

Superframes Manual

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1 Introduction

Superframes is an annotation scheme for semantic roles. Like other such schemes, it is essentially about pinning down, in a machine-readable form, “who did what to whom”. It is different from other such schemes, such as FrameNet (Baker et al., 1998), VerbNet (Kipper Schuler, 2005), PropBank (Palmer et al.,

Superframe	Roles					Sec.
SCENE	initial-scene	participant	scene	transitory-scene	target-scene	2.1
IDENTIFICATION		identified	identifier			2.2
ORDER		has-order	order			2.3
CLASS	initial-class	has-class	class		target-class	2.4
EXISTENCE			exists			2.5
Transformation-Creation		material			created	2.6
Reproduction		original			copy	2.7
QUALITY		has-quality	quality			2.8
STATE	initial-state	has-state	state		target-state	2.9
Destruction		destroyed				2.11
EXPERIENCE		experiencer	experienced			2.12
ACTIVITY		is-active	activity			2.13
MARKER		has-marker	marker			2.14
ACCOMPANIMENT		accompanied	accompanier			2.15
ATTRIBUTE		has-attribute	attribute			2.17
Depictive		has-depictive	depictive			2.16
ASSET		has-asset	asset			2.18
CAUSATION		result	causer			2.19
Resultative		has-resultative	resultative			2.20
COMPARISON		compared	reference			2.21
Concession		assertion	conceded			2.22
EXPLANATION		explained	explanation			2.23
Purpose		has-purpose	purpose			2.24
LOCATION	initial-location	has-location	location	transitory-location	target-location	2.25
Wrapping-Wearing		worn	wearer			2.26
Adornment-Tarnishment	initial-surface	ornament	surface		target-surface	2.29
Touching		touching	touched			2.33
Ingestion		ingested		transitory-location	ingerter	2.34
Hitting		hitting			hit	2.35
Excretion	excreter	excreted		transitory-location		2.37
Motion		has-location		transitory-location		2.39
MEANS		has-means	means			2.40
MESSAGE		topic	content			2.41
PART-WHOLE	initial-whole	part	whole		target-whole	2.44
POSSESSION	initial-possessor	possessed	possessor		target-possessor	2.45
QUANTITY		has-quantity	quantity			2.51
SENDING		sent	sender			2.52
SEQUENCE		follows	followed			2.53
SOCIAL-RELATION	initial-social-relation	has-social-relation	social-relation		target-social-relation	2.54
TIME		has-time	time			2.57
NONCOMP		has-noncomp	noncomp			2.64

Table 1: The superframes and their roles.

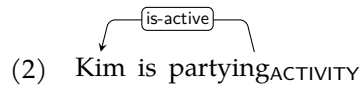
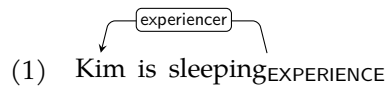
2005), VerbAtlas (Di Fabio et al., 2019), or WiSER (Feng et al., 2022) in a number of ways. It aims to avoid a number of practical problems in annotating with those schemes. Here’s how Superframes annotation works, in a nutshell:

1. Every content word (verb, noun, pronoun, adjective, or adverb) is a *predicate*. Every predicate evokes one of a few dozen *superframes*, which determines its coarse semantic class and the possible role labels for its arguments.
2. The syntactic *dependents* of a predicate can be *core arguments*, in which case they get one of the role labels defined by the superframe of the predicate, or *external arguments* or *modifiers*, in which case they are treated as evoking their own frame in which the predicate serves as a core argument.
3. There are only two main core role labels per superframe.
4. For predicates denoting change (or lack thereof) over time, some superframes have *aspectual variants* with role variants that allow to distinguish participants before, during, and after an event. This avoids having Source and Target as roles in their own right, which indicate the time sequence but suppress information about the nature of the relation that is changing.
5. Similarly, Superframes do not have the Agent role, which is often in conflict with roles indicating more specifically the agent’s relation to other participants.
6. Doubt, ambiguity, and figurativity are systematically treated. If there is not one clear solution, the solution is to give two or more alternative labels.

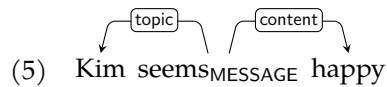
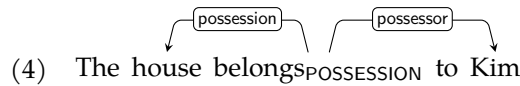
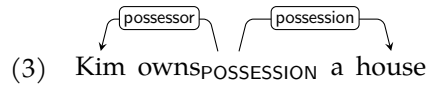
Table 1 shows the superframes and their roles.

1.1 Core Arguments

The most prototypical predicate is a verb, and the simplest case is a verb with only one argument. It can for example denote an experience or an activity:



With two core arguments, a verb denotes a relation that holds between them:



1.2 Frame Variants for Tense, Aspect, and Mood

Rather than a static relationship between two entities, many verbs (and other predicates) denote a change (or absence of change) in such a relationship. We sort such predicates into a few coarse aspectual classes. For example, initiation (-INIT) means a state is begun or worked towards, deinitiation (-DEINIT) means a state is ended, completed, or its end is worked towards, change (-CHANGE) combines both, where one state is replaced by another, and continuation (-CONT) means a state persists or is even intensified. Accordingly, roles with target-, initial-, or transitory- mark participants at/beyond the end of, at the beginning of, or at some point during the event, respectively.

- (6) Kim got_{POSSESSION-INIT} the house
- (7) Kim lost_{POSSESSION-DEINIT} the house
- (8) Kim sold_{POSSESSION-CHANGE} the house to Sandy
- (9) Kim kept_{POSSESSION-CONT} the house
- (10) Kim went_{LOCATION-CHANGE} from Chicago via Pittsburgh to Boston
- (11) The vase fell_{LOCATION-CHANGE} to the ground
- (12) The vase broke_{STATE-CHANGE}
- (13) Kim befriended_{SOCIAL-RELATION-INIT} Sandy
- (14) Kim married_{SOCIAL-RELATION-INIT} Sandy
- (15) Kim divorced_{SOCIAL-RELATION-DEINIT} Sandy

The SCENE superframe is often evoked by “light” verbs that contribute an aspectual or modal meaning. Thus, its aspectual variants are especially common.

- (16) The concert began_{SCENE-INIT}
- (17) The concert continued_{SCENE-CONT}
- (18) The concert finished_{SCENE-DEINIT}
- (19) The shouting intensified_{SCENE-CONT}
- (20) The shouting faded_{SCENE-DEINIT}
- (21) A coup was attempted_{SCENE-INIT}

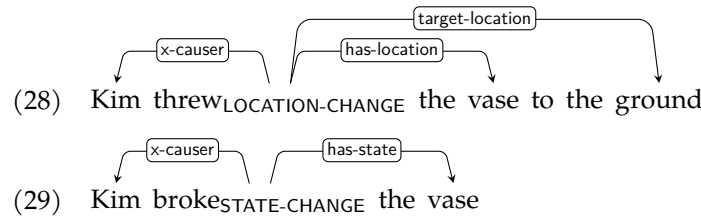
In addition, we use the suffixes -NECESSITY, -POSSIBILITY, -HABIT, and -TIME to mark the corresponding tense/aspect/mode categories.

- (22) Change is necessary_{SCENE-NECESSITY}
- (23) Change is possible_{SCENE-POSSIBILITY}
- (24) Kim plays_{SCENE-HABIT} tennis
- (25) Kim used_{SCENE-TIME} to play tennis
- (26) Kim is an avid unicyclist_{ACTIVITY-HABIT}
- (27) Kim owes_{POSSESSION-CHANGE-NECESSITY} Sandy money

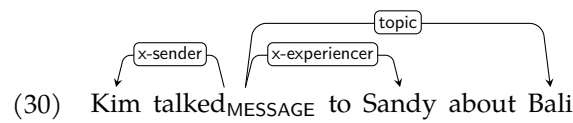
1.3 Non-core Arguments

Core arguments always get role labels from the superframe the predicate evokes. But many verbs have more arguments. One common case is a subject that is presented as the causer of the scene. For example, compare (28) with (11). The core scene is the same (same superframe, same arguments). We now assume there is an additional CAUSATION scene with *Kim* as the causer and the core

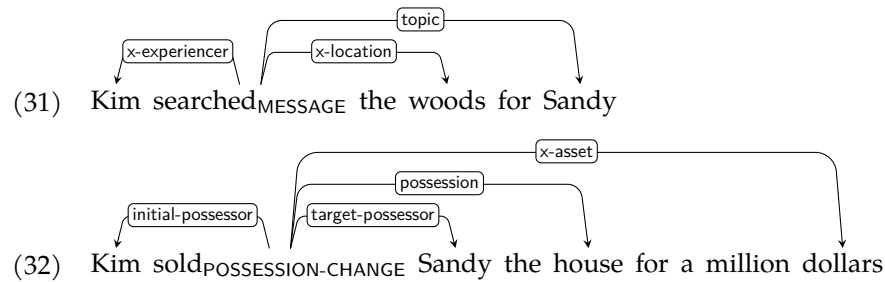
scene as the result. We denote this by giving *Kim* the causer role label, with an x- prefix to mark it as a non-core role.



Two other common non-core arguments are the senders and recipients (experiencers) of messages.

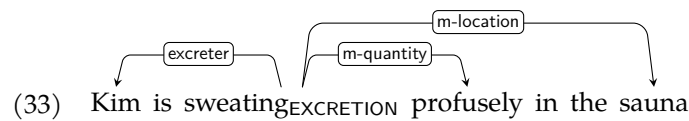


Other non-core arguments are usually rather predicate-specific.



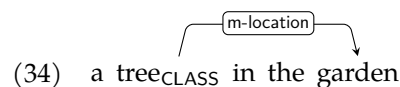
1.4 Modifiers

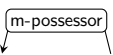
Like non-core arguments, modifiers are assumed to evoke an additional frame, and labeled with the role they fill in that frame, but with a prefix marking them as modifiers: m-.



1.5 Nonverbal Predicates

So far, we have only looked at verbal predicates. But of course, there are other types of predicates. An ordinary noun like *tree* evokes the CLASS frame, marking the entity it refers to as being a member of a class (in this case: the class of trees). There are no arguments here because the predicate itself doubles as a referent. However, the predicate can of course be modified:

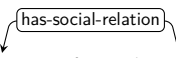


(35)  Kim 's tree_{CLASS}

Event nouns evoke event frames and have arguments:

(36)  Kim 's breaking_{STATE-CHANGE} of the vase

Relational nouns evoke relational frames and have arguments:

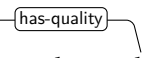
(37)  Kim 's friend_{SOCIAL-RELATION}

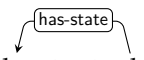
Pronouns and names evoke the IDENTIFICATION frame, meaning that they identify their referent as some entity (via naming or anaphora resolution).

(38) Kim_{IDENTIFICATION}

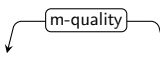
(39) they_{IDENTIFICATION}


Predicate adjectives most typically denote states or qualities.

(40)  I am despicable_{QUALITY}

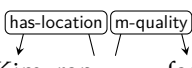
(41)  the dog is tired_{STATE}

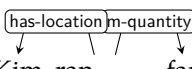
With attributive adjectives, the dependency relation is reversed, and the role label is changed accordingly.

(42)  despicable me_{IDENTIFICATION}

(43)  the tired dog_{CLASS}

Similarly for adverbs denoting, e.g, manner (quality) or extent (quantity):

(44)  Kim ran_{Motion} fast

(45)  Kim ran_{Motion} far

1.6 Control Relations

spell out strategies for consistent detection (xcomp, MESSAGE/SCENE frames, special cases...)

Many constructions systematically introduce semantic predicate-dependent dependencies that do not correspond to (surface) syntactic dependencies. In such cases, we add those dependency links.

- (46) the song I like_{MESSAGE} (relative clause)
- (47) Kim promised Sandy to come_{LOCATION-CHANGE} (subject control)
- (48) Kim persuaded Sandy to come_{LOCATION-CHANGE} (object control)
- (49) Kim seemed to fly_{Motion} (raising)
- (50) Kim entered the room singing_{MESSAGE} (depictive)
- (51) You're talking me silly_{STATE} (resultative)
- (52) Kim has come to stay_{LOCATION-CONTINUATION} (subjectless adverbial clause)
- (53) Kim left after trashing_{STATE-CHANGE} the room (subjectless adverbial clause)
- (54) Kim is hard to love_{MESSAGE} (*tough* construction)
- (55) the question we raised without answering_{MESSAGE} (parasitic gap)

1.7 Figurativity and Idiomatcity

Difficulties in choosing frames often arise because a predicate literally evokes one frame, but is used in a way that perhaps fits another frame equally well or better. In such cases, annotate both the more literal frame and roles, followed by the >> operator, followed by the more figurative frame and roles.

- (56) primeval forest_{CLASS}
- (57) colored pencil_{CLASS}
- (58) to lay_{LOCATION-CHANGE » MESSAGE-DEINIT} aside my drawings
-

2 Superframes Reference

2.1 SCENE

TBD

2.2 IDENTIFICATION

The identifier identifies the identified.

Evoked by pronouns, names, and other identifiers, as well as predicates denoting naming relationships.

- (59) I_{IDENTIFICATION} saw a picture
- (60) I can distinguish China_{IDENTIFICATION} from Arizona
- (61) a book called_{IDENTIFICATION} True Stories from Nature
- (62) This is Kim_{IDENTIFICATION}
- (63) This is the book_{MESSAGE} I like
-

2.3 ORDER

order indicates the order that has-order has in some sequence.

- (64) Chapter_{MESSAGE} 1
- (65) my first drawing_{MESSAGE}
-

2.4 CLASS

class indicates the class of entity that has-class represents.

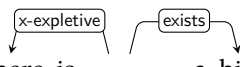
Most prototypically evoked by common nouns with no arguments.

(66) swallowing an animal_{CLASS}

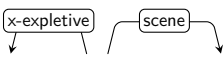
2.5 EXISTENCE

exists exists. Use this only for non-scene entities; for scenes, use the SCENE frame.

(67) There is_{EXISTENCE} a hill



(68) There is_{SCENE} a hubbub



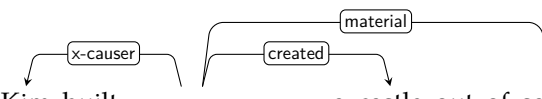
2.6 Transformation-Creation

created is newly created from material, or material is transformed to acquire a new class indicated by created.

(69) I succeeded in making_{Transformation-Creation} my first drawing



(70) Kim built_{Transformation-Creation} a castle out of sand



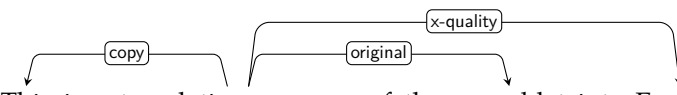
2.7 Reproduction

original continues to exist, and a (modified) copy comes into existence.

(71) Here is a copy_{Reproduction} of the drawing



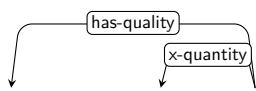
(72) This is a translation_{Reproduction} of the pamphlet into English



2.8 QUALITY

quality indicates a (permanent) quality/property/manner of has-quality.

(73) when I was six years old_{QUALITY}



- (74) a magnificent picture_{MESSAGE}
- (75) I pondered_{MESSAGE} deeply over the adventures of the jungle

2.9 STATE

state indicates a (temporary) state of has-state.

- (76) Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole_{STATE}
- (77) they sleep_{STATE}

2.10 STATE-CHANGE

A STATE changes.

- (78) they swallow their prey whole without chewing_{STATE-CHANGE} it
- (79) the six months that they need for digestion_{STATE-CHANGE}
- (80) And that hasn't much improved_{STATE-CHANGE} my opinion of them

2.11 Destruction

destroyed goes out of existence.

- (81) Sam 's death_{Destruction}
- (82) Sam 's destruction_{Destruction} of the city

2.12 EXPERIENCE

experienced indicates an experience that experiencer undergoes.

Used for dynamic scenes where the experiencer is not necessarily active, and that cannot well be framed as a state change. Also used for sensory and mental perception, addressees in communication, beneficiaries, and for "bystander" roles.

- (83) Kim 's adventures_{EXPERIENCE} in the jungle
- (84) Kim attacked_{EXPERIENCE} Sandy
- (85) I saw_{MESSAGE} a magnificent picture
- (86) I pondered_{MESSAGE} deeply
- (87) Kim talked_{MESSAGE} to Sandy
- (88) Kim did_{SCENE} something nice for Sandy
- (89) Kim cooked a meal only to have_{SCENE} Sandy spurn it

2.13 ACTIVITY

is-active actively participates in activity.

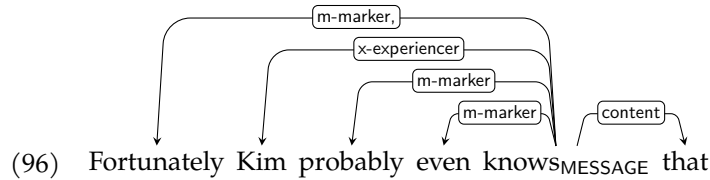
Used for dynamic scenes where is-active has agency and that cannot well be framed as a state change.

- (90) Kim worked_{ACTIVITY}
- (91) Kim partied_{ACTIVITY}
- (92) Kim danced_{ACTIVITY}
- (93) Kim had sex_{ACTIVITY}
- (94) after some work_{ACTIVITY} with a colored pencil
- (95) I devoted myself to geography_{ACTIVITY}

2.14 MARKER

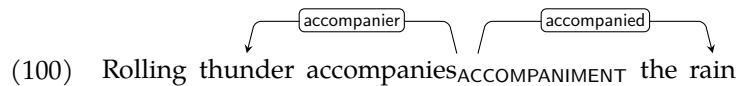
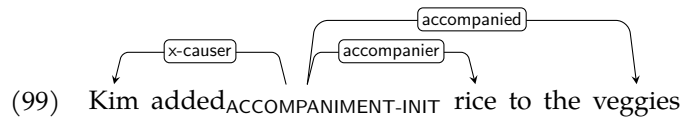
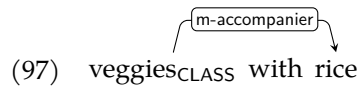
marker marks has-marker for modal strength, aspect, discourse function, etc.

Umbrella frame for various kinds of predicates that denote properties of propositions rather than scenes, often realized as “sentence adverbs”.

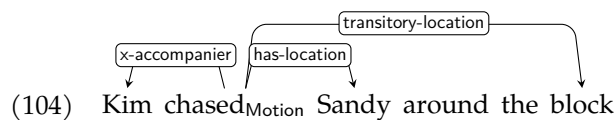
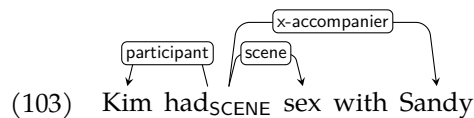
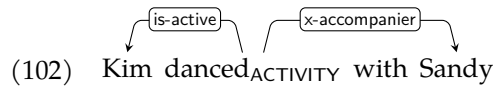


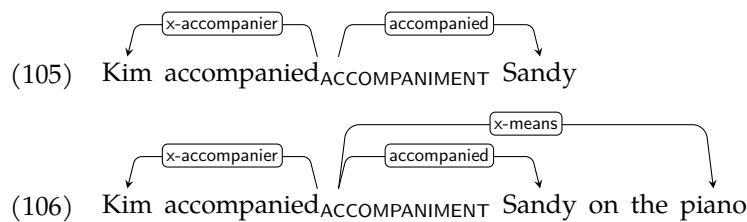
2.15 ACCOMPANIMENT

accompanier accompanies accompanied, meaning that it occurs together with it or participates equally in the same scene.



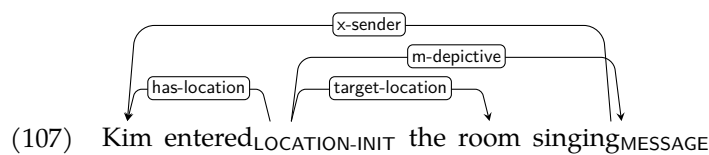
Often, the accompanier denotes not the accompanying scene but an entity participating in it, and must be metonymically understood as the scene.





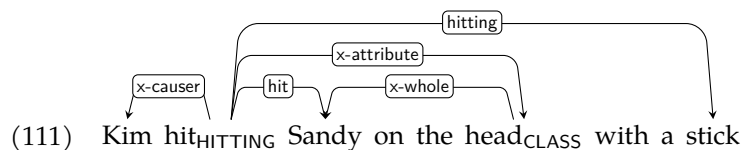
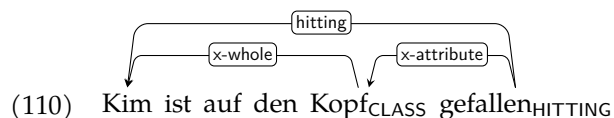
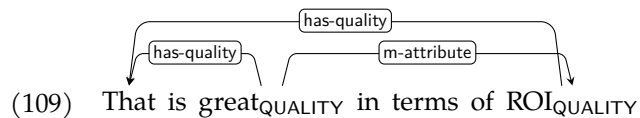
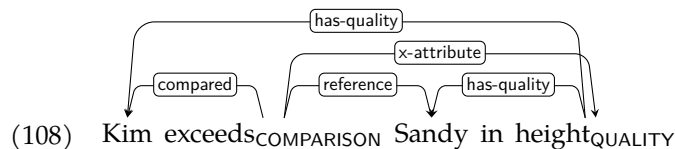
2.16 Depictive

Special case of ACCOMPANIMENT where accompanier assigns accompanied a role (cf. Sec. 1.6).



2.17 ATTRIBUTE

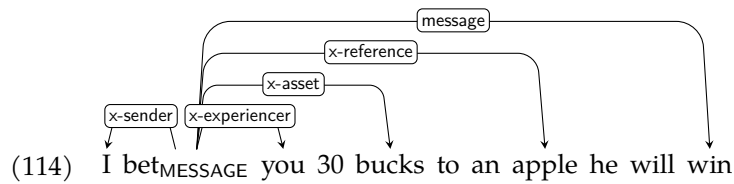
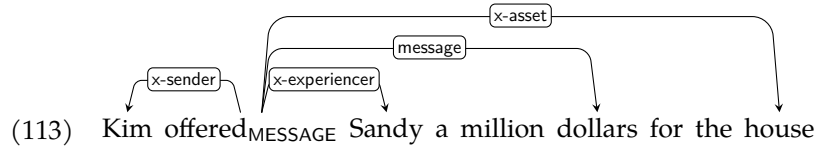
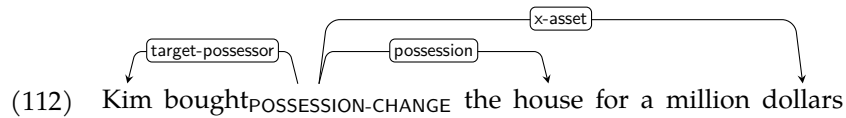
In a scene has-attribute, attribute is the part or attribute of one or more participants that is most directly involved in the scene.



Control relations?

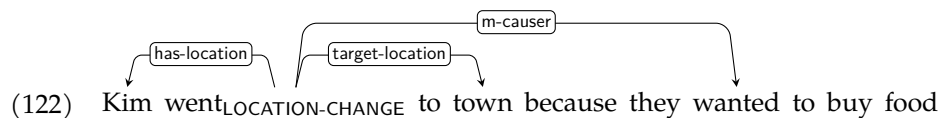
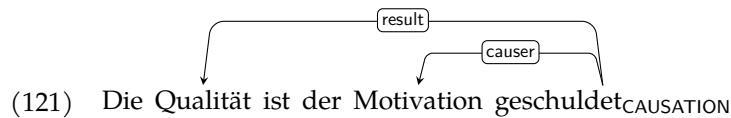
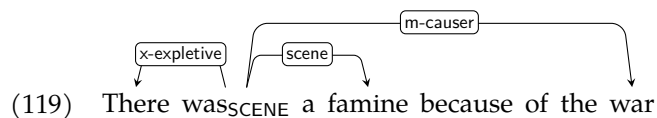
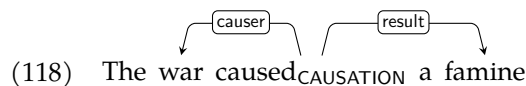
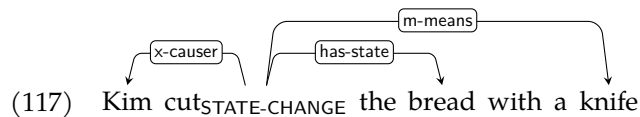
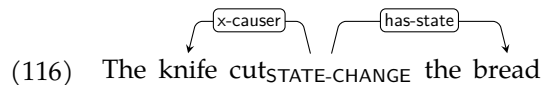
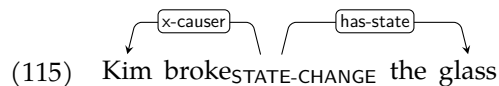
2.18 ASSET

In a scene has-asset, asset is given or offered in an exchange or wager.



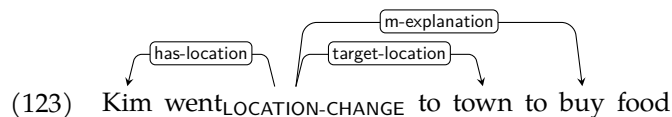
2.19 CAUSATION

causer causes result.



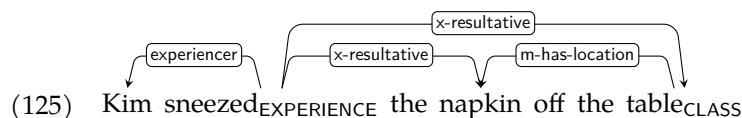
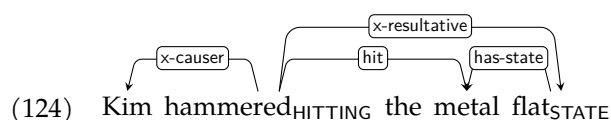
Note how the last example expresses a purpose, but expresses it as a cause, so

m-causer is the right label to use. Compare this to construal as a purpose:



2.20 Resultative

Special case of CAUSATION where result assigns an argument of causer a role. We treat the English resultative construction as a valency-changing operation that adds one or two arguments to the matrix predicate, so we use x-resultative rather than m-resultative.

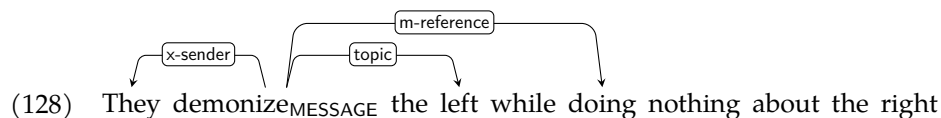
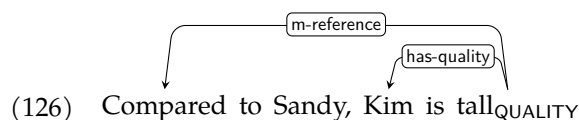


The last example shows the limits of our coding, we don't really have a token to label as LOCATION-DEINIT. If labeling atop SUD, we'd have *off*, but there's probably languages that express the same thing through case marking rather than an adposition, then we'd have the same problem again.

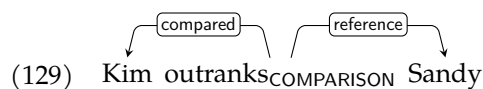
2.21 COMPARISON

compared is characterized with respect to reference.

Examples of comparing scenes:



Examples of comparing non-scene entities:



- (130) Kim exceeds_{COMPARISON} Sandy in height
- (131) The Polish restaurant compared_{COMPARISON} favorably to the Spanish one
- (132) Kim compared_{COMPARISON} Coke to Pepsi
- (133) Kim ran_{COMPARISON} afoul of Fielding 's constraints

2.22 Concession

Special case of COMPARISON, where compared is what's asserted and reference is what's conceded.

- (134) Kim went_{LOCATION-CHANGE} out despite the rain
- (135) It rained_{STATE} , but Kim went went out
- (136) Kim sent_{SENDING} Sandy a letter but it never arrived
- (137) Kim came_{LOCATION-CHANGE} although Sandy had told them not to

2.23 EXPLANATION

TBD

2.24 Purpose

TBD

2.25 LOCATION

TBD

2.26 Wrapping-Wearing

TBD

2.27 Wrapping-Wearing-Init

TBD

2.28 Wrapping-Wearing-Deinit

TBD

2.29 Adornment-Tarnishment

TBD

2.30 Adornment-Tarnishment-Init

TBD

2.31 Adornment-Tarnishment-Deinit

TBD

2.32 LOCATION-INIT

TBD

2.33 Touching

2.34 Ingestion

TBD

2.35 Hitting

TBD

2.36 LOCATION-DEINIT

TBD

2.37 Excretion

TBD

2.38 LOCATION-CHANGE

TBD

2.39 Motion

TBD

2.40 MEANS

TBD

2.41 MESSAGE

TBD

2.42 MESSAGE-INIT

TBD

2.43 MESSAGE-DEINIT

TBD

2.44 PART-WHOLE

TBD

2.45 POSSESSION

TBD

2.46 POSSESSION-INIT

TBD

2.47 POSSESSION-DEINIT

TBD

2.48 POSSESSION-CHANGE

TBD

2.49 POSSESSION-CHANGE-NECESSITY

TBD

2.50 POSSESSION-CONTINUATION

TBD

2.51 QUANTITY

TBD

2.52 SENDING

TBD

2.53 SEQUENCE

TBD

2.54 SOCIAL-RELATION

TBD

2.55 SOCIAL-RELATION-INIT

TBD

2.56 SOCIAL-RELATION-DEINIT

TBD

2.57 TIME

TBD

2.58 SCENE-INIT

TBD

2.59 SCENE-DEINIT

TBD

2.60 SCENE-CONTINUATION

TBD

2.61 SCENE-PREVENTION

TBD

2.62 SCENE-NECESSITY

TBD

2.63 SCENE-POSSIBILITY

TBD

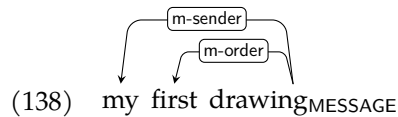
2.64 NONCOMP

TBD

3 Memos

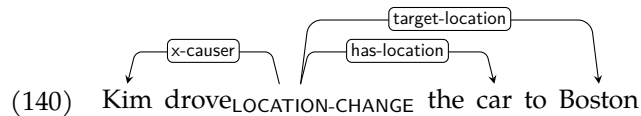
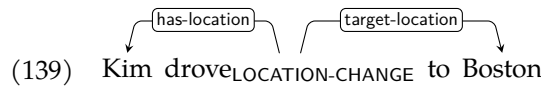
3.1 Arguments Determine Frames

The most important criterion in choosing a frame for a predicate is that there should be suitable roles for the predicate’s arguments, even if they are unrealized in the annotated instance. For example, while *drawing* denotes a CLASS of things, it can occur with a prepositional argument denoting a topic, so MESSAGE is a better choice.



3.2 Prefer Core over Non-core Arguments

When an argument fills both a core and a non-core role, it is more important to annotate the former.



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