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## **Spatial language: a contrastive analysis of the English *over* and the Croatian *preko***

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This paper is based on the assumption that polysemous words designating spatial relations are best described in terms of lexical networks of interrelated senses in the framework of cognitive semantics. An overview is given of existing cognitive semantic studies of *over* and a similar network analysis is carried out for the conceptually related Croatian spatial preposition *preko*. The two words are compared on the basis of image schematic representations. It is by contrasting related image schemas from a different language that some properties of conceptual relationships within the lexical network in question may be illuminated.

### **Introduction**

The English preposition *over* is a highly polysemous lexical item. Monolingual English dictionaries list twenty or more senses that are further subdivided into subsenses. Unfortunately, dictionaries have not yet developed a way of representing conceptual links between the various senses, some of which may seem to be unrelated altogether. As a result, the ordering of senses in different dictionaries is often inconsistent, and does not reflect the network-like semantic structure of prepositional categories where some members are more central than others. To make things more complicated, *over* may be used as an adverb, particle or prefix depending on the syntagmatic environment it finds itself in.

The first Croatian lexeme that comes to mind as an “equivalent” of the English *over* is undoubtedly the preposition *preko*. This intuitive judgment is confirmed by a bilingual dictionary (Bujas 1999: 617), where in the entry for *over* the preposition



*preko* is listed as the first translation option, followed by the prepositions (*iz*)*nad* and *onkraj*, the adverbs and adverbial phrases *preko*, *na drugoj strani*, *na drugu stranu*, the adjectives *prošao*, *svršen*, *gotov*, and finally by the adverbs *opet* and *iznova*. The existence of such a variety of lexemes and expressions points to the fact that the two languages reflect different conceptualizations of reality, primarily in the domain of spatial relations, as they are influenced by different linguistic, cultural and social backgrounds. Different senses of prepositions, as we will see later, are not arbitrary, but are related in such a way that the central senses motivate other, more peripheral uses. This does not mean that there is a single common attribute that ties the category together. Rather, the motivation is such that a **meaning chain** is created on the basis of similarity between two adjacent senses, starting from the central sense and all the way to the most peripheral ones. The existing meaning chain in a lexical category such as *over* or *preko* is just one of the possible ways the category may have been structured. In other words, although a sense offers different possibilities for motivating other uses on the basis of similarity, only some of these links are actually realized in language.

Our task here will be to examine to what extent the conceptual space of the English *over* and the Croatian *preko* overlap, and which meaning extensions of *over* find their counterparts in other Croatian lexemes. We will assume that the core senses overlap to a significant degree, while more divergence occurs towards the periphery of the category, where other translation options are needed. This means that we will track different meaning chains for the two prepositions assuming that they originate from a very similar, if not the same, conceptual core, and spread to language-specific uses, frequently outside the scope of the spatial domain. In order to be able to compare the meaning chains for *over* and *preko*, we will have to get a clear insight into the semantic structure of both words and the concepts of spatial relations that they express, as well as other related concepts understood in terms of space. As *over* may be used as a preposition, adverb or particle in a phrasal verb, it is evident that the Croatian semantic equivalents must belong to different syntactic categories as well. It is our assumption that the Croatian preposition *preko* generally corresponds to prepositional uses of *over*, while other Croatian lexemes are used for the concepts expressed by *over* as an adverb or particle in a phrasal verb. Also, it will be shown that an insight into the semantically corresponding part of the conceptual system of a different language can help clarify some relations and distinctions among the senses of the lexical category in question.

## Semantic representation of polysemous words – the lexical network approach

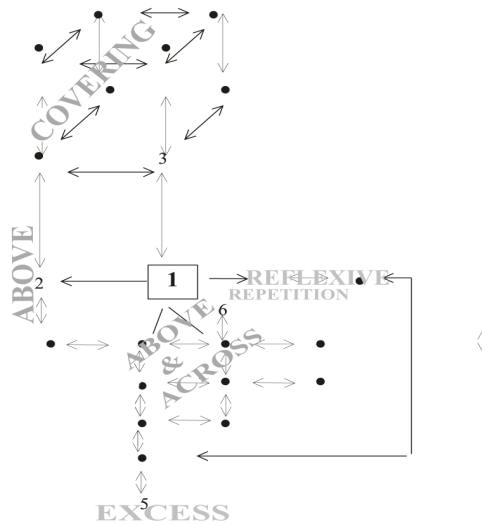
The theoretical framework underlying our work is that of cognitive semantics, where the semantic structure of prepositions has been a very popular field of investigation. Prepositions exhibit a high degree of polysemy, where different senses are related on the





basis of **family resemblances**.<sup>1</sup> This means that there is not one single attribute or set of attributes shared by all members of the category. Rather, the relation of senses within a category is such that it forms a chain of meanings, where senses are motivated by each other through similarity that exists between adjacent members of the category (see for example Lakoff 1987: 438, Taylor 1995: 108, Cuyckens 1995: 183-184).

Cognitive semantic studies of polysemous lexical categories such as prepositions result in graphical representations of meaning called **lexical networks**.<sup>2</sup> A lexical network consists of interrelated nodes that stand for different senses. Representations of this kind conveniently reproduce the structure of a lexical category organized around a prototype, or central member, from which motivations towards other meaning extensions originate. Meaning chains are easily traced along different nodes from the center towards the periphery. One such network is given in Figure 1, a somewhat graphically modified version of Lakoff's representation of the semantic structure of *over*.



**Figure 1 Lexical network for over (according to Lakoff 1987: 436)**

Figure 1 is a neatly organized network of interrelated senses. There are, however, several problems with this type of lexical meaning representation. The first one regards the granularity of the network. For example, it has been noted that the lexical network

<sup>1</sup> The notion of *family resemblances* was first introduced by Wittgenstein (1953: 66-67). It was later empirically applied to cognitive psychology by Rosch (see for example Rosch and Mervis 1975), and imported into cognitive linguistics.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the studies include Lakoff 1987: 416-461, Dewell 1994, Cuyckens 1995.





*over* as represented by Lakoff, particularly in the central ‘above and across’ sense may have other instantiations that are not represented in the network, and that additional refinements in terms of landmark and trajectory properties may be made (see Sandra and Rice 1995: 91). The missing senses demonstrate lack of systematicity in lexical network analyses. The selection of senses greatly depends on the subjectivity of the linguist, as there is no explicit methodology offered within the framework of cognitive linguistics that would enable us to distinguish between different usages.

Another problematic issue, also arising from the absence of methodological rigor, concerns the depth of the network, i.e. the danger that the nodes of the network are either too abstract, covering uses that are mentally represented as different senses, or too fine-grained, exemplifying contextual variants of the same sense (see for example Kreitzer 1997: 292)<sup>3</sup>. A more detailed critique of the lexical network approach and a discussion of mental representations of meanings described by prepositional networks are given in Kreitzer (1997) and Sandra and Rice (1995) respectively.

## Over

After having pointed out the main characteristics and some of the problems of the lexical network approach, we may proceed by examining different senses of *over* and searching for options of expressing equivalent spatial relations in Croatian. By doing this we are inevitably confronting two conceptual systems in order to compare the ways presumably universal spatial concepts are reflected in each language.

The most extensive and the most frequently quoted study of the spatial uses of the English word *over* is by Lakoff (1987: 416-461), which largely draws on the work of Brugman (1981) and further refines it. Six clusters of senses – schemas<sup>4</sup> - are defined which may further structure more specific instantiations differing with respect to the nature of the entities involved in the spatial relation. The six clusters of senses are exemplified with the following sentences.

	SENSE	EXAMPLE
(1)	ABOVE AND ACROSS	The boy jumped over the wall.
(2)	ABOVE	He lived over a bakery.
(3)	COVERING	Put a piece of paper over the hole.
(4)	REFLEXIVE	I turned over and fell out of bed.
(5)	EXCESS	The jar overflowed.
(6)	REPETITION	She was doing the same thing over and over.

<sup>3</sup> For a more general discussion of the distinctness of meanings within polysemous lexical categories see Geeraerts 1993.

<sup>4</sup> A schema, or more precisely, an image schema is a mental pattern which structures our understanding of various areas of experience.



In the first three senses *over* is used as a preposition, in sense 4 as part of a phrasal verb, in sense 5 as a prefix and in sense 6 as an adverb. Each of the senses have further sense variants depending on the nature of the entities participating in the image-schema. The trajector is the entity being positioned relative to a reference point, called the landmark<sup>5</sup>. The relations between trajector and landmark– schemas - are visually represented by drawings which show the shape of the landmark, the position or type of path of the trajector, as well as the existence of contact between trajector and landmark. For example, the sense exemplified by the sentence *The boy jumped over the fence* is represented by the following figure,

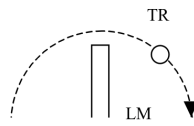


Figure 2 *The boy jumped over the fence*

where *the boy* is the trajector, *fence* is a vertical landmark and the dotted line represents the path traced by the trajector.

## Above and across

Let us consider some instantiations of the **above and across** sense, together with their possible Croatian counterparts.

(1)(a) *The bird flew over the yard/hill/fence.*

Ptica je letjela **preko** dvorišta/brda/ograde.

Ptica je **preletjela** dvorište/brdo/ogradu.

(1)(b) *The dog jumped over the fence.*

+Pas je skočio/skakao **preko** ograde.<sup>6</sup>

Pas je **preskočio** ogradu.

(1)(c) *Peter crawled over the bridge/hill/wall.*

Peter je puzao **preko** mosta/brda/zida.

Peter je **prepuzao** most/brdo/zid.

(1)(d) *Maria lives over the bridge/river/hill.*

Maria živi **preko** mosta/rijeka/brda.

<sup>5</sup> For the definition of the terms *trajector* and *landmark*, as well as their relation to the related terms *figure* and *ground* see Lakoff (1987: 419) and Langacker (1987: 231-232).

<sup>6</sup> There are two possibilities in this case: the unprefixated perfective verb *skočiti* + preposition *preko* and the imperfective verb *skakati* + preposition *preko*.



The **above and across** sense of *over* is its central sense, even though dictionaries never list this sense first or indicate its special status among other senses. Apart from Lakoff's study, its central status has been confirmed in a small-scale experiment conducted by Taylor, where native speakers were instructed to list as many sentences with *over* as they could think of within set time limits (Taylor 1995: 117-8). Examples such as (1)(b) were by far the most frequent, verifying that this sense is cognitively the most salient.

Lakoff distinguishes different schemas on the basis of landmark properties, as well as the existence of contact between the trajector and the landmark. Thus, in (1)(a) we have three different subsenses – there is no contact between the trajector and the landmark, which can be extended (*yard*), extended and vertical (*hill*) or just vertical (*fence*). In (1)(b) there is still no contact, but the path begins and ends on the ground. In (1)(c) there is contact between the trajector and the landmark, which can exhibit the same characteristics as in (1)(a) above. Sentence (1)(d) is different in that the landmark, regardless of its shape, is only a reference point serving to indicate the location of the trajector. Therefore, the **above** element is not actually present, as there is only an imagined path leading to the trajector. This property singles out the static relation subsense from the first three. Also the distinction between static and dynamic relationship seems to carry more weight than the landmark properties in the categorization of the subsenses, although Lakoff does not take this fact into consideration.

Corresponding Croatian equivalents of *over* in the **above and across** sense are the preposition *preko* and the etymologically related verbal prefix *pre-*. In sentences where a trajector is moving above and across a landmark ((1)(a) -(1)(c)), Croatian allows both the preposition *preko* with the landmark coded as a noun in the genitive case, and the verbal prefix *pre-* and the landmark coded as a direct object in the accusative. However, the meanings of the two sentences in each pair differ with respect to verb aspect. In sentences with *pre-* the actions expressed by the verb are completed – the trajector moved above and across to the other side of the landmark. In sentences with *preko*, the action itself is focused on, and it is not always clear whether the entire path has actually been crossed or not. The following is, therefore, possible:

*Sam je trčao preko brda, kad je naišao na Marka.*  
(*Sam was running over the hill when he came across Marko*<sup>7</sup>)

When *preko* is used, it is the intended path that leads above and across the landmark that is crucial, and not so much the completion of the action expressed by the verb.

As a discussion of the relationship of verbal prefixes, verb aspect and prepositions lies outside the scope of this work, we will restrict our findings to the following conclusion. When *over* indicates a dynamic relationship where a trajector is moving above and across the landmark, the same relationship may be expressed in Croatian by the preposition

<sup>7</sup> A progressive aspect is necessary in English to indicate the duration of the action.





*preko* or a verb prefixed by *pre-*. If the relationship is static and *over* indicates the location of the trajector **on the other side of** the landmark as in (1)(d), the preposition *preko* is used.

Apart from the spatial meaning of the central **above and across** sense, *over* features metaphorical extensions into some other cognitive domains. Consider the following examples.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1)(e) <i>They paid out over 3 million pounds.</i> | <i>Platili su preko 3 milijuna funti.</i>   |
| (1)(f) <i>She read the book over the vacation.</i> | <i>Pročitala je knjigu preko praznika.</i>  |
| (1)(g) <i>She never got over his death.</i>        | <i>Nikada nije preboljela njegovu smrt.</i> |
| (1)(h) <i>The film is over.</i>                    | <i>Film je gotov.</i>                       |

Sentence (1)(e) is an extension of the static sense of *over* exemplified by *Sam lives over the hill*, where the trajector (the paid amount) is located on the other side of the landmark (*3 million pounds*). This metaphoric extension exists in Croatian preposition *preko*. The same is also true of sentence (1)(f), which features an extension of the central sense into the temporal domain.

In sentence (1)(g) the landmark (*death*) is seen as an obstacle that one has to surmount or “get over”. Croatian preposition *preko* cannot be used in this sense. However, Croatian has the verb *preboljeti* (*recover, get well, get over*) where the same metaphor is applied by means of the prefix *pre-*.

In (1)(h) the duration of the film is the path one has to cross for the film to be finished. Once the path has been crossed in its entirety, we say that the film, or any other event, is over. This metaphoric extension is not realized in the meaning of the Croatian preposition *preko*. It is significant that the prepositional uses of *over* in (1)(e)-(1)(h) have their Croatian counterparts in *preko*. In (1)(g), where *over* is used as part of a phrasal verb we may use a verb prefixed by *pre-*, while the adverbial use in (1)(h) requires a completely different lexeme in Croatian.

## Above

In the sentence

- (2) *There was a canopy **over** the bed,*  
*Iznad kreveta se nalazio baldahin.*

*over* is used to denote an object being positioned above another object, without any contact between them. The **above** element links this schema directly to the **above and across** schema. This sentence cannot be translated into Croatian by means of the preposition *preko*. Instead, the preposition *iznad* (*above*) must be used. In other words, *preko* does not have a sense which only incorporates the **above** element. Accordingly, further metaphorical extensions of *over* in this sense, such as the expression *to have authority over somebody*, are not possible in Croatian.



Lakoff mentions another instantiation of the abstract sense **above**,  
(2)(a) *The powerline stretches **over** the yard*,

Električni vod se proteže **preko** dvorište where the trajector is long, one-dimensional and located above the landmark. This image schema is directly related to the **above and across** sense exemplified by *The bird flew over the yard*, where the path is extended and there is no contact between a moving trajector and the landmark. Since the Croatian *preko* does not have the **above** sense, it is not so much the location of the trajector (*powerline*) above the landmark (*yard*) that is stressed, but the fact that it is positioned from one to the other side, or across the landmark. This is not surprising as long objects such as powerlines or roads tend to be perceived as moving through space. The fact that *preko* can be used in (2)(a), but not in (2) suggests that the two uses may not be as naturally tied together in the same sense as Lakoff thought them to be and that the entire lexical network for *over* may be in need of revision. Again, it is the structure of the Croatian lexical category that causes us to reconsider the lexical, as well as mental representation of *over*.

## Covering

The preposition *over* may denote a covering relationship between a trajector and a landmark. Lakoff's covering schema forms a complex network of senses, some of which are exemplified by the following sentences:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (3)(a) <i>Put a piece of paper <b>over</b> the hole.</i> | <i>Stavi komad papira <b>preko</b> rupe.</i> |
| (3)(b) <i>There was a veil <b>over</b> her face</i>      | <i><b>Preko</b> lica je imala veo.</i>       |
| (3)(c) <i>Police are all <b>over</b> town</i>            | <i><b>Po</b> gradu svuda ima policije.</i>   |
| (3)(d) <i>I walked all <b>over</b> town.</i>             | <i>Šetao sam <b>po</b> cijelom gradu</i>     |

The covering image-schema is linked to the abstract **above and across** sense in cases where the trajector is located above the landmark covering it completely, from one end to the other, such as in (3)(a).

The Croatian *preko* is also used to denote a typical covering relationship, where the landmark is completely covered by and in close contact with the trajector. This is the case with the prepositional uses of *over* in (3)(a) and (3)(b), where *preko* is used as the Croatian equivalent. However, *preko* cannot be used to denote spatial concepts expressed by the prepositional uses of *over* in (3)(c) and (3)(d). Instead, the preposition *po* is used<sup>8</sup>. The

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that *po* is a highly polysemous preposition with meaning extensions in various domains. Whereas *over* and *preko* are intuitively instantly related to each other when abstracted from any linguistic context, it is very difficult to find a prototypical translation equivalent of *po*. Sentences (3)(d) and (3)(d) are examples of its only spatial sense.





relation is not that of complete, but partial covering. The trajector is either made up of many individual entities as in (3)(c), or it is moving along a path which seemingly covers the landmark as in (3)(d). Although there is a clear difference underlying the two covering concepts expressed by *over*, English makes use of their conceptual links and incorporates them in one lexical category. Croatian, on the other hand, does not extend the covering sense of *preko* to the figurative uses such as those in (3)(c) and (3)(d).

### Reflexive, excess and repetition schemas

Lakoff's last three network nodes for *over* include the **reflexive**, **excess** and **repetition** schemas. As *over* in these senses is never used as a preposition, each of them will only be discussed very briefly. Consider the following English sentences, together with their Croatian counterparts.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (4)(a) <i>The fence fell <b>over</b>.</i>             | <i>Ograda se <b>prevrnula</b>.</i>          |
| (4)(b) <i>The bathtub <b>overflowed</b>.</i>          | <i>Kada se <b>prelila</b>.</i>              |
| (4)(c) <i>She had to do it all <b>over</b> again.</i> | <i>Morala je sve učiniti <b>ponovno</b></i> |

In (4)(a) the spatial relationship is similar to that expressed by the **above and across** sense, the main characteristic being the equivalence of the trajector and the landmark. In other words, the trajector/landmark (*fence*) is moving above and across itself. The spatial relation in question may be expressed by the Croatian prefix *pre-* and an adequate motion verb.

In (4)(b) and in the **excess** sense in general *over* is most frequently used as a prefix, and denotes an excessive quantity of fluid (trajector) flowing over the edge of a container (landmark), forming an arc-shaped path, much like the one in the example *The dog jumped over the fence* in the **above and across** sense. The "overflowing" can be literal (*The bathtub overflowed*) or figurative (*He overreacted*). Croatian prefix *pre-* has also developed a sense that denotes excessive quantity. This sense is not only restricted to the spatial relation denoting literal or figurative motion above and across the rim of a container, but has a much wider application as an adjectival prefix where it denotes the concept of excessive quality (for example, *prevelik* = *too big*).

Sentence (4)(c) is an instance of the **repetition** sense, where the path is understood as an activity, and the landmark as a previous completion of this activity. This is a metaphor, Lakoff claims, that is unique in the conceptual system (1987: 435). The repetition sense is thus more loosely tied to the entire category than the other senses. It is not surprising, therefore, that such a unique metaphor has not been applied as a way of extending the central meaning of the Croatian *preko*, this concept usually being expressed by means of the adverb *ponovno*.



In an alternative lexical network these three senses may be united under the central above and across sense. The reflexive schema may be viewed as designating movement above and across a landmark following an arc-shaped path similar to the one expressed by the sentence *He jumped over the fence*. The same type of path is incorporated in the excess schema, while the repetition sense is in fact a metaphorical extension of the central sense. Similar reasoning guided Taylor in identifying four clusters of spatial meanings of prepositional *over*<sup>9</sup> (Taylor 1995: 109-116):

ABOVE  
COVERING  
CURVED, ARC-SHAPED MOVEMENT  
END-POINT OF PATH,

The **above** and **covering** senses are equivalent to the corresponding schemas in Lakoff's network. The third cluster of senses designates all the dynamic uses from the schemas **above and across**, **reflexive** and **excess**, where the trajector traces an arc-shaped path. The fourth cluster refers to the static sense exemplified by (1)(d) (*Maria lives over the hill*), where *over* designates the location at the end of the path one would have to follow to reach the trajector. The landmark is perceived as an obstacle on this path. The fact that two (or more) alternative networks may be formed for the same word does not mean that one of them is a correct representation of its meaning and the other is not. The clusters of senses are not unrelated. On the contrary, there are conceptual links existing between and within them that form a complex network of interrelated meanings. It is the linguist's job of drawing lines within the network and classifying meaning distinctions into clusters of senses that may be subjective and arbitrary to a certain degree. Until a more rigorous methodology is defined, this kind of procedure is inevitable as well as necessary in the description of the semantic structure of words.

### *Preko*

The Croatian preposition *preko* is used to express three types of spatial relationships, as well as some metaphorical concepts:

above and across  
Najgore mi je prijeći preko zebre.  
Going over the road crossing is the most difficult.  
on the other side of

<sup>9</sup> Another alternative semantic description of *over* is given in Kreitzer 1997.



Živjela je preko rijeke.  
She lived over the river.  
covering  
Preko glave je imala krpu.  
She had a piece of cloth over her head.

## Above and across

An experiment was conducted with the aim of determining which of these senses is central, i.e. cognitively the most salient for Croatian speakers. Seventy-one native speakers were asked to perform two tasks. In the first task, each of them had to write three sentences containing *preko*, assuming that it is the central sense that is cognitively the most salient and would be listed first<sup>10</sup>. In more than 75 percent of all sentences *preko* was used in the spatial domain. Almost half of these involved a dynamic spatial relationship, indicating motion of the trajector above and across the landmark:

skočiti **preko** zida  
*to jump over the wall*

The second task was to order 16 sentences in such a way that the most typical uses of *preko* are given the highest rank, while the least typical uses are attributed the lowest rank. Again it was the dynamic above and across relationship that was identified as the most typical use of *over* by most students. It is this central sense that is called forth in the minds of speakers when *over* is used in an abstract way, removed from any context. Also, it is plausible to claim that it is this sense that motivates other uses, not by a relationship of similarity based on common attributes, but by means of meaning chains created within the network. As the same spatial relationship is reflected in the central concept of the English preposition *over*, we may say that they share the same conceptual core, notwithstanding the subtle differences in the range of application of the **above and across** sense. It is the common meaning core that makes the two prepositions amenable to further comparison.

The central **above and across** cluster incorporates three similar, but distinct senses, featuring a dynamic relationship between trajector and landmark, and distinguished on the basis of landmark properties and the nature of the path crossed by the trajector.

- 1a** *Skočio je preko zida.*  
He jumped **over** the wall.

<sup>10</sup> For a review of psychological experiments relying on this assumption see Taylor (1995: 40-46).



Morao je ići **preko** granice.  
 He had to go **over** the border.  
 met.Razgovarale su **preko** ograde.  
 They talked **over** the fence.

**1b** *Nemoj ići **preko** šume.*  
 Don't go **through** the wood.

The relationship in sense **1a** is dynamic – there is a trajector moving above and across the landmark, which presents an obstacle that the trajector must surmount in order to reach the intended destination of its motion. This sense of *preko* is most frequently the conceptual equivalent of the corresponding sense of *over*. When the landmark is perceived as a flat surface like a field or wood (sense **1b**), *preko* has a similar meaning as the preposition *kroz* (*through*). *Kroz* focuses on the motion inside the landmark, whereas *preko* implies that motion across the landmark is a means of getting to another location. English doesn't allow the use of *over* to express this meaning nuance, and *through* must be used instead. The fact that two different prepositions must be used in English points to a conceptual difference of **1a** and **1b**, and justifies their classification as two separate nodes in the lexical network for *preko*<sup>11</sup>.

Sense **1b** blends into sense **1c**, where the landmark is perceived as a point in space one has to cross on the way to a (traveling) destination.

**1c** *putovati **preko** Splita*  
 travel **via/through** Split  
 met.O njenom dolasku saznao sam **preko** prijatelja.  
 I learned of her arrival **through** a friend.

That concepts **1b** and **1c** are closely related is confirmed by the use of *through* as the English equivalent of *preko* in both senses. This fact also points to the existence of close conceptual links between *over* and *through* within the network of spatial relations as mentally represented by native speakers of English.

## On the other side of

*Preko* may be used in a stative sense where it roughly means **on the other side of**. Thus, there is only an imagined path one would have to trace in order to reach the trajector, located on the other side of the landmark. A metaphorical extension of this sense indicating a quantity or amount higher than the one expressed by the landmark is also possible.

<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that *over* can be used in examples *Don't go over the field*, where the landmark (*field*) is perceived as a surface over, or above which one can move. *Wood*, on the other hand, is perceived as a closed container and only *through* is possible.





- 2 *Živjela je preko rijeke.*  
 She lived **over** the river.  
 met.Zaradio je **preko** 5000 funti.  
 He earned **over** 5000 pounds.

As we have seen above, *over* has an equivalent sense, which Lakoff classifies as a member of the **above and across** cluster. The problem of subjectivity in the selection and classification of senses has already been mentioned. It is our opinion that this meaning of *preko* or *over* has a different cognitive status than the dynamic meaning where the trajector actually moves above and across the landmark. Taylor uses the same reasoning when he separates the two meanings of *over* into two distinct senses (Taylor 1995: 114). In order to provide an objective solution to this problem, further experiments would be required that would involve psychological investigation into the cognitive status of different senses, as well as their mental representation.

## Covering

The third sense of *preko* indicates a **covering** relationship. The covering may be such that the trajector is above and in contact with the landmark so that it covers it completely (3a), it may designate a fabric or a piece of clothing hanging over the sides of an object (3b), or it may designate incomplete covering where the focus is on the fact that the trajector is located across the landmark (3c).

- 3a *Preko oka je nosio povez.*  
 He wore a blindfold **over** his eye.  
 3b *Prebacila je kaput preko stolice.*  
 She hung her coat **over** the chair.  
 3c *Ležao je izvaljen preko kreveta.*  
 He was lying sprawled **across** the bed

An examination of English equivalents of the covering sense of *preko* in 3a-3c reveals that the sense exemplified by 3c is conceptually detached from the first two in that the **across** element is emphasized. It is not only the covering relationship that is important, but the fact that the trajector is extended from one end of the landmark to the other is significant as well. It is again an insight into the conceptual system of a different language that has helped us single out sense 3c as a special case of covering, conceptually linked to the **above and across** sense.



## Concluding remarks

Generally, it is not clear to what extent spatial concepts are universal categories, or language-specific categories. The fact that there are cross-linguistic correspondences is not surprising, as spatial relations are not altogether culturally determined, but inevitably exhibit equal properties across different cultures, which are consequently reflected in language. A contrastive analysis of the English word *over* and the Croatian preposition *preko* has enabled us to reach several conclusions. First, it has demonstrated that there are some lexical items from the domain of spatial relations that may be compared along the same dimensions. In the case of *over* and *preko*, the central meanings are represented by very similar, if not identical image schemas designating a dynamic relationship where the trajector traces a path **above and across** the landmark. They also share the static **covering** sense, while the static **above** schema only appears in *over*. In Croatian, motivating links leading to this sense have not been realized within the semantic structure of *preko*. Rather, the equivalent concept belongs to other lexical categories, namely the prepositions *iznad* and *nad*.

Second, the fact that our network of the senses of *preko* contains a separate representation of the static sense described as **on the other side of** and Lakoff includes this sense in the central **above and across** schema does not mean that there are no correspondences between the two languages in this respect. It has been noted that lexical network analyses are subject to arbitrary and subjective judgments of linguists which may result in different representations of the same lexical item. There are, for example, at least three different cognitive linguistic representations of the meaning of *over* (Lakoff 1987, Taylor 1995, Kreitzer 1997). What is needed within the cognitive semantic paradigm is a more rigorous methodology to constrain and better define lexical network analyses. Also, the help of cognitive psychologists would be indispensable, in terms of getting an insight into the mental representations of senses that should be taken into consideration in corresponding linguistic analyses.

Our search for equivalents of different examples from one cluster of senses has pointed to interesting semantic features of some senses. For example, both *over* and *preko* are generally used to designate a covering relationship. However, when trajector covers the landmark incompletely in such a way that it is spread from one end to the other as in 3c above, the relationship is in Croatian freely expressed by *preko*, whereas in English a different preposition, *across*, must be used. Such cases should prompt linguists to reconsider meaning representations of lexical items. Namely, that senses like 3a, 3b and 3c may belong to different lexical concepts in other languages is due to some differences in image schema properties. Therefore, one should carefully examine whether senses are categorized on the basis of actual semantic structure of the category by means of objective and rigorous methodology, or could it be that subjective judgments have interfered with objective reasoning.



Finally, our analysis has confirmed the assumption that more divergence between *over* and *preko* occurs towards the periphery of each category, particularly in metaphorical extensions. Some uses of *over* are so far removed from the center of the category that their translation equivalents do not reveal any conceptual links with the core meaning of *preko*. There are also cases when translation equivalents are different, but designate related concepts from the spatial domain, such as *above*, *across*, *through* or *iznad*, *po*, *kroz*. The fact that, for example, some uses of *over* are in Croatian expressed with *iznad* or *po* instead of *preko*, shows that the three lexical items are closely related and does not exclude the possibility that some concepts may be expressed using two prepositions, exhibiting only minor nuances in meaning. Ideally, lexical items should not be studied in isolation, simply because they do not exist as such in the minds of language speakers. By ripping a lexical item like *over* from its conceptual environment where it coexists with *above*, *across*, *through* and other related words, we are depriving it of a dimension that is created through the very relationship with these words. Therefore, peripheral meanings of polysemous words should be studied in relation to related concepts from neighboring lexical categories, as they may share with them a number of features.

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## JEZIK PROSTORNIH ODNOSA: KONTRASTIVNA ANALIZA ENGLESKOGA *OVER* I HRVATSKOGA *PREKO*

Ovaj rad temelji se na pretpostavci da se polisemne riječi koje označuju prostorne odnose najbolje opisuju u teorijskom okviru kognitivne semantike pomoću leksičkih mreža međusobno povezanih značenja. Daje se pregled postojećih kognitivno semantičkih studija riječi *over*, te se provodi slična mrežna analiza konceptualno srodnog hrvatskog prijedloga *preko*. Dvije se riječi uspoređuju na temelju slikovno-shematskih prikaza. Neka svojstva konceptualnih odnosa unutar zadane leksičke mreže mogu se rasvijetliti usporedbom srodnih slikovnih shema iz drugog jezika.

