Metonymy in language and thought

edited by Klaus-Uwe Panther, Gunter Radden.

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Klaus-Uwe Panther and Günter Radden (eds)

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Edited by

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The present volume evolved from a workshop on metonymy held at Hamburg University on June 23 and 24, 1996. This conference was probably the first international meeting of scholars from Europe, North America and Asia which was exclusively devoted to the study of metonymy in language and thought. We would like to express our thanks to all of the participants of the conference, both presenters and audience, for making the workshop an intellectually stimulating and revealing event. The workshop was generously funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* and the *Hansische Universitätsstiftung, Hamburg*, whose financial contributions are gratefully acknowledged. For their help in organizing the workshop and preparing the manuscript we are indebted to our secretary Elisabeth Himmler and our student assistants Elizabeth Matthis, Anatol Stefanowitsch and Sebastian Ross-Hagebaum who devoted many long hours to the conscientious preparation of the volume. Without their dedication and support this volume would not have been possible. We also benefited greatly from the insightful comments given to us by two anonymous reviewers. Finally, we would like to thank the editors of the series *Human Cognitive Processing* for accepting this volume, in particular Jan Nuyts, who kindly assisted us in all editorial matters.

Contents

Introduction

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1. Background

Eighteen years after Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal work on the role of metaphor in conceptualization, which sparked a vast amount of research in cognitive linguistics, it has become increasingly apparent that metonymy is a cognitive phenomenon that may be even more fundamental than metaphor. We believe that the contributions give a fair view of the state of the art in metonymic research, although we are also aware of the fact that a great many questions about metonymy still remain unanswered, some of which will be addressed below.

The cognitive understanding of metaphor and metonymy is certainly at variance with both naive and traditional scholarly views, which have strongly been influenced by centuries of rhetorical and literary studies. The cleavage between literal and figurative language, which was taken for granted by traditional rhetoric and linguistics, has recently been challenged by Gibbs (1994: 24–79; and this volume). Still, we owe the first basic insights into the nature of tropes to Greek, Roman and medieval scholars, modern literary critics and linguists. Many different classifications of tropes have been proposed, starting with Aristotle, who subsumed metonymy and synecdoche under metaphor, and more recently by the *Groupe de Liège* or *Groupe* μ, which subsumed metaphor and metonymy under synecdoche (see Schofer and Rice 1977). Some of these ideas on metonymy definitely have a modern, cognitive tinge. Various contributors to this volume (Koch; Blank; and Nerlich, Todd and Clarke) link their cognitive approach to metonymy to this rhetorical tradition.

The authors of the contributions to this volume have different theoretical backgrounds and are affiliated with different disciplines: linguistics, psycholinguistics, psychology and literary studies. Many of them share the assumption that metonymy is a cognitive phenomenon underlying much of our ordinary thinking and that the use of metonymy in language is a reflection of its conceptual status. The conceptual framework within which metonymy is understood in most of these contributions is that of scenes, frames, scenarios, domains or idealized cognitive models (ICMs). Within these models, a metonymic link may be established between two conceptual entities in the broadest sense. This view supersedes the traditional assumption of metonymy as having primarily a referential function, a view which was still held by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

The papers read at the conference and collected in this volume address a wide range of topics related to metonymy. The papers have been grouped into four parts. Part 1 deals with theoretical aspects of metonymy as a cognitive process. Part 2 investigates historical aspects of metonymy within a cognitive framework. Part 3 contains a number of case studies on selected metonymies or aspects of metonymy. Part 4 explores the notion of metonymy in its application to language acquisition and literary criticism.

2. Contributions to the volume

2.1. *Theoretical aspects of metonymy*

Three papers address the role of metonymy in language and thought from a broader theoretical perspective. The issue of the conceptual nature of metonymy is investigated by **Günter Radden** and **Zoltán Kövecses** in their paper "Towards a theory of metonymy." Their approach is based on the notion of idealized cognitive model (ICM) as proposed by Lakoff (1987). Metonymy is understood as a conceptual process in which one conceptual entity, the 'target,' is made mentally accessible by means of another conceptual entity, the 'vehicle,' within the same ICM. In principle, either of the two conceptual entities related may stand for the other, i.e., metonymy is basically a reversible process. There are, however, a number of cognitive principles which govern the selection of a preferred vehicle. These principles lead to natural, or 'default' cases of metonymy and often escape our awareness. These principles

may, however, be overridden by factors such as style, taboo or politeness and may lead to the creation of expressive, or 'non-default' cases of metonymies.

In his contribution on "Speaking and thinking with metonymy," **Raymond Gibbs** lays the foundations for the study of metonymy in ordinary language as well as literary discourse. He situates metonymy in a larger cognitive context and adduces evidence for the conceptual basis of metonymy. Thus, the Gricean notion of conversational implicature can be seen as being metonymically motivated; metonymic reasoning may also contribute to the establishing of coherence by means of 'conceptual anaphors.' Finally, Gibbs also shows how metonymy is operative in discourse and leads to a better understanding of contextually determined reference, indirect speech acts, and colloquial tautologies.

Gilles Fauconnier and **Mark Turner** explore another conceptual aspect of metonymy. In their paper "Metonymy and conceptual integration," the authors investigate the interaction of conceptual blending and metonymy. They demonstrate that Lakoff's and Kövecses' unidirectional model of conceptual metaphor does not account for expressions such as *smoke is coming out of his ears*, which can only be understood as resulting from 'blending' the source and the target domains, since, literally, there are no ears in the source domain and there is no smoke in the target domain. Fauconnier and Turner's approach has far-reaching consequences for the theory of metaphor in that it may very well turn out that most metaphors involve conceptual integration. Also, conceptual entities may be metonymically linked in a blended space. In the well-known symbolic representation of death as *The Grim Reaper*, the input elements 'scythe,' 'cowl,' and 'skeleton' are conceptually integrated. Thus the blend 'shortens' the metonymic distance between originally non-contiguous conceptual entities.

Ken-ichi Seto's paper "On distinguishing synecdoche from metonymy" argues for a clear conceptual distinction between metonymy and synecdoche. Despite the current interest in these tropes, they have not yet been defined in a satisfactory fashion. According to Seto, the reason for this lack of precision resides in the confusion between taxonomies and partonomies. Taxonomies involve 'kind of' relations in a hyponymically-structured conceptual domain (e.g., *a ham sandwich is a kind of food*), whereas partonomies involve 'part of' relations in the physical world (as in *an arm is a part of the body*). Seto calls the former relations, which are defined by semantic inclusion, C-relations (category relations); the latter relations, which are constituted by spatio-

temporal contiguity between entities in the physical world, are called E-relations (entity relations). Seto proposes to reserve the term 'synecdoche' for C-relations and 'metonymy' for E-relations. On the basis of this distinction, he develops classifications of metonymic and synecdochic relations.

In her paper "Aspects of referential metonymy," **Beatrice Warren** detects structural parallels between referential metonyms on the one hand and noun-noun compounds and denominal verbs on the other hand. These three constructions have in common that they involve two referents and an implicit link connecting them. In noun-noun compounds, the referring item is explicit, whereas it is implied in metonyms. According to Warren, metonymy is basically an abbreviation device and, apart from finding the implicit referring item, its interpretation involves retrieving a relation. Metonymic relations are restricted to a small number of recurrent links. This makes the interpretation of metonymy less demanding, or even effortless, when compared to the open-ended interpretation of metaphor, which involves working out several matching links (of similar attributes) between the conventional and intended referents.

2.2. *Historical aspects of metonymy*

The outstanding role of metonymy in triggering linguistic change has long been recognized and led to various classifications of types of metonymy, some of which are described in the papers below. The cognitive paradigm in linguistics offers a new analytic tool for analyzing historical data. Four papers are devoted to the operation of metonymy in historical processes of language.

In his paper "Frame and contiguity: On the cognitive bases of metonymy and certain types of word formation," **Peter Koch** investigates metonymically-induced changes of meaning. He makes use of the conceptual networks provided by frame theory. Frames may be seen as conceptual gestalts and, in metonymic changes of meaning, a new sense is highlighted as the 'figure' while the old sense serves as its 'ground' within the frame. Figure/ground effects also account for the origin of metonymy in discourse. Koch distinguishes between three types of ad hoc metonymic innovation inducing a metonymic change: hearer-based inferential innovations such as the interpretation of 'fireplace' as 'fire,' speaker-based 'imprecise' innovations such as the sense of 'hip' for 'thigh,' and expressive innovations such as 'skull' for 'head.'

Andreas Blank presents further arguments for a frame-theoretical approach to metonymy. His paper "Co-presence and succession: A cognitive typology of metonymy" critically examines the classifications of metonymy that have been proposed. He claims that most typologies of metonymy are defective in that a number of metonymies do not fit into any of the categories proposed. He argues that all types of metonymic changes can be subsumed under two major types: relations between entities that are co-present within a frame, and those that are successive within one frame or two related frames. His typological model of metonymy comprises three levels of abstraction: the two domains of co-present and successive contiguity at the highest level, schematic types of contiguity at the intermediate level and concrete linguistic metonymies at the lowest level.

A specific problem of semantic change is studied by **Louis Goossens** in his paper "Metonymic bridges in modal shifts." He investigates the conceptual shift of the English modal *must* from a deontic to an epistemic meaning. This general shift, which also applies to other modal verbs, has been accounted for in two different ways: as a metaphorical mapping from the sociophysical world onto the epistemic world (Sweetser 1990), or, especially in grammaticalization studies, as a shift triggered by context-induced inference. Both synchronic and diachronic data on the usages of *must* suggest that the shift from deontic to epistemic is a gradual process, which can be accounted for by metonymic bridges.

The metonymic approach to historical linguistics is also relevant to the discipline of onomastics. In his paper "Metonymy in onomastics," **Olaf Jäkel** investigates the cognitive motivation underlying naming patterns as evidenced in the etymologies of German surnames. Apart from a number of surnames which are not motivated or whose motivation is obscure, surnames are coined by means of three principal patterns of naming: genealogy, profession and metonymy. Metonymic naming strategies make use of three types of metonymy: 'utensil metonymy' (IMPORTANT UTENSIL FOR PERSON) as in *Bohnsack* 'beanbag,' 'quality metonymy' (SALIENT QUALITY FOR PERSON) as in *Wunderlich* 'strange,' and 'location metonymy' (PLACE OF ORIGIN OR RESIDENCE FOR PERSON) as in *Langacker* 'long field.'

2.3. *Case studies of metonymy*

A variety of case studies investigate the operation of metonymy on various linguistic and conceptual levels. One paper is concerned with metonymy in grammar (Waltereit); three papers look at selected lexical and semantic me-

tonymies (Dirven; Pauwels; Voßhagen); one paper studies the metonymic structure of a particular concept in its cultural context (Feyaerts), and another paper investigates the degree of exploitation of a particular metonymic principle in two genetically unrelated languages (Panther and Thornburg).

Richard Waltereit's contribution "Grammatical constraints on metonymic reference: On the primacy of the direct object" demonstrates that metonymy also plays an important role at the level of grammatical relations. First, metonymic transfer can involve the insertion of a participant into a given thematic role such as *Le 53 est rentré* 'No. 53 is back,' where the number stands for a hotel guest. Second, it can also involve a transfer of semantically contiguous thematic roles as in *Papa va balayer ta chambre* 'Daddy will sweep your room' vs. *Papa n'a pas encore balayé les débris de verre* 'Daddy hasn't swept up the broken glass yet,' where the container (the room) is semantically contiguous with the object contained (the broken glass). Waltereit argues that, with regard to metonymic transfers, the direct object has primacy over the subject and other grammatical relations. The metonymically privileged status of the direct object is caused by three factors: it is semantically opaque and, hence, allows for a number of thematic roles to fit into the direct object slot; it is the argument that is semantically closest to the verb, which entails that its referential autonomy is somewhat weakened; and it is syntagmatically closer to the subject than other (oblique) arguments.

In his lexical-semantic study "Putting metonymy in its place," **Paul Pauwels** investigates the metonymic structure of four related verbs: *put*, *set*, *lay*, and *place*. Pauwels' corpus-based investigation shows that the majority of examples were not of the traditional nominal or referential kind. In his corpus, metonymy often seems to function as a 'euphemistic avoidance strategy.' But it can also serve as a focusing strategy, which, in extreme cases, may result in dysphemism. The most frequent metonymic type Pauwels encounters in his corpus is based on a relation of inclusion, where a more general concept stands for a more specific concept, or vice versa.

In his paper "Conversion as a conceptual metonymy of basic event schemata," **René Dirven** investigates the phenomenon which is generally known as conversion or zero-derivation, in particular, the conversion from nouns to verbs (e.g., *author* vs. *to author*). He shows that the process of conversion is typically found in three event schemata: the action schema, the location and motion schema, and the essive schema. Conversion is regarded as a process in which one participant in the event schema is metonymically focused upon, but the whole event is conceptually involved. For example, in the action schema the participants patient (*fish*), instrument (*hook*), and manner (*pearl fishing*) are most frequently converted into new verbs (*to fish, to hook, to fish pearls,* respectively). Five participant types are regularly exploited to yield new verbs. In conclusion, Dirven raises the question if this selectivity is the result of sociocultural saliency or rather a matter of linguistic preference.

Another semantic study, **Christian Voßhagen**'s paper "Opposition as a metonymic principle," focuses on antonymy as a metonymic relation. This metonymy shows up in irony, where usually a positive concept metonymically stands for a negative concept, and in some conventionalized lexical items such as *terribly* in *It was terribly amusing*. As a rule, the metonymy applies to evaluative concepts, which are semantically scalar but are reinterpreted as complementary.

In his paper "Metonymic hierarchies: The conceptualization of stupidity in German idiomatic expressions," **Kurt Feyaerts** studies the metonymic structure of everyday expressions of stupidity. For example, an expression such as *Du bist wohl nicht von hier?* 'You are not from here, are you?' exemplifies the metonymic folk model OUTGROUP ORIGIN FOR STUPIDITY. Feyaerts shows that metaphorically and metonymically organized hierarchies have major structural characteristics in common. Higher-level metonymies tend to be cross-culturally valid, while lower-level metonymies are more culture-specific.

Klaus-Uwe Panther and **Linda Thornburg** emphasize the importance of a cross-linguistic comparison of conceptual metonymies. In their paper "The POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy in English and Hungarian," they analyze the extent to which this metonymy is exploited across two genetically unrelated languages, English and Hungarian. They explore its operation in seven conceptual domains: sense perceptions, mental states and processes, hedged performatives, indirect speech acts, (extralinguistic) actions, character dispositions, and acquired skills. In some of these domains, the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is much more productive in English than in Hungarian. The most striking contrast between the two languages emerges in the domain of sense perceptions: whereas English systematically *exploits* the metonymy in sentences such as *I can taste the vanilla* (for *I taste the vanilla*), Hungarian systematically *excludes* the metonymy and resorts to a non-modal construction in the indicative mood. The authors also discuss the relationship between Gricean maxims, conversational implicatures and metonymy.

2.4. *Applications of metonymy*

Two contributions are devoted to the significance of metonymy in language acquisition and literary criticism. The role of metonymy in language acquisition is investigated by **Brigitte Nerlich**, **David D. Clarke** and **Zazie Todd**. Their paper "'Mummy, I like being a sandwich': Metonymy in language acquisition" may in fact be the first study on the production and understanding of metonymy in this field, whereas studies on the production and understanding of metaphor in language acquisition proliferate. In child language the use of metonymy serves two different functions: it is a means of extending the known stock of words to cope with increasing communicative needs and of exploiting 'natural pathways of meanings' creatively. The former use of metonymy is a pragmatic strategy which leads to 'compelled' overextension. Compelled overextensions are typically found up to the age of 2;5, while by the age of four children start producing metonymy for creative purposes. This use of metonymy is referred to by the authors as 'creative metonymical shrinking.' Children's comprehension of metonymy is empirically studied using a group of 2–3 year-olds and a group of 4–5 year-olds.

In her paper "Recontextualization of metonymy in narrative and the case of Morrison's *Song of Solomon*," **Anne Pankhurst** explores the function of metonymy in narrative fiction. In the novel analyzed, the reader has to activate metonymic strategies in order to understand the impact of an apparently simple object, an earring. The earring serves several metonymic functions: it is, in particular, a means of identifying its wearer and, at a macro-structural level, holds together different episodes of the novel. Pankhurst argues that the complex use of metonymy in this narrative cannot be accounted for by a single theory. The most promising approach to understanding the complex processes of reference and recontextualization in this world of fiction are provided by Riffaterre's functional view of metonymy and Gibbs' metonymic models of thought.

3. Perspectives for future research

The papers collected in this volume certainly contribute to a deeper understanding of the conceptual nature and function of metonymy. At the same time, the contributors are aware of the fact that many aspects of metonymy are still poorly understood. Of the many remaining problems to be solved we will single out two and briefly discuss them here:

(i) the nature of metonymic shift;
(ii) the pragmatic function of metonymy.

3.1. *The nature of metonymic shift*

We assume that metonymy is not, as has often been taken for granted, merely a matter of the substitution of linguistic expressions but a cognitive process that evokes a conceptual frame. The notion of 'conceptual frame' is meant here as a cover term for what is variously called 'domain,' 'idealized cognitive model' (ICM), 'schema,' 'scenario,' 'script,' etc. in the cognitive-linguistic literature (cf. also Blank, this volume; and Koch, this volume). The 'substitution view' of metonymy claims that the name of one thing is used in place of that of another thing to which it is related. As will be shown below, this view has serious draw-backs. Following Langacker (1993: 30), we assume that "metonymy is basically a reference-point phenomenon [...] affording mental access to the desired target." Let us consider the conceptual frame of a straightforward case of metonymy as exemplified in:

(1) The first violin has the flu.

The concept 'the first violin' is part of a knowledge structure that it evokes. As a musical instrument, a violin is immediately associated with a violinist as the player of that instrument. Moreover, the first violinist is defined as a member of a larger group of musicians, the symphony orchestra. Among the musicians of the orchestra, the first violinist is the most outstanding member. Finally, our knowledge of orchestras includes, among other things, the notion of music and its representation in scores. The predication *has the flu* as well as the attribute *first* trigger a non-literal interpretation of the noun phrase *the first violin*. Thus, the metonymic reading in (1) involves a shift from the instrument to the musician as the most readily available element in the frame. Through this metonymic shift, the reference point ('the first violin') is backgrounded and the desired target ('the first violinist') is foregrounded. This conceptual shift is reflected in grammatical form: thus the second sentence of (2a), in which *she* anaphorically refers back to the target, is a felicitous continuation of (1), whereas the second sentence of (2b), in which the pronoun is coreferential with the reference point, is not:

(2) a. The first violin has the flu. *She* cannot practice today.
b. #The first violin has the flu. *It* is a Stradivarius.

But now consider a situation described by the following sentence:

(3) My ex-husband is parked on the upper deck.

The expression *my ex-husband* evokes a rich mental script involving marriage, divorce, etc., all of which, however, do not seem to play a role in the metonymic interpretation of this utterance. In contrast to (1), it is not the conceptual frame of the noun phrase that is exploited for the metonymic interpretation, but the predicate *is parked on the upper deck*. The predicate helps identify the target of the metonymic shift, i.e., 'my ex-husband's vehicle.' Concomitantly, the metonymic reference point ('my ex-husband') is foregrounded while the conceptual target ('my ex-husband's vehicle') is backgrounded. This analysis is corroborated by the linguistic fact that an anaphoric pronoun cannot refer back to the target expression as in (4a), but only to the reference-point expression as in (4b):

(4) a. #My ex-husband is parked on the upper deck. *It* has a California license plate.
b. My ex-husband is parked on the upper deck. *He* is taking the bus today.

On the basis of pronominal facts as in (4), Nunberg (1995: 111) claims that in sentences such as (3) it is not the subject that is used metonymically but the predicate, which "contributes a property of persons, the property they possess in virtue of the locations of their cars." This type of analysis thus postulates that the metonymic shift is not achieved through the noun phrase but involves a "predicate transfer" (for a critique of Nunberg's theory cf. Kleiber 1995). It is possibly more plausible and intuitively more satisfying, however, to view the metonymy in (3) as an instance of referential shift, i.e., to understand *my ex-husband* in the sense of 'my ex-husband's vehicle.' We suggest that the choice of the pronoun might be governed by a general cognitive principle according to which humans take precedence over non-humans (see also Radden and Kövecses, this volume). This principle would account for the fact that the human entity in the frame seems to be foregrounded irrespective of whether it is the reference point or the target.

A further point in need of clarification relates to the relationship among the elements in the frame. In the case of an artifact as in example (1), the user

of the artifact is so tightly integrated into the frame that the metonymic reading has become lexicalized and is listed as a separate sense in dictionaries. In contrast, with the exception of well-known individuals such as Shakespeare, Mozart and Einstein, who are closely associated with their artistic or scientific products, humans do not seem to be consistently tied to a frame which leads to lexicalized metonymic senses. Thus it is highly unlikely that *ex-husband* would have 'car' as one of its conventional senses. This will even hold for human nouns such as *car-dealer*, which explicitly contains the concept of 'car' as an integral part of its frame.

We believe that both reference point and target are always present as elements of the conceptual frame, but are highlighted to different degrees. This can be shown by the following minimal pair which exemplifies two ways of highlighting frame elements:

(5) a. The harpsichord has the flu. *His* part has been taken over by the grand piano.
b. The harpsichord has the flu. *Its* part has been taken over by the grand piano.

In contrast to (2a), in which only the human target can be foregrounded, the sentences under (5) seem to allow the foregrounding of either the human performer or the instrument. The possessive pronoun *his* in (5a) anaphorically refers to the musician who is metonymically targeted by *the harpsichord*, whereas the pronoun *its* in (5b) is grammatically congruent with the reference-point expression, but conceptually relates to the part assigned to the harpsichord in the score.

The car-parking situation described in (3), however, does not lend itself to similar highlighting of either the reference point or the target as in (5). It is much more difficult to foreground the target when the reference point is human and the target is non-human. It seems, however, possible to say (6), in which the anaphoric pronoun *they* highlights the cars and not their owners:

(6) ?My ex-husband and his girlfriend are parked next to each other. *They* are both Fords.

In this sentence, the noun phrases *my ex-husband* and *his girlfriend* are metonymically interpreted as 'my ex-husband's car' and 'his girlfriend's car,' respectively, i.e., there is a referential shift from HUMAN to NON-HUMAN.

The discussion thus far has looked at one area in which metonymic

highlighting is reflected in grammar. There are, of course, other grammatical phenomena such as number and gender agreement which may be adduced as further evidence that certain elements of a frame are given more prominence than others. These issues shall, however, not be pursued here (for discussion on this point see Nunberg 1995; and Kleiber 1995).

3.2. *The pragmatic function of metonymy*

An issue which has received relatively little attention in the discussion of metonymy concerns the pragmatic function of metonymy in conversation: why is metonymy used at all? Why is 'literal' language not the prevailing means of communication? Part of the answer may lie in Sperber and Wilson's (1995: 158) principle of relevance: "Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance." Sperber and Wilson (1995: 153) hypothesize that a linguistic expression is optimally relevant if it produces maximal contextual effects with a minimum of processing effort.

As an illustration of the principle of minimal processing effort, consider a situation in which nurses talk about their patients as in (7a) and (7b):

(7) a. It's time for my gall bladder's medication.
b. It's time for Randolph's medication.

Even when the patient's name is known as in (7b), the metonymic noun phrase *my gall bladder* may provide the easiest access to the targeted referent. To the personnel in a hospital, information about a patient's ailments is in general more relevant than other attributes, such as the patient's bald-headedness, his level of education, etc. Hence, for the medical staff the metonymic wording such as (7a) may be the most efficient way of identifying a patient. To persons outside the hospital context, however, such metonymic reference represents neither an economical nor an appropriate referential shortcut.

The significance of the principle of maximal contextual effects is illustrated by example (8a), which is routinely understood in the sense of (8b):

(8) a. The Chicago Bulls *were able to nail down* their fifth championship in game 6.
b. The Chicago Bulls *nailed down* their fifth championship in game 6.

Literally, sentence (8a) states the ability of the well-known basketball team to win the championship, but metonymically this utterance implicates their actually winning the game. The metonymy involved may be described as a metonymic shift from POTENTIAL TO ACTUAL (see Panther and Thornburg, this volume). Why should a sports commentator choose the metonymic predication *were able to nail down* rather than *nailed down*, which, after all, seems to be the more economical wording of the two? Again, an explanation may be provided within the framework of relevance theory. Sentence (8a) triggers more contextual effects, i.e., pragmatic implications, than sentence (8b). Both utterances convey the actuality of winning the championship, which is explicitly stated in (8b), but only conversationally implicated in (8a). Yet, the metonymic wording in (8a) has the advantage of communicating additional information: in stating ability, the predicate *were able to* strongly implicates the notions of 'effort,' 'difficulty,' and 'positive achievement,' none of which is present in (8b). The greater length of (8a) is thus more than compensated for by the number of desirable contextual effects that it triggers.

As examples (7) and (8) demonstrate, a metonymic expression is hardly ever completely equivalent in its pragmatic force to its 'literal' counterpart. Thus, these data provide more evidence against the traditional 'substitution view' of metonymy. In conclusion, this view of metonymy as a means of providing maximal contextual effects with a minimum of processual effort certainly opens new avenues of future research on the role of this as well as other figurative modes of thought.

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Part I

Theoretical Aspects of Metonymy

Towards a Theory of Metonymy

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1. The cognitive view of metonymy

The aim of this paper is to propose a conceptual framework of metonymy as a cognitive process.[1] Unlike metaphor, metonymy has always been described in conceptual, rather than purely linguistic, terms. In analyzing metonymic relationships, traditional rhetoric operated with general conceptual notions such as CAUSE FOR EFFECT, CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS, etc. Still, metonymy was mainly seen as a figure of speech, i.e., it was basically thought of as a matter of language, especially literary or figurative language. This view of metonymy is reflected in standard definitions, which tend to describe metonymy as "a figure of speech that consists in using the name of one thing for that of something else with which it is associated" (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*). These kinds of definition thus claim that metonymy operates on names of things, involves the substitution of the name of one thing for that of another thing and assumes that the two things are somehow associated. The cognitive view of metonymy espoused here makes different assumptions:

(i) Metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon;
(ii) Metonymy is a cognitive process;
(iii) Metonymy operates within an idealized cognitive model.

1.1. *Metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon*

Metonymy is claimed to be not just a matter of names of things, but essentially a conceptual phenomenon. As already pointed out by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: Ch. 8), metonymy, like metaphor, is part of our everyday way of thinking, is grounded in experience, is subject to general and systematic principles and structures our thoughts and actions (cf. also Gibbs 1994: 324–333 and this volume). Lakoff and Johnson's example of the metonymy in *She's just a pretty face* illustrates the general conceptual nature of metonymy. We derive the basic information about a person from the person's face. In our culture, this is reflected in the tradition of portraits in painting and photography. The conceptual metonymy THE FACE FOR THE PERSON is therefore part of our everyday way of thinking about people.

The conceptual nature of metonymy is even more clearly manifested in the structure of categories. In his discussion of metonymic models, Lakoff (1987: 79–90) demonstrates that a member of a category may stand for the whole category and thereby account for prototype effects. These salient members may not even have a name so that the metonymic transfer merely operates at the conceptual level. His example of the stereotypical subcategory 'housewife mother' illustrates this point: We tend to think of the category 'mother' in terms of this stereotypical member even if the submember remains unnamed. Since most categories have prototypical structure, we may conclude that basically all categories have metonymic structure.

The use of metonymic expressions in language is primarily a reflection of general conceptual metonymies and is motivated by general cognitive principles. We claim that all metonymies are ultimately conceptual in nature and that many, if not most, metonymies do not even show up in language.

1.2. *Metonymy is a cognitive process*

The traditional view defines metonymy as a relationship involving substitution. This view is reflected in the notation generally used for stating metonymic relationships, namely, X STANDS FOR Y. In the above example of *She's just a pretty face*, the name *face* is thus taken to be a substitute expression for *person*, so that the sentence is assumed to mean 'she is just a pretty person.' But this cannot be the whole meaning since *She is a pretty person* does not mean that she is pretty 'all over,' but it suggests that, most importantly, she has a pretty face. This can be seen in the oddity of a sentence expressing a counter-

expectation: *?She is a pretty person but does not have a pretty face.* The two metonymies, THE FACE FOR THE PERSON and THE PERSON FOR THE FACE, thus complement each other: A person's face evokes the person and a person evokes the person's face. Metonymy does not simply substitute one entity for another entity, but interrelates them to form a new, complex meaning.[2] To use Warren's (this volume) example: "We do not refer to music in *I like Mozart*, but to music composed by Mozart; we do not refer to water in *The bathtub is running over*, but to the water in the bathtub." Metonymic relationships should therefore more adequately be represented by using an additive notation such as X PLUS Y, as suggested by Radden (in print). For the sake of simplicity, we will keep the traditional formula X FOR Y with the proviso, however, that the metonymic process is not understood to be one of substitution.

The metonymic process consists in mentally accessing one conceptual entity via another entity. This is the cognitive explanation Langacker (1993: 30) offers for metonymy. He conceives of metonymy as a reference-point phenomenon in which one conceptual entity, the reference point, affords mental access to another conceptual entity, the desired target.[3] We will refer to the reference-point entity as the 'vehicle' and the desired target simply as the 'target.' In the example of *She's a pretty face*, the 'pretty face' serves as the vehicle for accessing the 'person' as the target; in the reverse description, *She's a pretty person*, the 'person' serves as the vehicle for accessing the person's 'pretty face' as the target. In either construal, both the vehicle and the target are conceptually present. However, one of them is seen as being more salient than the other and is therefore selected as the vehicle.

1.3. *Metonymy operates within an idealized cognitive model*

The notion of 'contiguity' is at the core of most definitions of metonymy.[4] Traditional approaches locate contiguity relationships in the world of reality, whereas cognitive approaches locate them at the conceptual level.[5] Lakoff and Johnson (1980) think of contiguity in terms of the whole range of conceptual associations commonly related to an expression, Lakoff (1987) accounts for metonymic contiguity within the framework of idealized cognitive models (ICMs), Croft (1993) deals with contiguity relations in terms of encyclopedic knowledge representation within a domain or domain matrix, Blank (this volume) and Panther and Thornburg (this volume) describe the network of conceptual contiguity by using the notion of frame and scenario, respectively.

While all of these models are comparable with respect to claiming a cognitive basis, we believe that Lakoff's (1987) framework of 'idealized cognitive models' (ICMs) may capture metonymic processes best. The ICM concept is meant to include not only people's encyclopedic knowledge of a particular domain but also the cultural models they are part of. The ICM notion is not restricted to either the world of reality, the world of conceptualization or the world of language but, as will be shown in Section 2, may cut across these ontological realms. ICMs and the network of conceptual relationships characterizing them give rise to associations which may be exploited in metonymic transfer.

The impact which ICMs may have on metonymic (and metaphorical) transfer shall be illustrated by way of the changes of meaning which the word *hearse* underwent in the history of English. The semantic history of *hearse* may have proceeded in the following steps.[6] In medieval farming, the word originally denoted a triangular harrow with pins and was then metaphorically applied to a triangular frame for supporting candles at church services. The new 'candle-frame ICM' evoked the functionally most salient part of it, the candles. Our general knowledge of the 'candle ICM,' in its turn, gave rise to the metonymic focus on the process of burning. In the Middle Ages, candles were made of wax, were very expensive and were only lit for special occasions. This Medieval 'candle-burning ICM' explains why the burning of candles came to be metonymically associated with a special liturgical occasion, Tenebrae, the Holy Week before Easter. The Medieval 'Tenebrae ICM' accounts for a further metonymic step. In the church service of the Holy Week, all candles were gradually extinguished to commemorate the darkness at Christ's crucifixion. The burning candle was a metaphor for man's life, and, as an entailment, its extinction a metaphor of man's death. The whole candle-burning event was thus metonymically restricted to its final part, the extinction of the candle. The 'crucifixion ICM' was then metonymically extended to people's death in general. The 'death ICM' accounts for the metonymic highlighting of a salient part surrounding people's death, the funeral. The 'funeral ICM' involves several parts, many of which were described by the word *hearse*: the dead body, the coffin, the bier, the tomb, the funeral pall, the framework supporting the pall, and the carriage for carrying the coffin. Among these parts, the moving carriage eventually appeared to be the most salient element of the 'funeral ICM.' The sense development of *hearse* from 'harrow' to 'vehicle for conveying a dead person to the place of burial' is predominantly the result of different types of metonymic processes which

operated within cultural or general ICMs.

The metonymic stages in the sense development of *hearse* involved, not only things, but also events: the burning of the candle, the extinction of the candle, death, the funeral and the procession. This is to be expected in view of the many possible relationships which may hold in an ICM. Metonymic processes are thus not restricted to reference;[7] they occur at the purely conceptual level (categorization, linguistic reasoning), at different levels of language (lexis, morphology, syntax, discourse), in different linguistic functions (reference, predication, speech acts), and as a linkage interrelating different ontological realms (concepts, forms, and things/events). In order to be able to describe such diverse phenomena in a unified way, we will adopt the widest possible view of metonymy.

1.4. *Theoretical issues of metonymy*

On the basis of the three cognitive properties of metonymy discussed above, we will define metonymy as follows:

> Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model.

This working definition is useful in that it allows us to raise further important empirical and theoretical issues. We believe that, amongst others, the following questions need to be addressed in developing a theoretical framework of metonymy.

A first question we need to ask is where do we find metonymy? According to the above definition, metonymy may occur wherever we have idealized cognitive models. We have ICMs of everything that is conceptualized, which includes the conceptualization of things and events, word forms and their meanings, and things and events in the real world. We will refer to these types of conceptualization as 'ontological realms.' ICMs are not restricted to a single ontological realm, but may also interrelate ontological realms. For example, people tend to see a close relationship between the two entities which establish a sign: the concept of a thing and its name. This ICM cross-cuts two ontological realms and, as will be shown below, leads to metonymy. The notion of metonymy which follows from the conceptual definition given above thus has much wider application than that of traditional approaches.

A second question which needs to be addressed relates to the 'mental bridge' which allows the conceptualizer to access the desired target. This

question concerns the nature of the relationship between the vehicle and one or more targets. Metonymy tends to make use of stereotypical, or idealized, relationships within an ICM. Thus, certain places tend to be associated with events which typically occur at the place. For example, the expression *to go to bed* may, depending on the situation, evoke the metonymic targets 'to go to sleep,' 'to have sex' or 'to be sick.' All these events are stereotypically associated with beds, irrespective of the particular context that triggers the situationally relevant target. More generally, we may describe the conceptual relationship between space and event as one that is entrenched and may be exploited by metonymy. The question that needs to be answered here is what types of conceptual relationships in an ICM may give rise to metonymy.

A third question pertains to the choice of vehicle and target. Thus far, we have only considered conceptual relationships between two entities either of which may become the vehicle or the target as shown in the examples of *She's a pretty face* and *She's a pretty person*. Unlike metaphorical mappings, which tend to be unidirectional, metonymic mappings are in principle reversible. This was already implicitly noticed in traditional approaches by listing both directions of a metonymic relationship such as CAUSE FOR EFFECT and EFFECT FOR CAUSE, GENUS FOR SPECIES and SPECIES FOR GENUS, etc. Such theoretically possible alternatives have to be distinguished from the speaker's choice of a particular vehicle as the 'entry point' into the ICM. We therefore need to ask if there are any preferred metonymic construals and, if this is the case, what 'cognitive principles' govern the selection of one type of vehicle entity over another. Such precedence principles were already hinted at by Langacker (1993: 30). To the extent that there are such preferred routes, these will define the unmarked, or 'default,' cases of metonymy.

Given that there are such default routes, we need to ask, as a fourth question, if there are any principles that determine the choice of a vehicle other than by default construal. If this is the case, these metonymic construals yield marked, or 'non-default,' instances of metonymy.

The following four sections of this paper will be devoted to finding answers to these central questions which, for convenience, are summarized below:

(i) What are the ontological realms in which ICMs and metonymic relationships may occur? (Section 2);
(ii) What are the types of conceptual relationships that may give rise to metonymy? (Section 3);
(iii) Are there any conceptual entities that can better direct attention to an intended target than others? If this is the case, are there any cognitive principles that govern the selection of such 'default' cases of metonymy? (Section 4);
(iv) Are there any principles that override the preferred default routes and yield 'non-default' cases of metonymy? (Section 5).

2. Ontological realms in which metonymy occurs

The following three ontological realms are distinguished for the present purpose: the world of 'concepts,' the world of 'forms,' in particular, forms of language, and the world of 'things' and 'events.' These realms roughly correspond to the three entities that comprise the well-known semiotic triangle as developed by Ogden and Richards (1923: 11): thought, symbol and referent. The interrelations between entities of the same or from different ontological realms lead to various ICMs and possibilities for metonymy.

An important distinction has to be made between ICMs which interrelate entities of different ontological realms within the same semiotic unit and ICMs which interrelate entities of different semiotic units within the same ontological realm or realms. The former situation of interrelated ontological realms gives rise to two ICMs: the pairing of a concept and a form establishes a sign and may be described as 'Sign ICM'; the pairing of a thing or event and a sign, form or concept establishes a referential situation and may be described as 'Reference ICM.' In as far as these ICMs lead to metonymy, the metonymies will be described as 'sign metonymy' and 'reference metonymy,' respectively. The latter situation of interrelated semiotic units involves concepts, typically in conjunction with forms. These ICMs will be referred to as 'Concept ICMs,' and a metonymy based on a Concept ICM will be described as 'concept metonymy.' Figure 1 illustrates the semiotic relationships which lead to the sign metonymy (1) and three types of reference metonymies (2)–(4) on the one hand and one type of concept metonymy (5) on the other hand. The arrows indicate the direction of the metonymic mapping which will be discussed below.

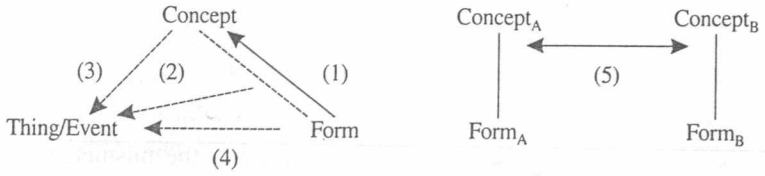

Figure 1. Sign, reference and concept metonymies