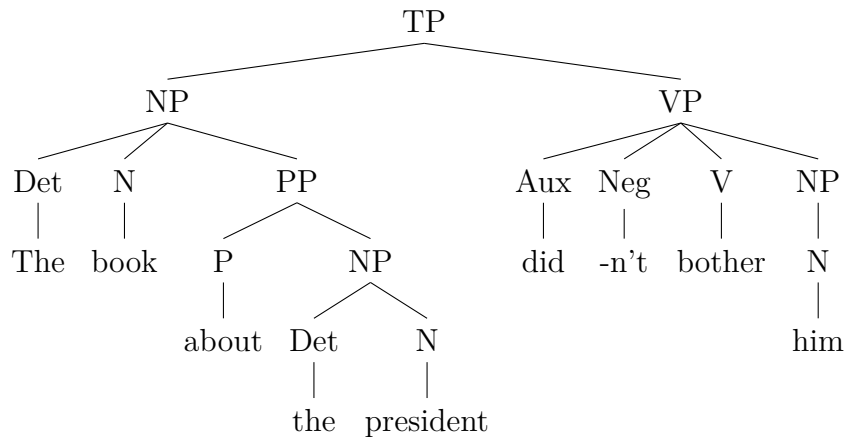


Syntax Homework 4

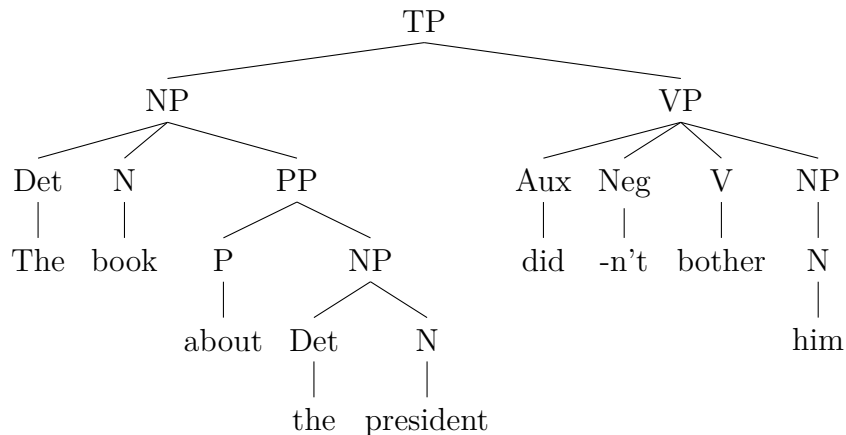
Rachel McCullough
Syntax

Part 1

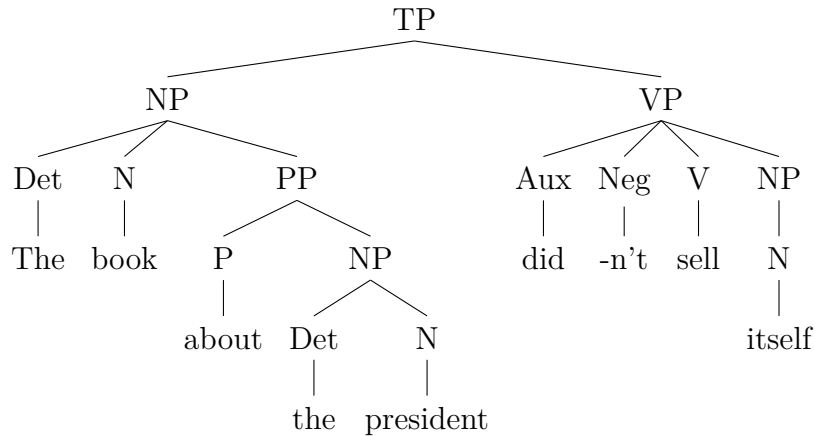
Trees and the President



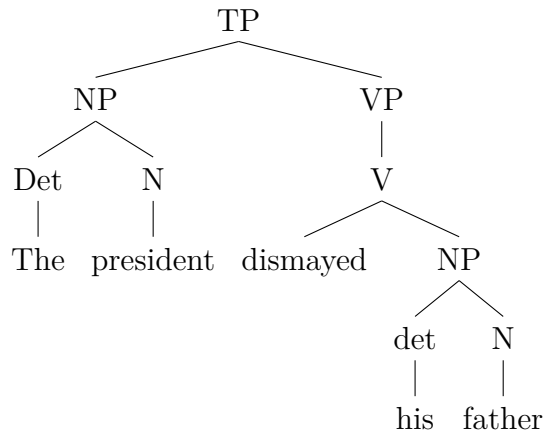
The NP “the president” doesn’t c-command the NP “him,” but they are co-indexed in that they refer to the same person. I’m a little confused about them, because I’d consider the two to be bound, because they are co-indexed, but this tree clearly has this sense of the sentence breaking the rule that the antecedent of a bound element must c-command its pronoun/anaphor.



While the NP “the book about the president” does c-command “him,” “him” is co-indexed by something outside of the sentence, so it’s definitely not bound to “the book about the president.”



“Itself” co-indexes “the book about the president,” and the NP “the book about the president” c-commands “itself,” so I’d say that those two elements are bound.



In this sentence, “the president” c-commands “his,” and the two are co-indexed, so the two elements are bound.

Violation of Binding Principles

- (1) * He₁ likes John₁.
This violates principle C in that John, an R-expression, is bound by a pronoun.
- (2) * John’s₁ father likes himself₁.
This sentence violates Condition A in that “father” intervenes between the proposed anaphor—“himself”—and its antecedent—“John.”
- (3) John’s father₁ likes him₁.

“John’s father” is trying to bind “him” by co-indexing them, but this violates Principle B.

- (4) * John₁ thinks that Bill likes himself₁.
Condition A is violated, because “Bill” intervenes between the proposed anaphor—himself—and its antecedent—John.
- (5) * John thinks that Bill₁ likes him₁.
Condition B is violated, because “Bill” c-commands “him.”
- (6) * A man that Sally₁ knows adores herself₁.
Principle A is violated because “herself” isn’t in the binding domain that “Sally” is in.
- (7) A man that Sally knows₁ adores him₁.
The NP “a man that Sally knows” c-commands the pronoun “him,” which isn’t allowed according to Condition B.
- (8) * He₁ said that [a man Sally knows]₁ adores puppies.
“A man that Sally knows” is an R-expression and therefore must be free. However, in this sense, “he” is trying to bind it, which violates Principle C.

A note: for this section I referred to both the rules discussed in class and the rules discussed in Chomsky’s *Government and Binding Theory*.

Part 2

Subject-Verb Agreement

From my understanding, if a VP is c-commanded by a licensor (or NP), they must agree in number in order to be grammatical. For example, we have the sentence “I am asleep,” in which the NP “I” c-commands the verb “am.” The same is the case for a more complex sentence like “the cats in the basement are tired.” In accordance with this, a sentence like “*the cats in the basement is tired,” is unacceptable. I’m unfortunately at a loss for negative examples—I can’t for the life of me think of a sentence in English where the NP doesn’t c-command the VP.

Ditransitive Verbs

If the two objects of a ditransitive verb are co-indexed, the antecedent must precede the anaphor. That is why “I showed John himself” is acceptable, but “*I showed himself John” is not. I’ll hazard a guess that this implies that c-commands are asymmetric with respect to ditransitive verbs in English (ie anaphor-antecedent isn’t acceptable, while antecedent-anaphor is).

Part 3

So, “hate” isn’t a ditransitive verb, so it doesn’t necessarily need to follow the rules mentioned above. Therefore, the sentence below doesn’t violate the rules that I’ve established so far.

- (9) Which picture of himself does John hate?

Similar to hate, we have verbs like “worry,” “frighten,” and “annoy,” which also aren’t ditransitive. For the purpose of this exercise, I’ll categorize these words along with “hate” as psychological predicates. I’d posit that sentences using reflexive pronouns and psych verbs allow for a different structure in which the NP containing the anaphor c-commands the antecedent if they are co-indexed.