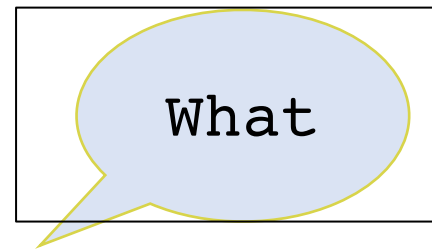


Do eyes make words?
Do words see them?

Embodied interaction
and their social and cognitive underpinnings.

Martina Wiltschko
ICREA/UPF

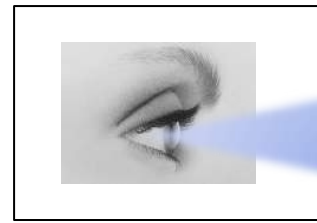




What does
'What' mean?

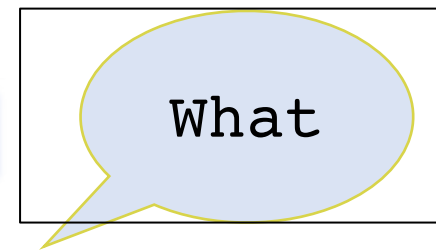
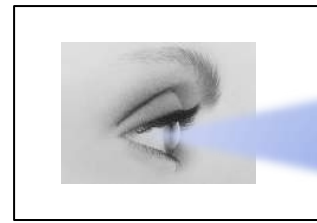
And how?

01 E ((looks up at T))
02 (3.2)
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05 E Nothing. I didn't
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07 T °Don't stare at
08 me then°
09 J St[op being so=
10 E [What?
11 J =aggressive Emily
12 E Actually Tom didn't
13 actually need to... 3



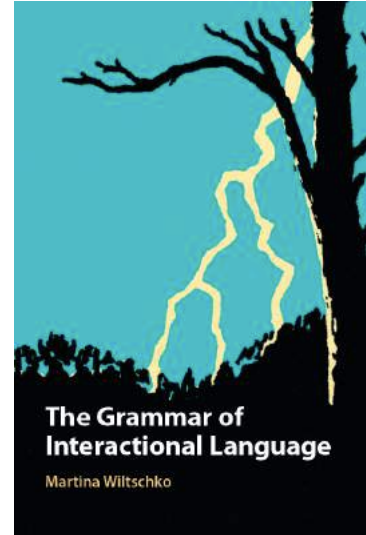
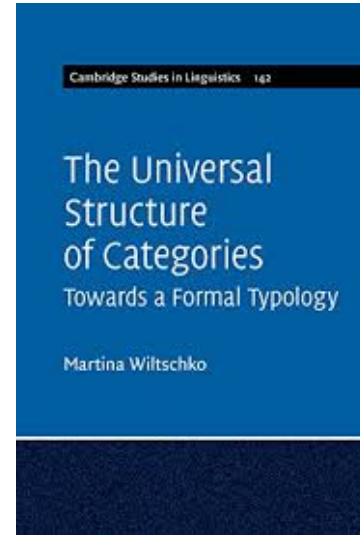
What does the stare
"mean"?
And how?

01 E ((looks up at T))
02 (3.2)
03 T → What.
04 (2.2)
05 E Nothing. I didn't
06 say anything.
07 T ° Don't stare at
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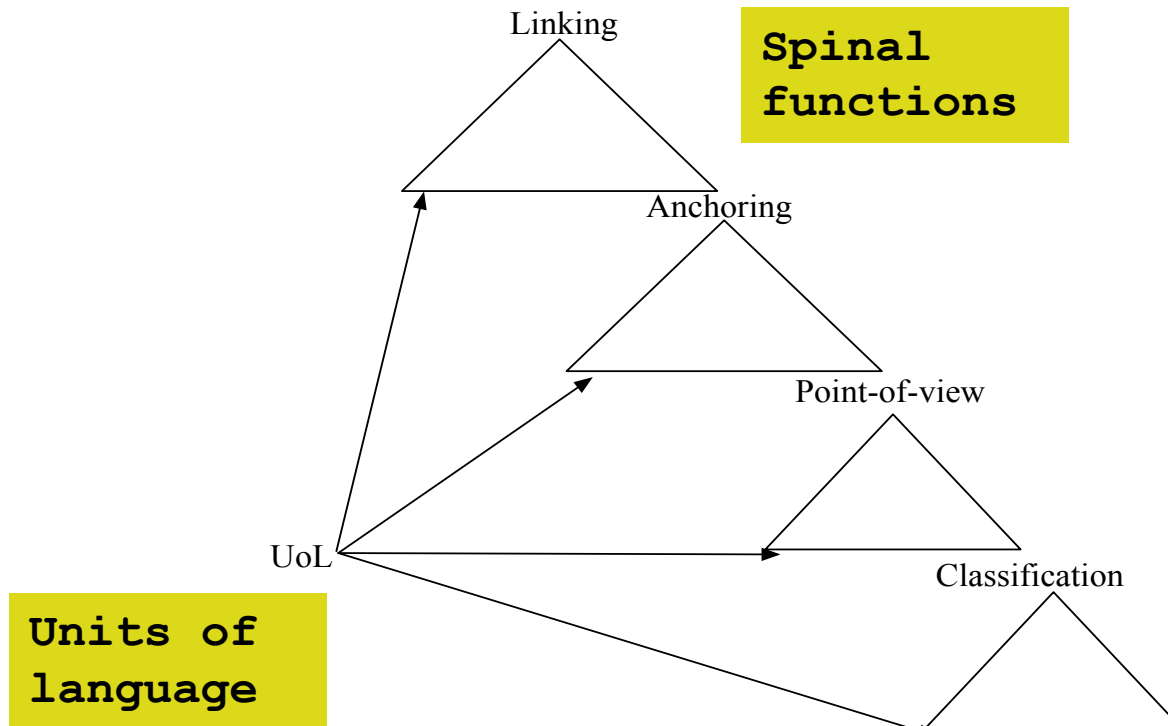
How does visual interaction combine with verbal interaction?

01 E ((looks up at T))
02 (3.2)
03 T → What.
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06 say anything.
07 T ° Don't stare at
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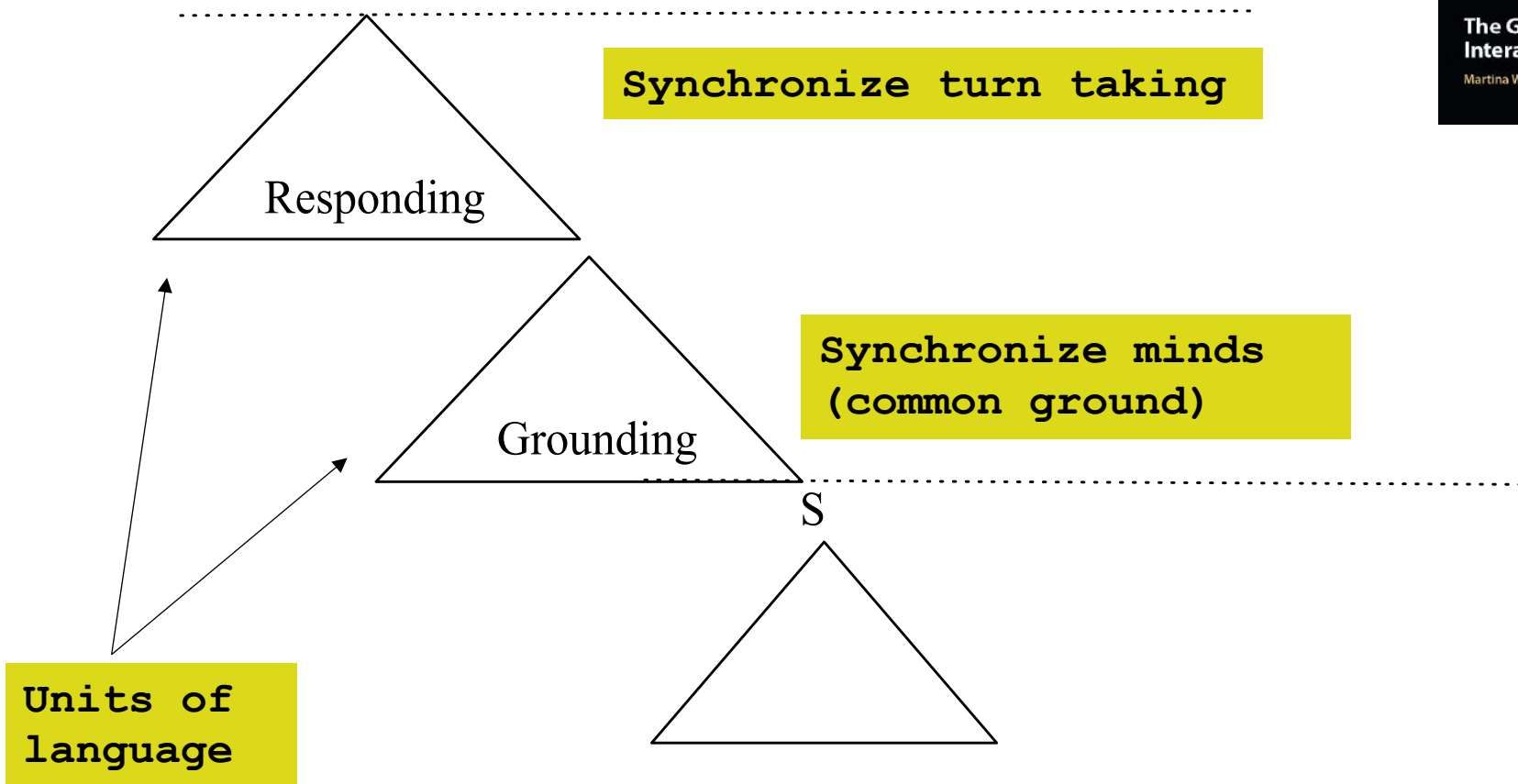
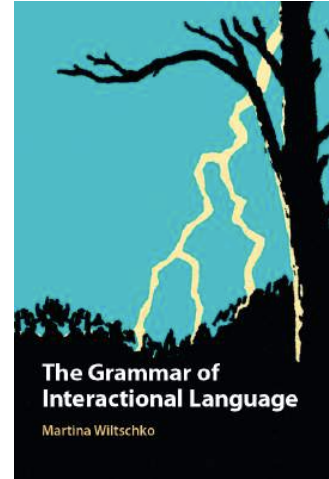
The grammar of i-language

The universal spine hypothesis



Meaning is composed of UoLs and the spinal functions

The interactional spine hypothesis (ISH)



i-language

I Gal Gadot was amazing as Wonder Woman, **eh?**

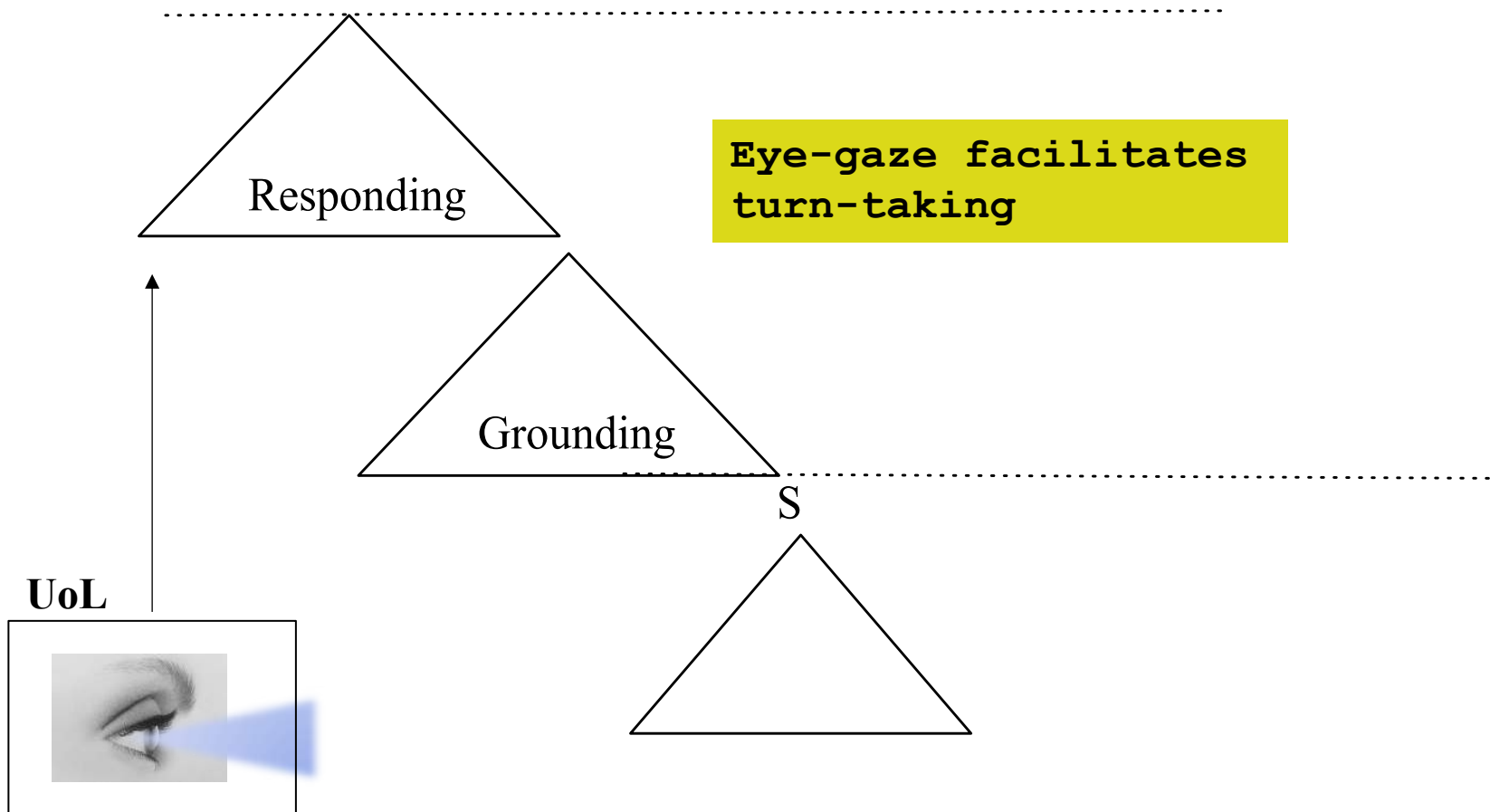
R **Yeah**, I know, **right?**

UoLs of i-language include

- recycled words
- dedicated particles
- Intonational contours

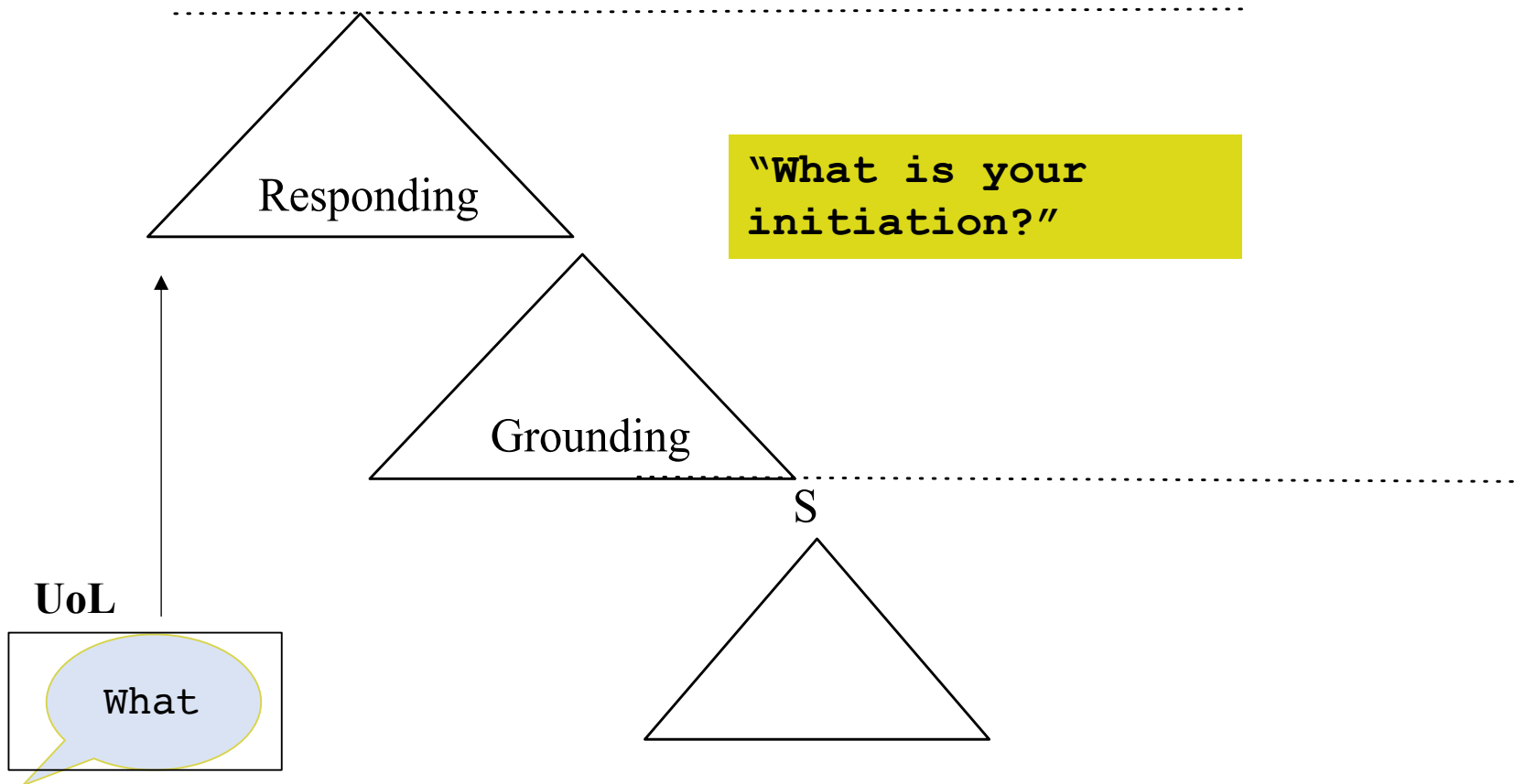
The proposal in a nutshell

The gaze makes a unit of language.

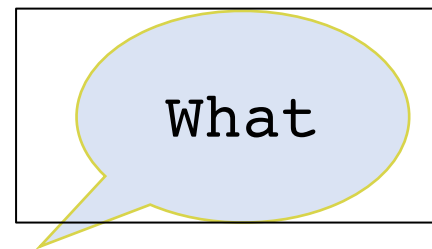


The proposal in a nutshell

“What” responds to the gaze.



Do eyes make words?
Do words see them?



01 E ((looks up at T))

02 (3.2)

03 T → What.

04 (2.2)

05 E Nothing. I didn't

06 say anything.

07 T °Don't stare at

08 me then °

09 J St[op being so=

10 E [What?

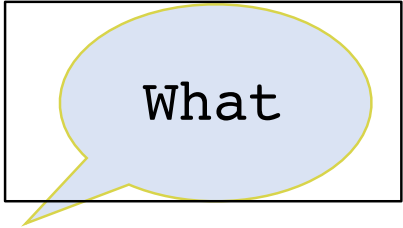
11 J =aggressive Emily

12 E Actually Tom didn't

13 actually need to... 12

What does
'What' mean?

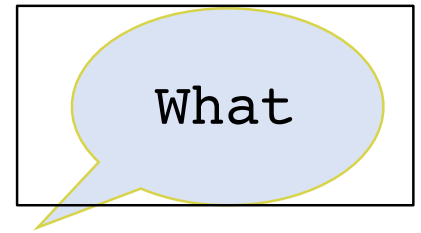
And how?



What

Hypothesis 1: **Ellipsis**

1. **What** [are you looking at]
2. **What** [do you want]
3. **What** [is your problem]



Hypothesis 1: Ellipsis

Initial evidence:

A: You know what I'm looking at?

B: **What** [are you looking at]

A: You know what I want?

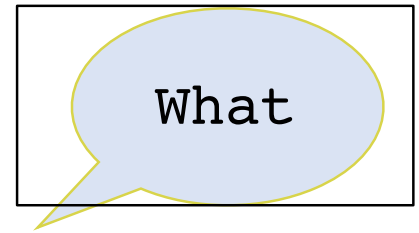
B: **What** [do you want]

A: You know what's my problem?

B: **What** [is your problem]

Ellipsis is
possible

Problem 1



Why is not possible...

- A: Stare
B: ***Why?**

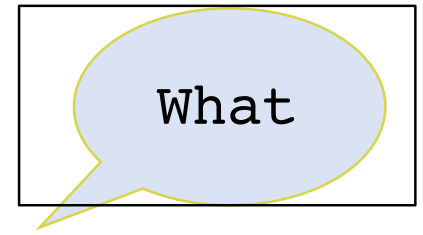
... but *why* questions are.

- A: Stare
B: **Why** are you looking at me?
B: **Why** are you not saying anything?

... and ellipsis is otherwise possible:

- A: You know why I'm looking at you?
B: **Why** [are you looking at me]
A: You know why I am not saying anything?
B: **Why** [are you not saying anything]

Problem 2



What is not possible in all situations even when *what* questions are.

A upon entering a room where two people are fighting:

1. **What** is going on?
2. ***What**?

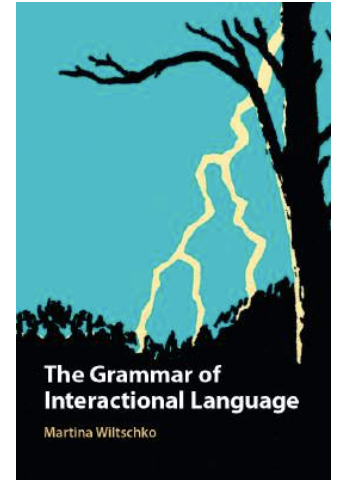
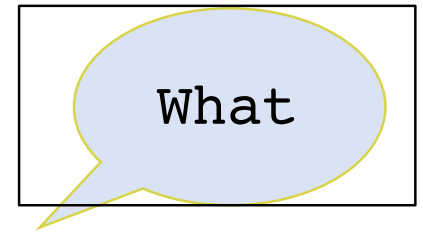
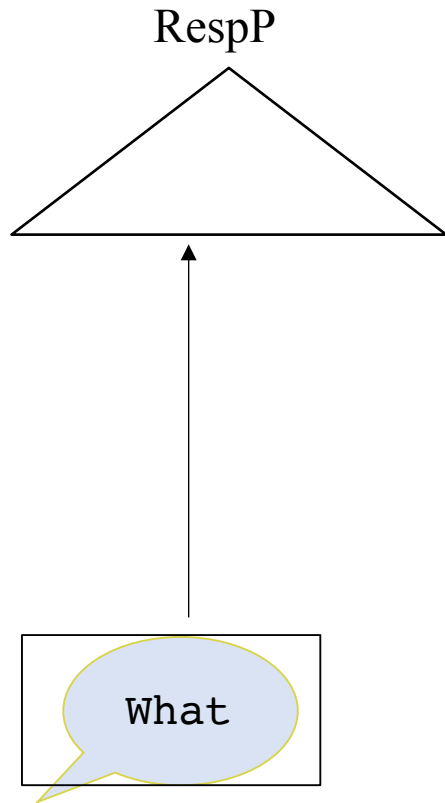
... and ellipsis is possible otherwise

A: You know what's going on?

B: **What** [is going on]

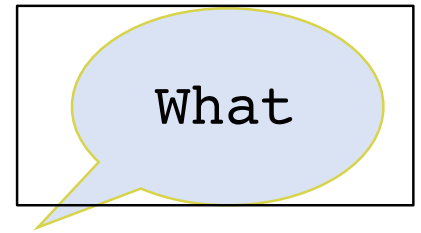
Hypothesis 2:

"What is your initiation?"



Evidence 1:

**"What is your
initiation?"**



What is used in response to other forms of initiation:

A: Hey Konrad!

K: What?

A: Konrad!

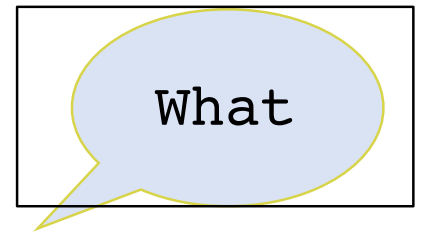
K: What?

A: You know what?

K: What?

Evidence 2

**"What is your
initiation?"**



Other forms of initiation have similar response possibilities

A: Hey Konrad!

K: What?

What do you want?

Why are you calling me?

*Why?

Yes?

A: Stare

K: What?

What do you want?

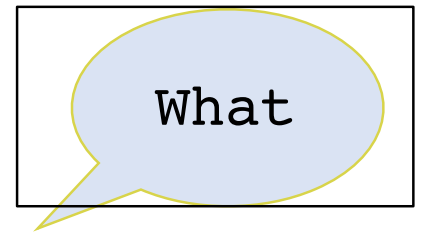
Why are you staring at me?

*Why?

Yes?

Evidence 3:

**"What is your
initiation?"**



What cannot be used when it is clear what the initiation is.

A: It's raining.

B: *What?

So what

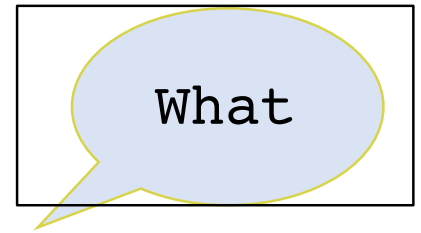
A: Stare

B: What?

*So what

Evidence 4:

**"What is your
initiation?"**

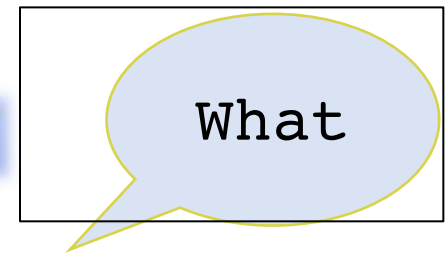
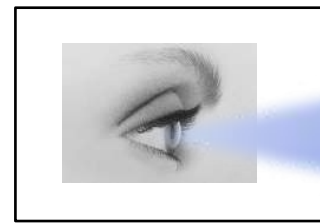


What requires the presence of initiation move

A upon entering a room where two people are fighting:

What is going on?

***What**



01 E ((looks up at T))

02 (3.2)

03 T → What.

04 (2.2)

05 E Nothing. I didn't

06 say anything.

07 T ° Don't stare at

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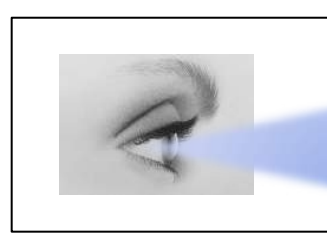
12 E Actually Tom didn't

13 actually need to... 22

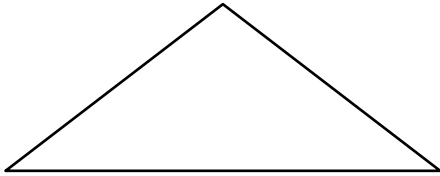
Stare must serve
as an initiating
move
But how?

Do eyes make words?

Do words see them?



RespP



eye gaze can serve as interactional UoL

→ Facilitates turn-taking

→ Serves as a clue for initiation



Eye-gaze facilitates turn-taking

- speakers end their turn with direct gaze at the listener
“presumably to signal that the turn is ending and to provide the partner with an opportunity to take the floor”

Ho et al. 2015: 3

- the listener begins to speak with averted gaze

Kendon 1967, Ho et al. 2015

- eye gaze aligns with turn transitions
- marking the end of a turn signals an initiation

Eye-gaze facilitates turn-taking



**Mutual eye-gaze
can be interpreted
as a sign(al) of
initiation**





Timing is
significant

01 E ((looks up at T))

02 (3.2)

03 T → What.

04 (2.2)

05 E Nothing. I didn't

06 say anything.

07 T ° Don't stare at

08 me then °

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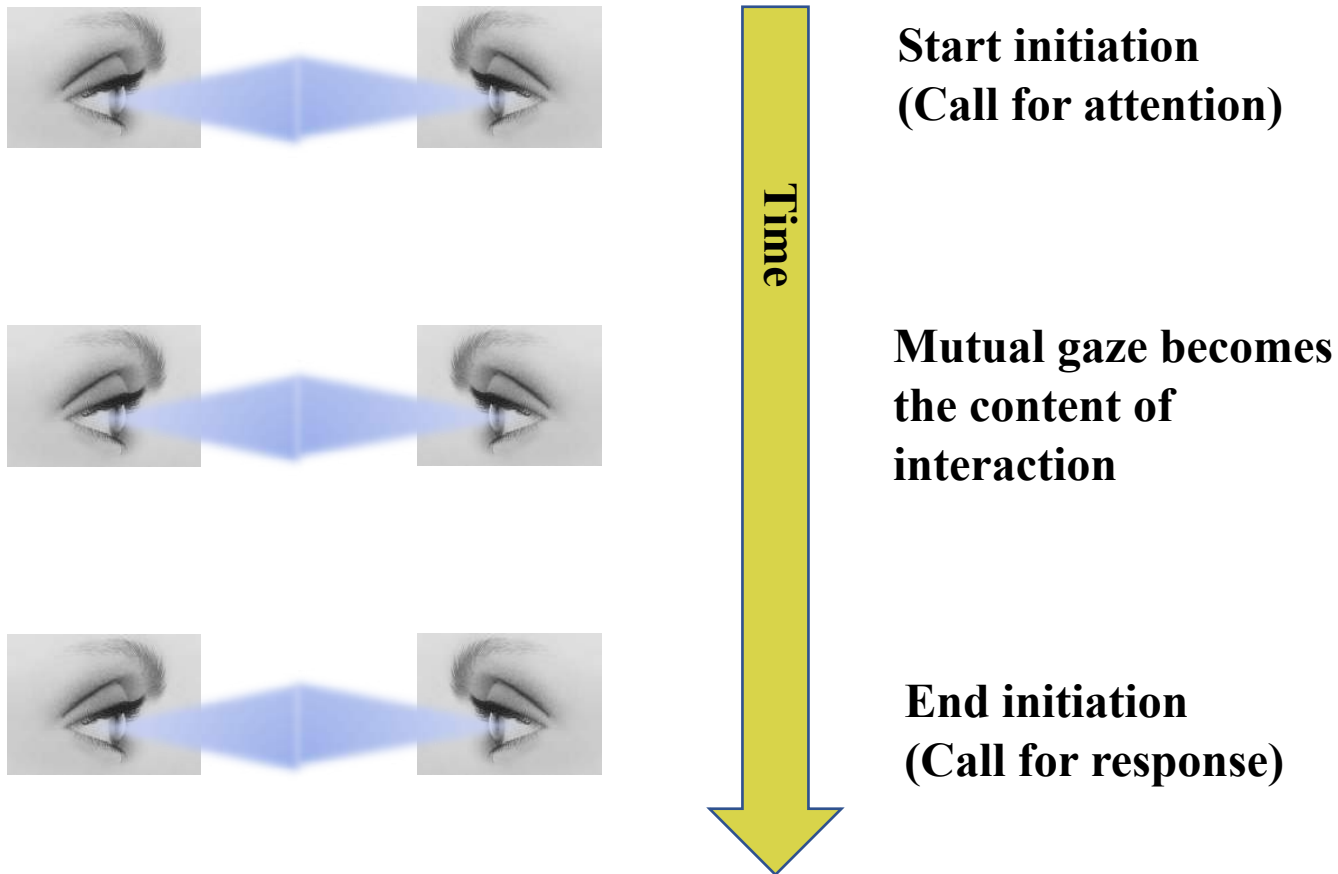
10 E [What?

11 J =aggressive Emily

12 E Actually Tom didn't

13 actually need to... 26

The timing of the stare





Why can she
deny the
initiation?

01 E ((looks up at T))

02 (3.2)

03 T→ What.

04 (2.2)

05 E **Nothing. I didn't**
06 **say anything.**

07 T°Don't stare at

08 me then°

09 JSt[op being so=

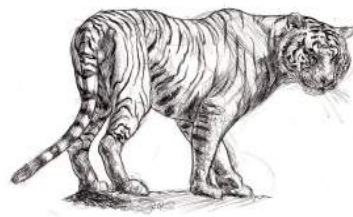
10 E [What?

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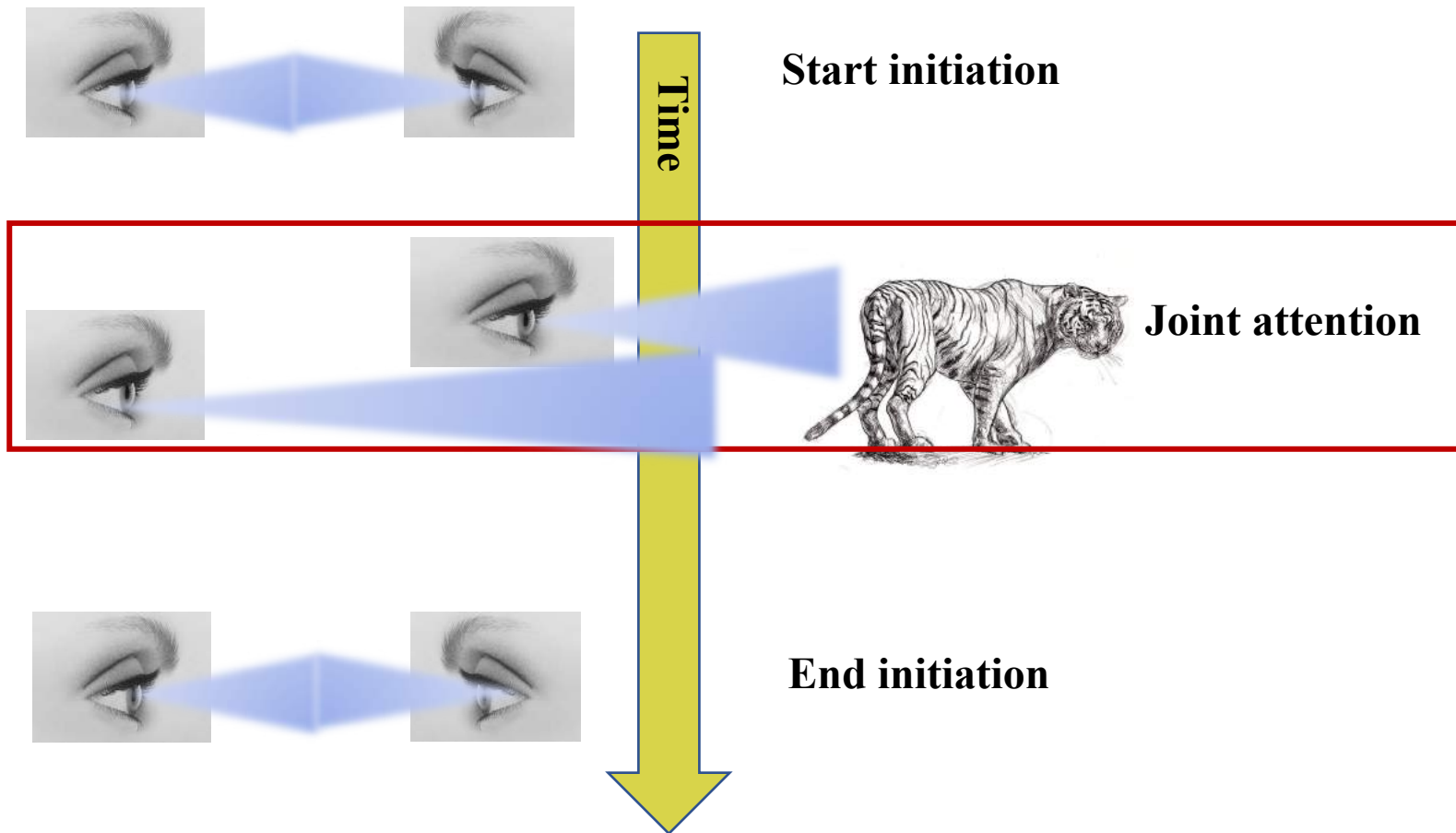
13 actually need to... 28

Eye-gaze occurs outside of social interaction

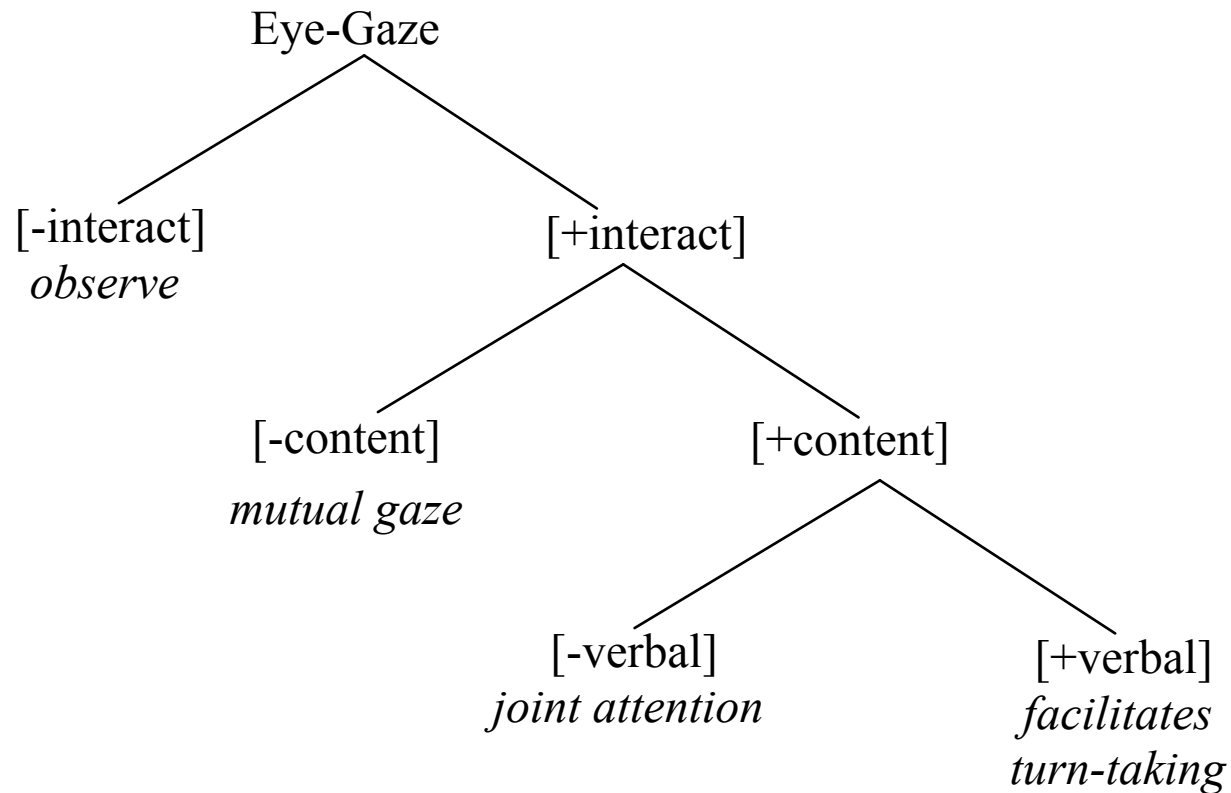


Observe

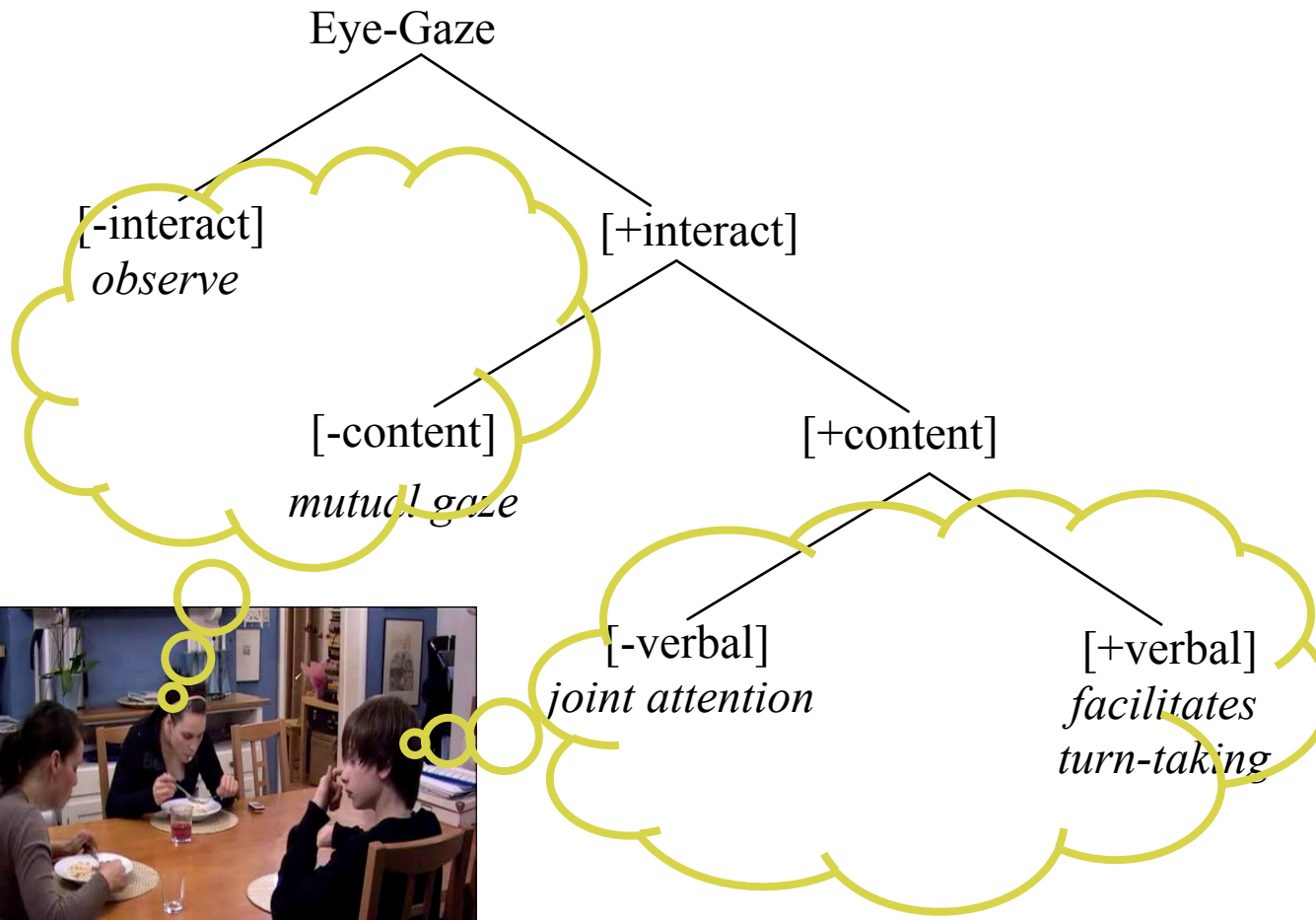
Eye-gaze occurs outside of verbal interaction



The multi-functionality of eye-gaze



The multi-functionality of eye-gaze



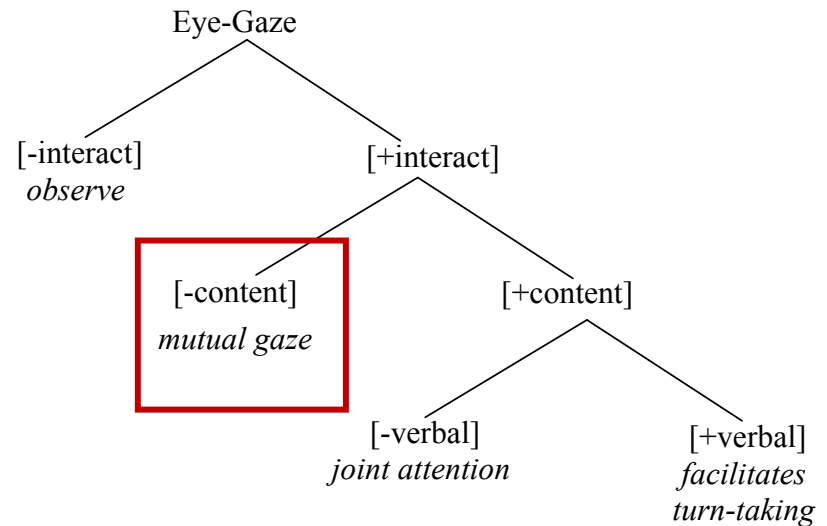


Why is stare
perceived as
aggressive?

01 E ((looks up at T))
02 (3.2)
03 T→ What.
04 (2.2)
05 E Nothing. I didn't
06 say anything.
07 T°Don't stare at
08 me then°

09 J St[op being so=
10 E [What?
11 J=**aggressive** Emily
12 E Actually Tom didn't
13 actually need to... 33

Why is stare perceived as aggressive?

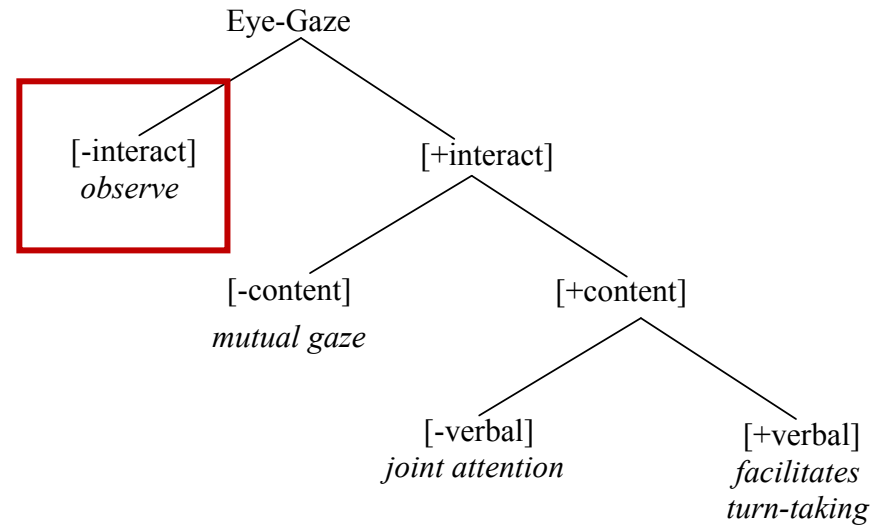


- Stare: threat display to establish dominance (Lawless 1976)
- Being looked at has profound effects on a human observer (Kleinke 1986, Bateson et a. 2006)



- Many animals respond to direct gaze with displays of fear, aggression or submission (Schwab & Huber 2006)
- Prolonged eye contact can be perceived as a threat signal (Nichols & Champness 1971)

Why is stare
perceived as
aggressive?



The ‘watchful eye effect’

- exposure to watchful eyes likely elicits higher levels of negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, distress, nervousness)

Panagopoulos & van der Linden 2017

- There is a grammar of interactional language

(Wiltschko, to appear)

- **Stare** can function as an interactional UoL:

It can be a **sign(al) of initiation**

- **“What”** is used as an interactional UoL:

“What is your initiating move?”

