

Figurativity across Domains, Modalities and Research Practices

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Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

FIGURATIVITY IN LANGUAGE, MIND AND SOCIO-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

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*“At any given moment, we engage in conceptualizing activity at different levels of awareness and in varied domains of mental experience. It draws on many types of abilities (perceptual, motor, intellectual) and vast stores of knowledge (particular and general; physical, social, and cultural; individual, conventional, and contextual). The problems we now address pertain to the boundary between “linguistic” and “extralinguistic” concerns. What in all this counts as **language**? Which particular skills and bits of knowledge can we specifically characterize as being linguistic? Accompanying the production or understanding of any **linguistic expression** is a complex and multifaceted stream of conceptualization. How much of this should we identify as its **linguistic meaning**?”*
(Langacker, 2008: 36; emphasis as in the original).

The human ability to use language non-literally has attracted the interest of various scholars for thousands of years. Over the centuries, scholars defined and studied an extensive variety of tropes such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, allegory and irony, and related those to their communicative effectiveness and stylistic aesthetics. By now it has already become commonsense to describe those times of interest in non-literality as times of (a) interpreting tropes simply as figurative linguistic expressions, and (b) approaching tropes as mere flourishes adding flavour to underlying non-figurative content.

As any investigation of studies of figurativity, i.e., of non-literality, will reveal, the turning point in scholars’ treatment of the phenomenon came in the 1970s, when a group of pioneers (most notably Wallace Chafe, Charles Fillmore, George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, and Leonard Talmy) undertook a root-and-branch re-evaluation of all linguistic premises at the time and created the roots of the theoretical paradigm known today as

Cognitive Linguistics (CL). The actual flourish of research on figurativity came in the 1980s after the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal "Metaphors We Live By" (1980) and "Philosophy in the Flesh" (1999). Since then, CL has regarded metaphor not as linguistic embellishment but as the backbone of human thinking, a way of reasoning about the world, which manifests itself in linguistic expressions, among various other semiotic systems and media. Since then, CL has kept a distinction between linguistic metaphor and conceptual metaphor. Conceptual metaphor, and figurativity in general (including all kinds of tropes such as metonymy, hyperbole, irony, etc.), are currently understood as constitutive of various processes of human comprehension of the world, of communicative interactions and of everyday human functioning. Despite the achieved consensus, researchers are still struggling to find answers to numerous questions that remain open even today.

The present volume constitutes a representative selection of pieces of research that seek to provide novel answers to the open questions. The volume maintains heavy emphasis on metaphor as a figurative cognitive operation that enables non-literal thought. Accordingly, the contributions included in **Part I** of this volume (*Figurativity and words*) follow the now classic Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) tradition of starting their analyses from the linguistic evidence available (i.e., treating linguistic expressions as tangible clues or cues) and, on this basis, proceeding to the construction of hypotheses about the human mind, and drawing conclusions about cognitive processes.

The wealth of research spawned over the past decades by Lakoff and Johnson's groundbreaking ideas provides more than just insights into metaphor and its workings. Other figures of speech also have been given attention to by scholars, e.g. simile (e.g., Galera 2013; Barnden 2012), irony (e.g., Giora and Fein 1999; Athanasiadou 2017; Ruiz de Mendoza 2017), hyperbole (e.g., Brdar and Brdar-Szabó 2005; Barnden 2017), etc. Yet, regrettably, as of today, research on figurativity can be accused of displaying a steady tendency for focusing disproportionately on conceptual metaphor. If there is any other figurative mechanism cognitive research pays significant attention to, that mechanism would be conceptual metonymy (see studies by, e.g., Dirven 1993; Panther and Radden 1999; Barcelona 2000a, 2000b, 2005; Dirven and Pörings 2002; Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez-Hernández 2011; Littlemore 2015). Barcelona (2000a: 31) even maintains that "every metaphorical mapping presupposes a conceptually prior metonymic mapping" and "the seeds for any metaphorical transfer are to be found in a metonymic projection". Thus, a huge portion of the research on the nature of conceptual metonymy has turned to the joint operation of

conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy, or, as Goossens terms it (1990), metaphonymy (for research on the nature of the resulting amalgamated concepts, or ‘conceptual complexes’, see Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2011). The present volume follows this general trend and does not limit itself to the analysis of conceptual metaphor; it pays attention to other figurative mechanisms as well, most notably, to conceptual metonymy.

As already mentioned above, since the 1980s, figurativity has been taken to express how figurative language use is, in fact, the outcome of human cognitive information processing and how figurativity is grounded and becomes embodied through the sensorimotor system that guides the human interaction with its environment. The first major aspect of such a claim has to do with the human physio-neurological build that allows for conceptual figurativity to operate. In this respect, in more recent times, the Lakoffian perspective on metaphor has been widened to incorporate neurobiological findings. Lakoff’s *Neural Theory of Metaphor* (2009), for instance, has displayed considerable explanatory potential in revealing how both conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy occur physiologically by providing intra-node circuits. Admittedly, as Feldman maintains, “it is premature (perhaps by centuries) to formulate explicit theories linking language to neural computation” (Feldman 2006: 4). Nonetheless, Feldman (*ibid.*) keeps arguing that we should express a firm support for endeavors which put forward working models of language and communication, endeavors which, even when not fully accurate, still keep pointing scholars in the right direction. **Part II** in the present volume (*Metaphor comprehension and processing*) tries and contributes to general research on how figurative uses are processed by figurativity producers and users.

The second major aspect of how figurative language use is grounded and embodied through the human sensorimotor system concerns the human cognitive environment. Both human figurative thought and human language have been argued (e.g. Gibbs and Colston 2012) to draw incessantly on the interaction between physiological experience and its context. That context can be either cultural or natural. As Gibbs succinctly puts it, “understanding embodied experience is not simply a matter of physiology or kinesiology, but demands recognition of how people dynamically move in the physical and cultural body” (Gibbs 2006: 228). However, the interplay between non-literal cognition (and its expressions) and socio-cultural environments has never been easy to trace, let alone analyse. To make matters worse, the figurative uses of today are not likely to be the same in, let’s say, 50 years’ time (Deignan 2003). The chapters in **Part III** of this volume (*Figurativity across discourses*) address such issues specifically. They pursue the goal of demonstrating how the figurative

meanings of linguistic expressions are more than simply a window onto our figurative thought – they are just as importantly a window onto human interactions with socio-cultural environments. The investigations included here also address issues such as the expression of relatively the same figurative meaning in different languages and in different cognitive-and-cultural contexts in various discourses.

The major contribution of this volume is that it offers its reader a most varied and widely-lensed viewpoint on how figurativity creates meaning in various social environments through various languages in various cultural-and-historical ages.

The volume showcases thirteen chapters selected for inclusion on the basis of their contributing to the range, scope and diversity within the cognitive linguistics research on non-literality. The volume encompasses three major thematic areas reflected in the three major **Parts** it is structured in.

The opening chapter of the volume, *Figurativity in compounds. The case of two modifier-head relations in English and French [NN]N units* by Pierre Arnaud, focuses on the role of figurativity at the sub-word level, i.e., in the creation and understanding of English and French non-coordinative binominal compounds. The analysis tackles the modification relation in this type of compounds, the influence of conceptual metaphor and metonymy in the constitution of the compounds and in rendering them exocentric. The author illustrates the role of conceptual metaphor and metonymy in endocentric (subordinative) attributive compounds, claiming that figurativity is the property of the modification relation itself in such compounds. More complicated appears to be the role played by figurativity in relational endocentric (subordinative) compounds: these compounds include a considerable variety of relations that have been classified in various ways. Pierre Arnaud reviews two recent classifications: Jackendoff's (2016) and Pepper's (2020) PHAB scheme. The analysis reveals that two sets of compounds pose problems for the neat division of subordinative ones into attributive and relational respectively. Units such as *sailfish*, *oiseau-lyre* or *wasp waist*, *régime jockey* are found to be created by analogy with a heavy reliance on metaphor and metonymy for supporting analogical creativity.

In her chapter, *Conceptual metonymies and metaphors at the morphological level: From Mandarin affixoids to social communication*, Shelley Ching-yu Depner discusses the rising productivity of constructions

in Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan with specific person-related affixoid such as *mèi* 妹 ‘younger sister’ in *fǎlālì mèi* 法拉利妹 ‘Ferrari-younger sister; the girl who drives a Ferrari’. In the chapter data harvested from newspaper corpora in *Taiwan News Smart Web* are analysed in an attempt to find answers to the following research questions: (1) does conceptual metonymy interact with metaphors in Mandarin affixoid constructions? and (2) how do conceptual metonymies shape Mandarin communication processes? The author establishes that conceptual metonymy is pervasively involved in Mandarin constructions with person-related affixoids and that it interacts with conceptual metaphors, but the role of metonymy is much stronger and far more frequent. It appears that +behavior for person+ is the most widely used conceptual metonymy for this morphological construction. An interesting finding is the fact that some Mandarin kinship terms, such as (*jiù* 舅 ‘mother’s brother’, *jin* 妗 ‘the wife of mother’s brother’) are not used in such constructions, while general gender indicators *-nan* and *-nu* are highly productive. The top four metonymies current in communication in Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan are: (1) +action for person+, (2) +ingredient for meal+, (3) synecdoche, and (4) hyperbole in synecdoche. The construction is used widely in various communicative contexts and settings. Both the types of affixoids admissible in the constructions and the connotations of the specific constructions depend heavily on the social awareness and conventions in Taiwan.

In the third chapter, *Meaning construal processes in the Hungarian technical terms of quality assurance*, Réka Sólyom focuses on analyzing the semantics of Hungarian technical terms within the field of quality assurance from a functional cognitive perspective. The author hypothesizes that metaphorical and metonymic meaning construal processes and blending have an important role to play in the semantic structure of technical terms in the specialized field. It transpires that in Hungarian terms in the field of quality assurance the prototypical conceptual metaphors PRODUCT’S LIFE IS HUMAN LIFE and PROCESSES ARE SCALES are productively employed. Their use is accompanied by the utilization of prototypical conceptual metonymies (e.g., category and member and container), blending (conceptual integration) as in Hungarian technical terms with *-(V)l* and *-(V)z* suffixes. According to the author’s previous research (e.g., Sólyom 2019, 2020), metaphors, metonymies, and blends occur among Hungarian technical terms of quality with various grammatical structures, hence the chapter provides analyses of terms with different grammatical structures.

In the last chapter in **Part I**, *Synecdoche and the manifestation of case by intonation*, Vladimir Phillipov attempts to answer the question: How the intonational case morpheme can be accounted for in cognitive

terms? Following Kasabov (2006), the author posits that the category of case is the most important grammatical category because it is fundamental to the dialectics of the relational status of the word-sign. The same concept of case is further related to case relations at the textual level (known variably as ‘roles’ or ‘actantes’). In this context, the difference between the segmental case variant and the intonational case variant is explained via the role of synecdoche defined as “[a] figure of speech in which a more inclusive term is used for a less inclusive one or vice versa, as a whole for a part or a part for a whole” (NSOED vol.2, 3189). It transpires that the intonational case variant is a competing mechanism language resorts to for purposes of resolving structural ambiguity. This comes as additional independent evidence supporting the fact that lexical tones and intonational tones are located in different components of deep structure.

In the opening chapter of **Part II**, *Optimal interpretation of written texts containing novel figurative language: Evidence from eye movement in secondary school children*, Maria Kiose presents the Optimal Interpretation Hypothesis of figurativeness, according to which it is construal processes of a whole text event, and not construal processes of an isolated figurative language unit, that control figurative comprehension. This central claim is sought verification for, first, in a corpus study reported in the chapter. The results from the study are then used as a stepping stone for an eye-tracking experiment also reported in the chapter. The experiment involves secondary school children as respondents; this age group is preferred by Kiose as figurative language use in younger children (i.e. children of pre-school and primary school age) has already been well-researched. Moreover, Kiose argues, secondary school children are better experienced in processing figurativeness, which could allow for steadier tendencies to be observed. Some of the more significant findings of the chapter concern gaze data and default responses data: as Kiose demonstrates, figurative uses require longer reading time and longer fixations; introducing visual mode also produces longer fixations; similes are read faster, but fixations get longer when certain conceptual metaphors are used. For instance, the conceptual metaphor AN ANIMAL IS A PERSON is argued in the chapter to take longer to read but fixations while processing it are of normal duration.

Chapter six, *Nonsense or metaphor? It's up to the context*, presents Fruzsina Krizsai and Anna Babarczy's contribution to studies on metaphor comprehension, and more specifically, on the difference between the comprehension of conventional metaphors and that of novel metaphors. In the chapter, the authors argue that the most important factors conditioning successful metaphor interpretation are (a) the familiarity of the concept, (b) the complexity of the metaphorical expression, and (c) the ‘richness’ of the

context in which the metaphor appears. Krizsai and Babarczy address two central questions: whether it is familiarity of the lexical item or the conventionality of the metaphor that is of top-most importance, and whether context holds a potential to compensate for a lack of familiarity of a metaphor. Krizsai and Babarczy report on an experiment involving 3-to-6 year-old Hungarian-speaking children, an experiment which yields data on pre-school children's metaphor comprehension performance in a sentence-picture matching task. The analysis provided in the chapter verifies that, although a rich context may increase the likelihood of adults' and older children's arriving at the intended metaphorical interpretation of a novel metaphor, for young children there is insignificant difference between conventional and novel metaphors. These findings are confirmed regardless of the effects of context. Thus, Krizsai and Babarczy argue, a rich context does not facilitate arrival at the intended metaphorical interpretation. Instead, the authors conclude, 'cognitive maturity' is what controls the efficiently of metaphoric information interpreting.

In chapter seven, *Understanding conceptual metaphor through literature in an EFL class: An action-research with F graders in the Greek primary school*, Stavroula Apostolakopoulou and Maria Paparoussi aim to demonstrate how introducing overt knowledge of conceptual metaphor can help students realize that our ordinary conceptual system is reflected in poetic discourse. Apostolakopoulou and Paparoussi present their own CMT-based approach to teaching metaphoric and idiomatic expressions through literature. The authors argue that teachers may need to integrate literary reading in the daily agenda of an FL class with a view to enhancing students' metaphor comprehension in the English language. The chapter also seeks to answer questions concerning the extent to which CMT can contribute to students' hands-on metaphor understanding. It addresses the issues of whether literary reading in class can help further students' comprehension of metaphorical language, and to what extent students' idiom comprehension and learning in English can be facilitated, if conceptual recognition and understanding are introduced overtly in in-class activities. The chapter is enriched by its inclusion of original materials used in the action research reported here by the authors, materials which could be used to answer Apostolakopoulou and Paparoussi's call for introducing overt knowledge of conceptual metaphors into the EFL classroom.

In the last chapter in **Part II**, *Investigating the impact of cultural embeddedness on metaphor translation and understanding* Wenjie Hong, Caroline Rossi, and Jean-Pierre Chevrot tackle the issue of cultural specificity and variations as a significant challenge to translation understood as a dynamic process of intercultural communication. The reported research

focuses on the influence of cultural specificity on translation solutions of metaphoric expressions. The findings indicate that culture-specific metaphors are more likely to lead to non-metaphorical translation solutions, while non-specific metaphors tend to be retained in target texts. But the influence of cultural specificity appears to interact in a significant way with the direction of translation. When translating into their native language, the subjects in the experiment show higher conceptual fluency and produce more variable translation solutions. When translating into their second/foreign language subjects are confronted with greater production uncertainty and tend to prefer more cautious non-metaphorical translation solutions. This can be interpreted as a risk-avoidance strategy in the face of conceptual asymmetries and cognitive uncertainty, but can also be due to lack of language proficiency and translation competence. The pedagogical implications from the research suggest that metaphor-based awareness-raising activities can be introduced in translator training to accelerate the development of reflective competence and improve trainees' understanding of translation – a situated, dynamic, and embodied activity mediating between different conceptual systems.

Chapter nine, with which **Part III** opens, is called *A conceptual blending analysis of humor in late-night comedy shows*. In it, Sanja Berberović and Nihada Delibegović Džanić address critically the socio-political issues of the amnesty for undocumented immigrants, the imposition of stronger border control in the USA and the enforcement of stricter immigration laws in the USA. More specifically, the two authors concentrate on President Trump's and conservative media outlets' anti-immigration rhetoric. In this chapter, Berberović and Delibegović Džanić provide multi-modal analyses of two segments from two late night shows (*The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* and *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*), which parody President Trump's, his administrations', and conservative media outlets' stances on the issue of the immigrants' 'caravan'. The authors amalgamate their analyses with premises from conceptual blending theory. Their main point of interest is the resolution of conceptual incongruity as realized through the unpacking of the blend into its input spaces. That incongruity is interpreted throughout the chapter as the main source of humor in the late night shows' segments. Berberović and Delibegović Džanić's analysis rests on the observation that the public conceptualization of immigrants and immigration in the US happens frequently through metaphorizations based on concepts such as ANIMALS, NATURAL DISASTERS, and INVASION. The use of the INVASION metaphor in relation to the 'caravan' of immigrants is represented in the chapter as the major point of attack for late-night shows' comedy sketches.

Berberović and Delibegović Džanić argue that, by poking fun at the use of the *INVASION* metaphor in relation to the caravan, and by ridiculing the language used by Trump's administration and his media supporters, Stephen Colbert and Trevor Noah not only achieve a humorous effect but also expose hidden, language-perpetuated ideologies.

Culturally-conditioned conceptualizations of *TIME* lie at the center of Gergana Ruseva's research interests in chapter ten, "*Look Ahead in the Past, Look Back in the Future*": *TIME IS SPACE Metaphors in Sanskrit*. The chapter demonstrates that, in contrast to most present-day cultures, the ancient Indo-Aryans did not rely as heavily on metaphorizing *TIME* through *SPACE*. Some of the main lines of support provided by Ruseva concern the unusual emphasis placed in the Indian culture on metaphorizations deriving from *LIFE AS A PROCESSION*, where each generation is seen as 'moving towards death'. Ruseva also argues that, in Vedic and Sanskrit, linguistic expressions evoking perceptions of spatial sequences can evoke the construction of both a sequence in *TIME* and a sequence in *SPACE* without necessarily suggesting the primacy of either concept. The author maintains that, in Indian culture, vertical perceptions of the *PAST* or the *FUTURE* do not specify which of these two concepts lies 'above' and which concept lies 'below', as this is a question which only makes sense (in Indian culture) in terms of degrees. Thus, the chapter demonstrates, in Vedic and Sanskrit, the vertical axis is frequently represented by a 'time arrow' normally appearing in the upward direction and conveying the meaning of 'future'. Discussing an image of the time dragon *Kālasarpa* (which, the author argues, symbolizes both an end and a beginning, both time and not-time), Ruseva demonstrates that it is possible to conceptualize the past as lying in front of us, and to believe that what comes in the end is the future. Ruseva also argues that Indo-Aryans believed the world of words and sounds to be much more real than the world of forms, and they believed the world of thoughts to be even more important than the world of words. That, Ruseva concludes, makes the ancients' perception of the world more dynamic than ours: they saw the world as incessant movement and not as frozen in stillness. Accordingly, the author maintains, their perception of *TIME* did not necessarily accord with our present-day notion of *TIME* as *OBJECTS* arranged in *SPACE* and ordered in *SEQUENCES*.

In *The NATION IS A PERSON Metaphor in Persian Political Discourse. Revealing the Metaphorical Potential of Modern Persian*, Sirma Kostadinova focuses on the specifics of the operation of the *NATION IS A PERSON* metaphor in contemporary Persian political discourse. Relying on the analytical principles suggested by the *MIPVU* in Conceptual Metaphor

Theory, the chapter studies linguistic expressions including ‘*chest*’, ‘*face*’, ‘*finger*’, ‘*foot*’, ‘*hand*’, ‘*head*’, and ‘*heart*’. The analysis also reveals the simultaneous functioning of conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy throughout the dataset. It also highlights metaphorical uses of other lexical items associating to the abstract notion of a NATION. On the basis of the data obtained, Kostadinova concludes that, first, modern Persian is no exception to the principle of conceptualising abstract notions such as a NATION in terms of the human body and its parts. Second, the Persian culture, the author argues, views UNITY, INDIVIDUALITY and STABILITY as crucial characteristics harmonizing all elements of the notion of a NATION into a WHOLE. Kostadinova also lays special emphasis on the simultaneity in the operation of conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy; she demonstrates how that can lead to ambiguity as to the contextual meanings of some of the expressions she analyses.

The object of investigation of Elena Tarasheva’s *Denotation shifts in new coinages in media discourses on politics* are instances of lexical items’ intensional content manipulation, the way that manipulation occurs in Bulgarian political discourse. Tarasheva conducts her analysis on a dataset she has compiled for the purposes of her study. The dataset used in the chapter consists of commentaries from a Bulgarian radio talk show which airs weekly on Bulgaria’s National Radio; a number of those commentaries can be later published by their author (Petar Volgin) in a different mode media, i.e. in a magazine. The chapter first describes how a list of keywords from the talk show is extracted and then proceeds to demonstrating how those key words undergo discourse-specific and author-specific changes to enact what is seen by Tarasheva as political spin. Chapter twelve also discusses the discourse use of newly-coined lexical items such as *грантаджии* (grant recipients) and *жълтопанетници* (inhabitants of the central areas of Bulgaria’s capital) in terms of how the items’ morphological build brings about changes into their denotational and connotational profiles.

The volume’s closing chapter, Yuliya Davydyuk’s *The cognitive symphony of souls in Kazuo Ishiguro’s “Nocturnes: Five stories of music and nightfall”*, focuses on a collection of short stories written by the British novelist of Japanese origin and 2017 Nobel Laureate in Literature Kazuo Ishiguro (2009). Davydyuk’s objective in this chapter is to highlight various aspects of the interaction of music, literature and cognitive linguistics through using “Nocturne: Five Stories on Music and Nightfall” as a case study. In her analysis, Davydyuk reveals how, while telling the stories of five musicians, Ishiguro generalizes about musicians’ lifestyle and how he presents it as a series of ‘nightfalls’ of the soul. Davydyuk provides a hybrid,

cognitive-stylistic viewpoint on the key notions in each of the narratives, and demonstrates how those relate to the main concept of MUSIC. She also systematizes some of the five stories' recurring social issues and integrates them into the texture of the whole book. The chapter concludes by suggesting that what lies at the heart of Ishiguro's "Nocturnes" can be seen as a reversed conceptual mirror-metaphor of LIFE IS MUSIC - MUSIC IS LIFE.

The selection of original chapters in this volume offers an unique set of viewpoints on the complexities of the co-existence of figurative thought and figurative language. The authors' contributions not only uphold the Cognitive Linguistics approach to figurativity: they position figurativity in various discursive environments, they compare and contrast figurativity in various languages and cultures, they trace figurativity in its development through various cultural-and-historical ages.

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PART I

FIGURATIVITY AND WORDS

CHAPTER ONE

FIGURATIVITY IN COMPOUNDS. THE CASE OF TWO MODIFIER-HEAD RELATIONS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH [NN]_N UNITS

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This chapter explores the way figurativity complicates the analysis of the modification relation in English and French non-coordinative binominal compounds. In the most obvious cases, a metaphor or metonymy applies to the compound and makes it exocentric. Endocentric, or subordinative, compounds can be divided into relational and attributive units. In many attributives, one can argue that it is the modification relation itself that is figurative. Contrary to the unique relation of attributives, relationals include a considerable variety of relations, two recent classifications of which are considered: Jackendoff's (2016), with a formal notation and functions, and Pepper's (2020) PHAB scheme. Two sets of compounds are apparently problematic with respect to the division of subordinatives into attributives and relationals. One includes units such as *sailfish*, *oiseau-lyre*, the other is comprised of examples like *wasp waist*, *régime jockey*. The article shows that both include analogy, but in different ways.

Key words: semantics of compounding, metonymy, metaphor, metaphonymy

Introduction

Figurativity is an all-pervading phenomenon of language, whose presence ranges from the simplest to the most complex levels. Occasional tropes may apply to one word, but also, as Littlemore (2015: 193) points out, metonymy “tends to hover over a sentence or a phrase”: for instance, a sentence introducing a weather forecast like Fr. *Les pulls col roulé pourront de*

nouveau prendre la direction du fond du placard “turtle-neck sweaters will again be able to head for the back of the closet” may be analysed as a playful metonymic reference to approaching mild weather. Whole discourses like fables and parables are figurations of real-life situations. Figurativity also applies to lexicalized units of varying degrees of complexity, from simple words through lexicalized verb phrases like *move the goalposts* to memorized sentences like *It’s a dog’s life* or proverbs, which refer metaphorically to a situation. The present article deals with figurativity in the lexicon at a moderate degree of complexity, that of binominal compounds ($[\text{NN}]_N$), discussing the effects of metaphor and metonymy on whole compounds and their constituents before focusing on the nature of the modification relation in attributive compounds. It finally investigates two modification relations in relational units whose intricate semantics are coloured by figurativity. Examples are from English and French.

Figurativity and compounding

From a semantic point of view, English and French have the same categories of binominal compounds (Arnaud & Renner 2014), although there are structural differences: French compounds are left-headed, they have internal plurals, and the modifier may be pluralized (Fradin 2009; Arnaud 2015).

The notion of head of a compound needs to be refined in order to properly distinguish classes. Scalise and Fábregas (2010) have suggested that headedness should be analyzed into three components, semantic, morphological and categorial. Semantic headedness produces the classificatory position of the compound, thus corresponding to the hyponymy criterion of Bauer (2017, 37): *seabird* denotes a bird. This IS-A relation is captured by Test A¹.

Test A_{Eng.} a N1N2 is a N2

A seabird is a bird.

Test A_{Fr.} un N1N2 est un N1

Une assurance-vie est une assurance.

“An insurance life (life insurance) is an insurance.”

The categorial head transfers its word-class to the compound — a less useful notion in the case of $[\text{NN}]_N$ compounds. The morphological head transmits its morphological specifications, like gender, to the whole unit, receives number and governs agreement on other elements of the noun

¹ The test is presented in its simple form, but must be adapted for number, gender, or mass nouns.

phrase, as in *robe-fourreau* “dress sheath = sheath (dress)”: $[[\text{robe}]_{\text{fem}} [\text{fourreau}]_{\text{masc}}]_{\text{fem}}$. As we shall see below, although categorial and morphological heads coincide both in English and French (in the left-side noun in French), semantic headedness has its use in distinguishing categories.

The classification of $[\text{NN}]_{\text{N}}$ compounds followed here differs from the frequently used tripartite one by Scalise and Bisetto (2009). These authors introduced a syntax-inspired system with attribution, subordination and coordination as principles of classification, and applicable to compounds of different word-classes, which has obvious merits. When the investigation focuses on nouns, however, it appears that one of Scalise and Bisetto’s three categories, that of coordinatives, is different enough from the other two to warrant its isolation and therefore a bipartite classification. Coordinatives are categorially and morphologically single-headed, but they have two semantic heads: for instance, *murder-suicide* denotes an event consisting of a murder *and* a suicide. Triple or longer coordinatives as in

(1) I am a critic-teacher-authority to so many [...]

lack the semantic hierarchy found in other categories, as in $[[\text{rail way station}] \text{ or } [\text{picture } [\text{post card}]]]$. Another argument for the separate treatment of coordinatives is that there are morphological differences between them and the other classes in many languages. For instance, German and Danish coordinatives are double-stressed or right-stressed in contrast to other nominal compounds (respectively Pittner 1991 and Krasnova 2017; see Kim 2001 for examples of differences in other languages).

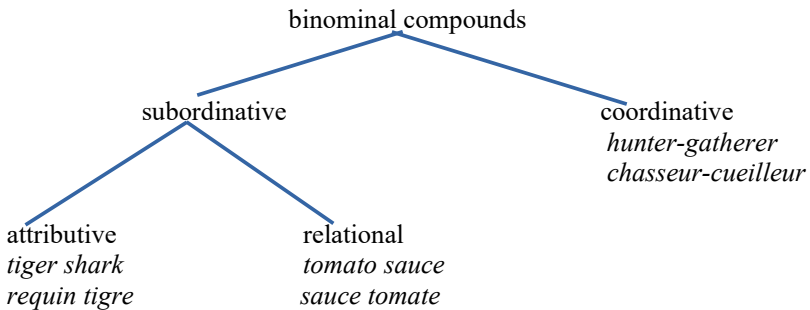


Figure 1. Classification of binominal compounds

The resulting classification is shown in Figure 1, with examples that are translation equivalents. Attributives and relationals are sub-categories of subordinatives, which are compounds with a single semantic head that coincides with the other two heads. The differences between relationals and attributives will be examined further below, but before that, a manifestation of figurativity that affects both categories merits attention. In this case, a metaphor or metonymy shifts the meaning of the compound, as in the examples of Table 1.

	Metaphor	Metonymy
English	scumbag “despicable person” snowflake “overly sensitive person” smokescreen “sth. to hide the truth”	skinhead gumshoe “detective” postcode “part of country where so. lives”
French	homme-orchestre “one-man band > Jack-of-all-trades” cocotte-minute “pressure cooker > place with explosive situation” voiture-balai “late pick-up car in cycle race > entity helping entities in distress”	plateau télé (1) “tray TV > TV dinner” plateau télé (2) “studio-set TV > talk show” micro-trottoir “mike pavement > short interview of passers-by”

Table 1. Examples of tropes on binominal compounds

While the non-figurative denotation of the unit co-exists with the figurative one in some cases, as in *snowflake* or *plateau télé*, it is missing entirely in other units, as in *scumbag* or *skinhead*. Test A, a test of semantic endocentricity, is negative:

Test A_{Eng.}

*A scumbag is a bag.

Test A_{Fr.}

*Un micro trottoir est un micro.

(the test must be applied in a figurative context for those units where non-figurative denotation subsists).

Bloomfield (1933, 235–236) popularized the term *exocentric* for this kind of compound, based on the fact that a semantic head is not present in the unit’s form. The term – which had a long history before Bloomfield (Noordegraaf 1989) – has been criticized (cf. Bauer 2017, 37 for a list of relevant publications). If one considers that, in spite of its semantics, the compound is the result of normal word-formation rules (Štekauer et al. 2012, 80), a term like *secondary exocentric* would be preferable, like Dressler’s (2006) mention of “secondary head-hood”. Also, based on the three subdivisions of headedness, *semantically exocentric* would be adequate. We return to the question of headedness further on.

Some semantically exocentric compounds have complex semantics, particularly some of the so-called *bahuvrihi* units which result from the application of synecdoche, a category of metonymy. *Skinhead* is a simple case of synecdoche, but *egghead* additionally rests on an implicit analogy between the appearance and fullness of the head and those of an egg. This kind of analogy will be further discussed below, but, as we shall see, *egghead* combines a kind of metaphor with a metonymy, and is therefore a case of metaphonymy (Goossens 2003; Barcelona 2008). In a semantically very complex case like *leatherjacket*, the name of a fish (*Oligoplites saurus*), neither *leather* nor *jacket* are literal, and the compound is further metonymized.

Other cases of figurativity are found in binominal compounds where a metaphor or metonymy affects the head, not the whole unit as in the above examples (the case of the modifier will be discussed below). Some tropes have long been lexicalized, resulting in catachreses, as in *brakeshoe*, *blood cell* (metaphors); *spyglass*, *mother tongue* (metonymies), but other cases are more salient, as in *couch potato*, *tree surgeon*, *sauce boat*; *brass knuckles*.

In order to discuss the case of apparent modifier figurativity, we need to return to the subcategorization of binominal compounds. In attributive compounds, the modification relation maps the meaning of the modifier onto that of the head, with intersective effect resulting in the naming of a new entity. Test B reflects the semantics of this modification (note that although IS-A is present in both tests, Test B is different from test A):

Test B_{Eng}. A [COMPOUND] is a [HEAD] that is a [MODIFIER]
 A sourcebook is a book that is a source.

Test B_{Fr.} Un [COMPOSE] est un [TETE] qui est un [MODIFIEUR]
 Un légume-racine est un légume qui est une racine.
 “vegetable root = root vegetable”

In the above two examples, the meaning of the modifier is wholly mapped onto that of the head, but this case is found mainly with modifiers that are abstract or constitute independently and previously lexicalized metaphors. In the more frequent case where a total mapping of meaning is made impossible by semantic incompatibility, analogy kicks in and Test B produces less-than-satisfactory utterances:

Test B_{Eng.} ??A tiger shark is a shark that is a tiger.
 Test B_{Fr.} ??Un crapaud-buffle est un crapaud qui est un buffle.
 “toad buffalo = bullfrog”

Test B must therefore be modified by the addition of an optional *like* or *comme*:

Test B_{Eng.} A [COMPOUND] is a [HEAD] that is (like) a [MODIFIER]
 A tiger-moth is a moth that is like a tiger.
 Test B_{Fr.} Un [COMPOSE] est un [TETE] qui est (comme) un
 [MODIFIEUR]
 Un crapaud-buffle est un crapaud qui est comme un
 buffle.

In such cases, a subset of the meaning of the modifier or head is active in the compound, and different subsets may be active in different compounds with a similar unit: what survives of the original intension of *cow* is very different in *sea cow* “dugong or manatee” and *cash cow*. A bell curve is bell-shaped, but the bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*, New Zealand) resembles a bell by its call. This is a consequence of analogy, and analogy is the basis of metaphor: Fr. metaphorical simplex *cloches* “bells” (for divers, for growing melons or presenting pastry) resemble bells in shape only. Is a metaphor present in those attributive compounds for which the *like* of Test B is present? Let us compare three close examples of analogy. A cylindrical office tower with a pointed roof in Lyon is familiarly called *le crayon* “the pencil”, which is obviously a perceptual metaphor, where the *comparandum* substitutes for the *comparatum*. In example (2), a simile, the analogy is made explicit by *like* and there is no substitution:

(2) Furthermore, in a compact city like Hong Kong, they result in unsightly, tall *pencil-like building blocks* in contiguous sites. [italics added] (Wing Suen and Bo-sin Tang 2002).

In the third example, the situation is again different:

(3) However, wind sway is especially pronounced in supertall buildings that are also super-skinny – they are often referred to as *pencil towers*. [italics added] (*The Guardian*, 7 Feb. 2021)

In this example, which displays the tenor of the analogy, viz. tallness and thinness (not tallness and a cylindrical shape with a pointed top as in the first example), no explicit comparison appears, but comparandum and comparatum are again both present. These two facts justify the use of a term which is more generally used when the co-presence occurs within a sentence and not within a word as in *This cottage is a palace*, viz. *in præsentia* metaphor. Does this mean that *pencil* in *pencil tower* is a metaphor? It can be argued that the analogy is triggered by the juxtaposition (hence “*in præsentia*”) of two nouns denoting concepts that belong to different domains, in other words it is the modification relation, not the modifier, that supports the analogy.

The other category of subordinative compounds, that of relationals, comprises those subordinatives that do not pass test B:

Test B_{Eng.} *A car park is (like) a car.

Test B_{Fr.} *Une assurance vie est (comme) une vie.

“an insurance life (=life insurance) is (like) a life”

Although their numbers are increasing (Radimský 2019), relational [NN]_N units are far less numerous in French than English, due to the Romance preference for prepositional units like *poisson de mer* “fish of sea = seafish”, *vaccin à ARN* “RNA vaccine”, which makes it difficult to find French examples for some modification relations. Figure 2 presents constructions (Booij 2010: *passim*) for French subordinative compounds (gender is omitted).

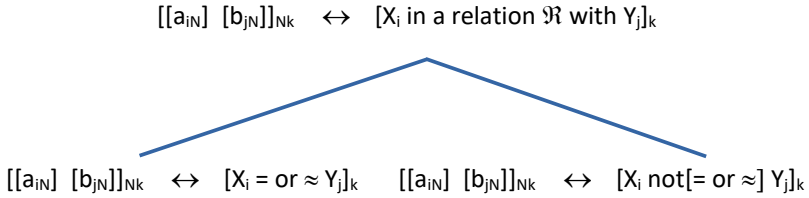


Figure 2. Constructions for French subordinative (top), attributive (left) and relational compounds (right)

Contrary to attributives which include one relation, HEAD IS A MODIFIER, relationals involve a semantically complex set of modification relations. In the most frequent case, modifier and head can be expressed as co-arguments in a predication, as in:

car park	for (park, cars)
snowman	made-of (man, snow)
pneu neige	for (pneu, neige) “tire snow = snow tire”
presse people	about (press, people) “press celebs = celebrities magazines”

When the head is a process noun, the relation is between the predicate and one of its arguments:

drug seizure	seize (X, drug)
retour chariot	return (carriage)

The link between participants in a process or between a process and a participant is one of contiguity, and, in the same way as the analogy in attributives was evocative of metaphor, the contiguity in relational compounds reminds us of metonymy. As Geeraerts (1994) wrote, “contiguity is a syntagmatic relationship that holds between entities in the same ‘chunk of experience.’” This affinity of relational compounds and metonymy was noted by a number of scholars, Schifko (1979), Bonhomme (1987, 77), Warren (1992; 1999), Koch (1999), Arnaud (2003, 87–92). Since relationals do not involve the substitution of one of the two participants by the other, they can in turn be considered as *in praesentia* metonymies.

One of the aspects of relational compounds that is evocative of metonymy is the difficulty in classifying their modification relations, as

opposed to the single relation of attributives. As has often been noted, relation modifications are “slippery” (Jackendoff 2016), and several relations may be present in some compounds. Arnaud (2016a) suggests that this may be due to the fact that the relations link concepts, not nouns, and their connective multiplicity is not easily grasped by means of labels that use discrete words. In the same way as generations of scholars have strived to produce classifications of metonymies (for recent classifications, see Radden and Kövecses (1999) and Peirsman and Geeraerts (2006)), the literature includes a large number of classifications of compound modification relations (Bauer 2017, 71–79; Pepper 2020, 184–188). In the next section, two recent classification schemes will be used on account of their principles – Pepper’s (2020) and Jackendoff’s (2016).

Pepper devised his scheme for binominal units in general, i.e. lexical units that name a combination of two thing-concepts, such as prepositional units, noun-plus-relational-adjective units, head-marked compounds, etc. (Eng. *railway*; Port. *caminho de ferro*; Rus. *želez.naja doroga*; Turk. *demir yol.u*). In view of the diverging numbers of relations in previous classifications, he started from the rather detailed scheme by Bourque (2004), which had the advantages of having been devised based on French as well as English units and therefore of not being anglo-centric like many earlier schemes, as well as resting on a large database of compounds. Pepper’s work resulted in “Bourque2”, a system of 27 relations, including six reversible ones, in his lower, high-granularity level (Pepper also devised a low-granularity inventory of 5 relations into which Bourque2 maps easily). A scheme with 27 relations can be expected to cover the needs of most investigations of compounding. The following is a sample of Pepper’s scheme:

PURPOSE	<i>animal doctor, sucre glace</i>	“sugar ice = icing sugar”
POSSESSION ²	<i>family estate, centre ville</i>	“centre city”
LOCATION	<i>house music, espace disque</i>	“space disk”

Jackendoff uses a formal notation, with 13 “basic” functions, six of which are reversible, and which can be combined. Here is sample of Jackendoff’s functions, with examples (remember that French units are left-headed):