The semantic network for over

Lecture 4
The proto-scene for over

- the diachronically earliest meaning associated with a particular spatial particle may constitute the primary sense
- OED - the earliest meaning associated with the form over relates to higher than, or above

The picture is over the mantel.  
The bee is hovering over the flower.  
The tree is leaning over the river.
At the conceptual level, the primary sense of *over* is represented in terms of abstracting away from specific spatial scenes.

- The abstracted mental representation of the primary sense is the **proto-scene**.
- The proto-scene does not have the rich details apparent in the individual spatial scenes.
• The spatial relation is one in which the TR is higher than but within potential contact of the LM.

• TR is close enough to the LM that, under certain circumstances, the TR could come into contact with the LM.

• The functional aspect resulting from this spatial configuration is that the LM (or the TR) is conceptualized as being within the sphere of influence of the TR (or the LM).
Diagram of the proto-scene of over

- the TR - the shaded sphere
- the LM - the thick horizontal line
- the area conceptualised as proximal to the LM (i.e. within potential contact of the LM) is delimited by the dashed line
The birds are somewhere over us.

- The TR is vaguely located in relation to the LM – above.

- The proto-scene for above designates a spatial configuration in which the TR is higher than but not in potential reach of the LM.

- The vagueness of location, which is denoted by somewhere, implies that the TR is not within the LM's (us) sphere of influence.
a. The cross-country skier skimmed over the snow.
b. ?The cross-country skier skimmed above the snow.

• In (a), *the skier*, is higher than but within reach of the LM, that is, in this case, in contact with the snow.
• In contrast, in (b), most native speakers of English would exclude possible contact from their reading.
the functional aspect of the proto-scene for over

- Both **over** and **above** designate spatial relations in which the TR is higher than and LM.
- Only **over** also designates the functional relation of influence b/n the TR and LM.
- A consequence of its spatial configuration involving the notion of **potential contact** between the TR and LM.
a. She has a strange power over me.

(Lakoff, 1987)

b. ?She has a strange power above me.

• The proto-scene for over does indeed have a functional element of influence between the TR and LM

• its spatial configuration designating potential contact between the TR and LM.
The on-line construction of meaning

The tree branch extended over the wall.
(She extended her arm towards the door.)

- In sentence 1 the lack of motion is the result of integrating what is coded by the verb *extended* with our knowledge of *trees*. 
The cat jumped over the wall.

• The verb **jumped** does prompt for a conceptualization involving **motion**, which entails a **trajectory**.

• The interpretation regarding the 'above-across' trajectory of the movement is **not** prompted for by **over**

• but rather arises from the verb **jumped** and encyclopedic knowledge.
encyclopedia knowledge (esp. real-world force dynamics) includes

- our understanding of the action of jumping, and in particular our knowledge of the kind of jumping cats are likely to engage in
- our knowledge of cats (they cannot physically hover in the air the way a bird can)
- our knowledge of the nature of walls
- our knowledge of force dynamics such as gravity
Schematization of
The cat jumped over the wall.

• If a cat uses the ground to push off from at point A, and passes through point B, then given our encyclopedic knowledge, point C is entailed.
The boy walked on the bridge.
The boy walked over the bridge.

- the particular default function of bridges, that is, that they typically facilitate passage across obstacles such as rivers, contributes significantly to this interpretation
He walked over the ice.
He walked on the ice.

(lawn/campus/picnic area/building site/familiar ground)

• there is nothing inherent in the meaning of over which requires an interpretation of the TR traversing an extended LM (across)
there might be an **Above-across Sense** associated with **over**

- A-B-C trajectory - certain distinct senses of **over** have developed from its frequent co-occurrence with verbs of translocation.

- A-B-C Trajectory Cluster $\rightarrow$ the Temporal Sense (e.g. The relationship endured over the years)
In some contexts *over* and *above* appear to be interchangeable:

Susan hung the picture *over* the mantel.
Susan hung the picture *above* the mantel.

- The semantic networks associated with each spatial particle represent continuums and that at certain points the interpretations of two continuums can overlap.
- In the case of *over* and *above* we find a close diachronic relationship.
Beyond the proto-scene

Additional senses in the semantic network
The semantic network for over

- Each distinct sense is represented by a dark sphere or node in the network.
- The proto-scene occupies a central position which indicates its status as the primary sense.
The A-B-C Trajectory Cluster

- On-the-other-side-of
- Above-and-beyond (Excess I)
- Completion
- Transfer
- Temporal

- points B and C never exist simultaneously in the world, precisely because a TR such as a cat could not occupy two such positions simultaneously
The On-the-other-side-of Sense

Arlington is over the Potomac River from Georgetown.

• the verb, *is*, fails to indicate any sense of motion
• there is no trajectory
• there is no beginning or end point
• there is no principled way of deriving an On-the-other-side-of Sense from this sentential context
• **Arlington** is understood to be located on the other side of the Potomac River from **Georgetown**
• **over** must have associated with it a context-independent On-the-other-side-of Sense
distinct sense $\equiv$ reanalysis of the complex conceptualization

- this conceptualization involves a shift in vantage point from being 'off-stage' (Langacker, 1992), to being in the vicinity of point A

- The default vantage point is 'off-stage'

- the eye icon is the vantage point
- the vertical line the impediment
- the dark sphere the TR
The ball landed over the wall.

- the construer (i.e. the vantage point) is located in the vicinity of point A
- the area beyond the wall is construed as point C
- through the use of *over* in contexts where *On-the-other-side-of* is implicated, this meaning has come to be conventionally associated with *over* as a distinct sense, a process we term **pragmatic strengthening**
The old town lies over the bridge.

The mansion is situated over that wall.

John lives over the hill.
The Above-and-beyond (Excess 1) Sense - the LM represents an intended goal and the TR moved beyond the intended or desired point.

- The arrow flew over the target and landed in the woods.

- Lissa just tapped the golf ball, but it still rolled over the cup.

in excess of, what the agent intended
The Completion Sense

• the trajectory has an end point C
• the end point of any trajectory (which represents the process of moving) is commonly understood as representing the completion of the process
• the distinct sense comes to be associated with the form over in the semantic network via pragmatic strengthening
The cat's jump is over \( [= \text{finished/complete}] \)
The film/game/play is over \( [= \text{finished/complete}] \)

- the end point of the motion (i.e. the location at which the TR comes to rest) is interpreted as the completion of the movement
- not a purely spatial relation, but an aspect of a process

- the Completion Sense refers to a process rather than the LM
- this is reflected syntactically in the absence of LM
- preposition vs. adverb
The cat's jump is over [= finished/complete]
The film/game/play is over [= finished/complete]

• the Completion Sense differs crucially from the On-the-other-side-of Sense

• It focuses on the spatial location of the TR when the process is completed

• the location of the TR is interpreted as an aspect of a process
Transfer Sense

- The bank automatically switched the money over to our checking account.

- the TR is transferred from one location, namely point A, to a new location, point C

- via pragmatic strengthening, this implicature is conventionalized as a distinct meaning component
Non-physical entities can be identified as TRs or LMs

The old government handed its power over (to the newly elected officials).

- nothing is physically transferred
- the abstract concept of power can be mediated by over, due to a conventionalized Transfer Sense
The Temporal Sense

The festival will take place over the weekend. Their friendship has remained strong over the years.

- TR is conceptualized as being manifested through time.
- It co-occurs with a temporal LM.

(similarly) The boy walked over the hill.

- There is a tight correlation in our experience between distance and duration.
Temporal Sense

• the dashed line constitutes the passage of time
• it correlates with the passage of the TR across the LM (the bold line)
The Covering Sense
The tablecloth is over the table.

1. the TR is perceived as being larger than the LM
2. the vantage point has shifted from off-stage to higher than the TR

<(<.)>  

Covering Sense

3. +/- contact
The fibreglass protector was over the swimming pool.
Above and proximal
The Examining Sense

Phyllis is standing over the entrance to the underground chamber.

• the TR is higher than but proximal to the LM
• Phyllis (TR) is in a position to observe the entrance carefully
• the human head (eyes) should be higher than the object being scrutinized, e.g. examining tools, a written text, or wounds on the body
There is an experiential correlation between **proximity** and potential **thoroughness**.

I'll give the document a close examination.

I'll give the manuscript a close reading.

- the viewer should be located above the LM and in proximity to the LM
- the functional aspect associated with the proto-scene is that there is a conceptual connectedness between the TR and LM (‘sphere of influence‘)
Examining Sense

Mary looked over the manuscript quite carefully.

For the Examining Sense to arise, the scene must contextually imply examination.

- the eye icon (vantage point) occupies the position of TR (Mary), and is above and proximal to the LM

- The vantage point is in focus and not the LM
Focus-of-attention Sense

a. The little boy cried over his broken toy.
b. The little boy cried about his broken toy.

• This sense is closely related to the Examining Sense from which it derives.
• A natural consequence - the object being examined, the LM, is the focus of the TR's attention.

Here the LM is in focus.
The vertical elevation or Up Cluster

- Four distinct senses arise from construing a TR that is located physically higher than the LM as being vertically elevated or \textit{up} relative to the LM.
The More Sense

Jerome found over forty kinds of shells on the beach.

- vertical elevation and quantity are correlated in our experience
- an implicature associated with being over is of having more of some entity
- this implicature is conventionalized (via pragmatic strengthening)
John is over fifty years of age.

- Age is a non-physical entity, as it does not directly correspond to physical amounts of a substance whose dimensions can be measured.

- John's age, the TR, can be related to the LM, the age of fifty.

- over has a distinct More Sense
Over-and-above (Excess II) Sense

- It is closely related to the More Sense.
- It adds an interpretation of too much to the *more* construal.

The heavy rains caused the river to flow over its banks.

Lou kept pouring the cereal into the bowl until it spilled over and onto the counter.

- the LMs are containers and the TRs are understood as the entities held by the container
Too much more of the TR results in a mess.

Excess Sense
A number of compounds involving *over* prompt for this *Excess Sense*

- the non-*over* element is construed in terms of a *container*, e.g., *overflow*, *overfill*, *overfeed*, *overeat* (the body is a container)

- the notion of going *beyond the normal*: *overtired*, *overdevelop*, *overreact*, *over-anxious*, *overdo*
Differences b/n Excess I and Excess II

• Above-and-beyond (Excess I) Sense seems to be more closely tied to motion along a trajectory and the interpretation of going beyond a designated point

• the Over-and-above (Excess II) Sense seems to be more closely related to exceeding the capacity of containers and exceeding what is normal
Control Sense

- the phenomenon of control or power is associated with vertical elevation

**She has a strange power over me.**
- this sentence does not mean that the TR, she, is higher than but within reach of me, the LM
- the conventional interpretation derived from such an example is that the TR exerts influence or control over the LM
in human history, control has been experienced as the controller being physically higher.

- in physical combat, the victor or controller is often the one who finishes standing, in the up position.
- the loser finishes on the ground, physically lower than the controller.

The fight ended with John standing over Mac, his fist raised.
In experiential terms, control and vertical elevation are correlated.
She has a strange power above me.

[Control reading]

• if control were understood only in terms of vertical elevation, we would expect that the English spatial particle above should also implicate control

• to be able to exert control, one must be physically proximal to the subject

• there are two elements associated with the concept of control; (1) is up, and (2) is physical proximity
The Preference Sense

- I would prefer tea over coffee.
- I like Beethoven over Mozart.
- I favour soccer over tennis.
- what is higher is conventionally understood as being preferred to what is lower.
The Reflexive Sense

The fence fell over.

- the TR, that is, the initial (upright) position of the fence, is distinguished from the final position, in which the fence is lying horizontally on the ground
- the fence falls through a 90-degree arc

Over mediates a spatial relation between two positions.
• He turned the page over.
• The log rolled over.
• The tree bent over in the wind.

A conceptual spatial relation is abstracted (via summary scanning) integrating the two temporally situated locations into a single spatial configuration.
The Repetition Sense

- The Repetition Sense adds an iterative meaning component to the use of over.
  After the false start, they started the race over.
  He played the same piano piece over.
  This keeps happening over and over.

*He ate the meal over.
*She won this afternoon's tennis match over.

- does not occur with processes that cannot be readily conceptualized as iterative
He played the same song over. This keeps happening over and over.

- the 90-degree arc is repeated
- or an iterative application of the A-B-C Trajectory
- the notions of completion and reflexivity are conceptually integrated
To sum up

• a detailed analysis of the principled polysemy of over
• we employed five criteria for distinguishing the primary sense of over, which we have termed the proto-scene
• we distinguished fifteen distinct senses
• to illustrate how the model adduced in the first three lectures applies to a single spatial particle