

Constituent: a group of words that functions as a unit.

- It captures judgments about the relatedness of words, and about the hierarchical structure of sentences.

Constituency Tests:

*tests are not infallible, you can use more than one.

1. Modification.

- If one word modifies another, then they are probably part of the same constituent.

❖ I bought a red balloon.
– ‘a’ & ‘red’ both modify ‘balloon’.

2. Movement.

- If you can move a group of words, they are functioning as a unit, and are a constituent.

❖ It was [a brand new car] that [he bought].

3. Replacement.

- If you can replace a group of words with a single word (keeping the same meaning), then they form a constituent.

❖ I have always loved [the man in a natty suit].
❖ I have always loved [John].
❖ I have always loved [him].

4. Pro-form replacement.

- If you can replace a group of words with a pro-form (pronoun, pro-verb, pro-adjective etc.), then they form a constituent.

❖ Susan [bought a truck with mag wheels].
❖ Susan [did (do) too].

5. Ellipsis.

- If an item is a VP, then it can be deleted under (near) identity with another VP.
❖ Bill [found a gold nugget in the stream] but I don't think John will [~~find a gold nugget in the stream~~].

6. Stand Alone (sentence fragment).

- If a group of words serve as a sentence fragment in response to a question.

❖ Q: What did Heidi buy at the flea market?
❖ A: [A bag of mouldy vacuum cleaner parts].

7. Conjunction.

- If the group of words can be coordinated with another string, then it is a constituent of the same types.

❖ [John] and [the man] went to the store.
❖ *[John] and [very blue] went to the store.

Some phrase structure rules of English:

- **CP** → (C) TP
- **TP** → {NP/CP} (T) VP
- **VP** → (AdvP+) V (NP) ({NP/CP}) (AdvP+) (PP+) (AdvP+)
- **NP** → (D) (AdjP+) N (PP+) (CP)
- **PP** → P (NP)
- **AdjP** → (AdvP) Adj
- **AdvP** → (AdvP) Adv

Drawing trees:

- Identify the parts of speech for all the words in the sentence.
- Try to figure out what words go together in phrases (constituents).
- Check your tree against your

Ambiguity: when a sentence has two meanings.

Paraphrase: a restatement of the meaning of a sentence, used to disambiguate ambiguous sentence.

*when you draw trees, draw them of the original sentence, not the paraphrase.

Ambiguity.**Lexical ambiguity**

- uses words with more than one meaning.

Structure ambiguity

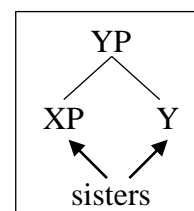
- ambiguous due to the structure of the tree.

(different meaning, different trees)

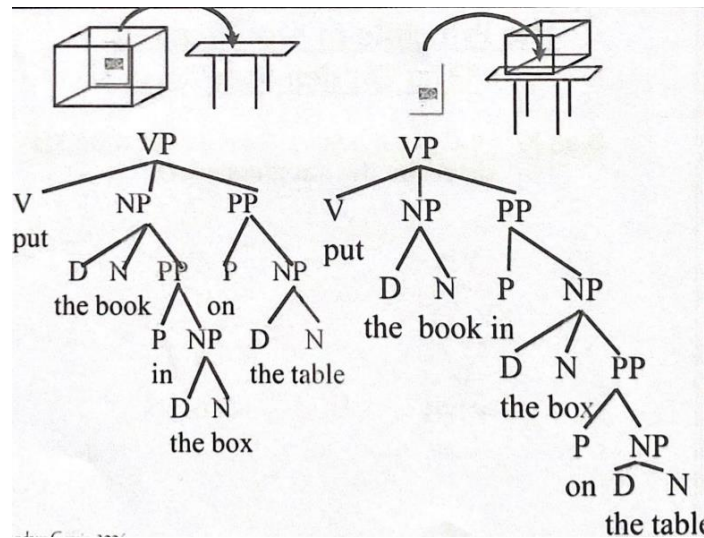
- ❖ Two sisters reunited after 18 years in checkout counter.
- ❖ The man put the book in the box on the table.

The principle of modification “The Golden Rule”:

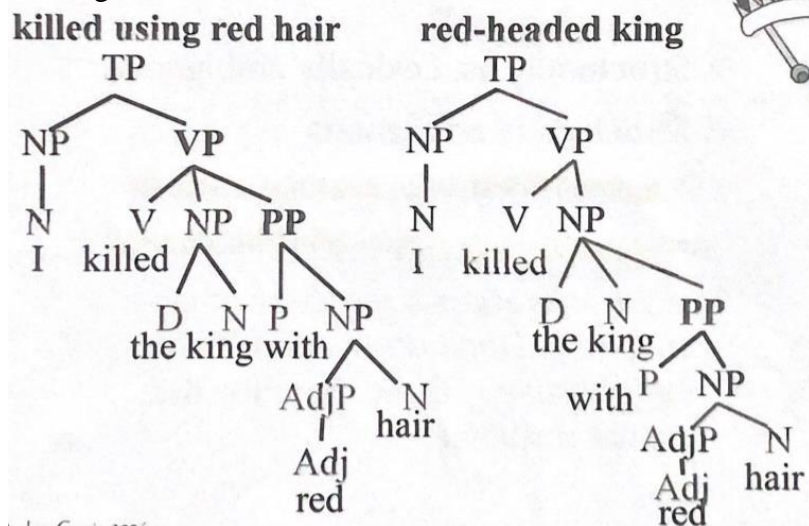
If an XP modifies a head Y, then XP must be Y’s sister.



- ❖ The man put the book in the box on the table.
1. put the book (currently in the box) on the table. ***the box isn't on the table**
 2. Put the book onto the box. ***the box is in the table**



- ❖ I killed the king with red hair.



- ❖ I killed the king with a knife.

