Layered VPs

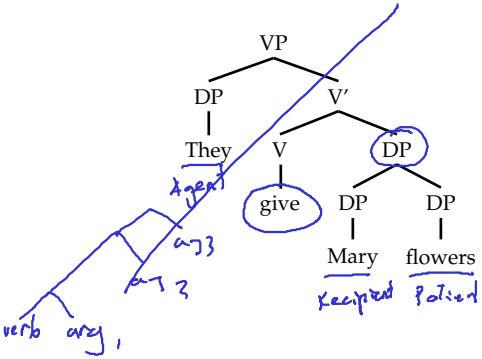
Based on Koeneman & Zeiljstra (2017)

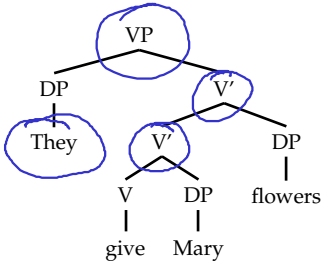
Umut Özge

COGS 532: Theoretical Linguistics
METU, Informatics

Structure of ditransitives

(1) They give Mary flowers.





Canter

Argument from case

(2) They give Mary flowers.

subject

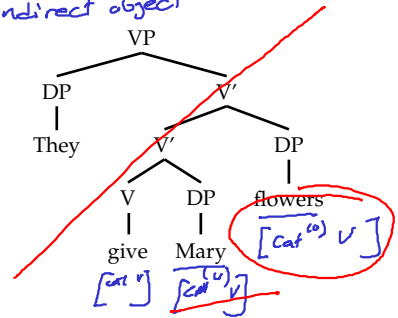
direct object

indirect object

<=> They give flowers to Mary.

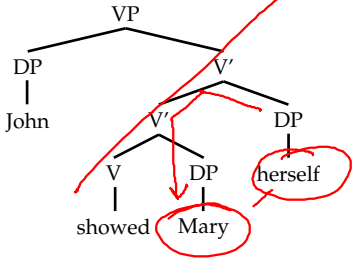
DO

PP



Argument from binding

(3) a. John showed Mary$_i$ herself$_i$.
b. The teacher gave [every girl]$_i$ her$_i$ favorite toy.

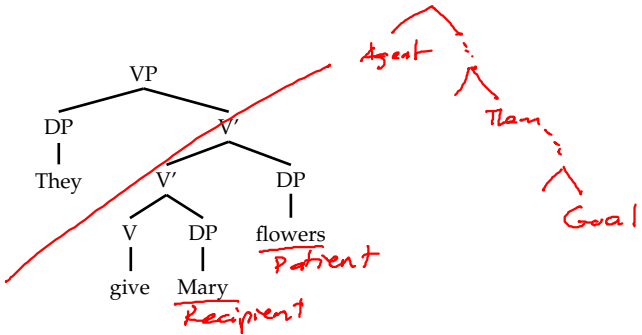


Counter-

Argument from Θ-hierarchy

Agent > Theme > Recipient > Patient > Goal

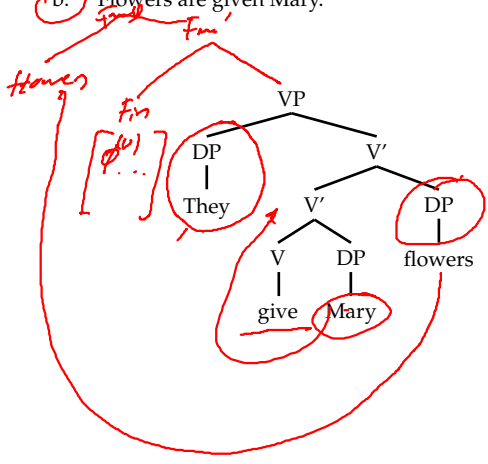
(4) They give Mary flowers.



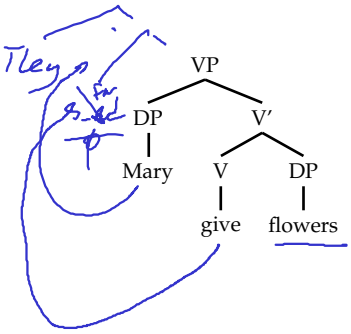
- RECEPIENT is higher than PATIENT.

Argument from passive

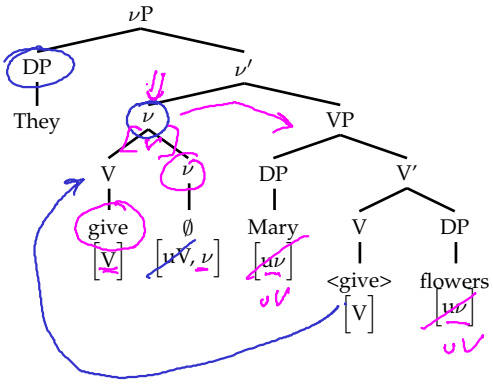
(5) a. Mary is given flowers.
b. *Flowers are given Mary.



* F, M case-marked
* M c-commands flowers



2 Problems
(1) Mary is left unchecked.
(2) Linear order ⇒ bad.


νP
DP
They
ν′
ν
VP
V
ν
DP
V′
give
V
∅
[uV, ν]
Mary
[uν]
V
<give>
[V]
DP
flowers
[uν]

Consequences: Burzio's Generalization

- Active/Passive

(6) a. She observed him.
b. He was observed.

- Ergative alternation

(7) a. Harry boiled the water.
b. The water boils.

(8) a. The enemy sank our boat.
b. Our boat sank.

(9) a. Kirsten closed the door.
b. The door closed.

intransitive ⇒ transitive

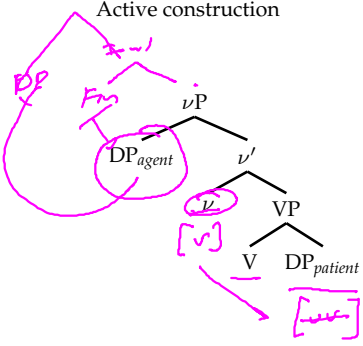
Active/Passive

* Transitivity ⇒ v

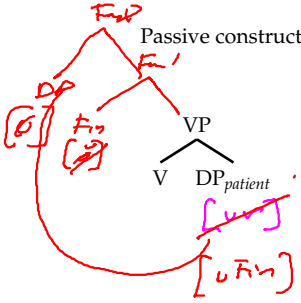
① no position for an agent (base generation)

② v head

Active construction

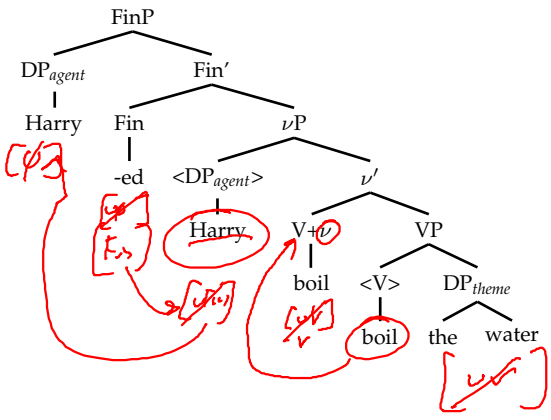
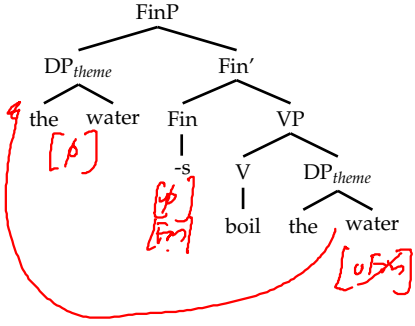


Passive construction



Ergative alternation

Harry boiled the water.



The water boils.