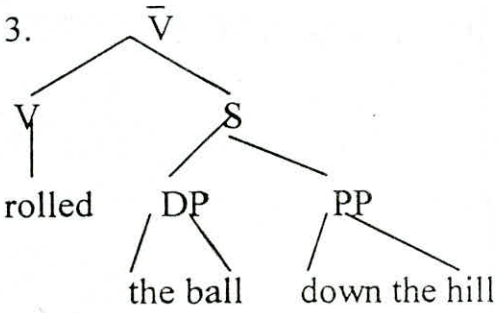
On the other hand, the assumption that the string *the ball down the hill* is a clausal constituent with *the ball* functioning as the subject of the clause
and *down the hill* as the complement of the of the clause , as shown in (3), is consistent with the merger operation.

3.



Such an assumption is not implausible since such three -place predicates like *roll* can function as two -place predicates, in which case the DP that immediately follows the verb functions as the subject, as demonstrated by the sentences in (4).

4.
(i) The ball *rolled* [down the hill].
(ii) The bath *filled* [with water].
(iii) The vase *broke* [into pieces]/ They *broke* [the vase] [into pieces].
(iv) The store *closed down*/ They *closed down* [the store].