

## **Cognitive framing analysis of American influencer Katt Denning's on Instagram**

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**Abstract.** *Charles J. Fillmore's frame semantic theory is used in this study in order to analyze social media conversation in terms of communicative and cognitive elements. In this study Instagram caption "2 years 🤍," by American influencer Kat Denning was main focus, together with the comments by Instagram users. The study mainly views remarks as a social discourse which creates general social and cultural meaning instead of direct expressions. Relationships and love are not only personal experiences on Instagram, it is mainly socially and artistically perceived and created via public engagement, according to the research. This investigation presents that frame semantics provides a helpful theoretical framework for comprehending the creation and interpretation of meaning in digital communication.*

**Key words:** *Frame Semantics, Social Media Discourse, Instagram Captions, Digital Communication, Public Engagement, Relationship Representation, Cognitive Linguistics.*

### **Introduction**

In recent years social media has grown to be an important part of today's communication and sending information. It has profoundly altered the way people communicate, exchange information and find meaning in their daily lives. Real-time multimedia creation, distribution and consumption are made possible by social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. "Social media refers to a range of Internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in virtual communities, create content, and engage in online interactions," according to Michael Dewing.[1] New forms of communication which is different from traditional media have emerged as a result of these platforms' incredible growth. Compared to conventional communication techniques, social media helps people to get quick feedback, customization and extensive information sharing.

The emergence of influencers is one of the most important social media trends. The Oxford Dictionary defines an influencer as "a person or thing that influences somebody or something, especially a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by recommending it on social media." Influencers, also known as "micro celebrities," are a new kind of employment that has arisen as a result of social media's growing significance and role in our daily lives. However, Khamis et al. suggested that modern "social media influencers" have changed the conventional definition of celebrity. They focus on "self-branding", which maintains that kindness and sincerity than reputation. In addition to the number of followers they have, their impacts is based on the level of engagement and trust they have their audience. [2]

Influencers are employed in many different spheres, including fashion, education, technology, and lifestyle. Through their material, they promote products or ideas, share experiences, and make recommendations. Their role has become more important in the context of digital marketing, where they act as a go-between for companies and consumers. However, influencers also shape cultural norms, social values, and thought patterns outside of marketing.

Influencers' language has a big impact on how effective they are. Language is an effective instrument for persuasion and cognitive influence in addition to being a means of communication. Influencers frequently use certain language techniques to connect and engage their audience. Informal language, sentimental emotions, and personal pronouns like "you" and "we" are some of these tactics. This kind of language fosters closeness and gives followers a specific sense of worth.[3]

From a cognitive perspective, understanding language requires an analysis of brain processes, according to Stella. The methods people employ to gather, process, store, and utilize information are known as cognitive processes. Among these processes are perception, memory, thought, and decision-making. Because language reflects people's perceptions of their surroundings, it is strongly related to cognition. According to cognitive linguistics, language is not random; rather, it is shaped by human experience and brain functions. Linguistic study thus illuminates human cognitive processes and meaning-making.[4]

A complex cognitive landscape of knowledge is created by the abundance of information on social media. Language is used to convey the interwoven ideas, thoughts, and emotional relationships that make up this environment. In this context, meaning arises from the connections between words and concepts rather than being isolated. For instance, a subject may be connected to particular feelings, moral principles, or social concerns. These relationships demonstrate the organization of knowledge in the human mind. Researchers can identify recurrent themes, mental processes, and underlying conceptual systems by examining the cognitive landscape. Understanding how people understand digital settings and interpret information is also beneficial.

Building on his earlier work in case grammar, Charles J. Fillmore developed the idea of linguistic meaning known as frame semantics, which connects language to encyclopedic knowledge. The key idea of this theory is that comprehension requires access to a structured corpus of past knowledge about a word. To put it another way, in order to fully comprehend a word, its meaning must be evaluated within a broader conceptual framework. To understand the term "sell," for example, a business transaction scenario with a seller, a buyer, goods, money, and the interactions between these parts is required.[5]

## **Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative research approach to examine framing tactics in social media conversation using Charles J. Fillmore's frame semantics theory. A single Instagram post by Kat Dennings titled "2 years 🍷" and a chosen collection of user comments on the image serve as the main source of data for the analysis.

The data was collected using purposeful sampling, with a focus on comments that express evaluation, sentiment, or interpretation of the text. These comments were chosen because they actively contribute to the construction of meaning rather than merely providing neutral or irrelevant responses. A qualitative content analysis method was used to look at the linguistic and semiotic elements of the comments, including language choices, evaluative expressions, intensifiers, and the use of emojis.[6]

The analysis was conducted in several stages. Initially, the comments were categorized using recurring themes and patterns. Second, these patterns were examined using underlying semantic

frameworks such as the romantic relationship frame, the aesthetic (beauty) frame, and the celebration frame. Third, special attention was paid to emojis' role as semiotic instruments that either reinforce or modify these frames by conveying emotional and contextual cues.[7]

## Results

Following post by Kat Dennings based on frame semantics is analyzed, “2 years 🎉”, the following comments are selected as examples for the frame-based analysis:

“Happy anniversary!!!”

“💍💍💍”

“So gorgeous 😊😊😊”

“Congratulations!!”

“The most breathtaking bride EVER!”

“My fav brunette couple 😊❤️👰”

“Party hard!”

“Your dress is everything 😊”

“congrats to you both 👰”

“Most cute wedding picture i've ever, ever seen. ❤️❤️❤️” “Congratulations.... Lucky man... u got the most beautiful girl”

“party party party”

“Hottie couple 🍷” [8]

From the standpoint of frame analysis, an examination of the comments under Kat Dennings' post “2 years 🎉” shows that rather than only expressing personal opinions, people develop a common social and cultural understanding. First and foremost, the comments are dominated by the ideal love relationship framing. Comments like “Happy anniversary,” “Congratulations,” “Hottie couple,” and “Lucky man” portray the couple as happy, harmonious, and admirable. In this context, love is presented as both a private emotion and a socially acceptable phenomenon that requires other people's acceptance. In other words, the positive evaluations in the comments contribute to making the link seem more “real” and “successful.”[9]

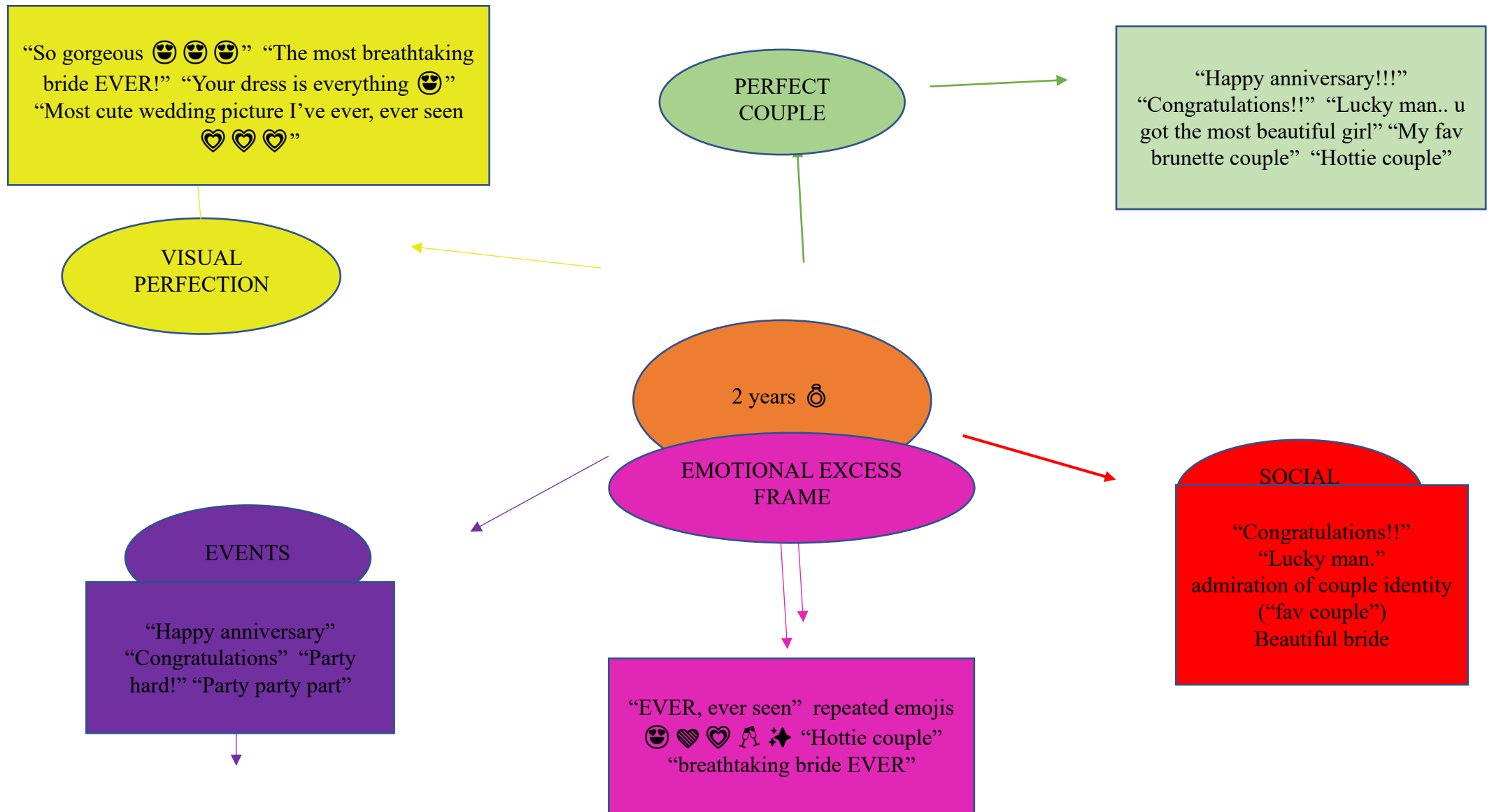
The remarks also offer a strong aesthetic (beauty) context. Phrases like “So gorgeous,” “the most breathtaking bride ever,” “your dress is everything,” and “the cutest wedding picture I've ever seen” highlight physical attractiveness, image quality, and overall visual impact. This implies that connections on social media are often evaluated primarily on appearance; in other words, “looking beautiful” is closely associated with “being happy.” As a result, relationships and love become social constructs that are evaluated according to aesthetic standards. Furthermore, a frame of celebration and social ritual is evident in the comments. Words like “party hard” and “party party” view the anniversary as more than simply a private event between two individuals; they see it as a social occasion that is extended to a wider audience and transformed into community delight. This scenario exemplifies a feature of social media: the tendency to make personal lives public.[10]

Another important component is the remarks' high level of emotional intensity. Emojis such as 😊❤️👰🍷 and intensifying language units like “ever,” “the most,” and “everything” are commonly employed to maximally heighten emotions. This demonstrates how emotions tend to be amplified and intensified in digital communication.

Emojis rapidly and directly activate recipients' emotional and cognitive frameworks. First and foremost, emojis improve the meaning of the text by making it more focused and affecting how the message is interpreted emotionally. For instance, emojis like 😊 and ❤️ establish a frame of love and positive affect, giving the message a friendly, sincere, and uplifting appearance. Similarly, emojis such as 🎉 and 🥳 set off a frame of festivity and celebration, associating the event with joy, happiness, and a generally nice atmosphere. Simultaneously, the frequent use of emojis (e.g., 😊😊😊, ❤️❤️❤️) creates an emotional intensity frame that transforms a simple comment into an expression of deep affection or excitement. Additionally, emojis often help reveal text's hidden meanings and reduce the possibility of misunderstandings; in other words, they specify how the message should be "read." [11]

As a result, the Figure 1. recipient interprets the information within a certain emotional and social context in addition to understanding it. All things considered, emojis are an essential semiotic tool in social media, enabling the clear and simple production of complex emotional and cultural frames. These comments come together to form a single overarching theme: that the ideal relationship is one that is happy, appealing, socially acceptable, and widely recognized. This theory views relationships and love on social media not just as private experiences but as publicly presented phenomena shaped by societal and aesthetic norms. [12]

**Figure 1.** Cognitive framing analysis of American influencer Katt Denning's on Instagram.



## Discussion

The study's findings demonstrate how social media discourse is significantly shaped by shared cognitive and cultural frameworks that users jointly, rather than individually, develop. From the perspective of frame semantics proposed by Charles J. Fillmore, the comments under Kat Dennings' post show how meaning emerges through activated knowledge structures rather than isolated lexical units.[13]

First, the prevalence of the ideal romantic relationship frame reflects broader cultural ideals of love and partnership in digital environments. As seen by the frequent use of evaluative phrases like praise, congrats, and admiration, users collectively promote normative ideas of successful relationships. This suggests that relational identities can be exhibited and socially validated through audience interaction on social media sites. In this approach, meaning is co-constructed and the acceptance of others becomes an essential component of relational representation.

Second, the existence of the aesthetic frame highlights the increasing importance of visual culture in shaping interpersonal evaluation. The emphasis on appearance, elegance, and visual perfection suggests that emotional experiences are often explained by aesthetic standards. This is in line with the broader trend in social media discourse that links pleasure and relationship success to physical beauty. Relationships are thus presented to the broader public in an artistic and emotional manner.[14]

Third, the celebration frame shows how an internet connection transforms private events into public ones. Comments that encourage celebration and communal joy demonstrate how personal achievements are stretched into socially shared occasions. This demonstrates how social media users actively contribute to the ritualization of everyday events. By blurring the lines between private and public spheres, these actions make daily life more visible on internet platforms.

The study found that Instagram comment sections serve as dynamic spaces for frame negotiation, where users collaborate to construct meanings about celebration, relationships, and beauty. Larger sociocultural standards that prioritize emotional expressiveness, visibility, and aesthetic appeal in digital communication are reflected in these frames. Frame semantics provides a useful theoretical lens to understand how meaning is socially formed and emotionally improved in online discourse.[15]

## Conclusion

This study employed Charles J. Fillmore's theory of frame semantics to examine how meaning is produced in social media discourse using an Instagram post by Kat Dennings as a case study. Analyzing user comments reveals that meaning on social media is not formed in isolation but rather through group interaction, where individuals actively contribute to the construction of shared interpretations.

According to the study, frame semantics is a valuable analytical tool for understanding how users collaborate to construct meaning in digital settings. This study shows how ongoing activity on social media both reflects and influences broader sociocultural ideals. Future research could expand this strategy by examining a larger dataset, comparing additional influencers, or examining cross-cultural variations in framing strategies.

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