

# Dependency Grammars and Parser

LING 571 — Deep Processing for NLP  
Shane Steinert-Threlkeld

# Ambiguity of the Week



**Adam Macqueen**  
@adam\_macqueen



Personally feel not enough hospitals are named after sandwiches.



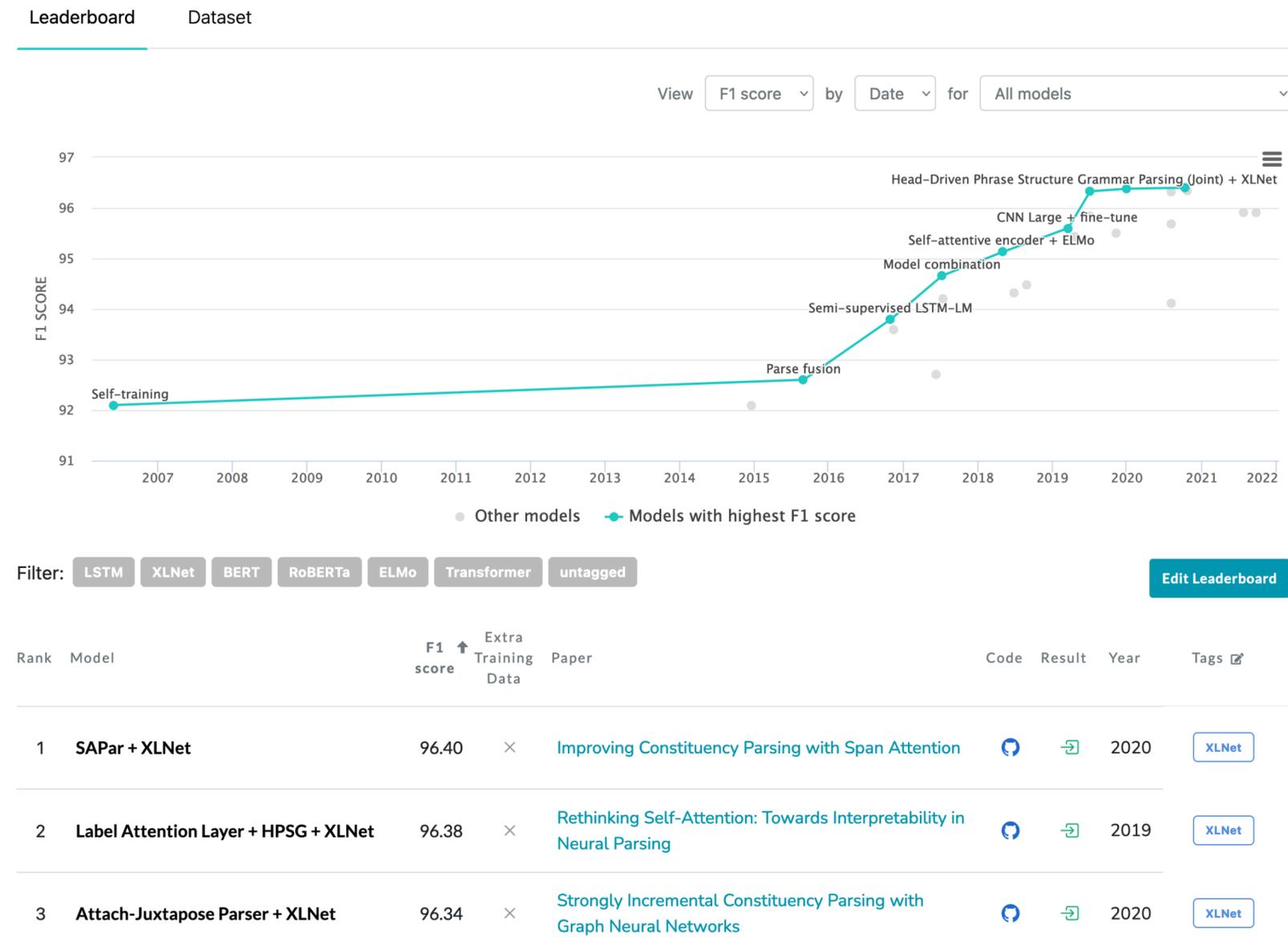
# Ambiguity of the Week 2



“What if my pet is not made of chicken and turkey?” —my brother

# Parsing in the LLM era

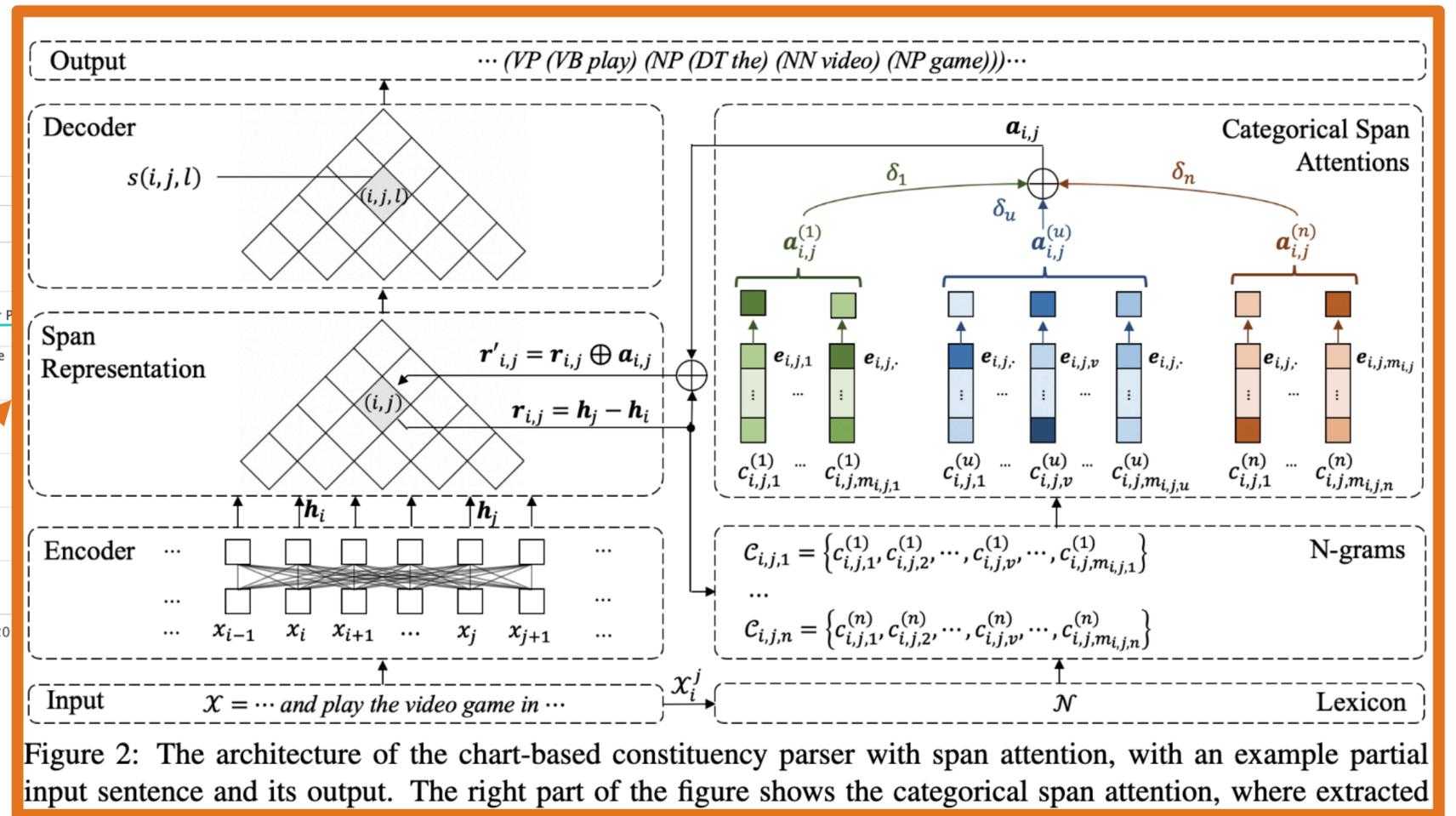
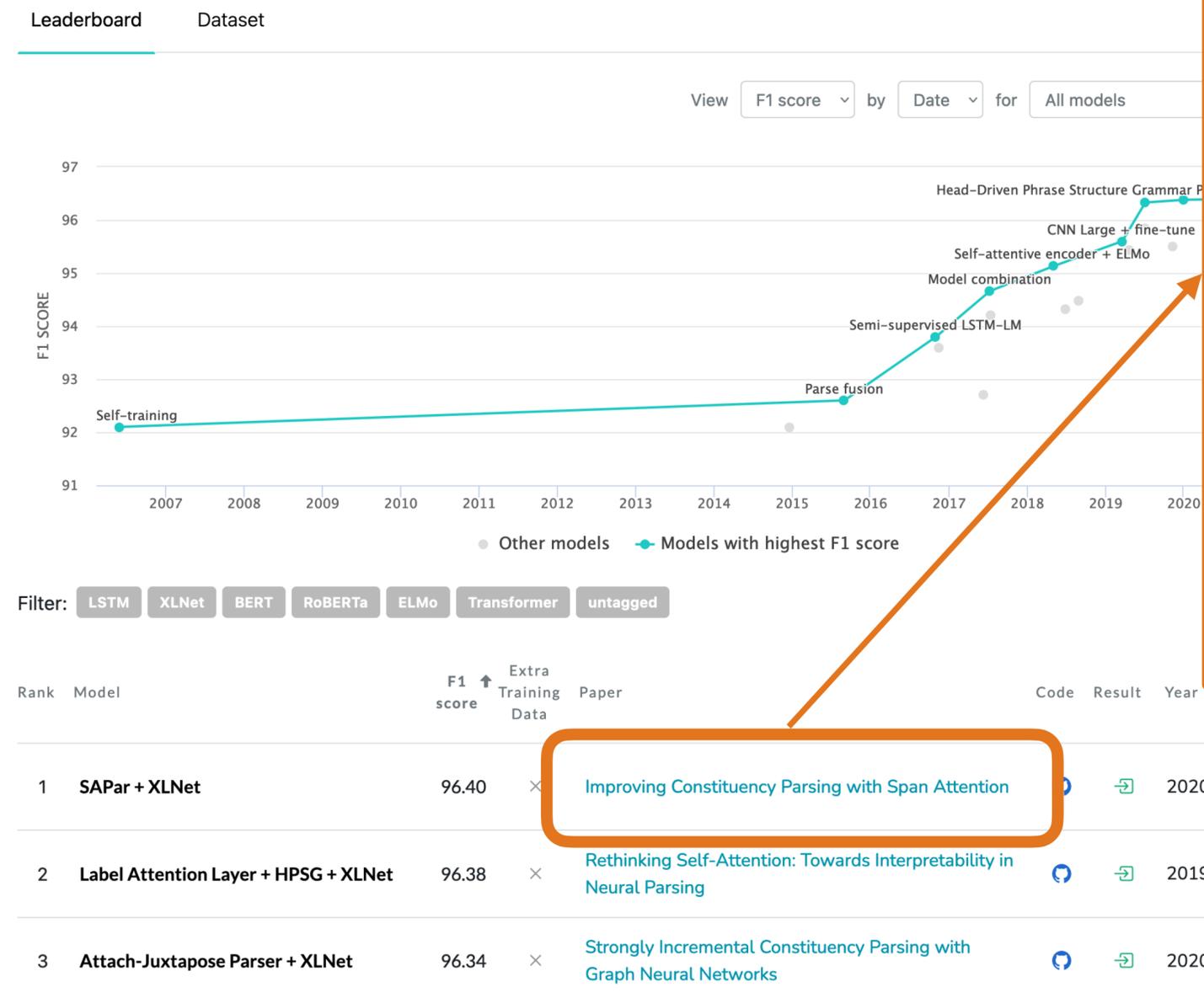
## Constituency Parsing on Penn Treebank



<https://paperswithcode.com/sota/constituency-parsing-on-penn-treebank>

# Parsing in the LLM era

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<https://aclanthology.org/2020.findings-emnlp.153/>

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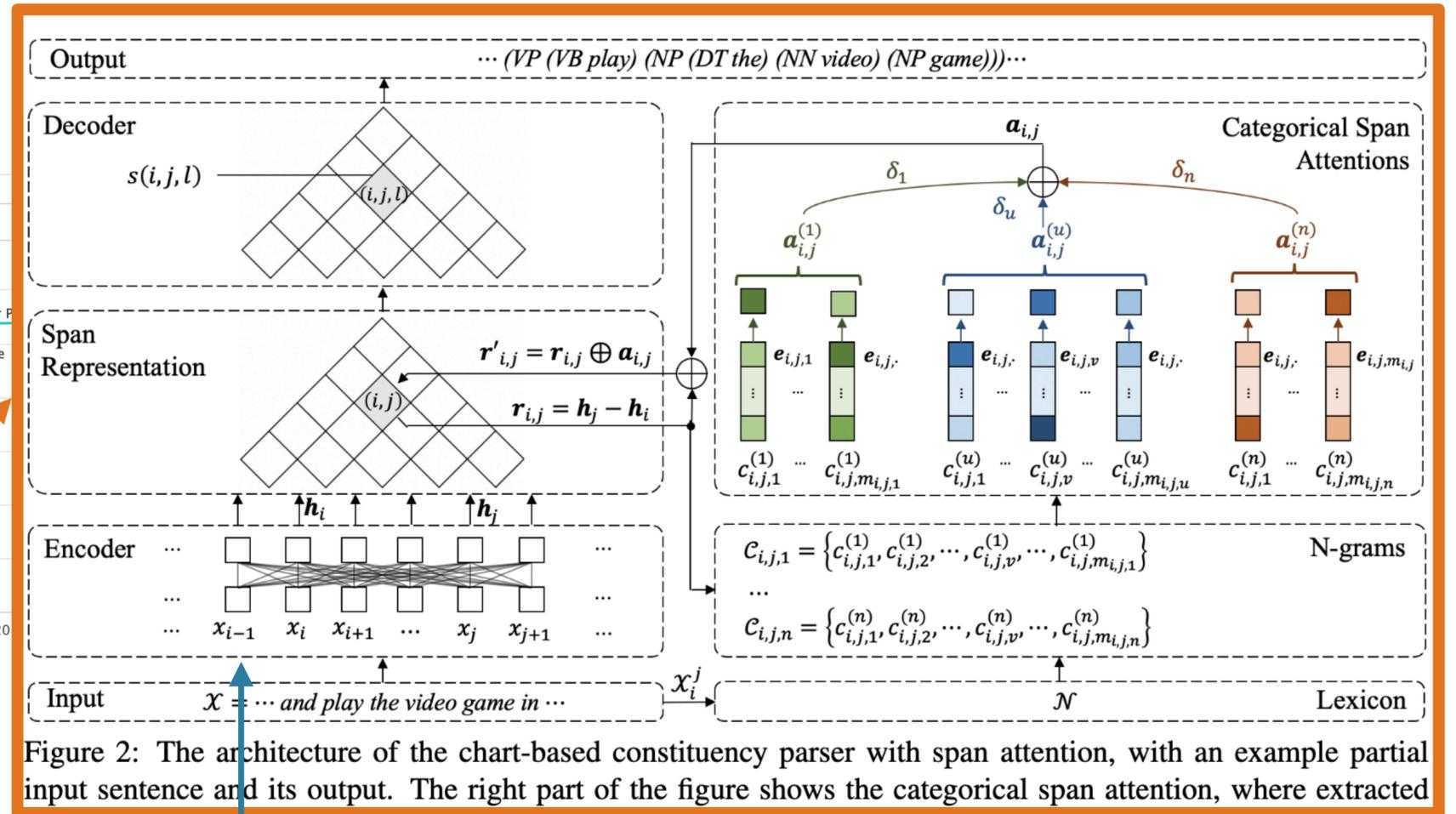
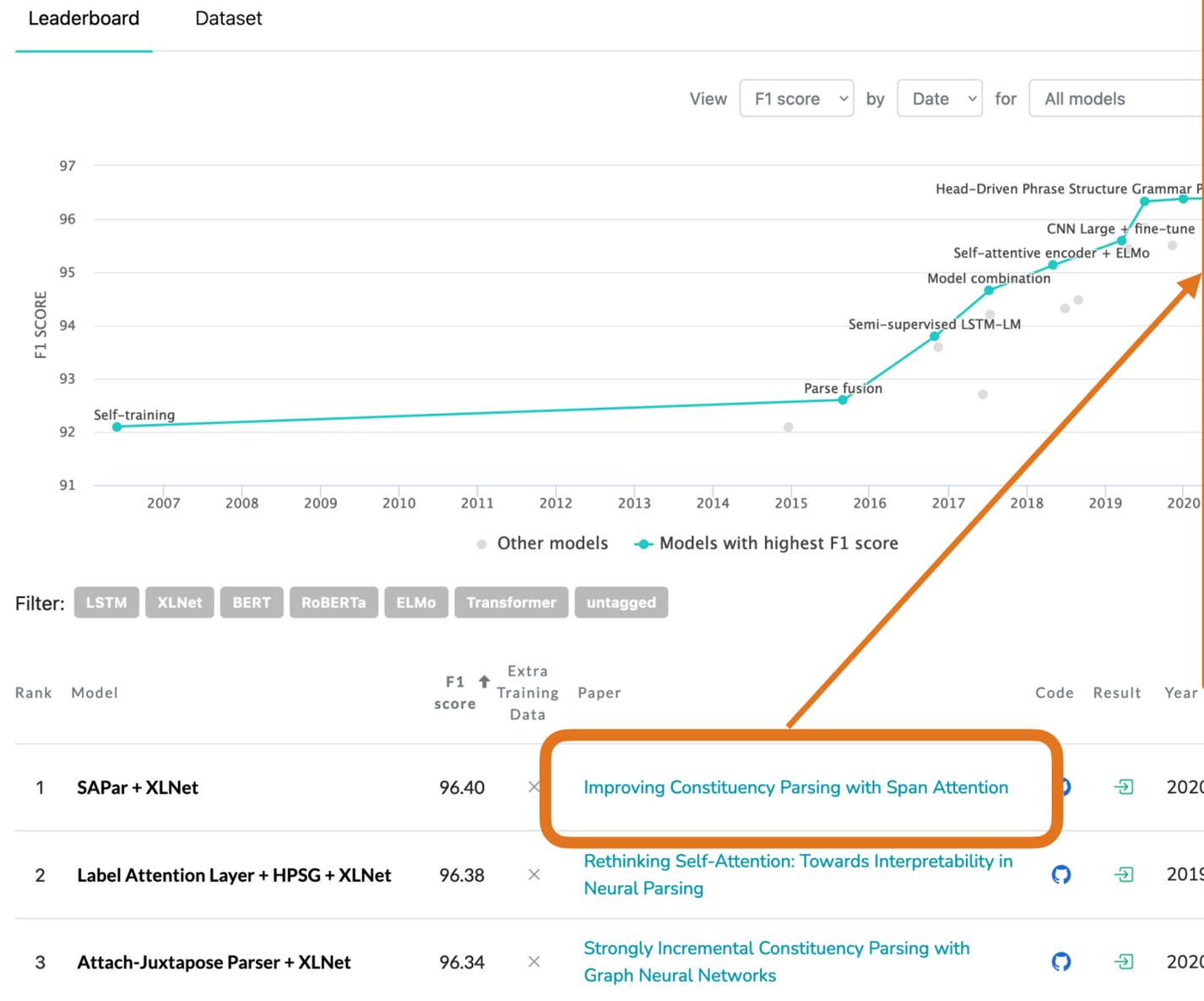


Figure 2: The architecture of the chart-based constituency parser with span attention, with an example partial input sentence and its output. The right part of the figure shows the categorical span attention, where extracted

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Pre-trained LM

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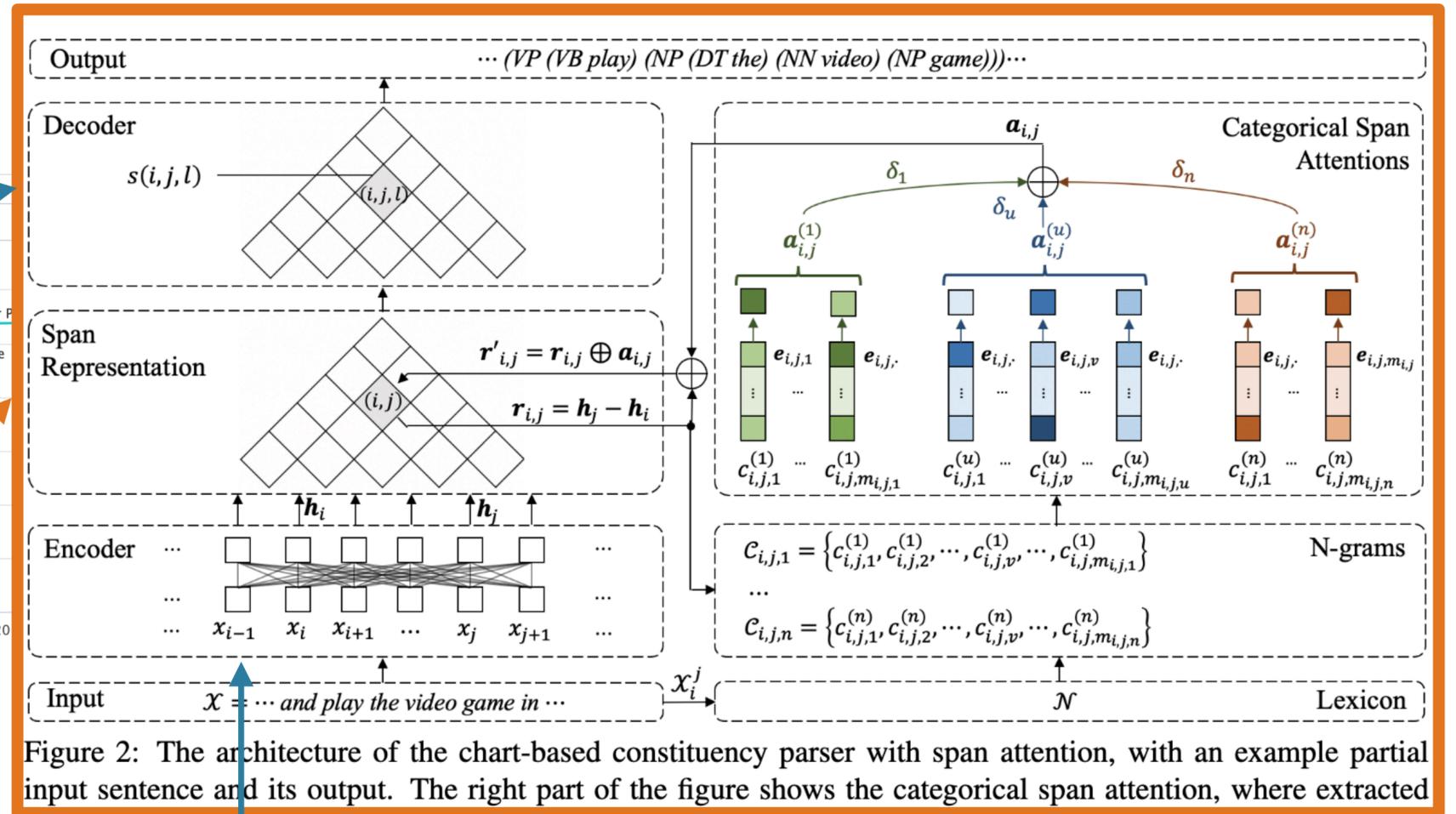
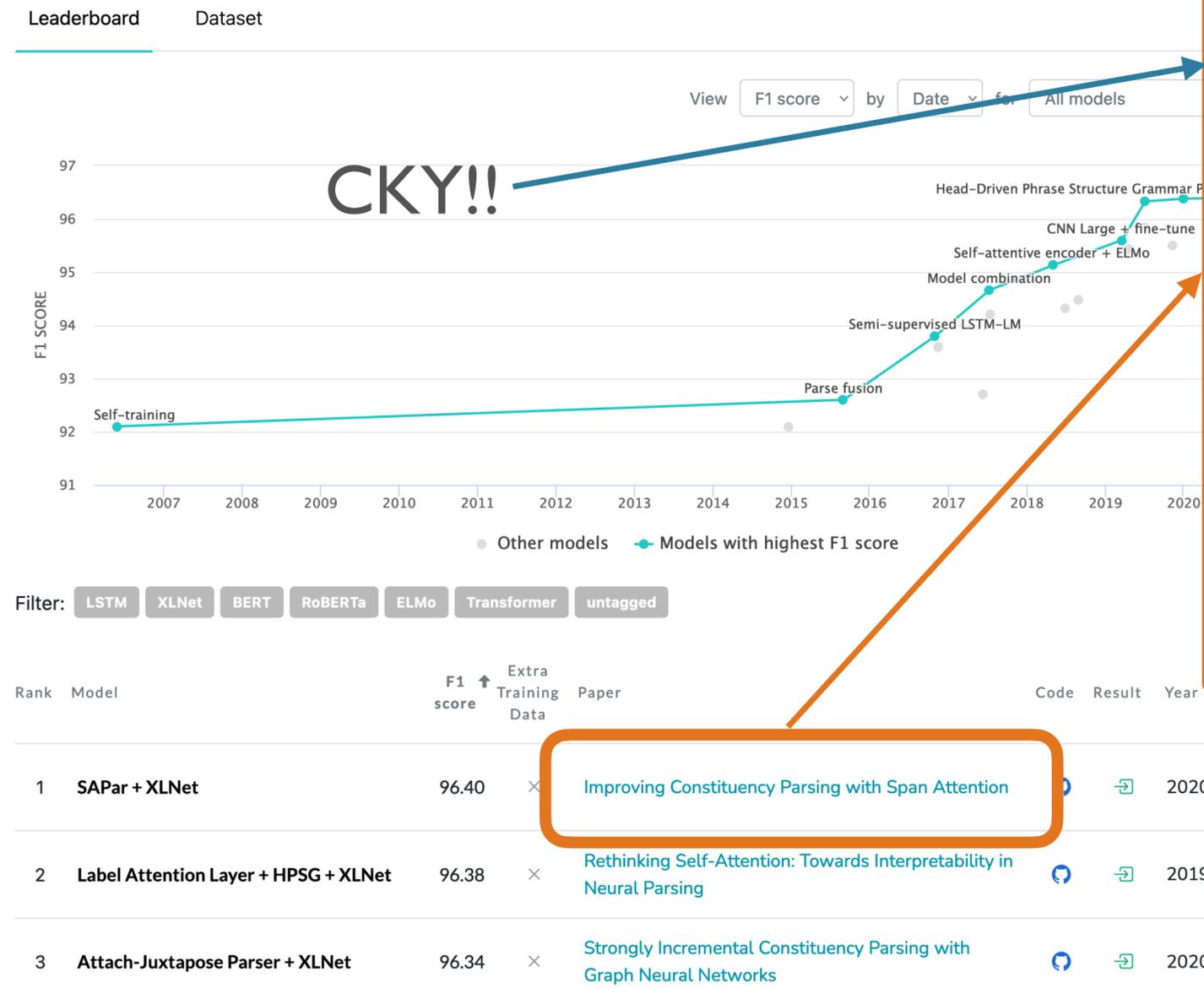


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# Roadmap

- Dependency Grammars
  - Definition
  - Motivation:
    - Limitations of Context-Free Grammars
- Dependency Parsing
  - By conversion to CFG
  - By Graph-based models
  - By transition-based parsing
- HW4 + mid-term feedback

# Dependency Grammar

- [P]CFGs:
  - Phrase-Structure Grammars
  - Focus on modeling constituent structure

# Dependency Grammar

- **[P]CFGs:**
  - Phrase-Structure Grammars
  - Focus on modeling constituent structure
- **Dependency grammars:**
  - Syntactic structure described in terms of
    - Words
    - Syntactic/semantic relations between words

# Dependency Parse

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- A Dependency parse is a tree,\* where:
  - Nodes correspond to words in string
  - Edges between nodes represent dependency relations
    - Relations may or may not be labeled (aka typed)
- \*: in very special cases, can argue for cycles

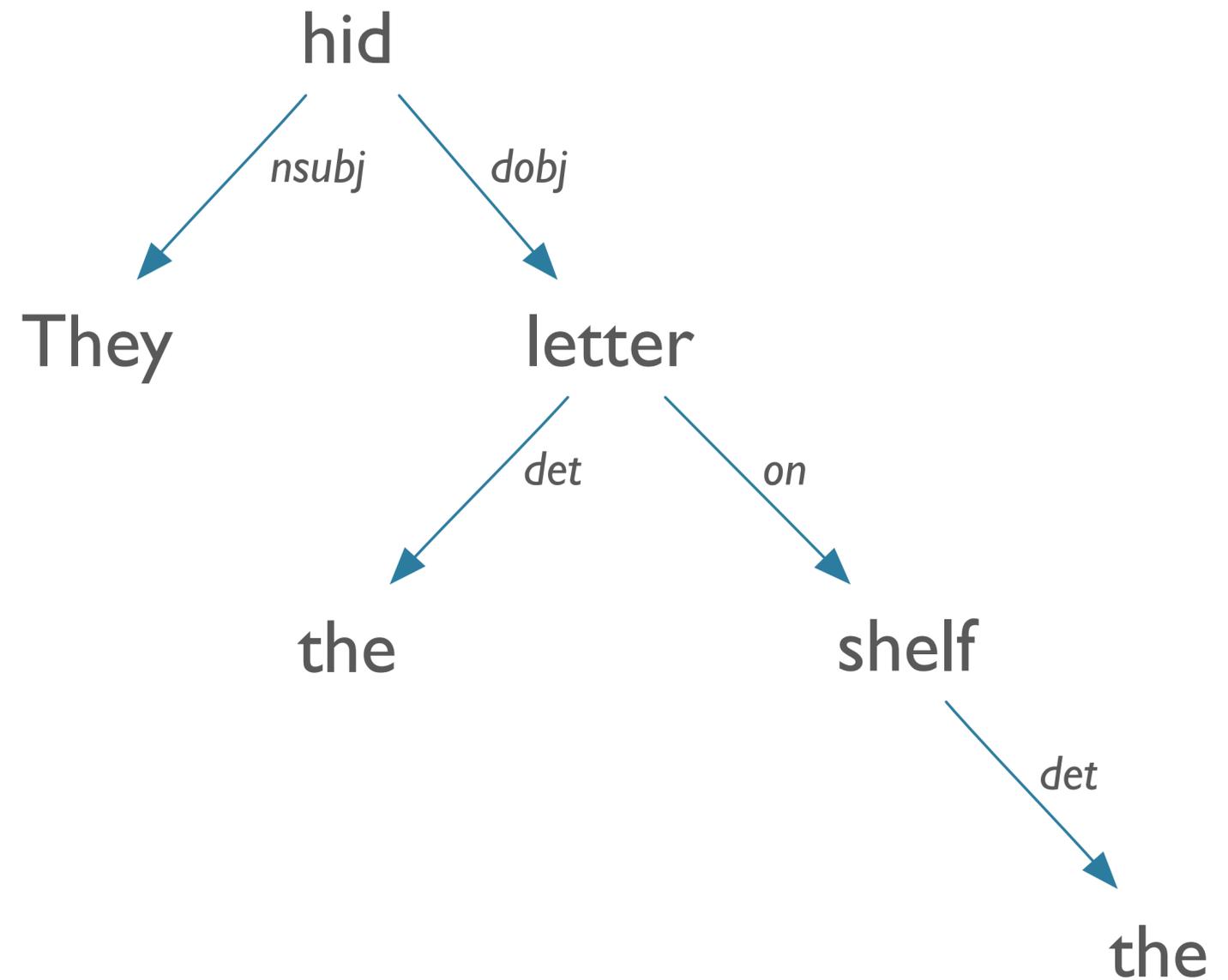
# Dependency Parse Example:

*They hid the letter on the shelf*

Argument Dependencies	
Abbreviation	Description
nsubj	nominal subject
csbj	clausal subject
dobj	direct object
iobj	indirect object
pobj	object of preposition

Modifier Dependencies	
Abbreviation	Description
tmod	temporal modifier
appos	appositional modifier
det	determiner
prep	prepositional modifier



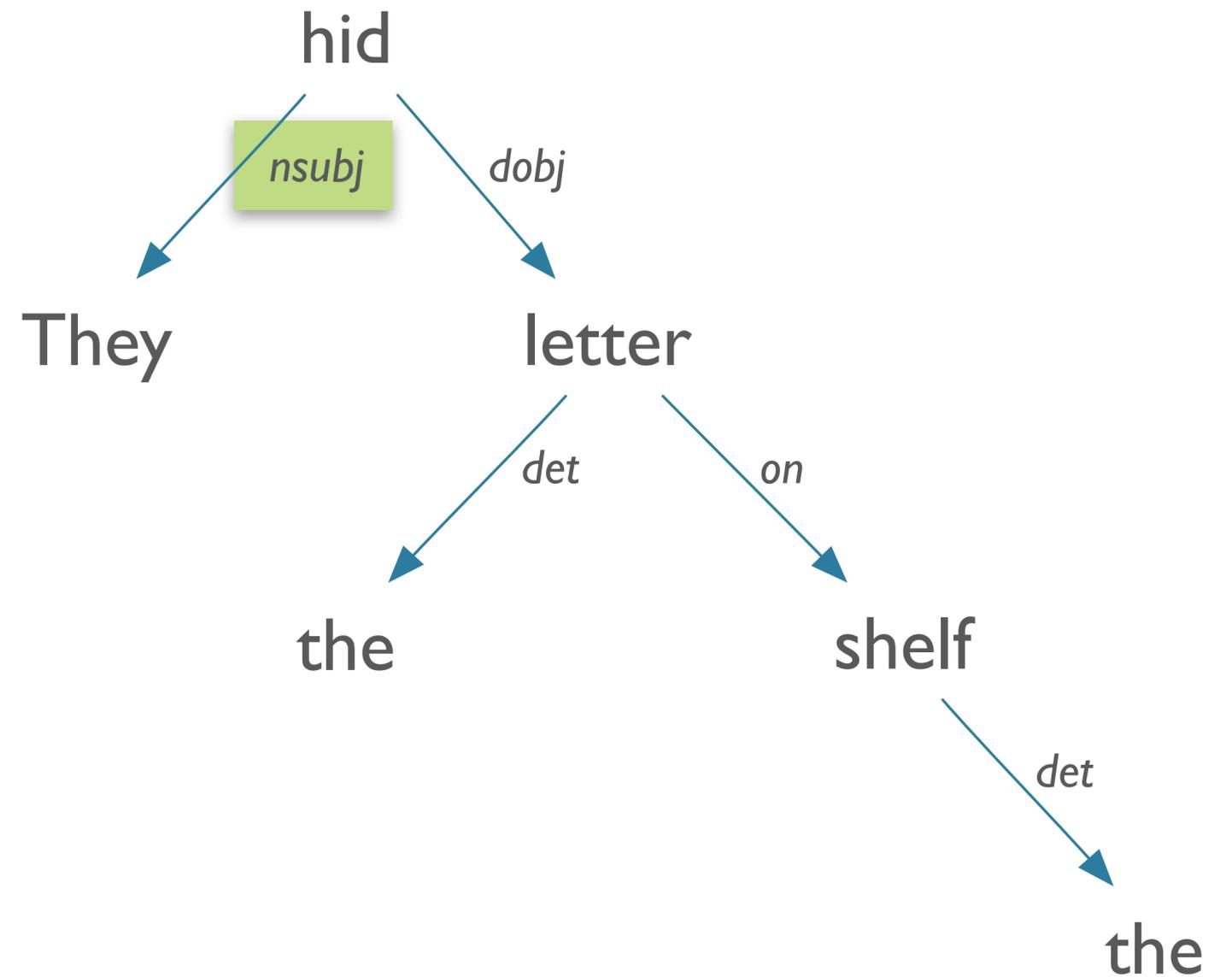
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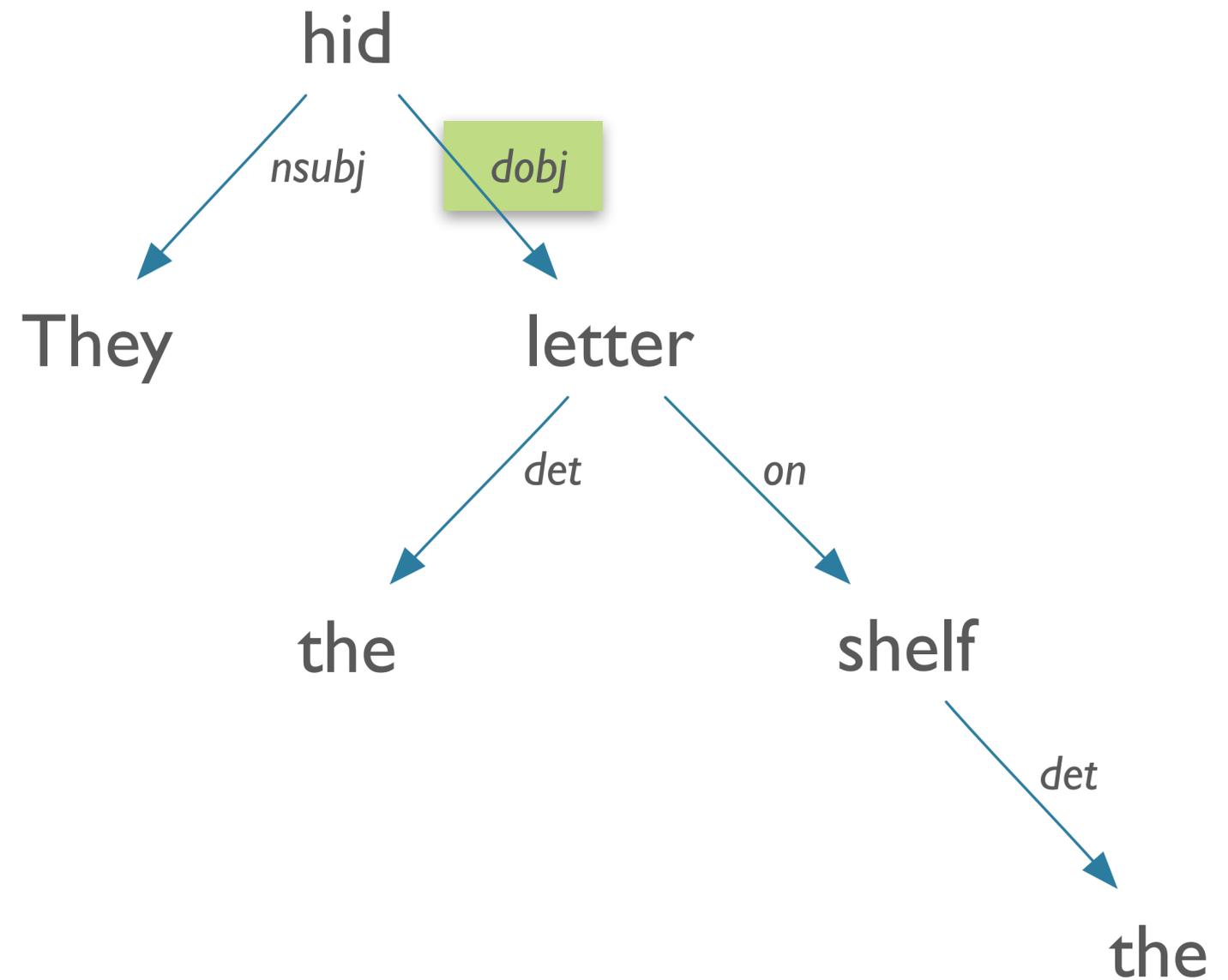
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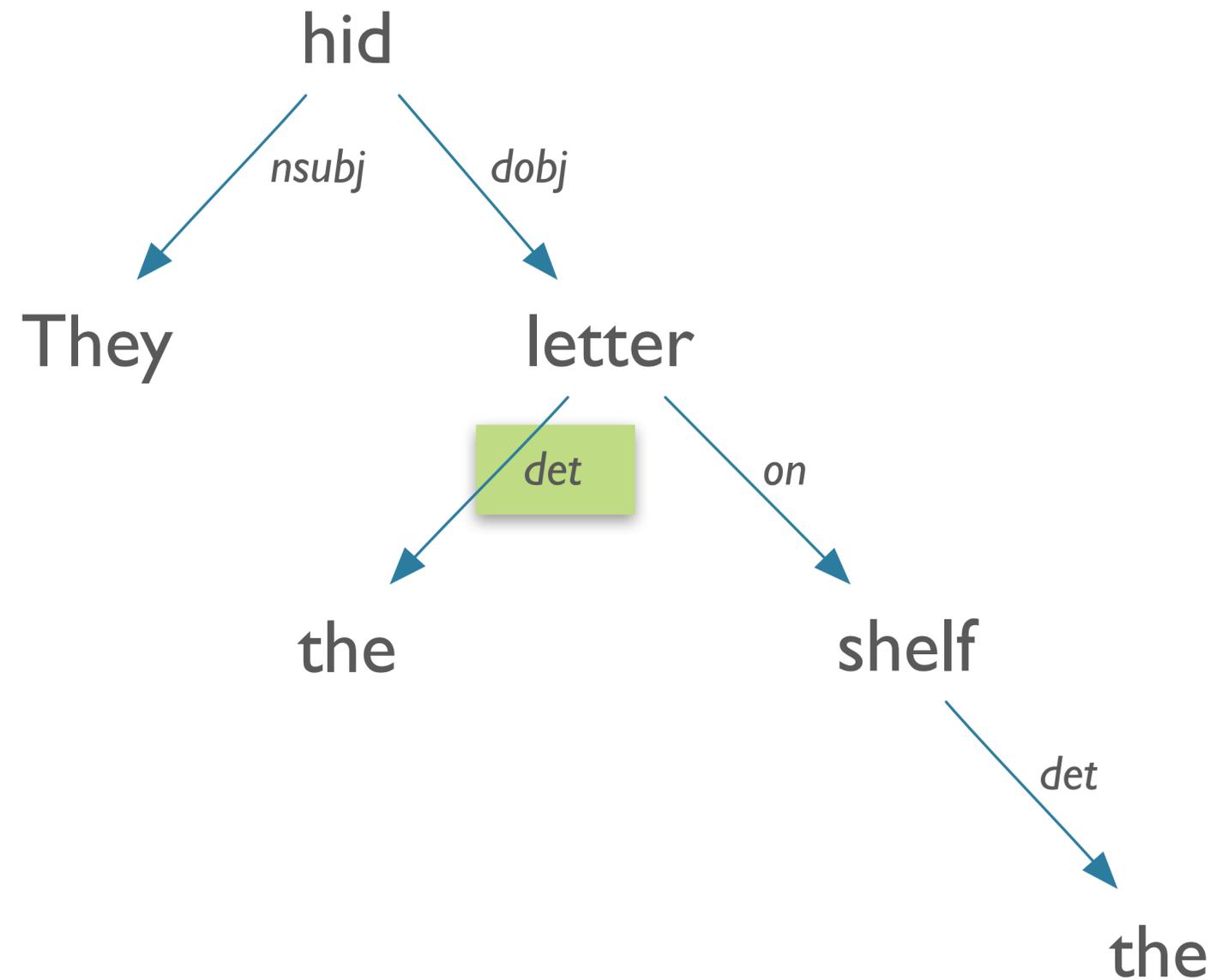
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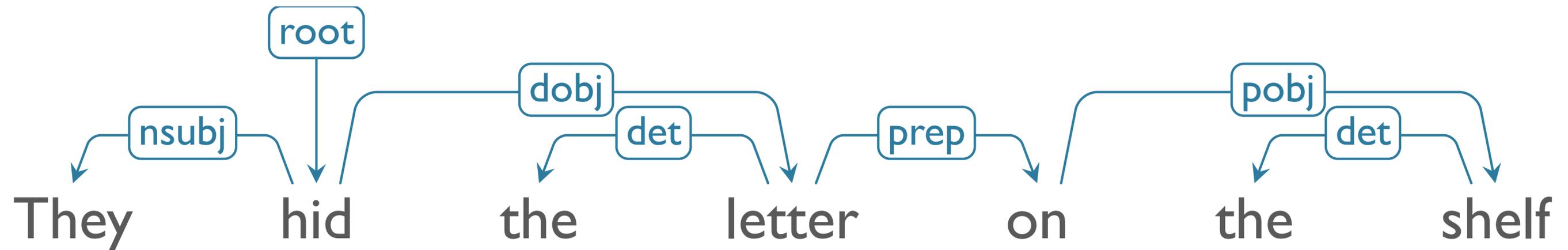
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# Alternative Representation



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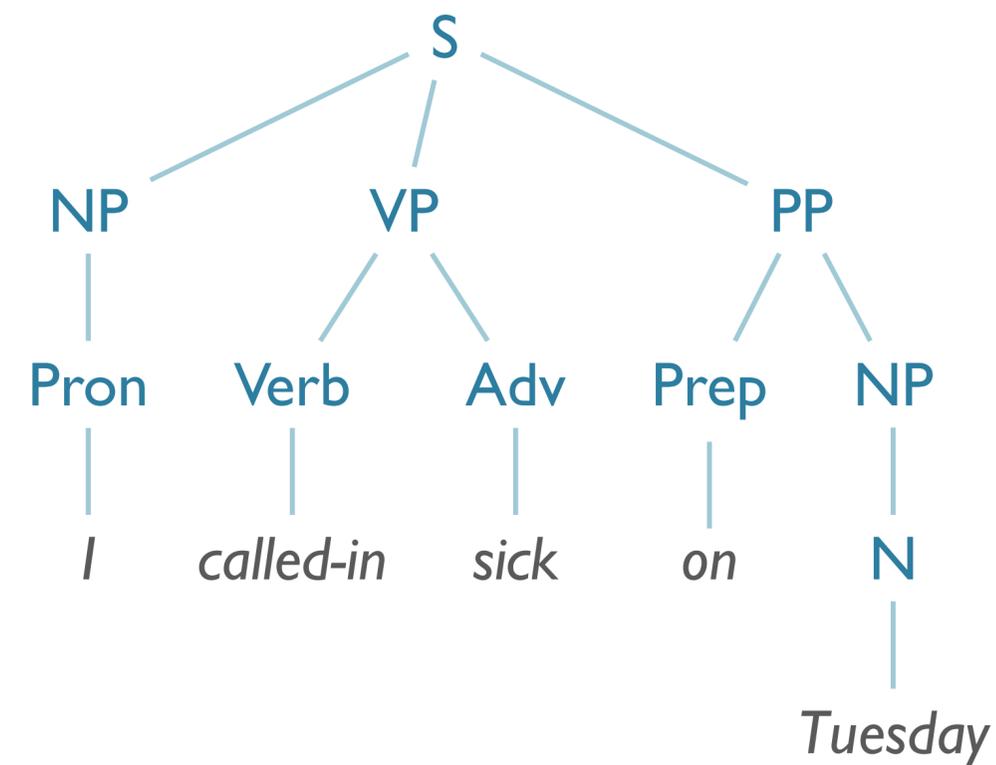
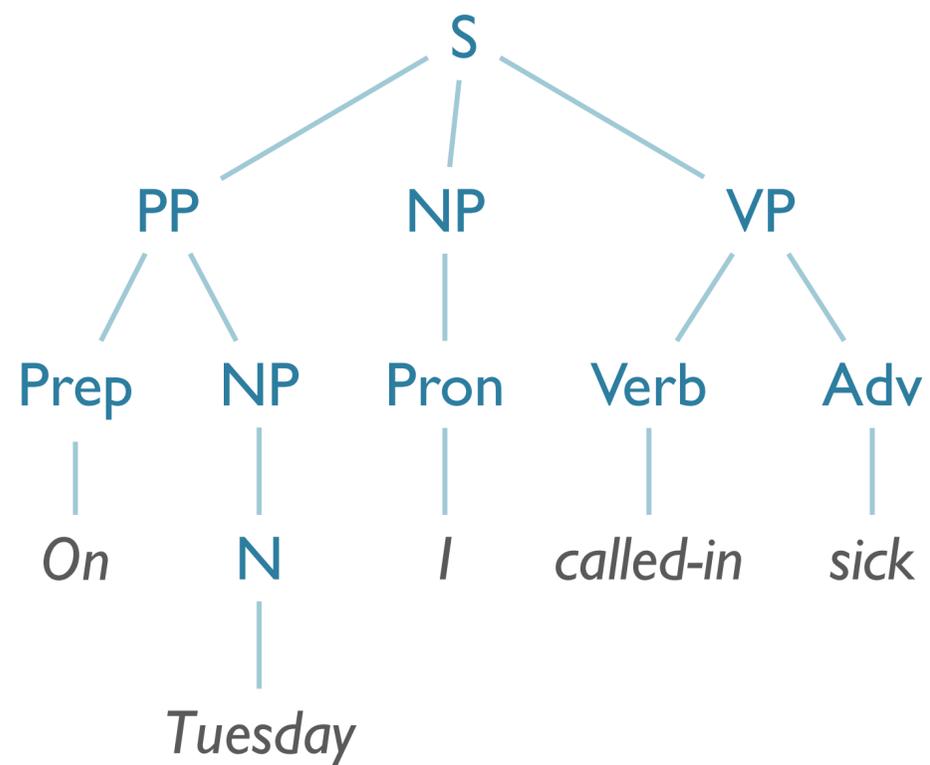
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- Good match for question-answering, relation extraction
  - *Who* did *what* to *whom*?
  - = (*Subject*) did (*theme*) to (*patient*)
  - Helps with parallel relations between roles in questions, and roles in answers

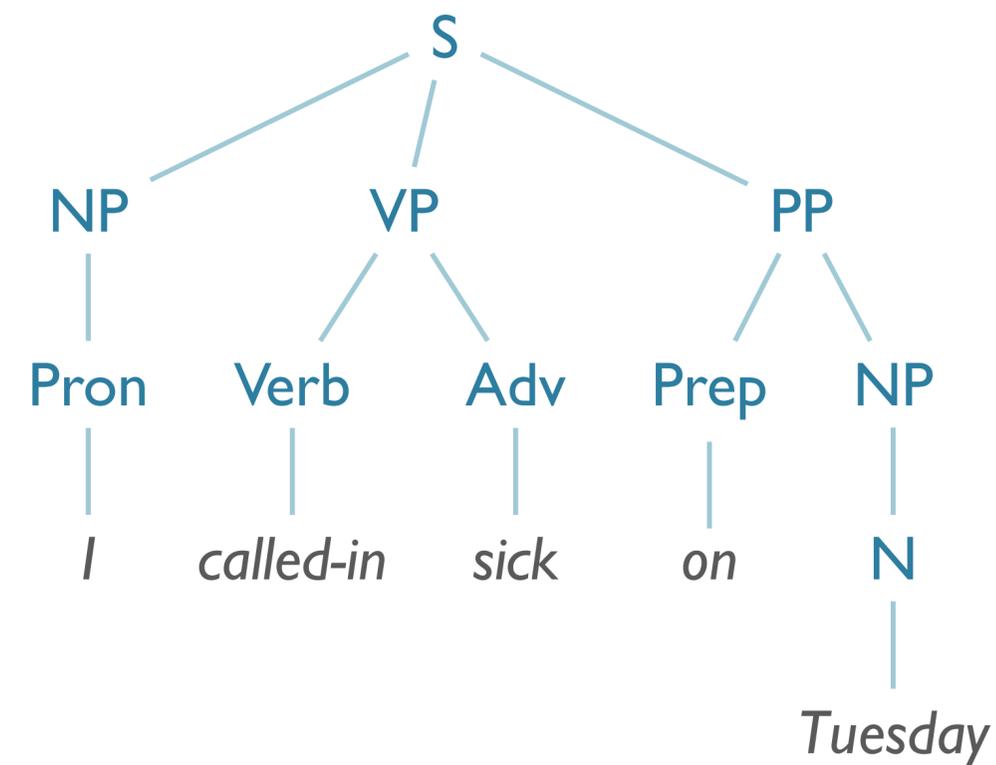
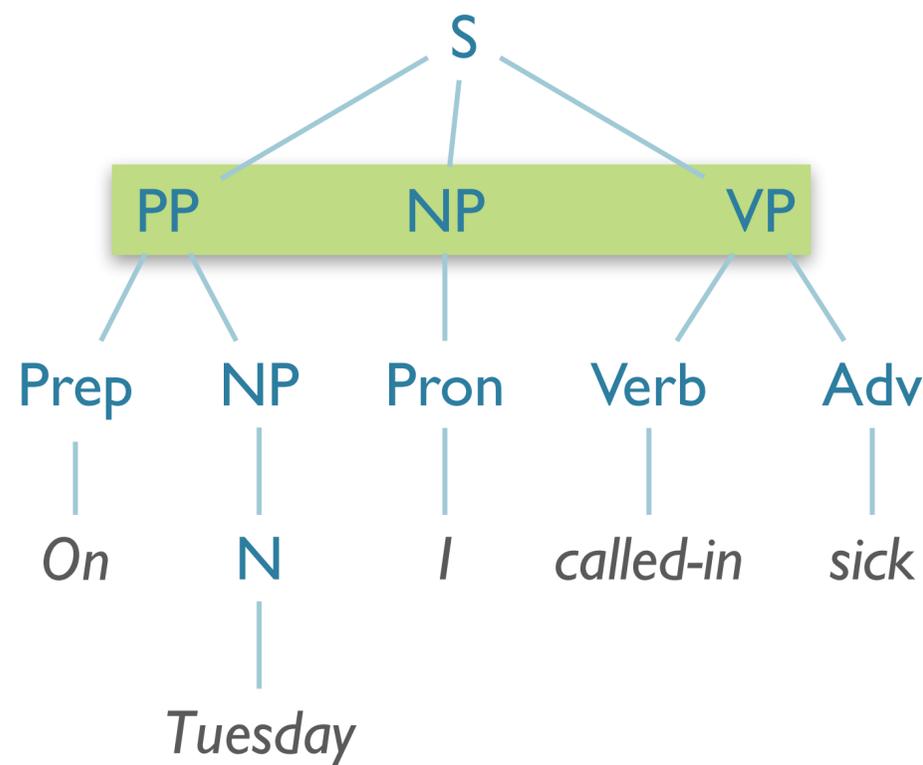
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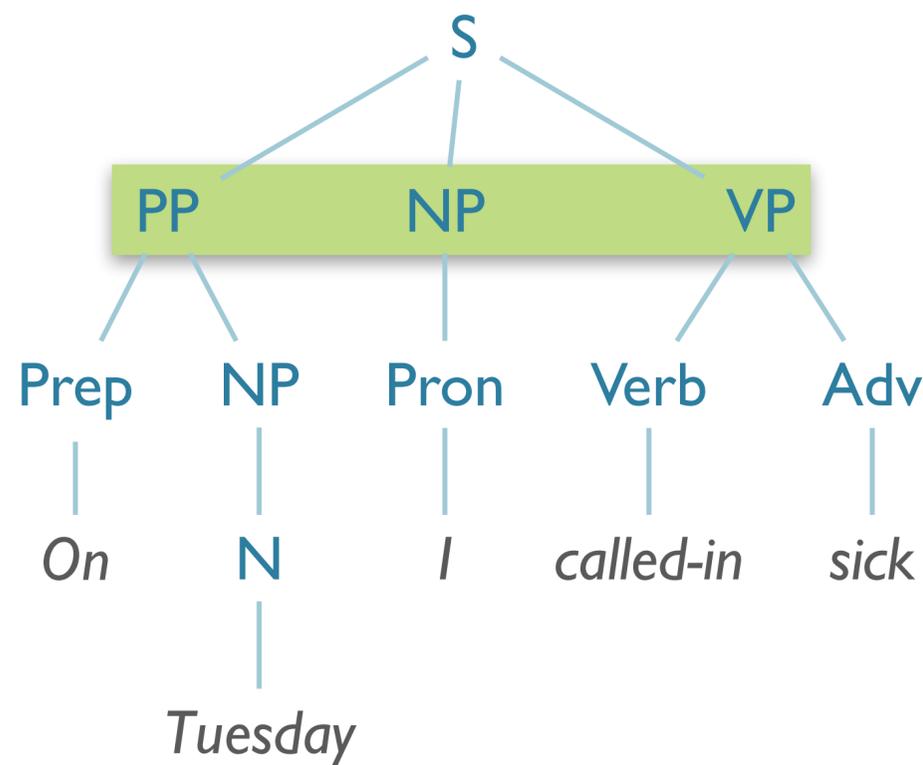


$S \rightarrow PP NP VP$

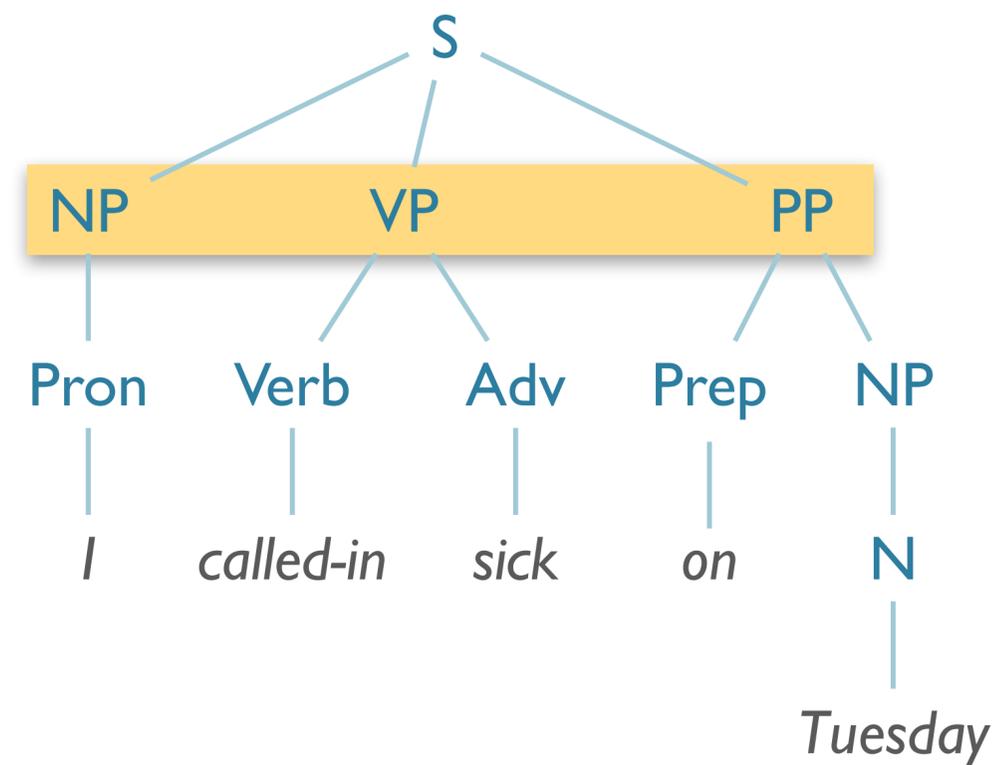
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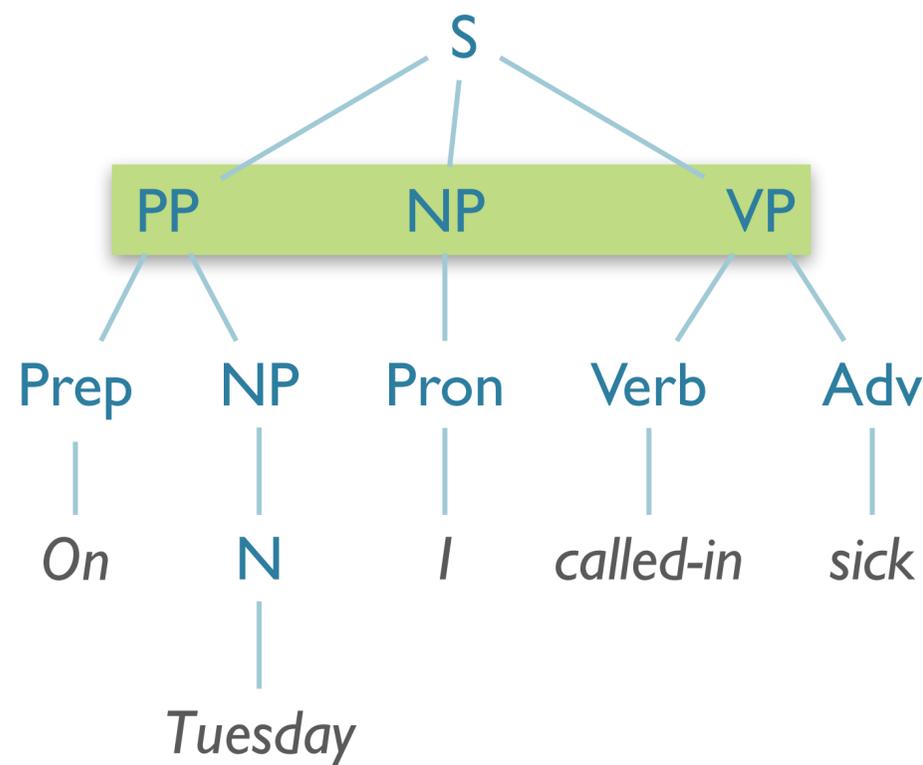
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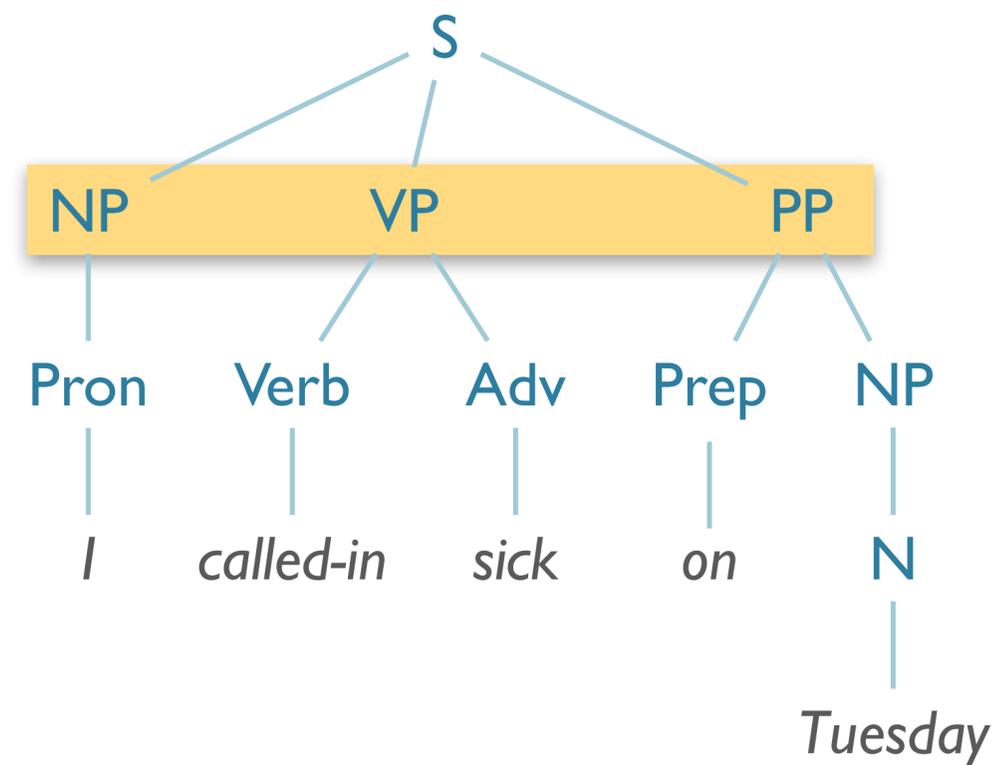
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# Why Dependency Grammar?

- English has relatively fixed word order
- Big problem for languages with freer word order



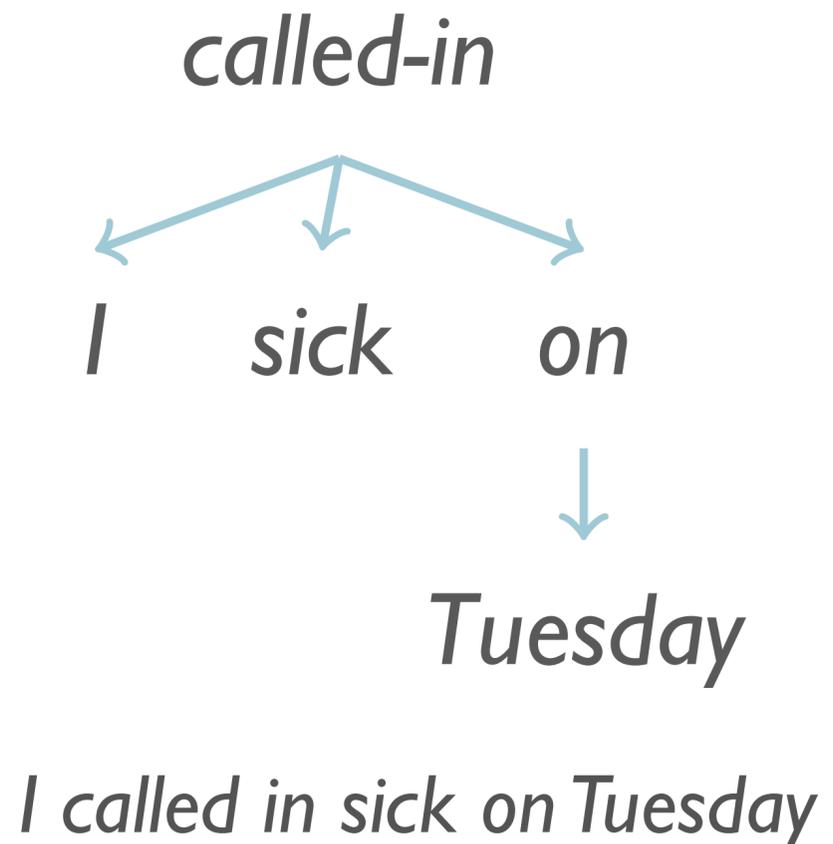
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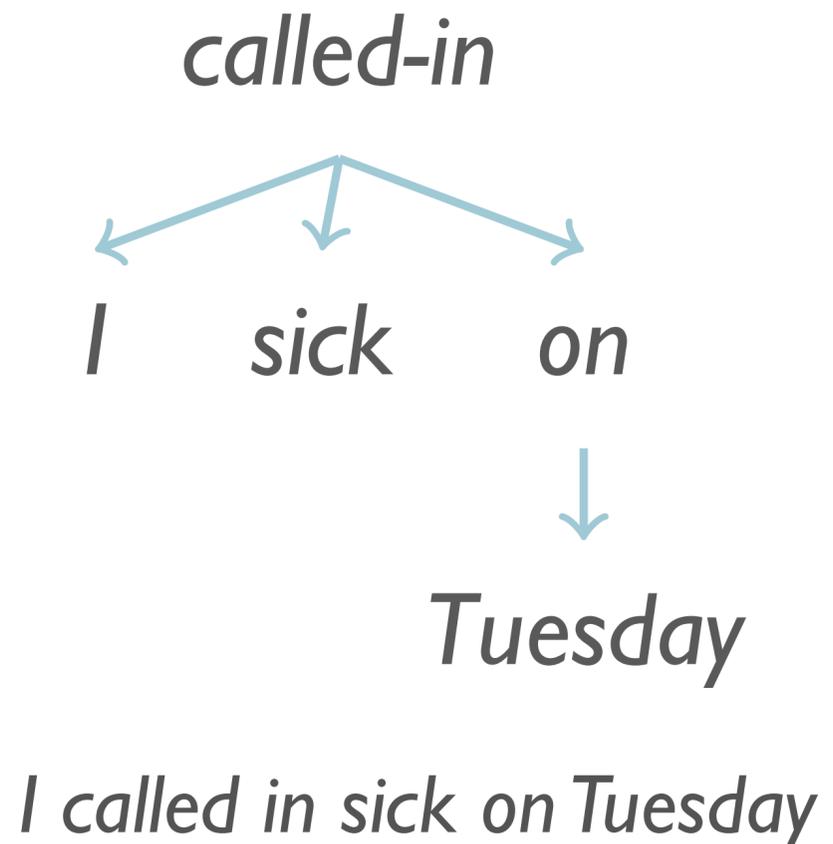
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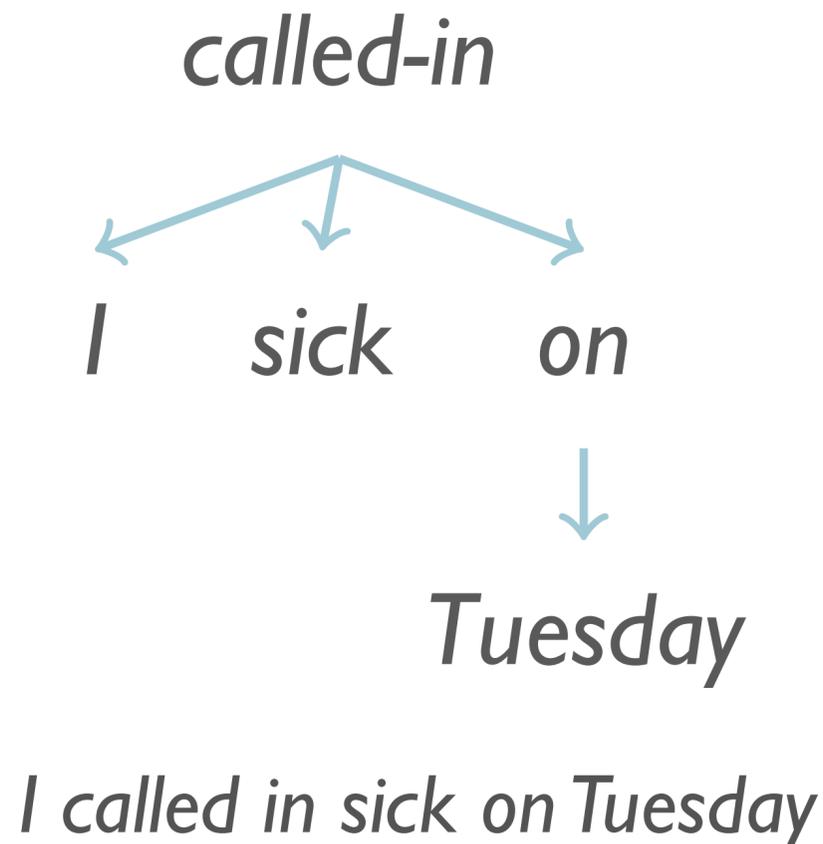
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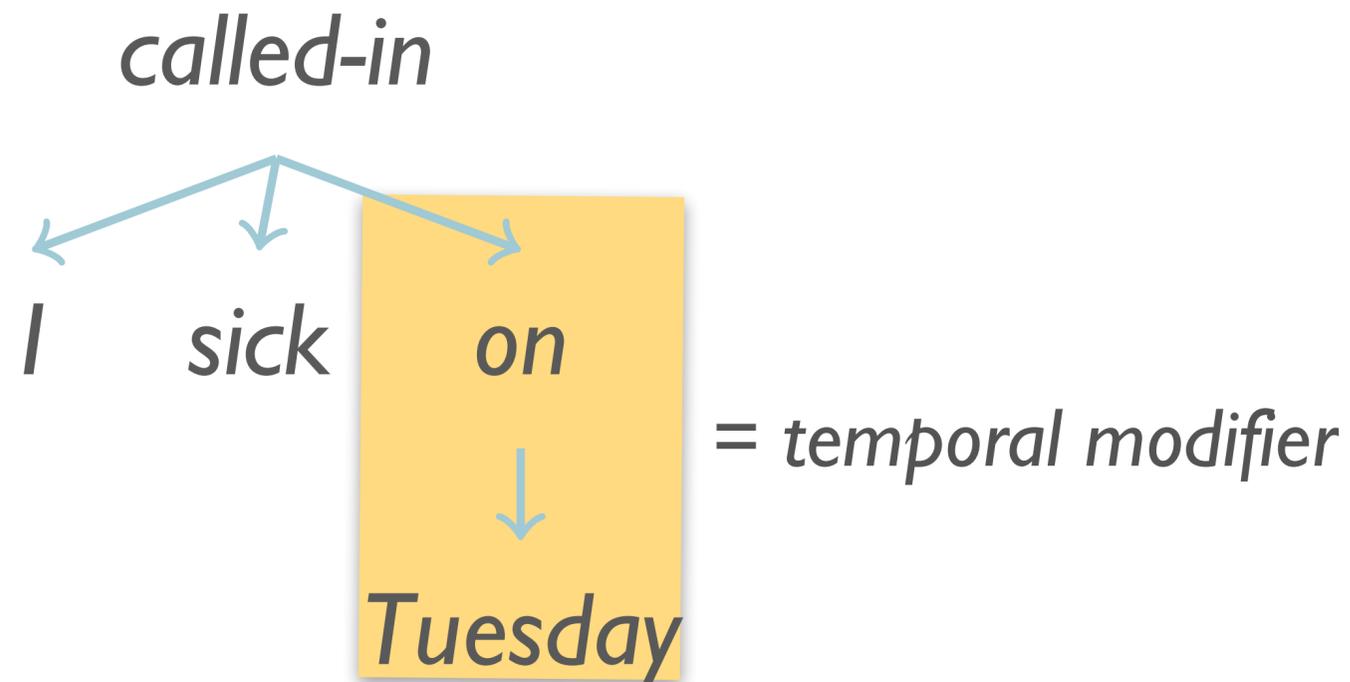
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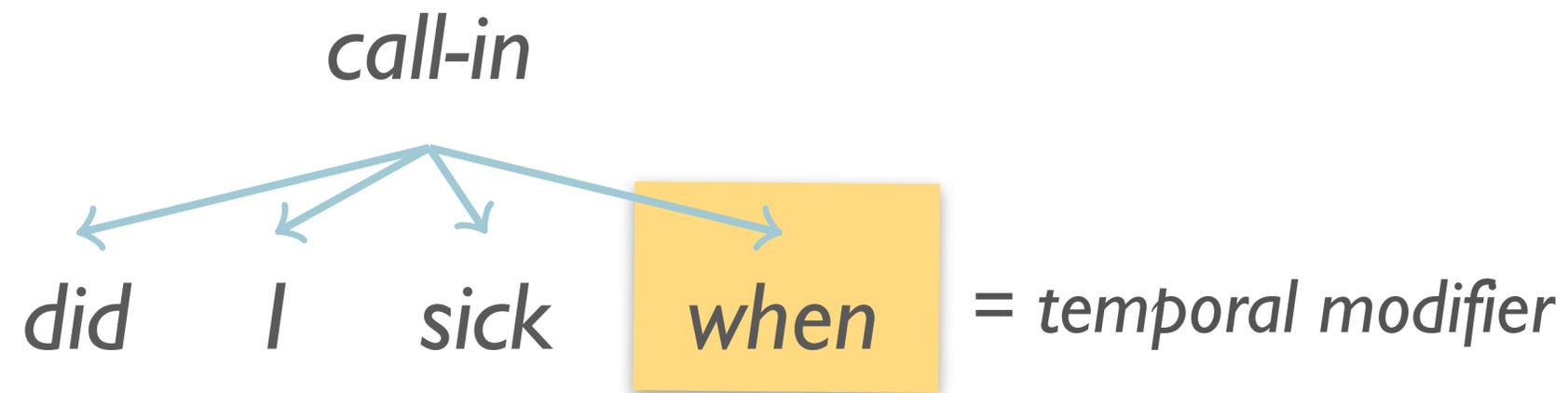
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  - Same structure
  - Relationships are between words, order insensitive



*I called in sick on Tuesday*

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*when did I call in sick?*

# Natural Efficiencies

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  - Must derive full trees of many non-terminals
- Dependency Structures:
  - For each word, identify
    - Syntactic head,  $h$
    - Dependency label,  $d$
  - Inherently lexicalized
    - Strong constraints hold between pairs of words

# Visualization

- Web demos:
  - displaCy: <https://explosion.ai/demos/displacy>
  - Stanford CoreNLP: <http://corenlp.run/>
- [spaCy](#) and [stanza](#) Python packages have good built-in parsers
- LaTeX: tikz-dependency (<https://ctan.org/pkg/tikz-dependency>)

# Resources

- Universal Dependencies:
  - Consistent annotation scheme (i.e. same POS, dependency labels)
  - Treebanks for >70 languages
    - Sizes: German, Czech, Japanese, Russian, French, Arabic, ...

## Possible Future Extensions

People have expressed interest in providing annotated data for the following languages but no data has been provided so far.

▶		Abaza	1	<1K		Northwest Caucasian
▶		Amharic	1	-		Afro-Asiatic, Semitic
▶		Ancient Greek	1	19K		IE, Greek
▶		Archaic Irish	1	-		IE, Celtic
▶		Assamese	1	-		IE, Indic
▶		Bengali	2	-		IE, Indic
▶		Bhojpuri	1	-		IE, Indic
▶		Cappadocian	1	-		IE, Greek
▶		Cusco Quechua	1	-		Quechuan
▶		Czech	1	1,198K		IE, Slavic
▶		Danish	1	-		IE, Germanic
▶		Dargwa	1	-		Nakh-Daghestanian, Lak-Dargwa
▶		English	3	1,209K		IE, Germanic
▶		French	1	-		IE, Romance
▶		Frisian	1	-		IE, Germanic
▶		Georgian	1	-		Kartvelian
▶		Gheg	1	-		IE, Albanian
▶		Greek	1	-		IE, Greek
▶		Gujarati	1	-		IE, Indic
▶		Hiligaynon	1	-		Austronesian, Central Philippine
▶		Icelandic	1	-		IE, Germanic
▶		Irish	1	-		IE, Celtic
▶		Italian	1	-		IE, Romance
▶		Kabyle	1	47K		Afro-Asiatic, Berber
▶		Kannada	1	-		Dravidian, Southern
▶		Khoekhoe	1	-		Khoe-Kwadi
▶		Kiga	1	-		Niger-Congo, Bantoid
▶		Korean	2	-		Korean
▶		Kyrgyz	1	-		Turkic, Northwestern
▶		Ladino	1	-		IE, Romance
▶		Laz	1	2K		Kartvelian
▶		Macedonian	1	-		IE, Slavic
▶		Magahi	2	7K		IE, Indic
▶		Maghrebi Arabic French	1	-		Code switching
▶		Mandiyali	1	-		IE, Indic
▶		Marathi	1	205K		IE, Indic

# Summary

- Dependency grammars balance complexity and expressiveness
  - Sufficiently expressive to capture predicate-argument structure
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- Dependency grammars balance complexity and expressiveness
  - Sufficiently expressive to capture predicate-argument structure
  - Sufficiently constrained to allow efficient parsing
  
- Still not perfect
  - “On Tuesday I called in sick” vs. “I called in sick on Tuesday”
  - These feel pragmatically different (e.g. topically), might want to represent difference syntactically.

# Roadmap

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  - Motivation:
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- **Dependency Parsing**
  - **By conversion from CFG**
  - By Graph-based models
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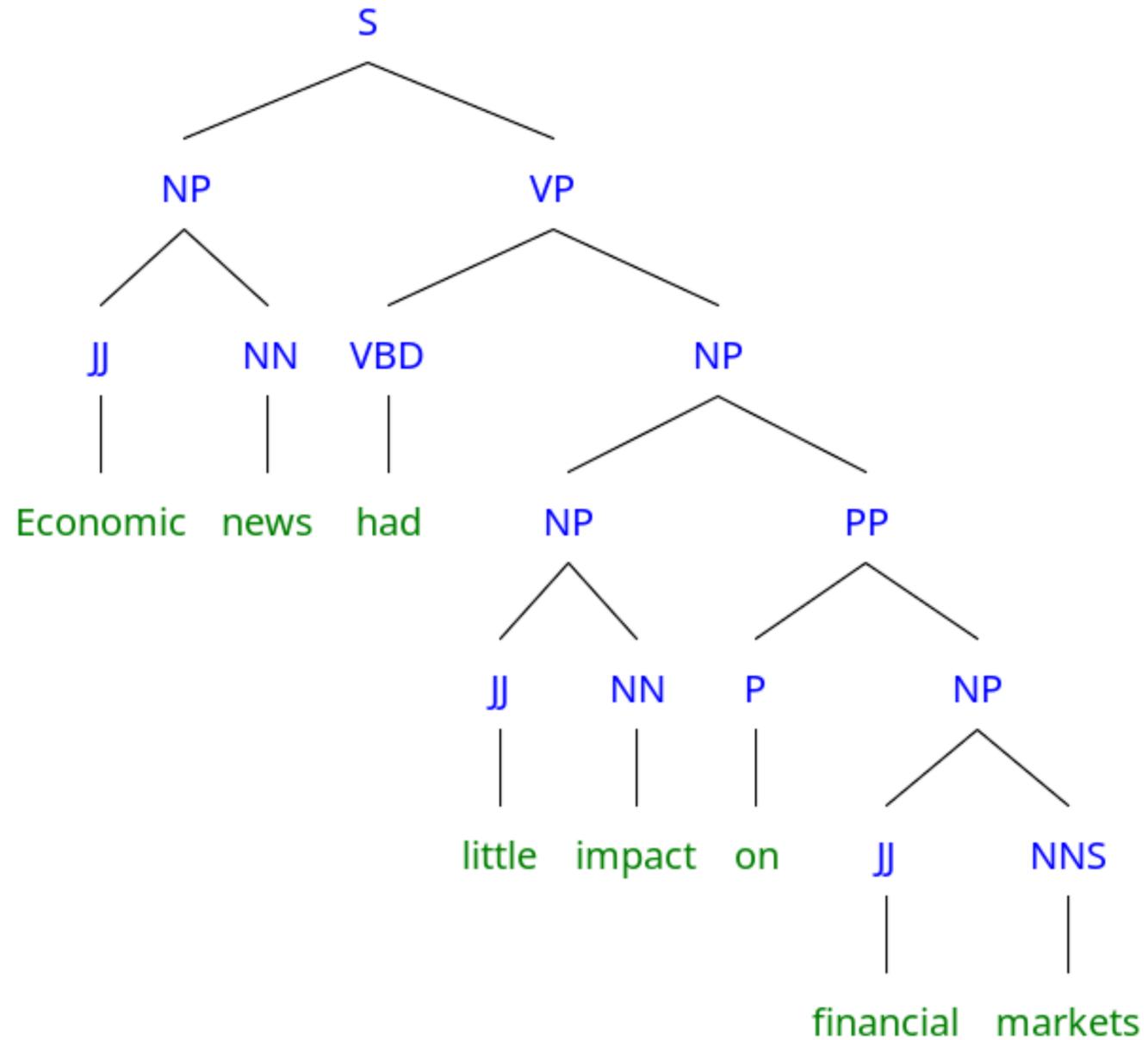
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- Can convert Phrase Structure (PS) to Dependency Structure (DS)
  - ...without the dependency labels

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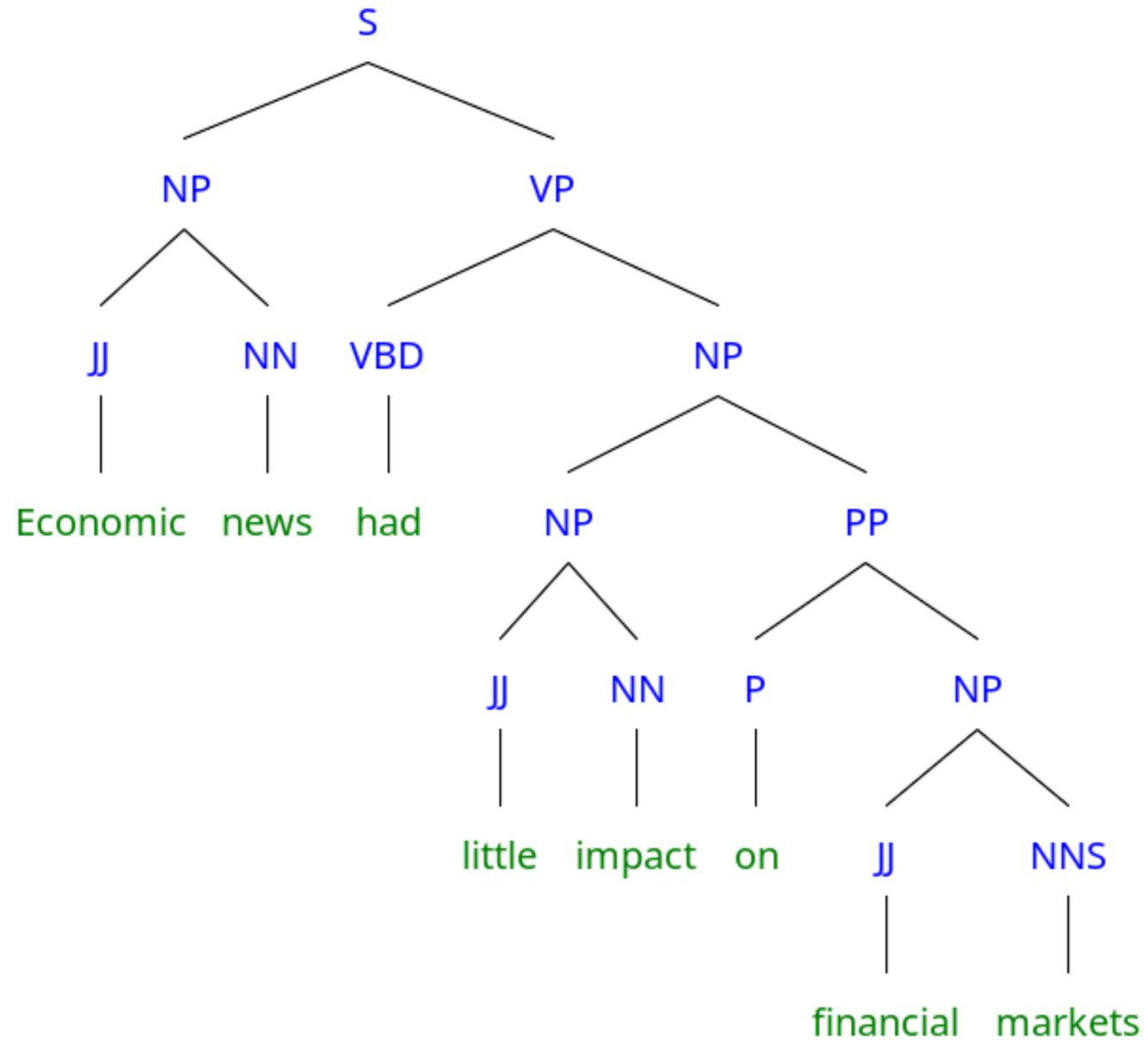
- Can convert Phrase Structure (PS) to Dependency Structure (DS)
  - ...without the dependency labels
- Algorithm:
  - Identify all head children in PS
  - Make head of each non-head-child depend on head of head-child
  - Use a *head percolation* table to determine headedness

# Conversion: PS → DS

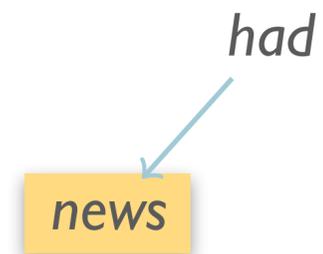
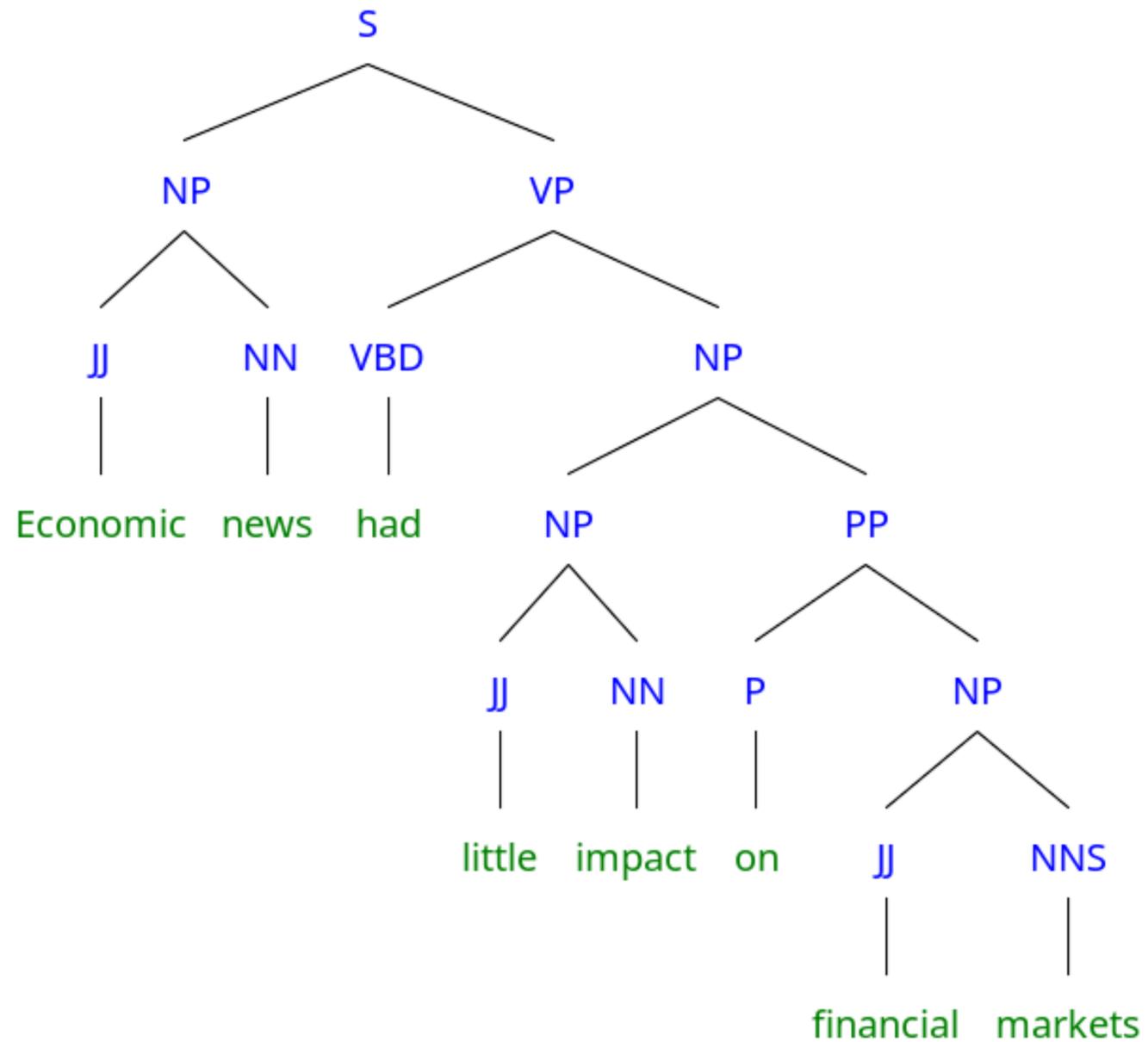


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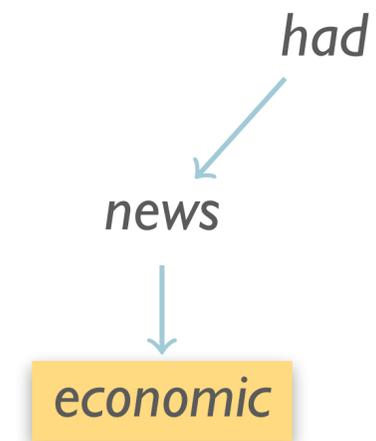
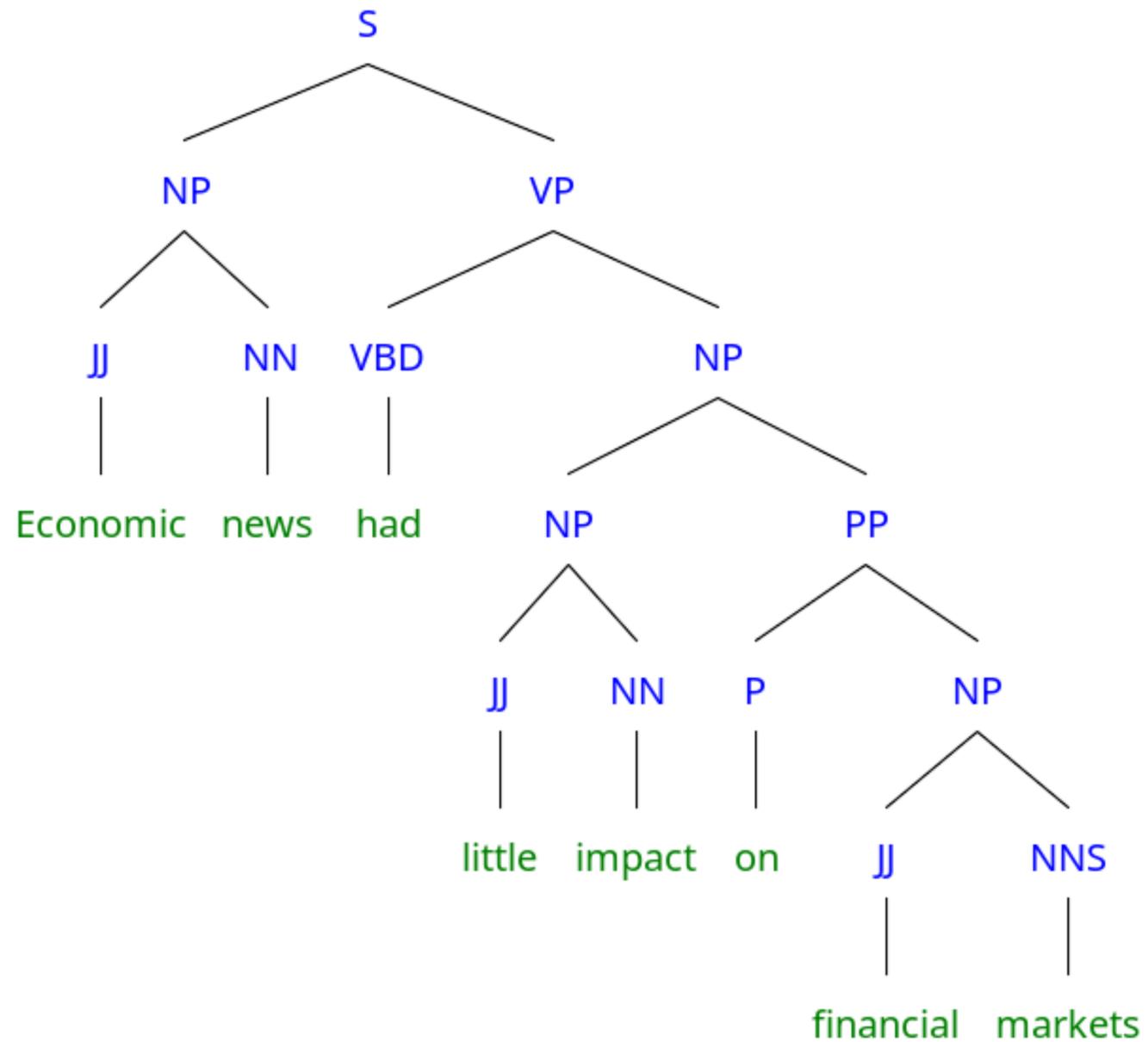
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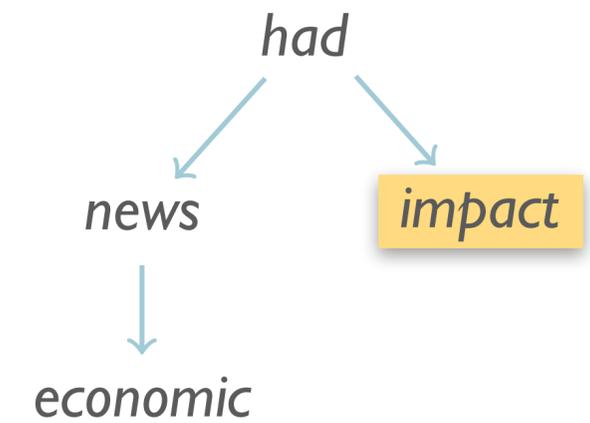
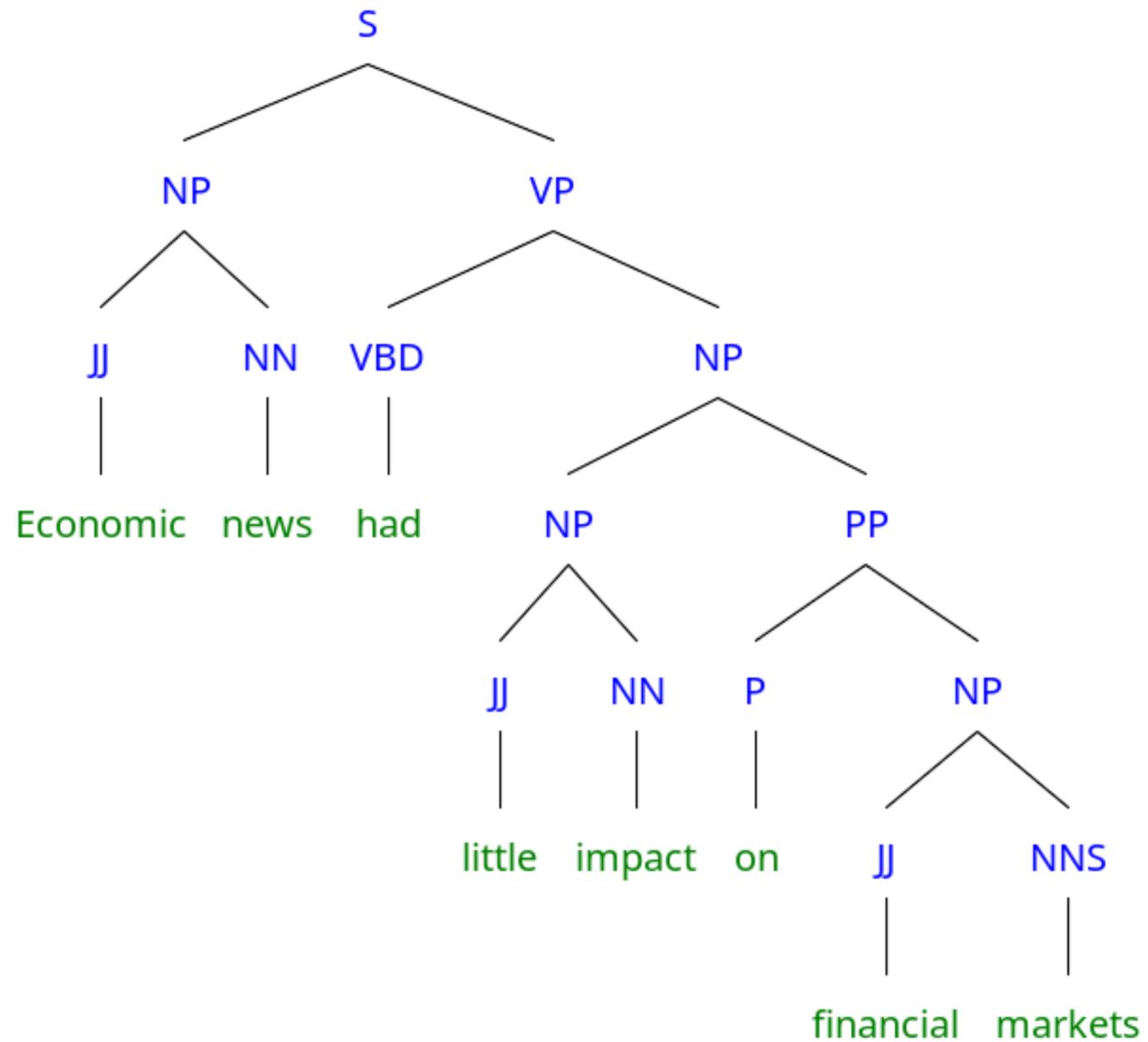
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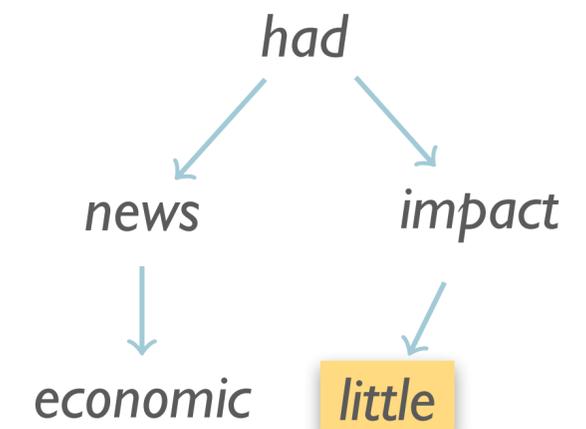
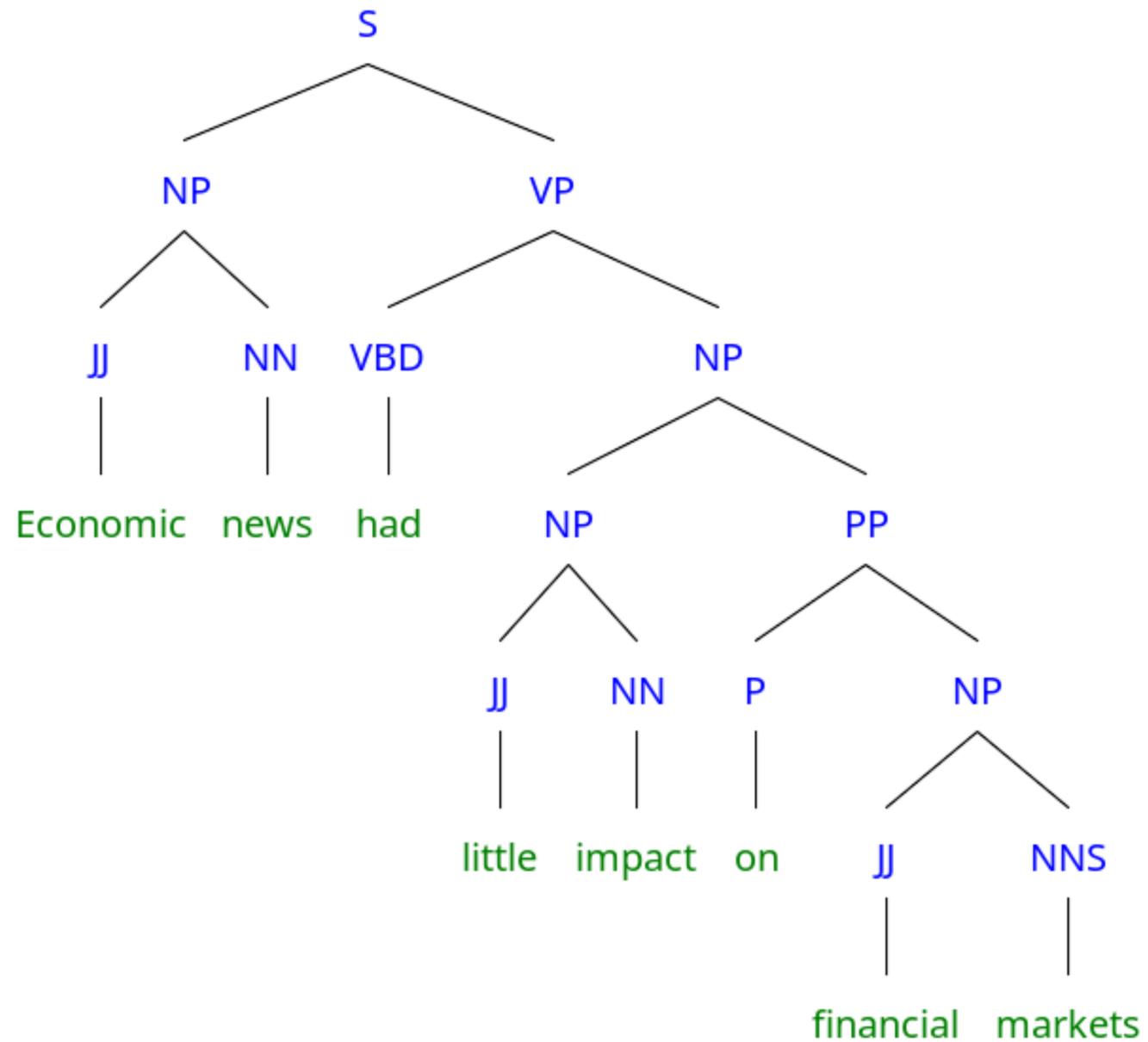
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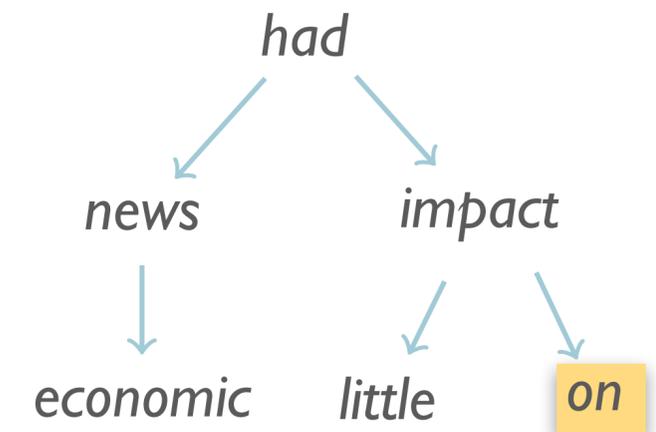
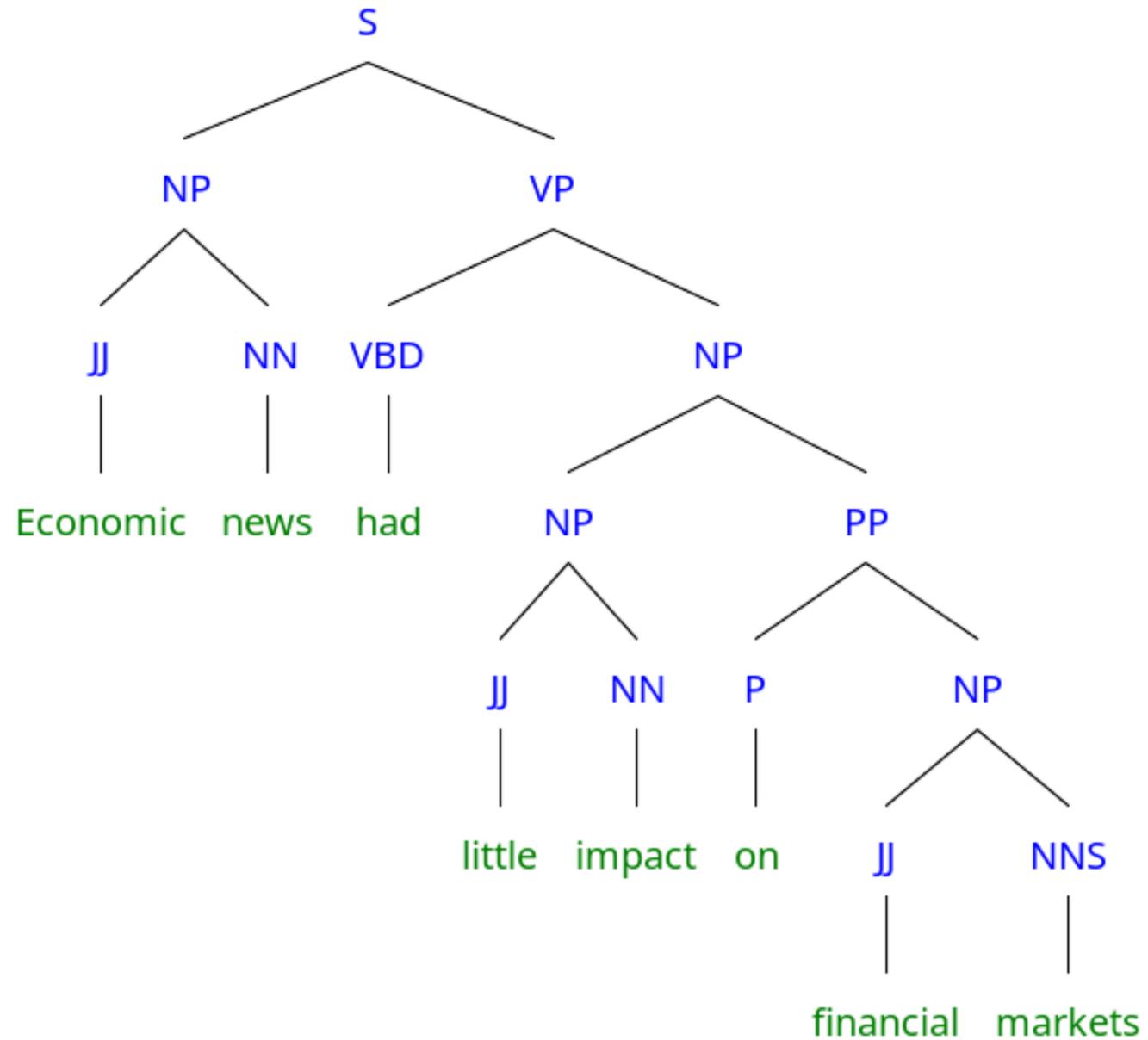
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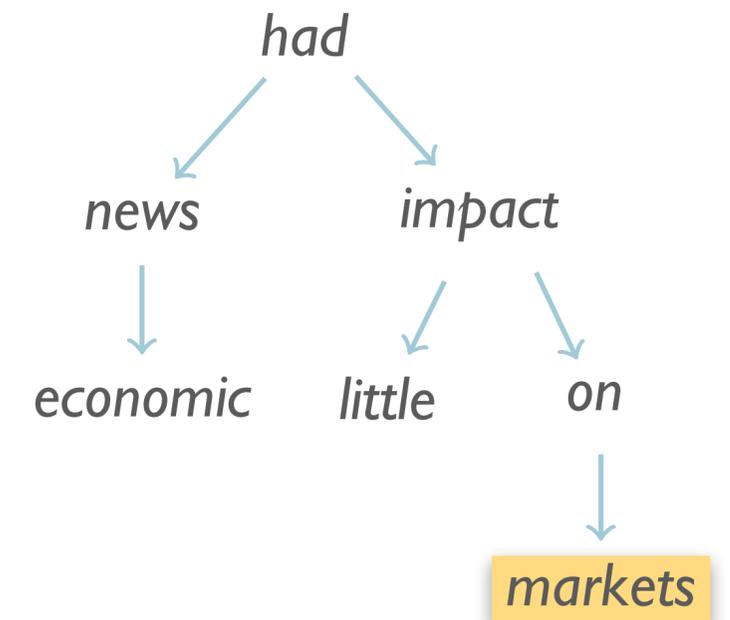
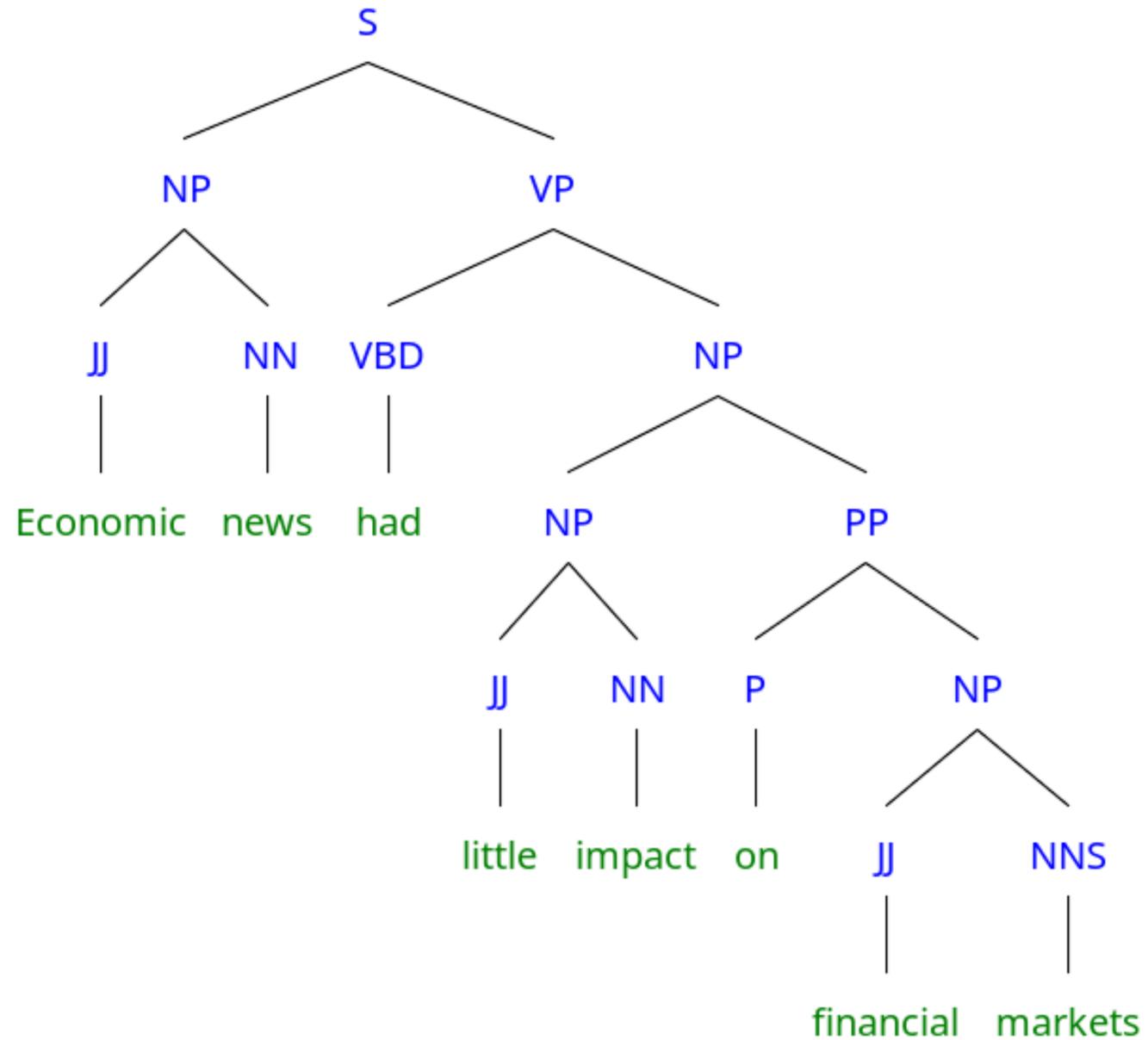
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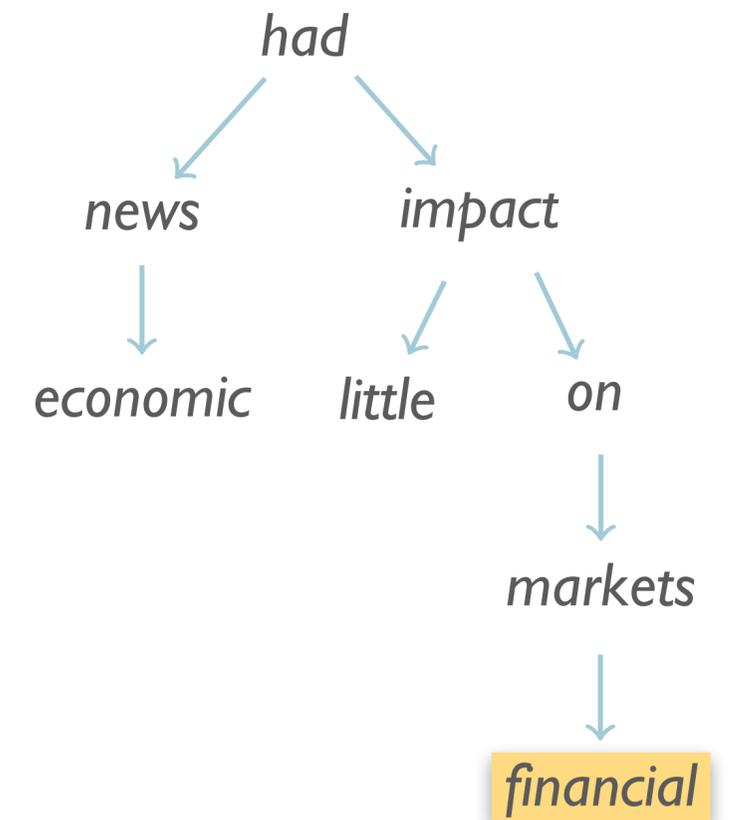
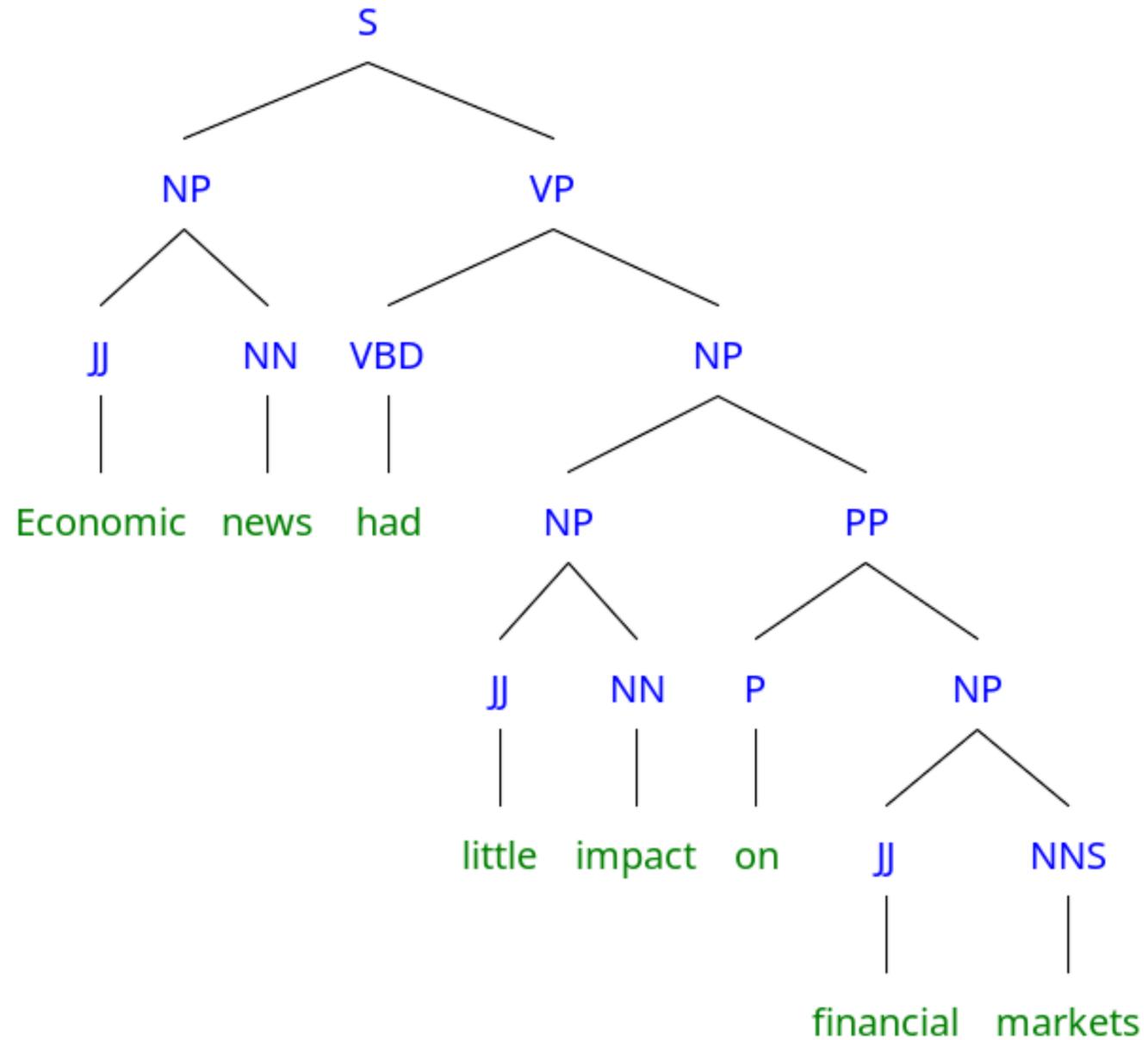
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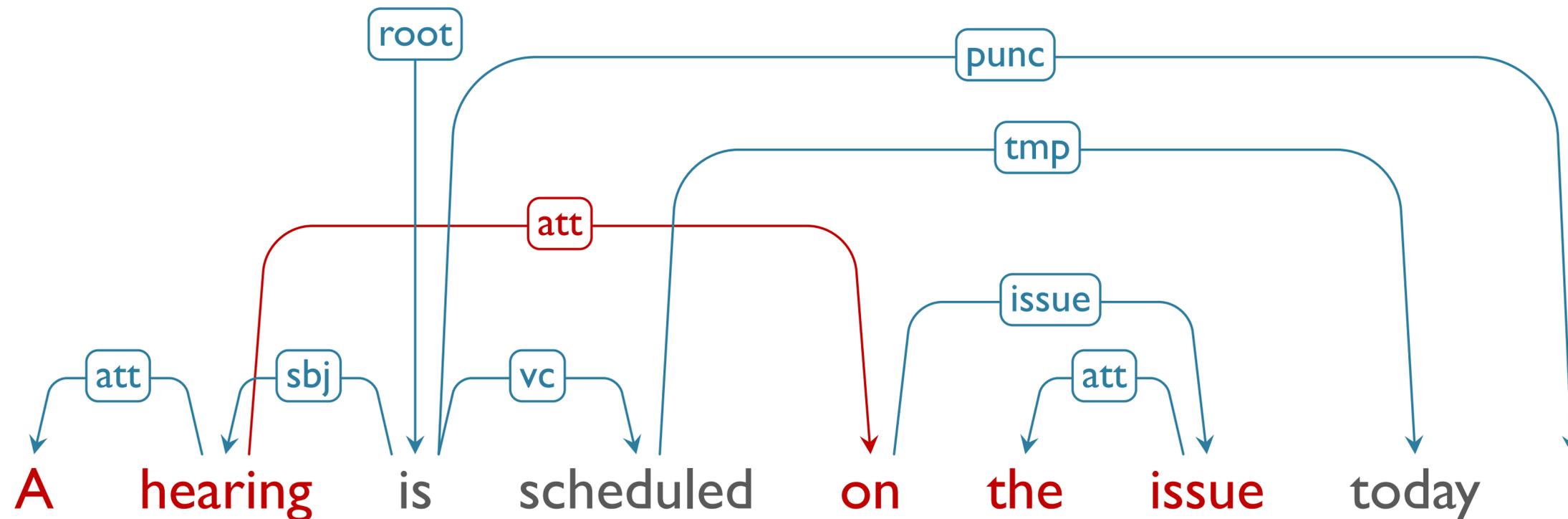
# Head Percolation Table

- Finding the head of an NP:
  - If the rightmost word is preterminal, return
  - ...else search Right→Left for first child which is *NN, NNP, NNPS...*
  - ...else search Left→Right for first child which is *NP*
  - ...else search Right→Left for first child which is *\$, ADJP, PRN*
  - ...else search Right→Left for first child which is *CD*
  - ...else search Right→Left for first child which is *JJ, JJS, RB or QP*
  - ...else return rightmost word.

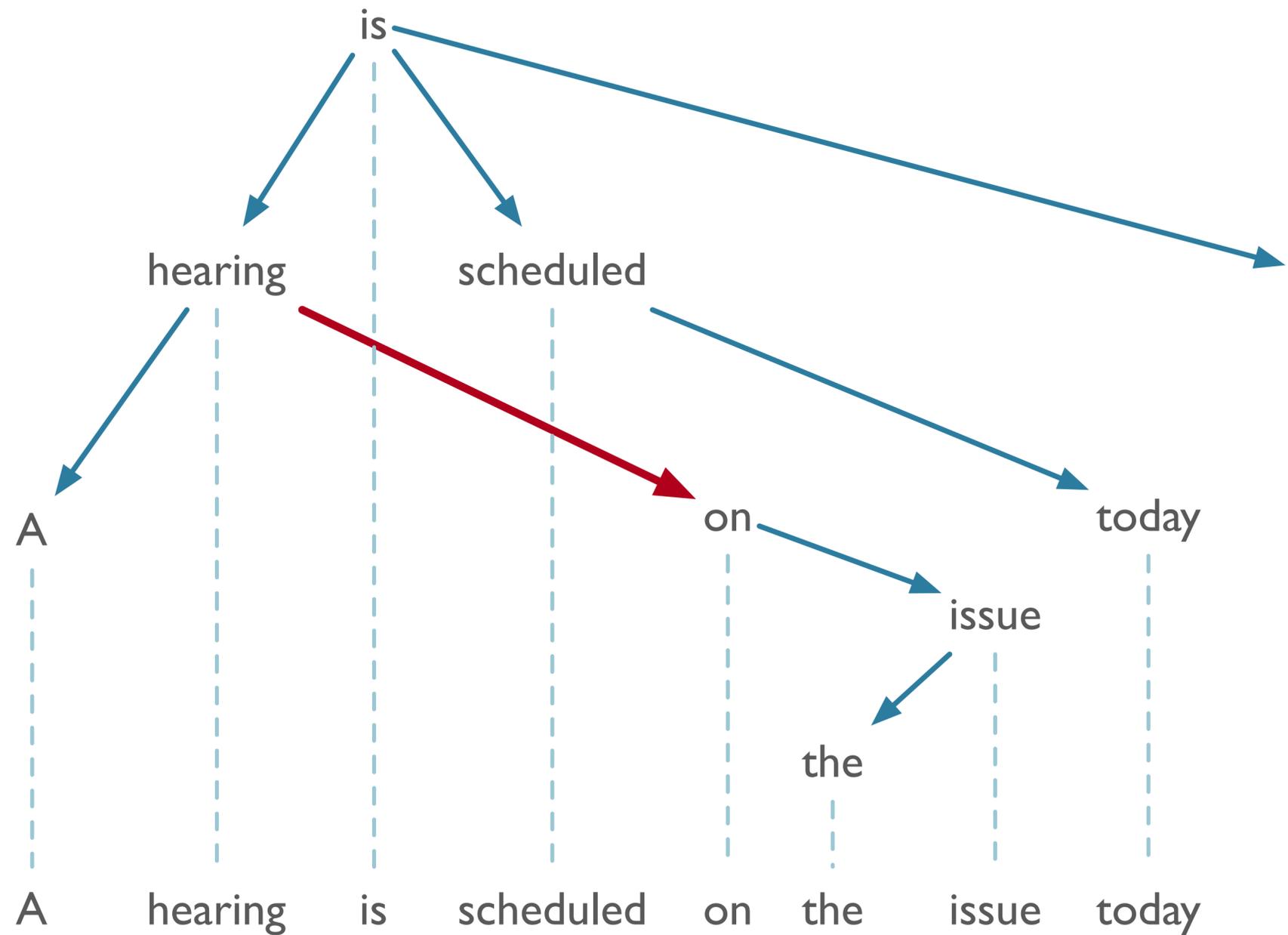
*From J&M Page 411, via [Collins \(1999\)](#)*

# Conversion: DS → PS

- Can map any *projective* dependency tree to PS tree
- Projective:
  - Does not contain “crossing” dependencies w.r.t. word order

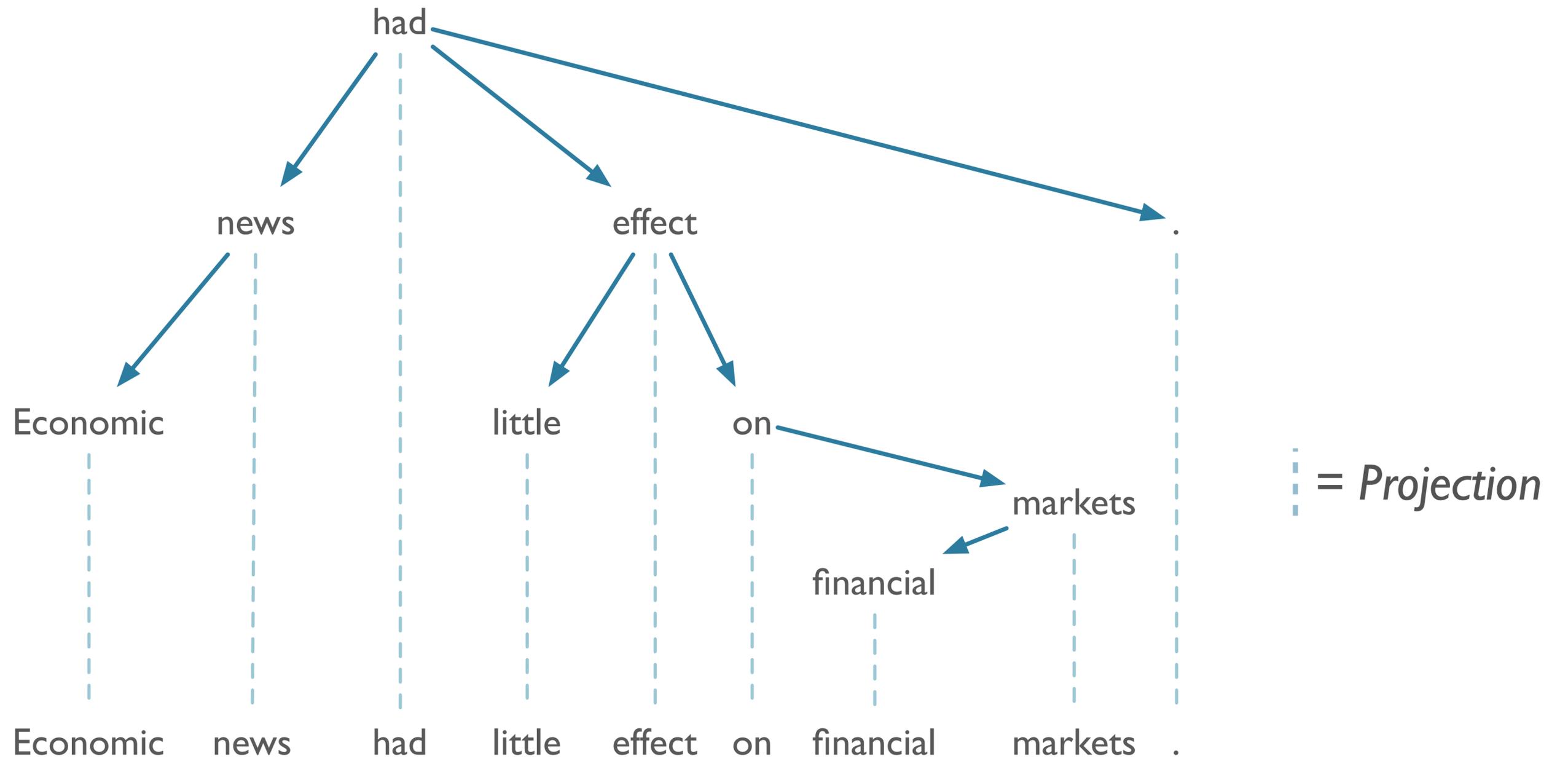


# Non-Projective DS

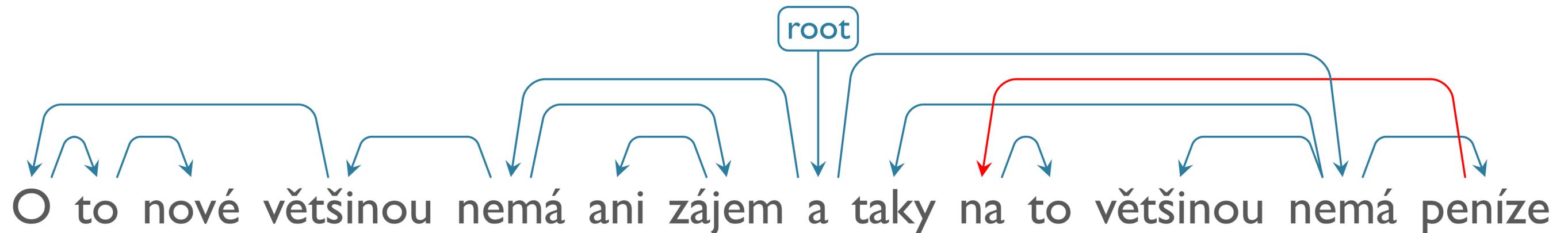
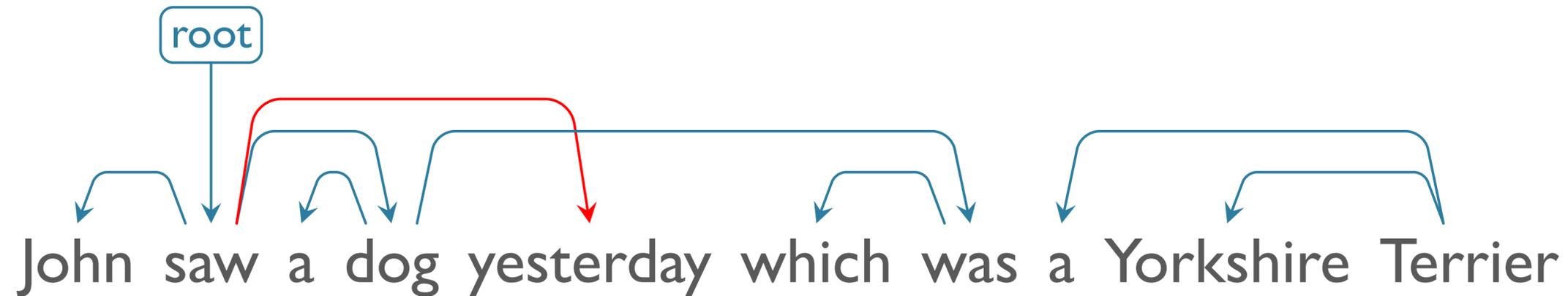


⋮ = *Projection*

# Projective DS



# More Non-Projective Parses



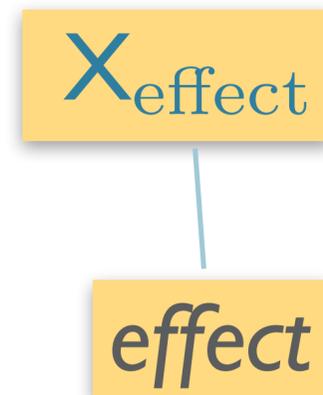
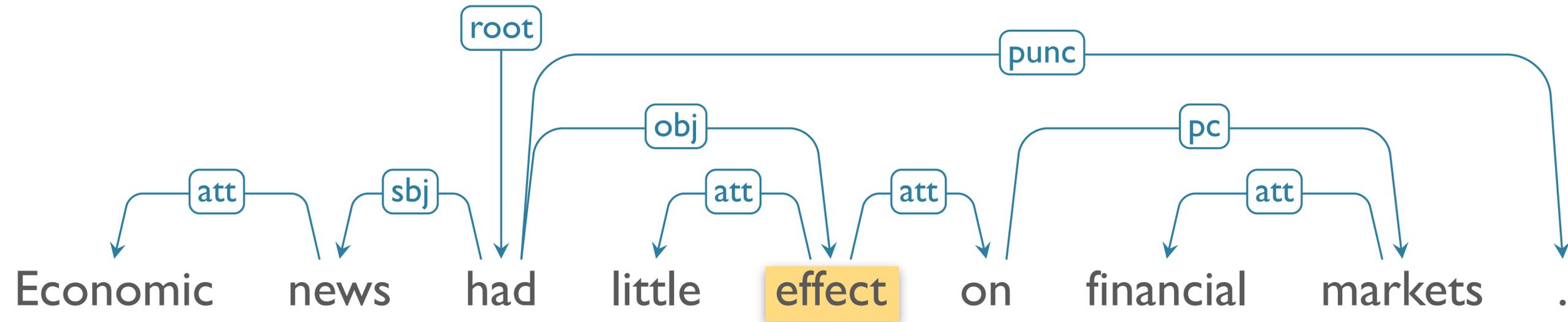
*He is mostly not even interested in the new things and in most cases, he has no money for it either.*

From [McDonald et. al, 2005](#)

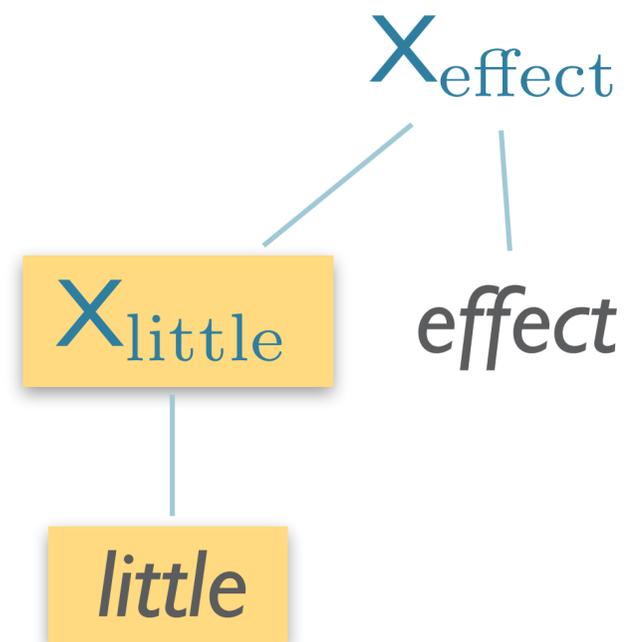
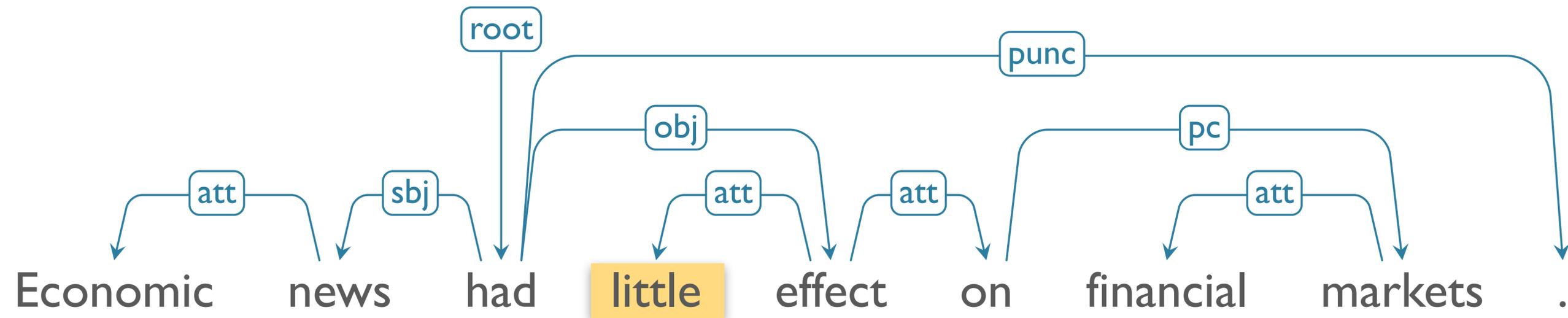
# Conversion: DS $\rightarrow$ PS

- For each node  $w$  with outgoing arcs...
  - ...convert the subtree  $w$  and its dependents  $t_1, \dots, t_n$  to a new subtree:
    - Nonterminal:  $X_w$
    - Child:  $w$
    - Subtrees  $t_1, \dots, t_n$  in original sentence order

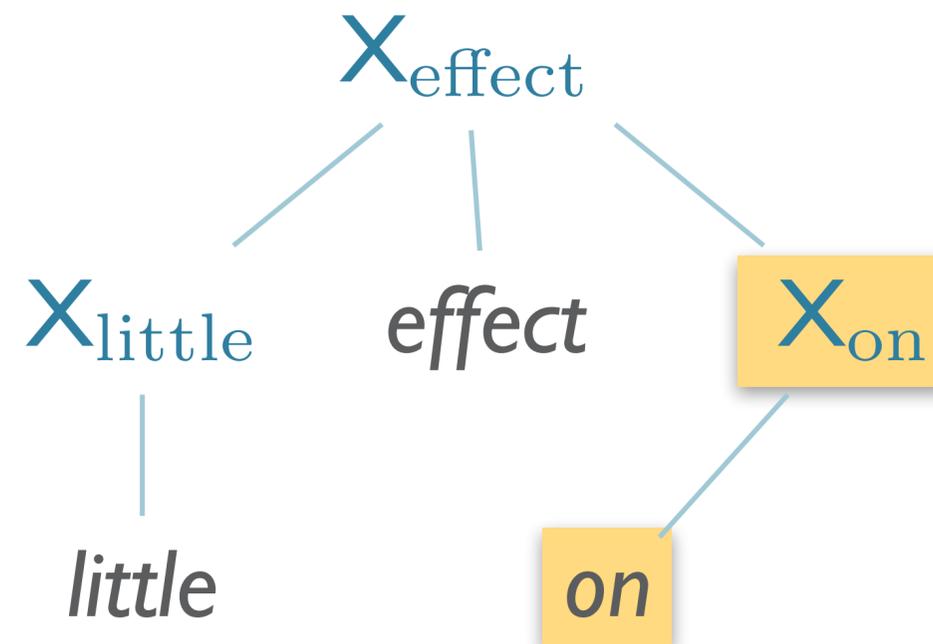
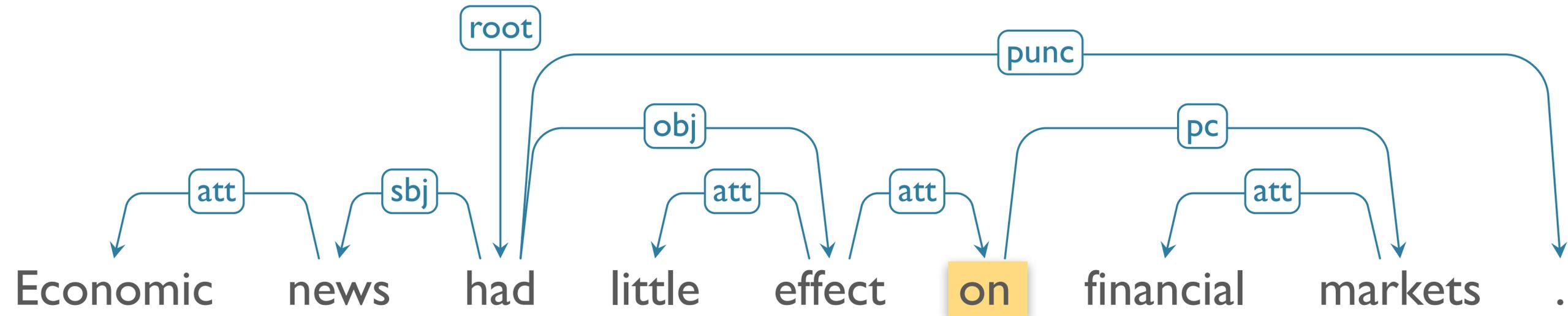
# Conversion: DS → PS



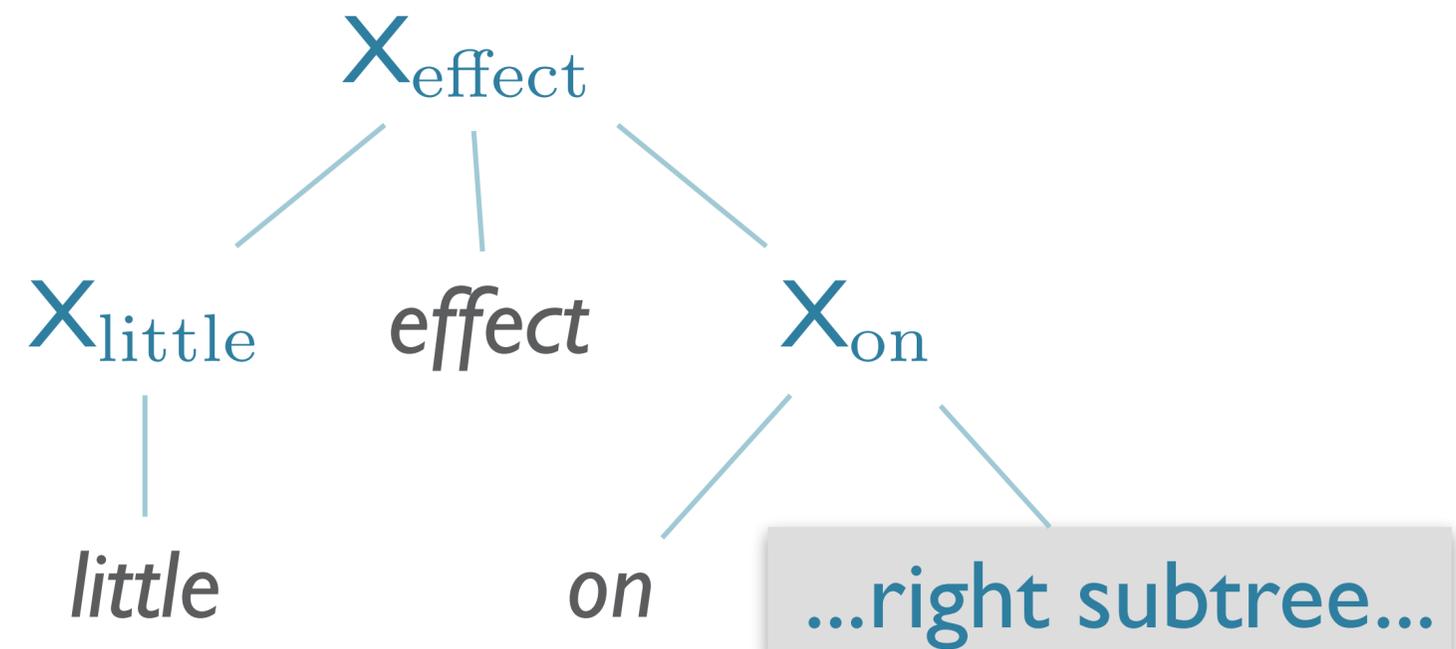
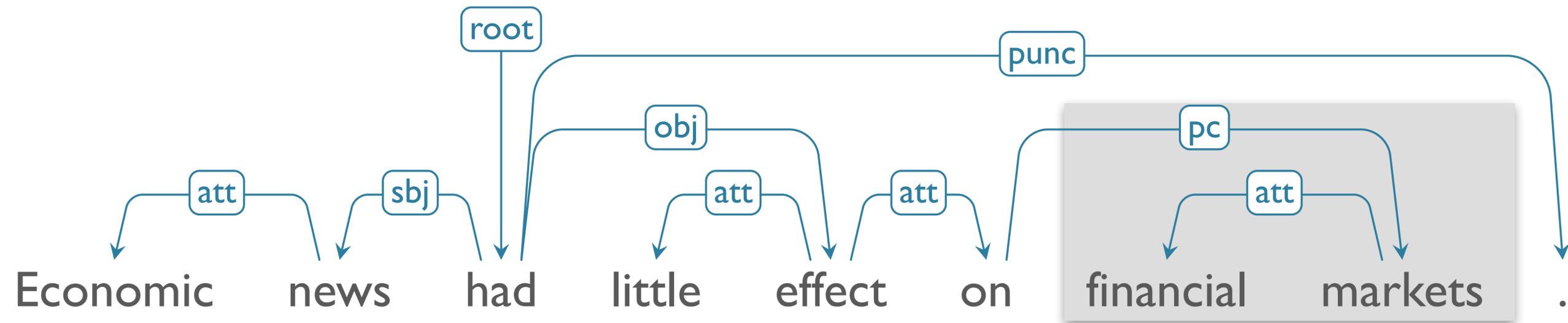
# Conversion: DS → PS



# Conversion: DS → PS

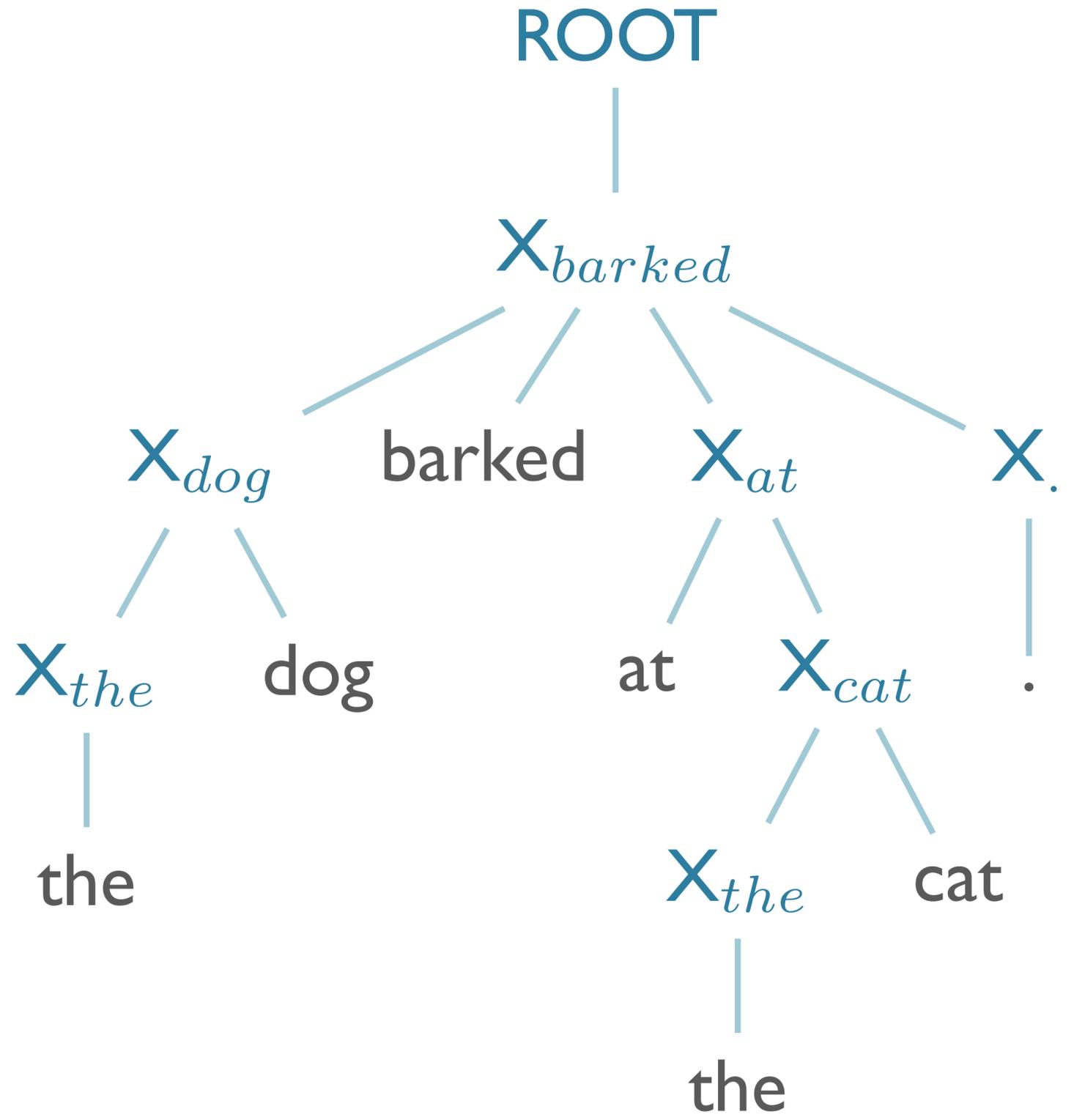
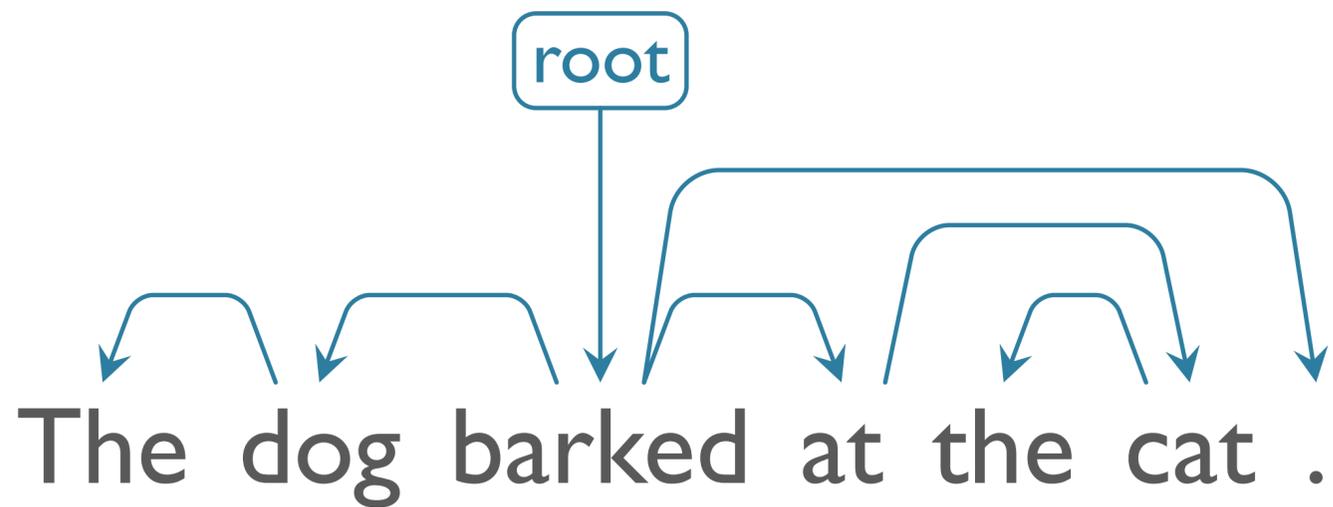


# Conversion: DS → PS



# Conversion: DS $\rightarrow$ PS

- What about labeled dependencies?
  - Can attach labels to nonterminals associated with non-heads
  - e.g.  $X_{little} \rightarrow X_{little:nmod}$
- Doesn't create typical PS trees
  - *Does* create fully lexicalized, labeled, context-free trees
- Can be parsed with any standard CFG parser



Example from J. Moore, 2013

# Roadmap

- Dependency Grammars
  - Definition
  - Motivation:
    - Limitations of Context-Free Grammars
- **Dependency Parsing**
  - By conversion to CFG
  - **By Graph-based models**
  - By transition-based parsing

# Graph-based Dependency Parsing

- Goal: Find the highest scoring dependency tree  $\hat{T}$  for sentence  $S$ 
  - If  $S$  is unambiguous,  $T$  is the correct parse
  - If  $S$  is ambiguous,  $T$  is the highest scoring parse
- Where do scores come from?
  - Weights on dependency edges by learning algorithm
  - Learned from dependency treebank
- Where are the grammar rules?
  - ...there aren't any! All data-driven.

# Graph-based Dependency Parsing

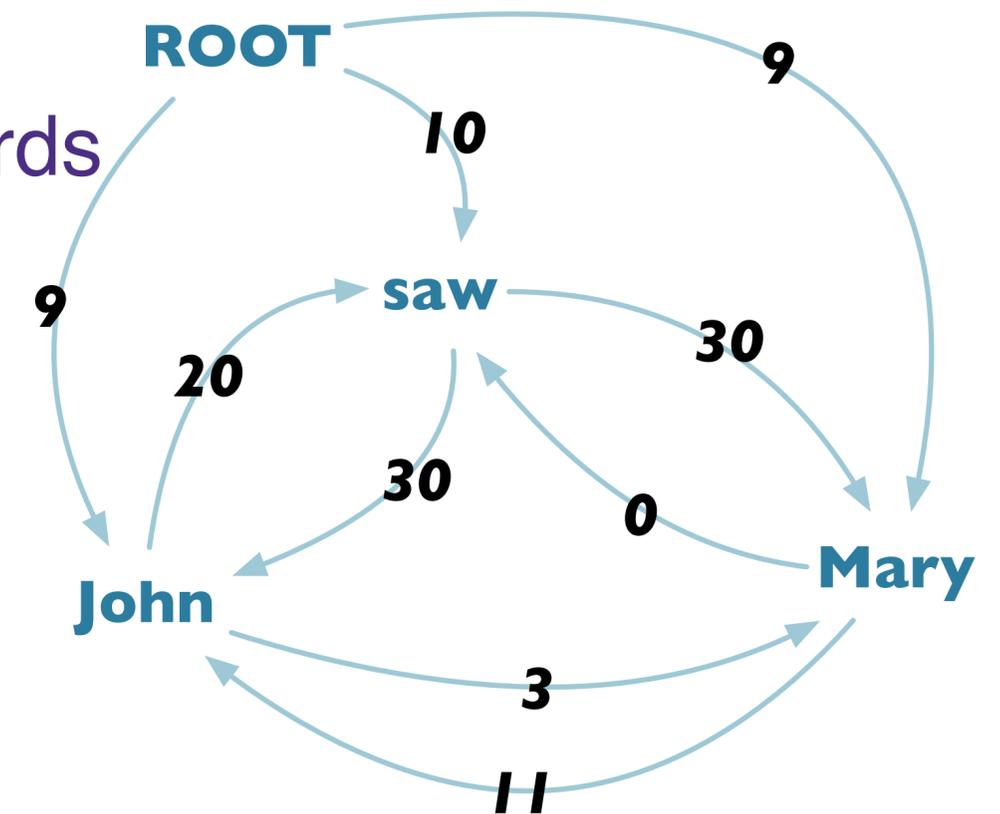
- Map dependency parsing to Maximum Spanning Tree (MST)
- Build fully connected initial graph:
  - Nodes: words in sentence to parse
  - Edges: directed edges between all words
    - + Edges from ROOT to all words
- Identify maximum spanning tree
  - Tree s.t. all nodes are connected
  - Select such tree with highest weight

# Graph-based Dependency Parsing

- Arc-factored model:
  - Weights depend on end nodes & link
  - Weight of tree is sum of participating arcs

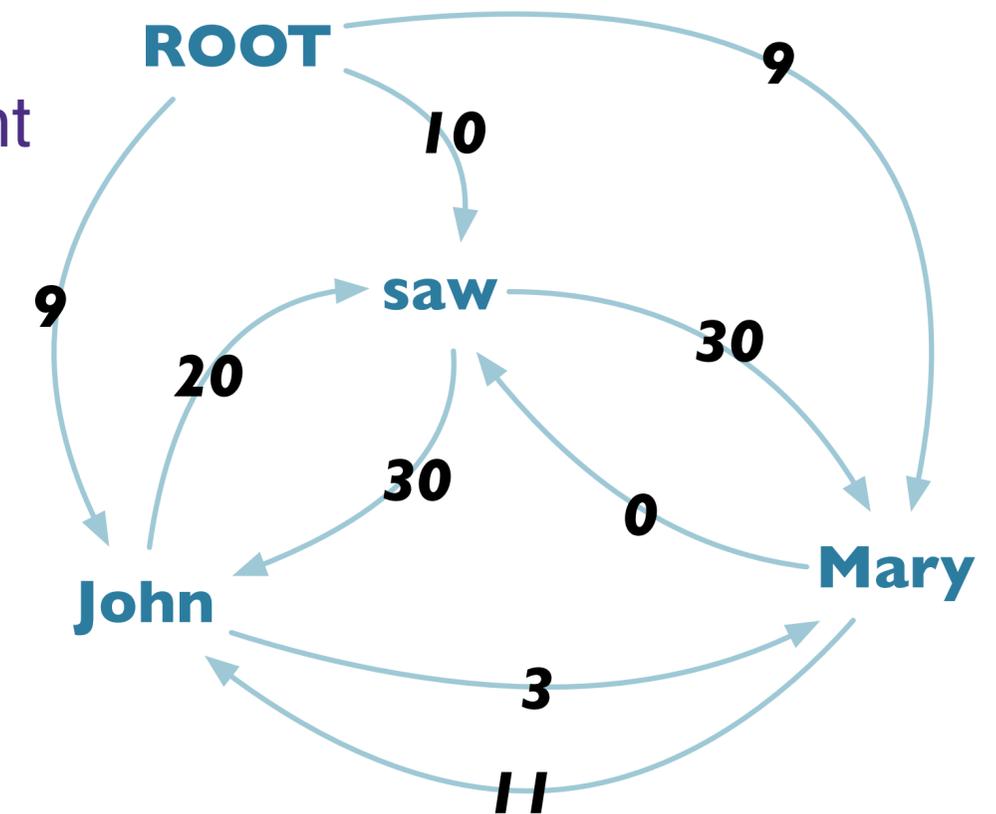
# Initial Graph: *(McDonald et al, 2005b)*

- *John saw Mary*
  - All words connected: ROOT only has outgoing arcs
- Goal: Remove arcs to create a tree covering all words
  - Resulting tree is parse



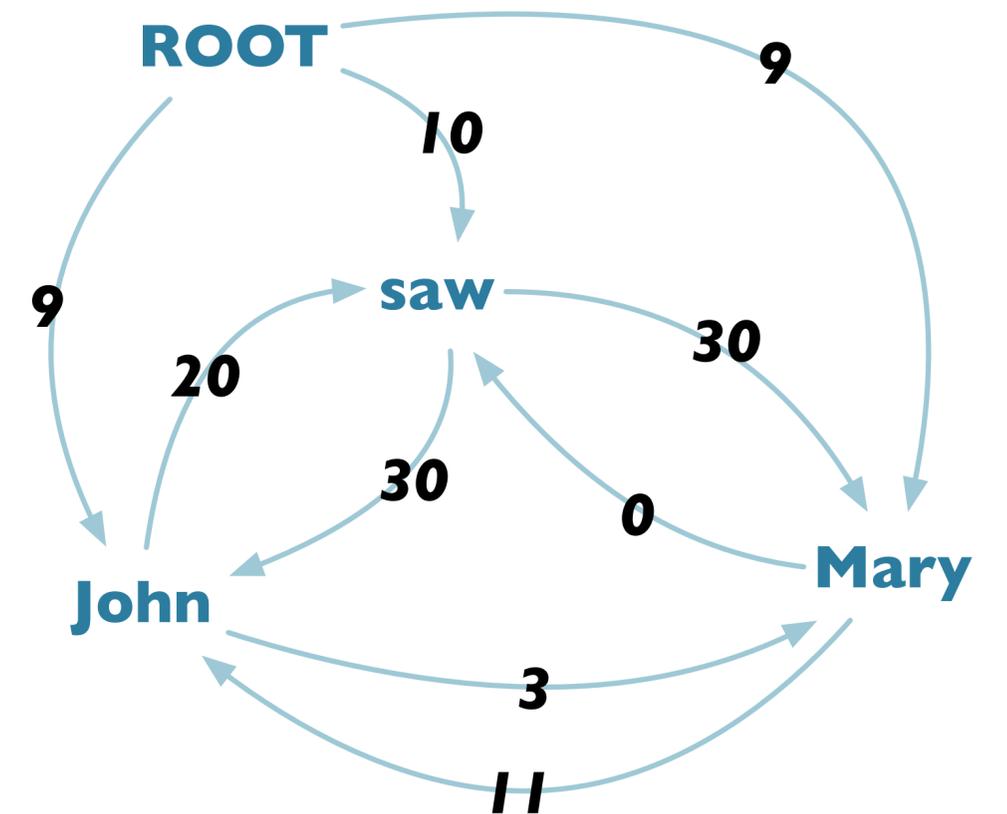
# Maximum Spanning Tree

- McDonald et al, 2005 use variant of Chu-Liu-Edmonds algorithm for MST (CLE)
- Sketch of algorithm:
  - For each node, greedily select incoming arc with max weight
  - If the resulting set of arcs forms a tree, this is the MST.
  - If not, there must be a cycle.
    - “Contract” the cycle: Treat it as a single vertex
    - Recalculate weights into/out of the new vertex
    - Recursively do MST algorithm on resulting graph
- Running time: naïve:  $O(n^3)$ ; Tarjan:  $O(n^2)$ 
  - Applicable to non-projective graphs



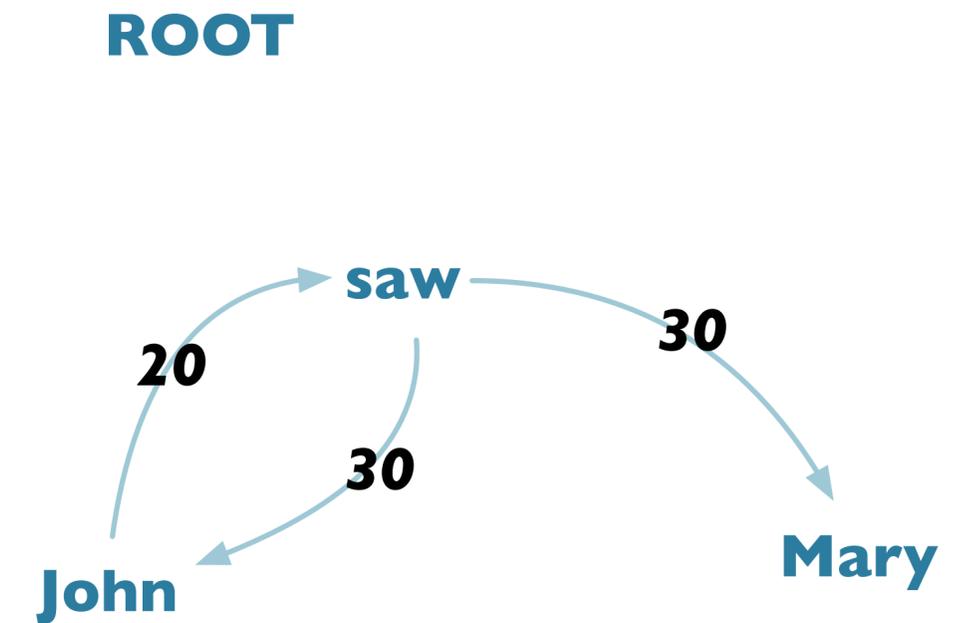
# Step 1 & 2

- Find, for each word, the highest scoring incoming edge.



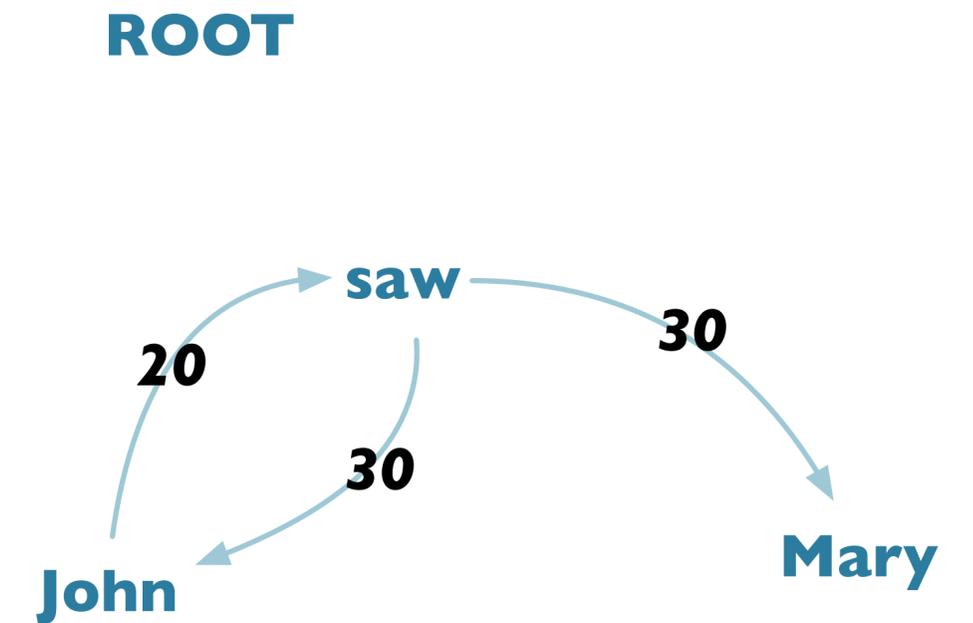
# Step 1 & 2

- Find, for each word, the highest scoring incoming edge.



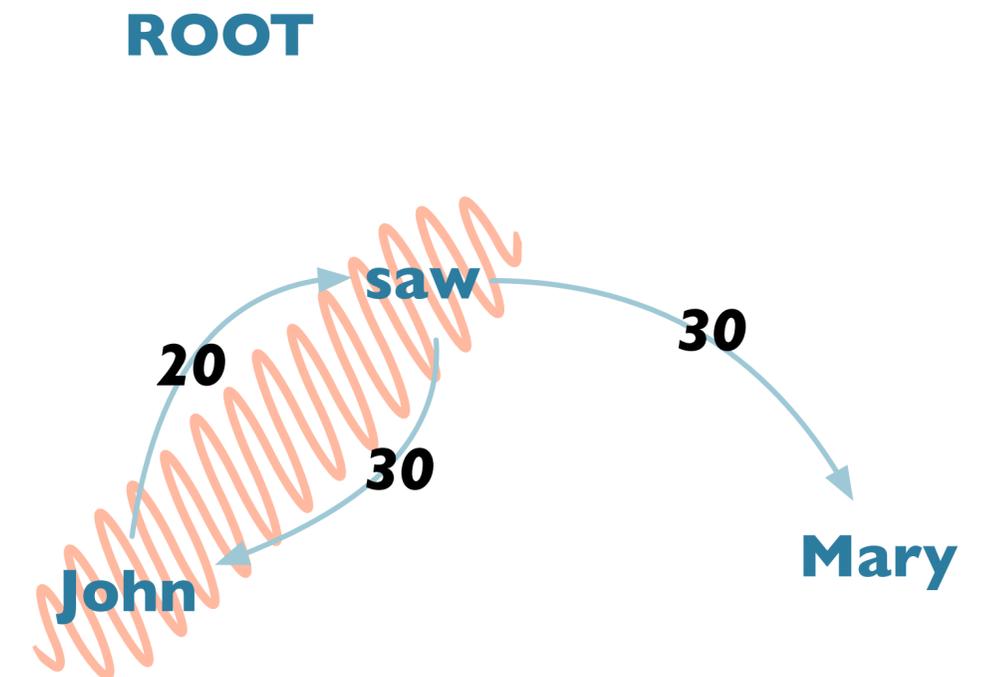
# Step 1 & 2

- Find, for each word, the highest scoring incoming edge.
- Is it a tree?



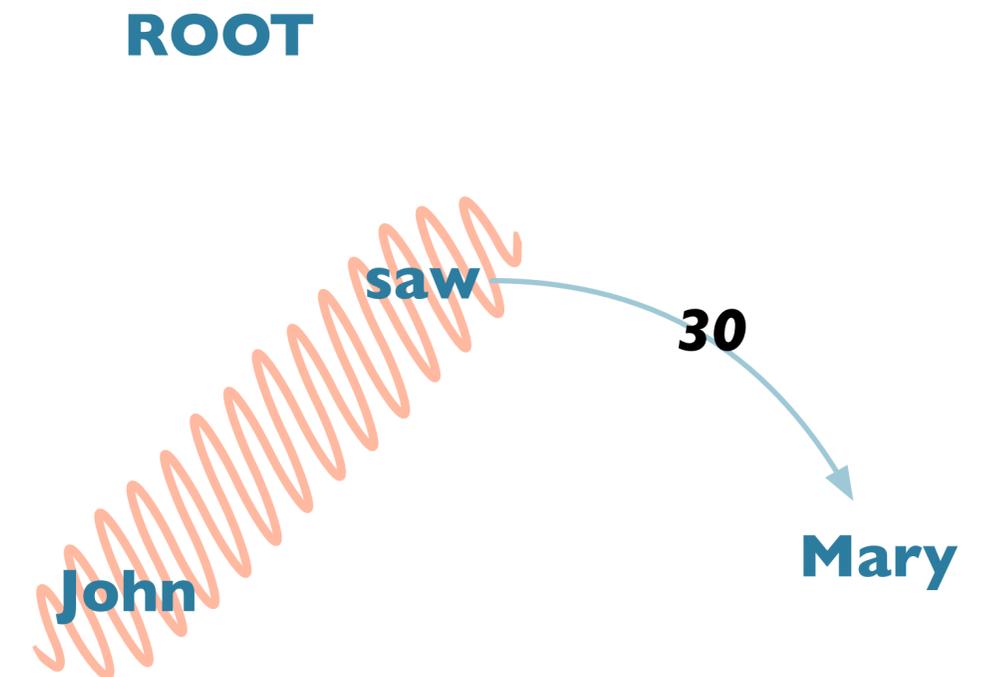
# Step 1 & 2

- Find, for each word, the highest scoring incoming edge.
- Is it a tree?
  - No, there's a cycle.



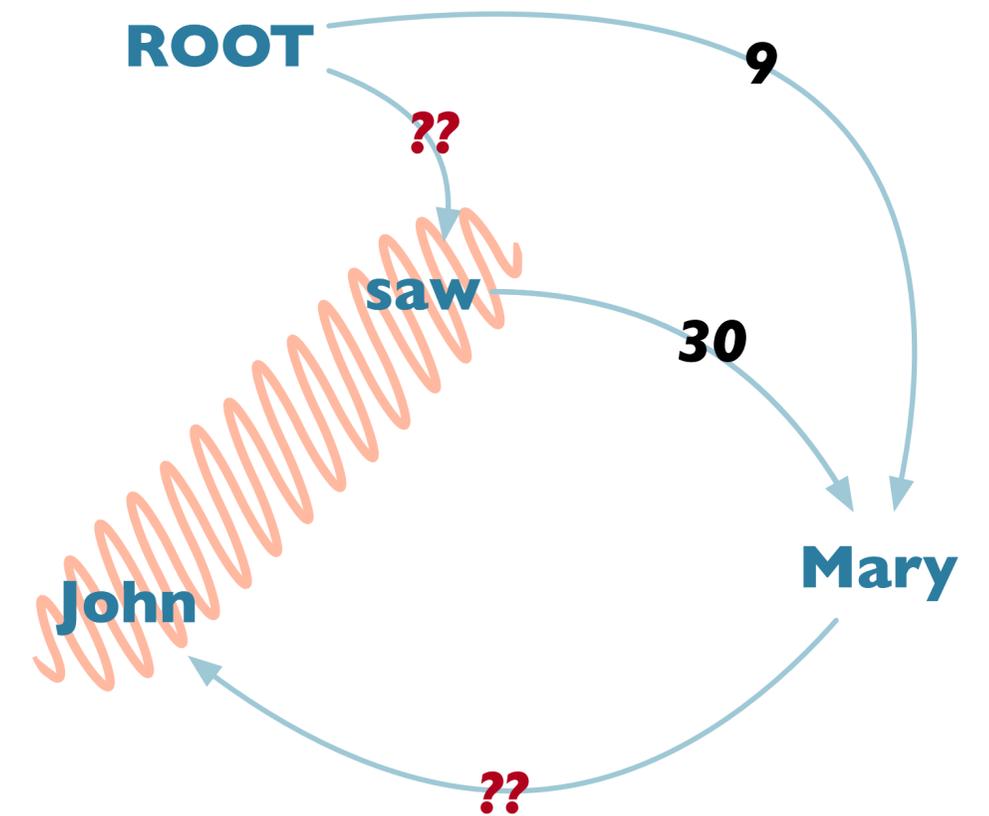
# Step 1 & 2

- Find, for each word, the highest scoring incoming edge.
- Is it a tree?
  - No, there's a cycle.
- Collapse the cycle



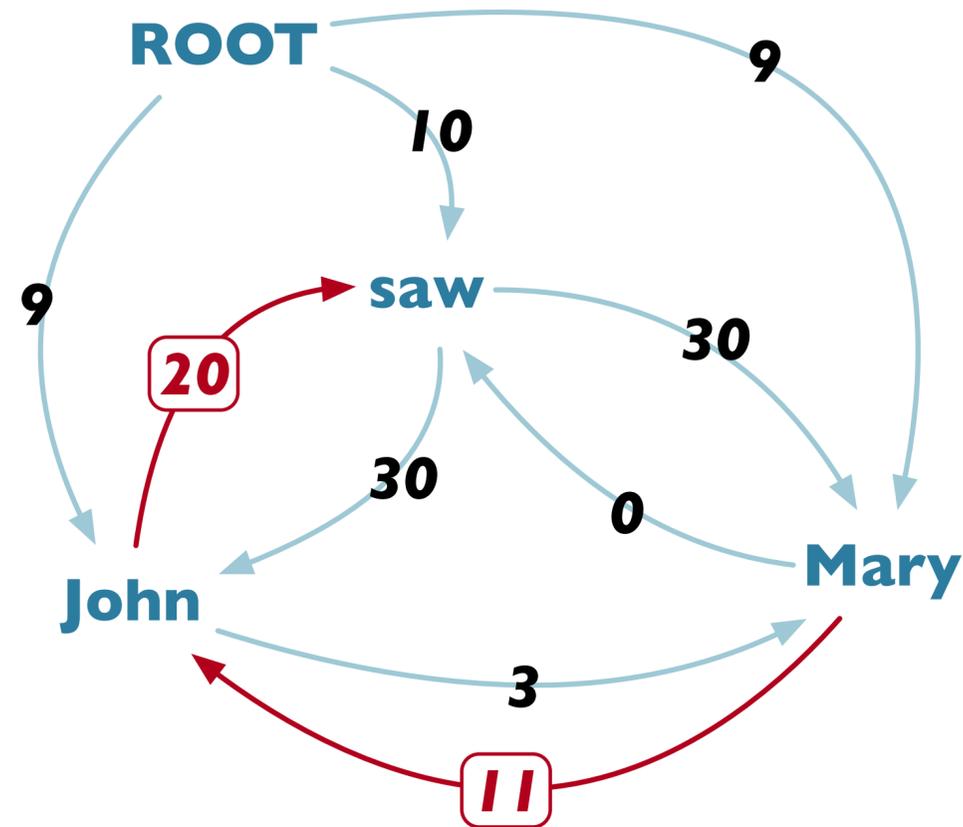
# Step 1 & 2

- Find, for each word, the highest scoring incoming edge.
- Is it a tree?
  - No, there's a cycle.
- Collapse the cycle
- And re-examine the edges again



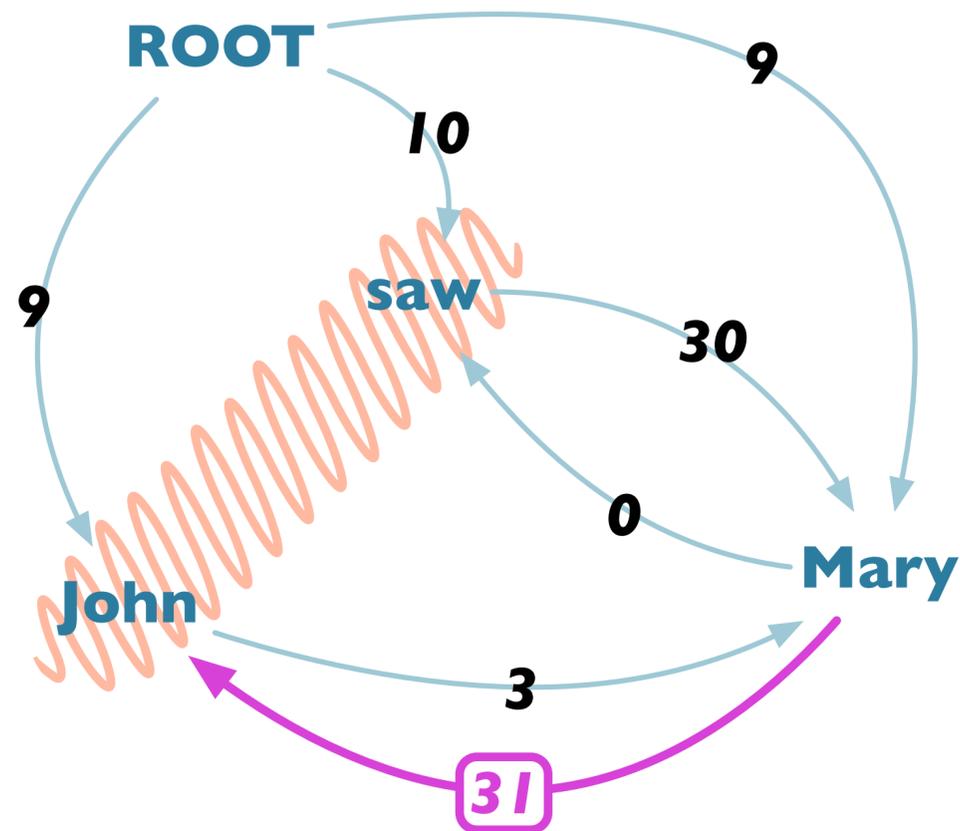
# Calculating Weights for Collapsed Vertex

$$s(\text{Mary}, C) = 11 + 20 = 31$$



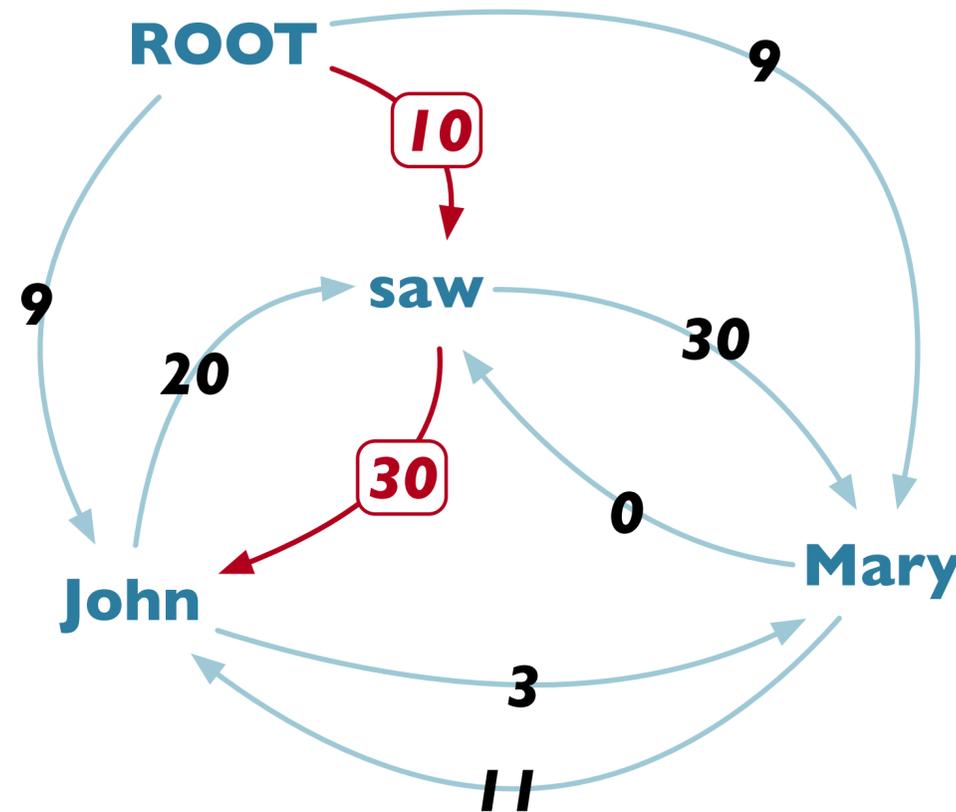
# Calculating Weights for Collapsed Vertex

$$s(\text{Mary}, C) = 11 + 20 = 31$$



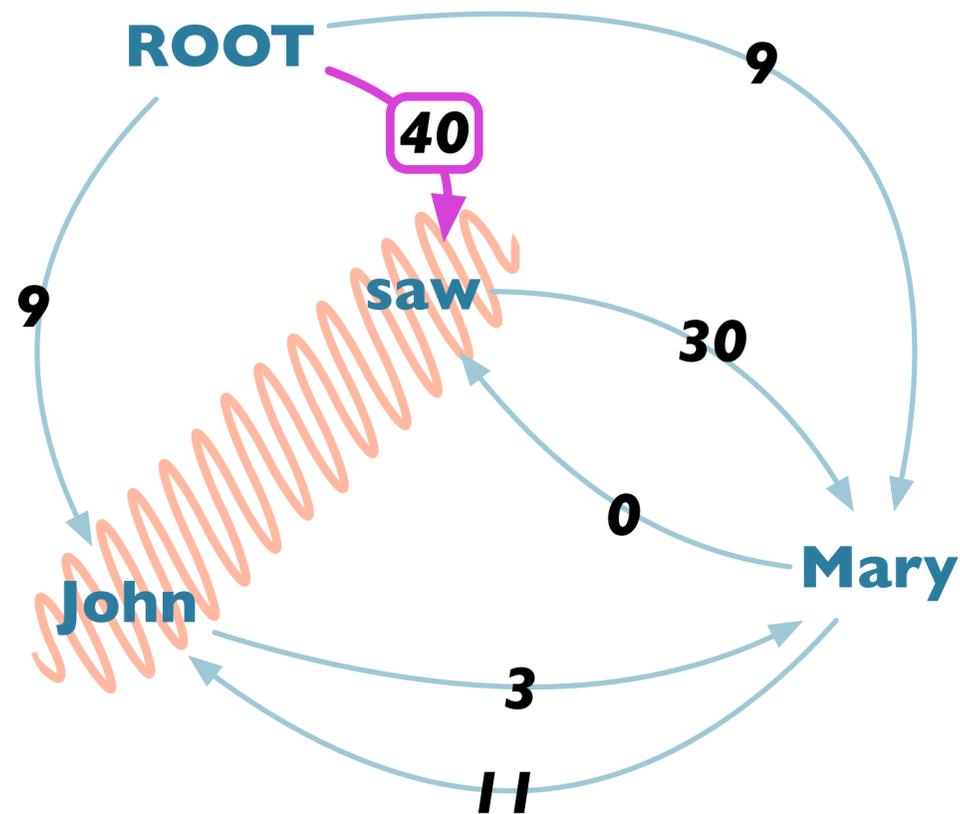
# Calculating Weights for Collapsed Vertex

$$s(\text{ROOT}, C) = 10 + 30 = 40$$



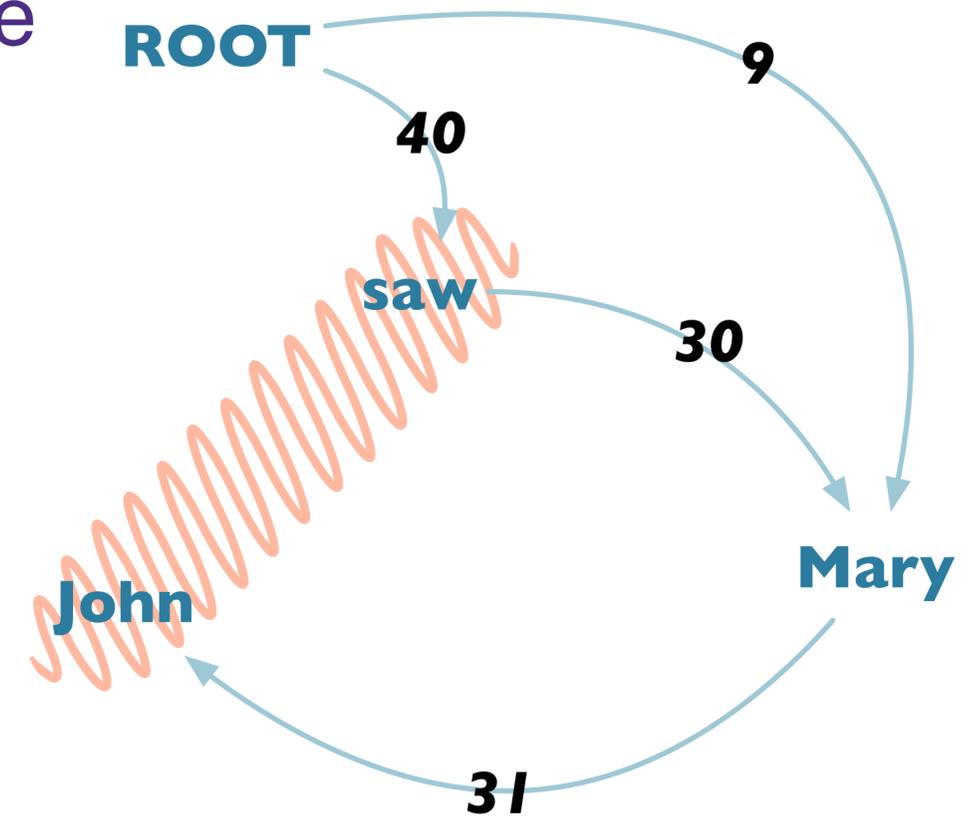
# Calculating Weights for Collapsed Vertex

$$s(\text{ROOT}, C) = 10 + 30 = 40$$



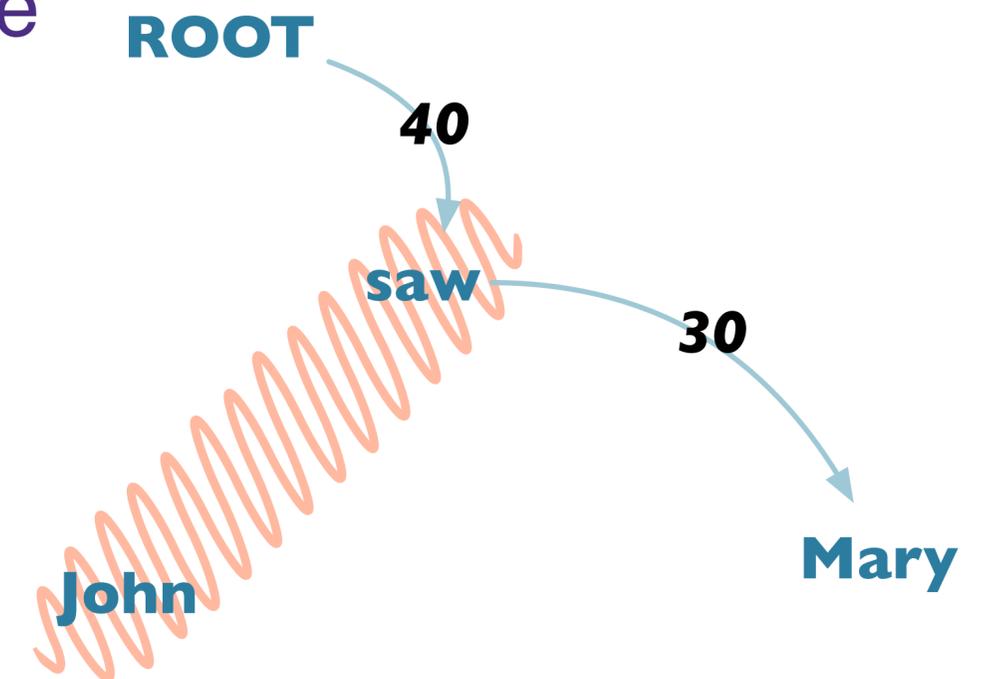
# Step 3

- With cycle collapsed, recurse on step 1:
- Keep highest weighted incoming edge for each edge



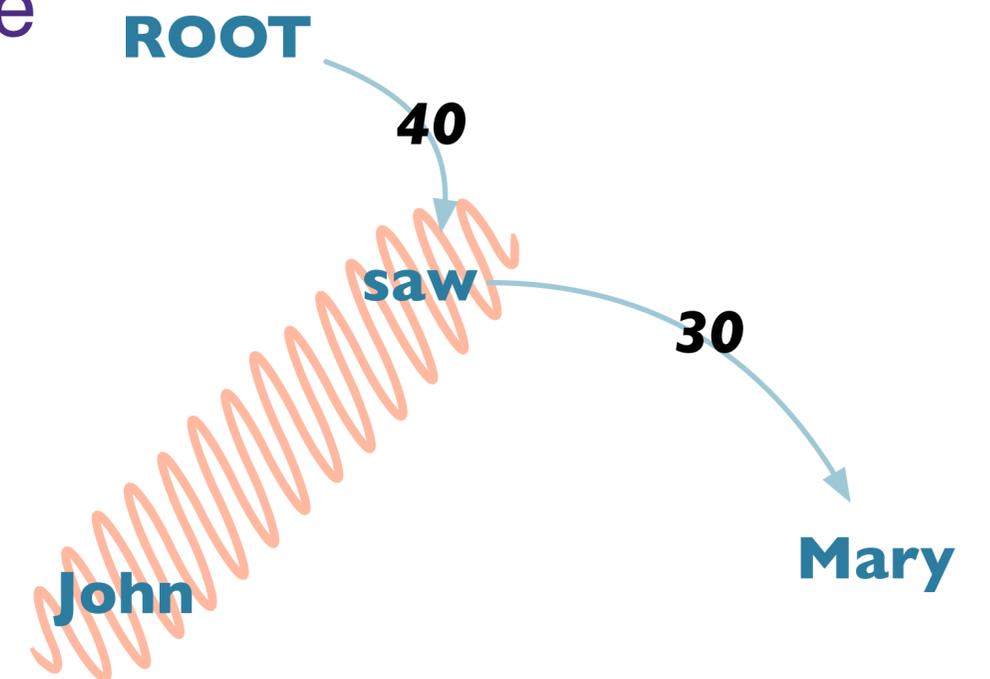
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- With cycle collapsed, recurse on step 1:
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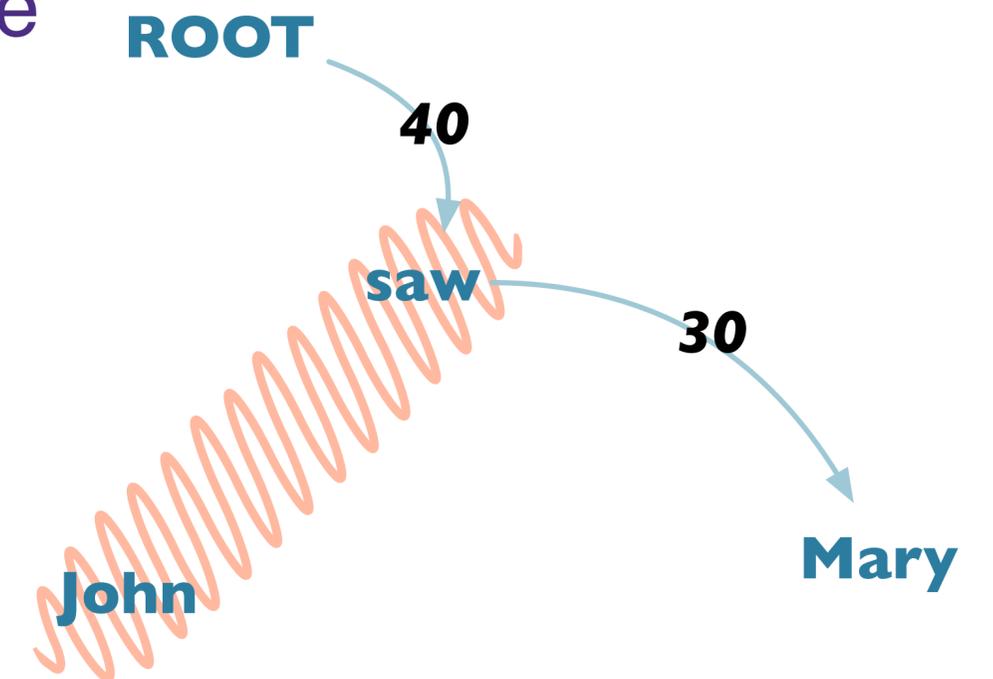
# Step 3

- With cycle collapsed, recurse on step 1:
- Keep highest weighted incoming edge for each edge
- Is it a tree?



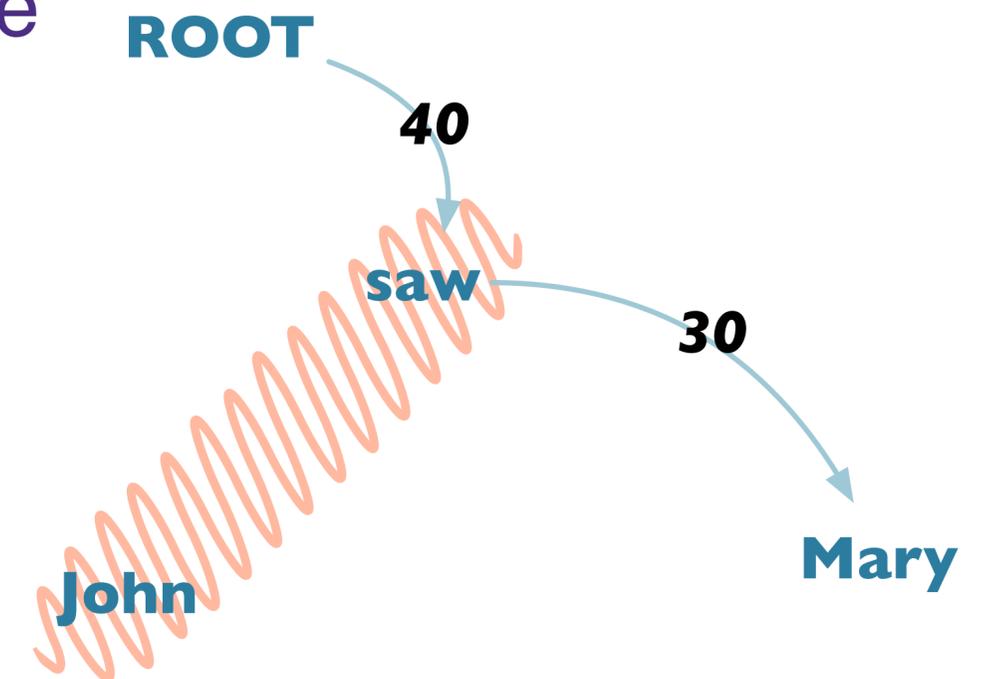
# Step 3

- With cycle collapsed, recurse on step 1:
- Keep highest weighted incoming edge for each edge
- Is it a tree?
  - **Yes!**



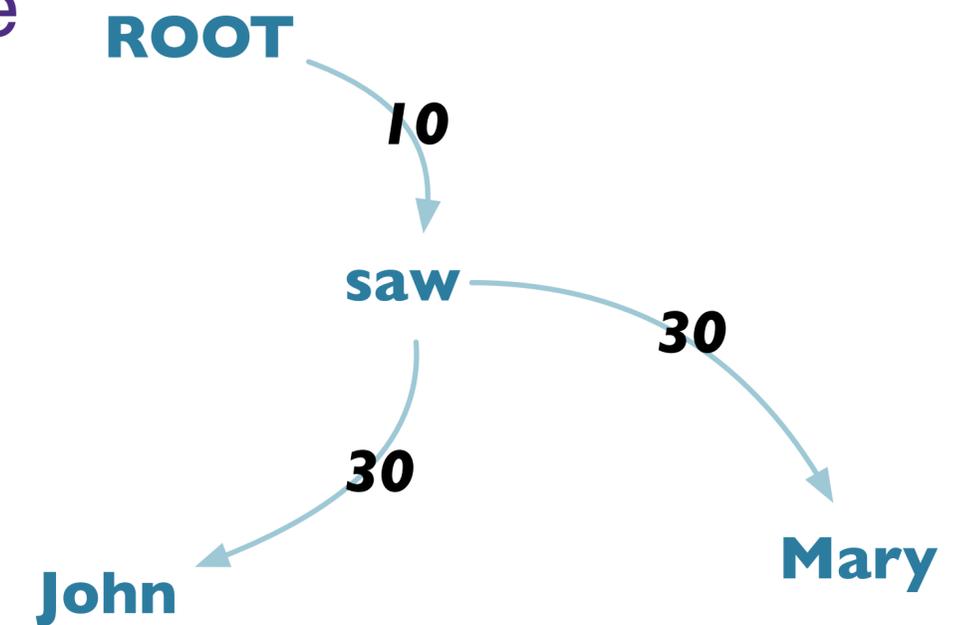
# Step 3

- With cycle collapsed, recurse on step 1:
- Keep highest weighted incoming edge for each edge
- Is it a tree?
  - **Yes!**
  - ...but must recover collapsed portions.



# Step 3

- With cycle collapsed, recurse on step 1:
- Keep highest weighted incoming edge for each edge
- Is it a tree?
  - **Yes!**
  - ...but must recover collapsed portions.



# MST Algorithm

**function** MAXSPANNINGTREE( $G=(V,E)$ ,  $root$ ,  $score$ ) **returns** *spanning tree*

$F \leftarrow []$

$T' \leftarrow []$

$score' \leftarrow []$

**for each**  $v \in V$  **do**

$bestInEdge \leftarrow \operatorname{argmax}_{e=(u,v) \in E} score[e]$

$F \leftarrow F \cup bestInEdge$

**for each**  $e=(u,v) \in E$  **do**

$score'[e] \leftarrow score[e] - score[bestInEdge]$

**if**  $T=(V,F)$  is a spanning tree **then return** it

**else**

$C \leftarrow$  a cycle in  $F$

$G' \leftarrow \text{CONTRACT}(G, C)$

$T' \leftarrow \text{MAXSPANNINGTREE}(G', root, score')$

$T \leftarrow \text{EXPAND}(T', C)$

**return**  $T$

**function** CONTRACT( $G, C$ ) **returns** *contracted graph*

**function** EXPAND( $T, C$ ) **returns** *expanded graph*

**Figure 15.13** The Chu-Liu Edmonds algorithm for finding a maximum spanning tree in a weighted directed graph.

# Learning Weights

- Weights for arc-factored model learned from dependency treebank
  - Weights learned for tuple  $( w_i, w_j, l )$
- McDonald et al, 2005a employed discriminative ML
  - MIRA (Crammer and Singer, 2003)
- Operates on vector of local features

# Features for Learning Weights

- Simple categorical features for  $(w_i, L, w_j)$  including:
  - Identity of  $w_i$  (or char 5-gram prefix), POS of  $w_i$
  - Identity of  $w_j$  (or char 5-gram prefix), POS of  $w_j$
  - Label of  $L$ , direction of  $L$
  - Number of words between  $w_i, w_j$
  - POS tag of  $w_{i-1}$ , POS tag of  $w_{i+1}$
  - POS tag of  $w_{j-1}$ , POS tag of  $w_{j+1}$
- Features conjoined with direction of attachment and distance between words

# Neural Graph-based Parsing

- Instead of hand-engineered features, let a neural network learn which features matter!
- Same algorithm, but scores for arcs from NN

## Simple and Accurate Dependency Parsing Using Bidirectional LSTM Feature Representations

**Eliyahu Kiperwasser**  
Computer Science Department  
Bar-Ilan University  
Ramat-Gan, Israel  
elikip@gmail.com

**Yoav Goldberg**  
Computer Science Department  
Bar-Ilan University  
Ramat-Gan, Israel  
yoav.goldberg@gmail.com

### Abstract

We present a simple and effective scheme for dependency parsing which is based on bidirectional-LSTMs (BiLSTMs). Each sentence token is associated with a BiLSTM vec-

arc-factored (first order) models (McDonald, 2006), in which the scoring function for a tree decomposes over the individual arcs of the tree. More elaborate models look at larger (overlapping) parts, requiring more sophisticated inference and training algorithms

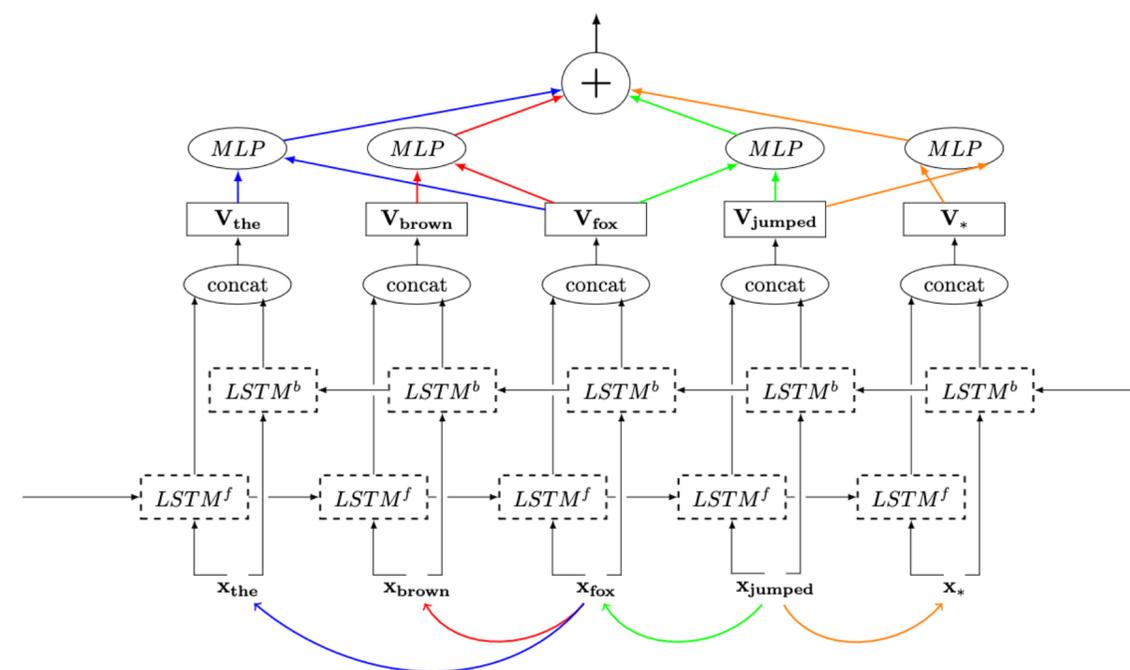


Figure 2: Illustration of the neural model scheme of the graph-based parser when calculating the score of a given parse tree. The parse tree is depicted below the sentence. Each dependency arc in the sentence is scored using an MLP that is fed the BiLSTM encoding of the words at the arc's end points (the colors of the arcs correspond to colors of the MLP inputs above), and the individual arc scores are summed to produce the final score. All the MLPs share the same parameters. The figure depicts a single-layer BiLSTM, while in practice we use two layers. When parsing a sentence, we compute scores for all possible  $n^2$  arcs, and find the best scoring tree using a dynamic-programming algorithm.

# Dependency Parsing

- Dependency Grammars:
  - Compactly represent predicate–argument structure
  - Lexicalized, localized
  - Natural handling of flexible word order
- Dependency parsing:
  - Conversion to phrase structure trees
  - Graph-based parsing (MST), efficient non-proj  $O(n^2)$
  - Next time: *Transition-based parsing*

# Further Reading

- Ryan McDonald, Koby Crammer, and Fernando Pereira. 2005. Online Large-Margin Training of Dependency Parsers. In *Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, pages 91–98. May. [\[link\]](#)
- Ryan McDonald, Fernando Pereira, K. Ribarov, and Jan Hajič. 2005b. Non-projective dependency parsing using spanning tree algorithms. In *Proceedings of the conference on Human Language Technology and Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, pages 523–530. Association for Computational Linguistics. [\[link\]](#)
- Sandra Kübler, Ryan McDonald, and Joakim Nivre. 2009. *Dependency Parsing*. Morgan & Claypool. [\[link\]](#)
- Jason M. Eisner. 1996. Three new probabilistic models for dependency parsing: An exploration. In *Proceedings of the 16th Conference on Computational Linguistics*, pages 340–345. Association for Computational Linguistics. [\[link\]](#)
- Michael Collins. 1999. *Head-Driven Statistical Models For Natural Language Parsing*. [\[link\]](#)
- Kiperwasser and Golberg 2016, "[Simple and Accurate Dependency Parsing Using Bidirectional LSTM Feature Representations](#)", *Transactions of the ACL*.