

Relation 9: Message-Topic

Preamble

Message and Topic are roles in the FrameNet Communication frame

(http://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=118&frame=Communication&)

though this frame is restricted to linguistic communication and hence more restrictive than our Message-Topic relation. Many inventories of semantic relations for compound nouns contain a relation such as Topic (Nastase and Szpakowicz 2003) or About (Levi 1978, Ó Séaghdha 2008).

Definition

Message-Topic(X, Y) is true for a sentence S that mentions the entities X and Y if and only if:

(1) S, X and Y are in accordance with the general annotation guidelines:

http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=dfhkmm46_0f63mfyf7

(2) the situation described in S entails the fact that X is a communicative message containing information about Y .

Definition - Restrictions

- (a) A Message has descriptive, significative or propositional content and has been produced to communicate this content.
- (b) A Message must be perceivable by someone other than its creator. Thus, dreams, feelings and so on are not permitted. Quarrels, arguments, disputes, verbal fights, etc. are NOT considered Messages unless they are communicating a message to parties that are not involved (e.g., "a public dispute on TV between presidential candidates"). Questions asked are Messages.
- (c) Prototypical Messages include speech acts, written texts, works of art and transmitted communications.
- (d) In many cases, a noun phrase can be interpreted as denoting both a communication channel (medium) and the message it contains, for example book, signal, painting. In such cases (and only in such cases), we will allow these channels as Messages. Processes like study, investigation, research, work, plans, procedures, measures, protocols, policy, etc. are not considered Messages unless they also denote the written text or communicate the outcome of the process rather than the process itself.
- (e) Communicative events such as performances and exhibitions can also be Messages. So can be meetings, conferences, symposia, workshops, etc.
- (f) Scientific disciplines cannot be Messages.
- (g) There is no restriction on the Topics -- a Message can be about anything.
- (h) The Message cannot represent a Topic by itself, it should have contents and these contents should have a Topic. Thus, "the icon/ X represents a file/ Y " is a negative, while "the icon/ X depicts a saint/ Y " is a positive example.

Definition - Overlaps

- (i) The relation between a message and any parts which are themselves messages is Component-Whole ("the first section of his speech").

Positive Examples

"The recommendations contained the following key <e1>points</e1> about the <e2>new politics</e2> of the government."

Message-Topic(e1, e2)

Comment: politics is the topic of the key points.

"Ed Miliband, the climate change secretary, used a <e1>speech</e1> at the Guardian Hay festival over the weekend to call for a modern and more pluralistic <e2>political system</e2>".

Message-Topic(e1, e2)

Comment: We can interpret here that the political system is the topic of the speech.

"I have been hearing the <e1>news</e1> from the web about the market <e2>reviews</e2> for windows 7, they were disappointing."

Message-Topic(e1, e2)

Comment: Note that there is also an Entity-Origin relation, yet it is between news and web.

"Here we offer a selection of our favourite <e1>books</e1> on military <e2>history</e2>."

Message-Topic(e1, e2)

Comment: Book are acceptable messages, as noted under restriction (d).

"This <e1>report</e1> describes the <e2>role</e2> of neuroprotection in acute disorders such as stroke and injuries of the nervous system."

Message-Topic(e1, e2)

Comment: Prototypical message, a written text about a specific matter.

"Mr Cameron asked a <e1>question</e1> about tougher <e2>sentences</e2> for people carrying knives."

Message-Topic(e1, e2)

Comment: Prototypical example, a speech act, a question about a specific matter.

Near-miss Negative Examples

"The <e1>recommendations</e1> contained the following key <e2>points</e2> about the new politics of the government."

Component-Whole(e2, e1)

Comment: This is in accordance with point (i) in the section on Overlaps above. The topic is "new politics".

"<e1>Witnesses</e1> described a <e2>scene</e2> of level-headed teamwork."

Other

Comment: Witnesses are not messages, instead they are the producers of a (possible) message about the scene.

"Springsteen's "Born to Run" is the greatest rock <e1>song</e1> in <e2>history</e2>."

Other

Comment: History is not the topic of the song. The relation between e1 and e2 is a kind of temporal location (i.e., Other).

"I always have <e1>dreams</e1> about <e2>alligators</e2>, last night was no exception."

Other

Comment: Unless stated otherwise (messages from someone else?), dreams are assumed to be internal to their creator and cannot be perceived by others. Condition (b) is violated.