Foundations of experience II: time

1 Conceptual metaphor theory approaches to time

Based on the discussion of conceptual metaphor analyses of time in Chapter 4, consider the following linguistic examples. First, provide an analysis of each of these in terms of:

a. the Lakoff and Johnson approach, and then
b. in terms of Moore’s revised approach.

c. What are the key differences in these two approaches, in terms of the nature of the conceptual metaphors that each perspective suggests underlie these examples?

(1) Time passed them by.
(2) February zoomed by this year.
(3) We’ve got through the most difficult part of the project.
(4) They have a lot of important decisions coming up.
(5) The general meeting came after we made the decision to liquidate all assets.
(6) The top premiership clubs have three games in the space of five days.
(7) Tomorrow’s game is situated ahead of three even bigger end of season games.

2 A problematic case

a. Paraphrase the meaning of the following example, in language that has a non-spatial grounding (hint: don’t use words relating to motion through space, such as gone, or positions in space).

b. In what way is this example problematic for conceptual metaphor theory?
c. How might you account for it while preserving a conceptual metaphor account?

(1) Christmas has disappeared over the horizon.

3 Temporal frames of reference

Consider the following linguistic examples in the light of the taxonomy of temporal frames of reference (t-FoRs) developed by Evans, as presented in section 2.3.2.

a. Identify which t-FoR underpins each example, according to that taxonomy.
b. Explain the reasons for your decision, in each case.

(1) Summer sped by this year.
(2) We have three exams in five days.
(3) It’s approaching midnight.
(4) The extraordinary meeting followed the closure of the company.

4 Lexical concepts in English and Wolof

Wolof is a Niger-Congo language spoken in West Africa. It has a number of words that relate to some of the lexical concepts for time found in English. For instance, *dirr* corresponds to the English duration concept lexicalised by time. In the following examples (drawn from Moore 2000), consider the Wolof word *jot* (‘time’). The examples below suggest that *jot* is comparable to the English concept of commodity, in which time is conceptualised as a resource that can be possessed, bought or wasted (e.g. *I have all the time in the world*).

(1) Dama ñàkk jot rekk
time

SFOC.1 lack time only

‘It’s just that I don’t have time!’

(2) Q: Am nga jot?
have PERF.2 time

‘Do you have (any) time?’

A: Fi ma tollu dama ñàkk jot
where 1.SUBJ be.at.a.point.equivalent.to SFOC.1 lack time

‘At this point I don’t have (any) time.’

(3) Su ŋu am-ee jot ŋu saafal la
When we have-ANT time we roast BEN 2.OBJ

‘When we have time we will roast [peanuts] for you.’
However, unlike the English concept commodity, as lexicalised by *time*, *jot* cannot be transferred to another person (e.g. *Can you give/spare me some time?*), nor can it be made, wasted or spent (e.g. *We’ve made/wasted/spent some time for/on each other*).

a. What does this imply regarding the similarities and differences between the English commodity concept associated with *time*, and the lexical concept for commodity encoded in Wolof by the word *jot*?

b. What might this suggest about how Wolof and English speakers conceptualise time as a resource or commodity?

c. In view of this, is it appropriate to label the meaning associated with *jot* commodity, or can you think of another more appropriate term?