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Some Remarks on Cross-Linguistic Equivalence of Polish, English and Italian Pragmatic Idioms with Faunal Constituents

Abstract. The aim of the present paper is to discuss Polish, English and Italian idiomatic faunal expressions of pragmatic character with a view to creating the typology of cross-linguistic equivalents of the units at issue. Routine formulae, ranging from word-like structures to sentence-like structures, excerpted from various lexicographic works, both mono- and bilingual, constitute three corpora of idioms, all of which contain animal terms, either generic, such as *animal* or *fish*, or names of given species, for instance *cat*. All the units analyzed perform a number of pragmatic functions, which are discussed in detail, so that it would be possible to determine whether, and if yes, to which extent, the pragmatic functions of faunal interpersonal idioms overlap in Polish, English and Italian.

Key words: *faunal, idiom, pragmatic, equivalent, contrastive linguistics*

1. Introduction

Currently the cultural component is regarded as a vital element of the majority of studies on phraseology. One area of interest, particularly significant in a contrastive perspective, is animal phraseology, in which the cultural perception of given species is reflected. Faunal idioms have been widely studied from the point of view of linguistic picture of the world (Chlebda 2007), in some cases with a view to presenting discussions of pictures of animals in European languages (Rakkusan 2000) as well as in such distant languages as German and Japanese (Ueda 2004). The stereotypes of animals reflected in phraseological units of two or more languages have been compared, for instance, the picture of an owl in Polish, English, German and Italian (Szerszunowicz 2003), the phraseological depiction of the fox in Polish, English and Italian (Szerszunowicz 2004a).

In fact, so far less attention has been given to units of pragmatic character which contain faunal constituents. The aim of the study, which is to be treated as one of preliminary character, is to shed light on pragmatic idioms containing animal names which are used in Polish, English and Italian. The units excerpted from mono- and bilingual lexicographic sources are analyzed with a view to developing a typology of cross-linguistic equivalents of the units at issue.¹ Three corpora of pragmatic units containing faunal constituents have been collected.² The Polish corpus is composed of 31 units, the English contains 29 items and the Italian one as many as 43 idioms of pragmatic character.

2. Pragmatic idioms

Pragmatic idioms, also called routine formulae or communicative phrases,³ are conventionalized word combinations which are used in recurrent situations by users of a given language. Pragmatic idioms constitute a group of ready-made, situation-dependent units used in a number of communication contexts.

As Piirainen states (2008: 215), they are tools of communication and their most important function is the constitution of speech acts, so they are "part of a larger complex of stereotyped action patterns and social interaction". Therefore, pragmatic phraseological units constitute a very important subgroup from the point of view of communication, since the knowledge of interpersonal idioms is indispensable for a language user to function in a given culture. Pragmatic phraseology reflects scripts which function in a given culture, so a contrastive analysis of the units at issue also enables an insight into differences in particular cultures.⁴

¹ In fact, faunal phraseology is underrepresented in collections of communicative phrases, such as, for instance, *Function in English* by Jon Blundell, Jonathan Higgins and Nigel Middlemiss (1993), *A Thematic Guide to English Interactional Gambits* by Grzegorz A. Kleparski and Anna M. Pietrzykowska (2010) or *A Dictionary of Language Functions* by Zofia Kopestyńska (1991).

² General bilingual dictionaries have to be consulted, since there are relatively few Polish-English dictionaries of idioms, with many more English-Polish ones. There are also only a few Italian-Polish phraseological dictionaries (WIW, FI, LIW, IW). No Polish-Italian phraseological dictionary has been compiled yet. Italian-English and English-Italian works, both lexicographic and phraseographic, have also been consulted (IEI, G, CID).

³ Other terms used are: *sememic idioms*, *conversational routines*, *social formulae*, *conversational formulae*, *functional idioms*, *politeness formulae*, *verbal stereotypes* (cf. Pastor 1997: 171).

⁴ On differences conditioned by cultural scripts in proverbs see: Rozumko (2009).

Moreover, it should be emphasized that in the case of foreign language learners developing the ability to use pragmatic idioms is a prerequisite to having a good command of the language studied because of their role in the process of communication. Moreover, routine formulae are inextricably linked with conversational styles; therefore, the ability to use them properly is necessary for proper intercultural communication (Kramsch 1998: 46–49). Furthermore, one should not underestimate the importance of research on pragmatic idioms for translation. To facilitate both, a proper phraseographic description of the units in question is necessary. That is why contrastive research studies on various aspects of pragmatic idioms are so important both in terms of theory and practical applications.⁵

2.1. Pragmatic idioms as a subgroup of phraseological units

As Piirainen states (2008: 215), fixed word combinations cover a large continuum of phrasemes. A number of classifications of phraseologisms have been developed, in the majority of which pragmatic units tend to be distinguished. Chitra Fernando presents the following characteristics of interpersonal idioms: they are “overtly or covertly marked for interaction”; they are discourse-oriented expressions; they are a means of structuring conversation; they may be fixed lexically invariant forms; they are metaphorical and imaginal in different way than ideational idioms; they tend to carry small amount of information; they are often restricted to certain routinized situations” (1996: 153–155; 160). It should be emphasized that pragmatic idioms can be fully idiomatic, partly idiomatic or non-idiomatic (Lüger 2007: 452–453). In fact, the units analyzed constitute a very specific group of units in terms of classification and description, since

strings classified as **formulae** are problematic because of their discursal function: they are specialized pragmatically. They generally conform to lexicogrammatical conventions of English, although a few are effectively truncated utterances. They are generally compositional semantically, although some similes and proverbs are obscure or metaphorical. (Moon 1998: 21–22)

As to division of phraseological units of pragmatic character, Moon (1998: 22) distinguishes four subtypes, the first of which is simple formula, described as “routine compositional string that nevertheless have some special discursal function or are iterative or emphatic, as well as syntagmatically

⁵ An example of such research study is the analysis of politeness in Polish and English (Jakubowska 1999).

fixed". A good example of a simple formula is *you know what*. The next subtype, sayings, comprises quotations, catchphrases and truisms, for instance, *home, James, and don't spare the horses*. There are two more subtypes, i.e. proverbs, "traditional maxim with deontic function", and similes, institutionalized comparisons.

Pragmatic idiomatic units can be divided into subgroups, for instance, Ross distinguishes social formulae, gambits and expressive formulae. Coulmas (1981) presents a typology comprising five classes: discourse structuring formulae, politeness formulae, metacommunicative formulae, emotional attitude formulae and delaying formulae, while Gläser (1986) distinguishes as many as fifteen groups of pragmatic fixed units. Balzer und Piñel (2010) present a detailed typology composed of six main groups: expressive formulas (7 types), commissive formulas (2), directive formulas (8), queastive formulas (2), assertive/representative formulas (5), verdictive formulas (4).

It should be stressed that pragmatic idioms perform various functions. Lüger (2007: 450) distinguishes four main functions of the units at issue, i.e. phatic function, performed by greetings, farewells, thanks, good luck wishes, etc.; expressive function, performed by apologies, invectives, curses, etc.; directive function, performed by formulae of encouragement, warnings, etc.; cognitive function, performed by formulae of praising, etc.

Pragmatic idioms are used both in informal and formal varieties of languages (cf. Fernando 1996: 20).⁶ However, faunal pragmatic phraseology, likewise the vast majority of units containing animal terms in general, is typical of informal spoken language (Szerszunowicz 2004b). Numerous expressions registered in dictionaries are marked *colloquial*, it is worth adding that in some cases also as *vulgar*.

Although boundaries of pragmatic idioms are not clear, with greetings, congratulations etc. constituting the core element, it can be assumed that "only a few routine formulae are figurative in the sense that elements of culture can be found in their source domain" (Pirainen 2008: 215). In a contrastive perspective it is interesting to analyze units with faunal constituents, elements rich in symbolic meaning, and to observe how they function within the units as well as to compare them with their cross-linguistic equivalents.

⁶ It is worth stressing that interpersonal idioms are particularly numerous in spoken discourse (cf. Inoue 2007).

2.2. Faunal constituents of pragmatic idioms

In analyses of phraseological thematic groups the constituents which researchers tend to focus on are body parts, colours, proper names and animal terms. It should be emphasized that thematic groups are composed of units of various motivations. All the above mentioned constituents are rich in connotations, which can be exploited in phraseological units. For instance, animal symbolism motivated some pragmatic idioms in the languages analyzed.

A good example in case is the Italian phraseologism *in bocca al lupo!* (lit. into the mouth of the wolf; 'Good luck!'). The connotation of the name *lupo* ('wolf'), 'wolf is a dangerous animal', is actualized in the unit. The origins of the unit can be explained by the ancient concept that, as Piirainen puts it (2008: 215), "an unconcealed wish of good luck brings misfortune and one can outwit the fate by wishing something bad".⁷ In turn, the response required, *crepi!* (lit. may he die!), also of figurative character, expresses a wish regarding the wolf. It is an example of the use of the magic function of language, i.e. the use of the words should cause the death of the wolf.

Many pragmatic idiom containing faunal constituents convey vivid imagery, which gives them specific markedness. Phrases such as the English unit *that cat won't jump* or the Polish *zdechł pies* (lit. the dog has died) evoke a picture, based on concrete imagery. The units at issue tend to be informal, in some cases even classified as vulgar. They are emotionally marked; therefore, they perform a very important role in the process of communication.

Some constituents are used in a particular unit because of different reasons. Factors of form complications, such as rhyming, alliteration, onomatopoeia etc., can determine the presence of given faunal constituents in particular phraseological units. For instance, the Polish unit *albo rybka, albo pipka* (lit. either a fish, or a pussy⁸), meaning 'one should decide on something; one cannot have two things at the same time' (USJP, III: 1099),⁹ contains two rhym-

⁷ Cf. pragmatic units without faunal constituents, e.g. Ger. *Hals- und Beinbruch!* (lit. broken neck and leg!; 'good luck!); Pol. *skręć/złam kark!* (lit. twist/break your neck!; 'Good luck!'), *złam/połam ręce (i nogi)!* (lit. break/arms (and legs); 'good luck!').

⁸ The Polish word *pipa* has as many as three meanings registered in lexicographic works, i.e. 'woman's private parts'; 'the woman as an object of sexual interest'; 'a clumsy, helpless person'; 'a thin pipe with a tap, by means of which beer is poured' (USJP, III: 150).

⁹ The variant of the unit at issue is *albo rybki, albo akwarium* (lit. either fishes, or the aquarium; USJP, III: 1099).

ing words, i.e. *rybka – pipka*. Another example is the Polish phraseologism *karaluchy do poduchy, (a szczypawki do zabawki)* used as a good night wish with humorous markedness. In Italian the question frequently asked by children *Che devo fare?* (lit. What shall I do?) rhymes with the answer *Piglia una mosca e falla ballare* (lit. Catch a fly and make it dance). All the examples listed show how factors of complication determine the presence of faunal constituents if given units.

Another interesting example of exploiting a faunal term as a constituent of a pragmatic unit is observed in the Polish euphemistic unit *o kur zapiał* (lit. oh the cockerel has crowed). The unit discussed, which has a characteristic intonation contour, is used instead of a Polish vulgar word *kurwa* (lit. whore ‘fuck’) and it is motivated by the phonetic similarity of the curse *kurwa* and the faunal term *kur*. It is worth adding that the word *kur* is marked as old-fashioned lexicographic works (e.g. USJP, II: 364).¹⁰ The English lexical equivalent, which exploits the same mechanism, could be, for instance, *shuuuuuugar*.

It is worth observing that in some cases blending of motivations occurs. For instance, the English pragmatic idiom *Are you a man or a mouse?*, used as an encouragement, exploits alliteration and rhythm as well as the stereotype of the mouse perceived as a timid, small and weak animal¹¹ contrasted with the stereotype of a man viewed as a strong being, occupying the top place on the hierarchy; thus, reflecting the attitude called aristocratism by Zdzisław Kempf (1985). The example discussed shows how factors of complication blend with the cultural motivation of the unit at issue.

Moreover, some pragmatic units containing faunal constituents are borrowings, i.e. loan phrases from other languages. For example, the Polish pragmatic unit of verdictive character *tu leży pies pogrzebany* (lit. there is the dog buried) is a calque of the German idiom *da liegt der Hund begraben*.¹² It should be added that the German idiom at issue does not function as a borrowing either in English or Italian.

¹⁰ The name *kur* appears as a constituent of other phraseological units in which it is not used because of its phonetic value, e.g. *czerwony kur* (lit. red cockerel) ‘fire’.

¹¹ Such a stereotype of the mouse is reflected in the English phraseological units *as timid as a mouse*.

¹² The German unit *da liegt der Hund begraben* is mentioned in a number of reference books as base for the Polish calque. Cf. (WSFJP: 528).

3. Cross-linguistic equivalents of pragmatic units with faunal constituents

The units are classified into groups according to the degree of equivalence with a special focus on the status of faunal term. The first group is composed of total / full equivalents, the second group contains partial equivalents which are those showing differences in structures and constituents, but having the same meaning. Within the latter group two subgroups are distinguished, i.e. units containing a different animal term from the one which is part of the source language unit and units without a faunal constituent. The third one is composed of non-phraseological equivalents, either single words performing the same function or a sentence-like structure of loose character.

Before the typology of units is presented, it should be stressed that a given pragmatic idiom containing an animal term may have more than one equivalent, both phraseological and non-phraseological. Moreover, it has to be taken into consideration that pragmatic units containing animal terms tend to be emotionally loaded and they very often convey imagery. Therefore, substituting such fossilized combinations with the target language phraseological units of non-pictorial character or non-phraseological units results in loss of expressiveness in translation. The equivalence of the units at issue is heavily context-dependent.

3.1. Full equivalents

The first group is made of full equivalents (also called total equivalents, i.e. units which are identical or very similar in their structures, constituents, meaning, stylistic markedness, etc.),¹³ which, in fact, should be called quasi-equivalents (Dobrowol'skij 200: 802; Fiedler 2007: 118; Szerszunowicz 2009). This term seems to be a more suitable one, being more precise than full equivalent, as one can assume it is highly improbable to find units whose parameters do not differ in two or more languages compared if a detailed analysis is conducted. In fact, there are hardly any items belonging to the subgroup at issue among the units analyzed. One of them is the pair

¹³ It is worth pointing out that a series of bilingual dictionaries containing units having close equivalents have been compiled for a number of languages, i.e. Polish-English (WR), Polish-Italian (MAW), Polish-German (WR), Polish-Bulgarian (MW), Polish-French (KZ), Polish-Spanish (RLL), Polish-Russian (CH). In fact, the vast majority of the units included in the dictionaries are idioms.

composed of the Italian idiom *Hai visto il lupo?* and the English one *Have you seen the wolf?*

It is surprising, since numerous faunal units have total equivalents in the languages compared. For instance, multiaspectual correspondence is found in figurative units motivated by the stereotype of farm animals, such as the donkey, the pig, and the cow as well as synanthropic animal, like the dog and the cat (cf. Szerszunowicz 2005). The names of the animals mentioned appear in structures realizing the schemata A/AN (ADJECTIVE) + ANIMAL NAME. The units are carriers of negative evaluation, which results from attributing bad characteristics, such as stupidity, to the animals. Numerous units with faunal constituents which have full equivalents in the languages analyzed as well as in other European and some non-European languages are of biblical or mythological origins or come from masterpieces of literature.

3.2. Partial equivalents

The subgroup at issue contains partial equivalents which are those showing differences in structures and constituents, but have the same meaning. Within the groups three subgroups are distinguished, i.e. units containing an identical faunal name, units whose constituents are different animal terms from the one which is part of the source language unit and equivalents without a faunal constituent.

3.2.1. Idiomatic equivalents containing a faunal constituent

Some faunal pragmatic idioms have cross-linguistic equivalents which also contain animal terms. There are equivalents whose faunal element is identical to the one in the source language unit as well as those whose animal constituent is different from the one in the source language unit.

The occurrence of faunal constituents in both the source language pragmatic idiom and its cross-linguistic equivalent is very important in terms of imagery conveyed by the units compared. In some cases the animal term is substituted with another one, belonging to the same class, and, irrespective of the substitution of the faunal element, the pictorial image of the units compared is similar. Other equivalents exploit completely different imagery than in the target language and they do not contain similar faunal elements.

3.2.1.1. Idiomatic equivalents containing an identical or similar faunal constituent

The first subgroup is composed of units which have identical or a very similar meaning and contain the same faunal constituent in the languages

analyzed. In fact, likewise in the case of the previous group, hardly any units analyzed meet the criteria to be qualified.

An example of such equivalents is the pair composed of the English phrase *A little bird told me* and the Polish unit *wróble o tym na dachu ćwierkają* (lit. sparrows are chirping about it on the roof), which differ semantically, yet, can be used in similar contexts.

3.2.1.2. Idiomatic equivalents containing different faunal constituents

Some pragmatic units of idiomatic character have cross-linguistic equivalents which contain different animal terms. Such units do not have the same structure and tend to convey different imagery, which is of great importance in terms of imagery.

To illustrate this type of relation between the source language unit and the target language unit, the idioms used to emphasize the essence of the problem in Polish and Italian will be analyzed. The Polish unit, a calque from German, *tu leży pies pogrzebany* has the Italian equivalent *qui casca l'asino!* (Q: 34; CA: 417), meaning literally 'the donkey falls here'. The units are given as equivalents in bilingual lexicographic works (e.g. WSWP I: 445).

To sum up, it should be stressed that such units are close equivalents unless word play occurs in a given text or the faunal constituent is the key component of the picture in the text, which is of importance for some reason. For instance, an accompanying illustration can refer to the faunal constituent, giving the possibility of activating the literal meaning.

3.2.3. Idiomatic equivalents without faunal constituents

Numerous Polish, English and Italian pragmatic idioms with animal terms have cross-linguistic fixed equivalents performing the same function which do not contain any faunal constituents. However, the target language units are of phraseological character, which is important in terms of cross-linguistic equivalence. It should be stressed that the subgroup is composed of various units, which show different degrees of equivalence in a contrastive perspective.

3.2.3.1. Figurative idiomatic equivalents without faunal constituents

A number of pragmatic idiomatic expressions with faunal constituents have cross-linguistic equivalents which are fixed figurative phrases conveying the same meaning, which do not contain any animal terms. Such equivalents tend to differ greatly in components, structure and imagery; yet, they perform the same function in the languages compared, which means that they can

be treated as functional equivalents. Stylistic markedness of corresponding units can be either similar or different and the latter relation may affect significantly their cross-linguistic equivalence.

As to pragmatic idioms, whose equivalents do not contain faunal constituents, a good example in case is the English idiom *Has the cat got your tongue?* whose Polish equivalent *Czy masz język zawiązany na kokardę?* (lit. have you a bow tied on your tongue?) exploits completely different imagery. Irrespective of the differences, the function of the two units is the same and they can be considered functional equivalents. Another English idiom, used to comfort a person left by a partner, *there are (plenty) more (good) fish in the sea* (CID: 144; ODI: 109; ODEI: 545) has an idiomatic Polish equivalent *tego kwiatu pół świata* (half a world of such flowers). In fact, one more unit can be treated as a functional equivalent of the English idiom. The phrase at issue is *nie jeden chłopiec na świecie, nie jedna róża w bukiecie* (lit. [there is] not [only] one boy in the world, [there is] not [only] one rose in the bunch WKPP: 422). In fact, it should be stressed that it can be used with reference to a boy who left the partner, not about a girl.

In some cases there is a rich variety of equivalents of a given source unit in the target language, which differ in imagery. For instance, numerous pragmatic phraseological units are connected with drinking alcohol, in the Polish culture there are phrases used to invite guests to have a drink (cf. Drabik 2010: 195). Among well-known Polish toasts, which are not so numerous (Jeźdrzejko 2007: 261), some belong to faunal phraseology, for instance the unit *ryba/ rybka lubi pływać* (lit. a little fish, a fish likes swimming). According to *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego*, the phrase used to invite somebody to have an alcohol drink while eating a fish dish (USJP, III: 191).¹⁴

The unit reflects the fact that in Poland one of typical dishes accompanied by alcohol drinks is fish, herring in particular. In fact, the unit tends to be treated as a toast irrespective of what kind of dish served. Both in English and Italian the Polish unit has phraseological equivalents, which differ in imagery. It is worth pointing to the fact that neither English or Italian phraseographic sources register full equivalents of the Polish unit at issue.

Moreover, it is worth adding that bilingual Polish-English and Polish-Italian dictionaries do not contain the unit *ryba/ rybka lubi pływać* (e.g. WSPA, USPW). In Polish phraseology there are two more faunal units which can be used as toast: *trzeba zalać robaka* (lit. one should pour over the worm) and

¹⁴ A presentation of ritual phrases connected with drinking alcohol in used in novels by Tadeusz Konwicki and their French equivalents in translations of his books is presented by Elżbieta Skibińska (2008).

raz kozie śmierć (lit. the goat dies once). In fact, both of them can be used as verbal expressions as well as pragmatic units.

However, in bilingual dictionaries they are registered as units of the former type without any mention of the latter use: Pol. *zalewać robaka* (lit. to pour over the worm), Eng. *to drown one's sorrow* (WSPA: 954); It. *bere l'alcol* (lit. to drink alcohol) (USPW: 1126); Pol. *raz kozie śmierć* (lit. the goat dies once), Eng. *you (can) only die once, right?*, It. *bere o affogare* (lit. to drink or to drown) (USPW: 456). The analysis shows that the bilingual sources consulted do not present the actual potential of the two units analysed.

One more problem regarding the subgroup of partial equivalents of faunal pragmatic units is their stylistic markedness. It should be stressed that in some cases significant stylistic differences in corresponding units can occur. In fact, the vast majority of all units analyzed belong to colloquial varieties of the languages compared. Yet, their markedness may still differ, for example, the Italian phrase *in boca al lupo* (lit. in mouth of the wolf) has a quasi-synonyms in the Italian language. One of them, *in culo alla balena* (lit. into the ass of a whale), requiring the answer *speriamo che non caghi* (lit. let's hope it does not defecate), is classified as vulgar. Another unit, *in groppa al riccio* (lit. on a hedgehog's back), followed by the phrase *con le mutande di ghisa* (lit. wearing underpants of cast iron), is colloquial. The two faunal informal good luck wishes definitely differ from the Polish corresponding unit *złam kark*, which is also of informal character; yet, it is not vulgar.

To sum up, it should be stressed that the idiomatic character of the cross-linguistic equivalent is by no means to be treated as the decisive factor of considering the unit an adequate counterpart of the source language phraseological unit. An in-depth analysis of the actual use of a given unit is necessary in order to find the most proper cross-linguistic equivalent, which may be, for instance, non-idiomatic one, since the idiomatic phrase may have to be excluded because of differences in vital parameters, like stylistic value.

3.2.3.2. Non-figurative idiomatic equivalents without faunal constituents

It is worth observing that some pragmatic units containing faunal constituents have equivalents which are fixed and they perform the same function as the source language units, but they are of non-figurative character. The main difference between the source language units and their cross-linguistic counterparts is the lack of imagery of the latter, which affects their equivalence.

Moreover, additional factors may affect the equivalence of the source language unit and the target language equivalent. For example, the Polish unit *Już po ptakach* (lit. Already after birds) has an English phraseological

equivalent registered in *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski*. The dictionary consulted contains a phraseological equivalent, *it's over and done with* (WSAP: 928); it should be noted that no Polish-Italian dictionary contain the unit *już po ptakach* (PSPW; USPW). The example shows the image component or its lack affect the equivalents of the two units analyzed.

Moreover, the Polish unit in question has a variant *Już po ptokach*, in which the standard Polish faunal component is substituted with a Silesian counterpart of the word. The presence of the dialectal form gives the phrase a special stylistic value. Therefore, the difference between the Polish unit and its equivalent is affected by the neutral character of the English phrase, contrasted with the substandard element of the Polish idiom.

The analysis of the examples leads to the conclusion that from the functional point of view such units are – or more precisely may be – equivalent in the cross-linguistic perspective. However, the difference in the stylistic markedness of the target language unit and their cross-linguistic equivalent may be significant.

3.3. Non-idiomatic equivalents

The analysis shows that some faunal pragmatic units do not have cross-linguistic equivalents of idiomatic character. Two subgroups can be distinguished, the first of which is composed of single-word equivalents, while the other comprises loose word combinations carrying the same meaning as the idiom in the source language.

3.3.1. Single-word equivalents

A number of phraseological units, including pragmatic idioms with faunal constituents, have single-word equivalents.¹⁵ In fact, this subgroup of equivalents is composed of various types of cross-linguistic counterparts of phraseological units (cf. Szerszunowicz 2008), which differ significantly in the degree of cross-linguistic equivalence. In some cases word equivalents can exploit a similar imagery as the one evoked by pictorial idioms. However, the biggest group of single word equivalents are ones of non-pictorial character.

¹⁵ Having a single-word equivalent does not exclude having the equivalent composed of a loose combination of words. For instance, the idioms described have also other equivalents in the Polish language, i.e. Eng. *in a pig's eye!* – Pol. *już to widzę!* (lit. I just see it); It. *in bocca al lupo!* – Pol. *Złam kark!* (lit. break your neck).

For example, the English unit *in a pig's eye* has a few Polish equivalents included in lexicographic works, one of which is a single-word equivalent *Akurat!* Similarly, the Italian idiom *in bocca al lupo!* (lit. into the mouth of the wolf!), which requires the response *crepi il lupo!* (lit. May the wolf die!) have single-word equivalents in the Polish language (*Powodzenia!* lit. good luck), to which one answers *dziękuję* (lit. thank you). In fact, the answer *nie dziękuję* (lit. [I do] not thank you) is also common in informal Polish.¹⁶

In fact, the change is greater in case of stylistically marked units such as the Polish idiom *wsio ryba*, whose English single-word equivalent can be the word *whatever*. The Polish idiom contains the word *wsio*, which is a loan from Russian ('everything, all'). The presence of the component *wsio* gives the unit a special stylistic quality, which is not found in the English equivalent. Similarly, the Polish equivalent of the English faunal idiom *painting the cat*, used as the answer to the question *What are you doing?* the person addressed finds annoying (LNSA: 224), can be neutral *nic* ('nothing') or *nico* (nothing with 'o' added), which is stylistically marked.

As mentioned before, one should take into consideration the fact that it is possible to find also corresponding multiword combinations of non-idiomatic character, which in some contexts could be suitable equivalents of the idioms analyzed. For example, the Polish idiom *wsio ryba* may be translated as *it doesn't matter* which or *whatever*, depending on the context. There are many examples of the phenomenon discussed and it should be added that in some cases the cross-linguistic equivalent can be either a single word or a multiword construct, the base of which is the single word equivalent. For instance, the word *whatever* can be amplified by additional elements, as a result of which a string is created (e.g. *whatever you want*).

The group of units is specific, as a single word substitutes a word combination. The fact may be of importance in many cases. The differences in stylistics are also observed, since in the majority of cases single words tend to be less emotionally marked; in other words, they tend to be neutral in comparison with faunal pragmatic idioms.

3.3.2. Word combinations as equivalents

Some pragmatic idioms have equivalents which are word combinations of loose character. Such units do not have corresponding fixed expressions in the target language. Therefore, the function the pragmatic idioms perform in the source language is to be realized in the target language by means of

¹⁶ The element of negation is inserted into the phrase so as not to jinx it.

a descriptive character. The choice of words used to form the equivalent is context-dependent and can vary significantly.

For instance, the English unit *who's she – the cat's mother?* can be used in two situations, i.e. “as a mild reproof, especially to a child for impolite use of the pronoun *she* when a person's name would have been more well-mannered” (ODI: 258); “expressing the speaker's belief that a woman or a girl has a high opinion of herself or is putting on airs” (ODI: 258). In fact, the Polish equivalents are not idiomatic (respectively: *Nie mówi się ona.* lit. One does not say *she*; *Wydaje się jej, że jest nie wiadomo kim.* lit. It seems to her she is nobody knows who).

The Polish pragmatic idiom *A to pies?* (lit. And is this a dog? ‘and it counts for nothing?’ WSF: 355), exploiting the connotative potential of the name *pies* (‘dog’), has non-phraseological equivalents in the languages compared (Eng. *And it counts for nothing?*; It. *E questo non è importante?*). The Polish units contain the constituent *pies* connoting inferiority etc.; thus, it implies that the thing it refers to has been treated as a matter of little importance.

Definitely in the case of loose word combinations the loss of stylistic value occurs. The units discussed above are idiomatic and they convey a surplus of meaning, which the equivalents of loose character do not possess. In the process of translation compensation techniques are to be implemented, so that the loss could be compensated in the text.

3.4. Pseudo-equivalents of faunal pragmatic units

A false-friend, an apparent friend or a pseudo-equivalent is “a word that has the same origin and general appearance as a word in another language, so that learners mistakenly assume that both have the same meaning and uses” (McArthur 1996: 366). In fact, the term *false friend* is used mostly with reference to lexical units, far less frequently to phraseological ones (Daszczyńska 1987; Orłoś 2003; Szerszunowicz 2006). The tendency to focus on lexical unit is also reflected in lexico- and phraseography: a number of dictionaries of lexical false friends have been compiled, but relatively few of them include phrases.¹⁷

False friends are also found among pragmatic phraseological units, for instance, in English the faunal pragmatic idiom *has the cat got your tongue?* is used when a person (who tends to be a child) is too shy or afraid to say

¹⁷ For example, in the case of Polish, the following dictionaries of lexical false friends have been compiled: Polish-Bulgarian (SAPB), Polish-Russian (SWPB), German-Polish (MST), Czech-Polish (O), Polish-English and English-Polish (R, EPD), Polish-Croatian (SAPCH). In fact, as few as two of them contain some phraseological units (EPD, O).

something. The question is used in order to encourage the person to speak. In the Italian language the pragmatic idiom *ti è morto il gatto?* (lit. has your cat died?) is used in a different situation, mainly, the question is asked when a person looks sad, is in a bad mood or is dressed in dark colours.

Irrespective of differences in imagery, due to the occurrence of the same faunal constituent (Eng. *the cat* / It. *il gatto*), these two pragmatic idioms can be associated by non-native language users with the idioms they know in their mother tongue. As a consequence, the idioms at issue can be decoded wrongly and misinterpreted.

Similarly, the Polish unit *tu leży pies pogrzebany* (lit. the dog is buried here), a loan unit from the German language, meaning 'this is the essence of the problem', has an Italian pseudo-equivalent which contains the constituent *gatta* ('cat') (It. *(qui) gatta ci cova!* lit. the cat is hiding here; Q: 224; P: 163; CA: 417). The meaning of the Italian unit is 'there is something suspicious about it, something hidden, things are not really as they are presented'. The similarity of structure as well as constituents may result in language learners' treating the units compared as synonyms.

In additions, it is worth mentioning that another Italian unit *qui casca l'asino!* (lit. the donkey falls here) included in the phraseographic works consulted (Q: 34; CA: 417), the meaning of which is similar to that of *(qui) gatta ci cova!*, is also a phraseological false friend of the Polish unit *tu leży pies pogrzebany*.

To conclude, it should be stressed that the group of phraseological pseudo-equivalents of pragmatic units with faunal constituents is composed of a relatively small number of units. Yet, this subgroup of equivalents deserves special attention, since they are particularly important from the point of view of foreign language teaching and bilingual phraseography. Determining pragmatic false friends renders it possible to produce a proper phraseographic description of the units at issue, drawing the dictionary users' attention to their apparent similarity.

4. Cross-linguistic equivalence of phraseographic description in phraseography

As it has already been pointed out, faunal phraseographic units tend to be underrepresented in bilingual lexico- and phraseographic sources, which has far-reaching consequences, which are especially important in terms of translation and foreign language teaching. The analysis conducted shows that many commonly used phrases are not included in the dictionaries. In

fact, such units should be included in phraseographic dictionary and the description of the phrases at issue ought to enable dictionary users to learn how to use a given phrase properly, providing them with sufficient information on the use of a given unit.¹⁸

The pragmatic phrase is to be explained with detailed information regarding its use, with clearly presented function of the entry unit. Cross-linguistic equivalents – in some cases there may be only one equivalent or no counterpart of phraseological character at all – should be given along with examples, preferably authentic ones, illustrating the actual use of the entry phrase. Stylistic markers are of great importance for the phraseographic description of pragmatic phraseological units, too. The entry should also contain the information regarding use restrictions of a given phrase. Moreover, it is advisable to contain the cultural component in the entry (cf. Rodger 2006). Its inclusion facilitates the development of the dictionary users' intercultural competence.

Such a presentation of pragmatic units containing faunal character provides the user with sufficient information on the use of a given phrase, which are not given in a standard bilingual Polish-English or Polish-Italian dictionary. In such lexicographic works the description of the unit, if registered, is limited to providing the cross-linguistic equivalent, usually only one. General dictionaries do not provide enough space for a detailed description of the units at issue, which is necessary in a contrastive perspective.

Therefore, pragmatically oriented bilingual or multilingual works have different potential in terms of phraseographic description. The fact that they contain only one type of phraseological units, which constitute a selection of phraseologisms of a given language, renders it possible to provide more detailed phraseographic information in each entry.¹⁹ This approach to bilingual description will be illustrated with proposals of entries of a few selected faunal pragmatic units.

4.1. Case one: *albo rybki, albo akwarium*

The first unit chosen as an example entry is *albo rybki, albo akwarium* (lit. Either fishes, or the aquarium). The phrase in question is included in monolingual dictionaries of the Polish language as well as phraseological

¹⁸ The theoretical principles of the compilation of a Italian-Polish phraseological dictionary are presented in the work by Aleksandra Pronińska (2005).

¹⁹ Another type of units frequently chosen as material for dictionaries is similes. There are monolingual dictionaries of similes (SP), bilingual (LIA) as well as multilingual (SČFI).

dictionaries (USJP, III: 1099; WSFJ: 678). However, it not registered in the bilingual lexico- and phraseographic works consulted (WSPA; SFAPPA), which justifies the choice of the unit at issue as an example of trilingual entry.

Albo rybki, albo akwarium (lit. Either fishes, or the aquarium) used to encourage somebody to take a choice, suggesting one cannot have two things at the same time.

E.G.: Nie możemy realizować obu projektów. Musisz się zdecydować: albo rybki, albo akwarium.

informal, colloquial

VAR.: Albo rybka, albo pipka

ENGLISH: You can't have your cake and eat it.

You can't have it both ways.

ITALIAN: Non si puo avere una bottiglia piena e la moglie ubriaca.

In fact, in the other two languages, i.e. English and Italian, equivalent phrases are of proverbial character. It is worth mentioning that in some other European languages proverbs conveying similar meaning also exist. They convey different imagery, for instance, in French the function is performed by the proverb *On ne peut pas avoir le beurre et l'argent du beurre* (lit. One cannot have the butter and the money for the butter). The German equivalent of the units discussed is the proverb *Man kann nicht den Fünfer und das Brötchen haben* (lit. One cannot have the fiver and the bun).²⁰

4.2. Case two: *Ryba/Rybka lubi pływać*

As mentioned before, the unit *ryba/rybka lubi pływać* is not included in bilingual lexico- and phraseographic works II: 191).²¹ Therefore, it is worth presenting the entry of the unit in question.

Rybka lubi pływać (lit. Fish likes swimming) the phrase used to invite somebody to have an alcohol drink while eating a fish dish

E.G.: No, śmiało. Wypijmy po jednym. Rybka lubi pływać.

VAR.: Ryba lubi pływać.

informal, colloquial

→ trzeba zalać robaka (lit. one should pour over the worm)

→ raz kozie śmierć (lit. the goat dies ones)

ENGLISH: Cheers! To your health!

²⁰ The Swiss German variation of the phrase is *Me chan nöd Föifer und s Weggli*.

²¹ A presentation of ritual phrases connected with drinking alcohol in used in novels by Tadeusz Konwicki and their French equivalents in translations of his books is presented by Elżbieta Skibińska (2008).

ITALIAN: Chin chin! Salute e figli maschi!

CULTURAL INFORMATION: The unit, known from the antiquity (Lat. *Pisces natate doces, Post pisces vinum misces*) reflects the fact that fish goes well with alcohol. In Poland one of typical dishes accompanied by vodka is herring. In fact, in many cases the unit tends to be treated as a toast irrespective of what kind of dish served.

The idiom presented belongs to the sphere of idiomacity which is culture-bound,²² so differences in eating and drinking customs influence fixed phrases of a given language in many aspects (Pinnavaia 2010). In many cases they may also convey evaluation, which can be culture-specific (cf. Szerszunowicz 2010). Pragmatic phraseology connected with eating and drinking is definitely the area, in which the cultural element can be traced, which is of particular interest in a contrastive perspective.

5. Conclusion

The analysis conducted shows that faunal pragmatic idioms constitute a group of units which are very interesting in a contrastive perspective. The group analyzed is composed of units of different motivations. As mentioned before, pragmatic idioms encompass a number of units performing various functions, which means that they are very important in the process of communication. Significant differences have been observed in Polish, English and Italian units. In fact, very few units have quasi-equivalent in either one or two languages compared, with a bigger number of partial equivalents, especially those conveying different imagery. The analysis showed that the vast majority of units analyzed are not included in bilingual lexico- and phraseographic works.

Taking into consideration the importance of the pragmatic unit in communication, the idioms discussed have to be included in such works. It should be stressed that their phraseographic description, in both mono- and bilingual works, facilitates the process of translation and foreign language learning. The proper description is necessary so that one could learn how to use a given unit properly. The analysis of Polish, English and Italian pragmatic units containing faunal constituents shows that they pose difficulty in translation. Pragmatic idioms are of great importance for communication; thus, from the point of view of foreign language teaching learners need to

²² On cultural aspects of lexicographic descriptions see Luque Durán (2007); Pamies Bertrán (2007); Luque Durán, Luque Nadal (2010); Pamies Bertrán et al. (2010).

know them and be able to use them in order to have a good command of the language. To sum up, it should be emphasized that an in-depth analysis of faunal pragmatic idioms is necessary for proper phraseographic description, which has very important implications for translation, foreign language teaching and lexicography.

Abbreviations

Cz. – Czech	Ger. – German	lit. – literally
Eng. – English	It. – Italian	Pol. – Polish

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Uwagi o międzyjęzykowej ekwiwalencji polskich, angielskich i włoskich idiomów pragmatycznych z komponentami faunicznymi

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza polskich, angielskich i włoskich faunicznych idiomów, które mają charakter pragmatyczny, i przedstawienie typologii ekwiwalentów badanych jednostek. Związki, wyekscerpowane z różnorodnych opracowań leksyko-graficznych, zarówno jedno-, jak i dwujęzycznych, tworzą trzy korpusy jednostek. Analizowane frazeologizmy używane są w różnych funkcjach, które autorka omawia w ujęciu kontrastywnym, co pozwala na wskazanie podobieństw i różnic pomiędzy poszczególnymi językami. W artykule przedstawiono ponadto propozycję opisu frazograficznego wybranych związków.