

Colloquium, Stuttgart  
May 26<sup>th</sup> 2020

# Beyond truth

## The view from response markers

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ICREA & UPF

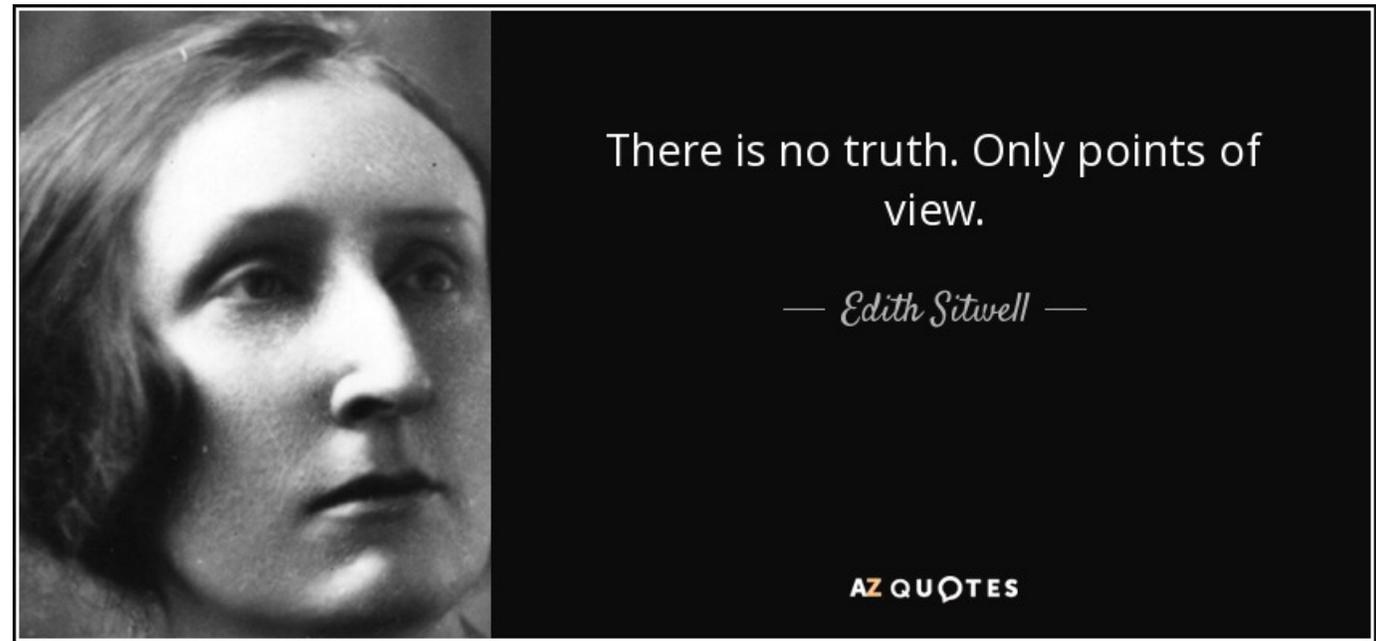


# Response markers

I: Do you believe in truth?

R1: **Yes.**

R2: **No.**



# Response markers

Response markers appear to be completely uninteresting from a linguistic point of view because...

...They often are simplex forms (*yes, no*);

...they can constitute reactive moves in isolation (not involved in composition)

... simple meaning:

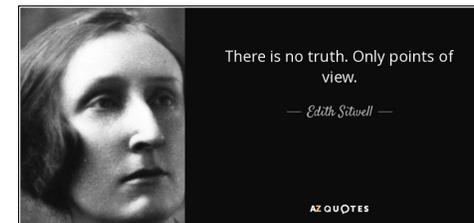
Polar question: Do you believe in truth?

{p, not p}

**yes:** ASSERT



**no:** ASSERT not p





**Canadians :**  
**"Yeah no" = No.**  
**"No yeah" = Yes.**  
**"Yeah no for sure" =**  
**Definitely.**



An MIT linguistics professor was lecturing his class the other day. "In English," he said, "a double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative."

A voice from the back of the room piped up, **"Yeah, yeah."**

The problem with double positives

# Distributional restrictions

I: Pedro quiere un perro.

Peter want a dog.

‘Peter wants a dog.’

R1: Sí

R2: Sí sí!

# Distributional restrictions

I: Pedro quiere un perro.

Peter want a dog.

‘Peter wants a dog.’

R1: Sí

R2: Sí sí!

R3: Claro que sí.

Clear that yes

‘Of course.’

R4: \*Claro que sí sí.

# Interpretive restrictions

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

‘Peter broke his leg.’

R: Jo jo.  $\rightarrow$  p = old information

“responding with doubled *ja* “indicates that the prior utterance contains already known information (...) and that therefore the current action should be stopped.”

Golato & Fagyal 2008: 249

# Response markers & intonation

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

R: i) Jo!

Yes HL%

→ p = old information

# Response markers & intonation

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

R: i) Jo!

Yes HL%

→ p = old information

ii) Jo?

Yes LH%

→ p = new information

# Response markers & intonation

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

R: i) Jo jo! → p = old information

ii) Jo jo? → p = old information

What is responsible for this difference?

# Interpretive restrictions

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

- R: i) Jo? (Is des wirkli woa?)  
'Is this really true?'  
(Warum sogst ma den des?)  
'Why are you telling me that?'
- ii) Jo jo? (\*Is des wirkli woa?)  
'Is this really true?'  
(Warum sogst ma denn des?)  
'Why are you telling me that?'

Response markers are interesting!

# Response markers

Response markers appear to be completely uninteresting from a linguistic point of view because...

...They often are simplex forms (*yes, no*);

...they can constitute reactive moves in isolation (not involved in composition)

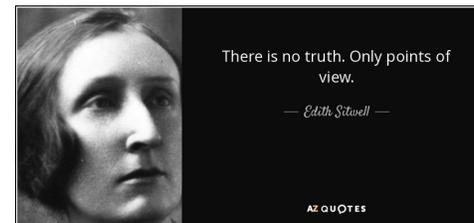
... simple meaning:

Polar question: Do you believe in truth?

{p, not p}

yes: ASSERT

no: ASSERT not p



This cannot be the whole story!

# The proposal in a nutshell

# The lexical representation of *yes/no*

## ***Yes***

‘**positive** attitude towards X

*das Leben **bejahen**.*

‘affirming life’

Upon receive e-mail with  
good news

*Yessss!*

## ***No***

‘**negative** attitude towards X

*Ein Atheist **verneint** die Existenz Gottes.*

‘An atheist denies god’s existence.’

Upon receiving e-mail with bad news

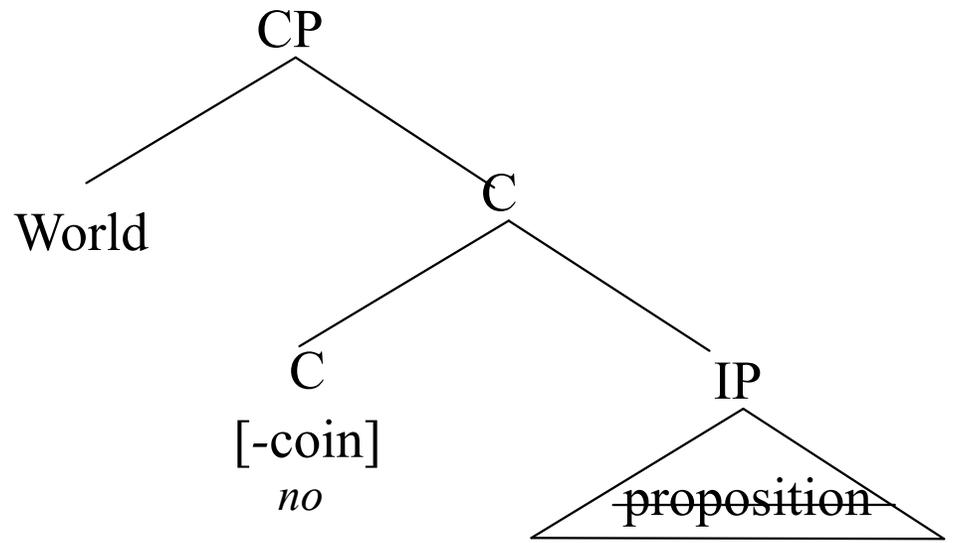
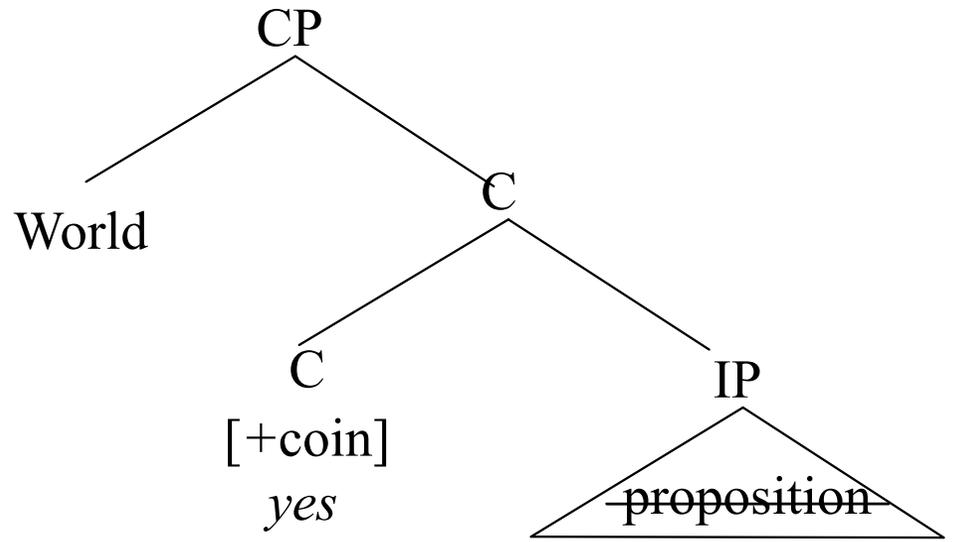
*No!*

Function derives from the spine!

# The function of *yes/no*

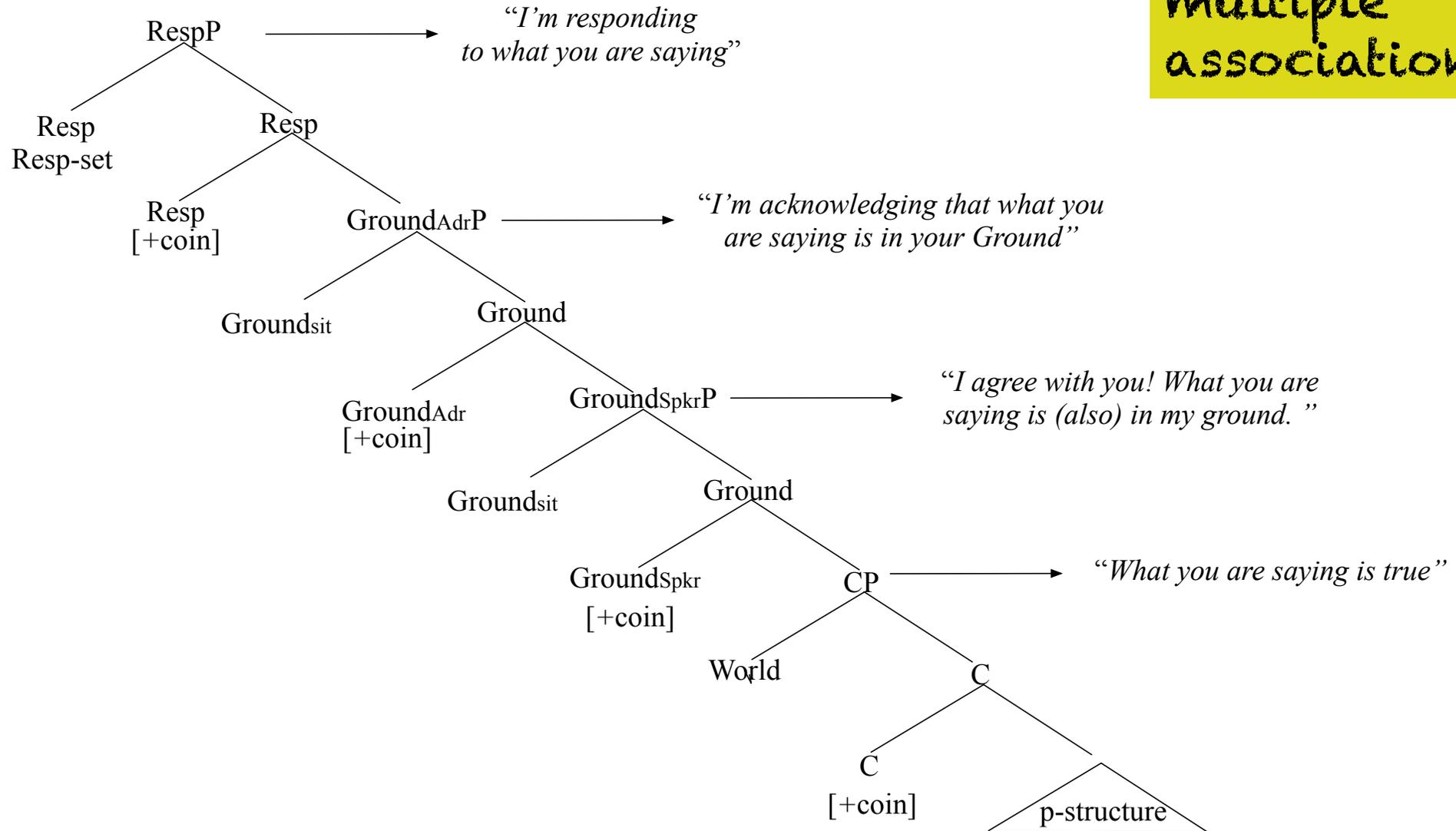
The answering function:

*yes/no* associate with C to value polarity



# The multi-functionality of *yes/no*

Multi-  
functionality  
derives from  
multiple  
association sites

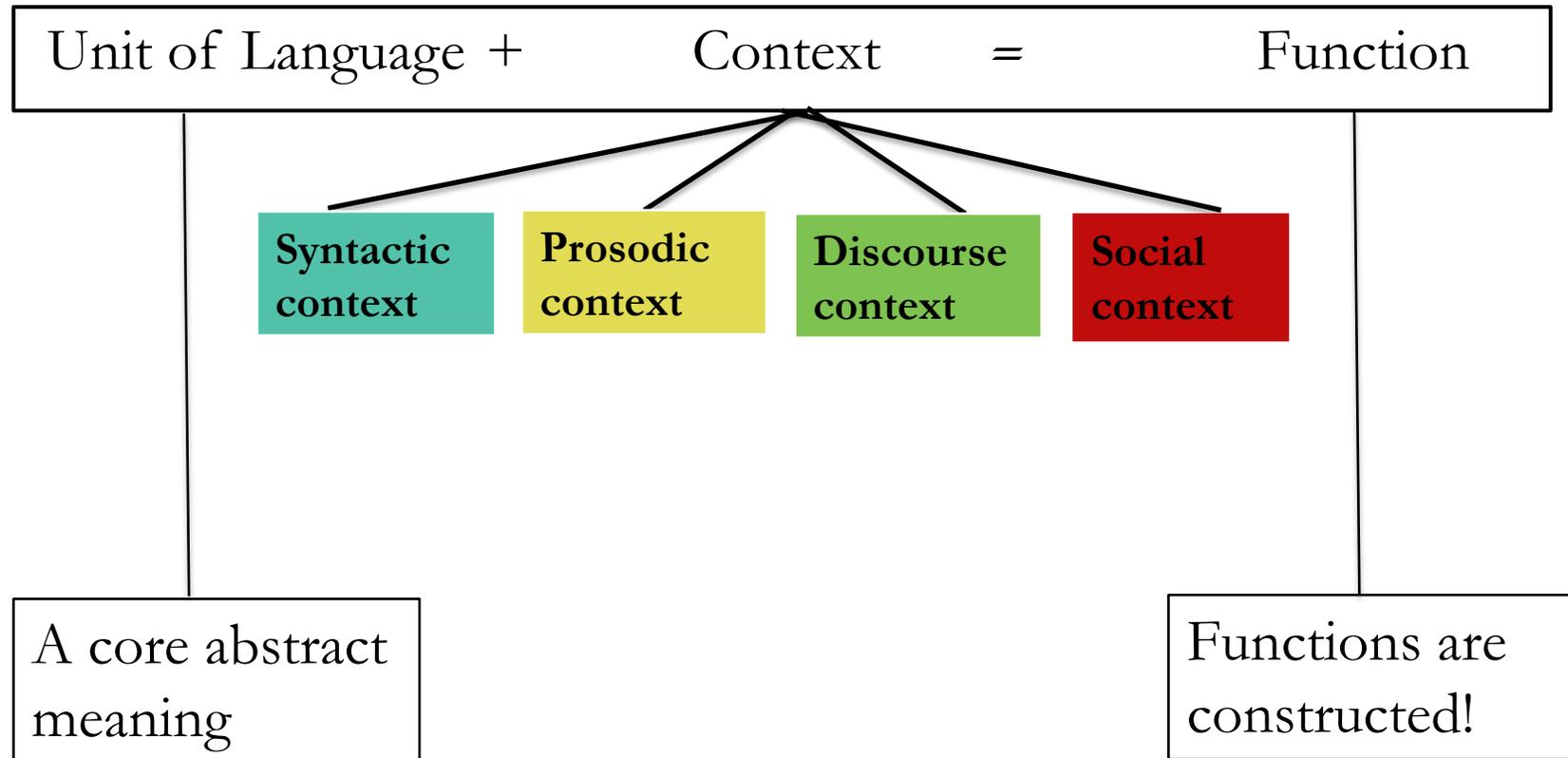


# Background

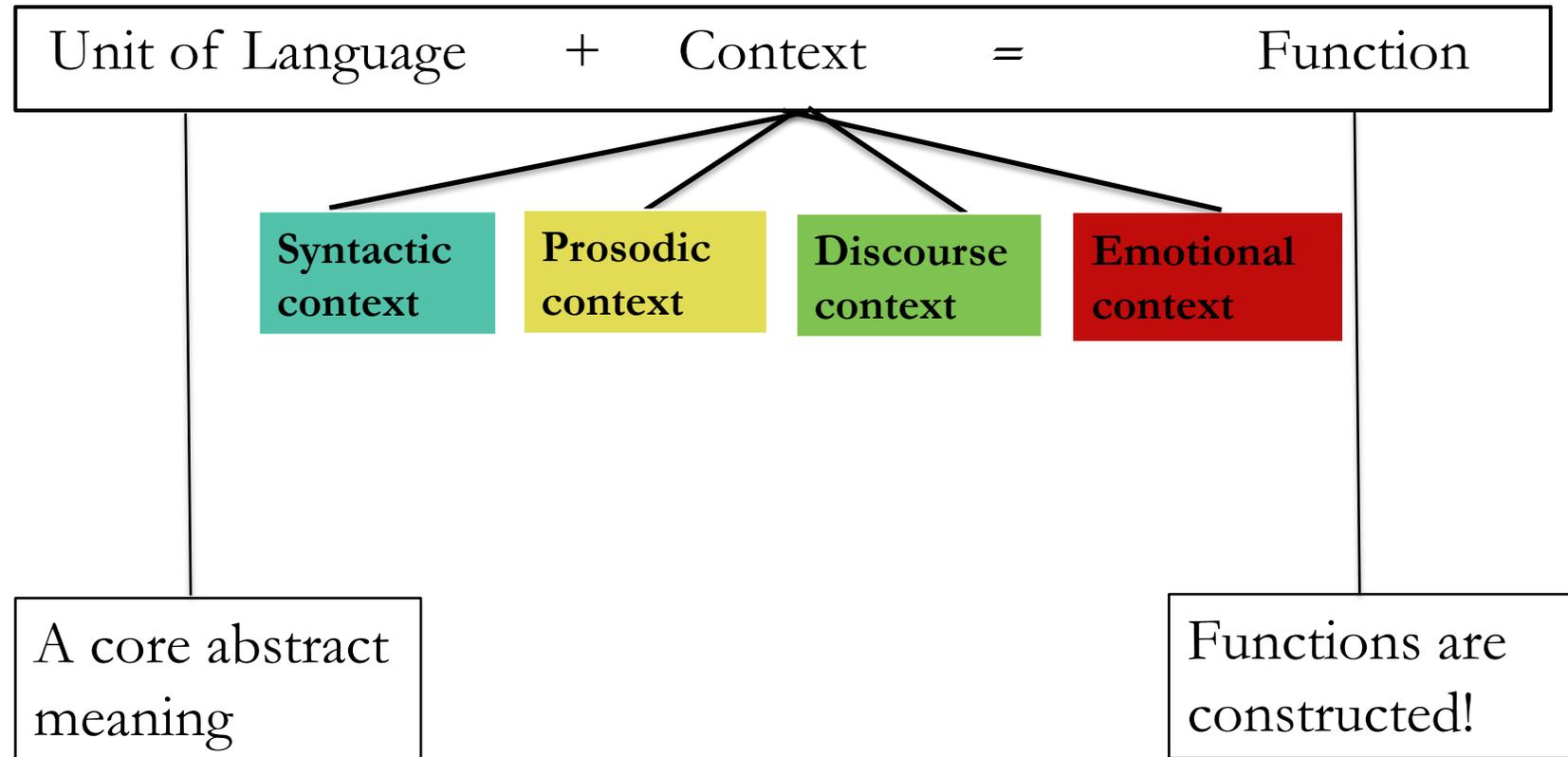
- i) Multi-functionality and the Universal Spine Hypothesis (Wiltschko 2014)
- ii) The interactional Spine Hypothesis

# Deriving multi-functionality

Wiltschko & D'Arcy (2016)

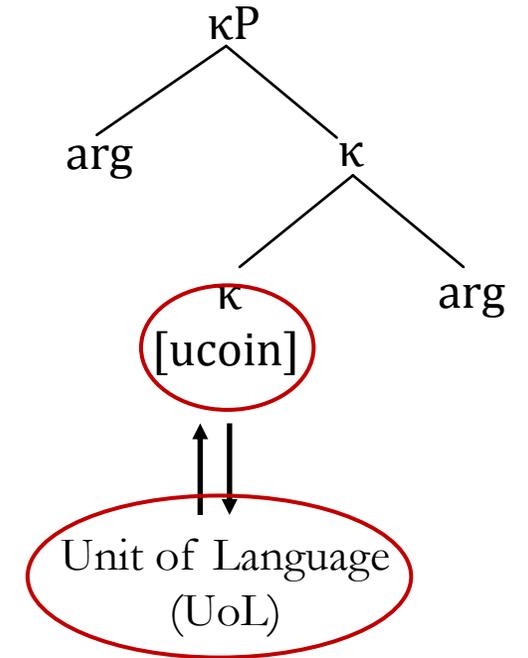
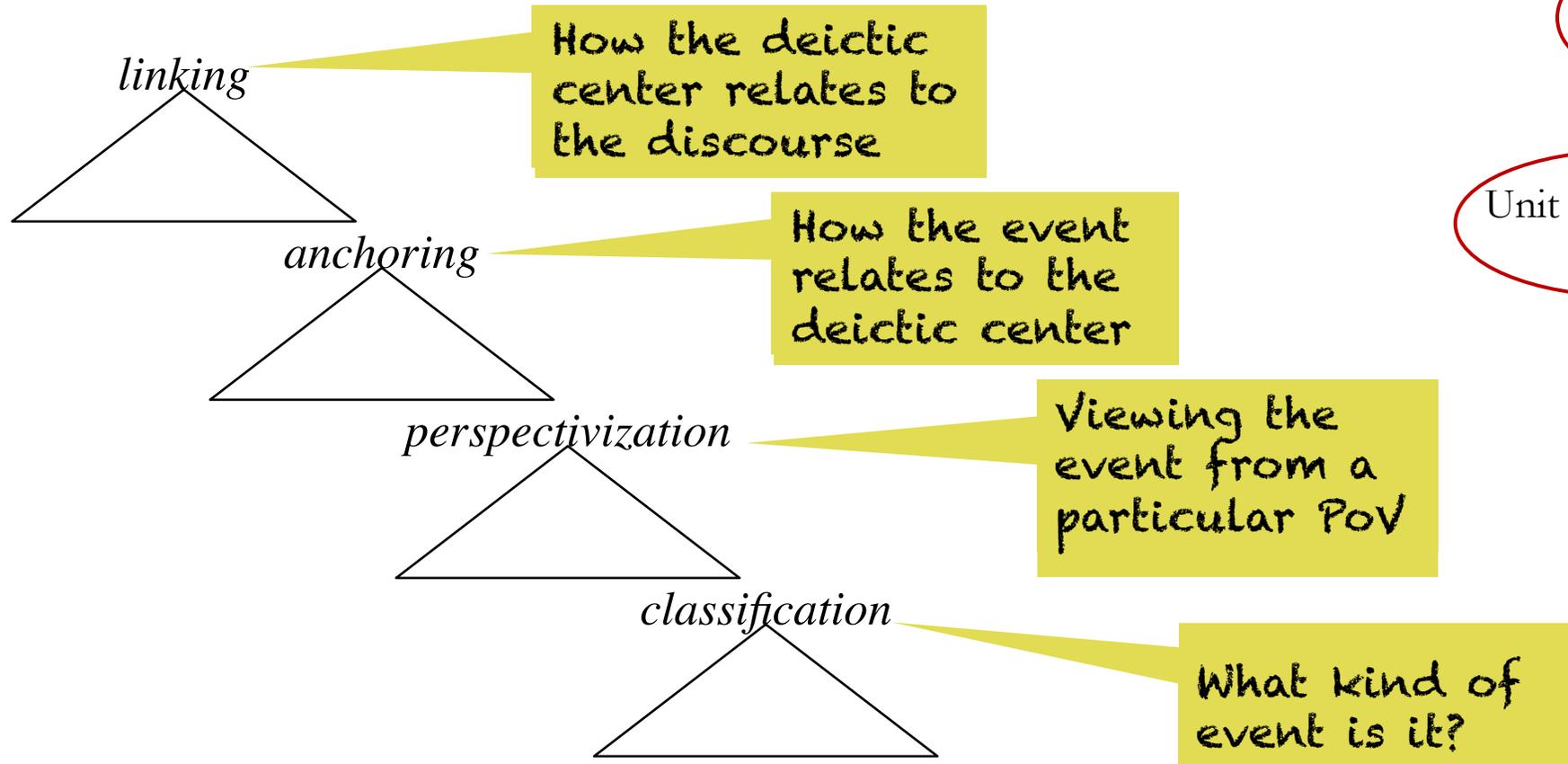


# Deriving multi-functionality of response markers



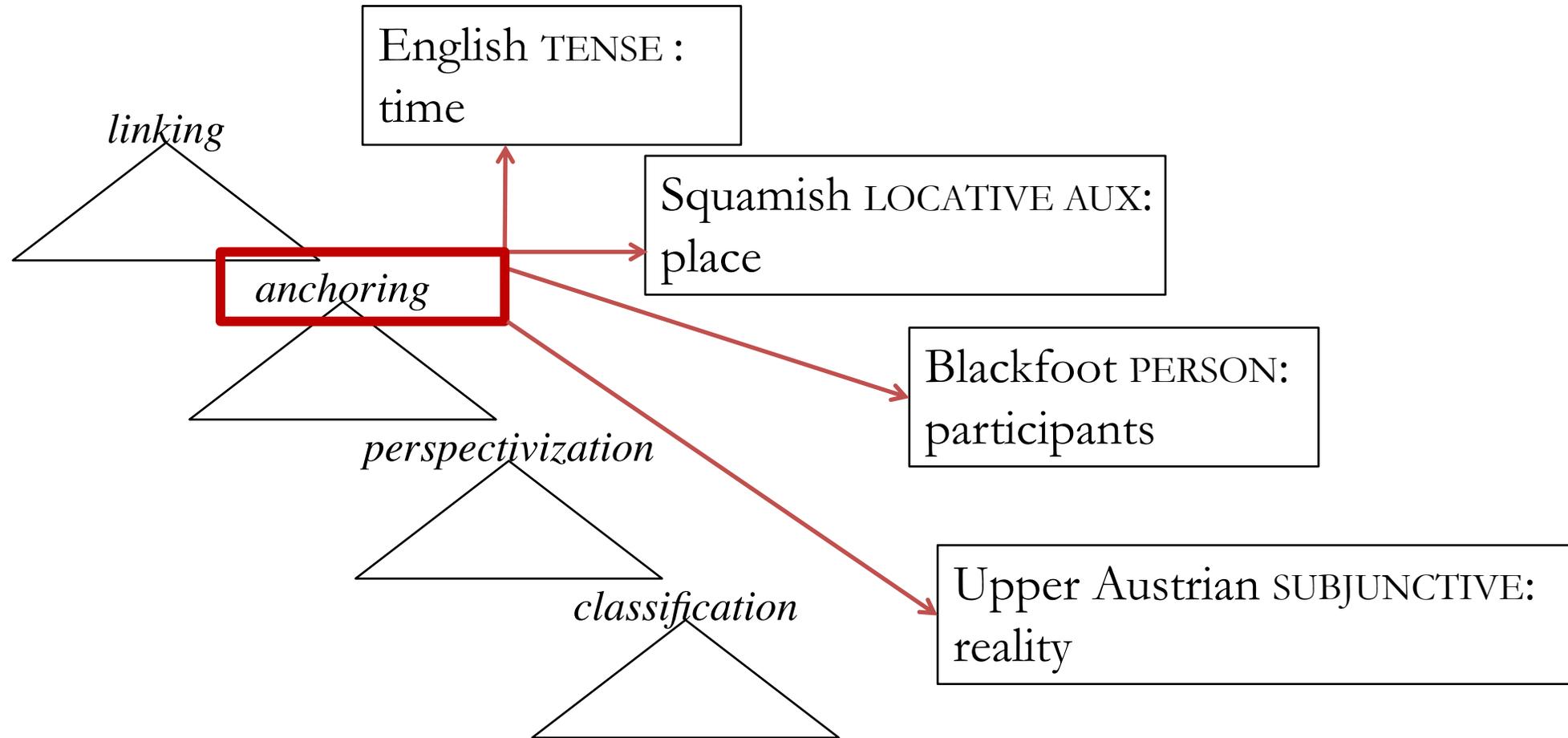
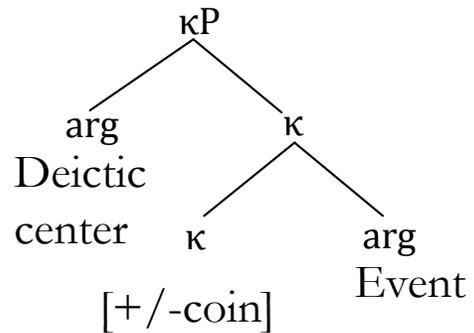
# The universal spine

Syntactic domains are associated with core abstract functions

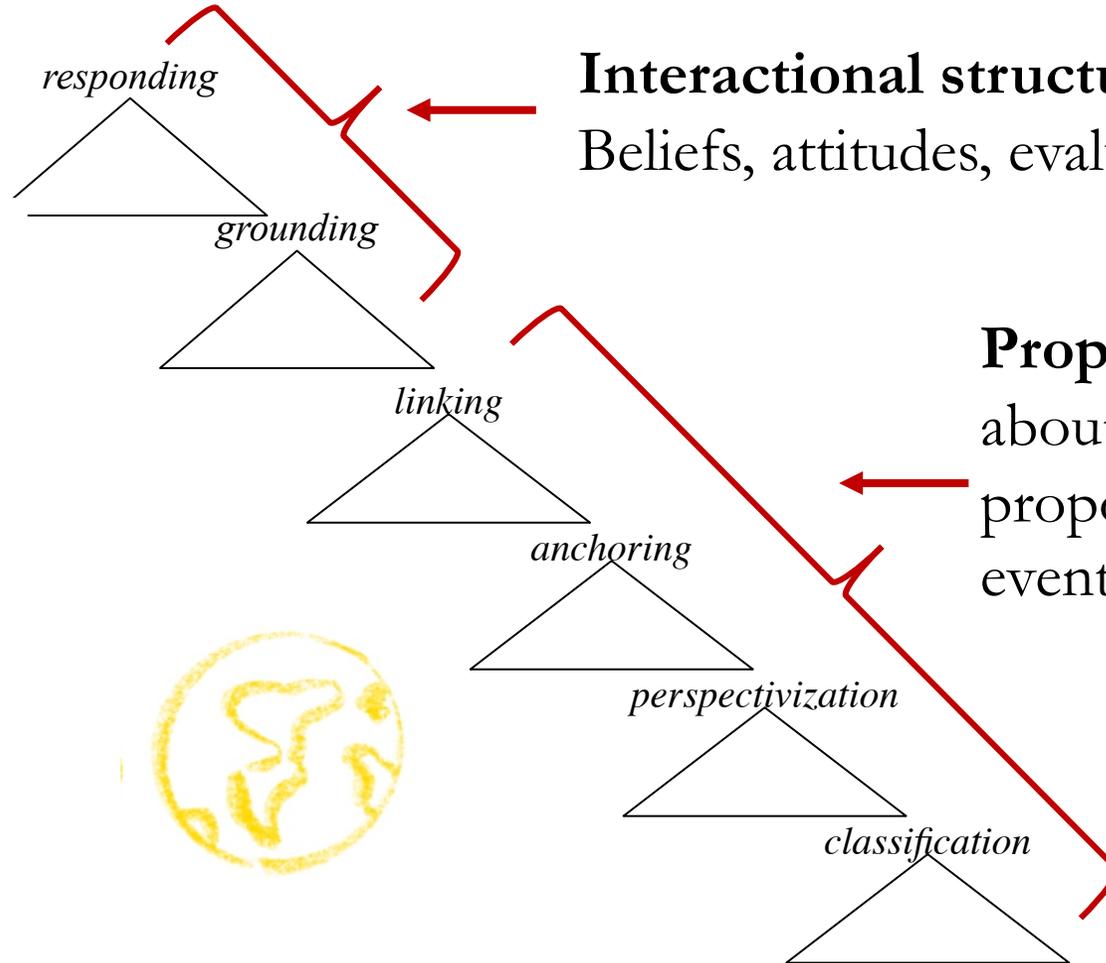


# Categories are derived

Different instantiations of **anchoring**



# The interactional spine

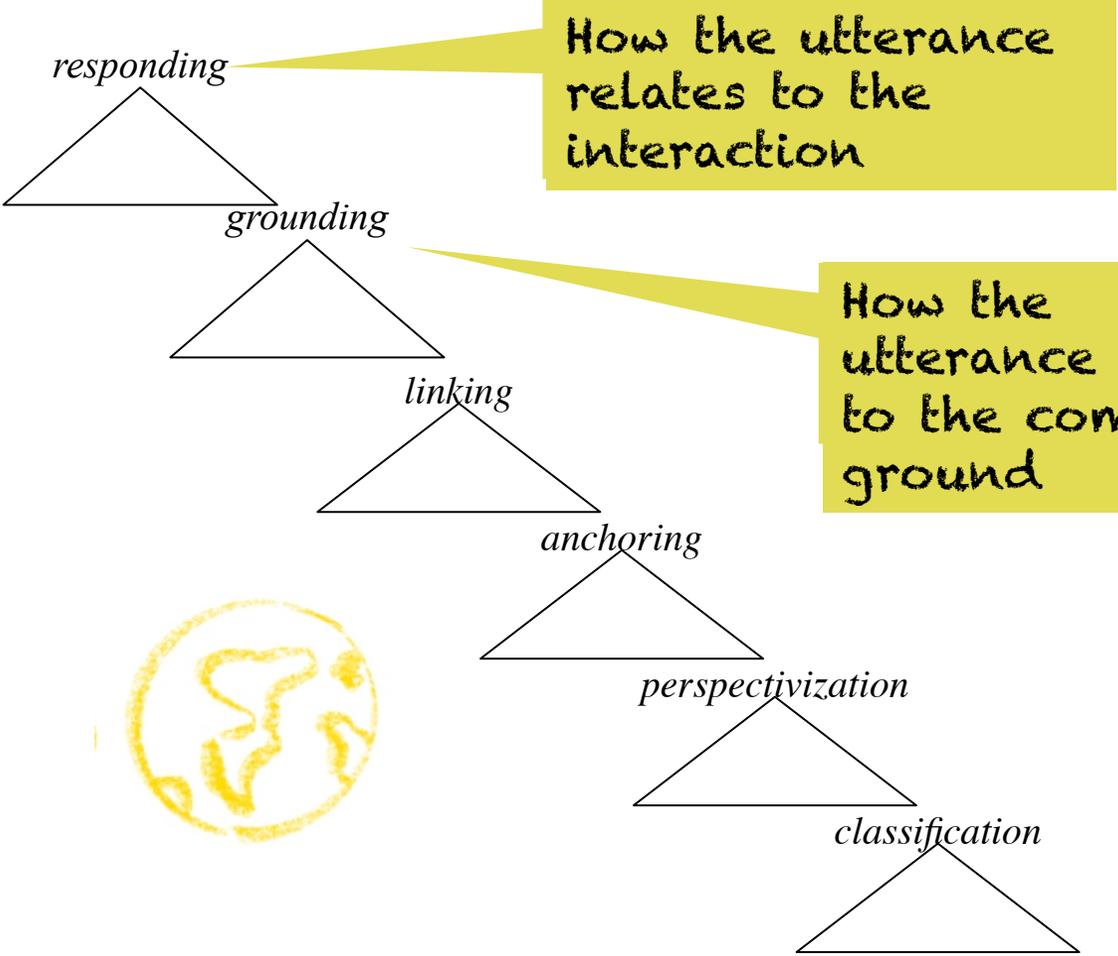


**Interactional structure** is about **mental worlds**:  
(Beliefs, attitudes, evaluations, discourse status,...)

**Propositional structure** is about the **world**:  
propositions, individuals, eventualities,...



# The interactional spine



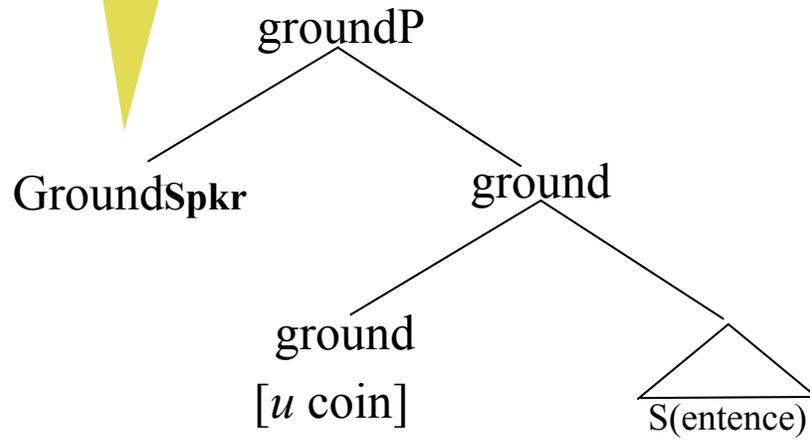
How the utterance relates to the interaction

How the utterance relates to the common ground

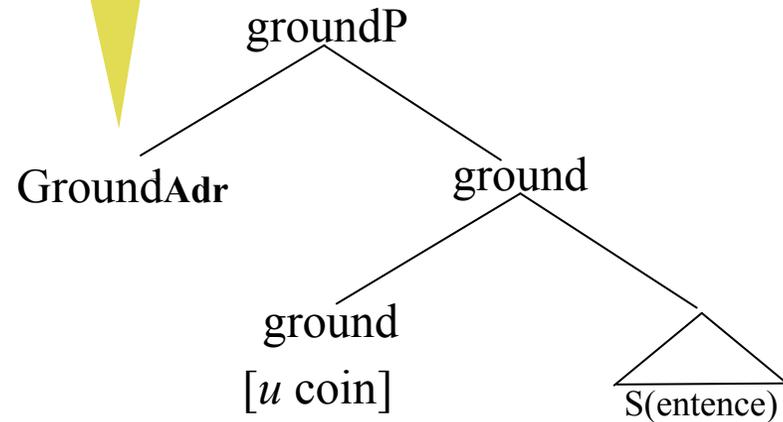


# The function of GroundP: commitment

What I'm saying  
{is/is not} in  
my ground



What I'm saying  
{is/is not} in  
your ground



# Mandarin: *de* (Bel,(S,p))

**Context:** John was told that Mary drives to work. He wonders whether he can take a ride each morning. But he is not sure whether Mary drives every morning. He runs into Bob, Mary's husband, and wants to know whether it is true. Bob says:

Ta meitian zaoshang kaiche shangban **de.**

She every.day morning drive work PRT

'She (really) drives to work every morning.'

Ta meitian zaoshang kaiche shangban.

She every.day morning drive work

She drive to work every morning.

# Mandarin: $a$ ( $\neg$ Bel,(S,p))

Context: John is talking with his advisor Mary for his graduation. He thinks he has already done what are required for graduation. But Mary thinks he needs to publish another article before his graduation.

John: Dou wancheng le. Wo xianzai deng zhe biye le.  
Everything is done. Now I am waiting for my graduation.

Mary: Buguo ni hai xuyao fabiao yi pian lunwen.  
But you still need publish one cl paper  
But you need to publish one more paper (before you graduate).

John: Shenme? Wo hai dei xie yi pian lunwen ***a***  
What? I still must write one CL thesis **PRT**  
What? I still have a thesis to write (which is out of my expectation).

# Mandarin particles: *ma* (Bel,(A,p))

Context: Mary sent John a puppy to keep. After a month, John calls Mary to ask which kind of dog's food is better for his dog. He says to Mary:

Ni shangci gei wo le tiao gou **ma** ...

You last.time give me asp cl dog prt

...wo xiang wen ni nage paizi de gouliang hao.

I want ask you which brand poss. dog.food good.

*'Remember you gave me a dog last time.*

*Now I want to ask which food is good for him.'*

# Mandarin particles: bei ( $\neg$ Bel,(A,p))

Context: Mary knows that John doesn't like cats. But one day when they are in the supermarket, she finds that John is looking at cat toys.

Mary: Ni zenme kan mao de dongxi?

You why look cat poss. things

*Why are you looking at the cat stuff?*

John: Wo erzi jian huilai yi zhi mao **bei** yiding yao yang.

My son pick back one cl cat prt, certainly want keep

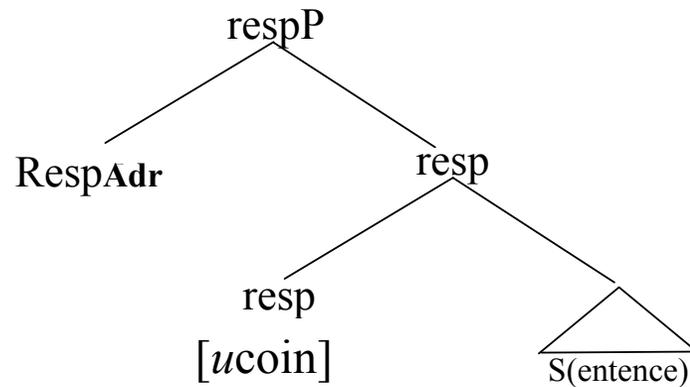
*(You haven't known that) my son picked up a cat somewhere and wants to keep it anyway.*

# The function of RespP: engagement

RespP serves the function of **MOVE TYPING**

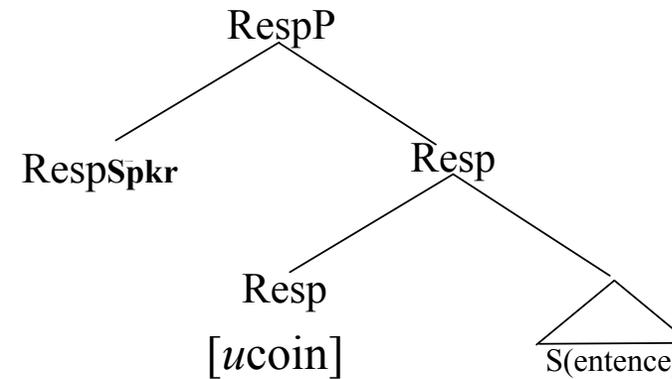
INITIATION:

[[.....] **Confirmational**]



REACTION:

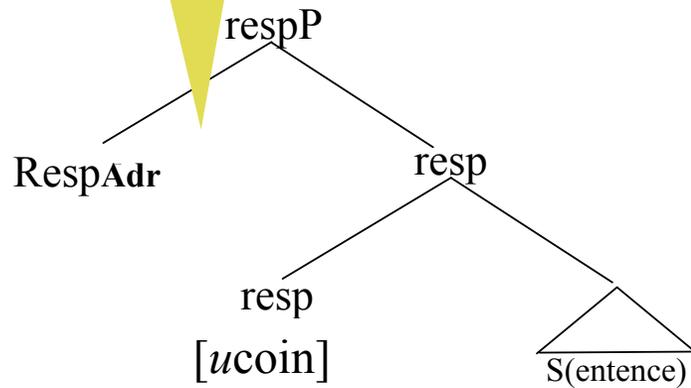
[**Response marker** [.....]]



# The function of RespP: engagement

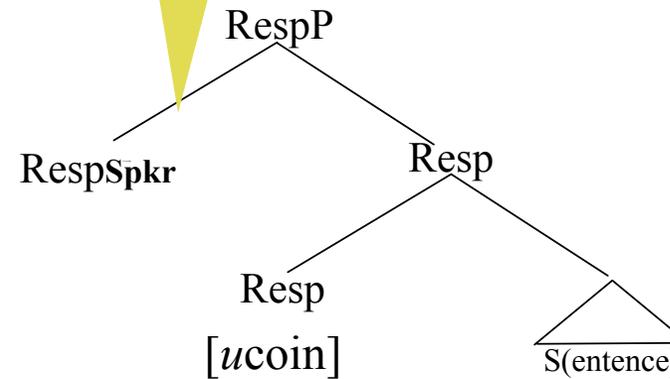
What I'm saying  
{is/is not} in your  
response-set

INITIATION:  
[[.....] **Com** mational]



What I'm saying  
{is/is not} in  
my response-set

RESPONSE:  
[.....] **Response marker** [.....]





# The syntax of response markers

Not all moves have to be typed as initiating or reacting.

Move-typing is only necessary when the current move violates the normal course of the conversation.

From this point of view, we may distinguish between two forms of movement from one turn to the next. In 'unmarked' movement, next turns are congruent with the understandings, expectations and projections that were established in the previous turn, or sequence of turns. In 'marked' movement, there are departures from some of these understandings, expectations and projections (Heritage, 2013). Turn-initial particles are often implicated in these departures because, as Schegloff (1996) notes, they represent a first possible opportunity to indicate that a departure is underway. Turn-initial *well* is undoubtedly one of these departure-indicating particles.

Heritage 2015: 89

# well

(9) [Field 1:6:2-9]

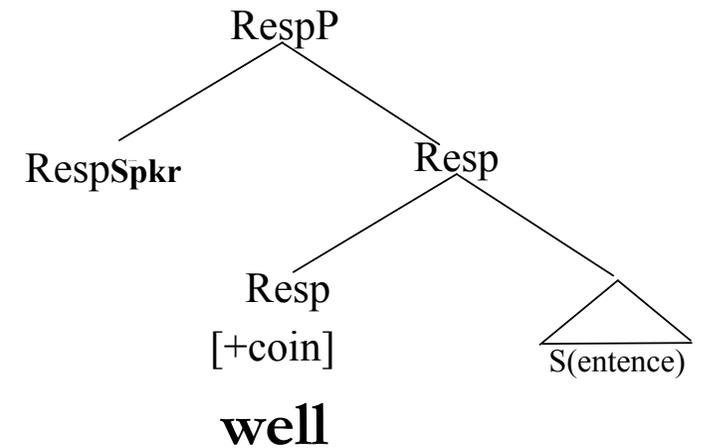
1 Les: Could you:r husband call on my mother in law please  
2 (0.4)  
3 Les: a:nd uh have a look at he:r um: (1.0) .h uh her bathroo:m,  
4 (0.7)  
5 Sut: .hh Uh w'dju give me your name plea:se,=  
6 Les: -> =Well her name is Missiz Nan Field.h  
7 (4.1)  
8 Les: And she lives at fifteen Applewood Close:.

(10) [Field(X):1:1:1:44-6]

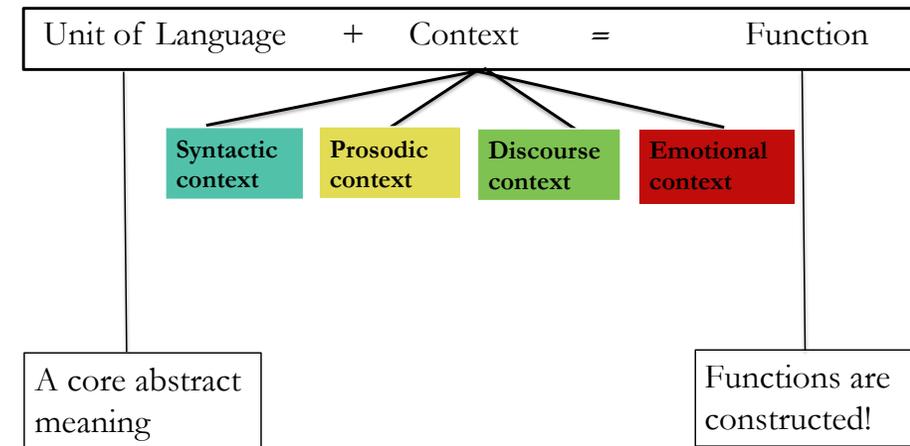
1 Mum: She's ↑(quite'n) old lady wasn't she.  
2 Les: Well she's ninety.  
3 Mum: Mm: ye:s

(12) [Trio 2: 12-16]

1 May: What happened et (.) wo:rk. Et Bullock's this evening.  
2 Pru: -> .hhhh Wul I don' kno::w::.  
3 (.)  
4 May: My-Loretta jus ca:lled'n she wz goin:g went by: there et  
5 five thirdu you know on'er way ho::me.



# well

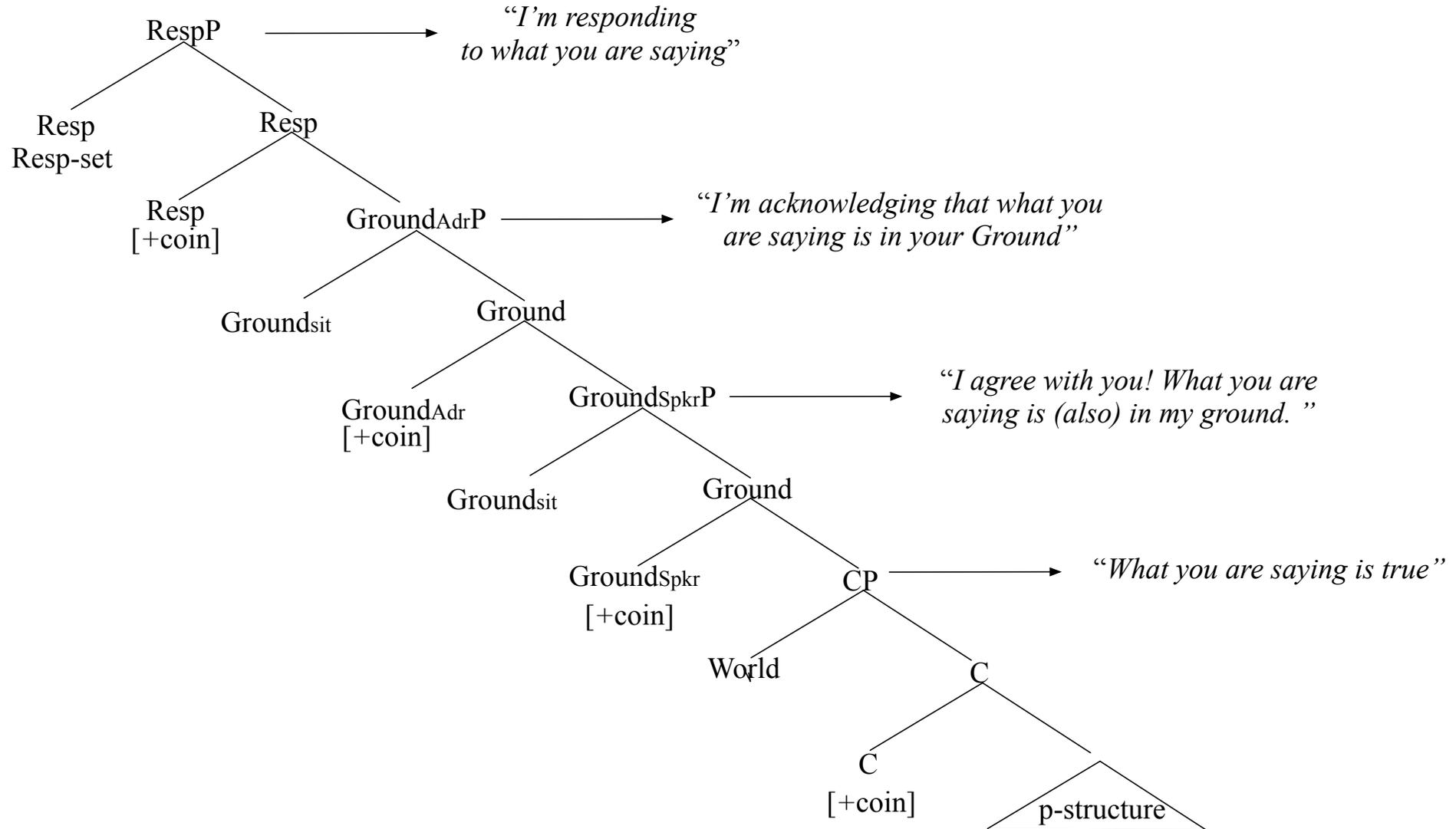


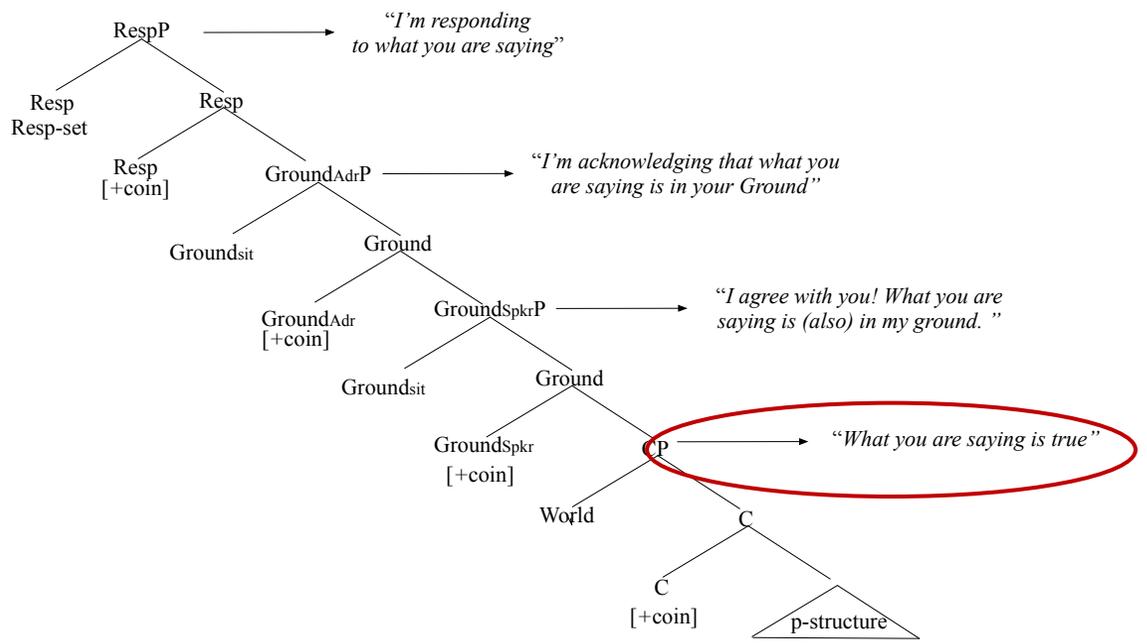
**Table 1**  
Summary of some major contributions to the pragmatic functions of *well*.

Pragmatic functions educed for Well-prefaced turns	Proposed by:
Well-prefaced turns will have an indirect, 'insufficient' or otherwise 'complex' relation to a prior	Lakoff, 1973; Svartvik, 1980; Carlson, 1984; Quirk et al., 1985; Schiffrin, 1987; Jucker, 1993; Schegloff and Lerner, 2009
Well-prefaced turns will involve disagreement or disaffiliation in relation to the prior	Pomerantz, 1984; Davidson, 1984; Bolinger, 1989; Jucker, 1993
Well-prefaced turns will be expanded	Schegloff and Lerner, 2009; Heritage and Clayman, 2010.
Well-prefaced turns will initiate a new departure (including within narratives)	Wierzbicka, 1976; Svartvik, 1980; Carlson, 1984; Quirk et al., 1985; Schourup, 1985; Bolinger, 1989; Jucker, 1993, 1997
Well-prefaced turns involve 'resuming'	Kim, 2011, 2013

As [Table 1](#) suggests, the literature exhibits a considerable range of opinion on the conversational role of *well*, in large part because of the real diversity of its functions, and the difficulties associated with bringing them under a common description. At the same time, this literature offers little information on the relative frequency of different usages of *well*, or on the interrelations among these usages. Absent this information, it is difficult to arrive at descriptions that integrate the primary usages, and that trace their interconnections.

# The syntax of response markers

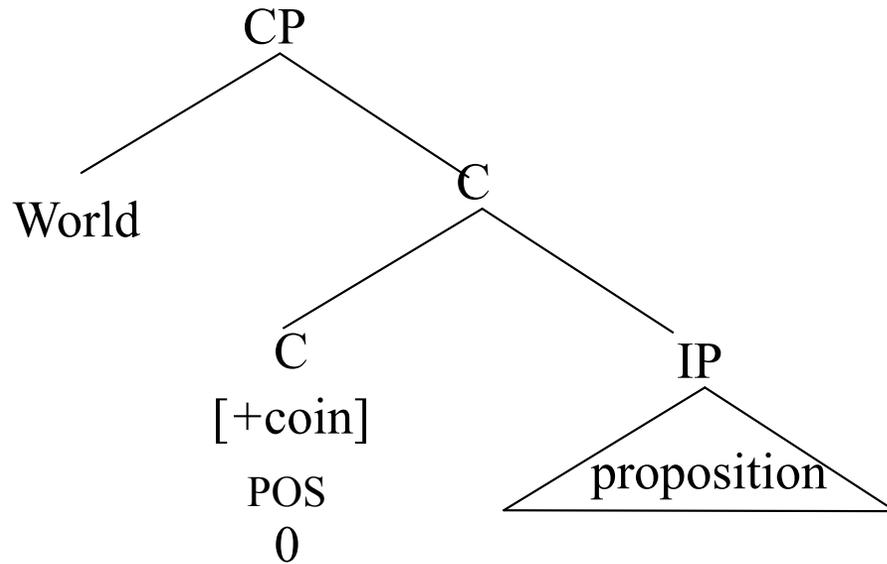




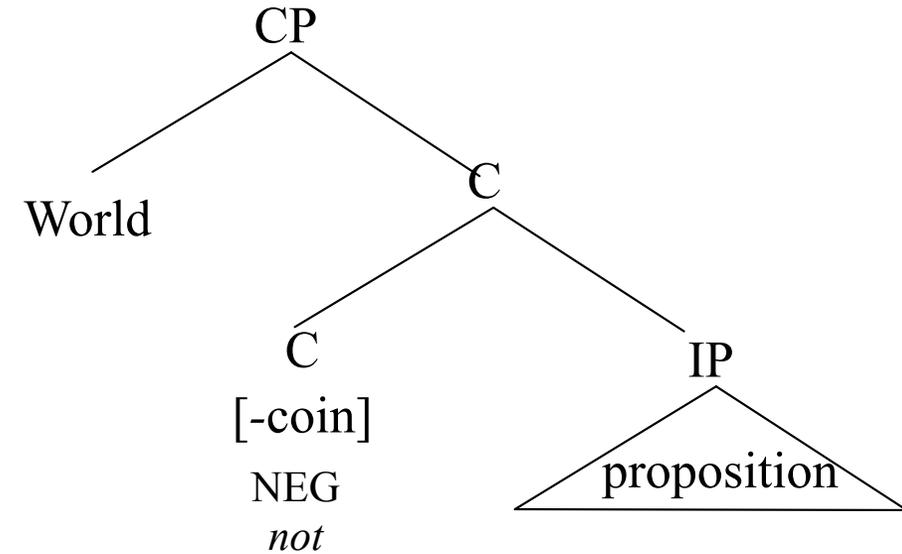
# Response markers in C

The syntax of polarity

# The syntax of polarity



He left.  
He said **that** he left.



He did **not** leave.  
He said **that** he did **not** leave

# The syntax of polarity

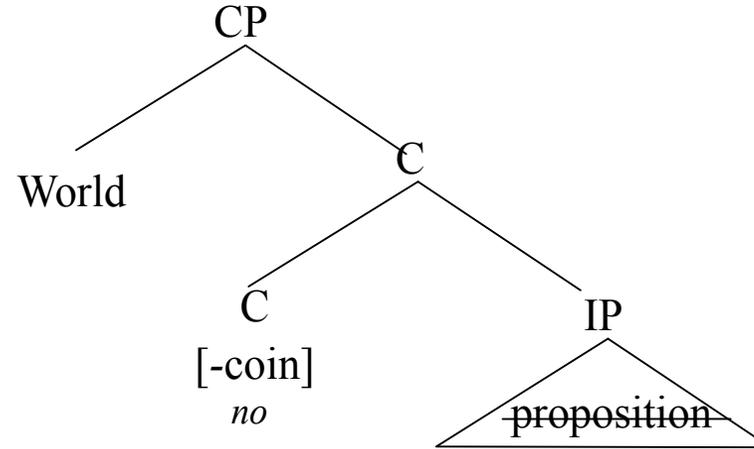
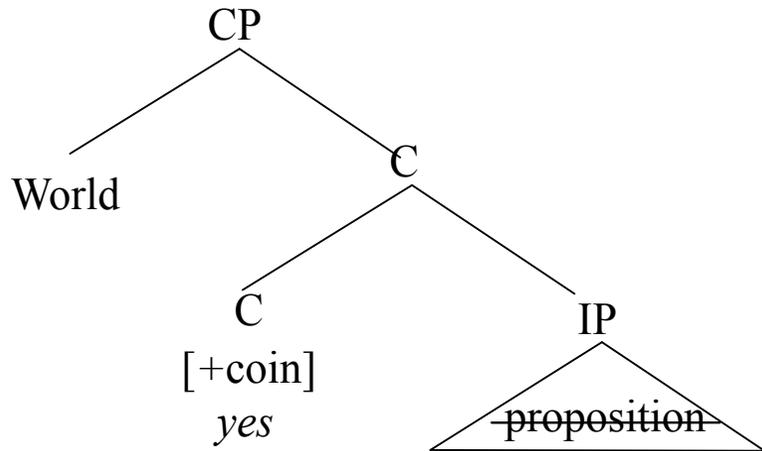
I: Puedes ayudarme?  
can-2sg. help-me  
'Can you help me?'

R: Claro **que si**.  
Clear that yes  
'Of course I can.'

**Si que** ha cantado la soprano  
yes that has sung the soprano  
'The soprano has sung.'

Batlari & Hernanz 2011: 2 (7 )

# Response markers valuing polarity



Lexicalization patterns for positive RMs

- demonstratives
- Forms of *be*
- Forms of *so*

(1) He did **not** leave.

(2) Q: Did he leave?

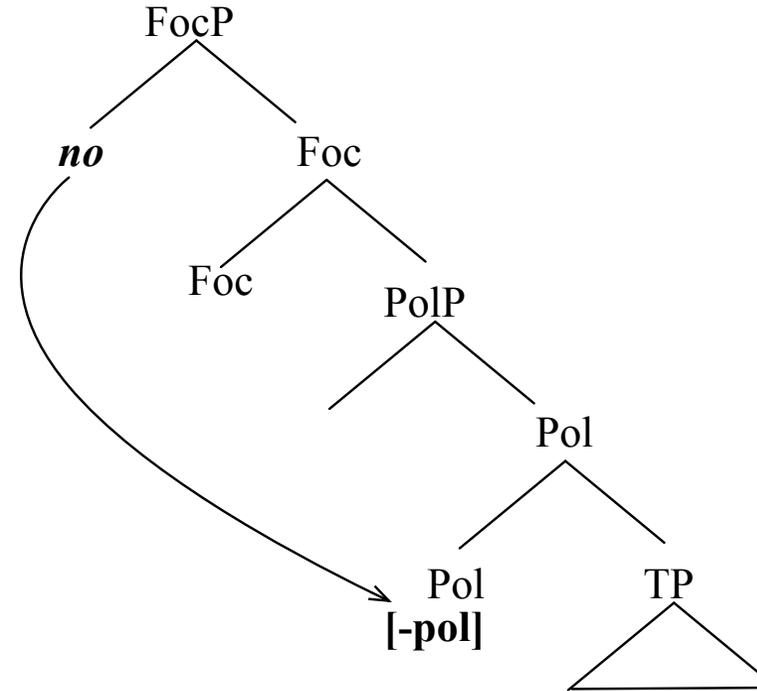
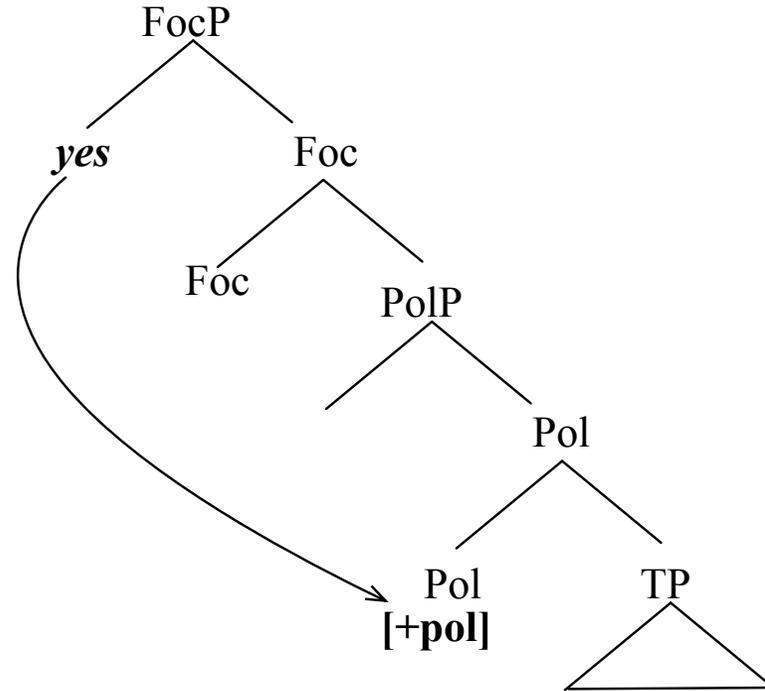
A: **No.**

(3) **No** puedo ayudarte.

Q: Puedes ayudarme?

A: **No.**

# Holmberg 2016

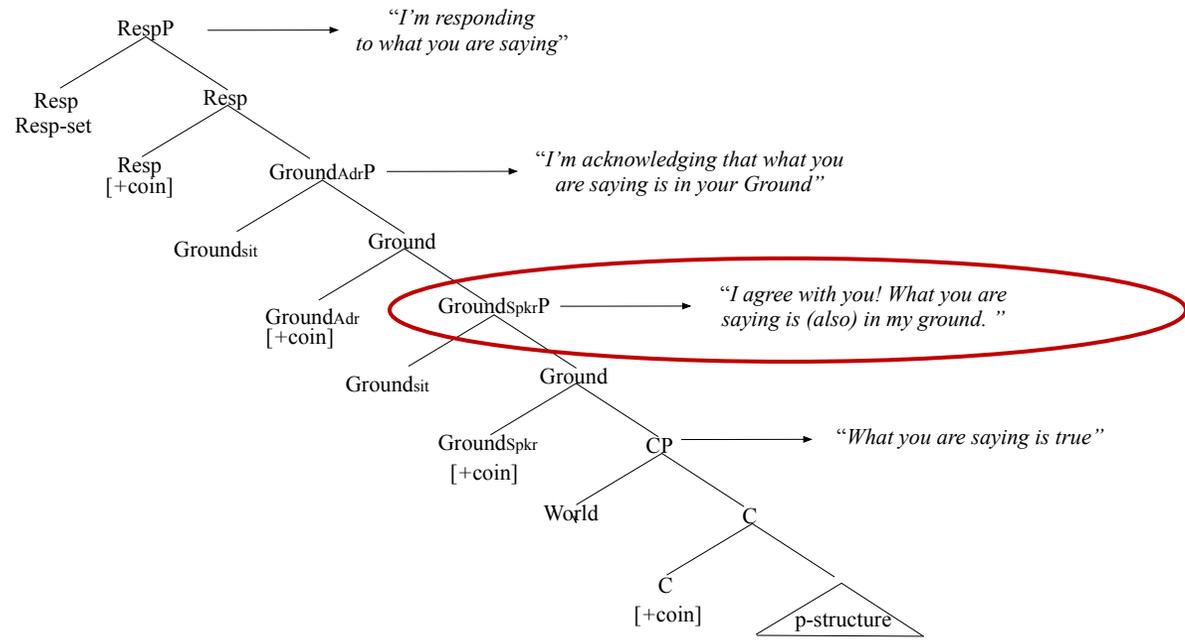


I: Who left?

R: \*Yes, Amy did.

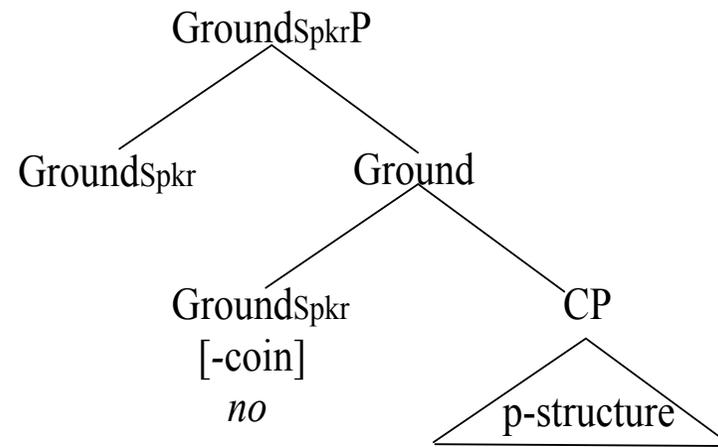
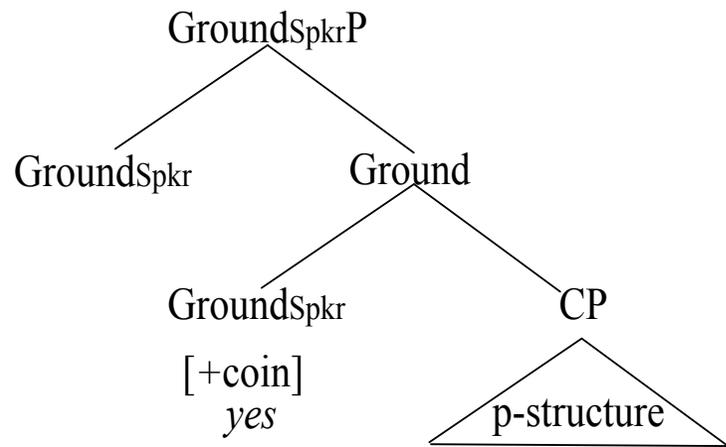
R: \*No, Amy didn't.

Roelofson & Farkas 2014



# Response markers in $\text{Ground}_{\text{Spkr}}$

Agreement markers



AGREEMENT  
WITH  
QUESTION

# Response to wh-question

Katie: Why would he do something like that?

Brooke: **Yes**, I know. That is the question.

BB-2012-05-23

Avery: How did that happen?

Lauren: (Chuckles) **yes**.

Michael: It happened because your amazing nephew convinced daisy to move out of the building.

YR-2012-05-17

# Response to command



Alison: So go back to the farmhouse and wait for us.

Deacon: **Yes**, Ma'am. BB-2012-06-20

Steffy: Treat me like one of your patients..

Taylor: **Yes**, I will. BB-2012-06-29

Michael: Breathe!

Starr: **Yes**. GH-2012-03-29

# Response to exclamation

AGREEMENT  
WITH  
EXCLAMATION

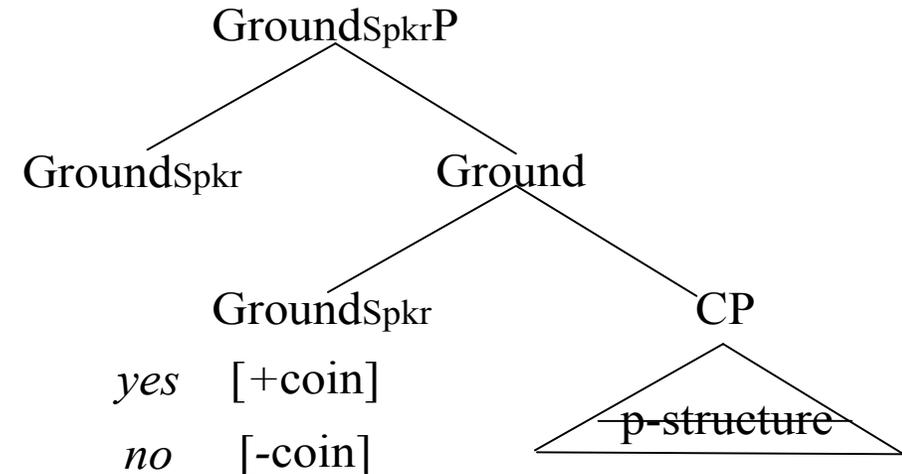
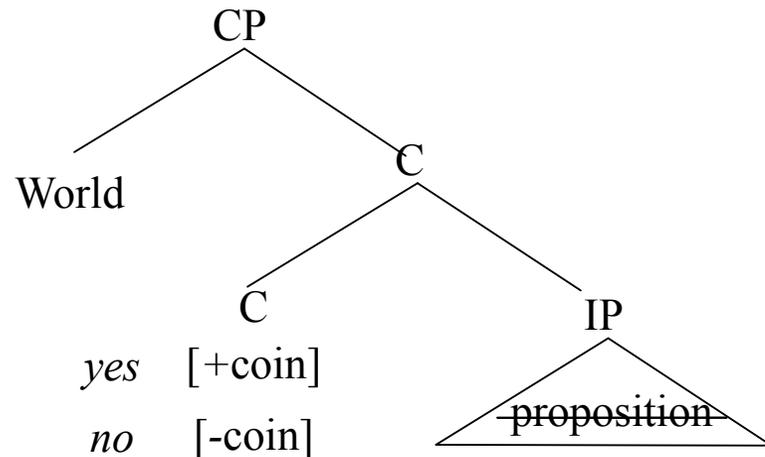
Steffy: Whoo-hoo .

Liam: **Yes!** BB-2012-05-03)

A: What a beautiful sunset.

B: **Yes**, I know. Isn't it gorgeous.

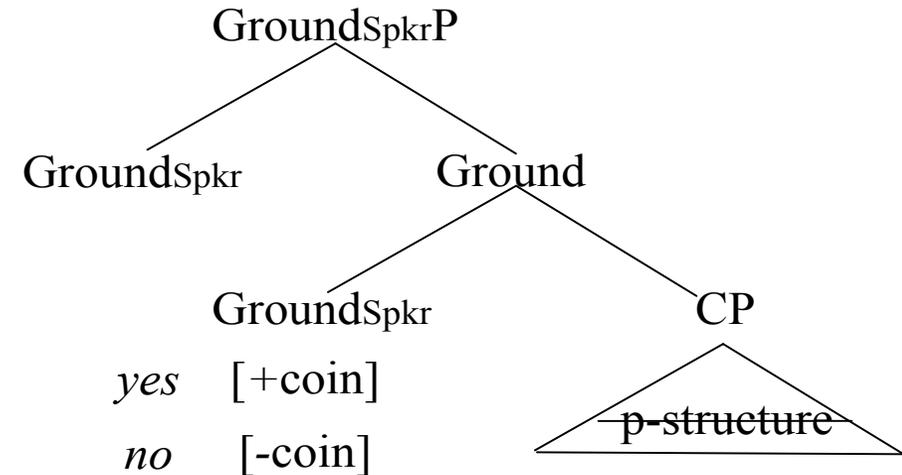
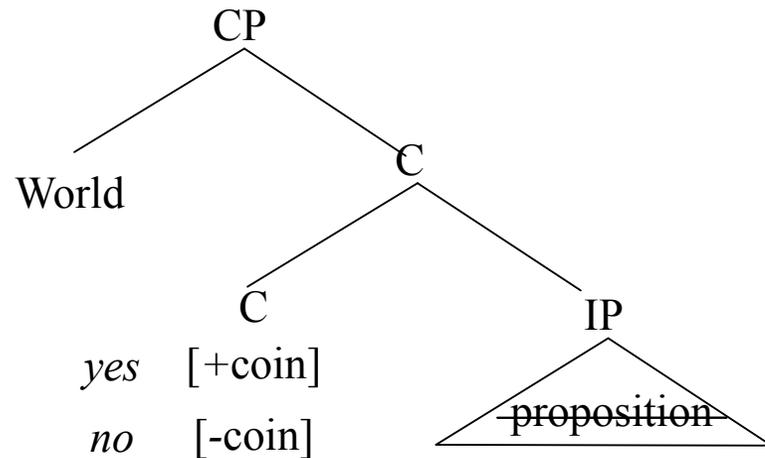
# Structural ambiguities



I: You have a new dog, eh?  
 R1: Yes I do.  
 R2: Yes you're right.  
 R3: \*Yes, I know

I: I have a new dog, eh?  
 R1: \*Yes, you do  
 R2: \*Yes you're right.  
 R3: Yes I know.

# Structural ambiguities



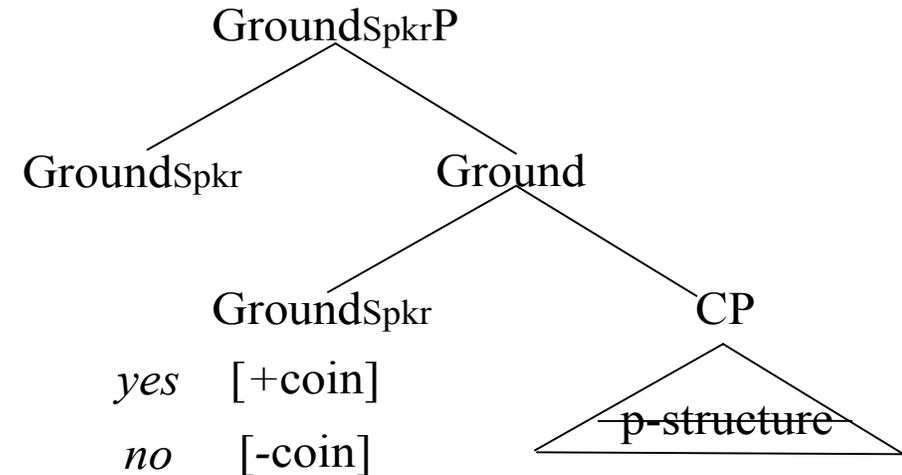
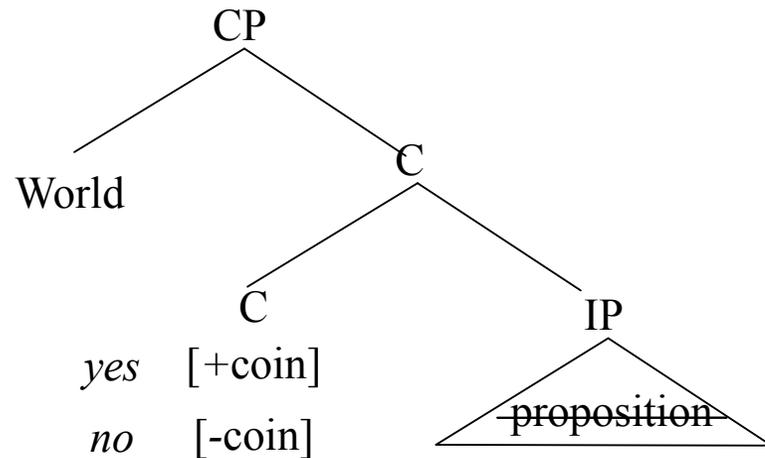
I: He went to Italy.

R1: No. I saw him yesterday.

R2: No!!! That's great.

He always wanted to go.

# Structural ambiguities



I: He didn't go to Italy.

**R1: Yes. He did.**

R2: No. He didn't.

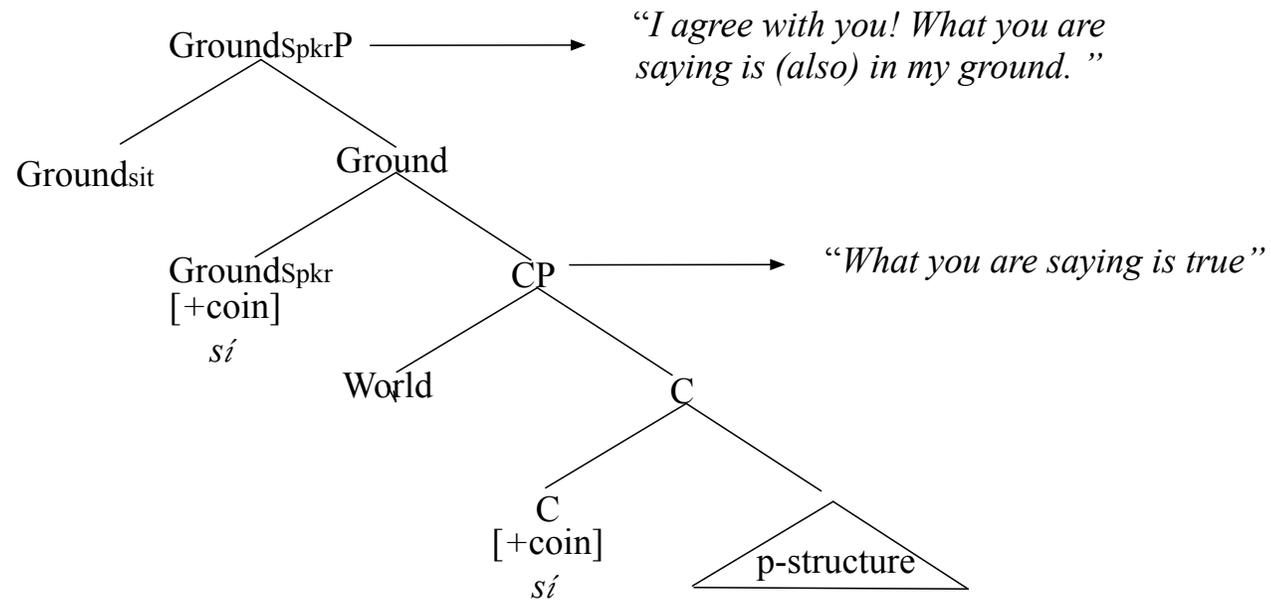
R3: Yes. He didn't.

**R4: No. He did.**

# Structural ambiguities

He didn't go to Italy

	<b>Target of response</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Effect of response</b>
[CP yes	[IP he went to Italy]	p	disagreement
[CP no	[IP he went to Italy]	not p	agreement
[Ground yes	[CP He didn't go to Italy]	R believes, not p	agreement
[Ground no	[CP he didn't go to Italy]	R doesn't believe not p	disagreement



# Understanding double positives

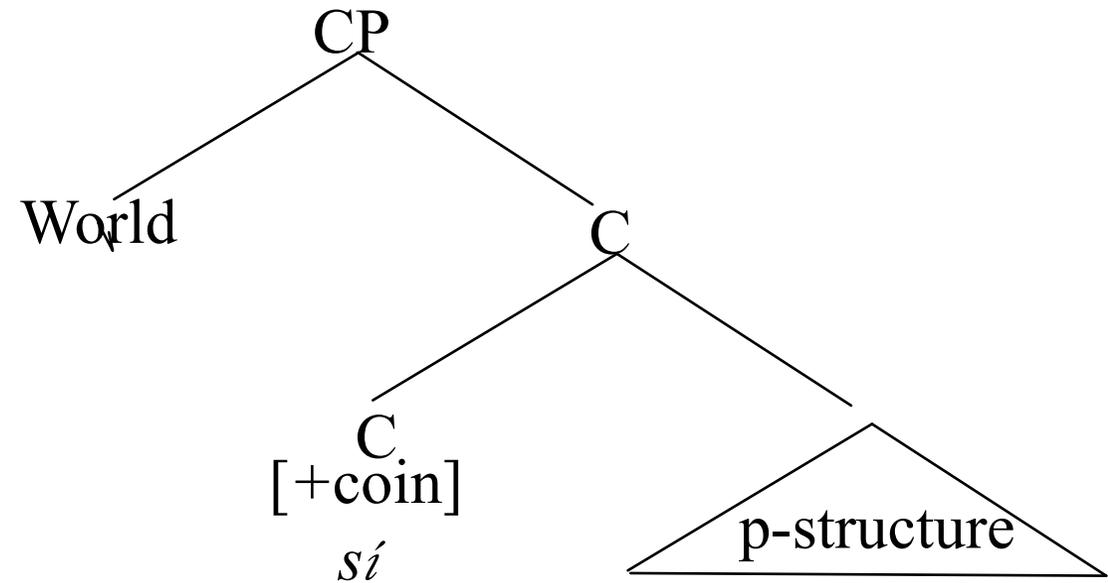
# Distributional restrictions

I: Pedro quiere un perro.

Peter want a dog.

‘Peter wants a dog.’

R1: Sí



# Distributional restrictions

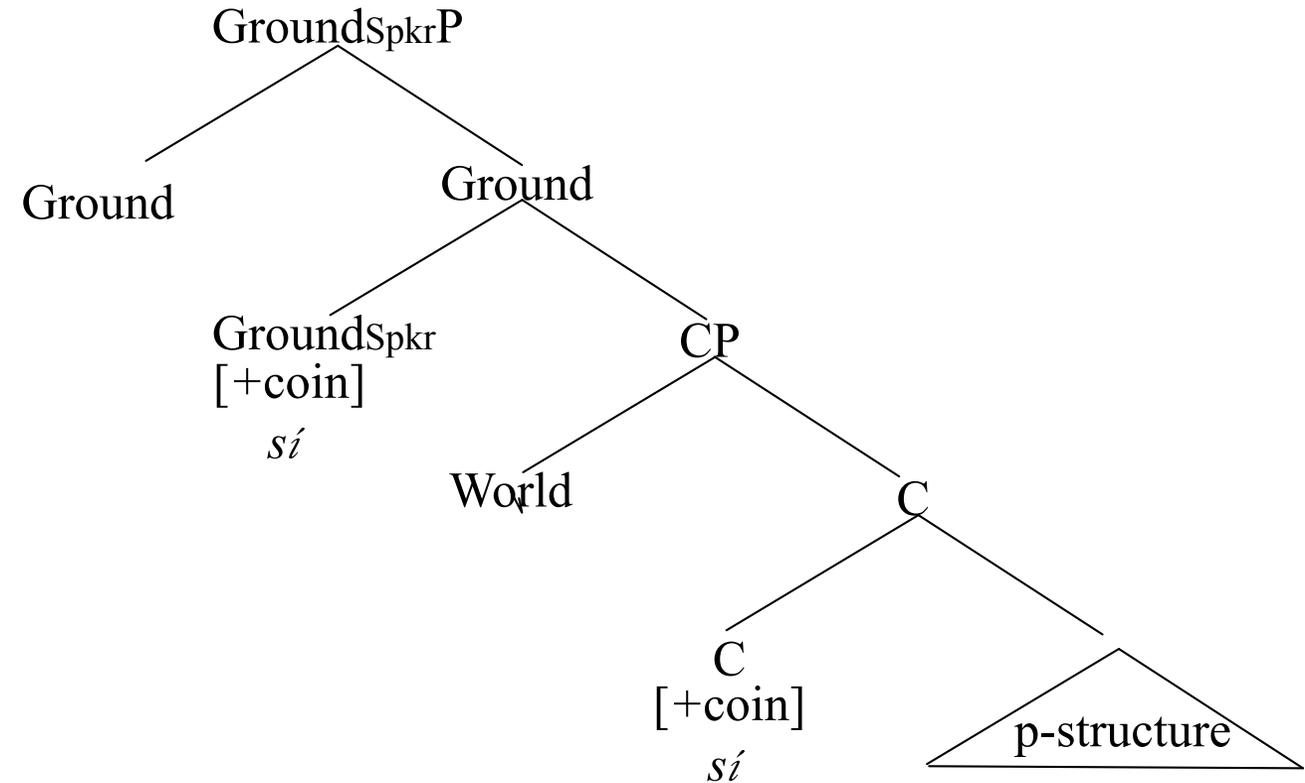
I: Pedro quiere un perro.

Peter want a dog.

‘Peter wants a dog.’

R1: Sí

R2: Sí sí!

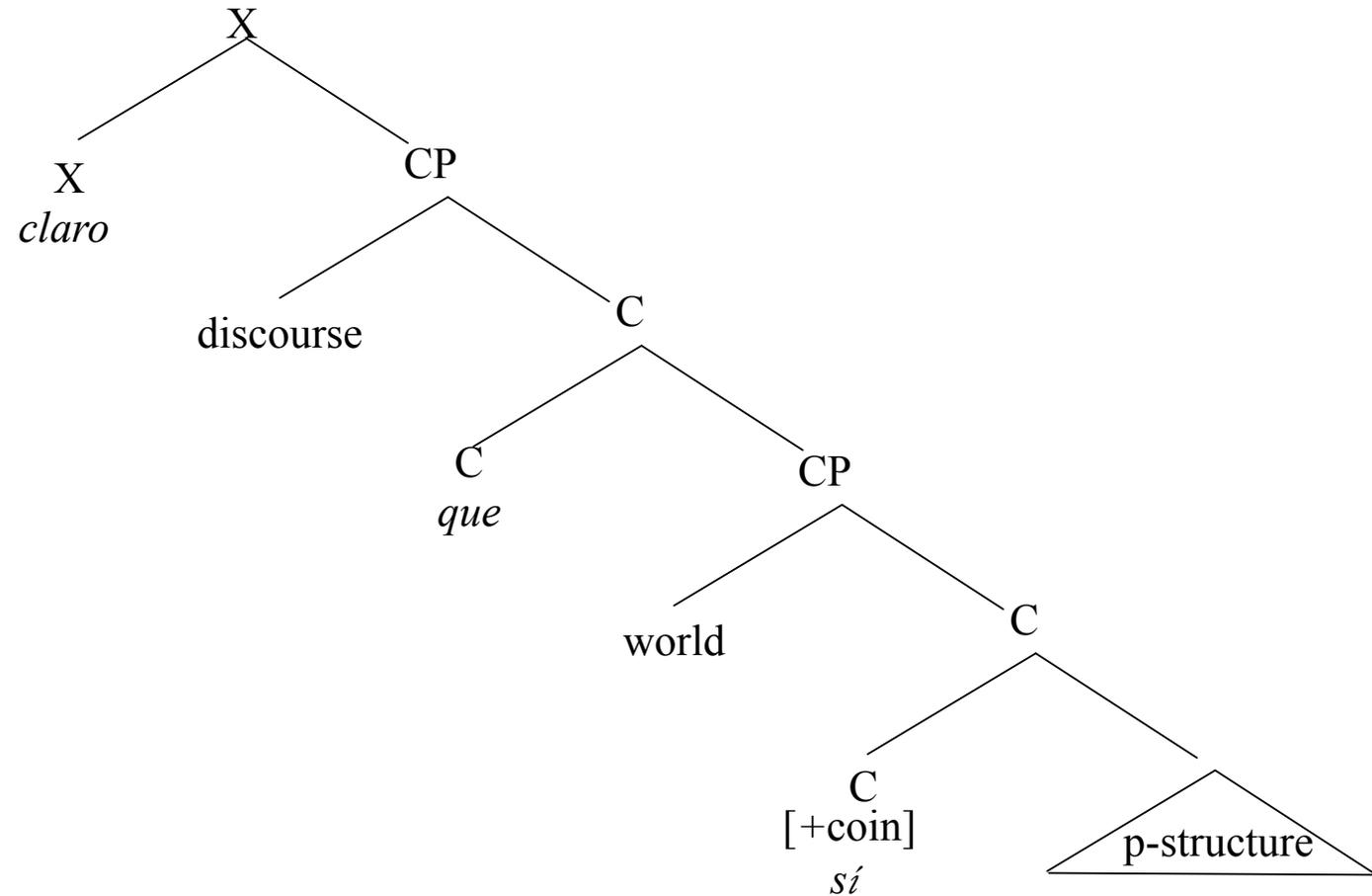


# Distributional restrictions

I: Pedro quiere un perro.  
Peter want a dog.  
'Peter wants a dog.'

R3: Claro que sí.  
Clear that yes  
'Of course.'

R4: \*Claro que sí sí.



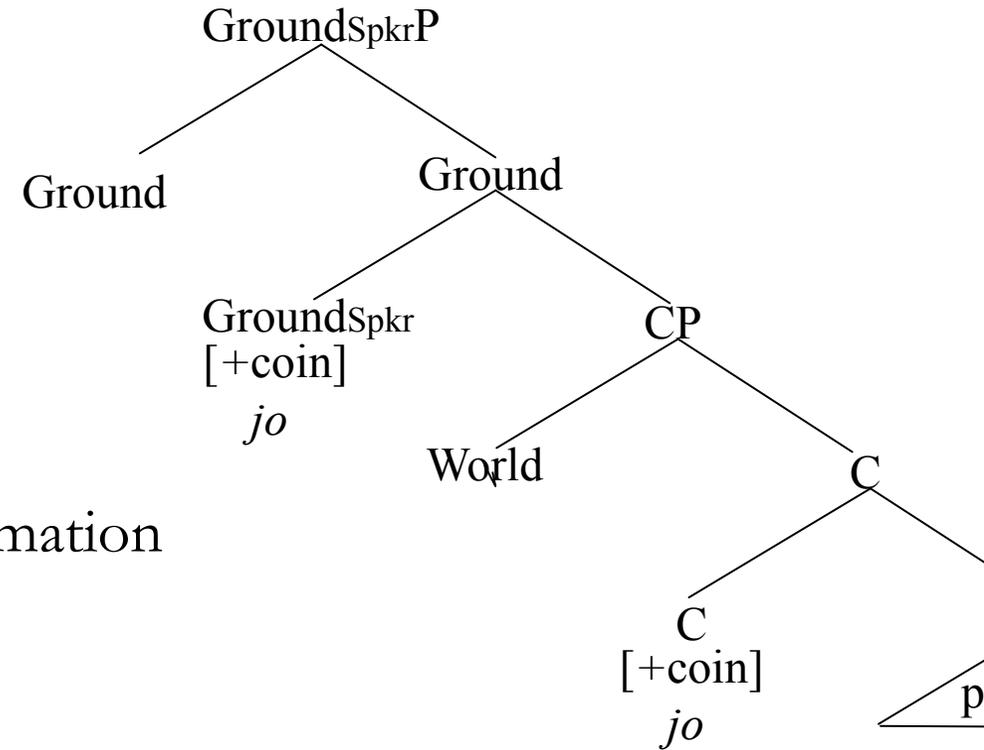
# Interpretive restrictions

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

R: Jo jo.

→ p = old information



responding with doubled *ja* “indicates that the prior utterance contains already known information (...) and that therefore the current action should be stopped.”

Golato & Fagyal 2008: 249

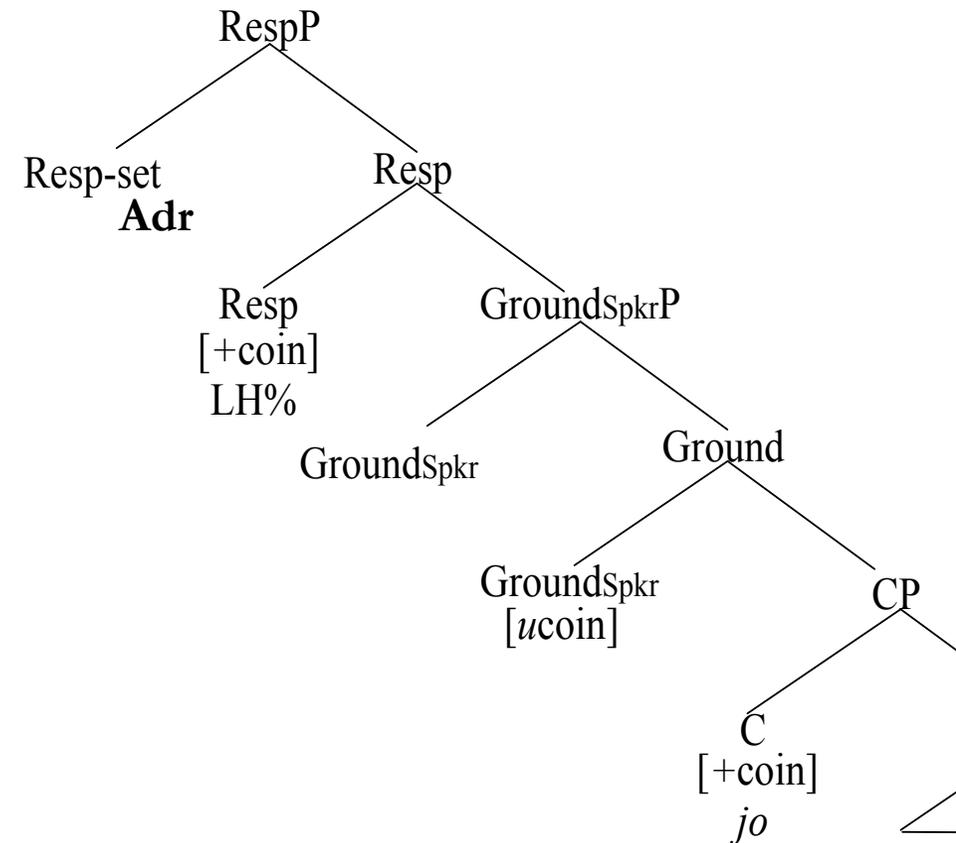
This is marked as an initiating move

# Response markers & intonation

I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.  
 DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

R: i) Jo!  
 Yes HL% → p = old information

ii) Jo?  
 Yes LH% → p = new information



# Interpretive restrictions

What is responsible for this difference?

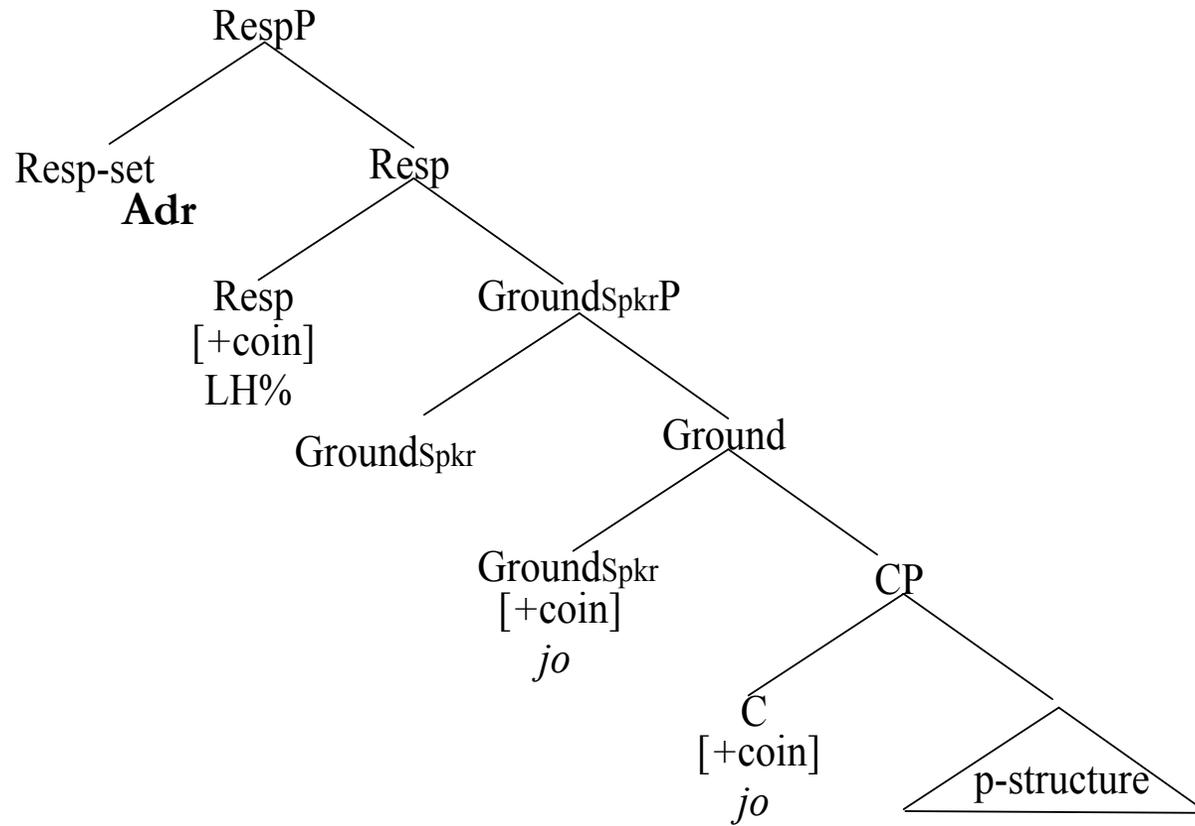
I: Da Peta hot si an fuas brochn.

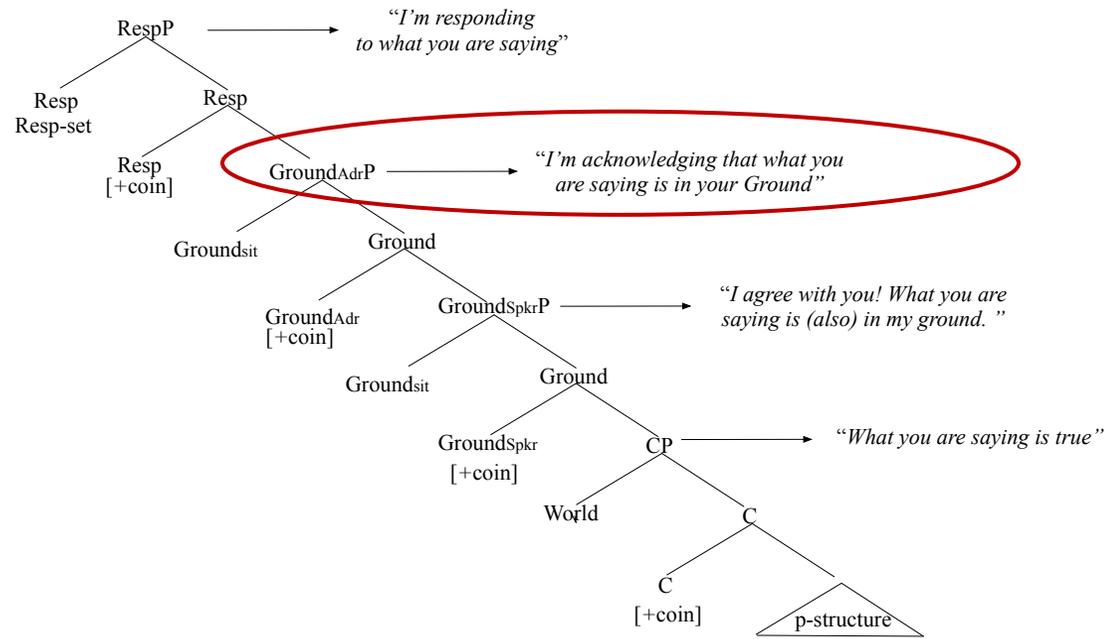
DET Peter has REFL INDEF foot broken

- R:
- i) Jo? (Is des wirkli woa?)  
(Warum sogst ma den des?)
  - ii) Jo jo? (\*Is des wirkli woa?)  
(Warum sogst ma denn des?)

# Response markers & intonation

- R:    i)     Jo jo!            → p = old information  
      ii)    Jo jo?            → p = old information





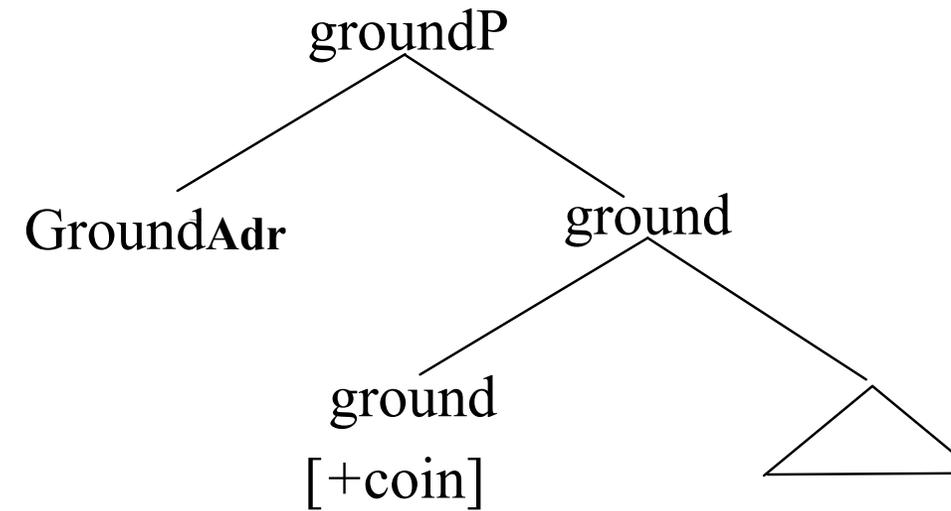
# Response markers in $\text{Ground}_{\text{Adr}}$

Understanding *yeah no*

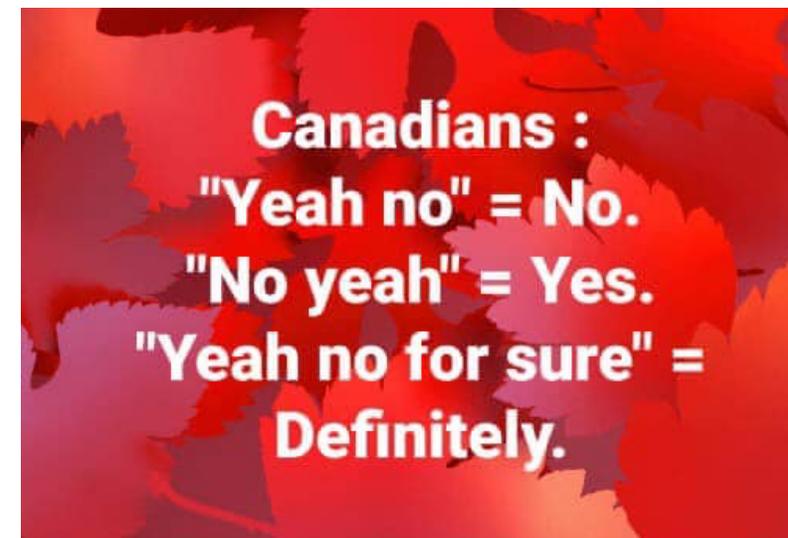
# Response to Addressee belief

I: The Godfather is the best movie ever made.  
R: **Yeah**, I think that honor goes to Casablanca.

Guntly 2016



# Response to Addressee belief



Dorothy: [We've got] to do this shopping Peter.

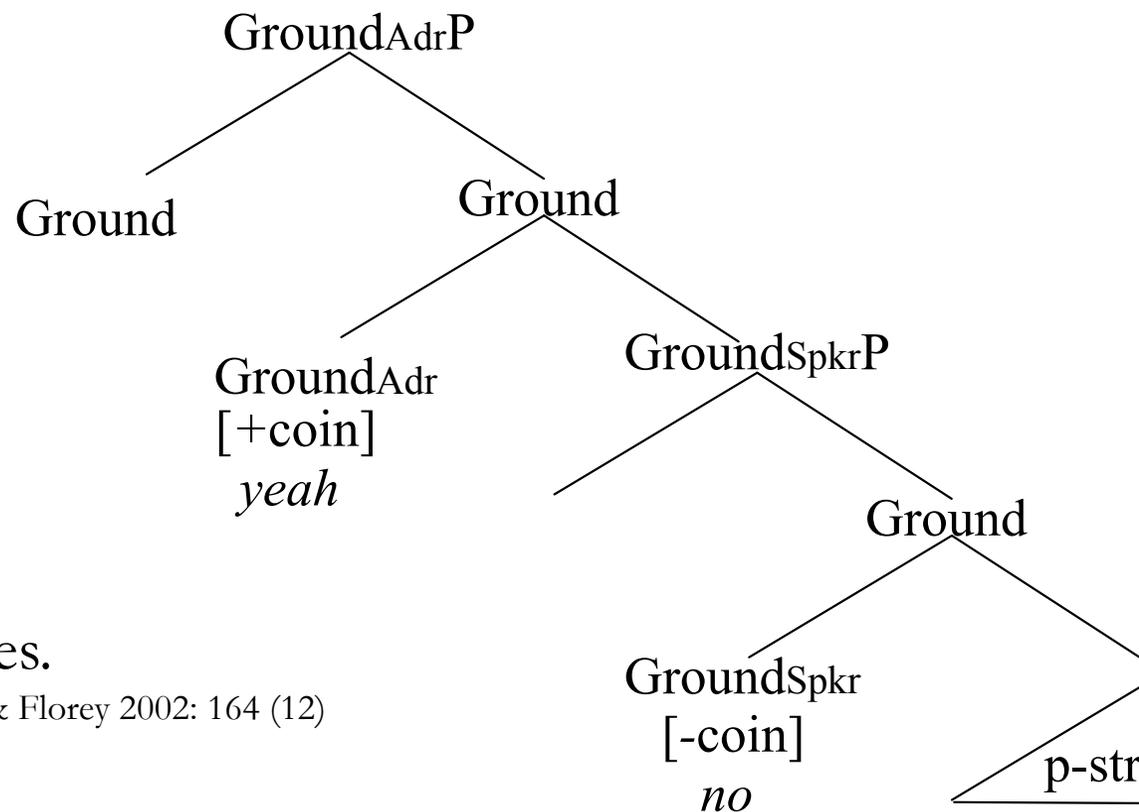
Peter: **Yeah, no** it's alright nanna, we've got 5 minutes.

Burridge & Florey 2002: 164 (12)

*“the speaker doesn't want to seem to contradict. Any contradiction, criticism or disagreement is potentially face-threatening or hurtful; so the speaker tries to minimize the effects by making a positive evaluation first, then following it with a negative one.[...] hedging yeah-no [...] has the function of reducing the force of a disagreement.”*

(Burridge & Florey 2002: 163f).

# Response to Addressee belief



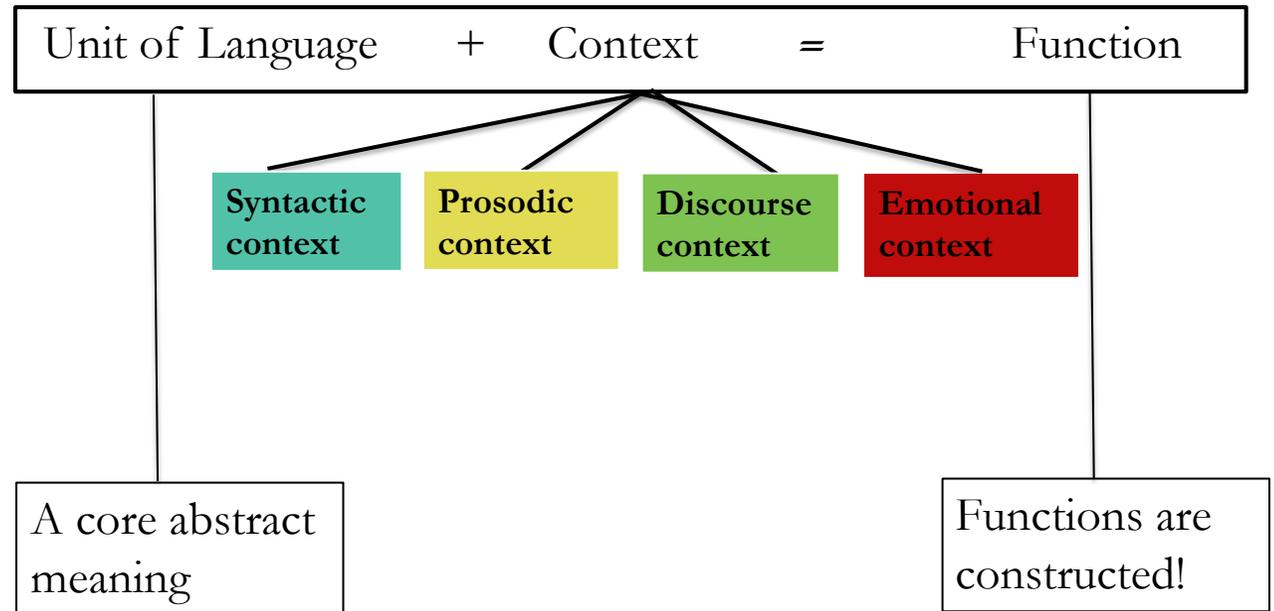
Dorothy: [We've got] to do this shopping Peter.

Peter: **Yeah, no** it's alright nanna, we've got 5 minutes.

Burridge & Florey 2002: 164 (12)

*“the speaker doesn't want to seem to contradict. Any contradiction, criticism or disagreement is potentially face-threatening or hurtful; so the speaker tries to minimize the effects by making a positive evaluation first, then following it with a negative one.[...] hedging yeah-no [...] has the function of reducing the force of a disagreement.”*

(Burridge & Florey 2002: 163f).



Conversational particles are typically multifunctional and yeah-no is clearly no exception. We have demonstrated throughout this paper that we are dealing here with a discourse marker that carries a complex conversational workload. Given this complexity of function, there were not surprisingly a number of cases where the purpose of yeah-no was not entirely clear

(Burridge & Florey 2002)

# Backchannels

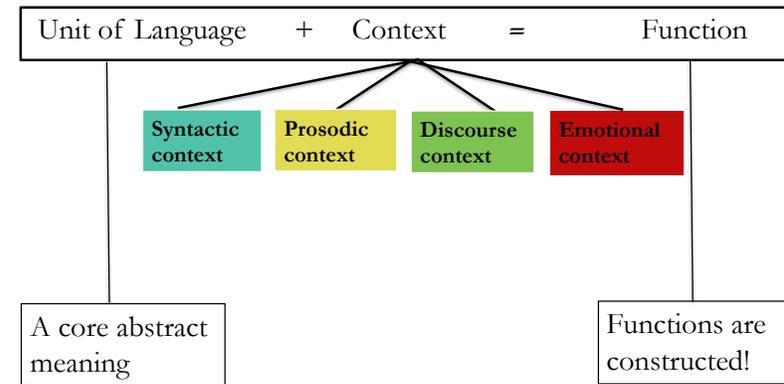
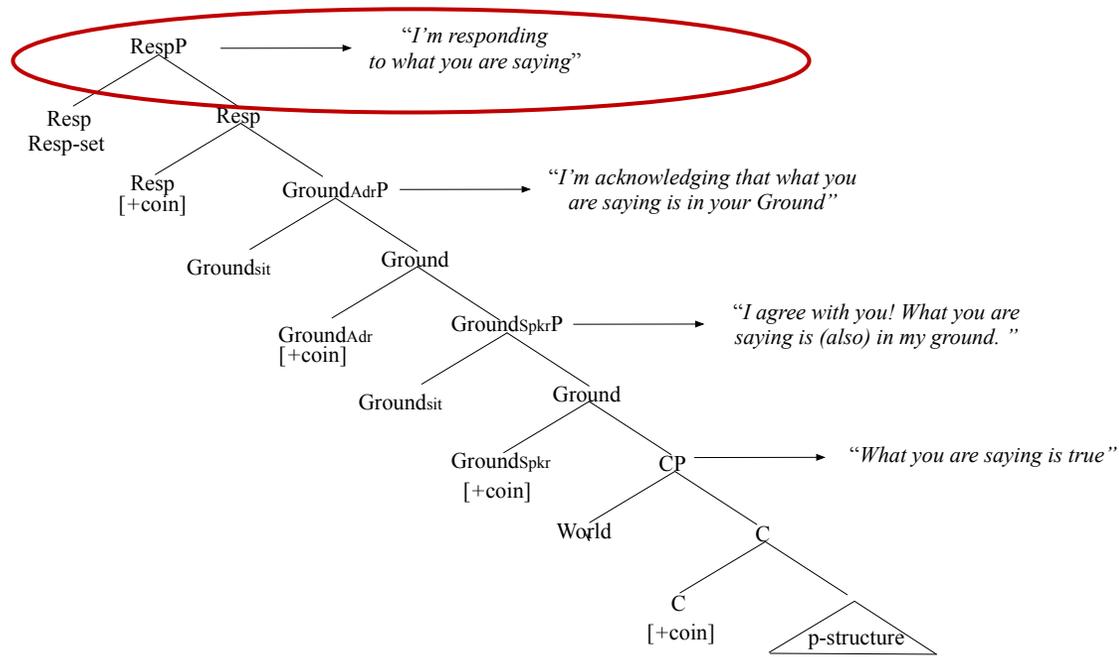


Table 1: Possible functions of response tokens taken from four labeling schemes.

Jurafsky et al. [4]	Benus et al. [5]	AMI [14]	Buschmeier et al. [15]	
continuer (backchannel)	backchannel	backchannel	“please continue”	
agreement	acknowledgement/ agreement	assessment	“I understand”	
assessment			“I agree”	
yes-answer			“I disagree”	
			attitude	
incipient speaker (incl. pivot/latching)	beginning discourse seg- ment		new discourse segment	
	pivot: acknowledgement + beginning disc. segment			
	ending discourse segment		ends discourse segment	
	acknowledgement + ending disc. segment			
	question		“What are you saying?”	
			“I do not understand”	
	stall/filler		stall	
	literal modifier			
	back from a task			
	cannot decide			unresolved
		inform		
		fragment		
		other		





# Response markers in Resp

Response markers

# Marking the utterance as a response

**Context.** A and B work in the same cubicle. A usually leaves work at 4, but sometimes his schedule is a bit off. B wants to know if A is indeed planning to leave at 4 today.

B:           *Gehst du heit um 4 ham?*  
Go-2SG you today at 4 home.  
'Are you going home at 4 today?'

A:a.       ***Jo des was-st doch eh.***       *I geh imma um 4 ham.*  
YES that know-2SG PRT       PRT       I go always at 4 home.  
'But you know that. I always go home at 4.'

b.       ***Jo des was-st leicht net?***  
YES that know-2SG PRT       NEG  
'So you don't know that?'

- Marking the response as a reaction move, serves an important purpose.
- The response deviates from the normal course of a conversation
- The expected response to a question is an answer.

# Marking the utterance as a response

**Context.** A and B are co-workers. Their working hours are fixed and they always go home at 4.30. Typically, they get ready to leave at 4.25 so they can be out the door by 4.30. Today B is not showing any signs of getting ready even at 4.25. A comments:

- a. *?Wonn gehst denn du heit ham?*  
When go-2SG PRT you today home
- b. **Jo** *wonn gehst denn du heit ham?*  
JA when go-2SG PRT you today home

**Context.** A and B are co-workers. Their working hours are somewhat flexible. They are working away and in the middle of the day A asks B:

- a. *Wonn gehst denn du heit ham?*  
When go-2SG PRT you today home
- b. *\*Jo* *wonn gehst denn du heit ham?*  
JA when go-2SG PRT you today home

# Marking the utterance as a response

I: Gehst du heit um 4 ham?

Go-2SG you today at 4 home.

‘Are you going home at 4 today?’

R: a. \***Jo jo** des was-st doch eh. I geh imma um 4 ham.

YES YES that know-2SG PRT PRT I go always at 4 home.

‘But you know that. I always go home at 4.’

b. \***Jo jo** des was-st leicht net?

YES YES that know-2SG PRT NEG

‘So you don’t know that?’

# Conclusion

# Response markers

Response markers appear to be completely uninteresting from a linguistic point of view because...

...They often are simplex forms (*yes, no*);

...they can constitute reactive moves in isolation (not involved in composition)

... simple meaning:

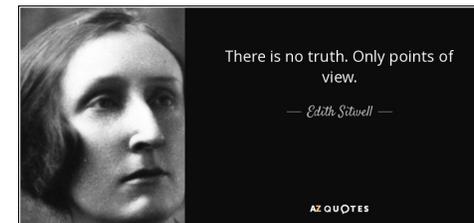
Polar question: Do you believe in truth?

{p, not p}

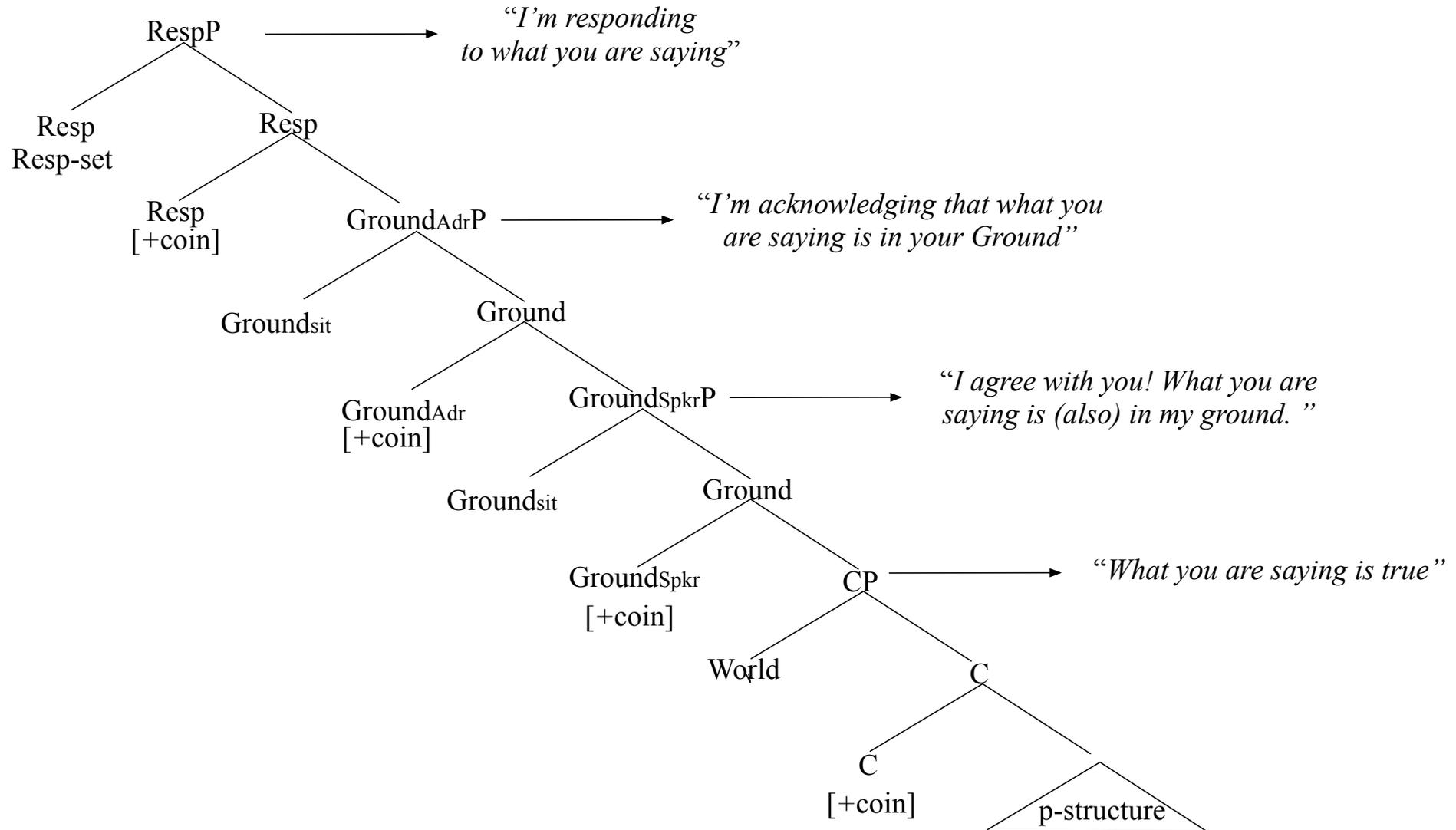
**yes:** ASSERT



**no:** ASSERT not p



# Response markers beyond truth



Oh yes!  
There is one  
more thing

# The lexical representation of *yes/no*

## *Yes*

‘**positive** attitude towards X

*das Leben bejahen.*

‘affirming life’

Upon receive e-mail with  
good news

*Yessss!*



## *No*

‘**negative** attitude towards X

*Ein Atheist verneint die Existenz Gottes.*

‘An atheist denies god’s existence.’

Upon receiving e-mail with bad news

*Noooooo!*

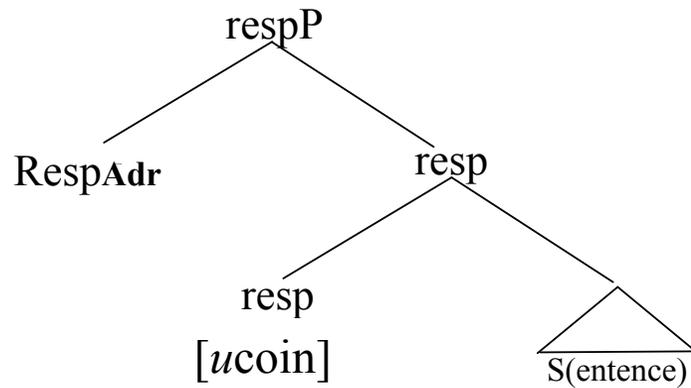


Reaction can come with emotion

# Reactions can be emotional

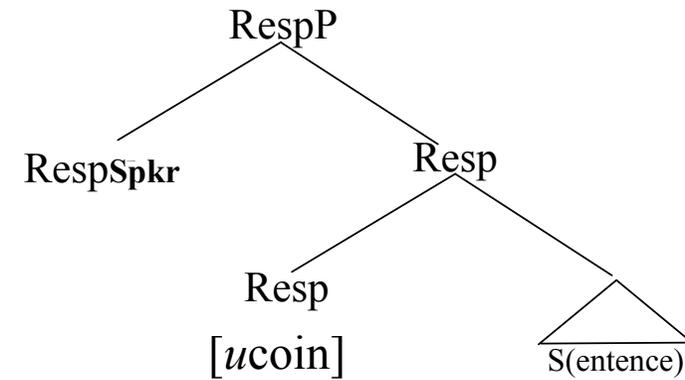
INITIATION:

[[...] **Confirmational**]

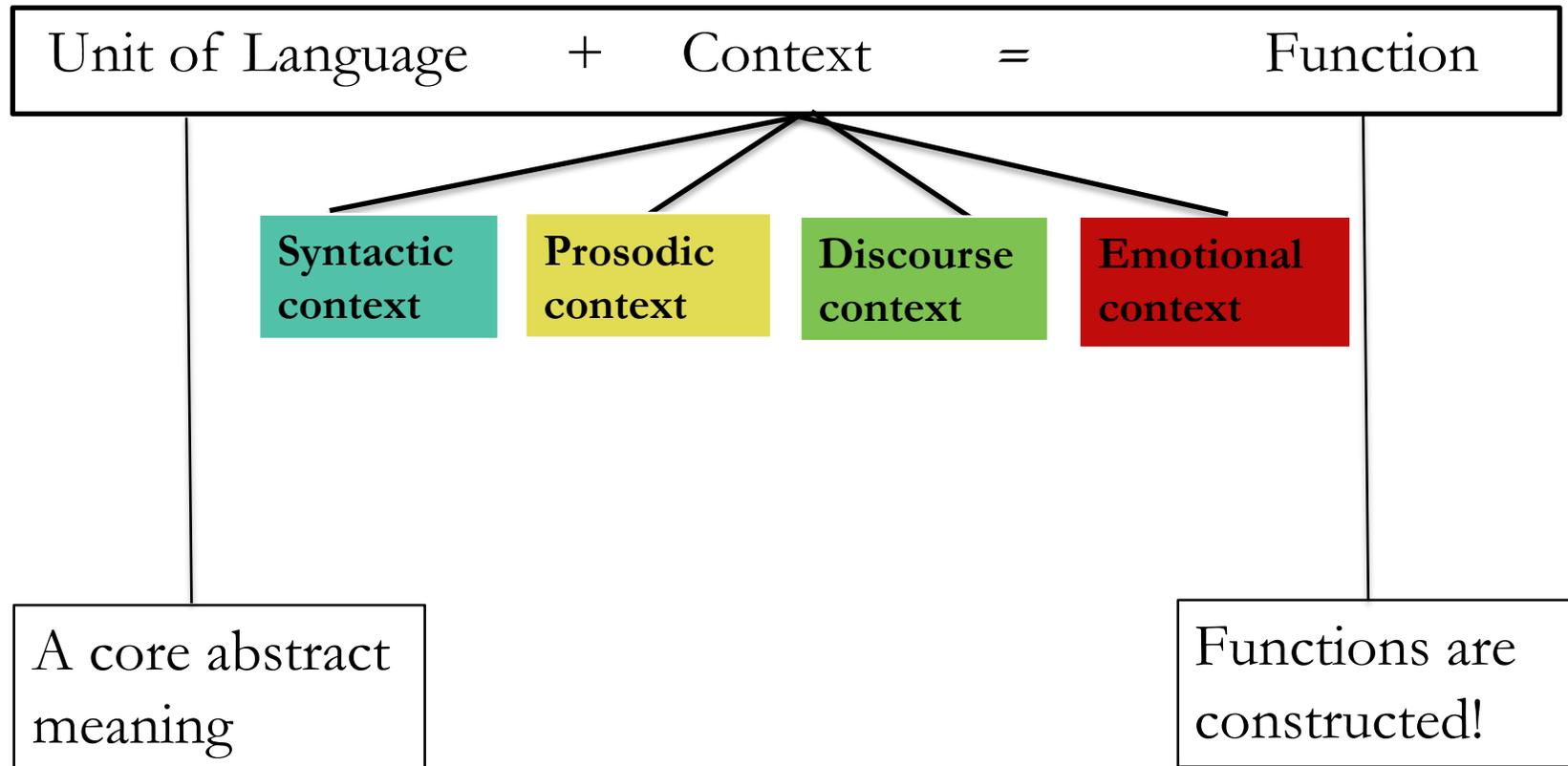


REACTION:

[**Response marker** [...]]



# Response markers are multi-functional



This is a  
paradigm

Positive particle	Negative particle
yes	no
yeah	nah
yup	nope
yessss	noooooo
yeah yeah	no no
yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah	no no no no no
oh yes	oh no
uhuh	u'uh
mhm	m'm

# The logic behind the paradigm

Prosodic modification of response markers

→ conveys **emotional stance towards what is said**

Primitives of emotions:

- i) Appraisal (assignment of positive or negative value)
- ii) Intensity
- iii) (un)expectedness

Ortony et al. 1988, Corver 2013

	intensity	expectedness
yessss	+	-
yeah	-	+
yep	n/a	+
yeah yeah	n/a	+
oh yes	+	n/a

At a soccer game. A's favorite team scores a goal and it is clear that because of this goal they will win the world cup.

R:      Yesssss      →      [+positive], [+intense], [-expected]

Eval-time = Utt-time

At a soccer game. A's favorite team is losing at the very last minute and it is clear that because of this loss they will lose the world cup.

R:      \*Yesssss

I: Did your team win?

R: Yesssss!

→ [+positive], [+intense], [+expected]  
Eval-time < Utt-time

I: Did your team lose?

R: Yesssss!

→ **[-positive]**, [+intense], [+expected]  
Eval-time < Utt-time

I: Your team won!

R: Yesssss!

→ [+positive], [+intense], [+expected]

Eval-time < Utt-time

Eval-time = Utt-time

I: Your team lost.

R: Yesssss!

→ **[-positive]**, [+intense], [+expected]

Eval-time < Utt-time

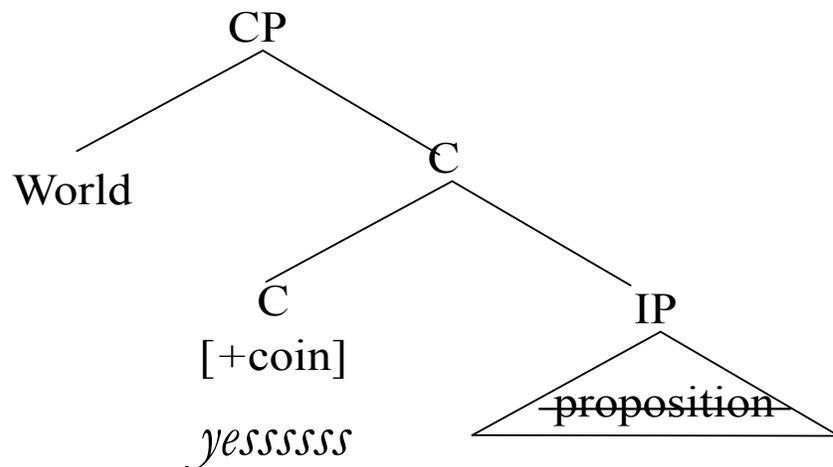
\*Eval-time = Utt-time

	Appraisal	Evaluation time
Answer to polar question	[+positive]	Eval-time < Utt time
	[-positive]	Eval-time < Utt time
Response to assertion	[+positive]	Eval-time < /= Utt time
	[-positive]	Eval-time < Utt time
Response to situation	[+positive]	Eval-time = Utt time
	*[-positive]	*Eval-time = Utt time

- When inserted on the spine, the positive/negative emotive evaluation is independent of the UoL
- Modification is of intensity of [+/-coin], not of positive/negative attitude

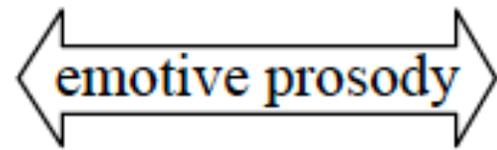
I: Your team won!

R: Yesssss!

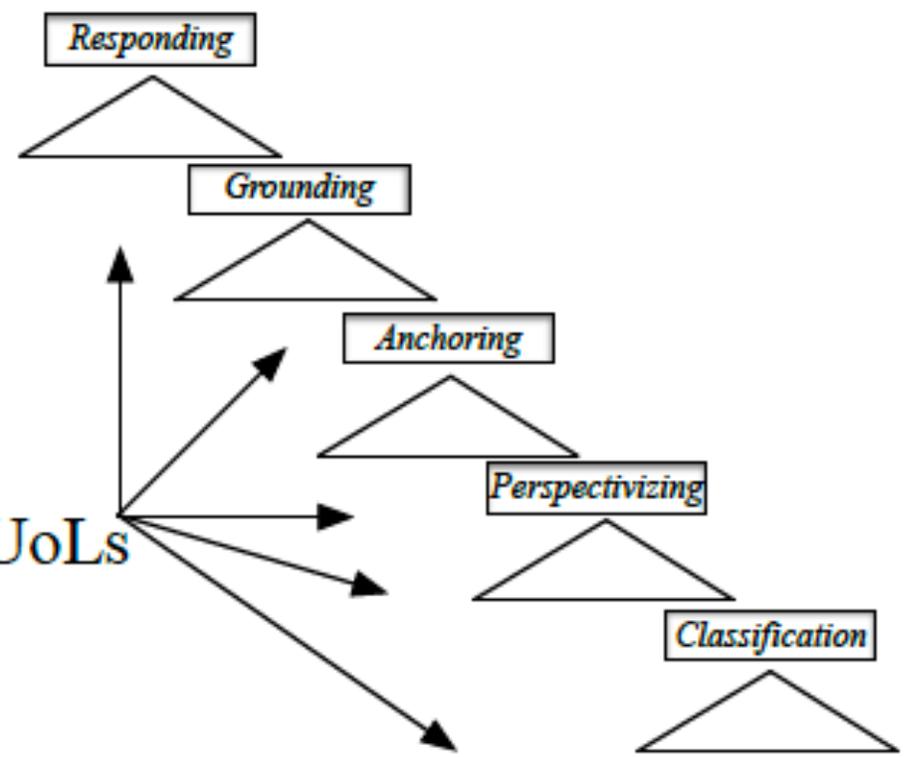




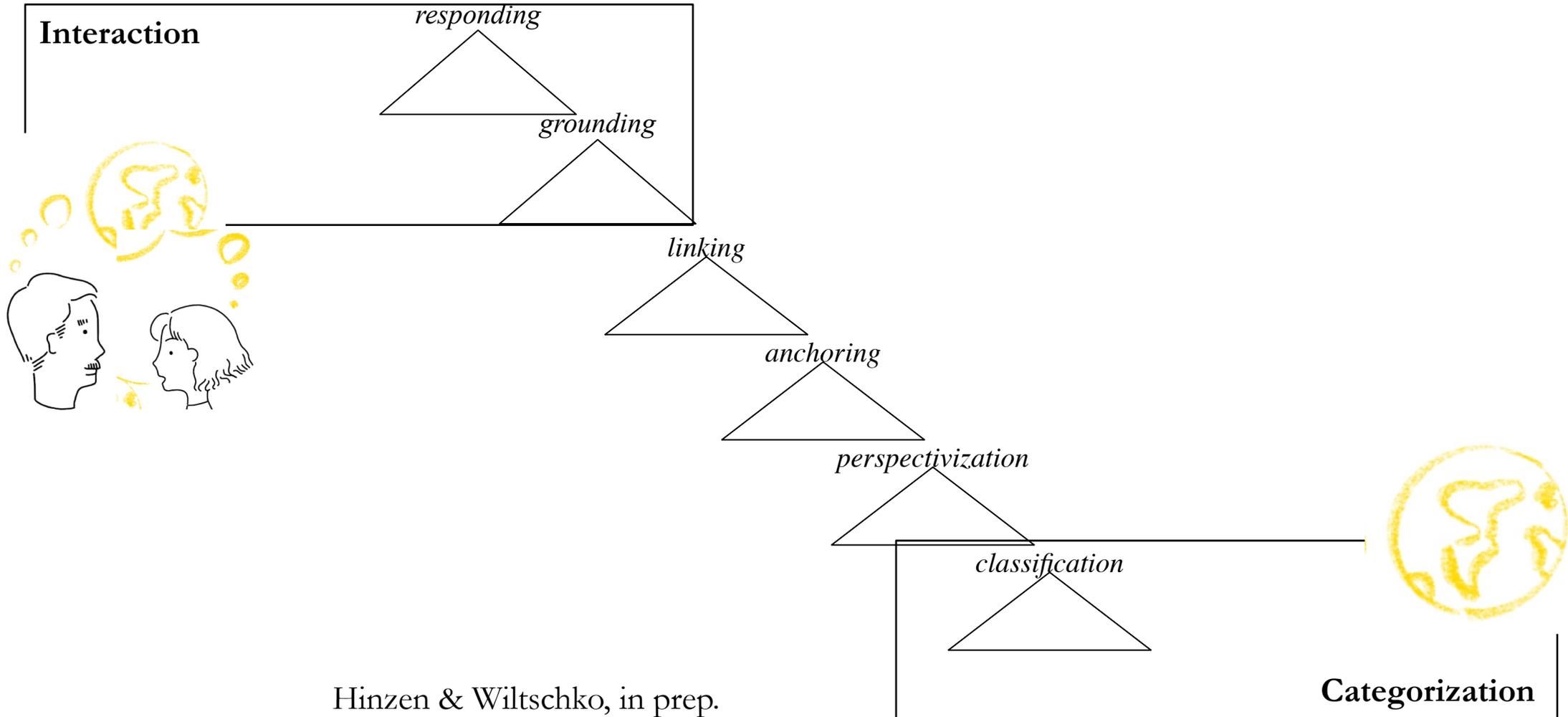
SYSTEM  
OF  
EMOTIONS



UoLs



# The grammar of interactional language



Hinzen & Wiltschko, in prep.

Thank you!

**"Everything we hear  
is an opinion, not a fact.  
Everything we see  
is a perspective, not the truth."**

- Marcus Aurelius

