

The theory of the Great Chain of Being (GCB) revisited: The case of GCB-level-conditioned animal terms

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Abstract

The Great Chain of Being is known as a model of the organization and perception of the surrounding reality which is deeply rooted in the European tradition and which relies on the fact that all the material/physical and spiritual entities create a hierarchy ranked from the lowest entities/beings to those occupying the highest level of the hierarchy. The Great Chain of Being and the processes it involves play an important role in the analysis of semantic change. For example, such cognitive mechanisms as anthropomorphisation and zoomorphisation understood as ascribing human or animal features to entities from the levels below and above humans or animals, are held responsible for the mechanism of zoosemy. Zoosemy is defined in the literature of the subject as a type of animal metaphor which is universally linked to evaluative changes in meaning, especially meaning pejoration. In this paper an attempt will be made to shed some light on one of the sub-types of zoosemy interpreted as an interface between a metaphorical schema and a metonymic mapping.

Keywords: *zoosemy, Great Chain of Being, metaphor, metonymy*

1 Introduction

The theoretical bases of the concept of the **Great Chain of Being** were developed in Antiquity by such ancient philosophers as Plato and Aristotle (cf. Nisbet 1982: 35), and it is worth mentioning that the **GCB** has not merely survived into our times but – more importantly – elements of its mechanism are reflected in various evolutionary theories and, recently, also in semantic investigations of natural languages. The Great Chain of Being is understood as a model of the organization and perception of the surrounding reality which is deeply rooted in the European tradition and relies on the fact that all the

material/physical and spiritual entities create a hierarchy ranked from the lowest entities/beings to those occupying the highest level of the hierarchy. The model in question is rooted in the consciousness of language users *as a cultural model indispensable to our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our language* (see Lakoff and Turner 1989: 167). What is, however, of utmost importance is the fact that the model and the processes it involves play an important role in the analysis of semantic change (see, among others, Krzeszowski 1997 and Kiełtyka 2014).

The goal set to this paper is to shed some light on the problem of the so-called semantic derogation of animal terms, which will be viewed as human-centred degeneration of GCB-level-conditioned animal terms. In the body of the article, we will provide a sample analysis of a sub-type of zoosemy (animal metaphorisation) where lexical units naming animal body parts undergo the processes of metaphorisation and metonymisation, and come to be used pejoratively either with reference to human beings or actions performed by human beings, and thus may be said to embody the general metaphorical schema that may be formulated as **<(PART OF) HUMAN BEING/ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) (PART OF) ANIMAL>** coupled with the metonymic projection formalized as **(PART OF) HUMAN BEING FOR ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING**. The analysis of zoosemy viewed as metaphor-metonymy interaction proposed in this paper is couched in terms of the conceptual metaphor theory initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987), while selected elements of the conceptual metonymy theory are based on Kövecses and Radden (1998), Radden and Kövecses (1999) and Kövecses (2002).

2 GCB-level-conditioned human-centred degeneration of animal terms

As hinted in the foregoing, in this paper we intend to focus on the problem of the so-called semantic derogation of animal terms, which may be viewed and will be viewed as human-centred degeneration of zoosemy-conditioned animal terms. To start with, it appears that the concept of being human-centred requires a word of explanation as it may be understood in at least two different ways. First of all, when referring to animals,

or – more specifically – to their body parts and behaviour, the speakers of Polish volitionally and consciously employ such animal-specific terms as *zdychać* ‘to die’ rather than *umierać* ‘to die’ or *pysk* ‘muzzle’ rather than *twarz* ‘face’ (see Kempf (1985)), that is various animal-specific terms which, in turn, may and frequently are used with reference to people, however, with a strong negative axiological load.

What is of vital importance here is the fact that in Polish such animal-specific verbs as, for example, *żyć* ‘to eat’, *zdychać*⁹⁵ ‘to die’ and such animal-specific nouns as *ryj* ‘snout’, *pysk* ‘muzzle’, *pazury* ‘claws’, to name but a few, are hardly ever emotionally and/or evaluatively tinted when employed with reference to animals, yet when targeted at humans, that is when they serve to encode the corresponding features, qualities or actions of human beings, they become emotionally and/or axiologically charged, as compared to the evaluative and/or emotional charge of those words that are used exclusively with reference to humans. Take, for example, such pairs as *żyć* vs. *jeść* ‘to eat’, *zdychać* vs. *umierać* ‘to die’, *ryj/pysk* vs. *twarz* ‘face’ *głowa* vs. *leb* ‘head’, *ręka* ‘hand/arm’ vs. *łapa* ‘paw’, *twarz* ‘face’ vs. *pysk* ‘muzzle’, in which the first element of each pair is animal-specific, while the second member is human-specific. Evidently, if the animal-specific terms are used on the genus-conditioned level, the derogatory load is neutralized. However, when the words are used on the human-specific level, and – even more intriguingly – irrespective of the gender factor (feminine, masculine, neuter), they are automatically pejoratively loaded, no matter if applied to male, female or epicene terms (e.g. *On(a) zawsze żyje jak świnia* ‘(S)he always eats like a pig’, *Masz brudne łapy Kaziu!* ‘Your hands (paws) are dirty Casimir!’, *Stul pysk frajerze!* ‘Shut your trap (muzzle) sucker!’, *Bodajby/bodajbyście zdechli!* ‘I wish they’d/you’d just drop dead!’). The observation formulated here – that may be termed as gender-unconditioned pejoration – runs counter to the observation so frequently voiced in the literature of the subject since the times of Jaberg (1905) through Schreuder (1929), Kleparski (1990, 1997), Kochman-Haładaj and Kleparski (2011) that female-specific contexts always provoke the rise of pejoratively-loaded senses and that

⁹⁵ In fact, because of the taboo sphere, the Polish animal-specific verb *zdychać* ‘to die’ appears – to many native speakers of Polish – to be heavily charged, if not at an evaluative level, then at least at an emotional one.

this is much more common than with male-specific contexts. The material analysed here shows something to the contrary. Namely, the zoosemically-conditioned pejoration of human-specific vocabulary is – at least on rare occasions – gender-blind.

Another impression that may be formulated is that Kempf's (1985, 1989) reference to the targeted animal-specific terms as *wyrazy gorsze dotyczące zwierząt* 'worse (derogatory) words used with reference to animals' seems somewhat inadequate and simplistic. Of course, the issue of semantic derogation is of crucial importance here; however, there is more to it, because – when human-specific lexical items, such as *umrzeć* 'to die', *ręka* 'hand/arm', *twarz* 'face', are used with reference to animals – there is a surprising effect. Such sentences as *Psy umarły tej wiosny* 'The dogs died this spring', *Podoba mi się twarz tego psa* 'I like the face of this dog', *Kot złamał rękę* 'The cat has broken his arm' are – even if semantically interpretable – totally stylistically unacceptable and anomalous, and, what is more, they have absolutely no nobilitating effect on the animals referred to. If acceptable at all, such contexts may have either a stunning effect upon the interlocutor, or may be treated as unrefinedly jocular.

What should be borne in mind is that at some stage of the cultural and civilizational development, the speakers of Polish and other Slavonic languages (e.g. Russian, Serbian, Czech) must have contended that since animals occupy a lower position in the **GCB** than human beings, a 'special' lexicon of animal-specific terms used to refer to their physical characteristics, instinctive behaviour, states and actions they may undergo or perform is necessary to mark the lower status of the representatives of the animal world. As noticed by Kempf (1985: 125), this type of 'special' lexicon for animal characteristics (body parts) and behaviour is not only and exclusively a characteristic feature of Slavonic languages, but also of many individual representatives of the Germanic and Romance branches of the Indo-European family of languages. For example, the Polish animal-specific verb *zdechnąć* 'to die' is rendered in the lexico-semantic **DEATH AND DYING** domain as Russian *izdochnut'* or *okolet'*, Serbian *crknuti/crći*, German *verrecken* or *krepiere*n (rather than *sterben*) and French *crever* (rather than *mourir*); with respect to the domain **BODY PARTS** the Polish animal-specific *morda/pysk* 'muzzle/snout' is conveyed by means of Russian *morda*, Czech *tlama*, Bulgarian *mucuna*, English *muzzle*, German *Maul* and French *museau*.

What is, however, most intriguing is that – as proved by Kempf (1985: 126) – the so-called GCB-level-conditioned animal terms are – generally speaking – exclusively European in nature, and, more to the point, their first attested use can be dated back to the 16th century. This means that the words that show a lower status of animals as compared to that of human beings were not present in such languages as the Hebrew of the *Old Testament*, neither did they occur in Sanskrit, Asian languages, or even such early European classical languages as Greek or Latin. Examples are not hard to find. Consider, for instance, the Greek *ophthalmoi* used for both Polish human-specific *oczy* and animal-specific *ślepia* ‘eyes’, *prósopon* used as both *twarz* ‘face’ and *pysk* ‘muzzle’ and *apothneiskein* for both *umierać* and *zdychać* ‘to die’.

3 Zoosemy as metaphor-metonymy interaction

The analysis of language data makes it possible to distinguish a sub-type of zoosemy where lexical items that serve to name animal body parts undergo the processes of metaphorisation and metonimisation and are used either with reference to human beings or actions typically performed by human beings. This sub-type of zoosemy will be interpreted as the interface between the general metaphorical schema that may be formulated as **<(PART OF) HUMAN BEING/ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) (PART OF) ANIMAL>** and the metonymic mapping that may be formalized as **(PART OF) HUMAN BEING FOR ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING**.

Thus, as hinted above, one may posit the operation of a special sub-type of zoosemy whereby nouns – used literally as names of animal body parts – are, through the working of animal metaphor, used to name human body parts and, further – by metonymic projection – come to be employed with reference to human beings of mostly objectionable or intolerable appearance, behaviour or character. For example, the Polish complex noun *świński ryj* ‘lit. pig’s snout’ is – through the mechanism of zoosemy – employed secondarily as a contemptible appellation denoting a person’s face, not infrequently with more general aesthetic, behavioural and/or moral connotations. However, *świński ryj* ‘a person’s face’ may – by means of metonymic projection – be

applied to a contemptible or aesthetically unattractive human being, as in the sentence *Ile/u świńskich ryjów przyszło na przyjęcie?* ‘How many pig’s snouts came to the party?’ In the latter case, *świński ryj* ‘a contemptible or aesthetically unattractive human being’ is an example of metonymy (or synecdoche), because the whole individual human being is referred to by his body part, or – in cognitive terms – reference to one and the same conceptual domain or, to be even more specific, the same ICM⁹⁶ is made (that of (unattractive, objectionable or contemptible) HUMAN BEING). On the other hand, in colloquial Polish *d**upa*⁹⁷ *wołowa* ‘literally cow’s arse’ is employed in the evaluatively loaded sense ‘a helpless/inadequate person’, and as such may be said to involve the mechanics of the conceptual metaphor **HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) (ANIMAL) BODY PART**.

In contemporary English slang usage, *turtleneck* or *turtle head* – by means of zoosemic extension – metaphorically stands for ‘a penis when it is covered by the foreskin’, e.g. *His turtle head came out when he got horny* (see *Urban Dictionary*). Meanwhile English *ponytail* ‘a type of hairdo’ (e.g. *to tie one’s hair in a ponytail*), and Polish *koński ogon* ‘a type of hairdo’ (e.g. *związać włosy w koński ogon* ‘to tie one’s hair in a ponytail’) are both based on the metaphorical relation where a human body part is perceived as an animal (horse’s) body part. In other words, the underlying schema set to work for this type of zoosemy appears to be couched in a pattern that may be formulated as **<(PART OF) HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) (PART OF) ANIMAL>**.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ The notion of Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) was proposed by Lakoff (1987) for whom a domain is any kind of conceptualization underlying semantic structures, whereas the ICM is the idealized model of bringing a certain structure to reality. The classification of the so-called content metonymies, in which specific relationships are characterized by certain conceptual content, offered in Kövecses and Radden (1998), Radden and Kövecses (1999) and Kövecses (2002), results from the assumption that human knowledge about the world is organised by structured ICMs, which are perceived by people as wholes and parts.

⁹⁷ The convention of double asterisks is used to break the sequence of letters that make up words which may justifiably be considered vulgar.

⁹⁸ Polish *kucyk* ‘pigtail’ is also based on the schema **<(PART OF THE) HUMAN (BODY) IS (PERCEIVED AS) ANIMAL>**.

On the other hand, we see that in the case of Polish *kurzy/ptasi mózdzek* ‘lit. a bird’s brain’ and metaphorically used in the sense ‘a person’s (retarded) brain’, as well as *barani leb* ‘lit. a ram’s head’ and metaphorically interpreted as ‘a person’s head’, both of which – through metonymic projection – are used in the extended sense ‘a stupid person’, the underlying relation involved takes a slightly different form. Namely, the pattern that may be phrased as **<(PART OF) HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) (PART OF) ANIMAL>** represents the mechanism of conceptual metaphor, while the mapping **PART OF HUMAN BEING FOR KIND OF HUMAN BEING** shows the working of conceptual metonymy.

It appears that one of the most interesting examples of meaning evolution in English based on the metaphor-metonymy interface discussed here is that of *trundle-tail* whose literal meaning (1486>1820) may be defined as ‘a dog with a curly tail; a low-bred dog, a cur’ (e.g. 1486 Myddyng dogges. *Tryndel-tayles*, and Prikherid curris. > 1820 The very brutes are degenerated our hounds are turnspits and *trindle-tails*.). As the *OED* files show, in the course of the 17th century (1625>1665), the compound noun narrowed its meaning to yield the sense-thread ‘a curly tail (of a dog)’ (e.g. a 1625 Like a poor cur, clapping his *trindle tail* Betwixt his legs. > 1665 Rough with a *trundle Tail*, a Prick-ear’d Cur) and finally – still in the same century (1614>1706) – started to be used contemptuously of a person (e.g. *OED*: 1614 Doe you sneere, you dogs-head, you *Trendle tayle!* > 1706 *Trundle-tail*, a Wench that runs fisking up and down with a draggled Tail). The historical pattern of meaning evolution in the case in hand – which again involves metonymy-metaphor interaction – may be schematised by means of the formula **(KIND OF) DOG FOR (KIND OF) TAIL (OF DOG)** (whole for part) metonymy (synecdoche) vs. **<(KIND OF) PERSON IS (PERCEIVED AS) (KIND OF) DOG>** metaphor.

3.1 *The derivation snout > to snout*

Let us start by saying that according to *CEDEL* and *ODEE*, the 13th century *snout* and the 14th century *snot* are very close etymologically. Both forms go back ultimately to a prehistoric Ger. base **snut-* or **snūt-*, the source also of obsolete English *snite* ‘wipe or pick one’s nose’, German *schneuzen* ‘blow one’s nose’, and German *schnauze* ‘snout’

(whence the 20th century English *schnauzer* ‘German breed of dog’). The 19th century colloquial word *snoot* ‘nose’ is an alteration of PDE *snout*, and it formed the basis of the 20th century adjective *snooty* (the underlying idea being of holding one’s ‘nose’ in the air in a superior way). In the case of *snout*, the human-specific 20th century evaluatively marked slang usage ‘a police informer’⁹⁹ grounded in the conceptual sphere(s) *BEHAVIOUR/PROFESSION* (e.g. (*OED*) 1910 He was in reality a ‘*snout*’ or ‘nark’, and from time to time had ‘given away’ many of his comrades > 1982 You may have been ‘grassed’ by a ‘*snout*’) is evidently a product of a **metonymic (PARS PRO TOTO) projection** of the word’s evaluatively negative 14th century (1300>PDE) sense defined as ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’¹⁰⁰ (e.g. (*OED*) a 1300 He lokede him abute, Wip his colmie *snute*. > 1820 Sae I said it wad prove since I first saw the false Southron *snout* of thee.) that is clearly linked to the conceptual zone *APPEARANCE*. On our interpretation here – by the process of **metaphorical (zoosemic) extension** – the negatively charged sense ‘the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ developed from the 14th century (c1300>PDE) animal-specific *snout* ‘the projecting part of the head of an animal, which includes the nose and mouth; the proboscis or rostrum of an insect’ (e.g. (*OED*) c1300 On his *snoute* an horne he [the rhinoceros] beres. > 1901 The large fleshy *snout* of the moose).

The *OED* provides ample evidence that in the middle of the 19th century (1857>1888) the verb *snout* acquired a short-lived **zoosemic** human-specific (evaluatively neutral) sense ‘to root, dig up, or grub, with or as with the snout’ related conceptually to the zone *BEHAVIOUR* (e.g. (*OED*) 1857 He would *snout* and jigger about the stones in a most unsalmon-like manner. > 1888 *Snouting*, grubbing, and biting their ditch deep enough for great ocean ships to sail through’).

Yet, the animal metaphorisation related to *snout* does not end here because during the first decades of the 20th century the analysed verb developed a novel **zoosemic** axiologically marked slang sense again grounded in the conceptual zone *BEHAVIOUR* ‘to act as a police informer’ (e.g. (*OED*) 1923 The gang found he was

⁹⁹ See the *OED* and *RDHS*.

¹⁰⁰ As pointed out by SDD, in Scottish English the lexical item *snout/snoot* is used in the human-specific senses ‘the face’, ‘the mind, head’.

snouting. > 1973 I've got to live in London when I go back. How long do you think I'd last if word got round that I'd been *snouting*?). For systematizing purposes the case of the sense coinage discussed here will be labelled as a **metonymic projection** > **denominal verbal formation** of the 20th century human-specific evaluatively tinted slang-marked sense 'a police informer'¹⁰¹ which is evidently conceptually linked to the zone *OCCUPATION/SOCIAL FUNCTION* (e.g. (*OED*) 1910 He was in reality a 'snout' or 'nark', and from time to time had 'given away' many of his comrades. > 1982 You may have been 'grassed' by a 'snout').

At the beginning of the 20th century, in Aus.E. slang register the verb *snout* started to be employed **metaphorically** in the human-specific axiologically negative sense 'to bear ill-will towards; to treat with disfavour, to rebuff', a sense that leads itself being linked to the conceptual dimension *BEHAVIOUR* (e.g. (*OED*) 1916 An' *snouted* them that *snouted* 'im, an' never give a dam. > 1970 That officer happened to have me *snouted* because I got you across the river, against his orders'). Around the middle of the 20th century, the evaluatively negative **zoosemic** phrase *to have a snout on (someone)* 'to bear ill-will towards someone' linked to the conceptual dimension *BEHAVIOUR* gained currency (e.g. (*OED*) 1941 *Snout* on, have a, to bear a grudge against a person. > 1966 The reason you blokes have such a *snout* on him is that he's forgotten more Law than you've ever learned.). The evidently abusive and hence somewhat negatively tinted **zoosemic** phrase *keep your snout out of this* 'keep your nose out of this' is frequently used in current English, and the semantics of the phrase may be contrasted with the Polish animal- and human-specific verb *niuchać* 'to sniff, to snuff (up)' that is used solely **metaphorically** in the human-specific sense 'to sniff (a)round; to nose around', e.g. *Policja niucha za nim po okolicznych barach* 'The police has been sniffing around local bars trying to find him'.

The paths of the historical semantic evolution of *snout*, which tend to involve the interaction between the word-formation process of denominal verbal formation

¹⁰¹ Urban Dictionary informs us that snout is also an Irish term for protestants in the north of Ireland (e.g. Did ye see them snouts on the news last night attacking holy cross girls school with blast bombs and bottles filled with piss?) as well as a Northern Irish colloquialism for a policeman (e.g. The snouts took him.).

(conversion) and the mechanisms of semantic change (metaphor and metonymy), may be itemized in the following way:

Meaning developments which originated during the L.Mid.E. period (1300-1450)

- *snout* ‘the projecting part of the head of an animal, which includes the nose and mouth; the proboscis or rostrum of an insect’ (animal-specific) (c1300>PDE);

Meaning developments which originated during the Mod.E. period (1800-)

- *snout* ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) >>> **metonymic projection** > **denominal verbal formation (conversion)** >>> *to snout* ‘to root, dig up, or grub, with or as with the snout’ (human-specific) (1857>1888);
- *snout* ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) >>> **metonymic (PARS PRO TOTO) projection** *snout* ‘a police informer’ (human-specific) (1910>PDE);
- *snout* ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) >>> **metonymic projection** > **denominal verbal formation (conversion)** >>> *to snout* ‘to bear ill-will towards; to treat with disfavour, to rebuff’ (1916>PDE);
- *snout* ‘a police informer’ (human-specific) (1910>PDE) >>> **metonymic projection** > **denominal verbal formation (conversion)** >>> *to snout* ‘to act as a police informer’ (human-specific) (1923>PDE);
- *snout* ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) >>> **metonymic projection** >>> *to have a snout on (someone)* ‘to bear ill-will towards someone’ (human-specific) (1941>PDE).

3.2 In search of partial conclusions

Even a cursory examination of the language data for *snout* leads to the conclusion that there have been no historical meaning transfers in the direction: *snout* n. ‘animal part of the body’ (animal-specific) > *to snout* *‘to use a snout – to sniff’ (animal-specific), much like in the case of the evolution of Polish *pysk* n. ‘animal part of the body’ (animal-specific) > *pyskować* *‘to use a snout’ (animal-specific) that is discussed in the section that follows. This may be due to the fact that – simultaneously with the morphological change, that is denominal verbal formation – the newly acquired verb loses (possibly via the stage of weakening) its animal-specificity and all that goes with it and acquires – through some sort of adequation process¹⁰² – specialized human-specific sense-threads,; where human-specific implies adequated to the human-specific reference. In turn, in the historical evolution of *snout* one may distinguish three directions of nominal and verbal metaphorisation/metonymisation involved that may be formulated along the following lines:

- 1) *SNOUT* n. (animal-specific) >>> **metaphorisation** >>> *SNOUT* n. (human-specific), e.g. *snout* ‘the projecting part of the head of an animal, which includes the nose and mouth; the proboscis or rostrum of an insect’ (animal-specific) (c1300>PDE) > *snout* ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) (1300>PDE);
- 2) *SNOUT* n. (human-specific) >>> **metonymisation > denominal verbal formation (conversion)** >>> *TO SNOUT* (human-specific), e.g. *snout* ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) (1300>PDE) > *to snout* ‘to root, dig up, or grub, with or as with the snout’ (human-specific) (1857>1888);
- 3) *SNOUT* n. (human-specific) >>> **metonymisation (PARS PRO TOTO)** >>> *SNOUT* n. (human-specific) >>> **metonymisation > denominal verbal formation (conversion)** >>> *TO SNOUT* (human-specific), e.g. ‘(contemptuously) the nose in man, especially when large or badly shaped’ (human-specific) (1300>PDE) > *snout*

¹⁰² On the notion of adequation see Stern (1931) who introduced the word into the terminology of diachronic semantics.

(human-specific), e.g. ‘a police informer’ (human-specific) (1910>PDE) > *to snout* ‘to act as a police informer’ (human-specific) (1923>PDE).

Schematic and highly simplified as the directions of meaning development sketched above are, they certainly allow one to formulate the conclusion that the interaction between the mechanisms of semantic change (metaphor and metonymy) and the word-formation process of conversion may be deeply involved in, if not held entirely responsible for, the semantic evolution of the derivation determined earlier as *snout* ‘animal body part’ > *to snout* ‘to act as a police informer’. Again, in this case the directionality of changes involved is of high complexity in that in some cases (e.g. direction 1) semantic change is geared by metaphorisation patterns, in others (e.g. direction 2) semantic alteration is triggered and conditioned by metonymic contiguity patterns, while in its most complex realization (direction 3) the working of metonymy (proper) – which results from the process of conversion – is preceded by the operation of its special type, that is synecdoche (PARS PRO TOTO relation).

4 The derivation *pysk* > *pyskować*

The Polish verbal category *pyskować* ‘to mouth off’ (used since the 15th century (see *BED*)) derived – through **the mechanism of metonymic projection** coupled with **the process of denominal verbal formation (affixation)** – from the concrete noun *pysk* ‘lit. face of an animal/muzzle’, and – when employed metaphorically – ‘trap/gob’ (B.E.); ‘yap/puss’ (Am.E.), is conceptually linked to nothing else but the sphere *BEHAVIOUR* and used in human-specific colloquial contexts frequently with a tinge of negative load, such as *Nie pyskuj mi!* ‘Don’t answer me back!’ (see *PWN-OXFORD*).

Likewise, as amply documented in various lexicographic works of present-day Polish (e.g. *SPP*, *SIP*, *SEP*, *SFWP*), the noun *pysk* has a rich phraseology and idiomaticity which is evident when we analyse such colloquial **zoosemic** phraseological units as *iść/pójść/(po)lecieć z pyskiem (na kogoś)* ‘to sneak/do the dirty on sb; to rat on

sb, to rat¹⁰³ sb out (AE)', *wyskoczyć/ wyjechać/ wylecieć do kogoś/ na kogoś z pyskiem* 'to slag sb off' (e.g. *Ja do niej grzecznie, a ona na mnie z pyskiem* 'I approached her nicely and she started screaming at me'); *Dozorca wyskoczył na nas z pyskiem* 'The caretaker started ranting at us'), *trzasnąć/ strzelić/ walnąć kogoś w pysk/ dać komuś po pysku* 'to give sb a knuckle sandwich' (e.g. *Dała mu po pysku* 'She gave him a smack across the face'), *wylecieć na (zbity) pysk* 'to be out on one's ear', *Stul pysk!* 'Shut your trap!', *dać pyska* '(obsolete) to give sb a smacker', (e.g. *Daj pyska na zgodę!* 'Let's shake hands and forget about it'; 'Let's kiss and make up'), *mocny w pysku* 'fast-talking' (e.g. *Mocny w pysku to on jest* 'He is a fast talker'; *nie mieć co do pyska włożyć* 'to have nothing to eat', *o głodnym/ suchym pysku* 'with an empty stomach', *rozpuścić/ rozedrzyć/ rozewrzeć pysk* 'to rant (on)', *trzymać kogoś za pysk* 'to have sb by the short and curls/ short hairs'.

The paths of the analysed historical meaning development of the derivation *pysk* 'snout, muzzle' > *pyskować* 'to mouth off', which have been shown to involve the interaction between the word-formation process of denominal verbal formation (affixation) and combined mechanisms of semantic change (metaphor and metonymy), may be formalized in the following way:

- *pysk* 'snout, muzzle' (animal-specific) >>> **metaphorical extension (zoosemy)** >>> *pysk* 'trap/gob' (B.E.); 'yap/puss' (Am.E.) (human-specific);
- *pysk* 'trap/gob' (B.E.); 'yap/puss' (Am.E.) (human-specific) >>> **metonymic projection > denominal verbal formation (affixation)** >>> *pyskować* 'to mouth off' (human-specific).

4.1 In search of partial conclusions

From the data scrutinized above it follows that in the case of the derivation *pysk* 'snout, muzzle' > *pyskować* 'to mouth off' one may speak about two directions of

¹⁰³ Notice that English *rat* – apart from being a name of a rodent – is used metaphorically in the human-specific sense 'an evil person' as in *you rat* 'you rascal' and in Am.E. 'an informer'. As a verb, it is used in human-specific application *to rat on sb* 'betray, inform' (see *PWN-OXFORD*).

morphological formation/metaphorisation/metonymisation that are involved. On closer enquiry, the directions of meaning development sketched above allow one to arrive at the conclusion that the metaphor-metonymy interaction may be held responsible for the semantic evolution of the derivation *pysk* ‘snout, muzzle’ > *pyskować* ‘to mouth off’. As one may observe, the directionality of changes involved is not as complex as in other instances discussed above. Specifically, we may speak of the working of **metaphorical extension (zoosemy)** which turns *pysk* ‘snout, muzzle’ (animal-specific) into *pysk* ‘trap/gob’ (B.E.); ‘yap/puss’ (Am.E.) (human-specific). This, in turn, is coupled with the mechanism of **conceptual metonymy** possibly triggering the word-formation process of **affixation** which is responsible for the change of *pysk* ‘trap/gob’ (B.E.); ‘yap/puss’ (Am.E.) (human-specific) into *pyskować* ‘to mouth off’ (human-specific).

The intriguing generalization that may be said to be emerging in this context is that very frequently animal-related verbs (like *pyskować* ‘to mouth off’) – after they undergo the process of **denominal verbal formation** – become restricted in their application, which is the reason why they tend to be employed exclusively in human-specific contexts.

5 Conclusion

The introductory part of the paper has been devoted to the discussion of certain intricacies of animal metaphor pertaining to broadly understood semantic derogation of animal terms, including the issue of gender-blind operation of zoosemically-conditioned pejoration. In the body of the article we have examined a sub-type of zoosemy where lexical units naming animal body parts undergo the processes of metaphorisation and metonymisation, and come to be used with reference to either human beings or actions performed by human beings, and thus may be said to embody the general metaphorical schema that can be formulated as <(PART OF) HUMAN BEING/ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) (PART OF) ANIMAL> coupled with the metonymic projection formalized as (PART OF) HUMAN BEING FOR ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING. The analysed lexical material provides evidence for an interesting interface that exists

between the mechanisms of semantic change (metaphor, metonymy) and word-formation processes (conversion, affixation) and as such may be segmented with reference to major directions of derivation.

To conclude, one may venture a claim that the European semantic derogation of animal terms, which originated in the 16th century is now apparently in full swing, and, importantly, it does not merely affect animal body parts and behaviour, but – not infrequently – it afflicts names of certain representatives of the animal world, with *dog* (e.g. *You dirty/ vile dog!*; *He's a crafty old dog!*; *It shouldn't happen to a dog*; *dog* 'unattractive woman') being the most conspicuous case.

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