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The Russian Prepositions *перед*, *против* and *напротив*: a Cognitive Linguistic Approach

MARIKA KALYUGA

Introduction

There is an assumption in cognitive linguistics that most non-spatial senses of a preposition and a case are derived from a common (usually spatial) sense through metaphoric extensions. The metaphoric extensions involve the understanding of a concept, the so-called “target,” in terms of a more simple, concrete concept called the “source” (Lakoff 1987; Boers 1996; Boers & Demecheleer 1998). For this reason, prepositions and cases with a similar spatial sense frequently develop similar non-spatial senses. For example, the Ancient Greek prepositions *πρό* ‘before’ and *ἀντί* ‘opposite’ are associated with nearly the same proto-scenario or idealized mental representation of events linked to the prepositional phrases. Consider figure 1 that represents a proto-scenario with which these prepositions are associated.

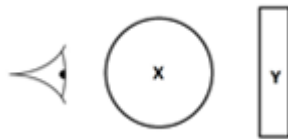


Figure 1

As these Ancient Greek prepositions are associated with nearly the same proto-scenario, they have also developed the same non-spatial senses that follow: ‘instead of,’ ‘on behalf of’ and ‘rather than’ (see Bortone 2010). However, their modern Russian equivalents *перед* + the instrumental (Instr) ‘in front of’ and *против* + the genitive (Gen) ‘opposite to, against’ share only one non-spatial sense. Both *перед* + Instr and *против* + Gen refer to criteria of comparison or evaluation, as for example, in expressions

reflecting the conceptual mapping IN COMPARISON or IN CONTRAST is IN FRONT or OPPOSITE¹:

1. *она перед тобой дура дурой*
'she is really stupid in comparison to you,' lit. 'before you *перед+Instr'*;
2. *всё казалось мелким и ничтожным перед разъярённой вселенной*
'everything seemed small and trifling in such close juxtaposition with an infuriated universe,' lit. 'before an infuriated universe *перед+Instr'*;
3. *его любовь ко мне ничто перед любовью, которой она пылает к тебе*
'the love he has for me is nothing to that, which she entertains for you,' lit. 'before love *перед+Instr* that she entertains for you';
4. *против моей эта идея никуда не годится*
'this is a lousy idea in comparison to mine,' lit. 'against mine *против+Gen'*;
5. *этот ужас был ничто против негодования, которое овладело его супругою*
'this horror was nothing in comparison to the anger that seized his wife,' lit. 'against the anger *против+Gen* that seized his wife';
6. *моё красноречие – ничто против его витиеватого слога*
'my eloquence is nothing in comparison to his rhetorical style,' lit. 'against his rhetorical style *против+Gen'*;
7. *против других домов этот казался гораздо новее*
'against other houses *против+Gen* this one looked much newer'².

The other senses of these prepositions and cases are different. For example, in *Sintaksicheskij slovar'* prepositional phrases with *перед+Instr* are described as designating the time of an action or an event (*перед полночью* 'before midnight *перед+Instr'*) and an object or a person that is the focus of an action (*преступление перед человечеством* 'a crime before humanity *перед+Instr'*) (Zolotova 2011, 268-278). In the same book,

¹ Target and source domains are represented in capitals.

² Consider similar conceptual mapping reflected in the etymology of the English *contrast* (from the Latin *contra-* 'against' + *stāre* 'to stand') and *confront* (from the medieval Latin *con-* 'with' + *front-* 'face'). *Confront* had the meaning 'to contrast' (e.g. *the old order of things makes so poor a figure when confronted with the new*), which is now obsolete (Oxford English Dictionary).

prepositional phrases with *против*+Gen are defined as indicating an opposition to someone or something (*выступить против войны* 'to speak out against war *против*+Gen') (Zolotova 2011, 86-90).

Why did *перед*+Instr and *против*+Gen develop different non-spatial senses? This paper aims to answer this question and to explain how the similarities and differences between the spatial proto-scenarios associated with these prepositions and cases are linked to the similarities and differences in their non-spatial use. The data have been collected from the main (*основной*) sub-corpus of the Russian National Corpus (RNC), which covers the period from the middle of the 18th to the early 21st centuries³. Due to space restrictions, the original sentences from the Corpus are not used. Most examples presented in the paper are constructed by the author based on the data. In this paper, the comparison of the spatial meanings of prepositional phrases (section 2) is followed by an analysis of their non-spatial, metaphoric extensions (section 3).

The Spatial Use of *перед* + Instr and *напротив* / *против* + Gen

In Modern Russian expressions with *перед*+Instr and *напротив*+Gen / *против*+Gen are used to describe very similar scenarios, albeit highlighting their various aspects (*стоять перед его столом* 'to stand in front of his desk *перед* +Instr'; *стоять напротив / против его стола* 'to stand opposite his desk *напротив* / *против*+Gen'). Consider figure 1. However, expressions with *перед* +Instr feature *CLOSE SPATIAL PROXIMITY* and even a *CONTACT* or attachment of X to Y (*веранда перед домом* 'the front veranda of the house,' lit. 'a veranda in front of the house *перед* +Instr'), while in the expressions with *напротив* / *против*+Gen X is understood as being *SEPARATED* and situated across some (interfering) space from Y. That is why, for example, *перед*+Instr (and not *напротив* / *против*+Gen) are used in the idiomatic expression for being close: *перед носом* 'right under one's nose, close, lit. in front of one's nose *перед* +Instr.' For the same reason *перед*+Instr, rather than *напротив* +Gen, are used in a similar expression for being close and being visible: *перед глазами* 'before one's eyes *перед* +Instr.'

Против+Gen can be used interchangeably with *напротив*+Gen only in expressions that describe a situation where X and Y are both static

³ Russian is traditionally divided into 3 historical periods: Old Russian (1100 c – 1500 c), Middle Russian (1500 c -1700 c) and Modern Russian (since 1700 c).

(остановиться *напротив* / *против* управления порта 'to stop opposite the harbour office *напротив*/ *против*+Gen'; находится *напротив* / *против* выхода 'to be located opposite the exit *напротив*/ *против*+Gen'), although expressions featuring *напротив*+Gen are more common. However, only *напротив*+Gen, as well as *перед*+Instr, can be used in expressions that describe a situation where Y is static and X moves in front of it (*напротив* нас / *перед* нами двигалась длинная колонна грузовиков 'a long line of trucks was passing in front of us *напротив*/ *перед* +Instr').

Перед +Instr can also describe a scenario where X and Y move in the same direction (*идти перед другом* 'to walk in front of a friend *перед* +Instr'; *бежать перед нами* 'to run before us *перед* +Instr'; *лететь перед лодкой* 'to be flying before the boat *перед* +Instr'), Consider figure 2.

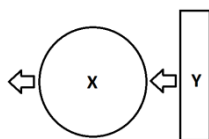


Figure 2

On the contrary, a dictionary of 11th to 17th century Russian shows that *против* could refer to a very different spatial scenario and could be combined not only with Gen but also with the dative (Dat). In addition to a static location 'opposite, in front, near' (*не ставил противъ воды* 'did not put near water;'), prepositional phrases with *против* referred to the direction 'towards' (*изидоша противу жениху* 'went towards the groom') (Bogatova 1995, vol. 16, 249-250). Some similar prepositional phrases exist in the present day language. In the following examples *против*+Gen describe a scenario where X and Y move against each other and exert force on each other (*идти против ветра* 'to walk against the wind *против*+Gen'; *грести против течения* 'to row against the stream *против*+Gen'). Consider figure 3.

Thus, *перед* +Instr coincides in meaning with *против*+Gen in one particular scenario (consider figure 1) and differs in the other (consider figures 2 and 3). Various aspects of the prototypical spatial scenarios associated with these prepositions and cases serve as source domains for their derived non-spatial senses.

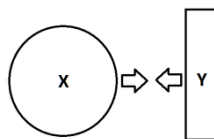


Figure 3

Non-Spatial Uses of *перед* + Instr and *против* + Gen

What is SEEN is LOCATED BEFORE ONE'S EYES (*передо мной лежала маленькая деревня*; before me lies a small village'; *передо мной расстилась каменистая равнина* 'before me *перед* +Instr lay a rocky plain') or is MOVING BEFORE ONE'S EYES (*перед глазами всё поплыло* 'everything was swimming before her eyes *перед* +Instr'; *город бесчисленными картинками замелькал перед глазами* 'the city, in a thousand pictures, began flashing before his eyes *перед* +Instr'). Accordingly, a MENTAL IMAGE is also conceptualised as LOCATED BEFORE ONE'S EYES (*жуткое зрелище все ещё стояло у него перед глазами* 'the horrible image still hung before his eyes'; *перед его мысленным взором разливалось ослепительное сияние* 'behind his thoughtful gaze shone a great glory, lit. before his eyes *перед* +Instr').

BEING VISIBLE or UNCOVERED are common source domains for BEING UNPROTECTED and VULNERABLE⁴. That is why expressions that reflect the conceptualisation of BEING UNPROTECTED and VULNERABLE as BEING UNCOVERED contain *перед*+Instr (*быть беззащитным перед человеческими страстями* 'to be influenced by human passions,' lit. 'to be vulnerable in front of human passions *перед* +Instr'; *оказаться бессильным перед всеми этими кораблями* 'to be helpless in the face of all of these ships,' lit. 'before all of these ships *перед* +Instr'; *чувствовать себя совершенно беспомощным перед лицом врага* 'to feel completely powerless in the face of the enemy', lit. 'before the face *перед* +Instr of the enemy').

Various emotions are associated with being UNPROTECTED and VULNERABLE and, therefore, words for these emotions govern

⁴ Consider also opposite expressions that reflect the conceptual mapping BEING LOCATED BEHIND A COVER is BEING PROTECTED (*книга за семью печатями* 'a closed book,' lit. 'a book behind seven seals *за*+Instr' and *страна за семью замками* 'double-bolted land, lit. a country behind seven locks *за*+Instr').

перед+Instr. For example, words for FEAR are used with this preposition and case (*страх перед будущим* 'fear in the face of the future,' lit. 'before the future *перед +Instr*'; *ужас перед неведомой глубиной* 'the dread of the unknown depths,' lit. 'before the unknown depths *перед +Instr*'; *робеть перед ним* 'to feel a little overawed before him *перед +Instr*'; *пасовать перед ней* 'to quail before her *перед +Instr*'; *трепетать перед своим господином* 'to tremble before one's master *перед +Instr*'; *робость перед профессором* 'shyness in the presence of their professor,' lit. 'before their professor *перед +Instr*').

The other emotion that is associated with BEING VULNERABLE is SHAME (*стыдиться перед братом* 'to be ashamed to face one's brother *перед +Instr*'; *стыдно перед гостями* 'to feel ashamed before visitors *перед +Instr*'; *краснеть перед учителем* 'to blush before a teacher *перед +Instr*'; *стусеиваться перед представителями новой литературы* 'to shy away from the representatives of new literature, lit before the representatives *перед +Instr* of new literature'; *чувствовать неловко перед этими ребятами* 'to feel uneasy before these children *перед +Instr*').

Shame is also frequently associated with the fear of being DISGRACED, HUMILIATED or LAUGHED AT. Semantic differences between the words for shame and disgrace (e. g. *стыд* and *позор* and their derivatives) were not distinctive until the 19th century (Bulygina and Shmelev 2000, 233). It is no wonder that words for disgrace, as well as words for shame, govern *перед+Instr* (*опозорить их перед всеми* 'to disgrace them before everyone *перед +Instr*'; *срамить меня перед людьми* "'о embarrass me before folks *перед +Instr*'; *высмеять его перед всеми собравшимися* 'to humiliate him in front of the whole meeting *перед +Instr*').⁵

TO MAKE KNOWN is understood as TO DISPLAY or TO PUT IN FRONT (*открыть сердце перед вами* 'to open my heart before you *перед +Instr*'; *обещать перед лицом всей страны* 'to promise in front of the entire country,' lit. 'in the face *перед +Instr* of the entire country'; *раскрыть перед*

⁵ Moreover, the origin of *позор* also reflects the conceptual link between being disgraced and being exposed. *Позор* is related to *позьреть* "to look at" (Shansky, 1971, 349). In Old and Middle Russian, *позор*, in addition to "disgrace" and some other meanings, referred to "show" (Bogatova 1990, vol. 16, 122). Consider also the expression *позорный столб* "a pillar of shame" and the verb *наказать* "to punish", which is related to *показать* "to show". The origin of these words goes back to the time when punishment was a public spectacle. This explains why words for disgrace govern *перед+Instr*.

вами его настоящий облик 'to unfold his real character before you *перед +Instr*'; *обнаружить свои чувства перед сыном* 'to show emotion to his son', lit. 'before his son *перед +Instr*'; *изливать все свои чувства перед учителем* 'to vent all of one's feelings to the teacher,' lit. 'in front of the teacher *перед +Instr*').

The other expressions that are based on the source domain of DISPLAYING refer to SHOWING OFF (*гордиться перед людьми своим положением* 'to boast before people *перед +Instr* of one's condition'; *пыжиться перед другим адвокатом* 'to strut before the other lawyer *перед +Instr*'; *задирать нос перед другом* 'to turn up his nose at his friend,' lit. 'before his friend *перед +Instr*'; *расхвастаться перед ним* 'to boast to him, lit. before him *перед +Instr*'; *расхвастаться перед женой* 'to show off for his wife,' lit. 'before his wife *перед +Instr*').

The origin of the words for 'condemn,' *разоблачить* and *обличать*, reflect the related conceptual mapping TO CONDEMN is TO UNMASK, which explains their use with *перед+Instr* (*разоблачить ваши трюки перед зрителями* 'to expose your tricks to the spectators,' lit. 'before the spectators *перед +Instr*'; *обличать перед судом* 'to expose before the jury *перед +Instr*'). One of the obsolete meanings of *разоблачить* was 'to undress' and that of *обличать* was 'to open' (Sreznevsky 2003, vol. 2, 523; Shansky 1971, 298; 381).

BEING LOOKED AT is a source domain for BEING JUDGED and SHOWING or EXPOSING is a source domain for EXPLAINING or JUSTIFYING (*предстать перед прокуратором* 'to present oneself before the prosecutor *перед +Instr*'; *оправдаться перед людьми* 'to justify oneself to people,' lit. 'before people *перед +Instr*'; *отчитываться перед менеджером* 'to report to a manager,' lit. 'before a manager *перед +Instr*'; *быть ответственным перед богом за свои действия* 'to be accountable to God for your actions,' lit. 'before God *перед +Instr*'; *отвечать перед больничным советом* 'to answer to the medical board,' lit. 'before the medical board *перед +Instr*').

The source domain of BEING IN FRONT (and, therefore, in a vulnerable position) is close to the other source domain for vulnerability and submissiveness – BEING DOWN –and can be combined with it. Likewise, the source domain of BEING OPPOSITE is often combined with the source domain for opposition and aggression – BEING UP. For example, expressions with *перед+Instr* may contain such verbs as *преклонить* 'to bow' (*преклонить перед ней колени* 'to bow the knee before her *перед +Instr*'), emphasising that X is lower than Y, whereas

expressions with *против* +Gen include such verbs as *восстать* 'to arise' (*восстать против бессмысленной жестокости* 'to arise against needless cruelty'_{*против*+Gen'}) highlighting that X is higher than Y.

DISPLAYING WORSHIP or BEING OBEDIENT TO SOMEBODY is viewed as BOWING, KNEELING or LOWERING ONESELF BEFORE SOMEBODY (*преклонить колени перед святыми дарами* 'to genuflect before the Sacrament'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *стоять на коленях перед иконой* 'to go on their knees before the icon'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *преклонить перед ней колени* 'to bow the knee before her'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *бухнуть перед доктором в ноги* 'to fall on one's knees before the doctor'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *пресмыкаться перед начальством* 'to crouch before authority'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *унижаться перед ней* 'to get down in the dirt for her,' lit. 'before her'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *подхалимничать перед менеджером* 'to fawn over a manager,' lit. 'before a manager'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *заискивать перед ними* 'to fawn on them,' lit. 'before them'_{*перед* +Instr'}).

FEELING or ACKNOWLEDGING ONE'S GUILT TOWARDS SOMEBODY is also conceptualised as BOWING BEFORE SOMEBODY. Consider *явиться с повинной головой* 'to come with a bent head.' Other synonymous expressions for acknowledging guilt also use *перед*+Instr since, apart from metaphoric and metonymic extensions, many other factors influence the use of prepositions and cases, including the syntactic structures of expressions with similar and opposite meanings (*мы виноваты перед тобой* 'we have wronged you,' lit. 'before you'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *чувствовать себя виноватым перед ним* 'to feel guilty toward him, lit. before him'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *грешен перед ней* 'to have sinned against her,' lit. 'before her'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *извиниться перед этим человеком* 'to excuse oneself to this man,' lit. before this man'_{*перед* +Instr'}).

Moreover, expressions for ADMIRING SOMEBODY are associated with BOWING BEFORE SOMEBODY and contain *перед*+Instr (*преклонение перед традициями* 'bowing to traditions, lit. before traditions'_{*перед* +Instr'}). *Преклонение* is akin to *поклон* 'bow.' Near-synonyms of *преклонение* also collocate with *перед*+Instr (*восхищение перед его твердостью* 'admiration of his fortitude,' lit. 'before his fortitude'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *в восторге перед ней* "'n admiration of her,' lit. 'before her'_{*перед* +Instr'}; *в удивлении перед их изобретательностью* 'to be astonished at their resourcefulness,' lit. 'before their resourcefulness'_{*перед* +Instr'}).

If DISPLAYING WORSHIP or BEING OBEDIENT TO SOMEBODY is viewed as BOWING, KNEELING or LOWERING

ONESELF BEFORE SOMEBODY, BEING RESISTANT is conceptualised as RISING AGAINST (*восстать против нас* 'to rise up against us *против+Gen*'). *Восстать* was borrowed from Church Slavonic, where it had the meaning 'to rise, to stand up' (Shansky 1971, 94). Consider also *встать на борьбу с врагами* 'to stand up to our enemies *против+Gen*'.

AGGRESSION is often conceptualised as MOVEMENT AGAINST some (opposing) force. For example, *пойти против них* 'to move against them'; *идти против царя* 'to go against the tsar'; *движение против ядерной бомбы* 'the movement against the H-bomb.'⁶

Против +Gen is commonly employed in many synonymous expressions for RESISTANCE, AGGRESSION and FIGHT (*выступить против войны* 'to speak out against the war *против+Gen*'; *голосовать против неё* 'to vote against her *против+Gen*'; *предупредить против этого* 'to warn against it *против+Gen*'; *протестовать против этой затеи* 'to protest against the idea *против+Gen*'; *сражаться против них* 'to fight against them'; *атака против врага* 'attack against an enemy *против+Gen*'; *война против врагов* 'war against the enemies *против+Gen*'; *сражение против мятежников* 'battle against the rebels *против+Gen*'; *агрессия против этой страны* 'aggression against this country *против+Gen*').

In turn, FIGHTING AGAINST is a source domain of TREATING ILLNESS and, therefore, MEDICINE is conceptualised as A WEAPON (*лекарство против кашля* 'medicine for the cough,' lit. medicine against the cough *против+Gen*'; *средство против морской болезни* 'treatment against sea-sickness *против+Gen*'; *прививка против гриппа* 'vaccination against influenza *против+Gen*'). Consider also other expressions based on the source domain of WEAPON (*гарантия против всех последствий* 'a guarantee against the consequences *против+Gen*'; *заклинания против его проклятий* 'spells for his curses,' lit. 'against his curses *против+Gen*'; *защиты против посягательств* 'protection from annoyance,' lit. 'against annoyance *против+Gen*').⁷

⁶ Compare to the expressions with *за +Acc* that are based on the opposite conceptual mapping: TO SUPPORT is TO STEP or MOVE BEHIND (*вступить за незнакомого* 'to stand up for a stranger,' lit. 'behind a stranger *за+Acc*'; *заступить за себя* 'to stand up for oneself,' lit. 'behind oneself *за+Acc*'; *выступить за преобразования* 'to promote changes,' lit. 'to stand up behind the changers *за+Acc*').

⁷ Some of the expressions mentioned in this paper are more common with different prepositions and cases. For example, the source domain of MOVEMENT AWAY (from something unpleasant or dangerous) is more common for such expression as *защита от*

Moreover, HATING is associated with BEING OPPOSITE and, as a result, contains *против*+Gen (*быть озлобленным против всего рода человеческого* ‘to be embittered against the whole human race *против*+Gen’; *злорада против его брата* ‘anger against his brother *против*+Gen’; *негодование против всех* ‘malice against everyone *против*+Gen’; *гнев против всего мира* ‘resentment against the whole world *против*+Gen’; *приступ страшного гнева против неё* ‘an impulse of fury against her *против*+Gen’; *возмутиться против собственного унижения* ;to become indignant at one’s own self-depreciation,’ lit. ‘against one’s own self-depreciation *против*+Gen’; *раздражение против неё* ‘irritation against her *против*+Gen’; *ярость против судьбы* ‘rage against fate *против*+Gen’).⁸

Spatial PROXIMITY is a common source domain for HAVING⁹. Since in expressions with *перед* +Gen X is viewed as being located in close spatial proximity to Y and in expressions with *против*+Gen – as being located across some (interfering) space from Y, only expressions with *перед* +Gen or *за*+Instr can refer to HAVING or similar concepts. For example, HAVING A PROBLEM or DILEMMA is BEING IN FRONT OF IT (*стоять перед выбором* ‘to face a choice,’ lit. ‘to stand in front of a choice *перед* +Instr’; *оказаться перед проблемой* ‘to find oneself confronted with a problem,’ lit. ‘to find oneself in front of a problem *перед* +Instr’; *быть поставленным перед необходимостью принять немедленное решение* ‘to be faced with the need to make a fast decision,’ lit. ‘to be put in front of the need to make a fast decision *перед* +Instr’; *главный вопрос, стоящий перед всеми союзниками* ‘the central question facing all Allies,’ lit. ‘the central question standing in front of all Allies *перед* +Instr’).

посягательств ‘protection from annoyance *от*+Gen,’ which explains its frequent use with *от*+Gen. RNC gives 149 examples of *защита* with *против*+Gen and 359 examples with *от*+Gen.

⁸ While BEING AGAINST someone or something is understood as BEING OPPOSITE, BEING SUPPORTIVE or LOYAL is conceptualised as BEING ON THE SAME SIDE or STANDING BEHIND (*по разные стороны баррикад* ‘on opposite sides of the barricades’; *ты либо с нами, либо против нас* ‘you are either with us or against us’; *принять чью-то сторону* ‘to take someone’s side’; *прикрывать их спину* ‘to back them up’).

⁹ The conceptualisation of having as being near the object of possession is very distinctive for Russian where ‘to have’ is commonly expressed by means of the preposition *у* (‘to,’ lit. ‘near’), with a genitive case marker on the possessor and the verb ‘to be’, as in (*у меня была машина* ‘I had a car, lit. to me *у* + Gen there was a car.’)

As *перед*+Gen are employed in the spatial expressions for PRECEDING IN THE SEQUENCE or SUCCESSION, this preposition and case are also employed in metaphorical expressions grounded in this domain. For example, ONE PERIOD OF TIME or AN EVENT CAN PRECEDE THE OTHER (*оставить все дела в полном порядке перед наступающим праздником* 'to leave all in order for the intervening holiday,' lit. 'before the intervening holiday *перед* +Instr'; *это случилось перед наступлением ночи* 'it happened at the coming of the night,' lit. 'before the coming of the night *перед* +Instr'; *перед наступлением ночи они остановились* 'before the fall *перед* +Instr of night they halted').

Conclusion

The cognitive linguistic approach demonstrates that a variety of applications of prepositions and cases are linked to a few prototypical, usually spatial, scenarios. The analysis conducted in this paper suggests that Russian prepositional expressions with *перед* + Instr, *напротив* + Gen and *против* + Gen are associated with similar, as well as very dissimilar proto-scenarios. For example, all of these prepositions and cases are associated with the spatial proto-scenario where X is located facing Y. However, expressions with *перед* +Instr highlight that X and Y are located in close proximity or even in contact with each other, while in the expressions with *напротив* +Gen and *против*+Gen X is viewed as being located across some intervening space or on the opposite side from Y.

Перед+Instr and *против*+Gen are linked to very different proto-scenarios when both X and Y are moving entities. In the proto-scenario for *перед*+Instr X moves before Y in the same direction, while in the proto-scenario for *против*+Gen X and Y move towards each other.

The similarities and differences in the spatial proto-scenarios explain the overlap and differences in the use of these prepositions and cases in non-spatial expressions that appeared as a result of metaphorical transfer.

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