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## **POLYSEMY OF ENGLISH SPATIAL PREPOSITION *OUT* IN THE COGNITIVE FRAMEWORK**

Cognitive linguistics has profoundly changed the approach to the study of language in general and has helped to get a more considerable insight into the word semantics in particular. As a result, the meaning of such a linguistic unit as Preposition, which until recently was typically seen as a formal grammatical marker, appears to be no less comprehensive and important for the study of language than the meaning of all notional words.

The given article is an attempt to study the semantic peculiarities of English spatial preposition *out* within the scope of a cognitive semantics approach. By adopting this approach to the study the following objectives have been set. Firstly, to determine semantic characteristics of *out* based on the definitions provided in dictionaries of contemporary English (Oxford Dictionary Online; Merriam – Webster Online: Dictionary and Thesaurus; Collins English Dictionary Online). Secondly, to build up a schematic network of more prototypical and less prototypical / peripheral senses of the preposition. Tracing back the ideas introduced by Lakoff [1] we believe that *out* is a highly polysemous word, which constitutes a conceptual category of evident spatial meaning from which other non-spatial, metaphorical senses derive. It should be stressed, though, that *out* will be analyzed regardless its grammatical function of either a preposition, an adverb, a suffix or a particle which constitutes a part of a phrasal verb construction. In order to establish different senses of *out* we sought to identify cognitive properties of each sense, in order to be able to classify them into subcategories. This will also allow the categorization of meanings into a coherent semantic radial network.

*Out* is a spatial particle. The domain of space is believed to be a basic cognitive domain available to human experience. Linguistic categorization of space represents the speakers' capacity to structure space therefore gives it a right to say that the categorization of space differs in different languages not only linguistically, but in its basic structuring, too. The location of a thing is specified by its relation to another thing / other things. The spatial relationship is usually described as a relation between the trajector (TR) and the landmark (LM) proposed by Langacker [2]. The object to be located is known as the TR, whereas the object that serves as the reference point is known as the LM. As regards prepositional usage, the TR describes the relation denoted by a preposition, whereas the LM is seen as an entity to which this relation is carried out.

*(1) He walked out into the street.*

In this example, “he” is the TR and “street” is the reference point or the LM which describes the location of the TR. TRs are usually smaller than their LMs and when the motion is described, it is a TR that moves and not a LM. Certain characteristics of a TR and a LM are to be borne in mind when describing these entities: dimensionality and shape of a TR and a LM, whether a TR is static or dynamic, if there is contact between a TR and a LM, etc.

All objects in space possess dimensions. Prepositions are conceptualized in three-dimensional space. A zero-dimensional space is a point and has no shape of its own. Points allow us to locate a TR easily. One-dimensional space conceptualizes a TR as being in a sideways contact with a LM e.g., *on the edge*. If a LM is a two-dimensional LM, a TR is usually viewed as being in vertical contact with a LM, e.g., *on the table*. Three-dimensional space is conceptualized as possessing volume and typically characterizes containers. The preposition *out* refers to the three-dimensional shape of a LM and activates the container-schema with a TR moving or being out of its boundaries.

Cognitive linguists claim that embodied meaning is of a primary importance. It was proposed that the meanings of various lexemes are instantiated in memory not as abstract propositions, but as schematic representations. Such schemas arise from the analysis of recurring patterns in our everyday physical experience. A word with its polysemous senses is regarded as a category, in which these senses are related to each other on the basis of such cognitive principles as metaphor, metonymy, specification, generalization and image schema transformations. Meanings of polysemous words are believed to form radial categories of meanings where some senses are considered to be prototypical, while others are peripheral and, as a result, less prototypical. In the centre of the network lies the primary sense or so called protosense of the item in question. This primary sense is believed to be embodied in humans typical experience and the way they conceptualize the world and space. Non-central or figurative senses are derived from the more central spatial senses and are mostly abstract in nature (Lakoff 1987:418–439). These senses are interconnected with the central sense by different types of links. In other words, such meanings are derived metaphorically as a result of experientially-based mapping between source and abstract domains.

Two prototypical related senses of *out* may be identified: (i) a static case, where a TR is outside a LM or (ii) a kinetic state, described best by the situation when a TR moves or is moved out of a LM. In (i), a TR is located outside an LM. It can be a thing / person who is out of a container / emotion (LM)

(1) *This guy just jumped out of a van right here, white sweatshirt, pulled out a gun, and now he's shooting.*

(2) *But as long as he is out of the country, he can maintain that he knew nothing about the assassination.*

(3) *Meg was already out of humor when she went to answer the phone.*

In (ii), a TR moves or is moved out of an LM.

(4) *Get out the car and push with the rest of us!*

(5) *She went out of her bedroom and down the stairs.*

(6) *A woman moved out of the gloom of the front garden and into the light cast by the bright gas chandeliers of Lord Akeldama's hallway.*

(7) *This calm helps keep the haters out of sight, out of mind.*

These senses are considered to be prototypical for the entire category of *out*: movement outwards of enclosed space either real or mental. As Lindner [4, p. 60-61] remarks *out* refers to "the removal or departure of one concrete object from within another object or place" or, in other words, "removal from a bounded region via dislocation in space" [4, p. 74]. It should be stressed that "boundedness", either two- or

three-dimensional is an integral part of space conceptualization and the use of *out*, otherwise preference can be given to the use of another preposition, e.g. *from*. The movement outwards must be understood not only as the movement out of the limited space, but also as movement from the depth, middle of an instance, etc.

(8) *Janelle spun around-in time to see the man appear out of thin air.*

(9) *Right now he just needed a drink to clear the stink out of his nose.*

*Out* has many of the meanings associated with the concept of “accessibility/inaccessibility”. *Out* implies inaccessibility in situations when a TR leaves a LM and, as a result, becomes inaccessible to the viewer or his/her perception. In some instances of figurative usage of *out* inaccessible sense may be transformed into non-functional or, even inexistent:

(10) *The phone seems to be out of order.*

(11) *He figured that, like the Nascar driver whose wheels wore out, it was finally time to retire.*

(12) *I sped up, crossed a low rise, and his car went out of sight.*

(13) *The lock on the patio door had rusted out long ago, so he didn't have to break in.*

(14) *The bubbling clockwork song died out with a series of clicks and sad groans.*

In the last example a gradual process is being described, i.e. a decrease in intensity to complete disappearance. The above mentioned examples involve inanimate non-functioning / inaccessibility. There are some instances in which *out* attributes to human “non-functioning” which includes being / becoming unconscious, being tired, etc.

(15) *He gets knocked out.*

(16) *I was worn out from rolling around so I went downstairs and stretched out on the floor.*

*Out* has also the potential of changing from inaccessibility to accessibility, like in the following examples:

(17) *My parents gave out a flyer to every single customer, and pretty soon the whole neighborhood was talking about the big day.*

(18) *I rent out the first floor because it's a big house, but she's a tenant, not a friend.*

The (17), (18) examples have a meaning of “making something out of one’s possession” into the somebody else’s.

Verb-particle constructions do not literally involve moving or any other kind of object manipulation out of literal bounded space. Particles in phrasal constructions are believed to have no lexical meaning of their own but rather describe certain relations and topological characteristics between a TR and a LM. Langacker [3] maintains, that both function and meaning of the particle depend on the context, which allows the particle to integrate into the verb and specify some attributes in its semantic structure.

(19) *Then one day as I went for a layup, my knee gave out.*

(20) *Jim played out his hand.*

*Knee* in (19) is perceived as an enclosure for *out*, while the verb *to give* due to its semantic structure of implied movement forces the subject of the sentence *knee* to change its condition from being “powerful” to that of lacking it. This semantic struc-

ture complies with the common schema of *out* in which a TR usually ends up in the area outside the boundedness. In (20) the direct object that follows the verb supplies the reference point, while the semantic structure of the verb makes the particle *out* indicate the completion of the activity. As a result, two different meanings of *out*: “exhaust” (19) and “complete” (20) originate in a specific context where *out* is used, rather than originally contained in the particle.

*Out* may be used in the sense similar to *outward*, but perhaps less vivid.

(21) *Emily went back to her bed where her books lay spread out, wishing she hadn't made her mother lose sleep, tonight of all nights.*

(22) *And so when they come to our home, I roll out the red carpet for them.*

The TR expands the original LM in all directions, i.e. a small area / volume is transformed into a larger one outside surrounding the central LM. Such verb-particle constructions are the examples of spatial domain expansion and a metaphorical extension of particle.

In a phrasal “verb + particle” construction we are talking about the restructuring ability of *out* which results in a meaning which a verb could not achieve on its own. The prototypical meaning of “boundedness” is conveyed in such kind of constructions as well, either directly stated or implied. The particle *out* is responsible for the reinterpretation of the role of a TR in the event described by the phrasal construction. The possible meaning of the phrasal construction and the relation between a TR and *out* is also determined by the category of the verb i.e. stative or dynamic.

(23) *The roots, full of water, stand out particularly well in dry soils.*

*Out* also possesses the meaning of something “lasting until the end”, as in the following examples:

(24) *If they didn't hold out, the Russians had the chance to roll up the German defenses on the Eastern Front.*

(25) *I tried to drag out dinner as long as possible, but by seven o'clock, I had to concede the evening to the cold.*

Such sense of *out* makes us feel that time itself stretches.

It must further be remarked that *out* can be found in various compounds, either as the first or the second component:

(26) *And Jann Wenner, a twenty-year-old college dropout, wanted in.*

(27) *Business is robust at this testing facility in Kashiwa, a hot spot at the outskirts of Tokyo.*

(28) *Census data show that Latino population growth in Houston and Harris County has flattened in the past decade while increasing at a faster pace in outlying counties in the Houston area.*

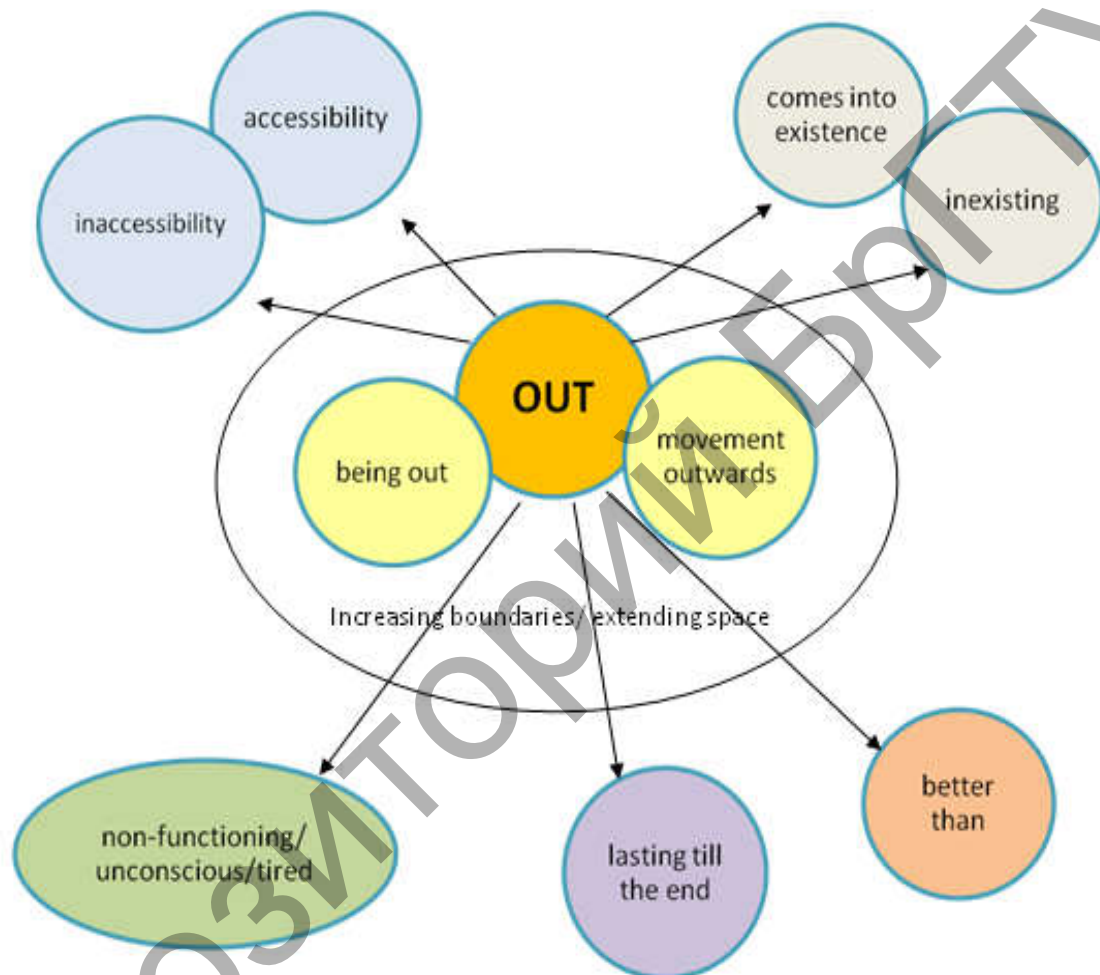
The meanings of these compounds with *out* are associated with the basic meanings that have been discussed above. There exist, though, a vast number of compounds with *out* in the meaning of “better than”:

(29) *Specifically, men seem to outperform women in tasks that involve mental rotation, spatial perception, and spatial visualization.*

(30) *He nearly jumped out of his skin when Gray James, the only other member of the Guardians ever to have fed on a kill, clapped him on the shoulder, a hint of support.*

The discussed above meanings of *out* may be summarized graphically in the form of a radial network. Such a radial network has a cognitive foundation in human capacity for extension and helps us understand the polysemous nature of *out* and the way humans categorize space. The following figure proves how the primary spatial meaning constitutes a part of the sense even in the most abstract and figurative uses of *out*.

Figure 1. The radial network of *out*



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