

# The syntax and semantics of quotation: the case of French

Olivier Bonami

U. Paris-Sorbonne &  
LLF

Danièle Godard

Laboratoire de Linguistique  
Formelle  
(CNRS & U. Paris 7)

Tübingen — March 12, 2008

# Outline & motivation

- ▶ One can quote just about anything (Partee, 1973; Clark & Gerrig, 1990; Postal, 2004):
  - (1) a. Paul said “I goed there”. (ungrammatical utt.)
  - b. Paul said “Mary bel... believ... knew I was there.” (utt. with repairs)
  - c. Paul said “Marie était là”. (heterolinguisitic utt.)
  - d. The balloon went “pshhhhhhhh” (nonlinguistic sound)
  - e. Paul went [speaker frowns] (paralinguistic behavior)
  - f. The car went [spkr moves his hand in a zizag] (arbitrary behavior)
- ▶ Yet the quotation is a constituent of the sentence:
  - g. Paul said “You’re stupid” to Mary.

# Outline & motivation

---

- ▶ Pullum & Scholz (2001), Postal (2004): direct quotation provides a strong argument in favor of model-theoretic approaches to syntax.
  - ▶ In Generative-Enumerative approach, each grammatical sentence must be generated from a finite lexicon/alphabet.
    - ▶ But there is no (simple) way to enumerate possible quotations.
  - ▶ In a Model-Theoretic approach, one need only put necessary conditions on what a grammatical sentence consists of.
    - ▶ An open, unconstrained slot can be left for quotation, where “totally free expression” (Jackendoff, 1984) occurs.
- ▶ We will not discuss the merits of this argument, but the proposed analysis is simple and elegant.

# Outline & motivation

- ▶ The French construction in (2) poses strong problems for the “open slot” theory:
  - ▶ The quotative clause can be linearized inside the quotation (2b).
  - ▶ Yet it can not be linearized *anywhere* within the quotation (2c).

(2) a. « Le président est arrivé », dit Marie.

the president is arrived said Marie

*Marie said “The president has arrived”.*

b. Le président, dit Marie, est arrivé.

c. \* Le pré, dit Marie, sident est arrivé.

- ▶ This suggests that in homolinguistic quotation, the quote is subject to syntactic analysis.

# Outline & Motivation

---

- ▶ We will work our way towards an account of French Incidental Quotative Clauses:
  1. Quotation in general
  2. A partial HPSG analysis of direct quotation
  3. French Incidental Quotative Clauses
  4. An HPSG analysis of IQCs

# Quotation in general

# A typology of quotation

---

- ▶ We may start with Cappelen & Lepore's (2007) typology:
  - (3) a. “Run” is a verb (pure quotation)
  - b. Paul said “The President has arrived” (direct quotation)
  - c. Paul said that the President has arrived. (indirect)
  - d. Paul said that the President “has arrived”. (mixed)
  - e. Paul said that the “President” has arrived. (mixed)
- ▶ NB: this typology is not exhaustive.
  - ▶ Hybrid quotation (Recanati 2001)
    - f. Mary was furious about Paul. She decided never to speak to this “jerk”.
  - ▶ Recanati's (2001) open quotation
    - g. “I'll never speak to you again”. That's what Mary said.

# Basic semantic properties of direct quotation

- ▶ When quoting linguistic behavior
  - ▶ Maximal opacity: even necessarily equivalent descriptions cannot be substituted *salva veritate*.
- (4) Paul said “**x = y**”, not “**y = x**”
  - ▶ Context shift: indexicals change reference.
- (5) a. \*You<sub>i</sub> said “**Your<sub>i</sub> idea is stupid**”.  
b. Yesterday I said “**I will come tomorrow**”, and here I am.
  - ▶ Dual semantics (Davidson, 1979; Potts, 2007).
- (6) Mary said “**The president has arrived**”  
*seems to entail*: Mary uttered the words “**the president has arrived**”  
*seems to entail*: Mary said that the President has arrived.
  - ▶ NB: this is a property of verbs of saying rather than quotation itself.

# Quotable behaviors

- ▶ As noted earlier, one may quote non-(homo)linguistic behavior.
- ▶ Quotative verbs have selectional restrictions:

- (7) a. Paul a dit « **infractus** ». *Paul said “infraction”*  
b. Paul a dit « **I’m here** ». *Paul said “I’m here”*  
c. \*Paul a dit « **hips** ». *Paul said “hips”*
- (8) a. Paul a affirmé « **Je suis là** ». *Paul stated “I’m here”*  
b. Paul a affirmé « **I’m here** ». *Paul stated “I’m here”*  
c. \*Paul a affirmé « **Suis-je là ?** ». *Paul stated “Am I here?”*
- (9) a. Paul a fait « **hips** ». *Paul went “hips”*  
b. Paul a fait [**speaker frowns**]. *Paul went ...*

- ▶ *Dire*: anything linguistic
- ▶ *Affirmer*: anything assertive
- ▶ *Faire*: anything at all

# Faithfulness in direct quotation

- ▶ When quoting nonlinguistic behavior, it is obvious that the quote only reflects some aspects of the relevant event. Recall (1f):
  - (1) f. The car went [speaker moves his hand in a zizag]
- ▶ Clark & Gerrig (1990): even when quoting linguistic behavior, the quote may highlight different aspects of the speech event, depending on both the intentions and the abilities of the speaker.
  - (10) a. He said in French: “The president has arrived”.
  - b. He said “The PreSident has Arrived”, with a strange intonation.
  - c. He said something like “the President has arrived”.
- ▶ Motivates their view of **quotation as demonstration**: the quote is not a description, but a demonstration mimicking the actual behavior

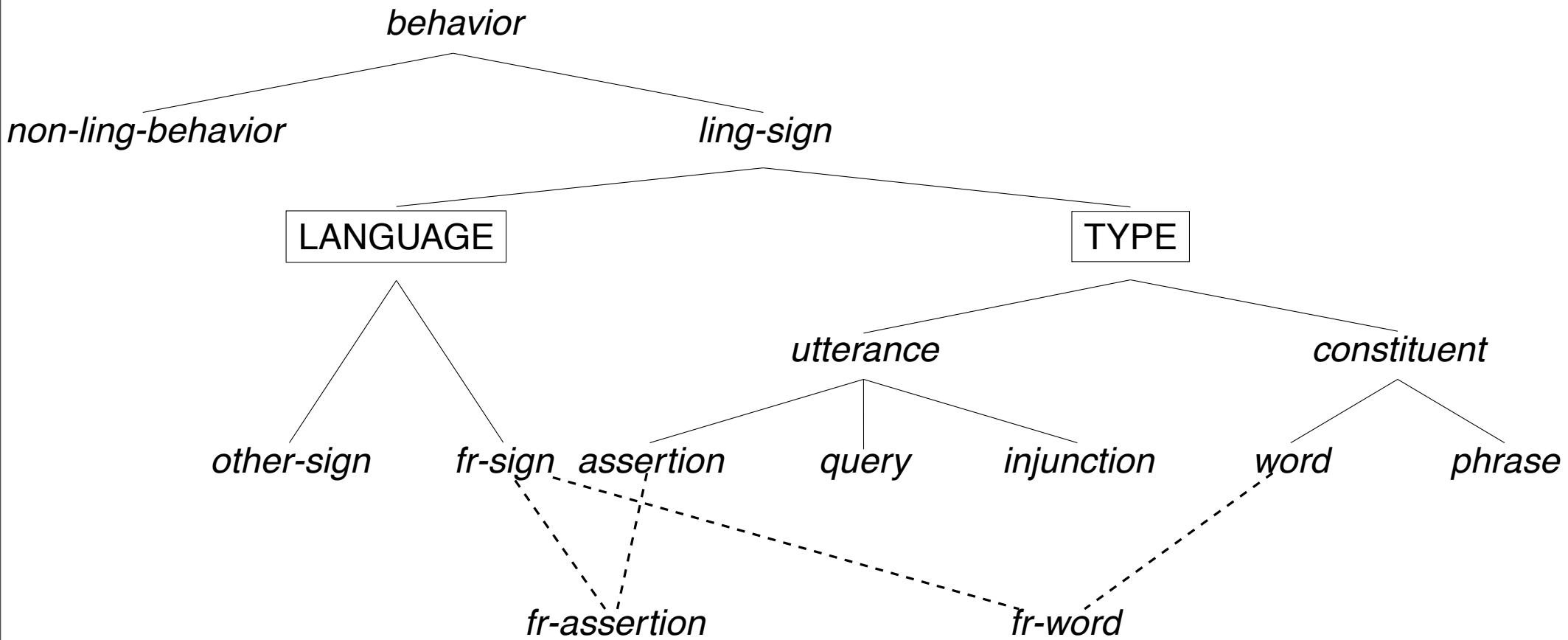
# An informal analysis

---

- ▶ Our analysis draws both on Clark and Gerrig (1990) and Cappelen and Lepore (2007)
- ▶ Like Cappelen & Lepore (2007), we assume that in the case of linguistic quotation, the argument of the quotative verb is the quoted sign.
  - ▶ More generally, the argument of the quotative verb is a behavior.
  - ▶ This buys us a simple account of the semantic properties of quotation.
- ▶ Like Clark & Gerrig, we assume that the relation between what occurs in the sentence and the actual argument of the quotative verb is indirect: there is a **resemblance** relation between the two, the details of which are left to the appreciation of the speaker

# **A partial HPSG analysis of direct quotation**

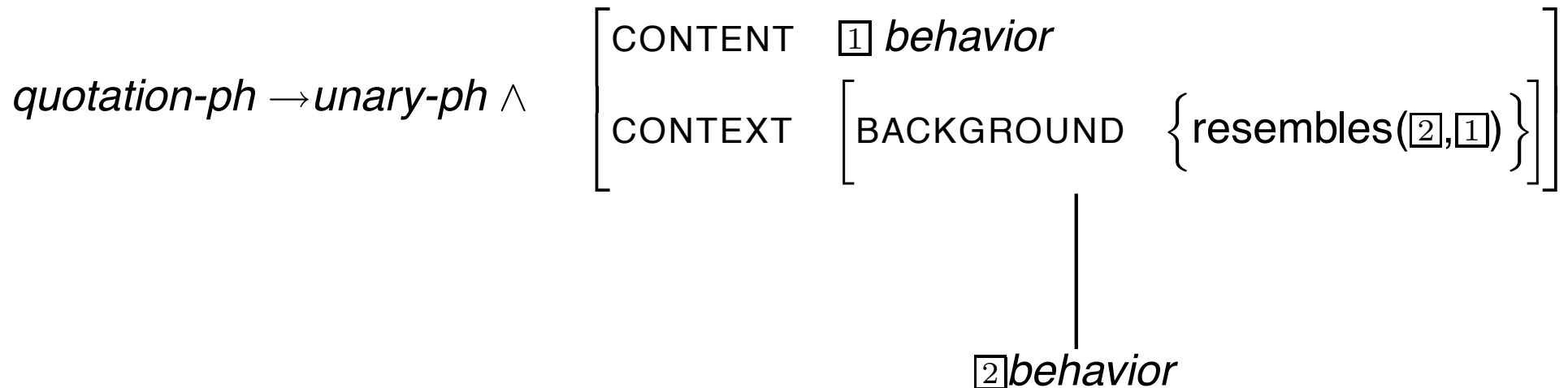
# Enriched ontology



*behavior* → [ LOCUS ind ]

*ling-sign* → [ LOCUS 1  
SS|LOC|CX|C-INDS|SPKR 1 ]

# The quotation construction



- ▶ Limitations:
  - ▶ There are technical and foundational issues in taking *signs* as values for CONTENT.
  - ▶ We do not say anything explicit as to what counts as resemblance.
  - ▶ Something should be said as to what it means for a sign to contain a *behavior* as a constituent.
  - ▶ Using BACKGROUND is not satisfying.

# Verbs of quotation

*dire* 'say':

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-STR} \left\langle \text{NP}_{\boxed{1}}, \left[ \text{CONT} \quad \boxed{2} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{ling-sign} \\ \text{LOCUS} \quad \boxed{1} \end{array} \right] \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{CONT} \quad \text{say}(\boxed{1}, \boxed{2}) \end{array} \right]$$

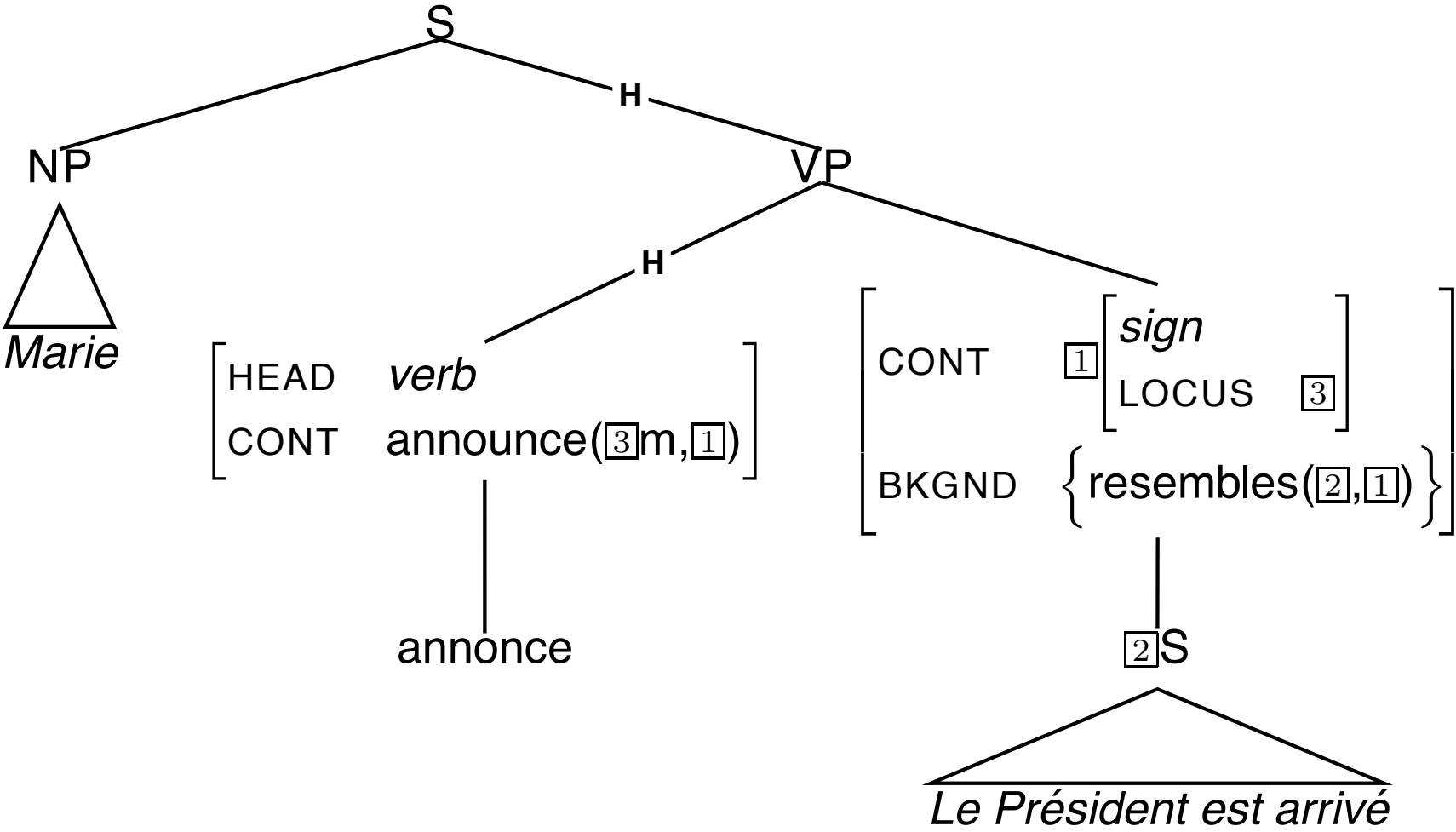
*affirmer* 'state':

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-STR} \left\langle \text{NP}_{\boxed{1}}, \left[ \text{CONT} \quad \boxed{2} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{assertion} \\ \text{LOCUS} \quad \boxed{1} \end{array} \right] \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{CONT} \quad \text{state}(\boxed{1}, \boxed{2}) \end{array} \right]$$

*faire* 'do':

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG-STR} \left\langle \text{NP}_{\boxed{1}}, \left[ \text{CONT} \quad \boxed{2} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \textit{behavior} \\ \text{LOCUS} \quad \boxed{1} \end{array} \right] \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{CONT} \quad \text{do}(\boxed{1}, \boxed{2}) \end{array} \right]$$

# A special case: homolingual quotation



# Explaining the properties: opacity

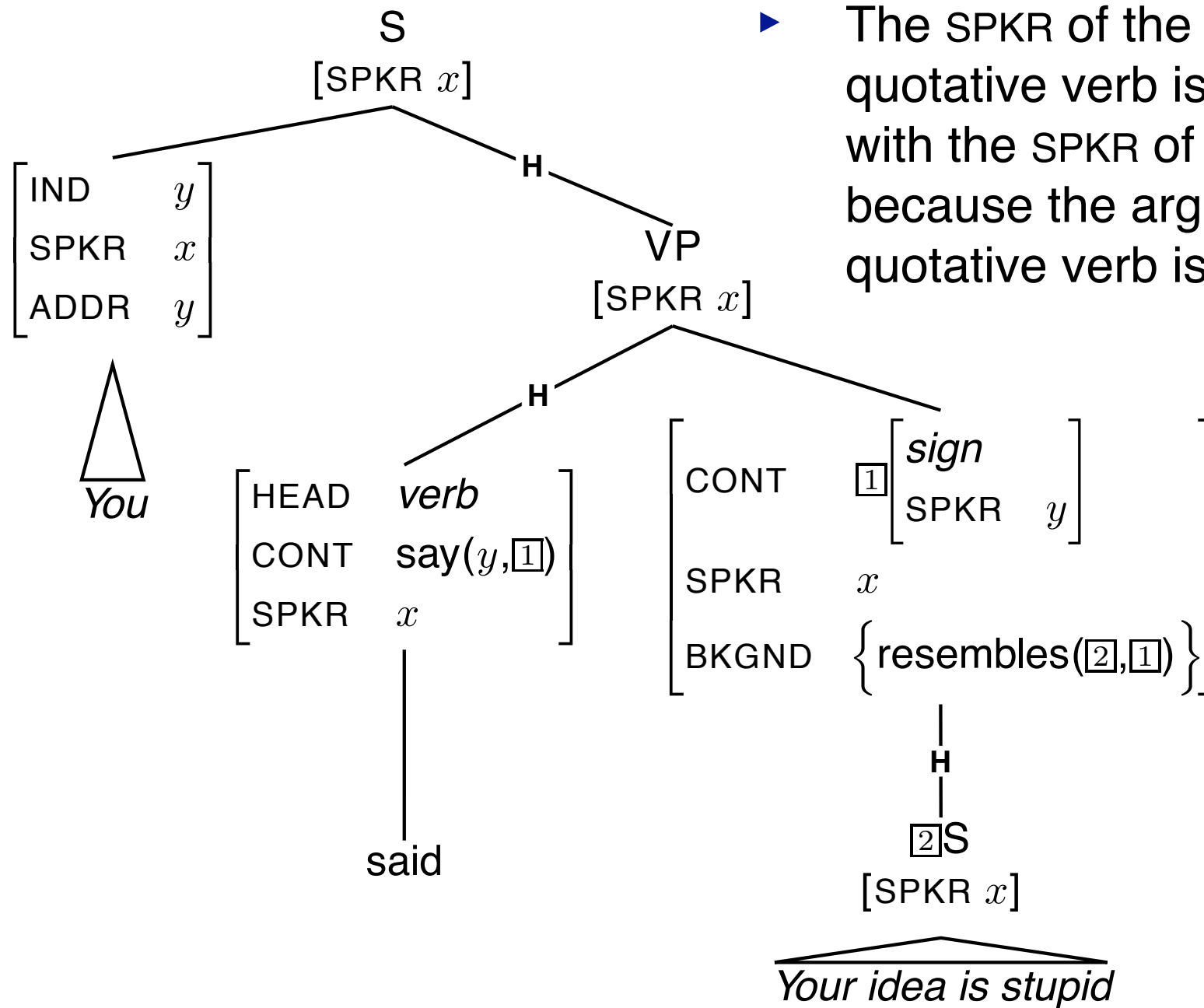
- ▶ Since the argument of the quotative verb is the quoted *sign*, and the quotation mimicks that sign, changing the syntax of the quotation changes the argument.
- ▶ More precisely:

- ▶  $(x = y) \equiv (y = x)$  ,

- ▶ but 
$$\begin{bmatrix} \textit{sign} \\ \text{PHON} & \text{'x is y'} \\ \text{CONT} & x = y \end{bmatrix} \neq \begin{bmatrix} \textit{sign} \\ \text{PHON} & \text{'y is x'} \\ \text{CONT} & y = x \end{bmatrix} .$$

- ▶ thus 
$$\text{say} \left( p, \begin{bmatrix} \textit{sign} \\ \text{PHON} & \text{'x is y'} \\ \text{CONT} & x = y \end{bmatrix} \right) \neq \text{say} \left( p, \begin{bmatrix} \textit{sign} \\ \text{PHON} & \text{'y is x'} \\ \text{CONT} & y = x \end{bmatrix} \right) .$$

# Explaining the properties: context shift



- ▶ The SPKR of the argument of the quotative verb is never identified with the SPKR of the utterance, because the argument of the quotative verb is *not* the quotation.

# Explaining the properties: dual semantics

---

- ▶ The argument of the quotative verb is a sign, not a string or a proposition.
- ▶ Thus the lexical semantics of most quotative verbs will appeal to both the form and the content of the argument
  - ▶ E.g. *x said “Y”* means that *x* used a sign whose form resembles *Y* in a speech event. This entails:
    - ▶ that *x* uttered (something resembling) “Y”
    - ▶ that *x*’s utterance conveyed (something resembling) the content conventionally associated with *Y*.
  - ▶ Crucially, nothing precludes a quotative verb from having a different lexical semantics; e.g. *utter* may take a *sign* argument but not entail that the sign was used.
  - ▶ NB: no need for a two-dimensional semantics (Potts, 2007), which is fortunate in this case (Geurts & Maier, 2005).

# **French Inverted Quotative Clauses (IQC)**

# The basic data

- ▶ Incidental quotative clauses (IQC) are an alternate way of effecting direct quotation, where the quotation is not syntactically subordinate:

- (11) a.  $Paul_i$  a dit «  $Mon_i$  frère est arrivé ».   
*Paul<sub>i</sub> said “My<sub>i</sub> brother has arrived.”*  
b. «  $Mon_i$  frère est arrivé », a dit  $Paul_i$ .

- ▶ In French grammar IQCs are grouped with other types of clauses under the heading “incises”; they differ in that only IQCs correspond to direct quotation.

- (11) a.  $Paul_i$  a dit que  $mon_j$  frère est arrivé. ( $i \neq j$ )  
*Paul<sub>i</sub> said that my<sub>j</sub> brother has arrived*  
b.  $Mon_j$  frère,  $Paul_i$  l’a dit, est arrivé. ( $i \neq j$ )

- (12)  $Mon$  frère, semble-t-il, est arrivé.

# ICQs are adjuncts

- ▶ It is clear that the ICQ is the semantic operator and the quotation the argument.
- ▶ Thus the ICQ is either a head or an adjunct. Its position in the sentence is completely natural if it is an adjunct, and completely surprising if it is the head.

(13) a. « **Mon frère est arrivé** », a dit Paul.

b. Mon frère est arrivé, récemment.

*My brother arrived recently.*

(14) a. Mon frère est, récemment/a dit Paul, arrivé.

b. Mon frère, récemment/a dit Paul, est arrivé.

c. Récemment/\*A dit Paul, mon frère est arrivé.

- ▶ Moreover, it is quite common for adjuncts (but not for heads) to be associated with incidental prosody ('comma intonation'). Incidental adjuncts have the same distribution as ICQs.

# Inversion

- ▶ Five types of subject inversion in French (Kayne, 1972, Bonami *et al.* 1999)

(15) a. Simple subject clitic inversion

Quel livre lit-il ?                      *Which book is he reading?*

b. Complex subject clitic inversion

Quel livre Paul<sub>i</sub> lit-il<sub>i</sub> ?              *Which book is Paul reading?*

c. Stylistic inversion

Quel livre lit Paul ?                      *Which book is Paul reading?*

d. Unaccusative inversion

Entrèrent trois hommes.      *Three men entered.*

e. Heavy subject inversion

Pourront demander une dérogation les étudiants dont le nom figure dans la liste qui suit.

*The students whose name occurs in the following list may ask for a dispensation.*

# Inversion

- ▶ Inversion is obligatory in ICQ; it may be either simple clitic inversion or stylistic inversion.
  - ▶ Not unaccusative inversion because agentive verbs are licit
  - ▶ Not heavy NP inversion because a complement may follow the subject

(16) a. « **Mon frère est arrivé** », a-t-il dit à Marie.

*“My brother has arrived”, he said to Marie.*

b. « **Mon frère est arrivé** », a dit Paul à Marie.

*“My brother has arrived”, Paul said to Marie.*

c. \*« **Mon frère est arrivé** », Paul a-t-il dit.

- ▶ Note that stylistic inversion is not possible in non-quotative incidental clauses.

(17) a. Mon frère, Paul l’a dit, est arrivé.

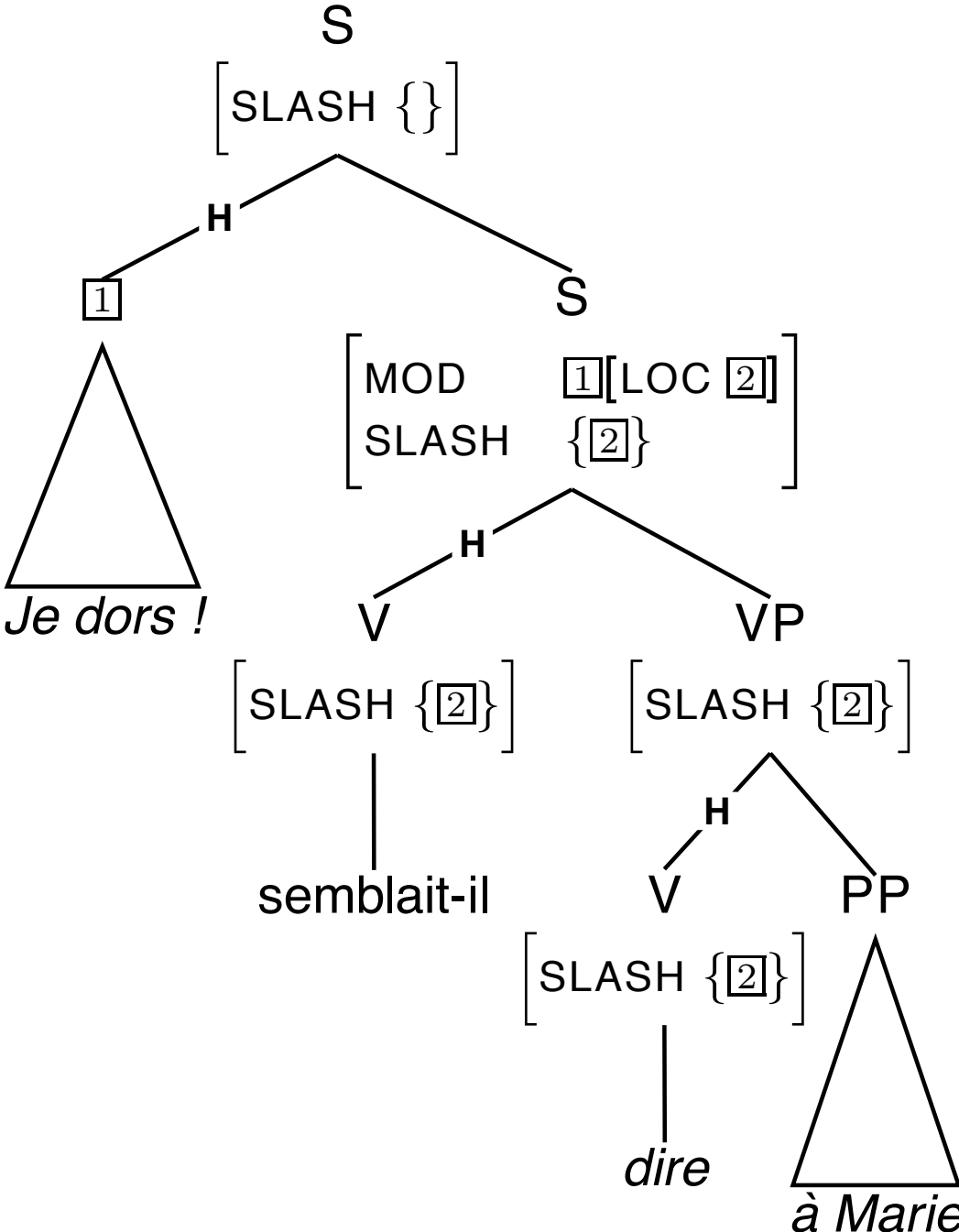
b. \*Mon frère, l’a dit Paul, est arrivé.

# Extraction

---

- ▶ Bonami et al. (1999) argue that stylistic inversion is possible only in extraction contexts. This suggests that ICQs are extraction constructions.
  - ▶ An IQC must contain a quotative verb, but there may be long distance between that verb and the quotation (although intervening finite clauses are dispreferred).
- (18) a. « **Je n'en peux plus** », semblait croire pouvoir dire Paul à ses étudiants.  
*“I can't take it anymore”, Paul seemed to think he could say to his students.*
- b. ??« **Je n'en peux plus** », croyais-je que Marie avait dit.  
*I thought that Marie said “I can't take it anymore.”*

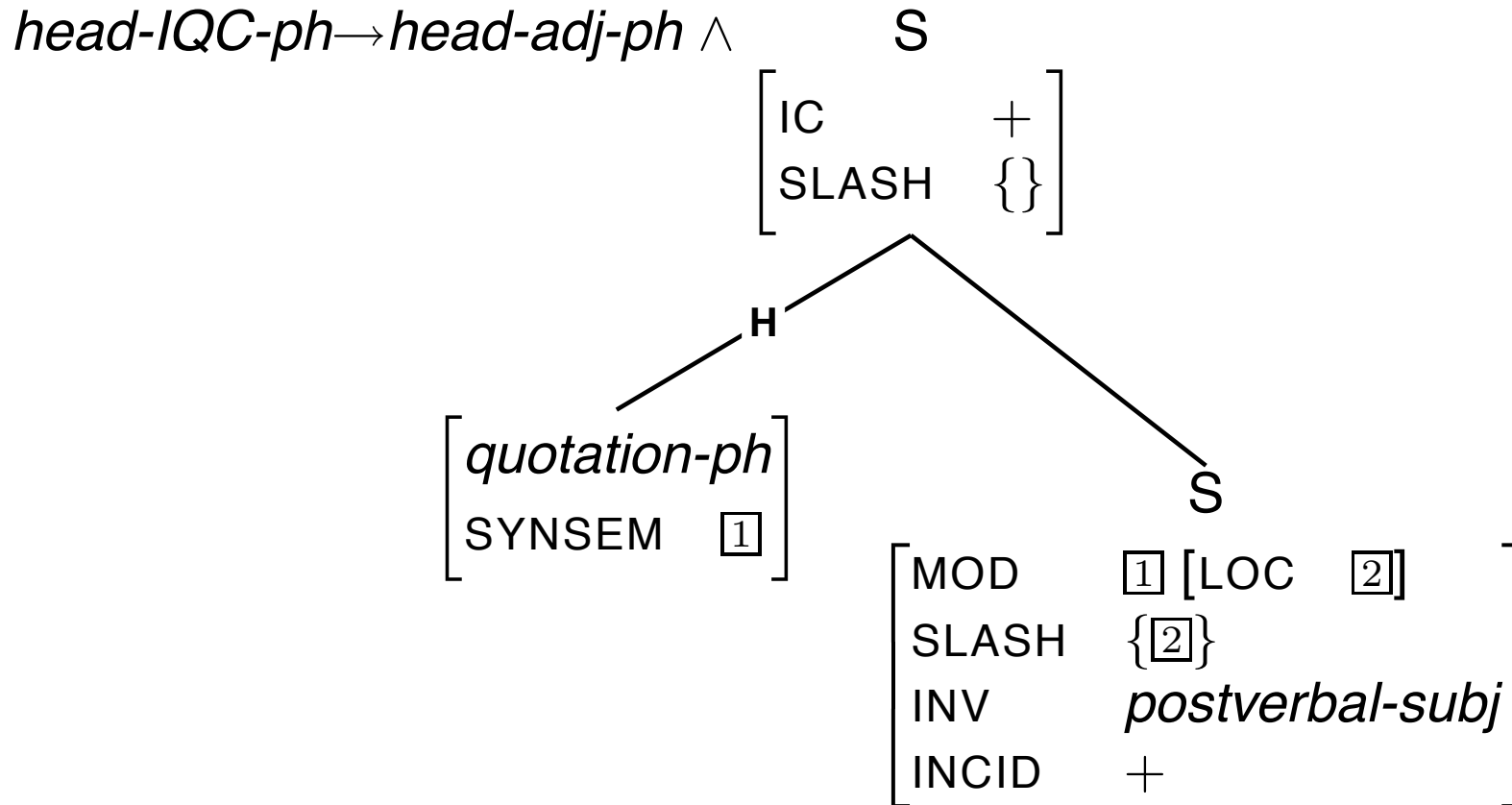
# Sketch of the analysis



► Notice the similarity with a *that*-less relative clause.

# **An HPSG analysis of IQCs**

# IQC introduction: a subtype of *hd-adj-ph*



- ▶ IC + is necessary because IQCs are never embedded
- ▶ the INV value makes sure we have the right type of subject inversion
- ▶ INCID + takes care of the prosody—more on this later

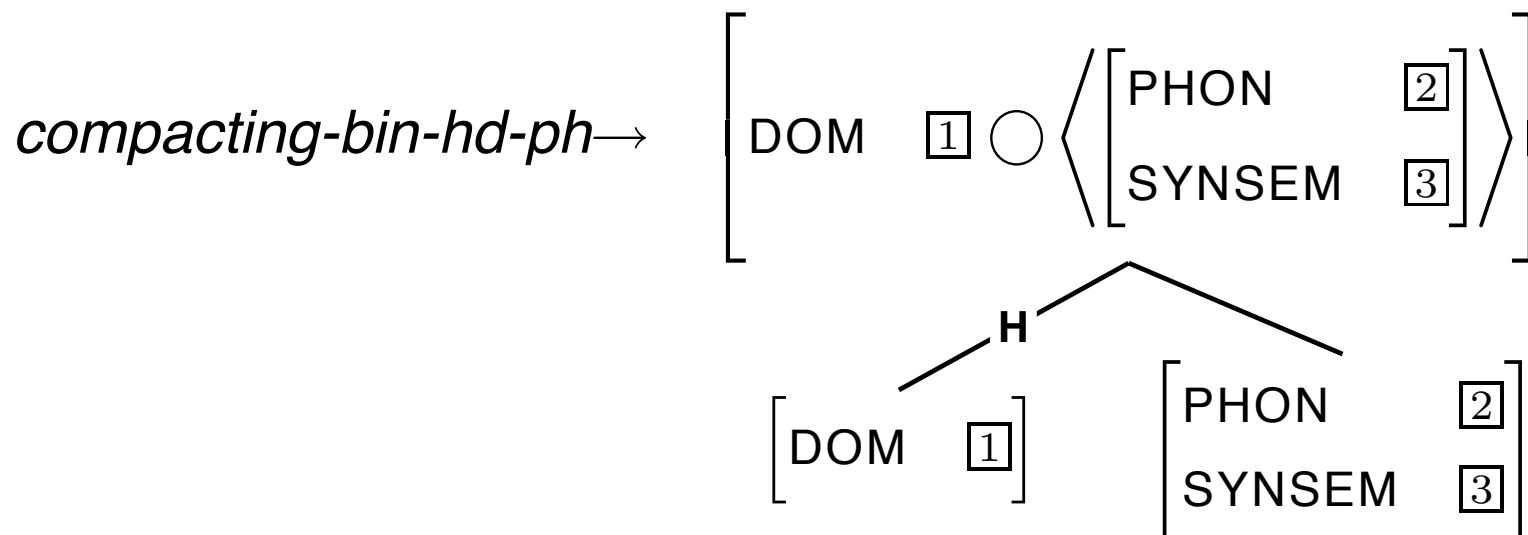


# Background on incidental adjuncts

- ▶ IQCs are a special case of *incidental adjuncts*, which are studied in detail in Bonami & Godard (2007).
  - ▶ Incidentalness is a prosodic property of various constituents which are ‘set apart’ from the rest of the utterance by pauses, vowel lengthening,  $F_0$  peaks, and/or register variation.
  - ▶ Incidentalness is not correlated in general with any syntactic, semantic or pragmatic property. Rather, various constructions use incidentalness to different ends.
  - ▶ In the case of incidental **adjuncts**, incidentalness indicates a scopal property: whereas scope correlates with order for integrated adjuncts, it does not for incidentals.
- (19) a. Paul a probablement répondu rapidement.  
*Paul probably answered quickly.*
- b. \*Paul a rapidement probablement répondu.
- c. Paul a rapidement répondu, probablement.

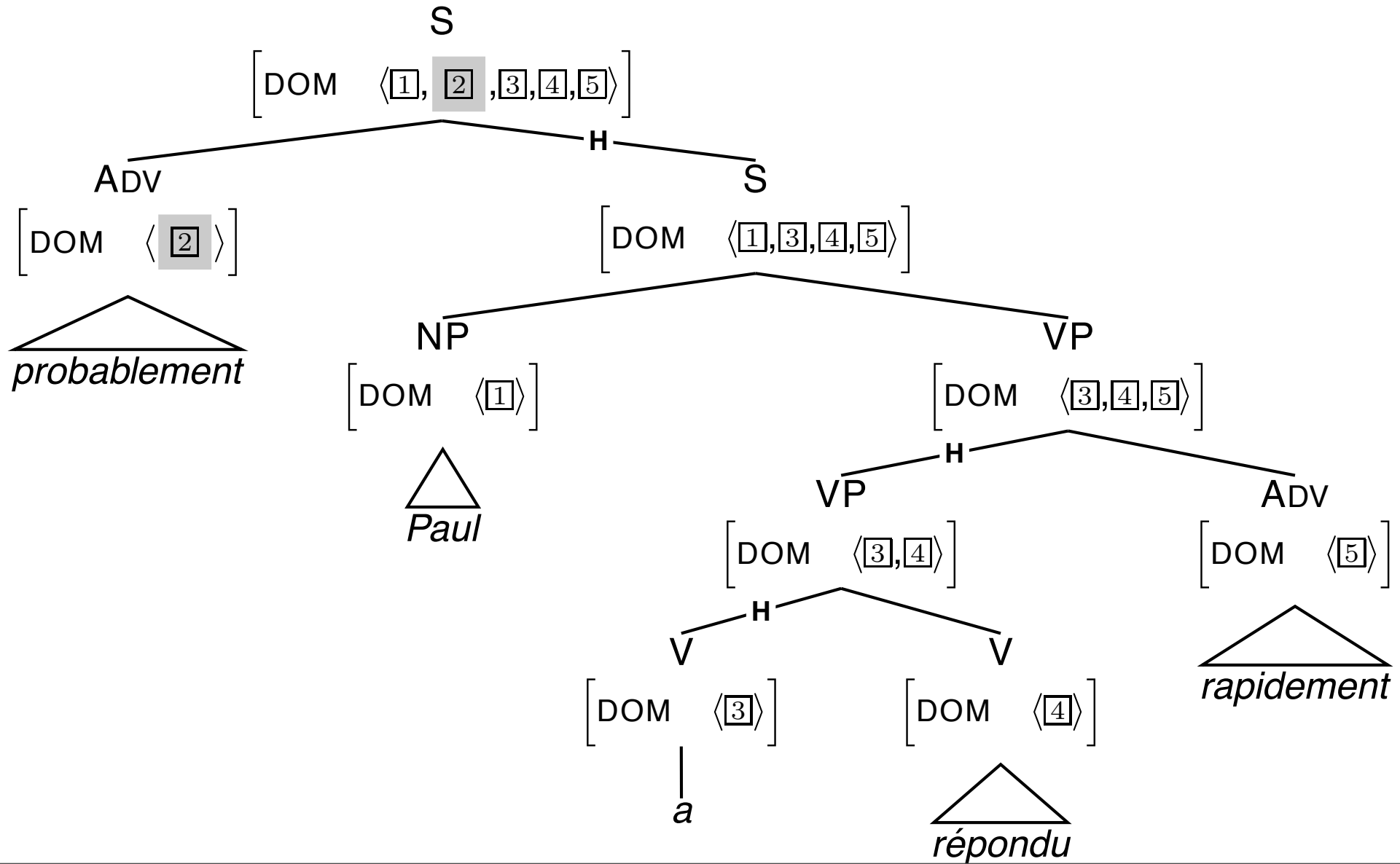
# An linearization-based analysis of incidental adjuncts

- ▶ We assume a (Kathol-style) linearization framework:
  - ▶ DOM is populated with *domain objects* combining *synsem* and *phon*.
  - ▶ All phrases are unary or binary
  - ▶ Heads are never compacted
  - ▶ Nonheads are normally compacted
    - ▶ exception: VP complements in subject inversion



# An linearization-based analysis of incidental adjuncts

- Incidental adverbs are adjuncts to clauses, whereas integrated adverbs are complements (Bouma *et al.* 2001).



# The case of ICQs

- ▶ To account for cases such as (2b):  
(2) b. *Le président*, dit Marie, *est arrivé*.
- ▶ We just assume that IQCs are *incidental* adjuncts.
  - ▶ We need homolingistic quotation to contribute domain elements
  - ▶ Other quotations contribute a single domain object, and thus can not be interrupted

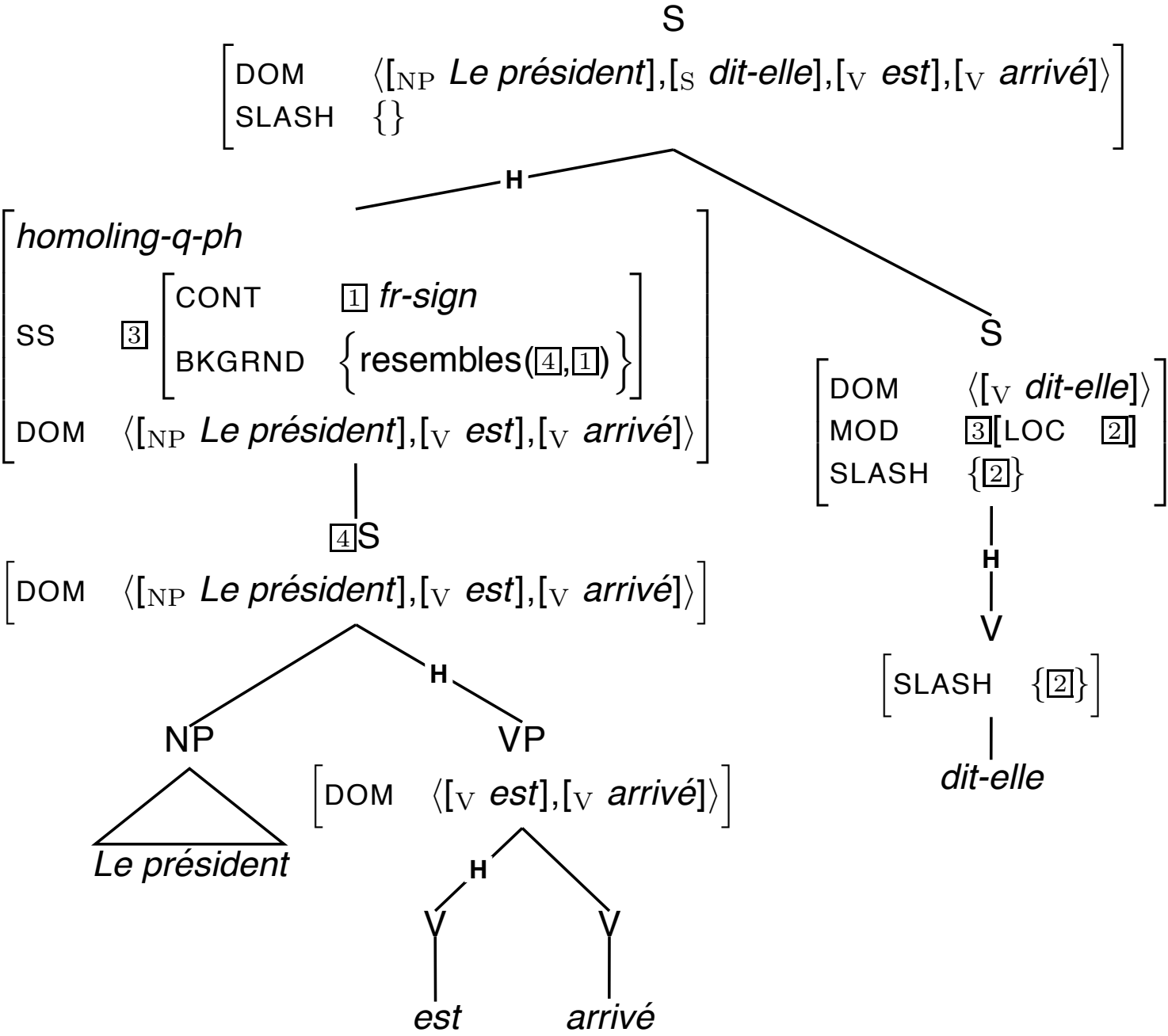
$quotation-ph \rightarrow homoling-q-ph \vee other-q-ph$

$homoling-q-ph \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{DOM} & \boxed{1} \end{bmatrix}$        $other-q-ph \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{DOM} & \langle dom-obj \rangle \end{bmatrix}$

|

$\begin{bmatrix} fr-sign \\ \text{DOM} & \boxed{1} \end{bmatrix}$

# An example



# Incidental adjuncts and parentheticality

- ▶ It is often assumed that incidentality correlates with a special pragmatic status ('parenthetical', 'conventional implicature', 'pragmatic', 'ancillary assertion', 'solitary commitment')
- ▶ In fact this is true only for some constructions; it is not for adverbs in general, and neither is it for IQCs.

(20) a. Paul a, probablement, répondu rapidement.

*Paul probably answered quickly.*

b. A: Paul a heureusement parlé à Marie.

*Paul fortunately spoke to Marie.*

B: #C'est faux: ce n'est pas heureux.

*That's false: it is not fortunate.*

c. A: « Le Président est arrivé », a dit Paul.

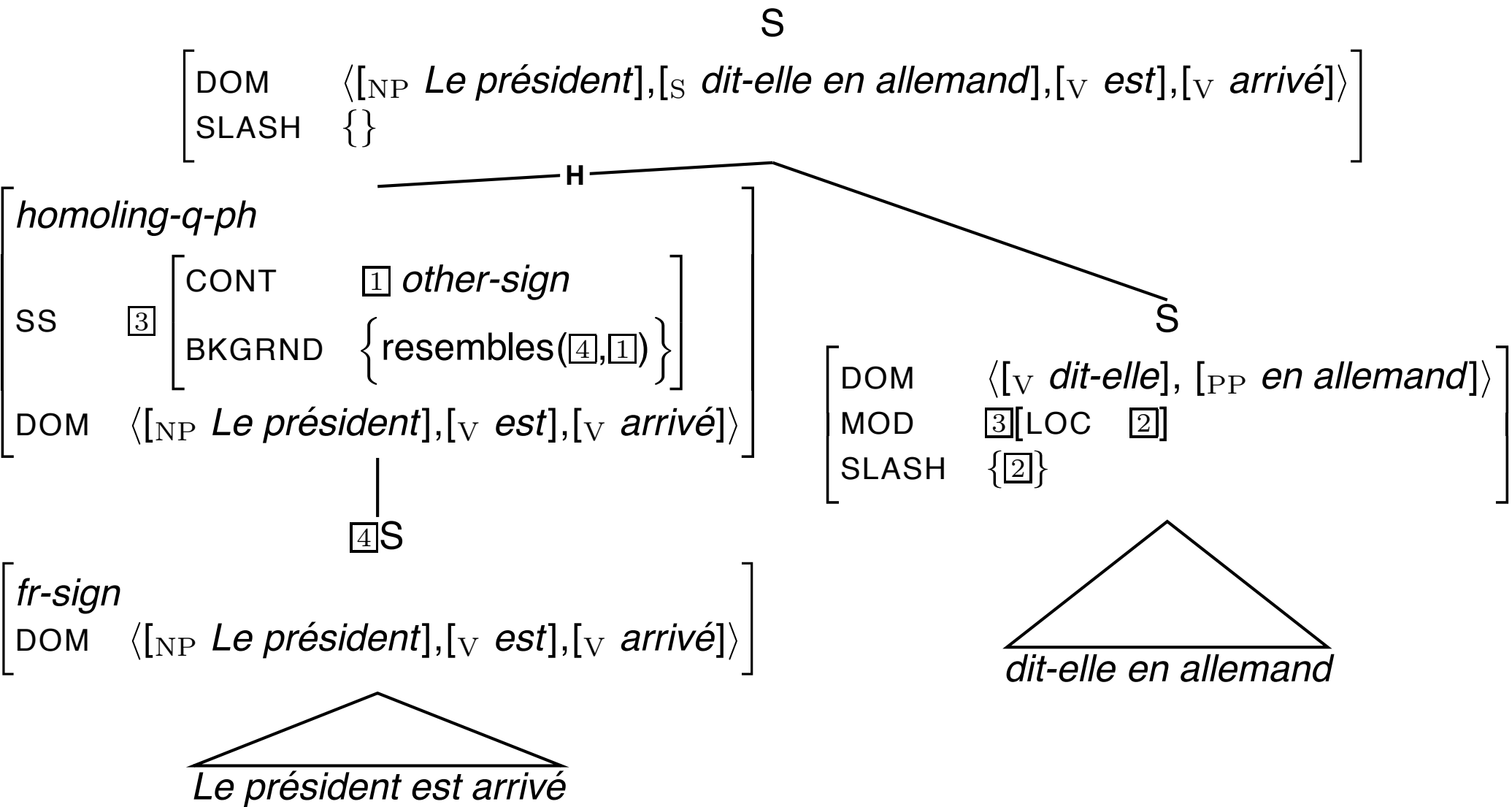
*Paul said "the President has arrived."*

B: C'est faux, il n'a pas dit ça.

*That's false: he did not say that.*

# An interesting prediction

(21) *Le président, dit Marie en allemand, est arrivé.*  
 “The president has arrived”, Marie said in German.



# Conclusions

# What we have done

---

- ▶ General, partially formalized analysis of direct quotation:
  - ▶ Explains the well-known semantic properties
  - ▶ *Really* takes non-homolingustic quotation into account
  - ▶ Integrates Recanati's (2001) "three types of meaning"
    - ▶ meaning of the speaker's words, meaning of the quoted speech act, picturing relation between the two
  - ▶ Should extend easily to hybrid quotation
- ▶ Full analysis of incidental quotative clauses
  - ▶ Extraction construction: accounts for long-distance, subject inversion
  - ▶ Placement properties follow from
    - ▶ Incidental adjunct status
    - ▶ Syntactic analysis of the quotation

# Remaining issues

- ▶ Semantic issues
  - ▶ [CONTENT *sign*]
  - ▶ In ‘pure quotation’, reference to linguistic *types*
  - ▶ The use of BACKGROUND is not satisfactory; since speech reports can be negated, what we really need is:

(22) a. Marie a dit: « **Le président est arrivé** ».

b.  $\exists x [\text{say}(m,x) \wedge \text{resembles}(\text{'Le Président est arrivé'},x)]$

- ★ Possible (partial) solution: take ‘resembles’ to be a relation between a *sign* and an *index*.
- ▶ To some extent, ICQs can occur within ungrammatical strings.

(23) **La président**, a dit Marie, **est arrivé**.

- ★ Calls for a grammatical framework where ungrammatical utterances, disfluencies, etc. are explicitly modeled.

# References

---

- Bonami, Olivier and Danièle Godard. 2007. Integrating linguistic dimensions: The scope of adverbs, *Proceedings of the 14th HPSG Conference*. Stanford: CSLI Publications, pp. 25–45.
- Bonami, Olivier, Danièle Godard, and Jean-Marie Marandin. 1999. Constituency and word order in French subject inversion. In G. Bouma, E. Hinrichs, G.-J. Kruijff, and R. T. Oehrle, eds. *Constraints and resources in natural language semantics*. Stanford: CSLI Publications, pp. 21–40.
- Bouma, Gosse, Rob Malouf, and Ivan A. Sag. 2001. Satisfying constraints on extraction and adjunction. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 19: 1–65.
- Cappelen, Herman, and Ernest Lepore. 2007. *Language turned on itself*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clark, Herbert H., and Richard J. Gerrig. 1990. Quotations as demonstrations. *Language* 66: 764–805.
- Davidson, Donald. 1979. Quotation, *Theory and Decision* 11: 27–40.
- Geurts, Bart, and Emar Maier. 2005. Quotation in context. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 17: 109–128.
- Jackendoff, Ray. 1984. On the phrase the Phrase ‘the phrase’, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 2: 25–37.
- Kathol, Andreas. 2000. *Linear syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kayne, Richard S. 1972. Subject inversion in French interrogatives. In J Casagrande and B Saciuk, eds., *Generative studies in Romance languages*. New York: Newbury House, pp. 70–126.
- Partee, Barbara H. 1973. The syntax of direct quotation. In S. R. Anderson and P. Kiparsky, eds., *A Festschrift for Morris Halle*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp. 410–418.
- Postal, Paul M. 2004. *Skeptical linguistic essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Potts, Christopher. 2007. The dimensions of quotation, In C. Barker and P. Jacobson, eds., *Direct Compositionality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 405–431.
- Pullum, Geoffrey K., and Barbara C. Scholz. 2001. On the distinction between model-theoretic and generative-enumerative syntactic frameworks, *Proceedings of LACL 2001*. Berlin: Springer Verlag.
- Recanati, François. 2001. Open quotation. *Mind* 110: 637–687.

