Syntax Exercises

Analysing clauses / sentences
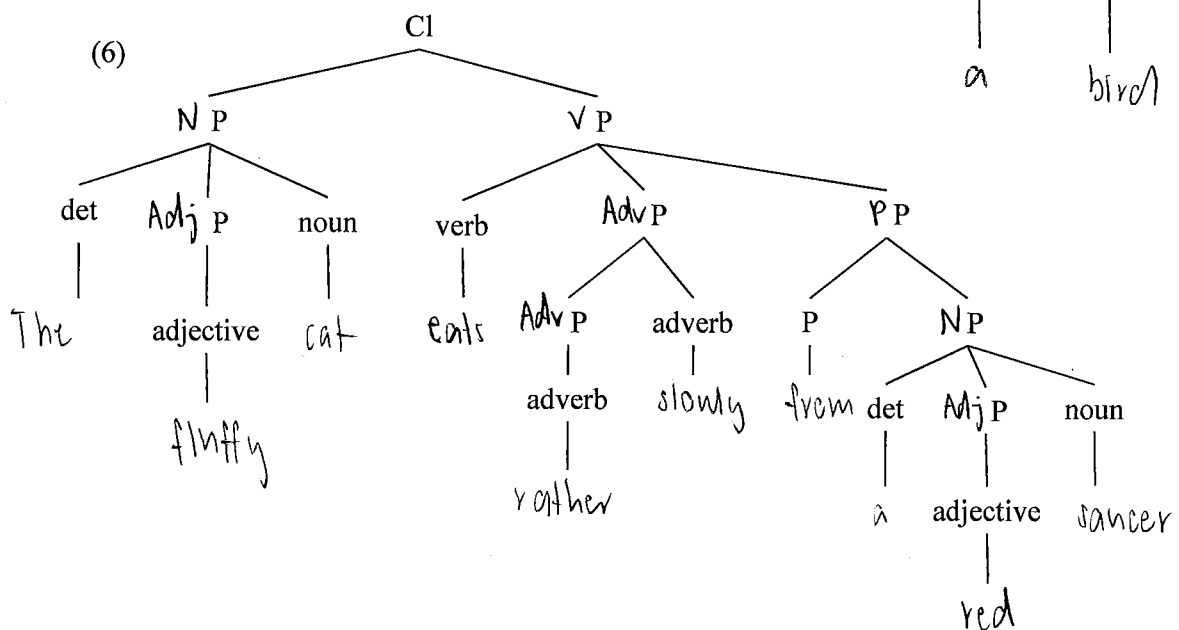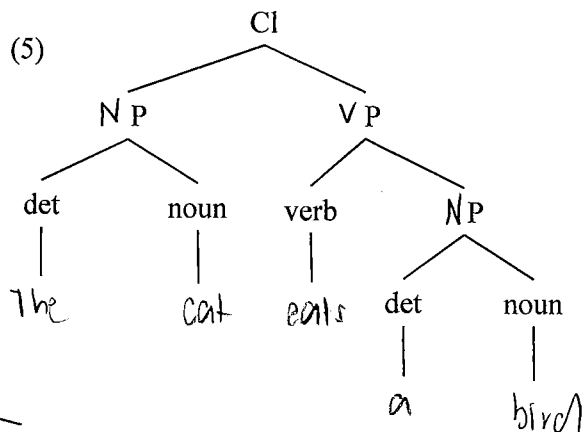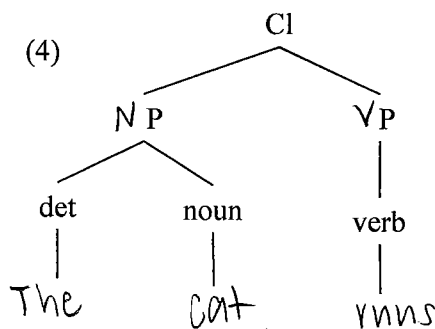
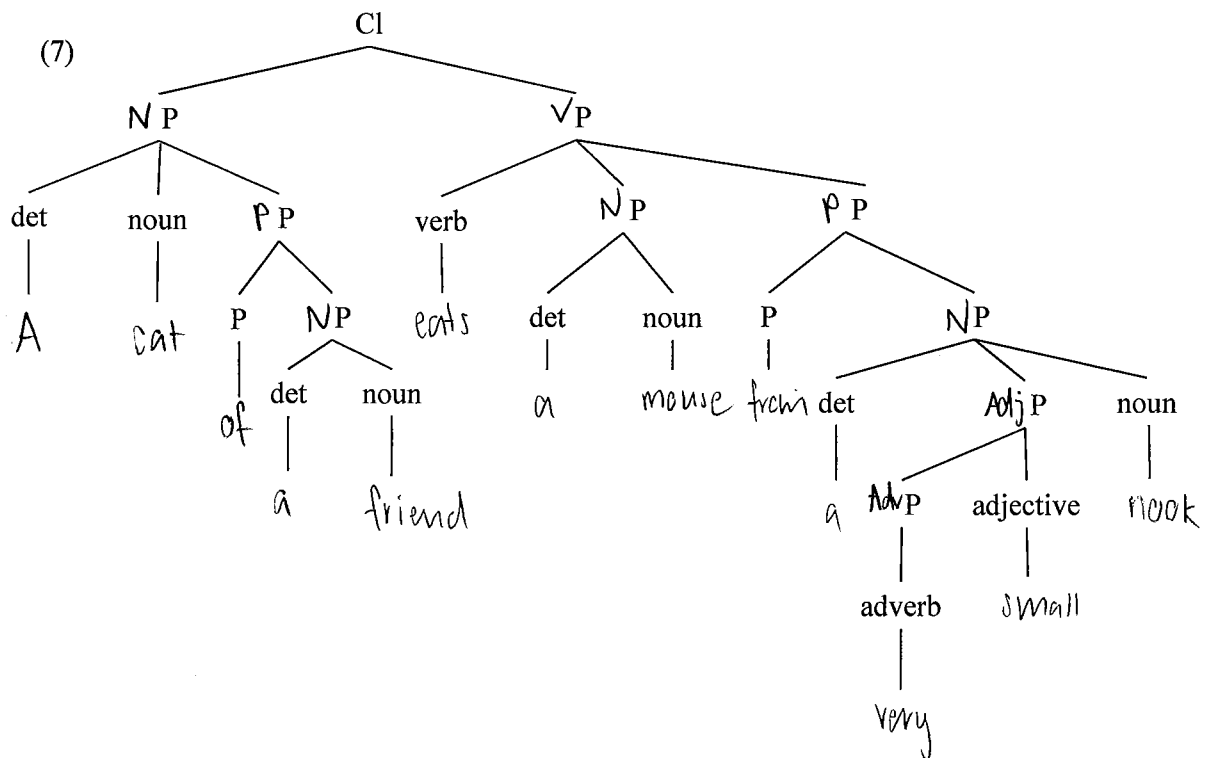*Analyse the following sentences*
a) on the lexical level,
b) in terms of theme and rheme ,
c) as meaning relationships,
d) functionally and
e) according to constituent structure.

(1) John watched a boring film on TV yesterday.
(2) The woman in the red parka gave sugar lumps to the horse.
(3) The group of students considered the lecture a waste of time.

Constituent structures

1. Can fill the following tree structures with example words?

(4)

```
              Cl
           /      \
        N P         V P
       /   \         |
     det    noun    verb
      |      |       |
     The    cat     runs
```

(5)

```
                    Cl
               /          \
           N P              V P
          /   \            /    \
        det    noun      verb    N P
         |      |          |     /   \
        The    cat       eats  det   noun
                                |      |
                                a     bird
```

(6)

```
                       Cl
              /                      \
          N P                          V P
       /   |    \              /        |          \
     det  Adj P  noun        verb     Adv P          P P
      |    |      |           |       /    \        /     \
     The  adjective cat      eats  Adv P  adverb   P      N P
           |                        |       |      |     /  |   \
        fluffy                    adverb  slowly  from  det Adj P noun
                                    |                    |    |    |
                                  rather                 a adjective saucer
                                                              |
                                                             red
```

(7)

```
                          Cl
              ┌───────────┴───────────┐
             NP                       VP
       ┌──────┼──────┐       ┌────────┼────────┐
      det   noun    PP     verb      NP        PP
       |     |     ┌─┴─┐     |     ┌──┴──┐    ┌──┴──┐
       A    cat   P   NP   eats  det  noun   P    NP
                  |  ┌─┴─┐         |    |     |  ┌──┼──┐
                  of det noun      a  mouse  from det AdjP noun
                     |    |                       |    |    |
                     a  friend                    a        hook
                                                   ┌───────┴───────┐
                                                 AdvP          adjective
                                                   |               |
                                                 adverb          small
                                                   |
                                                  very
```

2. *The following clauses/sentences are ambiguous. Wherever possible draw a structure tree to illustrate the ambiguity. Are the any where structure trees as we know them do not demonstrate how the ambiguity works?*

(8) The woman bumped into the man with the broom.
(9) She found the book on murders in the manor house.
(10) John left the party in a worse condition.
(11) Mary put the bags on the bench in the hall.
(12) I saw the boy with the binoculars.
(13) The woman decided on the motorbike.
(14) Her happy mood was ruined by the evening.
(15) The blind carpenter picked up his hammer and saw.
(16) I shot an elephant in my pyjamas. (Groucho Marx in *Animal Crackers*)
(17) Mary gave her dog crackers.

(1) a) John | watched a boring film on TV yesterday.
N | V | indef. article | Adj. | N | Prep. | N | Adv.

b) Theme | Rheme

c) agent | action | affected | circumstances

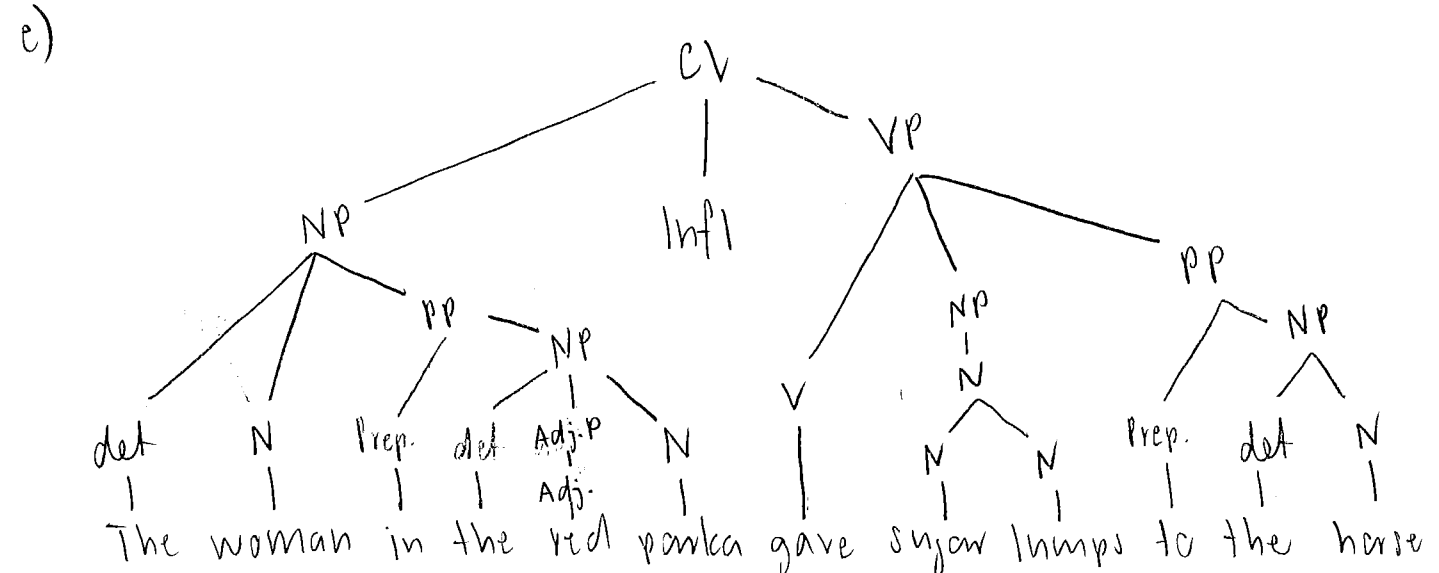**d)** subject | verb/predicate | direct object | adverbial | adverbial

e)

CL
- NP → N → John
- Infl
- VP
  - V → watched
  - NP
    - det → a
    - Adj.P → Adj. → boring
    - N → film
  - PP
    - Prep. → on
    - NP → N → TV
  - AdvP → Adv → yesterday
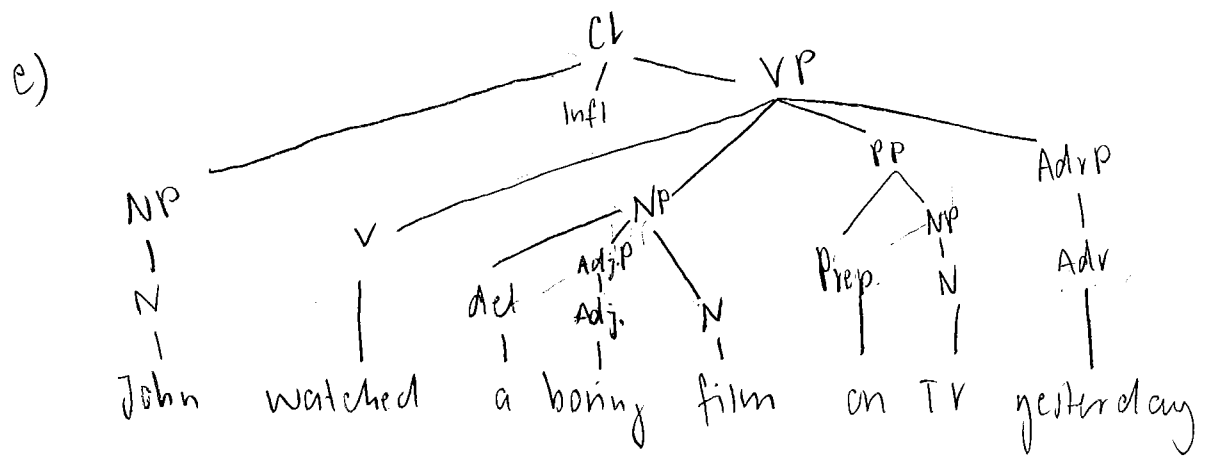
(2) a) The woman in the red parka | gave sugar lumps to the horse
def. article | N | Prep. | def. article | adj. | N | V | N | N | Prep. | def. article | N

b) Theme | Rheme

c) agent | action | affected | recipient

d) subject | verb/predicate | direct obj. | indirect object

e)

CL
- NP
  - det → The
  - N → woman
  - PP
    - Prep. → in
    - NP
      - det → the
      - Adj.P → Adj. → red
      - N → parka
- Infl
- VP
  - V → gave
  - NP → N → sugar lumps
  - PP
    - Prep. → to
    - NP
      - det → the
      - N → horse

(3) a) The group of students | considered the lecture a waste of time.

The	group	of	students		considered	the	lecture	a	waste	of	time.
def. article	N	Prep.	N		V	def. article	N	indef. article	N	Prep.	N

b)   Theme | Rheme
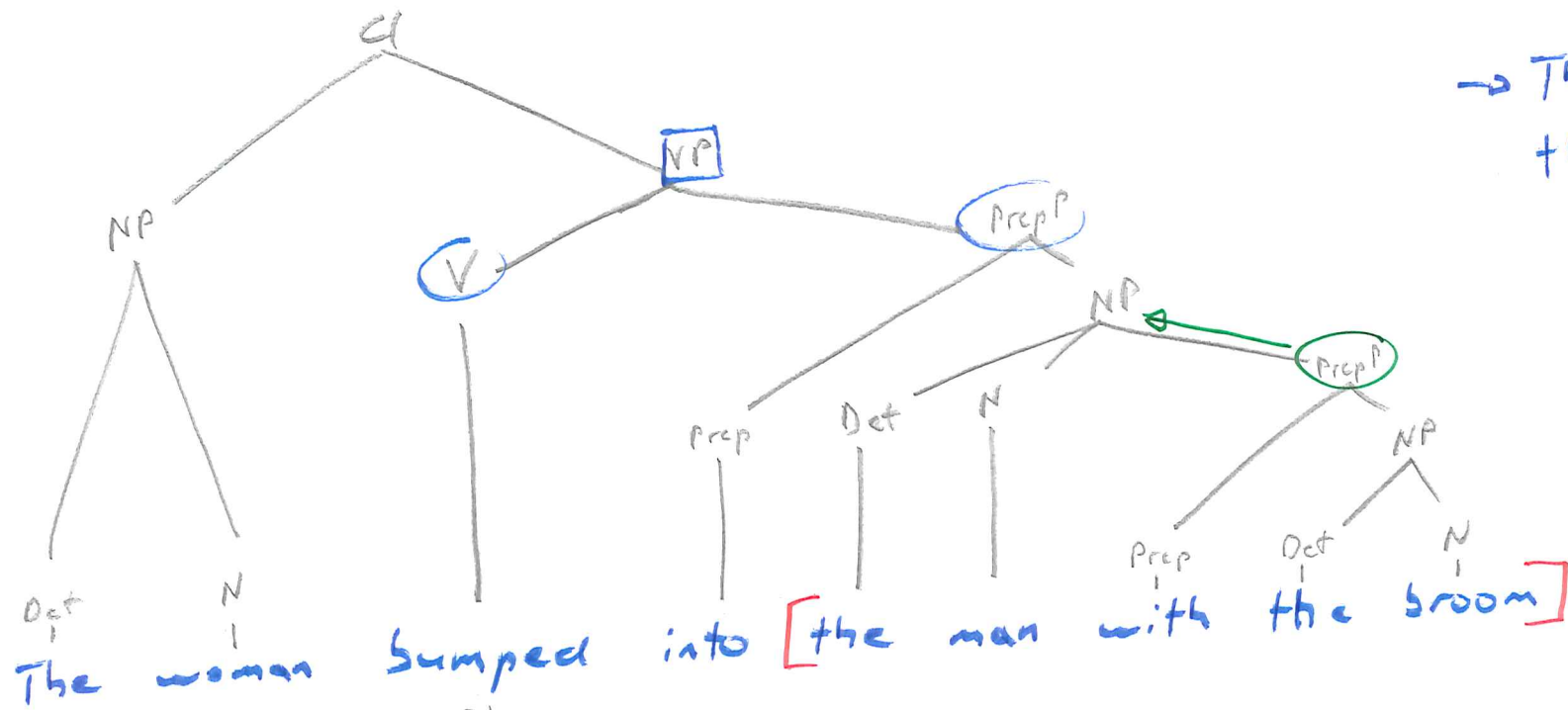
c)   agent | action | affected | affected

d)   Subject | verb/ predicate | direct obj. | Object complement

e)

(8)

cl

NP — VP — PrepP

→ The man has
the broom

NP: Det N
The woman

V: bumped

PrepP: Prep Det N NP
into [the man with the broom]

Prep Det N
with the broom

cl

NP — VP — PrepP
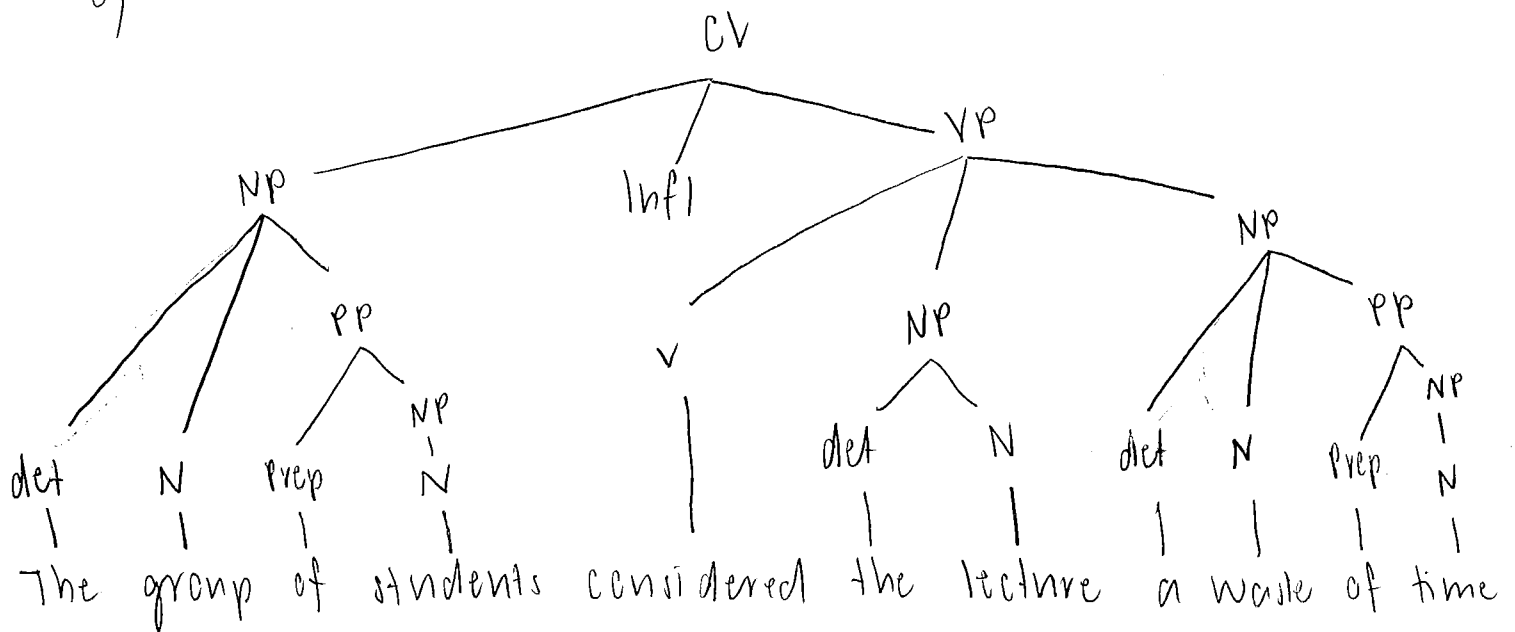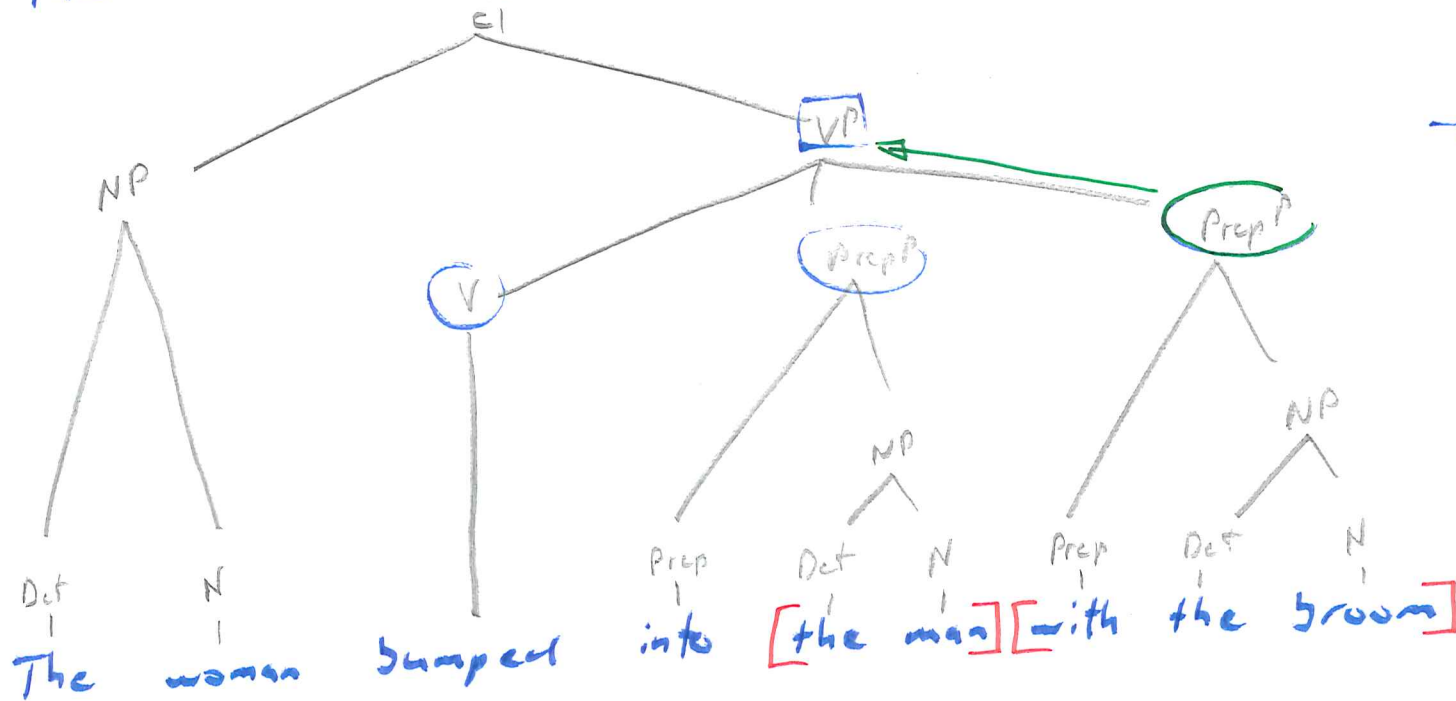
→ The ~~man~~ woman
has the broom

NP: Det N
The woman

V: bumped

PrepP: Prep NP
into [the man]

Prep Det N
[the man]

PrepP: Prep NP
[with the broom]

Prep Det N
with the broom

(g)
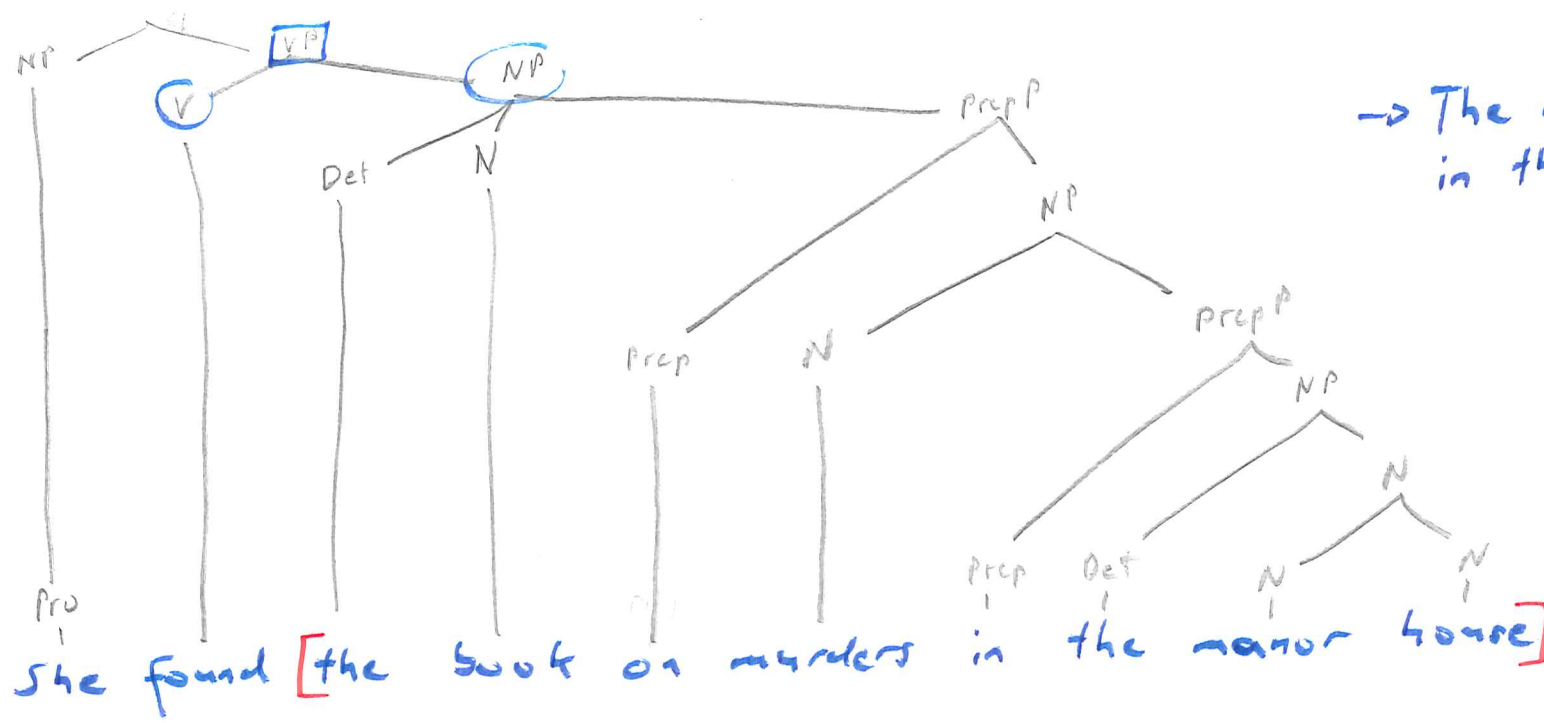
→ The murders were in the manor house

she found [the book on murders in the manor house]

Cl
NP
VP
V
NP
Det
N
Prep P
NP
Prep
N
Prep P
NP
Prep
Det
N
N
N
Pro
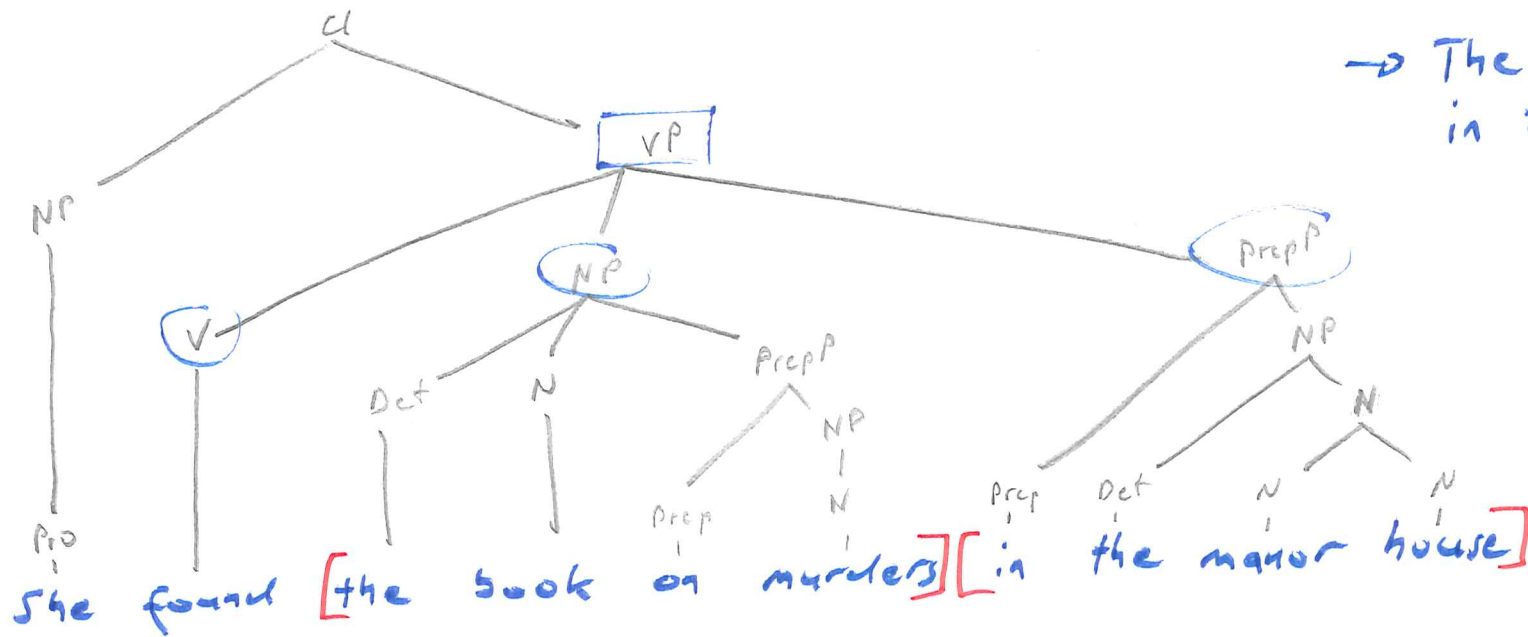
→ The book was in the manor house

Cl
NP
VP
V
NP
Det
N
Prep P
NP
N
Prep
Prep P
NP
N
Prep
Det
N
N
Pro

she found [the book on murders][in the manor house]

10

→ The party got worse

Cl
NP
VP
V
NP
Det
N
PrepP
NP
Prep Det
AdjP
Adj
N

John left [the party in a worse condition]

Cl
NP
VP
V
NP
PrepP
NP
Det N
Prep Det
AdjP
Adj
N

→ John got worse

John left [the party] [in a worse condition]
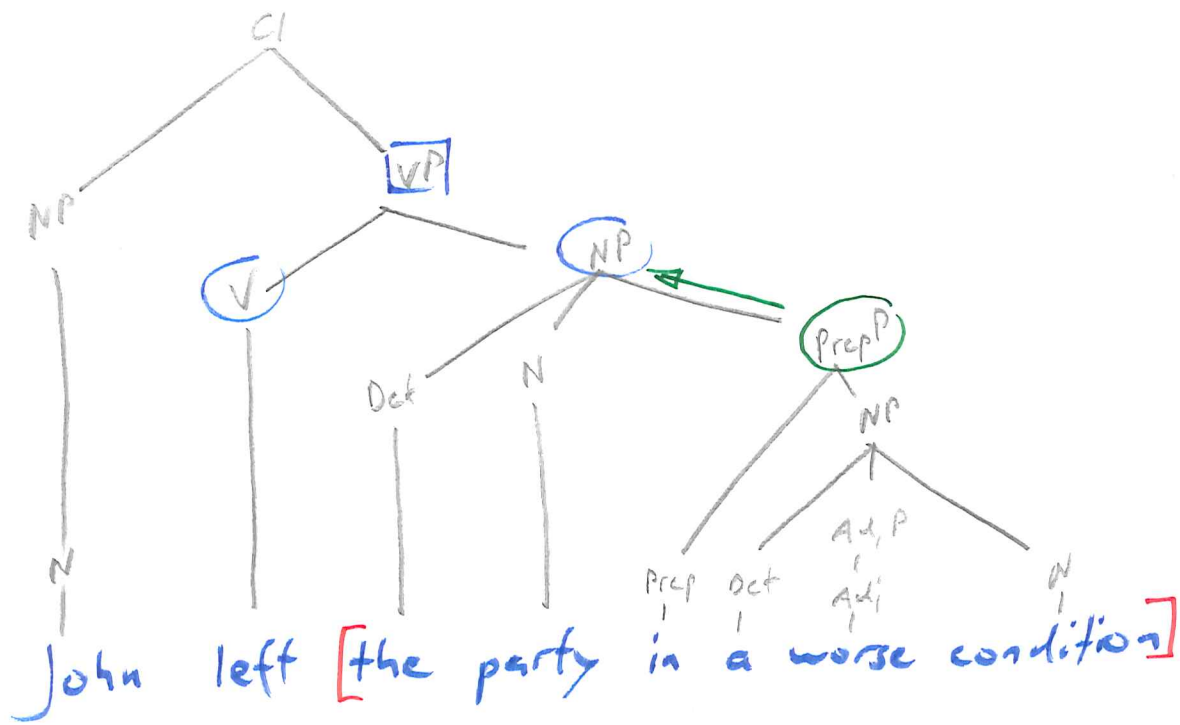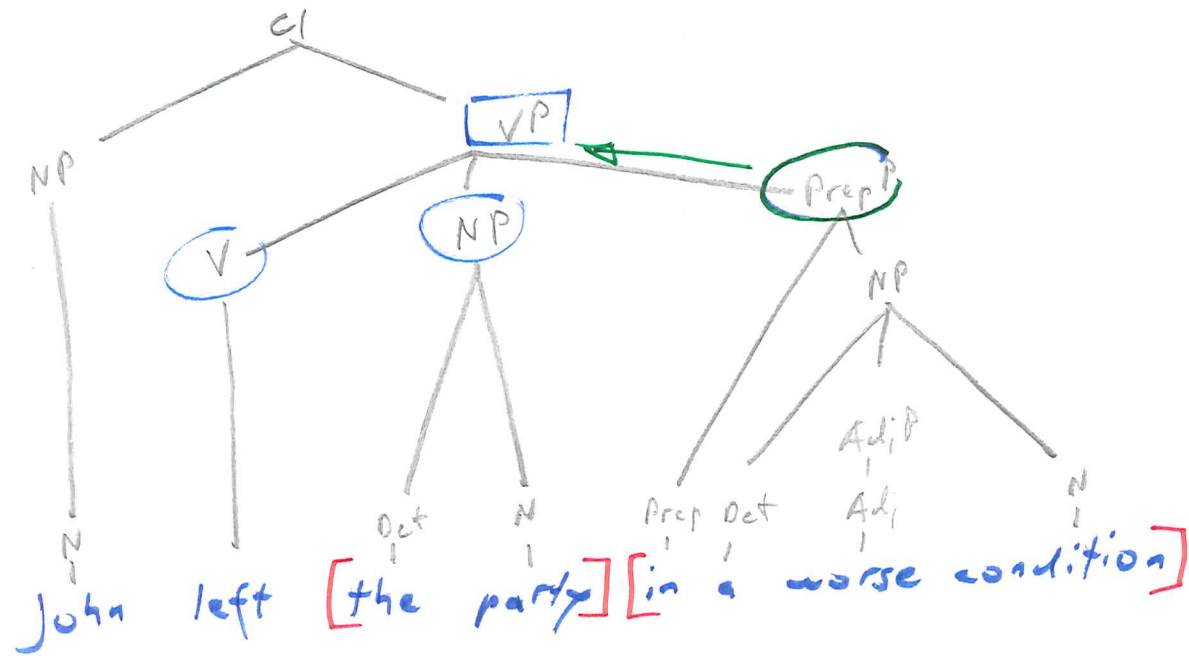
(11)

→ The bench is in the hall

Tree 1 labels: NP, VP, V, NP (boxed, blue), PrepP (circled, green), Prep, Det, N, NP, PrepP, Prep, Det, N, NP, Det, N

Mary put the bench [the bench in the hall]

Words: Mary put the bags on [the bench in the hall]

Cl
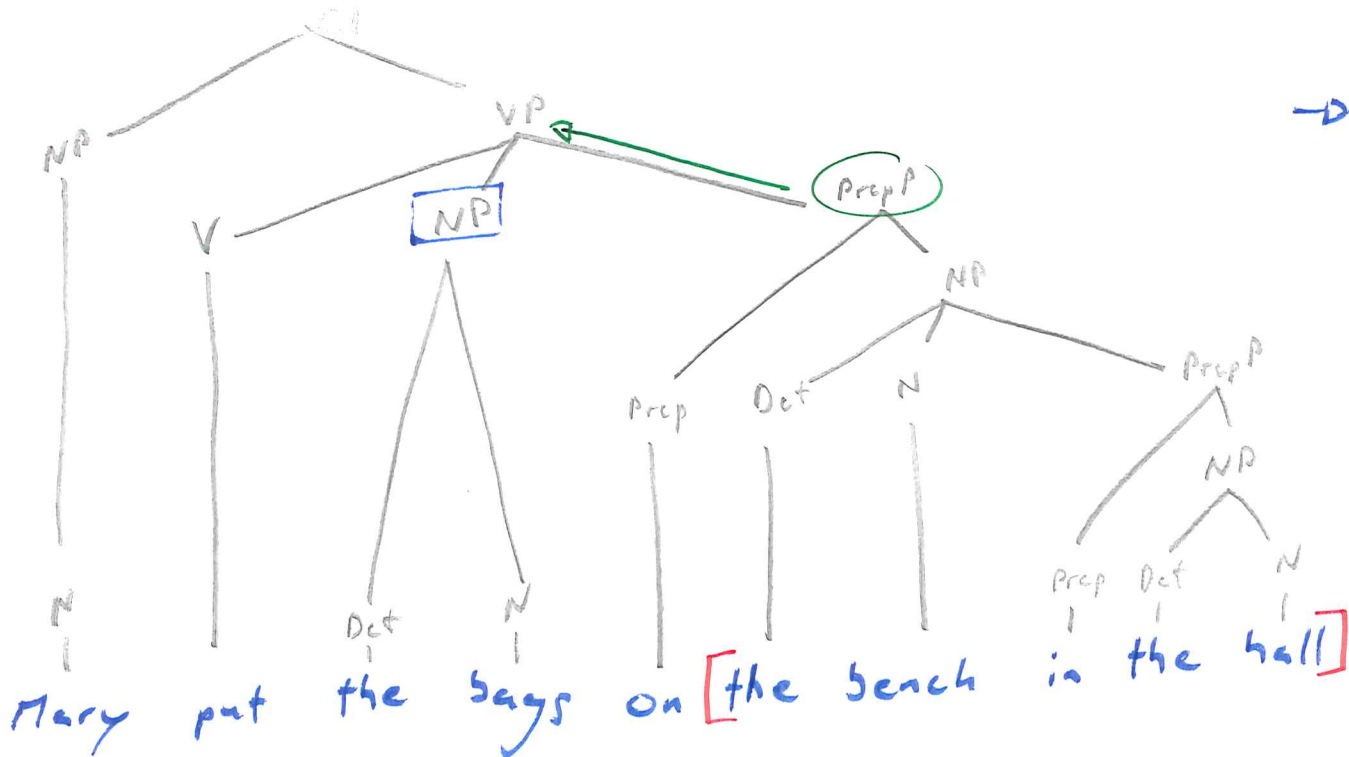
→ The bags were on the bench

Tree 2 labels: NP, VP, V, NP (boxed, blue), NP (circled, blue), PrepP (circled, green), PrepP, Prep, NP, Det, N, NP, Prep, Det, N, Det, N

Mary put [the bags on the bench] in the hall
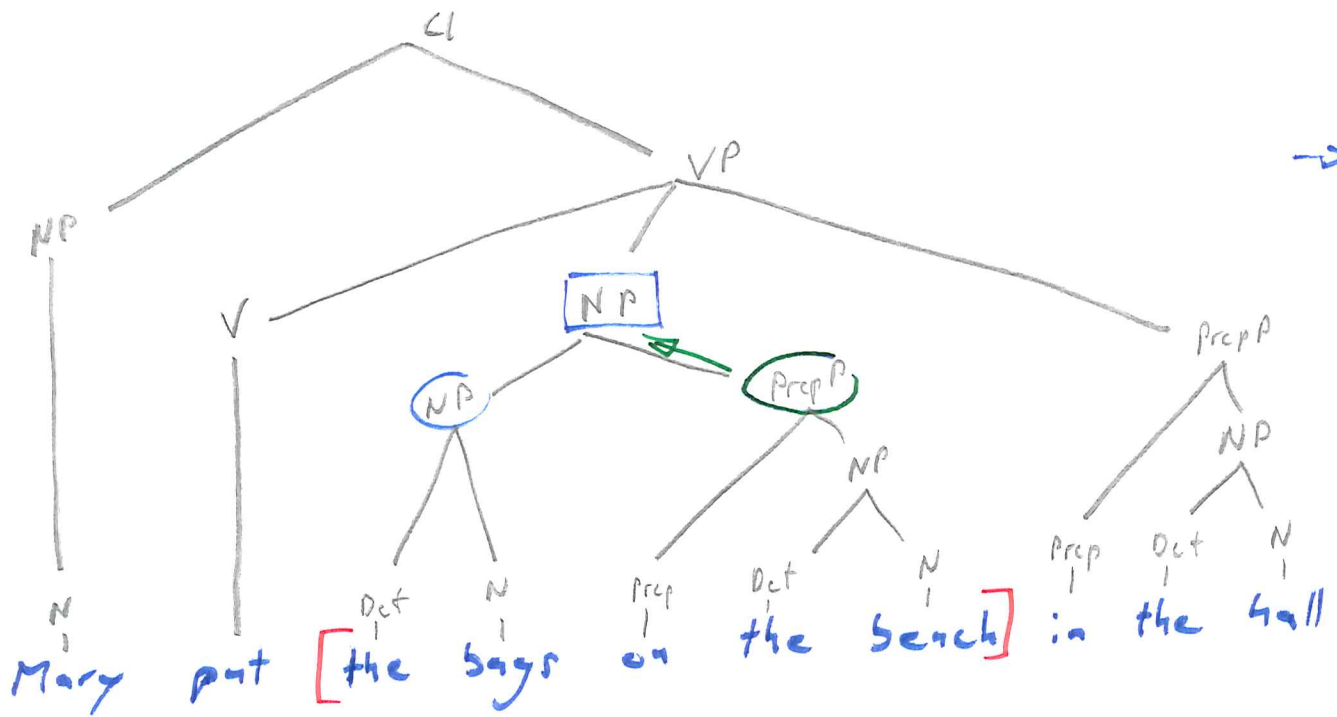
(12)

→ The boy has binoculars
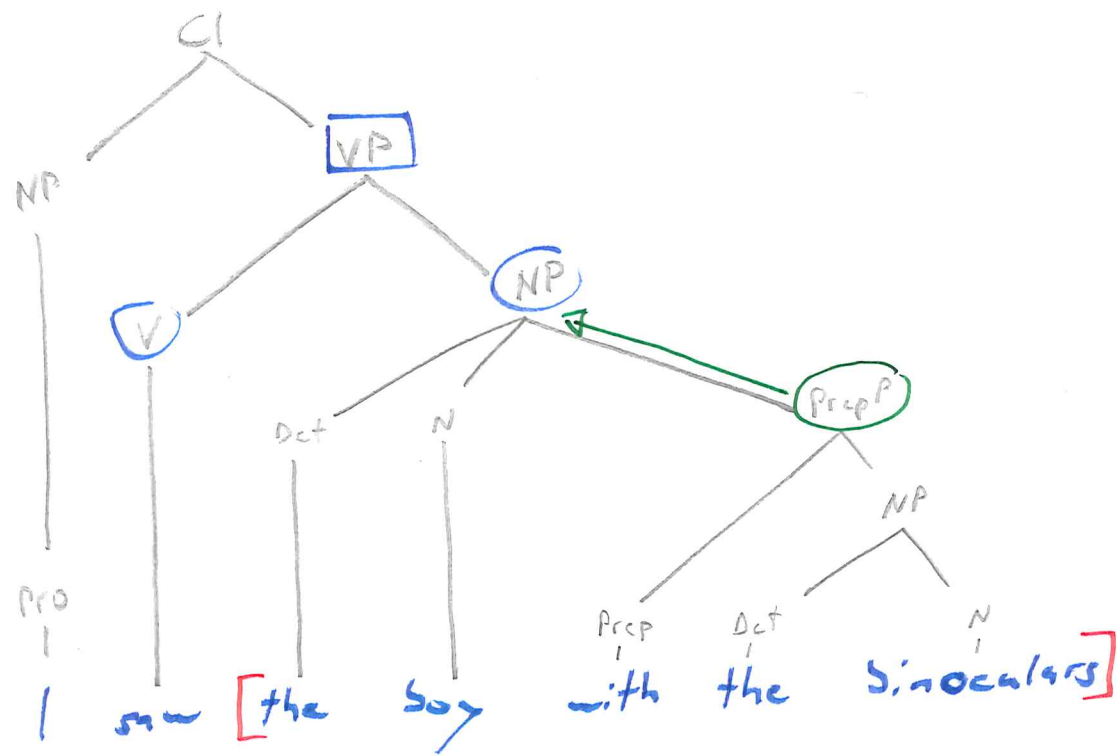
I saw [the boy with the binoculars]

→ I have binoculars

I saw [the boy] [with the binoculars]

(13)

Cl
NP
VP
V (circled)
PrepP (circled)
Prep
NP
Det
N
Det
N
The woman [decided] [on the motorbike]
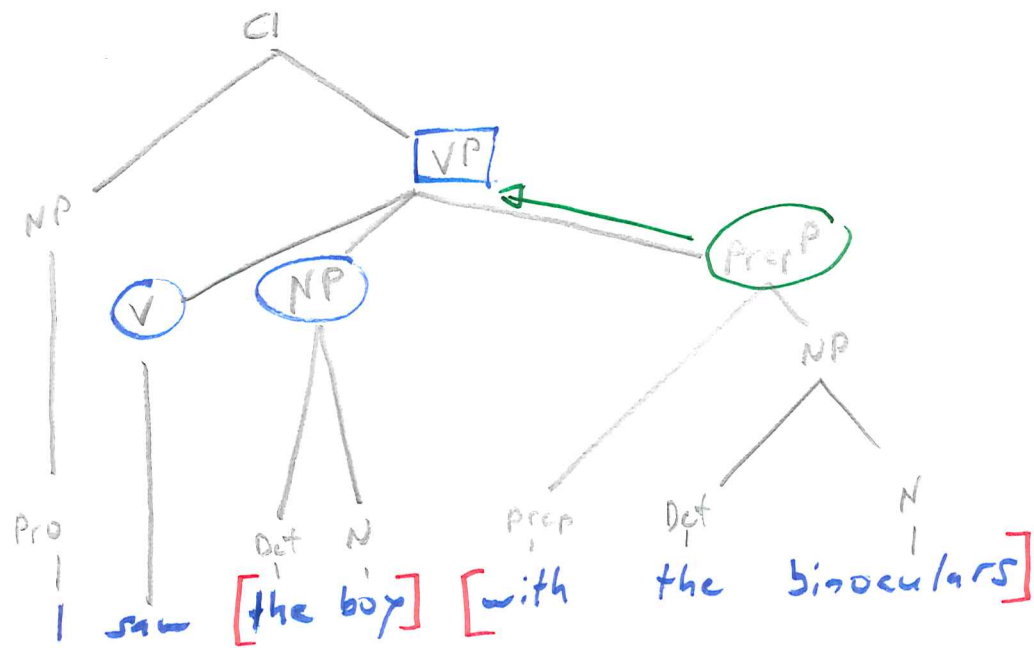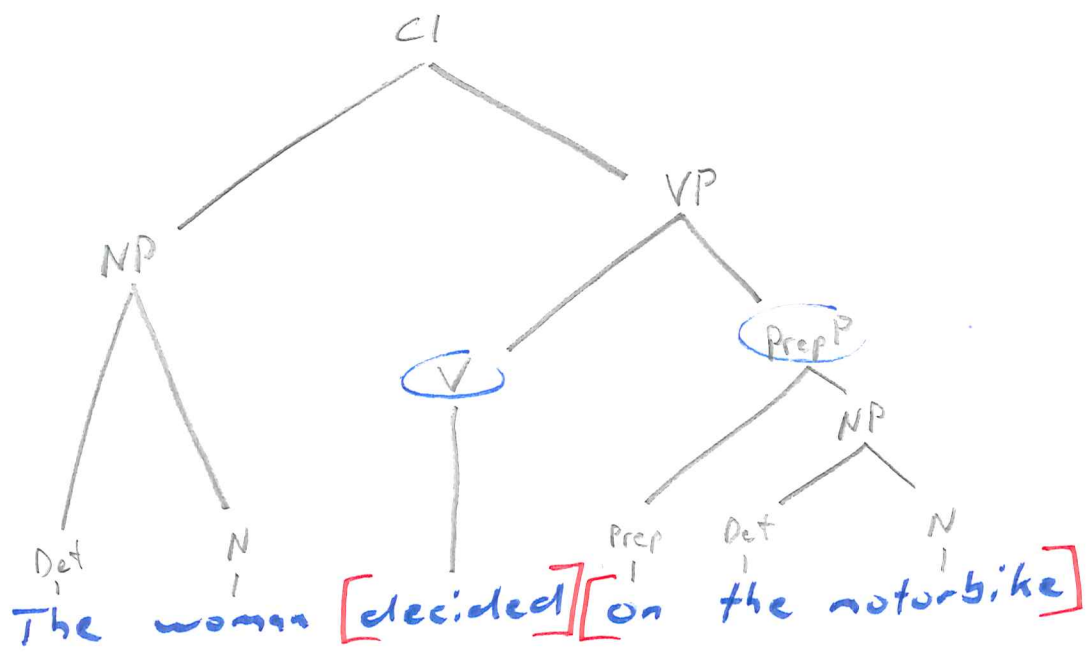
→ The woman made a decision while being on the motorbike

Cl
NP
VP
V (circled)
NP (circled)
Det
N
Det
N
The woman [decided on] [the motorbike]
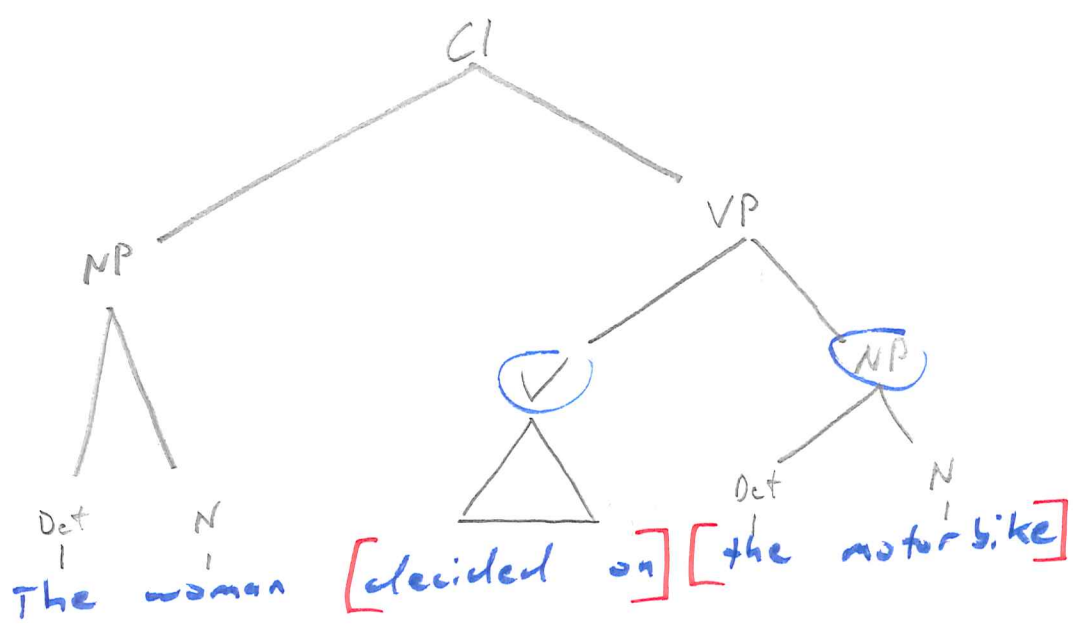
→ The woman made her decision for the motorbike (rather than e.g. a car)

CI
├── NP
│   ├── Det — Her
│   ├── AdjP
│   │   └── Adj — happy
│   └── N — mood
└── VP
    ├── V — was ruined
    └── PrepP
        ├── Prep — by
        └── NP
            ├── Det — the
            └── N — evening
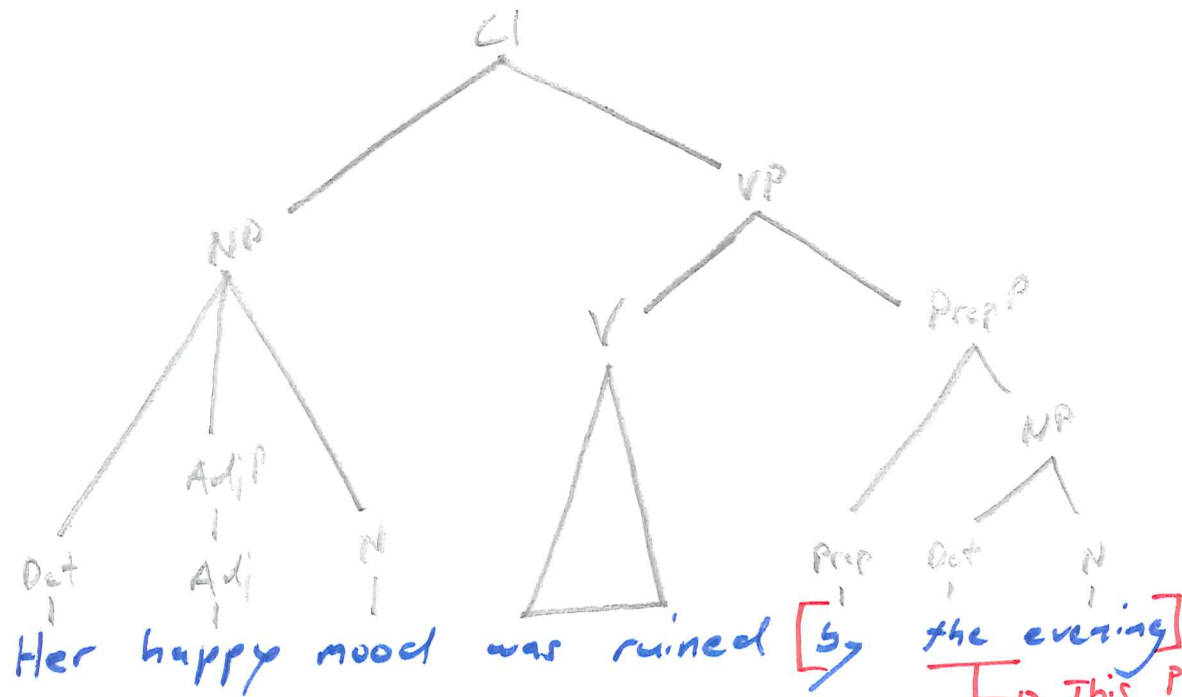
→ The evening ruined her mood
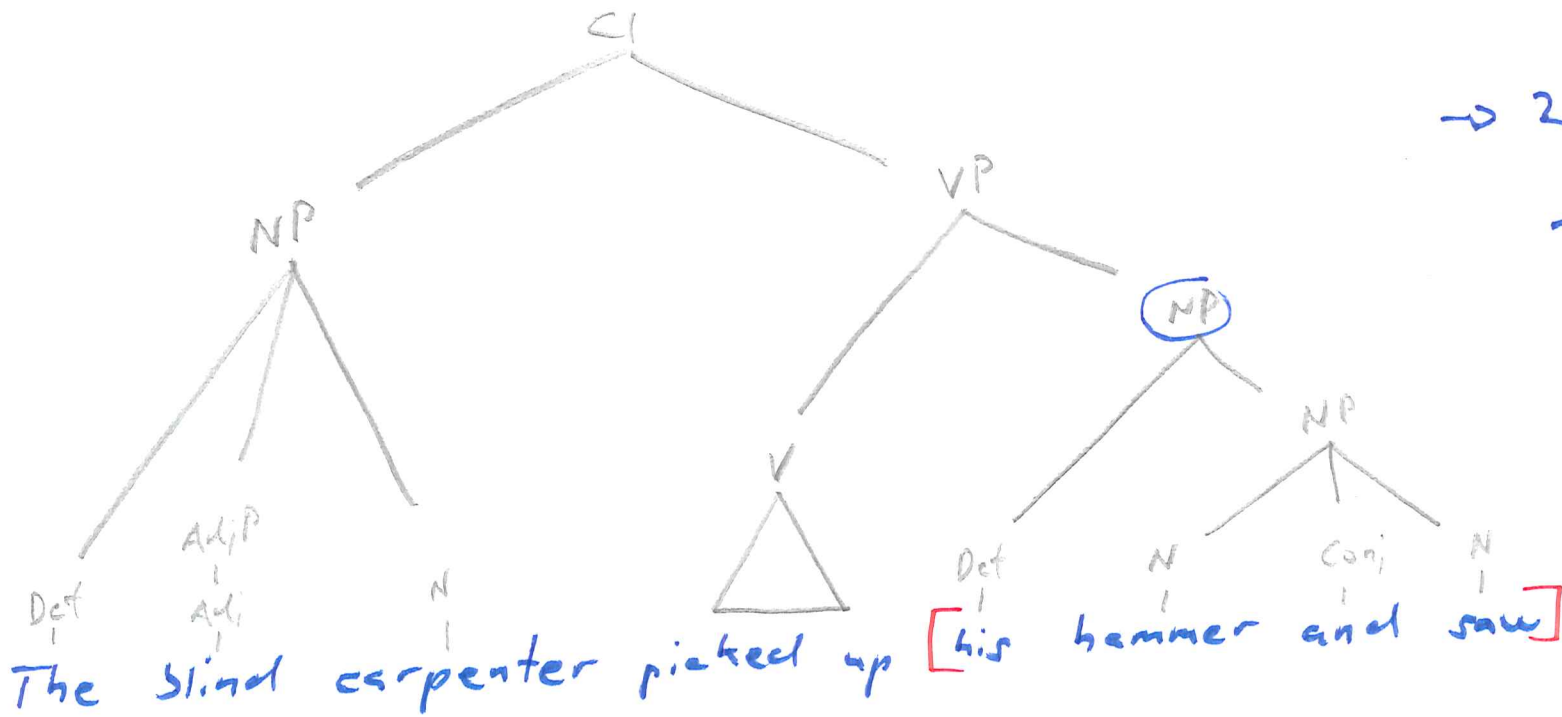
Her happy mood was ruined [by the evening]

↳ This Phrase cannot be put at the beginning

→ By the time it was evening, her mood was ruined

Her happy mood was ruined [by the evening]

↳ This Phrase could also be put at the beginning.

(15)

CI

NP

VP

MP (circled)

Det
AdjP
Adj
N

V (triangle)

Det
N
Conj
N

NP

The blind carpenter picked up [his hammer and saw]

→ 2 items: - hammer
            - saw
↗ action: pick up

CI₁

NP

VP

Det
AdjP
Adj
N

V (triangle)

NP (circled)
Det
N

Conj

Cl₂

NP* (Ⓔ)
VP
V

The blind carpenter [picked up his hammer] and [saw]
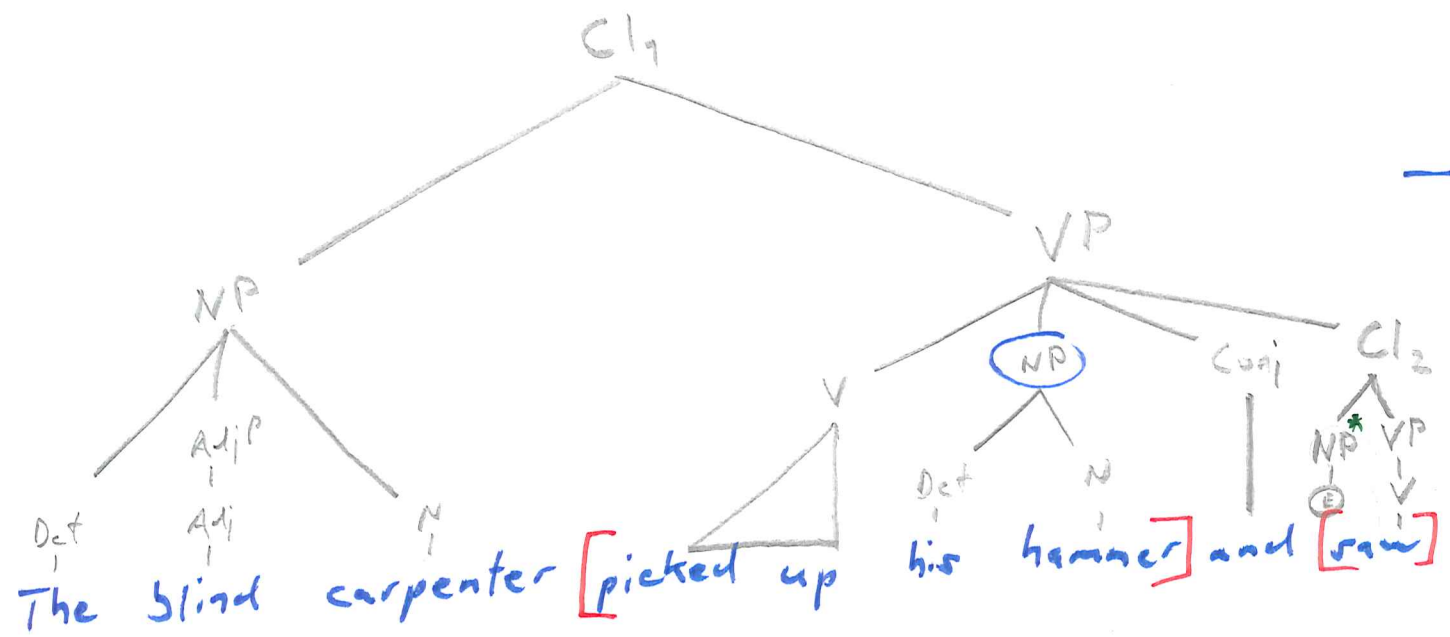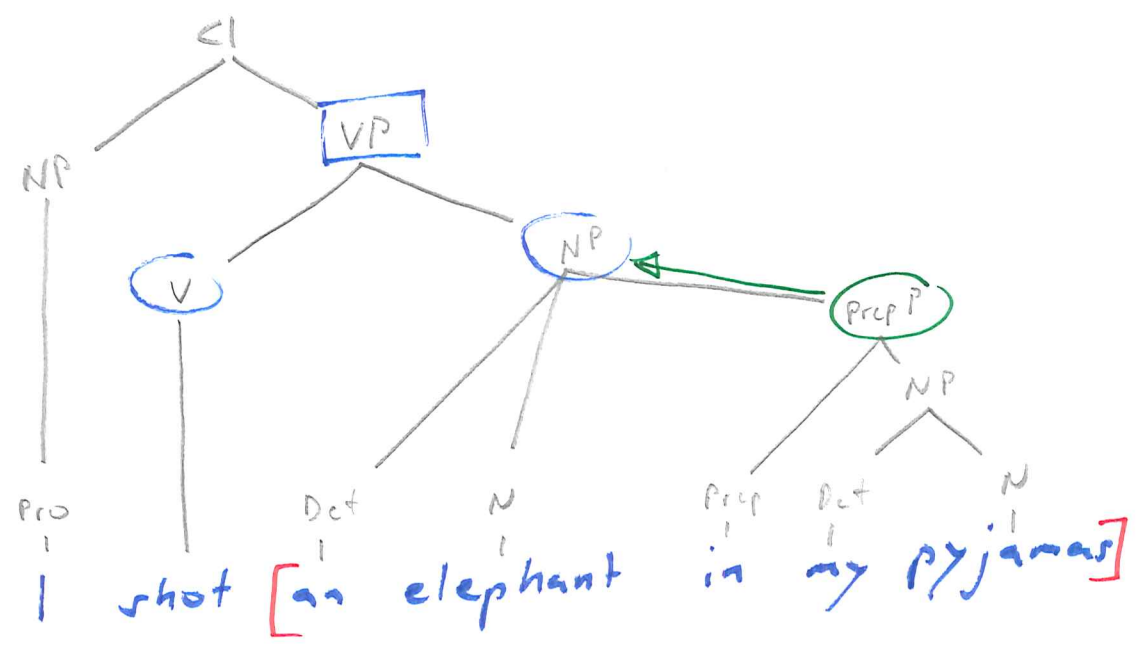
→ 1 item: hammer
↗ 2 actions: pick up
            see

* Ellipsis: A clause consist of NP + VP; here, the NP is ommitted (the blind carpenter) and the ommission represented by NP
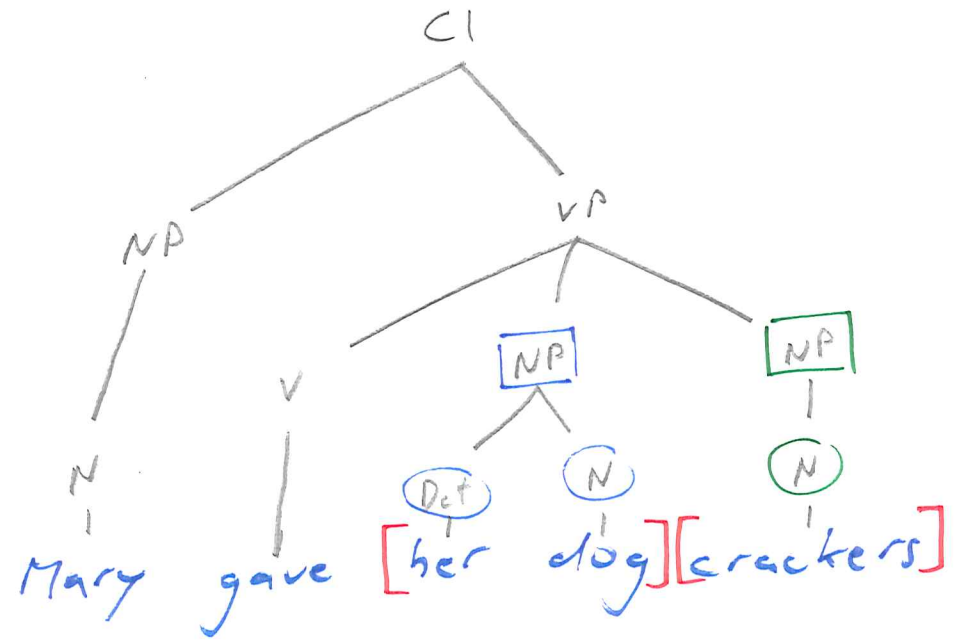↓
Ⓔ

(16)

CI
NP — VP
|
Pro
|
I shot [an elephant] in my pyjamas

V — NP — PrepP
|
Det — N
|
Prep — Det — N
NP

→ when I shot the elephant
  I was wearing pyjamas

CI
NP — VP
|
Pro
|
I shot [an elephant in my pyjamas]

V — NP — PrepP
Det — N
Prep — Det — N
NP
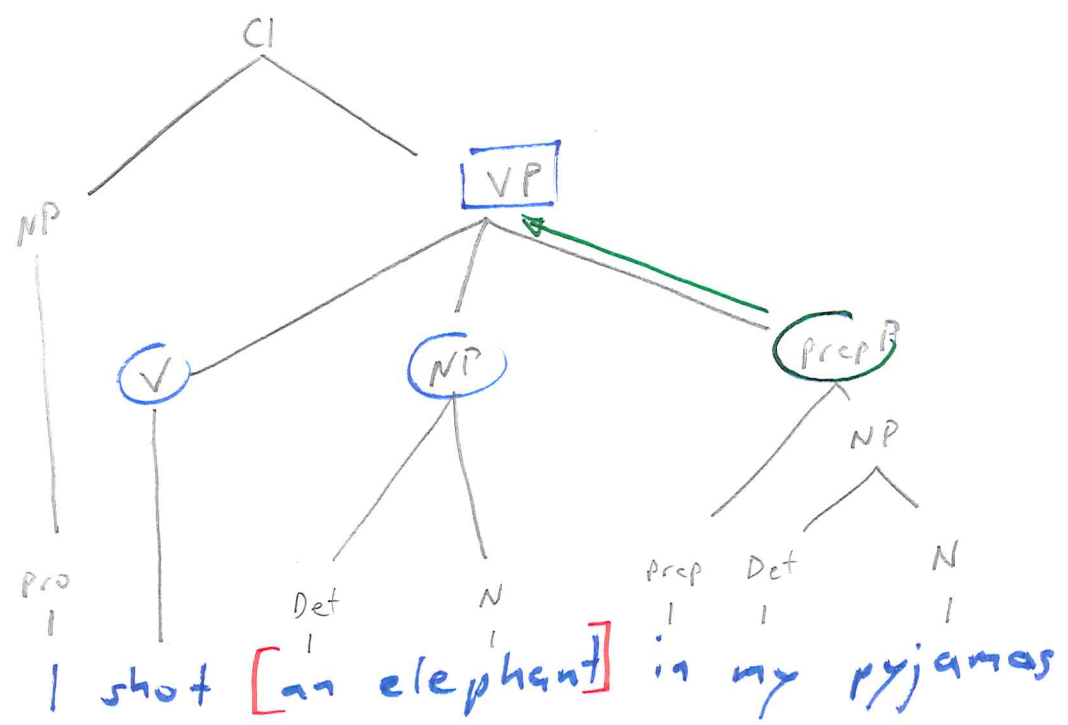
→ I shot an elephant
  that was in my pyjamas

(17)

Cl

NP   VP

N   V   [NP]   [NP]

                Det   N   N

Mary gave [her dog][crackers]

→ the dog receives crackers

✓

Cl

NP   VP

N   V   [NP]   [NP]

                    N

              Pro   N   N

Mary gave her [dog crackers]
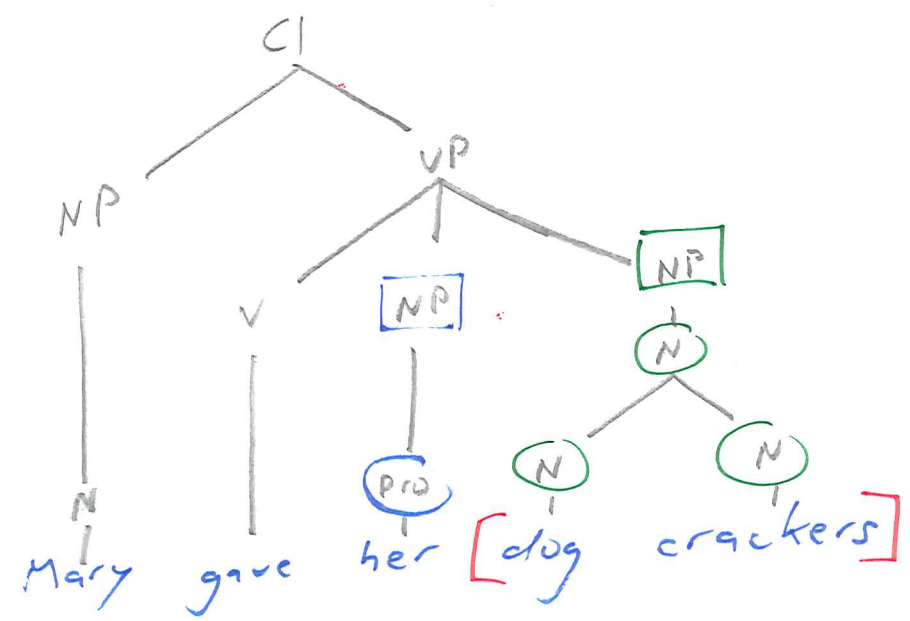
→ she (not Mary) receives dog crackers

✓