Linguists have become aware that metonymy is not just a contiguity-based figure of speech but that it is a pervasive cognitive-linguistic mechanism which influences different linguistic levels. This linguistic insight is reflected in Dutch and German dictionaries, which use metonymy-tags, for many examples, for many senses and for many word combinations, such as verbs that can be combined with different types of direct objects. A specific label used for the last phenomenon is objectverwisseling or Objektsvertauschung, which could be translated as Metonymical Object Change (MOC).

MOCs are better known in linguistics as transitive locative alternations, material-product alternations and instances of logical metonymy. This dissertation analyses these three types of argument alternations as metonymy-based. The focus of the analysis is therefore on the contiguity relation between the different possible direct objects. In all cases, it is this relation which underlies and restricts the possibility of changing a direct object.

A qualitative analysis of corpus data is used to examine MOCs in Dutch and German. This makes this study corpus-oriented. The interpretation of MOCs is modelled in a frame semantic approach.

This dissertation not only examines and clarifies the concept of MOC by analysing a large number of data, which could be useful from a lexicographical perspective, but it also provides theoretical insights into the phenomenon of metonymy in general.