

*Metaphor, Metonymy, Language Learning and Translation*

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## Abstract of Thesis

This thesis investigates the role of metonymy in communication, in creating text, in learner communication and in translation. I make the claim that metonymy, defined here as the ability to recognize part-whole relations between things, words and concepts, is the essential mechanism behind a whole variety of linguistic phenomena, normally dealt with in linguistics as distinct topics. In the General Theory of Metonymy presented here, I suggest that metonymy is a unifying principle behind how we process language. I discuss a range of data to demonstrate metonymy at work. I show that metonymic principles are not just in play in metonymic language but also in metaphoric and literal language. I argue that metonymy not only offers alternative ways of referring to entities, but is powerful in giving nuance and spin, and is the key to understanding why language is so fit for purpose in giving us the flexibility and subtlety so important in our social dealings with others. I illustrate the role metonymy plays in our lives by examining data from social and recreational activities where metonymy is central and seems to be explored for its own sake. In the Metonymic Theory of Learner Communication I propose that learner communication relies in a number of different ways on metonymic processing; and in the Metonymic Theory of Translation I propose that translation also relies heavily on metonymic processing. The burgeoning interest in metonymy in recent years has generated an extensive literature. This thesis attempts to make sense of this body of knowledge, offers an original synthesis of it, proposes how it might be developed and suggests practical applications of it. I suggest that a new discipline of Metonymics might emerge and that this could make a valuable contribution in reframing issues of debate in a variety of different areas of practice.

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I am indebted to my supervisor, partner and informants  
for their contribution to this thesis.

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in  
this thesis is entirely my own.

Wordcount exclusive of appendices and bibliography: 82,328 words

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Thursby Denroche". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Charles" on the left and "Thursby Denroche" on the right.

Charles Thursby Denroche

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis is about metonymy. By ‘metonymy’ I mean the recognition of part-whole relatedness between things, words and concepts. The thesis comes from an overwhelming impression, gained over many years, that metonymy plays a fundamental role in conceptualization and communication and that its role has not been fully recognized. This impression has been gained from everyday observations of naturally-occurring language but also from my experience as a language professional in the fields of translation, lexicography and language teaching. The thesis presents a ‘general theory’ of metonymy, that is, a theory which extends the notion of metonymy beyond the sphere in which it is normally considered to a more general application. In so doing, a commonality is uncovered among a whole range of semiotic and linguistic phenomena, normally seen as distinct.

This is not an exercise simply of renaming; it is more ambitious than that. It reveals that what, at first, appear to be diverse phenomena rely on the same basic and universal cognitive operation, the ability to recognise relatedness. Things, words and concepts are related if they have something in common, if a part-whole relationship exists between them. The part may be a physical part or an attribute. It is the manipulation of these ‘parts’ which allows us to realise the full meaning-making potential of the lexicon. It is argued in this thesis that morphology, syntax, lexis and phraseology only account for basic meaning making in language and that it is metonymy which gives us the flexibility and subtleties, on and above those systems, on which we constantly rely in our social dealings with others.

The thesis starts from the observation that conventional metonymic expressions in English, such as *pay with plastic*, *the small screen*, *go for a bite*, *a roof over your head*, *bums on seats*, are common; it progressed by recognizing that metonymy does not just provide an alternative way of referring to things, but plays a role in giving nuance, eg *swingeing cuts* versus *efficiency savings* (because both refer to the same thing, but each highlights a different aspect); it went on to the observation that metonymy operates at many different levels, from the sub-word level, eg creating metaphorical meaning, to the

level of discourse and intertext, where a set of independent texts associated through shared genre features.

Further, metonymy is not only prevalent but often salient in everyday communication, many interactions revolving around a metonymic component to such an extent that the metonymic associations become what the interaction is ‘about’, rather than just a means to an end. In order to confirm this hunch, I set myself the task of noting down examples of such interactions in which metonymy played a central role to which I was party over a two day period. Among them was a range of exchanges, some involving language, some not. Some interactions involved individual words or phrases, such as: discussing what *Sasha* was short for and why *Cantab* stands for Cambridge not Canterbury (the relation between short and long forms); solving a ‘quick’ crossword (the clues ask for synonyms); discussing the origin of the expressions *to be buff, buff up, to be in the buff*, etc (the etymology goes back to *buffalo* through a series of shifts); identifying someone at a party using a salient characteristic, eg *the woman wearing red boots*; observing an advertisement on the London underground with invented names for stations based on foods, the invented names and the real names being related in form, eg *Oxtail Circus/Oxford Circus, Highbury & Biscuit Tin/Highbury and Islington*; the use of salient personal characteristics of appearance when hailing someone, eg *Hey fatso!, You, Michael Palin!* Other interactions involved metonymy as an organizing principle at the level of the whole discourse, such as: being asked what my favourite scene was in a film (part for whole); a TV reporter interviewing individuals in the crowd on the banks of the Thames waiting for the New Year fireworks (individual testimonies used to convey a general sense of what it was like to be there). Others were not verbal but involved similarities of other kinds: playing a card game where the aim is to end up with sets of related cards, either adjacent numbers in the same suit or the same number in different suits (cards in each set share characteristics); playing Sudoku (grids and lines of numbers are compared for similarities); sorting out a spare room by ordering things by category (putting like with like); being told “customers who bought this book also bought ...”, when buying a book on Amazon (similarities in past choices may help to predict future choices); remarking on the similarity between people one encounters and figures in the public eye (‘lookalikes’). These are all activities in which the recognition of part-whole relationships plays a central role.

A social science thesis often contains a rigorously collected and analysed central body of data and chapters devoted to methods of data collection and analysis. The present thesis departs from this methodology. Here the argument is progressed in stages, the conclusion of one stage becoming the premise for the next, a methodology which could be broadly described as a reflective or speculative approach, what some would characterize as the “armchair” linguistics tradition. The purpose here is to ‘reconfigure’ theory, that is, make new connections across existing theory; but it would be misleading to say that the methodology of this thesis is solely in the nature of a theoretical investigation, as the argument is supported throughout by a substantial quantity of original data, either actively collected through small-scale studies, tasks and interviews or gained ‘opportunistically’ from naturally-occurring sources. This accords with the tradition of scholars from various fields concerned with language and communication: theoretical linguists, such as Jakobson (1971), Saussure (1983) and Chomsky (1965); discourse analysts, such as Levinson (1983) and Coulthard (1985); functional grammarians, such as Halliday (1994); cognitive linguists, such as Lakoff (1987); applied linguists, such as Widdowson (1983) and Cook (2000); and semioticians, such as Kress (Kress 2010). It is also the approach of scholars such as Bourdieu (‘field’ and ‘habitus’), Bernstein (‘elaborated code’ and ‘restricted code’) and Giddens (‘structuration’ and ‘modernity’); and, going back further in time, it characterizes the indirect or ‘circumstantial’ evidence used by Charles Darwin to support his ‘big idea’ thesis, the theory of evolution through natural selection presented in *On the Origin of Species* (Dawkins 2010).

I consider this approach appropriate for the present research because of the nature of the subject matter being investigated and the research questions being posed. The research questions of this thesis are:

**What role does metonymy play in communication?**

**What role does metonymy play in structuring discourse at the level of the whole text?**

**What role does metonymy play in language-learner interaction?**

**What role does metonymy play in translation?**

To investigate these in any other way than the one proposed would not only reveal less

but would be untrue to the intentions of the study. There would be a danger of producing work which was pseudo-scientific and the potential for arriving at misleading conclusions. Metonymy occurs in a complex environment. It operates at many different levels, often being the mechanism behind the scenes but equally often a process in the foreground of an interaction. Attempting to isolate metonymy through statistical analysis would be virtually impossible in the same way that, for example, applying chi-square tests to rigorously sampled data would be ill-suited to investigating how the definite article is used in expressing gender roles. It is unlikely to be conclusive and could easily throw up ‘phantom’ results (eg Cooper 1999 on processing idioms by L2 learners). There is a principle involved here which parallels Grice’s maxim of ‘quantity’ (Grice 1975:47), whereby the chosen methodology needs to offer as much information as is needed and no more. For these reasons the empirical data in this thesis are from a range of different sources. They are: corpus data, lexicographic data, internet searches, contrastive studies across languages, news-reporting, texts from the press, political speeches, promotional material, packaging, television shows, literary texts, jokes and other forms of humour, semi-structured interviews, experiments with informants, data from translators, post-task interviews and invented examples. In addition to these, I make frequent use of the data I have collected over many years, noted down in numerous field data notebooks.

The primary data used in this thesis are from a number of different sources. The first data set comes from a study in which bilingual informants, twenty-two applied linguistics MA students at a London university, provided translations for four lexical items, *floating rib*, *rib cage*, *answering machine* and *mobile phone*, using their native knowledge of a language other than English and their own research. These data were collected during a practice workshop and via email over a period of three weeks in 2008. The instructions asked for an interlinear translation, ie a morphemic explanation of the translation in the language the students were working into. Some gave fuller explanations.

The second data set is a collection of ‘family expressions’, that is, words/expressions used by a small speech community of two or more people such as occurs in a family, within a couple or between friends. Data were collected in 2007 from five informants (P, Q, T, U and W) from among friends and acquaintances through interviews, during

which I made notes.

The third data set is a series of recordings of a task performed by five bilingual informants, Anja, Britta, Joseph, Katherine and Zoë (pseudonyms) over a three-month period in 2006. In this task each informant was asked to speak on two topics, the “New York street map” and “social change over the last ten years”, first in one language and then another. There was no verbal interaction with me while these tasks were carried out in order not to influence the subjects or inadvertently scaffold their performances. The time spent on each language was approximately half an hour. These data were to serve as a pilot study to investigate whether, when expressing the same ideas in two different languages, a speaker uses more metaphoric language in the language they are more proficient in. As the present research progressed this was no longer a relevant research question, but the particular strategies of one of the informants, Zoë, stood out in offering stark confirmation of phenomena I did wish to discuss. It is for this reason that I use her data in the thesis but do not include data from the other four informants.

The fourth set of data was made up of ‘speech slips’. These were collected over a period of six weeks in 2008, by noting down in field notebooks any slips I heard around me, during conversations I was involved in, but also from interactions I heard in public places and on the radio/television. Only errors which I was sure were slips were considered, inferred from the context or because the subject self corrected.

The fifth source of data is from a trainee translator living in London, Alexander (pseudonym), in 2009, and an established professional translator working in Germany, Estelle (pseudonym), in 2010. These data consist of first drafts and final edited versions of translations carried out by them supported by retrospective interviews with the subjects. A list of the primary data sets outlined above can be found in Appendix A (p263). A list of primary data from publications and broadcasts used in the thesis can be found in Appendix B (p264).

I will proceed below by describing the content and methodology for each chapter. This thesis is about metonymy and its importance in communication, but it does not start with metonymy. Instead, preliminary chapters are employed to ‘set the scene’. In Chapter 3, I show that metonymy is located within metaphor and, in Chapter 2, how

metaphor is located within the overall picture of linguistic communication. Establishing these frames of reference is necessary before a discussion of metonymy can be attempted. For this reason an in-depth discussion of metonymy is found first in Chapter 4. The subsequent chapters then develop metonymic theory with regard to communication and its implications for language learners and translators.

In **Chapter 2, *Modelling the Linguistic Mind***, I discuss not metonymy but metaphor. The reason for this is that the area of scholarship in which much of the writing on metonymy is found is within the writing on metaphor; it is part of what has come to be known as ‘metaphor studies’. Many scholars either see metonymy as a type of metaphor, or write about non-literal language without distinguishing between the two. This chapter asks the question “What is metaphor?”, but in so doing paves the way for asking “What is metonymy?” By asking “What is metaphor?” and “What is metonymy?”, it also necessarily also asks and answers “What is literal language?”.

Scholars from many different fields have recognized the importance of metaphor and their approaches reflect their individual specialisms. Semanticists (eg Kittay 1987, Cruse 2000), language philosophers (eg Davidson 1979, Searle 1993), pragmatists (eg Sperber & Wilson 1986), cognitive linguists (eg Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999, Kövecses 2002, 2005), discourse analysts (eg Cameron & Low 1999b, Goatly 1997) and computational linguists (eg Barnden 2006, Partington 1998) have all contributed. The result is that the literature on metaphor seen together is bewildering. It is therefore my first duty in this thesis to resolve these seemingly contradictory accounts and bring clarity to the simple matter of defining ‘metaphor’.

To do this, I situate metaphor within the wider context of linguistic competence as a whole. I do this by presenting my own model of the linguistic mind, which consists of six components: three ‘stores’ and three ‘skill centres’. The stores are the Mental Lexicon, the Mental Phraseicon and the Mental Schema Store, large passive storehouses of information, concerned with lexis, phraseology and frames. These are acted upon by the skill centres, the Grammar Processor, the Metaphor Processor and the Pragmatic Processor, which are concerned with manipulations around morphology/syntax, metaphor and pragmatics. This model is then extended to the bilingual mind. I also situate these findings within contemporary theories of intelligence, cognition and the

mind.

This modelling resolves much of the confusion in the literature and many of the contradictory claims found there. It separates out phenomena which in the literature are confusingly lumped together and reveals that metaphor is by no means a single phenomenon. Three distinct metaphor phenomena emerge. They are: information about conceptual metaphor (eg GOOD IS UP, LIFE IS A JOURNEY), stored in the Mental Schema Store; information about conventional metaphor (eg *couch potato, spill the beans*), stored in the Mental Phraseicon; and the ability to manage novel metaphor (eg “Encyclopaedias are treasure troves”), which is the function of the Metaphor Processor. I characterize these phenomena as ‘knowing metaphor’, ‘using metaphor’, and ‘doing metaphor’. The methodology of this chapter is through reading, my own ideas and modelling.

It is ‘doing metaphor’, ie the ability to create and understand novel metaphor, which is the subject of **Chapter 3, *The Ability to Metaphorize***. This chapter explores what exactly is involved in generating and understanding novel metaphor. I develop a precise definition of novel metaphor through considering the work of Lakoff (1987a, 1993), Fauconnier & Turner (2002, 2008), Steen (2008), Deignan (2005, 2008) and Cameron (2008, 2011). I identify three essential features of novel metaphor, that it involves two domains, that there is directional transfer and that the transfer is selective. The ‘Stack of Counters Model’ which I present here is my own compositional/generative model, which explains novel metaphor in terms of the selective manipulation of features. In this model, the ‘entry’ for a word in the Mental Lexicon is pictured as a stack of counters, where each counter represents a semantic feature. The features are in a continuum from core (denotational) at the base of the stack to non-core (connotational) at the top. It is proposed that metaphorical meaning is created by manipulating these ‘counters’, highlighting some (selected from the connotational end of the stack) and suppressing others (usually from the denotational end).

The Stack of Counters Model indicates that metaphor, far from being anomalous and outside the generative description of language, as it is often portrayed (eg Kempson 1977), is in fact central to it; and that the time-honoured linguistic ‘principle of compositionality’, the idea that the whole is no more than the sum of its parts, also

applies here. I go further and suggest that metaphor is probably the best evidence we have for believing that word meaning is stored as features, as no other phenomenon makes feature-level ‘movements’ so visible. The model explains why processing metaphor is both predictable and relatively without effort. It is predictable because the information is already in the ‘stack’; it is carried out with ease because it involves a single basic operation, repeated over and over. It also explains why language learners can create novel metaphor in a language in which they are not very proficient (Johnson & Rosano 1993). They can do this because they are applying to the language they are learning a skill they constantly rely on when speaking their first language.

Through a discussion of the work of Glucksberg (2001) and Ortony (1993c), I clarify the difference between metaphorical expressions, such as “Vision is like a tap”, and literal comparisons, such as “Spain is like Italy”, and show that metaphorizing involves a transfer stage and a selection stage. The literature on the typologies and discourse functions of metaphor is reviewed and the information synthesized as a four-domain grid. This shows the wide range of functions which metaphor can generate. So diverse are the functions that some are diametrically opposed in effect. It is suggested that this is proof that the selection stage of metaphorizing is primary to metaphoric meaning making and that the choice of domain is secondary. The methodology of this chapter is through reading, my own ideas and modelling.

In **Chapter 4, The Vital Role of Metonymy in Conceptualization and Communication**, I argue that the multiple definitions of metaphor separated out in Chapter 2 and further refined in Chapter 3, are still inadequate. Although these go a long way towards explaining how it is that language achieves such impressive subtleties of expression, it is argued that a far more fundamental phenomenon underlies these, namely ‘metonymy’, and that this should be the central focus of our study. Metonymy is fundamental for the role it plays in understanding word categories, in enabling the interface between ‘sense’ and ‘reference’ and enabling the transition from competence to performance, in pragmatics and as the main process involved in meaning change over time.

It is argued that the sign is by nature ‘partial’ and therefore metonymic, and that it is this which offers the language user multiple strategies for naming entities. I report a study I conducted which collects data for *floating rib*, *rib cage*, *answering machine* and *mobile*

*phone* and shows that different naming strategies have been adopted across languages for the same entities. A more precise ontology of metonymy is developed in this chapter, using the writing on 'domain theory', the metonymy-metaphor continuum and work on metonymy typologies to do so. It is argued that metonymy, literal language and metaphor all involve the recognition of part-whole relations, the differences between them being the nature of the part-whole relation involved and the use to which it is put. This chapter presents a General Theory of Metonymy, a perspective on metonymy which reconfigures theory and shows a commonality across a number of linguistic phenomena not normally associated with each other. The methodology of this chapter is through reading, my own ideas and the use of informal data and small scale studies.

**Chapter 5, *Metonymy in Culture and Recreation*,** looks at the function metonymy has not only in providing a way of naming entities but also in offering different ways of referring to the same entity, thereby giving opportunities for expressing nuance and giving emphasis and spin (Panther & Radden 1999b). I demonstrate that for many lexemes, metonymy, literal language and metaphor can represent three distinct senses for the same lexeme, each occupying a distinct 'semantic space', often reinforced grammatically. I call this phenomenon 'the triangle of tropes'. The chapter examines the role metonymy plays in various cultural and recreational phenomena, explored under the categories of lookalikes, TV quiz shows, humour, formal metonymy and alternative names. It also considers the phenomenon of family expressions and the role of metonymy in avoiding cooperation. This chapter gathers evidence which shows the ubiquity of metonymy and the unexpectedly wide range of phenomena in which metonymy plays a part.

In **Chapter 6, *Metonymy, Metaphor, Discourse and Text***, I move from investigating metonymy and metaphor at the level of individual phrases to their role in organizing language at the level of the whole text. Four distinct phenomena are presented, which I name Discourse Metonymy, Discourse Metaphor, Textual Metonymy and Textual Metaphor. These are not just texts in which metonymic and metaphoric phrases appear, but texts in which metonymic and metaphoric systems have an organizing role across long stretches of language.

Discourse Metonymy involves a narrowing of focus, a noticeable change in register to

instances and examples. The effect is to make the discourse more real, vivid and concrete and reduce indeterminacy. Discourse Metonymy does not usually or necessarily involve any linguistic metonymies and may well have linguistic metaphors embedded in it. It is signalled by expressions such as *for example* or “We asked some people on the street what they thought ...”. Typical examples are testimonies and vox pops.

Discourse Metaphor also involves a change in register, but instead the focus is broadened, taking the reader away from the topic by introducing comparisons from outside the frame and exploring their connotational implications. The effect is to increase indeterminacy and create a less ‘real’ discourse. It is set up by the use of conventional metaphors, often in clusters, coming from different source domains. The function of Discourse Metaphor is to ‘draw back’ rather than encode any particular message, so the actual source domains drawn upon here are unimportant.

Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor are often used in the same text. The effect is to ‘home in’ and ‘pan out’, as required by the speaker/writer. They offer two additional registers either side of literal discourse, and grading within these registers, giving the speaker/writer a huge additional range of expressivity and rhetorical potential – a phenomenon not restricted to English but observable across languages. These phenomena correspond to the metaphoric and metonymic ‘poles’ described by Jakobson in classifying literary and artistic genres (Jakobson 1971 [1956]), and the metonymic and metaphoric ‘modes’ used by Lodge to identify literary genre and author preference (Lodge 1977).

Textual Metonymy is the creation of links across written and spoken texts through the use of items which indicate relatedness. These links are achieved through various types of lexical reiteration, but also through grammatical devices, as described by Al-Sharafi (2004). This is of course the area of cohesion and Halliday & Hasan’s exposition of it (Halliday & Hasan 1976), but whereas for Halliday & Hasan the main purpose of cohesive ties is co-reference, my emphasis is their role in progressing the narrative of a text. Textual metonymy does not necessarily involve linguistic metonymies and may involve linguistic metaphors.

Textual Metaphor is the organization of a whole text (or section of text) around one (conceptual) metaphor. The text may start with a linguistic metaphor which is then extended, or it may be that the source domain of a conceptual metaphor is constantly drawn upon, sufficiently to structure the text. Textual Metaphor allows the writer to structure a text by drawing on conceptual metaphors, such as COALITIONS ARE MARRIAGES or FOOTBALL IS A RELIGION. These texts are varied and chosen because they offer clear illustrations of the phenomena in question. The methodology of this chapter is reading, my own thoughts and text analysis.

In **Chapter 7, Metonymy and Language Learners**, I look at the role metonymy plays in interactions between language learners and other speakers. I explore the uses metonymy can be put to by learners in order to exploit the resources of the mental lexicon/phraseicon fully. I also identify ‘metonymic processing’ as an essential feature of learner-proficient speaker interactions.

I review non-literal language and ELT, non-literal (or ‘figurative’) language being any use of a word or phrase which departs from the first sense in a dictionary entry, ie the ‘core’ meaning. This review shows that the main focus in the past has been low-frequency conventional metaphors (idioms) almost to the exclusion of all other types. I suggest that the teaching of high-frequency conventional metonymies, eg *head for the door, bums on seats, small screen, pay with plastic*, would be a far more fruitful use of classroom time. Recently, other approaches to non-literal language have been developed, such as a more systematic approach to teaching lexis, in which items are grouped together under conceptual categories (Holme 2004), an approach which has produced teaching material for idioms (Wright 1999) and phrasal verbs, taught by the particle rather than the verb element (Flower 1993). Also introduced are the ideas of ‘metaphoric competence’ (Low 1988, Littlemore 2001a) and ‘figurative thinking’ (Littlemore & Low 2006a) in relation to learners, and the sub-skills which make up these competencies. What has not been explored so far is what metonymy offers learners. It allows them to compensate for lexical gaps, accommodate for the time pressure of face-to-face interaction by being ‘loose’ with meaning; it opens up a huge expressive potential and the ability to give nuance and ‘spin’. Equally important is the role metonymy plays in decoding what learners say.

A listener accommodates to learner utterances by being able to recognize relatedness between what they expect to hear, according to their idealized knowledge of the language, and what they actually hear. The ability to compensate for these ‘shifts’ I am calling ‘metonymy processing’. These shifts occur at many different levels, involving phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and cultural practices. Communication breaks down when metonymic associations are stretched to such an extent that relatedness can no longer be identified. The modified language which competent speakers use when speaking to learners, ‘foreigner talk’ (characterized by a more articulated pronunciation, less syntactic complexity, the use of few pronouns and more high-frequency words) is a further aspect of metonymic competence, performed by native speakers in order to sustain communication (Jenkins 2000:177).

Metonymic processing is also involved when understanding language varieties, as when a speaker is unfamiliar with eg a Scottish accent or American English, or hears them for the first time. It is not only context which helps us here; there are often clues embedded in the phraseicon. The equivalent for the British English word *ill* in American English is *sick*, but the idea of *sick* being ‘unwell’ is present in British English expressions such as *sick note, be off sick, sick leave, throw a sickie*. The method for this chapter is reading, my own ideas and data and small studies based on recordings.

**Chapter 8, *Metonymy and Translators*,** documents the rise of Translation Studies and compares it to the rise of Metaphor Studies, both occurring over roughly the same period. It reviews the numerous attempts by scholars to define what translation is and brings them together under five headings.

The discussion looks firstly at translation as ‘equivalence’, creating a text in the target language which has the same impact the original text has in the source language, following the tradition from Cicero (46BCE) through to Nida (1964). The second approach is action theories, where the overriding concern of the translator is loyalty to the target-text reader (Reiss & Vermeer 1984, Nord 1991a, 1991b, 1997). The third category is the focus on culture (eg Katan 2009, Venuti 1995). The fourth looks at the translator as an individual and the extent to which they can remain faithful to their own ideologies with regard to eg gender (Simon 1996) and colonialism (Niranjana 1992). The fifth approach is the investigation of translation as a psycho-linguistic process, what

goes on in the translator's mind, and the characterization of this as problem solving (eg Krings 1986), or an extension of 'normal' communication, where the message moves back and forth between the abstract (thought) and the concrete (text) (eg Bell 1991).

In this chapter, I propose a new approach to understanding translation which departs from the approaches above. I suggest that the relationship between the source and target texts is metonymic. The relationship between the source text and the target text is clearly not literal, as terms in different languages rarely correspond exactly; neither is it metaphorical, as it is rare that a literal source text is translated as a metaphoric target text or vice versa. Instead, the activity of translators is predominately concerned with the exploration of close relatedness at the level of individual words and phrases, and also at the level of paragraphs and the whole text.

The Metonymic Theory of Translation presented in this chapter characterizes metonymy as both the means by which translation is achieved and the means by which 'loss' is compensated for. It extends the work of Catford on translation 'shifts' (Catford 1965) and Vinay & Darbelnet's list of 'direct' and 'oblique' translation strategies (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995 [1958]) in identifying shift as a general principle in translation.

Research on non-literal language and translation has almost entirely focussed on the translation of idioms, seeing them as translation problems and offering a list of strategies for their solution (eg Baker 1992, Newmark 1988, Dagut 1976), an exception being Schäffner's study of conceptual metaphor in EU documents (Schäffner 2004). The advantage of a metonymic approach to translation is that it gives a fuller picture, identifying non-literality on a much broader spectrum, and recognizing that non-literality in translation is a solution rather than a problem.

This chapter examines examples of real-life translations, showing the metonymic relations between source and target texts, but also between first drafts and the final versions of target texts. This is supported by evidence from Think Aloud Protocols and post-task interviews with the translators. The Metonymic Theory of Translation developed in this chapter models translation as a two-stage process, encoding and editing, and contrasts this with interpreting, where the editing stage is absent or so short it is hard to identify. The methodology of this chapter is from reading, my own thoughts and evidence from informal data and small studies using text analysis and interviews.

**Chapter 9, Conclusion and Implications**, reviews the achievements of the thesis in recognizing metonymy as central to communication, and a common principle across a whole range of linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena. The chapter draws conclusions together from the six main chapters of the thesis: the two chapters on metaphor (2 and 3), the three chapters on metonymy (4, 5 and 6) and the two on the role of metonymy in applied linguistic contexts (7 and 8). It also restates the aspects of the thesis which constitute original contributions. The thesis explains how meaning making goes beyond deterministic encoding and decoding, but offers an explanation of this from within the ‘linguistic code’, which other attempts to explain secondary/indirect/multiple/‘fuzzy’ meanings, eg pragmatics, sociolinguistics, phraseology, metaphor studies and discourse analysis, have failed to do.

This is a ‘big idea’ thesis in the sense that the focus, ‘relatedness’, cuts right across human interaction at a very basic level. It deals with a phenomenon which is fundamental in our lives and unavoidable in the living out of our lives. The result is that the implications are many and wide ranging. The implications this research could have for the training of applied linguists, language teachers and translators/interpreters, and the directions that further research might take, are signposted. I suggest that the development of ideas presented in this thesis could profitably lead to the creation of a new field of study, Metonymics, which in its impact could be comparable to the now well-established field of Metaphor Studies. This final chapter explores the application of this research and revisits the question of the methodology used in it. To remind the reader, the research questions of this thesis are: What role does metonymy play in communication?, What role does metonymy play in structuring discourse at the level of the whole text?, What role does metonymy play in language-learner interaction? and What role does metonymy play in translation?

In this thesis, I use the following conventions:

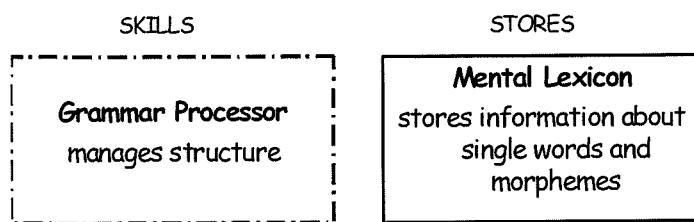
|                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <i>italics</i>           | = | lexical item  |
| “double inverted commas” | = | linguistic data and direct quotations of scholars in the text |
| SMALL CAPS               | = | semantic features and conceptual metaphors                    |

## 2 Modelling the Linguistic Mind

The purpose of this chapter is to define what metaphor is. To do so, I present my own integrated and comprehensive model of the linguistic mind. The model investigates what the essential components of the linguistic mind are which an individual needs to operate effectively as a language user. It reflects significant developments in linguistics and clarifies some of the confusion in the complex literature, especially around metaphor and pragmatics. The model consists of six components: grammar, lexis, phraseology, metaphor, pragmatics and coherence. Each is discussed in turn. What is novel about this model is the distinction it makes between 'stores' and 'skills', that is, between passive stores of information, on the one hand, and active skills involved in manipulating and processing language, on the other. The purpose of this enterprise is to provide a practical research tool for the investigation of subjects who operate with more than one language, particularly language learners and translators. The methodology used to achieve this is a reflective approach in which a style of speculative investigation is adopted, echoing the tradition in linguistics of studies of this sort.

### 2.1 Grammar and Lexis

Grammar and lexis are represented in my model by the *Grammar Processor* and the *Mental Lexicon*. The Grammar Processor manages structure and the Mental Lexicon stores information about single words and morphemes:



Creating a string such as *Is that your jacket?* involves selecting words from the lexicon and combining them according to the rules of grammar. Jakobson expresses it thus:

the speaker selects words and combines them into sentences according to the syntactic system of the language he is using [...] his selection (except for the rare case of actual neology) must be made from the lexical storehouse which he and his addressee possess in common (Jakobson 1971 [1956]:72).

### **The Overlap between Grammar and Lexis**

It is hard to imagine a model of language which dispenses with grammar and lexis, so fundamental are they; in fact, much writing in linguistics almost implies that they are the only necessary constituents of language. In the ‘grammar and lexis’ (or ‘slot and filler’) model, grammar contributes structure and lexis contributes meaning. (In semiotics, the description of language as a complex system of syntagms and paradigms, of relations *in presentia* and relations *in absentia*, is not dissimilar.) But, although the two phenomena are undoubtedly distinct there is also a sense in which they overlap; structure is itself an expression of meaning, a shorthand for general and frequently-occurring concepts. Widdowson puts it thus (my italics):

*Grammar* is a device for indicating the most common and recurrent aspects of *meaning* which it would be tedious and inefficient to incorporate into separate lexical items (Widdowson 1990:87).

The idea is also fundamental to Hallidayan ‘systemic-functional grammar’ (my italics):

One way of thinking of a ‘functional’ grammar, like the present one, is that it is a theory of grammar that is orientated towards the discourse semantics. In other words, if we say we are interpreting the *grammar* functionally, it means that we are foregrounding its role as a resource for construing *meaning*. (Halliday 1994:15)

And, while we can say that “grammar has meaning”, it is also true that lexis has grammar. Dictionary entries give information about word meaning, but also transitivity, countability, etc. The ‘lemma’ of each word contains semantic and grammatical information. Individual words are stored in the mind with information about their phonology, graphology, denotation, etc, but also their grammatical and morphological behaviour, eg how a stem inflects, how a word behaves colligationally, and how the

‘theta roles’ of a verb’s arguments correspond to syntactic positions. Pustejovsky’s ‘generative lexicon’ is an attempt to codify for the computational sciences this sort of information; and to do so, each lexical item is assigned information about its ‘argument structure’, ‘event structure’, ‘qualia structure’ and ‘lexical inheritance’ (Pustejovsky 1995).

The importance of the ‘grammar of lexis’ or ‘word grammar’ is also recognized by Lewis, who makes it a fundamental tenet of his ‘lexical approach’ to language teaching. For Lewis, language is “grammaticalised lexis”:

Instead of a few big structures and many words, we now recognise that language consists of many smaller patterns [...]; in a sense, each word had its own grammar. It is this insight – that language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar – which is the single most fundamental principle of the Lexical Approach. (Lewis 2000:137)

For Halliday “the lexicon is simply the most delicate grammar” (Halliday 1978:43). Another blurring of the divide between grammar and lexis has resulted from the recognition that ‘generativeness’, a principle normally associated with syntax, can also apply to lexis. Generativeness, the Humboldtian principle that a limited number of items can combine to create an infinite number of meanings (Humboldt 1836), and that the meaning of the whole is the sum of its parts (‘compositionality’), is primarily associated with syntax, thanks to the work of Chomsky (eg Chomsky 1965) who coined the term ‘generative grammar’, and phonology, eg Kenstowicz’s work on ‘generative phonology’ (Kenstowicz 1994), but the principle has also been applied to the lexicon, by eg Katz & Fodor (1963), who explain the generative power of the lexicon in terms of componential analysis, and Pustejovsky (1995), who uses the term ‘generative lexicon’.

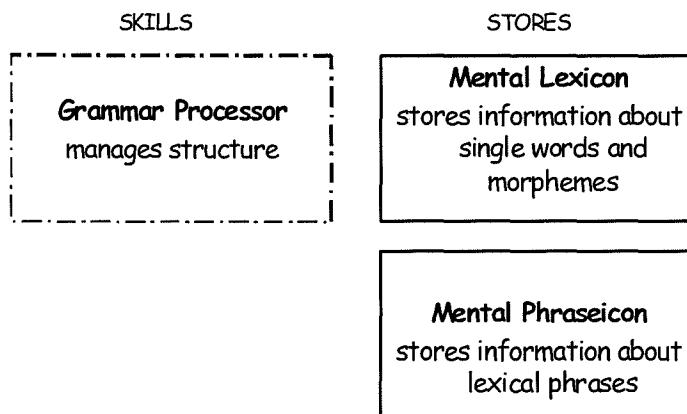
## **Stores and Skills**

Although I have indicated above that grammar and lexis are interconnected, I am nonetheless going to show a clear separation between the two in my model. My purpose for insisting on this is to make a distinction between active skills and passive stores. The Grammar Processor, in my model, can carry out a limited number of procedures, and

can do so extremely efficiently, but, like any processor, it has to have something to work on; it cannot operate in isolation. It is the information stored in the Mental Lexicon which it works on. This distinction between skills and stores is developed throughout this chapter. It should be noted that the model proposed here is a theoretical rather than a physical model, and that the processing and storage ‘modules’ identified in it represent functional entities rather than specific locations in the brain.

## 2.2 Phraseology

The next component I am adding to my model of the linguistic mind is the *Mental Phraseicon*. It stores information about lexical phrases. The model now looks like this:



### Lexical Phrases

What are lexical phrases? They are prefabricated ‘chunks’ of language, strings of words which are stored in the mind whole and retrieved whole, and have a meaning of their own which is not merely the sum of their component parts. The term ‘lexical phrase’ is preferred by Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992) and is the one I will be using in this chapter, but there are many more to choose from. Included in the list Wray (1999:214) provides are: ‘chunks’, ‘collocations’, ‘fixed expressions’, ‘idioms’, ‘formulae’, ‘multiword units’, ‘preassembled speech’, ‘prefabricated routines’, ‘unanalysed language’ and ‘sentence builders’; other terms in the literature are ‘lexicogrammatical units’, ‘phrasal lexemes’, ‘formulaic sequences’, ‘prefabs’, ‘ready-made utterances’, ‘formulaic

language', 'composites' and 'big words'. To this list could be added 'lexical bundles'.

This plethora of terms reflects the intense interest in lexical phrases in recent times: Pawley & Syder (1983), Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992), Lewis (1993), Wray (2002), those associated with the Cobuild dictionary project, eg Sinclair (1991), Carter, McCarthy, and other linguists working with concordanced corpus data, eg Partington (1998). These scholars recognised the importance of lexical phrases both in terms of frequency of occurrence and communicative usefulness. Altenberg (1998:102) estimates that lexical phrases account for more than 80% of adult native-speaker production; Hill, that they make up 70% (Hill 2000:53). Moon (1998) gives a lower estimate, but the disparity reflects the inclusiveness/exclusiveness of their definitions rather than any substantive disagreement regarding the phenomenon.

Lexical phrases have been defined in many ways. Sinclair distinguishes between 'open-choice' and the 'idiom principle' (Sinclair 1991). Moon classifies lexical phrases into three categories, based on whether the 'idiomaticity' of the string derives from: its lexico-grammar, which she calls 'anomalous collocations'; its pragmatics, which she calls 'formulae'; or its semantics, which she calls 'metaphors' (Moon 1998:83-84). Howarth's 'collocational continuum' includes: 'free collocations', 'restricted collocations', eg *pay heed, give somebody credit*, 'figurative idioms', eg *draw a line* and 'pure idioms', eg *set store by something* (Howarth 1998:28). Wray offers a four way classification: expressions which have 'normal' grammar in their construction, like *not for me, you bet, isn't it, no way*; expressions which are grammatically idiosyncratic, like *the long and the short of it, by and large, happy go lucky*; metaphoric expressions, which are fairly transparent, like *we need new blood, to see it on the small screen, pay with plastic*; and metaphoric expressions which are more opaque, like *go bananas, spill the beans* (Wray 1999:214-216). This classification identifies lexical phrases as a phenomenon and leads us to ask why they are there and what function they play in communication, a question I now consider.

### **The Function of Lexical Phrases**

When we look at their function, lexical phrases offer two significant advantages: they

extend meaning (because their meaning is more than the sum of their parts) and they make processing easier. Chunking saves us the bother of creating every new utterance from scratch; they allow us to cut and paste. Wray invites one to imagine a situation in a crowded bar where one wants to get past someone, where *Excuse me!* or *Mind your backs!*, being lexical phrases, are more predictable and therefore easier to process; a less formulaic utterance, such as *I'm just walking behind you with drinks and need to get by*, would be harder to process, and, interestingly, would also be more confrontational (Wray 1999:216). A sequence which is predictable and easier to process is somehow also less intrusive.

It is thought that one of the differences between language learners and mother-tongue speakers is that learners rely more on ‘free combination’ while native speakers make more use of chunking, and that the process of becoming proficient is linked to the ability to learn lexical phrases; it has also been suggested that learners have their own chunks, which they drop or modify as learning progresses (Wray 2002). There is empirical psycholinguistic evidence that lexical phrases are processed more quickly by both native and non-native speakers (Conklin & Schmitt 2008).

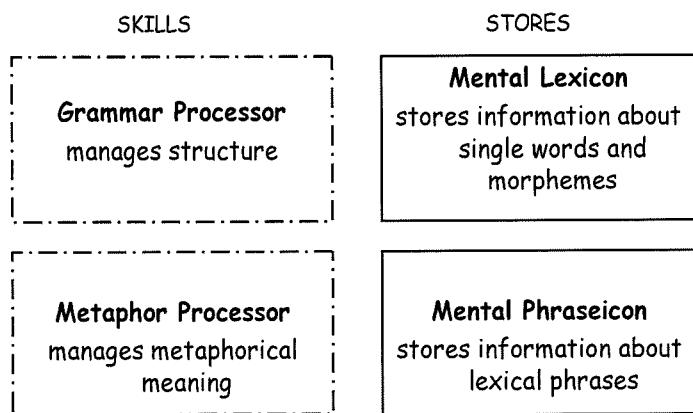
### **The Lexical Phrase, Generativeness and Collocation**

How do lexical phrases fit into the generative model? It is implicit in the grammar and lexis model that we use free combination when we assemble language. Research on lexical phrases indicates that our choices are far more restricted. Lexical phrases present an exception to generativeness; they are ‘non-productive’, that is, they cannot be varied much grammatically or lexically, if their meaning is to be retained (Wray 2000:465). Three axes of variation can be identified among the huge variety of expressions included under lexical phrases, the axes of ‘grammaticality’, ‘transparency’ and ‘variability’. Examples will help clarify what is meant by these terms: the expression *to spill the beans*, is grammatically ‘normal’ but not very transparent, while *happy go lucky* or *the long and the short of it* are grammatically idiosyncratic but fairly transparent in meaning; while none of the expressions above can withstand lexical variation, eg *She spilled the baked beans*.

It is clear from the discussion above that there is a continuum from free combination, through restricted collocation to lexical phrases. Technically, then, a separation between the Mental Lexicon and the Mental Phraseicon is an artificial one to make, because weak collocations of the sort *the dog barks* and *the plane took off* and strong collocations of the sort *virtually impossible*, *blindingly obvious*, *crushing defeat* represent an area of overlap between the two. Equally, it could be argued that the spectrum is so broad that multi-word units are ontologically distinct; after all, multi-word units behave differently and come about differently from single words. I have given the Mental Phraseicon a box to itself for this reason and also to acknowledge the importance of lexical phrases and the relatively recent emergence of lexical-phrase studies. The next two sections look at the mental processors responsible for metaphor and pragmatics.

### 2.3 Metaphor

The next component I am going to add to my model is a ‘skill’, the *Metaphor Processor*. Its role is to manage metaphorical meaning. The model now looks like this:



### The Usefulness of Metaphor in Communication

Metaphorical meaning plays a vital role in communication, which is why it merits a ‘box’ to itself in this model. It contributes to communicative competence in many ways, of which three are: extending meaning; managing imprecision; allowing speakers to be

indirect. These are considered below:

#### EXTENDING MEANING

Metaphor allows us to say things which denotation has not been able to catch up with. It allows us to extend the lexicon beyond the literal via connotation. It gives language a 'third dimension'. The expression *Less is more*, for example, has meaning, and is not just a contradiction, because both *less* and *more* are understood in a connotational sense; the expression *Boys will be boys* similarly has meaning, again through connotation, and is not simply a tautology.

#### IMPRECISION

If we had to find the exact words for everything we wanted to express, the demands on our memories and our abilities of recall would be impossible. Instead, we choose the best we can find in the time and rely on the 'tolerance of ambiguity' of our listeners for the rest. Metaphor gives us flexibility by allowing us to be imprecise. For example: what would you call someone who hands out free newspapers at railway stations? I have heard them referred to as *vendors*, but surely a *vendor* is someone who sells something, and these newspapers are free. But *vendor* will do; it is near enough. It gives us access to enough of the components of meaning of the sense we require for it not to pose a problem.

We are all reliant on our speech partners' ability to compensate for unintended imprecision, but this is especially the case with language learners. Their speech is rich in this sort of indeterminate meaning. I think of conversations I have had abroad with taxi drivers or hotel staff. A metaphorical 'haze' accompanies their speech at every level – at the level of phonology, syntax, semantics, discourse – and the listener has to compensate by doing extra processing work. It is unintended metaphoricity for the most part, but that makes no odds; as a listener, you still have to process it as metaphor in order to understand what is being said.

#### INDIRECTNESS

Metaphor gives us the subtleties we need when interacting with others. It allows us to talk about personal matters safely and tackle delicate topics without losing face or hurting feelings. It allows us to suggest things without saying them explicitly. In public

life, incidents often occur in which a public figure insults another using a metaphor. Mio recounts an exchange in which a representative of Russia compares the separation of Lithuania from Russia to a 'divorce', the representative of Lithuania replying that there had never been a marriage and that Russia's involvement in Lithuania was more like 'rape' than a marriage (Littlemore & Low 2006b:278).

Even if a remark is retracted the insult can still endure: a German Member of the European Parliament provoked Silvio Berlusconi (the former Italian Prime Minister), suggesting that he had passed an immunity law to avoid his own prosecution on bribery charges:

the Italian Prime Minister cocked his head, pitched his voice high and replied in a classic commedia dell'arte style: "There is a producer in Italy who is making a film about Nazi concentration camps. I will suggest you for the role of kapo." Nobody laughed. The uproar was loud and immediate. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder demanded an apology and Berlusconi, reluctantly, expressed his "regret" — but seemed to take it back the next day. "I did not make an apology," he said. "I spoke of my sadness over a comment that was interpreted badly". (Joffe, J. 'The Lost Art of the Insult', *Time*, 6 July 2003)

## **The Rise of Metaphor Studies**

Scholarly interest in metaphor has grown dramatically in recent years: "[t]he study of metaphor has exploded in the last decades (Cameron & Low 1999a:77); "[t]here has been a rapid burgeoning of interest in and research into the nature and function of metaphor in language and thought" (Ortony 1993b:xiii). Scholars from language philosophy, semiotics, text analysis, discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, computational linguistics, cognitive linguistics. philosophy of science and many other fields have contributed to this – summarized in Ortony (1993b), Gibbs (1994) and Knowles & Moon (2006). The result has been that a new field of scholarship has emerged, 'metaphor studies', which, like any identifiable discipline, has its own impressive literature, dedicated journals, research organizations and conferences.

The intellectual change (the 'paradigm shift') which this development has brought about

is to see metaphor no longer as an inessential rhetorical ‘trope’, a decorative add-on, encountered mainly in literature, what Cameron & Deignan characterize as the ‘older view of metaphor’: “The older view of metaphor was as poetic and decorative uses of language” (Cameron & Deignan 2006:688). Instead, the new view sees metaphor as an essential feature of everyday communication, as well as being important in scientific and technical discourse. For Cameron & Low, metaphor has a fundamental role, both diachronically and synchronically:

Metaphor in one form or other is absolutely fundamental to the way language systems develop over time and are structured, as well as to the way human beings consolidate and extend their ideas about themselves, their relationships and their knowledge of the world (Cameron & Low 1999b:xii).

### **The Systematicity of Metaphor**

A pattern emerges in which metaphor is systematic and predictable, not unstable and arbitrary. Metaphor is not a licence to make words mean whatever you want them to mean. Just as there is a consensus about the denotational meaning of words in a language community, there is also a consensus about their connotational meaning. The denotation of a word is the ‘core’ meaning, reliably analysed in the ‘definition’ part of a dictionary entry; the connotational, or ‘non-core’ meaning, can be investigated using electronic corpora, such as the *British National Corpus* (<http://thetis.bl.uk>) or the *Collins Cobuild Corpus* ([www.cobuild.collins.co.uk](http://www.cobuild.collins.co.uk)).

If we take *champagne* as our ‘node’ word and examine data from the *Collins Cobuild Corpus*, we find lines in which the sense is clearly literal:

They finished one bottle of *champagne* quickly enough, opened a second.  
are being pulled out; lobster, pink *champagne*, expense account heaven. Then  
15 minute flight they were offered *champagne*, the finest liqueurs and a choice

lines in which the sense lies at a half-way stage between literal and connotational:

drink. It's the poor man's *champagne*, though I've never tried it with

said he couldn't go to any of the *champagne* parties laid on for the two hand-blown, lead-free crystal *Champagne* flutes, imported Icelandic black

and lines in which the sense is clearly connotational:

Co, is interlaced highlights in *champagne*, honey and caramel tones occasional glimpses of Vuitton's *champagne*-colored fur amid the foliage to rot in jail; Letter [/h] [p] THE 'champagne socialists' who are opposed to enough to join revellers at the *champagne* socialists' ball. [p] Party meaningless. It also explains the 'champagne safari', which fairly dripped

These data can be used to compile a complete 'entry' for *champagne*, containing both denotational and connotational meanings, just as modern dictionary compilers do. The data also offer authentic examples useful in dictionary compilation.

The ease with which we deal with connotation, and the degree of our consensus about it, is shown in an experiment Cameron (1992:82) conducted with university students in the United States. The students were given pairs of words – *knife/fork*, *Ford/Chevrolet*, *salt/pepper*, *vanilla/chocolate* – and asked which of the pair was masculine and which feminine. She found not only that the participants could do the task without any difficulty (and did not think it strange to be asked) but that they agreed in their responses, (*knife*, *Ford*, *pepper* and *chocolate* all being seen as the more masculine of the pair) showing that concepts like 'masculine' and 'feminine', which one would expect to find hard to pin down in terms of connotation, can be manipulated and related to other concepts as shared knowledge.

Metaphor is not just systematic at the level of individual words but also at a conceptual level. What Lakoff & Johnson call 'conceptual metaphor' refers to abstract metaphoric schemata of thought, responsible for generating much of the conventionalized metaphor we find in everyday language (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). The expressions *I'm on top of the world*, *over the moon*, *Things are looking up*, *onwards and upwards*, *I'm up for it!* and *It's the pits*, *down and out*, *down in the dumps*, etc (which we would find stored in the phraseicon) all seem to reflect a common conceptual metaphor of the sort GOOD IS UP; but the same conceptual metaphor could also generate novel expressions.

What is more, not only is the process by which conceptual metaphors generate language systematic, but the origin of conceptual metaphors themselves is also systematic. For Lakoff & Johnson, conceptual metaphors reflect our bodily experience of the world (in the case of GOOD IS UP, perhaps early successes constructing towers from building blocks, pulling up on a table or learning to walk); they are physical experiences which have become encoded, forming part of what Lakoff & Johnson call the ‘embodied mind’ (Lakoff & Johnson 1999:16-44).

An important observation to make here is that the myriad of theories around metaphor do not in any way compete with each other, though they are often presented as doing so. Instead, each theory has a contribution to make to our understanding of this complex phenomenon; each gives a unique insight. Fauconnier & Lakoff, for example, felt impelled to make a statement declaring that there was no opposition between their theories, that it is “a mistaken perception that ‘metaphor theory’ and ‘conceptual blending’ are competing views” (Fauconnier & Lakoff 2010). Steen recognizes that metaphor is “not all thought”, “not all language” and “not just language and thought”, but all of these, and also a phenomenon which is interactive and ‘emergent’ in communication (Steen 2008). Cameron, similarly, characterizes metaphor as being many things – ‘linguistic’, ‘embodied’, ‘cognitive’, ‘affective’, ‘sociocultural’ and ‘dynamic’ – and claims that metaphor is “a multi-faceted phenomenon, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the idea of metaphor encompasses multiple phenomena” (Cameron 2010:3-7).

So, to recap, connotation is not random, but encoded and stored as part of the information we have about a word; conceptual metaphor is responsible for generating language in a systematic way; and conceptual metaphors reflect physical experiences of the real world (embodiment). If we add to this the restrictions of ‘collocation’, ‘semantic prosody’ (generalized patterns of collocation) and ‘colligation’, which further refine the way reality is encoded into language (Hoey 2000) and the “relatively stable bundles of patterns of use” which Cameron & Deignan call ‘metaphoremes’ (Cameron & Deignan 2006), a picture emerges of language in discourse where little is left to chance!

## Types of Metaphor

Metaphor is present, in one form or other, in every bit of speech or writing we care to look at. It is present as:

1. HISTORICAL METAPHORS are the etymological histories of words. Most words have derived from other words via metaphoric or metonymic extension over time, but few people are aware of these word histories. (For example, who knows that the word *travel* ultimately derives from a mediaeval three-pronged torture instrument?) Therefore, although fascinating, historical metaphor does not play a significant role in meaning making in everyday communication.
2. DEAD METAPHORS are metaphors which are so conventionalized that we are no longer aware of their original literal sense, although we have a sense that there must have been one, eg *loggerheads* or *tenterhooks*. What are ‘tenterhooks’?
3. CONVENTIONAL METAPHORS are metaphoric expressions which have become accepted as part of the corpus of a language. They are established expressions, reported in dictionaries, eg *spill the beans*, *go bananas*; but unlike dead metaphors, we know the meaning of their elements, ie *beans*, *bananas*.
4. NOVEL METAPHORS are metaphoric expressions which are not part of the corpus of the language now, and may never become so. Randomly combining words (and phrases) would quickly give us a whole array of novel metaphors, eg *My blouse is an airship*, *Ice-cream is a frigate*, *Wealth is posterity*, *Love is an untidy living room*.

I present this classification here in order to make clear that the Metaphor Processor is involved in only one of the four categories above, in the processing of ‘novel metaphor’. Once an expression is conventionalized, it has an entry in the Mental Phraseicon. It is a new sign; that is simply what it is called, and there is no need for the Metaphor Processor to work on it. Wray recounts a story which illustrates this: Kellogg, the breakfast cereal company, asked people in the street what they thought *Rice Krispies* were made of, as part of an advertising campaign. Nearly all the respondents said they did not know; furthermore, most of them were surprised that the answer was “rice”!

(Wray 2002). Conventional metaphors are of course decomposed when they are extended, one or more of the components being exploited through its core sense.

What the Metaphor Processor does is in principle quite simple: it selectively highlights certain ‘semes’ (meaning components) within words/phrases and suppresses others. Every time we retrieve a word from the mental lexicon, we have equal access to the narrow meaning and the broad meaning (Croft & Cruse 2004:212). Choosing a metaphorical reading over a literal reading is in principle no different from choosing between narrow and broad readings. If we imagine each word in the mind to be like a stack of counters, in which each counter represents a ‘seme’ (the counters lower down the stack being denotational and the counters higher up connotational), the difference between a literal sense and a metaphoric sense is that in metaphor we selectively choose counters only from higher up the stack. This model is explored in detail in the next chapter, Chapter 3, where it is set alongside theories of mind and theories of intelligence.

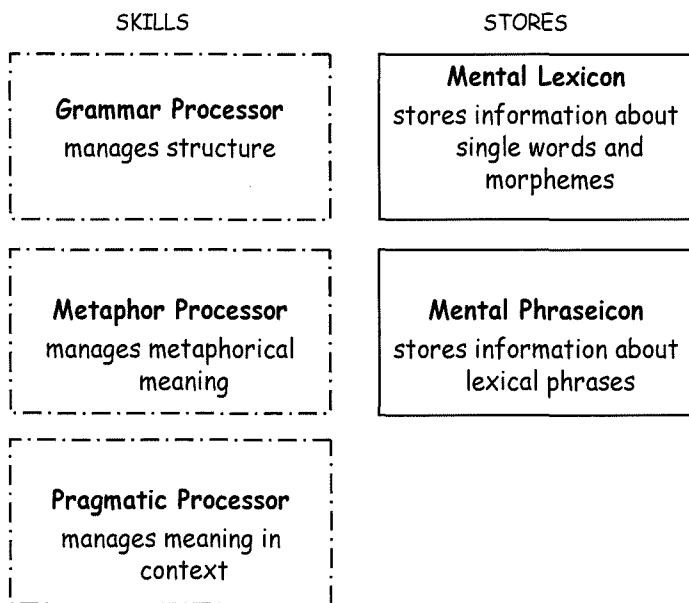
To make sense of a novel metaphor, such as *My blouse is an airship*, we ignore certain core components of *airship*, such as being ‘large’, ‘motorized’, ‘steerable’, and focus instead on a single feature, such as ‘air-filled’ or ‘ballooning’. Similarly, a novel expression involving the word *cat* might be interpreted by ignoring core features of cats – ie having four legs, fur, a tail, pointed ears and meow – and focussing instead on eg agility or mischievousness.

Semanticists tend to put metaphor outside a semantic description of meaning, seeing it as anomalous, not describable in terms of rules of generativeness or compositionality. I see metaphor instead as being the best proof we have that words are stored in the mind as meaning components. I suggest that the componential/generative model of metaphor I present above puts metaphor at the centre of linguistic meaning making rather than outside it.

## 2.4 Pragmatics

The next component I am adding to the model is also a ‘skill’, the *Pragmatic Processor*.

It has the task of managing meaning in context. The model now looks like this:



No model of the linguistic mind would be complete without a centre which creates/interprets meaning in context, which compares the propositional ‘linguistic’ meaning of an utterance with an external physical, psychological or textual reality in order to arrive at the intended ‘speaker’ meaning. The Pragmatic Processor starts with a proposition, eg *Is that your jacket?* – created through a collaboration between the Mental Lexicon, Mental Phraseicon, Grammar Processor and Metaphor Processor – adds information about context, and arrives at a ‘solution’, eg *Is this seat free?*

Once a piece of pragmatics is conventionalized, it is stored as an item in the Mental Phraseicon and no longer needs the Pragmatic Processor to work on it. Expressions such as *Would you mind if ...?* or *Could you pass the ...?* do not need to be processed anew every time they are encountered, but simply retrieved from the phraseicon. (We saw a similar pattern with metaphor in the previous section.) The distinction between conventional and novel pragmatics is made by Grice in his use of the terms ‘conventional implicature’ and ‘conversational implicature’ (Grice 1975:45), but this clarity is rare in the pragmatics literature.

The reader might think at this point that the Mental Phraseicon is a repository for quite

an assortment of different items. This is indeed the case. In fact, products of all three processors can be found in the phraseicon. It is a storehouse of conventional phrases derived from novel syntactic, metaphoric and pragmatic processing, processes Altenberg refers to as ‘grammaticalization’, ‘lexicalization’ and ‘pragmaticalization’ (Altenberg 1998:121). It is the graveyard for ‘dead syntax’, ‘dead metaphor’ and ‘dead pragmatics’.

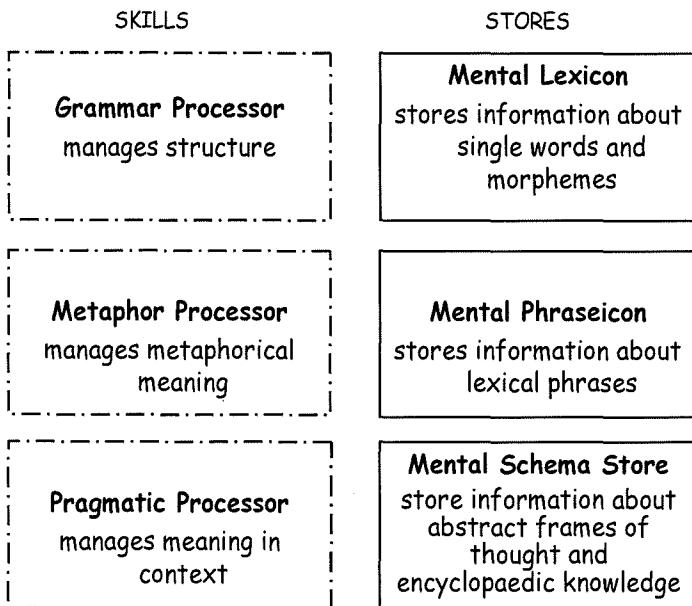
It should be also be noted here that although the Metaphor Processor and Pragmatic Processor may seem to be doing the same thing, in the sense of giving access to a second order or ‘derived’ meaning, they are in fact involved in quite different processes. They are different with respect to the role of context, the unit of language they operate on, and whether words are understood in their literal sense or not, as explained below.

1) Pragmatics is concerned with meaning *in context* while metaphor can also be understood *out of context*. 2) The Pragmatic Processor works by resolving implicatures at the level of the *speech act*, while the Metaphor Processor works on a smaller scale, at the sub-word level, the level of the *seme*. 3) Also, individual words in ‘indirect speech acts’ are usually intended in their literal sense. When *Is that radiator on?* is uttered in a context where the intended meaning is “I am cold, please turn the heating up”, the words *radiator* and *on* are understood in their literal sense, namely “heating body” and “not ‘off’”. Kittay writes:

This is not simply a distinction between literal and figurative language, for there is non-figurative language that has a second-order meaning. Searle’s case of indirect speech acts are of this sort – for example, ‘Excuse me, you are stepping on my toe’. (Kittay 1987:44)

## 2.5 Coherence

The final component I am going to add to our model of the linguistic mind is the *Mental Schema Store*, the store of abstract frames of thought and encyclopaedic knowledge. How this fits in with contemporary theory of the mind will be explored in the next chapter, but for now the model looks like this:



The Mental Schema Store is an important component, perhaps the most important in the whole model, because the knowledge it contains allows us to make sense of the world about us. It stores information about schemata, frames, scripts, genres, discourses, ideologies, narratives and conceptual metaphor; it stores information about mathematics and logic; the principles of pragmatics, eg 'cooperation' (Grice 1975:47), 'politeness', 'interest', 'Pollyanna', 'banter', 'irony' (Leech 1983:79-151) and 'relevance' (Sperber & Wilson 1986); how to construct discourse and text; mythology; narratology; frames for jokes (whether about mothers-in-law or men and lawnmowers); 'urban myths' like 'alligators in the sewer' and 'the baby on the roof rack' (Reeve 2002). It stores cultural knowledge in the broadest sense, ideas and concepts the individual encounters, memory, identity, what makes you who you are ... they are all in the Mental Schema Store. But, are we justified in including this vast store in our model and claiming it to be part of an individual's language competence? We are justified, because we cannot do without these schemata, frames and scripts, if we are to operate effectively as language users. Not only do we need to know the schemata, frames and scripts, but we also need to be able to switch quickly from one to another. Conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) are abstract relations, which do not always relate to the rules of mathematics and logic. Sometimes they throw up what appear to be contradictions, for example: in a meeting someone might say, *What we need in this institution is an overarching strategy*;

and then, in another meeting, someone talks about *the need for an underlying strategy*. How is it that these expressions, which seem to be opposites, mean the same thing? They are equivalent, but they draw on different conceptual metaphors, **WHAT IS ABOVE UNITES** and **WHAT IS BELOW UNITES**.

Another example to illustrate this is the announcement of election results. After votes are counted, the results can be presented in a number of ways: they could be listed alphabetically in order of the candidates' names; they could be announced starting with the least successful candidate and ending with the winner; or they could be announced in the reverse order, starting with the winner. The conceptual metaphors **MOST SUCCESSFUL IS FIRST** and **LEAST SUCCESSFUL IS FIRST** are both available to us. Our ability to switch between schemata is so developed, we are even able to switch within a sentence. Two schemata in the same sentence is what we have in mixed metaphors, eg *Pensions have been plundered sky high* or *If you open a can of worms, they always come home to roost* or *He took the plunge by nailing his colours to the mast*. Mixed metaphors may be looked down upon (by some) on stylistic grounds, but they rarely disadvantage the speaker by posing problems of comprehension, and reflect a fundamental skill, the ability to change quickly between schematic frames.

## 2.6 Discussion

### Skills and Stores

The model presented in this chapter acknowledges the vital role played by grammar, lexis, phraseology, metaphor, pragmatics and coherence in enabling us to perform effectively as language users. The model is not intended to be controversial, as the six boxes represent six well-established areas of scholarly activity in linguistics. What is thought provoking and innovative about the model is the distinction made between 'stores' and 'skills'. The stores are passive storehouses, while the skills are active processors. But they are also different in another respect, namely with regard to size: the stores are large, and constantly being added to, while the skills are centres which only carry out a few simple manipulations.

In the Mental Lexicon, there is information about individual words, their phonology, graphology, denotation, connotation, the grammatical category they belong to, whether they inflect regularly or not, which words they collocate with, how strongly they collocate, their frequency of use, information about register, and so on – all the information involved in ‘knowing’ a word. The Mental Phraseicon is also large, containing a huge number and variety of lexical phrases, and the Mental Schema Store, as discussed above, is vast.

The skill centres are not intended as actual physical locations in the brain but rather brain functions. They only perform a few simple – but vital – operations: the Grammar Processor organizes word strings based on dominance and dependence; the Metaphor Processor organizes meaning at the sub-word level by selecting certain semes and suppressing others; the Pragmatic Processor encodes information about context which is used to ‘enrich’ propositional meaning. These operations may be few and simple, but they play a vital role. It is because they are essential that the consequences are so great when they go wrong, Broca-type aphasia, the impairment of the ability to structure language, being an example of the disastrous effect of a lesion affecting the Grammar Processor.

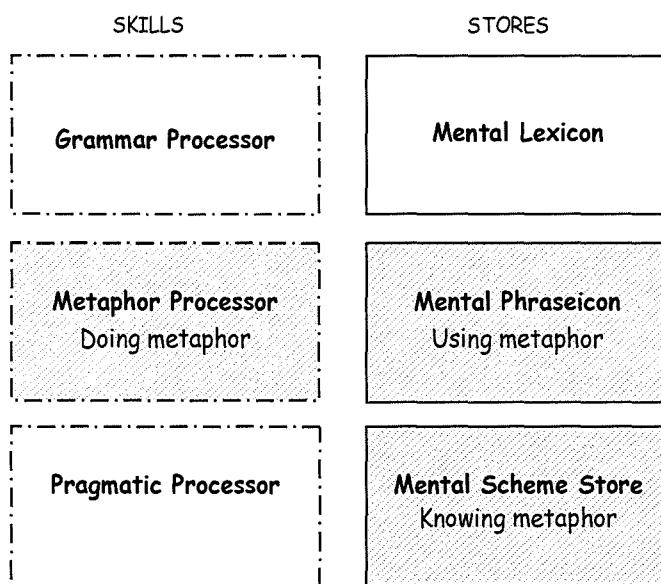
But to say the operations are simple is not to underestimate their importance or undervalue the scholarship in these areas, in fact, the x-bar/ minimalist approach to syntax (eg Radford 1997) and the ‘single-principle’ approach to pragmatics (ie ‘relevance’) of Sperber & Wilson (1986) suggest that scholars in these fields see it this way, too. My ‘Stack of Counters model’ of the Metaphor Processor is also minimalist. It is the economy of the processors which invests them with their generative power. All three processors are generators of language in the Humboldtian sense of “making infinite use of finite means” (Chomsky 1965:8).

### **Metaphor and Pragmatics Revisited**

The model presented in this chapter helps to separate out phenomena which in the literature are often confusingly lumped together. It became apparent in the discussion above that metaphor is not a single phenomenon, instead what Littlemore & Low call

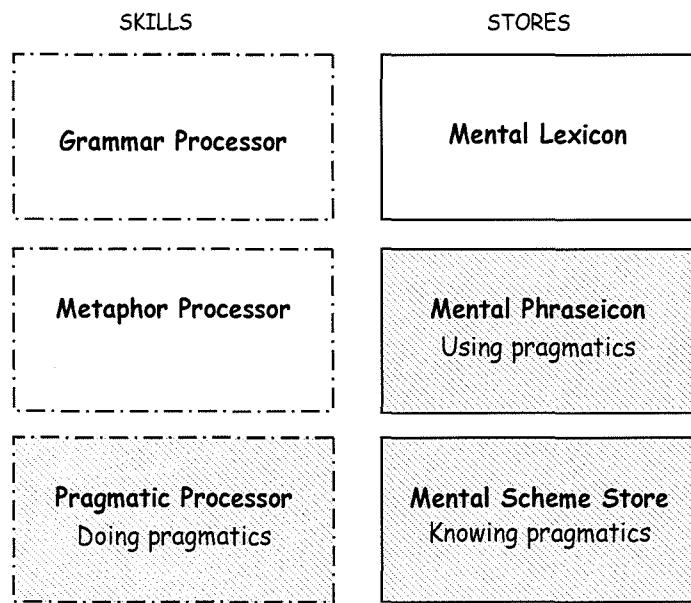
‘metaphoric competence’ (eg Littlemore & Low 2006b) involves at least three ‘boxes’: 1) dead and conventionalized metaphor (lexical phrases of metaphoric origin), stored in the Mental Phraseicon – which we could call ‘using metaphor’; 2) selectively highlighting and suppressing individual semes of a word/phrase to create novel metaphor carried out by the Metaphor Processor – which we could call ‘doing metaphor’; 3) abstract metaphorical frameworks, conceptual metaphors, such as GOOD IS UP, WHAT IS ABOVE UNITES, etc, stored in the Mental Schema Store – which we could call ‘knowing metaphor’. It is interesting to note that different disciplines tend to focus on different aspects: English Language Teaching has been mostly concerned with ‘using’ (ie idioms); literary studies with ‘doing’; and cognitive linguistics with ‘knowing’ metaphor. This pattern of using, doing and knowing is shown in Figure 1.1 (below):

**Figure 1.1: ‘Using’, ‘doing’ and ‘knowing’ metaphor**



A similar pattern pertains to pragmatics. It is also shared between three components: 1) conventionalized pragmatics in the form of lexical phrases, ‘using pragmatics’, stored in the Mental Phraseicon; 2) encoding context to enrich the meaning of propositions, ‘doing pragmatics’, carried out by the Pragmatic Processor; 3) the principles and maxims of pragmatics, ‘knowing pragmatics’, stored in the Mental Schema Store, as shown in Figure 1.2 (below):

**Figure 1.2: ‘Using’, ‘doing’ and ‘knowing’ pragmatics**



### Implications of the Model

The model presented above can be further interrogated through the following questions:

- 1) What connections are there between the different components of the model and to what extent are the components ‘modular’?
- 2) What connections are there between the six components of the model and the world outside the mind?
- 3) Is there a unique set of skills and stores for each language in the mind of speakers working with more than one language?

Answers to these questions, which are necessarily speculative, are offered below:

#### MODULARITY

For the model to be an accurate representation of the linguistic mind, each component needs to interact with all other components. The connections will be between

processors, between stores and between stores and processors. If we take the example of the word *green* in the environmental sense, an idealized speaker/listener would have an entry in the Mental Lexicon, an entry in the Mental Phraseicon for expressions such as *green issues* and *green party*, and an encyclopaedic entry in the Mental Schema Store, where a whole discourse about green issues is represented in an abstract form. It is an abstract form, ie a mental representation of an idea, and not a linguistic form, as the ‘green schema’ could be expressed visually or gesturally as well as verbally. But there would also be connections here to the specific lexical item *green* and its equivalents in other languages, if this sort of information existed.

### CONNECTING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

When it comes to the ‘outside world’, there would need to be connections via the senses to the three stores, in order that they can be added to and their contents recognised when encountered in speech and writing. A connection between the ‘outside world’ and the Pragmatic Processor would also be necessary, in order to encode/decode external contexts, and to the Grammar Processor and the Metaphor Processor, in order that utterances can be processed. Connections do not always need to exist, however, as both ‘doing grammar’ and ‘doing metaphor’ can occur as mental processes in isolation. Work on ‘simulation’ supports this, suggesting that processing involves the mental re-enactment of physical actions, played out as ‘as if’ actions, even for actions not possible in the real world, such as *stamping out racism* (Gibbs & Matlock 2008).

### THE BILINGUAL MIND

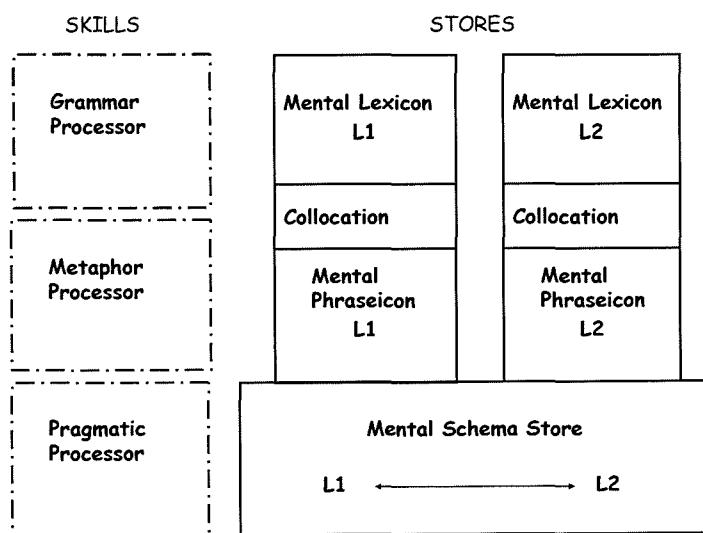
When we come to the bilingual mind, I envisage a unique set of *stores* for each language, but not necessarily a unique set of *skills*. The Grammar Processor, Metaphor Processor and Pragmatic Processor are skills which, it seems to me, could well be transferred to a second language. The Mental Schema Store could also be shared, as many schemata are universal ‘primary’ conceptual metaphors, eg AFFECTION IS WARMTH (Gibbs 1994, Kövecses 2005, Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

Many schemata are culturally specific and so many schemata will not transfer: “variation in metaphor seems to be just as important and common as universality” (Kövecses 2005:3). For example, the one-time prime minister of Japan, Yasuo Fukuda, has been referred to by the people and the press of Japan as a *maguro*, a type of fish,

rather like a trout. The connotation in Japanese culture is of someone who is lazy and ineffectual, not a universal metaphor.

The situation in the bilingual mind proposed above is summarized in Figure 1.3 (below). This diagram also shows the Mental Lexicon and Mental Phraseicon connected via collocation (thus including the idea of a continuum from free combination to lexical phrases discussed in Section 2.2), and the Mental Phraseicon and Mental Schema Store as contiguous. In addition, the proximity in the diagram of the L1 and L2 lexica and phraseica is intended to indicate that there is interaction between the two in a way compatible with Cook's notion of 'multicompetence', according to which the bilingual mind is not just an L1 and an L2 mind in the same brain, 'total separation', nor does it represent 'total integration', but rather a collection of interconnections between the two (Cook 2002) in which continua of associations and gradients of difference exist.

**Figure 1.3: Modelling the bilingual mind**



To conclude this section, I briefly discuss models of intelligence and cognition in order to situate the Model of the Linguistic Mind presented above in the wider context of cognitive psychology. I consider in this brief discussion the works of Gardner (1983), Sternberg (1990), Anderson (1983), Newell (1990) and Rumelhart & McClelland (1987). Gardner's theory of 'multiple intelligences' is concerned with exploring

individual differences rather than identifying basic brain functions and therefore does not have particular resonance with my model (Gardner 1983). The three elements identified in Sternberg's 'triarchic theory of human intelligence', the 'analytic', 'creative' and 'practical' have a resonance: the analytic element corresponds to an individual's receptive skills and the creative element to productive skills; while the 'heuristics', 'algorithms' and 'problem solving' elements resemble the processors in my model, and the 'expert systems' and 'knowledge organizers' resemble the stores in my model (Sternberg 1990).

There is also an approximate correspondence between the 'declarative memory modules' of Anderson's 'ACT-R integrated modular model' of the mind and the stores in my model, and between the 'goal modules' and 'production rules' in Anderson's model and the skills in my model (Anderson 1983). All the modules in my model have contact with the 'outside world': it is through auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory and taste sensory perception that new material comes to be included; while input from the immediate environment is required by the processors for online processing. Anderson gives importance to sensory input, represented in his model by 'perceptual motor modules' (Anderson 1983). Newell's theory of cognition is based on generic rules and general problem solving operations similar to the tasks the Grammar Processor, Metaphor Processor and Pragmatic Processor carry out in my model (Newell 1990). Connectionist models are less modular and suggest that processing language is more diffuse and volatile, involving 'spreading activation' rather than discrete locations associated with specific concepts (Rumelhart & McClelland 1987). I have chosen to present the linguistic skills and stores of the mind as modules. This however in the brain is certainly going to be more diffuse and more in line with 'structured connectionism' and 'spreading activation', which collaborations at Berkeley are exploring in the context of the Neural Theory of Language (Lakoff 2008:18).

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents a model of the linguistic mind in which grammar, lexis, phraseology, metaphor, pragmatics and coherence all play a role. It suggests that all six components are interconnected and constantly interactive. Clearly, anyone who works

with two languages or more, ie bilinguals, language learners, translators and interpreters, needs to be constantly aware of all six ‘boxes’, as neglecting any one of them will disadvantage overall linguistic competence. This chapter, although speculative in nature, aims to offer a practical research tool for investigating the bilingual mind and its application in the areas of language teaching training, and the training of translators and interpreters. The next chapter looks in more detail at metaphor and specifically the ability to ‘do’ metaphor, the ability to create and understand novel metaphor.

### 3 The Ability to Metaphorize

Three components of metaphoric competence were identified in the previous chapter. The Model of the Linguistic Mind presented there allowed us to differentiate between ‘using’, ‘doing’ and ‘knowing’ metaphor. This chapter looks more closely at just one of these components, ‘doing metaphor’. This is the skill of being able to create and understand novel metaphor, the ability to metaphorize. I draw on both traditional and recent theories of metaphor in order to understand what exactly novel metaphor is in terms of linguistic and cognitive manipulations. I argue that the ability to metaphorize is characterized by feature-level manipulations and that these manipulations have a fundamental role not only within metaphor but also in many other areas of linguistic communication outside metaphor. This is demonstrated in my ‘Stack of Counters’ model presented here. I also consider literal language and ask how literal comparisons differ from metaphoric comparisons, and survey the functions of metaphor in order to test the Stack of Counters model.

#### 3.1 Novel Metaphor in Closer Focus

The metaphor literature is vast and ranges over many disciplines (as already noted), metaphor having been taken up by philosophy, poetics, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, stylistics, psycholinguistics, psychology, computational linguistics and, of course, cognitive linguistics. The exciting rise of ‘metaphor studies’ has been well documented and the literature which it has spawned has been well reviewed (especially Ortony 1993b, Cameron & Low 1999b, Cameron 2003, Gibbs 2008 and Cameron 2010). I do not need to repeat what can be found in these overviews. Instead, I look specifically at what scholars have said about novel metaphor, and in so doing reconcile the multiplicity of approaches found in the literature into a single workable model.

It is thanks to metaphor studies that metaphor is now seen as essential in everyday communication rather than optional or marginal. Gibbs claims: “figurative language is not deviant or ornamental but is ubiquitous in every day speech” (Gibbs 1994:16). Metaphor studies has demonstrated that metaphor plays a significant role in all types of

communication. There exists a spectrum of views regarding the importance of metaphor, ‘very important’ to indispensable. Deignan finds writing about ‘life’ *without* using language to do with journeys hard to do; the same is true of writing about feelings (Deignan 2005:13-18, 2006). Pinker, in a similar experiment, demonstrates the impossibility of rewriting the American Declaration of Independence without using metaphor (Pinker 2007:235-238). Goddard observes how hard it is to talk about emotions without using metaphor and also observes that many words used to talk about music are personification metaphors, such as *serene, melancholy, uneasy, aggressive*, and many words used to talk about wine are synaesthetic metaphors, such as *cool, warm, hot, peppery, tart* (Goddard 2000:148).

Littlemore considers metaphor to be present in all language and communication and “so pervasive in language that it would be impossible for a person to speak without using metaphor at some point whether knowingly or not” (Littlemore 2001b:1). For Cameron & Low, metaphor is “the way human beings consolidate and extend their ideas about themselves, their relationships and their knowledge of the world” (Cameron & Low 1999b:xii). For Chandler “banishing metaphor is an impossible task since it is central to language” (Chandler 2002:126); while for Lakoff, metaphor is important both in everyday conversation and in technical discourse: “much subject matter, from the most mundane to the most abstruse scientific theories, can only be comprehended via metaphor” (Lakoff 1993:244). Jakobson recognises the equal importance of metaphor and metonymy and that “in normal verbal behaviour both processes are continually operative” (Jakobson 1971 [1956]:90). But it is in philosophy that we find the boldest claims for metaphor: Johnson considers that “perennial philosophical questions can’t be answered without metaphor” (Johnson 2008:40); while Nietzsche famously claims that:

[t]he drive towards the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instance dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself (Nietzsche 1979 [1873]).

### **The Rarity of Novel Metaphor**

While there is agreement in the metaphor-studies literature that metaphor is vital and

ubiquitous, it is acknowledged at the same time that novel metaphor is relatively rare. The distinction here is between metaphor which is original and unfamiliar, on the one hand ('doing metaphor' in the terminology used in Chapter 2), and metaphor which has been conventionalized and is already part of the corpus of the language community, on the other ('using metaphor'). Lakoff expresses this idea thus:

As common as novel metaphor is, its occurrence is rare by comparison with conventional metaphor, which occurs in most of the sentences we utter (Lakoff 1993:237).

A variety of terms has been used in the metaphor-studies literature for non-conventionalized, spontaneous, one-off metaphors. As well as 'novel metaphor' (eg Kittay 1987, Lakoff 1993, Gibbs 1994), we find 'strong' (Black 1993), 'living' (Davidson 1979), 'imaginative' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), 'alive' (Lakoff 1987b), 'metaphoric' (Searle 1993), 'active' (Goatly 1997), 'creative' (Knowles & Moon 2006:5) and 'process' (Cameron 2003). These terms are contrasted with 'conventional' (Knowles & Moon), 'weak' (Black), 'dead' (Davidson, Kittay, Searle, Gibbs and Goatly) and 'linguistic' (Cameron). These main terms are compared in Table 3.1 (below):

**Table 3.1: Comparison of terms**

| Source in which terms are found   | Terms corresponding to 'conventional' metaphor | Terms corresponding to 'novel' metaphor            |
|---|--|--|
| Black (1993)<br><br>Davidson (1979)<br><br>Lakoff & Johnson (1980)<br><br>Kittay (1987)<br><br>Searle (1993)<br><br>Gibbs (1994)<br><br>Goatly (1997) | WEAK metaphor                                  | STRONG metaphor                                    |
|   | DEAD metaphor                                  | LIVING metaphor                                    |
|   | LITERAL metaphor                               | FIGURATIVE and IMAGINATIVE metaphor                |
|   | DEAD metaphor and CATACHRESIS                  | NOVEL and STANDARD metaphor                        |
|   | DEAD metaphor                                  | METAPHORIC utterance                               |
|   | DEAD metaphor                                  | NOVEL and CONVENTIONAL metaphor                    |
|   | DEAD and DEAD AND BURIED metaphor              | ACTIVE and INACTIVE metaphor ('tired', 'sleeping') |

Many attempts have been made to make quantitative measures of the frequency of metaphor. Hoffman estimates that a speaker of English on average produces 3000 novel metaphors a week (Littlemore 2001b:1). Graesser et al found political commentaries and debates on TV to contain a 'unique' metaphor every 25 words (Whitney 1998:224). Pollio et al found five examples of figurative language per one hundred words in counselling data of which a third were novel (Aitchison 1994:149), and estimate that an L1-speaker uses about 10 million original metaphors and 20 million conventional metaphors in a lifetime (Pollio et al 1977). More recently, Steen, from his study of metaphor occurrence in various genres (academic discourse, news discourse, fiction and conversation) using British English and Dutch corpus data, found that less than 1% of the metaphors were novel, ie not already in the conceptual system (Steen 2008:220).

Such quantitative measures indicate the relative infrequency of novel metaphors and may explain why conventional metaphors have been studied so much more intensely. Added to this, there is a tendency for individuals to favour conventional language and processing which is automatic over conscious choices, “metaphorical thought is unavoidable, ubiquitous, and mostly unconscious” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:272). It is therefore perhaps understandable that creative uses have been neglected. Aitchison sees conventional ‘automatic’ language as being one which is encouraged by the educational system: “[e]ducation channels children towards conventional usages and less colourful speech” and the use of novel language “fades fastest among children who attend reputedly ‘good’ schools” (Aitchison 1994:154). My interest here is with this less prioritized area of production and reception, because, I feel, in spite of it seeming marginal, in fact it has a greater impact on everyday communication than has been acknowledged, as I will demonstrate in this thesis.

In Section 2.3, I offered a four-term classification of linguistic metaphor into ‘historical’, ‘dead’, ‘conventional’ and ‘novel’, based on degree of conventionalization. The degree of conventionalization of an expression determines how that expression is processed. ‘Historical metaphors’ do not offer any potential for metaphoric extension because there is not a more basic ‘physical’ meaning available to the speaker. Similarly, ‘dead metaphors’, such as *to be on tenterhooks*, *to be at loggerheads*, *to cock a snook*, cannot be extended, but there is a sense they could be were the speaker to know what the terms *tenterhooks*, *loggerheads*, and *snooks* originally meant. In data from my notebooks, a radio presenter explicitly asks this: “We are all on tenterhooks here at BBC London, whatever tenterhooks are. What are tenterhooks?” (*The Late Show*, *BBC London*, 20 January 2008). Black does not consider the term ‘dead metaphor’ useful and avoids it, as for him “a so-called dead metaphor is not a metaphor at all” (Black 1993:25). Lakoff also recommends either avoiding the term ‘dead metaphor’, as it is confusingly used to refer to four different phenomena exemplified by *pedigree*, *dunk*, *comprehend* and *grasp* (Lakoff 1987a:146), or reserving it for words such as *pedigree*, where neither conceptual mappings nor linguistic mappings exist (Lakoff 1987a:147). For me, the distinction between historical and dead metaphor is a useful one, for although historical and dead metaphors are retrieved from the Mental Lexicon as ready-made signs, without the need for them to be processed by the Metaphor Processor, dead metaphors can be explored and ‘interrogated’ in a way that historical metaphors cannot,

showing that they still have metaphoric potential encoded in them.

‘Conventional metaphors’, eg *to spill the beans*, *to see light at the end of the tunnel* or *to go bananas*, are also processed as ready-made signs, but retrieved from the Mental Phraseicon rather than the Mental Lexicon. Research from psychology suggests that idioms are more likely to be processed as chunks, ‘straight off’, rather than decomposed into their literal elements and interpreted metaphorically to fit the context in which they occur. Gibbs reviews the relevant evidence for this claim (Gibbs 1994, 2008), and suggests, contrary to Bobrow & Bell’s ‘idiom-list’ or ‘literal-first’ hypothesis, that “literal processing is not a default mode of understanding normal discourse” where idioms are concerned (Gibbs 1986:28). But although it seems that conventional metaphors are processed as chunks, there is encoded in them the potential for metaphoric extension, achieved by decomposing the expression and exploring literal senses of the component parts, as in these examples:

We are getting on like a house on fire, or rather a house quietly smouldering (data notebooks).

I have a fabulous support network here – people who want to help me through this and make sure I don’t completely lose my marbles. I am sure I have lost a few. They are rolling around on the floor, and I’ll find them when I am packing up to leave. (Neilan, C. ‘Flat out at work’, *FT Magazine*, May 6/7 2006, p7)

I’m not a one-trick pony. I’m not a ten-trick pony. I’ve got a whole field of ponies waiting to literally run towards this. (Stuart Baggs, ‘The Apprentice’, *BBC1 TV*, 2010, nd)

The fourth category, ‘novel metaphor’, expressions such as *Libraries are goldmines*, *Friends are anchors*, *Jobs are jails*, *Alcohol is a crutch*, *Surgeons are butchers*, *Vision is like a tap*, is quite different. They require to be processed as metaphors, involving manipulations of the Metaphor Processor in their creation and interpretation (‘doing metaphor’). It is this ability which is the principal concern of this chapter and the thesis as a whole. I argue in the chapters which follow that these manipulations are important not only for metaphoric meaning making, but also more generally across other linguistic phenomena, and explain the subtlety of expression achieved by language and its fitness

for purpose.

It is important to note here that for the purposes of the present discussion, I am including ‘simile’, ‘metaphor’ and ‘analogy’ as types of metaphorical comparisons, notwithstanding that many scholars argue for them being distinct (reviewed in Steen 2007). What distinguishes similes from metaphors is the inclusion of the marker *like*, but the metaphorical idea is the same – compare *Billboards are like warts* and *Billboards are warts*. Holme calls similes ‘marked metaphors’ (Holme 2004:89) and non-simile metaphors ‘unmarked’. I should add that while considering the metaphorical idea to be the same, I acknowledge that any differences between two strings of words, however small, such as the addition of a word, may result in the two strings being processed differently and potentially giving different meanings.

There is nothing unusual about signalling a comparison linguistically. Signalling can take the form of a single word, such as *like*, or it can be a performative verb, eg *Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day*, or even an elaborate sentences such as, *It could be said that in a certain sense some features of the present conflict in the Far East can be seen as having similarities with the situation in Northern Ireland*. All these set up metaphoric ideas. Analogies are also metaphoric ideas, but presented as an explicit relationship between four elements of the sort “A is to B as X is to Y” (sometimes notated as A:B::X:Y). Analogies like comparisons can be literal or metaphoric. If they are metaphoric, A and B are from the target domain and X and Y from the source domain; if literal, the relationship between the elements is of the sort lawyer:client::doctor:patient.

The four categories discussed above closely resemble Deignan’s categories of what she calls ‘metaphorically-motivated linguistic expressions’, namely ‘historical’, ‘dead’, ‘conventionalized’ and ‘innovative’ metaphors (Deignan 2005:39). But while Deignan is interested in permanence and frequency of particular usages as evidenced by corpus data, basing her distinction between ‘conventional’ and ‘dead’ metaphor on relative ‘coreness’ and ‘dependency’ (Deignan 2005:42), my concern is with mental processing and the involvement of the Metaphor Processor. Goatly has five categories: ‘active’, ‘tired’, ‘sleeping’, ‘dead’ and ‘dead and buried’ (Goatly 1997:34), a useful refinement but one which I will not pursue, as the categories of novel versus conventional are

sufficient for my purposes.

The categorizations of Deignan, Lakoff and Goatly, and my own, are on what Deignan describes as a cline from the metaphors you notice to those you do not notice (Deignan 2006) and represent classifications based on current or ‘synchronic’ use; but it is clear that an historical or ‘diachronic’ progression is also envisaged here, whereby expressions start life as novel, then progress to become conventional, and then perhaps become dead or even historical. Bowdle and Gentner are scholars of this longitudinal change in status of metaphoric expressions, referring to it as the ‘career of metaphor’ (Bowdle & Gentner 2005, Gentner & Bowdle 2008). Handl, too, investigates the conceptual principles involved in the conventionalization of metaphoric and metonymic expressions, and, using corpus data, speculates why certain expressions become conventionalized and others not (Handl 2011).

Categorizations of this type assume conformity across a speech community, but a single expression can of course be perceived differently by individuals and show variation across idiolects. The varying status of a single expression has been explored by applied linguists, such as Littlemore (2001b) and Holme (2004). Littlemore observes that what is conventional for one speaker is not necessarily conventional for all speakers, and that language learners will often process conventional metaphor differently from the way in which non-learners do: “[w]hat is a frozen metaphor to a native speaker is a novel metaphor to a language learner when he or she encounters it for the first time” (Littlemore 2001b:1), and, for this reason, ‘familiar’ and ‘unfamiliar’ may be more useful terms in this context than ‘conventional’ and ‘novel’. Holme introduces the term ‘inadvertent metaphor’ for expressions which a learner uses thinking them to be standard or conventional but which require native speakers to process them as novel (Holme 2004).

In the remainder of this section, I consider individual accounts from scholars who have made a particularly valuable contribution to understanding metaphor in communication. They are Lakoff, Fauconnier & Turner, Steen, Deignan and Cameron. I use their accounts in order to gain further insights into what novel metaphor (‘doing metaphor’) is, although these studies focus mainly on conventional metaphor (‘using metaphor’).

## **Lakoff**

Whether we consider the original exposition in *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) or later works by Lakoff (eg Lakoff 1993), the linguistic metaphors which are considered there are almost entirely conventional. The concern is with how embodied associations between domains in the brain are manifest in conventionalized language, rather than whether these embodiments are expressed through novel or conventionalized language. The Neural Theory of Language, the product of the collaboration between Lakoff and Berkeley neuroscientists, particularly Feldman, reinforces this (Lakoff 2008). In the ‘neural theory’ (NTL), conceptual metaphors are replaced by neural mappings, metaphors being relatively simple neural circuits in which connections are created and strengthened by repeated activation of the brain in two places at the same time (Fauconnier & Lakoff 2010:2). Even the novel metaphors characteristic of literature are understood by Lakoff & Turner to come about through the combination of conceptual metaphors already in existence in the conventional metaphors system (Lakoff & Turner 1989). For Lakoff, novel metaphors, when they do occur, come about in three ways: from the extension of conventional metaphors (used here to mean conceptual metaphors, such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY), from generic-level metaphors (eg EVENTS ARE ACTIONS), and from image metaphors (Lakoff 1993:237). ‘Image metaphors’ are usually based on resemblances in physical shape, created by “map[ping] one conventional mental image onto another” (Lakoff 1993:229). They are ‘one-shot’ metaphors in that they are “used for one term only” and as a result are not productive and systematic in the way ‘rich’ metaphors are (Lakoff 1987a:144), though, I would argue, being visual does not make them any less conceptual. Lakoff gives the example *My wife ... whose waist is an hourglass*, where the hourglass shape is mapped onto the wife’s waist (Lakoff 1993:229), and *dunk* in basketball, where the rim of a cup is mapped to the rim of the basket and the pastry is mapped to the ball (Lakoff 1987a:144).

## **Fauconnier & Turner**

While Lakoff explains how our conceptual system is structured with regard to metaphor, Fauconnier & Turner’s ‘blended space’ theory offers a model of how metaphorical

meaning is construed online in serving participants at particular moments in face-to-face interaction (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). It is thus a more dynamic and temporal approach to construal and less concerned with the systematicity of metaphor. It is therefore very relevant to the study of novel metaphor. For Fauconnier & Turner, a unique ‘blended space’ emerges from the interaction between two ‘input spaces’, via mappings to a ‘generic space’ (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). They introduce concepts of ‘integration networks’, ‘compression/decompression’, ‘governing principles’ and ‘optimality constraints’ in elaborating their model (Fauconnier & Turner 2008).

Comparing it to Lakoff’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory approach, ‘blended space’ theory has a wider scope, applying to all types of blend, not just metaphorical blends but also literal blends. The blend between BREAKFAST and LUNCH to give *brunch* (Radden 2008b:398) and the concept of ‘Jewish Pizza’ (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:263) are literal blends. Because other blends are included, there is no emphasis on directionality in blended space theory.

I now turn to three scholars, Steen, Deignan and Cameron, whose work is characterized by an interest in the emergent meaning of metaphor in discourse. Theirs are what might be called ‘discourse-analysis approaches’. Their work is of interest in the present argument as all three combine an awareness of Cognitive Metaphor Theory and traditional metaphor theory with an understanding of discourse and genre phenomena. They also have in common that they use empirical data to support their hypotheses.

### **Steen**

Steen investigates metaphor not in isolation but in the context of the ‘genre event’ in which it is found, seeing the use of metaphor as goal-directed, situated in practice and regulated by genre knowledge (Steen 2008). Research studies at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam analyzed empirical data and revealed that 99% of the examples of metaphor across various genres was conventional, and that few of these (one in a thousand) were expressed in a classic ‘A is like B’ form, “the arena in which the fiercest battles about psychological models of metaphor [ie ‘doing metaphor’] are fought” (Steen 2008:227). This presents a paradox to Steen: it means that most metaphors are not processed as metaphors in the sense of involving two domains and cross-domain mapping, in spite of

this being central to definitions of metaphor (Steen 2008). To resolve this, Steen recommends a ‘three-dimensional model’ of metaphor.

Steen argues that metaphor is not all language, as relevance theorists would have us believe (‘contra-relevance’ hypothesis); not all thought, as cognitive linguists would have us believe (‘contra thought’); and not all thought and language, as some discourse analysts would lead us to believe (‘contra language and thought’). Steen also reminds us that there are two senses of ‘metaphor as thought’: ‘thought’ in the sense of semiotic knowledge, knowledge of mental concepts and how they are organized in the mind; and ‘thought’ in the sense of mental processing in a psycholinguistic sense. The three dimensions of Steen’s model are ‘language’, ‘thought’ and ‘communication’, which he tags ‘naming’, ‘framing’ and ‘changing’ (Steen 2008:230). He identifies the function of each of these dimensions as follows:

The linguistic function of metaphor is to fill lexical [...] gaps in the language system [= ‘naming’]; The conceptual function of metaphor is to offer conceptual frameworks for the concepts that require at least partial indirect understanding [= ‘framing’]; The communicative function of metaphor is to produce an alternative perspective on a particular referent or topic in a message [= ‘changing’] (Steen 2008:231).

The third dimension, metaphor as communication, resolves the paradox of metaphor, but also invites Steen to introduce a new pair of terms, ‘deliberate’ and ‘non-deliberate’ metaphor, which he considers are more useful in this context than ‘novel’ and ‘conventional’ (Steen 2008:237). In ‘deliberate metaphor’ the “communicative function is to shift the addressee’s attention to another domain and set up some cross-domain mapping”, while with ‘non-deliberate metaphor’ the “communicative function is not a matter of cross-domain mapping in symbolic structure or in cognitive processing and representation” (Steen 2008:227). But this is not just a renaming of novel and conventional, as conventional and non-deliberate are not equivalent terms as:

It is quite possible for people to use conventional metaphor very deliberately [...]. Examples of such usage can be found on the sports page of any newspaper, where deliberate metaphor use is signalled by word play and other added rhetorical devices. (Steen 2008:223)

## Deignan

Deignan takes a similar approach; for her, metaphor is “a textual and social phenomenon as well as a cognitive one” (Deignan 2008:280). Metaphor emerges in interactions because it is a text resource, a discourse resource and a cognitive resource. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), though presented as if it were contemporary, is in fact quite traditional, according to Deignan, in that it focuses on representation rather than interaction (Deignan 2006). When authentic data are analyzed, metaphor appears to be set up or ‘primed’ both conceptually and linguistically, conceptual metaphor being the more generalized motivation, adapted in specific ways when expressed linguistically:

What are found [...] are metaphorically and metonymically used words that seem to develop their own life and linguistic associations in the target domain (Deignan 2005:222).

Deignan likens our linguistic metaphor system to a ‘street map’, where the streets are not organized in neat blocks as CMT suggests, but involving backruns and alleyways, “not the logical grid networks of planned modern cities, but collections of different sized and merging villages, with interconnecting roads” (Deignan 2005:222). Deignan demonstrates this using corpus data, certain expressions being nearly always used with metaphorical meanings, such as *shoot down in flames*, *all guns blazing*, *heavy blow* and *pay a high price* (Deignan 2008:287); while other expressions, such as *keep an eye on* have different degrees of metaphoricity depending on their collocates, eg *children*, *housing association flats*, *progress* (Deignan 2008:292). For Deignan lexical priming is as important as conceptual priming:

In common with other features of language in use, metaphors are shaped by their linguistic context, genre, culture, and ideology as well as their information content (Deignan 2008:293).

Deignan argues that true ambiguity is rare in naturally-occurring language because there is so much contextualization both from the situation and the text itself, semantic and sociolinguistic indicators serving to signal whether metaphor is intended or not (Deignan 2005:217). Although the data studied by Deignan are conventional metaphors,

the approach which emphasizes face-to-face interaction is a useful tool for investigating novel metaphor.

### **Cameron**

Like Steen and Deignan, Cameron is concerned with the dynamic role played by metaphor in discourse and its use in creating emergent meaning ‘online’ in face-to-face talk. Cameron employs data from reconciliation dialogues between Jo Berry and Pat Magee, the daughter of a man murdered by the IRA in Ireland and his murderer (Cameron 2008, 2011). Cameron looks at sections of the dialogues where ‘metaphor density’, calculated as the number of linguistic metaphors per 1000 words, is particularly high (Cameron 2008:199). Like Steen, she finds that the metaphors she identifies, although rarely novel, are used deliberately:

Novel metaphors – which seems to occur quite rarely in spontaneous talk – are deliberate, since some kind of search for an appropriate expression must have preceded production (Cameron 2008:202);

and that metaphor has a significant role in managing discourse:

The creativity of metaphor in talk appears less in the novelty of connected domains and more in the use of metaphor to shape a discourse event and in the adaptation of metaphor in the flow of talk (Cameron 2008:197).

Discourse events are managed by the use of metaphor to make difficult topics approachable, conventional metaphor being used in these dialogues to ‘distance’ or ‘de-emphasize’ “when the topic of talk is uncomfortable” (Cameron 2008:203).

An important point Cameron makes is that conventionalization is a process which can take place between two people within a single interaction, not only within a larger speech community over a longer period of time. She also observes that a conventionalized use once established between two speakers in one interaction may be taken up again in a subsequent interaction:

[C]onventionalization is a dynamic process that takes place within the talk of a discourse community and from which emerges a metaphor that can act as common currency in future talk (Cameron 2008:202).

Like Deignan, Cameron sees language as having a ‘life’ independent of thought in the sense that there may be systematicity within language which does not reflect cognitive systematicity. Cameron introduces the concept of a ‘systematic linguistic metaphor’, that is, the recognition of metaphoric patterns of use, such as RECONCILIATION IS CONNECTION in these data, without conceptual metaphors necessarily being involved (Cameron 2008:208). For Cameron, discourse-analysis studies have the merit of not claiming to generalize beyond what is offered by the data, leaving broader conclusions and generalizations, gained from abstracting away from the data, to cognitive linguists (Cameron 2008:208).

The work of Steen, Deignan and Cameron, considered in this section, prioritizes conventional metaphor over metaphorization. Their work is germane to the present research, as it emphasizes emergent and creative meaning and the use of metaphor as a flexible resource in discourse. In the next section, I identify three themes which recur in the metaphor-studies literature, and which I pursue in order to arrive at an even more precise ontology of novel metaphor.

### 3.2 A More Precise Ontology of Novel Metaphor

The metaphor literature offers a plethora of different theories on what metaphor is and how it is used, some of which have already been referred to in this chapter. ‘Different’ here could be understood to mean ‘competing’, but what we have in fact is a constellation of different but compatible ‘takes’ on metaphor, each offering a particular emphasis and reflecting the discipline which inspired it. In this section, I look across the theories of metaphor in order to identify common themes which will allow us to arrive at a more precise ontology of novel metaphor. The themes I identify are: 1) metaphor involves two domains; 2) metaphor involves a transfer between these two domains and in one direction; and 3) certain contents are selected for transfer while others are suppressed. I look at these in turn below.

## Two Domains

Traditional scholars and cognitive linguists concur that it is necessary to have two unrelated entities in order to create metaphor; for both, metaphor is seeing one thing in terms of another. But while traditional scholars identify these as linguistic components, cognitive linguists identify them as primarily conceptual. There is agreement that metaphor generally goes from a more physical source domain to a more abstract target domain, eg TIME IS MOTION (Lakoff 1993:216-218). Traditional scholars refer to the two entities variously as ‘tenor’ and ‘vehicle’ (Richards 1936), ‘frame’ and ‘focus’ (Black 1962), and ‘topic’ and ‘vehicle’ (Leech 1969); while cognitive linguists refer to them as ‘target domain’ and ‘source domain’ (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) or ‘trigger’ and ‘target’ input spaces (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Littlemore & Low, in their consideration of educational discourse, adopt a combining approach, using ‘source’ and ‘target’ to refer to both linguistic expressions and conceptual domains: “we use the labels ‘source’ and ‘target’ here for both linguistic and conceptual metaphors” and “talk of ‘domains’ in both cases” (Littlemore & Low 2006b:290).

Cognitive linguists have refined what is meant by a ‘domain’ by adding ‘basic’, ‘abstract’, ‘simple’, ‘complex’ and ‘matrix’ to the terminology. For Langacker, a ‘basic’ domain indicates a domain which derives from a directly-embodied human experience and an ‘abstract’ domain, one which does not (Langacker 1987:148-150). Langacker refers to ‘simple’ domains and a complex ‘matrix’ of domains to indicate an integrated collection of domains, such as the parts of the body making up the matrix BODY (Langacker 1987:152). Croft uses the terms ‘domain’ and ‘domain matrix’ (Croft 1993); Lakoff refers to an ‘Idealized Cognitive Model’ (ICM) and ‘complex ICM’ (Lakoff 1987b:282); while Kövecses extends the idea to event structure, and uses the term ‘event ICM’ and ‘complex event ICM’ (Kövecses 2002:152,161).

Cognitive linguists also make refinements regarding different types of conceptual metaphor. The distinction Grady makes between ‘primary’ and ‘complex’ metaphors is the most significant (Grady 1997). Primary metaphors are more basic than complex metaphors and are basic notions such as time, causation, events, emotions, etc (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:257):

There are hundreds of [...] primary conceptual metaphors, most of them learned unconsciously and automatically in childhood simply by functioning in the everyday world with a human body and brain (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:256-257).

Primary metaphors combine together to make complex metaphors, compared by Grady to atoms combining together to form molecules (Lakoff & Johnson 1999:46). This agglutination has consequences for how metaphors appear in different cultures. Primary metaphors derive more directly from bodily experience and are more likely to be universal, whereas complex metaphors, being made up of a combination of primary metaphors, are more likely to be culturally specific (Kövecses 2005:11, Yu 2008:248). Fauconnier & Turner see complexity in terms of ‘multiblends’, where outputs become inputs for new cross-space mappings, creating networks, such as those around ‘Dracula’, the ‘birth stork’ and the ‘grim reaper’ (Fauconnier & Turner 2002:279-295).

### Directional Transfer

The compatibility of traditional theories and theories from cognitive linguistics is also to be seen when we consider transfer between domains. The traditional ‘comparison theory’ (which goes back to Aristotle) is not inconsistent with the wording of Goatly’s definition, “[a] metaphor occurs when a unit of discourse is used to refer to an object, concept, process, quality, relationship or world to which it does not conventionally refer” (Goatly 1997:108-109), or this statement from Lakoff & Johnson: “[t]he essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:5). The ‘interaction theory’, developed by Black, in which an ‘implicative complex’ is created by the interaction of the first and second subject (Black 1962), is not far away from Fauconnier & Turner’s notion of a ‘blended space’ (Fauconnier & Turner 2002), or even the ‘ad-hoc concept’ of Sperber & Wilson (Sperber & Wilson 2008:102). There is also agreement that the interaction between the domains is directional, from source to target, not in reverse; thus, *Butchers are like surgeons* and *Surgeons are like butchers* are two different metaphorical ideas.

## Selection

Finally, the directional transfer between domains is ‘partial’, as only certain ‘mappings’ are permitted: “[m]etaphors are mappings across conceptual domains. Such mappings are asymmetric and partial” (Lakoff 1993:245). In the example Black uses, *A battle is a game of chess*, some features of *battle* are transferred, eg SPEED, POSITION and CASUALTIES, while others are ignored, eg WEATHER, WEAPONS and SUPPLIES (Goatly 1997:117-118). Reddy, in his detailed analysis of the ‘conduit metaphor’ (that communication is like the flow of water in a pipe), shows not only the mappings which occur between CONDUIT and LANGUAGE, but also the potential mappings which do not occur (Reddy 1993). For Ortony, a significant feature of metaphor is that mappings are multiple, in other words, transfer does not involve just a single feature (Ortony 1975:50), while Lakoff emphasizes that mappings are set by conceptual metaphors and cannot be varied, referred to as the ‘invariance principle’ (Lakoff 1993:215).

The evidence offered by the lexicographer Ayto demonstrates that although the invariance principle may well apply, certain lexical items can have a very rich spectrum of features from which to choose (Ayto 1986). Ayto identified the features of *cat*, as: FELINE, QUADRUPED, PET, MOUSE-CATCHING, SOFT, DOCILE, AGGRESSIVE, SPITEFUL/MALICIOUS, SKILFUL AT ESCAPING DANGER, DEATH-DEFYING, SEEING WELL IN THE DARK, ALOOF/SELF-CONTAINED, LITHE/AGILE, GRACEFUL, STEALTHY, HAVING NON-HUMAN UNDERSTANDING (Ayto 1986:53), all of which have expression in the lexicon, a phenomenon which poses no problem of ambiguity or confusion in use. Ayto makes a distinction between heavily-weighted prototypical features of a word and lighter features, and suggests that heavier features are not transferred, which is why the features which are discarded are often basic ones, such as FOUR-LEGGEDNESS in *He's a pig* or gender in *He's a bit of an old woman* (Ayto 1986).

When a metaphorical transfer occurs, the prototypical features of the word being used metaphorically are mapped onto those of another in such a way that those which do not match, typically the *more heavily weighted* ones, are discarded, and the light ones come to the surface (Ayto 1986:51).

In this section, I have shown that metaphorizing involves the processes of transfer and

selection. In the Stack of Counters model presented in the next section, I focus my attention on this second process, selection.

### 3.3 Stack of Counters Model

Numerous feature models have been proposed in semantics to explain word meaning, eg Katz & Fodor (1963), Talmy (1985), Jackendoff (1990), Pustejovsky (1995). Feature models have also been used in applied linguistics; Nida, for example, adopts componential analysis in his theory of translation (Nida 1975). In the cognitive sciences, Chandler in his ‘connectionist’ model of metaphor comprehension analyses word meaning into a set of auditory, olfactory, tactile, taste, visual and kinesthetic features and relations (Chandler 1991). The contributions of Tversky (1977), Ortony (1975, 1993c), Glucksberg & Keysar (1990) and Glucksberg (2001) have been particularly significant in understanding figurative language in terms of semantic features. Tversky uses ‘feature matching’ in his model of similarity; Ortony explains metaphor in terms of highlighting ‘non-salient predicates’; while Glucksberg & Keysar and Glucksberg use ‘salient properties’ to explain metaphor.

The Stack of Counters model presented in this section is also a feature model. It offers a way of recording which features are selected during metaphorization and where they occur on the denotational-connotational continuum. The model (outlined in Denroche 2006), assumes that information about each word, and each sense of a polysemous word, is stored as features in an encyclopaedic entry in the Mental Lexicon. Each entry is pictured as a stack of counters in which each counter represents a semantic feature. The features are in a continuum from denotational (or core) features at the base of the stack to connotational (or non-core) features at the top. The ‘stack of counters’ image is used to emphasize that there is a particular sequence in the order in which features are stored, that the features at the base of the stack are more ‘stable’ than those further up, and that each feature is independent and can be picked off individually. I propose that metaphorical meaning is created by manipulating these ‘counters’, highlighting some from the connotational end of the stack (of the target term) and suppressing others, almost invariably from the denotational end.

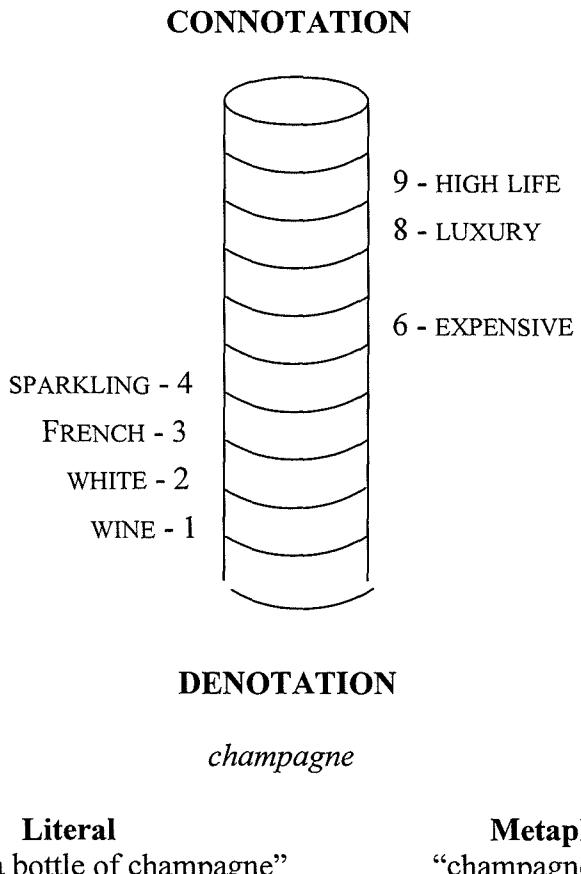
Two comments should be made at this point. Firstly, the principles of pragmatics apply here as much as they do for any utterance or text. I am taking for granted that the manipulations involved in the model I am presenting here are occurring within a pragmatic context. I am using the term ‘pragmatic context’ to include: a cognitive context (ie which cultural frames are employed); an ideational context (ie which real or imagined worlds are invoked); an interpersonal context (who the participants are and what their relationship to each other is); and a textual context (what information is contributed by the accompanying co-text). Within these contexts, the usual pragmatic principles, such as the Gricean maxims, the principle of relevance, etc, apply. Secondly, this is a theoretical model, and I do not suggest that it reflects the physical reality of features stored in the brain. Physical storage is likely to be more diffuse and less neat in the brain than my model, and to involve networks of connections rather than linear arrangements.

In Chapter 2, I gave an example of how an encyclopaedic entry for *champagne* could be compiled using corpus data. Corpus data, supplemented by data from dictionary definitions, would give a set of features for the item *champagne*, which could be ordered from core to non-core. The list might look something like this: 1 WINE, 2 WHITE, 3 FRENCH, 4 SPARKLING, 5 CHARACTERISTIC BOTTLE AND CORK, 6 EXPENSIVE, 7 USED FOR MAKING COCKTAILS, 8 LUXURY ITEM, 9 ASSOCIATED WITH THE ‘HIGH LIFE’, 10 USED FOR CELEBRATIONS, 11 USED FOR NAMING SHIPS, 12 SPRAYED BY THE WINNING RACING DRIVERS. The labels used in this list will probably not coincide exactly with the features as mental entities in the mind. They are expressed using everyday language for convenience, and are in small caps following the convention in semantics to indicate predicates rather than lexical items. Also, I have arranged the list in the order I felt appropriate following my intuition. This again is approximate, but could be refined by asking a panel of subjects from the speech community being investigated to decide the order through consensus. This would be a reasonable expectation as research suggests that both native and learner speakers have a strong sense of which meanings are basic (Hampton 2006).

I now take a metaphorical use of *champagne* in the expression *champagne lifestyle*. In this N-N compound *lifestyle* is the head (target or topic) and *champagne* the modifier (source or vehicle). It is a conventionalized expression, but if heard for the first time, we

can imagine that from the list of features offered by the item *champagne*, the connotational features EXPENSIVE, LUXURY, HIGH LIFE would be highlighted, and the denotational features WINE, WHITE, FRENCH and SPARKLING (and the other connotational features) suppressed. If we consider *champagne* used in a literal sense, such as *I bought a bottle of champagne*, this is reversed, the denotational features being highlighted and the connotational features suppressed. These two cases are illustrated in Figure 3.1 (below):

**Figure 3.1: Stack of Counters for *champagne***

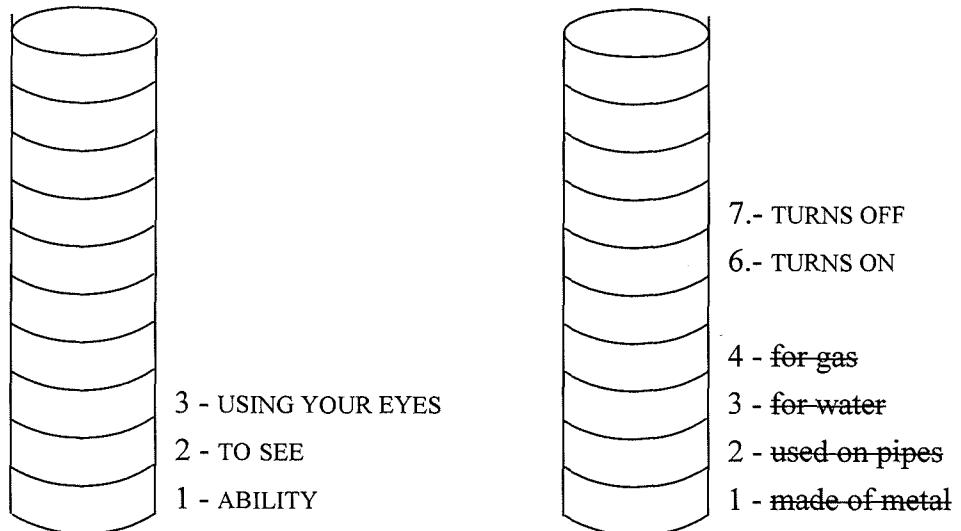


The next expression I wish to consider in order to test the model is an expression which is likely to be a novel metaphor for most people: *Vision is like a tap*. This was taken from a text on how to see without glasses (*Seeing: The Bates Method*.

<http://www.seeing.org> <accessed Jan 2008>) in which it is stated that tension ‘turns off’ vision and relaxation turns it ‘on’: *Vision is like a tap. Tension turns it off, relaxation turns it on*. Vision is compared to a tap. *Vision* is the target, and is used literally, and *tap* is the source, used metaphorically. In this metaphoric use, the core features of *tap*, 1 MADE OF METAL, 2 USED ON PIPES, 3 USED FOR WATER, 4 USED FOR GAS, are suppressed, while features higher up the stack are transferred, as illustrated in Figure 3.2 (below):

**Figure 3.2: Stack of Counters for *vision* and *tap***

**CONNOTATION**



**DENOTATION**

TOPIC: **Literal – vision**

VEHICLE: **Metaphoric – tap**

“Vision is like a tap”

It could be argued that 6 TURNING ON and 7 TURNING OFF are denotational features of tap, perhaps just as ‘core’ as MADE OF METAL, USED ON PIPES, but it is the access to the metaphorical sense of turning on/off which is significant here. This example is further complicated by a metonymic step, as the metaphor is really that vision is like water and taps allow water to flow.

The evidence from the examples above contradicts the claims of literalists such as Davidson that metaphor does not belong to a compositional/generative description of language. Davidson claims that there cannot be a ‘compositional semantic theory of metaphor’ to explain how metaphoric meaning is achieved through compositional rules acting on a finite set of simple meanings (Stern 2008:266). It would seem to me that metaphor demonstrates this very notion. It is an excellent demonstration that word meaning operates at the level of individual features, otherwise how can we explain that words are ‘picked apart’ in the way that occurs during metaphorization? Not only do

manipulations occur below the level of the word, but they occur with predictability. This is because the information used in metaphorizing is already there in the encyclopaedic entries. Searle is also a literalist, but his denial of there being metaphoric meaning in the code itself is argued differently. Searle states that “in a genuine metaphorical utterance, it is only because the expressions have not changed their meaning that there is a metaphorical utterance at all” (Searle 1993:90), but his reason for arriving at this conclusion is to make metaphor purely a pragmatic phenomenon; my conclusion is that it is only because of the stability of meanings of words in the language code that metaphorizing is possible.

### **Metaphoric Comparisons and Literal Comparisons**

In this section, I examine the difference between literal and metaphoric comparisons in order to test further the Stack of Counters model presented above. In Section 3.2, comparing two unrelated domains was given as one of the key characteristics of metaphor – along with ‘directional transfer’ between the domains and ‘selection’ – but comparisons can be made which are not metaphoric. It is the difference between these two, metaphoric comparisons and literal comparisons, which I examine here.

Before I do this, it is appropriate I should comment on two assumptions implied in the paragraph above: 1) that metaphors are comparisons, and 2) that metaphoricity can be characterized as opposite to literality. Lakoff questions both. He eschews the idea of metaphors as comparisons, considering them instead to be “mostly based on correspondences [...] rather than on similarity” (Lakoff 1993:245). In my use of the term ‘comparison’ in the present work I intend nothing more than the notion of bringing together two domains into juxtaposition, which I am sure accords with Lakoff’s view. Lakoff also objects to the second assumption, that ‘literal’ is the opposite of ‘metaphoric’. He considers the term ‘literal’ confusing, as it has come to refer to four distinct phenomena: standard language; language used conventionally to talk about a particular subject; truth-conditional meaning; and nonmetaphorical meaning (Lakoff 1986:292). Lakoff suggest ‘literal’ is best either avoided or reserved for the fourth sense, ‘nonmetaphorical meaning’ (Lakoff 1986:293). Although Lakoff claims metaphor to be central and pervasive in our conceptual system, he does not claim that

our conceptual system is entirely metaphorical: “[t]hough much of our conceptual system is metaphorical, a significant part of it is nonmetaphorical” (Lakoff 1993:244). What is more, he recognizes that the part which is not metaphorical is essential in the grounding of metaphoric thought (Lakoff 1987b, Lakoff & Johnson 1980:56-68, 1999): “[m]etaphorical understanding is grounded in nonmetaphorical understanding” (Lakoff 1993:244). This is a general principle which rather assumes that we all “have” language equally and to the same degree, which will not necessarily be the case.

What then is the difference between novel metaphors and literal comparisons? I explore this below by first considering the work of Glucksberg and Ortony on this question and then giving my own account, using the Stack of Counters model. In order to make clear what I mean by novel metaphors and literal comparisons, first I give a list here of each, compiled from examples from my own data and examples given in various discussions in the literature (eg Ortony 1993a, Glucksberg 2001, Forceville 2008). Literal comparisons are: *Blackberries are like raspberries, Wasps are like hornets, Tin is like copper, Encyclopaedias are like dictionaries, Hotels are like motels, Harvard is like Yale, Canada is like the USA, Spain is like Italy, India is like China* – though many such expressions can in certain circumstances be understood as metaphoric comparisons.

Novel metaphoric comparisons (expressed as similes for the sake of conformity) are:

*Billboards are like warts, Encyclopaedias are like goldmines, Libraries are like goldmines, Friends are like anchors, Lectures are like sleeping pills, Jobs are like jails, Alcohol is like a crutch, Brains are like computers, Butchers are like surgeons, Surgeons are like butchers, Vision is like a tap.* The first scholar I consider is Glucksberg.

## Glucksberg

Glucksberg follows rhetoricians in characterizing metaphor as “two *unlike* things compared, as in *some jobs are jails*” and literal comparisons as “two *like* things [compared], that is, things that belong to the same taxonomic category (eg *wasps are like hornets*)” (Glucksberg 2001:61). He identifies three differences between literal and metaphoric comparisons: firstly, that literal comparisons have features in common as well as features which are not shared, while metaphors only have one or two features in

common and differences are ignored; secondly, that literal comparisons are reversible, while metaphors are not; thirdly, that literal comparisons cannot be expressed without a signalling device, such as ‘like’, while metaphors can (Glucksberg 2001:30-37).

Glucksberg notes that literal comparisons can be asymmetric, the nature of the comparison being influenced by the term which comes first, as this emphasizes salient characteristics of the first term by virtue of its position, thus *Canada is like the USA* would perhaps activate the concept of the linguistic minority in Quebec, while *The USA is like Canada* would not (Glucksberg 2001:32).

## Ortony

Metaphor, for Ortony, comes about through the elimination of ‘tension’ created when topic and vehicle are brought together, resulting in a ‘distinctive set’ of appropriate characteristics being constructed from all the features available (Ortony 1975:48).

Ortony is influenced by Tversky’s ‘contrastive model’ in which a measure of similarity is achieved by looking at shared features, metaphor being understood “by scanning the feature space and selecting the features of the referent that are applicable to the subject” (Tversky 1977:349). Ortony prefers the term ‘predicate’ to ‘feature’, and refers to those predicates which are important and necessary in identifying an item (ie which would define it) as ‘high-salient predicates’ (Ortony 1993c:346).

Ortony reports on an experiment where subjects were given lexical items, eg *encyclopedias, billboards, warts*, and asked to list predicates for them. On average six predicates were given by the subjects. Subjects were then asked to rank them and say which of them were necessary in order to identify the item to somebody who did not know it. On average, three predicates were used to do this. These particular items were chosen as they appear in novel metaphors considered in the experiment, eg *Billboards are like warts*. Ortony found that UGLY was a high-salient predicate of *wart* but a low-salient predicate of *billboards*, and that metaphor as a result could be defined in terms of the highlighting of non-salient features (Ortony 1993c:351).

Ortony argues that literal and nonliteral comparisons both involve ‘predicate selection’ (Ortony 1993c:352), and that the difference between the two is that in metaphor there is

“virtually no common salience”, while in literal comparisons many salient predicates are shared (Ortony 1993c:350). If we consider a construction of the sort *A is like B*: a literal comparison is one where high-salient predicates of A and high-salient predicates of B are the same; a nonliteral comparison is one where high-salient predicates of B are the same as less-salient predicates of A, and there are high-salient predicates of B which do not apply to A (Ortony 1993c:349):

in [metaphor], high-salient predicates of the vehicle are low-salient predicates of the topic, [...] this distinguishes [metaphor] from literal comparisons, where the match is of high to high-salient predicates (Ortony 1993c:354).

Ortony also comments on reversibility, maintaining that “nonliteral similarity statements will tend to be much less reversible than literal similarity statements” (Ortony 1979:179), the reason being, that in nonliteral comparisons “terms have nonoverlapping sets of salient predicates” and therefore are asymmetric to begin with (Ortony 1993c:351), and that even if there are asymmetries, it is less obvious because many other salient predicates are shared (Ortony 1993c:352). If terms are reversed, the change in meaning for metaphor is greater than that for literal comparisons (Ortony 1979:179). This model of predicate selection encourages Ortony to see literal versus nonliteral more as a question of degree rather than one of essential difference:

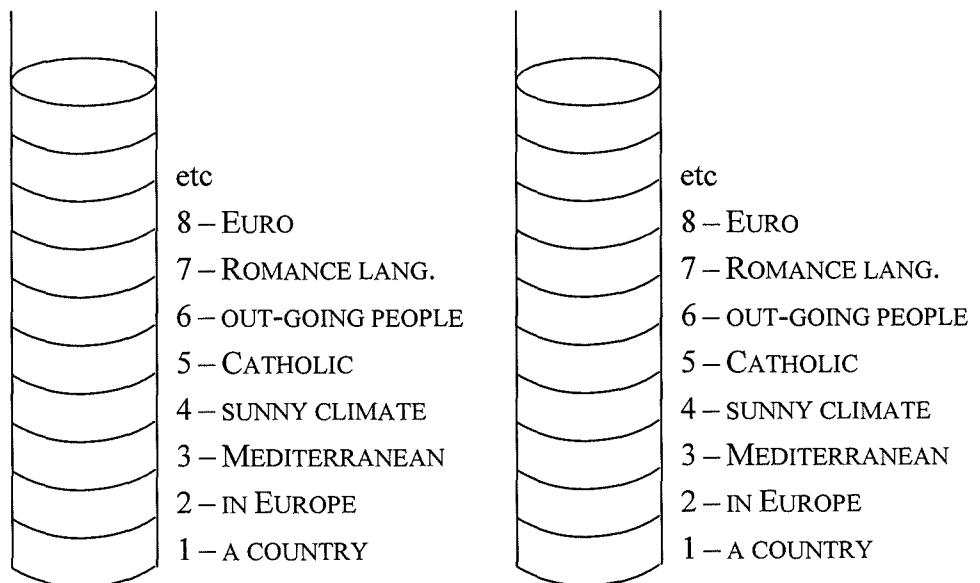
The position that I have adopted is still basically one that denies any fundamentally important difference in the processing of literal and nonliteral comparisons. I am inclined to believe that this is true for literal and metaphorical uses of language in general. (Ortony 1993c:353)

In order to show my own account of the difference between a literal and metaphoric comparison, I look at an example of each, using the Stack of Counters model. Earlier in this section, the selection of a distinctive set of predicate features from the vehicle/source term was illustrated for the expression *Vision is like a tap*. In order to illustrate a literal comparison, I have chosen the sentence *Spain is like Italy*. *Spain* and *Italy* share many features. They are both countries in Europe, located on the Mediterranean, both have sunny climates, Catholicism has been dominant in their histories, they are thought to be outgoing people, the dominant languages, Spanish and Italian, are from the same language family, the currency is the Euro, and so on. The

exact nature and order of these features in the encyclopaedic entries could be determined through experimentation, but I will simply leave them as approximations here. What we see in the illustration below conforms with the accounts of Ortony and Glucksberg: similar sections of the two encyclopaedic entries are used in literal comparisons; the comparison involves many features, not just one or two; the order of the two items can be reversed, that is, *Spain* could come before *Italy*, or *Italy* before *Spain* (though putting Spain first will certainly give prominence to Italy as the standard against which the comparison is being made), as illustrated in Figure 3.3 (below):

**Figure 3.3: Stacks of Counters for *Spain* and *Italy***

**DENOTATION**



**CONNOTATION**

*Spain*

*Italy*

“Spain is like Italy”

### 3.5 Functions of Metaphor

In this section, I look at the functions of metaphor in discourse. My purpose for doing so is to show that the wide range of functions which metaphor creates is enabled through a single common mechanism. Much has been written on the subject of the function of metaphor in discourse. What emerges is that metaphor has a vast array of different functions. It also emerges that these functions are so diverse that they include those which have an effect in discourse which are directly opposite to other metaphor functions, such as cultivating intimacy versus discouraging intimacy, inclusion versus exclusion, making meaning more specific versus making meaning less specific. I review the classifications of metaphor function compiled by Ortony (1975), Low (1988), Gibbs (1994) and Goatly (1993, 1997), and studies on the role played by metaphor in structuring discourse by Lerman (1985), Drew & Holt (1988, 1998) and McCarthy (1998). I then offer my own synthesis of these findings into a two-axis ‘grid’ of functions, and use this to argue that the many and diverse functions of metaphor are proof that the selection of features aspect of metaphor, identified above, is primary to metaphorizing, while the combination of source and target domains from which the meanings are transferred is secondary. This overview of the functions of metaphor provides a proof of the Stack of Counters model presented in the previous section.

#### Typologies of Metaphor Function

Ortony identified the three main functions of metaphor as ‘compactness’, ‘expressibility’ and ‘vividness’ (Ortony 1975). This was taken further by Low, Gibbs and Goatly. Although Low modestly describes his classification as an attempt to list “a few of the major functions of metaphor”, it is in fact a fairly complete overview of metaphor function (Low 1988:127-129). Low’s functions are: Making it possible to talk about something, such as describing musical pitch, particles in physics, the nature of religion; Demonstrating that things in life are related and systematic, using linguistic metaphors to make conceptual metaphors explicit; Extending thought, using metaphor to provide models and generate new hypotheses, eg *The brain is a computer, Atomic particles have colour*; Compelling attention by dramatizing, making utterances more vivid (close to Ortony’s ‘vividness’ function); Prevaricating or denying responsibility

for something, allowing the speaker distance or avoiding explicit reference, eg by commenting metalinguistically or quoting someone else's words; Allowing the speaker to discuss emotionally charged subjects and problematic topics, including euphemism, eg *seeing a man about a dog*; Compressing, summarizing and buying time, expressing things in a more concise manner (close to Ortony's 'compactness' function), or buying time by being more vague. The functions identified by Low are varied. Even if we categorize them within the metafunctions of Hallidayan systematic functional grammar, we see that they do not belong to just one metafunction; some are ideational ('Making it possible to talk about something', 'Demonstrating that things in life are related' and 'Extending thought'), while three are interpersonal ('Compelling attention', 'Prevaricating and denying responsibility' and 'Allowing the speaker to discuss emotionally charged subjects'). Low remarks on this paradox, that a single phenomenon, linguistic metaphor, can give rise to opposing functions in discourse with regard to 'clarity':

Metaphor thus has the intriguing attribute of having two central but opposing roles. On the one hand, it promotes greater clarity in what is said, while, on the other, it serves with quotations, jokes, and stories, to create what Lerman [...] calls a 'shielded form' of discourse. (Low 1988:129)

Low also comments that if we accept the Canale-Swain-Bachman model adopted by many language teachers and testers, that 'communicative competence' consists of a linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic component, then metaphor is involved in all four (Low 2008:221).

Gibbs refers to the functions of metaphor in his typology as 'social functions' (Gibbs 1994:134-140). They are: Reinforcing intimacy, Expressing one's own attitudes and beliefs indirectly, Relating the attitudes and beliefs of others, Signalling formality/informality, Signalling hostility, Indicating membership to a group, Giving judgments without offending, Releasing emotion, Avoiding unpleasant emotions (such as hospital slang, eg *beached whale, apple bobbing, a Betty Crocker*), Manipulating status within a group (such as American college slang, eg *to do the nasty, to play hide the salami, to do the bone dance*) and Conceptualizing in science, art and the law. Here again some functions are ideational and others interpersonal. Gibbs is perhaps more

concerned with the interpersonal usefulness of metaphor, those functions which relate to politeness, showing regard for the feelings of others, and establishing and maintaining interpersonal rapports, but also recognizes the ideational function of metaphor in conceptualizing in science, art and the law.

Goatly has published two classifications of metaphor function (Goatly 1993, 1997). The 1997 classification is more comprehensive and is the one I look at here, considered for the contribution it makes to the topic and also as a framework for summarizing the work of Low and Gibbs. Goatly acknowledges that his classification is similar to Low's: "Low [...] gives a list of the functions of metaphor which more or less coincide with some of mine" (Goatly 1997:332). In it, he lists twelve 'functional varieties' of metaphor and assigns each to a metafunction or a combination of metafunctions (Goatly 1997:166). I list these functions below, presented this time under headings for clarity:

#### IDEATIONAL

**Filling lexical gaps:** providing a term where none is available, eg *light year*; when a term is only partly appropriate, eg *He put his face in the water and half-gulped, half-ate it*; or when a term is modified to make it more precise, eg *My cry for help was the cry of the rat when a terrier shakes it*.

**Explanation and modelling:** explaining something which is unfamiliar; theory-constitutive metaphors, eg explaining electricity in terms of waterflow, light in terms of waves and particles, the human brain as a computer.

**Reconceptualization:** changing how we see the world and modify how we see it, in both science and literature.

#### IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL

**Reasoning by analogy:** used as an analogy in argumentation. (No equivalent in Low's classification.)

**Ideology:** defining and maintaining power relations through metaphors. (No equivalent in Low's classification.)

#### INTERPERSONAL

**Expressing emotional attitude:** conveying attitudinal meaning that cannot be conveyed

by literal language, eg *hell, bugger, piss off*.

**Decoration and disguise:** to decorate, entertain, grab attention and disguise, as in euphemism, eg *He fell asleep* and *to cross over the great divide*.

**Metaphorical calls to action and problem-solving:** According to Goatly, this is more an aspect of other functions than a function on its own, eg *Don't think of it as you are seeing it but simply as a mountain to be climbed*. (No equivalent in Low's classification.)

#### TEXTUAL

**Text structuring:** An analogy can run through a text and help give it coherence. (No equivalent in Low's classification.)

**Enhancing memorability, foregrounding and informativeness:** make an utterance stand out and be more memorable, eg *He moved to a private bar upstairs and trouble erupted*. (Goatly sees Foregrounding as equivalent to Low's 'Compelling attention by dramatizing'.)

#### PHATIC

**Cultivating intimacy:** inclusion through shared knowledge. (No equivalent in Low's classification.)

**Humour and games:** jokes, puzzles and conundrums. (No equivalent in Low's classification.)

Lerman, Drew & Holt and McCarthy have written on the role metaphor plays in structuring and managing discourse. Lerman identifies the use of metaphor in avoiding direct reference, or 'masking', in interviews with the US President Nixon (Lerman 1984), and dealing with problematic, or 'P', topics in Nixon's political speeches and the media reporting of them, eg *heavy weather, weather the storm, take the heat off* (Lerman 1985). Drew & Holt reveal that conventional and novel metaphor are particularly abundant when giving praise and making critical assessments about grievances, using data from business meetings and psychotherapy sessions (Drew & Holt 1988). In another study, using data from recorded telephone calls, they show that conventional metaphor is frequently used (ten examples per hour of recording) in

making topic transition, that is, signalling the end of a topic and inviting the speech partner to move to another topic (Drew & Holt 1998). McCarthy in his analysis from the CANCODE corpus identifies four functions of conventional metaphor: making an evaluation, giving an opinion, showing membership, negotiating meaning (McCarthy 1998). Cameron talks of conventional metaphor in classroom discourse ‘adding value’ along three axes: positive and negative evaluation, the speaker aligning themselves with or distancing themselves from their conversational partner, emphasizing and de-emphasizing (Cameron 1999:126-127). But it is Goatly’s typology which makes the most useful contribution to the present argument by demonstrating the multitude of functions made available through the single operation of metaphor. Though Goatly, Gibbs, Low and the other scholars considered above are mainly describing conventional language, I feel it is not too speculative to suggest that the functions they identify can be proposed for novel metaphor as well.

### **A Two-axis Typology of Metaphor Function**

In order to test the idea further that metaphor is not tied to any one function, I offer my own typology. I place the functions discussed above, plus further functions mentioned in Davitz (1969), Eder (1990), Moon (1994), Petrie & Oshlag (1993), Pollio et al (1977) and Sticht (1993), along two ‘axes’. The axes are:

- 1      whether the message is made more or less specific through the use of metaphor; and
- 2      whether the message expressed by metaphor concerns ‘transaction’ or ‘interaction’, that is, whether it is content-based or to do with social relations/personal attitudes (Brown & Yule 1983:1-4).

I have chosen these axes as they are fundamental dichotomies in linguistics and serve here to emphasize the idea of opposing functions. This creates four functional domains, which I name *New meaning*, *Detachment*, *Additional meaning* and *Vagueness*, as shown in the grid below:

**Table 3.2: Four domains of metaphor function – as a grid**

|               |                           |                   |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
|               | More Specific             | Less Specific     |
| Transactional | <b>New meaning</b>        | <b>Detachment</b> |
| Interactional | <b>Additional meaning</b> | <b>Vagueness</b>  |

*New meaning* is a functional category which is specific and transactional. By mapping the academic writing on function into the grid, I identify the components of this category as: **Organizing discourse**, eg structuring text (Goatly), text coherence (Sticht) and organizing discourse (Moon); **Explaining**, filling lexical gaps (Goatly), making it possible to talk about something (Low), explaining the unfamiliar (Petrie & Oshlag), describing intellectual history (Pollio et al), explaining and modelling (Goatly), indicating comprehension (Sticht), providing additional vocabulary (Pollio et al); **Expressing feelings**, being expressive (Ortony), describing emotional states (Davitz), releasing emotions (Gibbs); **Problem solving**, problem solving (Sticht, Goatly), problem solving by analogy (Pollio et al), reasoning by analogy (Goatly); and **Conceptualizing**, extending thought by providing models (Low), demonstrating that things in life are related and systematic (Low), reconceptualizing to change how we see the world, eg scientific theory (Goatly), creating a fictional world to say something about the real world, eg literary analogy (Goatly), conceptualizing in science, the arts and law (Gibbs).

*Detachment* is a functional category which is unspecific and transactional. Components of this category are: **Expressing emotional states**, expressing opinions (Moon), expressing emotional attitudes (Goatly), expressing attitudes and beliefs – in the context of transaction (Gibbs); **Commenting**, commenting on something (McCarthy);

**Summarizing**, compactness (Ortony), compressing and summarizing (Low); **Managing topic change**, structuring discourse – the mechanics of changing topic in what are otherwise interactional encounters (Drew & Holt).

*Additional meaning* is a functional category which is specific and interactional. Components of this category are: **Cultivating closeness**, cultivating intimacy (Goatly), reinforcing intimacy (Gibbs), creating a sense of camaraderie (Moon), aligning speaker and listener (Cameron), indicating membership to a group (Gibbs), ‘membershipping’ participants (McCarthy), signalling formality/informality (Gibbs); **Decoration**, decoration (Goatly), ornament (Pollio et al); **Language play**, humour and games (Goatly), punning (McCarthy); **Highlighting**, enhancing memorability (Goatly), making vivid and memorable (Ortony), making vivid, interesting and appealing (Moon), compelling attention by dramatizing something (Low), dramatizing (Lerman), giving emphasis (Moon, Cameron), foregrounding (Goatly); **Asserting yourself**, threatening face (Eder), signalling hostility (Gibbs), trivializing a political opponent (Lerman), manipulating status within a group (Gibbs), establishing and maintaining ideological power relations (Goatly).

*Vagueness* is a functional category which is unspecific and interactional. The components of this category are: **Politeness**, providing a mask (Pollio et al), masking reference to problematic topics (Lerman), avoiding unpleasant emotions (Gibbs), avoiding precise reference (McCarthy), negotiating meaning to be indirect (McCarthy), informing others of attitudes and beliefs in an indirect manner (Gibbs), discussing emotionally charged subjects and problematic topics (Low); **Avoiding commitment**, denying responsibility for something (Low), buying time (Low), distancing (Cameron); **Expressing approval**, expressing approval or admiration (Moon), praising (Drew & Holt), conveying thanks or refusals (Moon); **Expressing disapproval**, expressing disapproval (Moon), expressing criticism (Moon), making critical assessments, complaining (Drew & Holt), giving a negative judgment without offending (Gibbs), expressing an evaluation (Cameron, Moon, McCarthy). The information given above is summarized in Table 3.3 (below):

**Table 3.3: Four domains of metaphor function – summary**

|               | More specific  | Less specific  |
|---------------|--|--|
|               | <b>New meaning</b>   | <b>Detachment</b>  |
| Transactional | Metaphor is used for: organizing discourse, filling lexical gaps, explaining the unfamiliar, indicating comprehension, describing emotional states, problem solving, reasoning by analogy, reconceptualizing, creating fictional words, conceptualizing scientific theory.   | Metaphor is used for: expressing opinions, expressing emotional states, expressing beliefs, commenting, summarizing, compressing, managing topic change.   |
| Interactional | Metaphor is used for: cultivating intimacy, reinforcing intimacy, indicating membership, signalling formality and informality, decoration, language play, enhancing memorability, making vivid and memorable, dramatizing, foregrounding, emphasizing, asserting yourself, signalling hostility, establishing and maintaining power. | Metaphor is used for: avoiding unpleasantness, avoiding precise reference, negotiating meaning, informing others of attitudes and beliefs, discussing problematic topics, avoiding commitment, expressing approval or disapproval, criticizing, complaining, evaluating. |

In this chapter, I have shown that metaphorizing involves a transfer stage and a selection stage. I argue that it is the selection stage which is the more significant in making possible this diversity of function in discourse. The discussion above of the typologies and discourse functions of metaphor offers literature data to support the idea that a single common linguistic device, metaphor (novel or conventionalized is not differentiated here), is capable of creating diametrically-opposed functional domains. In the next chapter, I focus more closely on ‘selection’ isolated from ‘transfer’, and explore the myriad of verbal and non-verbal phenomena in which it plays a role in communication.

## 4 The Vital Role of Metonymy in Conceptualization and Communication

This chapter moves the argument of the thesis from metaphor to metonymy. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that ‘doing metaphor’, in the sense of showing the ability to metaphorize (ie manage novel metaphor receptively and productively), involves the recognition of part-whole relations between signs and parts of signs. I am calling this ‘metonymy’ from now on in this thesis. Recognizing that metonymy is a ‘sub-process’ or stage *within* metaphor allows us to draw the conclusion that metonymy is more fundamental than metaphor, and for this reason it is appropriate that metonymy now becomes the focus of the present study. In this chapter, I develop a ‘general theory’ of metonymy, demonstrating the significance of metonymy across a whole range of linguistic and multimodal phenomena. I show that metonymy has a far wider ‘reach’ than just the creation of lexical formulations used for referring. It plays a vital role at every level of the language system from phonology to pragmatics, as well as serving a whole variety of essential communicative functions. I argue that metonymy offers a means by which existing semiotic resources can be exploited to give salience and nuance, and that it is here we find the explanation of language’s great subtlety, flexibility and fitness for purpose.

### 4.1 Metonymy in the Language System

I am defining *metonymy* in this chapter as the highlighting of relatedness, usually part-whole, between closely-related concepts, things and signifiers. Whether we are concerned with a physical ‘part’, eg *give me a hand*, a part in the sense of an attribute, eg *the small screen*, or a part in the sense of an effect, eg *smoke* standing for FIRE, they have in common that they involve ‘relatedness’ and it is this which distinguishes metonymy from metaphor. Definitions of metonymy and relatedness will be examined in detail in the next section (4.2); in this section I outline the vital role metonymy plays in the language system itself and in our conceptual system. I consider a whole range of linguistic phenomena which all have in common that to operate they rely on the recognition of part-whole relations. I consider the following headings in turn below:

‘sense and reference’, ‘the metonymic nature of literal language’, ‘defining categories’, ‘etymology’, ‘pragmatics’ and ‘the partial nature of the sign’.

## Sense and Reference

The distinction between *sense* and *reference*, identified by Frege, and explored by later language philosophers such as Russell and Strawson, is a distinction between the generic meaning of a word, its ‘sense’, and a specific use of it in representing an entity in the real or an imagined world, its ‘reference’ (Frege 1960 [1892]). Sense is close to what a lexicographer tries to encapsulate in a dictionary definition, eg “A *ball* is a round object used in a game or sport ...”; while reference reflects the meaning of a word in actual utterances, eg “Alex is holding a *ball*”. Sense is the ‘full’ meaning of a word, while reference is a ‘partial’ meaning. Given this whole/part relation, it is reasonable to suggest, as Radden does, that sense/reference relations are inherently metonymic (Radden 2008a, 2009) and that moving between them involves the cognitive ability to process metonymically.

The sense/reference distinction has close parallels with other key concepts in language studies, namely Saussure’s distinction between ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ (Saussure 1983 [1916]) and Chomsky’s similar distinction between ‘competence’ and ‘performance’ (Chomsky 1965). They all concern the difference between the idealized knowledge of a language and the ability to use it. The relationship between the idealized systems of a language and how a language is actually used is a metonymic relation, and this – to my mind – is a more significant feature of the langue/parole and competence/performance (and I-language/E-language) distinctions than those more usually cited, such as grammatical incorrectness and syntactic incompleteness in performance.

The effortlessness with which a speaker goes back and forth from sense to reference belies the complexity of the information contained in encyclopaedic entries stored in our mental lexicon. How complex and inclusive ‘sense’ is can be demonstrated by the difficulty involved in defining even (or especially) common objects. Lexicographers can have a challenging task to ‘pin down’ meaning, as the entry below for ‘door’ from *Webster’s International Dictionary* shows, verging on the comical in its attempt to

include all possible cases. This extract does not even begin to consider the materials from which a door can be made or the connotations of ‘door’:

**Door** [n]: a movable piece of firm material or structure supported usu. along one side and swinging on pivots or hinges, sliding along a groove, rolling up and down, revolving as one of four leaves, or folding like an accordion by means of which an opening may be closed or kept open for passage into or out of a building, room or other covered enclosure or a car, airplane, elevator or other vehicle ... (Hanks 1979:32)

Not only do speakers/listeners move effortlessly between sense and reference, and between ideas and their articulation in words, but also between ‘generic reference’, the abstract reference to a whole genre, and ‘real reference’, the indication of a real instance (Radden 2009). Radden describes the generic-for-specific relationship as a TYPE FOR TOKEN metonymy (Radden 2005:13), and sees generic reference in English as motivated by INSTANCE FOR TYPE and TYPE FOR SUBTYPE metonymies (Radden 2009:201-202). The INSTANCE FOR TYPE metonymy “evokes the generic type” (Radden 2009:223), while the TYPE FOR SUBTYPE metonymy “serves to restrict the generic referent to prototypical members of the type” (Radden 2009:223). For example, if a shop assistant were to say “This jacket is our best-selling item”, we would understand this as an instance standing for a type, where the type is that model of jacket; if a client in a car showroom points to a car and says “I like this car”, we would understand this both as an instance and a type (Radden 2008a). We are aware when we buy an item on the internet that what we are being offered is a generic type, not the specific item in the photo, unless it is a public auction website such as *ebay*, in which case it *is* the actual item (Radden 2008a). Misunderstandings in respect to sense, generic reference and real reference occur only rarely and are quickly corrected, suggesting that these metonymic steps are a highly-practised part of our repertoire and there because they are necessary.

## The Metonymic Nature of Literal Language

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that metonymy is the fundamental operation behind metaphor, that metaphor involves the recognition of part-whole relations in selecting certain aspects and ignoring others. Here I wish to make the point that the processing of ‘literal language’ also involves metonymy. If we take the adjective *red* and use it to

qualify various nouns, such as *red carpet*, *red lorry*, *red apple*, in each case, a different quality of RED is understood. There are reds of different hues, intensities and reflectivenesses, so a prototypical carpet, lorry or apple will reflect a particular constellation of qualities within these categories. Thus each word-pair selects certain aspects from the full sense of 'red' and excludes those aspects which seem inappropriate in that context. Literal language is metonymic because it is a specific sense modified away from prototypical meaning.

As strings of words are built up into paragraphs, and paragraphs into whole texts, the process of 'metonymic narrowing' is multiplied and ever more specific meanings are construed by the reader. The longer the text, the more this accumulative 'narrowing' is involved in its interpretation. Miller illustrates this with the novel *Walden*:

When I read the first sentence [of *Walden*] and encountered Thoreau borrowing an axe, I used that information to narrow down the variety of possible states of affairs to just those that included Thoreau borrowing an axe. When I read next that he went down to the woods by Walden Point, I narrowed the potential set even further, now to those that included Thoreau with his axe walking to the woods by Walden Pond. By the time I finished, I had narrowed down this set considerably, but there were still indefinitely many alternatives left.  
(Miller 1993:360)

The text builds up a specific image of the protagonist, Thoreau, the axe he borrows, the wood he walks towards and the pond he sees, in the reader's mind. It is a specific set of mutually coherent images, which still leave scope for further narrowing as the prose progresses. The words on the page give access to the general sense associated with those words and 'metonymic processing' narrows them down to the specific image that the reader constructs for that particular reading.

## Defining Categories

Because superordinates and hyponyms involve part-whole relations, metonymy is very well suited to identifying general categories which do not have convenient labels. Departments within stores and sections of supermarkets, for example, can be identified in this way. In data from my notebooks, I noted that in a branch of the UK supermarket

*Tesco*, the section for pharmacy products was identified metonymically by ‘Aches and Pains’ (metonymic because products for treating other ailments than pain and products of general hygiene are found here), alongside sections identified using literal superordinates, such as ‘Canned Goods’, ‘Household Goods’ and ‘Soups’. In another UK supermarket, *Morrison’s*, the term ‘Medicines’ was used for this section. The term ‘Pharmacy’ was perhaps not used in both cases because it sounds too medical or suggests that a trained pharmacist is on hand, though it is the term used by another UK supermarket chain, *Waitrose*.

Many languages have a single word standing for both superordinate and hyponym, eg in the Native American Indian language Hopi, the word for ‘cottonwood’ means both ‘deciduous tree’ and ‘cottonwood tree’ (the most common deciduous tree in this region); and in the Native American Indian language Shoshoni, the word for eagle means both ‘eagle’ and ‘large bird’ (Glucksberg 2001:39). There is a metonymic relation between these words. In sign language salient features are used to identify celebrities, eg big ears for Prince Charles and opening a trouser zip for Bill Clinton. In American Sign Language, many superordinate categories do not have their own sign, so, for example, ‘furniture’ is achieved by ‘chair-table-bed etc’ (signed rapidly with the sign for ‘etc’ “crisply executed”), thus, to express “I lost my furniture in the house fire, but one thing was left, the bed”, ‘bed’ would appear twice: once as part of the signing to express the superordinate ‘furniture’ and again to express the hyponym ‘bed’ (Glucksberg 2001:39).

I now turn to prototype effects in understanding categories. A ‘prototype’ is understood to be an idealized example of a category, the ‘best fit’. In her experiments with university students in California, Rosch found when asked to rank exemplars of a category from most to least prototypical, eg for BIRD: *robin, sparrow, owl, eagle, ostrich, emu, penguin* ..., they were not only able to carry out the task but concurred in the rankings they gave (Lakoff 1987b:44). The relationship between an idealized prototype of a category and real exemplars of a category is metonymic because there is an overlap between the characteristics of the prototype and the exemplar. Kövecses & Radden claim that metonymic relations are involved in constructing prototypes (Kövecses & Radden 1998), while Gibbs maintains that prototypes are ‘stand for’ categories and therefore metonymic (Gibbs 1999:66); and for Lakoff “metonymic models of various sorts are the sources of a wide variety of prototype effects” (Lakoff

1987b:203).

For the cognitive linguists Brugman & Lakoff, ‘prototype effects’ are not limited to single lexical categories but also operate in ‘radial networks’, where the various senses of a polysemous word, such as *over*, share some but not all features (Brugman & Lakoff 2006). For Lakoff, ‘radial categories’, such as compounds of *mother*, eg *adoptive mother*, *birth mother*, *surrogate mother*, are related more by having ‘family resemblances’ than being hyponyms of a central category (Lakoff 1987b:84). For Al-Sharafi, all categorization is metonymic, because to categorize is to see something as a “kind of” thing and therefore to relate it metonymically (Al-Sharafi 2004:57). For Langacker, prototypes are involved in grammatical categories and constructions, prototypes being the “highest level schema” of a grammatical category or construction, and are involved in all essential operations in conceptualizing and articulating concepts in language (Langacker 2006 [1990]:31, 46). Prototype effects are also considered to be operating in phonology, the category ‘phoneme’ having a prototype structure by being a collection of allophones, making phonological categories inherently metonymic (Radden 2005:13-14).

The meaning relationships considered in the traditional study in linguistics of ‘relational semantics’, such as ‘hyponymy’, ‘superordinacy’, ‘synonymy’ and ‘antonymy’, are necessarily metonymic, because meaning relations described by them must involve some degree of semantic overlap to be ‘related’. The relationship between the superordinate *vehicle* and its hyponyms eg *car*, *bus*, *lorry*, *van* is metonymic; the relationship between the synonyms *little/small*, *over/above*, *expert/specialist* etc, is metonymic, because synonym pairs share denotational meaning, if not connotational meaning; and the relationship between ‘complementary antonyms’ eg *on/off*, *open/closed*, *dead/alive*, ‘gradable antonyms’ eg *big/little*, *fat/thin*, *rich/poor* and ‘reversive antonyms’ eg *start/stop*, *husband/wife*, *borrow/lend*, are metonymic, as they all share complementary features.

Fillmore’s concept of the ‘frame’ (equivalent, for him, to terms favoured by other scholars, such as ‘schema’, ‘script’, ‘scenario’, ‘cognitive model’) is a theory of understanding categories which relies on metonymic processing. A frame is a collection of interrelated concepts:

I have in mind any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits;

and access to one of them allows access to the others:

when one of the things in such a structure is introduced into a text, or into a conversation, all of the others are automatically made available (Fillmore 2006 [1982]:373).

Thus, it can be seen from this discussion, that categorization is recognized independently by many scholars in linguistics as metonymic, and the manipulation of categories in communication as a metonymic process.

## **Etymology**

When we look at meaning relations diachronically instead of synchronically, ie in terms of ‘historical semantics’, again we see metonymy at work. Metonymic and metaphoric shifts are the two processes most evident when explaining the change of word meaning over time. The noun *buff*, for example, ultimately derives from ‘buffalo’: the skin of a buffalo is a yellowy-brown colour, hence the use of *buff* to mean colour, as in *buff envelope*. This colour was the colour of the uniforms of volunteer firemen in New York, hence the sense of *buff* as expert, eg *film buff*. Another line of derivation goes from the sense of skin being visible, as in *to be in the buff*, ie naked; while yet another comes from the smoothness of a buffalo’s skin, as in *to buff up*, meaning to make shine, and to the more recent sense, *to be buff*, meaning fit/good looking. The animal standing for its skin; the skin standing for the colour; the colour standing for the clothing; the clothing standing for the profession; the profession standing for expertise, are all metonymic steps; and skin standing for unclothed; skin standing for shininess; shininess standing for the process by which you make something shiny; and shininess standing for ‘fitness’, are also all metonymic. The change of part of speech which *buff* undergoes in its history from noun to adjective, from adjective to noun, from adjective to verb, etc, ie ‘zero derivation’ (‘coercion’), is also a metonymic rather than a metaphoric process. Sometimes a number of metonymic steps result in a shift which is metaphoric, as is the case with the Arabic idiom “He has a lot of ash”, *kathir al-ramād*, cited by Al-Sharafi

(Al-Sharafi 2004:26). This idiom means “to be generous”, explained by this chain of metonymies: A LOT OF ASH STANDS FOR COOKING → A LOT OF COOKING STANDS FOR A LOT OF FOOD → A LOT OF FOOD STANDS FOR A LOT OF GUESTS → A LOT OF GUESTS STANDS FOR GENEROSITY (Al-Sharafi 2004:60).

## Pragmatics

For Radden, metonymy is present “at all levels of linguistic structure: phonology, lexical semantics, lexical grammar, morphology, grammar, and pragmatics” (Radden 2005:11). It is the pragmatic level I now turn to and the role of metonymy in understanding deixis and inferred speech. Deixis is metonymic because it allows speakers to refer to one entity using different frames, depending on the speaker’s perspective with regard to space (*this chair here* vs *that chair there*), person (*my timetable* vs *your timetable*), time (*this meeting now* vs *that meeting then*), etc. The ‘indirect speech acts’ of Austin/Searle involve inferencing from a logical form to a function which is not necessarily equivalent. Radden explains indirect speech acts (ISAs) in terms of part-whole relations between sentence meaning and utterance meaning:

The indirectness of a speech act resides in the incongruity between the intended illocution and the utterance meaning, which only partly renders the full speech act meaning (Radden 2005:22).

Gibbs recognizes that “speaking and understanding indirect speech acts involves a kind of metonymic reasoning, where people infer wholes (a series of actions) from a part” (Gibbs 1994:352). Panther & Thornburg also recognize that ISAs involve metonymic reasoning (2003, 2009). ‘Conversational implicatures’ of Grice involve a process by which propositional meaning is enriched by information from the (cognitive, physical, interpersonal and textual) environment in order to arrive at the secondary derived, intended ‘utterance meaning’. Thus, *Why don’t you finish your drink and leave?!* is more likely to be a threat than a suggestion; *Who do you think you are?,* a challenge rather than a request for information; *Whose car is that parked in front of the gate?,* a complaint rather than an enquiry; *Have you seen my keys?,* an entreaty to join in the

search rather than to elicit ‘yes’ or ‘no’. It is possible for us to arrive at these secondary ‘derived’ (or ‘conversational’) meanings by virtue of them being sufficiently closely related to be retrievable (inferred) using the context and our knowledge of the world to resolve incongruity.

Radden discusses the role of metonymy in implicature (Radden 2000:98-101). For him, “The conceptual relationships between a named and an implicated entity are based on contiguity, or metonymy” (Radden 2000:98). He identifies ‘sequential events’, ‘event and result’ and ‘place and activity’ as three metonymic relationships which “are particularly prone to evoking conversational implicatures” (Radden 2000:98). Gibbs calls this inferencing ‘metonymic reasoning’ (Gibbs 1999:72), while Radden calls it ‘metonymy-based inferencing’:

Indirect speech acts represent a particularly convincing case of metonymy-based inferencing (Radden 2005:22).

Ruiz de Mendoza also recognizes the role of metonymy in pragmatic inferencing (Barcelona 2005:31), as do Panther & Thornburg and authors in the volume edited by them, *Metonymy and Pragmatic Inferencing* (Panther & Thornburg 2003). Barcelona goes further:

The inferential nature of metonymy, ie, its role in activating the implicit pre-existing connection of a certain element of knowledge or experience to another one, also explains its ubiquity and its multilevel nature (Barcelona 2005:42).

Barcelona claims that “Metonymy is primarily *inferential* in nature rather than primarily *referential*” (Barcelona 2005:42). Metonymies “basically have an inferential function” and “their referential and motivational functions are consequences of their inferential function” (Barcelona 2009:391), while adding that there is more to inferencing than metonymy (Barcelona 2009:394).

Although, of course, they do not describe it as such, Sperber & Wilson’s ‘relevance theory’ is essentially a metonymic theory of inference (Sperber & Wilson 1986). It is metonymic because utterances are incomplete representations of intentions, external manifestations of assumptions the speaker wishes to communicate. ‘Ostensive

'behaviour', central to relevance theory, is behaviour which gives an indication that an implicit idea is being made explicit. It draws the hearer's attention to an assumption the speaker wants to communicate. Carston observes that explicatures are inferentially developed from partial, conceptual representations:

An explicature is an ostensively communicated assumption which is inferentially developed from one of the incomplete conceptual representations (logical forms) encoded by the utterance (Carston 2002:377).

It is therefore a metonymic process which takes the speaker from the intended meaning to the incomplete logical form and the hearer from the incomplete logical form to the inferred message.

### **The Partial Nature of the Sign**

It is a basic assumption behind all linguistic theory that words represent things (real, abstract or imagined) and clauses represent events; but such a determinist view of language soon becomes inadequate when we go from an idealized model of language to language in use. Many approaches have been adopted to explain what else is involved beyond one-to-one representation when we look at language use in the real world. The contribution phraseology, metaphor, pragmatics and cognition make to extending meaning have been discussed in Chapter 2 in the context of my Model of the Linguistic Mind presented there. Sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics are other approaches which help explain indeterminism, focussing respectively on language variation, meaning at the level of the whole text and the relationship between language and thought.

In this section, I explore the insights which metonymy studies give to the question. An approach focussing on metonymy puts into relief a basic characteristic of language as a semiotic system, namely, that language under-refers/under-determines, that 'the message' is always more than 'the text', that what is being said is only a partial representation of what exists, that, as Kress suggests, "[a]ll representation is always partial" (Kress 2010:70). The logical consequence of language being a sign system is

that language is metonymic:

Since we have no other means of expressing and communicating our concepts than by using forms, language as well as other communication systems are of necessity metonymic (Radden & Kövecses 1999:24).

Kress eschews the term ‘metonymy’, not finding it useful, but uses ‘metaphor’ to cover what I would consider to be metonymic phenomena, when he writes: “all signs are metaphors, always newly made, resting on, materializing and displaying the interest of the maker of the sign” (Kress 2010:71). Because language is metonymic, representation is not only possible but also flexible. It is possible, because without metonymy there would be no signs to begin with; it is flexible, because if partial correspondence (rather than one-to-one correspondence) is the principle at the centre of communication (semiotic work), then that partiality can be exploited to give infinite grades of meaning, and this potential used for highlighting and giving salience. As Kress states:

At the moment of the making of the sign, representation is always partial [...]. It is *partial* in relation to the object or phenomenon represented; it is *full* in relation to the sign-maker’s interest at the moment of making the sign. (Kress 2010:71)

Thus, the partial nature of the sign allows the full expression of meaning as it emerges in discourse; and if meaning making were not partial, ‘full’ expression could not be achieved.

For Langacker, this interface between fixed coded meaning and unfixed intermediate meaning is made possible through metonymic processing, as metonymy is a ‘reference-point’ or ‘active-zone’ phenomenon, where explicit indications “merely provide mental access to a desired target” (Langacker 1993:30-31), the reference point entity serving as a ‘vehicle’. Langacker observes that cognitive linguistics constantly discovers metonymic dualities:

I have been struck by the number of clearly essential notions involving an entity that is somehow “prominent” or “focused” within a more inclusive “dominion”. This is reflected in such terminological pairings as profile vs. base, trajector vs. landmark, participant vs. setting, immediate scope vs. overall scope, objective vs. subjective,

He also observes that grammar is metonymic for the same reason, that it offers broad rather than precise indications:

grammar [...] is basically metonymic, in the sense that the information explicitly provided by conventional means does not itself establish the precise connections apprehended by the speaker and hearer in using an expression (Langacker 2009:46).

In the discussion so far, I have been talking of ‘signs’ and have been using the term for what Peirce calls ‘symbol’ in the three aspects of the sign identified by him – icon, index and symbol (Hawkes 1977:128-130). Peirce did not intend this as a classification of signs, though it is often presented as such. It is the *index* which metonymy is most usually identified with, indexical representation (eg “smoke standing for fire”) being seen as quintessentially metonymic. In fact, metonymy is involved in all three aspects, with symbols, as discussed earlier in this section, with indices (as in the example above of smoke representing fire), but also with icons, as I will demonstrate now. If we take the famous London Underground map as an example, in the edition I have to hand (*Tube Map*, London Underground, April 2011), a wheelchair icon is used to indicate wheelchair access, but in fact the icon is only supplying information that there is something here to do with wheelchairs; we have to infer that this is not eg a sales point for hiring or purchasing a wheelchair or that it signifies there is room for one wheelchair only (as it might on the side of train). In fact, the key to the map reads “step-free access between the platform and the street”, which is more explicit information than the icon offers. The icon is only *part* of the message, the rest of the message is supplied by the reader; thus even an icon is processed metonymically. Another example: readers at the British Library in London are given instructions as to what they may or may not take into the reading rooms on the plastic carrier they are given to put their possessions in. On it, there is a combination of signs, some iconic, some indexical and some symbolic. These are sometimes used in combination; so, for example, an iconic representation of a pair of hands is accompanied by a text *Wash hands*, hands being represented twice (pictorially and verbally), washing only once.

The partial nature of meaning making is well illustrated by examining ‘naming’ across

languages. This shows up the different strategies independently adopted by different speech communities in the evolution of names for things. Kress illustrates this with the name for light bulb in German, *Glühbirne*, observing that in German this object is conceived as having the shape of a ‘pear’ (*Birne*) rather than a ‘bulb’, and emitting a ‘glow’ (*Glühen*) rather than ‘light’ (Kress 2010:103). Radden compares three objects, *push chair*, *seat belt* and *hiking boots*, in Spanish and English, and observes that whereas in English the actions of ‘pushing’, ‘sitting’ and ‘hiking’ are emphasized, in Spanish, ‘walking’ *silla de paseo* (chair of walk), ‘safety’ *cinturón de seguridad* (belt of safety) and ‘mountains’ *botas de montaña* (boots of mountain) are salient (Radden 2005:20). The different words between languages for the place where you get on and off a train also show this difference of perspective: the German word *Gleis* emphasizes a track or route; the Italian word *binario* emphasizes the pair of metal rails the train runs on; while the English word *platform* gives salience to the structure next to the train which allows you to board. In all these examples, one can see how the conceptual metonymy SALIENT PART FOR WHOLE was instrumental in giving origin to these words and expressions. I explore this phenomenon in more detail below in a study in which I compare names for body parts and common household objects across languages.

## A STUDY OF NAMING ACROSS LANGUAGES

In this study, my informants were applied linguistics students on MA courses at a London university. In the context of a practice workshop they were asked to give translations in their first languages for the two anatomical structures, *floating rib* and *rib cage*, and two electrical devices *answering machine* and *mobile phone*. Anatomical structures were chosen because the design of the human body is universal; electrical devices were chosen because their design is also fairly universal but terms for them have a shorter history. Data collected during this workshop were added to by data given by via email over a period of three weeks in 2008. The twenty-two informants were all non-native speakers of English, representing the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. For each item, the informants were asked to give:

- The term in English

- The language being considered (their first language)
- A translation of the English term into the language being considered, choosing an everyday term rather than a technical or medical term, when a choice was available, and using a transliteration into Latin alphabet, if the language considered uses another script. The informants were expected to rely on their first-language knowledge but were also invited to research further, if they wished. Where more than one informant gave data for the same language, I collated these to give a single version, after discussing any contradictions or inconsistencies with the informants first via email.
- An ‘interlinear translation’ of the translation, ie an explanation of what each morphemic/lexemic element meant and the order they came in. Some gave fuller explanations.

For the first term, *floating rib*, the data revealed an interesting phenomenon, namely that across the languages considered, three broad but distinct semantic categories were represented. In all the languages for which data were obtained, the word ‘rib’ was modified by a term from one of these three meaning areas, FLOATING, FREE and FALSE, as shown in Table 4.1 (below):

**Table 4.1: ‘floating rib’**

| FLOATING  | FREE   | FALSE   |
|---|--|---|
| Arabic<br><i>athlae aema</i><br>rib floating        | Chinese<br><i>fú-dòng-de lèi-gǔ</i><br>unfixed rib | Greek<br><i>nothos plevra</i><br>fake rib     |
| Dutch<br><i>wevende ribbe</i><br>swaying rib        | French<br><i>côte flottante</i><br>rib loose       | Russian<br><i>lozhnoey rebro</i><br>false rib |
| French<br><i>côte flottante</i><br>rib floating     | German<br><i>frei Rippe</i><br>free rib            | Spanish<br><i>costilla falsa</i><br>false rib |
| Italian<br><i>costola flutuante</i><br>rib floating | Polish<br><i>żebro wolne</i><br>rib free           |   |
| Spanish<br><i>costilla flotante</i><br>floating rib |  |   |

Arabic, Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish make the sense of FLOATING or SWAYING salient; Chinese, French (*flottante* appears twice, as it is a polysemous word in French, meaning both ‘floating’ and ‘loose’), German and Polish make use of the FREE or UNATTACHED aspect; while Greek, Russian and Spanish make use of FAKE or FALSE. Here we see a clear demonstration of metonymic, or ‘partial’, meaning making at work in the creation of terms for *floating rib* across languages.

The second term considered in this study was *rib cage*. Here, the same principle applies but the situation is more complex as the data fall into six categories, THORACIC BOX, THORACIC CAGE, CHEST CAGE, RIB CHEST, RIB CAGE, RIBS, as shown in Table 4.2 (below):

Table 4.2: 'rib cage'

| THORACIC<br>BOX                                    | CHEST CAGE                                      | RIB CHEST                                    |
|--|---|--|
| Spanish<br><i>caja torácica</i><br>box thoracic    | Arabic<br><i>kafas sadri</i><br>cage of-chest   | Dutch<br><i>ribbekast</i><br>rib chest       |
| THORACIC CAGE                                      | German<br><i>Brustkorb</i><br>chest cage/basket | RIB CAGE                                     |
| French<br><i>cage thoracique</i><br>cage thoracic  | Russian<br><i>grudnaya kletka</i><br>chest cage | Chinese<br><i>lèi-gǔ lóng-zi</i><br>rib cage |
| Greek<br><i>thorakikos klovos</i><br>thoracic cage |   | RIBS   |
| Italian<br><i>gabbia toracica</i><br>cage thoracic |   | Polish<br><i>żebra</i><br>ribs               |

Here, the idea of CAGE, modified by THORACIC, CHEST and RIB, accounts for seven of the languages represented in this study: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian and Russian; while the idea of BOX is the aspect used in Spanish; and RIBS, without any modifier, in Polish. Meaning making through metonymy allows the selection of certain aspects and the disregard of others, such that if there are enough aspects to choose from, it is possible for two languages to have arrived at terms which do not share any components, as is the case with English and Spanish, the English term being 'rib cage', the Spanish term being (literally) 'thoracic box'.

The third term for which data were collected was *answering machine*. Here three semantic categories emerge representing the aspects of ANSWER, RECORD and SECRETARY, as shown in Table 4.3 (below):

**Table 4.3: ‘answering machine’**

| ANSWER  | RECORD  | SECRETARY   |
|---|---|---|
| Arabic<br><i>Alat Alrad</i><br>machine of answering     | Chinese<br><i>lu yin dian hua</i><br>record telephone | Greek<br><i>aftómatos tilefonitis</i><br>automatic telephonist              |
| French<br><i>répondeur</i><br>answerer                  |   | Italian<br><i>segreteria telefonica</i><br>secretary’s office<br>telephonic |
| German<br><i>Anrufbeantworter</i><br>call answerer      |   | Portuguese<br><i>secretária electrônica</i><br>secretary electronic         |
| Spanish<br><i>contestador</i><br>answerer               |   |   |
| Russian<br><i>avtootvetchik</i><br>auto answer thing    |   |   |
| Urdu<br><i>machine-e-jawaab</i><br>machine of answering |   |   |

Arabic, French, German, Spanish, Russian and Urdu all use the aspect of ANSWERING, either modified by the equivalent of *-er* (French, German and Spanish), or expressed as a THING or MACHINE which ANSWERS (Arabic, Russian and Urdu). Chinese is the only language in the data to take the aspects of the device being a TELEPHONE and one which RECORDS. While the Greek, Italian and Portuguese terms approach the meaning through personification, an 'answering machine' being an automatic, electronic or telephonic SECRETARY or TELEPHONIST.

The fourth term considered in this study was *mobile phone*. Here, again, the data grouped into three distinct semantic areas, CELLULAR, PORTABLE and SMALL, as shown in Table 4.4 (below):

Table 4.4: ‘mobile phone’

| CELLULAR  | PORTABLE   | SMALL  |
|---|--|--|
| Arabic<br><i>telephone khilyawi</i><br>telephone cellular | Finnish<br><i>matkapuhelin</i><br>travel phone         | Chinese<br><i>shou ji</i><br>hand machine        |
| Italian<br><i>cellulare</i><br>cellular                   | French<br><i>portable</i><br>portable                  | German<br><i>Handy</i><br>handy                  |
| Polish<br><i>komórka</i><br>cell                          | Greek<br><i>kinitó</i><br>mobile                       | Italian<br><i>telefonino</i><br>telephone little |
| Portuguese<br><i>celular</i><br>cellular                  | Spanish<br><i>móvil</i><br>mobile                      |  |
| Russian<br><i>syotovoy telefon</i><br>honeycomb telephone | Urdu<br><i>haatif saafaree</i><br>telephone travelling |  |

Arabic, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian highlight the CELLULAR nature of the mobile-phone network; Finnish, French, Greek, Spanish and Urdu highlight the PORTABILITY of a mobile phone, the fact you can carry it with you; while Chinese, German and Italian highlight its SMALL size. These are three distinct areas of meaning, each one offering only a partial representation of the concept of ‘mobile phone’. It is interesting to note that Italian has two terms for ‘mobile phone’, *cellulare* and *telefonino*, one belonging in the CELLULAR group, the other to SMALL. This is so also in English, where *mobile* and *cell phone* are both current. A further category for mobile phone, which has not so far been included in this discussion, is exemplified by a now outdated term used in Chinese, *da ge da*, which means, literally, ‘big brother big’, coming from a time when mobiles were new and associated with flash entrepreneurs and gangsters. This is a cultural association with mobile phones which is also available for use in metonymic meaning making and which at the time in China was presumably thought to be a salient aspect.

Dictionary definitions, where you would perhaps expect to find a complete semantic description, surprisingly, are also partial, offering only certain aspects. The *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* defines a mobile phone in terms only of PORTABILITY: “a telephone which one can carry with one”; the entry in the *Macmillan English Dictionary* uses two aspects to define the mobile phone, PORTABLE and SMALL: “a small phone that you can carry around with you”; while the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* uses characteristics of the network and portability, but not size: “telephone which is connected to the telephone system by radio, rather than by a wire, and can therefore be used anywhere where its signal can be received”. Thus, the three aspects identified in the data discussed above across languages, CELLULAR, PORTABLE and SMALL, are not all found in any one of the dictionary definitions given above. The principle of metonymic meaning making applies as much to the evolution of a term in a language as it does to post hoc semantic descriptions in dictionaries.

## 4.2 Metonymy in Closer Focus

The huge growth in interest in metaphor, post the publication of Lakoff & Johnson’s seminal *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), has resulted in the emergence

of a massive literature on the subject and the birth of a coherent discipline which has come to be called Metaphor Studies (discussed in the previous chapter). From this academic interest in metaphor, a burgeoning interest in metonymy has occurred over recent years, especially the last ten, resulting in the formation of an impressive body of research, almost entirely from a cognitive linguistics perspective, enshrined in the volumes edited by Panther & Radden (1999b), Barcelona (2000), Dirven & Pörings (2002), and Panther, Thornburg & Barcelona (2009). These collections contain both reprints of classic articles (eg Goossens 1990, Croft 1993, Kövecses & Radden 1998) and new papers published in these volumes for the first time (eg Radden 2000, Riemer 2002b, Taylor 2002, Langacker 2009). Further articles also contribute to the body of metonymy literature (eg Langacker 1993, Radden 2005).

Seen collectively, the new writing on metonymy shows a consensus around a number of claims: that metonymy, like metaphor, is a conceptual phenomenon; that metonymy, like metaphor, is ubiquitous and plays a central and crucial role in conceptualization and communication; and that metonymy and metaphor can be identified as distinct though related phenomena. Metonymy is seen by some metonymy scholars not only to be *as* important but *more* important than metaphor. Radden considers metonymy to be “an even more pervasive phenomenon than metaphor”, being present “at all levels of linguistic structure” (Radden 2005:11). Taylor sees metonymy as “the most fundamental process of meaning extension, more basic, perhaps, even than metaphor” (Taylor 2002:325), and for Barcelona metonymy “is probably even more basic than metaphor in language and cognition” (Barcelona 2002:215). The plan of this thesis, moving as it does from a discussion of metaphor in Chapters 2 and 3 to a discussion of metonymy in Chapters 4 and 5, reflects these developments. The idea that metonymy is the more fundamental of the two concepts is confirmed by the Stack of Counters model of metaphor proposed in Chapter 3, in which metonymy, the ability to recognize part-whole relations, is shown to be the mechanism behind metaphor and the ability to metaphorize.

Radden observes that “the ubiquitous nature of metonymy has only recently been noticed” (Radden 2005:11), and Barcelona that “*metonymy* has not received as much attention as metaphor in cognitive linguistics” (Barcelona 2002:215). But if metonymy is so basic, why did the metonymy literature emerge so much later than the metaphor

literature, and why has there been less interest overall? The answer may be that it is often the case that more basic phenomena are discovered only when more complex and evident phenomena have been explored first. Exactly this occurred within metaphor studies: after publishing *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff & Johnson realized that in order to explain fully their ‘contemporary theory of metaphor’, it was necessary to introduce a concept more fundamental than conceptual metaphor, namely the ‘image schema’. Image schemas are the schematic representation in the mind of repeatedly encountered physical experiences, defined by Gibbs & Colston as “dynamic analog representations of spatial relations and movements in space” (Gibbs & Colston 1995:349). This concept allowed Johnson and Lakoff to explain how ‘source’ domains are mapped onto ‘target’ domains without flouting the principle of ‘invariance’: experiencing the world sets up schematic representations in the mind (image schemas) which help form the more detailed ‘cognitive models’; connections between cognitive models create conceptual metaphors via specific mappings; these are then expressed through lexicogrammar or multimodally.

Both authors examine image schemas in depth in the volumes they published independently in 1987 (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987b). Schemas are cognitive ‘primitives’, but it was conceptual metaphor which Johnson’s and Lakoff’s attention was drawn to first. Metonymy is present in this discussion in a further sense, as metonymy itself turns out to be one of the image schemas discussed by Johnson, the PART-WHOLE being an image schema discussed along with CONTAINMENT, CENTRE-PERIPHERY, PATH, LINK, BALANCE, CONTACT, SURFACE, FULL-EMPTY, MERGING, MATCHING, NEAR-FAR, MASS-COUNT, ITERATION and SUPERIMPOSITION (Johnson 1987). Image schemas are few in number because they are basic, and in any analytical framework, fundamental units tend to be few in number. Gibbs & Colston suggest there are “over two dozen different image schemas” when considering the work of Johnson and Lakoff together (Gibbs & Colston 1995:347), while Taylor identifies nine in his summary: CONTAINMENT, JOURNEY (origin-path-destination), PROXIMITY/DISTANCE, LINKAGE/SEPARATION, FRONT/BACK, PART-WHOLE, LINEAR ORDER, UP-DOWN ORIENTATION and MASS/MULTIPLEX (Taylor 2002:337-338). Even in Taylor’s overview where only nine image schemas are listed, PART-WHOLE is one of the nine, giving further confirmation that metonymy is fundamental to conceptualization. This leads us next to explore in more depth what the common and essential features of this basic

phenomenon are.

## A More Precise Ontology of Metonymy

Here, I discuss metonymy in more depth in order to arrive at a more precise ontology of metonymy and what distinguishes it from metaphor. The discussion centres around three main areas of interest: domain theory, the metonymy-metaphor continuum and typologies. I consider each of these in turn.

### DOMAIN THEORY

There is agreement in the literature that metonymy differs from metaphor in involving a single domain, while metaphor involves two domains. In the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Metonymy, this is called ‘domain theory’ (Dirven 2002a:15). For Lakoff, “metonymic mapping occurs within a single conceptual domain” (Lakoff 1987b:288), while metaphor involves “cross-domain mapping” (Lakoff 1993:203). Lakoff & Turner maintain that “metonymic mapping occurs within a single domain, not across domains” (Lakoff & Turner 1989:103). Kövecses & Radden (1998), Radden & Kövecses (1999) and Panther & Radden (2005:3) do not depart from this in their definitions but use a combination of terminology from traditional studies, ie ‘vehicle’ and ‘target’, alongside terms from cognitive linguistics, such as ‘cognitive process’, ‘conceptual entity’, ‘mental access’, ‘idealized cognitive model’:

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 Idealized Cognitive Model (Kövecses & Radden 1998:39, Radden & Kövecses 1999:21).

Warren also makes a connection back to traditional studies of figurative language, recasting ‘contiguity’ as “similarity in dissimilarity”:

the approach presented here is a further development of the traditional view that

metonymy involves contiguity, whereas metaphor involves seeing similarity in dissimilarity (Warren 2002:126).

Croft's often-cited paper attempts to refine this, suggesting that both involve mapping between domains, but that they are domains from the same 'domain matrix' in metonymy, and between different – and therefore unrelated – domains/domain matrices in metaphor (Croft 1993:348). Croft introduces the term 'domain matrix' (from Langacker) here in order to recognize that concepts are complex and represented in the mind by clusters of related domains; thus "We need new blood in this company" involves mapping between the two domains of BLOOD and PERSON, but this is metonymic because the domain BLOOD is within the domain matrix of PERSON (along with other domains, such as ARM, HEAD, SKIN, FINGER). Croft characterizes the nature of the mapping in metonymy as 'highlighting', reserving the term 'mapping' for metaphoric projections (Croft 1993:348).

Barcelona uses the term 'mapping' for both, otherwise his definition accords with Croft's: he defines both metonymy and metaphor as involving the mapping of a conceptual 'source' domain onto a conceptual 'target' domain, but distinguishes between them on the basis of whether the source and target are in the same 'functional domain' and whether they are linked by a 'pragmatic function'; thus, in metonymy "source and target are in the same functional domain and are linked by a pragmatic function"; while in metaphor source and target are either "in different functional domains" or "not linked by a pragmatic function" by being "in different taxonomic domains" (Barcelona 2002:246).

There are two significant differences between metonymy and metaphor which have not been emphasized so far in this discussion, both of which concern the nature of mappings: in metonymy there is usually just one mapping, where metaphor has several mappings; also, the mapping in metonymy can usually operate in both directions (source and target domains can be interchanged), while metaphoric mappings are strictly unidirectional, the source domain remaining constant. Barnden, a computational linguist, uses complexity of mappings and imaginary vs real as criteria for distinguishing between metonymy and metaphor (Barnden 2006). Metaphoric mappings go from (usually) a more concrete source domain to a more abstract target domain, eg

LIFE (target) IS A JOURNEY (source), while for metonymy, if a PART-WHOLE relation can be recognized, then the reverse, WHOLE-PART, will usually also be available. This is not always the case. Barcelona states simply that “a large number of metonymies are reversible” (Barcelona 2002:221). While for Kövecses & Radden, in their classification of metonymies into ‘sign’, ‘reference’ and ‘concept’ metonymies (that is metonymies operating on each of the three points of the semiotic triangle – discussed further in Chapter 5), it is only ‘concept metonymies’ which are reversible (Kövecses & Radden 1998:46).

Radden & Kövecses base their definition of metonymy on the notion of the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) – the encyclopaedic entry of an item in the mental lexicon – defining metonymy as a phenomenon which occurs *within* an ICM (Radden & Kövecses 1999:21). Each ICM offers three ‘ontological realms’, representing the three points of the semiotic triangle: ‘the world of reality’ (things and events), ‘the world of conceptualization’ and ‘the world of language’ (forms), all of which can give rise to metonymies (Radden & Kövecses 1999:20). “These realms roughly correspond to the three entities that comprise the well-known semiotic triangle as developed by Ogden and Richards [...] : thought, symbol and referent” (Radden & Kövecses 1999:23). The computations of these three ontological realms result in three types of metonymy, ‘sign’, ‘reference’ and ‘concept’ metonymies, and six metonymic relations within them: ‘sign metonymies’ (FORM FOR CONCEPT), ‘reference metonymies’ (FORM/CONCEPT FOR THING/EVENT; FORM FOR THING/EVENT; CONCEPT FOR THING/EVENT), and ‘concept metonymies’ (FORM/CONCEPT FOR FORM/CONCEPT; FORM/CONCEPT FOR CONCEPT) (Kövecses & Radden 1998:41-48; Radden & Kövecses 1999:28-29). Kövecses & Radden note that ‘sign’ and ‘reference’ metonymies do not offer bidirectional variants, while ‘concept’ metonymies do, and suggest that this is because concept metonymies do not cut across ontological realms in the way that sign and reference metonymies do (Kövecses & Radden 1998:46).

The distinctions discussed above, particularly the idea of metonymy involving connections within a single domain and metaphor involving connections between unrelated domains, are all ultimately reflections of the work of Jakobson and the distinction he made in his influential article of 1956 between relations of ‘contiguity’ and of ‘similarity’ (Jakobson 1971 [1956]). For Jakobson, ‘the metonymic way’

involves the combination of syntagmatically-associated items resulting in relations of contiguity; while ‘the metaphor way’ involves selection from among paradigmatically-associated items resulting in relations of similarity (Jakobson 1971 [1956]). On closer examination, equating syntagmatic relations to metonymy and paradigmatic relations to metaphor is just confusing (Dirven 2002b:87), as both relations are always present in all language items at all levels, whether metaphor, metonymy or literal language is involved. As Jakobson himself claims: “in normal verbal behaviour both processes are continually operative” (Jakobson 1971 [1956]:90). Lodge observes that although Jakobson argues that metonymy and metaphor are “opposed”, being “generated according to opposite principles”, they are related on a pragmatic level as both involve the principle of substitution (Lodge 1977:76). Towards the end of this essay, Jakobson seems to be giving in to this confusion by explaining metonymy in terms of selection rather than combination: “Jakobson ends up interpreting metonymy as relying on a ‘paradigmatic’ association by contiguity!” (Blank 1999:172). The term Jakobson favours to describe the nature of the relationship between vehicle and topic is ‘contiguity’ (Jakobson 1971 [1956]). Langacker considers the term ‘contiguity’ too vague and attempts to analyse it further in terms of features such as centrality vs peripheralness, profile vs base, basic vs abstract (Croft 1993:345). The term I have chosen with which to characterize metonymy in this thesis is ‘relatedness’. Like contiguity, it is not a precise term, but it has enough precision to define metonymy while being loose enough to embrace all the phenomena I wish to consider together in this thesis.

#### THE METONYMY-METAPHOR CONTINUUM

Here, I consider whether metonymy and metaphor are related but distinct phenomena, or whether there is a metonymy-metaphor continuum with intermediate points along it. Riemer refers to this debate as the ‘demarcation question’ (Riemer 2002b:380-388). For many scholars, metonymy is not even distinct but simply a type of metaphor, classified by subsuming it under the heading of metaphor. Aristotle identifies four types of metaphor in his famous definition in the *Poetics*, but three of these are strictly speaking metonymies, ‘genus to species’, ‘species to genus’ and ‘species to species’, only the fourth, ‘analogy’, being true metaphor (Al-Sharafi 2004:13). Searle sees metonymy and

synecdoche as “special cases of metaphor” and adds them to his “list of metaphorical principles” (Searle 1993:107). Halliday’s discussion of ‘grammatical metaphor’ is really a discussion of metonymy achieved through zero derivation (Halliday 1994:342).

It is Jakobson who reduces the list of classical tropes to two in his famous essay on aphasia (Jakobson 1971 [1956]), but although he presents metaphor and metonymy as opposing ‘poles’, entitling the explorative Section 5 of his essay ‘The metaphoric and metonymy poles’ (Jakobson 1971 [1956]:90), Jakobson is more concerned with keeping them apart than exploring the metonymy-metaphor continuum. As Dirven observes:

Jakobson was far more interested in opposing metaphor and metonymy and, in fact, he did not much bother about the idea of a continuum, on which metonymy and metaphor can be supposed to meet and to develop (Dirven 2002a:4).

How can we distinguish between metonymic and metaphoric linguistic expressions? Gibbs offers us a test in order to do this, his ‘like’ test, where expressions are reformulated by adding ‘like’ (Gibbs 1994:322). If the expression still makes sense, we are dealing with metaphor, if not it is metonymy. Thus, *It is like a chest cage* (in the example for ‘rib cage’ given earlier) makes sense, but CREDIT CARDS are like plastic, does not (they are made of plastic); similarly, a TV is not like a small screen, it has a small screen as one of its parts; nor is the ROYAL FAMILY like *Buckingham Palace*, but rather the building is used to stand for the family. There are many other ways of signalling metaphor other than *like*, eg *as if, so to speak, metaphorically speaking, the proverbial*, etc (Goatly 1997:168-197). Also, although Gibbs’ ‘like test’ is useful, it is suited to nouns, other tests being needed for other parts of speech: for examples, for verbs, the ‘as if’ test and for adjectives, the ‘as if it were’ test (Glucksberg 2001:50). Even for nouns, *like* is not unproblematic. As Glucksberg observes, both metaphor and metonymy involve the concept of ‘likeness’, the difference between them being a matter of degree, ie *how ‘like’* they are (Glucksberg 2001:40). To compare two things is to look for ‘likeness’ between them, but metonymy is a comparison between two concepts which are alike, while metaphor is a comparison between two concepts which are not alike.

In the colloquial use of *like*, such as “It is like we went to the shopping mall and like

met up with friends”, *like* is used to indicate metonymy. We can conjecture that a speaker who uses *like* in this way intends to give the impression that the activities they are engaging in are ‘something like’ rather than exactly those stated, perhaps because simply “going to the mall and meeting up with friends” sounds too banal, too ‘uncool’. Also, because there can be degrees of likeness, examples will emerge which are intermediate, such as *cherry tomato*. Is this metonymy or metaphor? ‘Cherries’ and ‘tomatoes’ are both foods, round, red, shiny and juicy (thus related metonymically because they share certain categories) but different in other respects, such as size, sweetness, internal structure, lobing, etc (making comparisons between them metaphorical). Radden proposes another test, the ‘but test’, where a clause with *but* is added to introduce a counter expectation, thus “Sheila is a mother of three children but she doesn’t work” provides unexpected information, because WORKING is not a prototypical attribute of *mother* and could therefore not be used to access MOTHER metonymically (Radden 2005:12-13).

The idea that there can be degrees of relatedness has prompted scholars to propose the existence of a metonymy-metaphor continuum, eg Al-Sharafi (2004), Deignan (2005) and Radden (2000), and to verify that this continuum exists by looking for points intermediate along it. Radden gives five examples with *high*, which form a cline from literal through metonymic to metaphoric; they are: *high tower/high tide/high temperature/high prices/high quality* (Radden 2005:24). For him, *high tower* is literal, *high temperature* is metonymic and *high quality* is metaphoric; while *high tide* is intermediate between literal and metonymic and *high prices* is intermediate between metonymic and metaphoric. This is a successful approach, I feel, as although *high* is polysemous, and this is what these examples show, graded meaning is revealed by the combinations it forms.

The metonymy-metaphor continuum can be illustrated by the behaviour of words in various noun-noun compounds. If we rank noun-noun compounds of *champagne* from the most literal to the most metaphoric, we would get a sequence like this: LITERAL (a glass of) *champagne/champagne cocktail/champagne flute/champagne breakfast/champagne pullover* (ie colour)/ *champagne lifestyle/champagne socialist* METAPHORIC (examples from the Cobuild corpus, [www.cobuild.collins.co.uk](http://www.cobuild.collins.co.uk) <accessed November 2003>). Similarly, compounds of *sandwich* gives a sequence like this: LITERAL

*sandwich filling/ sandwich knife/ sandwich shop/ sandwich counter/ sandwich man/ sandwich board/ sandwich course* METAPHORIC (examples from the Cobuild corpus, as above). Warren points out that noun-noun compounds tend not to be compositional because metonymic narrowing has already been set up in creating the compound; as Warren says for her example *foxholes*: “not all holes which have foxes in them are foxholes” (Warren 1999:125). This seems to me to offer evidence enough that metonymy and metaphor are related phenomena and that there is a metonymy-metaphor continuum with intermediate points along the continuum.

Scholars who have explored phenomena intermediate between metonymy and metaphor include Goossens (1990), Bartsch (2002), Riemer (2002a, 2002b) and Dirven (2002b). Goossens investigates the interaction between metonymy and metaphor in conventionalized figurative expressions and identifies four categories of ‘metaphtonymy’ in his data: ‘metaphor from metonymy’, ‘metonymy within metaphor’, ‘metaphor within metonymy’ and ‘demetonymization in a metaphorical context’ (Goossens 1990). Goossens has observed that many metaphoric expressions clearly derive from metonyms, such as *close-lipped* (to mean secretive), *tongue in cheek* (not in earnest), etc, and has coined the term ‘metaphor from metonymy’ to describe them (Goossens 1990). ‘Here the physical reality of having ‘lips which are close together’ or ‘your tongue in your cheek’ are part and parcel of the behaviour associated with the expressions. ‘Metaphor from metonymy’ is the most common category of Goossens’ four categories of ‘metaphtonymy’ (expressions in which metonymy and metaphor interact) according to Deignan’s study of corpus data (Deignan 2005).

Another of Goossens’ metaphtonymy categories is ‘metonymy within metaphor’, where a metonymic element is embedded in a metaphoric expression, eg *to shoot your mouth off*, in which mouth stands for speech (metonymy) and the expression as a whole means to reveal a secret (metaphor). ‘Metonymy within metaphor’ is not intermediate between metonymy and metaphor, but rather where both metonymy and metaphor coexist in the same expression while remaining distinct (Goossens 1990). In fact, in all his examples, metonymy and metaphor remain distinct phenomena appearing together, and so do not contribute to our understanding of the metonymy-metaphor continuum. This is so too for Bartsch who identifies, ‘double metonymy’, a combination rather than a blending of tropes, eg *Wall Street is in panic*, where a ‘metonymic chain’ can be identified within

the same expression, namely PLACE FOR INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE (Bartsch 2002).

Goossens' work is complicated by the fact that he looks at conventional expressions and thus is not concerned with metonymic processing as such but rather the historical evidence of it. Important phenomena which two of Goossens' categories do highlight, however, are: the metonymic basis of metaphor, eg *tight lipped* and *beat your breast* ('metaphor from metonymy'); and the embedding of metonymies in metaphorical expressions ('metonymy within metaphor'), eg *the hand* (= person) *that rocks the cradle rules the world* (Goossens 1990). Metaphor from metonymy is an idea which Kövecses & Radden explore, claiming that "many conceptual metaphors derive from conceptual metonymies", such as ANGER IS HEAT (Kövecses & Radden 1998:61). Kövecses understands this as coming about through a chain of conceptual metonymies: ANGER CAUSES BODY HEAT, BODY HEAT CAUSES HEAT (Kövecses 2002:156). Radden sees the embodiment of experience of the world as motivating this process and involving particularly 'primary metaphors': basically all the metaphors which Lakoff claims are grounded in our experience can be traced back to a metonymic basis (Radden 2005:25).

Riemer, in his attempt to understand the metonymy-metaphor continuum, identifies points which are intermediate between 'plain' metonymy and 'plain' metaphor (Riemer 2002a, 2002b). The terms he coins in the first article both involve the process of conventionalization: 'hypermetonymy', the extension of the meaning of a metonymy through conventionalization without invoking a metaphorical process; and 'hypermetaphor', the extension of the meaning of a metaphor through conventionalization without invoking a metonymic process (Riemer 2002a). In the second article, he proposes further terms which involve modification through generalization and conventionalization: 'post-metonymy', a generalization of a metonymy beyond its normal use, eg *Don't knock it until you've tried it*; and 'post-metaphor', an expression which loses metaphoric qualities through conventionalization, eg *kick someone out of his flat* (Riemer 2002b).

Dirven presents Riemer's categories diagrammatically on a cline – metonymy/ post-metonymy/ post-metaphor/ metaphor – but also adds further points along the cline – 'literalness', 'modulation' and 'frame variation' (Dirven 2002b:107), concluding that one principle, 'conceptual closeness/distance', is enough to place all these phenomena,

convincingly illustrated through the use of data around the lexeme *tea*:

the distinction between conceptual closeness and conceptual distance seems to be powerful enough to account both for the different levels of figurativity within metonymy and for those between metonymy and metaphor (Dirven 2002b:99).

I think what is important to recognize in Riemer's rather complicated accounts is the significance of 'metonymy in metaphor', the move from metonymy to metaphor through conventionalization, as this is a widespread phenomenon. To use my own example, the expression *man of cloth* to mean PRIEST may once have been metonymic, in that priests were perhaps those members of a community who were able to wear fine weaves and this was something which distinguished them. Now the expression is a 'dead' metonymy (in that it is no longer transparent), understood metaphorically as priests nowadays are just as likely to wear tracksuits.

In this context, I propose that a test for measuring metonymic processing effort could be developed. This would take the form of an 'overlap coefficient', a measurement of the degree of similarity between (real or virtual) utterances. This measurement of the 'strength' of a metonymy could be judged by a panel of informants, the 'degree of overlap' being expressed on a scale from 1 to 5. This could also be used to test for 'break points', ie where the overlap coefficient is so small that the link between source and target can no longer be identified and the connection cannot be processed metonymically. Gibbs & Colston use a technique similar to this in an experiment in which they ask participants to assess the degree of relatedness between thirty-two senses of the lexeme *stand* relative to five image schemas (Gibbs & Colston 1995:352-353).

## TYPOLOGIES

Many attempts have been made to classify metonymies, Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Nerlich et al (1999), Radden & Kövecses (1999) and Kövecses (2002), for example. One can assume these scholars are working from the premise that making a complete list of possible metonymic relations is part and parcel of achieving an understanding of what metonymy is. While the cognitive approach to metaphor is a relatively recent development, the literature on metonymy has always taken what might be called a

‘cognitive’ approach (though traditional rhetoricians would never have referred to it as such), in that even earlier work on metonymy attempted to classify metonymy into types rather than considering them as individual linguistic items. Radden & Kövecses suggest that the names given to types of metonymy by traditional rhetoricians are not unlike the terms given by cognitive linguistics now:

Unlike metaphor, metonymy has always been described in conceptual, rather than purely linguistic, terms. In analyzing metonymic relationships, traditional rhetoric operated with general conceptual notions such as CAUSE FOR EFFECT, CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS, etc. (Radden & Kövecses 1999:17)

The difference is that cognitivists see these classes as mental categories which connect to other cognitive processes (and have the potential of being expressed multimodally), while more traditional approaches see them as a classification of linguistic items out in the world of speech and text.

In the literature, typologies abound. Schifko classifies metonymies into ‘spatial’, ‘temporal’ and ‘causal’ (Blank 1999:169); Al-Sharafi lists nine types (Al-Sharafi 2004:3); Norrick lists eighteen (Nerlich et al 1999:363-364); while Radden & Kövecses calculate that linguists/cognitive linguists propose as many as forty-six different types (Radden & Kövecses 1999). These taxonomies show the variety of metonymic relations which exist and show how heterogeneous ‘contiguity’ is. They classify metonymies into broad relational categories, such as PART FOR WHOLE, PLACE FOR THE EVENT, EFFECT FOR CAUSE, CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED, PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, AGENT FOR ACTION. It would be hard to identify this as a list compiled by a traditional rhetorician or a modern-day cognitive linguist. Rhetoricians and cognitive linguists have in common that they explore the systematicity of metonymy.

Blank offers a ‘cognitive typology’ of metonymy in which different types of contiguity are explored (Blank 1999); while Seto uses spatial, temporal and abstract E- and C- relations (a distinction between metonymic, or ‘category’, and synecdochic, or ‘entity’ relations) as the basis for his classification (Seto 1999). Nerlich et al cite nine classifications, including those of Nyrop, Esnault, Stern and Ullmann, though favouring the typology of Norrick as being most complete:

Group I: CAUSE – EFFECT, PRODUCER – PRODUCT; NATURAL SOURCE – NATURAL PRODUCT, INSTRUMENT – PRODUCT; Group II: OBJECT – ACT, INSTRUMENT – ACT, AGENT – ACT, AGENT – INSTRUMENT; Group III: PART – WHOLE, ACT – COMPLEX ACT, CENTRAL FACTOR – INSTITUTION; Group IV: CONTAINER – CONTENT, LOCALITY – OCCUPANT, COSTUME – WEARER; Group V: EXPERIENCE – CONVENTION, MANIFESTATION – DEFINITION; Group VI: POSSESSOR – POSSESSION, OFFICE HOLDER – OFFICE (Nerlich et al 1999:363-364).

There are seven categories of metonymy in Lakoff & Johnson's list, PART FOR WHOLE, PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, OBJECT USED FOR USER, CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED, INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE, PLACE FOR INSTITUTION and PLACE FOR EVENT (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:38). These are not only categories of metonymy but conceptual metonymies themselves. Kövecses adds a further six relations to Lakoff & Johnson's list: WHOLE FOR THE PART, INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION, EFFECT FOR CAUSE, DESTINATION FOR MOTION, PLACE FOR PRODUCT and TIME FOR ACTION (Kövecses 2002:145), and gives an index of conceptual metonymies and metaphors (Kövecses 2002:281-285). We find a "List of Conceptual Metonymy" at the end of the Panther & Radden volume (Panther & Radden 1999b:419-423) and a "Metonymy and Metaphor Index" at the end of the Panther et al edited volume (Panther et al 2009:403-406).

If we look at the 'metonymy and metaphor index' at the end of Panther et al (2009), there are more than a hundred conceptual metonymies listed in the metonymy section (Panther et al 2009:403-405). Can we consider this list to be complete? Probably not, as this list was compiled for the purpose of indexing the conceptual metonymies discussed in the volume, not providing a comprehensive list. Also, as Brdar observes, conceptual metonymies like conceptual metaphors are not necessarily universal, so identifying conceptual metonymies in one culture does not necessarily mean they will apply cross-culturally (Brdar 2009:261). Like Kövecses and Panther & Radden, Panther et al use a convention whereby metonymies are named in the format SOURCE FOR TARGET, while metaphors (a separate list) are named in the format TARGET IS SOURCE:

In this index we follow the widespread convention of notating metonymies as SOURCE FOR TARGET and metaphors as TARGET IS SOURCE (Panther et al 2009:403).

Among the metonymies are BEING AT A LOCATION FOR MOVEMENT TO THE LOCATION, CAPABILITY TO DO ACTION FOR ACTION, CONCEPT FOR IDEOLOGY, DESTINATION FOR MOTION, FRUIT FOR FRUIT TREE, NON-CONTROL FOR PROBLEMATIC COLLECTIVE ACTION, RELATION FOR CONCOMITANT SUB-RELATION and SOUL FOR EMOTIONS, though the authors add that these hundred plus metonymies are essentially of three overall categories, WHOLE FOR PART, PART FOR WHOLE and PART FOR PART:

Most metonymies in this index are of the WHOLE FOR PART, PART FOR WHOLE, or PART FOR PART types, but are not classified into these types because this classification is normally quite obvious and because not all metonymies can be grouped under these types (Panther et al 2009:403).

A limitation of these taxonomies is that they are not comprehensive and never will be, as there will always be new associations to add to the list. Also, classification gives an artificial sense of categories being clearcut, while utterances often fall into more than one category, eg ‘blood’ in *We need new blood* could be seen as both a PART or an ASPECT.

Taxonomies can also distract us away from questions of more consequence, such as attempting to understand the mechanism and motivation behind metonymy – the main concern of this thesis. For the present research, the problem is not so much classifying metonymies into types, but rather making a distinction between conventional use and novel use. Most of the discussions in the literature concern ready-made signs, that is, words, compounds or phrases which are already part of the corpus of a language. While these are certainly of great interest in revealing metonymic processes which have occurred in the past, they tell us little about the mental process in communication. As Gibbs observes, “People may [...] comprehend conventional metonymic language without necessarily drawing metonymic mappings” (Gibbs 1999:74). A similar observation was made regarding metaphor in Chapter 3, which led to revealing metonymy as the mechanism behind active metaphorization, presented in my Stack of Counters model.

This chapter has developed a general theory of metonymy. I have shown that the ability

to recognize relatedness has a wide reach, playing an important role in conceptualization, in the language system and in communication. Metonymy is important in defining categories, in pragmatic inferencing and enabling literal and metaphoric meaning as well as metonymic meaning to be expressed. I also develop a more precise ontology of metonymy, exploring domain theory, the metaphor-metonymy continuum and typologies of metonymy. In the next chapter, I look the role played by the active use of metonymic mapping in communication and the strikingly conspicuous role metonymy plays in various cultural and social activities, which seem to have no other purpose other than to fulfil a ludic or recreational function, a sense of play and an enjoyment of metonymy for its own sake.

## 5 Metonymy in Culture and Recreation

The previous chapter has considered metonymy as a phenomenon in conceptualization, in the language system and in communication. In this chapter, I look first at the use of metonymy in giving nuance, emphasis and spin. I suggest that this is the key to explaining the flexibility of linguistic communication and why language suits our social purposes so well. I then look at the conspicuous role played by metonymy in personal and popular culture and recreational activities. I consider pursuits such as games, puzzles and jokes, activities which are inessential in one sense, but which are nonetheless important in our lives, certainly when we consider them in terms of the time, money and enthusiasm invested in them. They have in common that all have at their centre the exploration of metonymy for its own sake. I consider the following categories in turn: lookalikes, TV quiz shows, humour, formal metonymy, alternative names, family expressions and avoiding cooperation. I suggest that the surprising prominence of metonymy in these activities indicates an emotional acknowledgement of the importance of metonymy in the more practical aspects of our lives.

### 5.1 The Use of Metonymy to Give Nuance, Emphasis and Spin

In the introduction to this thesis (Chapter 1) I gave examples of metonymy occurring in everyday interactions, which I had collected in my notebooks during a two-day period over New Year 2010. They included a discussion about the short form of a name, the solutions to crossword clues, the etymology of the word *buff*, and so on. All involved the identification of part-whole relations for their success. Here, I offer some further examples taken again from my data notebooks. These illustrate just how widespread and diverse metonymic processing is in everyday interaction. These data include conventionalized expressions, such as *pay with plastic*, *the small screen*, *white-collar worker*, *scratch card*, *go for a bite*, *a roof over your head*, *fight tooth and nail*, *head for the door*, *win hearts and minds*, *go under the knife*, *slap and tickle*, *bums on seats*, *get money from the hole in the wall*; expressions, such as *prick and ping* ‘ready meals’ (the

containers are ‘pricked’ with a fork and the microwave ‘pings’ when the meal is ready); and proverbs, such as *The pen is mightier than the sword*.

There are also shop names in my data, where a salient feature is used to identify the type of business, such as *Fags and Mags* (tobacconist/newsagent), *Scissors* (hairdresser), *Wasabi* (Japanese food); publications, such as *Decanter* (about wine), *Bricks and Mortar* (about property) and *Click!* (about IT); and product slogans, such as “Snap, Crackle and Pop” for the breakfast cereal *Rice Krispies*. There is the device in the comedy TV series, *Friends*, where episodes are named by identifying a salient feature of each episode, eg “The one where Ross finds out”, “The one where Joey speaks French”, “The one with the male nanny”. The Reg Keeland English translations of Steig Larsson’s ‘trilogy’ have metonymically related titles – *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest* – although the originals do not.

There are also expressions for identifying a particular behaviour by naming a person famous for that behaviour, such as *do a Ratner*, after jewellery chain owner Gerald Ratner joked that his products were ‘total crap’, causing the company to suffer losses; *do a Burberry*, to turn a company around in the way the designer Christopher Bailey took Burberry from a traditional clothing company to a fashionable designer label. Gibbs and Aitchison give the same examples: *do a Liz Taylor* and *do a Napoleon* (Gibbs 1993:261, Aitchison 1994:154); while Goatly gives the behaviour of the Manchester United footballer Cantona as an example (Goatly 1997:168).

Original metonymies of this sort are understood because any complex entity offers a number of features, each of which can potentially be isolated and used to give access to the entity as a whole. Langacker sees metonymy as an ‘active-zone’ or ‘reference-point’ phenomenon, one which allows the speaker to highlight a particular aspect of a complex entity (Langacker 1993:30-31); ‘explicit indications’ allowing mental access to concepts rather than being determinist encodings of them:

Explicit indications evoke conceptions that merely provide mental access to elements with the potential to be connected in specific ways, but the details have to be established on the basis of other considerations (Langacker 2009:46).

Radden sees this as following a general metonymic principle of SALIENT PROPERTY FOR A BUNDLE OF PROPERTIES (Radden 2005:19). As Barcelona puts it:

The inferential nature of metonymy, ie its role in activating the implicit pre-existing connection of a certain element of knowledge or experience to another one, also explains its ubiquity and its multilevel nature (from morphemes in some cases to text) (Barcelona 2005:42).

A single entity may be identified metonymically in a number of different ways just by choosing which feature to make salient. Cruse gives the example of *car*, which combined with different verbs emphasizes the exterior in “wash a car”, the interior in “vacuum-clean a car” and the motor-vehicular mechanics in “service a car” (Taylor 2002:325). Taylor himself gives the example of *door*, which can be given the emphases of door as ‘an aperture’, as ‘a physical plane’, and as ‘a means of entry/exit’, depending on the verb it is combined with, ie “walk through a door”, “paint a door” and “lock a door” (Taylor 2002:326-327).

To give an example of my own, organizers of public events have the option of selling tickets which are numbered or unnumbered. There is a whole variety of ways in which we could express the idea of unnumbered tickets, thanks to our ability to process metonymically. It can be expressed as: *free seating, unreserved seats, unnumbered tickets, general admission, no seat allocation*; more conversationally as, *tickets sold on a first-come-first-served basis, sit anywhere*; or even more informally *a free for all*. On tickets for an event I attended, the organizer had printed *General Admission*, a choice probably made for good reasons, such as avoiding the negative connotations of ‘un-’ (eg *unreserved*) or ‘no’ (eg *no seat allocation*), avoiding the potentially misleading association of ‘free’ (eg *free seating*), and benefiting from *general admission* sounding ‘official’.

Another example I offer here is the practice of selling food and drinks on trains from a trolley pushed along the aisle. This can also be expressed in a variety of different ways, *refreshment service, trolley service, aisle service, seat-side service*, all identifying a salient feature and giving mental access to the phenomenon as a whole. The usage I noted in my data for one UK train company was *at-seat service* – “An at-seat service of light refreshments is available on board this train”.

As Gibbs states, “Metonymy is a fundamental part of our conceptual system. People take on a well-understood or easily perceived aspect of something to represent or stand for the things as a whole” (Gibbs 1994:319-320). Similarly, for Langacker: “A well-chosen metonymic expression lets us mention one entity that is salient and easily coded, and thereby evoke – essentially automatically – a target that is either of lesser interest or harder to name” (Langacker 1993:30). Metonymy clearly has an important role in referring. For some scholars, metonymy is no more than referring; Knowles & Moon, for example, for whom it is simply “about *referring*: a method of naming or identifying something” (Knowles & Moon 2006:54). Lakoff & Johnson, in contrast, have always recognized that metonymy is more than referring, as this statement from *Metaphors We Live By* shows:

metonymy is not merely a referential device. It also serves the function of providing understanding. [...] Which part we pick out determines which aspect of the whole we are focusing on. When we say that we need some *good heads* on the project, we are using “good heads” to refer to “intelligent people”. [...] The point is not just to use a part (head) to stand for the whole (person) but rather to pick out a particular characteristic of the person. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:36)

This is the great power of metonymy, its use in *focussing* and picking out particular characteristics. This applies as much to actions and events as it does to entities, ie verb phrases as well as noun phrases. Radden uses the term ‘event metonymy’, where an action or event is involved, described by a verb phrase; and ‘referential metonymy’, where an entity is involved, described by a noun phrase (Radden 2008a). Lakoff gives examples of how you might describe how you got to a party, eg *I hopped on a bus, I borrowed my brother’s car, I just stuck out my thumb*, observing that they all rely on the identification of a sub-event within the event for their representation (Lakoff 1987b:78-79). Gibbs makes the same point with the exchange, “*How did you get to the airport?*” “*I waved down a taxi.*” (Gibbs 1994:327). Seto gives examples of expressions which represent being ill and being well metonymically: *She can hardly get out of bed and to be up and about* (Seto 1999:106).

Metonymy gives alternative ways of saying things. The expression *dual fuel* in eg *dual fuel cookers* (gas hob and electric oven) and *dual fuel energy bills* (one company supplying both gas and electricity) is one of many possible ways of expressing this idea;

the expression *kerbside collection* for the collection of rubbish for recycling by local authorities from each house rather than a common drop-off point is again just one of many possible ways of describing this practice. Of interest in these two examples, *dual fuel* and *kerbside collection*, is that these choices involve a further layer of metonymy, as both introduce ‘formal metonymies’ (also ‘phonic metonymies’), where two elements within the expression are related in form (rather than function). The idea of rhyme as metonymy (formal metonymy) is an idea explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

We have seen above that metonymy can choose one of a number of different parts of a complex phenomenon in order to identify that phenomenon. This is useful in naming, but it is also useful in another respect. The fact that there is a *choice* of element opens up a hugely powerful tool. It means that a wide spectrum of subtle and closely nuanced meanings is made available to the speaker, as each metonymic choice represents a different emphasis/focus within a more generalized domain. Said simply, it gives us the opportunity of giving ‘spin’ to what you say, describing government policy in terms of *efficiency savings* or *swingeing cuts* for example.

Radden compares expressions meaning ‘to drive’ and observes that *sitting behind the steering wheel* has a different emphasis to *having wheels*; the former emphasizes the monotony of driving, while the latter emphasizes mobility and freedom (Radden 2008a). A similar contrast can be seen in an example from my own data between *I am moving house* and *I am being re-housed*, where the former suggests autonomy, the latter passivity, choosing where to live on the open market versus being given a home by the state when one becomes available. Other examples in my data of how event metonymies give emphasis are: referring to the inaugural ceremony for Barack Obama, “When he goes up those steps to the Capitol”; members of the England rugby team, discussing qualifying for a European Rugby tournament to be held in Spain, talk about their hopes of “getting on that plane to Spain”. Other examples, both of which emphasize the physical action of doing something rather than a mental effort: “I’ll just get your details up on screen” and “You’ve only got to pick up the phone” (Croft & Cruse 2004:215).

We could call this emphasis ‘fine-tuning’, ‘nuance’ or ‘spin’; but whatever we call it, it is this resource, I believe, which gives language its huge flexibility and expressive

range. Metonymy multiplies the range of what can be expressed while remaining within the conventionalized linguistic resources of ready-made signs. It is working within and beyond the ‘code’. It also gives us strategies for making meaning by extending the lexicon when ready-made signs are not available, or simply covering over gaps because existing signs cannot be retrieved in time or have not yet been learnt. As Nerlich et al put it:

Metonymies are used by children to cover up gaps in their tiny lexicons, whereas creative metonymies are used to express something new by not using the already available words in their lexicons (Nerlich et al 1999:367).

Metonymy thus makes a virtue of indeterminacy. It makes accessible the ‘middle ground’ between deterministic encoding/decoding, of which there is an element in any language, and the extensions of the lexicon achieved by making associations between things which are unrelated, ie metaphor. It makes fine-tuning possible, or, as Langacker puts it, allows us to get the right address not just the right neighbourhood:

Explicit linguistic coding gets us into the right neighborhood [...] but from there we have to find the right address by some other means (Langacker 2009:46).

Although, for Langacker, “indeterminacy rears its ugly head even in mundane examples of the most basic and seemingly straightforward constructions” (Langacker 2009:48), “metonymy [...] should not be seen as a problem but as part of the solution” (Langacker 2009:69).

## Metonymy in Context

Here I present further examples of metonymy in order to show how powerful a tool metonymy is in more pragmatic ‘meaning in situation’ contexts from my data notebooks. A passenger asking a bus driver “Do you go down Oxford Street?” intends with this to ask whether the *bus* will go down Oxford Street; a customer asking a shop assistant “What time do you close?” is asking what time the *store* closes; a customer speaking on the phone to the switchboard of a department store who asks “Could I speak to cookers, please” means ‘could I speak to someone in the department selling

cookers?’; a mother might explain “I have three children, 13, 7 and 5”, their ages, clearly, not their names – in another context she might have said her children were “clarinet, guitar and piano” or given the names of the schools they attend to identify them, if these characteristics had been salient in the discourse. These are all examples of commonly-used situationally-motivated metonymies: PERSON FOR VEHICLE, PERSON FOR ESTABLISHMENT, PERSON FOR DEPARTMENT, AGE FOR PERSON, OCCUPATION FOR PERSON, etc. They are so common that many would be surprised to have them identified as instances of figurative language. Often they are shorthand versions of ideas which would take longer utterances to express, but which metonymy allows us to ‘skip over’. Radden & Kövecses give the example *lighting the Christmas tree* for ‘lighting the candles on the Christmas tree’, observing that this “does not strike us as unnatural” (Radden & Kövecses 1999:31). The use of a characteristic of a person to get their attention is another common use of situational metonymy, such as *Hey Diana Ross!* or *Hey Smiler!* The characteristic of the person – looking like the singer Diana Ross or smiling a lot – replaces the more conventional way of hailing someone by using their name. Other examples: *The first violin has the flu*, ie the person in an orchestra who has this role (Panther & Radden 1999a:9). *He's sales. I'm IT. I'm Russian icons. I'm ceramics. I'm continuing education*, where a person is identified through the department they work for within an institution or company. Use is made of the metonymy SALIENT CHARACTERISTIC FOR PERSON.

In discourse and text, metonymy can create its own register (explored in depth in the next chapter). In a review of a TV spy documentary, the reviewer says “I thought we'd see beads of sweat on upper lips at border crossings, that sort of thing, but we didn't”, using metonymy over a longer stretch of language than just a clause (*Saturday Review*, BBC Radio 4, June 2010). Similarly, a discussion on a news programme starts from an item which informs us that the ‘trip hop’ pop duo *Massive Attack* is dismayed that their music is favoured by the middle-classes as background music to dinner parties (‘Today’ *BBC Radio 4*, June 2010, nd). The discussion is between a social observer and a music expert, and the feeling we have is that we are waiting for one of the contributors to give a metonymy which will ‘nail’ the paradox already flagged up in the news item. It inevitably comes. One of the contributors says “The dinner-party guests will be sitting there listening to Amy Winehouse [a British pop musician, now deceased] while tucking into the seafood linguini”. This is extended in formulae often used in conversation of the

types ‘a cross between X and Y’, ‘X meets Y’ and ‘one part X, one part Y’, where a blend of two metonymic meanings helps the speaker eg “It’s a cross between *Hair* and *Sunset Boulevard* for the under thirties”, “The end result is Jeremy Kyle meets Gladiators with Big Brother auditions thrown in” (‘Style Extra’, *London Metro*, 3 June 2010, p53) and “He has been described as one part Morrissey, one part Mahler” (‘Seven’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 June 2010, p8). The archetypical examination/essay question in education, “compare and contrast”, requires metonymic thought for its execution. It asks the student to compare entities, ie look for relatedness between them, eg democracy and communism, China and India; it also asks them to contrast them, but to contrast is effectively looking for the absence of relatedness, thus both ‘comparing’ and ‘contrasting’ are metonymic. Another example of metonymy playing a role in structuring knowledge is Mendeleev’s ‘periodic table’. This is an arrangement of the chemical elements in a table on the basis of two types of relatedness, represented by two axes, vertically according to common chemical properties and horizontally according to the number of protons in the series.

The most discussed metonymy in the literature is surely *Ham sandwich is waiting for his check*, mentioned by Lakoff & Johnson (1980:35) and discussed extensively in the literature since. Here we have an extension of the metonymic principle of a part or attribute standing for the whole, to a feature peripherally associated with that person in that particular situation standing for the person as a whole. Other classic examples are: in a hospital context, *The appendectomy is in theatre* and, in a hotel context, *Room 44 hasn't had her drycleaning yet*. Some scholars call them ‘situational’ metonymies, others ‘extrinsic’ metonymies, eg Croft & Cruse (2004:217), but because the ham sandwich example is so discussed, we could just as well call them ‘ham-sandwich metonymies’. These metonymies are not novel metonymies any more than “Hey, You, Diana Ross!” or “Hey Smiler!”, as they do not involve the exploration of a new conceptual metonymy. An example in my data is *Question Time* on BBC TV (‘Question Time’, *BBC1 TV*, nd), a political debate where a panel of speakers answers questions from the audience. The members of the audience, whose questions are chosen, are identified by name; the members of the audience who are chosen to air their comments on the topics are identified by their location in the hall and by what they are wearing, eg “Can we have the blue jumper in the back row”, “The woman in the striped jacket first”. Ruiz de Mendoza makes a distinction between ‘source-in-target’ and ‘target-in-source’

metonymies (Ruiz de Mendoza 2000), but neither of these really applies to ham-sandwich metonymies. The target is not in the source, and neither is the source in the target, instead the source is in the *context*, and so the metonymic principle could be represented thus: SALIENT FEATURE IN THE CONTEXT FOR PERSON.

### Triangle of Tropes

What we see emerging is a ‘triangle of tropes’, three resources available for expressing ideas, a literal, a metonymic and a metaphoric means. This is not equivalent to Seto’s ‘cognitive triangle’ of metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche (Nerlich et al 1999:367). Often, there will be ‘room’ in the lexicon for all three. The idea of one word having many meanings (polysemy) is of course familiar, though highly polysemous words are relatively rare. It seems to me that our conceptual system is particularly suited to one lexical item having a literal, metonymic and a metaphoric meaning, for there seems to be ‘room’ in the lexicon for these to remain distinct and not cause misunderstandings. The lexeme *bubbly* has the literal meaning WITH BUBBLES; a metonymic meaning of CHAMPAGNE; and a metaphoric meaning VIVACIOUS, as in ‘bubbly personality’. Here follow further examples: **smooth** means NOT ROUGH (literal), a FRUIT DRINK ie ‘smoothie’ (metonymic), and DEBONAIR/COOL (metaphoric); **flat** means ON A LEVEL (literal), an APARTMENT (metonymic), and NOT LIVELY (metaphoric); **green** means the COLOUR (literal), ILL (metonymic) and ENVIRONMENTAL, as in ‘green party/issues’ (metaphoric); **thick** means NOT THIN (literal), MILKSHAKE ie ‘thickie’ (metonymic), and STUPID (metaphoric); and **brown** means the COLOUR (literal), a CAKE ie ‘brownie’ (metonymic), and PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED, as in ‘brownfield site’ (metaphoric). It is noticeable that the metonymic sense of a lexeme often involves change of part of speech through zero derivation (‘conversion’), as in *bubbly* (n) and *flat* (n), or nominalization through affixation, as in *smoothie*, *thickie* and *brownie*. I think it is also important to note here that it is inappropriate to assign a particular function individually to any of the three tropes. Functions attributed to metaphors, such as their being real, evocative, vivid, powerful and compact (eg Ortony 1975), can equally well be applied to characterize metonymic or literal expressions. The resources the triangle of tropes offers us are more fundamental than any assigning of individual function to them would imply.

The undoubtedly offensive expression referring to the French, first used in an episode of the TV cartoon *The Simpsons* in the 1990s, *cheese-eating surrender monkeys*, which makes the implication, no doubt unfounded, that the French put up too little resistance when the German army invaded in the Second World War, has each of these elements: *cheese-eating* is metonymic (as the French are cheese eaters); *surrender* is literal; and *monkeys* is metaphoric. The adaptation of this expression by the comic Graeme Garden on the BBC TV quiz show *QI* to characterize the Americans, "Burger-eating invasion monkeys", retains the three elements of the 'triangle of tropes' ('QI', *BBC2 TV*, Series 4, Episode 10, 24 November 2006). Another example: the boyfriend of the character Carrie in the TV series *Sex in the City* has three names (not two or four): his 'real' name, *John*; (*Mr*) *Big*, on account of his being tall; and *Crossword*, because he is hard to puzzle out. *John* is literal; *Big* is metonymic; *Crossword* is metaphoric (Blöndal 2004, personal communication).

The use of metonymic expressions as referents is not simply a matter of substitution communicatively; but neither is it in terms of morphosyntax. Although *bubbly* is conventionalized meaning 'champagne' (and has a place in the mental lexicon), you may not be readily understood if you were to say *bubbly cocktail* for 'champagne cocktail', *bubbly bottle* for 'champagne bottle', *bubbly breakfast* for 'champagne breakfast' or *bubbly flute* for 'champagne flute'. Neither would more metaphoric uses, such as *bubbly socialist* be understood. There seem to be colligational and entailment restrictions in forming N-N compounds which do not permit this and which are not overridden by the metonymic source-target mapping(s), although *bottle of bubbly* and *cocktail made with bubbly* would be possible. Similarly, to say you are going to *buy a small screen* to mean 'buy a television' is also not retrievable for the same reasons. Panther & Radden demonstrate this with the sentence "My husband is parked on the upper deck", where *husband* stands for 'car', but does not universally license substitutions of 'car' with *husband*, such as *My husband has a sun roof/Californian licence plate, husband radio* (car radio), *husband dealer* (car dealer), etc (Panther & Radden 1999a:10). In the next section I look at examples from personal and popular culture and recreational activities in order to demonstrate that here too metonymy plays a central role and also to show the variety of phenomena where this is the case.

## 5.2 Lookalikes

The ability to recognize ‘lookalikes’, people who resemble others in how they look, speak, dress or behave (also ‘deadringers’), is a phenomenon which has a special significance for us. Perhaps it is related to what at one time in our evolution was of survival value, an ability to distinguish friend from foe. Now, metonymic similarity around human characteristics seems to please us sometimes just for its own sake. There is great affection for lookalikes, impersonators, tribute acts and tribute bands in British and other cultures. One of the most popular tourist attractions in London is a waxwork museum, Madame Tussauds, where visitors can test the ingenuity of the waxwork builders by getting up close to representations of world celebrities. Two household names in UK television, famous for their impersonations of famous people, are Rory Bremner and Jon Culshaw; while the artist Alison Jackson has gained notoriety for her photographs of lookalikes of celebrities, showing them in private moments, such as the Queen having breakfast in bed with her corgis, Tony Blair at a wild pool party and Kate Middleton preparing for her wedding day (Jackson, A. 2003, 2011). This is an irreverent look at public figures but also a delight in the ability of someone unknown to ‘pass off’ as someone famous.

In my data notebooks I noted a number of examples of metonymic processing around lookalikes. In one exchange, a parent and grandparent discussed whether Jessica, the young girl to whom they are related, looked more like her mother or her father (August 2010). In another, an informant pointed out someone who had just got off a bus and remarked that he looked like “Mehta from IT”, a work colleague (February 2009). In a further exchange, two people discussed whether someone in the doctor’s waiting room was a UK comedian or not (November 2009):

- A There was a guy in the doctor’s waiting room today who looked like Jeremy Hardy.
- B Perhaps it *was* Jeremy Hardy.
- A He certainly moved and spoke the way you’d expect him to.
- B There’s no reason why he shouldn’t live round here.
- A Or be ill like anyone else.
- B Maybe it was him.

In another example, an informant described how he and his colleagues would pass time between classes at a language school in Spain assigning classic film roles to other members of the staff. They based their casting on personal characteristics such as weight, facial hair, mannerisms, voice quality and 'ditziness' (Informant M, February 2010). The same informant made me aware of the *Internet Movie Database* website, IMDb, where in one section users post comments about physical resemblances, such as this observation about the actress Britt Ekland:

She kinda reminds me of Duffy, especially when you look at pics of her in the 60s.  
Anyone else see it? ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com))

Another example, this time of physical resemblance between objects rather than people, is from a visit I made in April 2010 to caves in Puglia in Italy, a region famous for caves with their spectacular stalactites and stalagmites. Visitors are taken on a guided tour which lasts an hour. Approximately half of the commentary during this tour is about the history of discovering the caves, fatal accidents which occurred during the excavations, and scientific facts and figures; the other half is taken up with naming features, pointing out stalagmites and stalactites and giving them names, eg 'the Owl', 'the Ice Cream Cone', 'the Tower of Pisa', 'the Dancer's Foot', 'the Mexican Landscape'. Recurrent formations were also given names, such as 'the toilet brush motif' and 'broccoli'. The visitors nodded in recognition that what they were looking at really did resemble these things. It was more interesting and worthwhile to relate the forms in front of them to other more familiar forms than just looking at the features themselves.

If we consider that in none of the examples above was there any transactional or practical purpose, nor that any action or decision was to ensue from this semiotic work around metonymy, we would be justified in concluding that the significance for the participants was a pleasure in exploring similarities of personal traits and resemblances of physical form purely for their own sakes, that there is something positive and reassuring in the activity itself, almost as if this were 'play'.

### 5.3 TV Quiz Shows

In this section, I continue my investigation of the recreational role of metonymy by considering three UK TV-quiz shows: *Who wants to be a millionaire?*, *Eggheads* and *Only Connect*. In all three, metonymy plays a central role, the task of the contestants being to make choices (or observe associations) among metonymically-related items. In the ITV Show *Who wants to be a millionaire?* contestants answer general knowledge questions by choosing from a set of four given answers, eg:

- Which gland is ‘goitre’ a disease of?
- A adrenal, B pituitary, C thyroid, D mammary

The given answers in this quiz are related metonymically. They have a common element. In the example above, the answers are all glands (and could even be referred to by adding the word ‘gland’ for each, thus: ‘adrenal gland’, ‘pituitary gland’, ‘thyroid gland’ and ‘mammary gland’). The contestant spends their ‘thinking’ time not so much finding the ‘right’ answer but exploring the metonymic relatedness of the four options until one emerges as the most appropriate. Processing an open question, where a choice of answers is not given, is more about memory and recall; where answers are given, it is more about comparing related items for matches and eliminating less probable options, based on features which emerge as salient through metonymic processing.

In the BBC2 quiz show *Eggheads*, there are two teams and for each question, three possible answers, eg:

- Who is the most junior in the kitchen?
  - chef de partie; commis chef; chef de cuisine.
- Which is a movie directed by Tarantino?
  - Death Proof; Bullet Proof; Shatter Proof.
- What’s the name of the edible paper used in macaroons?
  - cocoa paper; rice paper; sugar paper.
- Which word relates to starting a computer?

- bootstrap; bootlace; bootleg.

Here again the given answers are related metonymically (in meaning and form), the common element, or ‘overlap’, in the questions above being ‘chef’, ‘proof’, ‘paper’ and ‘boot’. The contestants are encouraged to speak their thoughts (like a Think Aloud Protocol), allowing the viewers an insight into how they come to their choices. Much of this commentary is a discussion of how the given options are related, and shows how the contestants arrive at a ‘best fit’, rather than recording the moment at which the ‘right answer’ is spotted.

The BBC4 TV quiz show *Only Connect* is based entirely on the ability to recognize metonymic relations of different types. It is so focussed on various aspects of the ability to analyse and process metonymically that the show could quite easily have ‘metonymy’ in the title. Even the team members introduce themselves by saying what ‘connection’ they have to each other, such as doing the same degree, attending the same college or working for the same company. In Round 1 – CONNECTIONS, contestants are asked how four items they are given are related, eg ATM, HIV, UPC, PIN (answer: they all are abbreviations which are used tautologically, often being said in combination with the word which the last letter is an abbreviation of, eg PIN number). In Round 2 – SEQUENCES, contestants are required to identify a sequence given to them item by item, scoring higher the earlier they recognize the sequence, eg *g, j, p, q* (answer: they are all letters with ‘descenders’, ie a part of the letter which goes below the line); *undo, copy, cut* and *paste* (answer: they are all key combinations in word-processing using CTRL + key). In Round 3 – CONNECTING WALL, sixteen seemingly-unrelated items are given in a grid, from which contestants are to find sets of related fours (Instructions: “There are four sets of four within these sixteen words. What are their associations?”), eg *cat, sleep, moon, cake* (answer: they can all be followed by ‘walk’ to give new words); *noble, heavy, base* and *scrap* (answer: they can all be followed by ‘metal’); *Barry, Wren, Nash, Hawksmoor* (answer: they are all British architects). In Round 4 – the MISSING VOWELS round, vowels are removed from expressions, titles or names and contestants are required to guess what they are against the clock, eg “These are all names of twins but without the vowels”.

All four rounds rely both on the contestants’ knowledge of the world and their ability to

reason. To win, contestants have to be able to recall information from their long-term memories and reason metonymically. As far as what they actually do in the studio, it is the ability to draw on the single cognitive ability, identify metonymic relations, which determines whether they win or lose. The components of general knowledge and competition between teams is enough to sustain a half-hour programme, but hidden here as well is the unconscious desire to share publicly a recognition that metonymic processing is central to our lives.

Another informant told me one of his favourite pastimes was to turn on the classical music station BBC Radio 3 and try to guess the composer and the piece (and perhaps also the soloist, orchestra and conductor). The pieces are always announced at the end on this station. What he was doing was to look out for metonymic overlap with pieces he already knew, recognizing characteristics of harmonies, melodic patterns and unique thumb-prints of the composer. The exploration of these metonymic associations was more important than the right answer, which could have been obtained easily by clicking on the programme-listings button on his digital remote. The guessing process made listening more acute. Another informant told me of a game he plays with his CD collection when friends come round to dinner, which he calls *Beat the Intro*. For this you try to identify a song from the instrumental lead-in before the voice begins. You try to 'beat' the introduction. This is also an activity around sound matching, a metonymic processing pursuit.

#### 5.4 Humour

Humour takes many forms. It can be physical, like slapstick, come out of a particular situation or derive from word play, to give three examples. Physical humour, situational humour and word play all involve metonymic processing. They rely on a 'gap' set up between our expectations and the reality we are presented with, an incomplete 'match' of some sort. In this anecdote, intended to be humorous, a fifteen year-old pupil is talking to his career advisor:

|                |                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Career advisor | What do you want to do for a career? |
| Student        | I want to be an archbishop.          |

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Career advisor | How are you going to go about it?  |
| Student        | Do A-levels, do ‘theology’ at university and then go on to theological college, and get an internship at a cathedral ... |
| Career advisor | What if you don’t manage to become an archbishop? What will you do then?   |
| Student        | Erm ... I’ll probably work for my dad in the papershop.  |

(‘You and Yours’, *BBC Radio 4*, March 2010)

The humour here comes from the idea that being an archbishop and working for your dad in a papershop are too dissimilar to be included in the same category. The student violates our expectations of metonymic processing. The language used here is nothing other than literal, in other words, there is no word play. Humour which does rely on word play, however, is exploiting the fact that signs are a fusion of meaning and form and that related forms can give rise to unrelated meanings, as is the case in this sketch by the British comedy duo Morecombe and Wise:

*A scene in Sherwood Forest*

- My name is Mud. Sorry, Hood. Robin Hood. I’m the swashbuckling type. But there’s only one trouble.
- What’s that?
- I swash when I should buckle and I buckle when I should swash.
- How did you fall in with the outlaws?
- I fell out with the inlaws.

(*The Sunday Telegraph*, 2 May 2010, p19)

The source of humour in this sketch is the similarity in sound between *mud* and *hood* (and therefore a pun between *My name is Hood* and the idiom *My name is mud*), around the compositionality of *swashbuckling* (*I swash when I should buckle* and *I buckle when I should swash*), and the altered meaning created by inverting *fall in with the outlaws* to give *fall out with the inlaws*, all humour reliant on seeing metonymic relations between items. If there were no links through form, the sketch would not be funny, just random.

In the next sketch, the lack of physical similarity between the comedian and the character he is trying to represent is comic, because this too violates expectations of

likeness, reinforced by the metonymic relation between *eight-stone weakling* and *seven-stone weakling*:

- Men! Are you worried about your physique? Would you want a big manly figure like me? You need not be an eight-stone weakling. You can be the same as I am: a seven-stone weakling. And men, have you tried the new Hercules Hurry-Up system of muscular development?
- Yes.
- You practise 12 hours a day with dumbbells, sleigh bells, cow bells and door bells. And one day you will jump out of bed, look in the mirror, swell out your chest and say ... "Boy, am I a sucker".

(*The Sunday Telegraph*, 2 May 2010, p19)

But what is most striking in this sketch is the seemingly random list of compounds of 'bell': *dumbbells*, *sleigh bells*, *cow bells* and *door bells*. Here there is nothing else to the humour but the joy of exploring metonymic relations (as regards form) between different kinds of bells, allowing us to be sent off in different unrelated directions (as regards meaning), allowing us to imagine exercise involving sleigh bells, cow bells and door bells.

The following jokes delight in phonic relatedness, syntactic ambiguity and phrasal polysemy. The first is around *syphilis* and *chablis* and their interchangeability; the second relies on a disambiguation of two possible syntactic structures, *evening* modifying *primrose* vs *evening* as a salutation and *primrose* as a vocative (name); in the third, two meanings of *being polite*, 'standing on ceremony' and 'not being rude' are invoked; while the fourth relies on the disambiguation of two meanings of *blind man*, 'not sighted' and 'a man who installs blinds'. The four jokes are:

A nun goes in to see the Mother Superior: "I've come to inform you that there is a case of syphilis in the convent". The Mother Superior replies: "Oh good! I was getting tired of the chablis we've been having".

A man goes into a health food shop and says "Evening Primrose oil". The man behind the counter says "I'm Mr Vine to you, if you don't mind."

A man has been invited to dinner with his boss and his boss's wife. She says "How many potatoes would you like?". He says "Just one". She says "You don't have to be polite, you know" He says "Ok, just one, you silly cow!".

A man knocks on the door of the bathroom. A woman inside calls out: "You can't come in, I've got no clothes on". The man says: "Don't worry. It's the blind man". She says: "Ok, then come in". He goes in and says: "Nice figure! Now, where do you want the blinds".

Two meanings sharing one word (puns) is also the source of humour in innuendo, as in the list of examples below from a round robin jokes email, where *take off*, *open wide*, *tease* or *blow*, *back* or *front*, etc have innocent meanings as well as sexual meanings, related metonymically through form:

Beware the double meaning when: the doctor says "Take off your clothes"; the dentist says "open wide"; the hairdresser says "Do you want it teased or blown?"; the milkman says " Do you want it in the front or the back?"; the interior decorator says "Once it's in, you'll love it"; the banker says "if you take it out too soon, you'll lose interest"; the telephone guy says "Would you like it on the table or up against the wall?" (Informant I, circulated email)

## 5.5 Formal Metonymy

In this section, I am going to discuss 'formal metonymy', which I am using here to mean the repetition of an element of form, either in phonology or graphology, within a larger structural unit. Formal metonymy is often found in the lexicon, as in expressions such as *hocus pocus*, *hoi polloi*, *hoity toity*, *mamby pamby*, *shilly shally*, *willy nilly* and *wishy washy*. It is also found in more recently created expressions, such as *credit crunch*, *cultural cringe*, *happy slapping* and *lager lout*. In many of these, the repetition of form is both phonic (sound repeated) and graphic (letters repeated), the two types of formal metonymy. When there is an exact repetition of a form, eg *busy busy*, there is a metonymic relation between the repeated element and the lexical phrase created by the repetition. Rhythm, harmony and melodies set up metonymies by offering a frame of repetition into which different notes or words can be inserted. Formal metonymy also

includes more abstract, higher-level repetitions, such as CVCV patterns.

Such is our appetite for metonymy, that when coining expressions we find it satisfying to include formal metonymy, almost as if it ‘clinches’ the choice and signals it as appropriate or definitive. Models of cookers which have gas hobs and electric ovens are described by manufacturers as *dual fuel*; Lambeth Council in London calls the house-to-house collection of recycling *kerbside collection*; while the service of drinks and snacks on Southern Trains in UK is referred to as a *seat-side service*. Many proverbs show formal metonymy, such as the rhymes in *A stitch in time saves nine* and *Pears for your heirs*, and the Italian expression *Traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor), because the formal metonymy adds persuasiveness to the saying.

In data I collected, many family expressions (discussed in more detail in the next section) showed phonic metonymy, such as *rudey nudey* (in the nude and therefore rude), *weirdy beardy* (someone with a beard therefore weird), and *Wealth and Stealth* (the title one informant gave the spreadsheet summarizing his finances). Hong Kong parents often give their children names which have a shared element, such as brothers called *Chi ho* and *Ki ho*. There is something very powerful about repeating a sound. Cook recounts the various names he calls his son – *Toby the Boby, Turbot the Burbot*, etc – all phonologically related to his name, Toby, and including the repetition of sound segments (Cook 2000:165). As Cook points out, the repetition is “almost always only partial” and a “rhymed word is partly like, but partly unlike, its partner” (Cook 2000:29). This could almost be a definition of metonymy: like but unlike. Repetition with variation is prominent in children’s verse and in fairy tales – *What big eyes/ears/paws/teeth you’ve got. All the better to see/hear/stroke/eat you with!* – which children, far from finding tedious, seem to enjoy for the ritual it introduces (Cook 2000:28).

I now turn to a historical example, in order to show that this phenomenon is not restricted to the modern era. The text below is the beginning of a letter by the composer Mozart to his cousin Bäsle, written in Mannheim in 1777. Theirs, at the time, was a relationship which was playful, flirtatious and scatological. We see here Mozart using a type of formal metonymy of his own invention, in which he adds words at the end of clauses which rhyme with the last word in the clause. I underline these pairs of words in

the text below:

Allerliebstes Bäsle Häsle! Ich habe dero mir so werthes schreiben richtig erhalten falten, und daraus ersehen drehen, das der H Vetter retter, die fr: Baaß has, und sie wie, recht wohl auf sind hind; wir sind auch gott lob and danck recht gesund hund. ich habe heut den Brief schief, von meinem Papa haha, auch richtig in meine Klauen bekommen strommen. Ich hoffe sie werden auch meinen Brief Trief, welchen ich ihnen aus Mannheim geschrieben, erhalten haben schaben. Desto besser, besser desto! [...] meihnnam ned <sup>net</sup>5 rebotco 7771 (Reich 1948:46-51)

The rhyming of Bäsle, his cousin's name, with *Häsle* (little hare) is followed by *erhlaten/falten* (received/folded), *ersehen/drehen* (see/turn round), *Vetter/retter* (his uncle's surname/saviour), *Baaß/has* (his aunt's surname/hare), *sie/wie* (you/how), *sind/hind* (are/behind), *gesund/hund* (healthy/dog), *Brief/schief* (letter/wrong), *Papa/haha* (father/ha ha), *bekommen/strommen* (received/strummed), *Brief/Trief* (letter/meet), *haben/schaben* (have/scrape). Sometimes these rhyming words comment on what has gone before, eg the letter which has been received is folded and is turned around to be read properly, but in other cases they do not, but instead make comic associations, like father/ha ha or letter/wrong; in other cases they seem to be there just for the joy of the repetitions. One of the expressions which the cousins used in their private language, *spuni cuni*, appears later in this letter. It is unclear what exactly this might have meant to them, an English equivalent might be something like *hanky panky*. It is not by chance that this is also a formal metonymy.

Returning to more contemporary examples, a sketch by the comedians Armstrong and Miller consists entirely of one character introducing himself using variants of his name, *Mick, Mike, Mickie, Mick the Nick*, etc, the humour deriving from the prolongation of the greeting and that the interaction does not get any further than this stage. Jokes where repetition with variation plays a role are common, appreciated by children and adults, such as 'Knock Knock' jokes:

Knock knock./ Who's there?/ Ice cream/ Ice cream who?/ Ice cream if you don't let me in!

Knock knock./ Who's there?/ B 4/ B 4 who?/ B 4 I freeze to death, please open this

door!

Knock knock./ Who's there?/ Figs/ Figs who?/ Figs the doorbell, it's broken!

Donald Rumsfeld, when US Defense Secretary, famously gave an exposition on 'knowns' and 'unknowns' at a press conference in 2002:

As we know, there are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.

(Donald Rumsfeld,

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/d/donaldrums148142.html>)

The strength of this speech comes from the truth it contains which is made felt by the metonymies used in saying it. The twelve occurrences in it of items containing 'know', ie *know*, *known*, *knowns*, *unknown*, *unknowns*, make the statement rhetorical, the formal metonymies flagging up to the listener that something significant is being said. There is a danger with rhetorical neatness of this sort that it can tip over into comedy. In fact, this speech was ridiculed by many at the time and even at the original press conference people can be heard laughing. However individuals reacted at the time, Rumsfeld's use of formal metonymy certainly made this speech memorable, so much so that *Known and Unknown* became the title of his memoirs.

Formal metonymy is also involved in morphological reductions ('clipping'), such as short versions of names, eg *Pret* for *Prêt à Manger* (a London sandwich shop chain). This reflects a basic principle of parsimony in communication but is also metonymic. Radden gives *crude* for *crude oil* as an example of morphological reduction, an instance of the PART OF A FORM FOR THE FULL FORM conceptual metonymy (Radden 2005:17).

## 5.6 Alternative Names

The need to have alternative names (ie a name other than the 'official' or given name for someone or something) is so strong that, for certain pairings, if one name is mentioned,

it invariably elicits the other name in the pair, such as: *Elvis Presley* and *The King*, *Margaret Thatcher* and *The Iron Lady*, *Princess Diana* and *The Queen of Hearts*, *Elizabeth I* and *Gloriana*, *Shakespeare* and *The Bard*, *John Prescott* and *Two Jags*, *Ireland* and *The Emerald Isle*, *Venice* and *La Serenissima*, the *Conservatives* and the *Tories*, *West Bromwich Albion* and *The Baggies*, *University* (attended) and *Alma Mater*; and terms such as *Brummies*, *Scousers*, *Paddies*, *Yanks*. The alternative name will usually have a more familiar register. Individuals will also have their own names for shops and department stores. In my data notebooks I collected a whole range of expressions for stores: *PJ's* (for *Peter Jones*); *Juan Louis*, *Johnny Lu Lu*, *Yonelle* (*John Lewis*); *Hallifucks* (*Halifax*); *Grotesquos*, *Toss-Co* (*Tesco*); *Shabby-tat*, *Shabby Twat* (*Habitat*); *W M* (*Morrison's*) (various informants). These original names reflect an irreverence but also an affection for these retail institutions. *Toss-Co*, suggests a company of 'tossers', while *Johnny Lu Lu* has the familiarity one would associate with a close friend or family member.

In an advertisement on the London Underground for a London restaurant booking service, the heading reads "Looking for a London Restaurant? We'll book it for you. Our New London Booking Service is here 118 118" (London Underground advertisement, June 2011). Below this is a map, drawn in the style of the classic London underground map, but with formal metonymies instead of real stations, the names of the stations having been altered to suggest foods: *Mornington Pheasant*, *Eggware Road*, *Puddington*, *Notting Hill Cake*, *Tortellini Court Road*, *Highbury and Biscuit Tin*, *Charing Croissant*, *Oxtail Circus*, *Piccalilli Circus*, *Greens Park*. These formal metonymies are entertaining, but as they all refer to foods, they also serve the function of increasing the cohesiveness of the text and contribute to the message of the advertisement, to encourage customers to book restaurants with this service.

The American TV series *Sex in the City* has made its way into the collective unconscious to such a degree that the title has given rise to a whole host of names of business and organizations, as this sample from an internet search shows:

*Secs in the City*, a website for recruiting secretaries, PAs and office administrators; *Socks in the City*, a podcast for knitters of socks; *Sweat in the City*, a fitness site for women who want to "get fit and feel fabulous"; *Decks in the City*, a blog about rave

music; *Vex in the City*, a beauty blog; *Ex in the City*, comic novel about ‘being dumped’; *X in the City*, a lap-dancing chain; *Fresh in the City*, a food, diet and lifestyle site; *Prospects in the City*, an organization which gives young people insights into various careers; *Faith in the City*, conference on religious architecture; *Classics in the City*, classical music CD shop in Glasgow; *Pets in the City*, a dog-care service; *Systems in the City*, financial services; *Silence in the City*, prayer and contemplation; *Pads in the City*, a Birmingham letting agency; *Paws in the City*, dog grooming; *Poetry in the City*, promoting poetry to new audiences; *Christ in the City*, a Christian event in Belfast.

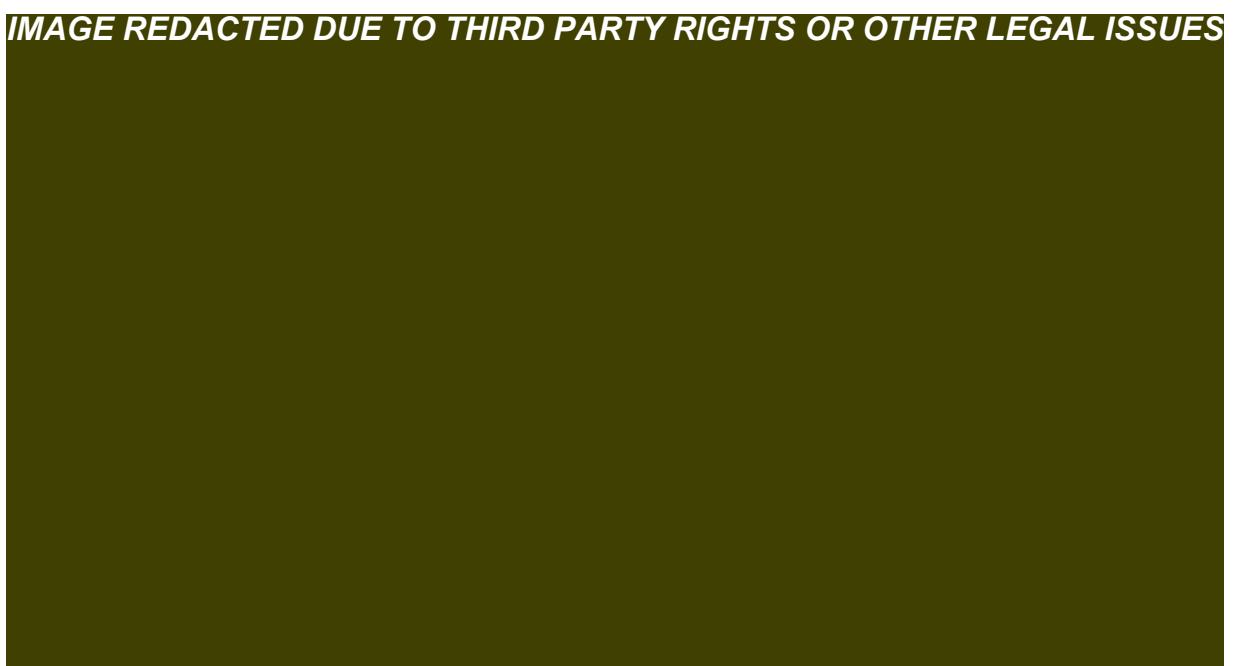
The dozens of names thrown up by this search would surely not have come into existence had the huge success of this TV series not preceded them. The series being so popular entered the public consciousness and made available a syntactic/phonological frame which was used to generate the names of these businesses, services and initiatives. It no doubt also generated a whole host of titles in other genres, such as newspaper headlines, names of TV and radio programmes and titles of undergraduate essays, in the time that *Sex and the City* was current, the sheer number of variants given above showing just how powerful metonymy is as a tool for generating and extending meaning.

Another example of an interest in formal metonymy is a weekly item which appeared in the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers in the UK called *Lost Consonants*. This was devised by a collage artist Graham Rawle and shows how a single consonant missing from a sentence can completely change the meaning of that sentence, and to comic effect, eg “The hunter was an expert at tracing animals in the wild” instead of ‘tracking’; or “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bus” instead of ‘bush’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost\\_Consonants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Consonants)). Rawle illustrated these modified sentences with his collage art. This again shows how formal metonymies are both easily understood and also a source of entertainment, I would suggest, because of the fundamental role metonymy plays in our lives. A comment from an informant in my data notebooks suggested that this connection was so readily understood that there was no humour here:

It is sort of obvious that if you change a word by just a letter it can mean something completely different. I thought everybody knew that. I thought there was more to it than that. That’s why I didn’t get it. (Informant K)

It is similarly the association between unrelated meanings via related form which is the source of amusement in bad translations. *Lost In Translation* started as a column in a UK newspaper and later became book publications. In them, Charlie Croker collected together amusing mistranslations from his travels abroad, such as “Munich, Germany: In your room you will find a minibar which is filled with alcoholics”, “Restaurant, France: Fish soup with rust and croutons” and “Guide to Buenos Aires: Several of the local beaches are very copular in the summer” (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/arts-andculture/73840/Lost-in-translation.html>). Robinson, a translation studies scholar, also collects translation gaffes, eg “Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar”, “Please leave your values at the front desk”, “Limpid red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people’s fashion” (Robinson 2003:101). Parody also relies on metonymy, but on a more ambitious scale, involving a whole text or reference to a genre. The reader/viewer needs to be able to identify the original on which the parody is based in order for it to work. The original on which the parody in Figure 5.1 (below) is based involves visual material, a classic *Beatles* album cover, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Times Higher Education 2 December 2010, p48):

**Figure 5.1: Parody of *Sgt. Pepper* album cover**



The original is recognizable in the parody by the layout, the colour scheme, how the group is arranged, the fact that it is a collage of images from other sources and the artefacts in the foreground. The faces have been changed to those of celebrities of the UK TV talent show *The X Factor*. For someone who knows the album cover and follows the talent show, the metonymic links will no doubt be easy to make. Even for someone who does not know the TV show, the illustration would be recognized as a parody, because metonymic processing will allow them to see that changes have been made to the original and will infer that this has been done for a reason.

## 5.7 Family Expressions

The final category of cultural phenomena which centre around metonymic activity considered in this section concerns ‘family expressions’. Family expressions, as I am defining them here, are expressions unique to a close group of a few individuals, such as next of kin, partners, colleagues or friends, and not part of the repertoire of people outside the group. I consider this to be an original line of research, as I have not seen research in this area elsewhere. It offers the potential of revealing processes by which new expressions come into existence in small communities.

In order to investigate this area I collected data from five informants. First, I explained what I meant by ‘family expressions’, and then asked them in informal interviews: 1) whether there were any expressions or sayings in their family; and 2) where those expressions came from. The data were collected over a period of three months in 2007. This was done informally when socializing, asking eg “There is something I wanted to ask you for my thesis. Are there any expressions in your family or expressions you use with friends which no one else uses, expression you have invented?” If what they then said was interesting, I would say “Can I just write that down?” and would get pen and paper in order to do so. I chose not to make audio recordings as I felt that this might inhibit the informants by making the process too formal. I continued asking about their expressions until I had all the information I could get. I also invited them to tell me of any expressions they thought of afterwards and to let me know, but none did. I approached five informants in this way, P, Q, T, U and W. P provided a particularly rich source of family expressions, offering seven examples and coming back to me after the

first conversation to give me more detailed accounts of the origins of her examples; while Q had none I could report. The entire data set from this experiment, thirteen expressions, is reported below:

EXPRESSION: *Burgess's* (Informant P)

The expression *Burgess's* is said whenever plates and cutlery are taken away with undue haste after you have finished eating in a restaurant or at home. ORIGIN: The staff at a cafe in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Burgess's, would take away plates and cutlery the moment you finished eating.

EXPRESSION: *It's only material things* (Informant P)

Said when something of (especially sentimental) value gets broken and the owner needs consoling. ORIGIN: This was said by the informant's grandmother to the informant's mother when a Wedgwood plate was accidentally broken. Rather than consoling this was felt to be unfeeling.

EXPRESSION: *Out of my bed!* (Informant P)

The expression is used to tell you your behaviour is displeasing. ORIGIN: Two young children were having a Sunday lie-in with their mother, but they misbehaved and were chased out of bed.

EXPRESSION: *Get off my land!* (Informant P)

The expression is used when someone overreacts. ORIGIN: This was said by the informant's mother during an argument with a neighbour about a dog, when the neighbour's daughter stepped over the boundary line of their garden into the garden of the informant's family.

EXPRESSION: *Let us gather fresh coconuts!* (Informant P)

Used when the family is about to leave for a trip or about to start a task which involves making preparations. ORIGIN: The informant did not know the origin of this expression, but thought that perhaps it had come from a radio programme.

EXPRESSION: *It's just like Christmas!* (Informant P)

Used when seeing an impressive spread of food. ORIGIN: The informant's grandfather would say this at Christmas but also any occasion where an impressive spread of food is offered.

EXPRESSION: *She's a beautiful dancer!* (Informant P)

Used when someone on television is making an attempt to be glamorous or make an impressive go at something, but not really succeeding. ORIGIN: A TV catchphrase.

EXPRESSION: *Brown boots* (Informant T)

This expression is said when someone is lagging behind in a conversation or slow in getting the point. ORIGIN: Three friends are walking to a local bar one evening. One of them says something of little consequence about buying a pair of 'brown boots' early in the conversation. Other topics come and go. Much later on, one of the friends, who has said almost nothing during this time, says, in a serious-sounding voice "I used to have a pair of brown boots". They laugh.

EXPRESSION: *That'll do for Giles' lunch* (Informant T)

Said after a meal when there are leftovers enough for a meal for one. ORIGIN: A woman friend of the family would say this when there was food left over after dinner. Giles was the woman's young son.

EXPRESSION: *Raynes Park* (Informant U)

Said when someone is clearly being untruthful about their whereabouts when speaking on a mobile phone. ORIGIN: Someone on a train called his wife from his mobile, saying he was at Raynes Park (a station on the suburban network in SW London), while actually being somewhere else.

EXPRESSION: *Comestibles* (Informant U)

Used as an alternative to 'food' especially food which will go off, eg "Put the comestibles in the fridge". ORIGIN: *Breakfast Comestibles* was seen as part of the signage in a new supermarket. The informant found this amusing as it is not something anyone would ever say.

EXPRESSION: *Dog food* (Informant U)

Used to refer to TV adverts, as in "It's on a dog-food channel", ie a channel with adverts, a non-BBC channel. ORIGIN: The actor Quentin Crisp used this expression in this sense, describing the film about his life as lasting forty minutes, or sixty minutes "with dog food".

EXPRESSION: *Work* (Informant W)

Used to refer to the puzzles of the kind you find in newspapers and magazines, such as

sudoku, number puzzles, crosswords. ORIGIN: A Canadian couple, friends of the informant, would spend their holidays going on long-distance train journeys across North America. The most demanding thing they did on these journeys was to do puzzles in newspapers and magazines, and they came to call this 'work'.

All the expressions above (where the origins are known) originate from incidents of particular emotional significance for the participants. Their emergence can be traced back to a particular event which was memorable by being amusing, emotional or poignant in some way. The expressions probably survived because the emotion associated with the incident was recalled when a matching situation was encountered. This recognition of matches/overlaps involves metonymic processing. The original purpose for conducting this experiment was to identify what proportion of expressions, which had emerged uniquely among intimate groups, was metaphorical. I found that none was, but that instead *metonymy* was the way we connect emotionally to experiences which are important to us, and that we share those memories with others by pointing out metonymic associations.

## 5.8 Avoiding Cooperation

Above we saw how relatedness in form but unrelatedness in meaning (formal metonymy) can be a source of humour. I now want to illustrate how formal metonymy can also be used to avoid cooperative communication. Most linguists would associate the term 'cooperation' with Gricean pragmatics and the 'cooperative principle', the idea that speakers assume a common purpose of cooperation in their interactions (Grice 1975). This is the sense in which I am using it here. It has been observed that it is not the aim of all participants in all interactions to be cooperative. A classic example is 'adversarial court questioning', which Baker describes as "an example of a non-cooperative context in which one participant, the defendant, tries to be as uncooperative as possible" (Baker 1992:233). A defendant or witness in a courtroom who wishes to withhold information will use strategies in order to be economical with the truth, even if on the surface they appear to be 'playing the game' of cooperation.

Formal metonymy can be used to avoid cooperation. This is achieved by making

connections via related forms to meanings which are unrelated and irrelevant in the context. Cockney rhyming slang was originally thought to have emerged as a way of communicating in a private language so employers would not understand what their workers were saying to each other, as the ‘slang’ terms were rhymes which were unrelated in meaning to the words they rhymed with. Cooperation can also be avoided when one participant chooses deliberately to misunderstand the expression their interlocutor uses. In the example below, the misunderstanding revolves around “like eating slugs” and whether using this expression means you have experience of eating slugs or not:

A      Whelks mussels that's like eating slugs  
B      Is it?  
A      Oysters and stuff  
B      Well I've never tasted a slug  
A      Going err sliding down your gullet  
B      But you don't eat slugs do you  
A      It's like eating a slug  
B      Well how do you know when you've never had one?  
A      That's how I would imagine it to be  
(*Creature Comforts*. DVD, 2003)

Another way of being uncooperative is to be literal, deliberately choosing to understand a (conventional or novel) metaphorical expression literally, or choosing to take one of the meanings of a polysemous word when another is intended. In the dialogue below, C refuses to accept D’s use of the expression “everything’s cricket” to mean ‘fair play’:

C      You are English policemen  
D      I am, yes  
C      Hello  
D      Hello  
C      Do you believe in the hunt or  
D      I I have to remain impartial  
C      Yes  
D      In my view there  
C      Because you are English policemen  
D      Yes that's right and everything's cricket

C The greatest police in the force  
 D And they say everything's cricket in England don't they  
 C Everything is cricket  
 D We have to  
 C This is cricket?  
 D No no no no it's just a saying just a saying  
 C They play  
 D Cricket well  
 C Yes cricket  
 D Cricket is a gentleman's sport  
 C Yes  
 D And everyone has the right to be gentlemanly in England as such  
 C And they play cricket today?  
 D No no no no I'm confusing you now  
 C Yes  
 D I'm confusing you forget the cricket side of things  
 C Yes  
 D It's just a saying  
 C And people they do protest against the cricket  
 D Forget the cricket  
 C Yes  
 D The cricket's purely a saying it's a saying  
 C Yes you've just said cricket  
 D Yes I just said cricket, forget that  
 C Ok  
 D Nothing to do with hunting ok  
 C Yes so why did you say this?

(*Ali G, Aiii*. DVD, 2000)

This dialogue from a satirical sketch from the film *Ali G, Aiii* is an exchange between an English policeman (D) and a visitor from Kazakhstan, Borat (C), a character invented by the comedian Sacha Baron Cohen; but such strategies can be observed in spontaneous interactions as well. Avoiding cooperation through formal metonymy is a strategy particularly available to learners, because as learners they can more easily disguise a deliberate act of 'un-cooperation' as a genuine mistake.

Formal metonymy can have another function altogether. It may also be used for emphasis, where it no longer involves the avoidance of cooperation. I recorded the following speech in my data notebooks from a conversation where the speaker was thanking a friend for looking after her mother during a hospital visit:

She was so glad you were there / reassured, you know, by your being there / because you are so calm and able // not Cain and Abel / calm and able [laugh] you just get on with it / without making a fuss / and she likes that / makes her feel safe (adapted)

Here the idea of being ‘calm and able’ is emphasized by contrasting it with words which sound similar (phonic metonymies) “Cain and Abel”, but which are unrelated in meaning. The language play of ‘Cain and Abel’ versus ‘calm and able’ also allows the speaker to be light-hearted and avoid becoming too serious or embarrassing when paying this compliment.

In this chapter, I have discussed the use to which metonymy can be put in order to give nuance, emphasis and spin, an essential tool in the language box and one which is perhaps the key, I argue, to why language is so subtle, nuanced and fit for purpose. I also offer various data to demonstrate the central role played by metonymy in various common cultural and recreational activities. I consider our fascination in recognizing similarities between people in appearance and salient characteristics of behaviour, our enduring interest in the TV general-knowledge quiz-show format, the role metonymy plays in structuring jokes and giving alternative names to people and things, the way in which metonymy allows us to refer to shared experience in family expressions and how metonymy can be used to avoid as well as encourage cooperation. These data have in common that metonymy is explored for its own sake in these activities. This leads me to argue that metonymy is perhaps being acknowledged unconsciously and at an emotional level for the vital role it plays in the wider context of our lives.

## 6 Metonymy, Metaphor, Discourse and Text

In Chapter 4, I developed a precise ontology of metonymy and used this to contrast metonymy with the precise ontology of metaphor developed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, I turn to the role metonymy and metaphor play in organizing longer stretches of language and their employment in making meaning at the level of the whole text. I briefly review the work of Jakobson on metonymic and metaphoric ‘poles’ of communication (Jakobson 1971 [1956]), Lodge on metonymic and metaphoric ‘modes’ of writing (Lodge 1977), Semino on metaphor and discourse (Semino 2008), Al-Sharafi on textual metonymy (Al-Sharafi 2004) and Halliday & Hasan on cohesion (Halliday & Hasan 1976). In my model, four text-wide phenomena emerge. The first pair are concerned with shifts in the framing of the discourse, either narrowing, Discourse Metonymy, or widening, Discourse Metaphor; while the second pair are concerned with lexical networks set up either through metonymic links between items within the text, Textual Metonymy, or patterning within a text organized by conceptual metaphor, Textual Metaphor. This approach extends ideas in this field to give a comprehensive framework for analysing metonymy and metaphor operating at the level of the whole text.

### 6.1 Discourse and Text

“The term *discourse* has been subject to cavalier usage” and as a result is ‘under-lexicalized’ (Kress 2010:114-115). The terms ‘discourse’ and ‘text’ are used widely in language studies, and although ‘discourse’ tends to suggest spoken language and ‘text’ written language, they are often used almost interchangeably, their closeness in meaning reflected in the expressions ‘spoken discourse’ (eg Cameron 2001), ‘spoken text’ (eg Brown & Yule 1983), ‘written text’ (eg Coulthard 1994) and ‘written discourse’ (eg Hoey 2001). For these authors ‘discourse’ and ‘text’ are units of language, but with an emphasis on ‘real language’, “language in use” (eg Brown & Yule 1983: xiii) and language created for the purpose of communication in the ‘real world’. Other scholars give even more emphasis to the social contexts in which language occurs. For Cook ‘discourses’ are “stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social and

psychological context" (Cook 1989:ix) and for Stillar, a discourse is the relationship between language texts, social contexts and usage (Stillar:1998:14). For Beaugrande & Dressler, a 'text' is a 'communicative occurrence' in which 'seven standards of textuality' – 'cohesion', 'coherence', 'intentionality', 'acceptability', 'informativity', 'situationality' and 'intertextuality' – must be satisfied:

A text will be defined as a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality. If any of these standards is not considered to have been satisfied, the text will not be communicative. Hence, non-communicative texts are treated as non-texts. (Beaugrande & Dressler 1981:3)

For other scholars, 'discourse' does not necessarily have to involve language at all. For Fairclough, discourse "*constitutes* the social. Three dimensions of the social are distinguished – knowledge, social relations, and social identity – and these correspond respectively to three major functions of language [...] Discourse is shaped by relations of power, and invested with ideologies" (Fairclough 1992:8). For Blommaert 'discourse' is "a general mode of semiosis" (Blommaert 2005:1), and comprises "all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use" (Blommaert 2005:3). For O'Regan "Discourse is the universal mode of semiosis through which the material and the immaterial (social, cultural, historical, political, economic, religious, etc.) are entered into a system of meaning relations. It is the means by which a world is acknowledged and brought within the realm of human experience and interpretation" (O'Regan 2006). For Block "discursive activity means any semiotic behaviour on the part of an individual which counts as the expression of a subject position (or subjectivity)" (Block 2007:16). While for Kress discourse involves "canonical forms of interaction" (Kress 2010:46). Gee distinguishes between 'little "d"' and 'big "D" discourses', 'little "d" discourse' being "any instance of language-in-use or any stretch of spoken or written language (often called a "text" in the expanded sense where texts can be oral or written)" (Gee 2011:205), while 'big "D" discourse' is enacting "identities and activities not just through language, but by using language together with other "stuff" that isn't language" (Gee 2011:201).

What I want to do in the present context is to exploit the fact that two terms exist, in order to use them to identify specific phenomena pertinent to the present research. I

propose distinguishing between phenomena which allow the speaker/writer to change the ‘frame’ (or ‘focus’) of discourse by adopting distinct communicative ‘voices’ or ‘registers’; and phenomena where metonymy and metaphor pattern lexical choices across text. The former I am calling ‘discourse’ phenomena; the latter ‘textual’ phenomena. Within these, I further distinguish as to whether metonymy or metaphor is involved, thus establishing a four-way distinction between Discourse Metonymy, Discourse Metaphor, Textual Metonymy and Textual Metaphor. A full exposition of this framework is given in Sections 5.2-6, but before I do so, I briefly review the work of certain scholars who have made a contribution to this field.

### **The Contribution of Jakobson, Lodge, Semino, Al-Sharafi and Halliday & Hasan**

It is Jakobson’s famous essay on aphasia in which metonymy and metaphor are identified as fundamental processes in communication, metaphor involving similarity, set up through selection and substitution, and metonymy involving contiguity, set up through combination and contexture (Jakobson 1971 [1956]). Jakobson describes these as two distinct semantic lines, the ‘metaphoric way’ and the ‘metonymic way’:

The development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity. The METAPHORIC way would be the most appropriate term for the first case and the METONYMIC way for the second, since they find their most condensed expression in metaphor and metonymy respectively.

(Jakobson 1971 [1956]:90)

For Jakobson, language has a “twofold character” (p72) and “in normal behaviour both processes [metonymy and metaphor] are continually operative” (p90); but he also sees metonymy and metaphor as offering ‘polar’ opposites (p83), different ‘poles’ (p90). This means that an author has a choice and can choose the metonymic pole over the metaphoric pole, or vice versa (p90). The consequence of this is that texts reflect these preferences such that some (literature texts) are inherently metonymic while others are inherently metaphoric. This according to Jakobson is achieved by the use of individual metonymies or metaphors in those texts. In the final pages of the essay,

Jakobson explores the idea that whole genres reflect these preferences, artists favouring one pole over the other, for example, identifying cubist art and the films of Griffiths as metonymic, and surrealist art and the films of Eisenstein as metaphoric (p92).

Lodge takes up Jakobson's metaphor/metonymy distinction and develops it (Lodge 1977). He devises his own typology of literary genres based on metaphoric and metonymic 'modes of writing'. For Lodge, reading Jakobson's 1956 essay was both a solution to his immediate problem of defining modernism and to the question of classifying literary modes in general:

The distinction between metaphoric and metonymic types of discourse not only seemed a much more effective way of distinguishing between the language of modernist and antimodernist fiction than metaphor/simile; it suggested the possibility of an all-embracing typology of literary modes (Lodge 1977:viii).

Lodge identifies realistic poetry and prose with the metonymic 'mode' and romantic poetry and prose with the metaphoric 'mode', identifying Philip Larkin, for example, as a 'metonymic' poet (Lodge 1977:214). Lodge goes further with his typology, seeing the history of modern English literature in terms of the metaphoric and metonymic modes, as an oscillation in the practice of writing "between polarized clusters of attitudes and techniques: modernist, symbolist and mythopoeic, writerly and metaphoric on the one hand; antimodernist, realistic, readerly and metonymic on the other" (Lodge 1977:220). Importantly for this research, Lodge recognizes that metonymic and metaphoric writing is not dependent on the presence of individual metaphors and metonymies. He gives examples from literary texts: the opening of Forster's *A Passage to India* is:

metonymic writing, not metaphoric, even though it contains a few metaphors and no metonymies; it is metonymic in structure, connecting topics on the basis of contiguity not similarity (Lodge 1977:98-99);

while Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* is not metaphorical:

necessarily in the quantitative dominance of actual metaphors (though the 'Ballad' is full of them) but in the way the discourse is generated and maintained by 'the projection

of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination'.  
Lodge 1977:104)

In the large body of writing on 'metaphor and discourse', 'discourse' is taken to mean the appearance of metaphor in specific discourse domains, such as advertising, politics, conflict, science, rather than whole-text phenomena where metaphor has an organization role with which I am concerned. Examples include Steen, who develops a "checklist for metaphor analysis" (Steen 1999), Cameron, whose concern is to develop an "operational identification procedure for metaphor" (Cameron 1999), the Pragglejaz Group, who develop "a method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse" (Pragglejaz Group 2007), and Semino, who aims to "explore the forms and functions of metaphor in a variety of texts and genres on a range of different topics", such as politics, science, education, advertising and illness (Semino 2008:1).

Semino offers a comprehensive overview of text phenomena involving metaphor (Semino 2008). She classifies the different ways in which "the patterning of metaphor in discourse" manifests itself using the headings 'repetition', 'recurrence', 'extension', 'clustering', 'combination and mixing' and 'literal-metaphorical oppositions' (Semino 2008:22-30). For our purposes here, the first four of Semino's "textual manifestations" of metaphor are the most significant and can be glossed as: 'repetition', the same linguistic metaphor repeated at different points within a text; 'recurrence', the appearance of two or more metaphoric expressions from the same source domain at different points within a text, eg *battle*, *army*, *combat*; 'extension', a series of different metaphoric expressions from the same source domain occurring in close proximity; and 'clustering', an unusually high density of metaphoric expressions from different source domains in a particular section of text (Semino 2008:22-26). Semino makes a distinction between 'clusters' and 'chains' of linguistic metaphors: clusters draw from different domains while chains draw from the same domain, and arise "from a combination of repetition, recurrence and extension" (Semino 2008:226), often functioning to frame or summarize, or occurring at significant points in discourse, such as when talking about a sensitive issue (Semino 2008:24-25). Semino's 'chains' correspond closely to my concept of Textual Metaphor, while her idea of 'clusters' corresponds to my idea of Discourse Metaphor.

Al-Sharafi's work is the most detailed account of figurative language contributing to cohesion and coherence of a text (Al-Sharafi 2004). He interprets all six of Halliday & Hasan's categories of cohesion in terms of metonymy, arguing that "metonymy ensures economy and compactness in text and thus shortens distances of interpretation" (Al-Sharafi 2004:115), suggesting that "metonymy accounts for the relations of lexical cohesion in a more satisfactory way than the term 'lexical cohesion' itself" (Al-Sharafi 2004:126). While accepting Al-Sharafi's position, I choose in my framework to focus on two categories of cohesion only: 'reiteration', which corresponds to my concept of Textual Metonymy, and the other category of lexical cohesion, 'collocation', which corresponds to my concept of Textual Metaphor.

In Halliday & Hasan's system, collocation is the phenomenon where words in a text are associated by virtue of being from the same 'domain' of human activity, as different from the Firthian modern sense in which the word is more commonly used, referring to associations between adjacent words (discussed in Chapter 2 in connection with the Mental Phraseicon):

[collocation is the] co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments: the specific kinds of co-occurrence relations are variable and complex, and would have to be interpreted in the light of a general semantic description of the English language (Halliday & Hasan 1976:287-288).

A text may draw from one, two or more different domains; an article on the finances of football, for example, would have lexis from the domains of 'finance' and the domain of 'football' (the sense of the article being an exploration of the interaction between the two). Collocational links between lexical items in a text are seen by Halliday & Hasan in terms of their literal meaning, not surprisingly, as their work came before the conceptual metaphor theory had emerged. If instead we look at lexical patterning through metaphor, where a source domain is common to a number of words in a text, then again we have collocation but of a different sort. Textual Metaphor is this sort of collocation, where the source domain of a conceptual metaphor structures a text by patterning the lexis in it.

I now present the four phenomena Discourse Metonymy, Discourse Metaphor, Textual

Metonymy and Textual Metaphor in turn. My procedure is to describe each phenomenon and then present a variety of different texts which show the phenomena in use.

## 6.2 Discourse Metonymy

‘Discourse Metonymy’ is a device for changing the focus of discourse to a more narrow focus by concentrating on a particular part of the frame. The content becomes more literal than literal, ‘ultra real’. By focussing in on the subject matter, the discourse foregrounds powerful physical images and with that gains in persuasiveness. The change of focus is a change of register in the Hallidayan sense (eg Halliday 1978).

Discourse Metonymy allows an author to argue by *exemplification* while ‘Discourse Metaphor’ allows an author to argue by *comparison*. A public figure might argue by exemplification, using Discourse Metonymy (underlined), as in this extract from a radio interview (‘Today’, *BBC Radio 4*, January 2010):

The earnings of lower-income workers are just not enough to live on. One of my constituents receives £45 family allowance a week; she works full time, has a weekend job as well as helping out at a butcher’s, but is still in debt;

or by comparison, using Discourse Metaphor (underlined) in this extract from the same interview:

The only criterion for the Think Tank was that its members should have an IQ of over 140. It is a bit like buying a computer, not loading any software and expecting it to do computations for you.

Below I discuss a number of different texts to illustrate the use of Discourse Metonymy. They are a guide to the French city Lille, a private email message, part of an interview with James Gooding, an article by the journalist Robert Elms on London hosting the 2012 Olympics, the Priministerial debates during the 2010 general election in the UK, a self-help study guide for university students, promotional material for a health club and a speech given at an HIV charity fundraising event.

The first text, the guide to the French city Lille, begins in the neutral ‘default’ register of what one might call ‘literal discourse’. It then goes into Discourse Metonymy from “here you can shop ...” (Discourse Metonymy underlined):

The development in Lille which includes the Centre Euralille shopping mall  
... this huge business and leisure development is the key to the city’s  
renaissance. Designed to serve more than ten times the population of Lille,  
here you can shop for essentials or luxuries, attend some of Europe’s most  
talked-about parties, enjoy concerts or even prepare a meal in a rented  
apartment. (Phillips 2000:14)

The noticeable shift in register indicates to the reader that the passage “here you can shop for essentials or luxuries, attend some of Europe’s most talked-about parties, enjoy concerts or even prepare a meal in a rented apartment” is to be understood as a list of activities which stand for the whole, ie all possible activities. The effect is to give a vivid picture, which a phrase such as “retail and entertainment possibilities” would not achieve (although, specifying a ‘rented’ apartment in the text, almost spoils the effect by making us think that this really might be a literal proposal!). In the next text I consider, the author uses Discourse Metonymy in an email to organize a New Year party (Discourse Metonymy underlined):

Dear Karen, I just wanted you to be party to the (breaking) news .. which is basically that Steven is of the opinion that spending New Year with us (ie you two and me), breaking open a bottle of bubbly and sharing a table in a local  
restaurant (or at home), would be far more agreeable than flying to an  
unfamiliar destination, such as Prague, Budapest ... and confronting the  
unpredictability of inclement weather, foreign folk, disease & etc. I hope you can come to stay for New Year. I get back on 29<sup>th</sup> (Mon) and don’t have anything in the diary until the next weekend. See how you feel and how that fits in with your plans. You are welcome to stay as long as you like. You’d have the keys, so you can come and go as you please. The house is quite comfortable and warm. All the best. P (personal communication)

The underlined sections employ Discourse Metonymy to contrast a party, “breaking open a bottle of bubbly and sharing a table in a local restaurant (or at home)”, with a city break “flying to an unfamiliar destination, such as Prague, Budapest ... and

confronting the unpredictability of inclement weather, foreign folk, disease & etc”, while literal discourse is used for the rest of the message. The author’s motivation here, we can imagine, is to persuade, entertain and give a sense of inclusion, conveyed through the use the vivid images achieved through Discourse Metonymy.

The next text is from the London listings magazine *Time Out*. In it, the interviewee, James Gooding (famous for having dated the Australian pop singer Kylie Minogue and selling his story to the press) uses Discourse Metonymy in two sections of the interview. This is when: 1) describing how Saatchi helped make art more accessible to young people: “I remember when I lived in New York, everyone wanted to be a documentary film-maker. Everyone traded in their bass guitars and bought their super-8 cameras and DVs, and started making little films”; and 2) arguing that contemporary art can be intimidating to the average person: “If I take my grandparents to see a Tracey Emin show and there’s an unmade bed, they’re going to ask, ‘What’s all that about?’”.

The British media is the British media. But I do think there’s far too much attention placed on the smallest things in people’s lives. If you were to put half of those journalists under a microscope and scrutinised their personal lives in the same way, what would you see?

I quit my agency over a year ago. And the year before that, I think I only did one shoot and maybe six TV commercials. I’m 28. I’m getting on. To be honest, I was bored of it years ago, although it was fun for a while. I had a billboard in Times Square when I was 19 – that was pretty amazing. But modelling isn’t something that really gets you going in the morning. It wasn’t exactly filling my head space. [...]

It’s such a media-saturated world now, and it’s pretty mindless. All those celebrity magazines – people should really stop reading them and start concentrating on their own lives a bit more. Obviously, I have my own personal reasons for saying that, but I think in general the whole celebrity media culture has got out of hand.

If Saatchi hadn’t been so media savvy, I don’t think it would have happened in quite the way it did. He made art more appealing to young people. I remember when I lived in New York, everyone wanted to be a documentary film-maker.

Everyone traded in their bass guitars and bought their super-8 cameras and DVs, and started making little films. Now they either want to be artists or to study media. [...]

My favourite artist from the show is Jonathan Messe. I was scared to meet him. He used to do these really dark performances that went on for hours and hours. And his work generally is very dark. Then you meet him and he's just the sweetest guy.

It's not a high-brow art show, it's an accessible art show. A lot of contemporary art can be very intimidating. If I take my grandparents to see a Tracey Emin show and there's an unmade bed, they're going to ask, "What's all that about?" So this show is about talking to the artists and getting them to open the door a little bit.

I don't know what the worst thing is. The funniest thing was when they said I was trying to get a recording deal – I can't sing to save my life. It kind of ties in with the best thing that could come out of this, which is that people will see a bit more of me and not the two-dimensional character that the press portrays. Hopefully, they'll go and visit a few art galleries.

It was hell at times, living inside that bubble. There were times when it really got to me, it really did upset me. But now it's all water off a duck's back. For the past six months, I've just kind of kept my head down and kept away from it all, and got on with my work. (*London Time Out*, August 20, 2003)

In both cases, Discourse Metonymy progresses the argument, reinforcing it by 'getting up closer' and giving vivid examples. There are also less sustained instances of Discourse Metonymy in this interview, the sections which begin "My favourite artist from the show is Jonathan Messe ..." and "The funniest thing was when they said I was trying to get a recording deal ...". Gooding also uses the device of 'terracing' within Discourse Metonymy. In the first of the examples discussed above, he uses direct speech to make what he is saying even more immediate. He does this by suggesting words which might have actually been said, "What's all that about?", thus creating levels within the Discourse Metonymy register.

In the next text, a polemical article by Robert Elms, *This is the Capital, That is the Way it is*, Discourse Metonymy is used to argue that London, and only London, is suitable to host the 2012 Olympic Games. He characterizes Manchester, not a good candidate in his eyes, by its bars, gay scene and interesting buildings; while London is characterized by decades of pomp, circumstance and The Rolling Stones:

Manchester is now trendy, has lots of bars by the canal, a good gay scene, a couple of interesting new buildings and even a Selfridges. But seen from afar those do not quite equal 2,000 years of pomp, circumstance and The Rolling Stones. (Elms, R. 'This is the Capital, That is the Way it is', *London Time Out*, 2002)

It is important to note that individual metonymies are not necessarily involved in constructing Discourse Metonymy. In the metonymic passages in the texts considered above, the language is actually literal. It should also be noted that Discourse Metonymy is not just a device that is either present or absent, there are levels of metonymy (touched upon above in discussing the *Gooding* article). Consider this example:

In the seventies, those were the sort of jobs no one wanted to do. Like working in the sewers or kitchens. Imagine digging a grave in the snow. ('Today', *BBC Radio 4*, January 2009)

In this extract, "those were the jobs no one wanted to do" is literal; "like working in the sewers or kitchens" is what we might call 'first level' Discourse Metonymy (signalled by *like*), while "Imagine digging a grave in the snow" is 'second level' Discourse Metonymy (signalled with *imagine*). Interestingly, the words signalling metonymy here, 'like' and 'imagine', are words used just as easily elsewhere to signal metaphor, eg "Being unemployed is a miserable existence. It is like being the spare wheel on a car. Imagine being a horse put out to pasture before your time".

The last example I consider in this section, a spoken text, is from the Priministerial debates shown on television during the campaign for the 2010 general election in the UK. These events attracted a huge amount of interest both from those professionally involved in politics and the general public. The reason for this was that it was the first time an American-style debate of this sort had been organized, which exposed the

candidates to such scrutiny while also setting them against each other on the same stage. As a result the language and the body language used were studied with great interest.

What is very notable in these exchanges is the use of Discourse Metonymy. All three candidates, but especially Cameron and Clegg, used Discourse Metonymy as a rhetorical device. They used particular incidents, possibly invented, to make their points. Not only this, they also used levels of metonymy (as discussed above), namely going from a general discussion to a particular incident, eg “I was in Plymouth recently, and a 40-year-old black man made the point to me”, and from a particular incident to direct speech within that incident in order to increase vividness, eg “He said, ‘I came here when I was six, I’ve served in the Royal Navy for 30 years. I’m incredibly proud of my country. But I’m so ashamed that we’ve had this out-of-control system with people abusing it so badly’”. Level 1 Discourse Metonymy shown in italics; Level 2 Discourse Metonymy shown in bold italics below:

Brown ... *I talked to a chef the other day who was training.* I said in future, when we do it, there'll be no chefs allowed in from outside the European Union. *Then I talked to some care assistants* - no care assistants come in from outside the European Union.

Cameron ... *I was in Plymouth recently, and a 40-year-old black man made the point to me. He said, "I came here when I was six, I've served in the Royal Navy for 30 years. I'm incredibly proud of my country. But I'm so ashamed that we've had this out-of-control system with people abusing it so badly."*

Clegg ... *I was in a hospital, a paediatric hospital in Cardiff a few months ago, treating very sick premature young babies. I was being shown around and there were a large number of babies needing to be treated. There was a ward standing completely empty, though it had the latest equipment. I said to the ward sister "What's going on? Why are there no babies being treated?" She said "New rules mean we can't employ any doctors from outside the European Union with the skills needed".* That's an example of where the rules are stopping good immigration which actually helps our public services to work properly. That's what I want to see, not an arbitrary cap.

*Cameron ... I went to Crosby the other day and I was talking to a woman there who had been burgled by someone who had just left prison. He stole everything in her house. As he left, he set fire to the sofa and her son died from the fumes. That burglar, that murderer, could be out of prison in just four-and-a-half years. The system doesn't work, but that sort of sentence is, I think, just completely unacceptable in terms of what the public expect for proper punishment. What have we got to do? We've got to get rid of the paperwork and the bureaucracy and we've got to get the police out on the streets.*

*Cameron ... I went to a Hull police station the other day. They had five different police cars, and they were just about to buy a £73,000 Lexus. There's money that could be saved to get the police on the frontline. The Metropolitan Police have 400 uniformed officers in their human resources department. Our police officers should be crime fighters, not form-fillers, and that's what needs to change.*

*Clegg ... I was in a factory in my own city where I'm an MP in Sheffield just a few weeks ago. There was a great British company there, a manufacturing company, that produces great metal braces with these huge rollers, which apparently are sold to the American army. They attach them onto their vehicles, and when the rollers move over mines, the mines blow up, but of course, they destroy the rollers and not the soldiers. The American army says that those rollers, designed, manufactured by a great British business in Sheffield, have saved 140 lives. Why is it they're not being used by the British army?*

*Clegg ... I know many of you think that all politicians are just the same. I hope I've tried to show you that that just isn't true. Whether it is on the questions from Alan on care, Jacqueline on crime, Helen on politics, Joel on schooling, Robert on the deficit, I believe we can answer all of those questions.*

*([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/16\\_04\\_10\\_firstdebate.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/16_04_10_firstdebate.pdf) <accessed 15 April 2010>)*

This transcript is from the first debate. Comments were made in the press at the time that this device was being overused, and in the two subsequent debates the candidates incorporated Discourse Metonymy less into their presentations. This suggests that the

journalists saw Discourse Metonymy as a powerful rhetorical device and therefore one which would be used sparingly. In this extract, David Cameron employs another device (discussed in Section 5.5), ‘formal metonymy’. The morphological structure, ‘N –er’, is repeated (N –er, + N –er) in the expression “crime fighters, not form-fillers” (underlined in the transcript above), adding further to the rhetoric of this speech.

### Testimonies and Vox Pops

Another common use of Discourse Metonymy is in testimonies and vox pops. That is, where a picture is built up from a series of individual contributions. This makes the narrative seem more ‘real’ and easier to identify with. To stress the idea that testimonies are the contributions of individuals, they are often presented in different typefaces to suggest different ‘voices’, and perhaps even in speech bubbles coming from cartoon heads. A language school for example could be marketed through testimonies from past students such as: “Thanks to studying at the British School, I now work as an accountant with foreign clients”; “Learning English has meant that I can understand all the lyrics of my favourite songs which I couldn’t do before”; “After finishing the course, I went to the US and now teach yoga to Hollywood stars” (invented examples). All these are metonymies in discourse, related to a central message, the idea that this school helps you realize your ambitions.

Below I discuss three examples of the use of testimonies, one from a study-skills guide on managing stress, another from promotional material for *Virgin Active* healthclubs, and the third, a fund-raising after-dinner speech for the HIV charity, *Terrence Higgins Trust*. The testimonies in this study guide come before the final summary at the end of each unit. This example is from the unit on managing stress:

#### *Students’ experiences*

I get really nail-bitingly nervous several weeks before my exams. What do I do? Apart from biting my nails, mostly talking to my mom on the phone. She always helps me get my feet on the ground.

I get on the bus and look out of the window: it makes me day-dream and I feel more relaxed when I get back.

I do have mega exam anxiety. I spend hours worrying, and then I worry that I'm worrying, and then I blame myself for wasting time worrying. None of it gets me anywhere, but it fills the hours so I feel I have done something. Well, I'm not so bad since I started yoga. The class is very calming and the regular break does me good. It's calming being away from student life for a while.

Music. I put on my headphones, choose something really wild, and turn it up loud. I might even dance along if no-one else is in.

I went to the Student Services office about money, but ended up talking about everything else. They recommended 3 sessions with a counsellor. I wouldn't go at first as I thought it meant admitting failure. I only went because I found out my friend had gone. It was the best thing I could have done. They helped me work out for myself what I needed to do, so I felt I had more space to think.

I don't think I have ever felt stressed. People keep asking me if I am but I don't know why. Maybe I seem stressed.

My stress levels kept going up and I did cope fine, but I felt miserable all the time. All my time was being swallowed up with work, worry and study, but I had to do something different. Now, I make sure I get to do 2 or 3 things a week that are just for enjoyment – it's not so much what I do as recognizing that I have stopped study and work and this is time for me. I think I am more efficient in the way I do things, so things are better all round.

Running: I run a mile a day and that clears my system of worry and leaves me clear-headed. (Cottrell 2007:170)

This is a commonly used but effective way of reviewing the unit, as each testimony describes a strategy discussed in the unit, and the eight, perhaps invented, testimonies are engaging and real.

The next text, publicity material for *Virgin Active* healthclubs, reproduced in Figure 6.1 (below), also uses Discourse Metonymy. Six contributors all say something positive about the services offered by *Virgin Active* healthclubs:

**Figure 6.1: Virgin Active healthclubs publicity material**

*IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES*



In this text, we are even given the names of the contributors and told where they live, giving the individual testimonies even more impact. A series of testimonies, interspersed with images, is designed to build a powerful impression of a strongly endorsed brand.

The *Terrence Higgins Trust*, an HIV charity, holds a fund-raising dinner each year at which the Chief Executive typically gives a speech. In 2008, four personal testimonies were presented instead of the regular speech. This was reported in the newsletter like this:

We heard first from Neil, His tales of finding a boyfriend at first made us laugh and then silenced the room. He shared with us the issue of disclosing his HIV status to prospective boyfriends [...]

And next Abigail and her heart wrenching story of the HIV diagnosis that has left her separated from her children in Zimbabwe [...]

And then Marc, diagnosed with HIV 23 years ago [...]

And finally we heard from Marc's mum, Jan who was brought up in a traditional West Indian family in the 1960s and raised her children in a very similar set-up during the 1970s and 80s.

Hearing of the resourcefulness of these individuals in overcoming the difficulties they encountered because of their contact with HIV will have had a strong impact on those present and would have made the potential donors more likely to give generously. Discourse Metonymy makes the impression of a text more real.

Individual testimonies are sometimes actively requested, by employers, for example, in a form of interviewing known as 'Competence Based Interviewing' (or 'Behavioural Interviewing'). In this, the candidate is asked to give specific examples of personal competencies elicited by these questions:

“What achievements in your life are you most proud of?”

“What in your life are you least proud of?”

“Tell me about a time when you were in a difficult situation or a situation of

conflict with a colleague, and how you set about resolving this situation”

“Tell me about a time when you contributed proactively to the team in bringing about an improvement in working practices in the office” (Beale, personal communication 2006).

In other words, the candidates are requested to present themselves using Discourse Metonymy, that is, in a series of vivid vignettes of their past work experience, elicited by questions such as those given above.

### 6.3 Discourse Metaphor

‘Discourse Metaphor’ is the opposite of ‘Discourse Metonymy’ in many respects. Rather than involving a closer focus on the subject matter, the focus is more distant; Discourse Metaphor allows speakers/authors to distance themselves from the subject matter, make connections outside the frame and draw comparisons with other domains. If ‘Discourse Metonymy’ can be characterized as *more* ‘real’, ‘Discourse Metaphor’ can be characterized as *less* real, in the sense that it leads to an increase in the sense of indeterminacy (or ‘fuzziness’) of meaning. A physical comparison can be made to the human eye. When we focus on something close to us, such as the printed page, the muscles which control the focus of the lens of the eye are at their most tense, and the lens itself is at its most round. If instead we are hill-walking and looking into the distance, our eyes are at their most relaxed and the lens its most flat; we also start to be more aware of what is in our purview, in our wider field of vision. Discourse Metonymy is like a close up, looking at detail; while Discourse Metaphor is panning out, a distance shot.

Discourse Metaphor is set up by clusters of metaphors occurring in the same section of text. In order to illustrate this I consider below three texts in which Discourse Metaphor plays an import role, the Gooding interview discussed above, a poem by Philip Larkin and *Silk Cut* cigarette packets. These examples are chosen in order to demonstrate that the phenomenon of Discourse Metaphor is to be found in widely different genres. In the interview with James Gooding our concern was with Discourse Metonymy but the same text also offers an example of Discourse Metaphor. In the last section of the interview,

Gooding talks about his affair with Kylie Minogue (for which he is famous) and to do so employs a whole series of conventional metaphors (ie idioms, metaphoric expressions which have become incorporated into the language and, therefore, are reported in dictionaries):

it was hell at times, living inside that bubble, it really got to me, it's all water off a duck's back, I've kept my head down, I kept away from it all (*London Time Out*, August 20, 2003).

The effect this has is to increase ambiguity by creating a metaphoric indeterminacy in this section. He sets up an interpersonal 'buffer' which gives room for manoeuvre; it allows him to talk about his stormy affair without loss of face or hurting anyone's feelings.

A great part (more than two thirds) of the poem by Philip Larkin, *Toads Revisited*, is what Lodge (Lodge 1977) refers to as the metonymic 'mode' (shaded below):

### Toads Revisited

Walking around in the park  
Should feel better than work:  
The lake, the sunshine,  
The grass to lie on,

Blurred playground noises  
Beyond black-stockinged nurses -  
Not a bad place to be.  
Yet it doesn't suit me.

Being one of the men  
You meet of an afternoon:  
Palsied old step-takers,  
Hare-eyed clerks with the jitters,

Waxed-fleshed out-patients

Still vague from accidents,  
And characters in long coats  
Deep in the litter-baskets -

All dodging the toad work  
By being stupid or weak.  
Think of being them!  
Hearing the hours chime,

Watching the bread delivered,  
The sun by clouds covered,  
The children going home;  
Think of being them,

Turning over their failures  
By some bed of lobelias,  
Nowhere to go but indoors,  
No friends but empty chairs -

No, give me my in-tray,  
My loaf-haired secretary,  
My shall-I-keep-the-call-in-Sir:  
What else can I answer,

When the lights come on at four  
At the end of another year?  
Give me your arm, old toad;  
Help me down Cemetery Road.

(Larkin 1964:18-19)

The shaded text consists of four sections: one characterizing the park; another, the men you find in the park; another, what the men in the park do/experience; and finally, the poet's office. (The park is characterized by "the lake", "the sunshine", "the grass to lie on", and "blurred playground noises"; the men you find in the park are characterized by "palsied old step-takers", "hare-eyed clerks with the jitters", "waxed fleshed out-patient still vague from accidents" and "characters in long coats deep in the litter-baskets";

what the men in the park do/experience is characterized by “hearing the hours chime”, “watching the bread delivered”, “[watching] the sun by clouds covered”, “[watching] the children going home”, “turning over their failures by some bed of lobelias”, “nowhere to go but indoors”, “no friends but empty chairs”; while the poet’s office is characterized by “my in-tray”, “my loaf-haired secretary” and “my shall-I-keep-the-call-in-Sir”.)

But in the fifth stanza, with “the toad work”, and in the last stanza, with “Give me your arm, old toad”, Larkin moves to Discourse Metaphor, making a connection between ‘work’ and ‘toads’. The image is also in the title of the poem, *Toads Revisited*, which itself revisits an earlier poem, *Toads* (Larkin 1955:32-33). Here Larkin is using both devices, the narrow focus of Discourse Metonymy and the wider focus of Discourse Metaphor, giving a gritty and vivid sense of life in the park and life in an office as well as a more diffuse overarching message about death and mortality. Larkin employs Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor in other poems, eg *The Whitsun Weddings* and *Church Going* (Lodge 1977:218).

The third example I have chosen is the packaging of the cigarette brand *Silk Cut*. Here, there are three choices, as in the previous examples: as well as ‘Discourse Metonymy’ and ‘Discourse Metaphor’ (and levels within them), there is also the ‘default setting’ of ‘literal discourse’. The *Silk Cut* cigarette packets show all three. On the front of the packets, Discourse Metaphor is used in the upper half, where the brand is stated: *Silk Cut – Purple* (Figure 6.2 below); literal discourse is used in the lower half, where general health warnings are given, “Smoking kills” and “Smoking seriously harms you and others around you” (Figure 6.2 below); while Discourse Metonymy is used on the back of the packet for more specific health warnings, such as “Smoking causes fatal lung cancer”, “Smoking can damage the sperm and decreases fertility”, “Stopping smoking reduces the risk of fatal heart and lung diseases”, “Smoke contains benzene, nitrosamines, formaldehyde and hydrogen cyanide”, “Smoking clogs the arteries and causes heart attacks and strokes” and “Smoking may reduce the blood flow and causes impotence” (Figure 6.3 below). The specific health warnings are metonymic, not literal, because they are processed as particular instances of a more general message, that smoking is bad for you. If the reader was not meant to process them in this way, they would wonder why they were being given such specific information and information

which may not apply to them (such as damaging the sperm or causing impotence for women). It is interesting methodologically to note that in a very short text such as this, Discourse Metaphor and Textual Metaphor merge, the shortness of the text making it hard to assess whether *Silk Cut – purple* is serving only to establish register or contribute to lexical cohesion as well.

**Figure 6.2: *Silk Cut* cigarette packets – front**



**Figure 6.3: *Silk Cut* cigarette packets – back**



Why were these choices made? What the cigarette company wishes to communicate in order to promote their brand image is communicated using Discourse Metaphor. Discourse Metaphor does this well by taking the focus off smoking itself and drawing on other domains with positive connotations, such as luxury, royalty, smoothness, a colour which is cool (as it contains blue) and is therefore calming. This is achieved multimodally. The health warnings, given both in literal discourse (on the front) and as a series of metonymies (on the back), are what the company is required to communicate by law. The health authorities have chosen Discourse Metaphor as the mode they require for this because it makes the message more vivid and shocking. At the time of researching, a company in the UK could choose from a list of sixteen health warnings. Since then, cigarette companies have been required to include shocking visual material, so that health warnings are processed as multimodal metonymies.

The examples of Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor given in this section show that both devices (as well as ‘literal discourse’) can be found in the same text, and that this is not confined to any specific genre, but that the use of figurative language at whole-text level is found across diverse genres. I now look at the other pair of phenomena involving figurative language at the level of the whole text, Textual Metonymy and Textual Metaphor.

## 6.4 Textual Metonymy

Textual Metonymy, in the sense the term is used here, is the use of metonymy to organize longer stretches of language by increasing the overall cohesion of the text. Textual Metonymy differs from ‘Discourse Metonymy’ in that it does not involve a change of register/focus/voice, but instead makes a contribution to ‘textuality’, the textual metafunction or ‘mode’ of a text, in the Hallidian functional grammar sense (Halliday 1994). Al-Sharafi proposes that all six of Halliday & Hasan’s categories of cohesion, the four grammatical categories (‘reference’, ‘substitution’, ‘ellipsis’ and ‘conjunction’) and the two lexical categories (‘reiteration’ and ‘collocation’), involve metonymic relations and make a contribution to textual metonymy (Al-Sharafi 2004:126). While accepting Al-Sharafi’s proposal, here I will focus on just one category of cohesion, ‘reiteration’, as it makes the most striking case for the role metonymy makes in contributing to textual cohesion.

In Halliday & Hasan’s account of cohesion, ‘reiteration’ covers a whole range of sense relations: same word, superordinates/hyponyms, meronyms, synonyms and antonyms:

Reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between – the use of a synonym, near-synonym, or superordinate (Halliday & Hasan 1976:278).

‘Same word’ apart, these all involve part-whole relations, as in each case terms are linked which overlap in meaning. The function of reiteration can be seen as simply one of co-referring, the main concern of Halliday & Hasan, but it can also serve other functions, such as progressively to enrich the meaning of a text or structure information within a text, as I will demonstrate below through the use of a series of illustrative examples: a newspaper report of an accident, a text on soya products, an extract from a self-help book, a text about the Himalayas, a newspaper article about football and an article about another accident. In the first text, a newspaper report of a road accident, we can infer that *Heelys* are a type of *wheeled shoe* and *wheeled shoes* are a type of *trainer* (underlined below):

### **HEELYS BOY HIT BY CAR FIGHTS FOR LIFE**

A boy of 12 is fighting for his life after he was struck by a car as he crossed a road, wearing a pair of Heelys. Jarred Twaits is said to have rolled under the vehicle's front wheels because of the trainers. The schoolboy, of Seaford, East Sussex, had brain surgery at King's College Hospital, London. Doctors last week warned the wheeled shoes could be a danger to children. (*London Metro*, 31 January 2007, p19)

Reiteration, through the use of hyponym-superordinate relations, does two things in this text: it increases the cohesion of the text through co-referring, making it easier to process, but it also informs the reader (or confirms, if they already know this) that trainers with wheels exist and that *Heelys* is one brand of them. This next text, an article from *New Scientist* on soya products, also informs, but the relationship between the items is more complex:

### **BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE HUMBLE SOYABEAN**

Success with a new product and hopes for a new pest killer is generating excitement about one of Japan's staple foodstuffs, the soyabean. Japanese people consume the nutritious legume mainly as *tofu* (bean curd), or miso, a thick brown salty paste used for flavouring.

Several years ago, miso came under fire from researchers who claimed that it caused high blood-pressure, then Japan's number-one killer. Predictably, sales slumped. Now to the *miso* producers' rescue has come *tonyu* – soyamilk. In fact, soyamilk is not new. The Chinese have drunk it, hot, for more than 2000 years. But many people find it unpleasant. (*New Scientist* 14 April 1983: 77 – adapted in Salkie 1995:79)

Here we have three types of reiteration: superordinate relations, *legume*–*soyabean*, *soya*–*tofu*, *soya*–*miso*, *soya*–*tonyu*; co-hyponyms, *tofu*–*miso*–*tonyu*; and synonyms, *tofu*–*beancurd*, *tonyu*–*soyamilk*. The result is a highly-structured text which is also highly informative, and typical of many scientific texts where knowledge is defined in terms of relationships and hierarchical organization. The italics (which are in the original) show that the author, by foregrounding these terms also considers them to be key in this article. Proforms also contribute to cohesion in this text, *miso* – *it*; *soyamilk* – *it* – *it*, by creating co-referential chains. I have excluded proforms in my analysis simply for clarity, lexical chains providing better examples for the present argument.

In the next text, an extract from a self-help book, the same dual function of Textual Metonymy, structuring and informing, is achieved through reiteration, but this time through the use of synonyms only, and the nature of the ‘informing’ is slightly different:

Andrew handled his sensitivity and reactivity somewhat differently. Andrew’s style was to turn a deaf ear to Gwen. She referred to this as “the deep freeze”. He was civil, even polite, but completely unavailable. Gwen had learned it was best to leave Andrew alone until he was ready to interact. Trying to talk with him when he pulled back was like cornering a fox, which will bite when trapped. It was hard for Gwen when Andrew walled her out. Sometimes this went on for months, and she carried resentment about this. She found solace in close friendships, teaching signing to the deaf, and taking care of her children. Life with Andrew involved lots of time alone, and Gwen tried to use it as best she could. (Schnarch 2002:142)

The expressions used for Andrew’s coldness towards Gwen in this text, *turn a deaf ear*, *the deep freeze*, *unavailable*, (not) *ready to interact*, *pull back*, *wall her out*, are different ways of saying the same thing, and therefore are co-referring, but they also progressively enrich the message. Textual Metonymy is also a stylistic choice, as the avoidance of same word repetition contributes to ‘elegant variation’. Although some of the terms are metaphoric, eg *turn a deaf ear*, *deep freeze*, *pull back*, *wall out*, we are still dealing with a metonymic phenomenon at the whole-text level, as the terms are closely related through their literal meaning.

In the next text, a text about the Himalayas, we see this phenomenon again: a series of synonyms, *mountain range*, *barrier*, *high and desolate passes*, *frontiers* and *mountain wall*, co-referring to one entity, the Himalayas, but also progressively enhancing our understanding of them:

The ancient civilization of India grew up in a sharply demarcated sub-continent bounded on the north by the world’s largest mountain range – the chain of the Himalayas, which, with its extension to east and west, divides India from the rest of Asia and the world. The barrier, however, was at no time an insuperable one, and at all periods both settlers and traders have found their way over the high and desolate passes into India, while Indians have carried their commerce and culture beyond her frontiers by the same route. India’s

isolation has never been complete, and the effect of the mountain wall in developing her unique civilization has often been overrated. (Leech et al 1982:194)

In the next text, a newspaper article about the transfer of football players, Textual Metonymy adds inclusion and exclusion to the functions of informing, enriching and entertaining identified above:

#### **BAGGIES IN A HURRY TO MAKE DOUBLE SWOOP**

West Brom yesterday revealed they had renewed their interest in Leicester midfielder Lee Marshall after agreeing a fee for Ipswich defender Hermann Hreidarsson.

The Baggies are keen to wrap up both deals ahead of their opening Premiership game against Manchester United on Saturday.

Albion managing director Brendon Batson said; 'We have had further talks with Leicester and Marshall's agent, which are ongoing. We want to try to conclude a deal as soon as possible.'

The Midlanders have agreed a fee for Hreidarsson which beats the club-record £2.1 million they paid Bristol Rovers for Jason Roberts two years ago.

Batson added: 'We've been focusing on several players and Hermann Hreidarsson is one of them. We've agreed a fee with Ipswich and have been given permission to talk to the player.'

Ipswich boss George Burley said: 'Our financial situation is well known. Relegation from the Premiership means we must sell and the club have reluctantly accepted this offer.'

(*London Metro*, 2006, nd)

(*The*) *Baggies*, *West Brom*, *Albion* and *The Midlanders* are all names for the same team: *West Bromwich Albion*. This information is needed in order to understand the article, and (different from the *Heelys* text) it cannot readily be derived from the text itself. An insider would enjoy the use of the familiar names for this team and enjoy a sense of inclusion and allegiance with West Bromwich Albion, set up through Textual Metonymy, when reading this article. The team *Ipswich* also has nicknames, such as *The Blues* and *Tractor Boys*, but the author avoids using these, thereby avoiding any show of allegiance towards the Ipswich team, perhaps because it is a less popular and less well

known team.

The last text I consider in this section, a report of an accident with a power tool, also uses a chain of metonymically-related expressions, but this time to entertain more than in service of any other discourse function:

**SAW CLOSE!**

**Barry nearly cuts off family jewels**

**By John Troup**

Builder Barry Moran was left in agony when his circular saw went haywire – and sliced into his MANHOOD.

Married Barry, 38, left the whirring saw on the ground after cutting up a door.

But the safety guard failed and the powerful blade propelled the tool across the deck – and up horrified Barry's left trouser leg. He said "It ripped right up the leg and into my lower region.

"I didn't realise what had happened at first – then I looked down and saw my private parts.

"Someone called an ambulance and a doctor put 20 stitches in my old man. The pain was terrible. A few more millimetres and my privates would have been cut off.

"The doctors said I was very lucky not to bleed to death – but I'm just relieved my tackle is still intact."

*Barry of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, has only just started walking again.*

He said: "Now I'm only hoping that when the stitches come out everything is going to work."

Wife Mikki, 30, echoed his fears saying: "That was the first thing I thought when I heard."

(*The Sun*, London, 26 July 2001, p19)

The function of Textual Metonymy here is not so much to enrich the discourse (or structure it), but to amuse the reader by displaying a repertoire of euphemistic terms for the male genitals (central to the story): *family jewels*, *manhood*, *lower region*, *private parts*, *old man*, *privates*, *tackle*, *everything*. As with the self-help text discussed above, although some of the terms are metaphorical eg *family jewels*, *tackle*, in textual terms, we are still concerned here with metonymy, not metaphor. Textual Metonymy is a

whole-text phenomenon, and because it is operating at this level, it does not rely on individual metonymies to set it up, but rather the part-whole overlapping in meaning between items. Textual Metonymy (reiteration) can be set up by individual metonymies, individual metaphors and literal language, unlike Textual Metaphor, where these three choices are not available.

## 6.5 Textual Metaphor

I am using the term Textual Metaphor to indicate the phenomenon where a single conceptual metaphor organizes a whole text or section of text. In Textual Metaphor, conceptual metaphor patterns lexical choice in a text or section of text to the extent that it is dominant in structuring it. Which conceptual metaphor is involved will depend on the subject matter and on the speaker/ author. Certain topics are difficult to discuss without using certain conceptual metaphors and the conventional language they give rise to; other topics invite authors to choose metaphorical ideas which are novel and thus the language which they use in constructing the text is novel too (and the association between the source and target domains may need to be spelled out in the text).

Below I look at examples of Textual Metaphor involving both conventional and novel metaphoric expressions in a variety of texts. They are: a report of the collapse of the investment bank Lehman Brothers, a card promoting the UK British National Party, an article on the UK football First Division, an advertisement for railcards, a promotion for HSBC bank, a poem by Philip Larkin and the introduction to a collection of academic papers on cognitive linguistics.

In the first text, about the 2008 financial collapse of the investment bank Lehman Brothers, the conceptual metaphor BAD IS DOWN plays an important role in patterning lexical choices in the text:

### **WORLD SHARES DIVE AFTER LEHMAN BROTHERS COLLAPSE**

LONDON (AFP) — Global stock markets plunged Monday as the dramatic collapse of US investment bank Lehman Brothers sparked sharp losses across

the financial sector on fears more bad news is to come, dealers said. With European bourses down between three and four percent, Wall Street slumped after a bankruptcy filing by Lehman Brothers and the distress sale of Wall Street rival Merrill Lynch to Bank of America.

The central banks, led by the US Federal Reserve, rushed to inject tens of billions of dollars into the money markets to head off any rush on liquidity as investors pulled money out of stocks and looked for safety. Asia tumbled first on the news Monday, followed by the Middle East, Russia and then Europe before the shockwave hit the North and South American markets.

At the same time, the dollar fell heavily against the euro before recovering some lost ground in volatile trade while oil prices slumped to seven-month lows under 93 dollars on fears the crisis will slow growth and curb energy demand. On Wall Street, stocks were down 2.72 percent at around 1600 GMT.

In Canada, stocks fell about three percent while the Brazilian market, South America's largest, lost five percent at the open but later steadied to show a loss of around four percent. In London, the FTSE 100 index was down 3.92 percent at 5,204.20 points. In Paris, the CAC 40 tumbled 3.78 percent to 4,168.97 points and in Frankfurt the DAX shed 2.74 percent at 6,064.16 points.

In Asia, where Tokyo and Hong Kong were among several markets closed for a public holiday, shares fell sharply, with Sydney down 1.8 percent and Singapore off 3.27 percent. In London, HBOS plunged 36 percent at one stage but managed to finish with a loss of 17.55 percent, reflecting concerns about a bank that had to raise fresh cash earlier this year after massive losses on its US subprime exposure.

Royal Bank of Scotland, similarly in the firing line, lost 10 percent and Barclays was down 9.84 percent. In Paris, one dealer said investors wanted to know why Lehman Brothers could not be saved -- was the company in such a bad state or was there no funding available to do a deal in tight markets?

Among the banks, BNP Paribas was down more than 7.0 percent and Societe Generale lost nearly 10 percent. Elsewhere in Europe, Brussels lost 3.49 percent, Madrid tumbled 4.50 percent, Italy was down 3.72 percent, Dutch stocks were off 3.64 percent and Switzerland fell 3.83 percent.

(AFP. 5 September 2008)

The lexical items *dive*, *collapse* (x2), *plunged*, *down* (x5), *tumbled* (x4), *fell* (x4), *slumped*, *low* (x2), *shed*, *under* all relate to the source domain DOWN, and are all terms which form part of the conventional language used in discussing and reporting financial events of this sort. There are other metaphors playing important roles here, too, of course, also creating conventional expressions, such as those around LOSS, but there is a sense here that financial crisis is being spoken about predominantly in terms of BAD IS DOWN (itself based on LESS IS DOWN).

The next text is structured using a less familiar metaphoric idea CRIMINALS ARE VERMIN. The text appeared on a creditcard-sized card and was posted through letterboxes of homes in London in 2008 (Figures 6.4 and 6.5 below):

**Figure 6.4: Front of BNP card**



**Figure 6.5: Reverse of BNP card**



The source domain, VERMIN, is represented in the first paragraph by *rat, cage, feed*, and is reinforced by a picture of a rat; while the target domain, CRIMINALS, is represented in the second paragraph by *judicial and prison policy, criminal, crimewave*. The two domains are separated out, words relating to VERMIN appearing in the text on the front of the card and words relating to CRIMINALS appearing on the back. Although the conceptual metaphor CRIMINALS ARE VERMIN is not explicitly stated anywhere on the card, it is easily inferred from the arrangement of the text.

In the next text, an article about football, the author exploits the metaphorical idea that TEAMS ARE FOODS, again not a familiar metaphoric idea:

#### **FIRST DIVISION PREDICTIONS AND FIXTURES**

##### **Watford (last season's final position: 9<sup>th</sup>)**

A more open division this year, without the likes of Fulham and Blackburn getting in the way. It's like a big mixed salad – lots of fresh ingredients, hopefully a tasty whole. But Gianluca Vialli's Hornets could be the shaved parmesan that finds itself on top when the dish is finished.

##### **Manchester City (18<sup>th</sup> Prem)**

The tuna in the mix – hard to ignore but tends to be a bit flaky. Have changed divisions every season for the last four – lets hope Keegan hasn't bitten off

more than he can chew.

**Preston North End (4<sup>th</sup>)**

In David Moyes Preston boast one of the best young bakers in the Nationwide cookery class. Will once again bring the best out of available ingredients to prove that last year's success was not a fluke.

**Wimbledon (8<sup>th</sup>)**

Those who forecast a return to insignificance after Premiership relegation will be disappointed again. Common-sense approach will pay dividends.

**Coventry City (19<sup>th</sup>, Prem)**

Of the three relegated sides Coventry could find themselves a bit lost, particularly as the season starts. In salad terminology, they're marshmallow – completely out of place.

**Bradford City (20<sup>th</sup>, Prem)**

A bit of lemon juice to keep our salad sharp. Bradford felt the squeeze last season but have returned full of zest and their acid bite will be frequently felt this year. [...]

**West Bromwich Albion (6<sup>th</sup>)**

Will lose freshness after last season's surprise success and might end up looking a bit limp. The lettuce in our top-10 salad – a vital part of the First Division mix, but a bit tasteless when you think about it. [...]

(supplement to *Weekend Guardian*. 2006, nd)

This article came before the football season had really got started, when there was little concrete to say about the championship. Instead, the piece entertains the reader by speculating on what might happen and the different potential of each team, using food metaphors. Most of the metaphoric expressions in this extract derive from the idea that TEAMS ARE FOOD. Talking about football teams in terms of food is not a familiar conceptual metaphor, and therefore, in order that the readers fall in with the journalist's structuring of the article, he feels it necessary to state it early on: "It [the First Division] is like a big mixed salad". The source domain is then represented in the remaining text by *tasty, shaved parmesan, dish, tuna, bitten off more than he can chew, bakers, cookery*

*class, ingredients, salad, marshmallow, a bit of lemon juice to keep our salad sharp, zest, acid bite, freshness, limp, lettuce, salad and tasteless.*

The metaphoric idea in the next text, an advertisement for rail travelcards is also not a familiar one, the source domain being ROCK MUSIC, the target domain is RAIL TRAVEL:

### **2.5 MILLION FANS AT EVERY GIG**

[picture of a guitarist wearing a suit and tie]

With over 2.5 million passengers spending an average of 3.5 hours per week on the train, Travelcards are the most cost effective way of hitting the commuter rail audience. To find out the rock star potential of Travelcards call 020 7207 5333. Travelcards: Focussing on the rail audience.

(Travelcard poster, National Rail, 2010, nd)

The source domain is set up by the items: *fans, gig, guitarist, audience, rock star, audience*. The two domains are melded together in the noun phrases *commuter rail audience*, and *the rock star potential of Travelcards*, as well as the image on the poster of a commuter performing with a guitar.

The next text, an advertisement of HSBC Plus Banking, is also based on the interplay between conceptual domains, BANKING and LUXURY HOTELS:



Welcome to club class banking Plus

How does a king size current account with freshly laundered sheets and goose down pillows feel?

[Row of images:] BED – PILLOW – BED – PILLOW – BED –  
BREAKFAST TRAY – FEET IN BED – MAID+PILLOWS – HSBC card –  
TORSO in bed

You know the beds you just never want to leave? Comfortable, soft, perfectly made? How would you like a bank account along the same lines? Welcome to HSBC Plus. An account with a bit more in the way of service. First off, we invite you in for a chat, so we can understand what you want from your

finances. Then we offer you 24/7 service, preferential rates, Roadside Breakdown Assistance and Worldwide Travel Insurance. Find out how to upgrade to HSBC by visiting [hsbc.co.uk/plus](http://hsbc.co.uk/plus) or call 0800 032 4720.  
(HSBC Banking Plus poster, London Underground, 2009, nd.)

The source domain is represented by the lexical items *king size, freshly laundered sheets, goose down pillows, beds you never want to leave, comfortable, soft and perfectly made* [beds], *upgrade*, and images of beds, pillows, a breakfast tray, feet, a maid and a torso. Here, as in the previous text considered above, there is a juxtaposition of the two domains within a NP, eg *king size current account, club class banking*. Later in the text, what this HSBC account has to offer above others is stated simply with “An account with a bit more in the way of service”, an expression which applies equally to banking and hotel accommodation.

The next text is another poem by Philip Larkin, *Water*. We saw how Larkin used Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor in the poem *Toads Revisited*; here, he uses Textual Metaphor to provide the frame for the whole poem. The poem is about religion, but religion explored in terms of water:

### *Water*

If I were called in  
To construct a religion  
I should make use of **water**.

Going to church  
Would entail a **fording**  
To **dry**, different clothes;

My litany would employ  
Images of **sousing**,  
A furious devout drench,

And I should raise in the east  
A **glass of water**  
Where any-angled light

Would congregate endlessly.

(Larkin 1964:20)

The lexical items *water*, *fording*, *dry*, *sousing*, *drench*, *glass of water* and (perhaps also *any-angled light*) derive from the source domain, WATER; while *religion*, *going to church*, (perhaps also *different clothes*), *litany*, *devout*, *in the east*, *congregate* derive from the target domain, RELIGION. Here, as in the previous text, there is often a tight interface between source and target domain, eg devout drench, and as we saw in the football text, here the conceptual metaphoric idea used to structure the text, RELIGION IS WATER, is almost stated explicitly: “If I were called in/ To construct a religion/ I should make use of water”.

The final text I have chosen to illustrate Textual Metaphor is an introduction to a collection of ‘Basic Readings’ on cognitive linguistics (Geeraerts 2006). In it, the author repeatedly refers to the conceptual metaphoric idea AN ACADEMIC GUIDE IS A TRAVEL GUIDE. Below I have collected together all the passages in this twenty-seven-page introduction in which the author employs TRAVEL GUIDE as a source domain. Language deriving from this domain is underlined; while much of the language of the text crosses over, applying equally to the source and target domain (not underlined):

### **A rough guide to Cognitive Linguistics**

When you move through the following chapters of this volume, you get to see a top twelve of sights that you should not miss [...] Still, to give you a firm reference point for your tour you may need some initiation to what Cognitive Linguistics is about. That’s what the present chapter is for: it provides you with a roadmap and travel book to Cognitive Linguistics. [...] It’s only a rough guide, to be sure: it gives you the minimal amount of background that you need to figure out the steps to be taken and to make sure that you are not recognized as a total foreigner or a naive apprentice, but it does not pretend to supply more than that. [...] To understand what you may expect to find in this brief travel guide, we need to introduce one of the characteristic ideas of Cognitive Linguistics first. (p1) [...]

### **What is so special about this Place?**

Theories in linguistics tend to be fairly insular affairs: each theoretical framework tends to constitute a conceptual and sociological entity in its own

right, with only a limited number of bridges, market places or even battlegrounds shared with other approaches. Cognitive Linguistics, when considered in the light of this metaphor, takes the form of an archipelago rather than an island. (p2) [...]

### **What does the tour include?**

You are right, of course: the first exploration of Cognitive Linguistics in the previous section remains somewhat superficial and abstract. You now have a general idea of what type of scenery to expect in the Cognitive Linguistics archipelago, but you would like to get acquainted with the specific islands, i.e. you now know what the overall perspective of Cognitive Linguistics entails, but you hardly know how it is put into practice. (p6) [...]

### **Where do you go next?**

Let us assume that, after roaming the present introductory volume, you really like the look and feel of Cognitive Linguistics. It's a safe assumption, in fact: you are bound to be drawn in by an intellectual climate that is both hospitable and inspiring, open-minded and exciting, wide-ranging and innovative. But where do you go after the initial tour d'horizon that has won your heart? (p20) [...]

When you've reached this stage, you will be ready to take a step into the world and take part in some real life Cognitive Linguistics activities. Where would you go? All self-respecting cities and countries have their own festivals and fiesta, and becoming part of the crowd involves participating in the celebrations. (p22) [...]

So now you know your way around in Cognitive Linguistics. You can walk the walk and talk the talk, and there's no way that you'd be exposed as a novice. But why would you be coming back? What would be a good reason to become a permanent resident? An obvious but relatively superficial motivation would be the diversity of the panorama: there's a lot to be found in the Cognitive Linguistics archipelago, and the framework is not so strict as to stifle creativity. It's a lively, colorful, varied environment, and you're likely to find some corner of special significance to you, where you can do your thing and meet people with similar interests. (p25) [...]

The choice of the GUIDED TOUR metaphor in this text may be a knowing nod to Lakoff's discussion of it in his classic essay on the "contemporary theory of metaphor", in which he identifies "three common academic discourse forms: the guided tour, the heroic battle, and the heroic quest" (Lakoff 1993:243). Lakoff suggests the guided tour metaphor is a version of a more primary metaphor, THOUGHT IS MOTION, and that his own essay

is an example of such a guided tour, where I, the author, am the tour guide who is assumed to be thoroughly familiar with the terrain and the terrain surveyed is taken as objectively real (Lakoff 1993:243-244).

Presenting the text above the way I have, in extracts, might leave the impression that there is a high concentration of language relating to the TRAVEL GUIDE domain in this text, but in fact the number of words is relatively small, only 270 words of the whole twenty-seven-page introduction use this source domain, only about 3.5% of the total wordcount. In order to test whether this deliberate and large-scale use of Textual Metaphor in this text was successful or not, I conducted an experiment with a group of MA applied linguistics students at a London university. This was undertaken in the context of a practice workshop. I asked them first to identify a conceptual metaphor which was organizing the text on a large scale. This they were able to do readily and identify the source domain of the metaphor. I then asked them their opinion of the text, whether they thought it was good, clever or appropriate. What I found was that the students generally found the text quite annoying, even patronizing, and felt that the travel guide metaphor was extended beyond the point of comfort, although it has only a minimal presence here in terms of number of words as a percentage of the whole text. Textual Metaphor is used for two purposes in this text: to make the prospect of embarking on a new field of study exciting by construing it in terms of travel (though as the students' reactions show, an author has to be careful not to overuse this device); the other is to give the text cohesion, achieved by making links across large stretches of text, ie between pages 1, 2, 6, 20, 22 and 25. It is also significant that the travel guide language appears mainly at the beginning of sections, as this is where cohesion is most needed, and then is abandoned as the author goes more deeply into the subject matter in hand.

In this chapter, I have briefly reviewed the writing on how metonymy and metaphor can be used to organize whole texts. I then present my own framework for analysis of metonymy and metaphor operating at the level of the whole text. This consists of four phenomena: Discourse Metonymy, Discourse Metaphor, Textual Metonymy and Textual Metaphor. I show through the consideration of naturally-occurring texts how metonymy and metaphor operate to change register of text, Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor, and pattern lexis in text, Textual Metonymy and Textual Metaphor. I demonstrated that at the level of the whole text, metonymy is again a guiding principle. The variety of my sample texts shows figurative language-based phenomena in meaning making at text level not to be localized to a few text types or contexts.

This chapter adds further detail to the picture being built up in this thesis of metonymy as a device operating at every level and constantly drawn upon as a resource in the choices speakers and authors make. In the next two chapters, I take further the argument developed so far and explore the role of metonymy in two specific areas of applied linguistics: language learning/teaching (Chapter 7) and translation (Chapter 8).

## 7 Metonymy and Language Learners

This chapter develops the idea of the importance of metonymy by turning to one particular category of applied linguist, the language learner. I argue that metonymy plays an important role in interactions between learners and their interlocutors, and that those interactions depend on the recognition of relatedness in order to be successful. Learners and their interlocutors – learners themselves and native speakers – use aspects of their ‘metonymic competence’ in both producing and comprehending utterances. I develop the concepts of ‘metonymic processing’, the recognition/supply of near equivalents, and ‘formal metonymy’, relatedness of (acoustic or graphic) form rather than meaning, and discuss the implications these have for learner communication and language learning. I also look at speech errors (‘slips’), reframing them in terms of metonymy theory.

### 7.1 Figurative Language and Language Learning

Published teaching materials for English, if concerned with figurative (non-literal) language at all, have tended to focus on metaphor rather than metonymy, on conventional metaphor rather than novel metaphor, and on low- rather than high-frequency items. This is lamentable, as it robs the learner of exposure to the whole range of phenomena, which lie between literal language and ‘fancy’ idioms, the very area which offers speakers expressive scope from within the limits of their existing knowledge. The purpose of this section is to review the teaching of figurative language, firstly as reflected in teaching materials and then as reflected in scholarship on teaching.

A standard coursebook in English language teaching presents non-literality as rare, colourful and complicated, and therefore probably dispensable or, at best, at the margins of what ‘should’ be taught. This has been the experience of Littlemore & Low (2006b):

Even now, there are few commercial second-language courses which teach metaphor as anything other than the basis of colourful idiomatic phrases (Littlemore & Low 2006b:268).

A traditional coursebook typically included one or two, usually quite obscure, idioms per unit/chapter (such as *raining cats and dogs* and *kick the bucket*), without giving any practice or much of an explanation of how they are used. Where idioms do receive special attention is when they are the topic of separate practice books, which typically offer multiple-choice gap-fill exercises in which the student is asked to choose the correct idiom from a short list (eg Allsop & Woods 1990, Thomas 1996, Watcyn-Jones 2002). But here too, the expressions considered are often very infrequent and very specific in their function, and presented as simply interchangeable equivalents, which could quite easily be substituted with literal expressions. These are the sort of expressions which Moon notes would hardly appear even in larger corpora (Moon 1998:83).

It is my observation that students seem to like idioms because they see the mastery of them as an indicator of having gained a high level of competence as well as enjoying them for the unexpected differences between cultures which these expressions reveal. Also, it gives them an experience of ‘colourful’ language they have had in their first language. Cornell confirms that native speakers have an advantage when it comes to idioms:

There can be few areas where there is such a contrast between the uncertainty of the learner and the confident instinct and experience of the native speaker (Cornell 1999:15).

Learners are quick to detect, in expressions such as *to look daggers*, *to be at sixes and sevens*, *to jump out of your skin*, *to get knotted*, an aspect which is entertaining and playful. Little of the fun around the outlandishness of idioms is reflected in teaching materials nor is a delight in their flamboyance and oddness encouraged. Idioms are perceived as weird, wonderful and colourful, and indicators of cultural differences. In my own data, from conversations with learners, one informant recounted his fascination when learning French at the non-equivalence of certain idioms between French and English as reported in his dictionary; he observed that *One swallow doesn't make a summer* in French became ... *ne fait pas le printemps* (= doesn't make a spring), and *to have other fish to fry* in French was ... *autres chats à fouetter* (= other cats to whip). More modern textbooks integrate idiomticity more successfully into the main linguistic

work of the course. This has been arrived at in two ways, motivated by two independent lines of linguistic research, either an awareness of phraseology theory or metaphor theory.

Phraseology theory treats idioms as phrases which have ‘added value’ by virtue of being processed as whole phrases or ‘long words’. These ‘lexical phrases’ include metaphorically-derived phrases, but also a whole range of other expressions which show different degrees of lexical and syntactic fixity and, therefore, availability for patterning. Phraseology scholars recognize the gradients of transparency, normality, flexibility and frequency and the existence of ‘aberrant’ grammar, such as *to go great guns*, *to do the dirty on someone*. This approach originates in an interest in collocation hand in hand with a desire to examine real data made possible through developments in corpus linguistics (Sinclair 1991). The influence all this has had on pedagogy can be seen in approaches such as the ‘lexical approach’, which sees language as grammar-in-lexis rather than lexis-in-grammar (Lewis 1993), and coursebooks which take up the idea of the centrality of lexis in language description, such as the *Innovations* series (eg Dellar & Walkley 2004).

The other way in, metaphor theory, focuses instead on metaphoricity itself, presenting idioms as evidence of cognitive patterning with conceptual metaphors as their origin. Materials writers influenced by metaphor theory offer students a more systematic (and therefore more economical in terms of study time) way of learning new expressions. In the *Collins Cobuild English Guides: 7 Metaphor*, Deignan embraces both the phraseological and the metaphorical approach by organizing expressions under keywords (which activate source domains for metaphors) as well as broad categories, such as ‘sport’, ‘farm animals’, ‘wind and storms’, ‘unhealthy plants’, ‘routes’ (Deignan 1995); while Wright organizes idioms by key words (*all, way, know, point, life, line*); topic, eg ‘family’, ‘holidays’, ‘dreams’, ‘health’; and explicitly according to the conceptual metaphors they derive from, eg BUSINESS IS WAR, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, PEOPLE ARE LIQUIDS (Wright 1999). The cover ‘blurb’ claims the aim is to make things easier for the learner:

Idioms Organiser is the first practice book which sorts idioms into different categories so that students find them easier to understand and learn (Wright 1999).

The same publisher's *Phrasal Verb Organiser* is also influenced by conceptual metaphor theory. It presents phrasal verbs by particle rather than the 'root' verb, eg verbs with UP (*put up, break up, bring up, dream up, hush up, use up*, etc), which are considered together for ease of learning, in order to give students a more systematic approach to learning and an intuition for understanding phrasal verbs when first encountered (Flower 1993).

Modern EFL dictionaries also offer students material which takes on the developments in linguistics. *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2002) offers a series of language awareness essays on subjects such as pragmatics and phraseology. Among them is one on metaphor (Moon 2002:LA8). Also, scattered through the Macmillan dictionary are 'metaphor boxes', which present metaphoric expressions by source domain, eg changes in quantities and amounts are like movements UP and DOWN (p1153); and an organization is a like a BODY (p1001).

When we turn to the scholarship on teaching figurative language, scholars appear surprised that developments in linguistics have not been taken up more enthusiastically. As early as 1988, Low claimed that discourse and pragmatics research had had an influence on language teaching literature and teaching materials in a way which metaphor studies had not, that "few of the results have filtered down to the 'shop floor' of language teaching methodology and courses" (Low 1988:125). There is certainly quite a body of literature both suggesting how figurative language may be taught (eg Lazar 1996) as well as empirical studies showing the efficacy of different methods of teaching, reviewed for the earlier period before 1990 by Low (Low 1988) and for the next decade, by Cameron & Low (1999a, 1999b). Nonetheless, there is still a sense that English language teaching has not kept up with developments.

Cameron & Low observe that the influence of the metaphor studies 'revolution' on language teaching has not been great:

The study of metaphor has exploded in the last decades, but little of the impact of that explosion has so far reached applied linguistics (Cameron & Low 1999a:77).

and

[T]here has to date been very little research into metaphor in second language acquisition, and very little into teaching control over metaphor. [...] Hopefully the next ten years will see an explosion of applied linguistic research. (Cameron & Low 1999a:91)

What the next ten years provided was an exploration of non-literal language and its significance for language learning in a much wider sense. We have principally Littlemore and Low to thank for this. They have written extensively, both as single authors and together, introducing a number of useful terms, which reflect their interest in the learning mind as a nexus of processing and cognitive skills: 'metaphoric competence' (Littlemore 2001a, 2006b, 2010), 'metaphoric intelligence' (Littlemore 2001b, 2002) and 'figurative thinking' (Littlemore & Low 2006a).

'Metaphoric competence' includes both the ability to produce and comprehend language and depends on the individual's speed and fluency to do so (Littlemore 2001a). Its usefulness, particularly in the context of learners in an academic environment, eg when reading academic texts, writing assignments, attending lectures, is explored by Littlemore (2001a) and Littlemore & Low (2006b). Littlemore compares 'metaphoric competence' in a speaker's first and second language (Littlemore 2010). In another exploration of metaphoric competence, Littlemore extends the range of Gardner's list of eight intelligences, in the context of his theory of 'multiple intelligences', to include a ninth, 'metaphoric intelligence' (Littlemore 2001b, 2002). Littlemore & Low also investigate the advantages of encouraging 'figurative thinking' in learners (Littlemore & Low 2006a). Holme also discusses 'metaphoric competence' and advocates adopting the use of conceptual metaphor in teaching lexis, arguing that this permits a more systematic approach and a greater awareness of networks within the target language (Holme 2004). Although the research cited above demonstrates a move away from teaching low-frequency conventional metaphors to a wider awareness of figurative language, and thus helps to offer a systematic framework for learning and remembering language items, I feel an even more useful strategy would be to expose students to high-frequency conventional metonymies, such as *head for the door*, *bums on seats*, *small screen*, *pay with plastic*. Not only this, I am convinced that the ability to understand and create novel metonymies would be of equal or greater utility in the toolbox of any communicator. I would like to suggest that developing a wider awareness, for which we

might coin the term ‘metonymic competence’ to parallel Littlemore & Low’s term ‘metaphoric competence’, would be a profitable use of classroom time.

An approach to teaching figurative language which focuses more on strategies for creating common types of novel metonymies than low-frequency conventional linguistic metaphors would contribute more to a learner’s overall communicative competence. This competence would include both the ability to recognize close-relatedness as well as create language involving close-relatedness, and thereby expand the speaker’s receptive skills and expressivity in real time during speech events. Low observes that “it is commonly accepted that young children demonstrate a preference for thinking metonymically before they think metaphorically [...] and this has recently been found to be the case for young L2 learners” (Low 2008:223), suggesting that the learning I am advocating is more easily within the grasp than other abilities.

The next section looks at skills involving metonymy, seeing the learner as a language user (and not only a language-learning student), using the resources they have learnt and performing with them in real life. To do this, I take up the concept of ‘metonymic processing’, discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and examine the role it plays in making interactions between learners and their interlocutors successful.

## 7.2 Metonymy and Learner Communication

Metonymy plays an important role in all communication but plays a particularly significant role in learner communication. It is an essential feature of learner-learner and learner-native speaker interaction. Without the ability to use metonymy to process language, the interactions learners have with other learners and native speakers would have little or no success. In this section, I am using the term ‘metonymic processing’ to cover the active involvement of metonymic relatedness when processing language during speech events. I look at three aspects of metonymic processing which are particularly significant. The first is the processing work which interlocutors do in order to compensate for the differences between what they expect to hear and what they actually hear. I discuss this under the rubric of ‘Accommodation’. The second is the modified version of speech/writing which interlocutors produce in order to make their

speech/writing easier for learners to understand. I discuss this under the heading of 'Foreigner Talk'. The third is the learner's use of metonymy to move away from a fixed one-to-one attitude towards language and explore instead the more flexible, nuanced, creative and expressive 'fuzzy' zone of near-fit equivalents and blended signs. This I discuss under the heading of 'Extending the Lexicon'. I deal with each of these in turn below.

## Accommodation

To introduce this topic, I would like to imagine someone on a trip to Budapest in Hungary, who on their arrival takes a taxi from the airport to the hotel. The interaction this imagined person has with the taxi driver during the journey would probably involve a lot of effortful processing. It would be hard work on a number of levels, due to the differences in the varieties of the language(s) they find themselves interacting in. There would be differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse and genre, as well as at the level of cognitive frames, conceptual metaphors and social/cultural practices.

The people who learners speak to, their interlocutors, need to be able to compensate for the unexpectedness of what they hear; they need to do processing work in order to understand the speaker's intentions. Metonymic processing involves noticing differences between what is heard and the patterns we store in our long-term memories as part of our competence knowledge of the language. The cognitive process is a form of 'compensation', analogous to the 'compensation' translators carry out to reduce 'loss' when translating (explored in Chapter 8). Learner utterances are like 'shifts' from an ideal norm. 'Shift' is also a term in translation studies, referring to the search for near equivalents when exact equivalents are unavailable. The process of understanding learner utterances is a form of translation in the wide sense of word, a form of what Jakobson calls 'intralingual translation' (Jakobson 2004 [1959]).

If someone were to utter the simple sentence *What are you doing?* with this pronunciation:

/ 'wɒt'ʌ 'ju 'dou 'in /

and we compare this with the performance of the same utterance by a typical Southern Standard British English (SSBE) speaker:

/ 'wɒt ə ju: 'du: ɪŋ /

there are a number of differences to be observed. The two most significant are the differences in stress patterns and vowel/diphthong positions. The first version (an Italian speaker) is spoken in a syllable-timed version of English (almost certainly influenced by their L1 being syllable timed), each syllable being given almost equal time and equal stress; while the SSBE version is stress timed (fewer stresses and with stresses falling 'on the pulse'). The two versions are also different in terms of the positioning of the vowels/diphthongs and the placing of the consonants, but not so different that the Italian speaker would not be understood by the SSBE speaker. The metonymic processing the SSBE speaker carries out, which involves observing relatedness, is vital for sustaining communication. Holme refers to this as 'inadvertent metaphor':

These sentences are incorrect because the categories that they deal with have been grasped in a way that does not match the conventions of English (Holme 2004:196).

Inadvertent metaphor is analogous to inadvertent humour, such as making puns without intending to. The unwanted un-literality learners present us with (and all speakers to some extent do) have to be processed as metonyms or metaphors by their interlocutors whether they are intended or not. 'Metonymic processing' involves 'shifts' at the level of phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse, genre, frames and social practices. If the metonymic shifts are too great, and the metonymic links are stretched too far, then even with the best will in the world on the part of the interlocutor, relatedness can no longer be recognized and communication breaks down.

In order to demonstrate the idea of metonymic shifts which are challenging to process without being so great that they cause communication breakdown, I wish now to present data from a recording I made of informant Zoë (pseudonym). These data were in fact

collected for another purpose, a pilot study early on in this research. Five bilingual informants contributed recordings (pseudonyms have been used): Anja (L1 German, near-native competence in English), Britta (L1 German, near-native competence in English), Joseph (L1 Italian, near-native-competence in English), Katherine (French/English bilingual) and Zoë (Greek parents, L1 German, advanced speaker of English). The recordings were made over a three-month period in 2006. Each informant was asked to talk about two topics first in one language then in another, one of those languages being English. The topics were: 1) “The New York street map” and 2) “Social change over the last ten years”. The time spent on each language was approximately half an hour. I was present but did not interact verbally with the informants during the recordings, in order not to influence their choice of words or scaffold their performances.

The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate whether advanced learners use metaphor differently in their first language compared to their second. As the present research progressed this was no longer a research question I wished to explore, and anyway no significant patterns could be read from the data. However, the particular strategies of one of the informants, Zoë, stood out in offering an illustration of another phenomenon: metonymic links which are demanding to process. The other informants did not offer data which illustrated this, thus I use Zoë’s data but do not include data from the other informants in this thesis. Zoë was born in Greece to Greek parents, moved to Germany when she was six, studied English at school and university in Germany and spent a year in the UK studying for an MA in Shakespeare Studies. Her data were of interest, while the data from the other informants were not, perhaps because she was less competent in English than the other informants, and had developed strategies to compensate; but it may equally be a consequence of her individuality, her history and possibly a rhetorical style learned from Greek. This is an extract from Zoë’s monologue on social change:

English has become more simple // they are not really full decorative embellished sentences / well structured sentences // they are short sentences / just swift to send them away / even in staccato language // and I think it has becomes more / because of the Americanisms / in our language / in English (Zoë, monologue, 2006)

In one sense, there is no sense to this passage: what are “full decorative embellished

sentences”; what does it mean to “send a sentence away”; what is ‘staccato’ language? In another sense, the passage makes complete sense. We have quite a clear idea of what Zoë wants to say and how she positions herself, in fact it is quite expressive and, as the recording reveals, is delivered with great fluency.

Later in the same interview, Zoë communicates her worries about young people vis-à-vis digitalization, and does so with the same effectiveness, though many words are extended beyond their typical use, eg *cope* and *method*:

these children / they know how to cope with the computer / but they don't know how / how to cope with other methods / with other things / everyday life // they are so much into this / electronic things (Zoë, monologue, 2006)

The sense I have here is of a speaker not confident enough to ‘nail down’ what she wants to say with one precise word, but who instead offers a cluster of approximations, eg *other methods/ other things/ everyday life*; and ‘hopes for the best’. In fact, by doing this, she creates an effect which is far from second best, her solutions perhaps being more expressive and richer in meaning than the single-word solutions she might have come up with given more time to think.

This leads me to the view that learner utterances are neither definitively ‘correct’ nor ‘incorrect’, but somewhere in between, neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad’, but attempts at meaning making ‘on the fly’, taking place in real time and under social pressure. They are for the most part successful utterances, but occasionally they are not, creating misunderstandings or communication breakdowns. This is no different really from any speech event, whatever the competence of the speaker or whether the speaker is a native speaker or not.

It could perhaps be imagined that there is a scale of processing effort, where native-native speaker interaction requires the least, native speakers of different varieties interacting requires more effort, learner-native speaker interactions still more and learner-learner interactions the most. But this is perhaps simplistic as the picture is complex and involves a whole set of variables. Learners are not necessarily harder to understand than native speakers (of other varieties). Many Londoners, for example,

would find broad Glaswegian or Geordie accents in English harder to understand than, say, a learner whose native language is a romance language. This is especially the case as Londoners have a lot of practice accommodating to learner English in service encounters in the capital, and perhaps have less experience interacting with people with broad Glaswegian and Geordie accents. The success of interactions involving learners is as much a matter of the learner's ability to articulate their wishes as it is the interlocutor's ability to accommodate their own utterances to the needs of the learner. This is the topic of the next section.

## Foreigner Talk

Another skill involving metonymy which the interlocutors of learners need to have in their repertoires is 'foreigner talk'. This is not an ideal term, particularly from a World Englishes perspective, but it is one which is used frequently in the literature (eg Ellis 2008, Jenkins 2000) and therefore useful in identifying the phenomenon here. It is a term used by the Creolist Ferguson, referring to the modified form of a language which proficient speakers use when speaking to learners, and characterized by:

less syntactic complexity, fewer pronouns, the use of higher frequency vocabulary, more clearly articulated pronunciation [...], slower speech rate, more questions [...], as well as the tendency to speak more loudly and to repeat (Jenkins 2000:177).

Being able to accommodate to learners like this is part of a speaker's 'metonymic competence'. The relationship between 'foreigner talk' and unaccommodated talk is metonymic. So is the relationship between 'baby talk' (also, 'parentese', 'caretaker talk', 'motherese' or 'Child Directed Speech') and the language the adult uses in other contexts; in fact, Ferguson compares foreigner talk to baby talk (Jenkins 2000:177). A Creole and its 'substrate' and 'superstrate' languages (eg French in the Caribbean Creoles of Martinique, St Lucia, Dominica, Haiti and Guadeloupe) could be considered metonymically related; so could 'hard-core' Creoles and more recent decreolized forms which derive from them, eg "I think he's left": *dapré mwen imach* (Creole); *dapré mwen i pati* (decreolized); *a man avis il est parti* (Standard Caribbean French) (Gournet 2010). Most Caribbean speakers have the ability to switch from the hard core Creole

through the decreolized form (or ‘mesolect’) to Caribbean French, a skill similar to the ability to change from adult to foreigner talk.

Language varieties (‘dialects’), such as eg Indian, Australian, West African, British and American English, and registers, eg formal vs informal or politically correct vs non-politically correct, sociolects and idiolects are related metonymically, so are varieties of languages, such as standard and vernacular Arabic, Swiss German and High German, Katharevousa and Demotí Greek, Bokmål and Nynorsk (Norway). The relationship between distinct languages is also metonymic and it is the job of translators to explore the metonymic relations between distinct languages when carrying out their work in producing translations (the subject of Chapter 8).

### Extending the Lexicon

Language has a loose fit around reality and meaning making is partial. As a result, we only need to refer to a part in order to communicate the whole, the listener supplying what is not actually encoded. Meaning can be ‘got at’ in many different ways.

Metonymy theory presents meaning as ‘emergent’ rather than ‘determined’ and communication as more flexible than a ‘determinist’ model, ie one in which there is a fixed one-to-one correspondence between words and things, would imply. The up side of this is that through metonymy learners are offered flexibility, by allowing them to exploit information they already have in the mental lexicon more fully.

I have presented data from my informant Zoë earlier in this section and present here another extract from the same recording. Here we have a very creative and expressive speech event, and (as the recording testifies) a fluent one, which cleverly exploits the restricted resources the speaker has available to her, and in which she uses metonymic associations to reach her communicative goals:

the world has becoming more and more in speed / more speedful // and more superficial // because no inner characters are more admired / but more superficial things / the outer looking / how you look / how you react yourself / how you cope by not being a character (Zoë, monologue, 2006)

Zoë uses other meaning-making strategies, to give two (or three) words/expressions where one would do. Often one *will* do, but she is perhaps not confident enough to know which one to choose, so gives the interlocutor the choice. In these extracts:

... in Germany they don't wear uniforms so that is a problem for them you can discern or tell which children are poor and which children are rich by their clothes and they start begin to have quarrel an argument together and is not really nice ...

... we had a computer at university and there I could type my certificate my dissertation my thesis I could even borrow a computer a laptop that time I could take it with me  
(Zoë, monologue, 2006)

Zoë offers us *discern* vs *tell*, *start* vs *begin*, *quarrel* vs *argument*; and *certificate* vs *dissertation* vs *thesis* and *computer* vs *laptop*. Sometimes we feel this is almost a form of bravura, using the pretence of reduced confidence in the learnt language to 'show off' a bit, in a way that only learners can, because they are more aware that they are 'performing'! I think it is also important here to observe that the solution Zoë comes up with can neither be classified as 'correct' nor 'incorrect', as we noted earlier in this section ('accommodation'), but as somewhere in between.

Littlemore observes that adult learners use 'lexical innovation' through the use of metaphorical extension to fill gaps (like children do), eg the invention by one of her informants of *un-junk-tion* to mean 'street cleaning', in the sense of 'removal of junk' (Littlemore 2001b:4). Littlemore gives examples of vocabulary learning of this sort, ie through metaphoric extension, eg uses of the word *cup*, eg of a bra, an acorn, a hip joint and a sports prize (Littlemore 2001a:459) or the word *eye*, eg of a potato, a needle, a hurricane (Littlemore 2001a:485). Low argues that "metaphor makes it possible to talk about X at all" (Low 1988:127) and observes that there is:

considerable evidence that learners try to overcome gaps in their knowledge of second language by exploiting what they *do* know how to say, and that this can involve the creation of metaphor [...], that is to say, what they do not yet know is treated as if it were part of the reduced inventory, or stock, of the second language that they do know (Low 1988:135).

Littlemore observes that the ability and inclination to use figurative language in order to increase their language competence varies from student to student, and characterizes those who produce a lot of figurative language as ‘metaphorical thinkers’:

By using such strategies, metaphorically intelligent language learners are able to use their language resources in order to express a wider variety of concepts. They are therefore able to increase both their fluency and overall communicative effectiveness.  
(Littlemore 2001b:4)

What I would add to the good work of Low and Littlemore in this area is to direct our attention to the metonymic end of figurative language. Most of their examples are metaphoric, but there is a huge area of flexibility and expressivity which learners exploit intuitively, which are more metonymic than metaphoric. This more subtle matching of similarities goes unnoticed because it is subtle. But it is this subtlety which gives it such power and universality; and, anyway, metonymy does the work behind the examples of metaphor Low and Littlemore give: the shape of a CUP and the physical characteristics of an EYE are related metonymically to CUP and EYE. Metonymy, even more than metaphor, offers a hugely useful resource of flexibility and creativity to the user.

This is illustrated in this dialogue in which the learner (L), a gardener, is talking to a native speaker (N), a gardening enthusiast, about work he had done that morning:

L: We had seven or eight boxes of them. Is it sowing or planting? Because it is not really a seed and not really a plant.

N: A seedling?

L: More like a broadbean.

N: I suppose it's more like a seed.

L: So, anyway, I sowed them.

N: You put them in the ground.

L: Yes.

(conversation overheard on London Underground, 14 May 2009)

In this extract, the two participants (led by the learner) are exploring the boundaries of categories along the continuum *seed/bean/seedling/plant* and *to sow/plant/put in the ground*. The discussion is explicitly metalinguistic (ie talk about language rather talk

using language). The learner knows that you *sow a seed* but *plant a plant*, and wants a word which would be suitable for an in-between category. The learner is explicitly exploring relatedness between the word categories *seed*, *plant*, *seedling*, *bean*, and *sowing*, *planting*, *putting in the ground*.

The purpose of this exploration is to add to his knowledge of the language, not to advance the narrative goals of the conversation; nor does it seem to be for the purposes of establishing intimacy with his interlocutor or for phatic communication. The learner is using the interaction in which he finds himself for his own learning purposes. It is communication “mixed with pedagogy”, forcing the interlocutor “to adopt the subject position of teacher” (Block 2007:166). Here, the learner engages his interlocutor, using her as an expert, to gain additional knowledge. The native speaker, on the other hand, seeks to resolve the problems the learner presents by offering immediate solutions, eg *A seedling?*, *I suppose it's more like a seed.*, *You put them in the ground.*, in order to get the dialogue back to an interaction which is a narrative with shared goals rather than one which is didactic and metalinguistic and sided only to the goals of the learner.

### **Formal Metonymy**

In Section 5.1, I discussed the important role played by formal metonymy (the recognition of similarities in form - sound or graphology – between utterances rather than meaning) in various aspects of everyday communication. I cited its use in closing off episodes in discourse, in humour, in conventionalized coined expressions (eg *dual fuel* or *kerb-side collection*) and private coined expressions, and its role in uncooperativeness. Here, I look at the further significant role of formal metonymy, namely in learning lexis.

The idea here is that new words which sound or look similar to words you already know will be easier to learn. I realize that this may seem a very obvious claim. I am making it as I feel the role relatedness in form plays in language learning has been seriously underestimated. If we take the European languages and imagine that we are encountering them for the first time, the relatedness in form is a very powerful handle, a good way in. Taken from the viewpoint of a speaker of English, for some lexical items,

the unfamiliar words seem to have no association at all; for others there is an association. In Czech, for example, for an English speaker, there does not seem to be any clue to help us know which of *dnes*, *včera* and *zitra* mean TODAY, YESTERDAY and TOMORROW, while it is clear which of *sekunda* and *minuta* means SECOND and which means MINUTE. Similarly, if you are not familiar with Polish, Finnish and Spanish (or related languages), it is hard to tell the words for BREAKFAST and LUNCH apart. They are *śniadanie* and *obiad* (Polish), *aamiainen* and *lounas* (Finnish), and *desayuno* and *comida* (Spanish). These examples and those which follow in this section are taken from *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: European Phrase Book* (2003).

The words for YES and NO in Dutch are *ja* and *nee*, in Norwegian *ja* and *nei* and Swedish *ja* and *nej*. For all three we can be fairly certain which is which without being told, while it is less clear in Finnish where the two words are *kyllä* and *ei*. Words for PUSH and PULL (eg signs on doors) are *tam* and *sem* in Czech, *spingere* and *tirare* in Italian, and *tolni* and *húzni* in Hungarian. All are hard to guess at, while *drag* and *skjut* in Swedish have overtones of ‘dragging’ and ‘shutting’, so perhaps could be guessed at as being ‘pull’ and ‘push’ respectively.

It is clear which months are referred to with *avril*, *mai* and *juin* in French, *April*, *Mai* and *Juni* in German, *április*, *május* and *június* in Hungarian, but not so *huhtikuu*, *toukokuu* and *kesäkuu* in Finnish; which of *água fria* and *água quente* is hot water and which is cold in Portuguese, whether *completo* in Italian or *fullt* in Norwegian mean a hotel has vacancies or not.

The words for ‘lift’ is *hiss* in Swedish, *hissi* in Finnish and *winda* in Polish, which seem to have no relation to any English words in graphology or phonology. But even here there is perhaps the suggestion of a ‘hissing’ sound of a lift arriving or the lift ‘winding’ its way to your floor, though more as a mnemonic than any clue to understanding. The words for ‘dialling code’ (*kod*) and ‘email address’ (*adres email*) in Polish seem obvious, so do *tarifas* (charges) in Portuguese and *linka* (telephone extension) in Czech.

The resonance set up by formal metonymy, which exists between languages, also exists between varieties of the same language even more strongly. To illustrate this I am now going to consider American and British English. Here, as in the examples from

European languages above, there are words which are completely different in the varieties, words which have similarities and words which are the same. Examples of words which are the same in standard American and British English are too numerous to give. Some are easy to understand because they are transparent eg *windshield* vs *windscreen*. Some words seem to give a clue, eg *gas* vs *petrol*, *school* vs *university*, *candy* vs *sweets*, *elevator* vs *lift*, while others give no clue at all, eg *socket* vs *point*, *faucet* vs *tap*, *eggplant* vs *aubergine* (examples from Kövecses 2000 and McCreary 2002).

The under-acknowledged role of formal metonymy in language learning perhaps explains the ‘magic point’, which some learners report reaching, where they seem to be learning lexis at an incredibly fast rate, but without really knowing why they are having such success. This, to my mind, may well be thanks to the associations laid down by ‘cognates’, words which are related in meaning and form between languages. I will use an example within the *same* language to illustrate this, between British English and American English. A British English speaker might encounter the fact that what is *ill* for them, in American English is *sick*. It is not hard to learn this because *sick* exists in British English. But the reason that this information is so easily assimilable is perhaps due to the network of formal metonymies available in the mental lexicon. Uses exist in British English where ‘sick’ means ‘ill’ and can serve as clues, such as: *throw a sickie*, *sick note*, *be off sick*, *sick leave*.

Words which look as if they should be related but are not, ‘false friends’, are often cited as traps which face language students, and indeed they can be the cause of serious errors, but they also contain elements which can aid memory once the traps are identified. The Italian word *fattoria* means ‘farm’, not ‘factory’, the word *parente* means ‘relative’ rather than ‘parent’, *vernice* ‘paint’ rather than ‘varnish’, but ‘farm’ and ‘factory’ have in common that they are places of production, ‘parents’ and ‘relatives’ are to do with family trees, and ‘paints’ and ‘varnishes’ are both liquids applied to surfaces to protect and decorate them; and so the true meaning of the false friend, although shifted, is still in a related domain.

MA translation programmes offered by a London university offer their students the opportunity of studying a ‘cognate’ language, that is, a language which is related to the

language/s they are taking as their main language/s. In recent years, students taking French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish have been offered Romanian (because it is a Romance language). The students who take these classes are trained to read certain types of text (institutional and technical) with a view to translating those texts. The skills they are training are very specific. They are not learning to listen, speak or write, and they are working within a very narrow field and range of text genres. Their progress over the year is startling, such that by the end of the year they are able to translate confidently and quickly from Romanian to English. A lot of this progress has to do, no doubt, with the fact that hundreds of metonymic clues, morphological syntactic, lexical, pragmatic and discourse, are picked up on by the student, probably often subconsciously. This was clearly the intention of the organizers of the programme. They anticipated that relatedness would aid their students in learning a language they had never encountered before, and this was indeed the case.

### 7.3 Slips as Metonymy in the Speech Process

The non-literal language which learners produce without intending to, but which their interlocutors are obliged to process (as if it were non-literal), was described in the previous section as ‘inadvertent metaphor’. It was identified as a feature of learner speech. For Holme inadvertent metaphor is a substitute for precise knowledge:

Sentence 86 (‘A coat is an object we support to disturb the wind’) is finally an inadvertent metaphor and shows metaphor-making as a substitute for precise lexical knowledge (Holme 2004:196),

though many educators would simply call these ‘errors’. The notion of ‘error’ and what exactly constitutes an ‘error’ was discussed in the previous section. It was suggested that there is no clearcut divide between ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’, when discussing learner speech (or any speech, for that matter), and that anyway the concept had limited relevance.

The pressures of time and the pressures of performing socially dictate that speaking is a matter of mobilizing the resources the speaker has to hand ‘on the fly’. Speaking is more

akin to improvisation than mechanical coding, involving split-second decisions, which once made cannot be gone back on. Utterances are the best you can come up with in the time rather than perfect solutions cast for posterity. Metonymy theory replaces a ‘deficit model’ of errors with one which is less deterministic and presents errors as neither avoidable nor necessarily undesirable.

The ‘errors’ we looked at in the last section consisted of metonymic variation in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse, genre and schemata. They required the interlocutor to accommodate to the learner in utterances, such as “I find myself boring myself” instead of “I find I get bored”; “I cannot support it” instead of “I can’t stand it”, “Prices have gone through the carpet” instead of “Prices have gone through the floor”. I am now going to consider another type of error, ‘speech errors’ (or ‘slips’): those which are a consequence of the process of speech production itself. These are different from ‘inadvertent metaphor’, in that speakers are usually immediately aware they have made them and usually self correct. They are also different from inadvertent metaphor in that they are extremely rare, an exceptional rather than a prominent feature.

In order to understand them properly, it seems appropriate here to offer a survey of some of the psycholinguistic scholarship in this area. To do so, I review the psycholinguistic models proposed by Fromkin in 1971, Garrett in 1975, Levelt in 1989 and Dell in 1986 (Fromkin & Ratner 1993). I then use data I have collected to identify the principal categories of speech errors, which I interpret in terms of metonymic processing. What emerges is that metonymic processing plays a vital role in all speech, whether it is error-free or self corrected, in the speech of learners and native speakers, and that it is the rare occasion that speech errors are committed that reveal this mechanism.

Our ability as speakers to respond with speed, accuracy and fluency to unpredictable remarks has prompted a number of different investigative approaches: marvelling at speech as a physiological phenomenon, measuring it quantitatively, hypothesizing the essential stages of speech production, devising models based on these hypotheses, and using empirical data to peek into the ‘black box’ of the speaking mind. Speech is certainly an awe-inspiring phenomenon: English involves the finely-tuned co-ordination

of 100 respiratory, laryngeal and supralaryngeal muscles in order to produce the 40-plus phonemes and gestures relating to stress, intonation and coarticulation needed to produce connected speech in English (Levelt 1989:413). It is an activity which “is neurologically and psychologically far more complicated than negotiating a flight of stairs” (Scovel 1998:27). The average native adult speaker of English selects from an active vocabulary of over 30,000 words and speaks at an average articulatory rate of two words (that is, five syllables or fifteen speech sounds) a second, but with an extraordinarily low error rate of one slip per 1000 (Scovel 1989:199).

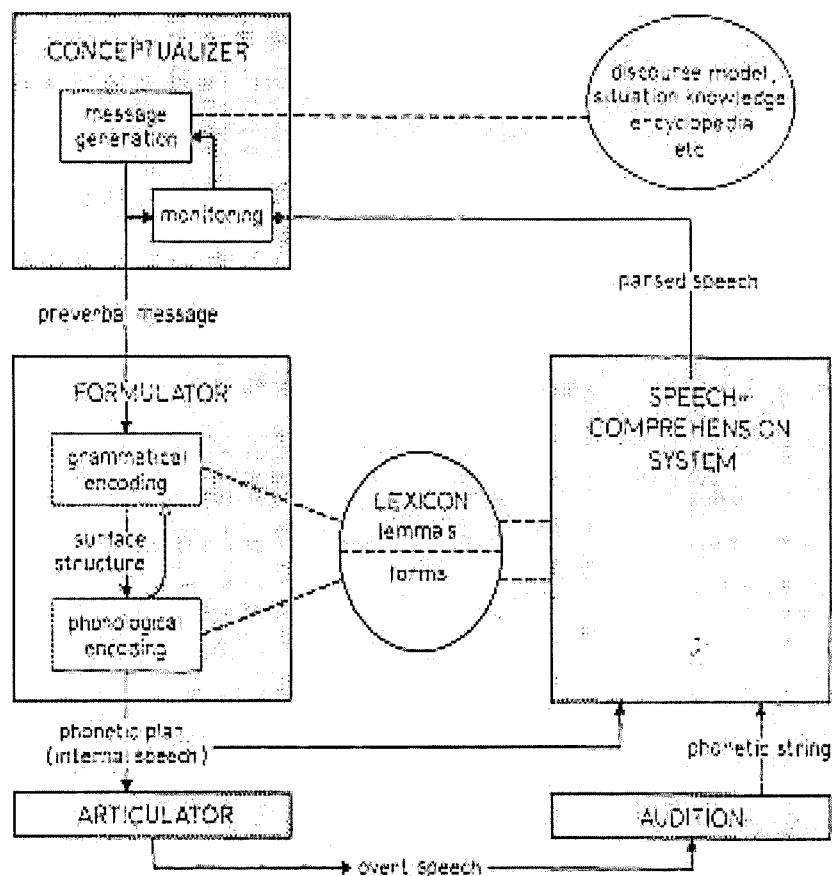
The psycholinguistic models I have cited are in general agreement on a number of points, the differences between them being more differences of detail than fundamental divergences. They *all* model speech as a process, which goes from abstract thought to articulated speech in three main stages: 1) an abstract preverbal form of the message goes to 2) an outline/detailed planning stage and finally to 3) an ‘articulatory plan’, which the speech organs execute.

Looking at this in more detail, we see that Fromkin’s *Utterance Generator Model* from 1971 has six stages: 1) the generation of an abstract message; 2) the representation of syntactic and semantic information in an abstract form; 3) the addition of stress and intonation contours; 4) the selection from the lexicon of word stems and their phonological representation; 5) phonological completion (ie attaching affixes); 6) the expression of phonemes by the articulators, using ‘distinctive feature’ information. (Fromkin & Ratner 1993:328-330). We see that Garrett’s 1975 model also has six stages: 1) the creation of an abstract message; 2) the creation of an abstract representation of the message as ‘lexical formatives’ and ‘grammatical relations’; 3) a functional level representation (F), where lexical formatives are given phrasal roles; 4) a positional level representation (P), where grammatical relations select positional frames; 5) a sound level representation, in which phonetic detail is specified; 6) the transmission of instructions to the articulators (Fromkin & Ratner 1993:331-333). While Levelt’s 1989 model has five stages: 1) the ‘conceptualizer’ generates a preverbal message using macro- and microplanning; 2) the ‘formulator’ translates the message into a more concrete form, using (a) the ‘grammatical encoder’, which creates surface structure by retrieving lemmas from the lexicon, and (b) the ‘phonological encoder’, which uses the surface structure and lexeme information to encode a ‘phonological plan’; 3) the

‘phonological plan’ is then *reduced* to a ‘phonetic plan’ (‘internal speech’) to achieve coarticulation phenomena typical of connected speech (such as ‘assimilation’, ‘elision’, weak forms) and loaded into the ‘articulatory buffer’; 4) the ‘articulator’ executes the phonetic plan as ‘overt speech’; 5) the ‘speech comprehension system’ feeds back the speaker’s internal and overt speech to the conceptual system to monitor it (Levelt 1989:27-28), as shown in Figure 7.1 (below):

Figure 7.1: Diagram from Levelt (1989:9)

The Speaker as Information Processor



## Metonymic Monitoring

The most significant difference between these models, and one which is of particular significance in the context of this chapter, is the last stage of Levelt's model, the 'speech comprehension system'. This is a 'feedback loop' which allows the speaker to 'proofread' what they say. It "presumes that people don't just communicate with others, they communicate with themselves; they don't just listen to others, they listen to themselves" (Scovel 1998:48). The listening they do employs metonymy in order to monitor content, syntax, word choice and phonological form for slips, so if needed 'spontaneous self-repair' can be carried out (Levelt 1989:497). Feedback loops are common to all biological systems, eg regulating breathing rate, blood sugar, temperature. The 'speech comprehension system' is a feedback loop which monitors for metonymy. It compares every utterance with what 'should' have been uttered. If metonymy is detected, in other words, if an imperfect match is detected, one where certain elements are different, a message is sent to the formulator/articulator to recast the utterance. Thus, the 'speech comprehension system' not only plays a role in the rare cases when we make slips, but is constantly active during all speech with the aim of compensating for metonymy with self-correction. Metonymy and metonymic monitoring emerge as essential features of all language production.

In this section, I present evidence from empirical data on speech errors ('slips') I have collected. Fromkin and Garrett relied heavily on their corpora when developing their models, and, wishing to follow in this tradition, I have collected my own data. To do this, I noted slips I encountered over a period of three weeks (in 2008). About half the speech was from BBC radio and TV, not ideal perhaps for, though broadcasting includes much spontaneous speech, most of it is scripted or mentally rehearsed, and, anyway, broadcasters are experienced performers, not 'typical' speakers. The other half, however, was from conversations I was party to and therefore presents examples which are both spontaneous and typical. Initially, I often forgot to listen out for slips, showing how instinctive it is to ignore slips and prioritize meaning. I chose to make this a study predominately of native speaker English, rather than learner English, because I wanted to examine the slips of what would be considered the target language community, as here the effortful metonymic processing discussed in the previous chapter is at a minimum.

There were about 100 items in the data I collected, a much smaller body of data than the corpora of Fromkin or Garrett, but nonetheless large enough to give a representative glimpse into the ‘black box’ of the speaking mind. The slips involved various units of language – word, morpheme and phoneme – and various operations – adding, deleting, swapping, repeating, blending. I only noted instances where the speaker made a repair. Many misselections go unnoticed because the speaker does not repair, and then it is hard to judge whether we are dealing with an error or not.

Psycholinguists make a distinction between ‘selection errors’ and ‘assemblage errors’. This difference was reflected in my data. Aitchison suggests that selection errors are more ‘slips of the brain’ than slips of the tongue, because they occur early on in the speech process, in the ‘outline planning’ stage, reflecting problems of ‘lexical access’; while assemblage errors are true ‘slips of the tongue’, occurring later in the speech process, during ‘detailed planning’ (Aitchison 2008: 241).

I identified four types of *selection error* in my data, which correspond closely to Aitchison’s (2008:241-244): ‘phonological errors’, ‘semantic errors’, ‘shared-element errors’ and ‘blends’. I identified three types of *assemblage error*: ‘affix errors’, ‘swapped phonemes’ and ‘inappropriately-inserted phonemes’, similar to Fromkin & Ratner’s categories of ‘anticipation’, ‘perseveration’ and ‘exchange’ (Fromkin & Ratner 1993:315). Below are some examples of the data I collected under these seven headings:

#### PHONOLOGICAL SLIPS

Here, the slip and the target word are related phonologically, often through the initial segment. In this data, I know what was intended because they are all examples of self-correction: *I've just had an amazing e-mail from a listener in Kent* for “amusing”; *the divorce money came true* for “through”; *I thought it would be hotter* for “heavier”; *boot* for “belt”; *discovered* for “discussed”; *present* for “pressing”; *play close attention* for “pay”; *chicken* for “chimney”, *send it* for “said it”; *what do you want to do to do* for “to do today”, etc. Though basically phonological, many of these had a semantic motivation in the context they occurred: the woman who was wearing a belt was also wearing boots; the pan which was surprising light was also hot. This type of error (popularly ‘malapropism’) was by far the most frequent in my data.

### SEMANTIC SLIPS

Here the slip and the target word are related semantically. This is not only a semantic relatedness, such as synonymy, antonymy, metonymy, but also in the ‘mind map’ sense of being in the same ideational field, eg *I think it is going to stay open* for *empty*; *He bores me* for *I bore him*. In one example, the speaker has three goes at getting the right name, *Oh, Ron, David, Steve could you get me the ...* More members of the set of ‘family members and close friends’ were activated than necessary.

Dell’s 1986 ‘spreading activation model’ attempts to explain why some speech errors seem to be both semantic and phonological and why unwanted items enter the articulatory buffer from the working memory (Dell 1986). Dell’s model is a connectionist model and gives an insight into how the mental lexicon is organized. When the word *swim* is activated, its activation spreads to other items, related semantically eg *drown, sink* and phonologically eg *swimmer, swimming, swims* (Dell 1986:290). For Dell, connections between items are networks rather than lines, and are two way rather than one way. Extraneous sensory data and pre-conscious thoughts occasionally become expressed as speech. So-called ‘Freudian slips’ are not really slips at all, but successful encodings of ideas which intrude into the language system.

### SHARED-ELEMENT SLIPS

Here the slip contains part of the target word, a ‘match’ with one of its elements, for example: *social prototype* for stereotype (*type*); *empty the dishwasher* for *washing machine* (*wash*); *short-circuit television* for *closed-circuit* (*circuit*); *grandstand* for *bandstand* (*stand*). Spreading activation has ‘lit up’ a word which is related both phonologically and semantically.

### BLENDs

Blends arise when two words, usually similar in meaning, are activated simultaneously. Both contribute an element to form a novel word, for example: *sfield* from *field* and *sphere*; slips such as *Borderstones* instead of *Borders* or *Waterstones*; *YouBook* from *YouTube* and *Facebook*; *she’s concentrating on motherhead* for *motherhood*; *idi’otic-sy* from *idiotic* and *idiocy*. I also noted instances of blends of lexical phrases, eg *on the line* from *on line* and *on the web*.

## AFFIX ERRORS

The speech errors in this category are more functional than lexical. They involve the incorrect insertion of inflectional or derivational affixes and arise at the level of the *syntactic frame*, eg: *privates teacherly* for *teaches privately*; *that what's happens*; *what coming up*; *remember to giver it some water*; *have you speaken to him*; *I'm going to a film with Ritz* for *I'm going to a film at the Ritz with Julie*, etc. Affix errors, being intermediate between lexis or syntax, suggest that their assemblage proceeds in parallel.

## SWAPPED PHONEMES

Here phonemes are either swapped, eg *gline wassies* for *wine glasses*, or rotated, eg *boup, soul and rutter* for *soup, roll and butter*. What is significant about these slips, popularly ‘spoonerisms’ (though spoonerisms usually make sense) is that they seem to be driven mainly by ‘ease of articulation’ (not necessarily the case for fictional spoonerisms). My data tend to show that it is easier to start with a plosive than an approximant or a fricative. In *boup, soul and rutter*, the sequence is more rotated than swapped, as if the sequence s-r-b has been moved on one in order to start with the plosive (but b-s-r not b-r-s). This example also supports the idea that syllable frames are preserved, ie segments are marked initial or final and remain in these positions when exchanged (Fromkin & Ratner 1993:316-317).

## INAPPROPRIATELY-INSERTED PHONEMES

In these slips, the wrong phoneme is inserted, eg *hone-owners* for *home-owners*; *Heasrow* rather than *Heathrow*. I feel the cause here is more likely to be ‘lazy’ articulation than deficient planning. In *hone-owners* (which occurred twice), closure using the tongue is easier to achieve than closure with the lips; in *Heasrow*, it is easier to drop the gesture of tongue grooving than perform it. We are unlikely to hear the slip *twitter and bisted* for *bitter and twisted*, because it is harder to say. Slips at the level of the phoneme arise late on in speech production, after the ‘phonological plan’ is in place.

What is significant about both selection errors (eg malapropisms) and assemblage errors (eg spoonerisms) is that they “rarely cross clause boundaries, and are predominately phrase internal” (Garrett 1988:75) suggesting that the clause is indeed the basic unit of speech (Field 2003:35), as converging evidence from syntax, functional grammar and thematic role semantics would suggest. All the examples I have given were repaired by

the speaker, showing how vigilantly we monitor our own speech and how quickly we make repairs.

Speech is in every sense of the word ‘performance’. It reveals thought bit by bit in real time, driven by the speaker’s desire to communicate. It is carried out quickly because the process from intention to articulation is highly automatized: “we can only produce speech at this rate because we do not pay conscious attention to the process” (Field 2004:18); it is carried out fluently because clauses are cascaded (‘incremental’) and planned ahead of time – phonological plans one clause ahead and syntactic frames two clauses ahead, according to Garrett (Whitney 1998:282); and it is carried out accurately because the mind is selective in what it allows in the working memory/syntactic buffer/articulatory buffer, and because at each stage a feedback loop monitors for metonymy, prompting self-correction when necessary.

The slips described above are uncommon in native speaker utterances, but are nonetheless present enough to be a characteristic feature of it. Slips are telltale indicators of how speech is produced and of the stages the mind goes through in going from intention to articulation. Slips are therefore a feature of native speaker utterances. It is a system based on metonymy, Levelt’s ‘speech compensation system’, which allows the speaker to compensate for slips in ourselves but also in others. We compensate for slips (‘speech errors’) by using this type of monitoring, but equally use the same monitoring device to compensate for the slips of others. Levelt suggests this monitoring is carried out by the same function of the brain which attends to the speech of others:

A speaker can attend to his own speech in just the same way as he can attend to the speech of others; the same devices for understanding language are involved (Levelt 1989:469).

We are constantly dealing with errors to such an extent that they are a feature of normal speech. We constantly compensate for errors by using metonymic processing and for slips by using metonymic monitoring. Compensating for errors and slips in learner speech is just an extension of the automatized processes associated with producing and processing speech when interacting with non-learners.

In this chapter I discussed four areas in which the learner benefits from aspects of metonymy while performing as a language user. They are: the accommodation of learner talk through the use of ‘metonymic processing’; the use of the special register of ‘foreigner talk’ by learners’ interlocutors to make comprehension less effortful; the deliberate use of metonymy as a strategy for compensating for the limitations in competence knowledge; and the role of ‘formal metonymy’ in providing a scaffold for a learner’s acquisition. The role of metonymic processing in monitoring the speech process was also discussed. I have demonstrated that just as in the general discussion of communication in Chapters 4 and 5, metonymy again plays a crucial role in the specific area of learner competence. I demonstrate that metonymy reveals itself in phenomena which are distinct and unrelated and which would not normally be considered together: metonymy has a role in how an interlocutor accommodates to a learner receptively and productively, in how learners express themselves when working at the limits of their knowledge, in how learners use metonymy as a scaffold when learning new items, and in how learners, like all speakers, use metonymy to monitor for slips. The next chapter looks at another category of applied linguists, translators, and shows that here too metonymy is at the heart of what they do.

## 8 Metonymy and Translators

This chapter continues to explore the role of metonymy by turning to another applied linguistics context: translating. A Metonymic Theory of Translation is presented in which translation is defined in terms of metonymy. This is sited in the context of the main approaches to defining translation in the translation studies literature: translation as equivalence, translation as action, translation as intercultural communication and translation as ideology. The literature on shift theory is discussed, as are psycholinguistic approaches and the methodologies used to investigate translation as a mental process. This metonymic approach is applied to examples of translation tasks. The involvement of metonymy is shown to be significant both in the process of going from source text to first draft ('interlingual level'), as well as going from first draft to final version ('intralingual level').

### 8.1 Translation Studies

There are parallels between the rise of Metaphor Studies and the rise of Translation Studies. Both have seen exponential growth over a similar period of time. In fact, many passages describing the rise of Translation Studies could equally apply to Metaphor Studies, if each time the word 'translation' appears, it is replaced with 'metaphor', as in this extract, for example:

The 1980s was a decade of consolidation for the fledgling discipline known as Translation [Metaphor] Studies. Having emerged onto the world stage in the late 1970s, the subject began to be taken seriously, and was no longer seen as an unscientific field of enquiry of secondary importance. Throughout the 1980s interest in the theory and practice of translation [metaphor] grew steadily. Then, in the 1990s, Translation [Metaphor] Studies finally came into its own, for this proved to be the decade of its global expansion. Once perceived as marginal, translation [metaphor] began to be seen as a fundamental act of human exchange. Today, interest in the field has never been stronger and the study of translation [metaphor] is taking place [...] all over the world. (Bassnett 2002:1)

Translation Studies is the academic discipline which has grown up around the practice of translation and interpreting (Baker 1998, Munday 2001, Venuti 2000). Translation is a complex cognitive activity, which occurs in a complex interpersonal, social and cultural setting, and often within exacting commercial constraints, the mind of the translator providing the bridge between languages, between texts and between cultures. What each translation-studies scholar does is to shed some light on one particular aspect. There is no sense that we are being asked to choose one theory over another (although theories are sometimes presented as competing); instead, each scholar makes a unique ‘slice’ through the subject, revealing a partial truth and contributing towards our understanding of the phenomenon as a whole. In the next section, I overview the translation studies literature in terms of four ‘loyalties’. I have chosen this term ‘loyalty’ as the idea of being loyal or faithful to the source text is a dominant idea in both lay and professional approaches to translation. I am extending this idea to consider other loyalties, in other words, other priorities which translators are required to consider in carrying out their work.

## 8.2 Four Loyalties in Translation

### **The First Loyalty: Equivalence**

One goal of translation studies is to define translation and understand what makes a good translation. The definitions of translation are many and varied, but the approach which has dominated in the history of translation theory is ‘equivalence’. This sees translation as an attempt to create a new text which is an ‘equivalent’ of the source text in the target language, a sort of parallel text. The traditions of Cicero and Horace, through Dryden and Jerome, to the writings of Jakobson, Nida, Newmark and House all work from this premise.

The classic ‘literal’ vs ‘free’ debate is basically a debate within equivalence, a ‘literal approach’ focusing on form (the words), and a ‘free approach’ focusing on function (the meaning). The ‘literal’ vs ‘free’ debate is basically expressing the paradox any translator finds themselves in, namely the wish to produce a translation which is both faithful to the original and fluent so as not to sound like a translation. The historic authors who

engaged in this debate, eg Horace, Cicero, Jerome and Dryden, unanimously recommend the translator leave the form of the text and focus instead on its meaning: Horace recommends “nec verbum verbo”, the avoidance of ‘word-for-word translation’ (Horace 1989 [20BCE]); Cicero recommends ‘sense-for-sense’ translation, which he describes as translating ‘like an orator’, *ut orator*, rather than ‘like an interpreter’, *ut interpres* (Cicero [46BCE]); Jerome claims that “in translating from the Greek he renders not word-for-word but sense-for-sense” (Jerome 2004 [395]); and Dryden, in the introduction to his translation of Ovid’s *Epistles*, identifies “turning an author word by word, or line by line, from one language into another” (‘metaphrase’), as being as confining and unnatural as “dancing on ropes with fetter’d legs” (Dryden 2004 [1680]).

When we come to authors in the twentieth century, the term ‘equivalence’ acquires a semi-technical sense. Jakobson recognizes it as “a cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics” as well as being ever present between languages (Jakobson 2004 [1959]:139). Nida suggests that it is only by aiming for ‘dynamic equivalence’ (free translation) rather than ‘formal equivalence’ (literal translation) that ‘the principle of equivalent effect’ can be achieved:

a translation which attempts to produce a dynamic rather than a formal equivalence is based on ‘the principle of equivalent effect’. In such a translation one is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message. (Nida 1964:159)

The discourse-analysis approaches of the early 1990s, eg Hatim & Mason (1990), Bell (1991) and Baker (1992), are also basically equivalence theories, but with the added insights gained from developments in discourse analysis in the 1980s. They recognise that there are many aspects to text and many features which contribute to their construction. Baker’s chapter headings show her commitment to the notion of equivalence, while conceding that she adopts the term equivalence more “for the sake of convenience [...] than because it has any theoretical status” (Baker 1992:5-6). Her chapter headings are: *Equivalence at Word Level*, *Equivalence above Word Level*, *Grammatical Equivalence*, *Textual Equivalence: thematic and information structures*, *Textual Equivalence: cohesion* and *Pragmatic Equivalence* (Baker 1992).

## **The Second Loyalty: The Target Text Reader**

Equivalence theories assume that loyalty to the source text is the overriding concern of the translator, but other loyalties are also desirable and possible. ‘Action theories’ move the focus of loyalty to the target-text reader. Reiss & Vermeer’s *Skopos Theory* (Reiss & Vermeer 1984), Holz-Mänttäri’s *Translational Action Theory* (Holz-Mänttäri 1984) and Nord’s *Integrated Text-Analysis Approach* (Nord 1991b) emphasize the importance of the translator’s brief/commission and entertain the possibility of the final text being different, even radically different, from the original in both form and content (eg a spoken TV interview may become a written press release; a four-page medical text for doctors may become a one-page non-technical pamphlet with illustrations for patients). In skopos theory, the first rule is that the ‘translatum’ (target text) should be determined by its ‘skopos’ (purpose), and the fifth rule, the ‘fidelity rule’, that there should be ‘intertextual coherence’ between the source text and target text (Reiss & Vermeer 1984). Thus equivalence, while still important, is demoted to last place on the list of priorities, while considerations of purpose are promoted to the first place.

## **The Third Loyalty: Translating Culture**

The third dominant focus in translation studies is culture and, particularly, loyalty towards the source culture. A translator has the choice either to keep the ‘exoticisms’ of the source culture intact or smooth them over by expressing them in terms of the target culture. For the German romantic Schleiermacher the choice is between ‘verfremdende Übersetzung’ (foreignizing) and ‘einbürgende Übersetzung’ (domesticating): “Either the translator leaves the writer in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards the writer; or leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and brings the writer towards the reader” (my translation), but at the same time he recognizes that foreignization is perhaps the more appropriate approach for the translation of literature and domestication more suited to the translation of business texts (Schleiermacher 2004 [1813]).

Venuti rediscovered Schleiermacher’s dyad of foreignizing and domesticating (Venuti 1995). Kwiecinski expands this to four ‘procedures’ for translating culture: ‘exoticising

procedures', 'rich explicatory procedures', 'recognised exoticisation' and 'assimilative procedures' (Katan 2009:79-81); while Katan defines translation as "intercultural communication" and the translator as a "cultural mediator" (Katan 2009:88).

### **The Fourth Loyalty: Loyalty to the Translator**

A fourth focus in translation theory is loyalty to the translator themselves and discussions around the extent to which a translator is faithful, or can be faithful, to their own ideologies. Feminism, gay rights, anti-racism, anti-classism, anti-colonialism, anti-globalization and environmental movements are all critical discourses. That is, they are movements which question the ideological assumptions behind certain social practices of the status quo regarding gender, sexuality, race, class, colonialism, globalization, the environment, etc. Translators are obliged to make decisions in their work as to whether they wish to promote or subvert the ideologies naturalized in the texts they translate.

The translator is faced with the choice of either being a neutral observer, standing back, simply exchanging signs in one language for signs in another, or carrying out their occupation as politically-engaged members of society, ready to question and test its assumptions. That plays itself out even in the most seemingly banal choices. Even in an instruction manual, to translate the pronoun referring back to "the operator" with he, she, s/he, they, are all political choices. Work in this field includes Niranjana (1992) on colonialism, Simon (1996) on gender and Venuti's influential work on the 'translator's visibility' (Venuti 1995).

### **8.3 Defining Translation in Terms of Metonymy**

The foci of loyalties discussed above provide us with different ways of viewing the complex phenomenon of translation and how it is defined: translation as equivalence, translation as action, translation as intercultural communication and translation as ideological engagement. I now want to explore an aspect of translation which has not been explored in the translation studies literature, and continues the narrative of the thesis: translation as metonymy.

Stated simply, the relationship between a source text and a target text is clearly not literal, as terms in different languages very rarely correspond exactly; nor is it metaphorical, as it is rare that a literal source text is translated by a metaphoric target text (or vice versa). Instead, the relationship between the two is all about close relatedness, metonymy, both at the level of individual words/phrases and at the level of the whole text. Bell recognizes this partial correspondence as a central feature of both monolingual communication and translation:

Perhaps the most significant message [...] for translation is the recognition that the essential characteristic of the lexical systems of languages is not precise boundary-marking but fuzziness and that it is the inherent fuzziness of language which presents the most formidable obstacle to the translator (Bell 1991:102).

Being a fundamental feature of translation, all four of the foci discussed above rely on the exploration of metonymic relations between elements of the source language and target language for their realization. That is, the notion that translation is metonymic, and involves choices based on metonymy, is more basic than the loyalties discussed above. In fact, it is the mechanism which makes it possible for those loyalties to be expressed.

The area of Translation Studies where one would expect to find discussions of metonymy is, in fact, devoid of any. When non-literal language in translation is discussed at all, the concern is almost exclusively with the translation of idioms. Idioms are seen as problematic, occurring occasionally, and presenting problems which interrupt the otherwise relatively effortless flow of literal translation (Crerar-Bromelow 2008). Idioms are seen as deviant and tend to be dealt with in isolation, authors offering translators 'selfhelp' style lists of how to deal with them when they occur, eg Dagut (1976), Broeck (1981), Newmark (1985, 1988), Baker (1992).

Broeck offers three strategies: translation 'sensu stricto' - using the same metaphorical image; substitution - using a different metaphorical image; paraphrase - using a non-metaphoric alternative (Broeck 1981:77). Metaphoric language for Baker is problematic language, though she does concede that 'opaque idioms' "can actually be a blessing in disguise", because they are more readily recognized by the translator than more transparent idioms, and therefore less likely to be mistranslated (Baker 1992:65-66). She

adds a fourth strategy, ‘omission’, that is, leaving the expression out entirely, to Broeck’s list (Baker 1992: 63-81). Newmark’s solutions are: 1) to translate the source metaphor with same image in the target language, 2) with the same image plus a literal gloss or explication by way of ‘grounds’, 3) with the same image but expressed as a simile, 4) using a different image, 5) with a literal translation, and 6) through deletion (Newmark 1988:87-91). Dagut adds the possibility of going from a literal to a metaphoric expression, thereby giving non-literal language an enabling role, rather than seeing it just as a problem to solve (Dagut 1976).

A far more ambitious and fruitful approach to metaphor in translation is that of Schäffner, who takes on board the developments in conceptual metaphor studies and applies them to professional translation (Schäffner 2004). In a comparative study across a body of European Union documents, she shows that certain conceptual metaphors, such as EUROPE IS A HOUSE, are retained, while others are not (Schäffner 2004). This is a departure from the rest of the literature on metaphor and translation, as it sees metaphor occurring at the level of whole text and genre rather than isolated within individual phrases/clauses; it has a systematic role in meaning making in multilingual communities, such as the European Union; and it sees metaphor as having a positive and enabling function, that it can solve and not just create problems for the translator.

The Metonymic Theory of Translation proposed in this thesis sees non-literal language as enabling translation in a fundamental sense. It looks not at the extremes, such as Baker’s ‘opaque idioms’ (Baker 1992:68) or Newmark’s ‘stock metaphors’ (Newmark 1985:303-311), but the mid-ground of closely-related but ‘shifted’ meaning that exists, not only between source text and first draft, but also between first draft and final version. It is suggested that translators, in carrying out their professional duties, spend most of their time and energies exploring the metonymic relations between and within language systems. The practical reality of the translator’s work consists of assembling words, phrases and clauses in the target language which have metonymic correspondences with units of language from the source text. There are two phases in written translation, ‘interlingual translation’ and ‘intralingual translation’, terms from Jakobson, which he glosses as ‘translation proper’ and ‘rewriting’ (Jakobson 2004 [1959]). Written translation involves both writing a first draft and revising that draft to get a final version, and in both the exploration of metonymic relations are involved. It

could be argued than in interpreting (spoken translation) there is only time for the first phase, translation proper, not the revision phase, rewording. Translation is a process whereby metonymic relations are explored not just in one dimension, but across a whole web of relations across text, involving enabling ‘referential’, ‘interpersonal’ and ‘textual’ meaning making (Halliday 1994).

In the next section I look in more detail at the different types of metonymic relation which can exist between units of different texts. To do this, I explore the concepts of ‘loss’, ‘gain’ and ‘shift’.

#### 8.4 Loss, Gain and Shift

The word most often associated with translation in the public mind is ‘loss’, as in the expressions “loss in translation” and “lost in translation”. A professional translator probably has a more positive association, as every translation, however bad, in a sense involves ‘gain’, because it allows communication between two parties who otherwise would not be able to communicate with each other. There is also a sense that a translation can be a better text than the original. Gabriel García Márquez famously credited his translator Rabassa with having created a version of his classic novel *100 Years of Solitude* which was better than the original (Rabassa 2005).

Most translation theory scholars, after accepting the idea that translation is possible (‘translatability’), accept that ‘loss’, both linguistic and cultural, is inevitable and that the solution to that loss is ‘compensation’. Translators have a myriad of techniques for compensating. All these involve metonymic relations, but are referred to by translation studies scholars as ‘shifts’, a term first adopted by Catford. In the rest of this section, I discuss the contributions made to translation shift theory by Catford (1965), Leuven-Zwart (1989, 1990), Vinay & Darbelnet (1995 [1958]) and Hervey & Higgins (1992).

For Catford, “translation is a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another” and that “a central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence” (Catford 1965). This is achieved at word level through ‘formal equivalence’, but ‘textual equivalence’ is resorted to when formal

equivalents can no longer be found. Textual equivalence involves compensation through the use of ‘shifts’, solutions which are near fits rather than exact equivalents. Shifts can be either ‘level shifts’, where grammatical meaning is expressed by lexis, or vice versa, or ‘category shifts’, where a different grammatical structure, part of speech, rank or idiom has to be used (Catford 1965:73-80).

Catford compares English and French and calculates that shifts are necessary in as many as 65% of tokens of *the* in the data he examines (Catford 1965:82). I would argue that even the remaining minority, the straight-forward, literal, one-for-one substitutions of ‘formal correspondence’, are also shifts. They are shifts because categories never correspond exactly between languages, and because meaning making itself relies on the recognition of part-whole relations, with part of the semantic frame used to access the rest of the frame (as we saw in the discussion of FLOATING RIB, RIB CAGE, MOBILE PHONE and ANSWERING MACHINE in Chapter 4).

The degree of departure in meaning between items in the target text and items in the source text is also the criterion used in classifying the seven ‘procedures’ in Vinay & Darbelnet’s shift theory (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995 [1958]). This work came from observing the formulations on English and French roadsigns, driving from New York to Montreal. The solutions observed were of two types, ‘direct’ and ‘oblique’, oblique strategies being turned to only when direct strategies gave unsatisfactory results. The direct translation strategies go from the least interventionist, ‘borrowing’, where a source language word is simply adopted unchanged and introduced into the target text; through ‘calque’, where the lexis or structure reflects the source language, eg *compliments de la saison!* or *science-fiction* (French); to ‘literal’ word-for-word translation. The oblique strategies are: ‘transposition’, involving a change in the part of speech, eg *No smoking* vs *Défense de fumer*; ‘modulation’, using a near equivalent, eg *The time when ...* versus *Le moment où ...*, *It is not difficult to ...* versus *Il est facile de ...*, *No vacancies* versus *Complet*; ‘equivalence’, changing the concept or image, eg *Too many cooks spoil the broth* versus *Deux patrons font chavirer la barque* (Two skippers make the boat capsize); and ‘adaptation’, making changes in order to achieve cultural compatibility, eg the film title *The Wanderer* translated to *Le Grand Meaulnes* (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995 [1958]:30-42).

The procedure which involves the most extreme shift in Vinay & Darbelnet's scheme, adaptation, can go beyond substitution of small units of text and involves choices which have implication across a whole work, such as the choice of Neapolitan dialect to represent the Irish accent or transferring the setting of Shakespeare to Chicago in the 1920s. Hatim talks of 'genre shift' here, where linguistic shifts are required by the genre to acknowledge that the unit of translation is often the whole text (Hatim 2009:46-47).

In Leuven-Zwart's version of shift theory, developed to compare translations in Dutch of Latin American literature with their originals, three types of shift are identified, 'modulation', 'modification' and 'mutation'. She takes as her unit of meaning the 'transeme', basically a clause, and examines the extent to which there is a meaning shift between the source and target text, modification representing more of a shift than modulation but less than mutation (Leuven-Zwart 1989, 1990). While Hervey & Higgins identify four types of shift: 'compensation in kind', which includes various types of linguistic strategy used to achieve equivalence, such as those discussed above; 'compensation by merging', where two or more linguistic elements of the original become a single element in the target text; 'compensation by splitting', where one linguistic element of the original becomes two elements in the target text; and 'compensation in place', where the location of the meaning of a particular unit is moved to another part of the text (Hervey & Higgins 1992).

Within the broad definition of metonymic translation, there is a spectrum which can be divided into 'strong' and 'weak' forms, that is, occasions where shifts are slight, close to literal, and others where shifts are more dramatic. Here are two examples of strong metonymic translation:

"Hello ladies and gentlemen, it's wonderful to see so many of you have braved the elements and made it to the first day of our conference on health care in a snowbound Canterbury" might in context just be rendered 'bonjour'. [...] In Adair's *A Void*, a translation of Perec's *Les Disparus*, a joke about the Paris Metro on p.98 is 'rendered' as a joke about London buses on p.210, the key element 'difficulty of getting around a busy capital' being drawn on in both cases. (David Hornsby, June 2010, personal communication)

The distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' metonymic translation is not unlike the

‘direct’ and ‘oblique’ strategies of Vinay & Darbelnet. The difference is that Vinay & Darbelnet’s spectrum is more restricted, as only two of their oblique strategies, ‘adaptation’ and ‘modulation’, constitute strong metonymic translation. Even these two strategies, although the most extreme, are illustrated by Vinay & Darbelnet through examples involving individual words and phrases, such as film titles, while ‘strong metonymic translation’ in my sense involves shift at the level of the whole text, as illustrated above.

## 8.5 Translation as a Psycholinguistic Process

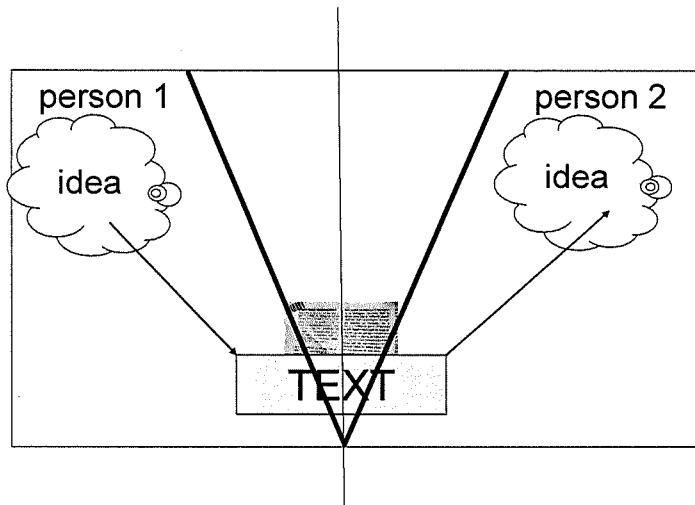
Another approach which scholars have taken is to investigate translation as a mental process rather than a product. They have attempted to understand what goes on in the black box of the translator’s mind. Here translation is defined as a psycholinguistic process. Many attempts have been made to model the process, to understand the sequence of events, and understand what cognitive resources a translator needs; but what seems to have intrigued scholars in this area above all else is the idea of a non-verbal intermediate stage, where the message is encoded in neither the source nor the target language.

For most psycholinguists, the idea that, in the human mind, one can go from an abstract thought to an encoded message (in a language or another semiotic system) is not surprising. Levelt’s speaking model, for example, examines the stages of the process of formulating to articulating a thought in speech (Levelt 1989). Nor is the reverse surprising, going from a linguistically-encoded message to an abstract thought (or indeed operating with abstract thoughts at all), but in translation psycholinguistics, perhaps because two languages are involved, this abstract, language-free stage has acquired an almost mystical status. It has been described variously as a ‘pre-linguistic’ phase, ‘déverbalisation’ (Lederer 1987:15), a ‘semantic representation’ (Bell 1991), the ‘third code’ and ‘tertium comparationis’.

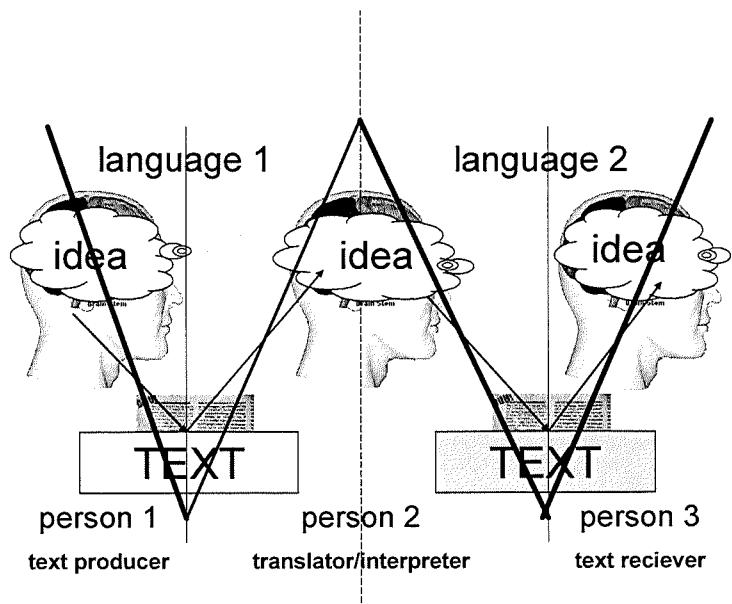
My analysis of what is involved is as follows. Translation involves encoding of abstract ideas, like speaking and writing, but translation is a different type of communication, as it also involves a decoding stage, ie from text to abstract idea. Further, the decoding and

encoding are in different code systems (languages), and this all occurs in the privacy of the translator's mind, not between two people. What is more, either side of the decoding and encoding phases, which the translator carries out, there are two further phases, each involving another person: before the translator decodes the message, a text producer has encoded the text from an abstract idea; and after the translator encodes the message into the target language, another person decodes the message, going again from text to abstract idea. Thus, 'normal' communication can be represented as a V (Figure 8.1 below) and translation/interpreting by a W (Figure 8.2 below), where the part that the translator/interpreter plays is an inverted V (Figure 8.3 below).

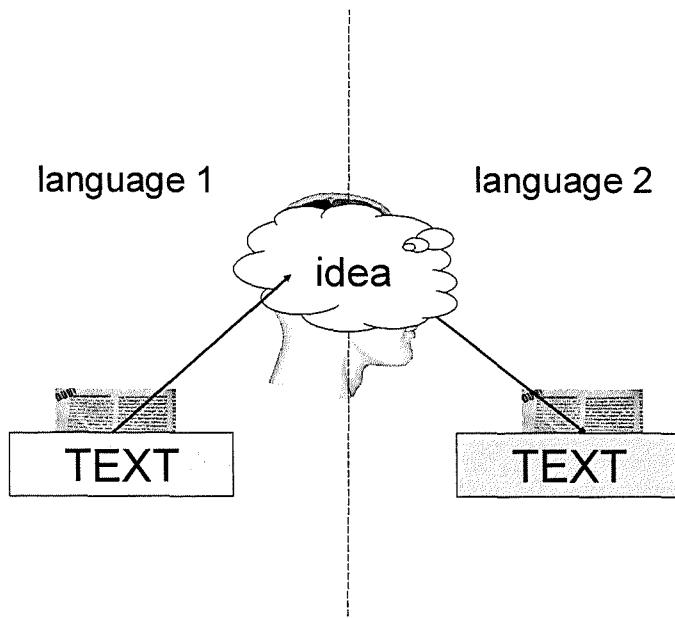
**Figure 8.1: 'Normal' communication**



**Figure 8.2: Translation and interpreting**



**Figure 8.3: Translation and interpreting – the translator’s role**



Below I look at five attempts to model translation: Wilss (1998), Levy (2000 [1967]), Krings (1986), Bell (1991), Kiraly (1995) and PACTE Group (2005).

Wilss sees translation in terms of problem solving, decisions being made by reference to two different knowledge systems at the translator’s command: ‘declarative knowledge’ (knowing things) and ‘procedural knowledge’ (knowing how to do things) (Wilss 1998:58). Wilss identifies six phases in the process of solving of problems: 1) identifying the problem; 2) clarifying of the nature of the problem; 3) searching and retrieving information relevant to solving the problem; 4) adopting a problem-solving strategy; 5) choosing one solution among many; 6) and evaluating the success of the solution (Hurtado Albir & Alves 2009:60).

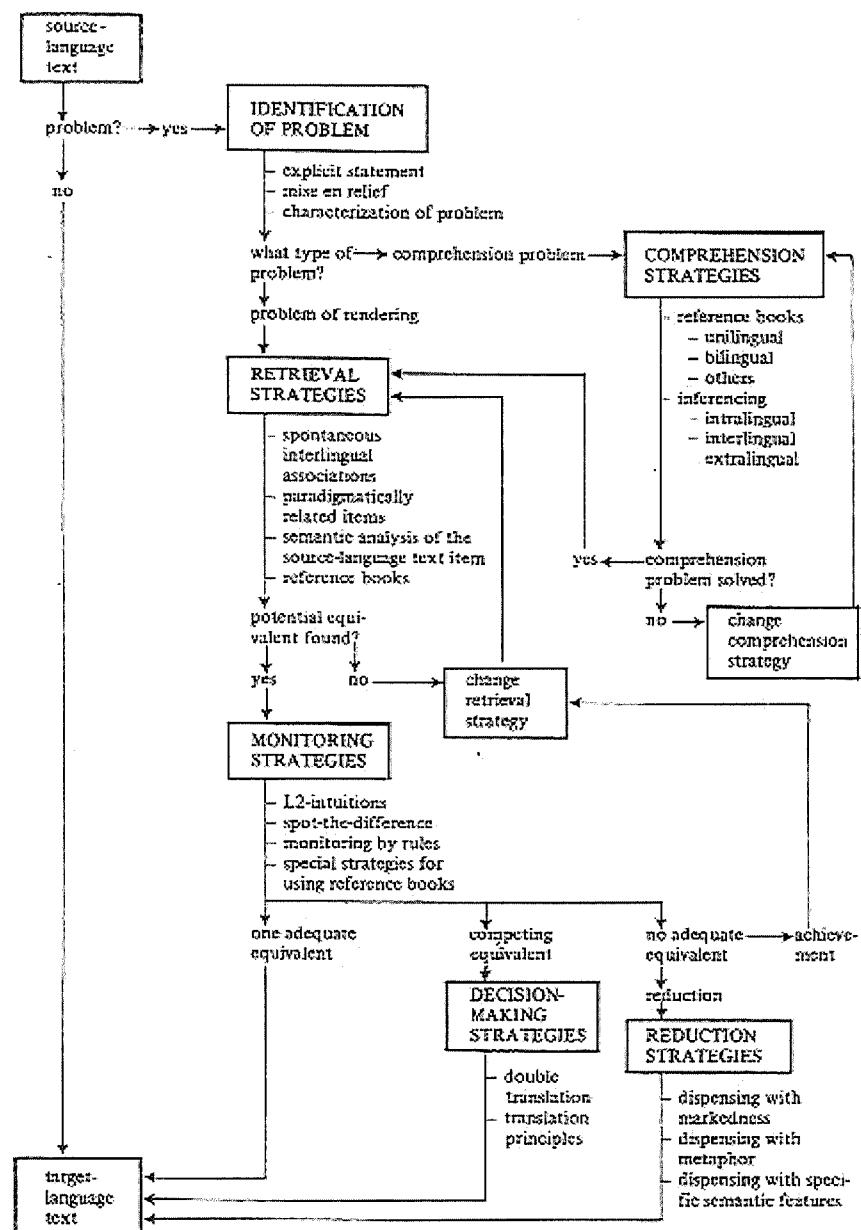
Decisions are made at both ‘macro-’ and ‘micro-’ contextual levels, the more local the problems (the smaller the scale), the less likely it is that translators will have infallible rules for solving them:

The more unique a translation problem the less practicable the general problem-solving procedures and the less like a game of chess or an algorithmically organized flowchart the whole activity becomes (Wilss 1998: 58).

Taking his ideas from ‘game theory’ (modelling behaviour in terms of choices), Levý argues that while translating, the translator is constantly presented with a number of alternative solutions, or *paradigms*. He argues that within a paradigm the choices are not equal; some are more suitable than others, otherwise the translator would be left in a dilemma as to which to choose. Choosing one word over another is a bit like choosing to play one card rather than another in a card game. (Levý 2000 [1967]), and “that it is the ‘ludic’ (play) quality of translation and its unpredictability, which makes translation motivating for professionals” (Cronin 1998:92-93).

Krings also sees translation in terms of problem solving. He looked at data from German native-speaker learners of French and drew up a flow diagram to represent the decision-making thought-processes involved (Krings 1986:269). For each ST word or phrase, the student first decides whether there is a translation problem or not. If there is no problem, they simply translate and go on to the next word/phrase. If there is a problem, it will be either a ‘comprehension’ or a ‘retrieval’ problem. Comprehension problems are resolved by using comprehension strategies; retrieval problems are solved using retrieval strategies. If there is a choice of solutions (‘competing equivalents’ in the TL), ‘decision-making strategies’ are adopted in order to decide which one to choose; if there is no adequate equivalent, ‘reduction strategies’ are adopted, which include “dispensing with markedness”, “dispensing with metaphor” and “dispensing with specific semantic features” (Krings 1986). This is summarized in Krings’ diagram in Figure 8.4 (below):

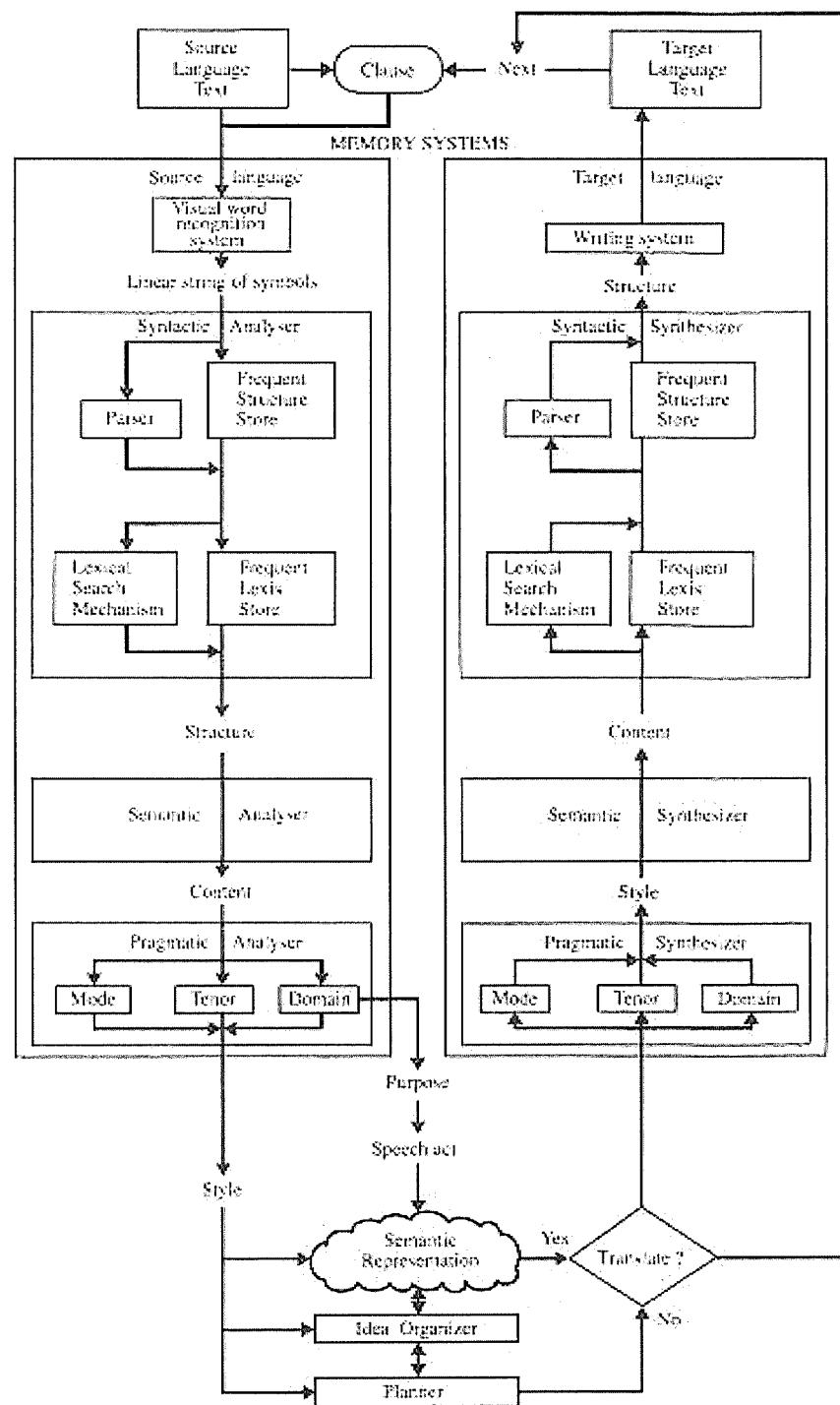
Figure 8.4: Krings' model (1986:269)



Bell compares translation to reading. They have in common that they both involve decoding, but the ends to which the decoding is put differ: in reading, processing is simply in order to understand the message of the original text; in translation, it is in order to end up with a derived text in another language. A reader's reactions to a text, such as curiosity, pleasure, disapproval, puzzlement, are personal reactions, while a translator's reactions are less personal, as they are noticing indicators of register and responding to features of the text which signal potential encoding problems. According to Bell, this makes reading essentially "sender-oriented" and the reading involved in translating "receiver-oriented" (Bell 1998:186-187).

Bell sees the clause as the default 'unit of meaning' in translation. The restricted capabilities of the short-term (working) memory limit the amount of language which can be manipulated at any one time. There is a balance between 'whole text' *top-down* and 'local' *bottom-up* processes; *micro* (bottom-up) and *macro* (top-down) processes work together (Bell 1998). For Bell top-down concept-driven and bottom-up data-driven processes are both involved in translation with an interactive process linking the two (Bell 1991:235). Empirical research suggests that professional translators use more top-down 'sense-oriented' strategies, with a focus on "function rather than form", while non-professionals tend to use bottom-up 'sign-oriented' strategies with a focus on "form rather than function" (Bell 1998:189). In Bell's model, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic *analysers* look after decoding the SL message, while the pragmatic, semantic and syntactic *synthesisers* look after encoding into the TL. Between the two is a pre-linguistic 'semantic representation', represented as a cloud. Bell presents his model in the form of a flow diagram (Bell 1991:59), reproduced in Figure 8.5 (below):

Figure 8.5: Bell's model (1991:59)



Bell also envisages five ‘demons’ (by analogy with Maxwell’s demons in physics). These are processing engines concerned with recognizing sensory data (image demon), analyzing received input for features (feature demon), cataloguing images against schemas (cognitive demon), choosing between competing schemes (decision demon), and coordinating all interactions with the long-term memory (supervisor demon) (Bell 1991:235-239).

The clause is the default unit of translation for Bell, but at the same time he acknowledges that other units of translation are relevant and that clauses overlap and cascade (Bell 1991). Many scholars recognize that the unit of translation can vary, Newmark for example:

all lengths of language can, at different moments and also simultaneously, be used as units of translation in the course of the translation activity; [...] further I have tried to show that, operatively, most translation is done at the level of the smaller units (words and clauses), leaving the larger units to ‘work’ (*jouer*) automatically, until a difficulty occurs and until revision starts (Newmark 1988:66-67).

Hatim & Munday give a full spectrum of possible units of translation:

Translation theorists have proposed various units, from individual word and group to clause and sentence and even higher levels such as text and intertextual levels (Hatim & Munday 2004:25).

For Malmkjaer the translator may work at several levels at once:

It needs to be stressed that momentary attention to units of fairly fixed sizes during translating and during comparison of source and target texts does not preclude the translator or analyst from considering the text as a whole (Malmkjaer 1998:288).

This provides an answer to the question of whether translators operate ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’. It would seem that both occur, and possibly, simultaneously.

In the model of Kiraly, three modules - an ‘intuitive workspace’, a ‘controlled processing centre’ and ‘information sources’ - interact with each other in the translation

process (Kiraly 1995:101). Much of this work involves just the intuitive or subconscious ‘workspace’, where inputs from various sources, including the source text, interact, without much conscious control being involved (Kiraly 1995:101-102). It is only when problems occur that automatic processing gives over to a more conscious work of the ‘controlled processing centre’ (Kiraly 1995:102).

The approach of the PACTE Group has been to explore the concept of ‘translation competence’ by breaking it down into six translation subcompetencies: the ‘bilingual’, ‘extralinguistic’, ‘strategic’, ‘instrumental’, ‘knowledge about translation’ and ‘psycho-physiological’ subcompetencies (PACTE Group 2005:610-611). It is the ‘strategic subcompetence’ which is of most interest in the present context, as it is here that problem solving takes place; deficiencies are compensated for, problems identified and procedures applied to solve them (PACTE Group 2005:610).

What emerges from the review of psycholinguistic models of translation discussed above is a picture with many shared principles. There is agreement: 1) that translation is an activity which involves a series of stages and that the stages come in a specific sequence; 2) that this process does not occur in isolation but each event connects to other events at many points; 3) that it involves knowledge about language/culture as well as procedural knowledge; 4) translation is an activity in which the recognition, analysis and solving of problems play an important part; 5) it is an activity in which informed choices are made by reference to information stored in the long-term memory. In the following section I consider the methods commonly used for investigating translation as a psycholinguistic process. From these, I then make a choice as to which method I use in my own studies of translation as a psycholinguistic process.

## 8.6 Psycholinguistic Methods for Investigating Translating

The methods commonly used for investigating translating as a psycholinguistic process reflect those used generally in psychology and the social sciences, when investigating mental processes. They are: Think Aloud Protocols, ‘introspection’ and ‘retrospection’.

**Think Aloud Protocols** (TAPs) require the translator to provide a ‘running

commentary', to verbalise what mental and physical activities they are carrying out while translating:

When used in the field of Translation Studies, TAPs will typically involve the "subjects" verbalizing everything that comes into their minds and all the actions they perform as they work on the creation of a TT (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997:171).

The term 'Think-Aloud Protocol' usually refers to the technique, but technically the 'protocol' is the written transcript. Here is an example of a TAP protocol:

ok now let's see *lieti eventi* maybe great news but probably I'm putting great news because I want to start writing something ehm and this means that I could well go back to it ehm now again I could put two new planets discovered outside the Solar System rather boring though is it? not not particularly attractive as a title maybe I'll change news to discoveries no I think I'll put two new planets discovered so I'll go back to great news and then two new planets discovered outside the Solar System have to spell it properly System ok *great news two new planets discovered outside the Solar System* ok and from there haven't got it in bold but let's imagine I have I think I will stick to the typology of the original ... (Bernardini 1999)

Criticisms of the technique are: to be a fluent protocol giver is a skill which only comes through practice; it is quite hard to give a running commentary without at the same time giving an interpretation:

Subjects involved in such experiments need special training to enable them to verbalize freely instead of analysing and commenting on their thought processes (Jääskeläinen 1998:268).

Also, however honest the subject might want to be, what they say they are thinking is not necessarily an exact account of what is actually going on in their mind. In spite of the criticism of TAP as a technique, it is generally thought to be a direct, reliable source of rich data, which give insights into how translators make choices, how they deal with equivalence, what they choose as their 'unit of translation' and how they come up with creative solutions. TAPs have helped show that translation is not a single invariable process, but one which has many forms:

In fact, the findings of TAP studies have so far offered indisputable evidence to support the view that there is no single monolithic translation process. The nature of the process varies considerably depending on several factors, including type of text, type of task and type of translator. (Jääskeläinen 1998:268)

For example, Bernardini's study suggests that professionals translate more quickly and more automatically, and that they use longer units and more unmarked processing; while trainee translators show the opposite phenomena (Bernardini 1999).

The second technique, **introspection** (or 'immediate retrospection'), involves subjects commenting on their performance immediately after carrying out a task. Fraser is persuaded by the usefulness of introspection as a technique for investigating translation as a mental process in addition to TAPs (Fraser 1996), but found that experienced subjects use "language processing strategies of which they have long ceased to be aware because long practice has resulted in automatization", so underlying processes might not be revealed through the use of this technique (Fraser 1996:77).

The third technique, **retrospection**, is probably the least used. It requires the subject to reflect on a task they have carried out at some distance in time from the event. This can take the form of interviews with the subject or information gained from questionnaires or reflection delivered by email. Retrospection can be supported by data from tracking software, such as *Translog* software, developed by Jakobsen & Schou (1999), which keeps an exact log (record) of the keystrokes a translator makes while translating at a computer. A retrospective protocol can be created which shows which keys were pressed by the translator and in what order. This allows the researcher to see how solutions are arrived at, where hesitations occur and where deletions and corrections are made. This has been useful in researching professional translators and editors. For example, the Norwegian Expertise Research Group uses Translog in combination with TAPs. *Proxy* and *Camtasia* are other methods for recording an account of a translator's performance: Proxy records keyboard activity and Camtasia stores a record of screen shots (Hurtado Albir & Alves 2009).

In the studies I have undertaken and presented in the next section, it is *retrospection* which I have chosen to use. This choice was made for a number of reasons. Firstly, I wanted to avoid being intrusive during the translation process. Another consideration

was that it would have been impractical to conduct protocols or introspection with the subjects I had available. Also, the editing stage of translation is itself a retrospective activity and a retrospective tool of enquiry seemed well suited to investigating it. Finally, I anticipated that the retrospective comments of the translators would complement well the data I had of the translation event itself, namely the source text, first draft and final version provided by the translators.

## 8.7 Studies Investigating Translation as a Process

In this section, I apply the Metonymic Theory of Translation outlined earlier in this chapter to examples of translation. I look at four examples. The first is an imagined translation task, based on an authentic text. The second is an actual translation of an article from the French newspaper *Le Figaro* carried out by an MA student at a London university. The third and fourth are taken from real-life translation events, in other words, the texts produced by professional translators in the course of their work. They are publicity material for a Munich food store and a website for a German marketing company, both carried out by a professional freelance translator living in Germany.

### **STUDY I: TRANSLATING THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR A HANDHELD FOOD MIXER**

The source text for this study is the Italian section of an instruction leaflet for a handheld foodmixer. It starts (errors retained):

Inserire la spina nella presa di corrente. Insere le spirali frullatrici (impasto di farina ecc.) oppure quelle impastatrici (impasto tipo panificazione, ecc.). Mettere sempre la frusta con la corona dentata nell'aperture contrassegnata con corona dentata (1)

Mettere gli ingredienti da lavorare in un recipiente adatto (scodella di miscela Krups o bicchiere di miscela Krups). Immergere le fruste nel recipinete ed avviare l'apparecchio. Avviare sulla posizion 1 (per evitare spruzzi), poi passare sul 2 (2). Il Krups TurboMix si avvia sull'1 o sul 2, e si passa poi al 3 (3).

Two difficulties immediately present themselves to a translator with the brief of

translating this text into English in the first paragraph: 1) how to distinguish between the two different types of beater supplied with the mixer (see Figure 8.6 below); and 2) how to describe the distinctive shape that identifies which beater goes in which hole (see Figure 8.7 below).

**Figure 8.6: The beaters**

*IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES*



**Figure 8.7: Inserting the beaters**

*IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES*



The translator can get information on both these points from the text and from the illustrations which accompany the text. Which in practice is the most useful source depends on the quality of the text and the quality of the illustrations, the translator's own repertoire of competencies and the resource available to them, such as, target-language texts, glossaries, etc. They may also have been supplied with the appliance itself. If the translator starts from the illustrations, we are dealing with what Jakobson calls 'intersemiotic translation'; if they starts from the Italian text, we are dealing with 'interlingual translation' (Jakobson 2004 [1959]).

Whatever source of information the translator has at their disposal (let us imagine they have all three), metonymy offers solutions to both the problems identified above.

Metonymy, it will be remembered, allows access to the meaning as a whole by highlighting a single aspect. Here, to distinguish between the different types of beater, the writer can choose to refer to the SHAPE, or the ACTION IT PERFORMS, or the TYPE OF MIXTURE it is used on, and so on. The shape can be described as 'spiral' (or 'hooked') vs 'cage-shaped' (or box-shaped); the action can be described as 'whisking' (or 'whipping' or 'beating') vs 'kneading'; and the type of mixture can be described as 'batter' (or 'pancake mix') vs 'dough'. All these offer potential solutions.

The distinctive mark which identifies the right beater and the hole in the body of the appliance which it goes into also present translation problems which can also be solved using metonymy. It can be described as 'crown-shaped', 'cog-like', 'toothed', etc. (The expression used in the Italian text, *corona dentata*, literally means 'toothed crown'.)

The Italian text - probably itself a translation - describes the beaters as *spirali frullatrici* (literally = spirals blending) versus *spirali impastatrici* (= spirals kneading), but adds glosses to these terms: *impasto di farina ecc* (literally = mixture of flour etc) versus *impasto tipo panificazione ecc* (= mixture type breadmaking etc). The strategy of using glosses, rather than a single term, used presumably because the unglossed terms were not felt to be descriptive enough, is itself metonymic; as is the use of 'etc', as it signals this as an example standing for a whole class of phenomena.

The literal equivalents given above in brackets (literally =) are what an Italian-English dictionary would offer the translator. They are useful only up to a certain point. They

add to the choices available to the translator by suggesting lexis, but they are seldom the best solution and rarely appear in the final text. In fact, translator trainers often discourage students from using dictionaries (other than technical glossaries) except as a last resort, thereby recognizing that non-literal metonymic translations are better than literal word-for-word substitutions.

The Italian text does not appear to have been written by an Italian native speaker, suggested by the unusual formulations and typos. Compensation for this is another way in which metonymy is involved in translation. The translator has to make adjustments, eg replacing *mettere* with 'mettere', *insere* with 'inserire' and *panificazione* with 'panificazione'. These are the sort of changes machine translation software is notoriously unable to deal with.

## STUDY 2: LE FIGARO ARTICLE

This study is based on a translation done by Alexander (pseudonym), an MA translation student at a London University in February 2009. I asked him to let me have an example of a translation he had done for one of his translation classes, providing me with the source text, his first draft in English and the final version he submitted. The translation he chose was of an article from the French newspaper *Le Figaro* from 2002. When he gave me this material, I took the opportunity to conduct a retrospective interview with him in which, with the texts in front of us, I asked him to take me through his working practice when doing a translation, and explain particularly the process of going from source text to first draft and first draft to final version for this task. He observed that keeping a first draft is not something a translator normally does and that he therefore had to make a conscious effort to do so. Below is an extract from the material he gave me:

### Source text

Ce n'est pas parce que les grandes vacances ont commencé depuis le début du mois que toutes les écoles ont **mis la clef sous le paillasson**. Depuis 11 ans, près de 500 **établissements** s'engagent à accueillir des élèves en dehors du **strict cadre scolaire**, les mercredis et les samedis au cours de l'année mais également durant les vacances, dans le cadre du programme « école ouverte ». (Le Figaro, 20 July 2002:6)

### First draft

It is not that because the long holiday started at the beginning of the month that all the schools **have put the key under the doormat**. For eleven years about 500 **establishments** have started receiving pupils **outside the strict school framework** on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the year, but also during the holidays, in the frame of the ‘open school’ programme.

### Final version

Although the school holidays began at the beginning of the month, not all schools have **locked their doors**. For eleven years now, about 500 schools have been running *extra classes*, **outside the regular curriculum**. They run on Wednesdays and Saturdays, both during the school year and during the holidays, as part of the ‘open school’ programme.

In this sequence – source text, first draft, final version – we see two ‘moves’, both involving metonymic shifts in meaning; but whereas the move from the original text to the first draft involves a shift *away* from the meaning of the original text, the move from the first draft to the final version involves a shift *back* to the meaning of the original text. I am calling the first a ‘shift away’, because the transfer from French to English generates a lot of unwanted indeterminacy or ‘fuzziness’, while the ‘shift back’ resolves this, reducing the haze of indeterminacy around the text.

The ‘shift away’ is made up of many individual micro-shifts at word level, caused by many factors. These mainly arise from the source language features being retained in the first draft, syntactical features, partially coincidence of categories between the languages and effects from cognates (words which look the same). The ‘shift back’ in the final text is similarly made up of many individual micro-shifts. This is mainly driven by the translator’s wish to achieve a final version which is internally coherent, rather than in an effort to be faithful to the source text. Alexander confirms this when he reports: “I had another look at the text [ie the original], just briefly, to check I hadn’t gone off at a tangent somewhere!” (Alexander, interview, 2009).

A few examples from the text illustrate these shifts. The examples from the first draft for all these examples are more or less literal translations of the French, and for that reason I have not given any additional explanation of the source text examples:

mis la clef sous le paillasson [Source text] →  
put the key under the doormat [First draft] →  
locked their doors [Final version]

établissements [Source text] →  
establishments [First draft] →  
schools [Final version]

strict cadre scolaire [Source text] →  
strict school framework [First draft] →  
regular curriculum [Final version]

### **STUDY 3: MALMAYR PROMOTION TEXT**

The informant in this study, Estelle (pseudonym), is an experienced freelance translator working in Germany. As in the previous study, she was asked to make available to me a translation, together with the original text and an early draft. The translation she chose was the text of a publicity website which she had been working on for a ‘fine food’ store, Malmayr. She delivered this to me via email in February 2010, a few days after submitting it to the client. As with Alexander, she was asked to participate in a retrospective post-task interview to discuss the translation. This was conducted on the phone a day after my receiving her email. In it, both Estelle and I had the texts in front of us. The comments she made on this occasion were mainly elicited from questions I posed. Below is a page of the original German text, her first draft in English and her final version:

#### Source text

#### WELCOME

In einer Zeit, in der Marken, Werbebotschaften und Produkte immer austauschbarer werden, bekommt die Frage nach Authentizität, Individualität und Qualität eine besondere Bedeutung. Die Suche nach dem Echten, dem Wahrhaftigen rückt dabei in den Mittelpunkt.

Immer schon ist dies der Anspruch des Familien-unternehmens Malmayr gewesen, Stammhaus veredelten Spaltenkaffees und Treffpunkt von Gourmets aus aller Welt seit

Generationen: Es geht bei Malmayr nicht um schnelle Trends oder Moden, sondern immer um die Konsequenz der Qualität. Sie ist die eigentliche Herausforderung, Außergewöhnliches hervorzubringen.

Mit Liebe zum Detail, Respekt vor dem Fachwissen der Mitarbeiter und Stolz auf eine lebendige Tradition wird dieses Unternehmen geführt. Denn Qualität und Service erster Klasse sind hier. Berufung und Passion. Jeden Tag.

Georg Wille & Wolfgang Rand

#### First draft

At a time when *brands*, *advertising slogans* and *products* are becoming increasingly interchangeable, the demand for authenticity, individuality and quality is assuming great importance. The search for something real, for something genuine, is becoming the focal point.

This has however always been the standard pursued by the Malmayr family-run business; for generations the parent house of the finest coffees and a meeting place for gourmets from around the world. At Malmayr, it is not passing trends or fashions that count but persistent quality. This is the real challenge: to create something extraordinary.

This company is run with great attention to detail, respect for the expert knowledge of its employees and pride in its living tradition. The company is passionate about first-class quality and service. This is its calling – day in, day out.

Georg Wille & Wolfgang Rand

#### Final version

At a time when *products*, *brands* and *slogans* are becoming increasingly interchangeable, the demand for authenticity, individuality and quality assumes an even greater importance. The contemporary thirst for the real, the genuine, has always been a goal at the family-run Swabian firm of Malmayr.

Producing fine coffees for generations and providing a meeting place for gourmets from all round the world, Malmayr represents enduring quality, not passing trends.

A pride in a living tradition and the wish to produce something truly extraordinary, a love for detail and a respect for the expertise of its staff, a passion for quality and first-class service are all constantly pursued.

In the first version, “brands, advertising slogans and products” (para 1, line 1) is a fairly literal substitution term by term of the original, but in the final version this becomes “products, brands and slogans”. When asked why she made this choice, the informant said:

it just sounds better, more logical. It is like a sequence, first the most general ‘product’, then ‘brand’, more specific, and then the actual words they use in their advertising, ‘slogan’. I took off ‘advertising’ because it doesn’t really add anything (Estelle, telephone interview, 20 February 2010).

When asked what role the source text played in going from the first draft to the final version, she said she hardly consulted it at all and only goes back to the original by way of a “quality check” before sending it off (Estelle, telephone interview, 21 February 2010).

In the third paragraph, the words in the original *Liebe* (love), *Respekt* (respect) and *Stolz* (pride), become *attention*, *respect* and *passion* and in the final version *pride*, *love* and *passion*. When asked about this, the informant commented:

I know. It didn’t seem to matter what order they came in, ‘pride’, ‘love’ ‘passion’. I just moved them around until I could hang the rest of the paragraphs on them in a way which seemed logical (laugh). (Estelle, telephone interview, 21 February 2010)

This idea of ‘moving words around’ is highly metonymic, relying on the recognition of relatedness between concepts in the same unit of text.

Estelle also identified a passage which posed particular difficulties. The problem revolves around the word *Provenienzen*, literally “provenances”.

Source text

...Über 1,500 *Provenienzen* werden hier präsentiert. Dabei liegt der Schwerpunkt auf den klassischen Weinanbau-gebieten wie Frankreich, Italien, Deutschland und Österreich. ...

### First draft

The wine and spirits department is one of the favourites in the food hall. It stocks wines from over 1,500 different *sources*. The main focus is however on wines *from* the classical wine-growing areas of France, Italy, Germany and Austria.

### Final version

The wine and spirits department is one of the favourites in the food hall. It stocks over 1500 different wines, specializing in wines *from* the classic wine-growing *areas* of France, Italy, Germany and Austria.

She says about this:

I found that particularly difficult. What do I do about the 'provenances'? I can't say "from 1,500 different vineyards" because I don't know if that's true. I don't know they *are* different. First I put "It stocks wines from over 1,500 different sources", but then I changed it to "it stocks over 1500 different wines" without specifying further, and merging it with the next sentence, "specializing in wines from the classic wine-growing areas of France, Italy, Germany and Austria". (Estelle, telephone interview, 21 February 2010)

What the informant does is to use metonymic shifts to solve the problem around the word *Provenienzen*. She intuitively distributes the meaning features of the original word to other lexical items - along the lines of Nida's feature analysis approach (Nida 1964) - and then modifies this further in the final version so that the duplication of the FROM feature is avoided, as shown below:

### Source text

*Provenienzen (provenances)* = PLACE; FROM

### First draft

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <i>source</i> | = PLACE; FROM |
| <i>from</i>   | = FROM        |

### Final version

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| <i>area</i> | = PLACE |
| <i>from</i> | = FROM  |

#### STUDY 4: NERCA PROMOTION WEBSITE

The informant for this study is the same as for Study 3, Estelle. Here again she was asked to provide an original text, a first draft and a final version, and discuss the translation in a retrospective post-task interview on the phone. The text is from the promotion website for a German marketing company, Nerca. The material was sent by email to me a day after being completed in February 2010 and the interview was conducted the same day. This time, instead of supplying the complete texts, Estelle sent me only certain passages she had identified as 'tricky'; and instead of giving just one first draft, she gave me the various options she had considered while writing the first version. She then explained how she came to make the choices she did for the final version. The interview this time was very much led by her rather than her responding to my questions, as was so for the Malmayr translation.

##### EXTRACT 1

###### Source text

Feiner Papierwaren

###### First draft

Fine paperware/ Fine paper goods/ Fine paper products/ Fine stationery/ Quality stationery

For each of the two words in this heading, alternatives come into view in Estelle's working memory: for *Feiner* she has 'fine' and 'quality', and for *Papierwaren* she has 'paperware', 'paper goods', 'paper products' and 'stationery'. Estelle comments

paperware and paper goods sound too ordinary, and stationery suggests just envelopes and business letterheads, that sort of thing, but they do a lot more than that (Estelle, telephone interview, 28 February 2010).

The choice she made for the final version was *Fine Paper Products*. To get there, she chose from among two groups of metonymically related words, making her choices according to connotations she wanted to exclude rather than through any clear sense that one alternative was the 'right' solution.

## EXTRACT 2

### Source text

Verpackung für Marken

NERCA macht Verpackungen für Marc O’Polo, Porsche Design, Daimler, Strenesse, Hugo Boss, Porzellanmanufaktur Meissen, viele weitere international tätige Unternehmen und gerne auch für Sie.

### First draft

Packaging the brand/Packaging brand names/ Packaging propriety brands/ Brand-name packaging

NERCA creates packaging for Marc O’Polo, Porsche Design, Daimler, Strenesse, Hugo Boss, the Meissen porcelain factory/Meiseen and many other companies which operate internationally/international companies. And for you too?/ We would be happy to produce packaging for you too.

In the second extract, the title again contains two elements: *Verpackung* and *Marken*. For *Verpackung*, there was no choice; the word she chose was ‘packaging’; for *Marken*, she had ‘brand’, ‘proprietary brand’ and ‘brandname’. She chose ‘Packaging Brand Names’ as she felt:

‘proprietary brand’ sounds like washing powder and ‘brand’ is too general. Actually, I chose Packaging Brand Names, rather than looking for anything more fancy, because it is close to the original, and I know the guy who checks these things gets nervous if it is too different, even if there is actually a better translation! (Estelle, telephone interview, 28 February 2010)

Thus, the checker is using relatedness as one of their criteria for assessing quality. The other choices in this extract – *the Meissen porcelain factory* vs *Meissen*; *operate internationally* vs *international* and “And for you too?” versus “We would be happy to produce packaging for you too” – again reflect the constant preoccupation of the translator with metonymically related alternatives and the need to choose between them.

## 8.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a Metonymic Theory of Translation in which metonymic shifts play a central role. I have sited this alongside other theories and definitions of translation from the translation studies literature. Studies were presented which illustrate that the relations between units of the source text and the first draft, and between the first draft and final version, involve metonymy, and that relatedness plays a role both in solutions which are more automatic and those which are the result of active problem solving.

The Metonymic Theory of Translation presented in this chapter has similarities with the shift approaches to translation of Catford, Leuven-Zwart, Vinay & Darbelnet and Hervey & Higgins, but goes beyond these scholars in a number of important respects. Firstly, the theory presented here locates metonymic translation in the broader context of Metaphor Studies as a whole, observing that the approaches to non-literality in translation have been less than useful, missing the point that non-literality is core to the activity of translation and not just an issue encountered on the rare occasions that colourful but irritating idioms turn up. Secondly, this theory does not look at shifts in isolation but in the context of a general theory of metonymic meaning making (outlined in Chapters 4 and 5), which sees all categories as involving part-whole relations. It also assumes an inherent metonymic relation between language systems, both between different languages, eg English and Spanish, and between varieties of the same language, eg British English and American English. Thirdly, this theory recognizes that written translation usually involves two phases: an interlingual ‘transfer’ phase and the intralingual ‘editing’ phase, and that metonymic shifts are fundamental to both, an idea suggested by Jakobson’s triad of terms ‘intralingual’, ‘interlingual’ and ‘intersemiotic’ translation, but not explored further in the literature. The two-phase nature of translation is investigated here through studies based on authentic translations in which the original, first draft and final version are compared, with additional insights drawn from interviews conducted with the translator. All four studies considered above show the key role that metonymy plays in the transfer of meaning from text to text. This is so whether that transfer is interlingual or intralingual.

In the next and final chapter, I look at the implications that the General Theory of

Metonymy developed in this thesis has for the understanding of meaning making in general and meaning making in the specific contexts of language learning and translation/interpreting. I consider how the insights gained for the argument presented in the thesis might lead to the development of a field of metonymy studies and how its application might be of service to the community of language professionals and other spheres of human activity.

## 9 Conclusions and Implications

Aristotle in the *Poetics* writes “the greatest thing by far is to have command of metaphor” (Aristotle 350 BCE 3/22). I suggest that a command of metonymy is even more basic and of even greater utility. The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the phenomenon of metonymy – the recognition of part-whole relatedness between signs and parts of signs – in the widest and most inclusive sense without extending the notion so far that it becomes debased or unworkable. To do this, I have investigated the role metonymy plays in communication at different levels, including the creation of text, and in varied contexts, particularly two applied linguistics contexts: language learning and translation. The unique contribution this thesis makes to the creation of new knowledge is to present three original theories: a General Theory of Metonymy, a Metonymic Theory of Learner Communication and a Metonymic Theory of Translation.

In the **General Theory of Metonymy** presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I demonstrated that metonymy plays a role at all levels of communication from word to text and every aspect of communication from basic reference to pragmatics. I showed that metonymy, as well as being behind the creation of metonymic language, is the mechanism behind literal and metaphoric language. How this is achieved was illustrated using my Stack of Counters Model presented in Chapter 3, which in turn came out of the Model of the Linguistic Mind presented in Chapter 2, in which various senses of ‘metaphor’ are differentiated. The theory of metonymy presented here has shown how metonymy exploits the partial nature of ‘the sign’ and how this inherent feature of the sign can be used both to create new ways of referring to things and to provide possibilities of giving salience to certain aspects of things. The use of metonymy is motivated on the one hand by the speaker’s need to abbreviate and condense, providing the speaker with a “kind of mental shortcut” (Brdar 2009:262) – it allows you to skip over familiar avenues of thought which would be too time-consuming and distracting to repeat each time – and motivated, on the other, by the speaker’s need to extend meaning ‘on the fly’ in order to serve the needs of referring and the need to give nuance, emphasis and spin. I suggest that the ‘metonymic mechanism’ is the key to how we achieve subtlety and fine-tuning in our dealings with others, a conclusion I believe to be unique to the present research.

I have demonstrated how speakers and writers create ‘moves’ within text using Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor, and that the use of these phenomena does more than define authorial style, text type and literary genre, as described by Jakobson in his discussion of metonymic and metaphoric ‘poles’ (Jakobson 1971 [1956]) and Lodge in his discussion of metonymic and metaphoric ‘modes’ (Lodge 1977). I have shown not only that Discourse Metonymy and Discourse Metaphor can occur *within* the same text, but that different *levels* of Metonymic Discourse and Metaphoric Discourse can occur within the same text, thus showing how metonymy and metaphor provide a speaker/author with an infinite variety of registers (and therefore functions), narrowing and broadening focus as you do in photography and film. I have shown that these are not just phenomena of literary works but are found in texts of all kinds, commercial and everyday, written and spoken, spontaneous and planned, private and public, formal and informal. I have also demonstrated that metonymy is involved in a whole range of social and recreational activities, such as puzzles, games and jokes, in which metonymy seems to occupy a central position, such that it becomes what the activity is ‘about’ rather than serving merely as an enabling mechanism. I speculate that engagement in these activities is an unconscious emotional acknowledgement of the significance of metonymy in our lives.

The **Metonymic Theory of Learner Communication** presented in Chapter 7 looked at the vital contribution metonymy makes to the success of interactions between learners and their interlocutors. I argue that metonymy is involved when speech partners accommodate the speech of learners; that metonymy plays a part in ‘foreigner talk’, the register used when interlocutors speak to learners; and that metonymy serves the learner in allowing them to extend the lexicon creatively and to compensate for shortcomings in their knowledge of the language they are learning; while ‘formal metonymy’ provides invaluable scaffolding when learning new items. Metonymy also has a role in self-correction, where the brain monitors differences between what is actually said and what the speaker meant to say, a phenomenon I call ‘metonymic monitoring’ (and one which is not confined to learners). I would go further, and suggest that learning itself could be considered to be metonymic. Learning involves adding to what is already known and understood. What is learnt will overlap to some extent with what is known, certain elements being repeated: “learning coming from repetition where an element is changed” (Cook 2000:30).

The **Metonymic Theory of Translation** presented in Chapter 8 has demonstrated that translation is an activity which involves the translator in a constant search for near equivalents between different code systems. I describe above how language learners explore metonymic relations between their first language and the language they are learning, making incremental modifications (of phonology, syntax and semantics) in small metonymic steps; translators, too, are engaged in exploring metonymic equivalents between languages and within languages in their work, the differences they manage leading to the construction of new texts as opposed to new interlanguages. It was argued that the two stages involved in written translation – going from source text to first draft and then going from first draft to final version – are both processes in which metonymic processing is central. This was investigated using the technique of ‘retrospection’ to demonstrate metonymy at work in real translation events carried out by professional translator informants. The theory of translation presented here recasts the notions of ‘loss’, ‘gain’ and ‘compensation’ in terms of metonymy, and reinterprets the ‘shift’ theories of scholars such as Catford and Vinay & Darbelnet in terms of metonymy. It was argued that a metonymic approach to translation is useful in understanding and facilitating the translation process by allowing us to abandon the straightjacket of literality and the idea that translation is a matter of exact equivalents.

## **Metonymics**

The fundamental role played by metonymy at so many levels of meaning making and in so many contexts suggests to me that it would be valuable if a discipline in its own right were to emerge which incorporated these ideas. We might call this new field ‘Metonymy Studies’ or ‘Metonymics’. I would imagine that the rise of the new discipline would take a similar path to that taken by Metaphor Studies, which started in a small way but grew exponentially, thanks to collaborations across disciplines and interest generated by publications, journals, associations, research groups, conferences and dissemination through university teaching and events. Metonymics would emerge from the recent burgeoning interest in metonymy and the body of understanding around metonymy which this thesis embraces and seeks to contribute to; Metonymics would have a grounding in traditional rhetoric and poetics, but would also draw on developments in recent research in discourse analysis, psycholinguistics, corpus

linguistics, computational linguistics and cognitive linguistics.

What would this new discipline look like? Metonymics would necessarily be multidisciplinary and this would be one of its strengths. Like Metaphor Studies, it would have the potential of providing a theoretical framing for analysing problems and a tool for solving them. Metonymics would allow us to re-evaluate situations, provide useful insights, resolve paradoxes and solve problems. The General Theory of Metonymy presented in this thesis is a metonymic theory of linguistic communication; it is Metonymics used to reformulate linguistic theory. The Metonymic Theory of Learner Communication and the Metonymic Theory of Translation also presented in this thesis are similarly applications of Metonymics. In the remaining pages of this thesis, I consider a diverse range of domains of human activity, dealing with each only briefly but imagining the trajectory that metonymic approaches might take.

Three examples within language studies which demonstrate how Metonymics can provide an interesting reframing are Critical Discourse Analysis, political ‘spin’, and the differences between American English and British English. Critical Discourse Analysis is the branch of discourse analysis which uncovers social inequities by ‘denaturalizing’ language. It presents competing ideologies as if they were separate realities, and, in my understanding, that the words for those separate realities are taken from distinct ‘bins’. Metonymics, instead, would suggest that there is one reality and one ‘code’ (with which to talk about that reality), and that differences in position are expressed by choosing different but metonymically-related words from the shared code. Secondly, journalistic and political ‘spin’ can similarly be seen as metonymic choices made from items available to both parties in order to emphasize certain aspects over others, rather than a journalist or politician mischievously misrepresenting a situation by choosing inappropriate terms: ‘spun’ and ‘unspun’ versions are related and come about by speakers using metonymic filtering in their manipulation of codes. Thirdly, the differences between American and British English, when viewed through the lens of Metonymics, become far more interesting than when seen in the way they are usually presented. The differences cease to be what at first seem random and trivial differences of naming, a matter of lists, and become instead differences which reflect the essential nature of things in all their richness and the partial nature of meaning making through signs: *law enforcement officer* and *policeman* are two ways of taking bites out of the

same apple. Furthermore, Metonymics could be used as a tool for understanding how ‘identity’ is expressed through language, the variation offered by metonymy allowing us to display ‘cultural capital’ and adopt different ‘subject positions’ in Block’s sense of the term (Block 2007:40). The essential relationships between dialects, language varieties and Creoles can similarly be explored using a metonymic approach.

The present thesis was driven by a desire to explain how we achieve such great flexibility and subtlety of expression, given the limitations on the linguistic resources available to us, and what it is in the design of the language system which makes it so ideally fit for purpose. It is suggested that the answer to this conundrum is our ability to metonymize. I have suggested in this thesis that utterances, given that they are created ‘on the fly’, will be judged by the criterion of whether they are ‘adequate’ in functional terms rather than whether they are ‘correct’. This gives a different perspective on the aims of teaching and testing languages. That language under-refers turns out not only to be inevitable but also necessary. It is indeterminacy exploited through metonymy which gives human language its flexibility. Brown recognizes the importance of indeterminacy in giving flexibility, without framing it in terms of metonymy:

It is now widely held that the underdetermination of most word-meanings when they are considered in isolation, as in a dictionary entry, contributes a necessary flexibility to human language. Such a flexibility enables the communication of new thoughts (or at least of thoughts in new relationships to other thoughts). (Brown 1995:16)

The metonymic theory of communication presented in this thesis can be seen as a ‘fuzzy logic’ theory of language. Fuzzy logic explains how subtle, human-like operations are mimicked by machines through combinations of basic-level choices (such as washing machines which carry out hundreds of different programmes depending on weight, absorbency and dirtiness of the washing). But it is more than a fuzzy logic theory of language, as it is not just a search for the smallest indivisible unit in communication (in the way that the Large Hadron Collider project in Berne is a search for the smallest indivisible sub-atomic particle, the Higgs Boson, the ‘glue’ which holds the universe together); instead, it is concerned with metonymy operating at many different levels on a rank scale, not just at the basic level.

Applying a metonymic perspective to real-world situations could make a valuable contribution in many areas by providing a framework for research and training of professional practitioners in various fields. As well as the areas of human activity identified for particular consideration in this thesis, namely language teaching and translation, I can imagine Metonymics contributing usefully in the areas of law, politics, international development, intercultural communication, arbitration, reconciliation and conflict resolution. The power and utility of Metonymics is in reframing situations and thereby re-evaluating them; this could offer useful insights, resolve paradoxes and possibly offer solutions to problems. One way in which Metonymics could help us understand the world is to expose problems which are created by the ‘straightjacket’ of sharply-defined categories, what Dawkins describes as “the tyranny of the discontinuous mind” (Dawkins 2011). He lists defining poverty, deciding where university-degree classification-lines are drawn, whether proportional representation voting systems are fair, when an embryo becomes a baby, the reliability of weather forecasting and safety testing of new drugs as examples where ‘platonic essentialism’, the distinctness of categories, has confused matters (Dawkins 2010). They are equally areas which would benefit from being re-interpreted using Metonymics. A metonymic theory of art is easy to envisage. Art works often use shifts and substitution to achieve their message. I will not give examples here but the parody of the Sgt. Pepper album cover, already discussed (Fig 5.1), illustrates this. The way the average person relates to images, thanks to digital photography, and how they document their holidays, is another example of how metonymy is part of everyday life: the holidaymaker engages in metonymic processing when looking through their photographs, perhaps hundreds of them, choosing between similar images and deciding which images to preserve.

Further contexts of my own illustrate the contribution Metonymics can make. They are from mathematics, Second Language Acquisition, the natural sciences and law; they are chosen because they have been at the centre of discussions with friends and colleagues over the last year regarding the application of metonymic theory. Many concepts in mathematics can be reframed in terms of metonymy. Algorithms and statistics both have at their core the expression of functions in terms of partial correspondences and overlap, but perhaps none more so than calculus. Calculus is particularly suggestive of Metonymics. Continuous functions are understood in terms of a large number of infinitesimal differences, the line of a curve being described in terms of infinitely small

but overlapping parts which add up to the whole.

In Second Language Acquisition, Vygotsky's concept of 'scaffolding' is suggestive of metonymy, as it characterizes learning as a series of stages rather than a 'one-off' process, where what is new is added to what is known: "the process by which one speaker (an expert or a novice) assists another speaker (a novice) to perform a skill that they are unable to perform independently" (Ellis 2008:978). Vygotsky famously names the locus of its occurrence the 'zone of proximal development', a learning space created by social context, "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky in Ellis 2008:983). This zone could be reframed as a zone of "active metonymic processing".

Other concepts from Second Language Acquisition studies which for me have a particular resonance with metonymy are Selinker's concept of 'interlanguage' (Selinker 1972) and Schmidt's concept of 'noticing the gap' (Schmidt 1990), as both can be interpreted in terms of metonymy. I consider both below.

*Interlanguage*, "the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language" (Ellis 2008:968), suggests a metonymic relationship between the learner's 'interlanguage' and the target language a learner is striving to learn, the learner's interlanguage being a blend of features of the first and second languages. In this characterization of learning, 'errors' reflect necessary stages in learning rather than accidental lapses, and are the result of "the intermingling of [...] core sources of knowledge" (Holme 2004:197). Taking this further, we might say that there is a metonymic relationship between the different stages of the learner's interlanguage as it changes over time, and between the innate Universal Grammar-type representations of language and real-language grammars. The metonymic progression through versions of interlanguage and the ability to replace one version with a closely related version permits learning to proceed towards a final 'stable' version of the target language. The concept of *noticing the gap* is the ability to notice differences between what is known and what is new. It allows learners to identify novel items when they encounter them and add them to what they already know. Observing these associations forms part of Schmidt's 'noticing skills' (Ellis 2008:973). Schmidt observes that "people learn about the things they attend to and do not learn much about the things they

do not attend to" (Schmidt in Ellis 2008:973). Noticing 'gaps' means monitoring for metonymy, observing similarities and partial overlaps, which may be differences of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis, phraseology, marked and unmarked forms, or differences of register and voice. They may also reflect 'overuse', "the use of an L2 feature more frequently than the same feature is used by native speakers" (Ellis 2008:974), or restricted use, a metonymic relation existing between the typical use and a generalized or restricted use of an item.

It is an appropriate point in this discussion to mention 'complexity theory', a holistic approach to understanding change in complex systems, originally developed within the natural sciences, but applied to other areas including second language acquisition, notably by Larsen-Freeman (Saville-Troike 2012:86). Complexity theory (and 'chaos theory') explains how change in complex systems comes about. When applied to second language acquisition, it suggests a common theory of learning in which language acquisition, first and second, is little different from other types of learning, and plays down the extent to which language learning relies on innate knowledge. Complexity theory scholars emphasize the interdependence of the different components of language and propose that the process of learning involves the gradual ordering and organizing of these components with respect to the learner's understanding of the language system as a whole. Metonymics would reframe this approach in terms of metonymic processing. It would suggest that the dynamic ordering and organising of components in a complex system involves a metonymic process, and that the ability to recognize relatedness between components is at the heart of (language) learning. There is an argument here that a learner, whether formally taught or not, always shows autonomy, as the patterns in the language system which the learner develops hypotheses about are always of the individual's own making, established through a process of constant matching and comparing.

In the natural sciences, the classification of plants and animals is an activity of Metonymics and little else, the relatedness and sharing of features between specimens being used as the basis for deciding to which family, genus or species a plant or animal belongs. Observing the similarity of physical features of plants and animals to draw up taxonomies in this way has been an activity pursued by natural scientists since Linnaeus and, indeed, before; but in more recent times, the similarity in chemical constituents of

plants and animals has been used to consolidate and modify existing taxonomies. Metonymics also helps explain why taxonomists often favour traditional illustrations over photographs, as a single illustration can offer a prototypical representation, containing all the distinctive features of a plant species, while a vast number of different photographs would need to be consulted in order to represent the same variation. Botanical and zoological illustrations use metonymy as if to caricature the features which allow us to disambiguate between species and genera. In Chapter 1 of this thesis, I make a comparison between Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection and my own thesis on the basis that both are single idea theses with wide-ranging implications. Here I return to Darwin's theory for another reason, to suggest that the theory is an example par excellence of a metonymic theory, as it looks at how relatedness between organisms can lead over time to dramatic change, how incremental differences (relatedness) can result in the mutability of species. The theory of evolution is perhaps the most striking example of a metonymic approach changing our understanding of the world and a single metonymic theory explaining a vast volume and array of data.

In law, the use of precedents in coming to judgements is suggestive of metonymy, judges, barristers and lawyers being involved in the comparison of the particular case they are working on with previous similar cases. Some lawyers will claim they merely interpret existing law rather than create new laws, that they give *ex post facto* rationalizations based on precedent; but their judgements are in effect prescribing new laws. The notion of 'beyond reasonable doubt' also suggests metonymic work is required of those passing judgement, an assessment of where the case in hand lies on a scale between a situation for which there is and is not conclusive evidence. In the philosophy of Law, Kelsen's concept of *grundnormen*, fundamental hypothetical rules of law to which all laws can be reduced (Kelsen 1970), is also suggestive of a metonymic approach, whereby a metonymic relationship is sought between an existing law and a prototypical *grundnorm*.

It would be fitting at this point in the thesis to ask where the limits to Metonymics can be drawn. If metonymy is so common and seems to have an application in so many contexts, in which contexts would Metonymics not be useful or appropriate? My answer to this is that it is best to see Metonymics as a research tool rather than a body of

knowledge. This is a position which metaphor scholars have increasingly taken with regard to metaphor: Cameron, for example, who talks of “metaphor as a research tool” (Cameron 2010:7). Thus, there is no reason why there should be any limits to where Metonymics is applied, as it would soon become apparent when a metonymic approach cannot deliver.

We might also ask here, why, given the importance of metonymy, has a discipline such as Metonymics not already been established? I suggest that it is because metonymy, in many of its manifestations, operates ‘behind the scenes’, that it is part of the mechanics of how communication is enabled and how the fine-tuning of interaction facilitated; but because of that it has not been the obvious place to start and it has taken some time to uncover its role and its significance. It could perhaps be compared to the idea of dedicating decades of research to molecules, only to realize that molecules are made up of atoms, and that that is where the key lies. A parallel example is the late emergence of interest in restricted collocations. According to Howarth, collocation escaped the notice of linguists for so long as a consequence of our tendency to concentrate on the extreme ends rather than the ‘middle ground’:

Linguists and teachers have traditionally concentrated their attention on the extreme ends of the spectrum: free combinations and idioms. [...] The large and complex middle ground of restricted collocations (not generally recognized as a pedagogically significant category) is often regarded as an unrelated residue of arbitrary co-occurrences and familiar phrases. (Howarth 1998:42)

If we apply this image of a spectrum to the present topic, metonymy represents the middle ground and literal language (eg when analysed through generative phonology, generative semantics and generative syntax) and metaphor the extreme ends.

This thesis has touched on issues around the nature of knowledge. In the literature reviews of Metaphor Studies (Section 3.2) and Translation Studies (Section 8.1), I make the point that theories in these fields are better considered complementary than competing, that each scholar contributes a valid but partial truth to the subject, giving, as Block describes for another context, a ‘polytheism’ of ‘multiple theories’ (Block 1999:145). The issue of compatibility recently came to the fore in metaphor studies when, in order to disabuse others of the perception that their theories were rival theories,

Lakoff and Fauconnier published a short manifesto making clear that they were not in disagreement and that their work was “entirely compatible” (Fauconnier & Lakoff 2010:3). I revisit the idea of the compatibility of theories here at the end of this thesis in order to make a further claim for the scope of metonymic theory, namely, that knowledge creation itself in certain contexts is best understood in terms of metonymy. The words used in the discussion above, such as ‘complementary’ and ‘partial truth’, the idea that different theories represent different aspects of a phenomenon and that they contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon ‘as a whole’, are describing knowledge in metonymic terms. What I am outlining here is a metonymic theory of knowledge and it is this theory of knowledge which informs the method of this thesis. I have suggested that *On the Origin of Species* has a parallel to my own research with regard to the nature of the data used. Darwin’s data are circumstantial, varied and of various quality in terms of rigour and precision of collection and analysis. This was necessary because of the nature of the thesis being presented. The data I have used in my thesis are also various, the research questions I have chosen to investigate requiring a flexible approach to data and an opportunistic approach to their use; so, even the method of their investigation has been metonymic.

## Appendix A: List of Sources of Primary Data

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|--|----------|
| Translations for <i>floating rib</i> , <i>rib cage</i> , <i>answering machine</i> and <i>mobile phone</i> , MA applied linguistics students at a London university, collected 2008         | p95-102  |
| Family expressions, informants P, Q, T, U and W, collected 2007  | p142-145 |
| Monologues on 'New York street map' and 'social changes over the last ten years', recordings of informants, Katherine, Britta, Joseph, Anja and Zoë, collected 2006                        | p195-200 |
| Speech slips, various sources, collected 2008  | p210-213 |
| First draft and final version translations of <i>Le Figaro</i> text (20 July 2002, p6) and translator's comments, Alexander, MA translation student at a London university, collected 2009 | p242-244 |
| First draft and final version translations of 'Malmayr' text, Estelle, freelance translator, collected 2010  | p244-247 |
| Telephone interview with Estelle, 20 February 2010   | p246     |
| Telephone interview with Estelle, 21 February 2010   | p246-247 |
| Extracts of first draft and final version translations of 'Nerca' text, Estelle freelance translator, collected 2010   | p248-249 |
| Telephone interview with Estelle, 28 February 2010   | p249     |

## Appendix B: List of References to Primary Data from Publications and Broadcasts

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| <i>Seeing: The Bates Method</i> . <a href="http://www.seeing.org">http://www.seeing.org</a> <accessed Jan 2008>                             | p66      |
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| 'Style Extra', <i>London Metro</i> , 3 June 2010, p53.  | p125     |
| 'Seven', <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> , 27 June 2010, p8.   | p125     |
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| 'QI', <i>BBC2 TV</i> , Series 4, Episode 10, 24 November 2006   | p127     |
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| 'Only Connect', <i>BBC4 TV</i> – various episodes broadcast in 2010.  | p131     |
| 'You and Yours', <i>BBC Radio 4</i> , March 2010, nd.   | p132-133 |
| 'A Scene in Sherwood Forest', sketch, Morecombe and Wise, <i>The Sunday Telegraph</i> , 2 May 2010, p19.                                    | p133     |
| 'Men! Are you worried about your physique?', sketch, Morecombe and  |          |

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