Foundations of experience I: space

1 Spatial schemas

In view of the spatio-geometric description developed for the *across* schema, in example (4) in Chapter 3, provide a similar schema for *over*, based on (1), below:

(1) The picture is over the mantelpiece.

2 Over versus above

a. In the light of the following acceptability judgements, how would your schema in (1), above, need to be adapted:

(1) ??There are birds somewhere over us. (Recall that a question mark at the beginning of a sentence denotes questionable grammaticality.)
(2) There are birds somewhere above us.

b. Now, based on this, try to identify the difference(s) between the schemas for *over* versus *above*. Can you come up with other linguistic evidence to support your hypothesis?

3 toward(s)

Consider the *toward(s)* schema as exemplified in a spatial scene encoded by the following sentence:

(1) The boy ran towards the tree.

a. Identify the components as exemplified in the scene involving this schema.
b. Identify the relevant properties of the components.
c. Identify the relevant relations holding between the components.

4 Spatial frames of reference

a. Based on the discussion of spatial frames of reference (s-FoRs) in Chapter 3, consider the following English sentences:

(1) The hills are east of the trees.
(2) The hills are on the lake side of the trees.
(3) The hills are left of the trees.
(4) The hills are behind the trees.

With the aid of diagrams, explain what reference frames are involved in these examples, and how the various elements of the reference frames serve to locate the figure.

b. Now consider the interpretations of the following, with the aid of diagrams:

(5) The dog is to the left of the tree.
(6) The dog is on the tree’s left.

How would you account for the different interpretations?

5 Talmy’s taxonomy of s-FoRs

Classify the following examples based on the taxonomy of s-FoRs provided in section 3.3.1. Give your reasoning for each, and provide as much detail as possible.

(1) St Paul’s Cathedral is to the north of the River Thames.
(2) St Paul’s Cathedral is left of the Thames.
(3) St Paul’s Cathedral is on the Bank of England side of the Thames.
(4) St Paul’s Cathedral is in the City of London square mile.
(5) St Paul’s Cathedral is near the London Monument.