

Chapter 2-3

Structure – Phrase-markers



Transformational Grammar

Engl 424

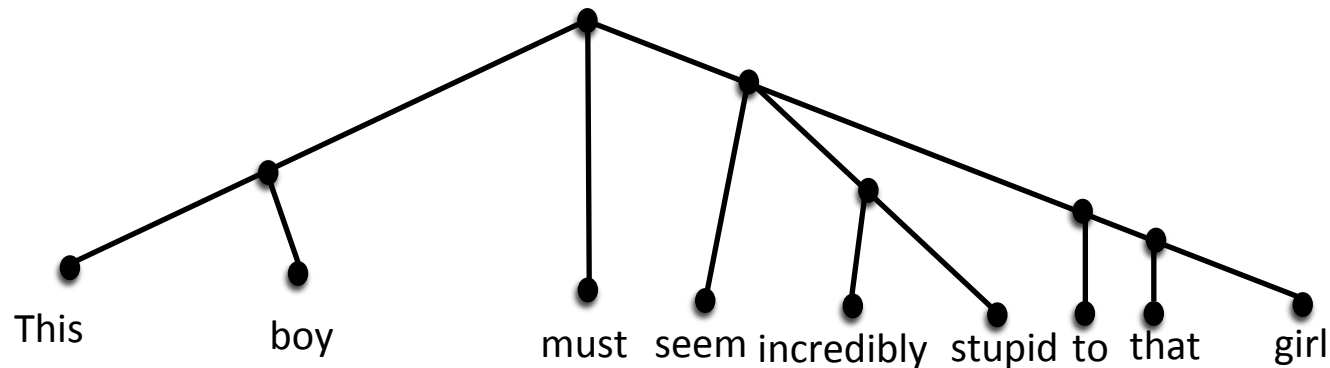
Hayfa Alhomaïd

Intuitions about Structure

➔ There are two types of intuitions about the native language syntax:

- Intuitions about how sound-sequences are structured into larger structural units (constituents).
- Intuitions about whether particular sets of constituents belong to the same category or not.

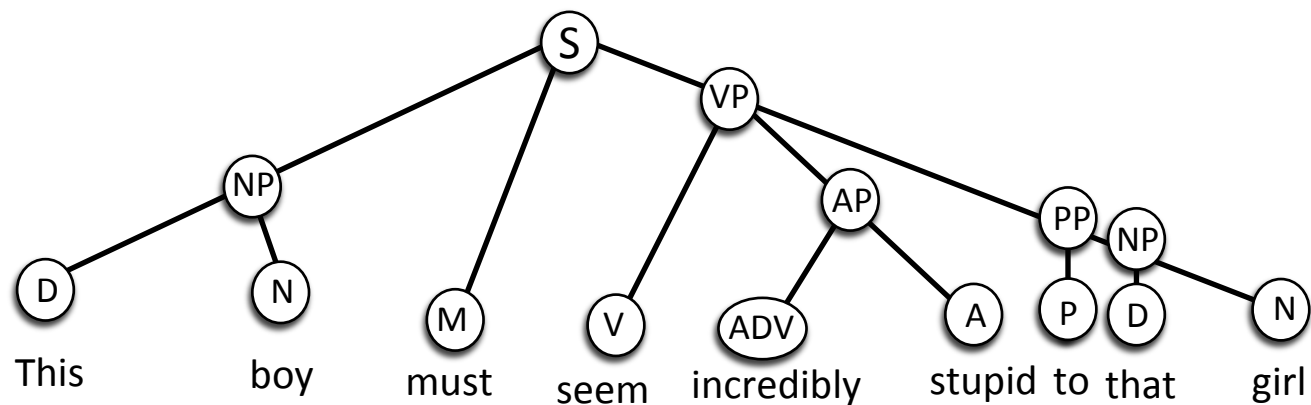
E.g. This boy must seem incredibly stupid to that girl



Intuitions about Structure

➔ There are two types of representation that we can analyze the sentences using them:

1- Phrase-marker (labeled tree diagram)



2- Labeled bracketing

[S[NP[D this][N boy]][M must][VP[V seem][AP [ADV incredibly][A stupid]
[PP[P to][NP [D that][N girl]]]]]]]

S	Sentence/clause
NP	Noun phrase
VP	Verb phrase
AP	Adjective phrase
PP	Prepositional phrase
ADV	Adverb
D	Determiner
N	Noun
M	Modal
V	Verb
A	Adjective
P	Preposition

Word-level categories

➤ What do we mean by word-level category?

It a set of words which share a common set of linguistic (especially morphological and syntactic) properties.

➤ What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Morphological evidence:

Certain types of inflection attach only to specific categories.

1- Verbs in English can be recognized by the fact that they have up to five forms; base, 3rd person singular, past tense, past participle, present participle. This can help to differentiate verbs from modals. E.g.

Base	3 rd person singular	Past tense	Past participle	Present participle
Show	Shows	Showed	Shown	Showing
can	*cans	could	*cannen	*canning

However, irregularity may cause some confusion since some verbs have one form that can serve two or three places E.g.

Base	3 rd person singular	Past tense	Past participle	Present participle
come	comes	came	come	coming
cut	cuts	cut	cut	cutting

Word-level categories

- What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Morphological evidence:

Certain types of inflection attach only to specific categories.

2- Adjectives and adverbs can also be distinguished by morphological grounds depending on the inflections since they are the only categories that take comparative –er. E.g.

Tall → taller , fast → faster , Soon → sooner

However, this can be problematic because some adjectives and adverbs do not take the comparative –er form, such as beautiful and intelligent.

Moreover, we can differentiate between adjectives and adverbs morphologically by the fact that adverbs take a distinctive –ly inflection. E.g.

Sad (A) → sadly (ADV)

Lucky (A) → luckily (ADV)

Word-level categories

- What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Morphological evidence:

Certain types of inflection attach only to specific categories.

3- Nouns can also be distinguished from adjectives and other categories by the fact that only nouns can take the plural –s. E.g.

Hero (N) → Heroes

Heroic (A) → *Herorics

4- Prepositions can be distinguished by saying that they are invariable forms that cannot take the verb inflections; -s, -d, -ing, -en, the comparative –er, the adverb inflection –ly, and the noun plural inflection –s.

5- As for determiners, they do not have any morphological distinctive feature that distinguishes them from other categories.

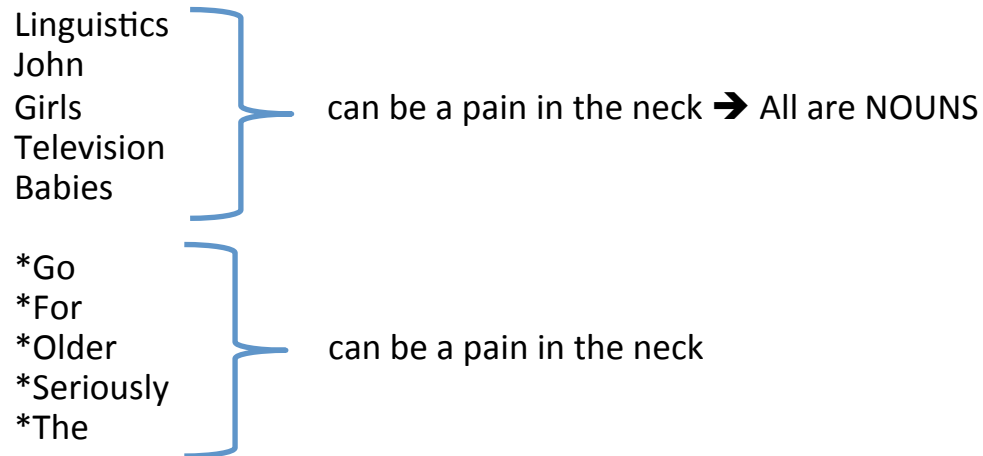
Word-level categories

- ➔ What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Syntactic evidence:

1- Only Nouns (not verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or prepositions) can be used in the following spot

_ can be a pain in the neck.



Word-level categories

- What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Syntactic evidence:

2- Only Verbs (not nouns, adjectives, adverbs, or prepositions) can be used in the following spot

They can _.

They can {
stay
hide
leave → All are VERBS
die
cry

*They can {
cute
down
woman

Word-level categories

- ➔ What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Syntactic evidence:

3- Only Modals can begin a three-word sentence

_ he be George?

Can
Could
Should
Will
Must



he be George? → All are MODALS

*Go
*For
*Older
*Seriously
*The



he be George?

Word-level categories

- ➔ What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types – categories like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth?

Syntactic evidence:

4- Only Adjectives and Adverbs can occur after (very)

He is very slow (A) / He walks very slowly (ADV)

*Very girls love to have fun (N) / *He very loves her (V) / *It happened very after the party (P)

We can differentiate between adverbs and adjectives by the fact that only adverbs can be used to complete four-word sentence

He treats her	{	badly politely well arrogantly	➔ All are ADVERBS
*He treats her	{	nice woman go	

However, adjectives also can be used to complete four-word sentence of the form “They are very _”

Phrasal categories: syntactic evidence

First evidence: Coordination

He has a cat and a dog

Is she in the kitchen or in the bathroom?

He speaks very slowly but very accurately

We can only conjoin constituents, nonconstituent sequences cannot be conjoined

*John rang up his mother and up his sister.

We can only conjoin constituents of one category

John wrote to Mary and to Fred (PP and PP) / John wrote a letter and a postcard (NP and NP)

*John wrote a letter and to Fred (NP and PP) / *John wrote to Fred and a letter (PP and NP)

Phrasal categories: syntactic evidence

Second evidence: Pronominalisation (a general property of natural languages that they have ability for referring to entities mentioned elsewhere in the same sentence).

1- Speaker A: What do you think of **the guy who wrote that unbelievably boring book on Transformational Grammar?**

Speaker B: I can't stand **him**.

2- Speaker A: Have you ever been **to Paris?**

Speaker B: No, I haven't been **there**.

3- John might **go home**, and **so** might Bill.

4- Many people consider John **extremely rude**, but I've never found him **so**.

We name these words that replace or refer back to another constituents **pro-constituents** or **proforms**

Phrasal categories: syntactic evidence

Third evidence: Ellipsis (to be omitted).

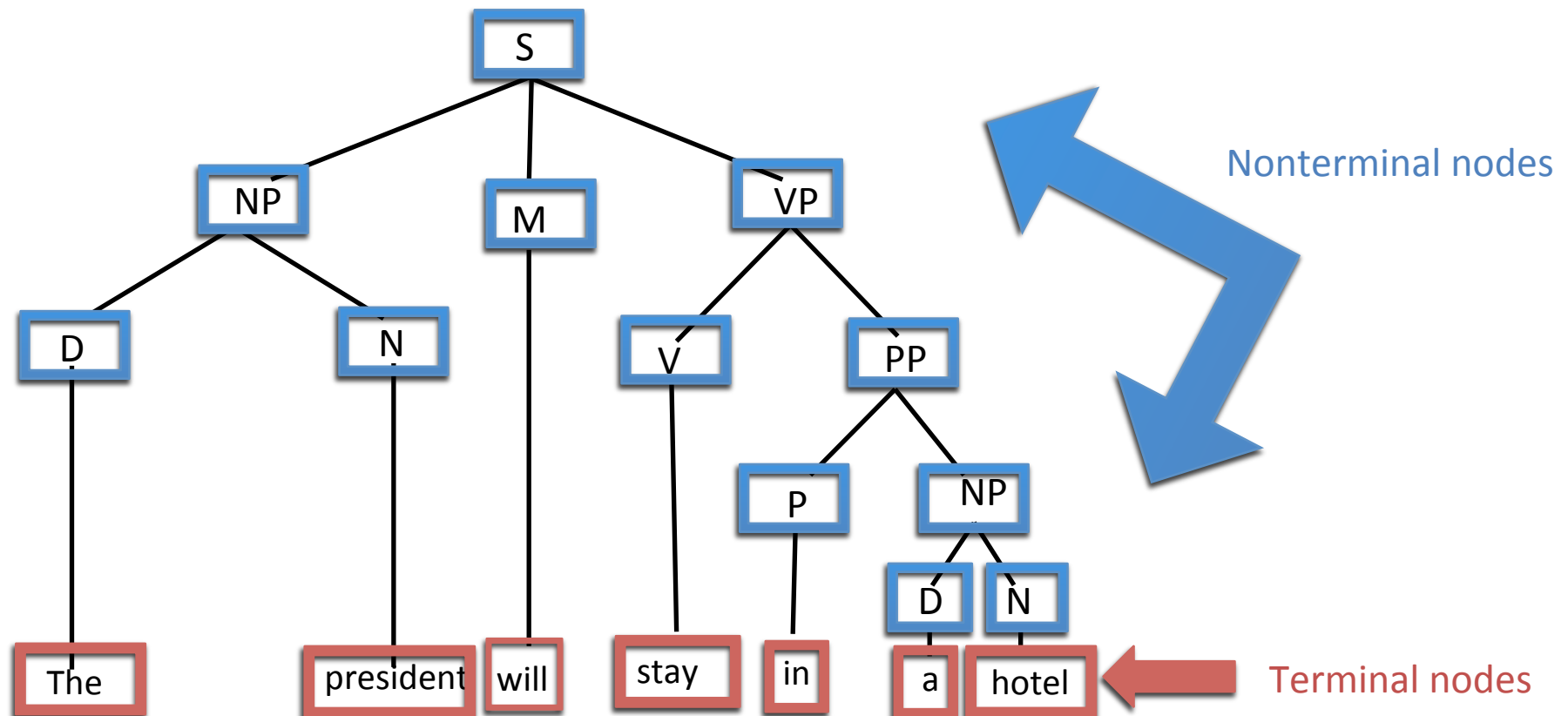
1- Speaker A: John won't **wash the dishes**.

Speaker B: I bet he will ~~wash the dishes~~ if you're nice to him.

2- John won't **help me with the dishes**, but his brother will ~~help me with the dishes~~.

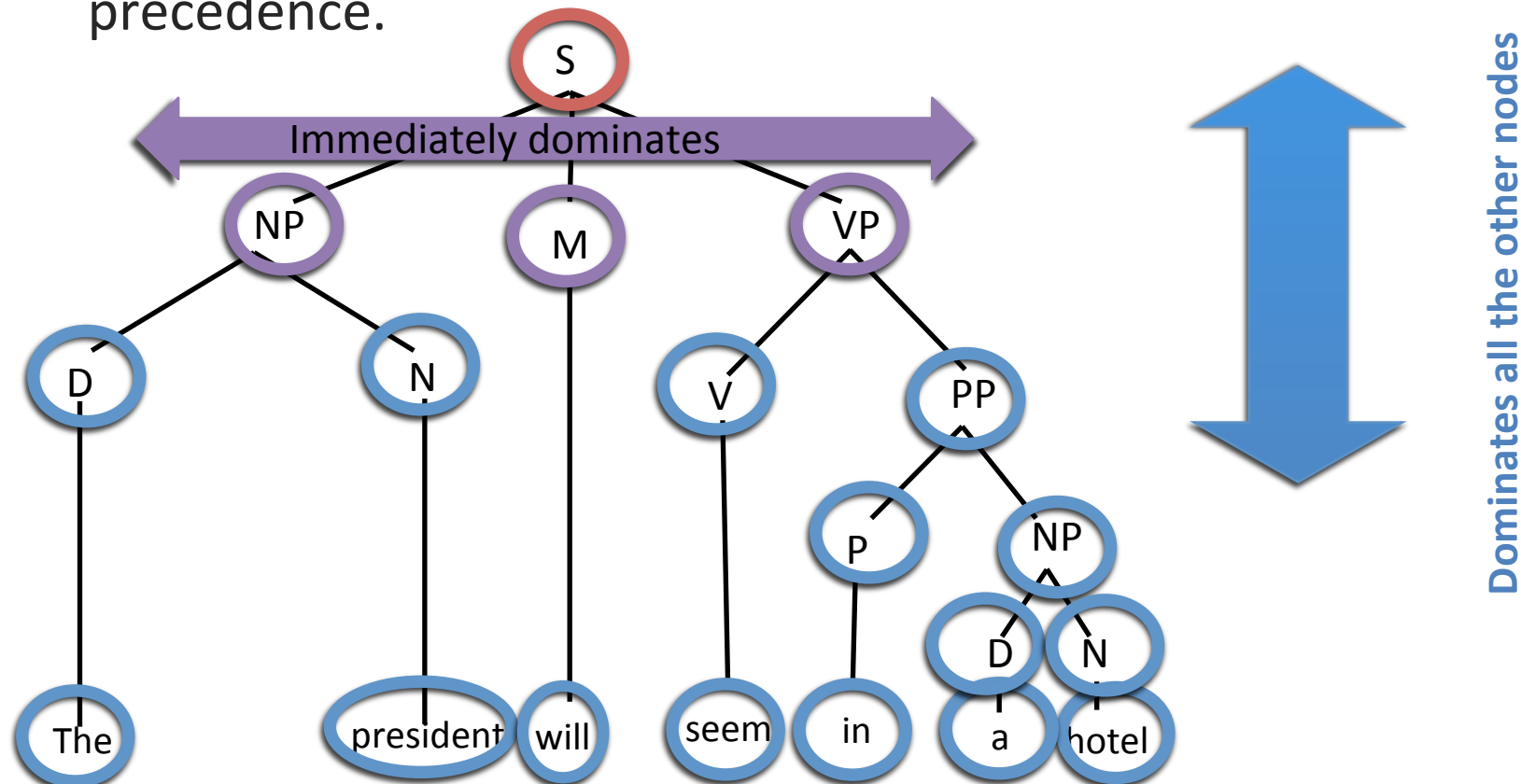
The nature of Phrase-markers

- A P-marker is a graph comprising a set of points (or nodes) connected by branches.



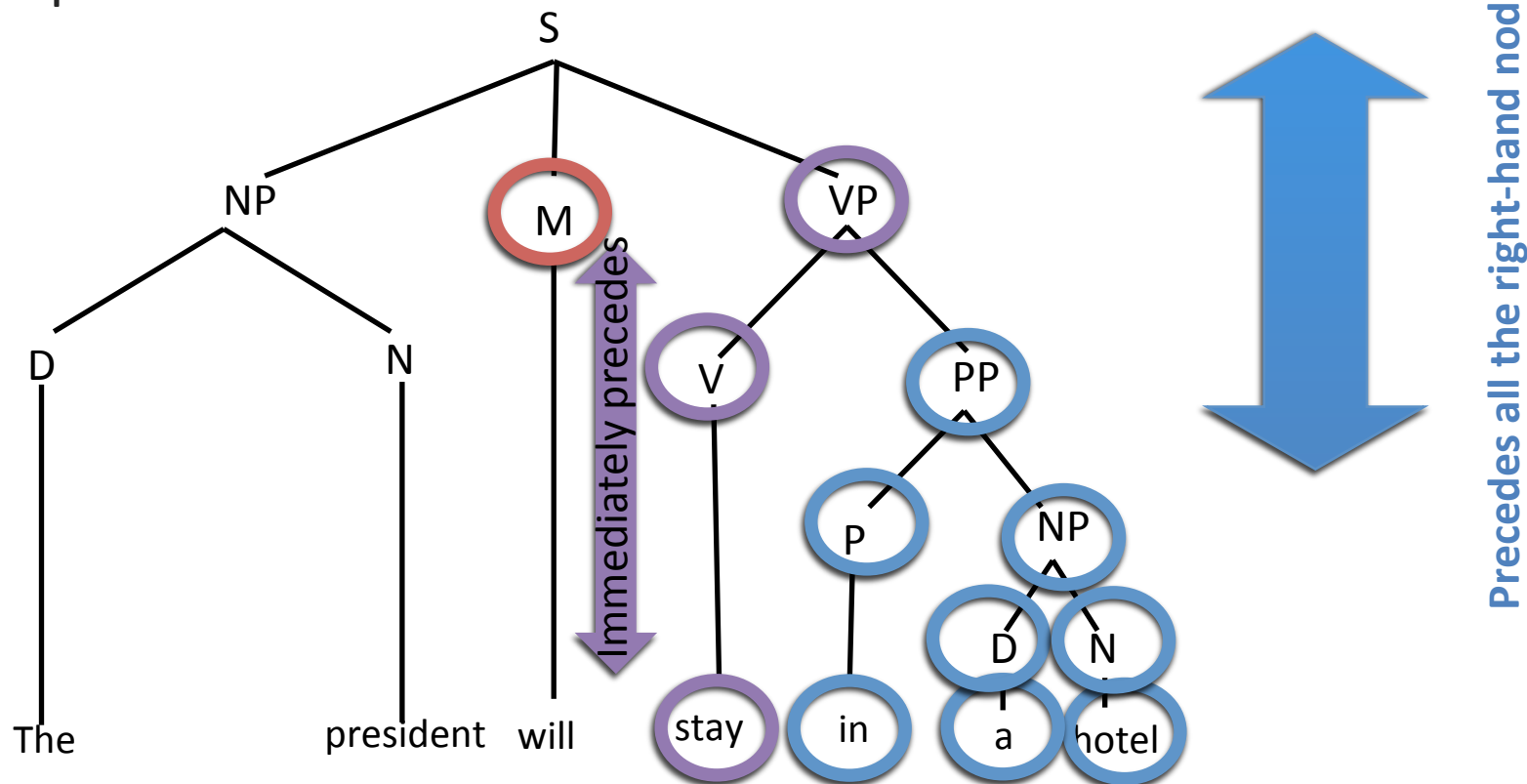
The nature of Phrase-markers

- Any given nodes contained in the same P-marker will be related by one of two different types of relation; by dominance, or by precedence.



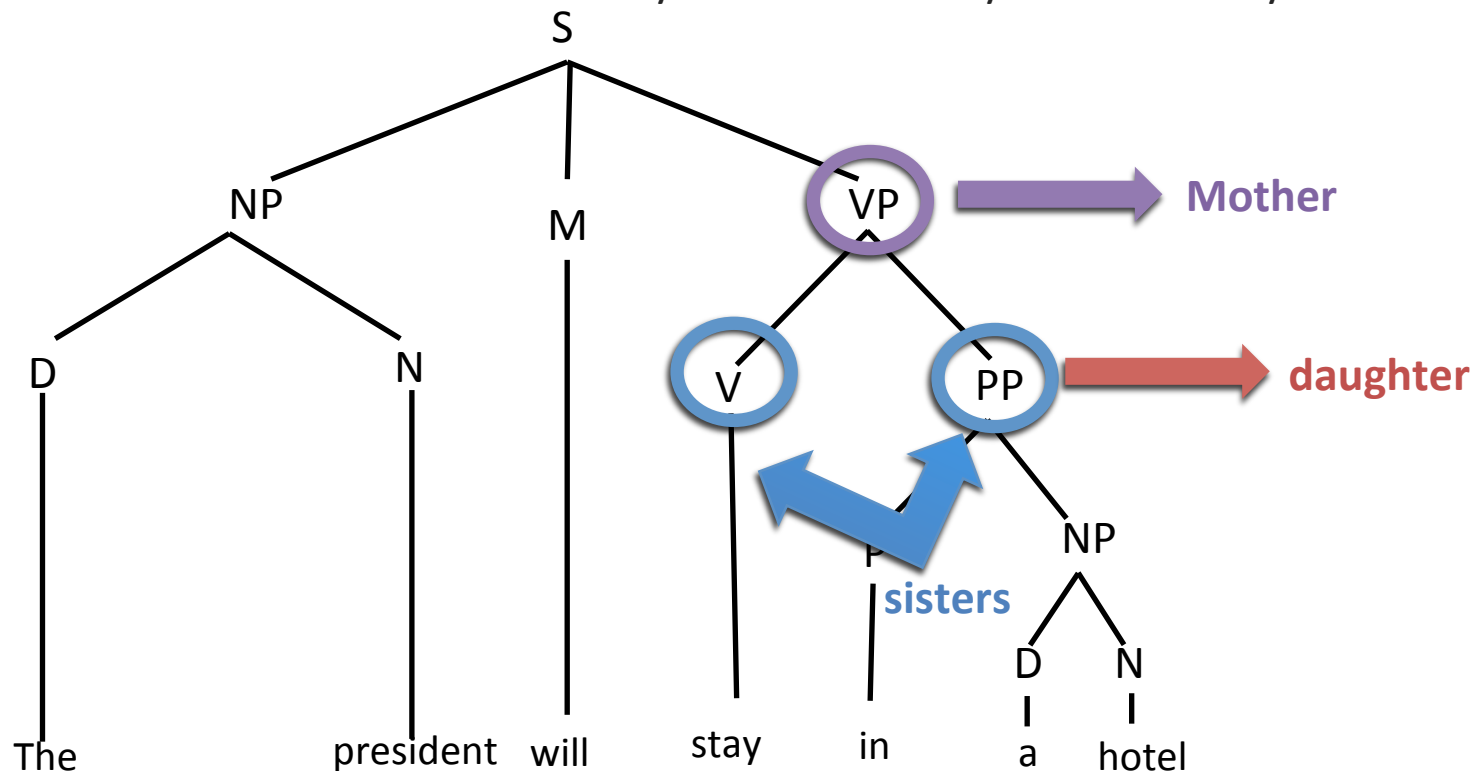
The nature of Phrase-markers

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The nature of Phrase-markers

- If one node immediately dominates another node, then the first one is the mother of the second, and the second one is the daughter of the first one.
- A set of nodes are sisters if they are immediately dominated by the same mother



This is all for today

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK 😊