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MEANING (METONYMY)-BASED CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CHICK LIT

This article explores meaning-based creativity in English language chick lit, focusing on the role of metonymy in the formation of creative neologisms. While lexical innovation has often been discussed in terms of form-based (morphological) creativity, the present study foregrounds the cognitive-semantic mechanisms that motivate formally creative coinages. Drawing on the distinction between form-based and meaning-based creativity, the article investigates how metonymy functions as a key source of semantic innovation underlying neologisms in English language chick lit. The study is based on a self-compiled corpus of 36 English language chick lit novels, from which 141 formally creative neologisms were extracted. The analysis shows that 37% of these neologisms are grounded in metonymic mappings, indicating a strong interaction between morphological experimentation and conceptual creativity. The article adopts the framework of creative use of metonymy, identifying such mechanisms as the extension or elaboration of an established metonymic relationship, extended use of the same underlying ICM, the juxtaposition of two established metonymic relationships, combination and/or juxtaposition with metaphor, 'twice-true' metonymy, and possible personification. Through detailed qualitative analysis, the article demonstrates that meaning-based creativity in chick lit neologisms is not based on entirely novel conceptual mappings. Instead, meaning-based creativity typically arises from the reduction/elaboration, recombination, or reorientation of entrenched metonymies, which are exploited for humorous, evaluative, and expressive purposes. The findings highlight the embodied and experiential grounding of metonymy-based neologisms and show how they contribute to characterisation, emotional engagement, and social critique. Overall, the study argues that chick lit provides a particularly fertile domain for observing the interplay between form-based and meaning-based creativity in contemporary English word formation.

Keywords: *linguistic creativity, meaning-based creativity, metonymy, mapping, creative use of metonymy, chick lit.*

Problem statement. Creativity permeates every sphere of human activity and finds one of its most potent expressions in language. Its significance is beyond dispute: linguistic creativity is central to identity construction, cultural reflection, and the articulation of emotional experience. Nevertheless, despite its pervasiveness, creativity has long remained on the periphery of mainstream linguistic inquiry, frequently dismissed as too elusive or resistant to systematic analysis.

The present study focuses on lexical creativity, understood as the inventive formation of new lexical units, or neologisms, within English language chick lit. This literary genre is marked by its emphasis on social observation, self-presentation, and a light, playful tone [19; 41].

Lexical creativity is dual in nature, operating at the intersection of formal word-formation processes and cognitive-semantic mechanisms that motivate the choice of particular lexical forms [24]. This dual nature was succinctly articulated by L. Collins [11] through the distinction between the "Joyce principle" and the "Juliet principle." The former, drawing on James Joyce's experimental manipulation of sound and structure, emphasises the phonological and morphological dimensions of lexical invention. The latter, inspired by W. Shakespeare's famous reflection on naming in "Romeo and Juliet," foregrounds the role of meaning and conceptualisation in word creation [52]. Accordingly, lexical innovation can be approached in terms of form-based and meaning-based creativity, which together capture the complementary dimensions of neologism formation in English language chick lit (henceforth ELCL). This article focuses exclusively on meaning-based creativity of neologisms in English language chick lit grounded in metonymy.

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Analysis of recent research and publications. Neologisms are broadly understood as lexical units or new meanings not previously recorded in a given language at a particular time [1]. English language chick lit fosters the emergence of new words mainly morphologically. They are deliberately created as alternative to existing forms to affect the communicative potential of the resulting expressions, i.e. perform a facilitative function [30, p. 278]. What enables the facilitative function of neologisms in ELCL is their creativity, which is commonly defined as the combination of novelty and appropriateness [9], meaning that an idea must not only be original but also serve a clear communicative function [51]. In the case of neologisms, newness is inherent by definition. What distinguishes creative neologisms is their appropriateness within discourse. Creative neologisms act as foregrounding devices through which writers position their characters as socially perceptive individuals – those who seek attention, navigate relationships, and aim to be "socially successful with their speech" [20, p. 1056]. Such coinages operate as markers of identity, interpersonal involvement, and socio-discursive stance [36]. Moreover, their expressive force is context-dependent, co-varying with who creates the word, in what setting, and for what purpose [23].

Linguistic creativity operates on two complementary levels: form-based and meaning-based [24; 36; 38; 39].

Morphology is one of the primary domains of form-based creativity in ELCL, providing the structural foundation for the invention of new words. The study of particularly unconventional morphological formations has given rise to a subfield known as extravagant [14] or extragrammatical [40] morphology which explores coinages that stretch standard morphological rules. Form (morphology)-based creativity is viewed as a cline [9] extending from F(ixed) to E(xtended) to X creativity – lexical formations that resist classification, lack reproducibility, and exhibit no clear derivational path [3; 22; 23; 31; 35; 43].

Meaning-based creativity, on the other hand, arises from creative use of linguo-cognitive operations – metaphor and metonymy [36; 38; 39].

Metonymy in Cognitive Linguistics is defined as a conceptual operation whereby one process or entity, ***the source***, provides mental access to another, ***the target***, to which it is closely related or even forms part of [37], or a "contiguous" entity [12, p. 347]. As conceptual units, source and target are distinguished from linguistic units – ***metomyms***. In a linguistically manifested metonymic relation, a source meaning is related to a target meaning by means of a linguistic form (a morpheme/word/phrase/sentence) [5, p. 164] called ***the vehicle*** [46]. For example, in *The White House issued a statement*, the source is THE WHITE HOUSE (a building or place), which provides mental access to the target, THE U.S. PRESIDENT OR ADMINISTRATION (the actual entity performing the action). The linguistic form *The White House* functions as the vehicle, through which the metonymic relationship between the place (source) and the institution or people associated with it (target) is expressed.

What goes on in the case of conceptual metonymy is a mapping within a single domain [37], which provides background knowledge for representing concepts. This background knowledge for some processes/entities involves an Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) – a structured scenario; a set of abstract mental representations that people have of "typical" situations in life, which are encyclopedic, flexible, and somewhat idiosyncratic [37]. ICMs play the same role as domains, while highlighting the not-so-simple relationship between a semantic domain and the external experience used by the mind to grasp it [10, p. 2]. For example, in *How did you get to the airport? – I waved down a taxi*, a metonymic operation is postulated on the "driving to a destination" ICM that includes the following elements: a) driving a vehicle to the destination; b) parking and getting out; c) getting to the destination. In English, it is possible to use the precondition (having a car), the embarkation (getting on a bus), and the center parts (driving a vehicle) to stand for the whole scenario. In the example cited, a more specific "taking a taxi" ICM is applied. "Taking a taxi" and "driving to a destination" ICMs are common low-level ICMs of a situational kind, since they involve the interaction between different entities with certain time and place [50].

Beyond situational ICMs, metonymy can also be grounded in experiential ICMs, reflecting the view that cognition is not merely embodied but situated within socio-cultural practice. Perception and action acquire meaningfulness – that is, they become structured, delimited, and value-laden – only through an individual's repeated engagement with culturally mediated activities, objects, and social interactions [32, p. 412].

Recent research on metonymy has taken a "social turn," expanding its scope beyond cognitive and embodied dimensions to consider it as a fundamentally social phenomenon [13; 21; 25; 37; 38; 44; 47; 55]. This shift has generated growing interest in the role

of metonymy in relation to social issues and communicative purposes such as identity construction, social positioning, and humour.

Chick lit, as a genre, is a rich site for the study of metonymy, particularly metonymy-based neologisms, as a social phenomenon – it's dialogic, socially embedded, and highly attuned to identity, gender performance, intimacy, and humour. Metonymy, as a social phenomenon through which we make sense of the world and form social relations, facilitates communication that is not only quick and efficient but also inherently creative. However, research into the creative use of metonymy remains limited [7; 36; 38]. This may be because metonymy does not entail the bringing together of unrelated conceptual domains [16], or perhaps because it has generally received less scholarly attention than metaphor [36, p. 105].

J. Littlemore and C. Tagg [38] and J. Littlemore [36] developed a taxonomy of meaning-based creative use of metonymy, while acknowledging that the classification is not exhaustive. The following six types of creative metonymic use have been identified: (1) the extension or elaboration of an established metonymic relationship; (2) extended use of the same underlying ICM; (3) the juxtaposition of two established metonymic relationships; (4) combination and/or juxtaposition with metaphor; (5) 'twice-true' metonymy; (6) possible personification. This framework focuses on metonymy at the phrase or clause level. It inspired research into how creativity activates mini-narratives/scenarios – a concept that builds on A. Musolff's [42] metaphor scenarios and L. Ritchie's [49] story metaphors [44, p. 361]. However, whether this taxonomy can be directly applicable to the study of the creative use of metonymy in neologisms remains to be seen. It may require a different analytical perspective – one that accounts for the way metonymic processes operate at the *lexical* level, shaping word-formation patterns, semantic extension, and conceptual innovation.

Task statement. The article aims to identify and analyse the metonymic mappings underlying the formation of creative neologisms in English language chick lit. Particular attention is devoted to the creative use of metonymy, exploring how conventional conceptual metonymies are extended and combined in unexpected ways to produce novel meanings that reflect the genre's humour, emotionality, identity construction, and social commentary. The **objectives** of the study are as follows: 1) to identify the metonymic mappings underlying formally creative neologisms in ELCL; 2) to single out the types of novel uses of metonymy underlying formally creative neologisms in ELCL; 3) to determine whether there is a correlation between form-based creativity and meaning (metonymy)-based creativity in ELCL neologisms. The **novelty** of this research lies in its integrative approach to lexical creativity, which systematically correlates form-based creativity with meaning-based (metonymy-driven) creativity in English language chick lit and refines the typology of creative uses of metonymy in communication [36; 38]. The **object** of the study is creative neologisms in ELCL whose meaning is grounded in metonymy. Its **subject** is the types of novel uses of metonymy that underlie the meaning of these neologisms. The **data** for this study come from a self-compiled corpus comprising 36 English language chick lit novels. The analysis identified 141 neologisms, all of which display form-based creativity by deviating from or elaborating established morphological patterns in English. Notably, 37% of these neologisms are motivated by underlying metonymic mappings, suggesting a strong correlation between formal innovation and meaning-based creativity.

The outline of research essentials. In this part of the article, I will demonstrate how the identified types of creative uses of metonymy are employed in the manufacture of creative neologisms in ELCL.

Introducing more detail into a conventional metonymic mapping.

I have this secret vocabulary for my husband. Words I've invented, just to describe him. I've never even told him about them: they just pop into my head, now and then. Like…

Tentery*: that taut, defensive way he behaves whenever the subject of my father comes up in the conversation (He thinks I don't notice)* [29, p. 1].

Formally, *tentery* lies at the most conservative end of creativity continuum. It fully complies with established morphological norms of the *-y* suffix usage meaning 'having a quality of something' (like in *messy*). The neologism readily alludes to the phrase *on the tenterhooks*. A tenter was a wooden frame – often resembling a line of fencing – used to stretch woolen or linen cloth as it dried, preventing it from shrinking. The tenterhooks were the metal hooks attached to the frame that held the fabric taut. Although tenters have long disappeared from everyday use, they were once a familiar sight in textile-producing regions such as northern England, where large "tenter-fields" surrounded wool mills. The metonymic expression *on tenterhooks*, meaning 'in a state of uneasiness or suspense; waiting nervously for something to happen' [53], arose from this physical process of stretching cloth tightly on the frame. Being

stretched, of course, leaves fabric very tense, as one's muscles are when one is feeling stressed or uneasy. And so to be "on tenterhooks" is to be similarly tense as one waits in suspense [53]. Originally, the phrase appeared as *on the tenters* in the play "Broken Herat" by the English West Country playwright John Ford in 1633, but by the late seventeenth century it evolved into the more precise *on the tenterhooks*. One of the earliest recorded uses of the latter form appears in "The General History of Europe" (1690). In its original meaning, *on the tenters* is grounded in the personification metaphor (CLOTHS is A PERSON) and the embodied metonymy where our felt bodily experiences of tightness are closely related via contiguity to larger psychological states, such as anxiety (cf.: *I felt my chest tighten*) or anticipation (cf.: *I had a tight knot in my stomach*).

The neologism *tentery* has the same conceptual grounding, introducing, however, a new detail into the metonymic mapping. The metadiscursive comment in (1) unveils the meaning of *tentery* as 'defensive way of behaviour.' This gives an important detail: being "stretched" does not only make one feel stressed or uneasy but also, voluntary or involuntary, make them want to "shrink back" defending themselves.

Redundant domain reduction.

(2) *Hah! I seized the moment, adopting a statesmanlike,* ***Obama-esque*** *tone. 'Yes. Now. I have something to say: Billy – and particularly Mabel – hitting is not allowed in our family* [15, p. 137–138].

Obama-esque can be described as a case of F-creativity. The adjective is formed in strict accordance with an established and highly productive morphological pattern in English, namely the suffix *-esque*, which is often attached to proper nouns to denote resemblance (cf. Kafkaesque, Chaplinesque). In this respect, Obama-esque fully complies with normative word-formation rules and does not introduce any structural deviation or morphological innovation. However, in (2), the expression *adopting a statesmanlike, Obama-esque tone* involves a layered metonymic structure. The phrase *statesmanlike tone* draws on a metonymic reduction of the domain STATESMANSHIP to its salient feature – rhetorical discipline and measured delivery. Speaking "like a statesman" conventionally evokes controlled, authoritative speech patterns associated with political figures.

H. Fielding's [15] addition of *Obama-esque*, however, introduces a redundant yet meaningful specification of this domain. At first glance, the new coinage appears unnecessary, since *statesmanlike* already conveys the relevant traits. Yet, its inclusion narrows the category to a single, culturally salient exemplar. Bridget's choice of Obama is most likely motivated by timing rather than deep political insight: he was in office when the events in [15] take place and was one of the most visible public figures of that period. Bridget, who is not portrayed as particularly interested in politics, is unlikely to be drawing on nuanced knowledge of Obama's distinctive qualities compared with other politicians. Rather, he is simply the most salient political figure available to her imagination. Even so, if any specific traits are invoked, they are Obama's characteristic eloquence and rhythmic speech, which have become emblematic of contemporary political oratory.

Conceptually, *Obama-esque* exemplifies what A. Barcelona [2] terms a "metonymic chain": CATEGORY (STATESMANSHIP) is reduced to one representative MEMBER – Obama – who stands for his SALIENT FEATURE – distinctive communicative style (controlled, authoritative speech).

The use of the neologism *Obama-esque* is particularly appropriate in this context. The narrator, Bridget Jones, humorously borrows Barack Obama's public persona to describe her own brief attempt at calm authority while handling a domestic quarrel with her small kids. The reference captures Bridget's habit of inflating ordinary moments into mini-dramas and shows how cultural figures can serve as ready-made templates for self-expression. The comic effect comes from the clear mismatch between tone and situation: Bridget, a stay-at-home mom of two kids is invoking the aura of a world leader to lend moral weight to a family rule.

Extended use of same underlying cognitive model.

(3) '*I have a message from Demetra,' I announce. 'She says could you possibly come and see her in about half an hour? Or maybe email instead? She's just a bit ... tied up.'*

Dyed up *crosses my mind, and I almost give a little snort of laughter* [28, p. 41].

The creativity here operates through pattern-adhering F-creativity: the coinage *dyed up* directly mirrors the established phrasal verb *be tied up* but substitutes the base verb with *dye* to reflect the immediate communicative context. Formally, the neologism respects the morphosyntactic structure of the phrasal verb *be tied up* while semantically re-anchoring it to the situation of "being occupied with dyeing one's hair."

Conceptually, the newly coined *dyed up* builds on an underlying ICM shared by the protagonist and Demetra. The protagonist, Katie, is Demetra's subordinate. She is asked to help her superior dye

her hair at work. While they are in the middle of this private, somewhat humiliating activity, a senior male colleague arrives unexpectedly, requesting to see Demetra. Embarrassed by her appearance, Demetra sends the protagonist to intercept him at the lift, instructing her to make an excuse for her absence. Following the instruction, Katie dutifully says, "She's just a bit … tied up," but, aware of the absurdity of the situation, adds wryly, "dyed up."

This newly coined phrasal verb functions as a compressed, ironic commentary on both the immediate context and the power dynamics it exposes. The shared ICM – "being tied up by dyeing hair at work" – enables the speaker to substitute *tied* for *dyed*, elliptically referring to what her boss is literally doing while maintaining the idiomatic structure. This innovation introduces humour by exposing the incongruity of the situation and expresses the protagonist's veiled frustration at being relegated to trivial, image-related tasks despite her professional qualifications.

Witness another example:

(4) *Samantha sighed again. "He calls you* ***Lewinsky-esque****"* [54].

In (4), *Lewinsky-esque* is a case of F-creativity, just like *Obama-esque*. It refers to the protagonist Cannie, whom her ex-boyfriend labels this way because she is a plus-size woman. On the surface, the expression draws on a PERSON for TRAIT metonymy, where the proper name *Lewinsky* stands for a salient physical characteristic. However, the association is far from purely descriptive.

The novel follows Cannie Shapiro, a 28-year-old journalist from Philadelphia, whose life unravels after she discovers a column in "Moxie" magazine written by her ex-boyfriend, Bruce, titled "Good in Bed." In this piece, Bruce reflects publicly on his past relationship with a "larger woman," ostensibly praising her sexual confidence but in reality, exposing intimate details of their private life. Against this backdrop, *Lewinsky-esque* becomes a much richer metonymy, grounded in the ICM of the "Lewinsky–Clinton scandal," which evokes the intertwined themes of public exposure, humiliation, and betrayal by a man. The metonymic reference thus extends from a superficial comment on physical appearance to encompass broader social and moral dimensions, transforming the name into a culturally loaded marker of female vulnerability under public scrutiny.

The juxtaposition of two established metonymic relationships.

Although interjections constitute a closed class, their conversion into verbs is not unusual in Present-Day English. Such formations, known as "interjection-based delocutive verbs" [8], are well attested in corpus data. For example: *It was a grim tale and the children were brought up on it, along with Mary Rose, who ummed and aahed in horror every time she heard it* [4]. This instance illustrates a SOUND for MENTAL/EMOTIONAL STATE metonymy, whereby vocalised sounds (*um, ah*) stand for the cognitive or affective states they typically express (hesitation, shock, or dismay). Given the frequency and conventionality of such forms, this type of metonymy can be regarded as an entrenched rather than a novel or extraordinary use.

By contrast, in ELCL we encounter converted interjections that go beyond such entrenched patterns, exhibiting creative use of metonymy. Consider the following example:

(5) *'Oh, sorry,' says Topher, shooting Nihal an* ***'uh-oh'*** *look.' We misunderstood. Did you come in here wanting to feel better?'* [27, p. 175].

In (5), the expression *uh-oh look* represents a creative juxtaposition of two established metonymic mappings. The interjection *uh-oh* conventionally realises a SOUND for MENTAL/EMOTIONAL STATE metonymy, signaling recognition of a mistake or the anticipation of trouble. In this context, however, it is transferred to the visual domain through a cross-sensory metonymy of SOUND for FACIAL-EXPRESSION, whereby the auditory cue is reinterpreted as a visible gesture. This *uh-oh look* then implicitly activates a secondary FACIAL EXPRESSION for EMOTION mapping. Mapping visible facial cues onto emotional states is conventional in English (cf.: *poker face, a worried glance, a dirty look*).

Another example (6) can be illustrative of this type of creative use of metonymy. In it, several women who are trying to lose weight attend a doctor's consultation. During the session, the doctor proposes an exercise: to imagine encountering a doughnut immediately after having eaten and to ask themselves whether they would still choose to eat it. He refers to this hypothetical doughnut as *the Platonic ideal of doughnut-ness*:

(6) *"I'd like to do an exercise with you," he said. He looked around the table. "How many of you ever eat when you're not hungry?"*

Dead silence. I closed my eyes. Emotional eating. I'd been through this lecture, too.

"How many of you eat breakfast, and then maybe you come to the office and there's a box of doughnuts and they look good and you'll have one just because they're there?"

More silence. "Dunkin' Donuts or Krispy Kremes?" I finally asked.

The doctor pursed his full lips. "I hadn't thought about it."

"Well, it makes a difference," I said.

"Dunkin' Donuts," he said.

"Chocolate? Jelly? Glazed that somebody from Accounting ripped in half, so there's only half a doughnut left?"

"Krispy Kremes are better," said Bonnie.

"Especially the warm ones," said Esther.

I licked my lips.

"The last time I had doughnuts," said Esther, "someone brought them to work, just like we're talking about, and I picked out one that looked like a Boston cream… you know, it had the chocolate on top?"

We nodded. We all probably knew how to recognize a Boston cream doughnut on sight.

"Then I bit into it," Esther continued, "and it was…" Her lips curled. "Lemon."

"Ick," said Bonnie. "I hate lemon!"

"Okay," said the doctor, laughing. "My point is, they could be the best doughnuts in the world. They could be ***the Platonic ideal of doughnut-ness****. But if you've already had breakfast, and you aren't really hungry, ideally, you should be able to walk right by."*

We thought about this for a minute. "As if," Lily finally said.

"Maybe you could try telling yourself that when you are really hungry, if what you're really hungry for is a doughnut, then you can go get one."

We thought again. "Nope," said Lily. "I'm still eating the free doughnuts."

"And how do you know what you're really hungry for?" asked Bonnie. "Like, me… I'm always hungry for the stuff I know I shouldn't be eating. But, like, give me a bag of baby carrots and I'm all, like, whatever" [54].

Doughnut-ness can be described as a case of pattern-bending F-creativity, as it partially departs from the canonical constraints governing English derivational morphology. Under normal circumstances, the suffix *-ness* attaches to adjectival bases to form abstract nouns denoting states or qualities (e.g. happiness, dryness, awkwardness). In doughnut-ness, however, the suffix is applied to a noun base (doughnut), thereby overriding a category constraint that typically blocks derivational processes from operating on bases of an "inappropriate" word class.

The concept of the "Platonic Ideal" is central to Plato's "Theory of Forms." According to Plato, the physical world that we see is not the real world. Instead, it is a shadow of the true world. The Forms are perfect and eternal representations of objects and concepts in the physical world. For example, a circle drawn on paper is imperfect and temporary, but its Form – the idea of the circle – is perfect and eternal.

However, the doctor's mention of the "Platonic ideal of doughnut-ness" isn't about the doughnut's perfect shape, but about the idea of sweetness itself – the doughnut standing for sugary treats in general. Empirical research has shown that the desire for sweet tastes declines less sharply after eating than for other tastes, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the "dessert mentality," suggesting that sweet foods remain tempting even when hunger is low [18]. Thus, following, R. Gibbs [17], the relation between sweetness and temptation is an embodied metonymy.

I thus argue that there is a chain of two overlapping metonymies underlying *doughnut-ness* in (6): the first one is SPECIFIC for GENERAL (DOUGHNUT for SWEET FOOD) and the second one is the embodied metonymy SWEET FOOD for TEMPTATION, which elaborates the first established metonymic relationship.

Combination of metaphor and metonymy in a novel way.

(7) *"It's* ***Mentionitis****," Jude was saying. – "What's that?" said Magda. – "Oh, you know, when someone's name keeps coming up all the time when it's not strictly relevant: "Rebecca says this" or "Rebecca's got a car like that"* [16].

Formally, the word *mentionitis* is built using the classical medical suffix *-itis*, which conventionally denotes inflammation or pathological conditions (e.g., bronchitis, tonsillitis, arthritis). In this respect, mentionitis adheres to an established and highly conventional word-formation pattern, positioning it toward the rule-governed end of the creativity continuum.

In (7), Jude diagnoses Daniel Cleaver with *mentionitis*, implying that he is infatuated with Rebecca. The coinage activates the conventional metaphor LOVE is A DISEASE, reflected in expressions such as *lovesick*, *feverish with love*, *heartache*, and *infected with desire*. The suffix *-itis* in *mentionitis* conventionally signals inflammation or disease of a body part through a SYMPTOM for DISEASE metonymy. While such metonymic mapping is well established in reference to physical or sexually transmitted conditions (e.g., *He's dripping* for *He has gonorrhea*), it is not conventional to use "mentioning someone" as a symptom of a disease.

Interestingly, *mentionitis* is not entirely new. The OED [45] records its earliest use in 1954, meaning

'a tendency to mention something for the sake of comprehensiveness or exhaustiveness, rather than relevance.' However, this earlier sense became obsolete. The word was reinvented and popularised by Helen Fielding in "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason" (1999), where it humorously denotes 'a tendency to mention the name of a person one is attracted to or infatuated with, regardless of its relevance to the conversation.' Magda's puzzled response, "What's that?" reflects the word's novelty in real-world English at the time. I therefore label *mentionitis* as an intrinsic neologism, coined within "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason" (1999) and subsequently diffused into wider usage. Since then, *mentionitis* has been attested in everyday discourse and popular media, demonstrating its successful diffusion beyond the literary context:

(8) *We barely admit to each other that we have bodily functions. It combats the kids and their constant* ***mentionitis*** *re: farting* (@Caissie, Twitter, 4 August, cited in [45]).

(9) *If he develops '****mentionitis****' about the woman who runs the spin class, then you may have a bigger problem* (*Daily Mail*, 1 July, cited in [45]).

In (7), the neologism *mentionitis* adds a layer of humour through pseudo-medicalisation, turning a familiar social habit into a mock-diagnostic condition. By describing a man's tendency to bring up a woman's name repeatedly as if it were a symptom of an ailment, Jude injects irony and comic exaggeration into the situation. It also serves social commentary, offering a witty shorthand for a recognisable phenomenon – the involuntary verbal leakage that betrays romantic interest. Importantly, in this context, it serves as a tool of characterisation and mild social critique: by coining *mentionitis* to describe a man, Jude positions herself as emotionally detached, observant, and slightly superior – someone who can analyse others' behaviour with amused insight rather than vulnerability.

Altering the valence of a metonymic mapping.

(10) *Can you believe it? How dramatic can you get? I know her husband is Italian, but I really don't think he's likely to kill the pair of them. He's a waiter, not a Mafia stooge, so what's he going to do?* <…>***Compliment*** *them into a coma? Run them over with the desert trolley?* [26, p.12].

The verb *compliment* in the expression *compliment them into a coma* aligns with the well-established noun-to-verb conversion in English. This subpattern involves a noun denoting an evaluative speech act being converted into a verb that describes the performance of the act. Classic examples include *insult → to insult*, *praise → to praise*, and *reproach → to reproach*.

As a verb, *compliment* typically carries a positive connotation – 'to say something nice or to praise' [34] – though it can occasionally be used ironically, as in *to be complimented by the police with a ticket* [53]. In a restaurant context, *complimenting* generally denotes an act of goodwill, politeness, or hospitality. In (10), however, *complimenting [to death]* is hyperbolically extended to denote excessive, relentless flattery, reversing the verb's usual positive evaluative polarity and creating a comic effect of verbal overkill. This example thus illustrates a creative alteration of the valence of an underlying metonymic mapping, in which a typically favourable action is reinterpreted through humorous semantic excess.

Conclusions. This article has shown that metonymy constitutes a major and conceptually rich source of neologism formation in English language chick lit. In it, I identified six types of creative use of metonymy, some corresponding to categories recognised in earlier studies [36; 38], and others not previously described. Newly observed types include introducing more detail into a conventional metonymic mapping (*tentery*), a phenomenon previously identified only for metaphor [39], redundant domain reduction (*Obama-esque*), and altering the valence of a metonymic mapping (*compliment* as a verb), also previously reported for metaphor [39]. These findings extend the taxonomy of metonymic creativity and demonstrate that ELCL provides a rich testing ground for exploring how speakers elaborate or manipulate conventional conceptual associations.

Interestingly, almost all ELCL neologisms that displayed meaning-based creativity grounded in creative use of metonymy are classified as F-creative. For instance, *Obama-esque*. Here, the creativity arises not from the morphological pattern itself (proper noun + *-esque*), but from the contextually motivated narrowing of the source domain. This creative use of metonymy serves an identity-constructive function, which is one of the core pragmatic roles of neologisms in chick lit. Also, is worth noting that many metonymy-based neologisms in ELCL are onomastic formations, built on personal names such as *Obama* or *Lewinsky*. The predominance of American onomastic references is not coincidental. It reflects the global cultural dominance of American media and celebrity discourse, which provides a shared reservoir of easily recognisable names and associations for both writers and readers. In this sense, American proper names function as transnational cultural signifiers: they are immediately intelligible to an international audience and evoke rich networks of meaning that transcend local contexts.

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Бєлова М. О. СМИСЛОВА (МЕТОНІМІЧНА) КРЕАТИВНІСТЬ В АНГЛОМОВНІЙ ЧІК-ЛІТ

У статті досліджується смислова креативність неологізмів в англомовній чік-літ із фокусом на ролі метонімії у формуванні нових лексичних одиниць. Хоча лексична креативність традиційно описується крізь призму морфологічних процесів, у цій розвідці акцент перенесено на когнітивно-семантичні механізми, що лежать в основі формально креативних словотворчих інновацій. Матеріалом дослідження слугує самостійно укладений корпус із 36 англомовних романів жанру чік-літ, у межах якого було виявлено 141 формально креативний неологізм. Аналіз показує, що 37 % цих одиниць мають метонімічну мотивацію, що свідчить про тісний зв'язок між формальною та смисловою креативністю. Теоретичною основою дослідження слугує типологія креативних уживань метонімії. У статті розглянуто такі типи метонімічної креативності, як розширення або деталізація усталеного метонімічного мапування, розширене використання тієї самої базової ідеалізованої когнітивної моделі, зіставлення двох усталених метонімічних мапувань, поєднання та/або зіставлення з метафорою, «подвійно істинна» метонімія. можлива персоніфікпція. У результаті доведено, що смислова креативність неологізмів у чік-літ не ґрунтується на повністю нових

метонімічних мапуваннях. Натомість вона виникає через творчу експлуатацію, переорієнтацію або комбінування усталених метонімій, які використовуються для досягнення гумористичного, оцінного та експресивного ефектів. Отримані результати засвідчують тілесно-досвідну природу метонімічної креативності та її вагому роль у конструюванні ідентичності персонажів, емоційної залученості читача й соціальної критики в жанрі чік-літ.

Ключові слова: *лінгвістична креативність, смислова креативність, метонімія, мапування, креативне уживання метонімії, чік-літ.*

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