

## Investigating the Mental Representation of the Thai Prepositions: A Case of *naj* and *bon*

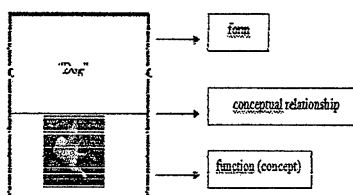
Kokitboon Fukham  
Mahasarakham University  
Kokitboon.s@msu.ac.th

## Introduction

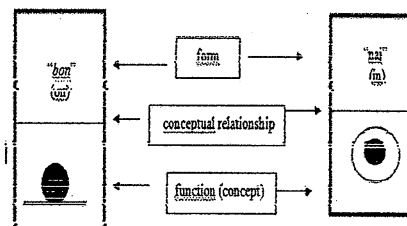
Language reflects human experience and the understanding of location. We as humans segment our concepts of the world into spatial scenes.



## Conceptual Relationship

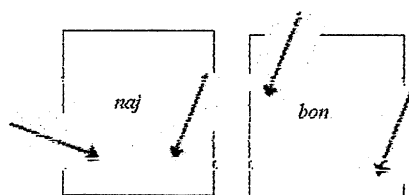


## Spatial Scenes



## Mental Representation

The concept of space is represented mentally around each preposition.



## Cognitive Grammar

- Langacker, R. (1987, 1991, 2008)
- Lindstromberg, S. (2010).
- O'Dowd, E.M. (1998).
- Tyler, A. & Evans, V. (2003).
- Kemmerer, D. (2006).

The mental representation of one entity (Trajector or Figure) in conjunction with another entity or a physical surface (Landmark or Ground). The concept of Figure (Trajector) and Ground (Landmark) are associated with Motion Path. (Trajector-Landmark (TR-LM) Framework)

Motion Path of certain entity whereby Trajector or Figure is moving or staying in place, displaying its direction of Path to Landmark or a point of reference.

Ex.

My phone is in my bag.  
A cat is on the roof.  
They are walking over the hill.  
(TR) (-Motion Path-) (LM)

### Method

- TR-LM Framework
- Data-Driven Approach
  1. corpus of Thai (Books)
  2. Video (Series, News, Documentaries)
  3. Informants

### Tentative Explanation

Thai prepositions: *naj* and *bon*  
-denote three basic lexical meanings.

#### 1. spatial or locative meaning

*naj* (*in*)

หนังสืออยู่ในห้องผม / A book is *in* my room.

*bon* (*on*)

แมวอยู่บนหลังคา / A cat is *on* the roof.

### Tentative Explanation

#### 2. Time relations (optional)

*naj* (*in*)

เราจะเจอกันในวันจันทร์

*We will meet on Monday.*

#### 3. Metaphorical or abstract meanings

*naj* (*in*)

คุณอยู่ในใจผมเสมอ

You are always *in* my heart.

*bon* (*on*)

(เขา)เก็บเอาเธอไว้บนหัวใจ

He adores her.

1. True physical contact

-spatial or locative meanings

2. Pseudo-physical contact

-metaphorical and abstract meanings

Mental Representation Dimension

ควานับล้านอยู่ บน ท้องฟ้า

(bon)

There are million stars in the sky

Tyler and Evans (2003)

English preposition *in* denotes containment

English preposition *on* entails support

~~function~~

Possible explanation for Thai prepositions is that we tend to use prepositions to express spatial scenes in terms of speakers' perspective.

ขอบคุณครับ