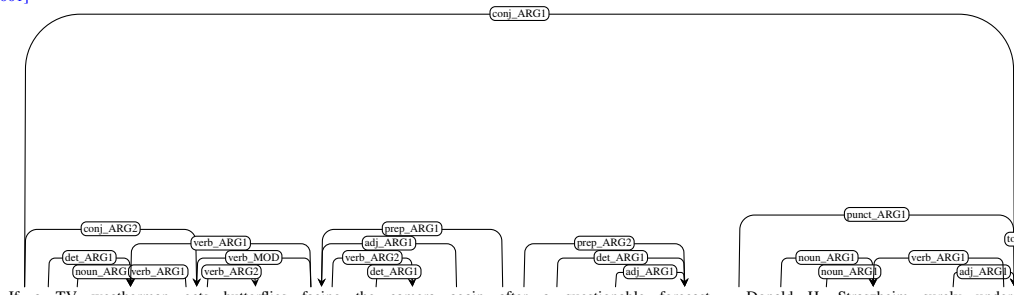
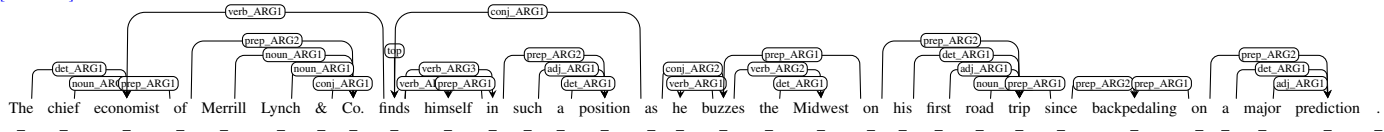


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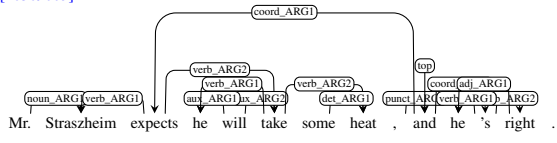
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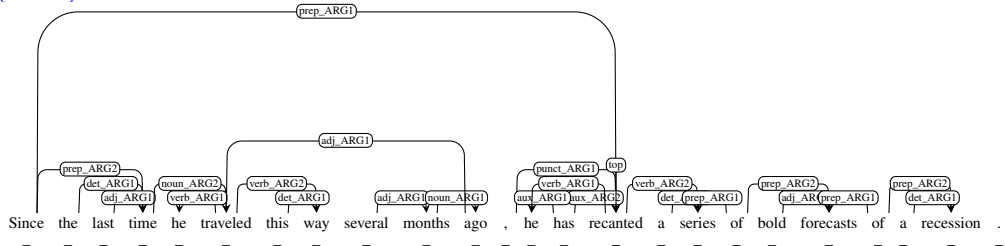
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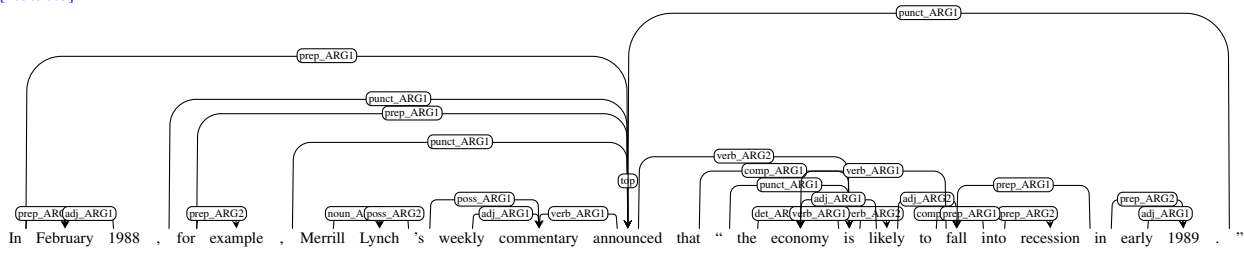
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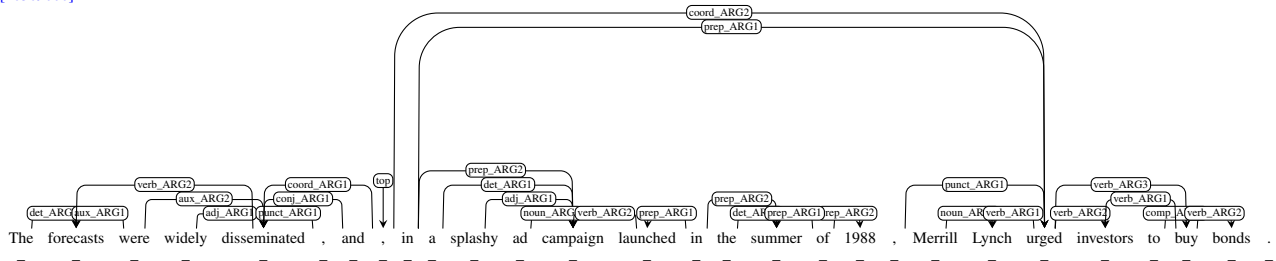
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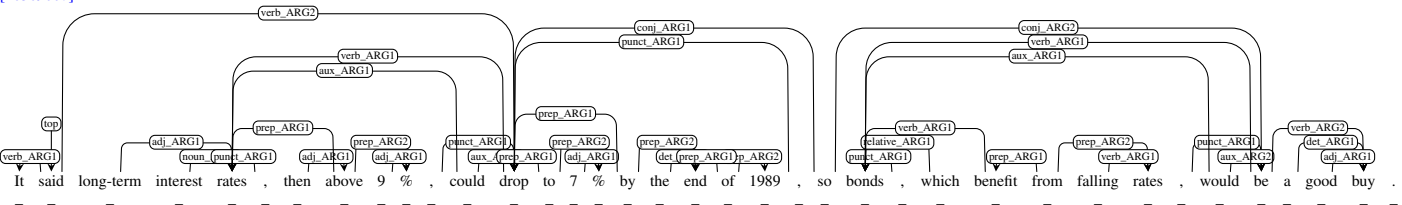
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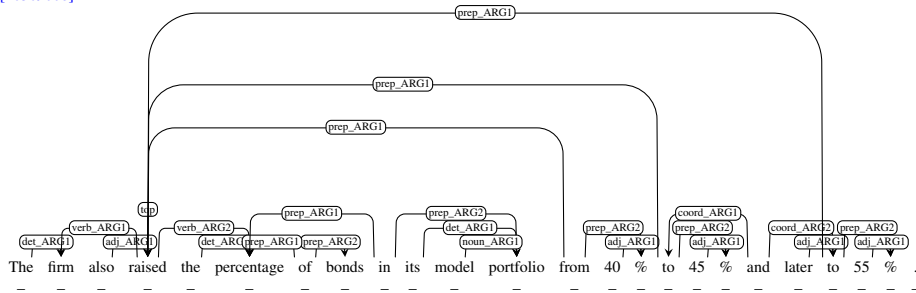
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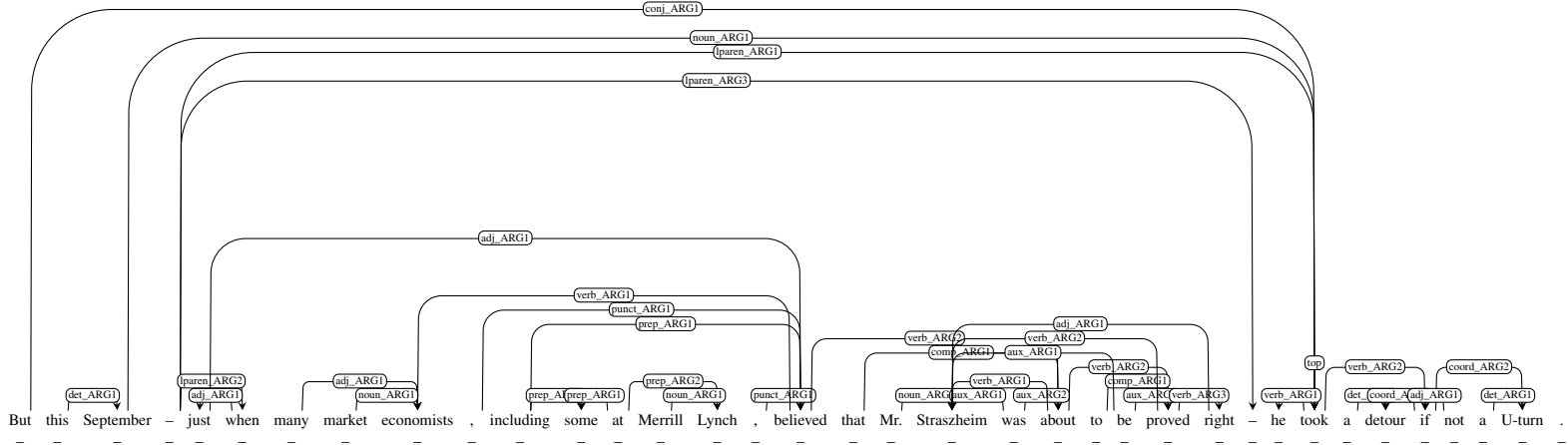
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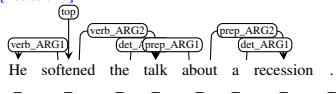
[20569008]



[20569009]



[20569010]



[20569011]

Now , in fact , he is predicting economic growth of 2.9 % this year and 2.1 % next year , a more optimistic outlook than the consensus of some four dozen top forecasters surveyed by Blue Chip Economic Indicators newsletter .

[20569012]

And , just recently , Merrill Lynch cut the recommended bondholdings back to 50 % .

[20569013]

While such changes might sound minor , they are n't : Merrill Lynch manages or oversees some \$ 300 billion in retail accounts that include everything from mutual funds to individual annuities .

[20569014]

Two well-known colleagues who believe Mr. Straszheim was right the first time are David Bostian Jr. and A. Gary Shilling , both of whom run their own New York research firms .

[20569015]

Mr. Bostian said in August that his macroeconomic index signaled recession .

[20569016]

Mr. Shilling , who was Merrill Lynch 's chief economist from 1967 to 1971 , has heralded a recession for months .

[20569017]

" My own personal opinion is that Don threw in the towel just about the time he should have doubled his bet , " he says .

[20569018]

Now a rocky stock market and weak corporate profits may further threaten the economy .

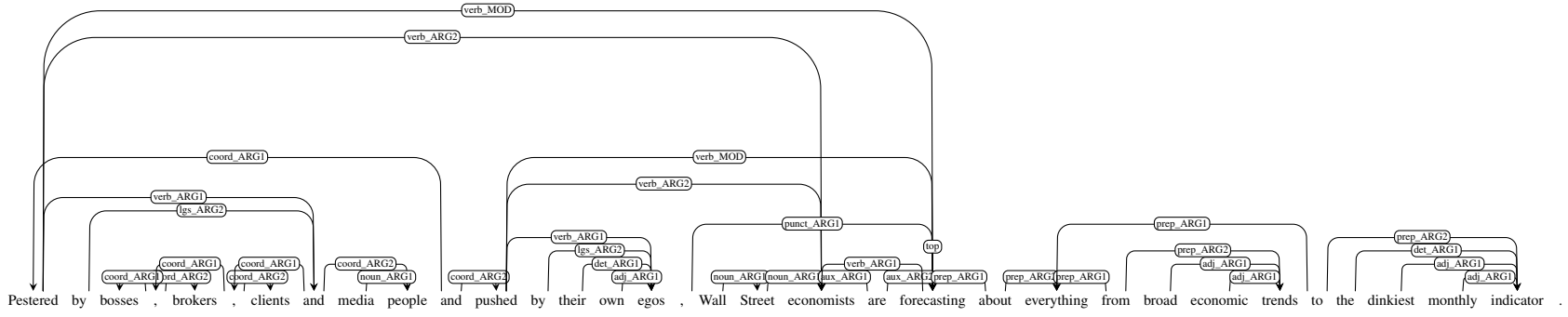
[20569019]

And Mr. Straszheim conceded after a recent drop in manufacturing jobs that " it may prove to be the case that we got whipsawed - that we pulled the recession forecast at just the wrong time . "

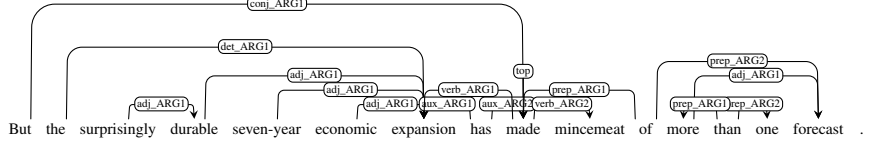
[20569020]

He adds , " That 's the forecasting business . "

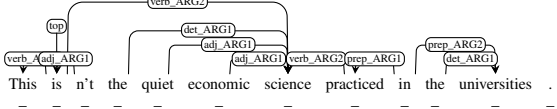
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[20569023]



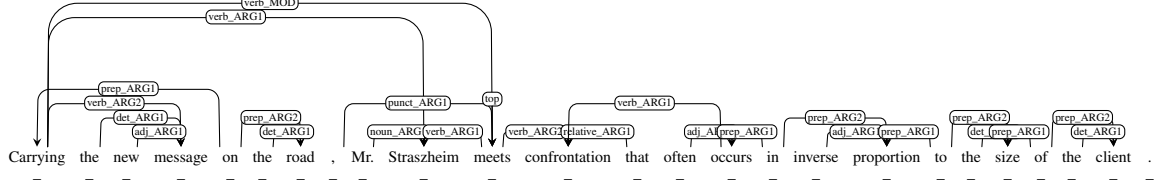
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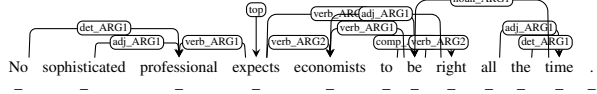
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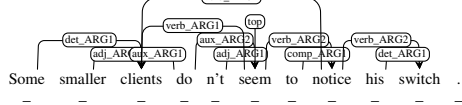
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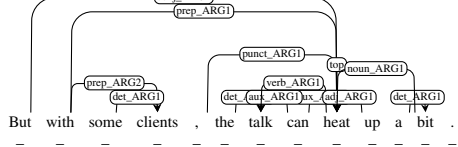
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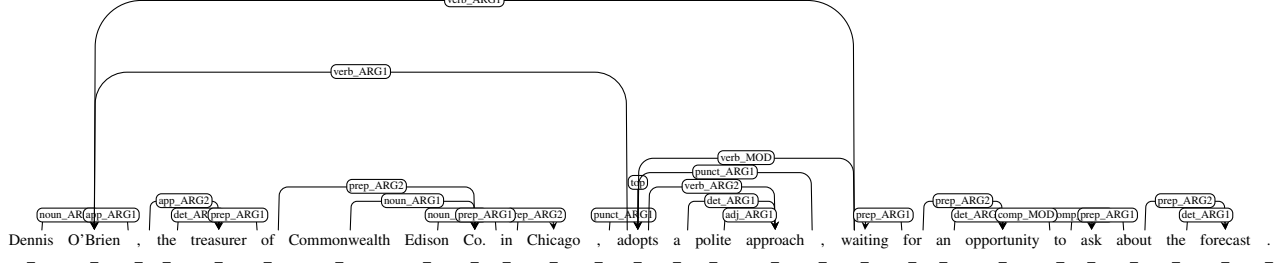
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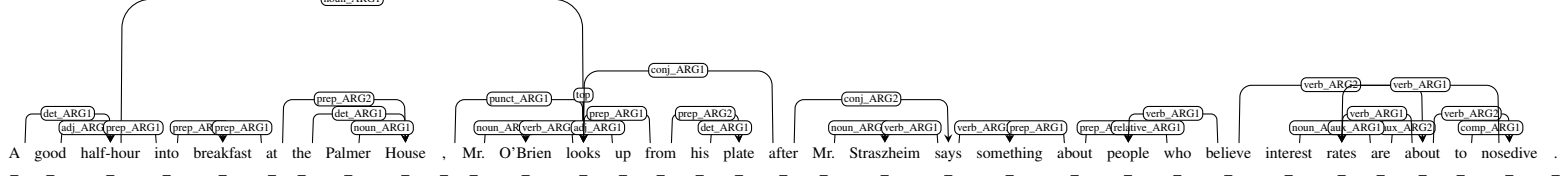
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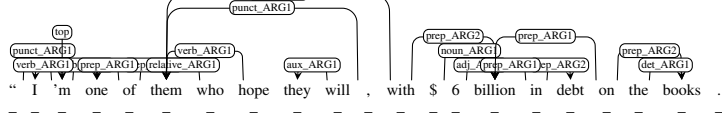
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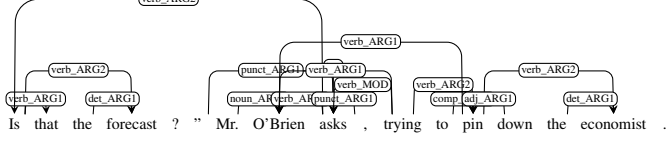
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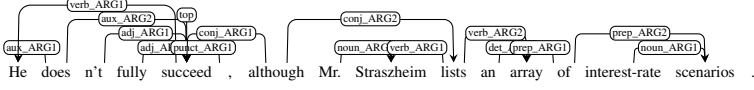
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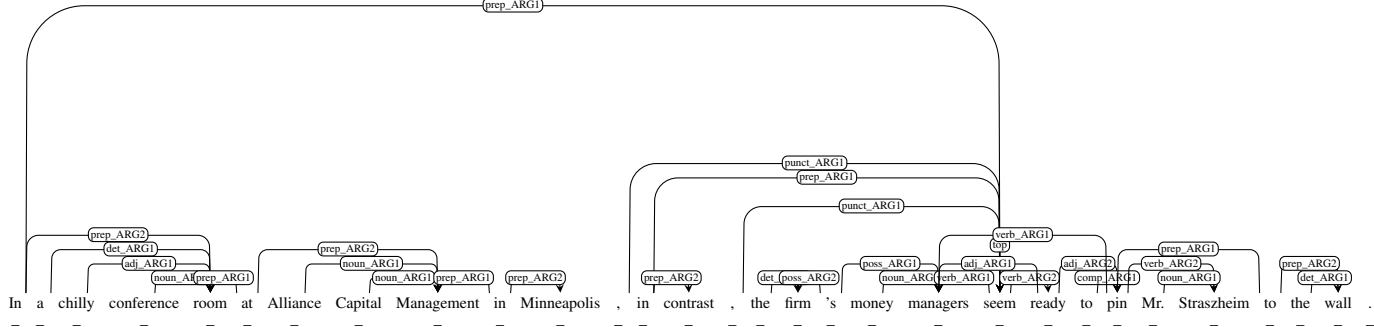
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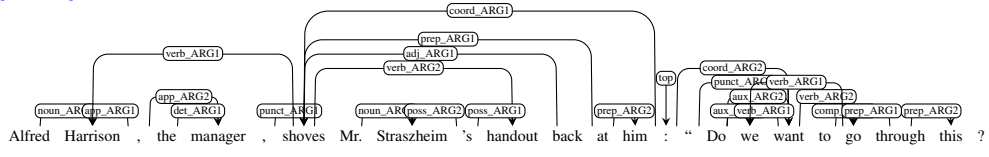
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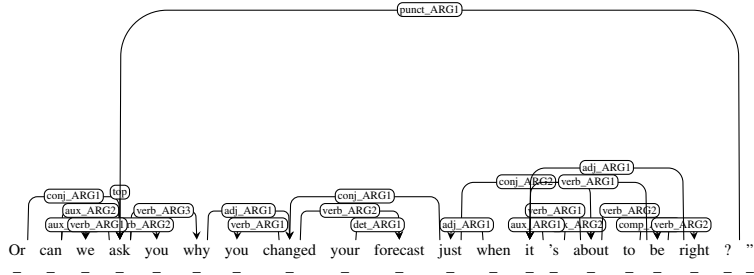
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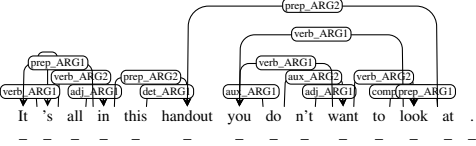
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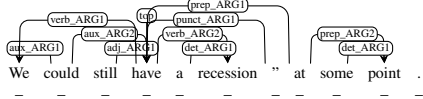
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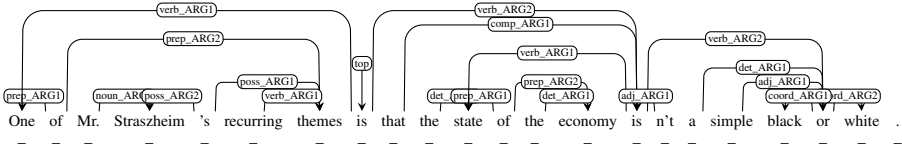
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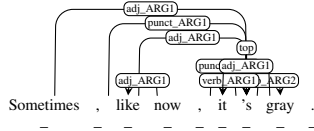
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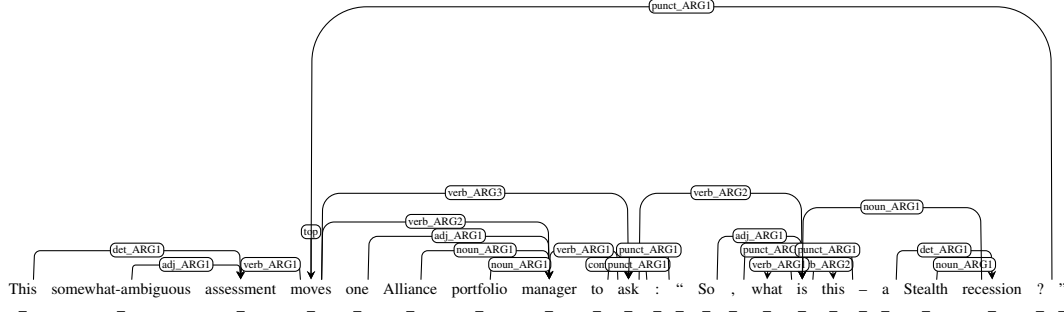
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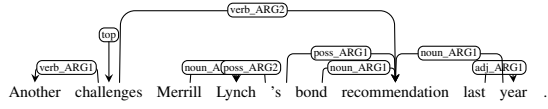
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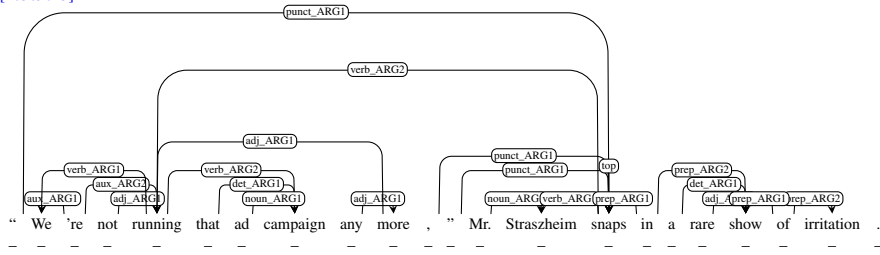
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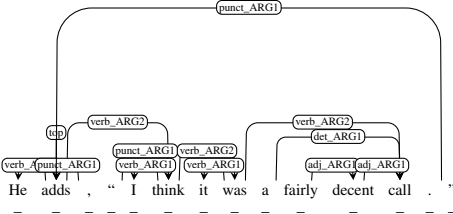
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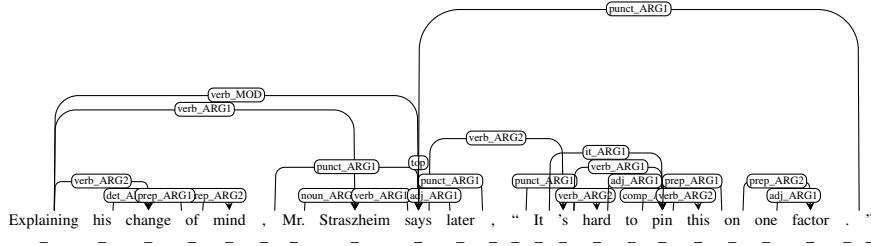
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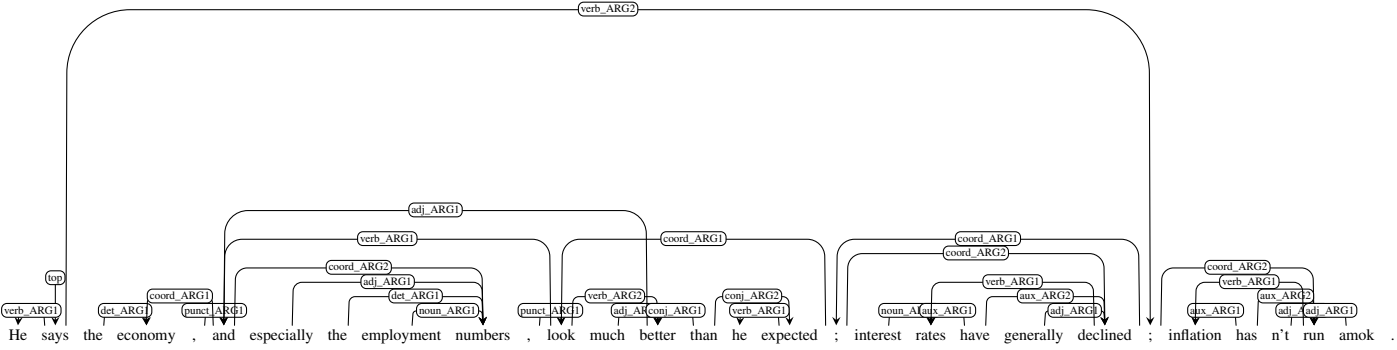
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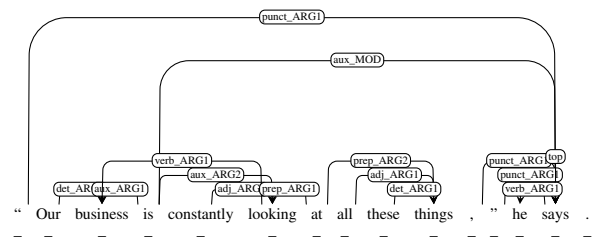
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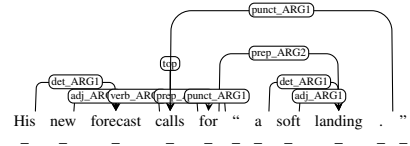
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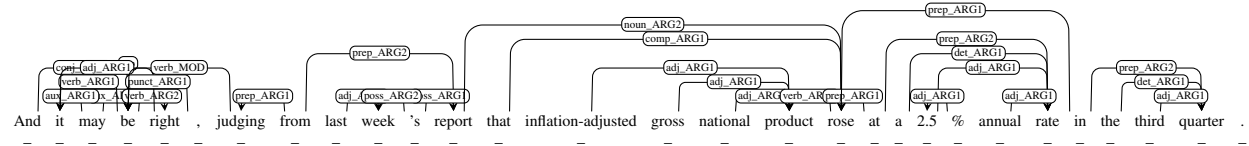
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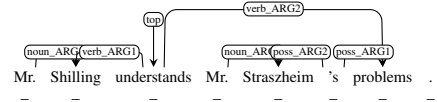
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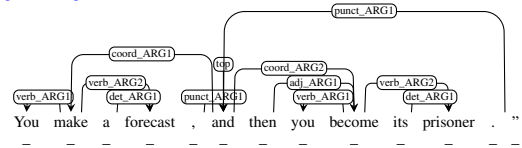
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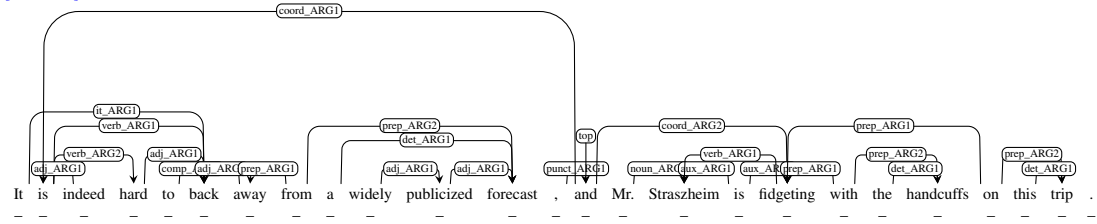
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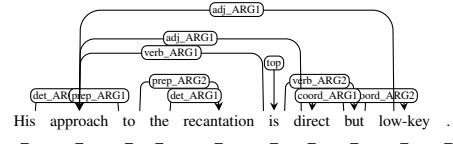
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