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Grammaticalization of *be*-derivative Prepositions in English*

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Rhee, Seongha. 2002. Grammaticalization of *be*-derivative Prepositions in English. *Discourse and Cognition* 9.2, 147-167. This paper describes semantic changes of some of English prepositions that were historically evolved from *be*-derivation. Based on semantic designations provided in Oxford English Dictionary (2nd ed.; 1991), this paper shows intra- and inter-categorical status of these prepositions and evolution of particular meanings. Five major mechanisms are invoked here to explain such semantic changes, i.e. metaphor, metonymy, 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. Metonymic transfer extends the meanings based on conceptual contiguity of various kinds. 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 by way of anthropocentricity and egocentricity. Finally, variation of the frame of focus on the source image schema gives rise to various meanings that may look irrelevant or are in apparent antonymy. This investigation shows that semantic change is a complex process in which multifarious factors and mechanisms interplay. (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies)

Key words: grammaticalization, *be*-derivative preposition, mechanism, semantic change

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1. Introduction

This paper describes semantic changes that occurred to a group of prepositions, i.e. those that evolved from be-derivation, and attempts to explain such semantic changes by means of five major mechanisms. Since be-derivation was a rather productive process in the history of English, there have been many prepositions that were created through the process as shown in (1). This paper, however, limits to a subset of such prepositions based on the degree of their synchronic use. These prepositions are listed in (2).

- (1) bebove, because of, bedown, beeast, before, begrey, behind, behither, below, beneath, benorth, beside, besides, besouth, bespite, bestride, bethrough, between, betwixen, bewest, beyond, beyonds, bihalve, bimong, bin, bitweies, bitwih, bitwihen, bitwixt, bout, bove, but, by.
- (2) because of, before, behind, below, beneath, beside(s), between, beyond.

Despite the shared characteristic in their morphological makeup, be-derived prepositions in English do not form a homogeneous category. It is partly due to the fact that generally prepositions are old grams, and have undergone numerous changes individually at different speed. Consequently, the development into prepositions is intricately affected by historical morphosyntactic changes.

However, there are certain characteristics that are shared by these prepositions, or by many adpositions in general across languages, that many of them are based on concrete nouns or nominal concepts; and that very often they are cross-categorically used as adverbs (see §2.2 for more discussion).

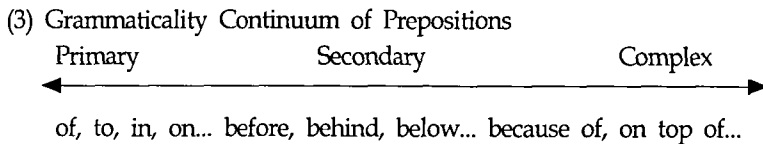
Since the scope of grammaticalization research encompasses potentially all levels of grammar, grammaticalization of prepositions may be looked at from many different perspectives. Our immediate concern, however, is that they have undergone numerous semantic changes through diverse change mechanisms. This paper focuses on characterizing such diachronic semantic changes from a grammaticalization point of view.

2. General Characteristics

As a preliminary for analyzing grammaticalization of *be*-derivative prepositions, we briefly survey their intracategorical and intercategory status, use frequency, and their historical sources.

2.1 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, *be*-derivative prepositions do not share the same grammaticality status with other members of higher grammaticality, such as *of*, *to*, *in*, *on*, etc. in that it is non-monosyllabic¹⁾ (i.e. primary prepositions); nor do they, except for *because of*, with other members of lower grammaticality, such as *on top of*, *on account of*, *on behalf of*, etc. (i.e. complex prepositions; cf. Matsumoto 1998 and Rhee 2002a,b for 'complex postpositions') in that these are phrasal prepositions while the *be*-derivatives are not. Therefore, in terms of intracategorical status according to the formal criteria, the locus of grammaticality of the *be*-derivative prepositions is around the middle of the continuum among prepositions. For this reason, prepositions that share these characteristics are aptly termed as secondary prepositions (cf. Lehmann 1995 [1982]). This is schematically presented as follows.



2.2 Intercategorical Status

It has been noted that prepositions show, albeit at varying degrees, a

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.

tendency to be used cross-categorially (Rhee 2002a&b). In particular, they are often used as adverbs, or less frequently as nouns or some other categories. This characteristic is shared by members of the *be*-derivative prepositions. Their cross-categorial usage is as shown below.

(4) contemporary cross-categorial usage (*a la* OED)

- a. because of: prep.
- b. before: prep. adv. conj.
- c. behind: prep. adv. n.
- d. below: prep. adv.
- e. beneath: prep. adv.
- f. beside(s): prep. adv.
- g. between: prep. adv.
- h. beyond: prep. adv. n.

The *be*-derivative prepositions also show varying degrees of use frequency across categories, a phenomenon well-representing the intercategory variability.

(5) use frequency (*a la* Johansson & Hofland 1989)²⁾

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| a. because of: | prep. (142) | | | (cf. <i>because</i> conj. 635) |
| b. before: | prep. (488) | adv. (177) | conj. (396) | |
| c. behind: | prep. (249) | adv. (43) | | n. (0) |
| d. below: | prep. (99) | adv. (51) | | |
| e. beneath: | prep. (54) | adv. (6) | | |
| f. beside: | prep. (90) | adv. (0) | | |
| besides: | prep. (21) | adv. (21) | | |
| g. between: | prep. (853) | adv. (8) | | |
| h. beyond: | prep. (143) | adv. (7) | | n. (1) |

In the above frequency table, there are several prepositions that draw our attention. The first is that the preposition *because of* occurs less frequently than the conjunction *because*. This may have to do with their morphosyntax

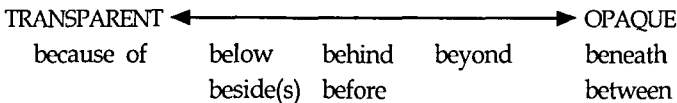
2) This frequency count is based on the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen (LOB) Corpus, a million-word collection of present-day British English texts (Johansson & Hofland 1989.1).

in that *because* requires an NP as its argument, while *because* requires a clause. However, from a diachronic point of view, *because* shows more phonological attrition (or ‘erosion’; cf. Lehmann 1995[1982]). This indicates that the syntagmatic string of [be-cause-of] has gone through, albeit not completely, the prepositional stage, and advanced into the conjunctive stage to a considerable degree.³⁾ The second case is that *before* has diverse uses in three different categories, representing its robust use status in each of them. The heterosemous⁴⁾ pair *beside* and *besides* shows that *beside* is entirely used as a preposition, while *besides* has balanced uses as a preposition or as an adverb.

2.3 Historical Source and Formal Transparency

As has been well presented in the localist axiom that most grammatical concepts are inherently spatial, most prepositions—which encapsulate highly grammatical concepts—are derived from spatial concepts (Rhee 2002b&c). This is well manifested in the fact that *be*-derivatives were derived from a combination of *be*- or its variant forms that were historically *by*. However, the *be*-derivatives exhibit varying degrees of morphological transparency as shown in (6).

(6) relative morphological transparency⁵⁾



3) This statement may imply linearity of change. However, the relative degrees of grammaticality of preposition and conjunction cannot be established.

4) Heterosemy, a la Lichtenberk (1991:476), refers “to cases (within a single language) where two or more meanings or functions that are historically related, in the sense of deriving from the same ultimate source, are borne by reflexes of the common source element that belong in different morphosyntactic categories.” Since *beside* and *besides* have shared syntactic category of preposition, they are only partly heterosemous.

5) Since transparency crucially depends on individual ‘perception’ this transparency scale may vary to certain extent. However, the lexical autonomy and use frequency of the combined elements relatively clearly suggest a cline of: low/side - hind/fore - yond - neath/tween.

3. Semantic Change

As was pointed out in the preceding discussion, the be-derivative prepositions are largely locative prepositions due to their original constructs (cf. Persistence; Hopper & Traugott 1993). They underwent various semantic changes and became highly polysemous since previously acquired senses have not yet disappeared even after new senses are acquired. Therefore, these prepositions are highly polysemous. We will turn to a brief review of general mechanisms of semantic change and specific mechanisms involved in the grammaticalization be-derivatives.

3.1 General Mechanisms

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.⁶⁾ On the other hand, in discussions of grammaticalization phenomena, semantic changes are always at the focal point, because they 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 (7).

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

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

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

3.2 Mechanisms in *Be*-Derivatives

3.2.1 Metaphor

Metaphor has been defined in many ways but most definitions share certain common concepts such as 'understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:5), or 'transfer from basic to more abstract' (Claudi & Heine 1986).

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

- (8) before: (a) (of motion in space) ahead of; (b) (of time) anterior to; (c) (of rank) superior to
- a. Forsothe the Lord ꝛede bifore hem to schewe the weie. (1388.
Wyclif)
- b. Se ꝑe to cummene is æfter me wæs geworden beforan me. (1000.
Ags. Gosp.)
- c. He is before his competitors both in right and power. (1755.
Johnson)

From the above examples we can see that the meaning formerly referring to space has been extended to temporal domain, and further to the quality domain. This can be schematically represented as in (9).

- | | | | |
|-----|--------|----|---------|
| (9) | SOURCE | >> | TARGET |
| | space | | time |
| | time | | quality |

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.

(10) PERSON > OBJECT > PROCESS > SPACE > TIME > QUALITY

Other be-derivatives also show semantic change triggered by metaphorization. Some of such sense examples and the domain change patterns in metaphorization are presented in (11).

(11)⁷⁾

Preposition	Senses	Domain Transfer
behind	(a) in a place left by; (b) in a condition or state left by; (c) in time left by	space > time space > state
below	(a) at a less elevation than; (b) under the influence of; (c) (of time) later than; (d) inferior to.	physical height > degree of influence space > time space > quality
beneath	(a) in a position down from or lower than; (b) under the influence of; (c) unworthy of	vertical space > degree of influence space > quality
beside	(a) out of; (b) out of a mental state or condition	physical > mental
between	(a) (of position) in the direct line which joins two points; (b) (of time) in the interval following one event and preceding another	space > time
beyond	(a) (of motion) to the farther side of; (b) (of figurative motion or state); (c) (of time) later than	physical > mental space > time

3.2.2 Metonymy

A survey of senses associated with the be-derivatives turns out many instances of metonymic transfer. Metonymic transfer, by definition, is a change essentially triggered by the contiguity relationship between two entities or events, and therefore, does not involve changes of ontological

7) The domain changes with labels 'physical height' to 'degree of influence' with below, and 'vertical space' to 'degree of influence' with beneath, can be more broadly described as [space > quality] in both cases.

domains. The following examples are cases of such metonymic transfer.

- (12) *between*: (a) (of simple position) in the direct line which joins two points; (b) (of intervening space) of the relation of continuous space or distance
- a. The place where his tent was at ye first, *betwene* Bethel and Ay. (1535. Coverdale)
- b. The vast distance *between* heaven and hell. (1858. Sears)
- (13) *below*: (a) lower than; (b) underneath
- a. He never counted him a man Would strike *below* the knee. (1805. Scott)
- b. From all that dwell *below* the skies. (1719. Watts)

Examples (12) and (13) involve semantic extension from a 'point' to an 'area'. This [locus > area] extension is based on spatial contiguity, a locus being a part of an area. Similarly, *beyond* also shows such extension as shown in (14).

- (14) *beyond*: (a) (of position in space) on the farther side of; (b) (of motion) to the farther side of
- a. *Beiundane* Iordane on Moab lande. (1000. Ælfric)
- b. Drove them... by *yonde* Doram. (1529. Rastell)

The direction of the semantic extension in (14) is [position > motion], which is motivated by teleological conceptual contiguity. I.e., humans tend to prefer rich interpretation of utterances, and a simple position may be conceptually viewed as a starting point of a motion. This is possible due to the human's subjectification, whereby an event or a state is viewed from a larger context of future-relevance.⁸⁾

3.2.3 Generalization

Generalization as a change mechanism is widely subscribed to by the

8) Subjectification and metonymy are closely related. Typically simple juxtapositions of events are re-interpreted as one preparatory event for the other (cf. Rhee 2002c in *against*, and Rhee 2002b in *a*-derivative prepositions).

grammaticalization scholars. This seems to be attributable to the fact that it is beyond doubt that semantic generality is closely related to 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 (cf 'semantic load'; Rhee 2000b&c). Examples in (15) are of *beneath*.

- (15) *beneath*: (a) in a position lower than; (b) directly down from; (c) behind; (d) lower on a slope, in a valley, etc. than; (e) lower in the scale of being, station, rank, excellence, or dignity
- a. He was byneþe his brech igurd faste ynoug. (1305. St. Edm. Conf.)
 - b. Lands that lye beneath another Sun. (1697. Dryden)
 - c. Thou art no Ruffian, who beneath the mask Of social commerce comest to rob their wealth. (1727. Thomson)
 - d. A Quarter of a Mile beneath the Village.. is the fallen Ruines of the Tower of Babel. (1704. Hearne)
 - e. Creatures bineþe men. (1375. Wyclif)

In the above examples of *beneath*, the extension pattern shows gradual generalization as in (16).

- (16) vertically relative position of point
- > vertically relative location of area
 - > horizontally relative location
 - > topographically relative location
 - > relative location along any scalar continuum

Likewise, the semantics of the preposition *between* also shows generalization as shown in the following.

- (17) *between*: (a) in the direct line which joins two points in space; (b) in any line of communication which passes from one point, place, or object, to another; (c) in relation to two immaterial objects figured as lying in space; (d) intermediate to of the relation of a number, quantity, degree, or quality to two others above and below it; (e) in

any objective relation uniting two or more parties and holding them in a certain connection

- a. An oðer alter Abram made bi-twen Betel and Ai. (1250. Gen. & Ex.)
- b. Any station on the Inner Circle Railway between Gower Street and The Temple. (ModE)
- c. Thus between hope and frear, suspicions, angers.. we bangle away our best days. (1621. Burton)
- d. He is now between Forty and Fifty. (1711. Addison)
- e. A coalition was formed between the Royalists and a large body of Presbyterians. (1848. Macaulay)

The semantic extension pattern can be summarized as in (18).

- (18) direct line of points in space
- > any line of communication
 - > abstract (immaterial) points
 - > scalar points in continuum
 - > any imagined connection

Other *be*-derivatives that exhibit semantic generalization can be summarized as in (19).

(19)

Preposition	Senses	Generalization Pattern
because of	(a) on account of; (b) for fear of	established cause > potential cause: (along realis-irrealis continuum)
beside	(a) by the side of an entity with a recognized side; (b) near any part of (less exactly); (c) near (a place)	close to a physical side > close to a physical entity > close to a geographic region
beyond	(a) on the farther side of (an area); (b) at a more distant point than; (c) exceeding in quantity or amount; (d) surpassing in quality or degree	of area > of point > of amount > of degree

3.2.4 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 claim 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 the *be*-derivatives 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 the *be*-derivatives 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.

3.2.4.1 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.

- (20) because of: (a) by the cause of (orig.); (b) by reason of; (c) for the purpose of
- a. þe synnes bi cause of whiche suche persecucioun schal be in Goddis Chirche. (1356. Wyclif)
 - b. I cling to thee with a more desperate love Because of thy ingratitude. (1816. J. Wilson)
 - c. The kynge made non assaut, bycause of the sparynge of his people. (1523. Ld. Berners)

The examples above show that semantic change occurred along the path of [cause > reason > purpose].⁹⁾ This is due to the fact that humans view

events with human-centeredness. I.e., a cause, which is natural or physical in nature, becomes a reason by attribution of rationality, a characteristic typical of humans. And then a reason becomes a purpose by attribution of intentionality, which, again, is a characteristic typical of human activities.

Likewise, the following examples show similar cases of subjectification of [physical precedence > weak causal force > strong causal force] in semantic changes of *before*.

- (21) *before*: (a) (of motion) ahead of; (b) hurried on by; (c) caused by
- Al þe hebreisce folc þe eode efter him and biuoren him. (1175. Lamb. Hom.)
 - He had been only the leaf before the wind. (1853. Kingsley)
 - Recoil before that sorrow, if not this sword. (1850. Mrs. Browning)

Furthermore, *beside* and *between* also show subjectification phenomena which can be summarized as in (22).

(22)

Preposition	Senses	Generalization Pattern
<i>beside</i>	by the side of (orig.); (a) by the side of for comparison; (b) contrary to	lateral location > comparison > contrast
<i>between</i>	by the two each (orig.); (a) of a line with two points at end; (b) of two opposite things; (c) of subjective relations of difference, diversity, likeness, equality, proportion, comparison	proximity in any configuration > linear configuration > subjective relations

9) The dates given on the examples do not necessarily represent the first occurrence of the lexeme with new semantic designation, and, therefore, does not represent the developmental order. Coexistence of multiple meanings is mainly due to ubiquitous layering phenomena in grammaticalization processes. The reconstructed path, therefore, is based on tracing 'plausible' chains of cognitive strategies.

3.2.4.2 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.

- (23) behind: in a place left by (orig.); (a) on the farther side of from the spectator; (b) on the side remote from our observation; (c) out of sight, in private; (d) out of attention or consideration
- a. þe burde byhynde þe dor for busmar laȝed. (1325. E. E. Allit. P.)
 - b. Behind every phenomenon we must assume a power. (1866. J. Martineau)
 - c. Murders and Executions are always transacted behind the Scenes in the French Theatre. (1711. Addison)
 - d. The plan of Don John. I put entirely behind me. (1866. Motley)

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, two entities in the physical world are projected to the relationship of the speaker's visual field with the referenced objects in the foreground. In this case the 'behindness' 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.¹⁰⁾ This subjectification pattern of visibility senses can be summarized as follows:

- (24) physical posteriority
- > distance
 - > weak visibility
 - > invisibility

10) A case with striking resemblance with this type of change is attested with the preposition against. For details cf. Rhee (2000c).

> exclusion from consideration

Furthermore, *below*, *before*, and *beyond* also exhibit similar patterns as shown in (25).

(25)

Preposition	Senses	Generalization Pattern
<i>below</i>	lower than (orig.); (a) lower in a writing; (b) too low for the influence of; (c) lower on a slope than, farther down a valley or stream than	lower in altitude > lower than acceptable standards lower in altitude > lower than ego-centric reference points
<i>before</i>	in the front (orig.); (a) in front of so as to be in the sight of; (b) in front of persons with cognizance; (c) in front of a person with deference; (d) in consideration of; (e) brought under the conscious knowledge or attention of; (f) claiming attention of; (g) in prospect; (h) awaiting	physical anteriority > location within visual field > location within domain of perception/cognizance > location within domain of a deferrable person > inclusion in active consideration > placement for attraction of attention > placement to demand attention > futurity > anticipation as to futurity
<i>beyond</i>	on the farther side of; (a) farther than, past; (b) out of the grasp or reach of; (c) to pass one's comprehension; (d) not within the range of (actions or states of mind)	physical distance > missing the target > outside capabilities > outside mental capabilities > exclusion

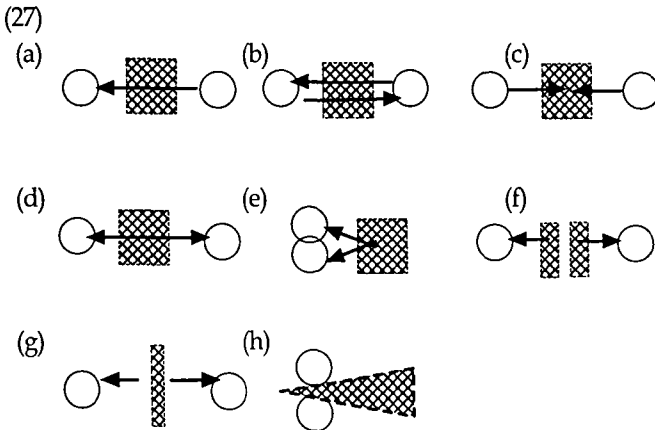
Among all prepositions that exemplify subjectification phenomena, *between* is an example par excellence in terms of its richness as shown in (26).

(26) *between*: (a) of motion across intervening space; (b) of reciprocal

action or relation; (c) of relation to things acting conjointly; (d) of confinement or restriction to two parties; (e) belonging to (two parties) jointly; (f) of division and distribution to two (or more) partakers; (g) of a line separating spaces from each other; (h) of motion or action to bodies it forces apart, subjective separation, distinction, discrimination, discernment, judgement

- a. You must send her your Page.. hee may come and goe betweene you both. (1598. Shaks.)
- b. The love that bituene hem was. (1300. Beket)
- c. This new Jehu.. Instructs the beast.. To take the bit between his teeth and fly. (1682. Dryden)
- d. And spake bitwene them selves. (1526. Tindale)
- e. They had but one pair of silk stockings between them. (1785. Mackenzie)
- f. By this ingenious distribution of himself between two houses. (1758. Johnson)
- g. The line of demarcation between the two colours. (1855. Dickens)
- h. Stand between them, keeping them well separate. (1837. Carlyle)

The above examples show subjective and enriched manipulation of entities in image schema. Generation of various senses of 'betweenness' is attributable to the following manipulation, where the latticed area is the focal point referred to by *between*.



3.2.5 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 (1996, 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 (28a) and (28b), whereas in other cases it means separation as in (28c), (28d), and (28e).

(28)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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 |

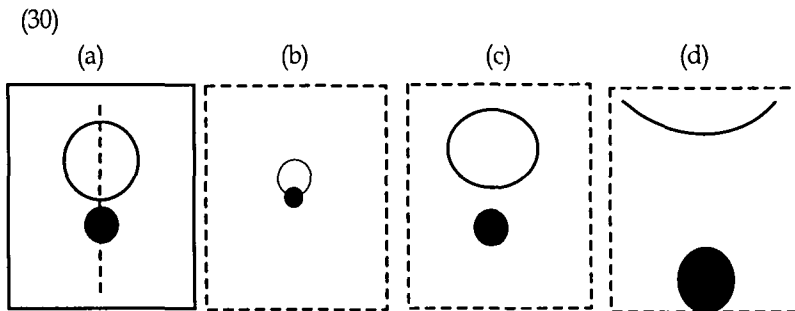
(Rhee 1996:64)

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; or figure and ground) are viewed as being together, thus bringing forth 'association' sense, as in (28a) and (28b); 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 (28c), (28d) and (28e).

Two prepositions among the *be*-derivatives, *beneath* and *beside*, are excellent cases of semantic changes that involved frame-of-focus variation. Let us consider the following example of *beneath*.

- (29) beneath: lower than (*orig.*); (a) at the base or foot of, in contact with the under side of; (b) under; (c) farther from (the surface)
- Hercules, Italus his sone, builde a citee.. by nepe þe Capitol. (1387. Trevisa)
 - Lands that lye beneath another Sun. (1611. Shaks.)
 - The Musician's art lies beneath the surface. (1871. Haweis)

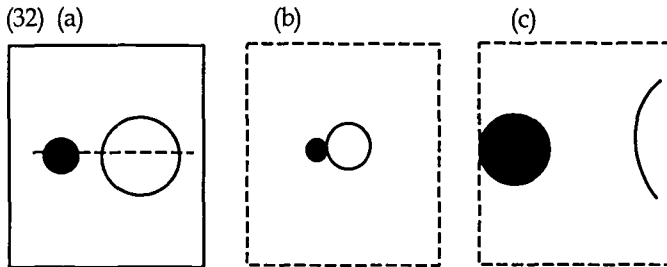
The original schema of 'beneathness' sense can be schematically represented as (30a), where there is no focus imposed on the schema. However, when the schema is viewed from afar through a telescopic frame as in (30b), the two entities are viewed as if they are in contact. If the focus frame is medially-adjusted as in (30c), the referenced entity refers to a relative region where the ground (the white circle) assumes a wide scope and acts like a canopy above the figure (the black circle). On the other hand, if the focus frame assumes the microscopic frame, i.e. viewed from a short distance, as in (30d) the distance between the ground and the figure comes into focus, thus emphasizing the separation or alienation between the two entities.



Likewise, beside also shows frame-of-focus variation as can be seen from the following examples.

- (31) beside: by the side of (*orig.*); (a) close to; (b) outside of, away from
- Let me sit down beside you. (1816. J. Wilson)
 - Let vs but open our eyes, we cannot looke beside a lesson. (1627. Bp. Hall)

The manipulated frame of focus of *beside* that brought forth senses exemplified in the above is as shown in (32). Schema (32a) is the focus-free image schema of 'besideness', where the ground and figure are in horizontal alignment. Schema (32b) is the telescopic focus frame, where the two entities appear to be in physical contact. On the other hand, schema (32c) is the microscopic focus frame and the two entities appear to be separated in this schema.



4. Conclusion

In this paper we discussed certain issues surrounding the *be*-derivative prepositions, such as their status as a grammatical category, inter- and intra-categorical fluidity, and their status in language use by comparing their token frequencies.

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

For a fuller understanding of the grammaticalization phenomena displayed by these prepositions, 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 remain for a topic of separate research.

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※ Most examples cited here are from OED, 2nd edition (1991).

※ Abbreviated data sources are a la OED without elaboration or separate listing.

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