

# Let's try and figure out why we can't inflect these verbs

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## 1. Introduction

► **Pseudo-coordination** (PseCo) in English (Carden and Pesetsky 1977, Ross 2013, i.a.) is a heterogeneous phenomenon.

□ “Go-type” PseCo allows the verbs to be inflected.

- (1) a. **Come and** find me.  
b. I **went and** bought some flour.

□ “Try-type” PseCo requires bare verbs for most speakers.

- (2) a. **Try and** stop me.  
b. % Jim **tried and** found his glasses.

► Similar *and*-less constructions:

- *Go get* (Bjorkman 2016) (3) a. I should **go find** some tea.  
b. \* John **went got** a bag of potatoes.  
□ *Try get* (Tanaka 2020) (4) a. % Every morning I **try buy** a coffee.  
b. \* Every morning she **tries buys** a coffee.

**Goal:** **Try and** provide a general account of the locus of this microvariation in the verbal domain

## 2. Two types of *try and*

► The two *try and* constructions have **different meanings**.

□ **Type A: Success is not entailed**; bare verbs only

□ **Type B: Success is entailed**; inflection is fine

- (5) a. I did **try and** find the building, but I didn't find it.  
b. # I **tried and** found the building, but I didn't find it.

► The two types have important properties in common.

□ The Coordinate Structure Constraint (Ross 1967) does not apply

- (6) a. **What** did you go and buy \_?  
b. **What** did you try and buy \_?

□ No intervention is possible between *try* and *and* (Tyler 2018).

- (7) \* Try **not** and chew with your mouth open.

□ The string following *try* cannot itself be coordinated.

- (8) \* Try [and cook] **and** [and do the dishes].

**Proposal:** Variation across speakers and constructions stems from fine-grained differences in features on the heads involved.

## 3. Analyzing *go get*

► I take a modified version of the monoclausal approach used by Bjorkman (2016).

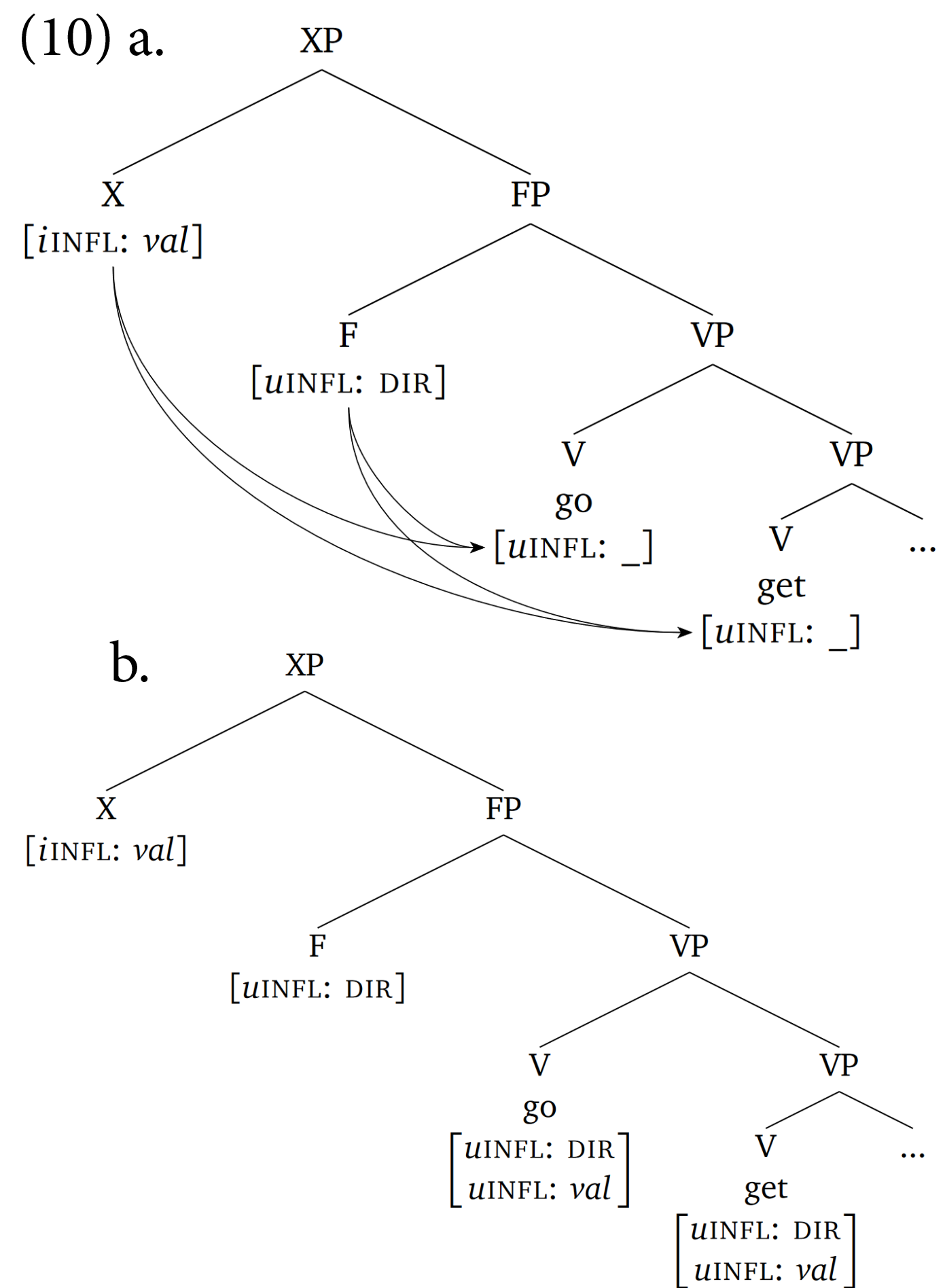
□ VP-selecting *go* is licensed by a functional head bearing [*uINFL:DIR*].

□ In English, [*uINFL:DIR*] requires the verb to be bare.

□ Both verbs get [*uINFL:DIR*] via **Reverse Agree**.

- (9) Reverse Agree Bjorkman (2016:69)  
An uninterpretable **or** unvalued feature on  $\alpha$  is valued by a feature [*F:val*] on  $\beta$  iff:  
a.  $\beta$  asymmetrically c-commands  $\alpha$  and  
b. There is no  $\gamma$ , distinct from  $\beta$ , with a valued and interpretable feature of the same type ([*iF: val*]) such that  $\gamma$  c-commands  $\alpha$  and is c-commanded by  $\beta$ .

□ The verbs can be spelled out only if their other inflectional features are compatible with them being morphologically bare.



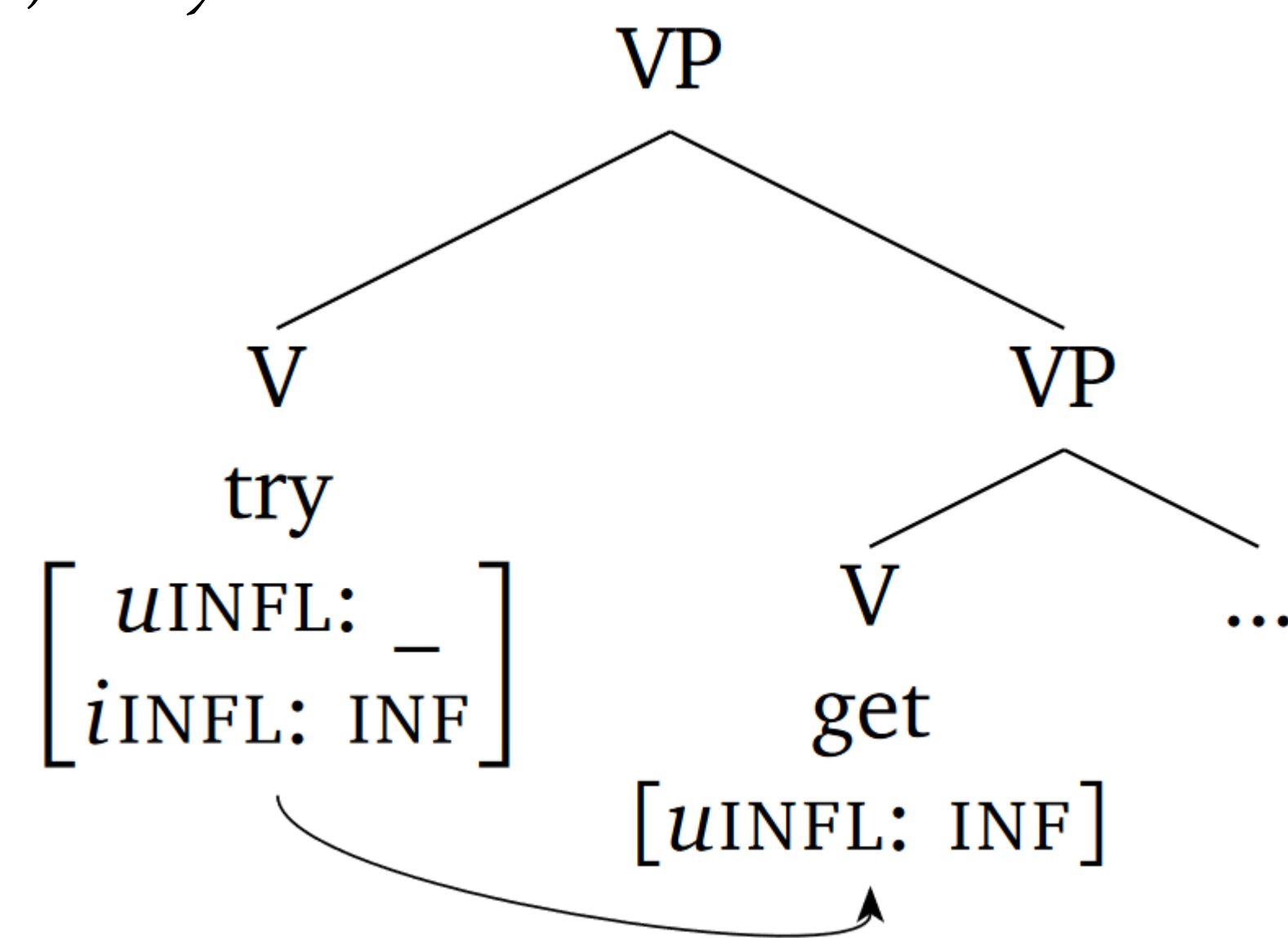
## 4. Type A *try and*

► Whereas *go get* imposes a bare verb requirement on both verbs, Type A *try and* imposes a bare requirement on *try* and ensures the second verb is bare (Ross 2013).

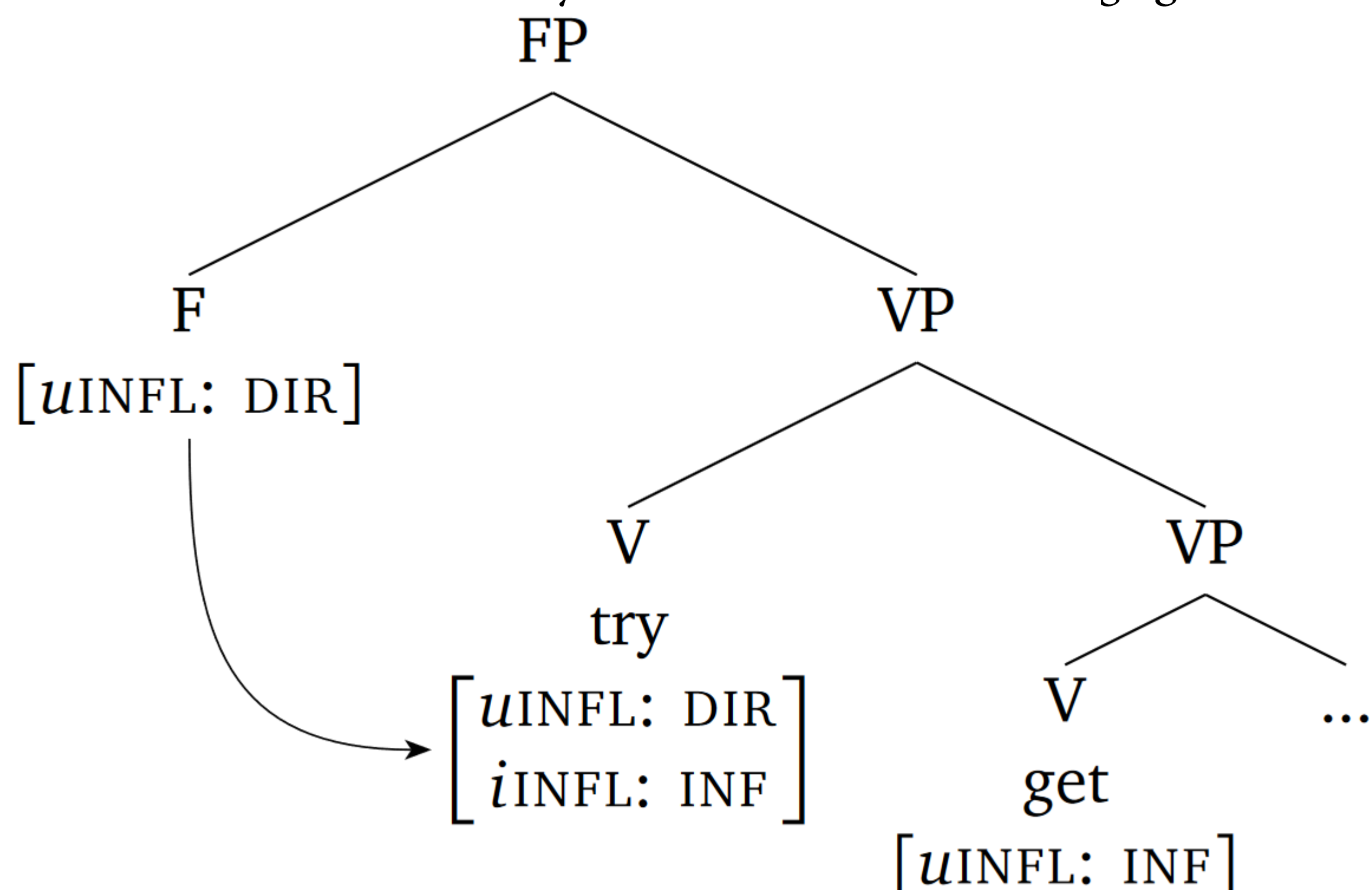
- (11) a. Every day, I **try and be** the best linguist I can be.  
b. \* Every day, I go **be** the best linguist I can be.

□ This suggests the presence of an interpretable feature on *try* that causes bare inflection (without loss of generality, [*iINFL:INF*]).

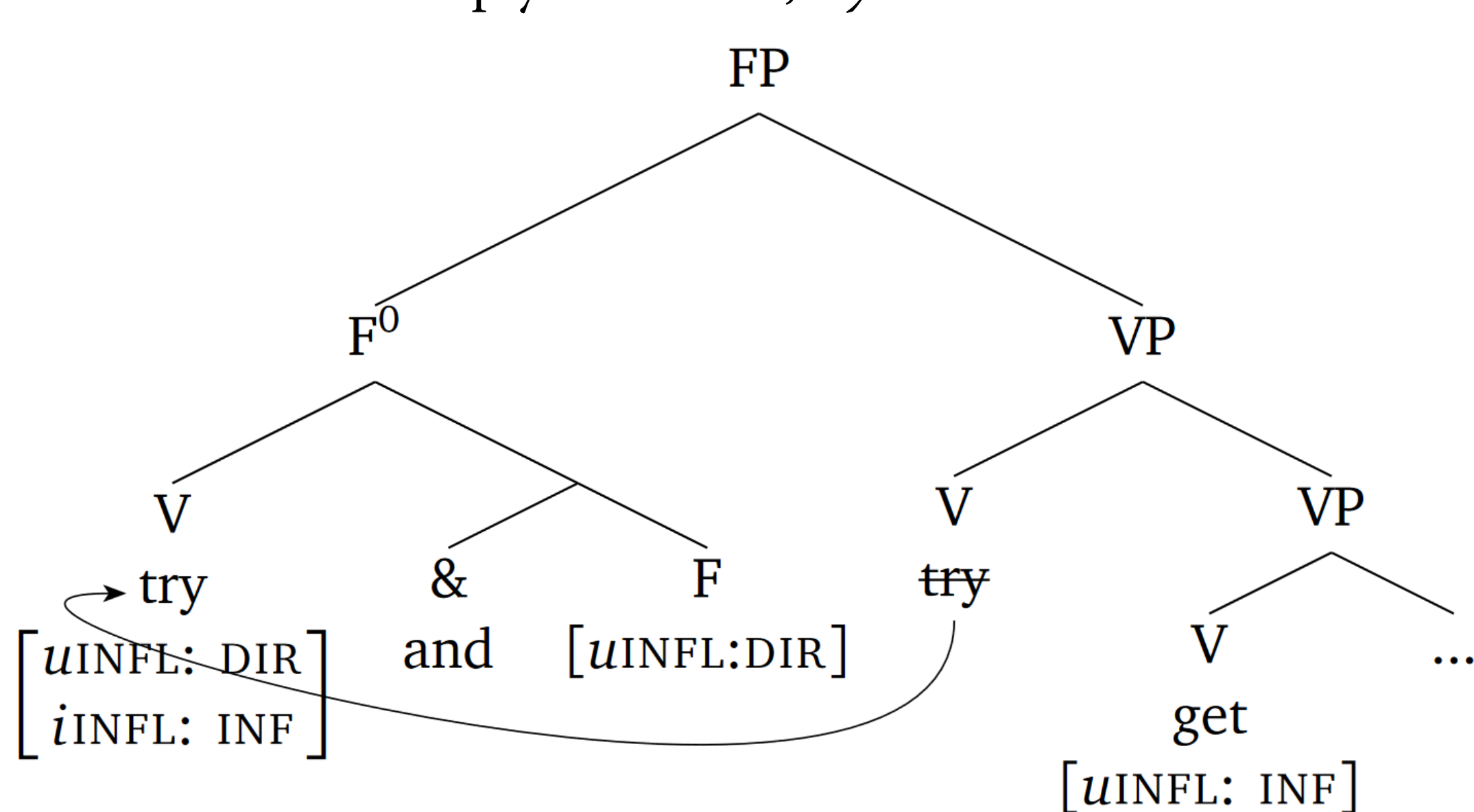
(12) a. *Try* selects a VP.



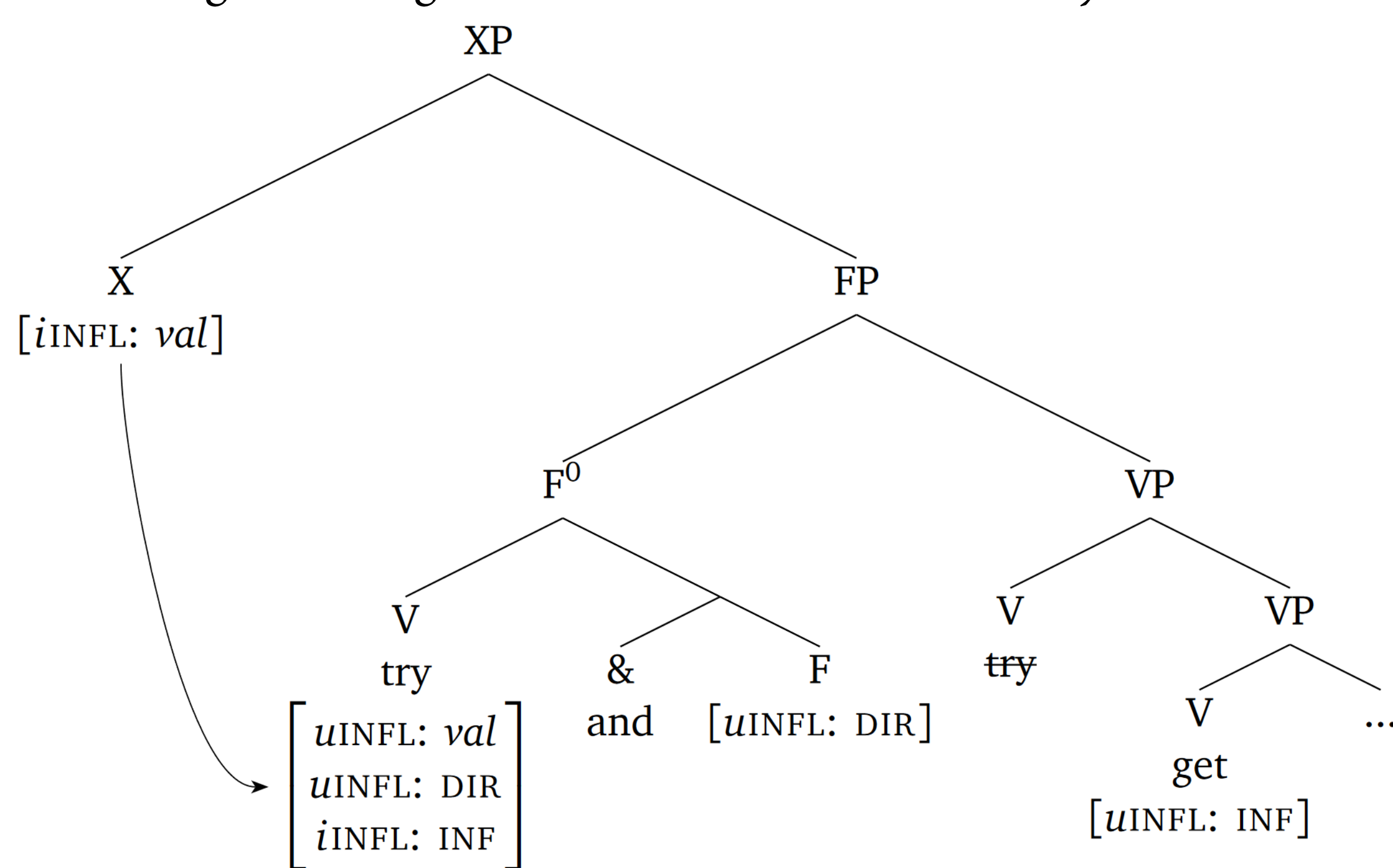
b. The VP is selected by the same F head used for *go get*.



c. Rather than simply move to F, *try* coordinates with F.



d. A higher head grants an inflectional feature to *try*.



The resulting structure is quite similar to that proposed by De Vos (2005).

## 5. Type B *try and*

► In the nominal domain, coordination can loosen certain licensing requirements (Heycock and Zamparelli 2003).

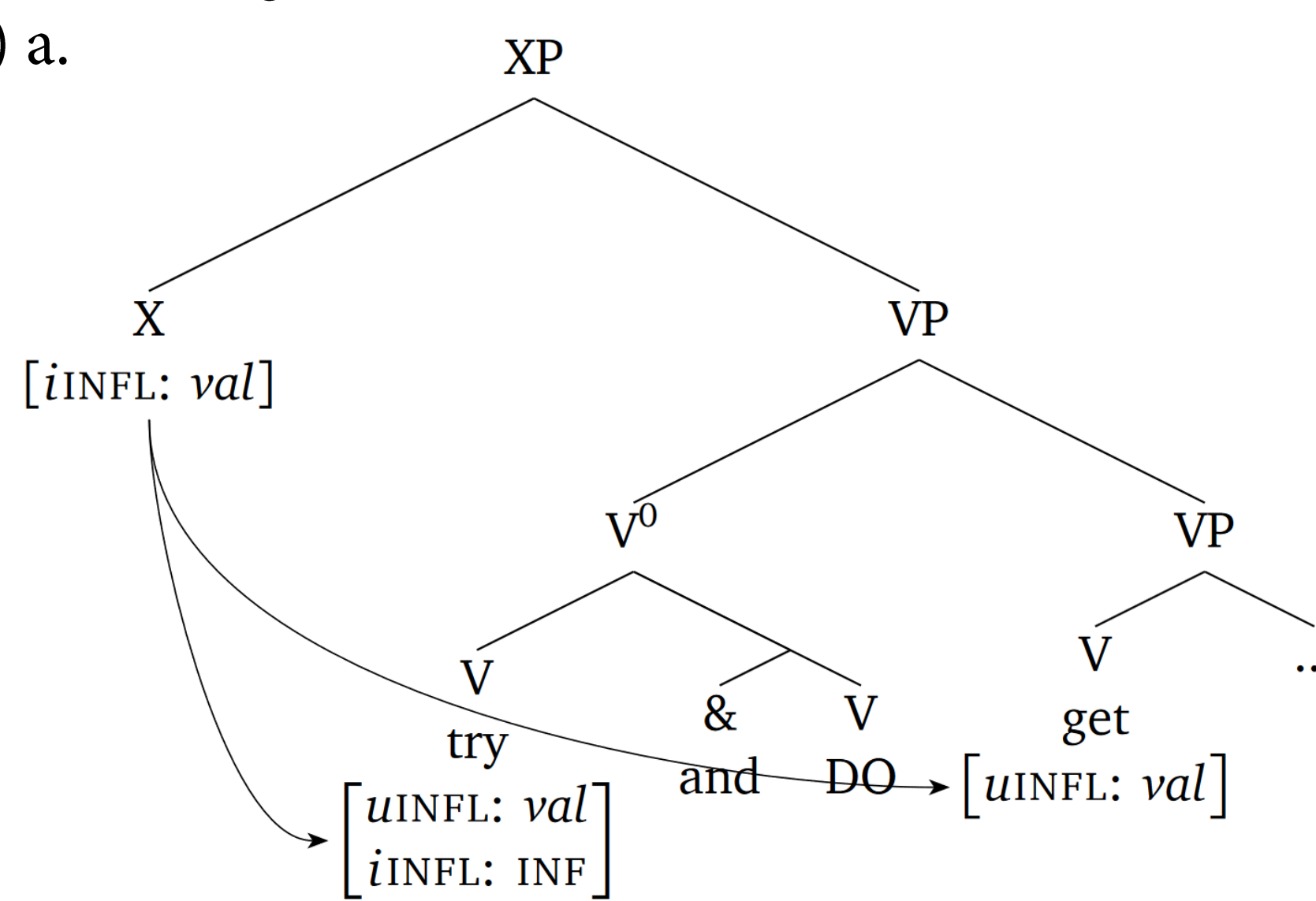
- (13) a. \* **Boy** went to the movies.  
b. **Boy and girl** went hand in hand.

► I claim that PseCo is an example of the same phenomenon in the verbal domain.

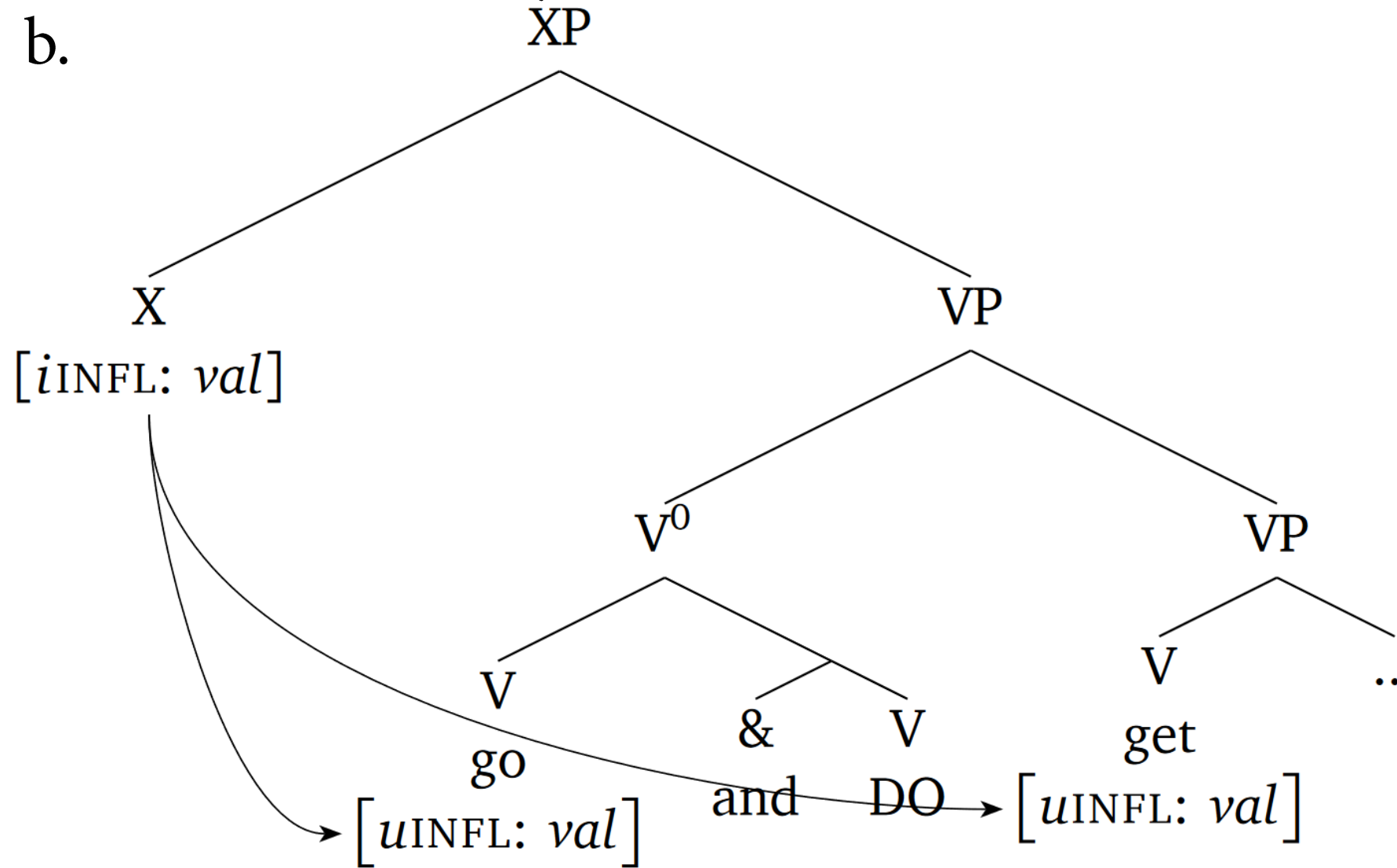
□ Specifically, it causes VP-selecting verbs to not require licensing by the F head with [*uINFL:DIR*].

□ VP-selecting verbs can coordinate with silent DO, which acts as an identity function on verbs.

(14) a.



b.



□ In *try and*, the structure prevents *try* from c-commanding the latter verb, so the [*iINFL:INF*] doesn't spread.

## 6. Conclusions

► English contains two types of *try and* construction, with different entailments, and morphological requirements that are near-parallel to *go get* and *go and*.

► Bare verb requirements in *go get* and Type A *try and* are caused by a [*uINFL:DIR*] feature from a functional head.

► That functional head becomes unnecessary in environments with true V head coordination, which enables *go and* and Type B *try and*.