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Topic addressed: What information is captured by an adequate interlingual representation system?

Any examination of real corpora, especially in non-scientific domains, will reveal that metonymic expressions are pervasive in real language use. Although various definitions of metonymy may draw the distinction between metonymic and non-metonymic expressions differently, typically certain core metonymic expressions (such as "Moscow announced ...") which are pervasive in text will always be defined as metonymy.

Regardless of the strategy adopted for handling metonymy in the analysis phase of processing, the representation of metonymic expressions in the interlingua will be faced with one central decision: how to represent the metonymy, literally or as rendered in the source text? The position that I will argue for is that despite the processing overhead, it is beneficial to resolve the metonym in analysis and to represent the replaced entity in the interlingua explicitly.

Reasons for resolving metonymy and explicitly representing the replaced entity include:

1. In some cases it is necessary to resolve the metonymy before generation in MT because some different languages have different

inventories of metonymy, and word-for-word translation of some metonymies will result in anomalous translations. By representing the resolved metonymy, the generator can choose to either render the content literally or to produce an appropriate metonymy in the target language (assuming an appropriately generator is available...)

2. The replaced referent can provide context for use during word-sense disambiguation, whether by domain inference techniques, selectional restrictions (which would have been violated by the metonym), or other techniques.

3. One may need to make the replaced entity available as a referent. Metonymies such as the infamous "ham sandwich" example allow anaphora to the replaced referent: "The ham sandwich wants a cup of coffee. He also needs a new fork". The metonymy may in fact result in a full-fledged use of the referent, entering the entity into the "given" register; examples such as "I drive a Volvo, but the engine is shot" illustrate that the replaced entity (the car or truck) is available as if it had been used explicitly.