

# The presence of ACTION ICM metonymies in English and Spanish football reports: A contrastive analysis

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this presentation is to explore the presence of ACTION ICM metonymies in football post-match reports, where they are a recurrently used strategy. The study is based on two corpora, each of them containing 125 reports, concerned with the 2016-2017 UEFA Champions League (from the group stage to the final match). They were retrieved from English and Spanish online newspapers and consist of roughly 170,000 words.

I must state that my view of metonymy follows the standard cognitive linguistics definition of metonymy as a cognitive process in which a conceptual entity acts a vehicle allowing the access to another entity, within the same idealized cognitive model (ICM).

In order to carry out my study, I followed a qualitative methodology. First, I thoroughly examined each corpus in search of metonymies. Then, I classified some of the ACTION ICM metonymy-producing relationships, following the taxonomy in Radden & Kövecses (1999). The corpora provided hundreds of different examples for conceptual metonymies such as MANNER FOR ACTION (e.g. *cabeceó*; he headed), RESULT FOR ACTION (e.g. to equalise; *prolongó la pelota*), or its reverse, ACTION FOR RESULT (e.g. *un remate*; a save), to name but a few. However, due to time constraints, I can only mention the most common types and their most prominent examples, but I will also focus on what Ruiz de Mendoza calls metonymic chains, which are very frequent in the corpora.

## 2. ACTION ICM METONYMY-PRODUCING RELATIONSHIPS

Within the ACTION ICM, metonymies are often suggested by incongruous collocations, as in “*balones largos*”, where a word which describes length (*largos*, long) is used to describe an object which is not measured in terms of length (the ball). Quite often as well, the action expressed by the verb is accessed through different aspects involved in the action, such as the manner of performing that action, the instrument concerned, etc. For instance, in “The striker was rightly *flagged* offside”, an object (the flag) provides access to the action performed by the linesman when raising a flag to signal offside, which is an example of OBJECT FOR ACTION.

### 2.1. RESULT FOR ACTION

In my opinion, RESULT FOR ACTION is one of the most interesting metonymies as well as one of the most prolific. It allows the speaker/writer to describe an action (or a whole series of actions) and its/their result(s) using a single expression, therefore being more concise and effective. I found expressions such as:

- (1) Mandzuki equalised for Juventus.
- (2) Finding the net/No encontró portería
- (3) Dybala stepped up to send Iker Casillas the wrong way from the spot

In (1) the verb “equalised” expresses both an action and its result, since “Mandzuki equalised” means he scored the goal and he drew the match, so that both teams remained level, equal.

In (2) we have the same metonymic expression in both languages (“finding the net”), which means the player was able to score a goal, because he hit the ball and the ball went inside the goal (notice the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy as well, where net stands

for the whole goal); so the player “found”, or “didn’t find” in the Spanish example, the goal.

Similarly in (3), the result (Casillas ended up diving the wrong way, since he believed the ball hit by Dybala was going that way) stands for the actions taken by Dybala when volunteering for striking the penalty, tricking Casillas and scoring the goal.

Together with all those verbs and expressions I have also found a series of nouns whose collocations made me realize we were dealing with metonymies:

(4) Balones largos/ Prolongó la pelota

(5) Balones altos/ A highball

In (4), we find “long balls”, another conventional expression in football jargon. Literally, we cannot apply the adjective “long” to a ball since it does not have length; however, “long balls” is metonymically used to refer to the distance between the initial and final position of the ball, that is, the length of the path the ball follows when hit. So the result (the ball goes over a long distance) stands for the action of hitting the ball with such strength that it goes far away. Moreover, we can also find the expression “*prolongó la pelota*” (he lengthen the ball), describing the same situation.

Finally, in (5) we have the Spanish expression “*balones altos*” and the English “a highball”. Again, balls cannot be measured in terms of height, so the adjective “*altos*” or “high” really makes reference to the action of sending the ball from long distance, with enough strength and skill to make it rise.

## 2.2. ACTION FOR RESULT

Concerning the opposite metonymy, ACTION FOR RESULT, it can also be found in the corpora, providing examples of conventional terms which once underwent a conversion or derivational process based on metonymy. Thus, a verb (which described the action) turned into a noun (which described the result). For instance:

(6) A save

(7) Un paradón

(8) A 25-yard drive

(9) Carvajal’s cut-back

(10) Un remate

(11) A cross

(12) As penalty claims for handball

A different example would be Number (12), a much less conventional expression. We all know the term “handball” to denote the sport, but here it describes the action in which the player has touched the ball with his hand, awarding the other team with a penalty kick.

## 2.3. ACTION FOR OBJECT

The conceptual metonymy ACTION FOR OBJECT is one of those metonymies which offers a higher number of different examples, in both languages. It is necessary to highlight that most of the words within this group are the same as those I have just mentioned as examples of ACTION FOR RESULT (e.g. “pass”, “cut-back”; and so on). The difference here lies in the fact that the action does not stand for a result, but for the object that received that particular action, i.e. the ball.

Consider the following examples:

- (13) Messi controlled a *pass*
- (14) Envió un *pase* lejano que Silvio cazó
- (15) Iwobi's *shot* was parried out
- (16) Logró parar su *disparo*
- (17) Ramos' *cross* was cleared by Godín

In examples (13-16), different actions (passing or shooting a ball) stand for the object that underwent that action, i.e. the ball. For instance, in (13 and 14) the player did not control or send a pass but the ball, which is what Silvio “chased” in (14).

That would be different from saying “What a wonderful pass!”, where the same term ‘pass’ does not make reference to the ball but to the result and would be an example of the ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy explained before.

In the same way, in (15) to (17) we understand the goalkeeper parried out the ball, not an abstract “shot” or “cross”, so the action of shooting the ball stands for the ball which was shot. Notice as well the metaphor SPORT IS WAR, with the words “shot”, “*disparo*”, “*tiro*”, etc.

As you can see, all the examples mentioned before are nouns, which makes sense since the metonymy is providing access to an object (the ball), so the action originally expressed by a verb becomes a noun.

#### 2.4. OBJECT FOR ACTION

The opposite metonymy, OBJECT FOR ACTION is also found in the corpus and even though it is not one of the most recurrent, it gives place to some remarkable examples, resulting from a recategorization process where metonymy plays a role.

- (18) He wasn't *red-carded*.
- (19) Ranieri had *fielded* a stronger side.
- (20) The striker was rightly *flagged* offside.
- (21) Casemiro is *floored* under the challenge of Schurrle

In (18) we find the object, a ‘red card’ used as a verb ‘red-carded’ denoting the action of the referee (not) showing the red card to the player after a hard foul. Similarly, in (19) the object ‘field’ stands for the action by means of which a player is on the field, playing. In (20) the object ‘flag’ which is used by linesmen to signal offside stands for the action of raising the flag to signal offside. Finally, in (21) Casemiro is brought down, therefore falling down on the ‘floor’, so again the object (floor) stands for the action.

As you can see, they are all English expressions as it is difficult to find OBJECT FOR ACTION metonymies in the Spanish corpus.

#### 2.5. ACTION FOR AGENT

We have seen before that the ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy lists examples of conventional terms that arose through conversion or derivational processes. Similarly, the ACTION FOR AGENT metonymy gives place to different terms used to refer to football players according to their role on the field. So we have words which show ACTION FOR AGENT metonymies or rather, as I have named it, the PROTOTYPICAL ACTION ON THE FIELD FOR THE PLAYER. Some of the examples found include:

*Atacante, striker, guardameta, goalkeeper, defensa, defense, the defence, goalscorer, goleador, manager, preparador, players, etc.*

The opposite metonymy, THE AGENT FOR THE ACTION also offers some interesting examples, but due to time constraints and their little frequency in the corpora, I will skip them.

## 2.6. MANNER FOR ACTION

A much more frequent metonymy is MANNER FOR ACTION. Most of the examples found within this group are denominal verbs, i.e. nouns which underwent a conversion process where metonymy played an important role.

- (22) He *headed* the ball straight at Oblak.
- (23) Stoyanov managed to *palm* Bjarnason's cross away
- (24) Alves [...] *chest* down and fire home a cross
- (25) Dembelé *side-footed* home

In general, most of them describe the way in which the ball was hit: with the head (22), touching the ball with the palm of the hand (23), with the chest (24) or kicking it with the inside of the foot (25). They all describe an action, so it does not come as a surprise that they are all verbs, but we can also spot on the corpora some other ways in which the metonymy MANNER FOR ACTION makes its way:

- (26) With a left-footed strike
- (27) A sublime outside-of-the-foot cross
- (28) A dipping right-foot volley
- (29) A fine left-foot shot

In these examples, the metonymy MANNER FOR ACTION is expressed through an adjective or a noun acting as an adjective because they are all modifying another metonymic expression where the ACTION stands for the RESULT ("cross", "shot"), which is a noun.

It is also important to say that this metonymy is highly prolific in English but it is difficult to find examples in Spanish. The only verb that has appeared is "*cabecear*" (to head) and regarding other parts of the speech, we find "*testarazo*", "*derechazo*" and "*zurdazo*", which will be explained in the next section, since they are metonymic chains and require more attention.

## 3. METONYMIC CHAINS

According to Ruiz de Mendoza (2000, 2007), quite often two or more metonymies interact, giving place to metonymic chains or complexes, where the target of the first metonymy becomes the source of the second metonymy. Both corpora have provided plenty of different examples of metonymic chains within the ACTION ICM, such as:

- (30) He headed the *opener*
- (31) [...] the striker glancing a *header* into the net

Example (30) could be paraphrased as "He headed the goal that opened the score". The term opener is an example of a RESULT FOR ACTION metonymy since that goal "opened" the score, it was the first to be reflected on the scoreboard (the noun is transformed into a verb, "to open") as well as an ACTION FOR OBJECT metonymy (which turns the word into a noun, thanks to the suffix "-er"), where the action stands for the ball, which is what the player actually headed.

The same suffix “-er” also appears in example (31), in the word “header”, but denoting a different metonymic chain. Here the word “header” makes reference to the ball the striker glanced into the net, so it reflects two metonymies: first a MANNER FOR ACTION METONYMY (where “head-“ describes the way of hitting the ball, with the head) and then an ACTION FOR OBJECT METONYMY, which transforms the verb into a noun thanks to the suffix “-er”, making reference to the ball.

The equivalent expression can also be found in the Spanish corpus, *cabezazo* (header), where the word reflects two different metonymic chains.

(32) Buffon envió a córner un *cabezazo* de Germain

(33) Dejó la eliminatoria casi sentenciada con un *cabezazo* de Chiellini

In (32) the expression *cabezazo* (header) represents a MANNER FOR ACTION FOR OBJECT (the suffix “-azo” providing access to the ball). However, in the following example (33), the same term (*cabezazo*) reflects a different metonymic complex. The first metonymy is the same, MANNER FOR ACTION, but then, the suffix “-azo” does not stand for the ball, but for the struck, i.e. we find an ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy, where the action of heading stands for its result, the struck, “el golpe dado con la cabeza”. The same suffix -azo also appears in the following examples.

(34) La mandó a la red Ronaldo con un *derechazo*

(35) Con un *zurdazo* cruzado que encarrilaba la eliminatoria

(36) Casemiro abrió camino con un *zapatazo* lejano que se coló junto al palo de Buffon

In (34) and (35), we find the terms *derechazo* and *zurdazo*, where the roots “derech” and “zurd-” describe the way of hitting the ball, with the right and left leg, respectively, so we find a MANNER FOR ACTION metonymy. Once more the suffix “-azo” turns the verb into a noun, denoting the struck, so we have an ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy. However, in (36), we come across the word *zapatazo*, which may look similar but it is an example of a different metonymic chain. This time, the root “zapat-“ (shoe) denotes INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION, since the instrument involved in the action stands for the action of kicking the ball with the shoe, then the ACTION STANDS FOR THE OBJECT kicked (the ball).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

As has been shown, metonymy plays an essential role within the ACTION ICM, providing examples of many different types of conceptual metonymies. After a careful analysis, we may conclude that most of the metonymies found within this group are now conventional expressions in football jargon, which were created through a derivation or conversion process where metonymy was involved.

However, we can never underestimate how active the metonymic process still is. As explained before, the same expression may appear as an example of two different metonymies, for instance, “cross”, in:

(37) A diving header from Isco’s cross

(38) Ramos’ cross was cleared by Godín

It is true the word “cross” was created long ago through a conversion process influenced by metonymy but metonymy is still playing an active role since the writer confidently chooses the word, knowing full well that the reader will understand the term in the intended way, activating the metonymy RESULT FOR ACTION or ACTION FOR OBJECT appropriately.

It is also worth mentioning the high number of metonymic chains that appear within the ACTION ICM. As illustrated, they are two or more metonymies where the target of the

first becomes the source of the second. For instance, *header*, which is a MANNER FOR ACTION FOR OBJECT metonymy.

Finally, it is important to highlight that ACTION ICM metonymies help the writer be concise but at the same time faithfully recreate a particular situation, helping the reader imagine a particular action just as it happened. This proves essential in football post-match reports since they need to offer the reader a review as vivid and accurate as possible. Of course, further research on the topic is needed yet, since these results seem to suggest that football jargon strongly relies on metonymy.

## 5. REFERENCES

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