

## CONCEPTUAL METONYMY – THE PROBLEM OF BOUNDARIES IN THE LIGHT OF ICMs

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### ABSTRACT

The paper starts with presenting the change in the understanding of the concepts constituting metonymy on the basis of its definition. The intention is to go deeper into the implications of the constructivist view of metonymy and to discuss particularly the notions of conceptual contiguity, idealized cognitive models, frames, prototype effect and gestalt theory.

Next, I attempt to present the diversity of metonymical types based on the concept of idealized cognitive models. The typologies suggested by Lakoff, Dirven, Voßhagen, Panther and Thornburg, and Radden and Kövecses are analysed. I am going to demonstrate the richness of the metonymic patterns generated by ICMs along with the dangers of constructing ICMs which violate the assumptions contained in the definitions. The latter applies particularly to the typology put forward by Radden and Kövecses.

The paper ends with the discussion on the constraints of metonymy and the superiority of ICMs over conceptual principles which may rule the choice of elements constituting metonymic patterns.

The concept of metonymy has changed much throughout time. Initially, metonymy, along with metaphor, constituted merely a trope, and as such was classified in writings of the classical authors exploring the field of rhetoric. Significantly, one of the most meticulous thinkers of antiquity, Aristotle, did not recognize the distinctive character of metonymy and reduced it to a subtype of metaphor (Panther and Radden 1999: 1). Some contemporary linguists retained this subordinated character of metonymy (Fass 1997: 47), albeit at the same time rejecting the idea that its manifestation should be restricted to figurative language solely. Cognitive linguistics not only differentiates metaphor from metonymy, treating them as two distinct phenomena, but has also, importantly, elevated its status to one of the cognitive processes, interpreting metonymy as a kind of a mode of thinking “used automatically, effortlessly, and without conscious awareness” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 104). Therefore it seems that we think and conceptualize via metonymy, which, once this was as-

served, inspired a host of linguists to expand the investigation into the issue and draw further conclusions. The present article intends to present briefly some of these conclusions, study more deeply what the term “conceptual” represents, and assess how far the realm of conceptual metonymy spreads.

### 1. Metonymy as a relation between entities

Let us start with George Lakoff’s attempt to approach metonymy sketched in *Metaphors We Live By*. He claims that in the case of metonymy “... we are using one entity to refer to another that is related to it” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 35); and again: “Metonymic concepts allow us to conceptualize one thing by means of its relation to something else” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 39). Lakoff does not elaborate on the nature of the mentioned relation, but instead he tries to account for the phenomenon by means of a suggested taxonomy, exemplified by metonymical patterns such as PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, OBJECT USED FOR USER, CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED, and others (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 38-39).

Nevertheless, the character of that relation has been suspected probably since an anonymous author’s suggestion expressed in *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* that “*Denominatio* [i.e., ‘metonymy’] is a trope that takes its expression from near and close things and by which we can comprehend a thing that is not denominated by its proper word” (quoted in Koch 1999: 141). The above definition, although still attributing to metonymy a figurative character, mentions terms essential for understanding metonymy, namely “nearness” and “closeness”. The relation between two entities that are close or near to one another was recognized under the name of contiguity for the first time by Leonce Roudet, who introduced this term into the field of historical linguistics, and then popularized by Jacobson, who associated metonymy and contiguity in his work on the linguistic aspect of aphasia (Blank 1999: 171). The claim that metonymy is based on contiguity has become a firm and often referred to assumption of cognitive research and thus “is at the core of most definitions of metonymy” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19). In the light of the above-mentioned facts the need arises to look closer at some definitions using the concept of contiguity as well as at definitions of contiguity itself.

#### 1.1. Conceptual contiguity

Ken-ichi Seto writes, “Metonymy is a referential transfer phenomenon based on the spatio-temporal contiguity as conceived by the speaker between an entity and another in the (real) world” (Seto 1999: 91).

“Contiguity cannot be based on any form of objective or ‘natural’ contiguity. This has the far-reaching implication that contiguity must be taken to mean ‘conceptual contiguity’ and that we can have contiguity when we just ‘see’ contiguity between domains” (Dirven quoted in Feyaerts 1999: 316).

The first of the above quotations leads us logically to the second one, for the appearance of the term contiguity as a concept which defines metonymy entails the question of the definition of contiguity itself. It appears that the concept of contiguity may be approached in two ways, namely in a traditional and in a cognitive way, as “traditional approaches locate contiguity relationships in the world of reality, whereas cognitive approaches locate them at the conceptual level” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19). According to the traditional theory, “linguistic meaning is seen as adhering to the objective reality. In this view, the notion of contiguity is basically limited to an observable, real-world relationship between two referents” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19). Conceptual contiguity, on the other hand, does not lay claim to “objectivity”. On the contrary, it agrees with cognitivist assumptions stating that meaning is created, not found, by human beings – “this approach expresses the cognitivist view of reality as a domain which does not exist independently of human understanding, knowledge and belief” (Feyaerts 1999: 317). This means that “human understanding, knowledge and belief” all influence what we regard as contiguous very much and are responsible for where we “see” the relationship which constitutes the base of metonymy.

Thus in the light of the cognitive assumptions we should regard as erroneous the claim that conceptual contiguity results solely from the mapping of real-world contiguity into our conceptual system. In other words, it is true that conceptual contiguity does not always reflect the spatial nearness of the entities. We should not, however, underestimate the role of experience in the forming of metonymical patterns. Lakoff claims that “metonymic concepts are grounded in our experience” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 39). This is due to the experience that we relate WHOLES and PARTS; PRODUCER and PRODUCT come together because of being typically (primarily) physical, and PLACE FOR EVENT metonymy refers to the same physical relationship found in our experience, as something always occurs somewhere (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 39-40). We conceive of the relation between place and event in terms of some spatial contiguity (an event takes place), although an event is not a physical entity, but by ascribing an event to the place where it happened we end up with the notion of contiguity of place and event. Similarly, the whole does not consist of parts unless there is a mind for whom such a relationship matters – from the point of view of an ant the handle does not constitute a functional part of a mug, the front page of a book is not more important than any other for an illiterate child leafing through the pages, and the lid of a container makes sense only when we know that there is an “inside”. In other words, because wholes and parts do not exist objectively in the world (although a chair may have an innumerable number of parts, functionally significant for us are its four legs, back and seat) and if we agree that only by distinguishing parts of larger entities are we able to state contiguity, then our experience and thus the notion of contiguity both gain a conceptual validity. Therefore, interference of the human mind does not allow for the possibility of pure experience and at the same time it eliminates the concept of objective absolute physical contiguity.

As has been pointed out, conceptual contiguity needs structures to operate within, other than those of the “objective reality”. Those other structures are called *idealized cognitive models* (ICMs) or frames. At this point I would like to look more closely at how metonymy is defined within the above mentioned conceptual structures, and what additional concepts the introduction of those structures imposes.

## 1.2. Idealized Cognitive Models

Let us start with the ICM, which is understood as “a complex, structured whole, a gestalt”, which organizes our knowledge, and uses metonymic mapping as one of its structuring principles (Lakoff 1987: 68). Several characteristics of ICMs, which are crucial for understanding of them, should be mentioned. First of all, ICMs are idealized models in the sense that they “are created by human beings” and may vary among cultures, such as the ICM of *week* (Lakoff 1987: 67-68). Additionally, a certain oversimplification contributes to their idealization, tied with the prototype effect which is called by Lakoff a “by-product” of ICMs (Lakoff 1987: 68). If we consider the instance of the *bachelor* ICM, we may notice that “the idealized model says nothing about the existence of priests, ‘long term unmarried couplings,’ homosexuality, Moslems who are permitted four wives and only have three, etc. With respect to this idealized cognitive model, a *bachelor* is simply an unmarried adult man” (Lakoff 1987: 70). Another feature that shall prove significant is that ICMs are wholes made up of parts – “in the idealized model, the week is a whole with seven parts organized in a linear sequence; each part is called a day and the third is Tuesday” (Lakoff 1987: 68).

This last characteristic of ICMs leads us to distinguish two kinds of metonymy on the basis of ICMs: the first one involves the relation between two elements *within* an ICM, and the second embraces the *pars pro toto* synecdochal relation existing between an ICM as a whole and its elements. As for the internal relations within an ICM, Lakoff states, “Given an ICM with some background condition (e.g., institutions are located in places), there is a ‘stand for’ relation that may hold between two elements A and B, such that one element of the ICM, B, may stand for another element A. In this case, B = the place and A = institution. We will refer to such ICMs containing stand-for relations as *metonymic models*” (Lakoff 1987: 78). Let us notice that Lakoff introduces into his definition a “background condition”, in this case that “institutions are located in places”. It is in fact a postulate of conceptual contiguity between A and B; the fact that institutions are located in places is conceptually meaningful for us so that we place both elements within the same ICM. If our conceptual system were of such a sort that the locations of institutions were conceived of as unimportant for us, then the stand-for relation PLACE FOR INSTITUTION would be blocked by the lack of one of the elements. Thus it is conceptual contiguity within the elements of an ICM that constitutes a prerequisite (Lakoff’s “background condition”) for metonymic models.

Let us turn now to metonymical models which display the part/whole relation between an ICM as a whole and its elements, as in the following cases – “in *They went to the altar*, an initial sub event stands for the whole Wedding ICM”, or “in *Our teacher had 100 essays to grade*, a final sub event stands for a larger Event ICM involving reading, correcting and eventually grading students’ papers” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 33). The idea of the ICM conceived of as a whole made of parts is well demonstrated in the example of the ICM of going somewhere in a vehicle. The parts of the ICM form the following structure:

- Precondition: You have (or have access to) the vehicle.
- Embarcation: You get into the vehicle and start it up.
- Center: You drive (row, fly, etc.) to your destination.
- Finish: You park and get out.
- End point: You are at your destination.

(Lakoff 1987: 78)

We arrive at metonymy when giving possible answers to the question “how did you get to the party?”. In the answers below, a different part of the ICM stands for the whole ICM:

- (1) “– I drove. (Center stands for whole ICM.)  
 – I have a car. (Precondition stands for whole ICM.)  
 – I hopped on a bus. (Embarcation stands for whole ICM.)”

(Lakoff 1987: 79)

We can see that *precondition*, *embarcation*, *center*, *finish* and *endpoint* all constitute parts of the same ICM of going somewhere in a vehicle. A part (let us call it concept A) is chosen to stand for the whole ICM (concept B) according to the rule that “compared to A, B is either easier to understand, easier to remember, easier to recognize, or more immediately useful for the given purpose in the given context” (Lakoff 1987: 84). Such a quality of being “easier to recognize” is referred to by the cognitivists as the “salience” of the concept, and may be examined well in its relation to the notion of “frames”.

Although to a large extent ICMs as well as frames may be viewed as the same conceptual models, they differ in that the latter ones represent more complex “networks of contiguities” (Koch 1999: 149). Let us analyse an example of the marriage frame: its elements are, among others, *marriage contract*, *wedding*, *bride/groom*, *wife/husband*, *vow*, *union of wife and husband*, *motherhood*. The theory of frames locates the *motherhood* element on the periphery of the frame, thus it is directly linked only with the *union of wife and husband* element. In other words, the conceptual contiguity between those elements of the frame is stronger than, for instance, that between *wedding* and *motherhood*.

We can return now to the issue of what makes one element of the frame “easier to recognize” so that it can stand for the whole frame. Koch tries to account for this phenomenon by means of the gestalt theory (Koch 1999: 151). He provides the example of a figure described by Wittgenstein, which can be perceived either as a white cross against a black background, or alternatively, a black cross against a white ground. On the basis of that, Koch draws the following analogy:

[...E]very concept designated by a given lexical item appears as a figure in relation to (at least) another contiguous concept that – for the time being – remains the ground within the same frame. But at some moment, while we are using the same lexical item, certain pragmatic, conceptual or emotional factors may highlight the ground concept so that figure and ground become inverted. That is what we call metonymy” (Koch 1999: 152). Therefore, metonymy may be explained as a kind of ‘figure/ground’ effect (Koch 1999: 151), and a metonymy that can be found in Polish – *ślub* (vow) stands for *marriage* (Koch 1999: 148) is a result of putting the vow element into the foreground of the whole frame. Analogously, Langacker’s theory of the active zones may be treated as a variant of the figure/ground effect: “*The kettle is boiling* fails to evoke the conception of a pool of a melted metal, as we take the water inside to be the kettle’s active zones with respect to boil” (Langacker 1991: 456).

## 2. The typology of metonymy

The Latin word *definire* evokes fixing of boundaries onto the semantic field (The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*: 116), (no matter whether it is located in the external world or in the human mind), which as a result produces a distinction between two or more concepts. We can find a visual synonym of this word in the Polish word *o-kreślić*, as well as in the English word *to de-lineate*, which both metaphorically show defining as drawing a line, although the emphasis is not on its shape as in the case of *to sketch*, but on the semantic area that is highlighted by the setting of boundaries.

Seemingly, the typology of a phenomenon presupposes that it is already defined. In this view the typology would constitute a further specification of a given phenomenon, and in terms of the spatial metaphor its result would be the division of the semantic area into smaller units. Therefore, in this perspective, we can multiply the types of a phenomenon without a change in the boundaries of its definition. In other words, a typology is secondary to definition and does not affect its range. Now I would like to confront this view with a thesis that typology changes and challenges our understanding of a phenomenon, what is more, the arrangement of phenomena in classes represent one of the types of scientific explanation used in science. When we classify, we approach a phenomenon which is neither yet fully known nor yet examined. Thus we tend to identify the knowledge of the place in typology with the knowledge about the phenomenon itself. As we will see, the same applies to metonymy.

### 2.1 The canon

If the diversity of metonymy present in contemporary linguistic studies is to be properly depicted, for the sake of contrast one should start with the brief typology of metonymy found in Lakoff’s *Metaphors We Live By*. The result of his research is represented by the following metonymic relationships:

- (2) THE PART FOR THE WHOLE – “We don’t like *longhairs*.”
- (3) PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT – “He bought a *Ford*.”
- (4) OBJECT USED FOR USER – “The *gun* he hired wanted fifty grand.”
- (5) CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED – “A Mercedes rear-ended *me*.”
- (6) INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE – “The *Army* wants to reinstitute the draft.”
- (7) HE PLACE FOR THE INSTITUTION – “*Hollywood* isn’t what it used to be.”
- (8) THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT – “*Watergate* changed our politics.” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 38-39).

Lakoff based his typology of metonymical patterns on a definition which views metonymy as the outcome of the process in which “we are using one entity to refer to another that is related to it.” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 35). He does not further investigate the nature of this relation within the definition, whereas the provided taxonomy betrays a specific rather than a generic character. This leads us to the conclusion that in this case taxonomy plays a role in defining the concept, as it gains an explanatory function through a possible rephrasing of the definition: “we are using one entity to refer to another that is related to it, *for instance THE PART FOR THE WHOLE, THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT and so on.*” One may notice that the definition after the above transformation loses some of its generality, as we mentally combine the generality represented by the definition and the specification/exemplification of taxonomy. In other words, what plays a role in grasping the concept of metonymy seems to be both the definition and the examples arranged in taxonomy.

Lakoff’s definition seems to be open in the sense that it generates further metonymic relationships. However, the following question arises: we can include an additional metonymic pattern, for instance THE CONTENT FOR THE CONTAINER, only when it fulfills the conditions of the definition. On the other hand, however, our understanding of a definition depends on the concepts included in it, which may be redefined so that they embrace a given metonymical pattern. For instance, as I attempted to show in the previous section of this article, the concept of contiguity must have attained a conceptual character in order to define a case in which the physical contiguity is not a direct basis of a metonymical concept, as in the case of *to go to the altar* which stands for the whole Wedding ICM. I would like, then, to take a closer look at some examples of taxonomies which are accompanied by a change in the understandings of the concepts in the definitions. If we regard Lakoff’s list of metonymical patterns as a canon, a kind of a set of prototypical

cases, we could analyse the range of metonymy by studying which types of metonymy are added to it, and what they may contribute to this process.

## 2.2 Conversion

Dirven (1999) defines conversion as “a categorical change of a lexical item from the status of a noun or an adjective to that of another word class” (1999: 277). As he further maintains, “conversion is not merely a process at the word level, but rather at the predicative-argument level, which we shall henceforth call the ‘nucleus’ level” (Dirven 1999: 277). Dirven analyses the above assumptions on the example of the Old English adjective *clean* which in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was converted into the verb *to clean*. According to Dirven the above process did not occur ‘in abstracto’, as “*to clean* is a transitive verb implying a case frame containing an agent, a patient, and possibly an instrument, a manner and result. This linguistic configuration can in fact be seen as an iconic reflection of a conceptual configuration, in which an agent as the energy source transmits energy to an object which is affected by the energy” (Dirven 1999: 277).

The above quotation requires some comment. First, Dirven stresses the need to treat any phenomenon as part of a bigger whole, such as in the case of a transitive verb which evokes a case frame. Secondly, we can see that he redefines conversion as a result of some conceptual process, since a change in the linguistic configuration is always a manifestation of some shift in conceptual configuration. It is the connection of these two elements that leads Dirven to construe conversion as a metonymical process which requires some conceptual part – whole structure. These structures are called by Dirven event schemata and may take the form of the action schema, as in the case of the change from the adjective *clean* into the verb *to clean* in *X makes the table clean* and *X cleaned the table*. In order to grasp the metonymical process exhibited here, we must notice that “the adjective *clean* denotes the resultant stage of the energy transmitted by the agent. Since the resultant state is the most salient element in this whole action schema, it comes to stand for the whole event. (...) At the same time, the entire action schema remains implicitly present in the resultant state, which now metonymically denotes the action schema as such” (Dirven 1999: 277).

The above quotation indicates that Dirven, apart from applying the notion of event schemata, makes use of another notion characterizing metonymy, namely the concept of salience. Let us pay special attention for a moment to the interaction between salience and event schemata which is exemplified by the action and motion schema. If the action schema “conceptually synthesizes the flow of energy from an agent to a patient, via an instrument in a certain manner,” the motion schema “comprises a moving patient and one or more elements of the motion’s trajectory, i.e., source, path, and goal” (Dirven 1999: 282). The words ‘synthesize’ and ‘comprise’ emphasize the part/whole character of the schemas, which in turn stands in close re-

lation to the issue of salience. Namely, if something is salient, it constitutes an easily identifiable, distinct entity, which is in a relation to some bigger whole. Within the motion schema, on the basis of the goal-over-source principle (Dirven 1999: 282), goals turn out to be more salient than sources, which can be illustrated by the following examples:

- (9) Before going home, the fisherman *beached* his boat.
- (10) On the cruise we’ll first *land* in Casa Blanca.
- (11) The submarine *surfaced* again. (1999: 282)

As Dirven points out, “in each of these instances, the physical strip or area of land which constitutes the goal stands for the motion as a whole” (1999: 283).

## 2.3. Opposition

Voßhagen in suggests the seemingly paradoxical metonymy A CONCEPT STANDS FOR ITS OPPOSITE, e.g. “*terrible – wonderful; great; the best...*” (Voßhagen 1999: 305). He uses a definition borrowed from Lakoff stating that

- “– There is a conceptual structure containing both A and another concept B.
- Compared to A, B is either easier to understand, easier to remember, easier to recognise [...]” (Lakoff 1987: 84)

Therefore, since the above pattern of metonymy must fulfill the following conditions, Voßhagen bases his research concerning opposites on the concepts of “conceptual contiguity, salience (...), idealized structuring of conceptual domains, and the highlighting function of metonymies for expressive purposes” (Voßhagen 1999: 289). The core assumption, then, becomes the claim that “opposites belong to one conceptual domain, and that the relation between opposites is one of close mental contiguity” (Voßhagen 1999:291). Voßhagen supports this statement by quoting the findings of word-association experiments, which strengthened the suspicion that people often use an opposite word in the place of an intended one (1999: 292). Thus, the conclusion follows that the opposite concepts represented by words are contiguous within one conceptual domain.

It seems that the situation in which a positive concept stands for its opposite is more frequent. It is well demonstrated in expressions conveying ironic meaning, as in the following situation:

- (12) “Y has been cheated by her friend X and says: ‘X is a fine friend.’” (Voßhagen 1999: 290), or in expressions such as
- (13) *big idea* – “an unwelcome suggestion, proposal, or action” and *big deal* – “... anything or anyone believed unimportant, uninteresting, or unimpressive” (Voßhagen 1999: 297).

Apart from the above examples, Voßhagen provides us with yet another type of metonymy involving opposition, namely THE POSITIVE END OF A SCALE STANDS FOR THE WHOLE SCALE. Some division of opposition introduced by Voßhagen is needed at this point. He differentiates between two types of opposition among adjectives, namely antonymical and complementary concepts. Complementarity implies a “two-valued organization’ of the domain” – it “is exemplified in pairs such as *married-unmarried* or *dead-alive* and involves concepts which are not gradable, do not express degrees of intensity and have no intermediary terms between them. Anything which belongs to the conceptual domain of complementaries is either the one or the other” (Voßhagen 1999: 294). Antonyms in turn split into two groups: “evaluative antonyms”, such as *good-bad*, and “physical-measurement adjectives” (e.g. *big-small*). The common features of both kinds of antonyms are that they are “gradable, denote different degrees of intensity and have a ‘neutral area’ between them”, the last is noticeable in the saying *it is neither good nor bad* (Voßhagen 1999: 293).

The above distinction becomes significant when we consider THE POSITIVE END FOR THE WHOLE SCALE metonymy. It applies only to antonyms and occurs in such expressions as *How big is it?* According to Voßhagen, “this situation is metonymic” since “an easy to perceive and well understood aspect of a conceptual domain – the more salient one – stands for the domain as a whole” (1999: 294). Therefore, the greater amount of some quality – in this case the quality of size – points to the whole scale, which is surely “conditioned by perceptual salience” (Voßhagen 1999: 294).

Although a significant characteristic of evaluative concepts is their gradability and the existence of intermediary terms, Voßhagen points to the conceptual structure in which those features become suspended. He postulates that in such cases evaluative concepts may be conceptualized in the same way as complementary ones, which means that their opposition is not perceived as scalar, but absolute (Voßhagen 1999: 300). An illustration of the above hypothesis may be the fact that “Speakers often interpret the negation of one evaluative term as an assertion of its opposite, although the intermediary term is possible. In answering the question *Is it a good movie?*, the reply with *No* tends to be understood in the sense of ‘It is a bad movie,’ although it may be neither good nor bad” (Voßhagen 1999: 300).

Such an idealized kind of opposition is called by Voßhagen an idealized conceptual structure “which people use in organizing the respective conceptual domains” (1999: 305), in this case the domain of evaluative concepts. It is clear from that description that the structures very much resemble Lakoff’s ICMs (1987). At this point an interesting issue emerges, namely whether it is possible for two contradictory ICMs to function in human consciousness at the same time. In that situation, the scalar ICM would underlie the common sayings such as “something is *not good, but not bad either*” (Voßhagen 1999: 293), whereas the complementary one would be re-

sponsible for the linguistic situations exhibiting the two-valued thinking, such as exemplified above.

#### 2.4. The POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy, SPEECH ACTS metonymy

This kind of metonymy, studied by Panther and Thornburg (1999) presupposes the State-of-Affairs Scenario (SoA) which displays the following structure:

- (i) the BEFORE: *necessary preconditions*: motivations, potentialities, capabilities, abilities, dispositions, etc., which can bring about the SoA
- (ii) the CORE: the *existing/true SoA*  
the EFFECTS: *necessary consequences* immediately following from the SoA
- (iii) the AFTER: *non-necessary consequences* of the SoA  
(Panther and Thornburg 1999: 337)

Panther and Thornburg maintain that POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is a case of the BEFORE element standing for the CORE element. They investigate this in several conceptual domains, some of which are:

- (14) *perceptual events – ABILITY TO PERCEIVE FOR ACTUAL PERCEPTION –*  
“Can you see well?”, “I can taste the vanilla”  
(Panther and Thornburg 1999: 339-3340)
- (15) mental states and processes – *ABILITY TO PROCESS FOR ACTUAL MENTAL PROCESS*  
“I can remember when we got our first TV.”, “I can imagine how it happened”  
(Panther and Thornburg 1999: 342)
- (16) actions – *ABILITY TO ACT FOR ACTION*  
“John was able to finish his paper before deadline”  
(Panther and Thornburg 1999: 348)

Moreover, Panther and Thornburg explain in terms of the same State-of-Affairs Scenario even less prototypical metonymies, such as indirect speech act metonymies. As the authors claim, due to the scenario approach, “indirect speech acts...yield to an explanation in terms of general metonymies...” (1999: 337), as in the following example of an indirect request:

- (17) “John, you will take out the garbage”, in which “the AFTER condition metonymically stands for the CORE of the requestive speech act scenario or the scenario as a ‘whole’”  
(Panther and Thornburg 1999: 337)

#### 2.5. Sign metonymy and reference metonymy

Now seems to be a proper moment for presenting the original typology of metonymy put forward by Radden and Kövecses (1999). They base their classifica-

tion on the following definition: “Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, (...) provides access to another conceptual entity, (...) within the same idealized cognitive model” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 21). Therefore, as the authors emphasize, “metonymy may occur wherever we have idealized cognitive models” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 21). However, in their view, the very notion of ICMs splits into three types: Sign ICM, Reference ICM, and Concept ICM. The above terminology is based on the idea of three (again) ontological realms, namely the world of ‘concepts’, forms (in particular ‘forms of language’) and the realm of ‘things’ and ‘events’. Two of the ICMs cross-cut the ontological realms: the Sign ICM interrelates “a form and one or more concepts, the Reference ICM relates “real-world entities” to “signs, concepts or forms” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 23). According to the authors, “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” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 23). In this light only the Concept ICMs can be classified as the latter instance of that division. This highly sophisticated system of ICMs leads to surprising and uncommon types of metonymy. Let us now provide some examples which illustrate what the authors mean when they claim that “The notion of metonymy has much wider application than that of traditional approaches” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 21). For the sake of clarity I shall present them in specific-generic order:

- (18) dollar for ‘money’ – FORM FOR CONCEPT – SIGN ICM
  - (19) word *cow* for a real cow – FORM-CONCEPT FOR THING/EVENT –  
REFERENCE ICM
  - (20) (concept ‘cow’ for a real cow – CONCEPT FOR THING/ EVENT –  
REFERENCE ICM
  - (21) word-form *cow* for a real cow – FORM FOR THING / EVENT –  
REFERENCE ICM
- (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 24-26)

It is clear that the above instances broaden our prototypical perspective of metonymy expressed in Lakoff’s classification of metonymical patterns. In all the above cases, entities of different ontological realms are interrelated within the same semiotic unit, namely either Sign or Reference ICM. Since we cross-cut different ontologies, we enter into the field of study which directly refers to the nature of language, that is, we pose the question about the relation between the forms of language, objects in the world, and the human mind. Radden and Kövecses provide us with the following conclusion: “since we have no other means of expressing and communicating our concepts than by using forms, language as well as other communication systems are of necessity metonymic” (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 24).

It seems, however, that Radden and Kövecses have been caught in the trap of their own definition. According to it, “one conceptual entity provides access to an-

other conceptual entity” (1999: 21). Yet, since metonymies that emerge within Sign ICM and Reference ICMs are the result of the crosscutting of different ontologies, and since these ontologies constitute forms, concepts, and things/events, it is clear that entities which comprise metonymy can not be constrained to conceptual entities only. The metonymical patterns such as FORM FOR CONCEPT, and especially FORM FOR THING/EVENT, contradict the definition which requires the conceptual character of both constituents. The direct consequence of that fallacy is that the authors use the notion of an ICM, which as the “*idealized cognitive model*” ex definitio permits only conceptual elements. Thus, adjusting an ICM so that it embraces elements from the other ontological realms is erroneous in the light of the definition of ICMs.

By providing various examples of types of metonymy first I attempted to present the diversity of metonymy. Secondly, I hope to be able to find the answer to the question of where this diversity comes from and how it is grounded as far as the traditional terminology is concerned. The above instances of metonymies point to the conclusion that the strategical concepts used in the definitions of metonymy, especially the notion of an ICM, have been considerably broadened in order to apply to unprototypical types of metonymy. The concept of ICMs, whether understood as Dirven’s event schemata, Voßhagen’s idealized conceptual structure, or Panther/Thornburg’s scenarios, explains metonymy as a phenomenon based on part/whole constructs. This implies that any conceptual structure which displays a part/whole character may serve as a basis for metonymy unless such an approach disagrees with the assumed definition, as in the case of the ICMs suggested by Radden and Kövecses. If, then, metonymies are to act as the partial products of human cognition, are we able to trace the principles of our mental perception? In other words, we are looking for any logic in metonymical taxonomy which might determine certain types of metonymy and exclude others.

### 3. Constraints of metonymy

#### 3.1 The Principle of anthropocentrism

Finding out why only some choices of source and target are acceptable and others are thought of as highly bizarre would contribute to our understanding of metonymy and the working of the human mind. Let us start with a “bizarre metonymy” presented in Gibbs’ reflection that “...we can use the name of any well known creative artist to refer to the artistic creation of the artist as in ‘does he like Hemingway’ or ‘I saw a Jasper John yesterday’. But not any product can be referred to by the name of the person who created the product. I could hardly say ‘Mary was tasty meaning the cheesecake that Mary made, in spite of the analogy between Mary mixing and processing ingredients to produce the cake and Jasper John mixing and applying colors to produce his paintings” (Gibbs 1993: 258). The analogy that Gibbs mentions suggests that baking a cake and painting a painting belong to the same PRODUCTION

ICM. However, although in the first case the PRODUCER STANDS FOR PRODUCT metonymy is acceptable, in the second example the ICM does not fulfill some other conditions which would facilitate the use of the above kind of the metonymical pattern, like the inclusion into the ICM of such elements as the commercial aspect of the product, its greater public accessibility and so on. Thus, the possible conclusion is that both situations cannot be subsumed under the same ICM unless Mary starts to sell her cheesecakes and, guided by PRODUCER STANDS FOR PRODUCT pattern she uses her name as a trademark. In other words, our concepts of baking and painting, despite the apparent similarities (like, for instance, the presence of producer and product elements), belong to the different ICMs. The inability to apply a *Mary stands for cake* metonymy indicates how an alteration within the ICM may block the metonymical pattern.

An interesting type of constraint referring to the principle of anthropocentrism may be found in Dirven, in his analysis of conversion as a type of metonymy: "... as long as human referents are not treated differently from non-human referents they can become the input for conversion processes. But if human referents are treated in their typically human agent and dative roles, they are unlikely to become involved in a conversion process." Therefore, "*to police a district* can never mean that people are turned into 'police officers of a district' (...) but rather it can only involve the patient role, i.e., that you put a sufficient number of policemen in a district so that it may become safe again. Here the police are not understood as agents, but as patients or instruments that in an atmosphere of street violence may restore a neighborhood's feeling of safety" (Dirven 1999: 285). Applying the principle of anthropocentrism here Dirven claims that "Since human beings are already the focus of attention in most linguistic structures, they cannot be focused upon again in the conversion process, at least not in the agent or dative roles, which are prototypically human roles" (1999: 285).

### 3.2 Cognitive principles of Radden and Kövecses (1999)

The above example is especially interesting in the light of Radden and Kövecses' view, whose principles governing the metonymical pattern stand in clear opposition to Dirven's idea. While Dirven sees "the clash between the two cognitive principles, i.e., the principle of anthropocentrism and the principle of metonymic focusing" (1999: 286), Radden and Kövecses claim that metonymic focusing follows from anthropocentrism and therefore in a sense they equate the two on the basis that "our basic human experiences are derived from our anthropocentric view of the world and our interaction in the world. In this world, humans take precedence over non-humans, things are looked at from a subjective rather than objective point of view, concrete objects are more salient than abstract entities, things we interact with are selected over things we do not interact with..." (1999: 45). In this view, the structure of the metonymical patterns reflects what we regard as our bodily experience, as in

the principles HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN (with subcategories of PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT or POSSESSOR FOR POSSESSED), CONCRETE OVER ABSTRACT (sub cases are BODILY OVER EMOTIONAL – *heart for kindness*), FUNCTIONAL OVER NON-FUNCTIONAL (for instance, *sitting behind the wheel*) (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 46). However, the problem is that human experience is hardly ever unambiguous and purely bodily, without an admixture of mental input. This manifests itself in the violation of certain principles, which can be illustrated by the example of *the buses are on strike*. Radden and Kövecses explain: "Since passengers 'interact' with the buses and buses are more relevant to them than their drivers, the metonymy is motivated by the cognitive principle INTERACTIONAL OVER NON-INTERACTIONAL and the communicative principle RELEVANT OVER IRRELEVANT, but it is inconsistent with the cognitive principle HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN" (1999: 51). In fact, we are provided with the CONTROLLED FOR CONTROLLER pattern which can be considered a case of NON-HUMAN STANDS FOR HUMAN. This points to a significant aspect of the metonymic patterns, which is their reversibility. A brief sketch of its range will help us to draw a further conclusion.

We have a WHOLE FOR PART metonymy (*the car needs washing*) which is motivated by the GOOD GESTALT OVER POOR GESTALT principle (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 48) but does not exclude the PART FOR WHOLE pattern which violates the above principle. Similarly, although the principle IMMEDIATE OVER NON-IMMEDIATE accounts for the EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy (*slow road* for 'slow traffic resulting from the poor state of the road') (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 38), the CAUSE FOR EFFECT metonymy is also possible: *healthy complexion* for "the good state of health bringing about the effect of healthy complexion" (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 38). Thus, in every pair of reversible metonymies one element breaks the principle that motivates the other. If so, one should express some doubts concerning the value of the above mentioned system of metonymical principles. Radden and Kövecses hold that "the significance of these principles lies in the fact that they help us understand why we select certain vehicle entities to access a target" (1999: 52). However, the attempt to provide some explanation for the logic of the source-target pattern and the effort to reveal some constraints of metonymy fail in the light of the phenomenon of reversibility. It seems that the reference to the principles becomes semantically empty, as it is metonymical highlighting that makes relevant what before was perceived as irrelevant, non-immediate or poor gestalt. One might say that a metonymic pattern is always relevant in the sense that the relevance is created by metonymy.

Now we may return to the view held by Dirven whose claim is that we cannot re-focus our attention on some element for a second time. According to him, metonymic highlighting itself constitutes a form of focus. Therefore, this approach seems to attribute to metonymy a creative role, contrary to Radden and Kövecses' perspective which views metonymy as a reflection of hidden principles and which



diminishes the significance of metonymy, seeing it solely as the conceptual expression of our physical characteristics. Let us look more closely at the OCCURRENT OVER NON-OCCURRENT principle postulated by Radden and Kövecses: "This principle reflects our preferential concern with real, factual, and occurrent experiences. It accounts for metonymy (...) ACTUAL FOR POTENTIAL in expressions such as *He is an angry person*, or *This is a fast car*. Here, the occurrent senses of the words *angry* and *fast* as found in their predicative usages stand for their non-occurrent, potential senses" (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 47). Nevertheless, as Panther and Thornburg illustrated with numerous examples, to which I referred in section 2.5, the reverse POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymical pattern is highly exploited: "I *can* swim fifty laps", "I *can* smell the garlic" (Panther and Thornburg 1999: 350). In this case the assumption that potentiality accompanies actuality in the action ICM requires greater conceptual work than applying some cognitive principle; as a matter of fact it demands creating a State-of-Affairs Scenario where actual and potential are the BEFORE and CORE elements of this Scenario. The reversibility of metonymy constitutes the result of the switch of metonymic highlighting from the CORE to the BEFORE element, not the effect of applying the OCCURRENT OVER NON-OCCURRENT principle. The metonymic highlighting which accounts for the reversibility of metonymy seems to remain unaccountable itself, or rather our understanding of this phenomenon is conveyed by means of the UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING metaphor in which case the focusing of attention is understood in terms of the physical focusing of an eye while perceiving an object.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the present article I have tried to present the reasons for the diversity of conceptual metonymy. It seems that there is a large potential in the use of the term ICM understood as a structured whole (one comprising at least two elements) that enables the appearance of new, original metonymies. The idea of conceptual metonymy not only casts into shade some older, trope-based explanations but, most importantly, it has introduced new ways of thinking into the studies on metonymy. As a result, our understanding of metonymy strongly depends on the way in which we conceive of ICMs. Therefore, the more broadly one treats ICMs, the greater the number of metonymical types arises, and consequently, metonymy as a cognitive process gains in significance.

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