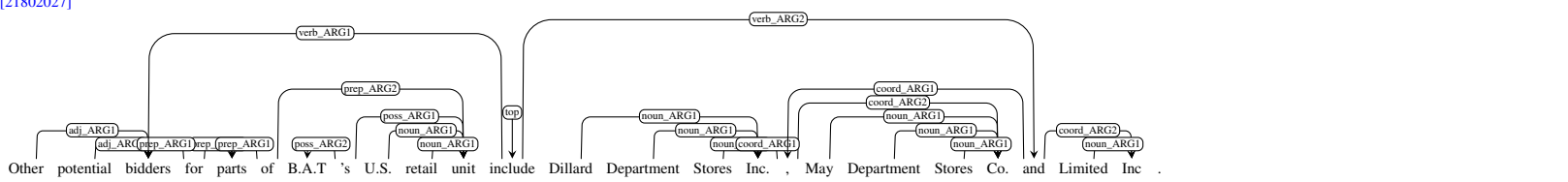
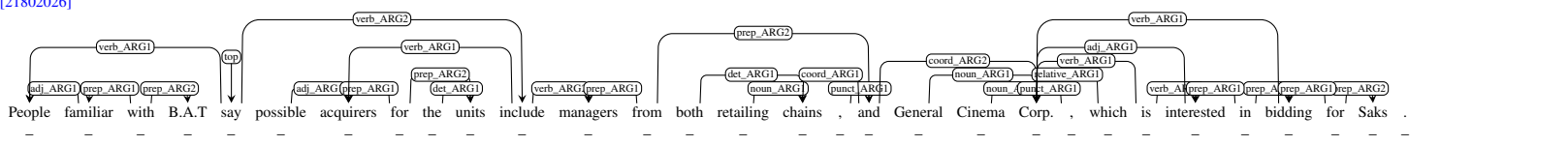
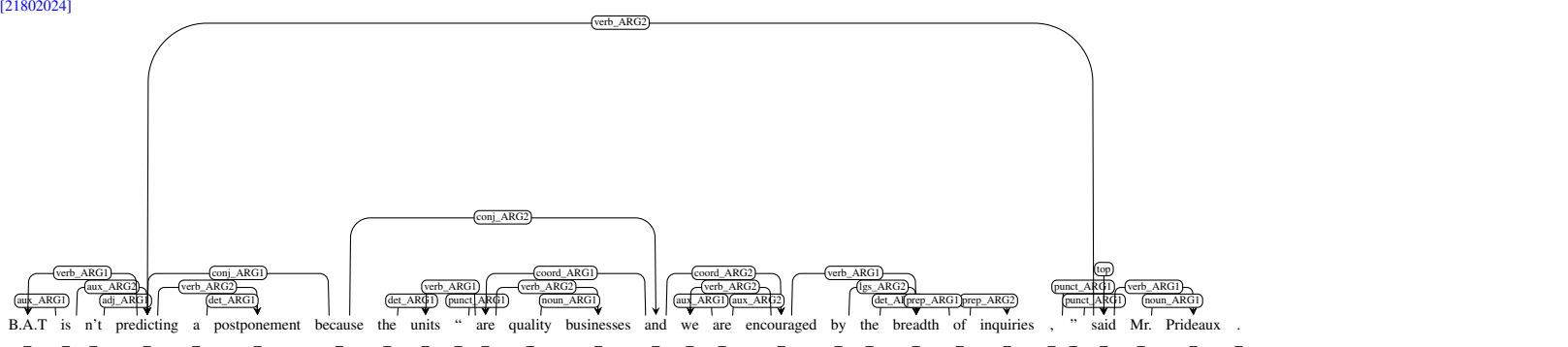
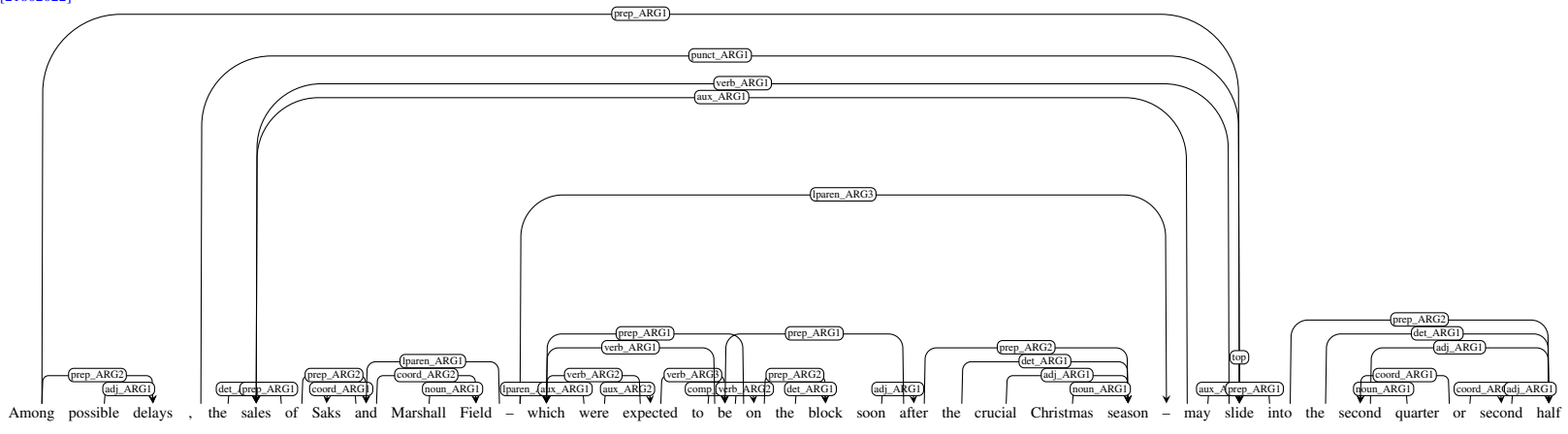
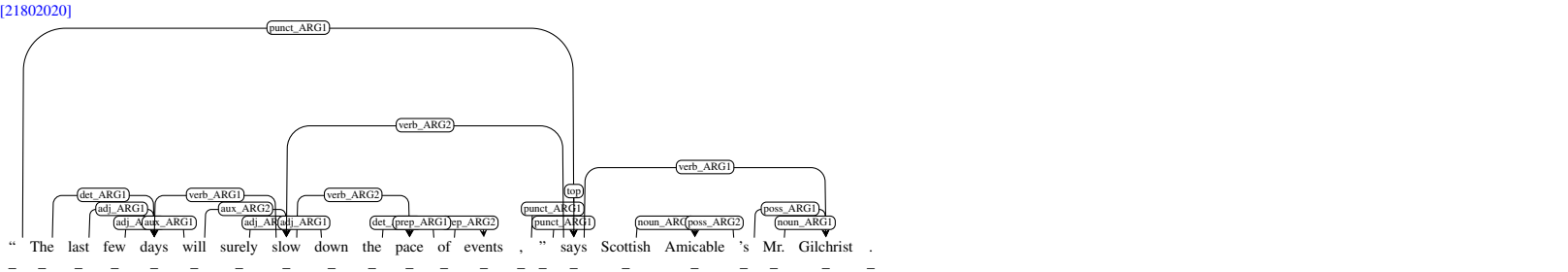
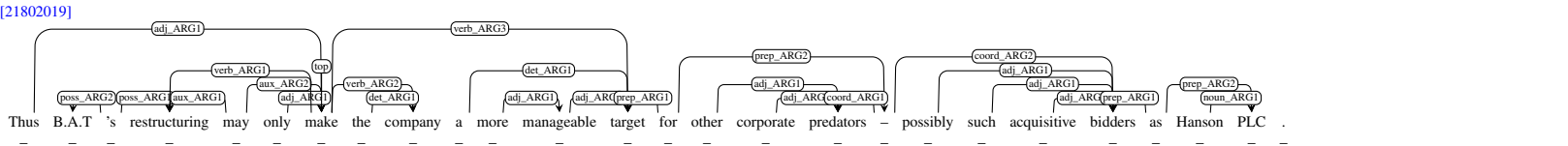
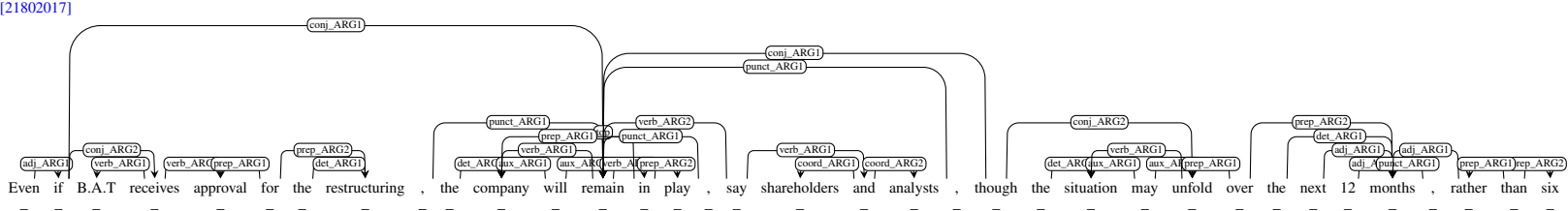
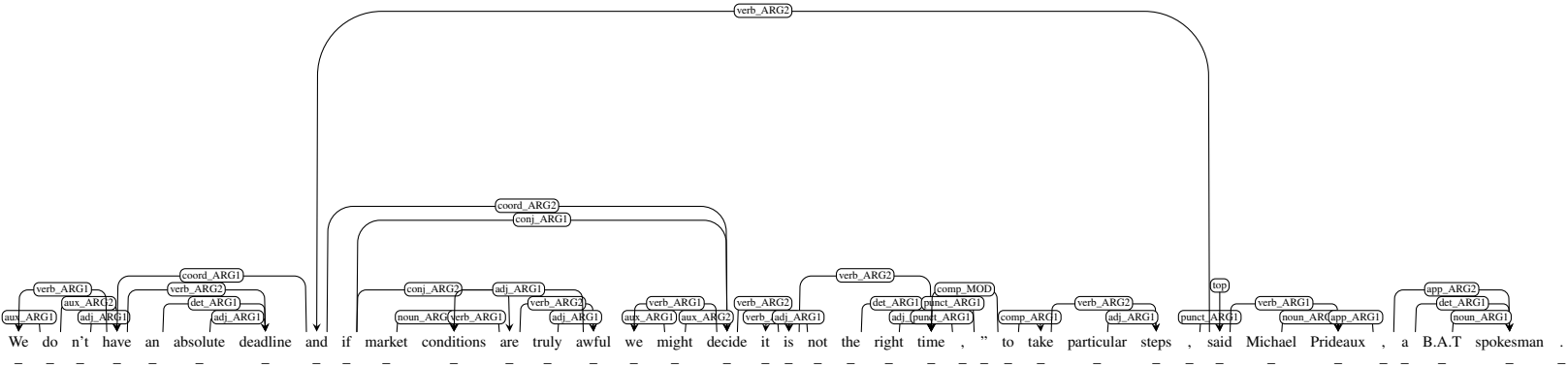


[21802003]





B.A.T has declined to identify the potential bidders .

[21802029]

Though Sir James has said he intends to mount a new bid for B.A.T once approval from U.S. insurance regulators is received , jitters over prospects for junk-bond financing and U.S. leverage buy-outs are making investors more skeptical about Sir James 's prospects .

[21802030]

His initial offer indicated he needed to raise as much as 80 % of the takeover financing through the debt markets .

[21802031]

Market uncertainty also clouds the outlook for B.A.T 's attracting a premium price for its U.S. retailing properties .

[21802032]

Finally , Tuesday 's California earthquake initially knocked 3.7 % off B.A.T 's share price in London yesterday because of fears of the potential claims to Los Angeles-based Farmers , which has a substantial portion of its property and casualty exposure in California .

[21802033]

On Farmers , Mr. Prideaux said it is too early to quantify the level of potential claims .

[21802034]

He added B.A.T 's has no expectation of a material impact on Farmers .