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Interpreting English Verb Conversions
The Role of Metonymy and Metaphor

In this paper we set out to illustrate the workings of some basic cognitive mechanisms in the process of interpreting English verb conversions. Given the flexible methodological principles of cognitive linguistics, we will argue that it is fully equipped to account for the full complexity of the meanings of such verbs.

1. Introduction

Simplifying things for expository purposes, we may say that most accounts of English verb conversions belong to one of two major groups. Depending on methodological orientation and theoretical bias, one can either adopt an analytical approach, i. e. start from the output, i. e. the new verb and isolate criteria that would allow for some kind of classification (analytical paradigm), or assume a top–down perspective, trying to predict the creation of new verbs on the basis of some kind of productive rule (synthetic paradigm)[1]. While in most earlier (hand)books on English word formation and grammars of English (Marchand 1969, Bauer 1983, Adams 1973, Quirk et. al. 1972) the criteria used were implicit syntactic relations 'underlying' verb conversions, it would be less than precise to call them synthetic. Neither Marchand (1969) nor Adams (1973) nor Quirk et. al. (1972) set out to explicate a specific algorythm for the creation of verb conversions. Their syntactic paraphrases are only used to classify the new verbs according to the function of their 'source' word within a putative underlying predicate–argument structure. Unfortunately, at that time

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1   Cf. Brekle & Kastovsky, 1977

there was little systematic to say above and beyond the syntactic classifications. After the more or less neat classification of verb conversions into groups such as e. g. predicate–object (*to lamb, to blossom*), predicate–object complement (*to knight, to beggar, to blind*), predicate–subject complement (*to captain, to dog, to fox, to clear*), predicate–adverbial (*to gas, to curry, to taxi*)[2] little was offered in the way of explaining their semantics. At best one can find unprincipled semantic subclassifications based on the typical meanings that such verbs receive on the basis of the meaning of the source lexeme. A clearly synthetic, or generative approach would be far more difficult to handle[3], because any such venture is severely hampered if one works within rigid theoretical–methodological bounds, and that for two notorious reasons: lack of full productivity and recalcitrant semantic aspects of derivations[4], i. e. word formation phenomena in general. This is after all what had led the two most prominent figures of both research paradigms (Bloomfield 1933: 238ff; Chomsky 1970) to characterize word–formation phenomena[5] as resisting systematic study.

> ... the semantic relations are not grammatically definable. Thus, we derive a great many verbs from nouns by means of various changes, including a zero–element, but the meanings of these derived verbs in relation to the underlying noun are manifold: *to man, to dog, to beard, to nose, to milk, to tree, to table, to skin, to bottle, to father, to fish, to clown,* and so on (Bloomfield 1933: 238ff).

> The idiosyncratic character of the relation between the derived nominal and the associated verb has been so often remarked that discussion is superfluous. Consider, for example, such nominals as *laughter, construction, actions, activities, revolution, belief, doubt, conversion, permutation, trial, residence, qualifications, specifications*, and so on, with their individual ranges of meaning and varied semantic relations to the base forms. There are a few subregularities that have frequently been noted, but the range of variation and its rather incidental character are typical of lexical structure (Chomsky 1970: 189).

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2   The classification and examples are taken from Marchand (1969); Adams (1973) proposed a similar analysis

3   Karius (1977) is an example of integrating analysis and synthesis in her account of instrumental denominal null–suffixed verbs within Chomsky's Standard theory (1965). Needless to say, synthesis is confined to the realm of the categorial part of the base component, i. e. to the fully productive rules of syntax creating pre–terminal strings, which are then fed matching information from the lexical entries which (for purposes of her analysis) are analysed into the so called lexical propositions.

4   For example the fact that *table the motion* means more, or something different from barely 'put the motion on the table'. This structured, predictable portion of verb semantics is, by some accounts, overlaid with an unstructured semantic residue (cf. Rose 1983).

5   Chomsky discusses the problem not in relation to word formation as such but as it pertains to problems of deriving nominalizations by productive rules of syntax. The problems are the same, however.

Things, of course, are not as simple as that, and there have been more and less convincing proposals for the solution of the problem of semantic idiosyncracies on various linguistic fronts (Coseriu 1977, Karius 1977, Lipka 1977, Ljung 1977, Barner and Bale 2002). A number of approaches put the blame on lexicalization, understood as a long–term process during which lexical units develop unpredictable semantic features. This is not completely unrelated to the dichotomies frequently invoked to account for the limited productivity of verb conversions, namely competence and performance, system and use, mental systems and behavior (cf. Ljung 1977, Rose 1983, Barner and Bale 2002). Verbs, according to such accounts, can be freely created according to fully productive rules, yet some are never *used* and fall into oblivion while others are produced, stored in the mental lexicon, where through *use* they develop semantic idiosyncracies. Least acceptable of all is to claim, as some have (to make facts accord with theory), that the two lexemes are nothing but a homonymic pair, two completely unrelated lexical units (Ljung 1977). This claim is so blatantly counterintuitive that a simple commonsense comment like the following suffices to undermine it:

> For example, to say that *wrinkle* the noun and *wrinkle* the verb are simply homophonous lexical items in English would be to claim that the striking phonological and semantic resemblances of the two *wrinkles* are merely accidental and exactly on a par with the resemblance between *buy* the verb and *by* the preposition, for example, or between *bare* the adjective and *bear* the noun (Sanders, 1988: 157)

We are not dismissing the idea of lexicalization in general[6], (and some kind of difference between rule/system and product/use[7]) but we propose to account for the semantics of verb conversions in a more principled fashion from our cognitive linguistic position on lexical semantics. Thus, our account of both the 'systematic' and 'unsystematic' aspects of the meaning of verb conversions will be based on the canonical event schemata (Dirven 1999), on the assumption of the encyclopaedic approach to lexical semantics and on other basic tenets of Langacker's usage–based model of grammar (2000). For limitations of space we shall not elaborate on the model but only provide crucial comments as they come to bear on the topic at hand. Our energy in what follows will be devoted

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6   In a usage–based model of grammar this would be accounted for as a case in which a schema only partially sanctions the instantiation because the instantiation fails to fully accord with schema specifications; in other words, there is greater elaborative distance between the sanctioning schema and the specific instantiation. This distance may in limiting cases be effectively reduced to zero, in which case we may say that the instantiation *is* the schema; i. e. it is so highly entrenched that it pre–empts categorization by the more general schemata available in the grammar. This is a very important fact about the model and language, because, unlike in some other theoretical models, it allows for general rules and specific facts to coexist as equally important aspects of one's knowledge of linguistic convention. For details, see Taylor 2002: 305ff, Langacker 1987, 2000).

7   In Langacker's terms, *schemas* and *instantiations*, though the boundary between them is fluid, unlike that between rigid dichotomous contrasts mentioned above.

to explicating motivations for the meanings of converted verbs; i. e. not in elucidating principles which *generate* or *predict* the system but those that *motivate,* or *make sense* of them (Lakoff 1987: 96). Crucial in that regard are canonical event schemas and the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy.

2. Clark&Clark (1979) & R. Dirven (1988)

Clark&Clark (1979) and Dirven (1988) represent two most important precursors of a more systematic account of the semantics of denominal verb conversions. Both base their classifications on the relevant paraphrases, yet the classes do not emerge on the basis of syntactic paraphrases, but on the basis of the case role (in the sense of Fillmore 1968) of the relevant (concrete) noun in those paraphrases. For example Clark&Clark (1979) isolate, among others, location verbs, locatum verbs, instrument verbs, experiencer verbs, etc. Two facts merit special mention here: a) there is a correlation between the isolated case roles of the parent nouns and the classes and subclasses of nouns according to the speaker's theories of their denotata (e. g. for locatum verbs, the parent noun denotes PLACEABLES – things like carpets, whose conventional role is to be placed with respect to other objects; for location verbs, the parent nouns denote PLACES – things with respect to which other objects are conventionally placed, etc.); b) the interpretation of such verbs is based on the kinds of situations in which the denotata of the corresponding nouns take part. Clark&Clark's (1979) convention for the interpretation of such verbs "relies critically on a theory of what people *know* [my italics] about (concrete) objects". The authors do not aim to provide a theory of kinds of situations because "When it comes to situations, kinds are particularly difficult to characterize. Unlike concrete objects, they do not come ready–made in discrete bundles." Still they conclude that "situations clearly fall into kinds when they have good rationales. One common rationale is that a kind of situation consists of all situations that have the same goal, purpose, or outcome" (1979: 796).

3. Event schemas

The reliance on *knowledge* about specific objects that the relevant nouns denote and on the *knowledge* of different *kinds* of situations in which they can participate is precisely what makes the two approaches consonant with the cognitive analysis we are about to present. Namely, to account for the systematic aspect of the semantics of verb conversions Dirven (1999) isolates three canonical event schemata which could structure what Clark&Clark (1979) termed kinds of situations. In Dirven's (1999) account the prime sources of motivations for verb conversions are the schematic models of events: the action schema, the motion schema and the essive schema or some combination thereof. First, a typical action schema accords with Langacker's canonical event model (1991: 285), or a prototypical action chain, and contains the fol-

lowing conceptual elements: the AGENT, as the source of energy that affects, and induces a change of state in a PATIENT. This action chain may also include an INSTRUMENT via which the energy is transmitted to the patient. Less significant in Dirven's action schema is the additional optional element of MANNER, which accounts for the manner in which the action is performed. The mechanism runs as follows. If for some reason one of the elements[8] of a schema becomes salient enough for purposes of local expression, this element can be used metonymically to stand for the entire schema. This principle accounts for the following verbs in English:

 a) Metonymic profiling of patient: *to fish, to salmon, to whale*
 b) Metonymic profiling of instrument: *to lure, to bomb, to cane, to chain*
 c) Metonymic profiling of manner: *to fish for compliments, to nurse someone*

Second, there is the motion schema, with its typical elements of the MOVING PATIENT, SOURCE, PATH and GOAL. It is the basis of the following types of verbs:

 a) Metonymic profiling of source: *to mine, to quarry*
 b) Metonymic profiling of path: *to channel*
 c) Metonymic profiling of goal: *to surface, to land*

And lastly, there is the essive schema in which metonymic mechanisms would profile the element of CLASS MEMBERSHIP/ATTRIBUTE, which Dirven exemplifies with the following verbs: *to volunteer, to author* etc. Still there seem to be certain problems, however, of deciding whether the essive schema can ever motivate conversion to verbs single–handedly, i. e. without coactivation of the action schema. So instead of saying that the verb *to volunteer* appears on the basis of a schema relation that could be coded as a simple copular construction *He is a volunteer*, we believe that the relevant semantics can only be arrived at if we presume some kind of action performed on the side of the volunteer. In other words, by saying *John volunteered to do the job* we are not identifying John as a member of the volunteer category, but assert that he is about to *do* the job on a voluntary basis; i. e. as a volunteer. This seems to accord well with Dirven's earlier remark that almost all English verb conversions are dynamic verbs (1988: 330), but contradict his later analysis of *to volunteer* as arising through a metonymic process within the essive schema alone. We will not pursue this question here as it does not invalidate the general principles.

Further to be stressed about these schemas is that they may motivate new verbs that are their less than perfect instantiations. Thus, while we could characterize the verb *to whale* as a close enough instantiation of metonymic profiling within an action schema: there in an AGENT (*whale hunter*) who acts wilfully and energetically on a PATIENT, (*whale*), which in turn undergoes a

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8   Though not all, there seem to be constraints on which elements of a schema can undergo metonymic profiling (cf. Dirven, 1999)

change of state (the state of being free and alive in his natural habitat to the state of captivity which ultimately results in the animal's death), e. g.

1) *Though some historians have written that **he whaled** at this last location, there is no evidence to support that contention.*

the following verbs may be seen as categorized by the same schema with more strain:

2) *Needless to say, mares should never be left **to foal** in paddocks with dams, creeks, ravines, or other hazards.*

3) *They **holiday** in exotic locations.*

4) *I **breakfast** quickly, drinking several cups of tea...*

In 2) the AGENT does not act energetically or wilfully (the activity of producing offspring is biologically determined; this less prototypical AGENT does not chose to foal whenever and however it pleases); there is no AFFECTED OBJECT, but an EFFECTED OBJECT, although we might claim that coming into being is a sort of change of state (from the state of nonexistence to the state of existence). In 3) *holiday* might be construed as the AFFECTED OBJECT in the sense that it is being consumed by an experiencer–like AGENT as time passes; just like in 4) breakfast is literally consumed by an AGENT in the act of eating. The fact is that all the cases mentioned, the more and the less prototypical alike, receive the same syntactic coding in the corresponding English sentence with no verb conversions (just as they do in those with conversion for that matter). Specifically, transitive sentences, which represent the typical coding of prototypical action chains, code our less prototypical scenarios as well:... *he hunted whales at this last location;... mares should never be left to produce foal in paddocks...; They spend holidays in exotic locations; I have a quick breakfast....*

It is important to draw here a parallel between what in previous, non–cognitive accounts was called the linguistically structured, systematic part of the meaning of verb conversions (see fn. 4), and the cognitive models presented here. Namely, to account for verbs that involve both action and motion as in *table the motion*, Rose (1973) proposes a systematic semantic relation 'to put X onto N' (smudged by unstructured semantic residue). The same 'systematic part' (but also more than that) can be accounted for by invoking a complex conceptual model that incorporates both the action schema and the motion schema. Details aside (such as the possibility of construing the PATIENT simultaneously as the MOVER, which is mirrored in Dirven's blended term *moving patient* (cf. Langacker, 1991: 326ff), the question of whether LOCATION/DESTINATION should qualify as AFFECTED OBJECT instead of/or together with the MOVER), we may represent the relevant conceptual configuration as follows:
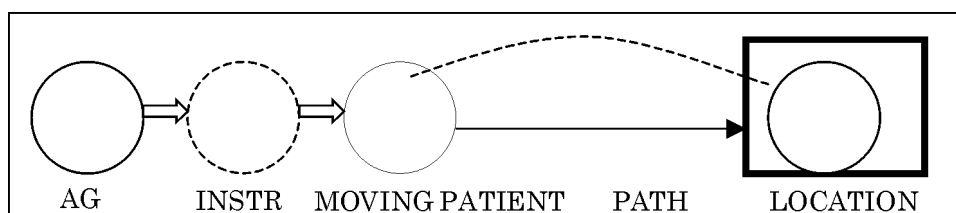
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Fig 1: Conceptual salience of LOCATION within the complex conceptualization of action schema and motion schema (forced movement towards some destination) giving rise to the expression *table the motion*.

The same schema, though with the moving patient as the salient element, provides motivation for the following linguistic instantiations:

5) *... but having **yoked** my oxen ....*
6) *When transplanting leeks, **water** the soil throughly if it is dry...*
7) *He was convicted of failing to **muzzle** a pit bull.*

Through energetic action, the AGENT ties a *yoke* (MOVING PATIENT) across the necks of oxen (LOCATION); puts a *muzzle* on the nose and mouth of dogs; pours *water* over the soil etc. Given the metonymic salience of MOVING PATIENTS, they are processualized (in Langacker's terminology) and come to stand for the activities of tying, putting and pouring, respectively. This results in a marked coding in which the conceptually salient elements are coded as verbs that are semantically 'stronger' (*to yoke, to water, to muzzle*) than would be their unmarked correspondents *to tie, to put, to pour*.

4. Bridging the gap between the systematic and the residue

The strength of the cognitive linguistics approach, however, does not lie in the mere restating of old insights in accordance with its own theoretical terms, but in the ability of its apparatus to simultaneously and straightforwardly account for the entire spectrum of semantic facts about converted verbs (traditionally of the 'systematic portion' of meaning and the 'semantic residue'). In other words, the conceptual event schemata and the cognitive operations of metaphor and metonymy allow for a straightforward account of the more 'figurative' examples such as the following:

8) *They **embargoed** oil shipments to the U. S.*
9) *They had to **mortgage** their home to pay the bills.*
10) *They **tabled** the motion.*

Rose would reject such examples as "unstructured metaphorical extensions" (e. g. his account of *to ape someone* 1973: 513) and explain them away by allocating them to semantic waste which has nothing to do with the fully productive semantic patterns. Where cognitive linguistics supersedes such accounts is in viewing conceptual entities not as classical Aristotelian categories, but as structured around a prototype, as the best example of a given category. Mem-

bership in a category is thus judged to be a matter of degree, not of common shared properties, which are necessary and sufficient and shared by all members alike (Rosch & Mervis 1975). This allows us to construe *embargo* and *mortgage* as MOVING PATIENTS via a principled metaphorical extension from CONCRETE to ABSTRACT MOVING ENTITIES. Also, we propose no fewer than three metonymic operations at work in the interpretation of the verb *to table*. At this point we will illustrate them in order to draw attention to the complexity of the example. Later on we will provide the theoretical backbone for our insights when we introduce the notion of the *network model* below. Namely, there is first the operation of metonymic expansion from the entity designated by the nominal predicate *table* to the underlying domain of meetings to make sense of the semantics of the entity TABLE in that particular context. This domain is relatively rich in detail not all of which is *directly* relevant for the metonymic mapping effecting the processualization of TABLE (the usual overall setting, the different roles of participants in a meeting, etc.). We propose here a second metonymic process, which would reduce the domain to its inherent action–motion structure (corresponding to Dirven's combined action–motion schema) relevant for the final metonymic operation. In this action–motion structure there is an agent who places a document/a proposal on the negotiation table. Finally, there is a metonymic mapping of the salient element, LOCATION, onto the whole of action–motion structure embedded in the overall domain. Schematically, this could be represented as follows:
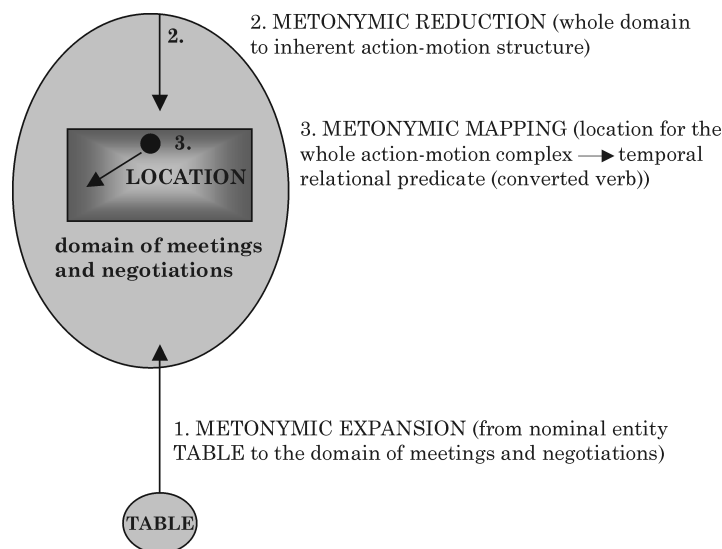

Fig. 2: Complex interplay of different metonymic operations behind the processualization of the nominal entitity designated by the lexeme *table* (i. e. conversion of the noun *table* to the verb *to table*)

It is important to stress that, on such an account, speakers do not lose sight of the larger embedding structures available at earlier stages of interpretation.

What metonymic reduction and metonymic mappings do is defocus or background, not obliterate the immediately less relevant structure.

Before we move on to discuss in more detail the metonymic and metaphoric mappings behind the 'idiosyncratic' aspects of the meaning of verb conversions, let us summarize the points so far made:

- In a CL account, verb conversions are morphosyntactic reflections of the metonymic profiling of a salient element within an event schema. This accounts for what has traditionally been accounted for as the principled semantic aspect of verb conversions.
- However, our claim is that the same cognitive apparatus simultaneously and straightforwardly accounts for the full complexity of verb conversions, thus covering also what in traditional accounts went beyond 'the systematic'. We have already given some preliminary ideas on how this works; now we turn to the point in more detail.

5. The network model (Langacker 1987)

What Clark&Clark (1979) referred to as the *knowledge* of the objects that the parent nouns denote, i. e. an individual's theory of the denotata of nouns that serve as input for conversion has its counterpart in the *network model* of linguistic semantics, as envisaged by Langacker 1987: 163). Here a brief introduction is in order. Cognitive linguistics in general insists on an encyclopaedic account of linguistic semantics. To illustrate let us go back to the lexical item *table*. The entity designated by this lexeme is understood as an access node to a vast and complex conceptual network of knowledge more or less relevant for its characterization (only one of them being the domain of negotiations illustrated in Fig 2). The semantic value of this symbolic unit is given by an open-ended set of relations – simple and complex, direct and indirect – in which the access node participates (Langacker, 1987: 163). That is to say, knowledge about tables is interconnected and organized into structures of increasing complexity and abstraction. Among the more central information for the semantic value of the lexeme *table* would be the specifications in the primary domains of physical properties – like its shape, material it is made of; of its function as a piece of furniture used to serve meals on, etc (the small circle in Fig. 2 labelled TABLE). Far less relevant (and less directly accessible) for the characterization of the central meaning of *table* would be the domain of negotiations, meetings and suchlike, in which tables play some, though only a minor role (in our diagram this is reflected in there being some distance between the small and the large circle). Furthermore, nothing in principle prevents me from storing in my conceptual system completely idiosyncratic information about my

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9 The difference between more central and more peripheral knowledge that provides the basis of meaning interpretation has its analogue in Clark&Clark's division of WORLD KNOWLEDGE into GENERIC KNOWLEDGE and PARTICULAR KNOWLEDGE. These notions are used in their empirical outline of what would be necessary to account for the process of interpreting innovative verb conversions (1979: 788ff)

friend having the exact same table as I do. It is, of course, completely unlikely that I would ever use this piece of information to explain what I believe to be the central meaning of the lexeme to a foreigner, but that it adds, however little, to my theory of this specific object, cannot be denied[9]. There are some parameters that do in fact help delimit more relevant from less relevant knowledge – such as the extent to which this knowledge is conventional, i. e. shared by a number of speakers; general, i. e. not idiosyncractic like that of my neighbor's table; relevant, shape e. g. being more relevant for the specification of the concept TABLE than color and so on.

Let us take another example. A conventional unit defines a category, say [SANDWICH], and sanctions[10] a novel, target structure to the extent that the target structure is judged by the conceptualizer to be a member of the category, as e. g. [HAM SANDWICH]. In this case the target structure is said to stand in elaborative relationship to the sanctioning unit [SANDWICH][11]. However, not always is this categorizing relationship so unproblematic. In other words, there are cases when the target structure can only be perceived as member of the category with a greater deal of strain. These are cases of the so called partial sanction: the conventional unit [SANDWICH] can be used to sanction a novel usage event where the same phonological sequence symbolizes the conception of the layered structure of a concert as coded in the following example:

11) *But they **sandwich** two orchestral pieces thus presenting an otherwise plausible (though) infrequent sort of concert outline (Prokofiev, Gershwin, interval, Gershwin, Enescu) exactly inside out.*

In other words, the sanctioning structure [SANDWICH] and the novel target structure stand in the relationship of extension. The sanctioning unit represents the lexical item in its literal sense, the target structure corresponds to its novel figurative value. This categorizing relationship is not the most direct, but given the network model is not much forced either. For the purpose at hand, i. e. for a vivid description of the layered structure of a concert, the target structure is perceived as similar enough in relevant respects to licence such a categorization. With repeated use, even such relationships may become conventional as is the case with the example at hand. According to the network model described above, there is nothing aberrant about such a complex lexical semantic structure. Both the relationship of elaboration and the relationship of extension legitimately add to the complexity of lexical semantic structure.

All of the above should show that, according to the basic tenets of Langacker's usage–based model, in the process of interpretation of verb conversions there is no categorial difference between the systematic and unsystematic, be-

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10 "Sanction reduces to categorization. A conventional unit defines a category, and sanctions a target structure to the extent that the latter is judged by the speaker to be a member of the category" (Langacker, 1987: 68).

11 The elaboration of a schema is consistent with its specifications but is more fully and precisely specified (Langacker, 1987: 489).

tween semantics proper and some kind of residue. The processes involved in metaphor interpretation or interpretation of non–metaphorical, yet still imaginative utterances like *table the motion* are not different in kind than those involved in the comprehension of literal utterances (cf. Langacker, 1987: 69ff). The difference resides in whether a novel–usage event will be categorized by elaboration (non–figurative utterances) or extension (figurative utterances) with the difference between categorization by elaboration and by extension boiling down the degree of strain with which such categorizations are effected.

This is what allows us to construe embargoes and mortages as MOVING OB-JECTS eventually placed on a LOCATION. In cases like *table the motion* the interpretation does not depend on having direct access to the most central of domains used for the specification of the meaning of the lexeme, but on being able to follow a structured route through the network to whatever domain is relevant for the interpretation of the new meaning in the appropriate context, in this case the non–central domain of meetings and negotiations. It is within this relatively distant domain that the new verb emerges on the basis of the second domain–internal (see Fig. 2) metonymic operation; i. e. mapping from the salient place on which the document in placed to the entire relevant action–motion scenario (placing the proposal on the table).

6. Metonymy before metaphor?

Before we conclude, we would like to pick up some loose ends from our preliminary discussion of the verbs *to sandwich, to embargo, to mortgage* and adduce some more examples to support our claims. The mentioned verbs were first used to illustrate some general methodological principles; now there are a few more important things to say about their interpretation. Namely, all verbs were said to involve a metaphorical relation, in the former between the structure of a [SANDWICH] and the structure of a (CONCERT), in the latter two between [PHYSICAL MOVING OBJECTS] and (ABSTRACT MOVING OBJECTS). So far so good. However, there seems to be some more cognitive processing involved which determines the amount of conceptual information picked up in on–line interpretation. Namely, earlier on we said that the sanctioning structure [SANDWICH], and the novel target structure stand in the relationship of extension, whereby the sanctioning unit represents the lexical item in its literal sense, the target structure corresponds to its novel figurative value. However, we presume that not everything we know from the primary domain of sandwiches needs to be activated in categorizing the novel metaphorical usage event. We need a mechanism to sidetrack the unnecessary portions of knowledge like e. g. the kinds of restaurants they are served at, the average number of calories per sandwich and suchlike, and focus only on the knowledge of putting together their layered structure (a person takes usually two slices of bread, and puts meat, cheese etc. in between). If this focusing is achieved via our general cognitive capacity to pick out the most salient portion of a larger cognitive structure, we cannot but conclude that even metaphorical interpreta-

tion is constrained and facilitated by a prior metonymic *domain reduction* (Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña Cervel, 2002: 148ff). The target structure is then sanctioned by the sanctioning unit [SANDWICH], provided the appropriate substructure can be metonymically identified within the target as well. This target substructure would include a music director arranging a layered concert outline.
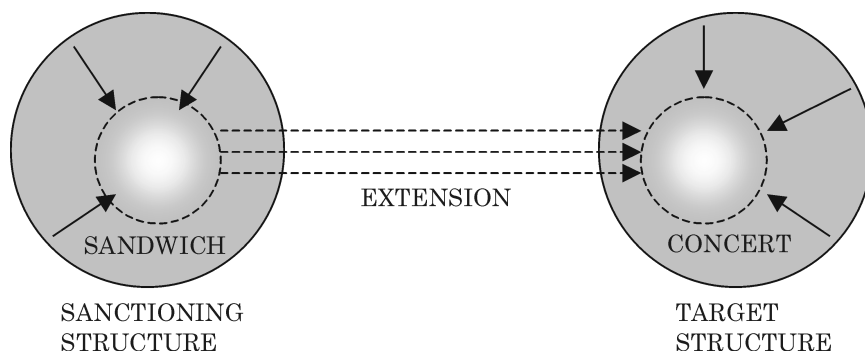

Fig. 3: Metonymic reduction in the sanctioning and target structure
preparing the ground for categorization by metaphorical extension

The road is now open for the final cognitive mechanism: a target–internal metonymy, mapping LOCATION onto the whole action–motion structure (comprising an AGENT putting two orchestral pieces, MOVING PATIENTS, in a LOCATION corresponding to the metaphorical sandwich). This last metonymy results in the processualization of the entity designated by the noun *sandwich*, i. e. in the emergence of the verb *to sandwich*.

The same analysis can be put forth for 12) where emotions are metaphorically put into a container; i. e. are not let out. The lexeme *bottle* gives us access to a domain where BOTTLE is represented as a container for storing liquids. This sanctioning unit, BOTTLE, functions as part of an event schema in which BOTTLE is a LOCATION/CONTAINER into which by virtue of AGENT'S action a MOVING PATIENT gets to be placed. This unit sanctions the metaphorical use of BOTTLE, standing for the children's bodies, as a CONTAINER for emotions, which are construed as MOVING ENTITIES.

12) *... this may be done for the best of reasons but it only ensures that children **bottle up** their feelings as well as their tears.*

In the case of *embargo* and *mortgage* we believe we have a similar case of metonymy–before–metaphor; i. e. metonymic reduction but only within the target structure. In this case there is a more schematic [ACTION–MOTION] sanctioning unit containing as one of its elements the PHYSICAL MOVING OBJECT. Given its schematic nature this sanctioning unit requires no conceptual reduction as in the previous cases but directly supports the categorization of entities designated by *embargo* and *mortgage* as ABSTRACT MOVING OBJECTS. Again, sanction proceeds only after whatever we know about embargoes and mortgages is stripped down to the appropriate substructure. In other words,

we metonymically carve out of the domain of embargoes and mortgages only the substructure corresponding to the schematic sanctioning unit; an AGENT exerting force over the entities EMBARGO/MORTGAGE as MOVING PATIENTS which, as a result of this action, get to be placed on a LOCATION, as roughly reflected in e. g.:

13) *They imposed an embargo over oil shipments;...*
14) *...otherwise the new owner must lift the mortgage or pay up the interest fee and let the mortgage stay on the property.*

Outside of this correspondence there remain details about the potential causes for imposition of embargoes, on the formal procedures necessary to implement decisions on imposing embargoes etc. in the former, and e. g. conditions on lifting the mortgage in case of premature loan repayment, etc. in the latter. Still these correspondences support a range of inferences, e. g.: physical objects have a certain weight, with which they press onto the location on which they come to be placed; embargoes and mortgages are also construed as having 'weight' with which they negatively affect the economy of the country, or the property; the country and the property are construed as being trapped under the weight etc.
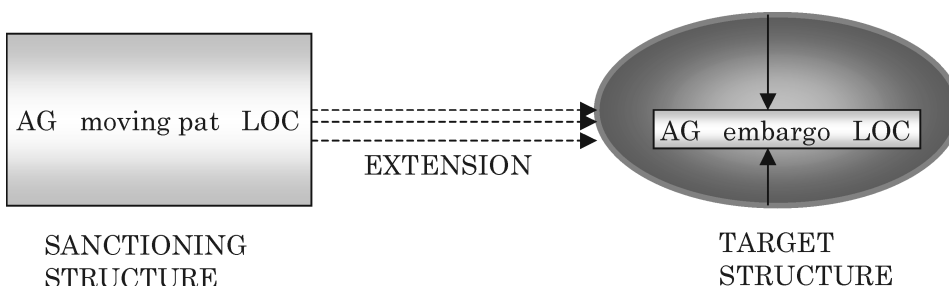

Fig. 4: Metonymic reduction of the target domain of embargoes to its inherent action–motion structure supporting sanction by extension.

This opens the road for the final metonymic mapping within the target structures. Here it is not the LOCATION, but the MOVING PATIENTS that come to stand for the whole action–motion structures as reflected in sentences 8) and 9) (in Figure 1 this would be indicated by the bold line of the circle representing the MOVING PATIENT).

The same analysis can be applied to the following examples where both *solace* and *mandate* as ABSTRACT MOVING ENTITIES are metaphorical counterparts of the CONCRETE MOVING ENTITY within the [ACTION–MOTION] sanctioning unit. As such they eventually get placed into their respective metaphorical LOCATIONS, into the hands of the possessor–agent *he* in 15) and into the soul in 16).

15) *He'd been **mandated** by the West African Economic Community to go in and enforce a ceasefire.*
16) *From them a new vision and emotion will emanate to **solace** the soul and give it joy.*

25

These last points raise the more general question of whether there can ever be metaphorical interpretation without metonymy preparing the ground for it beforehand. We could hypothesize that the structures corresponding to Dirven's event schemata, within which processualization occurs, must always be metonymically isolated first from their embedding conceptual domains. Sometimes these structures need to be metonymically accessed within both the sanctioning and target structure, sometimes within the target structure alone. Some more examples we are about to adduce seem to support this hypothesis; however, we would like to remain noncommital on this question as it requires extensive empirical studies on a range of different data, not only those which are the subject matter of this paper.

17) *Chen is credited with coining the term people's commune, the now discredited model of huge collective farms that, according to Mao, would **catapult** China into a state of pure communism almost overnight.*

The interpretation of the verb in 17) ***to catapult*** *s*tarts from the lexical access node that designates CATAPULTS. The central information available for this entity are the relevant physical properties, an object with typical features like size, material it is made of, and its function in human experience; catapults are devices used to shoot small stones or devices used to send aircraft into the air from an aircraft carrier. However, within this sanctioning unit there is only a limited portion that must be metonymically accessed to sanction a novel metaphorical usage event like that exemplified in 17). This substructure involves an AGENT (e. g. *a child; a soldier*) sending an object, the MOVING PATIENT (*stone; aircraft*) into a specific LOCATION (*another child or bird; air*) in a specific MANNER (quickly and suddenly). On analogy, many action–motion activities that occur quickly and suddenly are candidates for categorization by this sanctioning unit. Correspondences are easily established; China's overnight transition into communism is categorized by a unit wherein physical objects are quickly launched into physical locations. Once we have these correspondences, the final metonymic operation within the target maps the MANNER of forced motion onto the entire action–motion structure which results in the converted verb *to catapult*. A similar analysis could be provided for the metaphorical example in 18), where the manner of achieving an abstract goal (public admiration) is metaphorically understood as a manner of movement typical of worms:

18) *She never misses a chance to **worm** her way into the public's hearts.*

All the verbs discussed so far eventually emerged on the basis of a metonymic mapping within a complex action–motion schema as illustrated in Fig. 1. However, the schemata relevant for the characterization of verb conversions are many (Buljan, 2004 proposes five conceptual configurations within which different elements may be metonymically profiled – giving a total of 15 relevant conceptual configurations). Still, we hold that the general principles of interpretation do not vary from schema to schema. For example, the verbs in 19) and 20) are results of a metonymic mapping of the MANNER element wit-

hin a simple action schema onto the whole action schema (MANNER FOR AC-TIVITY metonymy):

19) *And for those few women who **parrot** their words.*

20) *Erm everything as I say okay yeah g er on knowing your script yeah good, didn't erm waver at all and also very good John at the old active liste-ning, sales type people, we tend to **rabbit rabbit rabbit** and not listen and it's a fault.*

These two examples are analogous to our *sandwich* example in that what we presume to be the most centrally accessible knowledge arrived at immedi-ately via the lexical access node (physical properties and behavior, function in human lives) needs to be reduced to the necessary minimum. The necessary minimum in the context of sentences 19) and 20) is the knowledge of the abil-ity of parrots to repeat people's words exactly, and rapid almost incessant lip and nose movements of rabbits respectively. Once we metonymically access those particulars about the animals' behavior in the sanctioning structure we can categorize people as such to the extent we have identified them as per-forming the same activity in an analogous manner (also via metonymic reduc-tion of the target structure). In 19) women are construed as talking gibberish, as uninventively repeating somebody's, perhaps even their own words. The in-ference is that nothing new is being communicated; in 20) people talk on and on, whereby what they are talking about is fast, monotonous and structureless, there seems to be no beginning and no end to it.

Unfortunately, space prevents a finer analysis of more examples. We would like to conclude by proposing the same set of interpretive principles for verbs, metaphorical and non–metaphorical alike, which arise from other conceptual event schemata, some of which are listed below for the purpose of illustration.

- The lexical access node is a metonymic vehicle to information–rich con-ceptual domains more or less relevant for the interpretation of the con-verted verb in the appropriate context
- Within this domain the relevant substructure, corresponding to concep-tual event schemata, is metonymically accessed
- The final metonymic mapping maps a salient element onto the whole embedding conceptual event structure effecting a processualization of the non–verbal entity

21) *After Marie Antoinette was **guillotined**, her lips moved in an attempt to speak.* (ACTION SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of INSTRUMENT)

22) *John **Greyhounded** to Los Angeles*
(AUTONOMOUS MOTION SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of INSTRU-MENT)

23) *Matt **ducked** into his office.*
(AUTONOMOUS MOTION SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of MANNER)

24) *Caspar was **weeding** the garden.*
(ACTION–MOTION SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of PATIENT (privative interpretation))

25) **Scoop away** *the seeds and discard.*
(ACTION–MOTION SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of INSTRUMENT)

26) *His wife* **beggared** *him.*

27) *Jones was* **orphaned** *at the age of ten, and taken in by next–door neigh-bours.*
(ACTION–ESSIVE SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of CATEGORY MEMBER-SHIP (PATIENT becomes MEMBER OF CATEGORY)

28) *The way they* **butcher** *meat.*

29) *You may have a friend with a nice car willing to* **chauffeur** *you.*
(ACTION–ESSIVE SCHEMA: metonymic profiling of CATEGORY MEMBER-SHIP (AGENT AS MEMBER OF CATEGORY acts on the PATIENT))

7. Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to show that the whole meaning of converted verbs can be accounted for systematically and straightforwardly provided we assume more flexible theoretical–methodological principles as found in cognitive linguistics. The event schemas, which in prototypical cases may roughly correspond to the semantic regularities detected in other paradigms, in fact go far beyond the systematic. They can be identified in a range of domains that sanction novel usage events by metaphorical extension (*to embargo, to mortgage, to sandwich*), or in non–central domains that categorize novel usage events over greater elaborative distances (*to table*). Metonymic and metaphorical mechanisms were shown to operate over the complex conceptual network structure allowing access to the conceptual information necessary for the interpretation of English verb conversions.

Our purpose here was to bring under the spotlight many of the interesting and important facts about verb conversions that have been off the linguistic stage for too long. We focussed on the semantics of verb conversions, not only to redress the balance between interest in form and interest in meaning, but to propose the semantic, i. e. cognitive semantic approach as a viable and perhaps even more revelatory option in a more thorough account of verb conversions. We did not, admittedly, invest time and effort in eludicating other aspects of verb conversion, i. e. morphological and syntactic facts, yet the little glimpse we have given of the kind of conceptual–linguistic correlations that could be uncovered should be enough to at least stir us into rethinking the whole story in cognitive linguistic terms.

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Tumačenje glagolske preobrazbe u engleskome
Uloga metonimije i metafore

Cilj je ovog rada prikazati interakciju nekih od osnovnih kognitivnih mehanizama u procesu interpretacije glagolskih preobrazbi u engleskom jeziku. S obzirom na fleksibilna metodološka načela kognitivne lingvistike, nastojat ćemo pokazati da je analizom temeljenom na njezinim postulatima moguće objasniti svu kompleksnost značenja takvih glagola.

Key words: metaphor, metonymy, verb conversion, event schema, English language, cognitive linguistics

Ključne riječi: metafora, metonimija, glagolska konverzija, shema događaja, engleski jezik, kognitivna lingvistika