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## METONYMIC CHAINS AND SYNONYMY<sup>1</sup>

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*Starting from the question about the universality of conceptual metonymies of the type PLACE FOR INSTITUTION, more specifically CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT and COUNTRY FOR GOVERNMENT, the present article uncovers some shortcomings of a coarse-grained corpus methodology and argues for a discourse-based approach to metonymies in authentic use that could motivate variation found in the use of the abovementioned metonymies. The central elements of this approach are the notions of metonymic chains and synonymy obtaining between metonymic sources and metonymic targets, as well as between metonymic sources in a chain. It is demonstrated that whether such metonymic chains break very soon or survive over longer stretches of text can depend on a variety of factors. Evidence is invoked that signals that there are certain environmental conditions (structural, conceptual and/or communicative-pragmatic arrays of elements) that may be conducive to the use of the metonymy type under study, or perhaps just the opposite. Specifically, it is shown that while metonymic synonymy is one of the means of enhancing cohesion while maintaining topic continuity, its application may be constrained or even overridden by cultural-conceptual and discursal factors, in particular by certain expectations or by communicative intentions, i.e. by marking the speaker's stance.*

**Key words:** *metonymy; metonymic chain; synonymy; cultural model; metaphor*

### 1. Introduction

Cross-linguistic work in cognitive linguistics has established most referential metonymies, and in particular metonymies of the type PLACE FOR INSTITUTION, illustrated in English examples in (1):

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- (1) a. *Croatia and Serbia have banned each other's vehicles from entering their territory and traded sharp accusations over their handling of Europe's migration crisis, which is causing havoc as thousands move through the Balkans each day.* (Irish Times, September 25, 2015)
- b. *All what [sic] Belgrade has to do is to "stop such an intensive influx of migrants" to Croatia for the border controls to end, Milanovic told reporters in Zagreb. He said Zagreb could handle only 4,000 to 5,000 migrants daily.* (The Guardian, September 25, 2015)

have metonymic equivalents in practically any language (cf. Brdar & Brdar-Szabó, 2009). Corresponding examples for PLACE FOR INSTITUTION, more specifically for CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymies are not difficult to find in various languages. Cf. the following German and Chinese examples:

- (2) *Erneut Gefechte*      *in Mazedonien:*  
renewed fights      in Macedonia
- Skopje*      *stimmt Nato-Präsenz zu*      (Die Presse, 18.9.2001, p. 12)  
Skopje approves      NATO presence PART
- (3) 北京      如今      核准      了      慈      济  
bei3 jing1      ru2 jin1      he2 zhun3      le5      ci2      ji4
- 在      大陆      成立      总      会  
zai4      da4 lu4      cheng2 li4      zong3      hui4

'Now [Beijing] (the Mainland Chinese government) approves the inauguration of Tzu Chi Foundation in Mainland' (Zhang, 2013: 295)

In other words, we may assume that the metonymies in question apply practically without limits, i.e. they are extremely productive. However, the question about their universality and actual presence in various languages is far from being answered fully by merely listing such examples. Rather, we would need to find out whether they are equally productive in all (these) languages, i.e. whether they are equally frequent or not. In order to get to know more about this, we would need to consider some cross-linguistic quantitative data, and in case we happen to observe differences in their distribution across languages, we must look for the motivation for the observed differences in the (non-)application of a given metonymy in a cross-linguistic perspective. My central claim in this article is that even that need not be enough to fully understand conditions (dis) favourable to their use in various languages. I show in Part 2 that a coarse-grained corpus methodology cannot reveal all the intricacies of the use of this type of metonymy. In Part 3, I demonstrate some lessons from the study of authentic use of metonymies in question that lead us to broaden the perspective by including qualitative data, enriching them by additional finer-grained quantitative data, and by viewing our findings in a more holistic light, paying due attention to the interplay of structural, cognitive-cultural and

communicative-pragmatic factors responsible for creating conditions (dis)favourable to the use of this type of metonymy in a language. In doing so, I will pay special attention to the phenomenon of metonymic synonymy obtaining in metonymic networks.

## 2. Why does looking at raw frequencies not suffice?

In order to check whether there are differences between English, German, Croatian and Hungarian concerning the use of the conceptual metonymy of the type CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT, I used four parallel corpora, containing articles on international/world news in two daily newspapers with national or international circulation for all four languages involved, i.e. English, German, Croatian and Hungarian. The texts that were included were hot news articles, and no editorials, leaders, or commentaries were included, so as to make the corpora as uniform as possible concerning the discourse type or genre.

The articles in question were sampled on seven randomly chosen weekdays in the period between September 18, 2001, and November, 2007. Of course, these weekdays were the same for all four languages under scrutiny in order to ensure that the corpora were comparable in terms of their topic. All the eight dailies with nationwide circulation were quite likely to carry international news articles about the same world events, or at least it would be reasonable to expect a great deal of overlap. Therefore, in theory at least, the same metonymically used names of capitals were available as an option.

I present both the absolute data in terms of types and tokens, as well as in a normalized form, giving the frequency of tokens normalized to the standard basis per 1,000 words. This procedure makes it possible to offset any relative differences in the number of articles and their relative length across papers and languages.

It turned out that the saturation of this particular text type with the metonymy in question is highest for English (2.82 metonymies per every 1,000 words in the subcorpus), closely followed by German (2.65); Croatian ranked third (1.85), while Hungarian came last (1.77).

Table 1.

Language	Corpus size	Metonymic tokens	Metonymic tokens per 1,000 words
English	57,606	163	2.82
German	62,560	160	2.65
Croatian	38,390	71	1.85
Hungarian	47,278	84	1.77

What these data indicate is that if our corpora are representative of a certain type of discourse, the tokens of conceptual metonymy of the type CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT do not exhibit what Krzeszowski (1991: 27) would call “maximally similar frequencies of occurrence” across the four languages. More specifically, we may say that there is no

statistical equivalence between English and German on the one hand, and Croatian and Hungarian, on the other, in this respect. However, when one zooms in on the data, the picture becomes slightly less clear. One would expect the distribution within languages to be relatively even, both across the sampled days, and also across individual texts. The consistency of subcorpora was subsequently checked for both.

While the distribution within languages proved to be relatively even across the sampled days, there are conspicuous differences concerning the number of metonymic types and tokens between the two Hungarian newspapers included in the subcorpus, with *Magyar Nemzet* apparently underusing the metonym in question when compared to the *Népszabadság*. The same is true for the Croatian subcorpus, with *Vjesnik* exhibiting 59 tokens, and *Večernji list* only 12 out of the total 71. Such differences cannot be detected in either the English or German subcorpus (81 for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and 79 for *Süddeutsche Zeitung*). All this appears to indicate that there might be corporate, as well as possibly individual, differences in style between the newspapers and their journalists, respectively. At the same time, we also note marked lows and highs in the use of metonymy on certain days, for both, or for just one of the newspapers (which may be counterbalanced by the other). In short, a coarse-grained statistical method paints a relatively deceptive picture for Croatian and Hungarian. This apparently requires us to plunge even deeper into the actual data, right to the level of individual texts and sentences.

### 3. Metonymy in authentic usage: what do metonymic networks tell us?

Studying metonymy in authentic usage, i.e. in discourse, means that we cannot be satisfied with such simplifying contrastive statements as the one outlined above for the examples in (1) and (2). Specifically, the sentence containing *Croatia and Serbia* in (1a) above is in the actual text followed by two sentences with another occurrence of the two countries' names and one instance of *Zagreb*:

- (4) *Croatia and Serbia have banned each other's vehicles from entering their territory and traded sharp accusations over their handling of Europe's migration crisis, which is causing havoc as thousands move through the Balkans each day. Serbia banned Croatian goods and cargo vehicles from entering the country yesterday, and Croatia responded by barring all Serbian-registered vehicles from crossing into its territory.*

*Officials in Serbia also angrily accused its neighbour of "racism", amid reports that Serb citizens had been barred from travelling into Croatia, in incidents that Zagreb said were caused by a computer problem.*

The three instances of metonymic expressions (*Croatia – Croatia – Zagreb*), form a metonymic chain, all sharing the same metonymic target concept. This phenomenon of metonymic patterning in discourse has been studied in some detail by Barcelona (2005), who uses the term metonymic chains to refer to "direct or indirect series of conceptual metonymies guiding a series of pragmatic inferences" (Barcelona 2005: 328). From this

wording, one might get an impression that Barcelona is primarily interested in purely tracking a series of metonymic expressions as they occur linearly in a running text. However, it is apparent in the article that what Barcelona has in mind is a more complex system of interaction involving both textual and conceptual dimensions when he talks about “two, often more, metonymies regularly occurring at the same or different analytical levels in the same utterance, even in the same sentence” (Barcelona 2005: 316).

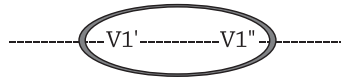
In my opinion the two dimensions are essential and inseparable. Both the textual (horizontal or linear) dimension and the conceptual (vertical) dimension should be integrated into a comprehensive study of how metonymy works in discourse, i.e. in the study of metonymic networks, similarly to what has been shown for metaphors in a series of studies by Goatly (1997), Koller (2003), Cameron and Low (2004), and Semino (2008). Note also that these authors use the term ‘metaphorical chain’ to refer to the phenomenon of “the occurrence of several related metaphorical expression throughout a text” (Semino 2008: 226).

Since in discourse we obviously deal with linguistically manifest metonymies, we may take as our starting point the threefold distinction between the linguistic vehicle, the metonymic source and the metonymic target, as in Panther (2005: 358). This makes it possible to distinguish between the linguistic or textual metonymic chains, on the one hand, and the conceptual metonymic chains, on the other. The former are series of linguistic metonymic vehicles.

We may consider the totality of all metonymic vehicles within a text or discourse, regardless of whether they share metonymic sources and targets, as a metonymic textual macro-chain. It can contain a number of metonymic textual micro-chains, consisting of metonymic vehicles sharing the same metonymic source. Textual metonymic chains may be fairly simple, or quite complex, since they may include overlapping micro-chains, or micro-chains that are interrupted by other micro-chains, etc. In fact, complex chains are far more frequent in actual usage than the simple ones. Metonymic micro-chains regularly interlace rather than neatly follow each other. Let us illustrate this with the help of a couple of examples.

For the sake of exposition, I concentrate here only on occurrences of low-level metonymy CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT, but also take into consideration the related metonymy COUNTRY FOR GOVERNMENT (but not other possible metonymies). In (5), we note two occurrences of *Zagreb* (followed by *Brussels*, which I leave out for the moment) in a single paragraph (the network is schematically presented in Figure 1):

- (5) *Viviane Reding, the justice commissioner in Brussels, accused the country of abusing trust “the day it entered the European Union” as she ordered Zagreb to bring its extradition laws into compliance with EU standards. High quality global journalism requires investment. The dispute reflects what one EU official called “a serious breach” between Zagreb and Brussels, only months after the former Yugoslavian republic joined the EU – an event celebrated as the union’s democratising expansion into a previously war-torn region.*



**Figure 1.** *A simple textual metonymic chain with two metonymies*

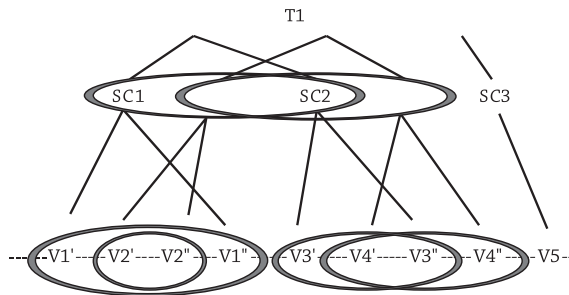
Conceptual metonymic chains are series of metonymic sources unified by common metonymic targets. In Figure 2, the concepts [SC1] and [SC2] which serve as metonymic sources are associated with [V1] and [V3], but have the same metonymic target, [T1].

(6) **Beijing** [V1'] and **Moscow** [V2'] also have concluded numerous bilateral agreements on trade and investment, military affairs, nuclear weapons, energy cooperation, science and technology, cultural exchanges and international policy.

**Moscow** [V2''] and **Beijing** [V1''] regularly vote in tandem on the United Nations Security Council. Their solidarity has reflected common world views. As a senior Russian Foreign Ministry official put it: "We have either shared or identical views of all international issues."

But the fact that **China's** [V3'] global equities and responsibilities are growing while **Russia's** [V4'] are minimal and declining may impinge on their solidarity.

Prior to their meeting, Presidents Hu and Medvedev convened two other multilateral forums in the Ural city of Yekaterinburg, forums that **China** [V3''] and **Russia** [V4''] have introduced to counterbalance the **United States** [V5] in regional and world affairs. (The International Herald Tribune, June 16, 2009, p. 6)



**Figure 2.** *Conceptual metonymic chains*

The term 'chain' has also been used in a different, more specialized sense in metonymy research from Reddy (1979), Fass (1991), Nerlich and Clarke (2001), Radden and Kövecses (1999: 36), to Ruiz de Mendoza (2008) and Hilpert (2007). These authors are primarily concerned with metonymies involving multiple conceptual shifts, breaking up "complex conceptual mappings into simple, well-motivated mappings with a strong experiential basis" (Hilpert, 2007: 80). These cases are referred to as metonymic tiers in

Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2007), a neutral term allowing for metonymy's interaction with metaphorical tiers.

#### 4. Metonymic chains: quantitative and qualitative aspects introduced

On a methodological level, we could state that we face a problem here. The initial assumption about there being significant cross-linguistic differences appears to be conveniently confirmed by a coarse-grained corpus analysis. However, as indicated in the last section of Part 2, this neat black and white picture is called into question even by a rudimentary, but more granular, analysis that zooms in on specific usage events and shows a great deal of variation, both quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative variation has to do simply with the oscillations that can be observed in the saturation of texts with the type of metonymy we are concerned with here. Assuming that there is something like average saturation of texts with metonymies across a corpus, some texts may exhibit fewer metonymies, while others may exhibit more than the average number. A reasonable assumption might be that some of the "missing metonymies" are replaced under certain conditions by something else that we do not count as a metonymy. It may or need not be formally related to the capital names (e.g. the replacements might be some pronominal elements, etc.). Another reasonable assumption might be that there are certain environments (structural, conceptual and/or communicative-pragmatic arrays of elements) that may be conducive to the use of the metonymy type under study, or perhaps just the opposite. Further, we might assume that these replacements might serve some syntactic and/or communicative-pragmatic function.

Qualitative variation, on the other hand, has to do with the organization of metonymic chains we find. We could find a variable number of metonymic chains; there might be none, but there might be many of them. These chains may break very soon and be quite simple, linking just two items. However, they can also be fairly complex, with many items chained, and what is more, they may overlap or interrupt each other.

##### 4.1. When and why do metonymic chains (not) break?

We should of course not forget the possibility of the limiting case, which is to avoid metonymy altogether, something that seems to often be the case in Croatian or Hungarian, judging by the number of texts in the corpus that exhibit no metonymic tokens. The other extreme, not too natural, particularly not so in the case of Croatian and Hungarian, would be to produce a whole string of repeatedly used metonymies, such as (6) above, or (7) below:

- (7) *Prijeti lansiranjem rakete: **Pyongyang** pokrenuo nuklearni reaktor u Yongbyonu*  
*Sjeverna Koreja u utorak je objavila da je ponovo pokrenula operacije u nuklearnom kompleksu Yongbyon koji se smatra glavnim izvorom plutonija vojne kvalitete i to je novi znak za uzburku nakon njezine najave lansiranja nuklearne i balističke rakete. Pozivajući se na sjevernokorejski Institut za atomsku energiju (AEI) i novinsku*

agenciju KCNA južnokorejska novinska agencija *Yonhap* piše da se radi o reaktoru od 5-megawatta koji je prošao brojne nadogradnje i prilagodbe. Mediji nagađaju da bi **Pyongyang** 10. listopada u povodu obilježavanja 70. godišnjice utemeljenja vladajuće Radničke partije mogao lansirati projektil dugog dometa.

**Pyongyang** je u ponedjeljak objavio da bi pomoću projektila u orbitu lansirao satelit i da će "svijet jasno na nebu vidjeti niz satelita koji polijeću visoko prema nebu", a da će o vremenu lansiranja i lokacijama odlučiti Komunistička partija.

Južnokorejsko ministarstvo obrane je smjesta poručilo da bi lansiranje predstavljalo "ozbiljnu provokaciju, vojnu prijetnju i kršenje rezolucija UN-a". Također bi prijetilo održavanju dugoočekivanog sastanka obitelji razdvojenih Korejskim ratom (1950.-1953.)

Sjevernokorejski dužnosnici su potvrdili da je **Pjongjang** dosegnuo "završnu fazu" u razvoju novog opservacijskog satelita.

(<http://www.nacional.hr/prijeti-lansiranjem-rakete-pyongyang-pokrenuo-nuklearni-reaktor-u-yongbyonu/>, accessed September 15, 2015)

Brdar-Szabó, Brdar and Jakobović (2009: 160) report several such long chains in a single issue of a Hungarian newspaper. There were 5 chained instances of *Moszkva* 'Moscow,' accompanied by 4 instances of *Tripoli*. This is, however, not the longest chain in that issue, we also find 7 instances of *Peking* 'Beijing' in another article.

However, it appears that some preconditions have to be met for such metonymic chains not to break. Longer texts are a more favourable environment for metonymic chains, and the corpus used in the abovementioned study, which was based on 54 issues of Croatian and Hungarian daily newspapers, i.e. on 9 weeks with 6 issues each, when broken by the six days showed that the total number of words in the texts was highest towards the weekend, i.e. on Friday/Saturday and Monday/Tuesday. This indicates that the texts themselves may have been somewhat longer than on mid-week days. These were also the days on which such longer metonymic chains were found, e.g. the above chains were attested on a Friday, April 18, 2007. This may be due to the fact that these texts were not prototypical "hot news" texts, but rather exhibited some features of commentaries. Conversely, more "hot news", such as texts that are short, exhibit fewer metonymies in question than editorials and commentaries. It is claimed in Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2011) and Brdar-Szabó, Brdar and Jakobović (2009) that there also appears to obtain a sort of cyclic variation in the availability of these metonymies, with productivity regularly peaking at weekend days, i.e. in Friday and Saturday editions. It follows that some contrasts in the availability of these metonymies can be ultimately motivated by the workings of a cultural model whose essential ingredient is a very general conceptual metaphor: PROXIMITY/DISTANCE IN THE SOCIOPHYSICAL AND MENTAL WORLD IS PROXIMITY/DISTANCE IN TIME. It seems that the creators of these texts, journalists, are by the end of the week prone to assume a more holistic perspective which gives them more distance with respect to the week's events, particularly if they write about some events introduced earlier in the week. The cultural model in question



does not by itself lead to any increase in the use of metonymies, but it certainly makes the news texts longer, which creates an environment favourable to longer metonymic chains. It would seem that pragmatic factors, such as perspective and the degree of the empathy and respect, or their lack (i.e. detachment) that journalists feel (and, of course, their readership if they adopt the perspective suggested in the paper) towards the political authority in question, play an important role in the abovementioned cultural model. I return to this observation in 4.2. below.

#### 4.2. Metonymic synonyms as replacements

In order to highlight the nature of potential metonymy replacements, I suggest that we now use a modification of Panther's (2005) diagram, as in Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2014). In this modified version the lexeme that is conventionally associated with the metonymic target concept is introduced, and the source meaning and the target meaning are renamed as metonymic source concept ( $SC_1$ ) and metonymic target concept ( $TC_2$ ), respectively. Most importantly, Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2014) indicate that the relationship of synonymy may obtain between the metonymic vehicle associated with (SC), which is linguistically manifest, and the lexeme that is conventionally associated with the metonymic target (TC), which is linguistically not manifest. The metonymic target meaning can simply be a nonce sense, but it can also become a conventionalized meaning of  $L_1$ , leading to the polysemy of  $L_1$ . Due to this polysemy, the relationship between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  may be characterized as an asymmetric type of synonymy (cf. Bierwiaczonek, 2007). The point is that  $L_1$ , the metonymic vehicle, can function as a synonym of  $L_2$ , but normally not the other way round.

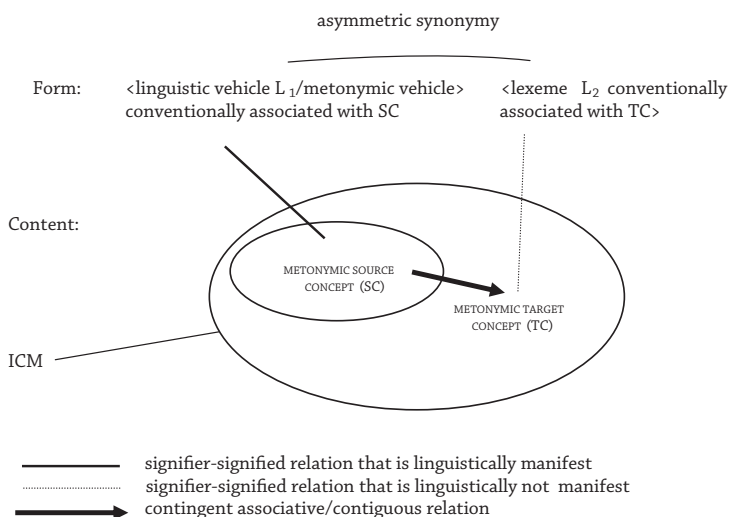


Figure 3. *The basic metonymic relation*

Among structures that may count as synonyms, we find not only expressions conventionally associated with  $C_2$ , such as *hrvatska vlada* ‘Croatian government,’ or *vlada Slovenije* ‘Slovenian government,’ etc., but also adjectives derived from the names of capitals followed by the noun denoting ‘government’. Cf. a Croatian (8) and a Hungarian (9) example:

- (8) *U ponoć beogradska Vlada donosi paket mjera*  
In midnight Belgrade-ADJ government brings package measures  
*koje nisu dogovor s EU...*  
which are-not agreement with EU

‘At midnight the Belgrade government brings a package deal which is not agreed with the EU’

- (9) *A ljubljani kormány szeptemberben kötött megállapodást*  
DEF Ljubljana-ADJ government September-in reached agreement  
*Párizssal a medveexportról.*  
Paris-with DEF bear-export-about

‘The Ljubljana government reached in September an agreement with Paris about the export of bears’

Very close to this is the use of the construction ‘government in X’, as in

- (10) *Vlada u Sarajevu pala...*

‘The government in Sarajevo fell’

In impersonal contexts we also witness the use of a prepositional phrase which in a way may be considered to be a clipped form of ‘government in X’. It is roughly equivalent to (13), or to the bare NP used metonymically. It has been claimed in Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2009) that these locatives are also metonymic.

- (11) *Iz Londona je službeno zanijekano da ...*  
from London-GEN AUX officially denied that

‘It was officially denied in London that...’

The PP apparently functions as the topic, although it is not the subject, and the predicate is impersonal (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular) and does not agree with anything, i.e. the subject is implicit. Equivalent locative structures with the same function are found in many languages (cf. Brdar and Brdar-Szabó, 2009).

Why should such replacements be more frequent in certain languages? It appears that there are typological preconditions for this type of construction. The languages with this construction are the so-called *pro-drop* languages with elaborate number and/or gender agreement and productive subsystems of impersonal constructions. On the

basis of this, we can hypothesize that the same adverbial constructions with capitals should be quite frequent in other pro-drop languages with rich systems of impersonal structures and overt agreement. This seems to be borne out by a look at some Slavic and Romance languages. Cf. the following examples from Polish (12) and Italian (13):

Polish:

- (12) *W Londynie mówi się już o wpływie tego zachowania...*  
in London speaks REFL already about influence this behaviour-GEN  
'The influence of this behaviour is already being spoken about in London...'

Italian:

- (13) *Il rischio di un attentato contro il premier*  
DEF risk of INDEF assassination against DEF prime-minister  
*e' considerato "alto" a Washington.*  
is considered high in Washington  
'The risk of an attempt on the prime minister's life is considered in Washington to be high'

The question that we should turn our attention to now seems to be: why do some languages such as Croatian or Hungarian exhibit a systematic pattern of replacement of metonymic NPs by metonymic locative PPs? Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2009) argue that the replacement pattern of subjects is one of several strategies available to solve the problem of the preservation or maintenance of the topic-continuity in the flowing discourse in the case of metonymic subjects.

While topics may persist for longer or shorter stretches, they eventually need to be maintained before they decay. This usually happens by means of a co-referring pronoun (anaphor), i.e. by repeating the expression in question, or by using a related expression (e.g. a synonym). The so-called pro-drop languages can in general tolerate quite long stretches without any explicit maintenance work apart from agreement features (number, person, gender), unlike English or German, which obligatorily require at least pronominals to fill the subject slot.

It appears now that the availability of metonymic NPs depends on how easily a language can maintain such metonymic topics. It appears that English, with its quite flexible system of co-referring pronouns (cf. the use of plural or singular pronouns in coreference with collective terms), but relatively rudimentary agreement system can achieve a relative longevity of such double-barrelled and ambiguous topics without incurring at the same time unbearable processing costs. In other words, metonymic chains would tend to be short to moderately long.

An attempt to use anaphoric pronouns in pro-drop languages such as Croatian or Hungarian in order to maintain such metonymic topics—the most marked or unnatural

solution of the four we mention above—would yield odd results. For example, regardless of whether we choose a pronoun according to the gender of the capital, i.e. neuter *ono* ‘it’ for *Sarajevo*, or masculine *on* ‘he’ for *Berlin*, or *London*, or *Washington*, etc. or whether we choose the feminine pronoun *ona* ‘she’ compatible with the target, i.e. the feminine noun *vlada*, ‘government’, there seems to obtain a break in the topic continuity, because the switch from a double-barrelled topic seems to be too abrupt. Even with more straightforward referents, it is usually assumed that a pronoun in subject position is quite likely to introduce a new topic.

On the other hand, we note that pro-drop languages such as Croatian or Hungarian, even if they can do without any anaphoric pronouns, must very soon narrow down the reference of the topic in order to be able to select appropriate number agreement features. Of course, a possible strategy is to avoid metonymy altogether, which accounts for a relatively frequent situation: newspaper articles in Croatian and Hungarian that exhibit no metonymically used names of capitals whatsoever. At best this would result in extremely short metonymic chains, i.e. they break down very soon in Croatian and Hungarian.

Returning now to the above observation about metonymic synonymy, and conflating it with the notion of complex conceptual metonymic chains, we realize that the phenomenon of synonymy is far more significant here and broader in scope than suggested by Figure 3: because such conceptual metonymic chains can be a series of different metonymic sources or vehicles unified by common metonymic targets, the sources/vehicles also become synonyms of each other, at least contextual synonyms. In this case synonymy appears to be fully symmetrical.

This means that the strategy of alternating between two metonymy types, i.e. between the CAPITAL-FOR-GOVERNMENT type, and the COUNTRY-FOR-GOVERNMENT type, is a case of metonymic synonymy in this more narrow sense of the notion. That these metonymic NPs function as virtual synonyms is clearly proved by the way that Serbian, Hungarian, German and English media reported a part of a statement made by the Croatian Prime Minister Z. Milanović. Note that the Croatian government is metonymically referred to as *Hrvatska* ‘Croatia’:

- (14) *Hrvatski premijer Zoran Milanović izjavio je u četvrtak da Hrvatska neće ukinuti blokadu graničnog prijelaza Bajakova...* (<http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/bajakovo-od-ponoci-nijedno-srpsko-vozilo-ni-drzavljanin-ne-mogu-u-hrvatsku/843741.aspx>, accessed on September 24, 2015)
- (15) *Premijer Zoran Milanović nakon sastanka na vrhu u Bruxellesu poručuje da Hrvatska neće ukinuti blokadu tog graničnog prijelaza...* (<http://www.hrt.hr/300215/vijesti/bajakovo-zatvoreno-za-promet-za-sve-kategorije-vozila>, accessed on September 24, 2015)

When reported by the foreign media, the name of the capital is often used metonymically instead of the metonymically used name of the country. Cf. Hungarian (16), German (17) and English (18) examples:

- (16) *Napok óta azt kérjük Szerbiától, hogy ne árásszon el bennünket migránsokkal. Amíg nem történik változás, **Zágráb** nem enged a szerb–horvát határzárból – közölte Zoran Milanovic horvát miniszterelnök csütörtöki rendkívüli sajtótájékoztatóján.* ([http://hvg.hu/vilag/20150924\\_Milanovic\\_Budapest\\_es\\_Belgrad\\_osszefogott](http://hvg.hu/vilag/20150924_Milanovic_Budapest_es_Belgrad_osszefogott), accessed on September 24, 2015)
- ‘We have been asking Serbia for days not to flood us with migrants. Until there is a change, Zagreb will not lift the closure of the Serbian-Croatian border – said Zoran Milanović, the Croatian Prime Minister, at an extraordinary press conference on Thursday’
- (17) ***Zagreb** will die Grenzen erst wieder öffnen, wenn Belgrad nicht mehr Zehntausende Flüchtlinge an die kroatische Grenze transportiert...* (<http://www.tt.com/home/10548493-91/faymann-geriet-mit-orban-aneinander-kroatien-schloss-grenze.csp>, accessed on September 24, 2015)
- ‘Zagreb will open the border only when Belgrade no longer transports tens of thousands of migrants to the Croatian border’
- (18) *Croatia may lift a blockade on its border with fellow ex-Yugoslav republic Serbia in the next 24 hours, Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic said on Friday. The two Balkan neighbours engaged in a trade war this week over the flow of thousands of migrants across their joint border. **Zagreb** banned traffic for all Serbian vehicles on Thursday, in response to Serbia blocking Croatian goods and trucks.* (<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/09/25/europe-migrants-croatia-serbia-idUKL5N11V21X20150925>, accessed on September 24, 2015)

This also means that metonymic synonymy offers a way to maintain metonymic topics, and is therefore also a means of making metonymic chains somewhat longer in Croatian, Hungarian and other pro-drop languages. Assuming in theory that this synonymy works in a very elegant but simplest possible way, we might expect the two metonymies to alternate, producing chains more or less of the form CAPITAL-COUNTRY-CAPITAL-COUNTRY-etc. This not only eliminates any need for propping up topics by pronominal elements, but also makes it possible to avoid implicit subjects, while still managing to keep in check the monotony that would be caused by excessive repetition. A statistical effect that might be expected would be that in texts exhibiting metonymic chains the frequency of metonymies of the type CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT roughly equals the frequency of metonymies of the type COUNTRY FOR GOVERNMENT. At the same time this means that the distribution of the two metonymy types should be fairly even.

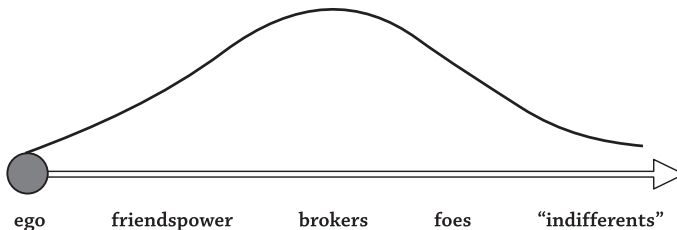
A close examination of authentic usage events reveals that this is not necessarily the case. So, why use one rather than the other under certain circumstances? The answer to this question seems to be that the alternation between the two metonymy types is dictated by the interplay of cultural-conceptual and communicative-pragmatic factors. In the rest of this section I consider the phenomena of the suppression of CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy and of its overuse. The suppression of CAPITAL

FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy has been observed in a series of studies concerned with Croatian, Hungarian, German, and Chinese (Brdar, 2007; Brdar and Brdar-Szabó, 2009; Milić and Vidaković, 2007; Zhang, Speelman and Geeraerts, 2011; Zhang 2013).

In Brdar (2007) I proposed that the propensity for metonymies in question may be constrained by the cultural model of FRIENDS AND FOES. This model, which is of broader scope than Kalisz's Friends Constraint (1983: 49), and whose linguistic traces are apparently present in Croatian, Hungarian and Chinese (though, of course, it need not be universal), is built around a conceptual metaphor mentioned at the end of Section 4.1 above. First of all, it can be easily observed that names of capitals are used in this way only in certain types of articles, most of the time in news on international affairs i.e. in articles dealing with relationships between countries, then in business news, but relatively infrequently in news on domestic affairs. This squares with the observation that in some communities journalists are not so ready to use the name of the capital of their own country in this way, while they often refer to other countries' governments in this way. This is apparently illustrated by the above set of examples (14–18). While the Croatian PM uses a COUNTRY FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy, i.e. *Croatia*, which is also reported as such in Croatian media, the foreign media tend to replace this by the CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy.

What I presume to be playing an important role here seem to be pragmatic factors such as perspective and the degree of empathy or its lack (i.e. detachment) that journalists feel (and, of course, their readership if they adopt the perspective they suggest) towards the authority in question. What underlies this way of marking the perspective and expression of empathy, i.e. what makes it possible, is, in my opinion, a variant of the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONAL DISTANCE IS DISTANCE IN PHYSICAL SPACE mentioned above.

The cultural viability of this type of metonymy depends on the location of the political institutions in question on a metaphorical scale of closeness with respect to the deictic centre or ego. This deictic centre or the collective ego is the cultural and linguistic community, specifically journalists as the producers and readers as the addressees of news articles, taken together. Both friends and foes come very close to the ego; some of them may be global or local power brokers. Converting this into a scale, we might end up with the following picture:



**Figure 4.** *The distribution of metonymic references along the metaphorical scale of closeness*

The curve in the above figure indicates the suppression of the CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy at both ends. The highest frequency of metonymic uses might be expected in the middle of the metaphoric scale of closeness, while it drops as we approach the extreme ends of the scale. Its use is constrained in the case of friends and severely limited, or virtually blocked, in the case of ego or self-reference, as there is simply not enough conceptual and emotional distance. This does not mean that, for example, a Croatian newspaper article will never use *Zagreb* to refer to the Croatian government. If the journalist assumes an outside perspective, which enables him to be “objective”, emotionally neutral, or detached, for example, when commenting on the activities of the government from abroad, or assumes a more critical overtone towards the government, the conceptual and emotional distance increases, and the metonymic use of the capital’s name becomes viable again. In the Hungarian example in (27), we have a report of a statement made by the Croatian MP, so naturally the newspaper/journalist takes a distance. *Budapest* is as rarely used in Hungarian media to refer to the Hungarian government as *Zagreb* is to refer to the Croatian government in Croatian media, but because of this distance and the inherent reporting, it is viable here:

(19) *A miniszterelnök megismételte korábbi véleményét is, miszerint **Belgrád és Budapest** összefogott **Zágráb** ellen.* (<http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1071207-orban-bekulni-ment-becsbe>, accessed on September 24, 2015)

‘The Prime Minister (Z. Milanović) also repeated an earlier reflection, according to which Belgrade and Budapest have joined forces against Zagreb’

We should also note the fact that *Budapest* occurs in a coordinative construction, a factor that by itself creates more distance. Just as expected, there is a switch towards the end of the sentence, where the COUNTRY FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy that was originally used by the PM is reported as the CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy.

The opposite tendency, the overuse of CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy can also be observed. This can be seen as an indicator of aggressive and confrontative stance. As Borkin (1972), who analyses such metonymic expressions as elliptical, i.e. as beheaded NPs because the head noun such as *government* is omitted, puts it: “Thou shall not behead your friend.” In other words, they deserve more respect and a more elaborate expression than just a beheaded, i.e. metonymic, NP. A recent example of the use of this strategy to show a particular stance are statements made by the Croatian Prime Minister Z. Milanović in the second half of September 2015, after the outbreak of the migrants crisis in Croatia, and the political conflicts with the Hungarian and Serbian governments. Note that in this statement, intended primarily for the Croatian TV audience, he uses two chains of the CAPITAL FOR GOVERNMENT metonymy, which we might consider an instance of bald on-record strategy that does not attempt to minimize the threat, not of course to the audience, but indirectly, to the third party mentioned in the statement. All this is intensified by the negative connotations of lexical items such as *dreka* ‘screaming’ and *osovina* ‘axis’, suggesting a conspiracy, as well as by the ironic use of *sveto trojstvo* ‘Holy Trinity’:

(20) *Bez obzira na dreku Beograda, Budimpešte i HDZ-a, to je sveto trojstvo, mi ljude primamo na jedan vrlo organiziran način i transportiramo ih na nekoliko graničnih prijelaza, organizirano i o državnom trošku. ...*

*'Dok ne vidim da osovina Budimpešta-Beograd funkcioniра na način da se dio ljudi vozi na Horgoš, a dio u Hrvatsku, bit ću uvjeren da nam rade iza leđa', naglasio je. (<http://www.hrt.hr/300179/vijesti/milanovic-beograd-budimpesta-i-hdz-su-sveto-trojstvo>, accessed on September 26, 2015)*

*'Regardless of the screaming by Belgrade, Budapest and the Croatian Democratic Alliance, this is a Holy Trinity, we receive people in a very organized manner and transport them to several border crossings, in an organized way and at the cost of the state...*

*Until I see that the Budapest-Belgrade axis functions in such a way that part of the people are driven to Horgoš, and part to Croatia, I will be convinced that they are doing something behind our backs, he stressed'*

However, when he was interviewed by the Serbian state TV the next day, he only used a relatively long and uniform metonymic chain with *Serbia* only, apparently avoiding any wording that might be perceived as provocative or insulting, cf. <http://www.maxportal.hr/milanovic-na-tv-beograd-nisam-fasist-ni-ustasa-moji-su-precibranili-srbe-od-ustaskog-rezima/>.

We could even attempt to arrange all the non-metonymic and metonymic items that can be used in this type of genre along a scale in terms of their politeness or directness (and also implicit assignment of responsibility) as follows, with items exhibiting less and less distance, neutrality and politeness/indirectness as we progress from left to right:

(21) country – X's government – government in  $X_{\text{capital}}$  – PP (P +  $X_{\text{capital}}$ ) –  $X_{\text{capital}}$

Thus we see that, while metonymic synonymy as described above is one of technical solutions to the problems of enhancing cohesion while maintaining topic continuity caused by the structural givens of a language, next to the use of locative expressions, its application may be constrained or even overridden by cultural-conceptual and discourse-pragmatic factors, tilting the distribution in one direction or the other.

## 5. Conclusions

By way of summing up, we can say that the question about the universality of a particular type of conceptual metonymy and its actual presence in various languages is far from being answered fully by a superficial contrastive approach and by using raw statistical data. In order to get a more realistic picture, we need to reconsider cross-linguistic quantitative data, looking for finer-grained facts of their distribution, and also suggest the motivation for the observed differences in the (non-)application of a given metonymy in a cross-linguistic perspective. My major claim in this article was



that even that need not be enough to fully understand conditions (dis)favourable to the use of a given type of conceptual metonymy in various languages. I have demonstrated that the study of authentic use of metonymies in question while paying special attention to the phenomenon of metonymic synonymy obtaining in metonymic chains leads to a broadening of the approach by including qualitative data, enriching them by additional finer-grained quantitative data. This makes our findings appear in a more holistic perspective that pays due attention to the interplay of structural, cognitive-cultural and communicative-pragmatic factors responsible for creating conditions (dis)favourable to the use of this type of metonymy in a language.

It has been established that while metonymic synonymy as described above is one of technical solutions to the problems of enhancing cohesion while maintaining topic continuity caused by the structural givens of a language, next to the use of locative expressions, its application may be constrained or even overridden by cultural-conceptual and discursal factors, in particular by certain expectations, or by communicative intentions, i.e. by marking the speaker's stance.

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## SAŽETAK

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### METONIMIJSKI LANCI I SINONIMIJA

U radu se polazi od pitanja univerzalnosti konceptualnih metonimija tipa MJESTO ZA USTANOVU. Na primjeru dva podtipa te metonimije, GLAVNI GRAD UMJESTO VLADE te ZEMLJA UMJESTO VLADE, upućuje se na neke probleme u vezi s granularnošću korpusne metodologije i zagovara se pristup koji vodi računa o autentičnoj porabi unutar diskursa te može objasniti varijaciju koja se može zapaziti u njihovoj porabi. Kako su okosnica tog pristupa fenomen metonimijskog ulančavanja te sinonimijske veze među metonimijskim izvorima i ciljevima s jedne strane te među pojedinim ulančanim metonimijama, pokazuje se da je varijacija u porabi metonimija i kvantitativne i kvalitativne naravi. U radu se pokazuje da duljina metonimijskih lanaca može značajno varirati unutar teksta, tj. lanci se mogu vrlo brzo prekinuti ili opstajati unutar većeg odsječka teksta u određenom obliku (uniformirani ili raznovrsni) ovisno o cijelom nizu čimbenika. Radi se o tome da neke jezične situacije u smislu određenih kombinacija strukturalnih, pojmovnih i komunikativno-pragmatičkih činjenica mogu rezultirati plodnijim tlom za porabu ovih tipova metonimija dok neke druge mogu dovesti do smanjivanja vjerovatnosti njihove porabe (njihovom zamjenom nekim drugim tipovima metonimije ili izbjegavanjem). Iako je metonimijska sinonimija jedno od sredstava kojima se osigurava kohezija i koherencija teksta putem održavanja topika, u radu se na nizu primjera pokazuje da pojava ove vrste sinonimije može biti sužena ili čak potpuno blokirana uslijed različitih kulturnih, konceptualnih i tekstualnih čimbenika. U članku se posebno raspravlja o kulturnom modelu PRIJATELJA I NEPRIJATELJA te namjeri govornika da jasno obilježi svoj stav o temi izričaja (uglavnom negativan) kao primjerima za čimbenike koji rezultiraju skraćivanjem, odnosno pucanjem metonimijskih lanaca, ili pak nekim njihovim nekanonskim pojavnim oblicima.

**Ključne riječi:** metonimija; metonimijski lanac; sinonimija; kulturni model; metafora