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硕 士 学 位 论 文

Image Schema and Forming Mechanism of Polysemy in  
Spatial Preposition of Over

-Based on Corpus of "over" from *Dubliners*

意象图式与空间介词 over 的多义词机制

-基于《都柏林人》中“over”语料

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## Abstract

The study of image schema, one of the essential topics in Cognitive Linguistics since its presentation in 1980s, has been developing rapidly in the international academia, attracting many scholars to carry out related studies, such as Brugman (1981), Linder (1983), Johnson (1987, 1989, 2005), Lakoff (1987), Langacker (1987, 1991), Clausner & Croft (1999), B. Hampe (2005), Brugman & Lakoff (2006) etc. The researches yield a rich harvest, and this positive developmental situation stretches forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the eighth International Cognitive Linguistics Conference (Spain, 2003), image schema was still one of the hot topics of the conference, which indicates the direction and the interest of the Cognitive Linguistic (CL) scholars' researches in the world in part. On the contrary, the studies of image schema in domestic academia are far behind those in the international society. The scholars in the field of CL, such as Wang Yin (2001, 2005, 2007), Zhao Yanfang (2001), Li Fuyin (2008), Chen Zhong (2005) etc, merely present some general introduction of image schemata in their monographs on CL. Until 2009, Li Fuyin accomplished one of his monographs partly on image schemas: *Metaphor, Image, and Image Schemas in Second Language Pedagogy*, published in Köln, Germany. To some extent, it reveals the domestic atmosphere of image schema studies, which is also inferable from the total amount of the published journals.

In this background at home, the author attempts to discuss the function and influence of image schema, a major cognitive model, upon the forming mechanism of spatial preposition *over*, with image schema as the fundamental theories framework, including its formation, categories, and other theoretical components. Even though several scholars such as Lakoff (1987), Taylor (1989) etc have explored the polysemy of *over*, their instances or evidence are derived from their self-introspection, unavoidably partial, prejudicial, and with some subjective and objective limitations.

Consequently, the thesis analyzes the polysemy of *over* and its forming mechanism, combining the theory of image schema with the corpus of 50 spatial prepositions *over* with spatial concepts out of 109 *over* in *Dubliners* (1907), James Joyce's notable collection of short stories. The analysis mostly concentrates on the three senses and image schemata of *over*: above-across, above, covering, as well as

the seven meanings under these senses. Having studied the senses and image schemata of *over* according to the instances from the corpus, the author comes to the findings:

1. In the image schemata under the above-across sense, the degrees at which the Path advances forward due to the motion of the Trajector (TR) relative to the Landmark (LM) are not limited to 90 or 180 degrees, as Taylor (1989) depicted in his “four major clusters of senses”, but also are feasible to extend to 360 degrees. Their evidence is the “reflexive schema” cited by Lakoff (1987) and Brugman (2006), first presented by Linder (1983). It is actually one of the variants of above-across image schema or sense, for the neglected Landmark in that instance, the container, should be more objectively analyzed.

2. The central sense or core schema of *over* should be the *above* sense or schema, instead of the above-across put forward by scholars such as Lakoff etc.

3. The forming mechanism of polysemous *over* as spatial preposition is the derivation of the appropriate senses or meanings in the contexts from its central sense or image schema, through the process of cognitive models, such as core image schema, spatial or orientational metaphor, combining bodily experience of human beings and relying on the contexts.

The study serves, to the language learners or acquirers, to analyze and master the different senses or meanings of the prepositions effectively, serves to distinguish the cognitive distinction and vagueness among the polysemy, and serves to extend this study to the learning, studies, and application of polysemy in other parts of speech in language. Nevertheless, there are also some limitations in this study. For example, a few items mentioned by the forerunners do not appear in this study, due to the following factors such as the size, times, scope, and style of the corpus, author’s analysis method, as well as other objective factors. Therefore, further in-depth studies are to be conducted after overcoming those negative factors, especially updating and enlarging the corpus.

**Key words:** image schema; polysemy; Trajector (TR); Landmark (LM); Path

## 摘要

自20世纪80年代产生至今, 意象图式就作为认知语言学的重要课题之一。在国外, 它得到了较快的发展, 吸引众多诸如 Brugman (1981), Linder (1983), Johnson (1987, 1989, 2005), Lakoff (1987), Langacker (1987, 1991), Clausner & Croft (1999), B. Hampe (2005), Brugman & Lakoff (2006) 等学者对其研究, 其相关研究已经达到一定的规模。在2003年西班牙举行的第八届国际认知语言学大会上, 意象图式再度引起与会学者们的关注, 成为会议的热门话题之一。但是意象图式在国内的研究却相当冷清, 远未达到国外的发展水平。活跃在认知语言学领域的多数学者, 也只是在他们的认知语言学的专著中略微提到意象图式而已, 如王寅(2001, 2005, 2007), 赵艳芳(2001), 李福印(2008), 陈忠(2005)等, 即便是该方面发表的论文也为数不多。尽管国内学者李福印(2009)在德国出版其专著《二语教学中的隐喻、意象和意象图式》, 但在德国的出版, 在某种程度上也体现国内这个领域的冷清。

本文作者尝试以意象图式作为基本理论框架, 含其形成、特点等理论支架, 结合空间介词over多义特征, 探讨意象图式这一重要的认知模式, 在空间介词over的多义词形成机制中所产生的作用和意义。以往学者如Lakoff (1987), Taylor (1989) 等对over的多义性研究, 大多只基于个人对over的内省例子, 难免会存在遗漏或者偏颇等主客观因素的影响。

本文基于James Joyce的著名短篇小说集《都柏林人》(1907)中所出现的语料, 即109个over中的50个表空间概念的空间介词, 分析over多义性现象及其产生机制。主要围绕上方-跨越(above-across)、上方(above)、覆盖(covering)三个主要的义项, 以及在三个义项下共7个空间意义的意象图式分析而展开。在研究过程中, 作者得到三个发现:

1. 上方-跨越(above-across)义项下的意象图式中的射体(Trajector, TR)相对于坐标(Landmark, LM)运动的路径(Path)的角度, 除了Taylor(1989)“四大义丛”所描述的90度与180度, 还可以延伸至360度。并且, Lakoff (1987), Brugman (2006) 等学者所引用的Linder (1983) 所提出的反射性(意象)图式(reflexive

schema), 应该客观地加入坐标(Landmark)进行分析。其实, 该图式也只是上方-跨越(above-across)义项下意象图式的一种变体;

2. 提出上方(above)作为over的中心义项或者核心意象图式, 而非Lakoff 等人所提出的上方-跨越(above-across);

3. over的空间介词多义词产生机制, 是中心义项经过核心意象图式和空间隐喻等认知方式的处理, 结合人类自身的身体体验, 从而衍生出该语境下的恰当的义项和意义。

本文对意象图式和空间介词over的空间概念的多义词形成机制研究, 可促进语言学习者掌握介词的不同义项与意义间的差异、区分多义词间的认知差异性与模糊性、扩展至其它词性多义词的学习、应用和研究。然而, 该研究因语料等客观因素, 善存在一些局限性, 有待于在更新、拓宽、扩大语料规模的基础上, 进行更深入的分析 and 研究。

**关键词:** 意象图式 多义现象 坐标 射体 路径



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## Chapter One Introduction

### 1.1 Aim of Research

Cognitive Linguistics was a newly established linguistic school or approach of international theoretical linguistic society in the past decades (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001: F23). Its birth can be marked by two points: Lakoff (1987) and Langacker's (1987) two classic monographs, and the special symposium of CL held by Rene Dieren in Duisburg, Germany in 1989. After the conference, *Journals of CL* was published, International Cognitive Linguistics Association (ICLA) was founded, and a series of books on CL were published by Mouton de Gruyter (Wang, 2004: 1), a professional linguistic press in the world. M. Johnson, G. Lakoff, R.W. Langacker, J.R. Taylor, and L. Talmy etc are generally regarded as the leading authorities and representatives in the field of CL.

“The researches of CL into language are on the basis of our experience, construal and conceptualized mode of the world (Ungerer & Schmid, 1996: x), and are the studies on human language correlated with aesthesia and knowledge (Rudzka-Ostyn, 1988: 621)” (Wen, 1999: 35).

Based on the second-generation cognitive scientific theory, CL develops with the embodied philosophy as its philosophical basis. It concentrates on developing human thoughts, language, and bodily experience, various dialectic relations with the outer world profoundly from the cognitive perspective; it investigates the correlation between language and cognitive model, knowledge structure, neural system, psychology, biological fundament etc. To elucidate those complicated relations explicitly, semantic studies should be posited as its core; consequently, the semantic researches from the cognitive point of view lead to the foundation of Cognitive Semantics. Furthermore, it turns into the nuclear parts of CL (Wang, 2002: 58).

The most important semantic structure in cognitive semantics is that of an image schema (Allwood & Gärdenfors, 1999: 23). Image schema is major cognitive model, instead of proposition (non-propositional). The structure of image schema is the most essential semantic structure (Mandler, 2004: 78). After Mark Johnson (1987) first put forward image schema, Leonard Talmy (1988) focused on the analysis of “image

schema of force dynamics. Some following Cognitive linguists conducted some researches into image schema as well, such as Lakoff, Langacker, Sweetser, Brugman, Turner etc (Wang, 2001: 187).

Image schemas are the initial cognitive strategies, the fundamental approaches of categorization, the essential forms to organize the thoughts, and the modes of acquiring senses (Wang, 2002: 61). They are not concrete images, but abstract cognitive structures. Image schema is the cognitive structure founded based on the cognition of the basic relation among the different things, a framework structure of linking the abstract relation with the concrete images in the human experience and comprehension, a recurring organized form of knowledge, and a fundamental structure of comprehending and cognizing more complex conception. Human experience and knowledge come into being right on these rudimental structures and relations (Zhao, 2001: 68).

Resorting to these image schemas, human comprehension and inference advance, and a variety of them combine with one another to constitute human experiential network; sequentially, semantic networks come into form. Since image schemas regulate and constrain human understanding and reasoning, senses in language can be delineated and analyzed from the perspective of image schemata (Wang, 2001: 188). Therefore, combining the theory of image schemata with the studies of the concrete lexical polysemy will be an effective way of lexical analysis.

Meanwhile, “One of the most vibrant areas of cognitive semantic research has been the study of lexical polysemy. Polysemy is a common observation that words exhibit a range of different meanings according to the contexts in which they are used” (Taylor, 2006: 574). It is a language phenomenon of “a family of possible interrelated meanings or senses for one lexical item such as a word or phrase” (Lakoff, 1987: 416). “Polysemy (or polyseme) is not just a matter of listing meanings disjunctively, as dictionaries do. It occurs when a single word has more than one meaning and when those meanings are systematically related. Systematic relationship is crucial here.” (Lakoff, 1987: 316-317)

Traditional semantic theories have not grasped the wholeness and essence of the polysemous phenomena. Instead, researches of CL indicate that polyseme, including the different senses and parts of speech, is extended from the central sense of one word to its other senses by human cognitive means (Zhao, 2000b: 24). Polysemy involves cognitive organization in a lexicon. Even at the level of the individual word,

language is an inseparable part of general cognition (Lakoff, 1987: 334). Among the most highly polysemous words in English, not surprisingly, are the prepositions (Taylor, 2006: 574).

The most important semantic structure in cognitive semantics is that of an image schema. Image schemas have an inherent spatial structure (Allwood & Gärdenfors, 1999: 23), and provide the basis for more richly detailed lexical concepts (Evans, 2007: 107).

Since “image schema is the most abstract basis of lexical meaning” (Ekberg, 2004: 36), Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. and Herbert L. Colston even go as far as to define that “image schemas can generally be defined as dynamic analog representations of spatial relations and movements in space” (Gibbs and Colston, 2006: 240). It will be an effective cognitive perspective to explore the forming mechanism of polysemy of spatial relation, embodied by spatial preposition *over*. Different senses and meanings of *over* can be effectively illustrated by means of image schemata. “Among these image schemas, there are certain very natural relationships, and these motivate polysemy, not just in one or two cases, but also in case after case throughout the lexicon” (Lakoff, 1987: 440). It is of rather efficient effect to analyze polysemous phenomena through the transformation of image schemata (Wang, 2005: 181).

Polysemy in linguistics has already been studied by scholars, proceeding with their studies based on image schema, such as Brugman (1981), Linder (1983), Lakoff (1987), Johnson (1987), Langacker (1987), Taylor (1995), and Tyler and Evans (2003), etc. However, just like Professor Li Fuyin mentions that “each theoretical school in CL proposes their own elucidation or interpretation on the polysemy of language, to a certain extent, only based on the introspection of those linguists, instead of the language behaviors of language users, lacking language empirical materials and studies, (Sandra & Rice, 1995)” (Li, 2008: 226).

To avoid these errors and probe into some new discovery, the thesis intends to employ image schema, an essential cognitive model, to elucidate the polysemous phenomena of spatial prepositions in language, with *over* as evidence, one of the most frequently used spatial prepositions. Then, on the condition of theories of image schema, analysis of the forming mechanism of polysemy in spatial prepositions of *over* will be put forward in this thesis as well, combined with the corpus of “*over*” from *Dubliners*, rather than dependent on personal introspection.

The study in this thesis is consistent with others' "Studies on polysemous lexemes support the assumption that such meaning extensions are non-arbitrary, systematic, and recurrent throughout the lexicon (see e.g. Brugman 1981, Cuyckens 1991, Rice 1992, Ekberg 1995a, b; 1997). As argued in Lakoff (1987: Case Study 2), the principles of extensions are moreover rooted in the general cognitive ability of human beings" (Ekberg, 2001: 302). Among all the natural processes of cognitive ability, image schema plays an essential role in the construction of the polysemy of spatial prepositions, embodied with the case study of *over* in this thesis.

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this paper, based on which polysemy of spatial prepositions *over* will advance, is image schema as defined by Johnson (1987) and Lakoff (1987) respectively. It is universally acknowledged that Johnson (1987) and Lakoff (1987) first put forward the notion of image schema in their distinguished monographs mentioned above. For the sake of better and further cognitive accounts of polysemy, the framework will introduce the formation, categories, and characteristics of image schema. Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) argue that schemas, such as "container," and "source-path-goal or path" etc, are among the most fundamental carriers of meaning. They also claim that most image schemas are closely connected to kinesthetic experiences (Allwood & Gärdenfors, 1999: 23).

Furthermore, the application of the proposed framework focuses on cognitive explanation of the polysemous senses. Therefore, this thesis attempts to concentrate on the study of the forming mechanism of polysemy in spatial prepositions of *Over* by means of the theoretical framework as well as their related supporting subcategories.

## 1.3 General Organization

Chapter One is the introduction of this thesis.

Chapter Two is the literature review of the studies into image schema. Some theoretical background of cognitive studies into image schema, the formation and development on image and schema, will be under discussion. Then the diachronic development concerning image schema abroad and at home will be reviewed in this chapter. They serve to account for the forming mechanism of polysemy, beneficial to the construal of prepositions, with *over* as one of its typical examples.



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