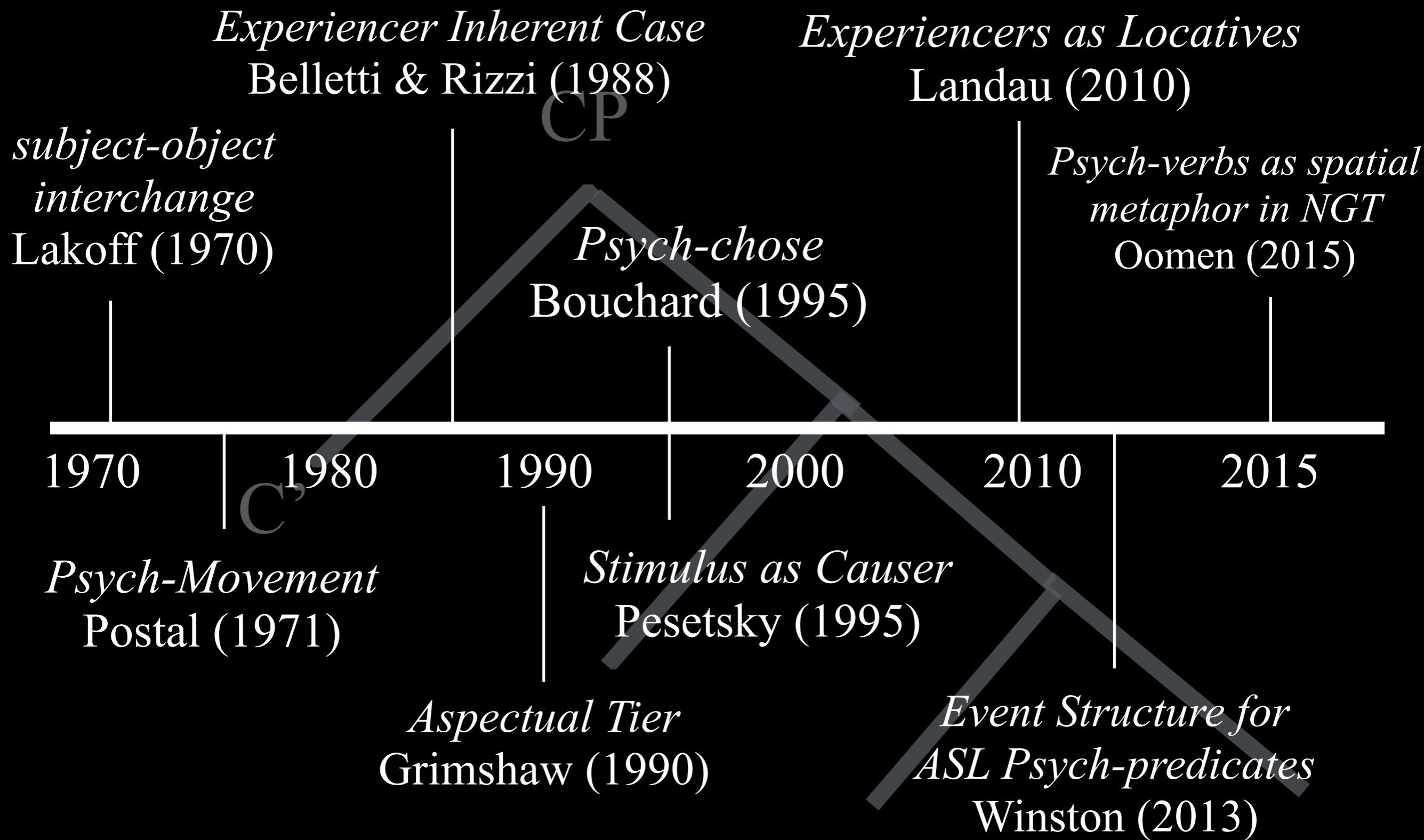


Construing Affective Events in American Sign Language

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Dissertation Defense
Gallaudet University
November 11, 2015

Construing Affective Events in American Sign Language







Affective Constructions AKA Psych Verbs

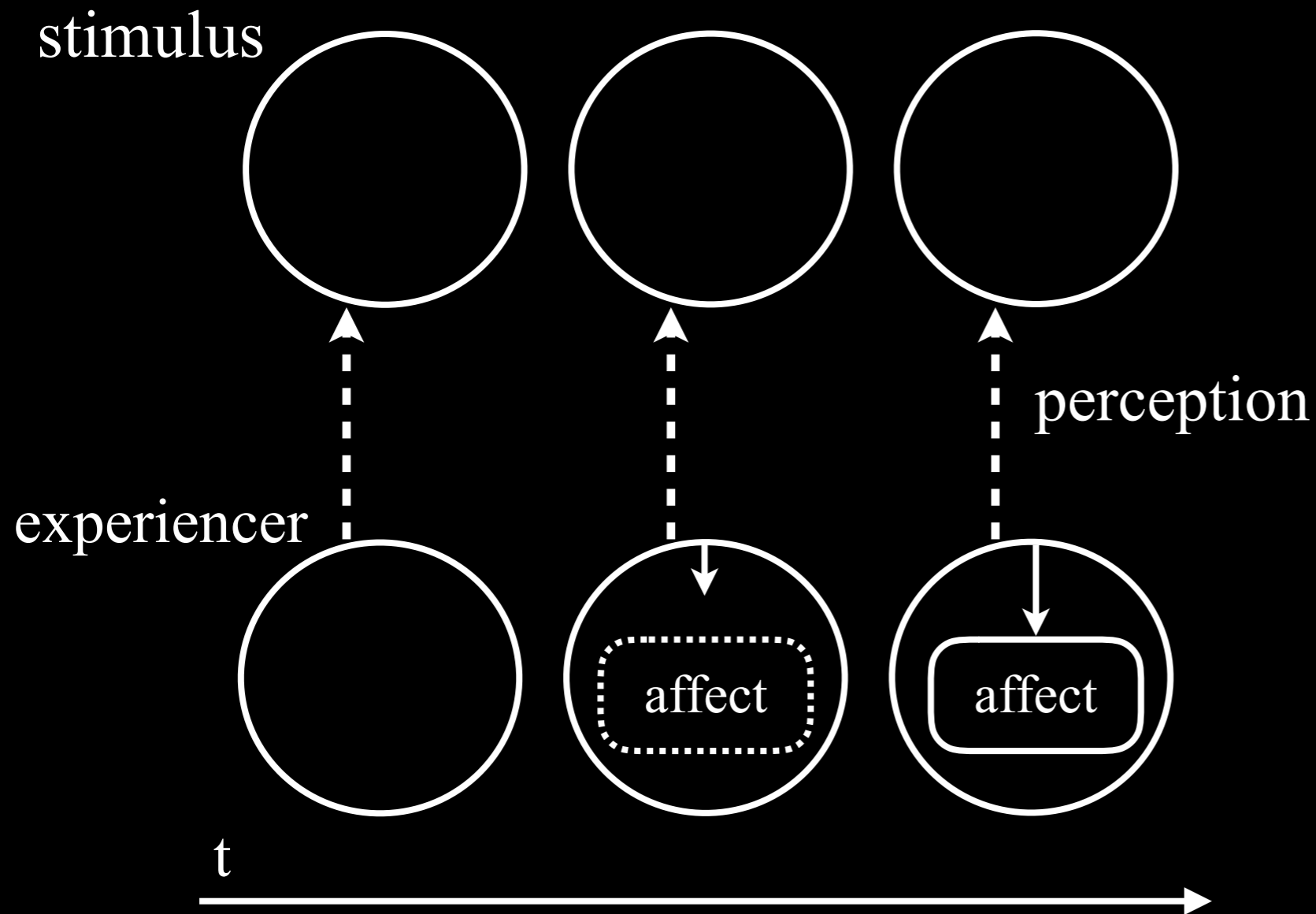
Little dogs fear big dogs.

Theta-Role Hierarchy:

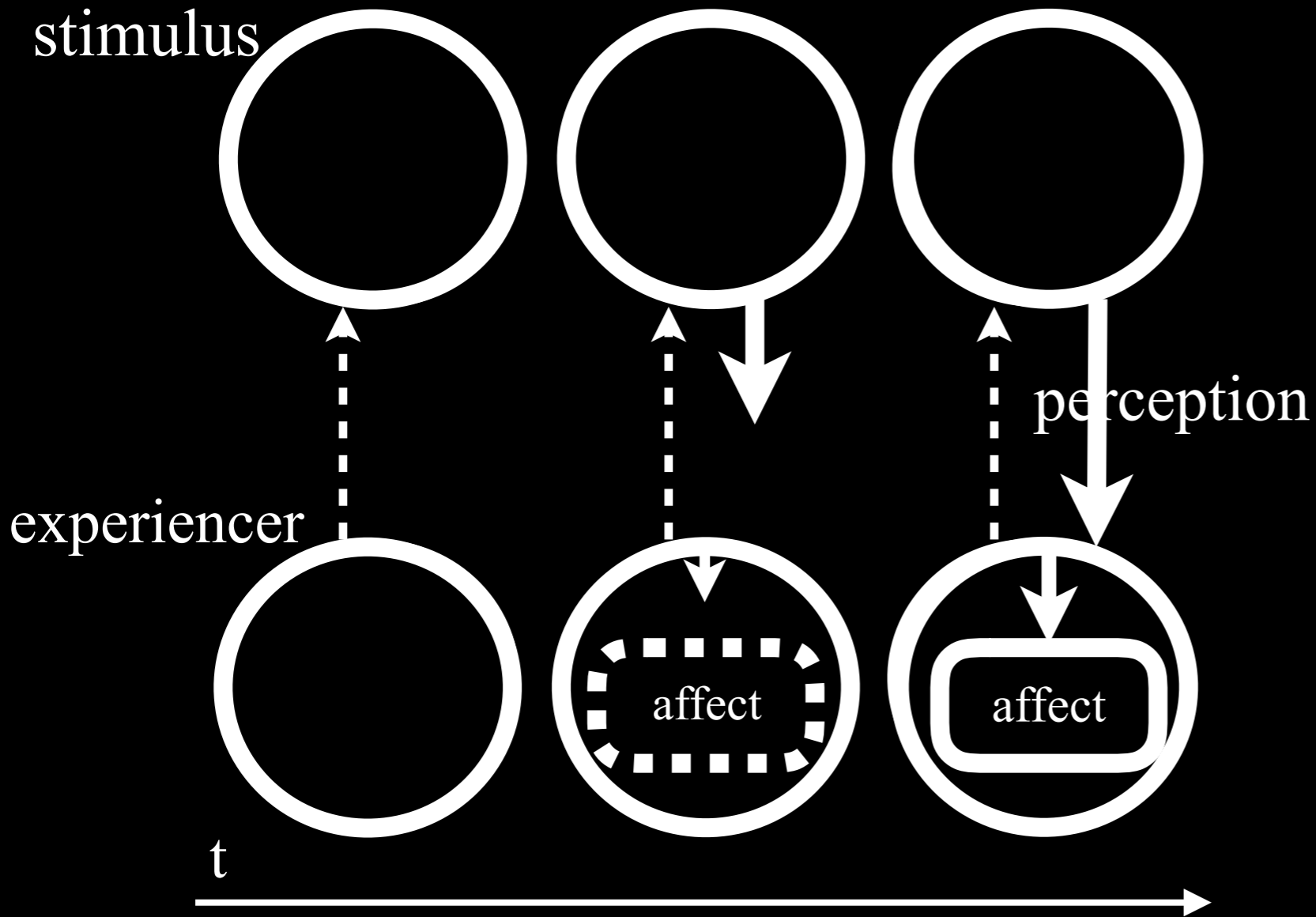
agent > experiencer > goal > theme

Big dogs scare little dogs.

Affective Event Conceptual Base



Big dogs scare little dogs.



Research Question

What constructions does ASL use to describe affective events?

- How are affective events encoded in naturalistic language?
- What construals of affective events are evoked by ASL constructions?
- Does ASL encode the experiencer as the object and/or the stimulus as subject?

Methodology

- 9 Deaf consultants
- Short film
 - affective events (fear, anger, confusion, etc.)
 - no language
- Consultant Tasks:
 - narratives
 - descriptions of affective event clips
 - judgment task



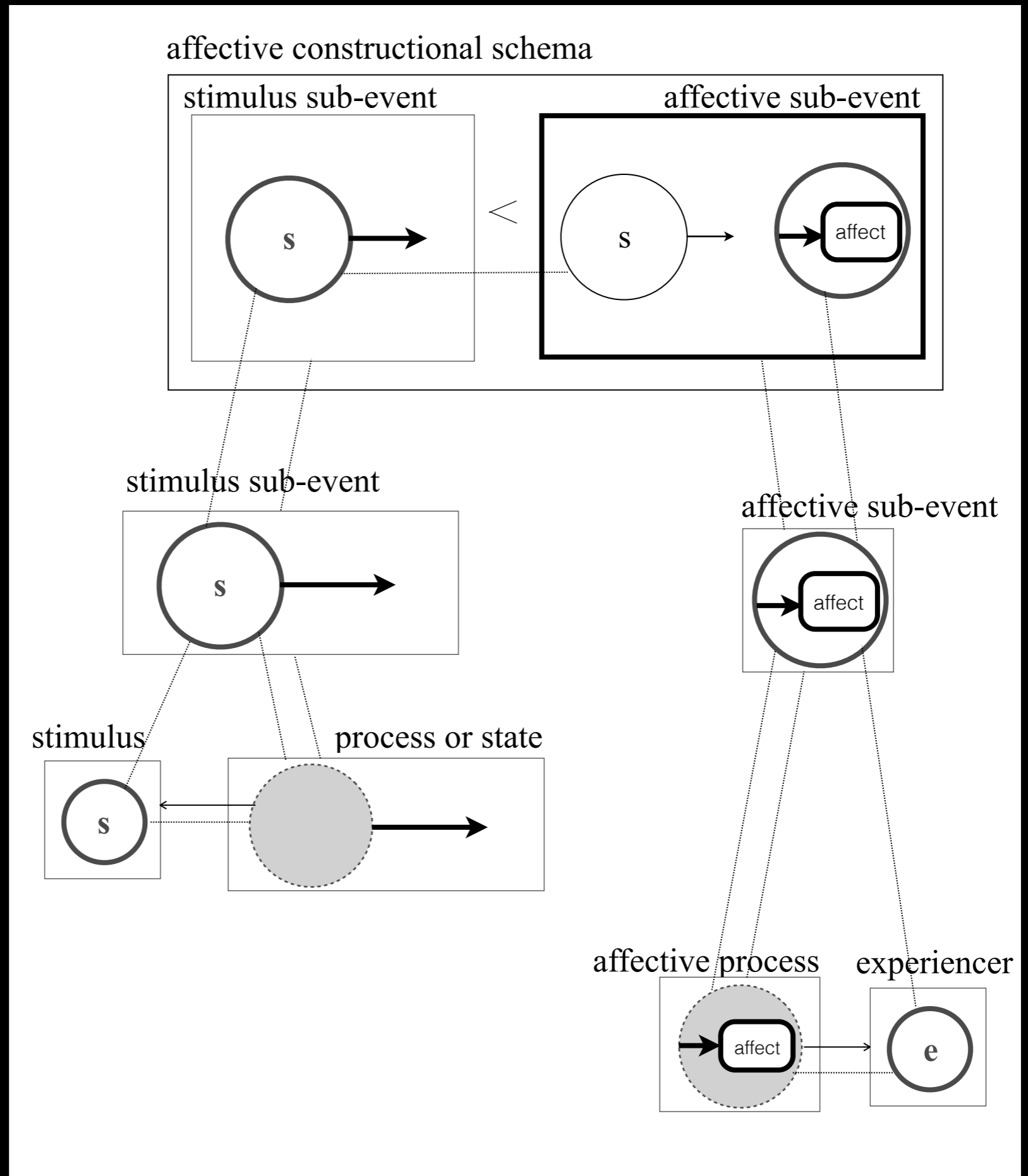
Results

- 184 affective constructions
- Biclausal Constructions:
Stimulus Clause + Affective Clause
- Three instantiations of the biclausal affective constructional schema:
 - affective lexemes
 - affective constructed dialogue
 - affective constructed action

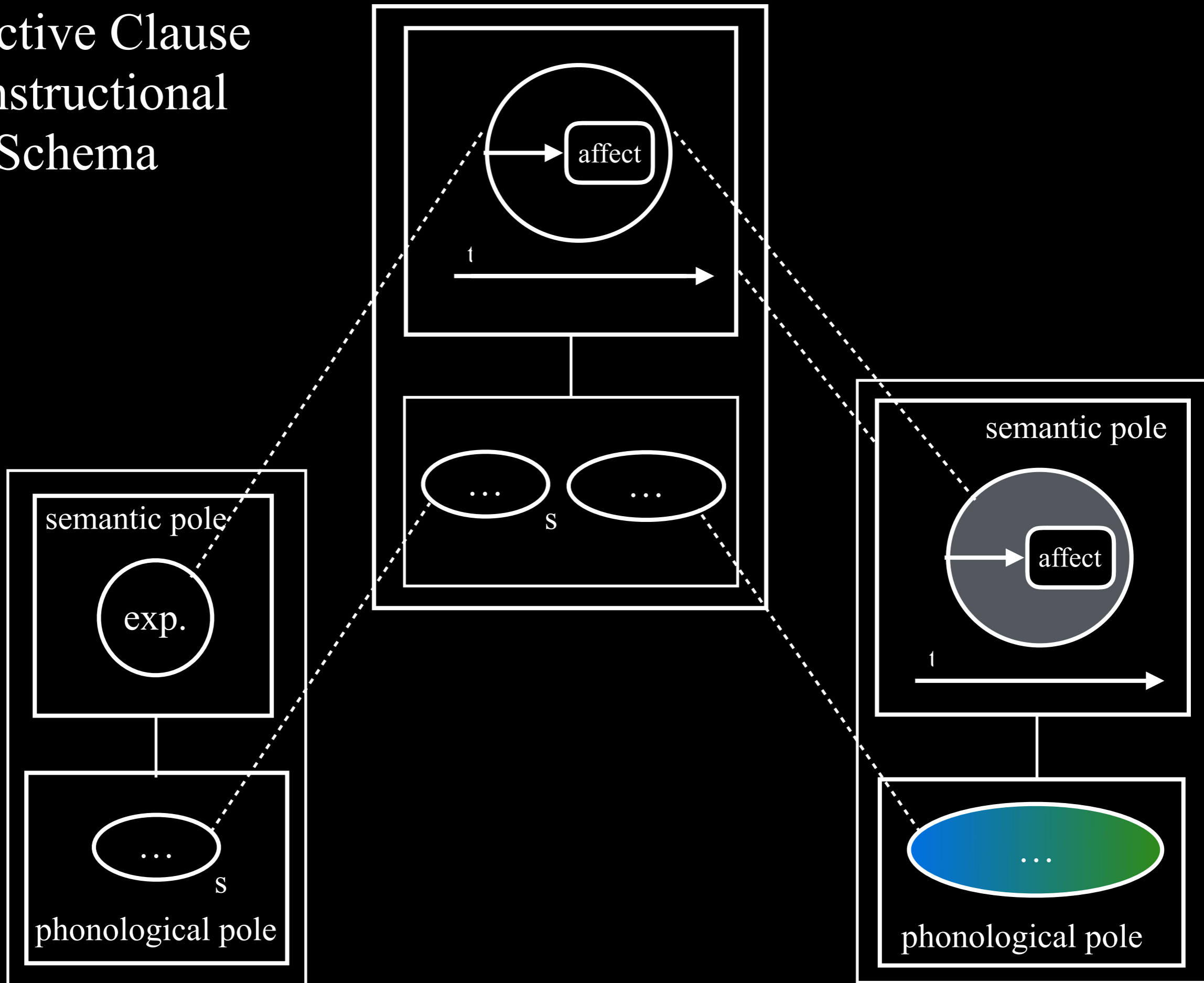
Biclausal Affective Construction



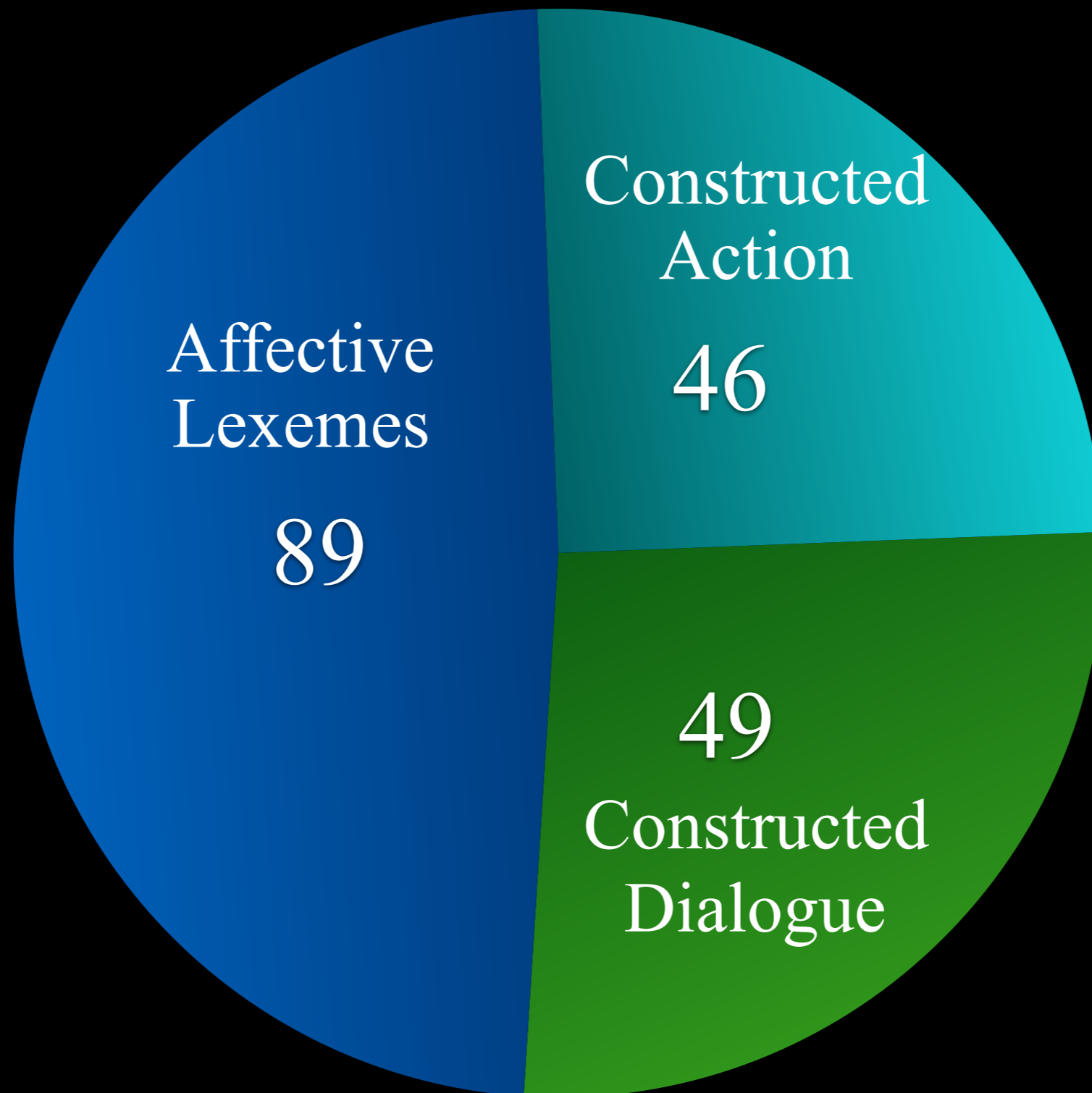
Semantic Pole of Biclausal Constructional Schema



Affective Clause Constructional Schema



Affective Clause Instantiations



Affective Lexemes



Affective Lexemes



|girl holding up quarter|

She revealed the quarter.

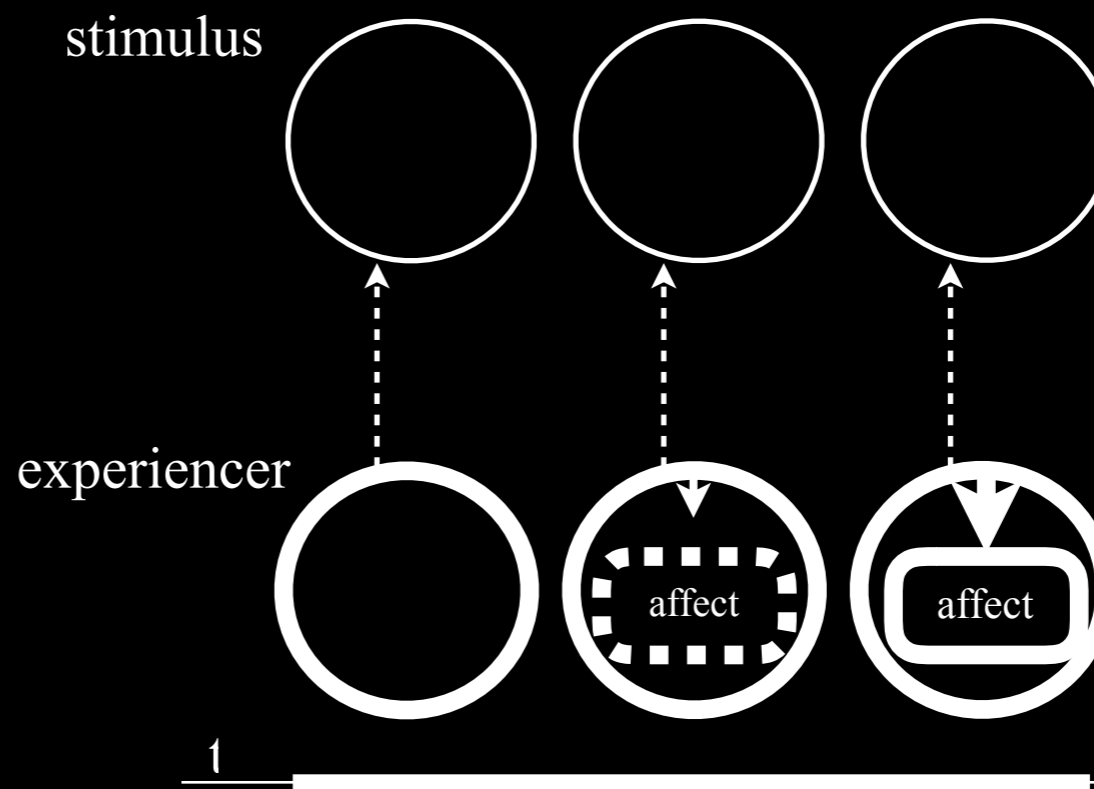
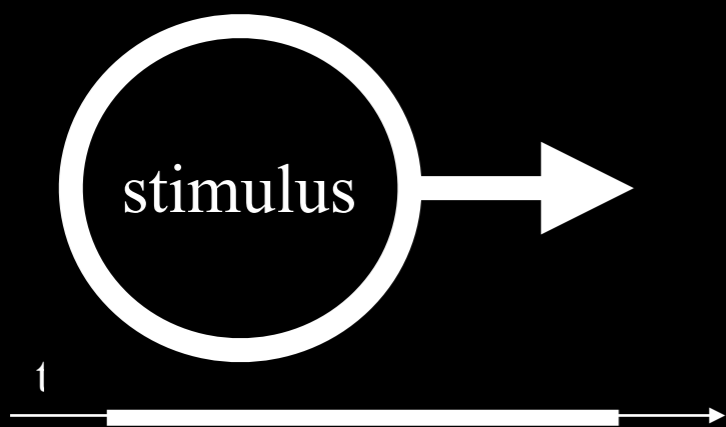


clown's confusion

PRO-X|->clown|

MIND^TWIST

He (clown) was confounded.

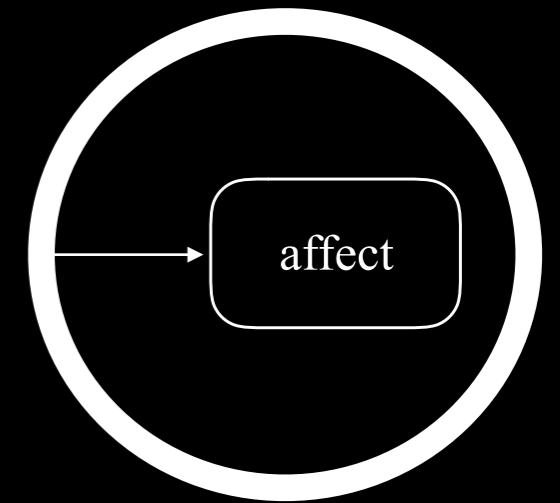


Constructed Action



Constructed Action: Icons of Indexes

experiencer



CLOWN

DV: try scare

MAN

man's annoyance——

The clown tried to scare him.

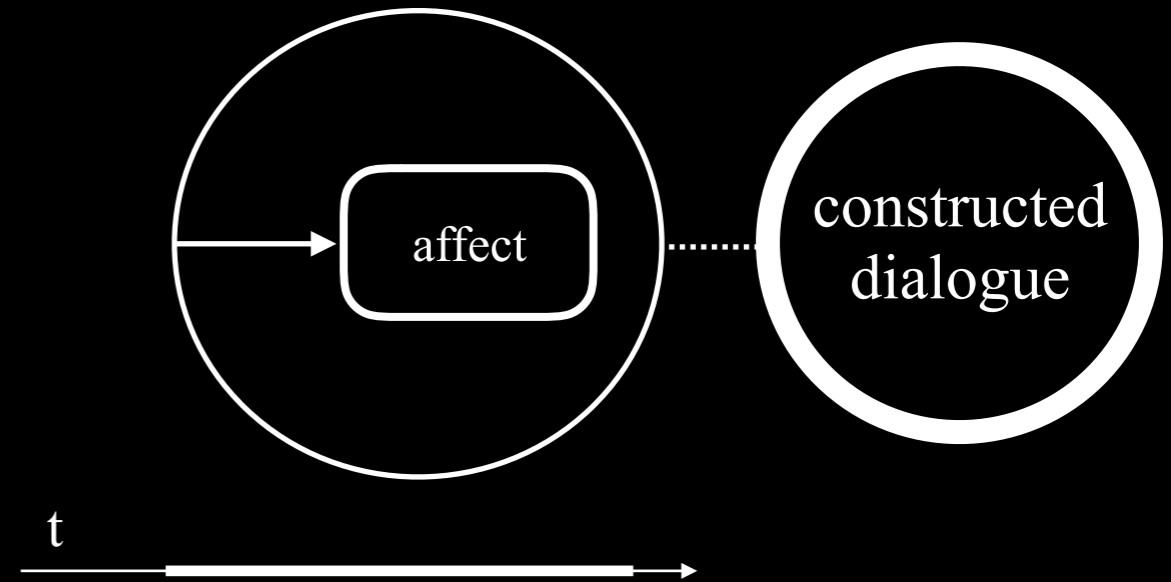
The man was annoyed.

Constructed Dialogue



Constructed Dialogue

experiencer



|clown scaring|

<CLOWN>t

The clown tried to scare her.

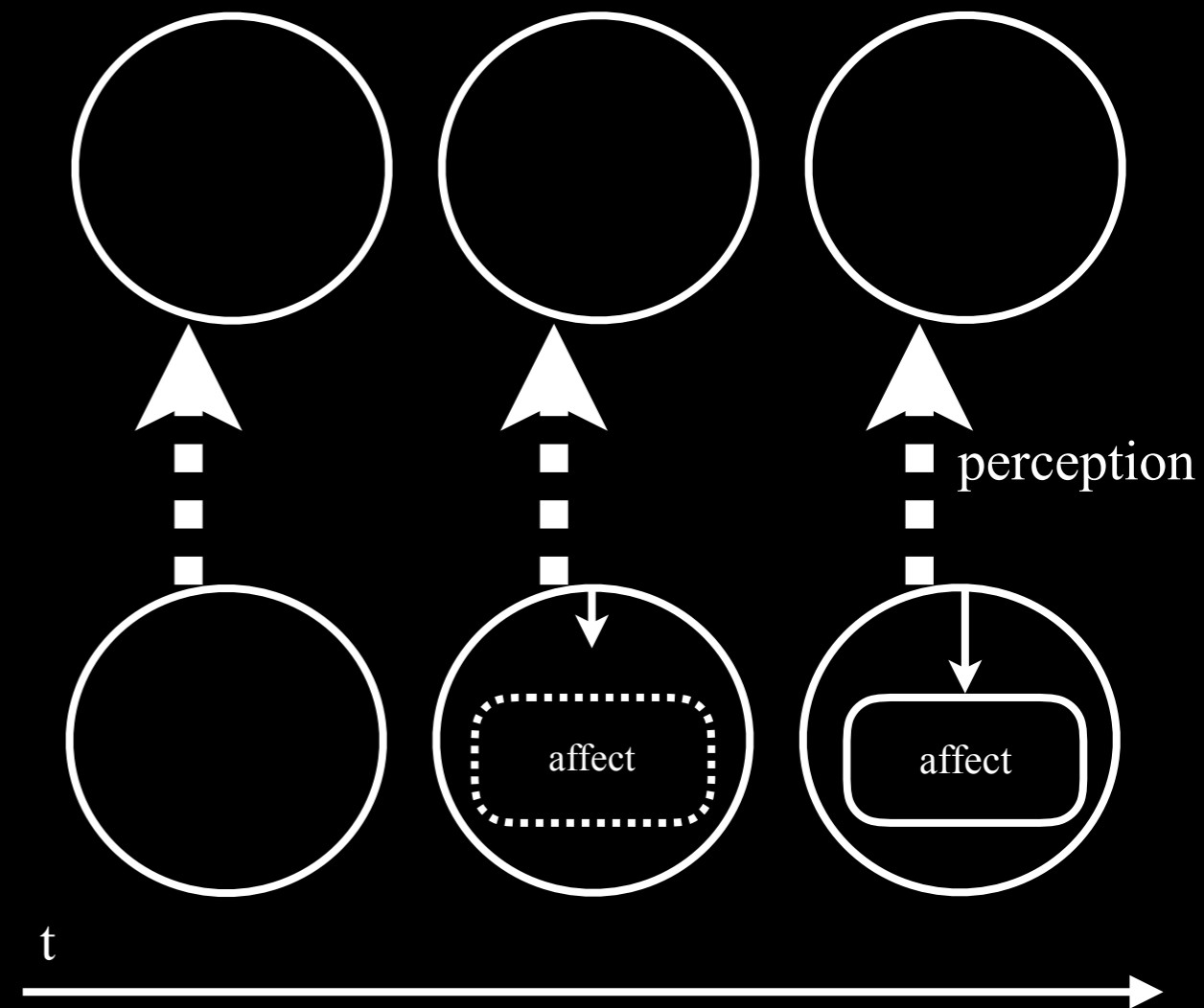
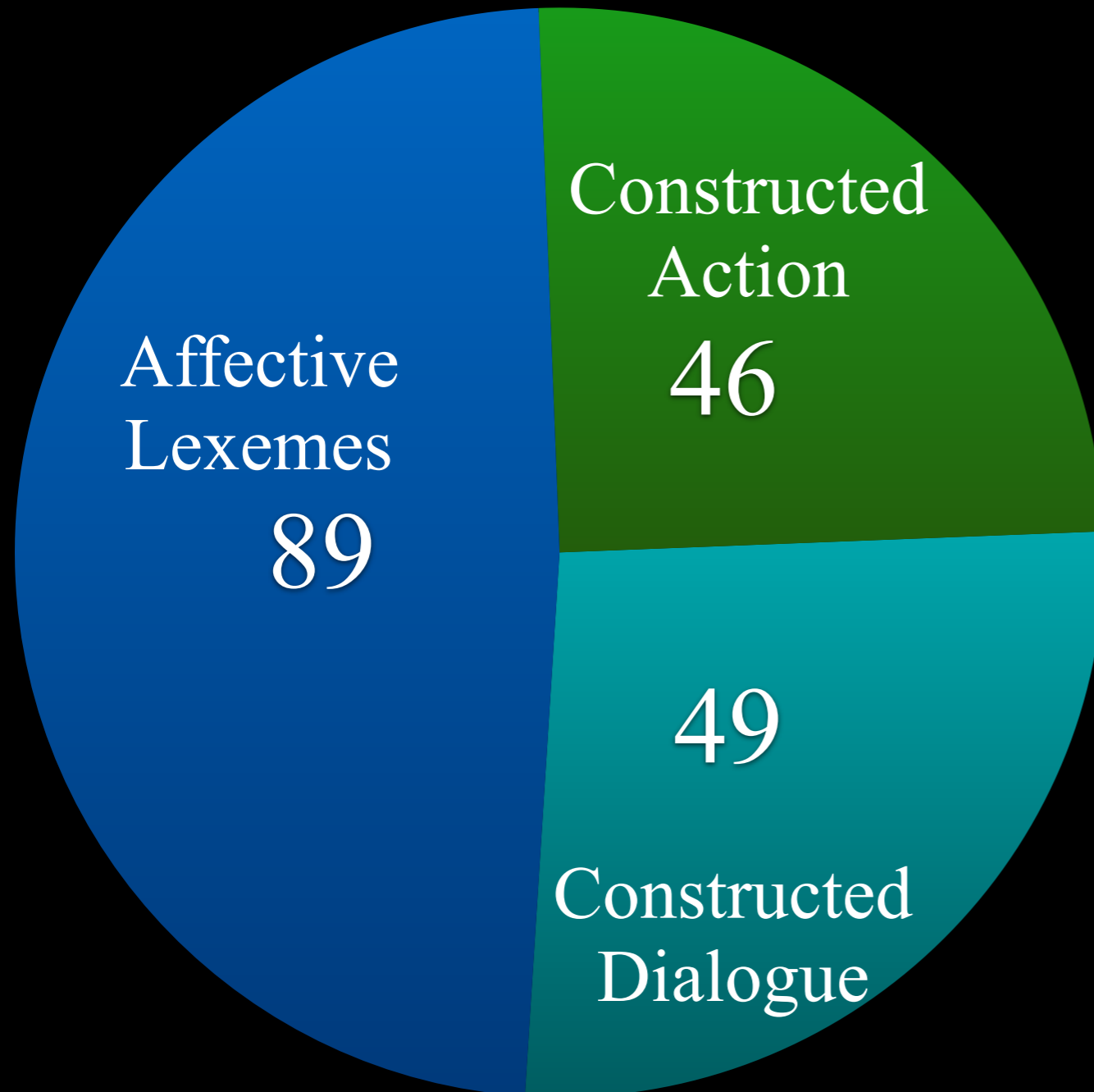
woman's annoyance_____

WOMAN

GOSH

The woman was like, "Oh my gosh."

Prospective Attending Sign



PAS with Constructed Dialogue and Lexeme



MAN STAND-UP PAS “REALLY GOSH”

*The man got up, took-in the clown’s antics,
and thought “Oh, come on.”*

CLOWN PAS ABASHED

*The clown perceived the man’s
response and was abashed.*

Research Questions

- To denote affective events, ASL encodes the stimulus in one clause and then the affective change in a second clause.
What constructions does ASL use to describe affective events?
 - The affective event schema had three instantiations: profiling the affect lexically, or naturalistic language?
 - indexing the affect through depiction of the experienter or supposed internal dialogue.
 - What construals of affective events are evoked by ASL constructions?
- In contrast to many spoken languages, ASL affective constructions do not impose an interpretation of the causation (stimulus or agent) stimulus as subject?
 - Does ASL encode the experienter as the object and/or the agent?

Future Research and Applications

- Stimulus Clause
Constructional
Schemas/Instantiations
- Prospective Attending
Sign
- Affective constructions
in spoken languages
(non-psych verb
constructions) and
other signed languages
- Psycholinguistic
effects
- Second Language
Acquisition
- Language teaching,
Interpreter education,
Mental health
counseling



Thank You

- To the participants in this study,
- To my research assistant and ASL model,
- To my committee, classmates, professors, and colleagues,
- To the Gallaudet Research Institute (Office of Research Support) for a small grant supporting this work,
- To all of you for coming!

Thank you

Questions, Comments, Quandaries?

Select References

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Appendices

- Content Requirements
- Judgment Task
- SCARE/FEAR



Cognitive Grammar Content Requirements

The only elements ascribable to a linguistic system are:

- i) semantic, phonological, and symbolic structures that actually occur as parts of expressions;
- ii) schematizations of permitted structures;
- iii) categorizing relationships between permitted structures.

Judgment Task

- **Six affective lexemes:**

- **EXCITED**
- **CONFUSED**
- **FRUSTRATED**
- **SUPRISED**
- **FEAR/SCARE**
- **PISS-OFF**

- **Five construction types:**

- **Two transitive**
- **Stimulus subject**
- **Experiencer object**
- **Biclausal construction**

- **S_{<stim>}V S_{<exp>}V_{<affect>}**
QUARTER STUCK GIRL CONFUSE

- **S_{<exp>} V_{<affect>} O_{<stim>}**
GIRL CONFUSE QUARTER

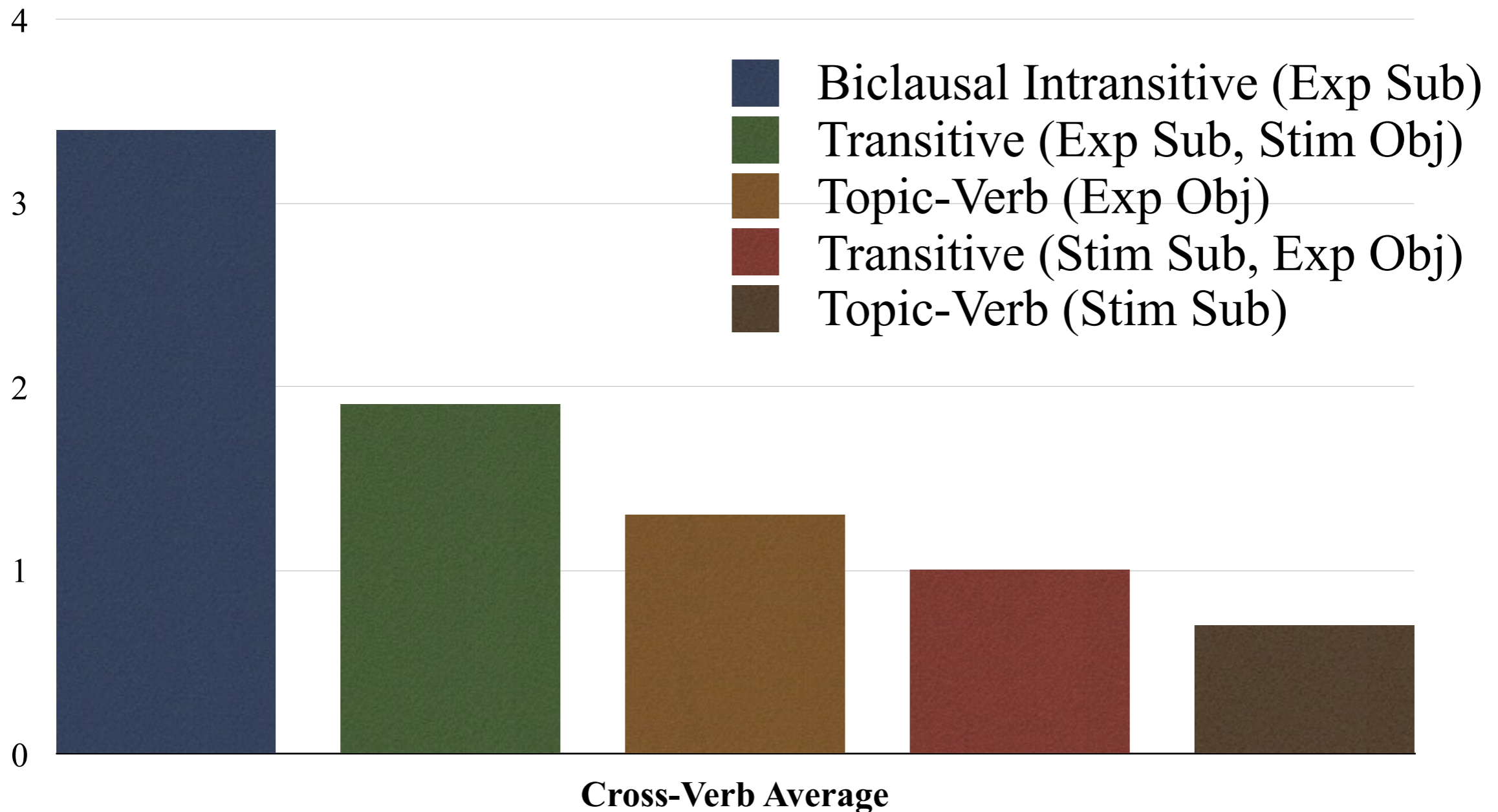
- **S_{<stim>} V_{<affect>} O_{<exp>}**
QUARTER CONFUSE GIRL

- **T_{<stim>} S_{<stim-pro>} V_{<affect>}**
<QUARTER>_t PRO-X_(quarter) CONFUSE

- **T_{<stim>} V_{<affect>} O_{<exp>}**
<QUARTER>_t CONFUSE GIRL

Judgment Task

Average judgment scores for each construction type.



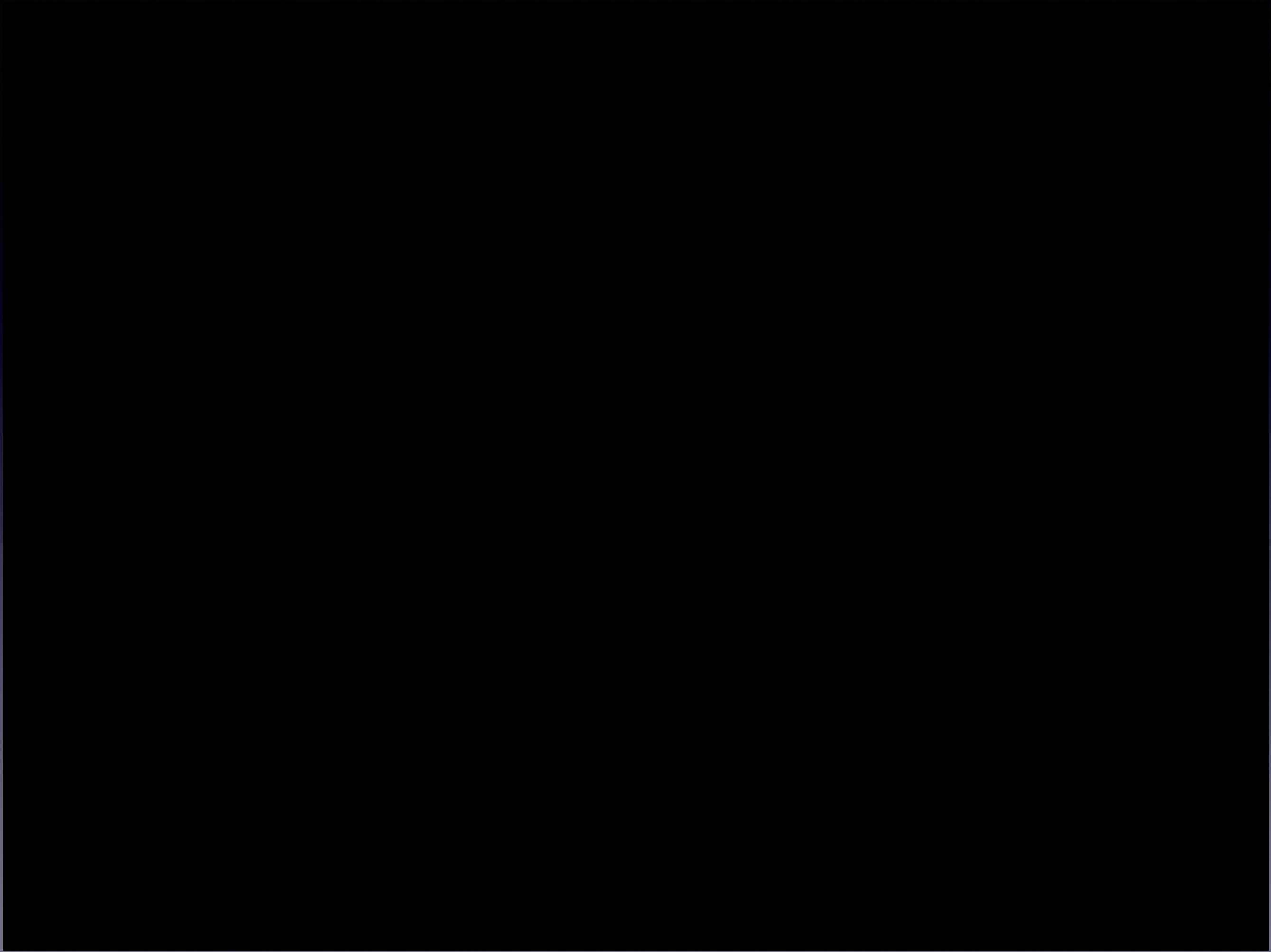
Original:
CLOWN PISS-OFF GIRL



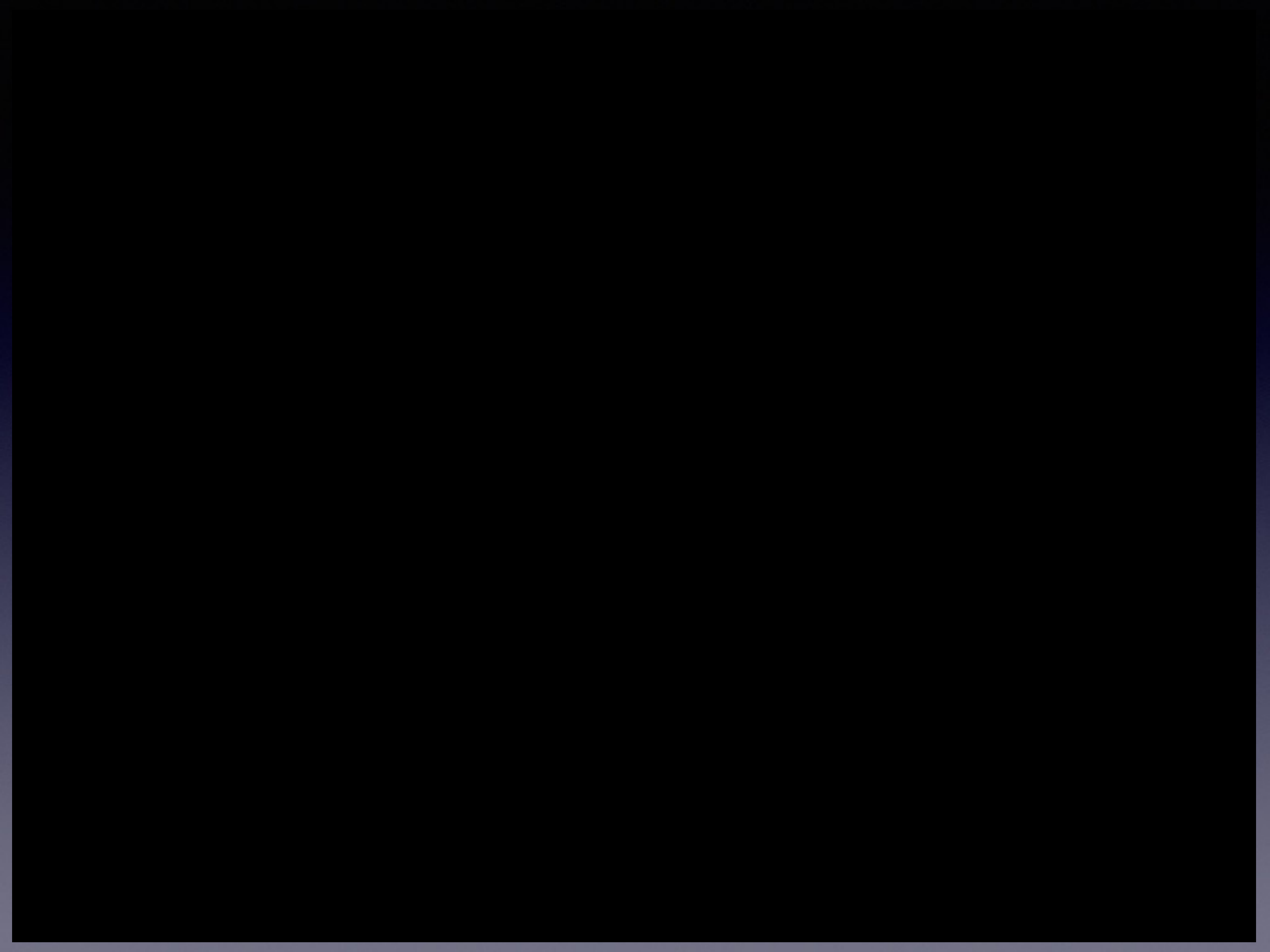
Consultant amended:
CLOWN PISS-OFF #AT GIRL

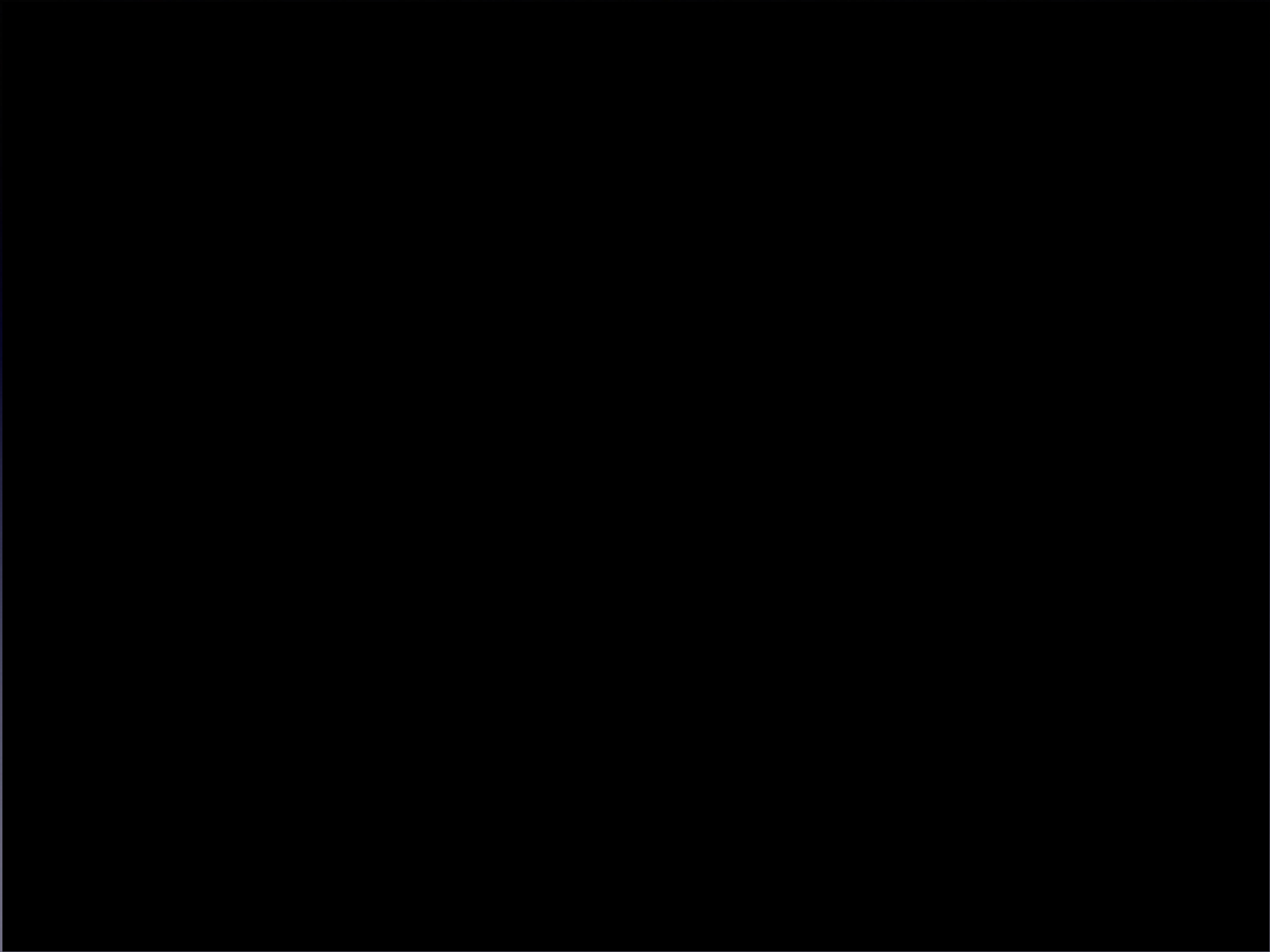
Sample Affective Event Clip and Judgment Task Constructions











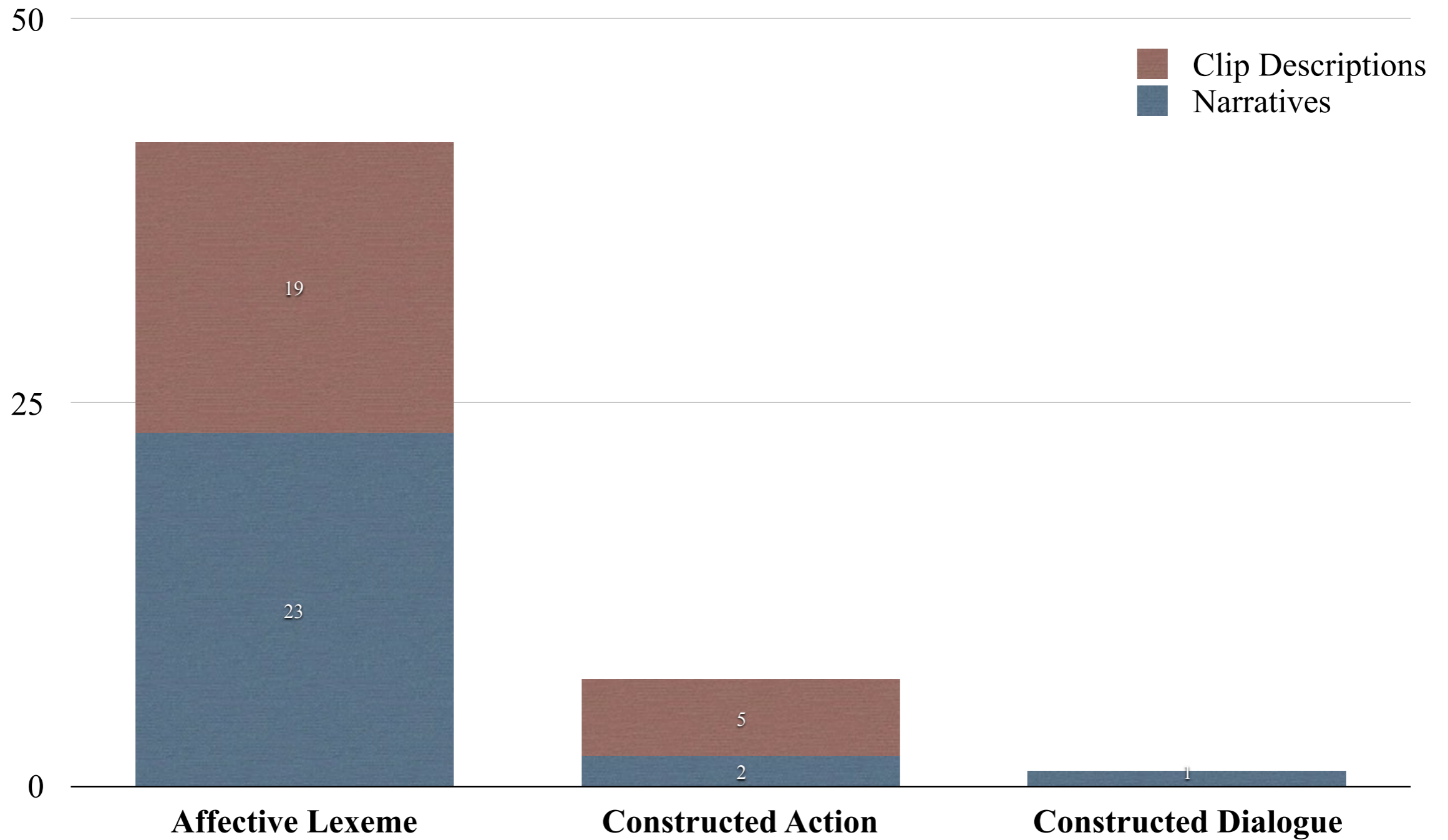


SCARE/FEAR

- Fear events
- Imagined fear events
- Relative clauses

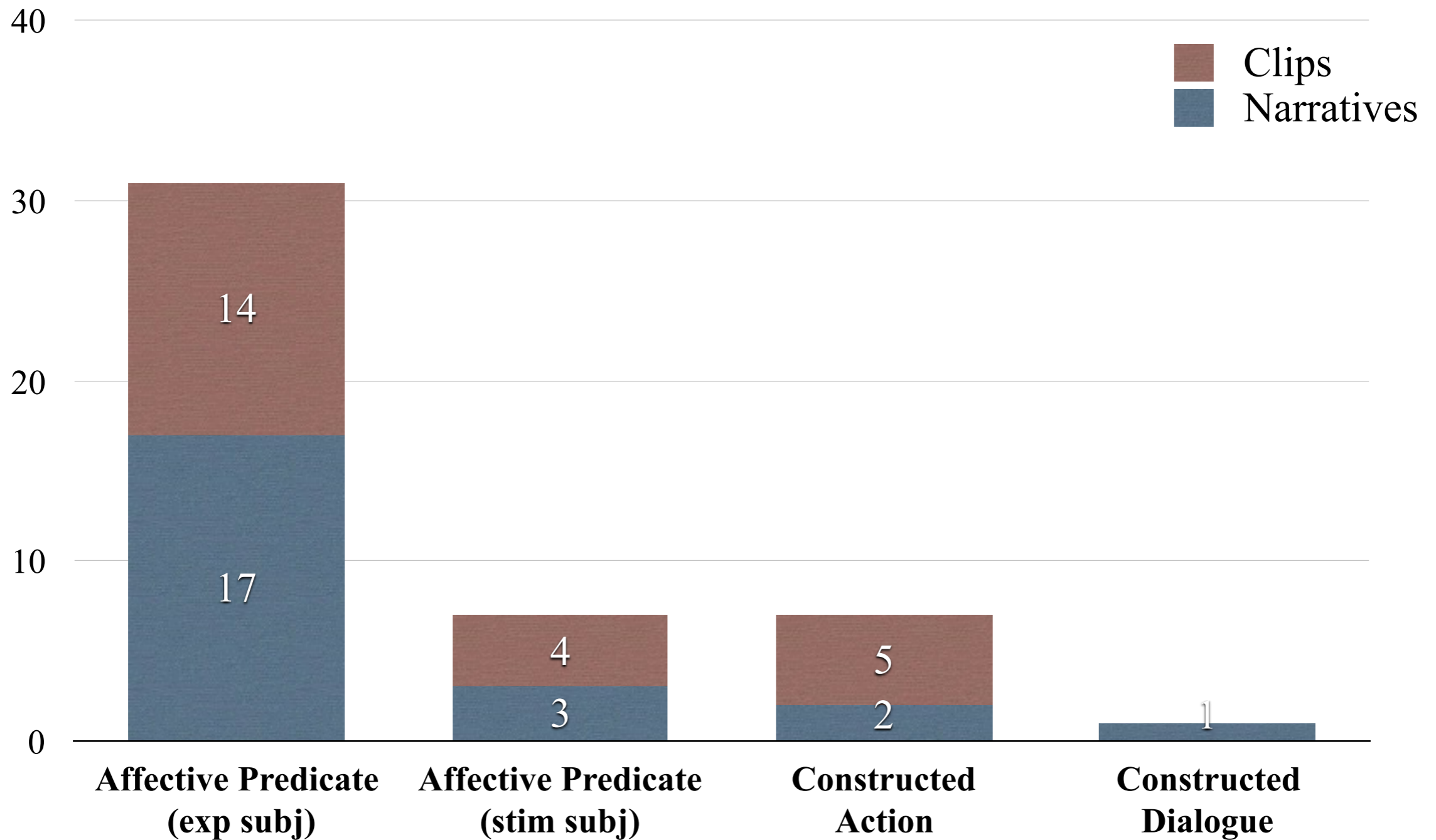
SCARE/FEAR

Construction types that referenced fear

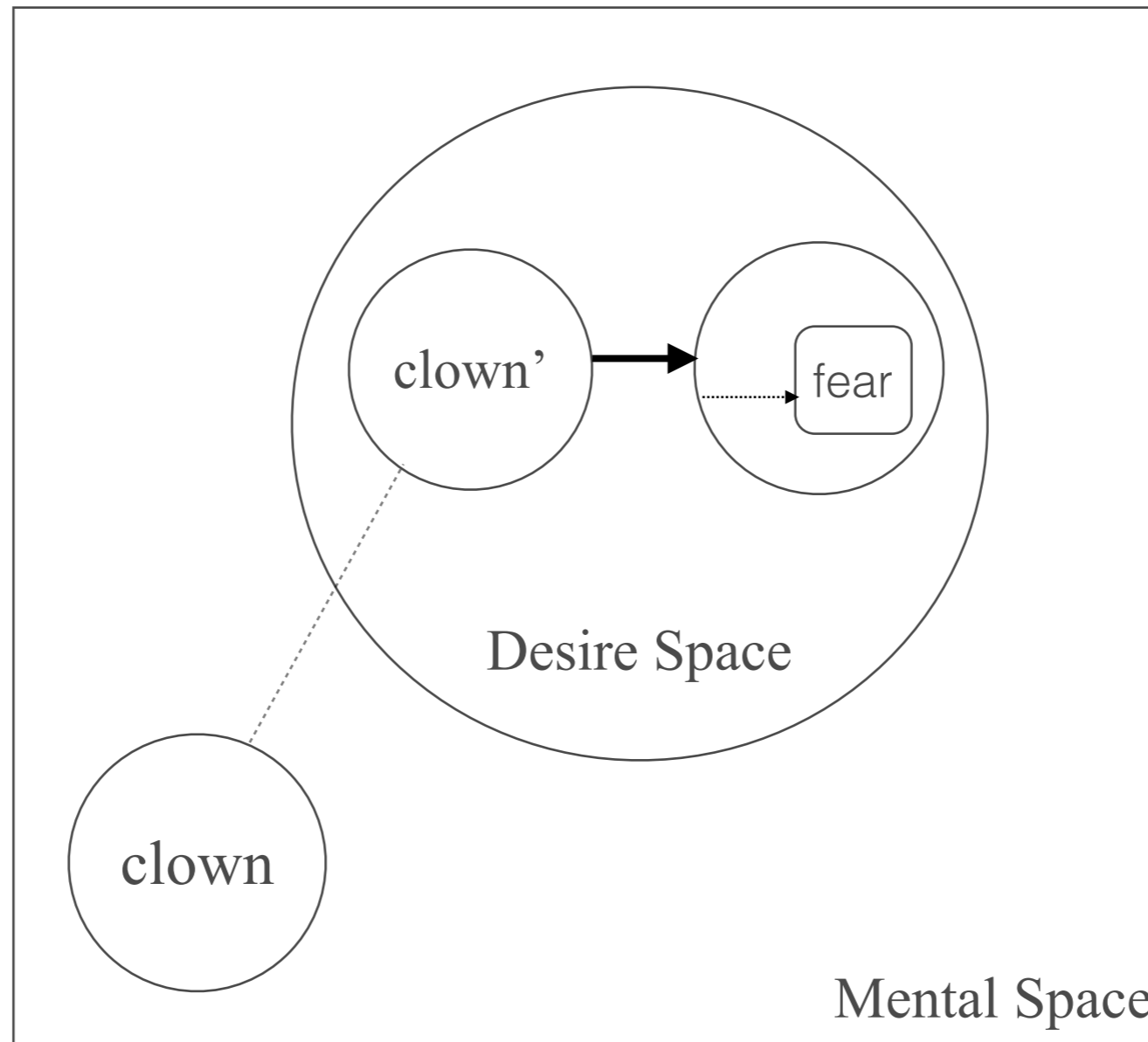


Denoting Fear Events

Constructions denoting fear events.



Imagined Fear Events



Mental spaces evoked by imagined fear event constructions.

Denoting Imagined Fear Events





	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
				
Partitioned:				
Blend:	clown _____			
Gloss:	TRY		FEAR/SCARE PEOPLE	
Translation:	<i>[The clown practiced] to try to scare people.</i>			




Figure 29. Experiencer-object subjectless clause with FEAR/SCARE.





Denoting Imagined Fear Events

	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Partitioned:					
Blend:					
Gloss:	PRO-Xclown	CLOWN	WANT	FEAR/SCARE	SOMEONE
Translation:	<i>The clown wanted to scare someone.</i>				

Figure 28. SVO construction with FEAR/SCARE.

Relative Clauses with FEAR/SCARE

	(a)	(b)	(c)
			
NMM:			
Gloss:	THAT	SAME	GIRL
Translation:	<i>That same girl,</i>		

	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
				
NMM:	head-up+squint—————			
Gloss:	WHO	FEAR/SCARE	RUN-AWAY	#BACK
Translation:	<i>who was afraid before and ran away, came back.</i>			

Construction type with FEAR/SCARE in a relative clause describing returning character.

Affective Constructions

Big dogs scare little dogs.

Little dogs fear big dogs.

Big dogs are scary.

Little dogs are fearful.



Biclausal Construction

