

DISCURSIVE INTERACTION OF METAPHOR AND METONYMY IN ENGLISH NEWS ARTICLES

Mosiienko Olena Volodymyrivna,

Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology and Translation
Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4175-2837

The paper analyzes the discursive interplay between metaphor and metonymy in modern English news stories on the role of such mental processes in shaping the media discourse. The analysis adheres to an integrative approach that does not see metaphor and metonymy as separate rhetoric tools but as mutually dependent processes that work in news stories. The research also analyzes the notion of metaphonymy, which captures the systematic overlap and interaction between metaphorical and metonymic mappings in news texts. The headlines and lead paragraphs selected from news outlets covering political, social, and economic events constituted the empirical material. Specific metaphor and metonymy patterns were identified and analyzed. These included metonyms that imply the use of person for institution, place for government, and event for result. The metaphorical frames included such patterns as politics is a game, political crisis is a disaster, governance is control. The findings reveal that metonymy generally serves to perform a referential grounding and assign agency enabling the complex institutional actors and processes to be represented in a condensed form. In its turn, metaphor offers evaluative and interpretative framing where the emotionally and culturally relevant source domains are projected onto the abstract political realities. Most importantly, the research indicates that meaning in news discourse is usually a product of the interplay of these mechanisms. Metonymy in most instances provides the discourse anchor on which metaphorical assessment is built. It leads to the condensed metaphoric organization that influences the audience creating the feeling of responsibility, urgency, and legitimacy. The article emphasizes that the discursive interaction of metaphor and metonymy performs crucial ideological and persuasive functions in news discourse. The analyzed news articles demonstrate how these mechanisms structure representation and evaluation of the events starting from the headlines. The research contributes to better understanding of figurative language in media texts and highlights the importance of integrated analytical approaches in contemporary discourse analysis.

Key words: media discourse, news article, headline, metaphor, metonymy, discursive function.

Мосієнко Олена. Дискурсивна взаємодія метафори і метонімії в англомовних новинних статтях

Статтю присвячено вивченню дискурсивної взаємодії між метафорою і метонімією в сучасних англійських новинних текстах. Аналіз функціонування цих тропів базується на інтегративному підході, який розглядає метафору і метонімію не як окремі риторичні засоби, а як взаємозалежні процеси, що діють у новинах. У дослідженні також розглянуто явище метафтонімії, в основі якого лежить метафоричне проєктування елементів сфери-джерела на елементи сфери-цілі. При цьому елементи однієї зі сфер мають метонімічне розширення, тобто потребують метонімічного розвитку поняття або мають метонімічну основу. Емпіричний матеріал дослідження становлять заголовки та вступні абзаци з новинних видань, що висвітлюють політичні, соціальні та економічні події. Було визначено та проаналізовано певні метафоричні та метонімічні моделі. До них належали метоніми, що передбачають використання власних імен особи для позначення інституції, місця для позначення уряду та події для позначення результату. Метафоричні моделі включали такі патерни, як «політика – це гра», «політична криза – це катастрофа», «керування – це контроль». Результати дослідження показують, що метонімія, як правило, слугує для створення референтної основи та призначення суб'єкта, що дозволяє представляти складні інституційні установи та процеси в стислому вигляді. У свою чергу метафора відображає оціночне та інтерпретаційне фреймування, в якому емоційно та культурно релевантні вихідні домени проєктуються на абстрактні політичні реалії. Проведене дослідження демонструє, що значення в новинному дискурсі зазвичай є результатом взаємодії метафори та



метонімії. У більшості випадків метонімія забезпечує дискурсивну основу, на якій будується метафорична оцінка. Це призводить до ущільненої метафоричної репрезентації подій, яка впливає на аудиторію, створюючи відчуття відповідальності, нагальності та легітимності. У статті акцентується увага на тому, що взаємодія метафори та метонімії виконує важливі дискурсивні функції, а саме ідеологічну та переконливу. Проаналізовані новинні статті демонструють, як ці механізми структурують представлення та оцінювання подій, починаючи із заголовків. Дослідження сприяє кращому розумінню образної мови в медійних текстах і підкреслює важливість інтегрованих аналітичних підходів у сучасному дискурс-аналізі.

Ключові слова: медійний дискурс, новина, заголовок, метафора, метонімія, дискурсивна функція.

Introduction. The study of figurative language of the media has always attracted the interest of linguists. This is because figurative language plays a pivotal role in shaping what people think affecting the perception and construction of reality [5; 11, p. 327–330]. Figurative phrases serve as effective means of persuasion and cognitive framing in news texts, predetermining the interpretation of the depicted events by the readership [12, p. 34–36]. The most well-known and commonly used tropes in this field are metaphor and metonymy that are viewed as specific cognitive and discursive mechanisms. Metaphor transfers meaning on the basis of similarity between conceptual domains, while metonymy operates through contiguity and conceptual association within the same domain [8]. People often perceive things through reference to other things in order to understand various phenomena they face. Consequently, metaphors affect not only the way people think about the world and understand it, but also how they act, how the social institutions are created, and how the society is organized [9, p. 164]. Metonymy is defined as a cognitive mechanism involved in the processing of knowledge and its conceptualization. Metonymy serves both as a designation for an object and a representation of the concept that underlies the lexical meaning. In fact, metaphor and metonymy rarely function in isolation. Instead, they often interact dynamically, reinforcing each other and creating complex figurative patterns that ensure the rhetorical and persuasive impact of media discourse [1; 6, p. 150; 7, p. 39–42; 10, c. 80–82].

The cognitive studies have proved that metonymy may bring about metaphor or vice versa. This interaction can be found in news discourse, where journalists frequently resort to figurative expressions to present abstract phenomena in a simplified way, show notable aspects of events, and evoke emotional resonance among readers [2, p. 186–188]. For example, economic crises may be metaphorically framed as

storms in news stories: *A perfect economic storm might be coming our way* [The Washington Post 09.05.2025] or *earthquakes: Economic earthquake that will be good news for homeowners* [The Australian 16.02.25] while political decisions are often presented metonymically through references to institutions: *White House says US would be 'lucky' if Trump stayed for third term* [The Guardian 18.12. 2025]. In this headline, *White House* stands for the individuals that represent the administration of the US president. The interaction of metaphor and metonymy is not ideologically neutral as it contributes to shaping socio-political views [2; 3]. Figurative mechanisms can function on textual, visual, and multimodal levels fostering discursive effects [4]. The present article **aims** to investigate the discursive synergy of metaphor and metonymy in English news articles, focusing on their function in representing different events.

The analysis of recent research and publications. Metaphor and metonymy have been initially treated as distinct figures of speech. Later, the theory of conceptual metaphor [8] and conceptual metonymy [7, p. 45–47] viewed these figurative means as interconnected cognitive operations that are frequently used in discourse. The interaction between the metaphor and metonymy can be realized in certain ways. In case when a metaphor is formed from metonymy, a metonymic shift provides access to a source domain that is mapped onto a target. For instance, the phrase *the crown* can metonymically stand for a monarch in news discourse, and then *the monarchy* may be metaphorically conceptualized as a *pillar* of society. The opposite transformation takes place when a metaphorical mapping includes a metonymic process within either the source or the target domain. For example, the financial markets can be described as *nervous* or *panicking*. Thus, human emotions are ascribed to an abstract system, while *markets* is a metonym for traders and investors. The blend of metaphor and metonymy means that both

mechanisms operate simultaneously. For example, the news headline *As Treaty Nears Expiry, Washington and Moscow Turn Up the Nuclear Heat* [The Rio Times 10.11.2025] demonstrates the use of proper names *Washington* and *Moscow* as institutional metonyms for governments, while the metaphor *nuclear heat* conceptualizes political and diplomatic escalation.

From a discursive perspective, the interaction of metaphor and metonymy in news texts plays a crucial role in constructing ideologically loaded frames. Metaphor represents abstract evaluations (e.g. war metaphors framing politics as conflict), whereas metonymy ensures precision and factual anchoring by linking discourse to concrete actors, institutions, or events [13]. Their combination enhances the persuasive potential of journalistic discourse by merging evaluative connotation with referential clarity. Figurative interaction contributes to ideological positioning and audience manipulation. For instance, institutional metonyms such as *Brussels* or *the Kremlin* depersonalize agency, while metaphors of *strength*, *resistance*, or *fragility* attached to these referents position them within broader ideological narratives. Thus, figurative interaction is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a strategic resource for news framing.

The Outline of the Key Research Findings.

Metaphor in news discourse functions as a powerful framing device that facilitates the conceptualization of abstract or technical events through more familiar experiential domains [6, p. 150; 11, p. 338–340] By projecting complex economic processes onto embodied experiences, metaphors not only describe but also shape the way events are interpreted and evaluated. For example, the headline *The economy is screaming out for help. Washington needs to listen* [CNN 03.12.2020] demonstrates the use of metaphor *the economy is screaming out for help* that personifies the economy as a patient in distress. The metaphor represents the U.S. economic downturn as an urgent medical emergency requiring immediate intervention. It also emphasizes vulnerability and suffering while implicitly reflecting policymakers as doctors or rescuers that are responsible for providing relief.

In the news article metaphorical framings can be used to characterize the fiscal policy of the government. For example, the headline *Are Republicans turning Uncle Sam into Uncle Sugar?* [The Hill 09.12.2025] demonstrates

the use of a metaphor that alters the image of the federal government to a liberal benefactor, implicitly connected with excessive generosity and weakening fiscal control. *Uncle Sugar* can be viewed as a pejorative modification of the conventional metaphor of *Uncle Sam*. The idea expressed by the metaphors in the headline becomes clear in the first paragraph that represents government spending as irresponsible handouts rather than legitimate economic intervention: *Republicans strongly opposed the Democrats' American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which doled out hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars to individuals, while increasing certain federal subsidies. Republicans claimed the American Rescue Plan was unnecessary, inflationary and fiscally irresponsible.* The discursive function of the metaphor in this example consists in guiding readers towards a critical interpretation of government spendings.

Metonymy is often used in the news discourse to condense information and create shortened referential phrase. For example, metonyms like *the White House announced*, *Brussels rejected the proposal* substitute institutions for the politicians who make decisions, presenting places as symbolic centers of power. The use of this figurative means reduces complexity and allows the readers to identify agents quickly. The headline *Wall Street Is Shaking Off Fears of an A.I. Bubble. For Now.* [The New York Times 9.12.2025] demonstrates the use of metonymy *Wall Street* in financial reporting, where a geographical place stands for the network of investors, banks, and traders impacting global markets. Unlike metaphors that help readers understand abstract events by linking them to familiar ideas, metonymy works by simplifying information using one language unit to stand for a broader concept.

The CNN Business article analyzed in this paper uses a number of such metonymic constructions. The appeal of the headline that *Washington needs to listen*, puts Washington in a metonymic role as representing the political establishment in the U.S., the Congress and the federal government in particular. Instead of addressing legislative bodies or individual policymakers, the capital city itself represents the U. S. political system, making it easier to refer to, and implies political accountability.

The sentence *Millions of Americans are counting on Uncle Sam to come to the rescue* relates to the historical culture of Uncle Sam as

the representative of the U.S. federal government. In this case, the government is not only referred to but also endowed with the sense of family and fatherhood, creating a discursive set of frames within which the intervention of the state is both natural and desirable. Another example of metonymy is the recurring reference to *the recovery*, which refers to a broader set of macroeconomic indicators like employment rates, consumer spending, and GDP growth. By compressing these complicated processes into a single word, the text allows readers to perceive abstract economic changes as an actual object that can stall, go dead, or derail. In this news article, the interaction between metonymy and metaphor can be seen in the following example: *Congress risks plunging the economy back into recession*, which metonymically denotes the collective actions (or inaction) of U.S. lawmakers, and frames economic decline metaphorically as a downward fall. Such interaction between metaphor and metonymy is known as metaphonymy. It can be used to increase the rhetorical impact. As it is seen from the analyzed examples above, metonymy plays a number of important functions: cognitive, by simplifying the reference to complex agents or processes (*Washington, Uncle Sam, the recovery*); pragmatic, dramatizing responsibility and urgency (depicting *Congress* as a single agent that can *plunge the economy*); ideological, by foregrounding state responsibility and implicitly demanding government-imposed remedies to economic suffering. In this way, metonymy in economic news articles does not merely shorten the meaning, but it also persuades the reader of who is to blame, what is at risk, and how the events are to be understood.

The BBC article *Zelensky condemns 'vile' Russian strikes lasting 12 hours* [BBC 28.09.2025] demonstrates how metonymy and metaphorical framing are used in political and conflict reporting. Metonym *Russia* stands not only for the government, but also for the Russian military command and its decision-making apparatus: *Russia said it struck military facilities and industrial enterprises supporting Ukraine's armed forces*. Metaphorical conceptualization of military attacks as trials or challenges, invoking a competitive frame can be seen in the following example: *Russia is testing European air defences*. Thus, the article represents Ukraine as the victim and depicts the international community as responsible actors who must respond.

Such framing affects public perception of legitimacy, and moral responsibility.

An example of systematic interaction of metaphor and metonymy can be seen in the headline *The great Rayner reshuffle' and 'Nightmare on Downing Street* [BBC 05.09.2025], but the nature and strength of such interaction is different. The proper name Rayner in *The great Rayner reshuffle* is metonymous as it both represents Angela Rayner as a politician and the institutional power that comprises the reorganization. This metonymic compression of agency is complemented with the figurative verb *reshuffle* which appeals to the source domain of card games or object manipulation and triggers the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A GAME. In this case, metonymy offers an agentive ground, and metaphor presents political change as a tactical move creating a managerial and instrumental meaning of political processes. *Nightmare on Downing Street*, in its turn, showcases a more cohesive type of interplay between metaphor and metonymy. A place name *Downing Street* is used as a metonym of the UK government, and *nightmare* introduces a metaphor that depicts political crisis as something scary and chaotic. The interaction between the metonymic institutional reference and the metaphorical evaluative frame converts to a metaphonymic construction. Discursively, this headline creates a higher level of emotional evaluation and portrays ineffectiveness of the government. These examples prove that metonymy in news headlines identifies participants and assigns agency, and metaphor performs the functions of framing and affect. The interaction of these figurative means allows to represent the political events in highly condensed, yet ideologically and emotionally loaded ways.

Metaphors and metonyms are also used in the news stories about tourism. The headline *Instagram vs reality: Bali is becoming a victim of its own success* [BBC 28.09.2025] conceptualizes Bali by combining metonymy and personification. The geographical name *Bali* metonymically stands for the island's socio-cultural, environmental, and infrastructural system, including its residents and traditions. At the same time, the metaphor of victimhood depicts the island as a live entity that suffers from the consequences of its success. Such combination of metaphor and metonymy represents tourism growth as a tragic process, which gradually turns economic success

into harm. So, the readers are positioned within a narrative of loss and responsibility. The contrast between *expectations* and *reality* reveals distorted reality deeply rooted in social media discourse. This opposition relies on a metaphor of illusion versus truth based on a theatrical or cinematic schema in which Instagram images are associated with the front of the stage while environmental damage remains hidden at the backstage. This metaphorical framing is activated via metonymic details: *If you took a picture of the coffee shop and zoomed out, you would see what the reality was.* The act of *zooming out* reinforces the idea of more serious problems that contradicts glamorous Instagram pictures.

The article repeatedly juxtaposes idealized metaphors of Bali as a *spiritual Shangri-La* with metonymic representations of pollution and congestion. Utopian metaphors evoke timelessness, purity, and transcendence, while specific elements such as piles of rubbish, and traffic jams function metonymically standing for pressure on environmental infrastructures. In this case, metonymy provides tangible evidence that undermines the paradise metaphor, uncovering the gap between symbolic representation and reality. Metaphors of disaster, violence, and decay intensify the evaluative potential of the news article. The sentence *Bali is under strain* conceptualizes the island as a stressed body. In the descriptions of Bali as being *eroded day by day*, the notion of erosion functions metonymically referring to literal land loss. Metaphorically this phrase designates broader environmental, social, and spiritual degradation. Even natural disasters such as floods are described as consequences of human activities and uncontrolled development. Bali is also metaphorically framed as a playground – *people treat Bali a bit like a playground*. This metaphor deprives the location of cultural depth and seriousness, and infantilizes the nation. By mapping *playground* onto *Bali*, the article implies that visitors behave irresponsibly and selfishly. The metonymic ref-

erences to traffic, which come to represent over-tourism as a whole, can be seen in the following example: *“When tourists said they are disappointed with Bali being more crowded, they are also part of the crowd... We’re the ones making the traffic.”* Tourists are depicted simultaneously as critics of congestion and as its creators, highlighting complicity and self-contradiction.

The metaphor-metonymy interaction in this news article simplifies complicated problems of sustainability and globalization by projecting them onto embodied experiences such as overcrowding, bodily strain, and decay. Pragmatically, figurative mechanisms focus on the opposition between idealized imagery and material degradation to secure the emotional effectiveness of the story. The Western tourists are not represented as disengaged spectators but rather as active participants in the transformation of Bali. Lastly, these figurative patterns are supported by images of plastic littered beaches. In this way, the interplay of metaphor and metonymy destroys the myth of Bali as a mythical paradise.

Conclusions. The study has revealed that metaphor and metonymy act in a complementary and mutually supportive way in news discourse. The interplay of these means creates strong metaphoric structures that allow compressing semantic meanings, applying evaluative frames, and locating an ideological stance. The main functions of metonymy and metaphor are to frame abstract institutions, processes and collective actors in concrete and culturally salient terms. The results of the study suggest that this interaction is critical in constructing coherent narratives of crisis, responsibility and transformation in news discourse. Future research can be conducted on how metaphor and metonymy interact to strengthen and change verbal framing in news. These studies would enrich the knowledge about figurative language as one of the tools in the discursive construction of meaning in global media communication.

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