

(2024 August 13) Prepositions, spatial proprioception, etc

It was Gertrude Stein's pronouncement that first drew my attention as a writer to prepositions:

"Then comes the thing that can of all things be most mistaken and they are prepositions. Prepositions can live one long life being really being nothing but absolutely nothing but mistaken."

In years of reading translations, I of course noticed that cultures apparently use different prepositions for what might ordinarily be thought the same situation and have varying definitions of cognate terms (Spanish *en* and English *in*, for instance, or German *für* and English *for* are not identical).

But recently, reading about Sanskrit's predilection for spatial, rather than temporal orientation (in Betty Heimann's introduction to her *Significance of Prefixes in Sanskrit Philosophical Terminology*), I saw prepositions in a new light: as indicators of an individual's (or a culture's) proprioceptive sensibilities.

Although as a toddler learning my native tongue I probably had some cognitive awareness of it, now for the first time I became aware of the amazing scope (and, by the same token, profound limitations) of this ubiquitous little part of speech.

A quick look into Google Scholar suggested even more connections -- for instance, in relation to gender, cognitive disabilities, etc. -- tying into a broad field of information and speculation on such matters as human sense of self, what Michael Polanyi called tacit knowledge, and human language in relation to what we think of as being (a topic dear to the hearts and minds of phenomenologist and existentialist philosophers and their ilk).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19782971/#:~:text=Abstract,the%20physical%20alignment%20of%20perspectives.>

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&as\\_vis=1&q=prepositions+and+spatial+proprioception&btnG=#d=gs\\_qabs&t=1717689654677&u=%23p%3D2RQB4KytpK4J](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_vis=1&q=prepositions+and+spatial+proprioception&btnG=#d=gs_qabs&t=1717689654677&u=%23p%3D2RQB4KytpK4J)

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