



Jornades de Foment de la Investigació

**METONYMY AND  
THOUGHT: VERI-  
FYING RUÍZ DE  
MENDOZA &  
OTAL'S MODEL  
OF METONYMY (A  
CORPUS-DRIVEN  
RESEARCH)**

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## PRELIMINARIES

This paper is concerned with metonymy. The great shift in the understanding of this concept that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s makes it necessary to provide a certain background knowledge so as to fully understand the goal of this research.

## GENERAL FRAME

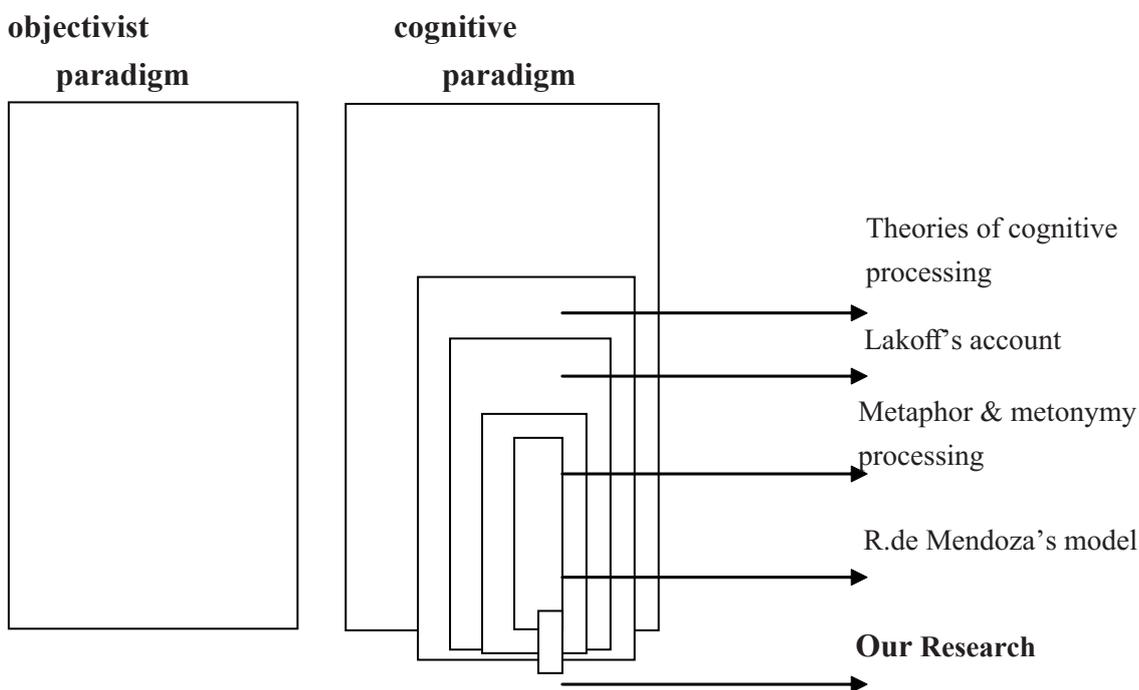


Figure 1: General frame

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A) Introduction to the Cognitive paradigm

As a new approach to the study of language the Cognitive paradigm is concern with a number of issues: the nature of reason, the way we make sense of our experience, the way we conceptualised and how our conceptual system is organised.

The new paradigm stands on the following basis:

- Experiential realism (Lakoff, 1987) on account of reason embodiment
- Prototype theory and basic level categories (Rosch, 1975) on account of a new view of categorization

**Metonymy and thought:** verifying Ruíz de Mendoza & Ota's model of metonymy (a corpus-driven research)

- Idealised Cognitive Models –ICMs- (Lakoff, 1987) as conceptual systems for categorizing reality
- Foundations for Cognitive Grammar (Langacker, 1987)

Cognitive Linguistics proposes a move from the traditional view of language which could be summarised as follows in contrast to the traditional paradigm:

<u>Traditional view</u>	to	<u>Cognitive linguistics</u>
From an objective view of the world		an experientialist view
language as formal		language as conceptualised
abstract reason		reason embodied
meaning as truth and reference		meaning as conventionalized
		representation

Within this shift of paradigm Lakoff (1987) represents a classical attempt to provide the foundations for a theory of mental representation. He argues that there are four structuring principles involved in this process:

- Propositional structure
- Image-schema
- Metaphoric mappings
- Metonymic mappings

In Lakoff and associates' theory of mental representation *metaphor* and *metonymy* are given a completely new status which derives from the nature they ascribe at thought, meaning and language:

from *linguistic / rhetorical tools* to *mental strategies in cognition*  
*conceptualizing mechanisms*

## **B) Metonymy: from trope to cognitive tool**

The most widespread view of metonymy in classical times originated in Aristotle. In his book –*Poetics*, he put forward a classification of four kinds of metaphor, metonymy being one of them.

This Aristotelian view of metonymy as a trope or the use of a word to name a different, but connected entity, is still maintained in modern rhetorics.

But in the 1970s and 1980s, new findings regarding the nature of human conceptualization made by cognitive scientists and experimental psychologists provided the necessary atmosphere for a shift of thought regarding the nature of metonymy.

**Metonymy and thought:** verifying Ruíz de Mendoza & Otal's model of metonymy (a corpus-driven research)

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 39) were the first to describe metonymy. They define it as “a process which allows us to conceptualize one thing by means of its relation to something else”.

Further on, in Lakoff and Turner (1989) metonymy is regarded as a type of *conceptual mapping*. The important point here is that metonymy is seen as a cognitive tool used for conceptualization rather than a mere linguistic strategy or a rhetorical device.

## STATE OF THE ART

After this important shift most of the emphasis has been on the study of metonymy as a conceptual phenomenon. Other relevant aspects of metonymy such as its ability to motivate some grammatical phenomena and the question of its communicative potential, have been largely neglected.

A number of fields have opened up in recent years. Metonymy has been described either in contrast to metaphor (Dirven, 1993) or to different polysemy phenomena (Croft, 1993). Turner and Fauconnier (2000) focus on the interaction between metaphor and metonymy. Barcelona (2000) and Radden (2000) work on the metonymic motivation of metaphoric mappings. Finally Gibbs (1994), Thornburg and Panther (1997) and Ruíz de Mendoza (1999) devote their attention to explore the role of metonymy in the mechanisms of explicatures and implicatures (inferential understanding)

However no study attempts to provide a sufficiently comprehensive explanation of metonymy. As a result many aspects of metonymy remain unexplained or have been only partially dealt with. Ruíz de Mendoza and Otal (2002) offer a sketch of the state of the art of contemporary studies on metonymy.

In view of the needs of contemporary metonymy theory, Ruíz de Mendoza and Otal (2002) set two goals in these regards:

1. To characterize metonymy
2. To determine the boundaries between metaphor and metonymy and between metonymy and figurative uses of language.

Their research gave evidence to establish a number of conclusions related to four broader aspects:

1. A consistent definition of metonymy clearly differentiated from metaphor
2. Connections between metonymy and grammar: restrictions and motivation
3. Connections between metonymy and inferences
4. Connections between metonymy and illocutory acts.

This paper is concerned with topic one, namely a consistent definition of metonymy and subsequently of metaphor.

## RUÍZ DE MENDOZA AND OTAL'S MODEL

Ruíz de Mendoza and Otal (2002) propose a theory from the point of view of the formal nature of the mapping process.

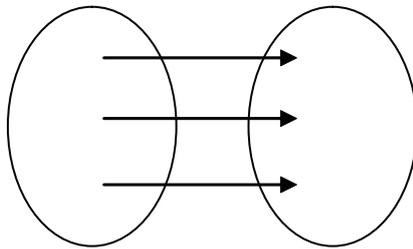
Criticisms of these authors highlight the following points:

- Inadequacy of the 'stand for' relationship
- Inaccuracy of the distinction predicative / referential in the use of metonymy and metaphor
- Imprecision in boundary limitation of the domains involved.

Their proposal classifies metaphors and metonymies in the following terms:

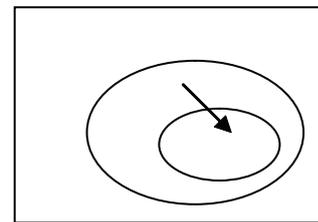
- Metaphors have domain external mappings
- Metonymies have domain internal mappings

The following figures are a schematic representation of both types of cognitive process:



**Figure 2:** Metaphoric mapping

(Mappings: sets of correspondences across conceptual domains)

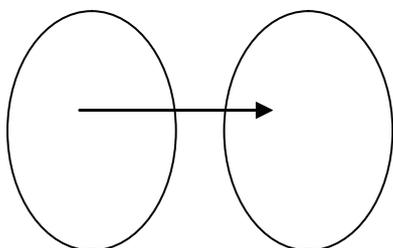


**Figure 3:** Metonymic mapping

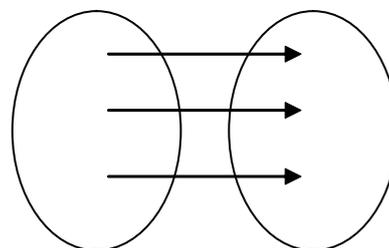
A further distinction recognises two types of metaphor in terms of the number of correspondences which are established between the matrix domain and the target domain:

- one-correspondence metaphor
- many-correspondence metaphor

Figures 4 and 5 represent this classification:



**Fig 4:** one-correspondence metaphor



**Fig 5:** many-correspondence metaphor

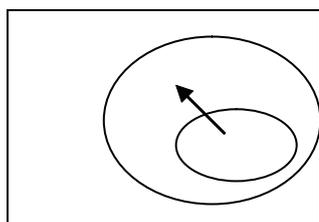
There are two types of metonymy → source-in-target metonymy.  
→ target-in-source metonymy

In the first type of metonymy (source-in-target metonymy) the **source domain (S)** is a subdomain of the **target domain (T)**. An example of this type of metonymy would be: *We need more hands in the farm*, where *hands* refers to *the workers*, thus *hands* appears as a subdomain of the wider domain *workers*.

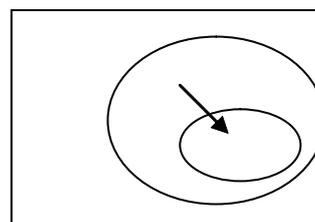
Conversely, in the second type of metonymy (target-in-source metonymy) the target domain (T) is a subdomain of the source domain (S).

*She is learning to tie her shoes* could be an example which illustrates this kind of metonymies. Here the concept *shoes* refers to *laces*. As we can observe this is a typical case of a conventional metonymy where THE WHOLE stands for PART OF THE WHOLE. There is a narrowing of meaning which implies that T –*laces*– is a subdomain of *shoes*, the source domain (S).

The model is diagrammed in the following figures:



**Fig 6:** Source-in-target domain



**Fig 7:** Target-in-source metonymy

The important aspect of this typology is that now we have an alternative definition of metonymy in terms of its formal constituents. Further implications are likely to derive from this model. Hopefully it will provide the frame to tackle such aspects as constrains that metonymy imposes on certain grammatical phenomena, the cases of non-referential metonymies and also in the so called pragmatic level it will provide a frame to deal adequately with inferential processes. So far, it is valuable in at least in one sense: it simplifies the overwhelming amount of typologies devised in order to classify metonymies.

## GOALS

A number of premises are to be introduced in order to set the goals:

1) After the distinction Ruíz de Mendoza & Otal (2002) made between source-in-target / target-in-source metonymies Ruíz de Mendoza (2004) gives the following definition of metonymy:

A one-correspondence domain internal conceptual mapping where the source may be a (central or non-central) subdomain of the target (source-in-target metonymy) or the target a non-central subdomain of the source (target-in-source metonymy)

Thus, metonymies are further distinguished in terms of *subdomain centrality*.

2) From the point of view of the processing strategies involved metonymy can be seen a phenomenon of domain reduction or domain expansion.

The typology provide above S-in- T and T-in- S metonymies is consistent with this description:

In Source-in-target metonymies we have access to a fully developed domain by invoking a relevant part of it. Whereas in target-in-source metonymies we have global access to a fully developed domain and then highlight a relevant subdomain.

According to this:

- source-in-target metonymies are processes of **domain expansion**
- target-in-source metonymies are processes of **domain reduction**

3) Only the matrix domain of a metonymic mapping is available for anaphoric reference. *Domain Availability Principle* (DAP) (Ruíz de Mendoza, 2000)

Within the general frame of research devoted to metonymy this is an important achievement, since the most recent proposals leave several aspects unexplained.

Consistently, the goal of this paper is to try to validate the former proposals: This model should be operative for a wide selection of randomly chosen meto-

nymies, including not only conventional cases, but also borderline samples. If the test proves successful the results will be mostly appreciated since the validation of this theoretical proposal, will be a major contribution in the consolidation of a coherent model for metonymy.

The research aims at validating the following aspects of the model:

- 1) In source-in-target metonymies the source can be a central or non-central subdomain of the target whereas in target-in-source metonymies, the target is always a non-central subdomain.
- 2) - Source-in-target metonymies are processes of domain expansion
- Target-in-source metonymies are processes of domain reduction

**Metonymy and thought:** verifying Ruíz de Mendoza & Ota's model of metonymy (a corpus-driven research)

- 3) Only the matrix domain of a metonymic mapping is available for anaphoric reference.

## METHODOLOGY

The use of large computerized corpora as a source of data for studying metonymy is still rather scarce, basically because it is difficult to explore metonymic expressions with the help of this type of corpus. In these respects I have followed a 'corpus –driven analysis' by taking evidence from real language corpora. Having this aim in mind I have gathered a collection of examples from various sources:

Sources:

- Examples of metonymy in Spanish:  
Newspaper *El País* 13/02/05, *El País* 06/03/05, *El País* 06/05/05
- Examples of metonymy in English:  
Newspaper *BBC Europe* 21/02/05, *BBC Europe* 06/05/05

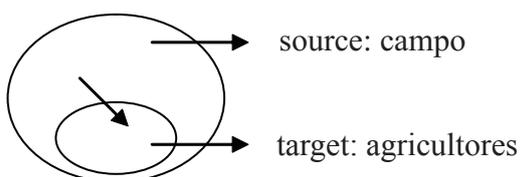
A total amount of 127 metaphoric / metonymic expressions were collected for analysis. 80 of them were metonymies. 5 samples could be interpreted both as referential-one-correspondence metaphors or metonymies. Both analysis were carried out for these cases. Recurrent samples of conventional metonymies were discarded. Thus the final choice of samples amounted to 58 samples.

## SOME EXAMPLES AT WORK

A set of four examples will be provided in order to explain the method of this research. Example one will be explained in full detail. The rest will be schematized.

**Example 1:** 'El campo dice basta'

*campo* stands for *agricultores*



**Metonymy and thought:** verifying Ruíz de Mendoza & Otal's model of metonymy (a corpus-driven research)

Type: target-in-source metonymy: the target domain is a subdomain of the source domain.

As I said before I will be operating with three hypotheses.

As for hypothesis one - H 1, in terms of domain centrality:

**H 1** → The target is a non-central subdomain of the source. According to the model it must be so, because *agricultures* (T) are a subdomain of *campo* (S) which is the central domain.

Let's apply hypothesis two –H 2, in terms of domain expansion / reduction:

**H 2** → In Target-in-source type we have domain reduction.

What we have here is a T-in- S metonymy. According to H 2 there should be a process of domain reduction, which implies a narrowing in meaning:

In our sample we move from *campo* (a wider setting) to *agricultures*, as part of the campo, or entities within the wider domain of campo.

Regarding the last hypothesis - H 3, anaphoric reference, we have the following operations:

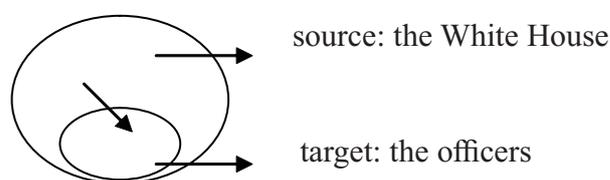
According to H 3 only the matrix domain of a metonymic mapping is available for anaphoric reference. That hypothesis which has been formulated as a principle – the *Domain Availability Principle*, states that ‘whenever a metonymic noun phrase occurs in a sentence, only the matrix domain of the metonymic mapping is available for anaphoric reference’. (Ruíz de Mendoza & Otal, 2002) This hypothesis works as a test consistent with the model at work.

**H3** → *El campo dice basta. Se enfada y luego sigue con las demandas.*

As we have said *campo* is the matrix domain in this metonymy. In this case the omitted subject – the pronoun *he* –él, designates the antecedent *campo*. The anaphor relation is established between the anaphoric item *él* and the antecedent of the matrix domain *campo*. In consequence H 3 applies here.

The second example goes as follows:

**Example 2:** ‘To travel with the *White House* is to see the world in style’



type: target-in-source metonymy

(The White House might sound overused as an example of INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE metonymy, however I decided to keep the conventional example because of the unusual context in which it is employed). In this sample the *White House* refers to the *officers*. Thus, like in sample 1 we have a T-in- S metonymy where, consistently with H 1, the T is a non-central subdomain of the source. We also have domain reduction – H 2, because *the officers* can be seen as being part of the wider entity

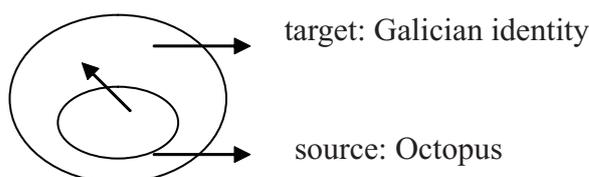
**Metonymy and thought:** verifying Ruíz de Mendoza & Otal's model of metonymy (a corpus-driven research)

White House. As for H 3, we could expand the sentence to [...], *it was very welcoming with us*. If anaphoric reference is to be established it must be between matrix domain *the White House* and the anaphoric pronoun *it*, as it is the case.

H3 → the White House ... it

**Example 3:** ‘how would you show your identity?’

‘I’ll order octopus’



type: source-in-target metonymy

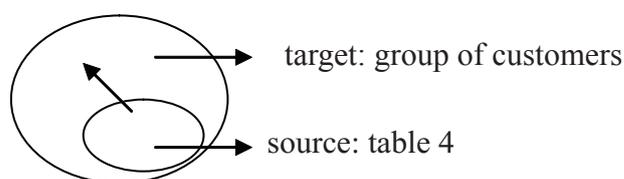
H1 → S is a non-central subdomain of T (It can be so)

H2 → In S-in-T we have domain expansion. Here we have domain expansion: *octopus* opens up to *Galician identity*, a wider entity

H3 → We can not establish anaphoric reference with *octopus* without splitting up the metonymy: the central mapping onto *Galician identity* would be missed.

Obviously I can not say: ‘I will order octopus. *This* (octopus) is my identity’ or ‘*which* is my identity. Here both *this* and *which* are intended to create an anaphora but this is not possible.

**Example 4:** ‘table 4 ordered pizza’



type: source-in-target metonymy

H1 → S (table 4) is a non-central subdomain of T (group of customers).

It can be so in a S-in- T metonymy

H2 → We have domain expansion. We map from *table 4* onto *the customers*.

H3 → No anaphoric reference is possible from source domain: table 4 ordered pizza, \* *it* wanted to drink wine.

## RESULTS

I have had problems in classifying some examples as the following:

‘Syria [is ] ready for Lebanon *pullback*’

Is there a S-in-T metonymy in the concept ‘pullback’ where pullback is an abstract entity which triggers a wider domain: troops, war weapons ...? This possibility of seeing some constructs as being metonymic in their internal structure is dealt in Kövecses and Radden (1998).

I think the difficult task of this paper was identification of non conventional metonymies and whether to consider them as any other processes, namely: metaphors, one-correspondence metaphors, referential metaphors, situational metaphors, predicative metonymies, double metonymies or simply lexicalizations.

Apart from certain difficult to classify samples which I will submit for further clarification, all the examples selected were consistent with the variables under analysis, both in English and Spanish.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the typology provided by Mendoza and Ota for metonymy fits all the examples analysed as well as the variables analyses.

However further research will be needed so as to validate this model as well as to explain possible cases which may not be fully explained under this light.

As explained before I will keep working with other colleagues in the clarification of four unclear samples.

Nevertheless we must rejoice ourselves that this typology is available, since it simplifies the overwhelming output of theories which try to bring coherence into the realm of metonymy.

As I see it, criticism will come from other fields of research not as much in terms of providing a better model -I find this one especially valuable because it combines simplicity with substantiality (Langacker,1987), but in the different perspectives of approaching language which tend to look at it focusing on usage, forgetting about cognitive motivation.

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## ANNEXE 1

### Traditional view

- objectivist view of world & language
- language is formal
- language as a mirror of the world
  
- mind as a mirror of nature
  
- meaning corresponds to things in the external world
  
- meaning is based on truth and reference
  
- reason is disembodied and abstract (ideal)
  
- thought is logical / formal
- thought as the mechanical manipulation of abstract symbols
- conceptual structure is atomistic

### Cognitive linguistics

- experientialist view of world
- language is conceptualized
- language as human construals to interact with the world
- mind as human capacity to interact with the world
- there is not objective correspondence between meaning and reality
- meaning is based on subjective constructs: conventionalized mental representations of reality
- reason is embodied, that is represented as perceived and interpreted by our senses (experiential) or our culture
- thought is imaginative
- thought has gestalt properties
  
- conceptual structure uses cognitive models (ICMs)