

Toward a semantics for personal name blends

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The phenomenon

- (1) **Brangelina** are true globetrotters, but have settled down in the vineyards of France, where they got married last year. (iWeb)

Brad (Pitt) & Angelina (Jolie)

- (2) **Steinmerkel** spricht über Kredite für den Mittelstand. (DeReKo)

‘Steinmerkel talks about loans for medium-sized businesses.’

(Frank-Walter) Steinmeier & (Angela) Merkel

- Blends made up from (at least) two personal names
- Some shortening of the base words
- Single phonological word template

Arndt -Lappe & Plag 2013; Beliaeva 2019

The phenomenon

- Little known about semantics of **personal name blends** – usually not distinguished from lexical blends
- Meaning of lexical blends is usually identified with the meaning of copulative compounds
 - (1) celesbian --> celebrity + lesbian (additive; cf. *singer-songwriter*)
 - (2) chofa --> chair + sofa (compromise; cf. *northeast*)
- *Brangelina* etc. “denote a group of individuals” (Renner 2015: 127); are “nicknames” (Mattiello 2017: 57)

Fleischer & Barz 2012; Bauer 2008; Bauer, Lieber & Plag 2013

Why at the event semantics workshop?

- Frequently, personal name blends are eventive

(1) Michonne never gained anything from the **Richonne** ship... (iWeb)

(2) Aniston also confirmed [...] “that **Brangelina** happened behind her back.” (iWeb)

(3) Frankreichs neuer Präsident setzt auf „**Mercron**“, die deutsch-französische Freundschaft als Motor für die EU und die Welt.

‘France’s new president believes in “Mercron”, the Franco-German friendship as the engine for the EU and the world.’

- Blends often serve as premodifiers for eventive nouns as in (1)
- Also denote (abstract) eventualities such as romantic relationships in (2) or friendships as in (3) on their own

Goals and challenges

- Typology of semantic types of personal name blends
- Show semantic relatedness of some of these types (incl. eventive ones), polysemy, and high degree of context-/world knowledge dependence
- Assumption that names have no semantics – complex blends, however, do
- Build on previous studies that made use of social ontologies and suggest a frame semantic analysis for some of the semantic types

The data base

Sources:

- German/English data from Twitter, iWeb, DeReKo, message boards

Methods:

- Initial list of well-known celebrity blends
- Extended through surveys in online message boards and corpora

Data:

- 1468 types – 2909 tokens

Typology of readings

Headed blends

- (1) ...you really think that they can just get goons from the streets [...] to shout **MESSI-DONA** for them and Messi would just score many goals... (iWeb)
- (2) Out there, they hailed each other. “I always call him ‘**Maradonny**,’” Nouri said. “At first I didn't know he was that technically skilled... (guardian.co.uk)

- Not frequent
- Always similitive --> ‘Messi is like Maradona in some respect’
- Head placement variable
- Common semantization pattern (cf. *to out-Merkel s.o.*, *merkelisieren*, *Merkel one's way into sth.*)

Typology of readings

Non-headed additive (both from iWeb)

(1) And so **Richonne** has emerged as the core couple -- the patriarch and matriarch of Alexandria.

(2) Novak had serve issues that year and **Fedal** really weren't his problem in slams.

- ~collection of individuals
- Non-headed / exocentric
- Either plural or singular agreement (like many group nouns, e.g. *couple*, *police* etc.)

Typology of readings

Non-headed abstract event (both from iWeb)

- (1) **Richonne** is a freaking love story by the book!
- (2) This is what the [...] wounded Federer fans miss about each re-enactment of this rivalry. # The foremost point to remember about **Fedal** and the two men at the heart of it is that in 2003, mens tennis was not in a very good place.

- Abstract events: romance and rivalry, respectively
- Non-headed / exocentric
- Always singular agreement

Typology of readings

Non-headed single event

(1) No, you're NOT a bad tennis fan if you didn't want **Fedal** to happen. [...] Similarly, the magnitude of Sundays occasion doesn't mean that one cant want a Nadal-Djokovic Roland Garros final just as much. (iWeb)

- Not very frequent
- Concrete event – (1) refers to a single match, not the abstract rivalry

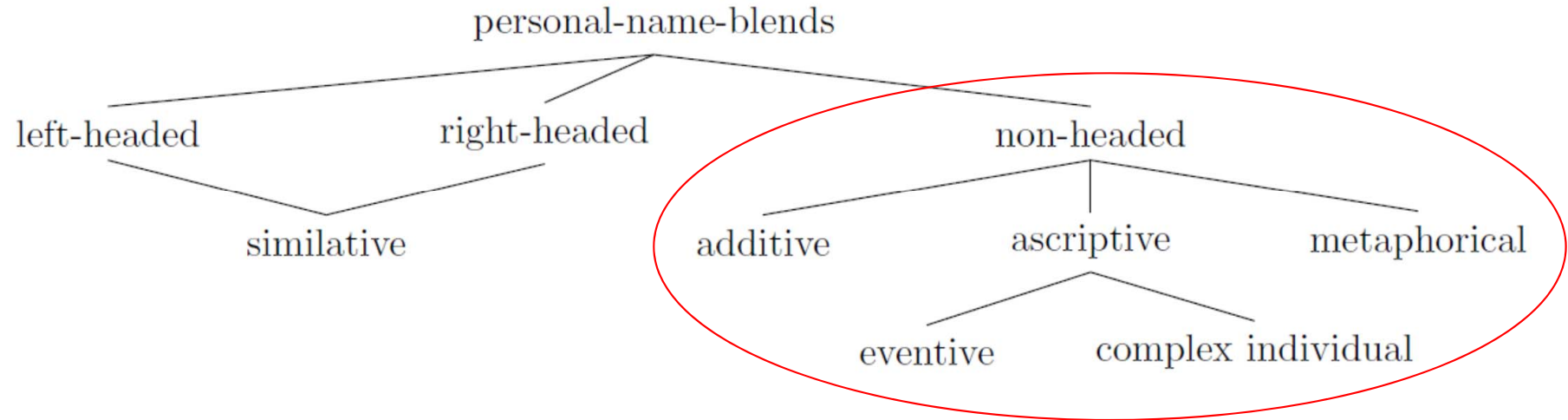
Typology of readings

Metaphorical, semanticized

(1) The 3.5mm headphone port and the Lightning jack are the **Brangelina of smartphone components**. It seems like everyday there is a new rumor of their split in the upcoming iPhone 7... (iWeb)

- Not very frequent
- Typically realized as *of*-PP with target domain as complement (or genitives in German)
- Reliant on entrenched characteristics of source domain blend

Typology of readings



Claim:

- All non-headed types are semantically related
- Either rely or build on each other semantically/conceptually
- Representation of complex frame in combination with a social ontology captures possible readings

Fedal as case study

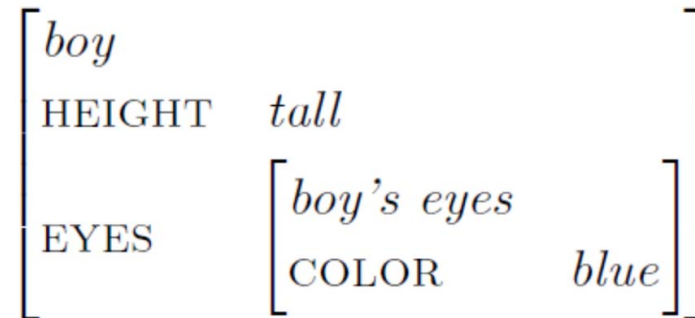
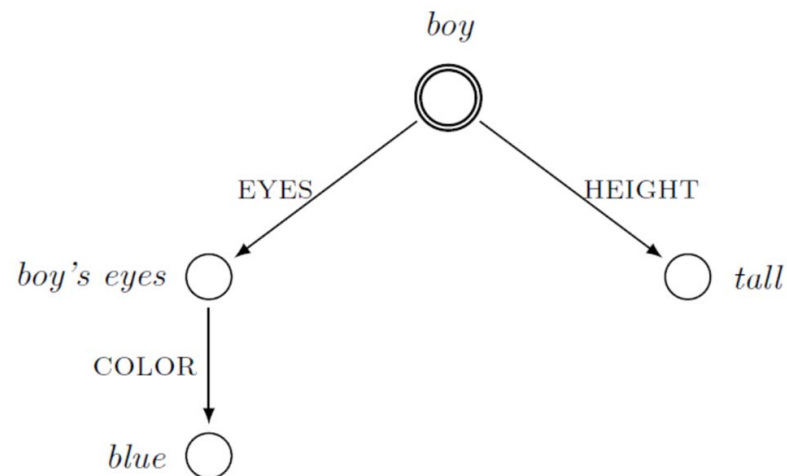
- (1) Novak had serve issues that year and **Fedal** really weren't his problem in slams.
--> **ADDITIVE** (sum of X and Y)

- (2) This is what [...] the wounded Federer fans miss about each re-enactment of this rivalry. The foremost point to remember about **Fedal** and the two men at the heart of it is that in 2003, mens tennis was not in a very good place.
--> **ABSTRACT EVENT** (rivalry)

- (3) No, you're NOT a bad tennis fan if you didn't want **Fedal** to happen. [...] Similarly, the magnitude of Sundays occasion doesn't mean that one cant want a Nadal-Djokovic Roland Garros final just as much.
--> **SINGLE EVENT** (match)

Modeling: Frame semantics

- A frame is a recursive attribute–value structure (Barsalou 1992; Löbner 2014; Petersen 2007)
- Attributes are unique to the attribute holder and take a single value at one point in time



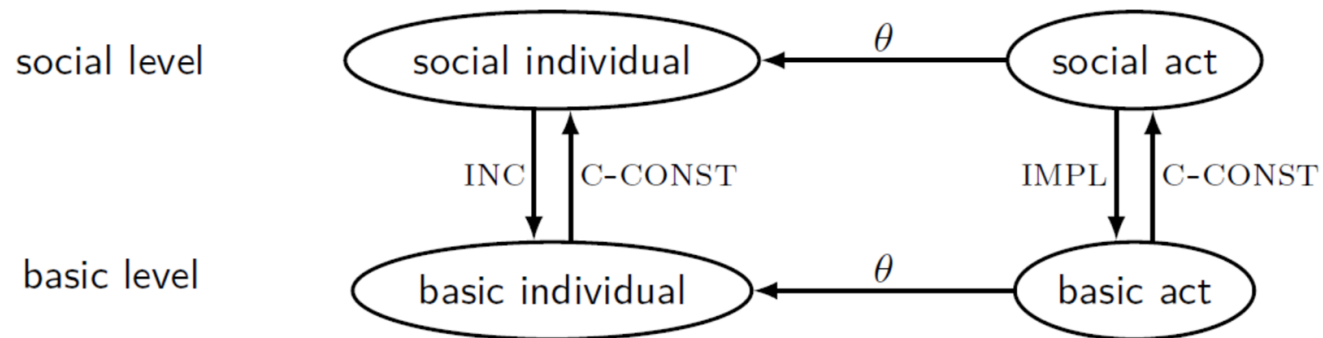
Social ontology

- Social ontology captures social entities
 - institutions, roles, functions, social actions (e.g. voting, marrying, teaching)
- Social ontology rooted in a physical or basic ontology (of basic entities)
- These two ontological layers are related systematically
- Social entities are “created” via social acts --> given certain circumstances (acts), basic entities count as social entities

Searle 1995; Löbner/Anderson 2018; Anderson 2018

Social ontology

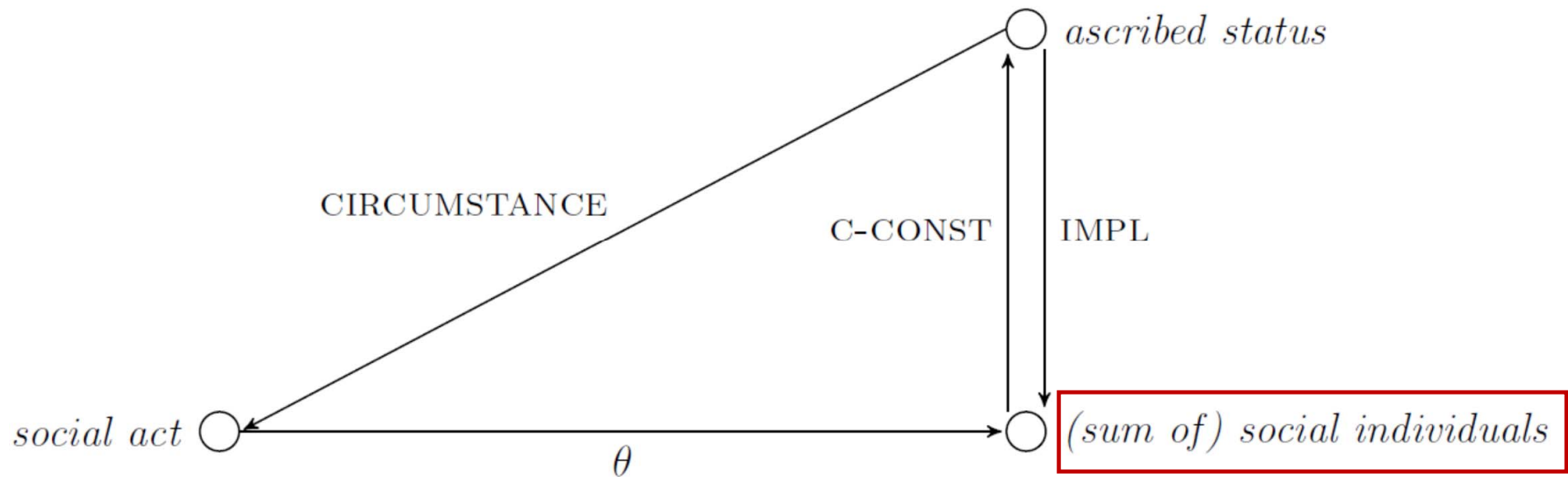
- IMPL
 - Social entities are implemented by more basic entities (e.g. bill of money by scrap of paper)
- C-CONST
 - Basic entities c-constitute social entities: Searle's <X counts as Y under circumstances Z> relation



Searle 1995; Löbner/Anderson 2018; Anderson 2018

Social ontology

General application to personal name blends

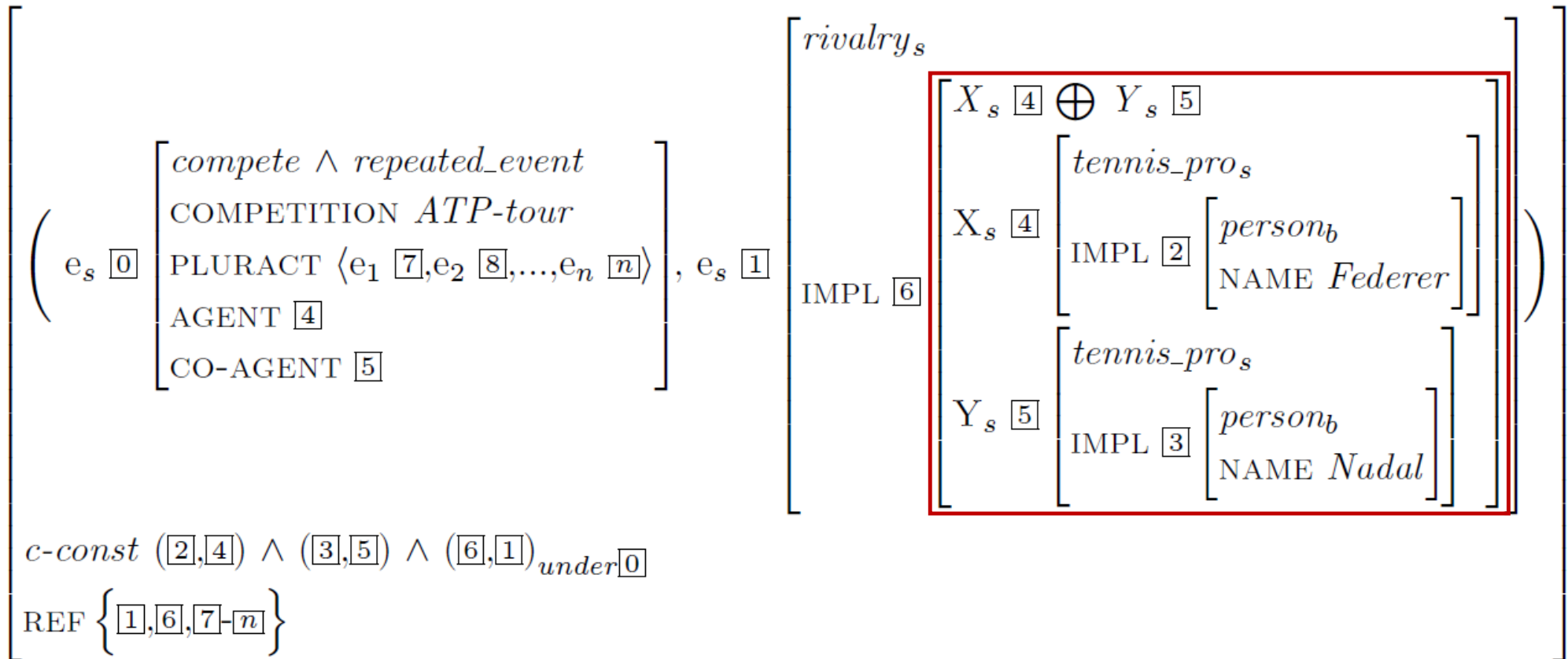


Capturing the additive reading

(1) Novak had serve issues that year and Fedal really weren't his problem in slams. (iWeb)

$$O_s \left[\begin{array}{l} X_s \text{ [3]} \oplus Y_s \text{ [4]} \\ X_s \text{ [3]} \left[\begin{array}{l} tennis_pro_s \\ IMPL \text{ [1]} \left[\begin{array}{l} person_b \\ NAME \textit{ Federer} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\ Y_s \text{ [4]} \left[\begin{array}{l} tennis_pro_s \\ IMPL \text{ [2]} \left[\begin{array}{l} person_b \\ NAME \textit{ Nadal} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\ c-const \text{ ([1],[3])} \wedge \text{ ([2],[4])} \end{array} \right]$$

Rivalries and matches – abstract and single events

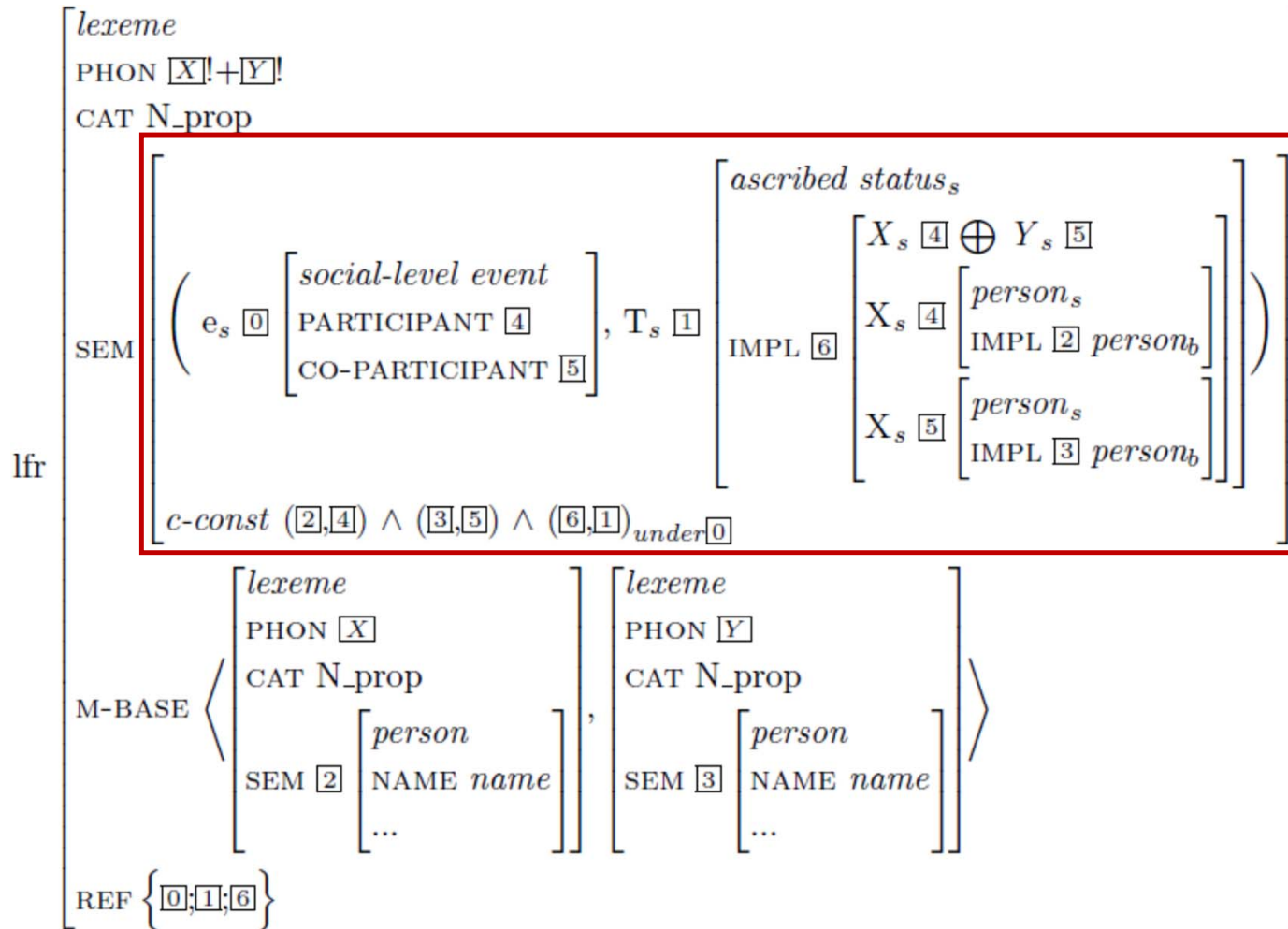


Rivalries and matches – abstract and single events

$$\left(\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{e}_s \text{ [0]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{compete} \wedge \text{repeated_event} \\
 \text{COMPETITION ATP-tour} \\
 \text{PLURACT } \langle \text{e}_1 \text{ [7], e}_2 \text{ [8], \dots, e}_n \text{ [n]} \rangle \\
 \text{AGENT [4]} \\
 \text{CO-AGENT [5]}
 \end{array} \right], \text{e}_s \text{ [1]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{rivalry}_s \\
 \text{IMPL [6]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 X_s \text{ [4]} \oplus Y_s \text{ [5]} \\
 X_s \text{ [4]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{tennis_pro}_s \\
 \text{IMPL [2]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{person}_b \\
 \text{NAME Federer}
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right] \\
 Y_s \text{ [5]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{tennis_pro}_s \\
 \text{IMPL [3]} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{person}_b \\
 \text{NAME Nadal}
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right] \right)
 \end{array}
 \right.$$

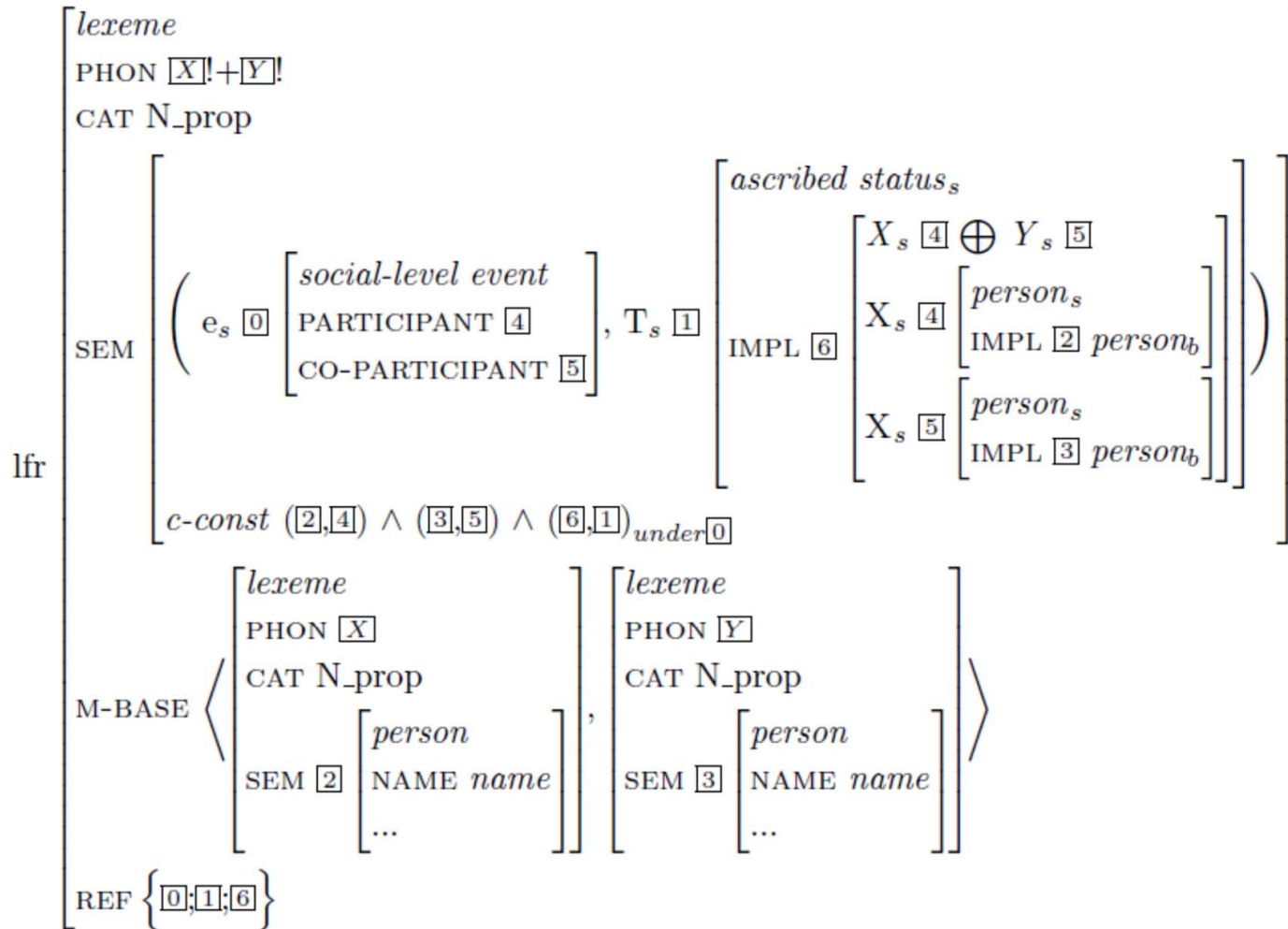
$$\left. \begin{array}{l}
 c\text{-const } ([2],[4]) \wedge ([3],[5]) \wedge ([6],[1])_{\text{under}[0]} \\
 \text{REF } \{ [1],[6],[7]-[n] \}
 \end{array} \right]$$

Lexeme formation rule for ascriptive blends



- Lexical rules operating on and manipulating base structures (Andreou 2017; Bonami & Crysmann 2016; Koenig 1999)
- Descriptive rules: generalization over attestations and in consequence the lexicon

Lexeme formation rule for ascriptive blends



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Summary & conclusion

- Personal name blends highly context-/world knowledge dependent
- Still, different readings connected in systematic, underspecified ways

- Social ontology and relation to basic ontology (or between types) allows for capturing ascriptive process crucial for interpretation
- Relation between a collection of individuals and status ascribed to them on basis of underlying social acts

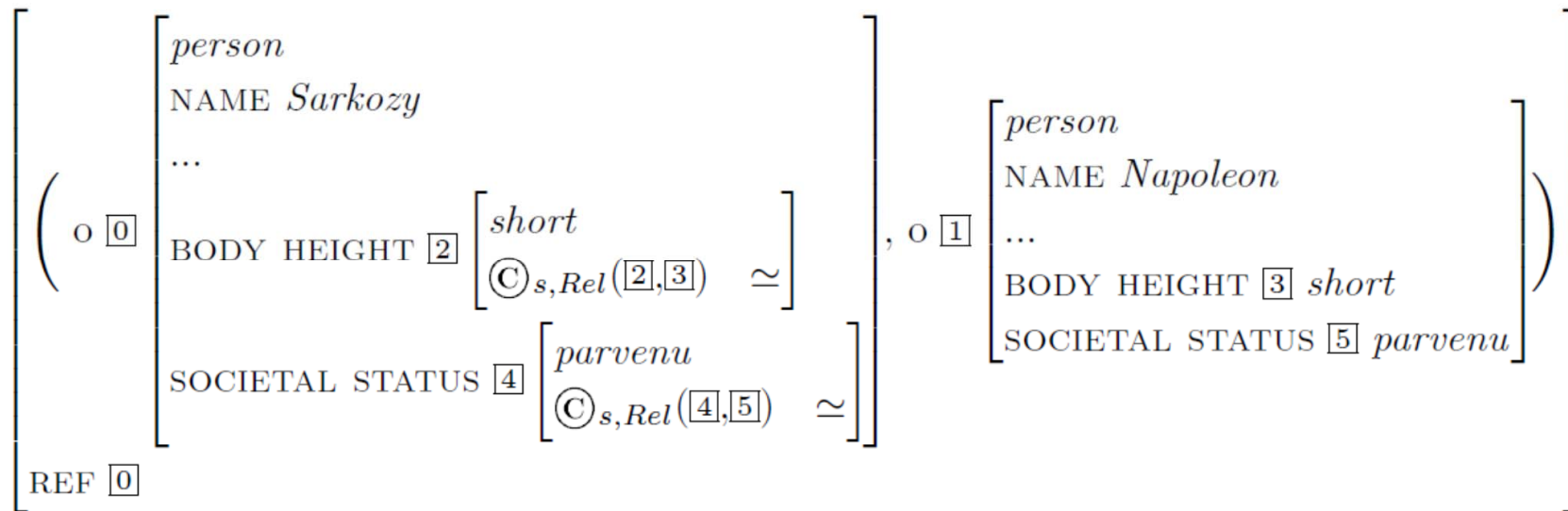
- Seems that not very many ascriptive types possible
- Co-participation or symmetric relationship between predicate of social act and blend constituents necessary

THANK YOU!

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Similative blends

- (1) Seither nennt ihn das Satireblatt «**Sarkoléon**». [...] Beide sind klein gewachsen [...] und beide sind gesellschaftliche Parvenus, Anhänger der «Meritokratie»... (DeReKo)
- ‘Since that time the satirical magazine has called him “Sarkoléon”. Both are short in stature and both are parvenus, adherents of “meritocracy”.’



Similative blends

$$\text{lfr} \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \textit{lexeme} \\
 \text{PHON } \boxed{X!} + \boxed{Y!} \\
 \text{CAT } N_prop \\
 \text{SEM} \left[\left(\circ \boxed{0!} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{person} \\ \text{ATTRIBUTE}_x \boxed{2} \left[\begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \textcircled{C}_{s,Rel}(\boxed{2},\boxed{3}) \simeq \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right], \circ \boxed{1!} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{person} \\ \text{ATTRIBUTE}_x \boxed{3} \beta \end{array} \right] \right) \right] \\
 \text{M-BASE} \left\langle \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{lexeme} \\ \text{PHON } \boxed{X} \\ \text{CAT } N_prop \\ \text{SEM } \circ \boxed{0} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{person} \\ \text{NAME } name \\ \dots \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right], \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{lexeme} \\ \text{PHON } \boxed{Y} \\ \text{CAT } N_prop \\ \text{SEM } \circ \boxed{1} \left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{person} \\ \text{NAME } name \\ \dots \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\
 \text{REF } \{ \boxed{0!}; \boxed{1!} \}
 \end{array} \right]$$