Lecture 8: More DCGs

- Theory
  - Examine two important capabilities offered by DCG notation:
    - Extra arguments
    - Extra tests
  - Discuss the status and limitations of DCGs

- Exercises
  - Exercises of LPN: 8.1, 8.2
  - Practical session

Extra arguments

- In the previous lecture we introduced basic DCG notation
- But DCGs offer more than we have seen so far
  - DCGs allow us to specify **extra arguments**
  - These extra arguments can be used for many purposes

Extending the grammar

- This is the simple grammar from the previous lecture
- Suppose we also want to deal with sentences containing pronouns such as

  she shoots him

  and

  he shoots her
- What do we need to do?

```
s --> np, vp.
np --> det, n.
vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
```

Extending the grammar

- Add rules for pronouns
- Add a rule saying that noun phrases can be pronouns

- Is this new DCG any good?
- What is the problem?

```
s --> np, vp.
np --> det, n.
np --> pro.
vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro --> [he].
pro --> [she].
pro --> [him].
pro --> [her].
```

Some examples of grammatical strings accepted by this DCG

```
?- s([she,shoots,him],[ ]).
yes
?- s([a,woman,shoots,him],[ ]).
yes
```

```
s --> np, vp.
np --> det, n.
np --> pro.
vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro --> [he].
pro --> [she].
pro --> [him].
pro --> [her].
```

Some examples of ungrammatical strings accepted by this DCG

```
?- s([a,woman,shoots,he],[ ]).
yes
?- s([her,shoots,a,man],[ ]).
yes
s([her,shoots,she],[ ]).
yes
```

```
s --> np, vp.
np --> det, n.
np --> pro.
vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro --> [he].
pro --> [she].
pro --> [him].
pro --> [her].
```

What is going wrong?

- The DCG ignores some basic facts about English
  - *she* and *he* are subject pronouns and cannot be used in object position
  - *her* and *him* are object pronouns and cannot be used in subject position
- It is obvious what we need to do: extend the DCG with information about subject and object
- How do we do this?

A naïve way…

```
s --> np_subject, vp.
np_subject --> det, n.            np_object --> det, n.
np_subject --> pro_subject.       np_object --> pro_object.
vp --> v, np_object.
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro_subject --> [he].
pro_subject --> [she].
pro_object --> [him].
pro_object --> [her].
```

Nice way using extra arguments

```
s --> np(subject), vp.
np(_) --> det, n.
np(X) --> pro(X).
vp --> v, np(object).
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro(subject) --> [he].
pro(subject) --> [she].
pro(object) --> [him].
pro(object) --> [her].
```

This works…

```
s --> np(subject), vp.
np(_) --> det, n.
np(X) --> pro(X).
vp --> v, np(object).
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro(subject) --> [he].
pro(subject) --> [she].
pro(object) --> [him].
pro(object) --> [her].
```

```
?- s([she,shoots,him],[ ]).
yes
?- s([she,shoots,he],[ ]).
no
?-
```

What is really going on?

- Recall that the rule:

  s --> np,vp.

  is really syntactic sugar for:

  s(A,B):- np(A,C), vp(C,B).

What is really going on?

- Recall that the rule:

  s --> np,vp.

  is really syntactic sugar for:

  s(A,B):- np(A,C), vp(C,B).

- The rule

  s --> np(subject),vp.

  translates into:

  s(A,B):- np(subject,A,C), vp(C,B).

Listing noun phrases

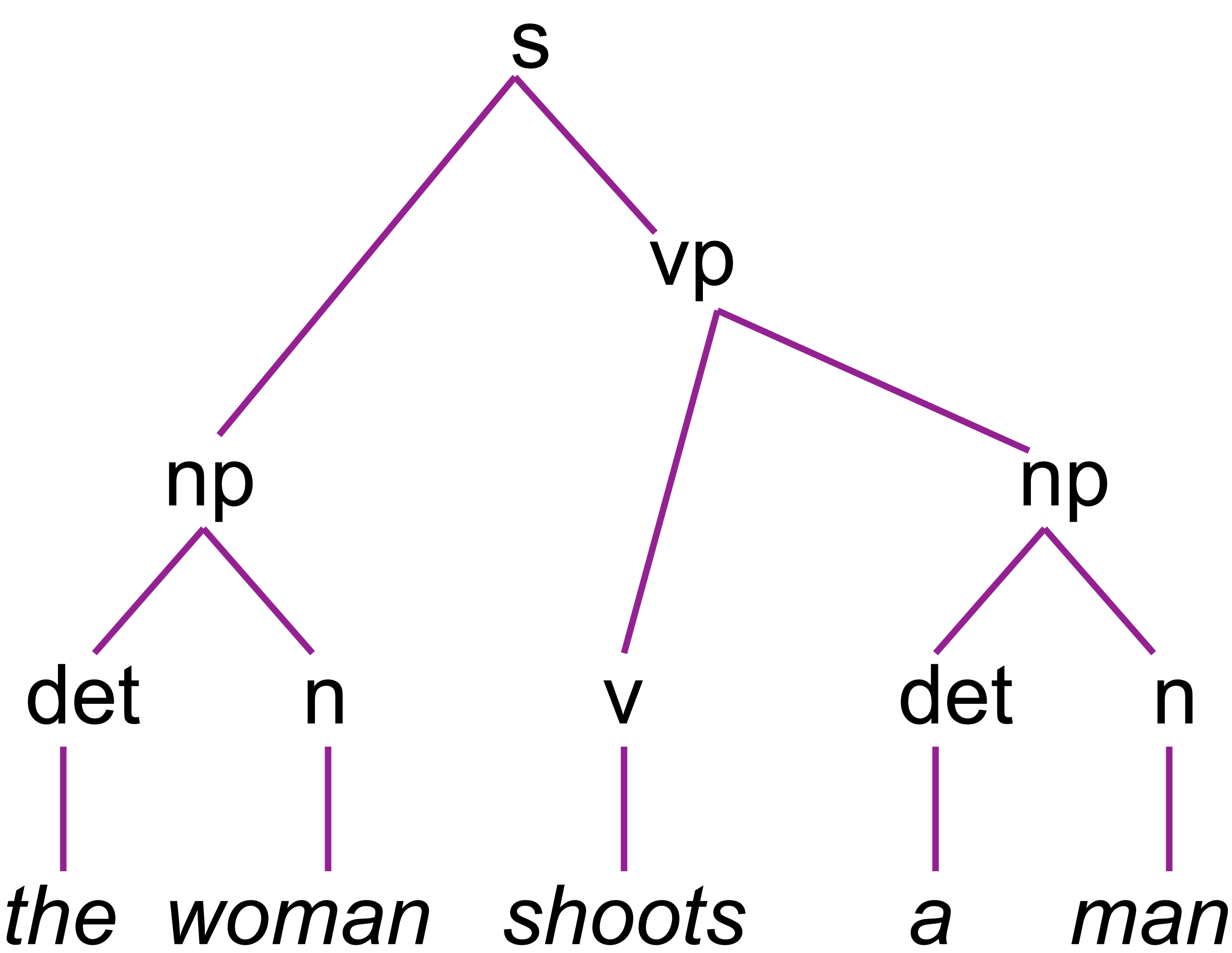
```
s --> np(subject), vp.
np(_) --> det, n.
np(X) --> pro(X).
vp --> v, np(object).
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro(subject) --> [he].
pro(subject) --> [she].
pro(object) --> [him].
pro(object) --> [her].
```

```
?- np(Type, NP, [ ]).
Type =_
NP = [the,woman];

Type =_
NP = [the,man];

Type =_
NP = [a,woman];

Type =_
NP = [a,man];

Type =subject
NP = [he]
```

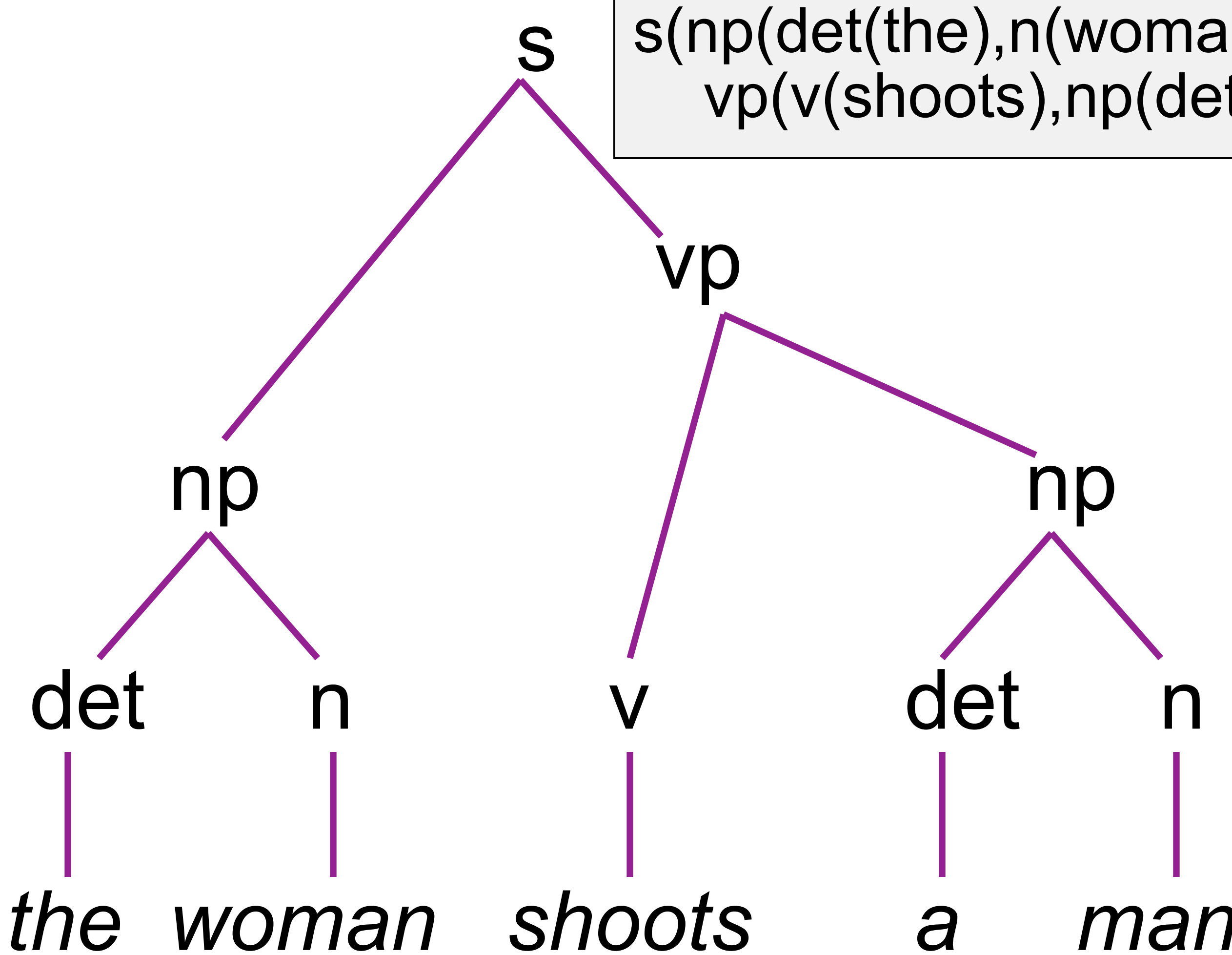
Building parse trees

- The programs we have discussed so far have been able to recognise grammatical structure of sentences
- But we would also like to have a program that gives us an analysis of their structure
- In particular we would like to see the trees the grammar assigns to sentences

Parse tree example



Parse tree in Prolog




```
s(np(det(the),n(woman)),
   vp(v(shoots),np(det(a),n(man)))))
```

DCG that builds parse tree

```
s --> np(subject), vp.
np(_) --> det, n.
np(X) --> pro(X).
vp --> v, np(object).
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro(subject) --> [he].
pro(subject) --> [she].
pro(object) --> [him].
pro(object) --> [her].
```

DCG that builds parse tree

```
s --> np(subject), vp.
np(_) --> det, n.
np(X) --> pro(X).
vp --> v, np(object).
vp --> v.
det --> [the].
det --> [a].
n --> [woman].
n --> [man].
v --> [shoots].
pro(subject) --> [he].
pro(subject) --> [she].
pro(object) --> [him].
pro(object) --> [her].
```

```
s(s(NP,VP)) --> np(subject,NP), vp(VP).
np(_,np(Det,N)) --> det(Det), n(N).
np(X,np(Pro)) --> pro(X,Pro).
vp(vp(V,NP)) --> v(V), np(object,NP).
vp(vp(V)) --> v(V)).
det(det(the)) --> [the].
det(det(a)) --> [a].
n(n(woman)) --> [woman].
n(n(man)) --> [man].
v(v(shoots)) --> [shoots].
pro(subject,pro(he)) --> [he].
pro(subject,pro(she)) --> [she].
pro(object,pro(him)) --> [him].
pro(object,pro(her)) --> [her].
```

Generating parse trees

```
?- s(T,[he,shoots],[]).
T =
    s(np(pro(he)),vp(v
    (shoots)))
yes
```

```
s(s(NP,VP)) --> np(subject,NP), vp(VP).
np(_,np(Det,N)) --> det(Det), n(N).
np(X,np(Pro)) --> pro(X,Pro).
vp(vp(V,NP)) --> v(V), np(object,NP).
vp(vp(V)) --> v(V)).
det(det(the)) --> [the].
det(det(a)) --> [a].
n(n(woman)) --> [woman].
n(n(man)) --> [man].
v(v(shoots)) --> [shoots].
pro(subject,pro(he)) --> [he].
pro(subject,pro(she)) --> [she].
pro(object,pro(him)) --> [him].
pro(object,pro(her)) --> [her].
```

Generating parse trees

```
?- s(Tree,S,[]).
```

```
s(s(NP,VP)) --> np(subject,NP), vp(VP).
np(_,np(Det,N)) --> det(Det), n(N).
np(X,np(Pro)) --> pro(X,Pro).
vp(vp(V,NP)) --> v(V), np(object,NP).
vp(vp(V)) --> v(V)).
det(det(the)) --> [the].
det(det(a)) --> [a].
n(n(woman)) --> [woman].
n(n(man)) --> [man].
v(v(shoots)) --> [shoots].
pro(subject,pro(he)) --> [he].
pro(subject,pro(she)) --> [she].
pro(object,pro(him)) --> [him].
pro(object,pro(her)) --> [her].
```

Beyond context free languages

- In the previous lecture we presented DCGs as a useful tool for working with context free grammars
- However, DCGs can deal with a lot more than just context free grammars
- The extra arguments gives us the tools for coping with any computable language
- We will illustrate this by looking at the formal language $a^n b^n c^n \setminus \{\varepsilon\}$

An example

- The language $a^n b^n c^n \backslash \{\varepsilon\}$ consists of strings such as abc, aabbcc, aaabbbccc, aaaabbbbcccc, and so on
- This language is not context free – it is impossible to write a context free grammar that produces exactly these strings
- But it is very easy to write a DCG that does this

DCG for $a^n b^n c^n \setminus \{\varepsilon\}$

```
s(Count) --> as(Count), bs(Count), cs(Count).

as(0) --> [].
as(succ(Count)) --> [a], as(Count).

bs(0) --> [].
bs(succ(Count)) --> [b], bs(Count).

cs(0) --> [].
cs(succ(Count)) --> [c], cs(Count).
```

Extra goals

- Any DCG rule is really syntactic structure for ordinary Prolog rule
- So it is not really surprising we can also call any Prolog predicate from the right-hand side of a DCG rule
- This is done by using curly brackets { }

Example: DCG for $a^n b^n c^n \setminus \{\varepsilon\}$

```
s(Count) --> as(Count), bs(Count), cs(Count).

as(0) --> [].
as(NewCnt) --> [a], as(Cnt), {NewCnt is Cnt + 1}.

bs(0) --> [].
bs(NewCnt) --> [b], bs(Cnt), {NewCnt is Cnt + 1}.

cs(0) --> [].
cs(NewCnt) --> [c], cs(Cnt), {NewCnt is Cnt + 1}.
```

Separating rules and lexicon

- One classic application of the extra goals of DCGs in computational linguistics is separating the grammar rules from the lexicon
- What does this mean?
  - Eliminate all mention of individual words in the DCG
  - Record all information about individual words in a separate lexicon

The basic grammar

```
s --> np, vp.

np --> det, n.

vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.

det --> [the].
det --> [a].

n --> [woman].
n --> [man].

v --> [shoots].
```

The modular grammar

```
s --> np, vp.

np --> det, n.

vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.

det --> [the].
det --> [a].

n --> [woman].
n --> [man].

v --> [shoots].
```

➔

```
s --> np, vp.

np --> det, n.

vp --> v, np.
vp --> v.

det --> [Word], {lex(Word,det)}.

n --> [Word], {lex(Word,n)}.

v --> [Word], {lex(Word,v)}.
```

\+

```
lex(the,      det).
lex(a,        det).
lex(woman,    n).
lex(man,      n).
lex(shoots,   v).
```

Concluding Remarks

- DCGs are a simple tool for encoding context free grammars
- But in fact DCGs are a full-fledged programming language and can be used for many different purposes
- For linguistic purposes, DCG have drawbacks
  - Left-recursive rules not allowed
  - DCGs are interpreted top-down

Next lecture

- A closer look at terms
  - Introduce the identity predicate
  - Take a closer look at term structure
  - Introduce pre-defined Prolog predicates that test whether a given term is of a certain type
  - Show how to define new operators in Prolog