Speaker-Addressee Phrase and Commitment Phrase Syntax in the Treetops

Shigeru Miyagawa

MIT

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Function of syntax

Traditionally, the study of syntax looks at sentential structure and how it relates to, among other things, truth conditions.

I argue, following a growing body of work, that syntax also plays a role in the actual use of language in communication.

(e.g., Krifka 2020; Miyagawa 2012, 2017; Portner, Pak, and Zanuttini 2019; Sigurðsson 2004; Speas and Tenny 2003; Wiltschko 2017; Zanuttini 2008)

Specifically, an extended syntactic structure furnishes:

A position that is the locus of illocutionary force;

Information about the relationship of the speaker to the addressee;

Information about the speaker's commitment to the proposition.

All this takes place high in the tree structure – in the treetops.

What does this structure look like?

I will adopt an idea in Krifka (e.g., 2020) combined with Speas and Tenny (2003), similar to Wiltschko (2017).

What are the properties of this treetop structure?

Two classic works provide the answers:

   Ross's (1970) "On declarative sentences"

      Emonds's (1970) *Root and structure-preserving transformations*

Although these two works deal with distinct phenomena, we will see that, after we address the problems noted for each, **they are about the same thing** — properties associated with the treetop structure.

Ross (1970): Performative analysis, based on the study of performatives in Austin (1962)

(1) Prices slumped.

(2)
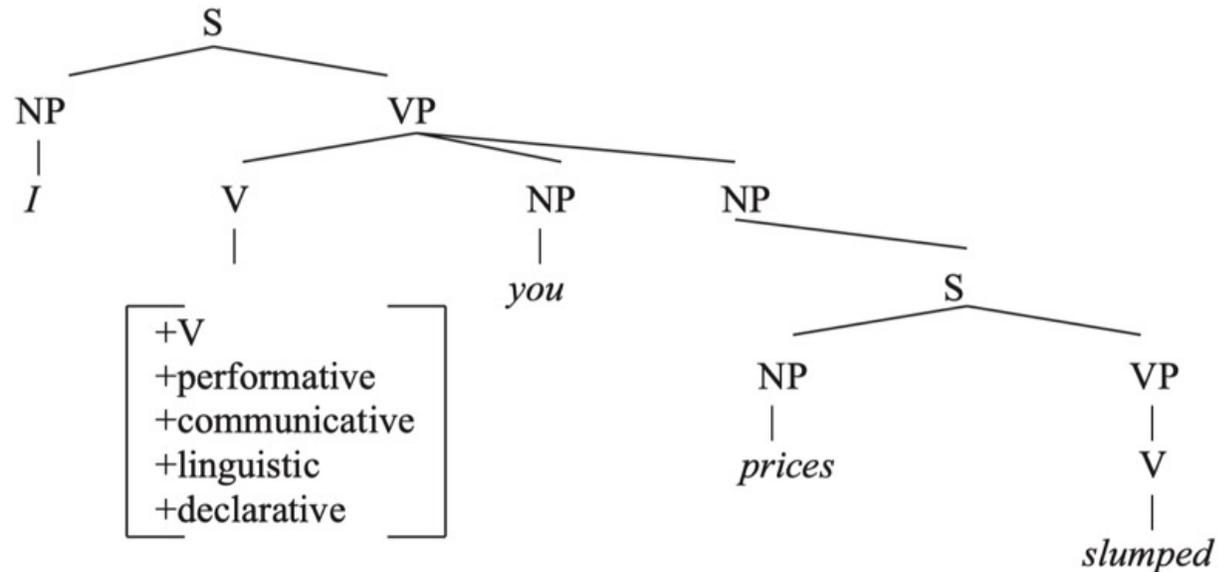
This super-structure has three major components above the CP:

Speaker

Addressee

A performative predicate (e.g., "declare")

Emonds (1970): Root

Non-structure preserving transformations occur only in root environments.

(3)   *Root*

A root will mean either the highest S in a tree, an S immediately dominated by the highest S, or the reported S in direct discourse. (Emonds 1970, 6)

Negative Constituent Preposing
(4)   a. Never had I had to borrow money.
        b. Because never had I had to borrow money, I have a lot saved.
        c. John said that never had he had to borrow money.
        d. *The fact that never had he had to borrow money is well-known.

Problems with Ross (1970)

Truth condition discrepancy (e.g., Lakoff 1975)

(5) a. Prices slumped.

b. I declare to you, prices slumped.

Evidence given for speaker-addressee is questionable

Ross (1970): non-local anaphor points to a discourse participant

(6)   **Tom** believed that the paper had been written by Ann and

       himself/*herself/*myself/*yourself.

(7)   The paper was written by **myself**/*himself/*herself/*yourself.

Problem: These uses of the anaphor more closely resemble logophors (e.g., Clements 1975). Logophors have as their antecedent, source (the one who makes the report); self (the one whose "mind" is being reported); and pivot (the one from whose physical point of view the report is made) (Sells 1987). Third-person logophors are common, e.g., Ewe (Clements 1975).

Emonds (1970): too many counterexamples

Hooper and Thompson (1973)

(8)   I found out that never before had he had to borrow money. (H&T 1973, 119)

Due to these and other problems noted for Ross and Emonds, their proposals have largely disappeared from core discussion in syntax.
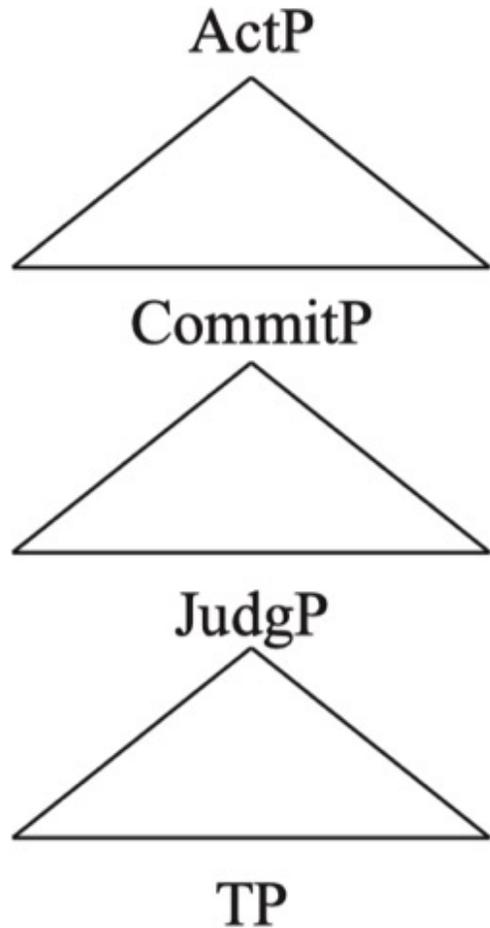
Proposal

(i)   The treetop structure contains Speaker-Addressee Phrase that is the locus of illocutionary force;

(ii)   It also contains Commitment Phrase (Krifka, e.g., 2020) that indicates the speaker's commitment to the proposition.

(iii) The treetop structure has a distribution predicted by Emonds's Root.

(i)– (ii) are based on Ross. The Austin/Gricean "mentalist" approach is replaced with the notion of public commitment by the speaker.

(iii) is based directly on Emonds's work.

Krifka (2020; see also 2017, 2019)

(9)

ActP: locus of illocutionary force (see also Frey and Meinunger 2019, Wiltschko 2017)

Commitment Phrase: Indicates the commitment that the speaker holds – for example, to the truth of the proposition in a declarative sentence; (see also Guerts 2019, Shapiro 2020 among others).

Judgment Phrase: expresses the judgment of the speaker toward the proposition, e.g., *probably.*

Some revisions (Miyagawa 2022)

(10)
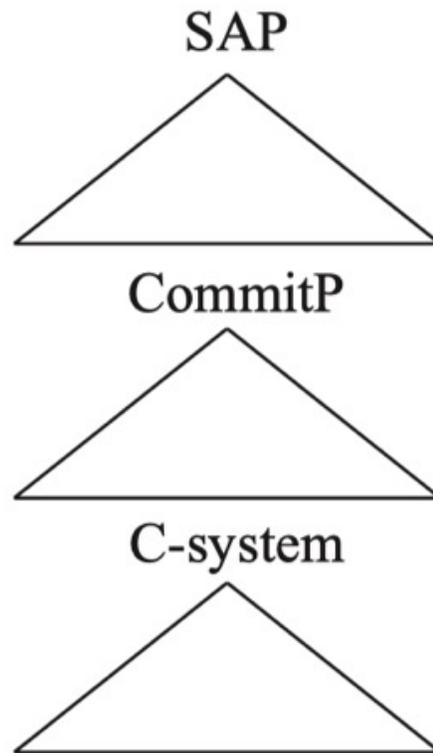
Speaker-Addressee Phrase: same as ActP, but with the specification of Speaker and Addressee (Speas and Tenny 2003), on the assumption that the performance of an illocutionary force usually requires Speaker and Addressee.

Commitment Phrase: same

C-system: extended CP system a la Rizzi (1997) that includes Krifka's Judgment Phrase.

Two domains: expressive and propositional

The idea is that the syntactic structure contains two domains, propositional, which concerns truth condition, and expressive, which is about the performative act.

(11)
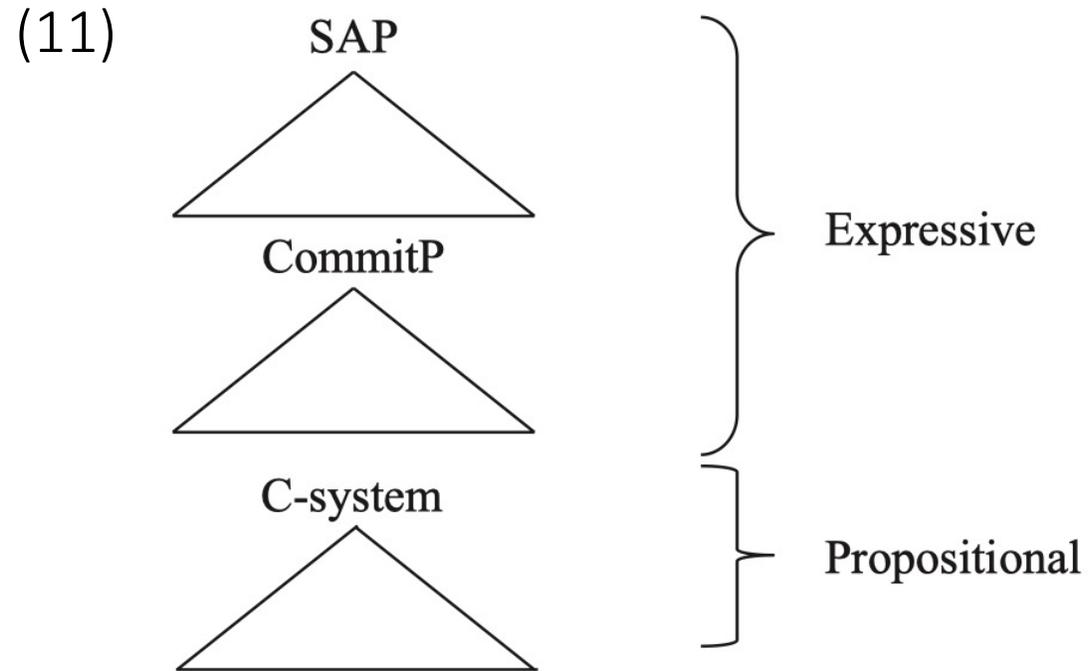
Keeping it simple

Frey and Meinunger (2019) offer evidence for the Judgment Phrase based on topicalization in German. See Miyagawa (2022) for an alternative analysis of topicalization that does not require postulating an independent Judgment Phrase.

On this account, topicalization is part of the proposition that is associated with truth condition.

Modern evidence for the Speaker-Addressee representation in the treetops: Allocutive agreement

Addressee

Souletin Basque

allocutive agreement (Oyharçabal 1993, as noted in Miyagawa 2012)

(12) *joan* 'to go' (de Rijk 2008, 811)

I am going	*noa*	*noak*	*noan*
he is going	*doa*	*zoak*	*zoan*
we are going	*goaz*	*goazak*	*goazan*
they are going	*doaz*	*zoazak*	*zoazan*

-k is second person masculine (colloquial);

-n is second person feminine (colloquial)

(13) Four ways to say *Peter worked* in Souletin, an eastern dialect of Basque,
depending on who you're talking to (Oyharçabal 1993):

$$\text{subj. agr.} \quad \text{allocutive agr.}$$

$$\downarrow \qquad \downarrow$$

a. *To a male friend*

Pettek   lan   egin   di**k**.

Peter.ERG work   do.PRF   AUX-3.S.ERG-| 2.S.COL.MASC.ALOC |

'Peter worked.'

b. *To a female friend*

Pettek   lan   egin   di**n**.

Peter.ERG work   do.PRF   AUX-3.S.ERG-| 2.S.COL.FM.ALOC |

c. *To someone higher in status (formal)*

Pettek   lan   egin   di**zü**.

Peter.ERG work   do.PRF   AUX-3.S.ERG-| 2.S.F.ALOC |

d. *Plural addressee*

Pettek   lan   egin   du.

Peter.ERG work   do.PRF   AUX-3.S.ERG

The allocutive agreement occurs high in the structure; It is "normal" agreement that competes with the subject/object agreement, **which means that it must have a probe — the Addressee representation.**

(Oyharçabal 1993)

See Zannuttini (2008) for evidence from English imperatives for Addressee in syntax. See McFadden (2020) for discussion of allocutive agreement in Tamil, and Sundaresan and MacFadden (2020) for discussion of a variety of allocutive agreements.

Evidence for the Speaker representation: Sentence particles in Romanian

Romanian has sentential particles that occur high in the structure, either sentence initially or finally.

(14)   Hai cã   iar   am   greşit/s-a   greşit!   (Hill 2007, 26a)

         HAI that   again   have-I erred/SEarb   has.erred .

         'Damn, I messed it up again. /Right, it has been messed up again.'

(15)   Haidem sã   începem   lucrul! (Hill 2007, 25d)
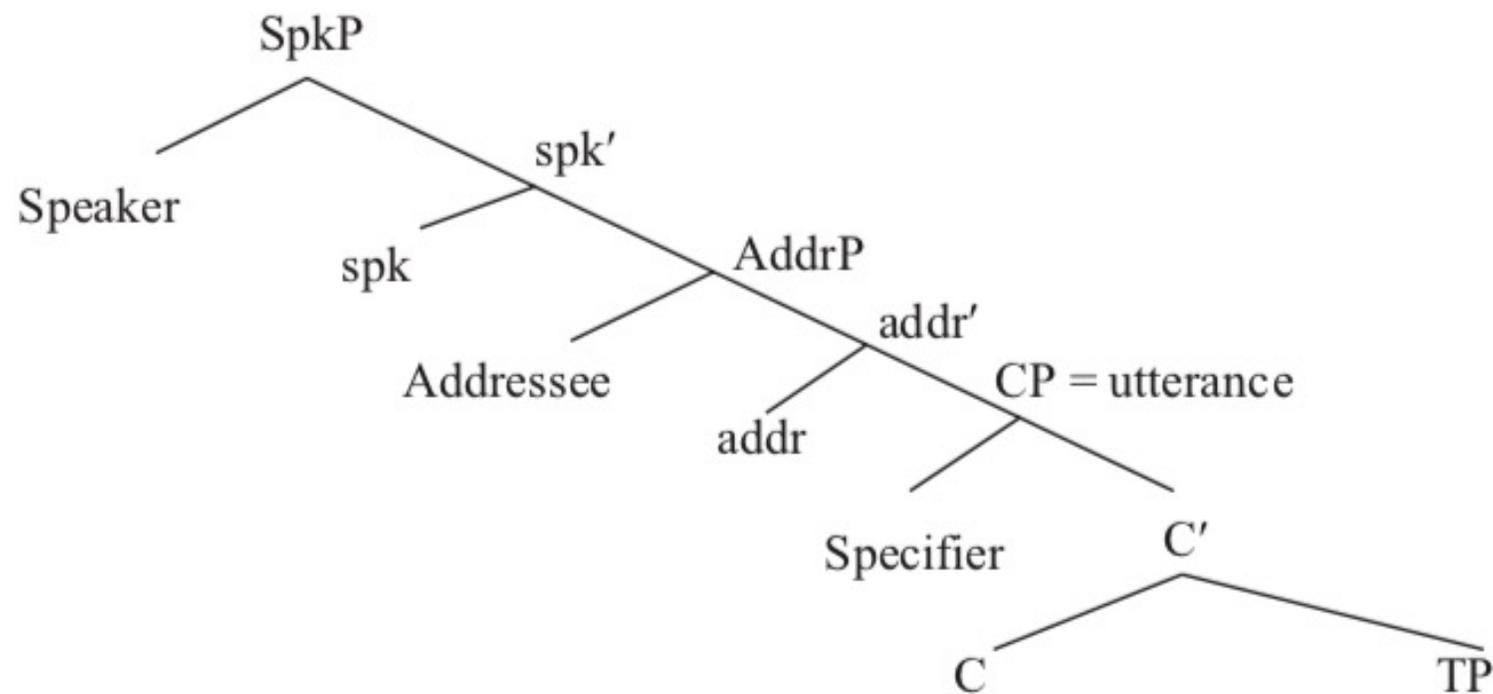
         HAI-1PL SUB   start   work

         'Let's start the work!'

Haidem inflects for person (1st person) and number (plural); its meaning is injunctive.

Speaker-Addressee Phrase

The allocutive agreement in Basque and sentential particle in Romanian give compelling evidence for the existence of the Speaker-Addressee representations in the treetops.

(16)

Based on Haegeman and Hill (2011), which is in turn a revision of the original proposal by Speas and Tenny (2003)

Distribution of the Speaker-Addressee Phrase: Root

Oyharçabal (1993), referring to Miyagawa (1987), notes that the Basque allocutive agreement has the same function as the Japanese politeness marker *-mas-/-des-*, and has a similar distribution.

Japanese politeness marker

Verbs in Japanese may occur in either colloquial form or polite form.

Colloquial

(17)   Hanako-wa   kur-u.

        Hanako-TOP   come-PRS

        'Hanako will come.'

Formal

(18)   Hanako-wa   ki-***mas***-u.

        Hanako-TOP   come-**MAS**-PRS

        'Hanako will come.'

Japanese politeness marker and root

The distribution of the politeness marker is highly restricted, essentially to the main clause, although there are some exceptions (Harada 1976).

Miyagawa (2012; see also 2017, 2022)

The distribution of the politeness marker exactly fits Emonds's Root definition.

(19) *Root*

A root will mean either the highest S in a tree, an S immediately dominated by the highest S, or the reported S in direct discourse. (Emonds 1970, 6)

Highest S

(20)   Hanako-wa   ki-*mas*-u.

            Hanako-TOP   come-MAS-PRS

            'Hanako will come.'

S dominated by highest S

(21)   Hanako-ga   ki-*mas*-u   kara,   ie-ni   ite-kudasai.

            Hanako-NOM come-MAS-PRS because   home-at   be-please

            'Because Hanako will come, please be at home.'

Reported S in direct discourse

(22)   Taroo-wa   Hanako-ga   ki-*mas*-u   to   itta.

            Taro-TOP   Hanako-NOM   come-MAS-PRS   C   said

            'Taro said that Hanako will come.'

Non-root environment: complement of 'believe'

(23) Taroo-wa [Hanako-ga   kuru/*ki-*mas*-u   to]   sinzitei-mas-u.

   Taro- TOP [Hanako-NOM come/come-PRS   C   believe-MAS-PRS

   'Taro believes that Hanako will come.'

New way to view Emonds's Root

Emonds's Root: defines the distribution of the treetop structure – the locus of

illocutionary force.

-*mas*- occurs with SAP, which is the locus of illocutionary force;

The distribution of –*mas*- matches Emonds's definition of Root.

Problem with viewing *-mas-* as allocutive agreement

Allocutive agreement should occur in the treetops, yet *-mas-* occurs low in the structure (Yamada 2019).

Below tense:

(24)   Hanako-wa   piza-o   tabe-**mas**-ita.

Hanako-TOP   pizza-ACC   eat-MAS-PAST

'Hanako ate$_{FORMAL}$ pizza.'

Below negation

(25)   Hanako-wa   piza-o   tabe-**mas**-en.

Hanako-TOP   pizza-ACC   eat-MAS-NEG

'Hanako will not eat$_{FORMAL}$ pizza.'

Why does the politeness marker *–mas-* occur so low in the structure?

This is for a historical reason (Yamada 2019). However, there is striking evidence that the allocutive agreement actually raises into the treetops (Miyagawa 1987, 2022; Yamada 2019).

The allocutive agreement feature, as it raises up the tree, determines allomorphy for each head (Yamada 2019).

Sequential allomorphy

(26)
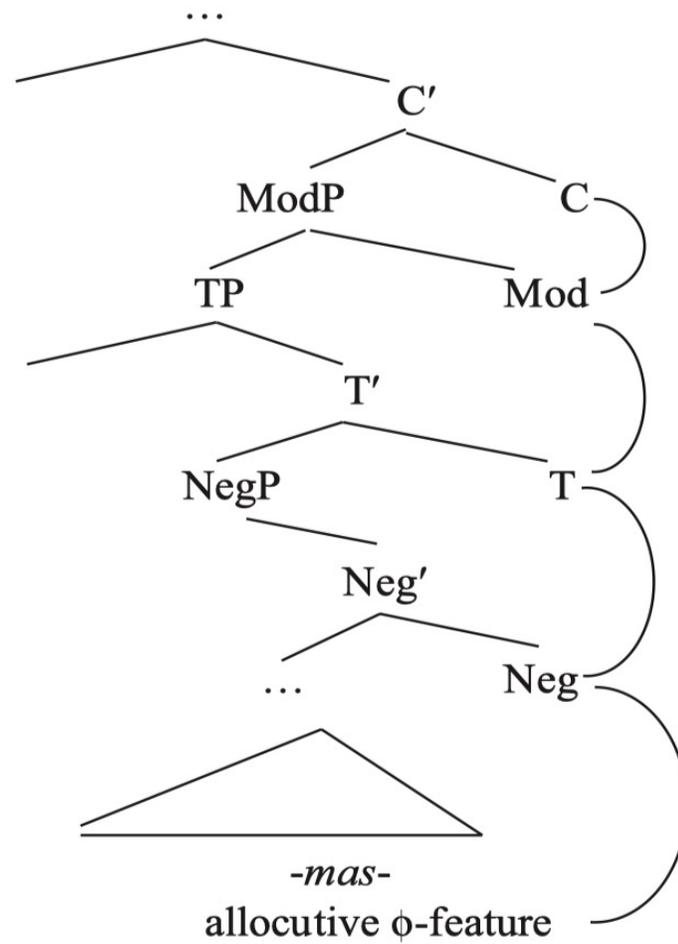
Colloquial:

(27)　Nimotu-wa　　todoka-na-kat-ta　　　*daroo*　　　　ka?

package-TOP　arrive-NEG-COP.PST　　INTERJECTION Q
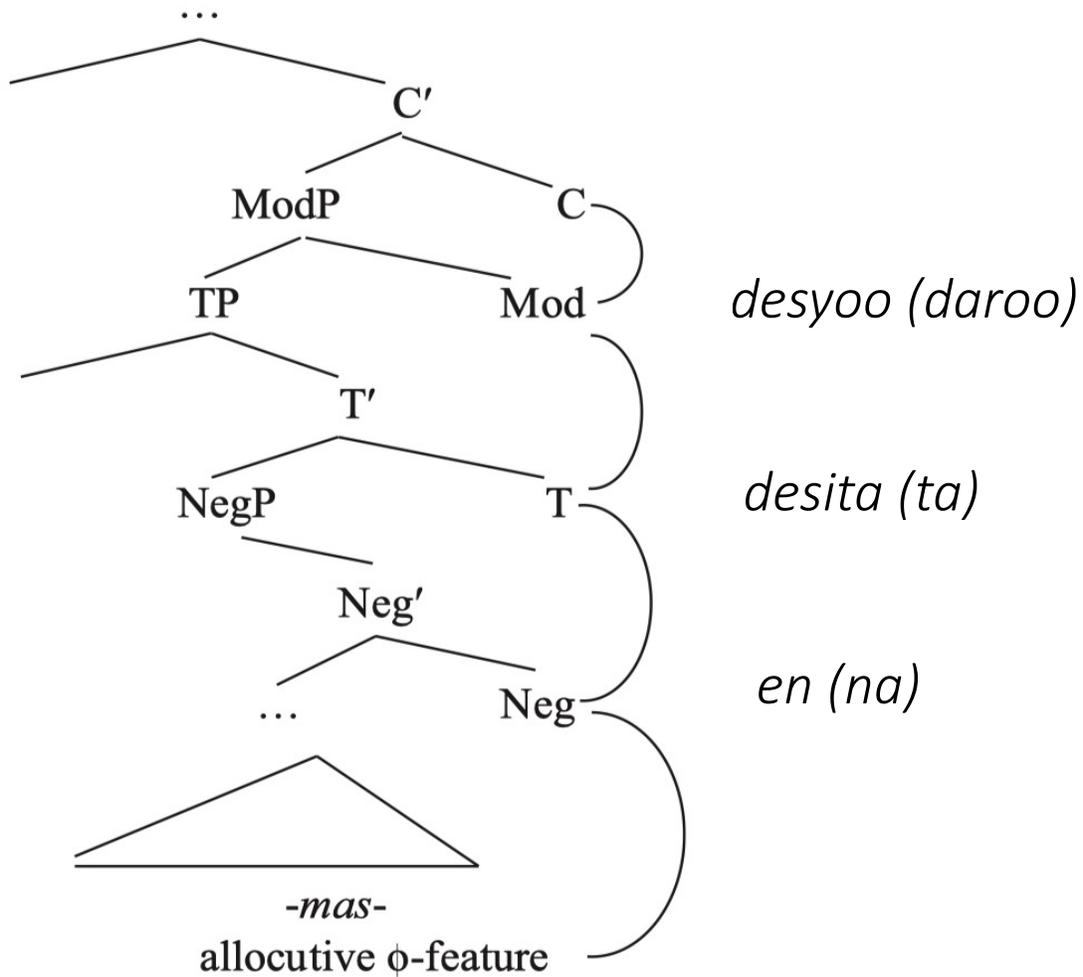
'Didn't the package arrive?'

Formal:

(28)　Nimotu-wa　　todoki-**mas**-en-desita　　　　*desyoo*　　　ka?

package-TOP　arrive-**MAS**-NEG-COP.PST　　　INTERJECTION Q

'Didn't the package arrive?'

NEG　NEG+ALLO.AGR　　PAST TENSE　PST+ALLO.AGR　　INTERJ　INTERJ+ALLO.AGR
na　　　*en*　　　　　　　　*ta*　　　*desita*　　　　*daroo*　　　*desyoo*

... C'

ModP C

TP Mod — *desyoo (daroo)*

T'

NegP T — *desita (ta)*

Neg'

... Neg — *en (na)*

-*mas*-
allocutive φ-feature

See Miyagawa (2022) for evidence that the allocutive agreement raises to C (based on Miyagawa 1987), and further, to SAP.

Commitment Phrase

(29)
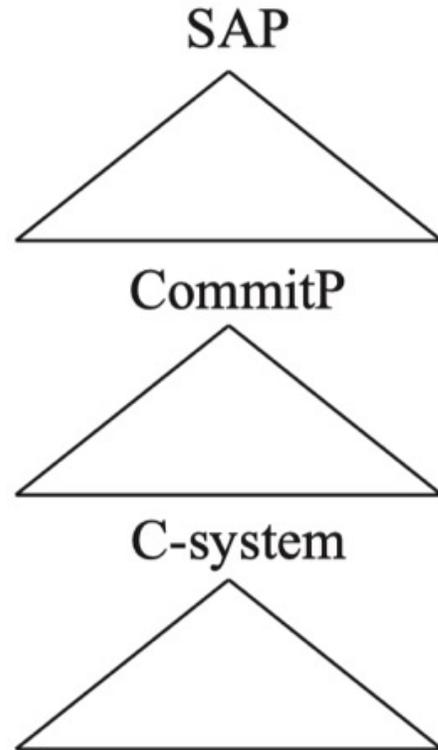
Krifka: the Commitment Phrase encodes the notion that speech acts should be understood as an expression of public commitments, not the mentalist approach of intentions or beliefs, such as that found in Gricean pragmatics (Bach and Harnish 1979; Truckenbrodt 2006; Green 2007; Brabanter and Dendale 2008; MacFarlane 2011; Geurts 2019; Krifka 2019a, 2020). See also Wiltschko 2017 for a similar idea.

Geurts (2019, 3): "commitment is a three-place relation between two individuals, [the speaker] and [the addressee], and a propositional content, p: [the speaker] is committed to [the addressee] to act on p [. . .]."

The "act" could be the speaker committing to the truthfulness of p, which is the case with assertions, or to commit to making p true, in the case of commissives (see Bach and Harnish 1979). A directive commits the speaker to the goal of the addressee making p come true (Geurts 2019, 10; see Green 2007, 76 for an opposing view). Questions can fall under directives on the assumption that they are requests for information (e.g., Frege 1918).

Commitment Phrase and Sentence-final Particles

Sentential particles indicate the speaker's attitude towards the addressee or the proposition, or some other entity (Cantonese (Heim et al. 2016; Tang 2015), Gunbe (Aboh 2007a, 2007b, 2010, 2016), and Romanian (Hill 2007, 2013; Haegeman and Hill 2014)).

yo, ne

yo, ne are the two most common sentence-final particles in Japanese.

yo is often translated with an explanation mark.

(30)   Hanako-wa   ik-u   yo!

        Hanako-TOP   go-PRS   YO

        'Hanako will go!'

ne is often translated as a tag question

(31)   Hanako-wa   ik-u   ne?

        Hanako-TOP   go-PRS   NE

        'Hanako will go, won't she?'

Yo and *ne* have been viewed as being in opposition, *yo* being speaker oriented, because it resembles assertion, while *ne* being addressee oriented, because it is asking the addressee for confirmation (e.g, Uyeno 1971; Suzuki 1976). See Davis (2009) for a detailed treatment of *yo.*

Miyagawa (2022)

ne: addressee oriented

yo: enhance commitment

yo-ne sequence **ne-yo*

(32) Hanako-wa   ik-u   yo   ne?

    Hanako-TOP   go-PRS YO   NE

    'Hanako will go, right?'

 Asking the addressee to confirm that it's OK to strongly commit to p.

yo-ne is not a complex illocutionary force

It is asking for confirmation; not also an assertion. It can be felicitously answered with a simple yes/no.
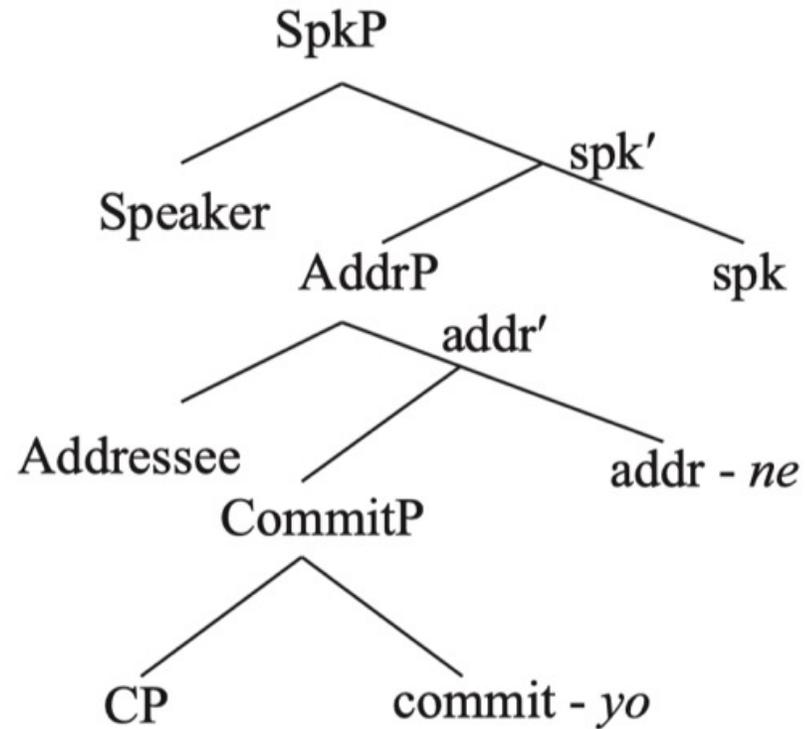
(33) Hanako-wa   ik-u   yo   ne?

     Hanako-TOP   go-PRS YO   NE

     'Hanako will go, right?'

(34) Iie/hai.

     no/yes

(35)

For the idea that sentential particles are associated with functional heads high in the structure, see Endo 2010; Saito 2015; Bayer 2012, 2018, 2020; and Haegeman and Hill 2014, among others.

Biased questions are both a question and an assertion (Reese and Asher 2009)

Discourse markers (Sadock 1974)

After all can co-occur with assertion, but not with question. (Also *yet*)

(36) a. <u>After all</u>, your advisor is out of the country.

  b. #<u>After all</u>, is your advisor out of the country?

Tell me can co-occur with question, but not assertion.

(37) a. #<u>Tell me</u>, John owns a car.

  b. <u>Tell me</u>, does John own a car?

Biased questions can co-occur with either (Reese and Asher 2009).

(38) a. <u>After all</u>, does John lift a finger to help around the house?

  b. <u>Tell me</u>, does John lift a finger to help around the house?

Biased questions

"Certain questions convey an expectation on the part of the speaker for a negative answer. Such utterances are said to be biased or to express a biased question." (Borkin 1971; Reese and Asher 2009; Guerzoni 2002; van Rooy 2003)

Biased questions often require more than just 'yes/no' (e.g., Krifka 1995).

(39) Does Fred do a damn thing around the house?

   ?Yes

Alternative to the complex illocutionary force analysis: Biased questions are questions; it contains enhanced commitment by the speaker to the truth of p, as we see with *yo-ne*.

Language of autistic children and SFP

Autism is characterized by abnormalities in social interaction and communication, including language development, and is often classified together with disorders that are very similar—such as Asperger syndrome—as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) (Tager-Flusberg 2010, etc.).

The act of establishing a normal connection with the addressee is missing, or substantially reduced, in ASD speakers (Watamaki 1997). For example, Baltaxe (1977) observed that German children with ASD confused the polite and familiar forms of address: *Sie* and *Du*.

Linguistically high-functioning young people with autistic spectrum disorders tend not to use SFPs (Sadake and Kobayashi 1987; see also Endo, forthcoming). Typically-developing children begin to use SFPs as early as 1.5 years of age.

Matsuoka, Sawamura, Kobayashi (1997)

Conducted experiments with an ASD child, 7 years of age, linguistically high functioning.

Prior to the experiment, the child did not use SFPs. Over a six month period, the experimenters trained the ASD child to use *yo* and *ne* in two experiments. After the training, the child was able to use both *yo* and *ne* with virtually complete accuracy.
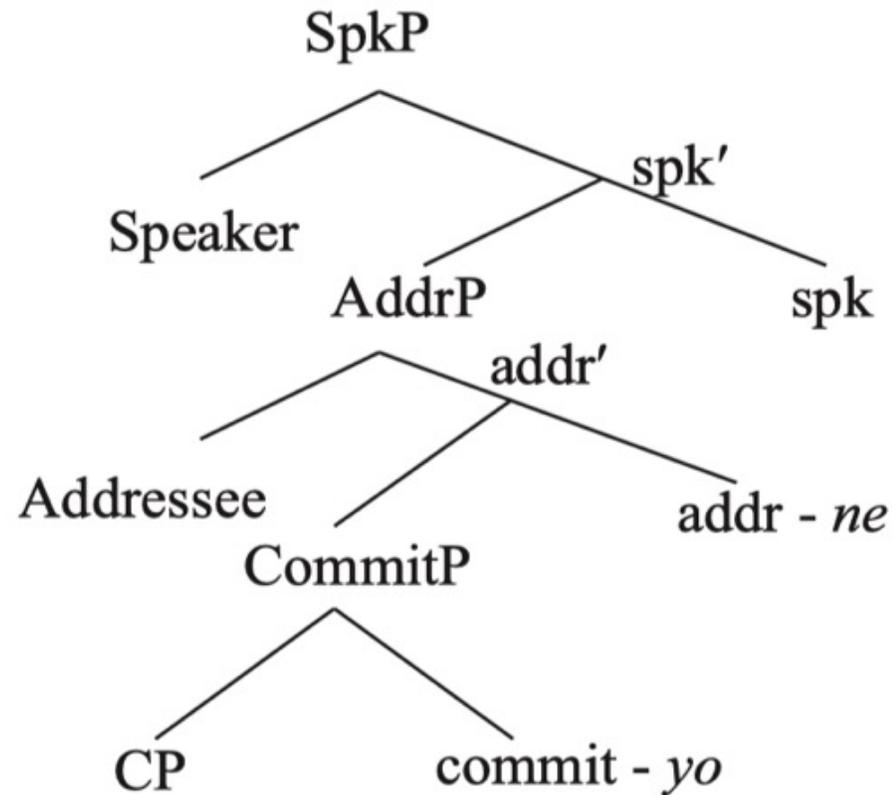
After some time, the experimenters did a home observation between the child and the mother over several weeks:

Yo: 271 times

Ne: 3 times

Why is there an asymmetry between *yo* and *ne*?

(40)

Concluding remarks

Syntax not only generates sentential structures that are associated with truth conditions, but also extends into the actual act of communication: the treetop structure of SAP and CommitP.

The basic properties of the treetop structure are found in Ross (1970) and Emonds (1970).

Much work is needed both conceptually and empirically to further flush out the properties of the treetop structure.

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