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【原著論文】

## On Potentiality of Cognitive Semantics and Linguistic Typology for Acquisition of the English Preposition *from* by Japanese Learners of English

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to argue that the approach based on Cognitive Semantics and Linguistic Typology has a significant potential for providing English Language Learners in Japan with a better methodology for apprehending semantic nature of English prepositions. We will also contend that these two branches of theoretical linguistics help us comprehend the importance of image-schemas for revealing semantic nature of English prepositions. Among many English prepositions, this paper, as a case study, examines the semantic properties of the specific English preposition *from*.

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**Key words:** cognitive semantics, linguistic typology, English preposition, English language learners, image schema

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### 1. On acquisition of semantics of English prepositions by Japanese ELLs

As the English language became the lingua franca, more and more people have been learning it, and English language schools can be found in almost every big city of the world. Although some linguists such as Dahl (2004) mentions that the structure of English is one of the simplest in the languages of the world, most English language learners (henceforth ELLs) would not agree with this statement, as they devote much of their precious time to becoming proficient English speakers, (and many of them unfortunately quit learning before acquiring a good command of English). Indeed English appears to be a difficult language for most (if not all) ELLs, but it should be also noted that all ELLs do not experience exactly the same hardships of acquiring the language; for those who speak such a language as Japanese, the one genetically and geographically unrelated to English, becoming high-proficiency learners of English requires much more time and effort than those whose languages are in many ways similar to English. Among many difficulties for ELLs, English prepositions are often said

to be notoriously difficult to be able to use in an appropriate manner (e.g. Cho 1992, Kotera et al. 2001, Tanaka 1983).

Several reasons can be claimed for why English prepositions are far more difficult for Japanese ELLs to learn. First, this can be attributed to the nature of English prepositions; they are highly polysemous, that is, each of them displays far more meanings than most English content words and also other function words. How can Japanese teachers of English instruct such polysemous words as English prepositions? Traditionally, most have just made Japanese ELLs memorize prominent senses of these prepositions, but this has not helped them acquire native-like intuition of how to use prepositions in an appropriate manner. For example, most ELLs in Japan are taught that the word 'night' always goes with 'at' (at night). This may make sense, as the closely related temporal nouns, 'morning' and 'afternoon' are almost always paired with 'in' ('in the morning' and 'in the afternoon'). On this puzzling fact, one may conclude that the prepositional phrase 'at night' should be memorized as an idiomatic expression. But as the following instances show, 'night' can be also used with other prepositions.

- (1) (a) At night, all your problems seem worse.
- (b) On the night in question, she was sound asleep.
- (c) In the night, they try to cross the border.

The same is true for 'be good at'. This expression, almost always learned as the fixed expression, can be also used with different prepositions instead of 'at'.

- (2) (a) I was good at math and science, I was not also good in things like English literature and history and that kind of things. (sic)
- (b) He was good with patients, as he was good with children. (Kotera and Konobe: 2001: 18)

These examples show that memorization does not help Japanese ELLs acquire proper usages of English prepositions.

Second, the linguistic structures between English and Japanese differ greatly. To encode the spatial and non-spatial relations expressed by English prepositions, Japanese utilizes not only postpositions (case markers), but also nouns and verbs (e.g. Cho 1982). Third, we are far from being fully convinced concerning effective learning methodologies of semantics of English prepositions. Many English instructors may contend that English dictionaries may be the best teachers for ELLs, but what they display is just lists of senses of English prepositions in an arbitrary fashion, so that Japanese ELLs must memorize these innumerable senses of the prepositions one by one.

It should be mentioned that language education is intimately related to the trend of linguistic theories, and little interest in semantics has to do with traditional linguistic theories. For example, the so called 'Oral Approach' was introduced into Japanese English education from the United States soon after World War Two, and this approach has so intimately related to the trend of linguistics then, that is, American structuralism in linguistics, the dominant linguistic assumption in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Oral Approach emphasized how ELLs effectively learn the sound and the grammatical structures, but not semantic structures. Then, the idea of Transformational Generative Grammar, the most influential linguistic theory in the latter half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been utilized in English language research and pedagogy. Because of the influence of Transformational Generative Gram-

mar which seldom discusses semantics of polysemous words, the focus of the most second language acquisition research has been on syntactic acquisition, not on lexical acquisition.

Unfortunately, as the traditional linguistic theory just mentioned above implies, the progress of the linguistics seems to have revealed very little concerning nature of polysemous words, as most still assume that senses of English prepositions are not related to each other (e.g. Bloomfield, 1933).

The purpose of this paper is to argue that Cognitive Semantics (henceforth CS) and Typological Linguistics (henceforth TL) will have a great potentiality in order for Japanese ELLs to understand the nature of semantics of English prepositions, and then to help them use English prepositions appropriately.

## 2. On Cognitive Semantics and its approach to English prepositions

This section sees that CS has a potentiality for providing us with better methodologies of learning and teaching semantics of English prepositions.

### 2.1. Why is CS based approach better than others?

This study will make an assumption, shared with most CS based studies, that the nature of multi-functions in a single English prepositions can only be revealed in a meaningful way with reference to how our experience structures the world (see especially Heine et al. 1991; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987; Lindner 1981; Rice 1987; Talmy 2000; Sweetser 1990).

This position is a clear departure from many classical approaches to meaning within the formal, or truth-conditional framework, whose basic assumption is that the meaning of a linguistic expression can be determined, either directly or by reduction, with reference to the relationship between the expression and an entity in the world. In other words, language is just a device to describe the objective reality (or some possible world), and meaning should be described independently of any particular human understanding (for more detail, see especially the discussion on the objectivism paradigm in Lakoff 1987: 157–370). One reason for this study to prefer a CS based approach over so-called classical approach is that the latter does not reveal any possible motivation behind semantic regularities of English prepositions. Within the classical

approach, one possible explanation for these regularities might be to discover the very same objective conditions but it seems almost impossible to imagine the necessary objective truth conditions for multiple senses of this single morpheme. Rather, such motivation will only be found by taking into consideration how we conceptualize the world; indeed, an increasing number of studies based on CS argue for the idea that language structure is in many ways shaped and motivated by human cognitive abilities and experience (see, e.g., Heine et al. 1991; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987; Sweetser 1990), and that this assumption allows us to cope with the issue of lexical polysemy in a more natural and convincing way.

## 2.2. On CS and its perspective on semantics of English prepositions

Since 1970s, more and more approaches to semantics have become against the objectivist world-view and truth conditional semantics, and these approaches collectively came to be called Cognitive Semantics. Although researchers of CS differ in their specific methods for linguistic analysis and their main interests, they seem to make the following common assumptions (see Evans and Green 2006: 157).

- (3) (a) Conceptual structure is embodied.
- (b) Semantic structure is conceptual structure.
- (c) Meaning representation is encyclopedic.
- (d) Meaning construction is conceptualization.

To cognitive semanticists, semantic structures are formulated on the basis of the nature of human interaction with the external world. Also it is assumed that semantic structures are conceptual structures, and the conceptualization process is dynamic rather than static. And our encyclopedic knowledge plays an important role in inferring appropriate meanings out of context.

This paper will focus specifically on the followings discussed in previous studies of CS, as they appear the most relevant to our study.

- (4) (a) the spatial sense as basic
- (b) prototype and extended meanings
- (c) image schemas
- (d) typological perspectives

### 2.2.1. On the spatial sense as basic

Most previous studies of CS share the localistic assumption; spatial senses are linguistically and psychologically more basic than non-spatial ones, and such other senses may be appropriately hypothesized as ultimately derived from the spatial senses (see, e.g., Croft 1991: 192, Lyons 1977: 718)<sup>(1)</sup>. This assumption may be supported by the following justifications. First, this has in fact been assumed by most functionally and cognitively oriented linguists. Second, children acquire the locative before any other, more abstract use (Clark and Carpenter 1989: 11). One might ask why the spatial senses should be the sources for other, more abstract senses. Jackendoff (1983: 210) argues that “if there is any primacy to the spatial field, it is because this field is so strongly supported by non-linguistic cognition; it is the common ground for the essential faculties of vision, touch, and action. From an evolutionary perspective, spatial organization had to exist long before language”.

### 2.2.2. On prototypes and extended meanings

Everything around us is categorized, but all the members of a category in question do not enjoy the same categorical status; some are more prominent than other members of the same category. The best or the most prominent member is often called the prototypical member. Prototypical senses are usually more salient and frequently used than other members of the same category. Other, less salient members of the category in question, are linked directly or indirectly to the prototype according to their similarities to the prototype. This is called the prototype theory, and the idea behind this theory shows sharp contrast with the traditional ideas of categorization in philosophy, psychology, linguistics and an anthropology, as traditionally it was (and still is) assumed that category membership is determined on the basis of a set of criterial features, and then one entity is required to have all the features in order to be included in the category. Therefore, the entities of the same category enjoy the same categorical status and they are sharply separated from other entities. On the contrary, prototypical categories exhibit degrees of typicality; every member of the category in question does not express the same membership status. Less prototypical members are derived from more prototypical member(s), and this semantic extension is often triggered by cog-

nitive mechanisms such as ‘metaphor’. CS assumes that metaphor is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5).

The prototypical theory seems appealing to effective acquisition of English prepositions. Tanaka (1983), for example, shows that prototype use of *on* is learned without difficulty by Japanese ELLs, but uses which derived from the prototype are troublesome for them. But what exactly is prototype? Is prototype, as assumed by many, a concrete entity, based on which other category members are derived? There have been criticisms for such a prototype perspective. For example, some categories such as ‘US MONARCH’ or ‘OBJECT THAT WEIGH MORE THAN A GRAM’ do not seem to show any prototype entities (Laurence and Margolis 1999). Then, if prototype is not necessarily involved in categories, how can prototype effect occur? One answer to this was suggested by Lakoff (1987). Lakoff proposed what he calls ‘idealized cognitive models (henceforth ICM)’, which explains prototype effects discussed by Rosch and her colleagues. Many ICMs are structured by image schemas discussed in 2.2.3.

### 2.2.3. On image-schemas

The notion of image schema was first discussed in detail by Johnson (1987). This is intimately related to our bodies and experience. Image schemas are kinds of templates distilled from our spatial experience and we map these templates onto non-spatial structure (see Oakley 2007: 215 for more detailed explanation). Evans and Green (2006: 179–189) argue that image schemas have the following properties.

- (5) (a) Image schemas are preconceptual in origin.
- (b) An image schema can give rise to more specific concepts.
- (c) Image schemas derive from interaction with and observation of the world.
- (d) Image schemas are inherently meaningful.
- (e) Image schemas are analogue representations
- (f) Image schemas can be internally complex.

Image schemas are derived from our sensory experience and emerged before any concrete concepts are formulated. For the purpose of illustration, let us consider how the image schema CONTAINER emerges.

“You wake out of a deep sleep and peer out from beneath the covers into your room. You gradually emerge out of your stupor, pull yourself out from under the covers, climb into your robe, stretch out your limbs, and walk in a daze out of the bedroom and into the bathroom.” (Johnson 1987: 331)

The above quotation shows that our repeated experience of IN and OUT come to formulate ONTAINER schema. They are precepts (5a) in the sense that they are unconsciously molded before any concepts, and they become the foundations, on the basis of which every concept is made (5b). Image schemas are inherently meaningful because they are derived from our embodied experience, which is “inherently meaningful in the sense that embodied experiences have predictable consequences” (Evans and Green 2006: 183).

They are analogue representations (5e), as they mirror the sensory experience, and can be comprised of their components (5f).

### 2.2.4. On typological perspectives

Many CS based studies assume the perspectives of Linguistic Typology (henceforth LT). LT can be “defined as a cross-linguistic, descriptive as well as explanatory enterprise devoted to the unity and diversity of language with respect to linguistic form or the relation between linguistic form and meaning or function” (Auwera and Nuyts 2007: 1074). This is nothing surprising, as CS and LT are highly compatible, as researchers in both branches of Linguistics take functional perspectives. For example, the research by Croft (1990), Talmy (2000), and Heine and his colleagues (1991) are well known for their great contribution both to the fields of CS and LT.

## 3. A case study for the English preposition *from*

This section will discuss the semantics of the English preposition *from* on the basis of CS’s assumptions mentioned above. The reason for this choice is that this preposition is so basic that Japanese ELLs are expected to use this properly, and its semantic structure seems relatively simpler than other basic English prepositions such as *for*. To begin with, consider the following senses of *from* (according to *The New Oxford American Dictionary*).

- (6) (a) indicating the point in space at which a jour-

- ney, motion, or action starts: *She began to walk away from him.*
- (b) indicating the point in time at which a particular process, event, or activity starts: *The show will run from 10 to 2.*
  - (c) indicating the source or provenance of someone or something: *I'm from Hartford.*
  - (d) indicating the starting point of a specified range on a scale: *men who ranged in age from seventeen to eighty-four*
  - (e) indicating the point at which an observer is placed: *you can see the island from here.*
  - (f) indicating the raw material out of which something is manufactured: *a varnish made from copal*
  - (g) indicating separation or removal: *The party was ousted from power after sixteen years.*
  - (h) indicating prevention: *The story of how he was saved from death*
  - (i) indicating cause: *a child suffering from asthma*
  - (j) indicating a source of knowledge or the basis for one's judgment: *information obtained from papers, books, and presentation*
  - (k) indicating a distinction: *the courts view him in a different light from that of a manual workers.*

*The New Oxford American Dictionary* states that the first definition (sense) of *from* is the core meaning. Similarly, Heine et al. (1991) mentions that spatial senses of prepositions are regarded as prototypical in most dictionaries, and further states that these judgments reflect their intuition, which can be trusted.

Our task here is to show how the senses of *from* are related to one another. This paper will discuss three prominent senses of *from*, that is, the spatial, temporal and cause/reason senses.

### 3.1. Spatial sense of *from*

To begin with, consider the following example.

- (7) Taro has returned from Japan.

According to Lindstromberg (1997: 39), the image schema behind the semantics of the English preposition *from* can be assumed as follows.



Fig. 1. The image schema of *from*

The basic assumption of most CS researchers on the semantics of prepositions is that “prepositions denote a relation involving two or more participant entities. The relation is inherently asymmetric, in that one participant is selected for foregrounding while the other participant(s) serve as background, or reference point entity” (sic) (Taylor 1993: 153). Following Langacker (1987), the foregrounded entity is called TR, and the background entity, LM. For Figure 1, a moving entity (which is indicated by the arrow) is TR, and LM is the location from where TR moves.

In (7), TR is Taro and LM is Japan, and notice that this sentence implicitly mentions that Taro is most likely to be here. Concerning this, let us introduce the notion of ‘GOAL-oriented perspectives’ proposed by Ikegami (1987).

Examining English motion expressions (‘moving from A to B’), he argued that “the goal marker is sometimes substituted where logically one would expect the source marker” (Ikegami 1987: 122). Some of his English examples are ‘averse from/to’, ‘different from/to’, ‘immune from/to’, ‘in distinction from/to’ (Ikegami 1987: 125). His important finding concerning this is that “this substitution always works in one way, i.e. the goal for the source, and never the other way around” (ibid.). Following his claim, we can argue that GOAL is psychologically and linguistically more prominent than SOURCE, so that we tend to focus on GOAL rather than SOURCE. This can be supported by the fact that many idiomatic *from* expressions co-occur with *to* as follows.

- (8) from first to last, from beginning to end, from start to finish, from bad to worse, from cover to cover, from the cradle to the grave, from day to day, from door to door, from hand to mouth, from head to foot, from pillar to post, from side to side, from start to finish, from stem to stern, from time to time, from top to bottom

Following this argument, we will make a little revision of Fig. 1, as in Fig. 2.

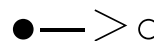


Fig. 2. The revised image schema of *from*

Figure 2 shows the white circle, to which attentions of speakers/hearers go. One implication of the Figure is that the speaker of (7) may expect TR close to or at the destination, implying that TR is far from LM. And the

implication of ‘remoteness’ will explain the different nuances between *from* and *off* below.<sup>(2)</sup>

- (9) (a) A rocket is taking off.  
 (b) A rocket is taking off from Cape Canaveral.  
 (Lindstromberg 1997: 40)

*From* implies greater separation from Landmark, while *off* does not. Therefore, *off* and not *from* can be used for a very special situation where the rocket has lifted ‘only’ 10 meters off the launching pad.

Notice that the spatial meaning of *from*, this study assumes, is not ‘prototype’, but is highly prototypical; spatial concept just reflects its image schema more vividly than non-spatial ones in most cases. We assume that how much a sense in question mirrors its image schema has much to do with its prototypicality.

### 3.1.1. How does LT reveal a possible origin of the English preposition *from*?

One question is where the spatial sense of *from* comes from? Historical documents on *from* do not provide us with enough information concerning this. So let us examine the function words of other languages whose semantics are similar to *from*, and see if this kind of typological study would indeed help reveal the origin of semantics of *from*. The counterparts of the spatial sense of *from* are called ‘ablative’ here.

The lexical sources of the ablative are limited: for the most part they are verbal expressions meaning ‘come from’, ‘follow’, ‘leave’, and ‘stand’, but some are nominal expressions meaning ‘out of hand’ or ‘in the

hand of’. These lexical sources all share their semantic structure with the ablative sense shown in Table 1 and 2. While this conclusion is obvious for such lexical sources as ‘leave’, ‘come from’, or ‘out of hand’, some may need further explanation. In the case of the lexical source meaning ‘follow’, one aspect of this concept is that a (usually physical) entity moves after another, and this implies that the two together *move from* one point to another. The lexical source meaning ‘stand’ implies that ‘one moves upwards *from* the sitting position’, which also involves the same semantic structure. Finally, regarding the lexical source meaning ‘in hand’, an entity moving into the hand come *from* outside of the hand, and this aspect of the meaning shares the semantic structure mentioned above. Our discussion here leads us to a speculation that the origin of the spatial sense of *from* would be structured by the image schema in Fig. 1 and 2.

### 3.2. The temporal senses

The ‘spatial sense as basic’ assumption strongly suggests that the spatial sense should be the source of other ablative related sense, never vice versa. Certainly this is also true of the relation between the spatial sense and the temporal sense. This claim is also supported by typological studies. The most important sources of ‘temporal-from’ sense is ablative markers in the languages of the world (see Haspelmath 1997: 66–7).

As has been argued repeatedly (see, for example, Clark 1973; Haspelmath 1997; Jackendoff 1983; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987; Lyons 1977), however, the spatial and temporal senses are intimately

**Table 1.** Lexical sources of the ablative

Language	Lexical Source	Gloss	Reference
Bengali	<i>thaakiyaa/theekke</i>	‘having stopped’ > ‘from’	Kahr 1975
Big Nambas	<i>da- + an</i>	continuative prefix + ‘leave’ > ‘from’	Fox 1979: 87
Estonian	<i>käest</i>	‘out of the hand’ > ‘from’	Heine et al. 1993
Ewe	<i>tsó</i>	‘come from’ > ‘from’	Lord 1989: 252
French > Haitian creole	<i>sortir &gt; sòt(i)</i>	‘come from’ > ‘(out) from’	Hall 1953: 55
Igbo	<i>naka</i>	‘in + hand’ > ‘from’	Svorou 1993: 262
Kwara’ae > To’aba’ita	<i>fa’asi &gt; fasi</i>	‘leave,’ ‘forsake,’ ‘depart from’ > ablative prep.	Lichtenberk 1991: 47
Lingala	<i>-úta</i>	‘come from’ > ‘from’, ‘since’	van Everbroeck 1958: 72, 158
Malayalam	<i>nilkkuka &gt; skuuḷil</i>	‘stand’ > ‘from’	Asher and Kumari 1997: 364
Mandarin	<i>cong</i>	‘follow’ > ‘from’	
Nama	<i>xú</i>	‘leave,’ ‘go away,’ ‘let go’ > prep. ‘from’, ‘by’	Krönlein 1889: 52
Swahili	<i>ku-toka &gt; kutoka</i>	‘to come from’ > prep. ‘from’	Heine et al. 2002: 71
Tamil	<i>vitu &gt; vit.tu</i>	‘leave’ > ablative postp.	T. Lehmann 1989: 131
Thai	<i>càak</i>	‘leave’	Blake 1994: 164

related and their boundary are not clear-cut in many cases. This is partly because these spatial and temporal concepts co-occur in an inseparable fashion: when one gives an utterance indicating one's physical movement to some other place, this always implies the change of time to some other time.<sup>(3)</sup>

### 3.3. On Cause and Reason

Next, let us consider the cause/reason meanings of *from*.

- (10) (a) John died from his excessive drinking.  
 (b) John died of alcoholism.

**Table 2.** Conflation Patterns of the Ablative-Related Senses

(Ab=ablative; Ag=agentive; Al=allative; B=benefactive; Cm=comitative; Cp=comparative; Cs=causal; F=function; I=instrumental; L=locative; Ma=manner; Pa=path; Po=possessive; Pu=purposive; Rc=recipient; Rs=resultative)

Conflation Pattern	Language	Nominal Gram
Ab	Alyawara	<i>-ithiya</i>
Ab	Apalai	<i>ino</i>
Ab	Babungo	<i>fi</i>
Ab	Buriat	<i>-haa4</i>
Ab	Hausa	<i>daga</i>
Ab	Kashmiri	<i>peth</i>
Ab	Koho	<i>bəh</i>
Ab	Korean	<i>eyes</i>
Ab	Korean	<i>hantheyse</i>
Ab	Kui	<i>-ti</i>
Ab	Malayalam	<i>mutal</i>
Ab	Malayalam	<i>ninnə</i>
Ab	Motu	<i>amo</i>
Ab	Slave	<i>-ts'eh</i>
Ab/Ag/Cp	Maltese	<i>minn</i>
Ab/Ag/Cp/Cs	Inuit	<i>-mit</i>
Ab/Ag/Cp/Cs	Modern Greek	<i>apó</i>
Ab/Ag/Cp/Cs/I/Ma	Punjabi	<i>tō</i>
Ab/Ag/Cp/L	Boumaa Fijian	<i>mai</i>
Ab/Ag/Cs	German	<i>von</i>
Ab/Ag(archaic)/Cs	English	<i>from</i>
Ab/Ag/Cs/I/Ma/Pa	Kannada	<i>inda</i>
Ab/Ag(?)Cs/Pa	Japanese	<i>kara</i>
Ab/Ag/I	Marathi	<i>kadūn</i>
Ab/Al/B/L/Po	Mwera	<i>pa</i>
Ab/Al/Cm/I	Lahu	<i>ge</i>
Ab(?)Al/Cp/Cs/F/I/L/Ma/Po/Pu/Rc/Rs	French	<i>à</i>
Ab/Al/Cp.Cs/I/L/Rc	Tok Pisin	<i>-long</i>
Ab/Al/Cp/Cs/L	Evenki	<i>-duk</i>
Ab/Al(illative)/Cp/Cs/L/Pa	Ngiyambaa	<i>-DHi</i>
Ab/Al/L	Bari	<i>i</i>
Ab/Al/L	Margi	<i>wú (ú)</i>
Ab/Al/L/Po	Chamorro	<i>giya</i>
Ab/Cp	Hungarian	<i>-nál/-nél</i>
Ab/Cp/Cs	Turkish	<i>-DAn</i>
Ab/Cp/Pa	Persian	<i>əz</i>
Ab/Cs	Abkhaz	<i>n+t°'</i>
Ab/Cs	Catalan	<i>de</i>
Ab/Cs	Hungarian	<i>-ból/-ből, -tól/-től</i>
Ab/Cs	Gooniyandi	<i>-yangga</i>
Ab/Cs	Diyari	<i>-yundu/-ndu</i>
Ab/Cs	Finnish	<i>-stA</i>
Ab/Cs/F	Spanish	<i>de</i>
Ab/Cs/L	Tuvaluan	<i>mai(i)</i>
Ab/Cs/L	Maori	<i>i</i>
Ab/I	Yagaria	<i>-viti'</i>
Ab/I	Yagaria	<i>-loti</i>
Ab(ulative)/I/Cs	German	<i>aus</i>
Ab/L	Sumerian	<i>ta</i>
Ab/Pa	Malayalam	<i>vazzi</i>

For the above examples, Radden (1985) states that *from* in (10a) is appropriate, for excessive drinking is not a disease which normally leads to death, while alcoholism is. He (1985: 189) argued on the causal meaning of *from* and *of*, that “with the *of*-phrase, the cause of one’s death is immediately attributable to a particular category, as expressed by a noun with the *from*-phrase, on the other hand, the cause of one’s death is only mediately attributable to an action, a habit or a property, as syntactically expressed by a gerund or a descriptive modifier”(sic). He concludes that these different nuances are derived from their spatial senses, and the spatial sense of *from* implies the notion of distance. As we saw, we are very much in harmony with his analysis of the cause/reason meaning of *from*.

### 3.3.1. On cause and reason expressed by pre/postpositions of other languages

LT has shown that its findings are true for a specific language; this is nothing surprising, as universal facts are naturally applicable to each individual language. Therefore it seems plausible to assume that LT could reveal the semantic nature of *from*. The typological work by Yamaguchi (2004) shows the conflation patterns of semantic roles displayed by the ablative-related pre/postpositions of other languages. The darkened parts are the conflation patterns with Cause.

The above conflation patterns of the ablative-related senses show that ablative meanings are closely related to cause/reasons meanings, although the ablative senses do not always evoke cause meanings. Based on this fact, our assumption is that the spatial sense and

**Table 3.** Frequency of occurrence of semantic roles expressed by pre/postpositions of the languages sample in Yamaguchi (2004)

total	202 (the number of pre/postpositions)
<u>(spatial meanings)</u>	
Ablative	72
Allative	79
Locative	90
Path	30
<u>(abstract meanings)</u>	
Agent	35
Benefactive	40
Cause	91
Comitative	50
Instrument	65
Manner	30

cause/reason sense of *from* are conceptually located to each other very closely.

Another point indicated by Yamaguchi (2004) is that cause/reason meanings are expressed by more pre/postpositions of languages than other senses (or semantic roles), as the following Table shows (Table 3).

One may indicate that spatial semantic roles, especially Locative occur as frequently as Cause. But notice that spatial concepts are the basic ones, based on which abstract meanings are derived from. The above data imply that cause/reason meanings are expressed by several or many pre/postpositions of each individual language, and indeed this is also true for English.

- (11) (a) He laughed *for* joy.  
 (b) She began to laugh *at* these words.  
 (c) Taro complimented his son *on* his good grades.  
 (d) *In* her excitement, she was unable to speak.  
 (e) We were surprised *by* his appearance.  
 (f) We trembled *with* fear.  
 (g) She was excited/crazy *about* him.  
 (h) Tourists were killed *through* accidents.  
 (i) He died *from* drugs.  
 (j) He died *of* cancer.

## 4. Conclusions

This paper argued that CS and LT have a significant potential for making contributions to acquisition of English prepositions by Japanese ELLs. Notice that our claims are very much in harmony with previous studies of semantics of English prepositions such as Dirven (1993, 1995), Lindstromberg (1997), and Radden (1985, 1989); our contribution to their discussion would be that we showed more explicitly how ‘remoteness’, one of the key concepts to explain the semantics of *from* for the above scholars, emerges. This study just showed a potential of CS and LT for the second language acquisition, so experimental studies will be required for our future research to examine exactly how CS and LT help effective learning of English prepositions by Japanese ELLs.

## Notes

- (1) Rice (1996) found that the spatial relations were not necessarily the core usages for the other relations. Her study showed the possibility that native speakers of English might recognize temporal relations and spatial relations differently, and neither of them



would not be the sources of each other.

- (2) It was Radden who introduced ‘remoteness’ for the analysis of the semantics of *from*. For this, he explains as follows: “Both in its spatial sense of ‘movement away from a point of origin’ and in its figurative sense of a ‘point of origin’... or ‘starting point’, *from* is in many ways the counterpart of *to*. Since a point of origin or a starting point is the remotest point from a goal, *from* implies the idea of remoteness” (1989: 564). However it is unclear why the idea of remoteness would be implied if *from* is regarded as being the counterpart of *to*.
- (3) See Note (1) for plausibility of separation between spatial and temporal senses.

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