November 5th, 2020

1 PRO, CP, no PRO, etc.

Although much of this can be derived from discussions or scribbles or videos, here are some actual examples of some sentences and trees that involve PRO (or don't).

Without recapping all of the story, the basic points are:

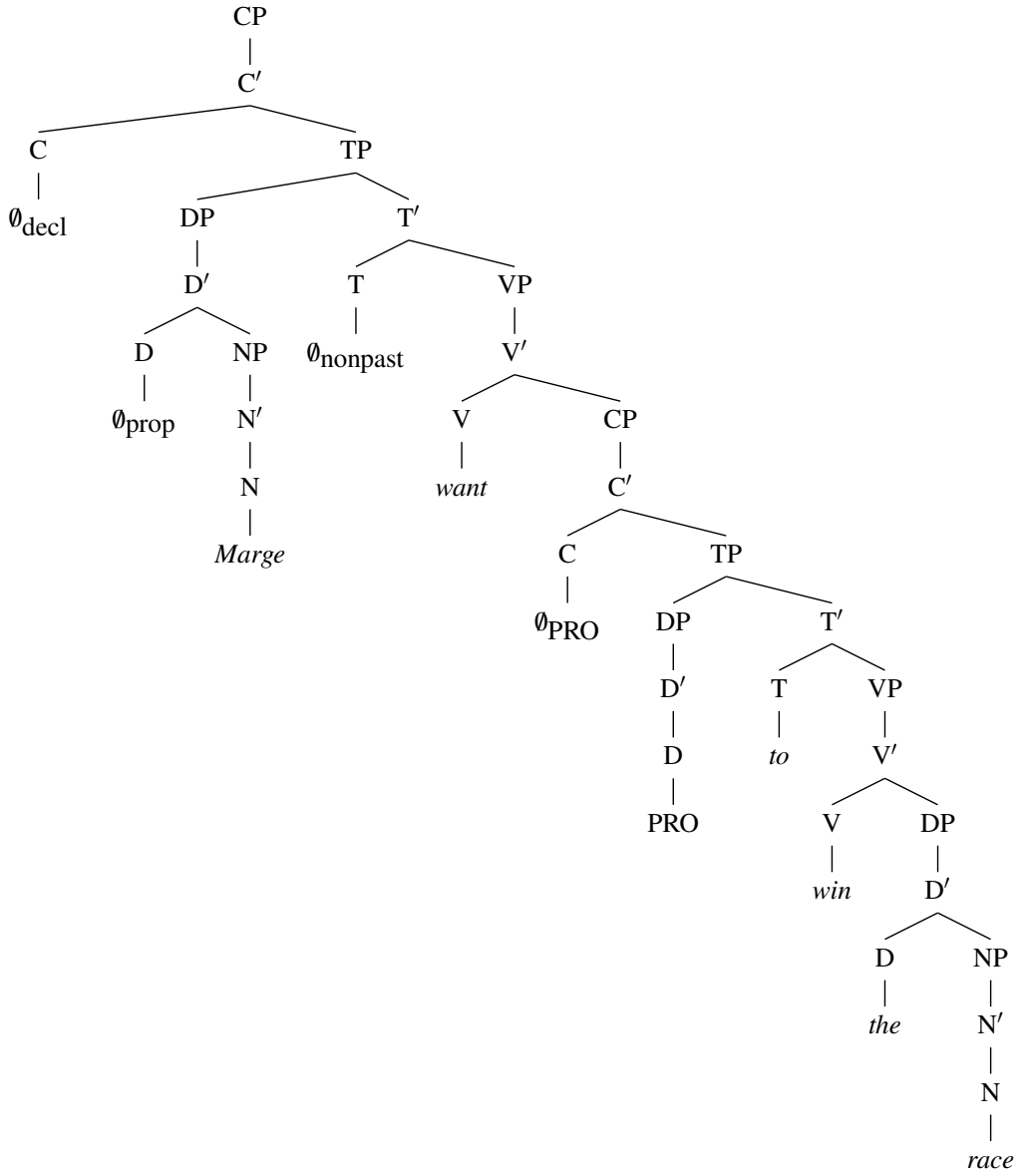
- PRO is a silent subject of infinitive clauses.
- When a clause is finite (past, nonpast, not infinitive), there is necessarily a CP.
- An infinitive clause is a TP uncless there's evidence that it is a CP.
- When there is a PRO, there is necessarily a CP. (That is, this counts as evidence.)
- When there is an overt C (e.g., *for*), there is necessarily a CP.
- The way to know if there is a PRO is to count the participants and see if there are more participants than there are overt phrases. If there are not enough overt phrases to go around (that is, if one thing seems to be playing two roles), that indicates that there is a PRO.

So, a case where there is a PRO:

(1) Marge wants to win the race.

(2) Marge wants [PRO to win the race]

Becase Marge is both wanting and winning, we need a PRO (and PRO will be the one winning, the subejct of the embedded infinitive clause). Because there is a PRO, we have a CP. And so the tree looks like this:

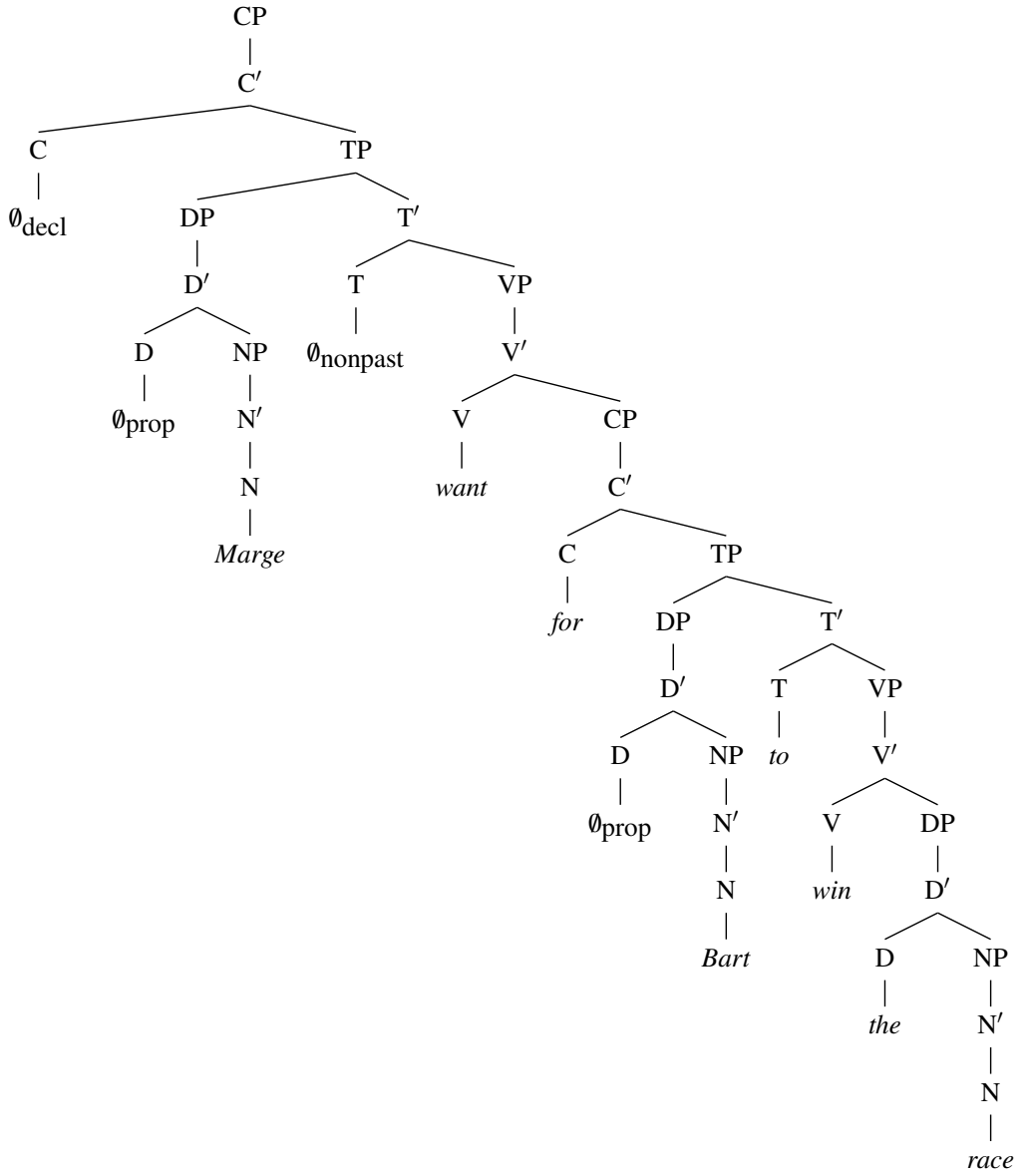


Now, a case where there is no PRO, but still an embedded infinitive.

(3) Marge wants for Bart to win the race.

(4) Marge wants [for [Bart to win the race]]

We have all the arguments (Marge is wanting, the embedded proposition is what Marge wants, Bart is winning), we do not need a PRO. The embedded clause is infinitive. It is clearly a CP because we can see the C (*for*). Thus:

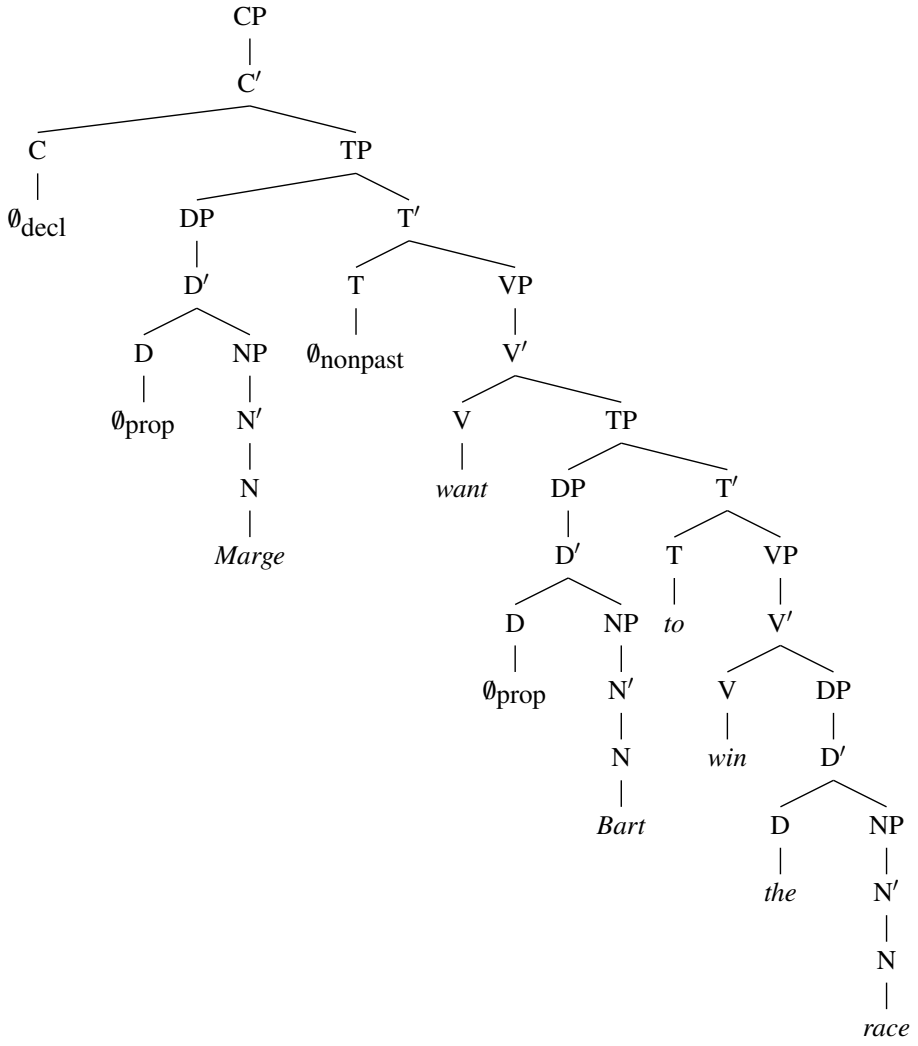


Now, a case where there is no PRO, an embedded infinitive, but no evidence of a CP.

(5) Marge wants Bart to win the race.

(6) Marge wants [Bart to win the race]

We have all the arguments (Marge is wanting, the embedded proposition is what Marge wants, Bart is winning), we do not need a PRO. The embedded clause is infinitive. There is no evidence for a CP, so we assume that there is no embedded CP, just a TP.



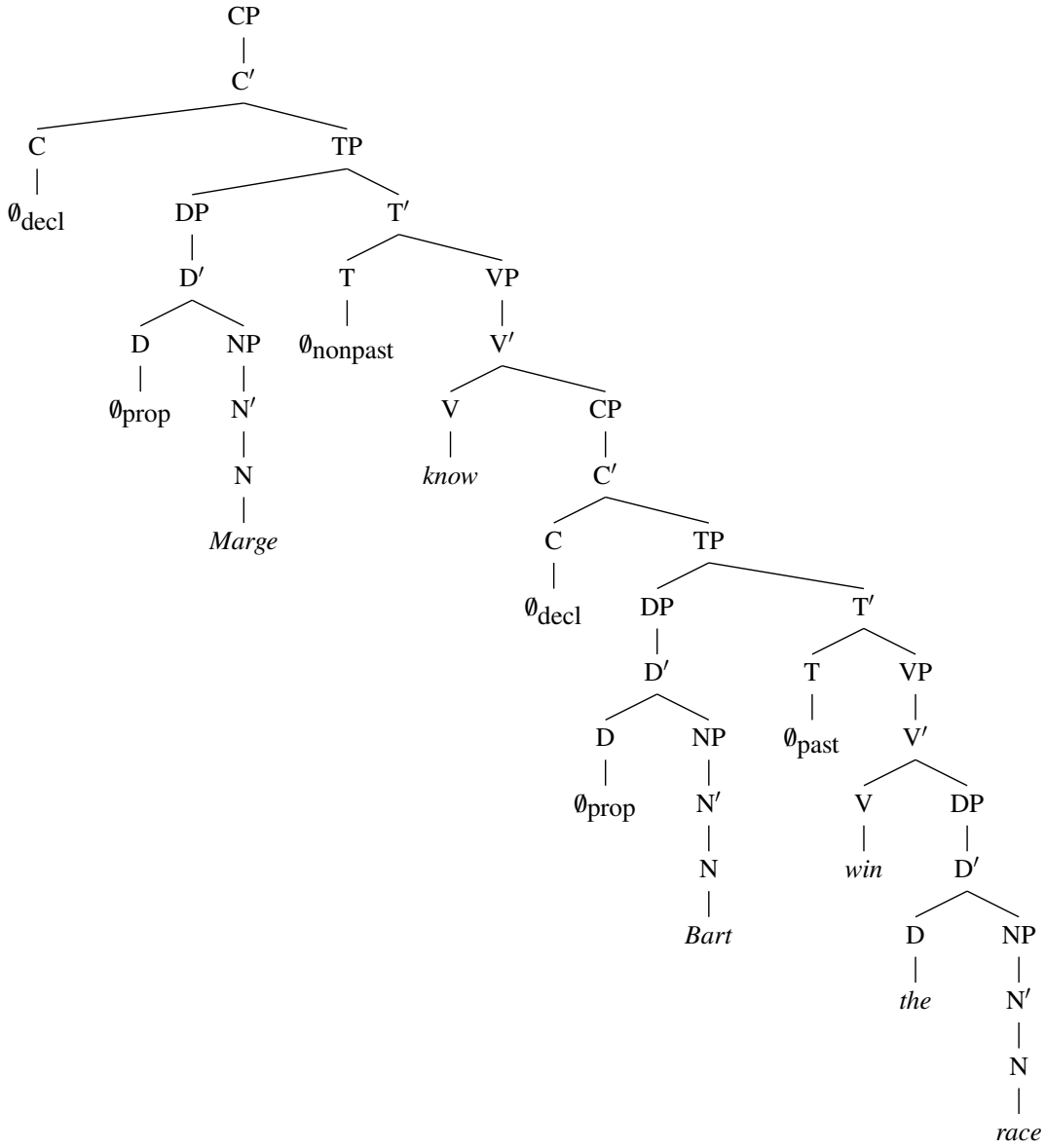
The rationale here for saying that there is no CP in this case has not been made clear, and might not even be made clear this semester. There is some reason to think this, though.

Now, an embedded finite clause. There is no *that*.

(7) Marge knows Bart won the race.

(8) Marge knows [Bart won the race]

The embedded clause is finite (past), so there isn't a chance of having a PRO (since PRO can only appear in infinitive clauses). There is no overt evidence of CP (no *that*), but the fact that it is finite is sufficient evidence of a CP.



And for completeness, may as well draw out the version with *that* as well:

(9) Marge knows that Bart won the race.

(10) Marge knows [that [Bart won the race]]

The embedded clause is finite (past), so there isn't a chance of having a PRO (since PRO can only appear in infinitive clauses). There is overt evidence of CP (*that*).