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ОСНОВНІ ПРИНЦИПИ ДІЄСЛІВНОЇ ЗООНІМНОЇ АНТРОПОМОРФНОЇ МЕТАФОРИ ТА ЇЇ АНАЛІЗ В АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ ТЮРЕМНОМУ СЛЕНГУ. ДІЄСЛОВО *TO RAT*

Дієслівна зоонімна антропоморфна метафора стає все більше цікавим напрямком для лінгвістів у сучасному мовознавстві. У порівнянні з номінальною зоонімною метафорою, її механізм є набагато складніший, оскільки передбачає поєднання загальної метафоричної схеми та метонімії. Важливим є те, що ми можемо легко знайти зоонімну антропоморфну метафору не тільки в стандартній мові, але також в її нестандартних варіантах, таких, як, наприклад, тюремний сленг, в якому зоонімні антропоморфні метафори як номінальні, так і дієслівні, є досить поширеним явищем через їх метафоричний характер. На жаль, проблема зоонімної антропоморфної метафори в тюремному сленгу не викликала глибокого зацівлення дослідників і навіть, можна сказати, ігнорувалася. Метою запропонованого дослідження є опис основних принципів дієслівної зоонімної антропоморфної метафори в англійському тюремному сленгу за допомогою методики когнітивного мовознавства та концептуальної семантики.

Ключові слова: тюремний сленг, метафора, метонімія, дієслівна зоонімна антропоморфна метафора.

Анна Цихановска. ГЛАВНЫЕ ПРИНЦЫПЫ ГЛАГОЛЬНОЙ ОТЗООНИМНОЙ АНТРОПОМОРФНОЙ МЕТАФОРЫ И ЕЁ АНАЛИЗ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ТЮРЕМНОМ СЛЕНГЕ. ГЛАГОЛ *TO RAT*

Глагольная отзоонимная антропоморфная метафора становит все больший интерес для лингвистов современного языковедческого направления. В сравнении с номинальной отзоонимной антропоморфной метафорой, этот процес является особенно сложным, потому что состоит из двух соединенных механизмов: общей метафорической схемы и метонимии. Важным является тот факт, что мы можем легко найти отзоонимную антропоморфную метафору не только в стандартном языке, но также в его нестандартных вариантах, например, тюремном сленге. Целью данной статьи является описание главных принципов глагольной отзоонимной антропоморфной метафоры в английском тюремном сленге посредством методологического аппарата, который основывается на некоторых элементах когнитивного языкознания и познавательной семантики.

Ключевые слова: тюремный сленг, метафора, метонимия, глагольная отзоонимная антропоморфная метафора.

Anna Ciechanowska. THE MAIN TENETS OF VERBAL ZOOSEMY AND ITS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH PRISON SLANG – THE CASE OF *RAT*

Verbal zoosemy – becoming a more and more attractive area of research – is the mechanism which in comparison to nominal zoosemy poses more difficulty for linguists of today since the process involves the combination of the general metaphorical schema and the metonymic transfer. What is also important is the fact that verbal zoosemy is the phenomenon which may be found not merely in standard languages, but also in their non-standard varieties, such as, for example, English prison slang. Nevertheless, this aspect of prison slang seems to be apparently neglected, if not all together ignored. The paper is an attempt to uncover the main twists and turns of verbal zoosemy functioning in English prison slang, employing a cognitively couched methodological framework based on the selected elements of cognitive linguistics and conceptual semantics.

Key words: prison slang, metaphor, metonymy, verbal zoosemy.

The analysis proposed in the article that follows focuses on the intricacies of the mechanism of verbal animal metaphor, a mechanism that may be proved to have played an active role in the shaping of the history of English prison slang, as well as on the main elements of the cognitively couched apparatus that may be employed in its analysis. Verbal animal metaphors used by people

incarcerated in penal institutions deserve closer inspection – at least – for two reasons. Firstly, the subject of verbal animal metaphors in prison slang seems to be treated in linguistic literature either fragmentarily or it is altogether ignored. As a result, the task of finding publications that deal with the mechanism of verbal zoosemy in this particular language variety seems to be relatively demanding. Although the number of publications whose authors concentrate on the phenomenon of prison slang perceived as an active element of the prison setting is substantial (see D. Clemmer, G. Sykes, I. Cardozo-Freeman, R. Hanser, J. Morawski), its linguistic features hardly ever constitute the core of strictly linguistic analytical tasks. In effect, one may speak of a relatively limited number of publications targeted at the language of the underworld, such as those of A. Devlin, A. Mayr, T. Einat and H. Einat, T. Einat and Z. Livnat, K. Stępniak, J. Obara, A. Niepytalska-Osiecka, Ł. Zarzycki and A. Dziedzic-Rawska. Worse still, it is hardly at all possible to chance upon publications that deal specifically with the issue of animal metaphorisation, which seems to form a part and parcel of this particular language variety. Among the publications targeted at the problem of metaphorisation in the body of prison slang vocabulary one finds A. Dziedzic-Rawska, who chiefly concentrates on the extremely figurative character of prison slang embodied in – among others – the rich application of metaphor and metonymy, as well as M. Schulte who emphasises the importance of metaphorical variation in this language variety by stressing that: «underworld argot is a metaphorical entity itself and hence metaphorical expressions are the norm» [30, p. 52]. Another reason that justifies the necessity of analysing the phenomenon of verbal animal metaphor in the language variety targeted here is the fact that not merely nominal zoosemy – being one of the most pervasive mechanisms of semantic changes in English prison slang – but also verbal zoosemy contribute greatly to the meaning of communicative events in this particular variety of language. When we delve into the vocabulary employed by prisoners of the English underworld we see that it is steeped in not merely nouns,[2] but also verbs, associated with the animal kingdom, and that is why we find here such lexical items as, for example, *to crab* used in the sense 'to cheat a person', *to dog* employed in the sense 'to see' and *to cock* conveying the sense 'to arrest a person'.[3] Hence, here the author shall make an attempt to account for the methodology of analysing one of the groups of verbal animal metaphors, namely those animal verbs that denote various actions typically performed by human beings – in our case by prisoners or – at least – some of them, by means of the analysis of the verb *to rat* serving as a representative example of verbal zoosemy in English prison slang.

In an attempt to formulate the main tenets of the apparatus that could be used in the analysis of animal verbs it was essential to employ the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the cognitive approach relying on the achievements of such researchers as, for example, G.A. Kleparski, R. Kiełtyka and G.A. Kleparski and B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk. Hence, the elements of the formal apparatus proposed here, such as *conceptual domains*, *conceptual micro/macrocategories* and *conceptual elements/locations* have been modelled mainly on the basis of G.A. Kleparski and R. Kiełtyka and G.A. Kleparski. The author has decided to rely on the achievements of cognitive linguistics since, as pointed out by, among others, L.A. Janda and D. Geeraerts, cognitive linguistics – being focused on the psychological side – allows us to reconnect the threads of the history of linguistic thought and heal the gashes that marked the field in the 20th century. Moreover, it is in no way an exotic endeavour off on its own disconnected tangent, but rather a framework that cooperates with a community of academic allies, such as, for example, anthropology, neurobiology, motor control, artificial intelligence, philosophy and literary criticism. If we narrow the perspective to semantic diachrony, we see that cognitive linguists, as a result of their strong and versatile cooperation with other scholars, have been able to formulate convincing evidence in favour of the view that semantic change is a cognitively driven mechanism.

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[2] Among nominal animal metaphors in English prison slang we find, among others, *grasshopper* used in the sense 'a common thief', *crow* the meaning of which is 'one who keeps watch while another steals', *spider* employed in the sense 'a young burglar', as well as *gopher* used in the sense 'a safe blower' (see *The Dictionary of the Underworld*, henceforth: *DU*).

[3] All the examples were taken from *DU*.

Nevertheless, the analysis of verbal zoosemy, being far more complex than its nominal type, requires the application of selected elements of the tradition of *conceptual semantics* – developed mainly by R. Jackendoff. It must be emphasised that the cognitively couched apparatus proposed here may be employed in the analysis of just one of the categories of English animal verbs, that is those that are related to the motivating animal names through the combination of metonymic and metaphoric mappings (see S. Martsa).[4]

Before we make an attempt to discuss the main tenets of the proposed methodological apparatus, we should answer the question of what is hidden behind the term *verbal zoosemy* in order to shed some light on the phenomenon itself. As R. Kiełtyka recently proposed, it is a sub-type of zoosemy working in the historical evolution of verbs, and it obtains as a result of the combination of the general metaphorical schema, formalised as <**HUMAN BEING/ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) ANIMAL**>, and the metonymic transfer that may be formalised as **HUMAN BEING FOR ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING**. R. Kiełtyka also explains that this: sub-type of zoosemy « may be said to lie on the border between metaphor and metonymy, and hence is either understood as an outcome of a metonymic projection of a sense acquired as a result of a conceptual animal metaphor (**GCM**), or conversely, metaphorisation is complemented by broadly understood metonimisation » [16, p.163].

In the case of the third category of verbs distinguished by S. Martsa, the category subject to analysis carried out by means of the methodological apparatus proposed here, it is easily observable that the metaphorical sense of the verb is overtly associated with the similar sense of the parent noun, which results from the mechanism of bidirectional mapping. What is more, we may venture a claim that the metaphorical meaning of the verb may also be perceived as the semantic extension of the sense of the corresponding noun. Hence, according to S. Martsa the senses of such verbs are motivated by metonymic transfer: « whereby the person expressed metaphorically by an animal name stands for the activity typical of that person » [23, p.57]. To illustrate the truth of the scholar's claim, let us look at the example of the noun *pig*. If someone calls someone else a *pig*, justifiably or not, he or she is believed to be greedy and/or gluttonous. These features make the person seem similar to a real-world pig, and hence the verb *to pig* may be employed in the sense of the activity or behaviour typical for such a person who 'eats or appropriates food greedily', as evidenced in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth: the *OED*). As a result, we may observe the working of the conceptual metonymy that may be understood as: **ANIMAL FOR THE ACTIVITY /BEHAVIOUR (PERCEIVED AS) TYPICAL OF ANIMAL**.

The proposed methodological framework assumes that the mechanism of verbal zoosemy that affected the aforementioned group of verbs may be divided into separate yet related stages. The first stage involves a metaphorical transfer as a result of which an animal noun, labelled as *parent noun* or *base noun*, starts to be used in a human-specific sense. The analysis of this stage requires the application of certain elements that belong to the tradition of cognitive linguistics in order to account for the semantics of the noun from which the mechanism starts, that is the parent noun, as

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[4] S. Martsa distinguishes three main types of English animal verbs, that is verbs related to the motivating of animal names through metonymic mappings, verbs related to the motivating of animal names through metaphoric mappings and verbs related to the motivating of animal names through the combination of metonymic and metaphoric mappings. S. Martsa accounts for further sub-metonymies that may be distinguished, for example, some animal verbs tend to evoke the sub-metonymy **YOUNG ANIMAL FOR BRINGING THAT ANIMAL FORTH**, as in the case of the verb *to foal*, while other verbs are motivated by the sub-metonymy **ANIMAL FOR CATCHING / EXTERMINATING THAT ANIMAL**, as in the case of *to fish*. The verbs that belong to the second group distinguished here are motivated by various types of metaphorical mapping, and a combination of metaphorical and metonymic mappings which may be said to be conceptually based on the GCB. According to S. Martsa, this particular type may be further divided into two individual semantic patterns based on the affinity held between animal verbs and the noun from which the verbal meaning derives. Interestingly, certain animal verbs, especially those functioning in human-specific senses, may belong to more than one group, such as, for example, *to ferret* which is either motivated by metonymic mapping or unidirectional metaphoric mapping of zoomorphisation, depending on the analysed sense. Furthermore, *to worm* is an example of a verb that may be justifiably placed in each of the three groups. In other words, different verbal, human-specific sense-threads of *worm* are motivated either by the working of metonymic mapping, unidirectional metaphoric mapping or bidirectional mapping [23].

well as the derived noun – termed here as the *agent noun*[5] – which is, in turn, subject to the working of the mechanism of metonymy in the second stage. Apart from the necessity to construe the meaning of the parent noun, the analysis of the first stage of the development of a verbal sense requires the analysis of several sub-mechanisms leading to the development of the novel nominal human-specific sense of the agent noun, such as the foregrounding of certain conceptual values, the exchanging or substitution of the elements (HUMAN BEING) for (ANIMAL), as well as the backgrounding of the locations that do not participate actively in the evolution of the sense of the agent noun and become dormant, labelled here as *temporarily irrelevant values*. To sum up, in the first stage of the development we may speak of several types of conceptual values, including backgrounded values, which are also termed temporarily irrelevant elements, foregrounded values, substituted values as well as background values which become transferred values, and they are – frequently – not identified in terms of the definition.

The second stage involves the working of the mechanism of metonymy and – at the same time – the process of morphological conversion which may be analysed with the aid of *conceptual semantics*. Conceptual semantics is the framework that attempts to show how lexical concepts are structured, and it tries to explain in what way these structures cooperate with formal aspects of language. R. Jackendoff proposed a set of components that are hypothesised to be universal since the linguist believes that the ultimate aim is to represent and account for the general structure of thought, not merely language-specific meanings. Hence, R. Jackendoff points out that all elements of content in the semantics of sentences are found in the *lexical conceptual structures* of the lexical items that are combined to form sentences [14]. And it is the notion of *lexical conceptual structure* (henceforth: LCS) that has been borrowed from the tradition of conceptual semantics in order to account for the *catalytic converter*,[6] which indirectly triggers conversion. The notion of LCS provides a tool for the classification of verbs since – as I. Plag and R. Lieber argue – the derivation of meanings associated with denominal verbs is possible through the formalism of LCS.

To start with, conceptual knowledge is encoded by semantic forms in linguistic forms by means of semantic primitives, including CAUSE, BEGIN, BECOME, BE-IN, HAVE-ON, etc.[7] Our apparatus allows us to analyse and construe the meaning of merely those animal verbs that may be categorised as SIMILATIVE conversion verbs, and these verbs may be explicable in terms of SIMILATIVE LCS: BE [parent noun], for example, *to gossip* – used in the sense 'to act like a gossip' – may be represented in terms of the SIMILATIVE LCS: BE[gossip], 'to act like a gossip' (see C.A. Gottfurcht). The identification of such verbs requires the analysis of the common phrases used in the definitions of their meanings, and such phrases include: *to act as*, *to act like*, *to be*, *to become*, *to behave as*, *to imitate*, *to live as*, *to play* and *to work as*. Due to their presence we are able to determine cases of SIMILATIVE verbs.[8] For example, the definition of *to tiger* is 'to act, behave, or walk to and fro, like a tiger', *to parrot* is defined as 'to chatter like a parrot', and *to dog* is described as 'to follow like a dog' (see the *OED*). As we see it, it is selected elements of the tradition of conceptual semantics that enable us to account for the metonymic mapping and the mechanism of conversion that are integral parts of the whole process of animal verbal metaphorisation. When all the elements discussed in the foregoing are combined into one consistent methodological apparatus, they may give us an opportunity to try to construe, at least, some of the senses of animal-specific verbs.

One of the illustrative examples of lexical items that are subject to the mechanism of verbal zoosemy in the history of English prison slang is the verb *to rat* used in the sense 'to inform to the

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[5]   An *agent noun* develops from the parent noun and it is understood as the performer of the activity expressed by the animal verb, indirectly giving rise to the novel verbal sense. For more on this issue see A. Ciechanowska [2].

[6]   *Catalytic converter* is understood here as the conceptual element that is related to the meaning of the parent noun from which derivation starts directly, the agent noun, developed from the parent noun and the activity performed by the agent noun and expressed by the targeted animal verb. For more on this issue see A. Ciechanowska [2].

[7]   Relying on the assumptions underlying the notion of LCS we may distinguish several types of conversion verbs, that is: RESULTATIVE, PRIVATIVE, LOCATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL and SIMILATIVE conversion verbs.

[8]   These common phrases were taken from the *OED*.

police or to prison wardens' (see *DU*), which is derived from the noun *rat*. In order to analyse and show the stages of the development of the targeted animal verb it is necessary to start from the analysis of the meaning of the parent noun whose role – in this case – is played by the noun *rat*. As the *OED* informs us, the lexical item *rat* is of uncertain origin; however, it is justifiably assumed that the noun was adopted first in Germanic languages, and then the word came to be employed in Romance languages. As shown in several lexicographic works (*Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* and *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*), the targeted noun corresponds to Middle English *rat* or *ratte*, and that it is etymologically related to Old High German and Middle Dutch *ratte*. According to the evidence taken from the *OED*, *rat* entered the written English lexicon at the outset of the 11th century (1000>1862),[9] and its historically primary meaning is defined as 'a rodent of some of the larger species of the genus *Rattus*'.[10]

In our interpretation, the primary sense of *rat* – being our parent noun – is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive paths of the conceptually central **DOMAIN OF SPECIES […]**, **DOMAIN OF ORDERS OF ANIMALS […]** and **DOMAIN OF GENERA OF ANIMALS […]**, which form the conceptual core of the analysed sense and for which such attributive values as (ANIMAL), **(**RODENTIA) and (RATTUS) are highlighted accordingly. The following *OED* quotations testify to this historically original sense of *rat*:

⇩ **c 1000** Fiber befer. Raturus, *ræt*. Lutria, otor.

⇩ **1377**   Had   ȝe   rattes   ȝoure   wille   ȝe   couthe   nouȝt   reule   ȝoureselue
1862 The black *rat*, so rare in England, is common in Alderney and Herm.[11]

At the outset of the 19th century, *rat* developed – at least – two verbal sense-threads defined as 'to inform to the police or to prison wardens' (see *DU*), and 'to inform in criminals' slang' (see the *OED*), both of which are in current slang use today (see *Merriam Webster*). Since it is prison slang vocabulary that is of primary interest for us here, we shall focus on the sense-thread defined in *DU*, that is 'to inform to the police or to prison wardens'. The construal of the discussed verbal sense of *rat* necessitates determining the character of the process of metaphorisation that results in the development of the agent noun. In this case, the role of the parent noun is performed by *rat*, used in its historically primary nominal sense 'a rodent of some of the larger species of the genus *Rattus*' (see the *OED*), while our agent noun is the noun *rat* used in its zoosemic sense 'a police informer, an informer in prison slang' (see the *OED* and *DU*). In terms of the methodological apparatus employed in this work, the analysed human-specific sense involves the activation of the attributive values (HUMAN BEING) and (ONE THAT 'REPORTS')+[to the police/wardens], presupposed by the conceptually central attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SPECIES […]** and **DOMAIN OF BEHAVIOUR AND ACTIVITY […]**. As the context of use of the zoosemic sense is fairly obvious,[12] we may justifiably speak of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF BEHAVIOUR AND ACTIVITY […]**, for which the negatively loaded element (ONE THAT 'BETRAYS') is brought to the fore. We may conjecture that the development of the agent noun may have been conditioned by the working of the mechanism of substituting of the location (HUMAN BEING) for the element (ANIMAL), the process of backgrounding of temporarily irrelevant locations **(**RODENTIA) and (RATTUS), the foregrounding of the value (ONE THAT 'REPORTS')+[to the police], coupled with the transfer of the background element (ONE THAT

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[9]   In the following paper, we shall use the convention of putting the first and the last documented *OED* date of use of a given sense in brackets.

[10]   Apart from its historically primary meaning, the lexical category in question is applied to animals of other species resembling the rat.

[11]   According to the body of dictionaries used for verification (*Merriam Webster*, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English*, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*), this sense-thread is current in present-day English.

[12]   Any act of informing and reporting to the police is universally perceived as a betrayal in the community of the underworld.

'BETRAYS'). As we can see it, this particular element is hardly at all identifiable in terms of the definition of the parent noun, so its transfer must be conditioned by our cultural knowledge which justifies why rats are perceived as treacherous animals. R.A. Palmatier maintains in his work that rats belong to the group of the most despised animals since they are regarded as vicious, unclean and parasitic rodents. They are believed to be dangerous for both humans and their property since they spread disease and steal food, while: *Human rats betray trusts*, *desert comrades*, *and think only of themselves* [6, p. 315]. It must be emphasised that the mechanism of metaphorisation is completed after the sub-mapping of the relevant anthropomorphised trait of *rat* back onto human beings. Again, one may claim after S. Martsa that the sense of *rat* analysed here results from metonymic mapping, and the conceptual metonymy evoked by this verb may be formalised as: ANIMAL[human-specific sense] FOR THE ACTIVITY / BEHAVIOUR (PERCEIVED AS) TYPICAL OF ANIMAL[animal-specific sense].

The nature of the relationship that exists between the parent noun, the agent noun and the activity profiled by the verb, is explicable due to the working of the catalytic converter whose role is played by the conceptual value (ONE THAT 'BETRAYS'), and it allows for the construal of the targeted sense of *to rat*. The verb may certainly be classified as SIMILATIVE, and the construal of its semantic picture is possible in terms of LCS: BE[rat], with a gloss 'to act like a rat'. In other words, the meaning of the verb may be formalised as: 'to act like a rat', that is {(ANIMAL)^(ONE THAT 'BETRAYS')} attributed to a rat the semantics of which may be rendered as {(HUMAN BEING)^(ONE THAT 'BETRAYS')^(ONE THAT 'REPORTS')+[to the police/wardens]}.

The main goal set to the analysis carried out in this work was to scrutinise the intricacies of the mechanism of verbal zoosemy exemplified by means of the verb *to rat* – used in prison slang in the sense 'to inform to the police or to prison wardens' – employing the cognitively couched methodological apparatus based on the ideas developed in G.A. Kleparski, R. Kiełtyka, S. Martsa and R. Jackendoff. The methodological framework used in the analysis may be justifiably characterised as being – somewhat – eclectic in its nature since it is a corollary of the author's taking into analytical consideration verbal transfers of selected animal-specific items. To the best of our knowledge, linguists either Polish or of foreign provenance, have thus far hardly ever targeted zoosemic evolution of verbs and they have traditionally centred on scrutinising the development of animal-specific nouns. The development of the proposed methodological apparatus required either modification of the tools that linguists have at their disposal, or the forging of new tools. Hence, in order to meet the task set to this work, the author introduced certain novel elements, such as the notion of *catalytic converter*, as well as gave a new meaning to already known terms, such as, for example, *agent noun*. Another novelty in the proposed methodological framework is accounting for the mechanism that has been labelled as *substitution*, which is understood as a combination of the principles of *highlighting* and *hiding* – known since the time of Lakoff and Johnson. Another novel concept that has been proposed is labelled as *background elements*, and it has been used in reference to those elements that – not infrequently – represent the salient instinctual character and behavioural traits of animals, but they are in no way identifiable in terms of the definition, and – as a result – they have a dormant character. We have also distinguished the category of values that have been labelled as *temporarily irrelevant values*, a term that stands for those conceptual locations that are in no way important for the construal of the novel sense of the agent noun, and hence remain backgrounded. The combination of the aforementioned tools with selected elements borrowed from the cognitive tradition and conceptual semantics allowed us to scrutinise and portray the stages of the development of the verb *to rat*, which serves in this work as an example of a prison slang animal verb related to the motivating of animal names through the combination of metonymic and metaphoric mappings. Due to the fact that we have dealt with the phenomenon of verbal zoosemy only to such a limited extent, the cognitively couched apparatus proposed in this work allows us to analyse and describe the stages of the development and the resultant meaning of only those verbs whose evolution was conditioned by the two metaphorisation mechanisms. Hence, it must be emphasised that in order to be used in the analysis of other categories of animal verbs, the methodological framework proposed requires further refinement and elaboration.

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