

Conventionality and linguistic domain(s) involved in the characterization of metonymies (for the creation of a detailed typology of metonymy)

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This presentation is the second of three presentations making up the first section of the theme session which we have organized for ICLC 12. This section will present part of the results of our project on metonymy, funded in part by two grants from the Spanish government. One of the aims of the project is to compile a detailed web-hosted digital database of metonymy, which may constitute a useful research tool for the academic community. We have already developed a rich set of criteria to describe metonymies, included them in our database, and applied them so far to 200 metonymies registered in the specialized literature on metonymy. In this section we will discuss the design and functioning of the database, each of its 11 fields, their application to a sample of the metonymies (in English, Spanish, American and Spanish sign language) included in the database up to early June 2013, the problems encountered, and some of the descriptive and theoretical findings that have so far resulted from the multiple searches allowed by the database.

In my presentation I will discuss the database entry fields concerning conventionality and the linguistic domain(s) or level(s) involved by the metonymies under analysis. As regards conventionality, we distinguish between cases of conceptual conventionality only, i.e. those guiding reasoning only or those having a purely inferential purpose; and cases of both conceptual and linguistic conventionality, i.e. those in which the conventionality of the metonymy is reflected in the motivation of conventional constructional meaning or form, and / or in the guidance of the morphosyntactic categorization of a construction. The field concerned with the linguistic domain(s) or level(s) where the metonymy has been attested is a complex field with four subfields. First, I will focus on the subfield concerned with the grammatical rank (e.g. morpheme, lexeme, phrase, clause, sentence, etc.) of the linguistic expression instantiating the conceptual metonymy. Then, I will deal with the subfield devoted to meaning. In this part of the entry, we check (a) whether the metonymy in question motivates constructional meaning or (b) whether it only guides or facilitates utterance and discourse meaning (Barcelona 2009). Within (a), we check whether the metonymy-motivated constructional meaning is (i) prototypical conventional meaning; (ii) non-prototypical conventional meaning; or (iii) implied or inferred, non-conventional meaning. Here we also specify whether the metonymy guides inferencing to morphosyntactic categorization (see Barcelona 2005). The next subfield deals with the motivation of constructional form by the conceptual metonymy instantiated in the linguistic expression (Barcelona 2005, 2009). Here we distinguish between prototypical and non-prototypical conventional form, and also specify whether the metonymy guides morphosyntactic categorization. Finally, I will comment on the grammatical process (e.g. grammaticalization, affixal derivation, conversion, etc.) that may be motivated in part by the metonymy in question.

The discussion of each (sub)field will be illustrated with metonymy entries from our database, and supplemented with searches combining these fields with other fields and with the discussion of the corresponding findings (e.g. types of conceptual metonymies guiding implicatures, those guiding non-prototypical clausal meaning, etc.).