

CONCEPTUAL METONYMY IN THE MEANING OF ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN NOMINAL COMPOUNDS

Tsveta Luizova-Horeva
University of Food Technology, Plovdiv

Cognitive linguists regard metonymy as a conceptual phenomenon, a mechanism which shapes both language and thought and plays a central role in ordinary meaning construction. This paper rests on the assumption that the semantics of compounds can be analysed within a cognitive linguistic framework. It addresses the ways in which conceptual metonymy participates in the meaning of English and Bulgarian nominal compounds, and attempts to outline and compare the patterns of its operation.

Key words: conceptual metonymy, metonymic relations, nominal compounds

Metonymy as a conceptual phenomenon

Metonymy is traditionally regarded as a figure of speech and is therefore studied within a rhetorical or stylistic framework. Cognitive linguists contend that it is conceptual in nature, grounded in experience and motivated by thought. It is systematic, forms patterns going beyond individual lexical items and shapes the language, thoughts and attitudes of language users (Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 39). In John Taylor's view, metonymy is one of the most fundamental processes of meaning extension, even more fundamental than metaphor (Taylor 1995: 124).

The relation seen as underlying metonymy is one of closeness, termed contiguity by phonetician Leonce Roudet (quoted by Koch 1999: 142). While traditional approaches search for contiguity in reality and see it as closeness between denotata or concepts, in cognitive theories it is placed on a conceptual level. As Panther & Thornburg state, "Assuming that 'denotata' are not just 'real-world' phenomena *per se* but conceptualisations of the human mind, one can reduce 'contiguity between denotata *or* concepts' to 'contiguity between concepts'." (Panther, Thornburg 2003: 280) Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 35 – 41) view contiguity as the whole range of conceptual associations that an

expression is usually related to. Geeraerts maintains that contiguity should be understood not only as spatial closeness, but “broadly as a general term for various associations in the spatial, temporal, or causal domain“ (Geeraerts 2010: 27). Taylor (Taylor 1995: 123 – 4) also stresses the importance of the conceptual basis: “the essence of metonymy lies in the possibility of establishing connections between entities which occur within a given conceptual structure“.

The connection is set up through a cognitive domain which mediates this shift (Langacker 2008: 69). Langacker (2008: 83) refers to the first entity as the ‘reference point’, and to the second one as the ‘target’. The person making the conceptualisation selects a reference point in a certain cognitive domain in order to obtain access to the target within the same domain. Reference points are selected on account of their salience, this selection being guided by human experience, perceptual and cultural factors (ibid.). He also contends that metonymy usually follows conventionally established patterns, e.g. a place name will commonly be extended to designate the event which occurred at that place (Langacker 2008: 250). Radden & Kövecses emphasise the effect of our anthropocentric view of and interaction with the world (Radden, Kövecses 1999: 45). A characteristic of metonymy that is generally agreed upon is its dependency on shared knowledge and the frequent need for particular contextualisation.

Using the terms ‘source concept’ and ‘target concept’, Ungerer and Schmid (2006: 115 – 128) maintain that they are cognitive equivalents of the entities connected by a contiguity relation (part-whole, place-man, material-object, etc.). They believe the number of correspondences between the two concepts is irrelevant; what is more important, and also more variable, is the amount of encyclopaedic knowledge accepted by the language community as a mapping scope. The mapping scope determines how appropriate metonymic mapping is by providing a relevant context for its interpretation. The source concept and the target concept are usually concrete, and the metonymic correspondences are directly grounded in image schemas or basic correlations – the latter being only indirectly included in metaphor as part of its mapping scope. Therefore, Ungerer and Schmid consider metonymy as more elementary than metaphor (Ungerer, Schmid 2006: 128 – 131).

A lot of definitions of metonymy include the notion of domain (cf. Langacker 1987, 2008, Croft 2003, Barcelona 2003, etc.). Experiential domains structure encyclopaedic knowledge. Lakoff and Turner argue that “A metonymic mapping occurs within a single domain, not across

domains“ (Lakoff, Turner 1989: 103). As seen in Langacker’s description of metonymy above, he is also in favour of the one-domain approach. William Croft, however, points out that metonymy often transcends the borders of individual domains, therefore it is better explained through the notion of ‘domain matrix’ (Croft 2003: 340). In his view (Croft 2003: 179), ‘domain matrix’ is synonymous with the other terms naming the complex structures involved in meaning construction, i.e. *schema* (cf. Lakoff, Turner 1989: 103, Taylor 1995: 87), *frame* (cf. Fillmore 1985, Sweetser 1999), or *script/scenario* (cf. Panther, Thornburg 1999, 2003). Ungerer and Schmid (2006) prefer the term ‘cognitive model’ based on Lakoff’s notion of Idealized Cognitive Models (Lakoff 1987). Radden and Kövecses also believe that Lakoff’s idea of ICMs best captures the specificity of metonymic processes (Radden, Kövecses 1999: 20). Starting from three main assumptions, i.e. i) metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon, ii) metonymy is a cognitive process; and iii) metonymy operates within an idealized cognitive model, Radden & Kövecses (Radden, Kövecses 1999: 17–21) suggest the following definition: “metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model.“ Ungerer and Schmid point out that in the prototypical case, the three aspects of metonymy (source concept, target concept and mapping scope) do indeed belong to one cognitive model, but the mapping scope can sometimes include a number of encyclopaedic connections associated with different cognitive models (Ungerer, Schmid 2006: 128 – 131).

Radden and Kövecses insist that metonymy does not only stand for another entity; rather, it connects both entities to form a new, complex meaning. Therefore the traditional formula ‘X for Y’ can be accepted on the condition that the metonymic process is not one of substitution (Radden, Kövecses 1999: 19). Another point that needs to be made is that the term ‘mapping’ used in a number of definitions of metonymy (e.g. Ungerer, Schmid 2006: 128 – 131, Lakoff, Turner 1989: 103), does not adequately describe the action mechanism of metonymy, as has also been suggested by Beatrice Warren (Warren 2003: 118). A more appropriate term would be ‘shift’, as in: ‘a shift in profile, i.e. “an expression that usually profiles one entity is used to profile a different entity associated with it“ (Langacker 2008: 69), or as suggested by William Croft, “the metonymic shift also involves a shift of domains within the domain matrix“ (Croft 2003: 179). In our opinion, instead of a shift of domains, it would be more accurate to speak of a shift of focus, of perspective, that produces the effect referred to

by Croft as *domain highlighting*, whereby metonymy brings to the fore a domain that is otherwise secondary (Croft 2003:177).

Metonymy in word formation

The presence of metonymy in word formation has become the focus of interest for an increasing number of researchers. Laura Janda claims that the range of metonymic relations in word formation is far more diverse than that in lexical metonymy (Janda 2011: 359). While she is mainly interested in derivational morphology, many other authors apply different cognitive tools to the study of compounding (cf. Benczes, Onysko, Sweetser, *inter alia*). Through combined application of the theories of metaphor, metonymy, blending, profile determinacy and schemata, Réka Benczes (Benczes 2006) has offered an extensive study of metaphoric and metonymic processes in English noun-noun compounds.

In order to examine the occurrence of metonymy in the meaning of English and Bulgarian nominal compounds, we collected a mini corpus of 274 Bulgarian and 614 English nominal compounds from the very general area of hospitality (including tourism, travel, hotels and restaurants) using written sources, such as textbooks, dictionaries, and business correspondence between Bulgarian and foreign operators on the tourist market.

Classification of metonymy

1. Types of metonymy-based compounds

Réka Benczes identified five different categories of metonymy in compounds according to the part of the compound upon which it acted: (1) on the modifier; (2) on the profile determinant; (3) on both constituents of the compound; (4) on the compound as a whole; and (5) on the relation between the two constituents of the compound (Benczes 2006: 141 – 180).

This approach yielded a classification of the metonymy-based compounds in our mini-corpus, rather than an inventory of the types of metonymy encountered in the examples. Our examples have been classified into five categories:

A. Compounds with metonymy-motivated modifier: e.g. *pastry cart*, *room rack*, *motor hotel*, *бензиностанция*. The head selects a modifier to elaborate one of its regularly elaborated domains (e.g. PURPOSE/ARTICLES DISPLAYED ON IT for *pastry cart* and *room rack*). A metonymic shift occurs within the matrix of the modifier, and the domain highlighted in this particular instance provides access to the domain which actually meets the

requirements of the head matrix (e.g. PASTRY – to DESSERTS, ROOM – to ROOM KEYS). This type is the most frequent one and exhibits the largest variety of metonymic relations in English. It is very rare in Bulgarian.

B. Compounds with metonymy-motivated head: e.g. *computer hookup*, *carhop*. In this compound we can see an instance of the +ACTION FOR AGENT+ metonymy¹ in the head (*see below*). This type is nonexistent in the Bulgarian corpus.

C. Compounds with metonymy-motivated modifier and head: e.g. *bellhop*. The head is again the result of the +ACTION FOR AGENT+ metonymy, whereas in the modifier we can identify an instance of the +INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION+ metonymy (*bell for ringing the bell/calling somebody*). These compounds are very rare in the corpus.

D. Compounds in which metonymy acts upon the relation between the two constituents: *cash bar*, *theme restaurant*. The modifier provides access to domains in the head matrix other than the ones usually highlighted (e.g. PRODUCT, LOCATION, CLIENTELE).

E. Compounds in which metonymy acts upon the compound as a whole: *redcoat*, *skycap*, *бюра-скара*, *пиле-грил*. This type occurs in both the English and the Bulgarian examples, though with different frequency. In this group we can find the most numerous examples of Bulgarian metonymic compounds.²

2. Types of metonymy in the compounds studied

The identification of the source and target concepts involved is most often used as a basis for the classification of types of metonymy. Although different authors speak of different patterns, some patterns seem to be more salient than others, e.g. spatial part & spatial whole. As mentioned above, Geeraerts and Peirsman have tried to outline the prototypical core which gives rise to the other patterns and the way in which these patterns are connected to each other and to the core. They believe that the prototype theory can be the common cognitive frame which could include and connect the different types of metonymy. In accordance with the conceptual metaphor theory which assigns a central position to space in

¹ Radden and Kövecses consider this type of metonymy within the Action ICM which, in their opinion, almost always involves a change in word class (Radden, Kövecses 1999).

² The term ‘exocentric’ is avoided here since endocentric and exocentric compounds share a common semantic pattern of modifier and head and, as stated by many, it is the metaphorical and metonymical reference of exocentric compounds which distinguishes them from endocentric compounds (cf. Onysko 2010: 244, Benczes 2006: 8 – 9).

human conceptualisation, they have identified physical contiguity as the conceptual core and listed the patterns based on this type of contiguity. Two relations forming the dimensions which structure the classification of this type of metonymy are *strength of contact* and *boundedness*. They underlie two of the metonymies in the prototypical core, i.e. +PART-WHOLE+ and +CONTAINER-CONTAINED+ (Geeraerts, Peirsman 2006: 269 – 316). Kövecses and Radden have also pointed out that parts and the whole form basic categories in our conceptualisation of the world (Kövecses, Radden 1998: 49).

In our corpus we have identified the types of metonymic relations listed below and divided them into three main groups. These types can operate alone or in combination. The basis for this classification is the typology of conceptual metonymies suggested by Radden and Kövecses (Radden, Kövecses 1999).

Group 1. Metonymic relations between the Whole and its Parts.

This type has traditionally been the focus of metonymy researchers.

+PART FOR WHOLE+

– *head count* (*head* for *people*), *return ticket* (*return* for both directions involved in the *journey*), *bank holiday* (*bank* for all members of the *public*)

– *motor hotel* / *motor inn*: In these compounds we encounter a metonymic chain (term after Dirven 2003: 84): +PART FOR WHOLE+ (*motor* for *motorcar*) – +INSTRUMENT FOR AGENT+ (*motorcar* for *person*).

– *cork charge*: again we can see the effect of chain metonymy: the part (*cork*) provides access to the whole (*bottle*), which in turn provides access to the thing contained in it (*alcohol*) via the +CONTAINER FOR CONTAINED+ metonymy.

– *door rate* / *rack rate*: *door* and *rack* provide access to the whole they belong to, i.e. *hotel* and *reception desk* respectively.

– *mom-and-pop hotel*: the phrasal component *mom-and-pop* serves as the reference point for access to the FAMILY domain, then, via the +MEMBER OF CATEGORY FOR CATEGORY+ metonymy – to the CLIENTELE domain in the domain matrix of *hotel*.

+ WHOLE FOR PART +

– *room rack*: metonymy reduces the number of highlighted domains to the single domain of KEY.

– *tour desk* (*tour* provides access to one component in its matrix, i.e. REGISTERING FOR THE TOUR), *hospitality desk* (*hospitality* – to a single domain in its domain matrix, i.e. PROVISION OF INFORMATION³).

As suggested by Geeraerts and Peirsman (Geeraerts, Peirsman 2006: 280), the +PART FOR WHOLE+ type of metonymy constitutes the prototypical core of the metonymy category, therefore it is only natural that many other types would be related to it, e.g.:

+MEMBER OF CATEGORY FOR CATEGORY+: *бензиностанция* (*бензин/petrol* provides access to the whole category of *гориво/fuel*), *pastry cart* (*pastry* – to the category of *desserts*), *coffee break* (*coffee* – to the category of *refreshments*), *tourist class* (*tourist* – to the entire category of *people travelling for pleasure*, usually on a limited budget);

+PART OF THE ACTION FOR THE WHOLE ACTION+: see below.

Group 2. Metonymic relations between components of the script/scenario.

Panther and Thornburg have suggested an idealised model of human actions and activities, which they call ‘the Prototypical Transitive Scenario’ (Panther, Thornburg 2003: 285). It includes the following components: a setting (*place* and *time*) and two distinct *participants* in an *asymmetrical* interaction, i.e. one an *intentionally acting human*, and the other is *directly affected/effected* by the action (*italics as in the original*). The scenario evoked by the Action can be expanded to include other components, too, though further from the prototypical core.

+ACTION FOR RECIPIENT OF ACTION+: *takeaway restaurant, takeout restaurant* (*takeaway /takeout* for the *food and drinks* taken away/out).

+RECIPIENT OF ACTION FOR ACTION+: *booze cruise*. The DRINKING or BUYING domain is highlighted by the first component. The occurrence of metonymy in this particular example may have been provoked by the phonetic similarity of the two components.

+ACTION FOR OBJECT +: *computer hookup* (the domain of ACTION provides access to the point where this action is performed).

+ACTION FOR AGENT OF ACTION+:

³ Some dictionary authors believe this kind of metonymy hinders correct interpretation: „the term is misleading as it suggests provision of rather more than information.“ (Beaver 2005: 183)

– *transit hotel, dine-around programme*: via the metonymy acting on the first component, access is provided to the CLIENTELE domain in the matrix of the head.

– *stand-up restaurant, drive-in restaurant, drive-through restaurant*. In combination with **+PART OF THE ACTION FOR THE WHOLE ACTION+**, this metonymy highlights both an element of the main action performed in restaurants, i.e. *obtaining food and drinks / dining*, and the CLIENTELE domain.

– *go-show, late show, carhop*: in the first two examples, metonymy operates on the compound as a whole providing access to the TRAVELLERS domain, and in the third example – on the second component.

+INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION+: *cash bar*. The first component *cash* metonymically highlights the action, i.e. payment, thereby providing access to domains in the head's matrix other than the usual ones.

+INSTRUMENT FOR AGENT+: *truckshop, transport café*. The metonymic shift activated by the first component highlights the PEOPLE/CLIENTELE domain.

+INSTRUMENT FOR RESULT OF ACTION+: *bellboy, bellperson* (as suggested above, *bell* serves as reference point for the action of *ringing the bell* to call a person). In these examples, metonymy interacts with metaphor, which will be the focus of future research.⁴

Group 3. Other metonymic relations

+PRODUCT FOR PLACE+: *кафе-аперитив, пиле-грил, бира-скара, φαστ-φυυδ, fast food, bed-and-breakfast*. This type of metonymy usually operates on the whole compound, which names a *product* offered at a certain *place*. The compound provides access to the domain matrix of *place*.

+GEOGRAPHICAL NAME FOR OBJECT+: *lido deck*. The first component is based on the name of an Italian resort and serves as the reference point for access to the OBJECTS domain, with a focus on *swimming pool*, in the matrix of *deck*.

⁴ Some occurrences of **+ACTION FOR PLACE+** metonymy have been found, as in: *getaway, drive-in, eat-in, drive-through, takeout, drop-off, pick-up, takeaway*. However, these examples are not treated as compounds proper, 'the result of a regular compounding process', but rather as products of conversion of phrasal verbs (Plag 2003: 144). The second element in some of these combinations is seen as an affixoid (e.g. Pencheva 2004: 220).

+RESULT FOR CAUSE+: *health resort /health spa, beauty salon, economy hotel*. The first components provide metonymic access to a large number of domains in the matrices of the head words.

+OBJECT FOR PERSON+: *redcoat, redcap*. The whole compound is based on metonymy.

+OBJECT FOR EVENT+: *black tie*. Like in the previous two examples, metonymy motivates the compound as a whole.

+MATERIAL FOR OBJECT+: *silver service*. The metonymy-based first compound highlights the OBJECTS domain in the matrix of *service*.

Conclusion

The analysis of the English and Bulgarian compounds in the mini-corpus has shown that the metonymic relations occurring in a fairly specialised area, i.e. hospitality, follow the same patterns as those outlined for compounds in general. Metonymy involving the Action and the script evoked by it, as well as the classical WHOLE – PART metonymic relation are particularly salient in the meaning of the English compounds, whereas the PRODUCT – PLACE metonymy is predominant in the Bulgarian compounds. The existence of more and less typical representatives of conceptual metonymy in these structures is another proof of the prototypical effects of the category. In Bulgarian, metonymy tends to operate on the compound as a whole, while in English it affects both components, the relation between them and the compound as a whole. The metonymic relations are far more numerous and diverse in the English compounds. Despite the differences between the two languages, it is evident that metonymy plays an important motivating role in compounding.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barcelona 2003: Barcelona, A. Clarifying and applying the notions of metaphor and metonymy within cognitive linguistics: An update. // *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, R. Dirven, R. Pörings (eds.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, 207 – 277.

Beaver 2005: Beaver, A. *A Dictionary of Travel and Tourism Terminology*, 2nd edition, CABI Publishing, 2005.

Benczes 2006: Benczes, R. *Creative Compounding in English. The Semantics of Metaphorical and Metonymical Noun-Noun Combinations*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2006.

- Croft 2003:** Croft, W. The role of domains in the interpretation of metaphors and metonymies. // *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, René Dirven, Ralf Pörings (eds.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, 161 – 207.
- Dirven 2003:** Dirven, R. Metonymy and metaphor: Different mental strategies of conceptualisation. // *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, R. Dirven, R. Pörings (eds.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, 75 – 113.
- Geeraerts 2010:** Geeraerts, D. *Theories of Lexical Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Geeraerts, Peirsman 2006:** Geeraerts D., Y. Peirsman. Metonymy as a Prototypical Category. // *Cognitive Linguistics*, 2006, No 17 – 3, 269 – 316.
- Fillmore 1985:** Fillmore, C. J. Frames and the Semantics of Understanding. // *Quaderni di Semantica*, 1985, No 6(2): 222 – 253.
- Janda 2011:** Janda, L. Metonymy in Word Formation. // *Cognitive Linguistics*, 2011, No 22 – 2, 359 – 392.
- Koch 1999:** Koch P. Frame and contiguity: on the cognitive bases of metonymy and certain types of word formation. // *Metonymy in Language and Thought*, K.U. Panther, G. Radden (eds.), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1999, 139 – 169.
- Kövecses, Radden 1998:** Kövecses Z., G. Radden. Metonymy: developing a cognitive linguistic view. // *Cognitive Linguistics*, 1998, No 9, 37 – 77.
- Lakoff 1987:** Lakoff, G. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Lakoff, Johnson 1980:** Lakoff, G., M. Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Lakoff, Turner 1989:** Lakoff, G., M. Turner. *More than Cool Reason: a Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Langacker 2008:** Langacker, R. *Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Langacker 1987:** Langacker, R. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Volume 1: Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- Onysko 2010:** Onysko, A. Casting the conceptual spotlight: Hybrid compounding in German as an example of head-frame internal specifier selection. // *Cognitive Perspectives on Word Formation*, A. Onysko, S. Michel (eds.), Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010, 243 – 301.
- Panther, Thornburg 2003:** Panther, K. U., L. L. Thornburg. The roles of metaphor and metonymy in English -er nominals. // *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, R. Dirven, R. Pörings (eds.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, 279 – 323.
- Panther, Thornburg 1999:** Panther, K. U., L. L. Thornburg. The potentiality for actuality metonymy in English and Hungarian. // *Metonymy in Language*

- and Thought*, K.U. Panther, G. Radden (eds.), John Benjamins Publishers, 1999, 333 – 357.
- Pencheva 2004:** Пенчева, М. Английските думи. София: УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2004.
- Plag 2003:** Plag, I. *Word-Formation in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Radden, Kövecses 1999:** Radden, G., Z. Kövecses. Towards a theory of metonymy. // *Metonymy in Language and Thought*, K.U. Panther, G. Radden (eds.), John Benjamins Publishers, 1999, 17 – 61.
- Sweetser 1999:** Sweetser, E. Compositionality and blending: semantic composition in a cognitively realistic framework. // *Cognitive Linguistics: Foundations, Scope, and Methodology*, T. Janssen, G. Reddeker (eds.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999, 129 – 162.
- Taylor 1995:** Taylor, J. *Linguistic Categorisation. Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Ungerer, Schmid 2006:** Ungerer F., H. J. Schmid. *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd., 2006.
- Warren 2003:** Warren, B. An alternative account of the interpretation of referential metonymy and metaphor. // *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, R. Dirven, R. Pörings (eds.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, 113 – 133.