

Addressee surfacing and *pro* in politeness strategies: the politeness path

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Honorificity and discourse: the puzzle

- Romanian

(1) Măria sa poate aștepta 2 minute? Atunci __
highness 3SG.POSS could.3SG wait 2 minutes then *pro*

vă puteți primi cafeau-a.
2PL.ACC could.2PL get coffee-the

'Can His Highness wait for 2 minutes? Then, you could have coffee.'

- English

(2) John, we have to stop being loud. You're disturbing me. (father to son)

Solving the puzzle

- There is a tendency towards simplification:
 - match between syntactic features and addressee

Addressee surfacing → maximal person deixis
→ maximal event deixis

- Simplification results in a unidirectional politeness path observed cross-linguistically
- Framework: Wiltschko's Interactional Spine Hypothesis

Roadmap

1. Honorificity path
2. Politeness *we*
3. Addressee surfacing
4. Conclusion and final remarks

1. Honorificity path: Hebrew

(3) a. Im [adon-i]_i yuxal le-xakot 2 dakot, az
if sir-my.1SG.POSS be.able.FUT.3SG.M to-wait 2 minutes, then
[__ / ata]_i tuxal li-Stot kafe.
pro / you be.able.FUT.2SG.M to-drink coffee
'If you (HON) could wait for 2 minutes, then you could have coffee.'

b. * [__ / ata]_i tuxal li-Stot kafe im [adon-i]_i
pro / you be.able.FUT.2SG.M to-drink coffee if sir-my.1SG.POSS
yuxal le-xakot 2 dakot.
be.able.FUT.3SG.M to-wait 2 minutes
*'You could have coffee if you (HON) could wait for 2 minutes.'

1. Honorificity path: Hebrew

■ Honorificity
■ No honorificity

	Highest honorificity	Intermediate honorificity		No honorificity
		Higher honorificity	Low honorificity	
Addressee surfacing	possessive honorific	<i>pro</i>	overt pronoun	overt pronoun
φ -features	Tense: future Person: 3	Tense: future Person: 2	Tense: future Person: 2	Tense: present Person: 2



1. Honorificity path: Romanian

(4) a. [Măria Sa]_i poate aștepta 2 minute?
highness 3SG.POSS could.3SG wait 2 minutes

Atunci [__]_i vă puteți primi cafeau-a.
then *pro* 2PL.ACC could.2PL get coffee-the

'Can His Highness wait for 2 minutes? Then, you could have coffee.'

b. *[__]_i Puteți aștepta 2 minute? Atunci [Măria Sa]_i
pro could.2PL wait 2 minutes then highness 3SG.POSS



își poate primi cafeau-a.
3SG.ACC could.3SG get coffee-the

*'Can His Highness wait for 2 minutes? Then, you could have coffee.'

1. Honorificity path: High honorificity in Romanian

	Lexical element	Possessive	Verbal agreement
High Honorificity	<i>Domnia/Măria/Luminăția/etc.</i> 'Lordship/ Highness/ Lightness'	<i>Sa</i> 3SG	3SG
		<i>Voastră</i> 2PL	3SG 2PL
		<i>Ta</i> 2SG	3SG 2PL

1. Honorificity path: Romanian

 Honorificity
 No honorificity

	Highest honorificity	Intermediate honorificity	No honorificity
Addressee surfacing	possessive honorific	<i>pro</i>	<i>pro/overt pronoun</i>
φ -features	Person: 3 Number: SG	Person: 2 Number: PL	Person: 2 Number: SG



1. Honorificity path: The features of *pro*

- Hebrew

(5) Im [adon-i]_i yenake kan, az [__]_i tir'e
if sir-my.1SG.POSS clean.FUT.3SG.M here then *pro* see.FUT.2SG.M
et acmexa ba-mar'a.
ACC yourself.2SG.M in+the-mirror

'If you (HON) clean here, then (you) would see yourself in the mirror.'

- Romanian

(6) [Măria Sa]_i are nevoie de ajutor? [__]_i Vă vedeți
highness 3SG.POSS has.3SG need of help *pro* 2PL.ACC see.2PL
în oglindă?
in mirror

'Does His Highness need help? Can you see yourself in the mirror?'

1. High honorificity: No [HON] to be found

- **Language utilizes existing features to encode politeness (Wang, 2023)**

- Plural
 - Third person
- Recycling

- **Features recruited for honorificity are semantically unmarked, which leads to indirectness and vagueness:**
 - More permissive in interpretation range

2. More recycling: Politeness *we*

- English

(7) John, we have to stop. (father to son)

- Spanish

(8) [__/#Nosotros]_i tenemos que parar.
pro we have.1PL.PRS to stop

[__]_i No me estáis escuchando.
pro not 1SG.ACC are-PRS.2PL listening

'We have to stop. You are not listening to me.' (teacher to students)

3. Addressee surfacing: Feature path

■ Honorificity
■ No honorificity

		Highest distance	Intermediate distance	No distance
Addressee surfacing		possessive honorific	<i>pro</i> overt pronoun	<i>pro</i> overt pronoun
φ-features	Tense	future	future	present
	Person & number	3SG	1PL 2SG 2PL	2SG



3. Addressee surfacing: Person and event deixis

Types of deixis

Person deixis	Event deixis
Person	Tense
Number	Mood
Addressee	

3. Addressee surfacing: Deixis path

Reduction of deixis reduces threat of face-threatening acts.

(Brown & Levinson, 1987)

Minimal deixis	Some deixis	Maximal deixis
3SG	1PL, 2PL	2SG
Possessive honorifics	<i>pro</i>	Overt pronoun
Future tense; conditional mood	Future tense; conditional mood	Present tense



3. Addressee surfacing: Person and event deixis

- *Abruzzese* (Subjunctive, *irrealis*, event deixis):

(9) Si li vu fa, pi ffavore

if it want-2_{SG} do for favour

'Please do it' (Lit. if you want to do it)

- *Chinese* (*pro*, person deixis):

(10) __/#ni shenme shihou youkong ne?

pro/#you what time free Q?

'When are you free?'

3. Addressee surfacing: Feature path

Highest honorificity

Indirect address
Maximal distance
Minimal deixis



Intermediate honorificity

Less indirect address
Intermediate distance
Some deixis

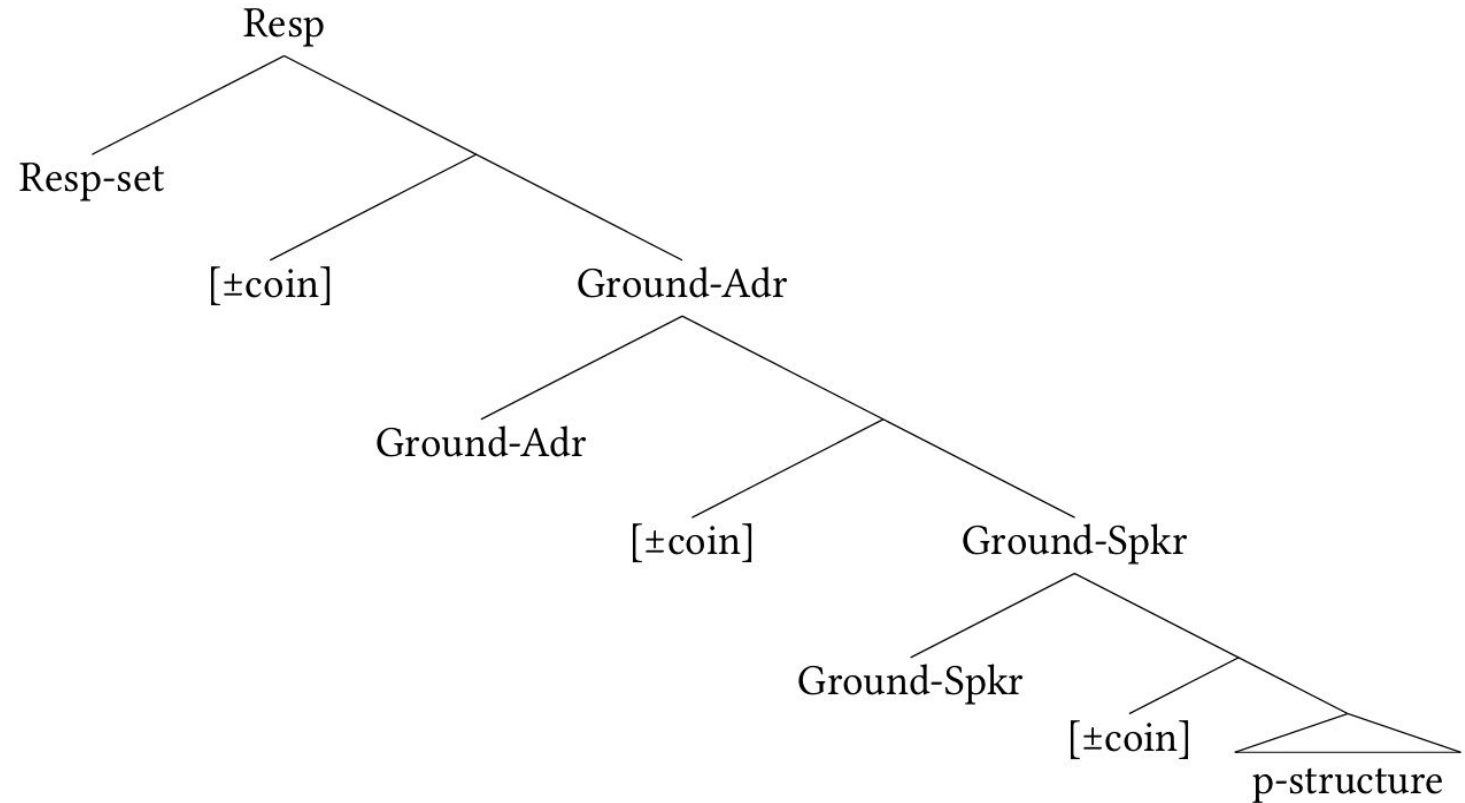


No honorificity

Direct address
No distance
Maximal deixis

3. Addressee surfacing: Interactional spine hypothesis (ISH)

- Two layers:
 - Grounding Layer:
Regulates common ground
 - Response Layer:
Regulates turn-taking
- The [+/-coin] feature:
orders the two arguments
it relates



(Wiltschko, 2021, 2022)

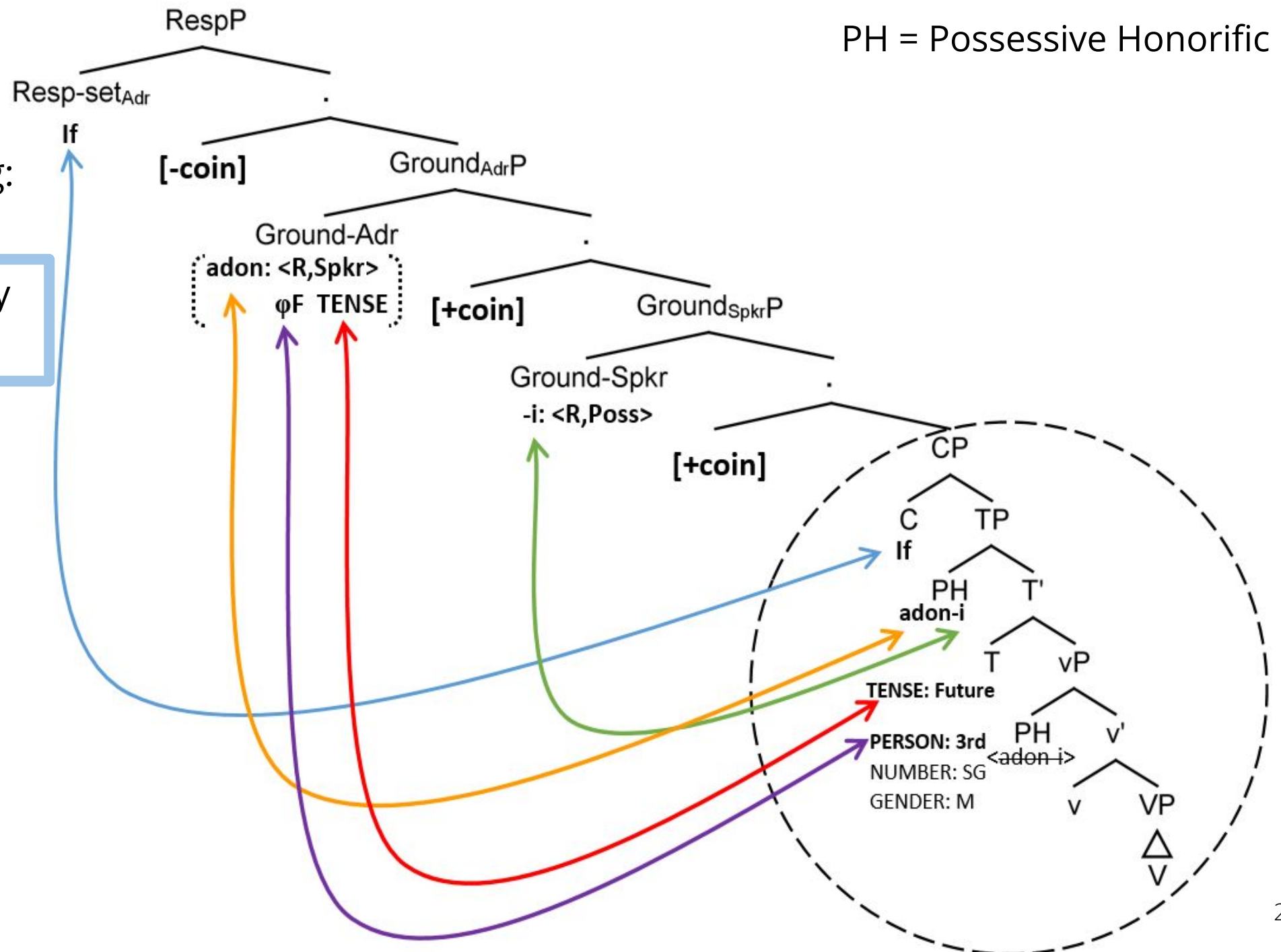
3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking nodes

- Hebrew

- (3) a. **Im** [**adon-i**]_i yuxal le-xakot 2 dakot, az
if **sir-my.1SG.POSS** be-able.FUT.3SG.M to-wait 2 minutes, then
[__ / ata]_i tuxal li-Stot kafe.
pro / you be-able.FUT.2SG.M to-drink coffee
'If you (HON) could wait for 2 minutes, then you could have coffee.'

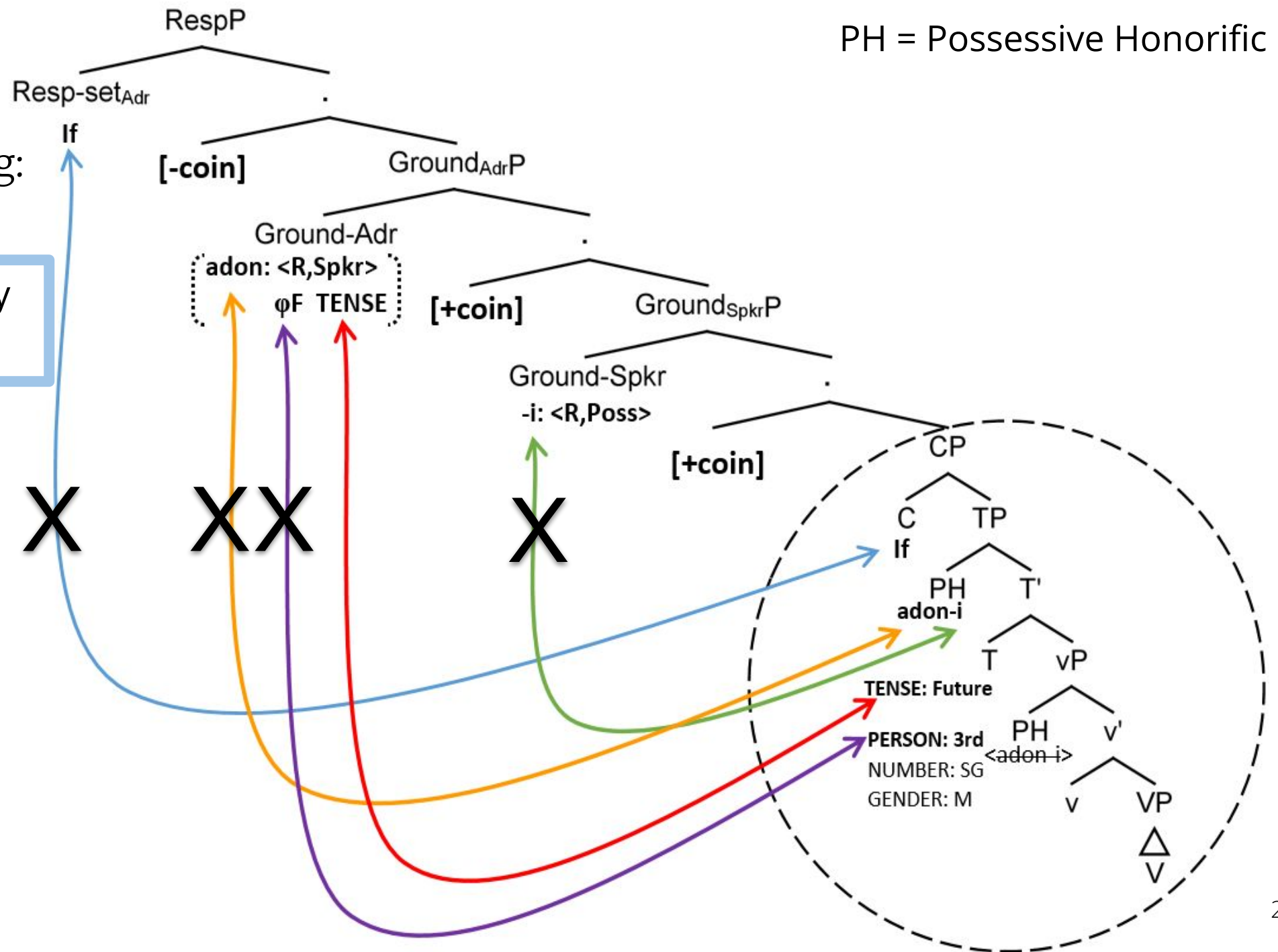
3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking tree

- Highest honorificity
- Minimal deixis



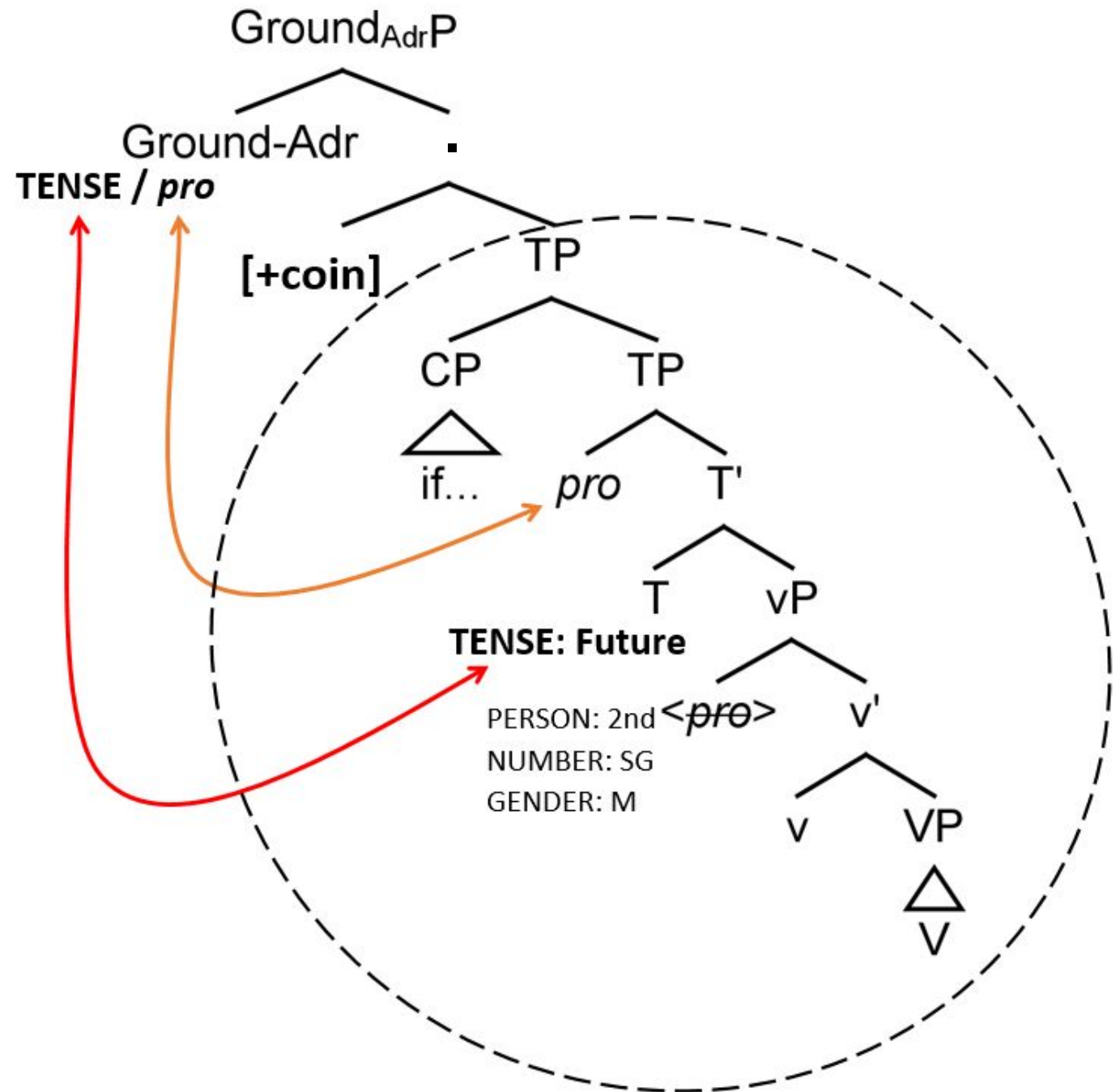
3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking tree

- Highest honorificity
- Minimal deixis



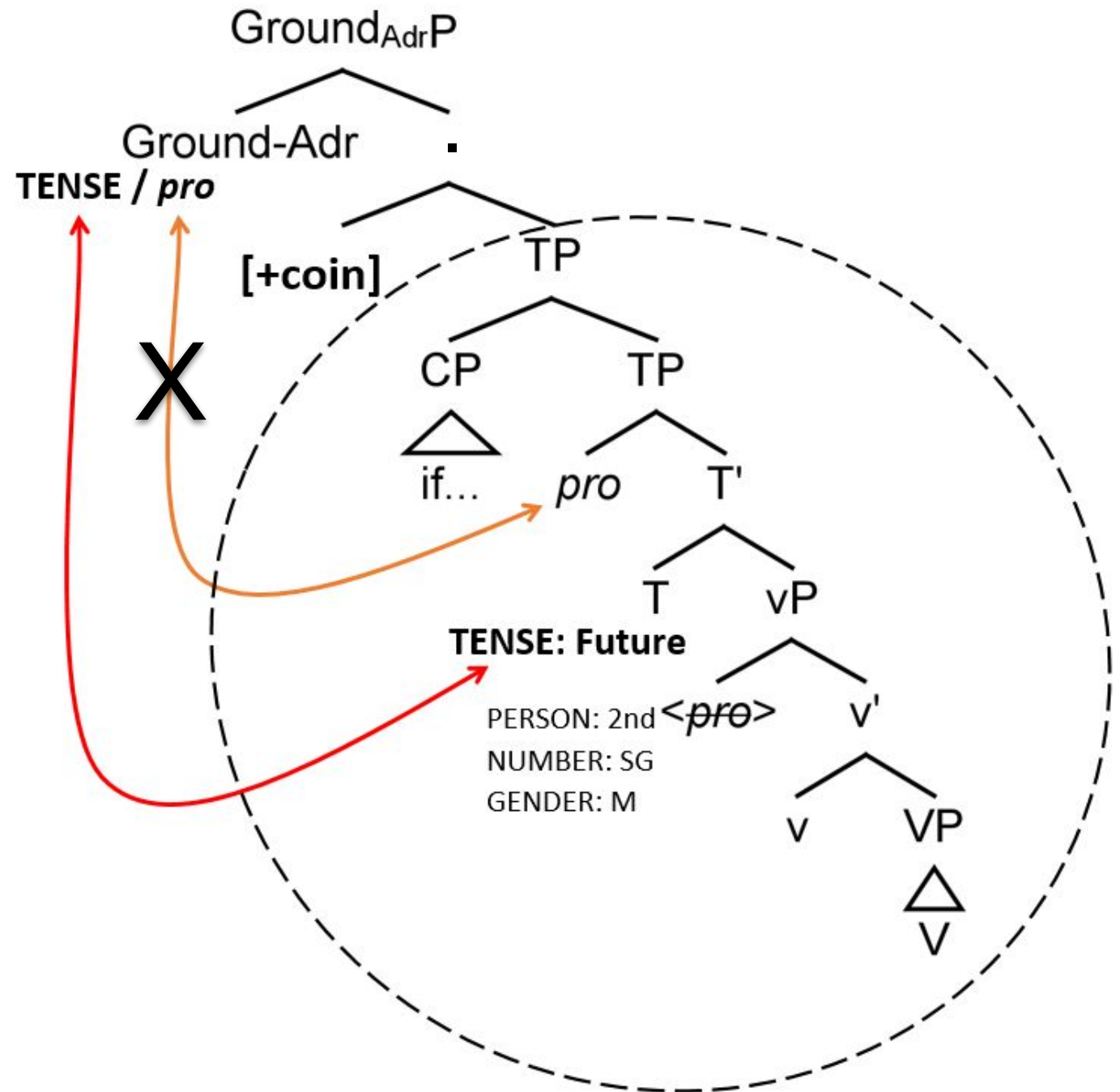
3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking tree

- Intermediate honorificity
- Some deixis



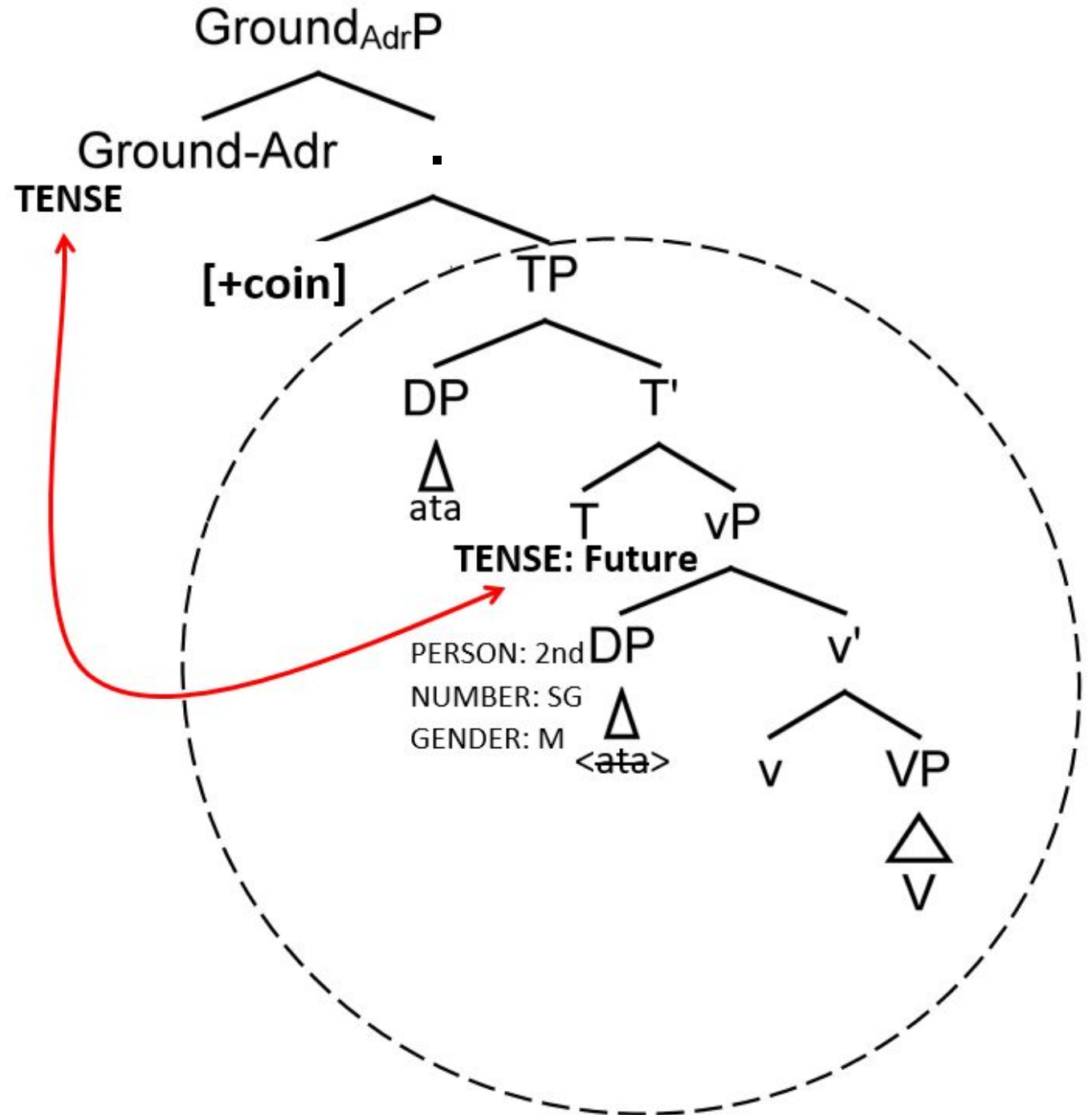
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- Intermediate honorificity
- Some deixis



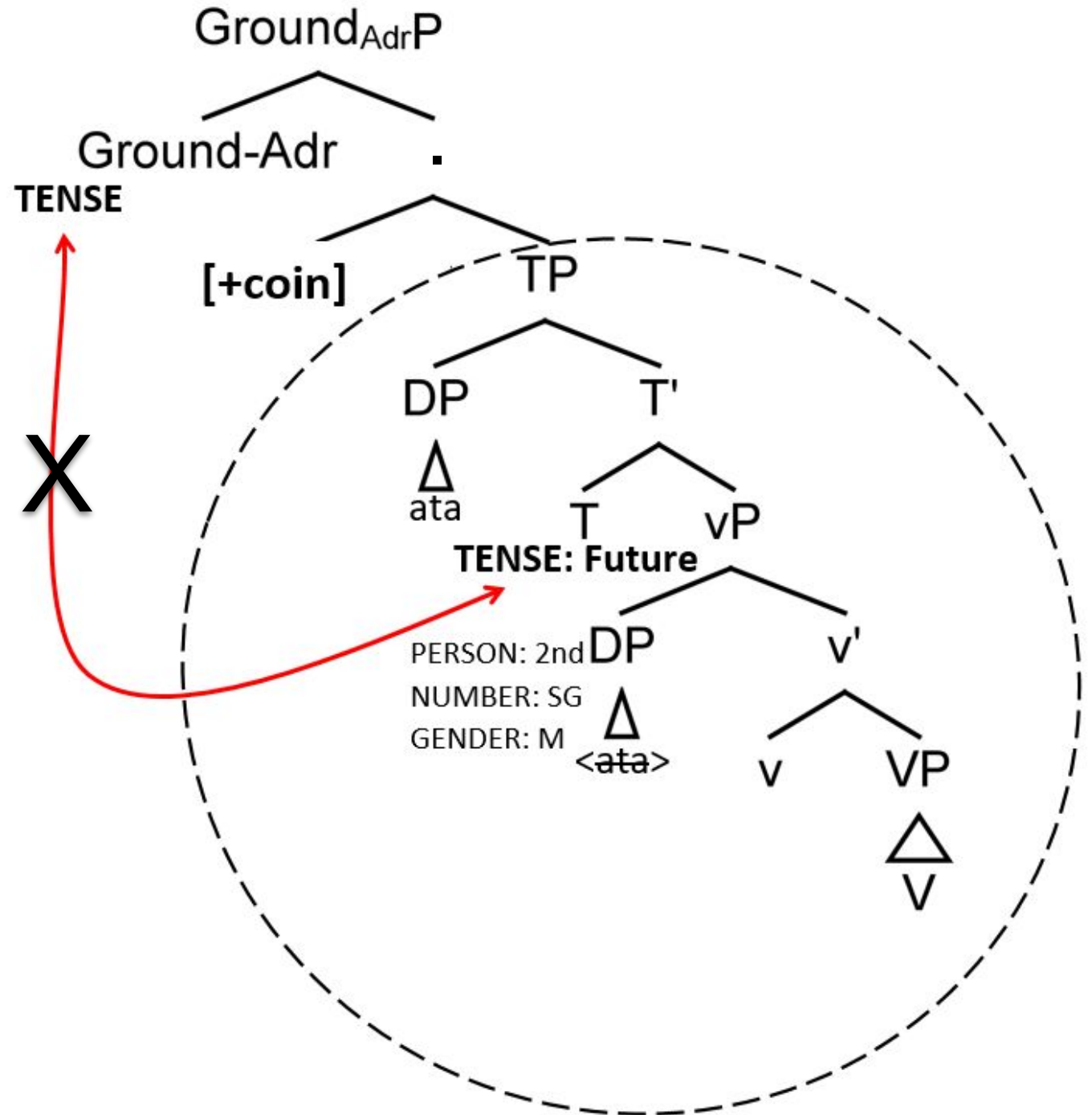
3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking tree

- Intermediate honorificity
- Some deixis



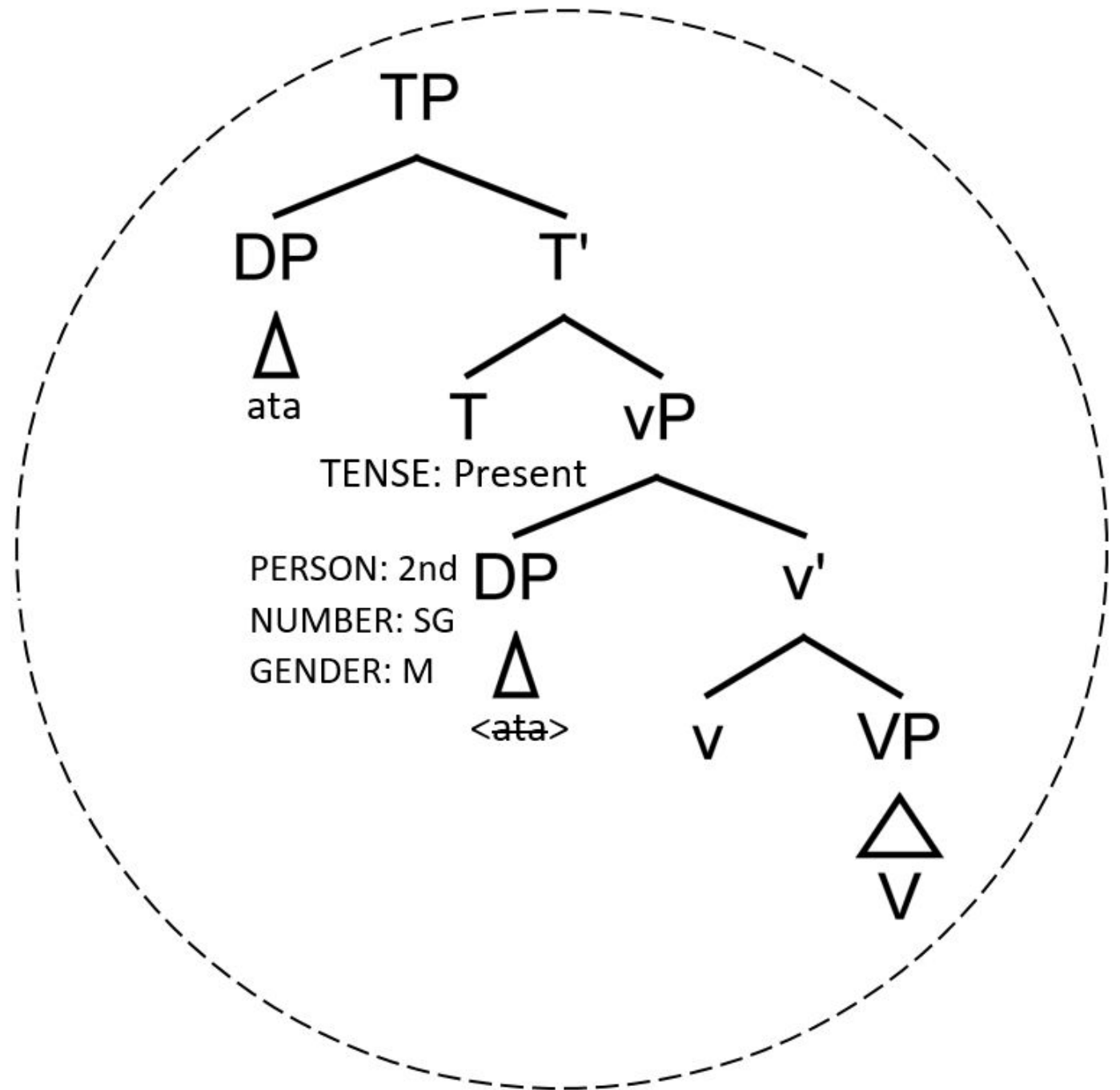
3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking tree

- Intermediate honorificity
- Some deixis



3. Addressee surfacing: (De)linking tree

- No honorificity
- Maximal deixis



3. Addressee surfacing: Feature path

Highest honorificity

Indirect address
Maximal distance
Minimal deixis



Intermediate honorificity

Less indirect address
Intermediate distance
Some deixis



No honorificity

Direct address
No distance
Maximal deixis

4. Conclusion and final remarks

- Possessive honorifics and Politeness *we* underlyingly follow the same unidirectional path
- Maintaining complex honorific links to the interactional layer is too demanding in the long run
 - there is a tendency to reduce (linking) complexity
 - the addressee will eventually surface in its most explicit syntactic form (e.g. 2nd person)
- Honorificity is dependent on person and event deixis

Thank you!



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shaping tomorrow

References

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A: Abruzzese
 C: Chinese
 E: English
 H: Hebrew
 R: Romanian
 S: Spanish

Deixis Types	Features	Politeness path		
		Highest honorificity (Minimal deixis)	Intermediate honorificity / politeness (Some deixis)	No honorificity (Maximal deixis)
Event deixis	Tense	Future (H)	Future (H) Present (E)	Present (E, H) Default tense
	Mood	Conditional (H)	Conditional (A, E, H, S)	
Person deixis	Person	3rd (H, R, S)	1st (E) 2nd (H, R) 3rd (S)	2nd
	Number	Sg (H, R, S)	Sg (H, S) Pl (E, R)	Sg (H, R, S)
	Addressee (subject expression)	Possessive honorific (H, R, S)	overt pronoun (H, S) / <i>pro</i> (C, H, R, S)	overt pronoun (H, R) <i>pro</i> (R, S)