



SFB 991



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Modeling nominalization in frames

A case study of *-ment* suffixation on causative
verbal bases

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Background

Starting point: Affix polysemy

Frames

Affix polysemy

- Various readings formed by one affix (Bauer et al. 2013, ch. 10)

EVENT	<i>assessment</i>
RESULT	<i>containment</i>
STATE	<i>contentment</i>
PRODUCT	<i>pavement</i>
INSTRUMENT	<i>entertainment</i>
LOCATION	<i>embankment</i>

How do we get such readings?

- Certain base verbs evoke certain readings (Bauer et al. 2013, 212)
 - Verb requires instrument → INSTRUMENT nominalization
 - *to wrap* → *wrap*
 - *to refresh* → *refreshment*

- Shift to a syntactic argument of the verb

*John **purchased a car**. His wife approves of this **purchase**.*

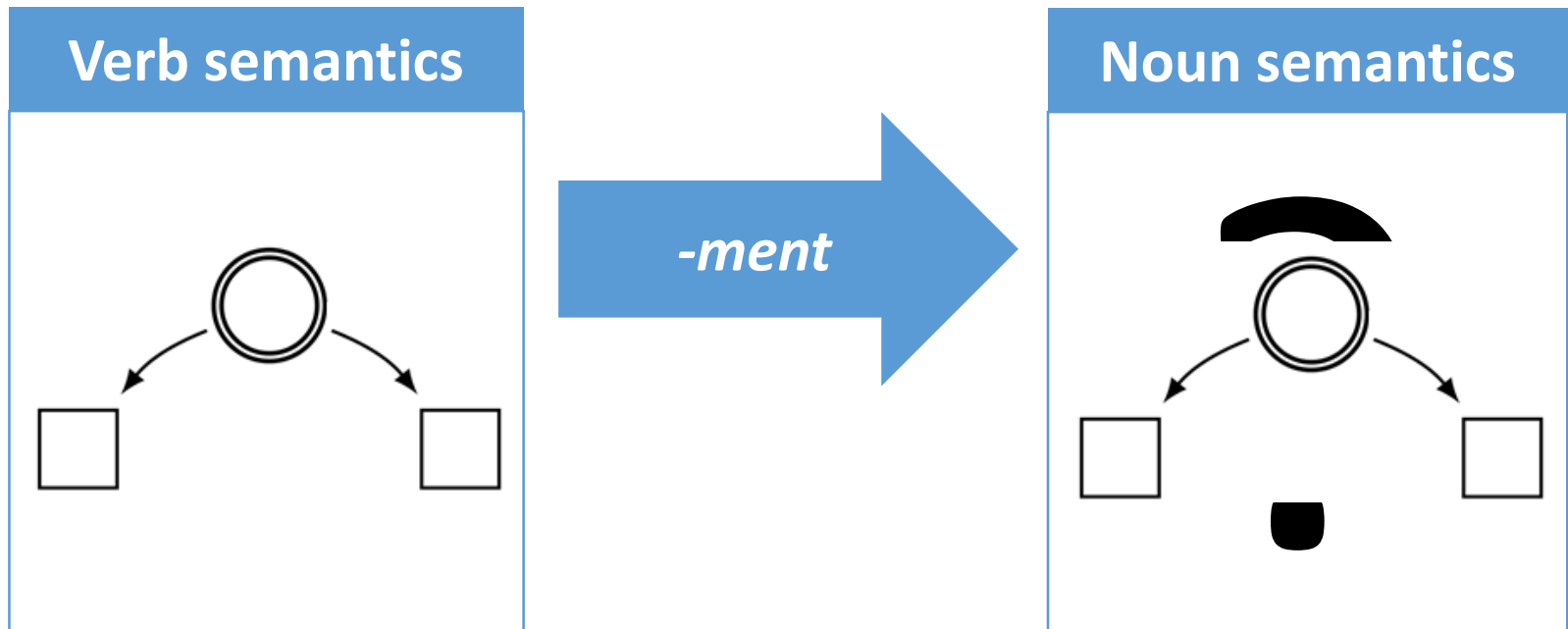


- Not restricted to syntactic arguments though

*My granny used to **embroider pillowcases**. I love the **embroidery** on this one.*



An interplay of verb and suffix



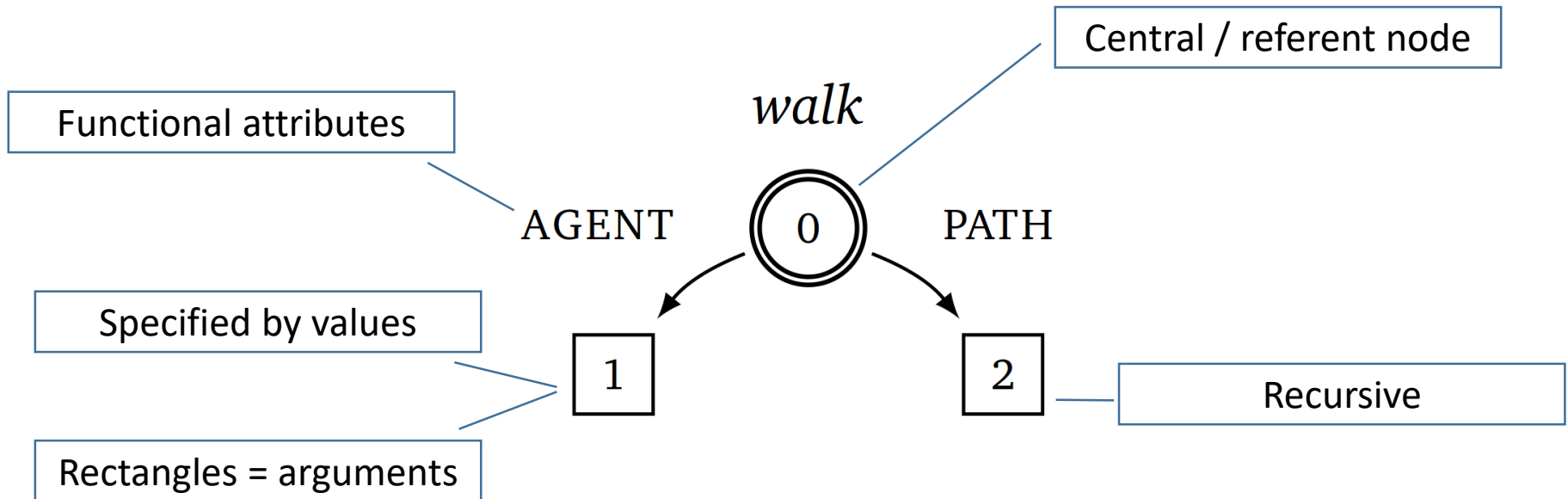
Frames

(e.g. Barsalou 1992 a,b; Löbner 2013; Petersen 2007)

- a means to model mental representations of concepts as well as linguistic phenomena
- grounded in cognitive reality

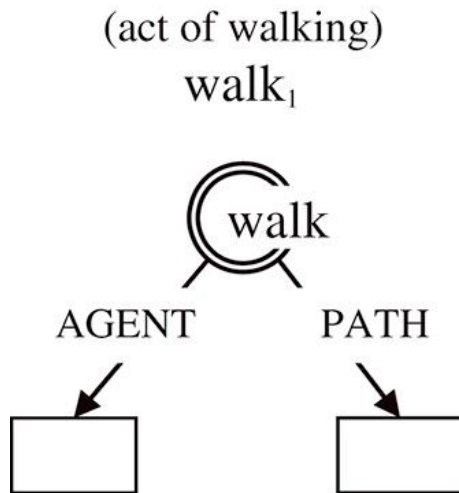
Modeling semantics in frames

(e.g. Barsalou 1992 a,b; Löbner 2013; Petersen 2007)



Frame graph of the verb *walk*

Modeling semantic shifts in frames



Frame graphs for three nouns derived from the verb *walk*
(Löbner 2013, Figure 12.9)

Our study

Issues concerning the productivity of *-ment*

- Nominal suffix attaching mainly to verbal bases
- Very productive in Early Modern English (15th-17th c.); nowadays still somewhat productive (Bauer et al. 2013, 199)
- Many (often highly lexicalized) derivatives, e.g.:
 - movement* 1393
 - department* c. 1450
 - treatment* 1560
- Aim: synchronic analysis of the productive process
 - Neologisms (1900-today)

Method: *-ment* data

- Data sources: Neologisms (*Oxford English Dictionary*) & Hapax Legomena (*Corpus of Contemporary American English*)
- 90 types derived from 24 verb classes (Levin 1993 / VerbNet)
- Largest classes: PSYCH verbs (N=16), CHANGE OF STATE verbs (N=13)
- Attestations from other sources (GloWbE, WebCorp, BNC, Twitter, Google)
- Semantic classification of derivatives

PSYCH verb bases

Definition of PSYCH verbs

- Semantically heterogeneous: psych states & changes of psych states (cf. Levin 1993, 188-193)
- Typically two arguments: STIMULUS & EXPERIENCER
- Traditional categories (Pesetsky 1995): OBJECT EXP & SUBJECT EXP
- Four subcategories following Levin (1993) / VerbNet:

	Subject Experiencer	Object Experiencer
Transitive Verbs	ADMIRE verbs <i>The tourists admired the paintings</i>	AMUSE verbs <i>The clown amused the children</i>
Intransitive Verbs with PP	MARVEL verbs <i>Megan marveled at the beauty of the Grand Canyon</i>	APPEAL verbs <i>This painting appeals to Malinda</i>

- AMUSE verbs = Complex events (causing subevent + caused subevent)

Some examples for attestations

- PSYCH CAUSATION EVENT

Today's evangelicals dance, listen to popular music, **partake in public amusements and diversions**, and attend the theater. (COCA_ACAD_2010)

- RESULT STATE (of a PSYCH CAUSATION EVENT)

I know a lot of our compatriots also **feel the same angst, consternation and confoundment**. (GloWbE_ART_2012)

- STIMULUS (in a PSYCH CAUSATION EVENT)

The Education Secretary arrived having just made **her first big policy declaration - dressed up as a reassurance to Middle England** that A-levels will be retained and that other exams may be made harder. (OED_NEWS_2005)

No federal agency regulates **portable amusements**, and no state employee inspects mobile rides. (COCA_NEWS_2012)

Types in our dataset (N=16)

affrightment

approvement

bumfuzzlement

confoundment

dumbfoundment

endullment

enragement

enrapturement

nonplusment

perturbment

reassurance

upsetment

soothement

staggerment

marvelment

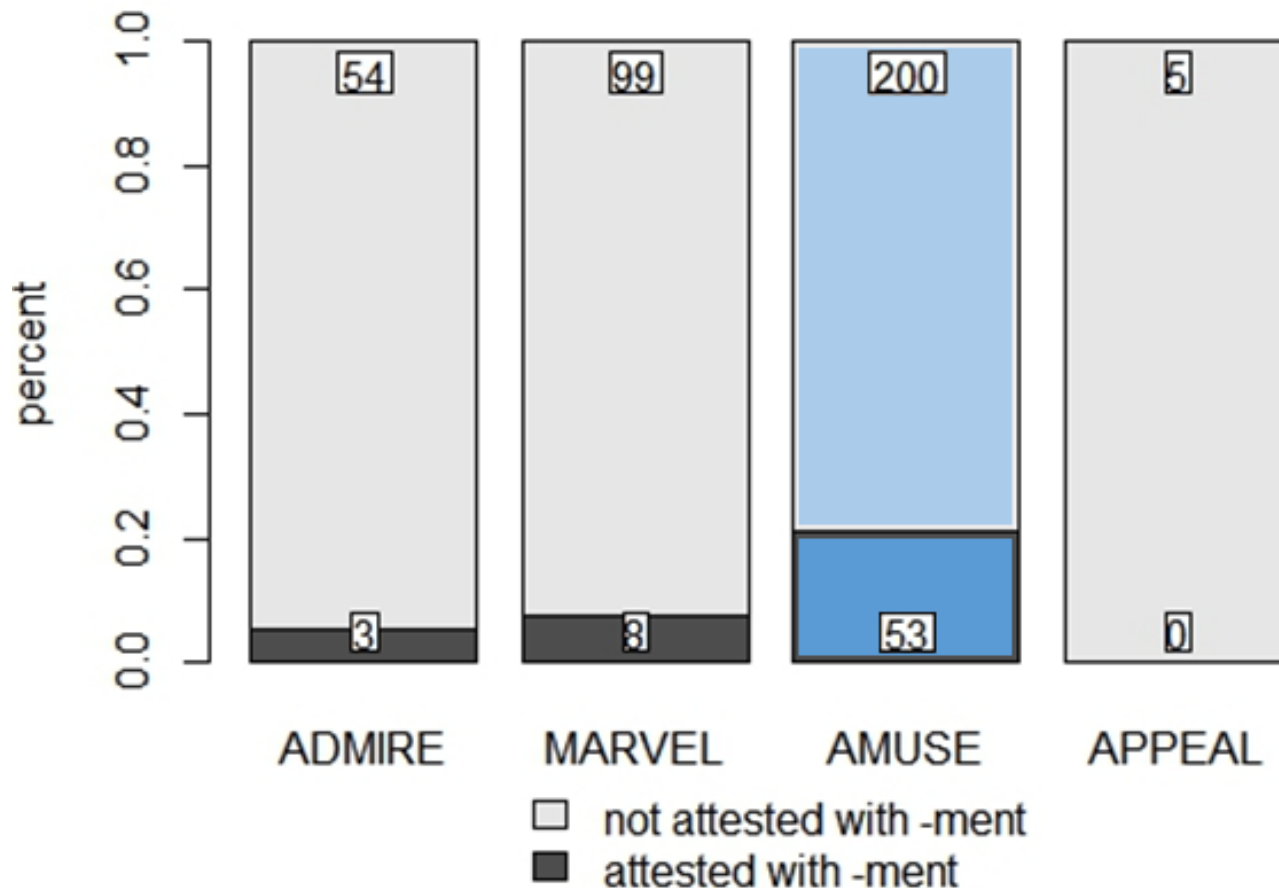
worriment

Results: Overview

- AMUSE verbs are preferred over the other three subcategories
- Semantic output:
 - PSYCH CAUSATION EVENT (Transposition) ✓
 - STIMULUS ✓
 - RESULT STATE ✓
 - ACTIVITY (causing subevent) ✓
 - CHANGE OF PSYCH STATE (caused subevent) ✓ (probably)
 - EXPERIENCER ☒

Base selection: AMUSE verbs are preferred

- seems to be a general tendency



Base selection: AMUSE verbs are preferred

- Artefact of lexical distribution: Only five APPEAL verbs, three of which are very infrequent
- Preference for other derivational processes
 - MARVEL verbs: conversion (*sorrow, freakout*)
 - ADMIRE verbs: *-ation* (*reaffirmation, adoration*) and conversion (*mistrust, grudge*)

Output semantics: RESULT STATE is dominant

- Not surprising: has been observed by many (e.g. Marchand 1969)
- It has been stated that STIMULUS & EVENT nominalizations should be impossible
- Pesetsky (1995, 71):

Now consider the nominalizations that are related to causative ObjExp verbs like *annoy*. **These nominalizations uniformly lack all causative force** (as observed first, perhaps, by Lakoff (1970:126)). The present analysis is an interesting alternative description of this fact. It is not surprising, rather, they are nominalizations of corresponding noncausative predicates. Thus, ***annoyance* does not mean 'the process of making annoyed', but 'the state of being annoyed'**. ***Amusement* does not refer to something amusing someone, but to the state of being amused.**

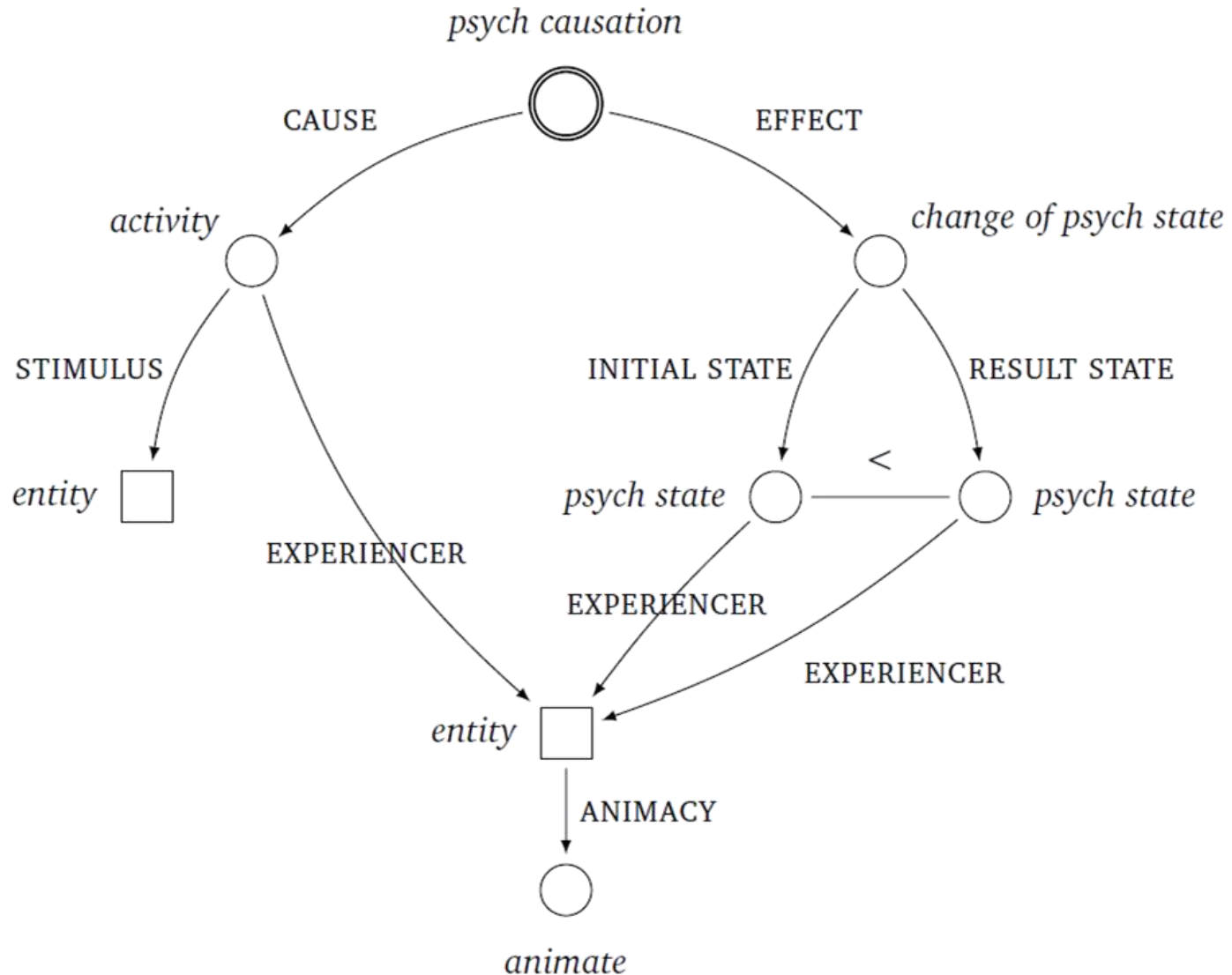
- Our data provide counter-evidence to these views (cf. e.g. Bauer et al. 2013; Melloni 2011 for Italian)

Output semantics: EXPERIENCER is not attested

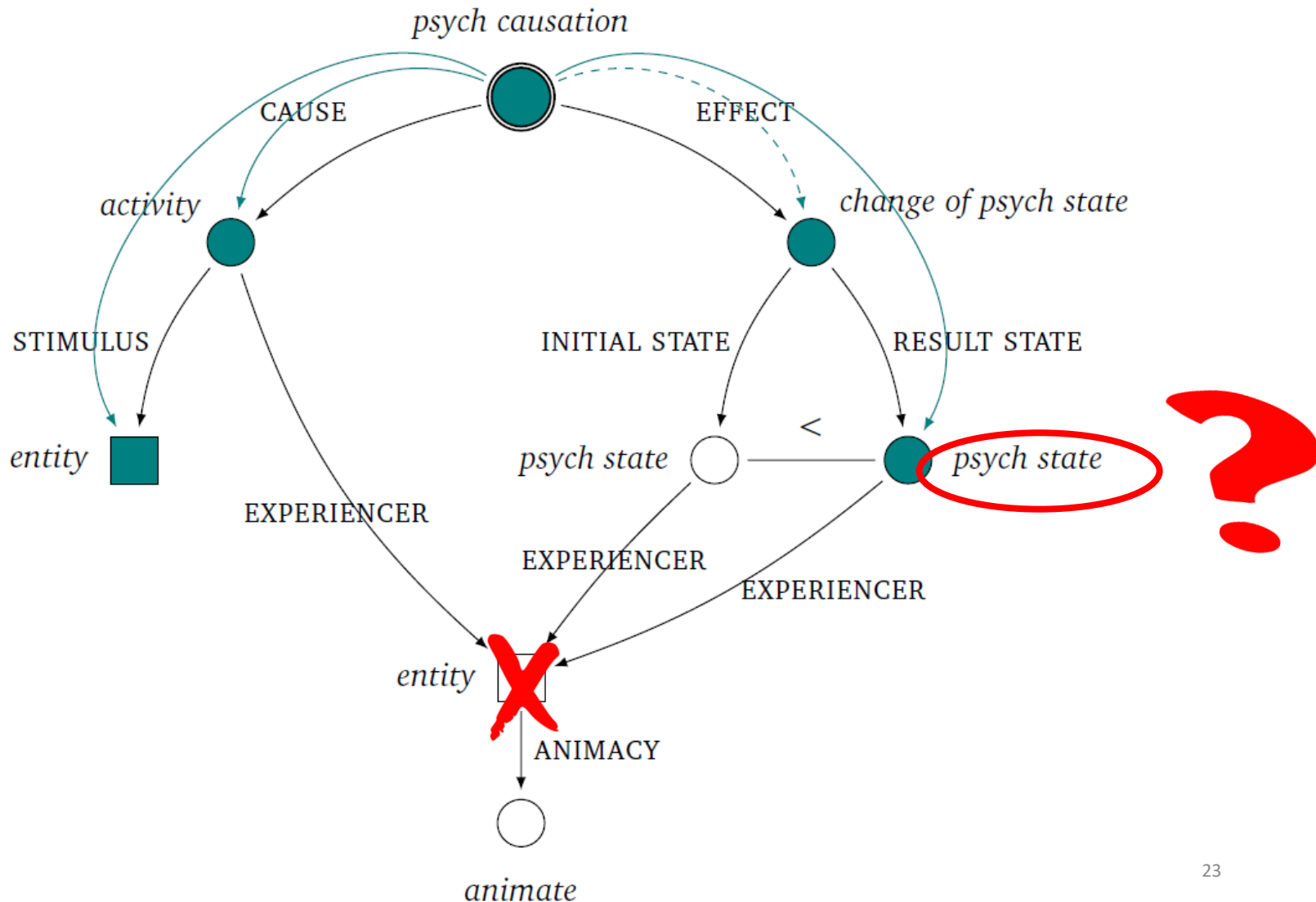
- Affix rivalry
 - Suffix for EXPERIENCER and PATIENT: *-ee* (or *-er*)
- Verb class might disallow it
 - Not convincing, cf. *soothee* and *sufferer*
- *-ment* might disallow it
 - EXPERIENCER isn't mentioned in the pertinent literature
 - Data set: no [+animate] readings (except, potentially, STIMULUS)
 - At least a preference for [-animate]!

Modeling PSYCH causation

(cf. Löbner 2013, Naumann 2013, Osswald & Van Valin 2014)



Modeling affix polysemy



CHANGE OF STATE verb bases

Definition of CHANGE OF STATE verbs

**OTHER ALTERNATING VERBS OF
CHANGE OF STATE (LEVIN 1993: 244-6)**

REMEDY verbs (VerbNet)

Types in our dataset (N=13)

OCOS

congealment
decenterment
discolorment
embrittlement
increasement
progressment
redoublement
worsenment

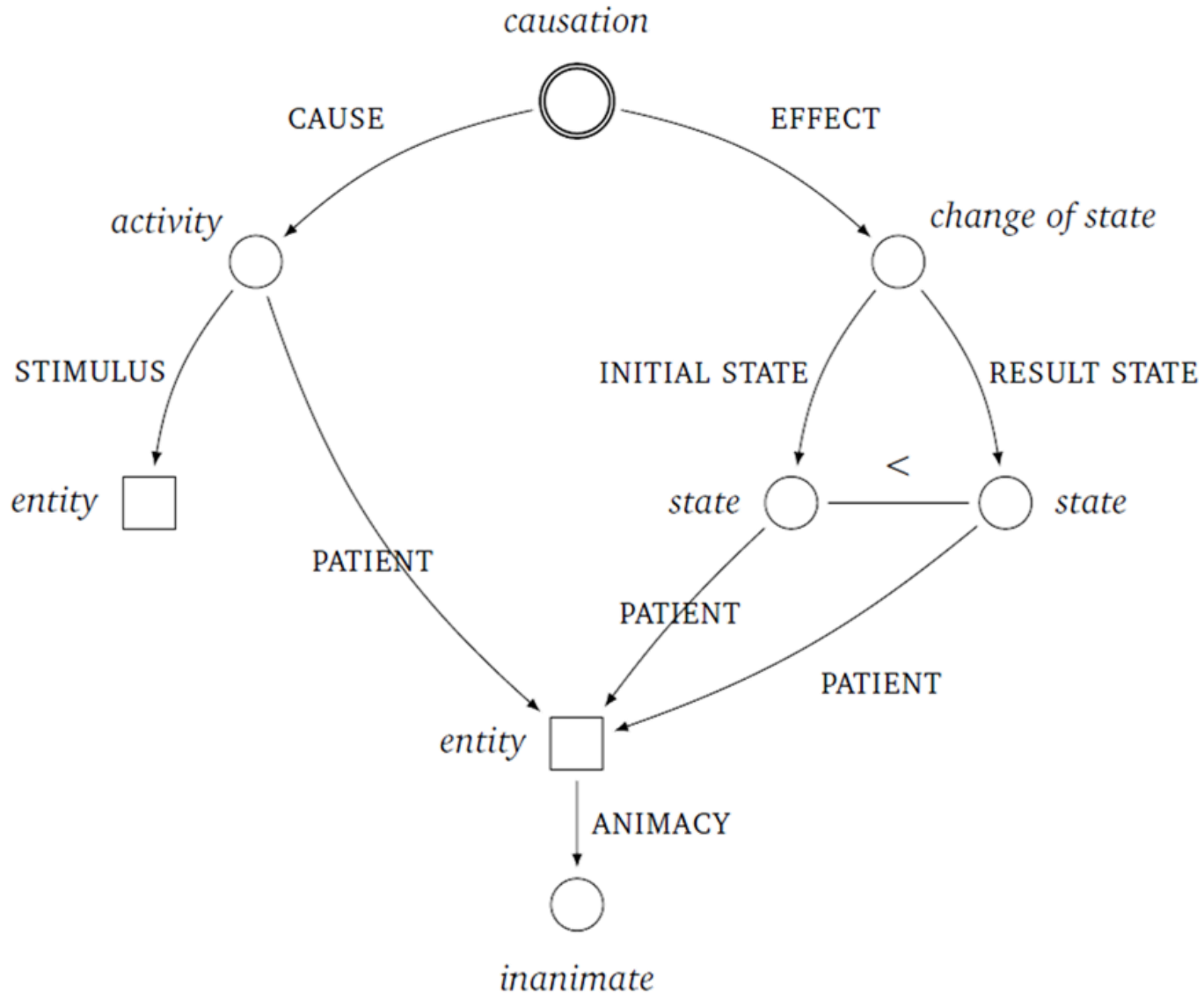
REMEDY

bedragglements
befoulment
besmirchment
debauchment
embetterment

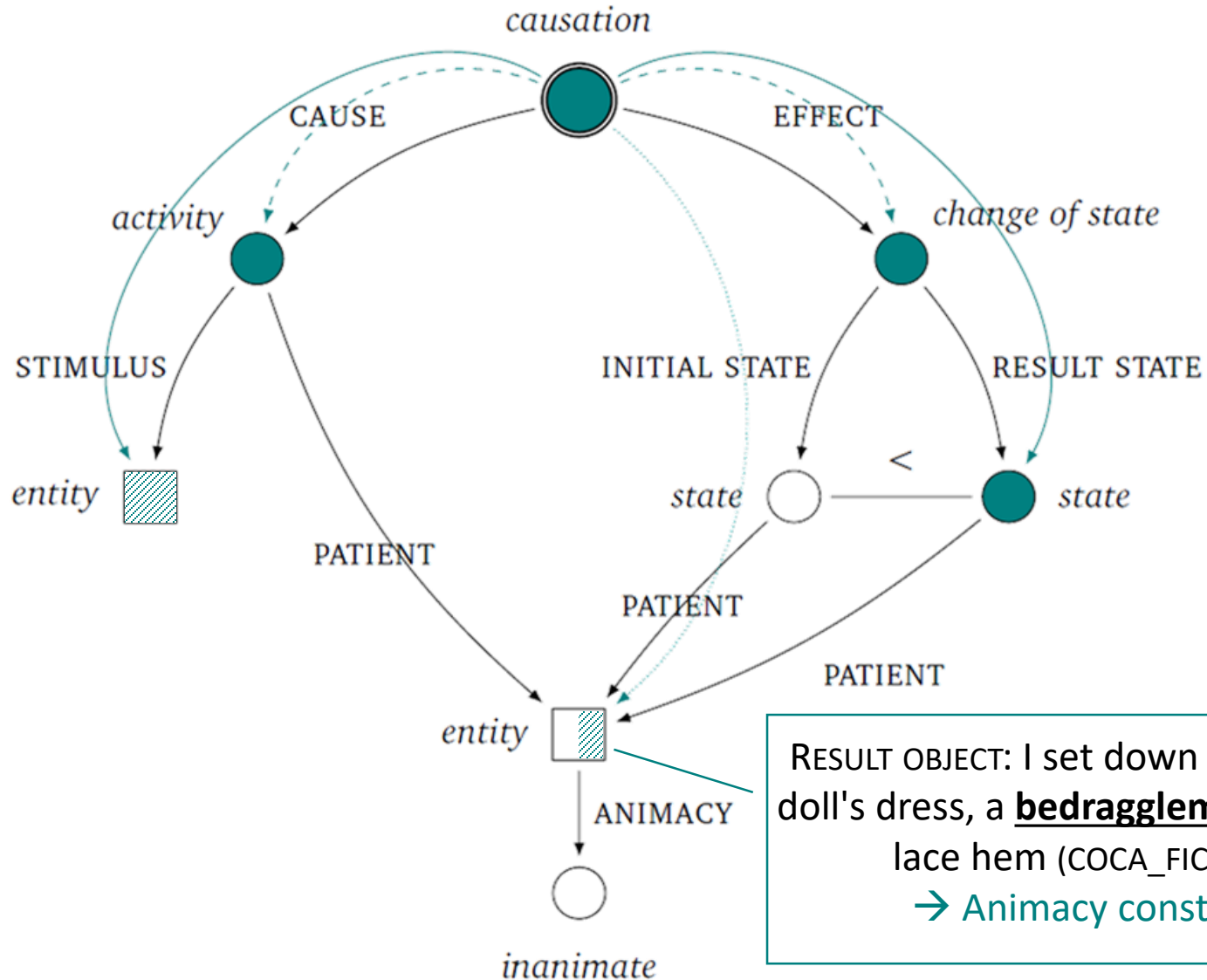
Results: Overview

- Five of the seven verb categories are not attested with *-ment*
- Semantic output:
 - CAUSATION EVENT (Transposition) ✓
 - STIMULUS (✓)
 - RESULT STATE ✓
 - ACTIVITY (causing subevent) ✓
 - CHANGE OF PSYCH STATE (caused subevent) ✓
 - PATIENT ☒
 - RESULT OBJECT ✓

Modeling affix polysemy



Modeling affix polysemy



Open questions (COS verbs)

- Are there systematic semantic differences between the derivations of OCOS verbs and those of REMEDY verbs?
- Can the *change of state* node be selected for all base verbs?
- Is the presence/absence of STIMULUS readings systematic?
- How exactly is the STIMULUS reading related to the RESULT OBJECT reading?

Summary

- *-ment* has clear preferences for certain types of base verb (AMUSE, OCOS, REMEDY).
- Resulting derivatives show a well restricted set of possible readings (e.g. transposition, RESULT STATE, STIMULUS; no EXPERIENCER).
- Shifts can target argumental and non-argumental components of the semantic representation.
- Shifts are governed by certain constraints and/or preferences.

Conclusion

- Affix semantics:
 - The potential to induce particular kinds of shift in the semantic structure of the base
- Possible readings of *-ment* nominalizations emerge from the predictable interaction of base semantics with affix semantics
- Future work: finalize COS analysis and test modelling of semantically different verb bases (problem: far fewer types)

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Thank you very much for your attention!
