Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

49

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac

METONYMY BASED ON CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND PRAGMATIC INFERENCING: EVIDENCE FROM SPOKEN DISCOURSE

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The characterization of metonymy as a conceptual tool for guiding inferencing in language has opened a new field of study in cognitive linguistics and pragmatics. To appreciate the value of metonymy for pragmatic inferencing, metonymy should not be viewed as performing only its prototypical referential function. Metonymic mappings are operative in speech acts at the level of reference, predication, proposition and illocution.

The aim of this paper is to study the role of metonymy in pragmatic inferencing in spoken discourse in televison interviews. Case analyses of authentic utterances classified as illocutionary metonymies following the pragmatic typology of metonymic functions are presented.

The inferencing processes are facilitated by metonymic connections existing between domains or subdomains in the same functional domain. It has been widely accepted by cognitive linguists that universal human knowledge and embodiment are essential for the interpretation of metonymy. This analysis points to the role of cultural background knowledge in understanding target meanings. All these aspects of metonymic connections are exploited in complex inferential processes in spoken discourse. In most cases, metaphoric mappings are also a part of utterance interpretation.

Key words: *cognitive linguistics; pragmatics; metonymy; discourse analysis; inferencing; cultural knowledge.*

1. Introduction

Metonymy has been explored in both the field of cognitive linguistics and in pragmatics. A common object of inquiry of both fields is to interpret human understanding and reasoning and how it is reflected in language. Pragmaticists are mostly concerned

50

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

with the ability of drawing inferences. In cognitive linguistics, metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon that plays a role in pragmatic inferencing.

Panther and Thornburg (1998, 2003) call metonymies 'natural inference schemas' i.e. easily activatable associations among concepts that can be used for inferential purposes.

Barcelona (2004) claims that two or more conceptual metonymies contribute to the meaning structure coded in a given utterance or a piece of discourse. Moreover, all the relevant metonymies are based on the knowledge implied in metonymic connections which is shared between conversational interactants.

This paper presents a study of metonymy as a conceptual tool for guiding inferencing in the interpretation of spoken discourse. The standard approach to the cognitive linguistic theory of metonymy emphasizes the conceptual and cognitive nature of metonymy where universal human knowledge and embodiment are essential for the interpretation of metonymy. This analysis points to the role of cultural background knowledge which may have a prototypical value in understanding target meanings.

The interpretation of the cases is based on the definition of metonymy as a mapping of knowledge from a source domain onto a target domain. Source and target domains are in the same functional domain and they are linked by a pragmatic function (Barcelona, 2002). The source of metonymy highlights the target meaning that becomes salient in a given communicative situation. We agree with Panther and Thornburg (2003) that source meanings remain active to some degree.

In the first part of the paper we give a brief survey of the literature on metonymy in cognitive linguistics and studies concerning the role of metonymy in pragmatic inferencing. The second part presents the analysis of 7 pieces of television discourse. We claim that 5 short dialogues cannot be fully interpreted without metonymies based on cultural background knowledge.

We hope that our contribution will provide evidence that metonymy is not only a cognitive process based on universal and embodied human conceptions, but the one that involves the knowledge about the cultural and social environment as well.

2. Metonymy

Metonymy has been known as a figure of speech since the times of the ancient Greeks. It was mostly studied in the context of literature and rhetoric, and included a substitution of words (Nerlich, Clarke and Todd, 1999; Koch, 1999). The term metonymy originated from ancient Greek philosophy, more precisely from Plato's Cratylus (Nerlich, Clarke and Todd, 1999, p.361). Aristotle in his Poetics distinguished four classes of 'metaphors'. One class among them was later termed 'metonymy', and another 'synecdoche' (Nerlich, Clarke and Todd, 1999, p. 362). Thus, Aristotle included the

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

51

phenomenon that we today refer to as metonymy under the name of metaphor. Koch (1999) gives a historical survey of the semantic basis of metonymy and claims that metonymy traditionally belongs to classical rhetorics. The earliest definition of metonymy (Lat. denominatio) as a rhetorical trope can be found in the Rhetorica ad Herennium (Her. IV: 32,43 = Anonymous, 1894, [1954 in ref list] p. 337). Koch's translation of the definition is as follows: "Denominatio [i.e. 'metonymy'] is a trope that takes its expression from near and close things and by which we can comprehend a thing that is not denominated by its proper word." (Koch, 1999, p. 141).

For a long period of time many scholars defined metonymy in terms of contiguity or associations between two words. Among the 20th century linguists we shall mention Roudet (1921) and Ullmann (1962) and their approach to metonymy. According to Roudet, metonymy is based on contiguity between ideas, or 'conceptual' contiguity, in Koch's more up-to-date terms (1999, p. 144). Ullmann's theory of semantic change is based on associations between old and new meaning (1962, p. 211). This view suggests that every word is surrounded by a network of associations which connect them with other words. Semantic changes can be based on associations between senses and those between names. Semantic changes based on an association between senses include two kinds of associations: similarity and contiguity. They result in two types of semantic change: metaphor (similarity of senses) and metonymy (contiguity of senses). The following comparison of metaphor and metonymy had a strong influence on scholars in the forthcoming decades: "Metonymy is instrinsically less interesting than metaphor since it does not discover new relations but arises between words already related to each other" (Ullmann, 1962, p. 218). Furthermore, Ullmann classified metonymies according to the associations they were based on: spatial relations, temporal relations, PART-WHOLE relations, which were traditionally defined as synecdoche, inventions named after the inventors, etc. This theory of associative fields gave a better insight into the processes which could be followed but did not entirely explain them. As a result, metonymy became one of the topics of semantics.

However, it was only after new research and interdisciplinary approach to language had revealed the cognitive basis of language that metonymy found its place among other cognitive processes. The study of metonymy within cognitive linguistics has shown that metonymy is much more than a relationship between words. Metonymy is considered to be a cognitive process that plays an important role in human thoughts and language (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1999). One of the revolutionary principles of cognitive linguistics is the view that word meaning includes all our knowledge, not only linguistic, but at the same time, world knowledge. It is termed 'encyclopedic knowledge' and arises from all our mental and physical experiences (Žic Fuchs, 1991). Therefore, it is possible for cognitive linguistics to argue that communication is based on the same conceptual system that is used for thinking and reasoning. Since it is very difficult to trace processes involved in thinking and reasoning, one way of identifying them is through the study of their linguistic realizations. This

52

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

view makes language one of the best means by which important evidence of how the conceptual system functions can be provided (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Since metonymy is one of the cognitive processes that we use regularly, its study should yield some interesting insights.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) were among the first cognitive linguists concerned with metaphor and metonymy. They define metonymy as the use of one entity to stand for another which is related to it. In their view, metonymy has a primarily referential function, but it also contributes to understanding. Metonymies are not arbitrary phenomena, they are systematic and can be seen as metonymic concepts such as: PART FOR WHOLE, PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED, PLACE FOR INSTITUTION, etc.

The following sentences are linguistic realizations of the above-mentioned metonymic concepts:

We don't hire longhairs.
He bought a Ford.
Nixon bombed Hanoi.
Wall Street is in panic. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 38-39).

People have no difficulties understanding these expressions because metonymic conceptual patterns structure not only our language but also our thoughts and actions. Our knowledge and experience, both physical and mental, form the basis for understanding metonymic expressions. It is obvious that metonymy focuses on the aspect that is most important in the given situation. Thus, this aspect becomes a salient part of a person or context.

Moreover, Lakoff (1987) shows that metonymic models are cognitive models present in the way we categorize. Experiments in cognitive psychology have shown that people find some members of categories to be better examples of these categories than other members. These representative members are called prototypes and they are often used metonymically to stand for the whole category. For example, a housewife-mother is considered a better example of the category 'mother' than a working mother. Thus, a housewife-mother is used as the stereotype which usually stands for the whole category 'mother'.

Radden and Kövecses (1999) adopt the view that metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model. In fact they adapt Langacker's (1993) notion of 'reference point' to the notion of metonymy. That is, they regard metonymy as a reference point phenomenon. Their great contributions to the theory of metonymy are an extensive typology of conceptual metonymies and their identification of the cognitive and communicative principles guiding the choice of the metonymic sources for certain metonymic targets.

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

53

In literature on cognitive linguistics there are several other definitions and typologies of metonymies, and all are well justified and examplified. One of the first definitions of metonymy is known from the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Additionally, Langacker (1999) explains metonymy as a reference point phenomenon. The chapter where Langacker presents metonymy as a reference point phenomenon is an update of his 1993 paper in *Cognitive Linguistics* on reference point phenomena. Nerlich, Clarke and Todd (1999) find Norrick's typology (1981) the most complete and coherent, whereas Blank (1999) and Seto (1999), respectively, offer their own classification. Fauconnier (1994 [1985]) introduces an understanding of metonymy based on the notion of *mental spaces.*

Traditional cognitive accounts of metonymy are based on the two-domain approach to metaphor and metonymy. Since we chose the two-domain approach to metonymy as the theoretical frame for our case analyses we will present the main elements of the theory.

Perhaps the best interpretation of the role of domains in metaphors and metonymies is found in Croft's paper (2003), which was originally published in 1993. Croft develops his theory on the basis of Langacker's (1987, ch. 4.1) definitions of the concept and domain.

Langacker describes the concept as a semantic structure symbolised by a word (Croft, 2003, p. 165). Each concept (or semantic structure) can be divided into a profile and a base. For example, a concept [ARC] has as its profile a 'curved line segment' and for its base 'a circle'. The concept [CIRCLE] on its own turn has a base 'shape', and [SHAPE] is profiled on the base of 'space'. So, the base of a concept is the knowledge which is presupposed in the conceptualization of the profile. The base is also called the domain.

The notion of domain is based on Langacker's concept of domain as

"... any sort of conceptualization: a perceptual experience, a concept, a conceptual concept, an elaborate knowledge system, etc" (Langacker, 1991, p. 3).

Langacker describes the domain as follows:

"All linguistic units are context-dependent to some degree. A context for the characterization of a semantic unit is referred to as a domain. Domains are necessarily cognitive entities: mental experiences, representational spaces, concepts, or conceptual complexes" (1987, p. 147).

Thus, a domain is "a semantic structure that functions as the base for at least one concept profile" (typically, many profiles) (Croft, 2003, p. 166). This means that a concept can function either as a profile or as a base for another concept profile, whereas domains are structural units of our encyclopedic knowledge. Taylor (1989, p. 84) claims that a domain can be any conceptualization or knowledge configuration that is used for characterization of meanings. Some domains, for example space, time and things, are called basic domains because they do not require any other domain for their

54

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

characterization. All other domains are referred to as abstract domains since they presuppose another basic or non-basic domain. Most concepts involve several different domains. For example, the definition of a human being comprises the domains of physical objects, living beings, volitional agents, emotions and others. All domains presupposed by a concept constitute the domain matrix (Langacker, 1987, p. 152). Metonymic mapping results in a domain shift within a domain matrix. Thus, metonymy makes primary the domain that is secondary in the literal meaning (Croft, 2003, p. 179). This conceptual effect is called domain highlighting (Cruse, 1986, p. 53). We shall illustrate these processes using Croft's example (2003, p. 178):

  a. Proust spent most of his time in bed.

  b. Proust is tough to read.

Sentence a. is literal, and sentence b. is metonymic. However, in the encyclopedic view of semantics, Proust as a person and the works of Proust are both included in the domain matrix of the concept [PROUST]. But Proust was primarily a person and that knowledge is primary in the literal meaning. Proust's work, i.e. the domain of creativity is secondary to the domain of Proust as a human being. Therefore, the metonymic shift involves a shift of domains within the domain matrix for the concept [PROUST]. This shift leads to the highlighting of the domain that is secondary in the literal meaning. Thus, Proust's work becomes a salient element in the given situation.

The key issue at this point are the boundaries of domains because they are crucial for the distinction between domains. The main principle that many cognitive linguists support is that metaphoric mapping occurs between two domains, whereas metonymic mapping occurs within one conceptual domain (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p. 103; Lakoff, 1987) or within one domain matrix (Langacker, 1987). Barcelona (2002, p. 246) proposes the function of a domain as a criterion for distinguishing between conceptual domains, stressing that in metonymic mapping the source and target domains are in the same functional domain. The author gives a broad definition of metonymy which he calls the *schematic* definition because it contains the necessary and sufficient conditions for metonymicity:

  "Metonymy is a mapping of a conceptual domain, the source, onto another domain, the target. Source and target are in the same functional domain and are linked by a pragmatic function, so that the target is mentally activated" (Barcelona, 2002, p. 246).

Barcelona (2003, pp.83-84) uses the term *mapping* as a projection of knowledge in the sense that the source domain is connected to the target domain by imposing a perspective on it. In other words, the source is not a substitution for the target but it merely *activates* the target domain from a given perspective.

When applied to inferencing, this means that both domains contribute to the full contextual meaning of an utterance. We hope to demonstrate that inference patterns in

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

55

spoken discourse are based on conceptual metonymies operating within cognitive domains.

3. The functions of metonymy

Some cognitive linguists view metonymy as having primarily a referential function (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), i.e. denoting a relation of substitution where one entity stands for another or provides mental access to another entity (Radden and Kövecses, 1999), but it has been shown that metonymy is ubiquitous in our cognition and functions at all linguistic levels.

Croft's (2003, p. 179) interpretation of metonymic mapping refers to metonymy as a lexical phenomenon, but metonymy also occurs in grammatical constructions (e.g. Goossens, 1999; Waltereit, 1999; Brdar, 2000, 2007; Panther and Thornburg, 1998, 2000, 2003; Brdar et al., 2001; Barcelona, 2004a) and in discourse and inferencing (Barcelona 2002, 2003, 2004; Panther and Thornburg 2003a and papers therein).

An adequate and systematic typology of metonymic functions is proposed by Panther and Thornburg (1998, 1999, p. 335) as the pragmatic typology of metonymic functions:

"a. propositional metonymies:

(1) referential and

(2) predicational;

b. illocutionary metonymies."

Illocutionary metonymies are non-referential metonymies

"wherein one illocutionary act stands for another illocutionary act, as, e.g. in the statement or assertion

a. I don't know where the bath soap is

which may metonymically stand for the question or inquiry

b. Where is the bath soap?" (Panther and Thornburg, 1999, p. 335).

Utterance a. is an assertion about what the speaker does not know, but indirectly it is used as a question, i.e. an indirect speech act. Searle (1975) claims that two illocutionary acts, primary and secondary, are performed in an indirect speech act. Panther and Thornburg (1999, p. 335) develop his hypothesis further and find a correspondence with the phenomenon of metonymy. The authors explain that both metonymic vehicle or source (the secondary illocutionary act) and the target (the primary illocutionary act) are conceptually present in the speaker's mind. Thus, they give an explanation of indirect speech acts as involving metonymies.

56

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

4. Metonymy and pragmatic inferencing

Nerlich and Clarke (2002, p. 560-561) stress the importance of understanding word meaning as having fuzzy boundaries and being context-sensitive. They incorporate this view in their formulation of sentence meaning:

> "The view that sentence meaning is the sum of the meanings of the words used in the sentence must be replaced by a view of sentence meaning as being the result of integrational and inferential processes feeding on clues other than those contained in the meaning of each word in isolation, that is, clues arising from the co-text of the sentence and the wider context of the situation of discourse" (Nerlich and Clarke, 2002, p. 560).

It should be added here that the context of the situation contains knowledge that is shared between the speakers and listeners. Gibbs (1998, p. 261-262) calls it *common ground information*, whereas Žic Fuchs uses the term *knowledge of the world* (Žic Fuchs, 1991).

Panther and Thornburg (1998) explore the inferential processes and the role of metonymy in drawing inferences. They assume the inferential approach to utterance meaning is a necessary component of a theory of utterance meaning. However, this theoretical approach does not satisfactorily account for the fact that conversational participants usually draw the inferences necessary to arrive at intended interpretations without any noticeable effort. Furthermore, it does not systematically specify the kinds of inference patterns that are needed for utterance interpretation. Panther and Thornburg show that a cognitive approach incorporating the notion of action scenario structure can be applied to the analysis of conversation. A scenario consists of parts (the BEFORE, the CORE, the RESULT, the AFTER part) that can be metonymically linked to each other and to the whole of the scenario. Conceptual relationships such as *part-whole, cause-effect* facilitate the inferential work of conversational interactants. These general relationships within scenario structure thus constitute *natural inference schemata*, i.e. easily activatable associations among concepts that can be used for inferential purposes. Thus, they propose the scenario approach to metonymy in speech acts.

Ruiz de Mendoza and Hernández (2003) link work on conceptual metonymy in cognitive linguistics to Gricean pragmatics and relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). In relevance theory metaphoric and metonymic meanings are not regarded as being part of what is said or explicated, but as being derived via implicature. Ruiz de Mendoza and Hernández propose that the principle of relevance must be supplemented by metaphoric and metonymic mappings, i.e. cognitive operations used for drawing inferences that are part of semantic and conceptual knowledge of speakers and hearers. These cognitive operations are accomplished by means of conceptual mappings of knowledge from a source domain into a target domain and are crucial for the concept formation and concept understanding.

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

57

Barcelona (2003) presents a sample of jokes and anecdotes and suggests that in many cases the inferential work is facilitated by pre-existing metonymic connections in a cognitive domain or by pre-existing metaphorical connections across domains.

Barcelona (2004) presents a case study of selected texts which confirms his hypothesis that two or more conceptual metonymies, often chained to each other, are shown to be active at least in two (normally in more) dimensions of analysis of the same utterance. It is to be expected that metonymy will be operative at several analytical levels (from morpheme to sentence to utterance or text) of a given usage event. For example, in a dialogue

"How much gas did you buy?"

"I just filled (h)er up."

several chained metonymies are responsible for various aspects of the full value of the second utterance which can be paraphrased as

"I bought the quantity of gas that fits into a tank."

The inference of the reply is guided by conceptual metonymies RESULT (filling up the deposit) FOR PRECONDITION (buying a certain amount of gas), VERTICALITY (level of height reached in filling) FOR QUANTITY (amount of gas), WHOLE (car) FOR PART (gas tank).

We believe that all the relevant metonymies in a piece of discourse operate simultaneously and unconsciously for the activation of the full intended interpretation. Therefore, a *metonymic set* may be a more appropriate term than metonymic chain for this situation. Given the complexity of involved aspects of meaning, a metonymic set has a prototypical structure where one or more metonymies are crucial for the pragmatic inference, and other metonymies contribute to the relevance of the utterance. The arrangement of the components in a metonymic set reflects their conceptual distance from the core component. The inference of the reply is derived from the first metonymy which is essential for understanding. Thus, metonymy that activates the target meaning may have a prototypical value but other metonymies also assist in the interpretation of the utterance. Given the complexity of involved aspects of meaning, the source domain remains present in the background of the target meaning due to the knowledge on which metonymic connections are based.

5. Metonymy in television interviews

The case study includes 7 examples of metonymy in television interviews broadcast on CNN television on talk shows. For this purpose, interviews retrievable as transcripts from the Internet were used. The complexity of background information, i.e. common knowledge, implied by the participants in the interviews was noticeable. In analyzing background knowledge shared between the speakers and listeners, the distinction was

58

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

made between universal human knowledge and culture-specific knowledge that served as the motivation for creating metonymic inferences. We noticed the importance of culture-specific knowledge for understanding metonymies in spoken discourse and establishing successful communication.

Our analytical method includes several theoretical elements:

- We assume that discourse meaning is represented in terms of domains as viewed by Langacker (1987) and Croft (2003).

- Data analysis was performed on the basis of the schematic definitions of metonymy and metaphor proposed by Barcelona (2002).

- The interpretative domains used are known from the cognitive linguistic literature, while subdomains mostly arise from the interpretation of the discourse.

- The structure of the analysis is largely based on the interpretations in Barcelona (2003).

- In their model of metaphor, Zinken, Hellsten and Nerlich (2003) mention the interaction between universal, bodily-grounded knowledge and culture-specific knowledge in discourse. We believe that this particular interaction is also crucial for understanding metonymy in spoken discourse. Since the role of universal knowledge and bodily-grounded knowledge has already been widely acknowledged, the basic aim of this contribution is to focus the analysis on the part culture-specific knowledge plays in inferences based on metonymic processes in spoken interaction.

5.1 Metonymies based on universal background knowledge

The first case is a short dialogue between Larry King and Mr Mandela. Larry King is an American television and radio host recognized in the United States as one of the premier broadcast interviewers. Since 1985, he has been hosting the nightly TV program *Larry King Live* on CNN where he has conducted interviews with politicians, athletes, entertainers and other newsmakers (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larry_king).

One of his guests was Nelson Mandela, a former President of South Africa who held office from 1994–99. Before his presidency, Mandela was an anti-apartheid activist and served 27 years in prison. Mandela is currently a celebrated statesman who continues to voice his opinion on topical issues. He has received more than 250 awards over four decades, most notably the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela).

The interpretation of the dialogue requires inferencing which is guided by metonymy based on universal background knowledge. That is, our knowledge and experience, both physical and mental in nature, form the basis for understanding metonymic expressions. People have no difficulties understanding them because

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

59

metonymic conceptual patterns structure not only our language but also our thoughts and actions.

(1) KING: When you look back, *we only have a minute or so left*.

MANDELA: *Yes, go ahead.*

(Interview with Nelson Mandela [on-line]. Available from:
http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0005/16/lkl.00.html)

Inference meant and conveyed by Larry King:

1. This is a question about memories, but a short answer is expected due to limited time left for the interview.

Inference meant and conveyed by Mr Mandela:

2. I understand the situation and I will conform myself to it.

Larry King, the host of the show, is indirectly limiting time when asking his guest to be brief, which is confirmed by Mr Mandela's response. The first part of the utterance *When you look back ...* is the beginning of an implicit question referring to some events in the past, and Mr King knows that recalling memories can take some time. So, he continues by politely mentioning the time left for the interview. By mentioning scarcity of time, Mr King signals that he wants a short answer and Mr Mandela shows that he understands what is expected of him. Therefore, his immediate answer is *Yes, go ahead*.

Inference 1 arises in the ACTION domain. It is based on the universal human knowledge that actions need time to develop. The mention of a limited time period maps metonymically onto a polite request for brevity and then both map onto the expectation of a short answer.

Actions are formed of preconditons, results and the after part. Actions and time are closely related in our conceptual structures since actions are performed in time. So, a precondition for an action to take place is the availability of time, or in some situations, the amount of time determines the duration of action. Domain mapping occurs between a conceptual domain of TIME as a source domain and a target domain of a PERFORMED ACTION in the common functional domain of ACTION as a PART FOR WHOLE relationship.

Barcelona (2004) claims that two or more conceptual metonymies contribute to the meaning structure coded in a given utterance or a piece of discourse. We think that they form a metonymic set because all relevant metonymies are based on the knowledge implied in metonymic connections and shared between conversational interactants. A metonymic set in dialogue (1) involves at least three conceptual metonymies. The first conceptual metonymy is PRECONDITION (TIME AVAILABLE) FOR ACTION TO BE PERFORMED WITHIN THAT TIME SPAN. The motivation for this metonymy is linked to the common knowledge that in a limited period of time only a limited amount of

60

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

activity can be accomplished. The second metonymy is A LIMITED TIME PERIOD FOR A POLITE REQUEST FOR BREVITY which operates in the LINGUISTIC domain as a PART FOR PART relationship. Larry King is aware that his guest will interpret correctly his mentioning of time as a polite request. In pragmatic terms this is an indirect speech act A POLITE REQUEST FOR A COMPLETE DIRECT QUESTION. Mr King's utterance can be paraphrased as *Can you give a short answer because we have only a little time left?* This is confirmed by Mr Mandela's reply because he gives an explicit affirmative answer to the complete direct question *Yes, go ahead.* Another metonymy active in Mr King's utterance is A UNIT OF TIME (A MINUTE) FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME (SHORTAGE OF TIME). This metonymy is triggered by the words *a minute or so.* The choice of the source domain is governed by the principle BASIC OVER NON-BASIC according to Radden and Kövecses (1999, p. 49).

Inference 2 meant by Mr Mandela is motivated by metonymy PRECONDITION (UNDERSTANDING THE REQUEST) FOR RESULT (UNDERSTANDING THE TASK) in the domain of COGNITIVE ABILITIES. This metonymy acts as a precondition for performing the action properly. In the ACTION domain a further mapping takes place: A PRECONDITION (UNDERSTANDING THE TASK) FOR PERFORMING THE ACTION (GIVING A SHORT ANSWER). In this situation we can say that the COGNITIVE ABILITIES domain is an integral part of the ACTION domain at the functional level. Thus, the mappings occur within the same functional domain (ACTION domain) in this contextual situation.

So, the TIME domain, ACTION domain, COGNITIVE ABILITIES domain and LINGUISTIC domain are active in inferencing in this short piece of dialogue. The list of metonymies in this example is probably not final, but we suppose that the mappings within the mentioned domains (and other possible ones) do not occur successively, forming a chain, but they are active all at the same time in the conceptual world. Another domain included here is TELEVISION INTERVIEW FORM, which represents the contextual setting of the dialogue and imposes its rules concerning the roles of the host and the guest, the topic, duration of the program, turn taking, politeness and possibly some other. These elements make up culture specific knowledge which is present in the background of all examples of short dialogues in this paper. So, it can be a moot point whether it is possible to make a strict distinction between universal and culture-specific metonymies since cultural information is present in all dialogues. Our aim is not to deny the combination, but to analyse different metonymic motivations in the same context.

The following is another example from the same interview that includes metonymy motivated by the universal human knowledge that our cognitive abilities may be influenced by different aspects of information to be processed.

(2) KING: *You have how many children?*

   MANDELA: *Well, I can't remember now.* (LAUGHTER)

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

61

(Interview with Nelson Mandela [on-line]. Available from:

http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0005/16/lkl.00.html)

Inferences meant by Mr Mandela:

1. Mr Mandela has unusually many children.
2. He does not want to mention the exact number of his children in public.

A part of the universal human knowledge is the notion that people have a limited number of children and that they take care of them. So, we suppose that Mr Mandela knows the number of his children, but by saying that he cannot remember how many, he implies that he has a lot of them. His answer can also serve as a polite refusal to mention the exact number.

Conceptual metonymy underlying Mandela's answer is INABILITY TO REMEMBER (SALIENT PROPERTY) FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF OBJECTS (QUANTITIVE CATEGORY). But, the full interpretation of the utterance includes the interaction of metonymy and metaphor. Mandela's answer would be interpreted as a metonymy INABILITY TO REMEMBER FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF OBJECTS if the situation stated in the source domain of COGNITIVE INABILITY were real. But, it seems that INABILITY TO REMEMBER (MENTAL PROPERTY) metonymically maps onto another mental activity POLITE AVOIDANCE OF ANSWER (MENTAL PROPERTY), where both mental properties are parts of the COGNITIVE domain. This metonymy is motivated by the underlying metaphorical mapping between the COGNITIVE domain and the EMOTION domain. AVOIDANCE OF ANSWER (COGNITIVE domain) is triggered by the feeling of EMBARRASSMENT (EMOTION domain) arising due to a request to mention in public a relatively large number of children compared to stereotypical expectations. The EMOTION domain is activated and maps onto the COGNITIVE domain. The metaphorical mapping is indicated by laughter at the communicative level. The activation of the BEHAVIOUR domain by SPECIFIC BEHAVIOUR (LAUGHTER) is mapped onto the COGNITIVE domain (AVOIDANCE OF ANSWER).

5.2 Metonymies based on culture-specific background knowledge

The study of following 5 cases below illustrates the importance of culture-specific knowledge in understanding metonymies in spoken discourse. The viewers or readers of the interview who lack some aspects of the social and cultural background knowledge may not be able to draw correct inferences and may feel confused.

Example (3) is relatively easy to understand due to the notorious terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. On that morning, 19 al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners. The hijackers intentionally crashed two of the airliners into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, killing everyone on board and many others working in the buildings. Both buildings collapsed

within two hours, destroying nearby buildings and damaging others. The hijackers crashed a third airliner into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. The fourth plane crashed into a field near Shanksville in rural Pennsylvania, after some of its passengers and flight crew attempted to retake control of the plane, which the hijackers had redirected toward Washington, D.C. There were no survivors from any of the flights. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11).

    (3) KING: Why didn't we talk about terror, we need *9/11*. I mean, you have to

       have a *9/11* to create -- we're an after-the-fact society, aren't we?

       (Interview with Jon Stewart [on-line]. Available from:

        http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0412/08/lkl.01.html)

Inference meant by Mr King

    The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 deeply changed the American society.

This example may be explained by considering that the terrorist attack on the WTC on September 11, 2001 constitutes a subdomain of the more general domain of TERRORISM. The TERRORIST ATTACK ON SEPTEMBER 11 itself is an ACTION domain that includes several subdomains which form its BEFORE part, CENTRAL part and the AFTER part.

The abbreviation *9/11* is a referential metonymy that stands for the DATE (SEPTEMBER 11, 2001). We can say that it is a symbol of that day, because the year is not mentioned. However, a far more complex metonymic set is activated by the source domain of the DATE. The date is an element in the action domain of A TERRORIST ATTACK. The source domain of TIME, specified by a DATE, maps onto the target domain of ACTION (TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE WTC IN NEW YORK) that occurred on that day. The mapping is based on a PART-WHOLE relationship.

The first metonymy is ABBREVIATION (9/11) FOR A DATE (SEPT. 11, 2001) in the REDUCTION domain. But, the date is an element of the central part of a terrorist attack that belongs to the ACTION domain. So, the second metonymy is DATE (SEPT.11, 2001) FOR ACTION (TERRORIST ATTACK THAT OCCURRED ON THAT DAY), which is based on the metonymy PART OF THE ACTION FOR THE WHOLE ACTION in the superimposed domain of TERRORISM.

However, the destruction of the WTC itself as the central part of an action (terrorist attack) resulted in many other changes affecting all aspects of American lifestyle. Domains of DEATH, SHOCK, CRISIS, SENSE OF INSECURITY, THREAT and possibly some others are integral parts of the TERRORIST ATTACK domain. They form the after part (result) of the whole action. They are linked by a conceptual metonymy ACTION FOR ITS RESULT which is motivated by the relationship CAUSE (TERRORIST ATTACK) FOR EFFECT (THE CREATION OF A NEW SOCIETY). The *9/11* caused

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

63

changes in the American society and politics. It was a turning point that created an *after-the-fact society*.

So, metonymic mapping occurred from A PART OF THE ACTION (DATE) FOR THE WHOLE ACTION (TERRORIST ATTACK) onto ANOTHER PART OF THE ACTION (RESULT). This metonymic process does not tend to develop in time as a succession when one metonymy is a reference point for another metonymy in Langacker's sense or it provides a mental access to another metonymy (Radden and Kövecses, 1999), so that they form a metonymic chain. In the conceptual world such metonymic mappings are all active at the same time and contribute to the final interpretation. This means that the conceptual content of each (sub)domain related to another sub(domain) by a specific metonymic connection is present in the full meaning of an utterance. Therefore, the metonymies occurring in the SEPTEMBER 11 domain can be called a metonymic chain, but it may be more appropriate to regard them as forming a metonymic set.

The following short dialogue was part of the interview Larry King conducted with Anthony Quinn, a Mexican-American actor. Specific cultural knowledge about Los Angeles is necessary for the interpretation of example (4), particularly Mr King's question.

(4) ANTHONY Q: I lived the first 50 years of my life here, and I didn't find it here. *I grew up on the east side of Los Angeles.*

KING: *Very poor kid?*

(Interview with Anthony Quinn [on-line]. Available from:

http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0004/18/lkl.00.html)

Inference meant by Mr Quinn:

1. I am wealthy now, but I was poor as a child since I grew up in a poor area of L.A.

Inference meant and conveyed by Mr King

2. Stereotypically, east side of Los Angeles is an area inhabited by poor residents.

Mr King's question may seem inappropriate, even insulting, for those who do not know some cultural facts about Los Angeles. The east side of Los Angeles can have different meanings depending on the context and usage. Apart from denoting a geographical region, it is used as a cultural term referring to predominantly Latino communities lying east of the City of Los Angeles. The Westside is, in contrast, generally stereotyped as the 'white part' of the City of Los Angeles. 'Westside' can be also a shorthand term to describe the concentration of wealth in this area. Based on his

64

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

cultural knowledge about residents of different parts of Los Angeles, Mr King inferred that Mr Quinn must have been a poor kid. Both participants share that knowledge and communication is successful. If Mr King's question had been *Very rich kid?*, it might have caused a misunderstanding. This conclusion is in accordance with Barcelona's view (2003) that metonymies (and metaphors) also constrain the range of possible inferences to be drawn from the explicit proposition. The point has already been made by Ruiz de Mendoza (1997) and Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez Hernández (2003).

Inference 1 arises based on the metonymy PLACE FOR ITS SALIENT PROPERTY. This metonymy operates within the PLACE domain. One subdomain integrated in the PLACE domain is its geographical name (the east side of Los Angeles). Another subdomain is a social characteristic of the specific area. In example (4), this subdomain is POVERTY. So, Mr Quinn's inference is due to the mapping of the source, the GEOGRAPHICAL NAME domain onto the POVERTY domain which is its salient domain in this communicative situation.

Inference 2 meant and conveyed by Mr King by uttering the question *Very poor kid?* is the result of the same metonymy PLACE FOR ITS SALIENT PROPERTY because Mr Quinn's statement about growing up in the East L.A. operates as a source domain (EAST L.A.) and invokes the POVERTY domain in Mr King's mind. The utterance *Very poor kid?* in this context is understood as relevant because the POVERTY domain as culture specific knowledge in the EAST L.A. domain is present in the mind of both communicative interactants. This means that interview participants (and their audience) share common background knowledge activated by Mr Quinn's utterance.

In the following dialogue (example 5) Larry King talks to Jon Stewart about promoting his new book. Jon Stewart is an American comedian, satirist, actor, author and producer. Stewart started off as a stand-up comedian, then moved on to television, and hosted his own show on MTV. He also won eight Emmy Awards and is the co-author of the book *America* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jon_Stewart). J.D. Salinger (mentioned in the following extract) is an American writer best known for his novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, written in 1951 but also for his reclusive nature.

(5) KING: Are you now an author?

STEWART: Yes, and as such, I am now going to be reclusive. I'm not even here. This is just an animatronic remote situation. *I'm going to become the Salinger of basic cable.* Very difficult to find me.

(Interview with Jon Stewart [on-line]. Available from:

 http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0412/08/lkl.01.html)

Inferences meant by Mr Stewart:

 Salinger is a famous author known for his reclusive behaviour.

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

65

Mr Stewart has become an author and his behaviour will change accordingly, i.e. he will no longer appear on tv.

Mr Stewart is not primarily a writer, but he will adopt the behaviour of famous authors hoping to be regarded as completely belonging to this profession.

Salinger is an author who stands for a specific behaviour. It is stereotypically thought that the majority of writers are reclusive. Salinger is also known for his reclusive nature. He has not given an interview since 1974 and has not made a public appearance nor published any new work since 1965. Therefore, Salinger's behaviour is a typical example of a reclusive character. Jon Stewart became popular as a political satirist, actor, television host and writer. Basic cable is the network where Stewart hosts his show. These pieces of information form the cultural background knowledge required for making the inferences.

Inference 1 emerges from the metonymy AUTHOR (SALINGER) FOR CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR (RECLUSIVE BEHAVIOUR) based on the conceptual metonymy PEOPLE FOR CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR. This metonymy operates in the domain of WRITERS. Apart from the above mentioned metonymy, another metonymy is activated and it explains the use of SALINGER as a "paragon" of the category of writers that are extremely reclusive: SALIENT MEMBER (SALINGER) FOR CATEGORY (EXTREMELY RECLUSIVE WRITERS) (see Lakoff, 1987 on metonymic models; Barcelona, 2004a, Brdar, 2007 on paragon names).

Inference 2 is guided by a metaphorical mapping across two functional domains (Barcelona 2002). The domain of WRITERS is metaphorically mapped onto the domain of BASIC CABLE SHOWMEN. More specifically, a sub-domain CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR from the WRITERS domain projects onto the domain of BASIC CABLE SHOWMEN, conveying the idea that Stewart will not be available in that medium for a long time.

Inference 3 is *possibly* meant by Mr Stewart. In the WRITERS domain, a subdomain CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR may be metonymically linked to a subdomain of RECOGNITION /FAME (FAMOUS WRITERS), such as in Salinger's case. The subdomain of CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR in the domain of BASIC CABLE SHOWMEN, metaphorically enriched with the content from the WRITERS domain (RECLUSIVE BEHAVIOUR), further maps onto the subdomain of RECOGNITION/FAME in the WRITERS domain. But, the reclusive character is not stereotypically linked to showmen. It is not enough to adopt the behaviour of famous writers to become one of them. Such discrepancies result in irony. Jon Stewart is not primarily an author, but a showman and comedian. By comparing his behaviour with a famous author such as Salinger, Stewart self-ironically implies that his new role, as an author, will demand of him some behaviour modification.

The inferences in the above short dialogue are motivated by the interaction of metonymic and metaphorical mappings. Interactants in the interview and their listeners might also have drawn other, additional inferences.

66

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

In the following dialogue Conan O'Brien, an American talk show host and comedian, and Bob Costas, a sportscaster for NBC, make satirical comments on the size of movie-star heads. Costas uses a geographic name/location, *Mount Rushmore,* to refer metonymically to the characteristics of an American national memorial on Mount Rushmore. *Mount Rushmore* (in South Dakota, US) is a monumental granite sculpture of the heads of four US Presidents (Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Lincoln). An outstanding characteristic of the sculpture is the size of carved faces.

(6) COSTAS: Most movie stars and television stars have outsized heads.

O'BRIEN: Right. Most of them can't stand without some kind of support. It's true. These movie stars have giant heads, tiny little bodies. And I was blessed with a big head. As a child, I was mocked. But once I got into television, this thing -- people watching it right now, if you're at an airport, if you're in a prison, wherever you are, you know, this is scary. And on TV, it works. It just pops.

COSTAS: *The biggest stars*, *their heads could go on Mount Rushmore, actual size.*

O'BRIEN: That's true. Some of them huge, giant, massive bulbous heads.

(Interview with Conan O'Brien [on-line]. Available from:

http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0508/16/lkl.01.html)

Inferences meant and conveyed by Mr Costas:

1. The biggest stars have outsized heads compared to their bodies.
2. Having a big head is a feature of a TV celebrity.
3. A big head does not necessarily mean an important person.

The appearances of the carved faces on *Mount Rushmore* in the media and popular culture often include a replacement of one or more of the four presidents' faces with other people or characters. Moreover, because the mountain is an important historical landmark, it is often used as a base for various action movies and books. Mr Costas uses Mount Rushmore as a hyperbole for both physical size of the heads of the biggest stars compared to their bodies, and for their importance as celebrities.

Inference 1 arises on metonymy MOUNT RUSHMORE (PLACE) FOR A SCULPTURE (A PIECE OF ART CARVED THERE) FOR OUTSIZED HEADS (A SALIENT PROPERTY OF THE SCULPTURE). Conceptual metonymy underlying this interpretation is A PLACE FOR ITS SALIENT PROPERTY (SIZE), which is based on a WHOLE-FOR-PART relationship.

Inference 2 results from the interaction of metonymy and metaphor. Metonymical mapping takes place between MOUNT RUSHMORE (PLACE) FOR A SCULPTURE (A PIECE OF ART CARVED THERE) FOR THE OUTSIZED HEADS OF US PRESIDENTS (A SALIENT PROPERTY OF THE SCULPTURE). Conceptual metonymy activated is PLACE

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

67

FOR ITS SALIENT PROPERTY (REPRESENTED PERSONS). Metaphor results from the activation of the TELEVISION MEDIUM domain (TV STARS) which is mapped onto the domain of AMERICAN PRESIDENTS (CARVED HEADS OF FOUR US PRESIDENTS). Both domains include a subdomain of FAME/RECOGNITION. Discrepancy occurs in the FAME/RECOGNITION domain because TV stars cannot be considered as important as American presidents. Therefore, inference 3 is meant but not conveyed. Metaphorical interpretation is based on the conceptual metaphor IMPORTANT IS BIG.

Let us consider another example of metonymy that reveals a complex structure of background knowledge in the interpretation.

(7) KING: *Are you an optimist?*

STEWART: *Sorry? I'm a Jew*. What kind of question is that, are you an optimist? I always have my bags packed. Is that optimistic. I never know when they're going to knock on my door and go (SPEAKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE).

(Interview with Jon Stewart [on-line]. Available from:

http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0412/08/lkl.01.html)

Inferences meant and conveyed by Mr Stewart:

1. Mr Stewart's first reaction to a simple question about his optimism is a surprise (*Sorry?*).
2. Mr Stewart is a Jew, and Jews are (according to him) pessimists.
3. It seems inappropriate to ask Mr Stewart about his optimism since he is a Jew.

At first sight there is no relevant link between his optimism, or lack of optimism, and being a Jew. However, Stewart explains his attitude alluding to the dark pages of Jews' history, namely to the Holocaust and the genocide of Jews when the Nazis used to break into Jewish houses and transported the whole families to extermination camps. So, being a Jew for him means being pessimistic, which is a trait inherited from the sufferings of his nation.

Inference 1 is based on the metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS HEARING which is activated by the EMOTION domain (SURPRISE). Mr Stewart was surprised to hear Mr King's question and he couldn't understand the relevance of the question he heard.

Inference 2 occurs in the NATION domain. The source domain JEWS (NATIONALITY) is mapped onto the target domain PESSIMISM (A CHARACTERISTIC TRAIT). The conceptual metonymy active in this situation is NATIONALITY FOR ITS SALIENT PROPERTY. Atrocities experienced by the Jewish nation resulted in pessimism as a personality trait of the people. So, the events from the Jewish history that are part of the JEWS domain are metonymically linked to the subdomain of PESSIMISM by a CAUSE-FOR-EFFECT relationship.

68

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

6. Conclusion

Metonymy is a common cognitive process that reflects one of the many ways in which human beings categorize knowledge and communicate. Metonymic principles provide an explanatory tool for understanding inferences. In cases presented in this paper, metonymy motivates pragmatic inferencing in short pieces of spoken discourse.

Metonymic mapping from the source onto the target domain or subdomain involves an interaction between universal, bodily-grounded and culture-specific knowledge. Since the role of universal and bodily-grounded knowledge in metonymy (and metaphor) has already received due attention, this study concentrates on the cases that include metonymies based on specific cultural knowledge. The participants in the interviews share the same cultural knowledge and for this reason communication is successful. However, an interactant or an observer who does not possess the necessary background knowledge included in the metonymic mappings cannot draw appropriate inferences automatically and successfully and communication may become confusing. Therefore, we wanted to stress that cultural knowledge is as crucial for the metonymic processes in spoken discourse as universal and embodied knowledge and should be given equal importance.

In the metonymic mapping, the source domain activates the target domain, but the conceptual content of the source domain remains present and contributes to the full interpretation of an utterance. Metonymic processes in examples given in this paper usually include two or more metonymies occurring in the same domain. Thus, we believe that metonymic mappings occur simultaneously and automatically. They are not successive, but integrated in the conceptual world. The result is a combination of inferences leading to the full contextual meaning of the dialogue. Such situation can be called a metonymic chain, but it may be more appropriate to regard concurrent metonymies as forming a metonymic set.

This study focuses on metonymy, but the analysis of several pieces of spoken discourse reveals that an interaction of metonymy and metaphor is also operative in the processes of pragmatic inferencing. We can say that metonymy and metaphor-based inferencing plays an essential role in utterance interpretation, although some other mechanisms, which are not dealt with in this paper, are probably involved as well.

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69

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70

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Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and...*
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71

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72

Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac, *Metonymy based on cultural background knowledge and…*
FLUMINENSIA, god. 21 (2009) br. 2, str. 49-72

SAŽETAK
Arijana Krišković – Sandra Tominac
METONIMIJA TEMELJENA NA KULTUROLOŠKOM ZNANJU I PRAGMATIČKA INFERENCIJA U GOVORNOM DISKURSU

Poimanje metonimije kao konceptualnog alata za inferenciju u jeziku otvorilo je novo područje proučavanja u kognitivnoj lingvistici i pragmalingvistici. Kako bi se shvatila vrijednost metonimije pri pragmatičkoj inferenciji, funkciju metonimije treba sagledati šire od njene prototipne referencijalne funkcije. Metonimijska preslikavanja odvijaju se u govornim činovima na razini referencije, predikacije, rečenice i ilokucije.

Ovaj rad bavi se ulogom metonimije u pragmatičkoj inferenciji u govornom diskursu na primjerima uzetima iz televizijskih intervjua. Analizirani su autentični izričaji koji se klasificiraju kao ilokucijske metonimije prema pragmatičkoj tipologiji metonimijskih funkcija.

Metonimijske veze koje postoje između domena i poddomena u istoj funkcionalnoj domeni olakšavaju procese inferencije. U kognitivnoj lingvistici opće je prihvaćeno da su univerzalno ljudsko znanje i tjelesna iskustva bitna za interpretaciju metonimije. Ova analiza ukazuje na ulogu specifičnog kulturološkog znanja u razumijevanju ciljanih značenja. Svi navedeni aspekti metonimijskih veza iskorišteni su u složenim inferencijskim procesima u govornom diskursu. U mnogim slučajevima, metaforička preslikavanja također se javljaju kao dio interpretacije izričaja.

Ključne riječi: *kognitivna lingvistika; pragmalingvistika; metonimija; analiza diskursa; inferencija; kulturološko znanje.*