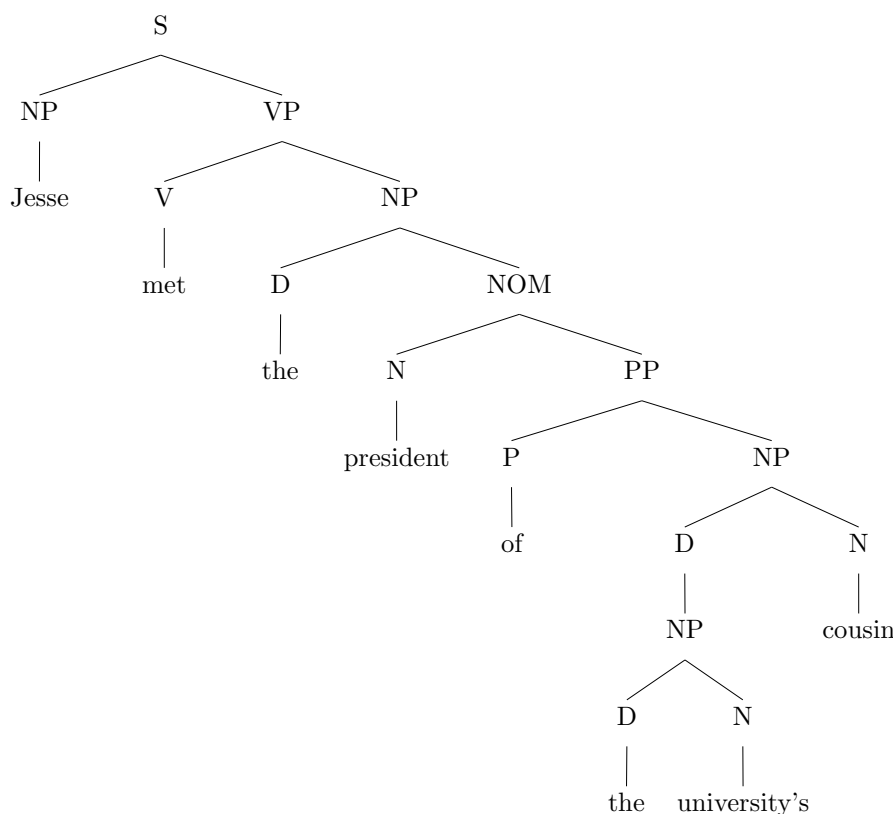


Chapter 6, Problem 3: English Possessives I

- A. The possessive marker 's in English appears at the end of an NP that serves as a possessive determiner for a larger NP. That is, 's comes at the right-hand edge of the specifier.
- B. If we were to treat 's as a case marker we would make exactly the wrong predictions about examples (ii)-(vii). That is, it predicts that the odd numbered examples should be well-formed and the even numbered ones should be ill-formed (at least on the intended reading).

To see why, consider (ii) and (iii). If 's were a case marker, the CASE value realized morphologically as 's would be assigned to the specifier of *cousin*, that is, to the NP *the president of the university*. Since CASE is a head feature, its value would be shared by the lexical head, namely *president*, yielding (iii). Furthermore, it predicts that in (ii), in which 's appears on an element that is not the head of the whole NP *the president of the university*, that NP can't be the specifier of *cousin*.

Note that the case marker analysis does provide a non-sensical parse for (ii) (and similarly (iv)) where *the university's* is the specifier of *cousin* and *of the university's cousin* is the complement of *president*:



Thus while the case marker analysis makes the right predictions about the grammaticality of the strings (ii) and (iv), it does not assign them all of the parses it should. (And it predicts that (vi) is strictly ungrammatical since *to* is a preposition and so can't be inflected for possessive case.)