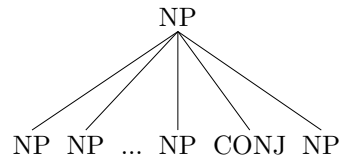
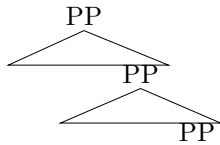


Chapter 2, Problem 3: Infinity

The Kleene star results in flat structures, that is, structures like the following:



Recursion results in nested structures like the following:



In a sentence like *A beagle, a dachshund, and a corgi were fighting*, one interpretation is that there is no internal grouping of the three conjuncts. That is, the dachshund need not be ganging up with one of the other dogs against the third one: each of the three may be fighting with both of the others. The flat structure reflects this meaning directly, whereas a nested structure would suggest a grouping of the dogs.

Conversely, in a sentence like *Pat walked near a bridge over the river*, a flat structure would be naturally interpreted with the two PPs both modifying *walked*, suggesting that Pat walked over the river. There are independent reasons for wanting *the bridge over the river* to be an NP; for example, it can serve as the subject of a sentence (e.g. *The bridge over the river was closed*) or as a conjunct in a coordinate structure (e.g. *We talked about the bridge over the river and the road through the woods*). Since prepositions take NP objects, if NPs must be allowed to contain PPs, it follows that recursion of PPs is possible.