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STRUCTURAL-SEMANTIC STUDY OF SLANG WITH A MAMMAL COMPONENT IN ENGLISH

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Annotation : Among English slang items, animal names occur in great abundance. They are diverse in terms of their structure, semantics, linguopragmatic and linguostylistic features, and they stand out because of the distinctiveness of their usage. From this perspective, the present article is devoted to a structural-semantic study of mammals codified in English slang dictionaries.

Keywords: slang, animal image, zoonym, mammals, toponymic mammals, somatic mammals, phytonymic mammals.

The practice of naming a person through an animal image and characterizing that person's behavior, appearance, and social status by means of animal imagery has been widely used in all societies since ancient times. This is because animals, like humans, possess many similar biological and physiological features, which increases the practical value of using animal imagery in the depiction of people. The use of animal names to describe a person is a powerful cognitive-pragmatic means of influence and is widely employed for various stylistic purposes, including praise, humor, irony, humiliation, and insult.

From a terminological point of view, the terms "animals/animal names" are primarily characteristic of Anglophone linguistics, whereas the term "zoonym" is more typical of Russian and Uzbek linguistics. Up to the present day, numerous scholarly studies devoted to this issue have been carried out both worldwide and in our national linguistic tradition. In English linguistics, for example, K. Molloy investigated human-animal relations in the discourse of anthropomorphism, A. Sakalauskaite studied zoometaphors in English, A. Mawlood examined the classification of animal-component phraseological units and idioms from a comparative perspective, A. Abbattista addressed the gender issues of animal metaphors, and K. Pearce explored the features of the use of animal images in science-fiction works in monographic studies [1]. In Russian linguistics, I. Kholmanskikh, D. Tishkina, and I. Belyayeva conducted comparative analyses of zoonymic phraseologisms, A. Balabanova studied the expression of zoonymic vocabulary in literary discourse, and A. Maslov carried out dissertation research on the stylistic features of vulgar metaphors based on zoonyms [2].

The number of dissertation studies devoted specifically to slang with a zoonym component on the basis of English material remains relatively limited. In particular, A. Ciechanowska examined zoonyms used in English prison slang [3], while J. Wedlock partly addressed animal names within the framework of taboo and insulting vocabulary in Australian English [4]. However, dissertations devoted to a comprehensive structural, semantic, and lexical-semantic analysis of animal names recorded in English slang dictionaries have not been encountered. From this perspective, the present chapter of the dissertation investigates these issues in detail.

In the first section of the chapter, zoonyms used in English slang dictionaries are analyzed from structural and semantic perspectives. First, animals are classified according to zoological types and substantiated by examples. Then, according to the identified types, they are divided into groups on the basis of form and meaning.

In world zoology, animals are divided into the following two main groups:

1. Vertebrates.
2. Invertebrates.

1. Vertebrate animals, in turn, include the following types: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish:

a) mammals: dogs, cats, squirrels, badgers, foxes and hedgehogs.

b) birds (ornithonyms): hummingbirds, ostriches, puffins, magpies, robins, blackbirds, ducks and owls.

d) reptiles: snakes, lizards, crocodiles, and turtles.

e) amphibians: frogs, toads, and newts.

f) fish: minnows, sharks, piranhas, salmon and trout.

2. The class of invertebrate animals includes the following: squids; worms, earthworms, spiders, crabs and insects.

During the analysis of slang with a zoonym component in English, our attention was drawn to the fact that mammalian items considerably outnumber other animal types. For this reason, we divided them structurally into the following types:

1. Monolexemic mammals: squirrel (wife); dog (an unreliable, treacherous person); pig (a fat, ugly person); lion v. (to intimidate); lioness (a loose woman).

2. Mammal + noun: squirrel cage (mental hospital); squirrel powder (marijuana); dogface (an ugly, ill-favored person); dog-driver (police officer).

3. Mammal + adjective: black cow (chocolate cocktail); cow-crazy adj. (preoccupied with women); coyote-ugly (extremely ugly); coyote milk (cheap whisky).

4. Mammal + somatism: dog's head (beer); dog's eye (a piece of meat); dog's nose (warmed beer); dog-leg (second-rate tobacco).

5. Mammal + anthroponym: John Bull (an Englishman).

6. Mammal + participial/adjectival form: dog-drunk (dead drunk); dog-tired (utterly exhausted); pig-brained (a stupid person); pigfaced (an ugly person).

7. Mammal + toponym: dog's home (guardroom); doghouse (prison); dogtown (the city of Port Chalmers); pig town (slums/ruins).

8. Mammal + ethnonym: pig Irish (a lower-class, poor Irish person).

9. Mammal (zoonym) + zoonym: dogfish (a sponger); elephant cock (a piece of meat); tiger snake (strong liquor); bear cat (an aggressive person).

10. Syndetically linked mammals: dog and cat (rug); cow and calf (ten shillings); hare and hound (a round of drinks); horse and donk (cheap wine).

11. Phraseological unit: dog trot to hell (an unpleasant experience); make a pig of oneself (to be greedy); pig between the sheets (a pork sandwich); drunk as a mouse (so drunk that one cannot stand upright).

Among English slang items with a zoonym component, we decided to divide mammals semantically into the following types:

1. Mammals denoting a person (men and women in general):

a) denoting nationality: kangaroo (an Australian person); bear (a Russian); monkey man (a West Indian immigrant); camel-driver (a Middle Eastern Arab); koala-shagger (an Australian); pigtail (a Chinese person); John Bull (an Englishman); pig Irish (a lower-class, poor Irish person).

b) denoting occupation: koala (a diplomat protected by Australian law); zebra (a referee in a striped shirt in sports games); ferret (an informer, a provider of information); dog-driver (a police officer).

d) denoting behavior and intellectual capacity: dog (an unreliable, treacherous person); fox (a cunning, hypocritical person); chimpanzee (a dim-witted hooligan); rabbit (a coward); aardvark (a naïve, foolish person); wombat (a stupid, silly person); hyena (a lazy person); baboon (a hooligan, a rude person).

e) denoting appearance: pig (a fat, ugly person); coyote (a very unpleasant person); buffalo (a large, stupid person); moose (a large, strong, coarse person); rat (an unpleasant person); dogface (an ugly, ill-favored person).

f) denoting a group or gathering of people: beaver patrol (a team of energetic young workers); mongoose gang (a gang of thugs working for a politician); donkey roast (an official banquet).

g) denoting social or economic status: possum (a person); rhino-fat (a rich person).

h) denoting race: chimpanzee (a white person); orangutan (a Black person); mongoose (a person with genetically blond-white skin and hair); bull-head (a white person).

i) denoting age: badger (an old man).

j) denoting psychological and physiological state: dog-tired (utterly exhausted); bull simple adj. (terrified of the police).

2. Mammals denoting men:

a) denoting appearance: ox (a large, rowdy man); sheep (a long-haired man); horse (a strong, handsome man); beaver (a bearded man).

b) denoting behavior and conduct: goat (a womanizer); bull (a womanizer, an importunate man); wolf (a man who openly pursues women to satisfy his lust); mouse-hunt (a womanizer); hare-finder (a womanizer).

d) denoting nationality: donkey (an Irish man belonging to the working class).

3. Mammals characterizing women:

a) denoting social status: squirrel (wife).

b) characterizing age and appearance: cow (a fat or ugly woman); hedgehog (an ugly woman); camel (an ugly woman); bat (an old ugly woman); pigmouth (a very fat woman).

d) denoting a gathering of women: cat party (a women's party).

e) denoting behavior: lioness (a loose woman); deer (a loose woman); cat (a loose woman); hare (a loose woman); cougar (an older woman who dates younger men); weasel (a promiscuous woman).

f) denoting race: seal (a Black woman).

4. Mammals related to alcohol and drugs: elephant (heroin); tiger (heroin); skunk (low-quality marijuana); squirrel powder (marijuana); pig iron (cheap, low-quality vodka); monkey dust (morphine); gorilla biscuits (tablets of phencyclidine, a type of narcotic substance); gorilla pills (strong tranquilizers).

5. Mammals related to food and drink: cow grease (second-rate butter); rabbit food (a salad consisting of vegetables and greens); bull butter (margarine); black cow (chocolate cocktail); bull's eye (a large round sweet).

6. Technonymic mammals: hippo (an armored police vehicle); llama (a rifle); pigmobile (a police car); pigskin (a saddle); cow-car (a milk container); pony-bag (a small box carried into a bank by guards).

7. Toponymic mammals: squirrel cage (mental hospital); fox-box (guards' room); boar's nest (a disorderly room or house); blind tiger (an unlicensed bar); dog's home (guardroom); doghouse (prison); dogtown (the city of Port Chalmers); pig town (slums/ruins); Pig Island (New Zealand).

8. Mammals denoting romantic relations and their consequences: cow-crazy adj. (preoccupied with women); mousetrap (marriage); wolf-whistle v. (to whistle at a passing woman); deer-stalking (to chase after a woman); the rabbit died v. (to become pregnant); cat and dog life n. (an unhappy, quarrelsome marriage).

9. Mammals related to criminality and hooliganism: mole (a prisoner who digs underground in order to escape from prison); tiger-hunter (a gambler); badger-man (the male

partner of a swindling woman); lion v. (to intimidate); giraffe v. (to deceive); gorilla game (forcing a woman into prostitution); skunk-eye v. (to look aggressively).

10. Mammals related to money and its circulation: monkey (100 US dollars); walrus (50 pounds); otter (eight pence); gorilla (1000 pounds or dollars); rhino (money); pony (50 Australian dollars); boar (a shilling).

11. Mammals related to cloth, clothing, and their parts: chipmunks (swimming shorts); weasel sack (a bag for keeping money); donkey's ears (an incorrectly turned-out collar); bull's wool (second-hand, cheap clothes); bull-ants (trousers); dog and cat (rug).

12. Zoonymic mammals: Cotswold lion (sheep).

13. Somatic mammals: mouse (a black eye); beaver tail (the female body).

14. Mammals related to disease names: dog-fever (influenza).

15. Coloristic mammals: sealskin adj. (black).

16. Mammals denoting natural phenomena: cat and dog v. (to rain heavily).

17. Mammals denoting the result of an action: dog trot to hell (an unpleasant experience); make a hare (to expose someone's foolishness); take the goat's tail v. (to win, to prevail).

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