

HIGH-LEVEL METAPHOR AND METONYMY IN CONSTRUCTIONAL ALTERNATIONS¹

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This paper addresses syntactic alternations from the perspective of high-level metaphor and metonymy. Within the *Lexical Constructional Model* or LCM (Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal, 2008, 2011; Mairal and Ruiz de Mendoza, 2009), grammatical alternations result from the interaction possibilities between lexical and constructional representations. These possibilities are regulated by constraints, of which high-level metaphor and metonymy are prominent cases. In this study I supply evidence in support of the metaphoric and metonymic grounding of a number of constructional alternations posited by Levin (1993). It will be shown how the conceptual connection between lexical and constructional configurations motivates grammatical conversions to occur. I will also examine the interaction between metaphor and metonymy in syntactic alternations, as in *I will buy you a ticket for 5\$* versus *5\$ will buy you a ticket*.

Key Words: *high-level metaphor, high-level metonymy, syntactic alternation, construction, Lexical Constructional Model.*

Este artículo examina las alternancias sintácticas desde la perspectiva de la metáfora y la metonimia de alto nivel. En el *Modelo Léxico Construccional* o MLC (Ruiz de Mendoza y Mairal, 2008, 2011; Mairal y Ruiz de Mendoza, 2009), las alternancias gramaticales surgen como resultado de las posibilidades de interacción entre las representaciones léxicas y construccionales. Estas posibilidades se regulan mediante factores de restricción internos y externos, entre los que destacan la metáfora y la metonimia de alto nivel. En este estudio aporoto

evidencia sobre la base metafórica y metonímica de un amplio número de alternancias construccionales definidas por Levin (1993). Se muestra cómo la relación conceptual entre las configuraciones léxicas y construccionales motiva la aparición de conversiones gramaticales. Asimismo, se examina la interacción entre metáfora y metonimia en alternancias sintácticas, como en el caso entre *I will buy you a ticket for 5\$* y *5\$ will buy you a ticket*.

Palabras Clave: *metáfora de alto nivel, metonimia de alto nivel, alternancia sintáctica, construcción, Modelo Léxico Construccional.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Cognitive Linguistics, metaphor and metonymy have been both recognized as central figures shaping the conceptual organization of experience. Metaphor is generally defined as a set of correspondences across two discrete conceptual domains (Lakoff 1993), while metonymy is regarded as a domain-internal mapping where one of the domains provides access to the other (Kövecses and Radden 1998; Ruiz de Mendoza 2000). Both processes determine how meaning is constructed in language use to a great extent, since they regulate much of our inferential activity (Panther 2005).

The interaction between metonymy and the grammar is one of the recent concerns of current research in Cognitive Linguistics. Pioneering contributions are provided by Dirven (1993), Kövecses and Radden (1998, 1999), Panther and Thornburg (2000) and Pérez and Ruiz de Mendoza (2001). This preliminary work mainly focuses on the metonymic constraints underlying morphological and grammatical phenomena, such as the categorial and subcategorial conversion of nouns, adjectives and verbs. For example, understanding the full semantic import of the term *blue* as an object needs to be done in terms of a metonymy whereby an attribute (*blue* as an adjective) can stand for objects in which this attribute is involved, as in *Blue is my favourite color*. In turn, an uncountable noun such as *beer* can be treated as countable

on the basis of a metonymy whereby a mass entity can stand for the mass and its container (cf. *Two beers, please!*). The most exhaustive account dealing with the issue is the one carried out by Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez (2001), who discuss the notion under the label of grammatical metonymy. Later on, the idea of grammatical metonymy is extended to metaphor (see Pérez and Díez 2005) and developed by Ruiz de Mendoza (2007) and Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal (2007), who attest the role of both mechanisms in non-morphological phenomena, such as grammatical conversions and syntactic alternations. Finally, these authors incorporate both metaphor and metonymy into the *Lexical Constructional Model* (Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal 2008, 2011; Mairal and Ruiz de Mendoza 2009; LCM) in the form of constraints on lexical-constructional interaction.²

The LCM is a recent constructionist approach with roots in Functional Linguistics and Cognitive Linguistics.³ The model is concerned with developing a usage-based theory of meaning construction capable of explaining all aspects of meaning, including those that go beyond argument structure. The LCM posits four levels of conceptual representation: argumental (level 1), implicational (level 2), illocutionary (level 3) and discursive (level 4).⁴ Each of the levels can be either integrated into a higher level or act as a cue for the activation of conceptual structure that yields implicit meaning derivation. This activity is regulated by two cognitive processes: subsumption and conceptual cueing (or cued inferencing). The former is a meaning production mechanism by which lower-level structures are integrated into higher-level configurations. The latter is a form of guided interpretation on the basis of lexical and constructional clues. Subsumption processes are internally and externally regulated on the basis of cognitive constraints, of which metaphor and metonymy are two prominent cases.

Taking sides with the treatment of metaphor and metonymy as constraining factors of the meaning construction process, the present paper explores diverse cases of metaphoric and metonymic motivation of syntactic alternation. Levin (1993) provides a number of examples for constructional alternations revealing either a metaphoric or a metonymic motivation. Some such alternations will be explored by looking into the possible grammatical role of metaphor and metonymy.

The interaction between metaphor and metonymy in syntactic alternations will also be examined. As we will shown, there is a significant amount of evidence that many constructional alternations are grounded in metaphor and metonymy and that it is necessary to work out the underlying cognitive processes to explain their communicative potential. The discussion will proceed as follows: first, I will focus on the characterizing the type of metaphoric and metonymic operations that regulate grammatical phenomena as well as on defining constructional alternations from a cognitive perspective. Then I will examine the metaphoric and metonymic grounding of a number of constructional alternations by drawing evidence from the LCM approach, and finally I will comment on the results of the analysis as a way of conclusion.

2. LEVELS OF DESCRIPTION

In order to understand the role of metonymy in grammar it is necessary to consider the different description levels of knowledge representation. This issue has been addressed in detail by Ruiz de Mendoza (2005), who distinguishes between *low* and *high* levels of description. The former are non-generic levels of conceptual representation created by making well-entrenched coherent links between the elements of our encyclopedic knowledge store. The latter are generic levels of representation created by deriving structure common to multiple low-level models (e.g. the notions of ‘action’ ‘perception’, ‘control’). The definition of low and high level models has later on been taken up in the broader account in Mairal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2009) and Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal (2008, 2011) within the LCM. In the LCM, low-level and high-level cognitive models are both subdivided into situational and non-situational models (Ruiz de Mendoza 2007). Situational cognitive models involve the interaction between different entities within a certain time and place, while non-situational models include variables that are not dependent on a specific time and place. Different types of inferencing arise from the application of metaphoric and metonymic on these cognitive models.

Cognitive operations on low-level non-situational models generally give rise to lexical inferencing. This kind of inferencing

allows speakers to scale down the meaning of *some time* in *It will take some time to repair your watch* and understand it as some time longer than expected. The communicative intention guides the associated inference on the basis of relevance criteria (see Sperber and Wilson 1995: 189). Operations like metaphor and metonymy on high-level non-situational models result in disparate phenomena such as conversion processes and constructional alternations. For example, the metonymy INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION underlies the categorial conversion of the noun *hammer* into a verb in *He hammered the nail into the wall* (Kövecses and Radden 1998). Likewise, the countable noun *America* is made uncountable in *There is a lot of America in what she does*, which is motivated by the metonymy AN ENTITY FOR ONE OF ITS PROPERTIES. Another example is the use of a non-actional object in *He began the book* (i.e. 'He began writing/reading/translating/editing, etc., the book'), as licensed by the metonymy OBJECT FOR ACTION (Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001). In much the same vein, metaphor has also been shown to lie at the basis of grammatical alternations. A case in point is the metaphor AN EXPERIENTIAL ACTION IS EFFECTUAL ACTION, which underlies the incorporation of the verb *laugh* into the caused-motion construction, as illustrated by Goldberg (1995) in *The audience laughed the actor off the stage*. Metaphors and metonymies of this kind have been labelled *high-level* due their basis on generic cognitive models and their impact on grammatical organization.

Metaphoric and metonymic operations on low-level situational models produce implicated meaning or implicatures. The metaphor *He left the room with his tail between his legs*, for example, invokes a situation in which a person who has been defeated and humiliated decides to forego the pursuit of a certain goal (see Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2003). This meaning implication is achieved based on the representation of a dog leaving with its tail between its legs after being punished. From the point of view of implicature derivation, metonymy acts as an inferential schema (Panther 2005) that affords access to whole low-level situational models. An example is the utterance *I waved down a taxi* (Lakoff 1987: 78), standing for a situation in which the speaker waves his hand to stop a taxi, gets into it and asks the driver to take him to his destination. Finally, metonymic operations on high-level situational models (also called illocutionary scenarios) give

rise to speech act meaning. In the LCM, it is claimed that illocutionary scenarios, in the sense given by Panther and Thornburg (1998, 2003) are high-level situational models constructed on the basis of generalizations over multiple low-level situational models (e.g. going to the dentist, teaching a class). Illocutionary scenarios are accessed metonymically through the activation of relevant parts in them. For example, in the case of requests, we derive generic structure from everyday situations where people attempt to get their needs satisfied by others. The scenario is grounded on the assumption that people make others aware of their needs with the expectation that, by cultural convention, they will feel inclined to help.⁵ This part of the scenario can be exploited by means of the most diverse linguistic mechanisms, like statements of need (e.g. *I'm thirsty*), questions about the addressee's ability to help (e.g. *Can you give me something to drink?*) and question tags on the performance of the action in the future (e.g. *You will give me a glass of water, won't you?*).

Thus, in the LCM approach, pragmatic inferencing is essentially no different from lexical or grammatical inferencing. The same cognitive processes take place for both phenomena based on different conceptual representations. There are two important advantages of explaining grammatical processes on the basis of high-level metaphor and metonymy. In the first place, it allows capturing the relevant meaning implications whose communicative impact may otherwise be lost. And second, it permits to achieve a degree of consistency the study of meaning construction, finding the same cognitive processes operating at different levels of linguistic enquiry. Let us now concentrate on the role of metaphor and metonymy in giving rise to constructional alternations, as well as on the way in which they allow us to account for an essential part of the meaning implications conveyed, as will be seen in section 4 below.

3. CONSTRUCTIONAL ALTERNATIONS

The issue of argument structure alternations has received a considerable amount of attention over the past few decades. Syntactic alternations occur when there is a change in the linguistic realization of the argument structure of a verb with respect to a postulated base

form. While both formal and functional approaches have studied alternations extensively, neither of them seems to be able to account for the full complexity of the phenomenon. Formal theories carry out a careful description of the structure of the alternation, deriving the syntactic variants on theoretical principles (see Larson's account of the double object construction, 1988). The problem with formal explanations is the little attention that is paid to the semantic characterization of the verbs that take part in the alternation (Jackendoff 1990a: 446). In the case of functional theories, the structure of alternations is accounted for on the basis of extragrammatical motivating principles. For example, Newmeyer (1998) argues that in Dik's (1989, 1997) analysis, the motivating factors for *John gave the book to Mary* and *John gave Mary the book* are iconicity and participant prominence respectively. The shortcoming of functional accounts is that, due to their extragrammatical perspective, they tend to be presented as universally applicable. However, many languages do not permit certain alternations, as is the case of Spanish, in which the double object construction is not possible (cf. **Juan dio María un libro*). These facts have prompted a careful research on the conditions of occurrence of alternations on the basis of the relationship between verbs and argument structure.

Perhaps the most important work in this area has been carried out by Goldberg (1995, 2006) within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, who has developed a Construction Grammar focused on argument structure constructions. In Construction Grammar theories, constructions are understood as entrenched pairings of form and function where function motivates form. In the Goldbergian approach, constructions interact within a network of relations that take the form of inheritance links. Four different kinds of inheritance links are distinguished. *Polysemy links*, in the first place, capture the relation between any particular sense of a construction and the extensions from this sense. For example, the ditransitive construction is associated with a range of senses that share the semantics of transfer, although differing in systematic ways. The second type of inheritance links put forward by Goldberg are *subpart links*. These are operational when one construction is a subpart of another but exists independently, as is the case of *Mary walked the dog*, which is a subtype of *The dog walked* because it adds a causal element. The third kind of inheritance links are *instance*

links. They are posited when a construction is an instance or special case of another one. An example of an instance link is the sense of *drive* in *Chris drove Pat mad*, which constrains the argument, meaning ‘crazy’. *Metaphorical extension links* are the fourth kind of inheritance links. These capture the relationship between two constructions that are metaphorically related, and can be illustrated in the relationship between the resultative construction *Pat hammered the metal flat* and the caused-motion construction *Pat threw the metal off the table*. The destination element of the caused-motion construction is mapped onto the goal element of the resultative construction by means of a metaphorical operation. In line with Goldberg’s metaphorical extension links, the LCM regards metaphor and metonymy as licensing factors on the fusion of verbs belonging to specific predicate classes into particular argument structure constructions.⁶ Thus, in the LCM, metaphor and metonymy are external constraints which regulate the interaction possibilities between lexical and constructional configurations, licensing or blocking out the incorporation of lexical items into a construction.

The LCM, although grounded in Cognitive Linguistics, does preserve the idea of alternation. As has been explained above, the LCM is focused on the study of the relationship between syntax and all aspects of meaning construction, making use of lexical and constructional templates. Lexical templates operate at the core grammar level. They consist in formal representations of lexical units and the world knowledge elements that affect their syntactic representation. Constructional templates, in turn, operate at all levels (core grammar, implicature, illocutionary force and discourse coherence), specifying the structure that is common to multiple lexical items. At the core grammar level, they are described as argument structure constructions consisting of elements of grammatically relevant semantic interpretation. At levels 2, 3 and 4, they take the form of idiomatic constructions consisting of fixed and modifiable elements.⁷ Lexical and constructional templates interact at all levels of linguistic description, constrained by internal and external factors. Internal coercion arises from the semantic properties of the templates, whereas external coercion results from the possibility of performing metaphorical and metonymic operations. Syntactic alternations are a side effect of the interaction possibilities between lexical and

constructional representations, which are regulated both by the semantic characterization of the templates and by high-level metaphor and metonymy.

However, the LCM proposal so far only contemplates syntactic alternations licensed by metaphors with an effectual action in the source domain. Effectual action metaphors are those where the target domain is a non-effectual conceptual domain that features a goal element that is affected by a causal event. The metaphor allows us to see non-effectual objects or goals (i.e. those that are not physically affected by the activity of an actor) as if they were effectual objects (i.e. those that receive the physical impact of the action). For example, the predicate *talk* can take part in the resultative construction *He talked me into it* (Goldberg 1995: 3) licensed by a metaphor by which a communicative action like talking (i.e. one that has an interpersonal impact on the object) is viewed as an effectual action like kicking or pushing (i.e. actions that can cause actual physical motion). In the metaphor, the receiver of the message is regarded as affected by the action of talking rather than as the goal of the message. Postulating this metaphor allows us to derive a number of meaning implications concerned with the balance between communication and effect, on the one hand, and between explicit and implicit information, on the other.

Metonymy, in turn, underlies constructions such as *The door opened easily*. This utterance is generally seen as a case of the *inchoative* construction, which in English alternates with the *causative* construction (cf. *Someone opened the door*). In interpreting the utterance, we are aware that doors need an external cause to open (e.g. a person, an animal, etc.), which would allow us to draw inferences as to the nature of the controlling entity. If we hear the wind blowing behind the door and we see the door opening, we would infer that the wind opened the door. Such an inference is obtained on the basis of a high-level metonymy whereby an action produced by an agent is treated as a self-induced process (Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001; Ruiz de Mendoza and Peña 2008).

From this discussion, it may become apparent that the LCM proposal to approach syntactic alternations in terms of high-level metaphorical and metonymic operations has an important advantage:

it allows us to capture relevant meaning implications whose actual communicative import would otherwise be lost from description. The following section studies the way in which high-level metaphor and metonymy bear on the explanation of a wide range of instances by discussing new cases which have not been considered so far within the LCM.

4. METAPHOR, METONYMY AND ALTERNATIONS

The present discussion on metaphor and metonymy is guided by Levin's (1993) work on syntactic alternations of English verbs. Levin develops a quite extensive description of alternations and her work seems a good point of departure for our analysis. In this respect, it should be noted that Levin's syntactic alternations will not be treated as the outcome of different syntactic projections of one verb, but rather as the result of the principled interaction between the verb and two standing constructions, as is defended within the LCM. In these examples, metaphor and metonymy will be shown as a crucial licensing factor for alternations to take place. The major point is to identify how and why metaphoric and metonymic operations allow us to account for the meaning implications of Levin's alternations.

4.1 High-level metaphor

At the lexical level, metaphors are relatively trivial phenomena (e.g. PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS), but at non-lexical levels of linguistic description metaphor regulates the interaction between lexical and constructional representation. High-level metaphors allow us to see one type of action as another, yielding effects in core grammar structure, especially conversion processes and syntactic alternations. An example of a conversion is the change from a verb with a prepositional complement like *laugh* (i.e. laugh at someone) to a transitive verb (i.e. laugh someone) in *Peter laughed John out of the office*. Let us now consider cases of high-level metaphor underlying alternations:

- (1) He *pushed* through the crowd.
He *pushed his way* through the crowd. (Levin 1993: 99)

The example above illustrates a case of the *way* construction, which has been characterized as a specific type of the resultative construction.⁸ In (1), the verb *push* is taken to take part in the construction on the basis of the high-level metaphor AN ACTIVITY IS AN EFFECTUAL ACTION. Since an activity predicate like *push* could not, in principle, participate in the construction, the verb needs to undergo a process of subcategorical conversion in order to meet the prerequisites of the construction. In other words, the predicate must express an effectual action, which causes the affected entities to be perceived as metaphorically moving into another location.

- (2) The world saw the beginning of a new era in 1942.
1942 saw the beginning of a new era. (Levin 1993: 79)

Example (2) represents a case of the subject alternation, which involves the promotion of a complement to the subject position of the resulting construction. This is the case of the conversion of *The world saw the beginning of a new era in 1942* (which is itself grounded in the metaphor EXISTENCE IS PERCEPTION) into *1942 saw the beginning of a new era*, in which the promotion of the time complement as the subject. This change is licensed by the high-level metaphor TIME IS A PERCEIVER, which acts on one of the elements of the source of the metaphorical correlation between existence and perception, forming a metaphorical chain of the kind postulated by Ruiz de Mendoza (2007).

- (3) The cook removed the bones from the fish.
The cook boned the fish. (Levin 1993: 130)

Levin refers to the realization in (3) as the cognate with alternation. In this type of alternation, the material denoted by the object is incorporated in the verb. In (3), the conversion of the noun *bone* into a verb is licensed by the high-level metaphor ACTIONS ARE GOALS. This metaphor conceptualizes the action being performed (i.e. removing bones from a fish) as a form of goal (i.e. getting the fish bone-free). This metaphorical mapping seems pervasive in alternations involving postverbal subjects, as can be found underlying other related examples such as *Mary buttered the toast* or *Jessica sprayed the wall* (see Levin 1993: 88-183).

4.2 High-level metonymy

Metonymic operations at the core grammar level also result in syntactic alternations. Specifically, middle alternations, which can be either inchoative and induce action alternations, are very frequently motivated by a high-level metonymy. The following is one example of the inchoative alternation provided by Levin:

- (4) The pirates drown the sailor.
The sailor drowned. (Levin 1993: 224)

In (4), the verb allows a subcategorical conversion from transitive to intransitive to take part in the inchoative alternation. This change is possible due to a metonymic mapping according to which prototypical actions are treated as dynamic events. This kind of conversion can be regarded in terms of an action standing for a process. Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez (2001) gather this metonymic operation under the label of ACTION FOR PROCESS. The ACTION FOR PROCESS metonymy is quite productive in English, as can be seen in many other examples from Levin (cf. *The glass broke*, *The paper burnt*, *The potatoes baked*, etc).

- (5) Margaret cut the bread.
The bread cuts easily. (Levin 1993: 6)

For Levin, the example above would be considered as a case of the middle alternation. This kind of alternation is characterized by the lack of an agent and the intransitivization of the verb. Here we find a different type of metonymy, which Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez (2001) have called ACTION FOR RESULT. The action in (5) has a result which is highlighted by the expression (as a result of cutting, we get loaves of bread). The example shows an intransitivization of the verb cut, as it happened with the previous case, but it is not the same, since here the focus is on the result that stands for the action, and not on the entity that causes the action.

- (6) The scientists run the rats through the maze.
The rats ran through the maze. (Levin 1993: 31)

The type of syntactic realization in (6) is an example of what Levin refers to as the induced action alternation, in which a causee is induced to act by a causer. Unlike in the previous alternations, in this case there is a transitivity of the verb (*run* is prototypically intransitive). This conversion is motivated by the high-level metonymy ACTIVITY FOR CAUSED EVENT. By means of this metonymy, an activity that involves someone doing something (e.g. running, walking) affords access to a more complex event in which there is also an instigator of the action.

- (7) I dried the clothes in the Sun.
The Sun dried the clothes. (Levin 1993: 80)

Example (8) also illustrates a case of the induced action alternation. Here, the ACTIVITY FOR CAUSED EVENT metonymy is licensed by the conceptualization of the instrument (i.e. the Sun) as the causal agent of the drying action (i.e. CAUSER FOR INSTRUMENT). The heat of the Sun is taken as the property that makes it possible to dry the clothes, and thus the instrument that allows the action to take place. The Sun stands as the causer of that instrument corresponding to the metonymic mapping.

4.3 Metaphoric and metonymic interaction

Let us now explore the various ways in which metaphor and metonymy may interact in syntactic alternations. Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal's proposal does not contemplate cases where metonymies and metaphors combine to license an alternation. In consonance with a previous analysis carried out by Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez (2002), their account should be extended to consider the interaction between metaphor and metonymy in alternations. Levin collects some in her work. Consider, for example, the following:

- (8) The voices echoed in the hall.
The hall is echoing with voices. (Levin 1993: 252)

The realization above, which is an instance of the locative alternation, is licensed by a metaphorical operation grounded in a metonymy. The construction *The voices echoed in the hall* is motivated by

the ACTION FOR PROCESS metonymy. This metonymy is necessary for the alternation that promotes the complement to the subject slot of *The hall is echoing with voices*, which is in turned based on the metaphor PLACES ARE PEOPLE.

A similar example is illustrated in (9):

- (9) I mixed the eggs with cream.
Eggs and cream mix well (together). (Levin 1993: 158)

Example (9) illustrates the middle alternation, which is created by transitive and intransitive usage of verbs. In this way, there is a conversion of *mix* in the construction *I mixed the eggs with cream*, which is motivated by the metonymy A CAUSAL ACTION FOR A CONTROLLED ACTIVITY. This metonymy supports the metaphor licensing the alternation. The causal transitive verb *mix* requires an agent, a process which maps metaphorically onto the object of the action. The metaphor FOODS ARE DOERS allows to see the object as the agent of the action. This type of analysis can be extended to subject alternations, as can be seen in (10) and (11) below:

- (10) We sleep five people in each room.
Each room sleeps five. (Levin 1993: 82)

Here, both constructions are related to the extent that the result of a metonymic mapping is a metaphorical process. Both sentences convey the idea that it is possible to accommodate five people in each room. In the first one, *sleep* is treated as a causative transitive verb, meaning yielding the paraphrase *We cause five people to sleep in each room*. This conversion process is licensed by the metonymy A CAUSAL ACTION FOR AN ACTIVITY. In *Each room sleeps five* there is an additional metaphorical process whereby the location is seen as the causer of an event. The metaphor PLACES ARE DOERS (cf. *Waterloo ruined Napoleon*) acts on the metonymic source. The causal action needs a causer (i.e. a doer whose action has some visible effects), which maps onto the place where the action takes place.

- (11) I will buy you a ticket for 5\$.
5\$ will buy you a ticket. (Levin 1993: 174)

The subject alternation reproduced in (11) also features a metonymy supporting the metaphorical operation. First, *I will buy you a ticket for 5\$* alternates with *I will buy a ticket for you* on the basis of the metonymy POSSESSOR FOR BENEFICIARY. This metonymy becomes a pre-requisite for the oblique subject alternation, according to which the instrument for a transfer of possession is the agent of an action. The instrument that allows the action to take place, *for 5\$*, becomes the subject of *5\$ will buy you a ticket*, which in turn responds to the metaphor TRANSFERS ARE ACTIONS.

5. CONCLUSION

Syntactic alternations occur as a result of an abstract conceptual relationship between different predicates and their functions. This study has shown the significant role of high-level metaphor and metonymy in syntactic organization as well as the need to consider their involvement in the interaction between lexical and constructional representations. Both metaphor and metonymy have proved to be licensing factors for grammatically relevant conceptualizations of the kind postulated by Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal (2007). This is precisely the proposal of the LCM, although its notion of external constraint should be investigated further together with the cognitive motivation of non-effectual metaphorical mappings to explain cases as the ones analyzed here.

NOTES

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² Interestingly enough, the phenomenon of coercion has been further approached from a cognitive point of view. A notable example is the work carried out by Lauwers and Willems (2011), who explore the issues of linguistic variation and change in constructionist accounts of language. An utterance like *He began*

the book is treated as a case of mismatch (cf. Francis and Michaelis, 2004) between the semantic properties of the construction and the inherent properties of the lexical item (*book*). From the perspective of the LCM, such an example would be licensed by the metonymy OBJECT FOR ACTION (Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001).

- ³ For further information of the LCM, I refer the reader to the group research webpage: www.lexicom.es.
- ⁴ Level 1, or core module, consists of elements of syntactically relevant semantic representation based on the interaction between lexical and constructional structures. Level 2, or implicational module, addresses inferential aspects of communication. Level 3, or illocutionary module, deals with illocutionary meaning. Finally, level 4, or discourse module, accounts for the discourse aspects of the LCM, including cohesion and coherence phenomena.
- ⁵ This convention specifies that people should modify negative state of affairs that are negative to others if it is within their range of abilities. The convention is part of the higher-level description labeled the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* (Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi 2007). The first formulation of the model was found in Ruiz de Mendoza's (1999) *Politeness Convention*, which was intended as a development of Leech's (1983) cost-benefit scale. In the later formulation put forward by Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi (2007), the convention is articulated as a cognitive model according to which people are culturally expected to help other people and at the same time, they expect not to be put to too great an effort in that respect. The model captures a number of cultural generalizations that are regulatory of communicative interaction and provide the cultural background for directive, commissive and expressive speech acts.
- ⁶ The notion of *fusion* was first introduced by Jakendoff (1990b) to designate the combination of semantic constraints within a lexical entry. In the Goldbergian approach, the concept captures the constraints regulating the integration of the participant roles of a verb and the argument roles in a construction. In the LCM, the notion makes reference to lexical-constructional subsumption.

⁷Argument structure constructions are mainly based on Goldberg's (1995, 2006) approach to construction types (i.e. ditransitive, caused motion, resultative, etc.). They are made up of sets of arguments which relate to one another on the basis of abstract predicates. These abstract representations retain the formalism proposed by Goldberg, although adapted to the requirements of a semantic metalanguage used in conjunction with the lexical structures (cf. Mairal and Ruiz de Mendoza, 2009).

⁸To get background on the way construction, it will be useful to review Jackendoff's (1990b) and Goldberg's (1995) work.

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