

Collins 2005: *A Smuggling Approach to the Passive in English*

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May 21, 2014

1 Introduction

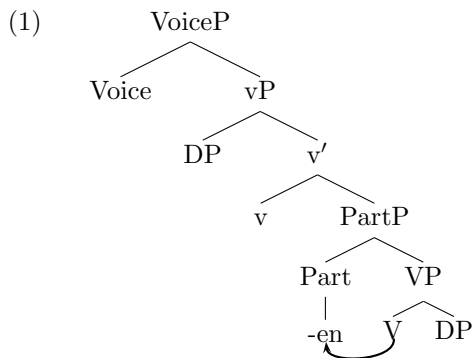
Important points of Collins' analysis:

- The thematic subject is merged in Spec-vP as in active clauses.
- The the preposition in the *by*-phrase does *not* form a constituent with the DP.
- The direct object of the verb is 'smuggled' across the higher subject to circumvent MLC / Relativized Minimality, etc.
- *by* is a 'dummy preposition' and the (optional) Spellout of the Voice head.

2 The Analysis

2.1 Architecture of the passive (VP)

- Unlike Baker, Johnson & Roberts (1989), the passive suffix *-en* does not absorb accusative case and the theta-role.
- Instead, the suffix is the head of a participle projection (PartP) to which the lexical verb moves:



2.2 Where is the *by*-phrase?

- Collins assumes that there is no difference between DP subjects in active clauses and DPs in *by*-phrases in passives, they are both situated in Spec-vP. This presents an immediate problem as to why the following order is not possible:

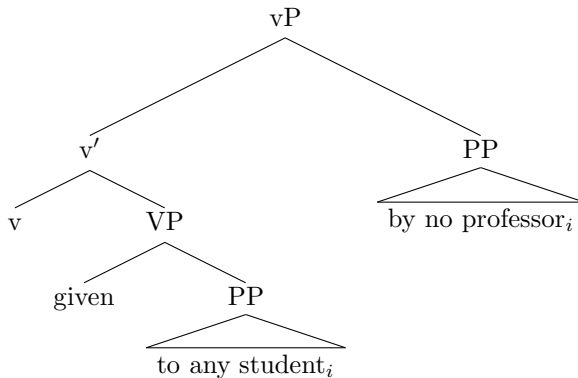
- (2) a. The book was written by John.
 b. *The book was [_{vP} [_{PP} by John] [_{VP} written *t_{thebook}*]]

There are a few options open to us:

1. Rightward specifier of vP
 2. Head movement of *written* to Voice
 3. XP movement of the ‘VP’ (cf. roll-up movement)
- (3) The book was [_{VoiceP} Voice+written [_{vP} [_{PP} by John] [_{VP} *t_{written}* *t_{thebook}*]]]

- Collins argues that this cannot be a rightward specifier due to binding facts such as the following:

- (4) *The book was given to any student by no professor.



2.3 Particle verbs

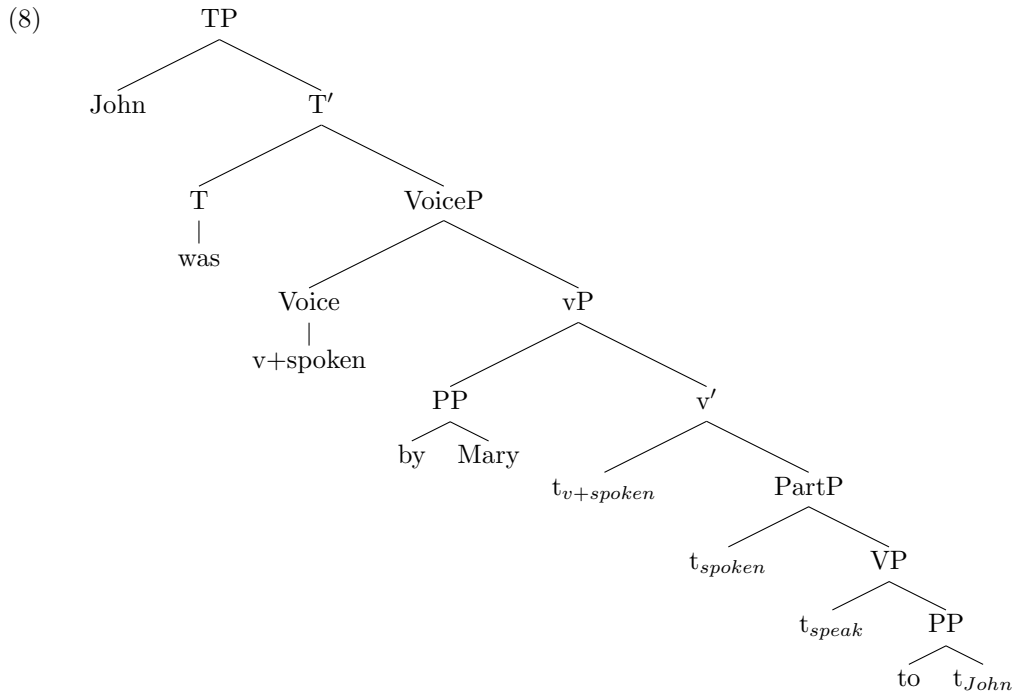
- Important arguments against a head movement approach come from the following data:

- (5) a. The argument was summed up by the coach.
 b. *The argument was summed by the coach up.
- (6) a. He summed the coach’s arguments up.
 b. He summed up the coach’s arguments.

(7) *Pseudo-passives*:

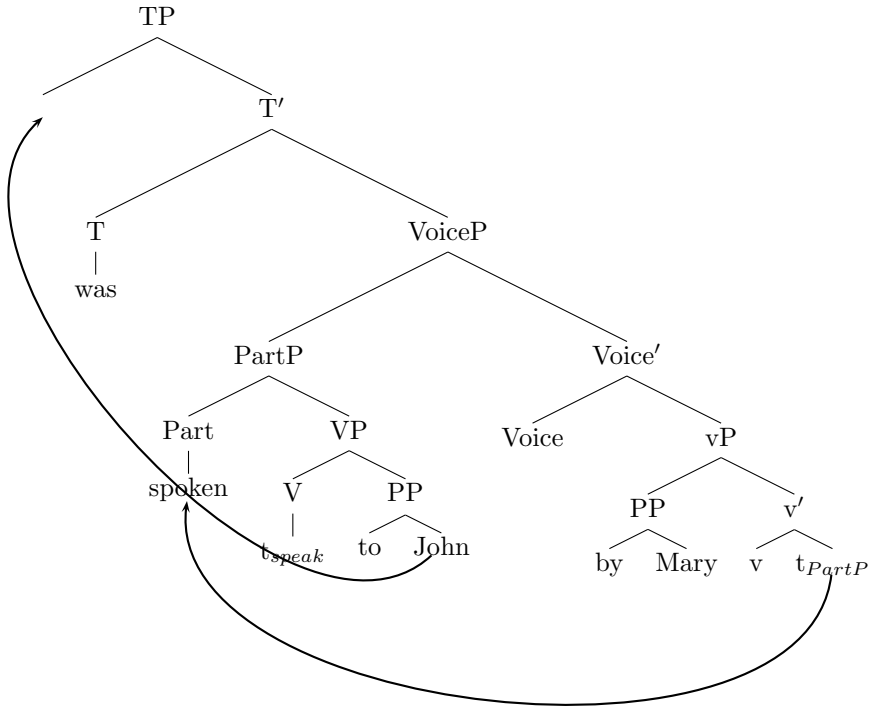
- a. John was spoken to by Mary.
- b. *John was spoken by Mary to.

- It is unclear as to why head movement of the lexical verb to Voice (stranding the particle) cannot derive the (b) cases:



- Instead, Collins assumes that there is a movement of PartP to Spec-VoiceP to ensure the PP follows the verb (and its particles):

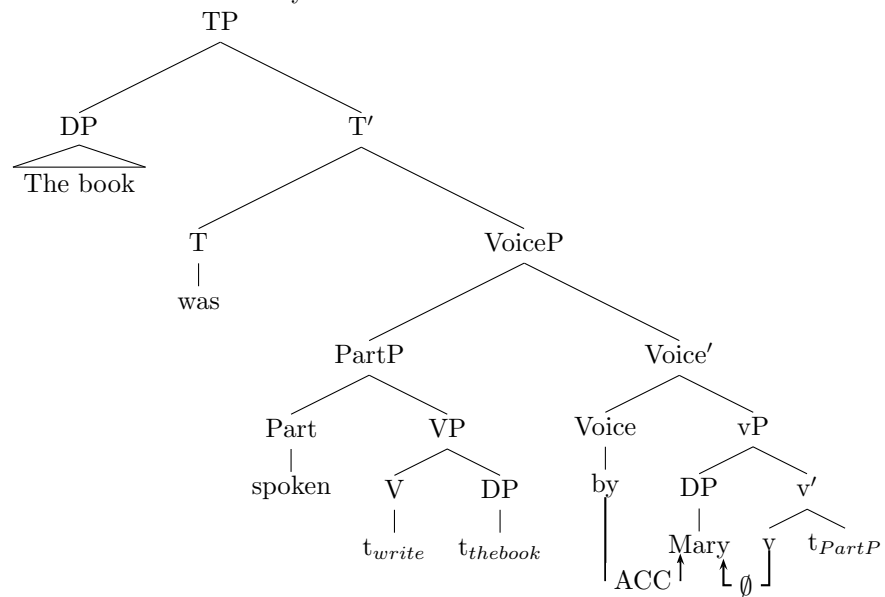
(9) John was spoken to by Mary.



2.4 *by* as the Head of VoiceP

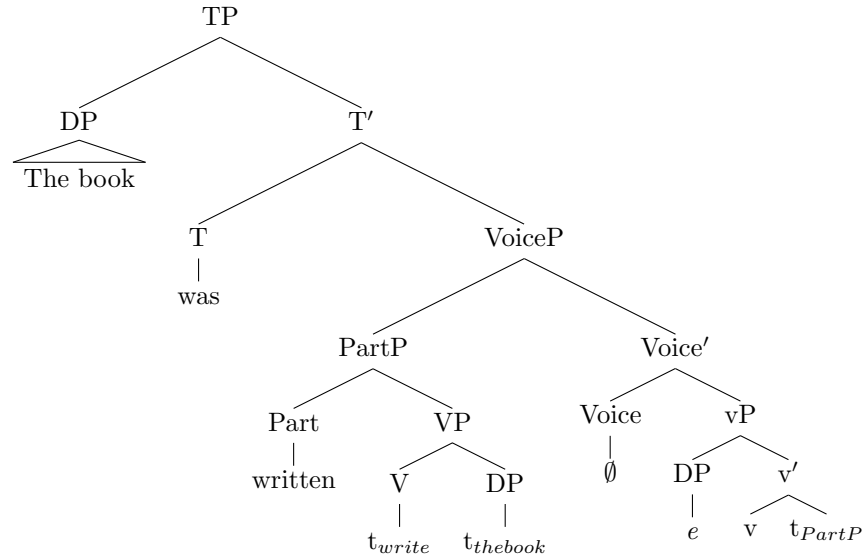
- We might assume that the *by*-phrase is in Spec-vP in passives as above.
- Collins instead proposes that *by* is the head of the Voice phrase and assigns accusative case to the DP in Spec-vP.
- *NOTE:* One can assume that Voice is responsible for case assignment in passives, whereas *v* is responsible for theta-role assignment (and is defective in these cases).
- The passive analysis therefore looks as follows:

(10) The book was written by John



NB: The *von* instantiation of Voice in German passives would assign dative.
 What about passives without a *by*-phrase?

(11) The book was written



This means that there have to be two types of Voice head:

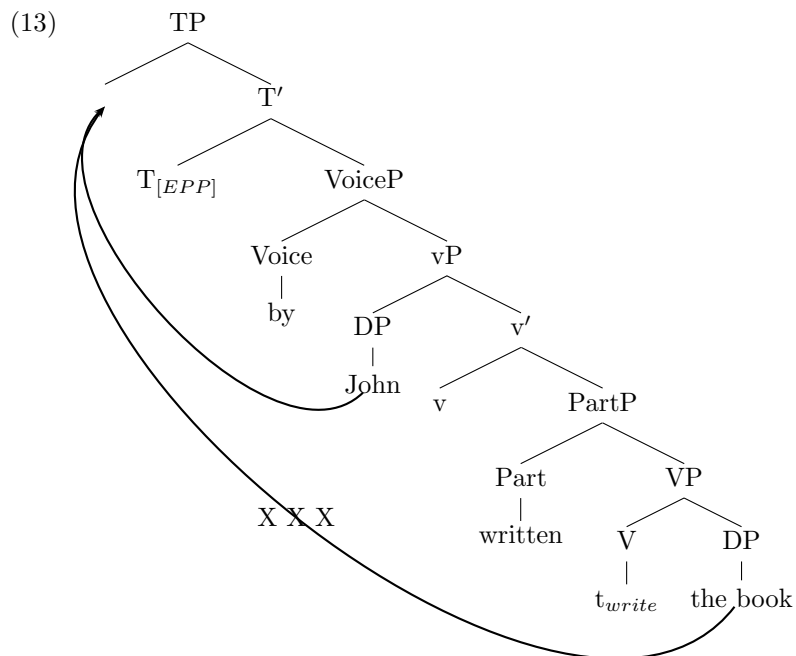
- Voice₁: *by* (assigns accusative)
- Voice₂: \emptyset (assigns null case?)

Collins draws a parallel between *for* and \emptyset complementizers in infinitive clauses.
 Where the latter licenses a null object:

- (12) a. [CP [C For] [TP John to win would be exciting.]]
 b. [CP [C \emptyset] [TP PRO to win would be exciting.]]

2.5 Smuggling

Why is this analysis referred to as smuggling? Consider the following example:



- If a T head has an EPP or similar movement-triggering feature, traditional locality restrictions mean that the only the closest DP can move to Spec-TP.
- Therefore, it is unclear how the direct object can move to Spec-TP when the subject is closer.
- Collins' solution is that the movement of PartP to Spec-VoiceP (higher than the subject in Spec-vP) 'smuggles' the soon-to-be syntactic subject past the higher phrase in Spec-vP.
- Assuming that subextraction from a moved constituent is permissible (cf. Freezing), then the now closer DP can be extracted.

(14)

