Towards a typology of emotive markers:

a case study of *puta*, *damn* and *scheisse*

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ICREA

Emotive markers (EMs)

puta in Chilean Spanish:

(1) Este weón nunca ha trabajado en su **puta** vida!
This guy has never worked in his EM life

(2) Este weón, **puta**, nunca ha trabajado en su vida!
This guy EM never has worked in his life

(3) **Puta**, este weón nunca ha trabajado en su vida!
EM this guy never has worked in his life!

(4) **E**ste weón nunca ha trabajado en su vida… **puta**!

This guy never has worked in his life… EM

- EMs express emotive stance towards the propositional content
- Prosodic cues affect the interpretation

Goals

1. **Empirical goals:**

   Demonstrate that there is a systematic correlation between the distribution and function of EMs

   Case study of
   - Chilean Spanish *puta,*
   - English *(god) damn,*
   - German *scheiss(e)*

2. **Analytical goals:**

   Develop a grammar of emotive markers within the Interactional Spine Hypothesis

1. **Empirical goals:**

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   Case study of
   - Chilean Spanish *puta,*
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Emotive markers (EMs)

- In formal linguistics, an EM is "a morpheme, syntax, or prosody that encodes the speaker's emotive attitude towards some **proposition** made salient by the utterance in which it occurs, and does so in backgrounded, not-at-issue content." (Rett, 2021, p.307-309)

EMs are not part of truth conditional meaning

1.1. Unfortunately, Jane lost the race.

1.2. Unfortunately, Jane did not lose the race.

1.3. It is not the case that Jane lost the race, unfortunately.

1.4.   **A:** Unfortunately, Jane lost the race.

B: That's not true, she won! / # That's not true, you're glad she did!

- EMs update common ground only in terms of the speaker's commitment to a psychological state made public in the interaction (Villalba, 2024).

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Different distributions of EMs: the case of *puta!*

puta in Chilean Spanish:

(1) Este weón nunca ha trabajado en su **puta** vida!

This guy never has worked in his EM life

(2) Este weón, **puta**, nunca ha trabajado en su vida!

This guy EM never has worked in his life

(3) **Puta**, este weón nunca ha trabajado en su vida!

EM this guy never has worked in his life!

(4) **E**ste weón nunca ha trabajado en su vida... **puta**!

Different distributions of EMs: the case of *damn!*

One-word reaction →

PAR	(..) right (...) but you got more single mom households than single father
INV	damn
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_f_01

Turn-initial position →

PAR	it was about seven of them n****s they beat the- they [beat the living sh...]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
PAR	[oh no-] oh no they caught me. They had it planned
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

Turn-final position →

PAR	you feel me .
INV	my bad I hadta take it there but damn .
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag2_m_03

Turn-medial position →

PAR	so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

EM in the interactional domain

- Part of the group of discourse markers (Martín Zorraquino, 1998; Maschler and Schiffrin, 2015):
  - They guide the interactants' inferences about content meaning of the ongoing discourse (Fraser, 1990) and mark a shift in the interaction, often **projecting** the nature of these shifts (Auer, 2005)

- Functional categorization of interactional particles: phatic, conative, expressive interjections (Ameka 1992; Ponsonnet, 2021; Dingemanse, 2023).

- Formal distinction of expressive interjections (Ameka, 1992):
  - Primary EIs are phonologically anomalous forms that are not used otherwise: *Ouch!, Gee!, Oho!, Oops!*.
  - Secondary EIs are forms that also belong to other parts of speech, including swear words (Ameka, 1992; Mushin et al., 2023): *damn!, scheiße!, puta!*

Interjections from a sequential perspective: an heterogeneous class

THE PREFERENCE FOR SELF-CORRECTION IN THE ORGANIZATION OF REPAIR IN CONVERSATION

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Research on repair has recognized a range of repair strategies, including self-initiation self-repair, other-initiation self-repair, other-initiation other-repair, self-initiation other-repair, repetition, paraphrase, confirmation checks, clarification requests and comprehension checks (Drew, 1997; Nagano, 1997; Schegloff, 2000; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks., 1977).

F. Emrani & M. Hooshmand

Is "Huh?" a Universal Word? Conversational Infrastructure and the Convergent Evolution of Linguistic Items

Mark Dingemanse, Francisco Torreira, N. J. Enfield

Interjections from a sequential perspective: an heterogeneous class

A|**L**|**S** AUSTRALIAN LINGUISTIC SOCIETY Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

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Towards an interactional grammar of interjections: Expressing compassion in four Australian languages

Ilana Mushin [a], Joe Blythe [b], Josua Dahmen [b], Caroline de Dear [b], Rod Gardner [a], Francesco Possemato [c] and Lesley Stirling [d]

Table 1. The corpus of compassionate interjections

Language	Corpus size	Token	Total number of tokens	Response token		With substantive talk	
				Standalone	With another response token	TCU initial	TCU final
Garrwa	3.5 hrs	*kurda*	34	16 (47%)	5 (15%)	8 (23%)	5 (15%)
Jaru	3.5 hrs	*Yawiyi*	72	7 (9%)	15 (21%)	7 (10%)	43 (60%)
		Luyurra	18	1 (6%)	9 (50%)	1 (6%)	7 (38%)
Murrinhpatha	6 hrs	*ʔaʔu*	23	17 (74%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	0
Gija	3.5 hrs	*gaage-*	113	36 (32%)	35 (31%)	13 (11%)	29 (26%)
		goorlangge-	54	9 (17%)	5 (9%)	10 (18%)	30 (56%)

Expressive interjections show consistent syntagmatic pattering and turn-based grammar that correspond with distinctive interactional functions (Mushin et al., 2023).

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A research gap

- Generativism has for a long time neglected interactional phenomena (resources above the CP layer), as they have been considered as part of performance rather than competence: interaction outside syntax.

- Functionalism have not problematized and even discarded the multiple dimensions of meaning, their relation, and their implications in linguistic theory: expressivity vs. descriptivity.

- Expressive interjections are, in this sense, items that have been neglected from both fronts in linguistic theory.

Expressive dimension of meaning — Interactional Emotive Markers — Interactional domain of language
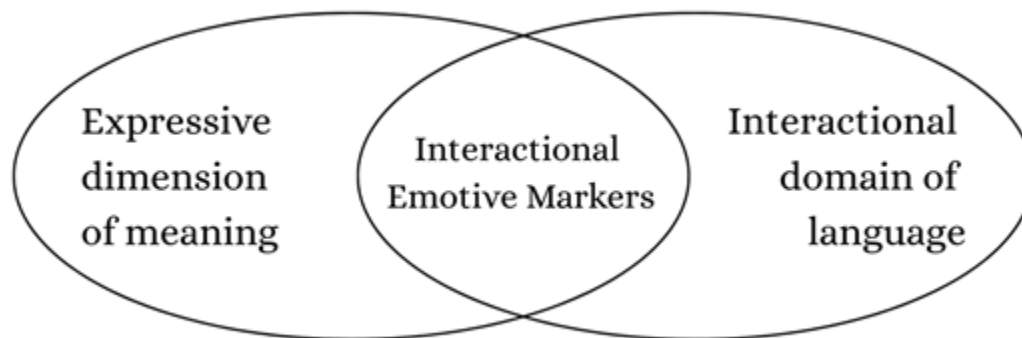
Research question

Research question:

What are the functions performed by EMs' in their different distributions?

Underlying hypotheses (Fox, 2007; Wiltschko et al., 2018, Couper-Kuhlen and Sterling, 2017).

Interactional items exhibit a systematic use that makes them possible objects of formalization.

Heterogeneity in EMs' distributions entails the expression of a restricted set of functions that can be generalized cross-linguistically.

Functions derived by context of use exhibit language-specific properties (mitigation, rephrasing, reassurance, etc.)

Outline

1. **Data and Method:** conversational corpora of English, Spanish and German

    1.1. EMs in turn-initial position

    1.2. EMs in turn-final position

    1.3. EMs in turn-medial position

2. **Analysis:** the syntax of *puta, scheiss(e)* and *damn*

3. **Conclusions:** the heterogeneity of EMs

Methodology

Extraction of sequential occurrences of EMs from three languages:

- **(God)damn:** Corpus of Regional African American Language— CORAAL (Kendall and Farrington, 2023)

- **scheiß(e):** Forschungs- und Lehrkorpus Gesprochenes Deutsch— FOLK (Schmidt, 2023)

- **puta:** Corpus de América y España de conversaciones coloquiales— AMERESCO (Albelda and Estellés, online)

Data: (god)damn, puta, scheiß(e)

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Language
American English (EN-US)
German (DE)
Chilean Spanish (ES-CL)

Data: (god)damn, puta, scheiß(e)

Language	Size of data
American English (EN-US)	8.6 hrs.
German (DE)	41.6 hrs.
Chilean Spanish (ES-CL)	14.21 hrs.

Data: (god)damn, puta, scheiß(e)

Language	Size of data	Number of tokens
American English (EN-US)	8.6 hrs.	66 damn 25 goddamn
German (DE)	41.6 hrs.	59 scheiße 2 scheiß
Chilean Spanish (ES-CL)	14.21 hrs.	51 puta

Data: (god)damn, puta, scheiß(e)

Language	Size of data	Number of tokens	Activities
American English (EN-US)	8.6 hrs.	66 damn 25 goddamn	Dyadic semi structured interviews
German (DE)	41.6 hrs.	59 scheiße 2 scheiß	Spontaneous multi-party conversations—joint activities
Chilean Spanish (ES-CL)	14.21 hrs.	51 puta	

Data: (god)damn, puta, scheiß(e)

Language	Size of data	Number of tokens	Activities	Interactants' relation
American English (EN-US)	8.6 hrs.	66 damn 25 goddamn	Dyadic semi structured interviews	Acquaintances
German (DE)	41.6 hrs.	59 scheiße 2 scheiß	Spontaneous multi-party conversations—joint activities	Acquaintances, co-workers, friends, family
Chilean Spanish (ES-CL)	14.21 hrs.	51 puta		Clients, friends, family

Classification criteria

Based on Mushin et al. (2023), Dingemanse and Akita (2017), Couper-Kuhlen (2009), Sacks et al. (1974):

Emotive Marker's...

- Position relative to the interactional sequence.

- Position relative to the host utterance.

- Contextual information surrounding it.

- Information that scopes over.

- Prosodic features.

1. EMs in turn-initial position

1. EMs in turn-initial position (EN-US)

PAR	so I took off like these n****s ain't finna get me today
INV	not today
PAR	and I ain't even know if they had guns or not so I just took off
INV	good job
PAR	so I took off , hopped a couple fences. They caught me around the corner
INV	WH{ damn }WH
PAR	it was about seven of them n****s they beat the- they [beat the living sh…]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
PAR	[oh no-] oh no they caught me. They had it planned
INV	AAH!

ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

PAR	so I took off like these n****s ain't finna get me today
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INV	AAH!

Client 6	¡ua! un cuarto para las doce	Wow! A quarter to twelve.
Driver	sí po ¿viste?	Yeah, right? See?
Client 6	tome caballero	Here you go, sir.
Driver	¡ay! ¿no tiene sencillo?	Oh! Don't you have change?
Client 6	no nada	No, nothing.
Driver	puta de diez mil… ¿tú no tení m'hija?/ ¿dos de cinco?	puta a ten thousand bill… Don't you have, my dear? / Two fives?
Client 4	nada vamos a ver pues	Nothing, let's see then.
Driver	por favor es que yo no tengo	Please, it's just that I don't have any.

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1. EMs in turn-initial position (ES-CL)

Client 6	¡ua! un cuarto para las doce	Wow! A quarter to twelve.
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Driver	¡ay! ¿no tiene sencillo?	Oh! Don't you have change?
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2. EIs in turn-initial position (DE)

LS	[...] wagt er des die vor mir so zu beleidigen	[...] he dares to insult her like that in front of me.
LP	(so) (nett) ((Lachansatz))	(so) (nice) ((starts laughing))
AM	wie unverschämt	How shameless
LS	und da ha_ich (.) und dann hab ich mich halt total	and then I (.) and then I just totally
AM	ja dann sehr gut laura ja ja richtig musst du ihn zusammen	yeah, good for you, Laura, yeah yeah you totally had to put him in his place
LS	ja hat ich_n riesenstreit mit ihm und	yeah, I had a huge fight with him and
LP	wäh	ew
AM	==scheiße== ja (.) sehr gut sehr brav	==scheisse== yeah (.) very good, very brave
LS	ach und s_halb (.) hab sein freund noch so angeschrien er soll sich doch verpissen und was ihm einfällt	oh and that's why (.) I yelled at his friend too, telling him to piss off and how dare he
		FOLK_E_00048_SE_01_T_01

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Interim: EMs in turn-initial position

- *damn, puta* and *scheisse* are used to assess addressee's information as newsworthy and emotionally triggering.

- As following turns show, this assessment has an epistemic as well as an emotive component.

- *damn, puta* and *scheisse* present different emotive content: it varies depending on the context of use and paralinguistic resources, maintaining some dimensions of their meaning constant (e.g., valence).

2. EMs in turn-final position

2. EMs in turn-final position (EN-US)

PAR	these mamas be letting they little boys dance and stuff (.) like this lady had her son dancing in a dress (.) and the little boy just doing it (.) like I will beat the shit out of JJ like...
INV	[LGH] I mean I get how it was funny and shit like that.
PAR	no that is not funny (.) I don't find that funny at all.
INV	I mean if it's not funny then it just like "okay they doing they thing" they turnt but [CGH] little crazy (..)[CGH] alright bro (.) it's gonna be an interesting time to wonder
PAR	very.
INV	cause' I don't think my mama would let that shit going down either (.) I was just (..) I just wanted my thing personally.
PAR	you can't say...
INV	I (.) wo I would hope she would know to do that shit god damn [LGH].
PAR	I don't know (.) you can't judge them and all that stuff but I don't...
INV	I'm not judging nobody .

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2. EIs in turn-final position (DE)

AM	ähm ja er versucht se sich_s halt immer irgendwie rauszureden	Uhm, °h yeah, he always tries to somehow talk his way out of it.
LP	will des nich dein vadder oder	Is it that your dad doesn't want it or—?
AM	ähm… ja	Uhm… Yeah
LP	kuck mal für n mann is es ja wirklich schwierig vor allem	Look, for a man, it's really difficult, especially
AM	ich weiß… ja irgendwie (.) <mark>scheiße</mark>	I know… Yeah, somehow (.) <mark>scheisse</mark>
LK	wie scheiße is_n das ey [+++]	How bad is it, man? [+++]
AM	was hast_n du da gekauft	What did you] buy there?
		FOLK_E_00046_SE_01_T_02

2. EIs in turn-final position (DE)

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LK	wie scheiße is_n das ey [+++]	How bad is it, man? [+++]
AM	was hast_n du da gekauft	What did you] buy there?
		FOLK_E_00046_SE_01_T_02

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Interim: EMs in turn-final position

- Turn-final uses are common in US-EN, limited in DE, and not attested in the ES-CL corpus.

- Besides their negative emotive content, *(god)damn* and *scheisse* present an epistemic component:

  - To assess addressee's information as outside speaker's expectations about the course of the conversation or

  - To stress a point that is contested by the addressee.

3. EMs in turn-medial position

3. EMs in turn-medial position (EN-US)

558	**INV**	how long you had that job for ?
559	**PAR**	a week .
560	**INV**	a week .
561	**PAR**	yeah bruh I wasn't cut out to be a janitor .
562	**INV**	I know it .
563	**PAR**	I wasn't made for that shit .
564	**PAR**	[CAUGH] so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
565	**INV**	yeah .
566	**PAR**	I was like in the uh concession stand selling chicken tenders and shit .

CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

3. EMs in turn-medial position (EN-US)

558	INV	how long you had that job for ?
559	PAR	a week .
560	INV	a week .
561	PAR	yeah bruh I wasn't cut out to be a janitor .
562	INV	I know it .
563	PAR	I wasn't made for that shit .
564	PAR	[CAUGH] so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
565	INV	yeah .
566	PAR	I was like in the uh concession stand selling chicken tenders and shit .

CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

48

558	INV	how long you had that job for ?
559	PAR	a week .
560	INV	a week .
561	PAR	yeah bruh I wasn't cut out to be a janitor .
562	INV	I know it .
563	PAR	I wasn't made for that shit .
564	PAR	[CAUGH] so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
565	INV	yeah .
566	PAR	I was like in the uh concession stand selling chicken tenders and shit .

CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

49

3. EMs in turn-medial position (EN-US)

564	**PAR**	[CAUGH] so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
565	**PAR**	I was like in the uh concession stand selling chicken tenders and shit.
566	**INV**	yeah.
567	**PAR**	and flirting with white bitches to get tips in the tip jar.
568	**PAR**	[LGHS] so you know what I'm saying, it was cool.
569	**PAR**	I got to do what the fuck I wanted to do.
570	**PAR**	I was smoking blunts and shit at work.
571	**INV**	okay.
572	**PAR**	I was showing up late and high as shit.

CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

564	**PAR**	[CAUGH] so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
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572	PAR	I was showing up late and high as shit.

573	PAR	like we didn't clock out for breaks.
574	PAR	but they didn't pay me shit so it wasn't that cool.
575	INV	mhm.
576	PAR	it was like seven twenty five.
577	PAR	it was... and plus the weak-ass tips that I hadta flirt to get.
578	PAR	I hadta pimp myself to get tips in that bitch.
579	INV	oh damn [LGHS].
580	PAR	wasn't that sweet.
581	PAR	[LGHS] uh so shit after that bruh they... we fucked around and got a new GM.

CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

54

3. EMs in turn-medial position (EN-US)

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3. EMs in turn-medial position (ES-CL)

1	**A**	pero a lo mejor no crees que estás como// ¿muy cómodo con él?	But maybe you don't realize that you're like// too comfortable with him?
2	**B**	¿cómo dices?	What do you mean?
3	**A**	que es cómodo pues/ es cómodo [tener una pareja esta]ble que	That it's comfortable, you know/ it's comfortable [to have a stable partner] who
4	**C**	[que te acostumbraste]	[you've gotten used to]
5	**A**	eh sabes que/ ==puta== si quieren tirar van a tirar porque hueón están pololeando y la huevada/ y ya no tienes que como que estar conociendo gente// y invitarlos a comer ¿cachái? a salir	You know that/ ==puta==, if you guys want to hook up, you'll hook up because, duh, you're dating and all that/ and you don't have to, like, meet new people// and invite them to eat, you know? Or go out.
6	**B**	no [sé]	I don't [know]

TCO_008_03_20

3. EMs in turn-medial position (ES-CL)

1	A	pero a lo mejor no crees que estás como// ¿muy cómodo con él?	But maybe you don't realize that you're like// too comfortable with him?
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3. EMs in turn-medial position (ES-CL)

7	**A**	[ooo] igual es- igual porqueee... hueón, qué paja estar conociendo gente nueva y... [LGHS]	[ooor] Maybe it's just... maybe because... dude, it's such a drag meeting new people and... [LGHS]
8	**A**	mira no sé si soy la mejor pa' hablar de esas cosas/ pero/ [LGHS]	look, I don't know if I'm the best person to talk about this stuff / but / [LGHS]
9	**A**	pero igual es una paja po' hueón, es como que te te exponís mucho al mundo / y ya cuando encontrái una pareja es como que te sentís cómodo y por eso es como que las parejas engordan juntos / porque después como que lo [LGHS] único que [hacen es co]mer y ver tele [LGHS]	but still, it's a drag, dude, it's like you're exposing yourself too much to the world / and then when you find a partner, it's like you feel comfortable, and that's why couples gain weight together / because after a while, the only thing [they do is eat] and watch TV [LGHS]
10	**B**	[LGHS] (2.8) quizás/ no sé/ no	[LGHS] (2.8) maybe / I don't know / no
11	**C**	y esto amerita un cigarro	and this calls for a cigarette

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Interim: EIs in turn-medial position

- In this position *scheisse* is used only in fictive quotation:

  - e.g., "*ich hab davor angst mich äh für ne prüfung anzumelden und im endeffekt merk ich dann (.) oh* scheiße *es is des und des*"*

- In this position, *(god)damn* and *puta* present less expressive prosody and different degrees of prosodic integration.

- These uses are compatible with sharing newsworthy or dispreferred information for the addressee.

- Emotive content of EMs is less evident as they become more functional items (González-Ormazábal and San Martín, 2019; Potts, 2021; Posio and Rosemeyer 2024)

*FOLK_E_00046_SE_01_T_01

Summary of the data: distributions of *damn, scheisse* and *puta*

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	Turn-initial	Turn-medial	Turn-final

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	Turn-initial	**Turn-medial**	**Turn-final**
Token	*(god)damn, scheisse, and puta*	*(god)damn* and *puta*	*(god)damn* and *scheisse*

Summary of the data: distributions of *damn, scheisse* and *puta*

	Turn-initial	Turn-medial	Turn-final
Token	*(god)damn, scheisse,* and *puta*	*(god)damn* and *puta*	*(god)damn* and *scheisse*
Target of evaluation	Previous turn	Host utterance	Previous turn or host utterance

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Target of evaluation	Previous turn	Host utterance	Previous turn or host utterance
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Epistemic evaluation	**speaker-oriented:** unexpected, newsworthy	**addressee-oriented:** dispreferred, noteworthy	**speaker-oriented** or **addressee-oriented**

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How do we model this?

Goals

1. **Empirical goals:**

   Demonstrate that there is a systematic correlation between the distribution and function of EMs

   Case study of
   - Chilean Spanish *puta,*
   - English *(god) damn,*
   - German *scheiss(e)*

2. **Analytical goals:**

   Develop a grammar of emotive markers within the Interactional Spine Hypothesis
   - Language use as competence
   - The Interactional Spine Hypothesis
   - Towards an analysis of EM's

The Chomskyan enterprise
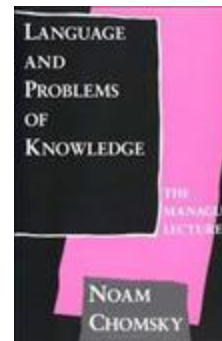
Plato's problem

How we can know so much, given that we have such limited evidence.

Chomsky's answer

Universal grammar

Chomksy 1988

The Chomskyan enterprise
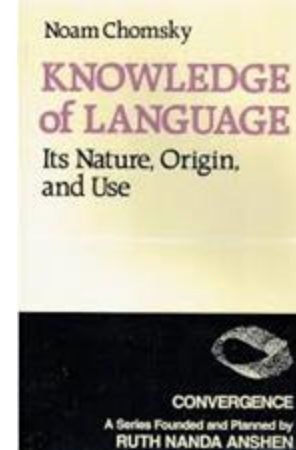
1. What constitutes **knowledge** of language?
2. How is knowledge of language **acquired**?
3. How is knowledge of language put to **use**?

Chomksy 1986: 3

The Chomskyan enterprise

We thus make a fundamental distinction between *competence* (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations). Only under

competence

performance
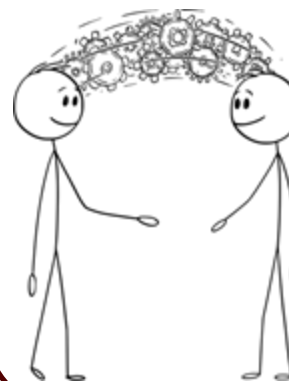
Chomksy 1965: 4

A Chomskyan enterprise?

A Chomskyan enterprise?
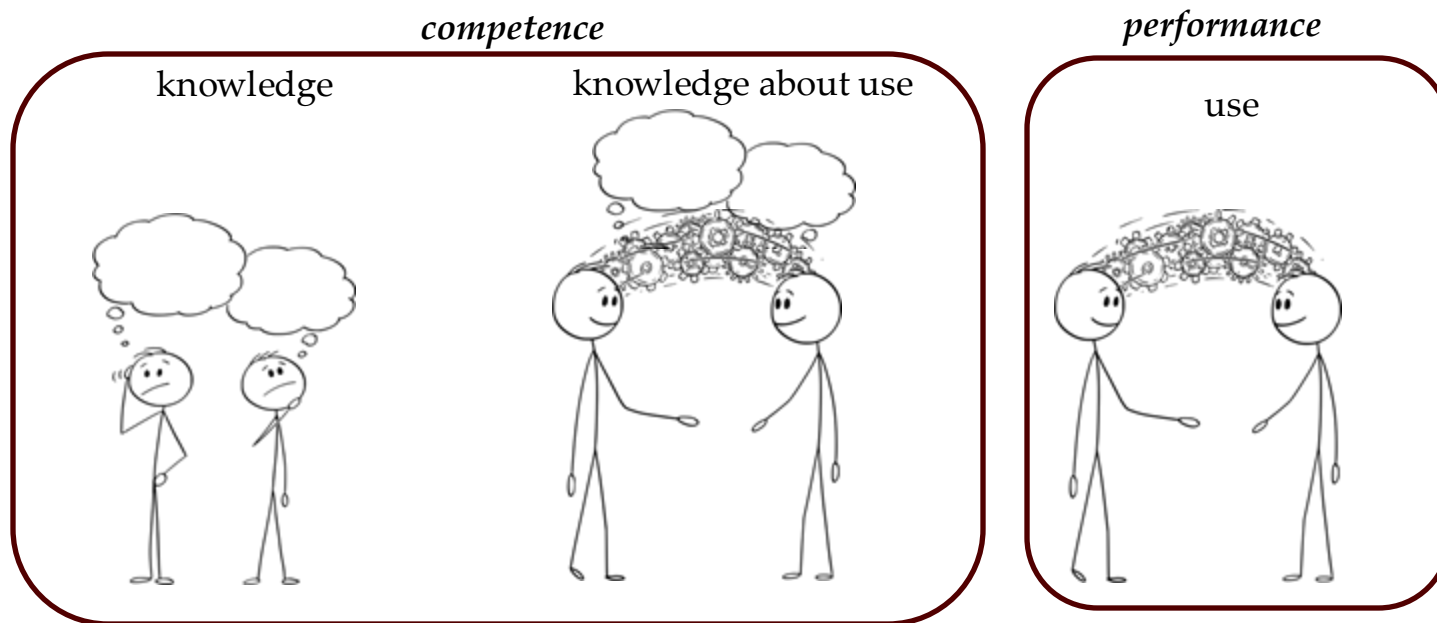
competence

knowledge   knowledge about use
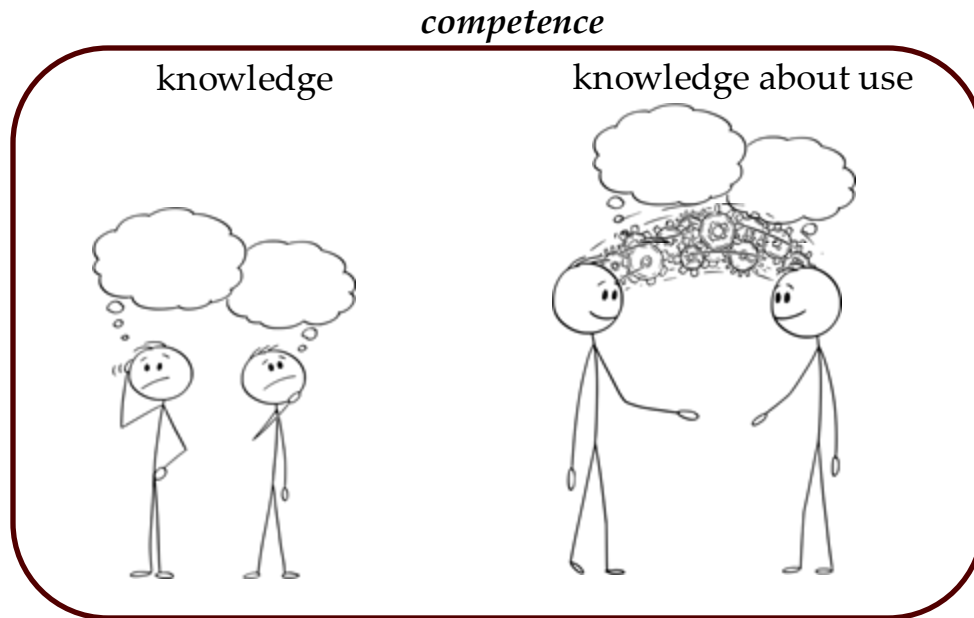
Communicative competence

"the **ability** to function in a truly communicative setting"
Savignon (1972)

Campbell and Wales 1970
Hymes 1972,
Keenan (Ochs) 1974

Interactional language

Catalan (/catalan1/ca_f01r_m04r_trd)
40 interjections in this segment of 248 turns (16.1%)
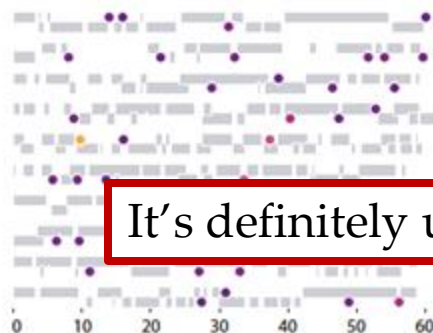
Egyptian Arabic (/arabic1/4715)
34 interjections in this segment of 249 turns (13.7%)
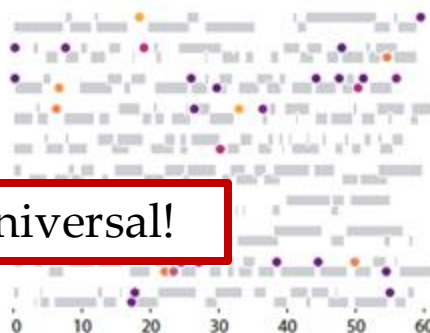
Hausa (/hausa1/HAU_BC_CONV_04_MEN)
61 interjections in this segment of 539 turns (11.3%)
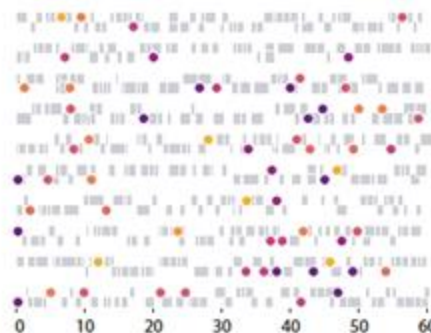
Japanese (/japanese3/0921)
95 interjections in this segment of 538 turns (17.7%)
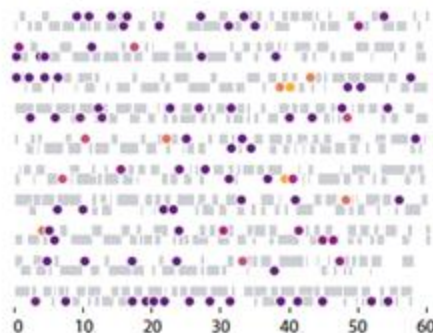
Hungarian (/hungarian1/124fc23_l_a_v)
71 interjections in this segment of 455 turns (15.6%)

Pite Saami (/pite_saami1/pit080924)
60 interjections in this segment of 289 turns (20.8%)

Time (s)

It's definitely universal!

Annual Review of Linguistics

Interjections at the Heart of Language

Mark Dingemanse
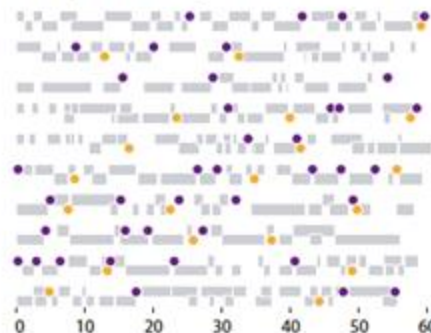
https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item_3530698_4/component/file_3562583/content

And it comes with systematic (grammaticality) judgements!

(1) a.   The dog is in front of the fan
   b.   **Wow**, the dog is in front of the fan
   c.   **Oh,** the dog is in front of the fan
   d.   The dog is in front of the fan, **eh**?
   e.   The dog is in front of the fan, **huh**?
   f.   **But Charlie**, the dog is in front of the fan
   g.   The dog is in front of the fan, **Charlie**.

huh
eh
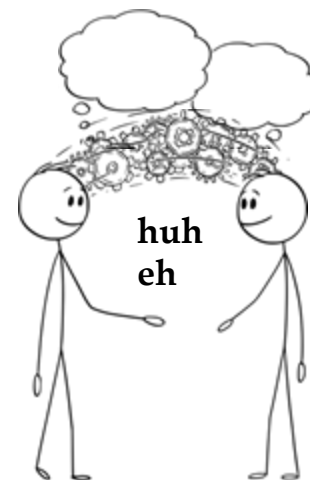
Eh vs. huh

1. You have a new dog, **eh**?
2. You have a new dog, **huh?**

Eh vs. huh

1. I have a new dog, **eh**?
2. *I have a new dog, **huh**?

And it comes with systematic (grammaticality) judgements!

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

R1: Sí

R2: Sí sí!

Response markers: si si

And it comes with systematic (grammaticality) judgements!

I: Pedro quiere un perro.
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R1: Sí

R2: Sí sí!

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

Response markers: si si

And it comes with systematic (grammaticality) judgements!

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.

Theoretical framework: Interactional Spine Hypothesis
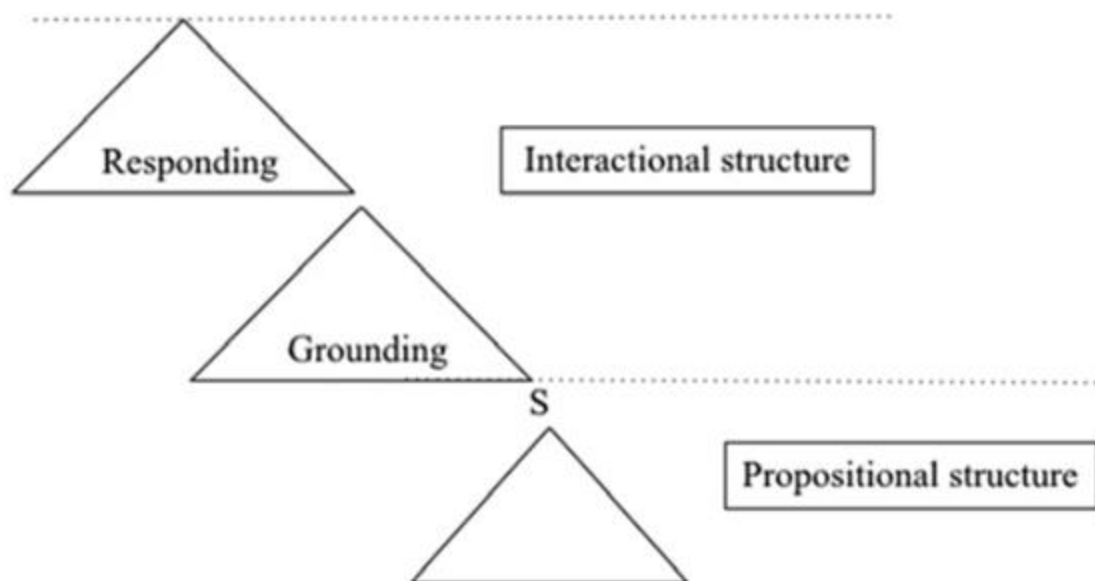
(Wiltschko, 2021)

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

Linguistic units that regulate communication and interactants' beliefs

Linguistic units that describe the external world

Responding — Interactional structure

Grounding

S

Propositional structure
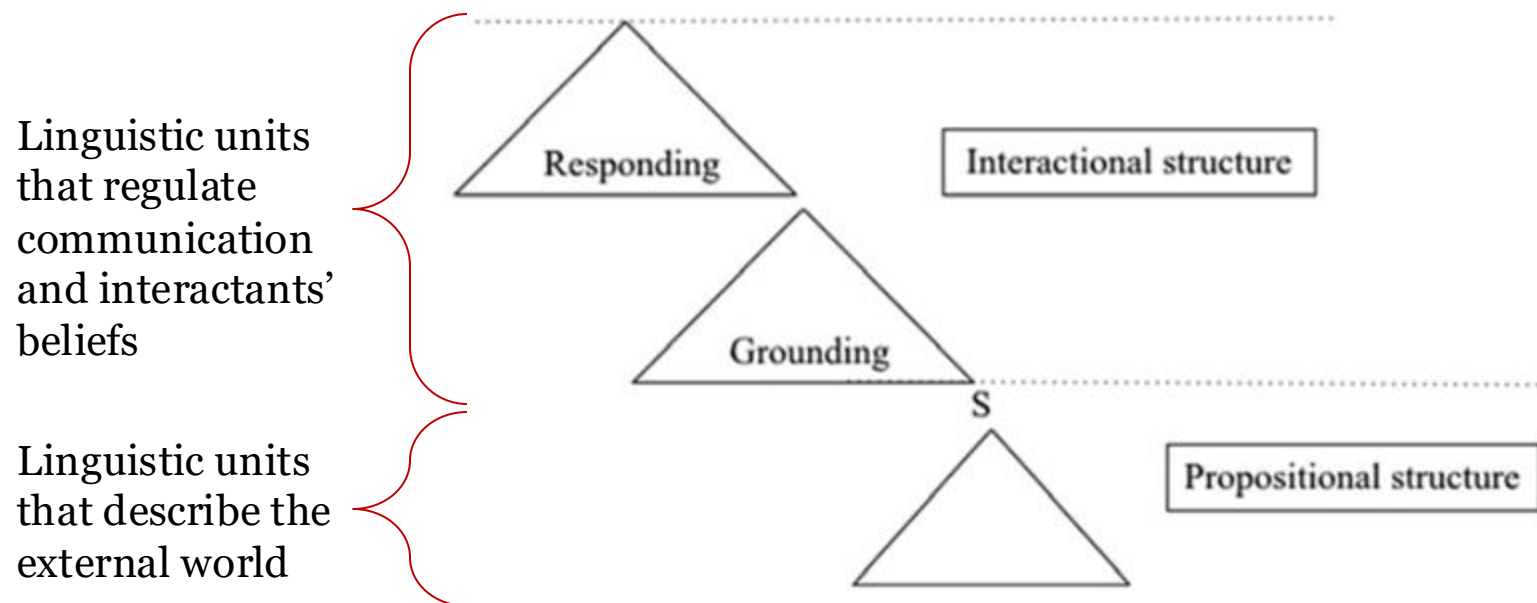
(Wiltschko, 2021)

The universal spine hypothesis

Linking

Anchoring

Point-of-view

Classification

The spinal functions
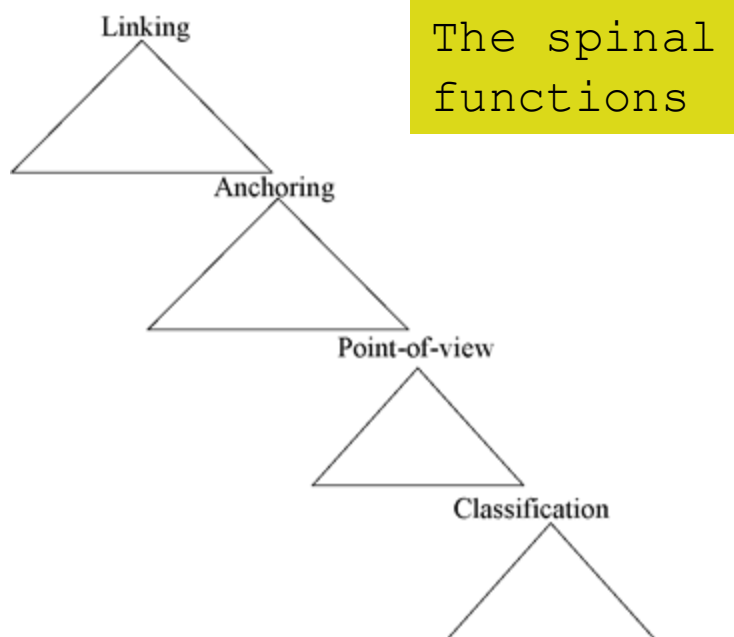
Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 142

The Universal Structure of Categories
Towards a Formal Typology

Martina Wiltschko

Spinal functions

Configuration of the spinal functions

Context enters

The universal spine hypothesis

Linking

Anchoring

Point-of-view

UoL

Classification
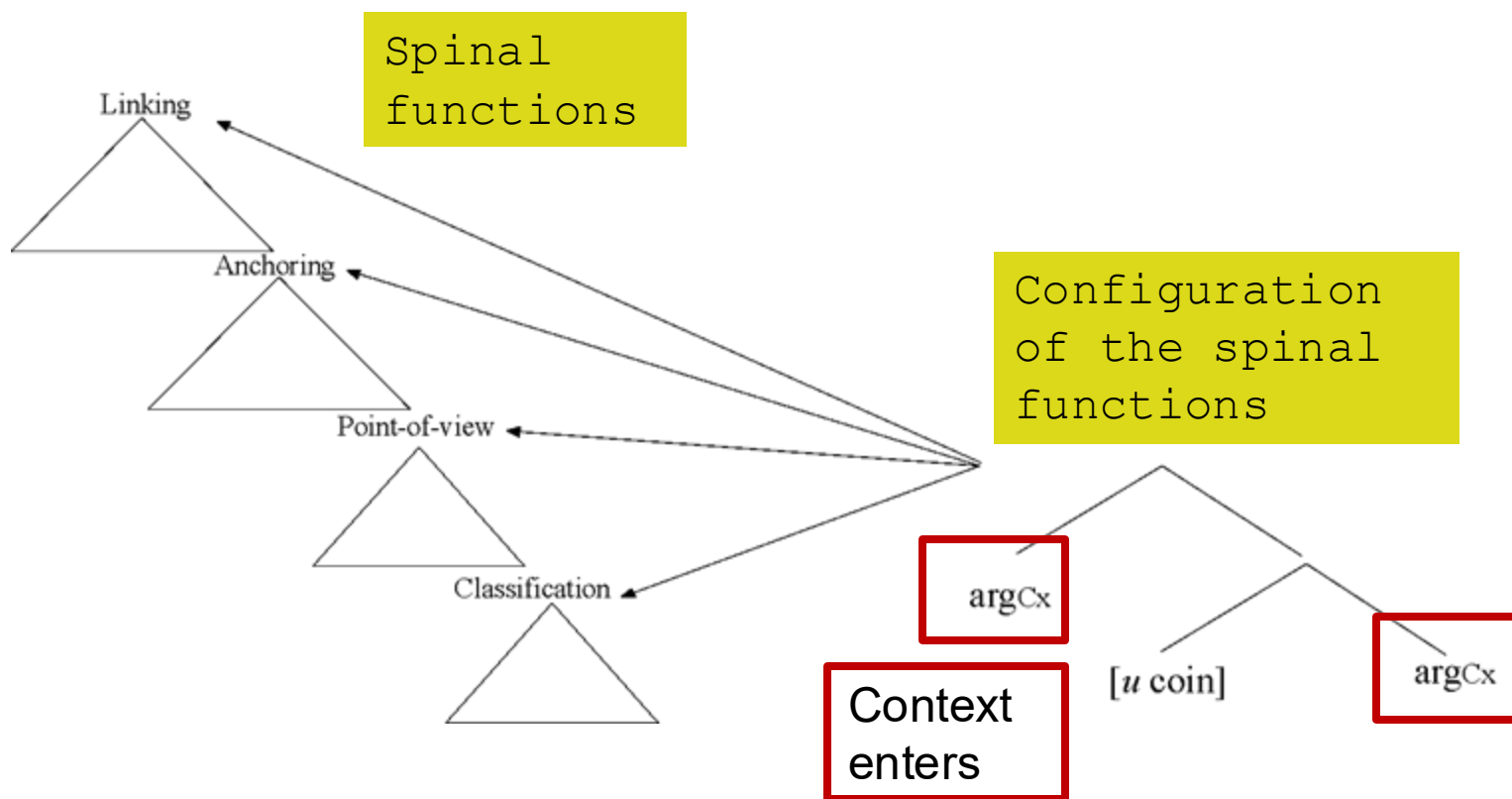
Meaning is composed of UoLs and the spinal functions
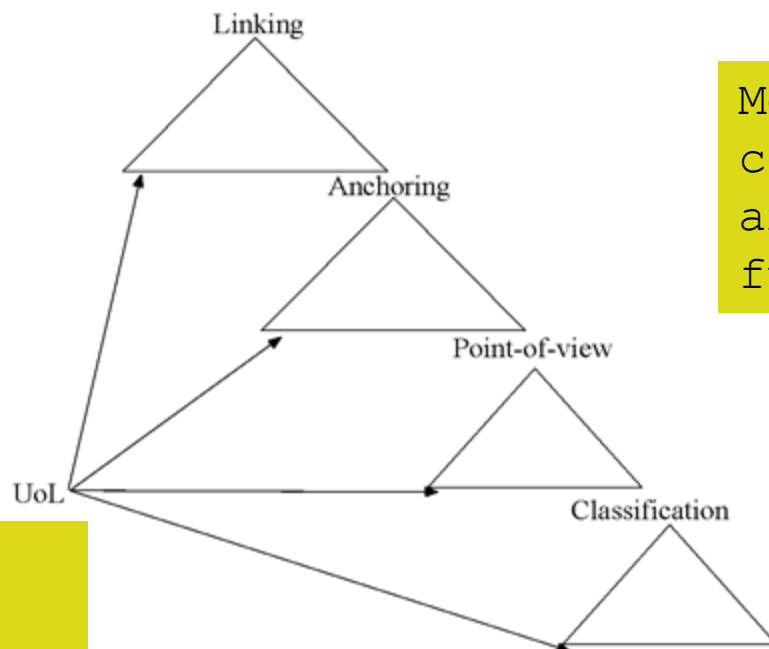
Lexicon enters

Expression of the spinal functions

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

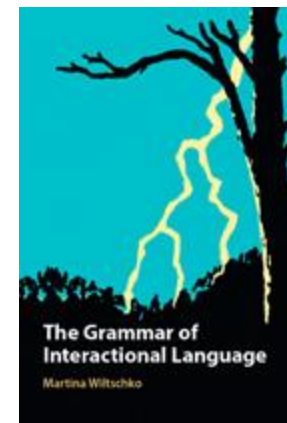**Interactional structure** is about **mental worlds**:

Propositional structure

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

Spinal functions

Configuration of the spinal functions

Responding

Grounding

p-structure

argCx

[u coin]

argCx

UoL
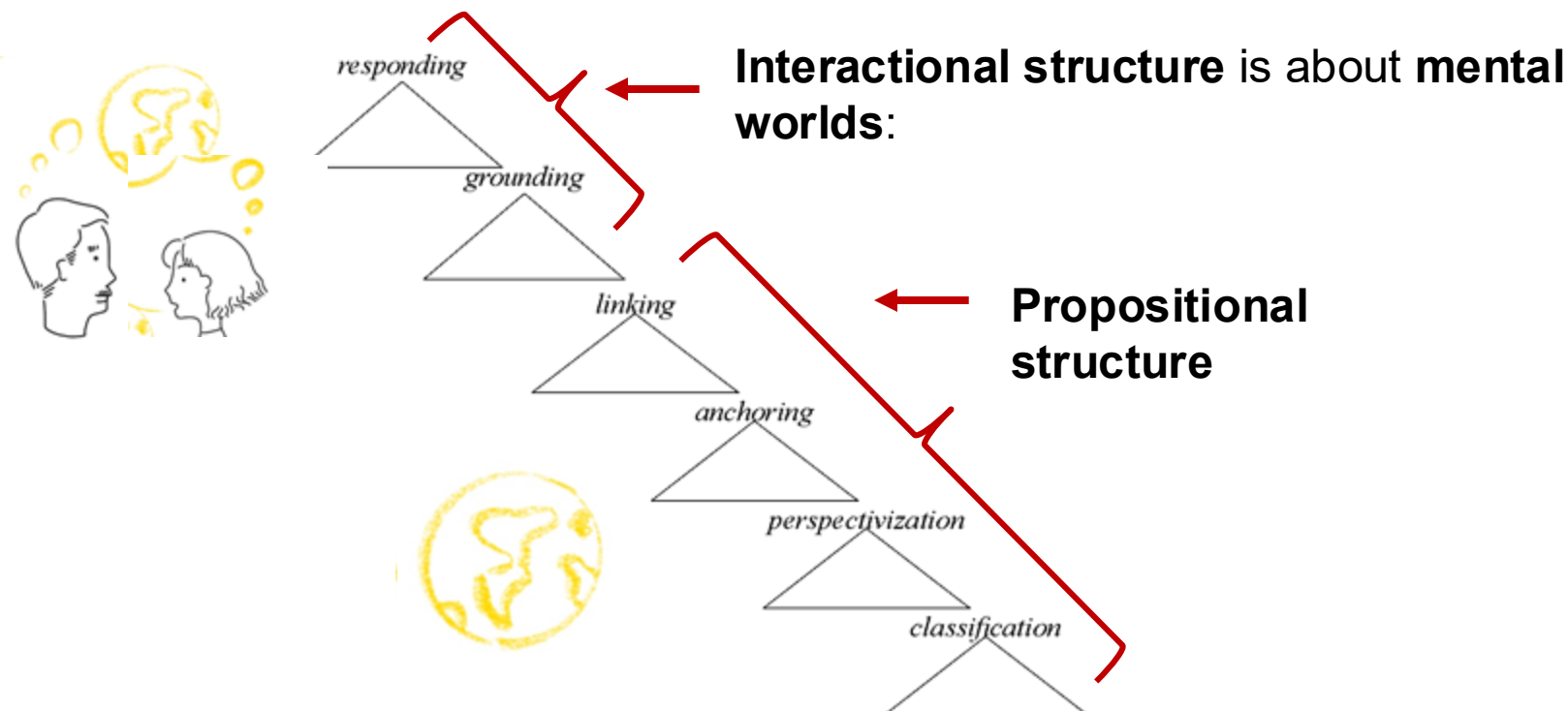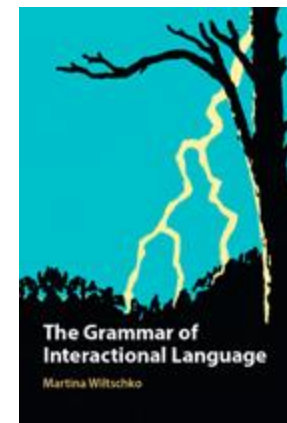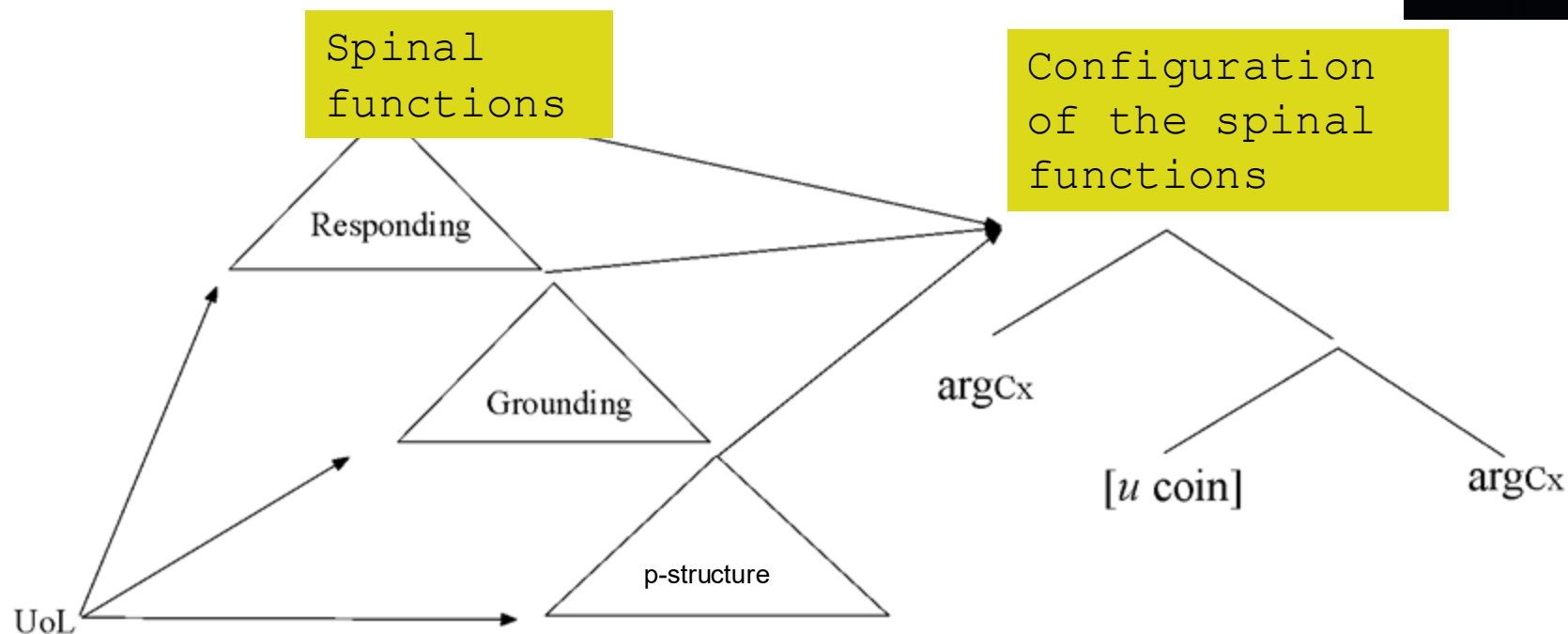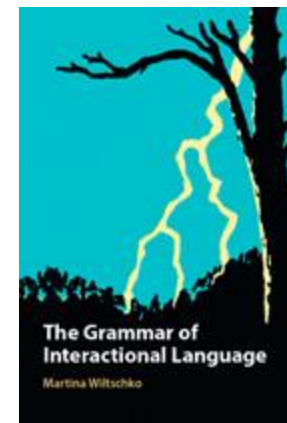
Expression of the spinal functions

Interactional Spine Hypothesis
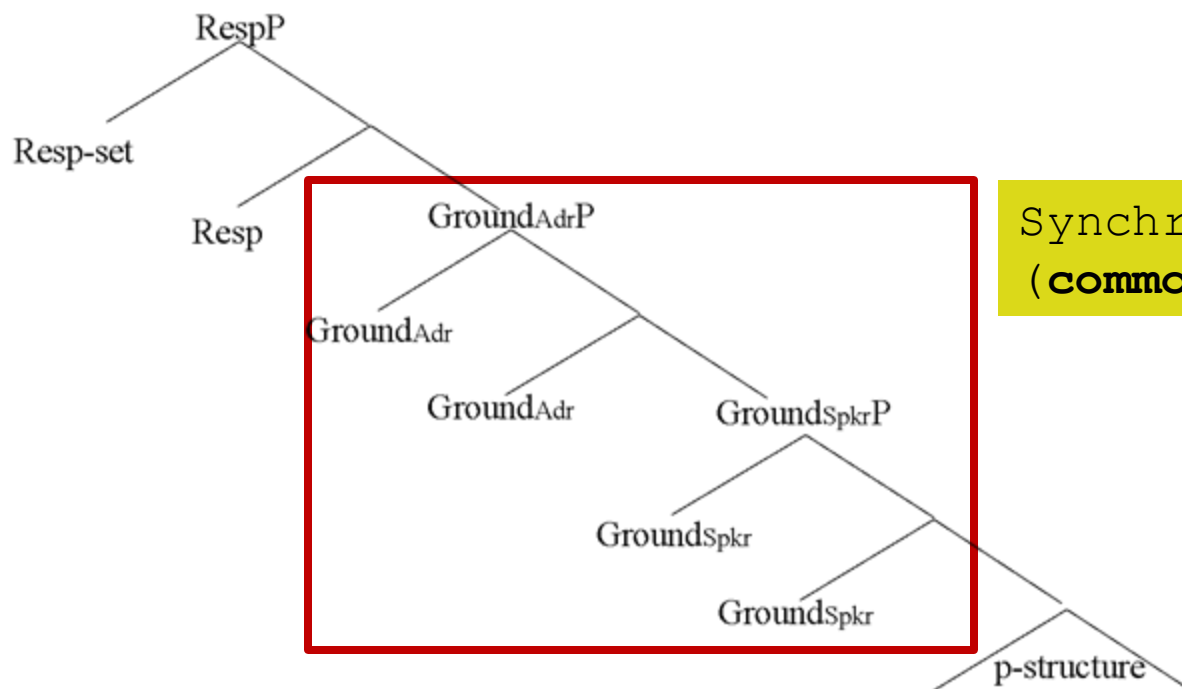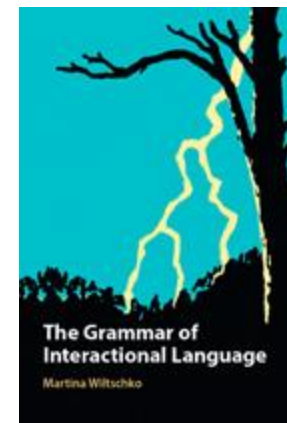
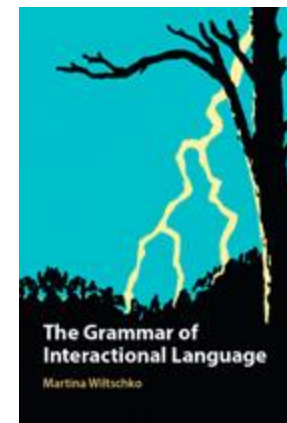Synchronize minds (**common ground**)

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

GroundP
Ground
Ground [*u* coin]
p-structure
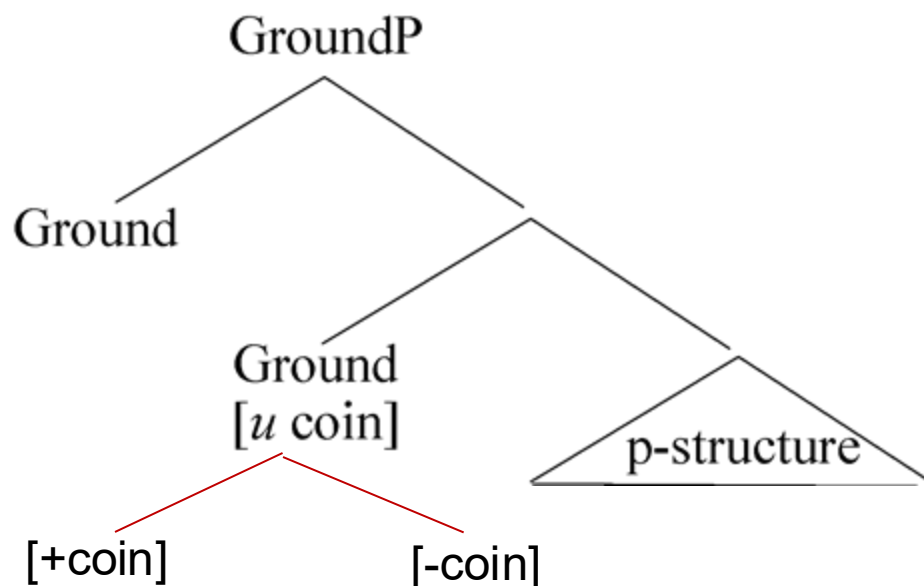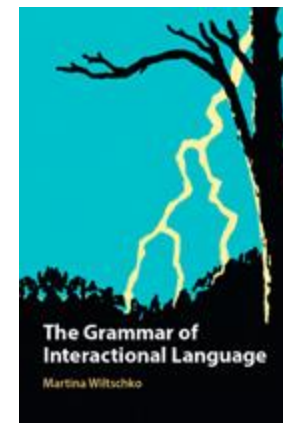
[+coin]
What I'm saying is in my/your ground

[-coin]
What I'm saying is not in my/your ground

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

RespP → what I put on/take from the table

GroundAdrP → (my assumptions about) your epistemic states

GroundSpkrP → my epistemic state

p-structure → polarity

Resp-set

Resp

GroundAdr

GroundAdr

GroundSpkr

GroundSpkr

The Grammar of Interactional Language

Martina Wiltschko

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

The Grammar of
Interactional Language
Martina Wiltschko

RespP
Resp-set
Resp
GroundAdrP
GroundAdr
GroundAdr
GroundSpkrP
GroundSpkr
GroundSpkr
p-structure

Units of Language
- Words
- Prosody
- Gestures
- …

propositions
propositional attitudes
(incl. questions,
desires)
+ **emotive attitudes**

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

RespP ← Speaker's demands: **Call on Addressee**

Resp-set

Resp

[+coin]
|
LH

GroundAdrP ← Speaker's assumptions about the addressee's epistemic state

GroundAdr

GroundAdr

GroundSpkrP ← Speaker's epistemic state

[+coin]
|
huh

GroundSpkr

GroundSpkr

p-structure ← Evaluation of truth-conditionality

[+coin]
|
eh
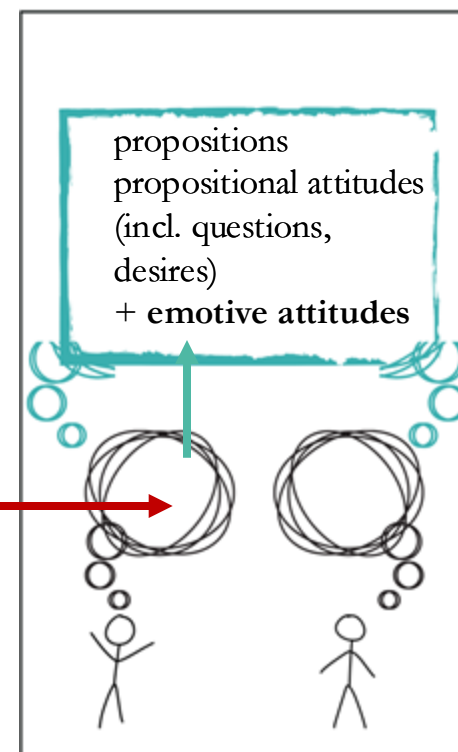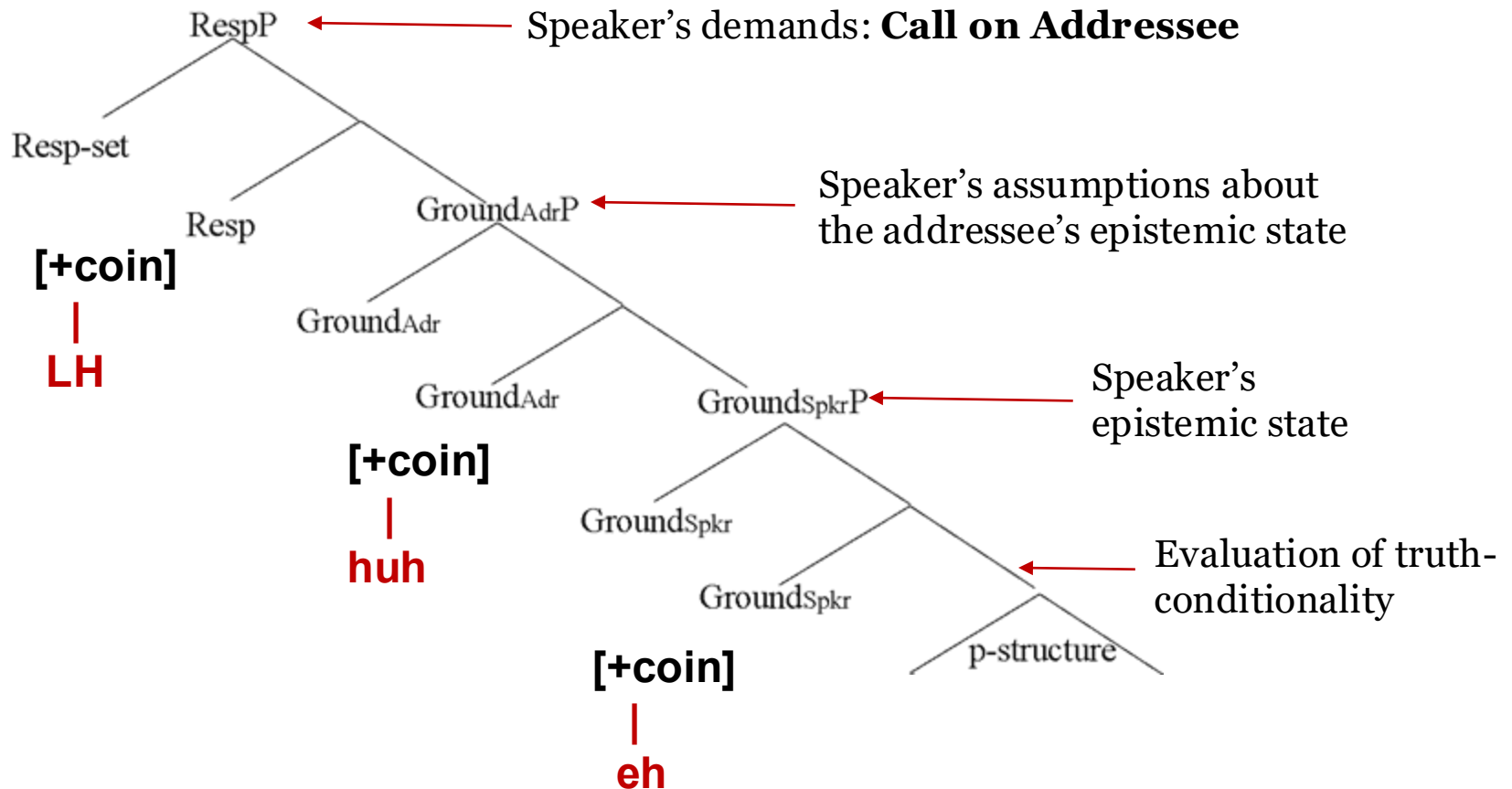
Interactional Spine Hypothesis

Multi-functionality derives from different positions on the spine

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

RespP
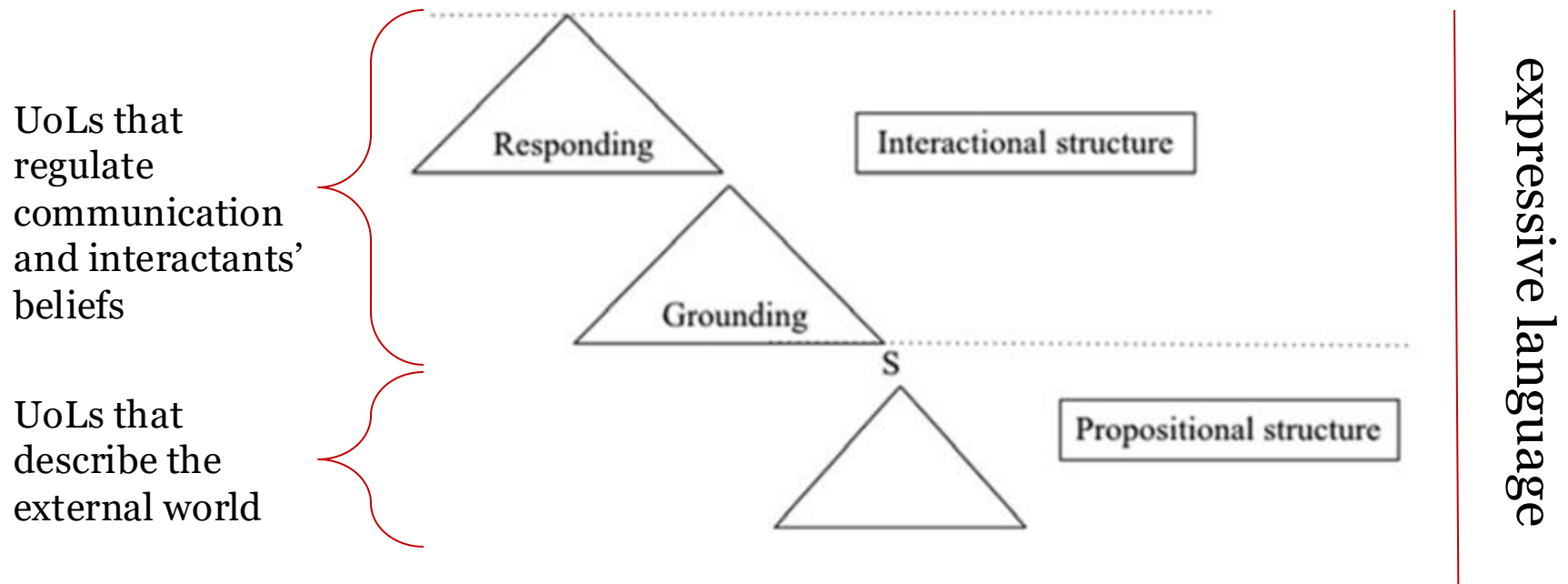Resp-set
Resp
GroundAdrP
GroundAdr
GroundAdr
GroundSpkrP ← Speaker's epistemic state
GroundSpkr
GroundSpkr
[+coin]
|
si
p-structure ← Values Polarity
[+coin]
|
si

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

RespP → what I put on/take from the table

Resp-set

Resp   GroundAdrP → (my assumptions about)
                      your epistemic states

   GroundAdr

      GroundAdr   GroundSpkrP → my epistemic state

         GroundSpkr

            GroundSpkr → polarity

               p-structure
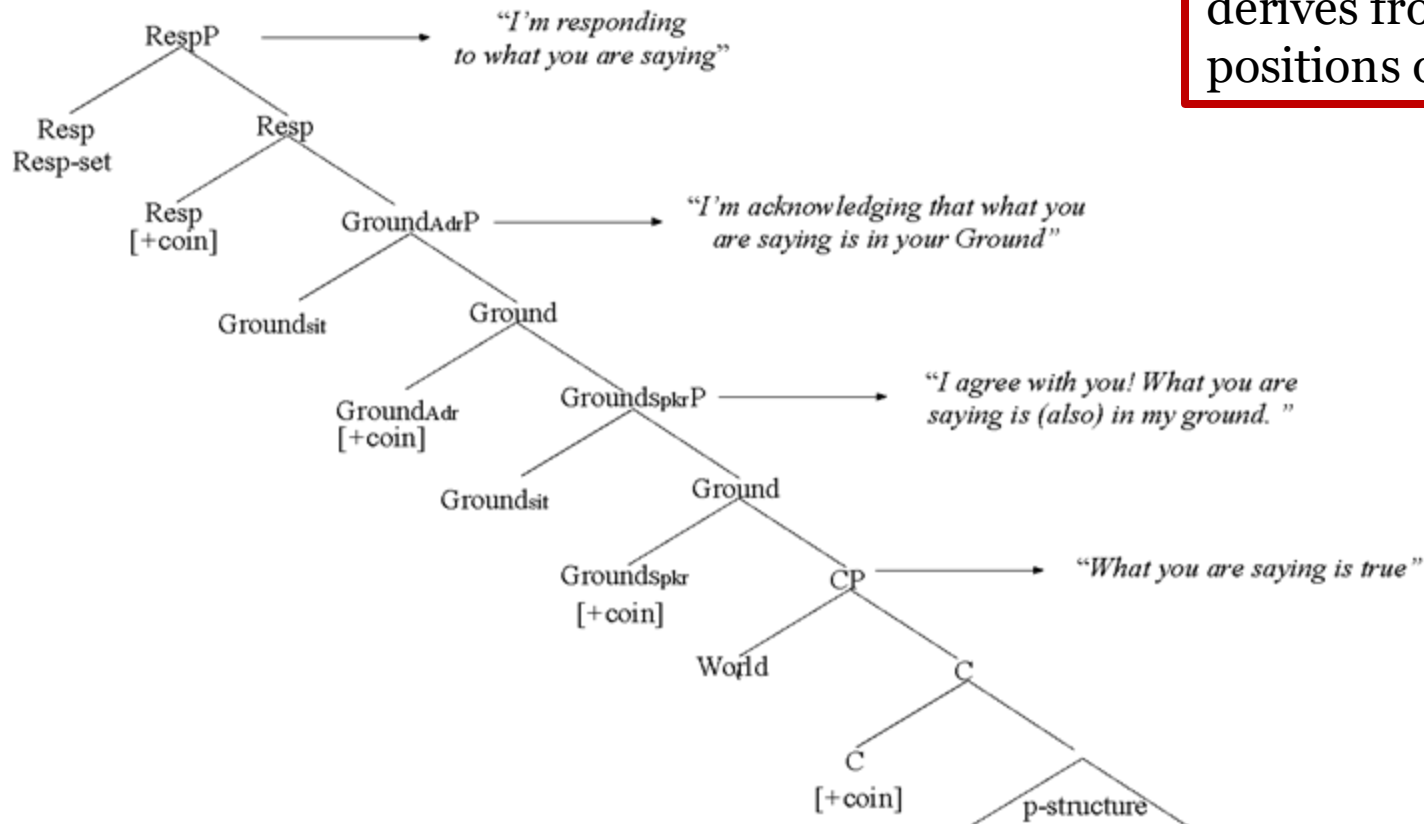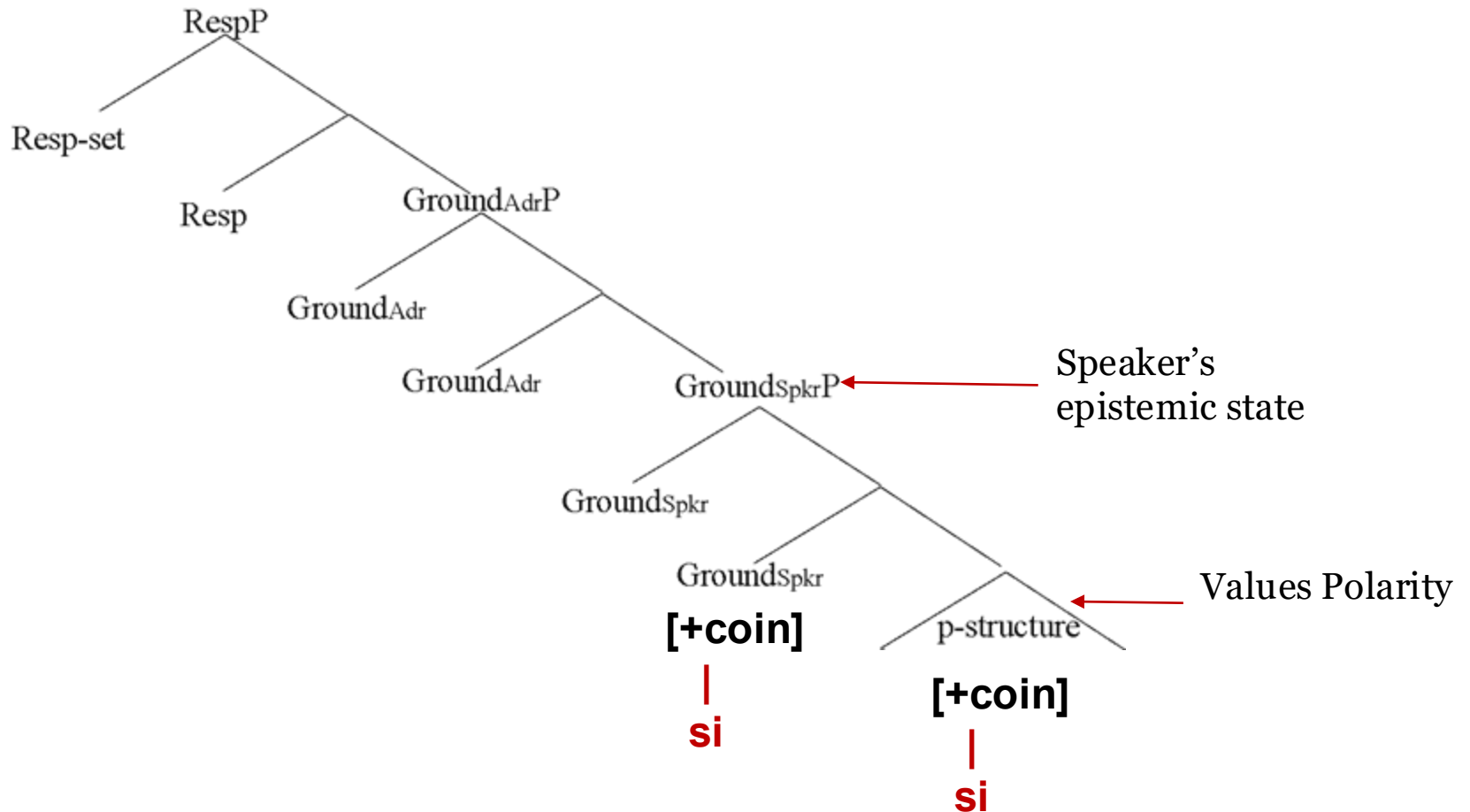
Where does emotivity come in?

Interactional Spine Hypothesis

UoLs that regulate communication and interactants' beliefs

UoLs that describe the external world

Responding — Interactional structure

Grounding
S

Propositional structure

expressive language

(Wiltschko, 2021, 2024)

- Expressions of feelings, moods, dispositions and attitudes through linguistic means permeate the entire linguistic system (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989)

- Expressivity arises from a stylistic lexical choice (Saab, 2021).

Analysing EM's

The idea

- EM's are **pro-forms** for Speaker's **epistemic state**

Grounds~pkr~

EM

The idea

- EM's are **pro-forms** for Speaker's **epistemic state**

Grounds$_{pkr}$

EM
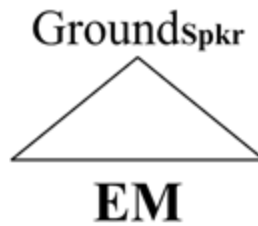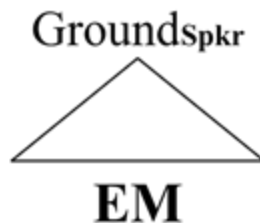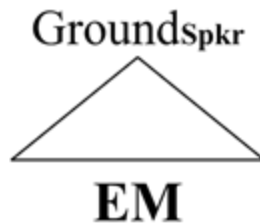
- Interactional **pro-forms** can occupy SpecRespP
  they mark that the speaker **reacts** to their own epistemic state

RespP
Resp-set
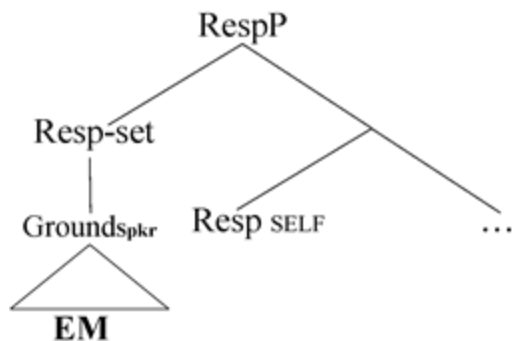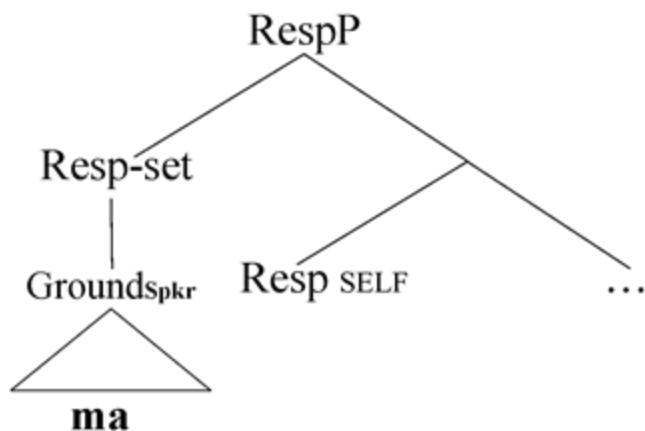Grounds$_{pkr}$ Resp SELF   ...
EM

The idea

- EM's are **pro-forms** for Speaker's **epistemic state**

Grounds_{spkr}

EM
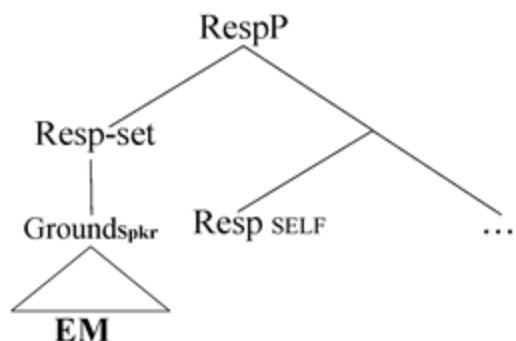
- They can occupy SpecRespP marking that the speaker **reacts** to their own epistemic state

RespP

Resp-set

Grounds_{spkr}   Resp SELF   …

EM

- Emotivity derives from lexical content
  use of *taboo* word signals heightened emotional state

Non emotive interjections

The syntax of talking heads

Martina Wiltschko [a] [b] [1] ✉

RespP
Resp-set
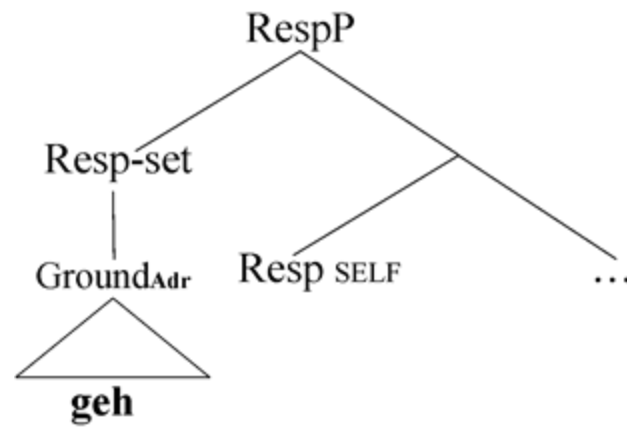Grounds_pkr   Resp SELF   …
ma

I see my friend drawing a beautiful picture. I'm surprised my friend can draw.

    Ma wos moch-st'n   du do   schens?
    MA what make-2SG-PRT 2SG there beautiful
    'What beautiful thing are you making?'

Non emotive interjections

The syntax of talking heads

Martina Wiltschko [a] [b] [1]

```
              RespP
             /     \
       Resp-set     \
          |          \
       GroundAdr   Resp SELF    ...
         / \
        /   \
       geh
```

I see my friend making an awkward contraption in our shared kitchen.

Geh	wos	moch-st'n	du	do	fia	an	bledsinn?
GEH	what	make-2SG=PRT	2SG	there	for	INDEF	nonsense

'What stupid thing are you doing?'

Propositional anaphors
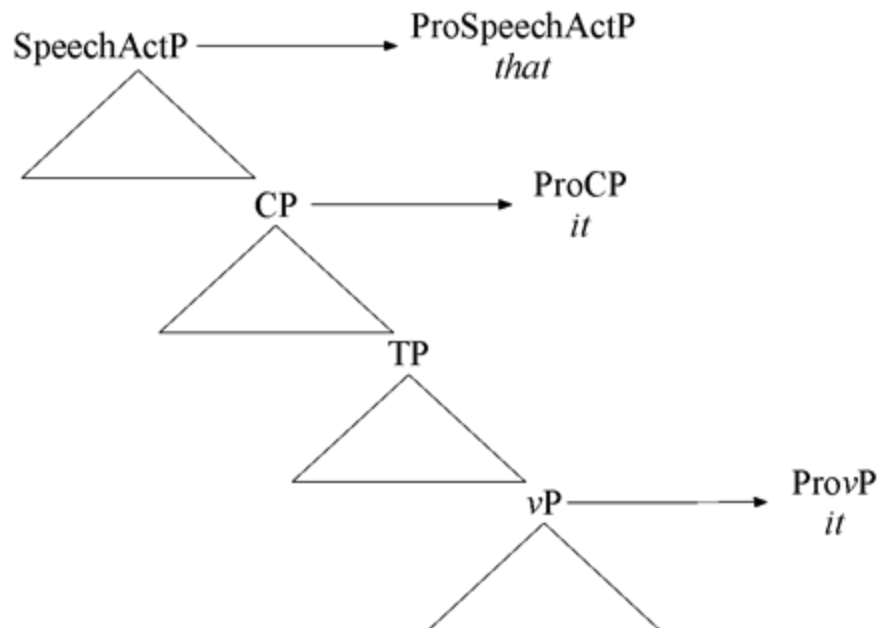
Krifka 2013

a.   Ede stole the cookie. Bill saw **it**.   EVENT ANAPHOR
b.   Ede stole the cookie. Bill knows **it**.   PROPOSITIONAL ANAPHOR
c.   A: Ede stole the cookie.
      B: **That**'s a lie!   SPEECH-ACT ANAPHOR

Interactional anaphors
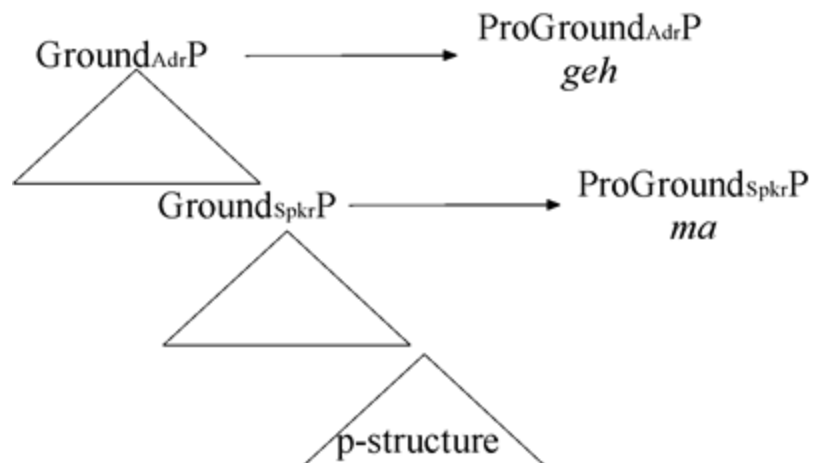
Wiltschko 2024

Interactional anaphors

Ma and *geh* are like EM's (minus the emotivity)

Stand alone
At the sight of something surprising or upon hearing something surprisi ç
Ma!

Turn initial
I suddenly remember that I need to return a book to my friend. So I tell her:

Ma	do	foit	ma	grod	ei,	I	woit	da	dei	buach	zruckgem
MA	there	falls	1SG.DAT	just	in,	I	wanted	2SG.DAT	2SG.POSS	book	return

'I just remembered: I wanted to return your book.'

Turn final
Des woa vielleicht sche! Ma!
Det was maybe beautiful. MA
'That was so beautiful. Wow.'

EM's

One-word reaction →

PAR	(..) right (...) but you got more single mom households than single father
INV	damn
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_f_01

Turn-initial position →

PAR	it was about seven of them n****s they beat the- they [beat the living sh...]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
PAR	[oh no-] oh no they caught me. They had it planned
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

Turn-final position →

PAR	you feel me .
INV	my bad I hadta take it there but damn .
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag2_m_03

Turn-medial position →

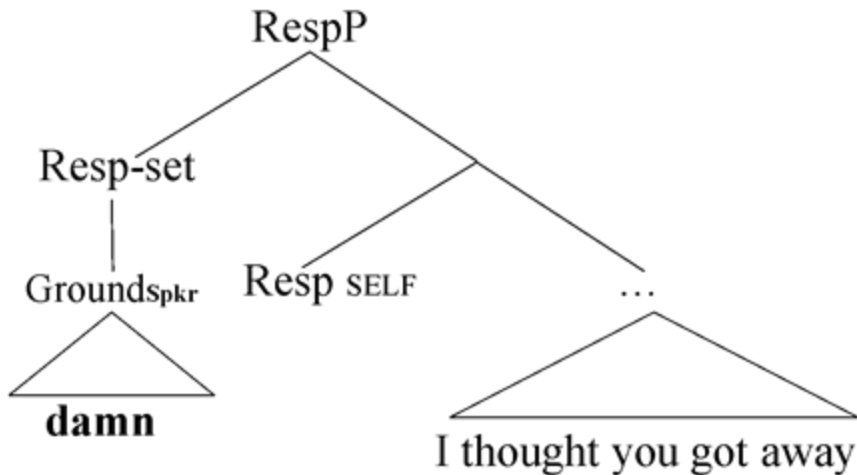| PAR	so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

The grammar of EMs

Turn initial

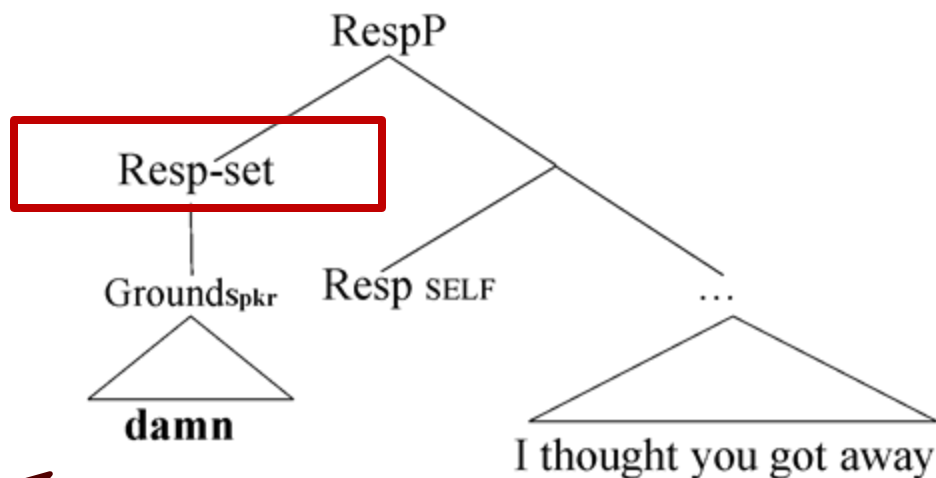|	
PAR	it was about seven of them niggas they beat the- they [beat the living sh...]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
	ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

113

The grammar of EMs

Turn initial

PAR	it was about seven of them niggas they beat the- they [beat the living sh...]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
	ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

RespP

Resp-set

Grounds_{pkr}   Resp SELF   ...
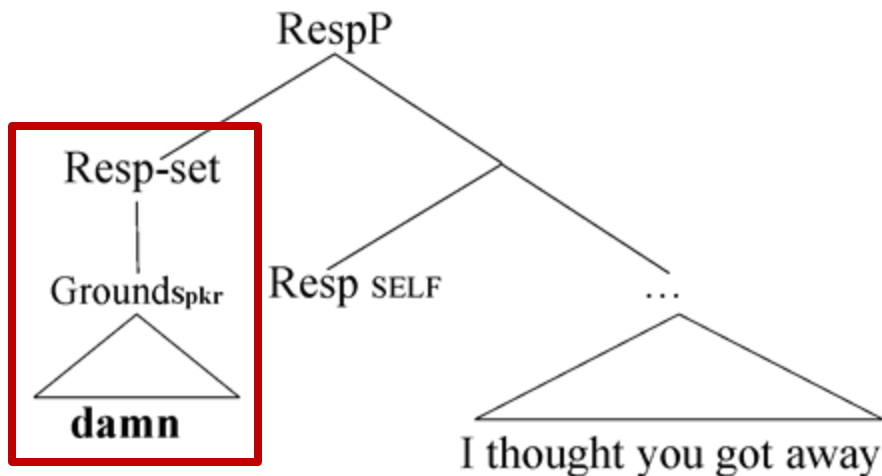
damn

I thought you got away

anaphoric

- reaction to previous turn

The grammar of EMs

Turn initial

PAR	it was about seven of them niggas they beat the- they [beat the living sh...]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
	ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

RespP
- Resp-set
  - Ground_pkr
    - damn
- Resp SELF
- ...
  - I thought you got away

anaphoric

- reaction to previous turn
- express surprise

115

Turn initial

PAR	it was about seven of them niggas they beat the- they [beat the living sh...]
INV	[damn I thought you got [away]]
	ATL_se0_ag1_m_03

- reaction to previous turn
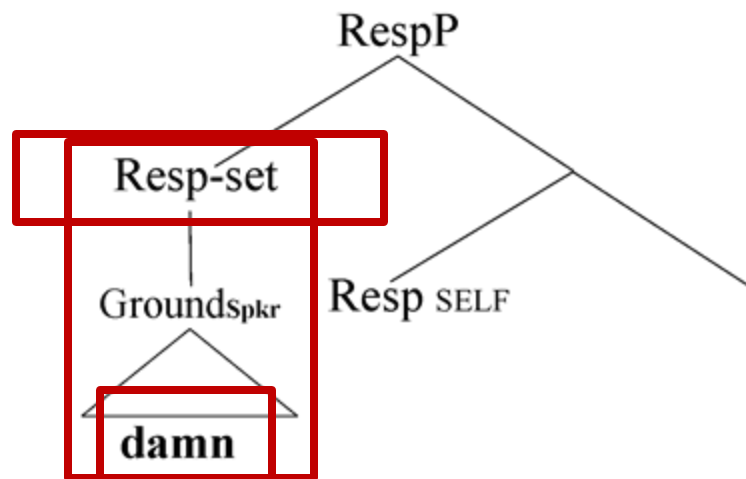- express surprise
- expresses emotivity
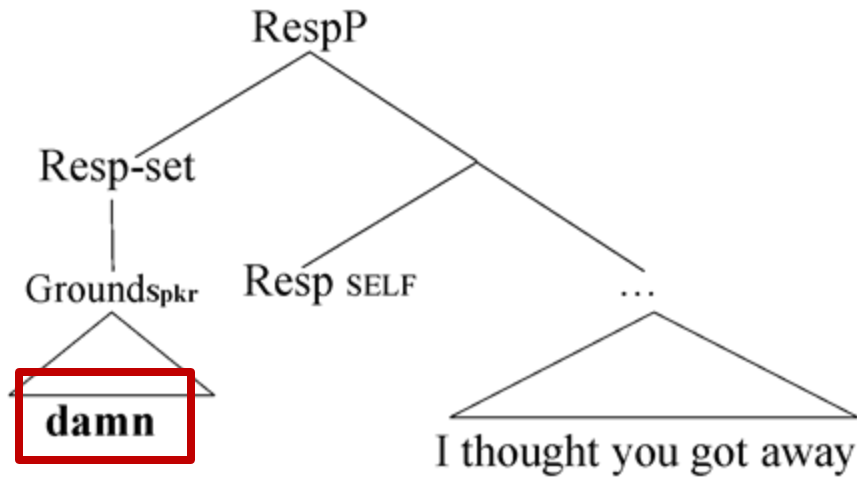
anaphoric

Stand alone

PAR	(..) right (...) but you got more single mom households than single father
INV	damn!
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_f_01

RespP

Resp-set

Grounds_{pkr}   Resp SELF

damn

anaphoric

- reaction (to previous turn)
- express surprise
- expresses emotivity

Stand alone

RespP

Resp-set

Groundspkr

damn
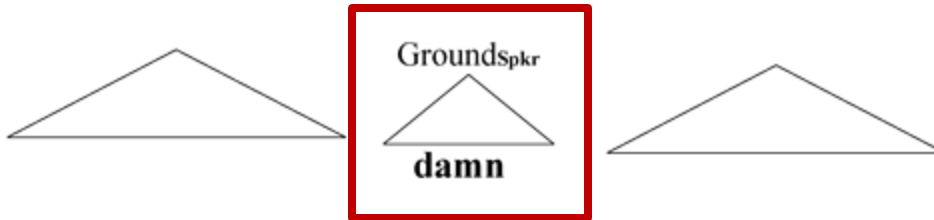
Resp SELF
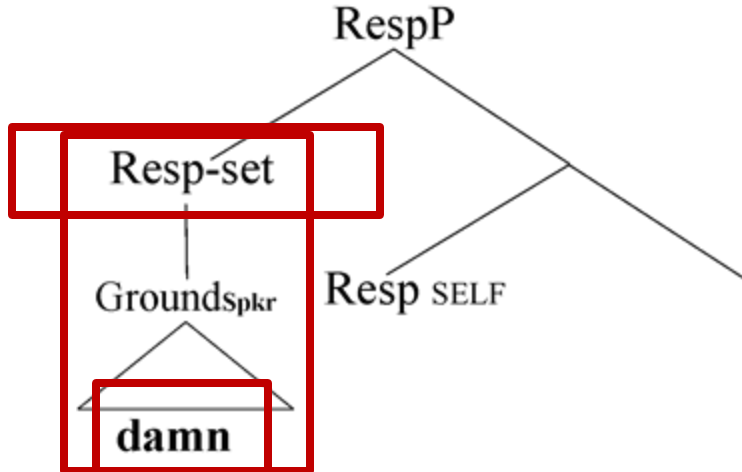
exophoric

- reaction (~~to previous turn~~)
- express surprise
- expresses emotivity

The grammar of EMs

Turn medial

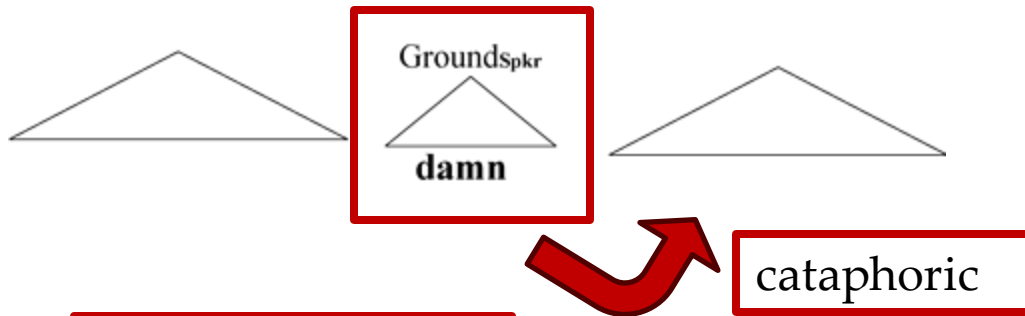| PAR	so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) god damn I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

Grounds_{pkr}

damn

- not a reaction
- "performative"

The grammar of EMs

Turn medial

PAR	so shit after that (.) shit after they fired me from that shit (.) <mark>god damn</mark> I started working at- the horse park up here in Conyers.
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag1_m_01

Ground$_{spkr}$

damn

cataphoric

- not a reaction
- "performative"

- less expressive
- flags newsworthy/dispreferred information for the addressee

120

The grammar of EMs

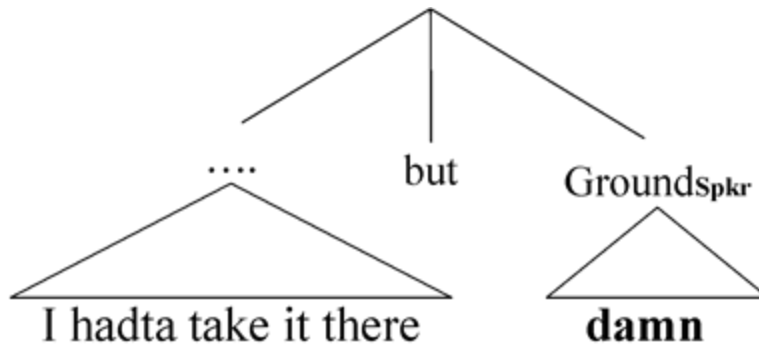**Turn final**

PAR	you feel me .
INV	my bad I hadta take it there but <mark>damn</mark> .
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag2_m_03

- not a reaction
- "performative"

Turn final

PAR	you feel me .
INV	my bad I hadta take it there but <mark>damn</mark> .
	CORAAL_ATL_se0_ag2_m_03

.... but Ground_{Spkr}

I hadta take it there **damn**
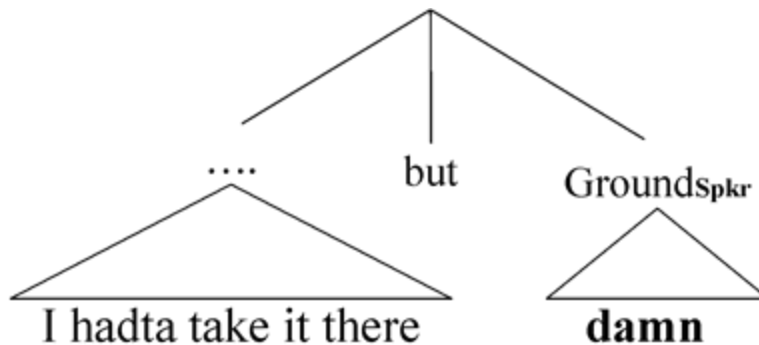
- not a reaction
- "performative"

- stresses a point

exophoric
or
anaphoric

Conclusions

About the distribution:

- *(god)damn, puta* and scheisse present similar (but not equal) distributional patterns across the studied languages.

- Sequential analysis revealed different functions of EMa, associated with the assessment of propositions made salient in context.

- Interactional position is key (but not enough) for determining their syntactic function.

About the content:

- Epistemically, *puta*, *scheisse* and *(god)damn* signal that a proposition is counter expected (for the speaker) or noteworthy/important (for the addressee): syntactic functions.

- Emotive content of EMs remains constant across context and is speaker-centered: lexical content.

Future work

Empirical tasks:

- Observe the uses of other EMs (e.g., positive EM) and analyse them using the same matrix.

Analytical tasks:

- To analyse the frequent co-occurrence of EMs with other particles (*oh damn!*, *puta oh!*) and make sense out of their internal order.

- To describe their prosodic features: pitch, length, volume, voice quality.

- To use emotion dimensions (valence, agency, activation, novelty) to describe the speaker's stance (Fontaine et al., 2013).

Theoretical tasks:

- To formalize an integrated description of the function of interactional items with their emotive content.

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