

Metonymy in Grammar Revisited

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In a series of publications and presentations (e.g. Nishimura 2002, 2003, 2008), I have proposed a characterization of metonymy that, to my mind, is sufficiently unified and comprehensive to allow us to (1) deal with the widest range of metonymic phenomena, (2) explain why metonymy should be as pervasive in language as most cognitive linguists would like to think it is, and (3) show that a broad array of grammatical phenomena, many of which have traditionally been treated separately, can all be seen as grounded in metonymy.

1. The Ubiquity of Metonymy

“The widest range of metonymic phenomena” mentioned in (1) is meant to include not just expressions like (4)-(7), in which each of the underlined nominals can be seen as referring to an entity **contiguous** to (or closely associated with) what it ordinarily designates, but also such locutions as (8)-(11). The term metonymy has traditionally been applied to conventional modes of expression like (4) and (5) as well as highly context dependent utterances, such as (6) and (7).¹

Suppose, for example, two friends on a train are getting off at the same station and the train is pulling into the station in question. Then you can easily imagine one of them saying to the other, “This is us.” Here the personal pronoun *us* refers to the station at which the speaker and the addressee are supposed to get off, which, in this context, is closely associated with what it normally designates, namely the speaker and the addressee. The sentence in (7) was actually said by me to a friend about a month after we went on a pleasant trip to a hot spring resort in Nagano. Here *Nagano* refers to our recent trip, which, in this context, is closely associated with whatever this place name is primarily used to refer to (certainly not our trip to the prefecture).

(4) Where are you parked?

¹ The traditional rhetoric defines metonymy as a figure of speech whereby the name of one entity e^1 is used to refer to another entity e^2 which is contiguous to e^1 . (Taylor 1995: 122)

- (5) Saikin mata Murakami Haruki-o yomihajimeta.
 ‘I’ve started reading Murakami Haruki again.’
- (6) This is us.
- (7) Nagano-wa tanoshikatta desune.
 ‘Nagano was fun, wasn’t it?’
- (8) My pencil broke.
- (9) Jitensha-o koida.
 ‘Lit. I pumped my bicycle.’
 ‘I pedaled my bicycle.’
 cf. pedaru-o kogu
 ‘pump the pedals’
- (10)a. I opened the door/the window.
 b. I walked through the door/put my head through the window.
- (11)a. The phone kept ringing.
 b. No one bothered to pick up the phone.

Although expressions like (8) and (9) may not strike you as metonymic, they can be viewed as such if you agree with Langacker (1984) and Seto (1986) that in each example the underlined nominal refers not to the whole pencil or the bicycle in its entirety, which it normally designates, but to a particular part of the writing instrument or the vehicle, specifically, the lead point or the pedals.

If these count as examples of metonymy, I do not see any reason why the relationship between the underlined parts of each of the pairs in (10) and (11) should not be viewed as metonymic. There should be no question that we can come up with an endless list of such examples.

Perhaps more importantly, although all the examples we have looked at so far are generally analyzed as nominals being used metonymically, the concept of metonymy is applicable to a wider variety of grammatical classes. Just to give a few examples at this stage, I would analyze the sentences in (12) and (13) as involving metonymy pertaining respectively to the adjective *comfortable* and the verb *chirakaru*.

- (12)a. I made myself comfortable in the sofa.
 b. I found the sofa comfortable.
- (13)a. Heyajuu-ni hon-ga chirakatteiru.
 ‘There are books scattered all over the room.’
 b. Heya-ga hon-de chirakatteiru.
 ‘The room is a mess because there are books scattered all over it.’

In (12), *comfortable* in (a) highlights a particular type of sensation experienced by the speaker, while the same adjective in (b) brings into focus whatever property the sofa has that causes that type of sensation. The relationship between these two variants of *comfortable* is metonymic because the sensation and the property in question are causally related. Likewise, while (13a) and (13b) profile the same spatial configuration (books being scattered all over the room), they contrast semantically in terms of figure/ground alignment (i.e. whether the configuration is viewed as one centering on books or the room), representing an instance of figure/ground reversal.

It should come as no surprise by now that metonymy plays an important role in **diachronic** shifts in meaning as well. Illustrated in (14) is a clear case of metonymy-based semantic extension currently underway.²

- (14)a. Tsumetai mizu-ga ha-ni/Kemuri-ga me-ni shimiru.
 ‘Cold water/Smoke gets into and affects one’s teeth/eyes.’
 b. Ha/Me-ga shimiru.
 ‘One’s teeth/eyes hurt because liquid or gas has gotten into them.’

While (14a) exemplifies the primary use of the verb *shimiru*, its alternative use illustrated by (14b) is well on its way to becoming fully conventional. These two variants, while sharing the same base, which is something like <liquid or gas gets into and affects a body part, causing an unpleasant sensation>, profile different facets (or stages) of it:³ (14a) focuses on water or smoke getting into and affecting a body part, whereas in (14b) the center of attention is shifted to the unpleasant sensation arising in the body part as a result. (Note that verbs and adjectives pertaining to bodily sensations can generally code as

² Some might say that the process has already been completed, in which case this would be an instance of polysemy as well.

³ An expression’s **profile** is the entity it designates, or refers to, and as such is a focus of attention within the overall conception evoked, which is called its **base**.

subjects the body parts in which these sensations occur, as in *Ashi ga itai/itamu; My foot hurts.*)

I hope to have shown that metonymy is ubiquitous in everyday language. In fact, it may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that just about every ordinary expression is metonymic in one way or another.

2. Fundamental Cognitive Abilities Underlying Metonymy

Cognitive linguists believe that metonymic phenomena are linguistic manifestations of some fundamental cognitive abilities that are not specifically linguistic.

2.1. The Reference-point ability

The first such ability to be discussed concerns what Langacker (1993, 1995, 2008) calls **reference points**. As shown in (15), defined as the ability to invoke the conception of one entity (called a reference point) in order to establish “mental contact” with another (referred to as a target), the reference-point ability is certainly not limited in scope to matters of language but is obviously manifested in various nonlinguistic aspects of our everyday functioning.

(15) Clearly, then, we have the ability to invoke the conception of one entity in order to establish “mental contact” with another. The entity first invoked is called a **reference point**, and one accessed via a reference point is referred to as a **target**. A particular reference point affords potential access to many different targets. Collectively, this set of potential targets constitute the reference point’s **dominion**.

(Langacker 2008: 83-84)

According to Langacker (1993: 30),

(16) [T]he entity that is normally designated by a metonymic expression serves as a reference point affording mental access to the desired target (i.e., the entity actually being referred to).

(Langacker 1993: 30)

It should be easy to see that this characterization is readily applicable to prototypical instances of metonymy like (4) and (9).

- (4) Where are you parked? (R: the addressee T: the car you drove to get to where you are)
- (9) Jitensha-o koida (R: the bicycle T: the pedals)

2.2. The ability to access and manipulate “encyclopedic” knowledge

I believe that another fundamental cognitive ability needs to be invoked to accommodate the whole range of metonymic phenomena. This is our capacity to draw upon “encyclopedic” knowledge (as opposed to “dictionary” meaning). Cognitive linguists are committed to what is called **encyclopedic semantics**, the gist of which is shown in (17).

- (17) The encyclopedic view of meaning denies the existence of any precise or rigid boundary between semantics and pragmatics or between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge. Instead, expressions are seen as meaningful by virtue of evoking multiple realms of knowledge and experience—I call these **cognitive domains**—in a flexible, open-ended manner. (Langacker 1997: 235)

According to this view, the meaning of just about every linguistic expression can be adequately characterized only by invoking a whole complex of knowledge, which is, more often than not, encyclopedic in character. The body of knowledge, typically involving multiple cognitive domains, relative to which the meaning of a given linguistic expression can be adequately characterized, will be referred to as its **frame** in this talk. It should be obvious that knowledge of encyclopedic scope is crucially involved in most of the examples of metonymy that we looked at in the previous section; in order for each of these expressions to mean what it ordinarily means, a whole complex of knowledge has to be activated. Take (11), for example.

- (11) a. The phone kept ringing.
 b. No one bothered to pick up the phone.

These different uses of *phone* highlight different components of what we might call the ‘telephone’ frame;⁴ the full meaning of these sentences depends upon the activation of the whole frame. Specifically, even if it is just one particular part of the phone that is directly involved in the relationship profiled by either *ring* or *pick up*, much of what either (11a) or (11b) actually means (i.e. the message it is typically intended to convey and what it is usually taken to mean) comes from the rest of the frame (e.g. what the ringing of the

⁴ We are talking about an old-fashioned landline phone here, rather than cell phones.

phone indicates, what you are expected to do when the phone rings, what you pick up (the receiver of) the phone for).

A profile shift within a frame is crucially involved even in those metonymic expressions to which the reference-point analysis can be applied most appropriately. For example, the reference point-target relationship operative in (5) between [the author Haruki Murakami] and [literary works by Haruki Murakami] can be established precisely because the proper noun *Murakami Haruki* has associated with it a frame in which [literary works by Haruki Murakami] figures prominently. Understanding (5) crucially involves accessing this frame and zooming in on that aspect of it which is compatible with the semantics of the verb *yomu* (to read).

- (5) Saikin mata Murakami Haruki-o yomihajimeta.
‘I’ve started reading Haruki Murakami again.’

In this connection, it is interesting to note that in expressions like those in (18), it is virtually impossible to determine whether *Murakami Haruki* refers to the author himself or his works, nor does it make much sense to do so.

- (18)a. Murakami Haruki-ga daisuki desu.
‘I like Haruki Murakami very much.’
b. Murakami Haruki-o takaku hyouka suru
‘think highly of Haruki Murakami’
c. Murakami Haruki-o kenkyuu suru
‘do research on Haruki Murakami’

As Sato (1992 [1978]: 161-165) aptly pointed out over forty years ago, this kind of referential indeterminacy is a clear manifestation of the metonymic fluidity characteristic of our consciousness itself.

We are now in a position to say what metonymy is all about.

- (19)Metonymy can be defined as occurring when different uses of a given expression, while activating a single shared frame, highlight different facets of that frame.**

2.3. The fate of metonymy in Langacker's network model⁵ for polysemy⁶

At this point, I would like to set the record straight about the fate of metonymy in what is known as the network model for polysemy, a model that has been a key component of CG since its inception. First, let me draw your attention to the fact that figurative language, of which metonymy is an all-important subtype, has been a matter of central concern in CG ever since this theory made its debut in the mid-1980s. Quoted in (20) is what Langacker had to say on page 1 of his *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, volume 1, which, together with George Lakoff's *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, is widely recognized to have heralded the advent of the cognitive linguistics movement.

(20) Figurative language is generally ignored in current theories; at best it is handled by special, ad hoc devices. Yet it would be hard to find anything more pervasive and fundamental in language, even (I maintain) in the domain of grammatical structure; if figurative language were systematically eliminated from our data base, little if any data would remain. We therefore need a way of conceiving and describing grammatical structure that accommodates figurative language as a natural, expected phenomenon rather than a special, problematic one. An adequate conceptual framework for linguistic analysis should view figurative language not as a problem but as part of the solution. (Langacker 1987: 1)⁷

Naturally, CG was designed right from the outset as exactly such a conceptual framework and has since delivered on its promise, as it were, by providing illuminating accounts of a wide variety of phenomena in terms of figurative language, most notably, by analyzing as a special case of metonymy the range of grammatical phenomena known as “raising” in the generative tradition (Langacker 1995).

Given this, I find it puzzling, to say the least, that many, perhaps the vast majority of cognitive linguists in Japan seem to believe that the network model, at least as it was originally conceived, is incapable by nature of accommodating metonymy. Let me

⁵ It should be borne in mind that this model was designed right from the outset to apply not just to lexical semantics but to all domains of language structure (Langacker 1987, 1988, 1999).

⁶ It should be noted that Langacker would be the first to admit that this model has its limitations. In fact, he has proposed an alternative model intended to overcome some of these limitations (Langacker 2006).

⁷ In fact, Langacker's keen interest in figurative language goes back even further, at least to Langacker (1976), in which he extensively discussed the ubiquity and significance of figurative language, at one point (p. 343) going as far as to say, “Virtually all language is figurative to some degree.”

mention just one prominent example.⁸ The remarks in (21)-(24) are taken from the section titled “Langacker and the network model” in Seto (2003: 203-204).

(21)[W]hen Langacker (1990) presented the network model, a model supposed to capture meaning extension from a prototypical sense, there was no place for metonymy.

(Seto 2003: 203)

(22)Figure [1] shows that the extension from the prototype is exclusively metaphoric and that the schema C is the extraction of the commonality of A and B. (Seto 2003: 203)

(23)Langacker started to change his position later, gradually and tantalizingly, until he finally decided to give metonymy a place in the network model when he referred to “*extension* (generally metaphorical and metonymic)” (Langacker 1995b: 111).

(Seto 2003: 204)

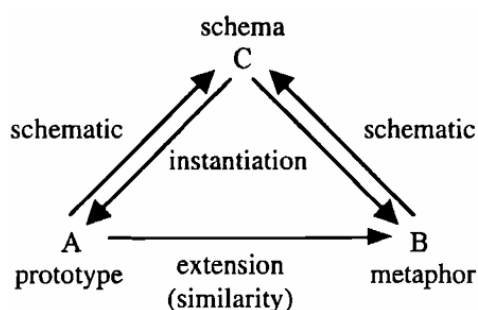


Figure 1. (Seto 2003: 203)

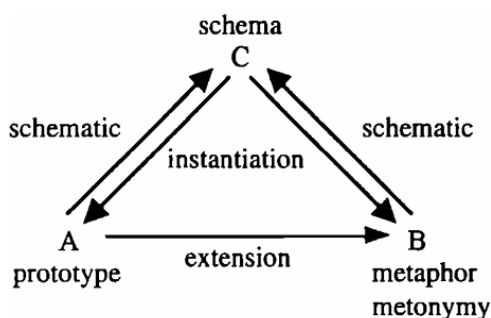


Figure 2. (Seto 2003: 204)

Figure 2 shows what Seto refers to as a new version of the network model, into which he claims metonymy is newly incorporated. Seto goes on to argue that this version won't work, either.

(24)However, the inclusion of metonymy in the network model poses a serious theoretical problem: B, the extension from the prototype A, is not a uniform node because the extension processes of metaphor and metonymy are different, so the status of schema has to change accordingly. While node C continues to be able to maintain a schematic relation with the prototype and a metaphor, such a relation is no longer possible with the prototype and a metonymy, because the prototype is related to its metonymic

⁸ For a detailed and incisive critique of this majority view, see Tanaka (2021).

extension on the basis of contiguity (the E-relation)⁹ in the world. There is no similarity to be extracted from the two. Therefore, so far as metonymy is concerned, the network model stops working. (Seto 2003: 204)

Despite my great respect for Professor Seto's groundbreaking research on figurative language, there is no doubt in my mind that he is wrong when he says that the network model is unequipped to deal with metonymy. I say this because, in presenting this model in his first book on CG, Langacker paid special attention to a classic example of a metonymic shift in meaning, specifically, the extension of Middle English *bedes* from 'prayers' to 'beads', arguing, convincingly to my mind, that extensions of this sort are readily accommodated in this model. Let's look at the main points of his argument.

(25) Despite their qualitative distinctness, extensions of this sort are readily accommodated in the present model. They are analyzable as a special case of extensions motivated by perceived resemblance. (Langacker 1987: 384)

(26) In the case of *bedes*, the notion of a person keeping track of a cycle of prayers by counting the balls on a rosary figured prominently in the encyclopedic description of both [PRAYERS] and [BEADS] during Middle English times. (Langacker 1987: 384)

(27) In the operative domain, both [PRAYERS] and [BEADS] evoke the conception of a one-to-one correspondence between prayers in a cycle and balls on a rosary; they contrast only in the choice of profile. If we abstract away from this point of difference, and consider the one-to-one correspondence without imposing a profile, the resulting conception is schematic for both [PRAYERS] and [BEADS]: it is compatible with their specifications and reflects their extensive commonality. Since it is mediated by a schema, the extension is quite comparable to those based on similarity; the qualitative difference that leads us to speak of association rather than resemblance derives from the fundamental contribution of profiling to the semantic value of an expression. Association is therefore analyzable as the attenuated similarity that remains when this critical specification is suspended. (Langacker 1987: 384)

⁹ E is short for "entity-based." Seto (2003: 196) defines metonymy as follows: Metonymy is a referential transfer phenomenon based on spatiotemporal contiguity as conceived by the speaker between an entity and another in the (real) world.

3. Metonymy in Grammar

A whole variety of grammatical phenomena, including some argument structure alternations, can be revealingly analyzed in terms of the comprehensive and unified conception of metonymy proposed in (19).

3.1. Metonymy-based shifts in meaning underlying grammatical variability

The uses of the verb *lock* exemplified by (28a) and (28b), while evoking the same complex of knowledge, differ in what aspect or stage of this frame (the “locking” frame if you will) they highlight.

- (28)a. I locked the door (of my car).
b. I locked my car.

Specifically, within the common frame that can be informally represented as (29):

(29) *lock*: [I <firmly close and fix shut the entrance to/exit from a place> (e.g. (28a)) -->
II <make the place impossible to get into/escape from/reach into> (e.g.
(28b))] ¹⁰

(28a) focuses on the means/cause stage, whereas the focus of attention shifts to the end/effect stage in (28b). In other words, while (28a) highlights the change of state the door underwent, it is what happened to my car as a result that (28b) brings into focus. (Throughout this talk an arrow indicates a cause-effect and/or means-end relationship, the latter being a special case of the former when the end is achieved.) The contrast in the choice of grammatical object reflects this difference. It is important to note here that despite the differing choices of highlighted stage, the whole “locking” frame has to be activated in order for both sentences to mean what they usually mean.

An extended version of the “locking” frame, schematically represented in (31), is involved in the emergence of the meanings of expressions like those in (30).

¹⁰ Throughout this talk an arrow indicates a cause-effect and/or means-end relationship, the latter being a special case of the former when the end is achieved.

- (30)a. He was locked in the cell for a week.
 b. She got angry and locked me out.
 c. Everything of value must be locked away.

(31) *lock*: [I <firmly close and fix shut the entrance to/exit from a place> (e.g. (28a)) -->
 II <make the place impossible to get into/escape from/reach into> (e.g. (28b))
 --> III <keep someone/something from getting into/escaping from the place>
 or <make someone/something in the place inaccessible> (e.g. (30a-c))]

While (28b) highlights stage II of this frame, the sentences in (30) bring into focus a further end (stage III) (e.g. keeping a person from getting into/out of the place, putting something in the place for safekeeping) achieved by means of the action profiled by *lock the cell*, *lock the safe*, etc. (i.e. making the place impossible to get into/escape from/reach into). Again, it is obvious that although the aspect highlighted by the examples in (30) is different from those focused on by the examples in (28), the full meaning embodied by the former depends as much on the activation of the whole “locking” frame as do the messages conveyed by the latter.

The use of *lock* illustrated in (32) represents an interesting variation on this theme.

(32) I locked myself out (of my car).

Although this variant also evokes the whole “locking” frame, it differs from those exemplified in (28) and (30) in that the three stages are causally related without constituting means-end relationships. (It is also worth noting that (28a) and (28b) can respectively serve to highlight stage I and stage II as they pertain to this accident scenario.)

In English, it is quite common for a single verb to have alternative uses that focus on different facets or stages of a single shared frame.

- (33)a. I squeezed the toothpaste tube.
 b. I squeezed a bit more out of the tube.
 (34)a. They voted for/against her.
 b. They voted her into/out of office.
 (35)a. Bill signed his name.
 b. The President signed a bill.

- c. The President signed the bill into law.
- (36)a. She edited the film.
- b. She edited his voice out of the film.

The uses of *squeeze* illustrated by the pair in (33), for instance, evoke a single frame that can be roughly represented as

(37)[I <press X hard> --> II <get Y out of X>]

within which (a) and (b) highlight different stages.

Although the number is much smaller, Japanese does have its share of verbs whose different variants highlight different facets of a single shared frame.

- (38)a. Kawa-ga yuttari nagareteita.
'The river was flowing slowly.'
- b. Ookina momo-ga nagarete kita.
'A big peach came floating down the river.'
- (39)a. toire-ni mizu-o nagasu
'flush water through the toilet'
- b. toire-ni mono-o nagasu
'flush something down the toilet'
- c. toire-o nagasu
'flush the toilet'

In (38), for instance, while the variant in (a) profiles the path followed by (the water in) the river in the same way that the English verb *flow* does in *The river was flowing slowly*, what the variant in (b) brings into focus is the movement of something (in this case, a peach) carried by the water whose movement is profiled by (a). Note again that the entire frame in (40) has to be activated in order for (38b) to mean what it is usually taken to mean.

- (40)*nagareru*: [I <liquid or gas moves steadily and continuously in one direction> (e.g. (38a)) --> II [something in it moves in the same direction> (e.g. (38b))]
- (41)*nagasu*: [I <cause (a large amount of) water to pass through a place> (e.g. (39a)) --> II <remove something from the place> (e.g. (39b)) --> III <clean the place> (e.g. (39c))]

Similarly, while the two variants of *tsumaru* exemplified in (42) share a frame, which can be informally represented as (43), they highlight different aspects of it: the cause (something getting stuck in the tube) and the effect (the malfunctioning of the tube), respectively.

(42)a. Haisui kan-ni gomi-ga tsumatteiru.
'There is some garbage stuck in the drain.'

b. Haisui kan-ga tsumatteiru.
'The drain is clogged up.'

(43) *tsumaru*: [I <something gets stuck in a tube designed to move liquid or gas along> (e.g. (42a)) --> II <it becomes difficult or impossible for the tube to serve its function> (e.g. 42b)]

3.2. The benefactive alternation

Illustrated in (44) and (45) is what some scholars call the benefactive alternation, a subtype of the dative alternation involving the benefactive preposition *for* rather than the goal preposition *to* in the prepositional variant.

(44)a. She made coffee for all of us.

b. She made us all coffee.

(45)a. Let me get some water for you.

b. Let me get you some water.

There are twin foci for the range of verbs displaying the benefactive alternation: verbs of creation and verbs of obtaining. I believe that what allows these two types of verbs to participate in this alternation (particularly, the ditransitive construction) is precisely the kind of metonymic shift in meaning discussed so far. The frames associated with verbs of creation and obtaining incorporate what we might call the “giving” frame, which specifies the purpose of creating or obtaining something. (Most of the time, you create or obtain something not just for the fun of it but either to avail yourself of it or to make it available to someone else.) Thus, there is a sense in which the integration of the semantics of these verbs with the semantic pole of the ditransitive constructional schema is achieved by what these two semantic structures have in common. The ditransitive construction serves to highlight the “giving” frame that is (at least potentially) incorporated in the meaning of these verbs. Alternatively, one can say that these verbs find it easy to make their way into

this construction precisely because a slight focus shift can make their semantic structure match (or instantiate) the schematic constructional meaning.

3.3. The *tough* alternation

The large number of adjectives (and the few nouns with analogous meanings) that participate in the alternation exemplified in (46) and (47) center around those pertaining either to the degree of ease or difficulty involved in performing an action or to the pleasure or displeasure experienced in carrying out an activity.

- (46)a. It is difficult to read this book.
b. This book is difficult to read.
- (47)a. It is comfortable to work in this office.
b. This office is comfortable to work in.

In (46), for example, the use of *difficult* in (a) represents the primary variant (call it D1) of this adjective, which places reading this book in a certain region on a scale of difficulty (i.e. D1 focuses on a property (P1) ascribed to the action in question), whereas the variant of the same adjective in (b) (D2) ascribes to this book a property held responsible for making that action difficult (D1) (i.e. D2 highlights that property (P2)). The syntactic shift from (a) to (b) correlates with the metonymic shift from the primary to the secondary semantic value of *difficult*, metonymic in the sense that P1 and P2 are viewed as causally related.

The causal construal accorded to P2 forms an integral part of the semantic value of D2; in fact, the only aspect of P2 specified by D2 is its causal relation to P1. (In (46b), for example, all *difficult* tells us about the highlighted property (P2) is that it counts as *something* in *There is something about this book that makes it difficult to read it.*)

It is not at all uncommon for adjectival polysemy to be based on this kind of causality.

- (48)a. I made myself comfortable in the sofa. (= (12a))
b. I found the sofa comfortable. (= (12b))
- (49)a. They became suspicious of his behavior.
b. They found his behavior suspicious.

As we observed in section 1, all it takes for something (e.g. a sofa) to be comfortable in

the sense exemplified in (48b) is that it makes someone (e.g. the speaker) comfortable in the sense illustrated in (48a). Likewise, while the variant of *suspicious* in (49a) focuses on how they felt about his behavior, what is highlighted by the variant of the same adjective in (49b) is whatever it was about his behavior that made them feel that way.

The metonymy mediating the polysemy of *difficult*, *comfortable*, etc. is rooted in our common knowledge that how difficult, comfortable, etc. a given action turns out to be is often determined by some property of the entity on (or, more schematically, in relation to) which (or whom) the action is performed; whether a *tough* predicate occurs in one construction or the other depends on which aspect of this shared frame the speaker chooses to highlight.

3.4. The English resultative and the Japanese passive

These two constructions have one interesting characteristic in common: they can have an argument (functioning either as direct object or as subject) that the base verb does not require (i.e. one whose semantic role is not implied by the kind of action typically associated with the verb). I have argued on a number of occasions for nearly thirty years that these seemingly peculiar uses (e.g. (52b) and (54b)) both involve the prototypical meaning of the verb being metonymically extended (or enhanced) to instantiate the constructional meaning. Specifically, the verb is allowed to make its way into the construction precisely when its meaning is extended (or enhanced) in such a way as to elaborate (part of) the schema constituting the semantic pole of the construction.

- (50)a. I painted the door.
b. I painted the door green.
- (51)a. I pushed the door.
b. I pushed the door open.
- (52)a. I shouted at the top of my voice.
b. I shouted myself hoarse.
- (53)a. Hanako-wa Taro-o nagutta.
'Hanako hit Taro.'
b. Taro-wa Hanako-ni nagurareta.
'Taro was hit by Hanako.'
- (54)a. Hanako-wa naita.
'Hanako cried.'

b. Taro-wa Hanako-ni nakareta.

‘Taro was adversely affected by Hanako’s crying.’

Shouting, for example, is usually not construed as an agent-patient interaction. You can, though, carry out the activity in such a way as to make your voice sound harsh; in extreme circumstances, then, the activity can be reframed as one instantiating an agent-patient interaction, where the two semantic roles collapse into a single individual,¹¹ in this case the speaker. Thus one way to analyze (52b) would be to say that the meaning of the verb *shout* is metonymically extended (or enhanced) to include a patient and her change of state, elaborating the semantic pole of the resultative constructional schema, which I believe is something like (55).

Much the same can be said about the so-called adversative passive in Japanese (e.g. (54b)). Unlike hitting (cf. (53)), crying is not typically viewed as the kind of activity that affects someone other than the actor herself. (You can certainly do it all alone, without anyone knowing.) It can, though, be carried out in such a way as to adversely affect someone who happens to be around. This is exactly the kind of marked situation that the adversative passive is meant to portray (or the type of marked construal that it imposes on a given scene). The use of the verb *naku* (to cry) in (54b) can be viewed as a metonymically extended (or enhanced) version of the prototype, a variant that perfectly matches an integral part of the construal embodied by the passive constructional schema, of which I assume (56) is a reasonable approximation.

(55) The semantic pole of the English resultative constructional schema: <X performs an action, directly resulting in some change in Y> (X and Y respectively profiled by the subject and object nominals; the resultative predicate specifying the resulting change)

(56) The semantic pole of the Japanese passive constructional schema: <X gets affected by Y performing an action involving X in some way> (X and Y respectively profiled by the subject and *ni*-marked nominals)

Both the English resultative and the Japanese passive allow bivalent or transitive verbs of action to cooccur with an argument (functioning either as direct object or as subject) that

¹¹ This is not to say that *shout* requires its direct object to be coreferential with its subject whenever it participates in the resultative construction, which is obviously not the case (cf. *The speaker was shouted down by the audience*).

is semantically distinct from their ordinary direct object nominals, as in (57) and (58).

(57)a. I ate a whole pizza.

b. I ate myself sick.

(58)a. Taro-ga watashi-no nikki-o yonda.

‘Taro read my diary.’

b. (Watashi-wa) Taro-ni nikki-o yomareta.

‘I was adversely affected by Taro’s reading my diary.’

This should not be surprising once you realize that the verb is allowed into each construction precisely when its profile is metonymically extended (or enhanced) to include yet another entity to be affected by the relevant type of action (e.g. eating too much, reading someone else’s diary). (We all know from experience that we can make ourselves sick by eating too much. Likewise, it is easy to imagine how upsetting it would be if someone else found out about your innermost thoughts.)

It is also worth noting that this seemingly peculiar use of the English resultative can be found in such hyperbolic expressions as (59)-(62), all taken from *Modern American Colloquialisms* published by Asahi Press in Tokyo in 1983. Note that here again the verb cooccurs with a direct object which is either not expected to be there at all (cf. *She cried bitterly*), as in (59), or else different in nature from what is expected from its prototypical semantic value (cf. *He ate a large meal*), as in (62).

(59) When Jennie's dog died, she cried her eyes out all afternoon.

(60) Don't get cornered by Mrs. Flapjaw. She'll talk your ear off.

(61) I work my fingers to the bone and what thanks do I get?

(62) Our son is growing so fast he'll soon be eating us out of house and home.

By forging an unlikely causal link between the action and some change in an unexpected patient, these expressions serve to highlight the extraordinary way the action is performed. Thus, literally interpreted, these expressions would imply that it is precisely because the action is performed in such an extraordinary way that the specified change results. (These expressions are hyperbolic in that they actually mean something like “the referent of the subject performs the action denoted by the verb in such an extraordinary way that you wouldn’t be surprised if the referent of the direct object underwent the change in question as a result.”) To tell the story from the verb’s point of view, as it were, it is coerced into

the resultative constructional schema, its meaning being metonymically extended or enhanced in such a way that there is a direct causal link between the action and some specific event, where the referent of the direct object undergoes the imaginary change specified by the resultative predicate.

To conclude, let me give you two more examples of how metonymy, drawing as it does on encyclopedic knowledge,¹² empowers a verb to be grammatically versatile.

(63) The public, the press, and the industry won't give them the space they need to achieve sustainable recovery. Downey, for example, was offered acting roles almost immediately upon leaving prison. We could, in effect, be loving these people to death. ("Fame and Addiction: Star Treatment" *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*, May 4, 2001)

What struck me the most about the underlined part of (63) when I came across it almost exactly twenty years ago was that it involved a verb generally considered stative and rather low in transitivity, one that would not be expected to fit into the dynamic and highly transitive resultative construction. By now, I hope, it is obvious that this seemingly peculiar use of the verb *love* represents a metonymic extension from its prototypical semantic value: the celebrities let our adulation go to their heads, thinking of themselves as invincible, when in fact they are in dire need of help, and, as the source of the adulation (a deviant form of love), we could be held responsible for letting all this happen.

The underlined part of (64), our final example, may be reminiscent of the famous sentence Adele Goldberg came up with in her 1995 book to demonstrate that grammatical constructions are independently meaningful, often contributing essential aspects of the meaning of a complex expression. The sentence in question is (65), an example of what is known as the caused-motion construction. The underlined portion of (64) is a real-life

¹² It is important to note that in CG this includes contextual knowledge assumed to be shared by interlocutors. Here is what Langacker says immediately after the passage quoted in (17): Prominent among the cognitive domains providing the basis for linguistic meaning are those residing in a speaker's apprehension of the immediate context, including the previous discourse and the linguistic interaction itself. Thus any feature of the pragmatic and discourse context falls within the purview of cognitive semantics and figures in the meanings of linguistic elements to the extent that it is apprehended by speakers at any level of awareness. Notice also what he says about nonbasic domains (i.e. domains other than those that are cognitively irreducible, neither derivable from nor analyzable into other conceptions): There is no requirement that a nonbasic domain be fixed, established, or conventionally recognized. Apprehension of the situational context thus qualifies as a cognitive domain, as does the previous discourse. (Langacker 2008: 45)

example of the verb *sneeze* occurring in this construction, its passive version to be exact, found in Richard Dawkins's *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*, which happened to be published in the same year as Goldberg's book. Taken out of context, the sentence *The full English text of Professor Crickson's message was sneezed around the world* would sound odd, to say the least, to most native speakers. Embedded, however, in the context in which it actually appeared, which is provided in Appendix, the same sentence would sound perfect. In fact, when I first encountered the sentence in 1998, included in an even larger context in the English textbook for all the freshmen at the University of Tokyo, some 3,500 of them, I did not find anything remarkable about it. Nor did any of the native speakers of English teaching with the same textbook. If I remember correctly, it took me a couple of years to realize that the underlined part of (64) represents a quirky use of the English caused-motion construction, just as (65) does.

(64) From there it would be short work to read the full English text of Professor Crickson's message, sneezed around the world.

(*River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*, p.18)

(65) He sneezed the napkin off the table. (Goldberg 1995)

All this goes to show how natural a novel meaning extension via metonymy can be, especially as it operates in a specific context that provides it with the appropriate frame or scenario to draw on.

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Appendix

The following science-fiction plot is feasible, given a technology that differs from today's only in being a little speeded up. Professor Jim Crickson has been kidnapped by an evil foreign power and forced to work in its biological-warfare labs. To save civilization it is vitally important that he should communicate some top-secret information to the outside world, but all normal channels of communication are denied him. Except one. The DNA code consists of sixty-four triplet “codons,” enough for a complete upper- and lower-case English alphabet plus ten numerals, a space character and a full stop. Professor Crickson takes a virulent influenza virus off the laboratory shelf and engineers into its genome the complete text of his message to the outside world, in perfectly formed English sentences. He repeats his message over and over again in the engineered genome, adding an easily recognizable “flag” sequence—say, the first ten prime numbers. He then infects himself with the virus and sneezes in a room full of people. A wave of flu sweeps the world, and medical labs in distant lands set to work to sequence its genome in an attempt to design a vaccine. It soon becomes apparent that there is a strange repeated pattern in the genome. Alerted by the prime numbers—which cannot have arisen spontaneously—somebody tumbles to the idea of deploying code-breaking techniques. From there it would be short work to read the full English text of Professor Crickson's message, sneezed around the world.

(Richard Dawkins (1995) *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*, pp. 17-18.)