

# Semantic Changes of English Preposition *against*: A Grammaticalization Perspective

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This paper describes semantic changes of English preposition *against* that occurred in the course of its grammaticalization. Based on semantic designations provided in Oxford English Dictionary (2nd ed.; 1991), this paper shows how particular meanings of the word evolved. Four major mechanisms of semantic change are invoked here to explain such semantic changes, i.e., metaphor, generalization, subjectification, and frame-of-focus variation. Metaphorical transfer extends formerly concrete meanings that made reference to physical space onto more abstract meanings such as temporal reference. Generalization changes relatively specific meanings or meanings largely restricted to a particular domain into those that could be used in larger contexts. Subjectification changes meanings formerly associated with description of the external world into those associated with personal emotion and evaluation. Finally, variation of the frame of focus on the source image schema gives rise to various meanings that are in apparent antonymy. This investigation shows that semantic change is a complex process in which multifarious factors and mechanisms interplay.

**Key words:** grammaticalization, *against*, semantic change

## 1. Introduction

English preposition *against* is an example par excellence of grammaticalization in many aspects as it exhibits properties typical of grammaticalization processes.

In particular, it has undergone numerous semantic changes through diverse change mechanisms such as metaphor, generalization, subjectification, and frame-of-focus variation. This paper focuses on characterizing such diachronic semantic changes from a grammaticalization point of view.

## 2. Grammaticalization Scope Revisited

A traditional notion of grammaticalization refers to changes in grammar, where a particular linguistic form changes either from lexical status to grammatical status or from one of less grammaticality into one of increased grammaticality (Kuryłowicz, 1975 [1965]; Hopper & Traugott, 1993, *inter alia*). This kind of traditional notion of grammaticalization presents a serious challenge unto this investigation of semantic change as to whether the semantic changes *per se* fall into the theoretical domain of grammaticalization. It is for this reason that a brief argument as to the research rationale is in order.

Grammaticalization as a phenomenon of grammatical change is a complex procedure involving all levels of grammar from phonetics to discourse. There is a consensus as to the relation between levels of grammar and grammaticalization that as grammaticalization proceeds, the levels where the grammatical form concerned belongs tend to become lower, as e.g., from syntax to morphology (Givón, 1971). With this respect, a grammatical change that does not involve categorial change, (a process often referred to as 'decategorialization' *à la* Hopper 1991), is viewed with scepticism as to whether it is a grammaticalization phenomenon in its own right.

In this regard there are two major points to which we turn our attention. First of all, the notion of 'categories' in grammar is by no means well-delineated. It has been often pointed out that there is considerable fluidity of 'categoriality' both category-internally and across categories (Heine, 1997; Rhee 1998). Therefore, a particular semantic change that does not involve categorial change, as e.g. from the temporal sense of English conjunction *while*, into the adversative/contrastive sense, albeit the change does not involve category change from conjunction, is often discussed in grammaticalization studies.

Secondly, grammatical change phenomena that occur at the earlier stages of the grammaticalization tend to be straight-forwardly decategorialization process, thus qualifying such descriptions as ones relating to grammaticalization. On the other hand, the changes that occur at the later stages tend to be less so. This is due to the inherent nature of the so-called grammatical categories. Since the lexemes at the end of the grammaticality scale are very susceptible to change, due to the fact that

the forms at this stage are largely vacant of meaning and cannot resist contextual forces constantly imposed on them, active and numerous changes overcrowd the category. Since these categories around the extreme of the grammaticality continuum are the locus of active and abundant grammatical changes, exclusion of these changes from the scope of grammaticalization studies will make the framework academically uninteresting.

For these reasons, it is proposed here that we include in grammaticalization any significant changes in grammar, be they semantic, syntactic or otherwise, if only the linguistic forms involved belong to a grammatical category (i.e., any change of a form that is already grammatical), and unless the change does not violate the unidirectionality principle (i.e., unless the change does not proceed from more grammatical to less grammatical categories).

### 3. General Characteristics

As a preliminary for analyzing grammaticalization of *against*, we briefly survey its intracategorical and intercategory status, and its historical sources from which the lexeme was derived.

#### 3.1. Intracategorical Status

Prepositions as a grammatical category are old grams, and therefore, they tend to be located at the far extreme of lexical-grammatical continuum of linguistic forms. However, within the category of prepositions, *against* does not share the same grammaticality status with other members of higher grammaticality, such as *of*, *to*, *in*, *on*, etc. in that it is non-monosyllabic<sup>1)</sup> (i.e., primary prepositions); nor does it with other members of lower grammaticality, such as *because of*, *on top of*, *on account of*, etc. (i.e., complex prepositions; cf. Matsumoto 1998 and Rhee 2002a for 'complex postpositions') in that these are phrasal prepositions while that is not. Therefore, in terms of intracategorical status according to

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1) It has been already observed by Zipf (1935) that most frequently used forms in human language are the shortest in form. The proportional relationship between the phonetic volume and use frequency along with semantic generality led Bybee et al. (1994) to a claim of parallel reduction between form and meaning.



*by*, or their variant forms, respectively, and their encoding of spatiality is self-evident. In this respect *against* is no exception. Its formal construct can be represented as the following:

- (2) on + *gagn/gegn* + es + t  
       'in' 'direct/straight' 'Genitive' 'Parasitic'

As is evident from its form, it was derived from *again*—its historically earlier forms were *a<sub>3</sub>gen* and *ayen*. Therefore, the historical development of *against* is layered as in the following:

- (3) a. on 'in' + *gagn/gegn* 'direct, straight' > *again*  
       b. *again* + es + t > *against*

The historical development of [*again* > *against*] is intriguing in terms of semantic change. This shall be addressed in §4.3.

Another peculiarity associated with *against* is that unlike many prepositions, which are largely derived from locative concepts as indicated above, the source of *against* is not associated with any nominal concepts of location. Instead, its core lexical source is *gagn/gegn*, which encodes manner, i.e. 'direct', 'straight'. With this respect it is noteworthy that the semantics of *against* is largely directional—it retains the meaning of its historical source. This is an instance of persistence (a la Hopper, 1991), which states that grammaticalized forms tend to retain the semantics of their sources even after they acquire considerable degree of grammaticality, and may continuously affect the constructions they occur in by imposing morphosyntactic constraints associated with their former meanings.

According to OED, *again* came to have the genitive ending *-es*, after the kindred *tō-seānes* and *to-yenes* in which the genitive is governed by *tā*. Late in the 14th century, after the *-es* had ceased to be syllabic, the final *-ens/-ains* developed a parasitic *-t* as in *amongs-t*, *betwix-t*, *amids-t*, probably confused with superlatives in *-st*. By the 16th century this became universal in literary English. This shows that linguistic change may not be straight-forward but go through unpredictable solecisms that may be perpetuated through fossilization.

## 4. Semantic Change

Since the beginning of grammaticalization studies many different kinds of change mechanisms have been proposed by grammaticalization scholars. As for mechanisms that operate in syntagm, reanalysis is the most prominent one.<sup>3)</sup> On the other hand, in discussions of grammaticalization phenomena, semantic changes are always at the focal point, because semantic changes reveal cognitive forces that drive language users in dynamic interaction of discourse. However, semantic changes are never easily captured by a single change mechanism. Rather it is a multi-faceted phenomenon where various mechanisms operate either simultaneously or successively. In many cases mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, and a single change may be interpreted as a result of different mechanisms. Proposed mechanisms and their proponents can be summarized as in (4).

- (4) a. metaphor (Matisoff, 1991; Sweetser 1988, 1990; Bybee et al. 1985; Heine et al. 1991a&b)
- b. metonymy (Traugott & König, 1991; Heine et al. 1991a); pragmatic inference; teleological contiguity (Rhee, 1996b)
- c. generalization (Bybee, 1988; Bybee & Pagliuca, 1994)
- d. subjectification (Traugott, 1980, 1982, 1988; Traugott & König, 1991)
- e. frame-of-focus variation (Rhee, 1996b, 2000a)

Now we turn to the description of semantic changes of *against* where individual mechanisms are involved. In subsequent discussions, we shall see instances of semantic change triggered by metaphor, generalization, subjectification and frame-of-focus variation.

### 4.1. Metaphor

Metaphor is evident in the semantic change exhibited by the following senses and examples.

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3) This should be a meaningful and fruitful line of research, which, however, should await a future research.

- (5) *against*: '(obs) drawing towards; near the beginning of; close to'
- a. On a dai, agenes the eue.  
'On a day, against the eve.' (1320. Sir Bevis)
  - b. The white swan Agens his deth be-gynnyth for to syng.  
'The white swan against its death begins to sing.'  
(1385. Chaucer)
  - c. The Sondag ageynst euen ther came a grete multytude of fendes.  
'The Sunday against evening there came a great multitude of fiends.'  
(1483. Caxton. Gold. Leg.)

From the above semantic change, we see that the meaning formerly referring to spatial, physical directionality (as indicated in the previous example (2)) has been extended to, though it became obsolete later,<sup>4)</sup> one referring to temporal proximity or temporal approximation. This can be schematically represented as in (6).

- (6) SOURCE > TARGET  
 spatial > temporal

Heine et al. (1991a&b) argue that there is unidirectionality in metaphorical mappings of tenor and vehicle as the following, and the above change is in consonance with that directionality.

- (7) PERSON > OBJECT > PROCESS > SPACE > TIME > QUALITY

Some researches (e.g. Hopper & Traugott, 1993) persuasively argued that cases where SPACE>TIME metaphor is the apparent change mechanism, as, for instance, in the case of English *be going to*, can be more amenably explained as ones involving pragmatic inferences triggered by the components of the source construction, such as, again e.g. English *be going to*, 'present' in *be*, 'progressive' in *be -ing*, 'purpose' in *to*, collaborate for emergence of imminent-futurity marking function. This kind of allegedly epiphenomenal metaphor is so widely recognized that this type of metaphor even acquired a special designation as 'post hoc metaphor.'

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4) The latest example cited in OED dates from 1634.

which refers to the kind of metaphor that is suspected to have operated in a certain change, which, however, upon scrutiny is only a description at the resultant state, rather than a dynamic force in the said change, thus disqualifying metaphor as the mechanism of change.

It is noteworthy, however, that in the case of *against*, there is not much room for an analysis otherwise.<sup>5)</sup> It may be best considered a case of semantic change by metaphor.

## 4.2. Generalization

Generalization as a change mechanism is widely subscribed to by the grammaticalization scholars. This seems to be attributable to the fact that it is beyond doubt that semantic generality is closely related with grammaticalization. For instance, it is widely accepted that semantically complex lexemes cannot be grammaticalized unless they are semantically bleached, which will warrant wider contexts of use, which, in turn, will expose the lexemes to more chances of change (Rhee, 2000b&c).

### 4.2.1. Tangibility and Directionality

In the semantic changes of *against*, generalization seems to have operated along two axes—tangibility and directionality. For example, generalization is thought to have triggered the following semantic change.

- (8) *against*: '(obs) exposed to light, cold, etc.; (more generally) towards the front of, near, adjoining'
- a. Their hyghe saylles. alle spred abroad ayenst the wyndes.  
'Their high sails, all spread abroad against the winds.'  
(1490. Caxton, Eneydos)
  - b. As a forme of waxe Resolueth from his figure 'gainst the fire.  
'As a form of wax resolves from its figure against the fire.'  
(1595. Shaks.)

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5) One possibility is the operation of context-induced reinterpretation (Heine et al. 1991a&b), where reinterpretation, which ultimately leads to semantic change, is triggered by the existence of dual-interpretation possibility. However, due to absence of a body of data with enriched contexts, this line of analysis is not pursued here.



- c. The most damnable vice, and most against injustice.. is  
Ingratitude.  
'The most damnable vice, and most against injustice.. is  
Ingratitude.'  
(1531. Elyot, Governour)
- d. I met him against the pond. (PDE, dial.)

The usage in (8a) and (8b) above shows that the semantic component 'tangible object' involved in its source meaning has been extended to less tangible objects such as wind (as in (8a)), fire (as in (8b)), light, cold, etc., which may be viewed as conditions rather than objects. The usage in (8c) and (8d) shows that the semantic component 'opposition' in its source meaning has been extended to 'association/vicinity', which does not presuppose direction that was present in 'opposition'. Therefore, *against* in (8c) encodes union, and in (8d) it encodes strict spatial proximity. The generalizing direction may be best represented in the following schema.

(9) Originally From	Generalized Into
TANGIBLE ENTITIES	> LESS TANGIBLE ENTITIES
OPPOSITION	> VICINITY/ASSOCIATION

Some scholars, including a leading proponent of generalization such as Bybee et al. (1994), despite their excellent exposition of semantic generalization of English *can*, showed reluctance in claiming generalization as a change mechanism, because it is possible that semantic generalization is a 'result' rather than a 'mechanism'. In this respect, Rhee (1996a), in analyzing grammaticalization of Korean displacement verbs, showed that semantic generalization, in the case involved, is in fact brought about by metaphor. In exploring the relation between metaphor and generalization, the crucial issue here is whether there are cases where meanings are generalized while semantic domain change is not involved. Rhee (2002b&c) presents cases of grammaticalization of English prepositions, where schematic transfers from source meanings are involved, thus resulting in semantic generalization, where such transfers, however, do not involve domain changes, which is tantamount to non-metaphorical transfer. These cases are examples of semantic generalization that do not involve metaphorical extension.

#### 4.2.2. Generalization and Metonymy

Metonymy has been often invoked to explain semantic changes. Even though we opt for omission of metonymy as a subject of separate discussion, it is worth mentioning that metonymy is closely related to generalization, because metonymy crucially relies on contiguity, albeit of various kinds, whereas generalization typically involves gradual extension in a single dimension or across different dimensions. When the meanings are generalized in a single dimension the extension is made possible by its contiguity. For this reason, the two mechanisms are closely related.<sup>6)</sup>

#### 4.3. Subjectification

Since the now-classic Traugott's (1982) exposition on semantic-pragmatic tendencies, which dealt with speaker involvement in semantic change, the notion of subjectification has been widely resorted to for explaining grammaticalization phenomena. Traugott (1982, 1988) and Traugott & König (1991) further claimed that the subjectification process is unidirectional, a claim later challenged by Herring (1991), who presented a case that suggests that subjectification may be bi-directional. It does not seem to be plausible to test the directionality of subjectification with the grammaticalization of *against* in the absence of well-documented diachronic corpus that enables us to establish quantitatively the order of emergence of senses. However, the semantic designations of *against* in OED clearly show instances that can be best analyzed as involving subjectification.

There seem to be a number of elements that change meanings into more subjective meanings. Among them are anthropocentricity and egocentricity, to a discussion of which now we turn.

##### 4.3.1. Anthropocentricity

Anthropocentricity is a tendency to interpret states of affairs with respect to human-centeredness. When this is used in semantic changes, it changes meanings into those having direct relevance to humans. Let us consider the following examples.

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6) If we accept that no semantic changes are cataclysmic but gradual, and if we use the notion 'metonymy' with a broad definition to include physical and conceptual contiguities, metonymy can be claimed to have operated in nearly all semantic changes.

- (10) *against*: '(of time) drawing towards; near the beginning of; (preparation) in view of; in preparation for; in time for'
- a. þat God wil Ageins domesdai.  
'that God will against doomsday.' (1350. St. Jerome's)
  - b. When the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, he had built, against her arrival, a palace. (1875. Emerson)
  - c. He has a few pounds put by against a 'rainy day.' (Mod.)

As shown in the examples above, *against* encodes more than temporal proximity or approximation—it has the meaning of 'in preparation'. Semantically *against* is a dyadic preposition in the sense that the image schema of semantics of *against* involves two objects—one mover (akin to 'trajector') the other goal (akin to 'landmark'). These objects may be either entities or events.<sup>7)</sup> In the examples above, two events are presented in 'against'-relations. For example, (10a) involves God's action and doomsday; (10b) Solomon's building a palace and Sheba's arrival; and (10c) possession of money and times of financial hardship. They are typically in foreground and background relations. However, these simple juxtapositions of events are re-interpreted as one preparatory event for the other. This is immediately reminiscent of semantic change that occurred with the development of English *while*, where mere temporal juxtaposition of two events (with the sense of 'at the time that') brought forth the contemporary 'contrast' meaning.

A slightly different kind of subjectification is attested in the following meanings and uses of *against*.

- (11) *against*: '(from *again*) directly opposite; towards; in regards to; in reception of; in welcome of; toward & into contact with; into direct collision with; in the opposite direction to the course of anything; counter to (implying adverse motion or effect); opposed in tendency or character; contrary to; not in confirmity with; towards with hostile intent; (generally) in hostility; competing with; in resistance to; in defence or protection from; of mutual

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7) As part of hard-wired metaphorical conceptualizations in humans, we understand experiences and events as discrete entities or substances. This ontological metaphor forms such a firm basis of human understanding, even its metaphorical nature escapes our notice (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

opposition; in exchange for; instead of; in the opposite scale; on the other side; as a counter-balance to'

- a. The men sitte upon the bench next the wall and the women  
againste them on the other side of the table.  
'The men sit upon the bench next to the wall and the women  
against them on the other side of the table.' (1551. Robinson)
- b. Opene þe ȝatis aȝens me!  
'Open the gates against me!' (1430. Hymns to Virg.)
- c. Remedies aȝenst sikenesse.  
'Remedies against sickness.' (1477. Earl Rivers)
- d. That aȝynste his great loue we be not founde vnkynde.  
'That against his great love we be not found unkind.'  
(1534. More's On the Passion)
- e. A little pain will weigh against a great deal of pleasure. (1722.  
Wollaston)

In the examples above, *against* in (11a) simply indicates a position 'directly opposite' to the referenced entity (i.e. 'the men'). Example (11b) has the 'in welcome of' sense. Examples (11c), (11d), and (11e) has 'counter/contrary/hostility' sense.

As is evident already, the examples above are interesting in that the semantics of *against* diverges in extremes to make them in antonymous relations as in 'in welcome of' and 'in hostility'. However, these two opposing meanings are in fact derivatives of a similar subjectification process. First of all, what we see from the semantic designation above is that from 'again' that straightforwardly referring to repetition, a new meaning of 'towards', primarily encoding direction, was evolved. There seem to have been the seed of directional sense from the beginning of the preposition.<sup>8)</sup>

Secondly, repetition is construed, through subjectification, as opposition. This seems to have to do with the human conception of dynamics of entropy (cf. Rhee, 1996b in discussions of *tulta* 'enter' and *nata* 'exit'). Conceptually, dynamic repetition is akin to static opposition. Traugott (1985), in her discussion of semantic change that occurred to *again*, noted

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8) However, since repetition sense with *again* predates (i.e. OE period) the direction sense of *against* (i.e. ME) here, it seems reasonable to posit the directionality of [repetition > direction].

that [opposition > iteration] is a common cognitive process, indicating that [directionality > opposition > association] change is frequently attested cross-linguistically. These concepts seem to be cognitively contiguous and do not seem to preclude any particular direction among them. In this case of *against*, we can posit that repetition was reinterpreted as opposition.<sup>9)</sup>

From the direction sense we see emergence of meaning further subjectified: from direction to receptiveness. This is an apparent contradiction to the [direction > opposition] sense derivation. This may be simply attributable to the non-monodimensionality of human conceptualization. However, subjectified reinterpretation of direction into reception is widespread. An excellent exemplar is the use of dative (as English *to*) as a marker of a direction or goal as well as a marker of a recipient. This has to do with human conception based on metonymic conceptual contiguity that if something moves toward a goal, the arrival at the goal is assumed to have been attained in absence of information to the contrary. In this case the goal can be equated with the recipient. Therefore, it is a well-known fact that the following two sentences in English are propositionally equivalent, albeit minor differences of some delicate shade of meaning in (12b) and (12b') have been the subject of some research.<sup>10)</sup>

- (12) a. I gave Jane a book.  
       a'. I gave a book to Jane.  
       b. I sent Jane a book.  
       b'. I sent a book to Jane.

Finally, there is another kind of subjectification—one from opposition to countering. Opposition and countering are so close that the two concepts are often inseparable. However, a major difference between the two is that opposition can be static, i.e. opposition can be purely locational as we can see, for example, from spatial distribution of two objects on the 'opposite' side of the street from each other. Therefore, the concept of countering is a result of addition of the concept 'dynamic force' to

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9) Cf. however, Traugott (1985) for a claim of [opposition > iteration (repetition)] directionality.

10) For instance, it has been noted by some that (12b) assumes receipt of the book, while (12b') does not.

'opposition'. From this opposition sense various meanings branch out, such as adversity, hostility, contradiction, and counter-balance, all of which can be construed as instances of semantic subjectification. It seems that there was an interaction of two related concepts from *against*, i.e. direction and opposition in creation of 'countering'. It is a natural consequence because humans perceive a movement toward an object as involving a force toward the object and a countering force from the object, thus creating certain clash between two countering forces.

The foregoing discussion of subjectification can be summarized as in the following.

(13) Source	Subjectified Into
REPETITION	OPPOSITION/DIRECTION
DIRECTION	RECEPTIVITY
OPPOSITION	COUNTERING

#### 4.3.2. Egocentricity

Egocentricity refers to the human tendency to view things or interpret states of affairs with speaker-centeredness. When this is used in semantic changes it changes meanings into those having direct relevance to the speaker. Let us consider the following example.

- (14) against: 'in optical contact with something behind'
- a. Far visible Against the clear blue sky. (1805. Southey)
  - b. The pictures stand out better against the dark wall. (1884. Mod.)

As is evident in the examples above, the alignment of objects in the physical world is rearranged in accordance with human visual field, especially, that of the speaker. In other words, opposing events in the physical world are projected to the relationship of the speaker's visual field with the referenced objects in the background. In this case the 'againstness' of one object with respect to the other is very subjective, because the physical alignment of two objects in the real world may be in any form; while with this subjectified meaning, the two objects are aligned along the speaker's visual trajectory. It is interesting to note that the static relation of the two objects now acquires additional sense of dynamicity (i.e. directionality) through the application of the speaker's projected vision. In addition to the mere directionality sense, this

'background' sense is richer, because the former can be conceptualized as linear, while the latter is three-dimensional. This subjectification pattern can be summarized as follows:

(15) Source	Subjectified Into
STATIC OPPOSITION	ALIGNMENT ALONG HUMAN VISUAL FIELD

#### 4.3.3. Subjectivity & Metonymy

In the previous discussion of semantic generalization, there was a mention of its relation with metonymy as a semantic change mechanism. As a matter of fact, metonymy is closely associated with subjectification as well. Subjectification is driven by language users in the course of its active search for meaningfulness of an event to the self. The meaningfulness is usually attained by finding links between the event and the self. These links may have cognitive or experiential basis, and the links between the event and the self provide contiguity, which is traced by the human cognition. For this reason, metonymy seems to be prevalent in grammaticalization. In this regard, we may pay our attention to the claim by Heine et al. (1991a&b *inter alia*), well captured in their Metonymic-Metaphorical model, that grammaticalization has two dimensions and that its macrostructure is metaphorical, while its microstructure is metonymic. If grammaticalization phenomena are sliced in small pieces, the change seems always minimal and always metonymic.

#### 4.4. Frame-of-Focus Variation

Semantic changes are largely schematic. For this reason semantic changes usually involve image or event schemas. When schemas are extended or transferred, details of source images or events are generally ignored and only the schematic structures are preserved.

Lakoff (1987) persuasively presented an analysis of *through*, *around*, *across*, *down*, *past*, *by*, etc. in English which reflect the different focus on part(s) of image schema, such as 'path' and 'end of path', and named this phenomenon as image schema transfer.

Rhee (1996b; 2000a; 2002a) shows cases of antonymous semantic change which seems to have resulted from variations of frame of focus on source schemas. For example, English *out of* means association in certain cases

as in (16a) and (16b), whereas in other cases it means separation as in (16c), (16d), and (16e).

- (16) a. It was out of my intention.  
       : with intention; intentionally  
       b. I asked out of curiosity.  
       : with curiosity  
       c. His behavior was out of decorum.  
       : without decorum; rudely  
       d. Fish cannot live out of water.  
       : without water; outside the water  
       e. We are out of milk.  
       : without milk

(Rhee, 1996a, p. 64)

This kind of antonymous contrast is produced by changing the frame of focus on the source schema. If the focus frame is telescopic, i.e. if the schema is viewed from afar, the two participating objects (trajector and landmark) are viewed as being together, thus bringing forth 'association' sense, as in (16a) and (16b); whereas, if the focus frame is microscopic, i.e. if the schema is viewed closely, the gap between the two participating objects becomes prominent, thus bringing forth 'separation' sense, as in (16c), (16d) and (16e).

Likewise in the case of *against*, certain senses are mutually antonymous, and this kind of sense generation is hard to explain unless we evoke the concept 'frame-of-focus variation'. Let us look at the following list of meanings of *against*.

- (17) *against*: 'directly opposite; towards; near; adjoining'

The senses listed above seem to have been generated in the course of utilizing image schema with variable focus frames as follows<sup>11</sup>:

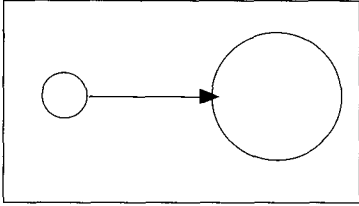
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11) As shall be obvious in the following discussion, the smaller circle in the diagram is the trajector and the larger circle is the landmark. The square with solid lines indicates a conceptual package that represents a conceptualized event or state; whereas the square with dotted lines indicates the frame of focus that can be superimposed on the schema. The arrow indicates an actual or imagined flow of dynamics, or simply an orientation assumed by the trajector or the landmark.

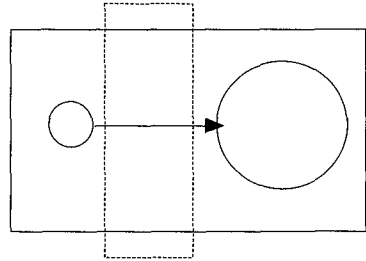


(18)

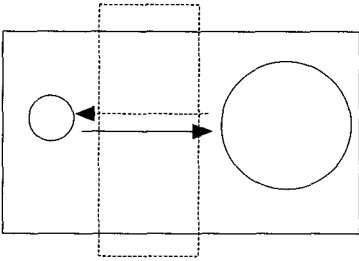
a. Focus-free 'against' schema



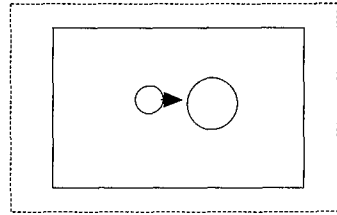
b. Direction focus ('towards')



c. Force-Dynamics focus ('opposite')



d. Telescopic focus ('near, adjoining')



In the above, (18a) is a schema that represents the image of the preposition *against*, free from any focus frames. It includes two participants—one as a reference or background, thus resembling the landmark, the other as a foregrounded potential mover, thus the trajector, and it crucially involves orientation, i.e. the trajector's spatial orientation with reference to the background.

In (18b) the orientation comes into focus, and therefore, the relative physical alignment becomes highlighted. From this microscopic focus frame the 'towards' sense is generated.

Schema (18c) resembles (18b), and in fact, the two utilize the same focus frame—the microscopic frame. The only difference is that (18c) contains an additional element participating in the schema—a countering force from the background in response to the imagined flow of force from the trajector. This, as discussed previously, is a product of a modification of language users through subjectification based on their construal of the physical world.

Schema (18d) is different from others in that the entire schema is viewed through a telescopic frame. Seen from afar, the entire schema is

reduced into a small dimension, thus rendering itself into one where the trajector and the landmark are seen to be in association. From this schema the 'near, adjoining' senses emerge.

## 5. Conclusion

We have seen how various meanings of *against* evolved through various mechanisms of semantic change in the course of grammaticalization of *against*. We also saw that various mechanisms of semantic changes, such as metaphor, generalization, subjectification and frame-of-focus variation operated in the course of semantic changes of *against*.

For a fuller understanding of the grammaticalization phenomena displayed by *against*, we should have looked at other crucial aspects of grammaticalization, such as morphosyntactic changes, and paradigmatic pressure from other prepositions or adverbials, which, however, should constitute a separate research.

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