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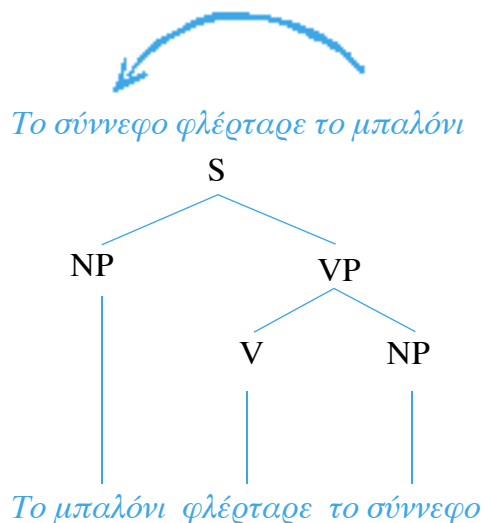
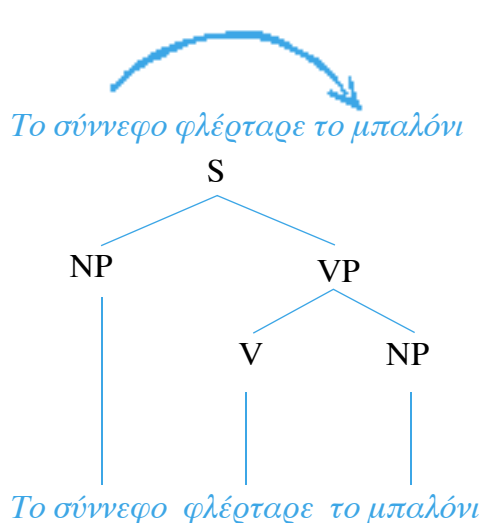
Μία πρόταση, δύο σημασίες (One sentence, two meanings)

While in English the relationship of the constituents (subject – object) is indicated by their order, in Greek this relationship is indicated by their case (subject = nominative, object = accusative).



When one sentence has two meanings, we say that this sentence is ambiguous and might be represented structurally in two different ways:

S: sentence
S: verb
NP: noun phrase
VP: verb phrase



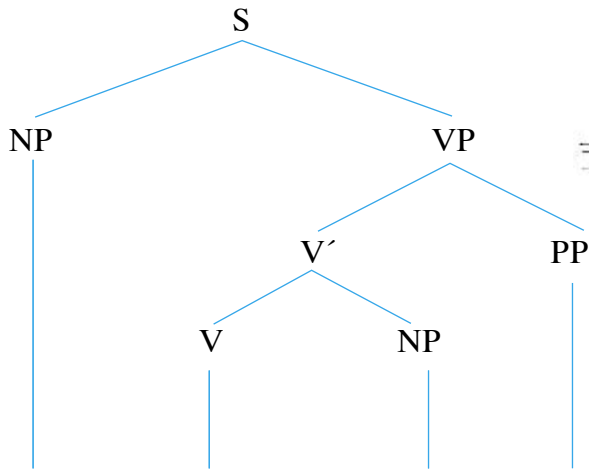
In clauses where the noun endings do not reveal their case (for example neuter nouns), we rely on the context or on our conception of the world to interpret the sentences.

*Το κορίτσι μύρισε το λουλούδι
Το ελάφι κινήγησε το λιοντάρι*

The prepositional phrase (PP) can be related either to the verb phrase or to the object noun phrase (NP).



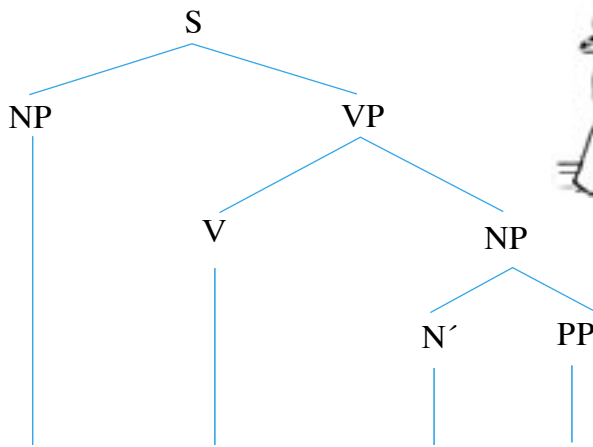
*Ποιος είχε τα κιάλια;
Ο Σαχίνης*



Ο Σαχίνης παρακολουθούσε τον κλέφτη με τα κιάλια



*Ποιος είχε τα κιάλια;
Ο κλέφτης*



Ο Σαχίνης παρακολουθούσε τον κλέφτη με τα κιάλια

ACTIVITIES

1. In the following sentences change the order of the constituents and indicate the direction of the action with an arrow

The girl kissed the boy

The boy kissed the girl

1. The cloud approaches the balloon
2. The statue fell in love with the pigeon

Can you show the direction of the action with an arrow? What happens if you change the order of the constituents in Greek?

1. Το κορίτσι φίλησε το αγόρι
2. Το σύννεφο πλησιάζει το μπαλόνι
3. Το άγαλμα ερωτεύτηκε το περιστέρι



2. Can you find which of the following sentences are ambiguous? What makes the other two sentences non ambiguous?

- Παντρεύτηκε μια καλή του φίλη
Παντρεύτηκε την καλύτερή του φίλη
Παντρεύτηκε η καλύτερή του φίλη

The ambiguity of some sentences lies not only in the absence of overt nominative-accusative distinction but also in the fact that the subject is optional in Greek.

3. Subject optionality might also result in two readings in embedded clauses:

Ο Σαχίνης είδε τον κλέφτη την ώρα που έμπαινε στο υπόγειο

Ποιος έμπαινε στο υπόγειο;

