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THE SEMANTIC HISTORY OF *DOUGH, BREAD, BUN*: ON HOW MONEY AND WOMEN GO TOGETHER

Abstract: In recent literature scholars have worked out a number of new categories of meaning development, such as zoosemy, plantosemy and foodsemy. In my paper I shall focus on the mechanism of foodsemy, a new semantic category proposed by Kleparski (2008). Most frequently, the process discussed here involves projection of attributive features and values, sometimes positive, yet most frequently negative, associated with members of the macrocategory **FOODSTUFFS** onto the macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**. Interestingly enough, numerous food and food-related lexical items are employed to conceptualize and encode the senses related to the macrocategory **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**. Additionally, one may also distinguish cases of shift in which metaphorical transfers link the conceptual macrocategory **FOODSTUFFS** and other conceptual categories, such as **FEMALE BODY PARTS** and **MONEY**. To illustrate complexity of foodsemy, I shall analyse the three cases of lexical items, such as *dough*, *bread* and *bun* that have undergone different metaphorisation processes.

Key words: diachronic semantic change, metaphor, foodsemy, female human being, female body parts.

Introduction

The period of the few recent decades constitutes a time of marked and intensifying interest in the study of metaphor which resulted in much work on new types of metaphorical extensions. In particular, one may speak of a number of metaphorical shifts, such as zoosemy, plantosemy and foodsemy, that came into being and have been given much attention. In a nutshell, they may be defined as metaphorical extensions onto the conceptual macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**, from the lexical riches linked to such conceptual categories as the macrocategory **ANIMALS** (e.g. *cow* > ‘fat, obese woman’, *pig* > ‘nasty and unpleasant person’), **PLANTS** (e.g. *daisy* > ‘attractive or beloved person’, Pol. *kwiatuszek* diminutive form of *kwiatek*

‘attractive or beloved female’) and **FOODSTUFFS** (e.g. *hamburger* > ‘a person who is not very wise’, *cheesecake* > ‘attractive female’). This paper is intended as a contribution to the last type of metaphorical transfer, that is foodsemy.

The term *foodsemy* was coined by Kleparski (2008), but the scholar’s analysis of this semantic mechanism goes back to the 1980s when he discussed foodsemic transfers without appending a specific appellation to the mechanism discussed. In this case of metaphorical transfer, the terminology of foodstuffs serves as the basis for the metaphorical transfers where the source domain is formed by lexical items related to the category **FOODSTUFFS**, and the target domain is formed by the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**. It is confirmed in later research on the subject, such as Cymbalista and Kleparski (2013:145), that foodsemy is the figurative extension of food related words onto various conceptual categories and, most frequently, the macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**. To be more specific, foodsemy involves the projection of attributive features and values associated with members of the macrocategory **FOODSTUFFS** onto the macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**, for example such a value as <SWEET> is perceived as positive in the case of the metaphorical transfer of *honey*, that is used not only in the literal sense ‘sweet sticky substance produced by bees and used for food’, but also figuratively in the sense ‘beloved, dear person’.

One has reasons to expect that, because of the fact that the subject of food is essential in human life, cases of foodsemy would be found in various languages, and they are indeed there to see in great numbers (see Kudła 2016). Evidently, foodsemic metaphor is most frequent with nouns and less frequent with other grammatical categories, yet developments among other categories may be found. The cases of adjectives comprise such examples as *porky* ‘fat, obese’ or *cheesy* ‘of poor quality’ and phrasal verbs, such as *to cream off* ‘to take the best part of something’ or *to milk somebody dry* ‘to cheat somebody out of everything they have’. The cases of Pol. *kielbasić* ‘to fail to do something’, *chrzanić* ‘to talk rubbish’ and *cukrować* ‘to pander’ constitute a representative sample of Polish verbs employed foodsemically.

Most frequently, the target domain involved is **HUMAN BEING**; however, there are other categories that foodstuff terminology can be metaphorically used in reference to. In what follows I shall be dealing with the analysis of foodsemic transfers in the field **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** (e.g. *cupcake* > ‘cute, adorable girl’, *peach* > ‘attractive, young female’), **HUMAN BODY PARTS** (e.g. *apple* > ‘vagina’, *coconuts* > ‘female breasts’), and **MONEY** (e.g. *lettuce* > ‘money, very often paper notes’, *spinach* > ‘money’) that occur in the English language. I shall start by illustrating the working of the mechanisms of foodsemic transfers with language data related to the lexical items *dough*, *bread* and *bun*. One is justified in thinking that these three lexical items, belonging to one thematic group, may have undergone a similar foodsemic development. However, on closer inquiry it turns out that the metaphorical evolution of the three nouns seems to have gone three distinct ways.

Females viewed foodsemically

In every community, there are issues and topics that people are not very eager to talk about in a direct and straightforward manner, for instance, we avoid topics such as death, disability and sexual intercourse, which are treated as taboo. To put it simply, there is a ban placed on certain objects or words that one does not dare to pronounce because their very mention may be treated as embarrassing or inviting trouble. Current research shows that there are a number of tools that serve to avoid taboo. We put to use euphemisms to get rid of banned words, to express the embarrassing topics with milder, more delicate vocabulary items. There is a close relationship between euphemisms and metaphors. Since a metaphor is a highly productive mechanism used unconsciously to talk about issues that are difficult to put into words, people resolve to use them eagerly. It is a fact that it is sometimes easier to implement metaphors as they emerge from the social or cultural experiences people share, and they are loaded with meanings that are rooted deeply in our perception of the outer world.

According to Cutierrez-Rivas (2011) *metaphors derive in some cases from analogies, since it is relatively easy and spontaneous for humans to create such by watching the ordinary things common to them and the world that surrounds them. Metaphors can become so ingrained in a culture that nobody questions the meaning behind them.* In consequence, they are a perfect tool to introduce various topics and notions, for example to render gender differences. Both woman and the female body are frequently pictured and viewed from a metaphorical perspective as food that can be eaten. In these metaphors of consumption women are usually eaten (or devoured), rather than consume food themselves (see Kleparski 2012). Cutierrez-Rivas (2011) claims that *women are mere products to be consumed, enjoyed and discarded.* One may provide partial yet representative evidence by quoting such cases as the metaphorical transfers of *dough*, *bread* and *bun*.

As the title of this paper suggests, money and women go together, so let us now discuss the topical shifts from the domain of **FOODSTUFFS** through **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** to the macrocategory **FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS** and the domain of **MONEY**. Interestingly enough the three lexical items may be proved to have undergone more than one metaphorical shift.

The foodsemic transfers of *dough*, *bread* and *bun*

DOUGH: Let us begin our analysis with the noun *dough*, as it is the first bakery product that leads to the production of any cake, bread or bun. The etymological roots of the word are Germanic. *The Oxford Etymological Dictionary* (henceforth *OED*) provides the following early forms: OE *dáh*, Ger. *teig*, ON *deig*, Sw. *Deg*.

The historically primary sense in English is, according to *OED* ‘a mass consisting of flour or meal moistened and kneaded into a paste, with or without leaven, ready to be baked into bread’. The first quotation with this word comes from Anglo-Saxon times, (1000) Wyr̅c clam of *da.æe*. Cned hyt <thbar> hit si swa picca swa *doh*. This early meaning has been current until recent times, which is confirmed by such modern lexicographic sources as *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (henceforth *LDCE*) and *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (henceforth *CID*) which define *dough* as ‘flour mixed with water and often yeast, fat or sugar so that it is ready for baking’ as in the example: She kneaded the *dough* well and left it to rise.

In recent times, the word started to be used in American English slang in the sense ‘money’, and this is evidenced for the second half of the 19th century: (1851) He thinks he will pick his way out of the Society’s embarrassments, provided he can get sufficient *dough*. (1896) I pulled in the *dough* and picked up the cards. (1955) I’m going back to business and make myself a little *dough*. Let us point to the fact the sense ‘money’ is still used in everyday English, both American and British English. *CID* evidences the currency of the sense with the present-day context of use: Have you got enough *dough* on you, or shall I pay by *American Express*? According to *the Routledge Dictionary of Slang* (henceforth *RDS*), the word *dough* functions in a compound noun *fresh dough* that stands for money earned through a criminal enterprise that has been made to appear to be the product of a legitimate business (also an early term for laundered money).

BREAD: The history of the word *bread* begins with OE. *bréad*, pl. *bréadru*: which corresponds to WGer. **braud*, and OFris. *brâd*, Du. *brood*, LG. *brôd*, *brood*), OHG., MHG. *brôt* (Ger. *brod*, *brot*); ON. *brauð* (Sw., Da. *bröd*). From the beginning the noun has been used in the sense ‘a well-known article of food prepared by moistening, kneading, and baking meal or flour, generally with the addition of yeast or leaven’. The first quotation illustrates the Anglo-Saxon original sense: (c 950) Neh ðær stoue ðær æeeton þæt *bred*. Being a basic ingredient of our ancestors’ diet, the word designating the food item appears continuously in quotations throughout the centuries (c 1175) Hi hadden *brad* and win and vii sandon. > (1843) O God! that *bread* should be so dear, And flesh and blood so cheap! Similarly to the case of *dough*, the word *bread* is still used in its historically primary meaning, which is confirmed by modern dictionaries. *CID* documents the sense ‘a food made from flour, water and usually yeast mixed together and baked’ with the example: Do you bake your own *bread*? Interestingly enough, historically speaking *bread* is used colloquially in the sense ‘any type of food’, as illustrated by the quotation from the online slang dictionary (www.urbandictionary.pl): Let’s go out tonight and eat some *bread*.

The modification of the sense of the word started at the beginning of the 18th century when *bread* developed the sense ‘livelihood, means of subsistence’, as in the

quotation from (1719) I was under no necessity of seeking my *bread*. Additionally, further quotations document the sense: (1727) Poor miserable Fishers, who get their *Bread* out of the Water, to keep them from starving. (1848) Many officers arbitrarily deprived of their commissions and of their *bread*.

The semantic development of *bread* continued with time and, in the first half of the 20th century, the meaning ‘money’ appeared in American slang, and – later on – the sense surfaced also in British English. (1939) Inside the low, smoky room, the musicians sweated for their *bread*. (1952) If I had *bread* (Dizzy’s basic synonym for loot) I’d certainly start a big band again. (1967) So me with all that *bread* maybe a week, and then I get the plane. Additionally, the compound *bread-artist* appeared, which was a casual term applied to one who prosecutes an art or profession simply to gain a living; (1831) The *Bread-artist* can travel contentedly round and round and realize much: for himself victual.

With time the sphere of application of *bread* extended to the domain of money. In the middle of the 20th century the word *bread* acquired the metaphorical application ‘money’ both in American and British English. According to the *RDS*, the sense surfaced in American English first in the 1930s, and it is still visible in compounds, such as, for example, *blood bread* ‘payment for donating blood’ or *breadwinner* ‘the person responsible for supporting a family’. Additionally, there is also an adjective, *breaded*, meaning ‘wealthy’. The *OED* provides the example of the compound *breadhead*, used in highly colloquial language in a sense ‘a person who is motivated by or obsessed with making money; a materialist’ as documented in the following quotation (1969) There is a new underground music scene happening, a sort of *breadhead’s* version of UFO called the Other Kingdom. (1983) Conga player/flautist wanted. No *bread heads* or time wasters. > (2001) Even Dylan knew he was a brand, an industry. He presented it as: ‘I’m not in it for the money, I’m not a *bread head*,’ but he had the finest lawyers working for him. What is more, the *RDS* confirms the use of *breadhead* with the function of talking in a derogatory manner about a person motivated by or obsessed with making money; money-minded. (1991) The really sharp Sixties boys never got waylaid by sex ‘n’ drugs, but kept their *breadhead* cool. > (2000) Frankly, it’s the real motives of today’s *breadhead* pop stars that I’m more worried about. Another British English compound that testifies to the sense of *bread* is *breadwinner*, which is used in reference to a person responsible for supporting a family. This compound appeared as early as in the first half of the 20th century. *Partridge Slang Dictionary* (henceforth *PDS*) illustrates the sense discussed here with the following quotation: (1963) “I don’t blame you, dear Kay” he said gravely, “for comparing yourself to me as *breadwinner*”.

When we take into consideration colloquial and slang register, it is possible to trace two further senses of *bread*. One of the uses serves to encode the sense ‘a young, attractive and sexually available woman’ and the target domain here is **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**. The second secondary metaphorical sense must be categorized as belonging to the macrocategory **FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS** as

the word is used in the sense of ‘vagina’ and is testified in the context of use taken from the online slang dictionary: This place is full of hot *bread*; John could have seen Anna’s fat *bread* suffocating in her panties.

BUN: To start with, the etymology of this lexical item is doubtful, but according to the *OED* it is certain that the noun serves to designate a sort of cake; however, the use differs greatly in different localities. While in England the word generally denotes a sweet cake (usually round) not too large to be held in the hand while being eaten, in Scotland it usually means a very rich description of cake, the substance of which is almost entirely composed of fruit and spice; the richest kind of currant bread. In some other places, such as in the north of Ireland, the noun is used in reference to a round loaf of ordinary bread. In the earliest textual samples, the meaning is doubtful; the context merely indicates some kind of loaf or cake. (1337) Cum uno pane albo, vocato ‘*bunne*’, de obolo. (c 1440) *Bunne, brede, placenta*. > 1960 Jock did his *bun* properly, ‘So my money’s not good enough, eh mate?’ he snarled at the driver.

Let us stress that a large number of foodsemic developments are evidently based on some visual resemblance, and such a mechanism of development probably operated in the following transfers. The lexical item *bun* is also used in reference to hair coiled at the back of the head in a shape suggesting a bun. The first quotation featuring this lexical item comes from the second half of the 19th century: (1894) The fashionable ladies to be seen in the Park with their *bun-chignons*. (1894) The days of the *bun* coiffures are over. > (1929) Victorian fashion, with hats perched on the head, permitted a free view of chignon, *bun*, or curls. Similarly, the noun acquired the sense ‘the buttocks’ due to visual resemblance. This meaning (‘human posterior’) is relatively new, as the first illustrative quotation comes from the 1960s: (1968) For half a man I’d snuff twenty Armenians and tell their Episcopalian mothers to be on guard and find linoleum stratagems getting to your *buns*.

Let us stress at this point that a substantial number of foodsemic transfers are restricted to informal contexts and slang uses and it is here that one finds the greatest numbers of food-based metaphorical senses. This is what has happened in the case of *bun* which is used in reference to ‘sexually available female’, ‘female private part’ and ‘sexual act’. The three senses are illustrated by successive quotations from the online slang dictionary: My girl is out of town, so I am going to the club tonight to get some nice *bun*; You Turtle, did you see her bun last night?; She called her baby daddy for some *buns*, she wasn’t trying to get back with him. Interestingly enough, the word may be used as a verbal function to convey the sense ‘to have sexual intercourse’. Notice the examples taken from the online slang dictionary: He tried to *bun* but was unsuccessful, she was not interested; I just met this chick and she is fixing to *bun* tonight.

The three cases of foodsemic transfers: *dough*, *bread* and *bun*, similar at a glance, may stand for various types of development. The three cases of foodsemic

evolution outlined here indicate that foodsemy is a highly productive mechanism closer to everyday use of the language than it may seem. Let us point to the fact that the closeness and familiarity of the food items gives rise to numerous metaphorical transfers. Among others it is plain that, deep in the human mind, the sphere of sexuality is connected with consumption. Hence, it is easier to understand the background of metaphorical developments such as those of *bread* or *bun* that are used in sexually-specific senses, e.g. *bread* meaning ‘sexually attractive female’, ‘female private parts’, and *bun* meaning not only ‘sexually attractive female’ and ‘vagina’, but also ‘sexual intercourse’. What is more, just as it is hardly possible to imagine life without daily bread, it is also impossible to imagine human existence without money. Hence, the notion of materialistic consumption is embedded into human reality and language. On the one hand, it is possible to trace examples of the metaphorical developments of *bread* and *bun* within the macrocategories **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** and **FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS** connected with sexual consumption, and – on the other hand – there are cases of *dough* and *bread* within the macrocategory **MONEY**. What the cases of metaphorical evolution have in common is the fact that they are connected with issues that are basic and vital in human life, such as food, money or sexuality.

Parallel cases of transfers

As stated previously, foodsemic developments affecting the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** are numerous and variously represented in different natural languages. As a rule, women are perceived as items that are consumed. Very frequently various foodstuffs stand metaphorically for **FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS** that are also metaphorically consumed. Hence, in a male-dominated society, women and their bodies are perceived as “products” to be acquired and consumed, and they are treated as available, ordinary, everyday foodstuffs for men to consume. Although nourishment is one of most basic human needs one can hardly imagine life without money and sexuality. While sexuality is a biologically conditioned element of our existence the need to have and amass financial resources, though by no means biologically conditioned, has become a part of our existence.

The historical cases of foodsemy, such as *dough*, *bread* and *bun*, indicate some possible mechanisms operating in language that may be observed, which also visible in the following cases that have undergone similar development:

FEMALE HUMAN BEING: *arm candy, biscuit, bread, bun, buttered bun, cheesecake, cookie, cream puff, cupcake, dish, ham, honey-bunny, sugar baby, cherry pie, crumpet, cherry, peach, strawberry, pepper, meat, a bit of meat, hot meat, veal, mutton, laced mutton, hot mutton, hot beef, tomato, tart, tartlet, sandwich, marmalade-madam,*

FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS: *apple, apple pie, apricot, bacon rushers, bacon sandwich, bean, beef, bread, bun, burger, cabbage, cake (hole), candy, cauliflower, cherry, cookie, cup of tea, fish, golden doughnut, honey box, honey pot, jelly, jelly roll, juice box, lunch-box, meat, muffin, mutton, oyster, pie, peach, sugar (dish)*

MONEY: *bread, bread buttered on both sides, buttered bun, butter-and-egg money, cabbage, cake, cheddar, cheese, chips, cream, dough, jam, lentils, lettuce, peanut, pepper, salad, soup, spinach, sugar*

The data enumerated above shows unambiguously that the domain of taste is frequently responsible for foodsemic transfers between the source domain **FOODSTUFFS** and the macrocategories **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** and **FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS**. This is most frequently realised through the metaphorical transfer of lexical items that in their primary sense refer to substances that are sweet *per se* (*biscuit, cake, cheesecake, cookie, doughnut, sweet meat*), fruit that are definitely on the sweet side (*apple, apricot, cherry, peach, strawberry*) and by those foodstuffs that contain sweet substances, such as sugar or honey (*sugar baby, sugar pie, honey-bunny, shoulder candy, arm candy*). In the history of English there have been many examples of meaning transfers of bakery terms (*cheesecake, crumpet, bun, buttered bun, cherry pie, tart, tartlet*). Likewise, various types of meat and meat products may be found in the above data (*bacon, beef, ham, meat, a bit of meat, hot meat, veal, mutton, laced mutton*). While analysing the data, it has been observed that negative connotations very frequently become an integral part of transfers related to sexuality. Additionally, the number of examples confirms the fact that it is a highly productive mechanism and in such cases one can speak of sexuality-oriented conceptualizations. One may generalize and say that metaphorical transfers of many of these words evidently follow the path of development <SEXUAL USE OF A PERSON IS CONSUMPTION>. Generally speaking, the material scrutinized here shows that a substantial number of euphemistic developments serve to encode taboo terms connected with sexuality.

Conclusions

It is hardly possible to account for all of the features of the metaphorical transfers in the category **FOODSTUFFS** within the scope of one paper. However, an attempt has been made to show that metaphorical extension has an enormous impact on vocabulary items linked to the macrocategory **FOODSTUFFS** and the mechanisms operating here are far from random. One may make an effort to formulate certain generalisations and the data shows, primarily, that figurative use of words related to food and consumption, in the majority of cases, is linked to the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**. Most evidently, the discussed cases of the foodsemic developments of *dough, bread, bun* encode negative features that characterize human beings. Additionally, a substantial number of pejorative

foodsemic developments denote negative human qualities and are tightly connected with the cultures that language users are born and brought up in. It goes without saying that the mechanism of foodsemy is frequently triggered by extralinguistic causes and conditions, such as the closeness and familiarity of the conceptual category **FOODSTUFFS**.

Interestingly enough, foodsemic transfers are traceable in various grammatical categories, such as nouns (e.g. English *meat* > ‘person viewed as sexual object’, *cheesecake* > ‘attractive female’), phrasal verbs (*to salt away* > ‘to save money’, *to cream off* > ‘to take the best part of something’), adjectives (e.g. English *porky* > lit. ‘made of pork’ > ‘fat, obese’, *cheesy* lit. ‘made of cheese’ > ‘of poor quality’), as well as idiomatic expressions and proverbs (e.g. *the cherry on the top* > ‘something additional, nice to have, and not expected’, *a piece of cake* > ‘something easy to do’). There are grounds to believe that such developments follow a metaphorical path leading from concrete source domain to abstract target domain, and the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** is the one that is most frequently involved.

It is also worth pointing out that a few of the cases of semantic shift documented here are linked to both **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** and **FEMALE PRIVATE PARTS** (*meat, beef, mutton, bean, apricot, grapes*) which clearly indicates that sexuality is widely associated with consumption. Moreover, one observes that the concept of a woman tends to be more associated with pleasurable consumption because of the element of SWEETNESS, for example, *peach*, the first meaning of which serves to encode the sense ‘attractive female’, and the second one to a body part with the emerging sense – ‘vagina’. Note that such lexical items as *apple pie, cake, bun, cookie, cupcake, candy, muffin, peach, cherry, fish, cabbage* have undergone a similar development from ‘a female (dear) person’ to ‘a female private part’.

Another general observation that may be formulated pertains to the register of vocabulary items that are products of foodsemic transference. It turns out that a substantial number of the words foodsemically transferred are restricted to informal contexts, and – in particular – to very colloquial language and slang usage. When psychological considerations or social attitudes are taken into account, it is possible to apply euphemistic expressions in order to avoid taboo words connected with sexuality and to find substitutes that are more acceptable, as is evidenced by the use of *bun, cake, cookie, muffin, apple, peach, apricot, honey box* or *sugar dish*, all serving to convey the sense ‘female private part’.

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