



Metonymy in Frames

The Role of Functional Relations in Contiguity-Based Semantic Shifts of Nouns

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This work refines the notion of metonymy and the underlying notion of conceptual contiguity by describing a fundamental structural property of metonymy.

Studied since antiquity, metonymy is a ubiquitous mechanism of meaning construction in context that involves a linguistically coded source concept that directs attention to a situationally relevant target concept. Modelling metonymic contiguity by means of recursive attribute-value structures, inspired by findings from cognitive psychology, suggests that the metonymic relation depends largely on the functionality of the source with respect to the target.

Based on this structural property, several patterns can be identified as potential bases for metonymic shifts. How these shifts are coded on the linguistic surface varies depending on whether the focus within the relevant frame is more on the source (metonymy closer to literal use) or more on the target (metonymy closer to word formation). Furthermore, decomposing the contiguity relation into functional relations hints at a potential conceptual distance between the source and target. This approach contributes to understanding the boundaries and possibilities of metonymy.

The series *Dissertations in Language and Cognition* explores issues of mental representation, linguistic structure and representation, and their interplay. The research presented in this series is grounded in the idea explored in the Collaborative Research Center *The structure of representations in language, cognition and science* (SFB 991) that there is a universal format for the representation of linguistic and cognitive concepts.

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