

CG41: Syntax

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Week 9, Fall 2007

Homework for Monday 5th November: Exercises 3.9, 3.11 and 4.11

For section prepare answers to exercises 3.12, 3.13 and 4.5

Please read Chapter 4 this week!

Some standard categories

Category	Abbreviation	Example (heads underlined)
Sentence	S	<i>Sasha likes sushi</i>
Tense	T	<i>will, may, -s</i>
Tense Phrase	TP	<i>Sasha <u>may</u> eat a pizza</i>
Determiner	D	<i>the, a, some, every, that</i>
Determiner Phrase	DP	<i><u>that</u> man on the moon, Sasha, hi</i>
Noun	N	<i>student, professor, pound, rice</i>
Noun Phrase	NP	<i><u>student</u>, <u>student</u> of linguistics</i>
Verb	V	<i>walks, talks, chews</i>
Verb Phrase	VP	<i><u>walks</u>, <u>walks</u> to town</i>
Preposition	P	<i>in, out, under, near</i>
Prepositional Phrase	PP	<i><u>under</u> the car</i>
Complementizer	C	<i>if, that, for</i>
Complementizer Phrase	CP	<i><u>that</u> Sasha wept</i>

Arguments versus adjuncts

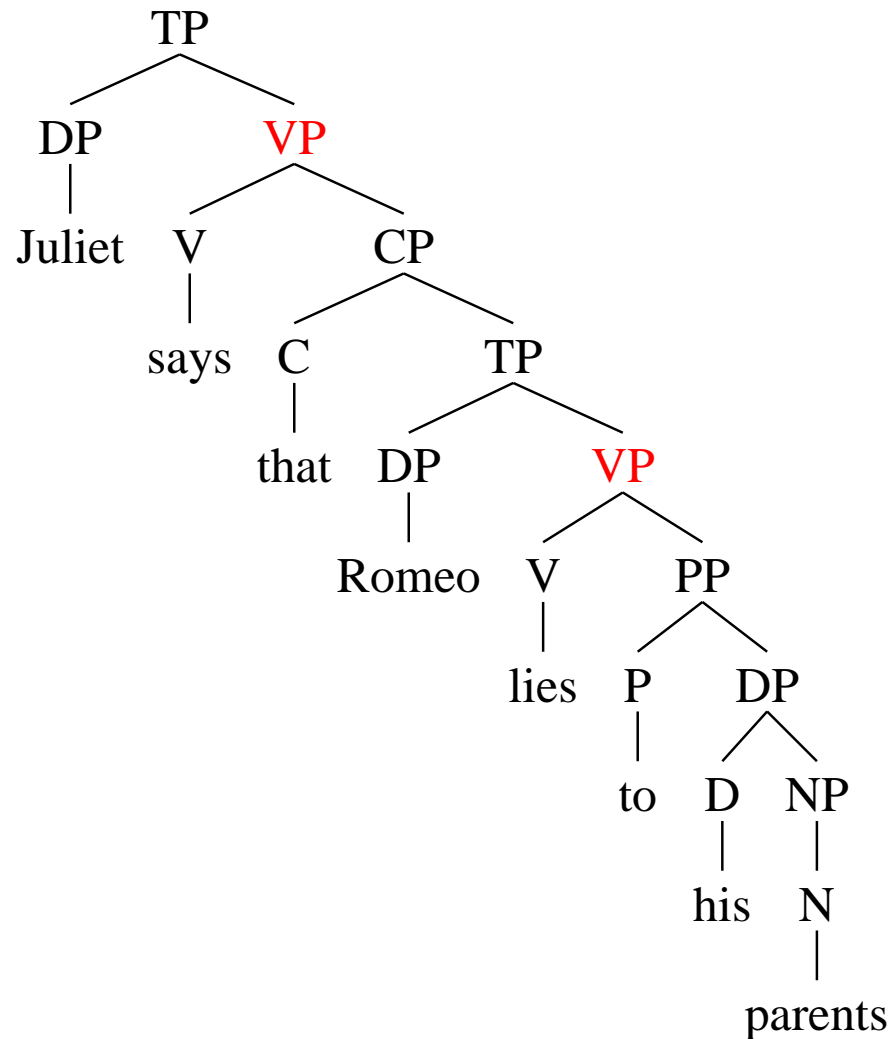
- *Arguments* are obligatory, and are *selected* by a head word
**(Sasha) devoured *(the hamburger)*

Analysed in terms of *non-recursive rules* like $VP \rightarrow V DP$

- *Adjuncts* are *optional* modifiers which modify the whole phrase
Sasha slept (soundly) (in the attic) (with a teddy-bear)

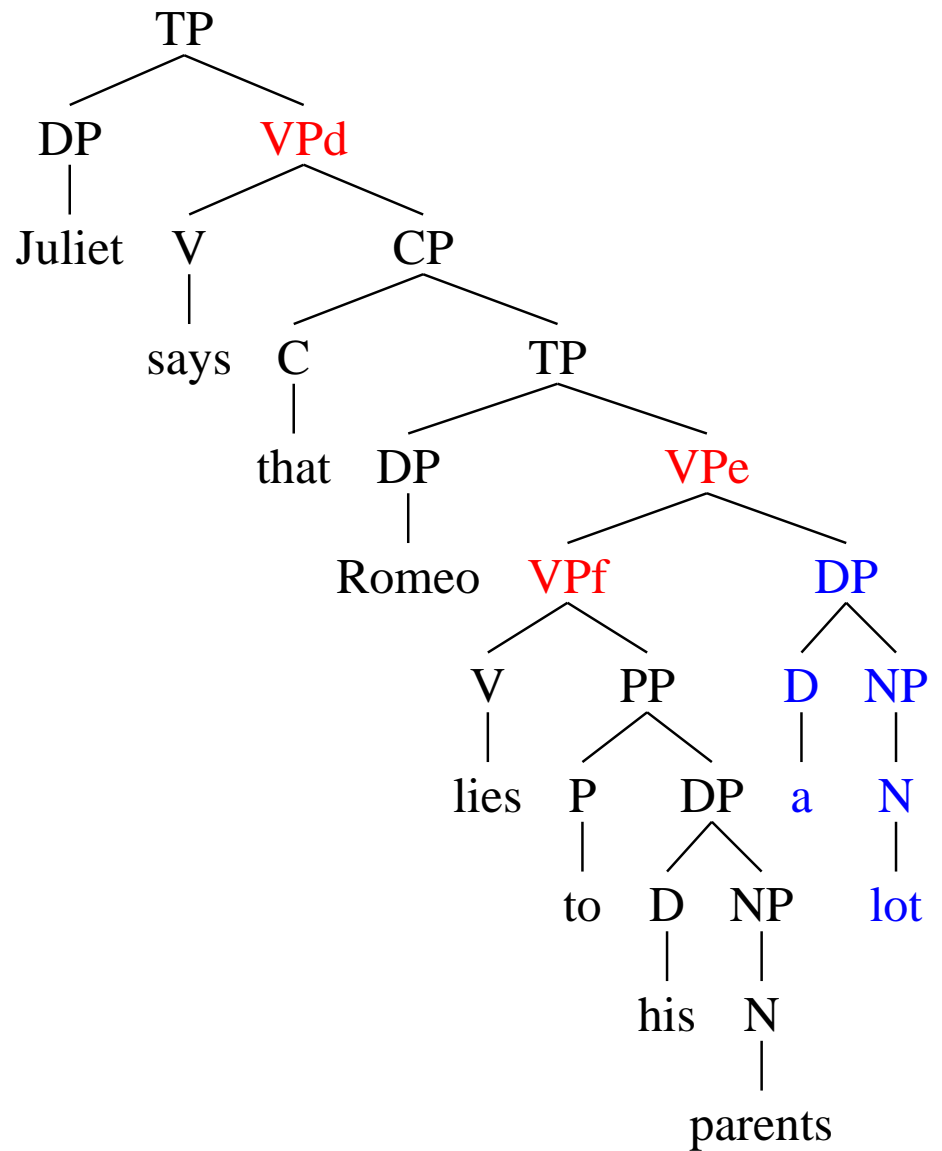
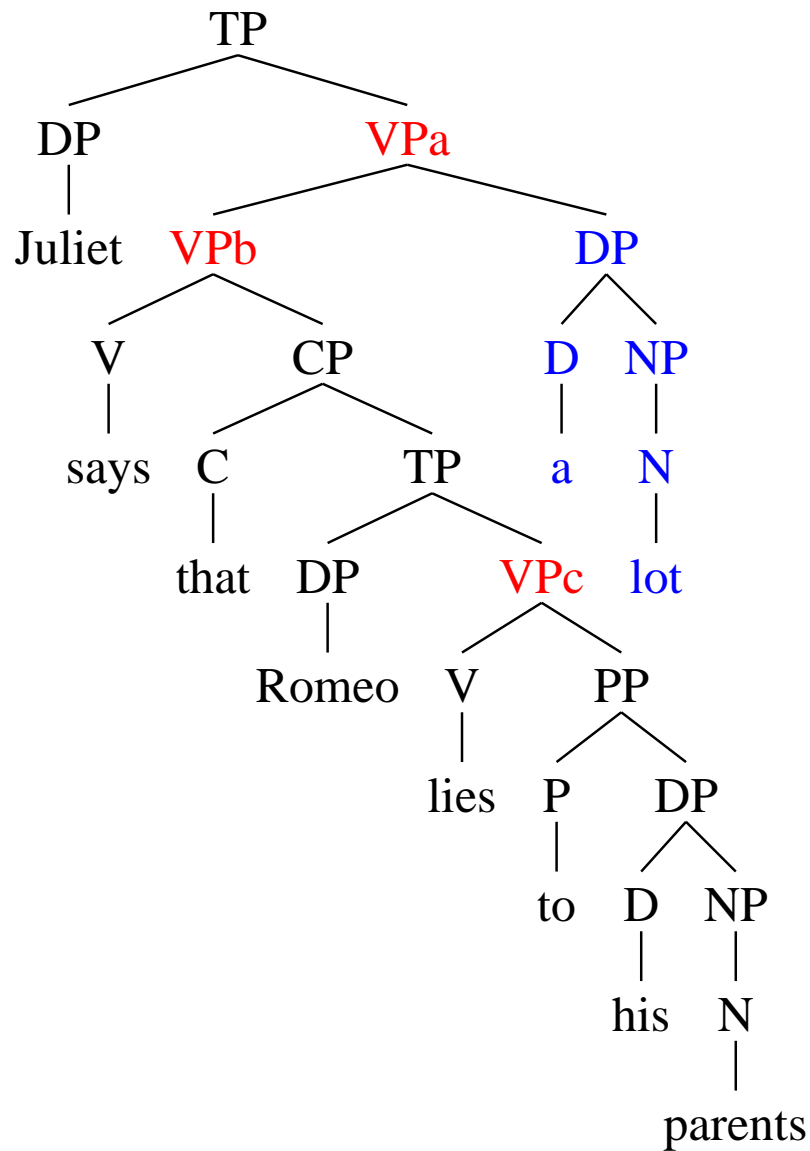
Analysed in terms of *recursive rules* like $VP \rightarrow VP AP$ or
 $VP \rightarrow VP PP$

Ambiguous attachments (Ex. 4.2)



Juliet says that Romeo lies to his parents [_{DP} a lot]

Ambiguous attachments (2)



VP fronting and attachment

[_{TP} *Juliet* [_{VP} *says that Romeo* [_{VP} *lies to his parents*]]]

[_{VP} *lies to his parents*][_{TP} *Juliet* [_{VP} *says that Romeo* [_{VP} *does*]]]



[_{TP} *Juliet* [_{VP} *says that Romeo* [_{VP} [_{VP} *lies to his parents*] [_{DP} *a lot*]]]]]

[_{TP} *Juliet* [_{VP} [_{VP} *says that Romeo* [_{VP} *lies to his parents*]]] [_{DP} *a lot*]]]

[_{VP} [_{VP} *lies to his parents*] *a lot,*] [_{TP} *Juliet* [_{VP} *says that Romeo* [_{VP} *does*]]]



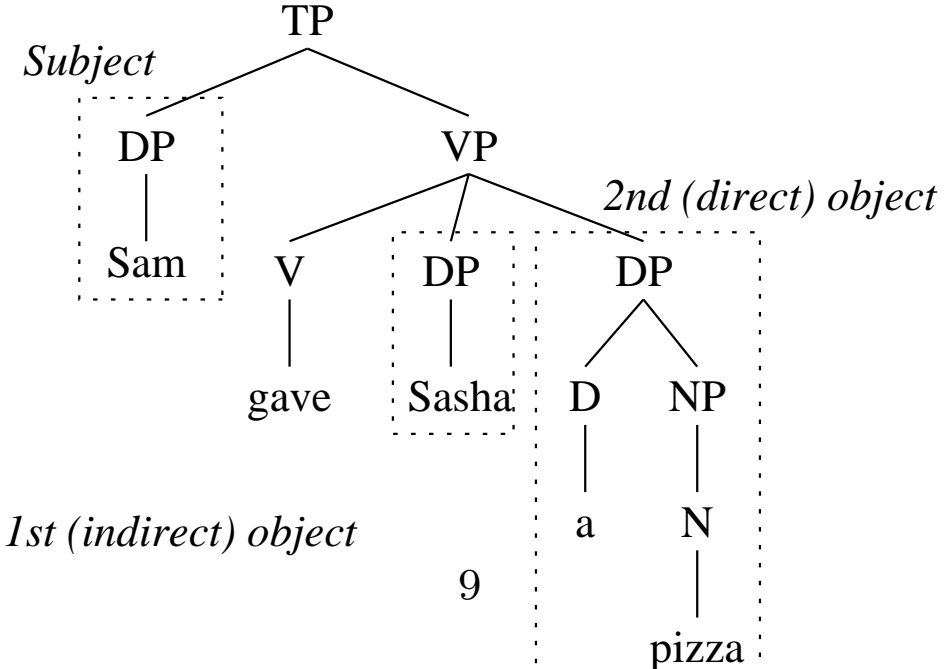
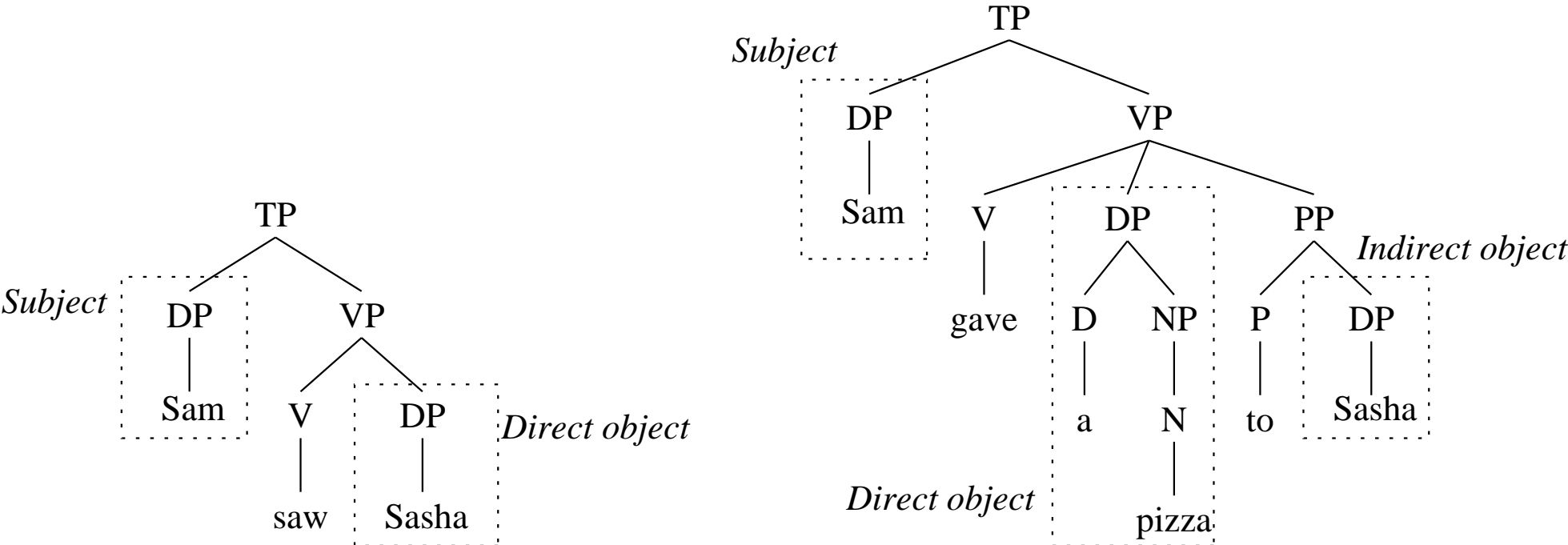
Case, grammatical functions, θ -roles

- *Case*: DP inflection, Nominative, Accusative, etc.
 - Not all languages have case, and the cases they have vary
 - Often associated with particular *structural configurations* or *lexical items*
- *Grammatical functions or roles*: Subject, Object, Complement, etc.
 - relatively few grammatical functions, universal (?)
- *Thematic roles*, a.k.a. θ -roles: Agent, Patient, Theme, Goal, etc.
 - Unclear exactly what the set of thematic roles is
- These are highly correlated:
 - Usually Agents realized as Subjects, Patients as Objects, etc.
 - Usually Subjects have Nominative case, Objects have Accusative case, etc.

Thematic roles

- Each verb has a fixed number of θ roles to assign
 - Intransitive verbs have one argument
 - Transitive verbs have two arguments
 - Ditransitive verbs have three arguments
- Every argument DP and CP receives a θ -role
 - *Agent: The students wrote a book*
 - *Patient: Sam ate a hamburger*
 - *Goal: Sam gave a book to the library*
 - *Theme: The painting pleased the students*
 - *Experiencer: The painting pleased the students*
 - *Possessor: Australia has nice beaches*

Configurations and grammatical functions



What determines whether phrases appear?

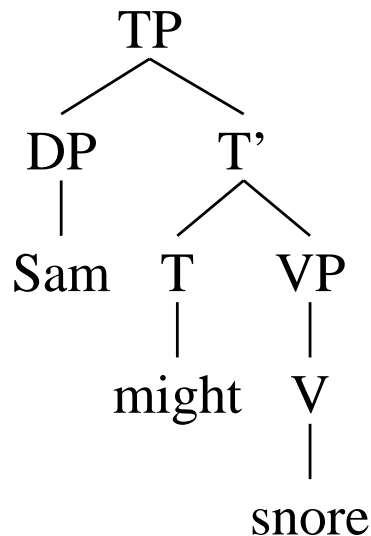
- Adjuncts are optional (introduced by rules $XP \rightarrow XP ZP$)
- Phrase-structure rules force every sentence to have a subject
 - “Weather *it*”: *It rained.*
 - Expletive *it* and *there*: *It seems that Sam is sick.*
There is a unicorn in the garden.
- θ -criterion (*s-selection*) determines *number of argument phrases*
- But the phrases’ *categories* are determined by the verb (*c-selection*)
I gave [_{DP} *a book*] [_{PP} *to the library*] vs.
I gave [_{DP} *the library*] [_{DP} *a book*]
I donated [_{DP} *a book*] [_{PP} *to the library*] vs.
**I donated* [_{DP} *the library*] [_{DP} *a book*]

Other syntactic dimensions

- *Topic and Focus*: Topic = old information, Focus = new information.
 - Sentences (particularly in free word-order languages) typically exhibit Topic-Focus (i.e., Given-New) order
 - Even in English, Passive and other constructions are used to place Topic first
- *Figure and Ground*: Figure = point object, Ground = reference plane.
 - Figure has no extent, while Ground has extent.
 - We sprayed the paint onto the wall.*
 - We sprayed the wall with paint.*

X' theory analysis of S

- The X' phrase structure schema have been endlessly tweaked
- It is common to assume an *intermediate level* between X and XP, called X' .
- The X' contains the head X and its complements (= non-subject arguments) but no adjuncts



$XP \rightarrow (YP) X'$

YP is subject or *specifier*

$X' \rightarrow X' (WP)$

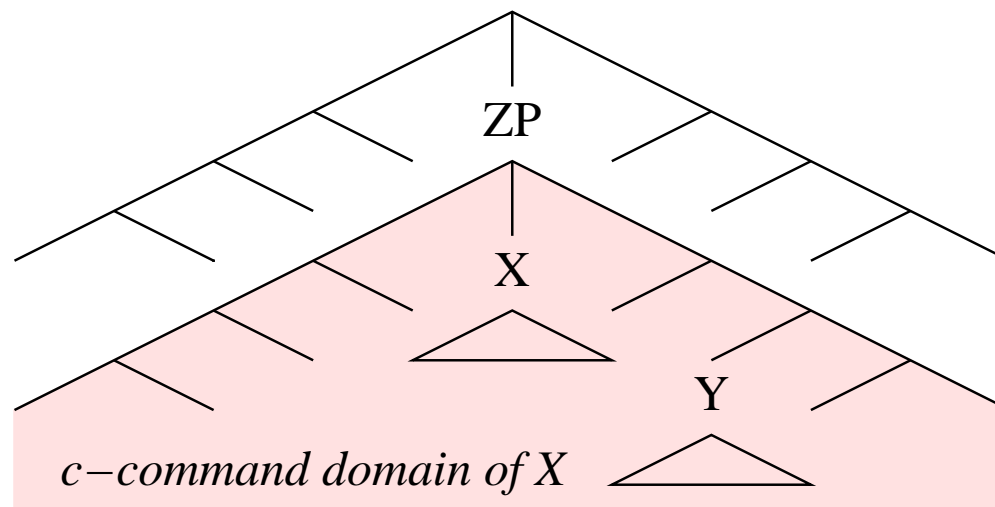
WP is an *adjunct*

$X' \rightarrow X ZP_1 \dots ZP_n$

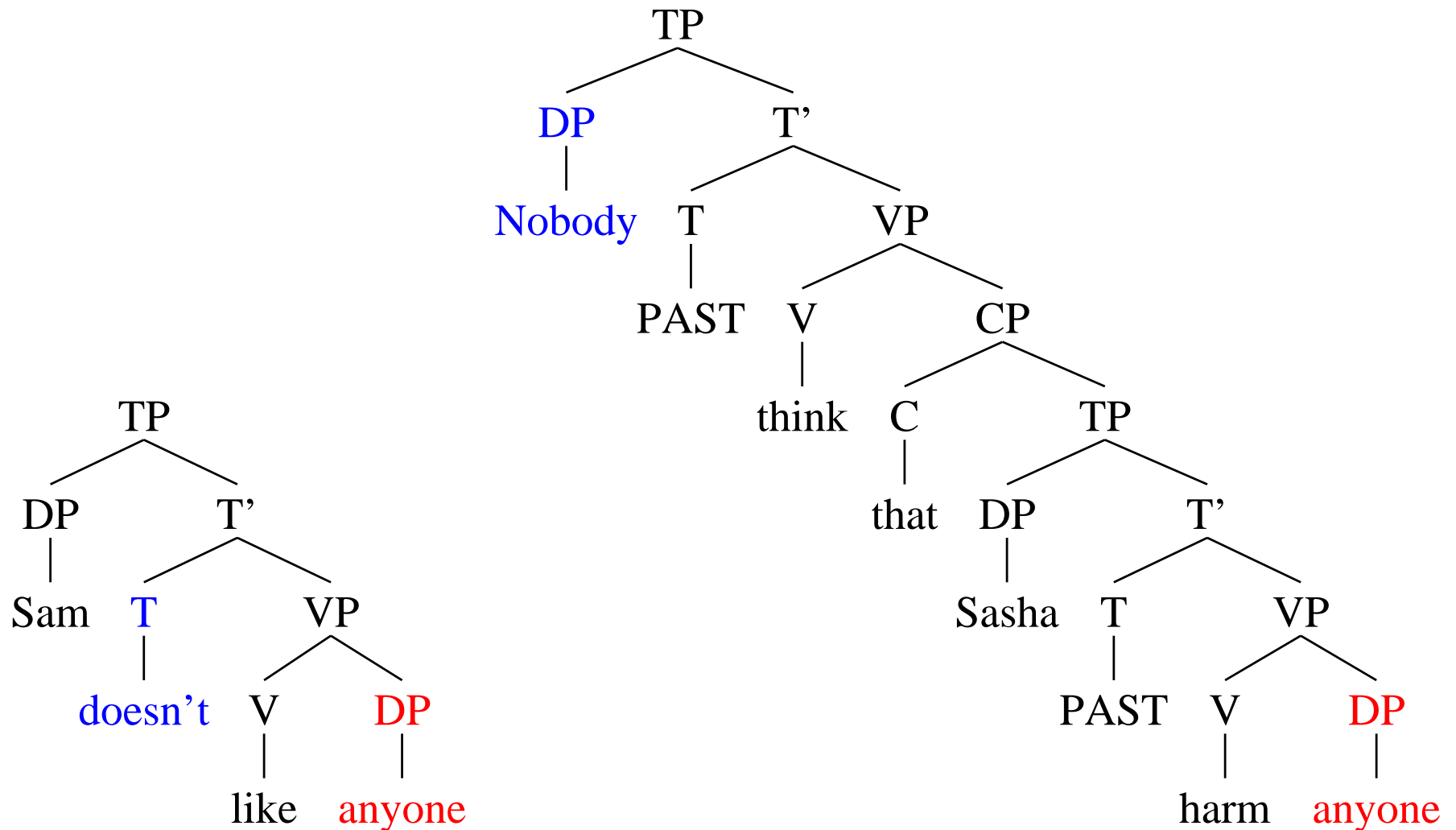
ZP are *complements*

Negative polarity items

- *negative polarity items*: *much, anything, anyone, at all*, etc.
- *negative elements*: *not, none, no, nobody*, etc.
- A negative polarity item (NPI) must be c-commanded by a negative element
- A node X *c-commands* a node Y iff the smallest maximal projection containing X also contains Y



Negative polarity examples



- **Anyone/Everyone doesn't like Sam*

Reflexive pronouns

- *reflexives*: *myself, herself, itself, each other* etc.
- *antecedent*: A DP that determines the meaning of the reflexive
- A reflexive pronoun must have an antecedent DP
 1. in the same clause
 2. that c-commands the reflexive

Sam shaved herself.

*Sam thinks I shaved myself/*herself.*

*That Sam aced the test pleased *herself.*

*A picture of Sam hit *herself on the head (as it fell).*

I showed Sam pictures of herself.

Please yourself!