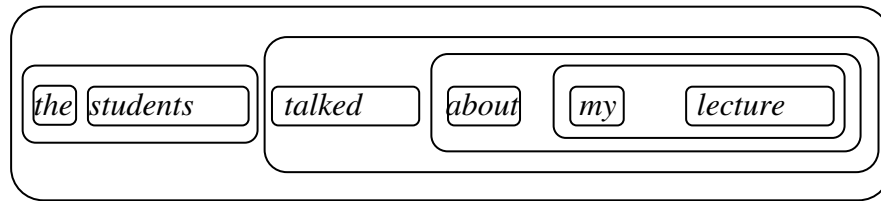
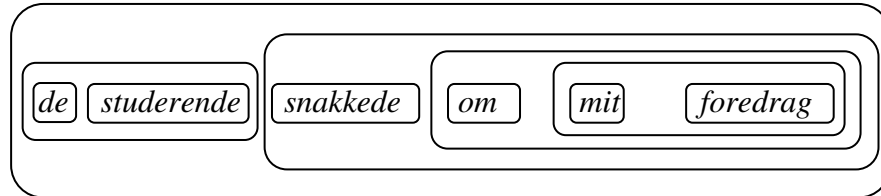


This can be illustrated by means of boxes:

(2) a. En.



b. Da.

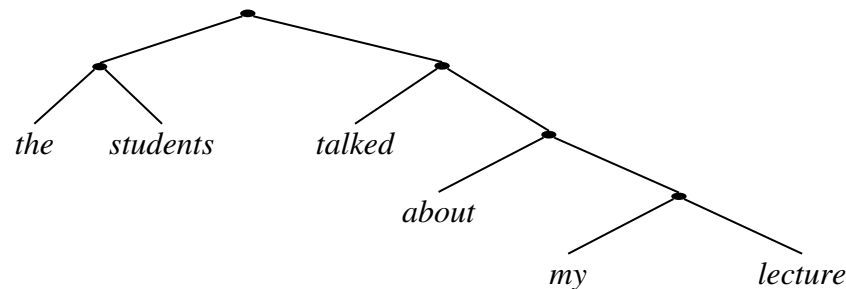


A variant on such boxes is the use of square brackets, []:

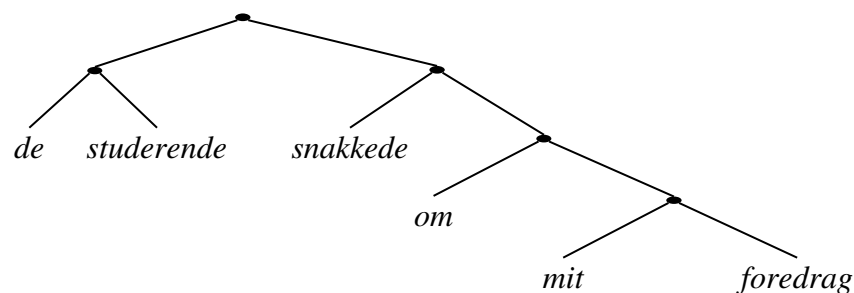
(3) a. En. [[[the] [students]] [[talked] [[about] [[my] [lecture]]]]]
 b. Da. [[[de] [studerende]] [[snakkede] [[om] [[mit] [foredrag]]]]]

I prefer to illustrate clause structure by means of tree structures, which I find to give a much better overview than (2) and (3):

(4) a. En.



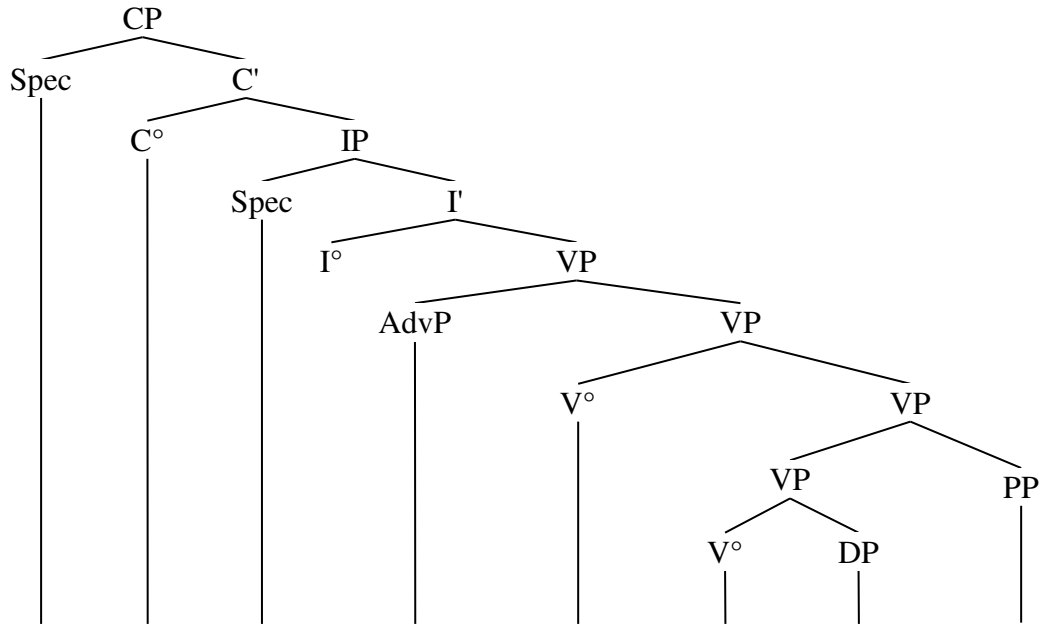
b. Da.



The most important thing is, however, that (2), (3) and (4) contain exactly the same information, i.e. they are merely notational variants of each other.

A more detailed example of the generative analysis of Danish clause structure that I and my colleagues use can be seen in (5)a, which is rather different from Diderichsen's (1946; 1966) two *sætningsskemaer*, 'sentence models', in (5)b,c, variants of which are used in most (functional) analyses of Danish (e.g. Christensen and Christensen 2014; Hansen 1977; Hansen and Heltoft 2011; Jørgensen 2000; and Togeby 2003):

(5) a.



b.

Fund.	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt		
F	v	n	a		V	N	A
<i>Nu</i>	<i>har</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>igen</i>		<i>poleret</i>	<i>bilen</i>	<i>med ståluld</i>

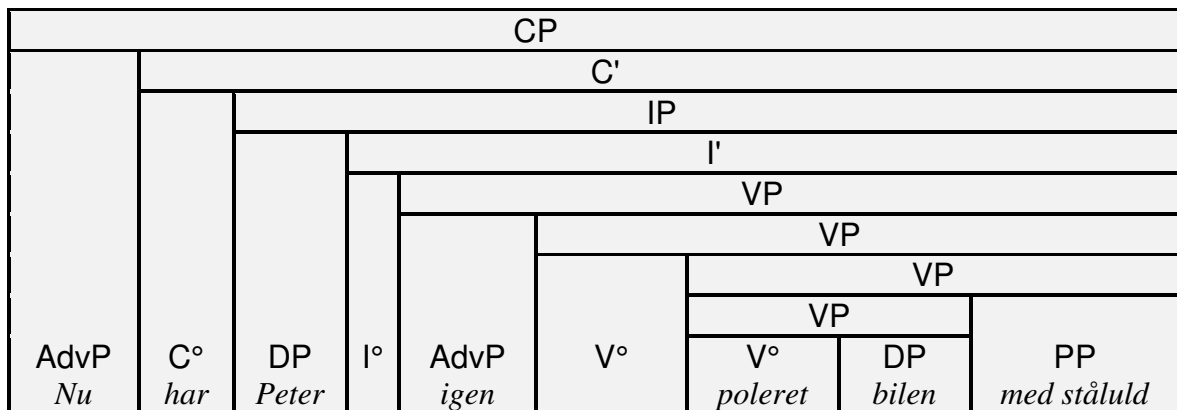
c.

Konj. felt	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt		
(F)	k	n	a	v	V	N	A
	<i>om</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>igen</i>	<i>har</i>	<i>poleret</i>	<i>bilen</i>	<i>med ståluld</i>

There are two types of differences between the two analyses, (5)a vs. (5)b,c. One difference is that they divide a clause into very different parts (e.g. IP vs. nexus field), which **IS** a substantial difference.

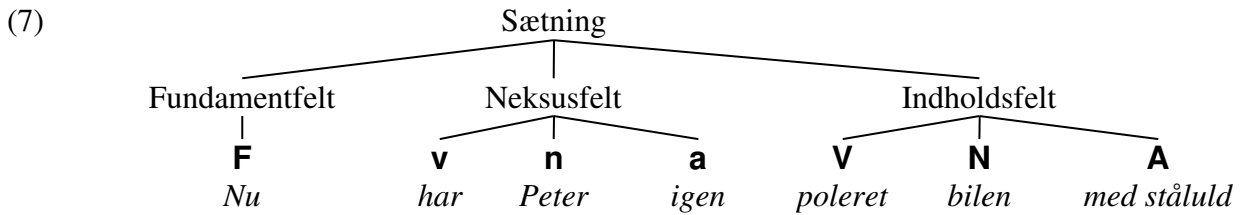
The other difference is how the two different partitions are typically illustrated (i.e. tree structure vs. field structure), and this is **NOT** a substantial difference, but merely a notational one. The tree structure in (5)a can also be illustrated as a field structure, as in (6), and the field structure (sætningsskema) in (5)b can also be illustrated as a tree structure, as in (7):

(6)



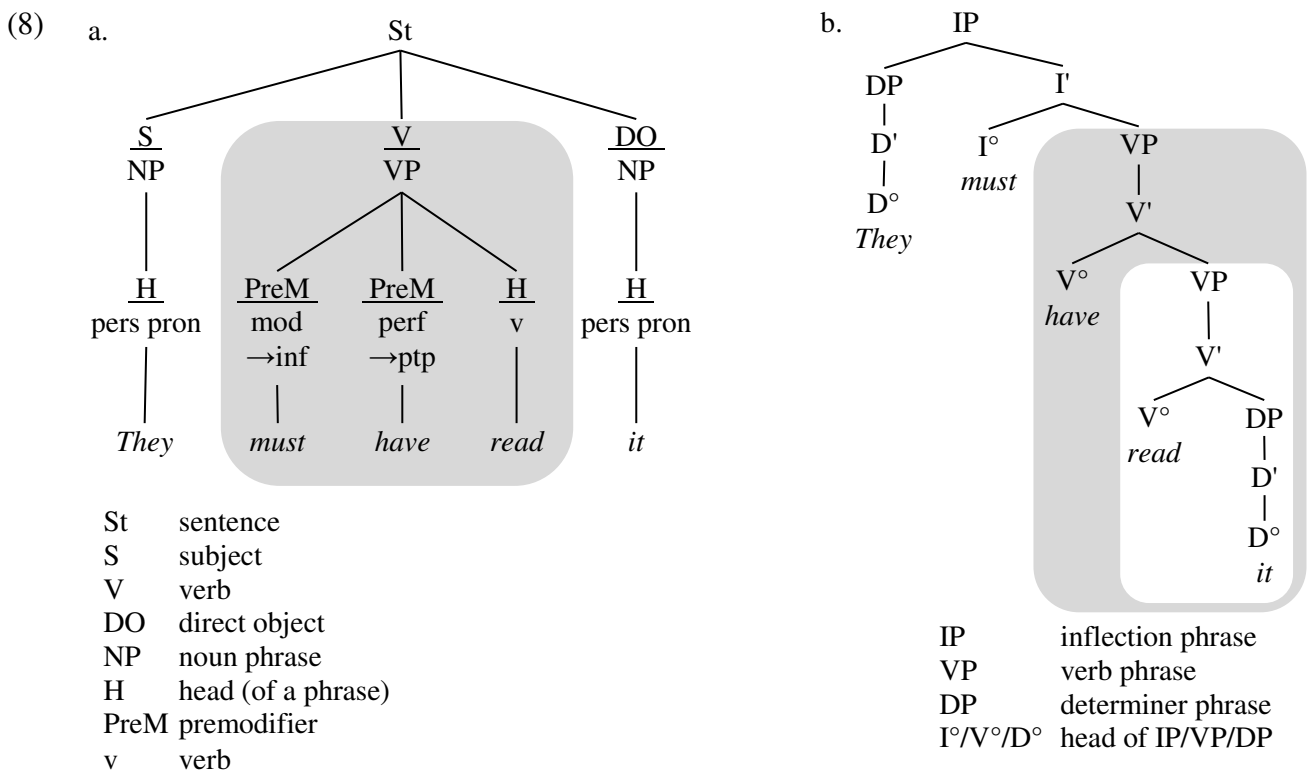
(5) b.

Fund.	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt		
F	v	n	a		V	N	A
<i>Nu</i>	<i>har</i>	<i>Peter</i>	<i>igen</i>		<i>poleret</i>	<i>bilen</i>	<i>med ståluld</i>



It is even possible that it is easier to see the substantial differences between the generative analysis and Diderichsen's (1946; 1966) analysis if the two field structures are compared, (5)b vs. (6), or if the two tree structures are compared, (5)a vs. (7).

An example of a different type of analysis is the tree structure in (8)a, which is used in most Danish analyses of English, e.g. Hjulmand and Schwarz (2017), Bache (2014), and Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen (1997). Here it is compared to the generative analysis of English clause structure that I and my colleagues use in (8)b.



(The grey areas highlight the differences in the size and structure of the VP.)

Apart from (5)-(8) showing three different ways of analysing and illustrating clause structure, (5)-(8) also show that the notation (boxes/fields or trees) is not necessarily so important. what is crucial is the division into constituents, i.e. which words belong together in which constituents.

I shall not go into details about the differences between analyses, but refer to e.g. Bjerre, Engels, Jørgensen and Vikner (2008) and Vikner and Jørgensen (2017) concerning Danish, as in (5)a vs. (5)b,c, and to Vikner (2015; 2016) concerning English, as in (8)a vs. (8)b.

Instead, I will continue using the generative analysis from (4), (5)a and (8)b and show how ambiguities can be accounted for within this analysis. I will, however, briefly return to the other analyses at the end of § 2.3 below.

2. Clause structure and ambiguity

2.1 Lexical ambiguity

First a few words about the difference between **lexical** ambiguity and **structural** ambiguity. If an ambiguous sentence is ambiguous because one or more single words have more than one meaning, then the ambiguity is **lexical**:

- (9) En. *He played cricket with a bat.* **LEXICAL** AMBIGUITY

Here there are three ambiguous expressions (*he played cricket with a bat*), and the result is eight different readings, which all differ in Danish (even if they are not all equally plausible):

- (10) Da. a. Han spillede cricket ved hjælp af et bat.
 b. ?? Han spillede cricket ved hjælp af en flagermus.
 c. ??? Han spillede cricket sammen med et bat.
 d. ? Han spillede cricket sammen med en flagermus.
- (11) Da. a. ?? Han legede fårekilling ved hjælp af et bat.
 b. ??? Han legede fårekilling ved hjælp af en flagermus.
 c. ??? Han legede fårekilling sammen med et bat.
 d. Han legede fårekilling sammen med en flagermus.

- (12) En. a. He played the game of **cricket** by means of a wooden stick called a **bat**.
 b. ?? He played the game of **cricket** by means of a small animal called a **bat**.
 c. ??? He played the game of **cricket** together with a wooden stick called a **bat**.
 d. ? He played the game of **cricket** together with a small animal called a **bat**.

- (13) En. a. ?? He pretended to be a **cricket** by means of a wooden stick called a **bat**.
 b. ??? He pretended to be a **cricket** by means of a small animal called a **bat**.
 c. ??? He pretended to be a **cricket** together with a wooden stick called a **bat**.
 d. He pretended to be a **cricket** together with a small animal called a **bat**.

2.2 Structural ambiguity in morphology

If an ambiguous expression is ambiguous not because one or more single words have more than one meaning, but only because it can have two different structures, then the ambiguity is **structural**:

- (14) a. b. **STRUCTURAL** AMBIGUITY
- $$\begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ / \quad \backslash \\ un- \quad \bullet \\ \quad \quad / \quad \backslash \\ \quad \quad lock \quad -able \end{array}$$
- $$\begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \bullet \quad \quad \bullet \\ \quad \quad / \quad \backslash \\ \quad \quad un- \quad lock \quad -able \end{array}$$
- [un- [lock-able]]
 "cannot be locked",
 Da. *ulåselig*
- [[un-lock] -able]
 "can be unlocked"
 Da. *oplåselig*

(14)a and (14)b mean two quite different things, but this is not because any of the single constituents have two meanings. Instead, the ambiguity stems from the two different ways that the three elements *un-*, *lock* and *-able* can be combined.

The **orange** circles highlight the constituents which are only found in one of the two analyses.
 (For the details of this account, see C. Vikner and Vikner 2008)

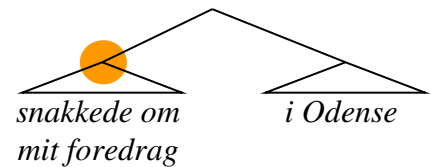
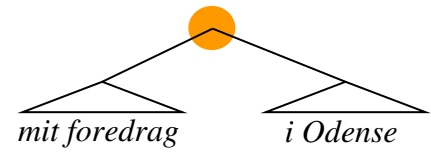
2.3 Structural ambiguity in syntax

If a place adverbial like *i Odense/in Odense* is added to our example in (1), the result is a structurally ambiguous clause:

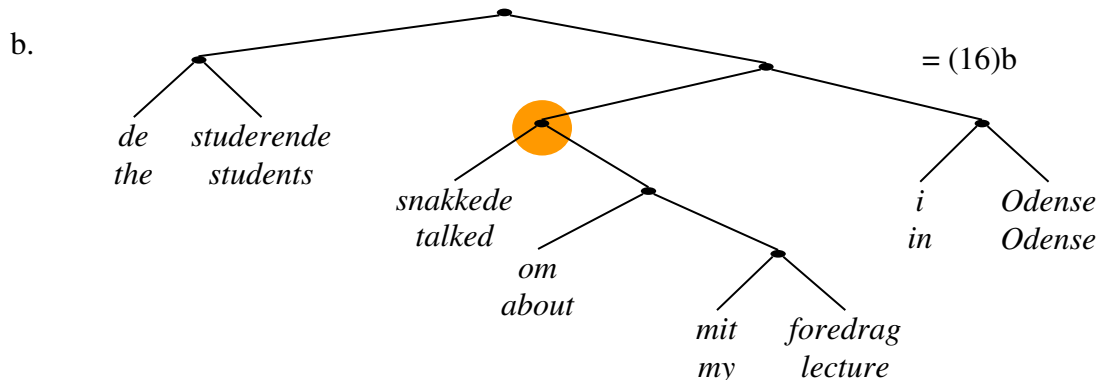
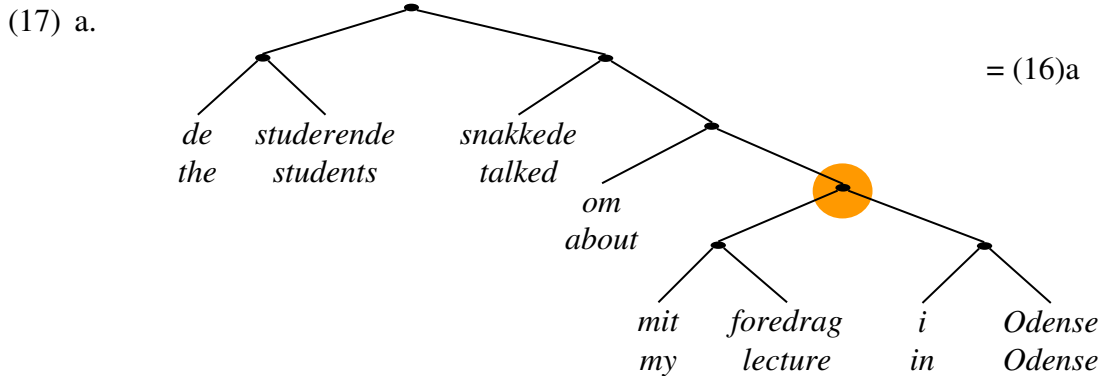
- (15) a. Da. (... at) *de studerende snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense.*
 b. En. (... that) *the students talked about my lecture in Odense.*

This example can have two different structures:

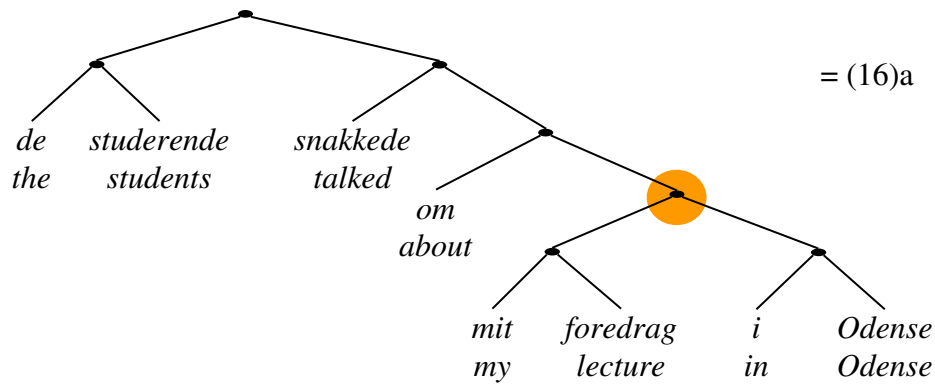
- (16) a. In one reading, the constituent *i(n) Odense* is the sister of the constituent *mit foredrag/my lecture*, and therefore *i(n) Odense* says something about *mit foredrag/my lecture*, i.e. where the lecture took place.
- b. In the other reading, the constituent *i(n) Odense* is the sister of the constituent *snakkede om mit foredrag/talked about my lecture*, and therefore *i(n) Odense* says something about *snakkede om mit foredrag/talked about my lecture*, i.e. where the talking took place.



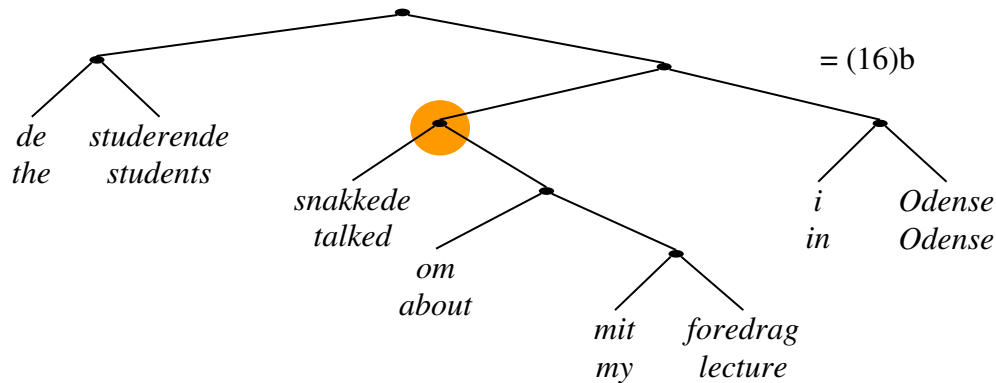
Here is the analysis of the two complete examples, and also here the orange circles highlight the constituents which are only found in one of the two structures/readings.



(17) a.



b.



If *i(n) Odense* is only the sister of (and therefore only says something about) *mit foredrag/my lecture*, (16)a/(17)a, then *mit foredrag i Odense/my lecture in Odense* forms one constituent, and then this constituent can be moved around:

- (18) Da. a. *de studerende snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense.*
 b. *Det var mit foredrag i Odense de studerende snakkede om _____.*

- (19) En. a. *the students talked about my lecture in Odense.*
 b. *It was my lecture in Odense the students talked about _____.*

- (20) Da. a. *de studerende snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense.*
 b. *Det de studerende snakkede om _____, var mit foredrag i Odense.*

- (21) En. a. *the students talked about my lecture in Odense.*
 b. *What the students talked about _____ was my lecture in Odense.*

When four words like *mit foredrag i Odense/my lecture in Odense* can be moved around together, this is because they form one constituent, and this is why none of the b-examples in (18)-(21) are ambiguous: The b-examples in (18)-(21) can only mean that *mit foredrag/my lecture* took place *i Odense/in Odense*, and they say nothing about where the talking of the students took place.

(Such constituency tests are recognised and employed in all of the approaches mentioned above, see e.g. Diderichsen 1946, 163; Hjulmand and Schwarz 2017, 53–56; Bache 2014, 15–18; Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen 1997, 20–22; and S. Vikner and Jørgensen 2017, 149–54)

If on the other hand, *i(n) Odense* is the sister of (and therefore says something about) *snakkede om mit foredrag/talked about my lecture*, (16)b/(17)b, then *snakkede om mit foredrag/talked about my lecture* forms one constituent, and then this constituent can be moved around:

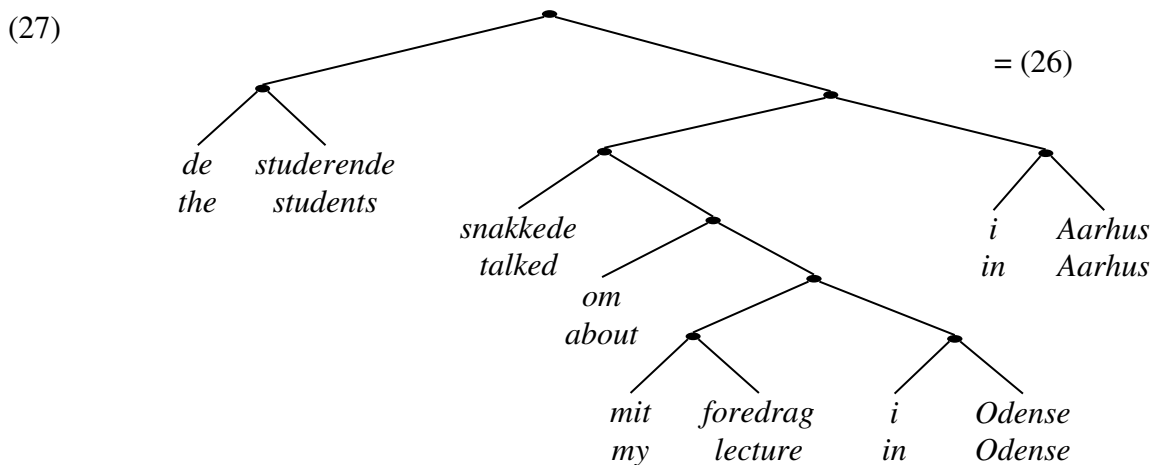
- (22) Da. a. *de studerende snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense.*
 b. *Det var (at) snakke om mit foredrag de studerende gjorde _____ i Odense.*
- (23) En. a. *that the students talked about my lecture in Odense.*
 b. *It was talk about my lecture that the students did _____ in Odense.*
- (24) Da. a. *de studerende snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense.*
 b. *Det de studerende gjorde _____ i Odense, var (at) snakke om mit foredrag.*
- (25) En. a. *the students talked about my lecture in Odense.*
 b. *What the students did _____ in Odense was talk about my lecture.*

When four words like *snakke om mit foredrag/talk about my lecture* can be substituted or moved around together, this is because they form one constituent, and this is why none of the b-examples in (22)-(25) are not ambiguous: The b-examples in (22)-(25) can only mean that the talking of the students took place *i Odense/in Odense*, and they say nothing about where *mit foredrag/my lecture* took place.

That a place adverbial like *i Odense/in Odense* can either be the sister of (say something about) *mit foredrag/my lecture* or be the sister of (say something about) *snakkede om mit foredrag/talked about my lecture* can also explain why the result is not ambiguous when we attach not one but two (incompatible) place adverbials to the same example:

- (26) a. Da. (... at) *de studerende snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus.*
 b. En. (... that) *the students talked about my lecture in Odense in Aarhus.*

In (26), *in Odense* has to be the sister of (say something about) *mit foredrag/my lecture*, og *i(n) Aarhus* has to be the sister of (say something about) *snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense/talked about my lecture in Odense*:



The other two theoretically possible combinations are excluded, as *i(n) Odense* og *i(n) Aarhus* cannot both say something about the same element.

This is supported by the same constituency tests that we used in (18)-(25).

If the analysis in (27) is on the right track, then (26)/(27) contain both a constituent which is mit foredrag i Odense/my lecture in Odense, (28), and one which is snakkede om mit foredrag i Odense/talked about my lecture in Odense, (29):

- (28) a. Da. *Det var mit foredrag i Odense de studerende snakkede om _____ i Aarhus.*
 b. En. *It was my lecture in Odense which the students talked about _____ in Aarhus.*
 c. Da. *Det de studerende snakkede om _____ i Aarhus, var mit foredrag i Odense.*
 d. En. *What the students talked about _____ in Aarhus was my lecture in Odense.*
- (29) a. Da. *Det var (at) snakke om mit foredrag i Odense de studerende gjorde _____ i Aarhus.*
 b. En. *It was talk about my lecture in Odense which the students did _____ in Aarhus.*
 c. Da. *Det de studerende gjorde _____ i Aarhus, var (at) snakke om mit foredrag i Odense.*
 d. En. *What the students did _____ in Aarhus was talk about my lecture in Odense.*

If the analysis in (27) is on the right track, then (26)/(27) neither contain a constituent which is mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus/my talk in Odense in Aarhus, (30), nor one which is snakkede om mit foredrag/talked about my lecture, (31):

- (30) a. Da. * *Det var mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus de studerende snakkede om _____.*
 b. En. * *It was my lecture in Odense in Aarhus which the students talked about _____.*
 c. Da. * *Det de studerende snakkede om _____, var mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus.*
 d. En. * *What the students talked about _____ was my lecture in Odense in Aarhus.*
- (31) a. Da. * *Det var (at) snakke om mit foredrag de studerende gjorde _____ i Odense i Aarhus.*
 b. En. * *It was talk about my lecture which the students did _____ in Odense in Aarhus.*
 c. Da. * *Det de studerende gjorde _____ i Odense i Aarhus, var (at) snakke om mit foredrag.*
 d. En. * *What the students did _____ in Odense in Aarhus was talk about my lecture.*

Danish examples of the same kind as (26)/(27) from KorpusDK (n.d.):

- (32) a. De kan h re mere om bogmessen i Frankfurt i Nyhedsmagasinet efter denne radioavis.
 b. Kriminalpolitiet p  Amager anholdt i g r eftermiddag en 35- rig libanesisk statsborger med asyl i Sverige, i K benhavns lufthavn i Kastrup.

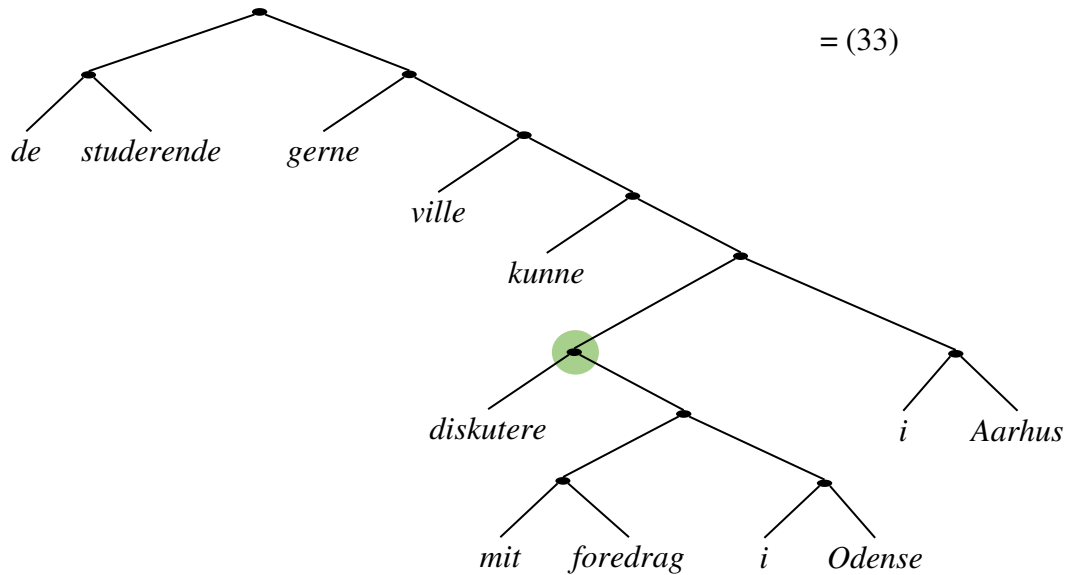
2.4 Structural ambiguity in syntax across the approaches

To illustrate the differences between the approaches, I will briefly discuss two slightly more complicated versions of (26)/(27):

- (33) Da. (... fordi) de studerende gerne ville kunne [[diskutere [mit foredrag i Odense]] i Aarhus].
 (34) En. *The students should have [[discussed [my lecture in Odense]] in Aarhus], instead of ...*

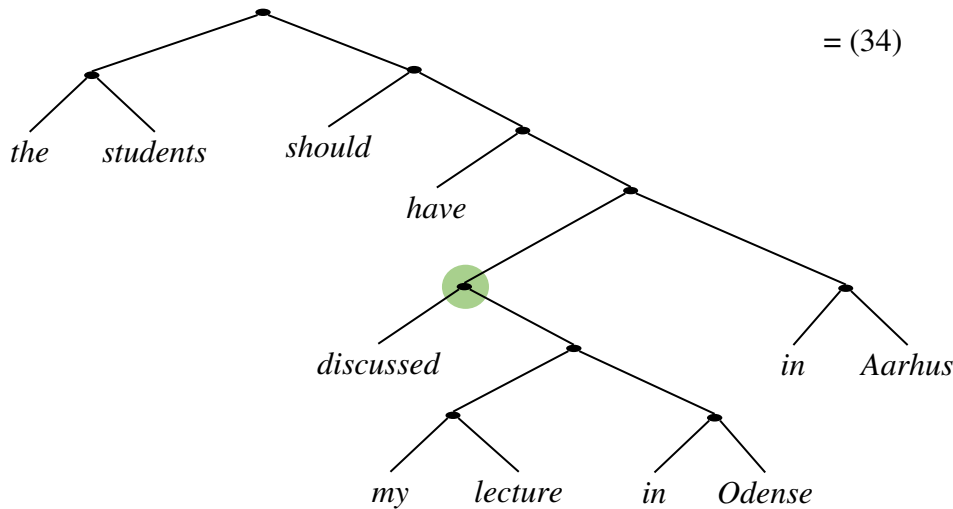
As in (26)/(27) above, i(n) Odense in (33)/(34) has to be the sister of (say something about) mit foredrag/my lecture, and i(n) Aarhus has to be the sister of (say something about) diskutere om mit foredrag i Odense/discuss my lecture in Odense:

(35) Da.



= (33)

(36) En.



= (34)

The same constituency tests that we used in (18)-(25) og i (28)-(31) are still relevant, but because there is more structure in (35)/(36) than in (17) and (27), the analyses in (35)/(36) also predict that (33)/(34) contain a constituent which is diskutere mit foredrag i Odense/discuss my talk in Odense, (37)/(38), (highlighted by means of a green circle in (35)/(36)), which is supported by the following:

- (37) a. *Det var (at) diskutere mit foredrag i Odense de studerende gerne ville kunne (gøre) _____ i Aarhus.*
 b. *Det de studerende gerne ville kunne (gøre) _____ i Aarhus, var (at) diskutere mit foredrag i Odense.*

- (38) En. a. *It was discuss my lecture in Odense which the students should have done _____ in Aarhus.*
 b. *What the students should have done _____ in Aarhus was discuss my lecture in Odense.*

(35)/(36) further predict that (33)/(34) do not contain a constituent which is diskutere mit foredrag/discuss my talk, which is supported by (39)/(40):

- (39) a. ** Det var (at) diskutere mit foredrag de studerende gerne ville kunne (gøre) _____ i Odense i Aarhus.*
 b. ** Det de studerende gerne ville kunne (gøre) _____ i Odense i Aarhus, var (at) diskutere mit foredrag.*

- (40) En. a. *It was discuss my lecture which the students should have done _____ in Odense in Aarhus.*
 b. *What the students should have done _____ in Odense in Aarhus was discuss my lecture.*

The constituent which the Danish (37) establishes, i.e. *diskutere mit foredrag i Odense*, is a constituent in the generative analysis which I suggest in (35) – namely a **VP**. This is, however, not a possible constituent in an analysis like Diderichsen's (1946; 1966) sentence model (*sætningsskema*) (nor in e.g. Christensen and Christensen 2014; Hansen 1977; Hansen and Heltoft 2011; Jørgensen 2000; or Tøgeby 2003) because *diskutere* in such an analysis forms a constituent, **V**, together with *kunne*. See e.g. Vikner and Jørgensen (2017) for more details.

The constituent which the English (38) establishes, i.e. *discussed my talk in Odense*, is a constituent in the generative analysis which I suggest in (36) – namely a **VP**. This is, however, not a possible constituent in analyses like the ones in Hjulmand and Schwarz (2017), Bache (2014), and Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen (1997) (and also Andersen 2006; McGregor 2015, 113–14; and Preisler 1997), because *discussed* in these analyses forms a constituent called VP or 'predicator group' together with *have*. See e.g. Vikner (2015; 2016) for more details.

A potential objection (especially from linguists who assume VPs or 'predicator groups' to consist of all and only verbs) could be that in (35)/(36) = (33)/(34), *i(n) Aarhus* would be the modifier of the entire clause (rather than only of the VP). An answer to this to this could be that *i(n) Aarhus* can be shown to form a constituent together with the VP *diskutere mit foredrag i Odense*, excluding the rest of the clause:

- (41) a. *Det var (at) diskutere mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus de studerende gerne ville kunne gøre _____.*
 b. *Det de studerende gerne ville kunne gøre _____, var (at) diskutere mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus.*
- (42) En. a. *It was discuss my lecture in Odense in Aarhus which the students should have done _____.*
 b. *What the students should have done _____ was discuss my lecture in Odense in Aarhus.*

A final example that shows that *i Aarhus* is not modifying the entire clause in (35)/(33) is

- (43) *Det de studerende gerne ville _____, var at kunne diskutere mit foredrag i Odense i Aarhus.*

and here I have found an example of the same type on the web:

- (44) Men det jeg gerne ville _____ var at kunne udvælge bestemte kunder og derefter sende en samlet mail til dem.

<https://forum.e-conomic.dk/14735/email-til-mange-kunder-pa-en-gang>

2.5 Further ambiguous examples from English and Danish

By means of analyses as the ones I have suggested above, we can account for a large number of ambiguities in English and Danish (and also many other languages), and as shown by the following examples, such ambiguities are not all that rare.

In the following, the underline constituent can be read as the sister of either (a) a larger or (b) a smaller constituent (indicated by []), exactly like *i(n) Odense* in (17)a,b:

- (45) Yoko Ono will ...
 a. ...[talk about her husband John Lennon who was killed] in an interview with Barbara Walters.
 b. ...talk about her husband John Lennon who was [killed] in an interview with Barbara Walters.
 (from a list of programmes, cited in Pinker 1994, 102)
- (46) a. Two cars were [reported stolen] by the Groveton police yesterday.
 b. Two cars were reported [stolen] by the Groveton police yesterday.
 (cited in Pinker 1994, 102)
- (47) a. I remember [meeting a mother of a child who was abducted by the North Koreans] right here in the Oval Office.
 b. I remember meeting a mother of a child who was [abducted by the North Koreans] right here in the Oval Office.
 (George W. Bush, 26.06.2008, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/06/20080626-9.html>)

Many such ambiguities of this kind were also listed by the Danish newspaper *Politiken* in their column *Oh Danmark* (which added its own headlines pointing out the unintended readings):

- (48) **NÅ SÅ DET VAR PERSONALET!**
 a. En Rembrandt og en Bellini til en samlet vurderingsværdi på et par hundrede millioner kroner blev [stjålet ved højlys dag af to yngre mænd] fra Nivaagaards Malerisamling.
 b. En Rembrandt og en Bellini til en samlet vurderingsværdi på et par hundrede millioner kroner blev stjålet ved højlys dag af [to yngre mænd] fra Nivaagaards Malerisamling.
 (Politiken) *Politiken, Oh Danmark*, 10.10.1999
- (49) **KENDSKAB TIL FORD T EN FORDEL**
 a. [En dame til at komme sammen med og som kan køre bil] på 60 - 70 år ønskes af ældre enkemand.
 b. En dame til at komme sammen med og som kan køre [bil] på 60 - 70 år ønskes af
 (Annonce i Kristeligt Dagblad) *Politiken, Oh Danmark*, 28.07.1996
- (50) **HER TA'R MAN DET MED RO**
 a. Mindre [dynamisk advokatkontor] søger en HH'er med henblik på elevansættelse.
 b. Mindre [dynamisk] advokatkontor søger en HH'er med henblik på elevansættelse.
 (Annonce i Farum Avis) *Politiken, Oh Danmark*, 09.07.1995
- (51) **KU' HUN IKKE NØJES MED ET PAR SØLVSKÆER?**
 a. Uskyldig. Tjenestepigen Alma Bondesen, der blev [beskyldt for tyveri] af sit herskab.
 b. Uskyldig. Tjenestepigen Alma Bondesen, der blev beskyldt for [tyveri] af sit herskab.
 (Billedtekst i *Politiken*) *Politiken, Oh Danmark*, 26.08.2001

- (52) **SPECIALBUTIK FOR BARNLØSE**
- a. [Rosengårdscentrets rabatbilletter til børn], som vi sælger ved særlige lejligheder, er gået hen og blevet uhyre populære.
 - b. Rosengårdscentrets rabatbilletter til [børn], som vi sælger ved særlige lejligheder, er gået hen og blevet uhyre populære.
- (Annonce i Ugeavisen Fyn) Politiken, *Oh Danmark*, 01.03.1998

3. Conclusion

Section 1 attempted to show that clauses have structure, and also to show how such a structure could be illustrated both inside generative linguistics and inside other (Danish) approaches to Danish clause structure and to English clause structure. I furthermore established a difference between substantial differences between the approaches and differences which are merely notational.

Section 2 was about how the structural analysis could account for structural ambiguities. I began with the differences between lexical and structural ambiguities, and then the difference between morphological structural ambiguities and syntactic structural ambiguities. I then focused on the kind of ambiguity which arises when one constituent, e.g. a preposition phrase, can be interpreted either as the sister of one constituent or as the sister of a different constituent. At the end, I discussed whether such analyses are possible across different approaches, concluding that the generative approach is more compatible with such accounts than competing approaches are.

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