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## New Lexical and Phraseological Faunal Units in the Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw from a Cross-Linguistic Polish-English Perspective\*

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The aim of the present paper is to discuss the new Polish faunal lexical and phraseological units from a cross-linguistic perspective. The research corpus is compiled on the basis of *Obserwatorium Językowe Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego* (the Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw) – an online source containing the items which are in use and which have not been included in dictionaries so far. The English equivalents allocated for these units are analysed and divided into four groups: quasi-absolute, partial, parallel and zero counterparts.

Keywords: animal terms; contrastive analysis; cross-linguistic equivalents; figurative language; phraseology

## 1. Introduction

The present paper is a descriptive study of new Polish animal words and multiword expressions. They have been chosen as the object of the study, since these items are important from a linguistic and cultural perspective (Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen, 2005). Many animal terms have

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developed conventional figurative meanings included in lexicographic entries. In phraseology, faunal idioms tend to be the second most numerous, following those containing names of body parts. From a contrastive perspective, animal terms and phrases deserve scholarly attention because of their linguistic specificity and cultural embedment.

The names of animals have been studied from various perspectives by many linguists who discussed Polish faunal lexis and phraseology in comparison with other languages. For instance, Vidović Bolt (2005, 2007, 2011, 2020) analyses Croatian and Polish fixed expressions with animal names in the contrastive, lexicographic, and translational approach. In turn, Szerszunowicz (2011) discusses Polish, English, and Italian faunal lexis and phraseology, Szczęk (2003) and Wysoczański (Szczęk, Wysoczański, 2004) investigate Polish and German phraseological units with zoolexemes, while Rodziewicz (2007) examines comparative animal phrasemes in Polish, Russian and German. The studies tend to focus on lexicographically attested units, with less attention paid to novel faunal items and their cross-linguistic equivalents.

#### 1.1. Aims

The general aim of the present paper is to discuss new Polish animal lexis and phraseological units, included in Obserwatorium Językowe Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (lit. Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw; hereinafter OJUW) with a focus on their cross-linguistic equivalents, with the Polish-English directionality. All the Polish items share two properties: they can be classified as faunal terms or expressions and they are neologisms with no standard systematic lexicographically attested English equivalent.

The Polish language is compared with English for the following reason: English functions as a modern lingua franca, so it is generally assumed that English influences Polish, which is attested by numerous borrowings

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Phraseology is understood in the broad sense, i.e. the fixedness is the common denominator for all kinds of reproducible language units: collocations, idioms proper, pragmatic phrasemes, proverbs, sayings, etc. (cf. Chlebda, 2003).

of English origin.<sup>2</sup> The comparison of these two languages allows for determining to which extent this tendency is observed in the new animal units used in modern Polish.

The study of Polish faunal items excerpted from OJUW involves allocating their English counterparts, which has not been done in a systematic way so far, with the view to classifying them into several groups of cross-linguistic equivalents, according to the degree of interlingual correspondence.

## 1.2. Research corpus

Many factors, including the acceleration of technological development, contribute to an increasing influx of new language items. The process of compiling and editing traditional dictionaries is complex and time-consuming. Thus, online resources of lexicographic character, being able to process new units within a short period, offer new possibilities for lexicographers. One of such online projects is OJUW. Its aim is to register and describe new lexical items such as borrowings, derivative neologisms, semantic neologisms and phraseological neologisms, in an online dictionary. In order to be included, a unit should meet the following criteria: appear in the Polish language after 2000; not be registered in any of the greatest dictionaries of Polish or foreign words; to be in use or to be gaining popularity in the standard variety. The items, now more than 1000, are provided by Internet users or taken from the editorial board's collection started in 2004.

OJUW contains various animal terms and multiword expressions with faunal constituents.<sup>3</sup> All animal items, both figurative and non-figurative,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The influence of English is observed in many languages (Furiassi, Pulcini, Rodriguez Gonzales, 2012). In this context, it is worth mentioning the Global Anglicism Database project (GLAD). English borrowings in Polish have been studied extensively by Witalisz (2007, 2015, 2016) and Mańczak-Wohlfeld (1994, 2006) who, apart from contributing papers on different aspects on English loans, edited a dictionary of English borrowings in Polish (SZA, 2010). It should be emphasized that in the recent decades, borrowings from English have been discussed by many Polish scholars, e.g. Markowski, Sękowska, Zabawa, Mycawka, Moch, Urban.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> All definitions of animal units are given after OJUW. In some cases, they have been abridged.

were included in the research corpus of 68 Polish units which contains: animal names, their derivatives or phrases with such terms, for instance:  $\dot{z}\dot{o}lwik$  (a diminutive form of  $\dot{z}\dot{o}lw$  'tortoise') 'a gesture, usually a welcome greeting, in which one person touches the other's fist with their own,' szcześliwa~kura~ (lit. 'a happy hen') 'a free range hen' (47 units); lexemes related to animals, for example: paszomat~ 'feed dispenser' -pasza~ 'feed' (7); words that may be associated with animal names, e.g.  $mal\dot{z}-$  an informal term meaning 'husband' derived from the formal word  $mal\dot{z}onek~$  'husband' by clipping is associated with the homonymic lexeme  $mal\dot{z}$  'sea or freshwater mollusk' (11); lexical items with prefixes related to the world of fauna, for instance: ichti(o)- (e.g. ichti(o)wegetarianizm~ 'a way of nourishing excluding meat, but allowing fish') and kyno- (e.g. kynoterapia~ 'therapy based on activities and playing with a dog, dog therapy') (3).

## 1.3. Methodological framework

The notion of equivalence is of paramount importance for modern studies, either literature- or language-oriented.<sup>4</sup> The theoretical approach to cross-linguistic equivalence is developed mostly by translation scholars (Nida, Taber, 1982; Nida, 1995; Baker, 1992; Koller, 1995), nowadays research is also conducted in the framework of cognitive linguistics (Tabakowska, 1993, 1995), which offers promising prospects of further elaboration in this field. It should be underscored that cross-linguistic equivalence can be viewed as correspondence at the level of translation and at the level of the system (systematic equivalence) (cf. Coseriu, 1997; MEP, 69; Toury, 1995; Dobrovol'skij, 2011).

Being of systematic character, the present study is conducted within the framework of contrastive analyses (cf. Colson, 2008). The traditional set of parameters used in a contrastive analysis is enriched with an additional criterion, i.e. the presence or absence of animal reference. As neologisms not included in lexicographic works, the units do not have recognised cross-linguistic equivalents, which involves choosing a word or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>An outline of various concepts of equivalence is presented in *Mala encyklopedia* przekładoznawstwa (MEP, 68–75).

phrase meeting the criteria of an interlingual counterpart. The prospective equivalents have been searched for in traditional dictionaries of the English language (WSPA), online dictionaries (BAB; UD) and various websites, for instance those selling products named by the analysed units.

A contrastive analysis determines the relation of the source language unit and its target language counterpart in terms of their systematic correspondence. For establishing the counterparts, the semantic criterion is the major factor. Another parameter of comparison is grammatical properties of the compared units. It is followed by the stylistic value carried by the prospective interlingual equivalents. The imagery and pragmatic characteristics are also important in terms of cross-linguistic correspondence (Szerszunowicz, 2008). The study allows for distinguishing several kinds of equivalents which are discussed and exemplified in respective subchapters.

The term *quasi-absolute equivalent* is preferred over the beforehand used *absolute* or *full equivalents*, since it is improbable that the units compare have identical features (Fiedler, 2007; Szerszunowicz, 2009). It can be assumed that they are bound to differ in some parameters, for example, frequency. Therefore, to sum up, it can be said although undeniably the degree of their equivalence is the highest in the typology proposed, the differences will still occur providing that many parameters are scrutinised. It is assumed that due to the influence of English, this group will contain lexical and phraseological borrowings, both loans proper and calques (EJO, 284).

Broadly speaking, partial equivalents are pairs of source language units and target language units which exhibit a high degree of cross-linguistic correspondence with subtle differences allowed. Such discrepancies mainly occur in the composition of lexical constituents and/or structure. It should be stressed that the imagery of the units compared is identical or very similar, i.e. no major changes in the figurative aspect are allowed (cf. Szerszunowicz, 2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>From a cross-linguistic perspective, another parameter of paramount importance is the frequency of the two units compared. The values obtained for a source language item and its prospective equivalents may differ greatly, thus affecting the relations of correspondence. In the present study, the analysis of the parameter has not been conducted because of the recent character of the Polish animal terms and phrasemes. Due to such chronological markedness, the occurrence of Polish faunal terms and expressions can be expected to be much lower than that of their English equivalents which have been used for longer time.

The research corpus also includes examples of parallel equivalents, i.e. source language units with semantically identical target language equivalents which differ in other parameters, major and minor alike, including the combination of lexical constituents and structure. Such equivalents are distinguished in particular for figurative words and polylexical expressions since the differences in lexical composition results in the change of imagery. The last group is composed of the zero equivalents, i.e. source language units which do not have corresponding items in the target language (Szerszunowicz, 2016). They result from the existence of a linguistic or cultural lacuna in the compared systems. Their counterparts are either lexical items or loose combinations of words.

# 2. A contrastive analysis of Polish animal units in OJUW and their English equivalents

The analysis conducted for the purpose of the present study allows for classifying the units into four groups. The classification is of scalar character: quasi-absolute equivalents are the most similar units; they are followed by partial counterparts which also exhibit a high degree of congruency. The next group, parallel items, is composed of the source language units and their target language equivalents expressing the same meanings but differing formally and/or in terms of other properties, for instance, stylistic value. The units whose equivalents are hard to find fall into the last category, i.e. lacunary items.

## 2.1. Quasi-absolute equivalents

The first group of cross-linguistic equivalents comprises 37 Polish words and phrases which have close equivalents in the English language, i.e. units that have identical semantics, highly similar grammatical properties and contain an identical faunal component.

## 2.1.1. English borrowings

In the analysed research material, many units belonging to this category are direct borrowings from English, for example: Pol. *cocooning* 'lifestyle consisting in spending most time at home' – Eng. *cocooning*, Pol. *bitchface / bitch face / biczfejs* 'unpleasant facial expression, especially in a woman' – Eng. *bitchface*, Pol. *copycat* 'an imitator' – Eng. *copycat*, Pol. *cat-friendly* 'friendly for cats' – Eng. *cat-friendly*.

In several cases, the borrowings are adapted into the Polish word formation system, as it is the case with the hybrid unit *camelowy* (adj. 'camel') and its English equivalent *camel*. Furthermore, the addition of the Polish suffix *-owy* may result in a more precise meaning of the borrowing: the word *petsitterka* 'a female petsitter' indicates that the person described is a female, whereas the English word *petsitter* is a dual gender item.

Apart from direct borrowings, the corpus includes English calques, both lexical, like Pol. *monopletwa* 'monofin' – Eng. *monofin*, and phraseological, as attested by Pol. *dzień konia* 'horse's day' – Eng. *horse's day*, Pol. *wyścig słoni* 'elephant race' – Eng. *elephant race*, Pol. *wyprowadzacz psów* 'dog walker' – Eng. *dog walker*. Another example includes the information technology Polish term *styl wielbłądzi* (lit. camel style) 'camel case,' whose English equivalents are manifold: *Camel Case*, *camel Case*, and *camel caps*, and a more formal compound *medial capitals* which can be classified as a parallel equivalent.

Very few English borrowings have Polish neologistic synonyms. Such relation is observed in the case of the following pairs: Pol. *birdwatcher* 'an amateur of birdwatching' – Pol. *ptasiarz* ('birdwatcher;' a word derived from the Polish term *ptak* 'bird') – Eng. *birdwatcher*, Pol. *birdwatching* 'watching birds in their natural environment as a hobby; ornithological tourism' – Pol. *ptasiarstwo* 'birdwatching' – Eng. *birdwatching*.

To sum up, it can be observed that generally speaking, the above discussed items differ in their markedness: Polish units are tinted with foreignness and novelty, while their English counterparts tend to lack these two qualities. Nevertheless, they can be treated as pairs of units exhibiting a very high degree of cross-linguistic equivalents.

## 2.1.2. Other quasi-absolute equivalents

Among the analysed units, there are also items expressing the same meaning which to a great extent resemble lexically and structurally their English equivalents. It allows for classifying them as quasi-absolute equivalents. In the research corpus, these units tend to employ elements of Greek or Latin origin, for instance, an international suffix (e.g. derivatives with *-ism*, *-holic*) rather than be English loans. Yet, it cannot be excluded that they might be secondary borrowings incorporated into Polish via English.

This cross-linguistic relation can be observed in the case of the terms alpakoterapia 'alpaka therapy' and alpakoterapeuta 'alpaka therapist' and their English equivalents, respectively alpaka therapy and alpaka therapist. The words terapia and therapy can be traced back to the Latin terapīa and the Greek  $\theta \varepsilon \rho \alpha \pi \varepsilon i \alpha$  'service, medical treatment.' Another example is the pair composed of the Polish formation pingwinarium 'pingwinarium' and its English equivalent pinguinarium: both are created by means of the suffix -arium forming nouns denoting a place.

A foreign suffix can be added to either Polish or English stems, which is exemplified by the pairs of the following words: Pol. kot 'cat' – kotoholizm 'cataholism,' Eng. cat – cataholism. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that the Polish terms kotoholik 'a male who loves cats' and kotoholiczka 'female who loves cats' have only one English equivalent which is cataholic 'person who loves cats.' The Polish lexical items carry the information concerning the sex of the cat lover, so they are semantically more specific. From a cross-linguistic perspective, they still bear a high degree of correspondence.

## 2.2. Partial equivalents

In the research corpus, there are 9 pairs meeting the criteria of partial equivalents. It should be emphasized that in several cases given pairs of equivalents may be either treated as quasi-equivalents or partial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>The word *therapy* can be qualified as an internationalism, since it appears in a similar form in various languages, for instance: Fr. *thérapie*, Germ. *die Therapie*, It. *la terapia*, Port. *la terapia*, Sp. *la terapia*, Swed. *terapi*. An analogous list can be compiled for the noun *therapist*.

equivalents, depending on the criteria adopted. Therefore, quantitatively, these two groups should be counted together as close equivalents.

#### 2.2.1. Units with identical animal constituents

The first subgroup of partial counterparts is composed of Polish and English units which contain an identical faunal constituent. Yet, when compared, these equivalents show differences in certain properties, for instance, in the structure. This relation can be illustrated with the example of *kaczkomat* 'a duck food dispenser' whose English equivalent is a multiword construction *duck food dispenser*. In turn, the Polish verb *kangurować* (lit. to kangaroo), meaning 'to hold a newborn baby on one's stomach or on one's chest so that its skin would directly adhere to the skin of the person keeping it,' has a compound equivalent of *to kangaroo* (*mother*) *care*.<sup>7</sup>

Special attention should be paid to the lexical items which have numerous equivalents with different wording. For instance, as already mentioned, in Polish the word *antyptak* (lit. antibird) meaning 'spikes mounted on window sills, cornices etc. preventing birds from staying in places protected in such a way; a silhouette of a bird of prey placed on windows and screens to scare away other birds' has several English counterparts with various animal references, both identical to the Polish ones, like *bird spikes*, *bird deterrent spikes*, *bird control spikes*, and different ones: *anti-roosting spikes*, *pigeon spikes*, *roost modification*. A similar relation of cross-linguistic asymmetry is observed for the Polish noun *antyszczekacz* 'an electronic device which enables teaching the dog not to bark persistently' whose all English systematic equivalents contain the component *bark: bark deterrent*, *anti-dog barking device*, *bark control device*, *anti-bark deterrent*.

Irrespective of identical faunal components, the pairs of equivalent units may exhibit differences conditioned by various factors. The noun *piesel* (*pies* 'dog' + the suffix -el) and its English equivalent constitute an illustrative example. The Polish word can be described as a creatively coined counterpart of the English noun *dohg* used in a series of Internet memes with a shiba-inu. In Polish, the lexeme in question, which pertains to youth jargon, has two meanings: the first one is the name of the Internet meme hero, the other is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In English, the expression *kangaroo mother care* is abbreviated to *KMC*.

a humorous term for a dog. In Polish, the noun *kotel* has also been coined as an informal name for a cat (cf. 2.4.). As a result of such word formation, these two lexemes constitute a pair of jocular pet terms which are conspicuous because of the suffix *-el* added to the animal name.

#### 2.2.2. Units with different animal constituents

The second subgroup of partial equivalents contains examples in which the animal term is not the same in both languages. From the perspective of imagery, it is of great importance to which degree the two faunal names differ. Providing that they both come from the same class or name similar animals, the two pictures evoked by the units are fairly alike. Yet, if the two zoolexemes differ greatly, it will result in lowering the degree of equivalence – such items will be classified as parallel counterparts.

In the corpus of animal lexis and phraseology in OJUW, an example of the former relation occurs: the Polish informal word *glonojad* 'algae eater' is used as a depreciative term referring to females who have had their lips excessively enlarged. Its English equivalent is the expression *fish lips*: the animal constituent *fish* is a hyperonym of the noun *glonojad*. Another equivalent is *trout pout*, a phrase which contains a name of a species. It is worth adding that it employs rhyme and rhythm. In Australian English, the unit *slug lips* is used. Undeniably, the image of an algae eater is particularly vivid, yet it should be admitted that even though the references are not identical, the Polish and English units in question still evoke similar connotations.

An interesting example of a complex relation occurs between the Polish term *koźlak* 'goatling' and its English equivalent *bock*. In fact, the English word is a German borrowing meaning 'he-goat' which functions as a term for strong lager of German origin. In Polish, the name has a Polish equivalent of the same meaning which does not evoke foreignness and can be easily related to the animal of this name by language users. The English word, although close to its Polish counterpart in terms of semantics, may not automatically be associated with any animal by native English speakers. It can be assumed that it is rather viewed as a chrematonym which is used internationally.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Apart from the English language, the name *bock* is used for instance in French (*la bock*, *la bockbier*), Portuguese (*bock*), Spanish (*el bock*).

## 2.3. Parallel equivalents

In the analysed material, there are 7 pairs which have various figurative counterparts in English, both lexical and phraseological. For instance, informal words *malż* 'clam' and *malża* (a form which can be interpreted as 'a female clam'), meaning 'husband' and 'wife,' have various equivalents, including the expressions *old man* and *old wife*. Figurative as they are, they do not carry any references to the animal stock. The imagery is completely different, moreover, Polish units might be described as more jocular and novel. Thus, there is no correspondence in these parameters in the examples.

Another pair of parallel equivalents is composed of the Polish idiom dać raka (lit. to give a crayfish/cancer) and the corresponding English unit it sucks. It should be emphasized that the Polish lexeme rak is also the term for cancer and it can be assumed that this meaning is activated in the phrase. From a comparative perspective, the two expressions in question perform the same function, since they are used as commentaries expressing a negative evaluation of the quality of the described object, situation, etc.

Furthermore, in this group, one can classify the term-like Polish items with polylexical English equivalents exhibiting lexical and structural dissimilarities and/or subtle semantic differences. To illustrate this model, the following pairs can be given: Pol. *strusiarnia* 'a place where ostriches are kept' – Eng. *ostrich pen*, Pol. *hipopotarium* 'a place where hippopotamuses are kept' – Eng. *hippoopotamus house*.

## 2.4. Zero equivalents

In the analysed corpus, there are relatively few lacunary items detected – only 15. One of them is the idiom *okładkowa sroka* (lit. cover magpie), used to refer to a person who decides to buy a book judging by its cover and evaluating it as beautiful. The expression is concise and can be viewed as a label for an attitude towards buying books. Its English equivalent is a descriptive paraphrase of the meaning.

Other examples include the verb *morsować* (lit. to walrus, a verb derived by suffixation from the name *mors* 'walrus') 'to bathe in winter in

the sea, river or a lake' and *morświnarium* (lit. porpoisenarium) 'a centre of research and educative exposition of Baltic porpoises for the needs of species protection.'

This subgroup of cross-linguistic equivalents also contains the professiolectal term *robopszczoła* (lit. robotbee, 'a miniature drone for plant pollination' whose English equivalents are descriptive phrases like *pollination drone* and *plant-pollinating drone*. Another lacunary unit is *cybermalż* (lit. cyberclam), i.e. 'a mollusc used as an element of the system of monitoring water quality.' There is no English unit expressing this meaning, so that the cross-linguistic counterpart is a loose string of words, for example: *a mollusc used for monitoring water quality*.

As already mentioned, in Polish, per analogiam to *piesel* (cf. 3.2.1), the word *kotel* was formed (Pol. *kot* 'cat' + the suffix -*el*). It functions only as a jocular name for a cat, and it has no close equivalent in English. It tends to be used in the Internet lore, in particular in memes, often in combination with the term *piesel*, as illustrated below.

The word *kotel* can be viewed as a lacuna due to its linguistic specificity as well as strong markedness and the relation to the noun *piesel*, which





II.1. Memes with the words *piesel* and *kotel* Source: demotywatory.pl, 10.01.2021

the above memes attest. It might be added that from a translational perspective, it can be re-created in English by compensation techniques in the process of translation. Yet, at the systematic level, it is difficult to provide a proper equivalent for the word *kotel*.

## 3. Conclusions

The analysis of broadly understood animal units in OJUW shows that this group comprises several kinds of faunal exponents: animal names and generic terms for animals, formations derived from faunal lexemes, animal-related prefixes and words, phraseological units with animal components.

The dominant group of English equivalents of the Polish animal units is composed of quasi-absolute counterparts, with as many as 37 pairs (55%). It is followed by zero equivalents whose number amounts to 15 (22%). The two other kinds are represented fairly evenly: 9 partial equivalents (13%) and 7 parallel correspondences (10%).

To a great extent, the fact that quasi-absolute equivalents are the most numerous is conditioned by the presence of many borrowings from English.

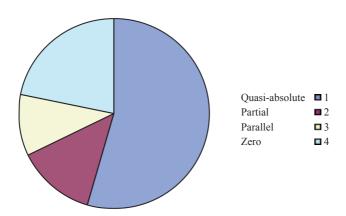


Diagram 1. The distribution of the English equivalents of Polish animal units in OJUW Source: own research.

Almost three quarters (73%) of all units which have quasi-equivalents are borrowings from English, either proper ones (slightly more than half of quasi-absolute equivalents; approximately one third of the total) or calques (nearly one fourth and one tenth, respectively). As a result, the degree of equivalence of all the corpus is high, with as many as 68% of close equivalents, i.e. quasi-absolute and partial counterparts, and only slightly more than one fifth of zero equivalents. In general, there are rather few cases of complex relation of cross-linguistic systematic correspondence such as that of *kotel* and its prospective English counterpart.

The study shows that animal terms are still productive in terms of coinage: they are used in a variety of ways to enrich the lexicon: as neosemantisms, a base for derivatives and constituents of phraseological units. The investigation aimed at comparing the recent faunal Polish items with their English counterparts to investigate the influence of the English language on this part of the Polish lexicon. It is worth analysing the equivalents of Polish new faunal units in other languages, both Slavic and non-Slavic, to examine their interlingual equivalence. It will also allow for determining the extent of English faunal borrowings cross-linguistically.

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- EJO Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego. (1999). Red. K. Polański. Wrocław– Warszawa–Kraków: Ossolineum.
- MEP *Mała encyklopedia przekładoznawstwa*. (2000). Red. U. Dąbska-Propkop. Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Języków Obcych i Ekonomii Educator.
- OJUW *Obserwatorium Językowe Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*. https://nowewyrazy.uw.edu.pl. 12.09.2020.
- SZA Słownik zapożyczeń angielskich w polszczyźnie. (2010). Red. E. Mańczak-Wohlfeld. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- UD Urban Dictionary. https://www.urbandictionary.com/. 12.09.2020.
- WSPA *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski PWN-OXFORD*. (2004). Red. J. Linde-Usiekniewicz. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.