# The Lexical-Semantic Field of *Coffee/Cafea*

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The lexical-semantic field of the terms referring to coffee comprises a significant number of lexemes and has particular dynamics. At present, because of the open cultural spaces, one can notice a significant increase in the number of terms belonging to this field which has quite a high mobility degree compared to other lexical-semantic fields. This is due to the fact that it is characterized by the freedom to create new names for the beverages containing coffee, the former making up complex structures. Linguistic and cultural borrowings also enrich this field permanently.

**1.** Any word has an individual lexical meaning and is also linked to other words, it can be similar or opposed to them semantically, stylistically, functionally, and, thus, becomes a part of some lexical-semantic, lexical-stylistic or derivational paradigms etc. From this point of view, synonyms represent one of the main associative groups which are included into a lexical-semantic field[1]. Lexical-semantic fields have a fundamental and complex importance in pointing out certain manners of representing 'the vision of the world'[2], since they are subsumed to cultural prototypes[3].

For instance, food and drink represent, together, means by which people can 'communicate'. The spiritual dimension (in a certain cultural context) of some universal dominant actions, such as food[4] and drink, represents a research topic which concerns the study of a society or culture, in any part of the world and during any historical period[5]. Throughout time, eating and drinking together with

[1] This conclusion is also shared by Silviu Berejan, who believes that a field can comprise different groups, namely: thematic, analogical, derivational, synonymic, etc.

[2] Cf. Bidu-Vrănceanu, 2008: 17.

[3] 'The importance of lexical fields to «world knowledge» is thus linked to their potential of providing «categorizations of reality», based on both common and differentiating properties, on the condition that the description of the sense should not go beyond the linguistic level or «include excessive non-sememised cognitive elements»' (Cf. Wotjak, 1998: 173-175, apud Bidu-Vrănceanu, 2008: 17).

[4] It seems that a famous aphorism belongs to the gastronome Jean Anthèlme Brillat-Savarin: 'What you eat is who you are'.

[5] For instance, in ancient Greece, food represented a way of communicating with the divinity, i.e. with gods, by means of the offerings. At that time, people were inventive



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other people (commensality) have become important activities. In this way, people interrelated and interacted: in cafés and other public houses, they used to talk freely (without necessarily mentioning their identity) or read newspapers.

**2.** The history of the bevarage called *cafea* (about which Talleyrand said that it hides 'a spirit': 'black as the devil, hot as hell, pure like an angel, sweet as love') is old enough[6]:

'It is said that, in the 8-th century, a Yemenite sheperd, called Kaldi, intrigued by the behavior of his goats, which were restless till dawn after eating the red beans of a plant, told the monks from the Chahodet Abbey what had happened. The abbot boiled the kernels of those fruits and, since it proved to be very stimulating, the beverage thus obtained was called *kawah* (meaning 'briskness', 'vitality'), a name that we encounter designating the coffee found in Parisian bistros (...)'[7].

Once coffee, called in Rom. *cafea*[8] (< Turk. *kahve*, nGr. *kafés*, Fr. *café*; cf. Eng. *coffee*, It.*caffè*, Sp. *café*, Germ. *Kaffee*), entered Europe, the beverage prepared from the beans of this plant, roasted and ground, or out of a substitute, created distinct customs. Gradually, it began to be served in special places, called *cafenele* (sg. *cafenea* < Turk. *kahvehane*, nGr. *kafenés*), i.e. public places[9], where coffee, or, by semantic extension, tea, drinks, cakes etc are served. In the past, the owner of a café was called *cafegiu* (< Turk. *kahveci*, cf. nGr. καφετζής, Bg. *kafedžija*). The same term designated 'the servant at a Prince's Court, whose duty was to serve coffee'; in modern times, *cafegiu* and *cafegioaică* (< *cafegiu* + suffix *-oaică*) designate 'those peole who enjoy drinking coffee (or who prepare it well)'.

In Romanian there is also a corresponding reflexive verb: *a se cafeli* (refl.), and also an expression, *la o cafea*, which refers to the moment or manner of drinking coffee – as part of a ceremony, or while chatting.

(maybe, determined by their survival instinct, but, also, by the pleasure of taste), keeping the most desirable/appetising of the foods they offered to gods for themselves.

[6] Around 2 000 B.C., in Ethiopia, coffee bushes grew wild.

[7] Braudeau, 2009: 23.

There are two other legends regarding the discovery of coffee (cf. Ştefănescu, 2011: 90-91). But, irrespective of the legends, the desire to drink coffee spread all over the world rather quickly.

[8] *Cafea*: Ar. *kahwa* (< *Kaffa*, a region in Ethiopia, the homeland of coffee) > Tuk. *kahve*, nGr. *kafés* (Graur, 1978, p. 34).

'Ever since 1570, *coffea arabica* beans were used as a medicine in Venice. (...) In 1683, a *bottega di caffè* opens in San Marco Square' (Braudeau, 2009: 24).

[9] Cf. *cafeşantan* (< Fr. *café chantant* [= *café concert*]) – café where variety shows are presented; the term *şantan* has an intensely depreciative connotation, meaning 'brothel').



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There are, therefore, many ways[10] of preparing coffee: for instance, *cafea espresso* is 'concentrated coffee, prepared with a special device'; *cafea-filtru/cafea la filtru* 'coffee prepared with the help of a filter'.

In Romanian, the syntagms *café-frappé* (cf. Eng. *frappé coffee*, *Greek frappé*) 'cold coffee with ice-cream, cream, and, optionally, alcohol' and *café-glacé* (cf. Eng. *coffee with ice cream*) derive from French, are not adapted graphically of phonetically, and designate certain cold beverages containing coffee. Another name of French origin for a coffee beverage is *mazagranul* (named after the town of *Mazagran* in Algeria) – a beverage prepared with black, strong coffee in which there are put small ice cubes.

*Cafeaua instant* (cf. Eng. *instant coffee/soluble coffee/coffee powder*)[11], prepared instantly, which does not require brewing (it can be drunk both hot and cold), is called *nescafé* (< Fr. *nescafé*, *nes*, cf. Sp. *nescafé*) – an acronym combining the name of the producing company *Nestlé* and *café*. The clipped term, *nes*[12], frequently used in familiar language, designates not only the very concentrated coffee powder, but also the drink made with this 'coffee', by its simple dissolving in water.

The category 'hot coffee' (which can also contain some alcoholic drink) includes *marghilománul/ marghilomână* (< the proper name Alexandru Marghiloman[13]), which designates the Turkish coffee brewed with rum or cognac. The term *capucino*[14], (< It.*cappuccino*), adapted graphically to Romanian,

[10] Michel Braudeau claims that there are 'five traditional ways of making coffee: boiling it *à la turque* (the extrafine ground coffee mixed with sugar is on the bottom of the coffeepot put on the heat source); the infusion (a piston pushes the dregs to the bottom of a glass recipient); filtration (water is poured over the ground coffee separated by a paper filter); percolation (the ground coffee, put in a filter between two superposed compartments, is penetrated upwards by the boiling water in the inferior compartment); percolation under pressure (the pressure of the water is amplified by the ten bar compressed air), which offers, at choice and fast, strong or mild espresso' (Braudeau, 2009: 71-72).

[11] Instant coffee was invented by the British chemist George C. Washington, in 1906; the product was launched on the market in 1909 (Cf. *Magazinul verde*, 4/2014: 56).

[12] After 1970, in Romania, the diminutive of the word was also used: *nesuleț* (Ciolan, 2013: 57).

[13] It is said that Alexandru Marghiloman (1854-1925), a famous politician, a leader of the Conservative Party, a jurist and one of the biggest landowners in the country, was a heavy coffee drinker. One day, when he was taking part in a hunting, asked for a coffee. Not being prepared for this, his attendant improvised and brew the coffee in cognac, instead of water. This is how *marghilomana* appeared (Cf. http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/marghilomana-cafeaua-rom-coniac/01.03.2014).

[14] Usually, a *cappuccino* is served in china cups, because, in this way, the required temperature is preserved longer than in the recipients made of glass, or any other material



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designates the beverage made with espresso coffee and milk froth (to which cognac or rum can be added), sprinkled with cocoa or cinnamon[15], having the color of the Capuchin Franciscan Friars habit. The obsolete term *capuţiner* (< Germ. *Kapuziner*)[16] means 'milk and coffee, containing more coffee than milk'.

The term *frappuccino*[17] (a blend formed from the words *frappé* and *cappuccino*), non-existent in Romanian dictionaries, designates the coffee mixed with ice cubes and different other ingredients (strawberries or chocolate etc.), being, usually, 'covered' with a cream 'top'.

Other (Italian) 'types' of coffee prepared with espresso and milk (similar to what is called *capucino*) are: *caffè macchiato* (sometimes called *espresso macchiato*) – it represents a small quantity of espresso coffee mixed with very little milk (added on top, similar to spots – cf. It. *macchiato* 'with spots', about coffee); *cortado* also designates a small quantity of espresso coffee mixed with a little milk; *caffè latte*[18] ( the short form *latte*) is a beverage containing a small quantity of espresso coffee mixed with a lot of milk, being served in a big cup or a high glass; *flat whit*e is a beverage specific to Australia, being prepared in a similar way to *capuccino* (or *caffè latte*). *Caffè corretto* (cf. Sp. *carajillo*) is a type of Italian coffee which also contains some liqueur.

*Irish coffe*[19] (cf. *caifé Gaelach*) is a hot 'cocktail' containing coffee, whisky, sugar and a cream topping. Other 'members' of the same 'family'are: *kioki*

(Cf. http://sfatulparintilor.ro/familie-parinti/pontul-zilei-familie-parinti/pontul-zilei-cum-sa-prepari-cappuccino-delicios-acasa/#ixzz2vO4VsVW7/01.03.2014).

[15] In Canada, the Tim Hortons coffeeshop chain also sells *iced cappuccino*, known by the customers as *Ice Caps*.

[16] The Turks, after their flight following the second siege of Vienna (1683), left a large quantity of coffee beans in sacks. The Austrians, unaccustomed to coffee, threw almost the whole quantity they found into the Danube. The remaining coffee was bought by a Pole who had lived in the East and knew the beverage prepared from those beans. He opened a café. Since he had no clients, he began to prepare it differently: he filtered it, added some milk and sugar, and also cream, which covered the whole cup, like the hood of a monk (Cf. http://www.dex.ro/capu%C8%9 Biner /01.03.2014).

[17] In Italian, there can also be a pun: *fra'/frà* is the short form of the addressing term *frate* 'brother', used to designate a position in the monastic hierarchy, and *cappuccino* (< *cappuccio* 'hood') is the monk who belongs to a branch of the Franciscan Order.

[18] Cf. Sp. *café con leche*, Fr. *café au lait*.

[19] Irish coffee is rather to the the taste of other peoples, not to the Irish themselves. The latter would gladly give up the soft ingredient, i.e. the cream, in favor of a stronger ingredient, whiskey. *Irish coffee* was invented in 1940, by Joseph Sheridan, the cook at Foynes hydroport (which later became Shannon International Airport). Sheridan was the one who added whiskey to coffee, to warm a group of trembling American passengers. They asked the cook if they had been served Brazilian coffee, and the answer was 'it's Irish coffee' (Cf. http://www.cevabun.ro/irish-coffee/01.03.2014).



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(instead of whisky, a combination of *kahlua* liqueur and *brandy* is used) and *Café Brulot* (contains coffee, orange liqueur, cinnamon, sugar, clove and lemon peel)[20].

*Black coffee* is the coffee prepared without sugar. *Salt coffee* (the sugar was partly replaced by salt)[21] is a beverage prepared from classical coffee, a little sweetened, on top of which some coffee foam containing a little salt is poured, and ground cocoa is sprinkled on the foam.

Thai-style coffee has a special aroma given by spices: coriander and cardamom; it is obligatorily served with pounded ice. Other types of beverages based on coffee, to be found in pubs, bars, coffeeshops, etc are: *Café Zürich*, *California Driver*, *Swiss Coffee*[22], *Kopi Luwak*[23], etc.

*Şvarţul* (< Germ. *schwarzer Kaffee*, cf. Germ. *schwarz* 'black') is a term rarely used (a synonym of filter-coffee/*cafea-filtru*) and designates a hot drink, made from roasted and ground coffee beans, filtered and sweetened.

The obsolete syntagm *cafea gingirlie* (< Turk. *ğiğili*) designates the Turkish coffee, well brewed and with foam.

Besides all these drinks made with coffee, there are also others having the taste and flavour of coffee, but obtained from coffee substitutes. Thus, *Inka* is a beverage prepared from natural nutritious ingredients: roasted cereals (barley, wheat) and chicory; these plants are dried and roasted, being turned into a fine powder, easily and quickly soluble, having the taste and aroma similar to those of coffee[24]. In its turn, *chicory* by itself can be a substitute of coffee.

In Romania, before 1989 (the last years of the communist regime), natural coffee was inexistent on the market, because of the limited imports, and instead of it it, what was sold/drunk was chick-pea coffee, *cafeaua din năut*, officially called substitute coffee, *cafea cu înlocuitori*. Since it contained only 20% coffee, and the other ingredients were chick-pea and oats, it was called, ironically and humorously, *nechezol*, a verbal derivative from the verb *a necheza* 'to neigh'+ the suffix *-ol* (usually, used to designate chemical compounds). The term *nechezol*

[20] Cf. http://www.descopera.ro/cultura/928970-enciclopedia-moderna-a-boabei-de-cafea/01.03.2014.

[21] The inventor of this drink is Hung Hsiao-yu, from Taiwan, who said that the idea occurred to him accidentally

(Cf. http://www.ziare.com/articole/cafea+cu+sare/01.03.2014)

[22] Cf. Ştefănescu, 2011: 103, 120.

[23] *Kopi Luwak* is the most expensive coffee in the world. The coffee beans are gathered from the excrements of some animals belonging to the family of squirrels. These animals feed themselves on these ripe coffee beans that they cannot completely digest.

[24] In 1971, the Polish specialists found the necessary ingredients and the technology to produce this type of soluble coffee, appreciated not only in Poland, but also in many other places (Cf. http://gastronomie.ele.ro/sfaturi/ Periplu-si-Savoare_--d6/Bauturi_--s17/Ce-este-INKA-_--a502.html/01.03.2014).



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reflects 'the mood' of a person who would like to drink a coffee, but the desired drink is perceived like forage for horses[25].

The person preparing the coffee-based beverages is called *barista* (< It. *barista*, cf. Eng. *bartender*).

**3.** The result of cultivating the coffee bush was the 'potion' called *kawah* 'vitality, force' (today's *coffee*), initially used by monks and other members of the Church[26], who, thanks to it, could remain awake for a long time.

*Espresso coffee* or *filter coffee* is the ingredient of various special beverages (mixtures) named after the manner of preparation (using the coffee pot or the filter), the ingredients used (milk, cream, ice cubes, cinnamon), the name where they were invented (*Irish*, *Swiss*, *Zürich*) or the name of the inventor (*marghiloman/ă*).

In Romanian, many terms which designate coffee-based beverages have been borrowed from other languages (*café-frappé*, *caffè macchiato*), and others are very old, rarely used at present (*cafea gingirile*, *şvarţ*, *capuţiner*). *Nechezol* is the term used with a comical connotation in the 1980s, during the communist regime. For substitute coffee, Romanian either borrowed some terms (*Inka*), or uses the name of the plant from which the beverage is made (*cicoare*).

Consequently, the Romanian lexical-semantic subfield having as central element *coffee* is in full development, since many terms have entered the language recently, because of the diversification of the methods of preparing coffee, of the increasing number of consumers and of the various coffee-based beverages.

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[25] Cf. http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nechezol/01.03.2014.

[26] At a certain moment, the Vatican forbade it because it was considered the beverage of Moslims; it was also forbidden in the Ottoman Empire, in the 16-th century, because of its effects on the nervous system.



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