

# Cognitive and cultural preferences of metonymy in Japanese

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Unlike metaphorical mappings, the source and target in a metonymic mapping are reversible, such as PART FOR WHOLE and WHOLE FOR PART, but there are preferences for one direction in metonymic processes. Radden and Kövecses (1999) argued metonymic preferences are organized by a number of cognitive, cultural, and communicative principles. Although some of them appear to be universal, strictly speaking, any metonymic relation depends on anthropological, social, cultural, and other parameters of relevance (Koch 2012). Therefore, principles underlying metonymic preference are still to be elaborated by case studies of various languages and culture. This paper describes the preferred sources and targets of metonymy in Japanese and discusses the principles which motivate the descriptive tendencies.

163 examples of referential metonymy from literary texts in *Japanese Corpus of Figurative Language* (JC-FigL) were annotated in terms of meanings of the source and target. Table 1 shows how frequently a source and a target cooccur in Japanese. The number in each cell indicates the correlation coefficient: the larger the number is, the more frequently the source and target co-occur.

The analysis revealed that, as for metonymy targeted at PERSON, fashion (e.g. ACCESSORY and HAIRSTYLE) and location (e.g. CITY and SHOP) are preferred as the source. Interestingly, this fashion-oriented tendency of the source accords with Chinese preferences, which significantly differs from English (Zhang 2016). In the bodily sources, physical traits (e.g. *kao* 'face' and *ashi* 'leg') sharply contrasted with internal organs (e.g. *mune* 'heart' and *nou* 'brain'), which strongly correlated with non-physical entities such as EMOTION. An exception is TORSO FOR MIND metonymy, which might be rooted in Japanese cultural convention: the word *hara* 'stomach' means one's thought or feeling.

General tendencies of metonymy can be generalized by cognitive factors grounded in bodily experience. However, this paper suggests that social and cultural factors in the language community capture more specific preferences in metonymy.

Table 1: The correlation between sources and targets of metonymy in Japanese. Bracketed numbers indicate the number of examples. Negative correlations were replaced by hyphens for visual help.

|                |                  | Target concept |             |          |                 |             |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|-------------|
|                |                  | PERSON (66)    | EMOTION (4) | MIND (9) | PERSONALITY (7) | ACTION (12) |
| Source concept | PERSON (8)       | -              | 0.15        | 0.08     | 0.38            | 0.06        |
|                | FACIAL PART (15) | 0.08           | -           | -        | -               | 0.01        |
|                | TORSO (3)        | -              | -           | 0.17     | -               | -           |
|                | LIMBS (8)        | 0.13           | -           | -        | -               | 0.06        |
|                | HEART/NERVE (4)  | -              | 0.49        | 0.31     | -               | -           |
|                | HEAD/BRAIN (4)   | -              | -           | 0.49     | -               | -           |
|                | ACCESSORY (7)    | 0.21           | -           | -        | -               | -           |
|                | HAIRSTYLE (4)    | 0.13           | -           | -        | -               | -           |
|                | WEAPON (5)       | -              | -           | -        | 0.14            | 0.36        |
|                | TOOL (10)        | -              | -           | -        | -               | 0.33        |
|                | CITY (4)         | 0.20           | -           | -        | -               | -           |
|                | SHOP (3)         | 0.18           | -           | -        | -               | -           |

## References

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