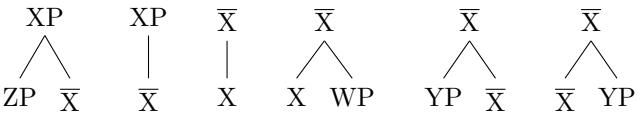
1 Parse Rules

Icelandic appears to have approximately the same parse rules as English. Some of the ones I have observed in this data are:

CP	→	$\overline{\text{C}}$
$\overline{\text{C}}$	→	C IP
IP	→	DP $\bar{\text{I}}$
$\bar{\text{I}}$	→	I VP
VP	→	$\overline{\text{V}}$
$\overline{\text{V}}$	→	NegP $\overline{\text{V}}$
$\overline{\text{V}}$	→	V
$\overline{\text{V}}$	→	$\overline{\text{V}}$ PP
$\overline{\text{V}}$	→	V DP
PP	→	$\overline{\text{P}}$
$\overline{\text{P}}$	→	P DP
NP	→	$\overline{\text{N}}$
$\overline{\text{N}}$	→	N

This does not include parses that result from head movement rules (such as topicalization creating a pseudo-rule like CP → PP $\overline{\text{C}}$

These rules represent the following subset of the basic X-Bar forms:



Again, these are the same forms we see in English.

As in German, all sentences seem to be CPs. By default the C is empty, requiring head movement rules to fill it.

2 Head Movement and Other Rules

From this data on Icelandic, it appears to share many head movement rules with German. We can clearly see the following rules in action:

V-Movement: Move a (the nearest) V into (a c-commanding) I

I-Movement: Move I into empty (c-commanding) C

Topicalization: Move XP into specifier of CP

The first two rules seem to be mandatory. I think that Topicalization is used to differentiate between yes/no questions and statements. Compare:

(a) 'Had Helgi read this book before yesterday?'

(b) 'Helgi had read this book before yesterday.'

In (b), 'Helgi' is being Topicalized, marking it as a statement. This mirrors the form of the example sentence, but without the NegP 'not.'

We could formalize this as:

Question Rule: To make a sentence a yes/no question, do not topicalize (but do V-Movement and I-Movement)

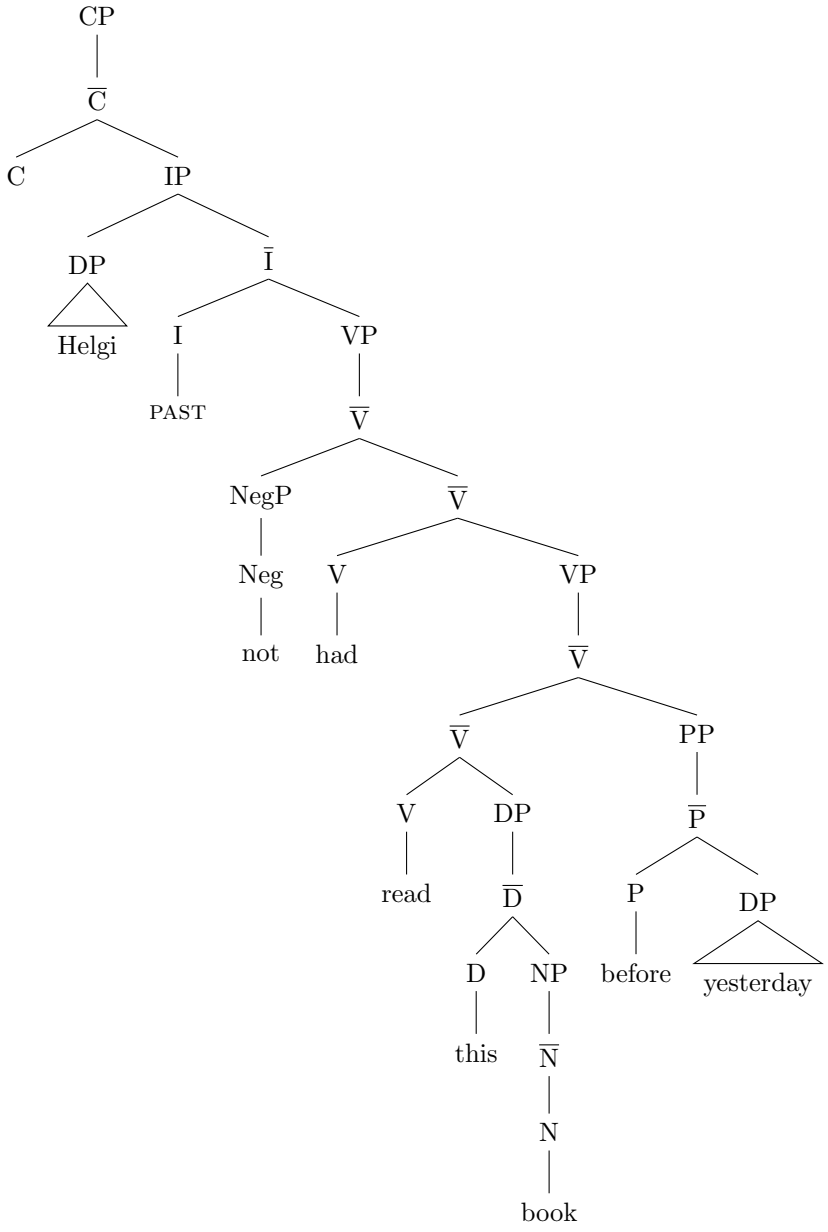
We can also see that while the other two rules apply in embedded CPs as well as root CPs (I-Movement only trivially so, as embedded CPs have complementizers already), Topicalization does not. This is why we do not get sentences like

'I asked this book whether Helgi read not before yesterday.'

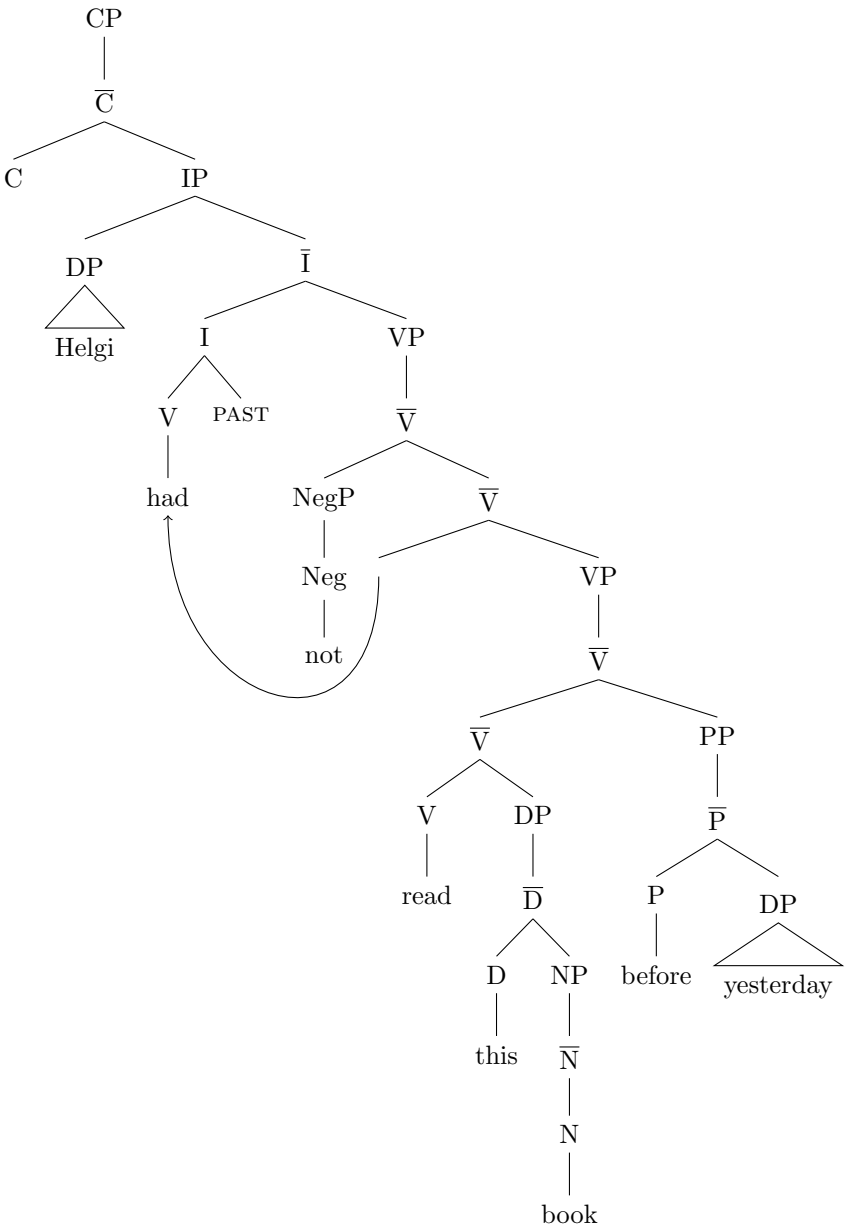
That is a sentence that would result if we allowed Topicalization in embedded CPs, and could move things to the specifier of the CP, in front of the already existing complementizer.

3 Derivation of 1h: ‘this book had Helgi not read before yesterday’

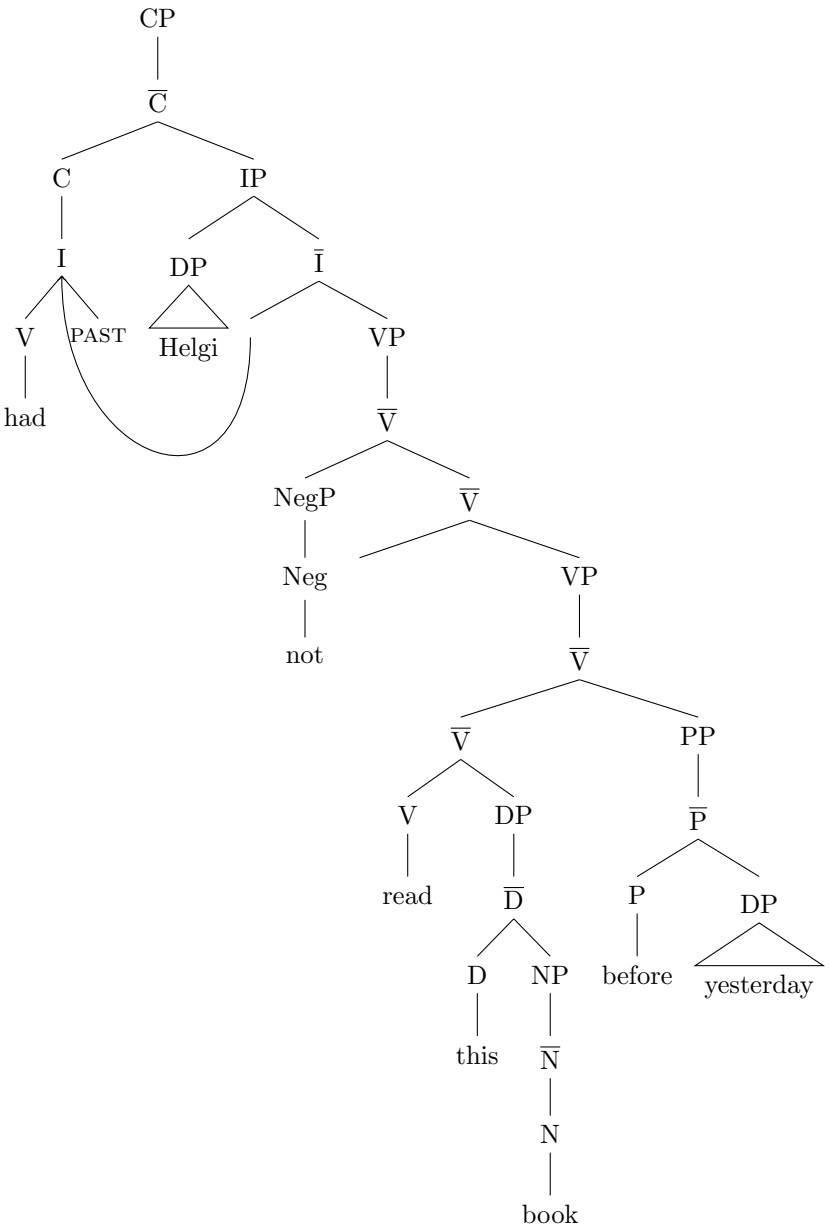
D-Structure:



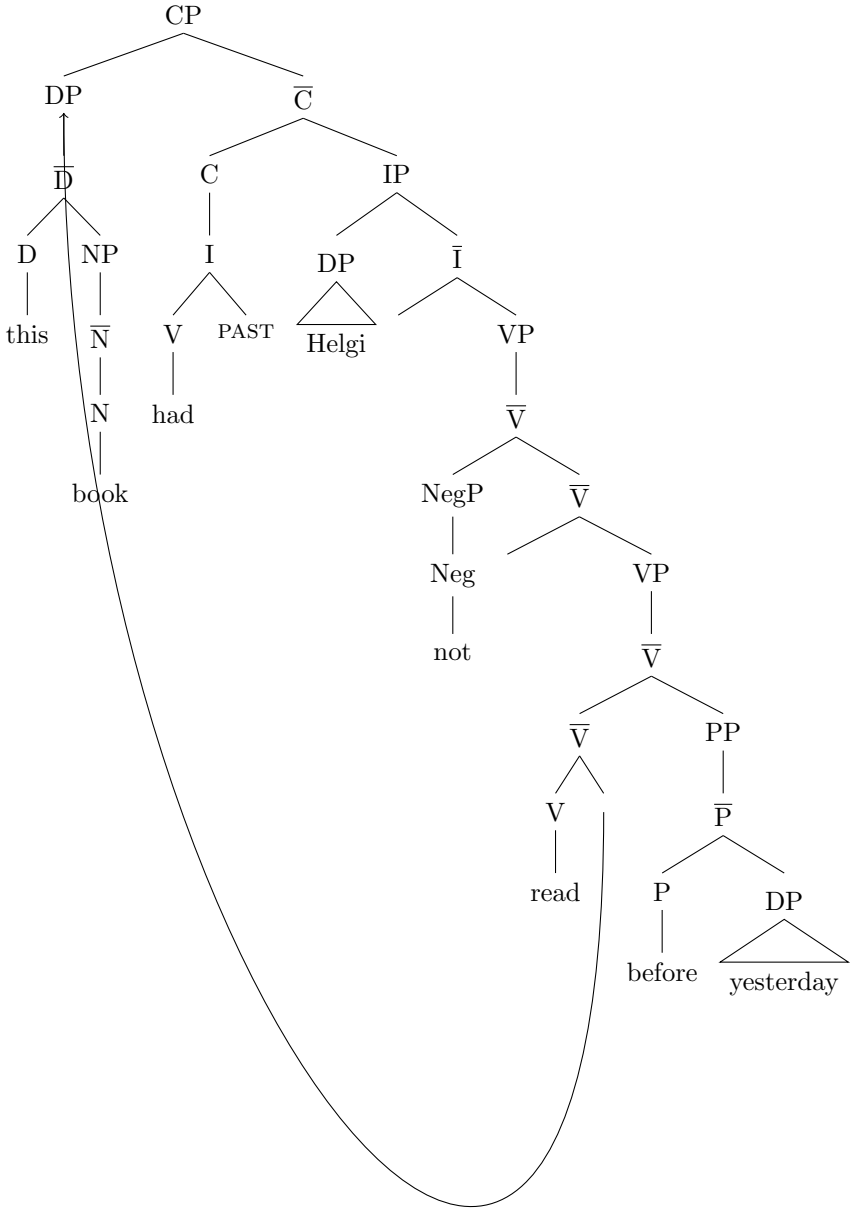
S-Structure Step 1: V-Movement



S-Structure Step 2: I-Movement

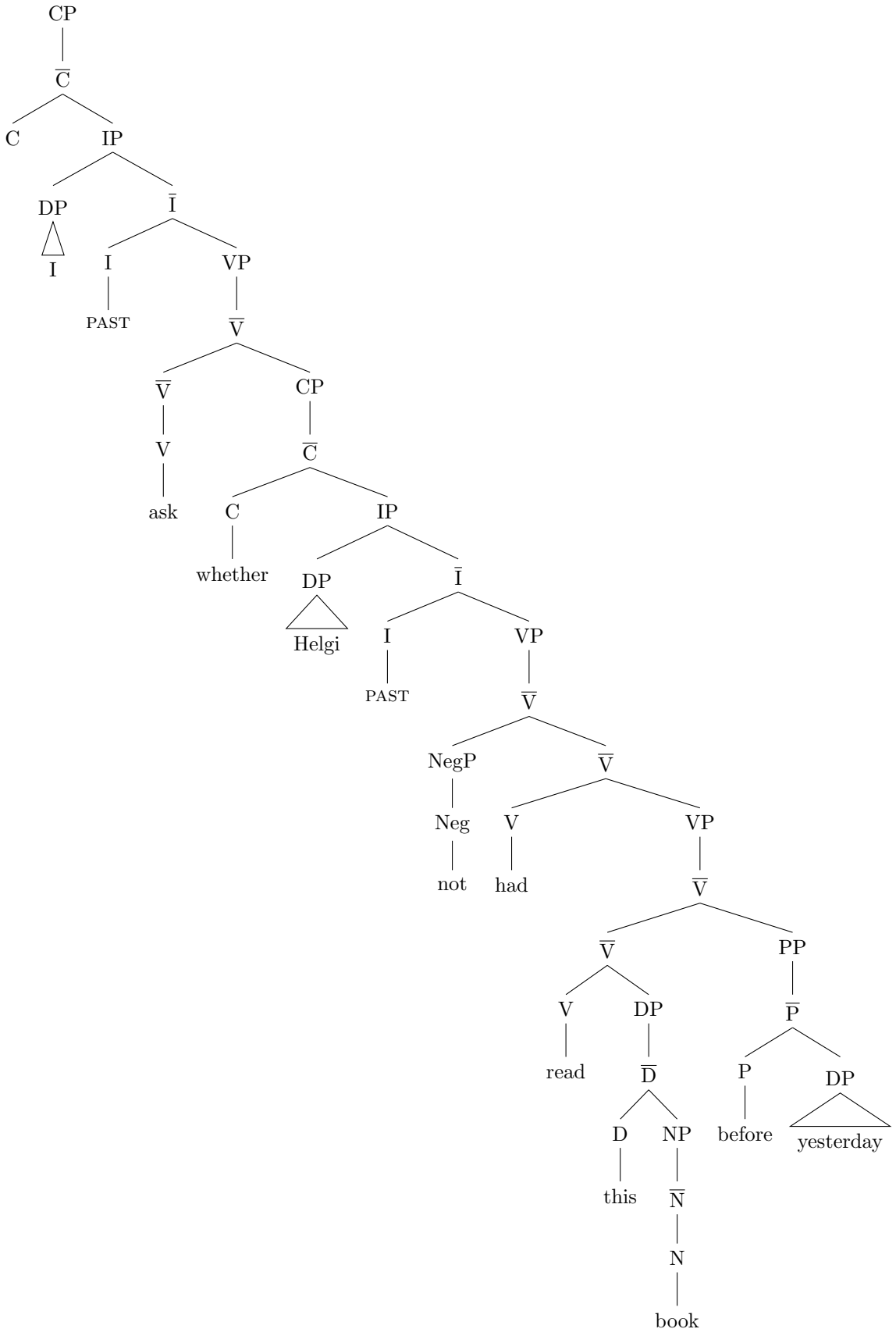


S-Structure Step 3: Topicalization (of DP ‘this book’)

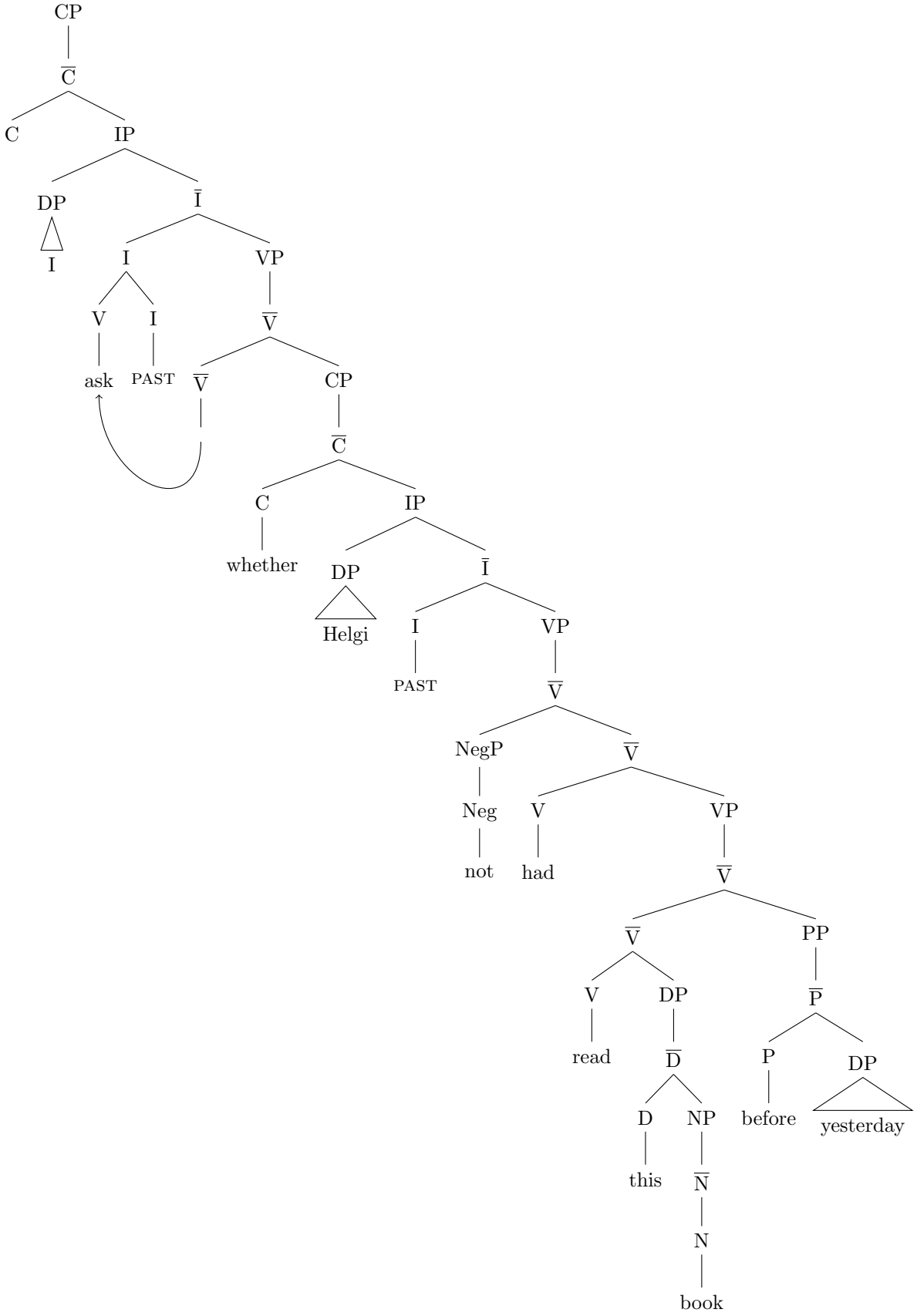


4 Derivation of 2b: 'I asked whether Helgi had not read this book before yesterday'

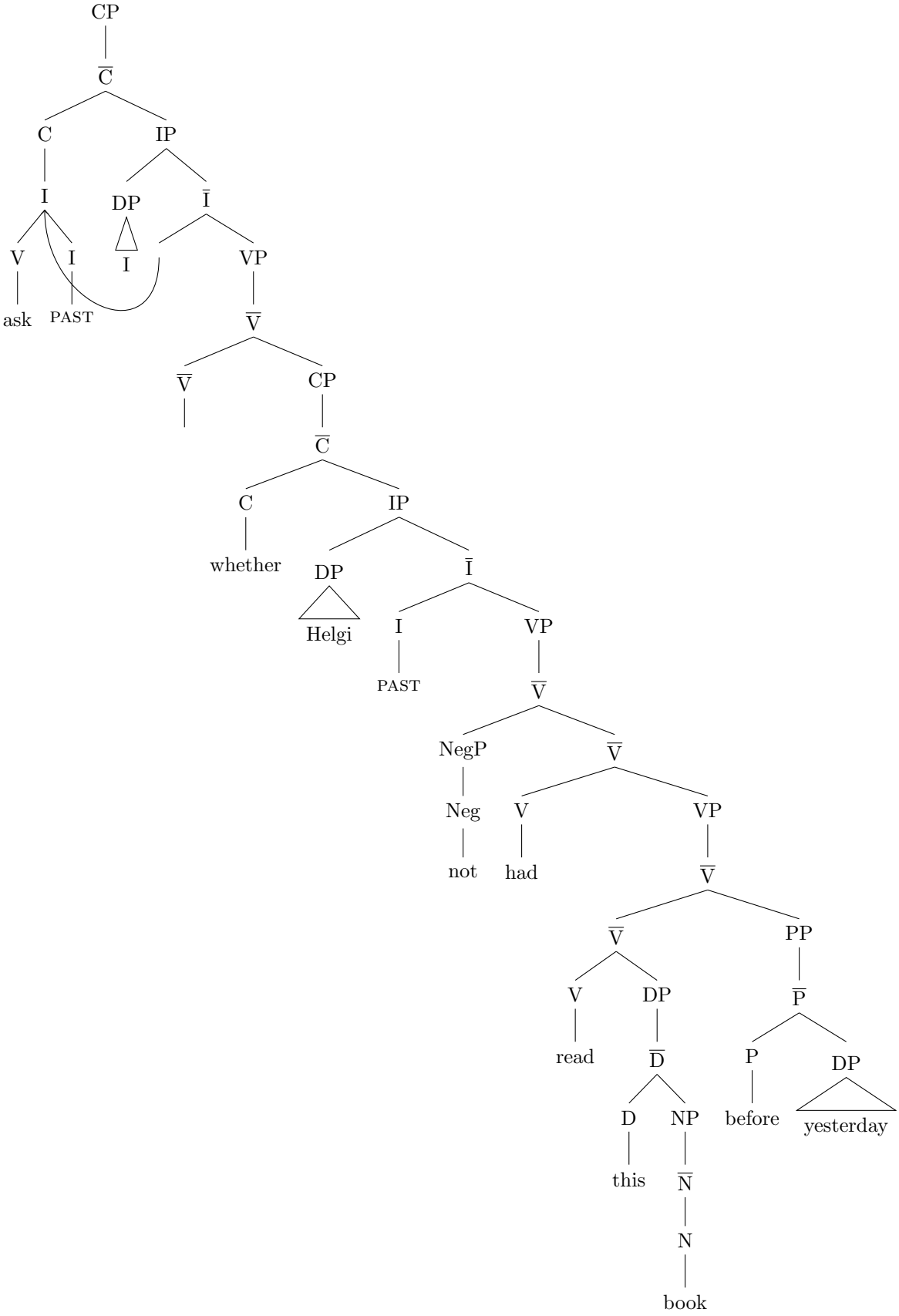
D-Structure:



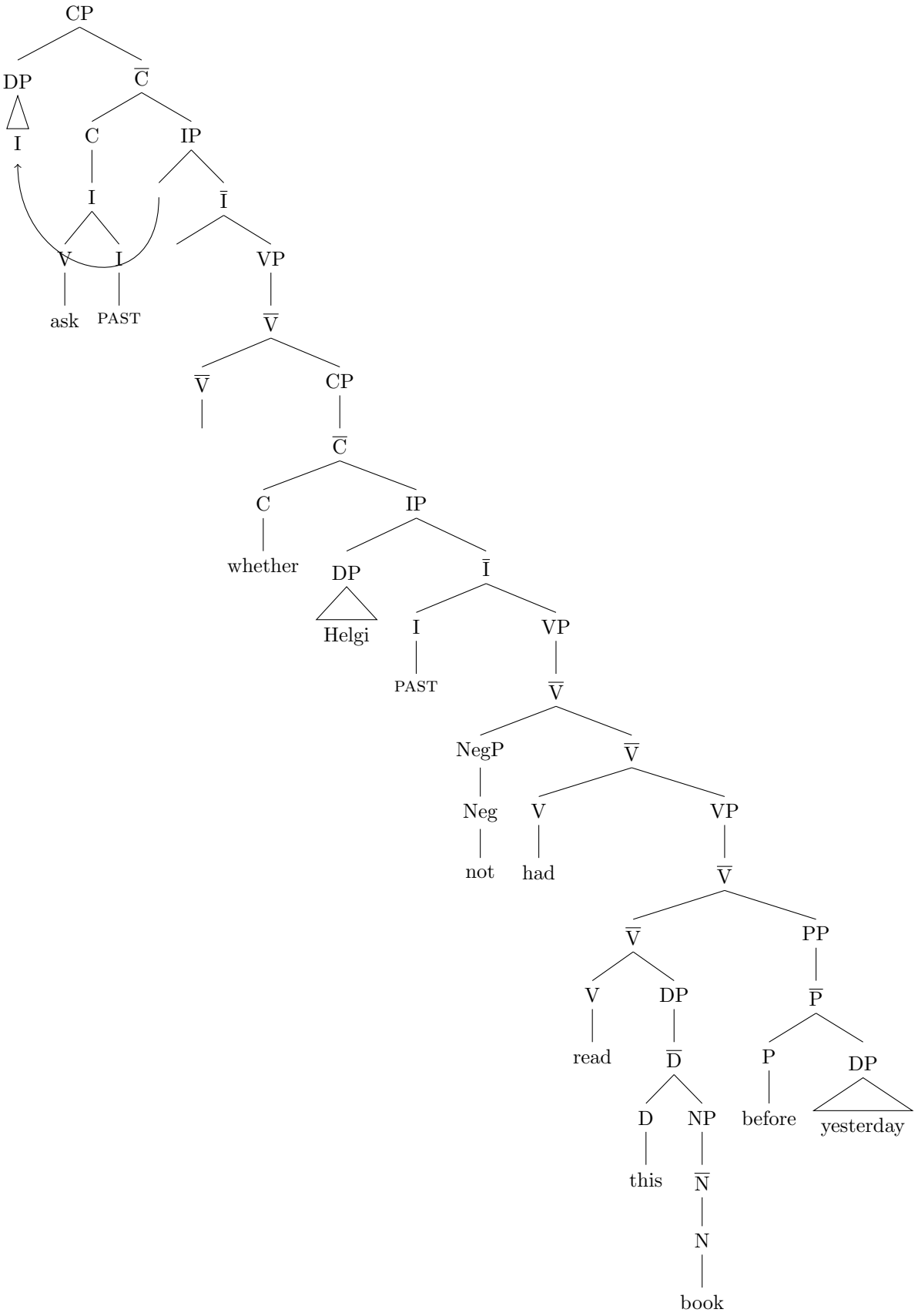
S-Structure Step 1: V-Movement (root)



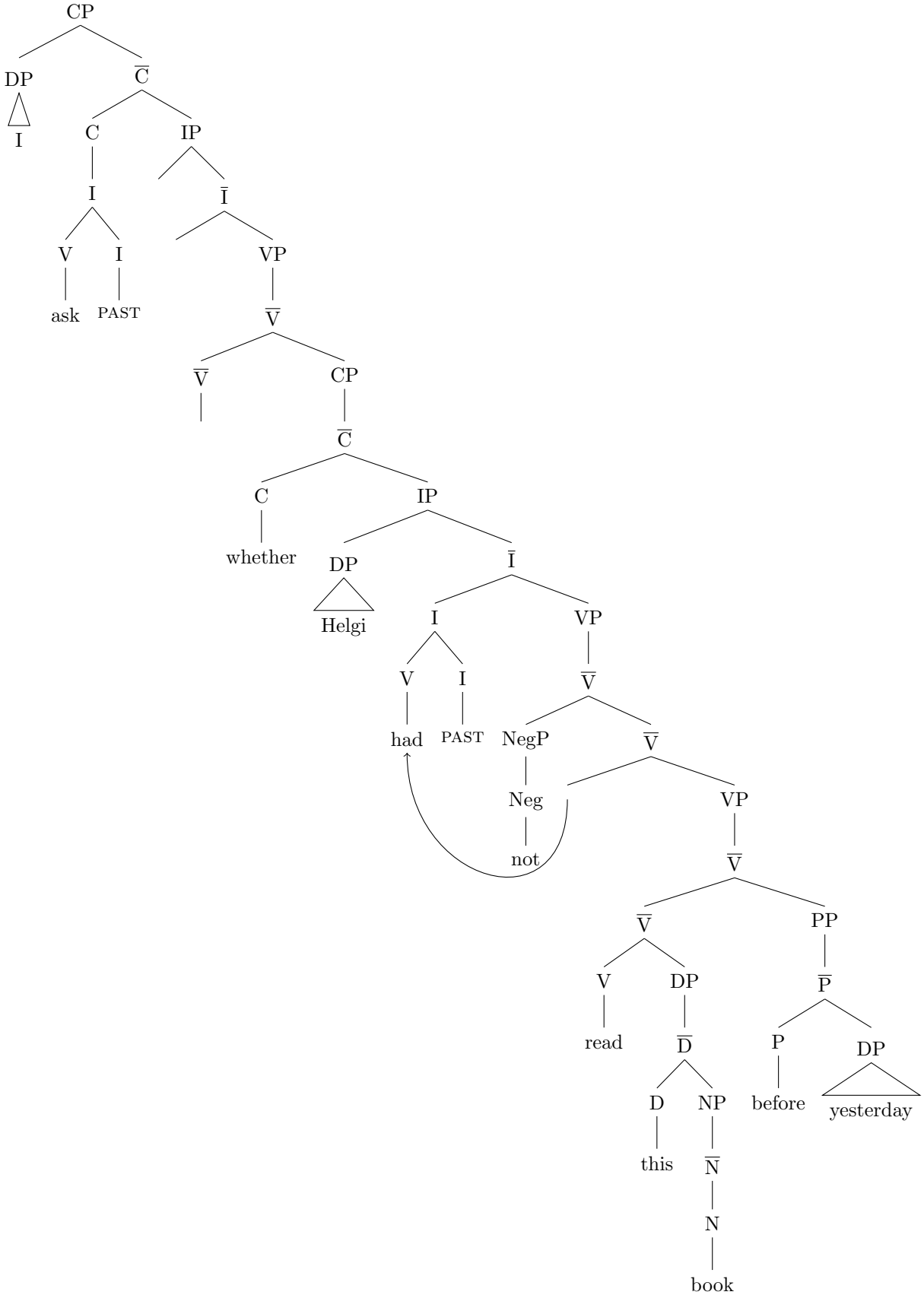
S-Structure Step 2: I-Movement (root)



S-Structure Step 3: Topicalization (root, ‘I’)



S-Structure Step 4: V-Movement (embedded)



We cannot perform I-Movement on the embedded clause, because the complementizer head is filled already (with 'whether'). We cannot perform Topicalization, because our Topicalization rule is forbidden in embedded clauses.