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1. The “shift” parameter

Mandarin Chinese (MC) has object shift (Soh 1998, Zhang 1997, Paul 2005, a.o.). By contrast, American English (AmE) does not allow it.

- (1) **MC: [+Shift]**
 Lisi [xiaoshuo]₁ du-wan-le t₁.
 Lisi novels read-finish-ASP
 ‘Lisi finished reading novels.’
- (2) **AmE: [-Shift]**
 *John [novels]₁ read t₁

In this study, we provide evidence in favor of a **global “shift” parameter**.

- (3) **PP shift schema**
 [... [PP ...]₁ [VP ... V ... t₁ ...]]

This parameter affects object shift, as well as **PP-shift**. Specifically, MC allows PP-shift, but AmE does not.

2. Ambiguity of locative PP

There is a subset of locative verbs (e.g., *write*, *hang*, etc.), which give rise to ambiguities that inform us about the nature of PP-adjunction.

American English
 Post-verbal PPs lead to a “cause” reading as well as a “non-cause” reading, while pre-verbal PPs only give rise to the non-cause reading.

- (4) Mary is writing letters [on the train]. (post-verbal PP)
 a. **Cause:** Mary is writing letters onto (some part of) the train.
 b. **Non-cause:** Mary is on the train and she is writing letters (on paper).
- (5) Mary is [on the train] writing letters. (pre-verbal PP)
 a. ***Cause:** Mary is writing letters onto (some part of) the train.
 b. **Non-cause:** Mary is on the train and she is writing letters (on paper).

Mandarin Chinese
 Pre-verbal PPs lead to a “cause” reading as well as a “non-cause” reading, while post-verbal PPs only give rise to the cause reading (Zhu 1981).

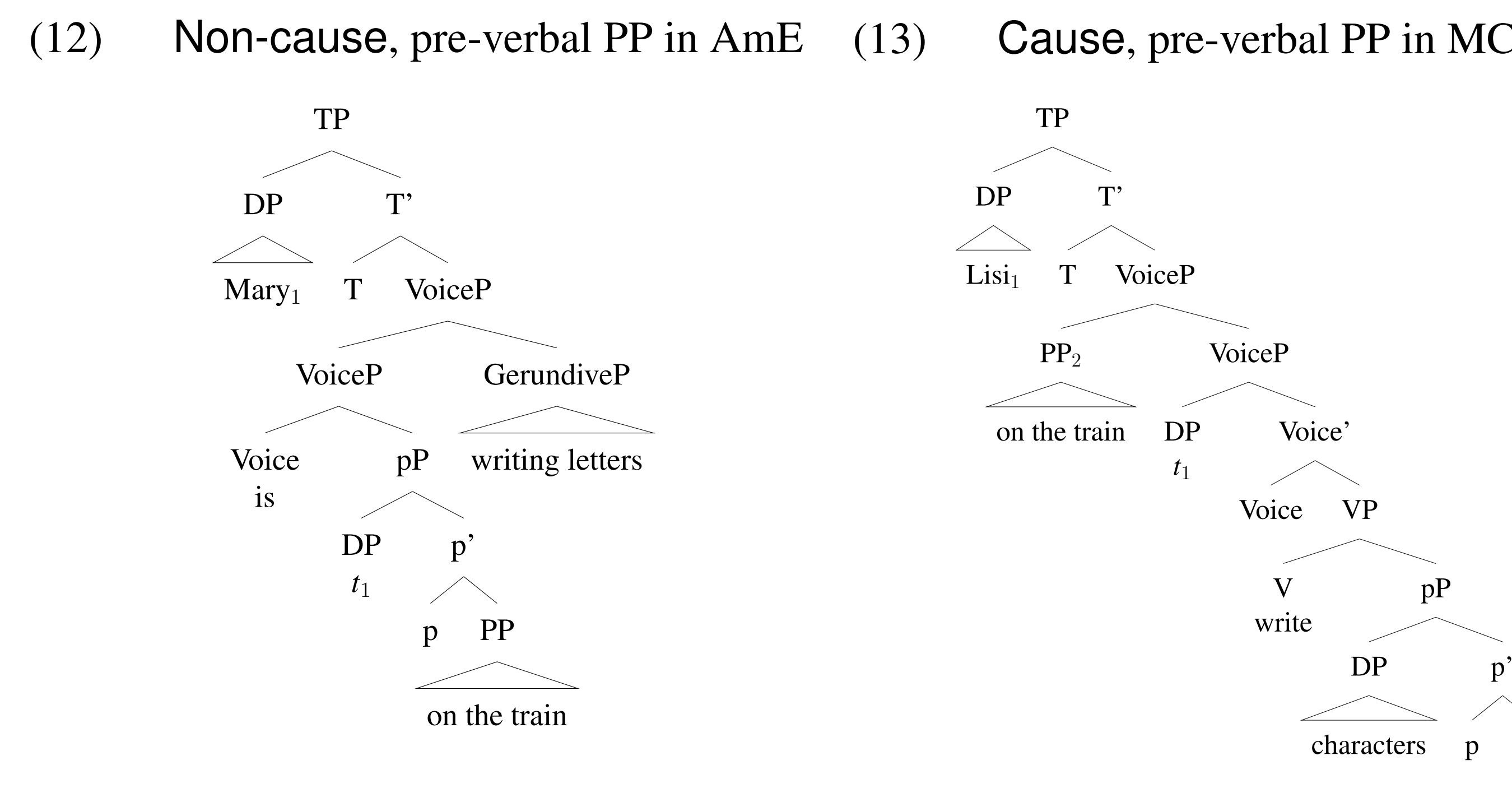
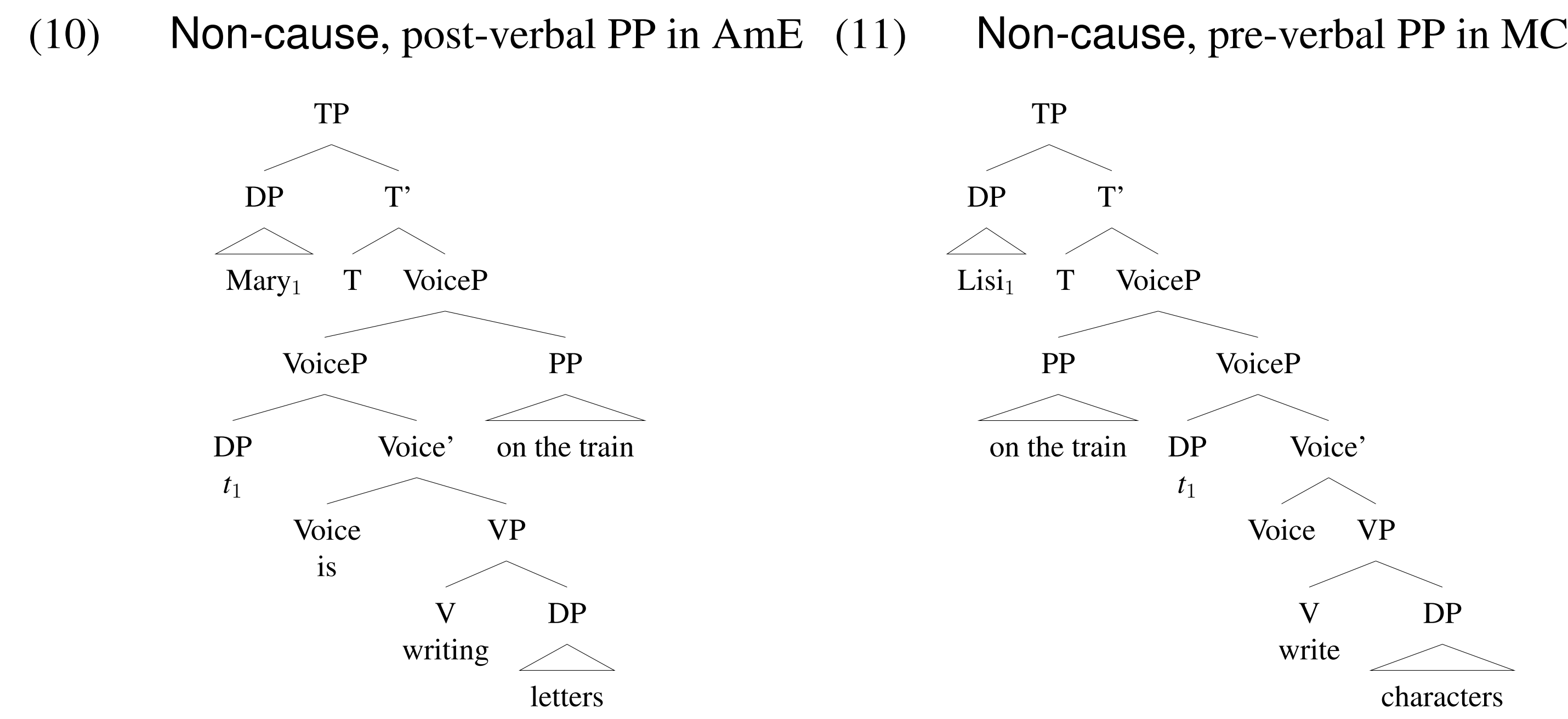
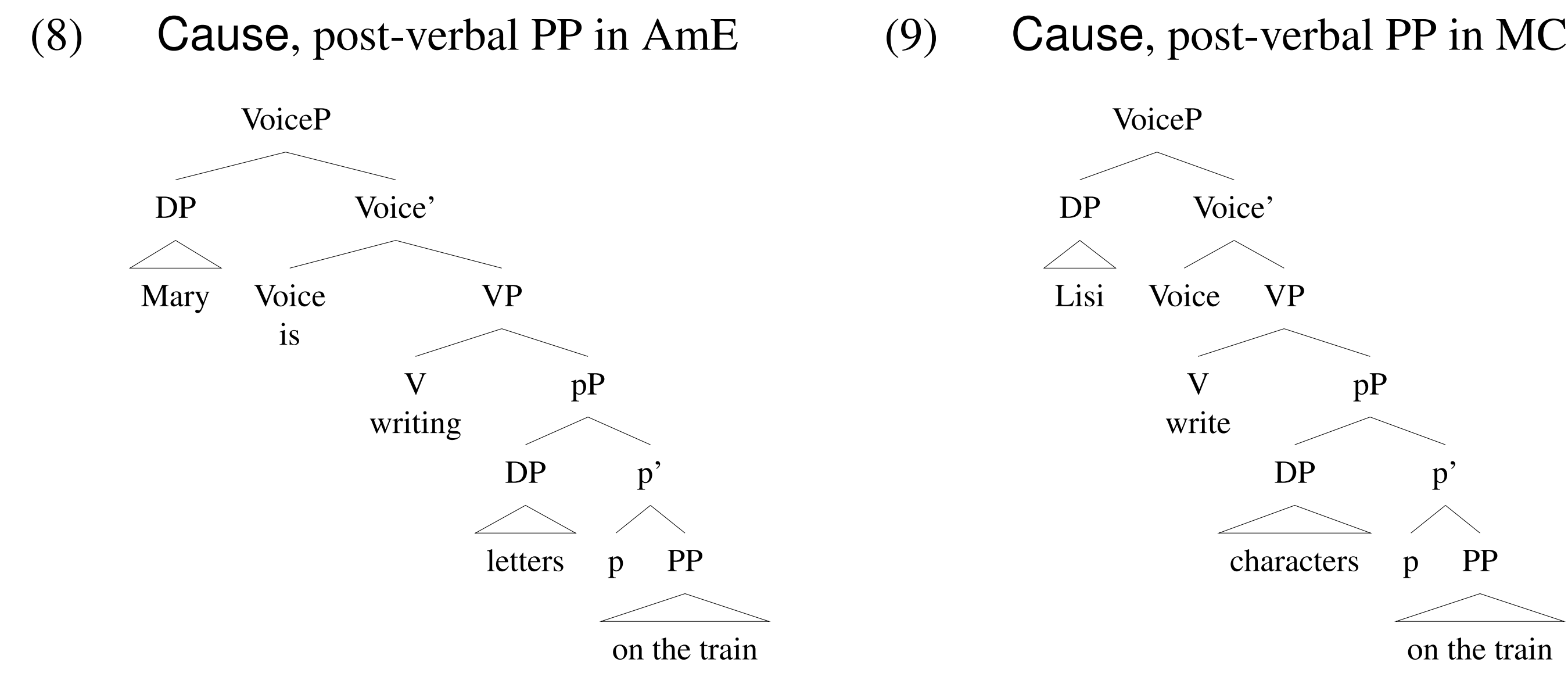
- (6) Lisi xie zi [zai huoche shang]. (post-verbal PP)
 Lisi write character at train on
 a. **Cause:** Lisi is writing characters onto (some part of) the train.
 b. ***Non-Cause:** Lisi is on the train and he is writing characters (on paper).
- (7) Lisi [zai huoche shang] xie zi. (pre-verbal PP)
 Lisi at train on write character
 a. **Cause:** Lisi is writing characters onto (some part of) the train.
 b. **Non-Cause:** Lisi is on the train and he is writing characters (on paper).

The word order differences above result from a single parametric difference; MC allows PPs to “shift” from a low position to a higher adjunction site, while AmE does not.

3. Syntactic analysis

Proposal

- The “non-cause” reading is derived by merging pP with VP.
- The “cause” reading is derived via locative verbs selecting for small clause pP complements, in a manner similar to some analyses of double object constructions (Kayne 1984, Guéron 1986)
- Pre- and post-verbal “cause” sentences in MC are transformationally related.



4. Adjunction & Double Object Constructions

MC and AmE differ in where PP and Temporal modifiers adjoin:

- (14) Zhangsan **zuotian** gei mama da dianhua *(zuotian)
 Zhangsan yesterday give Mother hit telephone *(yesterday)
 ‘Zhangsan called his mother yesterday.’

The shift parameter extends to double object constructions; (16) can be derived from (15), following Tang (2003) and contra Li (1990).

- (15) Lisi song-le yi-ben-shu [gei Zhangsan]
 Lisi send-ASP one-CL-book to Zhangsan
 ‘Lisi gave a book to Zhangsan.’
- (16) Lisi [gei Zhangsan] song-le yi-ben-shu
 Lisi to Zhangsan send-ASP one-CL-book
 ‘Lisi gave (to) Zhangsan a book.’

5. Clauses are islands for PP-shift in Mandarin

PP-shift and Double Object shift are like object shift because they cannot cross clausal boundaries.

- (17) *Zhangsan [xiaoshuo]₁ renwei [TP Lisi kan-wan-le t₁]
 Zhangsan novel think Lisi read-finish-ASP
 (int.) ‘Zhangsan thinks that Lisi finished reading novels.’
- (18) Zhangsan [zai che shang] shuo Lisi xie-le zi.
 Zhangsan at train on say Lisi write-ASP characters
 a. ***Cause:** Zhangsan says Lisi wrote characters onto the train.
 b. **Non-cause:** Zhangsan says Lisi was on the train and he wrote characters.
- (19) *Libai [gei Zhangsan] shuo Lisi song-le yi-ben-shu
 Libai to Zhangsan said Lisi send-ASP one-CL-book
 (int.) ‘Libai said Lisi gave (to) Zhangsan a book.’

6. Conclusion

- MC allows objects and PPs to “shift”, while AmE does not
- In MC, PP-shift and double-object-shift are clause-bounded, like object shift
- Future Directions: MC is similar to other object shift languages (e.g., Dutch and German; Koster & Zwart 2000) in that it has object shift in existential constructions

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