'
-imiz	'our'
-iniz	'your-plural'

### Plural

-ler

In particular, if you scan the data (now greatly clarified with hyphens and glosses), you can find two important generalizations:

- No word contains more than one possessive suffix, or more than one case.
- Suffix order is invariant, and goes like this: **Plural precedes Possessive Suffix precedes Case.**

With a word processor, it's not hard to prove these relationships by lining up the relevant morphemes into columns with tabs. Here the data once more, displayed in this way.

(29) Turkish data laid out in columns

	Stem	Plural	Poss.	Case		
1.	el				'hand	'hand'
2.	el			i	'hand-acc.'	'hand (object)'
3.	el			e	'hand-dative	'to (a) hand'
4.	el			de	'hand-locative'	'in (a) hand'
5.	el		im		'hand-1 sg.'	'my hand'
6.	el		im	i	'hand-1 sg.-acc.'	'my hand (object)'
7.	el		im	e	'hand-1 sg.-dat.'	'to my hand'
8.	el		im	de	'hand-1 sg.-loc.'	'in my hand'
9.	el		in		'hand-2 sg.'	'your hand'
10.	el		in	i	'hand-2 sg.-acc.'	'your hand (object)'
11.	el		in	e	'hand-2 sg.-dat.'	'to your hand'
12.	el		in	de	'hand-2 sg.-loc.'	'in your hand'
13.	el		imiz		'hand-1 plur.'	'our hand'
14.	el		imiz	i	'hand-1 plur.-acc.'	'our hand (object)'
15.	el		imiz	e	'hand-1 plur.-dat.'	'to our hand'
16.	el		imiz	de	'hand-1 plur.-loc.'	'in our hand'
17.	el		iniz		'hand-2 plur.'	'your (plur.) hand'
18.	el		iniz	i	'hand-2 plur.-acc.'	'your (pl.) hand (obj.)'
19.	el		iniz	e	'hand-2 plur.-dat.'	'to your (pl.) hand'
20.	el		iniz	de	'hand-2 plur. -loc.'	'in your (pl.) hand'
21.	el	ler			'hand-plural'	'hands'
22.	el	ler		i	'hand-plural-acc.'	'hands (object)'
23.	el	ler		e	'hand-plural-dat.'	'to hands'
24.	el	ler		de	'hand-plural-loc.'	'in hands'
25.	el	ler	im		'hand-plural-1 sg.'	'my hands'
26.	el	ler	im	i	'hand-plural-1 sg.-acc.'	'my hands (obj.)'
27.	el	ler	im	e	'hand-plural-1 sg.-dat.'	'to my hands'
28.	el	ler	im	de	'hand-plural-1 sg.-loc.'	'in my hands'
29.	el	ler	in		'hand-plural-2 sg.'	'your hands'
30.	el	ler	in	i	'hand-plural-2 sg.-acc.'	'your hands (obj.)'
31.	el	ler	in	e	'hand-plural-2 sg.-dat.'	'to your hands'
32.	el	ler	in	de	'hand-plural-2 sg.-loc.'	'in your hands'
33.	el	ler	imiz		'hand-plural-1 plur.'	'our hands'
34.	el	ler	imiz	i	'hand-plural-1 plur.-acc.'	'our hands (obj.)'
35.	el	ler	imiz	e	'hand-plural-1 plur.-dat.'	'to our hands'
36.	el	ler	imiz	de	'hand-plural-1 plur.-loc.'	'in our hands'
37.	el	ler	iniz		'hand-plural-2 plur.'	'your (pl.) hands'
38.	el	ler	iniz	i	'hand-plural-2 plur.-acc.'	'your (pl.) hands (obj.)'
39.	el	ler	iniz	e	'hand-plural-2 plur.-dat.'	'to your (pl.) hands'
40.	el	ler	iniz	de	'hand-plural-2 plur.-loc.'	'in your (pl.) hands'

**Study Exercise #5**

Reexamine these suffixes and propose a different — finer-grained — analysis.

<i>-im</i>	‘my’
<i>-in</i>	‘your’
<i>-imiz</i>	‘our’
<i>-iniz</i>	‘your-plural’

### Answer to Study Exercise #5

*-imiz* is really *-im* + *-iz*, and *-iniz* is really *-in* + *-iz*.

We can make this work if we give the suffixes slightly more abstract meanings: *-im* doesn't mean "my", but more generally, "first person". *-in* doesn't mean "your", but more generally, "second person". Then, *-iz* means "plural possessor". Singular possessor is indicated by including no suffix.

## 6. Position classes in inflectional morphology

When we looked at the Turkish data, the primary finding was that the morphemes could be arranged in a linear order, which could be expressed as five slots.

### (30) Five slots in Turkish morphology

Stem	Plural	Possessor Person	Possessor Number	Case
el 'hand'	-ler	-im 1st	-iz plural	∅ nominative
ev 'house'		-in 2nd		-i accusative
zil 'bell'				-e dative
				-de locative

In a long word like *ellerimizde* 'in our hands', all five slots get filled:

### (31) All five slots occupied

Stem	Plural	Possessor Person	Possessor Number	Case
<i>el</i> hand	<i>-ler</i> plural	<i>-im</i> 1st	<i>-iz</i> plur. poss.	<i>de</i> locative

In analysis, words like *ellerimizde* are very useful, since they demonstrate the need for all five slots at once.

The slots in a system like this are sometimes called **position classes**. Each position is an abstract location in the word, which can be filled by a particular morpheme or set of morphemes. In the analysis given earlier, we derived position classes using blocks of rules, one block per class.

An important check on a position class analysis is that there should be no contradictions of ordering in the data, if the analysis is correct. We can look through the data and see that (for

example) *-in*, *-iz*, and *-de* never precede *-ler*; that *-iz* and *-de* never precede *in*; that *-de* never precedes *-iz*; and similarly with the other morphemes.

Position classes can be defined simply by looking at the morphemes and checking their mutual ordering. But most often, the classes can be related to **morphological function**. For example, it is hardly an accident that the two suffixes in the third Turkish slot are both possessor person suffixes. The normal pattern is: position reflects function.

This said, it should be noted that there are exceptions; the occasional language will take the same function and put some of the morphemes into different positions; or fill a position with morphemes of variegated function. For instance, the Swahili morpheme *cho*, which means roughly “which”, gets put in a different position for positive and negative verbs:

- (32) ki-tabu a-ki-taka-cho Hamisi  
 book SUBJ-OBJ-want-**which** Hamisi ‘the book which Hamisi wants’
- ki-tabu a-si-**cho**-ki-taka Hamisi  
 book SUBJ-NEG-**which**-OBJ-want Hamisi ‘the book which Hamisi doesn’t want’

## 7. Formalizing with a grammar

Linguists seek to make their analyses as explicit as possible, by expressing the pattern of the language with **rules**. The rules taken together form a **grammar**. We’ll start with a very simple grammar for Turkish nominal inflection.

The “architecture” of this grammar is conceptually about as simple as it could be: we’ll start with a representation of (roughly) meaning, and set up rules that input this meaning and output sound.

In particular, let’s assume that the stem (*el*, *ev*, *zil*, or whatever) comes with **morphological features** specifying its grammatical content. The bundle of features is called the **morphosyntactic representation**.<sup>16</sup> The job of our grammar will be to manifest this content with actual material. For example, we can start out with something like this for #40 from (28) above (on p. 26):

*el*: [Number:plural, PossessorPerson:2, PossessorNumber:plural, Case:Locative]

The *el* part is the stem meaning ‘hand’. The part in [ ] is the morphosyntactic representation. It contains four morphological features:

- (33) Number  
 PossessorPerson  
 PossessorNumber  
 Case

<sup>16</sup> Why? We’ll see later on: the morphosyntactic representation transfers information over from the syntax to the morphology.

Each feature has a **value**, which is shown by placing it after a colon. So you can read the formula *el*: [Number:plural, PossessorNumber:plural, PossessorPerson:2, Case:Locative] as: “the stem *el*, with a morphosyntactic representation indicating plural Number, plural PossessorNumber, second PossessorPerson, and Locative Case”. We’ll return later on to the question of where these features come from.

The grammar itself consists of four rules. The order in which the rules are stated is significant and is part of the grammar. Only the first rule is stated in full.

(34) *A Grammar for Inflectional Morphology in Turkish Nouns*

**a. Number Rule**

Suffix *-ler* if the morphosyntactic representation bears the feature [Number:plural]

**b. Possessor Person Rule**

Add a possessor suffix, as follows:

*-im* if [PossessorPerson:1person]  
*-in* if [PossessorPerson:2person]

**c. Possessor Number Rule**

Add a possessor suffix, as follows:

*-iz* if [PossessorNumber:plural]

**d. Case Rule**

Add a case suffix, as follows:

*-i* if [Case:Accusative]  
*-e* if [Case:Dative]  
*-de* if [Case:Locative]

The reason that the rules must apply in the order given is that by doing this, we construct the word from “inside out”, adding a bit more to the material we’ve already accumulated. This “inside out” character will be shown immediately below.

You can show how the rules apply to a particular form by giving a **derivation**. In linguistics, a derivation shows each rule applying in succession, and justifies the rules by showing that they correctly derive the observed forms. You’ve probably seen something like a derivation before, as similar devices are used for proofs in math or illustrate an inference in logic — each line is justified by the rule that is applied.

For the Turkish form *ellerinizde* ‘in your (plur.) hands’ (#40 in the data of (27) above), the derivation would look like this (I use underlines, etc. simply to increase legibility).

**(35) Morphological derivation for *ellerinizde***

<i>el</i> : [Number:plural, PossPers:2, PossNum:plural, Case:Locative]	‘hand’ with its morphosyntactic representation
<u><i>eller</i></u>	Number Rule
<i>ellerin</i>	Possessor Person Rule
<i>elleriniz</i>	Possessor Number Rule
<i>ellerinizde</i>	Case Rule

At each stage, the relevant rule “sees” the right feature, and adds the appropriate suffix.

The derivation just given is a bit extravagant, in that I repeated the morphosyntactic representation at each phase, to show what was being referred to. A shorter answer, which I think would be fine to submit in a homework, would be like this:

**(36) A terser morphological derivation for *ellerinizde***

<i>el</i> : [Number:plural, PossPers:2, PossNum:plural, Case:Locative]	‘hand’ with its morphosyntactic representation
<i>eller</i>	Number Rule
<i>ellerin</i>	Possessor Person Rule
<i>elleriniz</i>	Possessor Number Rule
<i>ellerinizde</i>	Case Rule

**Study Exercise #6**

Derive #34, *ellerimizi* ‘our hands-accusative,’ starting with an appropriate morphosyntactic representation and using the rules above. Answer on next page.

## Answer to Study Exercise #6

el:[Number:plural, PossPers:1, PossNum:plural, Case:Accusative] ‘hand’ with its morphosyntactic representation

eller	Number Rule
ellerim	Possessor Person Rule
ellerimiz	Possessor Number Rule
ellerimizi	Case Rule

## 8. A note on grammars and applying them

The rules of (33) above are the very first *grammar* we have discussed; there will be quite a few more grammars as we proceed.

Grammars, written with formalized rules, are a central element of linguistics; they are the method that linguists use to make explicit hypotheses that can be tested and improved. The formalization of grammars has a purpose: we want the grammars to be unambiguous, so we can always agree on how the rules apply.

The role of formalized rules in linguistics is not that different from the role of explicit theory in any other science. The theory is supposed to be *applicable*, capable of making predictions about new data. When the predictions are right, we feel good about it; if the predictions are wrong, we go back to the drawing board, either modifying or replacing the theory.

Students new to formal grammars may need to master a skill that I will facetiously call “turning your brain into a computer”: you do nothing but look at the rule and the forms it applies to, and derive the result, as if you were a machine. For a moment, don’t think about what the grammar *ought* to be deriving; just follow the rules and see what it *does* derive.<sup>17</sup>

The payoff for such behavior is that the grammars become tools in our hands; tools for understanding in explicit terms how a language is working. We treat our tools with respect when we take them for what they are, namely, utterly mechanical principles.

I hasten to add: the need to turn your brain into a computer is temporary. All you want to do, at this moment, is check the outcome and see if it matches the true data of the language. But the other tasks of a linguist are actually quite creative: they include (a) thinking of better rules when the old rules fail; (b) looking at language data to detect the patterns that the rules should be capturing; (c) thinking of new ways (data to elicit in fieldwork, designing experiments) to get the data that will reveal interesting truths about a language. Linguistics is indeed a field that welcomes creativity; the “turning your brain into a computer” bit I’ve described here occurs only at the stage of checking how the rules apply.

<sup>17</sup> This is actually not such a bad skill to cultivate; there aren’t all that many people in the world who are capable of following complex instructions to the letter; you can be one of them!

## 9. The bigger picture

Grammars like the one we are working on can derive quite a bit of data. It's worth pondering, for instance, how many forms a Turkish noun can have. There are several choices to be made:

- Number: singular or plural, thus **two** possibilities
- Possessor Person: any of **three**: 1, 2, 3 ("his or her")
- Possessor Number: any of **two** (singular, plural)
- Case: nominative (no ending), accusative, dative, locative, plus ablative ("from"), genitive "'s", instrumental ("with"), thus **seven** possibilities<sup>18</sup>

Multiplying these out, every Turkish noun can appear in (at least)  $2 \times 3 \times 2 \times 7 = 84$  forms, of which we covered only 40. It seems likely that Turkish speakers often must produce a new form for a noun, when they haven't heard a particular combination before.

The Turkish nominal system is a fairly simple one; Turkish verbs, for instance, are quite a bit more complex; one estimate for the total size of the Turkish verbal paradigm is 40,000. The most elaborate system I know of is the verbal system of Shona (Bantu, Zimbabwe), where (according to the linguist David Odden), the typical verb has about 10 trillion possible forms. Odden has developed a system that generates these forms using a rather complicated set of rules; most of the complications arise in getting the tones right.

It seems also likely that Turkish children or Shona children must also be using some kind of a grammar; a grammar they internalize somehow in their heads. This is so because they could not possibly memorize every form of every word. We cannot know — yet — to what extent their grammars resemble our grammars, but the idea that through analysis and research we can get close to what they learn is a central idea of contemporary linguistics.

## 10. The source of morphosyntactic representations

The discussion in the last chapter showed how we can write a set of rules that create morphologically well-formed words through the successive addition of prefixes and suffixes by rule. But what do these rules *apply to*? There are various answers given by various linguists; here, we will examine just one fairly representative one.

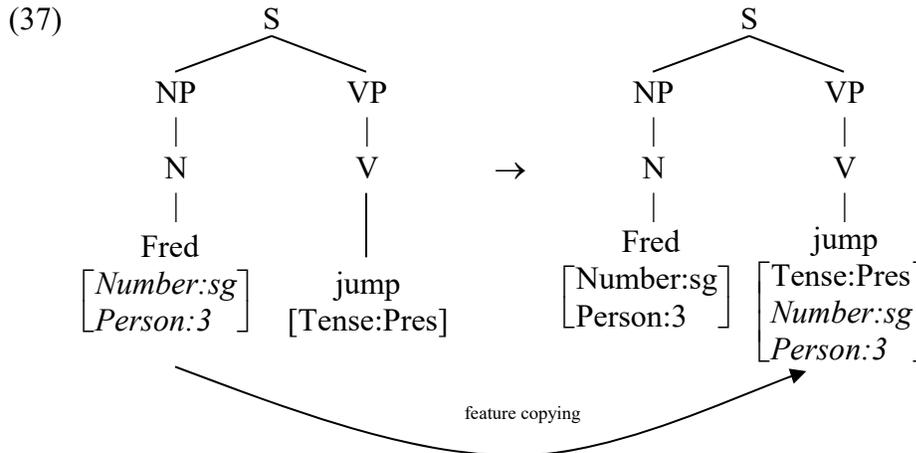
The idea is that the syntax of a language builds up a feature structure for every stem that appears in a sentence. Here are the data we address:

I jump.	We jump.
You jump.	
He/she/it/Fred jumps.	They jump.

---

<sup>18</sup> You can learn about all these cases, and much more, in a good grammar book. For Turkish, I have consulted Geoffrey Lewis (2000) *Turkish Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), which I find exceptionally clear.

The suffix *-s* is seen, and only seen, when the subject is one of the pronouns *he/she/it*, or a singular noun phrase. This indicates the fact that in English the verb “agrees with” its subject. A simple way to do this syntactically is to set up a rule that copies the morphosyntactic features of the subject onto the verb. Specifically, in a sentence like *Fred jumps* this rule must cause the features [Person:3, Number:Singular] to appear on the stem *jump*. Looking ahead to syntax, we can draw a syntactic structure<sup>19</sup> and the process of agreement:



We can assume that *Fred* is inherently [Number:sg, Person:3], since it is a proper name. The [Tense:Pres] must be assumed at the start as well, since it is part of the meaning of the sentence.

The operation above is part of syntax. Once the rules of the morphology get to apply, the presence of these feature will cause a suffixation rule to apply, which attaches the suffix that we spell *-s*. Here is a sample rule:

(38) **3rd Sing. Present Rule**

Suffix *-s* when the morphosyntactic representation contains  
[Tense:Pres, Person:Sing., Number:3].

In sum, we have quite a bit of descriptive work to do in a complete grammar: the **syntactic component** arranges words in correct order and builds up the morphosyntactic representations, while the **morphological component** refers to the morphosyntactic representation in order to add the appropriate affixes.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This is looking ahead, so don't be alarmed if the diagrams aren't clear. To clue you in a bit: S = Sentence, NP = Noun Phrase, VP = Verb Phrase, N = Noun, V = Verb, vertical line means "is part of".

<sup>20</sup> The definition of the term "affix" was given on p. 19.

## 11. German inflection: more than one feature per morpheme

Consider the person-number endings of German, in the present and past:<sup>21</sup>

(39) *A German verb paradigm*

Present			Past		
1 sg.	ich warte	‘I wait’	ich wartete	‘I waited’	
2 sg.	du wartest	‘you-sg. wait’	du wartetest	‘You waited’	
3 sg.	sie/er wartet	‘she/he waits’	sie/er wartete	‘she/he waited’	
1 pl.	wir warten	‘we wait’	wir warteten	‘we waited’	
2 pl.	ihr wartet	‘you-plur. wait’	ihr wartetet	‘you-plur. waited’	
3 pl.	sie warten	‘they wait’	sie warteten	‘they waited’	

First, a bit of terminology I’ll be using more later on: a **paradigm** is a table like (37) in which the rows and columns reflect inflectional features and the cells of the table contain the same stem inflected for the relevant features. Paradigms are a great way to display morphological data and are commonly used in linguistics.

Looking at the paradigm of (37), we find a tricky issue: is the stem *warte*, with endings like *-(zero)*, *-st*, *-t*, *-n*, *-t*, *-n*; or is it *wart*, with endings like *-e*, *-est*, *-et*, *-en*, *-et*, *-en*? Further evidence<sup>22</sup> indicates that the second is correct. Here are the forms broken up into position classes (shown with vertical alignment):

(40) *The same paradigm arranged as position classes*

Present				Past			
1 sg.	ich	wart	e	ich	wart	et	e
2 sg.	du	wart	est	du	wart	et	est
3 sg.	sie/er	wart	et	sie/er	wart	et	e
1 pl.	wir	wart	en	wir	wart	et	en
2 pl.	ihr	wart	et	ihr	wart	et	et
3 pl.	sie	wart	en	sie	wart	et	en

The first thing to notice here is that unlike in Turkish, we are not going to be able to put forth an analysis in which the inflectional rules mention just one feature each—that is, with endings for person, endings for number, and endings for tense. Rather, German “bundles” the features, in the sense that one single suffix manifests more than one feature at a time. Thus, for instance, the suffix *-est* is simultaneously the realization of second person and singular number. As a result, in the

<sup>21</sup> A caution here: the discussion here holds true only for stems ending in [t]; I’m doing this to keep the morpheme divisions simple. The problem is that to get German verb morphology really right you have to do some phonology, which won’t happen for quite a few chapters yet...

<sup>22</sup> Notably, the imperative is just the plain stem: *Wart!* (wait).

analysis below, I have mostly written rules that mention more than one feature at a time. For the six person/number *combinations*, one needs (at least six rules). Here is a grammar:

(41) *Rules for verbal inflection in German*

**I. Tense Marking**

Suffix *-et* when the morphosyntactic representations contains [Tense:Past]

**II. Person/Number Marking**

Suffix:

*-e* if [Person:1, Number:Singular]

*-est* if [Person:2, Number:Singular]

***-e* if [Tense:Past, Person:3, Number:Singular]**

***-et* if [Tense:Present, Person:3, Number:Singular]**

*-en* if [Person:1, Number:Plural]

*-et* if [Person:2, Number:Plural]

*-en* if [Person:3, Number:Plural]

In fact, things are even more complicated than this. In precisely one place in the system—the 3rd person singular—the person-number ending is different in the past than in the present. The analysis takes account of this with the rules in boldface, which mention three features at once. Systems of inflectional morphology are well known for including asymmetries of this kind.

English has a very similar instance: the *-s* of *jumps*, seen earlier, simultaneously manifests [Number:Singular, Person:3, Tense:Present]. In fact, such “tangling” is found in languages all over the world.

Subparadigms often involve **partial overlap**: thus, the German present and past verb paradigms overlap in all but the third singular. From the viewpoint of rules, this is because it is only in the third singular that the rules are sensitive to tense.

**12. Irregular forms and spell-out**

Morphology is notorious for the amount of irregularity it involves. All the examples seen above were selected from instances where the rules work more or less perfectly. But very often, the rules have exceptions.

To give a very simple example, English verbs most often realize the feature [Tense:past] by suffixing a morpheme that in spelling appears as *-ed*, as in *kiss/kissed*, *jump/jumped*, *vote/voted*.<sup>23</sup> We might write a rule like this:

(42) **Past Tense Rule**

Suffix *-ed* when the morphosyntactic representation contains [Tense:Past].

Yet English has about 180 verbs that don't work this way: here are some sample pairs of present tense verbs with their irregular pasts:

<i>sing</i>	<i>sang</i>	(not <i>*singed</i> )
<i>cling</i>	<i>clung</i>	(not <i>*clinged</i> )
<i>write</i>	<i>wrote</i>	(not <i>*writed</i> )
<i>keep</i>	<i>kept</i>	(not <i>*keeped</i> )
<i>have</i>	<i>had</i>	(not <i>*haved</i> )
<i>make</i>	<i>made</i>	(not <i>*maked</i> )
<i>go</i>	<i>went</i>	(not <i>*goed</i> )

You can see that sometimes the vowel changes, or consonants drop out (*had*, *made*), or a completely unrelated form is used, as in *went*. (Such cases of total replacement are described in linguistics with the term **suppletion**; *went* is said to be the “suppletive past” of *go*.)

A common way to deal with irregulars is to adopt word-specific rules of **spell-out**. These don't try to be general or insightful, but merely state the facts. Here are spell-out rules for *went* and *kept*:

(43) **Went spell-out**

*go* [Tense:past] is spelled out as *went*.

**Kept spell-out**

*keep* [Tense:past] is spelled out as *kept*.

A spell-out rule is assumed to preempt any regular rule that mentions the same features; we need to do this to make sure that we don't apply the Past Tense Rule to *went*, yielding *\*wented*.

We will have further uses for spell-out rules as we proceed.

### 12.1 The origin of irregular inflected forms

Irregular inflected forms are widespread in the world's languages. They have three sources.

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<sup>23</sup> By invoking the spelling, I can ignore some differences in pronunciation that arise from phonology: *-ed* is [t] in *kissed*, [d] in *rubbed*, and [əd] in *voted*. We will pay not attention to such differences until we cover phonology in Chapter 12.

(1) Often, irregulars are relics of changes in pronunciation that took place in the language centuries (or even millenia) before. For instance, around the year 1000, the Middle English version of *keep* was *cēpan*, where *ē* spelled a long vowel. At this time, long vowels came to be shortened before two consonants, as in *cepte*, formerly *cēpte*. Our own *keep* and *kept* are phonetically evolved versions of *cēpan* and *cepte*. But the shortening principle is no longer active in the language. So, for example, the past tense of *beep* has to be *beeped*, not *\*bept*.

(2) A second source of irregular forms is very different. Written languages often include technical or scholarly vocabulary, and it is quite common for this vocabulary to be borrowed from a prestigious foreign language. Korean and Japanese borrow from Chinese, Persian from Arabic, English from Latin and Greek. So *stimulus*, irregular plural *stimuli*, is used in scholarly articles and in lecturing by psychologists. This word comes from Latin, and *stimuli* is simply the Latin plural carried over into English. Persian likewise uses a whole group of complex plurals borrowed from Arabic; so the word *keta:b* ‘book’<sup>24</sup> can pluralize either with its Arabic-derived plural *kotob* or with the regular Persian plural suffix *-ha:*, as in *ketab-ha:*.

(3) Suppletion occurs when an inflected form of Word A somehow comes to be reinterpreted as an inflected form of Word B. Thus, *went* was once the past tense of *wend*, but somehow was reinterpreted to be the past tense of *go*. English *be*, *am*, and *was* were, thousands of years ago, three separate verbs, but now constitute different spell-outs of the same verb.<sup>25</sup>

### 13. What are the characteristic inflectional categories?

Every language has a set of inflectional categories, though the sheer amount of inflection can vary quite a bit. Mandarin Chinese has very little; Turkish and Finnish are quite richly inflected; English is closer to the Mandarin end of the scale.

Each inflectional category is expressed (in the theory we are using) as a feature within the morphosyntactic representations.

Here is a quick survey of some inflectional categories.

#### 13.1 Nominal Inflection

Nouns and pronouns are often inflected for **number** (singular, plural, and occasionally dual, meaning exactly two; or even trial, exactly three). Pronouns are in addition inflected for **person** (first = includes speaker; second = includes hearer; third = neither).

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<sup>24</sup> [:] means the preceding vowel is long.

<sup>25</sup> All information in this paragraph obtained from what is probably the most authoritative source, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com).

### 13.1.1 Gender

In a number of languages nouns are inflected for **gender**; for instance, in German nouns can be masculine, feminine or neuter (as we can tell by the definite articles they take). In some cases, gender is semantically quite sensible:

- (44) *der Mann*      ‘the-masculine man’  
       *die Frau*        ‘the-feminine woman’

Extraordinarily, this system carries over—often quite arbitrarily — to the whole vocabulary of nouns, irrespective of meaning. Thus each of the three common items of silverware is a different gender in German:

- (45) *der Löffel*      ‘the-masculine spoon’  
       *die Gabel*        ‘the-feminine fork’  
       *das Messer*      ‘the-neuter knife’

Thus gender is for the most part a purely formal device, not an expression of meaning.

Gender involves many other semantic correlations that have nothing to do with biological sex. From a web page intended to help learners of German<sup>26</sup> I quote the following rules:

- (46) 60. Fabrics are predominantly masculine (*der Gingham*, *der Kaschmir*).  
 61. Heavenly bodies are predominantly masculine (*der Mond* [moon], *der Stern* [star]).  
 62. Forms of precipitation are predominantly masculine (*der Regen* [rain], *der Schnee* [snow]).  
 63. Bodies of water (restricted to inland streams, currents, and stagnant bodies) are predominantly masculine (*der See* [sea], *der Teich* [pond]).  
 64. Words denoting sound or loud noise or phonetic speech sounds are masculine (*der Donner* [thunder], *der Dental* [dental sound], *der Diphthong*).  
 65. Dance steps and popular music forms are masculine (*der Jazz*, *der Tango*).

Such generalizations are pervasive in gender languages. However, since there are usually exceptions of various sorts, it seems that people who know gender languages have probably memorized the gender of every word.

Gender is not just a property of familiar European languages; for example, it is also found in Semitic languages, and a kind of system rather like gender (but with at least a dozen types) is found in Bantu languages.

### 13.1.2 Case

Nouns, and the syntactic phrases they occur in, are marked for **case**, which marks their role in the sentence. See p. 22 above for discussion of case.

<sup>26</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/meyersde/Home/determinants-of-gender-in-german>; sadly, no longer available.

### 13.2 Verbal Inflection

Very common is **tense**, which gives the time of action relative to the present: past (*I jumped*), present (*I jump*), future (*I will jump*), and other (for example, “remote past”) tenses.

**Aspect** sets the boundaries of the action of the verb time, for instance, completed vs. non-completed action.

Verbs often agree with their subjects (and sometimes their objects as well) in features for nouns (as shown above in section 10 of this chapter). These features include person (*I am, you are, she is*), number (*I am, we are*), gender.

Verbs, particularly second person forms (see below) can also be inflected for the **degree of familiarity** of the addressee; thus English used to make a distinction between (say) *thou believest*, addressed to intimates, children, and animals; and *you believe*, for less familiar addressees. Most European languages, Javanese, Persian, Japanese, and Korean have such systems today.

In various languages verbs are inflected for **degree of belief**. German, for instance, has an indicative (for full endorsement), a weak subjunctive (for weak endorsement), and a strong subjunctive (full skepticism):

#### (47) Indicative and two subjunctives in German

Er sagte, dass er krank **ist**.  
 He said that he sick is-indicative  
 “He said he is sick” (acknowledging a belief held by all)

Er sagte, dass er krank **sei**.  
 He said that he sick is-weak subjunctive  
 “He said he is sick” (and it’s not necessarily true)

Er sagte, dass er krank **wäre**.  
 He said that he sick is-strong subjunctive  
 “He said he is sick” (and the speaker doubts it)

Related to this is the category of verbal inflection in many languages which marks information known only by hearsay rather than by direct witness; this is common in American Indian languages. Turkish has both a “simple past” and an “inferential past”, illustrated in the pair below (The letter *ş* is used in Turkish to spell the sound written in English as *sh*, phonetic symbol [ʃ]).

#### (48) Verbal inflection for direct evidence vs. hearsay in Turkish

bir turist vapuru gel-**di**  
 a tourist ship come-past  
 ‘A tourist ship has come’ (witnessed by the speaker)

bir turist vapuru gel-miş  
 a tourist ship come-inferential past  
 ‘I gather that a tourist ship has come’ (learned from other people)

### 13.3 Adjectival Inflection

Adjectives typically don’t have their own inflectional categories, but acquire inflection by agreeing with the nouns they modify; thus German:

- (49) *ein guter Löffel* ‘a-masculine good-masculine spoon’  
*eine gute Gabel* ‘a-feminine good-feminine fork’  
*ein gutes Messer* ‘a-neuter good-neuter knife’

## 14. The principle of obligatory expression

An important aspect of inflectional morphology is that it often involves *obligatory choices*. When in English one says “I bought the book”, it specifically means “one book”, not “any old number of books”. Likewise, “books” necessarily implies the plural. To avoid the obligatory choice, one must resort to awkward circumlocutions like “book or books”. There are other languages (for example, Mandarin) that work quite differently. Thus, the following sentence:

- (50) wǒ<sup>3</sup> mǎi<sup>3</sup>    shū<sup>1</sup>  
 I    buy    book  
 我    买    书

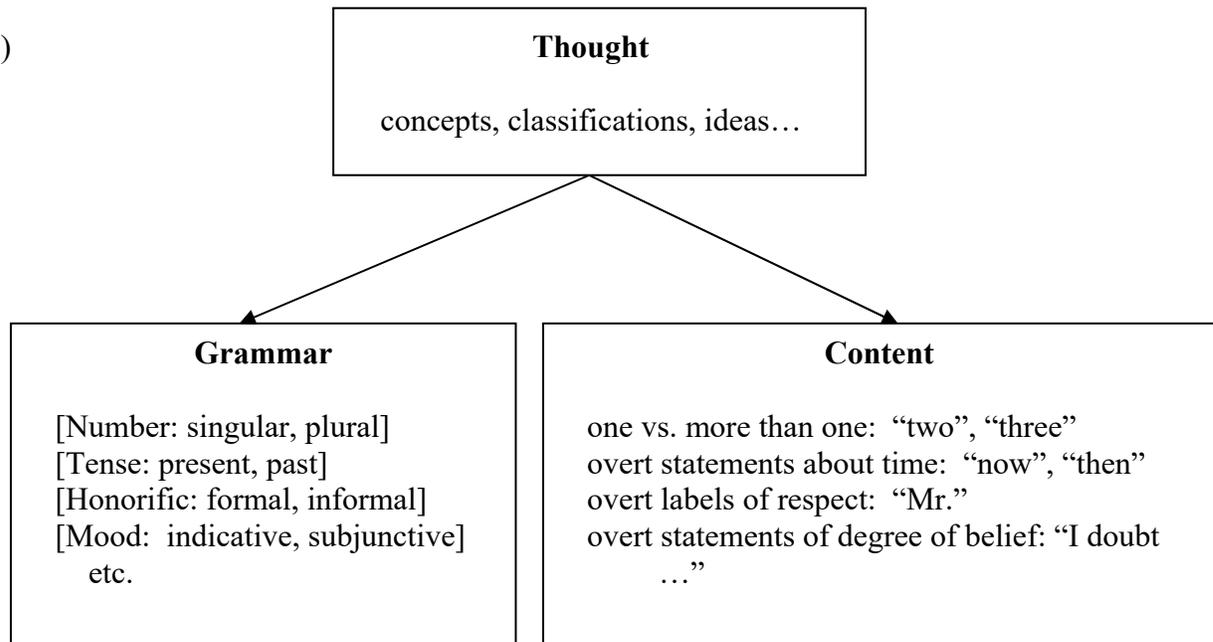
is quite noncommittal about how many books are bought.<sup>27</sup> Thus an important aspect of the grammar of languages is the set of choices they force speakers to make when speaking; this is determined by their systems of inflectional morphology.

Fundamentally, there is a bifurcation between the two ways that thought is embodied in language. The following diagram tries to make this clearer.

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<sup>27</sup> I have queried many Mandarin speakers about whether the sentence is also noncommittal about time (verb tense), and get differing answers. There is some subtlety here I am missing ...

(51)



Languages differ: each one takes a subset of the fundamental ideas, and *grammatically codifies* them. By this I mean that in some particular language, a particular concept gets expressed as grammatical features, and that these features are included in the morphosyntactic representations and thus integrated into the grammar. Whenever this happens, the expression of the concept in question becomes obligatory — since you have to obey the grammar of your language when you speak. In some other language, the same concept could remain uncoded grammatically, and the speaker is free to express it or not as she chooses, through choice of words and other means.

On the whole, the forms of thought that can get integrated into grammar are, as we might expect, the ones that are omnipresent in our lives: time, number, belief vs. doubt, and the fundamental aspects of conversations (speaker/hearer/other and their social relations.)

## 15. The typology of inflection

It's quite possible for there to be inflectional rules that apply (attaching their affix) only if *two* features are present in the morphosyntactic representation. We have already seen this in section 2.11 above; it is also true in the following Latin data:

(52) *A Latin noun paradigm*

Case	Singular	Plural	Meaning of case
<b>Nominative</b>	<i>somn-us</i>	<i>somn-i</i>	for subjects
<b>Genitive</b>	<i>somn-i</i>	<i>somn-orum</i>	for possessors
<b>Dative</b>	<i>somn-o</i>	<i>somn-is</i>	“to”
<b>Accusative</b>	<i>somn-um</i>	<i>somn-os</i>	for objects
<b>Ablative</b>	<i>somn-o</i>	<i>somn-is</i>	“from”
<b>Locative</b>	<i>somn-i</i>	<i>somn-is</i>	“at, on, in”
<b>Vocative</b>	<i>somn-e</i>	<i>somn-i</i>	for calling to someone

Taking just the suffix *-us*, we can see that it packs a considerable bundle of information: it tells us that *somnus* is nominative, that it is singular, and (with a few exceptions we will ignore) that it is masculine. We could write the rule like this:

(53) *A rule for the Latin inflectional suffix -us*

Add *-us* if [Case:Nominative, Number:singular, Gender:male]

In this respect, Latin is rather different from the Turkish we saw before. In Turkish, the rules that attach the suffixes generally refer to just one feature at a time.

This distinction is part of a traditional three-way system for classifying types of inflectional morphology, given below.

(54) *Isolating / agglutinative / inflecting*

- A language is **isolating** to the extent that it has little or no inflectional morphology. Examples: English, Chinese.
- A language is **agglutinative** if it has a rich inflectional morphology, and each morpheme expresses a single morphosyntactic feature. Thus, words have a very transparent structure. Examples: Turkish, Swahili.
- A language is **inflecting** (bad term, since it's ambiguous) if it has a rich morphology, and morphemes typically express *multiple* features. Example: Latin.

Of course, these terms are just matters of degree; Turkish is famous for being really quite agglutinative, and Latin is famous for being highly inflecting (in the relevant sense). There are many less-clear cases.

All else being equal, inflecting languages will tend to have *shorter* words than agglutinative languages. However, there is usually a “cost” to this terseness: typically, in an inflecting language the same ending often serves multiple purposes, so words tend to be inflectionally ambiguous.

## MORPHOLOGY, PART II: WORD FORMATION

**16. Rules of word formation**

The discussion in this chapter so far is of inflection; the morphology that is related to grammar. The other “side” of morphology is the system of rules used to to expand the stock of words, by forming new words from old. Often linguists refer to this process as **derivational morphology** or **derivation**; I use the term **word formation** since it is more precise.

For example, given that *identify* is an existing word of English, a rule of English word formation can create a new word, *identifiable*. From this another rule can provide *identifiability*, and from this yet another rule can create *unidentifiability*.

*16.1 Rules of word formation*

Consider some words formed with the English suffix *-able*:

(55) *-able*: *washable, lovable, thinkable, growable, doable*

We wish to write the **word formation rule** that attaches *-able* to an existing word to form a new one. There are three kinds of information that must be included in the rule.

First, there is a change of **form**; the existing word is augmented by the suffix. This could be expressed with the formalism below.

(56)  $X \rightarrow X + \text{-able}$

Capital X is meant to be a variable, designating “any string” (of letters, or later on, sounds). So the rule says, “augment any string with the string *-able*”.

Second, there is a change of **meaning**: *Xable* means “able to be Xed”. We will not formalize this, since the task of representing meaning is far too big to take on in this context. Finally, there is often a change in **part of speech**. *-able* attaches to Verbs (e.g. *wash, love, think*, etc.) and forms Adjectives. We can do this by adding in appropriate brackets to the primitive version of the rule seen in (51). Let’s put this all together:

(57) ***-able* Rule**

$[X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Verb}} \text{-able}]_{\text{Adjective}}$     Meaning: “able to be V’ed”

You can read this, approximately, as follows: “*-able* may be attached to verbs to form adjectives with the meaning, “able to be Verb’ed”.

Rules of word formation can be shown applying in a derivation. As before, we label each line of the derivation according to the rule that applies. Thus, for instance, here is a derivation for *washable*:



The evidence that *-able* is a productive suffix is that it is fairly easy to suffix it to a verb and thereby create a completely novel adjective. You may never have heard the *-able* adjectives in these sentences, but I believe they are intelligible and sound not all that awkward as English words.

(62) *Some examples suggesting that -able is productive*

This concept is diagramable in many ways.

These extremely delicate vegetables are not especially sautéable.

The criminal had disappeared and was not apprehendable.

This is the sort of evidence that can be used to justify calling a rule productive. One can take a step further and check if native speakers will even accept attaching the suffix to a completely made-up stem, and I believe that *-able* passes this test. For instance, if we agree to pretend for purposes of elicitation that *wug* is a verb of English, then it seems not too hard to imagine that *wuggable* could be formed from it. (I leave it to you to make up a meaning...)<sup>30</sup>

In contrast, the *-ity* Rule (59) is not especially productive. If you try to use it to make new words, they will usually sound very odd (I marked them below with asterisks, as we did for the bad sentences of the previous chapter).

(63) *Some examples suggesting that -ity is not productive*

The \*abstractity of this theory was a barrier to our understanding it.

The \*maroonity of his sweater paradoxically made it stand out, since the rest of us were wearing bright colors.

The \*steepity of the roof made the re-roofing job perilous.

It still makes sense to include an *-ity* Rule as part of our description of English, since English speakers clearly recognize *divinity*, *obscurity*, *obesity*, *insanity*, *sensitivity*, and so on as being derived from *divine*, *obscure*, *obese*, *insane*, and *sensitive*, respectively. But a careful description of English would acknowledge that the rule is not productive.

The outputs of an unproductive word formation rule will exist in a language only if the words it derives are accepted, individually, as words by the speech community. An English-learning child almost certainly learns a word like *divinity* as a individual, memorized form, but also is (eventually) able to perceive that it is derived from *divine*.<sup>31</sup>

Grammar books for particular languages often include a chapter on word formation, and sometimes attempt to differentiate the word formation processes of a language according to their productivity.

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<sup>30</sup> *Wug* was invented by the linguist Jean Berko Gleason as a noun; it is the name for a cute little bird that has become the emblematic animal of linguistics through its appearance on t-shirts, mugs, etc.

<sup>31</sup> One of the nice unsolved questions of theoretical linguistics is to figure out how language learners come to *know* which rules of word formation are productive and which aren't; current theories of this process suggest that word frequency is involved in some way.

## 18. Stacked derivation

At least in English, the idea of the position class, covered above for inflection, is not relevant for derivation. Rather, the rules of derivation can apply freely, provided their requirements are met. For example, we can derive the long word *unmindfulness* by applying the following rules in succession:

(64) Derivation of *unmindfulness*

[mind] <sub>Noun</sub>	stem	
[[mind] <sub>Noun</sub> ful] <sub>A</sub>	<b>-ful Rule:</b>	[ X ] <sub>N</sub> → [[ X ] <sub>N</sub> ful ] <sub>Adj</sub>
[un[[mind] <sub>Noun</sub> ful] <sub>Adj</sub> ]	<b>un- Rule ((55))</b>	
[[un[[mind] <sub>Noun</sub> ful] <sub>Adj</sub> ness] <sub>Noun</sub> ]	<b>-ness Rule:</b>	[ X ] <sub>Adj</sub> → [[ X ] <sub>Adj</sub> ness ] <sub>Noun</sub>

With a bit of strain, it's possible even to have the same inflectional rule *apply twice in the same form*. Here is an outline derivation for the (novel) word *industrializational*.

industry  
 industrial  
 industrialize  
 industrialization  
 industrializational

Although the last word is a bit of stretch, you can see that the result has “double application” of the rule that attaches *-al*.

**Study Exercise #7:** First find batches of words that include the suffixes *-al*, *-ize*, and *-ation*. Then give the rules and derivation for *industrializational*. Answer on next page.

## Answer to Study Exercise #7

Words including the affixes (these are used to justify the rules):

- al*: cynical, coastal, epochal, triumphal
- ize*: humanize, criminalize, socialize, legalize
- ation*: visitation, accreditation, limitation, condensation

[industry]<sub>Noun</sub>

stem

[[[industri]<sub>Noun</sub> al]<sub>A</sub>]<sup>32</sup>

**-al Rule:**

[ X ]<sub>N</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>N</sub> al ]<sub>Adj</sub>

“[[ X ]<sub>N</sub> al ]<sub>Adj</sub>” means “pertaining to X”

[[[[industri]<sub>Noun</sub> al]<sub>A</sub> ize ]<sub>V</sub>]

**-ize Rule:**

[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> ize ]<sub>Verb</sub>

“[[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> ize ]<sub>Verb</sub>” means “to render X”

[[[[[industri]<sub>Noun</sub> al]<sub>A</sub> iz ]<sub>V</sub> ation ]<sub>N</sub>]

**-ation Rule:**

[ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> ation ]<sub>Noun</sub>

“[[ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> ation ]<sub>Noun</sub>” means “the process of Xing”

[[[[[[industri]<sub>Noun</sub> al]<sub>A</sub> iz ]<sub>V</sub> ation ]<sub>N</sub> al]<sub>A</sub>]

**-al Rule (again)**

Here are some words that justify these rules:

- al*: cynical, coastal, epochal, triumphal
- ize*: humanize, criminalize, socialize, legalize
- ation*: visitation, accreditation, limitation, condensation

The repetition of the same suffix in the word is fairly good evidence that English word formation does *not* involve position classes. The multiple appearances result from the inherent property of word formation, that the rules apply where they can. In contrast, in the position-class systems seen in inflection, the rules apply in a strict arrangement defined by blocks.

### 18.1 Ambiguity from stacked derivation

A theme we will repeatedly return to in this book is **ambiguity** and the ways it emerges from the rules of a language. We begin with an example from word formation — the more elaborate syntactic examples to come will work in similar ways.

<sup>32</sup> We may ignore the spelling change, assuming our focus is on spoken English.

To start, let's set up a bit of the English morphological system. We have already dealt with the following rules:

(65) Negative *un-* Rule (repeated from (55), but renamed)

[ X ]<sub>Adjective</sub> → [ un [ X ]<sub>Adjective</sub> ]<sub>Adjective</sub>    Meaning: "not Adjective"

(66) *-able* Rule (repeated from (52))

[ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> → [ [ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> -able ]<sub>Adjective</sub>    Meaning: "able to be V'ed"

We will also need a new rule. If you consider pairs like the following:

<i>seat</i>	<i>unseat</i>
<i>attach</i>	<i>unattach</i>
<i>do</i>	<i>undo</i>
<i>twist</i>	<i>untwist</i>

it should be clear that there is some kind of rule attaching *un-*. However, this rule cannot be the same rule as (57), since it attaches *un-* to verbs. Moreover, its meaning is not really negative (*unseat* doesn't mean "to not seat") but rather something more specific, which we might call **reversive**; each of the *un-* verbs in the list more or less reverses the action of the simple verb. Write the rule yourself, then check your work on the next page.

(67) *Reversive un- Rule*

$[X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [\text{un} [X]_{\text{Verb}}]_{\text{Verb}}$       Meaning: “reverse the action of X”

We now have the apparatus we need to characterize an ambiguity, namely *untieable* (as in, “My shoes are untieable.”). Just to be clear about it, we could provide contexts that make both meanings clear (the usual term for this is “disambiguating context”).

(68) *Two meanings of “untieable”*

- a. My shoelaces were untieable, so I went ahead and untied them.
- b. I tried and tried to tie my shoelaces, but it turned out that they were simply untieable.

We could say, following the bits of meaning we put into our word formation rules, that the meaning in (68)b is something like “not able to be tied”, and the meaning in (68)a is “able to be untied” or (more explicitly) “able to be undone with respect to tying”. This is meant to lead up to the actual morphological derivations that generate the two meanings.

(69) *Two meanings of “untieable”: derivations*

- |    |   |   |                           |
|----|---|---|---------------------------|
| a. | $[ \text{tie} ]_{\text{Verb}}$  |   | stem                      |
|    | $[ \text{un} [ \text{tie} ]_{\text{Verb}} ]_{\text{Verb}}$                              | ‘undo the action of tying’                | Reversive <i>un-</i> Rule |
|    | $[ [ \text{un} [ \text{tie} ]_{\text{Verb}} ]_{\text{Verb}} \text{able} ]_{\text{Adj}}$ | ‘able to be undone with respect to tying’ | <i>-Able</i> Rule         |
|    |   |   |                           |
| b. | $[ \text{tie} ]_{\text{Verb}}$  |   | stem                      |
|    | $[ [ \text{tie} ]_{\text{Verb}} \text{able} ]_{\text{Adj}}$                             | ‘able to be tied’                         | <i>-Able</i> Rule         |
|    | $[ \text{un} [ [ \text{tie} ]_{\text{Verb}} \text{able} ]_{\text{Adj}} ]_{\text{Adj}}$  | ‘not able to be tied’                     | Negative <i>un-</i> Rule  |

**19. What meanings are expressed by word formation rules?**

The short answer here is “almost anything,” as we’ll see shortly. But there are some core meanings.

*19.1 Changing syntactic category*

Perhaps the most common purpose of word formation rules is to **change syntactic category**; we may want to say pretty much the same idea, but using the stem as a noun instead of a verb:

He had trouble <i>concentrating</i> .	(verb)
He had trouble with his <i>concentration</i> .	(noun)

In English, there are word formation processes that can change between any pair of the three major syntactic categories of verb, noun, and adjective:

(70) **Part-of-speech-changing word formation in English**

**Verb to noun:** *-ation*, as above (as in *visitation*)

usual meaning: “the process of Verbing”

**Noun to verb:** *-ify, -ize* (as in *classify, demonize*)

usual meaning: “to do something involving Noun”

**Adjective to noun:** *-ness, -ity* (as in *goodness, perversity*)

usual meaning: “the quality of being Adjective”

**Noun to adjective:** *-esque* (as in *picturesque*)

usual meaning: “resembling Noun”

**Verb to adjective:** *-ent* (as in *effervescent*)

usual meaning: “tending to Verb”

**Adjective to verb:** *-ify* (as in *clarify, humidify*)

usual meaning: “render Adjective”

The following terminology is sometimes used to describe such cases:

*Visitation* is a **deverbal noun**. (noun derived from verb)

*Classify* is a **denominal verb** (verb derived from noun)

*Perversity* is a **deadjectival noun**.

*Picturesque* is a **denominal adjective**.

*Humidify* is a **deadjectival verb**.

*Effervescent* is a **deverbal adjective**.

19.2 *Changing the number of participants in the action of a verb*

Verbs often have rules of word formation that change the number of participants involved in the action they describe. Consider the Persian verbs below.

(71) **Word formation processes the change the number of participants in a verb**

res-idan            ‘reach-infinitive’

res-a:n-idan      ‘send-infinitive’

xa:b-idan         ‘to sleep’

xa:b-a:n-idan     ‘to put to sleep’<sup>33</sup>

Here, we can take a verb that has just one participant (the one who is reaching, or sleeping), and make from it a verb that has an additional participant (the one who causes to reach, or causes to sleep). This is called a **causative verb**. English has no such word formation process, and uses syntactic constructions to express causation (“He made them sleep”).

<sup>33</sup> In the International Phonetic Alphabet, the symbol [:] means that the preceding vowel is long.

For Persian, the rule could be expressed as follows.

(72) Persian Causative Verb Formation

$[X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Verb}} \text{ a:n}]_{\text{Verb}}$     Meaning: “to cause to Verb”

19.3 *The grand miscellaneous*

Although the two purposes of word formation rules just given are probably the most common across languages, individual languages can include word formation rules of marvelous specificity. Among my favorites is one in Ilokano (Philippines), with a process that derives from a verb a new verb meaning “to pretend to be verbing”.

daʔit	‘to sew’
ʔagindadaʔit	‘to pretend to be sewing’
saʔit	‘to cry’
ʔaginsasaʔit	‘to pretend to cry’
ḍʒanitor	‘to work as a janitor’
ʔagindʒadʒanitor	‘to pretend to be a janitor’

As you can see, the rule involves copying the first two sounds of the stem (a process to be discussed below), followed by addition of the prefix [ʔagin-].<sup>34</sup>

English has some very specific word formation processes:

(73) *Highly concrete word formation processes of English*

<i>bowl-arama, carpet-arama</i>	‘grand emporium for X or X-ing’
<i>Stalin-ism, Mao-ism</i>	‘doctrine propounded by X’
<i>pay-ola, shin-ola, plug-ola</i>	‘bribery involving X’

**20. The ordering of word formation and inflection**

It is at least a strong cross-linguistic tendency — perhaps a universal of language — that rules of word formation apply before inflectional rules. Thus, for instance, in English it is possible to have words like *nullifies*, which are derived as follows (I’ll use IPA transcription to duck issues involving spelling):

$[n\Lambda l]_{\text{Adj}}$	root: ‘null’
$[[n\Lambda l]_{\text{Adj}}.ifaɪ]_{\text{Verb}}$	Word formation rule: Adjective + /-ifaɪ/ → Verb
$[[n\Lambda l]_{\text{Adj}}.ifaɪ+z]_{\text{Verb}}$	Inflectional rule:
	$X \rightarrow Xz$ if [Verb, +3rd person, +singular, +present]

<sup>34</sup> [ʔ] is IPA for the glottal stop, a sound that English speakers make in the middle of “uh-oh” [ʔʌʔou]

The opposite rule ordering would have derived \*[nʌlzɪfai], so that the inflectional suffix would appear “inside” the derivational suffix. Cases of this sort are rare at best.

This has implications for when you analyze a new language: typically it is possible to work out the inflection — appearing on the “outside” of the word, and then work with the leftover material and find the word formation rules.

## 21. Compounding

A widespread view of compound words is that they are a form of word formation. They differ in that rather than attaching an affix to a stem, they concatenate (chain together) two stems.

Here is a same rule of compounding for English nouns:

### (74) English Noun Compounding Rule

$$[ X_1 ]_{\text{Noun}} + [ X_2 ]_{\text{Noun}} \rightarrow [ [ X_1 ]_{\text{Noun}} [ X_2 ]_{\text{Noun}} ]_{\text{Noun}}$$

Meaning: “an  $X_2$  that has something to do with  $X_1$ .”

Thus: *boat house* (structure: [[ *boat* ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ *house* ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>) is a house that has something to do with boats (for example, you keep boats inside it). A *houseboat* is a boat that functions as a house.

The word *tigerbird* is probably not familiar to you, but you can guess part of its meaning simply by knowing how to speak English: you know it is a kind of bird (and not a kind of tiger!), and that it has something to do with tigers (perhaps it is striped like a tiger, or it likes to roost on top of sleeping tigers, or that it fights like a tiger, and so on).

Compounds like *houseboat*, *boathouse*, and *tigerbird*, derived by the rule given above, are said to be **headed**: the “head” of *houseboat* is *boat*, because a houseboat is a boat. Likewise *house* is the head of *boathouse*, because a boathouse is a house, and *bird* is the head of *tigerbird*.

In English, most compounds have at most one head, but other languages allow “double-headed” compounds, for instance when “mother-father” is used to mean “parents.” One rare English example is *Austria-Hungary*, which designated a country of Europe (1867-1918) that included both Austria and Hungary. Double-headed compounds can be derived with a rule that is exactly like the compound rule given above, except that the meaning has to be stated differently; something like “an entity that includes both  $X_1$  and  $X_2$ .”

It is possible to form a compound from two words one of which is itself a compound. For example, we can combine the compound *law degree* with the word *requirement* to get the complex compound *law degree requirement*. This compound can in turn be combined with *changes* to get *law degree requirement changes*; and so on. The following example suggests that the process is essentially unlimited:

(75) *Unlimited compounding in English*

## a. Data

eggplant	‘plant shaped like an egg’
eggplant plant	‘factory for manufacturing eggplants’
eggplant plant plant	‘factory for manufacturing factories for manufacturing eggplants’
etc.	

## b. Derivation

$[ \text{egg} ]_N + [ \text{plant} ]_N$	input stems: <i>egg, plant</i>
$[ [ \text{egg} ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N$	English Noun Compounding Rule ‘plant that has something to do with eggs’
$[ [ [ \text{egg} ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N + [ \text{plant} ]_N$	adding a second input stem: <i>plant</i>
$[ [ [ [ \text{egg} ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N ]_N$	English Noun Compounding Rule ‘plant that has something to do with eggplants’
$[ [ [ [ [ \text{egg} ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N + [ \text{plant} ]_N$	adding a third input stem: <i>plant</i>
$[ [ [ [ [ [ \text{egg} ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N [ \text{plant} ]_N ]_N ]_N ]_N$	English Noun Compounding Rule ‘plant that has something to do with eggplant plants’

The glosses given in (75) are what can be deduced from the rule itself; the glosses in (75) reflect what normally happens in English compounding: the bare meaning from the rule is elaborated into something sensible in context.

A consequence of this sort of repeated compounding is further support for our claim about rules of word formation: they are applied freely (potentially, over and over), rather than in the strict “assembly line” fashion seen in rules of inflectional morphology.

21.1 *The spelling of compounds*

The spelling system of English is inconsistent with regard to compounds; some are spelled without a space between the component words and some are spelled with a space. It is important to realize that an expression spelled with a space can still be a compound.

One can argue for this in two ways. First, consider German: it is customary in German to spell all compounds without a space between the component words. That is, the English practice is more or less an accident; given that other languages go the other way.

More important, there are linguistic arguments that compounds spelled with spaces are just like compounds spelled without them. Note first that, in the case of a genuine NP of the form Adjective + Noun, it is possible to insert an extra adjective between the adjective and the noun. For

example, we can take the NP *large cake* and add an additional adjective to get *large round cake*. But if we start with a compound, it is impossible to get an additional adjective in the middle. For example, starting from *pancake*, we cannot get *\*pan round cake*. The basic point is the while the noun of a NP can be modified by an additional immediately preceding adjective, a noun that is the second word of a compound cannot.

This fact provides us with a test to determine whether an expression really is a compound, even if it is spelled with a space. For instance, we can show that *carrot cake* is a compound by trying to place an adjective in the middle: *\*carrot large cake*. Other examples also show that expressions spelled with a space can be compounds:

coal scuttle	*coal dirty scuttle
lap dog	*lap slobbery dog
can opener	*can handy opener

## 22. Summing up so far

The picture of morphology thus far drawn is like this.

First, languages have means of expanding their inventory of words (more precisely: of stems). The rules of **word formation** add affixes to stems to derive new stems, which have new meanings. These meanings can be common, characteristic ones (like “the quality of being Adjective”, “to cause to Verb”), or exotic ones (like “emporium for selling Noun”). Compounding likewise expands the stock of stems, creating either single-headed compounds (like *boathouse*) or, in some languages, two-headed ones (like *Austria-Hungary*).<sup>35</sup> There is in principle no limit to “when” a derivational rule can apply; it simply looks for the right kind of base form and applies optionally.

The stems that result, whether they are basic or derived, are used in sentences. In a sentence context, the rules of the syntax (as yet undiscussed) provide each stem with a morphosyntactic representation, that is to say, a bundle of inflectional features. These features are specific to a particular language, although a number of features like [Case:Accusative] or [Number:Plural] occur repeatedly in languages. The features are referred to by the rules of **inflectional morphology**, which add affixes in order to express their content overtly. It is generally possible to arrange the affixes of an inflectional system into “slots”, where each word has at most one affix per slot. In terms of rules, the slots are expressed by having one rule per slot; each rule attaches the affix that corresponds to the features given in the morphosyntactic representation of the stem.

As a consequence of this scheme, inflectional morphology, being attached by rules that apply “later”, occurs on the “outside” of a word; that is to say, further from the stem than word formation.

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<sup>35</sup> There are also compounds with **implied** heads, like *airhead*. These typically have an unstated head, usually meaning “person” or “thing”. Thus *airhead* means, essentially, “air-headed person” = “person with head filled with air” = “person who doesn’t think”. Similarly: *pick-pocket* “person who picks pockets”; *stopgap* “thing that stops gaps”.

## 23. Phonological realization in morphology

When I say “phonological realization”, I mean the arrangement of the phonological material (speech sounds) that realizes the morphological categories, whether they be derivation or inflectional. I would guess that a large majority of all morphology (in the narrow sense that excludes compounding) is prefixation, suffixation, or compounding. All three are **concatenative**, in the sense that they string together sequences of speech sounds. They are the meat and potatoes of morphology, and are found in most languages.

But concatenation is not the only way you could carry out an inflectional or derivational process: segments can be interpolated, or copied, or altered in their phonetic content. Below, I will give some cases, and present ways that explicit rules can be written for them.

Note that all of these “fancy” forms of morphology can be used for both inflection and derivation — on the whole, the *functions* of morphology (grammatical or derivational) can be studied independently of the changes in phonological material that carry out these functions.

### 23.1 Infixation

The following data from Bontoc (Philippines) illustrate **infixation**, which can be defined as insertion of segments into some location inside the base:

#### (76) Bontoc infixation

fikas	‘strong’	fumikas	‘he is becoming strong’
kilad	‘red’	kumilad	‘he is becoming red’
bato	‘strong’	bumato	‘he is becoming stone’
fusul	‘enemy’	fumusul	‘he is becoming an enemy’

It’s reasonably clear that this is a derivational process, forming deadjectival (first two examples) or denominal (last two examples) verbs. The brackets we’ll need are something like this:

#### (77) Rules for Bontoc infixation (first draft)

$[X]_{\text{Adj}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Adj}}]_{\text{Verb}}$   
 Meaning: “become Adjective”

$[X]_{\text{Noun}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Noun}}]_{\text{Verb}}$   
 Meaning: “become Noun”

But how to express the infixation? The important part here is to be precise about just where the infixed material should be inserted. We will use here a method that makes uses of **variables** and **subscripts**.

The variables we have seen already with simple rules in prefixation and suffixation, as in  $[X]_{\text{Adj}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Adj}} \text{ness}]_{\text{Noun}}$ . Here, instead of simply expressing the speech sounds of the base





(81) *Samoan plural reduplication*

nofo	‘he sits’	nonofo	‘they sit’
pese	‘he sings’	pepese	‘they sing’
savali	‘he walks’	savavali	‘they walk’
atamaʔi	‘he is wise’	atamamaʔi	‘they are wise’

We can use our numerical subscript notation to express the Samoan process unambiguously:

(82) *Samoan Plural Subject Reduplication as a rule*

X	C	V	C	V	→	X	C	V	C	V	C	V
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	2	3	4	5

when the morphosyntactic representation contains [Number:Plural]

The rule tell us to count off the final CVCV of a word, and copy its first CV sequence (what is numbered “23” in the rule). Here is a derivation for *savavali*:

savali[Number: Plural]

sa	v	a	l	i	→	sa	v	a	v	a	l	i
∨						∨						
X	C	V	C	V		X	C	V	C	V	C	V
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	2	3	4	5

In Yidij,<sup>38</sup> an aboriginal language of Australia, the intensive form of verbs is created by adding to the beginning of a word a copy of the first two syllables of the word:

(83) *Yidij reduplication*

madʲindan	‘walk up’
madʲinmadʲindan	‘keep walking up’
dʲadʲaman	‘jump’
dʲadʲadʲadʲaman	‘jump a lot’ <sup>39</sup>

We can’t formalize the Yidij rule (yet) because we haven’t developed a theory of syllables.

The meanings expressed by reduplication are often “symbolic,” designating plurals, intensiveness, repeated action — things present in quantity.

<sup>38</sup> ɲ is a symbol of the IPA. Imagine make a sound like the first sound in English *jump*, except that it’s a nasal (similar to *m* or *n*).

<sup>39</sup> dʲ is the IPA for a voiced lamino-palatal stop, similar to the English “j” sound.

**Study Exercise #8**

Write the rule for forming causatives in Ateso (Nilotic family, Uganda).<sup>40</sup>

duk	'to build'	tuduk	'to cause to build'
lel	'to be glad'	telel	'to gladden'
ɲam	'eat'	taɲam	'feed'
wadik	'write'	tawadik	'cause to write'
cak	'throw'	tacak	'cause to throw'

---

<sup>40</sup> IPA phonetic symbols: vowels more or less as in Spanish, [ɲ] is rather English "ny", [c] is rather like English "ch" only made further back in the mouth.

### Answer to Study Exercise #8

In words, you begin the word with /t/, then copy the first vowel, then conclude with the rest. Using the notation taught here, this is:

$$\begin{array}{c} [ C \ V \ X ]_{\text{Verb}} \\ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \end{array} \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} [ t \ V [ C \ V \ X ]_{\text{Verb}} ]_{\text{Verb}} \\ 2 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \end{array}$$

Meaning: “cause to verb”

So, in wadik/tawadik, 1 is w, 2 is a, 3 is dik.

### 23.3 Segment Mutation

Morphology sometimes is carried out by finding a particular segment (perhaps in a particular context) and changing it into something else. For instance, a fair number of English verbs form their past tense by changing the stem vowel [ɪ] into [ʌ] (the value of the IPA symbols should be clear from context).

(84)	Present	Past
	<i>cling</i>	<i>clung</i>
	<i>sling</i>	<i>slung</i>
	<i>fling</i>	<i>flung</i>
	<i>string</i>	<i>strung</i>
	<i>wring</i>	<i>wrung</i>

While these are irregular verbs (and thus are probably memorized), the process is nevertheless a little bit productive: forms have arisen in dialects like *sing* - *sung*, *ring* - *rung*, *bring* - *brung*; the latter is explored for a period even by many children whose parents say *brought*. In experiments, people asked to provide a past tense for the made-up verb *spling* often volunteer *splung*.

We can state this rule as follows, noting that a crucial element in (most of) these verbs is the presence of a following [ŋ], the “ng” sound:

(85) *A segment-mutation rule for English past tenses*

$$\begin{array}{c} [ X \ \text{ɪ} \ \text{ŋ} ] \\ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \end{array} \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} [ X \ \text{ʌ} \ \text{ŋ} ] \\ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \end{array}$$

when the morphosyntactic representation contains [Tense:Past]

### 23.4 Morphological conversion

Consider the following data, which illustrate a process that forms deverbal nouns.

#### (86) Examples of verb-to-noun conversion

Fred likes to jump.	His last jump was 20 feet.
Chomsky likes to talk.	His last talk was attended by 500 people.
We need to think.	We had a good long think.

These cases have simplest possible string operation of all; that is, nothing changes. Such rules, which are often called rules of morphological conversion, can be expressed as follows:

#### (87) Verb-Noun Conversion Rule

$[X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Verb}}]_{\text{Noun}}$   
 meaning: “an instance of Verbing”

There is also a rule that goes in the opposite direction, for data like these:

#### (88) Examples of noun-to-verb conversion

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>
a mop	I mopped the floor.
a fax	I faxed the message.
a hammer	I hammered the nail in.

The rule needed is something like this:

#### (89) Noun-Verb Conversion Rule

$[X]_{\text{Noun}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Noun}}]_{\text{Verb}}$   
 meaning: “do something crucially involving Noun”

These are simply word formation rules that carry out no affixation (or any other change). There is no reason to exclude them from the theory, and indeed they seem to be pretty common among languages.

One might ask why we want rules going in both directions. The best answer, perhaps, is that the morphological base form in each case is somehow semantically primary: a *jump* is what happens when you engage in jumping (not: “jumping is what happens when you execute a jump”); *mopping* is the activity you do with a mop (not: “a mop is the device you mop with”).

Occasionally in older linguistic works one will find the claim “Language X lacks a distinction between nouns and verbs.” This is currently viewed as rather implausible; instead, one could say that in Language X, morphological conversion between nouns and verbs is highly productive, so

most nouns stems can be used as verb stems and vice versa. In any language, there are good *syntactic* reasons to want to have a distinction between nouns and verbs.

The conversion rules of English will turn out to matter quite a bit starting in the next chapter, as we start to parse (assign syntactic structure to sentences). You have to treat a word like *hammer* in a context-dependent way, so that for example it is a verb in *Please hammer the nail in* and a noun in *This is an excellent hammer*.

**Study Exercise #9**

Does English have adjective-to-noun conversion? Try to find examples. Specify the meaning that this process imparts. Write a formalized rule for it. Answer on next page.

**Answer to Study Exercise #9**

You can get adjective-to-noun conversion in English most easily in a particular context, namely with a preceding definite article *the*.

<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Noun derived by conversion</i>
lame	(the) lame
able	(the) able
meek	(the) meek
lonely	(the) lonely
tall	(the) tall

It's clear that there is a rather particular meaning here: "the tall" means "people who are tall". Formalizing:

**(90) Adjective-Noun Conversion Rule**

$[ X ]_{\text{Adjective}} \rightarrow [[ X ]_{\text{Adjective}}]_{\text{Noun}}$

Meaning: "those people who are Adjective"

This analysis is incomplete in that it doesn't indicate the special context of occurring after *the*.

### Sources and further reading

There are many textbooks in introductory morphology, among which I have appreciated Geert Booij's (2012) *The grammar of words. An introduction to linguistic morphology*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The estimate for the size of the Turkish verbal paradigm on p. 33 comes from a well-known introduction to computational linguistics, Daniel Jurafsky and James Martin's book *Speech and Language Processing* (Prentice-Hall 2000), where it is attributed to the computational linguist Kemal Oflazer.

## Chapter 3: Normative views of language

### 1. Introduction

Let us start with some examples. I suspect there are plenty of people in the world who believe each of the following assertions:

(91) *Examples of normative views*

- a. “French has a more beautiful sound than German.”
- b. “*Brung* as the past participle of *bring* is bad English.”
- c. “It is better to say ‘it is I’ than ‘it is me’.”
- d. “[Such and such an ethnic group ] speaks a substandard dialect of the language”
- e. “Australian accents sound cool.”
- f. “Southern accents sound friendly.”
- g. “Southern accents sound ignorant and uneducated.”
- h. “Southwestern Mandarin sounds rural and unsophisticated.”

Such beliefs are called *normative*, because they imply a judgment of “good” or “bad” in some way. The basis of the judgment might be esthetic (among (91), perhaps (a)), a sense of correctness ((b), (c)), or indeed an opinion about a whole class of people, defined by ethnicity (d) or geography (e-h). As the examples show, normative beliefs can be about some particular word (a) or grammatical construction (c), or about whole languages or dialects (all others).

Linguists encounter normative beliefs in three ways: they hear them from their consultants, they hold such beliefs themselves, and they encounter them as ordinary people and participants in the society to which they belong. However, the experience of linguists with respect to normative beliefs is, typically, extraordinarily different from that of most other people: we hold the *analytic perspective*, which takes two forms.

(92) *The “analytic perspective” on language*

- a. Every human **language** is a massive body of (mostly unconscious) knowledge, extremely complex and filled with subtleties — every single language forms a daunting project of research, even for the most skilled linguist. We seek to “get it right”, to do the language justice.
- b. The native speaker **consultant**, even though we may like him/her personally very much and enjoy our collaboration, is scientifically speaking a *specimen*: a person who is privileged to possess internally the vast formal system of a particular language and who is willing to take on the job of sharing samples of the utterances it generates.<sup>41</sup> Thus:

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<sup>41</sup> This itself is a complicated topic. Many long-term consultants are employees and get paid the going rate; but often there is more involved: a field linguist may get a better reception if she offers the fruits of linguistics (e.g. dictionaries, course materials, elementary reading texts) to the community as part of the deal. Field linguists should also be expected to respect the rituals of friendship and hosting (tea, etc.) of an unfamiliar culture, or to financially

interpersonally, a valued fellow human being; but scientifically, a specimen — a source of data.<sup>42</sup>

These two aspects of the analytic perspective have consequences for the thinking of linguists about normative beliefs. First, the linguist's sense of awe for the vastness and complexity of every language makes her inherently very skeptical about any claims that some aspect of a particular language is stupid or inferior. Second, once you start viewing your consultant (kindly) as a specimen and her statements and judgments as *data*, it is only natural to start thinking about the normative beliefs that he/she might share with you as data. This can be illuminating.

For linguists, normative beliefs impinge on their work in two ways.

First, there is **methodology**: given that it is basically inevitable that any human will hold normative beliefs, how might we make sure they don't harm the quality of linguistic research.

Second, normative beliefs about are a (relatively minor) topic within the field, that give rise to research questions, for instance:

- How do we find out about normative beliefs and assess them?
- Where do normative beliefs come from? Why do they arise?
- Are normative beliefs ever “justified” in a factual sense?

## 2. The professional practice of linguists concerning normative beliefs

Since as linguists we want to do good science, the primary issue here is the worry that our own normative beliefs might impede our objectivity. My own favorite metaphor for this is the clean white lab coat — the emblem that a laboratory scientist wants to keep the samples clean and uncontaminated. As linguists, we keep our lab coats clean (in part) by ignoring what we *feel* about language, and concentrating on the data.

Scientific objectivity is of course a goal that cannot always be attained. Everyone, including experienced linguists, has normative beliefs, and we can't make them go away. To speak personally on this point: I find that whenever I encounter a phrase like “very unique,” or the pronunciation [ˈnukjʊlər] (“nucular”) for *nuclear*, I experience real, unavoidable normative feelings — a brief, concealed, inner squirm. Both cases just cited are instances in which the normative belief is one that favors the older meaning or pronunciation (see more on this below). But as a scholar I know there is nothing *inherently* wrong with them — the world would not come to an end if everyone started saying [ˈnukjʊlər]! And when I am doing linguistics, I can try to factor out my feelings from my thoughts and analysis.

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help the consultant's institutions (e.g., a church) rather than the consultant directly. Beginning fieldworkers often seek an experienced mentor who knows the culture.

<sup>42</sup> One other factor worth pointing out is that full-time involvement with linguistics often leads the linguist to think of friends and family, at least silently, as specimens. The possibility of extending these thoughts from silent contemplation to active interrogation and comment obviously has to be pondered with care.

The fact that even linguists are vulnerable to normative feelings has consequences for how linguistics is conducted. First, the ability to maintain a poker face is valuable: a careful fieldworker will be able to conceal from their consultant any normative feelings that they may have about what the consultant is saying. Any expression of such feelings is likely to distort the material given by the consultant later on, as (s)he seeks to avoid the embarrassment of being laughed at or otherwise negatively evaluated. (Suppressing normative opinions about the consultant's speech is, of course, also a good way to retain a good working relationship with the consultant.)

Linguists also display their commitment to objectivity by employing professional vocabulary that shows that (at least when at work) that they do not buy into the normative beliefs that may be held by the speakers of the language being investigated. For instance, a linguist would be likely to use the term “nonstandard” rather than “substandard”; “prestigious forms” for “correct speech”.

### 3. Investigating normative beliefs

We turn next to the study of normative beliefs as a sub-area of linguistics.

To learn about normative beliefs, a good starting point is simply to attend to what people say about language. For instance, the “Cockney” dialect of English is that historically spoken by working-class people in poorer neighborhoods of London. It is fairly familiar to Americans because we hear it in mouths of fictional characters in film and drama. Here is a reported opinion of Cockney from about a century ago:

‘inspectors and teachers of English in London elementary schools who met in conference in 1906 declared that “The Cockney [London lower-class] mode of speech, with its unpleasant twang, is a modern corruption without legitimate credentials, and is unworthy of being the speech of any person in the capital city of the Empire.”<sup>43</sup>

The description may surprise Americans, since the Cockney they hear is sentimentalized; usually placed in the mouths of fictional characters who are uneducated but have a heart of gold.

All over the world, there are dialects that are considered (by many people) to be prestigious and dialects that are considered (by many people) to be non-prestigious — often the way that this is put is that the speakers do not speak “correct” English (or Spanish, or Korean, etc., etc.). Cockney is a clear example of a low-prestige dialect of a language.

What sort of dialect is likely to have low prestige? There seem to be at least three criteria:

- **Social class**, as in Cockney. A similar case is caste, the formal system of social hierarchy found in India.<sup>44</sup>
- **Minority ethnicity**, as in the German-influenced varieties of English spoken in North Dakota and neighboring states, or African-American Vernacular English (Black English).

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<sup>43</sup> Source: *Does Accent Matter?* (1989) by John Honey.

<sup>44</sup> A classic article is John J. Gumperz (1958) Dialect differences and social stratification in a north Indian village. *American Anthropologist* 60: 668-682.

- **Geography:** the varieties of Korean spoken outside Seoul, and some varieties of Japanese spoken outside Tokyo, tend to be stigmatized.

To some degree, you can get an idea of the prestige of varieties of language just by asking people, but social psychologists have tried to be more systematic about it. A favored research method is the so-called **matched-guise** experiment:<sup>45</sup> you find a perfect bilingual or bidialectal, and have them say (more or less) the same thing in both of the language varieties in question. You also mix in many other voices, so that, if all goes well, the experimental subjects who listen to the recording aren't aware that one person is speaking twice. The subject are asked to rate the speakers on various scales, for instance:

- intelligence
- suitability for employment
- trustability
- likelihood to be a friend

The measurement of interest concerns how these ratings differ for the recordings of the same speaker saying (essentially) the same thing in two languages or dialects.

By now, dozens of matched-guise experiments have been carried out around the world. Generally, they show what you might expect: that people who are speaking a prestigious dialect are judged as more intelligent and suited to positions of responsibility. For the more intimate criteria of trustability and friendliness, the less prestigious variety sometimes wins, but quite often the more prestigious variety does. Often enough, prestigious varieties are preferred even by the native speakers of the non-prestigious variety — at least when they are giving responses in an experimental setting, which is itself an academic, prestige-oriented environment.

This is what matched-guise experiments teach us. However, they are limited in their scope, due to the artificiality, just noted, of the experimental setting. A more nuanced view would be that there are different *kinds* of prestige. Nonstandard varieties are valued, at least by their speakers, as badges of community membership, and members of a community with a non-standard dialect who speak the standard dialect to their peers are “sending a message” of some sort.<sup>46</sup>

Educators, particularly of young children, often have an extremely delicate task: they judge that teaching a standard variety to non-standard speakers will help their students with their lives and careers, but the tacit message “your dialect is inferior” that may come with this training is not a very nice — or, as we will see, valid — message to give to kids. Enlightened educators try to steer a course between the need to teach a standard, and the need not to alienate their students when teaching the standard.

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<sup>45</sup> A good review is in Ralph Fasold (1984) *The Sociolinguistics of Society*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Chapter 6.

<sup>46</sup> The strikingly wise web cartoonist Randall Munroe points out that there is no way to avoid sending some sort of message by the way you talk; you can't “opt out”: <https://xkcd.com/1735/>

#### 4. The origin of normative beliefs

Why do people have normative beliefs about language? This question is in need of further study, but it seems reasonable to point out two possible sources.

##### 4.1 Societal division

Many normative beliefs seem to stem from the divisions found in a society. I don't think it is controversial to say that every society is in a state of conflict, ranging from mild to extreme. The divisions can be ethnic, economic, or geographic. In general, the varieties of language that are affiliated with power will be the more prestigious ones. This includes varieties spoken by wealthier and better-educated people; the varieties spoken in the capital city of a country; and varieties spoken by a politically dominant ethnicity.

An interesting comparison of this sort can be made when the very same language has different status in different locations. French has an exalted status in France, where it is the dominant language, but until recent decades it had low status in Quebec, which was economically dominated by English speakers. German once had very high status in Latvia, where it was the language of an economically dominant foreign-based minority. German was less prestigious in 19th century America, where it was very widely spoken but gradually abandoned by its speakers in favor of English.

I believe that the key point is this: feelings about language varieties are often projected from feelings about the people who speak them. The social structure and inner conflicts of a society can be diagnosed to some degree by querying its members about their normative linguistic beliefs. Nevertheless, often feelings about language are felt to be *specifically feelings about language*; the causal connection to feelings about people is not grasped.

##### 4.2 Linguistic conservatism

A rather different, and less political, source of normative beliefs results from the ever-present process of language change. Typically, speakers will feel that the older forms of a language are inherently "correct" and that the innovating forms are wrong. For example, "it is I" is the older form; "it is me" is an innovation. Putting the stress on the first syllable of *compensate* and *confiscate* was sometimes considered vulgar in the 18th century, since at that time many people still used the old pronunciation with stress on the second syllable.<sup>47</sup>

The example I gave above of my own normative beliefs ("very unique", ['nukjulər]) are of this kind: the older meaning of "unique" is "exactly one" (so it makes no sense to modify it with "very"); nowadays, "unique" is coming to mean "unusual" (so it's perfectly sensible to say "very unique"). The older pronunciation of *nuclear* is ['nukliər].

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<sup>47</sup> The shift can be observed in progress in an influential 1791 dictionary by John Walker, who specifically offered his book to (native speakers of) English as a way of improving their speech. Walker often carefully deliberates which of two stress variants is better, citing older authorities and using words such as "propriety".

## 5. The labels “language” and “dialect” as used by linguists and in ordinary life

Once we have a clear picture of normative beliefs and their basis, we can define the terms *language* and *dialect*. It is helpful to provide two definitions for each word: one as they are commonly used in linguistics and one for the way they are commonly used in ordinary language.

In linguistics:

- We start with the concept of **idiolect**. An idiolect is the version of a language spoken by one single person. For example, my own idiolect of English represents the large set of rules of this language in the version that is currently stored in my mind/brain, ready for the creation of novel utterances. My idiolect would also include my *lexicon*; the store of English words and idioms I have memorized in the course of my lifetime.
- A **dialect** is a relatively uniform set of idiolects; people who speak the same dialect can communicate fluently with minimal possibility of misunderstanding. Naturally, the identity of idiolects is never perfect, so the concept of dialect is not a precise one.
- A **language** is a collection of mutually-intelligible dialects. Here again, the concept is imprecise since there are dialects so different that mutual intelligibility is possible but marginal.

Among dialects, one speaks of “standard dialects”, which in general are the dialects associated with power, education, and prestige. Thus, for instance, in Mexico the variety of Spanish spoken in Mexico City is generally considered to be standard. However, from the viewpoint of the linguist the “standard” dialect is just another dialect.

In ordinary speech of non-linguists, the difference between a “language” and a “dialect” is quite different, and it is totally bound up with normative belief. Going out on a limb, we might say that in ordinary usage, a “dialect” is:

- a language variety that is (according to prevailing normative beliefs) **non-important**.
- a language variety that is **non-standard** (see below on this term).

An example of “non-important” occurs when the *World Almanac* lists the languages of some faraway country as “French, English, African dialects.”<sup>48</sup> An example of “non-standard” is in a sentence like *I asked the farmer for directions and was amused when he replied in dialect*.

An old saying shared among linguists<sup>49</sup> is, *A language is a dialect with an army and a navy*. This is meant to be silly but is often surprisingly accurate when applied to the real world.

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<sup>48</sup> Here is another one: all the languages of China that are genetically related to Mandarin are called “dialects” in English. So, in ordinary English speech Cantonese is a “dialect” but for a linguist it is a language, being mutually unintelligible with other varieties of Chinese.

<sup>49</sup> There’s a not-so-bad article on the Wikipedia about the origin of this saying; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_language\\_is\\_a\\_dialect\\_with\\_an\\_army\\_and\\_navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_language_is_a_dialect_with_an_army_and_navy).

Cantonese, which by the linguist's mutual-intelligibility criterion is a language, has no army or navy of its own and indeed is commonly called a "dialect" of Chinese. Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish, which by the linguist's criterion would constitute divergent dialects of Scandinavian, all have their own armies and navies and all get counted by the public (including their own speakers) as languages.

## 6. Standard and vernacular languages

A special kind of language — which was absent from the world before the rise of writing, education, and nation-states — is the **standard language**. Standard languages as used today are found in education, journalism, literature, and government. Standard languages always have a system of writing. A standard language is usually the required medium of instruction in schools, and there is normally an army of (mostly hidden) copy editors who labor to make sure that the written output of authors and journalists conforms to the standard language prior to publication.

A standard language normally co-exists in the same territory with one or more **vernacular** varieties of language. Vernacular varieties belong to the community; they are spoken among family and with friends. Usually, people do not write in a vernacular; they use their standard language instead for this purpose. Throughout the world, it is extremely common to be bilingual or bidialectal, capable of speaking both a standard language (often first encountered when a child enters school) and a home vernacular.<sup>50</sup> The home vernacular can either be a dialect of the standard language or a completely different language. Vernaculars are often endangered; standard languages hardly ever.

The choice of a standard language reflects a society's history — typically, it is the descendent of some vernacular language that happened to be spoken by the winners in a military, political, or cultural struggle of long ago. The ancient Romans proved very skilled at warfare and conquest, and it is uniquely this fact that explains how the little Italic dialect they happened to speak (Latin) emerged as a mighty pan-European standard. There is nothing about the contending languages themselves that influences the possibility that they will emerge as standards.

To return to the main thread of normative beliefs: a standard language is usually the most prestigious form of language spoken in its territory; obviously, exclusive use in education, government, and publication provides a great deal of prestige.

## 7. Are normative beliefs ever justified?

Let us now take on the most loaded question of all: is it really true that one language or dialect could legitimately be called inferior to another?

It seems unlikely to me that any language could be significantly simpler than any other. The reason I believe this is that field workers who go to work on a language never believe that they're

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<sup>50</sup> Due to migration, many people speak a language that would count for them as a home vernacular, but is a standard language elsewhere. Sometimes such speakers seek out language training so that they can bring to their home language the skills (literacy, vocabulary size, detailed normative principles) that are hallmarks of a standard variety.

done. A responsible and accurate reference grammar of a language<sup>51</sup> will go on for hundreds of pages, and still be giving just a rough outline of many areas. The languages for which the only grammars are thin ones are the languages that haven't been studied much. What we know about English would probably fill a large bookshelf. There's little reason to doubt that the same would hold of any other language that was submitted to the same degree of study.

Often, grammatical issues in a particular language are subtle or complex, and thus difficult for the linguist to establish confidently. This holds true just as much for vernacular languages spoken by peoples with simple material culture as for standard languages spoken in large industrialized countries.

A related point is that all languages seem to be about equally expressive: roughly speaking, whatever can be thought, can be said in any language; though the degree of effort needed might vary in certain cases.

This claim is probably true for dialects as well. A famous article by the linguist William Labov, "The logic of nonstandard English,"<sup>52</sup> made a case for the grammatical integrity of African American Vernacular English as a system (a well known fact about the dialect is that it has distinctions of verbal tense not available in the standard dialect), and also for the distinction between being a speaker of a standard dialect and being an articulate speaker (there are both articulate and inarticulate speakers of both standard and nonstandard dialects).

Naturally, languages differ greatly in vocabulary. A language will normally include a vocabulary suitable for the culture within which it is spoken; and indeed, experience suggests that it is not at all easy just to take a random vernacular language "off the shelf" and adapt it instantly as a standard language serving the needs of an industrialized society. But this seems to be a rather superficial difference, as with time languages can acquire new vocabulary (through borrowing and the use of word formation rules) to accommodate any culturally-novel concept. After all, every standard language was once a vernacular.

Languages differ a great deal in their morphological complexity. But it would be a mistake to equate morphology with overall complexity. In English, for instance, the inflectional morphology is very simple, but the choice of articles (*the* vs. *a*) is monstrously complex and difficult; it just happens to be a problem in syntax and semantics, not morphology.

Earlier in this text (p. 41) I very tentatively suggested that there may be some virtue in inflectionally-impoverished languages like Mandarin Chinese, which don't force their speakers to make commitments they don't want or need to make. Yet as a native speaker of a mildly inflectional language, I feel it is implausible that the inflectional choices of English are somehow hampering my ability to communicate, and I'm sure that native speakers of heavily inflected languages like Turkish or Finnish would feel the same.

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<sup>51</sup> A *reference grammar* is a grammar book written for linguists: its goal is to give the structure of a language clearly. Other grammars are organized to help teach the language, or are addressed to the lay public. For more on reference grammars see p. 435 below.

<sup>52</sup> In his book *Language and the Inner City* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 1974).

### 7.1 Putative cases of “illogicality” in language

It is sometimes said that stigmatized languages or dialects are “illogical.” For example, in many dialects of English (including African American Vernacular English), the sentence corresponding to standard English “You don’t know anything” is “You don’t know nothing”. Some people believe that this makes the non-standard dialects “illogical”, in that they are “really saying” something they don’t mean, namely “it is not the case that you know nothing.”

The absurdity of this is revealed by looking at other, non-stigmatized languages, which do the same thing without being looked down upon. For example, in French “You don’t know anything” would be translated as “Tu ne sais rien”, literally “You not know nothing.”

In fact, in non-standard English dialects, “You don’t know nothing” is completely clear and unambiguous. The way one would say “It is not the case that you know nothing” would be “You don’t know *nothing*”, with a heavy accent placed on *nothing*. There is no possibility for confusion. So, for instance, the following sentence is a possible one in African American Vernacular English:

(93) I didn’t say **nothing** — I just said it very softly.<sup>53</sup>

The “illogicality” accusation is based on a fundamental analytic error, that of analyzing other languages or dialects from the viewpoint of one’s own language or dialect. Every language and dialect has a grammar, which to be understood has to be studied in its own terms.

I conclude that at present there seems to be very little justification for any claims that one language or dialect is superior to another. Naturally, since I have my “white lab coat” on (see above), I would not want to exclude the possibility that such justification could be discovered in the future, but this is at present a hypothetical possibility.

## 8. Normative beliefs: who is in charge?

The normative beliefs that arise from societal divisions, particularly those involving standard languages, raise tough political questions. Notably, the speakers of nonstandard languages and dialects face the dilemma that because of negative normative feeling on the part of the standard speakers, their mother tongue — the vehicle of their innermost thoughts and of conversation with their nearest and dearest — has negative consequences (such as loss of prestige, or worse) when they speak it among members of the majority community. Naturally, this is not an easy outcome to accept.

Rebellions have been known to occur: the speakers of a non-standard variety join in insisting on the right to have their language treated as a standard (examples: French in Quebec, Catalan and Basque in Spain, Irish in Ireland). Often the linguistic uprising goes hand in hand with a political one. There are also minor, individual rebellions, consisting of speakers of non-standard dialects

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<sup>53</sup> Example taken from this article: Stefan Martin and Walt Wolfram (1998) “The sentence in AAVE,” in Guy Bailey, John Baugh, Salikoko S. Mufwene, John R. Rickford (eds.) *African-American English: Structure, History and Use*, pp. 11-36. New York: Routledge.

choosing (consciously or unconsciously) not to alter their speech when talking with standard dialect speakers.

## 9. Summary: normative beliefs

Summing up: normative beliefs about languages and dialects are found everywhere. They can be measured in matched-guise experiments, and typically are a reflection of the structure of a society; notably the difference between standard and non-standard varieties. With regard to particular grammatical constructions, words, and pronunciations within a single dialect, normative beliefs usually involve adherence to slightly archaic variants, that is to say, resistance to change.

Linguists, aspiring to be scientists, seek to be aware of their own normative beliefs, in order to be able to guard against bias. A number of scholars are actively interested in the nature and causes of normative beliefs and examine them as a research topic.

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### Study Exercise #10

Go through the text of this chapter and make a list identifying all of the normative beliefs mentioned. You can say “X is bad” if you like, but where possible be more specific. Answer below.

### Study Exercise #11

This is open ended, so can't have a single correct answer. On p. 69 above, the text says “Nonstandard varieties are valued, at least by their speakers, as badges of community membership.” This is not the whole story, however. Sometimes nonstandard varieties are valued by speakers *outside* the community. Try to think of examples. Use a search engine to try to find some justification for your claim. (Note: Google Books and Google Scholar are more likely to get you answers from people who have actually done some research on the question.)

**Answer to Study Exercise #10**

I believe the following list is fairly complete.

1. *Brung* as past tense of *bring* is bad.
2. All items listed in (91)
3. “very unique” is bad
4. [ˈnukjʊləɹ] (“nucular”) for *nuclear* is bad
5. The Cockney dialect of English is unworthy.
6. Dialects of English with German influences are bad.
7. Non-Seoul dialects of Korean are bad
8. Non-Tokyo dialects of Japanese are bad.
9. French is good (for France)
10. French is bad (for Canada)
11. German is good (for Latvia)
12. German is bad (for America)
13. *Compensate* and *confiscate* ought to be pronounced with stress on the second syllable.
14. “It is me” is bad.
15. Double negatives are bad.
16. Double negatives are illogical (speaker isn’t saying what he really means).

**Sample answer to Study Exercise #11**

Here are a couple possible examples.

1. There are European-American youths who attempt to speak African American Vernacular English. Naturally enough, this comes with an affinity for African American vernacular culture, particularly as it appears in works of popular culture like music and film. Here is one reference: Chapter 6 of Mary Buchholtz’s book *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity* (2010) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. It’s apparently quite common for British popular musicians to sing, at least in part, in American accents (from my youth I remember the Beatles singing [ˈdæns] for *dance*, rather than British [ˈdɑns]). Of course, American English *is* the standard variety in America, but it isn’t in Britain. Malchow (p. 108) puts this “singing in American” phenomenon in a broader context. (Howard Malchow (2011) *Special Relations: The Americanization of Britain?* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

## Chapter 4: Syntax I — Phrase Structure

### 1. Knowledge of syntax

A theme of Chapter 1 was *implicit knowledge*: people show they possess such knowledge in that it is reflected in the patterning of their language, but they cannot directly intuit the form of that knowledge. Here, we will focus on the kinds of implicit knowledge encountered in studying **syntax**, which is the study of sentence structure. What do speakers know when they know the syntax of a language?

(1) They have intuitions about **grammaticality**. A sentence is grammatical if it is syntactically well-formed; if it counts as “part of the language.” Grammaticality is distinct from merely making sense. Consider, for example, the following series of sentences:

She wonders if Alice is going to like Bill.  
 Who does she wonder if Alice is going to like?      (answer: *Bill*)  
 \*Who does she wonder if is going to like Bill?      (answer: *Alice*)

As far as meaning goes, the third sentence is as sensible as the second. It is only ungrammatical. Similarly, sentences like \*John and *Bill think I like each other* (p. 6) have a perfectly sensible interpretation, but are ungrammatical. Sentences like *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*, however, are quite grammatical but are nonsense.

(2) Our implicit knowledge of syntax cannot possibly take the form of a list of sentences. No such list could be stored in a finite mind, as there are an infinite number of grammatical sentences in English (or any other human language). It is easy to show this. A list of sentences like the following:

(94) *A potential infinity of sentences*

Alice likes Fred  
 John said that Alice likes Fred  
 Bill believes that John said that Alice likes Fred

can be extended onward to infinity. The basis of this particular potential infinity, as we will see, is that clauses can occur inside clauses.

Since syntactic knowledge cannot take the form of a list, we are led to the hypothesis that we implicitly know a set of syntactic **rules**; the rules enable us to create novel sentences (a potentially infinite supply of them) on the spot.<sup>54</sup> Just what sort of rules could do this will become clear later on.

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<sup>54</sup> This book already argued for the necessity of rules on the basis of huge paradigms in some inflectional systems, like the 10 trillion verb forms of Shona (p. 33); now we move up to infinity.

(3) Speakers have the ability to recognize and manipulate systematic relations among sentences. For example, the following set of four sentences:

Bill shaved Fred	(active statement)
Did Bill shave Fred?	(active question)
Fred was shaved by Bill	(passive statement)
Was Bill shaved by Fred?	(passive question)

forms a clear pattern that can be duplicated by a speaker of English for an indefinite number of other sentences.

(4) Sentences are not simply strings of words; they also involve grouping of words into larger units. The easiest way to show this is with sentences that have two meanings, traceable to two different groupings of the words:

(95) *Four ambiguous sentences, with ambiguity traceable to different word groupings*

There were (old)(men and women)  
There were (old men)(and women)

They (danced) and (sang the first number)  
They (danced and sang)(the first number)

Sue saw (the man)(with the telescope) (she used the telescope to help see him)  
Sue saw (the man with the telescope) (the particular man she saw had a telescope)

The ambassador (gave)(the Chinese vases) (...to a friend who likes Chinese vases)  
The ambassador (gave)(the Chinese)(vases)  
(...when he arrived in China, at the welcoming ceremony)

This is essentially the same point we made for word structure in Chapter 2; see for instance the discussion in (69)-(68) of the ambiguous word *untieable*. Structurally ambiguous sentences are far more common, though, than structurally-ambiguous words.

## 2. Constituent structure

The first step in developing a syntactic theory is to devise a formal notation for the structure of sentences. We wish to express the fact that the words of a sentence form groups of various kinds; that the groups are themselves grouped into larger units, so that a sentence forms a single complex structure. Linguists normally use a *tree* notation to do this.

Trees are actually applicable to morphology as well as syntax, so I'll illustrate the idea with a morphological example done earlier. On p. 47 above we gave a derivation for the word *unmindfulness*, as follows.

(96) Derivation of unmindfulness (repeated)

[mind]<sub>Noun</sub>  
[[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub>

[un[[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub> Adj]

[un[[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub> Adj]ness]<sub>Noun</sub>

stem

**-ful Rule:**

[ X ]<sub>N</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>N</sub> ful ]<sub>Adj</sub>

**Negative un- Rule**

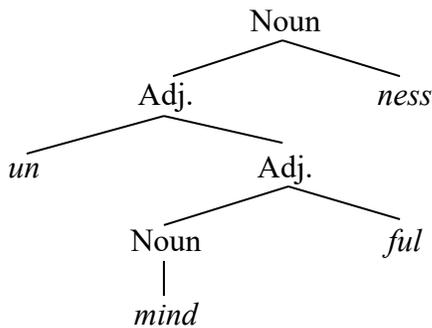
[ X ]<sub>Adjective</sub> → [ un [ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> ]<sub>Adj</sub>

**-ness Rule:**

[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> ness ]<sub>Noun</sub>

The output, [un[[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub> Adj]ness]<sub>Noun</sub>, can be shown more clearly with the alternative, but equivalent, tree notation, which is as shown below:

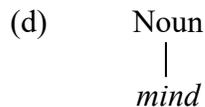
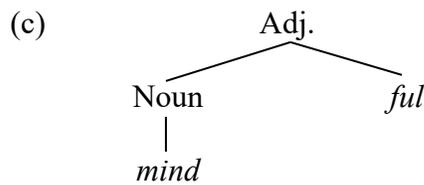
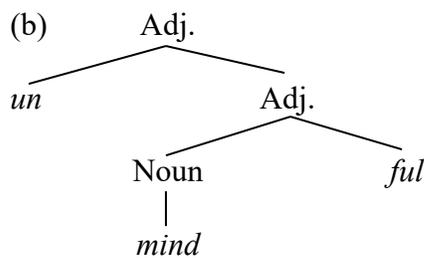
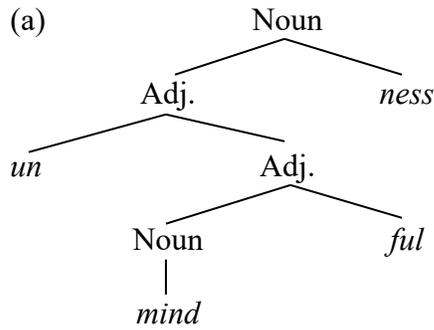
(97) Unmindfulness as a tree



As you can see, the tree metaphor is a bit odd, since linguistic trees are drawn upside down, relative to biological ones.

Definition: any unit in a tree is called a **node**. The nodes in the tree above are as follows: Noun, Adj., -ness, un-, Adj. (again), Noun, -ful, and mind .

When you combine a node with *all the material you can reach by going “downhill” from that node*, the result is called a **constituent**. The constituents of the tree just given are:

(98) *All the constituents of unmindfulness*

In addition, the elements *un*, *mind*, *ful*, and *ness*, each of which is at the “bottom” of the tree, are called **terminal nodes**. The terminal nodes are constituents, too, though in informal practice they are often left out of a list of constituents.

If you compare the tree with the bracketed version of *unmindfulness* given above, you’ll see that every constituent that isn’t a terminal node corresponds to a bracketed unit.

(99) *All the constituents of unmindfulness: shown with brackets*

- (98)a = [[un[[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub>ness]<sub>Noun</sub>  
 (98)b = [un[[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub>  
 (98)c = [[mind]<sub>Noun</sub> ful]<sub>Adj</sub>  
 (98)d = [mind]<sub>Noun</sub>

So the two notations are equivalent. For syntax, we'll mostly use trees, because syntactic structures tend to be quite a bit more complex than morphological structures, and the tree notation is much more readily apprehended by the eye. Bracketed notation is convenient for simple cases because it is compact.

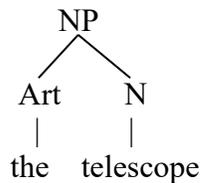
You can *name* a constituent by pronouncing its terminal nodes in order. So, for example, you can say things like: “in the word *unmindfulness*, *unmindful* is a constituent, and *mindfulness* is not a constituent.”

### 3. Trees in syntax

Drawing the syntactic trees for sentences depends in part on our knowledge of the meaning of the sentence, and in part on our knowledge of the grammar (the syntactic part of the grammar) of the language. The idea is to think through the meaning, and locate the syntactic units.

Consider the sentence *Sue saw the man with the telescope*. This sentence actually has two meanings: either Sue used a telescope for her observations, or the man was carrying one. Often, different meanings correspond to different trees, so let us for present purposes assume the meaning in which the man was carrying the telescope. I will build the tree from the bottom up.

I believe it is pretty intuitive that *the telescope* is a linguistic unit. We show this with a tree diagram.

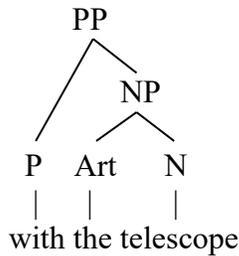


What does this diagram mean? The basic idea is that *the* is classified as an Article, and *telescope* as a Noun, abbreviated N; and the entire constituent is a **Noun Phrase**, abbreviated NP.<sup>55</sup> This NP can stand alone, for instance as the answer to the question “What did the man have with him?”

Let’s move on to the next larger unit. If we want the answer to “which man”, we could say (rather tersely):

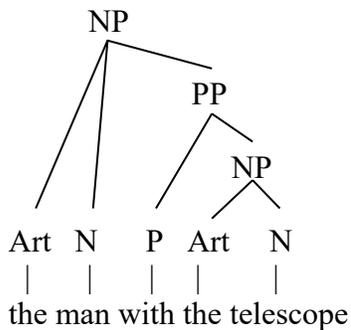
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<sup>55</sup> I’ll assume you learned in school how to identify articles, nouns, verbs, helping verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. If you’d like to review this material, please consult this help page:  
<http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/20/resources/CheckingPartsOfSpeech.pdf>.

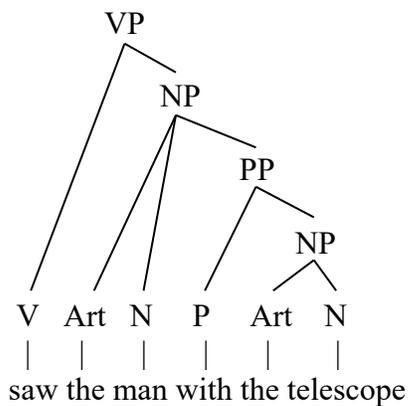


This is a **prepositional phrase** (PP), with the preposition *with* (P). The constituent *the telescope* is contained within the constituent *with the telescope*. One can also say it like this: *the telescope* is **embedded in** *with the telescope*.

We can continue, building up the structure as follows:

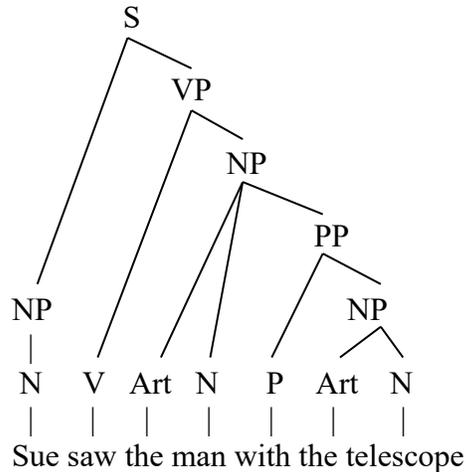


This is a bigger Noun Phrase, involving a *man*, further identified with the article *the* and the Prepositional Phrase *with the telescope*. It could answer the question, "Which man are we speaking of?"



This is a **Verb Phrase** (VP), whose verb is *saw*. What we created before can now be seen to be the object of this verb. The Verb Phrase could answer the question, "What did Sue do?".

Ultimately we arrive at a structure for the complete **Sentence**, abbreviated S:



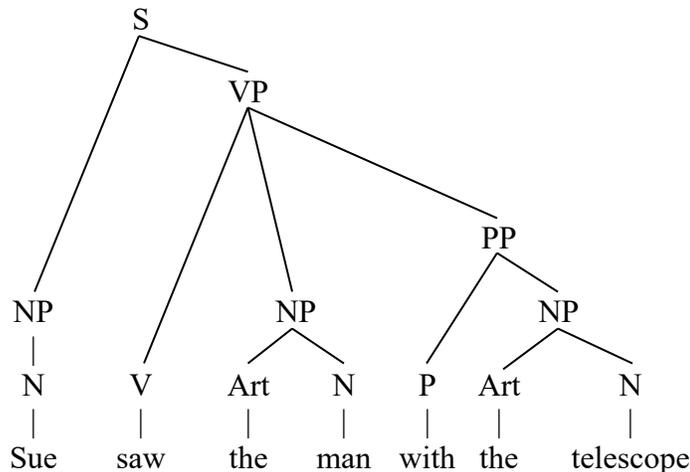
Here, we have a **subject**, in the form of the NP *Sue*, and a **predicate**, in the form of the VP *saw the man with the telescope*.<sup>56</sup>

Trees in syntax are also referred to as **phrase structure diagrams**.

#### 4. Phrase structure and ambiguity

As mentioned above, one of the first and most obvious descriptive benefits of constituent structure is that it provides a clear account of the ambiguity of many sentences and phrases. For example, with the tree just given, the meaning we had in mind was that “with the telescope” identifies the particular man that Sue saw (for example, he was walking down the street holding the telescope in its carrying case). For the (probably more obvious) meaning that Sue used the telescope to see the man, we would have:

<sup>56</sup> For why we are treating *Sue* as a full NP, not just an N, see below.



What is at issue is where “with the telescope” is *attached* in the tree: is it part of VP or of NP? We can clarify this concept a bit further with some terminology.

## 5. Heads and modifiers

Many (but not all) syntactic constituents possess a **head**. In a Noun Phrase (NP), the head is a Noun, and similarly the head of a Verb Phrase is a Verb, of a Prepositional Phrase is a Preposition, and (as we’ll see) of an Adjective Phrase is an Adjective. Intuitively, the head is the “core” of a constituent, what expresses the essence of its meaning. With just a few exceptions, heads are in one-to-one correspondence with phrases; every XP has a head X and vice versa.<sup>57</sup>

You can think of heads either formally (as a property of tree structures), or semantically. Semantically, the thing denoted by NP *is a* Noun, where Noun is the head of NP; thus, *the tall boy* is a *boy*. The action denoted by VP “is an” instance of Verb-ing, where Verb is the head of VP. Thus, in the VP “slowly eat pies”, the action described is an act of eating.

Everything within a phrase that is not the head can be termed a **modifier**, so long as we are willing to use the word “modifier” in a rather loose sense. This terminology may differ from what you learn in later linguistics courses, but it will be useful for our purposes.

Getting the concept of head and modifier right is, in my teaching experience, one of the trickier parts of learning syntax, so here are some examples.

### (a) *tall women*

The head of this NP is the N *women* (tall women are instances of women). The word *tall* is a modifier, specifying what kind of women.

<sup>57</sup> The exceptions, in this book, are that S has no head; and that for Comp, Conj, Art, and Aux there is no phrase of which they are the head. If you study more syntax, you may encounter theories that rearrange the system of categories so that the one-to-one correspondence works exceptionlessly.

(b) *the book*

The head of this NP is the N *book*; when we say *the book* we are speaking of a book. The meaning of *the* is somewhat elusive, but essentially its purpose is to tell the listener that the speaker expects that she will be able to know (through overt presence, prior discourse, or reasoning) which book is being discussed — it says, “You know, somehow, which book I am talking about”. The “opposite” of *the* is *a*, which signals that a book of which the listener is not necessarily aware is under discussion.

(c) *the man with the telescope*

The head of this NP is the noun *man*, and both the article *the* and the PP *with a telescope* are modifiers.

(d) *read the book*

The head of this VP is the V *read*; the VP describes an instance of reading, and *the book* is in some sense a modifier; it indicates what sort of reading-event took place by specifying one of the participants.

(d) *on Sepulveda*

The head of this PP (prepositional phrase) is the P(reposition) *on*. The meaning or function of the PP is to express location, and the word *on* serves to express this core meaning (*Sepulveda* has no inherent locative meaning; one can say “Sepulveda is a busy street”, “They are repaving Sepulveda”, and so on.)

(e) *very tall*

Looking ahead a bit, this is an Adjective Phrase, with an Adjective head *tall*, preceded by an Adverb modifier *very*.

## 6. Parsing sentences

The starting point for syntactic analysis of a language is to **parse** (provide a parse for; find the tree structure of) a variety of sentences. In the theory taught here, the basic principles of parsing are quite simple.

(100) *Principles of Parsing*

- a. For the phrases NP, VP, PP, AP, locate the head, and include all its modifiers in the same phrase.
- b. Sentences (including sentences inside sentences; see Chapter 1) are assumed to consist of a **subject** (which is an NP), and a **predicate** (which is a VP.)

Just as in traditional school grammar, the subject indicates what the sentence is about, and the predicate says something about the subject.

The hard part seems to be to make sure you find *all* the modifiers of each head, and include them in the phrase of which it is the head; so exercise care here.

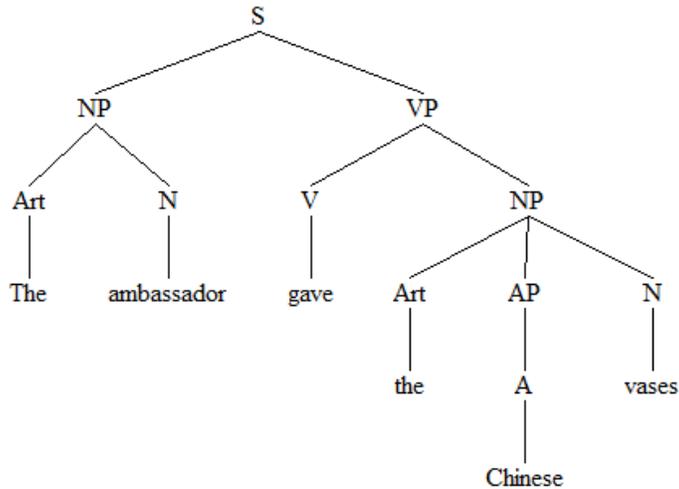
Returning to the two structures of *Sue saw the man with the telescope*, the crucial distinction is what the PP *with a telescope* is a modifier of: in one reading, it modifies *man* (that is, it specifies which man), and thus belongs as part of NP; in the other reading, it modifies *see* (that is, it specifies what kind of act of seeing took place), and thus belongs as part of VP.

### **Study Exercise #12**

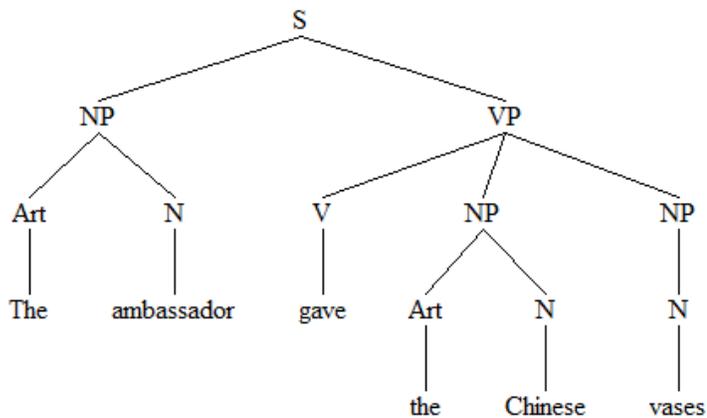
Diagram (that is, parse) both readings of the sentence *The ambassador gave the Chinese vases*. The answer is given on the next page.

## Answer to Study Exercise #12

This ambiguity is slightly more complex than the previous one, since it hinges not just on tree structure but also on the fact that *Chinese* can serve as either a noun (as in *the Chinese*, meaning “the Chinese people”) or an adjective.<sup>58</sup> With both readings, we can get two parses, as follows:



(That is, gave the Chinese vases to someone, unspecified. *Chinese* is an adjectival modifier of *vases*.)



(That is, the ambassador gave vases to the Chinese, as a diplomatic gift. The noun *Chinese* is the head of a NP; *gave* as head of VP takes two modifying NP, one the recipient of the giving, the other the thing given.)

<sup>58</sup> The two “versions” of the word *Chinese* are the result of morphological conversion. *Chinese* is fundamentally an Adjective, but from it is derived the Noun *Chinese*, by the conversion rule given in Chap. 4, (90).

[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub>]<sub>Noun</sub> meaning: “person who is X”

A curious property of the rule is that the output can only be used in the plural; hence it should also attach the inflectional feature [Number:plural] to the morphosyntactic representation of its output.

The example illustrates the point that differing parses of the same string are only one source of ambiguity in language. To mention some others in passing:

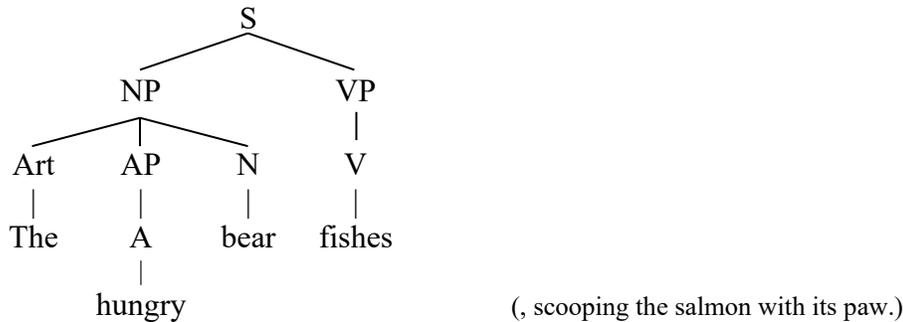
- Homophonous words: *We walked to the bank.*
- Multiple quantifier words: *Three men were examined by each doctor.*
- Phonological merger: *We were patting/We were padding*, which are identical in many North American English dialects

### **Study Exercise #13**

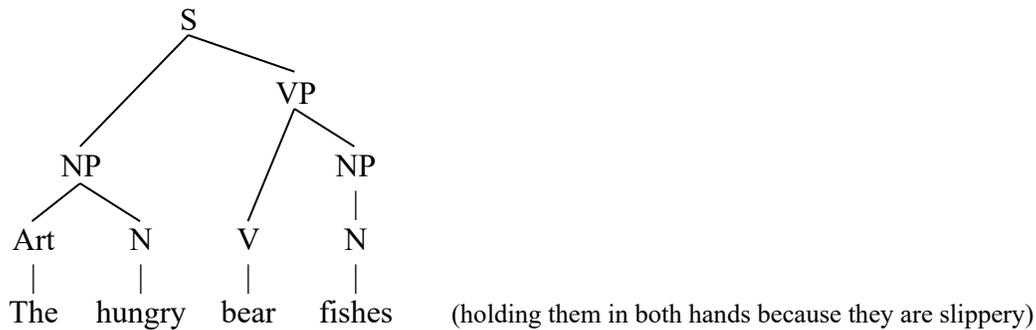
Here is one more ambiguity with its two parses (check that you know the answer before you look). The sentence is: *The hungry bear fishes*, and the answer is on the next page.

### Answer to Study Exercise #13

The far more likely reading uses the noun meaning of *bear*, making it the head of an NP; *fishes* is the head of VP.<sup>59</sup>



In the less likely reading, *hungry* is treated as a noun,<sup>60</sup> and *bear* as a verb:<sup>61</sup>



## 7. Possessive constructions

People are taught in school that adjectives are words that modify nouns. I think this is basically true; provided that you don't say they are the *only* words that modify nouns; there are quite a few other possibilities.

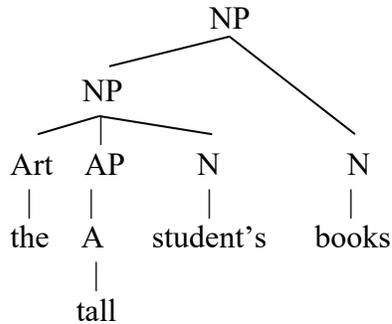
One very common noun modifier is the possessive construction, as in *the tall student's books*. *The tall student's* modifies *books*, but in its internal structure it looks just like an NP. (except for the extra material 's). It couldn't possibly be an Adjective; an Adjective is a word, but *The tall student's* is a whole phrase.

<sup>59</sup> You may be wondering why we bother with a VP symbol when there is no modifier present; see below on phrase structure rules for some justification.

<sup>60</sup> *Hungry* as a noun is, just as with *Chinese*, derived in the morphology by the conversion rule  
 [ X ]<sub>Adjective</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>Adjective</sub>]<sub>Noun</sub>.

<sup>61</sup> As a student once pointed out to me, there's yet a third parse: "the hungry bear-fishes", an NP modeled on *catfishes*. This involves *bearfishes* as a compound word, discussed in Chapter 2. Multiple parses lurk everywhere.

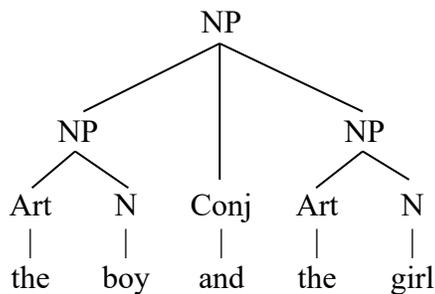
We will assume here that *the tall student's* is in fact an NP, and it sits inside the larger NP *the tall student's books*, modifying the head *books* (i.e., it says in effect, “whose books?”). Thus the structure is:



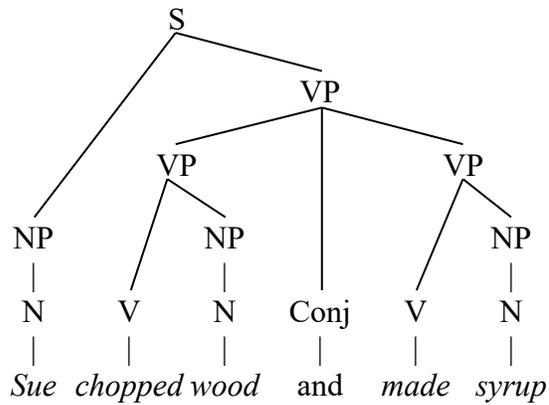
There's a debt to pay here: where does the 's morpheme come from, and where should it sit in the tree? We'll cover this in detail later on; the brief answer is that the 's is inflectional morphology, genitive case. What we will need is a way to relate the inflectional morphology to the syntax.

## 8. Conjoined structures

Conjunctions like *and* and *or* are fairly straightforward: we'll assume that they link together two identical units, forming a large unit of the same kind. Thus *the boy and the girl* is



We say that the two NPs *the boy* and *the girl* are **conjoined** by *and* into a larger NP, the entire structure. Similarly, *Sue chopped wood and made syrup* has a VP made of two conjoined VP's:

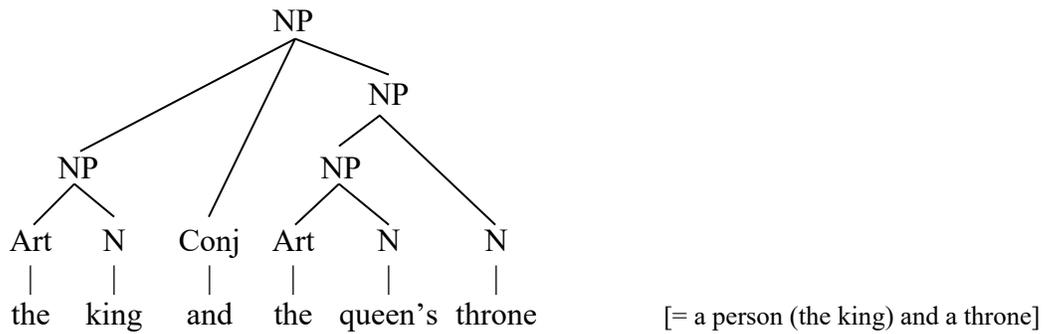
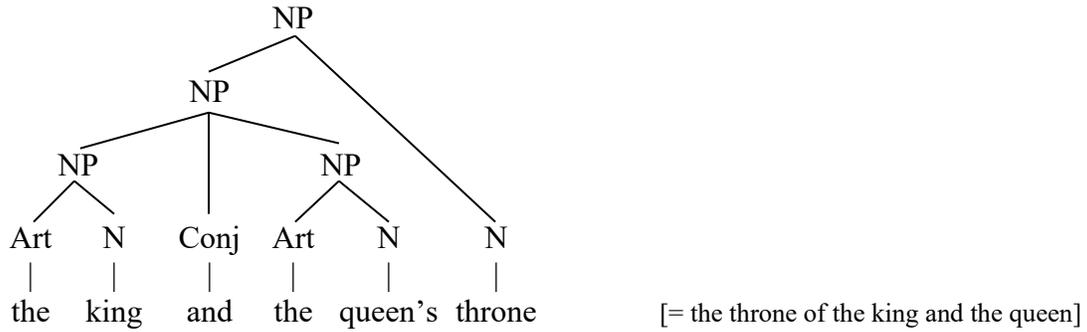


Several other categories, including Adjective Phrases, PP, and S, can participate in this construction: examples of these (same order) are *very tall but quite thin*; *over the river and through the woods*; *I like coffee and you like tea*.

#### Study Exercise #14

Parse *the king and the queen's throne* in both meanings.

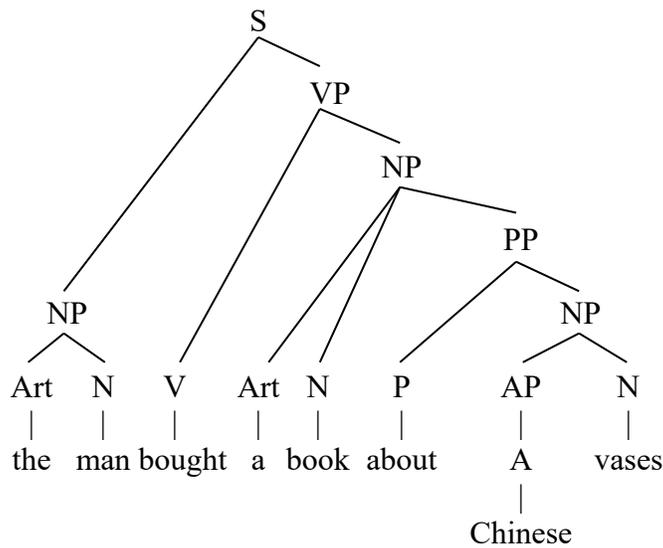
**Answer to Study Exercise #14**



**9. Terminology for trees**

Here is some terminology that will be useful in referring to trees. I will use the tree in (101) to illustrate the various terms:

(101) *A tree used to illustrate terminology for constituent structure*



(102) *Defn.:* **dominate**

Node X **dominates** node Y if you can get from X to Y by going “downhill” in the tree and never uphill. For example, S dominates everything in the tree; the NP on the right dominates an A, an N, and the words *Chinese* and *vases*. The NP on the right does not dominate the VP, nor does it dominate the word *man*.

(103) *Defn.:* **constituent**

A **constituent** is a node, plus all the nodes that it dominates.

Constituent was already defined earlier, but (103) is a more careful definition. As noted above, one usually refers to constituents by the words they contain. Thus one can say that the following:

*the man    a book about Chinese vases    bought    bought a book about Chinese vases*

are constituents (in sentence (101)). Note that sequences like

*bought a book*  
*the man bought a book*  
*a book*

are not constituents in sentence (101), *though they could be in other sentences*.<sup>62</sup>

(104) *Defn.:* **directly dominate**

X **directly dominates** Y if Y is “one node down the tree” from X. Thus the NP *a book about Chinese vases* directly dominates the PP *about Chinese vases*.

(105) *Defn.:* **daughter**

If X directly dominates Y, then Y is X’s **daughter**.

(106) *Defn.:* **sister**

Two daughters of the same node are **sisters**.

**head:** We’ve defined this casually, but can now give the tree-based formal version: the head of an NP is the N that it directly dominates. The head of a VP is the V that it directly dominates. For example, the head of the NP *a book about Chinese vases* is *book*. The head of the VP *bought a book about Chinese vases* is *bought*. And similarly, the head of the AP *very tall* is the Adjective *tall*. (One could extend this definition to PP as well, though it won’t matter for us.)

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<sup>62</sup> As mentioned above, this is one of the principal difficulties in parsing; that is, not to get distracted by mere “potential” constituents like these, and instead choose *complete* constituents.

## 10. Becoming a skilled parser

Of the practical skills needed to do linguistic analysis well, parsing sentences is probably #1. Many things we will do with grammar and meaning depend on having the right parse. So it's worth practicing your parsing, especially if it doesn't come to you naturally. This section offers some principles that will help you become a fluent and reliable parser.

The first principle is:

(107) Start with the obvious constituents you can get by proceeding “from the bottom up.”

By “bottom up”, I mean, first of all, to label each word for its part of speech. So if you try to parse these two sentences:

A. Alice owns the book on the table      B. Alice placed the book on the table

it makes sense to begin with the very low-level structure that assigns each word to its part of speech:

N	V	Art	N	P	Art	N		N	V	Art	N	P	Art	N		
A.	Alice	owns	the	book	on	the		table	B.	Alice	placed	the	book	on	the	table

That's the very bottom. But moving upward, you could then start grouping the words into bigger phrases, like this:

NP				P		NP		NP				P		NP		
				/		/		/				/		/		
N	V	Art	N	P	Art	N		N	V	Art	N	P	Art	N		
A.	Alice	owns	the	book	on	the		table	B.	Alice	placed	the	book	on	the	table

Observe what I've done here. Nouns have to belong to Noun Phrases, and there is nothing else in sight that could plausibly be part of the same Noun Phrase as *Alice*, so we've got an NP node more or less for free. *The table* is plainly a simple NP, with the common Article + Noun structure, and moreover it is the object of the preposition *on*, so we have a Prepositional Phrase, too.

The second principle of accurate parsing requires that you think consistently about heads, and about grouping modifiers into the same phrase as their heads. For example, in diagramming sentence A above, the crucial question is what *on the table* belongs to. If you think about the meaning of the sentence, it is clear that *on the table* modifies *book*; that is, it specifies which book is under discussion. The rest of the reasoning goes like this: ‘book’ is a noun; it must be the head of a NP; anything that modifies it (namely ‘the’ and ‘on the table’ must be its sister; therefore the full NP is ‘the book on the table’.

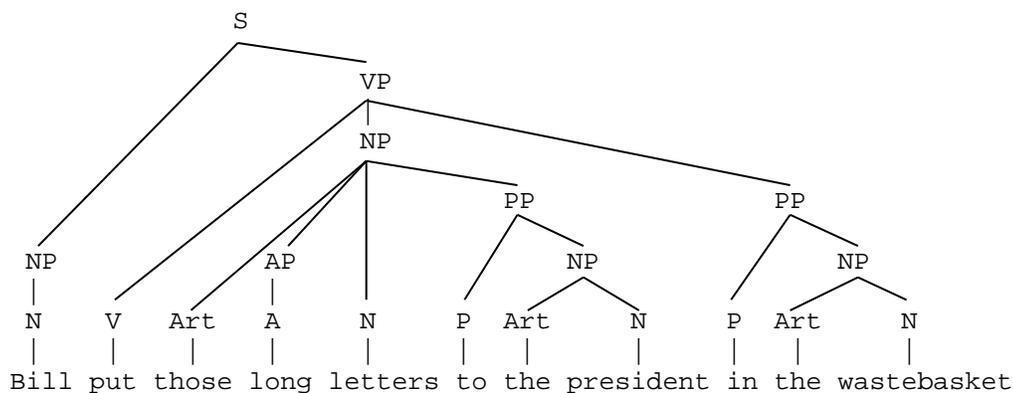


Let us now codify more carefully the principle we've been following:

(110) The modifiers of a head must be sisters to the head.

In *Alice owns the book on the table*, the PP *on the table* tells you what book it is; it modifies *book*, it must be a sister of *book*, and in (108) this is so. In *Alice placed the book on the table*, the PP *on the table* tells you the destination of the act of placing; it modifies *place*, it must be a sister of *place*, and in (109) this is so.

We can illustrate the principle (110) with a more complex sentence that has two PP's. They get placed in different positions according to what they modify:



The PP *to the president* says what kind of letters are being discussed; it modifies *letters* and must be a sister of *letters* within NP. The PP *in the wastebasket* specified the destination of the act of putting; it modifies the verb *put* and must be a sister of *put* within VP.

Here is another point that often troubles beginners learning to parse:

(111) Just because some word sequence is a constituent in some *other* sentence, it is not necessarily a constituent in the sentence you are trying to parse.

Look at example (108) above, and think about the sequence *owns the book*. It is unquestionably true that in all sorts of English sentences, *owns the book* is a constituent (example: *in Alice owns the book*, *owns the book* is a VP). Another of putting (111) is *Make your constituents maximal*; or *Don't leave stuff out*.

I have one other handy hint in parsing. For long sentences, once you've done the low-level stuff according to principle (107), it's often helpful to parse English sentences going backwards, starting with the end of a sentence.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Why so? It has to do with a property of English called "right-branchingness". When a constituent has two daughters, rather often the daughter on the left is a single word, whereas the daughter on the right has some internal structure. When you have a right-branching system, right-to-left implies bottom-up. Japanese, which is mostly left-branching, is probably easier to parse left-to-right.

## 11. Constituency tests

I'm a bit uncomfortable with the discussion so far because it consists simply of directions to you, the student, on how to parse sentences. This is merely being tyrannical unless it can be shown that the structures we're creating have some scientific purpose and validity. As a move in this direction, we can note the following evidence.

The following are examples of what linguists often call "cleft sentences:"

(112) *Some cleft sentences*

It's Bill that they don't like.  
It's on Mulberry street that they live.  
It was the flowers that Mary sent to Bill.

Such sentences are clearly related to simpler sentences, such as

They don't like Bill.  
They live on Mulberry Street.  
Mary sent the flowers to Bill.

We can express the relation between simple sentences and cleft sentences by writing a syntactic rule (we'll cover this more formally later on):

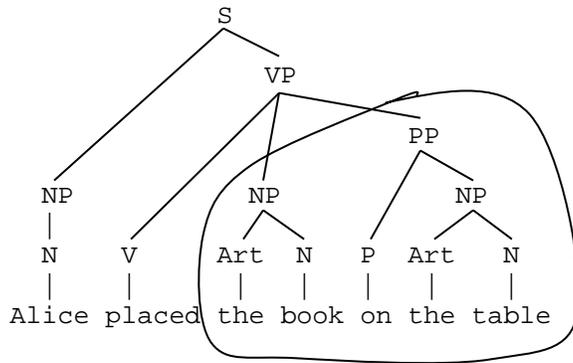
(113) *Clefting Rule*

To form a cleft sentence, take a simple sentence and perform the following operations on it:

1. Add *it* and an appropriate form of the verb *be* to the beginning.
2. Find a NP or PP constituent inside the sentence and reorder it so that it directly follows *be*.
3. Insert the word *that* just after the reordered NP or PP.

You can see for yourself that the cleft sentences cited above are derived from the corresponding simple sentences.

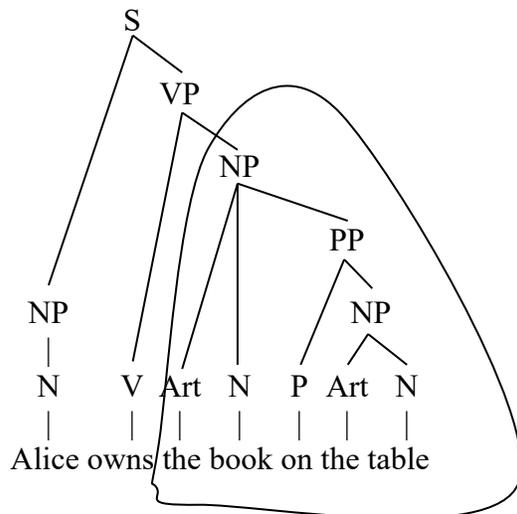
The crucial part of the rule is where it says "find an NP or PP *constituent*". It predicts that if we apply Clefting to a sequence of words that is *not* a constituent, the result should be ungrammatical. If you look at the tree drawn earlier in (109) for *Alice placed the book on the table*, you will see that *the book on the table* is not a constituent; it is two.



The analysis thus correctly predicts that if we attempt to do Clefting with this sequence of words, the result will be ungrammatical:

\*It was the book on the table that Alice placed.

On the other hand, in (108) *Alice owns the book on the table*, the sequence *the book on the table* is a constituent:



Therefore, Clefting produces a grammatical result:

It's the book on the table that Alice owns.

In summary: neither the principle (110) that modifiers form constituents with their heads, nor the rule of Clefting can be assumed in advance to be correct. We can only test them out against the facts. The more correct predictions they make, the greater is our confidence that they are true. If we want to be really confident about these principles, we must test them out against a much larger set of facts. We will carry out part of this task later on.

**Study Exercise #15**

- (a) In *They sent the king to Barataria* is *the king to Barataria* a constituent? Support your answer with evidence from Clefting.
- (b) Replace *to* with *of* in the same sentence and answer the same question.
- (c) What are the grammatical clefted versions of *Alice put the book on the table*? (There are about four).

Answers on next page.

## Answers to Study Exercise #15

(a) In *They sent the king to Barataria*, the sequence *the king to Barataria* is not a constituent. If it were, the rule of Clefting could apply to it, producing the sentence

\*It was the king to Barataria that they sent

We can explain the ungrammaticality of this sentence by supposing that ‘the king to Barataria’ is *not* a constituent.

(b) We have seen that Clefting can move only constituents. Since when we apply Clefting to *They sent the king of Barataria* we get a grammatical sentence:

It was the king of Barataria that they sent.

we infer that *the king of Barataria* must be a constituent.

(c)

It was Alice that put the book on the table.

(clefting the NP *Alice*)

It was the book that Alice put on the table.

(clefting the NP *the book*)

It was on the table that Alice put the book.

(clefting the PP *on the table*)

It was the table that Alice put the book on.<sup>64</sup>

(clefting the NP *the table*)

## 12. Grammars for syntactic structure I: Phrase structure rules

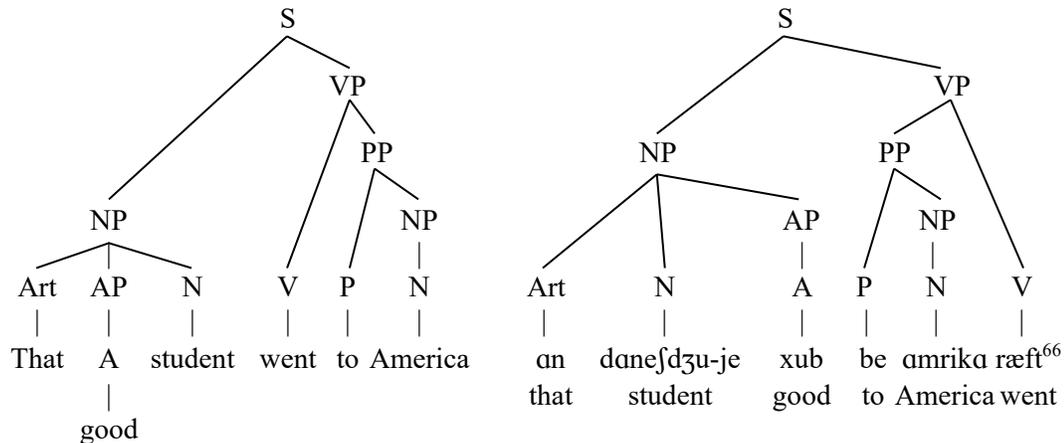
The discussion so far has been about structures; we now turn to the grammars that are responsible for these structures.

Phrase structure is language specific. To be sure, it does appear to be true that all languages have S and NP. However, the VP, AP, PP that we have in English appears to be missing in certain languages,<sup>65</sup> and moreover the order of the constituents of a phrase varies from language to language. Perhaps other languages include phrase types that English lacks.

<sup>64</sup> For the “stranded preposition” *on* in this sentence, see Chapter 3 above. Normative feeling in English (Chapter 3) is that you should not leave prepositions at the end of a sentence.

<sup>65</sup> It seems pretty clear that all languages have NP and S. It’s less clear that there is a Verb Phrase in languages where the subject comes between the verb and the object (for example, Verb-Subject-Object order, as in Malagasy). AP clearly cannot exist in a language without adjectives, and PP cannot exist in a language without prepositions (or postpositions). Korean has been claimed to be an adjectiveless language; like most adjectiveless languages it uses verbs for the same purpose; see <http://webpages.acs.ttu.edu/minjkim/KimHUMIT02.pdf>. Klamath (N. California) has been claimed to be a language without prepositions or postpositions; see [https://www.academia.edu/3876363/Adposition\\_as\\_a\\_non-universal\\_category](https://www.academia.edu/3876363/Adposition_as_a_non-universal_category).

Persian (also called Farsi) is very distantly related to English and has a similar inventory of phrasal categories in its syntax. But the order of elements within constituents is often different, as is illustrated by the following English sentence and its literal Persian translation:



Because of this, every language must include rules that specify its grammatical word orders.

The rules that specify word order are called *phrase structure rules*. Some examples of phrase structure rules are as follows:

*English:* NP → Art AP N                      *Persian:* NP → Art N AP  
 VP → V PP                                      VP → PP V

You can read the rules as follows: “an NP may consist of the sequence *Art, AP, N.*”

There is another way of interpreting phrase structure rules. If we have a complete set of them for a given language, we can think of the set of rules as an abstract machine that *generates* syntactic structures. For example, assume for the moment the following (obviously incomplete) set of phrase structure rules for English:

S → NP Aux VP (Aux = “helping verb”, like *can, will, be*, etc.)  
 NP → Art AP N  
 VP → V NP  
 AP → A<sup>67</sup>

In this respect, the phrase structure rules are like the rules of inflectional morphology given earlier: given a starting point, they *generate* a sentence. For inflectional morphology, the starting point is the stem with its morphosyntactic representation. For syntax, the starting point is a single symbol, such as NP or (most often) S, which designates the category that we wish to generate.

<sup>66</sup> IPA symbols: a = somewhat like *ah*; ʃ = *sh*, dʒ = *j*, x as in *ch* of German *Bach*, æ = the vowel of *cat*.

<sup>67</sup> This rule looks trivial right now—we’ll beef it up a bit later by allowing Adverbs and Preposition Phrases.

Here is the procedure.

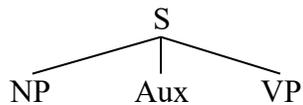
- (a) Provide the rules with the symbol S (or NP, or whatever) to start out with.
- (b) Whenever a symbol appears in a tree that is found on the left side of the rule, give that symbol daughters according to what the rule says;
- (c) Do this over and over until you can't apply any more rules.

If we start with S, the stages of this process would be as follows:

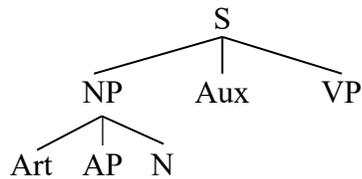
1. Starting point:

S

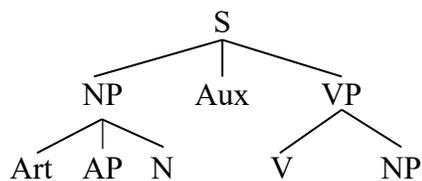
2: apply  $S \rightarrow NP \text{ Aux VP}$



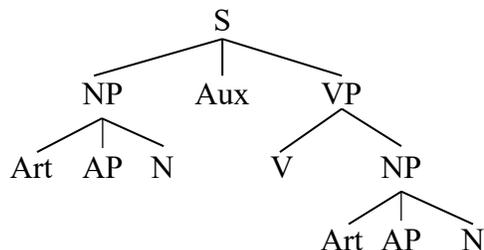
3: apply  $NP \rightarrow \text{Art AP N}$



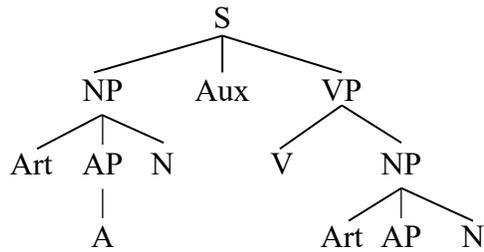
4: Apply  $VP \rightarrow V \text{ NP}$



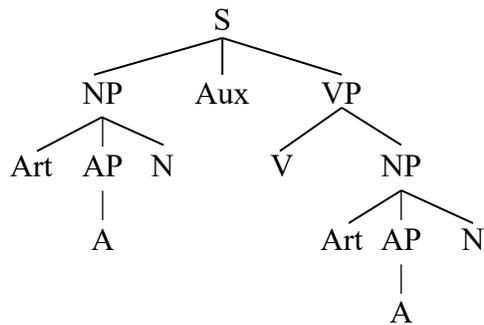
5: Apply  $NP \rightarrow \text{Art AP N}$  (again)



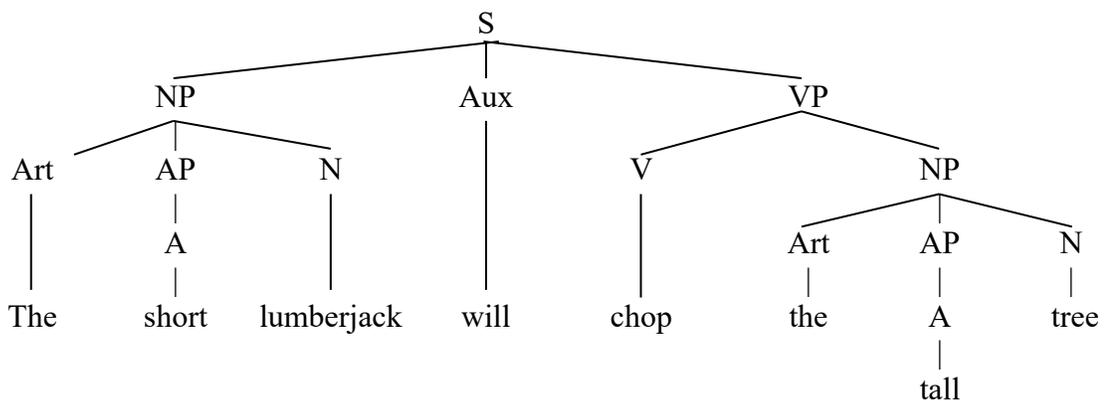
6: Apply AP → A



7: Apply AP → A (again)



All that remains is to insert actual words into the tree (a process called **lexical insertion**), and you get sentences:



or, with different choices for lexical insertion:

The sleepy student might ignore the noisy alarm.  
The green idea will paint the blue intellect.

Note that these sentences will not necessarily be sensible; they are merely grammatical.

A note on applicability of phrase structure rules: we saw that in inflectional morphology, the rules apply in a rigid order, like machines on an assembly line. Rules of word formation are more

“opportunistic”; they can reapply freely when they get the chance (see Chapter 2, §18). Phrase structure rules are likewise opportunistic; they keep applying until there are no more nodes to be expanded.

The phrase structure rules just proposed are obviously primitive, since they generate only one single structure. We can improve the rules by observing that some of the daughters introduced by a rule are optional. In particular, the NP rule has to introduce a N, but it doesn't have to introduce an Art or an A. The standard notation in linguistics for expressing optional elements is parentheses:

S → NP (Aux) VP  
 NP → (Art) (AP) N  
 VP → V (NP)  
 AP → A

These more flexible rules can provide the syntactic structures of sentences like these:

*The lumberjack will chop the tree*  
*Frogs will eat flies*  
*Fish can see*  
*Those students read books.*  
*Sue won*

and so on. (Diagram these if it is not obvious what the structure is.)

We can also make our AP rule less trivial, so that Adverbs are allowed.

AP → (Adv) A

For instance: *very tall*.

### 13. Curly brackets for “or”

One other complication in the notation for phrase structure rules. We find that a NP can begin *either* with an Article *or* with a possessive NP, but not both.

Article:

*the book, a book, this book, those books*

NP:

*Fred's book, the king of England's book, my book*

not both:

*\*the Fred's book, \*the king of England's this book, \*those my books*

Here is a simple way to account for this: we use curly brackets in the rules to mean “one or the other, but not both” (logicians call this “exclusive or”). The basic NP phrase structure rule for English comes out something like this:

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \left( \begin{array}{c} \{\text{Art}\} \\ \{\text{NP}\} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP}) \text{N} (\text{PP})$$

This means that you can start out an NP with an Article, or an NP, then continue with the rest (optional Adjective, obligatory Noun, optional PP). Examples of each type:

<u>the</u> long book about linguistics	(beginning with Article)
<u>the king's</u> long book about linguistics	(beginning with NP)

#### 14. Phrase structure rules for English sentences given so far

As we continue through syntax in this text, we will gradually build up an ever-improving grammar of phrase structure rules. Just to catch us up so far, I believe the following set of rules can generate most of the examples given in this book so far, as well as the sentences in the Study Exercises.

(114) *Phrase structure rules for English: Version I*

- S → NP (Aux) VP
- NP →  $\left( \begin{array}{c} \{\text{Art}\} \\ \{\text{NP}\} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP}) \text{N} (\text{PP})$
- NP → Pronoun
- VP → V (NP)(NP)(PP)
- PP → P NP
- AP → (Adv) A
  
- S → S Conj S
- NP → NP Conj NP
- VP → VP Conj VP
- PP → PP Conj PP
- AP → AP Conj AP
- V → V Conj V

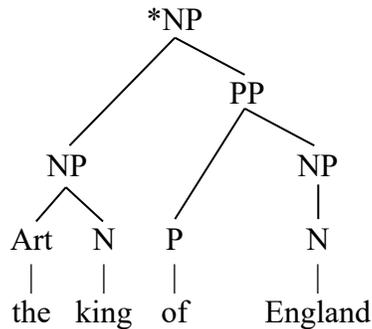
#### 15. Parsing: using the phrase structure rules as a guide

Once you've got a grammar like this to work with, then in principle it becomes easier to diagram sentences—any particular set of rules represents a claim about the inventory of phrase types a language allows, and thus constrains what kind of structures you can set up. Thus:

(115) When diagramming sentences, make sure every structure you set up is licensed by the rules.

In other words, you can't set up an NP whose structure is N AP, unless there is a phrase structure rule that specifies this sequence (either directly, or by leaving out parenthesized material). Thus you can be guided to an answer by both the meaning of the sentence and by the rules of the grammar.

Example: here is an incorrect structure (according to our grammar) for *the king of England*:



You can tell it's not right because the grammar in (114) contains no rule that permits NP to dominate NP followed by PP.<sup>68</sup> This is a very easy principle to apply; you just need a printed copy of the grammar on your desk, then you can check every single node in your tree to see if it is legal. If you're having trouble in parsing, it is definitely worth taking the time to apply this mechanical procedure.

There actually is one way you can legitimately diagram a structure that the grammar doesn't allow—namely, *change the grammar*. In other words, you have to say something like “This sentence shows that our grammar was wrong, and has to be fixed like this [offer substitute rules here].” In this book I have included only sentences that can be parsed with the grammar given so far at that point in the text. But of course real life is different: a grammar that could parse all of English would be quite large and a big challenge to create. Expanding the grammar so it can cover more of the legal sentences of a language is something linguists do all the time when they work with language data.

## 16. Further details of our current grammar

A few of our phrase structure rules in (114) need clarification.

### 16.1 Pronouns

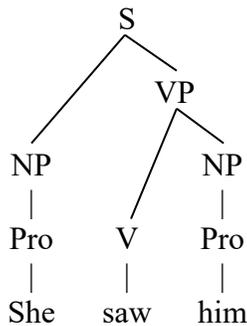
The phrase structure rule of (114) that introduces Pronouns is very simple:

NP → Pronoun

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<sup>68</sup> Note that there is a rule  $NP \rightarrow \left( \begin{matrix} \{Art\} \\ \{NP\} \end{matrix} \right) (AP) N (PP)$ . But it won't help, because it *requires* there to be an N daughter.

Pronoun, appearing in trees, is often abbreviated as Pro. Thus:



The reason to have a separate rule for pronouns is that, unlike nouns, they do not admit modifiers, except in special circumstances we'll defer for now.<sup>69</sup> This is one reason to give them their own phrase structure rule, rather than just calling them a kind of Noun. The other reason is that, later on, we will need rules of semantic interpretation that indicate what the pronouns refer to, and these rules need to identify the pronouns.

Incidentally, pronouns in English are unusual in that they are inflected for case. English has a three-way case system, with Nominative, Objective, and Genitive. Objective covers what in many other languages (including English, centuries ago) was Accusative or Dative. Different authors will give different names to these cases.

(116) *English pronouns in outline form*

		<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
<b>Singular</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>my</i>
	<b>2</b>	<i>you</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>your</i>
	<b>3</b>	<i>he/she/it</i>	<i>him/her/it</i>	<i>his/her/its</i>
<b>Plural</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>we</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>our</i>
	<b>2</b>	<i>you</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>your</i>
	<b>3</b>	<i>they</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>their</i>

Part of what a grammar must do is ensure that the correct case form of each pronoun is used in the right context; we will turn to the sort of rules that are needed later on.

## 16.2 Aux

“Aux”, meaning “auxiliary verb”, is the “helping verb” taught in school. In our phrase structure rules, it is the optional second daughter of S ( $S \rightarrow NP \text{ (Aux) VP}$ ). Here is a list of auxes:

<sup>69</sup> Examples: *Poor me*, a “frozen” memorized expression; *He who dares to go...*, with a relative clause.

**“Modal” verbs:** *can, could, shall, should, may, might, will, would*

Example: *I can go.*

**Forms of *have*:** *have, has, had*

Example: *I have gone.*

**Forms of *be*:** *be, am, are, is, was, were*

Example: *I am going.*

You can see that the choice of Aux also determines the inflectional morphology of the following verb—this involves rules we haven’t yet covered.

Be aware that *have* and *be* can serve as either Auxes or main Verbs. Thus:

*He is having a fit*

involves *be* as an Aux and *have* as a main Verb.

*He has been President.*

has *have* as an Aux and *be* as a main Verb.

### Study Exercise #16

Parse. Give one parse for each meaning. The number of parses is given in parentheses.<sup>70</sup> I suggest you keep a printed copy of the Version I grammar ((114) above) next to you as you parse.

- a. We have captured the turtle with the net. (2)
  - i. ... it was quite interesting because most turtles don’t carry a net.
  - ii. ... we felt sad to see the noble reptile caught in the webbing.
- b. The great import sinks. (2)
  - i. ... because, like many imports, it weighs a lot.
  - ii. ... because powerful people feel that their sinks ought to come from overseas.
- c. We offered the mighty bruins. (2)
  - i. ... because the mighty bruins were a good choice to offer them.
  - ii. ... because mighty people like to keep bruins in their personal zoo
- d. UCLA and USC’s departments (2)
  - i. the departments that belong to UCLA and to USC
  - ii. a university and a batch of departments
- e. We robbed the King of England of his money. (1)

---

<sup>70</sup> Through maybe you can think of more ...

- f. We despise the King of England and France (2)
  - i. We despise the person who is the king all at once of two countries.<sup>71</sup>
  - ii. We despise both a person and a country.
  
- g. We despise the King of England and of France (1)
  - i. We despise the person who is the king all at once of two countries.
  
- h. Bill and Alice and Sue (2)
  - i. a group consisting of Bill and Alice, and also a single person, Sue
  - ii. a single person, Bill, and also a group consisting of Alice and Sue
  
- i. the cover of Bill's book about the very dry climate of Australia (1)
  
- j. They might cook and serve the vegetables. (2)
  - i. what they do to the vegetables is cook and serve them
  - ii. They do two things: cook, and serve the vegetables
  
- k. a long and very unpleasant episode (1)
  
- m. Bill's mother's brother's shaggy dog (1)
  
- n. We sent the ambassador to Venezuela to Colombia. (1)
  
- o. We sent the ambassador to Venezuela (2)
  - i. We needed somebody to send, so we picked the ambassador to Venezuela
  - ii. Venezuela is where we sent the ambassador
  
- p. We have cooked her turnips. (2)
  - i. It's her turnips that we cooked.
  - ii. We cooked turnips for her.

Answers begin on the next page.

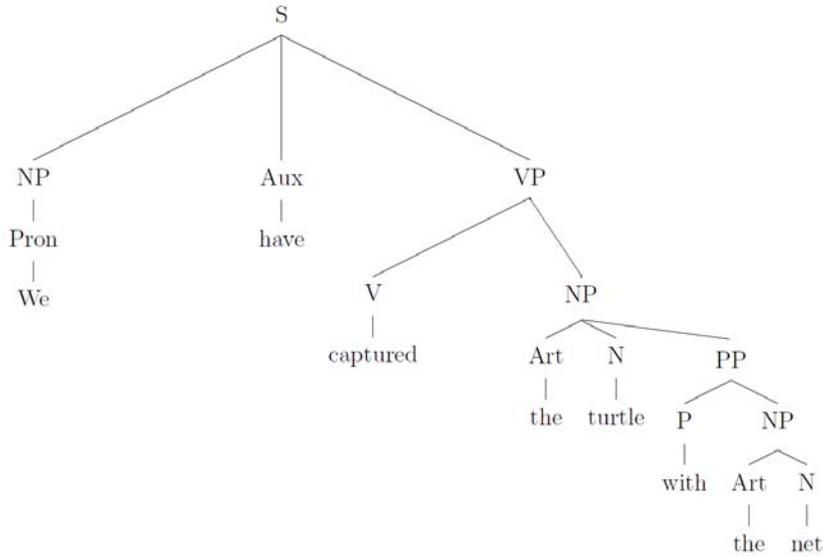
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<sup>71</sup> This happened once, more or less, and the Hundred Years' War was the result.

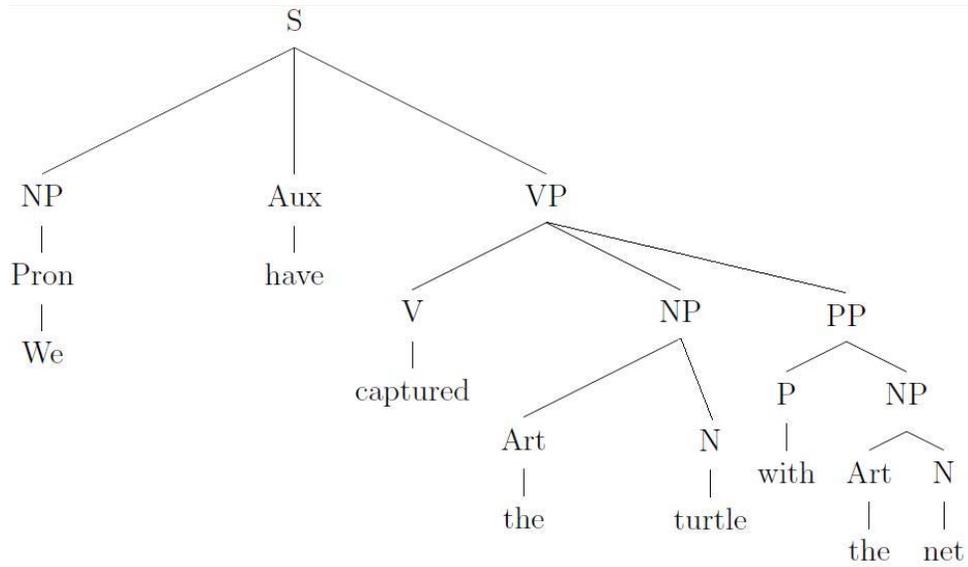
**Answers to Study Exercise #16**

a. We have captured the turtle with the net. (2)

i. ... it was quite interesting because most turtles don't carry a net.

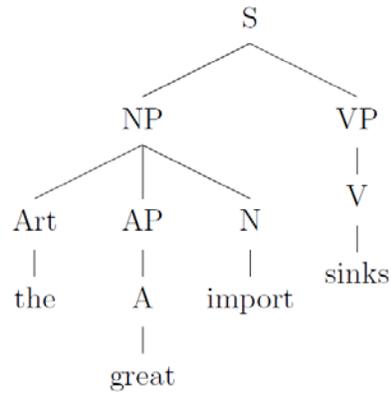


ii. ... we felt sad to see the noble reptile caught in the webbing.

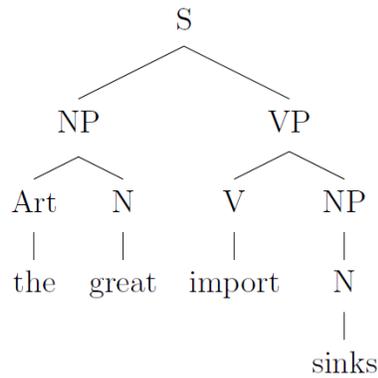


b. The great import sinks. (2)

i. ... because this wonderful import weighs so much

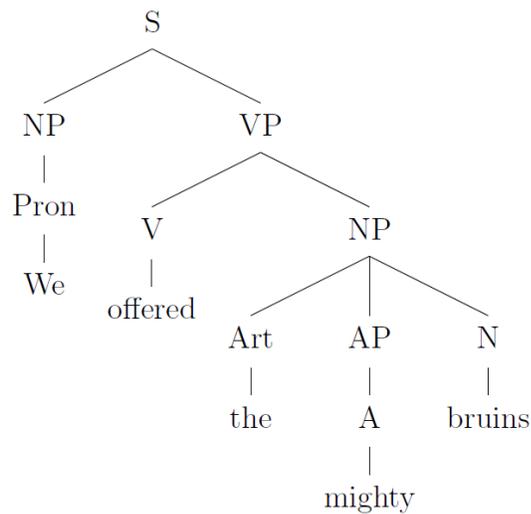


ii. ... because powerful people feel that their sinks ought to come from overseas.

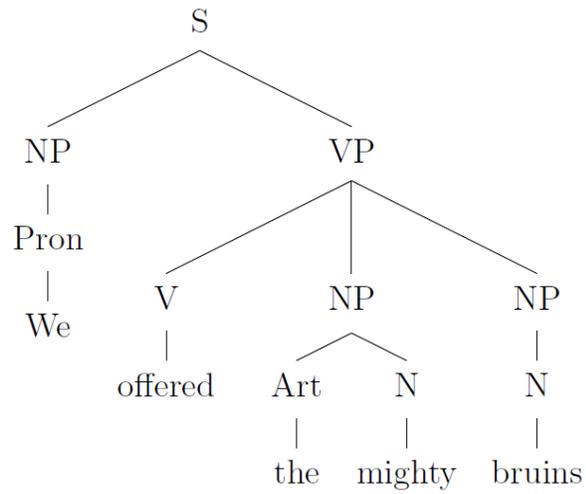


c. We offered the mighty bruins. (2)

i. ... because the mighty bruins were a good choice to offer them.

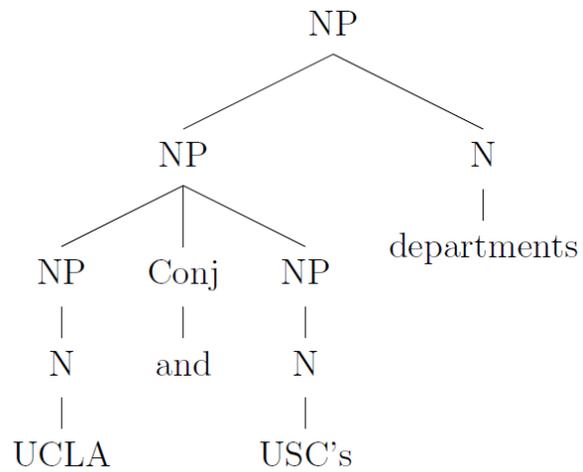


- ii. ... because mighty people like to keep bruins in their personal zoo

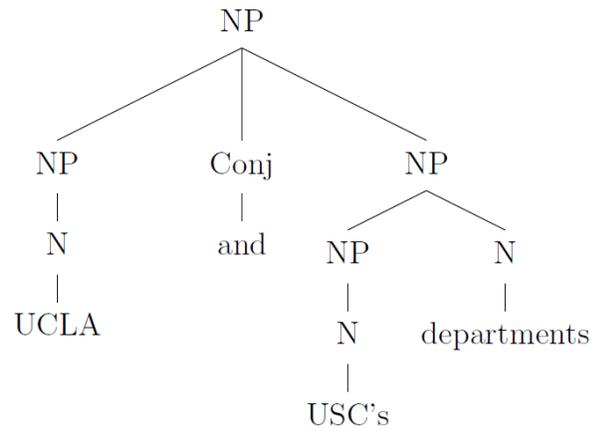


- d. UCLA and USC's departments (2)

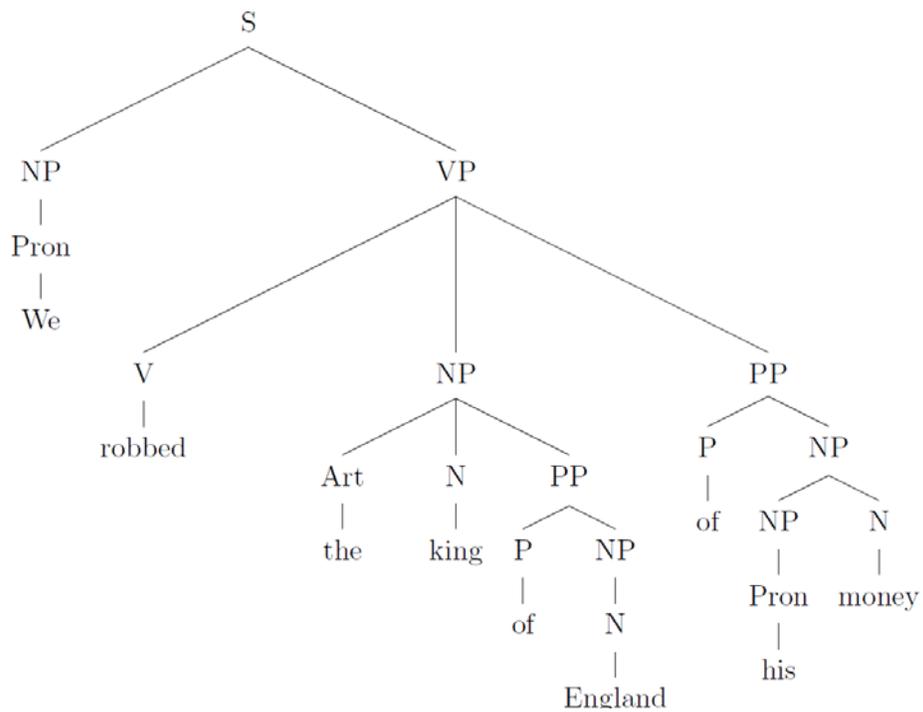
- i. the departments that belong to UCLA and to USC



- ii. a university and a batch of departments

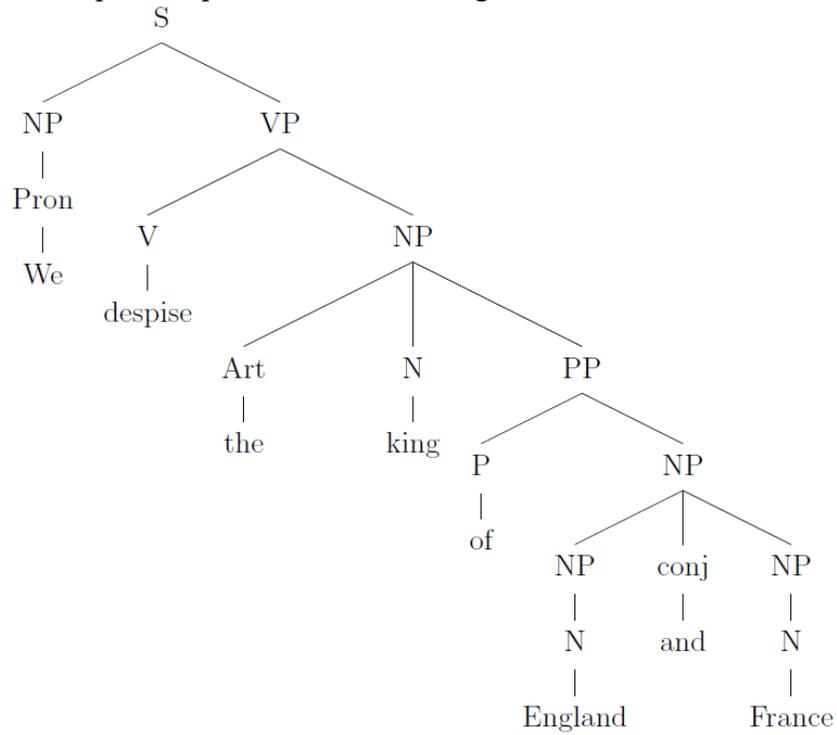


- e. We robbed the King of England of his money. (1)

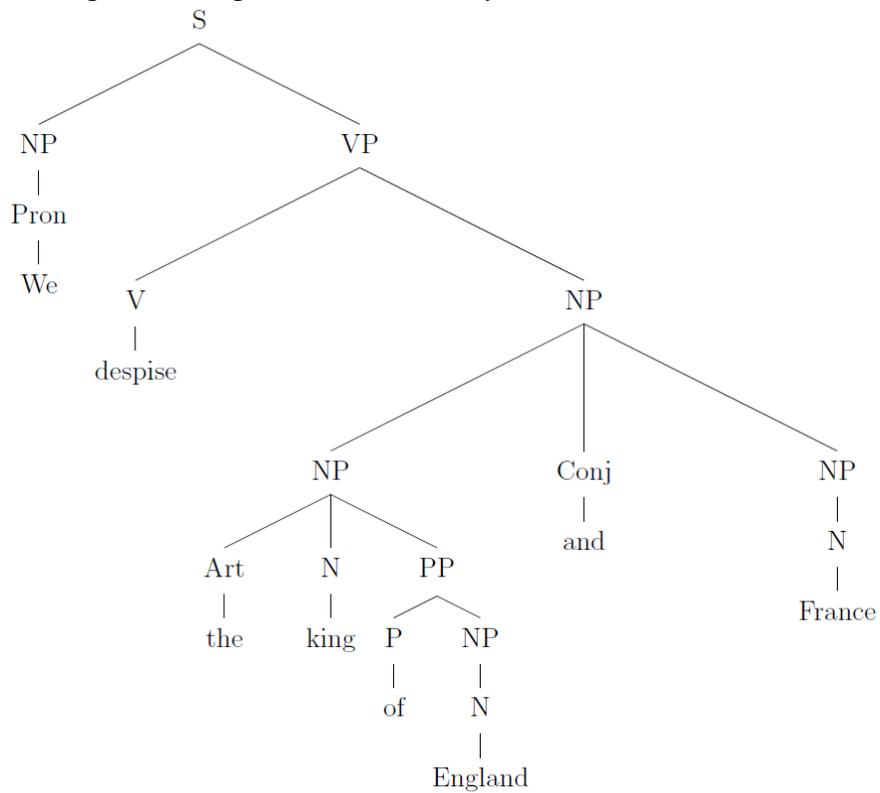


f. We despise the King of England and France (2)

i. We despise the person who is the king all at once of two countries.

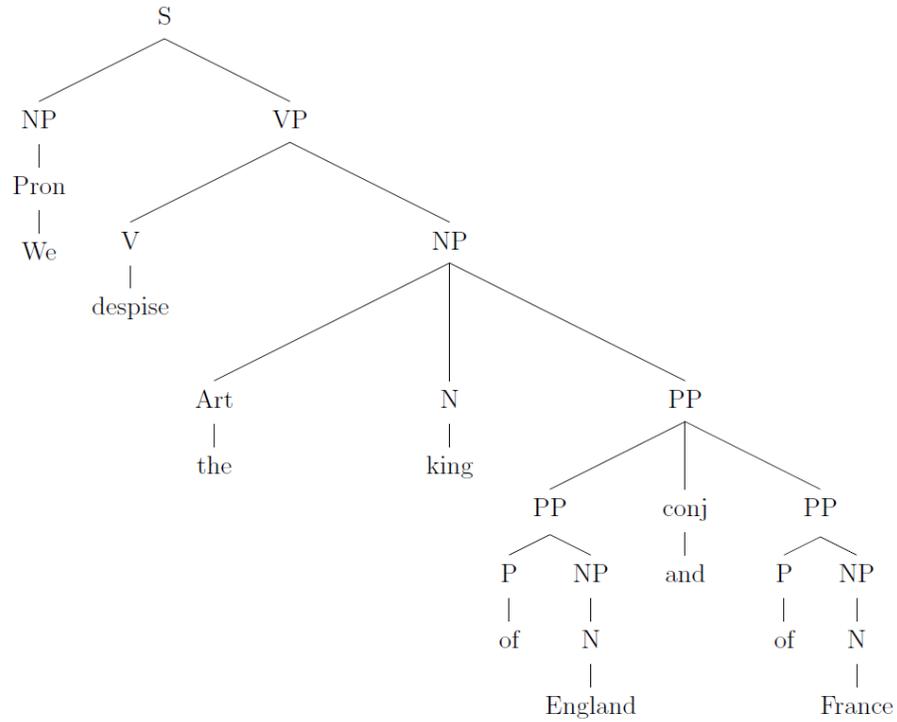


ii. We despise both a person and a country.



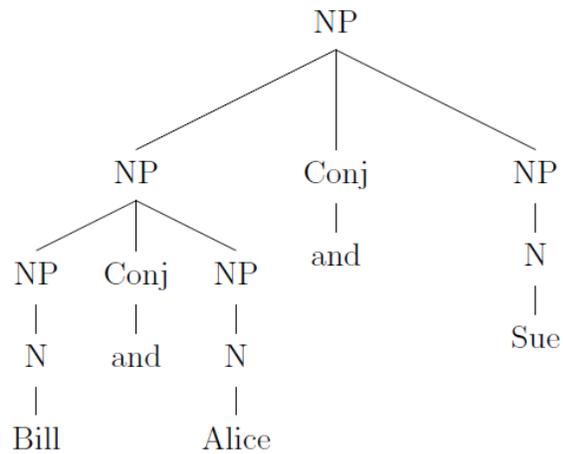
g. We despise the King of England and of France (1)

i. We despise the person who is the king all at once of two countries.

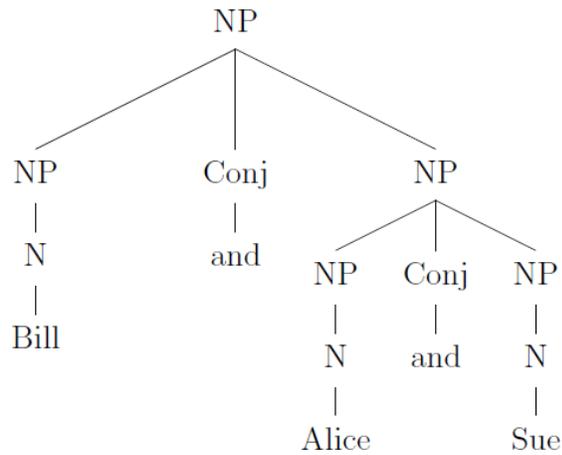


h. Bill and Alice and Sue (2)

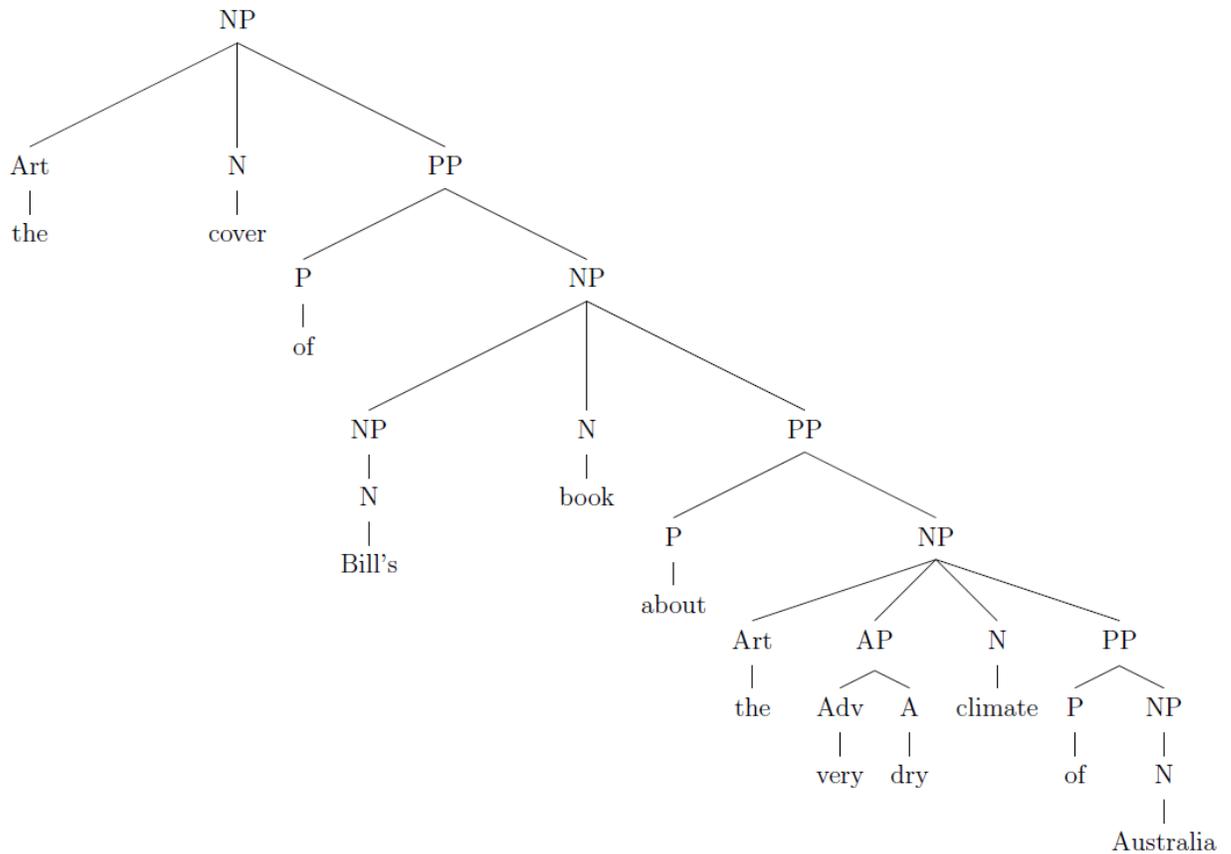
i. a group consisting of Bill and Alice, and also a single person, Sue



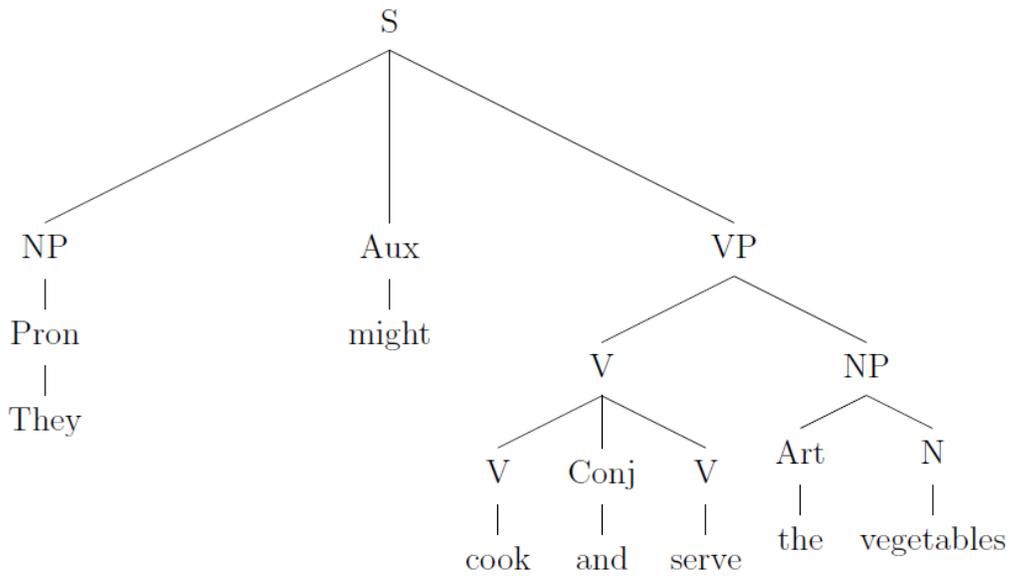
- ii. a single person, Bill, and also a group consisting of Alice and Sue



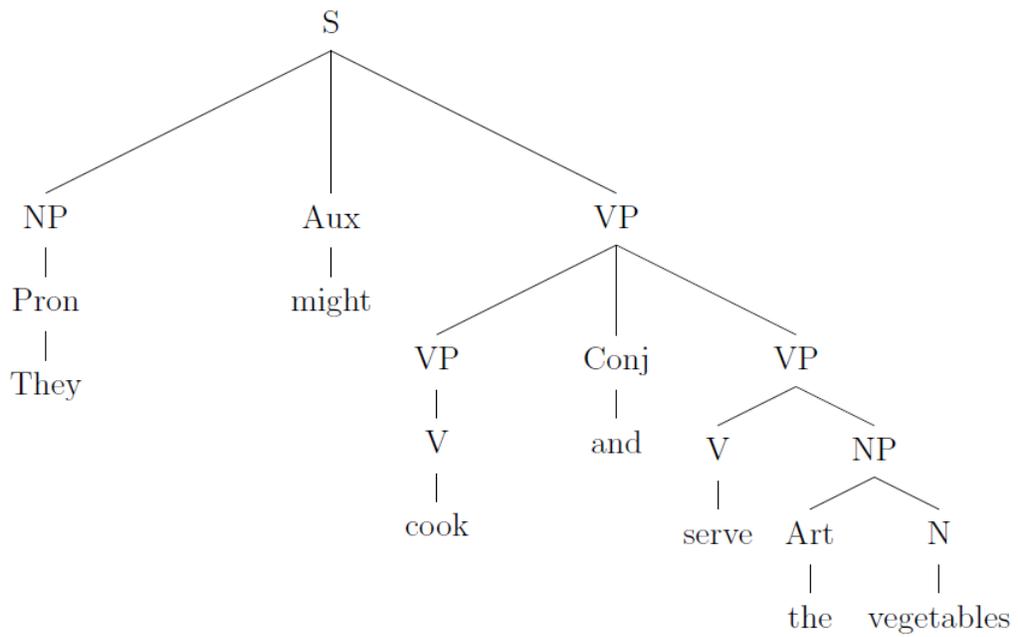
- i. the cover of Bill's book about the very dry climate of Australia (1)



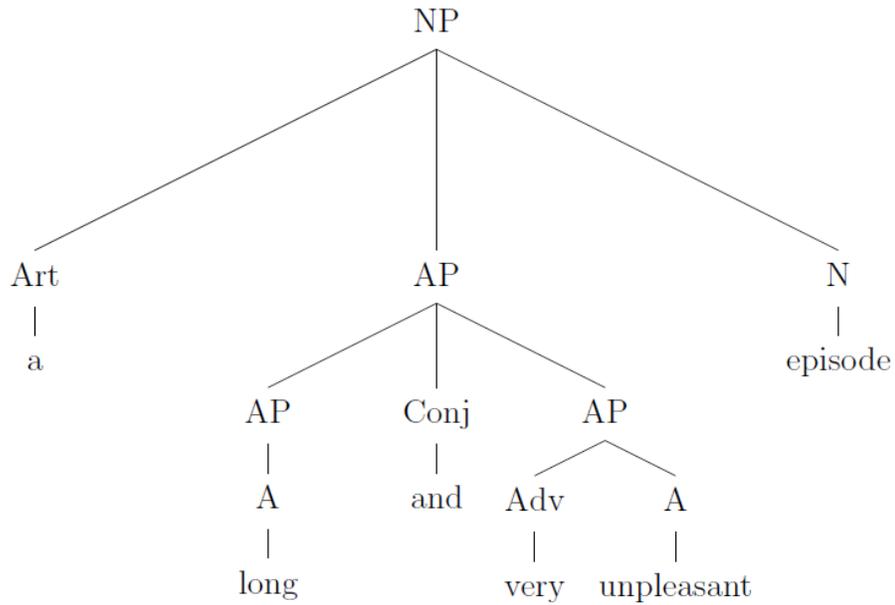
- j. They might cook and serve the vegetables. (2)
  - i. what they do to the vegetables is cook and serve them



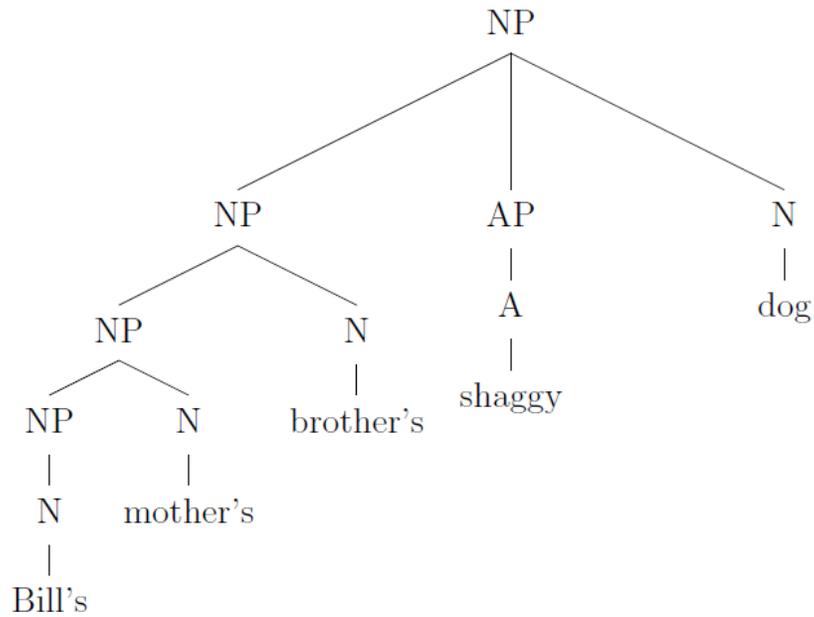
- ii. they do two things: cook, and serve the vegetables



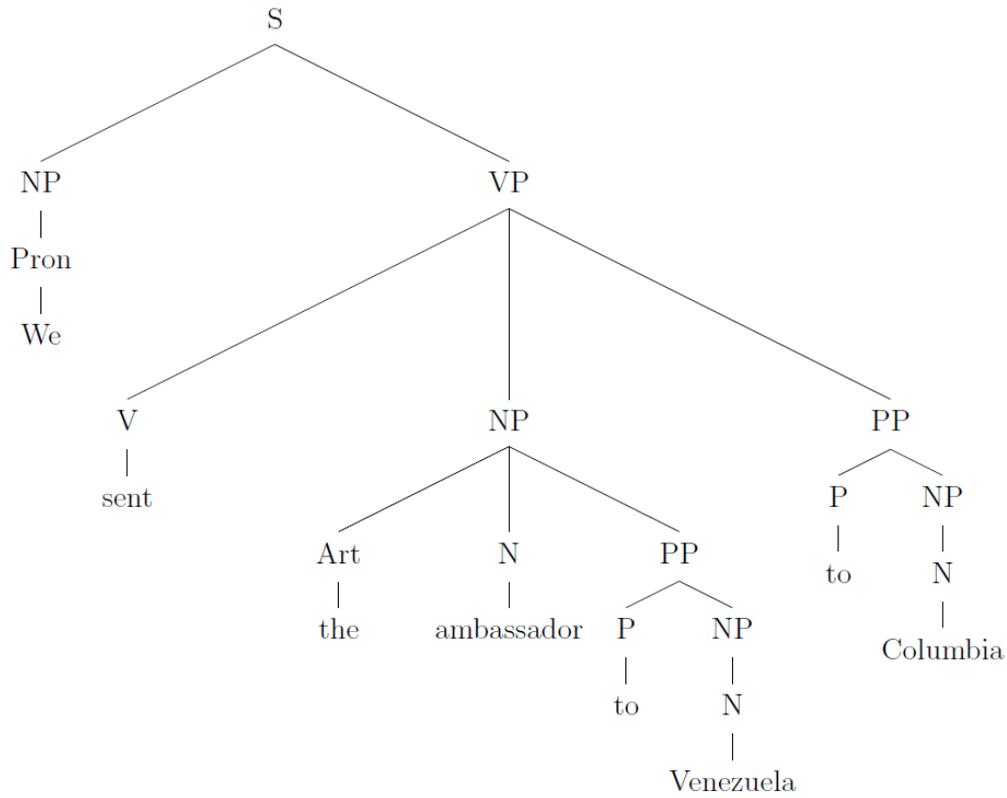
k. a long and very unpleasant episode (1)



m. Bill's mother's brother's shaggy dog (1)

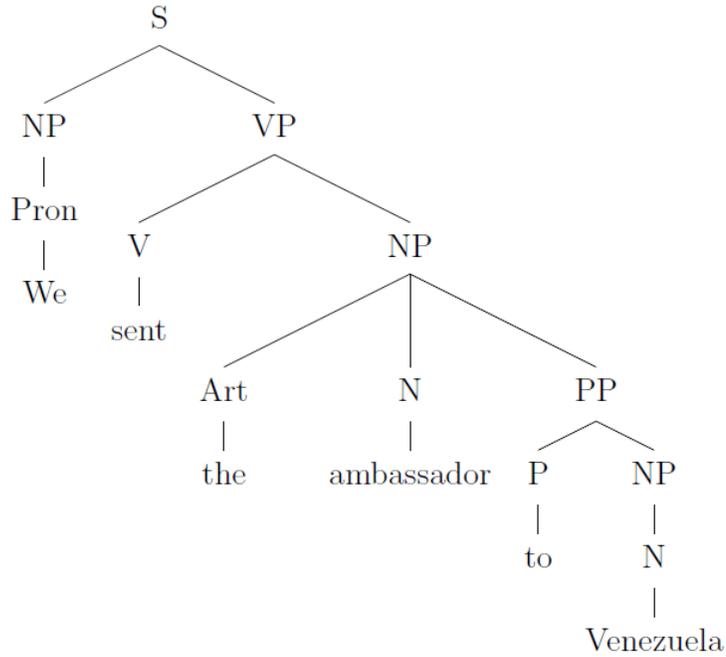


n. We sent the ambassador to Venezuela to Columbia. (1)

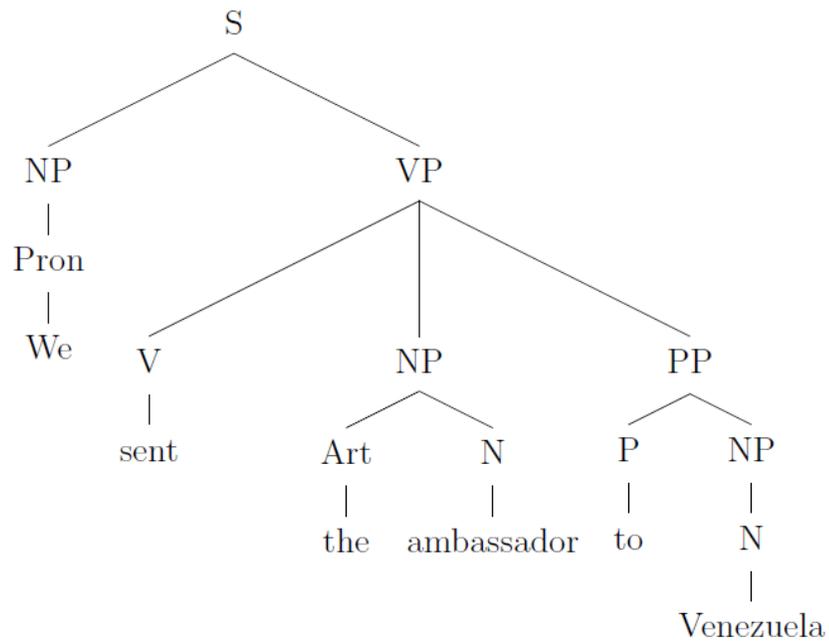


o. We sent the ambassador to Venezuela (2)

i. We needed somebody to send, so we picked the ambassador to Venezuela

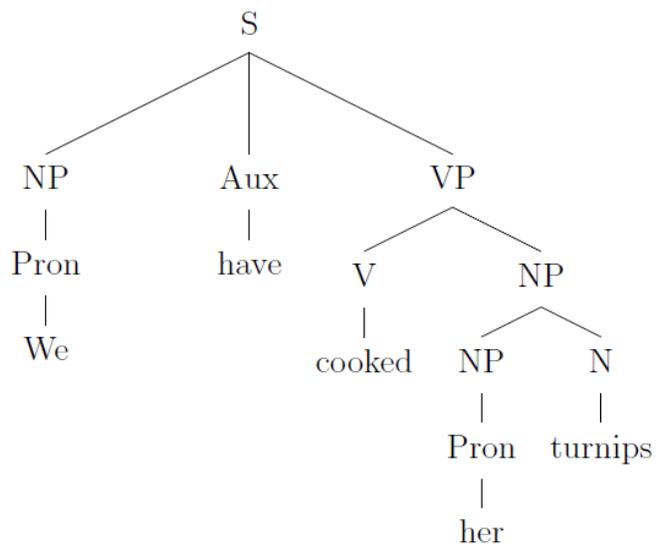


ii. Venezuela is where we sent the ambassador

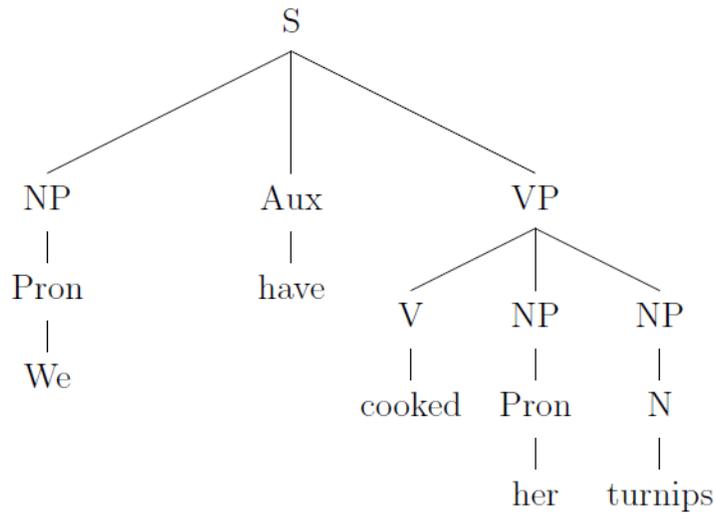


p. We have cooked her turnips. (2)

i. It's her turnips that we have cooked.



- ii. We cooked turnips for her.



### 16.3 Complementizers and subordinate clauses

Much of the most intricate syntax arises when one “puts a sentence inside a sentence”; that is, when one uses a **subordinate clause**. This showed up in Chapter 1 when we looked at the patterning of *each other*. Thus, \*[*John and Bill think [ I like each other ]<sub>s</sub> ]<sub>s</sub> is impossible, because *each other* is allowed to refer only to Noun Phrases that are within the smallest clause containing it — in this case, [ *I like each other* ]<sub>s</sub>. Subordinate clauses often occur when the verb of the main clause is a verb of saying or belief — the subordinate clause serves to express the content of the thought that is said or believed. With the notions of syntax we’ve developed so far, we can now be much more explicit about subordinate clauses than we were in Chapter 1.*

To analyze subordinate clauses, we need to provide a slot in phrase structure for the grammatical words that often introduce them—*that* in sentences like:

I think *that* [ John and Bill like each other ]<sub>s</sub>

There is also *for*, as in:

I would prefer *for* [ John and Bill to like each other ]<sub>s</sub>.

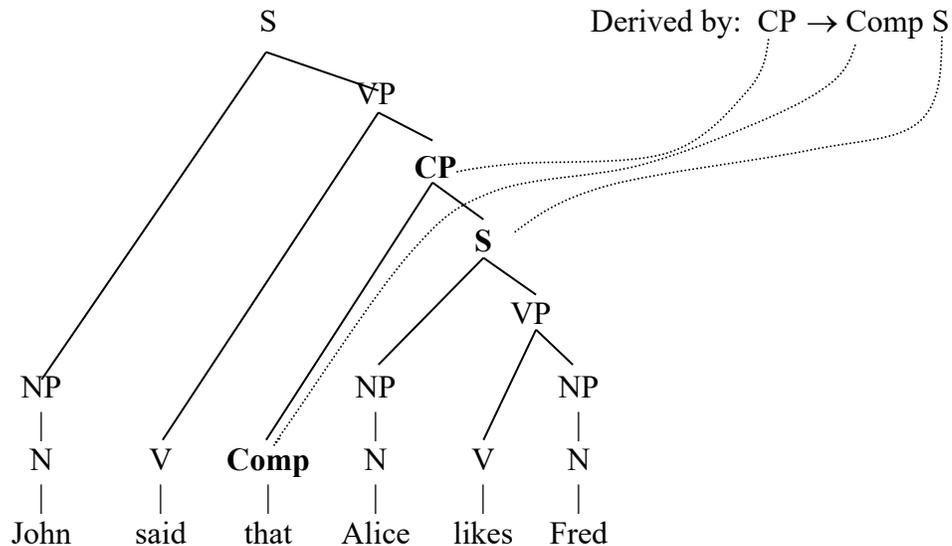
Such words are called **subordinating conjunctions** in traditional terminology. Linguists use the slightly shorter term **complementizer**,<sup>72</sup> abbreviated **Comp**. Other complementizers include *if*, (*al*)*though*, *when*, *whether*, and some others we’ll mention later.

<sup>72</sup> For why the complementizers is so called: the subordinate clause is sometimes classified as a “sentential complement”, meaning it functions as the object of the verb. A complementizer renders a simple S suitable for appearing as a complement; the bare sentence is made into a possible object.

With this apparatus, we can set up rules like these (I'm omitting optional material; see below for the full rules):

VP → V CP  
 CP → Comp S

CP is the category that provides the syntactic “slot” for the complementizer. Here is an example sentence that can be generated by these rules:



#### 16.4 Phrase structure rules for subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses in English most often occur the last constituent of the VP, indicating what was said or thought. Here are some examples:

##### (117) *Four sentences with subordinate clauses*

We said [ that we were going ]<sub>CP</sub>  
 We told Alice [ that we were going ]<sub>CP</sub>  
 We gave Bill notice [ that we were going ]<sub>CP</sub>  
 We sent word to Jane [ that we were going ]<sub>CP</sub>

From these sentences, you can see that the Verb Phrase can, in addition to its subordinate clause, include one or two NP objects and a PP, all of them preceding the CP. Thus the phrase structure rule needed is something like this:

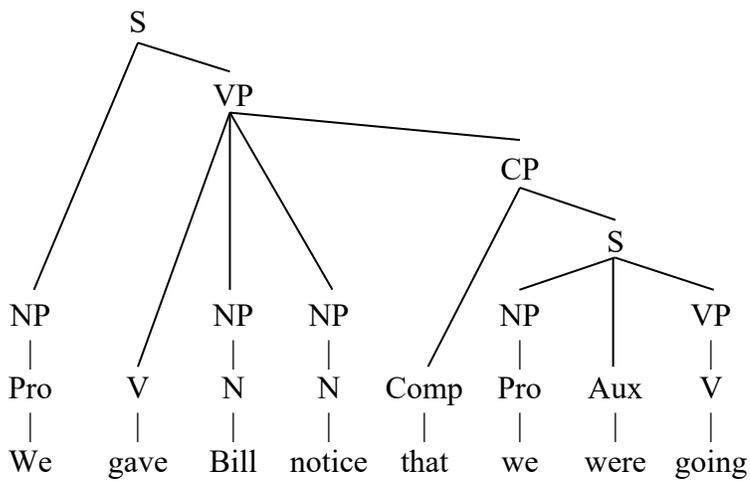
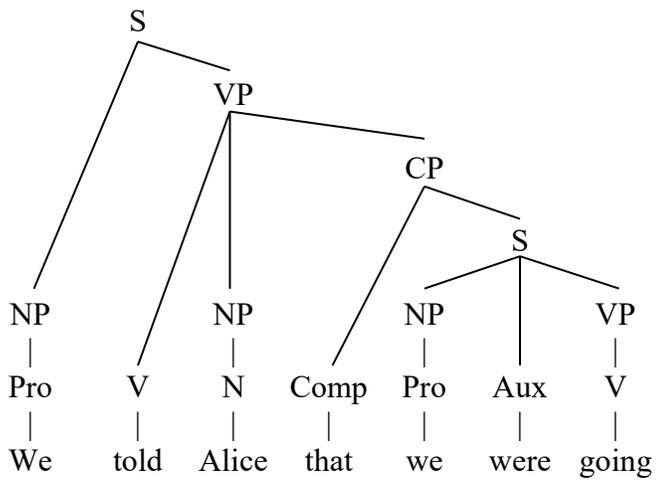
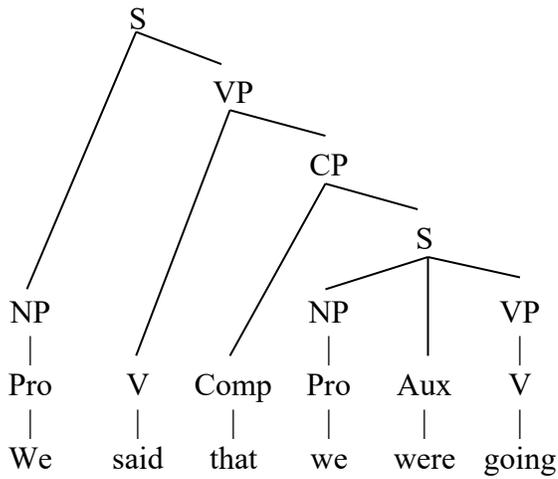
##### (118) *A phrase structure rule for VP that incorporates CP*

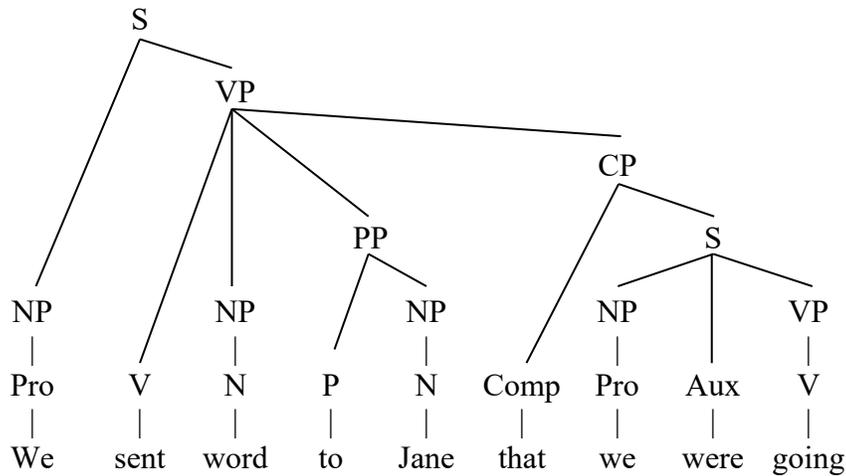
VP → V (NP)(NP)(PP)(CP)

**Study Exercise #17**

Parse the four sentences given in (117) above. Answers on next page.

Answers to Study Exercise #17



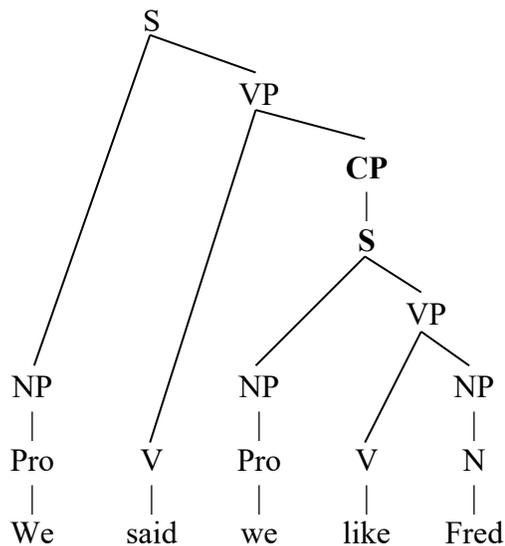


The rule for CP needs to let Comp be optional, since we have sentences like (119):

(119) *We said we were going.*

The conditions under which the Comp can be left out are somewhat complicated and will not be covered here.

Note that the tree for given below must have a “vacuous” CP node, at least under the phrase structure rules we are using, since with those rules only CP, not S, can be a daughter of VP.



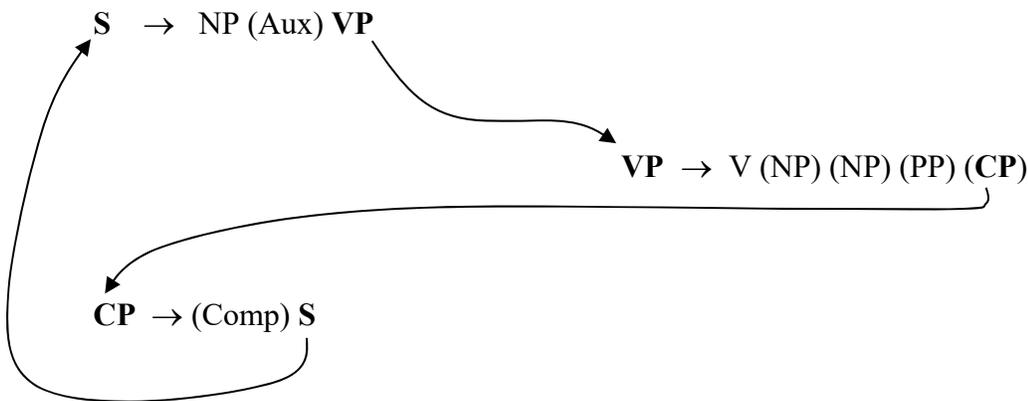
## 17. Recursive application of phrase structure rules

I mentioned above (p. 77) that the speaker’s knowledge of syntax is large but finite (that is, it fits somehow encoded in a single brain), yet permits the creation of an infinite number of sentences. The following partial list was meant as a demonstration:

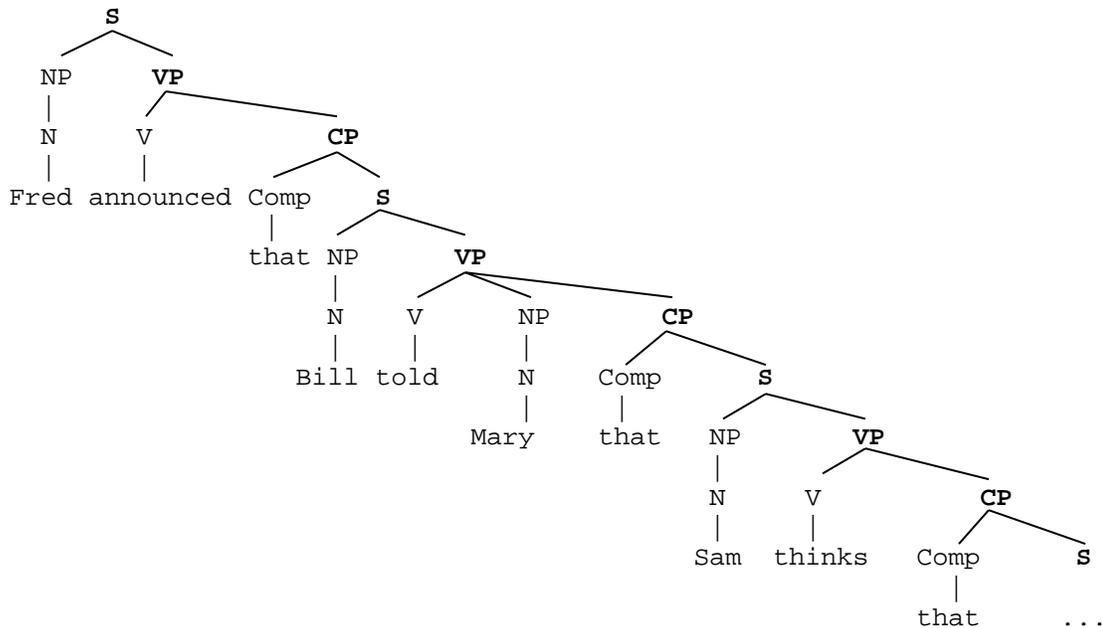
Alice likes Fred  
 John said that Alice likes Fred  
 Bill believes that John said that Alice likes Fred  
 ...etc.

We can now examine the cause of this infinite property. It results, by and large, from a particular property of phrase structure rules, namely that they permit application in **loops**. In (120), I demonstrate one of these loops, taken from the phrase structure rules already given. That is, by looping through application of phrase structure rules given above in (114) and (118), we can generate structures as large as we please.

(120) *A loop consisting of three phrase structure rules*



If we employ loop (120) in deriving a sentence and lexically insert appropriate words, we can generate a sentence as long as we like:



This is because there is an infinite number of places where we could stop the loop. Thus there are an infinite number of possible sentences that the grammar can generate.

In this sense, the phrase structure rules of (114) and (118) may be considered **recursive**; that is, their application “recurs” when they apply in loops to create structures of unlimited length.

As far as is known, *every* human language allows an infinite number of sentences. In every case, the principal reason is the same: the phrase structure rules of all languages contain recursive loops, which allow infinitely long syntactic trees to be generated. The recursive loop of phrase structure rules is the device that allows a finite number of rules to generate an infinite number of structures.

### **Study Exercise #18**

The phrase structure grammar in (114) has several other loops in it. The loop in (120) is a three-rule loop; find a two-rule loop and a one-rule loop and for each one give an example of the long structures they can generate. Draw trees derived using the loop.

### Answer to Study Exercise #18

a. Two rule loop

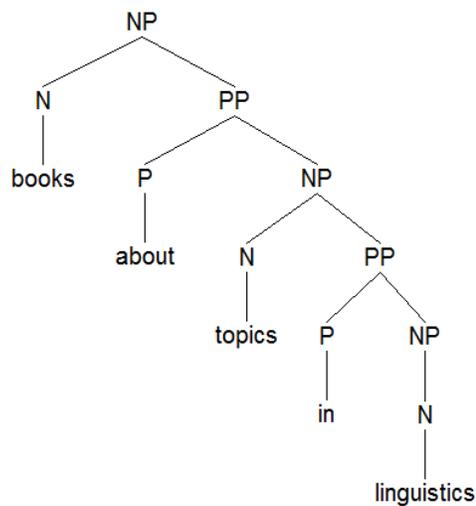
$$\mathbf{NP} \rightarrow \left( \begin{array}{c} \{\mathbf{Art}\} \\ \{\mathbf{NP}\} \end{array} \right) (\mathbf{AP}) \mathbf{N} (\mathbf{PP})$$

and

$$\mathbf{PP} \rightarrow \mathbf{P} \mathbf{NP}$$

form a two-rule loop (see boldface items)

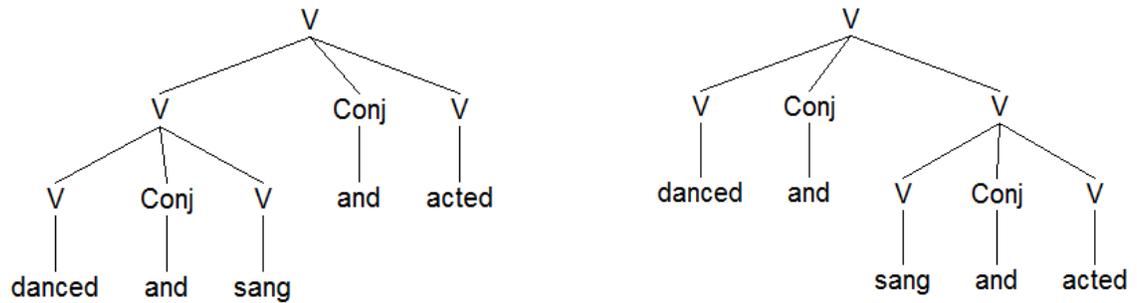
example: *books about topics in linguistics*



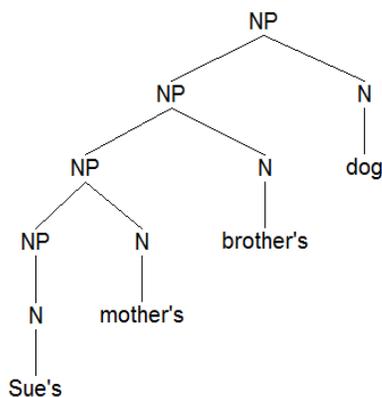
b. Any of the phrase structure rules with a conjunction forms a one-rule loop. For the rule

$$\mathbf{V} \rightarrow \mathbf{V} \mathbf{Conj} \mathbf{V}$$

you can get a ambiguous structures like *danced and sang and acted*.



Also, the rule  $NP \rightarrow \left( \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Art} \\ \text{NP} \end{array} \right\} \right) (AP) N (PP)$  forms a one-rule loop. This produces strings of genitives, like *Sue's mother's brother's dog*.



## 18. Relating syntax to inflectional morphology

We are now in a position to tie together our two course units so far (morphology and syntax). The crucial notion is the morphosyntactic representation, covered earlier in Chapter 2. You can think of the morphosyntactic representation as the means by which the syntax communicates essential information to the inflectional morphology.

The features in a morphosyntactic representation can have three sources.

### 18.1 Inherent features

First, some features of a morphosyntactic representation are **inherent**. They are properties of particular words or stems.

As noted in Chapter 3, it is normal to use the word **lexicon** to refer to the speaker's mental dictionary; their store of memorized stems, words, and other entities.<sup>73</sup> Since a feature like [Gender] on nouns is memorized, it must be listed in the lexicon. Here are three examples of inherent inflectional features.

<sup>73</sup> We also memorize a great number of word sequences, often called **idioms**.

I. Gender in German. The German word *Messer* (knife) is inherently, and arbitrarily, neuter. Its lexical entry must look something like this:

*Messer* [Gender:Neuter]

That is, attached to *Messer* is a partial morphosyntactic representation that indicates that *Messer* is a neuter noun.

II. The English pronoun *his* is inherently [Case:Genitive,Gender:Masculine].

*his* [Case:Genitive,Gender:Masculine]

III. All nouns derived by the English word formation rule  $[X]_{\text{Adj}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Adj}}]_{\text{Noun}}$  (example: *The French care a lot about food*) are inherently [Number:Plural].<sup>74</sup> This is also true for a small number of words for “pairlike” things, such as *trousers*, *scissors*, and so on, which must be lexically listed as [Number:plural].

## 18.2 Speaker-selected features

Other features of the morphosyntactic representation are meaningful; they represent **choices made by the speaker**, as part of the meaning of what they are trying to say. When we say *book* in English we are implicitly conveying the partial morphosyntactic representation [Number:singular], and when we say *books* we are similarly conveying [Number:plural]. (This raises the question of how linguistic entities bear meaning, a question addressed in Chapter 9.)

## 18.3 Features derived by syntactic rules

The remaining source for the features in morphosyntactic is **syntactic rules**. These attach the features that depend on what else occurs in the tree. Two important kinds of rule in syntax are rules of **case marking** and rules of **agreement**.

# 19. Case marking

## 19.1 Genitive case in English

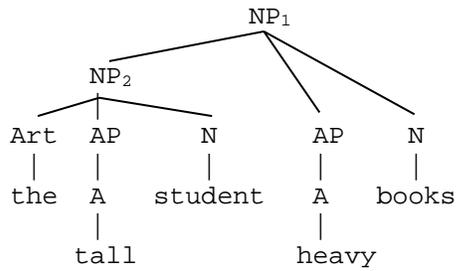
Genitive case in English is the case that we spell with the suffix *-’s*. Semantically, it denotes the relationship of possession. To derive it, we need a syntactic case marking rule, and a morphological suffixation rule.

Here is a tree to serve as an example. The phrase structure rules given so far generate this:

---

<sup>74</sup> Thus, a fully explicit version of the conversion rule would actually attach a partial morphosyntactic representation:  $[X]_{\text{Adj}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Adj}}]_{\text{Noun},[\text{Number:Plural}]}$ .

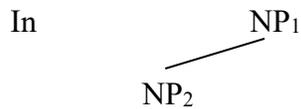
(121) *A sample English configuration that requires genitive case*



Choices employed: for NP<sub>1</sub>: NP → (  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Art} \\ \text{NP} \end{array} \right\}$  ) ( AP ) N (PP) (CP)  
 for NP<sub>2</sub>: NP → (  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Art} \\ \text{NP} \end{array} \right\}$  ) ( AP ) N (PP) (CP)

The syntactic rule of case marking that is needed is as follows:

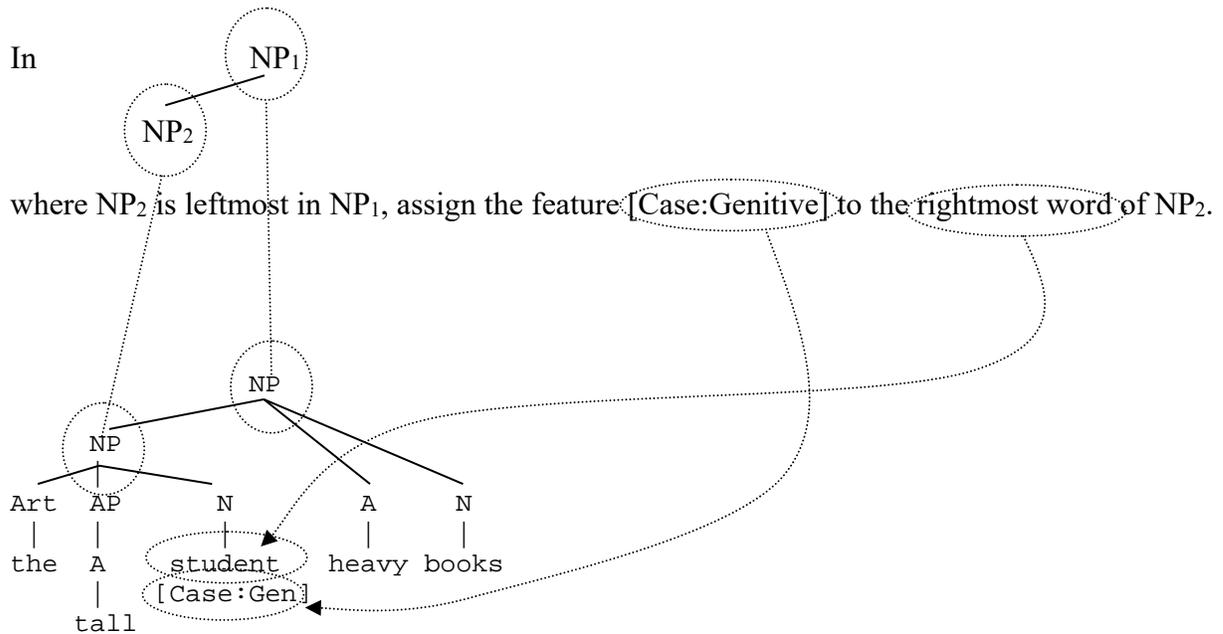
(122) **Genitive Case Marking (English)**



where NP<sub>2</sub> is leftmost in NP<sub>1</sub>, assign the feature [Case:Genitive] to the rightmost word of NP<sub>2</sub>.

Genitive Case Marking can be applied to the above as shown. I use dotted lines to show what part of the rule matches up to what part of the form

(123) Applying the rule of Genitive Case Marking



where [Case:Genitive] is the morphosyntactic representation of *student*.

That is the most complicated part. Once the syntactic rules have placed the feature [Case:Genitive] on the word *student*, then we move on to the inflectional morphology. Here, it is straightforward to get the suffix in place, with an ordinary rule of inflectional suffixation, as follows:

**Inflectional morphology: Genitive Inflection (English)**

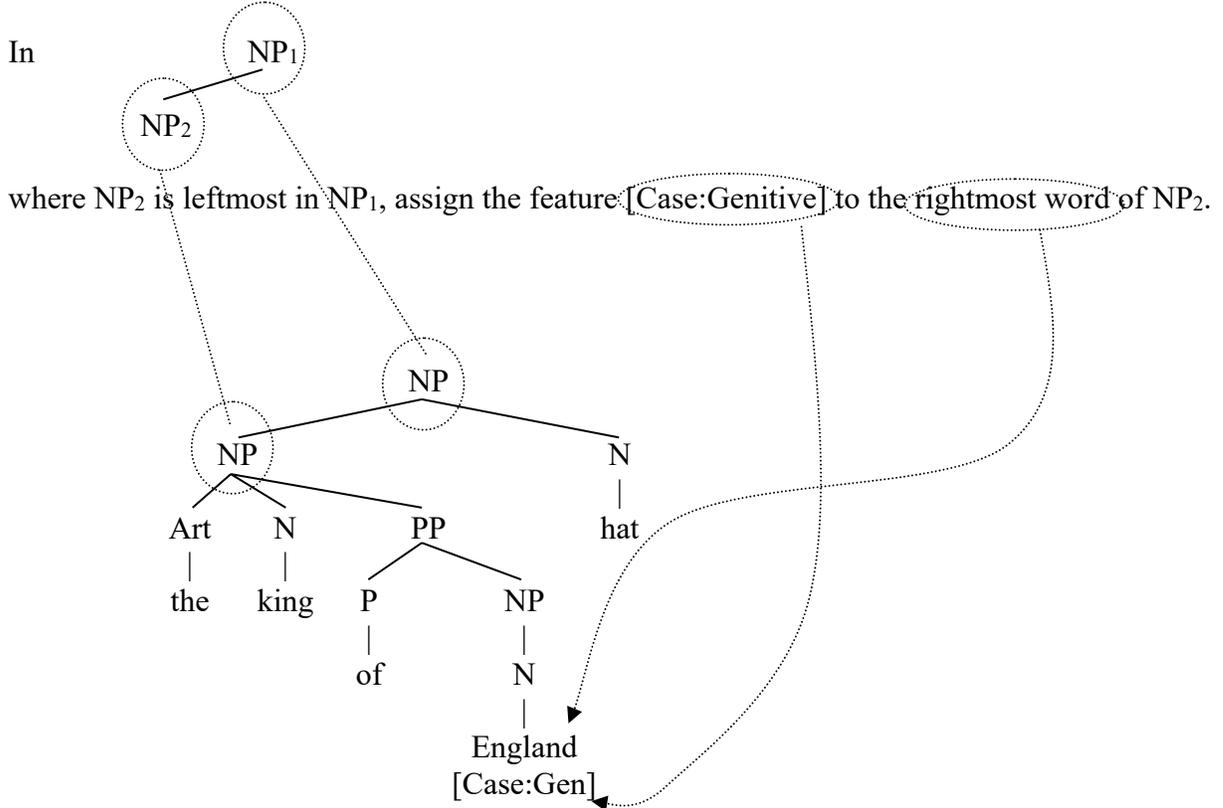
Suffix -s if [Case:Genitive].

Thus the full NP *the tall student's* is the combined result of syntactic and morphological rules.

19.2 Where to inflect? Edges vs. heads

The rule of Genitive Case Marking in English perhaps unusual for putting the relevant feature on the *rightmost word* of NP. We need this for cases like [ *the king of England's* ]<sub>NP</sub> *hat*, where *England* is the rightmost word of its NP. The matchup is shown below:

**Genitive Case Marking**



The other major form of case marking targets the *head* of the NP that is to bear case. Let us consider an example from German. On German Amazon I found an entry for a book with this title:

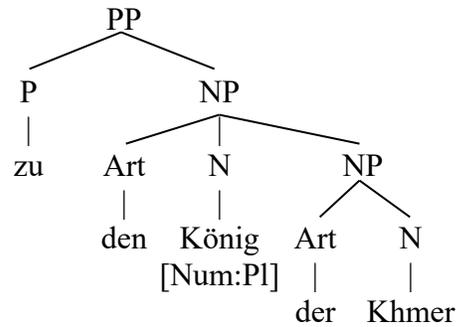
(124) *A German book title illustrating case marking on heads*

Schliemanns	Erben,	Von	den	Herrschern	der	Hethiter
Schliemann's	legacy	from	the	ruler-dative-plural	the	Hittite-genitive plural
zu	den	König-en	der	Khmer		
to	the	king-dative plural	the	Khmer-genitive plural		
‘Schliemann’s legacy: from the rulers of the Hittites to the kings of the Khmers’ <sup>75</sup>						

We’re interested in *zu den König-en der Khmer*, meaning ‘to the kings of the Khmers’.<sup>76</sup> Prior to case marking, the structure looks like this (for this particular construction, the relevant phrase structure rules of German are the same as in English):

<sup>75</sup> Hermann Schliemann was the archaeologist who excavated the ruins of Troy.

<sup>76</sup> The Khmers are the Cambodians.

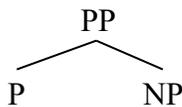


[Number:Plural] is already attached to *König* ‘king’; this reflects a semantic choice made by the person who made up this title.

A crucial fact about German is that the various prepositions take (more formally: **govern**) different cases. The preposition *zu*, pronounced [tsu] and meaning ‘to’, is one of the prepositions that governs the dative case. A partial dative-case marking rule for German can be written as follows:

#### (125) German Dative Case Marking

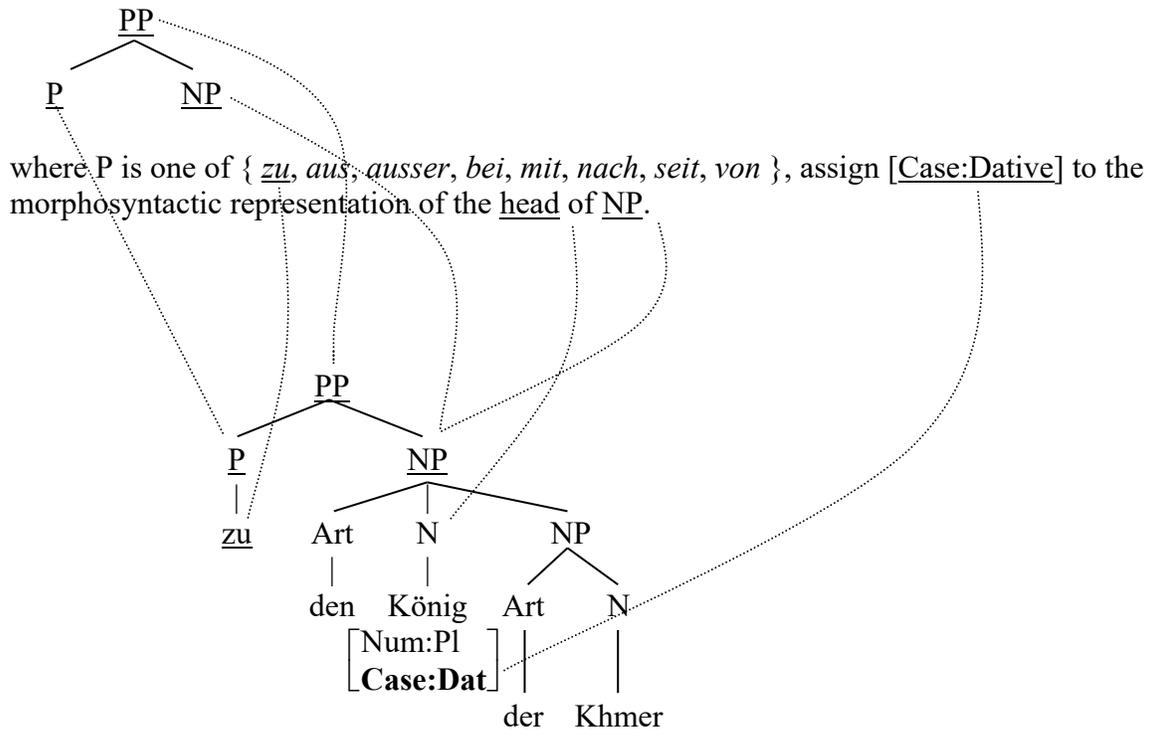
In the configuration shown:



where P is one of { *zu*, *aus*, *ausser*, *bei*, *mit*, *nach*, *seit*, *von* },<sup>77</sup> assign [Case:Dative] to the morphosyntactic representation of the head of NP.

This rule targets the *head* of NP for dative case realization, hence applies to our example as follows. You should check every arrow in the diagram to make sure it makes sense.

<sup>77</sup> ‘to’, ‘from’, ‘except’, ‘at X’s home’, ‘with’, ‘after’, ‘since’, ‘of’



The dative plural is then realized in the morphology with suffixation:

**Inflection morphology: Dative Plural Realization (German)**

Suffix *-en* if morphosyntactic representation contains  $\begin{bmatrix} \text{Num:Pl} \\ \text{Case:Dat} \end{bmatrix}$ ,

This will derive the boldfaced material in *zu den Königen der Khmer*.

There are further details about German we'll pass over here quickly. Case is generally also realized, through additional agreement rules (see below), on the Article beginning a Noun Phrase. Thus, *den* is in fact the dative plural form of the definite article.

The crucial distinction illustrated here is the edge-based case marking of the English genitive vs. the head-based marking of German datives. If each language used the opposite language's strategy, we'd get very different results: *\*the king's of England hat* (marking of genitive on the head), and *\* zu den König der Khmeren* (marking of dative on the rightmost word).

**Study Exercise #19**

Look at example (124) again and find a second case in which Dative case is realized on a head (and not on the rightmost word of NP).

## Answer to Study Exercise 19

The relevant passage is this:

Von	den	Herrschern	der	Hethiter
from	the	ruler-dative-plural	the	Hittite-genitive plural

The preposition *von* is on the list in rule (125) of prepositions that require their NP objects to be in the Dative case. The relevant NP is *Herrschern der Hethiter*, ‘ruler of the Hittites’. The head of this NP is *Herrschern*, ‘ruler-dative plural’, and the Dative suffix can be identified on it. It’s a little bit obscured for phonological reasons; as it happens, the dative is spelled and pronounced *-en* after *g*, as in the earlier *König-en*, but simply *-n* after *r*, as in *Herrscher-n*.

---

There are other differences between edge-based and head-based case marking. Marking on heads tends to get complicated, with different affixes for different nouns and so on; marking on edges tends to be a simple, single morpheme like English *-s*. Marking on heads probably is more often accompanied by agreement on modifying adjectives and articles.

## 20. Agreement

Features also get assigned in syntax when one phrase **agrees** with another. For instance, in English we have a very simple agreement paradigm in verbs.

<i>I jump</i>	<i>we jump</i>
<i>you jump</i>	<i>you jump</i>
<i>he/she/it jumps</i>	<i>they jump</i>

There is only one ending, *-s*, which marks three features at once; occurring when the subject is [Person:3, Number:Singular, Tense:Present]. Note, however, that for the special verb *be* there is a slightly richer system, with a special form for the first person singular:

<i>I am</i>	<i>we are</i>
<i>you are</i>	<i>you are</i>
<i>he/she/it is</i>	<i>they are</i>

The point at hand is that agreement with the subject is inherently syntactic; the verb needs to “know,” what the subject is in order to bear the right inflectional features.

Again, our strategy is to write a syntactic rule that assigns the features of the morphosyntactic representation, then a rule of inflectional morphology to add the appropriate affix.

The syntactic rule can be written provisionally as follows:

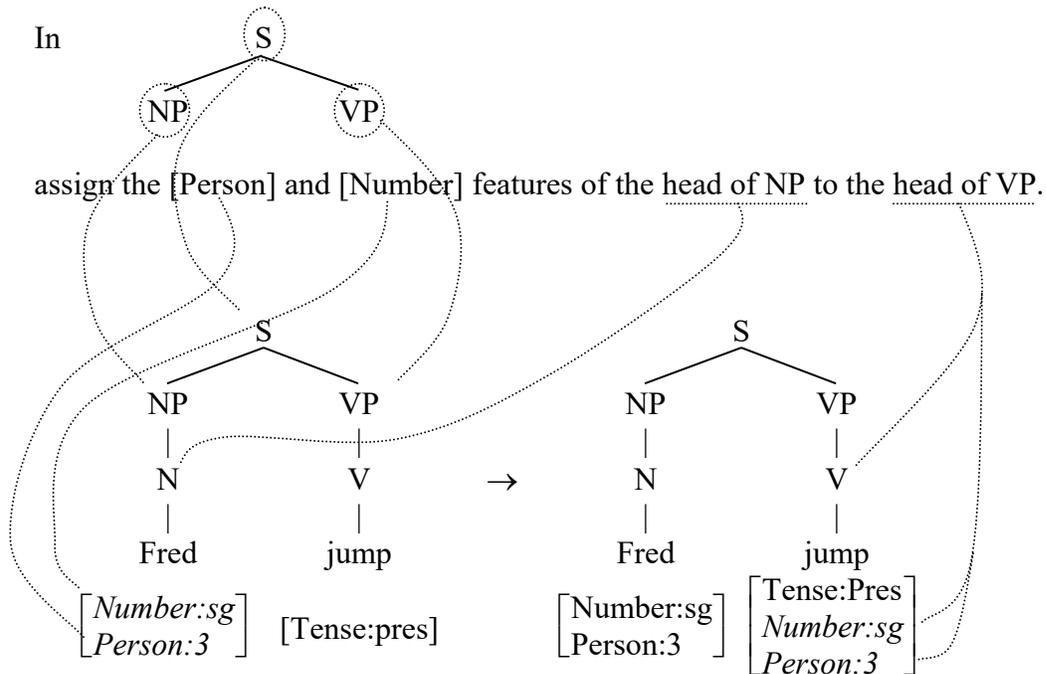
### Verbal Agreement (English)



assign the [Person] and [Number] features of the head of NP to the head of VP.

An application is shown as follows.

### Verbal Agreement (English)



The rule of inflectional morphology that generates the *-s* suffix is given below:

#### 3rd Singular Present Rule

Suffix *-s* if the morphosyntactic representation contains:  
 [Person:3, Number:Singular, Tense:Present]

which will convert the stem *jump* in the tree above to the correct output form *jumps*.

Compare: *I jump, they jump*, etc.

#### 20.1.1 Agreement in general

In languages with rich inflection, agreement rules like the above copy a great deal of information around the tree: verbs agree with their subjects (and sometimes their objects, too),

adjectives and articles agree with the nouns they modify, and in at least one language (Lardil, Australia) nouns agree with the verb of their clause in tense.

Here are some characteristic data from Swahili, a language with a rich inflectional system. Swahili has a rough equivalent of the genders found in European and Semitic languages, but it is much richer: instead of two or three genders, there is a system of about a dozen noun classes, which occur in pairs that consist of one singular and one plural prefix (traditionally numbered separately, rather than as a group). In the sentences below, you can see the “1/2” class and the 3/4 class; and in each the class is marked not just on the noun (*toto*, ‘child’; or *fuko* ‘bag’), but also through agreement rules on the Article *le* ‘that’ and on the past tense verb *li-anguka*.

The forms are shown with a plausible choice of features and morphosyntactic representations. The features employed are [NounClass] and [Number]. NounClass can take the values 1/2, 3/4, etc., following the traditional singular/plural numbering of the classes, but grouping the singular-plural pairs together in a single feature value.

(126) *Noun class agreement in Swahili*

- a. [NounClass:1/2, Number: singular]

**m-toto**      **yu-le**      **a-li-anguka**  
 Class 1-child Cl. 1-that Cl. 1 subj.-past-fall  
 ‘that child fell’

- b. [NounClass:1/2, Number: plural]

**wa-toto**      **wa-le**      **wa-li-anguka**  
 Class 2-child Cl. 2-that Cl. 2 subj.-past-fall  
 ‘those children fell’

- c. [NounClass:3/4, Number: singular]

**m-fuko**      **u-le**      **u-li-anguka**  
 Class 3-bag Cl. 3-that Cl. 3 subj.-past-fall  
 ‘that bag fell’

- d. [NounClass:3/4, Number: plural]

**mi-fuko**      **i-le**      **i-li-anguka**  
 Class 4-bag Cl. 4-that Cl. 3 subj.-past-fall  
 ‘those bags fell’

As the data show, these features get copied by rule from the noun that inherently bears them onto the neighboring Art and Verb, and later are realized in the inflectional component by rules that attach the various prefixes. It is usually the same prefix that realize these features on nouns, articles, and verbs, but as you can see in some cases they differ; so more than one prefixation rule would be needed.

Summing up, agreement and case marking are the main phenomenon in which syntax determines the features of the morphosyntactic representation. Other features represent choices made by the speaker, or are inherent to particular words. These three sources combine to produce the completed representation, which is then fed into the rules of inflectional morphology to provide the realization of these features in sound.

## 21. Analysis: creating an adequate set of phrase structure rules for a language

Languages differ quite a bit in their word order, a fact which can be described in grammars by writing different phrase structure rules.

One kind of analytic skill to be developed here is to formulate the phrase structure rules needed to analyze any particular language. Assuming you have a representative batch of sentences to work with, this involves three steps:

- Parse the sentences.
- Look at the trees, and see which daughters any given type of node can have.
- Express what you find with a reasonably economical set of rules.

### 21.1 Parsing without a grammar?

Initially, you may have a sense of circularity when I say “parse the sentences”. Since parsing is, essentially, the assignment of syntactic structure according to the rules of a grammar, how can one parse without already having the grammar in place? But in fact, there is probably enough information in the *general theory of syntax* that we are assuming for you to achieve a reasonably good parse. In particular, we are assuming:

(127) *Some principles that assist parsing in languages where the phrase structure rules are unknown*

- Languages always have clauses (which linguists conventionally label as S).
- Clauses generally have a subject and a predicate, analyzed as the NP and the VP.<sup>78</sup>
- All languages have Nouns and Verbs. Many languages also have Adjectives, either Prepositions or Postpositions (like prepositions, but follow their objects), and perhaps other parts of speech.
- Nouns, Verbs, and other words (for instance, Adjectives and Pre/Postpositions) are normally heads of phrases, so that N is head of NP, V is head of VP, and so on.
- These syntactic principles are accompanied by loosely formulated semantic principles: the VP of S *predicates* something of the head, and in XP (e.g., NP, VP, etc.) the sisters of the head X are semantically modifiers of the head.

Generally, assuming this principles will suffice to obtain at least a rough characterization of the structure of sentences, which can be refined later. You should also remember that the

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<sup>78</sup> An interesting challenge for this view is the existence of languages with the subject in the middle, with normal sentence order Verb-Subject-Object (as in Tagalog), or Object-Subject-Verb (as in Jamamadi) — where is the VP? We won't try to handle these cases in this course.

principles above are a bare minimum; languages will have all sorts of different orders of the daughter nodes of a given phrase, and differ in what daughters are allowed. Here, you have to rely on the patterns in the data.

### 21.2 Phrase structure rules for Hittite

The data below involve sentences in Hittite, taken from an exercise created by Prof. Jay Jasanoff of Harvard University. The transcription and syntactic analysis were guided by input from my UCLA colleague Prof. Craig Melchert; both are experts on this language.

Hittite was spoken in early ancient times in what is now Turkey. It is known from a hoard of about 25,000 cuneiform tablets discovered early in the last century and deciphered in the decades that followed. Some of the texts date back to about 1700 BCE and thus count as the oldest attestation of any Indo-European language.<sup>79</sup> We accept here on Jasanoff's authority that the sentences below, which he made up, would be grammatical to real Hittite speakers if we could somehow bring them back.

Phonetic symbols are necessarily based on educated guesses. [x] is as in Spanish *jamón* or German *Bach* (voiceless velar fricative).

1. nu    xassus    salli            parn-i            anda estsi  
    comp king    big-dative    house-dative    in    is  
    'The king is in the big house.'
  
2. nu    antuxsas            akuwakuwan    istamastsi  
    comp man-nominative    frog-accusative    hears  
    'The man hears the frog.'
  
3. nu    antuxsas            sallin            akuwakuwan    parn-a            pexutetsi  
    comp man-nominative    big-accusative    frog-accusative    house-allative    brings  
    'The man brings the big frog home.'
  
4. nu    akuwakuwas    westar-i            assun            memijan    tetsi  
    comp frog-nominative    shepherd-dative    good-accusative    word-acc.    says  
    'The frog says a good word to the shepherd.'
  
5. nu    westaras            sallin    akuwakuwan    pir-i            anda    xassussar-i    katta  
    istamastsi  
    comp shepherd-nom.    big-acc.    frog.-acc.    house-dative    in    queen-dative    with  
    hears  
    'The shepherd hears the big frog in the house with the queen.'
  
6. nu    akuwakuwas    antuxsan            natta    istamastsi

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<sup>79</sup> Indo-European is the very large language family that includes (for example) English, Russian, Hindi, Latin, Irish, etc. See Chapter 13.

comp frog-nominative man-accusative not hears  
 ‘The frog doesn’t hear the man.’

7. nu xassussaras xassui piran salli akuwakuwi katta tijatsi  
 comp queen-nom. king-dat. before big-dative frog-dative with comes  
 ‘The queen comes before the king with the big frog.’

8. nu westaras assui xassui akuwakuwan pexutetsi  
 comp shepherd good-dative king-dative frog-accusative brings  
 ‘The shepherd brings the frog to the good king.’

One can do both syntactic and morphological analysis on these texts. At the level of morphology, it is possible to collect some partial noun paradigms, as follows.

xassu-s	king nominative
xassu-i	king-dative
antuxsa-s	man-nominative
antuxsa-n	man-accusative
akuwakuwa-s	frog-nominative
akuwakuwa-n	frog-accusative
akuwakuw-i	frog-dative
westara-s	shepherd-nominative
westar-i	shepherd-dative ( <i>a</i> drops before <i>i</i> ? not known)
memija-n	word-accusative
parn-i	house-dative
parn-a	home-allative
xassussara-s	queen-nominative
xassussar-i	queen-dative

It looks at least roughly that the nominative suffix is *-s*, the accusative suffix is *-n*, and the dative suffix is *-i*. This predicts *\*akuwakuwa-i* and *\*xassussara-i* for the datives of “frog” and “queen”; in fact, there’s a bit of phonology going on: the vowel *a* is dropped before this suffix. We express the rules of inflectional morphology as follows.

### Hittite Nominal Inflection (sketch)

Suffix *-s* when [Case:Nominative]

Suffix *-n* when [Case:Accusative]

Suffix *-i* when [Case:Dative]

There also appears to be verbal inflection, for which we can conjecture this rule:

Suffix *-tsi* when [Person:3, Number:singular, Tense:present]

But in fact we know almost nothing about *-tsi* from these few data.

Turning now to the phrase structure rules, the idea is to inspect the sentences, parse them according to the principles of the theory, and generalize over what we see to produce the rules.

An intriguing aspect of the sentences is that they all begin with *nu*. This is most likely a complementizer: Hittites usually spoke in CP's, not S's, though in certain contexts it was possible to say just a plain S. Thus we will start our derivations with CP and assume this phrase structure rule:

CP → Comp S

NP could be derived by the following rule:

NP → (A) N

Probably the A should be an AP, but we will skip this for brevity.

Another simple rule is for PP, which in this language is evidently not a phrase for prepositions but for **postpositions**, which are just like prepositions but come after their NP rather than before. The phrase structure rule needed is:

PP → NP P

In sentences, the subject evidently comes before the predicate, justifying the rule

S → NP VP

The trickiest phrase structure rule to write here is for VP. Here there is a question of methodology: what is the best way to figure out simple phrase structure rules when we are given the data? I suggest putting together what I will call a **phrase structure table**. The table puts each example in a separate row, and aligns the contents of the phrase (here, as VP) in columns.

(128) *A phrase structure table for the Hittite VP*

	NP	NP	PP	PP	Adv	V
1			salli piri anda big-dat. house-dat. in			estsi is
2		akuwakuwan frog-acc.				istamastsi hears
3	sallin akuwakuwan big-acc. frog-acc.	parn-a house-dative				pehutetsi brings
4	westari shepherd-dat.	assun memijan good-acc. word-acc.				tetsi says
5		sallin akuwakuwan big-acc. frog-acc.	piri anda house-dat. in	hassussari katta queen-dat. with		istamastsi hears
6		antuhssan man-acc.			natta not	istamastsi hears
7			hassui piran king-dat. before	salli akuwakuwi katta big-dat. frog-dat. with		tijatsi comes
8	assui hassui good-dat. king-dat.	akuwakuwan frog-acc.				pehutetsi brings

If we collect all of the various items that evidently fit within a VP, and (going out on a limb) put them in a single rule, we get:

$$VP \rightarrow (NP)(NP)(PP)(PP)(Adv) V$$

This completes the set of phrase structure rules, stated all in one place thus:

### Phrase structure rules for Hittite

CP  $\rightarrow$  Comp S

S  $\rightarrow$  NP VP

VP  $\rightarrow$  (NP)(NP)(PP)(PP)(Adv) V

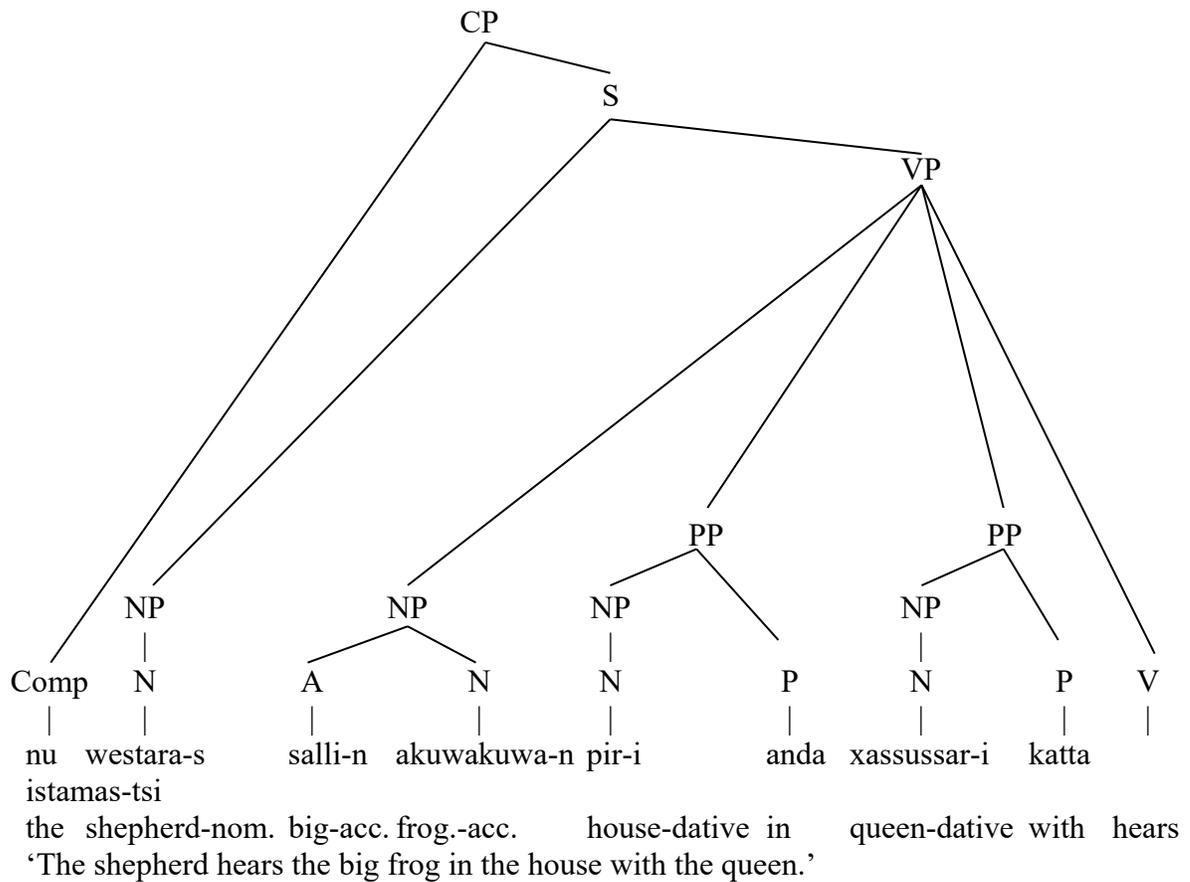
NP  $\rightarrow$  (A) N

PP  $\rightarrow$  NP P

“P” must be read “postposition”, rather than “preposition.”

### 21.3 Example diagrammed sentence

The rules suffice to generate all the sentences; here is one particularly long example.



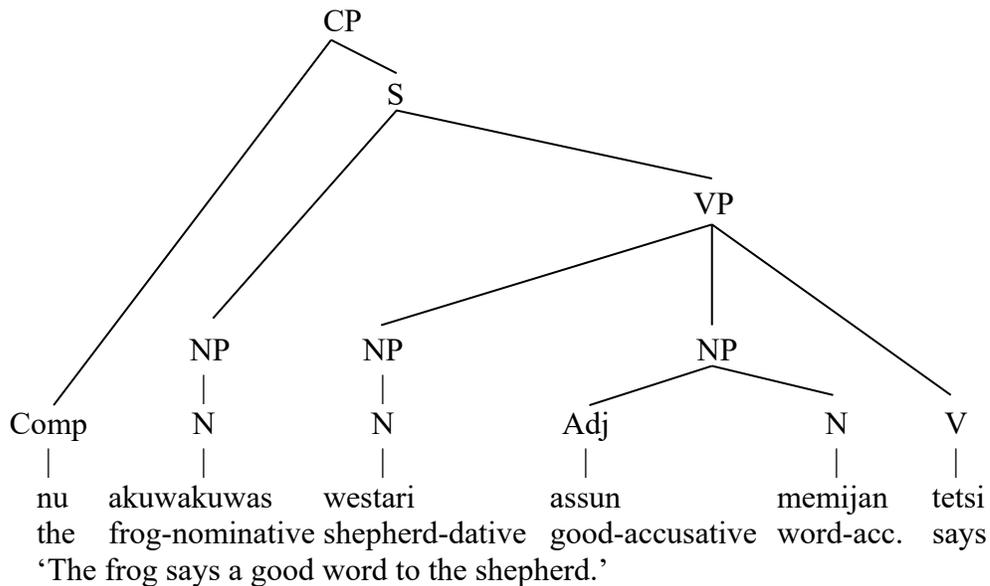
**Study Exercise #20**

Parse the Hittite sentence

nu akuwakuwas westari assun memijan tetsi  
 the frog-nominative shepherd-dative good-accusative word-acc. says  
 'The frog says a good word to the shepherd.'

Answer on next page.

## Answer to Study Exercise #20



### 21.4 Hittite as a head-final language

It can be seen that, at least in these data, Hittite is a **head-final** language: N is last in NP, P is last in PP, V is last in VP (and we don't know about AdjP).

Some other well-known head-final languages are Japanese, Korean, Bengali, and Turkish. The Bantu languages, such as Swahili and Zulu, tend to be strongly head-initial. English tends towards being head-initial, but is conflicted, in the sense that it puts adjectives before the head noun in NP. Hence some English noun phrases have the head noun in the middle:

[ the long [ **book** ]<sub>N</sub> about linguistics ]<sub>NP</sub>

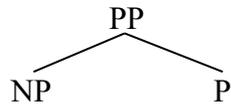
### 21.5 Case marking in Hittite

Hittite has a richer case system than English, with overt suffixes marking the Nominative, Dative, and Accusative. We can write syntactic rules that place the appropriate value for the feature [Case], based on the configuration of the tree.

For instance, Dative case is assigned in Hittite by postpositions. It can be attached by a similar rule:

### Dative Case Marking (Hittite)

In the configuration



add [Case:Dative] to the morphosyntactic representation of the head of NP.

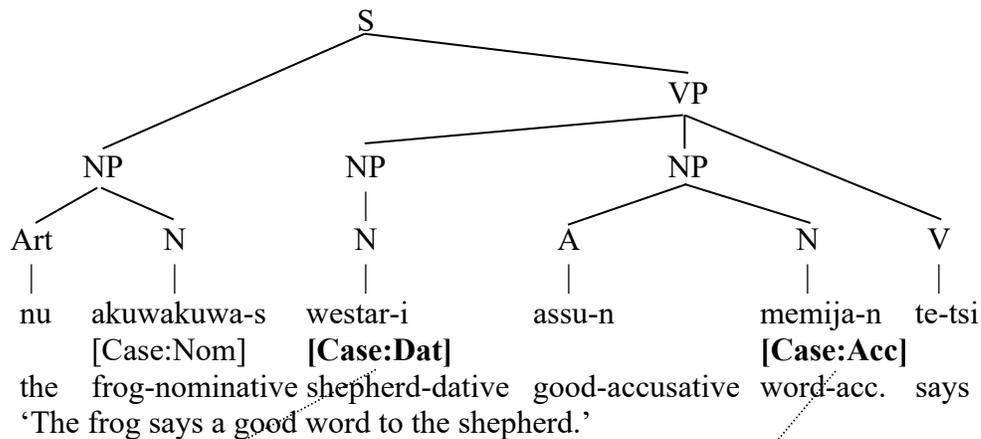
Getting Accusative and Dative objects right is trickier, and we also have very few data, so the following is really something of a guess:

### Case Marking for Objects (Hittite)

In verb phrases containing one or more NP, then

- if there are two NP, assign [Case:Dative] to the head of the first and [Case:Accusative] to the head of the second.
- if there is just one NP, assign [Case:Accusative] to its head.

Here is an example with two NPs inside the VP:



“assign [Case:Dative] to the head of the first and [Case:Accusative] to the head of the second”

A further rule, not stated here, would cause adjectives (such as *assun* above) to agree with their head nouns in case.

### Study Exercise #21: Turkish Phrase Structure Rules

Examine the Turkish sentences below. Provide a syntactic tree for each (you might find it more convenient to use the English glosses in the tree, rather than that actual Turkish words). Then



10. uzun vezir-in shiir-i  
tall vezir-GEN poem-Poss  
'the tall vizier's poem' (i.e. the poem by him)
11. uzun vezir-in uzun shiir-i  
tall vizier-GEN long poem-Poss  
'the tall vizier's long poem'
12. uzun vezir-in uzun sikidzi shiir-i<sup>80</sup>  
tall vizier-GEN long boring poem-Poss  
'the tall vizier's long boring poem'
13. \*uzun vezir-in Shekspir-in shiir-i  
tall vizier-GEN Shakespeare-GEN poem-Poss  
'the tall vizier's Shakespeare's poem'
14. Shirin Kerem-i öptü  
Shirin Kerem-ACC kissed  
'Shirin kissed Kerem'
15. Uzun vezir Shekspir-in shiir-i-ni okudu  
tall vizier Shakespeare-GEN poem-Poss-ACC read  
'The tall vizier read Shakespeare's poem'
16. Shirin vezir-in uyuduuna inaniyor  
Shirin vizier-GEN is-sleeping believes  
'Shirin believes the vizier is sleeping'
17. Kerem Shirin-e vezir-in uyuduuna söyledi  
Kerem Shirin-DAT vizier-GEN is-sleeping told  
'Kerem told Shirin that the vizier is sleeping'
18. Kerem Shirin-in vezir-in uyuduuna inandıını zannediyor  
Kerem Shirin-GEN vizier-GEN is-sleeping believes imagines  
'Kerem imagines that Shirin believes that the vizier is sleeping'
19. Orhan Kerem-in Shirin-in vezir-in uyuduuna inandıını zannettiini  
itirafetti  
Orhan Kerem-GEN Shirin-GEN vizier-GEN is-sleeping believes imagines  
confessed  
'Orhan confessed that Kerem imagines that Shirin believes that the vizier is sleeping'

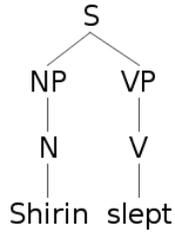
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<sup>80</sup> dʒ is IPA for the English "j" sound

**Answer to Study Exercise #21**

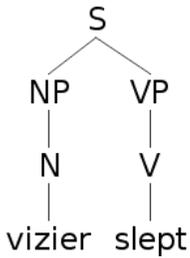
1. Shirin uyudu  
Shirin slept

‘Shirin slept’



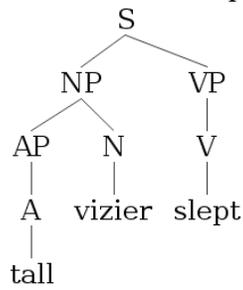
2. Vezir uyudu  
vizier slept

‘The vizier slept’



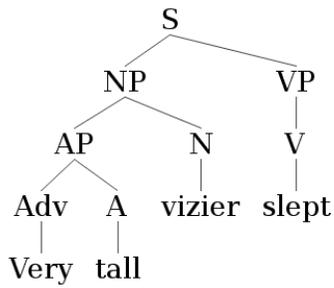
3. Uzun vezir uyudu  
tall vizier slept

‘the tall vizier slept’

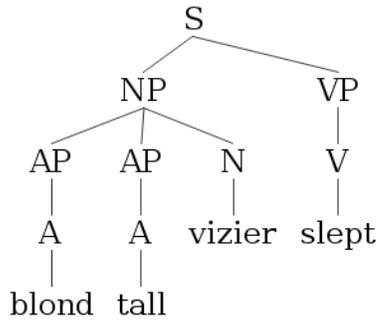


4. Chok uzun vezir uyudu  
very tall vizier slept

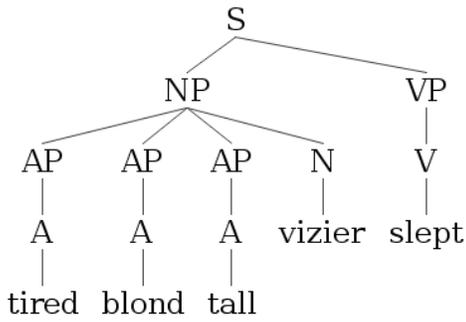
‘the very tall vizier slept’



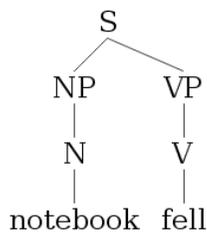
4. Sarışın uzun vezir uyudu  
 blond tall vizier slept 'The tall blond vizier slept'



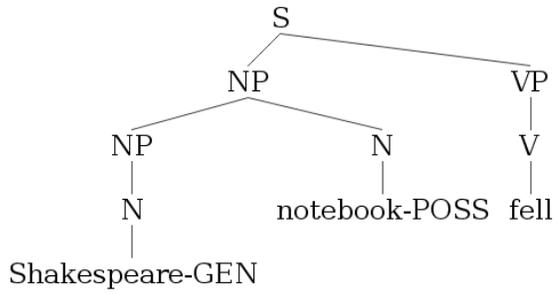
5. Yorgun sarışın uzun vezir uyudu  
 tired blond tall vizier slept  
 'The tired tall blond vizier slept'



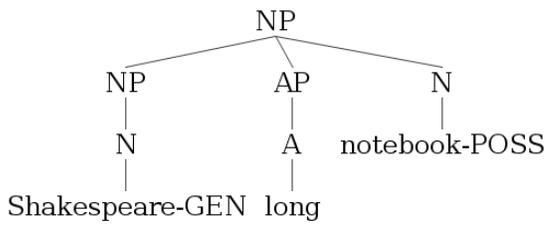
6. Defter düshtü  
 notebook fell 'the notebook fell'



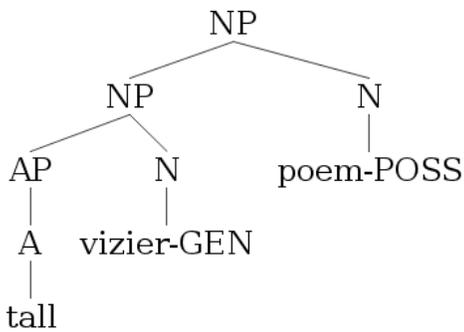
7. Shekspir-in defter-i düshtü  
 Shakespeare-GEN notebook-Poss fell  
 'Shakespeare's notebook fell'



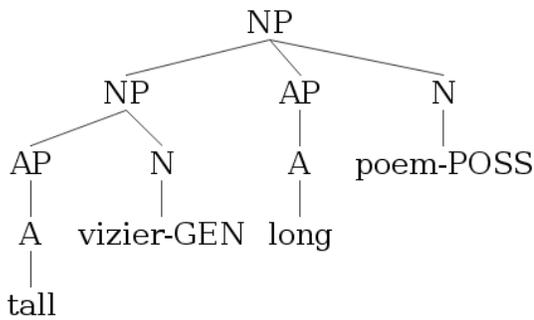
8. Shekspir-in uzun defter-i  
 Shakespeare-GEN long notebook-Poss  
 ‘Shakespeare’s long notebook’



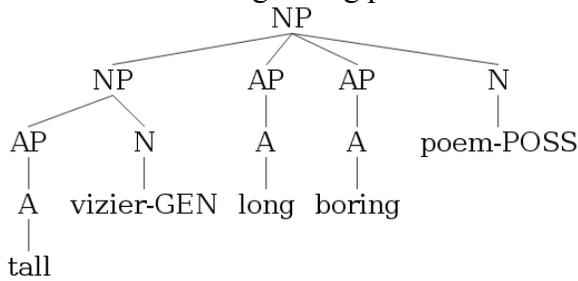
9. uzun vezir-in shiir-i  
 tall vezir-GEN poem-Poss  
 ‘the tall vizier’s poem’ (i.e. the poem by him)



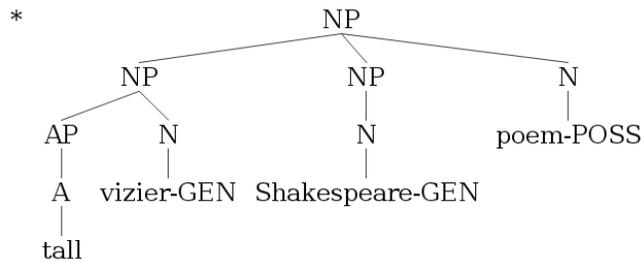
10. uzun vezir-in uzun shiir-i  
 tall vizier-GEN long poem-Poss  
 ‘the tall vizier’s long poem’



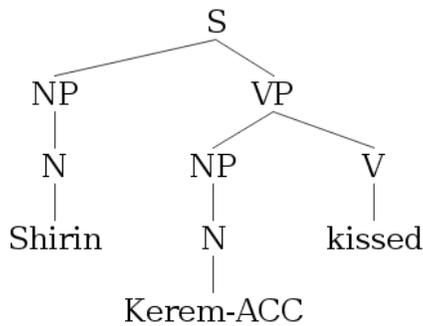
11. uzun vezir-in uzun sikidzi shiir-i  
 tall vizier-GEN long boring poem-Poss  
 ‘the tall vizier’s long boring poem’



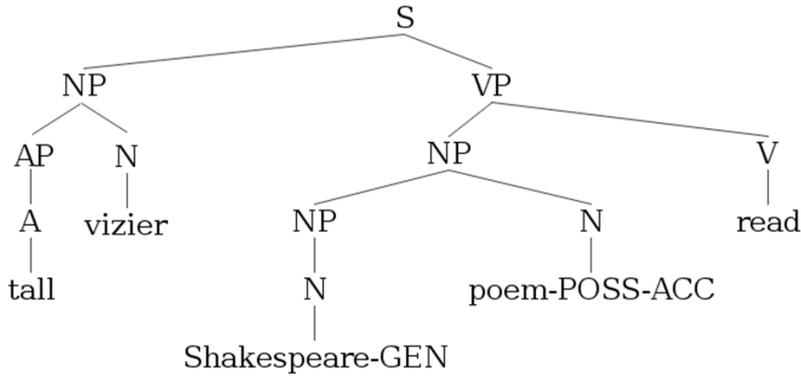
12. \*uzun vezir-in Shekspir-in shiir-i  
 tall vizier-GEN Shakespeare-GEN poem-Poss  
 ‘the tall vizier’s Shakespeare’s poem’



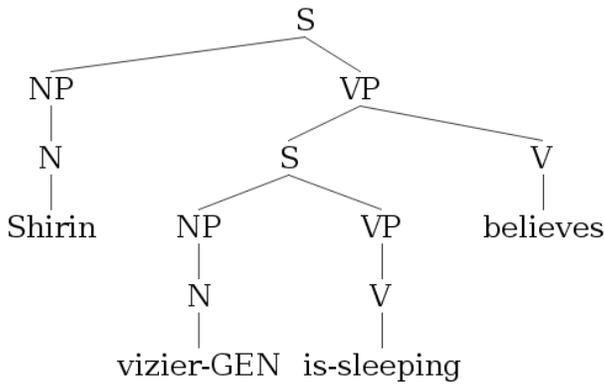
13. Shirin Kerem-i öptü  
 Shirin Kerem-ACC kissed  
 ‘Shirin kissed Kerem’



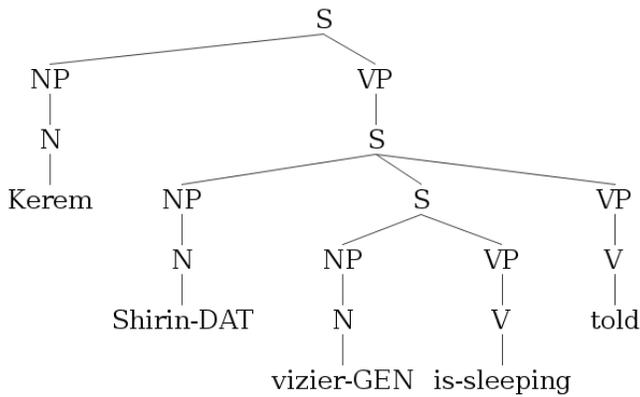
14. Uzun vezir Shekspir-in shiir-i-ni okudu  
 tall vizier Shakespeare-GEN poem-POSS-ACC read  
 ‘The tall vizier read Shakespeare’s poem’



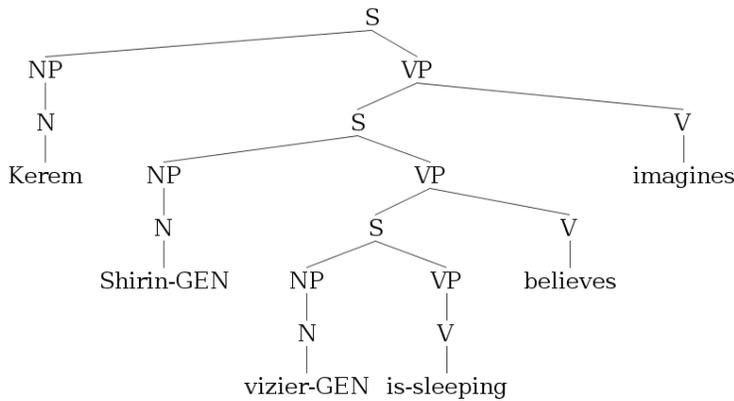
15. Shirin vezir-in uyuduuna inaniyor  
 Shirin vizier-GEN is-sleeping believes  
 'Shirin believes the vizier is sleeping'



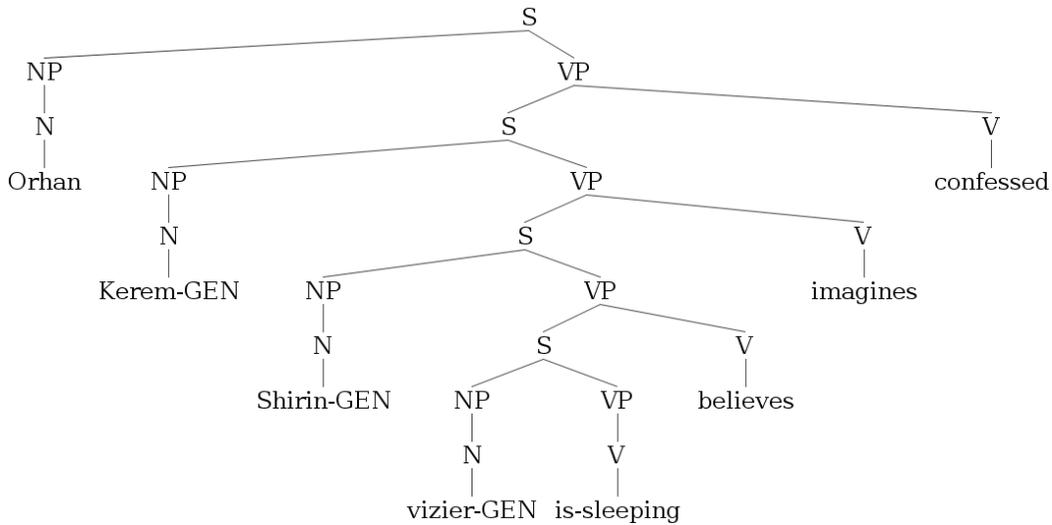
16. Kerem Shirin-e vezir-in uyuduuna söyledi  
 Kerem Shirin-DAT vizier-GEN is-sleeping told  
 'Kerem told Shirin that the vizier is sleeping'



17. Kerem Shirin-in vezir-in uyuduuna inandıını zannediyor  
 Kerem Shirin-GEN vizier-GEN is-sleeping believes imagines  
 ‘Kerem imagines that Shirin believes that the vizier is sleeping’



18. Orhan Kerem-in Shirin-in vezir-in uyuduunandıını zannettıını itirafetti  
 Orhan Kerem-GEN Shirin-GEN vizier-GEN is-sleeping believes imagines confessed  
 ‘Orhan confessed that Kerem imagines that Shirin believes that the vizier is sleeping’



**PS Rules for Turkish**

- S → NP VP
- NP → (NP) (AP)\* N
- VP → (NP) (S) V
- AP → (Adv) A

If you’re curious you might try to figure out how Turkish assigns Genitive, Possessive, Accusative, and Dative case. The data aren’t really sufficient to solve the problem but they are suggestive.

## 22. A bit more on phrase structure rules: Kleene star

Let us beef up the system of phrase structure rules once more. Some phrase structure rules allow for any number of daughters of a certain type. For example, the rule for NP allows for an unlimited number of Adjective Phrases preceding the noun, as in ‘a very long, dull, unusually boring movie’. A formalism for this often employed is to enclose in brackets the element that can be repeated indefinitely, and place an asterisk after the right bracket (the asterisk is known as “Kleene star”, after the mathematician who proposed the notation).<sup>81</sup> For example, the phrase structure rule for NP can be written as follows:

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow (\text{Art}) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^*.$$

An NP that uses both (AP)\* and (PP)\* would be *the very big blue book about linguistics on the counter*. AP’s: *very big* and *blue*; PP’s: *about linguistics, on the counter*.

Quite a few of the items on our previous phrase structure grammar would be more accurately depicted with Kleene star; the following is a list:

### (129) Phrase structure rules for English: Version II, improved with Kleene star

S → NP (Aux) VP

NP →  $\left( \begin{array}{c} \{\text{Art}\} \\ \{\text{NP}\} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^*$       Example: *his noble, wonderful inspiring gift of \$1,000,000 to X on Tuesday*

NP → Pronoun

AP → (Adv) A

VP → V (NP) (NP) (PP)\* (CP)      Ex.: *sold books to students for \$50 on Wednesdays*

PP → P NP

CP → (Comp) S

NP → NP (Conj NP)\*

Ex. *Alice and Sally and Bill left.*

VP → VP (Conj VP)\*

Ex. *We sang the song and danced the dance and played the tune.*

PP → PP (Conj PP)\*

Ex. *We tossed it over the fence and through the window and under the house.*

S → S (Conj S)\*

Ex. *He said that he was sick and he would go and he would get better soon.*

CP → CP (Conj CP)\*

Ex. *He said that he was sick and that he would go and that he would get better soon*

<sup>81</sup> Nobody knows for sure how to pronounce “Kleene”. Many people say [ˈkliːni] (“KLEE-nee”; IPA vowel symbols are fairly close to Spanish spelling).

V → V (Conj V)\*

Ex. *They washed and diced and sliced the vegetables.*

## Chapter 5: Syntax II — Transformations

### 1. Syntax beyond phrase structure: the need for transformations

As seen already, our overall goal is to beef up the grammar so that it becomes an ever better approximation to the grammar internalized by speakers of English. We have done this by amplifying the system of phrase structure rules, and also by adding rules of agreement and case marking to govern the distribution of inflectional features. This section introduces the next major type of syntactic rule, the **transformation**, and argues for why it is needed.

English contains a construction called the **Tag Question**. Tag questions appear after the comma in the following examples:

#### (130) *Examples of Tag Questions*

Frogs can eat flies, can't they?  
 The president has resigned, hasn't she?  
 Bill was watching the stew, wasn't he?

As the data show, a tag question contains three parts in order:

- A copy of the Aux of the main sentence (*can...can, has ... has, was ... was*).
- A contracted form of the word *not*
- A pronoun expressing the person and number of the subject of the main sentence.

#### 1.1 *Digression: spell-out rules for word sequences*

We introduced spell-out rules in Chapter 2 as a means of covering irregular inflected forms like *kept* or *went*. Spell-out rules are also a sensible option for contracted forms of English like *can't*. It seems intuitively very reasonable that *can't* is the normal realization of *can not*, and similarly that *hasn't* is the realization of *has not*, and (more interestingly) *won't* is the realization of *will not*. For such contractions (as traditional grammar calls them), we employ spell-out rules, of which the following are a partial list:

#### (131) **Some spell-out rules of English that create negative contractions**

*will not* → *won't*  
*can not* → *can't*  
*am not* → *aren't*<sup>82</sup>  
*do not* → *don't*  
*shall not* → *shan't*<sup>83</sup>  
 etc.

<sup>82</sup> As in *I'm tall, aren't I?*, used only in vernacular speech.

<sup>83</sup> Archaic, at least for Americans.

## 1.2 Phrase structure rules inadequate for tags

It is in the nature of phrase structure rules that they *can't copy*: they specify the daughter nodes of a particular kind of mother node, as well as the order in which the daughters appear, but that is all. If we naively attempted to generate tag questions simply by extending our set of phrase structure rules, we would derive many ungrammatical instances with a mismatched Aux, because these rules lack the copying capacity. Here is the failed approach in detail:

### (132) A Failed Grammar for English Tags

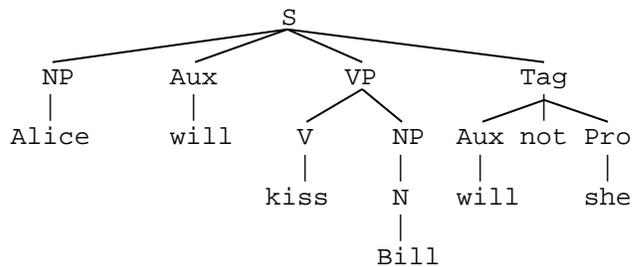
(a) Change the phrase structure for S to:

$$S \rightarrow NP \text{ (Aux) VP (Tag)}$$

(b) Add the phrase structure rule:

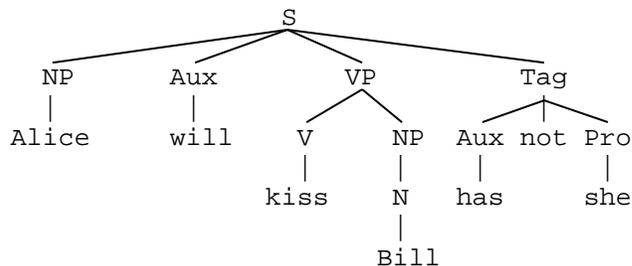
$$\text{Tag} \rightarrow \text{Aux not Pro}$$

This hypothesis derives *Alice will kiss Bill, won't she?* as follows:



(The tree shows the pre-spelled-out version of the sentence; the spell-out rule would convert *will not* to *won't*.)

This hypothesis fails because it doesn't enforce the copying requirement. We can apply the very same rules and derive preposterous sentences:



By Spell-Out: \*Alice will kiss Bill, hasn't she?

and similarly:

- \*Alice will kiss Bill, can't he?
- \*Alice will kiss Bill, hasn't it?
- \*Alice will kiss Bill, won't they?

### 1.3 Terminology of failed grammars

Linguists are always dealing with failed grammars like the one just given, taking them back to the drawing board and trying either to improve them or replace them with a better approach. Failed grammars are not a pointless activity; they lead us to explore the data more thoroughly and force us to refine or replace the failed analysis.

Some terminology for failed grammars that is widely used:

- Undergenerate:** A grammar *undergenerates* when there are grammatical sentences that it cannot generate.
- Overgenerate:** A grammar *overgenerates* when it generates ungrammatical sentences

The grammar we just looked at overgenerates, as the \* examples above indicate. A grammar that can't generate tag questions at all (which is what we had before) undergenerates. We are looking for a grammar that does neither.

### 1.4 Diagnosing the failure

As already noted, the failed grammar given in (107) above fails because nothing in the rule apparatus developed so far can copy. Grammar (107) can be thought of as providing a poor substitute for copying: it copies the structure, but not the actual words involved, which is what we really need. Plainly, we need more kinds of rules.

More generally, phrase structure grammars don't allow for cases where the constituents present in one part of a tree depend on the constituents present in another part, which may be some distance away. In fact, tag questions are a rather out-of-the-way instance of this phenomenon; the really important cases are yet to come. The tag questions will suffice, however, to give the basic idea.

### 1.5 Transformations

Faced with phenomena like tag questions, linguists generally assume that phrase structure rules do not alone suffice as a grammar formalism for languages. An additional kind of rule takes as its input a sentence generated by the phrase structure rules and alters it in some way.

- A syntactic rule that alters a tree structure is called a **transformation**.
- A grammar that includes transformations as well as phrase structure rules is a **transformational grammar**.

The rules of case marking and agreement given in the preceding chapter could be considered a kind of transformation, although their effects are not as dramatic as the copying and movement transformations we will cover in what follows; case marking and agreement only change the morphosyntactic representation, not the tree as a whole.

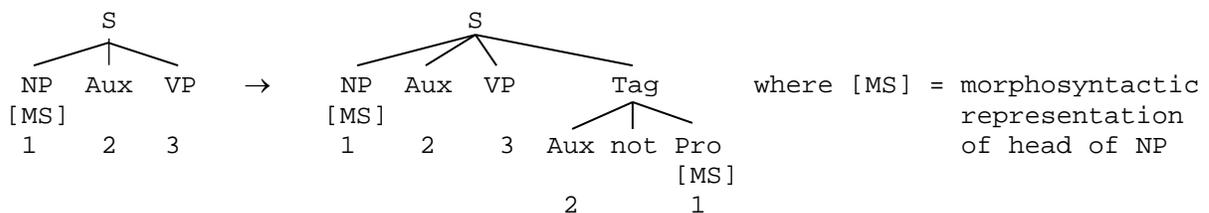
The general strategy seen in transformations is to let the phrase structure rules define the “basic inventory” of sentences in the language, and let the transformations apply to generate the wider variety of sentences that go beyond the capacity of phrase structure rules. For example, the sentence *Alice will kiss Bill* is in some sense a basic sentence (being generable by phrase structure rules alone), and *Alice will kiss Bill, won't she* is in a sense a syntactic elaboration of the simple sentence.

What can transformations do? This is a rather open question, whose answer forms a large part of the theory of syntax. At the moment, it's best to simply formulate the transformations we need and later on see what general theoretical principles are applicable.<sup>84</sup>

### 1.6 A transformation for tag questions

Here is a copying transformation that can derive tag questions. As you can see, it uses notation seen earlier in morphology, where we used numeral subscripts to make clear what changes into what for rules of infixation and reduplication. However, the syntactic transformation also contains reference to the tree structure that is manipulated.

#### (133) Tag Question Transformation



Here is an explication of this rule. It assumes you have an S, consisting of an NP, an Aux, and a VP. The NP is assumed to have a morphosyntactic representation, that is, a feature bundle located on the head of the NP. These three items (NP, Aux, VP) are subscripted 1, 2, and 3.

On the right side of the arrow in the rule, the change is shown. A new daughter of S is added at the right edge, with the category Tag. Its internal content consists of an Aux, the word *not*, and a Pronoun. The Aux is a copy of the Aux in the original sentence (this is shown by its bearing the number 2), and the Pronoun is assigned a copy of the morphosyntactic representation of the subject (this is indicated by the numerical subscript 1). Assuming that the features [Gender], [Person], [Number], and [Case] are part of the morphosyntactic representation, this will place the appropriate kind of pronoun into the tag; masculine subjects will get masculine pronouns, plural subjects will get plural pronouns, and so on.

<sup>84</sup> To be honest, we're really going to stop at the first step here; for a deeper theory of transformations you'll have to take more advanced syntax courses.

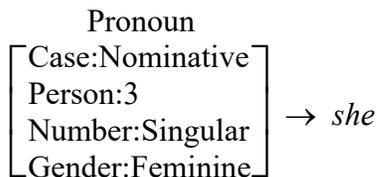
For explicitness, here are the nominative pronouns of English with their morphosyntactic representations (for the non-nominative pronouns, see p. 107 above).

(134) *Morphosyntactic representations for English nominative pronouns*

<i>I</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:1, Number:Singular]	(Gender is free) <sup>85</sup>
<i>you</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:2]	(Gender and number are free)
<i>he</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:3, Number:Singular, Gender:Masculine]	
<i>she</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:3, Number:Singular, Gender:Feminine]	
<i>it</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:3, Number:Singular, Gender:Neuter]	
<i>we</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:1, Number:Plural]	(Gender is free)
<i>they</i>	[Case:Nominative, Person:3, Number:Plural]	(Gender is free)

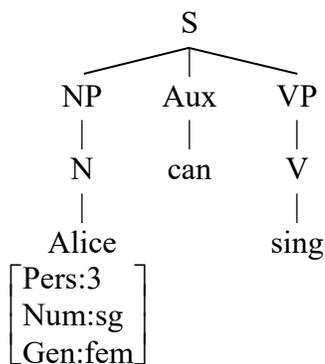
Indeed, in what we are about to do, it is sensible to think of the pronouns simply as the way that the English language happens to spell out the category Pronoun when it bears one of these morphosyntactic representations. Thus, for instance, a rule that takes the features of *she* and spells out the pronoun *she* is given below.

(135) *A spell-out rule that creates the word she*



With this apparatus in place, we can provide a full derivation for the sentence *Alice can sing, can't she?*

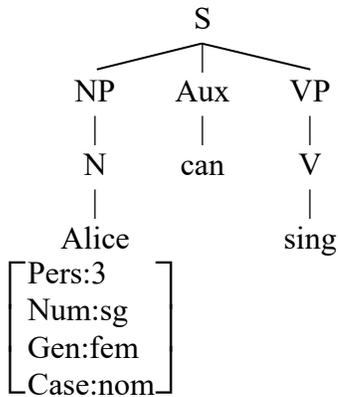
**First step:** application of the phrase structure rules to derive *Alice can sing*



<sup>85</sup> By “free”, I mean that you can use this pronoun no matter what the specification in the morphosyntactic representation.

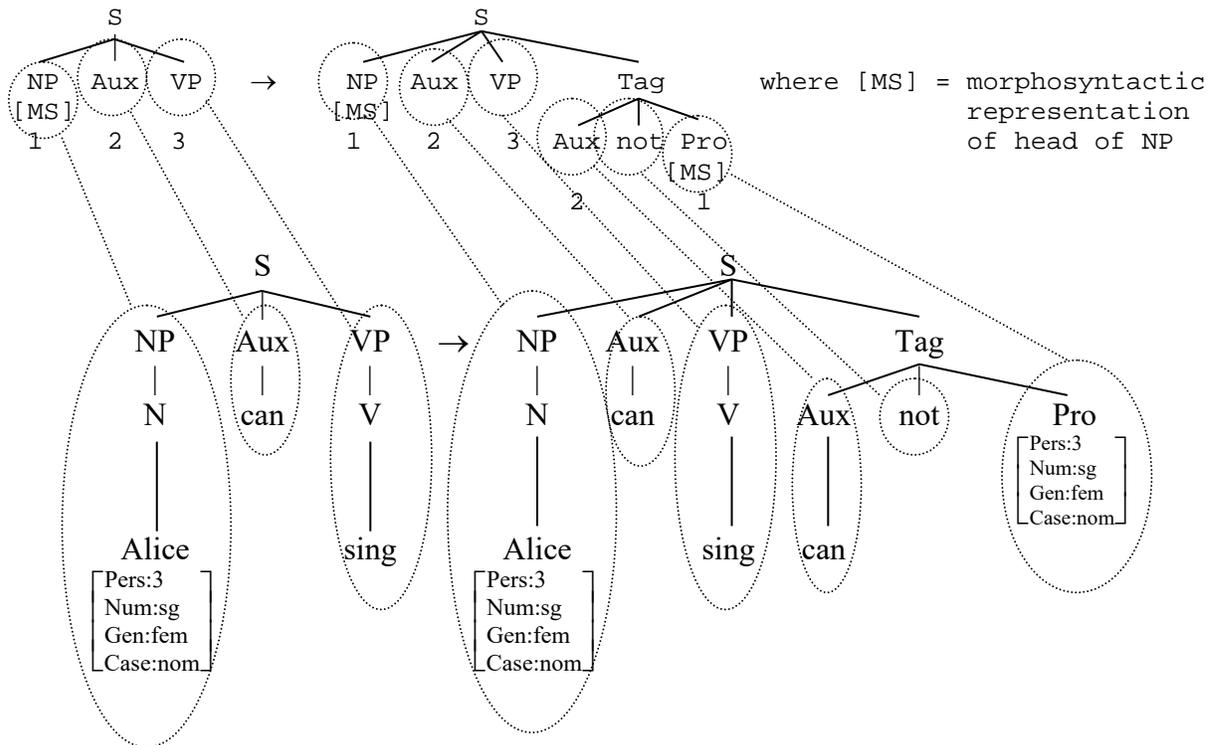
Note that *Alice*, by its very meaning, is inherently 3rd person, singular, and feminine.

**Second step:** since *Alice* is the subject, a rule of case marking makes it Nominative:



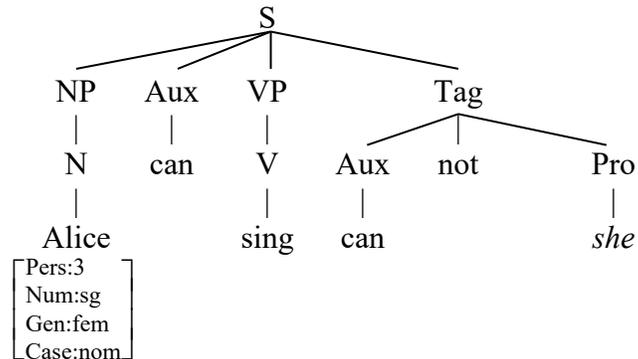
**Third step:** application of Tag Question Transformation (stated in (133)); matchup shown with dotted lines):

(136) *Tag Question Formation applied*



The dotted lines may look initially like spaghetti. Yet, you would probably find it worthwhile to inspect every strand. This is the way to make sure you are correctly applying a transformation to a tree.

**Fourth step:** apply rule the Spell-Out Rule for *she* in (135) above. It spells out a pronoun that is [Pers:3, Num:sg, Gen:fem, Case:nom] as *she* (tree omitted):



**Last step:** using one of the spell-out rules in (131), we spell out the sequence *can not* as *can't*:

Alice can sing, can't she?

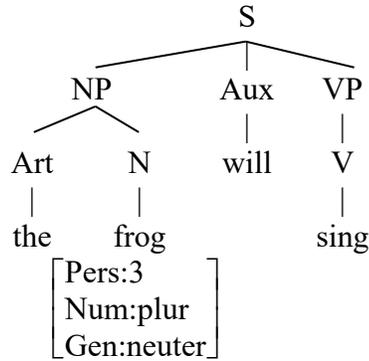
### Study Exercise #22

Derive *The frogs will sing, won't they?*

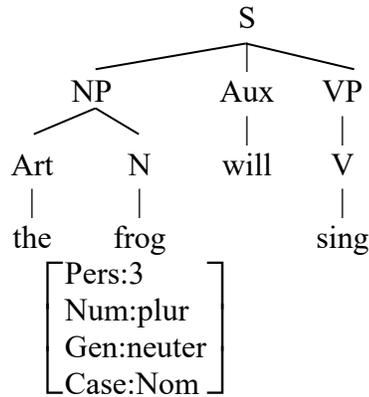
The steps should include Phrase Structure rules, Tag Question formation, spelling out of the pronoun *they*, spell-out of *won't*, and attachment of the plural suffix (inflectional morphology) to *frog*.

**Answer to Study Exercise #22**

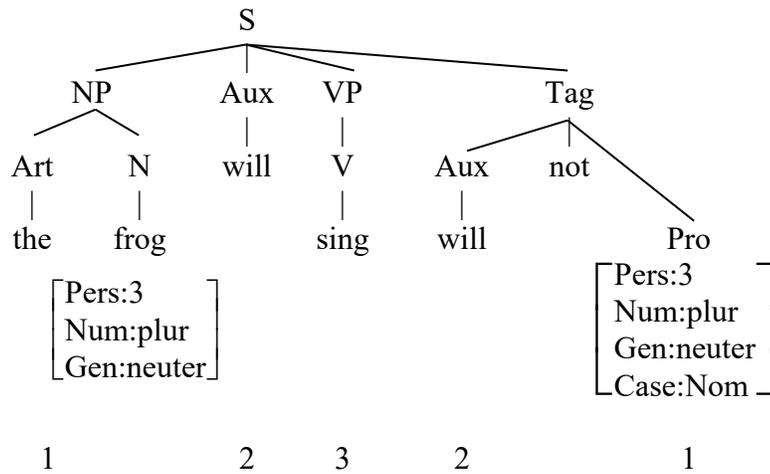
I. Phrase structure rules and lexical insertion:



II. Nominative Case Marking:



III. Tag Question Transformation (see (133))



IV. Spell out the pronoun that is [Pers:3, Num:plur, Gen:neuter, Case:nom] as *they*:

The frog<sub>[Pers:3,Num:plur,Gen:Neuter]</sub> will sing, will not **they**?

V. Spell out *will not* as *won't*:

The frog<sub>[Pers:3,Num:plur,Gen:Neuter]</sub> will sing, **won't** they?

VI. Suffix -s when [Number:Plural]

The frogs will sing, won't they?

## 2. Another transformation: Yes/No Question Formation

Consider a second transformation. Every sentence in English that is a statement has a corresponding question. Thus for

*Bill is leaving*

we have

*Is Bill leaving?*

and for

*The frog might hop.*

we have

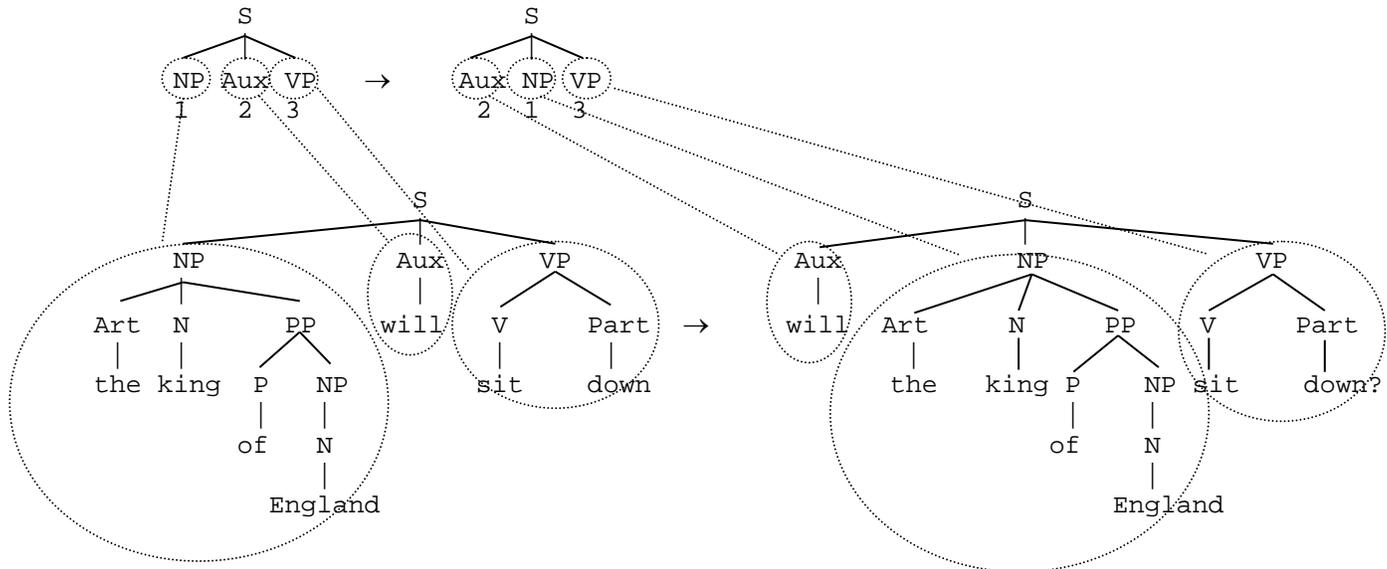
*Might the frog hop?*

Such questions are called **Yes/No questions**, to distinguish them from questions that begin with 'who', 'what', 'where', etc., which are called **Wh- questions**. It is plausible to regard a yes/no question as a syntactic variant of the corresponding statement; thus the phrase structure rules will derive the statement, which is converted to a yes/no question. The crucial transformation is as follows:

### (137) Yes/No Question Formation



Below is a derivation of the yes/no question *Will the king of England sit down?*. Dotted lines show the matchup between rule and form.

(138) *Yes/No Question Formation applied to a sentence*

You may be worried at this point that we have no way of forming Yes/No questions from a sentence that lacks an Aux. This issue addressed in the next section.

For now, it's worth considering Yes/No Question Formation as a transformation. In this case (unlike for tag questions), it would be quite possible to derive the sentences just by using phrase structure rules, something along the lines of:

$$S \rightarrow \text{Aux NP VP}$$

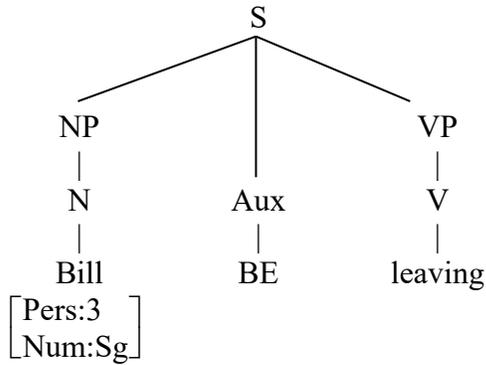
However, there seem to be at least two reasons that at least suggest that the transformational approach is better. First, speakers seem to recognize that (for example) *Is Bill leaving?* is the yes/no question that "goes with", or is appropriately paired with, *Bill is leaving*. We can characterize this sense of relatedness if we derive the question from the statement. Moreover, Auxes in English agree with their subjects (see section 20 above for English agreement):

Bill is leaving. (3rd person singular)  
 Bill and Fred are leaving. (3rd person plural)

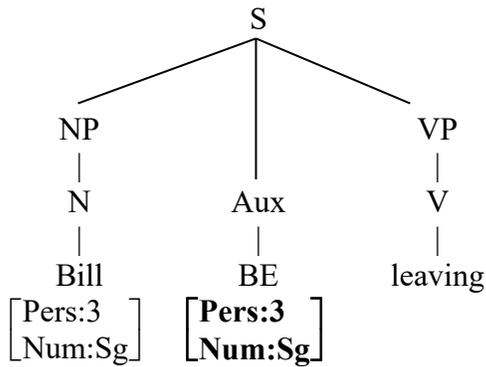
This agreement is carried over into the questions:

Is Bill leaving?  
 Are Bill and Fred leaving?

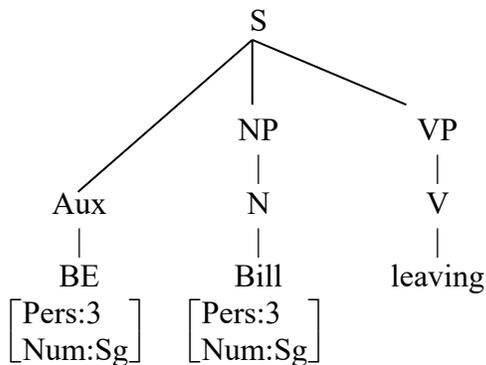
A clean analysis of this is possible, in which we only state the agreement rule once, if the questions are derived from the statements. In brief, the derivation would like this:



output of phrase structure rules  
 features of *Bill* are inherent in this noun



Agreement: copy the subject features onto the Aux



Yes/No Question formation

Is Bill leaving?

Morphology converts BE into *is*.  
 [Pers:3]  
 [Num:Sg]

This, then, is at least some justification for saying that Yes/No questions are formed by a transformation.

### 3. Inserted *do* in English

It's clear that tag questions and yes/no questions *can* be formed, even if there is no Aux in the base sentence. The method used in English is to insert the verb *do*, which could be described as the "default Aux" of the language.

For tag questions:

*John likes turnips, doesn't he?*  
*We left early, didn't we?*

For yes/no questions:

*Does John like turnips?*  
*Did we leave early?*

This phenomenon is an unusual aspect of English, and seems to be completely general. To give three additional examples:

- **Negation:** English negates a sentence by placing *not* directly after its Aux.

*I have not done my practicing.*  
*I will not take out the trash.*  
*He cannot play this concerto.*

Where the basic sentence has no aux (as in “He likes turnips”), *do* is inserted to provide one:

*I do not like turnips.*

- **Polarity focus:** one can emphasize the truth of what one is saying (for example, to contradict someone who doubts it) by putting a strong accent on the Aux.<sup>86</sup>

*I have done my practising.*  
*You will take out the trash.*  
*He can play “Chopsticks”.*

Where there would otherwise be no Aux, *do* is provided:

*I do like turnips.*

- **VP elision.** The second of two identical Verb Phrases can be elided, provided an Aux is left behind:

*You should take up hang gliding. Sue has. [that is, has taken up hang gliding]*

This Aux will be *do* if no other Aux is present:

---

<sup>86</sup> Meaning of “polarity focus”: focus is emphasis on one particular item in a sentence as the new material being contributed by the speaker. “Polarity” refers here to the “poles” yes and no, or affirmative vs. negative.

I wonder if there are any people who grow turnips around here. / Well, Bill does.

It would appear then, that some kind of process provides the aux *do* as the “backup Aux” whenever a syntactic transformation is applicable that requires an Aux to apply. A number of ways to formalize this idea have appeared, but I will not attempt this here, simply noting the general point that *do* is the “backup Aux” of English. We can at least state “what happens” as follows:

For all syntactic rules of English that refer to Aux, the Aux *do* is inserted prior to their application when the input sentence contains no Aux.

Having said this, I will mostly avoid sentences that require this unformalized operation in what follows, for simplicity.

#### 4. Summing up so far

Transformations have been posited to perform a variety of functions, as follows:

- **Assignment of inflectional features** to morphosyntactic representations (agreement and case marking)
- **Copying** of material (as in tags)
- **Movement** of parts of the tree (as in Yes/No Question Formation)
- **Insertion** (not formalized here) of semantically empty words like the Aux *do*.

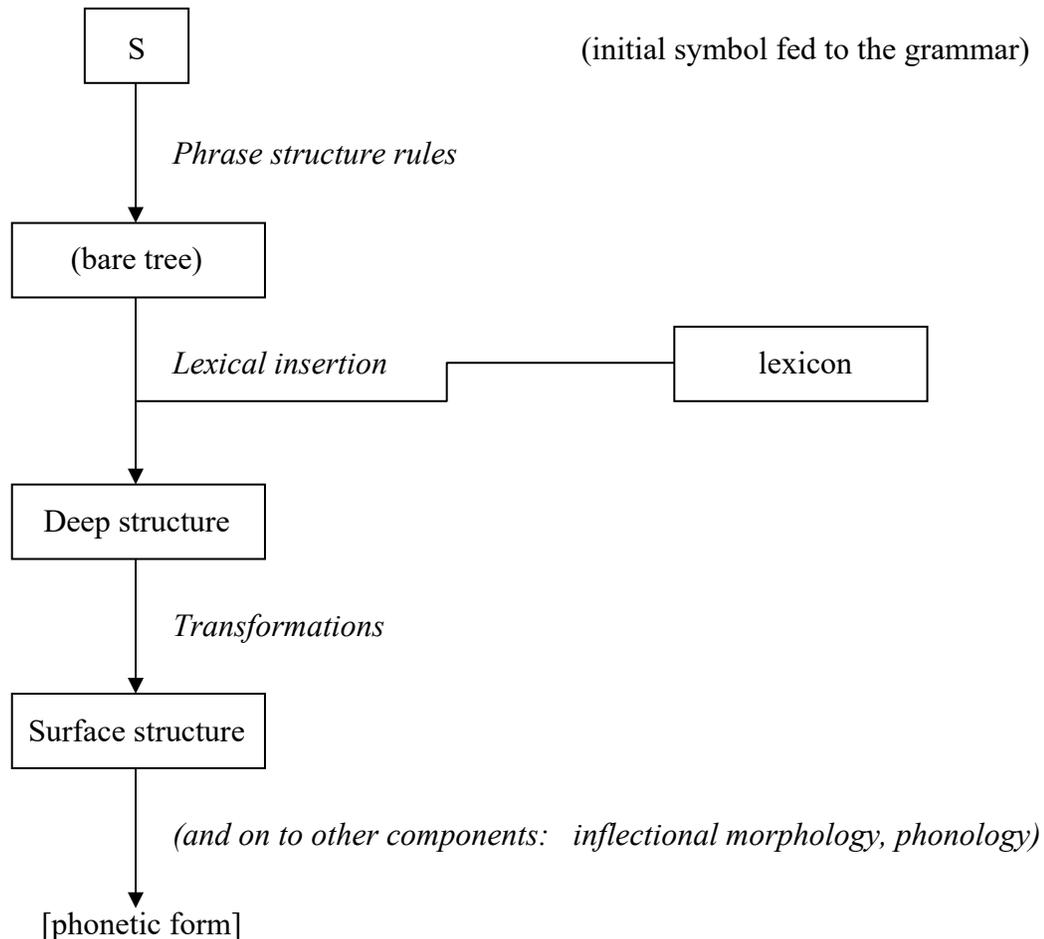
What remains to be covered are the most dramatic of transformations, the so-called long-distance movements. These will be covered in the next chapter.

#### 5. Architecture of the theory: deep structure and surface structure

It may be useful at this point to back off and consider the architecture of the theory as developed so far. By this I mean the various kinds of rules and the order in which they are arranged; or the “direction of information flow” that the theory assumes. Such information can be expressed with diagrams containing boxes and arrows, and indeed is sometimes jokingly referred to as the “boxology” of the theory.

The following diagram of this sort incorporates the terms **deep structure** and **surface structure**.

(139) *An architecture for grammatical theory with deep and surface structure*



The terms “deep” and “surface” involve no notion of profundity or superficiality. Deep structure is simply the output of the phrase structure rules with words plugged in by lexical insertion. Surface structure is the output of the syntax as a whole. In a sentence in which no transformations are applicable, the deep and surface structures would be the same.

A caution to bear in mind is that a diagram of this sort is simply depicting the *logical structure* of the model; we are not (necessarily) making any claim that this represents the time course of sentence production in the human brain, but only a claim about the structure of the language; that what we observe can be described in terms of a fixed number of perturbations of a simple structure that is generable by a phrase structure grammar.

## References and further reading

The classical work on transformations was done by the linguist Noam Chomsky more than half a century ago in his book *Aspects of the theory of syntax* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), which had a huge influence on the field. The short treatment given in this text is very conservative in mostly following *Aspects*. A textbook that goes into far greater depth, and would prepare you to read modern work in syntax, is Dominique Sportiche, Hilda Koopman, and Edward Stabler (2013) *An introduction to syntactic analysis and theory* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell).

## Chapter 6: Syntax III — Subcategorization and Wh- Movement

### 1. One more update of the phrase structure rules

For purposes of this chapter we will need a slightly more powerful set of phrase structure rules.

#### 1.1 CP as daughter of NP

In English it is possible to have an NP that contains a CP as its daughter. One place where this occurs is when the head noun of the NP is one that express a belief or a statement — such nouns include *belief*, *claim*, *assertion*, and so on. Some examples of CP-within-NP are given in (140).

(140) *Some examples of NPs that have CP as a daughter*

- a. Fred's *belief* [<sub>CP</sub> that he is a genius ]
- b. George's *insistence* [<sub>CP</sub> that he be included ]
- c. the *claim* [<sub>CP</sub> that this structure is an island ]
- d. Sally's *assertion* [<sub>CP</sub> that we should eat pasta ]

It should be clear that the fundamental principle of phrase structure we have been working with, “the modifier of the head is the sister to the head” ((100) above) is obeyed by these examples; for example *that he was a genius* specifies what particular belief Fred holds.

We can also establish that the normal position of CP within the NP that includes it is final position:

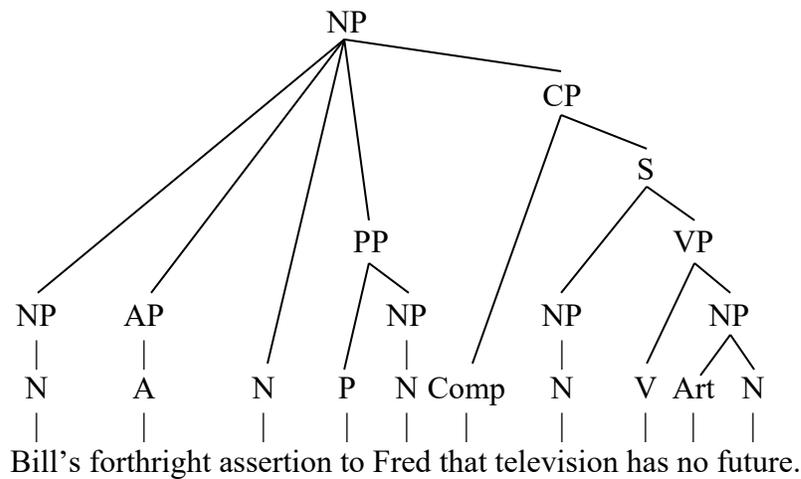
George's insistence [<sub>PP</sub> to John ] [<sub>CP</sub> that he be included ]  
 \*George's insistence [<sub>CP</sub> that he be included ][<sub>PP</sub> to John ]

I suggest the following version of the main phrase structure rule for NP:

(141) *A modified version of the NP phrase structure rule (allows CP)*

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \left( \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Art} \\ \text{NP} \end{array} \right\} \right) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^*(\text{CP})$$

To justify this rule, we can consider a long NP that includes every possibility for the main NP phrase structure rule is the following:



Many of the nouns that occur in such structures share a morphological property: they are derived (within the word formation component) from verbs. This can hardly be a coincidence, and we will discuss this further below. There are, however, a few nouns that take a CP that are not derived from verbs: *hypothesis*, *hunch*.

### 1.2 AP as daughter of VP

VP can sometime include an AP (Adjective Phrase). The most common instance of this is when the verb is some form of *be*: *Alice is quite tall*. Sentences with other verbs are given in (116).

(142) *Some sentences in which the VP includes an Adjective Phrase*

- a. Fred is sick.
- b. Bill looks tired.
- c. Alice seems very friendly.
- d. Jack appeared angry to Sam.

As far as handling such cases in the grammar, it seems sensible not to amplify our existing phrase structure rule for VP ( $VP \rightarrow V (NP) (NP) (PP)^* (CP)$ , given in (104)), but rather to introduce a new rule that only allows V and AP:

(143) *A new phrase structure rule for VP, permitting an AP daughter*

$$V \rightarrow V AP (PP)^*$$

The alternative of beefing up our existing rule  $VP \rightarrow V (NP) (NP) (PP)^* (CP)$  with an AP position, as in  $VP \rightarrow V (NP) (NP) (PP)^* (AP)(CP)$ , would overgenerate (as with *\*Bill told Fred Sam very angry*.)

### 1.3 Final phrase structure rule list

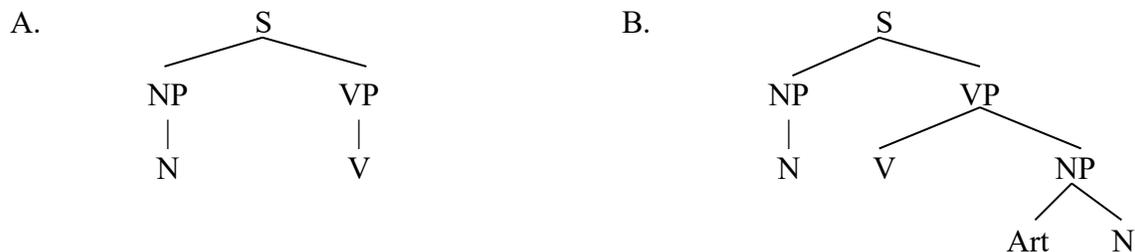
Putting all of these together, we have the phrase structure rules shown:

(144) Final<sup>87</sup> version of phrase structure rules for English, improved with two new rules

- S → NP (Aux) VP  
 NP →  $\left( \begin{array}{c} \{ \text{Art} \} \\ \{ \text{NP} \} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^* (\text{CP})$   
 NP → Pronoun  
 AP → (Adv) A  
 VP → V (NP) (NP) (PP)\* (CP)  
 VP → V AP (PP)\*  
 PP → P NP  
 CP → (Comp) S  
  
 NP → NP (Conj NP)\*  
 VP → VP (Conj VP)\*  
 PP → PP (Conj PP)\*  
 S → S (Conj S)\*  
 CP → CP (Conj CP)\*  
 V → V (Conj V)\*

## 2. Lexical insertion and subcategorization

The phrase structure rules for English as we have developed them so far generate, among many others, the following trees:



We have so far assumed that words are inserted whose part of speech matches up to the appropriate node in the tree. However, closer inspection shows that this procedure frequently overgenerates. Thus, for instance, a verb like *sigh* may appear in tree A but not tree B:

Fred sighed.

\*Fred sighed his fate.

A verb like *destroy* behave in the reverse fashion: it can appear in B but not in A:

<sup>87</sup> For purposes of this textbook.

Bill destroyed his car.  
 \*Bill destroyed.

Verbs like *destroy* that must take an object are called **transitive** verbs; verbs like *sigh* that cannot take an object are called **intransitive**. Some verbs, such as *eat*, fit into both categories; they can be called “optionally transitive”.

To avoid overgenerating in the way just shown, the theory needs a means of specifying the requirements of particular words for what tree structures they may appear in. This problem is becomes especially acute for the two new structures introduced in the preceding section. Only a few nouns in English (like *belief*, *insistence*, *claim*) can occur with a CP sister. Only a very small number of verbs (like *be*, *seem*, *appear*) may occur with an AP sister. So our theory currently has a big gap in it; we need some way of specifying what trees particular words are allowed to occur in. The method we’ll cover in this book is called **subcategorization frames**.

To start, let us agree that the process of “inserting words into the tree” will be called **lexical insertion**. Underlying this is the idea that speakers possess a mental dictionary, generally referred to as the **lexicon**.<sup>88</sup> Lexical insertion consists of extracting a word from the lexicon and inserting it into a syntactic tree. The entries in the lexicon contain the crucial information about what kinds of tree the words can be inserted into, in the form of a **subcategorization frame**.

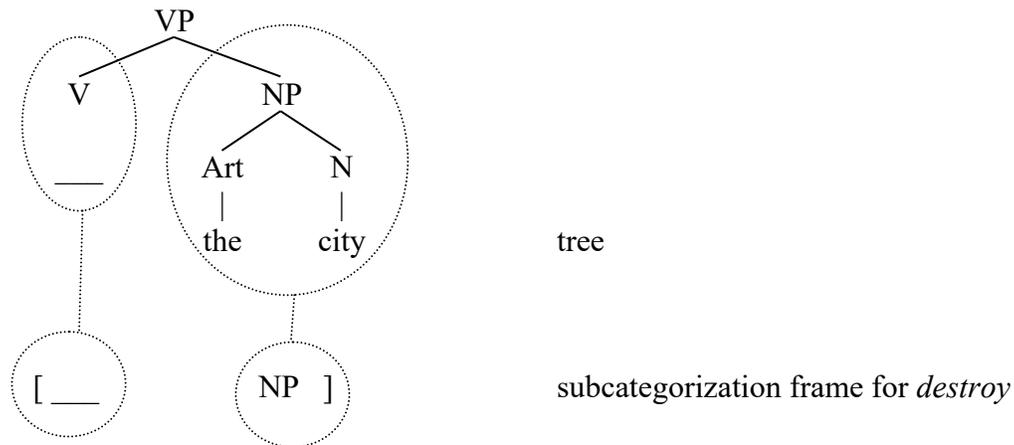
Under this approach, the lexical entry for *destroy* would be like this:

<p><b>destroy:</b></p> <p>Pronunciation: /dɪs'trɔɪ/          Meaning: “violently cause no longer to exist”          Syntactic category: Verb          subcategorization frame: [ ___ NP ].</p>	<p>(more on this later)</p> <p>(we lack a better way to represent meaning)</p>
--	--

The subcategorization frame indicate the sisters that *must be present* in order for the word to be legally inserted into the tree. *Destroy*, being a verb, will be inserted as the head of a VP. The subcategorization frame says that for insertion of *destroy* to be legal, the VP must contain an NP, occurring immediately to the right of V within VP. The diagram in (119) is meant to explicate this notation:

<sup>88</sup> Or even “mental lexicon”, if we want to be perfectly clear we are talking about the knowledge of a person rather than a lexicon as a book or database.

## (145) Matching a tree and subcategorization frame



Since *destroy* subcategorizes for an object NP, a sentence like *\*John destroyed* fails to match the subcategorization frame of its verb and is therefore ungrammatical.

It goes the other way as well: where a subcategorization frame does *not* include some particular type of phrase, then lexical insertion is impossible, and ungrammaticality is predicted, when that phrase type is present. Thus, for instance, the intransitive verb *sigh* would have the following subcategorization frame:

Here is a lexical entry for *sigh*:

<p><b>sigh:</b> pronunciation: /saɪ/          meaning: “exhale loudly to express sorrow”          syntactic category: verb          subcategorization: [ ___ ]</p>
--

The frame [ \_\_\_ ] indicates that *sigh* may not have sisters in the VP. It accounts for the ungrammaticality of *\*John sighed the misfortune*.

Optionally-transitive verbs like *sing* (*John sang*, *John sang the song*) have subcategorization frames that employ parentheses to show the optionality. Here is a lexical entry for *sing*:

<p><b>sing:</b> pronunciation: /sɪŋ/          meaning: “use one’s voice to produce music”          syntactic category: verb          subcategorization: [ ___ (NP) ]</p>
--

More generally, optional elements in subcategorization frames are indicated with parentheses. Grammaticality results if *some* version of the frame (leaving out, or keeping in, parenthesized material) matches the sentence. Thus *Jane sang* and *Jane sang the song* are both good.

Verbs of saying and belief often subcategorize for a CP. For example, *say* has the subcategorization [ \_\_\_ (PP) CP ] and *tell* has the subcategorization [ \_\_\_ NP (CP)]. This can be justified by the following sentences:

(146) *Data to justify the subcategorization frames of say and tell*

- a. \*Alice said.  
\*Alice said to Bill.  
Alice said that she would be going.  
Alice said to Bill that she would be going.
- b. \*Fred told.  
\*Fred told that he would be going.  
Fred told us.  
Fred told us that he would be going.<sup>89</sup>

Nouns have subcategorization frames as well. For example, here are the data that could be used to justify the subcategorization frame of *gift* as [ \_\_\_ (PP) (PP) ]

(147) *Data to justify the subcategorization frame of gift*

- a. a gift of \$10 to the Red Cross
- b. a gift of \$10
- c. a gift to the Red Cross
- d. a gift

The subcategorization frame of *picture* is [ \_\_\_ (PP) ], as in *picture of Alice* (again the PP is optional since *picture* is fine by itself.) The subcategorization of *dog* is [ \_\_\_ ] (there are no noun phrases like, say, \**dog of teeth*).

### 2.1 Two rarer cases: Nouns that subcategorize for CP; verbs that subcategorize for AP

I introduced the two changes in the phrase structure rules of the previous section  $(NP \rightarrow \left( \begin{array}{c} \{ \text{Art} \} \\ \{ \text{NP} \} \end{array} \right) (AP)^* N (PP)^* (CP))$  and  $VP \rightarrow V AP (PP)^*$  precisely because these rules seem to be especially “sensitive”, as it were, to subcategorization. There are only a few nouns that take CP and only a few verbs that take AP; see (140) and (142) for examples.

With regard to N that subcategorize for CP, there is an intriguing relationship to morphological rules; specifically the rules of word formation (see Chapter 2). Specifically, when a noun is morphologically derived from a verb that subcategorizes for CP, the resulting noun tends also to subcategorize for CP:

---

<sup>89</sup> *Tell* also has a second subcategorization [ \_\_\_ (NP)(NP) ]: *Fred told us his sorrows, Alice told them her name.*



### 2.3 Items not included in the subcategorization frame

Some constituents evidently get to appear “for free” in the syntactic tree; they don’t have to be subcategorized. This is true for PP’s with general adverbial meaning of place, time, or manner can occur with virtually any verb:

#### (151) *Some unsubcategoryed PP*

John sighed on Tuesday.  
 John sighed in the garden.  
 John sighed with great feeling.

The general practice for subcategorization is this: if any element *is always able to occur* as a sister, then we don’t bother to mention it in the subcategorization frame. Basically, we are interested only in the restrictions that hold of individual words. This aspect of the grammar will not be formalized in this book.<sup>90</sup>

What is true of verbs is also true of nouns: PP’s of place, time, and manner are ignored in determining noun subcategorizations, so cases like (126) would not justify a frame like [ \_\_\_ PP ] for their nouns.

#### (152) *Some unsubcategoryed PP within NP*

the dog in the garden  
 the party on Tuesday  
 a person in a good mood

Likewise, articles and possessors are not considered in the subcategorization frame, since they are possible for any noun (*the dog, Alice’s dog*).

### 2.4 Subcategorization and meaning

It’s a somewhat vexed question to what extent subcategorization should be treated (as it is above) as a straightforward matter of syntax. An alternative view is that heads occur in particular syntactic locations simply because of what they mean. For example, the verb *say* is entitled to occur in the syntactic frame [ \_\_\_ PP CP ] because an act of saying generally has someone who is being spoken to (in *I said to Fred that I was leaving*, this is *Fred*), and a thing which is said (*I was leaving*). Similarly, *put* occurs [ \_\_\_ NP PP ] because it involves a thing that is put, and location into which the thing is put. *Sigh* occurs [ \_\_\_ ] because nothing is affected when you sigh.

Although there is probably a grain of truth to this “semantics, not subcategorization” view, there are also reasons to treat it with skepticism.

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<sup>90</sup> In a more thorough grammar, we might adopt a bit more structure: some kind of node higher than VP but lower than S, which would contain the unsubcategoryed PP.

First, there are cases of verbs that have very similar meanings, but different patterns of occurrence. Consider for instance *tell* and *say*.

I told Bill that I was leaving.  
 \*I told to Bill that I was leaving.  
 \*I said Bill that I was leaving.  
 I said to Bill that I was leaving.

It's not clear how semantics alone could tell us which verb requires an NP object and which a PP. Likewise, the pattern below:

I like jumping.	I like to jump.
I prefer jumping.	I prefer to jump.
I enjoy jumping.	*I enjoy to jump.

where only one of the three similar verbs can't take an infinitive subordinate clause (see Chapter 1), suggests that meaning won't suffice to tell us everything about subcategorization.

The verbs *give* and *donate* are semantically similar, but have different syntactic behavior:

She gave the library \$1,000,000.	She gave \$1,000,000 to the library.
*She donated the library \$1,000,000.	She donated \$1,000,000 to the library.

Only *give* has a subcategorization for [ \_\_\_ NP NP ].

There is one more phenomenon that suggests that subcategorization cannot be reduced to meaning. Consider verbs like these:

He ate.  
 She sang.  
 We raked.

These have what are sometimes called “implicit arguments”—it's understood that *he* ate *something*; and that likewise *she* sang something (song unspecified), and *we* raked (leaves or grass unspecified). In other words, the syntax does not always have to provide overt expression for all the participants in an act. Yet in other cases, an implicit argument evidently is not allowed:

\*We took.  
 \*We own.

We deal with this by letting NP be optional in the subcategorization frames for *eat*, *sing*, and *rake* ([ \_\_\_ (NP) ] but not for *take* or *own* ([ \_\_\_ NP]).

## 2.5 Solving subcategorization problems

The best method seems to be the following:

- Think of words and sentences that include the word you're considering.<sup>91</sup>
- Look at the phrase structure rule that introduces the word (for example, if you're dealing with a noun, look at the phrase structure rule  $NP \rightarrow (Art)(A) N (PP)^* (CP)$ ). This will tell you the sisters that at least *might* be present.
- Remember that a subcategorized expression usually has a kind of intimate relation to the meaning of the word that subcategorizes it. The noun *claim* subcategorizes for an CP because the CP is used to designate the conceptual content of the claim.
- Try collecting as many individual frames for the word that you can, then use parentheses to collapse them into one or more simpler expressions.
- Don't be distracted by PP's of place, manner and time that can occur with anything; they don't belong in the subcategorization frame.

### Study Exercise #23

Give subcategorizations for the following words, justifying them with example sentences.

- a. Verbs: *elapse, award, tell, shout, die*
- b. Nouns: *turtle, bowl, announcement, reason*

---

<sup>91</sup> I admit that this is harder for non-native speakers, a problem hard to avoid in linguistics teaching. If you don't have native intuitions in English, I suggest doing one of two things when you solve subcategorization problems on your assignments: either find a native speaker consultant and get their intuitions, or else add verbal discussion to your answer, with wording like "assuming that xxx is grammatical in English; I'm not sure." It would be fair to grade your answer based on the facts as you give them.

**Answer to Study Exercise #23**

a. Verbs:

*elapse*: [ \_\_\_ ]

Time elapsed

\*Time elapsed me

\*Time elapsed to the losing team.

\*Time elapsed that it was a great misfortune.

*award*: [ \_\_\_ NP (PP)]

\*They awarded.

They awarded a prize

They awarded a prize to the winner.

\*They award to the winner.

[ \_\_\_ (NP) NP ]

They awarded the winner a prize.

*tell*: [ \_\_\_ NP (CP) ]

They told Bill that they were leaving.

They told Bill.

\*They told that they were leaving.

[ \_\_\_ NP (PP) ]

They told the truth to Bill.

They told the truth.

They told Bill.

\*They told to Bill.

[ \_\_\_ NP (NP)]

They told Bill the truth.

They told Bill.

They told the truth.

*shout*: [ \_\_\_ (PP)(CP)]

They shouted.

They shouted to Sally.

They shouted that they were leaving.

They shouted to Sally that they were leaving.

[ \_\_\_ (NP)(PP)]

They shouted the words.

They shouted the words to Sally.

*die*: [ \_\_\_\_ ]

Jefferson died.

\*Jefferson died Washington.

\*Jefferson died to Washington.

(Note: *Jefferson died in 1826*, *Jefferson died in Virginia* don't count, since PP's of place and time can occur with any verb.)

b. Nouns

*turtle*: [ \_\_\_\_ ]

turtle

\*turtle of shell

\*turtle that they were leaving

*bowl*: [ \_\_\_\_ (PP) ]

bowl

bowl of soup

*announcement*: [ \_\_\_\_ (PP) (CP) ]

the announcement

the announcement to Bill

the announcement that they were leaving

the announcement to Bill that they were leaving

*reason*: [ \_\_\_\_ (CP) ]

the reason

the reason that we are going

\*the reason to Fred

\*the reason to Fred that we are going

---

### 3. Wh-Movement

#### 3.1 Backdrop

This section returns to the topic of transformations. Thus far, we've seen two reasons to move beyond simple phrase structure grammars to transformational grammars:

- Phrase structure rules cannot copy material—only a copying transformation can generate the legal array of tag questions.
- Phrase structure rules cannot relate sentences to one another (for example, simple statements to yes-no questions).

We now move on to what many linguists would probably agree is the most important basis for transformations, sometimes called “long distance filler-gap dependencies”. The first example of such a case will be Wh- Movement.

### 3.2 Basics and terminology

A **wh- word** is one of a fixed inventory of words used for asking questions. They are so called because most of the wh-words in English begin with these letters.

The *wh-* words of English can be various parts of speech:

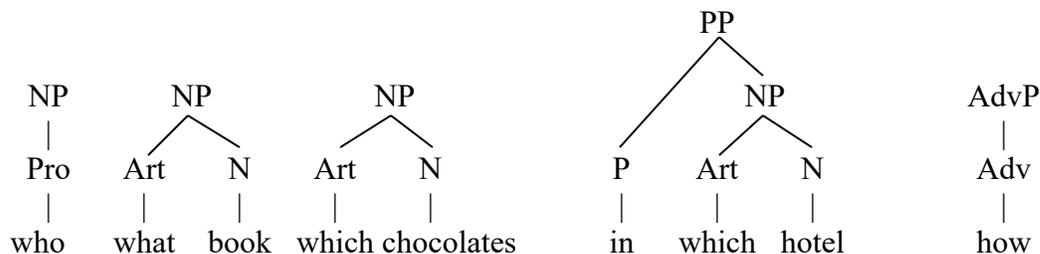
<i>which</i>	Article
<i>whose</i>	Article
<i>who</i>	Pronoun
<i>whom</i>	Pronoun
<i>what</i>	either an Article or Pronoun
<i>how</i>	Adverb
<i>when</i>	Adverb
<i>why</i>	Adverb
<i>where</i>	Adverb

A **wh- question** is a question that involves a *wh-*word. For example, the following are wh-questions:

Who did you see?  
 What book did you read?  
 Which chocolates did you like?  
 In which hotel are you staying?  
 How do you feel?

You can see that the *wh-* word usually comes at or near the beginning of the sentence. It constitutes, or is part of, a phrase that (intuitively), the sentence is about; i.e. the item that is being questioned.

A **wh- phrase** is an NP, PP, or AdvP (Adverb Phrase) that contains a *wh-* word and is placed at the beginning of a clause. In the wh- questions just mentioned, the wh- phrases are



This permits a more precise definition of **wh- question**; it is a question that begins with a wh-phrase.

### 3.3 *Wh- questions, subcategorization, and gaps*

Wh- questions are interesting in that they appear to violate otherwise-valid principles of subcategorization. Here is an example. The verb ‘put’ has the subcategorization [ \_\_\_ NP PP ]. Because of this a sentence like the following:

Fred will put the chicken in the oven

is grammatical; the subcategorization of *put* is satisfied. But

\*Fred will put in the oven

is ungrammatical because of the missing NP, and

\*Fred will put the chicken

is ungrammatical because of the missing PP.<sup>92</sup> This is an unusual case in which there are two subcategorized elements and both are obligatory.

In light of the subcategorization fact, it is a bit surprising that the following sentences, both Wh- questions, should be grammatical:

#### (153) *Two Wh-questions that appear to violate subcategorization*

Into what oven will Fred put the chicken?  
What chicken will Fred put into the oven?

These sentences contain gaps: instead of the NP or PP that the subcategorization of *put* calls for, one finds nothing. The gaps are shown below, denoted with an underscore:

#### (154) *Two Wh-questions that appear to violate subcategorization — marked for their gaps*

What chicken will Fred put \_\_\_ into the oven?  
Into what oven will Fred put the chicken \_\_\_ ?

Most people who ponder the question will judge that these gaps are (intuitively speaking) “filled” by the wh- phrase. We understand *what chicken* to be the object of *put* in the first sentence, and in the second sentence we understand *into what oven* to be the PP indicating where Fred put the chicken.

Let us define “gap”, for precision:

---

<sup>92</sup> As elsewhere we are ignoring extended uses of verbs, which often change the subcategorization. *John put the chicken* is fine in a fantasy world in which Olympic medals are awarded in the chicken-put.

- A **gap** is a location in syntactic structure where the subcategorization requirements would lead one to expect a phrase, but none occurs.

Such gaps are widely observed in English and in many other (not all) languages.

There is an intimate connection between wh- phrases<sup>93</sup> and gaps: to a rough approximation, gaps are allowed only when a wh- phrase is present; recall

- \*Fred will put in the oven
- \*Fred will put the chicken

This goes the other way around: if there is no gap, then we can't have the Wh-phrases either:

- \*What chicken will Fred put the dinner into the oven?
- \*Into what oven will Fred put the chicken into the pan?

Moreover, most people who ponder the question will judge that gaps are somehow “filled” by the wh- phrase. In (155):

(155) What chicken will Fred put \_\_\_ into the oven?

we understand *what chicken* to be the object of *put*, and in (156):

(156) Into which oven will Fred put the chicken \_\_\_ ?

we understand *into which oven* to be the PP indicating where Fred put the chicken.

Summing up, wh-questions in English have what are often called **filler-gap dependencies**, which we can detect in a rigorous way by working out subcategorizations.

The two questions that demand to be answered here, then, are

- Why should wh- questions, and only wh- questions, permit gaps?
- How do we account for the filler-gap dependency; that is, the fact that the wh- phrase at the beginning of the sentence intuitively fills the gap?

As you might be imagining already, the answer will involve a transformation.

### 3.4 Further background: echo questions

Before we proceed to the analysis, let us ponder a further phenomenon of English syntax, the so-called **echo question**. These are questions that contain a Wh- phrase, but have no gap; the Wh- phrase occurs in the ordinary position for its type, and satisfies the subcategorization requirements

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<sup>93</sup> And, as we'll see later on, phrases that behave quite similarly to wh- phrases.

of the relevant head. Echo questions are not all that common, because they can only be used to offer an astonished reply to a parallel statement:

(157) *Examples of echo questions*

The Romans destroyed the television set.  
The Romans destroyed *what*?

I saw Marilyn Monroe in Westwood last Saturday.  
You saw *who*?

Fred will put the chicken in the Socratic Oven.  
Fred will put the chicken in *what* oven?

Echo questions make an important point: it is possible to generate a wh-phrase in the ‘normal’ position for an NP or PP; wh- phrases do not always have to appear at the beginning of sentence.

A bit of terminology: the wh- phrases of echo questions are sometimes said to be **in situ**, which is Latin for “in its original position”.<sup>94</sup>

### 3.5 *A transformation for Wh- questions*

The grammatical problem at hand is that Wh- questions have subcategorization gaps that match up with the initial wh- phrases. This is a dependency that cannot be expressed with the phrase structure rules we have been using. These rules can only say what daughters a node may have, and thus they have no ability to regulate matchups between elements in the tree that are far apart. A transformation is needed.

The intuitive idea behind our transformation analysis will be to let normal questions be derived from *deep structures that look like echo questions*. That is, we will have a transformation that will move the wh- phrase out of its *in situ* deep structure position (where it satisfies the subcategorization of the verb) to the beginning of the sentence. In (158) I give preliminary version; this will be refined later on.

(158) **Wh- Movement (preliminary version)**

Move a wh- phrase to the beginning of the sentence as daughter of S, leaving a trace.

The term “trace” will be defined shortly.

In a minute, we can use this transformation to derive some wh- questions, but in the mean time a detail must be attended to. It’s clear that in typical Wh- questions (such as (127)), the Aux comes before the subject: *What chicken* [ *will* ]<sub>Aux</sub> [ *Fred* ]<sub>NP</sub> *put in the oven?* This is hardly something new, because we have already seen this in Yes/No questions, discussed in the previous chapter. It seem that the flipping of the order of subject and Aux is more general than we had

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<sup>94</sup> *Situ* is an inflected form ([Case:ablative, Number:singular]) of *situs* ‘place’.

imagined; it occurs in all normal (non-echo) questions, not just Yes/No questions. So a first act of tidying up will be to rename our earlier transformation of Yes/No Question Formation (from (111)), and assume that it applies in all normal questions. Here is the transformation with its new name.

(159) **Subject/Aux Inversion**

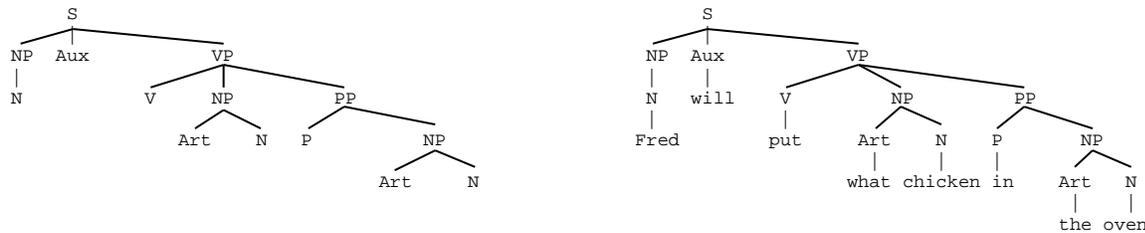


*Applies in all non-echo questions.*

We will assume, moreover, that Subject/Aux Inversion is ordered to apply *before* Wh-Movement; the concept of ordering the rules is one we've already seen for inflectional morphology in Chapter 2.

Now that we have the rules and their ordering, we can do a full derivation of a Wh- question under the proposed analysis. We begin with the phrase structure rules (on the left), then do lexical insertion (on the right):

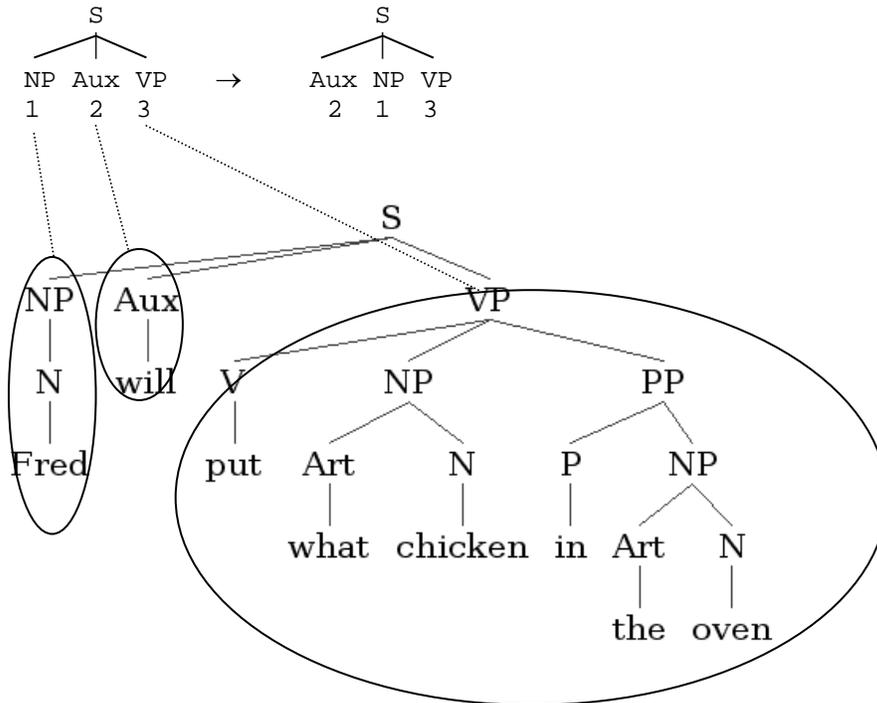
(160) *Application of phrase structure rules and lexical insertion*



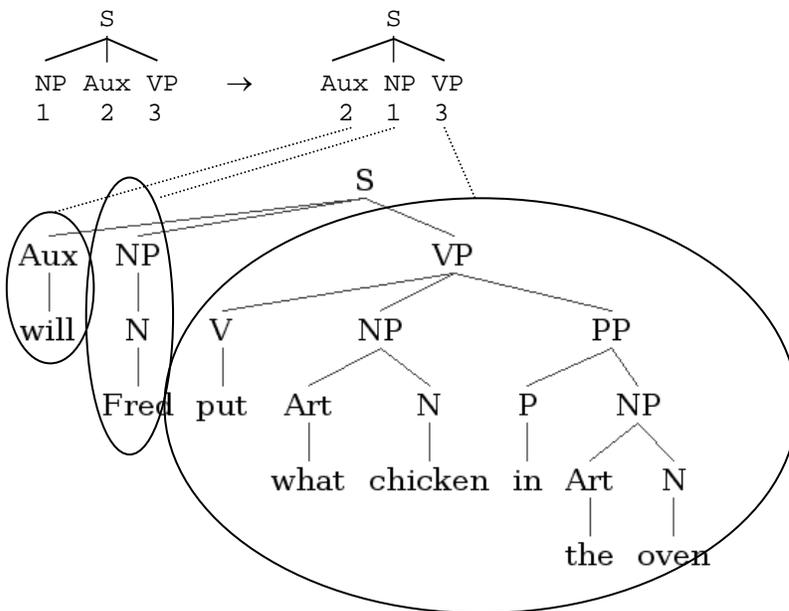
This creates the stage of deep structure, with *what chicken* in situ. The crucial point at this stage is that we have *not* violated the subcategorization of *put*, which in deep structure does have the required NP and PP sisters. In fact, with the theory we are working on, ultimately this will be seen to be true even in surface structure (more on this below).

Following our assumed rule ordering, the first transformation to apply is Subject/Aux Inversion, from (159):

(161) Application of Subject/Aux inversion

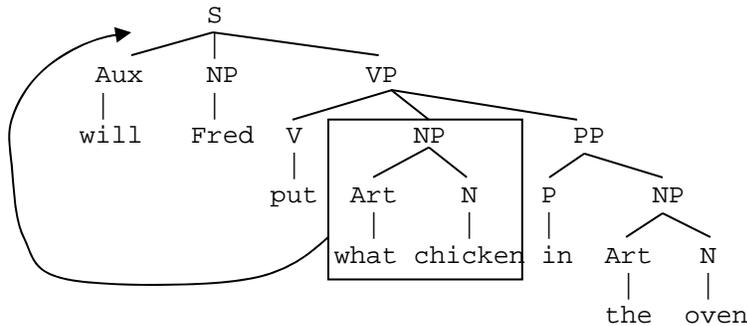


Deriving:

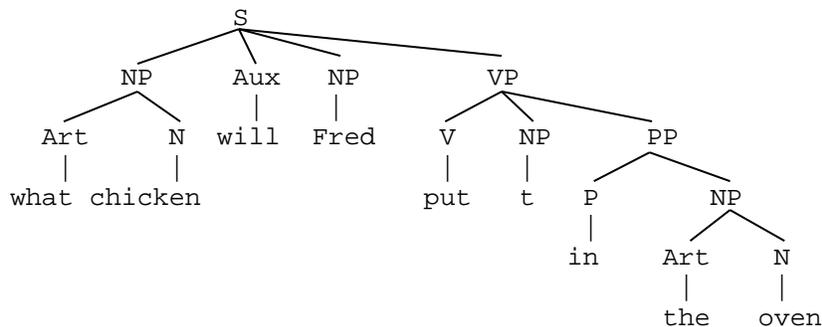


Now we apply Wh-Movement. I show this below first by drawing arrows to show what moves where, then showing the surface structure that results. A caution: the destination of *what chicken* is provisional; we will change the analysis a bit below.

(162) a. Output of Subject/Aux Inversion, with arrow showing application of (130) Wh-Movement



b. Surface structure



As stated in the Wh- Movement rule of (130), the movement of *what chicken* is assumed to leave a **trace**. A trace is more or less our formalization of a gap: it is an empty copy of what got moved; it has the same category, but it contains no phonetic material. To show that a trace is empty, we use the letter *t*, as the daughter of the trace's category. For now, the trace is just an arbitrary choice, but we later on it will play an important role in the semantics of wh- questions and similar constructions. For now, we can observe that the trace NP means that the subcategorization requirements of *put* are satisfied (albeit by an empty, abstract entity) at surface structure as well as deep structure.

I will now restate the point of what we're currently doing: we're trying to provide a solution to the problem of subcategorization gaps, and why these gaps characteristically are matched with a Wh-phrase at the start of the sentence. In this approach, gaps only arise from movement,<sup>95</sup> so the fronted wh- phrase will always match the gap. This ability to capture a **long-distance dependency** ("X here only if Y there") is a common justification for a transformational analysis.

<sup>95</sup> A caution: there are many other sources of gaps, such as the subject gaps mentioned in Chapter 1, or the dropped subject pronouns of Spanish, Persian, and many other languages. But these tend to have a special distribution, so the general point still holds.

**Study Exercise #24**

Provide a step-by-step syntactic derivation, mimicking that just given in the text, for

*Into what oven will Fred put the chicken?*

Note: as elsewhere in linguistics, when you're asked to provide a derivation, a useful strategy is to first do the derivation "backwards" in your head, to figure out the starting point (here, deep structure). Then do the derivation "forwards" on paper.

**Study Exercise #25**

Explain how our grammar predicts that

*\*What city have the Romans destroyed Carthage?*

is ungrammatical.

**Study Exercise #26**

Explain how our grammar predicts that

*\*Who will the princess sigh?*

is ungrammatical.

**Study Exercise #27**

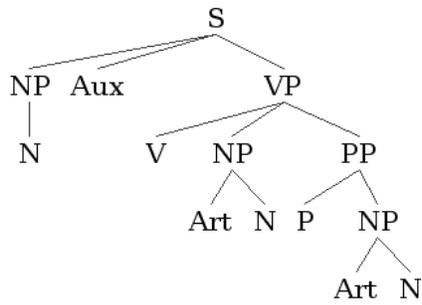
Derive the question

*Who will leave?*

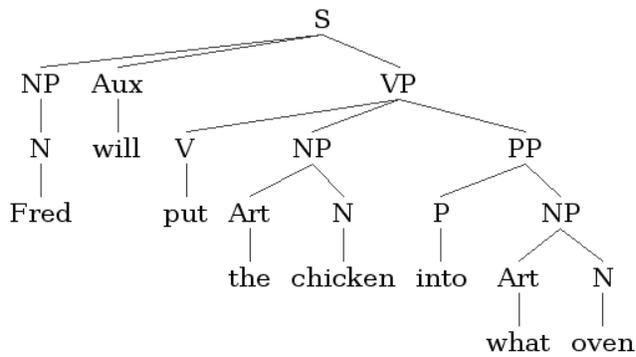
using the rules given above. What is odd about this derivation?

**Answer to Study Exercise #24**

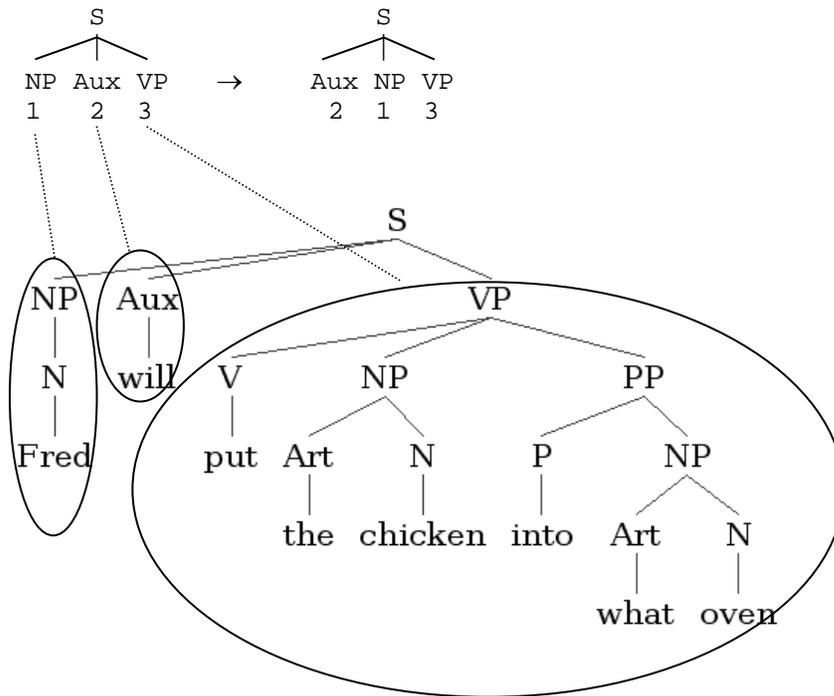
Phrase structure rules:



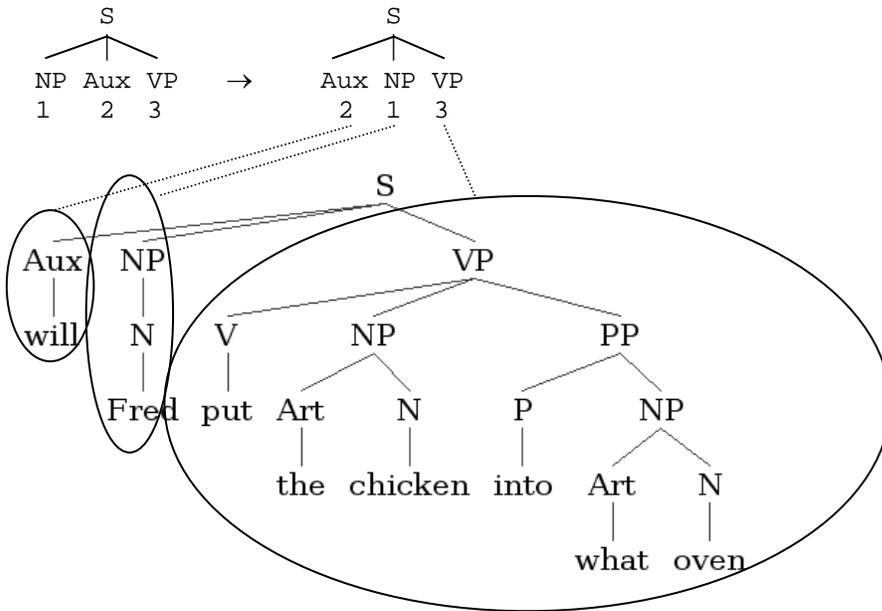
Lexical insertion:



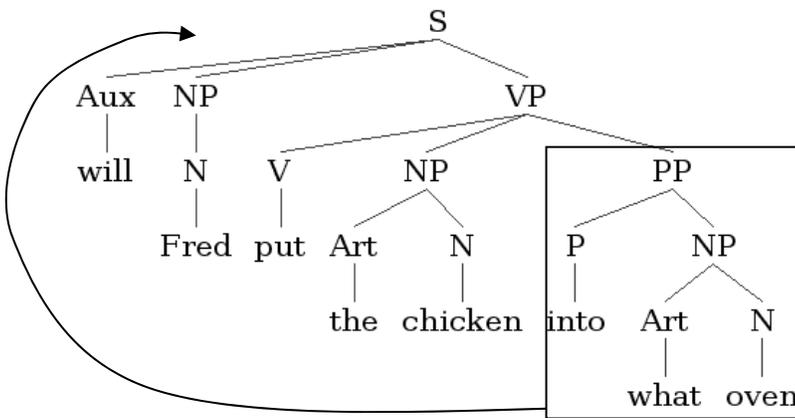
*Application of Subject/Aux inversion:*



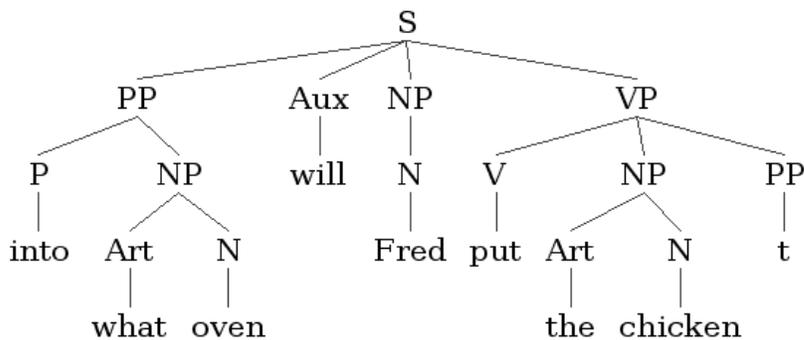
Deriving:



Output of Subject/Aux Inversion, with arrow showing application of (130) Wh-Movement



Surface structure results from Wh-Movement, including trace:



**Answer to Study Exercise #25**

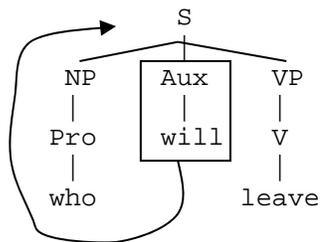
This sentence is a wh- question. Accordingly to our analysis, the wh- phrase in such a question must have originated in deep structure in some position inside the sentence. But there cannot be any such position. The subject position is already filled by *the Romans*, and the verb *destroy* subcategorizes for only one sister NP position, which is already occupied by the NP *Carthage*. Since our grammar cannot generate an appropriate deep structure, it is unable to generate the surface structure. It therefore predicts that the sentence should be ungrammatical.

**Answer to Study Exercise #26**

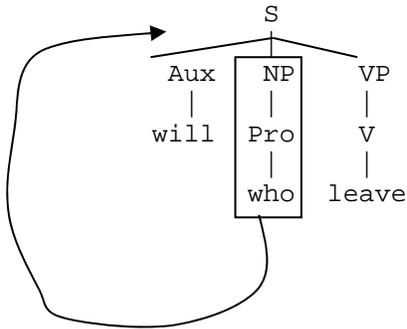
This sentence has essentially the same problem as in Study Exercise #24: there is no place that the NP 'who' could have come from: the subject position is already taken up by *the princess*, and *sigh* doesn't subcategorize for any sister NPs. Thus there is no possible deep structure, so our grammar cannot generate the surface structure. It therefore predicts ungrammaticality.

**Answer to Study Exercise #27**

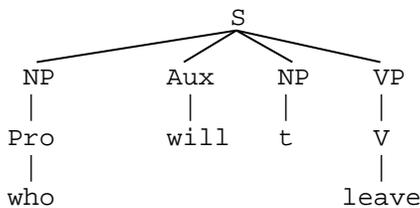
a. Deep structure, showing Subject/Aux Inversion:



## b. Result of Subject/Aux Inversion, showing Wh-movement



## c. Surface structure



What's odd? The input reads just like the output! This is sometimes called a **string-vacuous** derivation; the surface structure word order hasn't changed (trace being silent), but the structure is different.

String-vacuous derivations test the ability of the student to “think like a computer” (see p. 32 above). As humans, we may sometimes feel that derivations that in the end do essentially nothing waste our time. But the real payoff here is that we've applied the rules of the grammar, showing we got the right answer — what we win from the seemingly pointless activity is reassurance. And the rules, of course, aren't pointless because often the derivations they create are not string-vacuous at all.

#### 4. The “landing site” of Wh- Movement

Wh- Movement doesn't always move words to the beginning of the sentence. In so-called **embedded Wh- questions**, movement is to the beginning of a subordinate clause, as in the following examples.

(163) *Some instances of embedded Wh- questions*

I wonder what city the Romans destroyed.  
 We asked for whom the bell tolls.

They are found when the main clause has a verb like *wonder* and *ask*, which takes a question as its sister node. I'll assume that these verbs have a special categorization, not formalized here, under which they take a CP that is not a declarative (the usual case), but a wh- question.

A further observation about embedded questions is that they don't occur with the complementizer *that*:

\*I wonder what city that the Romans destroyed.

\*We asked for whom that the bell tolls.

\*I wonder that what city the Romans destroyed.

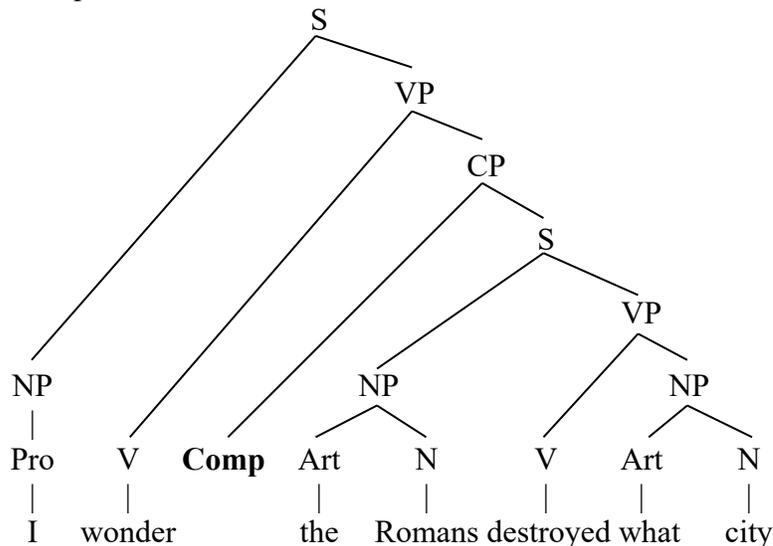
\*We asked that for whom the bell tolls.

These facts suggest a refinement of our analysis of Wh- Movement. An influential idea in syntactic theory is that the order of words in sentences can be explicated in terms of **slots**, which the words compete to fill. We've already said that the Complementizer *that* occupies the position Comp, a daughter of CP. The idea to be developed here is that in an embedded Wh- question, the moved Wh- phrase actually *occupies* the Comp slot. When Comp is thus occupied, there is no room for *that* (there's no problem in leaving it out; it is semantically empty in any event).

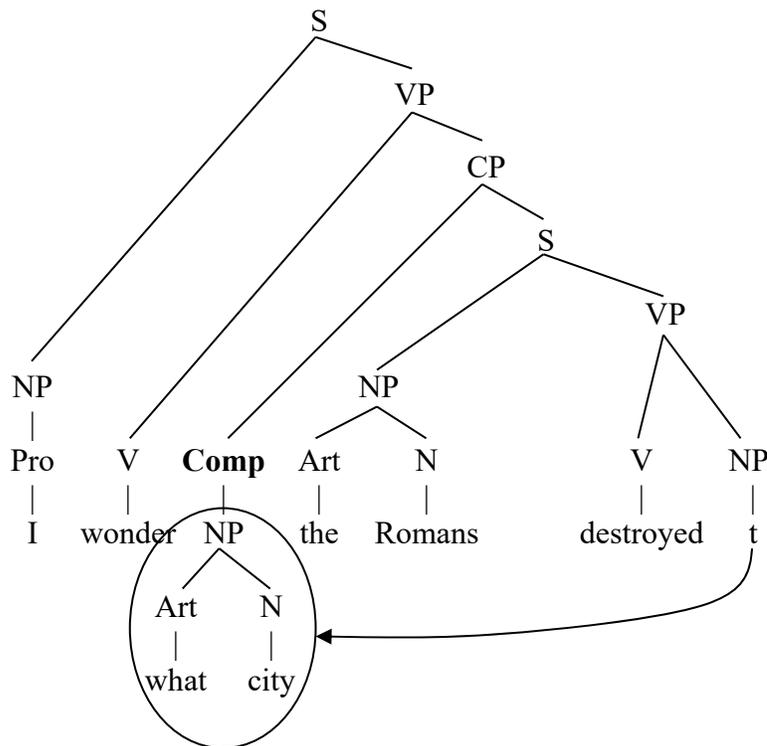
Under this approach, we can arrange lexical insertion simply to leave Comp empty for embedded clauses introduced by verbs like *wonder* and *imagine*. Then, Wh- Movement acts to fill the empty slot by moving the wh- phrase into it, as follows:

(164) *A derivation, using empty Comp, of I wonder what city the Romans destroyed?*

a. *Deep structure*



b. *Wh- Movement and surface structure*



In this approach, the empty Comp node provides a kind of “landing site” for the moved Wh-phrase.

4.1 *Cleaning up the analysis I: fixing Subject/Aux inversion*

Before going on, I should confess to a minor cheat: in the sentence just derived, I simplified matters by leaving out an Aux. In fact, there’s a nice puzzle at hand here: if there *is* an Aux in a subordinate clause, it does *not* flip with the subject as it would in a main clause. Here is the crucial comparison:

(165) *Aux inverts with subject only in main clauses*

a. *Main clause*

What city [have]<sub>Aux</sub> [ the Romans ]<sub>NP</sub> destroyed?

b. *Subordinate clause*

I wonder what city [ the Romans ]<sub>NP</sub> [have]<sub>Aux</sub> destroyed?

Let us modify Subject/Aux Inversion to acknowledge this fact.

**(166) Subject/Aux inversion (revised)**

*Restrictions:*

*Applies in non-echo questions.*

*Applies in main clauses only*

**Study Exercise #28**

Give an example, based on the sentence in the text, of what ungrammatical sentences would be generated if we allowed Subject/Aux Inversion to apply in subordinate clauses.

### Answer to Study Exercise #28

\*I wonder what city [have]<sub>Aux</sub> [ the Romans ]<sub>NP</sub> destroyed.

Note that the intended reading is different from the one you would spell with a comma, colon, or three periods:

(Y'know), I wonder, what city have the Romans destroyed?

(Y'know), I wonder: what city have the Romans destroyed?

(Y'know), I wonder ... what city have the Romans destroyed?

It seems that in these cases, the sequence is being treated as two sentences: *I wonder* and *What city have the Romans destroyed?* In these case the use of Subject/Aux Inversion is completely expected.

---

#### 4.2 Cleaning up the analysis II: Non-embedded Wh-questions

So at this point we have a working analysis for embedded Wh- questions. But to be consistent, we also need to cover the wh- questions that are *not* embedded, that is, the ones we started out with. There is a fairly reasonable tack that can be taken here, namely that *these sentences also have Comp*, which provides the landing site for the sentence-initial wh-phrase. Specifically, the assumptions we need to make are as follows:

- Wh- questions are not instances of S, but of CP.
- They require (by means not stated here) that the initial Comp be empty in Deep Structure.<sup>96</sup>

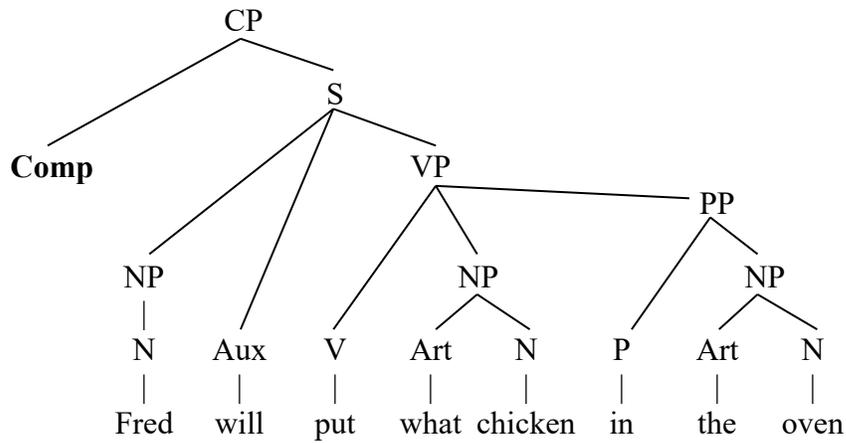
Under this analysis, the derivation of *What chicken will Fred put in the oven?* comes out slightly differently:

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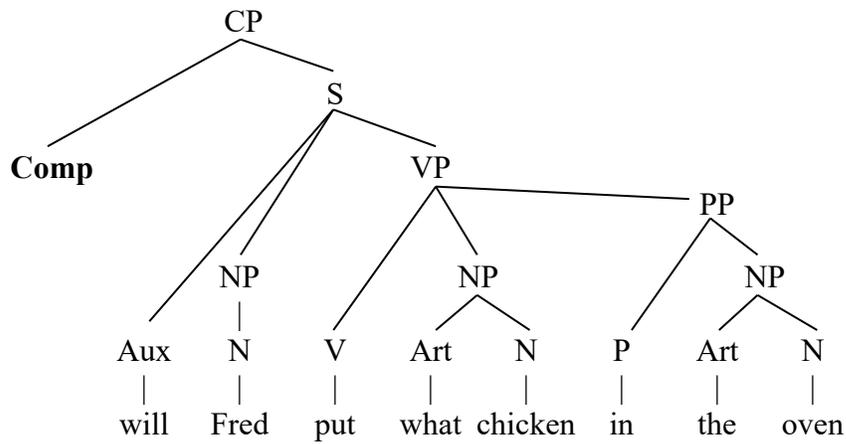
<sup>96</sup> There are alternatives to this, for instance letting the moved Wh- phrase displace a *that*, and adding a transformation that deletes *that* from the topmost complementizer of the sentence.

(167) Revised syntactic derivation for *What chicken will Fred put in the oven?*, using empty *Comp*

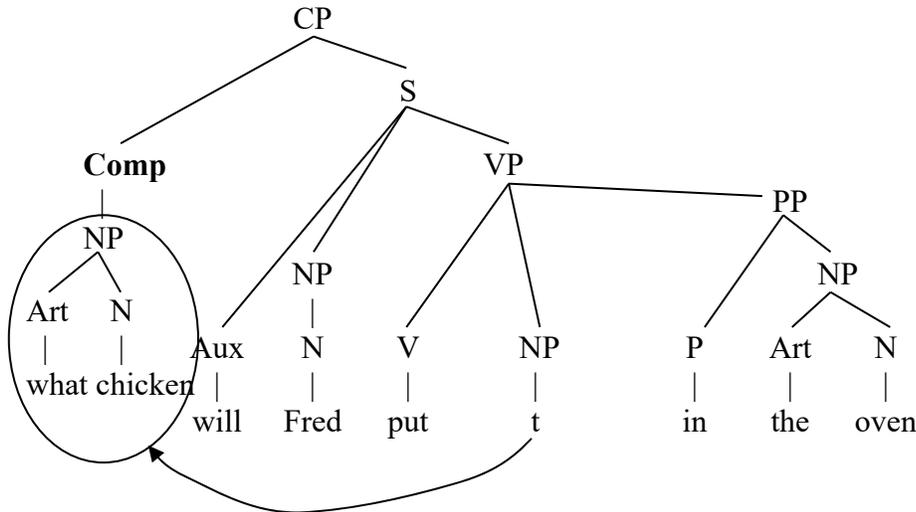
a. Deep structure



b. Subject-aux inversion



c. *Wh-* movement (and Subject-Aux inversion), yielding surface structure



With this in mind, we can express the Wh- Movement transformation more explicitly.

**(168) Wh- Movement (revised version)**

Move a wh-phrase into an unfilled Comp, leaving a trace.

**4.3 Slots in syntax**

This sort of analysis, in which an empty position is available for anything that moves (or, as we’ll see, is copied), has been extended by linguists to a consistent, across-the-board practice, essentially “a place for everything and everything in its place.” Thus, in more refined theories, there is a slot into which the Aux moves in questions, and many others. You will probably encounter this approach further if/when you study more syntax.

**5. Typology of Wh-movement**

Many languages other than English form Wh- questions by moving the wh- phrase to the beginning of the sentence. Here are three examples:

*French:* Tu as vu Paris (normal statement)  
 you have seen Paris

Quelle ville as-tu vu t? (wh- question)  
 what city have you seen (trace)?

*Chamorro* (South Pacific):

Hafahan si-Maria i-sanhilo gi tenda (normal statement)  
 bought Maria the-blouse at the-store  
 ‘Maria bought the blouse at the store’

Hafa hafahan si-Maria *t* gi tenda (wh- question)  
 what bought Maria (trace) at store  
 ‘What did Maria buy at the store?’

*Vata* (Ivory Coast, West Africa) Tones: 1 = highest, 4 = lowest

4 1 3 2 1  
 Kofi le saka (normal statement)  
 Kofi ate rice

3 4 1 3 2  
 yi Kofi le *t* la (wh- question)  
 what Kofi eat (trace) question-particle  
 ‘What did Kofi eat?’

Many other languages work in the same way; for example Modern Hebrew, Russian, and Spanish.

However, a large number of languages do not have Wh-Movement. These languages form Wh- questions simply by leaving the Wh- phrase in situ. An example of a non-Wh- Movement language is Persian:

Ali a:n keta:b-ra: xa:nd  
 Ali that book read  
 ‘Ali read that book’

Ali tʃe keta:b-i xa:nd?<sup>97</sup>  
 Ali what book-indef. read  
 ‘What book did Ali read?’

\*tʃe keta:b-i Ali xa:nd?  
 what book Ali read

Japanese is similar:

John-wa **naze** kubi-ni natta no?  
 John-Topic why was fired question particle  
 ‘Why was John fired?’

---

<sup>97</sup> If you’re thinking about case marking here, the answer to your question is that the Accusative suffix *-ra:* only attaches to *definite* Noun Phrases, the kind that would be translated with *the* in English. In the wh-question, the expression for ‘what book’ is indefinite and takes the indefinite suffix.

Bill-wa [ John-ga naze kubi-ni natta tte ] itta no?  
 Bill-TOP John-nom why was fired Comp said question particle  
 ‘Why did Bill say that John was fired?’<sup>98</sup>

It’s striking that the languages seem to pattern together; for instance, unbounded movement to the *right* is apparently exceedingly rare.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, there are logical possibilities for Wh-movement that seem to be unattested:

- \*Move a wh- phrase to the exact middle of a sentence.
- \*Move a wh- phrase so that it follows the second word of a sentence.
- \*Move all the words that precede the wh- phrase so that they follow the wh- phrase, and move all the words that follow the wh- phrase so that they precede the wh- phrase.

No such rules have been found in any language. We will discuss such cross-linguistic patterns in greater detail later on.

## 6. Why Wh- Movement?

It’s something of a puzzle why languages have Wh- Movement at all—why not adopt the sensible Persian/Japanese/Chinese strategy, and just leave your Wh- words in situ? Surely it would be clearer for the listener to interpret the wh- word in its proper syntactic location.<sup>100</sup>

A clue, I think, can be found in pairs of sentences that have the same gap, but where the Wh-phrase appears in a different location:

[ What song ] can Sue imagine that Bill sang *t* ?  
 Sue can imagine [ what song ] Bill sang *t* ?

Such pairs are often said to illustrate a difference of **scope**: the location of the wh-phrase indicates the domain in which the wh- phrase is acting as a logical operator. Thus, in the first sentence above, the wh- phrase *what song* is used to ask something about the content of Sue’s imaginings—its scope is the entire sentence. The second sentence reports a thought of Sue’s. Within this thought, *what song* is being used to ask something about Bill’s singing (that is, Sue is mentally answering the question, “What song did Bill sing?”). Therefore, the scope of *what song* in the second sentence is just the subordinate clause. It can be seen, then, that the linear position of the wh- phrase is suited to expressing a distinction of scope. (We will cover more about scope later on when we turn to semantics.)

<sup>98</sup> An odd custom of linguists writing in English about Japanese syntax is to use English first names.

<sup>99</sup> Proposed instances are in Navajo, Circassian, and American Sign Language. Such claims often trigger scholarly replies suggesting alternative interpretations of the data.

<sup>100</sup> Indeed, experimental work by psycholinguists has documented the increased cognitive load and memory burden that listeners experience when they have heard a wh- phrase and are “looking for” the corresponding gap later in the sentence.

What emerges, if this speculation is correct, is that there's no perfect design available. Languages without wh- movement make it clear where the inherent location of the wh- phrase is, but are less clear in indicating scope; languages with wh- movement mark scope clearly, but impose a burden on listeners, who need to carry out gap detection.

## 7. The unbounded nature of Wh- Movement

An important aspect of Wh- Movement is that it can move a wh- phrase over very long stretches of syntactic structure. Consider the following deep structures and corresponding surface structures:

You have seen who.

[ Who ] have you seen *t* ?

Joan thinks that you have seen who.

[ Who ] does Joan think that you have seen *t* ?

Bill would imagine that Joan thinks that you have seen who.

[ Who ] would Bill imagine that Joan thinks that you have seen *t* ?

Sally believes that Bill would imagine that Joan thinks that you have seen who.

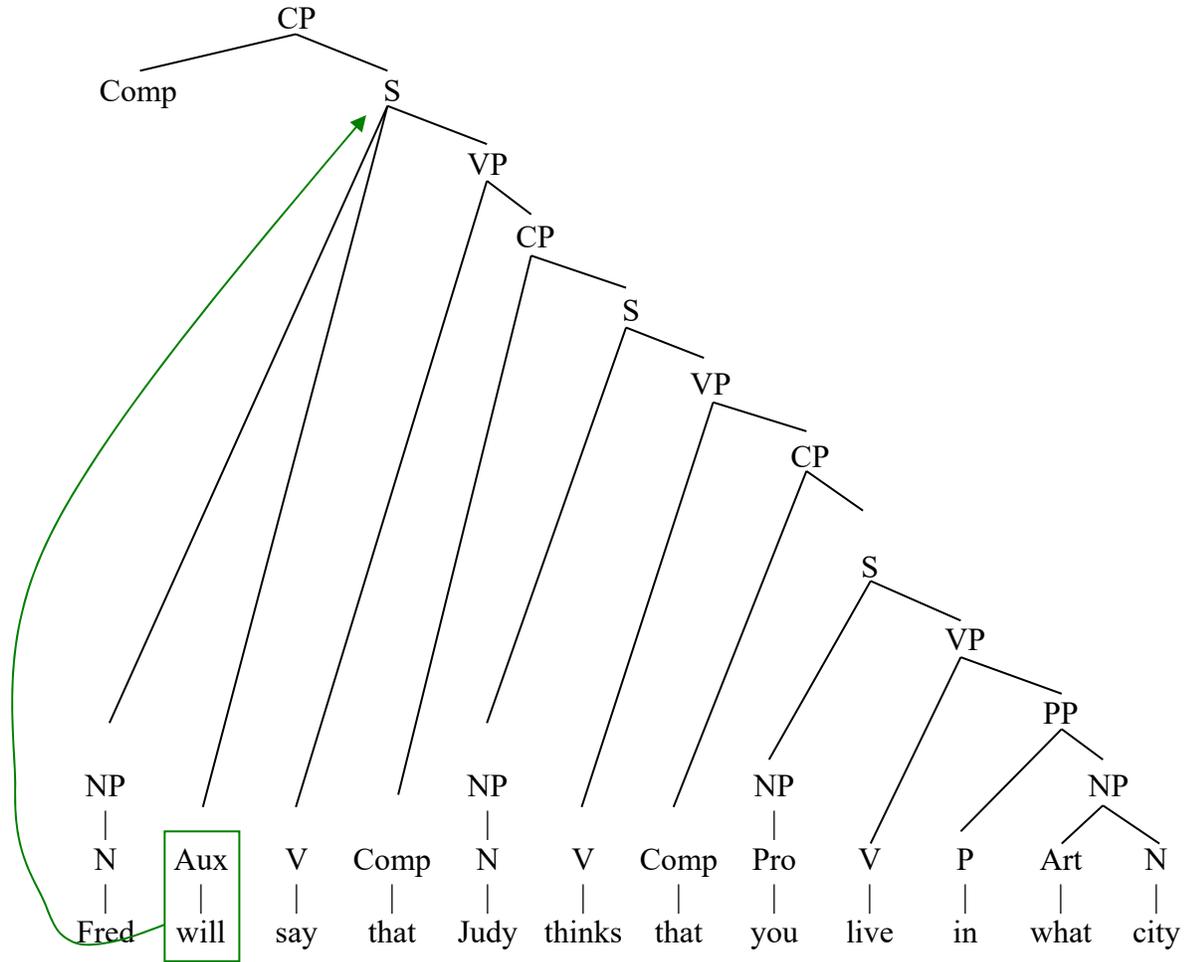
Who does Sally believe that Bill would imagine that Joan thinks that you have seen?

### Study Exercise #29

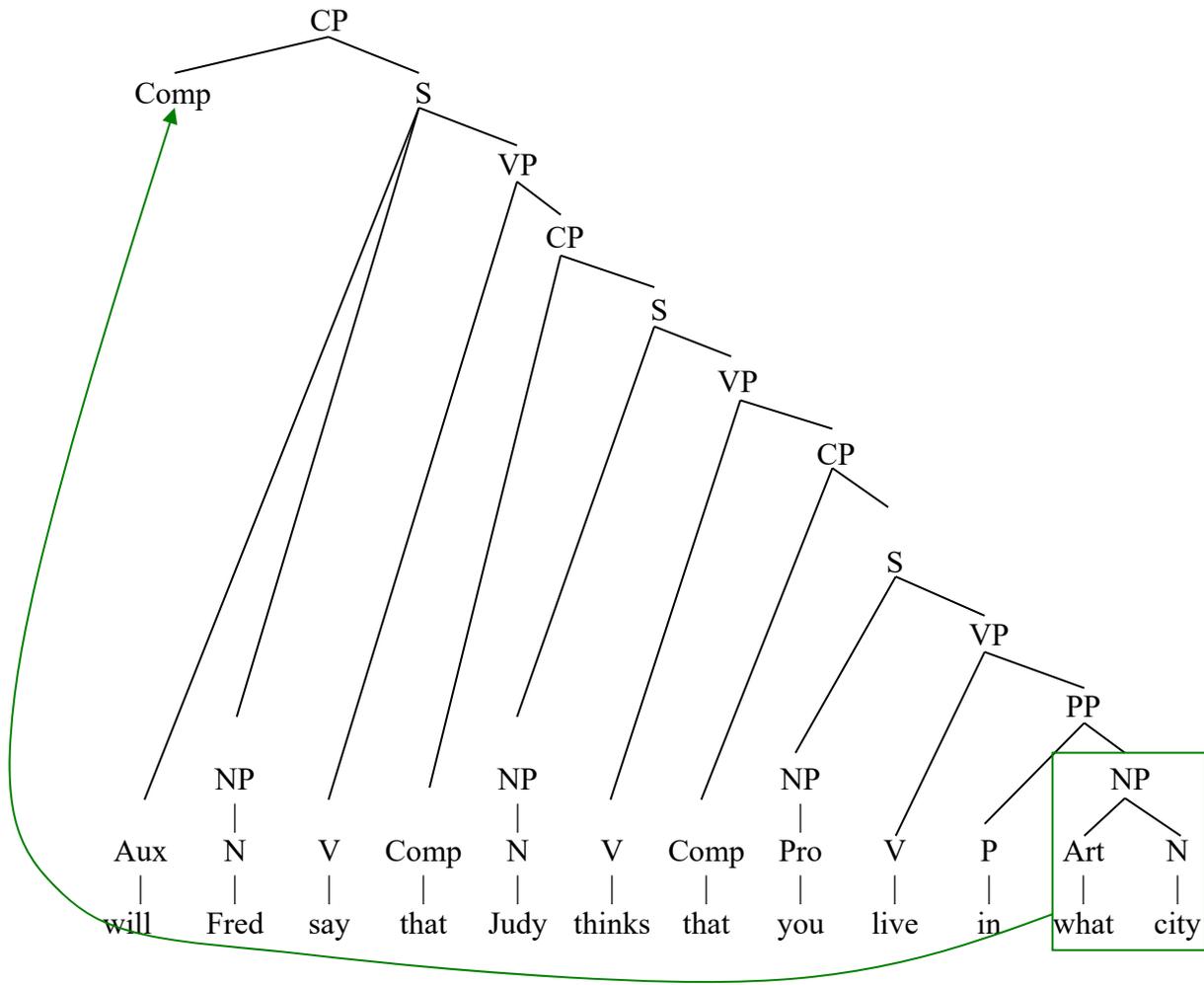
Provide a syntactic derivation (that is, deep structure, arrows showing what moves where, surface structure) for the sentence 'What city will Fred say that Judy thinks that you live in?'.

**Answer to Study Exercise #29**

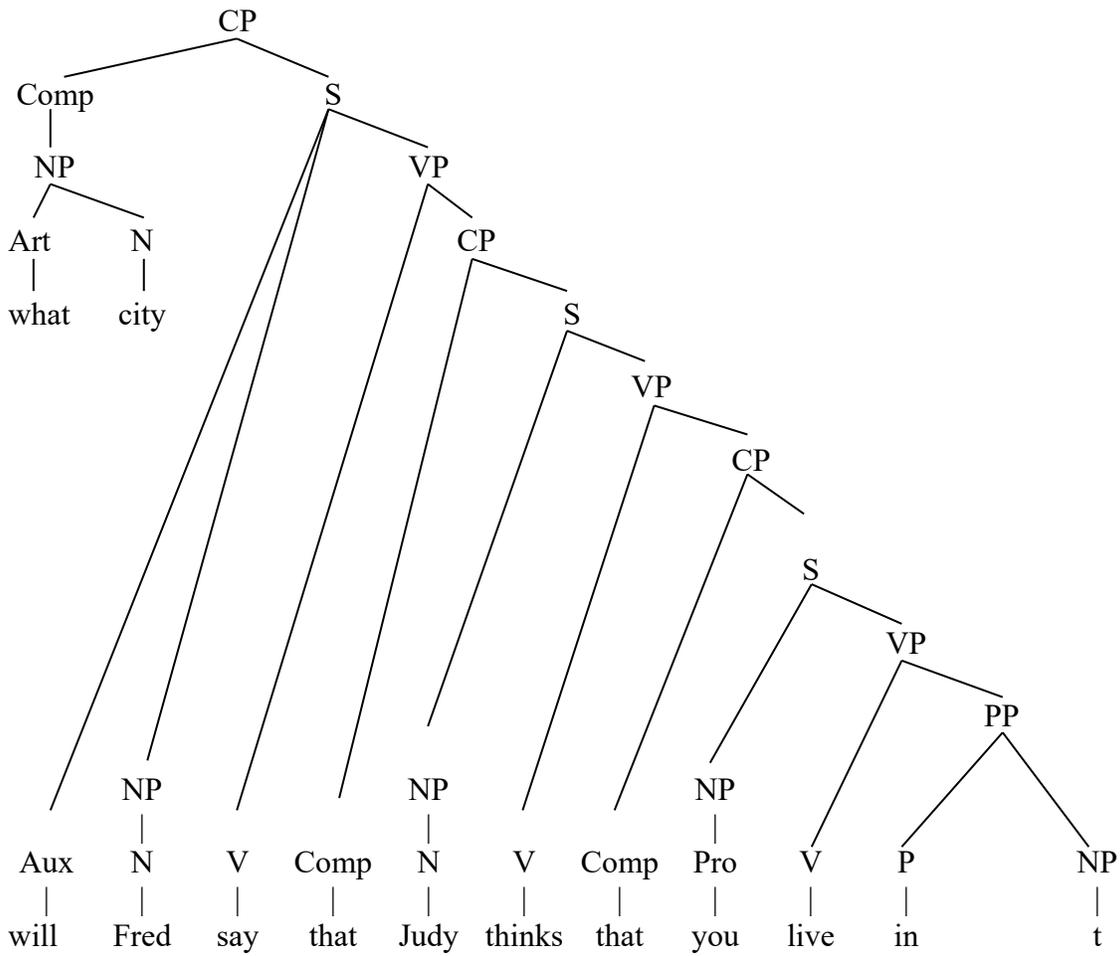
Deep structure. The *wh*- phrase is in situ, so that the preposition has an object. The arrow shows the movement attributed to Subject/Aux Inversion:



Output of Subject/Aux Inversion, with arrow showing action of Wh- Movement:



Surface structure, with trace of *what city*:



**Study Exercise #30**

Provide a syntactic derivation (that is, deep structure, arrows showing what moves where, surface structure) for the following sentences:

- a. Which book will Sue ask that we study?
- b. Sue will ask which book we should study.

Assume the transformations of Subject/Aux Inversion and Wh- Movement.

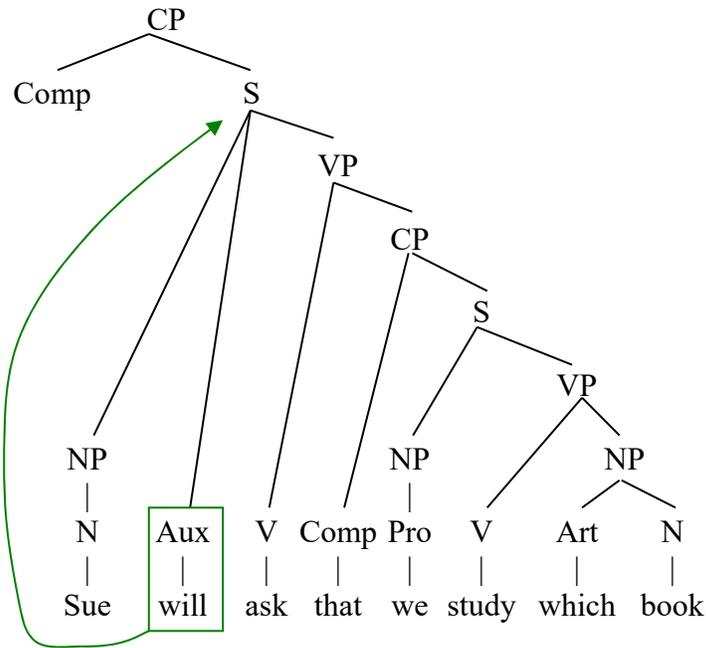
**Answer to Study Exercise #30**

**a. Which book will Sue ask that we study?**

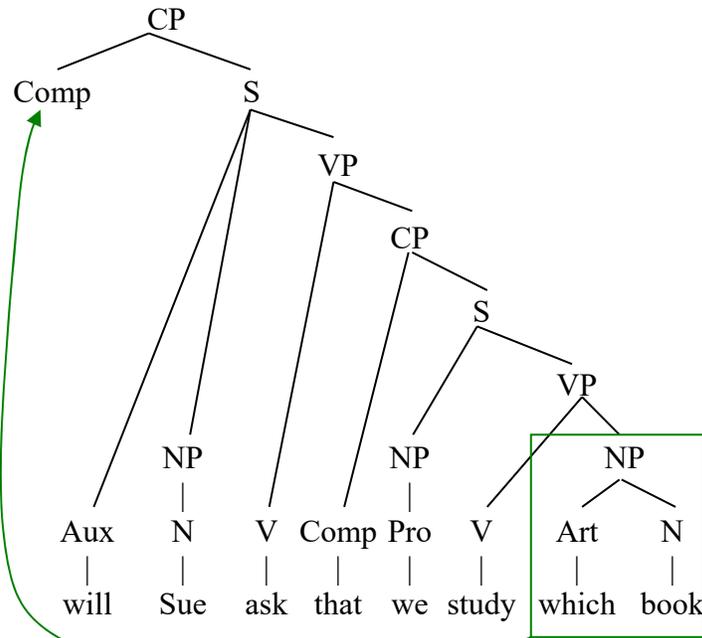
Deep structure, with *which book* in situ.

Note presence of empty Comp, the “landing site” for wh-phrases.

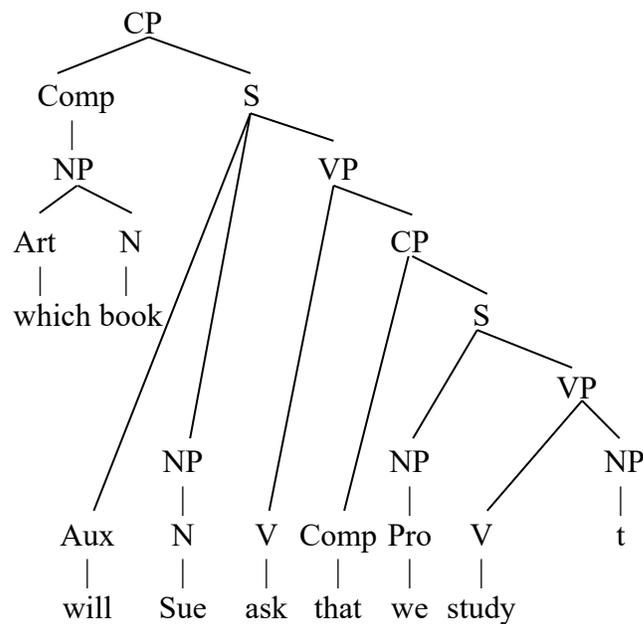
Arrow shows application of Subj/Aux Inversion:



Output of Subject/Aux Inversion. Arrow shows application of Wh-Movement, moving the wh- phrase into Comp.



Surface structure, with wh- phrase in Comp and a trace left behind:



**b. Sue will ask which book we should study**

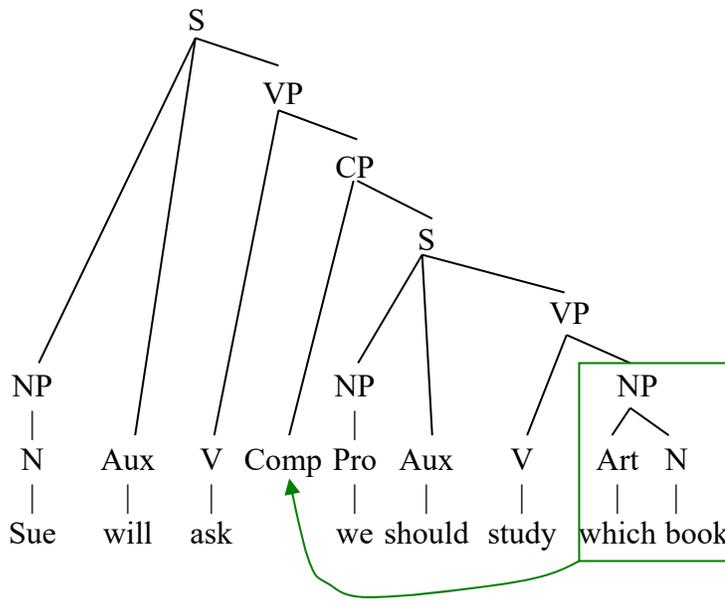
Deep structure, with *which book* in situ.

Now the empty Comp is an embedded Comp.

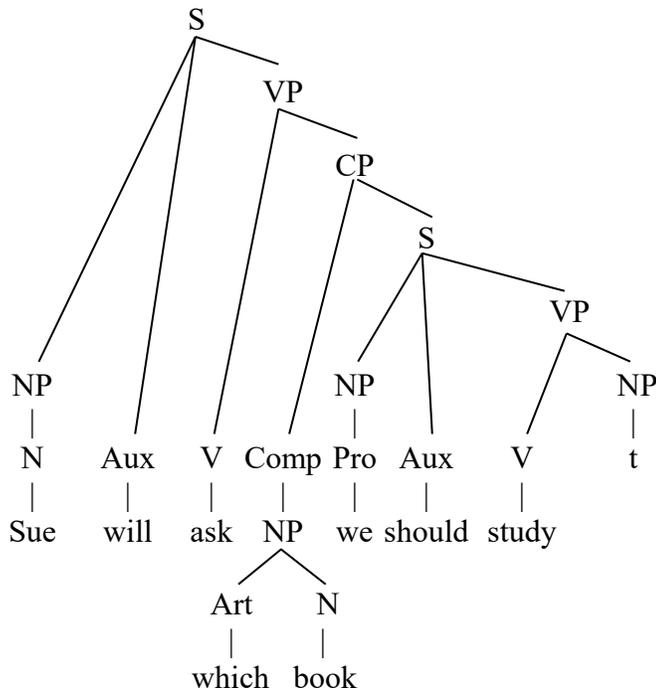
The full sentence, being a statement, is an S, not a CP.

Subject/Aux Inversion ((198)) does not apply in embedded questions.

Arrow shows application of Wh-Movement:



Surface structure:



## 8. Another transformation: Topicalization

English has a number of transformations similar to Wh- Movement. Perhaps the simplest is the so-called Topicalization rule, used to account for sentences like these:

Linguistics, I can teach.  
Those guys we would never give our credit cards to.  
In that oven you should never put a chicken.

The name of the rule is from that fact that the fronted NP serves as the “topic” of its sentence; what it is about.<sup>101</sup> These sentences have a distinctly rhetorical character, and often sound best if you imagine that the topic is being contrasted with some other topic:

Postmodernism, I’m clueless about, but linguistics, I can teach.

The “landing site” for fronted topics is *not* Comp, since you can get both *that* and the fronted topic in sequence:

I’d say that linguistics, I can teach.

This is of course very different from Wh- Movement, where you never get both at once, leading us to set up an analysis in which the *wh-* phrase moves *into* Comp (see (139), on p. 201). Thus I will state the rule of Topicalization as simply moving a phrase to the left edge of S, as follows:

### (169) Topicalization

Move an NP or PP to the left edge of an S, making it the daughter of S, and leaving a trace.

The justification for Topicalization is much the same as that for Wh- Movement: the presence of a topicalized element is correlated with a subcategorization gap later in the sentence.

Topicalization, like Wh- movement, appears to be unbounded, though the examples that show this tend to be a bit less natural:

John, I don’t think a lot of people would like.  
Fred, I’d imagine that you’d think that a lot of people wouldn’t like.

As unbounded transformations, Wh- Movement and Topicalization (as well as others to come) have some crucial similar behaviors, which we’ll examine later on in discussing “islands”.

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<sup>101</sup> I noted earlier that in normal NP + VP structure, the NP is what the sentence is about. Topicalization more or less overrides this, letting some other constituent be designated as what the sentence is about.

**Study Exercise #31**

Derive *I'd say that linguistics, I can teach.*

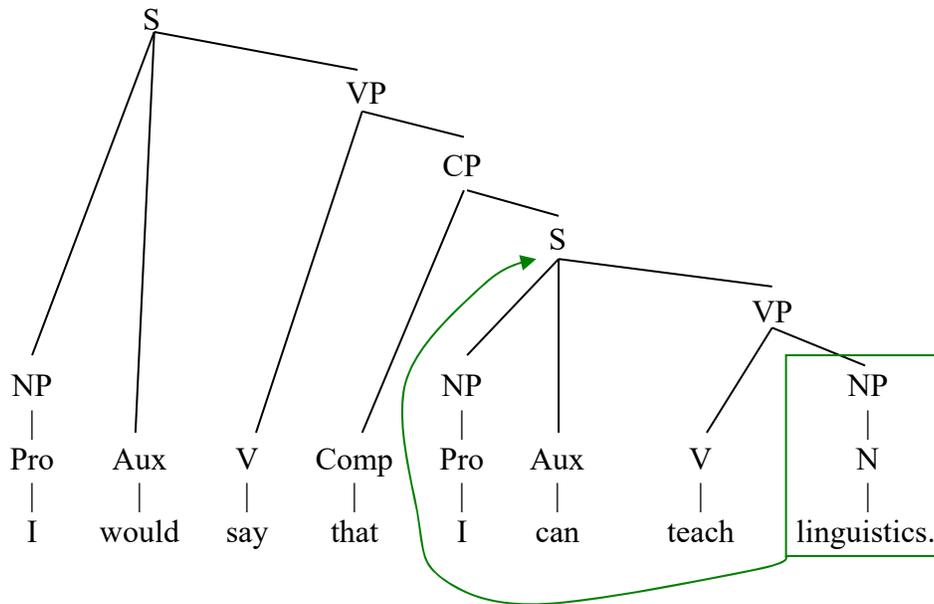
**Answer to Study Exercise #31**

***I'd say that linguistics, I can teach.***

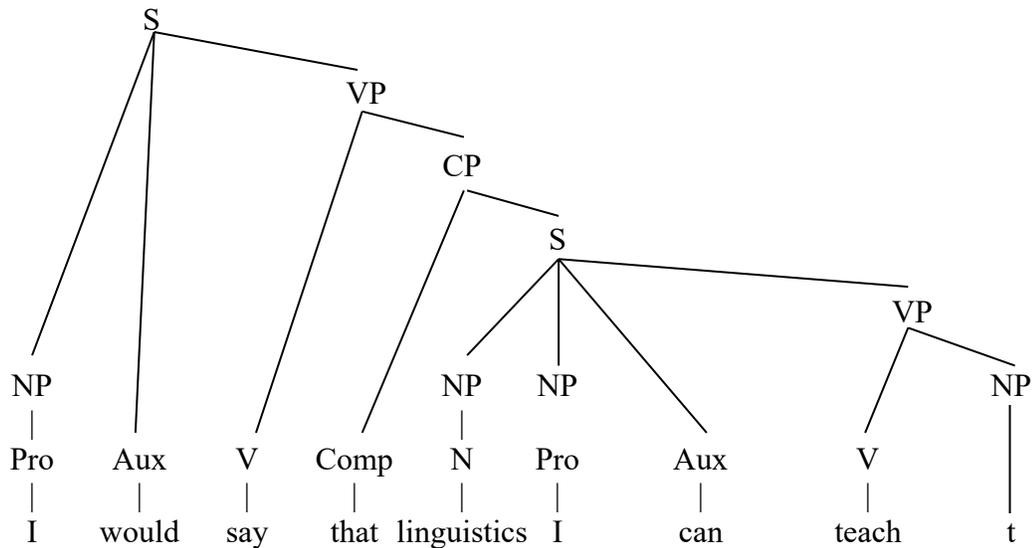
Deep structure, with *linguistics* in situ.

Application of Topicalization is shown.

Note that movement is simply to the beginning of S, *not* into Comp as with Wh-Movement.



Surface structure, with trace.



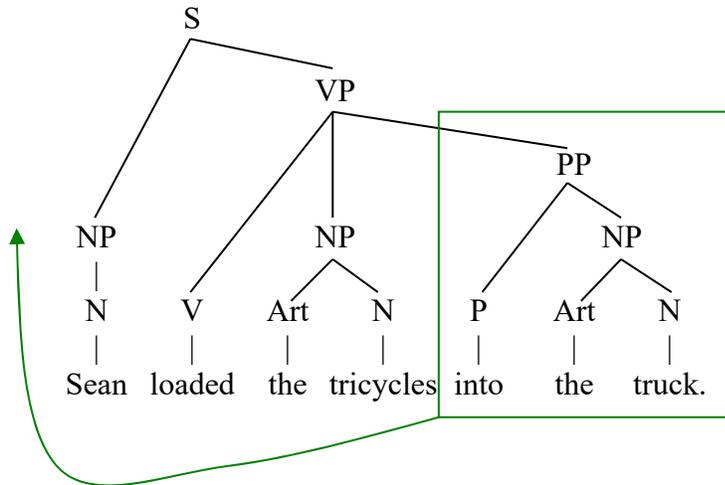


The mention of the copying of the feature [Tense] onto *be* (which you might think of as a form of agreement) is for completeness;<sup>103</sup> we will generally skip this step in the derivations to follow.

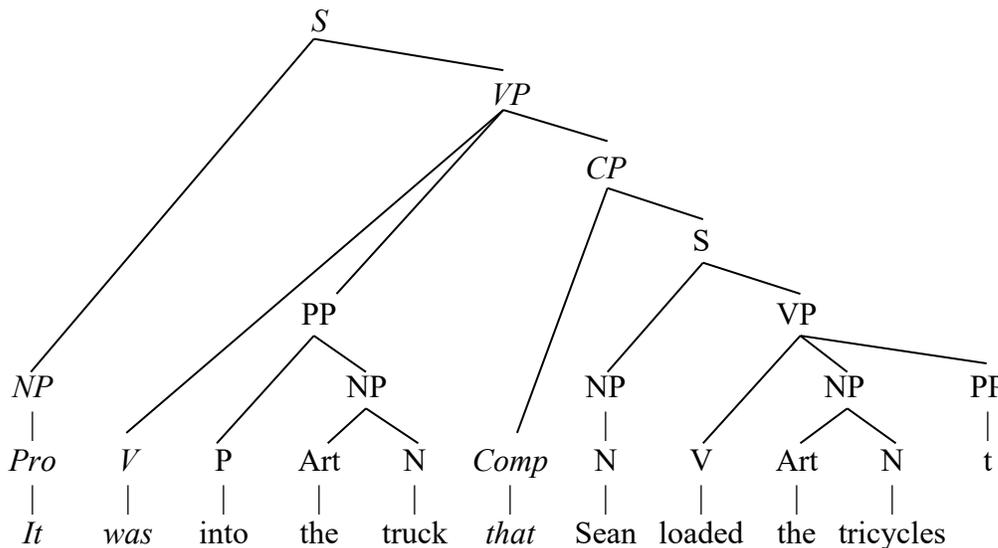
It Clefting is another instance of an unbounded dependency, and for the same reason as in Wh- Movement requires a movement analysis.

Here is an example of how It Clefting applies. Structure added by the rules is shown in italics.

Deep structure and movement:



Surface structure, with trace:



Like Wh- Movement and Topicalization, It Clefting is an unbounded rule:

<sup>103</sup> Detail: it seems that you actually don't have to copy tense in every case; you can also use a kind of default [Tense:present] on *be*, as in sentences like *It is Meng that left*.

It was [ the tricycles ]<sub>NP</sub> that Tom thinks Sue knows that Bill loaded \_\_\_ onto the truck.

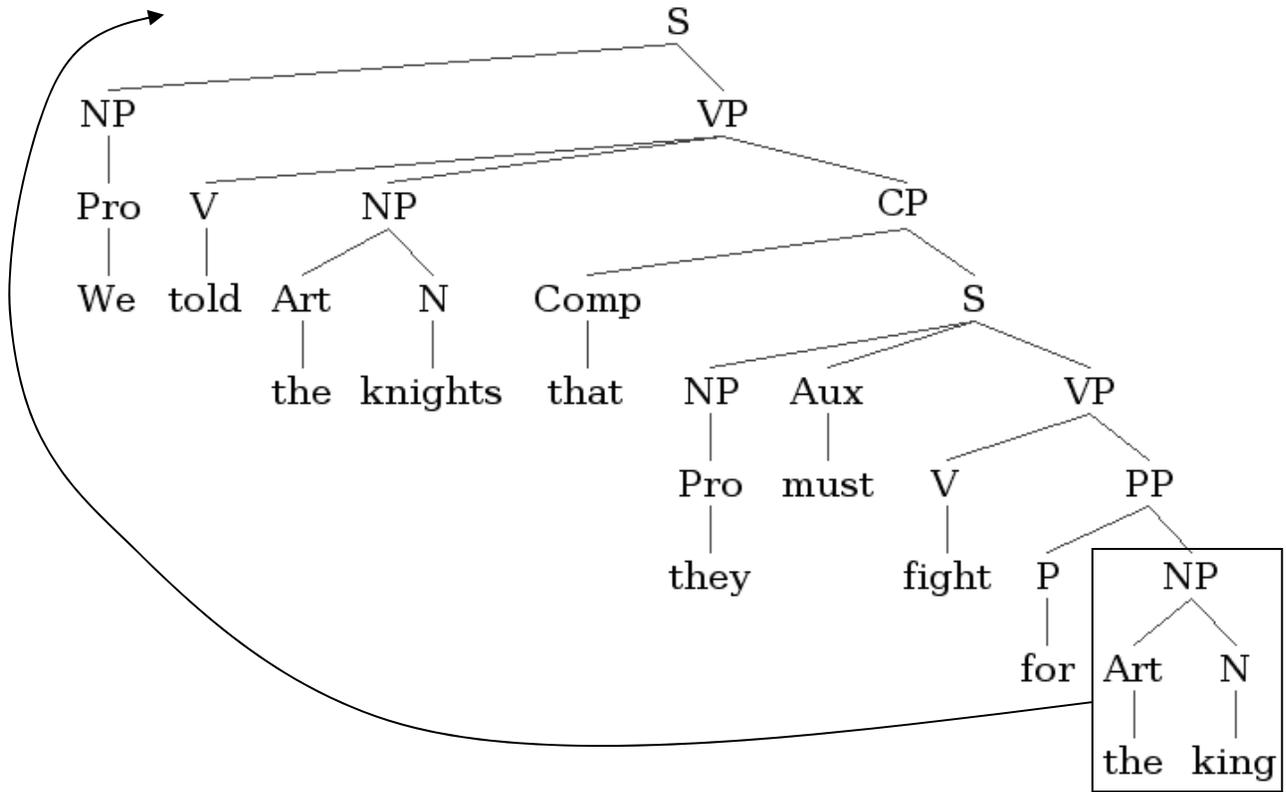
**Study Exercise #32**

Provide deep structure, arrows showing movement, and surface structure for this case of unbounded movement:

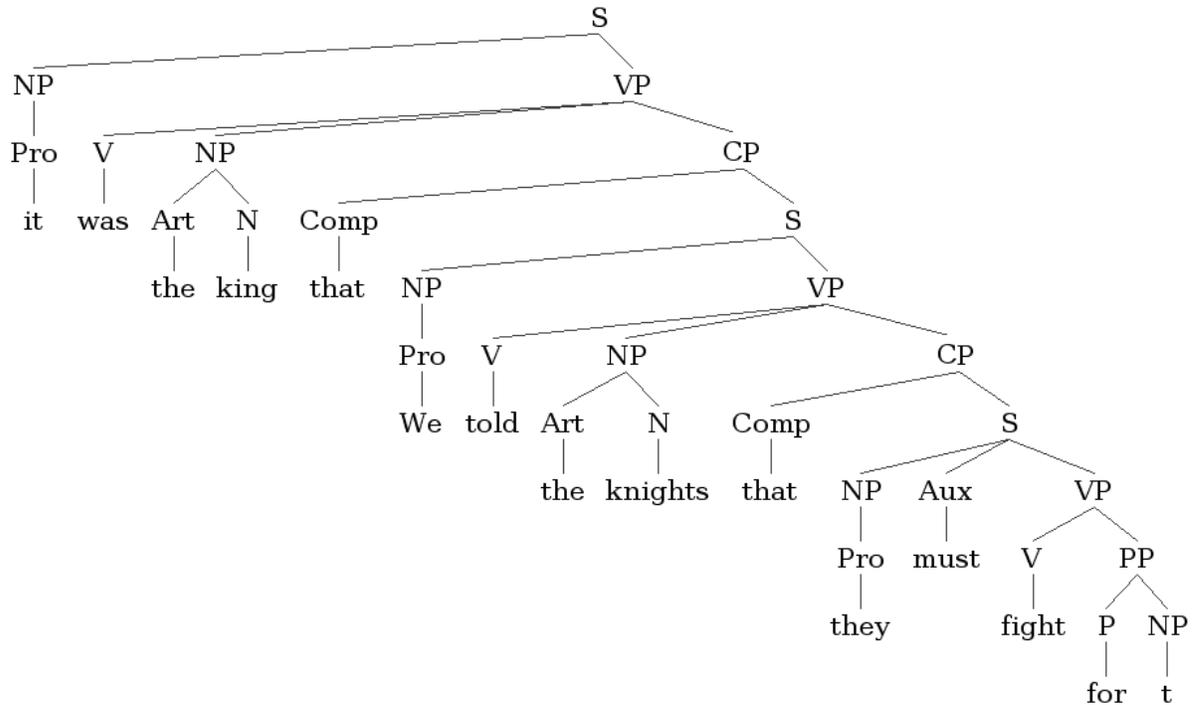
It was the king that we told the knights that they must fight for.

**Answer to Study Exercise #32**

Deep structure, with arrow showing movement:



Surface structure, with inserted *it* as subject and *be* as verb; moved NP is replaced by trace:



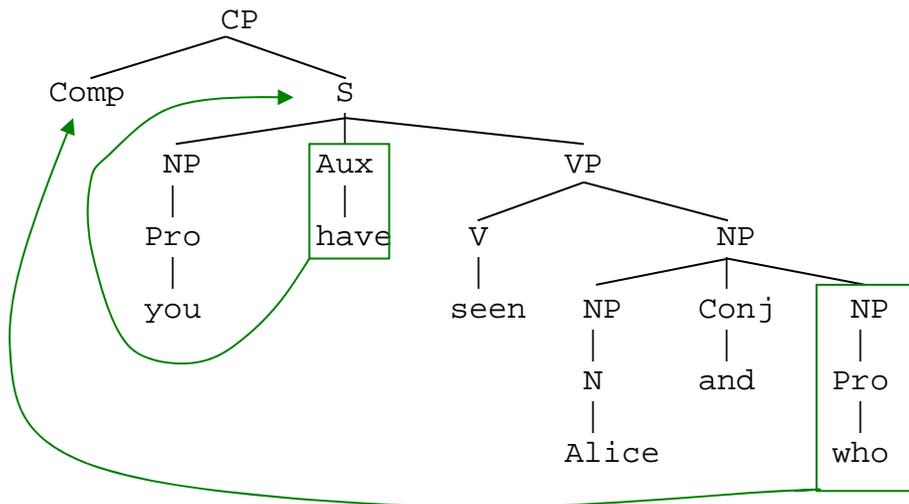
## 10. Island constraints

Consider the following deep structure:

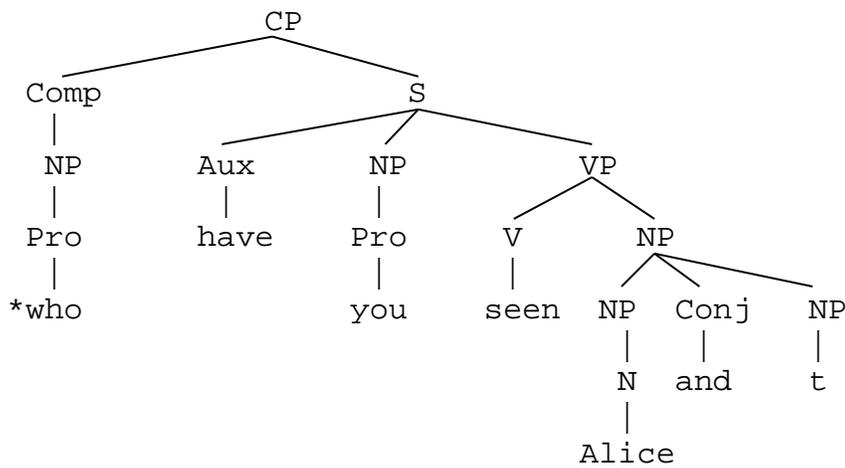
*You have seen Alice and who?*

This is clearly a possible deep structure, as it can be an echo question (p. 186) if nothing applies to it. However, if we make it part of a CP, in anticipation of making it into a Wh- question (see section 4.2 of this chapter for why), and then apply Wh- movement to this deep structure, the result is unexpectedly ungrammatical:

Deep structure, Subject/Aux Inversion, and Wh- Movement:



Surface structure:



Note that we really are dealing with ungrammaticality rather than nonsense; the question is perfectly reasonable and could mean roughly *Who did you see Alice with?*

The ungrammaticality of this sentence is a serious overgeneration problem: we have applied the rules of the grammar in a perfectly legitimate way, but have derived a bad result. Here are some further data of the same sort:

a. *Conjoined NP*

You have seen who and Alice (okay as echo question)  
 \*Who have you seen t and Alice?

b. *Conjoined NP*

Bill will take pictures of Fred and Alice (not the same deep structure, but close enough)

- \*Who will Bill take pictures of t and Alice?
- \*Who will Bill take pictures of Fred and t?

c. *Conjoined PP*

- Jay jumped onto the trampoline and into the pool.
- \*What did Jay jump onto the trampoline and into t?
  - \*What did Jay jump onto t and into the pool?

d. *Conjoined VP*

- Phil loves coffee and abhors tea.
- \*What beverage does Phil love coffee and abhor t?
  - \*What beverage does Phil love t and abhor tea?

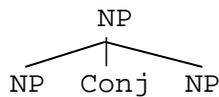
e. *Conjoined S*

- Phil might think that Sue loves coffee and Alice abhors tea.
- \*What beverage might Phil think that Sues loves coffee and Alice abhors t?
  - \*What beverage might Phil think that Sues loves t and Alice abhors?

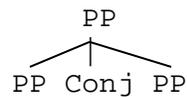
The generalization here is that Wh- Movement produces an ungrammatical result if it tries to move a wh- phrase outside a structure in which two constituents are joined by a conjunction. Structures of this sort are called **coordinate structures**. In the four groups of sentences above, the structures are as follows:

(171) *Some coordinate structures*

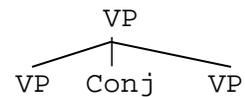
a, b:



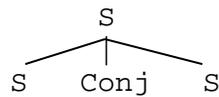
c:



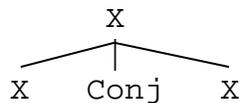
d:



e:



A general notation for coordinate structures is as follows:<sup>104</sup>



The next step is to fix the grammar so that it will no longer generate sentences in which extraction has taken place from a coordinate structure. The most obvious move would be to add a

<sup>104</sup> We could generalize this to cover the multiple conjuncts generated with Kleene star (p. 155; as in NP and NP and NP...), but won't take the time.

complication to the Wh- movement rule that would simply block the rule from doing this. However, we will see later on that all the other long-distance transformations are blocked in the same way. If we added exactly the same complication to all the other rules, we would be missing a generalization.

## 11. Constraints in grammar

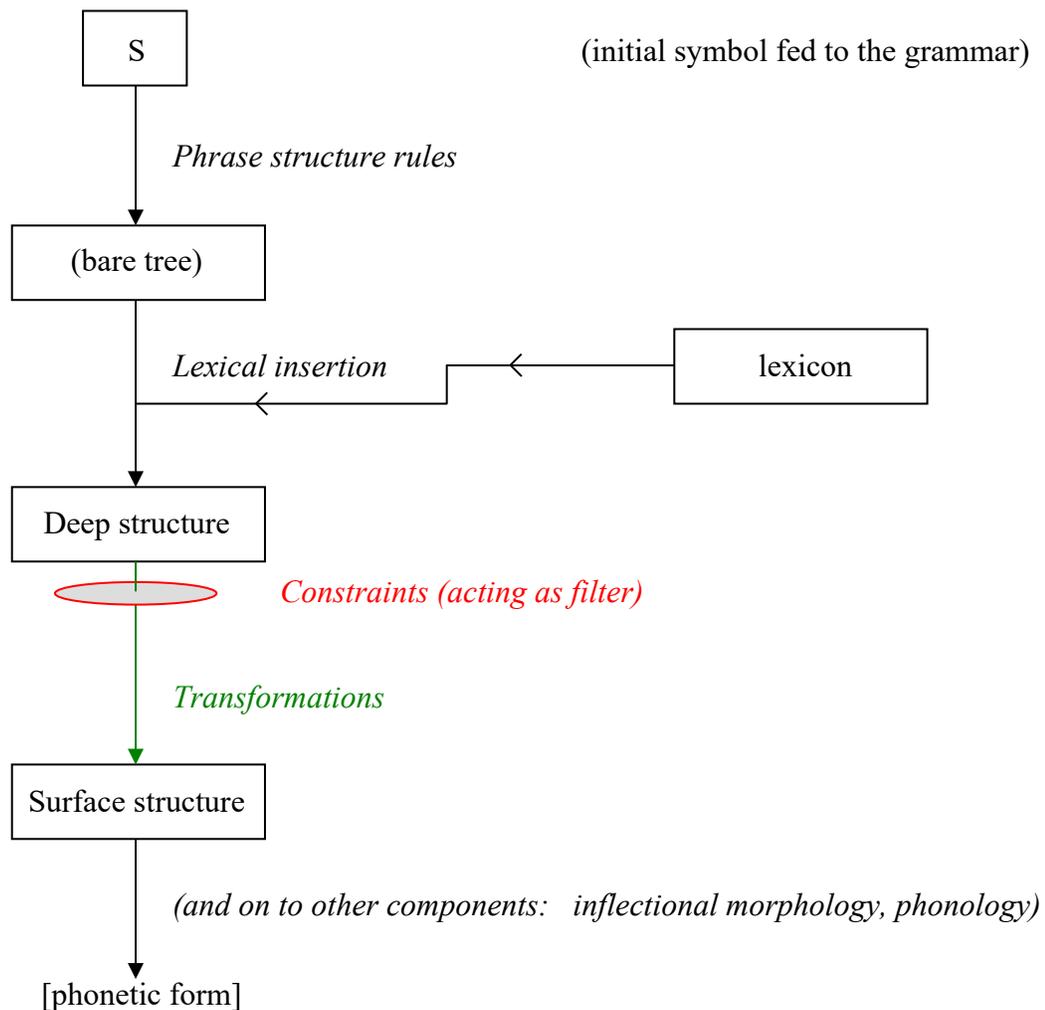
The more general solution would be to add to grammar a **constraint** on possible derivations. A constraint could be thought of as a “filter” on the operation of the grammar: if the derivation of a sentence violates the constraint, then the constraint marks the sentence as ungrammatical, and it is eliminated from the (infinite) set of sentences that the grammar generates.<sup>105</sup>

The general organization of such a grammar can be imagined as follows:

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<sup>105</sup> If you study more linguistics you will likely find a major role for constraints in the theories taught to you. Indeed, some theoretical approaches eliminate rules entirely: in such theories a well-formed linguistic structure is simply one that obeys all the constraints.

(172) *An architecture for grammatical theory with deep and surface structure plus constraints*



This conception includes three of (what I take to be) the four basic formal mechanisms of linguistic theory: (a) generative rules (here, phrase structure rules); (b) transformations (converting one structure to another); (c) filters (throwing out the result of a derivation).<sup>106</sup>

For the data under discussion, the constraint we need is the following:

<sup>106</sup> The fourth rule type is interpretation, which we will cover when we get to semantics.

(173) Coordinate Structure Constraint

Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside a coordinate structure.

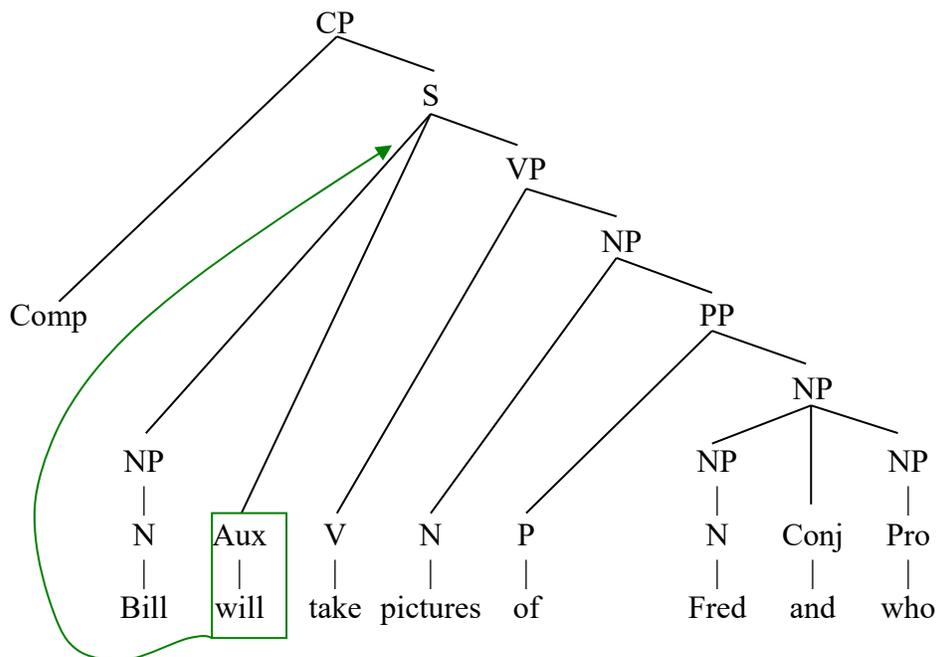


The triangle notation seen here means, “any constituent of the typeX”.

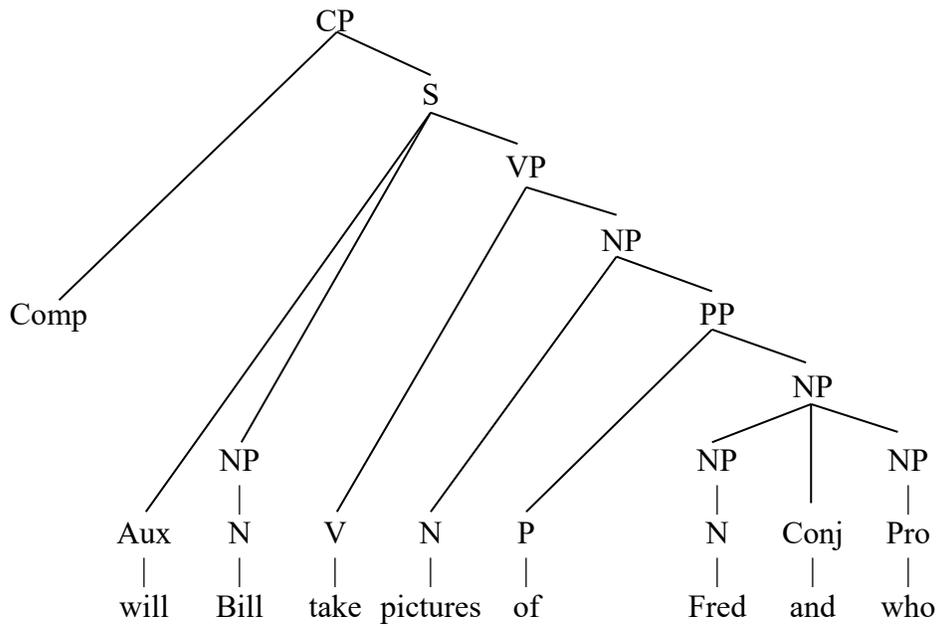
The Coordinate Structure Constraint is called an **island constraint**. A coordinate structure acts as an “island,” in that it is inaccessible to the efforts of transformations to remove things out of it. The Coordinate Structure constraint will correctly rule out the ungrammatical sentences given earlier.

Here is one way to demonstrate how a constraint works: you draw the deep structure of a sentence, outline the constituent that moves, outline the island that contains it, and draw an arrow showing that the movement does indeed move a constituent outside of the island. (One also adds an asterisk, to indicate that this movement results in ungrammaticality.)

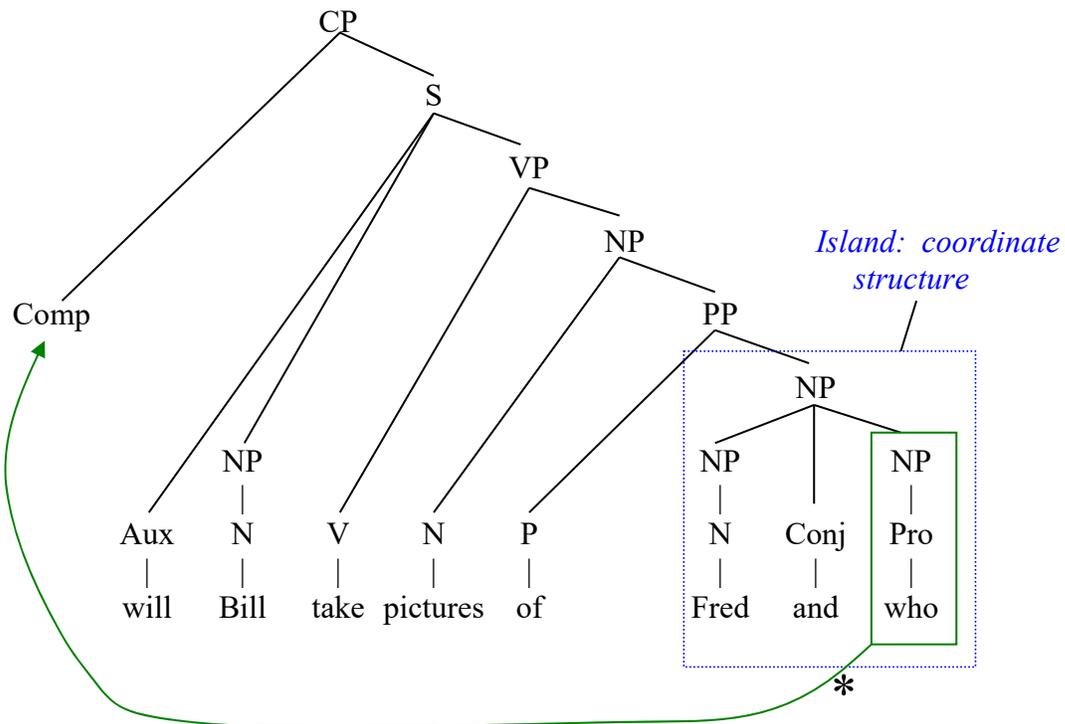
Deep structure (empty Comp is the landing site for Wh- Movement)  
 Arrow shows application of Subject/Aux Inversion.



Output of Subject/Aux Inversion:



2nd transformation (attempted): Wh-Movement:



Result: \*Who will Bill take pictures of Fred and?

**Study Exercise #33**

Explain why the sentence

*\*What city have the Romans destroyed and attacked Athens?*

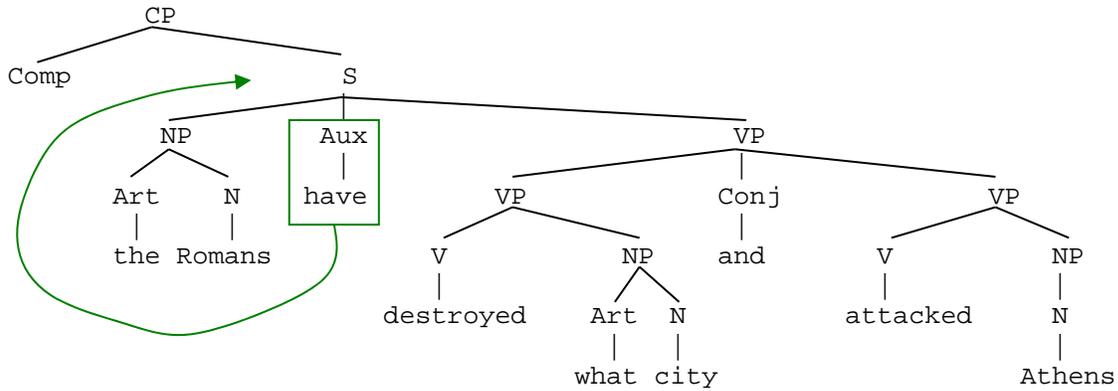
is ungrammatical. Illustrate with a derivation.

**Answer to Study Exercise #33**

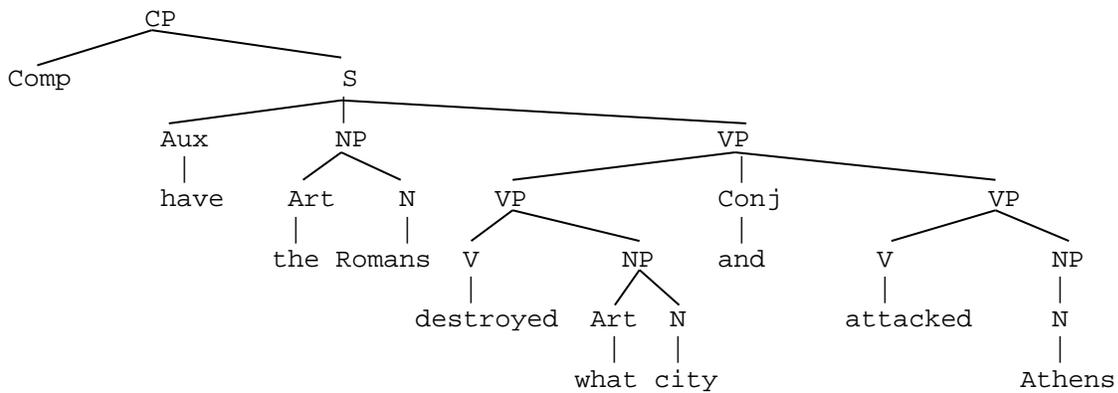
***What city have the Romans destroyed and attacked Athens?***

This sentence is a violation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint. The coordinate structure consists of the two conjoined VP's *destroyed what city* and *attacked Athens*. The wh- phrase *what city* is extracted out from inside the coordinate structure, resulting in an ungrammatical sentence.

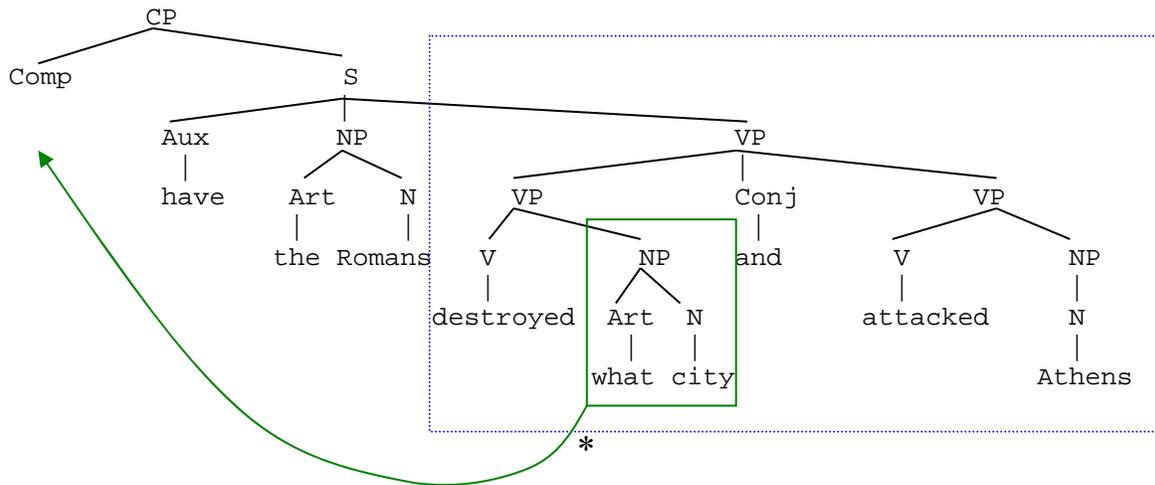
Deep structure, showing Subject/Aux Inversion:



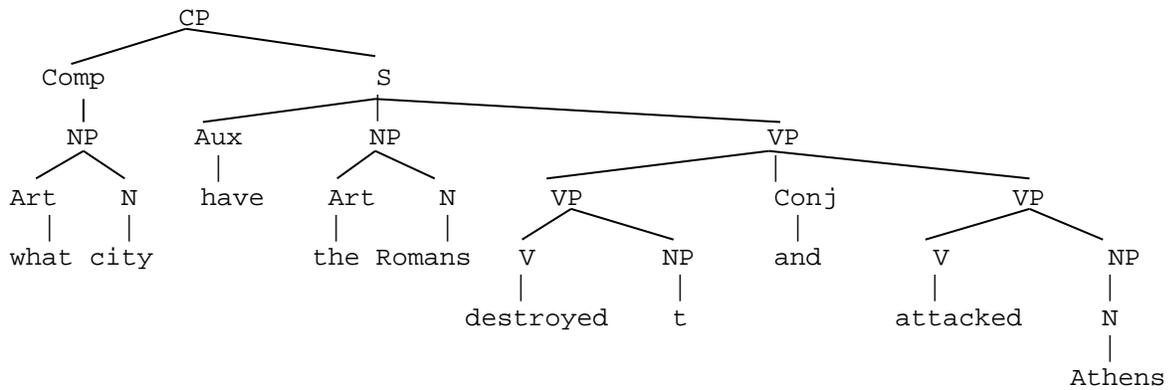
Output of Subject/Aux Inversion:



Wh- Movement, moving outside coordinate structure:



Illegal surface structure:



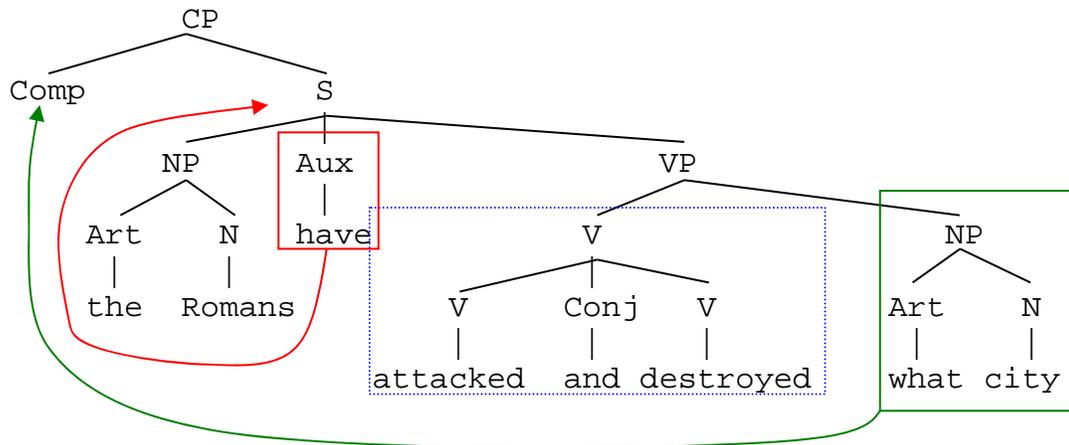
**Study Exercise #34**

Explain why the sentence ‘What city have the Romans attacked and destroyed?’ is grammatical. Illustrate with a derivation. Hint: take a look at the phrase structure rules (144) on p. 174.

### Answer to Study Exercise #34

#### *What city have the Romans attacked and destroyed?*

Here there is a coordinate structure, but the *wh*-phrase is not inside it. The coordinate structure is the two verbs *attacked* and *destroyed*. Since the *wh*-phrase *what city* is not extracted from inside the coordinate structure island, the sentence does not violate the Coordinate Structure Constraint and thus is grammatical. The following deep structure + movement arrows shows that the “extractee” is *not* inside the island:



This makes a useful point: it is not the presence of islands as such that creates ungrammaticality under extraction; it is specially the extraction of material from outside the island.

### Study Exercise #35

Explain why the sentence

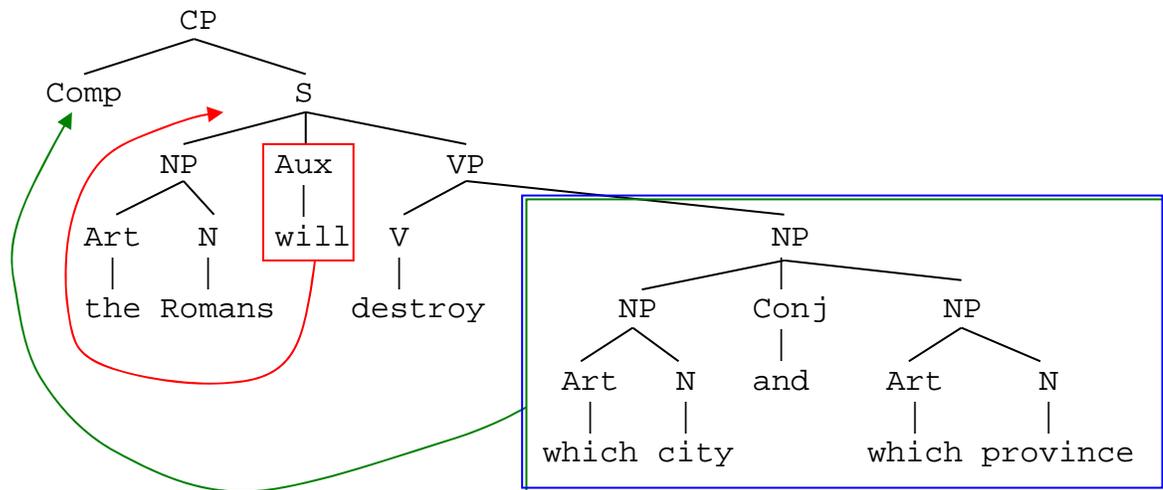
Which city and which province will the Romans destroy?

is grammatical. Illustrate with a derivation.

## Answer to Study Exercise #34

### *Which city and which province will the Romans destroy?*

In this case, the *wh*- phrase (namely *which city and which province*) is again not inside the coordinate structure; rather, it *is* the coordinate structure. Thus applying *Wh*- movement does not extract a *wh*- phrase from inside a coordinate structure, and the Coordinate Structure Constraint is not violated. Here is the deep structure with movement shown.



## 12. The universality of the Coordinate Structure Constraint

One of the goals sought by linguistics in writing formalized grammars is to locate **universals of language**. A linguistic universal is a property shared by all human languages. The explanation of linguistic universals is one of the key tasks of linguistic theory.

Linguistic universals are proposed and tested against data from the languages of the world; there are thought to be about 8000 of them.<sup>107</sup> No universal has been checked against all 8000, however, at least some proposed universals look fairly promising.

Some universals that have been proposed are fairly superficial, for example:

- All languages have nouns and verbs.
- All languages have *wh*- questions.
- All languages have consonants and vowels.
- All languages use the vowel [a]<sup>108</sup> or something phonetically close to it.

<sup>107</sup> The number is declining steadily. Probably the best list of languages is the *Ethnologue*, at <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.

<sup>108</sup> IPA [a] is more or less the [a] vowel of Spanish, or in some dialects of English the vowel of *hot*.



**French:** \*Quelle journal as- tu lu \_\_\_ et ce livre?  
 what newspaper have you read (gap) and this book

\*Quelle livre as- tu lu ce journal et \_\_\_?  
 what book have you read this newspaper and (gap)

**Russian:** \*Kovo Ivan videl Petra ili \_\_\_?  
 who Ivan saw Peter or (gap)

\*‘Who did Ivan see Peter or?’

\*Kovo Ivan videl \_\_\_ ili Petra?  
 who Ivan saw (gap) or Peter

**Arabic** (examples involve Topicalization)

\*Zayd-an ?intaqada xalil-un \_\_\_ wa-?amr-an  
 Zaid criticized Khalil-nom and-Amr-acc.  
 \*‘Zaid, Khalil criticized and Amr’

\*?amr-an ?intaqada xalil-un \_\_\_ Zayd-an wa  
 Amr-acc criticized Khalil-nom Zayd-acc. and  
 \*‘Amr, Khalil criticized Zayd and’

**Choctaw** (Oklahoma)

\*Katah-oosh John-at taloowa-tok anoti \_\_\_ hilhah-tok?  
 who-focus John-nom. sing-past and dance-past

\*‘Who did John sing and dance’ (= ‘Who was the person such that that person sang and John danced?’)

**American Sign Language** (example involves Topicalization)

\_\_\_\_\_t  
 \*FLOWER <sub>2</sub>GIVE<sub>1</sub> MONEY, <sub>j</sub>GIVE<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_  
 Flowers, he-gave-me money but she-gave-me  
 \*‘Flowers, he gave me money but she gave me \_\_\_\_.’<sup>109</sup>

Formal universals like the Coordinate Structure Constraint have inspired a fair amount of theorizing about language and language learning, which we’ll take on in the next chapter.

### 12.1 Looking ahead

The combination of long-distance transformations and islands leads to a fair amount of

<sup>109</sup> The underline represents a non-manual element produced in synchrony with the sign FLOWERS. Subscripts indicate, roughly, starting and ending points of verbal signs that serve the function of pronouns.

analytical work: for each transformation, you want to show that it respects the island, and for each island (we'll cover more) you want to show that the transformations all respect it.

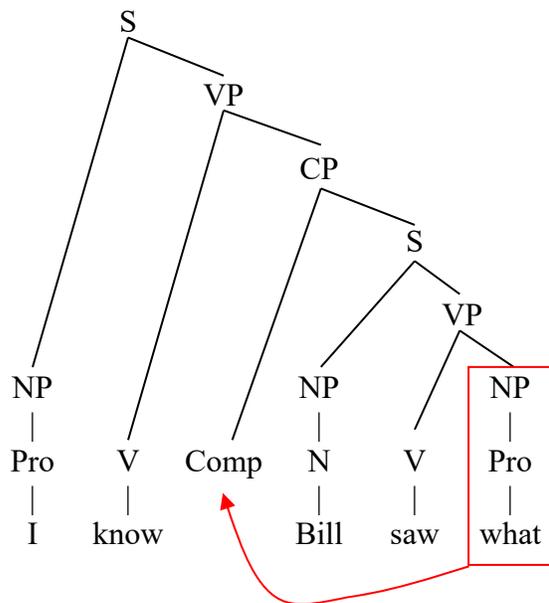
### 13. Two more islands

To complete our general account of long-distance transformations and island constraints, here are two more islands (there are quite a few more, varying from language to language, but we will stick with just three total). The general point that emerges is that all the long-distance transformations obey all of the island constraints (since there will be three of each, we will need to check a total of nine cases).

#### 13.1 The Wh- Island Constraint

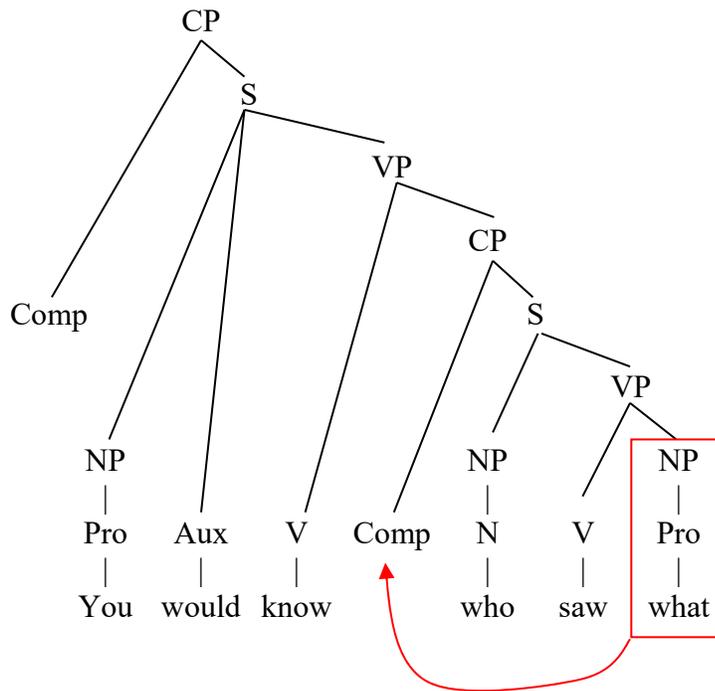
Recall embedded wh- questions, like *I know what Bill saw*. We already have the means to derive this (see Chapter 6, section 4.2) and the example is reviewed below.

Deep structure and Wh- Movement:

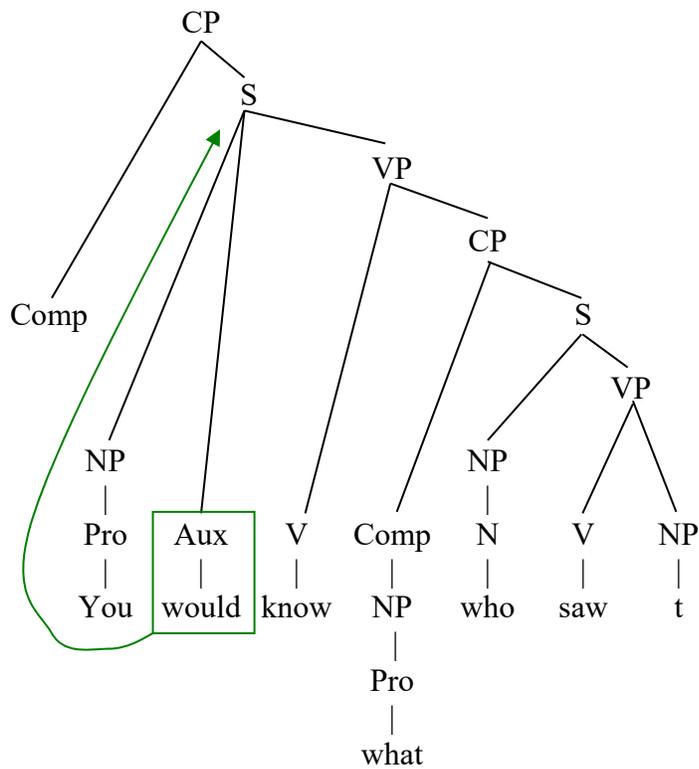




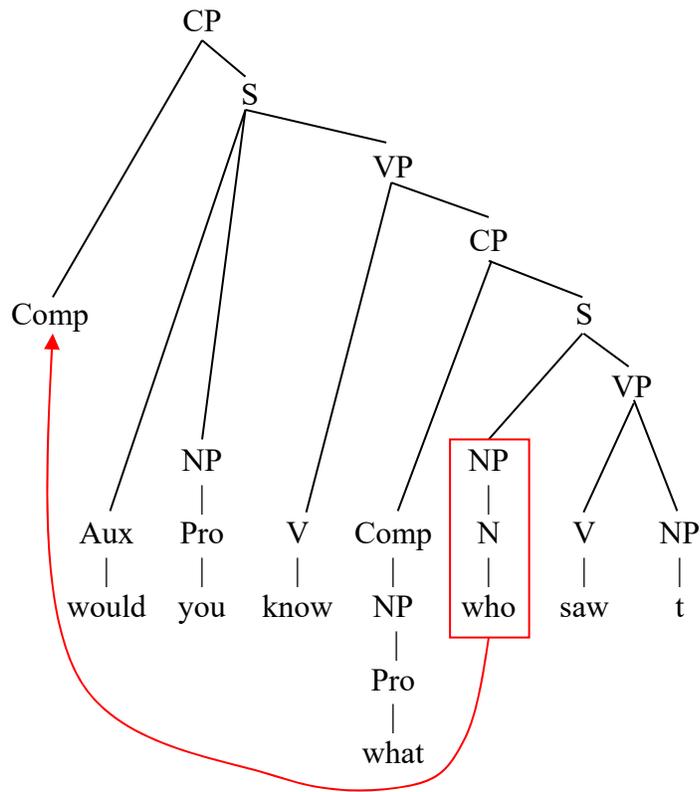
Deep structure and first application of Wh- Movement:



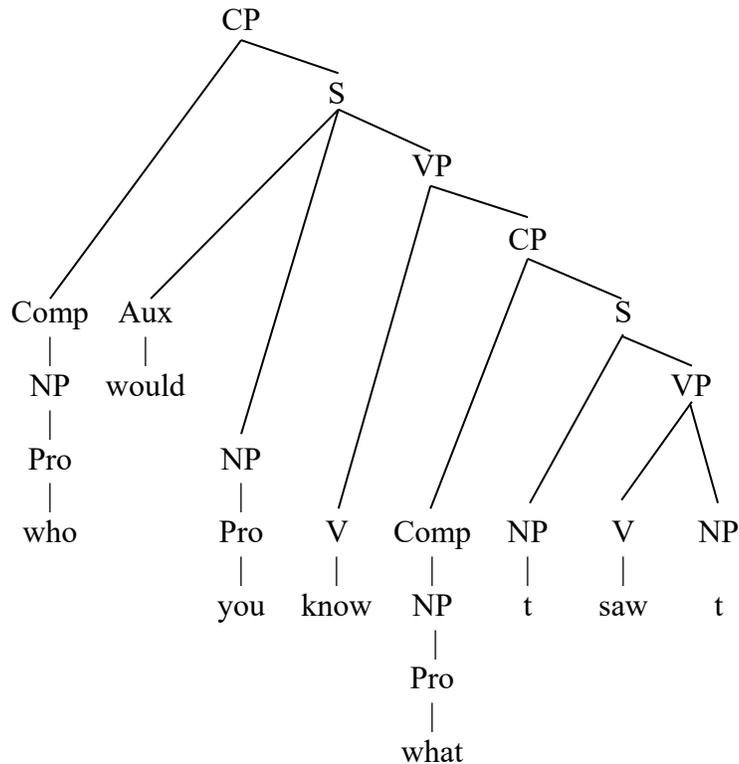
Result of first application of Wh- Movement, with arrow showing Subject-Aux inversion:



Result of Subject-Aux Inversion, showing second application of Wh- Movement:



Surface structure:



The result is *\*Who would you know what saw?*, which most speakers find crashingly bad. It is worth emphasizing that this is not due to its lacking a meaning; it's clear that it should mean the following:

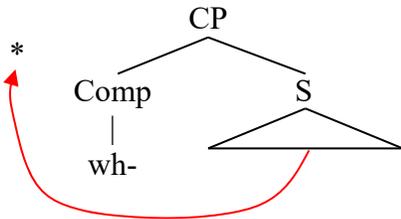
“What is the person such that you know what that person saw?”

The meaning is hard to access, given the extreme ungrammaticality of the sentence.

Linguists have proposed to explain the ill-formedness of sentences like *Who do you know what saw?* by positing yet another island, along the following lines:

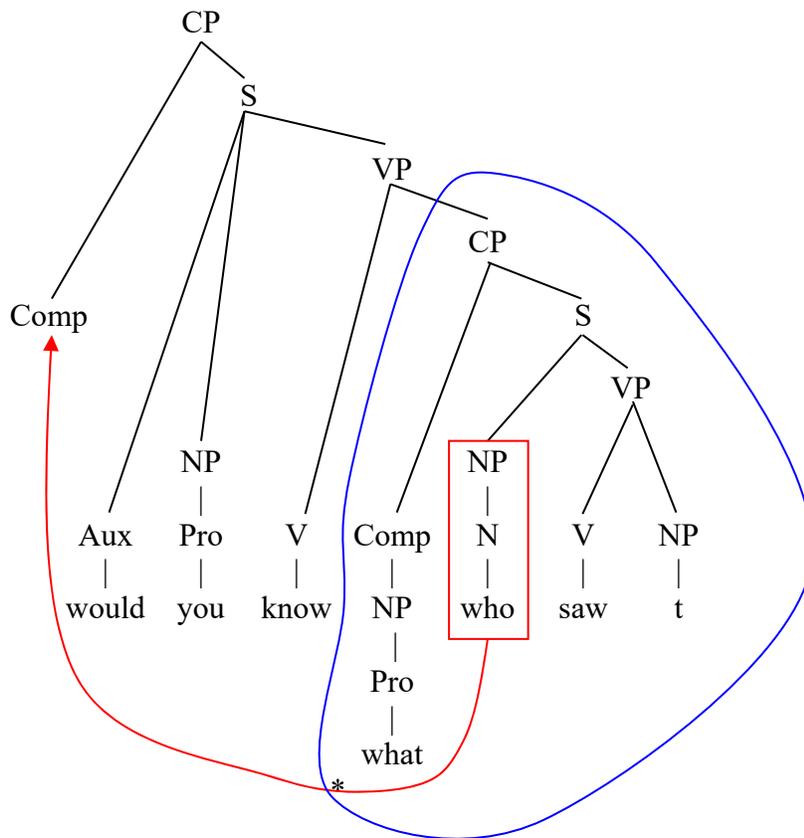
(174) Wh- Island Constraint

Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside an CP whose Comp contains a wh- phrase.



This island constraint is slightly different from the Coordinate Structure Constraint, because the island is actually created by a transformation. The “lower down” Wh- Movement forms an island that blocks any further Wh- movements higher up in the tree.

To illustrate: returning to the derivation given above, but this time drawing in the island, we can see that it is correctly excluded by the Wh- Island Constraint. The sequence *what who saw* is covered by the description of the island, and thus the sentence is ruled out.



The Wh- Island constraint covers a fair amount of data; here are some other sentences that it excluded. I've put brackets in to illustrate the CP that begins with a wh- phrase and thus forms a Wh- Island.

Bill admitted who committed this crime.

\*[ What crime ] did Bill admit [ who committed \_\_\_ ]CP?



Fred doesn't care how long you take on this exam.

\*[ Which exam ] doesn't Fred care [ how long you take on \_\_\_ ]CP?



Alice doesn't care which exam you take a long time on.

\*[ How long ] doesn't Alice care [ which exam you take \_\_\_ on ]CP?

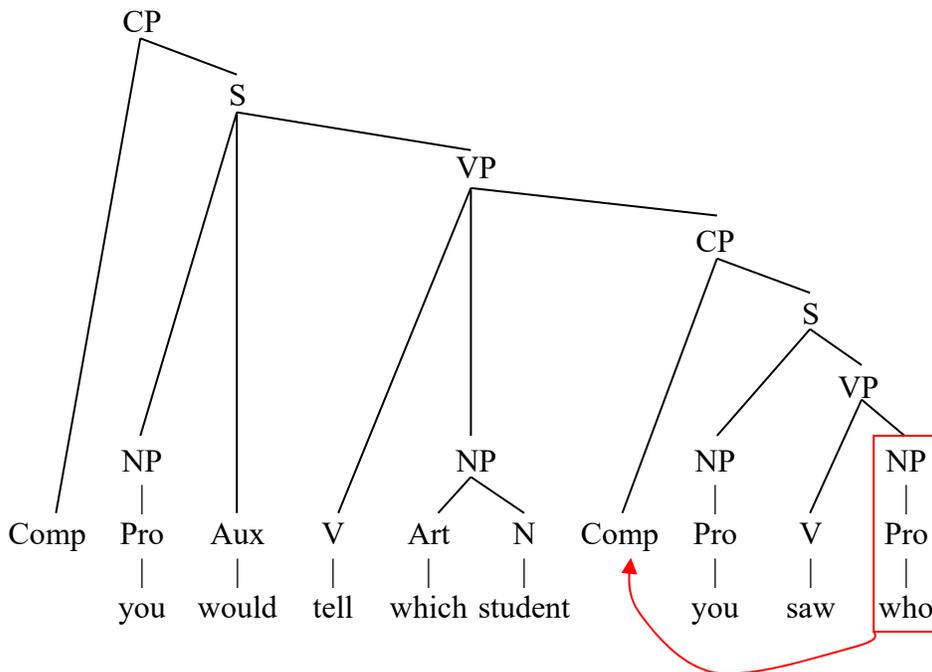


Observe further that there is nothing wrong with having two wh- phrases in the same sentence. It's only when one wh-phrase is moved *out of the CP* that the other one begins that you get a bad result. Here is an example. In the sentence

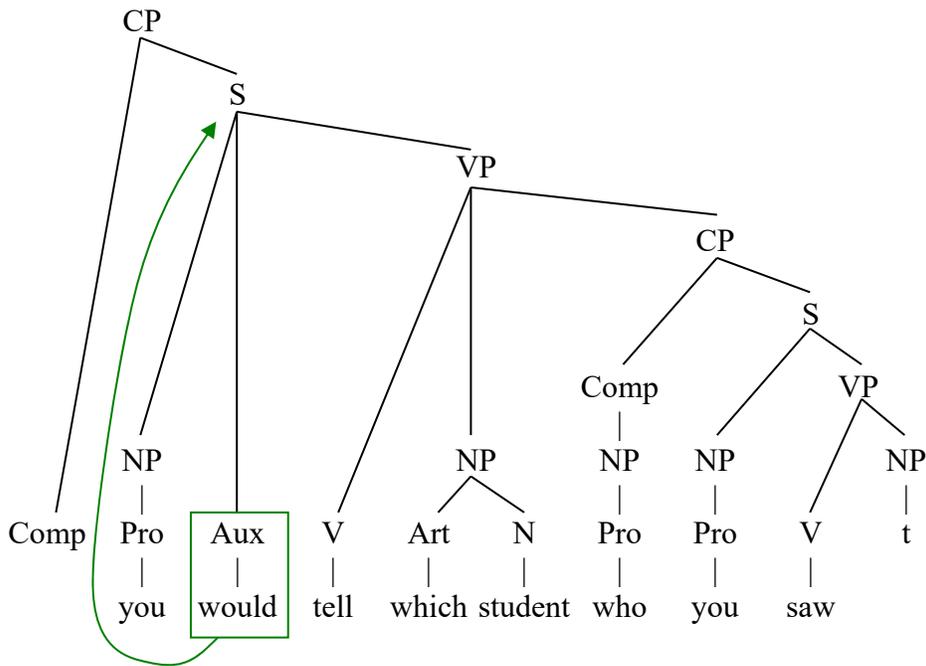
Which student would you tell who you saw?

the two instances of wh- movement are non-overlapping. The movement that goes to the higher Comp is *not out of the island*, so the sentence comes out fine. Here is the full derivation.

Deep structure with lower wh- movement:

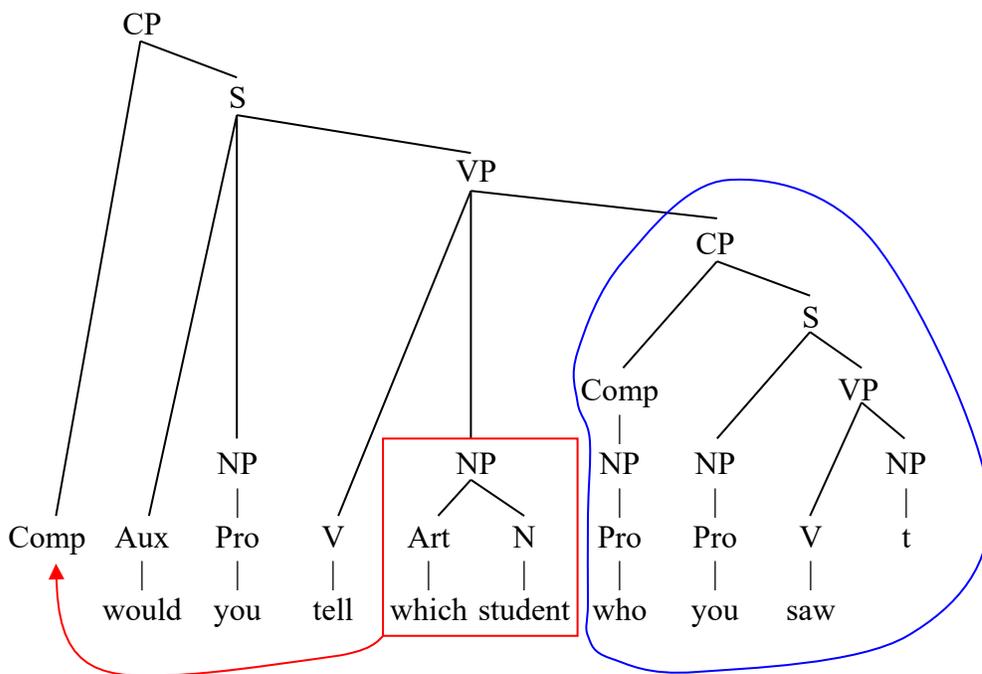


Output of lower wh- movement, showing Subject-Aux Inversion:

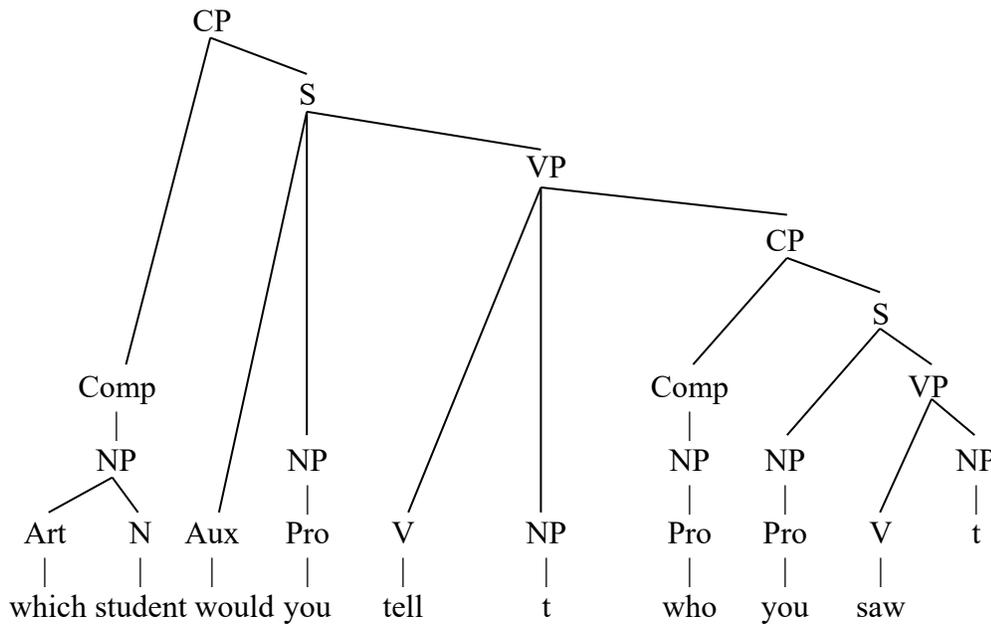


Output of upper wh- movement.

Note that this is *not* movement outside of the wh- island, shown in blue.



Surface structure:



You can see this all at once if we put the material on just one line, showing only the two instances of Wh- Movement and the island:

[ Who ] would you tell \_\_\_ [ [ who ] you saw \_\_\_ ]<sub>CP</sub>?

Note finally that Topicalization and It-Clefting obey the Wh- Island Constraint:

**Topicalization:**

\*[ Kate ], I realized [ to whom they would send \_\_\_ ]<sub>CP</sub>.

**It-Clefting:**

\*It was [ Oliver ] that I wondered [ which book \_\_\_ would read ]<sub>CP</sub>.

13.2 The Complex NP Constraint

Another kind of island is the so-called “complex noun phrase”. Recall (from p. 172) the main phrase structure rule in English for NP, the one to which we added a possible CP daughter:

$$NP \rightarrow \left( \left\{ \begin{matrix} NP \\ Art \end{matrix} \right\} \right) (AP)^* N (PP)^* (CP)$$

A complex NP is an NP having CP as a daughter (there may also be other modifiers). You get a complex NP if you include the boldface items below in applying the rule.

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \left( \begin{array}{c} \{\text{NP}\} \\ \{\text{Art}\} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^* (\text{CP})$$

Some examples of complex NPs include

Sue's belief that Sam is leaving Omaha

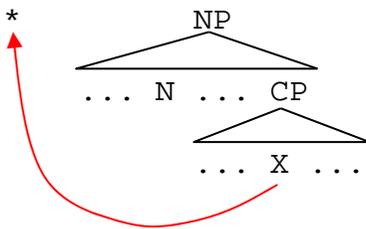
Alice's hunch that the burglar used this window

Bill's inane hypothesis that Frieda saw Jack<sup>110</sup>

The island constraint for complex NPs, called the Complex NP Constraint, is stated as follows:

### (175) Complex NP Constraint

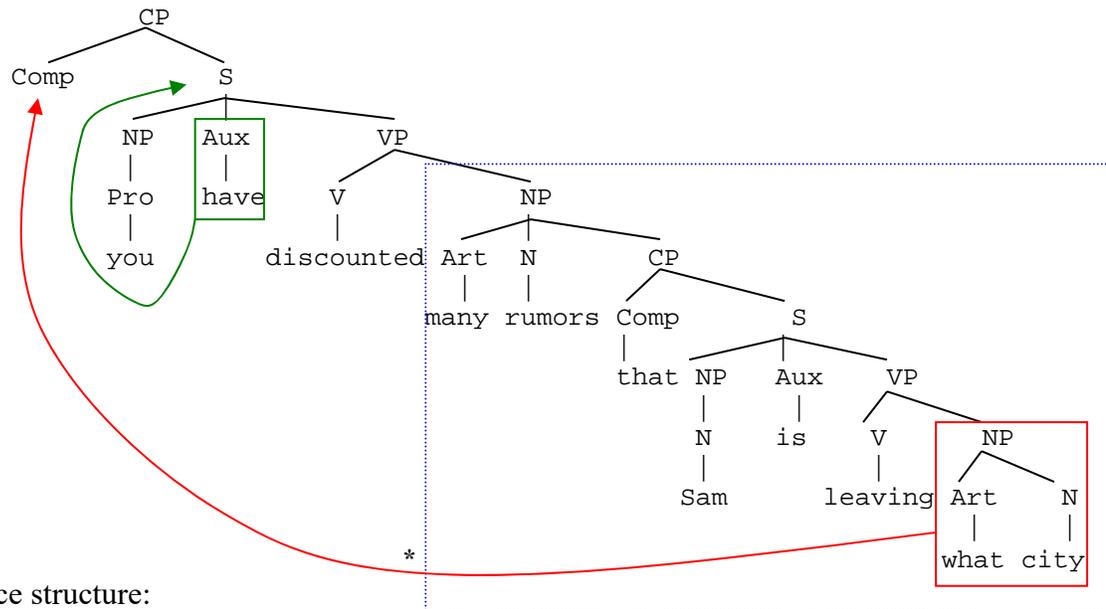
Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside a complex NP.



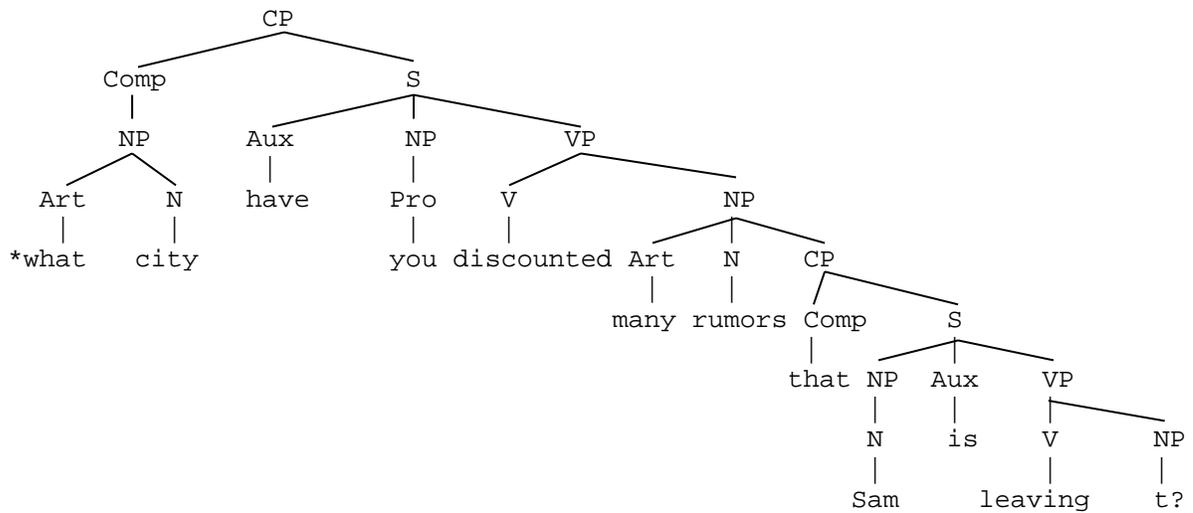
To demonstrate that complex NPs are islands, one does the following. (a) Set up a deep structure that contains a complex NP; (b) make sure that in this deep structure, there is a wh-phrase contained within the complex NP; (c) apply Subject Aux Inversion and Wh- Movement to the deep structure and see if the result is grammatical. I have done this in the following example. The Complex NP is circled, and the arrows show what moves where.

<sup>110</sup> The relative clauses mentioned above (p. 178) are also islands; for instance: *\*What apples will you see the man who picked \_\_\_?*

Deep structure, Subject-Aux Inversion, and Wh- Movement:



Surface structure:



The fact that the surface structure is ungrammatical supports the existence of the Complex NP Constraint. Similar ungrammatical sentences would be

- \*Which window would you disagree with Alice’s hunch that the burglar used?
- \*Who might you hear Bill’s inane hypothesis that Frieda saw?

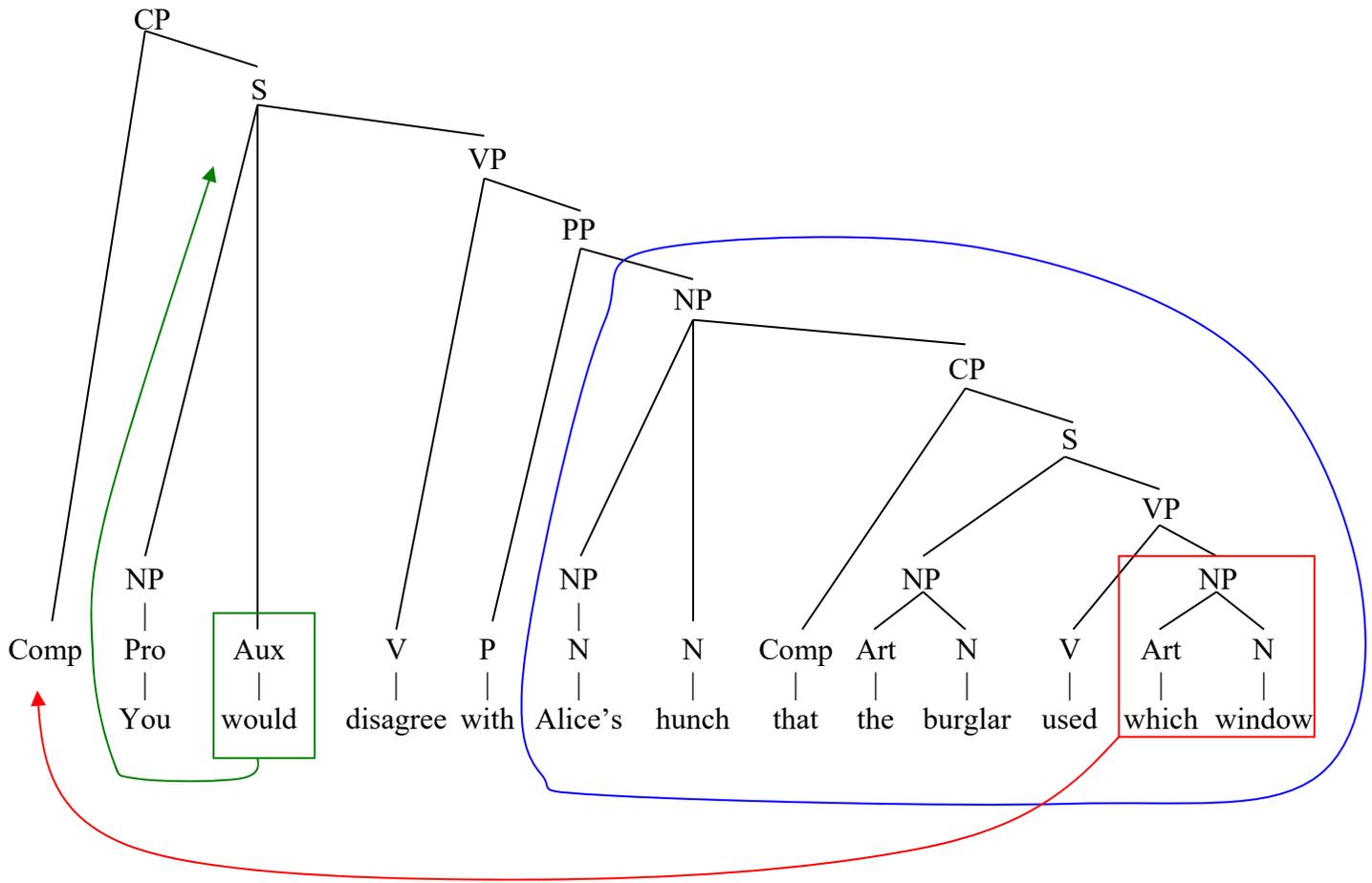
**Study Exercise #36**

Give a derivation, with boxes, arrows for movement, and a circled island, for the two sentences just given.

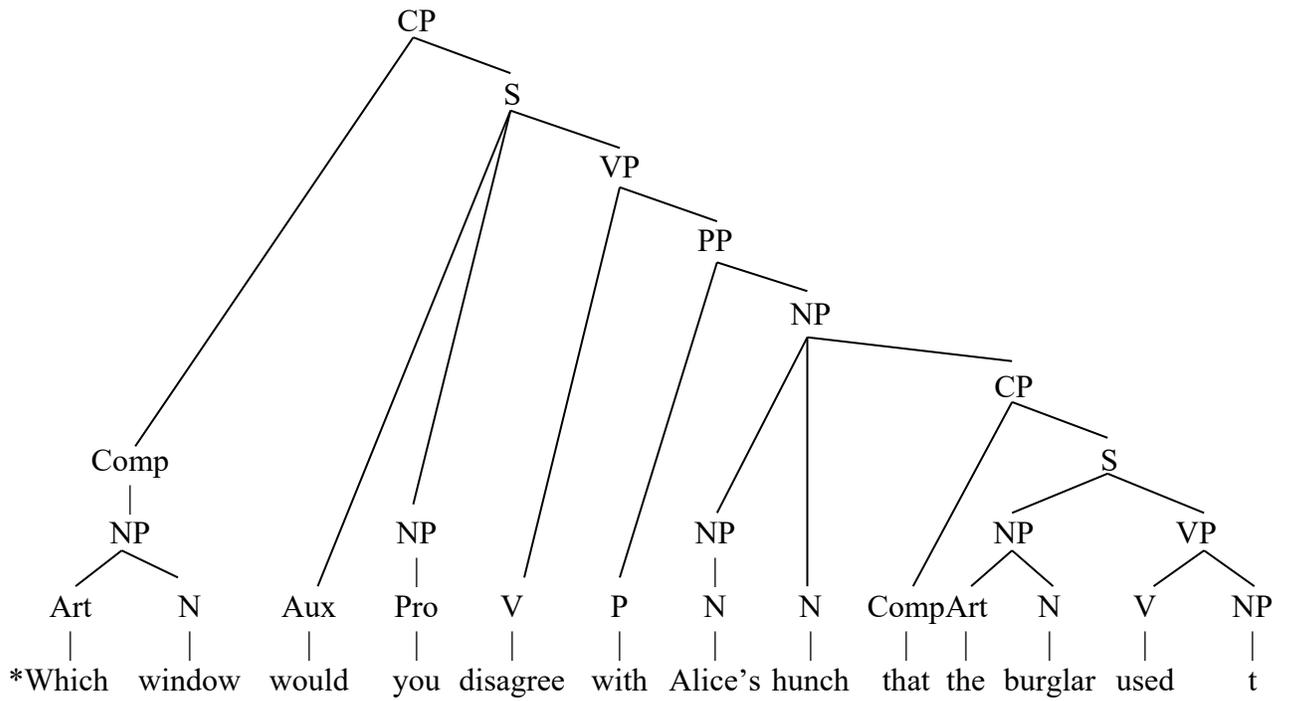
**Answer to Study Exercise #35**

*\*Which window would you disagree with Alice's hunch that the burglar used?*

Deep structure, with island shown with circle and arrows for Subject-Aux Inversion and Wh-Movement:

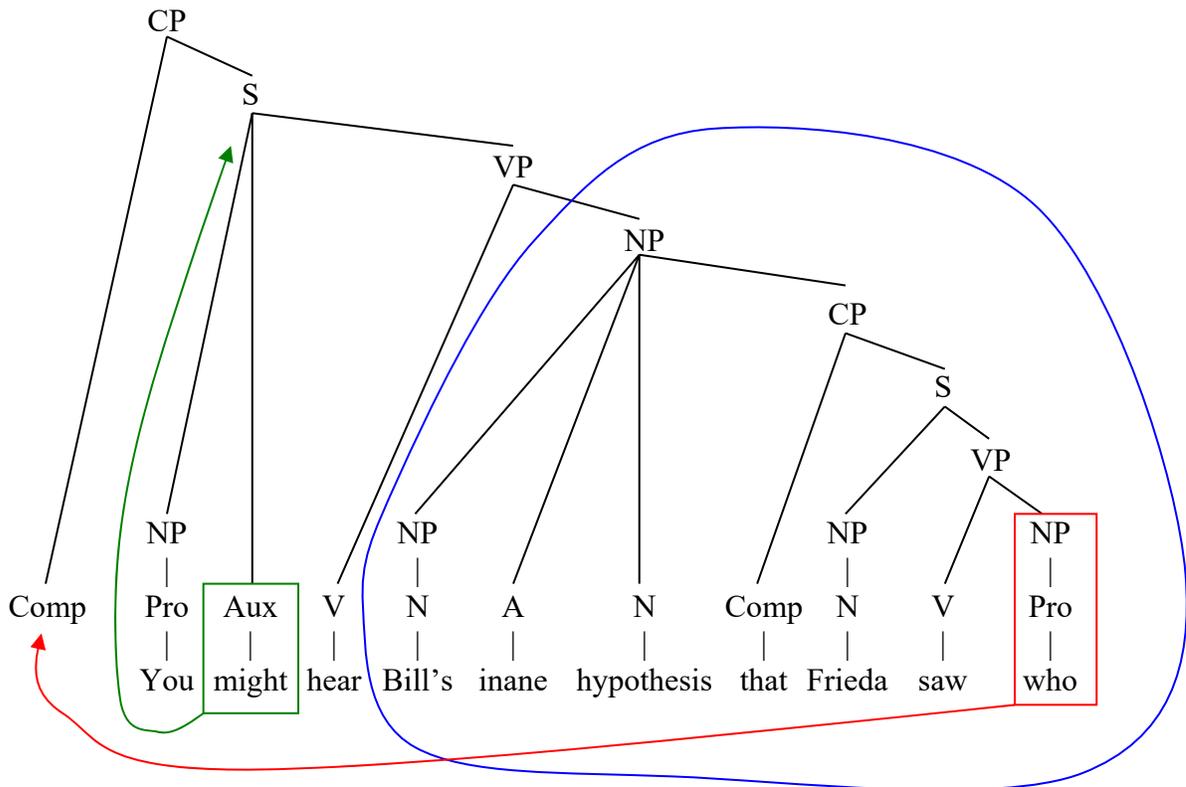


Ungrammatical surface structure:

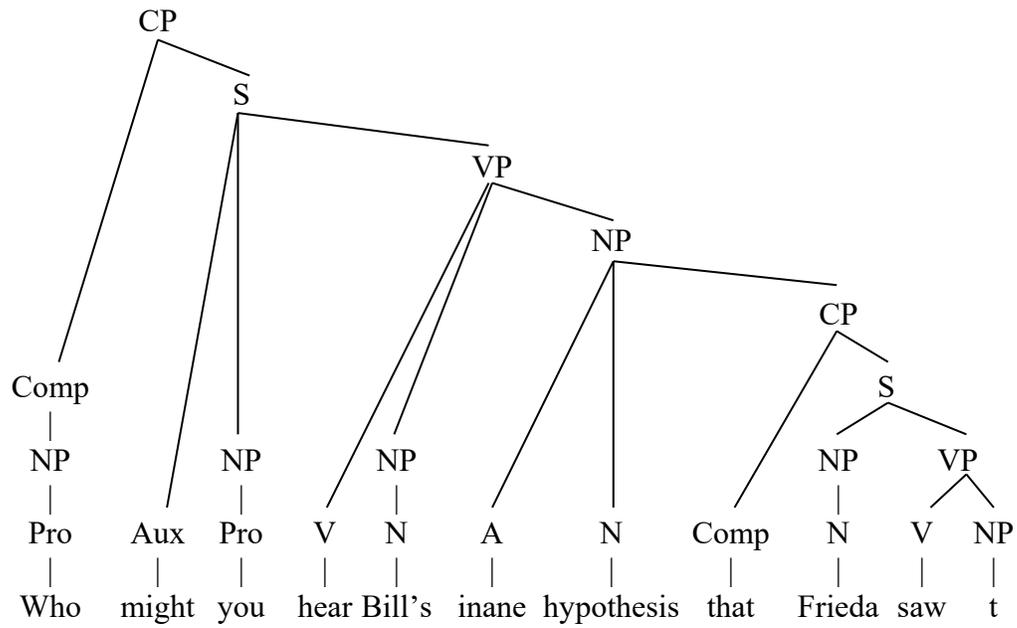


Who might you hear Bill's inane hypothesis that Frieda saw?

Deep structure, with Complex NP island, arrows for Subject-Aux Inversion



Ungrammatical surface structure:



**Study Exercise #37**

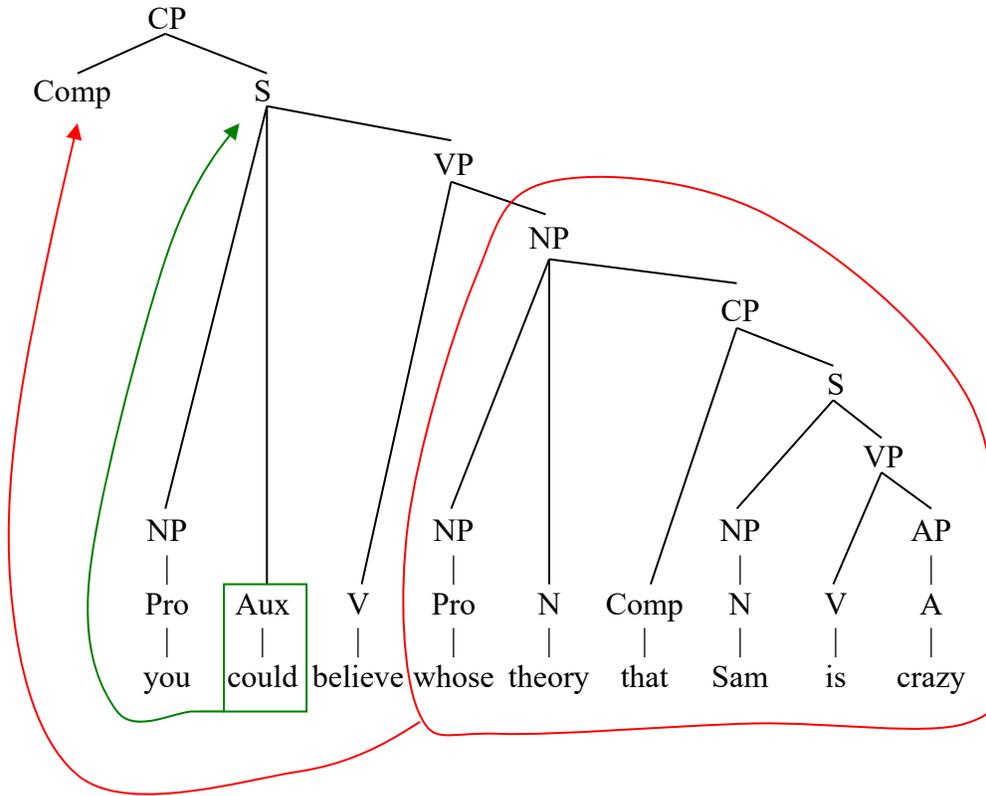
Why is the sentence

Whose theory that Sam is crazy could you believe?

grammatical? (You have to imagine a scenario in which all sorts of people are presenting theories that Sam is crazy.)

**Answer to Study Exercise #36**

Deep structure, with Subject-Aux Inversion and Wh-Movement shown with arrows:



The point is that the *whole island* is extracted. Island constraints are violated when you extract from *within* an island.

13.3 *The Complex NP Constraint and other syntactic transformations*

As the following labeled sentences show, the Complex NP Constraint is obeyed by Topicalization and by It-Clefting:

**Topicalization**

\*[ Kate ], I discounted [ many rumors that they would elect \_\_\_ ]<sub>NP</sub>.

**It-Clefting**

\*It was [ Kate ] that I discounted [ many rumors that they would elect \_\_\_ ]<sub>NP</sub>.

### 13.4 The complex NP constraint is not universal

When it was noticed and first formalized by Ross in the 1960's, it was thought that the Complex NP Constraint is a linguistic universal, just like the Coordinate Structure Constraint is. Shortly thereafter, however, Scandinavian linguists began studying the island constraints of their native languages, and noticed that neither Norwegian nor certain dialects of Swedish and Danish respect the constraint. The linguist Jens Allwood offers the following data from Swedish,<sup>111</sup> which he checked with a number of speakers; the complex NP is shown in brackets.

#### Simple sentence:

Herodes levde i [ hopp-et om att Salome skulle förföra den mannen. ]<sub>NP</sub>  
 Herod lived in hope-the of that Salome should seduce that man  
 'Herod lived in the hope that Salome should seduce that man.'

#### Wh- Movement out of Complex NP:

[ Vem ] levde Herodes i [ hopp-et om att \_\_\_\_\_ skulle förföra den mannen ]<sub>NP?</sub>  
 Who lived Herod in hope-the of that \_\_\_\_\_ should seduce that man

[ Vem ] levde Herodes i [ hopp-et om att Salome skulle förföra \_\_\_\_\_ ]<sub>NP?</sub>  
 Who lived Herod in hope-the of that Salome should seduce \_\_\_\_\_

#### Topicalization out of Complex NP:

[ Salome ] levde Herodes i [ hopp-et om att \_\_\_\_\_ skulle förföra den mannen. ]<sub>NP</sub>  
 Salome lived Herod in hope-the of that \_\_\_\_\_ should seduce that man

[ Den mannen ] levde Herodes i [ hopp-et om att Salome skulle förföra \_\_\_\_\_ ]<sub>NP</sub>.  
 That man lived Herod in hope-the of that Salome should seduce \_\_\_\_\_

This is unusual; most languages that have these rules do respect complex NPs. Thus, here are some French data, very much like English:

\*[ Qui ] as- tu proposé [ l'idée que Marie aime \_\_\_\_\_ ]<sub>NP?</sub>  
 'Who have you suggested the-idea that Marie loves (gap)?'

## 14. Why these islands?

To review, we have discussed three separate island constraints:

<sup>111</sup> The reason for the Biblical subject matter is not clear to me. You can make up example sentences about whatever you like, of course.

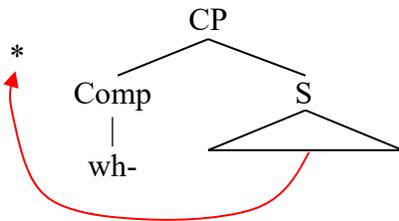
### Coordinate Structure Constraint

Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside a coordinate structure.



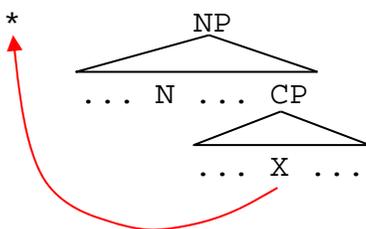
### Wh- Island Constraint

Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside an  $\bar{S}$  whose Comp contains a wh- phrase.



### Complex NP Constraint

Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside a complex NP.



Of these, the Coordinate Structure Constraint seems to be a good candidate for being a linguistic universal; the other two are probably not universal but seem to be found in many languages.

The question that arises when one lines up the islands in a row like this is: “**Why these islands?**” That is, why should island-hood be found for just this particular configuration of syntactic structures? The three islands seem to have little in common with each other.

The view of most linguists who consider this question is that the islands as formulated above are a first-pass approximation. That is, it’s a good idea to formulate the islands in this way, for the

sake of explicitness of analysis, but in the long term it seem desirable to seek more abstract principles to explain the data.

One approach that seems fruitful is to invert the problem: one specifies what places it is *legal* to extract from rather than what places it is illegal. You may encounter approaches of this type if you study syntax in future course work.

A final point is that the islands may be in some sense useful to the speakers. Psycholinguistic experimentation (including with brain-scanning devices) suggests there is a cognitive burden for the listener whenever the sentence heard involves a filler-gap constructions such as those created in the transformations described here. When a language has island constraints, they in effect tell the language user, “don’t bother to look for gaps here.”—perhaps this reduces the burden on speech perception, and thus reflects a principle of good “language design”.

**For further reading**

Islands were discovered, and launched as a major syntactic research topic, in a doctoral dissertation written at MIT in 1967 by the linguist John Robert Ross and entitled *Constraints on variables in syntax*. MIT makes this massive work available on their university website: <http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/15166>, and it is quite readable.

The research literature that has built up around islands in the intervening years is enormous and would probably best be undertaken by the student after more coursework in syntax. The linguist Dennis Ott has offered a rather sobering assessment of just how hard the island problem has proven to be in a brief book review: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/539657>.

## Chapter 7: Language acquisition

### 1. The relationship of linguistic theory to language acquisition

Linguistics exists in a kind of dual mode: at the level of language data, linguists are endlessly engaged in analysis, trying to develop better grammars as well as better general theories in which such grammars can be laid out. But behind all this activity are ponderings at a level which is less technical but more general, concerning how the strikingly elaborate grammars of human languages arise.

Let us assume (for purposes of argument) that the grammar we've been developing does in some way characterize the native speaker's knowledge. Our starting point here is that *the native speaker must learn the grammar, too*. Children do this in infancy and childhood, over the course of just a few years, usually without overt instruction, but instead simply by inhabiting a community where the language is spoken, listening intently, and trying to speak. Moreover, what the child learns is not the toy grammar we have been working with, but something much, much larger.

Language acquisition is an important area of linguistics and linguistic theory. There are three primary research methodologies. First, **observational study** is the longest-standing method: one arranges to be in a situation where one can hear little kids talking, and one records what they say, ideally with audio as well as transcription.<sup>112</sup> Much of the data from such study has been gathered into a large corpus, known as CHILDES, from which investigators can gather new and important generalizations.<sup>113</sup> Second, infants and children are the subjects in **experiments**, which gather their reactions to carefully-planned language material presented to them. In my own department at UCLA, an active infant and child laboratory carries out experiments with children brought into the lab by their parents. Third, research proceeds by **simulation**: linguists attempt to develop computer software that can learn the grammatical and phonological patterns of language on exposure to language data representative of what children hear; the grammars learned by the simulator can then be compared with evidence about what real people know about their language.

What results are being obtained by this active research program. I think the most important are two.

First, **production lags perception**: children, and even infants, have considerable linguistic knowledge that can be detected only in their reactions to experimental stimuli, not in their own productions. The extreme case of this is phonological knowledge in infants, who evidently know the speech sounds and the principles of legal sound sequencing from the age of about six months. Going even further, even newborns can in some cases identify their mother's language from its characteristic patterns of syllable timing and pitch; presumably they can do this because such auditory properties are available to them even *in utero*.

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<sup>112</sup> A classical procedure, decades old, is for a linguist to keep a detailed diary on the linguistic productions of his or her own child. Alternatively, repeated visits are made to the same children in their home or daycare center.

<sup>113</sup> <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/>

The other well-established result of the study of language acquisition is that **children are virtuosic**: they are prodigiously capable acquirers of language, and most noticeably, they outperform the efforts of linguists. Kids can be exposed to a language for a few years and become fluent native speakers, with extensive production abilities and nuanced, subtle judgments of well-formedness. Linguists, toiling away at analysis for many years, still struggle to obtain grammars that properly match what the native speaker knows. Moreover, to the extent that the linguists' theories are incorporated into machine-implemented systems that actually learn language, these systems cannot learn with anything like the speed or accuracy that children do. All of this causes linguists to believe that the ability to acquire language is an extraordinary aspect of human beings, well worth study.

The broad scientific debates surrounding grammar and language learning can be outlined as follows:

**Outline:**

- the quality of the evidence available to the child for learning
  - the “no negative evidence” issue
- the possibility of innate knowledge serving as an aid to learning
  - the alternative of powerful inductive mechanisms
- innate knowledge/abilities as a biological phenomenon
  - critical periods
  - genetic defects specific to language
- innate knowledge and linguistic universals
- linguistic abilities and human evolution

**2. The quality of the evidence available to the child**

To begin, it seems clear that however children learn language, conscious instruction (say, by parents) must play very little role. Not all parents instruct their children in language, and the parents who do are likely focusing on bits of normative grammar, quite peripheral to the language as a whole.

In fact, there's even less reason to consider overt instruction as a factor, because it appears that small children don't even pay much attention to it. Textbooks on language acquisition often include entertaining little dialogs between parents and toddlers showing the futility of overt instruction, of which the following is brief sampling:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| C: Nobody don't like me      | C: Want other one spoon, daddy.                    |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me' | D: You mean, you want <i>the other spoon</i>       |
| C: Nobody don't like me      | C: Yes, I want the other one spoon, please, daddy. |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me' | D: Can you say 'the other spoon'?                  |
| C: Nobody don't like me      | C: Other...one...spoon                             |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me' | D: Say 'other'                                     |
| C: Nobody don't like me      | C: Other.  |

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me'                   | D: Spoon.                                      |
| C: Nobody don't like me                        | C: Spoon.                                      |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me'                   | D: Other spoon.                                |
| C: Nobody don't like me                        | C: Other...spoon. Now give me other one spoon? |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me'                   |  |
| C: Nobody don't like me                        |  |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me'                   |  |
| C: Nobody don't like me                        |  |
| A: No, say 'nobody likes me'                   |  |
| C: Nobody don't like me                        |  |
| A: Now listen carefully: 'nobody likes me'     |  |
| C: Oh, nobody doesn't likes me. <sup>114</sup> |  |

These examples also make a subsidiary point: at any given point in the child's acquisition period, she has a relatively stable, internalized, wrong grammar, which she tends to stick to until it evolves in the natural way to the next, more accurate stage.

Leaving aside the case of overt instruction, we might also ask if children are somehow given a special linguistic diet by their parent, which makes acquisition possible. Such a diet might perhaps consist of a simplified version of the language, sometimes (more or less jokingly) called Motherese. Reasons to be skeptical of the effectiveness of Motherese are the apparent existence of children who learn their native language without it; and the fact that Motherese is often ungrammatical, a pattern that could hardly help acquisition in the long run.<sup>115</sup>

Scholars also differ on whether the input to the child is in general grammatical: Noam Chomsky<sup>116</sup> has repeatedly insisted that it is not, as in quotes like the following:

"Thus, it is clear that the language each person acquires is a rich and complex construction hopelessly underdetermined by the fragmentary evidence available." (*Reflections on Language*, 1975, p. 10)

"Knowledge arises on the basis of very scattered and inadequate data and ... there are uniformities in what is learned that are in no way uniquely determined by the data itself.." (*Cartesian Linguistics*, 1966, p. 65)

Various experts in child language development have disagreed with Chomsky's claim. It seems worth remembering that any one error in the learning environment (for example, if a speaker gets tangled up and inadvertently produces an island violation) could be very dangerous to

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<sup>114</sup> From: McNeill, D. (1966). Developmental psycholinguistics. In Smith, F., and Miller, G. A. (eds.), *The Genesis of Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

<sup>115</sup> I make no claims here on whether or not it is *desirable* to speak Motherese to one's children.

<sup>116</sup> Chomsky invented most of the content of the syntax unit of this text in some extremely influential work from the 1950s to the 1970s. Devices attributable to him include phrase structure rules, subcategorization, transformations, morphosyntactic representations, and an early version of island constraints.

the task of getting the grammar right, so even a modestly error-ful ambient environment might still suffice to make Chomsky's point.

### 3. Cases where “negative evidence” would be required for learning

One particularly intriguing aspect of language learning is this: *how do we learn that sentences are ungrammatical?* As noted above, actual correction of error is rare and ineffective, and for the more interesting cases like learning not to violate islands, it seems extremely unlikely that there would be sufficient overt correction for a child to learn the pattern.

### 4. Innate knowledge

For some linguists, the no-negative evidence problem provides indirect support for the hypothesis of **innate knowledge**. If some grammatical knowledge is simply not accessible to direct learning from the data, the only reasonable explanation for how we come by this knowledge as children is that we bring the knowledge to the task with us. In other words, our genome, physically embodied in our DNA, contains grammatical information, information crucial to acquisition.

It may seem counterintuitive to suppose that knowledge could be innate; some people get used to thinking that the genes control only the form of the body, and not of the mind. But examples of innate knowledge are easy to find in the animal kingdom. For example, some species of birds have a song that does not vary at all across individuals, and which even birds raised apart from their species will sing. The ability to sing these songs surely would count as innate knowledge. In many species of mammals, newborns, shortly after birth, get up and walk, an act that requires a huge amount of computation (we know this because getting a robot to walk is one of the biggest challenges facing human engineers today).

Chomsky is well known for his strong views on the innateness question for language. Here is a sampling, from his *Language and Mind* (1968):

To repeat: Suppose that we assign to the mind, as an innate property, the general theory of language that we have called “universal grammar.” This theory encompasses the principles that I discussed in the preceding lecture and many others of the same sort, and it specifies a certain subsystem of rules that provides a skeletal structure for any language and a variety of conditions, formal and substantive, that any further elaboration of the grammar must meet. The theory of universal grammar, then, provides a schema to which any particular grammar must conform. Suppose, furthermore, that we can make this schema sufficiently restrictive so that very few possible grammars conforming to the schema will be consistent with the meager and degenerate data actually available to the language learner. His task, then, is to search among the possible grammars and select one that is not definitely rejected by the data available to him. What faces the language learner, under these assumptions, is not the impossible task of inventing a highly abstract and intricately structured theory on the basis of degenerate data, but rather the much more manageable task of determining whether these data belong to one or another of a fairly restricted set of potential languages.

## 5. Inductivism

Chomsky's view is near one pole of an intellectual continuum at whose other extreme are scholars with a strongly inductivist point of view. In this alternative, what makes the child capable of the feat of language acquisition is her possession of formidable techniques of inductive learning—that is, grasping the pattern through intensive processing of the learning data available.

Bruce Derwing of the University of Alberta wrote:<sup>117</sup>

An alternative model of language acquisition ought to be developed on the assumption that the human organism is initially completely *un*-informed both as to the essential nature of language and as to the best way to learn a language. My initial assumption is that no other 'special mechanisms' or 'secret abilities' are required for learning *language* than for learning anything else. In short, I shall assume that language acquisition can be fully accounted for in terms of such known (i.e. empirically established) capacities as the ability of the human organism to discriminate among and generalize from the sense-data to which he is exposed and most importantly (since this capacity seems to be species-specific), to extract regularity—or induce a latent structure—from his experience.

Observe that Derwing is *not* opposed to innate abilities, but emphasizes that they are abilities to learn (not pre-formed knowledge); and he wants these abilities to not be specifically linguistic.

## 6. The learning of ill-formedness: two viewpoints

### 6.1 Learning well-formedness using innate knowledge

The most obvious cases here are straightforward linguistic universals. People wouldn't need to learn (somehow) that Coordinate Structure Constraint violations are ungrammatical if the Coordinate Structure Constraint (or, one might hope, something from which the Coordinate Structure Constraint follows as a consequence) is innate. This would also be the reason why the Coordinate Structure Constraint is universal.

More subtly, we can imagine how innate knowledge could permit English speakers to know that violations of the Complex NP Constraint are ungrammatical, while speakers of Swedish and Norwegian know that they are acceptable in their own languages. The idea is that the Complex NP Constraint (or again, something more abstract from which it follows) is innate, but in a form that would permit "data override": if you actually hear data that tell you the constraint is violable in your language, you override your innate knowledge. This would be the case for Swedish and Norwegian children, who presumably hear a number of sentences violating this constraint during their childhoods. Children in English-speaking environments never hear the data that would justify an override, so they never push aside the innate pattern.

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<sup>117</sup> *Transformational Grammar as a Theory of Language Acquisition* (1973). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 200-201.

## 6.2 Learning ill-formedness inductively without negative evidence

Although the learning of ill-formedness without negative evidence has been sometimes presented as an insuperable difficulty to inductive approaches, in fact inductivism is not entirely helpless in such cases. One strategy commonly proposed is to collect a lot of data, then compute some form of this statistic: **observed/expected** — that is, the number of observed instances of a structure, divided by some kind of estimate of how many instances one *should* observe, on the basis of other data.

For Complex NP Constraint violations, the observed/expected strategy might be something like this (I'm quoting the hypothetical unconscious inner monologue of the language-learning child):

- “Thus far in my experience I have heard 4,947 **complex NPs**, that is to say, in 10% of all sentences.
- “I have also noticed 6,823 **gaps**, created by rules such as Wh- Movement and Topicalization,” in 30% of all sentences.
- “Thus, by multiplying, I estimate that 3% of the ambient sentences should have occurred with a gap inside a complex NP. This would be about 600 sentences.”
- “But in fact, not a single gap has yet occurred inside a complex NP.”
- “I therefore infer there is something wrong about extracting constituents from inside complex NPs”.

The math exists that can make such inferences in a rigorous way, and is studied by statisticians.

Is this scenario a fantasy? It has in fact been applied to simpler data, in phonology, with fairly good results. Moreover, there is evidence that people can keep track of such statistics in syntax: psycholinguistic studies of how people understand sentences indicate that people's guesses about where in the tree a new word should go are guided by the *statistics of subcategorization*: their first guesses are those that match the most frequent subcategorization frame of the last syntactic head they heard. Thus (to use an example from earlier), the guess for the structure of *Fred ran up a big...* will depend on the relative frequency in real life with which *run* is followed by a particle (thus *ran up a big bill*) vs. a prepositional phrase (thus *ran up a big hill*).<sup>118</sup>

The apparent ability of people to count the statistics of subcategorization frames is particularly relevant because these frames have been put forth as a negative evidence problem.<sup>119</sup> If a child learns a wrong subcategorization, nothing in the ambient data will tell her it is wrong. Yet in fact, children rather frequently make subcategorization errors—and ultimately, of course, recover from them. Here are a couple of examples:

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<sup>118</sup> For a general review of this and related literature, see <http://lcnl.wisc.edu/people/marks/pubs/SeidenbergMacDonald.1999.CogSci.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> For instance, by C. L. Baker (1979) in “Syntactic Theory and the Projection Problem,” *Linguistic Inquiry* 10.4.

“I filled the salt into the bear.”<sup>120</sup>

“She came it over there” (Meaning: “She made it come over there”, a causative)

The first sentence indicates a wrong subcategorization for *fill* (probably acquired by wrongly generalizing from *put* and other verbs), which almost certainly was corrected prior to adulthood—mostly likely by gradually noticing that no occurrences of *fill* uttered by qualified individuals used this frame; the observed number of [ \_\_\_ NP PP ] cases (probably zero) was smaller than the child’s expected value, and ultimately led her to abandon this frame. The same reasoning would hold for the second example.

In general, I would judge that inductivism has made a modest comeback in linguistics in recent years, primarily due to experimental findings suggesting that people are very good at inductive learning.

Inductivism nevertheless faces a huge and still largely unanswered challenge. A statistic like *observed/expected* requires you to have, in effect, a set of “bins” into which you sort your linguistic experience, so as to be able to compute these values. A complex NP is a nontrivially complicated structure to describe—might there be a large variety of equally complex structures that also have to have their statistics monitored. Even for subcategorization, there is a danger of irrelevant bins: one hardly wants to waste counting how many sentences with an even number of words a verb has occurred in, and similarly for other utterly pointless contexts. Inductivism must either rely on innate knowledge to know what bins experience is sorted into, or find some way, not yet established, to get them “for free”.

### 6.3 Universals

Lastly, a purely inductivist approach to language offers no account of true linguistic universals, if such exist—in inductivism, a language violating the Coordinate Structure Constraint would be learnable.<sup>121</sup> Innatist approaches offer a quick and cheap explanation of universals; they’re true because languages are spoken by people, who being biologically arranged the way they are, have no choice but to obey them.

## 7. Innateness and biology

Turning, then, to the issue of the biology of human language, it’s important to note that the view that people are biologically equipped for language in a special way unique to our species is not entirely tied to the idea of innate linguistic knowledge. In particular, we could be highly adapted to *learning* and *use* of language, but not possess any innate knowledge of the *content* of language per se. At this level, the view the people are specialized for language is rather less controversial, though again it is hardly agreed upon universally.

<sup>120</sup> Bowerman, M. (1982). Evaluating competing linguistic models with language acquisition data: Implications of developmental errors with causative verbs. *Quaderni di Semantica*, 3, 5-66.

<sup>121</sup> There is of course a temptation to do an experiment: have a team of skilled and charismatic research assistants spend a great deal of time in a day care center uttering Coordinate Structure Constraint violations, and see if the children who attend it develop a “universal-violating” grammar. It’s not clear what the Human Subjects Protection Committee would think of this one...

A common way to make a case in this area is to compare language with other abilities (of various species) that plainly are part of their biological endowment.

### 7.1 *Irrelevance of deliberate training*

Achievement of fluency in language does not seem to depend on training (compare, for instance, playing the piano, or studying math). Most children become fluent speakers on their own, on schedule, by their own more or less automatic efforts. This is similar to the process of learning to walk, likewise documented to occur spontaneously, follows a standard time course, and (by experiment) has been shown not to be particularly aided by instruction.

### 7.2 *Critical period*

Language appears to involve a **critical period**, that is, a span of time after which complete acquisition of the skill becomes difficult or impossible. The critical period is widely documented for language; we see it (anecdotally) in families of immigrants, where the youngest members usually become the best speakers of the new language, despite equal exposure for all.

Vision in cats is apparently a similar ability: kittens who have one eye temporarily closed when young fail to “wire up” their neural circuitry for that eye, and do not make up the deficit later. Experimentation (cortical probes) indicates that the circuitry does not grow in. “Accidental experiments” on humans (surgery on congenital cataracts, misguidedly delayed to lessen risk) show that same is probably true for us.<sup>122</sup>

Some forms of birdsong reflect a critical period; young birds reared away from their species fail to acquire the song upon being returned to their original habitat.<sup>123</sup>

There’s clearly a range of opinion, some of it impassioned, on whether such experiments on kittens and birds should be done. A much greater consensus exists that they should not be performed on young humans. However, cases of lunatic or criminal behavior by parents have occasionally created such experiments. “Genie,” studied in the 1970’s by my colleague Susan Curtiss,<sup>124</sup> was forced by a psychopathic father to spend the first thirteen years of her life strapped into a baby chair, with little human contact and no linguistic input. When she was rescued and released into a more normal environment, her linguistic development was slow and difficult. Although she acquired a fair amount of vocabulary, she was unable to acquire the syntactic rules of English. When Genie was last studied, around age 20, she still was essentially not a speaker of English. Prof. Curtiss contends that she was unable to acquire language fully because she began the task after the end of the critical period.

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<sup>122</sup> For details on this work see <http://neuro.med.harvard.edu/site/dh/b50.htm> (David Hubel).

<sup>123</sup> See <http://www.neuro.duke.edu/faculty/mooney/>.

<sup>124</sup> *Genie: A Psycholinguistic Study of a Modern-Day “Wild Child”* (1977) Academic Press.

The psychologist Steven Pinker has conjectured that critical periods occur when the members of the species learn the skill when young; the neural apparatus for learning is programmed to atrophy at the end of the critical period, to avoid metabolic waste.

### 7.3 Genetic defects of language

It is by now fairly well established that the syndrome called Specific Language Impairment, which is marked by inferior ability to use language (but normal intelligence), has at least some genetic component; indeed, investigators have located families in which multiple members suffer from the syndrome, and at least one specific gene has been located that is implicated in Specific Language Impairment. The relevance of all this is called into question, however, by some scholars, who note the possibility that the impairment may involve some fairly “low-level” defect of phonetic process that could be the cause of the higher-level language difficulties.

## 8. Language and evolution

Certainly, if it is true that humans are biologically specialized for language it would be reasonable to attribute this to natural selection, the source of all adaptive specializations in species. Steven Pinker and Paul Bloom (1990)<sup>125</sup> offer reasons why an innate ability for language would have conferred a selectional advantage on our distant ancestors and thus shaped their evolution.

Pinker and Bloom endorse in passing a theory due to the phonetician Philip Lieberman that our vocal tracts (mouth, throat, larynx) were evolutionarily shaped to permit speech. Lieberman’s idea is that in evolving a long, arched vocal tract, we slightly increased our risk of choking to death while swallowing (the food and air paths cross in our elongated pharynxes). The evolutionary payoff, Lieberman claims, was highly intelligible speech. His theory remains controversial among paleontologists.<sup>126</sup>

## 9. Conclusion

I hope to have shown the study grammar does tie into broader issues. The link arises from grammar’s scope, intricacy, and difficulty, leading to the hypothesis that children learn it with the aid of innate mechanisms. This innateness hypothesis collides with the rival point of view that language can be learned with highly virtuosic inductive mechanisms (which themselves may or may not be innate, or specifically linguistic). Innate mechanisms of any sort assume that language is a biological specialization of humans, a claim supported by the existence of a critical period, specific language impairment, and other evidence. Lastly, such mechanisms have led scholars to try to speculate in as informed a way as they can about the evolution of language.

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<sup>125</sup> From the journal *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*; on line at <http://www.bbsonline.org/documents/a/00/00/04/99/>.

<sup>126</sup> P. Lieberman and E. S. Crelin (1971) “On the speech of Neanderthal man,” *Linguistic Inquiry* 2:203-22.

## Chapter 8: Review of Morphology and Syntax

### 1. Summary: grammar fragment

This is as far as we're going to get concerning the syntactic analysis of English. It may be useful at this point to summarize the rules and constraints as we developed them.

Our grammar has:

- an overall **architecture** (see p. 170), providing for the following:
- a set of **phrase structure rules** (final version given above in (144))
- a **lexicon**, with words bearing subcategorizations, and a principle of lexical insertion
- a set of **word formation rules** (Chapter 2) that can be used to expand the inventory of words in the lexicon
- A set of **transformations**:
  - Tag Question Formation
  - Subject/Aux Inversion
  - Wh-Movement
  - Topicalization
  - It-Clefting
- Further transformations that form **morphosyntactic representations**:
  - Genitive Case Marking
  - Verbal Agreement
- A set of three **island constraints**
  - Coordinate Structure Constraint
  - Complex NP Constraint
  - Wh- Island Constraint
- A postsyntactic module of **inflectional morphology**, including rules of
  - Spell-Out (for contractions)
  - Genitive Inflection (adding - 's)

This grammar suffices to cover a fragment of English. As mentioned earlier, a full grammar of English would be vast—and not all the data have even been gathered yet.

The rest of this chapter consists of study exercises; these hopefully will be helpful if your teacher puts a midterm exam in the middle of the course. Answers will be found at the end of the chapter. These exercises cover everything up to, but not including, the unbounded transformations and island constraints.

## 2. Morphology: Areas and affiliated skills

- **Word formation:**

- Writing word formation rules, which specify the base, what change in meaning and (perhaps) part of speech is involved.
- Constructing iterated derivations, generally “inside out”.

- **Inflectional morphology**

- Finding morphemes and arranging them in position classes
- Writing inflectional rules, specifying the relevant features of the morphosyntactic representation
- Ordering the rules correctly to obtain the right affix order

- The **phonological form** of inflection and word formation

- What change in the string of sounds is used to realize the word formation or inflectional process?
- 

### Study Exercise #38: Persian verbal inflection

#### Positive present indicative

mixaram	‘I buy’	mixarim	‘we buy’
mixari	‘you-sing. buy’	mixarid	‘you-plur. buy’
mixarad	‘he/she buys’	mixarand	‘they buy’

#### Negative present indicative

nemixaram	‘I do not buy’	nemixarim	‘we do not buy’
nemixari	‘you do not buy’	nemixarid	‘you-plur. do not buy’
nemixarad	‘he/she does not buy’	nemixarand	‘they do not buy’

#### Positive past indicative

xaridam	‘I bought’	xaridim	‘we bought’
xaridi	‘you-sing. bought’	xaridid	‘you-plur. bought’
xarid	‘he/she bought’	xaridand	‘they bought’

#### Negative past indicative

naxaridam	‘I did not buy’	naxaridim	‘we did not buy’
naxaridi	‘you-sing. did not buy’	naxaridid	‘you-plur. did not buy’
naxarid	‘he/she did not buy’	naxaridand	‘they did not buy’

**Positive subjunctive**

bexaram	‘that I buy’	bexarim	‘that we buy’
bexari	‘that you-sing. buy’	bexarid	‘that you-plur. buy’
bexarad	‘that he/she buys’	bexarand	‘that they buy’

**Negative subjunctive**

naxaram	‘that I not buy’	naxarim	‘that we not buy’
naxari	‘that you-sing. not buy’	naxarid	‘that you-plur. not buy’
naxarad	‘that he/she not buy’	naxarand	‘that they not buy’

- a. Find and gloss the morphemes
- b. Arrange the morphemes into five position classes.
- c. Make a set of inflectional rules to derive all these forms. You may assume these features:
  - [Polarity: positive, negative]
  - [Mood: indicative, subjunctive]
  - [Tense: past, present]
  - [Person: 1, 2, 3]
  - [Number: Singular, Plural]
- d. Show that your rules work by deriving all six third singular forms.
- e. Which orderings of the rules are needed?

### Answer to Study Exercise #38, Persian Verbal Inflection

a. Morphemes:

ne-, na-	negative
mi-	present
be-	subjunctive
xar	'buy'
-id	past
-am	first person singular
-i	second person singular
-ad, -∅	third person singular
-im	first person plural
-id	second person plural
-and	third person plural

b. There are five slots.

Negative	Misc.	Stem	Tense	Agreement
ne-	mi-	xar	-id	-am
na-	be-			-i
				-ad/-∅
				-im
				-id
				-and

c. Rules, in order

#### Mood Rule

Prefix	be-	when	[Mood:Subjunctive, Polarity:Positive]
	mi-	when	[Mood:Indicative, Tense:Present]

#### Negative Rule

Prefix	ne-	when	[Polarity:Negative, Tense:Present]
	na-	all other	[Polarity:Negative]

#### Tense Rule

Suffix	-id	when	[Tense:Past]
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#### Agreement Rule

Suffix	-am	when	[Person: 1, Number:Singular]
	-i	when	[Person: 2, Number:Singular]
	-∅	when	[Person: 3, Number:Singular, Tense:Past]
	-ad	all other	[Person: 3, Number:Singular]
	-im	when	[Person: 1, Number:Plural]
	-id	when	[Person: 2, Number:Plural]

-and when [Person: 3, Number:Plural]

d. Deriving “(s)he buys”:

xar [① Tense:Present, ②Polarity:Positive, ③Mood:Indicative, ④Person:3, ⑤Number:Singular]  
 mixar Misc.: ③, ①  
 — Negative rule  
 — Tense Rule  
 mixarad Agreement Rule (①, ④, ⑤)

Deriving “(s)he does not buy”:

xar [① Tense:Present, ②Polarity:Negative, ③Mood:Indicative, ④Person:3, ⑤Number:Singular]  
 mixar Misc. Rule (③, ①)  
 nemixar Negative rule (①, ②)  
 — Tense Rule  
 nemixarad Agreement Rule (①, ④, ⑤)

Deriving “(s)he bought”:

xar [① Tense:Past, ②Polarity:Positive, ③Mood:Indicative, ④Person:3, ⑤Number:Singular]  
 — Misc. Rule  
 — Negative Rule  
 xarid Tense Rule (①)  
 — Agreement Rule

Deriving “(s)he did not not buy”:

xar [① Tense:Past, ②Polarity:Negative, ③Mood:Indicative, ④Person:3, ⑤Number:Singular]  
 — Misc. Rule  
 naxar Negative Rule (①, ②)  
 naxarid Tense Rule (①)  
 — Agreement Rule

Deriving “that (s)he buy”:

xar [① Polarity:Positive, ②Mood:Subjunctive, ③Person:3, ④Number:Singular]  
 bexar Misc. Rule (①, ②)  
 — Negative Rule  
 — Tense Rule  
 bexarad Agreement Rule

Deriving “that (s)he not buy”:

xar [① Polarity:Negative, ②Mood:Subjunctive, ③Person:3, ④Number:Singular]  
 — Misc. Rule  
 naxar Negative Rule (①)  
 — Tense Rule  
 bexarad Agreement Rule (③, ④)

e. Ordering:

The prefix rules must apply in the order shown, else would get *\*mi-ne-* rather than the correct form *ne-mi-*.

The suffix rules must apply in the order shown, else we would get (for first singular forms) *\*-am-id*, rather than the correct *-id-am*.

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**Study Exercise #39: English word formation with *-ness***

full	fullness
squeamish	squeamishness
lurid	luridness
profound	profoundness

Write a word formation rule in the format of Chapter 2.

**Answer to Study Exercise #38, English Word Formation** $[X]_{\text{Adj}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Adj}} \text{ness}]_{\text{Noun}}$ 

Meaning: “the quality of being Adjective”

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**Study Exercise #40: Compounding in English**

Use this rule, taken from Chapter 2:

**English Compound Formation** (word formation rule)

 $[X_1]_{\text{Noun}} + [X_2]_{\text{Noun}} \rightarrow [[X_1]_{\text{Noun}} [X_2]_{\text{Noun}}]_{\text{Noun}}$ 

Meaning: “an  $X_2$  that has something to do with  $X_1$ .”

to derive

- a. *tigerbird*
- b. *law degree requirements* (watch for inflection)
- c. *eggplant plant*

**Answer to Study Exercise #39, Compounding***a. tigerbird:*

Given the existence of [ tiger ]<sub>Noun</sub> and [ bird ]<sub>Noun</sub>, we obtain [ [ tiger ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ bird ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>, which means “a bird having something to do with tigers”

*b. law degree requirements:*

Step 1: Given the existence of [ law ]<sub>Noun</sub> and [ degree ]<sub>Noun</sub>, we obtain [ [ law ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ degree ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>, which means “a degree having something to do with the law”, in this case “degree awarded for the study of law”

Step 2: Given the existence of [ [ law ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ degree ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub> and [ requirement ]<sub>Noun</sub>, we obtain [ [ [ law ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ degree ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ requirement ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>, which means “a requirement have to do with a law degree”, in this case “requirements needed to obtain a law degree”

Step 3: a rule of inflection morphology gives us the plural *law degree requirements*.

*c. eggplant plant*

Step 1: Given the existence of [ egg ]<sub>Noun</sub> and [ plant ]<sub>Noun</sub>, we obtain [ [ egg ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ plant ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>, which means “a plant having something to do with eggs.” In this case, the “having something to do with” is, “shaped like”, so we get the familiar vegetable.

Step 2: Given the existence of [ [ egg ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ plant ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub> and [ plant ]<sub>Noun</sub>, we obtain [ [ [ egg ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ plant ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub> [ plant ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub> which means “a plant having something to do with eggplants.” In this case, the “having something to do with” is, presumably, “suited for the manufacture of”; i.e. a hypothetical future factory capable of manufacturing eggplants.

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### Study Exercise #41: Hungarian word formation

Phonetic symbols: [ɔ] = “aw”, with lip rounding; [ɲ] is rather like “ny”; [ː] marks a long vowel, [ˈ] goes before the stressed syllable; [ø] is like German “ö” or French “eu”.

'a:ll	'stand'	'a:llva:ɲ	'stand, scaffolding'
'igɔzɔl	'justify'	'igɔzɔlva:ɲ	'certificate'
kiɔd	'publish'	'kiɔdva:ɲ	'publication'
'mutɔt	'show'	'mutɔtva:ɲ	'specimen, spectacle'

with a different vowel; ignore the vowel issue for now.

køt	'tie'	køtve:ɲ	'bond, security'
ke:r	'ask for'	kerve:ɲ	'questionnaire'

Write a rule of word formation. The hardest part is specifying the meaning.

### Answer to Study Exercise #40, Hungarian Word Formation

[ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> → [ [ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> va:jɒ ]<sub>Noun</sub>

Meaning: “the result or instrument of Verbing”

-ve:jɒ is due to phonology, a rule of Vowel Harmony

### Study Exercise #42: English word formation

a. Write a rule of word formation that can derive the italicized items.

a merry *chase*

a fifty-foot *drop*

The canoeists found that between Racquette Lake and Forked Lake was not a difficult *carry*.  
He reached the water fountain and took a good long *drink*.

b. Write a rule of word formation that can derive the items in the right column.

*kitchen*

*kitchenette*

*pipe*

*pipette*<sup>127</sup>

*rose*

*rosette*

*statue*

*statuette*

<sup>127</sup> This example works just fine in the spoken domain (*pipe* = [paɪp], *pipette* = [paɪpɛt]), but in the written domain we have to assume a spelling rule. It's pretty general in English that final letter *e* is dropped before a vowel-initial suffix, as in *ride* ~ *riding*, *dispense* ~ *dispensation*, and so on. Prior to the application of this spelling rule, *pipette* is *pipe+ette*.

### Answer to Study Exercise #41, English Word Formation

a. [ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> → [ [ X ]<sub>Verb</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>

Meaning: “an instance of Verbing”

b. [ X ]<sub>Noun</sub> → [ [ X ette ]<sub>Noun</sub> ]<sub>Noun</sub>

Meaning: “a little Noun or thing having to do with Noun”

### Study Exercise #43: Luiseño Inflection(S. California)

Write morphological rules to cover inflection. You will have to make up your own morphosyntactic representations.

Hint: think about whether a noun is something you could ever lose, and make up a feature to describe this.

ʔu'ma:kinaki	‘your car’	ʔu'ma:tʃa	‘your back’
nu'ma:kinaki	‘my car’	nu'ma:tʃa	‘my back’
ʔu'pa:nki	‘your bread’	ʔu'ka:mi	‘your son’
pu'pa:nki	‘his bread’	pu'ka:mi	‘his son’
nuxar'di:nki	‘my garden’	nu'naʔ	‘my father’
puxar'di:nki	‘his garden’	ʔu'naʔ	‘your father’
nu'no:tki	‘my boss’		
ʔuʂ'ŋa:ki	‘your wife’ <sup>128</sup>		

<sup>128</sup> To these may be added the somewhat startling *nu'peʃli* ‘my dish’, *pu'peʃli* ‘her dish’; grammar has an arbitrary side...

**Answer to Study Exercise #42, Luiseño**

The data illustrate the concept of **inalienability**, an inflectional category in many languages. A thing is inalienably possessed if you could never truly be rid of it: your relatives, the parts of the body.

Two rules are needed, which could apply in either order:

**Person-Number Marking**

$X \rightarrow nu X$  where morphsyntactic representation contains [Number:Sing, Pers:1]

$X \rightarrow ?u X$  where morphsyntactic representation contains [Number:Sing, Pers:2]

$X \rightarrow pu X$  where morphsyntactic representation contains [Number:Sing, Pers:3]

**Inalienability Marking**

$X \rightarrow X ki$  where morphosyntactic representation contains [Alienable:True]

---

**3. Study Exercise #44: Applying Word Formation Rules in Order**

Find two meanings for *overfillable* and provide derivations for both.

### Answer to Study Exercise #43, Applying Rules of Word Formation in Order

fill	root	
fillable	[ X ] <sub>Verb</sub> → [ [ X ] <sub>Verb</sub> able ] <sub>Adj</sub>	Meaning: ‘able to be Verbed’
overfillable	[ X ] <sub>Adj</sub> → [ over [ X ] <sub>Adj</sub> ] <sub>Adj</sub>	Meaning: ‘excessively A’

‘too fillable’; said perhaps of a conveniently wide-brimmed whiskey flask belonging to a heavy drinker. “Alas for Smith, the flask proved overfillable, and he filled it again and again.”

compare: *dreamable, drinkable; overeager, overproud*

fill	root	
overflow	[ X ] <sub>Verb</sub> → [ over [ X ] <sub>Verb</sub> ] <sub>Verb</sub>	Meaning: ‘Verb too much’
overflowable	[ X ] <sub>Verb</sub> → [ [ X ] <sub>Verb</sub> able ] <sub>Adj</sub>	Meaning: ‘able to be Verbed’

‘liable to be overflowed’; said perhaps of a car engine that admits a dangerous excess of motor oil because the dipstick gives an inaccurate reading: “my car engine is just way too overflowable”

compare: *overeat, overdress; (same examples for -able)*

#### 4. Study Exercise #45: Chamorro Infixation

Formalize this rule of word formation using the symbols V, C, and numeral subscripts. State in words what your rule does. [ʔ] is a “glottal stop”, a kind of consonant. It can be identified as the little silence created by closing the vocal cords, heard in the middle of “uh-oh”.

liʔiʔ	‘to see’	liniʔiʔ	‘(the) thing seen’
hatsa	‘to lift’	hinatsa	‘(the) thing lifted’
saʔan	‘to tell’	sinanʔan	‘(the) thing told’
hasu	‘to think’	hinasu	‘thought’
faisin	‘to ask’	finaisin	‘question’

### Answer to Study Exercise #44, Chamorro Infixation

Assumed to be word formation.

$$\begin{array}{c} [C X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [[C \text{ in } X]_{\text{Verb}}]_{\text{Noun}} \\ 1 \quad 2 \qquad \qquad 1 \quad 2 \end{array}$$

Meaning: “thing that is Verbed”

In other words, “count off the first consonant, and place *-in-* right after it.”

---

### Study Exercise #46: Yucatec Reduplication

Symbols:

$\overline{tʃ}$  as in *church*

$\overline{ts}$  like *Betsy* but is just one sound, not two

$k'$  is k with extra oral pressure (“ejective”), and similarly for other sounds.

$j$  is IPA for y

$ʔ$  is glottal stop, heard in the middle of *uh-oh*.

sak	‘white’	sasak	‘very white’
$\overline{tʃitʃ}$	‘hard’	$\overline{tʃitʃitʃ}$	‘very hard’
$\overline{tʃak}$	‘red’	$\overline{tʃatʃak}$	‘very red’
$k'as$	‘bad’	$k'ak'as$	‘very bad’
$nats'$	‘near’	$nanats'$	‘very near’
haj	‘thin’	hahaj	‘very thin’
$\overline{natʃ}$	‘far’	$\overline{nanatʃ}$	‘very far’
sis	‘cool’	sisis	‘very cool’
$suʔuts'$	‘sour’	$suʔusuʔuts'$	‘very sour’
$jaʔab$	‘many’	$jaʔajaʔab$	‘very many’

**Answer to Study Exercise #45, Yucatec Reduplication**

Assumed to be word formation.

$[X C]_{Adj} \rightarrow [[X X C]_{Adj}]_{Adj}$       Meaning: "very Adjective"  
1 2                    1 1 2

in other words: "copy all but the last consonant, and put the copy before the original."

---

**Study Exercise #47: Obligatory Expression**

In

*My cat jumped.*

specify two cases of obligatory expression (inflectional system of English forces you to communicate particular information)

**Answer to Study Exercise #46, Obligatory Expression**

*Cat* is singular—the sentence means specifically one cat. This is because English nouns must appear with either [Number:Singular] or [Number:Plural] in their morphosyntactic representations.

*Jumped* is past tense; tense must be marked in the morphosyntactic representation of the main verb of a sentence.

---

**Study Exercise #48: Organization of the grammar: morphology**

In the view of some linguists, the following is not only an impossible word of English, but violates a fundamental principle of grammar. Explain.

*\*personsology* ‘the study of collections of more than one person’

Answer on next page.

**Study Exercise #49: Normative grammar**

Briefly describe a matched-guise experiment.

**Answer to Study Exercise #47, Organization of the Grammar: Morphology**

In \**personsology*, a suffix for word formation, *-ology*, has been added “outside” of (hence, “after”) an inflectional suffix. If word formation precedes lexical insertion and inflection follows it, this should not be possible

**Answer to Study Exercise #48, Normative Grammar**

The core of a matched guise experiment is to have a bilingual or bidialectal person say essentially the same thing in both of the language varieties she speaks, and then have experimental subjects rate both voices for various traits—honesty, intelligence, friendliness, etc.—without knowing that the “two” speakers are actually one. The idea is to get a controlled evaluation of what people think about the varieties as such.

## 5. Syntax: Some skills

- Parsing sentences, particularly knowing where to attach modifiers.
  - Using phrase structures to check if your structure is “compliant”.
  - Establishing the phrase structure rules needed for new languages.
    - Method: parse the sentences first, based on meaning, then make a short, clean set of rules using ( ) and ( )\*.
  - Applying various transformations, given in the text.
  - Determining the deep structure, given the surface structure, so you can give a whole derivation.
  - Show how the various island constraints rule out sentences.
  - Demonstrate that a movement transformation applied unboundedly.
  - Demonstrate that a transformation obeys a particular island constraint.
- 

### Study Exercise #50: Syntax: parsing

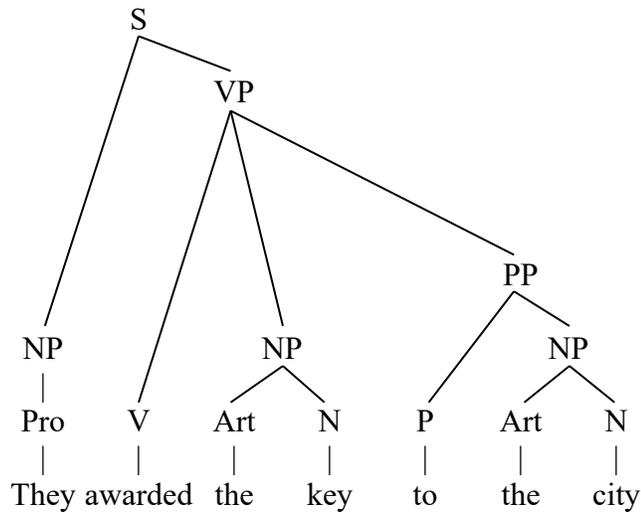
English phrase structure rules:

- S → NP (Aux) VP
- NP →  $\left( \begin{array}{l} \{ \text{Art} \} \\ \{ \text{NP} \} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^* (\text{CP})$
- NP → Pronoun
- VP → V (NP) (NP) (PP)\* (CP)
- VP → V AP
- PP → P NP
- CP → (Comp) S
- 
- NP → NP (Conj NP)\*
- VP → VP (Conj VP)\*
- PP → PP (Conj PP)\*
- S → S (Conj S)\*
- CP → CP (Conj CP)\*
- V → V (Conj V)\*

Parse:

- a. His brother and his wife’s book’s excessive length meant that it would cost a lot.
- b. They awarded the key to the city (explicate both meanings)





This is the meaning, “The city was award the key (perhaps an important historical artifact for the municipal museum.” *To the city* specifies what kind of act of awarding.

### Study Exercise #51: Constituency Testing with It Clefting

A. As noted earlier, It-Clefting can be used to show what is an NP or PP, since it “targets” these phrases; that is, it is a potential constituency test. Use this test to justify the constituency of the two meanings of the sentence (b) in Study Exercise #49.

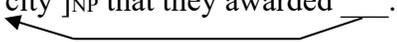
B. Use the It-Clefting constituency test to determine if the underlined sequences of words are constituents.

- a. I put the key under the mat.
- b. I own the key under the mat.

### Answer to Study Exercise #50, Syntax: Constituency Testing

**Part A.** In the first reading, *the key to the city* is held to be an NP; that is a constituent. It-Clefting can only apply to constituents. When we cleft *the key to the city*:

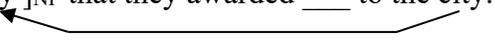
It was [ the key to the city ]<sub>NP</sub> that they awarded \_\_\_\_.



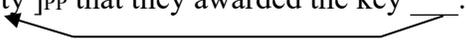
we only get the reading where *to the city* specifies which key.

In the second reading, *the key* and *to the city* are separate constituents, and they can each be It-Clefted on their own:

It was [ the key ]<sub>NP</sub> that they awarded \_\_\_\_ to the city.



It was [to the city ]<sub>PP</sub> that they awarded the key \_\_\_\_.



However, in each case, Clefting *removes the ambiguity*. It can only affect constituents; so it reveals the constituent structure of the basic sentence for each of the two meanings.

### Part B.

a. I put the key under the mat.

\*It was the key under the mat I put.

So, *the key under the mat* is not a constituent. (It's actually an NP followed by a separate PP.)

b. I own the key under the mat.

It is the key under the mat that I own.

So, *the key under the mat* is a constituent. (*under the mat* is part of this NP, modifying *key*)

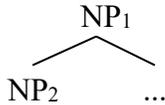
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**Study Exercise #52: Case Marking**

Apply the case marking rule below to the structure you gave for sentence (a) in Study Exercise #49 above.

**English Genitive Case Marking**

In the configuration shown:



assign the feature [Case:Genitive] to the morphosyntactic representation of the rightmost word in NP2.

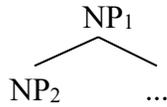
You may assume that when the sentence is turned over to the component of inflectional morphology, the following morphological rule applies:

**Genitive Realization**

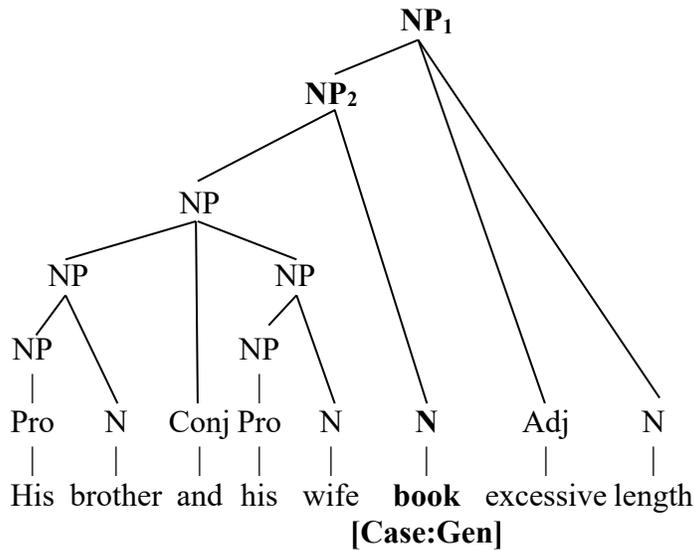
Suffix - 's when the morphosyntactic representation contains [Case:Genitive].

**Answer to Study Exercise #51, Syntax: Case Marking**

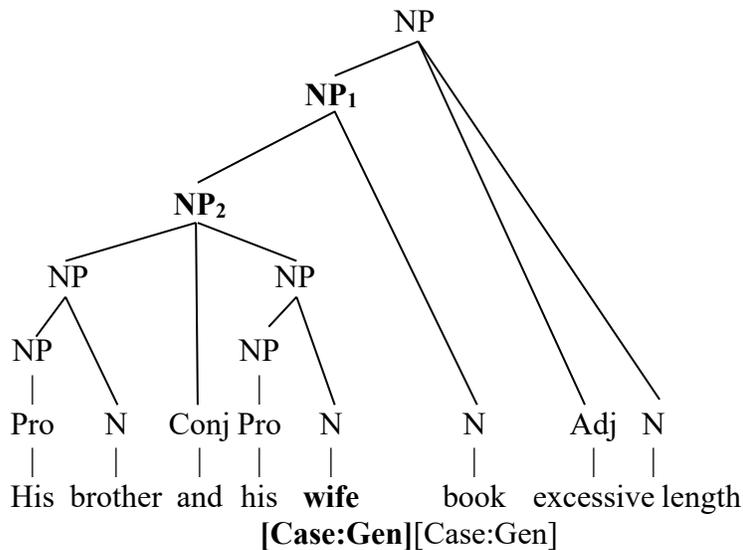
I'll show just the relevant NP. Items referred to in the rule are shown in boldface. We are looking for:



and are putting the feature [Case:Genitive] on the rightmost word of NP2. Here is one application:



Here is the other application:



These are realized later in the morphology as *wife's* and *book's*.

**Study Exercise #53: Subcategorization**

I.

Provide and justify subcategorization frames for:

- a. opinion
- b. transform (as a verb)
- c. expire

II.

a. Explain why the grammar in this book would not generate these sentences:

\*We took.

\*We own.

b. Suppose for the moment that we had a grammar that *did* generate these sentences. Would this be a case of overgeneration or ungeneration?

### Answer to Study Exercise #52, Subcategorization

I.

a. opinion

[ \_\_\_ (CP) ] and [ \_\_\_ (PP) ]

Bill's opinion

Bill's opinion of Fred

Bill's opinion that Fred will win.

b. transform (as a verb)

[ \_\_\_ NP (PP) ] and [ \_\_\_ PP ]

\*Fred transformed.

Fred transformed the field.

Fred transformed the apple into a pear.

Fred transformed into a dwarf.

c. expire

[ \_\_\_ ]

Time expired.

\*Time expired the men.

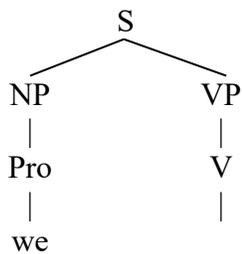
\*Time expired to (or: of, above) the men.

II.

a. \**We took* is bad because *take* subcategorizes for an obligatory NP object. Its frame is:

[ \_\_\_ NP ]

The grammar won't generate \**We took* because *take* cannot be inserted into the relevant tree, which is:



The explanation for \**We own* is identical.

If the grammar did generate \**We took*, \**We own*, it would be overgeneration: outputting examples that are ungrammatical.

### Study Exercise #54: Syntax: Writing your own phrase structure rules

The following data are from a problem set book by Jeannette Witucki. It's a pretty good book (sadly, never formally published), but you should remember that Witucki isn't necessarily teaching exactly the same syntactic theory as me, and not all the loose ends will necessarily get tied up here.

The language here is Sango, a creole<sup>129</sup> language spoken in the Central African Republic. The word-by-word glosses are by me, guessing as best as I could from the sentence glosses, which are Witucki's.

1. mbi    tɛ        mbeni    yãma  
I        eat        some    meat  
'I eat some meat'
  
2. mbi    kɛ        tɛ        yãma    la        so  
I        prog.    eat        meat    day        this  
'I am eating meat today'
  
3. mbi    mu        na        mɔ        mersi    mingi  
I        give     to        you     thanks   many  
'I give you many thanks'
  
4. lo        mu        na        lo        ngu  
he        give     to        him     water  
'He gives him water'
  
5. lo        kɛ        mu        na        mɔ        nginza  
he        prog.    give     to        you     money  
'He is giving you money'
  
6. i         mu        mbeni    ateme    ka  
we        give     some    stones   there  
'We take some stones there'
  
7. mbi    mu        na        mɛrɛnge ti        lo        nginza  
I        give     to        child   of        him     money  
'I gave money to a child of his.'

---

<sup>129</sup> A creole language arises when a simple, spur-of-the-moment contact language arising among speakers of distinct languages (here, French and Ngbandi) is learned by children and elaborated (via Universal Grammar, some think) into a full-fledged, fully-expressive language with native speakers.

8. mɔ zia ngu na wa  
you put water to fire  
'You put water on the fire'
9. mɔ zia mbeni yãma na sese  
you put some meat to ground  
'You put some meat on the ground'
10. ala mu na lo ere so  
they give to him name this  
'They gave this name to him.'
11. ala zia yãma so na sese  
they put meat this to ground  
'They put this meat on the ground'
12. lo zia ala na kanga  
he put them to jail  
'He put them in jail'
13. mbi zia mbeni ateme da  
I put some stone here  
'I put some stones here'
14. mbi zia ala da la so  
I put them here day this  
'I put them here today'
15. i faa na yãma  
we kill to meat  
'We kill animals'
16. i na mɔ faa na yãma  
we to you kill to meat  
'you and I kill animals'
17. i na ala faa na yãma  
we to them kill to meat  
'They and I kill animals'
18. i na lo faa kɔndɔ  
we to him kill chicken  
'He and I kill chickens'

19. i faa kɔndɔ mingi  
we kill chicken many  
'We kill many chickens'
20. ala faa woga mingi ti te  
they kill antelope many of eating?  
'They kill many antelope to eat'
21. mbi faa kɔndɔ ka na keke  
I kill chicken there to tree  
'I killed a chicken there in the tree'
22. mɔ wara mbi ka la so  
you find I there day this  
'You found me there today'
23. mbi wara kɔli ti mbi  
I find man of I  
'I found my husband'
24. mbi wara ita ti mbi ti wale  
I find sibling of I of woman  
'I found my sister'
25. mbi wara ita ti mbi ti kɔli  
I find sibling of I of man  
'I found my brother'

### Answer to Study Exercise #53, Sango Phrase Structure Rules

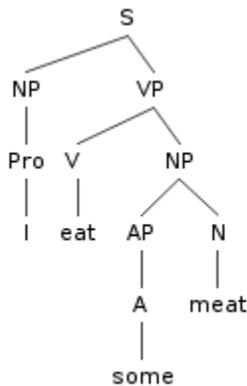
Hoping for a slightly cleaner answer I made a couple of perhaps dubious assumptions:

- *la so* ‘today’ is a fixed expression, i.e. a compound, as in English. I am classifying this as an Adverb.
- I am treating *ke* as an Aux.
- I am treating the prenominal expression *mbeni* ‘some’ as an Adjective, letting postnominal *so* and *mingi* be in the position for Articles.

The analytic strategy is:

- Provide conjecture trees for each sentence.
- Write down “sketch” phrase structure rules, that is, exactly what is needed to generate the proposed tree.
- At the end, collate, generalize and simplify the rules using ( ) and (\*)

1.    mbi    tɛ        mbeni    yãma  
       I        eat        some    meat  
       Pro    V        A        N  
       ‘I eat some meat’



Rules needed:

$S \rightarrow NP VP$

$NP \rightarrow Pro$

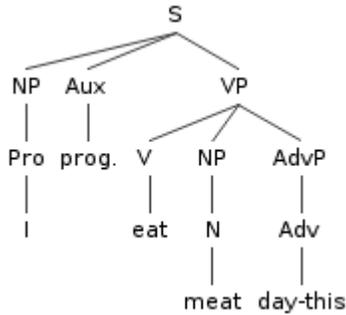
$VP \rightarrow V NP$

$NP \rightarrow AP N$

$AP \rightarrow A$

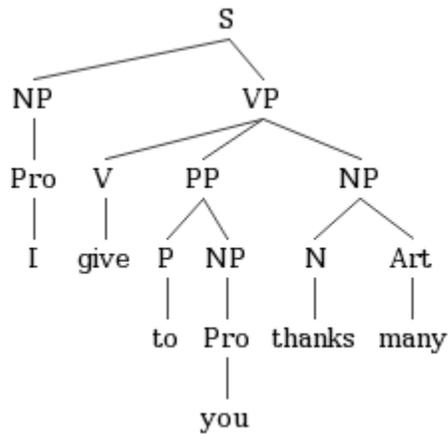
Out on a limb: “some” as Adjective, since it looks like in general, the Articles follow the noun.

2. mbi ke te yāma la so  
 I prog. eat meat day this  
 Pro Aux V N Adv.....  
 'I am eating meat today'



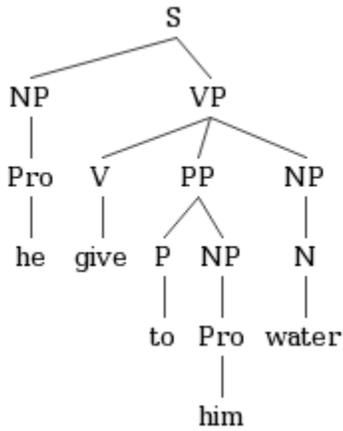
S → NP Aux VP  
 NP → Pro (lots of these, I won't repeat this one)  
 VP → V NP AdvP  
 AdvP → Adv  
 NP → N

3. mbi mu na mo mersi mingi  
 I give to you thanks many  
 Pro V P Pro N Art  
 'I give you many thanks'



V → V PP NP  
 PP → P NP  
 NP → N Art

4. lo mu na lo ngu  
 he give to him water  
 Pro V P Pro N  
 'He gives him water'



VP → V PP NP

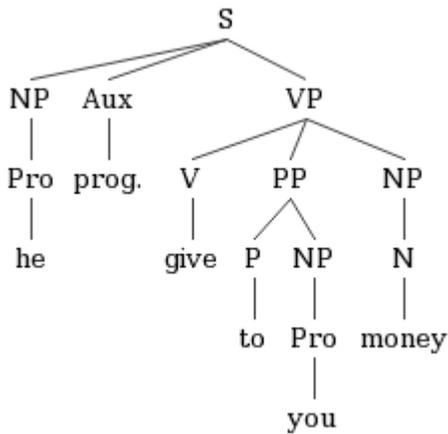
PP → P NP

(many of these, won't repeat)

NP → N

(many of these, won't repeat)

5. lo ke mu na mo ngingza  
 he prog. give to you money  
 Pro Aux V P Pro N  
 'He is giving you money'

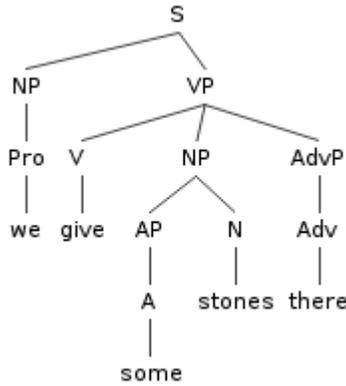


S → NP Aux VP

(many of these, won't repeat)

VP → V PP NP

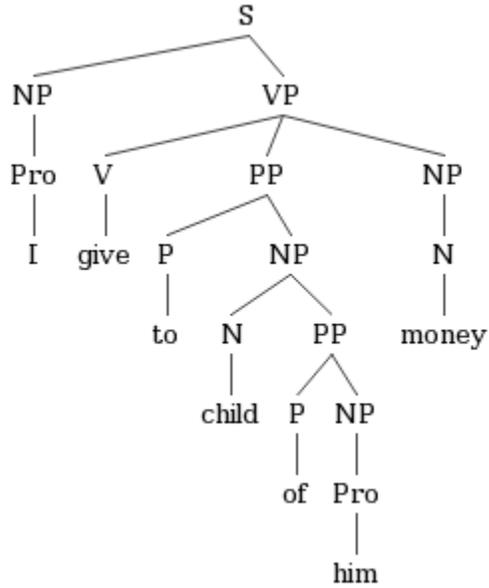
6. i mu mbeni ateme ka  
 we give some stones there  
 Pro V Adj N Adv  
 ‘We take some stones there’



V → V NP AdvP

AdvP → Adv (won't repeat)

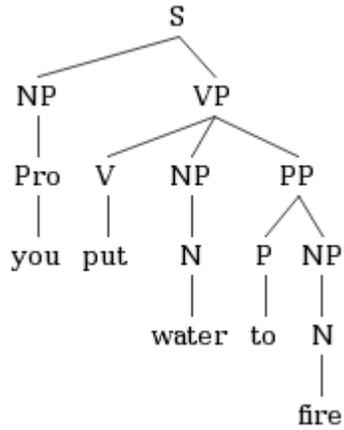
7. mbi mu na merenge ti lo ngingza  
 I give to child of him money  
 Pro V P N P Pro N  
 ‘I gave money to a child of his.’



VP → V PP NP

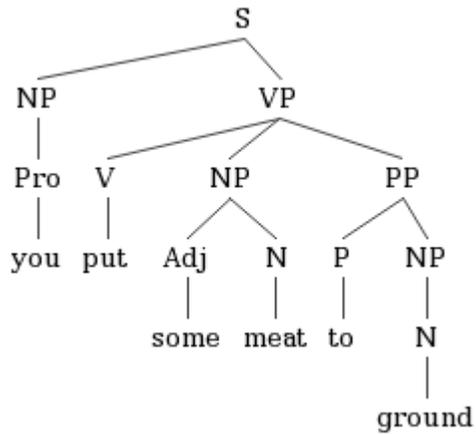
NP → N PP

8.    mɔ      zia      ngu      na      wa  
       you    put      water   to      fire  
       Pro    V        N        P        N  
       ‘You put water on the fire’



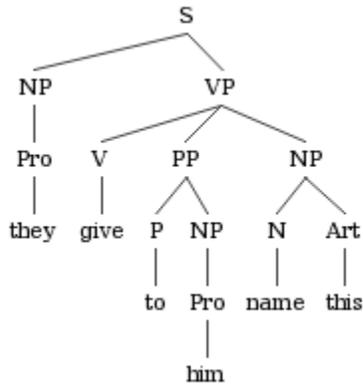
VP → V NP PP

9.    mɔ      zia      mbeni   yãma    na      sese  
       you    put      some    meat    to      ground  
       Pro    V        Adj     N        P        N  
       ‘You put some meat on the ground’



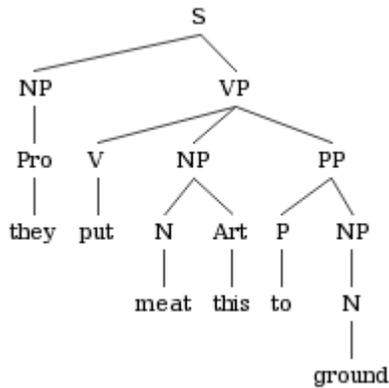
VP → V NP PP

10.   ala     mu     na     lo     ere     so  
       they  give  to     him  name  this  
       Pro   V     P     Pro  N     Art  
       ‘They gave this name to him.’



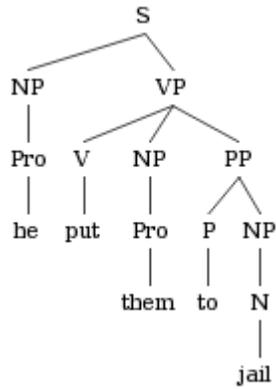
V → V PP NP  
 NP → N Art

11.   ala     zia     yāma   so     na     sese  
       they  put     meat  this  to     ground  
       Pro   V     N     Art  P     N  
       ‘They put this meat on the ground’



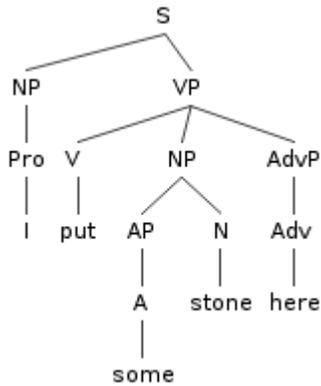
VP → V NP PP  
 NP → N Art     (won't repeat this one)

12. lo zia ala na kanga  
 he put them to jail  
 Pro V Pro P N  
 'He put them in jail'



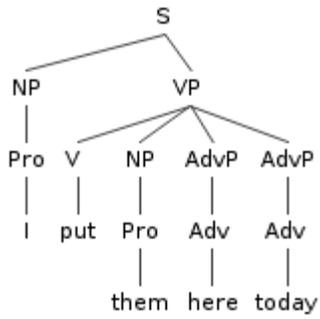
VP → V NP PP

13. mbi zia mbeni ateme da  
 I put some stone here  
 Pro V Adj N Adv  
 'I put some stones here'



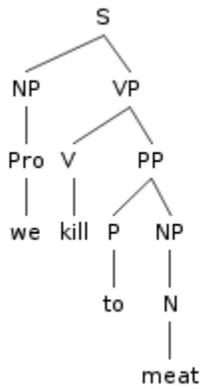
VP → V NP AdvP

14. mbi zia ala da la so  
 I put them here today.....  
 Pro V Pro Adv Adv  
 'I put them here today'



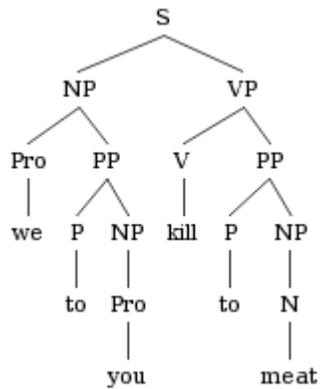
VP → V NP AdvP AdvP

15. i        faa        na        yāma  
 we        kill        to        meat  
 Pro       V        P        N  
 ‘We kill animals’



VP → V PP

16. i        na        mō        faa        na        yāma  
 we        to        you        kill        to        meat  
 Pro       P        Pro        V        P        N  
 ‘you and I kill animals’

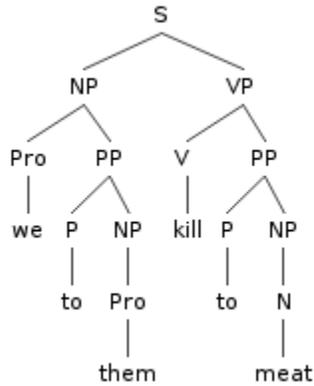


NP → Pro PP

VP → V PP

Note unusual construction, with a PP modifying a Pronoun within NP; not possible in English.

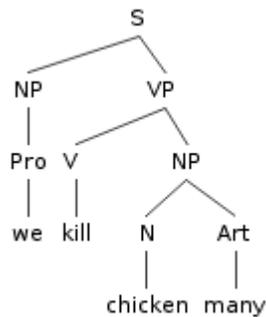
17. i na ala faa na yāma  
 we to them kill to meat  
 Pro P Pro V P N  
 ‘They and I kill animals’



Nothing new in PS rules.

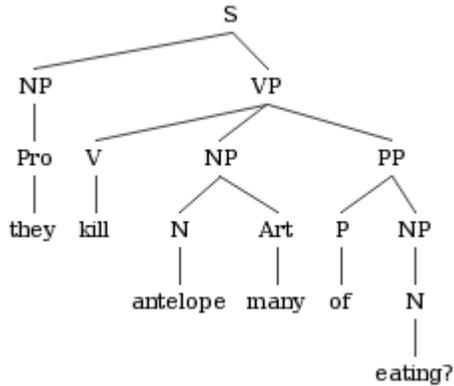
18. i na lo faa kōndō  
 we to him kill chicken  
 Pro P Pro V N  
 ‘He and I kill chickens’  
 Ditto.

19. i faa kōndō mingi  
 Pro V N Art  
 ‘We kill many chickens’



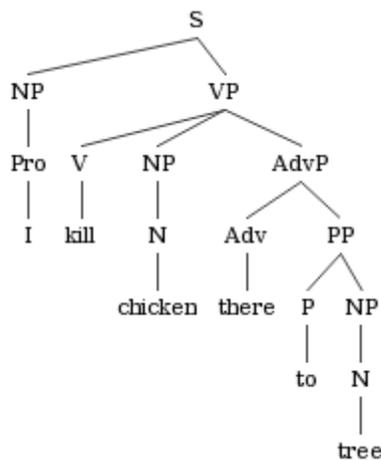
No new rules.

20.   ala    faa    woga   mingi   ti    te  
       they   kill   antelope   many   of    eating?  
       Pro   V     N     Art   P     N  
       ‘They kill many antelope to eat’



VP → V NP PP

21.   mbi    faa    kondo   ka    na    keke  
       I     kill   chicken   there   to    tree  
       Pro   V     N     Adv   P     N  
       ‘I killed a chicken there in the tree’

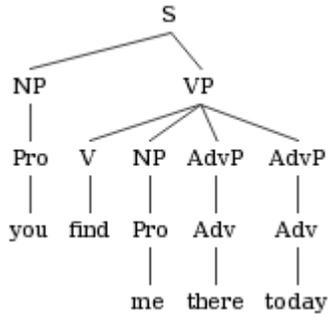


I suggest that the PP *ne keke* is modifying the Adverb *ka*. Thus we need to put our Adverbs inside Adverb Phrases (adjusting the previous rules that used bare Adverbs), and set up an Adverb Phrase rule.

VP → V NP AdvP

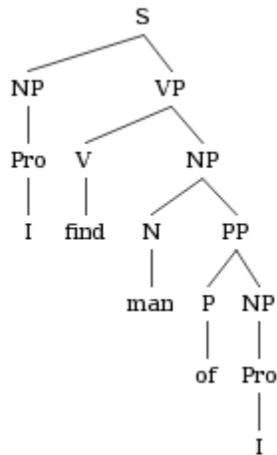
AdvP → Adv PP

22. mō wara mbi ka la so  
 you find I there today.....  
 Pro V Pro Adv Adv  
 ‘You found me there today’



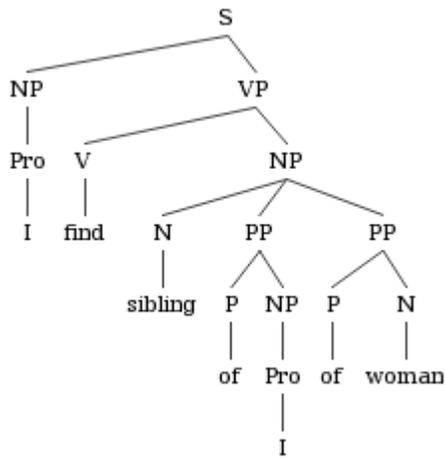
A fairly clear case of two Adverbs.  
 VP → V NP AdvP AdvP

23. mbi wara kōli ti mbi  
 I find man of I  
 Pro V N P Pro  
 ‘I found my husband’



NP → N PP

24. mbi wara ita ti mbi ti wale  
 I find sibling of I of woman  
 Pro V N P Pro P N  
 ‘I found my sister’



NP → Pro PP PP

I assume that each PP is independently a modifier of *ita* ‘sibling’:

25. mbi wara ita ti mbi ti kōli  
 I find sibling of I of man  
 Pro V N P Pro P N  
 ‘I found my brother’  
 Just like #24.

This completes the gathering of the “sketch” phrase structure rules. We first collate them, removing duplicates, like this:

S → NP Aux VP

S → NP VP

NP → AP N

NP → N

NP → N Art

NP → N PP

NP → Pro

NP → Pro PP

NP → Pro PP PP

VP → V NP

VP → V NP AdvP

VP → V NP AdvP AdvP

VP → V NP PP

VP → V PP

$$VP \rightarrow V PP NP$$

$$AdvP \rightarrow Adv$$

$$AdvP \rightarrow Adv PP$$

$$AP \rightarrow A$$

then we can use the abbreviatory notations, and a little guess work, to produce a more general grammar:

$$S \rightarrow NP (Aux) VP$$

$$NP \rightarrow (AP)^* \left\{ \begin{array}{l} N \\ Pro \end{array} \right\} (PP)^* (Art)$$

$$PP \rightarrow P NP$$

$$VP \rightarrow V (PP)(NP)(PP)(AdvP)^*$$

$$AdvP \rightarrow Adv (PP)$$

The most interesting of these is the VP rule. There are evidently VP's with both NP PP and PP NP order. My guess would be that this is determined by subcategorization; that is

Subcategorizes for [ \_\_\_ NP PP ]: zia 'put'

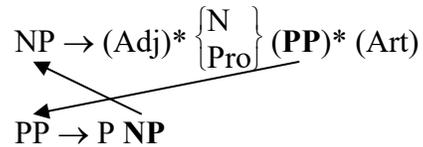
Subcategorizes for [ \_\_\_ PP NP ]: mu 'give'

**Study Exercise #55: Recursiveness in Sango**

Find a recursive loop in the phrase structure rules you just developed for Sango in Study Exercise #53. If there is none, so state.

### Answer to Study Exercise #54, Recursiveness

The one loop appears to be a two-rule case:



It's virtually certain that Sango has subordinate clauses, which would produce at least one further loop, as in English.

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### Study Exercise #56: Case marking in Pseudo-English

Write rules to mark case in this pseudo-English. You should write both syntactic rules of case marking, to put the right morphosyntactic features in the right places, and rules of inflectional morphology, to actually add the suffixes.

You will find it helpful first to parse the sentences. Other than the case marking, the language is just like real English.

- a. John<sub>wa</sub> gave Mary<sub>ni</sub> a book<sub>o</sub>.
- b. The king<sub>o</sub> of England<sub>wa</sub> sold the queen<sub>ni</sub> a book<sub>o</sub> of poem<sub>so</sub>.
- c. The king<sub>wa</sub> sent the prince<sub>ni</sub> of Wales<sub>o</sub> a letter<sub>o</sub>.
- d. The key<sub>o</sub> to the door<sub>wa</sub> is of great importance.
- e. Fred<sub>wa</sub> thinks that the seller<sub>o</sub> of fish<sub>wa</sub> read the paper<sub>o</sub>.
- f. Wew<sub>a</sub> told the daughter<sub>ni</sub> of Mary<sub>o</sub> a story<sub>o</sub> about mice<sub>o</sub>.
- g. Iw<sub>a</sub> sang a song<sub>o</sub> about bird<sub>so</sub> to Alice.
- h. Alicew<sub>a</sub> made the claim<sub>o</sub> that shew<sub>a</sub> was leav<sub>ingo</sub>.

**Answer to Study Exercise #55, Case marking in Pseudo-English****Syntactic rules of case marking**

Mark the rightmost word of the subject NP (daughter of S) as [Case:Nominative].

Mark the rightmost word of the last object NP (last NP daughter of VP) as  
[Case:Accusative].

Mark the head of the first NP, when there are two of them in VP, as [Case:Dative].

**Rules of inflectional morphology**

Suffix -wa when [Case:Nominative]

Suffix -o when [Case:Accusative]

Suffix -ni when [Case:Dative]

Note: the nominative and the accusative here (but not the dative) are very roughly as in Japanese.

## Chapter 9: Semantics

### 1. Goals of semantics

Semantics is the branch of linguistics that studies meaning, particularly meaning as it is conveyed by language. We can start out by asking what meaning is.

Meaning is a characteristic of symbolic systems; language is by far the most elaborate and powerful symbolic system that has ever been found. Our sentences are complex symbols, physically realized in speech or writing, which bear meanings and thus express our thoughts.

Clearly, there is more to thought than the language that expresses it. Thought can exist in the absence of language, since many animals can behave in a sophisticated and rational fashion without having anything like human language.<sup>130</sup> It also seems clear that we sometimes experience thought in ways that are very direct and not linguistic. There is no need for thought to occur in a linear sequence, as our words must; and moreover that our visual thoughts are not particularly expressible in language.

The development of a theory of thought is at present an active but speculative activity, involving psychologists, philosophers, cognitive scientists, and scholars in the field of artificial intelligence. One vindication for a proposed theory of thought would be if it could be embodied in a system that could think and reason like a person. This remains a distant goal.

Our focus in semantics is not quite as grand; we just want to know how language expresses thought. The problem faced by semanticists is to study the ways in which language embodies thought, without a well-developed theory of thought to go by. This problem has not stymied research, however, because there are plenty of ways to conduct careful research that don't require a full theory of thought to make progress. For instance, one strategy that has been followed (it originates in the field of philosophy) is to develop formal systems that determine the **truth conditions** of sentences (properties of the world that must hold for sentences to be true), often in a small, artificially-constructed world. This kind of approach requires a fair amount of development and will not be taught here; instead, in the interest of a unified text I want to cover aspects of semantics that interact most closely with syntax.

We will cover three aspects of linguistic meaning: **predicate-argument structure**, **anaphora**, and **operators and scope**.

### 2. Predicate-argument structure

A **predicate-argument structure** is a simple semantic representation that limits itself to depicting "who is doing what to whom." For example, in a sentence like

---

<sup>130</sup> A book on this topic I have enjoyed, written from a sober but exploratory viewpoint, is *Animal Minds*, by Donald Griffin (University of Chicago Press, 1992). This continues to be an active area of research as scientists document the ability of various animals to plan, to use tools, and to infer the mental states of other beings.

*John cooked the egg.*

an act of cooking is described. We could characterize this act with the following predicate-argument structure.

COOK ( (Cooker John ), (Cook-ee the egg ) )

In this structure, COOK is a “predicate”, which has “arguments”, in this case filling the slot of Cooker and Cook-ee. The labels for the argument slots are arbitrary, and in fact I will sometimes be choosing slightly silly ones, simply because they are short and clear.<sup>131</sup> Argument slots are sometimes designated with the term **thematic roles**.

Predicate-argument structure contains both more and less information than a syntactic tree.

Predicate-argument structure contains *more* information than syntactic structure because it identifies the argument slots for each participant in the action. Syntactic structure instead places the participants (designated by NPs) in syntactic roles, such as **subject** (NP daughter of S) or **object** (NP daughter of VP)—and, as we will see, there is only a loose connection between thematic roles and syntactic roles.

Predicate-argument structure contains *less* information than syntactic structure for various reasons. Most notably, predicate-argument structure is not meant to convey linear order; COOK “has” the two arguments given, but there is nothing in the thought being expressed that requires this order. The order that appears on the page is selected purely for convenience.

Linear order is a property of language, not of thought. Different languages have idiosyncratic orders, including all six logically possible orders for simple two-NP sentences like *John cooked the egg*. Here are all six, with examples of each.

SVO	English, Spanish, Swahili, Mandarin
SOV	Japanese, Korean, Turkish, Persian
VSO	Tagalog, Biblical Hebrew, Irish
VOS	Fijian
OSV	Xavante (Brazil)
OVS	Hixkaryana (Brazil) <sup>132</sup>

## 2.1 Rough correlations between syntax and predicate-argument structure

Linguists have long noticed that aspects of meaning, as we might express them in a predicate-argument structure, show a *loose correlation* with syntactic structure. Here are some common generalizations.

<sup>131</sup> More ambitious theories try to *generalize* over slots, with widely-applicable terms. For instance, Agent is used for any slot occupied by an entity that controls the action, Theme is used for objects in motion, and so on. The details needed for this kind of generalization are not agreed upon by all linguists.

<sup>132</sup> The last three orders, with object before subject, are rare.

Many predicate-argument structures involve some sort of **actor**; an entity that is in control and performs the action. Most often, the actor is expressed syntactically as the **subject** (NP daughter of S). This is true, for instance, in the following sentences.

(176) *The norm: subject as actor*

Alice sang.

Susan built the transmission.

Fred and Bill opened the package.

Many predicate-argument structures involve some sort of **patient** or “undergoer” of the action. These are most often expressed as **direct objects** of the verb (in English, NP daughter of VP).<sup>133</sup> So, this would hold true of *the transmission* or *the package* in the sentences just given.

Verbs of giving or sending often have a **recipient** or **beneficiary**. These are often expressed as an object (daughter of VP<sup>134</sup>), or as the object of a preposition, as below:

(177) *The norm: recipient/beneficiary as object or PP object*

Alice sent Fred a dozen red roses.

Alice sent a dozen red roses to Fred.

Bill baked Sheila some cookies.

Bill baked some cookies for Sheila.

These are only loose correlations. The verb *undergo* is striking in that its subject is usually the patient of the action.

(178) *Exception: subject as patient*

John underwent surgery.

The verb *experienced* is unusual because its subject is the mental experiencer of the event; normally experiencers are expressed in prepositional phrases.

(179) *Norm: experiencer as PP object*

The world seemed sad to Sam.

(180) *Exception: experiencer as subject*

Sam experienced sorrow.

---

<sup>133</sup> Second daughter, when there are two.

<sup>134</sup> First daughter, when there are two.

There are many other exceptional cases.

## 2.2 Variation in how syntax manifests predicate-argument structure

Aside from peculiar verbs like *undergo* or *experience*, there are general and systematic patterns in how the syntax of languages expresses predicate-argument structure. The grammar of particular languages often provide multiple possibilities for how a predicate-argument structure is realized syntactically. These patterns hold good for many or even all of the verbs of the language.

### 2.2.1 Passives

A well-known example of this kind is the **passive** construction, found in many languages:

(181) An active sentence and its corresponding passive

- a. The doctor examined John.
- b. John was examined by the doctor.

The first of these sentences is said to be in the “active voice” and the second in the “passive voice.” For both sentences, the predicate-argument structure is something like this:

(182) *Predicate-argument structure for both (181)a and (181)b*

EXAMINE ( (Examiner Doctor ), (Examinee John ) )

The active voice for *examine* is probably more frequent; it makes the subject the agent of examining, and the object into the thing examined. I suspect that this is the most common form of expression for this verb. In the passive voice, the thing examined is expressed as the subject, and the agent of examining is expressed (if it is expressed at all) as the object of the preposition *by* within the VP.<sup>135</sup> In the passive, the agent can also be simply suppressed; that is, omitted:

(183) *A passive sentence with suppressed agent*

John was examined.

We might plausibly give such a sentence a predicate-argument structure with a null argument, something like this:

(184) *Predicate-argument structure for (183)*

EXAMINE ( (Examiner  $\emptyset$ ), (Examinee John ) )

The null would be interpreted as meaning that *someone* did the examining but the sentence does not specify what.

---

<sup>135</sup> There is one other syntactic difference: passive sentences contain *be* as an Auxiliary, and the verb is inflected in its Past Participle form.

Why might languages offer more than one way to connect up the thematic roles with the grammatical positions? One view is that these variations are related to **discourse structure**: when we converse or tell a story, we are not producing sentences in isolation; rather, each sentence builds on a body of information that already exists and adds a new bit of information. Quite often, at least in English, the subject NP embodies the pre-existing information, and the VP is what adds something new. Thus, *The doctor examined John* is most naturally used where one is already talking about the doctor, and *John was examined by the doctor* is most naturally used when one is already talking about John. Thus, the passive construction permits the speaker to organize information in a dialogue or narrative in a coherent way that builds on older information, by making the old information the subject.

The use of passive to avoid the expression of certain arguments is, in English, confined to the omission of the *by*-phrase. German goes beyond English in allowing what is normally the *subject* to go unexpressed, when the verb is intransitive:

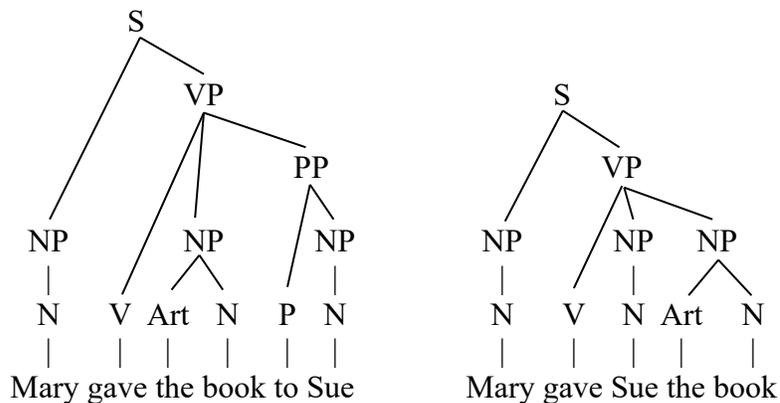
*Es wurde getanzt.*  
It was danced  
'There was dancing, people danced.'

DANCE ( (Dancer  $\emptyset$ ) )

This construction is often called an **impersonal passive**.

### 2.2.2 Dative constructions

Here is another instance in which the same predicate argument structure has more than one syntactic expression. It occurs with verbs of giving. Here is an example:



The first tree illustrates the NP PP construction, in which the item given is the NP object and the recipient is in the PP. The second tree illustrates the NP NP construction, in which the recipient is the first NP and the item given is the second NP. Both have the same predicate-argument structure:

GIVE ( (Giver Mary), (Gift book), (Recipient Sue) )

As with passive, the variation may be related to the form of a discourse: the first sentence would be more natural when one is already talking about *the book*, the second would more natural when one is already talking about *Sue*. As in passive constructions, the new information comes later in the sentence.

### 2.3 Propositions as filling argument slots

The following sentence has a predicate-argument structure in which one of the participants is a Proposition — depicting an event.

*Mary had John cook the egg.*

CAUSE ( (Causer Mary ), (Proposition COOK ( (Cooker John ), (Cook-ee the egg ) ) ) )<sup>136</sup>

To treat such a case, we need a kind of nested structure, similar to the multi-clause structure of syntax. In this sentence, Mary, the agent, caused the state of events described in Proposition to come into being.

Here is another sentence whose predicate-argument structure involves a proposition, here, the content of Mary's thoughts:

*Mary thinks that Bill jumped.*

THINK ( (Thinker Mary ), (Proposition JUMP ( (Jumper Bill ) ) ) )

### 2.4 Cases of mismatch between syntax and predicate-argument structure I: *weather it* and *pleonastic it*

Consider the following sentence, shown with a proposed predicate-argument structure.

*It rained.*

RAIN

What is special about such a case is that there are no arguments—*raining* is a thing that just happens (nobody rains!).<sup>137</sup> The *it* we get in syntactic structure is meaningless, and is evidently present simply to satisfy the grammatical requirement (S → NP VP) that sentences must have subjects. Such semantically empty elements are a mismatch between syntax and predicate-argument structure. They illustrate that syntax involves demands of “pure form” that have nothing to do with expression.

The *it* that occurs as the subject of *rain*, *snow*, etc. is sometimes called “weather *it*”.

<sup>136</sup> In this and some later predicate-argument structures, I've used color to make sure that brackets match up correctly. For correct bracket structure: every argument is surrounded by parentheses, and every list of arguments is surrounded by parenthesis (even if there is just one argument).

<sup>137</sup> Observe that this is different from *John was examined* and *Es wurde getanzt*, discussed above. Someone really did examine John, and someone really did dance (we're just not saying who). But no one rains.

Here is another such case:

*It seems that Mary gave the book to Sue.*

SEEM( (Proposition GIVE( (Giver Mary ), (Gift book ), (Recipient Sue ) ) ) )

Here again we have a semantically empty *it*, present to give the main clause a subject. This *it* is sometimes called **pleonastic *it***.<sup>138</sup>

A related construction gives the main clause a subject by taking the logical subject of the embedded clause and expressing it “in the wrong position”:

*Mary seems to have given the book to Sue.*

SEEM ( (Proposition GIVE( (Giver Mary ), (Gift book ), (Recipient Sue ) ) ) )

In this grammatical construction, often called “Subject Raising”, the NP *Mary* occurs in a syntactic location that is intuitively “higher” than its location in predicate-argument structure.

### Study Exercise #57

Give predicate-argument structures for the following sentences. Be brave about labeling the argument slots; this is somewhat arbitrary.

- a. John appears to have been given a book by Sue.
- b. It seems to have rained.
- c. It seems that it rained.
- d. It is felt that Bill rants.

---

<sup>138</sup> “Pleonastic” comes from the Greek for “superfluous”; the *it* is felt to be somehow unnecessary (though it’s necessary for the sentence to be grammatical.)

**Answer to Study Exercise #57**

- a. John appears to have been given a book by Sue.

APPEAR ( (Proposition GIVE( (Giver Sue ), (Gift book ), (Recipient John) ) ) )

- b. It seems to have rained.

SEEM ( (Proposition RAIN ) )

- c. It seems that it rained.

SEEM ( (Proposition RAIN ) )

- d. It is felt that Bill rants.

FEEL ( (Experiencer  $\emptyset$  ), (Proposition RANT( (Ranter Bill) ) ) )

### 2.5 Cases of mismatch between syntax and predicate-argument structure II: causative verbs

Another important way in which predicate-argument structure mismatches syntax arises in languages that have so-called **causative** verbs. Here, a prefix or suffix appears on the verb (attached, perhaps, by a word formation rule), and the whole construction takes on a kind of “biclausal” character, seen in the suggested predicate-argument structure for each sentence.

#### (185) Causative structures in Turkish

- a. *Simple sentence with predicate-argument structure*

müdür mektub-u imzala-dı  
 director letter-ACC sign-PAST  
 ‘The director signed the letter’

SIGN ( (Signer director ), (Signee letter) )

- b. *Causative sentence based on (a), with predicate-argument structure*

dişçi mektub-u müdür-e imzala-t-tı  
 dentist letter-ACC director-DAT sign-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘The dentist made the director sign the letter’

CAUSE ( (Causer dentist ), (Event SIGN ( (Signer director ) (Signee letter) ) ) )

Syntactically, there is really just one clause, since there is only one verb present, and it assigns case to the NPs in the usual way for a Turkish clause (Accusative for the first object, Dative for the

second). You can see that in the formation of causatives, the number of NPs allowed in the clause goes up by one; the additional syntactic slot is needed to express the agent of causation.

### Study Exercise #58

Provide plausible predicate-argument structures for the following two sentences of Turkish:

müdür Hasan-a mektub-u göster-di  
director Hasan-DAT letter-ACC show-PAST  
'The director showed the letter to Hasan'

dişçi Hasan-a mektub-u müdür tarafından göster-t-ti  
dentist Hasan-DAT letter-ACC director by show-CAUS-PAST  
'The dentist made the director show the letter to Hasan'

How is this construction similar to the English passive?

### Answer to Study Exercise #58

First sentence:

SHOW( (Show-er director ), (Shown letter), (Witness Hasan ) )

(or some other reasonable labels for the argument slots)

Second sentence:

CAUSE ( (Causer dentist ), (Event SHOW( (Show-er director ), (Shown letter), (Witness Hasan ) ) ) )

The parallel to English that I had in mind was the use of the postposition *tarafından*, which means (roughly) ‘by’. In English passives, we provide no simple slot for the agent of the action (there is no object position, and the subject position is taken up by the recipient of the action), so an added *by*-phrase is used to express the subject. In Turkish causatives like the one in this exercise, the slots provided by Nominative, Accusative, and Dative case are all “used up”, as it were, so the language opts for the equivalent of the English *by*-phrase to express the fourth argument.

### 2.6 Predicate-argument structure in linguistic theory

There are two possibilities for integrating predicate-argument structure into linguistic theory. One possibility is to find a set of rules that inputs syntactic trees and derives the predicate-argument structure from them. Another approach that has been taken is to let the predicate-argument structure be the starting point of the derivation—embodying the message the speaker wishes to communicate—and let the grammar find an appropriate tree structure or structures for communicating this message. We will not pursue this question here.

### Study Exercise #59: The predicate-argument structure of *As*-phrases

The particle *as* has interesting syntactic and semantic behavior, in which the phrase structure again mismatches the semantics. Some sample sentences:

1. We consider him as being eccentric.
2. They regard him as praiseworthy.
3. We judge it as unfortunate that he visited Mary.
4. We regard him as appearing to be sick.

We could accommodate *as* phrases with the following phrase structure rules:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VP} &\rightarrow \text{V (NP) AsP (CP)} \\ \text{AsP} &\rightarrow \text{as} \begin{cases} \text{NP} \\ \text{AP} \\ \text{VP} \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

Furthermore, we must add rules of inflectional morphology that would ensure that the VP that is part of an *as*-phrase, the verb is marked to be a present participle (*V-ing*). Only a few verbs such as *regard* and *consider* subcategorize for *as*-phrases.

What is interesting semantically is that *as*-phrases express propositions without including any CP. For example, in the first sentence above, *we* are not doing anything to *him*; rather, we are holding a belief about him, that is, we are the mental experiencers of a proposition involving him. This idea could be expressed with the predicate-argument structure below:

CONSIDER ( (Experiencer *we* ) (Proposition ECCENTRIC ( (Characterized *he* ) ) ) )

The proposition is, essentially, “he is eccentric”, without any verb or CP encoding this proposition.

Assign predicate-argument structures to sentences #2-4 above. Note that the *it* in #3 is pleonastic.

### Answers to Study Exercise #59

1. REGARD ( (Experiencer they ) (Proposition PRAISEWORTHY ( (Characterized he ) ) ) )
2. JUDGE ( (Experiencer we ) (Proposition UNFORTUNATE ( (Proposition VISIT ( (Visitor he ), (Visitee Mary ) ) ) ) ) )
3. REGARD ( (Experiencer we ) (Proposition APPEAR ( (Proposition SICK ( (IllPerson he ) ) ) ) ) )

## ANAPHORA

### 3. Defining anaphora

All languages have pronouns. For example, these are the pronouns of English in their various forms (this is an amplified version of chart (116) above).

(186) *English pronouns (more complete version)*

#### *Nominative*

I	we
you	you
he/she/it	they

#### *Objective*

me	us
you	you
him/her/it	them

#### *Genitive*

my	our
your	your
his/her/its	their

#### *Predicative Genitive*<sup>139</sup>

mine	ours
yours	yours
his/hers/—	theirs

<sup>139</sup> Used after *be*, as in *It is mine*. There is no 3rd pers. singular inanimate form; for example, you can't say *\*That fuel pump is its*, referring to a particular car. This is known as a "paradigm gap" and is widely found in more heavily inflected languages.

*Reflexive*

myself	ourselves
yourself	yourselves
himself/herself/itself	themselves <sup>140</sup>

Pronouns are like nouns, but they get their reference from context—either the linguistic context, or the situational context of speech. As already noted, the English pronouns are distinguished by morphosyntactic features of Number, Case, and Person, and in the third person, for gender. Their meanings are determined entirely by these features.

There are also pro-forms for other parts of speech. The phrases *do it* and *do so* are pro-forms for Verb Phrases:

(187) *Do it and do so as VP pro-forms*

- a. I wanted to [ teach Linguistics 865 ]<sub>VP</sub> but was too busy with other courses to [ do so ]<sub>VP</sub>.
- b. I had to [ teach Linguistics 497 ]<sub>VP</sub> because no one else would [ do it ]<sub>VP</sub>.

*Thus* is a somewhat archaic proform for Adverb Phrases:

*He did it thus.*

The term **anaphora** refers, in linguistics, to the process whereby a pro-form gets its reference from the meaning of another phrase; thus in:

*Bill thinks he's a genius.*

we say that *he* makes anaphoric reference to *Bill*; likewise, above *do so* makes anaphoric reference to *teach Linguistics 865*.

#### 4. The Pronominalization Hypothesis and why it fails

A tempting analytical option for pronouns, assuming that we need transformations anyway, is to suppose that pronouns are the result of applying a “Pronominalization” transformation.

Consider a sentence like (188):

(188) *Alice told Sue that she was a genius.*

Here, the pronoun *she* can refer either to *Alice* or to *Sue*. The sentence is therefore ambiguous. The Pronominalization theory would say that when *she* means *Alice*, then the deep structure would be as in (189):

---

<sup>140</sup> It would also be sensible to include here the *wh*-pronouns: Nominative *who*, objective *who* (normative English *whom*), Genitive *whose*, Predicative Genitive *whose*, missing the Reflexive.

(189) Alice told Sue that Alice was a genius.

(Tree omitted.) Analogously, when *she* means *Sue*, then the deep structure is as in (190):

(190) Alice told Sue that Sue was a genius.

According to the Pronominalization Hypothesis, there is a Pronominalization transformation that converts the second instance of two identical noun phrases into the appropriate pronoun:

(191) **Pronominalization (hypothetical rule)**

When two NP occur in sequence, replace the second one with a pronoun whose morphosyntactic representation bears matched values for the features [Number], [Animacy], and [Gender].

It is easy to see that Pronominalization will convert the two deep structures (189) and (190) into the same surface structure, namely:

*Alice told Sue that she was a genius*

Assuming that the meaning of pronouns is determined by consulting their deep structure form, the Pronominalization Hypothesis therefore succeeds in accounting for the ambiguity of sentence (188), and indeed for sentences in general that are ambiguous because of pronoun reference.

Although the Pronominalization Hypothesis initially may seem reasonable (and indeed enjoyed a brief vogue among linguists in the early 1960's), in fact it suffers from several problems.

First, there are sentences in which the deep structure that the Pronominalization Hypothesis provides doesn't mean what we want it to. If all pronouns are derived from full noun phrases, then the deep structure of

*Everyone thinks he is a genius*

would be

*Everyone thinks everyone is a genius.*

But this deep structure clearly means something quite different from the surface structure. The problem here evidently lies in the **quantifier** word *everyone*; we will return to quantifiers later on in section 11 of this chapter.

A second problem with the Pronominalization Hypothesis is that there are pronouns that it can't derive, because the essential sequence of two identical NPs, as referred to in the Pronominalization rule (191), is not present. Specifically, there are instances in which one uses a pronoun in the total absence of any other NP. The following example was invented by the linguist Howard Lasnik. Imagine a cocktail party at which a man arrives, a stranger to all, who starts drinking heavily and getting into heated, unpleasant discussions with all he encounters. After an

hour of unpleasantness, he storms out of the room, slamming the door behind him. At this point one could, without knowing the man's name, say:

(192) *Well, he's left.*

Indeed, in this particular example it would be fine to say this sentence without even knowing the name of the man that *he* refers to. The point is that if *some* pronouns are interpreted as referring to a salient person in the context (that is, the pragmatic, real-life context), then we should consider the possibility that even the *she* in *Alice thinks she's a genius* is similarly interpreted—*Alice* is a plausible person for *she* to refer to, since, after all, we're talking about her.

A final problem with the Pronominalization Hypothesis is that, curiously enough, it appears to lead us to infinite deep structures.<sup>141</sup> Here is an example:

*The girl who deserves it will get the prize she wants.*

This sentence contains two pronouns, *it* and *she*. According to the Pronominalization Hypothesis, we can get the deep structure by replacing these pronouns with copies of the full NPs to which they refer. Doing this yields:

*The girl who deserves [the prize she wants] will get the prize [the girl who deserves it] wants.*

But this sentence also contains pronouns! Thus, to arrive at the true deep structure we will have to substitute for these as well:

*The girl who deserves [the prize [the girl who deserves it] wants] will get the prize [the girl who deserves [the prize she wants]] wants.*

And we are still not done, so:

*The girl who deserves [the prize [the girl who deserves [the prize she wants]] wants] will get the prize [the girl who deserves [the prize [the girl who deserves it] wants]]] wants.*

No matter how long we keep going, we are still going to have uninterpreted pronouns in our representation, so it's clear that this process is never going to yield an interpreted representation. The upshot is that deriving pronouns from full-NP deep structures does not seem promising as an account of their semantics.

## 5. Interpretive rules for pronouns

Given what we've just seen, one might think that the right way to handle the meaning of pronouns would be just to let them be pronouns; that is, nouns whose meaning is determined by referring to a salient (highly noticeable) entity in the context (either linguistic context, or real-life context), which matches the requirements of number (*she* vs. *they*), gender (*she* vs. *he*), and

<sup>141</sup> The problem was noticed in the 1960's by the linguists Emmon Bach and Stanley Peters, and is sometimes called the Bach-Peters paradox.

animacy (*she* vs. *it*). In this approach, interpreting pronouns is relegated largely to the domain of thought, not language—pretty much every sentence would be interpreted the way we interpret the sentence *Well, he's left* given above.

This is an appealingly simple theory, but it likewise cannot work. Research on the possibilities of how pronouns refer has shown that there is indeed a heavy *linguistic* contribution to their interpretation.

Consider the following very simple sentence:

*John likes him.*

Fluent speakers of English will assert pretty firmly that *him* cannot refer to *John*, even though there is no logical reason why it could not. Similar sentences are:

*He likes John.*

*He likes John's brother.*

*He thinks John is a genius.*

The reason why *he* cannot refer to *John* in these sentences turns out, as we'll see shortly, to be linguistic; that is, grammatical. Curiously, there seem to be linguistic rules that tell you what certain pronouns *cannot* refer to. In what follows, we will work out the basics of these rules, and find that they depend on syntax.

Our rules will not change the syntactic structure or words of sentences in any way; they simply specify possible (or impossible) meanings. Thus, they are called **interpretive rules**.

We have already covered, informally, an interpretive rule for English, the Each Other Reference rule, rule (24) from Chapter 1. Here, we will cover further rules, with a more ambitious formalization of them.

## 6. Formal preliminaries

### 6.1 Subscripts and coreference

In what follows, we will use a standard notation for designating what pronouns refer to, namely, subscripting. When I write this:

(193) *Bill<sub>i</sub> thinks he<sub>i</sub> is a genius.*

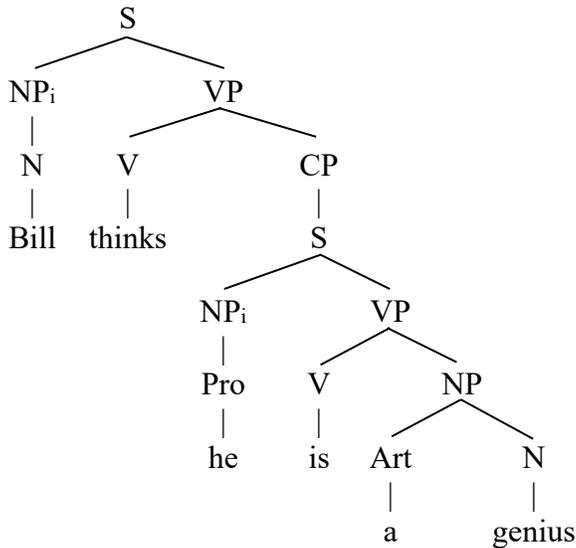
I will mean: the reading of this sentence in which *he* is understood as referring to *Bill*. This is denoted by the use of identical letters as subscripts.

When I write this:

(194) *Bill<sub>i</sub> thinks he<sub>j</sub> is a genius.*

the nonidentical subscripts should be taken to mean that *he*, in this reading, refers to someone other than Bill.

It will important later on to suppose that the indices are attached to the NP node, not further down (like the Pronoun or Noun node). Thus the tree for (193) is as follows:



Terminology: in (193), *Bill* and *he* are said to be **coreferent**, meaning that they refer to the same thing. In (194), *Bill* and *he* are not coreferent. Also, in the first sentence, *Bill* is taken to be the **antecedent** for *he*, which means that it supplies the information about what *he* refers to.

We will also make use of a three-way distinction:

- **Reflexive pronouns** are members of the set {*myself, yourself, ourselves, ...*}
- **Regular pronouns** are members of the set {*I, me, you, he, them, ...*}
- **Full noun phrases** are Noun Phrases that are neither reflexive pronouns or regular pronouns; such as *Sue, the president, my brother, etc.*

Lastly, a technical definition:

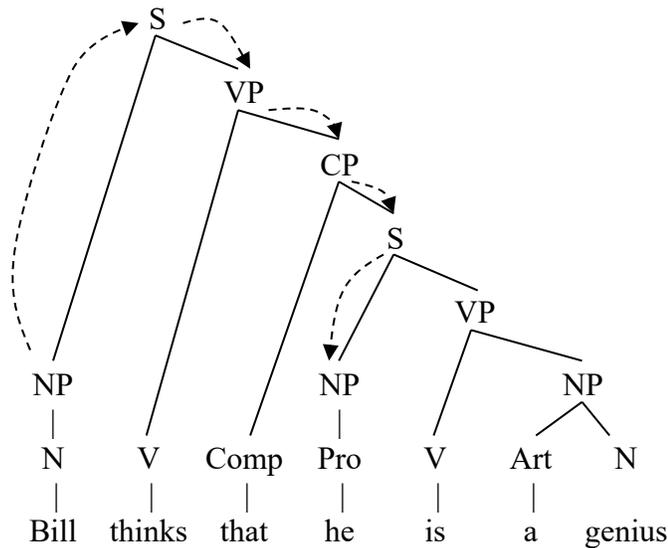
(195) *Definition: c-command*

In a syntactic tree, constituent A **c-commands** constituent B if the mother of A dominates B.

In other words, A c-commands B if there is a path that

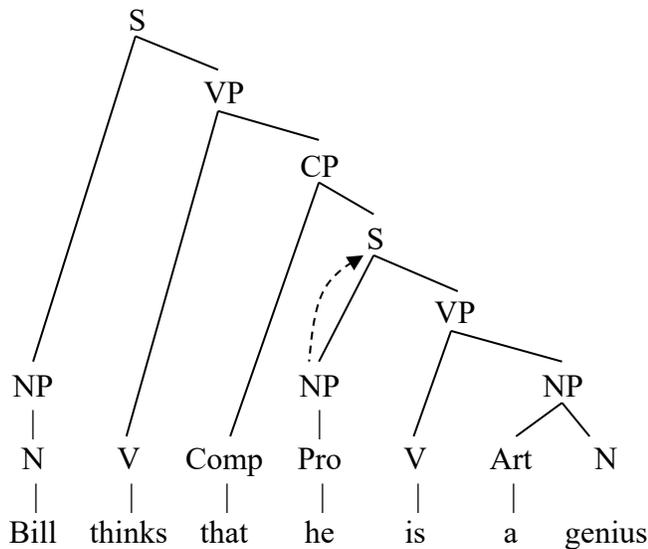
- starts at A
- moves up one node from A to A's mother node
- travels exclusively downward through the tree and arrives at B.

Thus in the following example:



the NP *Bill* c-commands the pronoun *he* because you can go upward by one from the NP *Bill*, arrive at S, then move downward through VP, CP, S, and thence to the NP *he*. See dotted arrows.

In the same example, the NP *he* does not c-command the NP *Bill* because once you've gone uphill once from *he*, you can't get to *Bill* by going just downhill:



*He* does c-command *genius*, however.

In general, we will speak of c-command only for NPs. In drawing these little arrows, you want to start with the NP node, or you'll have problems.

The term c-command apparently means “constituent-command”. It emerges from a period of syntactic research that tried out a number of similar definitions, of which c-command appears, at least for now, to be the simplest and most effective. We’ll see the relevance of c-command to pronouns shortly.

## 6.2 Clausemates

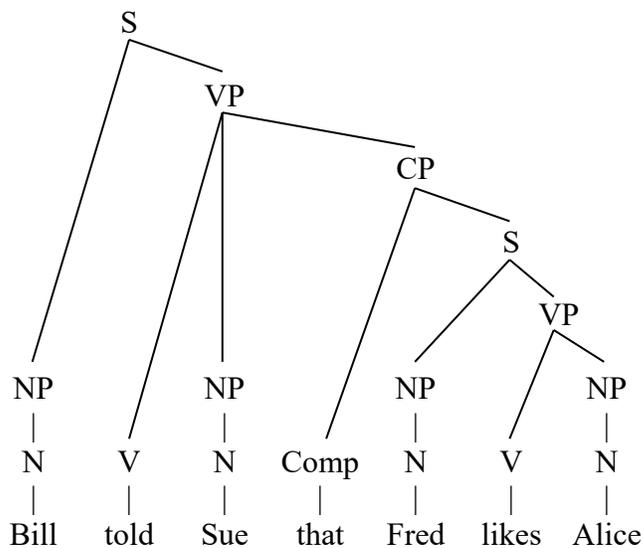
Following up on the discussion in Chapter 1, we will also make use of the term *clausmates*, defined as follows.

### (196) Definition: **clausmates**

Constituents X and Y are **clausmates** if every S node that dominates X also dominates Y, and vice versa.

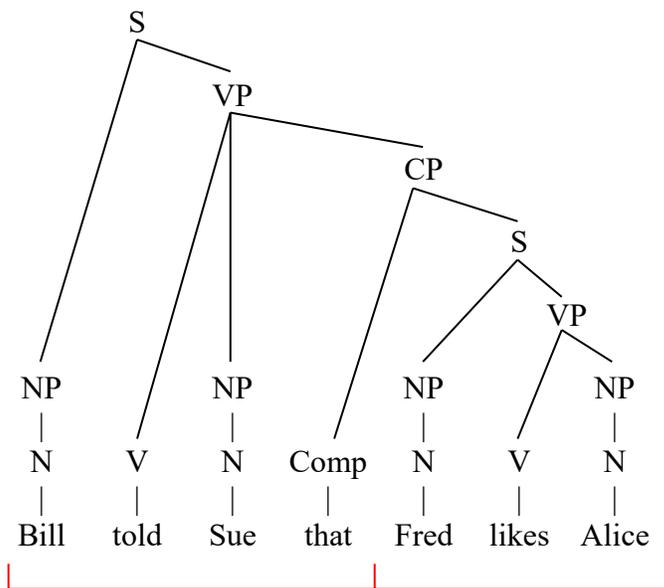
Clausmates are often said to be **in the same clause**, which means the same thing.

In the following sentence:



the clausmate pairs are: *Bill-Sue*, *Fred-Alice*. Non-clausmates: *Bill-Alice*, *Bill-Fred*, *Sue-Alice*, *Sue-Fred*.

A quick informal way to show clausmates is to bracket the sentences into domains of clausmatehood, like this:



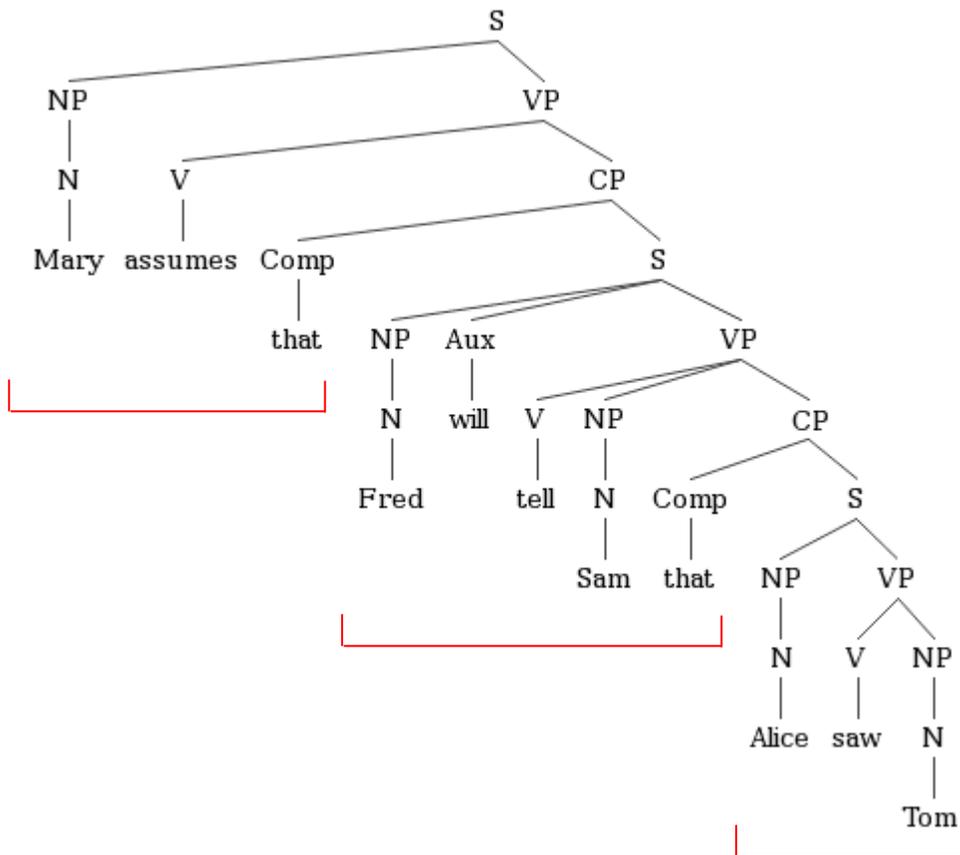
Within brackets, any two NP are clausemates.

**Study Exercise #60: Clausemates**

*Mary assumes that Fred will tell Sam that Alice saw Tom.*

Parse the sentence, and draw the informal brackets to show the clausemate domains. Then consider every pair of NP (there are ten pairs) and specify whether they are clausemates. Answer on next page.

Answer to Study Exercise #60



Pairwise:

- Mary-Fred: no
- Mary-Sam: no
- Mary-Alice: no
- Mary-Tom: no
- Fred-Sam: yes
- Fred-Alice: no
- Fred-Tom: no
- Sam-Alice: no
- Sam-Tom: no
- Alice-Tom: yes

## 7. An interpretive analysis for reflexive pronouns

Using the approach just described, we can write the following rule of interpretation for reflexives:

### (197) Reflexive Interpretation

A reflexive pronoun must be coreferent with an NP that

- (a) is its clausemate; and
- (b) c-commands it.

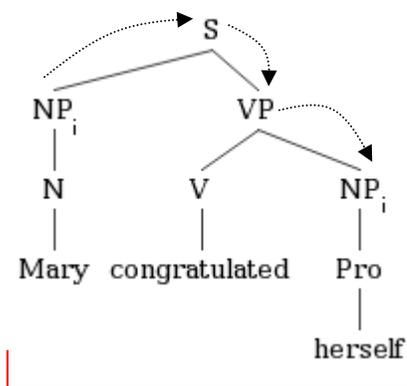
Here are examples, labeled for how the rule works. As you read these examples, I suggest you draw the tree, consult the definitions of c-command and clausemate, and check the rule is working correctly.

*\*Himself sings.*

Here, there's no NP for *himself* to be coreferent with, so it receives no interpretation. The standard assumption, which we will follow, is that a sentence with an uninterpretable pronoun is ungrammatical.

Next consider:

*Mary<sub>i</sub> congratulated herself<sub>i</sub>.*

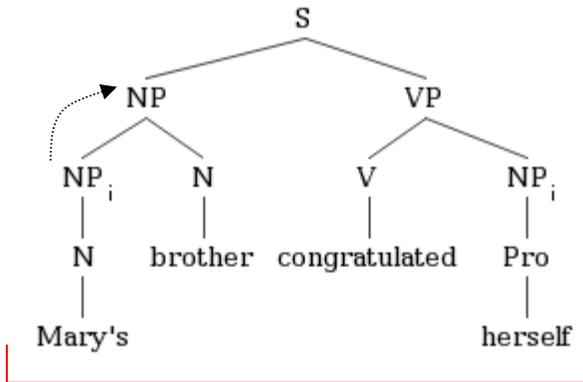


This one is fine; the NP *Mary* c-commands the NP *herself* and, since there is just one clause, the two are clausemates. The correct indexation (note: on the NPs, not lower down) is shown in the tree above.

Next consider:

*\*[Mary<sub>i</sub>'s brother] congratulated herself<sub>i</sub>.*

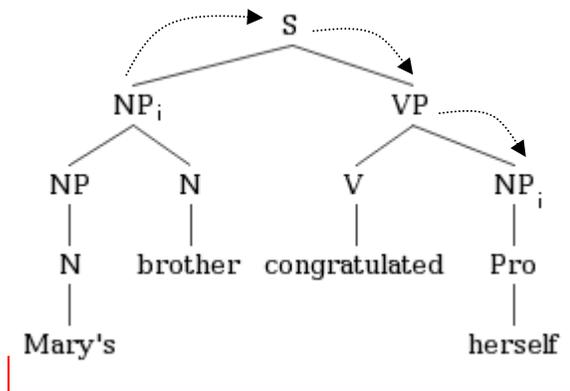




Here, *Mary* is a clausemate of *herself*, but doesn't c-command it—the mother of *Mary* is the higher NP *Mary's brother*; so *Mary* is not “high enough” in the tree to c-command *herself*.

Next consider:

\*[*Mary's brother*]<sub>i</sub> congratulated *herself*<sub>i</sub>.



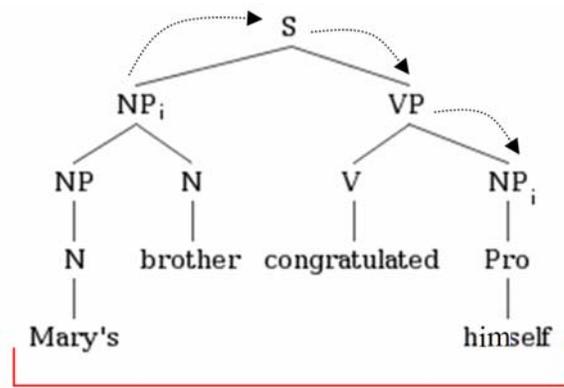
Same tree, but different indices. Here, the NP *Mary's brother* does c-command the NP *herself*, and is a clausemate. The problem here is not with Reflexive Interpretation, but rather with the morphosyntactic representation: brothers are always male, and *herself* is [Gender:feminine]), so the sentence is still ungrammatical. Let us record this feature-matching principle for future reference:

**(198) Feature-matching in pronouns**

A pronoun must bear a morphosyntactic representation that matches its referent in the features [Gender], [Number], and [Person].

Now consider:

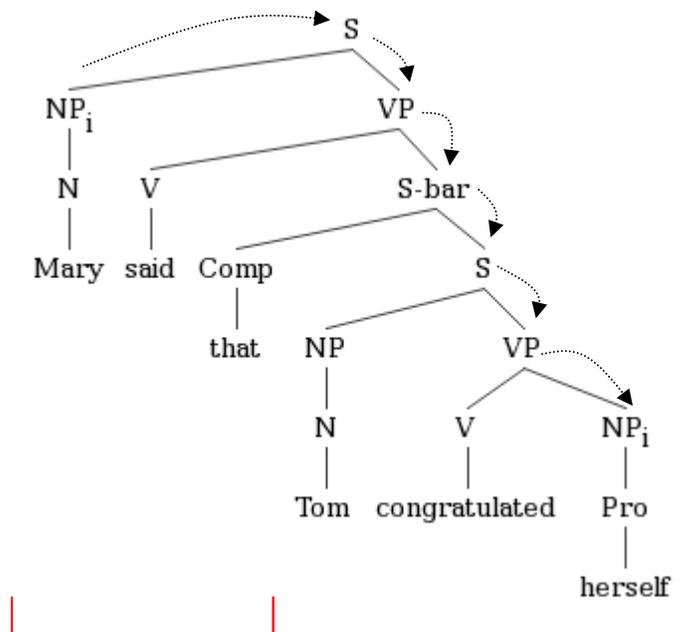
(199) [*Mary's brother*]<sub>i</sub> congratulated *himself*<sub>i</sub>.



This one matches all requirements (gender match, c-command, clausemate condition), and is fine.

The next case to consider is:

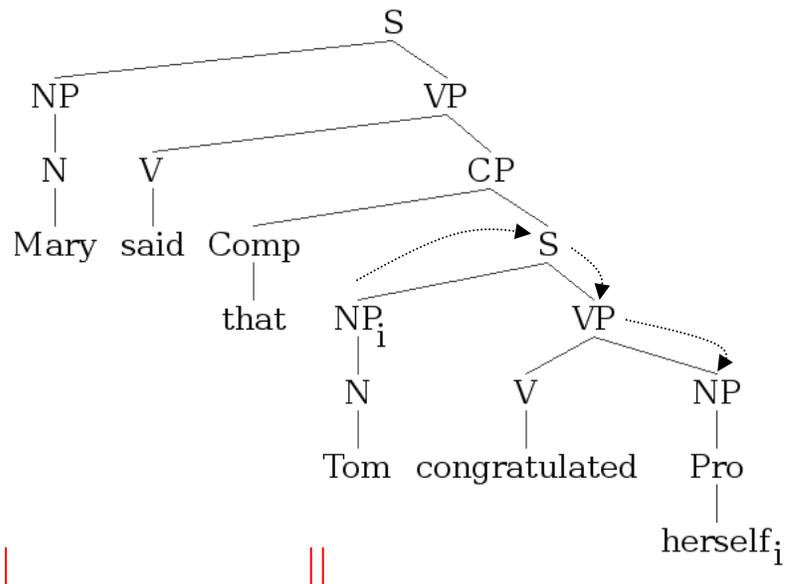
(200)  $Mary_i$  said that Tom congratulated herself<sub>i</sub>.



Bad: *Mary* is not the clausemate of *herself* (*herself* is in the lower S, *Mary* is not).

We can try a different indexation for the same sentence:

(201) Mary said that Tom<sub>i</sub> congratulated herself<sub>i</sub>.



Bad: *Tom* is a c-command clausemate but because it is a name for males there is a featural mismatch with the pronoun, following (167).

### Study Exercise #61

*\*The fact that Mary<sub>i</sub> lost the race surprised herself<sub>i</sub>.*

This one is bad; you give the explanation. Answer on next page.



(202) **Regular Pronoun Interpretation**<sup>142</sup>

A regular pronoun cannot be coreferent with a c-commanding clausemate.

Some examples follow.

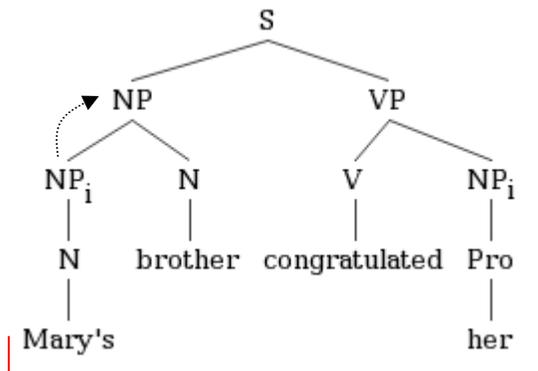
8.1 *Pronouns alone*

*He<sub>i</sub> left.*

This is fine: there is no NP in the sentence that *he* is required to be non-coreferent with, and the sentence is freely usable whenever there's an obvious enough male entity available for *he* to refer to. This could be someone mentioned in a previous sentence, or someone noticed in the physical surroundings, as discussed earlier for sentence (192). Notice the sharp contrast with *\*Himself left*, where the reflexive requires an overt NP to refer to.

8.2 *No c-command, coreference ok*

[Mary<sub>i</sub>'s brother] congratulated her<sub>i</sub>.



This is fine, because *Mary* doesn't c-command *her*.

8.3 *No coreference — always ok*

[Mary<sub>i</sub>'s brother] congratulated her<sub>j</sub>.

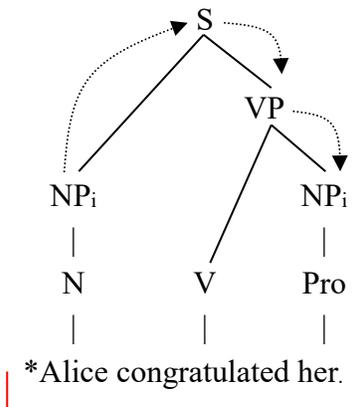
The subscript *j* means that the *her* refers to a female person other than *Mary*. This is fine, too, since Regular Pronoun Interpretation doesn't actually *require* that pronouns be coreferent with any other NP in the sentence. Thus, this sentence could appear in a context like this:

<sup>142</sup> In the linguistics literature this rule is often called "Principle B." The rules for reflexives and reciprocals are subsumed together under "Principle A". In this introductory text I have opted for descriptive rule names instead.

*Alice sang incredibly well, enough to convince her sternest critics. In fact, even Mary's brother congratulated her.*

I think it's pretty clear that in this sentence it would be possible for *her* to refer to *Alice*.

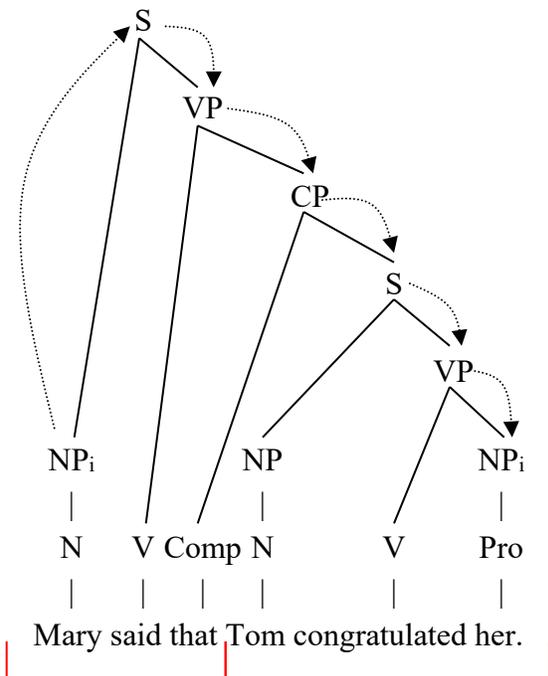
8.4 C-commanding clausemate: coreference impossible



This one is no good: *Alice* is the clausemate of *her*, and also c-commands *her*, so it can't be coreferent. However, with distinct reference, the following reading is ok:

Alice<sub>i</sub> congratulated her<sub>j</sub>.

8.5 C-command but not clausemate: coreference ok



This one is fine: *Mary* does c-command *her*, but it is not the clausemate of *her*, so Regular Pronoun Interpretation doesn't rule out this reading.

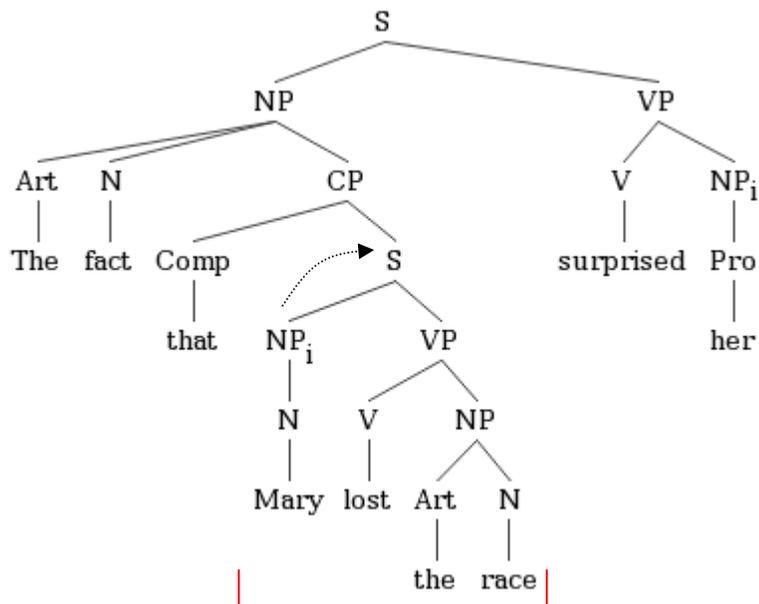
### 8.6 C-command but not clausemate: non-coreference ok

Mary<sub>i</sub> said that Tom congratulated her<sub>j</sub>.

This is likewise fine, *her<sub>j</sub>* refers to some female person mentioned earlier or physically present.

### 8.7 No c-command, not clausemate: coreference ok

The fact that Mary<sub>i</sub> lost the race surprised her<sub>i</sub>.

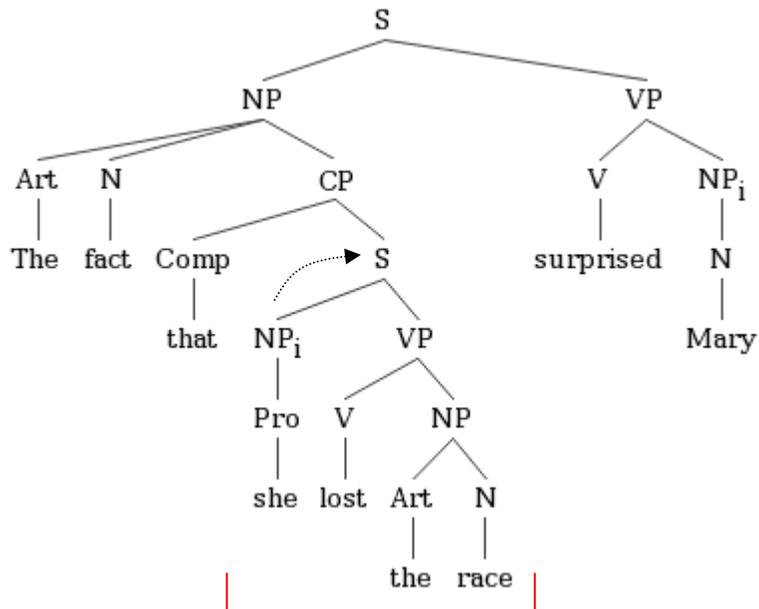


Ok, *Mary* is neither a clausemate of *her*, nor does *her* c-command *Mary*, so the coreference is allowed.

### 8.8 Backwards coreference

An intriguing prediction of the analysis is that you could, in principle, get sentences in which the pronoun actually comes before the full NP with which it is coreferent. These do in fact arise, though because of additional factors they won't be found in all places you would expect them. Here is an example:

The fact that she<sub>i</sub> lost the race surprised Mary<sub>i</sub>.



This sounds best only under particular conditions of emphasis and intonation. In particular, you can't utter *Mary* with a full phrasal stress, as if the name were being introduced to the conversation for the first time — if *Mary* were new information, you wouldn't have been referring to her with a pronoun! The sentence sounds ok if you say:

The fact that she<sub>i</sub> lost the race SURPRISED Mary<sub>i</sub>.

Of course, since Regular Pronoun Interpretation only forbids coreference, the following reading is also acceptable:

The fact that she<sub>j</sub> lost the race surprised Mary<sub>i</sub>.

## 9. An interpretive analysis for full noun phrases

One wouldn't think that there need to be any rules for the meaning of full noun phrases, but these are in fact needed. Consider a sentence like:

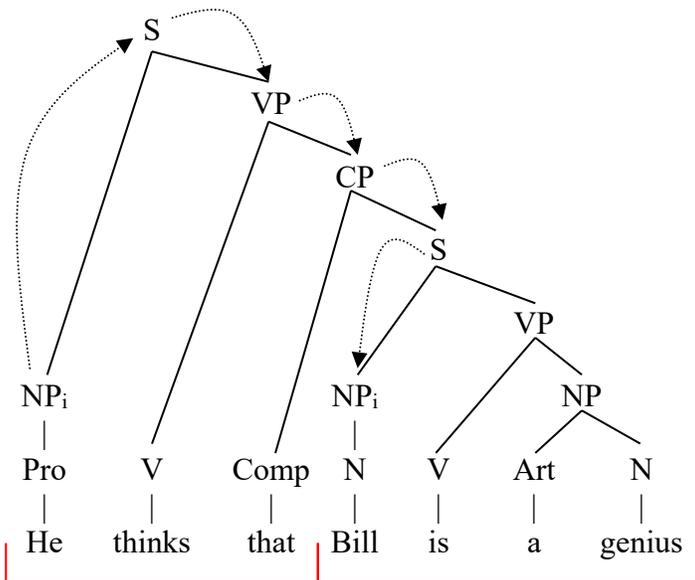
\*He<sub>i</sub> thinks Bill<sub>i</sub> is a genius.

The coreference shown is impossible, even though nothing we've said so far rules it out. The rule commonly used is this one:

(203) **Full Noun Phrase Interpretation**<sup>143</sup>

A full noun phrase cannot be coreferent with a c-commanding Noun Phrase.

This rules out \**He<sub>i</sub> thinks that Bill<sub>i</sub> is a genius* because *he* c-commands *Bill* and *Bill* is a full NP.



Indeed, the same rule predicts that in

Bill thinks that Bill is a genius.

Bill saw Bill.

we must interpret the two *Bill*'s as being different people; that is, these sentences must be interpreted:

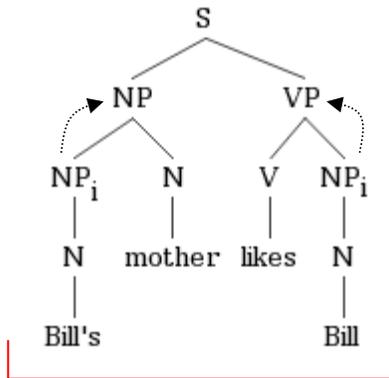
Bill<sub>i</sub> thinks Bill<sub>j</sub> is a genius.

Bill<sub>i</sub> saw Bill<sub>j</sub>.

If neither copy of *Bill* c-commands the other, then coreference becomes more or less ok:

[ well, at least ] Bill<sub>i</sub>'s mother likes Bill<sub>i</sub>.

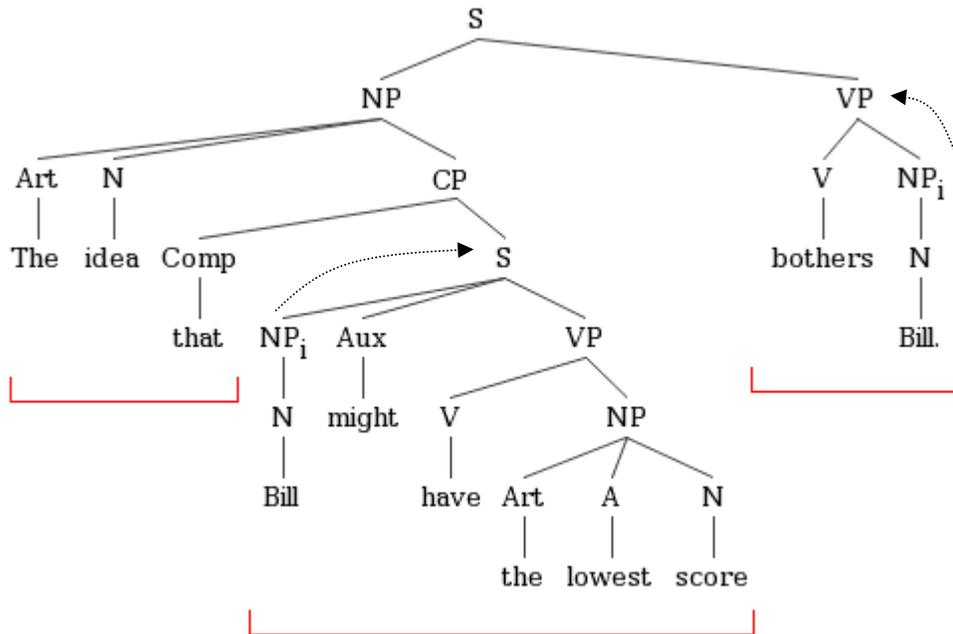
<sup>143</sup> In the linguistics literature this rule is often called "Principle C."



**Study Exercise #62:** in the following, why can the two *Bill*'s be the same person? Show the relevant structure.

*The idea that Bill might have the lowest score bothers Bill.*

## Answer to Study Exercise #62



This is ok because neither instance of *Bill* c-commands the other. The mother of the first *Bill* is S, which doesn't dominate the second *Bill*; and the mother of the second *Bill* is VP, which doesn't dominate the first *Bill*.

---

## 10. Summary

We've now done a particular corner of English semantics, setting out rules of semantic interpretation for anaphoric elements. Dividing all NPs into the categories of Reflexive Pronouns (with their close relative Reciprocal Pronouns), Regular Pronouns, and Full NPs, we developed three rules, one of which requires coreference in certain contexts, the other two of which forbid it:

### Reflexive Interpretation (197)

A reflexive pronoun must be coreferent with an NP that (a) is its clausemate; and (b) c-commands it.

### Regular Pronoun Interpretation (202)

A regular pronoun cannot be coreferent with a c-commanding clausemate.

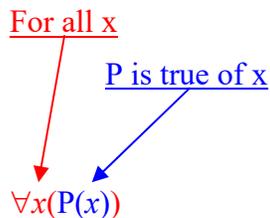
### Full Noun Phrase Interpretation (203)

A full noun phrase cannot be coreferent with a c-commanding Noun Phrase.

## OPERATORS AND SCOPE

**11. Operators and scope in formal logic**

The idea of operators and scope was incorporated into linguistics from the field of symbolic logic, a branch of philosophy.<sup>144</sup> Logicians express (certain aspects of) meaning with formulas like the following.



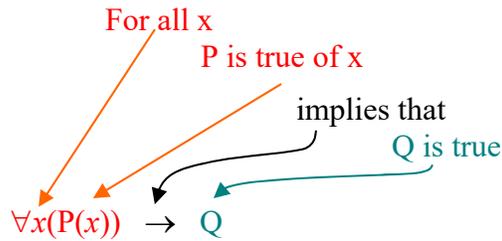
The meaning of the formula is, “for all  $x$ ,  $P$  is true of  $x$ ”. If we were applying this formula to a real-life situation, we might imagine a universe that consists of the students in Linguistics 20, and  $P$  represents “has the flu”. The formula could then be interpreted as “For every student in Linguistics 20, it is the case that that student has the flu.” Or, more fluently: “Every student in Linguistics 20 has the flu.” In the formula,  $\forall x$  is an **operator**,  $x$  is a **variable**, and  $P$  is a **predicate** (just like we saw with predicate-argument structure).

To see the concept of **scope**, let us compare two formulae that are more complex. In (204) I give the first one. There is a page break to facilitate comparison.

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<sup>144</sup> At UCLA you can study the basics of this field in Philosophy 31; indeed almost every university has an introductory logic course.

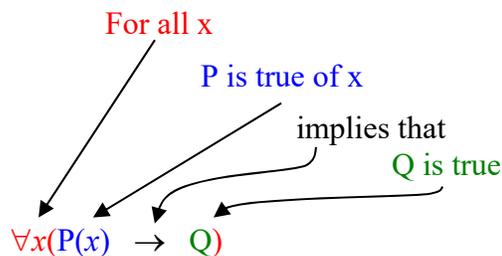
(204) *A logical formula containing an operator and a variable, in one scope relation*



Pursuing our real-life interpretation, we might suppose that Q means “the professor postpones the exam”. The symbol  $\rightarrow$  means “if ... then”. The interpretation would then be “If every one of the students in Linguistics 20 has the flu, then the professor will postpone the exam.”

In (205) there is a similar formula, but with a different location for the red-colored right parenthesis.

(205) *A similar logical formula involving a different scope relation*



With the parenthesis relocated, “for all” now covers the entire rest of the formula, rather than just  $P(x)$ . Thus, in the real-life interpretation of the formula, this would be “For every student, if that student has the flu, then the professor will postpone the exam.” — this would imply that the professor will postpone the exam even if there is just one case of the flu in the class.

One can speak here of an operator having **scope**. In the first formula, the scope of the operator  $\forall x$  is just  $P(x)$  (informally, “x has the flu”) whereas in the second formula the scope of the operator  $\forall x$  is  $P(x) \rightarrow Q$  (informally, “if x has the flu, the professor will postpone the exam”).

The operator  $\forall x$  is of a particular kind, called a **quantifier**. It means “all” (symbol: inverted A). The other quantifier most often used in elementary logic is  $\exists x$ , which means “at least one x” (inverted E, “exists”).

In logic, these concepts are employed in the study of the principles of valid reasoning. For example, the formula  $\sim \forall x(P(x)) \rightarrow \exists y(\sim P(y))$  (which means “If it is not the case that P is true of all x, then there must exist some y of which P is not true”) represents a case of valid reasoning. It is true irrespective of what we mean in the real world by the entities x and y or the predicate P. Over

the centuries, logicians have provided mathematical proofs for a vast number of such formulae, thus providing a mathematically valid, more trustable, basis for deductive reasoning.<sup>145</sup>

## 12. Operators and scope in language: some examples

In linguistics, the focus is less on proofs of validity, and more on using logic to provide a precise and interpretable characterization of meaning. In fact, linguistic meaning is much richer than what can be expressed with the logic taught in beginning logic courses, and finding a rich enough formal system to characterize human language continues to be a research challenge for logicians and linguists alike.

We can start by seeing that the logical notions of quantifier, scope, and variable are expressed fairly directly in English (or indeed in any other language). Here is an example:

*Every boy sang.*

Here, we have the following:

<i>Every boy</i>	a kind of (restricted) universal quantifier ( $\forall x, x$ a boy)
<i>x sang</i>	a predicate

Putting these together, we get something like (206):

(206)  $(\forall x, x \text{ a boy}) (x \text{ sang})$

If you want to read (206) aloud, you can say “For all  $x$  such that  $x$  is a boy,  $x$  sang.”

The *restricted* form of the quantifier,  $(\forall x, x \text{ a boy})$ , is very characteristic of human language: it is quite rare that we would want to quantify over absolutely everything (boys, turtles, personal qualities, months, neutron stars ...), and typically quantifiers hold over some modest sub-domain, such as the class of boys.

Like logicians, linguists generally place operators at the left of the domain over which they have scope; this is a matter of convenience and is an arbitrary convention. So, for instance, a sentence like:

*Jane taught every student.*

would be expressed as:

$(\forall x, x \text{ a student}) (\text{Jane taught } x)$

---

<sup>145</sup> Deductive reasoning goes from premises to conclusions. For inductive reasoning, which goes from observations to inferences, there is also a sound mathematical basis, Bayesian probability theory.

In principle, we could integrate such expressions with the predicate-argument structure developed earlier in this chapter. Under this approach, the meaning would appear like this:

$$(\forall x, x \text{ a student}) (\text{TEACH} ( (\text{Teacher Jane}) (\text{Teachee } x) )$$

For brevity (and to avoid unwanted complications), in what follows I will skip this step and simply place the quantifiers and variables into ordinary syntactic structure.

### 12.1 Pronouns as variables

So far, we have treated pronouns as NPs that refer to things. When a pronoun is coindexed with another NP (*Bill<sub>i</sub> thinks he<sub>i</sub> is tall*) it is meant to refer to the same real-world thing as that NP. When a pronoun has its own distinct index (*Well, he<sub>i</sub> left*), it is meant to refer to some real-world thing assumed to be identifiable by the context but not mentioned linguistically.

However, not all pronouns refer to things. The other use of pronouns is as *the linguistic manifestation of logical variables*. This can happen when there is a logical operator, such as a quantifier, elsewhere in the sentence. Consider the following sentence.

*Every boy thinks that he is smarter than average.*<sup>146</sup>

There is a boring reading:

[ *Every boy* ]<sub>i</sub> *thinks that* [ *he* ]<sub>j</sub> *is smarter than average.*

where *he* is someone else, like, say, Fred. We focus here on the interesting reading:

[ *Every boy* ]<sub>i</sub> *thinks that* [ *he* ]<sub>i</sub> *is smarter than average.*

This sentence would hold true in a world in which Fred thinks Fred is smarter than average, Bill thinks Bill is smarter than average, Sam thinks Sam is smarter than average, and so on. In this reading, the pronoun *he* does not *refer* to anyone. Instead, *he* acts as a logical variable, and indeed we have *two instances of the same variable* under the scope of a single quantifier.

<i>Every boy</i>	is the quantifier ( $\forall x, x$ a boy)
<i>he</i>	is a bound variable ( $x$ )
<i>x</i> thinks <i>x</i> is smarter than average	is a complex predicate, with two variables

Putting these together, we get the structure in (207):

<sup>146</sup> You may recall from section 4 of this chapter that sentences like this are part of the reason not to derive pronouns from full NP's by a transformation.

(207)  $(\forall x, x \text{ a boy}) (x \text{ thinks } x \text{ is smarter than average})$

In sum, the pronoun *he* is not referential but rather is the linguistic means for expressing the second instance of the variable. (The first variable simply occurs in the syntactic location of the NP containing the quantifier; see rules below for how this can be derived).

Let us return briefly to the “boring” reading mentioned above: the pronoun *he* does not *have to* act as a bound variable, but can also be an ordinary pronoun, which can refer to some male person who happens to be under discussion, such as Fred. Thus, the boring reading could be represented as in (208):

(208)  $(\forall x, x \text{ a boy}) (x \text{ thinks } he_i \text{ is smarter than average})$

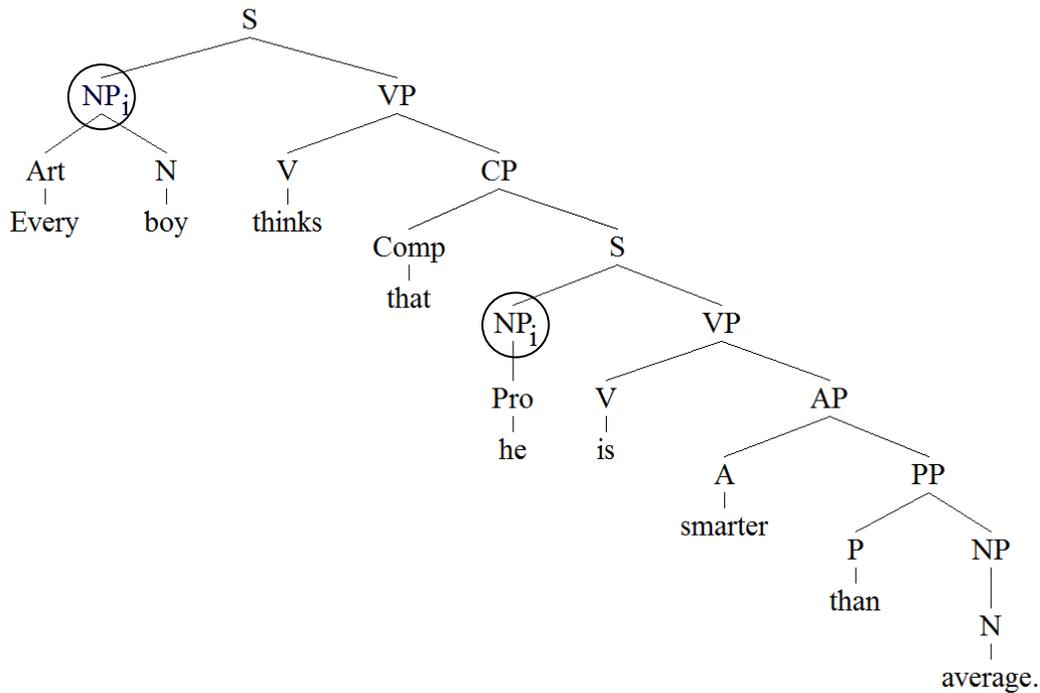
where  $he_i$  is a pronoun referring to someone in the environment, in the ordinary way.

Some terminology: we say that in the first reading, *he* acts as a variable that is **bound** by the quantifier. In sum, the pronouns of a language play at least two roles: they either simply refer to other entities, or they act as bound variables.

What is the mechanism whereby pronouns get interpreted as bound variables? As a rough approximation, we can make use of the discussion of pronoun reference from earlier in this chapter. There, we studied rules that assign indices to pronouns and their antecedents, to express ordinary coreference and non-coreference. The extension of this idea in the present context is this: if a pronoun gets coindexed with a *quantified* NP, then the relationship is then semantically interpreted not as coreference, but as an operator-variable relationship. Thus, for instance, the rules of anaphoric interpretation permits the following coindexation for the NPs in the sentence we are working with (*he* is not the clausemate of *every boy*, so Regular Pronoun Interpretation ((202)) is satisfied; and *he* does not c-command *every boy*, so Full Noun Phrase Interpretation ((203)) is satisfied).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> The tree below is not compliant with our phrase structure rules. The change needed is pretty straightforward: AP  $\rightarrow$  (Adv) A (PP). All comparative adjectives (“X-er”) can take a PP with *than*.



Because *every boy* is a quantified NP, this must be further translated to

$(\forall x, x \text{ a boy}) (x \text{ thinks } x \text{ is smarter than average})$

More specifically, when a quantified NP is logically interpreted as an operator-variable combination, any pronouns coindexed with it must be assigned the same variable. The following match-up illustrates this:

[ Every boy ]<sub>i</sub> thinks that [ he ]<sub>i</sub> is smarter than average.

$(\forall x, x \text{ a boy}) (x \text{ thinks } x \text{ is smarter than average})$

The pattern holds not just for regular pronouns but for coindexed reflexives.

[ Every cat ]<sub>i</sub> washed [ itself ]<sub>i</sub>.

$(\forall x, x \text{ a cat}) (x \text{ washed } x)$

We will give explicit rules for doing this later on.

### 13. Logical form

It is time now to integrate the discussion into a general approach to semantics. Note that the following is just one (well represented) viewpoint among many.

The core idea is that the rules of the semantics create from syntactic representation<sup>148</sup> a separate representation of the sentence's meaning (or, in cases of ambiguity, more than one representation). Such a semantic representation is often called the **logical form** of a sentence. Logical form is meant to be specifically linguistic in character; it only represents the contribution of language to meaning and is certainly not the “language of thought”, if such a thing exists — our thoughts involve all sorts of non-linguistic inferences and associations, in addition to language.

Here are some of the steps that would be needed to construct a logical form from a syntactic structure. As some (probably early) stage we would establish the possible references of pronouns and reflexives through the assignment of indices, using the rules of Reflexive Interpretation, Regular Pronoun Interpretation, and Full Noun Phrase Interpretation, given earlier in this chapter. Another step would be to convert quantified NPs into operator-variable pairs, to indicate scope, as described in the previous section; at this stage coindexed pronouns must be converted to variables under the scope of the same quantifier. Yet another step would be to establish precisely “who is doing what to whom” by replacing the syntactic tree with an appropriate predicate-argument structure.

Here are a couple of examples of how all this might work. In

*Every boy thinks he is smart*

the rule of Regular Pronoun Interpretation would (as one of its options) coindex *every boy* and *he*, thus:

[ Every boy ]<sub>i</sub> thinks [ he ]<sub>i</sub> is smart

Next, the quantified NP *every boy* would be converted to an operator-variable combination. Since *he* is coindexed with *every boy*, it is assigned the same variable *x* (this will be done more explicitly below in section 19):

$(\forall x, x \text{ a boy}) (x \text{ thinks } x \text{ is smart})$

Then the whole expression could be converted to a predicate-argument structure, yielding a logical form:

$\forall(x, x \text{ a boy})((\text{THINK}((\text{Thinker } x), (\text{Proposition SMART}((\text{Assessee } x))))))$

For the sentence *Mary seems to like every boy*, the same processes would yield:

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<sup>148</sup> Most likely, from surface structure. The traces left by movement rules generally make it possible to cover the effects of deep structure on meaning; they serve as a “memory” for the location of phrases at the deep structure level.

SEEM ( (Proposition  $\forall(x, x \text{ a boy})( \text{LIKE} ( (Liker \text{ Mary} ) (Liker-ee x) ) ) ) ) )$

This is, of course, only an outline scheme. In the pages below, I'll discuss briefly the rules for converting quantified NPs into operator-variable pairs, which will flesh out the scheme a bit. However, we will henceforth skip the step of creating predicate-argument structure from syntax.

#### 14. Sentences with two operators

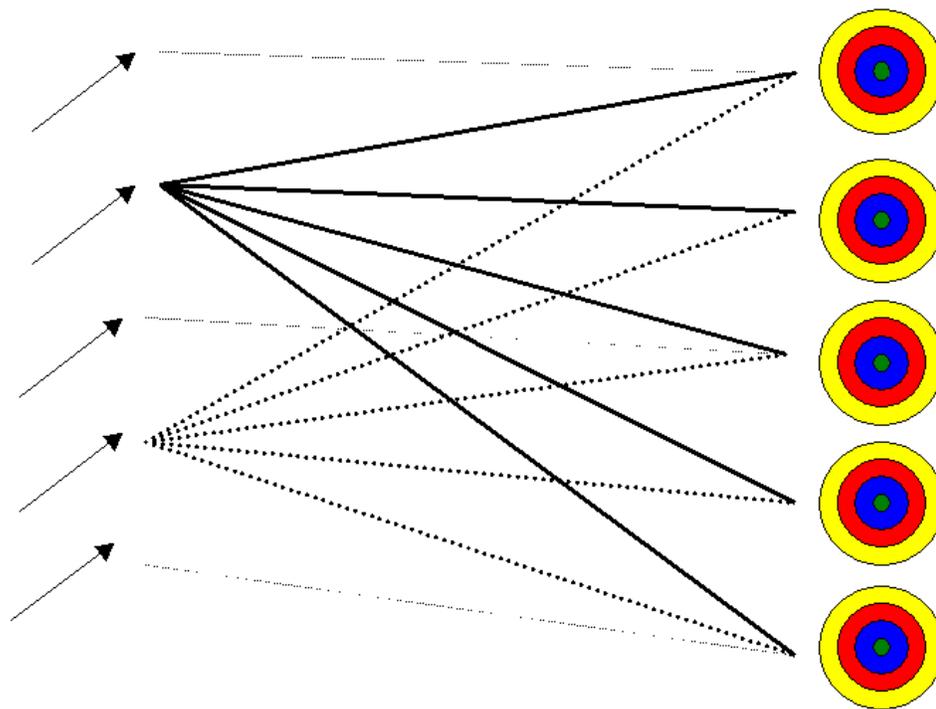
The strongest justification for the type of analysis to follow comes from sentences that have two logical operators. In such sentences, the two operators often interact with each other, yielding different meanings. For example, speaking of an archery tournament, we could say sentence (209):

(209) *A sentence ambiguous because of two interacting quantifiers*

Two arrows hit every target.

This sentence is ambiguous, in the following way. Suppose that the archers are so impoverished that between them they could bring a total of only five arrows to the tournament. Thus, each arrow has to be used repeatedly. Suppose further that the archers used a total of five targets. Here is one reading: two of the arrows (perhaps the straightest ones) were used so successfully that during the course of the tournament they penetrated every one of the five targets.

(210) “Two arrows hit every target”: Scenario I

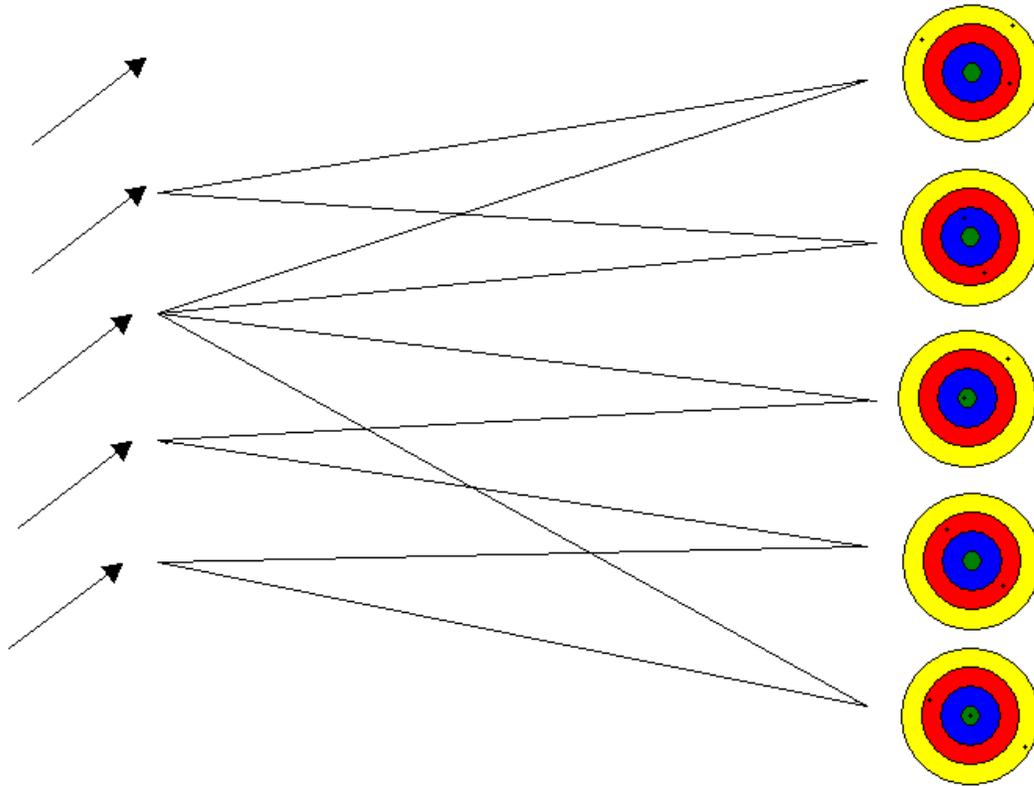


In the other reading, we would find that inspecting the targets at the end of the tournament, each has at least two holes in it.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> I'm saying “at least” because this seems to be the default interpretation of numerals like *two*; we could get a different interpretation by saying *exactly two*.

(211) “Two arrows hit every target”: Scenario II



A nice challenge to one’s ability to write clearly is the task of expressing, in a single sentence, just *one* of the two meanings of a double-quantifier sentence. Often, to do this well, it pays to use “philosopher’s language” — highly formal, stilted wordings that achieve precision. For example, the two readings of *Two arrows hit every target* can be summarized as follows:

(212) ‘*There were two arrows such that they hit every target.*’

True of Scenario I; diagram (210)

(213) ‘*For every target, it is the case that two arrows hit it.*’

True of Scenario II; diagram (211)

Two common phrases that form part of this “philosopher’s language” are *such that* and *it is the case that* — both of them have the effect of canceling out an unwanted scope reading, so the paraphrase becomes unambiguous. Paraphrase (212) above uses *such that*, and paraphrase (213) uses *it is the case that*.

The ambiguity we have just seen is within the capacity of the formal system we are developing. To handle it, we use two operators. The word *every* is a real-language version of the universal quantifier  $\forall x$ . *Two* is not an operator that is normally taught in introductory logic, but I

think it is intuitively clear that it is an operator of some kind. Thus, by putting the operators in the right structural locations, we can characterize the ambiguity.

(214) *Representing the two scopes for “Two arrows hit every target”*

a. *Scenario I*

( For two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ) ( ( for every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ) (  $x$  hit  $y$  ) )  
 ‘There were two arrows such that they hit every target.’

b. *Scenario II*

( For every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ) ( ( for two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ) (  $x$  hit  $y$  ) )  
 ‘For every target, it is the case that two arrows hit it.’

This is an example of a **scope ambiguity**. In (214)a, the scope of the operator ( For two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ) is ( ( for every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ) (  $x$  hit  $y$  ) ). In (214)b, the scope of the operator ( For every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ) is ( ( for two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ) (  $x$  hit  $y$  ) ).

Another way of saying that same thing is that in (214)a, ( For two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ) **takes scope over** ( for every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ), because ( for every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ) is inside the scope of ( For two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ). In (214)b, ( for every  $y$ ,  $y$  a target ) takes scope over ( For two  $x$ ,  $x$  an arrow ).

#### 14.1 *The local “universe of discourse”*

As you can see above, in language operators often consist of two parts, one the quantifying expression itself (*two*, *every*), and the other an expression of the set of entities (*arrows*, *targets*) being quantified over. The latter set is grounded in the local “universe of discourse”—when I say *every target*, I mean, “every target in the set of targets relevant to the conversation we are having”; hence, in the present context, every target that was present at the archery tournament. Clearly, speakers interpret quantifiers making use of their real-world knowledge, which permits them to infer the set of relevant targets (or whatever) from the context.

### 15. Operator scope in multiclause sentences

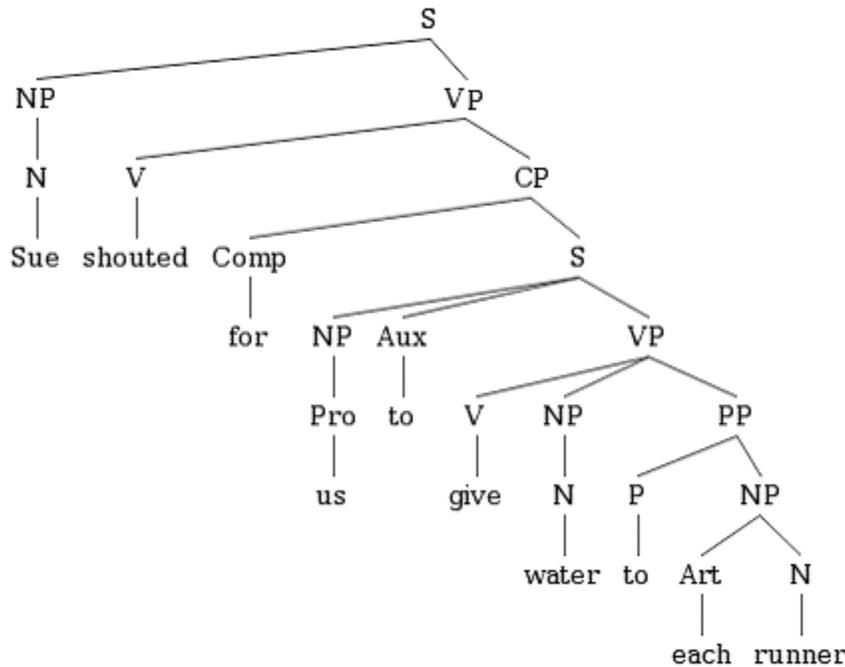
Operators can have scope not just over other operators, but over particular clauses in a sentence that has more than one clause. These cases are of special interest for us because they can be used to show the close relationship of operator scope with syntactic structure.

Here is an example. The sentence at hand is:

(215) *Sue shouted [for us to give water to each runner ]*

We need briefly to cover the syntax here. In one commonly-adopted analysis, *for us to give water to each runner* is a CP, *for* is a *Comp*, *us* is the NP subject of *for us to give water to each runner* and *to* is a particular sort of Aux used only in verbal infinitives. *Shout* is a verb that subcategorizes

for this particular kind of CP (often called an “infinitival clause”, since *to give* is the infinitive form of *give*) Here is the proposed parse:



Now, let us consider the meanings at hand. The easy reading here, which I will call Narrow Scope, is the one where Sue shouts just once, at the beginning of a marathon, the utterance (216):

(216) *Hey! Give water to each runner!*

In this reading, the scope of *each* is the embedded clause that reports what Sue shouted. Here is a possible logical structure for this reading:

(217) *Narrow scope reading of “Sue shouted for us to give water to each runner”*

Sue shouted ( ( for each *x*, *x* a runner ) ( for us to give water to *x* ) )

For the other reading, imagine it’s a bit late in the day in a marathon, and the stragglers are coming by the water station at Mile 23, spaced about two minutes apart. Whenever this happens, Sue shouts (218):

(218) (Happens many times:) *Hey! Give water to that runner!*

Call this the Wide Scope reading. It could be represented like this:

(219) *Wide scope reading of “Sue shouted for us to give water to each runner”*

( For each *x*, *x* a runner ) (Sue shouted ( for us to give water to *x* ) )

In other words, for each passing runner, there was a “shouting event”, in which Sue directed the workers to give that runner some water.

Here is an effort to provide single-sentence paraphrases of the two readings.

Narrow-scope reading:

*The message expressed by Sue’s shouting was such that for each runner, we should give water to that person.*

Wide-scope reading:

*For each runner, Sue emitted a shout to the effect that we should give water to that runner.*

The general point of this example is that we can have a sentence that has just one variable, but is ambiguous. This is because the sentence has two clauses, and thus two locations for the operator to go.

### **Study Exercise #63**

Provide paraphrases for both the wide and narrow scope readings of these sentences, which are ambiguous in the same way as (215). Also, provide logical notation similar to the ones just given.

- a. I signed an order for each soldier to be given a medal.
- b. I announced that progress has been made on every front.

### Answer to Study Exercise #63

- a. Wide scope: “For each soldier, I signed an order that that soldier be given a medal.”  
 ( For each  $x$ ,  $x$  a soldier ) ( I signed an order that (  $x$  be given a medal ) )
- Narrow scope: “I signed an order, whose content was that each soldier should be given a medal.”  
 I signed an order such that ( ( for each  $x$ ,  $x$  a soldier ) (  $x$  be given a medal ) )
- b. Wide scope: “For every front, I announced that progress was being made on that front.”  
 ( For each  $x$ ,  $x$  a front ) ( I announced that ( progress had been made on  $x$  ) )
- Narrow scope: “I made an announcement, whose content was the progress was being made on every front.”  
 I announced that ( ( For each  $x$ ,  $x$  a front ) ( progress had been made on  $x$  ) )
- 

## 16. Creating operator-variable pairs from quantifiers in logical form

We can now consider what rules could be used to derive the logical form of quantified sentences. We know, up front, that the rules need to have some flexibility, because of sentences like (215) *Sue shouted for us to give water to each runner*, where a single syntactic structure yields two different interpretations for quantification.

We first need a rule that translates quantified NPs into operators. This is not the final form of the rule, but it will suffice for now

### (220) Quantifier Translation (preliminary version)

Replace

[ every N ] <sub>NP</sub>	with	[ for every $x$ , $x$ an N ] <sub>NP</sub>
[ some N ] <sub>NP</sub>	with	[ for some $x$ , $x$ an N ] <sub>NP</sub>

and similarly for other quantified expressions. If the variable  $x$  is already in use, use  $y$  instead; etc.

The other rule we need is more dramatic: it lets us pick the clause over which the operator will have scope, moves it there, and creates a variable in the location that the moved NP left behind.

### (221) Quantifier Raising

Left-adjoin a quantified NP to S, leaving behind a variable in its original location.

This rule has an undefined concept in it, **adjunction**, which is defined as follows:

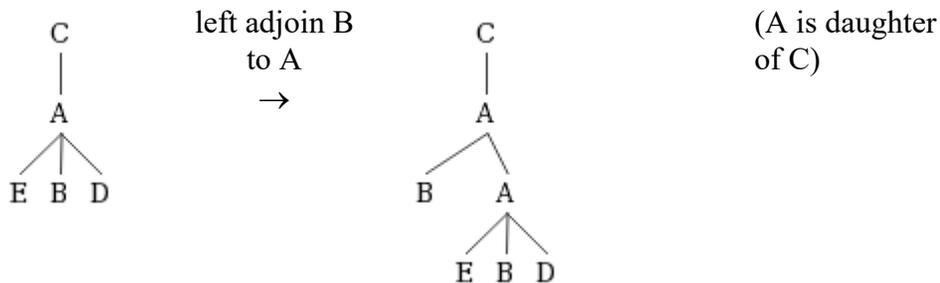
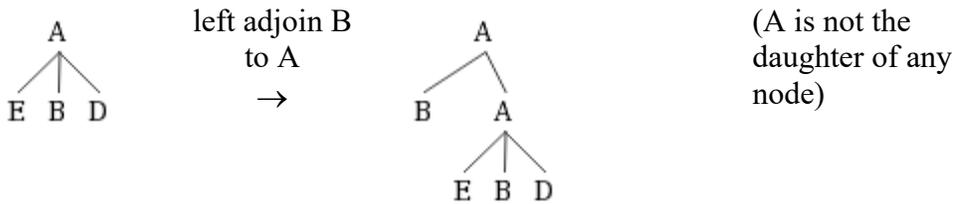
(222) **Left-Adjunction**

Given a constituent A, containing a B, and (optionally) C, the mother of A:

Form a new constituent, which is:

- has the same node label as A
- has as its daughter nodes a copy of B, followed by A
- if A was the daughter of C, the new constituent becomes the daughter of C

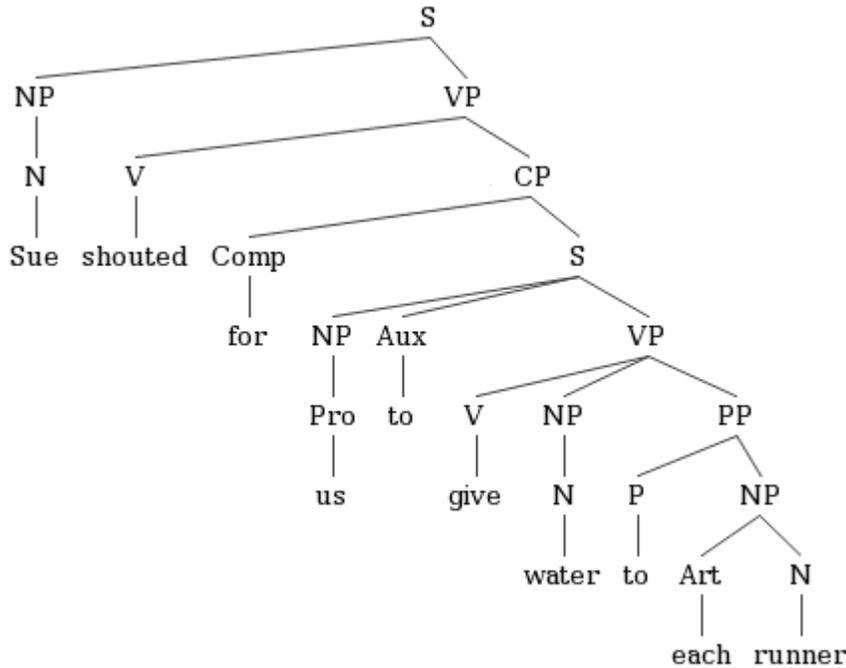
Here are two simple cases of left adjunction.



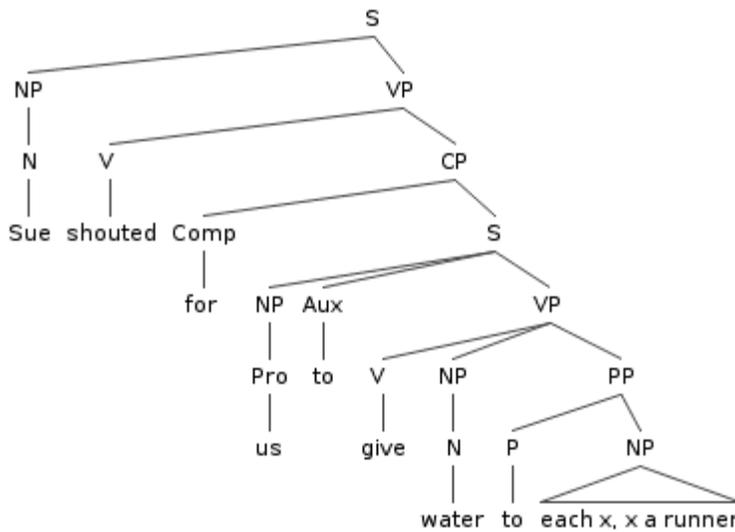
The purpose of left adjunction is simply to provide a slot in which the logical operator can reside.

## 17. Deriving distinct meanings with Quantifier Raising

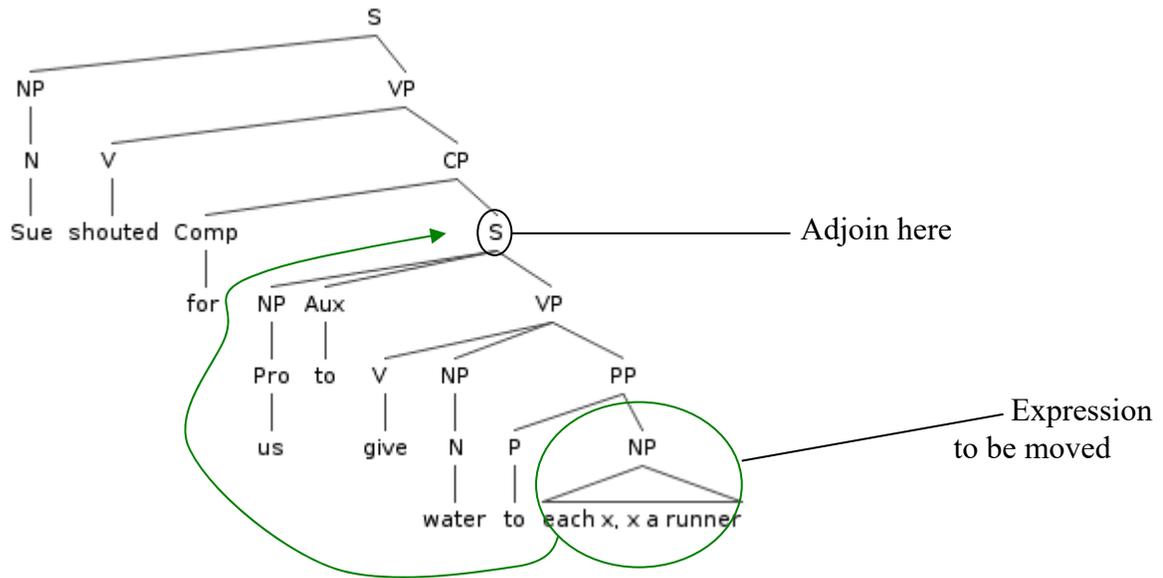
Let us return to (215) *Sue shouted for us to give water to each runner*, whose surface structure is repeated below.



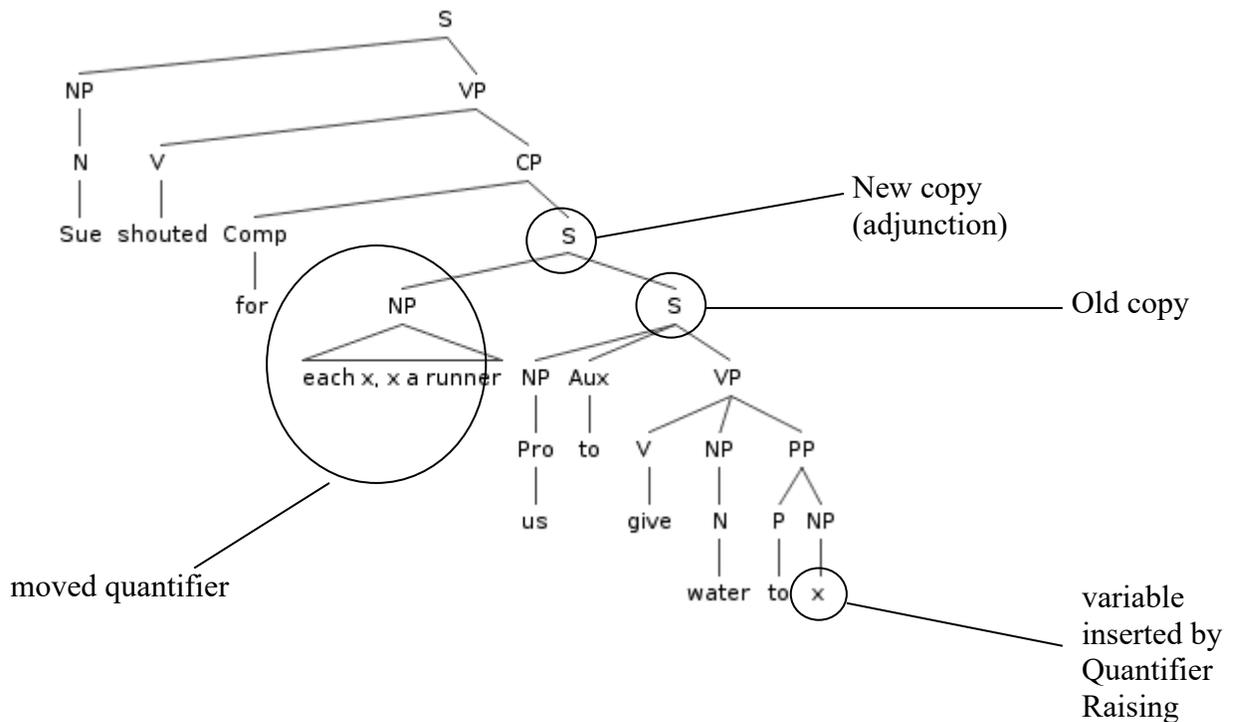
First applying Quantifier Translation to *each runner*, we get the following. A triangle is used to avoid worrying about the inner details of the quantifiers.



Next, we note that the clue to the multiple meanings is that the sentence has two clauses, hence two S nodes that the Quantifier Raising can adjoin *each runner* to. If we pick the lower S, adjunction will look like this:

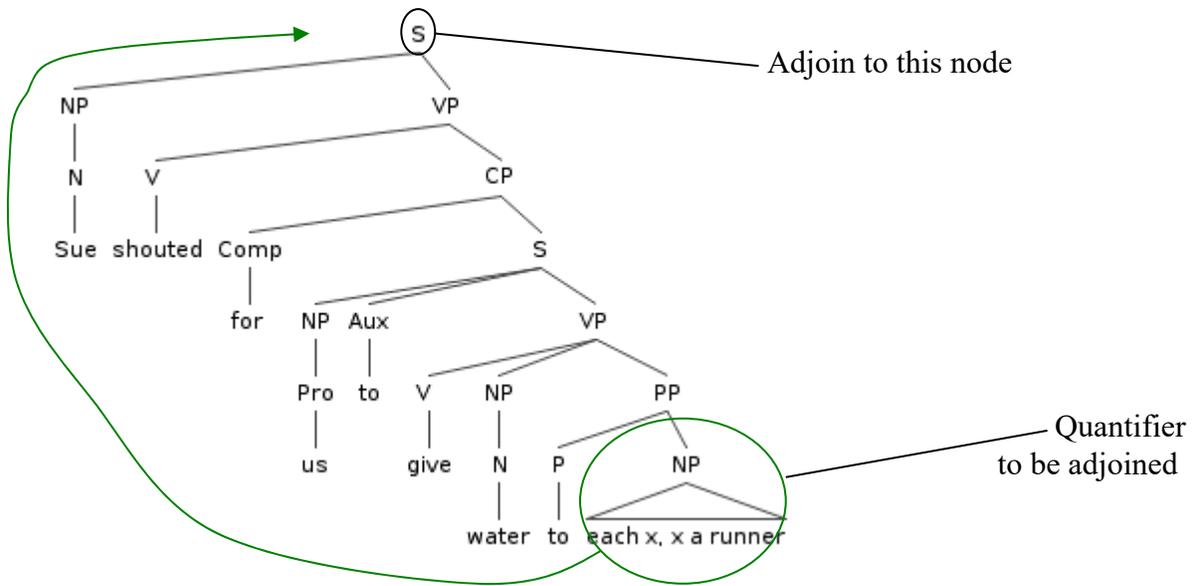


Inserting the new S node, and rearranging the tree in the way required, we get the following:



Note the variable: it is the logical place marker formerly occupied by *each runner*, and it is bound (shown by the shared index *x*) by the raised operator *each runner*. This yields a logical form for one of the meanings, that is, a single act of shouting, telling us to attend to all of the runners. This is the Narrow-scope reading given above.

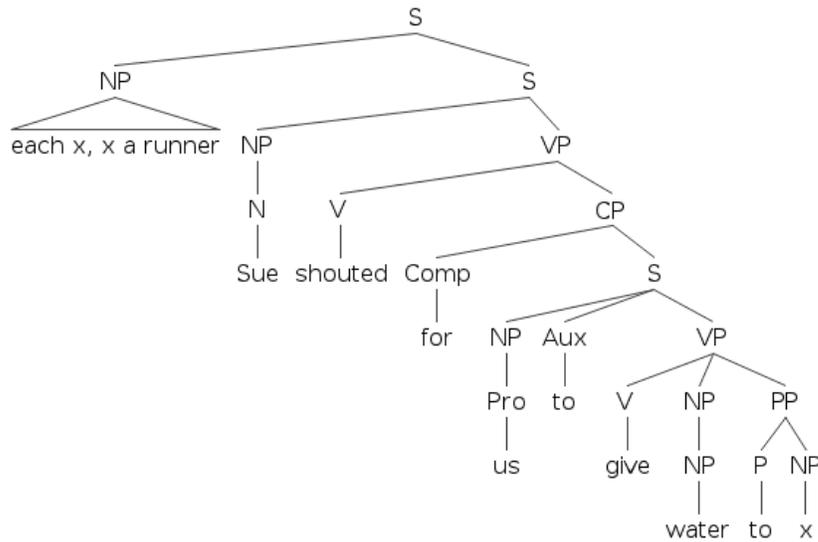
If we pick the upper clause, we will end up deriving the Wide-scope reading. The stage of adjunction will look like this:



**Study Exercise #64**

Show the final output of the derivation.

**Answer to Study Exercise #64**



This is the Wide-scope reading.

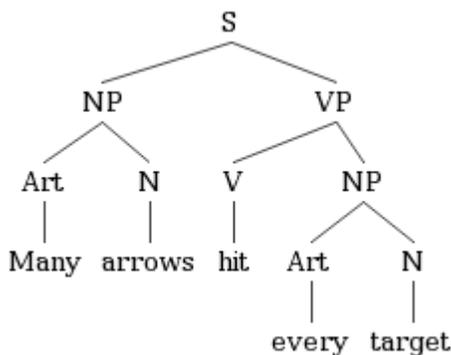
**18. Logical form in sentences with two quantifiers**

Let us now return to the topic of section 14 of this chapter, namely sentences that include two quantifiers. This time, we will actually provide the derivations (using Quantifier Raising) that apply to the syntactic representation to create the alternative readings at the level of Logical Form.

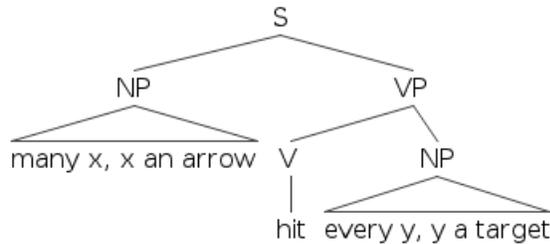
Suppose we start with a simplified version of our arrow-target sentence:

*Many arrows hit every target.*

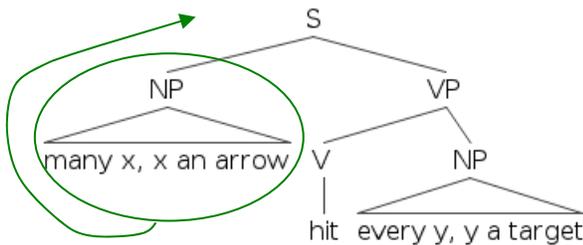
This sentence is ambiguous, and could mean either “Many were the arrows that hit every target”; or “For every target, many arrows hit it.” The syntactic surface structure (as well as deep structure) would be as shown below; *many* and *every* are both Articles syntactically.



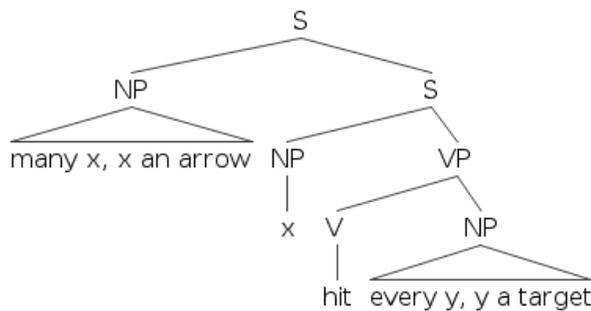
We first translate the NP with quantifiers into appropriate operators, with the rule of Quantifier Translation (220). Note that it is crucial to use *different* variables (here, *x* and *y*) for the different noun phrases (it's with bound pronouns that we use the *same* variable).



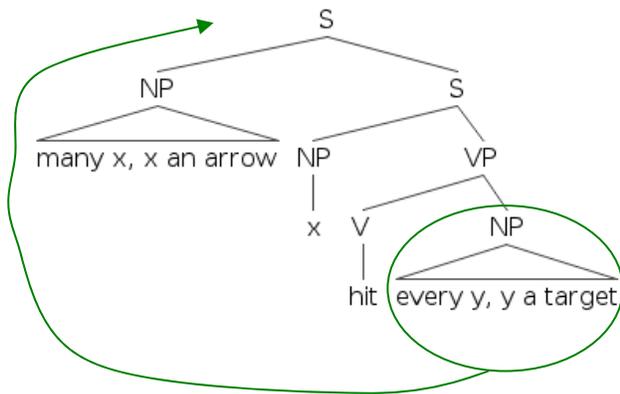
Although the order in which we perform the operations turns out not to matter here, we can arbitrarily choose first to left-adjoin *many x, x an arrow* to the sentence, as follows:



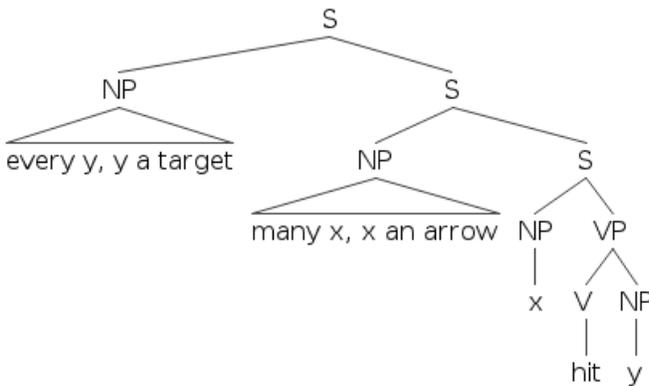
The result has a new S node, copying the original one, and the moved quantifier is the sister of the original S:



In the next step, we need to apply the same rule of Quantifier Raising again, this time to *every y, y a target*, which likewise is a quantified NP. Assuming (again arbitrarily) that it left-adjoins to the highest available S node, the application would look like this:



Here is the result:



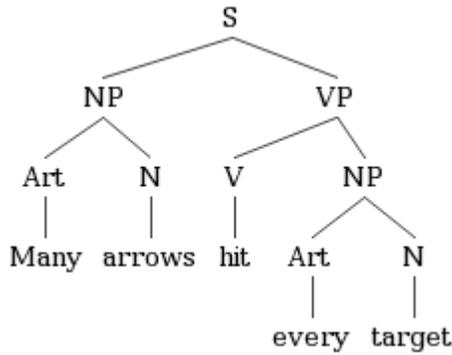
Note that a second variable, *y*, now appears in the clause. This is the reading we wanted: “For every target, many were the arrows that hit it”. In this reading, *every* has scope over *many*, and this can be seen directly in the structure of the logical form.

**Study Exercise #65**

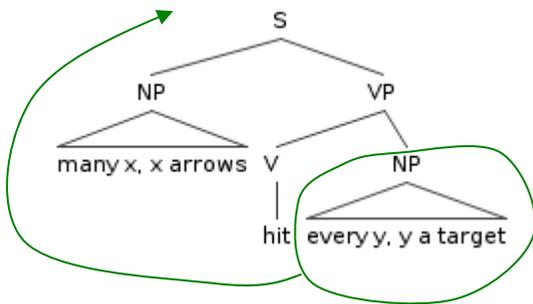
Derive the other reading.

**Answer to Study Exercise #65**

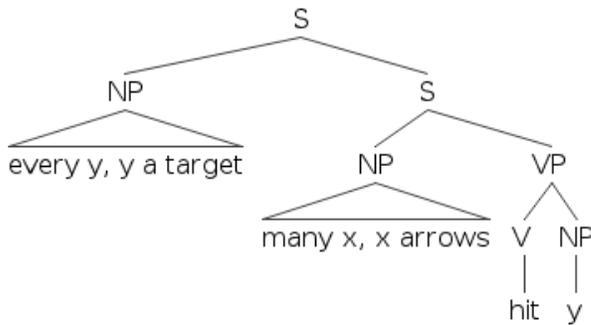
Syntactic structure:



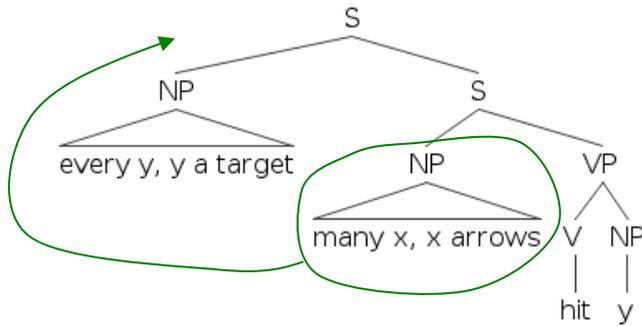
Output of Quantifier Translation. I also show an arrow that indicates the application of Quantifier Raising to the quantified expression *every y, y a target*.



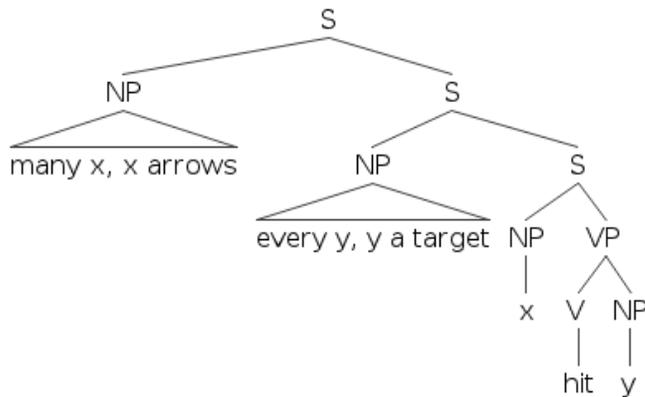
The structure that results is given below.



Next, we apply Quantifier Raising to *many x, x arrows*. This is shown with the arrow below:



The final structure that results is shown below:



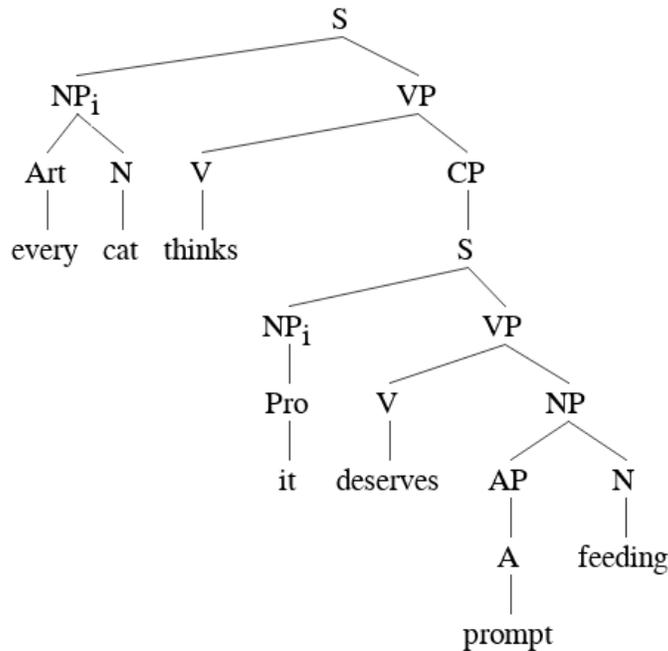
As the diagram shows, in this reading *Many* has scope over *every*. Hence, the meaning is something like “Many were the arrows that hit every target.”

### 19. Quantifier translation with coindexed pronouns

We now can circle back to the discussion in section 13 of pronouns that are coindexed with quantified NP, and bring them fully into the picture. For this purpose we will examine the sentence *Every cat thinks it deserves prompt feeding*. This is ambiguous, but by far the most likely reading is that cat Fluffy thinks Fluffy deserves prompt feeding, cat Fritzie thinks Fritzie deserves prompt feeding, cat Oscar thinks Oscar deserves prompt feeding, and so on. We cover this reading first.

Ordinary application of the rule Regular Pronoun Interpretation (202) would permit *it* to be coindexed with the subject of the sentence; this is so because they are not clausemates. Here is the structure thus derived, with *every cat* and *it* coindexed with *i*.

(223) *A sentence with a quantified NP coindexed with a pronoun*



Now, when we convert *every cat* to a quantified expression, there is an extra step that must take place, for we must deal with the coindexed pronoun *it*. The key idea is to add a fairly simple additional principle to the Quantifier Translation rule, shown in italics below.

(224) **Quantifier Translation (revised)**

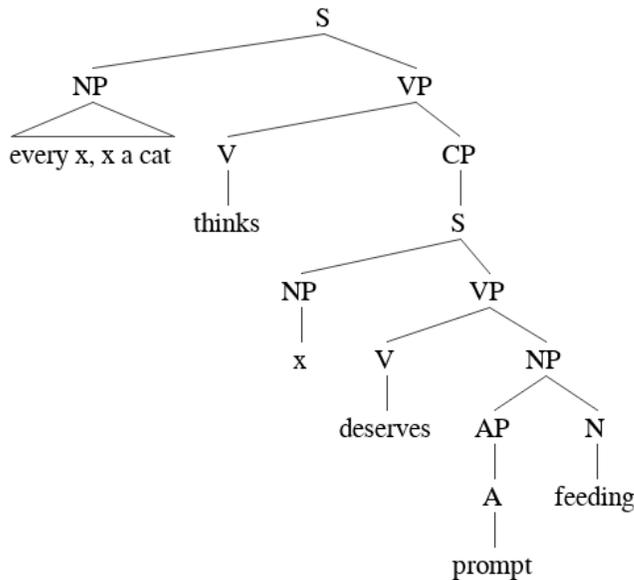
Replace

[ every N ]<sub>NP</sub>      with      [ for every *x*, *x* an N ]<sub>NP</sub>  
 [ some N ]<sub>NP</sub>      with      [ for some *x*, *x* an N ]<sub>NP</sub>

and similarly for other quantified expressions. If the variable *x* is already in use, use *y* instead; etc. *Let pronouns coindexed with NP be replaced by the same variable.*

The italicized new provision in the rule essentially transfer the concept of coreference into the similar-but-distinct concept of *co-binding* — two variables will end up bound by the same quantifier. Quantifier Translation applied to sentence (223) will yield (225).

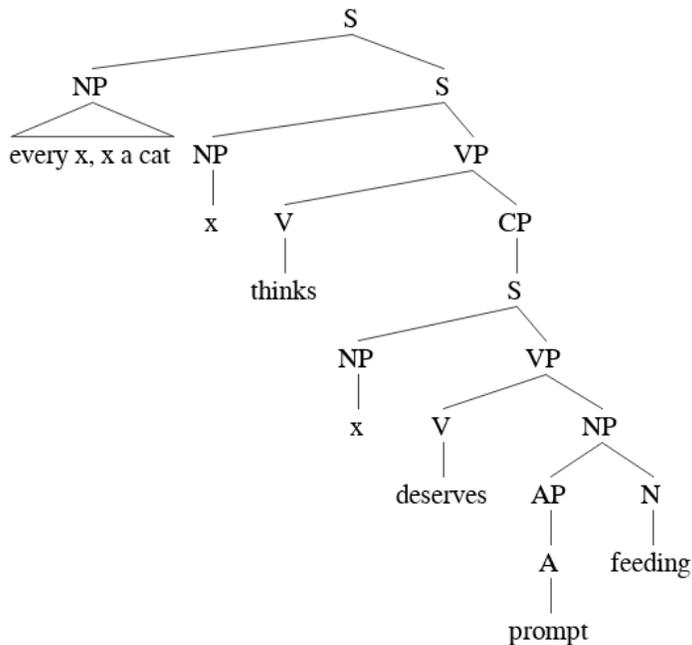
(225) *Output of Quantifier Translation as applied to a sentence with a coindexed pronoun*



The new variable  $x$  can be seen in the former position of the subordinate clause *it*. For simplicity I have removed the former indices indicating coreference, since they have served their function. The new representation now depicts co-binding, not coreference.

The final output will derive by applying Quantifier Raising to the quantifier, like this:

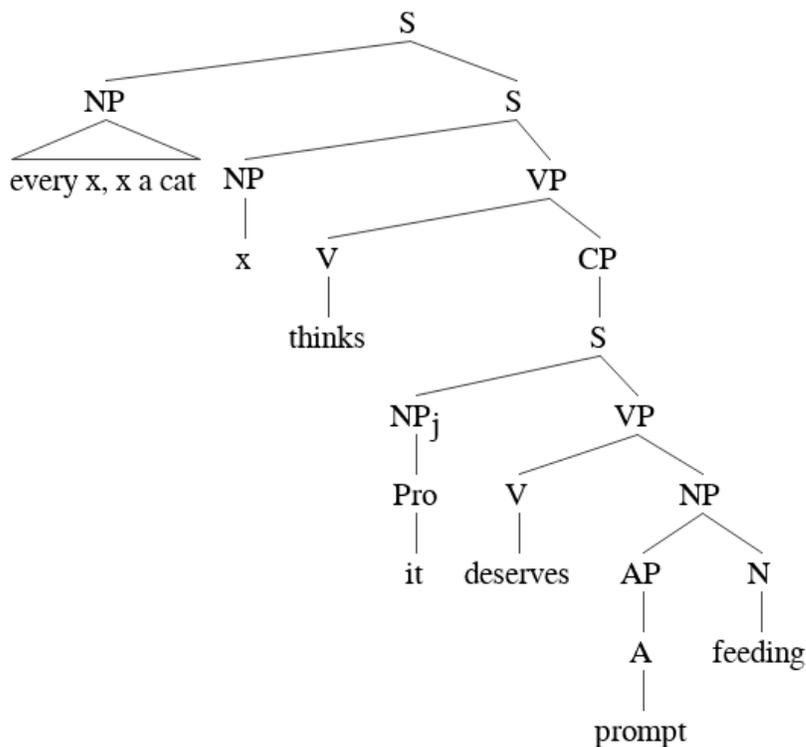
(226) *Output of Quantifier Raising as applied to a sentence with a coindexed pronoun*



This could be read, “For every cat, it is true of that cat that it thinks that it deserves prompt feeding.” The single quantifier now binds two identical variables.

To tie up a loose end, recall that the sentence is ambiguous: if at the stage shown in (223) we had exercised our choice (legal when applying Regular Pronoun Interpretation) to assign a *distinct* index to the pronoun *it*, then the special provision of Quantifier Translation (224) would not be applicable. The *it* does not become a variable, and in the final output the quantifier binds just one variable, the one in the position from which it was raised:

(227) *Output of Quantifier Raising as applied to a sentence with a distinctly indexed pronoun*



The pronoun *it* bears the “extraneous” index *j*, meaning it designates some other entity, already mentioned in the conversation, that every cat thinks deserves prompt feeding.<sup>150</sup>

## 20. Wh-phrases are operators

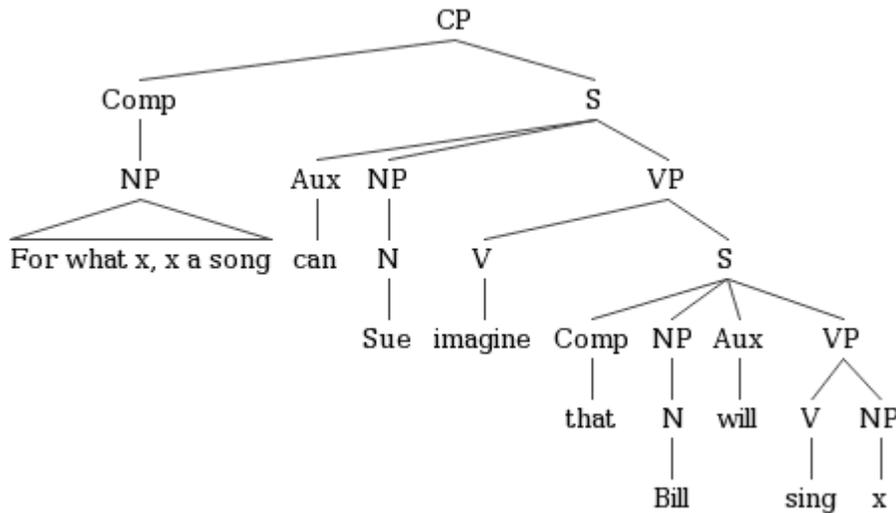
Chapter 5, section 6 of this text discussed the fact that Wh- questions can differ in the scope of the Wh- phrase, giving the following example:

[ *What song* ] *can Sue imagine that Bill sang* \_\_\_\_?  
*Sue can imagine* [ *what song* ] *Bill sang* \_\_\_\_

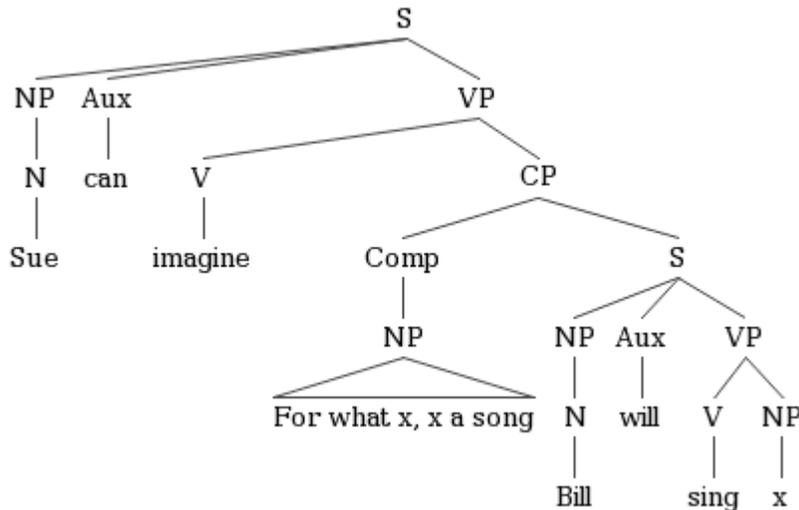
<sup>150</sup> This scenario might seem odd but I could imagine it being the canary.

We can now express this idea more precisely by giving these sentences logical forms similar to the quantifier sentences already discussed. The key idea is that *wh- phrases are logical operators*, which are requests for the listener to fill in the missing information that the variable stands for. Thus we might have the following two logical forms:

a. Wide scope of *what song*



b. Narrow scope of *what song*



You can see that the syntactic transformation of Wh- Movement is a kind of observable, syntactic analogue of Quantifier Raising, and has the function of placing the *wh-* phrase where it bears its logical scope. The landing site for Wh-Movement is different (Comp vs. adjoined to S), but this is a relatively superficial difference.

In languages where *Wh-* phrases syntactically remain *in situ*, things will work differently. Here, Quantifier Raising must apply to *wh-* phrases, so that their scope will be correctly expressed in logical form. Here is an example from Mandarin Chinese, an *in-situ* language:

(228) *A sentence of Mandarin with ambiguous scope*

a. *IPA transcription*

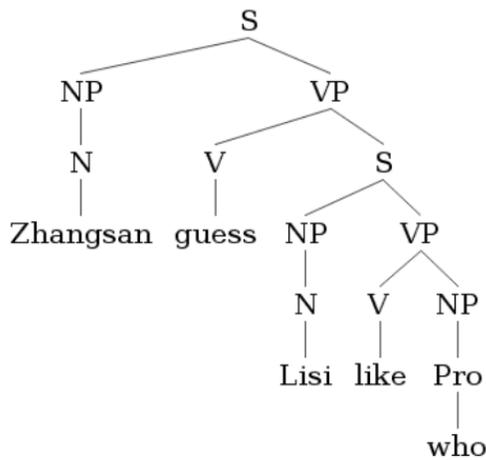
[s tʂáŋsán ts<sup>h</sup>ái [s lìsù çìhwán ʂěi ]  
 Zhangsan guess Lisi like who

b. *Pinyin Romanization with integers for tone number*

1 1 1 3 4 3 1 2  
 Zhangsan cai Li si xi-huan shui

This sentence is ambiguous. It can mean “Who does Zhangsan guess that Lisi likes?” This meaning involves raising the Wh- phrase to adjoin to the highest S in logical form, a wide-scope reading. The sentence can also mean “Zhangsan guessed who Lisi likes”, a narrow-scope reading. This meaning involves raising the Wh- phrase only to the lower S in logical form.<sup>151</sup> Here are derivations demonstrating the two meanings.<sup>152</sup>

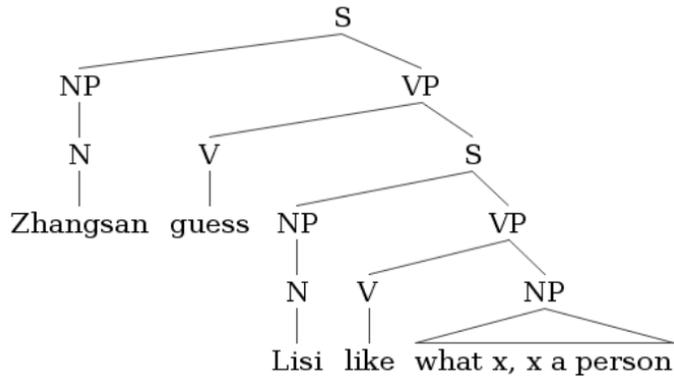
a. *Surface syntactic structure*



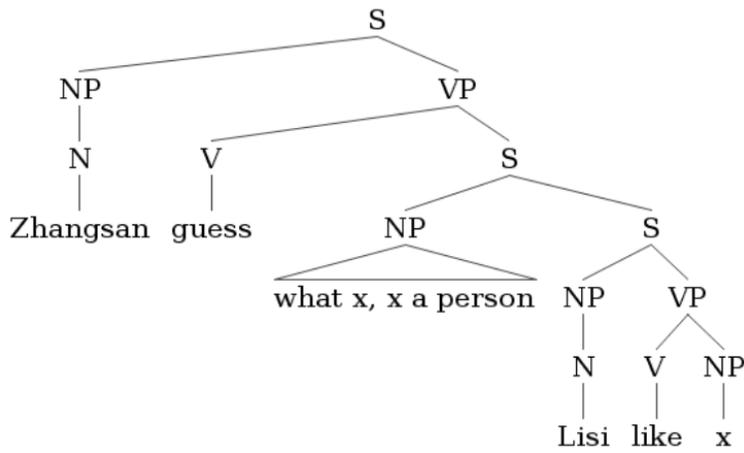
<sup>151</sup> Thanks to UCLA graduate students Kristine Yu and Grace Kuo for constructing this example for me.

<sup>152</sup> Mandarin apparently has no complementizers for embedded clauses, so I am omitting the CP node.

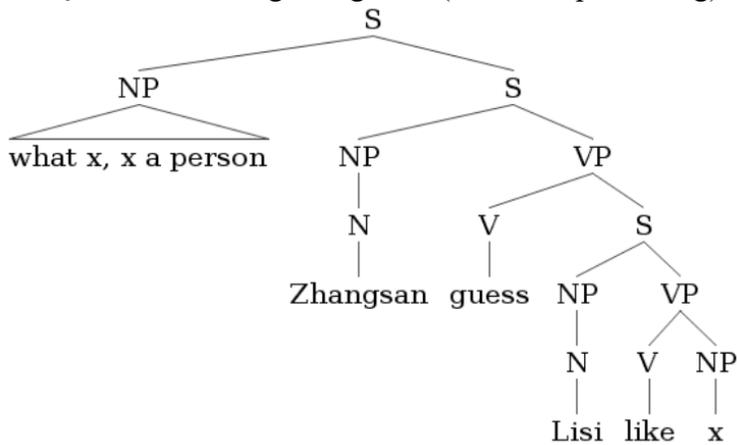
b. Quantifier translation of wh-phrase



c. Quantifier Raising to lower S (narrow-scope reading):



d. OR Quantifier Raising to higher S (broad-scope reading):



## 21. Summary of operators, variables, and scope

- Constructions with operators and variables are among the most intricate of semantic phenomena. A basic analysis of them is possible using the rules of Quantifier Translation and Quantifier Raising. These rules apply during the creation of logical form, a hypothesized linguistic level that explicitly characterizes linguistic aspects of meaning.
- Scope differences can be of various kinds: a single operator can be raised to different levels (as in *Sue shouted for us to give water to each runner*), or there can be two operators that vary in their scope relative to each other (as in *At least two arrows hit every target.*).
- Pronouns coindexed with quantified NPs often turn into additional variables in logical form (as in *Every cat thinks it deserves prompt feeding*)
- The constructions created in logical form by Quantifier Raising are abstract and not directly observable. Yet they are mimicked by observable constructions in language: Wh- phrases are a sort of quantifier, which in languages like English really do move to the appropriate scope location in surface structure. Contrariwise, languages without Wh-movement must be assumed to have a “hidden” version of Wh-movement, needed to handle ambiguous sentences and similar in form to Quantifier Raising.

## Chapter 10: Phonetics

This point in the text marks a discontinuity in the subject matter. Language is a system relating sound and meaning, and the previous chapter ended with the relatively subtle aspects of meaning involved in quantifiers. We turn now to the other extreme: physical sounds, created by the speech organs and apprehended by the ear. Later, we will see that phonetics is the primary working material of phonology, a field that in turn relates to morphology and to syntax, and hence ultimately to semantics. So language is like an arch, primarily abstract but anchored at either end to observable aspects of the world. Semantics relates language structure to situations in the real world; phonetics relates language structure to the physical events in the vocal tract and the atmosphere on which we depend to communicate.

### 1. Phonetic description

The first task of a linguist trying to study a new language is to be able to hear its sounds correctly and take down utterances in accurate and reliable fashion. It's a familiar experience for everyone to have heard a foreign language as a babbling stream of sound—it seems to go by very fast, and is hard to imitate and remember. Often, a language will include crucial distinctions between sounds that escape the linguist entirely in the period of initial efforts. Therefore, it's a fundamental skill of linguists to be able to listen to other languages with a trained ear and to take down what is said accurately in a phonetic transcription. Transcription is taught to beginning linguists all over the world.<sup>153</sup>

Here is an example of phonetic transcription:

[ˈðɪs ɪz ə fəˈnɛtɪk trænˈskrɪpʃən əv ən ˈɪŋɡlɪʃ ˈsɛntɪs pɪəˈnɑːnst ɪn maɪ ˈoʊn ˈdaɪələkt]  
(This is a phonetic transcription of an English sentence pronounced in my own dialect.)

In fieldwork, the task of transcribing a new language usually begins with slow and modest steps: listening to one single, perhaps short, word at a time, and only gradually building up to the point of being able to provide an accurate transcription for any utterance. It also helps to focus on very short utterances when you are learning to transcribe.

### 2. The International Phonetic Alphabet

The standard form of phonetic transcription is the **International Phonetic Alphabet**, a large symbol set promulgated by a scholarly society called the International Phonetic Association. Both the alphabet and the association may be abbreviated “IPA”. The IPA is the form of transcription that will be covered in this text. The Association offers much information, either free or inexpensive, on its Alphabet and how to use it:

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<sup>153</sup> At UCLA we offer both Linguistics 102 (applications-centered) and Linguistics 103 (fieldwork-centered) for this purpose.

- Their printed guide, *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association : A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet* (Cambridge University Press, and probably, your university library)
- The IPA website: <https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/>
- The IPA phonetic chart, which, despite the continuing discovery of new sounds, still fits on just one page. Below, I've split it up for greater legibility.

(229) **The IPA chart**

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2015)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

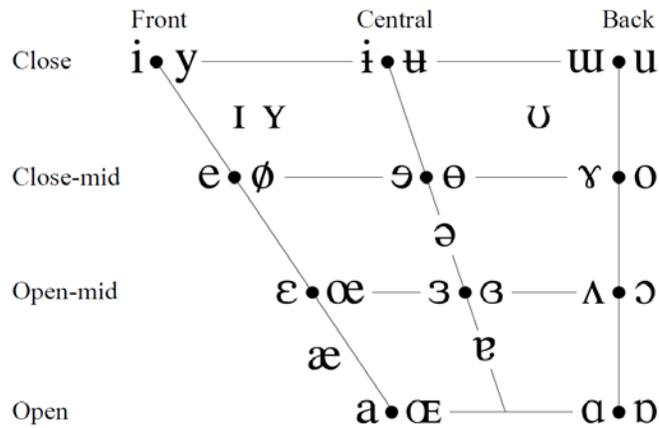
© 2015 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d			ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ	n			ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ		r						ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ	ɾ			ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative			ɬ ɮ								
Approximant		ʋ	ɹ			ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant			l			ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
◌͡ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Examples:
◌͡ Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	ɓʼ Bilabial
◌͡ (Post)alveolar	ɟ Palatal	tʼ Dental/alveolar
◌͡ Palatoalveolar	ɡ Velar	kʼ Velar
◌͡ Alveolar lateral	ɠ Uvular	sʼ Alveolar fricative

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

OTHER SYMBOLS

- |   |                                   |     |                              |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| ʍ | Voiceless labial-velar fricative  | ʎ ʐ | Alveolo-palatal fricatives   |
| ʋ | Voiced labial-velar approximant   | ɺ   | Voiced alveolar lateral flap |
| ɥ | Voiced labial-palatal approximant | ɥ   | Simultaneous ʃ and X         |
| ħ | Voiceless epiglottal fricative    |     |                              |
| ʕ | Voiced epiglottal fricative       |     |                              |
| ʡ | Epiglottal plosive                |     |                              |
- Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.

k̠p̠    t̠s̠

DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g.  $\underset{\circ}{\eta}$

$\circ$ Voiceless	$\underset{\circ}{\eta}$ $\underset{\circ}{\delta}$	$\dots$ Breathy voiced	$\underset{\cdot\cdot}{\text{b}}$ $\underset{\cdot\cdot}{\text{a}}$	$\underset{\text{̣}}$ Dental	$\underset{\text{̣}}{\text{t}}$ $\underset{\text{̣}}{\text{d}}$
$\underset{\vee}$ Voiced	$\underset{\vee}{\text{s}}$ $\underset{\vee}{\text{t}}$	$\sim$ Creaky voiced	$\underset{\sim}{\text{b}}$ $\underset{\sim}{\text{a}}$	$\underset{\text{̤}}$ Apical	$\underset{\text{̤}}{\text{t}}$ $\underset{\text{̤}}{\text{d}}$
$\text{h}$ Aspirated	$\text{t}^{\text{h}}$ $\text{d}^{\text{h}}$	$\sim$ Linguolabial	$\underset{\sim}{\text{t}}$ $\underset{\sim}{\text{d}}$	$\underset{\text{̦}}$ Laminal	$\underset{\text{̦}}{\text{t}}$ $\underset{\text{̦}}{\text{d}}$
$\underset{\text{ɔ}}$ More rounded	$\underset{\text{ɔ}}{\text{ɔ}}$	$\text{w}$ Labialized	$\text{t}^{\text{w}}$ $\text{d}^{\text{w}}$	$\sim$ Nasalized	$\underset{\sim}{\text{ẽ}}$
$\underset{\text{c}}$ Less rounded	$\underset{\text{c}}{\text{ɔ}}$	$\underset{\text{j}}$ Palatalized	$\text{t}^{\text{j}}$ $\text{d}^{\text{j}}$	$\text{n}$ Nasal release	$\text{d}^{\text{n}}$
$\text{+}$ Advanced	$\underset{\text{+}}{\text{u}}$	$\text{Y}$ Velarized	$\text{t}^{\text{Y}}$ $\text{d}^{\text{Y}}$	$\text{l}$ Lateral release	$\text{d}^{\text{l}}$
$\text{-}$ Retracted	$\underset{\text{-}}{\text{e}}$	$\text{ɣ}$ Pharyngealized	$\text{t}^{\text{ɣ}}$ $\text{d}^{\text{ɣ}}$	$\text{̚}$ No audible release	$\text{d}^{\text{̚}}$
$\dots$ Centralized	$\underset{\dots}{\text{ẽ}}$	$\sim$ Velarized or pharyngealized	$\text{ɫ}$		
$\times$ Mid-centralized	$\underset{\times}{\text{ẽ}}$	$\text{̥}$ Raised	$\underset{\text{̥}}{\text{ɹ}}$ ( $\underset{\text{̥}}{\text{ɹ}}$ = voiced alveolar fricative)		
$\text{̣}$ Syllabic	$\underset{\text{̣}}{\text{n}}$	$\text{̠}$ Lowered	$\underset{\text{̠}}{\text{ɸ}}$ ( $\underset{\text{̠}}{\text{β}}$ = voiced bilabial approximant)		
$\text{̤}$ Non-syllabic	$\underset{\text{̤}}{\text{e}}$	$\text{̡}$ Advanced Tongue Root	$\underset{\text{̡}}{\text{ɛ}}$		
$\sim$ Rhoticity	$\underset{\sim}{\text{ə}}$ $\underset{\sim}{\text{a}}$	$\text{̢}$ Retracted Tongue Root	$\underset{\text{̢}}{\text{ɛ}}$		

SUPRASEGMENTALS

- $\text{ˈ}$  Primary stress       $\text{ˈfounəˈtʃən}$
- $\text{ˌ}$  Secondary stress
- $\text{ː}$  Long       $\text{eː}$
- $\text{ˑ}$  Half-long       $\text{e}^{\text{ˑ}}$
- $\text{̥}$  Extra-short       $\text{ẽ}$
- $\text{̩}$  Minor (foot) group
- $\text{̪}$  Major (intonation) group
- $\text{.}$  Syllable break       $\text{.i.ækt}$
- $\text{̣}$  Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

- |                          |                       |                          |                           |  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|
|                          | LEVEL                 |                          | CONTOUR                   |  |
| $\text{é}$ or $\text{ẽ}$ | $\text{̨}$ Extra high | $\text{ẽ}$ or $\text{̨}$ | $\text{̨}$ Rising         |  |
| $\text{é}$               | $\text{̨}$ High       | $\text{ẽ}$               | $\text{̨}$ Falling        |  |
| $\text{ē}$               | $\text{̤}$ Mid        | $\text{ẽ}$               | $\text{̨}$ High rising    |  |
| $\text{è}$               | $\text{̦}$ Low        | $\text{ẽ}$               | $\text{̨}$ Low rising     |  |
| $\text{è}$               | $\text{̩}$ Extra low  | $\text{ẽ}$               | $\text{̨}$ Rising-falling |  |
| $\text{̣}$               | Downstep              | $\text{̣}$               | Global rise               |  |
| $\text{̤}$               | Upstep                | $\text{̣}$               | Global fall               |  |

It would not be reasonable to teach the entire IPA chart in an introductory linguistics course, but I've included it to show what is needed to cover (most of) the world's languages.<sup>154</sup> Given the very brief time available, the only language that we will cover will be American English. This is

<sup>154</sup> The IPA is revised and improved from time to time, but still needs work. For instance, it still lacks symbols for the sounds commonly Romanized as *pp*, *tt*, and *kk* in Korean.

actually a rather complex language phonetically, and once you have it down, it makes transcribing the others easier.

### **3. Vowel and consonant charts for English**

The following are charts, based on the IPA chart, giving just the vowels and consonants of English. Below each symbol is a **keyword** of English meant to identify and illustrate the sound. The row and column labels give the phonetic terminology, to be covered below, that says what kind of sound each symbol designates.

(230) IPA symbols for the sounds of English

a. Consonants

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	voiceless	p <u>pin</u>			t <u>tin</u>			k <u>kin</u>	
	voiced	b <u>bin</u>			d <u>din</u>			g <u>gill</u>	
	Affricates					tʃ <u>chin</u>			
Fricatives	voiceless		f <u>fin</u>	θ <u>thin</u>	s <u>sin</u>	ʃ <u>shin</u>			h <u>hymn</u>
	voiced		v <u>vim</u>	ð <u>this</u>	z <u>zip</u>	ʒ <u>vision</u>			
	Nasals	m <u>mitt</u>			n <u>nip</u>			ŋ <u>sing</u>	
Approximants	lateral				l <u>Lynn</u>				
	central	w <u>win</u>				ɹ <u>rim</u>	j <u>ying</u>		

b. Vowels and diphthongs

	Front	Central	Back		Diphthongs
	Unrounded	Unrounded	Unrounded	Rounded	
Upper high	i <u>beat</u>			u <u>boot</u>	aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ b <u>ite</u> , b <u>out</u> , C <u>oit</u>
Lower high	ɪ <u>bit</u>			ʊ <u>foot</u>	
Upper mid	eɪ <u>bait</u>	ə <u>abbot</u>		oʊ <u>boat</u>	Rhotacized upper mid central unrounded ə B <u>ert</u>
Lower mid	ɛ <u>bet</u>		ʌ <u>but</u>		
Low	æ <u>bat</u>		ɑ <u>father</u>	ɔ <u>taut</u> (only some dialects)	

If you want to hear the keyword pronounced (by me) visit <http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/charts/english/chartsforEnglishbroadtranscription.htm>

Here is a quick identification of the symbols. The IPA was created in its first version by a panel of European linguists in the late 19th century (first publication 1888). Naturally enough, as much as possible they used as the basis of IPA the typical phonetic values that Roman letters have in European languages, and you can see this in the charts above. However, some of the symbols are invented.

(231) *Key for English consonants in IPA*

- [ʃ] is the “sh” sound, heard in *she*.
- [ʒ] is the “zh” sound, heard in the middle of *vision*.
- [tʃ] is the “ch” sound, heard at the beginning and end of *church*. If you listen carefully, you’ll hear that the choice of “t” + “ʃ” is a sensible one here.<sup>155</sup>
- [dʒ] is the “j” sound, heard at the beginning and end of *judge*. It, too, is “compositional”, made up of [d] plus [ʒ]
- [ŋ] is the “ng” sound, heard at the end of *sing*.
- [ɹ] is the “r” sound of English. (We can’t use [r], because in IPA [r] is a tongue-tip trill.)
- [j] is the “y” sound (the IPA symbol is based on how the “y” sound is spelled in German, Dutch, Polish, and many other languages)

A few of the symbols that aren’t letters have informal names used by linguists to refer to them orally. For example [ʃ] is “esh” (or even “snake”); [ʒ] is “ezh”; [ŋ] is “angma” or “eng”. In my own teaching I refer to [ɹ] (as it appears in English) as “English *r*”.

For vowels, it is uncommon for the IPA symbol to match the English spelling. Letter *i* in English often spells what in IPA is [aɪ] ([baɪt] *bite*), whereas the IPA sound [i] represents a sound fairly close to what English often spells as *ee* (as in [bi] *bee*). Similarly, IPA [u] is what English often spells as *oo* ([mun] *moon*), whereas letter *u* is often [ju] in IPA ([mjut] *mute*). The IPA founders went essentially by “majority rule”: the Roman vowel letters have mostly pan-European (now: pan-global) meanings, but for historical reasons English diverges greatly from this consensus.<sup>156</sup> If you know a non-English language that uses the Roman alphabet, you can probably use it to help you learn IPA. For example, the IPA symbols [i], [e], [a], [o], and [u] have meanings not far from the same letters as used in Spanish spelling.

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<sup>155</sup> Though in close detail, you can notice that the [tʃ] in *gray chip* is not really the same as the [t] + [ʃ] in *great ship*. If you want to show that a single sound is meant, you can link up the [t] and the [ʃ] with a ligature: [tʃ].

<sup>156</sup> How did this come to be? The original phonetic values of the Roman letters come from Latin, and most European languages preserve, roughly, these old phonetic values. English underwent massive phonetic changes in the decades starting around 1500 that greatly altered the phonetic values of its letters.

In addition, the Roman alphabet has very few vowel letters, so a greater number of novel symbols needed to be used for the IPA. The ones used for English are given below.

(232) *Non-Roman symbols for English vowels in IPA*

- [ɪ] is easy for native speakers but can be hard for second language speakers; it is close to [i] but not as long, and with the tongue pressing less firmly against the roof of the mouth. Try listening to pairs such as *peat, pit* ([ˈpi:t, ˈpi:t]).
- [ʊ] is to [u] as [ɪ] is to [i]. Try listening to pairs such as *kook, cook* [ˈkʊk, ˈkʊk].
- [ʌ] is similar to [ə] (“schwa”) but is longer with a lower jaw position. In addition, [ʌ] mostly occurs in stressed syllables; [ə] is always in a stressless syllable (in English). Listen to *mundane* vs. *contain*: [mʌnˈdeɪn], [kənˈteɪn].
- [ɚ] (“rhotacized schwa”) is much like [ɪ], only it acts as a vowel rather than consonant. Compare *furry* [ˈfɚi] with *free* [ˈfri].

In my own teaching, I identify vowel symbols orally as follows. [i] and [u] are “letter *i*” and “letter *u*”. [ɪ] is “small cap *i*”. [ʊ] is “small cap *u*” or “horseshoe”. [ə] is “schwa” and [ɚ] is “rhotacized<sup>157</sup> schwa”. [ɛ] is “epsilon”. [ɑ] is “script *a*”. [æ] is “*a - e* digraph”. [ɔ] is “backwards *c*” or “open *o*”.

The remaining vowels are **diphthongs**, which means a vowel that changes during its time course. IPA transcribes diphthongs by providing two symbols; one for the start, the other for the end of the vowel. Try pronouncing these diphthongs very slowly, and hearing the starting or ending points—is your [aɪ] like Spanish [a] plus English [ɪ]?<sup>158</sup> Depending on your dialect, you may also be able to hear the diphthongal character of [eɪ] and [oʊ]—saying these diphthongs instead of their simple monophthongal versions [e] and [o] is a common source of an accent when English speakers learn languages that have [e] and [o].

#### 4. Stress

Most of the information in a phonetic transcription will consist of symbols standing for individual speech sounds. However, in a language like English, it is also important to transcribe **stress**, which roughly speaking, is the amount of articulatory effort or loudness found on a syllable. Stress must be included because you can have different words that are phonetically distinguished only by their stress pattern, as in the examples given below. These illustrate the IPA diacritic for stress: [ˈ], placed just *before* the stressed syllable:

*differ*     [ˈdɪfə]

<sup>157</sup> “Rhotacized” = “rendered r-like”; after Greek *rho* “r”.

<sup>158</sup> If not: the probable cause is that the diphthongs vary greatly across different speaking rates and styles. [aɪ] is a “medium” pronunciation; “fast” would be [æe], and “slow and careful” would be [aɪ]. Probably, when you listen carefully to yourself, your speech is slow and careful. Another possibility (rather unlikely if you are a UCLA student), is that your own dialect doesn’t have an [aɪ], using (for example) the sound [a:] instead.

*defer* [dɪ'fə]

*permit* [pə'mɪt] verb: 'to allow'

*permit* ['pə-mɪt] noun: 'a kind of document giving permission'<sup>159</sup>

## 5. Transcription technique

There are various methods you can use to become a skilled phonetic transcriber.

### 5.1 The keyword method

A very useful method is the use of **keywords**, which I will illustrate with an example. Suppose you have trouble hearing the distinction between [i] and [ɪ], but you are trying to transcribe the word *mitt*. The correct transcription happens to be [mɪt]. You already know, having examined chart (230) above, that the English word *beat* has [i] and the word *bit* has [ɪ]. These can serve as keywords for the [i]/[ɪ] distinction. The dialogue below illustrates the method.

<i>Linguist:</i>	“Please say the next word on our list.”
<i>Native speaker:</i>	“[mɪt]”
<i>Linguist (can't hear it, but is coping):</i>	“Please say the word spelled <i>b - i - t</i> .”
<i>Native speaker:</i>	“[bit]”
<i>Linguist:</i>	Please say <i>b - e - a - t</i> .
<i>Native speaker:</i>	“[bit]”
<i>Linguist:</i>	“Now say the word we are working on.”
<i>Native speaker:</i>	“[mɪt]”
<i>Linguist:</i>	“Now say all three words in a row.”
<i>Native speaker:</i>	“[bit] ... [bit] ... [mɪt]”

The idea should be plain: it's easier for your ear to compare a new word to known words than it is to transcribe “out of the blue”. This holds not just for the more delicate distinctions of English but for all difficult distinctions, in any language.

When I do English phonetic dictations in class, I sometimes encourage students to raise their hand and ask me to pronounce keywords. If you want to use keywords in doing a homework, you can find them (with sound files) at this web address:

<http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/charts/english/chartsforEnglishbroadtranscription.htm>

### 5.2 Other general hints

When you're transcribing a language that you know, and which has a spelling system, it's important not to be influenced by the spelling of a word. In my experience teaching English transcription, this is a major source of errors.

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<sup>159</sup> The example works for the majority of Americans, though there are many who say [pə'mɪt] for both.

It's also sometimes a good idea to listen to a word more than once. You can do this indefinitely with a recording; with a live speaker you have to size up how patient they are.

Lip reading can be very useful, particularly for the difference between [θ] and [f] (*thin* vs. *fin*), and for vowels that have lip rounding. Lower vowels have more jaw opening.

### 5.3 Hints specific to English

The inflectional suffixes *-ed* and *-s* are spelled in a constant way, but are pronounced differently in different environments. For example, *latched* = [lætʃt], not \*[lætʃd]; *blades* = [bleɪdz], not \*[bleɪds].

The letter *s* is often ambiguous between [s] and [z]: compare *goose* [gus] with *lose* [luz].

The sequence *ng* in spelling can spell either one sound or two (for most dialects). For example, *finger* is [ˈfɪŋgə] (two sounds), but *singer* is [ˈsɪŋə] (one sound). In the less-widely-spoken dialect, spelled *ng* is [ŋg] in the middle of a word (*finger* [ˈfɪŋgə], *singer* [ˈsɪŋgə]) and [ŋ] otherwise. For what we should think about this dialect, see Chapter 3.

It is difficult to hear schwa; often people transcribe a full vowel that corresponds to the spelling. For example: *tenacious* = [təˈneɪʃəs], not \*[tɛˈneɪʃəs]; *connection* = [kəˈnekʃən], not \*[kouˈnekʃən]; *childless* = [ˈtʃaɪdləs], not \*[ˈtʃaɪdlɛs]. Schwas can be spotted because they tend to be very short and rather “indistinct” in their quality.

As noted above, the letter *u* often represents a sequence of [j]+[u]: *use* = [ˈjuz]; *fugue* = [ˈfjuɡ]; *spectacular* = [spekˈtækjʊlə] or [spekˈtækjələ].

The letter *x* can represent [ks] (*Texas* = [ˈtɛksəs]) or [gz] (*exact* = [əɡˈzækt]).

The sequence *th* can represent either [θ] (*ether* = [ˈiθə]) or [ð] (*brother* = [ˈbrʌðə]).

A note on my own teaching practice: where I have provided more than one way of transcribing the same sound, either way is acceptable. I do not require that you memorize the symbols; phonetic charts are provided for exams.

**Study Exercise #66**

Visit the following web page. It has a list of English words. When you click on a word, it will launch a sound file in .wav format, which (if your Web browser is set up properly), should play on your computer. (I recommend you use headphones in a quiet place.)

- <http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/20/sounds/English/>.

Answers below.

**Answer to Study Exercise #64**

1. [ˈpɪn]
2. [ˈtɪn]
3. [ˈkɪn]
4. [ˈbɪn]
5. [ˈdɪn]
6. [ˈgɪl]
7. [ˈtʃɪn]
8. [ˈdʒɪn]
9. [ˈfɪn]
10. [ˈθɪn]
11. [ˈsɪn]
12. [ˈʃɪn]
13. [ˈhɪm]
14. [ˈvɪm]
15. [ˈðɪs]
16. [ˈzɪp]
17. [ˈvɪzən]
18. [ˈdeɪrə]
19. [ˈmɪt]
20. [ˈnɪp]
21. [ˈsɪŋ] (many speakers say [sɪŋ] instead)
22. [ˈlɪn]
23. [ˈwɪn]
24. [ˈɪm]
25. [ˈjɪŋ] (many speakers say [jɪŋ] instead)
26. [ˈbʊt]
27. [ˈbʊk]
28. [ˈbaʊt]
29. [ˈbɪt]
30. [ˈkɑt]
31. [ˈbɪt]
32. [ˈbʊt]
33. [ˈkɑt]
34. [ˈbæt]

35. ['bɪt]
36. ['fʊt]
37. ['beɪt]
38. ['æbət]
39. ['baʊt]
40. ['bɛt]
41. ['bʌt]
42. ['bɒt]
43. ['bæt]
44. ['faðə]
45. ['baɪt]
46. ['baʊt]
47. ['kɔɪt]
48. ['bɚt]
49. ['dɪfə]
50. [dɪ'fə]
51. [pə'mɪt]
52. ['pə'mɪt] (some speakers have final stress for this word)
53. ['pɑp]
54. ['tɑt]
55. ['kɪk]
56. ['bʌb]
57. ['dæd]
58. ['gæg]
59. ['faɪf]
60. ['θɪn]
61. ['sɪs]
62. ['ʃu]
63. ['hi]
64. ['væt]
65. ['ðau]
66. ['zu]
67. ['eɪzə]
68. ['tʃəʃ]
69. ['dʒʌdʒ]

70. ['mɑm]
71. ['nʌn]
72. ['jʌŋ]
73. ['juθ]
74. ['wɪtʃ]
75. ['tɔɪ]
76. ['dʒʊnəpəʃ]
77. ['wɪʃ]
78. ['pəʒən]
79. ['θætʃə]
80. ['jæt]
81. ['kwɛstʃən]
82. ['tenθ]
83. ['ʌðə]
84. ['fæloʊ]
85. ['bɛltʃ]
86. ['mju:zɪk]
87. ['lætʃt]
88. ['bleɪdz]
89. ['fɪŋgəʃ]
90. ['sɪŋəʃ]            (some speakers have ['sɪŋgəʃ])
91. ['ju:z]
92. ['fju:ʒ]
93. [spɛk'tækjʊləʃ]
94. [spɛk'tækjələʃ]
95. ['tɛksəs]
96. [ɪg'zækt]
97. ['iθə]
98. ['bɪʌðə]
99. ['fɪt]
100. ['fɪt]
101. ['fɪət]
102. ['lʊk]
103. ['lʊk]
104. ['lʊək]

105. ['ðaɪ]
106. ['θaɪ]
107. ['ɪaɪrə]
108. ['ɪaɪrə]
109. ['kət]
110. ['kɑt]
111. ['ʔʌʔou]
112. (misnumbered, no word here)
113. (misnumbered, no word here)
114. ['ɪɔɪ]
115. ['deɪrə]
116. ['θɪn]
117. ['ðɛn] (some speakers have [ðɪn])
118. ['ʃu]
119. ['vɪʃən]
120. ['tʃəʃ]
121. ['dʒʌdʒ]
122. ['jɪɪ] (some speakers have ['jiɪ])
123. ['lɔ] (some speakers have ['lɑ] for this word)
124. ['lɑ]
125. ['kət] (some speakers have ['kɑt] for this word)
126. ['kɑt]
127. ['pəli] (some speakers have ['pɑli] for this word)
128. ['pɑli]
129. ['bɔɪ]
130. [tə'meɪrou]
131. [ə'meɪəkə] (some speakers have [ə'meɪkə] for this word)
132. [kə'neɪəkət]
133. ['bæd]
134. ['ɪaɪd]
135. ['bɔɪ]
136. ['haʊ]
137. ['tɪkəl]
138. ['bʌtɪ]

## 6. Other places to practice

If you want to get practice in learning the symbols, you might try reading passages of transcription; I have posted a couple of them at

- <http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/PracticeReadingTranscription.pdf>
- <http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/PracticeReadingTranscriptionII.pdf>

Some further practice can be obtained from an exercise I've posted for another course:

- <http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/EnglishTranscriptionPractice/>

## 7. Some toughies from English

The hardest factor in phonetic transcription is that we tend to hear best the phonetic distinctions of languages we speak. In fact, it's typically the distinctions heard in infancy and toddlerhood that are the most noticeable — experiments have shown that the neural circuitry for vowel detection, for example, is already being “tuned” to the ambient language by the age of six months.

Thus, if there are English distinctions that you didn't acquire early on, you may find them tough. I only apologize a little bit for this: linguistics training necessarily involves practice in hearing such distinctions, even if it's hard. In my own teaching I usually include some “exotic” cases from American dialects, which I hope will be equally hard for everybody!

Here are cases of distinctions that may be difficult. They are posted at the same Web page mentioned above.

<i>feet</i>	[fɪt]	
<i>fit</i>	[fɪt]	Clues: [ɪ] shorter than [i]. Spoken slowly, [ɪ] becomes [ɪə].
<i>Luke</i>	[lʌk]	
<i>look</i>	[lʊk]	Clues: [ʊ] shorter than [u]. Spoken slowly, [ʊ] becomes [ʊə].
<i>thy</i>	[ðaɪ]	
<i>die</i>	[daɪ]	Clue: sit up close and lip-read. [ð] when pronounced carefully usually has some tongue protrusion.
<i>writer</i>	[ˌwaɪrɪtə]	
<i>rider</i>	[ˌraɪdɪtə]	Clue: [aɪ] has more jaw lowering.
<i>caught</i>	[kɔt]	
<i>cot</i>	[kɒt]	Clue: [ɒ] has a fish-like lip-rounding gesture.

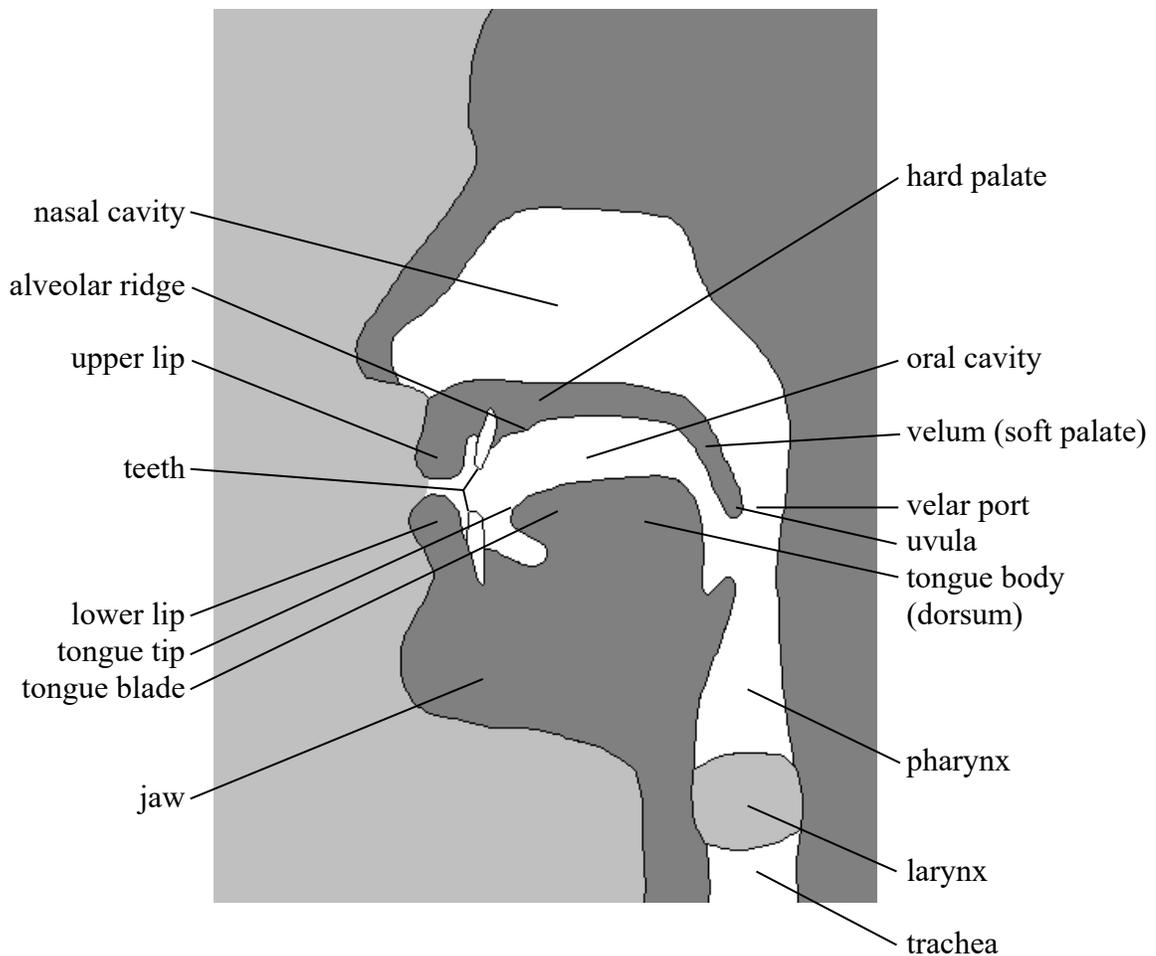
## THE PRODUCTION OF SOUNDS IN THE VOCAL TRACT

The human vocal tract can produce thousands of audibly distinct sounds. Of these, only a subset are actually used in human languages. Of this subset, some sounds are much more common than others. For example, almost every language has a [t]-like sound, while very few languages have a bilabial trill. Any one language uses only a fairly small inventory of speech sounds.

### 8. Vocal tract anatomy

To understand how sounds are made, one needs to have an idea of the location and shape of the articulatory organs. Here is a diagram; a so-called “mid-sagittal”<sup>160</sup> section:

(233) *Diagram: Midsagittal section of the vocal tract*

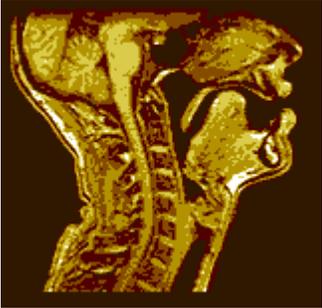


<sup>160</sup> I believe this word comes from “sagittal suture”, the arrow-shaped join between bones forming the skull, running through the middle of the head from front to back. “Section” means “diagram from cutting;” most information about human anatomy has come from dissection.

The above is a schematic diagram; the hypothetical speaker is saying something like [ʌ̃] (nasalized “uh”).

The information for images has traditionally been obtained by dissection of cadavers, or later, from X-rays. More recently, magnetic resonance imaging makes possible the safe examination of living subjects, with images like the following:

(234) *MRI images of the vocal tract (midsagittal section)*

 <p>[l]</p>	<p>American English [l]</p>
 <p>[ɹ]</p>	<p>American English [ɹ]</p>
	<p>A evidently nasalized [ɹ̃], showing more of the head and neck<sup>161</sup></p>

<sup>161</sup> First two images: from [www.linguistics.ubc.ca/isrl/Gick\\_Whalen\\_Kang](http://www.linguistics.ubc.ca/isrl/Gick_Whalen_Kang)(SPS5); research from Haskins Laboratories, New Haven, CT. Last image: <http://web.mit.edu/albright/www/>; the Web page image of Prof. Adam Albright, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### 8.1 *The parts of the vocal tract*

The three major regions of the vocal tract are the **nasal cavity**, the **oral cavity** (less pretentiously, the mouth), and the **pharynx**, which is located behind the tongue but above the larynx.

The most crucial organ of speech is the **tongue**. Bear in mind that just looking in a mirror gives you a poor idea of the shape of the human tongue, because you can only see the tongue's forward extension. In reality, the tongue is more of a lump; when at rest it is fairly round in shape except for visible flange up front. The round main section is quite mobile and flexible, and can move in all directions. Terminology for parts of the tongue are as follows: the **tip** (or **apex**), the **blade** (= the forward flange), and the **body** (the main rounded part).

We will now cover the roof of the mouth, going from front to back. The **lips** and **teeth** need no comment other than that they are both important for speech. The next important landmark, going backward, is the **alveolar ridge**. Most people can feel this ridge by placing the tongue a little further back in the mouth than the upper inside edge of the front teeth. The alveolar ridge forms a useful descriptive "boundary line" on the upper surface of the mouth.

The expanse behind the alveolar ridge is called the **palate**. The palate is divided into a hard, bony section in front called the **hard palate** and a soft fleshy section in back called the **soft palate** or **velum** (Latin for "sail"). The velum is mobile. If you know how to produce nasalized vowels (as in French or Portuguese), you can see it moving by looking in a mirror, placing your tongue as low as possible, and alternating between saying nasalized and normal vowels. The main function of the velum in speech is to control nasality. Most often, the velum is raised up to block off the nasal passage. When it is lowered, air may pass out the nose and we get a nasal sound.

The little hanging object at the tip of the velum, made famous by screaming cartoon characters, is called the **uvula**. It is used in consonant production in many languages (for example, French, Persian, and Arabic), but not in English.

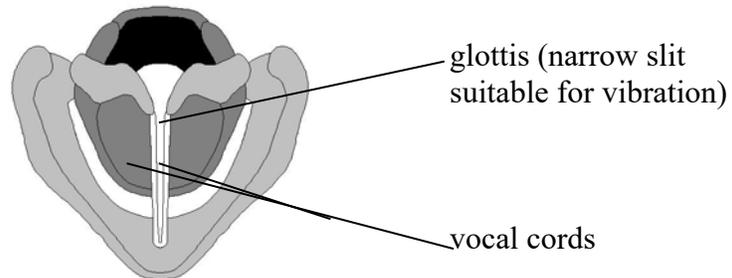
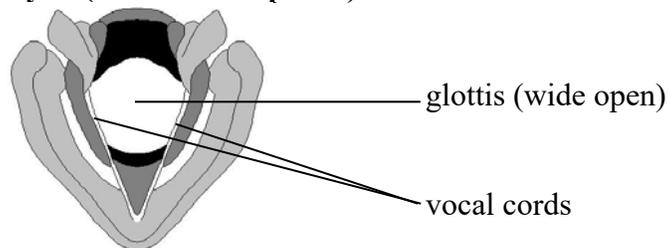
The **pharynx** is the space behind the tongue, invisible to us unless we use a mirror. This space can be made smaller by retracting the tongue body down into it.

### 8.2 *The larynx*

At the bottom of the pharynx is the **larynx**, or voice box. This is a highly complex structure of cartilage, muscle, and ligaments. The crucial elements of the larynx are the **vocal cords**.<sup>162</sup> These are not really cords, but flaps that come in from both sides. The vocal cords can close off the flow of air to varying degrees. The gap between the vocal cords is called the **glottis**.

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<sup>162</sup> Not: chords.

(235) *The larynx***Larynx with vocal cords in position to vibrate:****Open larynx (vocal cords spread):**

There are basically four things that the vocal cords can do. (1) If they are spread far apart, we get normal breathing. (2) If they are brought tightly together, the airflow is blocked. If the blockage is then quickly released, we get what is called a **glottal stop**, IPA symbol [ʔ]. This is the sound that begins each syllable of the expression “uh-oh” [ˈʔʌʔou]. (3) If the vocal cords are brought close but not touching, we get an [h]. (4) If the vocal cords are just barely touching, they vibrate, producing what is called **voicing**. Voicing accompanies most vowels and many consonants (except when we whisper), and is the most important source of sound in speech.

Numerous speech organs are actively controlled by the speaker in the production of speech. In normal speech, the following organs are active: the lips, the tongue blade, the tongue body, the velum, the jaw, the larynx (up and down), and the vocal cords. Video imaging of speech shows that these speech organs move extremely rapidly and with great precision.<sup>163</sup> Speaking is one of the most complex physical feats people can perform, yet we do it without even thinking about it.

**9. Describing consonant articulation**

To describe a consonant, one normally describes three things:

**Place of articulation.** All consonants involve a constriction somewhere in the vocal tract. To specify a consonant one must state where this constriction is made; this is the place of articulation.

<sup>163</sup> Videos are accessible on line; I suggest a search on “mri video vocal tract”.

**Manner of articulation.** This indicates the kind of constriction that is made—roughly, how narrow it is, and the acoustic result.

**Voicing**— whether the vocal cords are vibrating during the production of a consonant. A good way to detect voicing is to put your hand firmly on top of your head when you say a word. If you do this while you say “za”, you will feel buzzing all the way through. If you do this for “sa”, you will feel buzzing only after the [s] is over. So [z] is a voiced sound and [s] is voiceless.

### 9.1 Manner of articulation

We will cover six manners of articulation.

(a) In a **stop**, the airflow is momentarily blocked off completely (i.e. “stopped”), then released. The stops of English are

(Keywords:)	[p] <i>pop</i>	[t] <i>tot</i>	[k] <i>kick</i>
	[b] <i>Bob</i>	[d] <i>Dad</i>	[g] <i>gag</i>

Note that I have arranged the six stops in rows and columns, going by place of articulation and voicing.

(b) In a **fricative**, one forms a narrow constriction at the place of articulation. The air passing through the constriction makes a hissing noise. English has nine fricatives:

[f] <i>fife</i>	[θ] <i>thin</i>	[s] <i>Sis</i>	[ʃ] <i>shoe</i>	[h] <i>he</i>
[v] <i>vat</i>	[ð] <i>thou</i>	[z] <i>zoo</i>	[ʒ] <i>Asia</i>	

(c) An **affricate** is a rapid sequence of a stop and a fricative made at roughly the same place of articulation with a single gesture. Affricates can usually be considered a subclass of the stops. English has two affricates, [tʃ] (as in *church*) and [dʒ] (as in *judge*).

(d) In a **nasal** consonant, the velum is lowered, allowing air to escape out the nose. The great majority of nasals have a complete blockage within the mouth at the same time. The places of articulation for nasals are usually the same as those for stops. The nasal consonants of English are [m] (*Mom*), [n] (*none*), and [ŋ], which is the last sound of *young*.

(e) In an **approximant**, the vocal tract is relatively open, so that air flows freely and there is no frication noise. Approximants are normally divided into **lateral** and **central**. In a lateral approximant, the air flows around the sides of the tongue; [l] is a lateral. In a central approximant, air flows through a central channel. English has three central approximants:

- [j] occurs in words like *youth*
- [w] occurs in words like *witch*<sup>164</sup>
- [ɹ] occurs in words like *roar*

Approximants are often divided up in a different way: **liquids** are the “r” and “l” sounds; in English [l] and [ɹ]. **Glides** (also called “semivowels”) are central approximants like [j] and [w] that are closely similar to vowels (see below).

(f) In a **tap**, the tongue tip brushes very briefly against the roof of the mouth—too short a closure to count as a stop. The tap of English is found in words like *data* (North American dialects), and is symbolized [ɾ]. The tap is generally voiced.

## 9.2 Place of Articulation

By combining information about place of articulation with information about manner, we can arrive at complete descriptions of English consonants. I will cover the places of articulation going from the front to the back of the mouth. In reading the following refer to the midsagittal section diagram in (233) above (p. 385).

(a) **Bilabial** sounds are made by touching the upper and lower lips together. English has a voiceless bilabial stop [p], a voiced bilabial stop [b], and a (voiced) bilabial nasal [m].

Note the standard form for describing a consonant: the format is VOICING-PLACE-MANNER. In the case of nasals and approximants, which are almost always voiced, it is permissible to specify only place and manner.

(b) **Labio-dental** sounds are made by touching the lower lip to the upper teeth. English has a voiceless labio-dental fricative, [f], and a voiced one, [v]. Labio-dental stops and nasals are rare, though English speakers make them if they try to say [p], [b], or [m] while smiling.

(c) **Dental** sounds are made by touching the tongue to the upper teeth. This can be done in a number of ways. If the tongue is stuck out beyond the teeth, the sound is called an **interdental**, though we will not worry about such fine distinctions. English has a voiceless dental fricative [θ] (as in *thin*), and a voiced one [ð] (as in *then*).

(d) **Alveolar** sounds are made by touching the tip or blade of the tongue to a location just forward of the alveolar ridge. English has several alveolar consonants. There is a voiceless alveolar stop [t], a voiced alveolar stop [d], voiceless and voiced alveolar fricatives [s] and [z], an alveolar nasal [n], and an alveolar lateral liquid [l]. All these phonetic symbols correspond to English spelling.

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<sup>164</sup> A small number of American English speakers have an additional central approximant, [ɻ], which is a voiceless version of [w]. It occurs in words spelled with *wh*, like *which*.

(e) **Palato-alveolar** sounds are made by touching the blade of the tongue to a location just behind the alveolar ridge. English has a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] (as in *shoe*), a voiced palato-alveolar fricative [ʒ] (as in *vision*), a voiceless palato-alveolar affricate [tʃ], (as in *church*), and voiced palato-alveolar affricate [dʒ] (as in *judge*).

(f) **Palatal** sounds are made by moving the body of the tongue forward toward the hard palate. English has just one palatal sound, the palatal glide [j], as in *year*.

(f) **Velar** sounds are made by touching the body of the tongue to the velum. English has three velar sounds: a voiceless velar stop [k] (as in *cat* or *king*), a voiced velar stop [g] (as in *goat*), and a velar nasal [ŋ] (as in *sing*). Note that in this case English uses a sequence of two letters to spell what is phonetically a single sound.

(g) **Glottal** sounds are made by moving the vocal cords close to one another. English has a voiceless glottal fricative [h].

### 9.3 *Interpreting the consonant chart*

The consonant chart for English, given above in (230) (p. 374) can now be better understood, as it arranges the consonants of English place, manner, and voicing. The arrangement of the chart is traditional: the columns depict place, going from front to back in the vocal tract, and the rows depict manner, going roughly in increasing sonority (loudness). Take a look at the chart again, examining its rows and columns, to see how these group together sounds of similar phonetic properties.

**Study Exercise #67: Pronouncing the “gaps”**

Look at this copy of the English consonant chart. It has eight digits in it, located in cells that are blank for English but not for languages in general. Try to pronounce each of the gaps. The answer key identifies the gaps in IPA and gives languages that have them.

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	voiceless	p p <u>in</u>		<b>1</b>	t t <u>in</u>			k k <u>in</u>	
	voiced	b b <u>in</u>		<b>2</b>	d d <u>in</u>			g g <u>ill</u>	
Affricates	voiceless				<b>3</b>	tʃ ch <u>in</u>			
	voiced				<b>4</b>	dʒ g <u>in</u>			
Fricatives	voiceless	<b>5</b>	f f <u>in</u>	θ th <u>in</u>	s s <u>in</u>	ʃ sh <u>in</u>		<b>7</b>	h h <u>ymn</u>
	voiced	<b>6</b>	v v <u>im</u>	ð th <u>is</u>	z z <u>ip</u>	ʒ v <u>ision</u>		<b>8</b>	
Nasals		m m <u>itt</u>			n n <u>ip</u>			ŋ s <u>ing</u>	
Approximants	lateral				l L <u>ynn</u>				
	central	w w <u>in</u>				ɹ r <u>im</u>	j y <u>ing</u>		

## Answer to Study Exercise #67

Sound files of the author pronouncing these sounds can be listened to at [www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/Charts/CChartWithSounds/CChart.pdf](http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/103/Charts/CChartWithSounds/CChart.pdf).

1. This is a voiceless dental stop, made by putting the tongue tip in the location for [θ] and “squeezing” the constriction enough to yield a stop articulation. The IPA symbol uses a diacritic, a little subscript platform for the *t*: [t̪]. [t̪] is the normal pronunciation in Spanish and French for the sounds that are spelled with letter *t* in these languages.

2. This is a voiced dental stop; as [t̪] is to [t], so is [d̪] to [d].

3 and 4: The alveolar voiceless and voiced affricates can be pronounced by putting together a [t] and an [s] (for voiceless) and a [d] and a [z] (for voiced) and saying them rapidly as a single sound: [ts], [dz] (or, if precision is needed, [t͡s] and [d͡z]). [ts] is the sound spelled with letter *z* in German. [dz] occurs for some English speakers as a variant (allophone; see below) of the basic [z] sound after [n], in words like *lens* (IPA [lɛnd͡z]).

5 and 6: If you make a fricative instead of a stop at the bilabial location, you will get [ɸ] (voiceless) and [β] (voiced). Both occur in Ewe (Ghana); listen at to real versions at [www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter7/ewe/ewe.html](http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter7/ewe/ewe.html).

7 and 8: If you make a fricative instead of a stop at the velar location, you will get [x] (voiceless) and [ɣ] (voiced). [x] occurs in German, where is spelled *ch*, as in *Bach* [bax]. [ɣ] occurs in Spanish as the *g* sound when between vowels, as in *lago* [ˈlayo] ‘lake’.

## 10. The tap

In the chapters that follow we will need to deal with a peculiar sound of North American English, called the **tap**. I list it separately here because it is not a basic sound of the language — once we’ve gotten some phonology in place, it will emerge that tap is always derived from other sounds by phonological rules.

Tap is transcribed in IPA with the symbol [ɾ], and is found in words like *butter* [ˈbʌɾə], *city* [ˈsɪɾi], and *battle* [ˈbæɾəl].<sup>165</sup> In these words, [ɾ] is essentially a “type of *t*”, as reflected in the spelling; and indeed in the next chapter, once we can write phonological rules, we will actually derive [ɾ] from [t]. Tap is also found in words like *bidder* [ˈbɪɾə], *paddy* [ˈpæɾi], and *puddle* [ˈpʌɾəl], where it is phonologically derived from [d].

Like [d], tap is a voiced sound, but is different from a [d] in that it is very short: the tongue tip touches the alveolar ridge only for a brief instant, thus gently “tapping” the roof of the mouth.

<sup>165</sup> As they are pronounced by most North Americans. The tap is one of the really distinctive traits that sets of the North American dialects from other forms of English, which tend to use [t] (or some other sound) in the same set of words.

In fact, English tap is actually very similar to the “r sound” employed in Spanish, Italian, and many other languages. While tap is not a contrastive speech sound in North American English, it is worth including here because some of the most interesting phonology of this dialect, to be covered below, involves taps.

## 11. Describing vowels

Vowels differ from consonants in that they do not have real “places of articulation”, that is to say, points of major constriction in the vocal tract. Rather, the vocal tract as a whole acts as a resonating chamber. By modifying the shape of this chamber using movements of the tongue, jaw, and lips, one imparts different sound qualities to the basic noise made by the vocal cords.

An analogy can be made with brass instruments. The vocal cords by themselves make a rather ugly buzz, just like the mouthpiece of a trumpet does when played by itself. The buzz is given its more pleasant characteristic quality by being passed through a resonating chamber (for example, a trumpet or a vocal tract). The quality of the sound is determined by the shape of the chamber; thus vowels of English are similar to notes played by the same trumpet with different mutes placed inside.

There are three basic modifications that one can make to the shape of the vocal tract. Vowels are described by specifying the amount of each modification used.

### 11.1 Rounding

One obvious modification one can make to the shape of the vocal tract is to round the lips, thus narrowing the passage at the exit. This happens, for example, in the vowels of *boot* [u], *book* [ʊ], and *boat* [oʊ]. These are called *rounded* or simply *round* vowels. Other vowels, such as the [i] of *beat* or the [ɑ] of *cot*, are called *unrounded*. (Caution: you may speak a dialect of English that has little lip rounding. The really rounded vowels are found more easily in other languages.)

### 11.2 Height

Another modification one can make to the shape of the vocal tract is to make passage through the mouth wider or narrower. Widening is accomplished by opening the jaw and/or lowering the body of the tongue towards the bottom of the mouth. Narrowing is accomplished by raising the jaw and raising the body of the tongue.

The terminology for describing these changes is based on the height of the tongue body (without regard to whether this is due to jaw movement or tongue movement). Vowels are classified as **high**, **mid**, or **low**, depending on tongue body position. In effect, high vowels have a narrow passage for the air to pass through, and low vowels have a wide passage.

Examples of high vowels in English are [i], the vowel of *beat*, and [u], the vowel of *boot*. Example of low vowels are [ɑ], the vowel of *cot*, and [æ], the vowel of *bat*. You can feel the oral passage widening and narrowing if you pronounce a sequence of vowels that alternates between high and low, such as [i æ i æ i æ i æ].

### 11.3 Backness

The third primary way of changing the vocal tract shape is to place the body of the tongue towards the front part of the mouth or towards the back. Vowels so made are called **front** and **back** vowels.<sup>166</sup> For example, [i] (*beat*) is a high front vowel, and [u] (*boot*) is a high back vowel (which is also rounded). You can feel the tongue moving forwards and backwards if you pronounce the sequence [i u i u i u i u].

### 11.4 Vowel chart

We now have three “dimensions” for classifying vowels, each based on a particular modification of the vocal tract shape: rounding, height, and backness. The three dimensions allow us to describe vowels clearly, and also to organize them in a chart:

Note that this chart is an abstraction, since in physical reality the vowels do not line up vertically in tongue body position. In particular, the high front vowels are considerably more forward than the high back vowels, owing to the space available for tongue movement. Because of this, the chart should be interpreted as saying “relatively more front” or “relatively more high” rather than specifying actual physical tongue positions.

	Front	Back		Diphthongs
	Unrounded	Unrounded	Rounded	
Upper tense	i beat		u boot	aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ bɪte, bɔt, Coit
Lower nontense	ɪ bɪt		ʊ fʊt	
Upper tense	eɪ baɪt	ə abbɒt	oʊ boʊt	Rhotacized upper mid back unrounded: ɚ Bert
Lower nontense	ɛ bet	ʌ but	ɔ bɔʊt	
Low	æ bat	ɑ fɑtʰər	ɔ tɑʊt (dialectal)	

Vowels are usually identified with formula HEIGHT-BACKNESS-ROUNDNESS. For example, [u] is an “upper high back rounded vowel.”

### 11.5 Dialect variation

English dialects differ most noticeably in their vowel systems. Here are differences you may find in your speech:

<sup>166</sup> A more refined classification recognizes **central** vowels; neither front nor back. Here it will suffice to have just two degrees of backness.

(1) I included the lower mid back rounded vowel [ɔ] on the chart, but probably about half of Americans don't have this vowel in their speech—there is an ongoing change in American English that is wiping out this vowel. Speakers of the newer, [ɔ]-less dialect use [ɑ] in the words that speakers of the older dialect say with [ɔ]; thus:

Old dialect		New dialect <sup>167</sup>	
law	['lɔ]	law, la	['lɑ]
caught	['kɔt]	caught, cot	['kɑt]
Pauley	['pɔli]	Pauley, Polly	['pɑli]

Speakers who don't have an [ɔ] as a separate sound do usually have it as part of diphthong, as in [ɔɪ] *boy*.

(2) Many Americans have a high central rounded vowel, IPA [ɯ], instead of [u].

### 11.6 Schwa ([ə]): a reduced vowel

English has a so-called “reduced vowel”, which appears in the underlined position in the following words:

tomato	[tə'meɪrəʊ]
<u>A</u> meric <u>a</u>	[ə'meɪrəkə]
C <u>o</u> nn <u>e</u> ct <u>i</u> c <u>u</u> t	[kə'neɪkət]

This vowel varies in its quality and is quite short, so it is hard to transcribe. We will simplify things by always transcribing the reduced vowel as [ə] (the vowel called “schwa”). In transcribing, if you hear a very short, indistinct “blurry” vowel, transcribe it as schwa.

### 11.7 The rhotacized vowel [ɚ]

[ɚ], the vowel of *bird*, is rather like the schwa, except that the tongue blade is curved upward in the manner of an [ɹ] (see images above). This upward curvature is called **rhotacization**; thus [ɚ] is classified as a rhotacized upper mid central unrounded vowel. Its name “rhotacized schwa” fits its visual form.

### 11.8 Glide-vowel connections

As a “semivowel”, a glide is a consonant that is articulated in the same manner as a vowel. Glides can be described from the viewpoint of vowels as well as consonants. Thus, [j] is considered a central palatal approximant; but from the viewpoint of semivowels it is the partner of

<sup>167</sup> These labels should be interpreted with caution: some speakers of the “old” dialect are three years old, some speakers of the “new” dialect are 100. Language change happens fairly slowly.

[i]—since its position is upper high and front. Likewise, [w] is the partner (articulated in the same place as) [u], and the alveolar central approximant [ɹ] also has the vowel partner [ə̃].

### 11.9 Diphthongs

As noted above, a *diphthong* (note the spelling) is a vowel (that is, a single sound) during which the articulators are in motion. A common way to represent diphthongs in IPA is to give a sequence of vowel symbols, one representing the starting point and the other the ending point. English has numerous diphthongs. The three most obvious ones are [aɪ], which appears in *ride*; [ɔɪ], which appears in *boy*; and [aʊ], which appears in *how*. The diphthong [aʊ] is pronounced [æʊ] by many speakers. Less obvious diphthongs (because the articulators don't move as far) are [eɪ], as in *bay*, and [oʊ], as in *so*.

### 11.10 Syllabic consonants

English also has what are called “syllabic consonants”. These are sounds that are articulated like consonants, but form the nucleus of a syllable as if they were vowels. Syllabic consonants are transcribed by putting a [̩] underneath the symbol for the appropriate consonant. The following transcriptions illustrate this:

tickle    [ˈtɪk̩l̩]  
 button    [ˈbʌt̩n̩]

It's possible to think of the rhotacized schwa, [ə̃], in a different way: as [ɹ̩]. These quite different symbols depict essentially the same sound from different points of view. [ɹ̩] is the consonant [ɹ], rendered syllabic, whereas [ə̃] is a schwa vowel [ə] with added tongue retroflexion.

## FEATURES

### 12. Features

We will shortly shift from phonetics to phonology, which studies the legal arrangements of speech sounds (essentially, phonological grammaticality) as well as the changes of sounds as they appear in context. This involves writing rules and constraints, and to do this, it will be essential to have a system of features, just as we did for inflectional morphology in Chapter 2. The features of phonology are phonetic in character. For example, in informal terms, the features of [d] are that it is a stop, that it is alveolar, that it is voiceless, and further, that it is *not* round, *not* nasal and so on. When we have specified enough features for a particular sound, then we have complete and explicit description, properly distinguishing it from any other sound. This makes it possible to write explicit rules and constraints.

In phonology, features are generally given a more compact notation than what we used for morphological features: a plus sign, placed *before* the feature name, means that a segment has the relevant property; minus means that it lacks it. Thus [i] is said to be [+high, +tense, –round,

–nasal, –back]. If you wanted to, you could read this as [High:Plus, Tense:Plus, Round:Minus, Nasal:Minus, Back:Minus], but in practice no one actually expresses phonological features in this way.

As with inflectional features, phonological features normally have brackets placed around the feature names. But more often than not, the features are arranged in a column rather than a list:

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{high} \\ +\text{tense} \\ -\text{round} \\ -\text{nasal} \\ -\text{back} \end{array} \right]$$

This makes it easier to string them together and express whole morphemes and words, should be necessary, in features. The notation given above is often called a **feature matrix** (plural: **matrices**).

### 13. A feature set

In this text we will use the following features for phonology; each should be assumed to take the values plus or minus:

#### (236) *A phonological feature set*

[syllabic]	[high]	[stop]	[bilabial]
[voiced]	[low]	[affricate]	[labiodental]
[nasal]	[back]	[fricative]	[dental]
	[round]	[liquid]	[alveolar]
	[tense]	[glide]	[palato-alveolar]
	[stressed]		[palatal]
		[aspirated]	[velar]
		[lateral]	[glottal]

Here is some discussion of the individual features:

**[syllabic]**, roughly, distinguishes vowels from consonants; the vowels are [+syllabic], the consonants [–syllabic]. In the unusual case of syllable consonants (like [l̩] and [ŋ̩]; see §11.10 above), the value is taken to be [+syllabic].

**[tense]** is a feature of vowels, corresponding to what is sometimes taught in school as “long”. The vowels [i], [ε], [æ] [ʌ], [u] are [–tense]; the others are [+tense]. The lower high, lower mid, and low vowels are [–tense], the others [+tense]. The distinction may seem arbitrary, but is useful for phonology — consider, for instance, that it is precisely the [–tense] vowels that may not occur before another vowel, or at the end of a word.

To distinguish the three basic vowel height categories (high, mid, and low), we only need two features, not three: high vowels are [+high, –low]; low vowels are [–high, +low]; and mid vowels

are [-high, -low]. (A vowel that was [+high, +low] would be a articulatory impossibility; you can't put the tongue in both high and low positions at once.)

Other than the above, the features are simply restatements of the traditional phonetic terminology already covered above.

In my own teaching I ask that students understand the meaning of the features but not memorize them; exams include feature charts where needed. On the other hand, the more you have the features in your head, the easier it becomes to navigate phonology.

## 14. Feature charts

Here are the features employed in this book, with the sounds of English defined according to the features.

Notes:

- [aspirated]: for stops, this means “accompanied by a little puff of breath on release.” In English, initial [ptk] are aspirated: *pin* [p<sup>h</sup>ɪn], *tin* [t<sup>h</sup>ɪn], *kin* [k<sup>h</sup>ɪn].
- [stressed]: This is treated as a feature of vowels; vowels can be either stressed or stressless. The value is not given in the chart, but (for example) when you see stressless [i] (as in ['hæpi] *happy*) you should assume [-stress] and when you see stressed [i] (as in ['divə] *diva*) you should assume [+stress]. The exceptions are: assume that schwa ([ə]) is always [-stress] and caret ([ʌ]) is always [+stress].
- When a blank appears in the chart, it means that the feature is not essential to the definition of the sound. For example, there are no values under [p] for [high], [low], [back], [round], or [tense]. The actual position of the tongue and lips for [p] will vary depending on the context. This practice in feature theory is sometimes called “underspecification”.
- The major diphthongs [aɪ aʊ ɔɪ] would be treated as two-vowel sequences, so they don't appear in the chart. [eɪ] and [oʊ] are close enough to [e] and [o] that we can approximate them as [e] and [o] here.



**b. Vowels**

	Manner of articulation features						Laryngeal features	Features mostly for vowels								Place of articulation features							
	[syllabic]	[stop]	[affricate]	[fricative]	[liquid]	[glide]	[voiced]	[nasal]	[high]	[low]	[back]	[round]	[tense]	[stressed]	[bilabial]	[labiodental]	[dental]	[alveolar]	[palato-alveolar]	[palatal]	[velar]	[glottal]	[lateral]
i	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ɪ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
eɪ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ɛ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
æ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
u	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ʊ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
oʊ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ɔ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ʌ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ə	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ɚ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
ɑ	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*14.1 Description of sounds using their features*

As already noted, the features allow us to describe a segment phonetically using the notation of a feature matrix. For example, a totally- feature matrix for the vowel [i] would be as in (238):

(238) *A fully-specified feature matrix for [i]*

+syllabic
-stop
-affricate
-fricative
-liquid
-glide
+voiced
-aspirated
-nasal
+high
-low
-back
-round
+tense
-bilabial
-labiodental
-dental
-alveolar
-palato-alveolar
-palatal
-velar
-glottal
-lateral

I obtained this, in essence, by taking the row of chart (236) for [i] and turning it on its side.

The matrix in (238) is dismaying long, and it is seldom that one will ever see a matrix this big in discussions of phonology.<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless, it might appear, for instance, in the files created by a computer program meant to apply phonological rules.

In actual practice, we will work mainly with *partially-specified* feature matrices. Suppose in particular that we want to consider [i] specifically as a sound of English. Here, it would make sense to give only the features necessary to distinguish it from all the other English sounds. In these terms, [i] is specified as in (239):

(239) *An English-specific, partly-specified feature matrix for [i]*

-back
+high
+tense

---

<sup>168</sup> It is long partly because, to save time, we are using rather primitive features that directly reflect the IPA. It's possible to produce a more streamlined system.

You can establish the content of partly-specified feature matrix by examining the full matrix (obtainable from the rows of (237)) and taking away features one by one where they are not needed to distinguish the sound from any other sound in the same language. In the above example, [-low] is not needed, since no high vowel can be low. [-round] is not needed, since English no vowel can be both front and rounded vowels. [-nasal] is not needed, since nasality is not a distinctive property of English vowels.

**Study Exercise #68**

Using the features above, describe the sounds [tʃ] and [n] in the same way that [i] was described, that is, enough to distinguish them from other sounds of English.

## Answer to Study Exercise #66

I believe the shortest possible descriptions are as follows.

[tʃ]:  $\begin{bmatrix} -\text{voiced} \\ +\text{affricate} \end{bmatrix}$

[−voiced] is needed to distinguish [tʃ] from [dʒ]. [+affricate] is obviously needed since there are many other voiced sounds in English (but only two affricates).

[n]:  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{nasal} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix}$

[+nasal] is needed since [t, d, s, z] are also [+alveolar]. [+alveolar] is needed because [m, ŋ] are also [+nasal].

Feature notation also allows us to refer to whole **classes** of sounds at a time. This is similar to the use of features in inflectional morphology, where they permit use to refer to classes of inflected forms. For example, the expression [+voiced, +alveolar] would pick out the segments [d, z, n, ɹ, r, l] if we were dealing with English. Similarly, the expression [+syllabic, +high] picks out the vowels [i, ɪ, u, ʊ] from the set of all English sounds. The expression [+syllabic], with just feature, picks out the set of all vowels. This is one of the essential purposes of a phonetic feature system, since in phonology it is quite typically for whole groups of sounds to behave alike, based on their shared phonetic properties. This is really no different from we made of features in inflectional rules. For example, [Tense:past] might designate a whole set of possible morphosyntactic representations, which might differ from each other, for example, in person and number, but all of which are equally deserving to receive (for example) a past tense suffix when inflection is derived. Any representation that is designated by the expression [Tense:past], whatever its features for person and number, would be eligible for attachment of this suffix.

### 14.2 *The role of features in language: preview of phonology*

Often, when we put morphemes together into words (Chapter 2) or put words together into sentences (Chapters 4-6), the resulting sequences get pronounced in a way that is not the “sum of their parts”. Rather, there are phonological changes that adjust the basic sequences in some way.

Here is a simple example. The distinguished UCLA linguist Russell Schuh was known to his colleagues as “Russ Schuh”. Prof. Schuh once told me that he had become used to hearing his name pronounced as [ɹʌʃʃu], as if he were “Rush Schuh”. The crucial data are:<sup>169</sup>

<sup>169</sup> I will leave off the stress marks for simplicity.

<i>Russ</i>	[ɪʌs]
<i>Schuh</i>	[ʃu]
<i>Russ Schuh</i>	[ɪʌʃu]

Similarly English speakers say *miss* [mɪs], *Sheila* [ʃɪlə], but *miss Sheila* [mɪʃʃɪlə]; *nice* [naɪs], *shadow* [ʃædəʊ], but [naɪʃʃædəʊ], and so on. The substitution is to replace [s] by [ʃ] when another [ʃ] follows, resulting in phonetic double [ʃʃ].<sup>170</sup>

[z] is similar to [s] (its voiced partner) and it undergoes a parallel process, becoming [ʒ], the voiced partner of [ʃ].

<i>use</i>	[juz]
<i>Schuh's book</i>	[ʃuz bʊk]
<i>use Schuh's book</i>	[juʒ ʃuz bʊk]

We can think of [ʃ] as the “trigger” of this process; it causes the [s] to become [ʃ] and the [z] to become [ʒ]. With this in mind, we might ask if [ʒ], the voiced partner of [ʃ], can likewise act as a trigger for the change. This is hard to check, since words in English cannot begin with [ʒ]. But pushing things a bit, we can try some Russian loanwords:

<i>Russ</i>	[ɪʌs]
<i>Zhirinovsky</i>	[ʒɪrənɒfski]
<i>Russ Zhirinovsky</i>	[ɪʌʃ ʒɪrənɒfski]

<i>use</i>	[juz]
<i>Zhivago's book</i>	[ʒɪvəɡouz bʊk]
<i>use Zhivago's book</i>	[juʒ ʒɪvəɡouz bʊk]

So it looks like [ʒ] is indeed a possible trigger. Summing up, we want a rule like this:

### Alveolar Fricative Palatalization<sup>171</sup>

$$\begin{Bmatrix} s \\ z \end{Bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} ʃ \\ ʒ \end{Bmatrix} \text{ when } \begin{Bmatrix} ʃ \\ ʒ \end{Bmatrix} \text{ immediately follows.}$$

We have two **sets** of sounds here, {s, z} and {ʃ, ʒ}. These sets are hardly arbitrary; they have a basis in the phonetic properties of these sounds. Thus, the phonological features become relevant.

The set {s, z} consists of all and only the alveolar fricatives. The notation here:

$$\begin{Bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{Bmatrix}$$

<sup>170</sup> If you wonder what a *single* [ʃ] sounds like, try the sentence *Rush oodles of food to the meeting room*. It begins [ɪʌʃ u...], with a single [ʃ], which is simply the final [ʃ] of *rush*.

<sup>171</sup> “Palatalization” is a common name for any rule that shifts sounds into the (roughly) palatal region.

means “all and only the sounds (of the language under study) that are [+fricative] and [+alveolar]”.

Moreover, it is sensible to let rules alter the value of individual features. We can do this for Alveolar Fricative Palatalization by stating it formally as follows:

**Alveolar Fricative Palatalization (restated with features)**

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} -\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \text{ when } \begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \text{ immediately follows.}$$

The general conception here is that phonological rules do not apply to arbitrary lists of sounds, but to groups of sounds defined setting the values of some group of phonetic features. Indeed, a term often used in this context is the following:

A **natural class** is the complete set of sounds in some language that share the values for one or more features.

Thus, Alveolar Fricative Palatalization applies to the English natural class of alveolar fricatives, denoted  $\{s, z\}$  or  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix}$ .

There is second role that the features play in phonological rules: the **change** made by a rule is usually not some massive change of sound, but merely a change in some small number of the features. Alveolar Fricative Palatalization only changes the values of [alveolar] and [palato-alveolar].

A key principle for formulating phonological rules is that *any feature not mentioned in a rule is assumed to stay the same*. So, for instance, if we start out with [s], which is [–voice], and apply Alveolar Fricative Palatalization, we end up with [ʃ], which is likewise [–voice]. If we start out with [z], which is [+voice], and apply the rule, we end up with [ʒ], which is likewise [+voice]. This is what permits us to describe symmetrical changes such as that of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization.

For now, what is important as an analytic skill is to be able to use the features to identify natural classes of sounds, and to execute parallel changes when they occur in a rule.

The precise use of features can be tricky; and I suggest the use of appropriate software. The program “Pheatures Spreadsheet” by Floris van Vugt enables precise calculations and can be obtained (in a version using the features presented here) from the author’s website at <https://linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/20/index.htm>. All feature calculations in this text have been checked using this software.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Indeed, the process of checking led me to spot many errors and omissions, and I suspect that these may occur widely in published texts and scholarly articles that have not been checked in this way.

**Study Exercise #69**

Suppose the following sets appear on the left side of the arrow or in the context of a phonological rule of English. What features would you use to characterize the set? (Or, to put it differently, what features define the natural class?)

- a. [u,ɪ] b. [i,ɪ,eɪ,ɛ,æ] c. [v, ð, z, ʒ] d. [w, u, ʊ, ou, ɔ] e. [m, n, ŋ]  
f. [l] g. [p, t, k, tʃ, f, θ, s, ʃ, h] h. [θ, ð]

Try to use the minimum number of features needed. Use the feature charts given in (237) on p. 400 above.

**Answer to Study Exercise #67**

a. [u, i]	[+high +tense]
b. [i, ɪ, eɪ, ε, æ]	[-back, +syllabic]
c. [v, ð, z, ʒ]	[+voiced +fricative]
d. [w, u, ʊ, ou, ɔ]	[+round]
e. [m, n, ŋ]	[+nasal]
f. [l]	[+lateral]
g. [p, t, k, tʃ, f, θ, s, ʃ, h]	[-voice]
h. [θ, ð]	[+dental]

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**Study Exercise #70**

Same instructions as previous exercise.

- [d, n, z, l, r]
- [l]
- [w]
- [h]
- [æ, a, ɔ]
- [eɪ, ε, ou, ʌ, ə, ø]
- [ε, ʌ, ə, ø]
- [ε, ʌ, ə]
- [æ, ɪ, ʊ, eɪ, ε, ou, ə, ʌ, ɔ, ø, a, i, u, b, d, g, dʒ, v, ð, z, ʒ, m, n, ŋ, l, ɹ, j, w]
- [f, θ, s, ʃ, h]

**Answers to Study Exercise #68**

- a. [+voice, +alveolar]
  - b. [+lateral]
  - c. In the features used here, there are many answers: [+round, +velar], [+back, +velar], [+glide, +velar], [+glide, -palatal], [+glide, +round], [+glide, +back], [-syllabic, +round], [-syllabic, +back]
  - d. [+glottal] or [+aspirated]
  - e. [+low]
  - f. [-high, -low]
  - g. [-tense, -high]
  - h. [-tense, -high, -palatoalveolar]
  - i. [+voice]
  - j. [-voice, +fricative]
- 

**Study Exercise #71**

In this exercise, you need to specify not just a class of sounds, but the whole rule. As before, assume that the rules are in English, and use the feature charts given in (237) on p. 400 above. You should use as few features as you can, but make sure you specify the change of the rule in full (give all changing features).

- a. t, d become tʃ, dʒ before j, w.
- b. i, ɪ become u, ʊ after w.
- c. tʃ, dʒ become ʃ, ʒ after a vowel

### Answers to Study Exercise #69

- a.  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{stop} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{affricate} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \\ -\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \text{ before } [+ \text{glide}]$
- b.  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{high} \\ +\text{syllabic} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{back} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] \text{ after } \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{glide} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right]$ <sup>173</sup>
- c.  $[+\text{affricate}] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{fricative} \\ -\text{affricate} \end{array} \right] \text{ after } [+ \text{syllabic}]$
- 

### For further reading

A highly recommended textbook is *A Course in Phonetics*, written by an eminent phonetician, the late Peter Ladefoged. Ladefoged prepared a website, still posted at UCLA, that relates to his text and can be used for studying phonetics: [www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/contents.html](http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/contents.html).

The web site of the International Phonetic Association has much useful material on descriptive phonetics, particularly its descriptions of particular languages:

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<sup>173</sup> Instead of  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{glide} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right]$  you could use variety of other combinations, such as  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right]$ .

## Chapter 11. Phonology I: Phonological Rules and Phonemic Analysis

### 1. Phonology

Phonetics studies speech sounds as physical events; whereas phonology studies the (mostly unconscious) rules that govern the use of sounds in language. That is, phonology studies the “grammar of sound.” For instance, the rule of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization, treated at the end of the previous chapter, would count as part of this grammar.

### 2. What is the content of phonology?

Phonologists study, more or less, four aspects of sound patterning.

First, they study how sounds **change in context**. Alveolar Fricative Palatalization describes how the basic sounds [s] and [z] vary when they occur just before a [ʃ] or [ʒ]. This change of sounds by context is often called **alternation** and is discussed further below.

Second, phonologists study the principle of **legal sequencing of speech sounds** — essentially, phonological grammaticality. To give an example, it is “phonologically legal” for English words to begin [bl] (and plenty of them do: *blend*, *blood*, *black*, *bliss*, and so on). But it is phonologically impossible for English words to begin with \*[bn]: a word like *bnick* [bnɪk] is judged by English speakers to be aberrant; and English speakers often have great trouble even in saying it (they tend to “repair” the bad sequence by putting in a schwa: [bənɪk]). The study of legal sound sequencing is often called **phonotactics** and, in analysis, is usually done by means of setting up a system of constraints, which use the phonological features just like the rules do.

Third, phonologists study how the realization in sounds is **related to other components of the grammar**. Here is a simple example. In the variety of American English I speak, the word *bonus* (similarly *onus*, *phonograph*, *persona*), the sequence [oʊ n ə] has a nasalized [õ] and a very short [n] (in IPA it would be transcribed [ɾ̥]). But in *slowness* or *lowness* the [oʊ] is not nasalized, and the [n] is an ordinary regular-length [n]. Here is the full comparison:

<i>bonus</i>	[ˈbõðr̥əs]	<i>slowness</i>	[ˈslounəs]
<i>onus</i>	[ˈõðr̥əs]	<i>lowness</i>	[ˈloʊnəs]
<i>phonograph</i>	[ˈfõðr̥ægɹæf]		
<i>persona</i>	[pəˈsõðr̥ə]		

These differences evidently have to do with the fact that *slowness* and *lowness* are derived by a word-formation rule, namely the **-ness Rule** seen in (64) in Chapter 2 ([ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> → [[ X ]<sub>Adj</sub> ness ]<sub>Noun</sub>). Quite often, the syntactic or morphological source of an utterance will have some kind of effect on its phonology.

Lastly, phonologists are interested in the **contextual variation** observed for most speech sounds. They attempt to discover this variation and analyse it in the usual manner of linguistics with a set of formalized rules and representations. We will cover this topic starting in section 6 below.

### 3. Formalization of phonological rules

The formalization of phonology quickly gets us into really massive representations, and the expression of rules and derivations must proceed with care. In this section, I will give a pretty careful version of formalization; once we have it in hand, we can proceed more casually (and with less effort).

The rule we will formalize and deploy is Alveolar Fricative Palatalization, already given in the previous chapter.

#### Alveolar Fricative Palatalization

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} -\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \text{ when } \begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \text{ immediately follows.}$$

Recall that it derives [ɪʌʃʃu] *Russ Schuh* from [ɪʌs] plus [ʃu]. It similarly applies to words ending in [z], as in *use Schuh's book* [juʒʃuz buk]; and it can be triggered not just by [ʃ] but also by [ʒ], as in the contrived example *Russ Zhirinovsky* [ɪʌʃʒɪrənɔfski].

At this point we can aim for a higher level of precision, and the first task is to develop a notation for phonological contexts. We will use the slash / to mean / \_\_\_\_\_ means “in the environment, in the context”. We will also use underscores, \_\_\_\_, to mean “imagine that the sound targeted by the rule occurs here.” So now:

/ \_\_\_\_ X      means “before X”

Similarly:

/ X \_\_\_\_      means “after X”

/ X \_\_\_\_ Y    means “between X and Y, in that order”

Alveolar Fricative Palatalization now can be stated like this:

(240) **Alveolar Fricative Palatalization** (formalized)

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} -\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{bmatrix} / \text{---} \begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{bmatrix}$$

In general, many phonological rules can be formalized with the scheme

$$A \rightarrow B / C \text{ --- } D$$

where A, B, C, and D are partially specified feature matrices. C, or D, are often not present (for instance, Alveolar Fricative Palatalization has no C).

### 3.1 How features are treated in phonological rule application

To formalize further, it will be helpful to be precise about the role of features and how they function in phonological rules.

#### 3.1.1 Left side of the arrow

A matrix of features, such as  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix}$ , whenever it appears on the left side of the arrow has very specific meaning: it designates *any sound that possesses all of the feature values indicated*. So, for English,  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix}$  designates the set { s, z }. This is because [s] and [z] are all and only the sounds that are [+fricative] and [+alveolar] in English.

Note that this is an English-particular fact. If we were using the feature matrix  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{bmatrix}$  for the analysis of Korean, we would have to bear in mind that Korean actually has three alveolar fricatives, { s, z, s<sup>h</sup> }, where [s<sup>h</sup>] is the IPA symbol for an aspirated s, with a strong puff of breath that distinguishes it from regular [s].<sup>174</sup> So, feature matrices can be taken to have both a general meaning — the set of properties they designate — and a meaning specific to the language under analysis — the set of sounds that the language has that are specified by these properties.

#### 3.1.2 Right side of the arrow

On the *right* side of the arrow in a rule, a feature matrix actually means something quite different. It does not designate a set of sounds, but rather is treated as an *instruction to change* every feature value of the input segment in the way specified in the matrix. I think it fair to say that the features on the right side of an arrow aren't really a matrix at all, even though they are notated that way. They are simply a list of required changes.

A point that may seem obvious here, but will still be important to keep in mind, is: the theory assumes that any feature *not* specified in a rule as needing to be changed is *left the same*; no changes unless the rule says so. We will see an example of this shortly.

#### 3.1.3 Rule environment

Lastly, in the *environment* of a rule (after the slash), a matrix is, once again, a real feature matrix. Just like matrices on the left side of the arrow, it stands for the set of sounds in the language that bear all the features listed.

### 3.2 Formalized example of phonological rule application

Consider the consequences of these assumptions for applying Alveolar Fricative Palatalization to the sound /s/. For just once, we will perform the rule application in its full, formalized version.

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<sup>174</sup> If you know Korean, here is the relevant background: [s] is spelled as  $\text{ㅅ}$ . [s<sup>h</sup>] is spelled as  $\text{ㅅ}$ . [z] in Korean is the usual pronunciation of  $\text{ㅆ}$  when surrounded by voiced sounds (it is an allophone; see below).

Recall that the name *Russ Schuh* is basically [ɪʌs] + [ʃu]. Looking at the feature chart under (237), we can translate each symbol into a feature matrix, producing five matrices in a row.

(241) *Russ Schuh* ([ɪʌs] + [ʃu]) in features

-syllabic	+syllabic	-syllabic	-syllabic	+syllabic
-stop	-stop	-stop	-stop	-stop
-affricate	-affricate	-affricate	-affricate	-affricate
-fricative	-fricative	<b>+fricative</b>	<b>+fricative</b>	-fricative
+liquid	-liquid	-liquid	-liquid	-liquid
-glide	-glide	-glide	-glide	-glide
+voiced	+voiced	-voiced	-voiced	+voiced
-nasal	-nasal	-nasal	-nasal	-nasal
0high	-high	0high	0high	+high
0low	-low	0low	0low	-low
0back	+back	0back	0back	+back
-round	-round	-round	-round	+round
0tense	-tense	0tense	0tense	+tense
-bilabial	-bilabial	-bilabial	-bilabial	-bilabial
-labiodental	-labiodental	-labiodental	-labiodental	-labiodental
-dental	-dental	-dental	-dental	-dental
-alveolar	-alveolar	<b>+alveolar</b>	-alveolar	-alveolar
+palato-alveolar	-palato-alveolar	-palato-alveolar	<b>+palato-alveolar</b>	-palato-alveolar
-palatal	-palatal	-palatal	-palatal	-palatal
-velar	-velar	-velar	-velar	-velar
-glottal	-glottal	-glottal	-glottal	-glottal
-lateral	-lateral	-lateral	-lateral	-lateral
ɪ	ʌ	s	ʃ	u

The zeros seen in some instances of [high], [low], and [back] indicate that these segments have no value for these features.

I repeat below the formalized statement of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization.

#### Alveolar Fricative Palatalization (formalized)

$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{c} -\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right] / \text{---} \left[ \begin{array}{c} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right]$$

A rule can be imagined as a little machine that scans across the input, seeking sequences that are eligible to be altered by the rule. Alveolar Fricative Palatalization affects only those sounds that are  $\left[ \begin{array}{c} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right]$ , and in applying the rule, one seeks sound that fit this description. If you look at the feature matrix for [ɪʌs] + [ʃu] in (241), you will see that it does indeed possess these two feature values. Moreover, Alveolar Fricative Palatalization also requires that, for it to apply, the

following sound must possess the features  $\left[ \begin{matrix} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{matrix} \right]$ . Inspecting (241), you can see that this is likewise so. Lastly, the rule states that if these two conditions are met, then features of the target segment (left side of arrow) must be changed to  $[-\text{alveolar}]$  and  $[\text{+palato-alveolar}]$ . This is shown happening in (242).

(242) *Changing Russ Schuh*  $[\text{I}\Lambda\text{s}] + [\text{ʃu}]$  to  $[\text{I}\Lambda\text{ʃ}] + [\text{ʃu}]$  by *Alveolar Fricative Palatalization*

-syllabic -stop -affricate -fricative +liquid -glide +voiced -nasal 0high 0low 0back -round 0tense -bilabial -labiodental -dental -alveolar +palato-alveolar -palatal -velar -glottal -lateral	+syllabic -stop -affricate -fricative -liquid -glide +voiced -nasal -high -low +back -round -tense -bilabial -labiodental -dental -alveolar -palato-alveolar -palatal -velar -glottal -lateral	-syllabic -stop -affricate +fricative -liquid -glide -voiced -nasal 0high 0low 0back -round 0tense -bilabial -labiodental -dental -alveolar +palato-alveolar -palatal -velar -glottal -lateral	-syllabic -stop -affricate +fricative -liquid -glide -voiced -nasal 0high 0low 0back -round 0tense -bilabial -labiodental -dental -alveolar +palato-alveolar -palatal -velar -glottal -lateral	+syllabic -stop -affricate -fricative -liquid -glide +voiced -nasal +high -low +back +round +tense -bilabial -labiodental -dental -alveolar -palato-alveolar -palatal -velar -glottal -lateral
I	Λ	ʃ	ʃ	u

The full representation (242) is in fact just  $[\text{I}\Lambda\text{ʃu}]$  expressed in feature notation (as I have aligned it under the feature matrices), so the rule does indeed derive the correct output.

As already noted, any features not changed by the rule are left unchanged. Thus,  $[\text{s}]$  starts out as  $[\text{+fricative}]$ , and, after it is changed to  $[\text{ʃ}]$ , it is still  $[\text{+fricative}]$ , and similarly with all the other features not mentioned in the rule.

The derivation just given is, I should confess, extraordinary in being complete; I have put every feature in and thus been completely explicit about how the rule applies. In actual practice, linguists are reluctant to expend this much effort (or use up this much paper), and they leave the irrelevant features out for convenience. However, in general even when this is done, it is tacitly assumed that the “real” representations are detailed, more or less in the way given here; and that shorter versions are being used just as convenient abbreviations. In contrast, when a phonology is programmed into a computer, as has been repeatedly done, there is no problem with including all the features and being completely explicit.

Recall from above that the rule of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization is more general than just  $s \rightarrow \text{ʃ} / \_\_\_ \text{ʃ}$ . It also applies to [z], converting it in parallel fashion to the palato-alveolar counterpart of [z], namely [ʒ], as in *use Schuh's book* [juʒ ʃuz bʊk]. The features that change in making [s] into [ʃ] are the same features that change in making [z] into [ʒ]; and likewise the rule can apply in unusual cases (like *Russ Zhirinovsky*). The rule applies to all of these cases correctly, capturing the right generalization by use of features.

It is worth noting that the Alveolar Fricative Palatalization rule says *nothing* about the feature [voice], even though [voice] is the feature that distinguishes [s] from [z], and [ʃ] from [ʒ]. Under the theory, it is a *good thing* that voice is not mentioned, because it is precisely by not mentioning it that we can capture the parallel changes of  $s \rightarrow \text{ʃ}$ ,  $z \rightarrow \text{ʒ}$ .

The use of features in Alveolar Fricative Palatalization shows a classical set of properties, seen over and over in phonology. The rule applies to not one single sound but a set of sounds, {s, z}, which is definable by setting values for just two of the features. The right-side context of the rule is likewise defined not by one single sound but by two, {ʃ, ʒ}, again definable using the features. The change made by the rule is a parallel change ( $s \rightarrow \text{ʃ}$ ,  $z \rightarrow \text{ʒ}$ ), which can be stated in unitary fashion by mentioning in the rule only those features that have to change, and omitting the others.

### 3.3 More practice in formulating rules with features

In this textbook, the philosophy for use of features is: make the rule as terse as it can be while still deriving the correct output. This was in fact done with the formalization of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization above. Every feature included in the rule is necessary, in the sense that the rule would derive wrong results if you left it out. No redundant features are included. This is part of the scholarly ethos of linguistics: linguists aim for maximally concise, yet accurate, analyses.<sup>175</sup>

#### Study Exercise #72

Here is Alveolar Fricative Palatalization again, but with all six of its features numbered.

#### Alveolar Fricative Palatalization

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} 1+\text{fricative} \\ 2+\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} 3-\text{alveolar} \\ 4+\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right] / \_\_\_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} 5+\text{fricative} \\ 6+\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right]$$

For each feature, state in words what goes wrong if it is omitted. If possible, give an example of a bad result derived.

<sup>175</sup> In fact, there is a more serious reason to be concise: a concise rule is more general and makes broader predictions. For instance, our rule of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization predicts that if English were ever to borrow a new sound [s<sup>h</sup>] (say, from Korean), then [s<sup>h</sup>] would likewise turn into [ʃ<sup>h</sup>] before [ʃ] or [ʒ]. It's good for the rule to make testable predictions of this kind.

### Answer to Study Exercise 72

1. The rule would apply not just to [s] and [z] but to all alveolars, including the stops [t] and [d] as well as [n] and [l]. These would all be turned into palato-alveolar sounds that do not exist in English. (Indeed, palato-alveolar stops, nasals, and laterals are rare and can only be transcribed in IPA by using special diacritics.)

2. Without the feature [+alveolar], the rule would wrongly convert the non-alveolar fricatives [θ] and [f] to [ʃ], and also [ð] and [v] into [ʒ]. Example: *with Schuh* [wɪθ ʃu] → \*[wɪʃ ʃu].

3. If you change a sound to [-alveolar] without providing any new place of articulation, you get a combination of features that designates no actual sound (because it has no place of articulation). So the output would not even be interpretable.

4. If you change a sound to [+palato-alveolar] without taking away the [+alveolar], you get a sound that is both [+palato-alveolar] *and* [+alveolar]: the tongue would touch the roof of the mouth over a very extensive region. This is probably possible, but it is certainly not right for English and there are no IPA symbols for such sounds.

5. If [+fricative] is left out of the context of the rule, then *any* [+palato-alveolar] sound should trigger the rule. This would include the affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ]. So we should get palatalization in phrases like *Russ Church* or *Russ Johnson*. Perhaps there is a dialect of English in which this actually occurs, but it does not occur in the target dialect (\*[ɹʌʃ tʃəʃ], \*[ɹʌʃ dʒənsən]).<sup>176</sup>

6. If [+palato-alveolar] is left out of the context of the rule, then *any* [+fricative] sound should trigger the rule. The set of triggers would include the fricatives [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [h]. This makes a great number of wrong predictions, such as *Russ Smith* (\*[ɹʌʃ smɪθ]).

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<sup>176</sup> In the feature system adopted here, [ɹ] is also [+palato-alveolar], so we should also get palatalization in *Russ Richards*. Again, not so in the target dialect: \*[ɹʌʃ ɹɪʃədz].

Let us ponder a minute what it means to use features minimally in expressing a rule. In actual practice, you can often get away with very few features on the *left* side of the arrow (also in the rule context, when there is one). These parts of the rule only need to single out a group of sounds from the set of sounds that the language already has. But, on the *right* side of the arrow, it is often necessary to specify quite a few features, since we want the rule to produce the intended sounds—precisely—in its outputs. A motto that might help here is “terse on the left side, verbose on the right side” of the arrow.

**Example 1:** suppose that in some hypothetical dialect of English we wanted  $i u \text{ ɪ } \text{ ʊ } \rightarrow \tilde{i} \tilde{u} \tilde{\text{ ɪ }} \tilde{\text{ ʊ }}$ , where the tilde indicates nasalization on vowel; the feature being [+nasal]. The left side of the rule can be just [+high], because in the feature system we’re using there are no [+high] consonants.<sup>177</sup> The right side of the rule need only mention [+nasal], since that is all that changes; hence, [+high]  $\rightarrow$  [+nasal].

**Example 2:** suppose in English we want  $k g \eta \rightarrow p b m$ . The left side is [+velar]. The right side must specify  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{bilabial} \\ -\text{velar} \end{bmatrix}$ . Why [-velar]? Because plenty of languages have sounds that are both [+velar] and [+bilabial]—they have two articulations at once. IPA renders these sounds (common in West Africa) as  $[\widehat{kp} \widehat{gb} \widehat{\eta m}]$ .<sup>178</sup> If we didn’t change [+velar] to [-velar], we’d end up with one of the “labial-velar” sounds as the incorrect output.

**Example 3:** suppose in English we want this:

$p t k \rightarrow m n \eta$

The left side of the arrow in the formalized rule has to have  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voice} \end{bmatrix}$ , since we don’t want [b] [d] [g] to undergo the rule. On the right side of the arrow we need to have  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{nasal} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{voice} \end{bmatrix}$ , since nasals are nasal, and they aren’t stops, and they are voiced (look at feature chart (185) on p. 400, to see that these are indeed exactly the three features that need to change).<sup>179</sup>

<sup>177</sup> A caution: you may elsewhere encounter feature systems in which certain consonants, such as [j w], are [+high].

<sup>178</sup> And if you are pondering a theory like “automatically change the other features so that you arrive at the closest sound in the phoneme inventory compatible with the change”, then ponder the rule of /ɪ/ Rounding, (190) on p. 432. There is no /ɪ<sup>w</sup>/ phoneme in English, and the closest phoneme compatible with adding [+round] to /ɪ/ is /w/. This works great for describing the phonology of little kids and Elmer Fudd ([ˈkweɪzi ˈwæbɪt]), but not ordinary adult English.

<sup>179</sup> Note in particular that it counts for nothing under the theory that English has no voiceless nasals; we might suppose that voiceless nasals somehow get “fixed” to voiced nasals, but this is asking for more than the theory actually says. We really need to provide the [+voiced] feature.

**Example 4:** suppose in English we want  $i \text{ } \upsilon \rightarrow i \text{ } u$ . Let's do the change first: this clearly has to be  $X \rightarrow [+tense]$ . Now, what is the simplest characterization for  $X$ ? The answer is evidently  $[+high]$ . For  $i \text{ } \upsilon$ , this works straightforwardly. And for  $i \text{ } u$ , the rule takes an input that is already  $[+tense]$  and mindlessly turns it into an output that is  $[+tense]$  — no harm done. Application that harmlessly makes no change is sometimes called **vacuous application**.

### Study Exercise #73

Formulate these rules using feature chart (185) on p. 400. Assume that the inventory of sounds is as in English.

- a.  $t, d$  become  $tʃ, dʒ$  before  $j, w$ .<sup>180</sup>
- b.  $l$  becomes  $ɹ$  when another  $l$  comes before it, separated by a vowel.<sup>181</sup>
- c.  $tʃ, dʒ$  become  $ʃ, ʒ$  between vowels.<sup>182</sup>
- d.  $v, ð, z, ʒ$  become  $f, θ, s, ʃ$  at the end of a word.<sup>183</sup>
- e.  $ɪ, \varepsilon, \text{æ}$  are deleted at the end of a word.
- f.  $ɪ, \upsilon$  become voiceless vowels (IPA  $[i̥], [\upsilon̥]$ ) when they occur between  $\{p \text{ } t \text{ } k \text{ } tʃ \text{ } f \text{ } \theta \text{ } s \text{ } ʃ \text{ } h\}$  and  $\{p \text{ } t \text{ } k \text{ } tʃ \text{ } f \text{ } \theta \text{ } s \text{ } ʃ \text{ } h\}$ .<sup>184</sup>
- g.  $u, \upsilon$  become  $i, ɪ$  everywhere<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> This one is more or less real: *get you* [<sup>1</sup>getʃju], *said you would go* [<sup>1</sup>sɛdʒjuwud'gou], *twin* [tʃwɪn], *dwel* [dʒwɜɛl]. A later rule normally deletes [j] after palato-alveolars, yielding [<sup>1</sup>getʃu], [<sup>1</sup>sɛdʒuwud'gou].

<sup>181</sup> Based on Latin phonology. This is why we say *nav-al*, but *sol-ar* (words borrowed into English from Latin).

<sup>182</sup> More or less real, as a rule of the vernacular dialect of Italian spoken in Florence.

<sup>183</sup> This is close to being true of English, though it really happens only at the ends of phrases, and the devoicing is sometimes partial.

<sup>184</sup> Not unlike a phonological rule of Japanese.

<sup>185</sup> A change that was once a phonological rule in Yiddish.

### Answers to Study Exercise #71

- a.  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{stop} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{affricate} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \\ -\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] / \text{ \_\_\_\_ } [+glide]$
- b.  $[+\text{lateral}] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{lateral} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \\ -\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] / [+lateral][+\text{syllabic}] \text{ \_\_\_\_ }$
- c.  $[+\text{affricate}] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{fricative} \\ -\text{affricate} \end{array} \right] / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_\_ } [+syllabic]$
- d.  $[+\text{fricative}] \rightarrow [-\text{voice}] / \text{ \_\_\_\_ } ]_{\text{word}}$  Note the use of vacuous application (to [f, θ, s, ʃ]) to simplify the rule.
- e.  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{back} \\ -\text{tense} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{ \_\_\_\_ } ]_{\text{word}}$
- f.  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{high} \\ -\text{tense} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [-\text{voice}] / [-\text{voice}] \text{ \_\_\_\_ } [-\text{voice}]$
- g.  $[+\text{high}] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{back} \\ -\text{round} \end{array} \right]$  Note the use of vacuous application (to [u, ʊ]) to simplify the rule.

### 3.4 Derivations in phonology

Derivations in phonology follow the two-column format used elsewhere in linguistics. Rules apply in succession, changing the representation, and the linguist justifies each step of the derivation by providing the name of a rule in the same row, in the right column.

We have already seen what a full, explicit derivation would look like — it would be enormous! In actual practice, phonologists use the feature matrices only for their rules, and for the words that the rules are applying to, they use IPA symbols.

Phonological derivations must begin with a starting point, which for phonology is called the **underlying representation**.<sup>186</sup> The choice of a correct phonological underlying representations is something we will need to develop in detail, starting in the next section. For now, let us simply assume that the underlying representation of *Russ* is /ɹʌs/, and the underlying representation of *Schuh* is ʃu. It is a standard convention in phonology to surround underlying representations with slant brackets rather than square brackets; thus the underlying representation for *Russ Schuh* is /ɹʌs ʃu/.

<sup>186</sup> One could draw an analogy: the phonological underlying representation is to the phonological rules what the syntactic deep structure is to the set of transformations; each is the input to a series of rules that transforms it.

So, a trivial derivation in standard format would be:

<i>Russ Schuh</i>	
/ɪʌs ʃu/	underlying representation
ɪʌʃ ʃu	Alveolar Fricative Palatalization
[ɪʌʃ ʃu]	Output

As with the morphological derivations we have done earlier, there is enough space to give the representation in two-column format, with representations on the left and names of rules applied on the right. It is assumed that the reader can check the values of symbols like [ʃ] and [s] against a feature chart, and verify that the rule does indeed make the changes shown with the phonetic symbols of the derivation.

Here are a couple more details. For “output”, one can use the more explicit terms “surface representation”, or simply “phonetic representation”. Also, it is often clearer when showing how a rule applies to indicate *only the segment that changes*, aligning it vertically and leaving blank space elsewhere. With these two changes, the derivation about would come out as follows:

<i>Russ Schuh</i>	
/ɪʌs ʃu/	underlying representation
ʃ	Alveolar Fricative Palatalization
[ɪʌʃ ʃu]	phonetic representation

In a larger-scale example, multiple phonological rules would be applied — in fact, as we will see, in a particular order. Each rule gets its own line in the derivation.

#### 4. Some phonological formalisms

Phonological rules can be written with some of the notations that we used in Chapter 2 for some of the more interesting types of morphology (that is, not prefixation or suffixation).

First, the symbols C (for “consonant”) and V (for “vowel”), used earlier for morphology, are applicable to phonology, with the refinement that we now defined them as abbreviations: C is a shorter way to write [–syllabic] and V is a shorter way to write [+syllabic].

Second, the use of labeled brackets carries over to phonology, though usually the bracket employed simply designates the edge of any word, rather than some particular category like Noun or Verb. So, for instance, we can write a rule that converts [i, u] to [e, o] at the end of a word to something like this:<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Final Lowering rules of this kind are found in Chamorro (Austronesian, Guam) and Lardil (Pama-Nyungan, Australia).

### Final Lowering

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{high} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [-\text{high}] / \text{ \_\_\_\_ } ]_{\text{word}}$$

In some languages, vowels become long when they are separated by the sequence CV from the end of a word; as in [tapi] → [ta:pi]. This can be written with CV notation as follows:

### Penultimate Lengthening<sup>188</sup>

$$V \rightarrow [+long] / \text{ \_\_\_\_ CV } ]_{\text{word}}$$

Lastly, the use of the variable X, meaning “a string of sounds of any length, including zero,” is sometimes useful for phonology. For instance, the rule of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization applies only when the triggering sound [ʃ] or [ʒ] immediately follows the target sound [s] or [z]. But there are a number of languages in which palatalization will apply even if the triggering [ʃ] or [ʒ] is several segments away in the word. Such a “long-distance” palatalization rule could be written:

### Alveolar Fricative Palatalization (long-distance version)

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right] / \text{ \_\_\_\_ X } \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right]$$

*“Replace an alveolar fricative with the corresponding palato-alveolar fricative when a palato-alveolar fricative occurs late in the same word.”*

Such a rule would convert English *sushi* [suʃi] to [ʃuʃi], or *sunshine* [sʌnʃaɪn] to [ʃʌnʃaɪn].<sup>189</sup>

## 5. Optional rules in phonology

In the discussion of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization so far, the data have somewhat simplified: the examples given earlier *can also be pronounced without applying the rule*. So, if we were to present the data in greater detail, we would give options of pronunciation for all of the forms in question.

<i>Russ</i>	[ɪʌs]
<i>Schuh</i>	[ʃu]
<i>Russ Schuh</i>	[ɪʌsʃu], [ɪʌʃʃu]

<sup>188</sup> “Penultimate lengthening” = “lengthening of the vowel of the second-to-last syllable”. Languages with Penultimate Lengthening include Italian (Romance, Italy) and Mohawk (Iroquoian, New York and Ontario).

<sup>189</sup> In real languages, rules of this type are called Sibilant Harmony; they are found, for instance, in Kinyarwanda (Bantu, Rwanda) or Chumash (Chumashan, Southern California). Young children, in their personal phonologies, often show Sibilant Harmony; the examples [ʃuʃi] and [ʃʌnʃaɪn] given above were uttered by my son when he was little.

<i>miss</i>	[mɪs]
<i>Sheila</i>	[ʃɪlə]
<i>miss Sheila</i>	[mɪsʃɪlə], [mɪʃʃɪlə]
<i>nice</i>	[naɪs]
<i>shadow</i>	[ʃædəʊ]
<i>nice shadow</i>	[naɪsʃædəʊ], [naɪʃʃædəʊ], and so on.
<i>use</i>	[juːz]
<i>Schuh's book</i>	[ʃuːz bʊk]
<i>use Schuh's book</i>	[juːz ʃuːz bʊk], [juːʒ ʃuːz bʊk]
<i>Russ</i>	[ɹʌs]
<i>Zhirinovsky</i>	[ʒɪrənəʊfski]
<i>Russ Zhirinovsky</i>	[ɹʌs ʒɪrənəʊfski], [ɹʌʃ ʒɪrənəʊfski]
<i>use</i>	[juːz]
<i>Zhivago's book</i>	[ʒɪvəɡoʊz bʊk]
<i>use Zhivago's book</i>	[juːz ʒɪvəɡoʊz bʊk], [juːʒ ʒɪvəɡoʊz bʊk]

The variation seems to be an element of speaking style: the rule is applied in fluent, ordinary speech, but could be suppressed in formal, careful speech.

When a phonological rule is optional, I will indicate this simply by placing the word “(optional)” in parentheses after the rule:

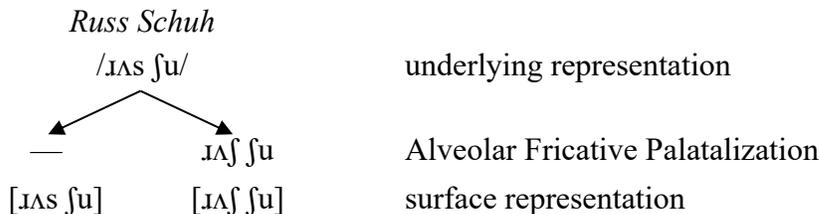
**Alveolar Fricative Palatalization (restated as optional)**

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{alveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right] / \text{---} \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{fricative} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \end{array} \right] \text{ (optional)}$$

5.1 Derivations for optional rules

There is no standard way to write derivations for optional rules, but in this textbook I will use an ad hoc notation, which I will call a “branching derivation.” The format gives arrows indicating the two possibilities for when an optional rule does or does not apply; for example:

(244) *A branching derivation for Russ Schuh*



Where there are multiple applicable rules, the branches will multiply, producing a tree of greater size. Some commercial speech recognition devices use rules to generate alternate forms of the words to be recognized; their derivations can culminate in hundreds or thousands of branches.

## 5.2 Some additional optional rules in English

### 5.2.1 Preglottalization

It is possible for a stop to be both [+glottal] and some other place feature, such as [+alveolar] or [+bilabial]. The vocal cords touch each other, closing the glottis, and at the same time some sort of is made higher up in the vocal tract. Typically the glottal closure comes a little bit earlier, so the phenomenon is sometimes called “Preglottalization”; and a plausible transcription would be along the lines of [ʔpʔtʔk]. A phonological rule of Preglottalization is stated below.

#### (245) Preglottalization

$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voiced} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [+glottal] / \text{ \_\_\_\_ } ]_{\text{word}} \quad (\text{optional})$$

By the rule, an alveolar stop stays alveolar, a velar stops stays velar, and a bilabial stops stays bilabial, but they receive a glottal closure in addition. The rule ignores the detail of timing just mentioned.

Here are data for Preglottalization as applied to [t]:

*cat*: [ˈkæt] or [ˈkæʔt]

*hat*: [ˈhæt] or [ˈhæʔt]

*cut*: [ˈkʌt] or [ˈkʌʔt]

Additional data with other places of articulation are as follows:

*cup*: [ˈkʌp] or [ˈkʌʔp]

*hack*: [ˈhæk] or [ˈhæʔk]

### 5.2.2 Tapping

Another optional rule (of North American English<sup>190</sup>) is Tapping, which derives the tap [ɾ] as a variant of [t].<sup>191</sup> The data look like this:

<sup>190</sup> Tapping is unusual outside North America. It occurs natively in some Irish speech and is apparently currently in the process of spreading into overseas dialects such as Australian. Non-tapping dialects often have Glottaling instead: *butter* [ˈbʌʔə], [ˈbʊʔə].

<sup>191</sup> And, as we’ll see later on, of /d/.

**Forms that can be tapped**

<i>butter</i>	[ˈbʌtə]
<i>attic</i>	[ˈætɪk]
<i>heritability</i>	[hɛ.ɪrəˈbɪləbɪlɪti]
<i>motto</i>	[ˈmɑtəʊ]

**Forms that cannot be tapped**

<i>attain</i>	[əˈteɪn]	(*[əˈreɪn])
<i>Tommy</i>	[ˈtɑmi]	(*[ˈrɑmi])
<i>cat</i>	[ˈkæt] <sup>192</sup>	(*[ˈkæɾ])
<i>actor</i>	[ˈæktə]	(*[ˈækrə])
<i>Atkins</i>	[ˈætɪkɪnz]	(*[ˈærkɪnz])

Inspection of these and similar data indicate a very particular environment for Tapping, namely: between two vowels (or other syllabic sounds; diphthongs and syllabic consonants), of which the second must stressless:

**(246) Tapping (preliminary version)<sup>193</sup>**

$$t \rightarrow r / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_ } \begin{bmatrix} +syllabic \\ -stress \end{bmatrix} \text{ (optional)}$$

Now, different speakers will vary, but my impression is that most speakers of North American dialects can, in very slow and careful speech, “turn off” tapping and produce [t]’s in the relevant words:

<i>butter</i>	[ˈbʌtə], [ˈbʌtə̃]
<i>attic</i>	[ˈætɪk], [ˈætɪk̃]
<i>heritability</i>	[hɛ.ɪrəˈbɪləbɪlɪti], [hɛ.ɪrətəˈbɪlətɪ]
<i>motto</i>	[ˈmɑtəʊ], [ˈmatəʊ]

Hence the rule is (marginally) optional.

**5.2.3 /æ/ Diphthongization**

A third optional rule, which is found in the dialect of many but not all American English speakers, is a rule of /æ/ Diphthongization, which applies before nasals. Here are data:

<sup>192</sup> Or, optionally, [ˈkæʔt], not relevant here.

<sup>193</sup> To be generalized below.

**No diphthongization:**

<i>cat</i>	[ˈkæt]
<i>pack</i>	[ˈpæk]
<i>lap</i>	[ˈlæp]
<i>lab</i>	[ˈlæb]
<i>pal</i>	[ˈpæl]

**Diphthongization:**

<i>can</i>	[ˈkæn], [ˈkɛən]
<i>man</i>	[ˈmæn], [ˈmɛən]
<i>Spanish</i>	[ˈspæniʃ], [ˈspɛniʃ]
<i>dance</i>	[ˈdæns], [ˈdɛəns]
<i>spam</i>	[ˈspæm], [ˈspɛəm]
<i>tram</i>	[ˈtræm], [ˈtɛəm]

Assuming that the vowel in question is basically [æ], we can write the rule as follows:

**(247) /æ/ Diphthongization**

/æ/ → [ɛə] / \_\_\_\_ [+nasal]

**5.3 Optional rules and speaking style**

Different optional rules tend to apply in differing speech styles. In most people's speech, Tapping is very close to obligatory, and "turning it off" (as in *pity* [ˈpɪti]) is appropriate only in the most formal of speaking styles. I find that /æ/ Diphthongization can be "turned off" in somewhat more casual contexts than Tapping can be; and Preglottalization can be turned off even in fairly relaxed contexts. On the other end of this continuum, there are rules that (for me at least), only get to apply in the most casual speech, for instance the rule (not formalized) that monophthongizes /aʊ/ to [æ] (try for instance: *Get out of here!* [gɛtˈʌrəhiː].)

Research by sociolinguists indicates that when we speak, we constantly regulate the application of a great number of optional phonological rules. Presumably, we do this for purposes of making the appropriate impression on the people with whom we are speaking: as already noted in Chapter 3, there are contexts that call for colloquial speech and contexts that call for formal speech. Most people command a range of styles,<sup>194</sup> and the ability to turn optional rules off or on is part of this command.

<sup>194</sup> By this I mean even monolingual, monodialectal people. Obviously, the ability to speak more than one dialect or language increases the range of impressions that a speaker can create.

#### 5.4 Obligatory rules?

*Obligatory* phonological rules do in fact exist and are numerous. But to justify them we will need to do a bit of further theoretical development, the task of the next section.

### 6. Underlying representations in phonology and their analysis

So far, we have assumed a very informal approach to the question of derivations in phonology. In the case of Alveolar Fricative Palatalization, things are rather straightforward: the pronunciation of *Russ Schuh* must be in some way the “sum of its parts”, derived from the pronunciation of *Russ* plus the pronunciation of *Schuh*. In this case, the starting point of the derivation can be clearly identified: the syntax and lexical insertion have previously strung together the words *Russ* and *Schuh* in a way that has caused an [s] to be placed immediately before a [ʃ] (and similarly for [z], [ʒ]...), and the phonology will convert the result to [ʃ] (and similarly for the other cases). This is a simple set-up, which is why I have discussed it first.

In other instances, we will find that sometimes the starting point of a phonological derivation is less obvious and involves some inferences. Recall from our discussion of long-distance transformations in Chapter 6 that the analyst must often infer from the observed form of a sentence *what its deep structure was*: we can do this by understanding the transformations and undoing their application, so that we arrive at the correct deep structure. Once we have come up with a good guess for the deep structure, we can then run the grammar in the “forward” direction, verifying that it correctly derives the sentence that we observed in the first place. Of course, at the time when the analysis is figured out in the first place, we must think flexibly, juggling both the rules and the deep structures in our heads at the same time to obtain an adequate answer.

Phonology is somewhat like syntax here. The phonological analogue of a syntactic deep structure is called the (phonological) **underlying representation**. It is the starting point of the phonological derivation. The phonological analogue of syntactic surface structure is called the (phonological) **surface representation**, or equivalently, **phonetic representation**. It is the output of the phonology; it can be imagined as “handing off” to the speech articulators a set of detailed instructions for the pronunciation that they should execute. In phonology, underlying representations are converted to surface representations by a sequence of phonological rules, just as syntactic deep structures are converted to syntactic surface structures by a sequence of transformations.

Phonological underlying representations *differ* from syntactic deep structures in the following way: while deep structures are themselves the output of rules (the phrase structure rules and lexical insertion), phonological underlying representations are assumed to be part of the *lexical entries of morphemes*<sup>195</sup> — the underlying representation is what the speaker has memorized about the pronunciation of the morpheme, but it is not necessarily the way it is pronounced in the phonetics.

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<sup>195</sup> For an example of a lexical entry, see Chapter 6, section 2.

Why do we need to have phonological rules? One reason has already been given: morphemes get pronounced in different ways in different environments (for example, the morpheme *Russ* as [ɹʌs] or [ɹʌʃ], discussed above). The other reason is more subtle and requires a more elaborate form of analysis, one in which we simultaneously deepen the underlying representations and elaborate the rule system. We turn to this form of analysis —the foundation of phonological description — in the next section.

### 6.1 Phonemic analysis and the Phonemic Principle

The most basic principle of phonology is the following:

#### (248) **Phonemic Principle**

Every language has a limited set of phonemes (= basic speech sounds); and every word in the language consists solely of phonemes of that language.

As basic speech sounds, phonemes are assumed to be the elements of underlying representation. By convention, when we listed phonemes (as opposed to phonetic segments in general), we designate them as such by surrounding them with slant brackets (like /t/) rather than square brackets (like [t]).

The phonemes of my own dialect, which are fairly representative for an American English speaker, are as follows:

#### (249) *The author's phonemes*

##### a. *Consonants*

/p, t, k, b, d, g, tʃ, dʒ, f, θ, s, ʃ, h, v, ð, z, ʒ, m, n, ŋ, l, ɹ, w, j/

##### b. *Vowels and diphthongs*

/i, ɪ, eɪ, ε, æ, u, ʊ, oʊ, ɔ, ʌ, ɑ, ə, ø, aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ/

In fact, this list of phonemes is more or less the same as what is given in the phonetic charts in the previous chapter, which were deliberately limited to English phonemes. We have only mentioned a couple non-phonemes so far, such as the tap [ɾ].

A system of phonemes can be construed as a *complete set of building blocks for words in a language*. All the words of English (in the relevant dialect) are made up of the sounds in (249) *and no others*. Thus an English speaker immediately recognizes that ['blɪk] (“blick”) could be English and that ['q'øfɪ] could not, even if she has never heard either word before. In phonological analysis, we set up a phoneme inventory that is large enough to encompass the target language — but, as we will see, no larger than necessary.

Languages vary a great deal in the number of phonemes they have. The record low is believed to be held by Rotokas (South Pacific), with 11, and the record high is believed to be held by !Xoo (Namibia), with 160. English has somewhere around 40, the number varying according to dialect. The average across languages is about 30.

To see the point of the phonemic principle, you have to imagine a language that did not obey it. In such a language: every word would have its own unique phonetic content, and would not be decomposable into a sequence of units. (Such a system might be rather like the vocal communication systems of certain animal species, consisting of a fixed inventory of calls.)

There is a clear advantage for a language in having a phonemic design. As noted earlier, speech articulation is highly complex, with many articulators moving very rapidly. It would be difficult to learn to pronounce all the thousands of words of a language if each one were a unique phonetic sequence. Presumably it is easier to proceed phonemically; that is, to learn only a limited number of sounds and form all the words by stringing these sounds together.

The sign languages of the deaf could, in principle, be suggested as a counterexample to the Phonemic Principle. However, research on sign language suggests that even this form of language can be analyzed into gestural “phonemes”, even though these phonemes are quite different from the phonemes of spoken language.<sup>196</sup>

That the Phonemic Principle holds true of English is vividly confirmed by the behavior of English speakers (particularly monolingual ones) in a multilingual environment. The English speaker in such a context is likely to hear new words from speakers of other languages that contain phonemes that are absent from English. His imitations of these words will *systematically warp them* so as to consist solely of English phonemes. Thus French “r”, which is phonetically [ʀ] (an approximant consonant made at the uvula), will be replaced by English [ɹ]. German [x] (the voiceless velar fricative [x], spelled *ch* in *Bach*) will be replaced by English [k]. The four phonemic tones of Mandarin, which correspond to nothing whatever that is phonemic in English, will be ignored completely.<sup>197</sup> It is very hard for speakers to learn new words made up of sounds not in their own phonemic inventories, which confirms the the phonemic inventory as a phonological concept.

## 6.2 Allophones, phonemes, and rules

A second key principle, which will be the basis of much of the analyses to follow, is the Allophonic Principle:

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<sup>196</sup> And more generally, such research has found morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, grammar, intonation, etc. in sign languages; it’s a serious area of linguistics with a large research program.

<sup>197</sup> This is not to say that English speakers cannot control the pitch of their voices; they do this with exquisite precision in rendering the *intonation* patterns of their language. But the idea of a pitch contour as an inherent property of a *word* (i.e., as phonemic) is a tough one for English speakers to assimilate, and thus a serious part of the first-year curriculum of instruction in Chinese (or any other tone language).

(250) **Allophonic Principle**

Phonemes vary; and the variation is rule-governed.

A **allophone** is a variant of phoneme.

Consider an example. We consider two variants of the English phoneme /ɹ/—a distinction that typically is not transcribed, but seems to be widely found.<sup>198</sup> One variant is simply the plain alveolar central approximant [ɹ], already discussed. However, many instances of this phoneme are pronounced as [ɹ<sup>w</sup>], with simultaneous lip rounding. The superscript [<sup>w</sup>] is the IPA symbol for simultaneous rounding, which is also called **labialization**.

Inspecting my own speech (and checking with other speakers), I transcribed the following data:

<i>real</i>	[ˈɹ <sup>w</sup> ɪl]	<i>par</i>	[ˈpɑɹ]
<i>write</i>	[ˈɹ <sup>w</sup> aɪt]	<i>core</i>	[ˈkoɹ]
<i>rope</i>	[ˈɹ <sup>w</sup> oʊp]	<i>ear</i>	[iɹ]
<i>reveal</i>	[ɹ <sup>w</sup> əˈvɪl]	<i>part</i>	[ˈpɑɹt]
<i>arrange</i>	[əˈɹ <sup>w</sup> eɪndʒ]	<i>bear</i>	[ˈbeɹ]
<i>apparition</i>	[æpəˈɹ <sup>w</sup> ɪʃən]	<i>lure</i>	[ˈluɹ]
<i>carry</i>	[ˈkeɹ <sup>w</sup> i]	<i>forming</i>	[ˈfoɹmɪŋ]
<i>era</i>	[ˈeɹ <sup>w</sup> ə]	<i>tornado</i>	[toɹˈneɪrəʊ]
<i>Erie</i>	[ˈiɹ <sup>w</sup> i]		

What is needed with such data is an inspection that reveals the pattern, which is the most central aspect of phonological analysis. If you don't see the pattern yet, look some more.

<sup>198</sup> Reference: Daniel Jones (1918) *An outline of English phonetics*. For a study with physical measurement, see Delattre, Pierre C., and Donald C. Freeman. 1968. "A Dialect Study of American r's by X-ray Motion Picture." *Linguistics* 44: 29–68.

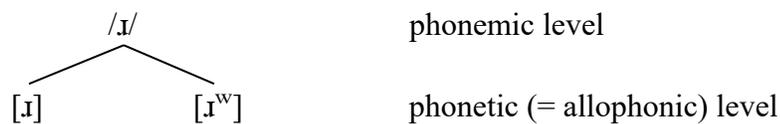
From the data, it is evident that

[ɪ<sup>w</sup>] occurs only before a vowel

[ɪ] occurs elsewhere; that is, before a consonant or pause

This is an essentially *mechanical* difference: it's an authentic detail of English pronunciation, and if you don't respect it your English will sound unnatural. But the difference between [ɪ<sup>w</sup>] and [ɪ] has no *communicative* value, the way the difference between (for example) [t] and [p] has. ([t] vs. [p] is "communicative" because *tin* and *pin* are not the same word; because *mat* and *map* are not the same word, because *still* and *spill* are not the same word, and so on — you could not say the same thing for [ɪ<sup>w</sup>] and [ɪ].)

The idea, then, is that at some abstract level, [ɪ<sup>w</sup>] and [ɪ] belong to the same category — they are predictable variants of the same underlying sound. A diagram suggesting this idea is given below.



This fundamental sound designated as /ɪ/ is a phoneme of English.

Going further, we adapt the basic model of underlying forms and derivations — set up in the previous section for independent reasons — to the description of phonemes. We will place the phonemes at the level of underlying representations, and derive the surface sounds using rules. The underlying representations will be what is stored in the lexicon, and the surface (phonetic) representations are submitted to the speech articulators for pronunciation.

As noted above, phonemes are normally placed in slant brackets to distinguish them from ordinary phonetic transcription, in particular to designate them as the elements of underlying representation. Thus, we speak of “the phoneme /ɪ/”. The contextual variants that are derived from the underlying phonemes are placed in the ordinary square brackets used in phonetics, thus: [ɪ], [ɪ<sup>w</sup>]. They are referred to as the the **allophones** of the phoneme. Here are some more careful definitions.

(251) *Some key definitions for phonemic analysis*a. *Phoneme*

Assume a particular language L.

A **phoneme** is one member of a limited set of sounds in L which may occur in the underlying representations of L, and which constitute the units of which words in L are phonologically formed.

b. *Phoneme inventory*

The **phoneme inventory** of L is its complete set of phonemes.

c. *Allophone*

Assume a particular language L, and a phoneme of L to be called P.

An **allophone** of P is a variant of a phoneme that occurs in the surface representations of L and is derived from P by the system of phonological rules.

Note that these definitions make no reference at all to *spelling*. It is just as possible to analyze the phonemes of an unwritten language as it is to analyze the phonemes of a written language. There will, of course, be *some* connection between the phonemes and the spelled letters, but understanding the rules that govern this connection is a different research topic.<sup>199</sup> The written language can actually be quite deceptive with regard to the phonemes, since often spelling is quite inconsistent (consider e.g. *beat* vs. *beet*, both with the phoneme /i/).

## 7. Treating phonemes with rules and derivations

Let us return to the distribution of the sounds [ɪ<sup>w</sup>] and [ɪ] in English:

[ɪ<sup>w</sup>] occurs only before a vowel

[ɪ] occurs elsewhere; that is, before a consonant or pause

Proceeding to the formal analysis, we might suppose that the underlying form is /ɪ/, and that [ɪ<sup>w</sup>] is derived from /ɪ/ by rule. Alternatively, we suppose that the underlying form is /ɪ<sup>w</sup>/, and that [ɪ] is derived from /ɪ<sup>w</sup>/ by rule. Often, both analyses can be made to work, but the choice that is generally made is to pick the underlying form on the basis of which choice will produce the simplest rules. In the present case, choosing /ɪ<sup>w</sup>/ would require us to set up two phonological rules; one to turn /ɪ<sup>w</sup>/ to [ɪ] before a consonant (as in *part* ['pɑ:ɪt]), and another to turn /ɪ<sup>w</sup>/ to [ɪ] at the

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<sup>199</sup> In fact, it is a topic only rarely treated by phonologists, even though it is often interesting and intricate. There is something of a research gap here.

end of a word (as in *par* ['paɪ]). The simpler choice is to pick /ɪ/ as the underlying form, a choice which permits us to use just a single rule turning /ɪ/ into [ɪ<sup>w</sup>] before a vowel.

Thus, the underlying representation (or “phonemic representation”) for a phoneme is the single sound from which all the contextual allophones are most straightforwardly derived. Further, we can say the same thing at the level of morphemes:

(252) *Defn.: Phonemic representation of morphemes*

The **phonemic representation of a morpheme** is the string of phonemes from which it is formed.

For example, under the analysis proposed, the phonemic representation of *real* (phonetically [ɪ<sup>w</sup>il]) is /ɪil/. The phonemic representation of *par* (phonetically [paɪ]) is /paɪ/.

From the phonemic representation we derive a phonetic representation, the linguistic characterization of the actual pronunciation of a word. In the case we are considering, there is just one phonological rule, which can be stated as follows:

(253) **/ɪ/ Rounding**

ɪ → [+round] / \_\_\_ [+syllabic]

In words, “If the sound ɪ occurs in the environment before a [+syllabic] sound, change its features so that it is [+round].”<sup>200</sup>

Given a phonemic form and one or more rules, we can apply the rules in a derivation of the kind given earlier for the example *Russ Schuh*. The derivation derives the allophones from the phonemes. Here are derivations for *real*, *par*, and *part*:

<i>real</i>	<i>par</i>	<i>part</i>	
/ɪil/	/paɪ/	/paɪt/	underlying representations
ɪ <sup>w</sup>	—	—	/ɪ/ Rounding
[ɪ <sup>w</sup> il]	[paɪ]	[paɪt]	surface representations

In this type of phonemic analysis, the underlying representation could be thought of as an abstract, idealized version of the pronunciation, embodying only the essential aspects, and the surface representation is what one obtains after filling in all the detail through the application of rules.

<sup>200</sup> The rule is expressed casually, using a phonetic symbol instead of a feature matrix. It could be formalized as

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{liquid} \\ +\text{palatoalveolar} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [+round] / \_ \_ [+syllabic]$$

Note that including “vacuous” derivations for words like *par* and *part* is not a waste of time, but helpful in the cause of rigor — we need to show that the rule properly avoids applying where it should not. It is assumed for phonology that all words are submitted to all rules, like objects passing down an assembly line. In this respect, phonology is like inflectional morphology, discussed in Chapter 2. It is not like word formation, where rules apply freely, and optionally, whenever they can.

The allophone [ɪ] is what is often called an elsewhere allophone. This term can be precisely defined if you have a particular rule-based analysis in mind. The elsewhere allophone of a phoneme is the one that does not undergo any rules. Verbally, it is often best described with the word “elsewhere”: for the phoneme /ɪ/, you get [ɪw] before a vowel and [ɪ] elsewhere. Note: The elsewhere allophone is an allophone like all the others; it just happens to be the one that doesn’t need any rules to derive it. Indeed, when one chooses an underlying form for a phoneme, the elsewhere allophone (provided one can be identified) is the sensible choice to make, for it will lead to the simplest rule set.

### 7.1 Rules and derivations for optional rules

The same strategy for selecting the underlying form of a phoneme holds when the rules in question apply optionally: usually the segment derived in the environment of the optional rule will be treated as an optional contextual allophone. To illustrate, we return to the data for /æ/ Diphthongization given earlier:

#### No diphthongization:

*cat*      ['kæt]  
*pack*     ['pæk]  
*lap*        ['læp]  
*lab*        ['læb]  
*pal*        ['pæl]

#### Diphthongization:

*can*        ['kæn], ['kɛən]  
*man*        ['mæn], ['mɛən]  
*Spanish*    ['spæɪŋ], ['spɛɪɪŋ]  
*dance*      ['dæns], ['dɛəns]  
*spam*      ['spæm], ['spɛəm]  
*tram*        ['tɹæm], ['tɹɛəm]

The elsewhere allophone must be [æ]: it is quite easy to derive the contextual allophone [ɛə] by the /æ/ Diphthongization rule already given in §5.2.3, but it would be quite a mess to do it the other way (an obligatory rule  $\varepsilon\alpha \rightarrow \varepsilon$  before all non-nasal consonants, and an optional  $\varepsilon\alpha \rightarrow \varepsilon$  rule before nasal ones).<sup>201</sup> So we set up /æ/ as the underlying form of the phoneme, keeping /æ/ Diphthongization as before (repeated below).

<sup>201</sup> In fact, the argument is stronger: there are marginal words like *baa* [bæ] ‘sound that a sheep makes’ demonstrating that [æ] is the allophone that occurs when word-final.

**/æ/ Diphthongization**

/æ/ → [ɛə] / \_\_\_ [+nasal]

With these assumptions, we can now do the illustrative derivations, including both an environment where the rule optionally applies and one where it does not.

<i>can</i>	<i>cat</i>	
/kæɪn/	/kæt/	underlying representations
↙ ↘		
kɛəɪn	—	/æ/ Diphthongization (optional)
[kɛəɪn]	[kæɪn]	surface representations

**7.2 The justification for obligatory rules**

/ɪ/ Rounding (253) is stated as an obligatory rule (by our conventions, if it were optional we would have to say so). The basis for obligatory rules is purely distributional; you can't actually "see" the rule in effect as you can with optional rules. Yet the justification for the rule is just as strong. The rule, being obligatory, enforces a kind of "phonological grammaticality" on words. Specially, if you say a word with the wrong allophone for one of the phonemes, typically it will sound strange — phonetically not right. I find this to be true with the words above. The following forms reflect the outcome if one "neglects to apply" /ɪ/ Rounding:

<i>real</i>	*[ <sup>1</sup> ɪɪl]
<i>write</i>	*[ <sup>1</sup> ɪaɪt]
<i>rope</i>	*[ <sup>1</sup> ɪoʊp]

My own judgment is that these don't really sound right as English (intuitively: "there's not enough like an r", "a lazy r").

The opposite type of "wrong allophone" is given below; as it were we "applying /ɪ/ Rounding where it should not be":

<i>par</i>	*[ <sup>1</sup> pɑɪ <sup>w</sup> ]
<i>core</i>	*[ <sup>1</sup> kɔɪ <sup>w</sup> ]
<i>ear</i>	*[ <sup>1</sup> iɪ <sup>w</sup> ]

To me at least, these forms sound peculiar (intuitively: "adding a *w* where it doesn't belong").

Thus, a phonemic analysis is a partial theory of what is "sayable" in a language. For a word to sound right, it must (a) be composed of solely phonemes from the language; (b) properly submit to all applicable obligatory phonological rules. In English, \*[<sup>1</sup>ɪɪl] is ungrammatical because the

speaker has neglected to apply /ɹ/ Rounding where it should be applied; \*[ˈpɑɹ<sup>w</sup>] is ungrammatical because [ɹ<sup>w</sup>] is neither permissible as a basic phoneme (it is not in the inventory) nor can it be derived by any legitimate rule.<sup>202</sup>

### 7.3 *The large-scale descriptive goal of a phonemic analysis*

With patience and experience, a trained phonetician can detect hundreds of phonetically distinguishable sounds in a language. To deal with them all in our discussions would be chaotic, tedious, and error prone. Once a full phonemicization is in place, the phonetic system is reduced to order: instead of hundreds of sounds to deal with, there are no more than a few dozen. Phonemic analysis is thus considered a basic method for bringing order to phonological systems.

## 8. Practical uses of phonemic analysis

Here are practical uses of phonemes.

First, linguists sometime write **reference grammars**, intended to be a thorough account of the structure of a language, covering phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Often the first few pages of a reference grammar give the examples in full IPA transcription, setting forth a phonemic analysis with its phoneme inventory. Once this is done, all future examples can be given in phonemic transcription. It is assumed that the reader can apply the allophone rules to any such transcription to get the desired pronunciation. This eliminates unnecessary detail from the transcriptions and makes them easier to read.<sup>203</sup> You can easily imagine how un-useful (indeed, annoying) it would be if a reference grammar of English always specified the difference between [ɹ] and [ɹ<sup>w</sup>].<sup>204</sup>

**Dictionaries** usually use a phonemic transcription in their specifications of pronunciation. This avoids redundancy and clutter. There is often a further advantage: speakers of different dialects of the dictionary's language often have the same phonemes but different systems of allophones. Such speakers can make use of the same phonemic transcription but render it (probably, without even thinking about it) in their own accent. The reason this (usually) works is that language change most often takes place at the allophonic level: the detailed allophones get shifted, while the underlying phonemic categories persist unaltered. So dialects inherit much of their phonemic system from their ancestral forms, while altering the detailed rendition.

Phonemic analysis is also important in **alphabet design**. A sensible alphabet will have a separate symbol for each phoneme of the language, and no other symbols. This makes it possible for the spelling to specify, in principle, all aspects of the pronunciation of a word, without including any additional redundant information. The rules will suffice to fill in all the details of

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<sup>202</sup> "Sayability" in phonology also involves legal phoneme orders (phonotactics), mentioned above.

<sup>203</sup> Indeed, most reference grammars go one step further and produce a **practical orthography**; a spelling system that follows the phonemic principle but uses only Roman letters.

<sup>204</sup> This sounds like I am making a joke, but old 19th century reference grammars can be found in libraries that do exactly this.

allophony. Alphabet design is a continuing activity worldwide as ever more languages are provided with writing systems.

## 9. Phonemic analysis and features

Everything we said earlier about features and natural classes (see Chapter 10, section 14.2) carries over to the rules used in phonemic analysis: many rules apply to more than one segment, or apply in environments that include more than one segment, or involve a parallel phonetic change; and all of these can suitably be expressed using features. As noted earlier, the scheme is: (a) on the left side of the arrow, we set up a group of features to single out the class of sounds that undergo the rule; (b) on the right side of the arrow, we specify all and only the features that change their value. The result is a kind of parallel shift of whole classes of sounds.

Here is a characteristic examples of an allophonic rules of English that applies to natural classes. As a rough approximation, we can say that the basic phonemes /p t k/ get an aspiration (a little puff of breath, [+aspirated]) when they occur in word-initial position.

### (254) Aspiration

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voice} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [+aspirated] / [\text{word } \_\_\_ ]$$

“Voiceless stops become aspirated word-initially.”

Here are representative underlying forms and derivations:

<i>pit</i>	<i>spit</i>	<i>top</i>	<i>stop</i>	<i>kick</i>	<i>Scot</i>	
/pɪt/	/spɪt/	/tɒp/	/stɒp/	/kɪk/	/skɒt/	underlying representation
p <sup>h</sup>	—	t <sup>h</sup>	—	k <sup>h</sup>	—	Aspiration
[p <sup>h</sup> ɪt]	[spɪt]	[t <sup>h</sup> ɒp]	[stɒp]	[k <sup>h</sup> ɪk]	[skɒt]	surface representation

Note the parallel shift, /p t k/ → [p<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup>]. As noted earlier, the assumption made in the theory is that only the features specified in the rule are changed in the form. Thus /p/ starts out [+bilabial] and [−voice], and ends up with these features because nothing has changed them (and similarly for all of the features of /p/, see features chart (185) on p. 400).

Here is another example:

### (255) Vowel Nasalization

$$[+\text{syllabic}] \rightarrow [+nasal] / \_\_\_ [+nasal]$$

“A vowel becomes nasalized when it precedes a nasal sound.”

Derivations:

<i>bun</i>	<i>bud</i>	<i>doom</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>sing</i>	<i>sit</i>	
/bʌn/	/bʌd/	/dum/	/du/	/sɪŋ/	/sɪt/	underlying representation
̃	—	~	—	ĩ	—	Vowel Nasalization
[bʌ̃n]	[bʌd]	[dũm]	[du]	[sĩŋ]	[sɪt]	surface representation

Examples are given here for three vowels only, but all the others would work the same.

#### Study Exercise #74

Demonstrate that Vowel Nasalization can apply to /ə/, using a close pair similar to *bun* / *bud*. Include a derivation in the same format as above.

### Answer to Study Exercise #70

The case I could find are *burn/bird*, *turn/turd*, *kern/curd*, *CERN/surd*, *Hearn/herd*, *stern/stirred*, *spurn/spurred*, *kernel/curdle*, and (in some dialects) *earn/erred*. If you don't insist on near-identity, there are many more. Derivations for *burn/bird*:

<i>burn</i>	<i>bird</i>	
/bɚn/	/bɚd/	underlying representation
ɚ̃	—	Vowel Nasalization
[bɚ̃n]	[bɚd]	surface representation

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## 10. Rule ordering

We have seen earlier that different forms of linguistic rules differ in whether they “care” about the order in which they apply. For instance, rules of inflectional morphology generally obey a very strict order, which imposes a particular linear ordering on the prefixes and suffixes they attach. In contrast, both word formation rules and phrase structure rules are “opportunistic,” applying freely, or not, if they are applicable.

Phonological rules turn out to be like inflectional rules: it often matters what order they are applied in, and in such cases the order is a strict, fixed one. Thus “ordering statements” must therefore form part of the phonologies of human languages.

To develop our argument for ordering, we will need two phonological rules of American English. Our first rule is based on the following data. /˘/ is the IPA diacritic meaning “extra short”.

<i>cat</i>	[kæ˘t]	<i>cad</i>	[ˈkæd]		
<i>pot</i>	[pɑ˘t]	<i>pod</i>	[ˈpɑd]	<i>Pa</i>	[ˈpɑd]
<i>cop</i>	[kɑ˘p]	<i>cob</i>	[ˈkɑb]		
<i>cup</i>	[kʌ˘p]	<i>cub</i>	[ˈkʌb]		
<i>batch</i>	[bæ˘tʃ]	<i>badge</i>	[ˈbædʒ]		
<i>pasta</i>	[ˈpɑ˘stə]	<i>Mazda</i>	[ˈmɑzdə]		
<i>beat</i>	[ˈbi˘t]	<i>bead</i>	[ˈbi˘d]	<i>bee</i>	[ˈbi]
<i>Bruce</i>	[ˈbɹu˘s]	<i>bruise</i>	[ˈbɹu˘z]	<i>brew</i>	[ˈbɹu]
<i>Rico</i>	[ˈɹi˘kou]				<i>Rio</i> [ˈɹi˘ou]
<i>spooky</i>	[ˈspu˘ki]			<i>boo</i>	[ˈbu]
<i>goat</i>	[ˈgou˘t]	<i>goad</i>	[ˈgou˘d]	<i>go</i>	[ˈgou]
<i>sake</i>	[ˈse˘ik]	<i>sage</i>	[ˈse˘idʒ]	<i>say</i>	[ˈseɪ]
				<i>seance</i>	[ˈse˘ɑns]

Normal-length and extra-short vowels in English are allophones of the same phoneme. In the data above, extra-short vowels occur before voiceless consonants, and regular length vowels occur before voiced consonants, before vowels, and finally. Thus the longer versions of the vowels are the *elsewhere allophones* (as defined above; section 4), and we should set them up as the underlying representations.

We also need a feature to write the rule with; for present purposes we can simply add the feature [short].

With these assumptions, then, the rule of Vowel Shortening would be as follows.

### Vowel Shortening

[+syllabic] → [+short] / \_\_\_\_ [-voice]

*“Realize a vowel as extra short before a voiceless sound.”*

Here are derivations:

<i>Bruce</i>	<i>bruise</i>	<i>brew</i>	<i>buoy</i>	
/ˈbɹʊs/	/ˈbɹʊz/	/ˈbɹu/	/ˈbɹuɪ/	underlying representation
ũ	—	—	—	Vowel Shortening
[ˈbɹʊs]	[ˈbɹʊz]	[ˈbɹu]	[ˈbɹuɪ]	surface representation

The other rule we will need is the rule of Tapping already seen under (246) above and repeated below. We can safely ignore here its (marginally) optional status.

### Tapping

$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow r / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_ } \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{array} \right]$

Here, it will be useful to use a fully formalized version of the rule, using features instead of the symbol [r]. We need to know, then, just what features must be changed in order to turn both /t/ and /d/ into [r].

First of all, a tap is voiced, so that the rule should add [+voiced] on the right side of the arrow. This will correctly voice /t/, and it will do no harm for /d/. Tap also differs from the alveolar stops in manner of articulation, being a liquid tap and not a stop. Using the features set up above, the rule must be:

### Tapping (in features)

$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{voiced} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{tap} \\ +\text{liquid} \end{array} \right] / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_ } \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{array} \right]$

With these two rules in hand, we can now see how they might interact. The crucial facts are:

- Tapping changes the voicing of a /t/.
- Vowel Shortening depends on the voicing of the following consonant.

Because of this, we will get different outputs depending on which order we apply the rules in.

Here are derivations of pertinent examples, using both orderings:

A. *Tapping precedes Vowel Shortening*

<i>patting</i>	<i>padding</i>	
/'pætɪŋ/	/'pædɪŋ/	underlying representations
'pæɾɪŋ	'pæɾɪŋ	Tapping
—	—	Vowel Shortening
['pæɾɪŋ]	['pæɾɪŋ]	surface representations

B. *Vowel Shortening precedes Tapping*

<i>patting</i>	<i>padding</i>	
/'pætɪŋ/	/'pædɪŋ/	underlying representations
æ̃	—	Vowel Shortening
ɾ	ɾ	Tapping
['pæ̃ɾɪŋ]	['pæɾɪŋ]	surface representations

The predictions that the derivations make are clear: if Tapping precedes Vowel Shortening, then *patting* and *padding* should be pronounced identically. If Vowel Shortening precedes Tapping, then *patting* and *padding* should be pronounced differently; that is, *padding* should have the longer vowel. The two words will be distinct (but in their vowels, not their taps). These observations should hold true not just for these two words, but for all the words in which both rules can apply (e.g. *latter-ladder*, *writer-rider*, *Patty-Paddy*, etc.).

What are the facts? There is actually no single outcome. Instead, different dialects of American English use different orderings. Speakers from Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin typically order Vowel Shortening before Tapping; thus they pronounce pairs like *patting-padding* differently, with the length difference as shown in B above. Speakers from other areas tend to have the opposite ordering, and the pronounce such pairs identically as in A above.

The essential point is not the details of the two dialects, but the very fact that they have the same rules, yet differ. This implies that when one learns a language, and hence its phonology, part of what one learns is *ordering restrictions* that must be imposed on its phonological rules.

Depending on what dialect of English you speak, you implicitly learned a particular ordering for two of the phonological rules.

### 10.1 Analyzing rule order

To establish the ordering of two rules A and B, the simplest procedure is simply to find a relevant form — a form where A and B are both applicable — and try both orders. Either you will find that only the order A-B produces the right output, only B-A produces the right output, or they both work (in which case the order doesn't matter). All that's really needed to do this test is to match up the rules with the forms with care, so you know that you've found exactly what the rule predicts.

A slightly less mechanical skill is to explain clearly in words what you've found about ordering. Here is an example description, for the example in the preceding section: “In the dialect where *patting* is [ˈpæɪŋ] and *padding* is [ˈpæɪŋ], Vowel Shortening must be applied before Tapping. The reason is that Vowel Shortening depends on the phonemic value of [voice] for the following consonant, before that value is converted to [+voice] by Tapping.”

Here is a description of the ordering argument for the other dialect: “In the dialect where both *patting* and *padding* are both pronounced [ˈpæɪŋ], Tapping must be applied before Vowel Shortening. If we applied Tapping first, it would “see” the underlying /t/ of *patting* and wrongly shorten the vowel.” This description is of the “counterfactual” type, which tells us what would go wrong if we ordered the rules differently.

### 10.2 “Indifferent” cases

In a great number of cases, two rules simply don't interact, and either ordering is compatible with an adequate grammar. For instance, in *pin*, underlying /pm/, it simply doesn't matter whether we apply Aspiration first and Vowel Nasalization second, or Vowel Nasalization first and Aspiration second; we will get [p<sup>h</sup>ɪn] no matter what.

## 11. Discovering phonemes with distributional analysis

There is a fairly standard technique for starting with phonetic data, and determining from it the phonemes and allophonic rules of the phonology. It has no standard name but might be called “distributional analysis.” The technique does not even need to know the structure of the words or what they mean — all that we need is that knowledge of when two utterances are different words or the same word. Distributional analysis for phonemes has two parts.

### 11.1 Location of minimal pairs

Remember what we said about phonemes earlier, as the “Phonemic Principle” (248): Every language has a limited set of phonemes (= basic speech sounds); and every word in the language consists solely of phonemes of that language. Now that we are including allophones in the system, we must consider this a little more abstractly: the limited set of phonemes is actually a set of

*abstract* entities, from which the pronounced allophones are derived by rule. This leads us to a more sophisticated characterization of the phoneme.

(256) **Defn.: phoneme**

The inventory of **phonemes** for a language is the smallest set of abstract sounds from which all the (physically pronounced) sounds can be derived by rule.

So, for example, we set up /ɪ/ as the entity that underlies both surface [ɪ] and surface [ɪ<sup>w</sup>], along with a rule to derive the latter allophone. An adequate full phoneme inventory for English would include enough phonemes to permit us to derive everything.

The definition in (256) immediately leads to one of the two principal techniques for figuring out a phonemic system. Here is the rationale. If I give you the following set of paired words:

<i>pin</i>	[pɪn]	<i>tin</i>	[tɪn]
<i>pail</i>	[peɪl]	<i>tail</i>	[teɪl]
<i>append</i>	[ə'pɛnd]	<i>attend</i>	[ə'tɛnd]
<i>cap</i>	[kæp]	<i>cat</i>	[kæt]
<i>aspen</i>	['æspən]	<i>Aston</i>	['æstən]

then I have firmly ruled out the possibility that [p] is an allophone of /t/ (or similarly that [t] is an allophone of /p/). The reason is that *there can be no environment* for the claimed rules that derive these allophones — no such environment could exist, given that they occur in exactly the same locations in plainly different pairs of words. These locations are:

[ \_\_\_ ɪn]  
 [ \_\_\_ eɪl]  
 [ə' \_\_\_ ɛnd]  
 [kæ \_\_\_ ]  
 ['æs \_\_\_ ən]

It follows that pairs like *pin* and *tin* are extremely informative about the phonemic system. Such pairs are called **minimal pairs**.

(257) **Defn.: Minimal pair**

Two words form a **minimal pair** if they differ in just one sound, in the same location.

All the pairs given above are minimal pairs. *Pin* [pɪn] and *Tim* [tɪm] are not a minimal pair for /t/ and /p/ because they differ in more than one sound. *Spin* [spɪn] and *pins* [pɪnz] are not a minimal pair for /s/ and /z/ because the [s] and [z] occur in different locations.

Linguists tend to be fond of minimal pairs; indeed long ago a linguist wrote “minimal pairs are the analyst’s delight”. They instantly clarify a distinction; in the present case they show that two

sounds are separate phonemes. If you have a minimal pair, anywhere in linguistics,<sup>205</sup> then you know you have two structurally different things, and you know where the difference lies.

Even better than minimal pairs are minimal triplets, minimal quadruplets, minimal n-tuplets; the more the better. A set like *pin, tin, chin, kin, bin, gin, din, fin, thin, sin, shin, Zinn, Lynn, win* already establishes the phonemic status of a majority of English consonants.

### 11.2 Establishing complementary distribution

The other well-known method for figuring out a phonemic system is to locate pairs of sounds that are in **complementary** distribution, defined as follows.

#### (258) Defn. **Complementary distribution**

Two sounds A and B are in **complementary distribution** if B never occurs in the environments where A occurs, and vice versa.

Complementary distribution is a pattern that strongly suggests membership in the same phoneme.<sup>206</sup> It implies that there is an important phonological generalization present, which ought to be accounted for by our system of rules. Usually, when A is in complementary distribution with B, it is sensible either to derive surface [A] from underlying /B/ or derive surface [B] from underlying /A/.<sup>207</sup> In the discussions above, we established complementary distribution for various sets of sounds: [ɪ] and [ɪ<sup>w</sup>], short and normal-length vowels, oral and nasalized vowels, aspirated and plain voiceless stops.

Sometimes, complementary distribution can be established just by staring at the data and letting the answer come to you! On the other hand, if you get stuck, there is a simple procedure you can follow that increases the chances of success. This method has no official name, but I will call it the method of **local environments** here.

Let us look at two sounds of English. The regular [l] we have already defined, as a lateral approximant. The so-called **dark l** is transcribed [ɫ] (l with a tilde through it). It is made by pushing the tongue body upward and backward at the same time the tongue blade makes the appropriate movement for the l. I list below a bunch of words that have either the normal “light” [l] or dark [ɫ]. Here are some data.

<sup>205</sup> The minimal pair method is widely used in phonemicization, but in fact it is an important method of analysis throughout linguistics. Thus, we have already seen minimal pairs in morphology (Turkish *eli* ‘hand-accusative’ / *ele* ‘hand-dative’), in syntax (“Fred stole/killed the chicken from Greeley”), and in semantics (“Alice congratulated her/herself”). Throughout, the method used is to compare utterances that have just one single difference, in order to learn the contribution made by that difference.

<sup>206</sup> There are exceptions (complementary distribution, but separate phonemes), which you would have to learn about in a more advanced treatment of phonology. See For Further Reading at the end of Chapter 12.

<sup>207</sup> The exception is when (for example) A is in complementary distribution with *both* B and C, but B and C belong to separate phonemes. We must then evaluate a number of different analyses; one usually emerges as much simpler.

<i>Words with light</i> [l]		<i>Words with dark</i> [ɫ]	
lay	[leɪ]	fall	[faɫ]
lose	[luːz]	tell	[teɫ]
please	[plɪz]	else	[ɛɫs]
allow	[ə'laʊ]	filter	[fɪɫə]
gremlin	[ˈgɹɛmlən]	milk	[ˈmɪɫk]
freely	[ˈfriːli]	apple	[ˈæpəɫ]

In the method of local environments, you write down a dash, and before it whatever comes before the target sound, and after it whatever comes after the target sound. When the sound comes initially, we can use [ to mark a “left word boundary” and when it comes finally we can use ] to mark a right word boundary. So, the local environments for the data just given are as follows:

<i>Words with light</i> [l]		<i>Words with dark</i> [ɫ]	
lay	[ ___ eɪ	fall	ɑ ___ ]
lose	[ ___ u	tell	ɛ ___ ]
please	p ___ i	else	ɛ ___ s
allow	ə ___ aʊ	filter	ɪ ___ t
gremlin	m ___ ə	milk	ɪ ___ k]
freely	i ___ i	apple	ə ___ ]

Looking at the data in this way often suffices to reveal the crucial environment. If not, you can break the data down even further. Look just at the left side, like this:

<i>Words with light</i> [l]		<i>Words with dark</i> [ɫ]	
lay	[ ___	fall	ɑ ___
lose	[ ___	tell	ɛ ___
please	p ___	else	ɛ ___
allow	ə ___	filter	ɪ ___
gremlin	m ___	milk	ɪ ___
freely	i ___	apple	ə ___

and also look just at the right side, like this:

<i>Words with light</i> [l]		<i>Words with dark</i> [ɫ]	
lay	___ eɪ	fall	___ ]
lose	___ u	tell	___ ]
please	___ i	else	___ s
allow	___ aʊ	filter	___ t
gremlin	___ ə	milk	___ k]
freely	___ i	apple	___ ]

In this case, the “right side only” display of the data yields the answer very clearly: light [l] comes before a vowel. Nothing else appears to work. (In particular, we can’t use “after a vowel”, since both [l] and [ɫ] occur after vowels.)

Once you have a description, the procedure is as before: select the elsewhere allophone as the underlying representation, since it will generally make possible the simplest rule or set of rules. In this case, we clearly should choose /l/, since we can apply a single rule of Lightening to get the [l] allophone. (Choosing /l/ is perhaps more intuitive, but would require two rules of Darkening, one applying before a consonant, one at the ends of words. The diacritics of the IPA are a human-created convention, and are not necessarily a good guide to the choice of underlying forms.)

The full analysis works as follows:

Phoneme: /l/

Rule:

**/l/ Lightening**

ɫ → [-back] / \_\_\_\_ [+syllabic]

*‘/l/ becomes light when it precedes a vowel’*

Derivations:

<i>lay</i>	<i>please</i>	<i>freely</i>	<i>fall</i>	<i>else</i>	
/ləɪ/	/plɪz/	/fri:li/	/fɑɫ/	/ɛɫs/	underlying representations
l	l	l	_____	_____	/l/ Lightening
[leɪ]	[plɪz]	[fri:li]	[fɑɫ]	[ɛɫs]	surface representations

Summing up, the method of local environments is often an effective way to establish the environments of particular allophones, and it worth trying if you get stuck.

Limitations: the local-environment method cannot be relied upon all the time, for two reasons. First, every once in a while, you get a *nonlocal* environment, for instance a vowel allophone that depends on the vowel of the next syllable. Second, sometimes the step of looking at the left side and the right side separately fails, because the environment involves both sides. Most often, a two-sided environment is between vowels (“intervocalic”) as in Tapping.

### 11.3 Near-minimal pairs

From time to time, the language does not “cooperate” with the linguist in providing minimal pairs for particular pairs of sounds. This can happen for several reasons. Sometimes, the words of the language are long, so they are less likely to differ in just one place. Sometimes, minimal pairs are lacking for sounds that happen to be rare in the language — as an example, you might try

finding English minimal pairs for /ɜ/ vs. [ð].<sup>208</sup> Lastly, sometimes sounds tend (but only tend) to occur in rather different environments: English [ɑ] is *mostly* confined to syllables bearing the main stress of a word, and for this reason, it is unlikely to occur in minimal pairs with [ə], which may occur only in stressless syllables.

In such cases, we often will end up concluding that, despite the lack of minimal pairs, the sounds in question really are two separate phonemes. This is because the true criterion is not whether a minimal pair exists, but rather whether a phonological rule predicting the difference is feasible (a minimal pair instantly suffices to show that no such rule could exist). When we are unable to derive a distinction between sounds by rule, we have no choice but to place the two sounds in underlying representation, classifying them as separate phonemes.

In order to show that no rule could exist, the backup strategy normally followed is to find a set of **near-minimal pairs** for the target sounds. These consist of pairs of words in which the two target sounds occur in *very similar*, though not identical, environments. If there are enough such pairs, it becomes plain that there could be no workable phonological rule to derive the distinction.

To give an example, I believe that for at least some dialects of English, there simply are no minimal pairs for [ə] and [ɑ]. However, there are fair number of near-minimal pairs for the distinction, which will differ from speaker to speaker. The list in (259) is from my own speech; other speakers may pronounce some of the words differently.

(259) *A set of near-minimal pairs for [ɑ] vs. [ə]*

<i>Words with [ɑ]</i>		<i>Words with [ə]</i>	
<i>boron</i>	[ˈbɔ.ɹɑn]	<i>Lauren</i>	[ˈlɔ.ɹən]
<i>hexagon</i>	[ˈhɛksəɡɑn]	<i>Michigan</i>	[ˈmɪʃəɡən]
<i>Huguenot</i>	[ˈhjuɡənɑt]	<i>geminate</i>	[ˈdʒɛmənət]
<i>ion</i>	[ˈaɪɑn]	<i>Zion</i>	[ˈzaɪən]
<i>Islam</i>	[ˈɪzlɑm]	<i>bedlam</i>	[ˈbɛdləm]
<i>lexicon</i>	[ˈlɛksəkɑn]	<i>Mexican</i>	[ˈmɛksəkən]
<i>mascot</i>	[ˈmæskɑt]	<i>basket</i>	[ˈbæskət]
<i>meson</i>	[ˈmɪzɑn]	<i>reason</i>	[ˈri:zən]
<i>neon</i>	[ˈniɑn]	<i>Ian</i>	[ˈiən]
<i>Panama</i>	[ˈpænəmə]	<i>cinema</i>	[ˈsɪnəmə]
<i>tarragon</i>	[ˈterəɡɑn]	<i>Berrigan</i>	[ˈbe.ɹəɡən]
<i>pompom</i>	[ˈpɑmpɑm]	<i>wampum</i>	[ˈwɑmpəm]

<sup>208</sup> For speakers *leather* [ˈlɛðə] vs. *leisure* [ˈlɛʒə] will work. I've also heard *pleasure* [ˈplɛʒə] vs. *pleather* [ˈplɛðə] 'type of artificial leather made from plastic'.

The basis of the argument from near-minimal pairs becomes clear if you set yourself the (hopeless) task of writing a rule to derive [ə] from /a/, or [ɑ] from /ə/. Why should the far-away /l/ in *lexicon* induce an [ɑ], whereas the far-away /m/ in the similar word *Mexican* induces [ə]? Why should a far-away /ɹ/ induce a [ə] in *reason* whereas an /m/ in the same position induces an [ɑ] in *meson*? There is no rhyme or reason to the data and thus there is no basis for a rule. The right conclusion is to set up /a/ and /ə/ as separate phonemes, and not try to posit “rules” that have no validity.

#### 11.4 Summing up so far: analytic methods

Encountering a language, we will (if our ears are good) notice perhaps hundreds of audibly distinct sounds. The task of phonemicization is to set up a relatively small number of phonemes (usually a few dozen), such that if we apply the right rules we can derive all of the observed sounds from them.

In order to sort out the sounds into phonemes, the key techniques are:

- Any two sounds for which a **minimal pair** exists must be allophones of distinct phonemes.
- Any two sounds for which a convincing set of **near-minimal pairs** exists must be allophones of distinct phonemes.
- Any two sounds that are in **complementary distribution** or **free variation** are likely to be allophones of the same phoneme.

## 12. Phonemic analysis on novel languages

Phonemic analysis of English has a kind of trivial quality to it if you are an English speaker — we intuitively sense our own phonemic system, and the rules are just adding the details. But this is an English-internal perspective. The surprises happen when you do the same basic procedure on other languages.

In particular, the sounds are often organized in a way quite different from how English works. In English, /ð/ is an independent phoneme, supported by multiple minimal pairs. In Spanish, [ð] is normally analyzed as an allophone of the phoneme /d/: wherever the /d/ phoneme would appear between two vowels, the phonetically-similar allophone [ð] occurs instead. In English, the aspirated stops [p<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup>] are treated as allophones, respectively, of /p t k/; whereas in Korean, Mandarin Chinese, and many other languages, /p<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup>/ and /p t k/ form distinct series of phonemes, supported by numerous minimal pairs. So the important idea is to work out of each language’s phonemic system in its own terms.

Below I give the two principal errors that can arise during phonemicization.

### 12.1 Underdifferentiation

Sometimes linguists do not set up *enough* phonemes, so that pairs of words that have distinct pronunciations fail to have distinct phonemic content — there is a “lost distinction”. This is sometimes called **underdifferentiation**. The usual reason for underdifferentiation is that the

linguist cannot hear the lost distinction. Thus, for instance, for years the sounds [ɪ] and [ʊ] of the West African language Okpe went missed by linguists, who heard them mistakenly as the same as [e] and [o].

To repair underdifferentiation errors, it helps to bring more linguists onto the scene — especially, native speaker linguists, who have the great advantage of having heard the distinction from birth. Acoustic phonetic measurements also can be helpful.

## 12.2 Overdifferentiation

Linguists occasionally set up *too many* phonemes. This is the result of insufficient analysis: the linguist fails to notice that two sounds are in complementary distribution. In this kind of error, a generalization is missed, and we have a failure to note that the distributions of the allophones are predictable by rule. The error is sometimes called **overdifferentiation**; two sounds are treated as separate phonemes when they should be treated as the same phoneme.

An example of phonemic overdifferentiation occurred around the 16th century when the invading Spaniards first encountered Tagalog in the Philippines. They assumed that all five vowels of Spanish /i, e, a, o, u/ were vowel phonemes of Tagalog — and spelled them with their own five Roman letters. But in the Tagalog of the time, [e] and [o] were allophones of the phonemes /i/ and /u/, and indeed in the alphabet the Tagalog speakers were already using, [e] and [o] were spelled with the same letters used for [i] and [u] (phonemic writing). The Spaniards' error reflects the natural but naïve expectation that a new language you encounter will be maximally similar to your own.

## 13. Phonemic analysis of Yidjɪn

Let us work out some phonemes in a more detailed example, using data from an Australian aboriginal language, Yidjɪn ([ɲ] is IPA for the palatal nasal, like Spanish “ñ”). Yidjɪn is no longer spoken, though there may be a few aborigines alive today who remember a few words. Fieldwork on Yidjɪn was carried out in the 1960's and 70's by Prof. Robert M. W. Dixon of the Australian National University, who also developed the phonemic analysis given. The data below are somewhat idealized, constructed from Dixon's lexicon following his description of the facts.

First, here are the non-English IPA symbols needed.

- [ɟ] is a voiced palatal stop —same place of articulation as [j], but full stop closure.
- [ɲ] is a palatal nasal, as noted above
- [ː] indicates that the preceding vowel is long
- [ɫ] is dark l, with the feature [+back]. As noted above in section 11.2, this sound occurs as an allophone in English, though the environment is not the same as in Yidjɪn.
- [r̠] is a trilled r.
- [ɻ] is a retroflex central approximant, with tongue tip curled up and back.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>209</sup> Some English speakers use this kind of r, rather than the (more common) /ɹ/.

The following are consonant and vowel charts for Yidjɪn. These are not just a casual review—consulting the chart is actually a good procedure to follow when you are discovering the rule environments.

(260) *Phonetic charts: sounds of Yidjɪn*

a. *Consonants*

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
Stops (voiced)	b	d		ɟ	g
Nasals	m	n		ɲ	ŋ
Liquids nonlateral		r	ɻ		
Lateral		l			
Lateral [+back]		ɭ			
Glides	w			j	

b. *Vowels*

	Front Unrounded	Back Unrounded	Back Rounded
High tense	i, i:		u, u:
High lax	ɪ, ɪ:		ʊ, ʊ:
Low		a, a:	

Here are the 54 words we will be working with.

(261) *Data for Yidjɪn problem*

1. [ɟɔmba:ɡɪ] ‘tobacco’
2. [ɲawu:ɟɔ] ‘salt-water turtle’
3. [ɡuɭa:ɭ] ‘big-leafed fig tree’
4. [ɲɟɲɔ:r] ‘initiated man’
5. [dugu:bil] ‘bark bag’
6. [muɲɟɔ:ɭ] ‘plenty’
7. [wigilwigil] ‘sweet’
8. [ɟambu:ɭ] ‘two’
9. [ɟoɭɲu:ɭ] ‘waterfall’
10. [ɡabu:ɭ] ‘stick for carrying fish’
11. [wurgu:ɭ] ‘pelican’

12. [babu:ɟɔ] (can't find gloss)
13. [gʉlɟɪ] 'sand, sugar'
14. [magu:f] 'a root vegetable'
15. [muɭna:ri] 'blanket'
16. [ɲumbu:bɔ] 'new-born baby'
17. [jɔjɔ.ɟuŋguɭ] 'noise of snake sliding through grass'
18. [ɟɔga:bal] 'house frame'
19. [ɟɔwa:r] 'wattle tree'
20. [ɟɔdu:ɬɔ] 'brown pigeon'
21. [duɭnbi:laj] 'white cedar'
22. [ɟimu:r] 'large house'
23. [gunbu:f] 'billy-can'
24. [guɭa:n] 'walnut tree'
25. [ɲɔŋgu:f] 'Torres Straits pigeon'
26. [muga:ɟɔ] 'fish net'
27. [wi:ɟu:f] 'shellfish species'
28. [wuɭmbu:ɟ] 'leafy broom'
29. [ɟɔri:n] 'leech'
30. [ɲɔndu:ba] 'you-nom. sing'
31. [gʉjɔ] 'tree vine species'
32. [wuɭmbu:ɟ] 'leafy broom'
33. [ɟɔɭgʉnɔ] 'black myrtle tree'
34. [buɭu:ɟ] 'storytime person'
35. [ɲu:ɟu:f] 'just now'
36. [gʉgu:ɬɔ] 'recitative mourning style used by men'
37. [wubu:f] 'lucky'
38. [dalɲudalɲɔ] 'sound of bell ringing'
39. [dalɔ] 'forehead'
40. [ɟɔma:l] 'straight spear thrower'
41. [ɟilɲɔ] 'down'
42. [baŋga:mo] 'English potato'
43. [muɭa:ri] 'initiated man'
44. [gangu:f] 'grey wallaby'
45. [gʉjɔ:n] 'wind'
46. [gajɔ:f] 'dirty (e.g. water)'

47. [bułgu:ɿ] 'swamp'  
 48. [ʃuŋgu:m] 'worm'  
 49. [ʃoʊɿ] 'sharp, pointed'  
 50. [gawu:t] 'blue gum tree'  
 51. [bawo:] 'backbone'  
 52. [gawo:] 'tree species'  
 53. [galbr:] 'catfish'  
 54. [diwi:] 'small ground bee'

In doing phonemicization with raw data like this, the overall strategy one follows is to consider pairs or small groups of sounds that are **phonetically similar**, under the hypothesis that they are allophones of the same phoneme. There is no reliable principle to be followed here other than general phonetic similarity; one must make guesses, some of which pay off in the discovery of allophonic relationships. Usually in introductory textbooks, the author decides to send you in a direction that actually turns out to work when you try it, and that will be generally true here.

We can start in on Yidjɿ by considering the two sounds [l] and [ɿ], which are indeed phonetically similar (light vs. dark l). Following the method of section 11.2 above, we collect local environments for these sounds by looking up each on in the data, and recording (a) the example number; (b) the preceding sound; (c) the following sound. Here is such a chart for [l]:

(262) *Local environments for Yidjɿ [l]*

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 5. i ___]   | 38. a ___ŋ  |
| 7. i ___w   | 38. a ___ŋ  |
| 7. i ___]   | 39. a ___o  |
| 18. a ___]  | 40. a: ___] |
| 21. i: ___a | 41. i ___ŋ  |

The first local environment on chart (262) was obtained by taking the l-containing form

5. [du'gu:bił]

from (261) and replacing l with \_\_\_, as follows:

5. [du'gu:bi\_\_\_]

and then removing all the material not next to the l:

5. [~~du'~~gu:bi\_\_\_]

The resulting entry in (262), 5. i \_\_\_\_ ], means “an [l] occurred after [i] and at the end of a word.” All the other entries in (262) were obtained the same way.

The same procedure yields this list for dark [ɫ]:

(263) *Local environments for Yidiɲ dark [ɫ]:*

3. u ____ a	20. u: ____ ʊ	34. u ____ u
8. u: ____ ]	21. u ____ n	35. u: ____ ]
9. ʊ ____ n	23. u: ____ ]	36. u: ____ ʊ
10. u: ____ ]	24. u ____ a	37. u: ____ ]
11. u: ____ ]	25. u: ____ ]	43. u ____ a:
13. u ____ g	27. u: ____ ]	44. u: ____ ]
14. u: ____ ]	28. u ____ m	46. ʊ: ____ ]
15. u ____ ɲ	32. u ____ m	47. u ____ g
17. u ____ ]	33. ʊ ____ u	50. u: ____ ]

These lists are then inspected for pattern. It’s useful to look first at “right sides” alone, then at “left sides” alone, and remember the phonetic character of the sounds in involved. In the present case, the payoff comes from looking at the “left side” environments for [ɫ], which, shown alone, look like this:

(264) *Inspecting the local environments for Yidiɲ [ɫ]: left sides only*

3. u ____	20. u: ____	34. u ____
8. u: ____	21. u ____	35. u: ____
9. ʊ ____	23. u: ____	36. u: ____
10. u: ____	24. u ____	37. u: ____
11. u: ____	25. u: ____	43. u ____
13. u ____	27. u: ____	44. u: ____
14. u: ____	28. u ____	46. ʊ: ____
15. u ____	32. u ____	47. u ____
17. u ____	33. ʊ ____	50. u: ____

which in turn reduces to the following four cases:

u \_\_\_\_, u: \_\_\_\_, ʊ \_\_\_\_, ʊ: \_\_\_\_

These four cases occupy a specific region of the vowel chart, repeated below:

	Front Unrounded	Back Unrounded	Back Rounded
High tense	i, i:		u, u:
High lax	ɪ		ʊ, ʊ:
Low		a, a:	

This can be characterized very simply as the round vowels.<sup>210</sup> Thus, using our feature set, “in the environment, after a round vowel” is stated:

$$/ \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] \text{—}$$

This is clearly a meaningful discovery; there are enough data that this pattern is very unlikely to be true by accident.

The next thing to check is: how does the distribution of the phonetically similar light [l] sound relate to this environment? Combing through the list of local environments (262), we find that there are *no* cases of light [l] in the environment  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] \text{—}$ . Thus, we have established complementary distribution.

The phonemic analysis would work like this. [l] is the “elsewhere” allophone, since there is nothing particular that defines its distribution, other than not matching the environment for dark [ɫ]. Therefore we set up the elsewhere allophone as the phoneme /l/, and write the following rule:

(265) /l/ Darkening (Yidip)

$$l \rightarrow [+back] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] \text{—}$$

*“Realize the /l/ phoneme as back (dark; velarized) when it follows a round vowel.”*

This rule can be illustrated with derivations of words chosen from the original data in (261). To make the illustration clear, we pick one form that is eligible for the rule and one that isn’t:

(266) *Derivations to illustrate Yidip /l/ Darkening*

10. /ga'bu:l/	5. /du'gu:bil/	underlying representation
ɫ	—	/l/ Darkening
[ga'bu:ɫ]	[du'gu:bil]	surface representation

<sup>210</sup> It’s true that these four vowels are also [+back] and [+high]; we’re going for a terse characterization here (see p. 414) and there’s no point in using more features than necessary.

#### 14. Some minimal pairs in Yidj

In many languages (for instance, Italian and Swahili), long vowels are allophones of the their short counterparts. This *might* be true of Yidj — in principle — but the following minimal pair data show that we needn't pursue this hypothesis very far:

[malan]	'flat rock'
[mala:n]	'right hand'
[wuɹu]	'spear handle'
[wu:u:]	'river' or 'snake species' <sup>211</sup>
[guɹil]	'smell-present tense'
[gu:i:l]	'smell-past tense'

Plainly, the long and short vowel pairs must be counted as separate phonemes.

#### 15. More Yidj allophones

The local-environment method for detection of allophones is applied below to [u], [ʊ], [u:], and [u:]; again the data we are working from are from (261).

---

<sup>211</sup> Two unrelated meanings, like English *bank*.

(267) *Environments for [ʊ] in Yidiɲ*

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. ʃ__m  | 48. ʃ__ŋ | 20. ʃ__] |
| 9. ʃ__t  | 49. ʃ__ɹ | 26. ɹ__] |
| 12. ʃ__] | 30. ɲ__n | 33. n__] |
| 18. ʃ__g | 2. ʃ__]  | 36. ʃ__] |
| 19. ʃ__w | 17. ʃ__j | 38. ŋ__] |
| 20. ʃ__d | 17. ʃ__ɹ | 39. l__] |
| 29. ʃ__r | 31. ʃ__] | 41. g__] |
| 33. ʃ__t | 16. b__] | 42. m__] |
| 40. ʃ__m |          |          |

(268) *Environments for [u] in Yidiɲ*

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 11. w__r | 26. m__g | 36. g__g |
| 13. g__t | 28. w__t | 37. w__b |
| 15. m__t | 3. g__t  | 38. ŋ__d |
| 16. ŋ__m | 31. g__j | 4. ŋ__'ɲ |
| 17. ɹ__ŋ | 32. w__t | 43. m__t |
| 17. g__t | 33. ʃ__g | 45. g__t |
| 21. d__t | 33. g__n | 47. b__t |
| 23. g__n | 34. b__t | 5. d__g  |
| 24. g__t | 35. ŋ__ɹ | 6. m__ɲ  |

This one is a bit harder: you have to notice that there are *two* environments for [ʊ]: after a palatal consonant, and at the end of a word. The [u] cases occur in neither environment, so we have a more complex complementary distribution. This is something that we will have to accept; i.e. the idea that the same allophone might be derived by two different rules.

We set up the basic phoneme (“elsewhere”) /u/, and write two rules. Both turn out to be generalizable when we look at further data, so these are preliminary versions.

(269) **Yidiɲ Postpalatal Laxing (preliminary)**

$$u \rightarrow [-\text{tense}] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{palatal} \end{array} \right] \_\_\_$$

“/u/ becomes lax when it follows a palatal consonant.”

(270) **Yidj Final Laxing (preliminary)**

u → [-tense] / \_\_\_\_ ]<sub>word</sub>

“/u/ becomes lax at the end of a word.”

A note on terminology: “lax” is the opposite of “tense” in phonology, hence the rule names with “Laxing”.

Some derivations of three sample forms are as follows. Note that these forms have /l/’s as well, which redundantly illustrate /l/ Velarization.

1.	/jilŋu/	9.	/juŋgu:l/	4.	/bulu:l/	underlying form
	—		u		—	Postpalatal Laxing
	u		—		—	Final Laxing
	—		ɫ		ɫ	/l/ Velarization
	[jilŋu]		[juŋgu:ɫ]		[bulu:ɫ]	phonetic form

There is no need to order the rules in any particular way (any ordering works), and the ordering given is an arbitrary choice.

We turn next to the long vowels [u:] and [u:].

(271) *Environments for [u:] in Yidj*

- 4. j\_\_r
- 45. j\_\_n
- 46. j\_\_ɫ
- 6. j\_\_ɹ
- 51. w\_\_]
- 52. w\_\_]

(272) *Environments for [u:] in Yidj*

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 10. b__ɫ | 25. g__ɫ | 37. b__ɫ |
| 11. g__ɫ | 27. ɹ__ɫ | 44. g__ɫ |
| 12. b__j | 28. b__ɹ | 47. g__ɹ |
| 14. g__ɫ | 30. d__b | 48. g__m |
| 16. b__b | 32. b__ɹ | 5. g__b  |
| 2. w__j  | 34. ɫ__ɹ | 50. w__ɫ |
| 20. d__ɫ | 35. ɹ__ɫ | 8. b__ɫ  |
| 22. m__r |          |          |

23. b\_\_ɪ

36. g\_\_ɪ

9. g\_\_ɪ

It should be clear that the situation is parallel to what we saw with short [u] and [ʊ]: the lax vowel occurs finally and after a palatal consonant, whereas the tense vowel occurs elsewhere. There are fewer data here, but our confidence should be increased by the fact that we've seen the pattern before.

The analysis needs to be revised, not replaced, to handle these data: evidently the rules of Postpalatal Laxing and Final Laxing must apply to the *class* of vowels [ u, ʊ ]. We need, therefore, to be explicit about the vowel features we are using, and then use features to handle the data. Here are vowel features for Yidj:

i [+high, -low, -back, -round, +tense, -long]

i: [+high, -low, -back, -round, +tense, +long]

ɪ [+high, -low, -back, -round, -tense, -long]

u [+high, -low, +back, +round, +tense, -long]

u: [+high, -low, +back, +round, +tense, +long]

ʊ [+high, -low, +back, +round, -tense, -long]

ʊ: [+high, -low, +back, +round, -tense, +long]

a [-high, +low, +back, -round, -tense, -long]

a: [-high, +low, +back, -round, -tense, +long]

With these features, we can we restate the rules as follows, capturing natural classes:

(273) **Yidj Postpalatal Laxing (final version)**

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [-\text{tense}] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{palatal} \end{array} \right] \_\_\_$$

*“Any rounded vowel becomes lax after a palatal consonant.”*

(274) **Yidj Final Laxing (still preliminary)**

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [-\text{tense}] / \_\_\_ ]_{\text{word}}$$

*“Any rounded vowel becomes lax in final position.”*

The designation  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right]$  suffices, in a language like Yidj with a tiny vowel inventory, to designate all and only the vowels of the set { u, ʊ }. As before, the idea behind the rule is that it

changes only the feature [tense], with all other features remaining the same. As a result, /u:/ becomes [u:] and /u/ becomes [ʊ], each retaining their value of the feature [long] — features not specified by the rule are assumed to remain unaltered.

Note that in this kind of analysis, part of the goal is to achieve as much generality as you can. In principle, you could describe the language with zillions of little rules, each applying to one sound in one environment. But aiming for more general rules gives a clearer picture of the overall pattern.

### **Study Exercise #75**

Find three appropriate forms from the list above and illustrate the revised versions of these rules as they apply to long vowels. Use the derivations given in (266) above as your model.

## Answer to Study Exercise #72

52. /bawu:/	6. /mʊŋju:ɹ/	11. /wurgu:l/	underlying representation
—	ʊ	—	Postpalatal Laxing
u:	—	—	Final Laxing
—	—	ɫ	/l/ Velarization
[bawu:]	[mʊŋju:ɹ]	[wurgu:ɫ]	phonetic form

We are almost done sorting the data. Here is how the high front vowels [i] and [ɪ] are distributed.

(275) *Environments for Yidiɲ [i] and [ɪ]*

[ɪ]:

- 1. g\_\_]
- 13. g\_\_]
- 15. r\_\_]
- 43. r\_\_]
- 49. ɹ\_\_]

[i]:

- 22. j\_\_m
- 27. w\_\_ɹ
- 41. j\_\_l
- 5. b\_\_l
- 7. w\_\_g
- 7. g\_\_l
- 7. w\_\_g
- 7. g\_\_l

These data also suggest complementary distribution: all of the [ɪ]'s are final and no [i]'s are final. Knowledge of phonetics helps here: [ɪ] is the lax partner of [i] just as [ʊ] is the lax partner of [u], suggesting that our Final Laxing rule should be generalized even further, to include the front vowels. However, Postpalatal Laxing should *not* be generalized further, since as examples 22 and 41 show, we get [i], not [ɪ], after palatals.

If Final Laxing applies to long /u:/, to short /u/, and to short /i/, then it have better apply to long /i:/ as well. Data are few, but apparently conform to the prediction:

(276) *Environments for Yidij* [i:], [ɪ:]

[ɪ:]	[i:]
53. b__]	21. b__l
54. w__]	29. r__n

Let us go out on a limb, assuming that collection of further data would continue to confirm the overall pattern. Thus we will complete the fully-generalized rule. We want it to apply, in final position, to { u, u:, i, i: }, but not [a, a:]. This can be done if we formulate it to affect only non-low vowels:

(277) **Yidij Final Laxing (final version)**

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{low} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [-\text{tense}] / \_\_\_ ]_{\text{word}}$$

*“Non-low vowels are made lax in word-final position.”*<sup>212</sup>

### Study Exercise #76

Review the completed phonemic analysis of the Yidij vowels and specify all the natural classes it uses that have more than one member. Describe each natural class according to (a) the rule that uses it; (b) a list of sounds in { }, (c) a description in IPA terminology.

<sup>212</sup> [+high] would work as well as [-low], since Yidij has no mid vowels.

### Answer to Study Exercise #73

Postpalatal Laxing is triggered by the natural class of palatal consonants, which in Yidjɪn is { ʝ, ɲ, j }. Postpalatal Laxing applies to the class of round vowels, which in Yidjɪn is { u, u: }. Final Laxing applies to the natural class of nonlow vowels, which in Yidjɪn is { i, i:, u, u: }.

## 16. The full Yidjɪn phoneme inventory

We've now succeeded in showing that several of the sounds of the Yidjɪn phonetic chart in (260) above are not independent phonemes, but merely allophones. These are placed in parentheses in the revised charts below:

(278) *The sounds of Yidjɪn with allophones shown in parentheses*

### a. Consonants

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
Stops (voiced)	b	d		ʝ	g
Nasals	m	n		ɲ	ŋ
Liquids nonlateral		r	ɻ		
Lateral		l			
Lateral velarized		(ɭ)			
Glides	w			j	

### b. Vowels

	Front Unrounded	Back Unrounded	Back Rounded
High tense	i, i:		u, u:
High lax	(ɪ), (ɪ:)		(ʊ), (ʊ:)
Low		a, a:	

This reduces the phoneme population to 19, which is a rather small phoneme inventory compared to most languages.

## 17. Optional rules and the local-environments method

The existence of optional rules implies a slight change in how we determine the system of phonemes: we need to look not just for cases of complementary distribution (defined above in (202)) but also for cases of **free variation**. Free variation occurs whenever you have this situation:

in some particular context, wherever X occurs, so can Y, and vice versa. Thus in the English example given earlier, in the context / \_\_\_ [+nasal], wherever [æ] can occur, so can [ɛə], and vice versa. Two sounds occurring in free variation are treated as allophones of a single phoneme, and the only difference is that the rule deriving the contextual allophone is optional..

The method of local environments can be adapted for free variation. The key is to make separate columns for each *variation pattern*. Thus, for instance, if you were working on the data for the rule of /æ/ Diphthongization (247) (p. 426), you would make a column headed “[æ] or [ɛə]”, like this:

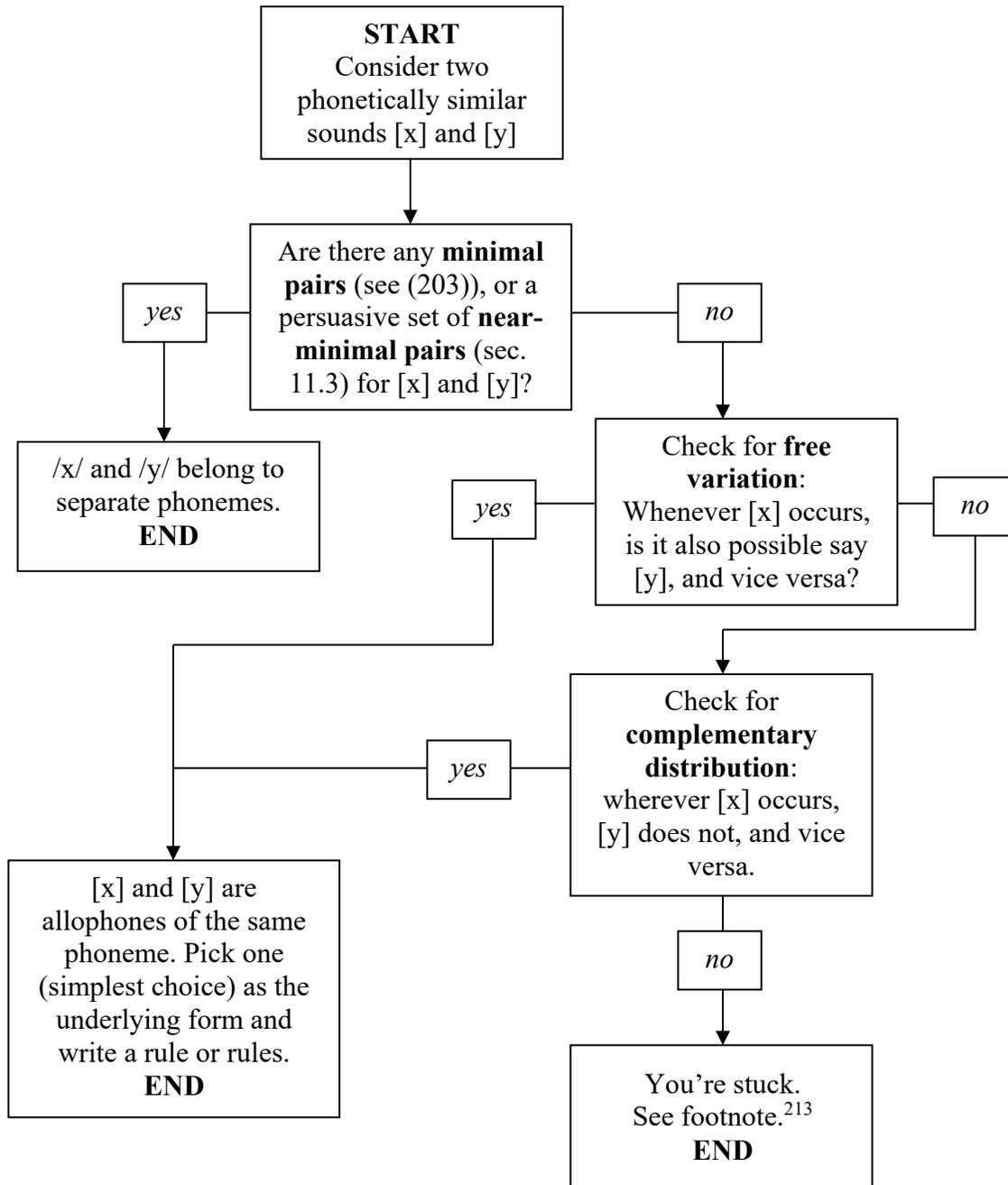
[æ] or [ɛə]		[æ] only	
<i>can</i>	/ k ___ n	<i>cat</i>	/ k ___ t
<i>man</i>	/ m ___ n	<i>pack</i>	/ p ___ k
<i>Spanish</i>	/ p ___ n	<i>lap</i>	/ l ___ p
<i>dance</i>	/ d ___ n	<i>lab</i>	/ l ___ b
<i>spam</i>	/ p ___ m	<i>pal</i>	/ p ___ l
<i>tram</i>	/ ɾ ___ m	<i>lass</i>	/ l ___ s

From this, it would be straightforward to detect that the contextual allophone is [ɛə], and to formulate /æ/ Diphthongization as applying before nasals.

### 17.1 A full “flow chart” for distributional phonemic analysis

Integrating the method for free variation, we can describe the traditional method for distributional phonemic analysis as a “flow chart” of options, as in (221) below.

(279) A flow chart for phonemic analysis



<sup>213</sup> This is unlikely to occur, but I could imagine it happening. The scenario are that phonemes [x] and [y] are so rare and/or so irregularly distributed that even near-minimal pairs are hard to find.

**Study Exercise #77**

Data from English. The target sounds are [s] and [ts̩]. Are these one phoneme or two?

- Collect local environments.
- Give the appropriate underlying forms and rules.
- Give underlying representations and derivations for *dance*, *concert*, and *false*.

Hints:

- In your local environments, put the stress mark before the vowel; rather than before the syllable as IPA requires. For instance, for the [s] in [kən'sid], write / n \_\_\_ 'i.

Sorting local environments: make a list for “just [s]”, a list for “[s] and [ts̩] in free variation, and for “just [ts̩]”.

<i>dance</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> dænts̩]
<i>Clarence</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> klɛ.ɹənts̩]
<i>mince</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> mɪnts̩]
<i>hence</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> hɛnts̩]
<i>concert</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kənsət̩], [ <sup>1</sup> kəntsət̩],
<i>cancer</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kænsə̃], [ <sup>1</sup> kæntsə̃]
<i>cancel</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kænsəl], [ <sup>1</sup> kæntsəl]
<i>cancellation</i>	[kænsə <sup>1</sup> leɪʃən], [kæntsə <sup>1</sup> leɪʃən]
<i>tonsil</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> tənsəl], [ <sup>1</sup> təntsəl]
<i>fancy</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> fænsi], [ <sup>1</sup> fænts̩i]
<i>insert</i>	[ɪn <sup>1</sup> sət̩]
<i>concede</i>	[kən <sup>1</sup> sɪd]
<i>coincide</i>	[kɔɪn <sup>1</sup> sɑɪd]
<i>soup</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> sʊp]
<i>false</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> fɔls]
<i>farce</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> fɑ:ɹs]
<i>miss</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> mɪs]
<i>fussy</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> fʌsi]

## 18. Answer to Study Exercise #74

Local environments:

[tʰs] only

*dance* /n \_\_\_ ]

*Clarence* /n \_\_\_ ]

*mince* /n \_\_\_ ]

*hence* /n \_\_\_ ]

Environments for either [s] or [tʰs] in free variation:

*concert* /n \_\_\_ ə

*cancer* /n \_\_\_ ə

*cancel* /n \_\_\_ ə

*cancel* /n \_\_\_ ə

*tonsil* /n \_\_\_ ə

*fancy* /n \_\_\_ i

Environments with only [s]:

*insert* /n \_\_\_ 'ə

*concede* /n \_\_\_ 'i

*coincide* /n \_\_\_ 'aɪ

*soup* / [ \_\_\_ 'u

*false* /l \_\_\_ ]

*farce* /ɪ \_\_\_ ]

*miss* / 'ɪ \_\_\_ ]

*fussy* / 'ʌ \_\_\_ i

[s] and [tʰs] are sometimes in complementary distribution, sometimes in free variation.

[tʰs] only: word-finally after [n].

Free variation: between [n] and a stressless vowel.

[s] only: elsewhere

We set up /s/ as the underlying form (it would be quite a mess to try to state all the environments for [s], but it works fine as the elsewhere allophone).

Rules:

**Obligatory /s/ Affrication**

$$s \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} -\text{fricative} \\ +\text{affricate} \end{bmatrix} / n \text{ \_\_\_\_ } ]_{\text{word}}$$

“An s becomes [ts̩] if it comes between [n] and the end of a word.”

**Optional /s/ Affrication**

$$s \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} -\text{fricative} \\ +\text{affricate} \end{bmatrix} / n \text{ \_\_\_\_ } \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix} \quad (\text{optional})$$

“An s may become [ts̩] if it comes between [n] and a stressless vowel.”

Derivations:

<i>dance</i>	<i>concert</i>	<i>false</i>	
/'dæns/	/'kɑnsət/	/'fals/	underlying representations
ts̩	—	—	Obligatory /s/ Affrication
—	'kantsət	—	Optional /s/ Affrication
['dænts̩]	['kantsət̩]	[kɑnsət]	phonetic forms

**19. When to use features in writing rules: normal descriptive practice**

Let us be clear: the theory assumed here, in its pure and rigorous form, includes no phonetic symbols at all; rather, a speech sound is simply the matrix (in square brackets) of its feature values, as for example in (238) above. So in a completely rigorous, theory-compliant world, the rules, the representations, and the derivations would include no phonetic symbols at all. On the other hand, there is a virtue of making our work reasonably terse and also intelligible to others, and so often a working phonological analysis is carried out with the occasional use of phonetic symbols. This is done repeatedly above.

I feel that in semi-formal presentation, it is appropriate to use a *mixed* notation, using phonetic symbols where they lead to no harm, and features where they contribute insight. Here are ways in which rules benefit by writing them with features.

**To capture a natural class.** We've seen multiple examples of this: in  $A \rightarrow B / \text{\_\_\_\_} C$ , if either A or C is a group of sounds describable with a set of features (natural class), it makes sense to use the features for A or C.

**To provide an insightful way of showing what features are changing.** This relate to the “ $\rightarrow B$ ” expression in the rule schema  $A \rightarrow B / \text{\_\_\_\_} C$ . If, for example, if a rule changes [p t k] to [b d g] one would want to express the change as “ $\rightarrow [+voice]$ ” to capture the generalization of

voicing change across three places of articulation. Moreover, if we encountered a rule that changed *only* /p/ to [b], leaving /t/ and /k/ unaltered, it would *still* make sense to express the change as “→ [+voice]” rather than “p → b”, because this characterizes the natural relatedness of [p] and [b] and shows that the change induced by the rule is a minor one (one feature).

**To capture an assimilation.** An **assimilation** is a phonological process in which one sound becomes more similar to a neighboring sound. In feature theory, assimilations show up when the changing feature is that same as a feature present in the environment of the rule. It makes sense to write the rule using features to make it clear that it is in fact an assimilation rule. For example, in English, /k, g, ŋ/ becomes fronted [k̟, g̟, ŋ̟] before front vowels, as in *keel* [ˈk̟il], *gale* [ˈg̟eɪl], or *dinghy* [ˈdɪŋi]. This is an assimilation, which can be expressed by:

### Velar Fronting

$$[+velar] \rightarrow [-back] / \text{---} \begin{bmatrix} +syllabic \\ -back \end{bmatrix}$$

*“A velar consonant becomes fronted before a front vowel.”*

When none of these factors is present, it seems sensible to use IPA symbols; this makes the rule easier to read, and a reader equipped with your feature chart could probably work out a strict featural version without much trouble if necessary.

## Chapter 12: Phonology II — Phonology/Morphology Interaction

### 1. Overview

Phonology is a part of grammar, the part dealing with speech sounds and their realization. Phonology does not operate in isolation, but is tied to other components of the grammar, notably morphology. In what follows we will examine some of the phenomena involving in this relationship.

### 2. Alternation

Let us start with a definition:

(280) **Defn.: alternation**

**Alternation** is the appearance of a single morpheme in different phonetic forms in different contexts.

Alternation is found in all languages of the world. It normally results from an interaction of morphological and phonological rules. To show how alternation arises, we can consider an example, which requires some background material on the morphology and phonology of American English.

For morphology, we can briefly review the format used here for word formation rules. In Chapter 2 we established a rule of word formation that we called the *-able* Rule; repeated below.

(281) *-able* **Rule** (repeated from (52))

$[X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Verb}} \text{əbəl}]_{\text{Adj}}$                       meaning: “able to be Verbed”

This derives, for instance, *lovable* and *wearable*.

In Study Exercise #7 (Chapter 2) we established another word formation rule, the *-ation* Rule:

(282) *-ation* **Rule**

$[X]_{\text{Verb}} \rightarrow [[X]_{\text{Verb}} \text{ˈeɪʃən}]_{\text{Noun}}$                       meaning: “process of Verbing”

This derives, for instance, *accusation*, *improvisation*, and *indentation*.

We will also use some phonological rules that interact with the morphological rules just given. Of these, the following one is new:

(283) **Pre-Stress Aspiration**

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voice} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [+aspirated] / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_ } \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{stressed} \end{bmatrix}$$

This is part of family of rules assigning aspiration; see also Initial Aspiration in (219) above.<sup>214</sup> This one is needed to cover that cases of aspiration that occur other than at the beginning of the word. Here are examples:

*appeal* [ə'p<sup>h</sup>il]  
*attend* [ə't<sup>h</sup>ɛnd]  
*account* [ə'k<sup>h</sup>aʊnt]

In these examples the voiceless stop is between two syllabic sounds (vowel, diphthong, or syllabic consonant), of which the second is stressed. Note further that when the second is *not* stressed, the aspiration is absent (or at least quite weak):

*caper* ['k<sup>h</sup>eɪpə]  
*tickle* ['t<sup>h</sup>ɪkəl]<sup>215</sup>

The remaining phonological rules we'll need were justified in the pages above; they are repeated below for convenience:

**Tapping**

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} +\text{voiced} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{tap} \\ +\text{liquid} \end{bmatrix} / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_ } \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix}$$

as in *butter* ['bʌtə], *motto* ['mɑtə], *vanity* ['vænəri], *ready* ['ɹɛdi], etc.

**Preglottalization** (from (245))

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voiced} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [+glottal] / \text{ \_\_\_ } ]_{\text{word}} \text{ (optional)}$$

as in *cat* ['kæ<sup>ʔ</sup>t], *cap* ['kæ<sup>ʔ</sup>p], *lack* ['læ<sup>ʔ</sup>k], etc.

<sup>214</sup> Not all phonologists have been happy with setting up two aspiration rules (one initial, the other pre-stress), and various proposals have been made to unify them.

<sup>215</sup> We can't check /t/ here because it would undergo Tapping (246), which makes it not a stop at all and hence ineligible for aspiration.

Both of these rules are optional, but for simplicity we will assume here that they apply obligatorily. This simplifying assumption will not change the analysis in any crucial way.

### 3. Testing for the relative ordering of morphology and phonology

With all of these morphological and phonological rules in hand, we can now cover the crucial data:

<i>note</i>	<i>notable</i>	<i>notation</i>
[ˈnəʊt]	[ˈnəʊrəbəl]	[nəʊˈtʰeɪʃən]

<i>quote</i>	<i>quotable</i>	<i>quotation</i>
[ˈkwəʊt]	[ˈkwəʊrəbəl]	[kwəʊˈtʰeɪʃən]

The first three forms are, or are derived from, the stem *note* and the last three from *quote*; the relevant rules of word formation are the *-able* Rule and *-ation* Rule. If we “peel away” the affixes *-able* and *-ation*, then we can look at what is “left over”; that is, the various versions of the stems:

<i>note</i>	<i>notable</i>	<i>notation</i>
[ˈnəʊt]	[ˈnəʊrəbəl]	[nəʊˈtʰeɪʃən]

<i>quote</i>	<i>quotable</i>	<i>quotation</i>
[ˈkwəʊt]	[ˈkwəʊrəbəl]	[kwəʊˈtʰeɪʃən]

or simply:

<i>note</i>	<i>notable</i>	<i>notation</i>
[ˈnəʊt]	[ˈnəʊr]	[nəʊˈtʰ]

<i>quote</i>	<i>quotable</i>	<i>quotation</i>
[ˈkwəʊt]	[ˈkwəʊr]	[kwəʊˈtʰ]

These variant forms of the stems are called **allomorphs**. It can be seen that, following the definition given above of “alternation” ((280): “Alternation is the appearance of a single morpheme in different phonetic forms in different contexts.”), both *note* and *quote* alternate.

Most, but not all alternation, has a simple explanation, stated in the theory given here as follows:

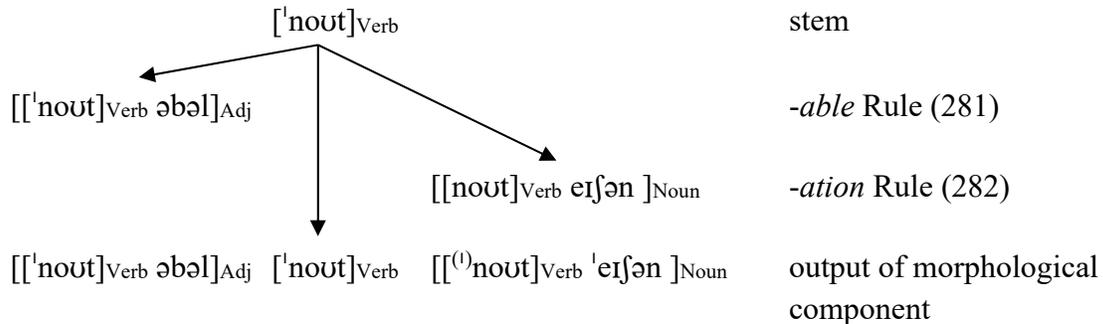
*Morphological rules precede phonological rules.*

More specifically, the morphological component of grammar is assumed to occupy a position before the phonological component. The scheme that results is this: morphological rules, by adding prefixes, suffixes, etc., change the environments in which the phonemes occur. Then, phonological rules sensitive to these environments apply differentially to different instances of the

morpheme. This makes the morphemes show up differently in different contexts; that is to say, makes them alternate.

Here is a derivation showing how the scheme works for the words and rules given so far. It will be a “bicomponential” derivation, with first word formation then phonology.

As noted above in chapter 2, section 16, rules of word formation apply freely; they represent a choice made to derive a new word from an old one. Since this is essentially a form of optionality, we can again use the branching derivation formalism to show the various possible routes:



The resulting forms  $[[{}^1\text{nout}]_{\text{Verb}} \text{əbəl}]_{\text{Adj}}$ ,  $[{}^1\text{nout}]_{\text{Verb}}$ , and  $[[\text{nout}]_{\text{Verb}} \text{'eɪʃən}]_{\text{Noun}}$  are submitted to the phonology, in order to convert the abstract schemata of phonemes to an overt, pronounceable string of sounds. There are reasons to think that the bracketed structure of the morphology is retained in the phonological component, but since this is not necessary here, and it is helpful to keep the representations maximally legible, I will discard the brackets. The phonological component thus starts with:

'noutəbəl                  'nout          nou'teɪʃən<sup>216</sup>

These forms are in fact the phonological **underlying** representations for these words, and would normally be shown surrounded by / /, like this:

/ 'noutəbəl /                  / 'nout /                  / nou'teɪʃən /

The representations are “underlying” for purposes of phonology, where they form the most abstract level of representations; of course they are output representations when considered from the viewpoint of morphology.

As before, the phonological derivation consists of applying the rules in order. In this derivation the phonological rule ordering does not matter, and the order shown was arbitrary chosen.

<sup>216</sup> There is an additional change here, removing the stress on the stem before the stressed suffix *-ation*. This can be done by rule ( $[+\text{syllabic}] \rightarrow [-\text{stress}] / \_\_\_ X [+ \text{stress}]$ ), but we'll not deal with this here.

/ˈnoutəbəl/	/ˈnout/	/nouˈteɪfən/	underlying representations
—	—	t <sup>h</sup>	Pre-Stress Aspiration (283)
r	—	—	Tapping (246)
—	ʔt	—	Preglottalization (245)
[ˈnourəbəl]	[ˈnouʔt]	[nouˈt <sup>h</sup> eɪfən]	phonetic representations

We have now produced an explanation for alternation: the *-able* Rule placed the /t/ of /nout/ in an environment where Tapping could apply to it; the *-ation* Rule placed the /t/ of /nout/ in an environment where Pre-Stress Aspiration could apply to it; and the lack of any morphological affixation left the /t/ in word-final position, where Preglottalization could apply to it. The end result is three allomorphs, [nour], [nouʔt], and [nout<sup>h</sup>].

This pattern is very general in languages: morphology changes environments, phonology “sees” these environments and accommodates the phonemes to them by assigning the appropriate allophone. The theoretical conclusion is that, at least in the normal case, morphology precedes phonology.<sup>217</sup>

#### 4. Phonology so far

Here is a quick summary of what we have so far in phonology.

**Phonemes:** Every language can be analyzed as consisting phonologically of a smallish set of phonemes (usually a few dozen), which form the building blocks for the pronunciation of words. Phonemes are represented as feature matrices, and morphemes as sequences of feature matrices.

**Allophones:** The phonemes often vary according to their context; that is, they have allophones. Sometimes the appearance of particular allophones is obligatory; one must use a particular allophone in a certain context (and if you don’t, the result is phonologically ungrammatical, and “sounds funny”). Sometime we instead get free variation: two or more allophones are possible in one particular context.

**Theory:** morphemes are assumed to have an underlying representation consisting of a string of phonemes. The underlying representation of a phoneme is its elsewhere allophone. Phonological rules apply to these underlying representations to create surface representations, which determine the observed pronunciations. Phonological rules make use of features, which are the phonologically relevant phonetic properties of sounds. They often apply to whole classes of phonemes (definable using the features), and they usually change just one or two feature values.

**Analytic method:** you can prove two sounds are *different* phonemes by presenting a minimal pair (this is: two sounds, identical environment, eliminating the possibility of a rule to predict the difference); or set of near-minimal pairs. You can prove two sounds are part of the *same* phoneme

<sup>217</sup> It is certainly a consensus among linguists that at least some phonology follows morphology. Linguists have also experimented with theories in which some phonological rules are premorphological, some postmorphological; we won’t try to cover such theories here in a first course.

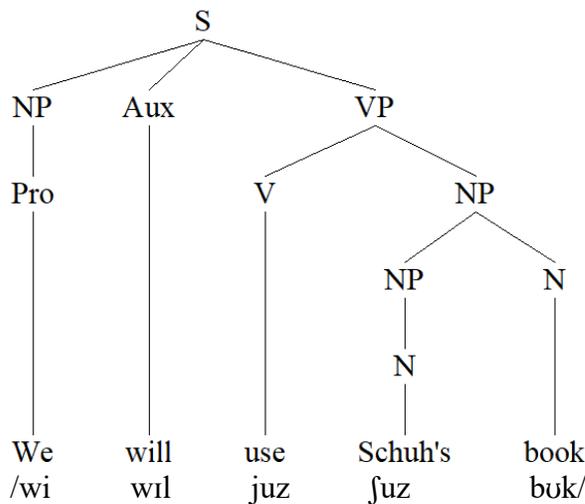
by collecting their environments in a sample of words, scanning these environments for the crucial generalization,<sup>218</sup> and formalizing what you find with rules. The same method works for free variation, if you collect each variation pattern as a separate batch of environments.

**Alternation:** morphology, which works with phonemic forms, puts morphemes in different locations. This makes the phonemes of these morphemes vulnerable to different phonological rules in different locations. As a result, the morphemes get different pronunciations in different contexts, which is what we call alternation.

## 5. The ordering of syntax and phonology

If phonological rules in general apply after morphological rules, then it is worth asking if phonological rules are always ordered in a particular way with respect to syntactic rules. The way to test this is the same as before: we set up a situation in which the ability of the syntax to combine two words into a phrase would alter which phonological rules are able to apply.

In fact, the very first example of a phonological rule covered here, Alveolar Fricative Palatalization, illustrates the ordering of syntax with respect to phonology. In a sentence like *We will use Schuh's book*, it is essential that the syntax apply first, giving a normal tree:



The tree, with its words (shown here both in orthography and in IPA), is then handed off to the phonology, which “sees” the underlying sequence /zʃ/ in *Schuh's book* and applied Alveolar Fricative Palatalization (along with other rules, perhaps), yielding something like this: [wiwiljuʒʃuzbuk].

Here is another example. Just as English has two aspiration rules, it also has two Tapping rules. To review, the original Tapping rule from (246) is repeated here:

<sup>218</sup> This is usually the hardest step. I occasionally suggest to students that memorizing the phonetic symbols and feature chart might be helpful for this task.

## Tapping

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} +\text{voiced} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{tap} \\ +\text{liquid} \end{bmatrix} / [+ \text{syllabic}] \text{ \_\_\_\_ } \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix}$$

*utter* /'ʌtə/ → ['ʌrə]

*batting* /'bætɪŋ/ → ['bærɪŋ]

It is crucial that the second vowel be [−stress], otherwise we get aspiration instead of Tapping. However, there is a particular situation in English where we get Tapping even when the second vowel *is* stressed; namely, when the second vowel is in a separate word.

Here are Tapping examples across word boundary, shown here with the brackets ]<sub>w</sub> [

	<b>Phonemic</b>	<b>Phonetic</b>
<i>at Ed</i>	[ æt ] <sub>w</sub> [ 'ɛd ]	[ ær ] <sub>w</sub> [ 'ɛd ]
<i>get Alice</i>	[ gɛt ] <sub>w</sub> [ 'æɪs ] <sub>w</sub>	[ gɛr ] <sub>w</sub> [ 'æɪs ] <sub>w</sub>
<i>not Adam</i>	[ nɒt ] <sub>w</sub> [ 'ædəm ] <sub>w</sub>	[ nɒr ] <sub>w</sub> [ 'æɪrəm ] <sub>w</sub>

To handle these facts, we need to adopt an additional Tapping rule, which could be written like this:

### (284) Phrasal Tapping

$$t \rightarrow r / [+ \text{syllabic}] \text{ \_\_\_\_ } ]_w [+ \text{syllabic}]$$

In words, this says “make /t/ a tap when it is immediately preceded by a vowel and immediately followed by a vowel which is in the next word.”

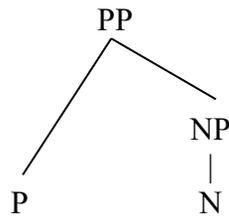
Phrasal Tapping is a phonological rule that can be used to test out the ordering between syntactic and phonological rules. For syntax, we will use the following phrase structure rules taken from (144) above.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PP} &\rightarrow \text{P NP} \\ \text{NP} &\rightarrow \left( \begin{array}{c} \{ \text{Art} \} \\ \{ \text{NP} \} \end{array} \right) (\text{AP})^* \text{N} (\text{PP})^* (\text{CP}) \end{aligned}$$

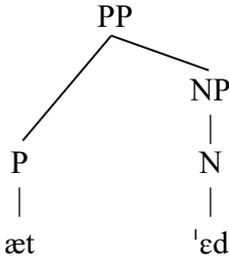
(plus: lexical insertion)

Consider now the pronunciation of the PP *at Ed*. If the syntactic rules apply first, then we will derive the correct output as follows:

## SYNTACTIC COMPONENT:



PP → P NP  
 NP →  $\left( \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Art} \\ \text{NP} \end{array} \right\} \right) (A)^* N (PP) (CP)$



Lexical insertion

## PHONOLOGICAL COMPONENT:

[ æt ]<sub>word</sub> [ 'ɛd ]

(same as above, but tree omitted, and word boundaries made explicit)

[ æɾ ]<sub>word</sub> [ 'ɛd ]

Phrasal Tapping (284)

[æɾ'ɛd]

phonetic form

It is easy to see that, had we applied Phrasal Tapping before the syntactic rules joined *at* and *Ed* together, we would have derived the wrong result. (Indeed, if *all* phonological rules applied before syntax, phrasal phonology simply would not exist.)

What about phonological rules in general? Certainly it is very common for phonological rules to be sensitive to phrasal environments, so at the very least we can say that *some* phonological rules are postsyntactic. Linguists differ on the question of whether there exists in addition a class of presyntactic phonological rules.

## 6. Neutralization

A definition:

(285) **Defn.: neutralization**

**Neutralization** is the phonetically identical realization of distinct phonemic forms.

That is, two forms that differ phonemically undergo their phonological derivation, and emerge as identical.

The rule of Tapping is, at least in many dialects, a neutralization rule. The following data show that Tapping can apply to /d/ as well as to /t/ (plus sign is a notation for morpheme break):

**Cases of Tapping with /t/**

*write* /<sup>1</sup>.ɹaɪt/ [ˈɹaɪ<sup>2</sup>t]  
*writer* /<sup>1</sup>.ɹaɪt+ə/ [ˈɹaɪrə]

*white* /<sup>1</sup>waɪt/ [ˈwaɪ<sup>2</sup>t]  
*whiter* /<sup>1</sup>waɪt+ə/ [ˈwaɪrə]

*pat* /<sup>1</sup>pæt/ [ˈpæ<sup>2</sup>t]  
*padding* /<sup>1</sup>pæɪŋ/ [ˈpæɪŋ]

**Cases of Tapping with /d/**

*ride* /<sup>1</sup>.ɹaɪd/ [ˈɹaɪd]  
*rider* /<sup>1</sup>.ɹaɪd+ə/ [ˈɹaɪrə]

*wide* /<sup>1</sup>waɪd/ [ˈwaɪd]  
*wider* /<sup>1</sup>waɪd+ə/ [ˈwaɪrə]

*pad* /<sup>1</sup>pæd/ [ˈpæd]  
*padding* /<sup>1</sup>pæd+ɪŋ/ [ˈpæɪŋ]

Reformalizing the rule with features, it now reads:

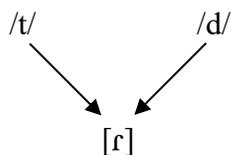
(286) *Tapping (revised)*

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow r / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_ } \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{array} \right]$$

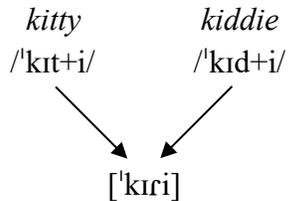
“An alveolar stop when between two vowels of which the second is stressless is realized as a tap.”

The neutralization produced by Tapping takes the form given in (287):

(287) *Neutralization diagram for Tapping*



We have seen several sources of ambiguity in this text, arising from rules of morphology (*undoable*), syntax (*They saw the man with the telescope*) and semantics (*Many children rode on each ride*). Phonological neutralization is yet another source of ambiguity. In the dialect under description here, the listener hearing [ˈ.ɹaɪrə] must infer from context, or just guess, whether the speaker meant /<sup>1</sup>.ɹaɪtə/ *writer* or /<sup>1</sup>.ɹaɪdə/ *rider*. Usually, context suffices, but in my own experience the particular ambiguity [ˈkɪɹi] = *kitty/kiddie* really does seem to create confusion — many households have both kitties and kiddies in them! The neutralization diagram for this word pair is given below.



The case of Tapping is somewhat unusual in that two phonemes are realized identically by converting them into an allophone that happens to be different from either of them. More typically, the neutralized output is identical to one or the other phoneme. Here is an instance; consider the following data:

<i>We live in Pittsburgh</i>	[ɪm pɪtsbəg]
<i>Wouldja hand me the phone book?</i>	[foum bʊk]
<i>I gotta make a phone call.</i>	[fouŋ kəl]
<i>It's all a con game.</i>	[kɑŋ geɪm]

If one says these casually enough, the /n/'s at the end of *phone*, *in*, and *con* turn into either [m] or [ŋ]. The patterning is as follows:

n	→	m	/	___	p
n	→	m	/	___	b
n	→	ŋ	/	___	k
n	→	ŋ	/	___	g

Very informally, we can write the rule as follows:

### Nasal Place Assimilation

n → [same place] / \_\_\_ [-syllabic]

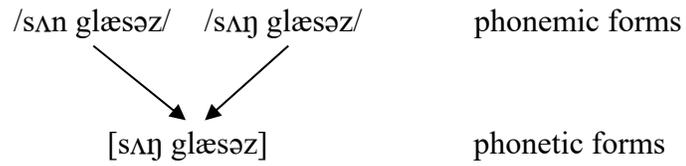
where “same place” is shorthand for changing all of the place features to match those of the following sound.

Nasal Place Assimilation is clearly a neutralizing rule; it neutralizes the difference between /n/ and /m/ in some cases, and between /n/ and /ŋ/ in others. For example, the following sentence is ambiguous:

“They were [sʌŋ glæsəz]”

The readings are the sensible “They were sunglasses”, and the phonetically literal but nonsensical “They were sung glasses”.

(288) Neutralization diagram for “sunglasses” and “sung glasses”

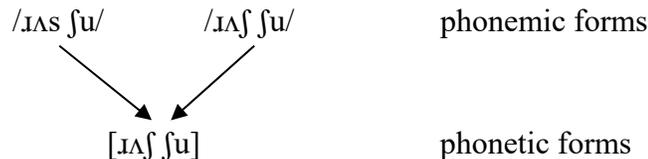


### Study Exercise #78

Look at chapter 10, section 13.2. Justify this claim: “Alveolar Fricative Palatalization is neutralizing”. Make reference to the definition of neutralization in (285) and provide a neutralization diagram analogous to (288).

### Answer to Study Exercise #75

“Neutralization is the phonetically identical realization of distinct phonemic forms. *Russ Schuh* /ɪʌs ʃu/ and *Rush Schuh* /ɪʌʃ ʃu/ are distinct phonemic forms (as shown by the distinct pronunciations of *Russ* [ɪʌs] and *rush* [ɪʌʃ]). They are realized identically when *Russ Schuh* undergoes Alveolar Fricative Palatalization and becomes [ɪʌʃ ʃu], just like *Rush Schuh*. The neutralization diagram is:



## 7. Methods for solving problems with alternation

As with phonemicization, it helps to have some practical methods of analysis in hand when you take on problems of alternation in novel languages. As before, the tricky part is first to “run the derivations backward” when you don’t actually know the rules yet. This is actually more feasible than it might sound at first.

As an example, let us consider some data from Servigliano, a Romance language spoken in the Marche region of Italy. This dialect has numerous vowel alternations in its paradigms. Here are some data; note that different paradigms are mixed together here.

### (289) Phonology of vowels in Servigliano — some paradigms

#### a. Verb agreement

[ˈkredo]	‘I believe’	[ˈkridu]	‘you believe’
[ˈmetto]	‘I put’	[ˈmittu]	‘you put’
[ˈmɔro]	‘I die’	[ˈmoru]	‘you die’

#### b. Number in one variety of masculine nouns

[ˈfjore]	‘flower-masc. sg.’	[ˈfjuri]	‘flower-masc. pl.’
[ˈpotʃe]	‘flea-masc. sg.’	[ˈputʃi]	‘flea-masc. plur.’
[ˈpatre]	‘father-masc. sg.’	[ˈpatri]	‘father-masc. plur.’
[ˈmure]	‘cloth-masc. sg.’	[ˈmuri]	‘cloth-masc. plur.’

#### c. Gender in adjectives and nouns

[ˈpesa]	‘heavy-fem. sg.’	[ˈpisu]	‘heavy-masc. sg.’
[ʃiˈfosa]	‘picky eater-fem. sg.’	[ʃiˈfusu]	‘picky eater-masc. sg.’
[ˈloŋga]	‘long-fem. sg.’	[ˈlungu]	‘long-masc. sg.’
[tʃiˈlestra]	‘heavenly-fem. sg.’	[tʃiˈlestru]	‘heavenly-masc. sg.’
[ˈsgwetsa]	‘suspicious-fem. sg.’	[ˈsgwetsu]	‘suspicious-masc. sg.’
[ˈʃfwerta]	‘strange-fem. sg.’	[ˈʃfwertu]	‘strange-masc. sg.’
[ˈsprɔta]	‘pedantic-fem. sg.’	[ˈsprɔtu]	‘pedantic-masc. sg.’
[ˈmoʃa]	‘dejected-fem. sg.’	[ˈmoʃu]	‘dejected-masc. sg.’

[a'mika]	'friend-fem. sg.'	[a'miku]	'friend-masc. sg.'
['pattsa]	'crazy-fem. sg.'	['pattsu]	'crazy-masc. sg.'

Before going on, note that there are two types of masculine noun in Servigliano which form their singulars differently. This is because Servigliano (like closely related Italian) has “declension classes”; arbitrary set of nouns that inflect in different ways. In a formal analysis this can be treated by using an arbitrary inflectional feature like [DeclensionClass], borne arbitrarily by noun stems and referenced by the rules of inflectional morphology.

Returning now to Servigliano phonology, the first step in solving an alternation problem is to **break up the words into their morphemes**. You sometimes have to be a little bit brave about this when the morphemes alternate. We have already done some cases (Chapter 2) of breaking up words into morphemes when there are no alternations, and the right strategy seems to be to find sequences of sounds that are invariant whenever a particular gloss (meaning) is present. When there are alternations, we have to be more permissive, being willing to assume that two sequences are the surface versions of the same underlying morpheme even when they are somewhat different.

For Servigliano, division of words into morphemes is not difficult: it should be clear that the inflectional suffixes in the words of (289) all consist of a single vowel, and that the stems consist of everything else in the word. The alternating material is a vowel internal to the stems. Therefore, we can form a list of suffixes, noting that none of them alternate.

[-o]	first singular present agreement for verbs
[-u]	first singular present agreement for verbs
[-e]	singular ending for a particular type of masculine nouns
[-i]	plural ending for this type of masculine nouns
[-u]	singular ending for another type of nouns or adjectives, in the masculine gender
[-a]	singular ending for this type of nouns or adjectives, in the feminine gender

Were it our focus to cover the morphological of Servigliano, we could express the inflectional categories in features and write simple rules to attach these suffixes when the relevant features are present in the morphosyntactic representation. But let us skip this step and move on with phonology.

The next step is to **collect full sets of allomorphs of all the morphemes**. This is already done for the suffixes, which do not alternate. For the stems, we collect the allomorphs as below; the tilde symbol ~ is often used to mean “alternates with”:

(290) *Stem allomorphs present in the data of (289)*

['kred] ~ ['krid]	'believe'
['mett] ~ ['mitt]	'put'
['mør] ~ ['mor]	'you die'
['fjor] ~ ['fjur]	'flower'
['potf] ~ ['putf]	'flea'

[ˈpatr]	‘father’ (does not alternate)
[ˈmur]	‘cloth’ (does not alternate)
[ˈpes] ~ [ˈpis]	‘heavy’
[ʃiˈfos] ~ [ʃiˈfus]	‘picky eater’
[ˈlɔŋg] ~ [ˈlʊŋg]	‘long’
[tʃiˈlestr] ~ [tʃiˈlestr]	‘heavenly’
[ˈsgwets] ~ [ˈsgwets]	‘suspicious’
[ˈʃʃwert] ~ [ˈʃʃwert]	‘strange’
[ˈsprɔt] ~ [ˈsprɔt]	‘pedantic’
[ˈmɔʃ] ~ [ˈmoʃ]	‘dejected’
[aˈmik]	‘friend’ (does not alternate)
[ˈpatts]	‘crazy’ (does not alternate)

Once we have done this, the next step is to extract the phonological essence of the alternating pairs: **find the segments that alternate**. In the data above, it turns out that there are only four alternations; we use the tilde symbol again to depict alternation.

(291) *Alternating segments present in the data of (289)*

a. [e] ~ [i]

[ˈkred] ~ [ˈkrid]	‘believe’
[ˈmett] ~ [ˈmitt]	‘put’
[ˈpes] ~ [ˈpis]	‘heavy’

b. [o] ~ [u]

[ˈfjɔr] ~ [ˈfjʊr]	‘flower’
[ˈpɔʃ] ~ [ˈpuʃ]	‘flea’
[ʃiˈfos] ~ [ʃiˈfus]	‘picky eater’
[ˈlɔŋg] ~ [ˈlʊŋg]	‘long’

c. [ɛ] ~ [e]

[tʃiˈlestr] ~ [tʃiˈlestr]	‘heavenly’
[ˈsgwets] ~ [ˈsgwets]	‘suspicious’
[ˈʃʃwert] ~ [ˈʃʃwert]	‘strange’

d. [ɔ] ~ [o]

[ˈsprɔt] ~ [ˈsprɔt]	‘pedantic’
[ˈmɔʃ] ~ [ˈmoʃ]	‘dejected’

It is also worth recording the three patterns of *non*-alternation:

(292) [a], [i], [u] *do not alternate*

[ˈpatr]	‘father’
[ˈmur]	‘cloth’
[aˈmik]	‘friend’

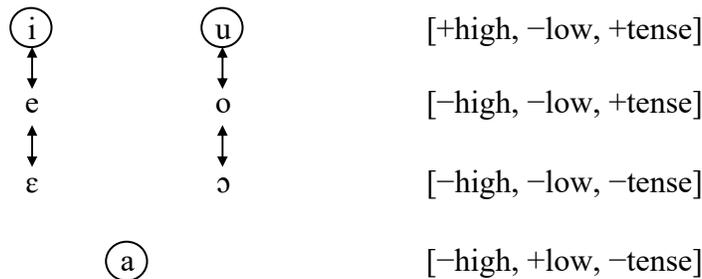
['patts]

'crazy'

It is usually sensible in the case of non-alternators to give them the simplest possible underlying representation, respecting the principle “what you hear is what you get”: non-alternating [a] is underlying /a/; non-alternating [i] and [u] are likewise /i/ and /u/.<sup>219</sup>

The existing alternations can be interpreted more carefully, by plotting them on a chart containing the full seven-vowel inventory of Servigliano using arrows. I will also circle the non-alternating vowels and include the feature values for vowel height that I am assuming.

(293) *The pattern of vowel alternation in Servigliano, with features*



We can see that if a vowel alternates, it alternates with an immediately higher or lower vowel in the chart.

To figure out the rest of the problem, we assume that there is **something about the environment of the alternating segments**, which is our analytic task to find. Plainly, this environment must be located in the suffixes, which provide the only environment that could differentiate the two derivations. I suggest that at this point you re-look at the data in (289), asking the question, “What causes the higher of the two alternating vowels to appear?” The answer appears following this page break.

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<sup>219</sup> The exception is if the phonemic analysis, carried out earlier, has given reason to assign these sounds the underlying representation corresponding to an elsewhere allophone; see above.

Whenever two vowels in Servigliano alternate, the higher of the two vowels appears when the next vowel in the word (the suffix vowel) is *high*. This makes intuitive sense; i.e. the highest sort of vowels cause their preceding neighbors to become higher; an instance of assimilation. Three suffixes that have high vowels are the plural suffix [-i], the 2nd sg. suffix [-i], and the masculine singular suffix [-u].

Now that we have located the alternating segments, the next step is to **explore alternatives for the underlying representation**. In particular, when [A] alternates with [B], it makes sense that either /A/ is the underlying representation, with [B] derived from it, or vice versa, with [A] derived from underlying /B/. So, if [i] alternates with [e], as in Servigliano, we must consider both possibilities: set up underlying /e/ for the alternating forms, and derive [i] from it; or set up underlying /i/ for the alternating forms, and derive [e] from it. The same holds true for the other three alternations, [u] ~ [o], [e ~ ε], and [o ~ ɔ].

Let us pick one of these hypotheses and see if we can make it work. In particular, suppose that whenever two vowels alternate, it is the *lower* of the two that is underlying. Thus:

(294) *One hypothesis about underlying representations in Servigliano*

- [i] ~ [e] is underlain by /e/.
- [e] ~ [ε] is underlain by /ε/.
- [u] ~ [o] is underlain by /o/.
- [o] ~ [ɔ] is underlain by /ɔ/.

With this in place, we do the next step, which is to **reconstruct the underlying representations, and see if we can find rules that convert them into correct surface representations**. By “reconstruct”, I mean that when a morpheme has one of the alternations of (294), one picks the relevant UR for that sound, plugging in to the UR for the morpheme as a whole. Thus, since [ˈkred-o] ‘believe-1sg.’ / [ˈkrid-u] ‘believe-2sg.’ displays the [e] ~ [i] alternation, following (294) we would set up /ˈkred/ as the underlying form for ‘believe’.

Also by “reconstruct”, I mean that all words are re-formed to consist of the concatenation of the UR’s of their constituent morphemes. Thus, since we are assuming that the underlying form for the 2sg. ending is /-u/, we are therefore assuming that the underlying form for the word [ˈkrid-u] ‘believe-2sg.’ is /ˈkred-u/.

Following this method, we can obtain a possibly-workable hypothesis for the underlying form of every word, putting in good position to hunt for the rules. It can be helpful to do a set of “sketch derivations”, juxtaposing underlying and surface forms, and listing (without necessarily yet understanding) the changes that are needed.

For Servigliano, we will need 14 example forms: two each for all seven underlying vowels, occurring before a high-voweled suffix (which by hypothesis triggers raising), and before a phonologically-inactive non-high voweled suffix. We set these up as in (295). It is essential to observe that for every morpheme, its underlying representation is exactly the same throughout the

paradigm; this follows from the fundamental principle of the theory that morphological rules apply before phonological ones, concatenating phonemic representations.

(295) *Outline of the needed derivations, assuming lower vowels as UR's*

<i>'believe-1sg.'</i>	<i>'believe-2sg.'</i>	<i>'strange-f.sg.'</i>	<i>'strange-m.sg.'</i>	
/ˈkred-o/	/ˈkred-u/	/ˈʃwert-a/	/ˈʃwert-u/	Supposed underlying forms
—	i	—	e	Phonological Rules
[ˈkredo]	[ˈkridu]	[ˈʃwert-a]	[ˈʃwertu]	Surface forms
<i>'flower-m.sg.'</i>	<i>'flower-m.pl.'</i>	<i>'die-1sg.'</i>	<i>'die-2sg.'</i>	
/ˈfjor-e/	/ˈfjor-i/	/ˈmɔr-o/	/ˈmɔr-u/	Supposed underlying forms
—	u	—	o	Phonological Rules
[ˈfjore]	[ˈfjuri]	[ˈmɔro]	[ˈmɔru]	Surface forms
<i>'friend-f.sg.'</i>	<i>'friend-m.sg.'</i>	<i>'cloth-m.sg.'</i>	<i>'cloth-m.pl.'</i>	
/aˈmik-a/	/aˈmik-u/	/ˈmur-e/	/ˈmur-i/	Supposed underlying forms
—	—	—	—	Phonological Rules
[aˈmika]	[aˈmiku]	[ˈmure]	[ˈmuri]	Surface forms
<i>'father-m.sg.'</i>	<i>'father-m.pl.'</i>			
/ˈpatr-e/	/ˈpatr-i/			Supposed underlying forms
—	—			Phonological Rules
[ˈpatre]	[ˈpatri]			Surface forms

Seeing the derivations in outline like this, we can now reconstruct the rules: [o e] need to turn into [i u] when a high vowel follows, and [ɛ ɔ] need to turn into [e o] when a high vowel follows. This can be done with two ordered rules: first we raise the [e o] to [i u], getting them “out of the way”, after which it is safe to raise [ɛ ɔ] to [e o]. To be more precise: the change from [ɛ ɔ] to [e o] is actually tensing, given the features of (293) we are assuming. I express the rules thus, using the Kleene star notation (explained on p. 155 above).

### Servigliano Raising

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{tense} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow [+high] / \text{---} C^* \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{high} \end{array} \right]$$

“Tense vowels must become high if the next vowel in the word is high.”<sup>220</sup>

<sup>220</sup> In principle, I could have included [−high] on the left side of the arrow, but it is not necessary; high vowels can be vacuously rendered [+high] with no harm to the analysis.

### Servigliano Tensing

$$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{low} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [+tense] / \text{--- } C^* \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{high} \end{bmatrix}$$

“Nonlow vowels must become high if the next vowel in the word is high.”<sup>221</sup>

We test the rules out by applying them in order in a full set of derivations.

#### (296) Complete working derivations for Servigliano

<i>'believe-1sg.'</i> <i>'believe-2sg.'</i> <i>'strange-f.sg.'</i> <i>'strange-m.sg.'</i>				
<i>/kred-o/</i>	<i>/kred-u/</i>	<i>/ʃwert-a/</i>	<i>/ʃwert-u/</i>	Underlying forms
—	i	—	—	Raising
—	—	—	e	Tensing
[kredo]	[kridu]	[ʃwertə]	[ʃwertu]	Surface forms
<i>'flower-m.sg.'</i> <i>'flower-m.pl.'</i> <i>'die-1sg.'</i> <i>'die-2sg.'</i>				
<i>/fjor-e/</i>	<i>/fjor-i/</i>	<i>/mɔr-o/</i>	<i>/mɔr-u/</i>	Underlying forms
—	u	—	—	Raising
—	—	—	o	Tensing
[fjore]	[fjuri]	[mɔro]	[mɔru]	Surface forms
<i>'friend-f.sg.'</i> <i>'friend-m.sg.'</i> <i>'cloth-m.sg.'</i> <i>'cloth-m.pl.'</i>				
<i>/a'mik-a/</i>	<i>/a'mik-u/</i>	<i>/mur-e/</i>	<i>/mur-i/</i>	Underlying forms
—	—	—	—	Raising
—	—	—	—	Tensing
[a'mika]	[a'miku]	[mure]	[muri]	Surface forms
<i>'father-m.sg.'</i> <i>'father-m.pl.'</i>				
<i>/patr-e/</i>	<i>/patr-i/</i>			Underlying forms
—	—			Raising
—	—			Tensing
[patre]	[patri]			Surface forms

This works, and so the analysis is complete.

#### 7.1 Testing the wrong analysis

There is, however, a loose end. Recall what was said earlier: “if [A] alternates with [B], it makes sense that either /A/ is the underlying representation, with [B] derived from it, or vice versa,

<sup>221</sup> As before, I could have put [−high] on the left side of the arrow, but since there is no harm in vacuously reassigning [+tense] to high vowels, I kept the rule simpler by one feature.

with A derived from underlying /B/.” We have only tried one direction. What if we had tried the other, with the *higher* vowels as underlying, and lowering rules.

(297) *An alternative hypothesis about underlying representations in Servigliano*

- [i] ~ [e] is underlain by /i/.
- [e] ~ [ɛ] is underlain by /e/.
- [u] ~ [o] is underlain by /u/.
- [o] ~ [ɔ] is underlain by /o/.

I suggest you take a minute to ponder why this would lead to failure.

The reason that a Lowering analysis would fail is that it cannot handle the stems that have [i] throughout their paradigms — if some Lowering environment actually existed, why would these [i] lower as well? Here is the essential comparison:

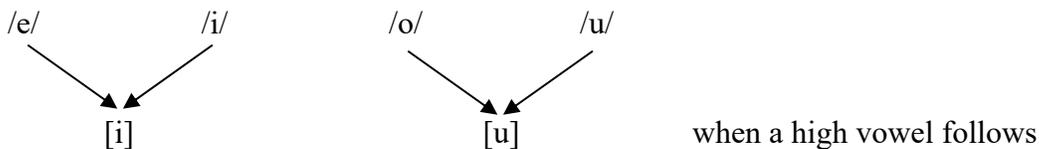
(298) *Outline of the needed derivations, (wrongly) assuming higher vowels as UR's*

<i>'believe-1sg.'</i>	<i>'believe-2sg.'</i>	<i>'friend-f.sg.'</i>	<i>'friend-m.sg.'</i>	
/ˈkɹid-o/	/ˈkɹid-u/	/aˈmɪk-a/	/aˈmɪk-u/	Underlying forms
e	—	—	—	Phonological Rules
[ˈkɹedo]	[ˈkɹidu]	[aˈmɪka]	[aˈmɪku]	Surface forms

Under this analysis, /i/ must serve as the underlying form for two distinct patterns: invariant [i], and the [i] ~ [e] alternation. No general rule will be found that can lower some, but not all of the claimed underlying /i/. In contrast, the Raising/Tensing analysis works perfectly, with a simple phonological environment.

### 7.2 Neutralization and Servigliano

The failure of one analysis, and the success of the other, can be related to the concept of neutralization (285). We have in Servigliano the following neutralization patterns:



The failed analysis above fails because it tries to “undo a neutralization”; predicting the height difference by (some nonexistent) context when in fact the distinction is underlying.

### 7.3 Summarizing the method

The method employed above, suitably adapted, can be used to address many problems of phonological alternation. The method is summarized below.

(299) *A method for solving problems of phonological alternation*

- Break up the words into their morphemes.
- Collect full sets of allomorphs of all the morphemes.
- Find the segments that phonologically alternate.
- Assume that non-alternating segments are the same as their surface forms.<sup>222</sup>
- Explore alternatives for the underlying representation of alternating segments.
- For each such alternative, reconstruct the underlying representations of the morphemes, and (by concatenating) the words. Seek rules, possibly ordered, that convert these UR's into correct surface representations.

<sup>222</sup> More precisely, to whatever emerges from the basic process of phonemicization, treated earlier. Typically it is best to study alternations by working with already-phonemicized data.

- The correct underlying representations are those compatible with a set of adequate rules.

### Study Exercise #79

This involves the case forms of nouns in Hungarian. You should ignore the vowel changes in suffixes, which are due to a phonological rule of Vowel Harmony.

*Phonetic symbols:*

[ʃ] is a voiced palatal stop.

[ç] is a voiceless palatal stop.

[ɲ] is a voiced palatal nasal.

[:] means that the preceding vowel is long.

[ø] mid front rounded, as in German *Goethe* or French *Chartreuse*.

[y] high front rounded, as in German *Führer* or French *tu* or Mandarin [nǚ] ‘female’<sup>223</sup>

- What stems alternate, and what are their allomorphs?
- State a phonological rule that correctly derives the alternation, in both formalism and words. Give your rule a name.
- Give underlying forms and derivations for pɔd, pɔdnɔk, and pɔtto:l.
- Is your rule neutralizing? Explain your answer.

### Hungarian Data

<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Dative</i>	<i>Ablative</i> <sup>224</sup>	<i>Essive</i> <sup>225</sup>	<i>Allative</i> <sup>226</sup>	<i>Gloss</i>
rɔgbi	rɔgbinɔk	rɔgbitø:l	rɔgbike:nt	rɔgbihez	‘rugby’
ipʃɛ	ipʃɛnɛk	ipʃɛtø:l	ipʃɛke:nt	ipʃɛhez	‘fellow’
kɔlɔp	kɔlɔpnɔk	kɔlɔptø:l	kɔlɔpke:nt	kɔlɔphoz	‘hat’
ku:t	ku:tnɔk	ku:tto:l	ku:tke:nt	ku:thoz	‘well’
juk	juknɔk	jukto:l	jukke:nt	jukhoz	‘hole’
sɛm	sɛmnɛk	sɛmtø:l	sɛmke:nt	sɛmhez	‘eye’
rɔb	rɔbnɔk	rɔptø:l	rɔpke:nt	rɔphoz	‘prisoner’

<sup>223</sup> Unchecked data taken from a textbook. If you are a native Mandarin speaker and can confirm, please contact me.

<sup>224</sup> Ablative case means, roughly, “from”.

<sup>225</sup> More accurately: essive formal. Essive case means, roughly, “as”.

<sup>226</sup> My Hungarian grammar says: “used with expressions of attaching something to, adding to, or communicating to someone or something” (Carol Rounds, *Hungarian: An Essential Grammar*, p. 109).

ʒɛb	ʒɛbnɛk	ʒɛptø:l	ʒɛpkɛ:nt	ʒɛphɛz	‘pocket’
ka:d	ka:dnɔk	ka:ttø:l	ka:tke:nt	ka:thoz	‘bathtub’
pɔd	pɔdnɔk	pɔtto:l	pɔtke:nt	pɔthoz	‘bench’
a:ʃ	a:ʃnɔk	a:cto:l	a:cke:nt	a:choz	‘bed’
mɛlɛg	mɛlɛgnɛk	mɛlɛktø:l	mɛlɛkke:nt	mɛlɛkhez	‘heat’
hɛrt̩sɛg	hɛrt̩sɛgnɛk	hɛrt̩sɛktø:l	hɛrt̩sɛkke:nt	hɛrt̩sɛkhez	‘duke’
tɛmplɔm	tɛmplɔmnɔk	tɛmplɔmto:l	tɛmplɔmke:nt	tɛmplɔmhoz	‘house of worship’
by:n	by:nɛk	by:ntø:l	by:nke:nt	by:nhøz	‘sin’
torɔŋ	torɔŋnɔk	torɔŋtø:l	torɔŋke:nt	torɔŋhoz	‘tower’
fəl	fəlɔnɔk	fəlto:l	fəlke:nt	fəlhoz	‘wall’
ø:r	ø:rɔnɔk	ø:rtø:l	ø:rke:nt	ø:rhøz	‘guard’

e. Ponder next the paradigm of ‘emerald’ below and suggest a minimal change for your analysis to derive it.

f. Give a derivation for [smərəktke:nt].

<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Dative</i>	<i>Ablative</i>	<i>Essive</i>	<i>Allative</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
smərəgd	smərəgdɔnɔk	smərəktto:l	smərəktke:nt	smərəkthoz	‘emerald’

### Answer to Study Exercise #76

- a. What stems alternate, and what are their allomorphs?

Stem	Allomorph 1	Allomorph 2
rɔb	rɔb	rɔp
ʒɛb	ʒɛb	ʒɛp
ka:d	ka:d	ka:t
pɔd	pɔd	pɔt
a:ʃ	a:ʃ	a:c
mɛɛg	mɛɛg	mɛɛk
hɛrt̩sɛg	hɛrt̩sɛg	hɛrt̩sɛk

- b. State a phonological rule that correctly derives the alternation, in both formalism and words. Give your rule a name.

#### Voicing Assimilation

[+stop] → [-voice] / \_\_\_ [-voice]

‘A stop becomes voiceless when it precedes a voiceless sound.’

- c. Give underlying forms and derivations for pɔd, pɔdnɔk, and pɔtto:l.

/pɔd/	/pɔdnɔk/	/pɔtto:l/	underlying forms
—	—	t	Voicing Assimilation
[pɔd]	[pɔdnɔk]	[pɔtto:l]	surface forms

- d. Is your rule neutralizing? Explain your answer.

Yes. Look at this quadruplet, focusing on the underlined sounds:

ku: <u>t</u>	ku: <u>tt</u> o:l
pɔ <u>d</u>	pɔ <u>tt</u> o:l

There is a /t/-/d/ distinction, but it gets wiped out before a voiceless sound.

e. Ponder next this paradigm and suggest a minimal change for your analysis to derive it.

The crucial forms are forms like [smɔrɔktke:nt]. It looks like Voicing Assimilation has to be *allowed to apply to its own output* (the standard term for this is “iterative”). The rightmost /k/ turns a /d/ into a [t], and then this [t] turns the preceding /g/ into a [k].

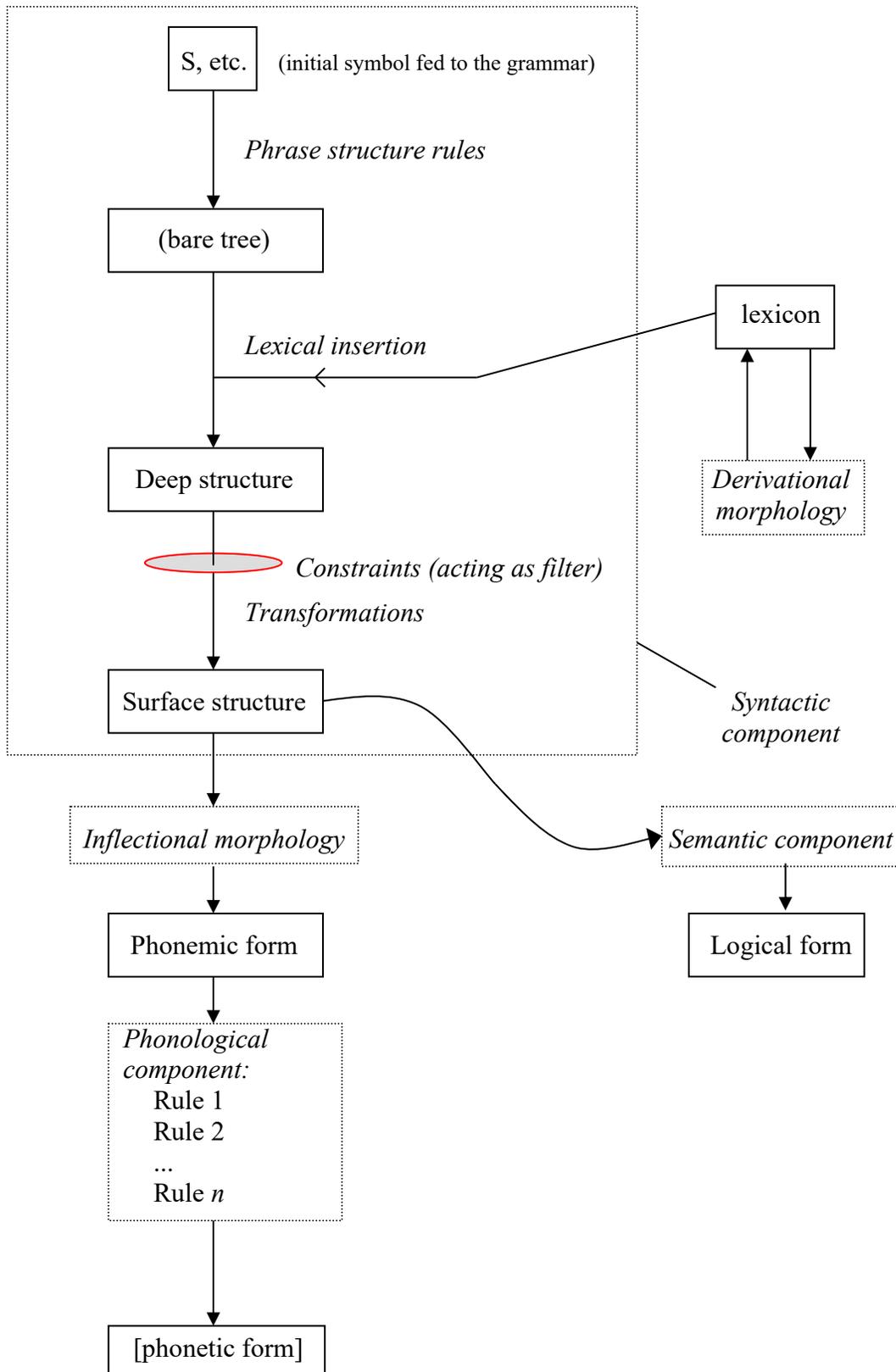
f. Give a derivation for [smɔrɔktke:nt].

/smɔrɔgdke:nt/	underlying form
t	Voicing Assimilation: first time
k	Voicing Assimilation: second time
[smɔrɔktke:nt]	surface form

## 8. The organization of grammar

We have now covered (however briefly) most of the central areas of linguistic analysis: syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology. At this point, we can amplify the “boxological” diagram, covering the organization of grammar, given earlier ((172) on p. 222).

How do the theories in these areas all fit together? This is very much an open question, one that linguists continue to debate. For concreteness, I will give one particular view here. The following chart shows the components and the direction of information flow. Components (modules of the grammar) are shown in dotted boxes; level of representation (linguistic forms) are shown in solid boxes.



The **syntax** is the primary generative component, creating an infinite number of possible sentences.<sup>227</sup> The number is infinite because the phrase structure rules can apply recursively, in loops. **Deep structure** is created by filling the trees created by phrase structure rules with words (lexical insertion). Deep structures are modified by **transformations**, which have the power to copy and move, generating more elaborate structures that could not be formed by phrase structure rules alone. **Constraints** on transformations sometimes filter out sentences that the syntactic component would otherwise generate.

The words that undergo lexical insertion into the syntactic tree are sometimes single-morpheme stems like *cat*, and sometimes the result of rules of word formation. Following the view of many linguists, I have made the morphology of word formation a kind of adjunct to the lexicon. It extracts words from the lexicon and forms new words from them, which are added back to the lexical stock. Word formation rules string together morphemes, which are assumed at this stage to be composed of phonemes, since the rules of the phonology have yet to apply.

Particular syntactic rules (transformations of agreement, case marking, etc.) build up a **morphosyntactic representation** for each inflected word, which specifies the values of features like [Number], [Case], [Tense], and so on. In a postsyntactic component, the **inflectional morphology**, the features of the morphosyntactic representation trigger rules of affixation, which manifest the inflectional categories in audible form. Again, the morphological rules are assumed to manipulate morphemes in their phonemic form, since phonology has not applied yet.

At the bottom of the grammar, the rules of the **phonology** provide a phonetic realization for the syntactic structure; thus they relate it to the physical reality of articulation. They apply (in the theory shown here) after syntax and morphology; an ordering which accounts for the fact that the morphemes **alternate** according to the environments in which they occur, environments that were created by morphological and syntactic combination. Phonological rules can also **neutralize** distinctions, creating ambiguity.

The role of **semantics** in this scheme, is rather speculative; I have placed it in the diagram as applying to syntactic surface structure, and creating a level of **logical form**, in which the aspects of meaning most closely related to syntax, such as predicate-argument structure, pronoun reference, and scope, are derived.

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<sup>227</sup> Word formation is also generative, and in most languages can likewise create an infinite variety of structures (recall (75) from Chapter 2: *eggplant plant plant...*), though the structures typically are far less elaborate.

**For further reading (phonology)**

Quite a few textbooks lay out the basics of phonological theory in more detail; one is my own text *Introductory Phonology* (2008; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell). Another, very data-rich introductory text is David Odden's *Introducing Phonology* (2005: Cambridge University Press). A more advanced introduction with many beautiful problem sets is Michael Kenstowicz and Charles Kisseberth *Generative Phonology: Description and Theory* (1979: Academic Press).

The theory of phonemes was worked out in the earlier part of the 20th century. An acclaimed work from this period is Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1932; still in print at University of Chicago Press), a book still worth reading.

The system of phonology in which the surface phonetic forms are derived from an underlying representation using a series of ordered rules is perhaps the oldest part of linguistic theory still in general use today; it was worked out by the grammarians of ancient India, whose leading figure was Pāṇini (ca. 500 BCE.). The modern revival of the Pāṇinian system began around Bloomfield's time, but achieved full development with Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle's 1968 book *The Sound Pattern of English*, a massive study of English phonology.

There is no up-to-date textbook covering the many further developments in phonology over the past few decades but a useful survey is *The Handbook of Phonological Theory*, 2nd ed. (2011), ed. by John A. Goldsmith, Jason Riggle, and Alan C. L. Yu (Wiley-Blackwell).

## Chapter 13: Historical Linguistics

### 1. Outline

Languages change over time, in an interesting and paradoxical way. The speakers of a language usually communicate easily with their grandparents in childhood and with their grandchildren in old age. This covers five generations. But consider a passage of prose from the English of about 40 generations ago (Old English, about 1000 A.D.):

*urne gedæghwamlīcan hlaf syle us to dæg*  
 ['urne gɛ'dæɣwamlīkan 'l̥af 'syle us to 'dæɣ]  
 our daily bread give us today  
 'Give us this day our daily bread'

This would be unintelligible to a speaker of Modern English, and many of the morphemes have evolved so as to be only faintly recognizable (e.g. [dæɣ] = *day*, ['l̥af] = *loaf*, [lik] = *-ly*). Somehow, a series of changes that were little noticed as they were happening have gradually converted English into an entirely different language.

Just to show an intermediate stage, the following passage is a Middle English translation (ca. 1400 A.D.) of the same Biblical verse. Remember to read it phonetically, not according to spelling. (This should give you a clue why letters have such different values in English than they have in European languages.)

[geɤə to us to dæɪ urə etʃə dæɪəs bred]  
 give to us today our each day's bread

Historical linguistics attempt to understand the process of linguistic change. The two fundamental questions in the field are: (a) How and why do languages change? (b) What is the history of the languages of the world?

### 2. Descent; related languages

When linguists speak of the “ancestry” of a language, they have a specific meaning in mind. If Language B is descended from Language A, it means that there has been a continuous transmission of the language, from generation to generation, going from A to B (with gradual changes over time). We can speak of this form of language transmission as **descent**. Modern English is related to Old English by descent (is “descended from” Old English), as there is a continuous link through 40 generations of speakers between the two.

We need to be careful about the term “descent”: it certainly does not imply an actual chain of *biological* ancestors, because there are countless people who are native speakers of a language whose parents are not. Such speakers are part of the chain of transmission just as much as children of native speakers.

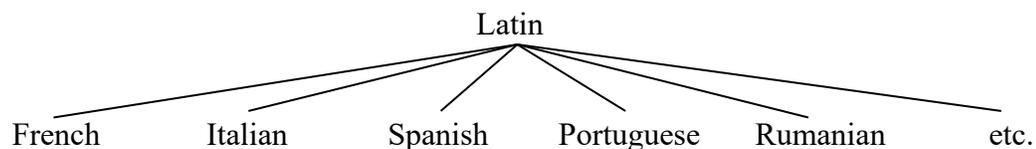
For linguists, descent is the gold standard for language identity—descent has a completely clear meaning and can be diagnosed with near certainty if enough data are available. Descent is not always used as the criterion of language identity in popular culture, however. For instance, in the real world you will hear people say things like:

“Modern English is a mixture of Old English, French, and Latin.”

This statement is perfectly true as a description of the *vocabulary* of Modern English, since over the centuries English has borrowed thousands of words from French and Latin. But English is *descended* from Old English;<sup>228</sup> there was no continuous transmission of language from generation to generation that leads from French or Latin to English.

Two languages are said to be **related** if they descend from the same ancestor language. That is, it is often the case that a single language comes to be spoken in two geographically isolated areas, or over a very wide area. Given enough time, such a language is likely to develop more than one descendent. Because of lack of intercommunication, different areas evolve their own descendent languages, which eventually become mutually unintelligible. Exactly this happened in the evolution of the modern Romance languages from Classical Latin. Thus, the Romance languages are related to one another (in the technical sense) because they all descend from the same ancestor.

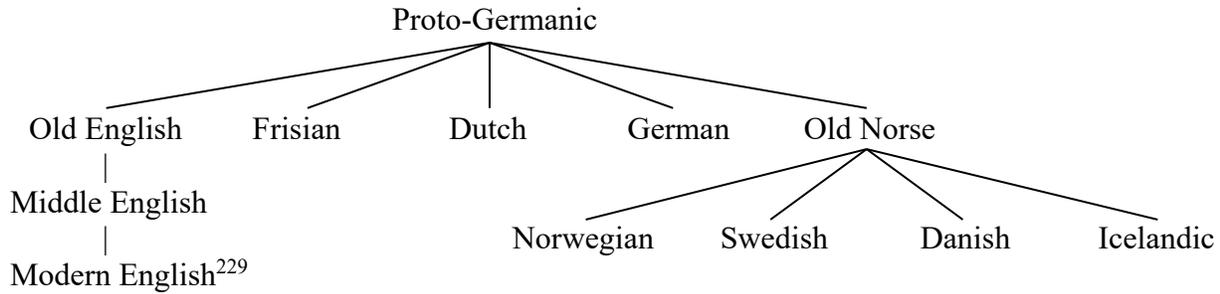
Languages can thus be thought of as family groupings. We can use family tree notation to represent the ancestry of languages, in which a line represents a relationship by descent.



Here are some other examples of language families. The Germanic languages are all closely related. They descend from a common ancestor which was spoken roughly at the same time as Latin. However, this ancestor was spoken by an illiterate people, so we have no records of it. The name used for the common ancestor of the Germanic languages is *Proto-Germanic*.

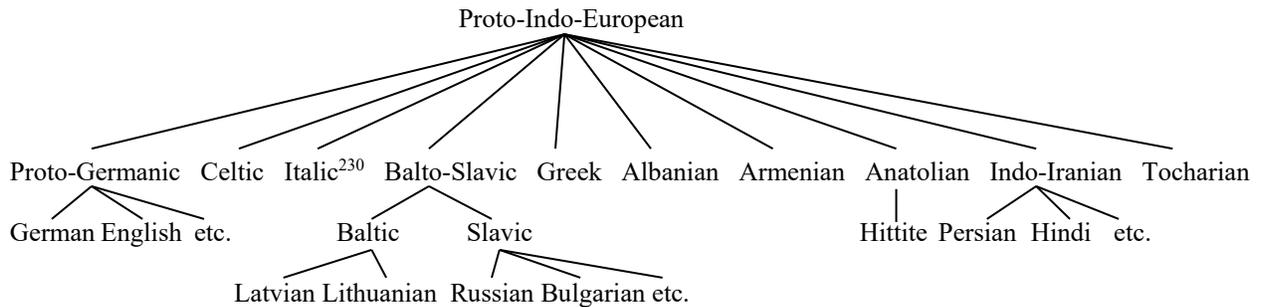
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<sup>228</sup> ... and, at a deeper level, the earlier languages from which Old English is descended; more on this immediately below.

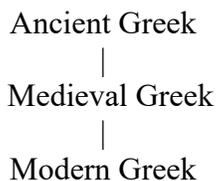


Although we have no written records of Proto-Germanic, we nonetheless have a fairly good idea of what it was like. Just how we know this will be a central topic later on.

Latin and Proto-Germanic are in fact related to each other. They are (roughly speaking) sisters, and descend from an ancestor language called *Proto-Indo-European*. The Indo-European language family is a large one, and over half the population of the world speaks an Indo-European language. Here is a very sketchy version of the Indo-European family tree:



However, a family tree doesn't have to branch. For example, Ancient Greek has only one descendent, namely Modern Greek, so its family tree is just a vertical line, sometimes shown like this:



“Relatedness” should not be confused with “similarity”. For example, Modern Persian is in a sense far more similar to Arabic than to Modern English, at least in vocabulary; thousands of words of Persian are borrowed from Arabic.

[dʒom'hur] ‘republic’

<sup>229</sup> Only English is shown with stages (following the custom, three of them: Old, Middle, Modern). But the same could be done for all of the languages shown.

<sup>230</sup> The Italic family consists of Latin and a few poorly-attested sisters. As noted above, all of the Romance languages (also including: Portuguese, Romanian, Catalan, and others) descend from Latin.

['elm]	'science'
[mohæn'des]	'engineer'
[velɑ'jæt]	'province'
[rædd]	'refutation'

If one's goal is to learn Persian, it may well be more useful to start off knowing Arabic than knowing English. Nevertheless, Persian is related to English (they are "cousins", both granddaughters of Proto-Indo-European); and Persian is not at all related to Arabic. One can see this in some of the core vocabulary of English and Persian:

[pe'dær]	'father'
[bæra'dær]	'brother'
[setɑ're]	'star'
[gav]	'cow'
[æst]	'is'
[bor-d-æn]	'carry-past stem-infinitive' = "bear"
[bu-d]	'be-past tense'

Notice that these words, which are authentic cognates (shared inheritances) in English and Persian, are core, commonplace words—the kind that a language tends to hang on to. The words shared by Persian and Arabic are mostly more sophisticated ones: Persian typically has borrowed its vocabulary for the spheres of higher learning from Arabic.

One result of looking at things in this way is that statements like (300):

(300) "Lithuanian is a very old language"

become meaningless. In fact, they are often just expressions of nationalistic sentiment. Leaving aside invented languages like Esperanto, all languages are equally old, in the sense that they all have an ancestry that goes back farther than linguists can trace. There are only two ways that the statement above could be given a true interpretation. It could mean that we have written records of Lithuanian dating back to the distant past; or it could mean that Lithuanian has changed very little over the centuries.

### 3. Sound change

Sound change is a fundamental mechanism of language change. That is, one of the principal reasons that languages change is because their sounds change. For example, the voiceless [ɸ] in Old English [ɸaf] 'bread' has become voiced [b] in Modern English. This change happened to all the voiceless [ɸ]'s of Old English; for example, the words *lady*, *lot*, and *lean* originally began with voiceless [ɸ]'s.<sup>231</sup>

<sup>231</sup> The Old English for "lady" was *hlæfdige*, literally "kneader of bread". "Lot" was *hlot*, and "lean" was *hlæne*. All three forms are from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, available online from many university computers (including UCLA's) at <http://dictionary.oed.com/>.

As a language evolves, it is subjected to dozens or even hundreds of sound changes, until it takes on a form that would be unintelligible to the original speakers.

Sound change is connected in a curious way to phonology. Basically, sound change results from the fact that throughout its history, a language has a large number of phonological rules. The rules are the seeds of sound change.

However, it is important to see that sound change and phonological rules are not the same thing. A sound change is a *historical event*. For example, if all the words that in 1300 were pronounced with voiceless [t̥] are pronounced with voiced [t] in 1500, then we say that the language has undergone a sound change taking [t̥] to [t]. A phonological rule, on the other hand, is *something in the mind of a native speaker*; it is part of a speaker's unconscious mental grammar.

### 3.1 Sound change and restructuring

The link between phonological rules and sound change is a phenomenon called restructuring. To understand this concept, it will help to do an example in detail.

The sound change we will examine is a fairly recent one. As I noted earlier, American English is divided into a dialect that has an extra phoneme /ɔ/ and a dialect that lacks this phoneme. I will call the dialect that has /ɔ/ "Dialect A", and the dialect that lacks it "Dialect C" (why not "B" will become clear shortly). In Dialect A, *caught* is pronounced [ˈkɔt] and *cot* is pronounced [ˈkɑt]; whereas in Dialect C, both words are pronounced [ˈkɑt]. In fact, Dialect C has /ɑ/ in all words where Dialect A has /ɔ/.

	Dialect A	Dialect C
<i>cot</i>	[ˈkɑt]	[ˈkɑt]
<i>caught</i>	[ˈkɔt]	[ˈkɑt]
<i>la</i>	[ˈlɑ]	[ˈlɑ]
<i>law</i>	[ˈlɔ]	[ˈlɑ]
<i>hock</i>	[ˈhɑk]	[ˈhɑk]
<i>hawk</i>	[ˈhɔk]	[ˈhɑk]
generally:	[ɑ]	[ɑ]
	[ɔ]	[ɑ]

It can be argued that Dialect A represents the original state of the language, and that Innovating American English has undergone a sound change: ɔ has become ɑ in all environments. There are two reasons to believe this.

First, there is the fact that, with just a few exceptions, *speakers of Dialect A agree with each other* on which words have [ɔ] and which words have [ɑ]. This fact would be very difficult to explain unless the distinction is inherited. There's no official committee that decides to change the pronunciation of words. Rather, children usually just adopt the pronunciation of the previous generation.

The other reason to think that the [ɔ]-[ɑ] distinction reflects the earlier state of the language is that all the old written documents through the centuries spell out the distinction.<sup>232</sup> English spelling was *invented*, probably by scribes who already know how to read and write Latin. There's every reason to think that the old scribes did their best to reflect in their spelling what they heard with their ears.

Let us therefore adopt the assumption that Dialect C is the one that has innovated, and that it has undergone a sound change. What was the mechanism of the change? The clue lies in what I will call "Dialect B," the crucial intermediate case.

Speakers of B have free variation in the *caught* class of words. Extending the data above to B, we have:

	<b>Dialect A</b>	<b>Dialect B</b>	<b>Dialect C</b>
<i>cot</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kat]	[ <sup>1</sup> kat]	[ <sup>1</sup> kat]
<i>caught</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kɔt]	[ <sup>1</sup> kɔt] ~ [ <sup>1</sup> kat]	[ <sup>1</sup> kat]
<i>la</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> la]	[ <sup>1</sup> la]	[ <sup>1</sup> la]
<i>law</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> lɔ]	[ <sup>1</sup> lɔ] ~ [ <sup>1</sup> la]	[ <sup>1</sup> la]
<i>hock</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> hak]	[ <sup>1</sup> hak]	[ <sup>1</sup> hak]
<i>hawk</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> hɔk]	[ <sup>1</sup> hɔk] ~ [ <sup>1</sup> hɔk]	[ <sup>1</sup> hɔk]
generally:	[ɑ]	[ɑ]	[ɑ]
	[ɔ]	[ɑ] ~ [ɔ]	[ɑ]

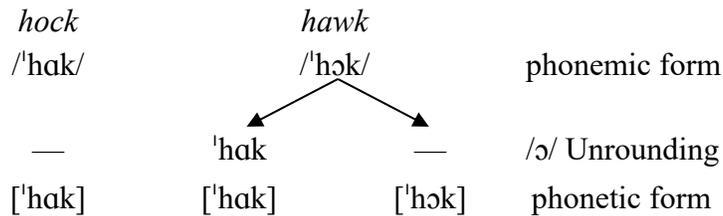
It is in Dialect B that we can see sound change in progress. Evidently, B speakers have a rule of neutralization, which applies optionally—in other words, they *have* a distinction, but sometimes wipe it out phonologically. Here would be the phonological analysis of Dialect B:

(301) /ɔ/ **Unrounding**

ɔ → [–round] in all environments, optionally

<sup>232</sup> A 1440 Latin glossary: "Hawke, *falco*". A 1398 source: þe hocke is a nesche herbe (as in *hollyhock*).

Example derivations:



It is claimed here that B represents the intermediate stage in the historical evolution from A to C. When a language has an optional rule, it tends to be applied more and more often through time. That is, people’s standards of what constitutes “careful speech” get lowered, and the casual-speech rules get applied more frequently.

The next step involves the introduction of a new generation of speakers. As young children, these speakers face the task of learning the phonemic system of their language. However, in the present case, the task is a very difficult one. The older speakers, who supply the data, have in their minds a phonemic distinction between /ɔ/ and /ɑ/. However, in their actual pronunciations, /ɔ/ is fairly rare, because most of the time these speakers apply the voicing rule. The new generation has very little data that they could use to learn the /ɔ/ phoneme. The potential for acquisition error is great.

It is easy to imagine how this situation will turn out. The younger generation is likely *not to notice the [ɔ]’s at all*, and they will acquire a different phonological system, in which [ɔ] plays no role at all. Here are the oldest, intermediate, and youngest phonological systems compared:

#### **Dialect A**

two phonemes, /ɔ/ and /ɑ/  
no applicable phonology

#### **Dialect B**

two phonemes, /ɔ/ and /ɑ/  
Phonological rule: ɔ → ɑ, optionally

#### **Dialect C**

one phoneme: /ɑ/  
no applicable phonology

The interesting point is this:

- The speech of “late decadent” Dialect B and Dialect C are *almost identical*; B speakers pronounce the old [ɔ] words with [ɑ] (let us say) 95% percent of the time, whereas C speakers pronounce them with [ɑ] 100% of the time.

- But the phonological systems of B and C are drastically different, due to the acquisition error that created C—the children who brought C into existence failed to notice a phoneme, and thus also failed to learn the rule.

The technical name for this phenomenon is *restructuring*:

(302) *Defn.: Restructuring*

a change in the phonological system of a language, induced by the phonological rules of the older generation.

Dialect C probably arose from a restructuring by younger speakers of the unstable phonological system of Dialect B. Dialect B in turn represents an innovation (through the introduction of the rule of /ɔ/ Unrounding) in Dialect C. American English in fact preserves all three dialects today, though we can perhaps anticipate that in a couple centuries Americans will all speak C.

To summarize, most sound changes are the result of the following process. (a) A new phonological rule is introduced into a language. (b) The rule is applied with increasing frequency. (c) A new generation restructures the system, getting rid of the rule.

It can now be seen why speakers don't notice their language changing. The basic ingredient of the change, the optional phonological rule, is an inherent, normal part of the language. The restructuring by the next generation is phonetically very minor, even though it is a radical change in the underlying system.

A bit of notation: when linguists write “→”, the arrow implies a phonological rule: part of the knowledge of a living speaker. When they write “>” instead, they mean a sound change—a historical event that arose as a consequence of phonology. The fact that the material on either side of these sides is the same should not blind us to the fact that a rule and a sound change are logically very different things. Thus:

ɔ → ɑ    “/ɔ/ is realized as [ɑ]”, part of grammar

ɔ > ɑ    “[ɔ] evolved into [ɑ]”, part of history

#### 4. The regularity of sound change

It is true of most phonological rules that they apply regularly. For example, the rule of Tapping in English is regular; there are no exceptions to it in the whole vocabulary. Now if sound change is the result of phonological rules, then we would expect sound change to be regular as well. In general, this turns out to be true. Thus, for instance, in Dialect C of American English, *not a single former [ɔ] is left*; they have all become /ɑ/.

To give another example: another recent, exceptionless sound change of American English converted /æ/ to /e/ before /ɪ/.<sup>233</sup> Here again, the conservative dialect still exists alongside the innovating dialect.

æ > e / \_\_\_ ɪ

Conservative dialect:	<i>marry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> mæɪ]	<i>Mary</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> mɛɪ]
	<i>carry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kæɪ]	<i>Cary</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> keɪ]
	<i>arable</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> æɪəbəl]	<i>airable</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> eɪəbəl]
	<i>Harry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> hæɪ]	<i>hairry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> heɪ]
Innovating dialect:	<i>marry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> meɪ]	<i>Mary</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> meɪ]
	<i>carry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> keɪ]	<i>Cary</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> keɪ]
	<i>arable</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> eɪəbəl]	<i>airable</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> eɪəbəl]
	<i>Harry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> heɪ]	<i>hairry</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> heɪ]

This is intended as one further example of the exceptionlessness of sound change: if you speak the innovating dialect, the odds are that you have no words whatever that still contain /æ/ before /ɪ/; indeed, such pronunciations may seem outright unnatural.

For a sound change that had exceptions, we can consider \*ʊ → ʌ, which occurred roughly during the 1600's and affected most dialects of English.<sup>234</sup> This sound change had just a few exceptions (for example, *put*), which means that /ʊ/ survived as a phoneme, but is rare in English today.

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<sup>233</sup> A detail here: the phoneme /eɪ/ has the allophone [e] for most speakers before [ɪ]—it's monophthongal in this context.

<sup>234</sup> The regional dialects of northern England were not affected by this change, and speakers of these dialects use [ʊ] in many words where other speakers would use [ʌ], such as *luck*.

**Study Exercise #80**

Let's add in "Dialect BR" — standard British English, and do some comparisons with American Dialect A.

Word	BR	A
<i>sore</i>	[sɔ]	[sɔɪ]
<i>saw</i>	[sɔ]	[sɔ]
<i>door</i>	[dɔ]	[dɔɪ]
<i>daw</i> <sup>235</sup>	[dɔ]	[dɔ]
<i>lore</i>	[lɔ]	[lɔɪ]
<i>law</i>	[lɔ]	[lɔ]
<i>pore</i>	[pɔ]	[pɔɪ]
<i>paw</i>	[pɔ]	[pɔ]
<i>roar</i>	[ɹɔ]	[ɹɔɪ]
<i>raw</i>	[ɹɔ]	[ɹɔ]

Using the same reasoning as given earlier, decide which dialect has changed, what the change was, and what the original forms were.

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<sup>235</sup> A kind of bird.

### Answer to Study Exercise #77

The original forms were like dialect A, the American one. There are two reasons to believe this is true. First, Americans agree with one another about which words should have an /ɪ/ in them. This would be very hard to explain if the /ɪ/'s were innovated. Second, the spelling of the words, established long before British and American English split, indicates the early presence of /ɪ/ in *sore, door, lore, pore, and raw*.

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The answer just given can be based on very little background knowledge. Looking up these words in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, I find that for all of these words, there are attestations that predate the split of American and British English (no earlier than 1607, the date of the first permanent English colony in America at Jamestown, Virginia). These clearly show an *r* in exactly the words that Southern Californians pronounce with /ɪ/ to this day.

- 1300: þe touche of senewes haþ no feling of **soore** and of smerte.
- 1340: File **sawe** and spindelle
- 1000: Seo **duru** wæs belocen <sup>236</sup>
- 1600: The theevish **Daw**, and the dissembling Pye.
- 1502: Who wil not for shame a short tyme suffir **lore** and lerne.
- 1596: The Venetian **Law** cannot impugne you as you do proceed.<sup>237</sup>
- 1400: þat neiþer cold ne hoot ne schulde not sodeynli entre þe **poris** of the skyn.
- 1380: This egle..with hys grymme **pawes** stronge (Chaucer)
- 1391: With such a noise and such a **rore**
- 1325: þe deuel huem afretye, **Rau** oper a-roste!<sup>238</sup>

One other fact: the *geography* of deleted /ɪ/ is what we would expect if it originated among fashionable people in London sometime in the 1600's or 1700's. It spread outward from London, reaching the large cities of Birmingham and Liverpool, but never reaching Scotland or Ireland or indeed much of the rural territory of England. R-less pronunciation was exported from England by emigration to Australia and New Zealand. To some degree it was exported to America and became part of the dialects of coastal cities such as Boston, New York, and Charleston, South Carolina. However, it arrived too late to affect the people who had already settled inland; hence the majority dialect in America preserves historical /ɪ/.

### 5. How do languages make up for lost phonemes?

Before going on, I will address a problem that is raised by the sound changes we have seen. Notice that two of these sound changes eliminated phonemes from the language: ɔ > ʌ eliminated

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<sup>236</sup> "The door was shut", from an English version of the Bible, Matthew 25:10.

<sup>237</sup> Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* IV.1.178.

<sup>238</sup> I believe this is something like "The devil him affright, raw or roasted!"

the /ɔ/ phoneme, and æ > e / \_\_\_\_ ɪ eliminated the /æ/ - /eɪ/ distinction before /ɪ/. In fact, sound changes do this fairly often. If this is so, why don't the world's languages gradually lose all their distinctions, and become an incoherent stream of muttering, say [dədədədədədədədə]?

One answer is that languages **borrow** phonemes from neighboring languages. This happens frequently; for example, English borrowed the phoneme /v/ from French (it had a [v] before, but only as an allophone of /f/, not as a separate phoneme.) Here are examples:

*value* from French *vallue* ca. 1300  
*vanquish* from French *vencus* ca. 1330  
*view* from French *veue* ca. 1415

Japanese long ago borrowed [tʃ] from Chinese ([tʃa] 'tea'), and much later [f] from English.<sup>239</sup>

However, it is also possible for a language to create a new phoneme entirely on its own. Here is an example of how this can happen, from the history of German. I will show how German created a new phoneme, during the transition from Old High German (the ancestor of Modern German, spoken around 1000 A.D.) to Middle High German (an intermediate stage, spoken around 1400 A.D.).

Here are the relevant facts. I give a partial paradigm for the adjective *hox* 'high' in both Old High German and Middle High German. [x] stands for a voiceless velar fricative, and [ø] is a front rounded vowel.

	<i>OHG</i>	<i>MHG</i>
'high'	'hox	'hox
'higher'	'hox-iro	'høx-ərə
'highest'	'hox-isto	'høx-əstə
'high (adv.)'	'hox-o	'hox-ø

You can see from the data that Middle High German has two sounds, /o/ and /ø/, where Old High German has only /o/. Further, /o/ and /ø/ must be separate phonemes, because there is no reasonable way to predict which one will occur in a given environment. Thus Middle High German has created a new phoneme. How was this done? The mechanism was simply sound change. The evolution of the forms above is the result of the following two sound changes, applying in the (historical) order given:

I. **Umlaut:** o > ø / \_\_\_\_ [-syllabic] i

<sup>239</sup> More precisely, Japanese uses the sound [ɸ], a voiceless bilabial fricative, to render English the phonetically similar /f/, as in [ɸaito] 'fight'; [ɸesutibaru] 'festival'.

II. **Vowel Reduction:**  $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix} > \text{ə}$

Umlaut turned /o/ into the corresponding front vowel [ø] when the vowel /i/ occurred in the next syllable (this makes sense, since /i/ is itself a front vowel). Vowel Reduction converted all the unstressed vowels into schwa. The stress in Old High German and Middle High German always fell on the first syllable, so in effect Vowel Reduction applied to all vowels in non-initial syllables.

The following derivations show how Umlaut and Vowel Reduction jointly created a new phoneme:

hox-iro	hox-o	
höx-iro	hox-o	Umlaut
höx-ərə	hox-ə	Vowel Reduction

By itself, Umlaut introduced only a new allophone. At the beginning of its existence, [ø] was only a phonetic variant of /o/. The dirty work was done by Vowel Reduction: this sound change obliterated the environment that had triggered Umlaut. The sound [ø] was “stranded”; it was no longer predictable from the context, and thus came to be a phoneme on its own.

You can see, then, that it is possible for a language to acquire a new phoneme, strictly from its own resources, without borrowing it. The general mechanism is this: a new rule created an allophone, then a later sound change wipes out the conditioning environment for that allophone. The allophone then stands alone as a new phoneme.

One further point: it’s clear that the “wiping out of conditioning environments” often will happen, as it did in German, by removing phonemes—what averts the crisis of the language’s words becoming so short that they get confused with each other? The answer appears to be that morphology comes to the rescue. For instance, a striking aspect of Mandarin Chinese is that a great fraction of its basic vocabulary consists of compound words. It is thought that this compounding arose as a response to massive phonological erosion, the result of sequence of dramatic sound changes in the earlier history of the language.<sup>240</sup>

The overall picture is that languages manage (probably through the efforts of innovating children during the course of acquisition) to retain a kind of balance, in which there are sufficient phonemic contrasts, and the words are sufficiently long, to keep the vocabulary items reasonably distinct from one another.

<sup>240</sup> A miniature example of the same kind, from the Web, where a Southerner reports: “The reason we say *straight pin* is that, in many Southern dialects, *pin* and *pen* are homonyms. To ensure that the correct item is fetched, one says *Please fetch me a straight pin* or *Please fetch me an ink pen*. (Source: <http://everything2.com/e2node/straight%2520pin>) The sound change that took place in Southern dialects is \*ε > ɪ / \_\_ [+nasal], hence [pɪn] for both *pin* and *pen*.

## 6. The Comparative Method

I said earlier that the modern Germanic languages all descend from a single ancestor, called Proto-Germanic. In addition, both Proto-Germanic and Latin descend from a common ancestor called Proto-Indo-European. We do not have written records of either Proto-Germanic or Proto-Indo-European. How do we know that these languages existed, and how do we know what they looked like?

Our knowledge is the result of the **Comparative Method**. The Comparative Method is a way of recovering information about a lost proto-language by comparing its known daughter languages. This method was worked out over the course of the 19th century by a research community of mostly European linguists.<sup>241</sup>

The basis of the Comparative Method is the fact that sound change is normally regular. It is the regularity of sound change that permits us to prove that languages are related, and to recover information about their lost ancestor.

In outline, the Comparative Method works like this:

- a) Compare sister languages sound by sound.
- b) Determine what *regular* sound changes could have given rise to the correspondence of different sounds across languages.
- c) “Reconstruct” the original language by undoing the various sound changes.

To illustrate the Comparative Method, I will apply it to the language of instruction in this course, comparing it with its sister languages German and Swedish to recover information about the hypothesized answer, namely Proto-Germanic. Here is the first batch of data:<sup>242</sup>

	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
A. <i>good</i>	<sup>1</sup> gʊd	<sup>1</sup> gu:t	<sup>1</sup> gu:d
<i>drive</i>	<sup>1</sup> draɪv	<sup>1</sup> traɪb-ən	<sup>1</sup> dri:v-a <sup>243</sup>
<i>ride</i>	<sup>1</sup> raɪd	<sup>1</sup> raɪt-ən	<sup>1</sup> ri:d-a
<i>wide</i>	<sup>1</sup> waɪd	<sup>1</sup> vaɪt	<sup>1</sup> vi:d
<i>deed</i>	<sup>1</sup> di:d	<sup>1</sup> ta:t	<sup>1</sup> do:d

<sup>241</sup> One of them, Jacob Grimm, was also a pioneer (in collaboration with his brother Wilhelm) in the scholarly collection of folklore; hence “Grimm’s fairy tales”.

<sup>242</sup> Swedish forms were converted to IPA using the rules given in Philip Holmes and Ian Hinchliffe (1997) *Swedish: An Essential Grammar*, Routledge. I have not yet checked my conversions with a Swedish expert. For future reference, the Swedish words below are spelled: *god, driva, rida, vid, dåd, grön, gå, giva, gås, binda, rund, land, hund, lind, stol, sten, bäst, lista, vit, fot, söt, ut, tecken, salt, smärta, spinna, spade, löpa, hop, pund, and pipa*.

<sup>243</sup> For simplicity I’ll ignore the phonetic differences between English, German, and Swedish *r*, which are actually [ɹ], [ʀ] (voiced uvular approximant), and [r].

The data have been chosen in the following way. They all contain a /d/ in English, and the corresponding German and Swedish forms are phonetically similar and mean roughly the same thing. (In the German forms, I have added a suffix in various places. This simplifies the problem, without distorting it in any crucial way.)

The crucial observation to be made here is this: wherever English has /d/, Swedish also has /d/ in the same location of the word; but German has /t/. We can express this as a formula:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
d	t	d

The formula holds true not just for these words, but for hundreds of words throughout vocabularies of the three languages.

What could account for the d-t-d correspondence? The answer proposed here is:

- (a) English, German, and Swedish all descend from the same proto-language. That is, at one time they all *were* the same language, namely Proto-Germanic.
- (b) Following the breakup of Proto-Germanic, German underwent a sound change that changed /d/ to /t/ in all environments.

Because sound change is regular, this explanation accounts for the regularity of the t-d-t correspondence.

There is a standard way of expressing our hypothesis in a compact form. We use an asterisk to designate a hypothetical sound; thus if we assume that Proto-Germanic had a /d/, we designate the /d/ as \*d. (Thus in historical linguistics, asterisk means “hypothetical”, not “ungrammatical”). We can write the proposed sound changes with the same notation as phonological rules. Here, then, is the analysis:

Correspondence:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
d	t	d	*d

Sound change:

d > t in German

Notice that this is not the only possible analysis. It is conceivable that Proto-Germanic had \*t, and that English and Swedish changed; or even that Proto-Germanic had something completely different, and all three daughters changed. What we say about the *phonetic identity* of the original sound is a more or less educated guess; what we can be sure about is that there was some particular sound in Proto-Germanic that gave rise to English /d/, German /t/, and Swedish /d/.

Note finally that the sound change is hypothesized to have once been a phonological rule; that is, that the early speakers of German first optionally changed their /d/'s to [t]'s, and gradually came to do this regularly, causing the next generation to restructure (see section 3.1 above).

Let us continue the reconstruction, with the following data:

	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
B. <i>good</i>	'gud	'gu:t	'gu:d
<i>green</i>	'grin	'gry:n	'grø:n
<i>go</i>	'gou	'ge:-ən	'go:
<i>give</i>	'giv	'ge:b-ən	'gi:va
<i>goose</i>	'gus	'gans	'go:s

Here the focus is on /g/. Clearly, not much work is needed here, since all three languages have this sound. The most reasonable hypothesis is that Proto-Germanic had \*g, and that it has evolved unchanged in the daughter languages.

Correspondence:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
g	g	g	*g

The following examples look like they might be a problem. Where English and Swedish have /d/, German has /d/, rather than the expected /t/:

	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
C. <i>bind</i>	'baɪnd	'bɪnd-ən	'bɪnd-a
<i>round</i>	'raʊnd	'rʊnd-ə	'rʊnd
<i>land</i>	'lænd	'lænd-əs	'lænd
<i>hound</i>	'haʊnd	'hʊnd-ə	'hʊnd
<i>linden</i>	'lɪndən	'lɪnd-ə	'lɪnd

The problem can be resolved if we carefully compare the data under A with the data under C. In all the examples of C, the /d/ of German occurs *after* /n/. In the examples of A, the /t/ of German never occurs after /n/. We know already that phonological rules have environments; so it is reasonable to suppose that the \*d > t change had one. In particular, it was blocked after /n/, so that in this set of words German retains the Proto-Germanic /d/. The analysis, then, must be something like this:

Correspondence:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
d	t	d	*d
d	d	d	*d

Sound change:

d > t except / n \_\_\_\_ in German

Sometime the environments for a sound change are more complicated. In the following data, we are looking at what corresponds to English /t/. In German, /ts/ stands for an alveolar affricate:

	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
D(i)	<i>stool</i>	'stul	'ʃtu:l
	<i>stone</i>	'stoun	'ʃtam
	<i>best</i>	'bɛst	'bɛst
	<i>list</i>	'lɪst	'lɪsta
(ii)	<i>white</i>	'waɪt	'vi:t
	<i>foot</i>	'fʊt	'fu:t
	<i>sweet</i>	'swɪt	'sø:t
	<i>out</i>	'aʊt	'ʊ:t <sup>244</sup>
(iii)	<i>token</i>	'tɔ:kən	'tɛkən
	<i>salt</i>	'sɔlt	'salt
	<i>smart</i> <sup>245</sup>	'ʃmɛrts-ən	'smɛrta
	<i>Lent</i>	'lɛnts	?

The correspondences are as follows:

<sup>244</sup> [ʊ] is a high central rounded vowel.

<sup>245</sup> In the sense of pain, as in “that smarts”.

		<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
D.	i.	t	t	t
	ii.	t	s	t
	iii.	t	ts	t

It is possible to show that all three rows reflect \*t in Proto-Germanic. German retains /t/ after a fricative, shifts \*t to /s/ after a vowel (including a diphthong), and shifts \*t to the affricate /ts/ in word initial position or after a non-fricative consonant. The analysis would be as follows:

		<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
D.	i.	t	t	t	*t
	ii.	t	s	t	*t
	iii.	t	ts	t	*t

Sound Changes in German:

t > [+fricative] / [+syllabic] \_\_\_\_

t > [+affricate] /  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{fricative} \end{array} \right]$  \_\_\_\_

One more set of data suggests a slight revision of the analysis:

	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
E.	<i>spin</i>	'spɪn	'ʃpɪn-ən
	<i>spade</i>	'speɪd	'ʃpa:tən
	<i>leap</i>	'lɪp	'lø:pa
	<i>heap</i>	'hɪp	'hu:p
	<i>pound</i>	'paʊnd	'pʊnd
	<i>pipe</i>	'paɪp	'pi:pa

Here the correspondences are as follows:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
p	p	p
p	f	p
p	pf	p

In analyzing these data, the trick is to ignore temporarily the minor difference between bilabials and labio-dentals, and refer to them collectively as “labials”. If we do this, we find a close similarity between the labials and the alveolars. That is, German has converted stops to fricatives after a vowel or glide, and has converted stops to affricates after a non-fricative consonant. Thus to

handle the labials, we needn't assume additional sound changes, but only generalize the previous ones:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
p	p	p	*p
p	f	p	*p
p	pf	p	*p

Sound Changes in German:

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voiced} \end{array} \right] > [+fricative] / [+syllabic] \text{ \_\_\_}$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voiced} \end{array} \right] > [+affricate] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} -\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{fricative} \end{array} \right] \text{ \_\_\_}$$

There are a couple of loose ends to clear up. First, we have to add some detailed sound changes to specify our rather vague “labials” of German as either bilabial or labiodental. This step is not particularly interesting, so I will skip it here. We also have to determine the facts for the third voiceless stop of Proto-Germanic, namely \*k.

For the first sound change (the one that created fricatives), we are on safe ground. Proto-Germanic \*k did indeed become a fricative (the velar one) in German, as is shown by cases like *token* = *tsaxən*, *seek* = *zux-ən*, *make* = *max-ən*. The messy part concerns the expected velar affricate /kx/. This does exist in Swiss German, and written records show that it once existed through much of the German-speaking area. However, a later sound change caused /kx/ to revert back to /k/ in most German dialects. Thus the system as it stands today is not as symmetrical as we might expect.

At this point we have reconstructed several sounds of Proto-Germanic using the Comparative Method:

*p	*t	*k
	*d	*g

We could go on, until we have reconstructed the entire inventory of Proto-Germanic phonemes. When this is done, we can reconstruct entire words. For example, the Proto-Germanic word for ‘good’ (English *gud*, German *gut*, Swedish *gud*) has been reconstructed as \**gud*. One can use similar methods to reconstruct much of the morphological system, and, to a limited extent, even the syntax.

I should admit that this exercise is artificial in an important way. No one seriously attempting to reconstruct Proto-Germanic would use Modern English, Modern German, and Modern Swedish as the basis of the reconstruction. Better results are obtained by using the oldest available written records of these languages. Real reconstructions employ Old English (oldest records 800’s A.D.) instead of Modern English, Old High German (800’s A.D.) instead of Modern German, and Old

Norse (800's) instead of Swedish. Other languages are used as well. The oldest attested data from a Germanic language is from Gothic, a language now extinct that was spoken by one of the tribes that overran the Roman Empire. Parts of the Bible were translated into Gothic around 600 A.D.

To summarize: the comparative method involves (a) locating "sister words" from sister languages; (b) determining the sound correspondences; (c) writing the sound changes in each language; and (d) determining the original forms to which the sound changes applied.

### Study Exercise #81: Proto-Germanic $\theta$

The following correspondence sets illustrate the fate of Proto-Germanic  $\theta$  in English, German, and Swedish. The German data are slightly fudged, as *bad*, *klaid*, *tod*, and *laid* are actually pronounced [bat], [klart], [tot], and [lart]. The pronunciations shown are used whenever an ending is added to the word. For purposes of the problem, assume the pronunciations given.

	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
1. <i>bath</i>	[bæθ]	bad	bad
2. <i>brother</i>	[brʌðə]	bruder	bruder
3. <i>cloth</i>	[klɒθ]	klaid	kled
4. <i>death</i>	[deθ]	tod	dod
5. <i>further</i>	[fəðə]	(be)fordərn	(be)furdra
6. <i>loath</i>	[louθ]	laid	led
7. <i>thank</i>	[θɪŋk]	daŋk	takk
8. <i>thing</i>	[θɪŋ]	dɪŋ	tiŋ
9. <i>three</i>	[θri]	drai	tre

a. Arrange the data into phonetic correspondence sets, i.e. complete the chart that would begin as follows:

Eng.	Ger.	Swed.	
θ	d	d	1,3...
ð	d	d	2,5

b. Determine the sound changes that  $\theta$  has undergone in the three languages, and write them in the format

X > Y / P\_\_Q in Language L

c. The following cases seem to go against what you've seen before (cf. nos. 1, 3, 4, and 6). How might they be explained?

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10. <i>bathe</i>	[beɪð]	baden	bada
11. <i>clothe</i>	[kloʊð]	klarden	kleda
12. <i>loathe</i>	[louð]	larden	leda

There are two clues to consider: first, the spelling of English was established long ago in the history of the language, before a number of sound changes took place. Second, consider differences in the corresponding German and Swedish forms.

### Answer to Study Exercise #78

#### a. English German Swedish

θ	d	d	1,3,4,6
ð	d	d	2,5
θ	d	t	7,8,9

b. English: θ > ð / [+syllabic] \_\_\_ [+syllabic]

German: θ > d (everywhere)

Swedish: θ > t / [word \_\_\_]  
θ > d / elsewhere

c. These forms have English /ð/ matching German and Swedish /d/, whereas the “normal” forms of 1, 3, 4, and 6 have English /θ/ matching German and Swedish /d/.

We know that in English, \*θ became [ð] just in case it was between two [+syllabic] segments. A reasonable hypothesis would be that *at the time of the θ > ð sound change*, the \*θ's of *bathe*, *clothe*, and *loathe* really were between two [+syllabic] sounds; in particular, that there was a final vowel in these words that is no longer pronounced. The final vowel dropped out only after the θ > ð change had already happened.

The history of *bathe* under this hypothesis would be as follows:

*beɪθə	(assuming that the final vowel was schwa)
beɪðə	θ > ð / [+syllabic] ___ [+syllabic]
beɪð	dropping of final schwas

There are a number of facts supporting this hypothesis. First of all, the “missing vowel” really is present in German and Swedish. That is, in those cases in which English has “mysterious ð”, German and Swedish have an extra vowel that is missing in English; and in those cases in which English has the normal final [θ], German and Swedish do not have an extra vowel. That is, we can use German and Swedish to suggest what English originally looked like, and thus explain an otherwise mysterious change.

In addition, notice that in just those cases where English has “mysterious ð”, the spelling puts a “silent e” at the end of the word. This silent *e* is pointless from a modern point of view, but it makes sense if the *e* was at one time pronounced. The spelling of these words remained the same, even though one of the vowels was no longer present.

## 7. Study Exercise #82: Proto-ABC

This problem has made-up data, but the patterns are patterns seen in real language histories.

We assume a proto-language, called ABC, with three attested daughter languages, A, B, and C. The goal is to characterize the sound system of Proto-ABC and all of the sound changes that applied in its daughter languages.

The data below are alphabetized by Language A, but not otherwise organized.

No.	Language A	Language B	Language C	gloss <sup>246</sup>
1	kaku	kaku	kaku	'snow'
2	kapo	kabo	kaba	'daughter-in-law'
3	kawi	gawi	gawi	'lamb'
4	kene	gene	dzana	'salmon'
5	kepi	gebi	dzabi	'victory'
6	keta	geda	dzada	'cow'
7	kiko	giko	dzika	'grass'
8	kiko	giko	dzika	'ancestor'
9	kita	kida	tʃida	'rye'
10	kitu	kitu	tʃitu	'weft'
11	kopa	kopa	kapa	'loom'
12	kopu	kobu	kabu	'harness'
13	kuki	kugi	kudzi	'reins'
14	mame	mame	mama	'battle'
15	maru	malu	maru	'goddess of the hearth'
16	mupu	mubu	mubu	'bridle'
17	mura	mula	mura	'sacrifice'
18	mura	mula	mura	'wine'
19	naki	naki	natʃi	'wheat'
20	nari	nali	nari	'rain'
21	newi	newi	nawi	'sheep'
22	niwo	niwo	niwa	'elbow'
23	noto	noto	nata	'goddess of wisdom'
24	pako	pako	paka	'chicken'
25	peka	peka	paka	'old'
26	peko	bego	baga	'wool'
27	pika	bika	bika	'wheel'
28	poke	boke	batʃa	'brother-in-law'

<sup>246</sup> The glosses are meant to be words that could have occurred in Proto-Indo-European, a society that (as we know from the actual reconstructed vocabulary) raised crops, milked cows, obtained wool from sheep, spun and wove cloth, fought with chariots, and worshipped many gods.

29	poku	pogu	pagu	'linen'
30	pomo	pomo	pama	'god of thunder'
31	pono	bono	bana	'sow (seeds)'
32	popa	bopa	bapa	'young'
33	puke	puke	putʃa	'plow'
34	punu	punu	punu	'goat'
35	putu	budu	budu	'shield'
36	rike	like	ritʃa	'household god'
37	riwu	liwu	riwu	'blanket'
38	roti	loti	rati	'sky'
39	ruti	ludi	rudi	'chief'
40	taki	tagi	tadʒi	'roast'
41	tawo	dawo	dawa	'cloud'
42	tepo	depo	dapa	'altar'
43	tewe	tewe	tawa	'pray'
44	tinu	dinu	dinu	'harvest'
45	tipi	dibi	dibi	'god of war'
46	tipu	dibu	dibu	'chariot'
47	tita	dida	dida	'gizzard'
48	tito	dito	dita	'amphora'
49	towu	towu	tawu	'beget'
50	wute	wute	wuta	'spear'
51	kupa	kupa	kupa	'sword'
52	kuma	guma	guma	'leather'

Here is the problem solved, through a series of Socratic questions.

**Question:** (a) Find the correspondence series for liquids (l, r), and conjecture what was the ancestor sound.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, part (a):**

Everywhere (for example: 15, 17, 18, 36-39), we find that A, B, C, have [r, l, r]. The simplest guess is that \*r in Proto-ABC evolved into [l] in B.

**R to L**

r > l      in Language B

**Study Exercise #79, Question (b)**

Give the inventories of stops and affricates in A, B, and C, arranging them into one chart for each language.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (b)**

			[+bilabial]	[+alveolar]	[+palato- alveolar]	[+velar]
A	[+stop]	[-voice]	p	t		k
B:	[+stop]	[-voice]	p	t		k
		[+voice]	b	d		g
C:	[+stop]	[-voice]	p	t		k
		[+voice]	b	d		g
	[+affricate]	[-voice]			tʃ	
		[+voice]			dʒ	

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**Study Exercise #79, Question (c)**

Find the correspondence series for bilabial stops and reconstruct the ancestor sounds.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (c)**

There are two series:

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	
p	b	b	as in 2, 5, 12, 16, 26-28, etc.
p	p	p	as in 11, 24, 25, 30, etc.

Two possibilities: one single proto-sound \*p, with it changing to [b] in some context in Languages B and C. Or, two proto-sounds \*p and \*b, with a merger to p in Language A.

It seems pretty hopeless to find a context into which \*p could have evolved into b: look for instance at

B 30 [pomo] vs. 31 [bono]

or at

B 25 [peka] vs. B 26 [bego].

So it seems more sensible to set up two proto-stops, as follows:

\*p  
\*b

and assume

b > p in A.

This sound change works perfectly for the data, since there are no [b] in Language A.

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**Study Exercise #79, Question (d)**

Find the correspondence series for alveolar stops and reconstruct the ancestor sounds.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (d)**

This works very similarly. There are two series.

t d d      as in 6, 9, 41, 42, 44, 45, etc.

t t t      as in 10, 23, 40, 43, etc.

It looks pretty hopeless to try to derive the modern [d] from \*t—for instance, why would t become d in Language B 42 [depo], but remain t in Language B 43 [tewe]? Better to assume that \*t and \*d were proto-sounds, and that the distinction got wiped out everywhere in A.

\*t

\*d

\*d > t in A

This is actually encouraging, because it's entirely similar to the bilabials above. So it now becomes sensible, indeed imperative, to look at the velars.

---

**Study Exercise #79, Question (e)**

For the moment, ignore the palato-alveolars. Find the correspondence series for velar stops and reconstruct the ancestor sounds.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (e)**

With the hint that we ignore palato-alveolars, the data look very much like the data for the last two cases.

k g g      as in 3, 26, 29

k k k      as in 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 27, etc.

As before, it's very unlikely that the voicing distinction arose by a sound change — compare 25 and 26 in Languages B and C. So we can set up:

\*k

\*g

\*g > k in A

---

**Study Exercise #79, Question (f)**

Generalize your findings of the last three sections using features.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (f)**

**Stop Devoicing**

\*[+stop] > [-voice] in A

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**Study Exercise #79, Question (g)**

What are the vowel inventories of A, B, and C? Form a chart listing the vowels by their features.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (g)**

[ieaou], [ieaou], and [iaɪu], respectively. Here is the chart:

	[-back]	[+back]
[+high -low]	i	u
[-high -low]	e	o
[-high +low]		a

---

**Study Exercise #79, Question (h)**

Find the correspondence series for vowels and reconstruct. To save time, here is a hint: the original system had five vowels.

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (h)**

a a a      1, 2, 10, etc.  
 e e a      4, 14, 21, etc.  
 o o a      2, 7, 8, 11, 12, etc.  
 i i i      3, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc.  
 u u u      1, 10, 12 etc.

Given the hint, it's a fairly obvious move to set up this proto-vowel system:

\*i, \*e, \*a, \*o, \*u

and then assume a massive wiping out of distinctions in C: all three of [e,a,o] emerged as [a].

**Mid Vowel Lowering**

\*e, \*o > a in Language C

In features, this would be:

$$* \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{high} \end{bmatrix} > [+low, +back]$$
**Study Exercise #79, Question (i)**

Collect local environments for [k], [tʃ], [g], [dʒ] in Language C. Retain the original data next to them. What vowels can follow k, g in C?

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (i)**

[k]:

No.	Language A	Language B	Language C	environment
1	kaku	kaku	kaku	[__ a
1	kaku	kaku	kaku	a__ u
2	kapo	kabo	kaba	[__ a
11	kopa	kopa	kapa	[__ a
12	kopu	kobu	kabu	[__ a
24	pako	pako	paka	a__ a
25	peka	peka	paka	a__ a
27	pika	bika	bika	i__ a
51	kupa	kupa	kupa	[__ u

[g]:

No.	Language A	Language B	Language C	environment
3	kawi	gawi	gawi	[__ a
26	peko	bego	baga	a__ a
29	poku	pogu	pagu	a__ u
52	kuma	guma	guma	[__ u

[tʃ]:

No.	Language A	Language B	Language C	environment
9	kita	kida	tʃida	[__ i
10	kitu	kitu	tʃitu	[__ i
19	naki	naki	natʃi	a__ i
28	poke	boke	batʃa	a__ a
33	puke	puke	putʃa	u__ a
36	rike	like	ritʃa	i__ a

[dʒ]:

No.	Language A	Language B	Language C	environment
4	kene	gene	dʒana	[__ a
5	kepi	gebi	dʒabi	[__ a
6	keta	geda	dʒada	[__ a
7	kiko	giko	dʒika	[__ i
8	kiko	giko	dʒika	[__ i
13	kuki	kugi	kudʒi	u__ i
40	taki	tagi	tadʒi	a__ i

In C:

[k] and [g] can be followed by [a] or [u].

[tʃ] and [dʒ] can be followed by [a] or [i].

---

**Study Exercise #79, Question (k)**

See if you can find a solution in which there were only \*k and \*g in Proto-ABC, with all instances of [tʃ] and [dʒ] resulting from sound change. The big challenge is that in C, both [k] and [tʃ] can occur before [a], and likewise both [g] and [dʒ] can occur before [a]. Hint: look at the *original* vowel of the [a]'s preceded by [tʃ] and [dʒ], versus the original form of the [a]'s preceded by [k] and [g].)

**Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (k)**

Cases where \*k evolved into [tʃ]:

*Environment**Example*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • followed by an [i]                        | 9 [tʃi <u>da</u> ]                             |
| • followed by an [a] that used to be an [e] | 28, [batʃ <u>a</u> ]; compare B [boke <u>]</u> |

Cases where \*k stayed [k]:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • followed by an [u]                        | 1 [k <u>aku</u> ]                             |
| • followed by an [a] has always been [a]    | 1 [k <u>a</u> ku]; compare B [k <u>a</u> ku]  |
| • followed by an [a] that used to be an [o] | 11 [k <u>a</u> pa]; compare B [k <u>o</u> pa] |

So it looks like \*k evolved into [tʃ] just in case—at the time—it was followed by [i] or [e]. These are the [–back] vowels.

We can confirm this with the voiced counterparts [g] and [dʒ].

Cases where \*g evolved into [dʒ]:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • followed by an [i]                        | 7, [dʒi <u>ka</u> ]                            |
| • followed by an [a] that used to be an [e] | 6, [dʒ <u>a</u> da]; compare B [g <u>e</u> da] |

Cases where \*g stayed [g]:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • followed an [u]                             | 29 [p <u>ag</u> u]                                      |
| • followed by an [a] that has always been [a] | 3 [g <u>a</u> wi]; compare B [g <u>a</u> wi]            |
| • followed by an [a] that used to be [o]      | 26, [b <u>a</u> ga]; compare B [b <u>e</u> g <u>o</u> ] |

So it looks like \*g evolved into [dʒ] just in case—at the time—it was followed by [i] or [e], that is, by a front vowel.

Here is everything set up by sound changes.

(303) **Palatalization**<sup>247</sup>

$$* \begin{bmatrix} +\text{velar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{bmatrix} > \begin{bmatrix} -\text{velar} \\ +\text{palato-alveolar} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{affricate} \end{bmatrix} / \text{---} \begin{bmatrix} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{back} \end{bmatrix}$$

“Velar stops evolved into palato-alveolar affricates when they preceded a front vowel.”

Historically, Palatalization must have taken place before Mid Vowel Lowering, since it was triggered by proto-\*e, before \*e was converted to [a].

**Study Exercise #79, Question (I)**

Provide historical derivations for 15, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 33, in each language.

<sup>247</sup> This is the general term for any phonological rule or sound change that moves sounds into the general territory of the hard palate (including not just the palatal place of articulation, but also the palato-alveolar).

### Answer to Study Exercise #79, question (I)

Language A:

15	3	4	8	9	33	
*maru	*gawi	*gene	*giko	*kida	*puke	Proto-ABC
—	k	k	k	t	—	Stop Devoicing
maru	kawi	kene	kiko	kita	puke	Language A

Language B:

15	3	4	8	9	33	
*maru	*gawi	*gene	*giko	*kida	*puke	Proto-ABC
l						R to L
malu	gawi	gene	giko	kida	puke	Language B

Language C:

15	3	4	8	9	33	
*maru	*gawi	*gene	*giko	*kida	*puke	Proto-ABC
—	—	dʒ	dʒ	tʃ	tʃ	Palatalization
—		a a	a	—	a	Mid Vowel Lowering
maru	gawi	dʒana	dʒika	tʃida	putʃa	Language C

Thus, we see Proto-ABC as having had a fairly simple phonological system, with the six stops [ptk bdg], various other consonants, and five vowels [ieaou]. The voicing contrast was wiped out in A. C underwent a fairly complex chained development, first developing the palato-alveolars from velars before front vowels, then radically simplifying the vowel system to just [iau]. In B, a trivial change shifted \*r to [l].

## 8. The reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European

The greatest achievement of the comparative method has been the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European. Indo-European is so-called because the Indo-European languages in their original territory (before the age of Western expansion) stretched from Europe to India. Proto-Indo-European was reconstructed over a long period of research that spanned most of the 19th and early 20th centuries; the details are still being worked out today. The field of historical linguistics in fact was developed mostly as a result of the efforts to understand the relationships of the Indo-European languages.

The Indo-European family was mentioned above in connection with the concept of descent. Here is a more detailed family tree given in outline form. Extinct languages are shown in italics.

### (304) *The Indo-European family tree*

Italic, comprising

*Latin* and its modern descendents, the Romance languages

*various ill-attested ancient languages of Italy*

Greek (*Ancient Greek*, *Medieval Greek*, Modern Greek)

Indo-Iranian, comprising

Indic (*Sanskrit*, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Sinhala, many others)

Iranian (Persian, Pashto, Kurdish, others)

Balto-Slavic, comprising

Baltic (Latvian, Lithuanian)

Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Macedonian)

Germanic (see above)

Celtic (ancestor of Irish, Scots Gaelic, Welsh, Breton, *Gaulish*, *Cornish*)

Albanian

Armenian (today attested in two main daughter languages, Eastern and Western Armenian)

*Hittite* (Turkey, earliest written records of any Indo-European language)

*Tocharian* (Central Asia)

The reconstruction of the family was made much easier by the fact that so many branches of the family are attested in very old written documents; roughly 1700 BCE for Hittite, 1500 BCE for Sanskrit, 1200 BCE for Mycenaean Greek.

One can find numerous foreign words that descend from the same Proto-Indo-European root as familiar English words. These words are familiar, because English has borrowed heavily from Latin and Greek. The following table gives some examples.

	PIE
English <i>father</i> Latin <i>pater</i> (cf. <i>paternal</i> ) Greek <i>pater</i> (cf. <i>patriarch</i> ) Persian <i>pedær</i>	*pāter
English <i>heart</i> Greek <i>kardia</i> (cf. <i>cardiac</i> ) Latin <i>kord</i> (cf. <i>cordial</i> )	*kerd
English <i>bear</i> Latin <i>fer</i> (cf. <i>transfer</i> ) Greek <i>pherein</i> (cf. <i>amphora</i> ) ‘vessel to carry things in’	*bher
English <i>two</i> Latin <i>duo</i> (cf. <i>dual</i> ) Greek <i>dis</i> (cf. <i>disyllabic</i> ) Armenian <i>erku</i>	*dwo

Proto-Indo-European is believed to have been spoken about 6000 years ago, give or take a few thousand years. The Armenian form *erku* in the table gives an idea of how far a word can evolve through sound change in this amount of time.

## 9. Grimm’s Law

You’ll see in the examples above that the consonants of Germanic generally deviate from those of the remaining Indo-European languages. This is due to what is probably the most famous of all sound changes, **Grimm’s Law**. In very rough outline, Grimm’s Law looked like this:

<i>Proto-Indo-European</i>		<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
p t k	>	f θ h <sup>248</sup>
b d g	>	p t k
b <sup>h</sup> d <sup>h</sup> g <sup>h</sup>	>	b d g

Here are examples:

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<sup>248</sup> On grounds of phonetic symmetry we would expect a voiceless velar fricative [x]. This probably was an intermediate stage on the way to [h]; for example, in Polish [x] can be optionally pronounced [h].

<i>father</i> , Latin <i>pater</i>	<i>three</i> , Greek <i>treis</i>	<i>heart</i> , Greek <i>kardia</i> :
<i>hemp</i> , Greek <i>kannabis</i>	<i>two</i> , Latin <i>duo</i>	<i>knee</i> , Latin <i>genu</i> . <sup>249</sup>
<i>brother</i> , Latin <i>frater</i> <sup>250</sup>	<i>do</i> , Sanskrit <i>d<sup>h</sup>a:</i> <sup>251</sup>	<i>guest</i> , Latin <i>hostis</i> <sup>252</sup>

The *American Heritage Dictionary* is to my knowledge the only dictionary that bothers to take the etymologies all the way back to Proto-Indo-European. You can find the original roots for these correspondences in their Indo-European appendix:

*pater	*trei	*kerd
*kannabis	*dwo	*genu
*bhra:ter	*dhe:	*ghosti

## 10. The method of reconstructed environments

The most virtuosic application of the Comparative Method uses a technique that, oddly, has no standard name. To fill this gap, I will call it here the **method of reconstructed environments** here.

In the **method of reconstructed environments**, the environment for a sound change in Language A, which is no longer present in A, is determined using data from sister language B.

The method was already illustrated in the Proto-ABC example above. We used the vowels of A and B to solve the problem of the sound change  $k > tʃ$   $dʒ$  in C.

Proto-ABC is modeled on a real-life case, namely the history of Sanskrit, of which the following data are representative.

<i>Latin</i>	<i>Old English</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>gloss</i>
-kwe	—	-te	-tʃa	‘and’
kwis	hwa:	tis	tʃid	‘who’
kwod	hwæt	—	-kas	‘what’
—	hwæθer	poteros	kataras	‘which of the two’
kwando	hwanne	—	kada:	‘when’

The correspondence series here are these:

<sup>249</sup> [kni], until about 1700

<sup>250</sup> The Proto-Indo-European  $b^h$ , preserved in Sanskrit  $b^h a:tar$ , became  $f$  in Latin.

<sup>251</sup> Meaning “to set”.

<sup>252</sup> The Proto-Indo-European  $g^h$  became  $h$  in Latin.

<i>Latin</i>	<i>Old English</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>	
kw	hw	t	tʃ	(first two)
kw	hw	p	k	(last three)

Normally, these are attributed to Proto-Indo-European \*kw, which survived intact in Latin and became [hw] in Germanic by Grimm's Law. In Greek, the fate of \*kw depended on the following vowel: if this vowel was front, \*kw evolved into [t], as in the first two rows; otherwise \*kw evolved into [p].

It is the Sanskrit forms that are the puzzle: they show sometimes [tʃ], and sometimes [k], but in exactly the same environment, namely before [a].

The solution to the problem is to use the method of reconstructed environments. The crucial insight is that the Sanskrit vowel inventory is missing vowels found in its sister languages, namely the mid vowels [e] and [o]. If we consider just Greek *poteros* vs. Sanskrit *kataras*, it is plausible that the Sanskrit vowel were (at some pre-attested phase of Sanskrit) the same as the Greek ones, and that there was a merger:

### (305) Mid Vowel Lowering

\*e, \*o > a in Sanskrit

In other words, we use Greek and Latin as a guide to the former quality of the Sanskrit vowels. This lets us explain the behavior of \*kw, as follows:

*-kwe	*kwid	*-kwos	*kwoteros	Pre-Sanskrit
tʃe	tʃid	—	—	*kw > tʃ before front vowels
—	—	kos	koteros	*kw > k elsewhere
tʃa	—	ka <u>s</u>	ka <u>t</u> ar <u>a</u> s	*e, *o > a
tʃa	tʃid	kas	kataras	attested Sanskrit

This account both rationalizes the gap in the Sanskrit vowel system, and explains the development of [tʃ] from \*k.<sup>253</sup>

The method of reconstructed environments was introduced as a technique by several scholars more or less simultaneously during the 1870's, and marked the maturity of reconstruction as a method. Further developments have mostly followed developments in phonology: we can make better guess about old phoneme inventories by the study of what are typically phoneme inventories

<sup>253</sup> Curiously, the very same pattern appears in the history of Salishan languages (northwestern United States). Nez Perce plays the role of Sanskrit here. The scholars who reconstructed proto-Salishan presumably didn't have as hard a time figuring this out, since they already had the Sanskrit example to work with.

today; and our increased knowledge of phonological rules in the world's languages permits more informed guesswork about old sound changes.

## 11. Validating the comparative method

The best way to evaluate the comparative method is to apply it to a language family whose ancestor is known from written evidence. Plausible candidates:

- Apply method to Romance languages, compare result with Latin
- Apply method to Hindi, Bengali, etc., compare result with Sanskrit
- Apply method to Slavic languages, compare result with Old Church Slavonic
- Apply method to Mandarin, Cantonese, etc.; compare result with oldest written Chinese

The result is generally encouraging, but also shows the limitations. Thus, Proto-Romance, the reconstructed ancestor of the modern Romance languages, is not unsimilar to Classical Latin, but departs from it in many important ways. Similar conclusions follow, I believe, in the other examples just given.

### 11.1 *Confirming Proto-Germanic Reconstructions*

Opportunities to confirm Proto-Germanic reconstructions directly are almost non-existent, but a famous case of this sort is often mentioned. The reconstruction is of interest, because it shows how knowledge of phonology and sound change in general guides reconstruction.

The following forms are the oldest attested versions in Germanic languages of the word “guest”:

Gothic	gasts
Old Norse	gestr
Old High German	gast
Old English	gæst

Given this data, a historical linguist experienced in the typical sound changes found in languages might reason as follows:

- The final consonant of Gothic and Old Norse is plausibly the result of a long-lost [z]—this sound can become [r] by weakening from fricative to liquid, and [s] by assimilating the voicing of a preceding [z].
- Long consonant clusters are historically usually the result of the loss of vowels; thus \*gVstVz.
- The absence of the \*z in some of the daughter languages (Old High German, Old English) is hardly surprising, given the tendency of languages to simplify their consonant clusters.
- Again on the basis of examples seen elsewhere, it is likely that the Gothic and Old High German vowels ([a]) represent the original form, and that the front vowels of Old Norse and Old English are the result of assimilation: the vowel of the stem becomes front under

the influence of a following front vowel.<sup>254</sup> The mostly likely such vowel is [i]—it is the most common trigger of this kind of process, and is also the most likely vowel to delete.

- Thus, the ancestor form was plausibly \*gastiz, and the history of the descendent forms is perhaps something like this:

Gothic	Old Norse	OHG	Old English	
*'gastiz	*'gastiz	*'gastiz	*'gastiz	Proto-Germanic
—	'gestiz	—	'gæstiz	vowel assimilation
—	'gestir	—	—	weakening of z to r
'gastz	'gestr	'gastz	'gæstz	loss of stressless vowel
—	—	'gast	'gæst	cluster simplification
'gasts	—	'gast	'gæst	voicing assimilation
'gasts	'gestr	'gast	'gæst	attested forms

This is going fairly far out on a limb, and can only be called informed conjecture. Yet in this case the conjecture was pleasingly confirmed by an archaeological discovery; a horn found in southern Denmark, dated to about 400 A.D—only shortly after the breakup of Proto-Germanic. The runic inscription on the horn is transcribed thus:

Ek Hlewagastiz Holtijaz horna tawido  
I, Hlewagastiz, son of Holti, made (this) horn.



Gold horn of Gallehus,  
Jutland, Denmark, c. 400 AD

From <http://alcor.concordia.ca/~shannon/335PP/Lecture01Germania.ppt#270,11,Runes>

ek hlewagastiz | holtijaz | horna | tawido

<sup>254</sup> Old Norse also shows a partial height assimilation.

Following the general pattern of early Germanic names, “Hlewagastiz” is interpreted as “fame-guest”—thus giving *gastiz* as confirmation of the reconstructed Proto-Germanic form. Latin *hostis* ‘enemy’ is taken to be further confirmation; its [h] is the normal counterpart of Germanic [g]; and the two are thought to descend from Proto-Indo-European \*g<sup>h</sup>ostis ‘stranger’—with opposite semantic drift in the two daughter language families.

In a similar case, the reconstruction for “king”:

Old English	cyning
Old Frisian	koning
Old Saxon	kuning
Old High German	kuning
Old Norse	konongr

is taken to be \*kuningVz, where V is some vowel that *didn’t* cause the stem vowel to become front—probably a non-front vowel. Conveniently, this word was borrowed very early into Finnish (not an Indo-European language), which preserved it in the form *kuningas*, essentially unaltered (save for the z > s; Finnish has no [z]) for 2000 years.

### 11.2 Why the Comparative Method is imperfect

In spite of such gratifying examples, the more general truth is that the Comparative Method cannot in general recover the prior state of languages intact, but only bring us closer to it than any other procedure could. The problem is gradual data loss over time. If any part of a word is lost in *all* of the daughter languages, it will not be recoverable by the Comparative Method. In section this week, you’ll see some examples of reconstructed Proto-Romance, and you’ll see that they involve very considerable differences from Classical Latin.

It is not just the sound that get irrecoverably lost. Whole words get replaced over time, gradually removing the historical linguist’s raw material entirely. Thus, English marginally preserves the Proto-Germanic word \**hundo-z* in the form of *hound*, but in general to refer to dogs we say *dog*, of which the Oxford English Dictionary says:

“Late Old English; previous history and origin unknown”

Many words do not have etymologies—the best-informed scholars just plain don’t know. (OED on *big*: “its derivation is entirely unknown”; on *boy* “of obscure origin”; on *tag*: “origin obscure”; on *miffed* “origin uncertain”.)

## 12. How far back can we go?

Given the gradual loss of data over time, most linguists have been reluctant to pursue the deeper ancestry of the Indo-European languages (and similarly for very deep relationships around the world). It is generally agreed that the data aren’t sufficient to relate Indo-European to any of

the neighboring language families<sup>255</sup> using the Comparative Method, and the debate hinges on whether we are entitled to use any *other* method less rigorous than the Comparative Method, such as merely combing through the data for resemblances that may well be quite accidental.

I believe most linguists are skeptical of such efforts. The world abounds in **false cognates**, that is to say, words that look like they come from the same proto-word, but can be shown through reasoning and evidence that they are not. A classic case is the Persian word [bæd], which means, of all things, “bad”, but (as careful study of the sound correspondences and ancient Persian documents will show) is not etymologically related to English “bad” at all.<sup>256</sup>

Thus, scholars who try to demonstrate deep relationships (of which the logical extreme is the hypothetical “Proto-World”) risk the scorn of their colleagues. Typically a scholar who uses “trans-comparative” scholarly methods will be regarded by a few colleagues as a visionary, and by others as exhibiting scholarly irresponsibility.

The failure of the Comparative Method to go “really deep” is perhaps a bit sad, since it would be nice to know the language our remote ancestors spoke. A useful comparison here is a parallel discipline—evolutionary biology—that likewise has established the family trees of things (species) through careful and systematic comparison. Evolutionary biology has better data—such as DNA sequences—that have enabled biologists to reconstruct the unitary Tree of Life almost to its origin. Historical linguistics, alas, only has words, which gradually get replaced over the centuries. The complete Tree of Languages may be valid as a concept, but it cannot be accessed with the methods we have and is unlikely ever to be.

An even less likely prospect is pinpointing when and how language first came to be. It seems essentially certain that this required advances in human evolution, and, as we saw in Chapter 7, some of the adaptations involved may have involved linguistic ability itself. But barring the invention of time travel, we are not likely to find out much about the early stages of human language.

### 13. Borrowing

Sound change is not the only way in which languages can change. Another important mechanism is borrowing, the adoption of words from other languages. Over time, languages can borrow thousands of words; indeed, Albanian is an Indo-European language, but it is of little use in reconstructing Indo-European, because it has borrowed so heavily from other languages that there are only a few hundred native Albanian words left.

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<sup>255</sup> Candidates include Uralic (Finnish, Hungarian, Estonian, etc.), Altaic (Turkish, Mongolian, etc), Basque, and others.

<sup>256</sup> The Middle Persian form is recorded as *vat*, more distant already...

**Study Exercise #83**

a. Use your knowledge of the sound changes developed earlier to predict what will be the German words for *to* and *pepper*.

b. Given this, what would you expect the German word for *party* (in the sense of ‘political party’) to be?

**Answer to Study Exercise #83**

a. The German for *to* is /tsu/, spelled *zu*. The German for *pepper* is /pʰɛfər/. Obviously, this procedure doesn't work all the time, since many other sound changes separate German and English.

b. /pfartsɪ/. This is actually not right; see immediately following discussion.

Borrowing makes trouble for the Comparative Method. The difficulty is that words that are borrowed after a given sound change look like exceptions to that sound change. The German for *party* is in fact not /pfartsɪ/ but rather /partaɪ/. The word was borrowed from French, long after the sound change that converted \*t and \*p into affricates.

In this particular case, the difficulty is not great. We have extensive old records of both German and French, and it is not difficult to trace the history of the word through both languages. But in other cases there is no documentation.

The procedure used in such cases is more subtle. Usually, one does a tentative reconstruction based only on basic, core vocabulary items that are not often borrowed—words like *father*, *arm*, *moon*, *three*, *water*, etc. From these basic words, one can get a rough idea of the sound correspondences.

Once this is done, the sound correspondences themselves can be used to check for borrowings. That is, the words that violate known sound correspondences are likely to be the borrowed words.

**Study Exercise #84**

Consider the following correspondences:

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Proto-Germanic</i>
fish	fɪʃ	fiʃ	*fisk
shoe	ʃu	ʃu:	*sku:
flesh	fleʃ	flaʃ	*flesk

In these cases, we have [ʃ] in English matched with [ʃ] in German matched with [sk] in Swedish.

The English words *skirt* and *shirt* are both descended from the same Proto-Germanic root. One of them is a borrowing, the other is native. Which is which?

## Answers to Study Exercise #81

*Skirt* is borrowed from English in Old Norse around the time of the partial Danish conquest of England. The Old Norse form was *skyrta*. The form is recognizable as a borrowing because all native \*sk clusters had been converted to [ʃ].

*Shirt* and *skirt* were the same word in Proto-Germanic, reconstructed by the Oxford English Dictionary as \*skurtjo:n.

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Once one has filtered out the borrowings, one can use the words that remain to get a better idea of the sound changes. With this done, one can make a more accurate judgment of which words are borrowed, which then permits a through a series of gradual improvements.

## 14. Grammatical simplification

I will discuss one further mechanism of language change: grammatical simplification. The basic picture is this: sound changes over time tend to make the grammar of a language, particularly its morphological rules, very complicated. In compensation, languages often spontaneously simplify their morphological rules.

I will first show how sound change complicates the morphological rules. An example of complexity in morphology is the set of irregular plurals in English, such as *foot-feet*, *mouse - mice*. These are exceptions to the normal pattern of plural formation in English, which would lead us to expect *foots* and *mouses*.

In the theory of inflectional morphology given in the course, a form like *feet* must be listed in the lexicon, with its phonological form and a sort of pre-formed morphosyntactic representation. Here are sample lexical entries for *foot* and *feet*:

<i>foot</i> /fʊt/
<i>feet</i> /fi:t/[Number:plural]
‘appendage at end of leg’

The theory of lexical insertion must state such that, whenever there is a special listed entry like *feet*, that entry is lexically inserted, and the form that would be derived by the rules of the inflectional morphology, namely *foots* [fʊts], is preempted.

### 14.1 The origin of irregular forms

The existence of irregular forms can, in most cases, be attributed to sound changes of long ago. The plurals *feet* and *mice* are in fact the historical descendents, through sound change, of a system that was quite regular thousands of years ago, in Proto-Germanic times. What made them irregular was a lengthy sequence of sound changes. I will go over them briefly here.

Here are the reconstructed forms for *foot*, *feet*, *mouse*, and *mice* in Proto-Germanic (around 500 BCE):

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
* <sup>1</sup> fot	* <sup>1</sup> fot-i	* <sup>1</sup> mus	* <sup>1</sup> mus-i

Notice that there is nothing particularly irregular about them. The plural is formed by attaching a suffix of the form *-i*, which in fact was the regular plural suffix for this class of nouns. In the system of inflectional morphology used in this course, the rule would have been (approximately) the following:

#### Early English Plural Formation

Suffix *-i* when [Number:plural]

The first step towards irregularity for these words was an innocent-looking phonological rule, which created front vowel allophones of the back vowels /o/ and /u/:

#### Early English Umlaut

$$* \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ +\text{round} \end{array} \right] > [-\text{back}] / \_\_\_ [-\text{syllabic}] i$$

This change produced the following forms:

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
<sup>1</sup> fot	<sup>1</sup> föt-i	<sup>1</sup> mus	<sup>1</sup> mys-i

To understand the next change, you need to know that in Proto-Germanic, the first syllable of a word (and only the first syllable) was stressed. The next sound change converted all the stressless vowels into schwa:

#### Vowel Reduction

$$* \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{array} \right] > \text{ə}$$

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
'fot	'føtə	'mus	'mysə

This is reminiscent of how German acquired the phoneme /ø/ (see section 5 of this chapter, above). In fact, pretty much the same thing happened in early English: when the triggering environment for an Umlaut rule was lost, the language acquired front rounded vowel phonemes.

The next step in English was to lose the schwas:

### Final Schwa Drop

\*ə > Ø / \_\_\_\_ ]word

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
'fot	'føt	'mus	'mys

Then the vowel /ø/ lost its rounding, and became the corresponding unrounded vowel /e/:

### ø Unrounding

\*ø > [–round]

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
'fot	'fet	'mus	'mys

Once we have reached this stage, we are no longer relying on reconstruction. The above forms appear in the oldest written documents for Old English.

- Beowulf 745 *Sona hæfde unlifzendes eal zefeormod **fet** and folma*  
'swiftly thus the lifeless corse was clear devoured, even feet and hands.'
- 1297 *He vel of is palefrey, & brec is **fof**.*  
'He fell off his horse and broke his foot'
- Late Old English: King Alfred's translation of Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*:  
*Gif ge nu gesawan hwelce **mus** þæt wære hlaford ofer oðre **mys***  
'If you saw in a community of mice, one mouse asserting his rights and his power over the others'

Around 1050 to 1100, the front rounded vowel /y/ underwent the same fate that /ø/ had undergone earlier: it lost its rounding, becoming the corresponding front vowel /i/:

### y Unrounding

\*y > [–round]

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
'fot	'fet	'mus	'mis

Around 1500, for reasons that are not known, the tense vowels of English suffered a convulsive change, which sent them all over the phonetic chart. This change is called the Great Vowel Shift, and it marks the boundary between Middle English and Early Modern English.

### Great Vowel Shift

i > ai	u > au
e > i	o > u
æ > e	ɔ > o

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
'fut	'fit	'maʊs	'maɪs

Our words are now in recognizably modern state. There was one more sound change: the vowel /u/ became lax in certain environments, in a complex and somewhat irregular change:

### /u/ Laxing

\*u > [–tense] in certain environments

<i>foot</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>mouse</i>	<i>mice</i>
'fʊt	'fi:t	'maʊs	'maɪs

This is the end of journey of these vowels, for now. It is interesting to plot their trajectories on a phonetic chart, to see how far the vowels have migrated in 2500 years:

The vowel of *mus*:

u  
↓  
aʊ

The vowel of *musi*:

i ← y ← u  
↘  
aɪ

The point of this example is to show that 2500 years of sound change can make a very simple morphological rule into a complex one. It would be very hard to write a general rule that predicts *mice* as the plural of *mouse* and *feet* as the plural of *foot*.

#### 14.2 Grammatical regularization as a source of change

In fact, the language didn't really tolerate the situation. At some point in the history of English, the old, increasingly irregular system of plural formation was discarded and replaced by a simpler rule. Basically, in Modern English plurals are formed by suffixing *-z*.<sup>257</sup>

#### Modern English Plural Formation

Suffix *-z* when [Number:plural]

The plurals *mice* and *feet* are relic forms; they have managed to hang on as exceptions to the general rule.

The change in the system of plural formation in English is a classical case of grammatical simplification. The language changed not through sound change, but in response to sound change. It created a new rule for plurals, and replaced most of the old irregular plurals with newly created forms.

Who is responsible for grammatical simplification? The most likely answer is small children, who are still acquiring language. It is not hard to see why: one constantly observes small children oversimplifying the grammar of the language they are learning. In particular, they don't know, or neglect to use, the special lexical entry for forms like *feet*. Instead, they generate *foots* using the regular grammatical system. In some cases, particularly with less common words, such regularized forms can be adopted by the speech community as a whole.

An example: the plural of *cow* was once [kaɪ], or something like it (note the archaic form *kine*). [kaɪ] is the plural inherited through sound change from Proto-Germanic; its history is essentially the same as that of *mice*, with the same vowel. The plural we use today, *cows*, was the invention of children. It differs from *foots* only in that it managed to get adopted for general use.

Quite a few forms in English today are creations of children, of this kind. Another plural form of this type is *brothers* (formerly *brethren*) and the past tenses *helped* (formerly *halp*) and *melted* (formerly *malt*).

The upshot of this is that language change can be thought of as an eternal struggle. Over the centuries, sound change alters the morphological system, making it more complex and obscure. Fighting on the other side are small children, who refuse to learn the irregular forms, and replace

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<sup>257</sup> There is a bit of phonology going on: the underlying /-z/ becomes [-s] after voiceless consonants (*cats*, with /kæt-z/ → [kæts]) and a schwa is inserted to break up clusters of the form [s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ] + [z], as in *badges* (/bædʒ-z/ → [bædʒəz].)

them with regular forms, as generated by the rules of the language at the time they learn it. The current state of a language is the result of a temporary balance between these opposing forces.

## 15. Summary of historical linguistics

At this point we have covered the basic mechanisms of language change. An outline of the field is as follows:

First, all languages have phonological rules. Phonological rules are vulnerable to restructuring by the next generation, which results in sound change. Sound change is normally regular. It is this regularity that makes it possible to reconstruct lost proto-languages, using the Comparative Method.

Borrowing is another major source of language change. Borrowed words make the Comparative Method more difficult to apply, but they can often be detected because they are exceptions to the sound correspondences.

A third major source of language change is grammatical simplification, the abandonment by children of irregular forms resulting from sound change in favor of regular forms. Sound change and grammatical simplification are in eternal conflict: sound change complicates the morphology, and grammatical simplification “repairs” the damage.

The Comparative Method yields well-supported family trees and the changes that the languages underwent during their descent. It cannot go back more than a few thousand years and thus the deep history of languages, as well as the origin of language in general, is not accessible to investigation by this method.

### Study Exercise #85: Historical Linguistics

Here are matched sets from three dialects of English. Apply the Comparative Method, forming correspondence sets and positing sound changes. Here, is it best to compare sequences rather than sounds. Do: [ju, u, o].

		<i>Dialect A</i>	<i>Dialect B</i>	<i>Dialect C</i>
1.	<i>Muir</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> mjuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> mjuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> mjoɪ]
2.	<i>moor</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> muɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> muɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> moɪ]
3.	<i>more</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> moɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> moɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> moɪ]
4.	<i>cure</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kjuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> kjuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> kjoɪ]
5.	<i>Coors</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> kuɪz]	[ <sup>1</sup> kuɪz]	[ <sup>1</sup> koɪz]
6.	<i>core</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> koɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> koɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> koɪ]
7.	<i>Buhr</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> bjuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> bjuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> bjoɪ]

8.	<i>boor</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> buɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> buɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> boɪ]
9.	<i>bore</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> boɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> boɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> boɪ]
10.	<i>endure</i>	[ɛn <sup>1</sup> djuɪ]	[ɛn <sup>1</sup> duɪ]	[ɛn <sup>1</sup> doɪ]
11.	<i>dour</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> duɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> duɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> doɪ]
12.	<i>door</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> doɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> doɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> doɪ]
13.	<i>Turing</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> tjuɪŋ]	[ <sup>1</sup> tuɪŋ]	[ <sup>1</sup> toɪŋ]
14.	<i>tour</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> tuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> tuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> toɪ]
15.	<i>tore</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> toɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> toɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> toɪ]
16.	<i>inure</i>	[ɪ <sup>1</sup> njuɪ]	[ɪ <sup>1</sup> nuɪ]	[ɪ <sup>1</sup> noɪ]
17.	<i>Koh-i-noor</i> <sup>258</sup>	[ <sup>1</sup> kouhɪnuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> kouhɪnuɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> kouhɪnoɪ]
18.	<i>nor</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> noɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> noɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> noɪ]

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<sup>258</sup> A famous diamond, from the Persian for “mountain of light”.

**Answer to Study Exercise #85**

Correspondence sets:

Proto	A	B	C	Examples
*juɪ	juɪ	juɪ	joɪ	1, 4, 7
*juɪ	juɪ	uɪ	oɪ	10, 13, 16
*uɪ	uɪ	uɪ	oɪ	2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17
*or	oɪ	oɪ	oɪ	3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18

The proto-language is identical to Dialect A.

B and C have both undergone:

\*j > Ø / [+alveolar] \_\_\_\_

See *endure*, *Turing*, and *inure*

C has also undergone:

\*u > o / \_\_\_\_ ɪ

which has merged *moor* with *more*, *boor* with *bore*, and so on.

**For Further Reading**

Two textbooks in historical linguistics I have enjoyed are the following. *Introduction to Historical Linguistics* by Anthony Arlotta (1981: University Press of America) is very brief and quite clear; *Historical Linguistics* by Theodora Bynon (1979: Cambridge University Press) goes into greater depth. Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1933, still in print), cited above for phonology, has a wealth of good material on historical linguistics.

## Chapter 14: Applications and Outlook

### 1. This text and linguistics in general

In this text I've presented *one* theory, and for almost every particular area of data, one analysis. This has given us the tools to analyze a fair amount of data, and to illustrate what it means to do linguistic analysis. If you study linguistics further, you'll get more elaborate theories — for one thing, for purposes of an introductory text I've mostly picked theories on the basis that they can be taught in a short period of time, and specialist courses can be more ambitious.

In addition, at the level of research, linguists explore many different theories, and try to find evidence for which one is right. As research proceeds, the theories have tended to become more subtle, more ambitious, and more accurate. But there's a great deal of work yet to be done, and at the present stage of research disagreement among linguists is very common.

### 2. Unsolved research problems in linguistics

One indication that linguistic theory is making progress is that descriptive grammars are getting better. Grammar authors, equipped with better theories, and better knowledge of what languages are like in general, seem to be able to lay out languages more completely and systematically than their predecessors 50 or 100 years ago.

On the other hand, I think most progress in linguistics is yet to come, and the linguistics of 100 years from now may be very different from the linguistics of today.

For what it's worth, here are what I take to be three of the leading unsolved research problems in linguistics.

#### 2.1 *The island problem*

Our islands (Chapter 6) have been a “laundry list” of syntactic structures, some of them perhaps universal and some language-particular. One area where theorizing has been intensive is the attempt to unify and simplify the theory of islands. An approach that is commonly taken is that it's probably better to specify where Wh-phrases *can* be extracted from rather than making a big list of where they can't. No current theory has obtained the agreement of all specialists.<sup>259</sup>

#### 2.2 *The acquisition problem*

We solve linguistics problems through patience, guile, and occasionally inspiration. It is unlikely that children learn language this way, since they seem more reliable than we are — they proceed steadily onward to become fluent native speakers. To solve the problem of how children

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<sup>259</sup> A quick, pessimistic, overview may be read at <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/539657/>

acquire language so well, three things will be needed. First, we need to develop adequate grammars of individual languages, which characterize the native speaker's knowledge and intuitions accurately. We also need adequate general theories of language that say what grammars can be like. Both of these issues have been taken on, at least in an elementary way, in this course.

The next step would be to start modeling the child's behavior directly: linguistics will gradually develop formal systems (probably implemented as computer programs) that mimic the child, learning grammars when exposed to realistic data from languages. This task has only begun to be taken on by linguists in the past few years; it is also a topic of interest to computer scientists.

One of the very simplest such problems to learn a grammar that can form the past tense of English verbs, given the present stem. The rules of the game are that the system is given a set of verbs (perhaps a couple thousand) with their past tense, learns a grammar, and then is tested on new verbs. One system of this sort<sup>260</sup> when asked for the past tense of “*spling*”, guesses as follows:

(306) *Three machine-generated guesses for the past tense of “spling”* ['splɪŋ]

<i>splung</i>	['splʌŋ]	first choice
<i>splinged</i>	['splɪŋd]	close second
<i>splang</i>	['splæŋ]	third choice

These guesses roughly matches the preference of people, who vary in the same way. Many vastly harder tasks in modeling learning have yet to be addressed, since we don't yet know how.

An important element of future learning systems is that they should not necessarily be maximally accurate! Human children learning a language sometimes get it wrong, and occasionally get it spectacularly wrong, producing (when the mislearned system is adopted by the speech community) a major change in the language across time.<sup>261</sup> I suspect that the task of modeling failure (in a scientifically useful way) is likely to fall primarily to linguists, since at least at present computer science is focused on achieving accuracy, which of course is of great value in the practical world. Ultimately, I think, linguistics should try to pass the “Turing test”, as it applies for language—the creation of an artificial system that behaves identically in all respects to human learners.

### 2.3 *The parsing problem*

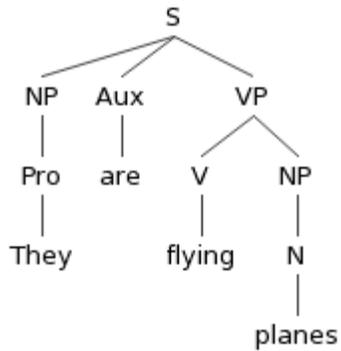
A **parser** is a procedure (usually embodied as a computer program) that, given a grammar and a sentence, can figure out the phrase structure tree that the grammar assigns to the sentence. One problem in parsing is that sentences often have many more parses than we as linguists think they do. To give one example, the sentence:

<sup>260</sup> Adam Albright and Bruce Hayes (2003) “Rules vs. Analogy in English Past Tenses: A Computational/Experimental Study,” *Cognition* 90: 119-161  
[<http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/#acquisition>]

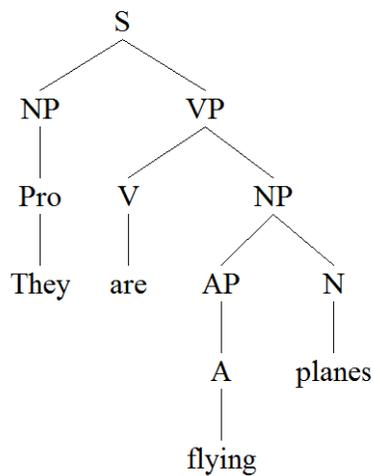
<sup>261</sup> Some examples are given at  
[http://linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/papers/HayesLSAPlenaryTalkSlidesJan8\\_2015.pdf](http://linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/papers/HayesLSAPlenaryTalkSlidesJan8_2015.pdf).

*They are flying planes.*

has two obvious parses:



(They are acting as pilots)



(Those things up in the air are planes that are flying)

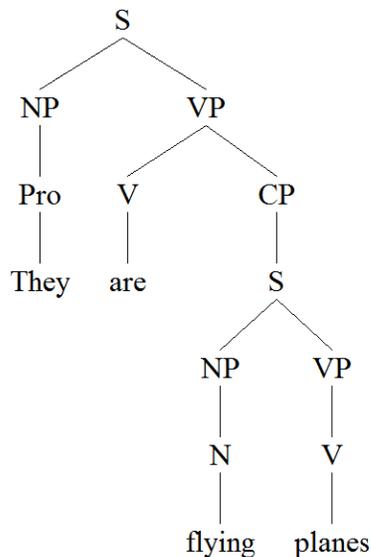
But a complete and thorough search yields parses that are absurd but possible. Thus, consider the following set-up:

Smoking kills.

What are the facts? The facts are, smoking kills.

They are, smoking kills.

They are, flying planes.



(I envision small bits of a large board being slowly removed by impact with the propellers.)

The absurdity, indeed the “cheapness” of this example is perhaps even irritating, but it illustrates a general problem. Parsers implemented as computer programs arrive at a great number of parses that would never occur to people. In contrast, people seem to be able to arrive at the correct parses almost instantaneously, without distraction. Much current research is devoted to inventing parsers that can mimic the high level of human performance—partly in the hope that this will shed light on how people perform this task.

#### 2.4 Other kinds of parsing

Parsing is not just a matter of syntax. In morphological parsing, we seek to recover the stem and the features of the morphosyntactic representation from the phonological form of an inflected word, which may often be completely novel. In “phonemic parsing” — better known as speech recognition — we seek to find the phonemic representation (as well as the lexical items present) from a raw acoustic signal. Like syntactic parsing, morphological and phonemic parsing are only partly solved problems, the topic of current research.

### 3. Linguistics: what is it good for?

Enrollment in undergraduate majors in linguistics has tripled in the U.S. since 2000.<sup>262</sup> This is a good thing, more or less, for linguistics departments. Is it a good thing for society?

I actually think it is; that is, I feel society would be better off if more people had knowledge of linguistics. Some specific areas where linguistics has made or could make a difference in real life are as follows.

<sup>262</sup> See [http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/Annual\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/Annual_Report_2013.pdf), p. 10.

### 3.1 Teaching reading and writing

Children learn to read an alphabetic language do so, in part, by establishing correspondences between the phonemes they learned in infancy and the letters used to spell the language. The spelling system is like a code (letters encode phonemes), and many children have the experience of “breaking” the code and thus suddenly becoming able to read novel words by decoding them phonemically. This produces a major jump in reading ability.<sup>263</sup>

“Phonics” is the standard term in the teaching profession for what a linguist might call “the system of letter-phoneme correspondences”. Phonics as a method for teaching reading was eclipsed for a number of decades in the United States by an alternative “whole word” or “whole language” method, which became controversial. The Congress appealed to the National Institutes of Health to make a scientifically-guided comparison of the two methods, and the NIH panel (reporting in 2000) came out firmly in favor of phonics.<sup>264</sup>

Beyond a theoretical rationale for phonics, I think there could be some useful further applications of linguistics in the teaching of reading. In particular, it would pay for teachers to know the local dialect in the area of their schools and in particular to understand the phonemic systems of their students. Here is an example: if a student has no phonemic distinction between [ɪ] and [ɛ] before nasals (saying, as tens of millions of Americans do,<sup>265</sup> both *pin* and *pen* as [pɪn]), then a reading teacher should not correct the student who reads *pen* as [pɪn] —this can only confuse the student and undermine her confidence, given that she *correctly* interpreted the letters in the context of her own phonemic system. Indeed, I think that that same thing would be sensible for features — such as absence of /θ/ — that clearly mark the student as a speaker of a non-standard dialect. For such a student [mɪf] counts as success, at least in local terms, in reading the word *myth*, where standard dialects have [mɪθ].

In the later school years, children are taught to write in a standardized, normatively-defined style. We can debate the merits of having such a style (see Chapter 3), but let’s just assume for purposes of argument that ability to write in the standard variety is of sufficient value to students’ future lives that they ought to be taught it. Here, having teachers who understand syntax can help in making clear to children what the requirements of this style are. One common instance arises in sentences like the following.

*Being in a dilapidated condition, I was able to buy the house very cheap.*

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<sup>263</sup> One author writes, “once children can map sounds to letters ... their reading vocabulary suddenly jumps to nearly the number of words they can comprehend orally.” See Snider, Vicki A. (1995) A primer on phonemic awareness: What it is, why it's important, and how to teach it. *School Psychology Review* 24: 443-456.

<sup>264</sup> You can read their basic recommendations at <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/research/supportedm/Pages/nrp>

<sup>265</sup> Geographically, older [ɛ] evolved to become [ɪ] before nasals in dialects of the South, the Southwest, the southernmost parts of the Midwest, inland California, and in African-American Vernacular English, which originated in the South.

In many English dialects, this sentence can have a meaning in which it is the house that is dilapidated. However, this reading is not possible in the written standard, where the only possible reading is one in which the speaker is dilapidated. Since people who command the written standard often hold strong normative views (chapter 3) against the non-standard pattern, teachers can protect their students from future harm by teaching them the standard pattern.

To do this, it is necessary to have at least an elementary concept of syntax. For example, an English teacher might tell his students: “the implicit subject of a preposed clause must refer to the subject of the main clause”.<sup>266</sup> The concepts of clause, implicit subject, and coreference—all covered in this text — are clearly needed in some way to get the idea across.

### 3.2 *Teaching foreign languages*

Language instruction can be either intuitive or structural. The latter approach, one lays out the grammar in a systematic way, much as a linguist tries to do. The teaching of pronunciation varies perhaps most of all. Some language textbooks give the student nothing but orthography, along with the advice that they should imitate native speakers. In contrast, some texts include training in basic phonetics. Although not in the United States, many language textbooks around the world actually use the IPA as a tool for making the correct target pronunciation as clear as possible.

In some cases, linguistic theorizing has produced better descriptions of how the language works, notably in Japanese and other tonal languages. It remains to be seen whether such developments will help in language instruction. Here again, the question is whether the students should be told “Listen closely to native speakers and mimic their pitch patterns” or given a clear description of how the system works phonologically, then try to make adherence to the consciously-learned system an automatic and habitual pattern.

### 3.3 *Alphabet design*

Many of the world’s peoples cannot write their native language because it has not yet been given an orthography. As mentioned in Chapter 11, phonemic analysis is commonly used to determine what sounds need to be symbolized by letters in a new spelling system.

### 3.4 *Human-machine interaction*

It is of course a goal of many people and companies that we will someday engage in fluent conversations with computers and other machines; presumably when this happens our interactions with machines will be far more convenient and helpful to us. However, those who use machines and software for synthesis and recognition will know that neither of these capacities has yet reached perfection. We are still at point where they can cause considerable frustration, for instance when the speech recognizer cannot understand our utterances; falling short of perfection also

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<sup>266</sup> Strunk and White’s book of normative grammar, *The Elements of Style* (from which the example above derives) says “A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject.” This is vague in using the term “refer to”, but seems clear enough to be useful. Link: <http://orwell.ru/library/others/style/english/estyle>.

implies fatigue when we try to listen to the unrealistic productions of synthesizers. What is needed to make things better?

Different people will give different answers to this question. Obviously, the answer I feel most sympathetic to is, “more and better linguistics.” For instance, we cannot hope to have a good speech synthesizer until we have exquisitely detailed — and generalizable — knowledge of the rules for English allophones, both within the word and across word boundaries within the phrase. Whether this knowledge will take the form of a traditional rule-based linguistic description or something different is not firmly established.<sup>267</sup> The problem of speech recognition may also benefit from deeper and more detailed phonetic description and grammars.

Syntax and semantics must also be invoked to improve the abilities of computers to converse with us. We can get an idea of the state of advancement achieved here by examining the behavior of the grammar checker included in a leading word processor. Examples like the following indicate that the busy crew at Microsoft has gotten strikingly good at parsing long noun phrases and making sure that the verb agrees in number with their head (sequences underlined are those identified as a problem by the grammar-checker in Word 2010):

The turtles is green.

The turtles are green.

The turtles in the pond is green.

The turtles in the pond are green.

The turtles that many of us believe to be swimming in the pond is green.

The turtles that many of us believe to be swimming in the pond are green.

The turtles that the ducklings that the wolves ate believe to be swimming in the pond is green.

The turtles that the ducklings that the wolves ate believe to be swimming in the pond are green.

On the other hand, any student who has learned the content of this text could tell what is wrong with the ungrammatical sentences below, which the Word grammar checker fails to detect:

Which books do you think are on the table?

\*Which books do you think is on the table?

\*Which book do you think are on the table?

Which book do you think is on the table?

---

<sup>267</sup> Even the phonemes apparently need work: a system of letter-to-sound rules must come into play when a speech synthesizer encounters a novel word. Currently, I startle whenever I hear my Apple smartphone pronouncing my home street *Calvin Avenue* as \*['kælvən] — even the most elementary set of letter-to-phoneme rules should be able to avoid generating this output!

That is to say, verbs must agree with their subject NP when it is *in situ*, prior to the possible leftward displacement of that NP by Wh- Movement.<sup>268</sup>

Not surprisingly, there are industrial syntacticians, who develop detailed grammars for various languages, and use the grammars to assign parses to sentences (as in the grammar-checking application above.) There are also industrial semanticists, who attempt to extract meanings from sentences in the primitive mentalese of computers.

Quite a few students from UCLA (both undergraduate and graduate) have gone on to careers in “industrial linguistics.” Often, though not always, they have expertise in both linguistics and computing.

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<sup>268</sup> In 2014 I asked the language research staff at Microsoft about this, and they told me they *do* have Wh-movement in their grammar checker, and that it *ought* to be catching the agreement error described here. Perhaps there is a bug in the implementation. Thanks to Bill Dolan and Karen Jensen for their help.

## Chapter 15: More review problems

These are given in the same order in which the topics appear in the text.

### Study Exercise #86: Inflectional morphology in an imaginary language

a. Set up inflectional rules to derive these forms. Be sure to state your rules in the correct order. Give your rules names. Assume features [PossessorPerson, Number, PossessorNumber].

kitab	'book'
kitabam	'my book'
kitabı	'your book'
kitabef	'his/her book'
kitabılam	'our book'
kitabılı	'you-all's books'
kitabıl	'their book' (not a typo)

kitabım	'books'
kitabımam	'my books'
kitabımı	'your books'
kitabımeı	'his/her books'
kitabıılam	'our books'
kitabıılı	'you-all's bookss'
kitabıl	'their books' (not a typo)

b. Provide a derivation for kitabıılam 'our books'.

**Answer to Study Exercise #86**

a. Rules in correct order:

**Number Rule**

$X \rightarrow Xim$  if [Number:plural]

**Possessor Number Rule**

$X \rightarrow Xil$  if [PossessorNumber:Plural]

**Possessor Person Rule**

$X \rightarrow Xamif$  [PossessorPerson:1]

$X \rightarrow Xi$  if [PossessorPerson:2]

$X \rightarrow Xef$  if [PossessorPerson:3, PossessorNumber:Singular]

Note that the third part of the Possessor Person Rule must include the feature [PossessorNumber:Singular], because otherwise it would attach the suffix -ef in plurals, deriving \**kitabilef* rather than the correct *kitabil* for ‘their book’.

b. Provide a derivation for *kitabimilam* ‘our books’.

The morphosyntactic representation is:

[Number:Plural, PossessorNumber:Plural, PossessorPerson:3]

kitab	stem	
kitabim	Number Rule	(since [Number:Plural] is present)
kitabimil	Possessor Number Rule	(since [PossessorNumber:Plural] is present)
kitabimilam	Possessor Person Rule	(since [PossessorPerson:3] is present).

---

### Study Exercise #87: Non-concatenative morphology

These forms follow the rules of a language game that was developed for the television show *The Simpsons*; they are excerpted from an article by the linguist Alan Yu. These are only a small part of the overall data, covering disyllabic words with initial stress. Formalize the rule for creating the “disguised” form of the word. Treat diphthongs as single vowels, in spite of their sequential IPA transcription.

Word	Normal pronunciation	Game pronunc.	Word	Normal pronunciation	Game pronunciation
<i>oboe</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> oubou]	[ <sup>1</sup> oubəməbou]	<i>wonder</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> wʌndəɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> wʌndəmədəɪ]
<i>washing</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> wɔʃɪŋ]	[ <sup>1</sup> wɔʃəməʃɪŋ]	<i>music</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> mju:zɪk]	[ <sup>1</sup> mju:zəməzɪk]
<i>opus</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> oupəs]	[ <sup>1</sup> oupəməpəs]	<i>scramble</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> skæmbəl]	[ <sup>1</sup> skɪæmbəməbəl]
<i>water</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> wɔrəɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> wɔrəmərəɪ]	<i>Kieran</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> ki:ən]	[ <sup>1</sup> ki:əməɪən]
<i>party</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> pɑ:ɪrɪ]	[ <sup>1</sup> pɑ:ɪrəmərɪ]	<i>stinky</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> stɪŋki]	[ <sup>1</sup> stɪŋkəməki]
<i>piggy</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> pɪgi]	[ <sup>1</sup> pɪgəməgi]	<i>joking</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> dʒoukɪŋ]	[ <sup>1</sup> dʒoukəməkɪŋ]
<i>aura</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> ɔ:ə]	[ <sup>1</sup> ɔ:əmə:ə]	<i>table</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> teɪbəl]	[ <sup>1</sup> teɪbəməbəl]
<i>purple</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> pə:pəl]	[ <sup>1</sup> pə:pəməpəl]	<i>listen</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> lɪsən]	[ <sup>1</sup> lɪsəməsən]
			<i>tuba</i>	[ <sup>1</sup> tubə]	[ <sup>1</sup> tubəməbə]

### Answer to Study Exercise #87, Non-Concatenative Morphology

*Simpsons Language Game Rule*

X	C	V	C*	→	X	C	ə	m	ə	C	V	C*
1	2	3	4		1	2				2	3	4

This answer uses Kleene star, which we used earlier for syntax, to mean “any number of consonants”.

### Study Exercise #88: Wh- Movement and islands

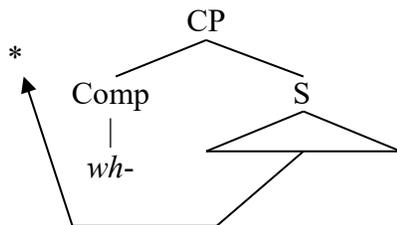
Show why

*\*What donor might Sue wonder what books donated to the library?*

is ungrammatical, given the Wh- Island Constraint below. In particular, first extract *what books* to the lower Comp, then extract *what donor* to the higher Comp, showing the island violation graphically.

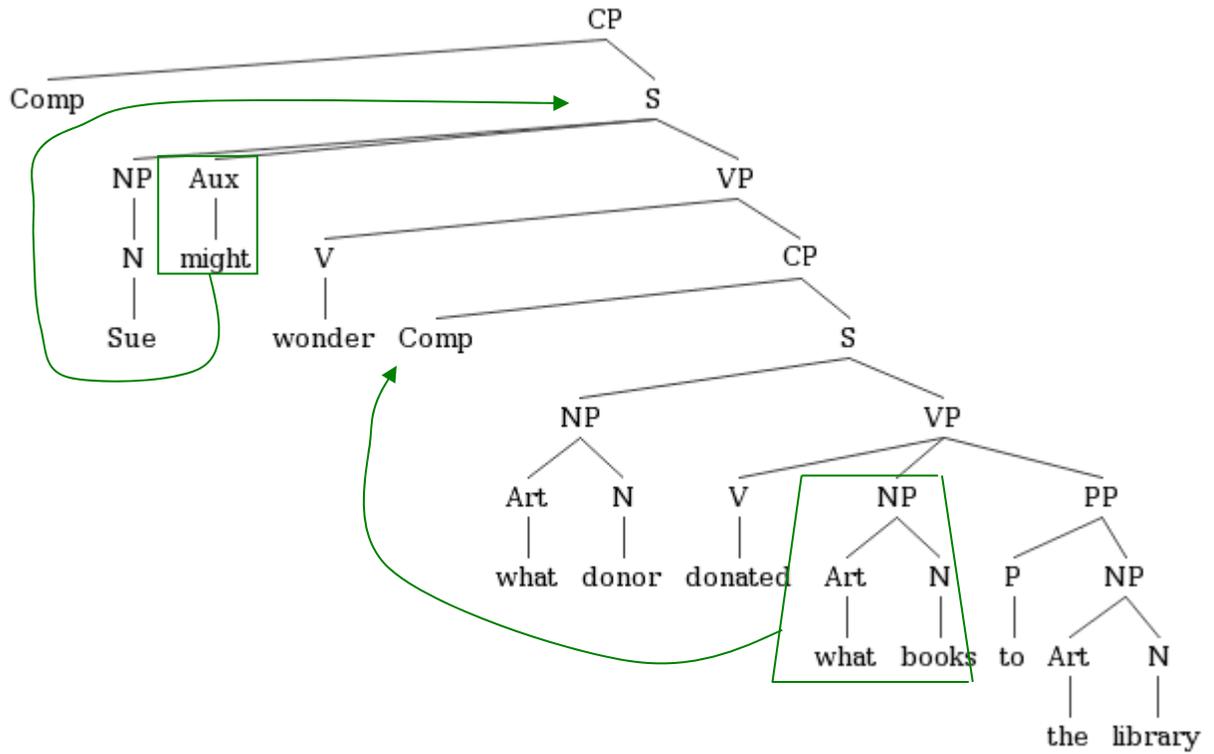
#### Wh- Island Constraint

Mark as ungrammatical any sentence in which a constituent has been extracted from inside a CP whose Comp contains a wh- phrase.

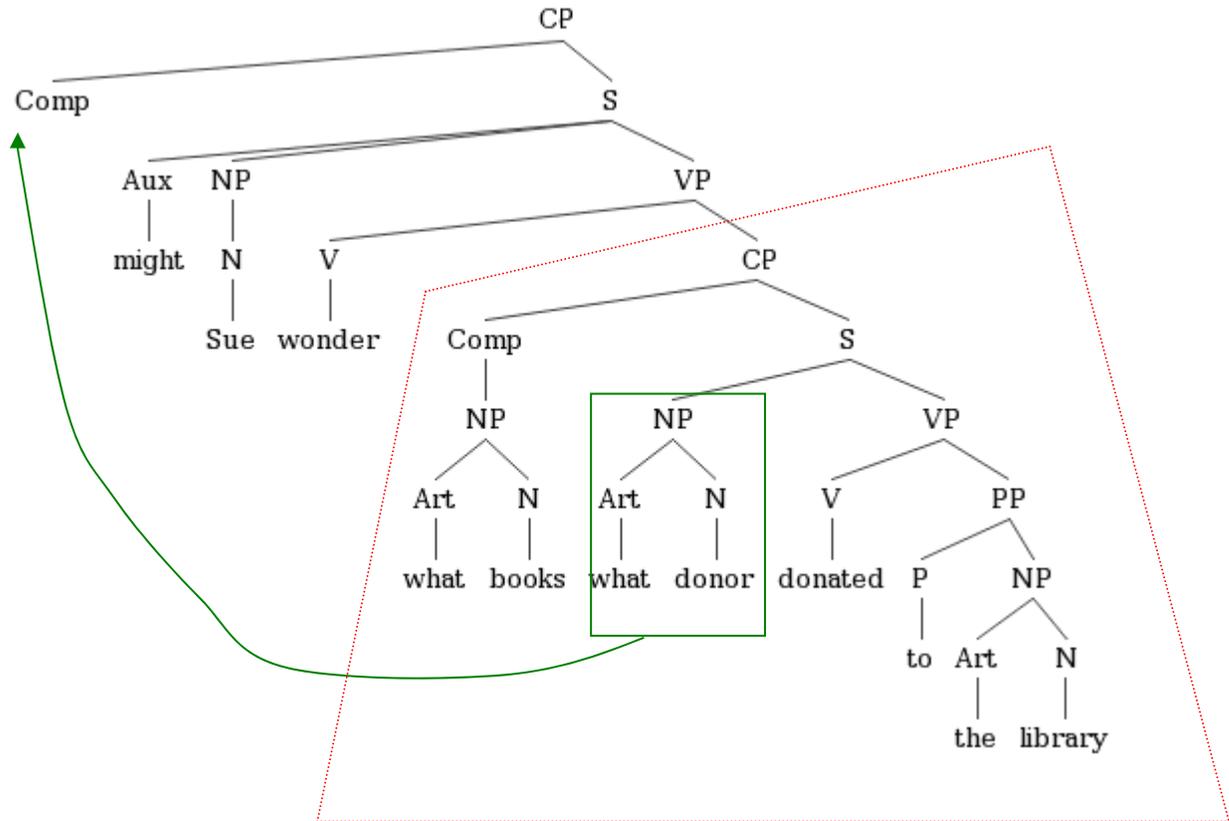


Answer to Study Exercise #88

Deep structure (all wh- phrases *in situ*), with lower instance of Wh-Movement; also Subject-Aux Inversion in upper clause:



Resulting tree, with subsequent movement of *what donor* into the higher Comp. This violates the Wh-Island Constraint; the island is enclosed in a dotted box:



Since a wh-phrase is moved out of the island, the resulting sentence is ungrammatical.

**Study Exercise #89: Semantics; anaphora**

*The wizards believe that the witches turned the girls into copies of each other.*

- a. Produce the phrase structure tree.
- b. Show clausemates with brackets, show c-command with arrows.
- c. Explain with reference to rule given below the possible reference of *each other*.

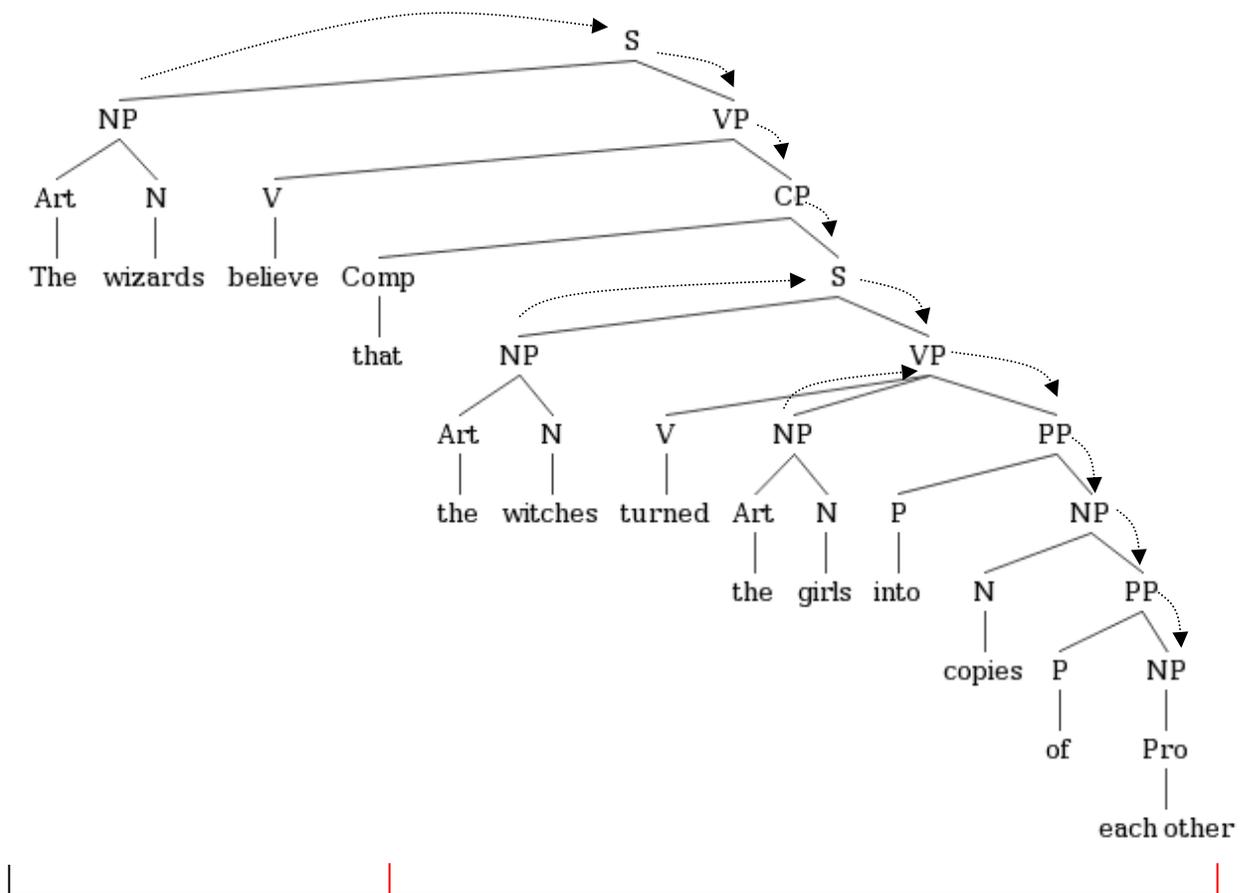
**Each Other Reference**

*Each other* may refer only to a plural c-commanding clausemate.

**Answer to Study Exercise #89**

*The wizards believe that the witches turned the girls into copies of each other.*

a. Diagram/b. Show clausemates with brackets, show c-command with arrows.



*The witches, the girls, and each other* are all clausemates, but *the wizards* is not clausemates with any of them.

Looking at the tree and the crucial NPs, we see the following relations of c-command:<sup>269</sup>

- the wizards* c-commands the other three NPs
- the witches* c-command *the girls* and *each other*
- the girls* c-commands *each other*

<sup>269</sup> Recall how this is determined: go up one node from any NP, and anything dominated by this node is dominated by this NP.

c. Putting it all together, we see that:

- *the girls* c-commands and is a clausemate of *each other*, and so can be coreferent with *each other*

Scenario: The wizards believe that the witches turned Sue into a copy of Ellen, and turned Ellen into a copy of Sue.

- *the witches* c-commands and is a clausemate of *each other*, and so can be coreferent with *each other*

Scenario: The wizards believe that Alice, a witch, turned the girls into copies of Miriam (another witch), and that Miriam turned the girls into copies of Alice.

- While *the wizards* c-commands *each other*, it is not a clausemate of *each other*, and so it cannot be coreferent with *each other*

Scenario: Bob, a wizard, believes the witches turned the girls into copies of Ted, another wizard; and Ted believes the witches turned the girls into copies of Bob. Logically possible, but evidently not available linguistically.

### Study Exercise #90: Semantics, Scope I

This sentence has a scope-based ambiguity.

*Many people visit two islands.*

- Describe clearly in words the two meanings of these sentence.
- Using Quantifier Translation and Quantifier Raising, derive the logical forms for each meaning.

#### Quantifier Translation

Replace

[ every N ] <sub>NP</sub>	with	[ for every x, x an N ] <sub>NP</sub>
[ some N ] <sub>NP</sub>	with	[ for some x, x an N ] <sub>NP</sub>

...

and similarly for other quantified expressions. If the variable *x* is already in use, use *y* instead; etc.

#### Quantifier Raising

Left-adjoin a quantified NP to S, leaving behind a variable in its original location.

### Answer to Study Exercise #90

Describe clearly in words the two meanings of this sentence. Give a scenario of which it could hold true.

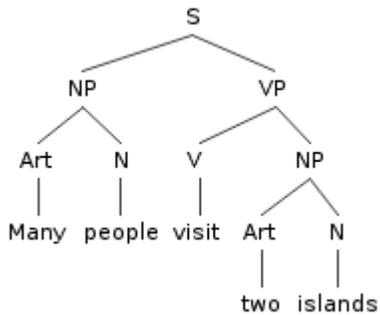
*Many people visit two islands.*

*i. Describe clearly in words the two meanings of this sentence.*

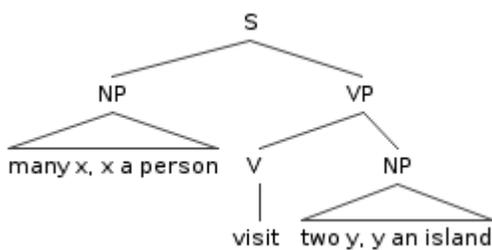
- (a) It is true of many people that they visit two islands (not necessarily the same two).
- (b) It is true of two islands that many people visit them (not necessarily the same people).

*ii. Derivation of logical forms*

Surface structure:



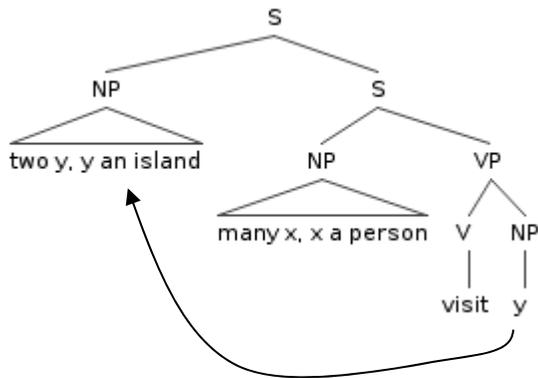
Quantifier Conversion:



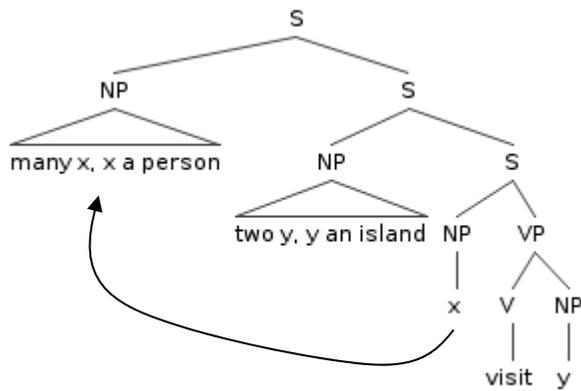
At this point, the meanings depend on the order in which the quantifier operators are raised.

(a)

Quantifier Raising I



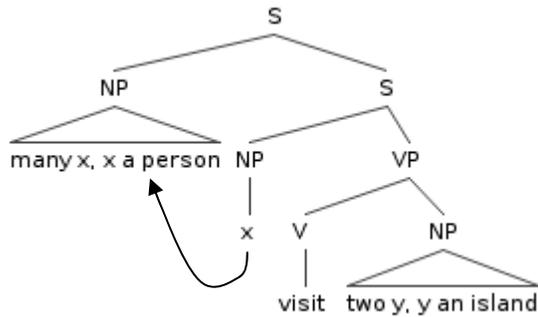
Quantifier Raising II



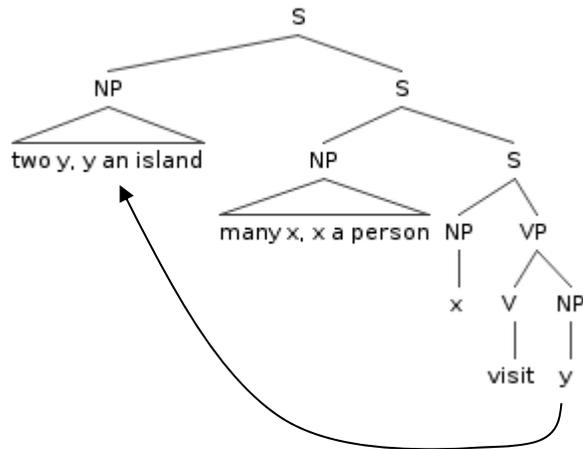
“It is true of many people that they visit two islands”

(b)

Quantifier Raising I



## Quantifier Raising II



“It is true of two islands that many people visit them.”

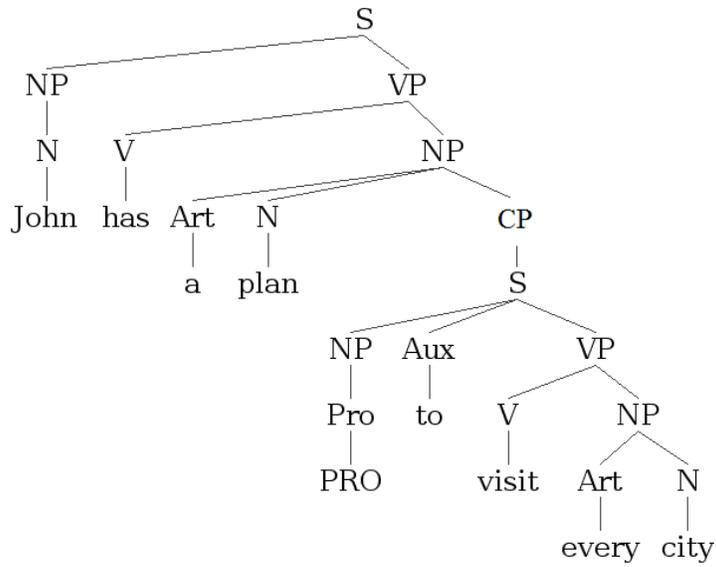
### Study Exercise #91: Semantics / raising quantifiers different distances

Sentence: *John has a plan to visit every city*

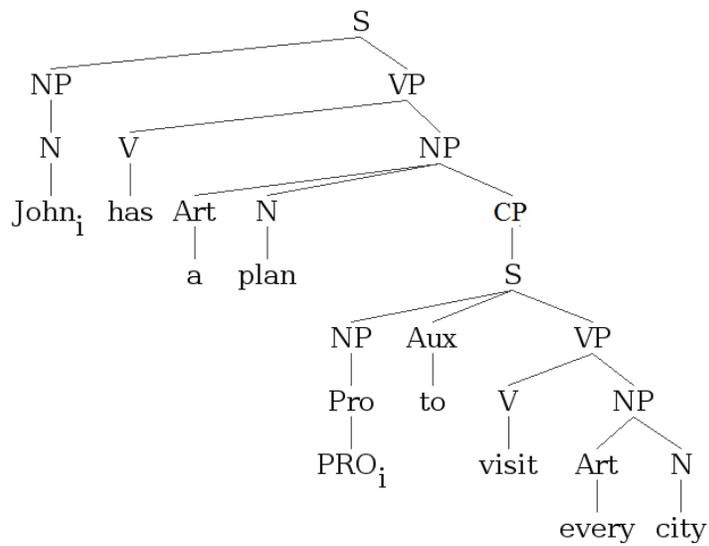
- Explicate both meanings in philosopher’s language.
- Apply Quantifier Translation and Quantifier Raising to derive both meanings.

See previous question for the rules you need.

To answer this question, you’ll need a bit of help with the syntax, there being material that this text does not cover. We’ll assume that the clause *to visit every city* is an S, and it has an NP subject that is empty (but is interpreted as being coreferent to *John*). This is the same sort of empty subject discussed in section 4 of Chapter 1 of this text, under the name “implicit noun phrases”. We’ll use the standard notation for this empty subject, which is: PRO (it is essentially a kind of pronoun). If, further, we say that *to* is an Aux, the structure will be as follows:

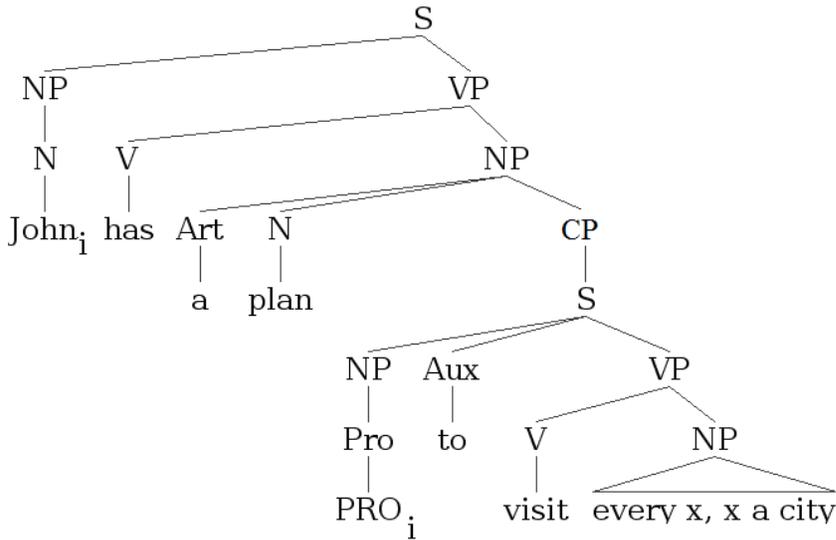


It also seems appropriate to indicate that PRO refers to *John*; we can do this in the usual way with indices, though we have no rules yet that can carry this out:

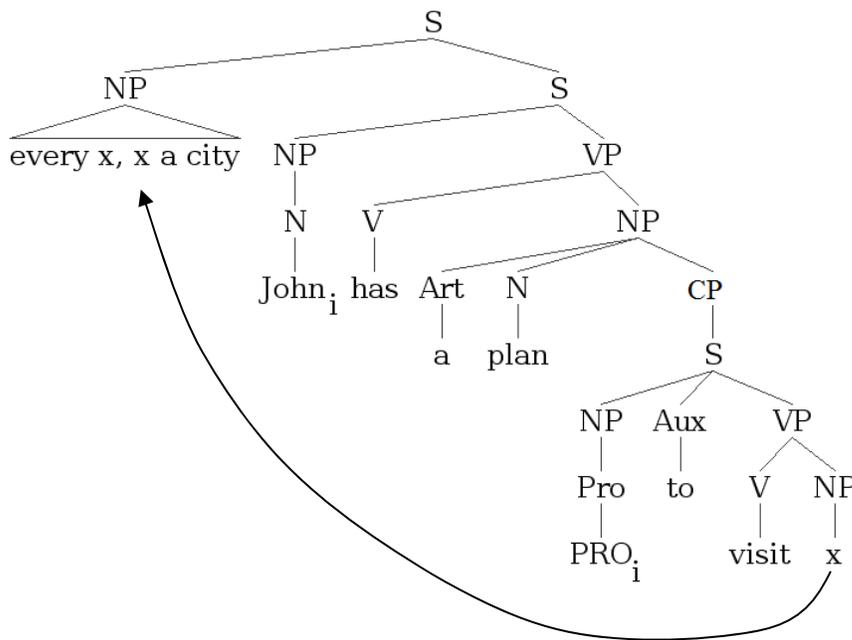


**Answer to Study Exercise #91**

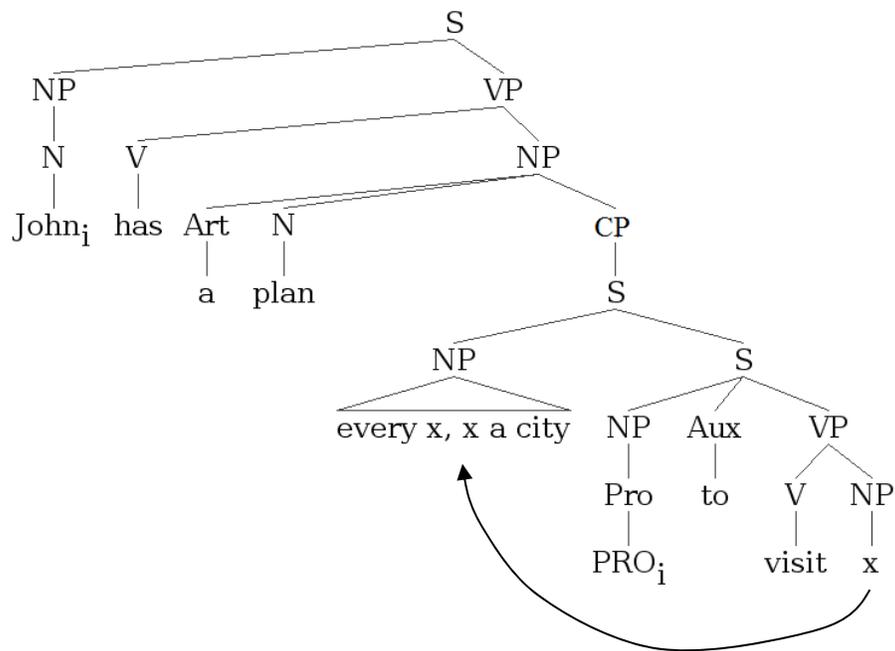
- a. I. For every city, John has a plan to visit it.
- II. John has a plan such that in it, he visits every city.
- b. For both readings, we start with Quantifier Conversion, deriving:



To derive meaning I, we raise the quantifier to the highest S, adjoining it there, as follows:



To derive meaning II, we raise the quantifier to the lower S, adjoining it there, as follows:



### Study Exercise #92: Phonetic Dictations

*southern*  
*myrrh*  
*corpulent*  
*whether*  
*multiple*  
*coinage*  
*parameter*  
*ostentatious*  
*turmoil*  
*trapezium*

**Answer to Study Exercise #92**

<i>southern</i>	[ˈsʌðəːn]
<i>myrrh</i>	[ˈmɜː]
<i>corpulent</i>	[ˈk{ou, o, ɔ}ɪpj{u, ʊ, ə}lənt]
<i>whether</i>	[ˈweðəː]
<i>multiple</i>	[ˈmʌlt{ɪ, ə}p{əl, l}]
<i>coinage</i>	[ˈkɔɪn{ə, ɪ}dʒ]
<i>parameter</i>	[pəˈɪæməɾəː] [əː] for first [ə] or [aɪ] ok
<i>turmoil</i>	[ˈtɜːmɔɪl]
<i>ostentatious</i>	[ɒstənˈteɪʃəs]
<i>trapezium</i>	[ˌtɹæˈpiːziəm]

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### Study Exercise #93: Phonology

This is an imaginary language but the rules it has are found in real languages.

[β, ð, γ] are voiced fricatives (bilabial, dental, velar). [t̪, ɖ, ɳ] are dental.

	<i>'Noun'</i>	<i>'the Noun'</i>	<i>'two Nouns'</i>	<i>'five Nouns'</i>	
1.	[pama]	[la bama]	[ɖue bama]	[kwɪɳɖo bama]	'tuna'
2.	[peli]	[la beli]	[ɖue beli]	[kwɪɳɖo beli]	'swordfish'
3.	[t̪ube]	[la ɖube]	[ɖue ɖube]	[kwɪɳɖo ɖube]	'mackerel'
4.	[t̪azo]	[la ɖazo]	[ɖue ɖazo]	[kwɪɳɖo ɖazo]	'cod'
5.	[kame]	[la game]	[ɖue game]	[kwɪɳɖo game]	'mahi mahi'
6.	[koli]	[la goli]	[ɖue goli]	[kwɪɳɖo goli]	'carp'
7.	[bafi]	[la βafi]	[ɖue βafi]	[kwɪɳɖo βafi]	'catfish'
8.	[belu]	[la βelu]	[ɖue βelu]	[kwɪɳɖo βelu]	'pollock'
9.	[ɖaba]	[la ðaba]	[ɖue ðaba]	[kwɪɳɖo ðaba]	'yellowtail'
10.	[ɖazo]	[la ðazo]	[ɖue ðazo]	[kwɪɳɖo ðazo]	'sturgeon'
11.	[gele]	[la γele]	[ɖue γele]	[kwɪɳɖo γele]	'halibut'
12.	[gova]	[la γova]	[ɖue γova]	[kwɪɳɖo γova]	'salmon'

- Produce consonant and vowel charts, labeling the rows and columns with features. You may assume [+dental] is a feature.
- Do the stems alternate? Explain
- Give rules, naming them.
- Is any rule ordering required?
- Give right order/wrong order derivations for *la dazo* and *la ðazo*.

**Answer to Study Exercise #93**

a) Produce consonant and vowel charts.

		[+bilabial]	[+labiodental]	[+dental]	[+alveolar]	[+velar]
[+stop]	[-voice]	p		t		k
	[+voice]	b		d		g
[+fricative]	[-voice]		f		s	
	[+voice]	β	v	ð	z	ɣ
[+nasal]		m		n		
[+liquid]					l	
[+glide]		w				

	[-back -round]	[+back -round]	[+back +round]
[+high -low]	i		u
[-high -low]	e		o
[-high +low]		a	

b) Do the stems alternate? Explain

Yes, for example the stem for “tuna” has the two allomorphs [pama] and [bama].

c) Give rules, naming them.

**Intervocalic Voicing**

[+stop] → [+voiced] / [+syllabic] \_\_\_ [+syllabic]

This voices any stop occurring between vowels. It can be applied harmlessly to [b, d, g], since they are already voiced, so I left out [-voice] from the left side of the arrow.

**Intervocalic Spirantization<sup>270</sup>**

[+stop  
+voice] → [-stop  
+fricative] / [+syllabic] \_\_\_ [+syllabic]

This turns any voiced stop between vowels to its fricative counterpart, thus [b, d, g] → [β, ð, ɣ].

<sup>270</sup> Standard terminology for a rule that creates fricatives. “Spirant” is an old-fashioned synonym for “fricative.”

d) *Is any order required?*

Intervocalic Spirantization must precede Intervocalic Voicing, to keep the voiced stops that derive from voiceless from turning into fricatives—we want Intervocalic Frication to apply “too late” to affect those stops.

e) *Give right order/wrong order derivations for la dazo and la ðazo.*

Correct:

/la tazo/	/la dazo/	underlying representation
—	ð	Intervocalic Spirantization
d	—	Intervocalic Voicing
[la dazo]	[la ðazo]	surface representation

Incorrect:

/la tazo/	/la dazo/	underlying representation
d	—	Intervocalic Voicing
ð	ð	Intervocalic Spirantization
*[la ðazo]	[la ðazo]	surface representation

### Study Exercise #94: Phonemics of Mississippi English

This exercise is based on an unpublished article by Prof. Elliott Moreton, an eminent linguist who teaches in the Linguistics Department at the University of North Carolina. The article is posted on his professional web site:

<https://users.castle.unc.edu/~moreton/Papers/RaiseAlphaNotes1999.pdf>. The native speaker is Prof. Moreton himself, who grew up in Oxford, Mississippi. He writes, “If you’re going to imitate my accent, you might as well do it right.”

#### *Data for Part I*

<i>gripe</i>	[gɹaɪp]	<i>bribe</i>	[bɹa:b]	<i>I</i>	[a:]	<i>bias</i>	[ba:əs]
<i>light</i>	[laɪt]	<i>slide</i>	[sla:d]	<i>thigh</i>	[θa:]	<i>biology</i>	[ba:'alədʒi]
<i>spike</i>	[spaɪk]	<i>migrant</i>	[ma:gɹənt]	<i>sigh</i>	[sa:]		
<i>knife</i>	[naɪf]	<i>hive</i>	[ha:v]				
<i>price</i>	[pɹaɪs]	<i>prize</i>	[pɹa:z]				
		<i>line</i>	[la:n]				
		<i>lime</i>	[la:m]				
		<i>fire</i>	[fa:ɪ]				

Directions. [a:] and [aɪ] are allophones of the same phoneme.

- a. Decide what form the underlying phoneme should take. Justify your decision. As always, you should select the simplest analysis.
- b. Write a rule to derive the contextual allophone.
- c. Give derivations for *price*, *prize*, *sigh*, and *bias*.

*Data for Part II.*

*write* [ɹaɪt]  
*writer* [ˈɹaɪrə]  
*ride* [ɹa:d]  
*rider* [ɹa:rə]

- d. How should the rule you wrote be ordered with respect to the rule of Tapping? The rule is restated here for convenience.

### Tapping

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{alveolar} \\ +\text{stop} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{voiced} \\ -\text{stop} \\ +\text{tap} \\ +\text{liquid} \end{array} \right] / [+ \text{syllabic}] \text{ — } \left[ \begin{array}{l} +\text{syllabic} \\ -\text{stress} \end{array} \right]$$

- e. Justify your answer with right and wrong derivations for the four words just given.

### Answer to Study Exercise #94

a. We should pick underlying /a:/. This is the “elsewhere” allophone, and we can get a nice clean analysis picking it as the phonemic representation. All we have to do is set up a rule turning it into [aɪ] before a voiceless consonant. If we set up underlying /aɪ/ and tried to turn it into [a:] as an allophone, the rule needed would be very complicated, since you need three environments (voiced consonant, vowel, end of word).

b. The rule that is needed is this:

#### Diphthongization

a: → aɪ / \_\_\_ [-voice]

(Obviously, you could give it other names.)

A lesson that emerges (if your own English happens not to be Mississippian) is: don't assume that another person's phoneme is necessarily the way *you* say a sound! Each phonemic pattern must be analyzed in its own terms, dialect by dialect.

c. Derivations

/ˈpɹiɑ:s/	/ˈpɹiɑ:z/	/ˈsɑ:/	/ˈbɑ:əs/	underlying representations
aɪ	—	—	—	Diphthongization
[ˈpɹiɑɪs]	[ˈpɹiɑ:z]	[ˈsɑ:]	[ˈbɑ:əs]	surface representations

d. Diphthongization must precede Tapping, because it applies based on the *underlying*, not derived, voicing value of the tap.

e. Good derivations:

<i>write</i>	<i>writer</i>	<i>ride</i>	<i>rider</i>	
/ˈɹiɑ:t/	/ˈɹiɑ:t-ə/	/ˈɹiɑ:d/	/ˈɹiɑ:d-ə/	underlying representation
aɪ	ˈɹiɑɪtə	—	—	Diphthongization
—	ˈɹiɑɪrə	—	ˈɹiɑ:r-ə	Tapping
[ˈɹiɑ:t]	[ˈɹiɑɪrə]	[ˈɹiɑ:d]	[ˈɹiɑ:rə]	phonetic representation

Bad derivations:

<i>write</i>	<i>writer</i>	<i>ride</i>	<i>rider</i>	
/ˈɹiɑ:t/	/ˈɹiɑ:t-ə/	/ˈɹiɑ:d/	/ˈɹiɑ:d-ə/	underlying representation
—	ˈɹiɑ:rə	—	ˈɹiɑ:r-ə	Tapping
aɪ	—	—	—	Diphthongization
[ˈɹiɑ:t]	*[ˈɹiɑ:rə]	[ˈɹiɑ:d]	[ˈɹiɑ:rə]	phonetic representation