

The role of metonymy in teaching the Spanish verbal system to L2/FL learners of Spanish

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Abstract. This paper explores the application of conceptual metonymy (Lakoff, 1987; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2000; Langacker, 2009; Panther, Thornburg and Barcelona, 2009; Barcelona, 2013) in the development of pedagogical resources for the teaching of the Spanish verbal system to L2/FL learners. To this end, a description is given of the advantages of introducing inferential reasoning using metonymy based on certain principles taken from the Cognitive Grammar model (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2000, 2001, 2008, 2009) in grammar teaching materials – both descriptions and activities. We focus on tense uses that involve metonymic processes, particularly, the meaning extensions in two Spanish past tenses: (1) the actional meaning of stative verbs when conveyed in *pretérito indefinido* (preterit), as in *Pudimos comprar la casa* ‘We could buy the house’, metonymically extended to *Compramos la casa* ‘We bought the house’; and (2) the distancing use (*uso citativo*) of *pretérito imperfecto* (imperfect) when referring to current facts, as in *¿Cómo te llamas?* (How PRO.REFL.2SG call. IPFV.PST.2SG?) ‘What was your name again?’, which is metonymically extended to (*Se me ha dicho/No recuerdo/No he oído*) cómo te llamas [(‘I have been told/I can’t recall/I couldn’t hear’) how PRO.REFL.2SG call.PRES.2SG]. In order to discuss the kind of contribution that this conceptual standpoint can make to the teaching of the Spanish verbal system, the pedagogical potential of some techniques and resources is explored in terms of (a) metonymic and metaphorical reasoning in pedagogical grammar descriptions, (b) consciousness-raising paraphrase exercises focused on meaning indeterminacy, and (c) network building and the use of (dynamic) images to show variable construals in grammatical meaning.

Key words: Cognitive grammar, conceptual metonymy, verb tense, meaning indeterminacy, focus on form, Spanish as a second/foreign language

[es] El papel de la metonimia en la enseñanza del sistema verbal del español a aprendientes de español L2/LE

Resumen. El presente artículo explora la aplicación de la metonimia conceptual (Lakoff, 1987; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2000; Langacker, 2009; Panther, Thornburg y Barcelona, 2009; Barcelona 2013) en el desarrollo de materiales pedagógicos para la enseñanza del sistema verbal a aprendientes de español como segunda lengua/lengua extranjera. Para ello, se describen las ventajas de introducir el razonamiento inferencial mediante la metonimia en los materiales didácticos –descripciones y actividades–, a partir de algunos de los principios del modelo de la Gramática Cognitiva (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2000, 2001, 2008, 2009). El artículo se centra en los usos de tiempos verbales que implican procesos metonímicos, en concreto, las extensiones de significado presentes en dos tiempos pretéritos en español: (1) el significado accional de verbos estativos cuando se transmiten con pretérito indefinido, como en *Pudimos comprar la casa*, que se ve ampliado metonímicamente a *Compramos la casa*; y (2) el uso distanciador (citativo) del pretérito imperfecto referido a eventos o situaciones presentes, como en *¿Cómo te llamas?*, ampliado metonímicamente a *Se me ha dicho/No recuerdo/No he oído cómo te llamas*. Por último, con el fin de analizar en qué medida este enfoque puede contribuir a la enseñanza del sistema verbal español, se explora el potencial pedagógico de algunas técnicas y recursos, en concreto, (a) descripciones gramaticales pedagógicas centradas en el razonamiento metafórico y metonímico, (b) ejercicios de paráfrasis centrados en la indeterminación del significado para promover la concienciación de los aprendientes, y (c) la creación de redes y el uso de imágenes (dinámicas) para ejemplificar la variabilidad de las conceptualizaciones del significado gramatical.

Palabras clave: Gramática cognitiva, metonimia conceptual, tiempo verbal, Español como Segunda Lengua/Lengua Extranjera

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(*imperfecto*). 4.2. Stative verbs understood as actions or changes of state when used with Spanish preterit or with the progressive periphrasis (*estar* + Gerund). 5. Pedagogical implementations. 6. Conclusions. References.

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1. Introduction

The advantages of Cognitive Linguistics (Cadierno & Hijazo Gascón, 2013; Castañeda Castro, 2018, 2019; Ibarretxe Antuñano, Cadierno & Castañeda Castro, 2019) and, more specifically, Cognitive Grammar (hereinafter CG) (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2001; Castañeda Castro, 2004a) for teaching Spanish L2/FL grammar are supported by a considerable amount of research. Some of the ideas that have been deemed crucial in this regard are: (a) the close relationship between language and other cognitive abilities such as the perceptual ones; (b) the relevance given to meaning – not only lexical but grammatical as well; (c) the complex nature of linguistic categories – with prototypical and non-prototypical uses intertwined through processes of metaphorical and metonymic extension; (d) the role of constructions as basic descriptive units.

A significant amount of this research has focused on the role that identifying metaphorical extensions can play when learning polysemous forms, mainly in the field of vocabulary (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008), but also in grammar (Littlemore, 2009; Tyler, 2012; Tyler & Evans, 2004; Tyler, Mueller, & Ho, 2010). However, this is not the case with metonymy, defined in Cognitive Linguistics as the semantic projection between a source domain and a target domain within the same overall conceptual frame. For instance, the role of metonymy in the process of building a coherent and entrenched conceptualization of the different meanings and uses of verbal forms in relation to tense, mood and aspect remains largely unexplored in the realm of Spanish L2/FL. This paper addresses this issue and argues for the learning potential of the development of awareness of metonymic extensions, especially if this process is facilitated by appropriate pedagogical grammar descriptions.

In sections 2 and 3, we will consider how metonymy and meaning indeterminacy are conceived in CG, taking into account a number of theoretical tools from this model, such as the concept of construal, and paying special attention to two dimensions, i.e. the profile/base distinction and the processes of subjectification. The *profile/base* distinction (see Langacker, 1987; Taylor, 2002; Croft, 2006), for instance, accounts for how different components of events are focused by alternative linguistic forms. The two conceptualizations construed in *My car is being towed* and *My car has been towed* are dependent on the shift of focus on the ongoing process or on the resulting state, respectively. The final state of the car remains in the background (base) when we profile the process of *towing* in *My car is being towed*, and it is highlighted (profiled) against the backdrop of the process (base) when we say *My car has been towed*.

Subjectification, as defined by Langacker (1987, p. 128), is another process deeply involved in the conceptualization of events. In this kind of conceptual extension, we talk about things as if the mental processes experienced while conceiving the facts we describe were happening in the real world, when they are actually taking place in our minds. Therefore, when we say *The road goes from my house to the beach* we talk about the road as if it is moving from a place to another, but it is actually the speaker who mentally (and fictionally) is moving in his/her sequential and directional conception of the road extension. The central role of subjectification in the grammaticalization process – be it lexis into grammar, or less grammaticalized forms into more grammaticalized forms – makes it necessary to explore its relationship with the metonymic extensions in our study.

In section 4, we will look into some examples of metonymic extensions implied in the use of verb tenses in Spanish. There are many instances of this kind of conceptualization in Spanish. Consider the metonymic extension between (1a) and (1b):

- (1a) Perdone, pero no *vamos a tener* ese tipo de clavos.
Pardon.IMP.2SG.FORM, but not *go.PRES.1PL.AUX to have*.INF that.SG.MASC type of nails.
'Sorry, I'm afraid we do not have that type of nails.'³
- (1b) Perdone, pero no *vamos a poder* atenderlo/la, porque no tenemos ese tipo de clavos.
Pardon.IMP.2SG.FORM, but not *go.PRES.1PL.AUX to can*.INF attend.INF.PRO.ACC.SG.MASC/PRO.
ACC.SG.FEM, because not have.PRES.1PL that.SG.MASC type of nails.
'Sorry, I'm afraid we can't help you, because we do not have that type of nails'

Both (1a) and (1b) refer to the same scene or speech event: a buyer requests something from a seller in a shop. A necessary precondition for this request to be granted is that the giver (seller) has the items that the receiver (buyer) wants. In (1a) the speaker (seller) turns down the interlocutor's (buyer) request by denying this precondition (the possession of

³ In this paper, we follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules.

the requested item itself). However, instead of using a present tense (*no tenemos*), he/she uses a future periphrasis (*no vamos a tener*). This can be considered an instance of metonymy, as the use of the future tense is not motivated by the present fact of not having the item, but by the future non-accomplishment of the transaction itself, as restated in (1b).

In this paper, we will focus specifically on how metonymic extensions are present in some uses of two past tenses, *pretérito indefinido* (preterit) and *pretérito imperfecto* (imperfect). The preterit usually depicts actions fully completed within a time frame not related to the time of speaking. Although the differences in the conceptualization of the same event by means of the preterit (*Corrí*, run.PRET.1SG) as opposed to the *pretérito perfecto compuesto* (present perfect)⁴ (*He corrido*, run.PRF.1SG) or the imperfect (*Corría*, run.IPFV.PST.1SG) have been thoroughly examined through the CG lens (see Castañeda Castro, 2006; Alhmod & Castañeda Castro, 2014; Ruiz Campillo, 2019, among others), in our study we will focus on the specific use of preterit with stative verbs such as *saber* ‘to know’ or *poder* ‘can/to be able to’. When used with this type of verbs, the preterit usually implies a shift of meaning from the potentiality of the action conveyed by the lexical item to the actual completion of the action itself (in the case of *poder*), or a shift from the resultative state to the process that leads to that state (in the case of *saber*). Consider *saber* in (2a):

- (2a) Cuando *supo* la noticia, se puso muy contento.
When *know*.PRET.3SG the.SG.FEM new, PRO.REFL.3SG put.PRET.3SG very happy.SG.MASC.
‘When he learned the news, he became very happy.’
- (2b) Cuando *oyó/recibió/se enteró de* la noticia, se puso muy contento.
‘When he heard/received/learned the news...’

The stative nature of the verb *saber* in (2a) is metonymically shifted into the actional meaning equivalent stated in (2b).

The imperfect also depicts actions within a time frame not related to the time of speaking, but it differs from the preterit in its imperfective aspectual nature. We will also explore the use of this past tense to refer to current events, as in (3):

- (3) Tú *eras* de Granada, ¿verdad?
You *be*.IPFV.PST.2SG from Granada, truth?
‘You were from Granada, right?’

This use is traditionally explained in Spanish descriptive grammar as *citativo*, that is, a distancing strategy employed to confirm a piece of information already known or exchanged but not properly recalled (4a below), to signal inadequate reception of the information (4b below), or to distance oneself from the source of the information (4c below):

- (4a) No lo recuerdo, pero *eras* [eres] de Granada, ¿no?
Not PRO.ACC.NEUT remember.PRES.1SG, but *be*.IPFV.PST.2SG [be.PRES.2SG] from Granada, not?
‘I can’t remember, but you were [are] from Granada, weren’t you?’
- (4b) ¿Has dicho que *eras* [eres] de Granada?
Say.PRF.2SG that *be*.IPFV.PST.2SG [be.PRES.2SG] from Granada?
‘You have said that you were [are] from Granada?’
- (4c) Me han dicho que *eras* [eres] de Granada.
PRO.DAT.1SG say.PRF.3PL that *be*.IPFV.PST.2SG [be.PRES.2SG] from Granada.
‘They have told me that you were [are] from Granada.’

The meaning extension from the past to the present (square brackets) can also be studied under the umbrella of metonymy.

Finally, in section 5, metonymic extensions in verb tense use are explored from a pedagogical perspective. It is our belief that raising L2/FL students’ awareness of metonymic processes in Spanish can help them set up a stable and robust network of different uses linked by metaphorical and metonymic extensions. And this, in turn, can contribute to reducing arbitrariness in the learning process. Some examples will be given on how to implement metonymic and metaphorical reasoning in pedagogical grammar descriptions, as well as some sample exercises aimed at raising students’ awareness of meaning indeterminacy. It is not our purpose here to present a complete sequence of teaching activities on the imperfect / preterit opposition, but rather to suggest some examples of activities that contain metonymic and metaphorical reasoning for the initial consciousness-raising phase in the learning process of these tenses, on the assumption that this kind of inferential abilities are more relevant in the initial conceptualization phase than in the subsequent automatization phase.

⁴ We have chosen the term *present perfect* to refer to *pretérito perfecto compuesto* because it is especially adequate to describe the concept expressed by this Spanish tense morpheme. We are aware of the non full correspondence between these two tenses, but we use the English term for the sake of clarity. On the other hand, for the sake of simplification, we gloss this tense as PRF, synthesizing the periphrastic form AUXILIARY *haber* (have) + PAST PARTICIPLE with the glossing formula “main verb.PRF”. Finally, we gloss *pretérito indefinido* (i.e. *pretérito perfecto simple*) as PRET and *imperfecto* as IPFV.PST.

2. Grammatical metonymy in Cognitive Linguistics

Within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics (see Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) and more specifically in the Cognitive Model Theory, according to Ruiz de Mendoza and Peña Cervel (2008), metonymy (as well as metaphor) is regarded as a way of “modelling our knowledge of the world on a par with propositional (or frame) structure (Fillmore, 1985) and with topological or image-schematic structure (Johnson, 1987).” Frames are established frameworks of knowledge in which propositional relationships among their typical/defining components/participants can be recognized, as in the case of the RESTAURANT FRAME: public premises with a dining room and a kitchen, among other facilities available to customers, where clients can book a table in advance, pay for being served meals by waiters, etc. As for image schemas, these are topological models that abstract essential aspects of basic spatial relationships as IN/OUT, UP/DOWN or FRONT/BACK recognizable in our everyday, bodily conditioned experience of the world. Both frames and image schemas are considered by Ruiz de Mendoza (2005) as non-operational models. They are the source of conceptual domains, i.e. the aspects of frames and image schemas on which operational models (metaphor and metonymy) apply in order to generate new knowledge structures or constructs.

Metaphor is a kind of mapping operation between different or independent domains, by means of which the structure and elements of the source domain correlate with similar or analogous components of the target domain, our understanding of the latter being guided by this process. For instance, in (5) below, the source domain of COMBUSTION/BURNING is used to represent a completely independent target domain, HUMAN CONFLICT EVOLUTION. There is, on the one hand, an identification between conflict, which can affect or even destroy relationships, and fire, which can destroy things; and, on the other, a correlation between the high temperature of fire and the high tension characteristic of human confrontation. There is this other additional correspondence: the identification between the fuel that feeds the fire and the human action that increases interpersonal tension.

(5) Mary *added fuel to the fire* with that answer.

Metonymy (Barcelona, 2013, p. 15) is an “asymmetric mapping” (not a systemic matching as in metaphor) where a component or subdomain (the source) of a domain gives access to another component or subdomain (the target) of the same domain, “provided that source and target are linked by a pragmatic function, so that the target is mentally activated.” For example, in (6) *cabeza* ‘head’ metonymically refers to *person*. There is a functional link (main part-whole) between *head* (the body part where the main cognitive, communicative, emotional and physiological traits that allow the identification of a person are located) and the person him- or herself. This functional link is also evident in (7), where *el coche* ‘the car’ also changes its referent from the vehicle as a whole into one of its parts, *los faros* ‘the headlights’, that become prominent in the context given by *El coche me deslumbró* ‘The car blinded me’:

(6) Hay un bocadillo por *cabeza* [*persona*].

‘There is a sandwich per *head* [*person*].’

(7) El *coche* [*los faros*] me deslumbró.

‘The *car* [*the headlights*] blinded me.’

Metaphor can be considered as a manifestation of analogical thinking, and metonymy, in contrast, as a manifestation of associative thinking. Metaphor is an iconic relation based on structural resemblance or similarity between two domains, whilst metonymy is based on the contiguity of two or more components or dimensions in one domain and on the pervasive cognitive operation that allows us to reach a target because of its connection with an access or reference point (Langacker, 1991, p. 42). These basic cognitive operations involved in metaphor and metonymy lead us to think that metonymy is, as Panther and Thornburg (2017, p. 279) state, “an even more basic figure of thought and language than metaphor”, and that it is often a constituent part of metaphor itself. In this regard, Barcelona (2013, p. 18) claims that there are at least two ways metonymy can be implied by metaphor:

(a) “Abstraction of a common conceptual structure between metaphoric source and target.”

This is the case in *That’s a loud colour* (author’s example). Here, the metaphor implied (DEVIANT COLOURS ARE DEVIANT SOUNDS) “is possible thanks to the abstraction of a common subdomain, namely the effect on perceivers [the irresistibly attracting of their attention] of both deviant colours and of deviant, ‘loud’ sounds.” This, in turn, implies the metonymy EFFECT FOR THING THAT CAUSES THAT EFFECT.

(b) “Generalization or decontextualization of a metonymy.”

This second way of metonymy-in-metaphor implication is typical of primary conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 50) such as MORE IS UP, AFFECTION IS WARMTH, or PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS. These metaphors, as Barcelona (2013) continues explaining, are “the result of decontextualization of metonymies based on frequent experiences that associates level of verticality with quantity (in pouring or heaping events),” affective human physical contact with level of warmth (as in hugging or stroking events) or movement to a destination with actions carried out at that place (as in so many purposeful movement events). Once level of verticality, level of warmth, or destination are associated with quantity, affection or purpose respectively, the initial metonymy is decontextualized and it becomes a metaphor, even if neither real verticality, warmth nor destination are present. This may

be the case with the future periphrasis built with *go* in English (*I'm going to buy a house*) or with *ir* 'go' in Spanish (*Voy a comprarme una casa*, Go.PRES.1SG to buy.INF.PRO.DAT.1SG a.FEM house).

Croft (2006, p. 260) states that both metaphor and metonymy are the result of conceptual adjustments (domain mapping in the case of metaphor; domain highlighting in the case of metonymy), which are carried out to satisfy the *conceptual unity of domain* principle. According to Croft, this principle establishes that all the elements in a syntactic unit must be coherently interpreted within a single domain. In his account of metaphor and metonymy, Croft builds on the *autonomy/dependence* distinction proposed by Langacker (1987, p. 300) and holds that metaphor is the result of an autonomous component in a construction inducing domain mapping in another component of the construction that is semantically dependent on the former. By way of an example, in *No puedo digerir este libro* 'I cannot digest this book' the noun phrase *este libro* 'this book' is the autonomous element as it is conceivable without reference to any activity. This is the reason why it induces the metaphoric interpretation of *digerir* 'to digest', which is not conceivable without a conceptual reference either to the organism that digests or the thing being digested. Consequently, *digerir* 'to digest' metaphorically adjusts to the meaning of *libro* 'book' and it becomes "to understand fully" or "to assimilate/metabolize cognitively". On the other hand, metonymy is the result of a dependent element of a construction inducing domain highlighting in the autonomous component of the construction on which it is dependent. In *No puedo digerir este libro*, again, *digerir* 'to digest' induces the conceptualization of *este libro* 'this book' as an abstract, complex semantic entity, thus highlighting only one of the dimensions involved in its meaning (that is, its content) and setting aside others such as its physical condition.

2.1. Types of metonymy

There have been several proposals for metonymy classification (see Croft, 2006; Panther & Thornburg, 2017; Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña Cervel, 2008; Barcelona, 2013, among others). Panther and Thornburg's (2017, p. 280) is especially relevant for the purpose of this work and what follows is a summary. The authors distinguish two main types of metonymy: (1) propositional metonymies, which can be referential/or predicational, and (2) illocutionary metonymies. According to these authors, referential metonymies operate on nominal expressions. In example (8), *el museo de la ciudad* 'the city museum' stands for the people in charge of the museum – a specific metonymic expression that illustrates the higher-order conceptual metonymy INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RUNNING THE INSTITUTION –, whereas *Sorolla* stands for a painting painted by Sorolla – a specific metonymic expression that instantiates the higher-order conceptual metonymy PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT PRODUCED BY THE PRODUCER.

- (8) *El museo de la ciudad* ha adquirido un *Sorolla*.
'The city museum has acquired a *Sorolla*.'

Predicational metonymies operate on the verb phrase of sentences. Examples (9), (10) and (11) below, taken from Panther and Thornburg (2017, p. 281), are different kinds of the higher-order metonymy POTENTIAL EVENT FOR ACTUAL EVENT: OBLIGATION TO ACT FOR ACTUAL ACTION in (9), ABILITY TO HEAR FOR ACTUAL PERCEPTUAL EVENT OF HEARING in (10) and PERMISSION TO ACT FOR ACTUAL ACTION.

- (9) I *had to take* residency in Los Angeles.
(10) Kyle *could hear* the crashing of glass and metal.
(11) Soon he *was allowed to fly* to the United States, where he is in exile.

These three metonymies can be found also in Spanish but only in their perfective versions – (12a), translation of (9); (13a), translation of (10); and (14a), translation of (11) –, but not in the imperfective counterparts (12b), (13b) and (14b):

- (12a) *Tuve* (have.PRET.1SG) que establecer mi residencia en Los Ángeles.
(12b) *Tenia* (have.IPFV.PST.1SG) que establecer mi residencia en Los Ángeles, *pero todavía no me había decidido*.
'I *had to take* residency in Los Angeles, *but I had not made up my mind yet*.'
(13a) Kyle *pudo* (can.PRET.3SG) oír el choque estruendoso de cristal y metal.
(13b) Kyle *podía* (can.IPFV.PST.3SG) oír el choque estruendoso de cristal y metal *si había un accidente*.
'Kyle *could hear* the crashing of glass and metal *if an accident happened*.'
(14a) Pronto le *permitieron* (allow.PRET.3PL) volar a los Estados Unidos, donde está exiliado.
(14b) Le *permitían* (allow.IPFV.PST.3PL) volar a los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, *nunca hizo uso de esta posibilidad*.
'They *allowed* him to fly to the United States, *but he never used this possibility*.'

Imperfective alternatives allow for a strict potential interpretation. That is why (12b), unlike (12a), includes *pero no me había decidido* 'but I hadn't made my mind up yet' without rendering a contradictory meaning. Similarly, (13a), unlike (13b), would be incongruent if we added the complement *si había un accidente* 'if an accident hap-

pened’, which conceives “accident” as hypothetical: **Kyle pudo oír el choque estruendoso de cristal y metal si había un accidente*. Finally, (14b) does not accept the additional relative sentence *donde está exiliado* ‘where he is in exile’, which presupposes he travelled to the United States, but it is compatible with *nunca hizo uso de esta posibilidad* ‘he never used this possibility’, which again restricts the flight to the United States to mere potentiality. We will return to aspects related to this topic later.

The third kind of metonymy according to Panther and Thornburg’s classification, i.e. illocutionary metonymy, operates on the speech act level and offers an explanation, in terms of conceptual metonymy, for indirect speech acts. Panther and Thornburg (2017, pp. 282-283) give some examples – reproduced here as (15)-(19) –, related to requests. In all of them, if the request frame or scenario is taken for granted, mentioning one of the previous conditions or the resultant effects in an indirect way (i.e. metonymically) stands for the act of request itself:

- (15) *Can/could* you turn the light off?
- (16) You *can* turn the light off.
- (17) I *want* you to turn the light off.
- (18) You *should* turn the light off.
- (19) *Would* you mind turning the light off.

In section 3, we argue that Panther and Thornburg’s metonymy typology is directly relevant for the metonymies we find in some uses of the imperfect and preterit tenses in Spanish.

2.2. The role of metaphor and metonymy in the formation of complex categories

In this section we will explore the central role that metaphor and metonymy play in establishing the links between the different meanings a form can have, i.e. the different conceptualizations that it allows for. This polysemic approach (one form–many meanings intertwined through metaphoric and metonymic extensions) proves useful not only as a conceptual description, but also as a pedagogical tool, as it helps learners to build (and visualize) the meaning networks that converge in (or rather are derived from) a given form. This, in turn, contributes to reducing learners’ perceived arbitrariness and to providing them with learning strategies for autonomous learning. For the sake of exemplification, we will examine the use of the imperfect tense in Spanish to talk about the present in an indirect way, be it because we make use of meaning indeterminacy as a way to metonymically extend the past facts to the present, or because we highlight certain aspects of the illocutionary speech event in order to accomplish other discursive or pragmatic purposes.

Cognitive Linguistics argues that lexical categories and grammar constructions, as well as other linguistic components, are conceptually organized in complex category networks. At the centre of these networks are the most prototypical meaning(s) mapped onto the given form, which are then metaphorically or metonymically extended to other non-prototypical meanings. Underlying all these meanings, a common schematic value of abstract nature can be found that pervades all the prototypical and non-prototypical values. Following Langacker’s well-known example (Langacker, 1987, pp. 377-386), the prototypical use of *tree* refers to the most identifiable (culturally mediated) exemplars of a tree (e.g. *oak*, *chestnut tree*, *olive tree*, etc.). This form is then applied to other exemplars which possess some of the characteristics present in the prototypical meaning, but lack some others (e.g. when we use *tree* to refer to a big *bush* due to our limited botanical knowledge). Additionally, the prototypical meaning can be metaphorically extended to other meanings, such as a *concept tree* or a *family tree*, either directly from the prototypical exemplar or via the already extended meanings, which act as conceptual nodes. As mentioned, a schematic value can be distilled from all these prototypical and non-prototypical meanings which accounts for all the characteristics that the exemplars have in common. This semantic descriptive tool has also been applied to grammatical categories, such as the pioneering analysis carried out by Brugman and Lakoff (1988, pp. 477-507) on the preposition *over*, or the analysis of the preposition *por* by Cuenca and Hilferty (1999, pp. 143-148).

Moving on to one of the grammatical issues we are analysing in this paper, the imperfect tense is used in Spanish for a variety of communicative purposes. These have been traditionally described, and consequently taught, as a list of complementary uses, usually without any connection between them. The following list contain these main uses:

- (20) Me llamó cuando *venía* para casa. (= unfinished past event/action at the time of the story)
PRO.ACC.1SG call.PRET.3SG when come.IPFV.3SG towards home.
‘He/she called me when he/she was coming home.’
- (21) No sé dónde está, pero *venía* para aquí. (= it happened then; maybe still now, maybe not)
Not know.PRES.1SG where be.PRES.3SG, but come.IPFV.PST.3SG towards here.
‘I don’t know where he/she is, but he/she was coming here.’
- (22) ¿Tú *venías* a la fiesta? (= distancing use to confirm already gained information)
You come.IPFV.PST.2SG to the.FEM.SG party?
‘Were you coming to the party?’
- (23) *Venía* a arreglar mi móvil. (= polite request)
Come.IPFV.PST.1SG to fix.INF my mobile.

- ‘I came to fix my mobile.’
- (24) Si pudiera, *venía* a la playa todos los días. (= hypothetical meaning, often desiderative)
 If can.PST.SUBJ.1SG, come.IPFV.PST.1SG to the.FEM.SG beach all.MASC.PL the.MASC.PL days.
 ‘If I could, I would come everyday to the beach.’
- (25) Yo, en tu lugar, *venía* a la playa todos los días. (= advice)
 I, in your place, come.IPFV.PST.1SG to the.FEM.SG beach all.MASC.PL the.MASC.PL days.
 ‘If I were you, I *would* come everyday to the beach.’

Example (20) can be considered as our prototypical conceptualization of the imperfect tense, i.e. when it refers to an event or action presented as unfinished at a given point of the narration or story. However, how does this use relate to the other meanings in (21-25)? Besides, how can learners be guided to establish these connections and to avoid having to learn a long list of unrelated uses? One way of achieving this is by establishing the radial connections between the central prototypical use and the other more proximal and more distal meanings, as shown in the proposal depicted in Figure 1, yet to be empirically validated.

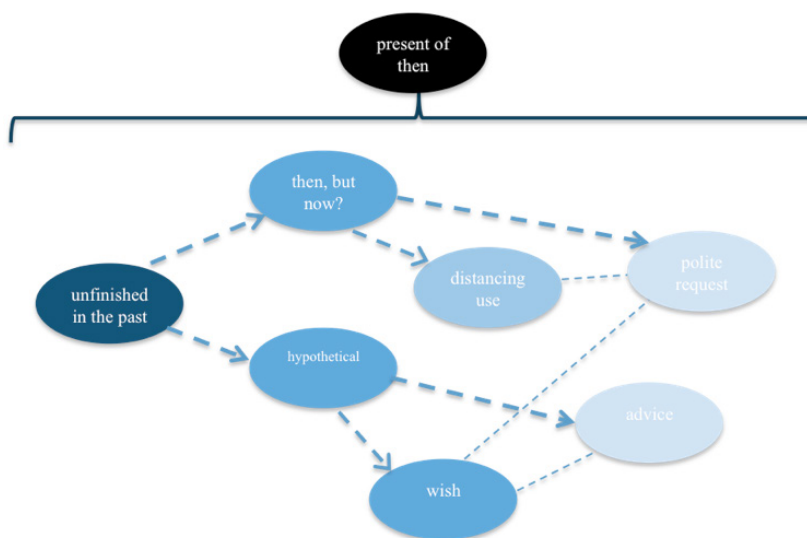


Figure 1. Node representation of prototypical and non-prototypical meanings of imperfect tense in Spanish.

In the visual representation in Figure 1 we can see the most prototypical use (“unfinished in the past”) as the source meaning of all the other uses, which implies that the latter, however distant they may seem, can be derived from the former. The darker the circle, the closer to the prototypical meaning the derived meaning is. The derivations (or extensions) are symbolized by arrows. Darker and thicker arrows stand for direct extensions by means of metaphor, metonymy or other types of cognitive operations (such as partial coincidence, analogy, etc.). Lighter and thinner broken lines account for related meanings, not directly derived by means of such cognitive operations.

The “hypothetical” use can be explained as a metaphorical extension of the “unfinished in the past” meaning. Instead of referring to the “past” domain, we refer to another “not-related-to-now” domain, that is, the “hypothetical” mental domain (see Castañeda Castro & Alhmod, 2014, pp. 45-46 on this counterfactual meaning of the imperfect close to the conditional tense). This “hypothetical” use is in itself the source of another closely related extension (the “wish” use), as the hypothetical mental domain triggers the conceptualization of the verb phrase as a desiderative event. In addition to this, this first “hypothetical” extension can be seen as the source of a metonymy where the preconditions of the speech act – the speaker’s hypothetical identification with the interlocutor’s situation – are highlighted (focused) and mentioned for the speech act itself, giving us the “advice” use. According to Panther and Thornburg’s (2017) previously mentioned classification, this could be considered as an example of illocutionary metonymy: PRECONDITIONS OF A SPEECH ACT FOR THE SPEECH ACT ITSELF.

The “then, but now?” use (fully analysed in Section 4 below) could be considered as an example of propositional metonymy, PRECEDING STATE FOR CONSEQUENT STATE. This metonymy implies a profile/base rearrangement: the consequent state (i.e. the present situation as the default continuation of a preceding situation) is highlighted here as the primary focus in the time-continuity frame. This process is triggered by a pragmatic or discursive contextual element. In our example (21), this could be the fact that the speaker has seen the person on their way here (*venía*), and this can still apply to the present (something about which he/she is unsure) or may have finished (and, therefore, the person must be here already). The indeterminacy of the imperfect is exploited here to talk about a present situation. This indeterminacy accounts for the next use in the concept tree, the extended “distancing use” in (22). Here, a present/future situation is conveyed (the party is still on, and the speaker wants to confirm if the listener *is coming* or not), but there is the need to distance oneself from the propositional meaning of the utterance, since the information about it has already been given to the speaker. This is achieved by using the imperfect tense to refer

to the previous discursive situation when the information was exchanged/gained, in a propositional metonymy that can be termed PAST MENTION OF AN EVENT FOR THE EVENT ITSELF. Finally, as shown in the concept tree, another use can be derived from this “then, but now?” use: the “polite request”. Here, the speaker makes his/her request for something to be done in the present, but he/she uses a past tense. This is another example of an illocutionary metonymy where the preconditions of the speech act – the speaker’s need or desire for a request (the reason why the speaker *venía*) – are mentioned for the speech act itself. On the whole, this concept tree illustrates another important cognitive phenomenon, i.e. metonymic and metaphorical chaining (see Ruiz de Mendoza, 2000; Barcelona, 2002), as exemplified with a higher-order metonymy (PRECEDING STATE FOR CONSEQUENT STATE) inserted into a more specific illocutionary one (SPEECH ACT PRECONDITIONS FOR SPEECH ACT ITSELF).

This way of representing the relationships among the different meanings that a form can convey (imperfect tense) may prove useful to provide learners (B1-B2 students of Spanish as a foreign language in our case) with a conceptualization that focuses on the prototypical use(s) and the derived extensions, in other words, on the kind of rules that are midway between the overarching conceptualization provided by the schematic value (in the case of the imperfect tense, the “present of then” value in the top darkest circle in Figure 1) and the micro-rules of unconnected uses that will inevitably promote rote-learning on the learners’ side. This does not mean that the schematic value underlying all the prototypical and non-prototypical uses is not worth understanding. On the contrary, when learners have a solid and accessible command of all the intertwined meanings, helping them to distil the general meaning that pervades all these uses can be an effective pedagogical strategy to strengthen network building. Nevertheless, we think that becoming aware of the metaphorical and metonymic extensions can be the first step in the network-building process, particularly relevant if we want to present learners with a rule-governed system that also accounts for communicative and contextualized linguistic uses. In this regard, we want to stress the fact that this approach allows for language instruction that focuses on patterns related to specific lexical items and, therefore, to specific discursive and pragmatic functions. This is of paramount importance, as the extensions may not be applicable in certain cases due to the semantic import of (in our case) the verb. This can be seen in Chart 1, where some of the extension instances provided for different verbs seem rather unnatural or impossible (signalled * in the grey cells). The exploration of this type of restrictions remains still unexplained and opens a promising future line of research that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

Chart 1. Distribution of different verbs and different uses of the Spanish imperfect tense.

	UNFINISHED IN THE PAST	THEN, BUT NOW?	DISTANCING USE	POLITE REQUEST	HYPOTHETICAL	ADVICE
VENIR ‘to come’	Me llamó cuando <i>venía</i> para casa. ‘He/she called me when he/she was coming home.’	No sé dónde está, pero <i>venía</i> para aquí. ‘I don’t know where he/she is, but he/she was coming here.’	¿Tú <i>venías</i> a la fiesta? ‘Were you coming to the party?’	<i>Venia</i> a arreglar mi móvil. ‘I came to fix my mobile.’	Si pudiera, <i>venía</i> todos los días a la playa. ‘If I could, I would come everyday to the beach.’	Yo, en tu lugar, <i>venía</i> todos los días a la playa. ‘If I were you, I would come everyday to the beach.’
DECIDIR ‘to decide / to make a decision / to make up one’s mind’	No <i>decidía</i> , así que me tocó a mí tomar la decisión. ‘He/she didn’t make up his/her mind, so it was me who had to make the decision.’	¿Sabemos ya el resultado? La junta <i>decidía</i> hace un momento. ‘Do we know the result yet? Supposedly, the council made a decision a while ago.’	Tú <i>decidías</i> siempre lanzando una moneda, ¿no? ‘You usually made up your mind by flipping a coin, right?’	* <i>Decidía</i> quedármelo. ¿Me lo envuelve? *‘I was deciding to keep it. Can you wrap it up.’	Si pudiera, <i>decidía</i> solo pensando en lo que me dice el corazón. ‘If I could, I would decide thinking only on what my heart tells me.’	Si yo fuera tú, <i>decidía</i> ya si comprarlo o no. ‘If I were you, I would decide straightaway whether to buy it or not.’
LLAMAR(SE) ‘my/your/... name is ...; to go by ...; to call ...’	¿Cómo <i>te llamabas</i> antes de casarte? ‘What was your name before you got married?’	Lo mejor es que vayas al taller del amigo de papá. Búscalo en la guía. <i>Se llamaba</i> Talleres López. ‘Why don’t you go to dad’s friend’s repair shop. Look it up. I think its name was Talleres López.’	Perdona, ¿cómo <i>te llamabas</i> ? ‘Sorry, what was your name again?’	* <i>Me llamaba</i> Paquito, por favor, que hay confianza. *‘You called me Paquito, please, we are among friends here.’	Si pudiera cambiarme el nombre, <i>me llamaba</i> Tristán. ‘If I could change names, I would go by Tristan.’	¿Vas a estudiar a España? Pues si yo fuera tú, <i>me llamaba</i> Ana, es fácil de pronunciar. ‘Are you going to study in Spain? If I were you, I would go by Ana, as it is easily pronounced.’
QUERER ‘to want’	<i>Quería</i> ir a la fiesta, pero tuve que trabajar hasta tarde. ‘I wanted to go to the party, but I had to work until late.’	¿Te vas? La jefa <i>quería</i> verte. ‘Are you leaving? The boss wanted to see you.’	<i>Querías</i> una cerveza, ¿verdad? ‘You wanted a beer, right?’	<i>Quería</i> dos kilos de tomates, por favor. ‘I would like two kilos of tomatoes, please.’	*Si pudiera, <i>quería</i> ir a la playa. *‘If I could, I would want to go to the beach.’	*Si yo fuera tú, <i>quería</i> ir a la playa. *‘If I were you, I would want to go to the beach.’

2.3. Grammatical metonymy

Barcelona (2013, p. 13) holds that “metonymy is a conceptual mechanism operating under the lexicon (in phonological categorization and in the meaning and grammatical behavior of certain morphemes), at the lexical level, and above the lexicon (motivating certain aspects of grammar, especially grammatical recategorization, and guiding discourse-pragmatic inferencing, especially indirect speech acts and implicatures).”

Lexical metonymies, such as the ones in (6) and (7), are generally assumed, but there is also grammar metonymy, which often is not. Consider (26)-(29) for some examples of this type of metonymy, related to different grammatical resources:

- (26) *Se afeitó.*
PRO.REFL.3SG *shave*.PRET.3SG
(Metonymically) ‘He/she shaved a part of his/her body.’
- (27) Hay *cerdo* en el frigo.
Have.PRES.IMPS *pig* in the.MASC.SG fridge.
(Metonymically) ‘There is some pig meat in the fridge’ (= ‘There is some pork in the fridge’).
- (28) Madre e hija tienen *los mismos* hijos.
Mother and daughter have.PRES.3PL *the*.MASC.PL *same*.MASC.PL son.PL.
(Metonymically) ‘Mother and daughter have the same number of sons.’
- (29) Los libros *son* en la estantería.
The.MASC.PL book.PL *be*.PRES.3PL on the.FEM.SG shelf.
(Metonymically) ‘The books’ placement is on the shelf.’ (= ‘The books go on the shelf’).

In (26) the reflexive pronoun *se* ‘him/herself’ is used metonymically: we do not mean he/she shaved his/her whole body but just one of its parts. This is achieved by A WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy.

In (27) the countable noun *cerdo* ‘pig’ is understood as uncountable, that is, pork or “pig meat”, due to the metonymy THE WHOLE (the whole animal) FOR THE PART (the meat we get from it).

In (28), with the indefinite phrase *los mismos* ‘the same’, we mean that mother and daughter have the same number of sons, and these necessarily must be different individuals. We refer to the identity of two groups of individuals but, in fact, we are metonymically alluding to the identity of the quantity of individuals in those two groups.

In (29) there is a peculiar use of *ser* ‘to be’. This Spanish copula usually means identification or correspondence, but in this occasion it expresses an object location – something which is usually conveyed by *estar*, the other Spanish copula which usually translates in English to *to be*. The explanation of this strange use is that *los libros* does not refer to the books themselves but, metonymically, to the books’ placement.

The notion of *active zone* (Langacker, 1987, pp. 271-274) is very useful to understand some of these metonymies classified as WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymies. The active zone is defined by Langacker (1987, p. 271) as a “prominent substructure” of the referred entity that “participates most directly and crucially” in a designated relation. In *We all heard the trumpet* (author’s example), the *trumpet* per se “does not impinge on our auditory apparatus, rather it is the sound emitted by the trumpet that does so.” Therefore, the sound caused by the trumpet would be the active zone directly involved in the hearing event. In (26), for instance, the shaved body part can be understood as the active zone of the person designated by *se* ‘him/herself’. It is just the body part (e.g. the beard) that directly participates in the relationship expressed in the sentence. Taking this notion of active zone into account, these WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymies could be reformulated as WHOLE FOR THE RELEVANT PART (ACTIVE ZONE) metonymies. In section 3 we will review some other important notions offered by CG that prove to be very adequate to understand metonymy and, specifically, grammar metonymy.

3. Metonymy in Cognitive Grammar

CG (see Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2008, 2009; Croft, 2006; Taylor, 2002; Maldonado, 2012, among others) is one of the most solid theoretical models developed in the wider framework of Cognitive Linguistics. Some of the principles of this linguistic theory are especially adequate to explain the role of metonymy in some grammatical phenomena. In this section we will review these principles in relation to Spanish language.

There are two main ideas or principles in CG that are important to understand metonymy from the point of view of this model: (1) the first idea is that grammatical and lexical options are many times alternative conceptualizations of the same objective situation (“construal”, in CG’s terms); (2) the second idea is that meaning is usually indeterminate both in vocabulary and grammar. Let us consider each one in some detail.

3.1. Construal

Regarding the concept of construal, we will consider the opposition between the present perfect and the preterit in Spanish.

If we compare the present perfect (*has cantado* sing.PRF.2SG) with the preterit (*cantaste* sing.PRET.2SG), we can see that both tenses can refer to the same finished past event, but they temporally locate it in different frames or bases: a time period or span that includes “now” in the case of present perfect and a time period that does not include “now” in the case of the preterit. See Figure 2 for an iconic representation of this contrast for the sentences (30) and (31):

- (30) *He ido al dentista esta mañana.*
 Go.PRF.1SG to.ART.MASC.SG dentist this.FEM.SG morning.
 ‘I have been to the dentist this morning.’
- (31) *Fui al dentista esta mañana.*
 Go.PRET.1SG to.ART.MASC.SG dentist this.FEM.SG morning.
 ‘I went to the dentist this morning.’

The same event, placed exactly in the same objective temporal location, is linguistically conceptualized and represented in a different way depending on the presupposed temporal frame we bear in mind with each tense (see Castañeda Castro 2004b, 2006 and Alhmod & Castañeda Castro, 2014 for a detailed account of this approach). We refer to the same objective situation with alternative linguistic images or points of view. The two alternatives share the same truth conditions, as they are true in the same circumstances. However, this fact does not imply that they have the same meaning. For CG, perspective/construal is an important, basic dimension of meaning, specifically of grammar meaning.

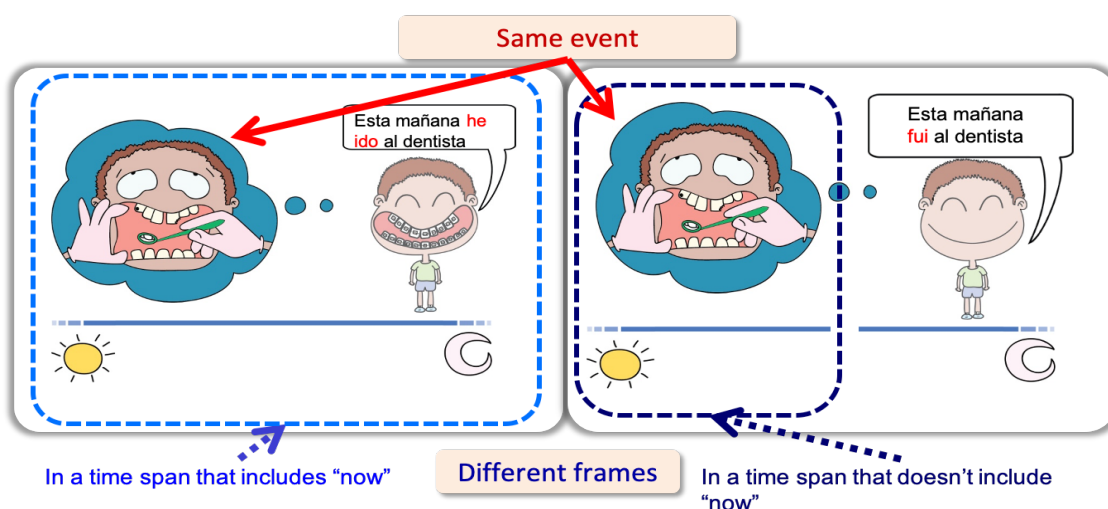


Figure 2. Present perfect versus preterit in Spanish. Source: Alhmod and Castañeda Castro (2014, p. 282).

3.2. Meaning indeterminacy

The second feature of the CG model, especially relevant for understanding the role of metonymy in grammar, is that meaning is usually indeterminate both in vocabulary and grammar. According to Langacker (2009, p. 46), “explicit linguistic coding gets us to the right neighborhood but from there we have to find the right address by other means [...]” This assertion can be confirmed by many examples. For the sake of simplicity and considering our purpose, example (32), taken from Langacker (2009, p. 54), will suffice. In (32), despite its apparent objectivity, simplicity and transparency, there is a remarkable indeterminacy as illustrated in Figure 3.

- (32) *Dos hombres levantaron dos cajas.*
 ‘Two men lifted two boxes.’

The strict meaning of (32) is represented in Figure 3(a), inspired in the iconic notations used by Langacker himself. This sentence entails just two men and two boxes participating in a lifting event, the former as agents and the latter as patients. Notwithstanding, the specific way this interaction is actually achieved remains indeterminate. There are many possibilities, among which we have alternative interpretations illustrated in Figures 3(b-g) with their specific paraphrases.

Bearing all these ideas in mind, we can conceive metonymy as a case of language indeterminacy, and as one of the construal dimensions that allow for alternative conceptualizations in symbolization and communication processes. We will now explore, in a more detailed way, two construal dimensions that are especially important to understand metonymy in general and, more specifically, in the realm of Spanish tense grammar: the profile/base distinction and subjectification.

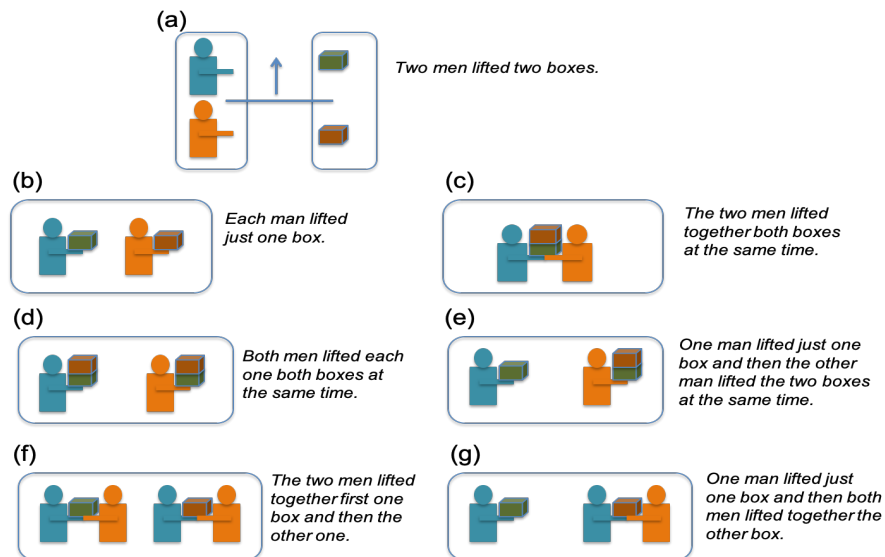


Figure 3. Meaning indetermination. Multiple interpretations of *Two men lifted two boxes*. Adapted from Langacker (2009, p. 54).

3.3. Profile/base distinction

The profile/base distinction can be found in part-whole lexical relationships. In the three examples of noun phrases illustrated in Figure 4 below, the meanings of the nouns in red (*pie de lámpara* ‘lamp base’, *pantalla de lámpara* ‘lamp screen’, and *lámpara de mesa* ‘table lamp’) have two parts or components that can be perceived as a figure-background relationship: there is the *profile* (the darkened part in the pictures), or the specific referent of the noun, and there is the *base* (the faded part in the pictures), that works as a conceptual context or frame for the profile.

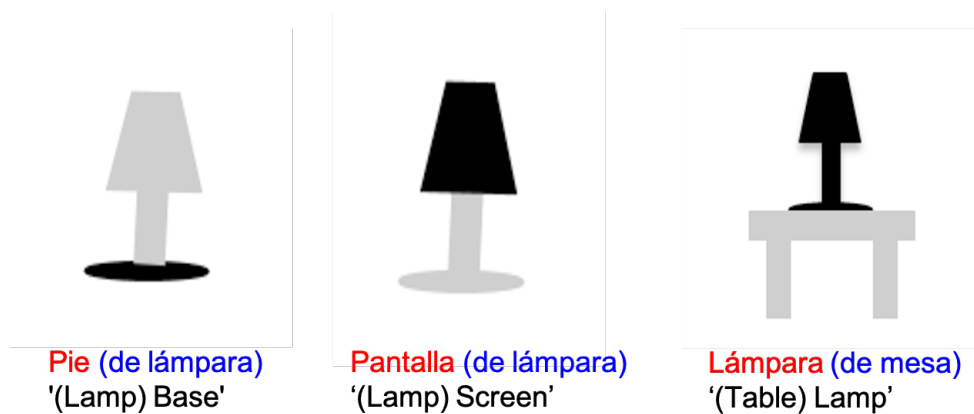


Figure 4. Profile/base distinction. *Lámpara de mesa* ‘table lamp’. *Pie de lámpara* ‘lamp base’. *Pantalla de lámpara* ‘lamp screen’. Adapted from Alhmod, Castañeda Castro and Cadierno (2019, pp. 195-196).

Every noun focuses on the profile, but they necessarily presuppose the domain of the base. The base is part of the meaning but it works as a secondary or background component, although essential to identify the characteristic or defining features of the notion referred to.

We can also see the profile/base contrast in the realm of lexical morphology, specifically in derivative relationships, as Langacker (2008, p. 100) points out when analysing the words derived from the verbal root “choose”. As Figure 5 below shows, the verb *elegir* ‘to choose’ allows for several things in the profile component. On the one hand, both the trajector (the choosing entity, marked as “Tr.” in the figure) and the landmark (the chosen entity, marked as “Lm.” in the figure). On the other hand, the relationship between them, which is sequentially perceived as it evolves in time (symbolized by the arrow in black). The set of options from which the subject can choose are pushed back into the background of the base. In contrast, the noun *elector* ‘chooser’ focuses on only one component as the profile, i.e. the subject that chooses, setting the other components aside as the base.

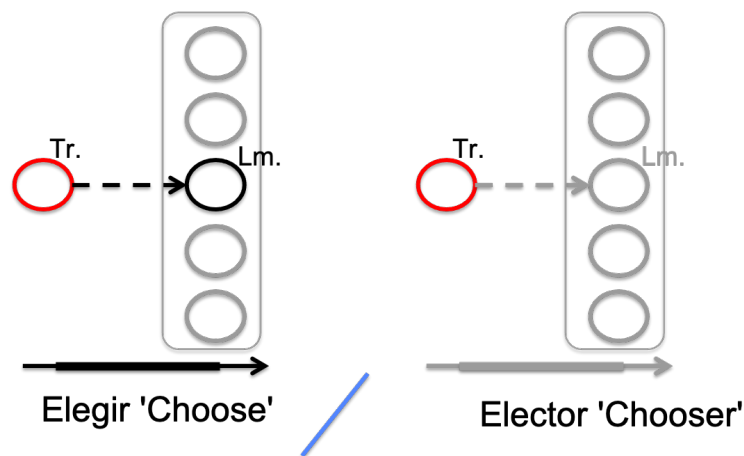


Figure 5. Profile/base distinction in derivative morphology. The case of *elegir* ‘to choose’ and *elector* ‘chooser’. Adapted from Langacker (2008, p. 100).

Polysemy may be based on alternative profile/base arrangements construed on the same semantic complex configuration. This is the case with the different semantic values that we can identify in *elección* ‘choice’ as illustrated by the three alternative meanings of this abstract noun in Figure 6: *elección* (‘choice’ 1) as “thing chosen”; *elección* (‘choice’ 2) as “range of options”, and *elección* (‘choice’ 3) as “act of choosing”.

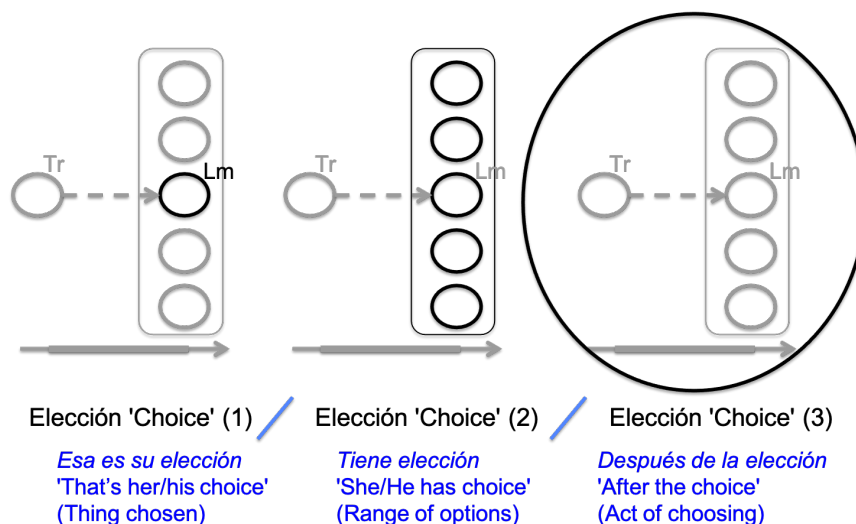


Figure 6. Meanings of *elección* ‘choice’. Adapted from Langacker (2008, p. 100).

As one final example, we will analyse the profile/base contrast in the deictic dimension of tense oppositions/alternatives. All tense morphemes designate a situation or an event, understanding a situation as a relationship perceived in its temporal evolution. This is the profile. However, each morpheme places the situation or event in a complex conceptual base: (1) in the time dimension that evolves in a continuous line back to front and (2) with relation to the moment the speaker is speaking at – or in relation to a second time landmark, as it happens with the past perfect tense, which places an event before a past landmark that, in turn, happened before now.

These distinctions are shown in the iconic representations (Figure 7 below) for present *lueve* (rain.PRES.3SG) ‘it rains’, imperfect *llovía* (rain.IPFV.PST.3SG) ‘it rained’, present perfect *ha llovido* (rain.PRF.3SG) ‘it has rained’, and preterit *llovió* (rain.PRET.3SG) ‘it rained’. Again, brightly coloured parts are the profile and faded-coloured parts are the base.

On the left, we have the imperfective aspect (IPFV) tenses (present and imperfect) and, on the right, we have the perfective aspect (PFV) tenses (present perfect and preterit).

We will come back to this kind of representation later, but for now we want to emphasize the fact that the construal dimension based on the profile/base distinction is a pervasive focus adjustment mechanism in the conceptualizations symbolized by language. If we keep this in mind, it should not be surprising that metonymy, another kind of highlighting operation (Croft, 2006), may also be a common construal mechanism. Metonymy happens as the result of changing the focusing arrangement of any expression or construction, that is, from the default option into an alternative one that highlights a semantic component usually set aside as part of the base of the complex conceptual setting implied in the meaning of the expression.

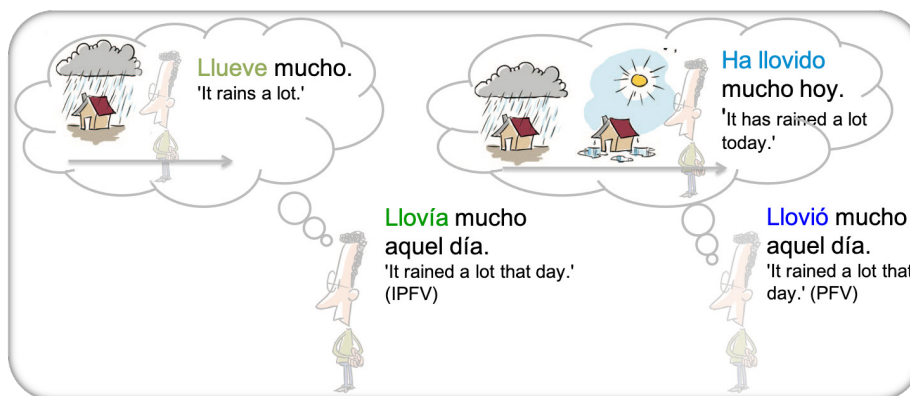
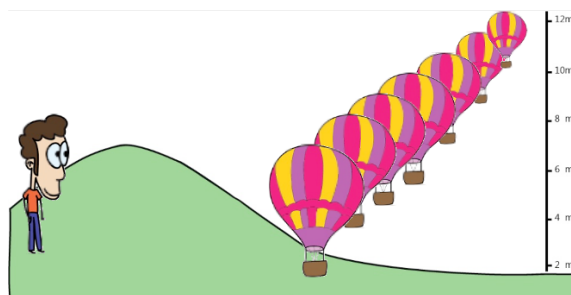


Figure 7. Profile/base distinction in deictic meanings: Spanish past tenses. Adapted from Alonso *et al.* (2011, pp. 121, 125, 133).

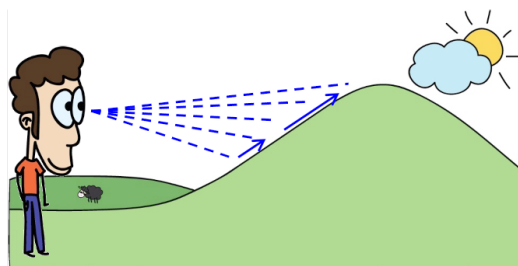
3.4. Subjectification

Subjectification can be considered as a special kind of metonymy: it occurs when we talk about the world as if things were happening in the world when, in fact, they are just happening in our mind as we represent the world. Here follows an example from Langacker (1987, pp. 128-132). When we say *El globo se eleva suavemente* ‘The balloon rises gently’, we describe an objective change of the balloon’s height, as shown in Figure 8 below. In contrast, when we say *La colina se eleva suavemente* ‘The hill rises gently’, it is not the hill itself that gently rises but our sight that moves up progressively while we look over the whole extension of the hill, as shown in Figure 9. We are metonymically referring to the increasing height of the different points of the hillside we successively focus on. In other words, it is our “mental travelling” that motivates the dynamicity expressed by the verb “rise”.



El globo se eleva suavemente. 'The balloon rises gently'

Figure 8. Objective movement: *El globo se eleva suavemente* ‘The balloon rises gently’ Langacker’s example (1987, p. 128-132). Illustration: Castañeda Castro and Alhmoud (2014, p. 69).



La colina se eleva suavemente. 'The hill rises gently'

Figure 9. Subjective movement: *La colina se eleva suavemente* ‘The hill rises gently’. Langacker’s example (1987, p. 128-132). Illustration: Castañeda Castro and Alhmoud (2014, p. 69).

Other examples of subjectification in grammar are (33)-(34):

- (33) Cuando llegué al cruce *apareció* (= en mi mente) de pronto una señal de stop y no pude parar a tiempo.
When arrive.PRET.1SG to.ART.MASC.SG crossing appear.PRET.3SG of soon a.FEM.SG sign of stop and not can.PRET.1SG stop to time.
'When I arrived at the crossing, a stop sign suddenly *turned up* (= in my mind) and I couldn't stop in time.'
- (34) La manzana *está* (= sabe) ácida.
The.FEM.SG apple be.PRES.3SG sour.FEM.SG.
'The apple *is* (= tastes) sour.'

4. Grammatical metonymy in tense and aspect morphemes in Spanish

All the theoretical background set forth in the previous sections provides the tools to analyse in depth two examples of metonymy in tense and aspect Spanish morphemes: one concerning the use of the imperfect tense to indirectly implying the present, and another one related to stative verbs being understood as actions or changes of state when they are formulated in preterit or by means of a progressive periphrasis.

4.1. Metonymic uses of Spanish imperfect past simple tense (*imperfecto*)

When used prototypically, the *imperfecto* conceptualizes unfinished facts, i.e. seen while they are happening in the moment of the story we are at (see Section 2.2. above). With this tense, we do not know whether the processes we are referring to are completed or not at a later point in the story, nor do we know if the situation changes or stays the same in the present time. The uncertainty (indeterminacy) associated with the imperfect is an interesting source of implications and, eventually, metonymies as well.

As for time continuity, when we use the imperfect there are, at least, two possible settings or scenes (the so-called "frames" in Cognitive Linguistics). On the one hand, we may be telling facts on a timeline that is linked to the present time. Let us see the example in (35), illustrated in Figure 10.

- (35) + ¿Vas a salir? *Llovía* mucho esta mañana.
Go.PRES.2SG to exit.INF? Rain.IPFV.PST.3SG much this.FEM.SG morning.
'Are you going to go out? It was *raining* a lot this morning.'
– Sí, *pero creo que ya no*.
Yes, but believe.PRES.1SG that yet not.
'That's true, but *I think it isn't now*.'

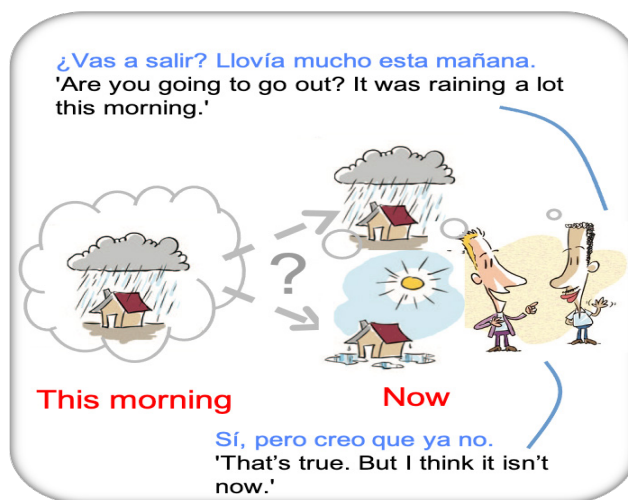


Figure 10. Telling facts on a timeline linked to the present moment (now).

Illustrations adapted from Alonso *et al.* (2011, p. 125).

In (35) the past event *llovía mucho* 'it was raining a lot' is located this morning and, therefore, is temporally linked with now. The use of the *imperfecto* allows for two possible continuations: the raining can keep happening now, as suggested by the first speaker's statement, or it may have stopped, as conveyed by the second speaker's reply.

The other time-continuity setting or frame takes place when we are telling facts that are not connected with the present time, e.g. because we are telling a fictional story. That is the case in (36a) and (36b):

- (36a) *Llovía* mucho aquella mañana. *No paró en ningún momento*.
Rain.IPFV.PST.3SG much that.FEM.SG morning. Not stop.PRET.3SG in no moment.
'It *rained* a lot that morning. *It didn't stop at any moment*.'

- (36b) *Llovía mucho aquella mañana, pero por la tarde salió el sol.*
 Rain.IPFV.PST.3SG much that.FEM.SG morning, but for the.FEM.SG afternoon exit.PRET.3SG the.
 MASC.SG sun.

‘It rained-IPFV a lot that morning, but in the afternoon the sun came out.’

As we can see in Figure 11 below, the first sentence *Llovía mucho aquella mañana* ‘It rained a lot that morning’ places the past event “then”, in the ongoing moment of the story we are telling. Again, since the speaker uses the imperfect, the situation can evolve in two ways: it might have kept raining – as in the conceptualization implied by *no paró en ningún momento* –, or it might have stopped and the situation might have changed – as implied by *pero por la tarde salió el sol*.

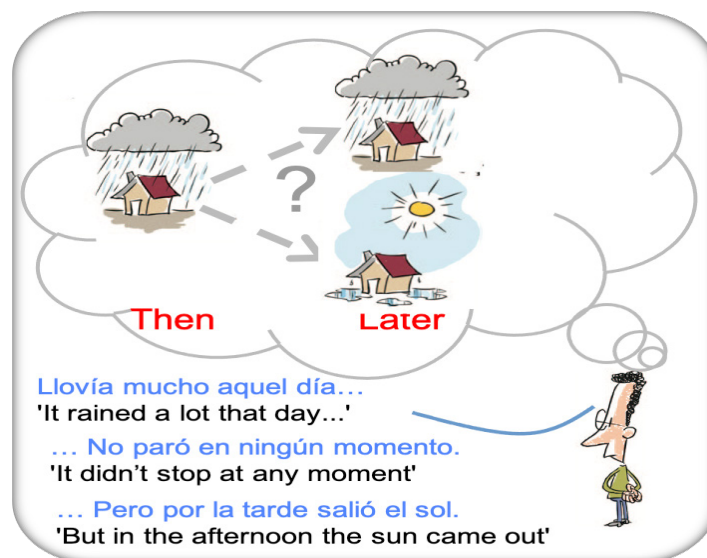


Figure 11. Telling facts that are not necessarily linked with present time (now).
 Illustration adapted from Alonso *et al.* (2011, p. 125).

In some present-time relevant contexts we can, therefore, talk about the present indirectly – out of politeness or because of other discursive or pragmatic reasons, as explained in section 2.2. above. In this sense, the imperfect refers to a situation unfinished in the past that is supposed to be still happening “now”, provided nothing indicates otherwise. According to Panther and Thornburg’s (2017) previously mentioned classification, this could be considered as an example of propositional metonymy, one that affects the verb phrase and that could be formulated as PRECEDING STATE FOR CONSEQUENT STATE. This metonymy implies a profile/base rearrangement: the consequent state (i.e. present situation as the default continuation of a preceding situation), which is part of the base in the prototypical meaning of the imperfect tense, is highlighted as the primary focus in the time-continuity frame, due to a pragmatic or discursive triggering element from the context. Nonetheless, this metonymic extension of the imperfect could also be understood as an illocutionary metonymy if we take into account its pragmatic dimension in instances like the ones commented in section 2.2., where the preconditions of the speech act – the speaker’s need or desire for a request (see 23) or the speaker’s hypothetical identification with hearer’s situation for a suggestion or advice (see 25) – are metonymically mentioned for the speech act itself. This, in turn, is an example of metonymy chaining (see Ruiz de Mendoza, 2000; Barcelona, 2002), where a higher-order metonymy (the PRECEDING STATE FOR CONSEQUENT STATE one) is inserted in a more specific illocutionary one (SPEECH ACT PRECONDITIONS FOR SPEECH ACT ITSELF), as explained in 2.2.

4.2. Stative verbs understood as actions or changes of state when used with Spanish preterit or with the progressive periphrasis (*estar* + Gerund)

Let us now turn to the other instance of tense/aspect metonymy we would like to comment on: the one related to the preterit and the *estar* + gerund periphrasis combined with stative verbs.

We should start this topic by recalling the distinction between stative and action verbs and how the progressive periphrasis interacts with them. Non-periphrastic verbal forms (see, for instance, Langacker, 2001), are used to talk about states, i.e. situations that stay the same for a time such as *Está de pie* ‘He/she is standing’, *Sabe mucho* ‘He/she knows a lot’, *Es lista* ‘She is smart’, *Tiene miedo* ‘He/she is afraid’, *Puede andar* ‘He/she can walk’, etc., or about actions or changes of state such as *Se levanta* ‘He/she gets up’, *Coge los regalos* ‘He/she picks up the gifts’, *Lleva los regalos al coche* ‘He/she takes the gifts to the car’, etc. With the progressive periphrasis, formed with *estar* + gerund, we refer to the intermediate state of an action. We represent an action as it evolves, after it has started and before it is finished, that is, as a situation that can stay the same for some time.

Stative verbs such as *saber* ‘to know’ are semantically consistent or coherent with imperfective tenses (present tense or imperfect past in a non-present situation). On the other hand, action verbs are semantically consistent with perfective tenses and with the progressive periphrasis. The contrast between an action verb phrase used in a non-periphrastic form and used with the progressive periphrasis is shown in Figure 12:

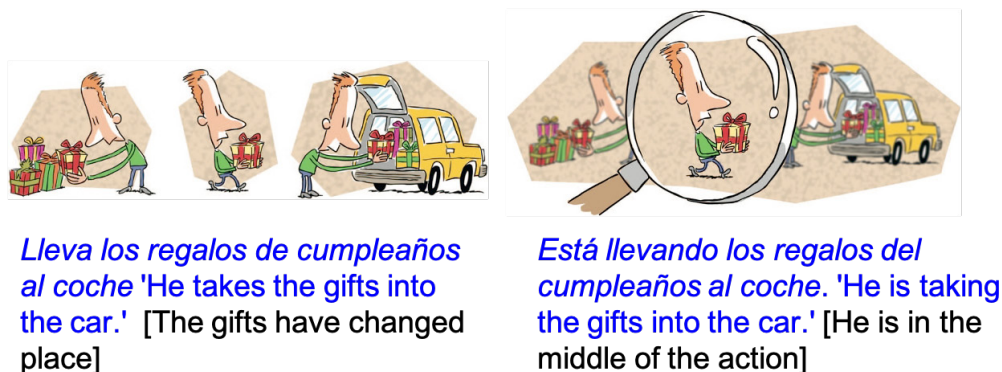


Figure 12. Action verb phrases with and without progressive periphrasis. Adapted from Alonso *et al.* (2011, p. 198).

This expected and usual association is exemplified in (37) and (38) with the verb *saber* ‘to know’ employed in two of its imperfective tense forms: the simple present (*sabe*) and the imperfect (*sabía*). These two uses are illustrated respectively in Figures 13 and 14 belows, where the symbol “||” (“pause” button in recording/playing devices) stands for “state”.

- (37) *Sabe* lo que hay en la caja. Está abierta.
Know.PRES.3SG the.NEUT that have.PRES.IMPS in the.FEM.SG box. Be.PRES.3SG open.FEM.SG
 ‘He knows what is in the box. It is open.’
- (38) *Sabía* lo que había en la caja. Estaba abierta.
Know.IPFV.PST.3SG the.NEUT that have.IPFV.PST.IMPS in the.FEM.SG box. Be.IPFV.PST.3SG open.FEM.SG
 ‘He knew what was in the box. It was open.’

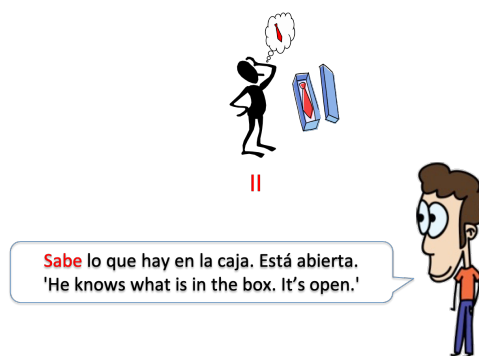


Figure 13. Stative verb *saber* and Spanish simple present tense. Adapted from Castañeda Castro and Alhmoud (2014, p. 67).

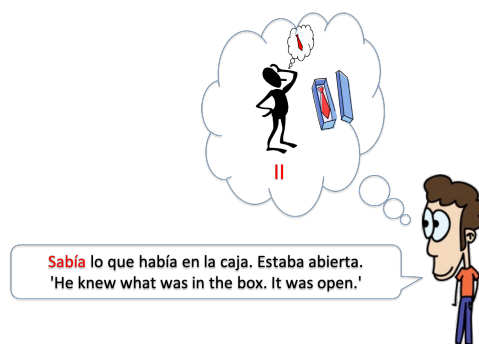


Figure 14. Stative verb *saber* and Spanish imperfect past simple tense. Adapted from Castañeda Castro and Alhmoud (2014, p. 67).

But what happens when we combine perfective tenses with states? This combination transforms the stative verb in an action one, as we can see in (39), illustrated in Figure 15, with the present perfect tense:

- (39) Ha abierto la caja y *ha sabido* lo que hay en ella.
 Open.PRF.3SG the.FEM.SG box and *know*.PRF.3SG the.NEUT that have.PRES.IMPS in PRO.FEM.SG.
 'He has opened the box and has found out what is in it.'

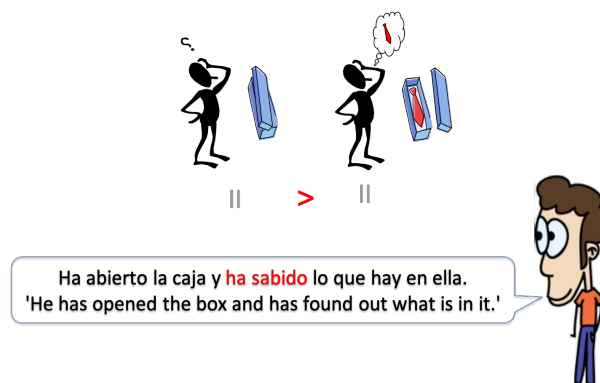


Figure 15. Stative verb *saber* and the Spanish *pretérito perfecto compuesto* (present perfect).
 Adapted from Castañeda Castro and Alhmod (2004, p. 67).

This reinterpretation can be conceived as a metonymic change. With the present perfect (*ha sabido*), we conceive *saber* 'to know' as the process of acquiring knowledge, not as the state of knowing itself. We change the focus of the verb by highlighting the change of state that precedes knowledge (symbolized with the commonly used icon for the play button >). This could be considered an instance of the STATE FOR ACTION THAT CAUSES THAT STATE metonymy identified for French *passé simple* by Panther and Thornburg (2009).

The same aspectual readjustment effect can be seen in (40), illustrated in Figure 16, where the preterit is also used with *saber* to refer to a time setting which is not necessarily linked with now.

- (40) Abrió la caja y *supo* lo que había en ella.
 Open.PRET.3SG the.FEM.SG box and *know*.PRET.3SG the.NEUT that have.IPFV.PST.IMPS in PRO.FEM.SG.
 'He opened the box and found out what was in it.'

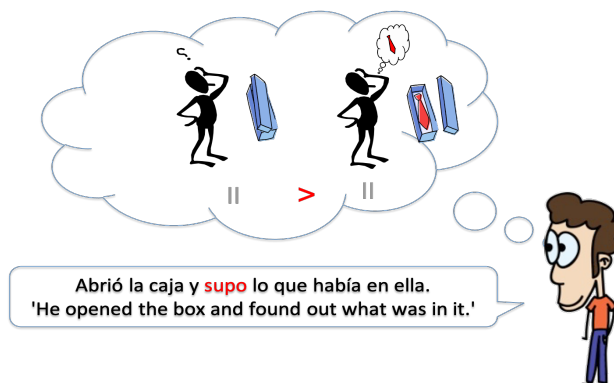


Figure 16. Stative verb *saber* and preterit. Adapted from Castañeda Castro and Alhmod (2014).

Finally, a similar transformation happens when we combine stative verbs with the *estar* + gerund periphrasis, as shown in the exchange in (41), illustrated in Figure 17. This periphrasis focuses on a state as its profile, but it achieves this by placing the state in the presupposed base of an action. In other words, the profiled state is the intermediate state of an action. With stative verbs such as *saber*, the actional interpretation is provided by the metonymic extension where A STATE STANDS FOR THE ACTION THAT CAUSES THAT STATE.

- (41) + ¿Sabe lo que hay en la caja?
 Know.PRES.3SG the.NEUT that have.PRES.IMPS in the.FEM.SG box.
 'Does he know what is in the box?'
 – Lo *está sabiendo* en este preciso instante.
 PRO.NEUT be.PRES.3SG know.GER in this.MASC.SG precise.MASC.SG instant.
 'He is knowing it right now.'

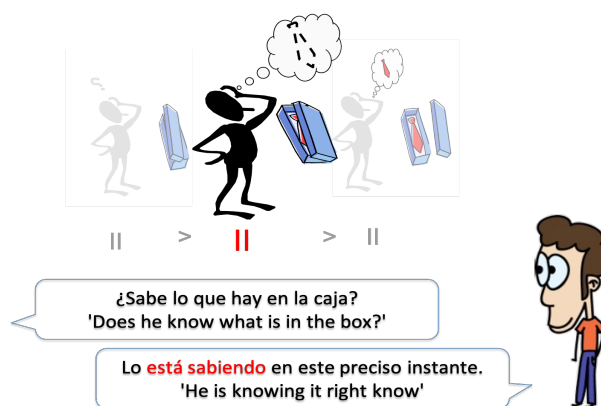


Figure 17. Stative verb *saber* and Spanish progressive periphrasis.
Adapted from Castañeda Castro and Alhmod (2004, p. 67).

The coercion exerted on the verb predication by the progressive periphrasis can be of a different nature from the one illustrated in (41). For instance, the progressive construal sometimes induces a repetitive conception of the described situation, not only with punctual events – “achievements” according to Vendler’s (1957) terminology – as in example (42), but also with stative verbs as in example (43). In (43), taken from Croft (2006, p. 296), not only is the stative verb (*resemble*) reinterpreted as an inchoative process, but it is also conceived as an abstract “macro-event” derived from the repetitive conceptualizer’s experience of the similarity between mother and daughter, which increases over time.

- (42) Está disparando.
Be.PRES.3SG shoot.GER
‘He/She is shooting.’
- (43) She *is resembling* her mother more and more every year.

Subjectification can also play a clarifying descriptive role in some cases of metonymic aspectual readjustment in stative verbs induced by perfective tenses, as exemplified in (44):

- (44) El paisaje (= mi experiencia del paisaje) *fue* precioso.
The.MASC.SG landscape be.PRET.3SG beautiful.MASC.SG
‘The landscape (= my experience of the landscape) *was* beautiful.’

In (44) we use the verb *ser* ‘to be’ in the preterit tense form *fue* (be.PRET.3SG) because we are talking about our experience or our perception of the landscape (i.e. about the perfective condition of this experience as it is temporally bounded), and not because the landscape beauty lasted only for a while and then vanished.

As a conclusion, if we apply Panther and Thornburg’s (2017) classification, the metonymies associated with the stative verbs in the perfective or the progressive forms would be also of the propositional kind. From the point of view of Croft’s conception (see section 2 above), the tense morpheme (e.g. PRETERIT) acts as the dependent component in the conjugated verb (e.g. *fue* [be.PRET.3SG]): its semantic import induces the highlighting adjustment in the verbal root, which is the autonomous component of the construction (e.g. *ser* ‘to be’), and triggers the change of meaning (e.g. from its imperfective stative lexical aspect to the perfective actional one, metonymically interpreted as the perfective condition of our experience of the object in the case of *el paisaje fue precioso*).

5. Pedagogical implementations

The widely spread – though not always fully endorsed – rejection of grammar instruction advocated by Communicative Language Teaching in the late 20th century was to a certain extent justified as a reaction to previous grammar-based methodologies and as a means to place communicative use of language at the centre of the teaching agenda. However, this rejection has been vanishing in the last decades as a result of empirical evidence of the importance of focusing learners’ attention on form while involved in meaning-focused communicative practices (see Ellis 2005 for a thorough revision on the role of focus on form and its entanglement with other parameters when learning a language in instructional settings). Focus on form (Doughty & Williams, 1998) differs from traditional grammar teaching in the central role that it bestows on communication. Under the wide umbrella of focus-on-form teaching practices, grammatical instruction focuses on fostering learners’ awareness and increasing their implicit/explicit knowledge of the meaning that any given *form* bears – as opposed to a declarative knowledge of linguistic forms only – in the course of communicative language activities, as well as providing them with useful feedback, be it implicit or explicit, either when processing input or when producing output.

It goes without saying that the pedagogical accounts of CG perfectly fit into this focus-on-form approach, as they can make use of the array of tools that this grammar-instruction methodology has developed over the years, e. g. input

enhancement, input flood, input processing and consciousness-raising tasks – we have excluded interaction-based feedback techniques, as well as other well-known activities such as dictogloss; for more information on all these techniques, please refer to Doughty and Williams 1998.

One of the major concerns of Spanish L2/FL learners is the variety of uses of verb tenses they are confronted with. Sometimes, instructional practices tend to focus on rote learning of these uses, presenting them as a list of complementary – at times even contradictory, counter-intuitive or simply random – meanings. In contrast, focus-on-form techniques can be combined with CG descriptions to develop learners' awareness on the form-meaning mappings implied in metonymic extensions when learning the different values of verbal forms. Facilitating metonymic reasoning in grammatical descriptions, as well as the promotion of input processing of how forms are mapped onto meanings, can increase learners' awareness and provide them with tools for prospective autonomous learning. Besides, helping learners to build conceptual networks and using images to show variable construals can reduce learners' perceived arbitrariness on verb tense use.

We outline here three (A-C below) pedagogical implementations of these techniques to deal with verb tense indeterminacy and metonymical extensions of the kind we have analysed in the previous sections. All the proposals here outlined have been trialed in instructional settings with B1-B2 (CEFR) university students of Spanish as a foreign language. The results have been promising and call for future empirical validation.

A. As for the effects of using the preterit tense with stative verbs, we can first present learners with an explicit, deductive explanation on the two possible interpretations of the preterit tense when used with stative verbs (see Figure 18), as opposed to the imperfect tense.

If we use *imperfecto* with **state verbs** (*ser/estar* [to be], *parecer* [to seem/to look like], *conocer/saber* [to know], *tener* [to have], *poder* [can/to be able], *querer* [to want], *gustar* [to like], etc.), we describe how things used to be then; if we use *Indefinido* we can talk about two kinds of facts:

A limited state with a beginning and an end or States or changes of state having to do with finished processes or actions.

Alfredo fue trabajador al principio, pero con el tiempo se hizo perezoso.
'At the beginning, Alfredo was hardworking but later he became lazy'
[We describe what Alfredo was like for a limited period of time, after which he changed.]

¿Tú estuviste en Praga una semana?
'Did you stay in Prague for a week?'
[We describe a stative situation with a start and an end.]

Alfredo fue el mejor. Se portó con mucha calma y valentía.
'Alfredo was the best. He behaved calmly and bravely'
[He was the best doing something.]

Estuviste muy bien en Praga. Tu mejor interpretación.
'You did it very well in Prague. Your best interpretation'
[Your performance in Prague was very good.]

Figure 18. Focused instruction on past simple tense with stative verbs. Adapted from Castañeda Castro (2014: accompanying digital resource).

After this, we can use input-processing activities, such as the example in Figure 19, where learners have to focus on the meaning that the form (i.e. preterit tense) bears.

Answer the questions about the examples taking into account if they include imperfect or past simple verb forms

1. Nuria: ¿Has hablado con Mario?
Ángela: La verdad es que no **quise** molestarlo...
Nuria: Have you talked to Mario?
Ángela: The truth is that I didn't want to bother him.' Has she eventually talked to him?

2. **Tuvo** cinco hijos.
'She gave birth to five children' Were the children adopted?

3. Mis amigos preguntaron a los vecinos si **podieron** comprar la casa.
'My friends asked the neighbours if they were eventually able to buy the house' Who wanted to buy the house?

4. **Policía:** ¿Usted vio el atraco y al ladrón?
Testigo: Sí, así es.
Policía: ¿Y podría usted decirme cómo **era**?
'Policeman: Did you see the robbery and the thief?
Witness: That's right.
Policeman: And could you tell me what he was like?' Is the policeman asking about the robbery or the thief?

5. ¿**Fue** un buen viaje?
'Was it a good journey?' Are they referring to the travel agency offer or to the traveller's experience of the journey?

Figure 19. Input-processing activity for preterit tense with stative verbs. Adapted from Castañeda Castro (2014: accompanying digital resource).

These kinds of activities do not seek learners' production of output; they rather aim at fostering learners' awareness of the meaning-form mappings by means of analysing the implications that using this verb tense with stative verbs has. Interestingly enough, these activities also trigger learners' subconscious reasoning on the contrast of using this tense as opposed to the imperfect tense. For instance, as for example 5 in Figure 19, if the student realizes that the sentence is uttered with the preterit *fue* (not the imperfect *era*), he/she can understand that the sentence is referring to the traveller's experience. In contrast, the meaning conveyed by means of the imperfect *era* refers to the characteristics of the travel agency offer.

B. As for the use of the imperfect tense to talk about events that, having started in the past, are (or may be) still relevant to the present situation – as we have seen in the previous sections, due to courtesy/politeness or to other pragmatic reasons such as discursive distancing –, we can make use of iconic representations to symbolize the metonymical extension of this verb tense. We can start by presenting the learners with a deductive explanation accompanied with a graphic representation to help them visualize the verbal instances (see the arrows in Figure 20).

When we use the "imperfecto" we don't know if later in the story the processes we are referring to are carried out completely or not, if the situation changes or stays the same in the present time:

1)
● ¿Y Ana?
○ Llegará en un momento porque he visto que **venía** por la calle.

- 'And Ana?'
- 'She will arrive in a minute. I have seen she was coming down the street.'

[What we are saying with "imperfecto" was happening before now and we suppose that it stays the same now]

2)
● Oye, tú trabajas en el instituto, ¿no?
○ **Trabajaba**. Me despidieron hace dos meses.

- 'Hey, you work at the high school, don't you?'
- 'I used to. They fired me two months ago.'

[What we are saying with "imperfecto" isn't happening now]

Figure 20. Focused instruction on imperfect tense with present or indeterminate meaning. Adapted from Castañeda Castro (2014: accompanying digital resource).

This explanation can be visually supplemented with the images contained in Figure 7, which graphically represents the meaning of the imperfect tense in relation to three other verb tenses, and Figures 10 and 11, which show the two possible time continuity frames the imperfect can be part of. This can foster network building in learners, helping them to cognitively organize the information on this verb tense.

After this initial focused instruction, we can ask students to think over these other examples/instances shown in Figure 21 and decide in which box they would place them, i.e. the "Now is different" box or the "Now as well" box.

And what about now?

1. ¿Cómo te **llamaban** en la escuela de pequeño?
'Hey, What did they use to call you at school?'
2. Perdona, ¿cómo te **llamabas**? Lo he olvidado.
'Excuse me. What was your name? I have forgotten it.'
3. Pedro: ¿Qué me has dicho que **querías**, Juan?
Juan: Una cerveza
'Pedro: John, What did you say you wanted?
Juan: A beer.'
4. La **quería** desesperadamente. Pero el tiempo todo lo cura.
'I loved her desperately. But time heals everything.'
6. María: ¿Y las llaves del coche?
Lucía: No sé. **Estaban** en la mesita de noche. Mira a ver.
'María: Where are the car keys?
Lucía: I don't know. They were on the bedside table. Go and check.'

Then but not now

1. ¿Cómo te **llamaban** en la escuela de pequeño?

4. La **quería** desesperadamente. Pero el tiempo todo lo cura.

Then and now as well

2. Perdona, ¿cómo te **llamabas**? Lo he olvidado.

3. Pedro: ¿Qué me has dicho que **querías**?
Juan: Una cerveza

Figure 21. Input-processing activity for imperfect tense with present or indeterminate meaning. Adapted from Castañeda Castro (2014: accompanying digital resource).

C. Other activities can be designed in order to work on the common errors made by students when they apply the wrong metonymic extension using these Spanish tense alternatives in their output, as exemplified in the activity shown in Figure 22. In this activity students are asked to narrate a silent picture story with no text. On the right side of Figure 28 are some of the mistakes students usually produce in relation to past tense choice.

In sentence 1, for instance, the utterance *Decía que no *fue embarazada* seems to try to mean *She didn't get pregnant*, but this meaning can not be conveyed with this past tense choice in Spanish. Instead, either *no se embarazó* (not PRO.REFL.3SG impregnate.PRET.3SG) 'she didn't get pregnant', as they would say in Latin America, or *no se quedó/había quedado embarazada* (not PRO.REFL.3SG stay.PRET.3SG/PLUPERF.3SG pregnant.FEM.SG) 'she didn't get/hadn't gotten pregnant', as they would say in Spain, would be the right conceptualization. The same phenomenon seems to happen in the remaining examples: **estuvo muy ilusionado* (be.PRET.3SG very excited.MASC.SG) 'he was very excited', meaning *se ilusionó mucho* (PRO.REFL.3SG excite.PRET.3SG) 'he got very excited' in number 2; **fue la hora de dormir* (be.PRET.3SG the.FEM.SG hour of sleep.INF) 'it was time to sleep', meaning *llegó la hora de dormir* (come.PRET.3SG the.FEM.SG hour of sleep.INF) literally 'the time came when he had to go to bed' in number 3; or **tuvo mucho sueño* (have.PRET.3SG much.MASC.SG sleep) 'he was sleepy', meaning *tenía/sintió mucho sueño* (have.IPFV.PST.3SG/feel.PRET.3SG much.MASC.SG sleep) 'he was/felt sleepy'. In all these cases, the perfective perspective is justified as a change of state is being conveyed. However, this can not be achieved by metonymically applying this perspective to the resulting state expressed by the stative verbs *ser (fue)*, *estar (estuvo)* and *tener (tuvo)*, contrary to what happens in the above discussed case of *supe* (see Figure 16 in Section 4.2.).

Can you tell this story?

We can talk about a change referring to the change itself with the "indefinido" or to the new state caused by that change with the "imperfecto"

Perhaps you have made some mistakes like these ones.
Can you explained them?

1. Encontró una carta de su novia. Decía que no ***fue embarazada**.

1b. Encontró una carta de su novia. Decía que no **estaba / se quedó-había quedado** embarazada. '... she wasn't pregnant / she didn't get - hadn't gotten pregnant'
2. El señor Pérez la leyó y ***estuvo muy ilusionado porque nunca más necesitaría trabajar**.

2b. El señor Pérez la leyó y **estaba** muy ilusionado / **se ilusionó** mucho porque nunca más necesitaría trabajar. '...he was excited / he got excited...'
3. Finalmente ***fue la hora de dormir**. ***Tuvo mucho sueño**.

3b. Finalmente **era/llegó** la hora de dormir. **Tenía / Le entró** mucho sueño. '...it was time to go to sleep... ...he was sleepy'
4. *** Tenía un sueño sobre su hermana y su novio. Cuando *estuvo despierto se dio cuenta de que el novio de su hermana...**

4b. **Tuvo** un sueño sobre su hermana y su novio. Cuando **estaba despierto/se despertó** se dio cuenta de que el novio de su hermana... '... he was awake/ he woke up...'

Figure 22. Working with errors made by students due to wrong choice of past tense.

Adapted from Castañeda Castro (2014: accompanying digital resource).

These are only three examples of the pedagogical potential that CG descriptions can have when combined with focus-on-form teaching techniques. As a conclusion, we include some final remarks that aim at summarizing how we can implement this approach:

1. A polysemic approach (i.e. one form–many meanings intertwined through metaphoric and metonymic extensions) should be adopted, instead of a monosemic (i.e. one form–one meaning) or a homonymic approach (i.e. one form–many non-related meanings).
This strategy will allow for students to build cognitive conceptual networks (see section 2.2. above) which can contribute to reducing potential learners' perceived arbitrariness of linguistic features. This network building can help organize verb tense uses by means of concepts such as more central/prototypical meanings and metaphoric and metonymic extensions.
2. It would be useful to take into account metaphorical and metonymic reasoning in grammatical explanations and error treatment.
Metaphor and metonymy are two basic cognitive strategies ever-present in human conceptualization and, as such, can serve as two powerful pedagogical tools to increase learners' understanding and awareness of how linguistic representations work or of how their output may differ from what they actually meant.
3. Learners' awareness of grammatical meaning indeterminacy can be raised by using paraphrase or interpretation exercises.

Input-processing exercises, even if they do not promote learners' production of output, are a good way to inductively raise learners' awareness on so central a feature as meaning indeterminacy. This type of exercises succeeds at focusing learners' attention on specific linguistic features and the change on meaning (i.e. conceptualization) they imply. From the learners' point of view, meaning indeterminacy may seem contrary to speaker-hearer effective communication. However, if this overarching linguistic feature is reflected upon by means, in our case, of metonymic extensions, learners can develop a useful cognitive sensitivity to it and this, in turn, can help them autonomously analyse and understand other instances.

4. Lexical and constructional conditioning of some metaphorical and metonymic instances has to be acknowledged.

Raising learners' awareness on how metaphorical and metonymic extensions are determined – and sometimes restricted – by lexical meaning and construction predication (see 2.2. above) is a good tool to avoid rule overgeneralization and to keep meaning central in the learning process.

5. Finally, images can be used to foster learners' awareness of the multidimensional and holistic nature of meaning.

The use of images as visual depicting of meaning and symbols/icons as graphic representations of cognitive conceptualizations (base/profile, subjectification, etc.) can help learners visualize all the parameters present in a given linguistic coding. Moreover, images and symbols/icons can help flesh out CG descriptions, as these visual aids support verbal explanations for the sake of simplification and clarity. We think that the varied representations included in most of the figures in this paper can be considered a good example of this.

6. Conclusions

In this work, we have tried to argue for the descriptive and pedagogical advantages that the CG grammar model offers in order to account for some uses of imperfect and preterit tenses in Spanish that seem to imply conceptual metonymy. On the one hand, some lexically or contextually restricted interpretations of the imperfect (when this tense is used in contexts relevant to the present time) can be explained as instances of a metonymy chaining process: the higher-order metonymy PRECEDING STATE FOR CONSEQUENT STATE linked with the illocutionary metonymy that allows for PRECONDITIONS OF A SPEECH ACT to stand FOR THE SPEECH ACT ITSELF. On the other hand, the combination of the preterit with stative verbs such as *saber* 'to know', *tener* 'to have', *poder* 'can', etc. gives rise to the reinterpretation of these verbs as action verbs thanks to the involvement of the metonymic extensions STATE FOR ACTION/PROCESS THAT CAUSES THAT STATE or ABILITY TO CARRY OUT AN ACTION FOR THE ACTION ITSELF. Therefore, such different phenomena as indirect speech acts or aspect coercion can be accounted for in an unified way by means of such pervasive construal mechanisms as metonymy, which is also relevant for other grammatical and lexical aspects. This descriptive approach has also proved useful for pedagogical purposes (1) by using images to help students conceptualize subtle distinctions, (2) by providing conceptualizations especially suitable for input– and output-processing techniques based on focus on form, and (3) by offering a realistic treatment of multiple form-meaning mappings based on network building and metonymy awareness. Other grammatical resources relative to tense, mood and aspect can benefit from this descriptive approach, as do other aspects of Spanish grammar. Thus, the potential implementation of CG descriptions in combination with focus-on-form techniques calls for further exploration.

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