

Semantics & Discourse

— Syntax-Semantics Interface —

Philippe de Groot

Outline

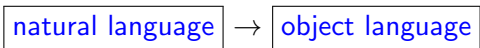
- 1 Using an object language
- 2 Compositionality
- 3 The homomorphism requirement
- 4 Abstract parse tree
- 5 Lexicalized case
- 6 Syntactic structure as λ -terms
- 7 Compositionality as a homomorphism

Using an object language

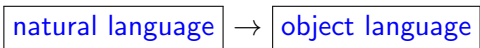
Using an object language

natural language

Using an object language



Using an object language



Eric is tall and thin

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall**(e) \wedge **thin**(e)

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall(e) \wedge thin(e)**

Rebecca has a husband

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall**(e) \wedge **thin**(e)

Rebecca has a husband \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband**(x, r)

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall**(e) \wedge **thin**(e)

Rebecca has a husband \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband**(x, r)

Eric is someone's husband.

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall**(**e**) \wedge **thin**(**e**)

Rebecca has a husband \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband**(x , **r**)

Eric is someone's husband. \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband**(**e**, x)

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall**(e) \wedge **thin**(e)

Rebecca has a husband \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband**(x, r)

Eric is someone's husband. \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband**(e, x)

Everybody has a father

Using an object language

natural language \rightarrow object language

Eric is tall and thin \rightarrow **tall(e) \wedge thin(e)**

Rebecca has a husband \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband(x, r)**

Eric is someone's husband. \rightarrow $\exists x$. **husband(e, x)**

Everybody has a father \rightarrow $\forall x$. $\exists y$. **Is(y, father(x))**

Using an object language

Using an object language

natural language

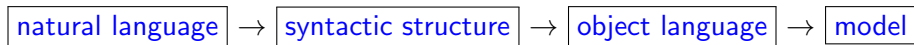
Using an object language

natural language → syntactic structure

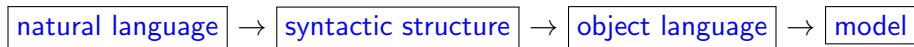
Using an object language

natural language → syntactic structure → object language

Using an object language



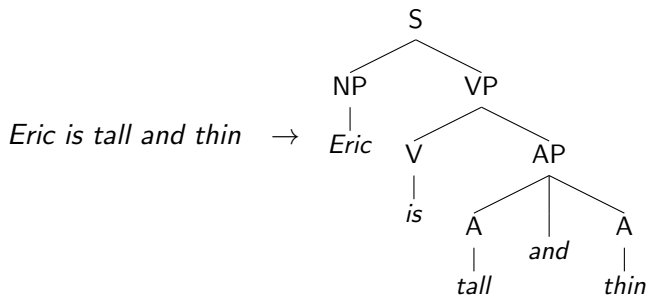
Using an object language



Eric is tall and thin

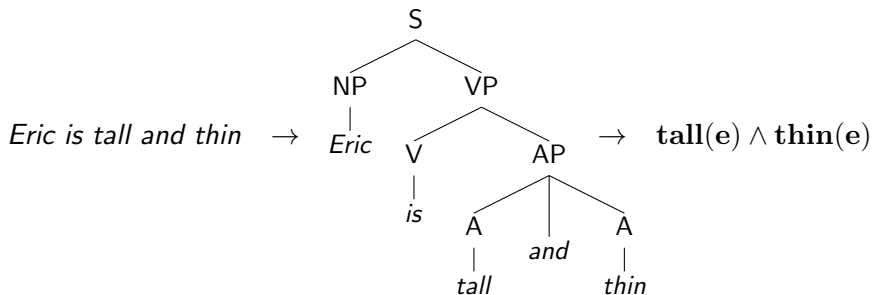
Using an object language

natural language → syntactic structure → object language → model



Using an object language

natural language → syntactic structure → object language → model



Compositionality

The principle of compositionality

Also known as Frege's principle:

The meaning of a complex expression is determined by its structure and the meanings of its constituents.

Compositionality

Consider the following non-logical constants:

e : e

tall : e \rightarrow t

thin : e \rightarrow t

Compositionality

Consider the following non-logical constants:

e : e

tall : e \rightarrow t

thin : e \rightarrow t

Grammar:

S \rightarrow NP VP

VP \rightarrow V AP

AP \rightarrow A *and* A

A \rightarrow *tall*

A \rightarrow *thin*

NP \rightarrow *Eric*

Compositionality

Consider the following non-logical constants:

$e : e$

tall : $e \rightarrow t$

thin : $e \rightarrow t$

Grammar:

$S \rightarrow NP VP$

$VP \rightarrow V AP$

$AP \rightarrow A \text{ and } A$

$A \rightarrow \textit{tall}$

$A \rightarrow \textit{thin}$

$NP \rightarrow \textit{Eric}$

Semantic rules:

$\llbracket S \rrbracket = \llbracket VP \rrbracket \llbracket NP \rrbracket$

$\llbracket VP \rrbracket = \llbracket AP \rrbracket$

$\llbracket AP \rrbracket = \lambda x. (\llbracket A_1 \rrbracket x) \wedge (\llbracket A_2 \rrbracket x)$

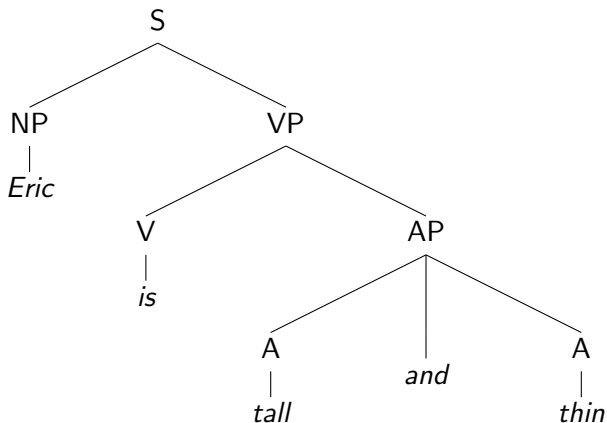
$\llbracket A \rrbracket = \lambda x. \mathbf{tall} x$

$\llbracket A \rrbracket = \lambda x. \mathbf{thin} x$

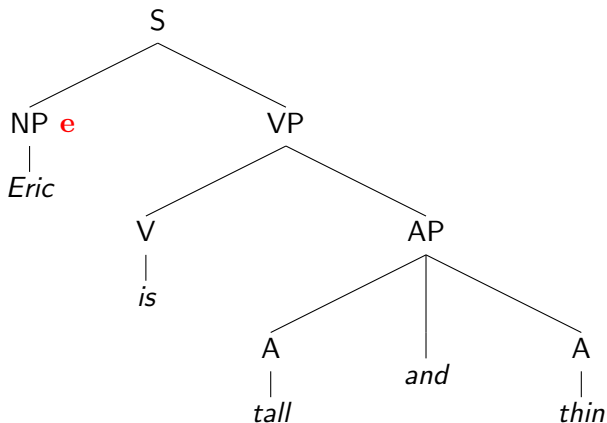
$\llbracket NP \rrbracket = e$

Compositionality

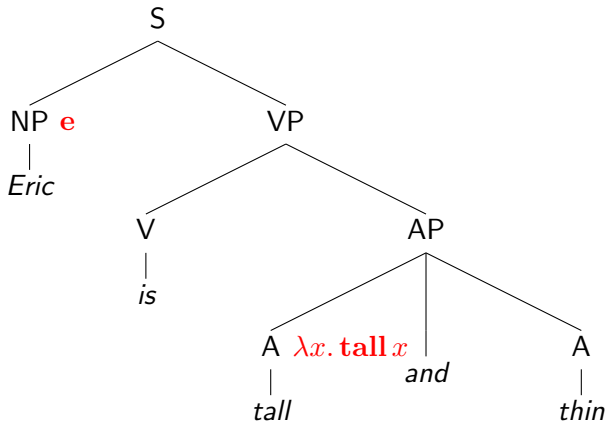
Compositionality



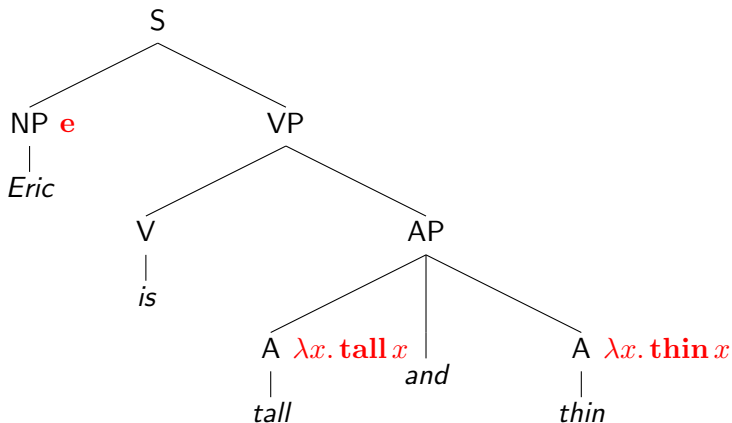
Compositionality



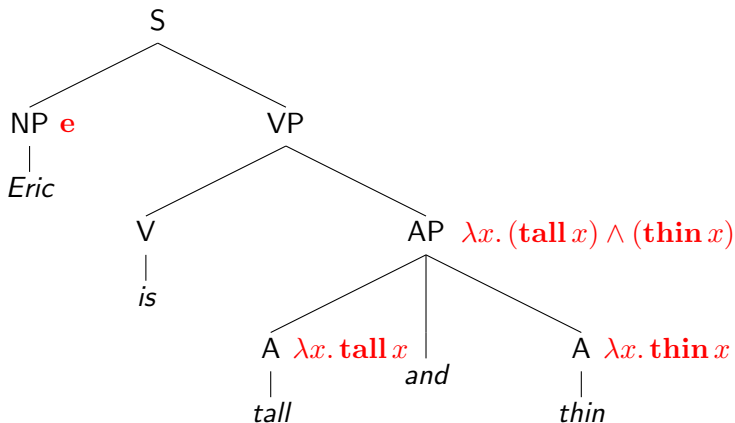
Compositionality



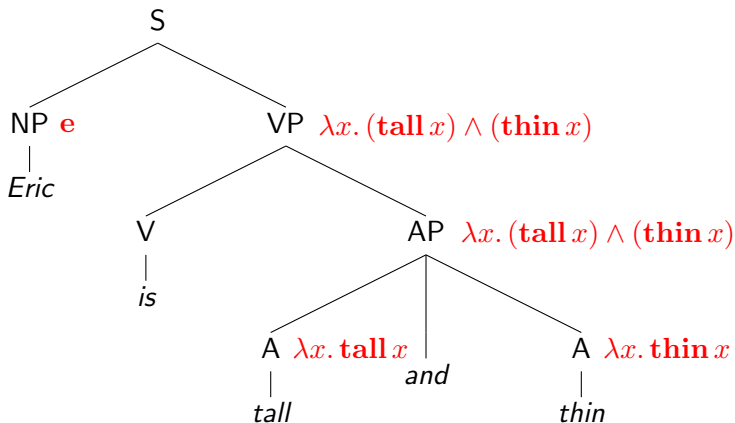
Compositionality



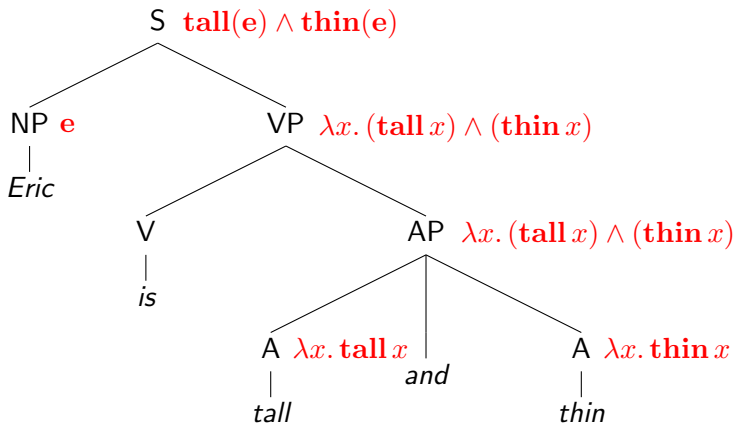
Compositionality



Compositionality



Compositionality



The homomorphism requirement

Richard Montague (1970)

Universal Grammar, *Theoria* 36:373–398.

- Semantics must be obtained as a homomorphic image of syntax.

Abstract parse tree

Grammar:

$P_0 : S \rightarrow NP VP$

$P_1 : VP \rightarrow V AP$

$P_2 : AP \rightarrow A \text{ and } A$

$P_3 : A \rightarrow \textit{tall}$

$P_4 : A \rightarrow \textit{thin}$

$P_5 : NP \rightarrow \textit{Eric}$

$P_6 : V \rightarrow \textit{is}$

Abstract parse tree

Grammar:

$P_0 : S \rightarrow NP VP$

$P_1 : VP \rightarrow V AP$

$P_2 : AP \rightarrow A \text{ and } A$

$P_3 : A \rightarrow tall$

$P_4 : A \rightarrow thin$

$P_5 : NP \rightarrow Eric$

$P_6 : V \rightarrow is$

First-order multisorted signature:

$P_0 : NP \times VP \rightarrow S$

$P_1 : V \times AP \rightarrow VP$

$P_2 : A \times A \rightarrow AP$

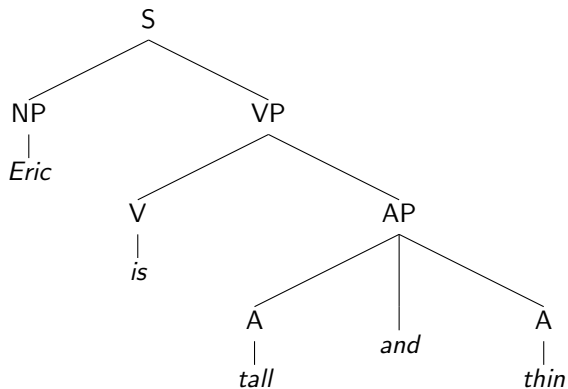
$P_3 : A$

$P_4 : A$

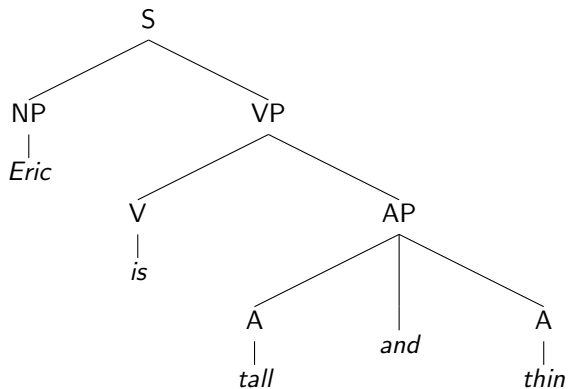
$P_5 : NP$

$P_6 : V$

Abstract parse tree



Abstract parse tree



$$P_0(P_5, P_1(P_6, P_2(P_3, P_4)))$$

Lexicalized case

Grammar:

P_0 : $S \rightarrow NP \text{ is } AP$

P_1 : $AP \rightarrow AP \text{ and } AP$

P_2 : $AP \rightarrow \textit{tall}$

P_3 : $AP \rightarrow \textit{thin}$

P_4 : $NP \rightarrow \textit{Eric}$

Lexicalized case

Grammar:

 $P_0 : S \rightarrow NP \text{ is } AP$ $P_1 : AP \rightarrow AP \text{ and } AP$ $P_2 : AP \rightarrow \textit{tall}$ $P_3 : AP \rightarrow \textit{thin}$ $P_4 : NP \rightarrow \textit{Eric}$

First-order multisorted signature:

 $IS : AP \times NP \rightarrow S$ $AND : AP \times AP \rightarrow AP$ $TALL : AP$ $THIN : AP$ $ERIC : NP$

Lexicalized case

Grammar:

 $P_0 : S \rightarrow NP \text{ is } AP$ $P_1 : AP \rightarrow AP \text{ and } AP$ $P_2 : AP \rightarrow \textit{tall}$ $P_3 : AP \rightarrow \textit{thin}$ $P_4 : NP \rightarrow \textit{Eric}$

First-order multisorted signature:

 $IS : AP \times NP \rightarrow S$ $AND : AP \times AP \rightarrow AP$ $TALL : AP$ $THIN : AP$ $ERIC : NP$ $IS(AND(TALL, THIN), ERIC)$

Syntactic structure as λ -terms

First-order multisorted signature:

IS : $AP \times NP \rightarrow S$

AND : $AP \times AP \rightarrow AP$

TALL : AP

THIN : AP

ERIC : NP

Syntactic structure as λ -terms

First-order multisorted signature:

IS : $AP \times NP \rightarrow S$
 AND : $AP \times AP \rightarrow AP$
 TALL : AP
 THIN : AP
 ERIC : NP

Higher-order signature:

IS : $AP \rightarrow (NP \rightarrow S)$
 AND : $AP \rightarrow (AP \rightarrow AP)$
 TALL : AP
 THIN : AP
 ERIC : NP

Syntactic structure as λ -terms

First-order multisorted signature:

IS : $AP \times NP \rightarrow S$
 AND : $AP \times AP \rightarrow AP$
 TALL : AP
 THIN : AP
 ERIC : NP

Higher-order signature:

IS : $AP \rightarrow (NP \rightarrow S)$
 AND : $AP \rightarrow (AP \rightarrow AP)$
 TALL : AP
 THIN : AP
 ERIC : NP

IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC

Compositionality as a homomorphism

Compositionality as a homomorphism

Abstract language:

AP, NP, S : type

IS : AP \rightarrow (NP \rightarrow S)

AND : AP \rightarrow (AP \rightarrow AP)

TALL : AP

THIN : AP

ERIC : NP

Compositionality as a homomorphism

Abstract language:

AP, NP, S : type

IS : **AP** \rightarrow (**NP** \rightarrow **S**)

AND : **AP** \rightarrow (**AP** \rightarrow **AP**)

TALL : **AP**

THIN : **AP**

ERIC : **NP**

Object language:

e, t : type

e : **e**

tall : **e** \rightarrow **t**

thin : **e** \rightarrow **t**

+ *the logical constants*

Compositionality as a homomorphism

Abstract language:

AP, NP, S : type

IS : **AP** \rightarrow (**NP** \rightarrow **S**)

AND : **AP** \rightarrow (**AP** \rightarrow **AP**)

TALL : **AP**

THIN : **AP**

ERIC : **NP**

Object language:

e, t : type

e : **e**

tall : **e** \rightarrow **t**

thin : **e** \rightarrow **t**

+ *the logical constants*

Interpretation of types:

AP := **e** \rightarrow **t**

NP := **e**

S := **t**

Compositionality as a homomorphism

Abstract language:

AP, NP, S : type

IS : **AP** \rightarrow (**NP** \rightarrow **S**)

AND : **AP** \rightarrow (**AP** \rightarrow **AP**)

TALL : **AP**

THIN : **AP**

ERIC : **NP**

Interpretation of types:

AP := $e \rightarrow t$

NP := e

S := t

Object language:

e, t : type

e : e

tall : $e \rightarrow t$

thin : $e \rightarrow t$

+ *the logical constants*

Interpretation of terms:

IS := $\lambda xy. x y$

AND := $\lambda xyz. (x z) \wedge (y z)$

TALL := $\lambda x. \mathbf{tall} x$

THIN := $\lambda x. \mathbf{thin} x$

ERIC := **e**

Compositionality as a homomorphism

IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC

Compositionality as a homomorphism

IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC = $(\lambda xy. x y)$ (AND TALL THIN) ERIC

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda xy. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\ &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\ &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\ &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\text{THIN } z)) \text{ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\text{THIN } z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge ((\lambda x. \mathbf{thin } x) z)) \text{ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS } (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\text{THIN } z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge ((\lambda x. \mathbf{thin } x) z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\mathbf{thin } z)) \text{ERIC}
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\text{THIN } z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge ((\lambda x. \mathbf{thin } x) z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\mathbf{thin } z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\mathbf{tall ERIC}) \wedge (\mathbf{thin ERIC})
 \end{aligned}$$

Compositionality as a homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{IS (AND TALL THIN) ERIC} &= (\lambda x y. x y) (\text{AND TALL THIN}) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y. \text{AND TALL THIN } y) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} \text{AND TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda x y z. (x z) \wedge (y z)) \text{TALL THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\text{TALL } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda y z. ((\lambda x. \mathbf{tall } x) z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda y z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (y z)) \text{THIN ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\text{THIN } z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &= (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge ((\lambda x. \mathbf{thin } x) z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\lambda z. (\mathbf{tall } z) \wedge (\mathbf{thin } z)) \text{ERIC} \\
 &\rightarrow_{\beta} (\mathbf{tall ERIC}) \wedge (\mathbf{thin ERIC}) \\
 &= (\mathbf{tall e}) \wedge (\mathbf{thin e})
 \end{aligned}$$