

# THE DIFFERENTIATION OF METONYMY AND METAPHOR CONCEPTS IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

## LA DIFERENCIACIÓN DE LOS CONCEPTOS DE METONIMIA Y METÁFORA EN LA LINGÜÍSTICA MODERNA

Valentyna Moisiuk <sup>1</sup> \*; Oksana Dziubina <sup>2</sup> ; Sypa Liliia <sup>3</sup> ; Sokol Mariana <sup>4</sup> ; Svitlana Konovalchuk <sup>5</sup> ; Marta Rudenko <sup>6</sup> .

1. Yuri Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Ukraine. hladka\_valya11@yahoo.fr
2. Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. oksana12@tnpu.edu.ua
3. Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Ukraine. liliia35@fru.edu.ua
4. Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. e-mail: maryanasokol@ukr.net
5. Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. svilanakonoval2@yahoo.com
6. Ya Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University, Ukraine. orudenko22@tdmu.edu.ua

\* Corresponding author: Valentyna Moisiuk, e-mail: hladka\_valya11@yahoo.fr

### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the feasibility of distinction between metonymy and metaphor; since ancient times, language researchers have studied them together because they are based on the transfer of names by similarity or analogy of features. The main task of the article is to outline the dominant theories of metonymy and metaphor, developed in the plane of the semantic-syntactic paradigm, as well as to present cognitively oriented considerations about the essence of these two phenomena, which prove their distinction. Based on the basic postulates of cognitive linguistics, particularly the theory of conceptual metaphor, the theory of mental spaces, and the theory of conceptual integration, the authors prove a significant difference between the two outlined linguocognitive mechanisms. Based on phraseological units of modern French, the authors prove, first, that metonymy represents a real adjacency of concepts, while metaphor - hypothetical. Secondly, their difference lies in the different number of conceptual spheres involved in metonymization (one conceptsphere) and metaphorization (more than two conceptspheres). Thirdly, in metaphorization, projected images reflect various (sometimes unexpected) associations that link different spheres of GOAL and SOURCE, while in metonymization, projected images adhere to logically established connections.

**Keywords:** metaphor; metonymy; similarity of concepts; cognitive semantics; conceptual sphere.

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## RESUMEN

El artículo está dedicado a la viabilidad de la distinción entre metonimia y metáfora; desde la antigüedad, los investigadores del lenguaje los han estudiado juntos porque se basan en la transferencia de nombres por similitud o analogía de características. La tarea principal del artículo es esbozar las teorías dominantes de la metonimia y la metáfora, desarrolladas en el plano del paradigma semántico-sintáctico, así como presentar consideraciones de orientación cognitiva sobre la esencia de estos dos fenómenos, que prueban su distinción. Con base en los postulados básicos de la lingüística cognitiva, particularmente la teoría de la metáfora conceptual, la teoría de los espacios mentales y la teoría de la integración conceptual, los autores prueban una diferencia significativa entre los dos mecanismos linguocognitivos descritos. Basados en unidades fraseológicas del francés moderno, los autores prueban, primero, que la metonimia representa una adyacencia real de conceptos, mientras que la metáfora, hipotética. En segundo lugar, su diferencia radica en el diferente número de esferas conceptuales involucradas en la metonimia (una conceptosfera) y la metaforización (más de dos conceptosferas). En tercer lugar, en la metaforización, las imágenes proyectadas reflejan varias asociaciones (a veces inesperadas) que vinculan diferentes esferas de OBJETIVO y FUENTE, mientras que en la metonimia, las imágenes proyectadas se adhieren a conexiones lógicamente establecidas.

**Palabras clave:** Metáfora; Metonimia; Similitud De Conceptos; Semántica Cognitiva; Esfera Conceptual.

## INTRODUCTION

The development of a cognitive approach, which considers language forms as a result of world conceptualization by human consciousness, and their meaning as a result of certain structural knowledge, concepts covered by linguistic signs, allows a deeper understanding of the processes of “voicing” the surrounding reality, enables inclusion mechanism of our consciousness creating new words and expressions needed to fix the changes that occur in the real world picture. Metonymy is one of the effective means of conceptualizing the elements of reality (de Mendoza Ibáñez, 2021). Nowadays it is interpreted not only as one of the inherent languages of universals, as a type of semantic shift, the transfer of the name from one subject to another on the basis of adjacency of associations, but also as one of the cognitive models of world cognition. Researchers’ close attention to this phenomenon in terms of cognitive semantics determines the relevance of given research (Lin, 2021).

Metonymy as one of the productive creative means of language enrichment has only recently become the center of attention of researchers, being in the shadow of the phenomenon of metaphor related to it. As a “kind of complement” to the latter, it received a common definition, according to which it was interpreted as a rethinking based on the similarity or analogy of features in the conceptual reflection of the denoted object. Moreover “It is obvious that the quality of understanding the essence of the conceptual-categorical apparatus, its professional use in practice depends on the quality of education, which causes the effectiveness of innovative approaches, the emergence of new generation books” (Sokol et al., 2020). Nowadays, scholars, clearly distinguishing between the concepts of systemic-linguistic and speech metonymy, as well as taking into account their relationship in communicative activities, study this phenomenon in different areas, in particular as a separate method of nomination

and a tool of semantic derivation (Ostapchuk, 2016), as one of the aesthetic means of text organization (Drozdova et al., 2021) as a separate from the metaphor of tropes (Lakoff & Turner, 2009); investigate the connection between metonymy and the pragmatics of expression (P. Halperin et al.), etc. Based on this, metonymy is defined as “a semiotic pattern that manifests itself in the transfer of symbols of one component of the event to another, the name of the class of objects and the whole to the adjacent part within one situation.” (Langacker, 1993), as “transfer of the name of phenomena, objects and their features by contiguity or - more broadly - by their connection in space and time” (Arutyunova, 1990). It is worse to note that “communicative culture as a complex social phenomenon is part of the general culture of the individual, includes the achievements of social and individual life. It reflects the ratio of subjective and objective qualities and functions that are personified in the linguistic hierarchy at each level of the education system” (Drozdova et al., 2021). However, despite the awareness of the separate status of metonymy, linguists continue to study it through the prism of common and distinctive features with metaphor. Addressing the basic tenets of cognitive linguistics, which studies the ways and means of representing knowledge, the cognitive principles of generating new units, clarifies the mechanisms of the relationship between language and cognitive structures, allowed a new look at the outlined issue (Jenabagha et al., 2022).

Thus, the **aim** of given research is to prove the feasibility of distinguishing between two similar concepts - metonymy and metaphor.

## METHODS

The main **task** is to highlight the dominant theories of metonymy and metaphor, developed in the plane of semantic-syntactic paradigm, as well as to present cognitively oriented considerations about the essence of these two phenomena, which, in fact, prove their distinction. The phraseology of modern French is **the material of the research**, which not only vividly reflects the mentality of a certain language community, the peculiarities of their vision and understanding of reality, but also demonstrates the cognitive mechanisms that work during the generation of new nominative units.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In general, the history of the study of metonymy begins with the works of ancient philosophers, where it was considered traditionally as a stylistic figure, trope, figurative and expressing means of speech (Aristotle, Cicero). Only Quintilian considered it as a spacious figurative and expressing means of poetic and prose speech, and most importantly – a separate phenomenon in comparison with the metaphor. According to him, “[m]etonymic comparison of objects occurs not on the basis of their similarity as in the case of metaphor, but on the basis of adjacency, that is, the affiliations of them to one circle of phenomena, to the concepts of one order associated with time, spatial, causative and consequential and other ratios (...) [In the case of metonymy], instead of the word that accurately corresponds to the subject, they substitute another with the same meaning borrowed from the subject that is with a close relationship” (Arutyunova, 1999). In this way, the Roman speaker continues, “renaming borrows the names in related and close objects, under which things are understood by their true names” (Arutyunova, 1999).

With the development of a semantic approach, the semantic nature of the outlined phenomenon is thoroughly investigated, where the metonymy is interpreted as a lexical method of expressing certain connections and relationships, as uncomplicated formal changes in the transfer of the name (see,

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for example, the works of Taranenko (1989), and Jacobson (1990), etc.). Scientists state that both in metonymy and in the metaphor of the transfer of the name of concept A to concept B occurs. At the same time, in the first case (metonymy) the concepts A and B remain unchanged, while in the name of the concept B the attention is focused on its certain denotative semantic feature. In the second case (metaphor) there is an inevitable interpenetration of signs of concepts A and B of these semiotic units through their categorical and denotative semantic components, resulting in the formation of a new concept (Labashchuk et al., 2020). Describing the metaphorical rethinking in this perspective, L. Vygotsky writes: “We seem to rise above the concept of A, and then descend to the concept of B. But this kind of overcoming structural dependencies becomes possible only due to certain relations of commonality between the concepts” (Vygotsky, 1982). Obviously, for the same reasons, V. Telia connects metaphorization with word generation: “To describe the technique of metaphor, ie how it organizes a new meaning, means to describe metaphor as a model similar to word-forming or syntactic models. However, the model of metaphor is a more complex mechanism, because it generates completely new linguistic objects (...) through the interaction of heterogeneous entities that participate in metaphorical synthesis” (Telia, 1988).

In this way, firstly, the metonymy represents the combination of semes, meaning of relations in the denotative semantic field, while metaphor – by categorical aspect, according to the semes’ hierarchy. An interesting opinion in this regard is expressed by the modern Polish researcher M. Labashchuk, naming the transfer by similarity as “vertical semantization”, and the transfer by contiguity, by the most stable connections (on the basis of the sign that it means) – “horizontal semantization” (Labashchuk et al., 2020). Secondly, the metaphor reflects clarification, complication, invisible intellectual tension in human consciousness, while metonymy reflects simplification, economy of speech-thinking efforts. A similar view is observed by the Ukrainian scientist I. Ostapchuk. According to her conviction, the “metaphor [is] a semantic process, [which involves] a mutual convergence of two non-essential semantic spheres as a result of the predicate subject of an unusual assessment, and metonymy is a semiotic process, the phenomenon of substitution of adjacent concepts” (Ostapchuk, 2016).

It is based on the latest feature of metonymy and metaphor based on the theory of scientists, studying these phenomena from the point of view of syntactic semantics, semantics of references, taking into account the functions performed by them in language and speech (Arutyunova, 1999; Taranenko, 1989; Jacobson, 1990). First, as they point out, in speech, the metonymy destroys the lexical syntagmatics of the phrase and sentence due to ellipsis and semantic condensation of the content of the collapsed compound in one word, for example: *lire du Hugo* instead of *lire les romans de Hugo*. However, O. Taranenko opposes the understanding of metonymy as a condensed phrase: “In this case, two types of semantic processes are identified and, consequently, two fundamentally different types of contiguity underlying these processes – extralinguistic (subject-conceptual) and actually linguistic (textual)” (Taranenko, 1989). If, according to the scientist, “in the case of the ellipsis (...) there is an elimination, omission of a language unit that can be understood without explication, that is, they change (reduce) the form of the actual invariance of the content, then by metonymy, on the contrary, there is a change (expansion or narrowing) of content with invariance of form” (Sokol et al., 2020).

Secondly, the metonymy tends to the position of the subject and other referential members of the sentence and, unlike the metaphor, cannot be used in the position of the predicate. N. Arutyunova approached the explanation of this question in more details. According to her, the metaphor doesn’t denote an object, but its features, thus undergoing “partial adjectivation”. In this way, by performing a function of characterization of the nomination object, in the vast majority it plays the role of predicate

(Arutyunova, 1999). Given the above features of this phenomenon, as well as studying their role in the process of semiotics, I. Kobozeva names the main functions of metaphor heuristic (constructive), i.e. understanding of new realities, and deconstructive, i.e. the destruction of existing stereotypes of consciousness (Kobozeva, 2001). In the case of metonymy, it is not a question of giving part of the features of one concept to another, but about a referential displacement: the lexical unit that implements the first concept assumes the reference function of the lexical unit that implements the second concept. As a result, for metonymy it becomes typical to perform an identification, or individualizing, function in relation to specific objects, i.e. allows the addressee of speech to isolate the object from the field of observation, distinguish it from other objects available with it (Arutyunova, 1990).

Similar considerations are observed in the works of R. Jakobson, who contrasted metonymy and metaphor in terms of logical and psychological analysis. First of all, he distinguished them in terms of two types of aphasia associated with the destruction of the association by contiguity and similarity (Jakobson, 1990). Considering both phenomena a symbolic transference, the scholar argues that metaphor represents the paradigmatic pole of language because it is based on substitution, and metonymy is the syntagmatic pole, because its use allows the sign to replace the whole syntagma (Drozdova et al., 2021). Thus, according to R. Jakobson, a metaphor, serving in general rational-logical, as well as a figurative-aesthetic type of thinking, performs a logical, system-forming, typological or classification function. Metonymy, as a manifestation of everyday practical and linguistic activity and the aesthetic type of thinking, performs, respectively, the function of free variation of the connections of features within the visible field, the usual sensory experience or the usual conceptual relations of features. In this way, the meaning-forming mechanisms of metonymy are generally based on sensory contemplation (Sokol et al., 2021).

M. Labashchuk also came to a similar conclusion, studying these two phenomena from the point of view of the connection between language and thinking. Defining them as two ways to realize the speech-thinking (or pictorial) goal, the Polish researcher interprets metonymy as a way of emotional, sensory-contemplative analytical isolation from the scope of the concept of features inherent (from the point of view of the subject of the expression) of the concept and linguistic meaning with their subsequent deployment in thematic-rhematic syntax (Labashchuk et al., 2020). As for the metaphorical method, it appears as a way of synthetic (varying degrees of conventionality) attribution of features to a concept or linguistic meaning. In other words, the fundamental difference between metonymy and metaphor is that in the first the synthetic character is laid down earlier, and in the second it is created by the intention of the subject (Drozdova et al., 2021). That is why, the author continues, the metonymic way of depicting is mostly either mythological or spontaneously sensory-contemplative, while the metaphorical one is abstract, reflective, rational, and conditional. The essence of the image method in language is determined by the intention and its focus on the separation and synthesis of categorical and reference components (Sokol et al., 2020).

Thus, the main functions of metonymy can rightly be considered constructively related, which arises on the basis of the phrases or sentences in a certain elliptical construction, and situational, which identifies a particular object or person with a related object in a particular speech situation. In other words, it can be deduced logically by establishing different types of communication between the concepts and categories involved in the communication process. At the same time it is necessary to emphasize several more functions of metonymy, namely: communicative, by means of which conciseness and accuracy of expression is reached; figurative, which helps the speaker to express his own opinion; pragmatic, which creates in the recipient a certain emotional perception of the subject

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of speech, as well as to cause a positive or negative assessment of him; euphemistic, the essence of which is to communicate information, which the author cannot provide, taking into account certain ethical considerations.

Considering this aspect of the matter, the metaphor is interpreted as the transfer of a cognitive structure prototypically associated with a particular linguistic expression, from the conceptual sphere to which it belongs, to another; as a “figurative construction based on the assimilation of objects belonging to different branches of ontology” (Kobozeva, 2001). The metonymy is the transfer of linguistic expression, corresponding to one of the elements of the cognitive structure, to another element. Thoroughly analyzing these two phenomena, G. Lakoff and M. Turner, in particular, propose to distinguish them by such parameters as: 1) metaphor involves two conceptual domains, metonymy involves only one; 2) metaphor is set to decode, metonymy is set to establish a reference, 3) the logical connection of the metaphor is reflected in the expression *is a*, and the relationship in metonymy is reflected in the expression *stand for* (Lakoff, 1989). In other words, during the metonymization, consciousness remains within one conceptual sphere, while during the metaphORIZATION one conceptual sphere is projected onto another, i.e. we observe “a certain expansion of the concepts of the SOURCE sphere, as a result of which they capture and assimilate a new sphere – the space of the GOAL” (Kobozeva, 2001).

In this area the generalized approach of B. Warren stirs up particular interest, who, first of all, proposes to distinguish two metonymies: 1) reference, which combines two entities (eg: “*Give me a hand with this*”), and 2) a sentence that combines metonymically two sentences (eg: “*How did you get to the airport?*” – *I waved down a taxi*”) (Warren, B. (2002). Examining the question of distinguishing between metonymy and metaphor, she puts forward several criteria, the main of which are such as: 1) metaphor, in contrast to metonymy, is hypothetical; 2) metaphor, as a rule, goes beyond the syntagma, and metonymy remains within it; 3) in the metaphor, the SOURCE area and the GOAL area are connected by associative connections; 4) conceptual metaphor, having different forms of linguistic expression, can permeate the entire text, that is not typical of metonymy; 5) metaphor is a semantic operation, and metonymy is syntactic, which is explained by the combination of units due to the implication of the sign of the metonymizing concept (Warren, 2002).

Agreeing to some extent with the differences outlined above from a cognitive point of view, we will dwell on them in more detail. Metaphor, as we know, is associated with the semantic transfer of only part of the features from the area of the SOURCE to the scope of the GOAL, distinguishing them in the latter and characterizing it on the basis of these features. The combination of a part of one concept with another into a single essence determines the vertical nature of this connection (as pointed out by R.O. Jakobson). This combination is arbitrary, sometimes non-existent in nature, which may ultimately lead to the hypothetical character of metaphor (for example: *hirondelle d’hiver* “chimney sweep; chestnut seller”, *aérodrome à mouches* “bald spot”). In metonymy, on the other hand, there is a “holistic overlay” of the sphere of the SOURCE on the sphere of the GOAL. (This, in fact, was emphasized by R. Langacker, suggesting to replace the principle of substitution *X put forward by the classical approach instead of Y* by the principle of superposition expressed in the formula  $X + Y$  (Langacker, 1993). At the same time, the first seems to “pass” the second, taking over the function of reference. This linear combination generates a condensed syntactic structure, for example: *argent terroriste* “money to carry out terrorist acts” instead of *argent destiné à la réalisation des attentats terroristes*; *monsieur je-sais-tout* “a man who pretends to have an answer to all questions” instead of *monsieur qui répète tout le temps et fait croire qu’il sait tout*. Linguistic linearity, or syntagmatism,

is a consequence of the arrangement on a mental level of conceptual units interacting in metonymy. This contiguity is real, not hypothetical, as in the metaphor: the existing properties of the scope of the GOAL (intended to commit terrorist acts; knowledge of the answers to all questions) are distinguished by the explicitly presented by the SOURCE sphere.

The construction of a cognitive model of integrated spaces that arise during metonymization and metaphorization reveals a difference in the number of conceptual spheres involved in them. Let's compare, for example, the metaphorical idioms (1) *mordre à l'appât* "to be interested", (2) *vendre la vigne* "to marry a daughter" and metonymic idioms (3) *perdre la main* "to lose the ability to work", (4) *mettre un coup de pressio* "to embarrass, to upset", *se bouffer la gueule* "to quarrel, to bicker, to squabble, to have words". In the first case, there are two different conceptual spheres: ANIMAL and HUMAN (example 1), PLANT and HUMAN (example 2), and in the second case there is only one conceptual sphere HUMAN (examples 3 and 4).

The difference between these two phenomena is also observed through the prism of associative and related relations. Thus, during the metaphorical transfer between two objects of the surrounding reality, various associations can arise, which are realized in different linguistic expressions. For example, the metaphorical projection from the original mental space *un chat* (the area of the SOURCE) into an integrated space, the main image of which will be "human" (the sphere of the GOAL) is reflected in such idioms as: *chat écorché* "thin, shapeless man", *réveiller le chat qui dort* "attack a dangerous person, but who is currently behaving calmly", *une mine de chat fâché* "angry look", *chat qui chie dans la braise* "a person who is in a very awkward and funny situation". Thus each of the projected images represents various associative communications: appearance, essence and feature of character, manner of behavior, etc.

As for metonymy, the existing related connections are always isolated. Thus, the projection from the original mental space *une tête* into an integrated space, one of the images of which will be "man", will always reflect the relationship of part and whole, for example: *tête chenue* "aged man", *avoir la tête dans le guidon* "be very busy", *avoir la tête sous le billot* "take risks", *avoir la tête à son ouvrage* "to be concentrated on work", *avoir la tête ailleurs* "be scattered".

## CONCLUSION

A detailed analysis of different approaches to defining the essence of metonymy through the prism of its differences from metaphor once again demonstrates a change not only in linguistic views on this phenomenon, but also in the methodology of its study. If within the classical (rhetorical) and traditional (semantic-syntactic) paradigms all attempts to distinguish between metaphor and metonymy have been reduced, first of all, to determine the type of relations in which their components were, today scientists talk about cognitive modeling, involving conceptsphere, designing images from mental spaces, which allows a new look at the outlined phenomena.

Based on the basic postulates of cognitive linguistics (theory of conceptual metaphor, theory of mental spaces, theory of conceptual integration), a significant difference between these two linguocognitive mechanisms can be postulated. Its essence is, first, that metonymy represents a real contiguity of concepts, while metaphor - hypothetical; secondly, it is a question of different number of conceptual spheres involved in the process of metonymization (one conceptsphere) and metaphorization (more than two conceptspheres); thirdly, during metaphorization the projected images reflect

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various (sometimes unexpected) associations which can connect among themselves various spheres of the GOAL and SOURCES whereas at metonymization the projected images adhere to logically established communications.

Thus, the analysis of metonymization and metaphorization processes from the cognitive point of view allows their interpretation as different linguistic-cognitive mechanisms of conceptualization and categorization of reality, which differ in cognitive models of integrated space construction and onomasiological schemes and principles that reflect connections between mental spaces.

The perspective of the research is the elucidation of the linguocognitive principles of distinguishing the processes of comparison and metaphorization through the prism of cognitive linguistics.

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