

“Metonymy Grammar: Word-formation” by Laura A. Janda, Universitetet i Tromsø

Main Idea: Role of metonymy in grammar

Metonymy as a motivating force for **word-formation**

Metonymy is **more** diverse in grammar than in lexicon

1. The Big Picture: Why study metonymy in grammar?

Russian example of grammatical metonymy

source	target	suffix	source class	target class	source ex	target ex
PART	WHOLE	(i)a/jan	noun	noun	<i>brjuxo</i> 'belly'	<i>brjuxan</i> 'person with a large belly'

Czech example of grammatical metonymy

source	target	suffix	source class	target class	source ex	target ex
CONTAINED	CONTAINER	áč-Ø	noun	noun	<i>květina</i> 'flower'	<i>květináč</i> 'flower-pot'

2. Relevant Previous Scholarship

Works on metonymy say little about word-formation

Works on word-formation say little about metonymy

3. Databases: Russian, Czech, Norwegian

Databases are inventories of **types**.

Type: unique combination of metonymy pattern, word class pattern, suffix

Language	#types	# metonymy patterns	# word class patterns	# suffixes
Russian	747	110	33	274
Czech	561	105	23	207
Norwegian	177	60	12	57

Table 1: Overall statistics for databases

metonymy pattern	illustrative example		language of example
	source	target	
ABSTRACTION FOR CHARACTERISTIC	<i>mysl'</i> 'thought'	<i>myslennyj</i> 'mental'	Russian
ACTION FOR ABSTRACTION	<i>myslit</i> 'think'	<i>myšlenka</i> 'idea'	Czech
ACTION FOR AGENT	<i>bake</i> 'bake'	<i>baker</i> 'baker'	Norwegian
ACTION FOR CHARACTERISTIC	<i>bereč</i> 'guard'	<i>berežnyj</i> 'careful'	Russian
ACTION FOR INSTRUMENT	<i>sušit</i> 'dry'	<i>sušička</i> 'dryer'	Czech
ACTION FOR PRODUCT	<i>stifte</i> 'establish'	<i>stiftelse</i> 'establishment'	Norwegian
CHARACTERISTIC FOR ABSTRACTION	<i>tixij</i> 'quiet'	<i>tišina</i> 'silence'	Russian
ENTITY FOR CHARACTERISTIC	<i>Kafka</i>	<i>kafkovský</i> 'Kafkaesque'	Czech
CHARACTERISTIC FOR ENTITY	<i>tøff</i> 'tough'	<i>tøffing</i> 'tough guy'	Norwegian
ACTION FOR EVENT	<i>zabastovat</i> 'go on strike'	<i>zabastovka</i> 'strike'	Russian

Table 2: Top ten metonymy patterns shared by all three languages

metonymy pattern		illustrative example	
source	target	source	target
Russian <i>-ina</i> : 15 metonymy patterns (9 sources, 7 targets)			
CHARACTERISTIC	ABSTRACTION	<i>tixij</i> 'quiet'	<i>tišina</i> 'silence'
CHARACTERISTIC	ENTITY	<i>ženskij</i> 'female'	<i>ženščina</i> 'woman'
ENTITY	ABSTRACTION	<i>Dostoevskij</i>	<i>dostoevščina</i> 'Dostoevskian style'
ACTION	PRODUCT	<i>carapat</i> 'scratch'	<i>carapina</i> 'scratch'
GROUP	ENTITY	<i>vinograd</i> 'grapes'	<i>vinogradina</i> 'grape'
GROUP	ABSTRACTION	<i>policejskij</i> 'police'	<i>policejščina</i> 'police repression'
ACTION	EVENT	<i>krestit</i> 'christen'	<i>krestiny</i> 'christening'
CHARACTERISTIC	MATERIAL	<i>pušnoj</i> 'fur-bearing'	<i>pušnina</i> 'furs (collect.)'
CHARACTERISTIC	LOCATION	<i>ravnyj</i> 'equal'	<i>ravnina</i> 'plain'
CHARACTERISTIC	ENTITY	<i>rogatyj</i> 'horned'	<i>rogatina</i> 'bear-spear'

CHARACTERISTIC	GROUP	<i>obščij</i> ‘common’	<i>obščina</i> ‘community’
MATERIAL	ENTITY	<i>led</i> ‘ice’	<i>l’dina</i> ‘ice-floe’
ENTITY	MATERIAL	<i>kon</i> ‘horse’	<i>konina</i> ‘horse-meat’
PART	LOCATION	<i>verx</i> ‘top’	<i>veršina</i> ‘summit’
PRODUCT	ENTITY	<i>maslo</i> ‘oil’	<i>maslina</i> ‘olive-tree’
Czech <i>-ník</i> : 16 metonymy patterns (12 sources, 6 targets)			
ABSTRACTION	ENTITY	<i>služba</i> ‘service’	<i>služebník</i> ‘servant’
ACTION	AGENT	<i>pracovat</i> ‘work’	<i>pracovník</i> ‘worker’
ACTION	INSTRUMENT	<i>narazit</i> ‘collide with’	<i>nárazník</i> ‘bumper’
ACTION	LOCATION	<i>chodit</i> ‘walk’	<i>chodník</i> ‘sidewalk’
CONTAINED	CONTAINER	<i>čaj</i> ‘tea’	<i>čajník</i> ‘teapot’
ENTITY	ENTITY	<i>střevíček</i> ‘lady’s shoe’	<i>střevíčník</i> ‘lady-slipper (a flower)’
GROUP	ENTITY	<i>družstvo</i> ‘collective’	<i>družstevník</i> ‘collective farmer’
INSTRUMENT	AGENT	<i>soustruh</i> ‘lathe’	<i>soustružník</i> ‘lathe-worker’
LOCATED	LOCATION	<i>ryba</i> ‘fish’	<i>rybník</i> ‘fishpond’
LOCATION	AGENT	<i>knihovna</i> ‘library’	<i>knihovník</i> ‘librarian’
LOCATION	LOCATED	<i>skála</i> ‘cliff’	<i>skalník</i> ‘cotoneaster (grows on cliffs)’
MATERIAL	AGENT	<i>zlatý</i> ‘gold’	<i>zlatník</i> ‘goldsmith’
MATERIAL	ENTITY	<i>pára</i> ‘steam’	<i>parník</i> ‘steamboat’
PATIENT	AGENT	<i>papír</i> ‘paper’	<i>papírník</i> ‘seller of paper goods’
PRODUCT	AGENT	<i>kouzlo</i> ‘magic’	<i>kouzelník</i> ‘magician’
QUANTITY	ENTITY	<i>pět</i> ‘five’	<i>pětník</i> ‘5 crown piece’
Norwegian <i>-ing</i> : 11 metonymy patterns (5 sources, 9 targets)			
ACTION	ABSTRACTION	<i>bake</i> ‘bake’	<i>baking</i> ‘baking’
ACTION	EVENT	<i>trene</i> ‘train’	<i>trening</i> ‘practice’
ACTION	GROUP	<i>regjere</i> ‘govern’	<i>regjering</i> ‘government’
ACTION	LOCATION	<i>fylle</i> ‘fill’	<i>fylling</i> ‘landfill’
ACTION	MATERIAL	<i>male</i> ‘paint’	<i>maling</i> ‘paint’
ACTION	PRODUCT	<i>tegne</i> ‘draw’	<i>tegning</i> ‘drawing’
CHARACTERISTIC	ENTITY	<i>tøff</i> ‘tough’	<i>tøffing</i> ‘tough guy’
LOCATION	LOCATED	<i>Vestlandet</i>	<i>vestlending</i> ‘person from Vestlandet’
STATE	ABSTRACTION	<i>son</i> ‘do time in jail’	<i>soning</i> ‘incarceration’
STATE	LOCATION	<i>skråne</i> ‘slant’	<i>skråning</i> ‘slope’
WHOLE	PART	<i>kveld</i> ‘evening’	<i>kvelding</i> ‘dusk’

Table 3: Highly versatile suffixes in Russian, Czech, Norwegian

metonymy pattern		illustrative example	
source	target	source	target
Russian <i>-ovyj</i> : 10 sources, 1 target			
ABSTRACTION	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>vkus</i> ‘taste’	<i>vkusovoj</i> ‘taste, gustatory’
MATERIAL	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>benzin</i> ‘gasoline’	<i>benzinovoj</i> ‘gasoline’
ENTITY	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>slon</i> ‘elephant’	<i>slonovoj</i> ‘elephant’
TIME	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>čas</i> ‘hour’	<i>časovoj</i> ‘hour-long’
PART	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>gorlo</i> ‘throat’	<i>gorlovoj</i> ‘throat’
LOCATION	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>kraj</i> ‘region’	<i>kraevoj</i> ‘regional’
GROUP	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>orkestr</i> ‘orchestra’	<i>orkestrovoj</i> ‘orchestral’
INSTRUMENT	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>ščipcy</i> ‘tongs’	<i>ščipcovoj</i> ‘relating to tongs’
ACTION	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>torgovat</i> ‘trade’	<i>torgovoj</i> ‘trading’
CHARACTERISTIC	CHARACTERISTIC	<i>černyj</i> ‘black’	<i>černovoj (variant)</i> ‘first draft’
Czech <i>-dlo</i> : 2 sources, 7 targets			
ACTION	AGENT	<i>zlobit</i> ‘be naughty’	<i>zlobidlo</i> ‘naughty person’
ACTION	GROUP	<i>plavat</i> ‘swim’	<i>plavidlo</i> ‘all types of boats’
ACTION	INSTRUMENT	<i>létat</i> ‘fly’	<i>letadlo</i> ‘airplane’
ACTION	LOCATION	<i>dívat se</i> ‘watch’	<i>divadlo</i> ‘theater’
ACTION	MATERIAL	<i>mýt</i> ‘wash’	<i>mýdlo</i> ‘soap’
ACTION	PART	<i>chodit</i> ‘walk’	<i>chodidlo</i> ‘sole of foot’
ACTION	PATIENT	<i>jíst</i> ‘eat’	<i>jídlo</i> ‘food’
STATE	LOCATION	<i>sedat, sedět</i> ‘sit’	<i>sedadlo</i> ‘seat’

Table 4: Balance of sources and targets among suffixes

4. Observations: Comparison with lexicon, directionality, cross-linguistic

Metonymy patterns found only in the lexicon (full list of 9 items):

- ACTION FOR TIME: *la saison* (< ‘act of sowing’)
- AGENT FOR PRODUCT: (*I’m reading*) *Shakespeare*
- TIME FOR ENTITY: *the sixties*
- CONSEQUENT FOR ANTECEDENT: *phobos* (‘fear’ < ‘flight’)
- SUBEVENT FOR COMPLEX EVENT: *mother is cooking potatoes* (involves also washing, peeling, etc.)
- CAUSE FOR EFFECT: *unlock the prisons* (meaning ‘set the prisoners free’)
- POTENTIAL FOR ACTUAL: *Can you see him?* (meaning ‘Do you see him?’)
- HYPONYM FOR HYPERNYM: *Kodak* (meaning ‘camera’)
- HYPERNYM FOR HYPONYM: *the pill* (meaning ‘contraceptive pill’)

Metonymy patterns shared by lexicon and word-formation (sample from 79 items):

- ACTION FOR AGENT: *a snitch*; *hrabal* ‘greedy person’ (< *hrabat* ‘rake’)
- ACTION FOR INSTRUMENT: *Andenken* (‘keepsake’ < ‘act of remembering’); *odměrka* ‘measuring-cup’ (< *odměřit* ‘measure’)
- ACTION FOR LOCATION: *Gang* (‘corridor’ < ‘act of walking’); *parkoviště* ‘parking-lot’ (< *parkovat* ‘park’)
- INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION: *to ski*; *bičovat* ‘beat with a whip’ (< *bič* ‘whip’)
- ACTION FOR PATIENT: *achat* (‘purchase’ < ‘act of buying’); *lízátko* ‘lollipop’ (< *lízat* ‘lick’)
- AGENT FOR ACTION: *to butcher*; *pytlačit* ‘do poaching’ (< *pytlák* ‘poacher’)
- CHARACTERISTIC FOR ENTITY: *a beauty*; *naháč* ‘naked person’ (< *nahý* ‘naked’)
- CONTAINER FOR CONTAINED: (*to drink*) *a glass*; *kapesné* ‘pocket-money’ (< *kapsa* ‘pocket’)

Metonymy patterns found only in word-formation (sample from 54 items):

- ABSTRACTION FOR ACTION: *toužit* ‘long for’ (< *touha* ‘desire’)
- ABSTRACTION FOR MANNER: *honem* ‘quickly’ (< *hon* ‘chase’)
- ACTION FOR CHARACTERISTIC: *váhavý* ‘hesitant’ (< *váhat* ‘hesitate’)
- ACTION FOR EVENT: *zabijačka* ‘pig-slaughtering’ (< *zabít* ‘kill’)
- ACTION FOR GROUP: *plavidlo* ‘all types of boats’ (< *plavat* ‘sail’)
- CHARACTERISTIC FOR ACTION: *chladit* ‘cool[verb]’ (< *chladný* ‘cool[adj.]’)
- CHARACTERISTIC FOR CHANGE STATE: *mládnout* ‘grow younger’ (< *mladý* ‘young’)
- EVENT FOR CHARACTERISTIC: *válečný* ‘war[adj.]’ (< *válka* ‘war’)
- PATIENT FOR ACTION: *věznit* ‘imprison’ (< *vězeň* ‘prisoner’)
- STATE FOR ABSTRACTION: *nenávisť* ‘hatred’ (< *nenávidět* ‘hate’)
- TIME FOR CHARACTERISTIC: *včerejší* ‘yesterday’s’ (< *včera* ‘yesterday’)

Table 5: Comparison of metonymy patterns across lexicon and word-formation

Russian and Czech			
metonymy patterns	# of suffixes	illustrative example	
		source	target
LOCATION FOR CHARACTERISTIC	22 (R), 14 (Cz)	<i>centr</i> ‘center’	<i>central’nyj</i> ‘central’
POSSESSOR FOR POSSESSED	18 (R), 11 (Cz)	<i>kráva</i> ‘cow’	<i>kraví</i> ‘cow’s’
STATE FOR CHARACTERISTIC	12 (R), 10 (Cz)	<i>želat</i> ‘want’	<i>želatel’nyj</i> ‘desirable’
CHARACTERISTIC FOR LOCATION	11 (R), 6 (Cz)	<i>suxoj</i> ‘dry’	<i>suša</i> ‘dry land’

PART FOR WHOLE	9 (R), 9 (Cz)	<i>uši</i> 'ears'	<i>ušák</i> 'bunny'
Russian			
		illustrative example	
metonymy patterns	# of suffixes	source	target
CHARACTERISTIC FOR MATERIAL	9	<i>gustoj</i> 'thick'	<i>gušča</i> 'dregs'
INSTRUMENT FOR CHARACTERISTIC	4	<i>ščipcy</i> 'tongs'	<i>ščipcovyj</i> 'relating to tongs'
CHARACTERISTIC FOR CHARACTERISTIC	4	<i>velikij</i> 'great'	<i>veličavij</i> 'stately, majestic'
Czech			
		illustrative example	
metonymy patterns	# of suffixes	source	target
CONTAINED FOR CONTAINER	11	<i>písek</i> 'sand'	<i>pískoviště</i> 'sandbox'
PRODUCT FOR LOCATION	6	<i>mléko</i> 'milk'	<i>mlékárna</i> 'dairy'
QUANTITY FOR ENTITY	6	<i>sedm</i> 'seven'	<i>sedmička</i> 'number 7 bus, highway, etc.'
Norwegian			
		illustrative example	
metonymy patterns	# of suffixes	source	target
LOCATION FOR LOCATED	8	Strømmen	<i>strømning</i> 'person from Strømmen'
PRODUCT FOR AGENT	5	<i>musikk</i> 'music'	<i>musikant</i> 'musician'

Table 6: Language-specific preferences for metonymy patterns

5. Conclusions

- The main purpose of word-formation is to signal metonymy
- Metonymy in word-formation is more diverse than in lexical use
- Different languages make different investments in word-formation to signal metonymy