

Ling 566
Nov 6, 2006
Passive Construction

Overview

- Wasow's responses re: psycholinguistics
- Passive
 - Arguments for lexicalist account
 - Details of our analysis
- Homework questions

Production errors are sensitive to syntactic structure

Agreement errors are more common with PP complements than sentential complements: errors like (2) are significantly more common than errors like (1).

(1) **The claim that the wolves had raised the babies were rejected.*

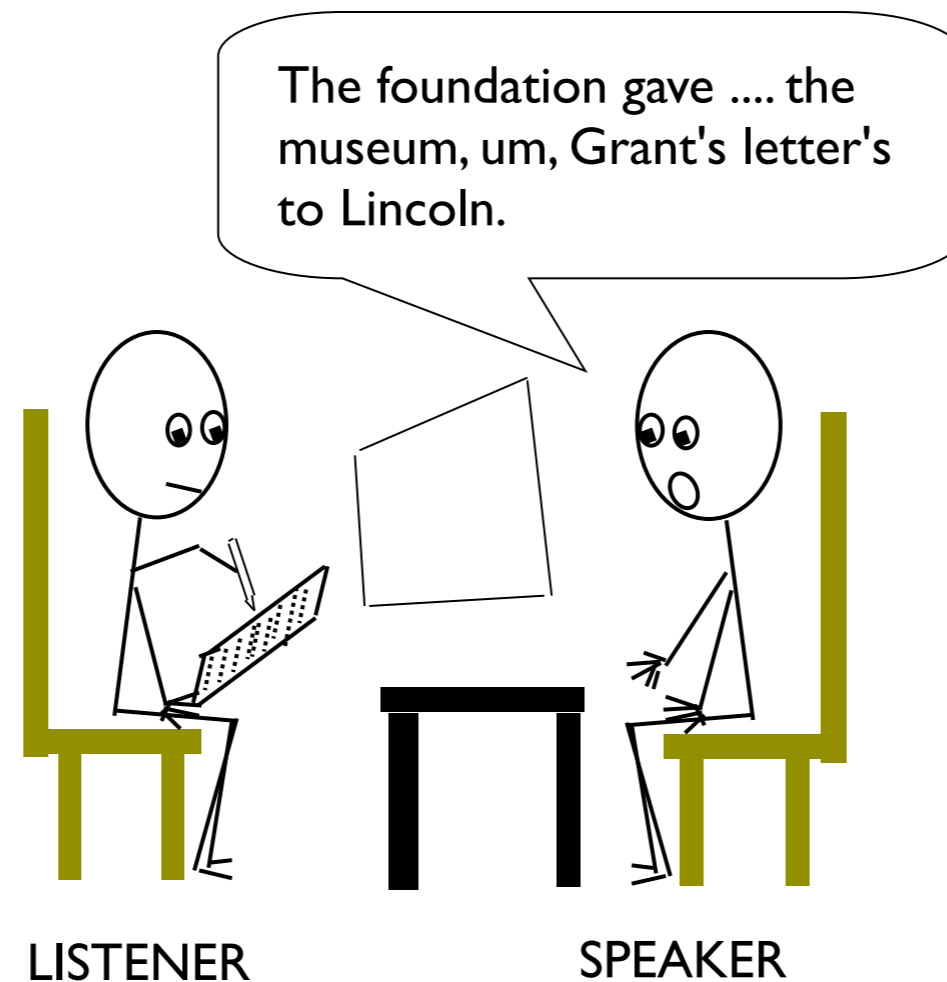
vs.

(2) **The claim about the newborn babies were rejected.*

So why?

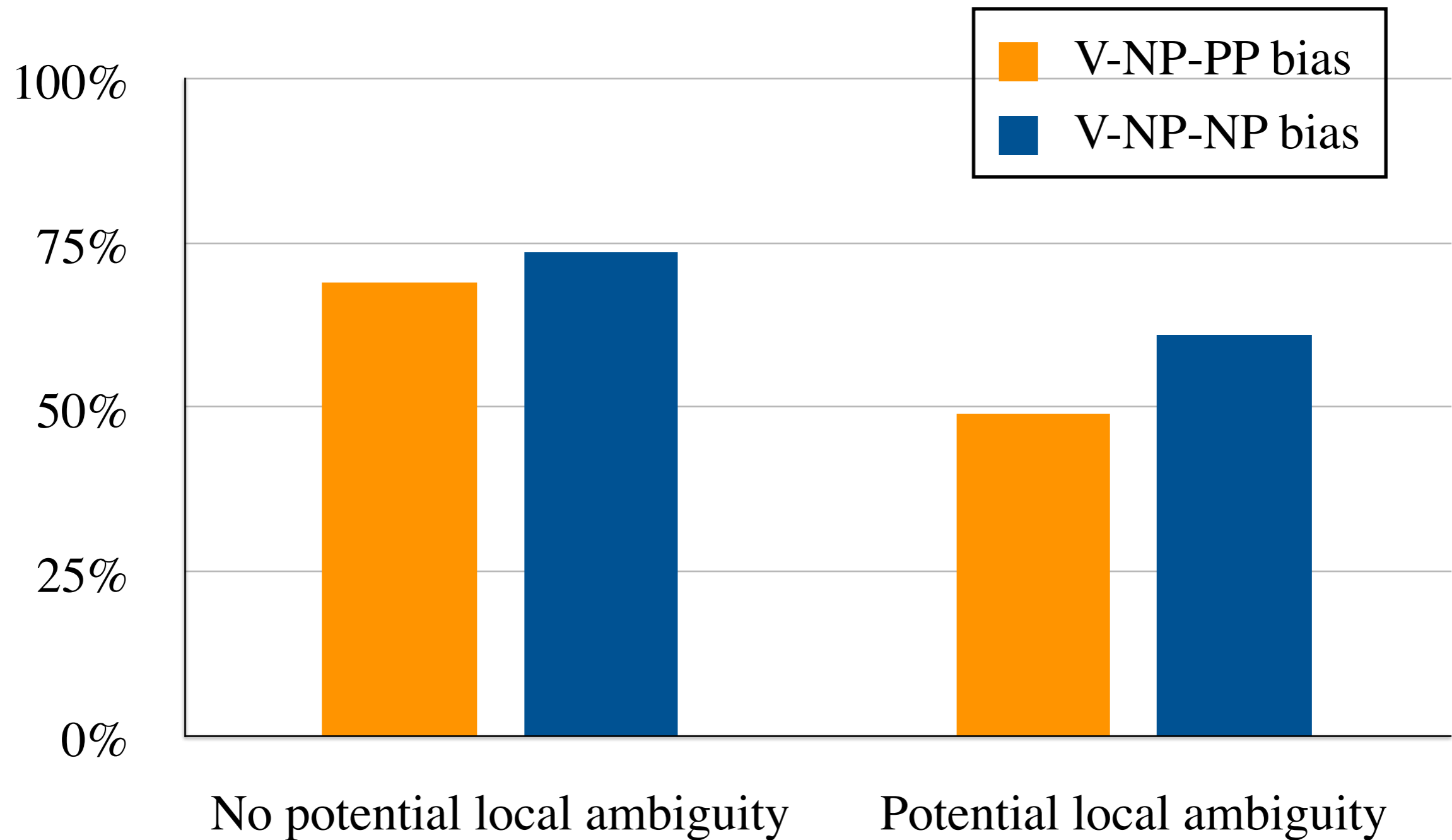
- Speculation: Clauses are their own agreement domains, so people don't mistake an NP in a lower clause as a trigger for agreement
- Original work: Kay Bock (1980s).

Experimental Method, continued



3. The speaker answers the listener's question.
The listener chooses the correct response on a list (from two choices).

Experimental Results on Local Ambiguity



Reverse ambiguity effect

- Y-axis is % V-NP-NP order
- Arnold, Wasow, Asudeh & Alrenga 2004
Journal of Memory & Language
- Re-ran the experiment with slightly better methodology and found a *stronger* reverse ambiguity effect.

The Passive in Transformational Grammar

- Passive was the paradigmatic transformation in early TG.
- Motivations
 - Near paraphrase of active/passive pairs.
 - Simplified statement of cooccurrence restrictions.
 - E.g. *devour* must be followed by an NP, *put* by NP-PP
 - Such restrictions refer to pre-transformational (“deep”) structure.
 - Intuition that active forms were more basic, in some sense.
- Its formulation was complex:
 - Promote object
 - Demote subject, inserting *by*
 - Insert appropriate form of *be*, changing main verb to a participle.

But transforming whole sentences is overkill

- Passive sentences look an awful lot like some actives:

The cat was chased by the dog VS

The cat was lying by the door

- Passives occur without *be* and without the *by* phrase:

Cats chased by dogs usually get away.

My cat was attacked.

So a lexical analysis seems called for

- What really changes are the verb's form and its cooccurrence restrictions (that is, its valence).
- There are lexical exceptions
 - Negative:
 - Pat resembles Bo* but **Bo is resembled by Pat*
 - That look suits you* but **You are suited by that look*
 - Positive
 - Chris is rumored to be a spy* but
 - *They rumor Chris to be a spy*

We posit a lexical rule

- Why not just list passive participles individually?
 - To avoid redundancy
 - To capture productivity (for example?)
- We make it a derivational (lexeme-to-lexeme) rule.
Why?
 - Our constraints on lexeme-to-word rules wouldn't allow us to make Passive one.
 - In some languages, further inflections can be added to passive verb forms.

The Passive Lexical Rule

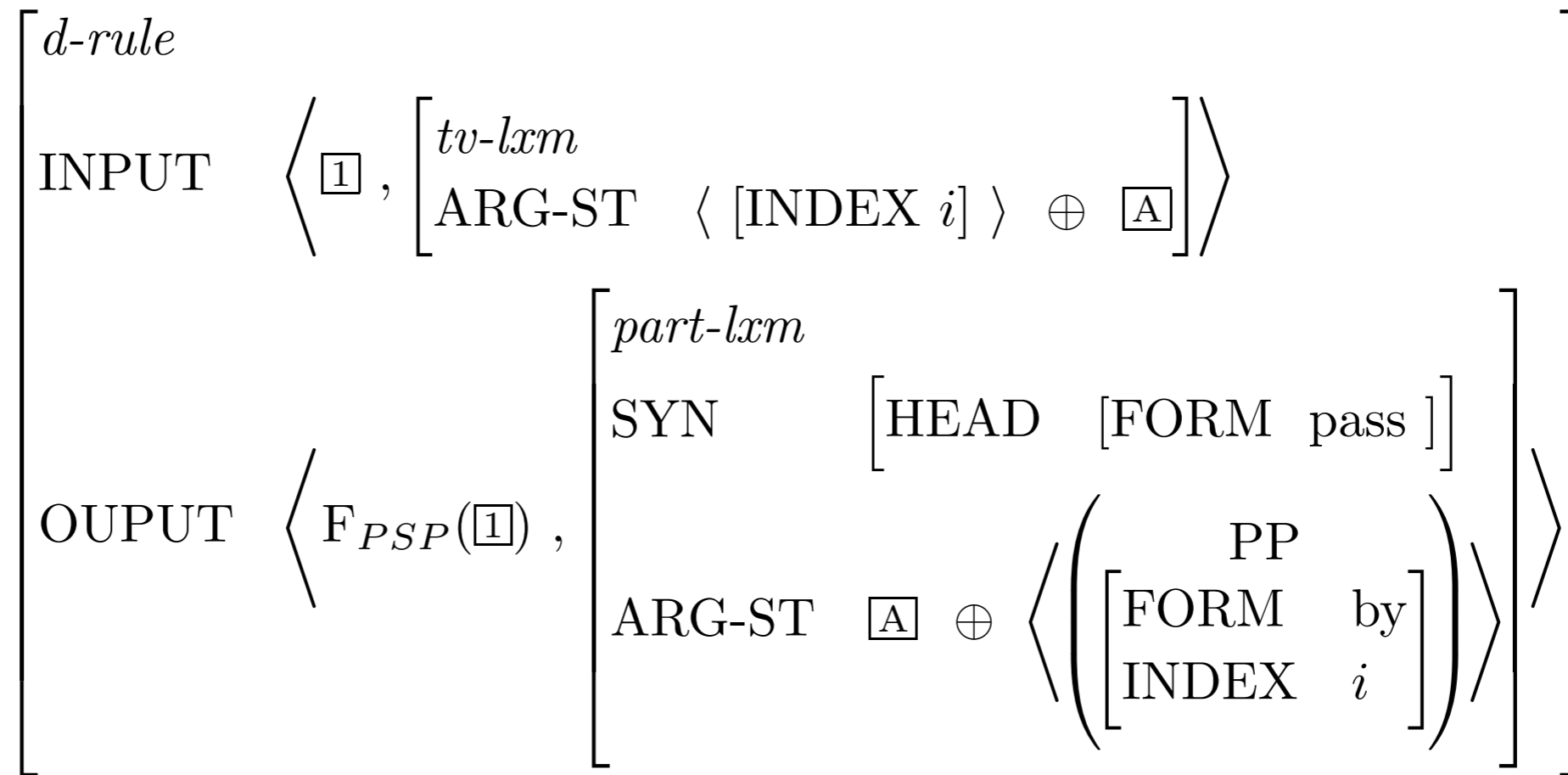
$$\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{INPUT} \\
 \text{OUTPUT}
 \end{array} \right.
 \begin{array}{l}
 \left. \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{tv-lxm} \\
 \text{ARG-ST} \langle [\text{INDEX } i] \rangle \oplus \boxed{A} \end{array} \right] \right\rangle
 \right. \\
 \left. \left\langle \text{F}_{PSP}(\boxed{1}), \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{part-lxm} \\
 \text{SYN} \left[\text{HEAD} \left[\text{FORM } \text{pass} \right] \right] \\
 \text{ARG-ST} \left[\boxed{A} \oplus \left(\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{PP} \\
 \text{FORM } \text{by} \\
 \text{INDEX } i \end{array} \right] \right) \right] \right] \right\rangle
 \end{array} \right.
 \end{array}
 \left. \right]$$

Questions About the Passive Rule

$$\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \textit{d-rule} \\
 \text{INPUT} \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{tv-lxm} \\ \text{ARG-ST} \langle [\text{INDEX } i] \rangle \oplus \boxed{A} \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\
 \text{OUTPUT} \left\langle F_{PSP}(\boxed{1}), \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{part-lxm} \\ \text{SYN} \quad \left[\text{HEAD} \quad [\text{FORM } \textit{pass}] \right] \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \boxed{A} \oplus \left\langle \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{PP} \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{FORM} \quad \textit{by} \\ \text{INDEX} \quad i \end{array} \right] \right) \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right] \right\rangle
 \end{array} \right]$$

- Why is the morphological function F_{PSP} ?
- Why do we have a separate FORM value *pass*? Why not say the output is [FORM *psp*]?
- What kind of a PP is the *by*-phrase (that is, argument-marking or predicational)?

More Questions



- What makes the object turn into the subject?
- Why is the type of the input *tv-lxm*?
- What would happen if it were just *verb-lxm*?

Intransitives have passives in German

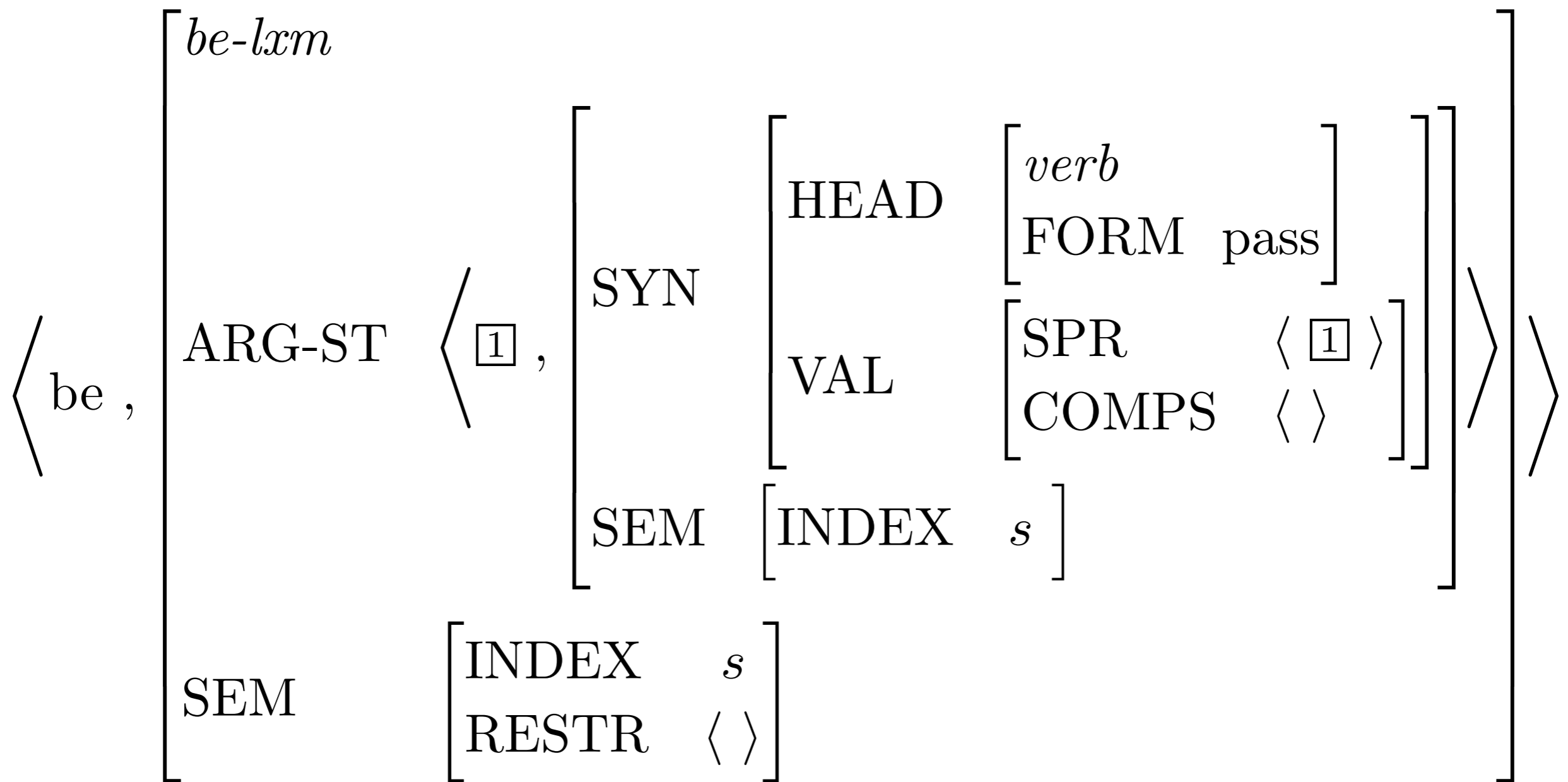
In der Küche wird nicht getanzt.

in the kitchen is not danced

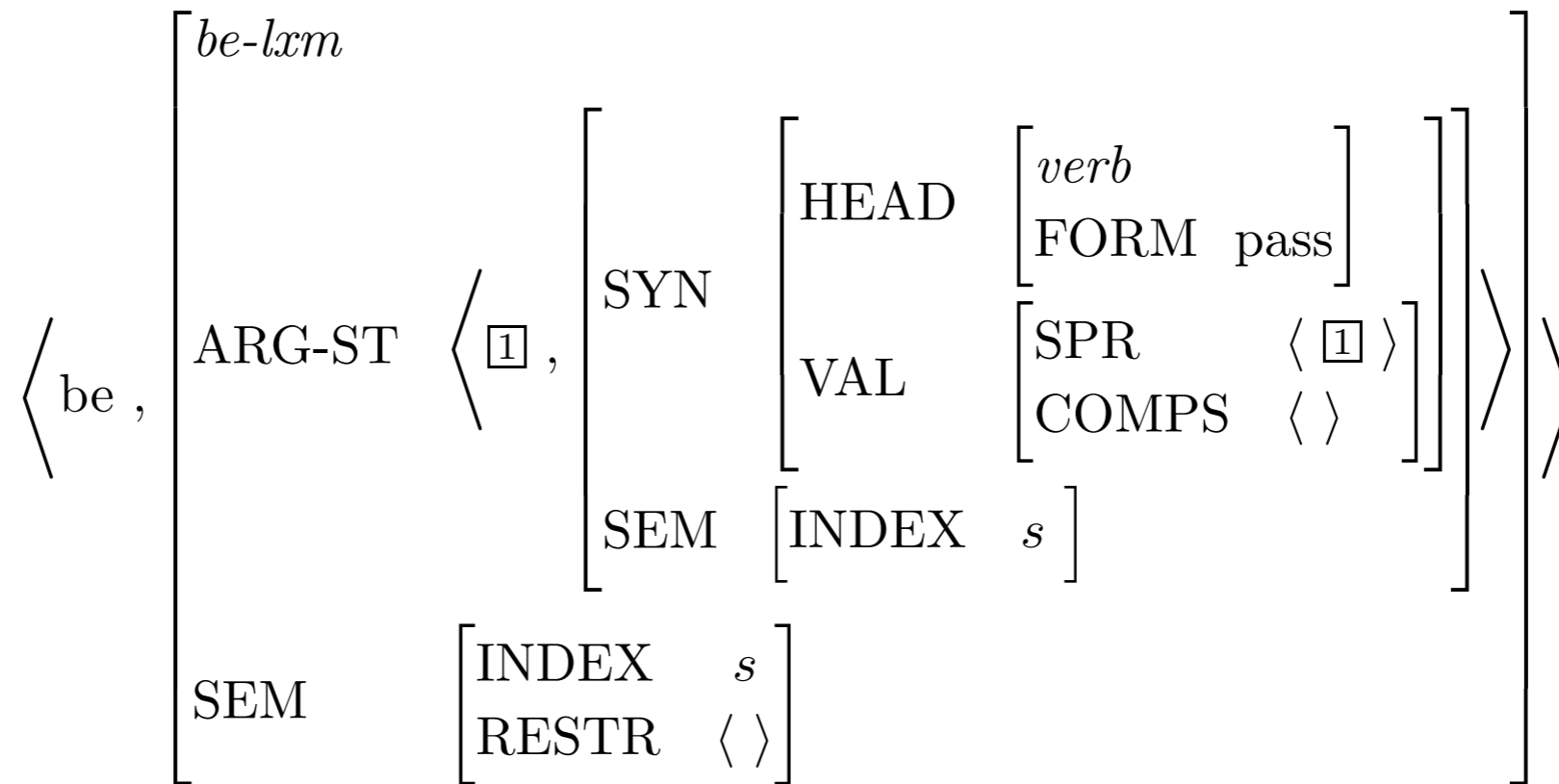
‘There is no dancing in the kitchen.’

NB: The exact analysis for such examples is debatable, but German, like many other languages, allows passives of intransitives, as would be allowed by our analysis if the input type in the Passive LR is *verb-lxm*.

The *be* that Occurs with Most Passives



Questions About the Entry for *be*



- Why doesn't it include valence features?
- What is the category of its complement (i.e. its 2nd argument)?
- What is its contribution to the semantics of the sentences it appears in?
- Why is the first argument tagged as identical to the second argument's SPR value?

Passive tree

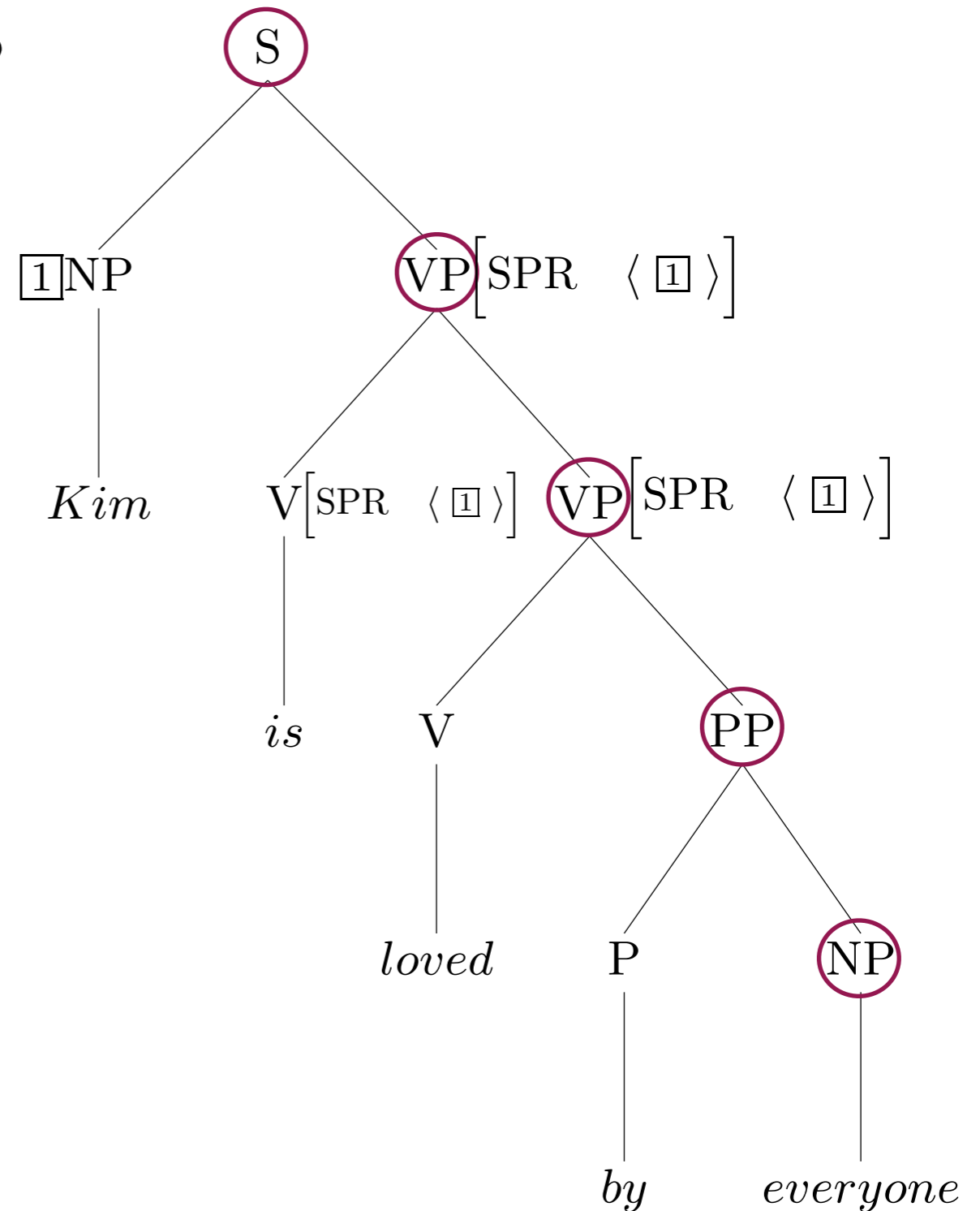
Which rule licenses each node?

What is the SPR value of the upper VP?

What is the SPR value of the lower VP?

What is the SPR value of *is*?

Any questions?



More Questions

- Why do we get
They are noticed by everyone
and not
**Them are noticed by everyone?*
- Why don't we get
**They is noticed by everyone?*
- What would facts like these entail for a transformational analysis?

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