

CHAPTER THREE

Lexical Semantics of Bare Singular NPs

1. Introduction

As we have seen, most singular ‘count nouns’ do not suffice in bare form as full NPs; one of the notable features of the set of nouns under discussion is that they do. This chapter analyzes location nouns that are found as full NPs, showing that they fall into several classes, determined by characteristics of the referent of each NP as well as by the type of preposition with which the NPs occur.

Section 2 of this chapter looks at the nouns that occur as bare singular NPs. In that section, I examine the senses of the nouns and present four categories of bare singular NPs: Social/Geographical Spaces, Media, Temporal Interruptions, and Untethered Metaphors.

Section 3 examines the spatial prepositions used with bare singular NPs. Section 3.1 distinguishes the meanings of the three most basic spatial prepositions: *in*, *on*, and *at*. Section 3.2 contrasts PPs that

name the location point with those PPs that describe the path the locatum travels relative to either the locatum (direction) or to the location (traversable locations).

Finally, as an initial step in capturing the patterns of meaning produced by these marked noun classes when they are used with certain prepositions, Section 4 examines several proposals for the existence of lexical elements that are larger than the word, since some of the PPs act more like individual meaning units. Thus, in seeking useful descriptions of the expressions containing bare singular nouns, constructions, idioms, and use types are considered as ways to capture phrase-dependent meaning.

2. Analyzing the Nouns

2.1 Senses of the Bare Singular NPs

In this section, I show that bare singular NPs contained within spatial PPs can be divided into four categories, according to the sense of the NP's referent. Since we are examining the NPs in locative phrases, it is helpful to consider the types of referents that these NPs are used to discuss. Places are often considered to be separate from entities (that is, first-order entities as defined by predicate calculus). However,

though places and entities are different, “in so far as they occupy space, entities may serve to identify the spaces that they occupy. For example, in... *I'll meet you at the car*, ‘the car’ is used indirectly to identify a place: i.e., the space that is occupied by the car” (Lyons 1977:693). As we will see, large immobile entities like buildings may especially be viewed as places:

There are many nominal expressions in English which can be understood as referring either to entities or to places according to the context in which they are used. For examples, ‘the church’ or ‘the house’ may refer to a physical entity which though it is normally located in a particular place, would still be identifiable as the same thing if it were moved to another place. But the same expression may also refer to places (or spaces) within which other entities are located: cf. *John is in the church*. (Lyons 1977: 475)

This use of a noun denoting an entity to indirectly denote a place is seen in the first set of nouns, the Social/Geographical Spaces group.

2.1.1 Social/Geographical Spaces

Of the bare singular NPs found in PPs, those nouns highlighted in Table 4 constitute the largest set in my corpus. They are shown with attested prepositions, though other prepositions are likely to occur with these as well.

Table 4
PPs Containing Social/Geographical Spaces
 Location is a place
 Locatum is a physical object

on/off base	in harbor	at/to sea
in/to/out of bed	up hill	from/off/on shore
at/to/from/in/into/ toward camp	at home	on site
close to/off/on/to campus	in hospital	at/in/to seminary
down cellar	up/down island	up slope
at/in/to chapel	in/to/into jail	down/on stage
at/in/from/to church	in/to kindergarten	in/down/out of state
in class	in kitchen	down/up stream
in clinic	in/on line	in studio
at/from/in/out of/to college	to market	in/to synagogue
in country	in/after/to meeting	at/to table
at/in out of court (legal)	after/out of office	to temple
at/in court (royal)	at pasture	in theater
at/in/to daycare	off planet	across/around/down/in/in to/out of/outside/through/ to/toward/up town
on deck	in/into port	at/to university
in dock	from/in/out of/to prison	at/from/to work
in district	on property	off world
in hall	down/up river	in yeshiva
	at/in/from/outside/to/ toward school	

For this group of PPs, the locatum is a physical object, typically human, although also possibly a vehicle or other artifact. The location is a noun whose referent would be primarily categorized as a place: some are open areas, some are buildings, some are rooms. It has long been noted (e.g., Quirk et al. 1985:277) that bare nouns in such PPs are often used to convey a sense of a social institution. I will call those NPs that name social spaces, community institutions, or geographical features ‘Social/Geographical Spaces.’ Out of a corpus of 796 tokens denoting Social/Geographical Spaces, I have found 55 attested bare singular NP

types, shown in Table 4. Selected examples appear in (1).

- (1) a. He also says Charlie, the oldest Salinger, and his girlfriend, Kirsten, will face a big obstacle in their relationship, and Claudia, 13, will announce she has fallen in love **at summer camp**.
(Jennifer Mangan, "Inviting Praise," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 15, 1996, Section 5, p. 3)
- b. The contrast is apparent **on campus**, too. Unlike their predecessors in the Vietnam era, many ROTC students today can be seen wearing their uniforms and boots—not just to military classes, but all day long.
("ROTC Regains Respect on Campuses As Graduates Fare Well in Workplace," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 11, 1989)
- c. The space between his two front teeth, which were unusually far apart, gave him the proficiency in whistling for which he was distinguished **at college**.
(Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*, 1913, Gutenberg etext)
- d. While tape recordings to uncover, say, infidelity aren't admissible **in court**, they can mean leverage in a settlement.
(Jill Abramson, "Mind What You Say; They're Listening," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 25, 1989)
- e. They are not proficient on the computers; like Brian, twenty-four of his classmates have no computers **at home**, and they attend Computer class only twice a week.
(Susan Sheehan, "Kid, Twelve," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 54)
- f. "I'd call up the prison board and get their cell numbers and then I could write to them. These people are a stamp away. They're sitting **in jail** with nothing to do but look at the walls. They want people to write to them."
(Mike Sula, "Shocks to the System," *Chicago Reader*, Aug. 9, 1996, Section 1, p. 28)

- g. At \$1 a bag, so many people want ice that a huge line forms outside any store where it is available, and the average buyer has to stand **in line** for four hours to buy it.
(David N. Laband, "In Hugo's Path, a Man-Made Disaster," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 27, 1989)
- h. Some of this I understand, but not the part about ice interfering with takeoffs. We've been **offplanet** nearly ten months. Has something unusual happened?
(Suzette Haden Elgin, *Earthsong: Native Tongue III*, DAW Books: New York, 1994, p. 121)
- i. But Chen I. Chung was on an upwardly mobile track, because those more qualified to lead than he was would soon be dead or **in jail**.
(Frederic Dannen, "Revenge of the Green Dragons," *The New Yorker*, Nov. 16, 1992, p. 81)
- j. During their first year **at school**, children become Octobrists and wear the badge of Baby Lenin.
(Peter Gumbel, "Soviet Youth Organization Is in Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 15, 1989)
- k. Up **on deck**, thinking of spending five days on the Dolphin, I began to be seized by feelings of panic and pain I couldn't explain.
(Diane Johnson, "Great Barrier Reef," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 7, 1992)
- l. He finally escaped from the neighborhood, at seventeen, by joining the Navy. He scrubbed the decks of ships **in port**—the sort of menial work that most Negroes were assigned.
(Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Belafonte's Balancing Act, *The New Yorker*, Aug. 26/Sept. 2, 1996, p. 135)
- m. The shrubs bounced against the ground again and again, and **upslope** the trees howled.
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984, p. 156)

- n. Up on the beach below me were a score of similar boats, each with its long pole, at one end of which was a pike, at the other a paddle. Thurid was hugging the shore, and as he passed out of sight round a near-by promontory I shoved one of the boats into the water and, calling Woola into it, pushed out **from shore**.
(Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Warlord of Mars*, 1919, Gutenberg etext)
- o. A ship—a huge ship, so big that for a second I thought it was just **offshore**.
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984, p. 87)

Based on the senses of the nouns, five semantic subgroups emerge within the group of Social/Geographical Spaces. ‘Municipality’ nouns are listed in (2); these all denote official, bounded territories—areas that would be under a single jurisdiction.¹

(2) **municipalities:** base, campus, country, district, island, planet, property, site, state, theater, town, world

The second subset of Social/Geographical Space nouns, shown in (3), are all buildings related to religious practice.²

1. *Theater* is included here in its use relating to an area of military operations, not the sense relating to show business.

2. *Seminary*, listed with these religious settings, could also be considered a member of the group in (18), which are more generally places intended for learning or studying.

Soja (1994) also notes the bare use of the word *mass*; while this word qualifies as religious, I considered it more an event than a location, since unlike *chapel*, *church*, and *temple*, a mass does not generally also name a building. I have therefore not included *mass*. (Cf. the word *class*, which if it were purely an event, would not be a bare location

(3) **religious settings:** chapel, church, seminary, synagogue, temple

The third subset of Social/Geographical Space nouns, shown in (4), denote places intended for learning or studying:

(4) **educational settings:** campus, class, college, kindergarten, school, university, yeshiva

Soja (1994:269) notes that variations of “education words” commonly occur in bare singular form. And indeed, not only *school*, but all compounds that it heads (such as *day school*, *high school*, *law school*) as well as names of years in school (*kindergarten*, *first grade*, *second grade*, etc.) would count as Social/Geographical Spaces. Likewise, compounds headed by many of the words listed in Table 4 also show up as bare singular forms (e.g., *summer camp*, *boot camp*, *prison camp*).

Besides the two senses created by using the word denoting a building to indirectly name the space in which it is located, Behrens (1995) identifies a further split in uses of these building terms—between the institution occupying a building and the physical building. In collecting types of nouns most often cited as problems for mass/count distinction, she includes the examples in (5).

word either; *class*, however, is included in (18) as a clipping of *classroom*.)

- (5) a. Mary goes to school
 b. Mary goes to the school
 c. Harry is in church/jail
 d. Harry is in the church/jail
 (Behrens 1995:53, ex. 27)

She notes that these systematic sense alternations are distinct from the mass/count alternation because they can be found in neutral mass/count contexts too, as in (6).

- (6) a. The University has decided to close the dental school.
 b. The University is in Evanston.

Behrens observes that because of this additional sense contrast for buildings, lexical context rather than the grammatical (distributional) context is commonly assumed to ‘disambiguate’ or select the appropriate sense (see Bierwisch 1983). Such sense alternations provide a productive device for extending vocabulary and are found as well in languages which lack a grammatical paradigm for mass/count comparable to the English paradigm. Behrens (1995:54) notes, however, that in English the mass/count syntax also comes into play: “Some systematic metonymies correlate not only with distinct lexical environments, but also with mass or count contexts and thus, are syntacto-semantic alternations in the same ways as the transitivity alternations in the verbal domains are (cf. Levin 1993).”

The next set of nouns, shown in (7), are all related to travel on water, while those in (8) denote natural environmental features³:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (7) nautical settings: | deck, dock, harbor, port |
| | river, sea, shore, stream |
| (8) natural features: | hill, slope |

The semantic groupings in (2)-(4) and (7)-(8) are based only on the shared meanings of the nouns.⁴ These semantic divisions give a first glimpse of what we could consider to be criteria for identifying felicitous bare singular NPs of the Social/Geographical Spaces category. That is, information on how speakers categorize the referents of these NPs allows us to make predictions about what other nouns could serve as bare singular NPs, although it is not sufficient to guarantee that all NPs from those categories will show up in bare forms.

3. *River, sea, shore, and stream*, might also be considered members of either the set in (7) or in (8).

4. Not all the bare singular NPs pass the “speaking of __” test (Ch. 1, example (7)). Members of the Natural Features category are less felicitous in that template than other members of the Social/Geographical Spaces set. The constraints relate to the semantic categories in (7) and (8) as well as to pragmatic aspects that will be discussed in Ch. 4: only those bare NPs that denote social institutions and are used in Familiarity Implicature (but anchored off a participant, not anchored off the place of the utterance) pass this test.

2.1.2 Media

Distinct from the Social/Geographical Spaces terms just discussed is a set of count noun locations for which the locatum is not a physical object, but an image or a piece of information. In these phrases, too, the count nouns do name the location of that information, but the bare NP is primarily a type of recording medium rather than a place, and the PPs are often expressions of means, specifying how the locatum was recorded.⁵ This set of location tokens I refer to as Media Expressions. The set of nouns is smaller than that set of bare singular NPs making up the Social/Geographical Spaces, but, because of the newness of some of its members, it is a more open, productive category, easily encompassing words for new technology. In addition, these nouns are not used for the same range of referring functions as the Social/Geographical Spaces, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4. Media Expressions divide into two types: Recording Expressions and Framing Expressions, which I illustrate and discuss in turn. Some examples of the first type, Recording Expressions, are shown in (9).

- (9) a. Plenty of Grammy® magic has been captured **on album** over the years.
(BMG Music Service catalog, 1997)

5. There is a precedent for using bare forms in means adverbials involving tools (e.g., *make something by hand*, *walk the dog off leash*, *arrive by train*), but the PPs containing Recording Media NP also show other behavior similar to the other spatial PPs under investigation.

- b. Subpoenas went out en masse for maximum scare, and were delivered to traders' homes with a uniform message: Confess or we will use RICO to take your homes, cars and money and send you to jail. We have it all **on tape**.
(Jeff Bailey and Scott McMurray, "Were Investors Sitting Ducks?" *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 3, 1989)
- c. Many times, when I am interviewing somebody, they will ask, "When am I going to be **on TV**?"
(Neil Steinberg, "Adventures of a Pencil-Wielding Pariah," *Chicago Reader*, Oct. 25, 1996, Section 1, p. 25)
- d. When you're on a network and you've brought another Mac's hard disk onto your desktop, make an alias of any shared program, document or folder. When you're **offline** and you'd like to reconnect, just double-click the alias.
(David Pogue and Joseph Schorr, "Secrets of the Macintosh Revealed," *MacHome Journal*, April 1997, p. 28)
- e. A tornado watch means "Watch the sky: Weather conditions are right for a tornado." A tornado warning means "A tornado has been sighted or picked up **on radar**: Take cover immediately."
(<http://www.army.mil/usar/arpercen/hubjun.htm>)
- f. Most national advertisers **on video** so far have created special commercials, often hugely elaborate extravaganzas related to the movie's plot.
(Joanne Lipman, "Texas Firm's Splicing of Local Ads Into Videos Angers Movie Studios," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 2, 1989)

The words in Table 5 show attested PPs containing Recording Expression bare singular NPs; of the 87 Recording Expression tokens collected, I have found 18 different noun types.⁶

6. *Television* and *TV* are counted as the same type; *tape*, generally short for *audiotape*, is counted separately from *videotape*.

Table 5
Recording Expressions
 Location is recording media
 Locatum is information

on album	on radio
on cable	on record
on cassette	on/off screen
on CD	on sonar
on disk	on/off tape
on film	on television/TV
on/off line	on video
on/off mike/microphone	on videocassette
on radar	on videotape

Note that the PPs in Table 5 all contain count nouns and occur with the preposition *on*, as opposed to the examples in (10), which show other terms for recording information, but are not unexpected bare forms since they are mass nouns rather than count nouns:

- (10) a. in ink
 b. in memory
 c. in print

The influence of prepositions on the grouping of bare singular NP objects will be discussed in Section 3.1.1.

A group related to the set in Table 5, but distinct from it, is the small group of nouns highlighted in Table 6.

Table 6
Framing Expressions
 Location is the area within a visual frame
 Locatum is an image

on/off camera in/out of frame in/out of range on/off screen in/out of shot in/out of sight on/off stage in/out of view

These nouns are related to photography and film media, but are particularly used in phrases that indicate a bounded space or frame within which the locatum is viewed. That is, while the locata of Table 5 are data lodged or recorded fairly permanently in a type of medium,⁷ the locata of Table 6 can move in and out of the location. To highlight this contrast, an expression involving a Recording Expression is given in (11), while a PP used as a Framing Expression is given in (12).

- (11) The film crew that comes to capture the town **on film** for a public television show finds a conflict brewing between the old and the new in Dadetown.
 (Pat Dowell, "Left for Dade," *In These Times*, Oct. 28, 1996, p. 28)

7. This is reflected in the verbs used with these PPs as predicates, which are either forms of *be* or *record*, *catch*, *capture*, and related synonyms.

- (12) As Buzz moves **off-camera** to the right, Neil comes into view beyond the plus-Z strut.
(<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/alsj/a11/a11.clsout.html>)

Though both (11) and (12) relate to filming, in (11) the locatum (the town) is fixed onto the location medium (film), while in (12) the locatum (Buzz Aldrin) is momentarily located outside of the location frame (the view of the camera). Other examples of Framing Expressions are shown in (13):

- (13) a. The Marionette's head loomed close behind her for an instant, then disappeared **out of frame**.
(<http://www.filmscouts.com/matinee/flubber/productn.html>)
- b. Beginning, like a book, with a catalog of all the previous works by the same author, it proceeds with a lengthy account of an impassioned theoretical debate following a Paris cineclub screening, then with a love story of sorts, but the film's narrative and dialogue are recounted almost entirely **offscreen**, in voice-overs.
(Jonathan Rosenbaum, Review of "Venom and Eternity," *Chicago Reader*, June 13, 1997, Section Two, p. 13)
- c. Cinema legend insists that there is a pair of pliers visible in the bottom of one dinosaur scene in the original King Kong (1933). To save the shot, the animators apparently animated it **out of shot**, as if it were a snake burrowing underground.
(<http://www.anson.com.au/craigd/digest/digest32.htm>)

- d. The baby Jesus appears in two of the plays, "Birth of Christ" and "Adoration of the Shepherds." In Bend, the baby Jesus there had not auditioned, mind you, but he played the part like a natural. When he was first carried **on stage**,⁸ a young voice in the crowd exclaimed, "It's a live one!" (Susan Hauser, "Cherubs Audition for Divine Part," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 17, 1989)
- e. Bennett Braun appeared on the Chicago evening news with his star patient, who switched personalities **on camera**. (Joan Acocella, "The Politics of Hysteria," *The New Yorker*, April 6, 1998, p. 68)

2.1.2.1 PP and NP Ambiguities

The Media category, like the Social/Geographical Spaces group, can be broken down further. Unlike the Social/Geographical Spaces, however, which showed different noun classes for the locations, the Media terms have differences that are found in contrasting senses for the same location term (see Nunberg 1978 for a detailed treatment of polysemy and extended reference). Bare singular NPs from the Recording Media set can be used in at least three senses: the first is used to refer to the broadcast of that media form (e.g., by television as opposed to by radio), the second is used to refer to the particular content of the broadcast (e.g. "Does kids' television contain too much violence?"), and the third to

8. *On stage* has several uses: as a Social/Geographical Spaces expression, when it follows a copula, it is used to mean 'to perform (typically on a stage)'; as a metaphor, it is used to mean 'to be hyperanimated,' or 'to act like one is the focus of attention'; as a framing expression, it is predicated of a locatum that is moving into a bounded, visible space. This last use is also exemplified by *off stage*, *backstage*, *downstage*, and *upstage*.

name the apparatus used to access the content (television, meaning a TV set).⁹ Besides these variations in the sense of the “locations,” a polysemous range of senses for the locatum NP is also possible, because the Media NPs are used to discuss representations of real-world objects; as a result, an ambiguity can occur concerning whether the locatum is the thing originally recorded or is a depiction of it. Both the location and locatum contrasts will be discussed in Section 2.1.2.2.

2.1.2.2 Sporadic Reference and Eroded Forms

Some words naming media formats require an article, as shown in the (a) examples of (14) and (15).

- (14) a. I read it in the **newspaper**.
 b. * I read it in **newspaper**.
- (15) a. We saw it at the **show** last week.
 b. * We saw it at **show** last week.

9. Nunberg (1978:60-61) also lists other functions for “words of transmission” (or Recording Media terms), including reference to the industry and to the group of people who work in the field. In (i), for example, *radio* is used to mean “the radio profession”:

- (i) She studied acting with the famous Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and got into **radio**, writing the questions for a pioneer quiz show and taking bit parts as a gun moll.
 (Whitney Balliett, “Edith Oliver: One on the Aisle,” *The New Yorker*, March 9, 1998, p. 33)

Since *radio* in (i) is not a location noun, I do not pursue the use of this industry sense.

- (16) a. He talked to her on the **phone**.
 b. * He talked to her on **phone**.

Quirk et al. (1985) include such obligatorily articulated forms in their discussion of different kinds of specific reference that can be created in English by using articles. The types created with the definite article include situational reference (which is derived from the extralinguistic situation and can be based on either the immediate situation or derived from general knowledge), anaphoric and cataphoric reference (in which the referent is evoked in the actual discourse), and sporadic reference, illustrated in (17).

- (17) a. attend the **theater**
 b. listen to the **radio**
 c. talk on the **telephone**

For the NPs in (17) “reference is made to an institution which may be observed recurrently at various places and times” (Quirk et al. 1985: 269). They also extend the term ‘sporadic reference’ to expressions referring to transportation and communication, such as those in (18).

- (18) a. ride the **bus**
 b. catch the **train**
 c. wait for the **mail**

In all these cases, the definite article does not lead the hearer to pick out one particular bus, phone, or piece of mail, but instead is used to refer to any one member of the general category named by that noun.

Birner and Ward (1994) also note this use of the definite article when no particular referent is picked out. While they show that unique identification of the referent licenses the use of the definite article, they also show that uniqueness is only sufficient, not necessary, for definite reference, in view of cases like (16) and (17), where definite NPs are used to refer to locations or objects whose referents are “not relevantly differentiable from other objects denoted by the same NP” (Birner and Ward 1994:7) (see also Givón 1978, Kadmon 1990). Concerning this set, Birner and Ward note Ladusaw’s spoken observation that, for NPs whose referents are vehicles, in the absence of uniqueness, the definite article may be used only if the vehicle is one that moves along a regular pre-established path (Birner and Ward 1994:10). Thus the use of *the train* or *the bus* that Quirk et al. note can be felicitous only in the articulated form, while words such as *car*, *bike*, and *motorcycle* (with a non-unique referent) cannot, as seen in (19).

- (19) a. #ride in the car
 b. #ride the bike
 c. #take the motorcycle

phone. Another kind-referring use is shown in (23), where one particular subtype of a kind is referred to—Krifka et al. (1995:74-77) call this one the taxonomic sense. Finally, (24) shows the most typical use of the definite article—one in which the referent is uniquely identifiable (within the discourse).

As might be expected, in some instances ambiguity arises concerning the type of reference invoked by using articulated forms. An example is given in (25).

- (25) My sister goes to **the theatre** every month.
 [=Quirk et al. 1985, p. 269, ex. 1]

As Quirk et al. (1985) explain, the highlighted NP in (25) might be used to invoke situational reference (that is, to indicate a particular theater, e.g., The Goodman Theater). A more likely meaning, however, is that the sister does not necessarily confine her theater-going to a single building but attends theater events at different places at different points in time. Through sporadic reference, then, *the theatre* might also be used to refer to theater as an institution. Under the sporadic interpretation, “it would be inappropriate to ask in response [to (25)]: ‘Which theater?’” (Quirk et al. 1985:269).

However, more to the point for our examination of bare forms, sporadic reference not only is identifiable by the use of the definite article, but in many cases, “has become so institutionalized that the article is not used” (Quirk et al. 1985: 277).¹⁰ To clearly distinguish their “institutionalized” bare form from other uses of this same term, I call this optional dropping of the definite article during sporadic reference the ‘eroded’ form. Thus for Quirk et al., both (26a) and (26b) can be described by saying that when no particular piano is being referred to, both (a) and (b) are used for sporadic reference, while I distinguish (26b), which lacks an article, as an example of the eroded sporadic form.

- (26) a. Do you play the **piano**?
 b. Do you play **piano**?

Musical instruments are often found in such synonymous pairs of articulated and eroded forms. In expressions with syntactic objects that denote musical instruments, as with other bare direct objects, the verb+NP together create the effect of noun incorporation: Does she [play piano]_{VP}? He [plays saxophone]_{VP} in the band. The bare form is the usual NP form in these cases, when the object is any one of an undifferentiated class. What is unusual, then, is the existence of a (nearly) syn-

10. By “institutionalized” here they do not appear to mean that the referent is treated as a social institution, but rather that a habit of speech has become what might be called ‘idiomatic,’ ‘lexicalized,’ or ‘casual.’

onymous articulated form:

- (27) a. She deserved to **play organ** for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.
(Amy Tan, *The Hundred Secret Senses*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995, p. 70)
- b. Offered a position as organist in the town of Arnstadt at the age of eighteen, he accepted, and proceeded to dedicated [sic] himself to the art of composition. In 1705 he walked fifty miles to Lübeck to hear Buxtehude **play the organ**.
(<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/~0100543/bach.htm>)

As Christophersen (1939:132) notes, musical instruments are often referred to by using an NP with a definite article, creating an ambiguity between reference to a particular referent and a “generic term for the entire invention.” With such NPs, speakers may some times use a definite article in places where an indefinite article could also be used. In (28), for example, Christophersen claims that if no one definite banjo is meant, then “playing on a banjo” could be substituted:

- (28) Perhaps he would have turned away ... had he not heard a most astonishing sound... Somebody in Dullingsham Junction was playing the banjo.
(J. B. Priestley, *The Good Companions*. London: Heinemann, 1929, p. 201) [=Christophersen (1939:132)]

With many kinds of count nouns, as long as the referent of an NP is undifferentiated from other referents denoted by that NP, hearers can interpret the NP through sporadic reference to mean any one instance of the type. Moreover, when musical instruments are the referents and

they are viewed as such an undifferentiated set, using any article with the NP is optional:

- (29) a. Someone was playing the banjo.
 b. Someone was playing (on) a banjo.
 c. Someone was playing banjo.

2.1.2.3 Broadcast vs. Apparatus Senses

The eroded form of a sporadically referring NP might at first appear to explain the optional use of the definite article in the PPs *on (the) radio* and *on (the) television/TV*. But although *TV* and *radio* appear in both articulated and bare forms, it is another factor that accounts for their bare use. Here the absence of an article is used to disambiguate two metonymous senses. For *television/TV*, no article is used when the type of broadcast is discussed, while the article is used by most speakers when referring to the apparatus which receives the broadcast, as shown by the examples in (30):

- (30) a. They would never put that **on TV**. [broadcast sense]
 b. ? They would never put that **on the TV**. [broadcast sense]
 c. The remote control is **on (top of) the TV**. [apparatus sense]
 d. * The remote control is **on (top of) TV**. [apparatus sense]

The difference shown in (30) is not just an institutionalized, eroded dropping of the article, but is an alternation chosen to reflect different

meanings of the word *TV* (see Nunberg (1978) for a detailed accounting of metonymous relations).

The meaning associated with the syntactic form of the location NP then influences a hearer's sense of the semantic type of locatum as well. This is shown in (31), which illustrates the information inferrable by the choice of whether to use an article: while the locatum which is *on the TV* is a physical object, the locatum that is *on TV* is part of the content of a broadcast.

- (31) a. Look--the cat is **on TV!**
 b. Look--the cat is **on the TV!**

For the pair of utterances in (31), both (a) and (b) were true in the context described, though non-equivalent, due to metonymous senses of *TV*. The context involved a "Cat Adventure Videotape" which contains images of birds, mice, cats, and dogs. While the video played, one real cat sat in front of the TV screen to watch, while another cat attacked the screen from above, sitting on the TV set (Gregory Ward, p.c.).

In some dialects, ambiguity can occur with the articulated location NP when the referent of the locatum NP can be interpreted as either an

object or a depiction of one, as occurs in the British usage in (32):¹¹

- (32) A: Oh dear, the radio's exploded.
 B: Well what's **on the television**, then?
 A: Looks like a penguin.
 B: No, I didn't mean what was on the TV SET; I meant what
 PROGRAM!
 (Monty Python's Flying Circus, *Another Monty Python Album*,
 Buddha Records, 1972, side B)

Oddly, however, *on (the) radio* and *on (the) television/TV* do not show identical patterns in the meaning assigned to each NP form. *Radio* regularly appears with both the definite article and the zero form to convey the broadcast sense, as shown in the examples in (33).

- (33) a. Now here was Simon asking me what I wanted for Christmas. Once again I was listening to "Yingle Bells" [sic] **on the radio**. (Amy Tan, *The Hundred Secret Senses*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995, p. 97)
- b. For the past three years, Coke has been running advertisements—only **on radio** and only in selected cities — in a bid to boost morning consumption. (Michael J. McCarthy, "New Pepsi Soda Will Seek To Break the Coffee Habit," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 28, 1989)

11. In some non-standard American dialects also, especially among older rural speakers, *the TV* is used in the broadcast sense as well as the apparatus sense, as in the example in (i) in which the character speaking is a rural grandmother:

- (i) You know what I heard **on the television**?
 (Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country*, New York: Harper & Row, 1985, p. 14)

In neither (33a) nor (33b) is a particular radio apparatus referred to. Thus (33) shows that the use of the article is optional when referring to a radio broadcast. However, with *radio*, as with *television*, only equipment can only be referred to by using an article with the word:

- (34) a. Is that a fly **on the radio**?
 b. Is that a fly **on radio**?

In contrast to the ambiguous (34a), (34b) can only be used to refer to the fly's buzzing sound being broadcast.

To summarize the difference, for all speakers the bare form of both words is used to refer to only the broadcast sense. The articulated form has more ambiguity. For some speakers, *the television* can refer to either the broadcast or the receiving apparatus, and for all speakers, *the radio* can have both these senses (see Table 7).

Table 7
Bare and Articulated Uses of *Radio* and *TV*

	Radio	Television
+ article	apparatus or broadcast	apparatus (broadcast also in some dialects)
- article	broadcast	broadcast

An additional ambiguity in identifying the locatum arises since it is common in any medium to refer to an image of something in the same terms that we would use to refer to the real thing (e.g., *Show me the cat in the picture, Honey*). With electronic media, too, we speak of people being *on TV*, when it is their image that is being televised and viewed. This would be another instance of the deferred reference detailed by Nunberg (1978). This referring function of representation to the original is responsible for our understanding of the examples in (35), where the underlined words have as their referent not a human being, but some audio or video depiction of one:

- (35) a. If you're not on cable you're not going to be watched.
(John Dimsdale, *Marketplace* radio broadcast, Oct. 3, 1996)
- b. Many times, when I am interviewing somebody, they will ask, "When am I going to be on TV?" [= (23)]
- c. If she was as simpering in life as she is on film, one sympathizes a bit with Belushi's escape into reality-altering substances.
(Julie Salamon, "Belushi's Story; Father-Daughter Gangsters," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 24, 1989)
- d. Moreover, SCAD's business affiliations with lending institutions, accreditors, and professional organizations were jeopardized by individuals in constant communication with one another, and caught on tape *coordinating* [emphasis in original] further efforts to harm SCAD. If "conspiracy" isn't the proper term for this, then no such term exists in the English language.
(Lloyd B. Lewis, Letter to the Editor, *Lingua Franca*, Sept./Oct. 1996, p. 7)

A verb such as *watch* can take an object that is an artifact (e.g., watch the clock) or one that names the content of the broadcast (e.g., watch the news); however, the meaning of the underlined phrase in (36) is not ambiguous; as we saw, without an article, the bare word *television* is not used to refer to a TV set.

- (36) She reminded me that **watching television** was as bad as going to the movies.
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 236)

If there are two NP objects, as in (37), one is overtly marked with a means preposition such as *with*, *on*, or *via*:

- (37) But the networks are finally waking up to a large demographic reality, which is that a lot of younger people don't **watch news on TV**.
(Howard Kurtz, "The Kids on the Bus," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 9, 1996, p. 32-3)

As illustrated in (37), when used as a means preposition, *on* generally takes a bare NP object. However, *on* can also be a spatial preposition, requiring a physical object, which would show up as an NP with an article. The difference between meanings of the NP *television* depends on whether the content (the object being depicted) is already specified through another NP, as it is by *news* in (37); in that case, the PP *on tele-*

vision specifies the means. In (38), several senses are conflated:

- (38) On the radio at eleven, Ben Grauer came on from Times Square to narrate the amazing descending ball of light that marked the New York New Year, and Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians played from the Waldorf, which was exciting to imagine ... but it would have been more exciting to watch it **on television**, which we didn't have.
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 236)

The phrasing of the final clause in (38) creates a structure in which *television* is the direct object of the word *have*. This involves the same token of the word *television* in the two clauses shown in (39).

- (39) a. It would have been more exciting to watch it on television.
b. We didn't have television.

In (39a) *on television* is a means adverbial. But two interpretations could explain the use of the term *television* in (39b). One approach is to claim that there is a sense of *television* that refers to being hooked up for TV service, perhaps akin to *having cable* or *getting electricity*.¹² Neither of these cases involve an artifact, but instead some other commodity to prepare the viewer to receive the broadcast. The second explanation for

12. Cf. In Irish English the definite article is used for this sense (e.g., *getting the electricity*).

the construction in (39b) relies on a combination of the broadcast and artifact senses brought into being in a way similar to the entities evoked in Ward et al.'s (1991) analysis of pragmatic islands, i.e., the existence of the broadcast sense from *on television* makes accessible an actual (discourse entity of a) television set for referring to. These two readings of the NP *television* in (39b) I therefore identify as the 'service' sense and the 'invoked apparatus' sense.

2.1.2.4 Two New Media Expressions

Two newer media terms, *the Internet* (and the clipped form *the Net*) and *the World Wide Web* (or just *the Web*), are most often found with the definite article, as illustrated in (40) and (41).

- (40) a. I got the article off the Net.
 b. * I got it off Net.

- (41) a. I found the article on the Web.
 b. * I found it on Web.

Since each represents a unique identity, the use of the definite rather than an indefinite article is not surprising. Conversely, the metaphor of the Net or the Web as a single physical space is reinforced by the use of the articulated form. However, when the NPs are used in means adverbials, it is surprising that they do not appear in the bare form, as other

media terms do. Only with *via*, a more overt marker of means, do these NPs sometimes appear in the bare form, as shown in (42):

- (42) If you have comments on the show, you can send them to us via Internet.
(WBEZ radio broadcast, 1997)

It will be interesting to watch the evolution of the form of these two media NPs. It is unlikely that either will be used with an indefinite article very soon (at least, not as long as each referent is unique, although it could come to pass that one day there will be numerous independent internets available). However, it is possible that they will remain in the articulated form when being used for sporadic reference, like *the telephone* and *the movies*. They may also make the transition to the eroded zero form, when used in sporadic reference, like *on radio/on the radio*. The third model would be if they ended up like *on line*,¹³ *on tape*, or *on cable*, i.e., only used in the bare form.

13. Two senses are distinguished by article usage with the word *line*: if people are 'on the line' they are involved in a telephone call, whereas to be 'on line' means people are using a computer connection (sometimes via a phone line).

Yet another sense of *line* included in the Social/Geographical Spaces, was the 'queue' sense. However, in some regions of the U.S. there is a contrasting pair here as well. In the New York area people form a queue by getting *in line*; once it is formed, each new person gets *on line*. In most other U.S. dialects, *in line* serves for both these meanings.

2.1.2.5 Apparatus vs. Content Senses

In scanning electronic corpora for the string *on video*, I found *video* used as a clipping for both *videotape* and *videocassette*. In its clipped form *video* remains a count noun. Although the head noun is dropped, its influence is still felt in determining whether the entire compound is mass or count. (This is in keeping with the behavior of other clipped compounds, as we saw in Chapter 1, Sect. 2.1). Technically, *tape* is the material a movie is recorded on, while a *cassette* is the artifact onto which the *tape* is wound. That is, while the original event is recorded onto *videotape*, copies of that *tape* are circulated in the shell of a *videocassette*. Or put another way, a *videocassette* contains *videotape*. Not all recording media terms, however, allow reference to both the material and the artifact. For example, we could say that a version of a movie is being distributed *on film* (which is the material that is recorded on) but not *on reel* (the artifact on to which the film is wound).

A more general referring function is seen throughout the Recording Media terms. Both *videotape* and *videocassette* can be used, by means of metonymy, to refer to the content on the *tape*, as well as to the form of the media; the word *film* behaves the same way, as shown in (43).

- (43) a. *The Manchurian Candidate* is my favorite **film**.
[sense = content] [form = count]
- b. I'd rather watch it on **film** than rent the video.
[sense = material] [form = mass]
- c. I would always rather watch a **film** than a video.
[sense = media form] [form = count]

TV, on the other hand, can be used to refer to both the medium and the apparatus, but not to an individual bit of the content—for that there is the word *show*, or within that category, *episode* (but cf. a mass use: *I feel like watching some TV*). This individuated use can be tested for all the terms by inserting the Media word in a template that uses the word as an indefinite count noun, as shown in (44), and checking to see if a content or apparatus sense results.

- (44) That's a ___ I really like.

The results of such a test are shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Recording Media Terms Used as Count Nouns

	Content	Apparatus for Projecting the Data	Object Containing the Data
cable			
line			
cassette	yes		yes
compact disk/CD	yes		yes
(floppy) disk	yes		yes
film	yes		yes
record	yes		yes
tape	yes		yes
video	yes		yes
videocassette	yes		yes
videotape	yes		yes
computer		yes	yes
radar		yes	
radio		yes	
sonar		yes	
television/TV		yes	

Table 8 shows a contrast in use of Recording Media terms in their ability to be used to refer to the content recorded on them. *Cable* and *line* only serve as means terms, that is, objects that are *on cable* and *on line* are never placed on a cable or on a line; these terms are only interpreted through the metonymous sense. For the other Recording Media terms, based on the two sets of groupings shown in the table, I propose the following rule for count noun uses of recording media: if there is an apparatus sense assigned to a recording media word (as there is for *com-*

puter, radar, radio, sonar, and television/TV), then the content sense is blocked (cf. blocking rules in Clark and Clark 1979). Likewise, if there is another word for the apparatus, then using the media word for the apparatus is blocked. For example, for the medium of film there is the word *projector* for the apparatus, and thus we do not use the word *film* for the apparatus sense. For the medium of video we have the word *VCR* as the apparatus, and thus do not use the word *video* for the apparatus sense; tellingly, the word *video* is used differently by some non-native speakers of English, who use *video* to mean the machine that plays a tape (perhaps in a direct translation from the way their languages assign the content/apparatus/object distinction). For the medium of audio-tape, English has the words *recorder* or *player*, and thus the words *tape* or *cassette* are not used to refer to such an apparatus. Note that computers seem to be acceptable in both senses because the term *computer* is sometimes used to refer to the monitor and sometimes to the drive that stores the data.

In conclusion, with utterances containing Recording Expressions, both locatum and location NPs can have polysemous uses. For the locatum, we may denote a physical object or an image depicting it. For locations, generally the use of the article indicates a concrete referent, while the

bare form is used to convey a media or broadcast sense.

2.1.3 Temporal Interruptions

The third set of bare singular NPs consists of count nouns that name a stretch of time which provides a break in a regular routine. These are shown in Table 9.

Table 9
Temporal Interruption Expressions¹⁴
Locatum is animate

at breakfast	on break
at campfire	on holiday
at dinner	on lunch [break]
at lunch	on leave
at recess	on recess
at sunset	on sabbatical
	on vacation

The two columns in Table 9 represent two subtypes of temporal occasions, or two ways of viewing periods of time. Nouns in the first column, which occur with *at*, denote points at which some event occurs; they pick out a scheduled time slot in the day. This is an expected extension of *at*, which in its locative function picks out a point in space. The nouns in the second column, which occur with the preposition *on*, denote longer stretches of time during which some regular activity is not

14. For Soja's subjects, who were preschool-age children, *snack* and *snacktime* also showed up as bare singular NPs. These terms, I would argue, are also temporal interruption expressions, although my corpus has no attested examples of adults using these terms.

done, but is put on hold, so to speak. These terms generally refer to times not within a daily schedule, but interruptions in a year's routine.¹⁵ The *at* phrases describe an event in which the duration of the event rather than the point at which it occurs is emphasized. As with the set of Social/Geographical Spaces, the locatum is animate.

As demonstrated in (45), the PP containing these nouns indicates the locatum's state or activity (or lack of activity), and thus can be used to infer where the locatum's activity might be taking place. Unless it is stated in a separate PP, however, (such as in B's response in (45b), the exact location of the located person is only implied.

- (45) a. A: Is Janet around?
 B: Oh, she's on sabbatical.
- b. A: Is Janet around?
 B: Oh, she's on sabbatical in France.
- (46) a. A: Where's Tom?
 B: He's on break.

For (45a) and (46), the hearer can infer (by means of rather easily defeasible R-implicatures) that the locatum is somewhere 'not here.'

15. The terms *break* and *lunch [break]*, are exceptions to this view since they often occur as events in a daily, not yearly schedule. It may be that they are viewed, like *vacation* and *sabbatical*, as more specifically interruptions in the work routine, so that it is the lack of paid activity that is emphasized.

2.1.4 Untethered Metaphors

In examining bare singular count nouns that occur in PPs, one last set was found that can be grouped together not so much for the meanings that the nouns share, but because the expressions are used in situations which have in common the location NP's lack of a referent. The expressions are purely metaphorical, and no physical location is referred to. For example, when a person is described as *on edge*, no physical edge is meant; when a person is *on target*, there is no actual bull's-eye; when someone is *out of line*, there is no queue being referred to, etc. Thus, while they contain locative prepositions and nouns which have count senses sometimes denoting a physical location, this set of commonly used PPs are not used here as locative expressions. These PPs are listed in Table 10.

Table 10
Untethered Metaphors
 No object named by the NP is involved

<p>off base in bed (with) on board on edge in line (with) out of line on target on track</p>

With *on target*, for example, the locatum is typically a person's abstract predictions or plans, and the phrase indicates the degree to which they are accurate, as in (47).

- (47) You were **on target** regarding industry problems, but wide of the mark in portraying the financial health of this company.
(David R. Waters, "Letters to the Editor," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 31, 1989)

A non-metaphorical reading of *on target*, on the other hand, would need to have a physical projectile locatum rather than a locatum that is a plan or idea—as in the sentence in (48).

- (48) We thought the missile was veering off course but it stayed **on target**.

Note that when contact is made with an actual, physical target, an article would be needed to talk about the word *target's* referent:

- (49) Look, a squirrel has landed **on the target**.

On board is often used to describe someone joining a team or a company, as in example (50). In this case the metaphor is that the company is like the crew of a ship, but no actual ship—the original referent of *board*—is referred to.¹⁶

16. This sense is still seen in some uses of *board* in modifiers, such as an *onboard* or *outboard motor*.

- (50) Shortly after coming **on board**, he hired Marvin Honig, formerly an executive vice president of ad agency FCB/Leber Katz Partners, to Esty's top creative spot.
 (Thomas R. King, "Joseph O'Donnell Quits as Chairman Of Saatchi Ad Unit," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 4, 1989)

Similarly, with *off base*, *on track*, and other metaphorical uses of PPs found in Table 10, while a count noun is included in the PP, there is no physical object being referred to by the NPs. A longer metaphorical phrase that is frequently found is *be in bed (with)*. Used metaphorically, *in bed with* involves no actual bed, rather the locatum(s) (generally people of power such as a company's or a country's leaders) are implied to be in collusion.

A couple remaining bare forms appear in PPs in which the NPs are not denoting locations at all. These nouns, although they resemble members of the Social/Geographical Spaces group, have unrelated senses. They are further differentiated from the majority of bare singular NPs by being limited in co-occurrence to certain verbs:

- (51) lie **in state**
- (52) a. go to school **out of state**
 b. play the next two games **in state**
 c. travel **out of state**
- (53) hold **at bay**

In (51), for example, the word *state* is not used as freely as the Municipality uses of *state* shown in (52). The sense of *state* in (51) occurs with very few verbs. Unlike the PPs in (52), *state* in (51) is not used to refer to a location; *lie in state* is more of a set, non-literal phrase. Both (51) and (53) show words that have non-locational senses that only superficially resemble the count noun senses.

2.2 Uses of Bare Singular NPs and Their Containing PPs

In looking at the four sets of nouns that can be used as bare singular NPs in locative expressions, we see that some are used in reference, and others in predication. Traditionally, nouns are considered to have denotations, while NPs are used to refer.¹⁷ Looking at the bare singular NPs in locative PPs, recall that for the metaphorical uses, while the nouns have denotations, the bare NPs are not used to pick out any referent denoted by the noun; a member of this set, then, only occurs in PPs that are predicating expressions of the locatum.¹⁸ Likewise, the temporal

17. “First-order entities are such that they may be referred to” (Lyons 1977:443).

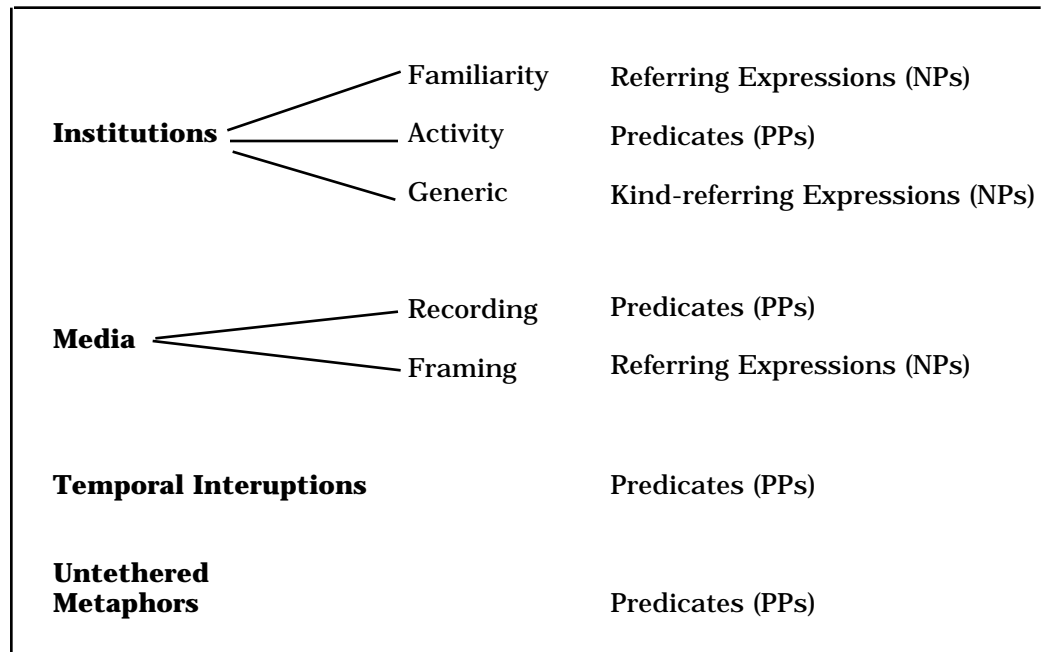
18. Of course, different senses of the same noun may have different bare form uses. To say a person is *on line* (meaning using a computer or accessing a database) or that information is *on line* (meaning located on or available via a database or computer) is to use a predicating expression about the locatum, while to say a person is *in/on line* (meaning standing in a queue) could be either a referring expression,

interruption expressions do not pick out an event or entity in their bare NP use, but in PPs are used to predicate the activity of the locatum. Of the media terms, the Recording Expression are again predicates. For an entity to be *on TV*, no specific television set is referred to; instead, the PP predicates something of the locatum. The framing expressions, on the other hand, are used to convey a particular framed space, from a particular participant's point of view. The Social/Geographical expressions also are used in both predication and reference. The generic use is kind-referring, the Familiarity use is individual referring, and the Activity use is not referential at all, but consists of a PP predicate describing the locatum (the locatum, however, is a referring expression). These different uses of bare singular NPs are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

indicating a particular line, or a predicate describing the locatum's queueing activity.

Predicates and Referring Expressions



The PPs that are solely predicates, which contain NPs not used for reference, are in line with claims that bare singular forms are not used to pick out actual places (cf. Christophersen 1939:183, Hall and Hall 1969:3, Quirk et al. 1985:276-277). But it is the groups of NPs with both referring and predicating uses that are the ones of interest here, since they indicate that we cannot make a blanket generalization about the meanings and uses of bare singular forms.

3. Analyzing the Prepositions

Now that I have laid out the four main categories of nouns that are used

as bare singular NPs, I turn briefly to the influence of preposition choice on the meaning of the phrases containing those NPs. In some ways this choice is also affected by knowledge of the NPs' referents, relating as it does to such aspects as the physical shape of the location NP's referent and the size and mobility of the locatum.¹⁹ But first, let us consider some of the geometric information that speakers take to be the underlying meaning of a spatial preposition.

3.1 Denotations of the Spatial Prepositions *in*, *on*, and *at*

3.1.1 Geometric Aspects

First I will lay out some of the expectations about the distinct meanings of *in*, *on*, and *at* that a hearer brings into play.

Herskovits (1985: 358-359) presents a view of each preposition as a category organized around a focal relation, the "ideal meaning" for the preposition. The definitions on the left in (54) show the four ideal meanings she proposes for the prepositions under discussion:

19. Other relevant aspects, as we'll see in Chapter 4, are such pragmatic factors as the expected use of the locatum and location, the relation between the speaker and hearer, and the speaker's current view of the location.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| (54) a. in : spatial inclusion | Food is in the freezer. |
| b. on : contiguity and support
(for three-dimensional objects) | The book is on the table. |
| c. contiguity
(for one or two-
dimensional objects) | A stain is on my shirt. |
| d. at : coincidence of two points | The store is at the corner. |

Dirven (1993) lays out similar minimal requirements for the prepositions: *on* requires contact, *in* requires some kind of enclosure, and *at*, the most “neutral” place preposition, requires neither contact nor enclosure, merely that one point is oriented off the other. Because *on* alone requires that the two objects actually touch in space, Dirven sees *on* as the most spatial of the set: “Although *at* and *in* can be used to fulfil purely spatial functions, they do so in a less concrete or less ‘spatial’ way than *on*, and therefore they may be more apt to go beyond spatial conceptualisations” (1993:75). That is, *at* and *in* are more likely to be used in extended non-spatial senses, e.g., temporal, manner.

3.1.2 Moving Beyond Geometry to Interpretation

However, despite the factors that Herskovits, Dirven, and others note as common threads in the meanings of spatial prepositions, Herskovits (1985: 348) notes a major shortcoming of the simple-relations

models—those models which see prepositional meaning strictly determined by the configuration of actual objects:

the simple relations would not, in any case, apply to the objects themselves, but rather to parts of space, to geometric images matched onto the object, to what I call geometric descriptions of the objects. And even with the same preposition, different geometric descriptions may be applicable.

In other words, the relevant part of a location object may be perceived and indicated in different ways. This can be seen by the different physical areas picked out as the location in the PPs in (55).

- (55) a. the crack in the vase (Herskovits 1985:348)
 b. the water in the vase (Herskovits 1985:348)
 c. the beauty in the vase

In (55a) the vase is conceptualized in terms of the substance of the container, while in (55b) the relevant space is the volume that the container surrounds. In (55c), on the other hand, it is elements such as the vase's proportion or its manufacture that are being pointed out, and not an actual space.

By examples such as (55a) and (55b), Herskovits points out that it is not real-world objects (like vases) which we manipulate in our spatial perceptions and descriptions, but modified geometric descriptions: "geomet-

ric description involves viewing or conceptualizing an object as a point, a line, a surface, or a strip—in other words as some simple geometric figure” (1985:349). So, she argues, speakers do not use prepositions to locate a real-world entity with a constant meaning, but are influenced by a filter of geometric perception that allows them to indicate the relevant perspective of an object; this ability to highlight various possible perspectives helps speakers to figure out which aspect of the meaning of a preposition and an NP is meant, even among utterances containing the same preposition and NP.

Thus, according to Herskovits, our geometric conceptualization interacts with the variation in the spatial meanings we can apply to the same spatial prepositions. But beyond variations in how we conceive of the ideal meaning of a particular spatial relation, there are ordered extensions into non-spatial domains as well. Dirven (1993) analyses 12 spatial prepositions (*in, on, at, from, off, out of, by, with, under, through, about, over*) by separating them into groups related by meaning, and showing the patterns of radial meaning extension that lead from the spatial sense out into other domains such as time, state, area, manner, circumstance, and cause. His approach resembles that of Lakoff (1987) in showing a core meaning for a word with a series of shifts and extensions that lead

to related word senses in other domains. In this case, the spatial sense is core, but through extension to other domains, non-spatial senses emerge. As Dirven notes, “the extensions of the meanings of a preposition from physical space via time into more abstract domains do not occur in any haphazard way but follow a path of gradually increasing abstractions, whereby the link with each prior meaning remains obvious and may account for most, if not all, co-occurrence restrictions” (1993: 76) between *locatum* and *location*.

The use of domains is helpful in contrasting many sets of related PP meanings. The examples in (56) provide some instances of connected senses of the preposition *at* (Dirven (1993:20-21)).

- (56)
- | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------------------------|
| a. | point as place: | at the station |
| b. | time-point: | at six o'clock |
| c. | manner: | at full speed |
| d. | circumstance: | at these words, he left |
| e. | state: | at work |

Dirven's assignment of phrases to domains seems to be determined partly by the intuitive categorization of the location NPs (e.g., a station is a place, six o'clock is a time, etc.). Rauh (1993) makes this claim more explicitly: she says that in the same way that selectional restrictions on verbs require objects of certain types (e.g., animate, concrete), so prepo-

sitions allow only complements which are marked with certain semantic features (e.g., spatial, temporal, scalar). “The preposition *above* does not take a complement which is marked as temporal. It does, however, take complements which allow a spatial or a scalar interpretation. The preposition *at*, on the other hand, allows spatially and temporally interpretable complements... which means that there are lexical variants” (Rauh 1993:108). In other words, there are distinct senses for the same prepositions.

It is useful to consider the types of constraints on nouns that can occur in locative PPs. For example, *in* in its basic spatial sense requires enclosure of one object in another, which in the spatial domain requires physical objects. However, if following a domain shift such as those in (56), the domain is shifted to a state, a new set of NPs become possible objects for a spatial preposition. For example, abstract nouns can be used if they identify a condition or an emotional state; by metaphorical extension, this term is considered to surround the locatum, at least emotionally: *in danger*, *in trouble*, *in agony*. Thus it is important to note that each domain, not just each preposition, would take a different set of NPs.

Dirven contrasts meanings of two prepositions from different domains used with the same verb and object:

The difference between means and instrument stands out most clearly in the pair *write in pencil* and *write with a pencil*: the *in*-phrase conceptualises the way (manner or means) in which things are done; here the idea of an enveloping state or substance is clearly present, which also accounts for the use of *pencil* as an uncountable noun; the *with*-phrase stresses the use of an accompanying instrument and since this is concrete, *pencil* is used as a countable noun here. (Dirven 1993:90)

The reason for the syntactic contrast in object forms between *in pencil* and *with a pencil* has to do with *in* being able to have either a substance or material noun as its object, thus allowing us to interpret the word *pencil* as *pencil lead*. The word *with*, on the other hand, allows artifacts, and especially tools, among the types of referents its objects might be, so a countable NP like *a pencil* is possible with *with*. The metonymy of *pencil* as a tool (with a count noun interpretation), to *pencil lead* as a substance (mass noun) is what allows *pencil*, but not other substance nouns to show up after both *in* and *with*:

- | | | |
|------|-------------|-------------------|
| (57) | in charcoal | * with a charcoal |
| | in blood | * with a blood |
| | in ink | * with an ink |

We saw evidence of this contrast in object types earlier with the two sets

of Recording Media expressions discussed in Section 2.1.2 above. There we saw bare singular NPs such as *on disk*, *on radio*, *on video* contrasted with PPs in which the object NP was a mass noun, such as *in ink* and *in memory*. With *in ink* and *in memory*, the referent of the object is a substance or encompassing storage situation, while with *on* we expect more physical placement as onto a section of the tape, disk, etc.; that is, the location NP for *on* is viewed as more of a discrete location. Therefore, it is not surprising that Recording Media occurring with prepositions like *in* are interpreted as more masslike than expressions that follow *on*.

Quirk et al. (1985), for example, address this difficulty of determining whether a spatial preposition is used in a locative phrase, observing that “certain nouns have the zero article, especially as complement of *at*, *in* and *on* in quasi-locative phrases ... We call them ‘quasi-locative’ because, although they appear to have locative meaning, their function is rather more abstract” (p. 277). In fact, it is this appearance of locative meaning that makes these forms so hard to classify. I propose that while all these PPs appear to have locative structure (i.e., spatial preposition + location NP), not all of them have locative meaning. In the next chapter I will show that although some of the NPs in certain contexts (e.g., *in town*, *on campus*) are referring expressions and thus pick out

physical referents as part of being spatial expressions, many of the PPs (e.g., *in prison, in court*) involve more extended senses of the prepositions and are used with prepositions not from the spatial domain but from manner or state domains. The lack of article in the NP can be an indicator that a hearer should choose a non-spatial sense for the preposition, or that the referent is identifiable.

3.2 From Senses to Extensions of Spatial Prepositions

3.2.1 Use Type Patterns

Rauh (1993) notes that the semantic roles THEME, LOCATION, SOURCE, PATH, and GOAL are independent of the domains of space, time, manner, etc., though these roles were probably originally relevant to the spatial domain and were later transferred to other domains, a development that she notes has been observed for many prepositions diachronically (by, e.g., Closs-Traugott 1985) and in language acquisition (by e.g., Clark 1973). Rauh explains the process by which a new sense of a preposition develops:

It is easy to see how variants ... may develop. If it is assumed that primary spatial prepositions exhibit selection properties on the basis of which they select a spatial unit as their internal argument, then it is possible to imagine that deviant marked sequences can be generated by inserting non-spatial complements, thus violating the selection properties and thus inducing a meta-

phorical interpretation. As Kittay (1981; 1987: 214ff.) has demonstrated, one of the relevant principles of metaphor is the transfer of structural or organizational properties from one semantic domain to another. (Rauh 1993:123)

Many prepositions of spatial origin are used non-spatially, though Rauh notes that only a few of these may be identified as distinct lexical prepositions, for while numerous examples exist of temporal lexical variants of originally spatial prepositions, including *before*, *after*, or *until*, of these, “*before* used as a spatial preposition is rare in Modern English, and *after* as well as *until* have completely lost their spatial properties” (Rauh 1993:124). She indicates that such changes confirm that reanalysis of lexical properties is possible, indeed documented. Rauh suggests that one can observe changes in the sense of these prepositions from the “marked metaphorical use of a form to a lexical variant characterized by reanalyzed lexical properties” (p. 124).

Other uses of spatial prepositions, Rauh claims, have become highly lexicalized, but are merely reinterpreted rather than reanalyzed. I am not suggesting that the prepositions used with bare singular NPs are reanalyzed as having new non-spatial senses, but only that the prepositions in some uses are easily reinterpreted non-spatially, especially with certain sets of objects.

Herskovits (1982, 1985) proposes that factors in addition to metaphorical extension create variants of prepositional meaning. She suggests that the central sense of each preposition's 'ideal meaning' is somewhat elastic and she describes the allowable variations as different 'use types' for each preposition:

A use type is, thus, a phrase pattern centered around a preposition, together with the interpretation, or meaning, associated with the pattern. Most often, the phrase pattern is simply a preposition with selection restrictions for the subject and object of the preposition, but sometimes it involves a specific word as subject of the prepositions. (Herskovits 1985:370)

In Herskovits's description, "subject and object of the preposition" correspond to what I have been referring to as the locatum and the location NPs. A typical example of a use type would be "Person *at* Artifact," which would be interpreted pragmatically to mean the person is using the artifact.²⁰ From this use type, one can generate examples such as those in (58):

- (58) a. Tomeka was at the computer.
 b. Joe was at the Xerox machine.
 c. The temp was at his desk.

In these constructions, the locatum is understood to be not just in the

20. As we'll see in Chapter 4, Section 2.1.2, the meanings conveyed by these use types qualify as R-Implicatures.

proximity of the location (which is all that *at* alone would semantically entail) but involved in the activity associated with that artifact. Hence in (58a) Tomeka is sitting at the computer typing; in (58b) Joe is making copies; in (58c) the temp is using the desk surface (to write or to sort papers), etc. Even if they are not doing the activity, *at* is used to imply that they are positioned on the side where one could work, as compared to the examples in (59), where only nearness, not orientation is implied:

- (59) a. Tomeka is by the computer,
 b. Joe was by the Xerox machine.
 c. The temp was by his desk.

Use types, then, are a way to point out common interpretations of certain prepositions in certain uses. But of course, as Herskovits observes, the agreed upon meaning may not be attached to just any locatum, but generally takes in a very constrained set of objects. In (58), for example, artifacts such as wall, mailbox, poster, etc., could not be used to convey that the locatum was using the object. So, use types, while they are described as patterns of meaning centered around a preposition, really reflect an interaction of the meaning of the preposition, the meaning of the NP, and socially agreed upon expectations about how the referents of such NPs are typically used.

In summary, simple geometric relations among the referents of NPs are often taken to be key to understanding the meaning of a preposition (for a critical review of past approaches, see Cienki 1989:4-14), but often these relations are just a starting point, with semantic extension and pragmatic factors such as context and the speakers' expectation of the object's function having a fairly predictable influence as well.

3.2.2 Dialect Differences Between *in* and *at*

Other differences in prepositions are more localized in their use. One dialectal difference between British and American speakers, for example, is illustrated in (60), which shows a contrast used by British speakers.

- (60) a. He's at school (Brit) = He attends/is attending school
 [=Quirk et al. (1979), p. 310]
- b. He's in school (Brit) = He's actually inside the building
 --not, e.g., on the playing fields
 [=Quirk et al. (1979), p. 310]

Quirk et al. (1979) note the contrast between some *in* and *at* expressions which reveals separate senses for the PPs, which again differ from the core spatial sense distinguishing each preposition.

American English, they point out, uses "in school" for both the activity sense (60a) and the location sense (60b). This American usage can be

verified from the many attested examples of *in school* that I have collected, two of which appear in (61). In neither case is the school building meant, but instead the time period during which the locatum was attending school is indicated.

- (61) a. The beauty of Burnett's story (the novel, which was published in 1905, is an expanded version of an 1888 novella) is that it presents the battle of youthful fancy against adult "realism" as a kind of epic struggle, fought where it is usually fought—**in school**.
(Terrence Rafferty, "The Current Cinema," *The New Yorker*, May 29, 1995, p. 92-3)
- b. When I was **in nursery school**, some girls fed me hot sauce.
(Matt Groening, *Life in Hell* cartoon, *Chicago Reader*, Aug. 16, 1996, Section 4, p. 1)

However, the British meaning difference in (60) is the same one expressed in many American locative PPs by the contrast between the articulated and anarthrous forms, as shown in (62)-(64).

- (62) a. to be at church = to be taking part in the service
b. to be at the church = to merely be in or near the building, for any purpose
- (63) a. to be in school = to be taking part in attending or teaching a class
b. to be in the school = could apply to any person (visitor, parent, janitor, voter) who was physically inside the building
- (64) a. to be in prison = to be held there for committing a crime
b. to be in the prison = to be in the building, for any reason (e.g., as visitor, cook, cockroach)

Since I posit in Chapter 4 that the meanings of the bare forms in (62)-(64) are created by Activity Implicature, the (a) examples can be said to convey the Activity sense. The meanings in the (b) examples, which contain articles in the NP, are used to convey the more straightforward locative meaning, and can therefore be said to convey the Locative sense.

To summarize, prepositional meaning is interpreted through basic geometric information, through our conceptualization of the relevant part of the referents, and through certain implicated contrasts concerning the referentiality of the location NPs.

3.3 Orienting a Spatial PP

Previously, in Section 2, I discussed the meanings of the bare singular NPs analyzed in isolation, i.e., by looking at what *school*, *university*, and *college*, for example, have in common. In this section, the NP as part of a PP is considered, and I will use a categorization that looks at the influence of the verb, the preposition, and the location NP in specific sentences to identify two perceptions of the referents when they are referred to in PPs.

PPs with bare forms are often considered in their adverbial function, but

as noted in Chapter 1, like other locative PPs, they can also serve as modifiers of NPs or as nominals. With locative PPs such as *downtown*, *offstage*, and *out of state*, the use of a PP rather than an NP to name a location allows for a new patterning of the bare singular NP uses, creating a system that takes into consideration the information that the PP presents about the shape of the location and what the locatum does at that location. I will show that with some PPs, the location is presented as a particular point to which the locatum travels or at which the locatum is positioned (Section 3.3.1). In other, sometimes identical PP structures, the location is presented as a type of path. This second perspective has two instantiations: (1) the path as a direction of movement—a path with no specific endpoint required, or, (2) the location as a traversable area within which the locatum travels (Section 3.3.2).

3.3.1 Location as a Point

In Section 2.1, *in*, *on*, and *at* were shown to be the most basic spatial prepositions, appearing with verbs of location or position (e.g., *be*, *stay*, *sit*). The NPs in these PPs identify the stationary point at which the locatum is positioned. The same NPs that appear with *in*, *on*, and *at* generally can appear in a PP after a motion verb (e.g., *go*, *travel*, *arrive*)—rather than a location verb—to name the source or goal end point at

which the locatum was or plans to be; in that case they appear with the prepositions *to*, *toward*, or *from*:

- (65) a. She got up and walked slowly **toward camp**.
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./Nov. 1996, p. 118)
- b. Seventeen-year-old Junko Furuta was riding her bike home **from work** last spring when a gang of teen-age boys kidnapped her.
(Damon Darlin, "Japanese Fear New Juvenile Violence Is Sign of Spreading 'American Disease,'" *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 2, 1989)
- c. He bought books at auctions, he bought them C.O.D., and every week he came **to town** with Roman and hauled a bagful out of the library.
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 84)

A new set of prepositions can be brought into play, but not as prepositions with NP objects; instead, some prepositions, such as *up*, *down*, *on*, *off*, and *out of*, combine with Ns to create P+N compounds. The terms *downtown*, *uptown*, *downstate*, and *upstate*, for example, are such nominals that name the location point. Similarly, by itself, *home* as an object can name a point without using a preposition.²¹ With the lexical-

21. Cf. Fillmore's (1991)' treatment of the word *home* in which he shows that it often has the behavior of a bare intransitive preposition containing an anaphoric element. As we saw in Chapter 1, Sect. 3.3, many of the bare NPs can follow the verb *leave*, but only *home* appears bare after all motion verbs:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| (i) flew home | (ii) * flew school |
| arrived home | * crawled prison |
| crawled home | * arrived church |

ized P+N compounds as well as with *home*, both verbs of location and verbs of motion can occur.

The following three scenarios indicate the presence of a Location Point Nominal. These are illustrated in (66)-(68).

- (66) PPs without prepositions: the NP is either the word *home*, or a lexicalized P+N compound made of *up* or *down*:
- a. When school came out my sisters **went home** in different groups, each supposing I was with the other.
(Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of the Island*, 1915, Gutenberg etext)
 - b. Why don't you meet me at the Parasol on top of the Sunbelt Plaza on Peachtree? Food's not all that hot, but the view is spectacular, and there's really not any place **downtown** that doesn't cater to tourists.
(Anne River Siddons, *Homeplace*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1987, p. 239)
 - c. The shrubs bounced against the ground again and again, and **upslope** the trees howled.
(=(13))
 - d. He called Singer first, finding him finally **downstate** at the Seventh Division construction office.
(Tony Hillerman, *The Fly on the Wall*, 1971, New York: HarperCollins, p. 247)
-

- (67) PPs (containing NPs that are either lexicalized P+N compounds or bare singular NPs) with verbs of motion and following the prepositions *from*, *to*, *toward*, or *through*:
- a. Instead of his usual monologue, Mr. Hall just shouts “I’m back!” **from offstage** and introduces Ms. Abdul.
(Leon E. Wynter, “Ghetto and Suburb Go to a House Party,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 29, 1989)
 - b. Although most of the apartment complexes on the auction block were built by Texans, most of the buyers are **from out of state**.
(Christi Harlan, “Apartment Complex Sales Brighten a Dark Market,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 5, 1989)
 - c. It was only much later, when we were driving away **from camp** and I was trying, not very successfully, to still my pain and anger at the scant notice that Mrs. Spectorisky had taken of me, that I realized that I had of course invited just such rejection by dropping in at Lenore this unexpectedly.
(Diana Trilling, “The Girls of Camp Lenore,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 12, 1996, p. 68)
 - d. Mr. Thompson [the principal] sometimes prevails upon the parents to **come to school** and do the paddling, which is limited to two licks with a nine-inch long oval wooden paddle, kept in the school office.
(Susan Sheehan, “Kid, Twelve,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 56)
 - e. A Brinks truck raced **through town**, hit a bump, and a bag fell out at my feet.
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 227)
 - f. She could hear the tinny, diminishing burr of the Toyota as it turned out of the driveway and disappeared down Pomeroy Street **toward town**.
(Anne River Siddons, *Homeplace*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1987, p. 282)

- (68) Bare Singular NPs following verbs of location/positions and the prepositions *in*, *on*, or *at*:
- a. There she was, **standing on stage** in a pink strapless gown that she and her mother bought, used, for \$20 at a bridal shop, to be crowned with a cut-glass studded tiara, four inches high.
(Clare Ansberry, "Perhaps 900 Queens Reign Over Ohio And Its Bounty," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 5, 1989)
 - b. If you **live on campus** in a dorm or networked Greek house, and you're having difficulty connecting your computer to the network, please press six to receive a referral to a rescon [residential networking consultant].
(Northwestern University Information Services, outgoing voicemail message. Dec. 1996)
 - c. We weren't restaurantgoers—"Why pay good money for food you could make better **at home**?" was Mother's philosophy—so we weren't at all sure about restaurant custom: could, for example, a person who had been seated in a restaurant simply get up and walk out? Would it be proper? Would it be legal?
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 109)

The types of examples in which Location Point Nominals are found are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12
Location Point Nominals
 Locatum Moves To or Is Situated At the Location Point

Location Appears with no preposition	
He went home. Is your father home? She went downstate for the weekend. She lives downstate. She works downtown. We learned it without leaving campus.	
Moveable Locatum with <i>from, to, or toward</i>	Stationary Locatum with <i>in, on, at or across, up, down</i>
She went to school. She came from camp. She returned from downtown. The car traveled toward town.	He stayed at home. She lives up river. They are on shore. We sat in church. The store is across town.

3.3.2. Traversable Locations

While *in*, *on*, and *at* can be used with positional or movement verbs when the endpoint location is specified, we should also now consider additional prepositions used to describe the location as a directional path, or to describe the location as a traversable expanse. This use only occurs with motion verbs. Here the location is viewed not as a point, but rather as a traversable area through which the locatum moves. *Up*, *down*, *across*, and *through* are examined here as typical of the prepositions that can be used for expressing a locatum's movement through a

location area.

In these cases, unlike the Location Point Nominals, directional PPs have similar meanings to PPs with an indefinite article in them. To move up hill is to move up a hill, to travel down river is to travel down a river, to run across town is to run across a town, etc. Here, *up* and *down* serve more typically as directional prepositions, with the bare singular NPs serving as objects. That is, the contrast between *up* and *down* uses has to do with whether the locatum is moving or stationary; i.e., whether the locatum is progressing up the state rather than being located upstate, is moving up the length of the town or is being situated uptown. Table 13 below gives examples of PPs that contain Traversable Location Objects.

Table 13
Traversable Locations

Locatum Moves Along the Location

<p>up/down island up/down stream up/down river up/down hill up/down slope across/through town across/through campus</p>

Example (69) below contrasts the two uses of bare nouns with *up*.

- (69) a. Our people're already **upriver**, so, tonight, you'll be the guest of a bunch of centipede enthusiasts.
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./Nov. 1996, p. 117)
- b. Leveritt and Brinkman stepped aboard the boat that was to carry them **upriver**.
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./Nov. 1996, p. 22)

In (69a) the term *upriver* refers to a point where people are located; *river* is not the location, *upriver* is. In (69b) *upriver*²² refers to the path along which they will travel; here *river* is the location along which the traveling occurs.

In (70a) *offshore* is used to refer to a point just off of the shore; in contrast, in (70b) *on shore* is used to describe the path of the clouds towards the shore:

- (70) a. A ship--a huge ship, so big that for a second I thought it was just **offshore**.
(=(15))
- b. The next day a heavy wall of clouds moved **onshore**.
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984. p. 127)

In (71), the highlighted phrases describe the direction of the travel:

22. One factor adding to the ambiguity is that, as with many compound forms in English, there is little consistency in whether the term is written as a single orthographic word or as two words.

- (71) Down at Alley's Store, I could shell out for an autographed jar of one of Carly Simon's You're So Vain skin care products. I could ride my bike **up island** to John Belushi's or Lillian Hellman's grave at Abel's Hill Cemetery, or **down island** to the zillion-dollar mausoleum-cum-mansion that the ghostly-looking Mike Nichols and Diane Sawyer have built at Tashmoo.
(Pete Karman, "Ferry Tales," *In These Times*, Aug. 5-18, 1996, p. 40)

Here *island* names the location that is being traveled through, while the actual endpoints are named in separate phrases. In other words, *island* is not where the locatum is headed, but is the area that he is traversing.

A use of *down* with one of the bare singular NPs occurred eight times in the corpus in a collocation which I at first judged odd. In their original settings they were attributed to older rural speakers; the OED indicates that it is only an American usage. The examples in (72) show uses of *down cellar*, which, if they were Traversable Point Locations, would be different than the other data examined because they lack not only an article, but also another preposition--i.e., down [into the] cellar. But seen as Location Point Nominals they are more consistent with other bare singular forms—e.g., [to] down cellar, [at a point which is] down cellar. This Location Point reading is reinforced by the parallel structure shown in (72b) with "upstairs, downstairs, and in the pantry," in which each phrase names a point that was checked during the search:

- (72) a. Raymond went **down cellar** to putter away the afternoon in his workshop.
(Barbara Mater, "Delving in the Dark," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, mid-December 1994, p. 121)
- b. Well, her and me starts to lookin' upstairs, downstairs, in the pantry, **down cellar**, Ronnie still listenin' to the radio, then Doris sees the porch door is open and we look out there, then look in the barn.
(E. Annie Proulx, *Postcards*, New York: Collier Books, 1992, p. 67)
- c. I wonder if it wouldn't help you out to go **down cellar** and stir the ice-cream.
(E. S. Ward, *Story of Avis*, 1877, p. 141, [=OED Online])

At least one other directional preposition can be used to create ambiguities between the Location Point and Traversable Location senses — *across*: e.g., 'ride your bike across town', or 'live across town'. A more limited set of bare nouns is used with *across*, however; *town* and *campus* are two, perhaps because they both generally involve a larger, more expansive space than the other NPs.²³ Examples of these are shown in (73) and (74).

- (73) a. Mr. Smith actually hangs out **across town** at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club, but that club isn't as photogenic.
(Paul Ingrassia, "This Time, GM's Innocent," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 29, 1989)

23. Some other constraints than sheer size of the referent select the nouns that are found with this preposition. These NPs are also used to pick out an identifiable referent for the speaker and hearer; as I'll show in Chapter 4, besides the constraint on the physical shape, it is only those bare singular NPs that are used for Familiarity Implicatures that are also used with *across*.

- b. I told him it would be insane to bicycle **across town** during a massacre.
(Jan Wong, *Red China Blues*, New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1996, p. 260)
- (74) a. Meanwhile, **across campus** at the Gallery of Design, Tana Bana: the Woven Soul of Pakistan will illustrate that country's textile heritage and regional artistic diversity.
(<http://www.wisc.edu/news/thisweek/Events/Y98/sep/asiaart.html>)
- b. As Weisberger later put it in his appeal to his tenure committee: On or around November of 1994, we were walking **across campus** when she told me she had a dream about me.
(Ruth Shalit, "The Man Who Knew Too Much," *Lingua Franca*, Feb. 1998, p. 35)

In (73a), *across town* denotes the point at which Smith is found, while in (73b), *town* is the area across which the cyclist moves. Similarly, in (74a) the gallery is located at a point which is across the campus from an earlier named location, while in (74b) *campus* is the area crossed by the speaker.

Uphill can also be used to point out a traversable location:

- (75) In another moment the colossal mechanism went striding by me, and passed **uphill** towards Pырford.
(H. G. Wells, *War of the Worlds*, 1898, Gutenberg etext)

Here the hill is the location up which the locatum travelled. In other tokens, however, *uphill* examples are largely metaphorical—used to

mean 'difficult'. Out of four occurrences taken from the *Wall Street Journal*, all were adverbial uses modifying the verbs *run*, *flow* and *jog*, and none were used to refer to an actual hill; such metaphorical uses are illustrated in (76).

- (76) a. But is he so clever that he has achieved the political equivalent of making water run **uphill**?
(Marjorie Brady, "The Fascist Element in Perestroika," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 31, 1989)
- b. But at Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp., new-venture money flows **uphill**—into the poverty-ridden villages and backwoods shacks of the Appalachian Mountains.
(Sue Shellenbarger, "Stimulating a Pocket of Appalachia With Venture Funds," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 15, 1989)

In (76) the hill, though metaphorical, is still traversed by the locatum; it is just that *hill* is not used referentially.

4. Larger Lexical Chunks

So far I have presented several subsets of location nouns that can serve as bare singular NPs and looked at the spatial prepositions that often occur with these NPs. The meaning that a speaker intends to convey by using such NPs in PPs can be partially understood through a lexical semantic analysis of the particular nouns and prepositions; understanding a speaker's full meaning, however, as will be seen in the next chapter, also requires a set of pragmatic factors. For the Familiarity and

Generic senses, it is the nominal form that is used to convey a marked meaning, but the Activity sense is conveyed by the whole PP predicate together with assumed semantic constraints on the nouns. Treating non-literal or noncompositional PPs (e.g., *over the hill*, *out of sorts*) as idiomatic lexical entries has traditionally been a way to set these expressions aside as exceptions to the general meaning-creating compositional rules of linguistic structure, thus treating each phrase as a lexical exception to be individually memorized. A difference must be noted, however, between such single occurrence idioms and larger patterns of set expressions, such as *be in prison*, *be in church*, *be in school*.

Several recent approaches have begun examining patterns of combined structure and meaning, looking at productive patterns of lexical chunks that are larger than the word unit. Recent examinations of phrasal idioms, such as Nunberg et al. (1994), several practitioners of Construction Grammar, including Fillmore et al. (1988), Lambrecht (1994), Michaelis and Lambrecht (1996), and Goldberg (1995), as well as the analysis of prepositional use types in Herskovits (1985), all present examples of more complex approaches to meaning construction that suggests a useful approach to the interpretation of PPs containing bare singular NPs. In this section I suggest that looking at the words alone—whether they

be nouns or prepositions—is an inadequate way to understand the uses of these bare NPs. In Section 4.1 to 4.3 I will briefly review three approaches to attaching meaning to larger lexical chunks, which suggests a better way to tackle bare singular NPs in use.

4.1 Constructions

Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor (1988) use a Construction Grammar (CG) approach to explaining the use of utterances containing *let alone*, as illustrated in (77a). This example shows that the meaning for an utterance containing the conjunctive phrase *let alone* is dependent on the two NPs and negative element that frame it, so that the actual lexical entry for the construction is more like that shown in (77b).

- (77) a. We didn't have a slice of bread, let alone sandwiches.
 b. Neg X, let alone Y (where X is lower on some scale than Y)

CG includes components that differ from those of traditional phrase structure grammars by allowing larger groupings than mother and daughter nodes as constructions; these may specify “not only syntactic but also lexical, semantic, and pragmatic information” (Fillmore et al. 1988:501). Constructions may consist of lexical, phrasal, clausal, or sentential units, or even prosodic contours (cf. Lambrecht 1994, Hirsch-

berg and Ward 1995). Lexical items may count as full constructions themselves, or constructions may be idiomatic, including ‘formal idioms,’ which Fillmore et al. (1988:505) define as follows: While substantive or lexically filled idioms have wording that is rather set (e.g., *kick the bucket*), formal or lexically open idioms are “syntactic patterns dedicated to semantic and pragmatic purposes not knowable from their form alone.” As an example of a formal idiom, they provide the unexpected pairing of the definite article and the comparative form illustrated in (78a-c), which is shown more abstractly in (78d).²⁴

- (78) a. The more you practice the better you’ll be.
 b. The bigger they come the harder they fall.
 c. The more you tighten your grip, the more star systems will slip through your fingers.
 d. *The Adj1-comparative S1 the Adj2-comparative S2*

Goldberg, in her 1995 book on CG, claims that while a great deal of information does come from lexical items themselves, an entirely lexically-based approach fails to account for the full range of English data: “particular structures together with their associated formal expression must be recognized as constructions independent of the lexical items which instantiate them” (p. 1). This description applies not only to

24. Another formal idiom suggested by Fillmore et al. (1988:58) is the bare use of *home* where a direction or locative complement is normally required. As we saw in Table 12, the bare use of *home* patterns like other Ns such as *downtown* and *upstate* but lacks the overt preposition of these compounds.

expressions like those in (77) and (78) but to many uses of bare singular NPs in which [+human NP—V—locative preposition—bare singular NP] can be construed as a unit, with many possible instantiations and a special meaning attached to the whole phrase. Regarding examples of the comparative constructions in (78), Fillmore et al (1988:507) note, that “in spite of the fact that it is host to a large number of fixed expressions, the form has to be recognized as fully productive. Its member expressions are in principle not listable: unlimitedly many new expressions can be constructed within its pattern, their meaning constructed by mean of semantic principles specifically tied to this construction” .

CG assumes that form-meaning constructions are the basic units of language, and the theory is intended to account for subtle meaning differences between alternations or sentence variations with the same lexical items.²⁵ This would certainly apply to expressions containing bare singular NPs, since, for example, bare vs. definite vs. indefinite vs. plural NP forms can be used in PPs to create many different nuances of meaning. However, the selection of nouns for each bare singular use is more semantically constrained than the construction patterns in (77) and (78), since, as we saw earlier, the marked Familiarity and Activity

25. Lambrecht (1994:6), quoting Daneš (1966), calls such sets ‘allosentences’.

senses only occur with bare location nouns that are Social/Geographical Spaces.

4.2 Idioms

The more constrained the items that fill the variables, the more the expression type is perceived as idiomatic. The constraints on the referents of bare singular NPs has been noted by most earlier discussions of PPs containing these forms, most of which dismiss the expression as 'frozen' or 'idiomatic'. Nunberg et al. (1994), however, suggest a more comprehensive account of idioms, noting that phrasal idioms involve special conventions; these conventions are not just noncompositionality, but can be conventions attached to the use of the idiom constituents (p. 499). They note that the majority of phrasal idioms are compositional, but that idiomatic phrases can be divided into two types: idiomatically combining expressions, which are conventionalized, but have a meaning put together from their parts, vs. idiomatic phrases, which are not compositional but only conventionalized. They contrast idioms based on metaphoric transfer of meaning from literal words to representational word (e.g., *pull strings*, or *let the cat out of the bag*) in which certain actions and their objects remain in the same relationship, as opposed to other idioms that are totally noncompositional, i.e. the meaning is not

distributed among the parts (e.g., *to saw logs*, *to kick the bucket*).

However, neither category of idiom quite accounts for bare NPs in locative phrases. While the meaning conveyed by bare singular NPs is not literal, no metaphor is required to decode it; instead, further information about the utterance's context is what allows the hearer to understand the phrase. Thus, while PPs lacking articles are often said to be idiomatic (cf. Meyer-Myklestad 1967, Hall and Hall 1969, Quirk 1979:277), this means only that a particular meaning is conventionalized with the form. On the other hand, the bare forms are not as opaque in relation to their component word meanings as the ideas of sleeping and dying are to sawing logs or kicking buckets. The meaning conveyed by the expressions *on campus*, *up river*, or *on site* is not far from the meaning of the articulated phrases, but the meaning varies in a particular direction; in these expressions what is conventionalized by the lack of article is the deictic or activity sense, not a whole new meaning for *campus*, *river* or *site*.

4.3 Use Types

As mentioned earlier, Herskovits (1982, 1985) also suggests a phrasal approach in her examination of the semantics and pragmatics of locative

expressions. She suggests that the idea of prepositions denoting simple spatial relations between two objects (e.g., containment, support, contiguity) is inadequate. Her approach is to suggest that each preposition has a singular ‘ideal meaning’ that is manifested in some way in all of its uses, although this meaning may be shifted or extended in various ways—in particular via two kinds of transformations applying to the ideal meaning: sense shifts and tolerance shifts (Herskovits 1985: 355). Recall that the ideal meaning does not apply to the referents of the noun phrases, but to geometric descriptions associated with these referents. Each prepositional category is structured by resemblance to an ideal relation, a kind of prototype of the preposition’s sense. “The whole set of uses of the preposition can then be subcategorized into use types (corresponding roughly to different senses), each such subclass manifesting the ideal meaning, but usually after some transformations” (Herskovits 1985: 343).

Like constructions and formal idioms, Herskovits sees use types as “complex entities, more elaborate than senses as linguists usually conceive of them. One might specify in a use type a whole range of elements of meaning, anything that holds true for any phrase generated by the use type pattern” (Herskovits 1985:371), i.e., the referents are all

used for a specific purpose or found in a particular circumstance. However, calling these use types implies a shift in meaning of, for example, one of the prepositions, while it is not the case that these locative PPs with bare form NPs present a special subsense of *in*, *on*, or *at*. What is needed is a use type that allows a variety of locative prepositions as well as a variety of NPs.

To understand bare singular location NPs in locative PPs, we need a system to identify meaning that is neither solely word-based nor solely sentence-based. Nunberg et al. (1994), Goldberg (1995), Fillmore et al. (1988), and Herskovits (1985) all present a direction to follow. Constructions such as formal idioms suggest ways in which phrasal or idiomatic uses can be included as lexical entries and, further, not just as individual phrases, but as patterns or templates that allow a number of different variables to be inserted.

Earlier in the chapter I discussed the characteristics of the variables (i.e., the bare singular NPs with distinct referent types); in this section I looked at ways to group together NPs that occur with the same preposition which together convey related meanings. Constructions, formal idioms, and use types are all attempts to include patterns of related

phrases that speakers use in conventionalized ways. Constructions and idioms share the aspect of including more than lexical material, and even more than phrasal material, as lexical units. Use types add the pragmatic aspect of grouping the constructions according to the locatum's function and incorporating a way for assumptions about the place to be expressed.

In short, PPs conveying the Activity and Familiarity senses are like the Location Point constructions shown in (91) and (92) in that they involve a number of words in collocations unexpected by the grammar. PPs with Activity and Familiarity senses, however, have different kinds of constraints that can be inserted into the template than the Location Points constructions do. We could say that the Activity and Familiarity PPs are idiomatic, but only in that the bare form is conventionally associated with an inference: about the typical activity of a referent (for Activity senses) or indicating an indexical function (for Familiarity senses). Finally, our PPs containing bare singular forms are also like use types in relying on a socially determined function of the referent, but a use type inaccurately suggests a variation on the meaning of one of the words involved.

Nonetheless, it is useful to recognize the behavior of locative PPs that contain bare singular NPs as involving not just isolated nouns, but as more complex patterns creating conventionalized extensions of meaning. The unit involved for some of the marked meanings is not just a noun, but a bare noun phrase within a locative PP. Some sense of 'construction' is called for as a way to incorporate into the meaning of the bare singular NP patterns of semantic constraints as well as the shared patterns of expectations by the speaker and hearer.

5. Conclusion to Chapter 3

A lexical semantic analysis reveals several patterns for the types of nouns that are used as bare singular NPs: five types of Social/Geographical Spaces, as well as Recording media, Framing expressions, Temporal Interruption events, and certain purely metaphorical uses. In addition, lexical semantics assists in grouping the types of PPs in which the bare singular NPs are most often found into those denoting the location point and those depicting the path across the location which the locatum traverses. This last section showed that the linguistic unit under examination is best considered some form of template-based construction: one whole unit made of the locative preposition and the bare singular NP and the semantic constraints on the referents for the loca-

tion and locatum. Further, we see that the conventionality associated with such PPs involves not the transfer of each phrasal unit to a metaphorical equivalent, but the attaching of meaning to the use of the bare form. Finally, the use type model was presented as a way to suggest that recognizing the locatum's activity at a location is a common way to cluster constructions; in the Activity sense this identifies the location referent's expected use. However, a fuller explanation of the meaning and use of these anarthrous forms requires an analysis of the sets of conventionalized meanings that such NPs and PPs involve, an understanding of the discourse uses to which these structures are put, and an awareness of the contexts in which they are found. These pragmatic factors are explored in Chapter 4.