

Why 'ahead of Christmas' but not 'ahead of Friday'? On semantics of Finnish FRONT adposition constructions in SEQUENCE IS RELATIVE POSITION ON A PATH metaphor of time

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The recent cognitive linguistic research distinguishes the field-based metaphor of time, called SEQUENCE IS RELATIVE POSITION ON A PATH (SRP), from the ego-centered metaphors (Moore 2014; cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Unlike the ego-centered metaphors that locate times relative to the experiencer of time (*We are approaching summer; Winter is coming*), SRP locates times relative to other times (*New Year's Day follows Christmas*). Thus, SRP metaphor does not focus on the deictic notion of 'now' but rather on the order of temporal entities in relation to the same encompassing background.

Many languages, including Finnish, utilize adpositions of the sagittal front–back axis when coding the order of temporal entities: in instances of SRP, FRONT corresponds with 'earlier' while BACK corresponds with 'later' (*The days ahead of Christmas are busy*; e.g. Boroditsky 2000; Huumo 2015, 2017; Moore 2014). In this study, I analyze Finnish FRONT adposition constructions that instantiate SRP. My focus is on the semantics of the Ground entities, that is, entities coded as adpositional complements in the studied expressions. I will explore what types of temporal entities (e.g. holidays, historically or socially significant events, personal events) the speakers of Finnish code as Grounds in order to locate another event, the Figure. My aim is to understand why some temporal entities (e.g. days of the week, time units, months) are less salient than others with SRP: why is it that a speaker of Finnish could easily say that 'the meeting was held ahead of Christmas' (1), but would probably not say that 'it was held ahead of Friday' (2)? In addition to semantically categorizing the Ground types used in instances of srp, I will study the relationship between the Figure and the Ground. This is done by defining whether the Ground element offers a contextual frame in which the Figure is to be understood (3), or is the Ground used merely as a temporal anchor for locating the Figure on the timeline (1).

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|-----|---|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (1) | Kokous | pide-ttiin | joulu-n | ede-llä. |
| | meeting | hold-PST.PASS | Christmas-GEN | front-ADE |
| | 'The meeting was held ahead of Christmas' | | | |
| (2) | ?Kokous | pide-ttiin | perjantai-n | ede-llä. |
| | meeting | hold-PST.PASS | Friday-GEN | front-ADE |
| | 'The meeting was held ahead of Friday' | | | |
| (3) | Joulu-n | ede-llä | puhu-taan paljon | ylikulutukse-sta. |
| | Christmas-GEN | front-ADE | talk-PRS.PASS a.lot | overconsumption-ELA |
| | 'Ahead of Christmas, there's a lot of talk about overconsumption' | | | |

Even though much is already known about the use of FRONT adpositions in spatial metaphors of time, there is yet no comprehensive corpus-based evidence of the Ground entity types commonly used in FRONT adposition constructions in instances of SRP in Finnish, neither has there been previous studies investigating the nature of the relationship between the Figure and the Ground when both of the elements are temporal entities. With the data obtained from two electronic corpora, 1) *Suomi24 corpus* and 2) *The Newspaper and Periodical Corpus of the National Library of Finland*, and building from the framework of Cognitive semantics, I argue that the events with high historical, cultural or social significance are more likely to be chosen as Ground entities in instances of SRP than the often recurring, mundane events and times.

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