

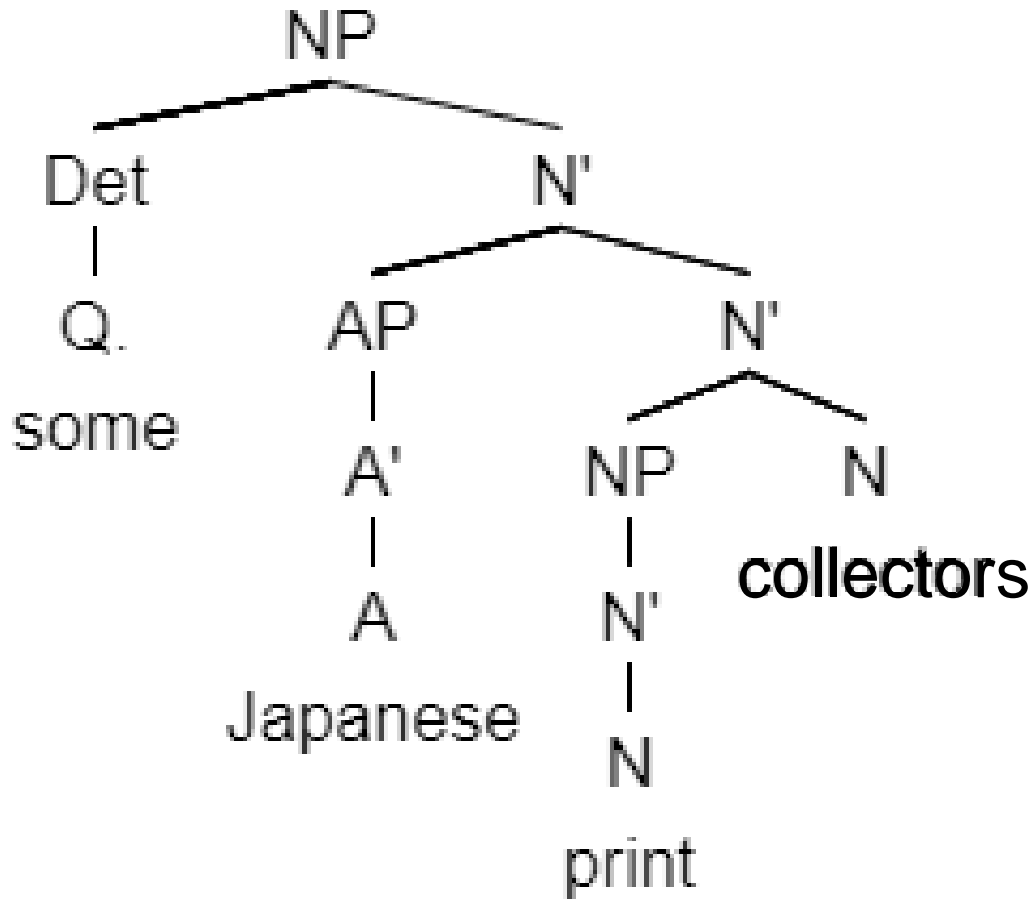
Section 4

Ambiguous structures

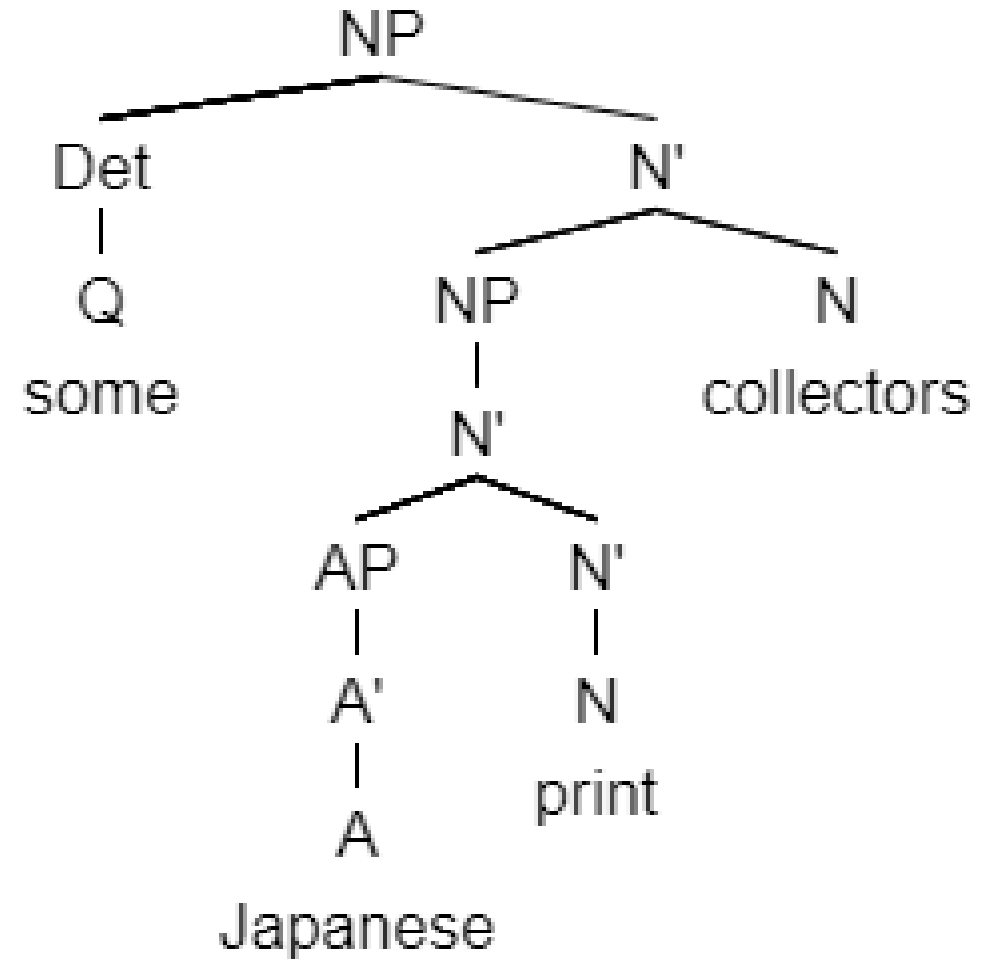
Structurally ambiguous noun phrase.

- A noun phrase is considered as **STRUCTURALLY AMBIGUOUS** when its structure permits more than one interpretation.
- Example:
 - 1. Some Japanese print collectors**
 - 1a. some **Japanese collectors** of prints
 - 1b. some **collectors** of Japanese prints
 - 2. More exciting ideas**
 - 2a. **more ideas** that are exciting
 - 2b. **ideas** that are more exciting

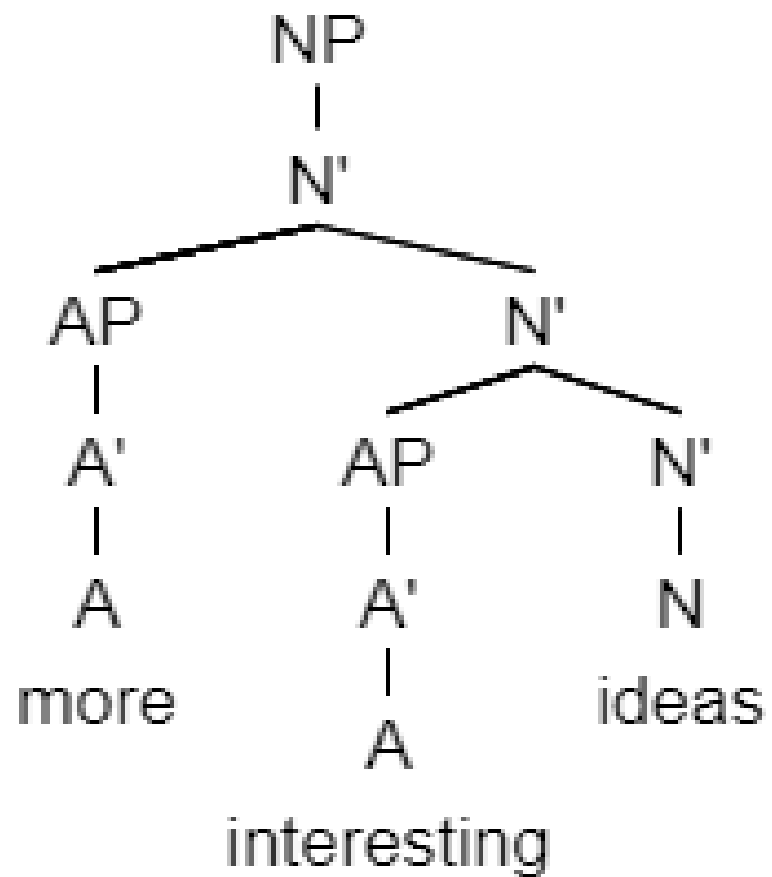
1a. some **Japanese collectors** of prints



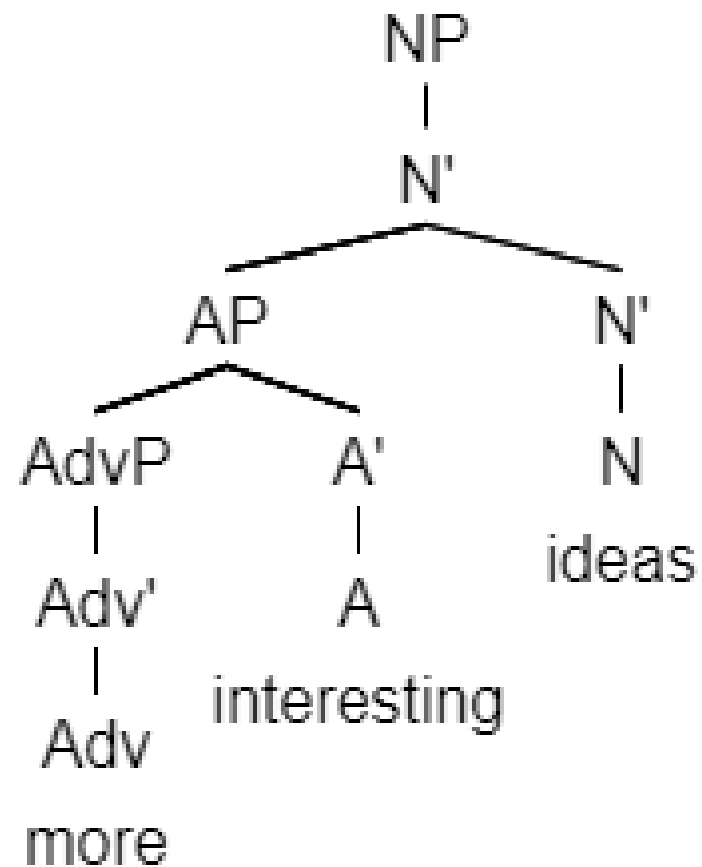
1b. some **collectors** of Japanese prints



2a. **more ideas** that are exciting



2b. **ideas** that are more exciting



Structurally ambiguous verb phrase.

1. [He] **watched the hunters with the binoculars.**

This verb phrase is structurally ambiguous because:

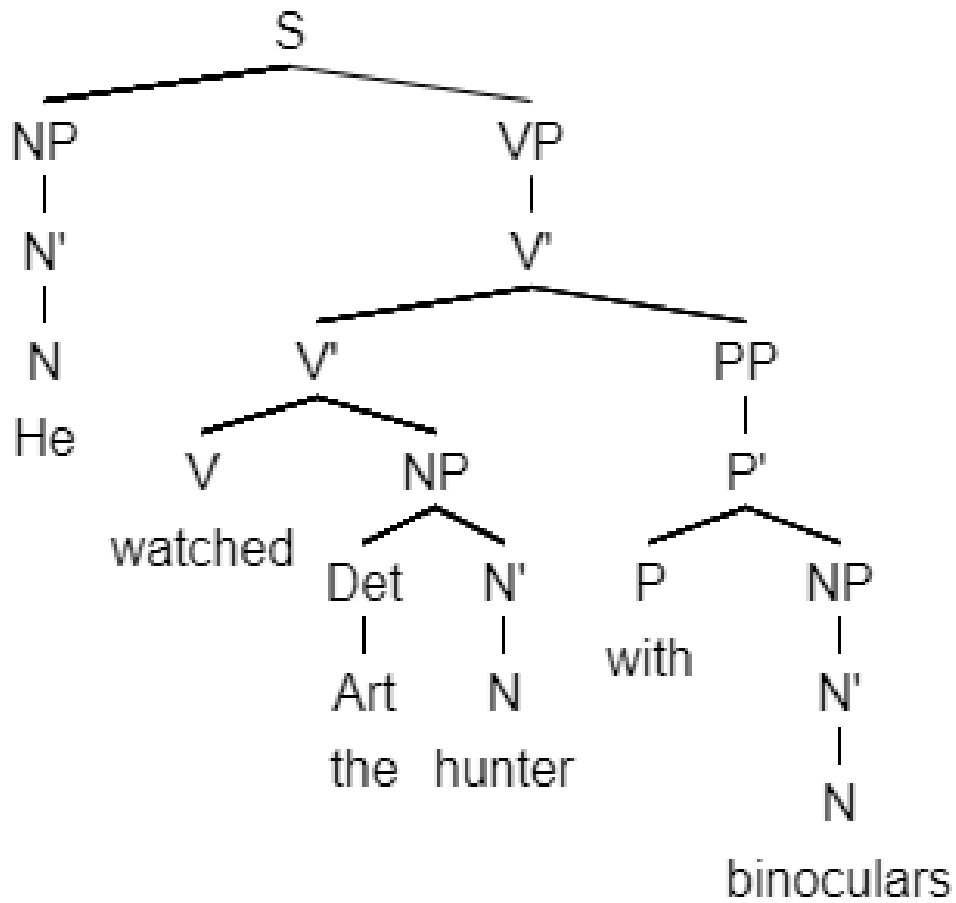
- 1a. He watched **the hunters** with binoculars.

→ SVOA

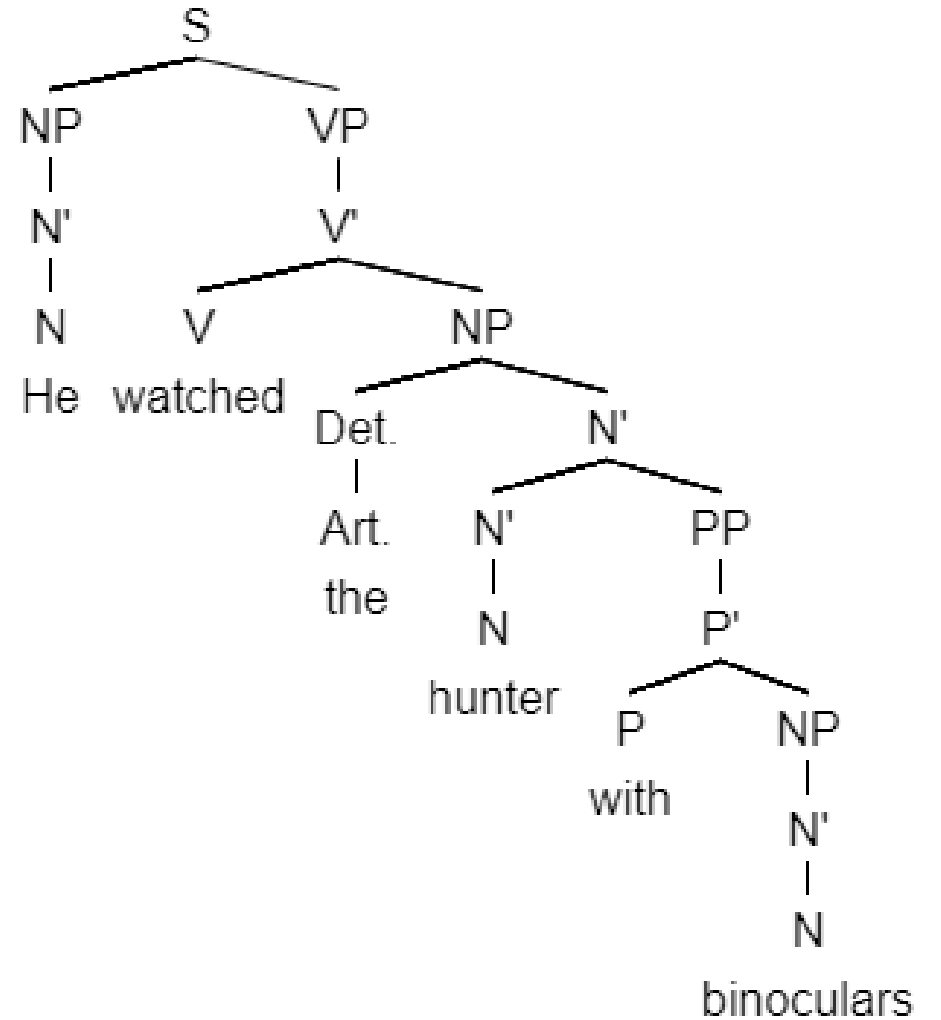
- 1b. He watched **the hunters with binoculars.**

→ SVO

1a. He watched **the hunters** with binoculars.
 → SVOA



1b. He watched **the hunters with binoculars**.
 → SVO



Structurally ambiguous verb phrase.

2. [They] **are moving sidewalks**.

This verb phrase is structurally ambiguous because:

- 2a. They **are moving** sidewalks.

→ SVO

- 2b. They **are** moving sidewalks.

→ SVC

Structurally ambiguous verb phrase.

3. [The witch] **turned on the stove**.

This verb phrase is structurally ambiguous because:

- 3a. The witch **turned on** the stove.

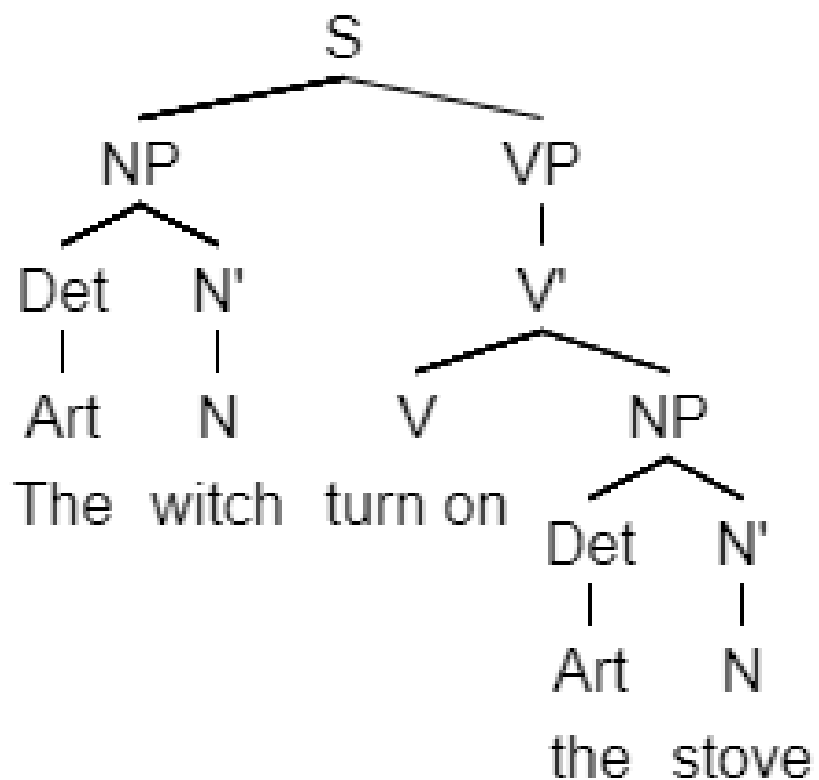
→ SVO

- 3b. The witch **turned** on the stove.

→ SVA

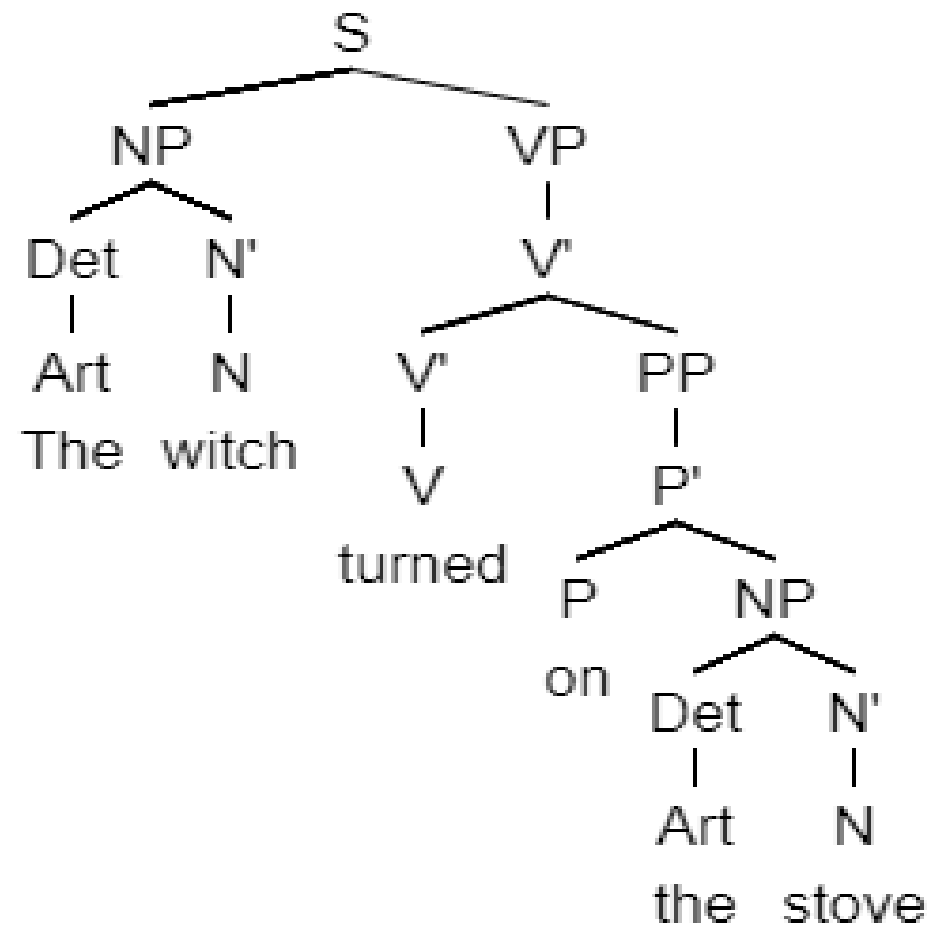
3a. The witch **turned on** the stove.

→ SVO



3b. The witch **turned** on the stove.

→ SVA



Exercise

1. An old car enthusiast
2. More boring subjects
3. John saw the performers with the binoculars.
4. She decided on the train.

Homework

1. A foreign stamp collector
2. An American car importer
3. More interesting places
4. Harry watched the dog with one eye.