Current Trends in Pragmatics
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If, within the entire spectrum of approaches involving the very formal perspectives just as much as the many “waste-bin” attitudes, there is a definition of the scope of pragmatics that would be the least vulnerable to criticism, the following general observation may come in handy. Pragmatics does not deal with language as such but with language use and the relationships between language form and language use. Using language involves cognitive processes, taking place in a social world with a variety of cultural constraints. Thus, to pursue any study in pragmatics is to inevitably indulge oneself in multidisciplinary considerations.

The dialogue between various strands of linguistics contributing to the current shape of pragmatics as a scientific discipline has been taking place for years. The resulting degree of cross-fertilization of the linguistic fields of investigation with ideas reflecting the scope of pragmatics as defined above is indeed dazzling. Cue this ultra-brief outline. Many types of interaction have been observed between anthropological linguists (studying the relationships between languages and cultures), sociolinguists (concerned with the ways in which social relationships, patterns, and networks interact with language structure and language use), neurolinguists (trying to reveal the neurophysiological aspects of speaking and listening), psycholinguists (studying the relationships between language and mind in general) and developmental psycholinguists (concentrating on the ontogenetic origin and evolution of language); linguists and philosophers of language (often focusing on a rather narrow, though itself quite diversified, range of topics: speech act theory as the philosophical study of language in action, proposing the “speech act” as the basic unit of analysis); conversational logicians formulating rules for conversational exchanges, and reflecting on how these influence interpretation processes, and linguists studying presuppositions in an attempt to determine what implied propositions have to be true for an expression to be appropriately used; those dealing with the given/new and topic/comment distinctions trying to discover how “common” or “mutual” knowledge is reflected in sentence structure, and how it gets gradually extended in a text), and text linguists and discourse analysts (describing how macrostructural properties of texts and discourses relate to processes and strategies of discourse progression);

1 Cf. e.g. Jef Verschueren’s Understanding Pragmatics (1999, Arnold) for a comprehensive account of the development of pragmatics in the 20th century.
conversation analysts and ethnomethodologists (undertaking detailed linguistic analyses of conversational exchanges in order to unravel their most intricate mechanisms, often viewed as manifestations of microsociological patterns and relationships), and many other scholars in the language-related sciences. Yet they are often still inclined to pursue their interests within the confines of their own disciplines and sub-disciplines, with different aims and methodologies, and with various divergent and confusingly overlapping terminologies.

The present volume is, on the one hand, an attempt to give a state-of-the-art picture of these apparently inconsistent procedures—the reader will easily notice moments where discussions, prompted by the nature of the data studied, lean towards neighboring analytic apparatuses, borrowing terms and concepts only to reformulate them for the sake of the original approach. But on the other hand, the volume aims to show that the analyst’s commitment to homogeneity in description is often a matter of degree and in many cases it is his/her ontological mind-set as a whole that determines how much of the interdisciplinary ingredient is actually allowed into the analysis.

The papers included in the first two parts of the volume (6 papers in “Pragmatics and Cognition” and 4 in “The Semantics-Pragmatics Interface”) are meant to present, respectively, two major theoretical standpoints underlying the current debate on the status of linguistic pragmatics. The first can be characterized as follows: in the study of meaning, semantics feeds into pragmatics in a sequential manner and thus pragmatics requires interdisciplinary backup from the neighboring linguistic disciplines (most notably, cognitive linguistics and corpus linguistics) in order to yield the desired explanatory power. The second standpoint, obviously antithetical to the first and intradisciplinary in nature, has it that semantics is much more permeable to pragmatic enrichment and disambiguation than is traditionally assumed; hence, the combination of an underdetermined semantics with a pragmatic disambiguation process successfully generates a templatic representation of the meaning.

Having addressed the methodological issues, the volume proceeds to the question of implementation of pragmatics in the (critical) analysis of particular linguistic phenomena (“Conversational and Text Analysis,” 5 papers). The methodological ingredient is not completely absent, but the authors do not argue for or against a redefinition of the status of pragmatics in terms of a scientific discipline. Instead, they propose critical solutions within the existing apparatus, occasionally suggesting revision of the traditional basic-level concepts such as illocutionary acts or performative utterances.

Finally, it is demonstrated in the last part (5 papers on “Pragmatics, Social Research and Didactics”) that research in pragmatics can be instrumental, that is, that developments in the field of pragmatics are often intentionally applied
outside the domain of formal linguistics. By showing the relevance of pragmatics to social, political and applied studies, the volume returns to the initial question of interdisciplinarity, however, unlike in the first part, pragmatics is no longer considered a discipline complementary to other linguistic and extralinguistic domains, but rather a feasible analytic tool, clearly subordinate to conceptions originating within the domain of humanities as a whole.

Overall, the volume aims to inspire the following set of questions: how successful is the existing apparatus of pragmatics and the basic-level parameters (theories of speech acts, relevance, implicature, presupposition, deixis, politeness, etc.) in the elucidation of various aspects of meaning, what kind of methodological assistance does pragmatics need in order to generate explanatory power, and, perhaps most intriguingly, aren’t the fuzzily defined boundaries of the discipline of pragmatics a natural temptation for analysts to concentrate, instrumentally, on the fragmented sub-domains only? As the collection unfolds, these questions form a continuum which, it seems, is often a process that a linguist goes through as his or her methodological awareness deepens. Thus, the orientation of the volume towards the analyst and the analytic mind-set, as well as the attempted balance between the alternative approaches, seem the major theoretical characteristic of the book. Naturally, this rather “empathic” structuring does not entirely detract from the principle of thematicity as regards the arrangement of papers within the four parts.

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Part I: Pragmatics and Cognition
CHAPTER ONE

HOW TO DO A COUPLE OF THINGS
WITH METONYMY

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1. Introduction

Because most recent cognitive linguistic research on metonymy has been concerned with uncovering inferential processes underlying it as well as with stressing its conceptual nature and thus refuting the classical view stipulating that it is just a matter of transfer of lexical meaning, the focus has always been mainly on its referential nature, some of its other pragmatic aspects receiving hardly any attention. The present paper undertakes to highlight some of these other, largely unnoticed, pragmatic layers that attach to metonymy in wider discourse.

First, it has hardly ever been pointed out that one of the most important textual functions of metonymy is to enhance the cohesion and coherence of the utterance, although this appears almost self-evident when metonymic chains occurring in natural data in their context are considered. In a second layer of pragmatic aspects that attach to metonymies of various types we find a range of effects at the interpersonal level. Metonymies can, for example, be put to very effective use by speakers in managing responsibility in a more or less subtle manner. My main goal in this paper is to document these pragmatic functions and show that its referential function, providing a means of more or less indirect reference, actually serves as a springboard for its use in the fine-tuning of background assumptions, effectively attenuating or attributing responsibility for some states of affairs, a use which often remains quite inconspicuous.

The organization of the paper reflects these pragmatic functions or uses of metonymy. In Part 2, I start with its most important and most obvious pragmatic function, the referential one. Specifically, I review the evidence that metonymy is not purely referential in nature, showing that some types can help understanding, similarly to what has been observed with metaphors. Focusing on the referential type of metonymy, I proceed in Part 3 to show that metonymy
can have a text-constitutive role, i.e. metonymy can enhance text cohesion (and coherence) when used as a device to maintain nominal topic continuity, i.e. as a means of keeping the same metonymic source topic while occasionally switching between metonymic targets, or targeted topics. I also show that topic continuity can be achieved even by some non-canonical forms of metonymy, viz. by metonymically used prepositional phrases, particularly in Slavic languages, as well as in Hungarian. Finally, in Part 4, I demonstrate how such metonymic prepositional phrases can be used for manipulation, effectively attenuating or attributing responsibility for some states of affairs. The paper closes with a brief analysis of a specific example of predication metonymy, the expression *to pull/squeeze the trigger*, which is also used to manage responsibility.

2. Metonymy: reference and beyond

Metonymies are in contemporary cognitive linguistic research considered to be efficient mental shortcuts, as they have the advantage of communicating additional information: One concept stands for another, but both concepts are actually activated, to at least some degree. Informally speaking, metonymy is an efficient means of saying two things for the price of one, i.e. two concepts are activated while only one is explicitly mentioned (cf. Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19).

A fairly frequent way of defining metonymy has been to contrast it with metaphor (and occasionally with synecdoche) and focus on three central points of difference, although it has been repeatedly claimed that the borderline between the two is blurred (cf. Barcelona 2000, Ruiz de Mendoza 2000, and Radden 2002). On the one hand, metonymy is based on contiguity, whereas metaphor is based on similarity (cf. Ullmann 1962: 212, Taylor 1989: 122).

Metaphors are often considered to be shortened similes, i.e. two entities are compared but there are no function words that would make this comparison explicit. In other words, something is described by stating another thing with which it is implicitly compared:

(1) a. For the most part, the *father* of video art comes off as an unexpectedly slight figure, a likable, playful avant-gardist whose imaginative resources have seldom matched his commitment to the idea of innovation.

b. They decided to put a *ceiling* on the income of party leaders. (Deignan 1995: 63)

In the first example above, the person who invented video art is presented as a figurative progenitor, the person who introduces a new way of doing
something or a new way of thinking, and from whom something develops. Similarly, in (1) b. ceiling is used to denote an upper limit on income because ceilings are horizontal surfaces that are the top part of rooms and thus form their upper boundary.

Metonymy, on the other hand, is traditionally approached as a stand-for relationship that is, unlike metaphor, not based on similarity but on contiguity or proximity. This means that metonyms are expressions that are used instead of some other expressions because the latter are associated with or suggested by the former:

(2) a. He was testifying on the Hill earlier in the week.
   b. He emigrated to America in 1969.

In (2) a. the Hill, short for Capitol Hill, is not used to denote a particular location in Washington, i.e. the hill where the Capitol building stands, or not even so much this particular building, as the institution of the US Congress which meets in this building. In (2) b. America is not used in its geographically most proper sense, to denote the whole continent, but rather refer just to the United States of America.

The notion of contiguity is taken in its broadest sense to cover all associative relations except similarity, and may thus be too vague a notion, making metonymy almost a cognitive wastebasket. Panther and Thornburg (2002: 282) attempt to constrain the scope of metonymy by submitting that the relation between the metonymic source and the target is contingent, i.e. it does not exist by conceptual necessity. When a nurse, for example, refers to a patient as the ulcer in room 506, it is not conceptually necessary for the ulcer to belong to the patient in room 506. Metonymic relation is thus in principle defeasible or cancelable, because the source concept is still usually retrievable (though backgrounded), even if the target concept is conventionalized in the lexicon.

A second important point of difference concerns the number of conceptual entities involved and the number of elements linked by the two operations. The conceptual entities involved may belong to the same domain (or idealized cognitive model, also called script, scenario, or frame in cognitive linguistic literature) or to different domains. If they belong to two different, discrete domains, we have a metaphor, if they, on the other hand, belong to the same domain, we are dealing with metonymy. Metaphors typically employ a more concrete concept or domain as source in order to structure a more abstract concept or domain as target. The mappings are unidirectional, and the source and target are not reversible (cf. Kövecses 2002: 6). This is not binding for metonymies. Metonymic mappings can proceed in either direction, from the more concrete part of the domain (subdomain) to the more abstract one, and the other way round. Metaphors may work on the basis of a set of correspondences
(though some may exploit only one), while metonymic mappings are based on a single correspondence (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza and Peña 2002).

Finally, metaphor and metonymy are said to have different functions. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 36f) metaphor is “principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding;” while metonymy “has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another.” This difference is typically reflected in their realizations. Metaphors often function as predicative expressions (with an explicit or implicit verbal element), whereas metonymies function as nominal expressions, most commonly functioning as subjects and objects.

Metonymy is “a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or ICM” (cf. Kövecses and Radden 1998: 39). This is illustrated by simple examples such as:

(3) Those many moons ago when I did my degree in Media and Communications my lecturer in marketing was obsessive about researching the market first. His favorite saying was... “Spend your grey matter before you spend the folding green stuff.”

(4) The Kremlin has officially anointed Prime Minister Vladimir Putin the official successor to Boris Yeltsin, and the war in Chechnya should ensure his victory in the presidential election in June 2000.

In (3), the expression grey matter is used as a part for whole metonymy, specifically as a substance constituting an object for the object metonymy. Grey matter as consisting of specific type of cells stands for the central part of the brain. This in turn stands for the whole brain, and finally brain as organ stands for the cognitive faculties residing in it, primarily the cognitive activity of thinking. As for example (4), the Kremlin is the area in Moscow in which government buildings are concentrated and it is traditionally used to refer to the centre of political power in the former USSR and Russia.

Within the framework of a pragmatic typology of metonymies proposed in Panther and Thornburg (1999: 335f), the metonymies discussed so far, as well as the ones highlighted in (5-6) are characterized as instances of propositional metonymy. Propositional metonymies come in two subtypes: in a referential metonymy, exemplified in (1-4) and (5), one referring expression, usually a noun phrase, is the vehicle for an implied target that is also a referring expression normally realized as a noun phrase; in a predicational metonymy, illustrated in (6) below, one propositional content stands for another propositional content. Cf. now some examples of propositional metonymies:
Most successful is the Guggenheim, which operates flourishing satellites in Venice, Berlin and, most recently, Bilbao, Spain. That branch, which opened in 1997, has proved highly lucrative, both for the Guggenheim and for Spain. In addition to spending $100 million to build the museum, the Basque regional government paid the Guggenheim a one-time fee of $20 million and subsidizes the Bilbao’s $12 million annual budget. But the returns on that investment have been substantial; in the 18 months since the Bilbao opened, tourism in the Basque region has increased by 28 percent.

b. Only one in eight M.P. in Westminster is a woman, but this is because British antidiscrimination laws bar the party from stacking its lists of parliamentary candidates in women’s favor.

In the two examples in (5), we have some typical examples of referential metonymies. In (5) a, a name of a town, Bilbao, is used to refer to an institution in that locality, i.e. a recently opened satellite of the Guggenheim Museum. The second example in (5) again appears to be the vanilla-type of referential metonymy where a noun which inherently denotes a place, here a part of London, is used to denote an institution saliently associated with the locality named, here the British Parliament.

Metonymy, although ubiquitous, is apt to be frequently overlooked, and this seems particularly true of predicational metonymies, such as the ones illustrated in (6). Predicative adjectives refer here to the manner in which various activities are performed that are sometimes named explicitly in complements of adjectives or are only inferable from them or from the larger context. We understand manner here in a very broad sense so as to also include indications of whether an activity took place or not, etc.

These activities may belong to several related types. They may refer to rather physical aspects of one’s behaviour, or to less tangible ones, such as emotive reactions. They can also refer to cognitive activities and to linguistic actions (speaking being the default type, but written communication is also attested). These activities can occasionally be quite difficult to keep apart, which is no wonder concerning intimate links between thinking and behaviour on the one hand, and between thinking and speaking on the other. However, it stands to reason to assume that while clear in (6) a, an example uprooted from its
broader context, may be interpreted as metonymically standing for either a cognitive process “think, have an opinion,” or for a previous linguistic action whose subject matter was the issue of abortion, the other two examples are less problematic. *Clear* in (6) b. is quite likely to be about the subject’s cognitive action, i.e. planning a garden design, while *clear* in (6) c. rather refers to the manner in which the president phrased his words.

The third type of discourse-pragmatic metonymy, extensively discussed in Thornburg and Panther (1997) and Panther and Thornburg (1998), is illocutionary metonymy where one illocutionary act stands for another illocutionary act. In the following example:

(7) Could you open the window?

we have a *yes-no* question, which actually functions as an indirect request. If we conceive of speech acts as involving a scenario with several parts, we realize that the central part of these speech acts, the one which normally determines the type of speech act and after which they are named, is in fact not present explicitly in the case of indirect speech acts. There is instead always a more peripheral part of the scenario which stands metonymically for another illocutionary act, i.e. for another part of the speech act, or for the whole speech act. The conceptual distance between the central part of the speech act scenario and the part that is explicitly used in an utterance can, of course, vary. It is widely assumed that the more peripheral the part that is used metonymically, the more tentative the whole. In our example in (7) the speaker, at face value, of course, inquires whether the interlocutor has the ability to perform an activity, which is part the precondition part of the whole scenario.

It follows from these examples that metonymy does not only have a referential function. But even if we concentrate on the so-called referential or nominal type of metonymies, its referential function appears to be just one among several layers of functions that fall within the purview of pragmatics in one way or another.

While Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 36f) see metonymy as having primarily referential function they are aware of its additional functions. They point out not only that metonymy is “naturally suited for focussing” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 37ff), but also that it can just like metaphor have a role in construal, in other words in making it possible for us to see and understand things in alternative ways:

But metonymy is not merely a referential device. It also serves the function of providing understanding. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 36)
Metonymy is often used for understanding in a slightly different sense, i.e. not so much for highlighting as in more radical sense of providing a conceptual handle or window on a concept that would be otherwise quite difficult to conceptualize and lexicalize. A fairly drastic example of this comes from the special language of the military, where according to Oxford English Dictionary one of the (now obsolete) meanings of horse is:

(8) 3. Mil. A horse and his rider; hence a cavalry soldier.
      1548 HALL Chron., Edw. IV 231 The Duke..came in no small hast.,
      onely accompanied with sixtene horses. Ibid., Hen. VIII 32 The kyng
      contynually sent foorth his light horses to seke the country.
      1853, and LIGHT-HORSE.
      1548 HALL Chron., Hen. IV 13 King Henry..with a fewe horse in the
      night, came to the Tower of London. 1549 Compl. Scot. xi. 89 He
      furnest..tua hundretht lycht horse. 1597 SHAKES. 2 Hen. IV, II. i. 186
      Fifteene hundred Foot, fiue hundred Horse Are march'd vp. 1698 Lond.
      Gaz. No. 3445/1 First marched an Alai Beg with about 50 Horse. 1777
      ROBERTSON Hist. Amer. (1783) I. 157 The body..consisted only of two
      hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty..Indians. 1853 STOCQUELER
      Milit. Encycl., Light horse, all mounted soldiers that are lightly armed
      and accoutred, for active and desultory service. Thus light dragoons,
      fencible cavalry, mounted yeomanry, etc. are, strictly speaking, light
      horse.

However, there are many less exotic examples where the presence of a metonymy is hardly ever noticed. In the following set of examples we have descriptions of a person placing a candle on a table:

(9) a. Magdalen lit a candle. “What notice must I give you,” she asked, as she
     put the candle on the table, “before I leave?”
   b. “Can I put the candle on the table?” “Will you light it up for me?”
   c. She put the candle on the table, and taking her head between her hands
     sat down to think.

According to standard dictionary definitions, candle is a source of artificial light made of wax, tallow or similar solid fat formed in a cylindrical shape around a wick of cotton or flax. Dictionary definitions do not mention any candle stick or candle holder as part of a candle, i.e. they do not record any metonymic uses of the PART-FOR-WHOLE type, where candle would refer to the whole of the functional unit consisting of a candle and its holder. Note that the above examples could be actually interpreted as being about a candle without any holder, but it is more likely that both a candle and a holder are involved. In
the latter case, we then have a PART-FOR-WHOLE metonymy that goes virtually unnoticed because it is subconscious, but is very useful indeed. There is simply no ready-made label for the functional unit consisting of two parts, and specifying the parts of the unit, say by means of a coordinating construction, on every occasion we mean the unit would be too cumbersome. Making the speaker and the listener aware of the existence of the functional unit in conceptual terms, i.e. raising their consciousness, which might be a side-effect of the lexicalization, would certainly place additional burden, however small, on working memory resources and slow down online processing, and possibly other cognitive processes that might be running.

We might go on discussing similar examples—names for institutions and places that are also used to refer to people associated with them, such as school, church, or labels for substances that are also used to refer to functional units consisting of the substance and the container, or the reverse of this, labels for containers that are also used to refer to functional units consisting of the container and the substance in it, etc.—but we have already seen that metonymy is used for understanding, i.e. as a mental shortcut, in a way that is quite similar to how metaphors work. I now turn to the discussion of some textual functions of metonymy that seem to fall out of this referential function, making it possible to refer to more than one referent or even a combination of referents as metonymic target, while mentioning only one of them as metonymic vehicle.

3. Metonymy and text cohesion: switching between metonymic targets while maintaining the same metonymic source topic

One of the most important discourse-pragmatic functions of metonymy is to enhance cohesion and coherence of the utterance. It is something that is already at the very heart of metonymy as a conceptual operation whereby one content stands for another while both are activated. In other words, metonymy is, as I have already pointed out, an efficient means of saying two things for the price of one, i.e. two concepts are activated while only one is explicitly mentioned (cf. Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19). This necessarily enhances the cohesion of the utterance because two or more topical concepts may be referred to by means of a single label.

There is, however, another sense in which metonymy can enhance topic text coherence. A single metonymic source can be used to refer to more than one metonymic target within a single text. In other words, we can shift between subdomains within a single matrix domain, picking different target meanings at different points in a text, while using a single lexeme as a metonymic source. There is consequently, at least nominally, less shifting or switching between topics, as far as the lexical realisation of the metonymic source is concerned.
This can be illustrated by the following series of authentic examples with Shakespeare, all of which were retrieved from Google:

In the first batch of examples we switch between Shakespeare’s literary work and Shakespeare as a person. The former is referred to by the lexical noun Shakespeare, the latter by means of the personal pronoun. The former functions as the direct object of the verb to read, the latter is associated with predicative expressions such as be British, be dead, be one of the greatest writers. In (10) d. the second clause makes reference to spelling, which can be a property of both a text and a writer, but the verb used makes it quite clear that it is Shakespeare as the writer that is meant here:

(10) a. Why do I have to read Shakespeare: he died years ago, and he was British.
    b. This question is most commonly asked when students are required to read Shakespeare. “He’s been dead for four hundred years!”
    c. I love to read Shakespeare, he is one of the greatest writers of all time, I believe that Shakespeare is a language of its own.
    d. Read Shakespeare, he used all sorts of spellings...

In the second group of examples, the label Shakespeare is used to switch between the writer’s work as a whole and specific edition, as published by a certain publishing house, and thus also involving Shakespeare’s work as materialized physically in printed volumes, as in (11) a., or between the writer’s whole work and a single work, as in (11) b.:

(11) a. Regarding editions, the rather expensive Arden Shakespeare is often cited ... to learn HOW to read Shakespeare.
    b. I agree. Shakespeare should definitely be read. Keep one of the plays on the night table, it’s a sure cure for insomnia. Except, of course, for Hamlet. It is so pretentiously hilarious, that my significant other couldn’t get any sleep, since I couldn’t help but laugh out loud throughout its reading.

Notice that the anaphor used for both the whole of Shakespeare’s work, and a single work or a printed volume of one of his works, is it, as illustrated in (11) b., and (11) c. below:

(11) c. First, I can’t recommend an edition because I’m unable to read Shakespeare and understand it. I don’t try anymore. I just go to the plays and let the actors/director do the work of interpretation for me.

However, in (11) d., pronoun he is used to refer back to Shakespeare targeting the whole work, but it still leaves some room open for Shakespeare the
writer. This example is in fact remarkable as it makes a hint about a potential shift between three metonymic targets. There is Shakespeare’s work as a whole (or something like characteristic properties of his work), then possibly the writer itself (or something like his characteristic properties, the spirit of the man as reflected in his work), as implied by the use of the personal pronoun, and finally the physical printed volume, as suggested by the mention of ink:

\[(11)\]  
\[
d. \text{When you read Shakespeare, he is not contained in the ink, even though he comes through it.}
\]

This series may be rounded off by the following excerpt from a web page entitled *Teaching Shakespeare Through Exercises on Acting and on the Basic Emotions* (http://www.longleaf.net/ggrow/Skspre/Other.html), which illustrates how keeping all the three targets in play can be used to achieve considerable stylistic effects:

\[(11)\]  
\[
e. \text{From this point, I asked people to consider what happens when the world seems to fall apart. Has it ever happened to you? Have you seen it in somebody else? What was it like?—I had them write in their journals about this experience, then tie it into what Lear goes through when his world falls apart, and how, if at all, he resolves this experience.}
\]

\[
\text{Helped, I think, by the exercises, a sense of trust developed in this class, which led to some moments of remarkable sharing. While we were discussing Capulet’s threats to disown Juliet for loving Romeo, a young woman ventured, faltered, then with encouragement from friends she had made in the class, revealed that she had been disinherited and banished from her father’s house (she was now crying openly) for becoming engaged to a man of a different religion. On that day, we didn’t read Shakespeare. He read us.}
\]

This phenomenon of simultaneously activating more than one topical concept, viz. a metonymic source, and one or more metonymic targets, is ubiquitous. It can also be illustrated on the metonymic use of geographical proper names. In addition to their primary, literal use to refer to locations, e.g. in utterances specifying where a state of affairs obtains, geographical names can be used metonymically in a number of ways. For example, names of capitals are frequently used to refer to various political institutions, most notably to the institution invested with the executive political power, viz. the government of the country in question, as the capital is its official seat:
(12) a. Why did this usually Europhile nation thumb its nose at Brussels, its own government and main political parties, its employers and trade unions, its bishops and farmers, and many forecasters too?
   b. At a recent Politburo-level meeting, according to versions reaching Washington, President Jiang Zemin counseled a low-key, cautious approach toward the new administration.
   c. If Beijing doesn’t get anything substantial from Bush at the summit in Shanghai, such as a reaffirmation of U.S. support for the one-China policy; it might harden its policy toward Washington and Taiwan.

In addition to these, names of capitals can be found in metonymic uses that are also characteristic of other place names, i.e. to refer to branches of companies and museums, tribunals, stock exchanges, events, etc.

(13) a. Arusha depends mostly on witnesses for evidence, many of them illiterate farmers who could not record their impressions at the time.
   The Hague enjoys intelligence intercepts from western armies, satellite photographs and other high-tech methods of collecting more durable evidence.
   b. Kuala Lumpur rose by 6.1% on optimism about prospects for Malaysia.
   c. The risk is that scattered American units would find themselves fighting multiple mini-Mogadishus.
   d. So what sort of NATO will emerge after Prague?

As pointed out above, these place names can be used to switch between more than one metonymic target. The following excerpt—part of a newspaper article—contains two occurrences of Beijing. The first appears to be an unambiguous instance of the CAPITAL-FOR-GOVERNMENT type of metonymy. Notice that there is later in the text an explicit mention of the metonymic target—the Chinese government, which is in the same sentence juxtaposed to the US government. The second occurrence of Beijing is, however, somewhat less clear. It is just possible to interpret it again in the same way, but it is far more likely that it is used to refer indirectly to the upcoming Olympics, to be held in Beijing in 2008, which is thus an instance of the PLACE-FOR-EVENT metonymy:

(14) After months of detention amid widespread condemnation from Capitol Hill and US academics, Li’s swift court proceedings and promised release just hours after the Olympics vote leave an appearance of tit-for-tat justice, raising questions about whether Li and other detainees with US ties are being used as bargaining chips by Beijing, observers said.
   Li was “a hostage in the Olympics bid,” said Frank Lu, director of the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democratic
Movement in China, which tracks arrests and harassment of dissidents and activists. “We know that just two weeks ago the Chinese government told the US government that if the US voted against Beijing, they wouldn’t release him.” (Boston Globe, July 15, 2001, A1)

Some preliminary studies on the availability of metonymically used names of capitals show (Brdar-Szabó and Brdar 2003) that this particular type of metonymy is ubiquitous in English and German, while less so in Hungarian and Croatian. Part of the difference between the two pairs of languages can be attributed to the fact that English and German metonymically used place names that function as subjects often find their counterparts in adpositional phrases in Hungarian, as in (15), and in prepositional phrases Croatian, as shown in (16). These are used as adverbials of place:

(15) 
Moszkvában most úgy látták,…
“Moscow now thinks…”

(16) Odluka je nezakonita, smatraju u Sarajevu,…
“It is considered in Sarajevo that the decision is illegal”

Somewhat less frequently, instead of metonymic NPs we find in Croatian and Hungarian just a denominal possessive adjective that is derived from the name of the capital. This adjective is used to premodify a nominalization related to the verb describing the activity of the government in question:

(17) Francuski minister vanjskih poslova Hubert Vedrine izjavio je
French Minister of-foreign-affairs Hubert Vedrine stated AUX
jučer da je rezolucija za sada dostatna, no da
yesterday that AUX resolution for now sufficient but that
Vijeće i druge zemlje trebaju čekati na beogradski
Council and other countries should wait for Belgrade-ADJ
odgovor na rezoluciju…
response to resolution…
“French Minister Hubert Vedrine stated that the resolution is enough for the time being, but that the Council and other countries should wait for Belgrade’s response to the resolution”
(18) **Warsaw-kísérletek a múlt elhalványítására**

“Warsaw’s attempts at revising the past”

Comparable constructions, while not impossible, are relatively infrequent in English and German, if the capital is intended as a metonym:

(19) South Korea’s President Roh Moo-hyun’s first meeting with George W. Bush, his US counterpart, in Washington on Wednesday was hailed in Seoul yesterday as a happy ending to a period of turmoil in relations between the military allies. [Financial Times, May 16, 2003]

(20) Nach mehr als zwanzig Jahren Krieg sei es äußerst schwierig, einen Neuanfang zu finden, heißt es in Islamabad.

“It is said in Islamabad that after more than twenty years of war it is extremely difficult to make a new start”

Metonymically used names of capitals are of course more natural as subjects. While topics may persist for longer or shorter stretches, they eventually need to be maintained before they decay. This usually happens by means of a co-referencing pronoun (anaphor), i.e. by repeating the expression in question, or by using a related expression (e.g. a synonym). So-called pro-drop languages can in general tolerate quite long stretches without any explicit maintenance work apart from agreement features (number, person, gender), unlike English or German, which obligatorily require at least pronominals to fill the subject slot.

The replacement pattern of subjects that we observed above is one of the five strategies available to solve the problem of the preservation or maintenance of the topic-continuity in the flowing discourse in the case of metonymic subjects. This is in fact, in our opinion, the most natural option in Croatian and Hungarian, languages that (i) have prominent systems of impersonal constructions, and (ii) that belong to the pro-drop type of languages with rich agreement systems.

The second option would be to avoid metonymy altogether, while the third, the least natural in the case of Croatian and Hungarian, would be to produce a whole string of repeatedly used metonymies. A fourth strategy would be to
alternate between the metonymy types, i.e. between the CAPITAL-FOR-GOVERNMENT type and the COUNTRY-FOR-GOVERNMENT type, more or less tantamount to “elegant variation” through synonymy. This strategy is found in many languages. Cf. some English examples:

(21) a. Diplomats here said they had hoped that the strange tale of the Portuguese ambassador, Antonio Tanger de Correa, would create a model. Portugal is the current president of the European Union, a six-month term that ends with June, and Lisbon asked Belgrade to approve the appointment before the war and Mr. Milosevic’s indictment.

b. The Czech Republic, which is applying to the European Union, has kept its ambassador here, Ivan Busniak, for about four years. But Prague is unsure if it will rotate him. If he leaves, Prague—mindful of its Western orientation—has decided to replace him with a deputy chief of mission ad interim “and wait for better times,” the ambassador said.

This is also attested in language such as Croatian and Hungarian. What is more, as shown in Brdar-Szabó (2002) and Tomka (2003), COUNTRY-FOR-GOVERNMENT metonymies are more productive than the CAPITAL-FOR-GOVERNMENT type in Hungarian and Croatian. As will be shown below, such “elegant variation” is nevertheless of limited help.

Finally, another unnatural solution would be to use anaphoric pronouns either according to the gender/number of the metonymic target or the number/gender of the metonymic source. This is unnatural, or at least very marked, because it almost invariably leads to the breakdown in the continuity of the topic, as such pronouns in subject position are then very frequently interpreted as introducing new topical referents/concepts.

It now all depends on how easily a language can maintain such double-barrelled metonymic topics. It appears that English, with its quite flexible system of co-referring pronouns (cf. the use of plural or singular pronouns in coreference with collective terms), but relatively rudimentary agreement system can achieve a relative longevity of such double-barrelled and ambiguous topics without incurring too much processing cost.

An attempt to use anaphoric pronouns in pro-drop languages like Croatian or Hungarian in order to maintain such metonymic topics—the most marked or unnatural solution of the four we mention above—would yield odd results. For example, regardless of whether we choose a pronoun according to the gender of the capital, i.e. neuter ono “it” for Sarajevo, or masculine on “he” for Berlin, or London, or Washington, etc. or whether we choose the feminine pronoun ona “she” compatible with the target, i.e. the feminine noun vlada, the Croatian word for “government,” there seems to obtain a break in the topic continuity,
because the switch from a double-barrelled topic seems to be too abrupt. The same happens sooner or later in the case of elegant variation between capital and country names, as the nouns can be of different gender, too. Even with more straightforward referents, it is usually assumed that a pronoun in subject position is quite likely to introduce a new topic, or affect a backshift to one of the topics mentioned before the last one. With metonymic double-barrelled nouns, such a shift becomes intolerable.

Hungarian, of course, has a rudimentary gender system, but nevertheless such a switch to an overt 3rd person personal pronoun would be unusual, if not felt to be impossible, and is not once attested in our corpus. The third person singular personal pronoun seems to be used exclusively for animate antecedents, while the 3rd person demonstrative pronoun is mostly used for inanimate objects (azt, “this-ACC”). This virtually leaves us with zero pronoun option for inanimate subjects.

On the other hand, we note that pro-drop languages like Croatian or Hungarian, even if they can do without any anaphoric pronouns, must very soon narrow down the reference of the topic in order to be able to select appropriate number agreement features. English and German are more likely to gradually determine the ultimate reference of the topic on-line in a step-by-step fashion, i.e. pick it up from the larger context or from one of the consecutively activated knowledge domains or ICMs, while Croatian and Hungarian seem to automatically assign the default metonymic interpretation to capital names in this type of discourse. This is why the range of possible referents of metonymic expressions based on place names is broader in English and German than in Croatian or Hungarian, as reported in (Brdar-Szabó 2002).

This means that even if Croatian and Hungarian get around the problem of the selection of anaphoric pronouns by simply avoiding these pronouns, the problem of the selection of the appropriate agreement features cannot be that easily avoided. Of course, one of the possible strategies is to avoid metonymy altogether, which accounts for a relatively frequent situation: newspaper articles in the Croatian and Hungarian that exhibit no metonymically used names of capitals whatsoever. Instead, literal expressions may be used such as “X’s government.” The closest they then come to metonymy is in the use of the premodifier “official” in front of the name of the capital, which seems to facilitate subsequent anaphoric reference according to the gender features of the metonymic source, or in the formula “the government/regime in X” (which is also attested in English):

(22) a. Poslije terorističkog udara na SAD 2001., vlada u Riyadhu je mjesecima odbijala javno priznati
Riyadh AUX months-INSTR refused publicly admit-INF
da su otmičari koji su u tome sudjelovala
that COP hijackers who AUX in that took-part
većinom bili gradani Saudija Arabije.
for-most-part COP-PART citizens Saudi Arabia-GEN

“After the terrorist attack against the USA in 2001 the government in Riyadh has for months refused to publicly admit that most of the hijackers that took part in it were citizens of Saudi Arabia”

b. Oni, naime, drže da ni međunarodno pravno
they namely think that neither internationally legally
ni moralno SAD nema pravo napasti Irak i
nor morally USA not.has right attack-INF Iraq and
primijeniti silu protiv režima u Bagdadu.
use force against regime in Baghdad

“They namely think that the USA has neither the moral nor (international) legal right to attack Iraq and use force against the Baghdad regime”

Another unnatural solution to the pressure of maintaining topic continuity, attested both in Croatian and Hungarian texts in our corpus, is to stick to a whole series of metonymic uses of the same capital name within a single text. This is admittedly a very awkward solution in stylistic terms, but it is nevertheless used. This point is exemplified in the relevant sections of a Hungarian article reproduced below:

(23) Vita Phenjan atombombája körül
controversy Pyongyang nuclear bomb-POSS around

Tegnap aztán ugyanaz a rádió – önmagára
yesterday however the-same DEF radio itself-on

hivatkozva - jól érthetően azt mondta, hogy
 citing well comprehensible-ADV that said that

Phenjannak joga van birtokolni atomfegyvert,
Pyongyang-DAT right is possess-INF nuclear weapons-ACC

majd ugyanez a kijelentés megjelent a
and the same statement appeared in Pyongyang papers too. United States suspended last week the oil supplies to North Korea which was introduced as one of the compensatory measures inducing Pyongyang to shut down its old-type nuclear plants. […] Many observers were earlier of the opinion that the only goal that Pyongyang wanted to achieve by announcing that it has a nuclear weapons programme was to bring the United States to the conference table.”

The most natural strategy for languages such as Croatian and Hungarian, is to remove the pressure of maintaining the metonymic topic continuity by shifting it from the subject position, and partly detopicalizing it at the same
time, and have the name of the capital mentioned in a PP functioning as an adverbial, as illustrated above. This is precisely what we have observed above. This discourse-functional strategy is made possible, moreover it is made the most natural one, by the typological givens of these languages. Their grammatical structure is pervasively characterized by the fact that they are pro-drop languages and that their productive subsystems of impersonal constructions play an extremely important role. Let us illustrate the latter phenomenon by the following sets of Croatian and Hungarian examples, (24) and (25), respectively.

Both languages have numerous impersonal constructions. In addition to constructions with verbal and adjectival or nominal meteorological predicates (discussed below), there are also constructions with experiencers in the dative or accusative (in Croatian), and in the dative (in Hungarian), and finite verb forms in the 3rd personal singular:

(24)  
| a. Meni je zima. | me-DAT COP-3SG cold  |
| b. Hladno/ topolo/ vruće/ loše/ dobro mi je. | cold warm hot ill well me-DAT COP-3SG  |
| c. Boli me/ Strah me je. | hurt-3SG me-ACC fear me-ACC is-3SG  |

(25)  
| a. (Nekem) tetszik ez a ház. | me-DAT like-3SG this DEF house-NOM  |
| b. Melegem van/ Nekem melegem van | hot-POSS-1SG me-DAT hot-POSS-1SG is-3SG  |

It is significant that the same pattern of replacement of metonymically used names of capitals is found in some other pro-drop languages that have elaborate agreement systems as well as productive impersonal constructions. Cf. the following examples from Polish (26), Russian (27), Slovenian (28), Spanish (29) and Italian (30):

(26)  
Nieoficjalnie w Pekinie mówi się jednak, że japonscy dyplomaci, którzy byli obecni na miejscu zdarzenia w Shenyangu, nie zareagowali na interwencję

unofficially in Beijing say-3SG REFL nevertheless that Japanese diplomats who were present at scene not reacted on intervention

(27)  

(28)  

(29)  

(30)
“It is nevertheless unofficially said in Beijing that Japanese diplomats who were present in Shenyang did not react to the intervention of the police on the location over which they have jurisdiction”

(27) a. *V Washingtonu so o tem podvomili, prebegli* In Washington AUX about that doubted-3PL dissident

*general severnokorejske vojske pa je v izjavah general North-Korean army-GEN but AUX in statements*

*za japonske medije potrdili,… for Japanese media confirmed…*

“In Washington, they doubted this, the dissident North Korean general has nevertheless in his statements for Japanese media confirmed…”

(28) a. *V Tbilisi že kategoričeski oprovergajut zajavlenija* in Tbilisi however categorical-ADV refute-3PL announcements

*o tom, što kakie-to diversionnye groups being-sent in Abhazia-ACC*

*[Izvestija, May 7, 2003]*

“Tbilisi categorically denies any reports that some sabotage detachments are being sent to Abkhazia”

(29) a. *En Washington se consideraba seguro que importantes* in Washington REFL considered certain that important

*dirigentes iraquies habian huido hacia el país leaders Iraqi had fled towards DEF country*

*vecino,… neighbouring*

“It is taken for certain in Washington that important Iraqi leaders had fled to a neighbouring country”