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## **CULTURAL SCRIPTS IN ENGLISH AND POLISH PROVERBS: TRADITION AND INNOVATION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The theory of cultural scripts developed by Wierzbicka and her colleagues makes it possible to describe cultural norms embedded in different languages using words which represent universal human concepts (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004). Wierzbicka has demonstrated in her numerous publications that common expressions and grammatical structures found in English illustrate the patterns and values of Anglo culture which are absent from many other languages, such as Polish or Russian. However, with the increasing globalization of English, cultural scripts encoded in it are likely to influence speakers of other languages. The influence of English on Polish is best visible in the borrowing of individual words, though there is convincing evidence that larger linguistic units, such as proverbs, have been borrowed as well. Because proverbs are often used to comment on recurring social situations, they seem to be particularly important in maintaining and disseminating social and cultural norms. Proverbs reflect certain cultural norms, and changes in proverbial language may be indicative of the adoption of new social and cultural patterns by a society. The aim of the present paper is to investigate the reflection of Anglo cultural scripts in English and American proverbs, contrasting them with their Polish counterparts, and to examine the changes in Polish culture as illustrated in recent borrowings of English proverbs into Polish.

The term 'Anglo' culture refers to the countries in which English is the primary language, i.e. the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Each of these countries has developed a specific varie-

ty of English reflecting different cultural traditions, but, at the same time, all these varieties share a number of common expressions and speech routines which encapsulate Anglo values and cultural norms. Kachru (1985) classifies them as the "inner circle" Englishes. The term 'Anglo' English is rarely used by linguists and its unity is often disputed, even though, as Wierzbicka (2006: 13) rightly notices, "it is precisely this Anglo English, with the Anglo cultural heritage embedded in it, that in the postcolonial and increasingly global world continues to provide the basis for talking about English in the singular". The common Anglo heritage embedded in "inner circle" Englishes also includes some elements of proverbial language.

Proverbs have rarely been used as social or historical variables, even though, as Obelkevich (1994) has demonstrated in his study of proverb usage in Europe, the content of proverbs, their forms, and attitudes towards them in different periods provide important information about social and cultural history. In England, attitudes towards proverbs have shifted from great enthusiasm in the sixteenth century to almost complete rejection in the Enlightenment. However, the decrease in the use of proverbs in the learned culture was accompanied by the appearance of new proverbs, illustrating the new ways of thinking, such as the primacy of facts and figures over traditional collective wisdom (Rozumko 2009). Thus, a historical analysis of the form and use of proverbs seems to offer many possibilities for the study of changes in cultural patterns of a linguistic community. Likewise, a cross-linguistic analysis of proverbs may be helpful in discovering the similarities and differences between cultural norms and values found in different linguistic communities.

Paremiologists have tended to take the view that proverbs reflect universal human concepts rather than the cultural patterns of a particular nation (Mieder 1993; Lau 1996). Although this is true of a number of proverbs which exist in similar forms in many different languages, there are also numerous proverbs which are language- and culture-specific. As Mieder (1993: 178) has demonstrated in his study of New England proverbs, they "do reflect to a certain degree the worldview of their users, and with caution one could perhaps say that a collection of proverbs from a particular state mirrors certain stereotypical values of its people". If a collection of proverbs from a particular state reflects some local values, there seems to be good ground to believe that collections of English and American proverbs mirror some Anglo values and cultural patterns.

## 2. CULTURAL SCRIPTS IN ENGLISH, AMERICAN AND POLISH PROVERBS

Of all the countries of the “inner circle”, proverbs seem to have received most scholarly attention in the USA, largely thanks to the paremiographic and paremiological efforts of Wolfgang Mieder. This is why the majority of the proverbs quoted here come from *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* (DAP) edited by Mieder et al. (1992). Other sources used here include *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (ODEP) edited by Wilson (1970) *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (ODP) edited by Speake (2004), and Whiting’s (1989) *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions* (MPPE). Most Polish proverbs used here come from the most comprehensive Polish collection of proverbial texts, the four-volume *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich* (NKPP) edited by Krzyżanowski (1969–1978). The analysis below will focus on two patterns of Anglo culture identified by Wierzbicka (2006) and the cultural scripts associated with them, i.e. the respect for facts and the value of personal autonomy.

### 2.1. THE ANGLO IDEAL OF ACCURACY AND RESPECT FOR FACTS

Wierzbicka claims that “[t]here are few features of modern Anglo culture as distinctive as its respect for ‘facts’” (2006: 41). Facts can be empirically verified and represent ‘safe’ objective knowledge, free from personal opinions. Wierzbicka (2006) argues that the Anglo respect for empirical evidence goes back to the Enlightenment and scientific revolution, which fostered the respect for empirical knowledge and rational thinking, most successfully illustrated in and disseminated by the writings of the English empirical philosopher, John Locke, in particular his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). The influence of empiricism on Anglo culture is evidenced both in scientific discourse and colloquial language, which has adopted numerous expressions originally used in scientific language, such as ‘exactly’ or ‘precisely’. One of the consequences of the increasing importance of scientific accuracy and individualism was the expulsion of proverbs from the learned culture (Obelkevich 1994). Folk wisdom, encapsulated in proverbs, fell into disrepute giving way to the scientific ideal of accuracy, precision and non-exaggeration, which Wierzbicka phrases in the form of the following cultural script:

*The Anglo script for 'accuracy' and 'nonexaggeration'*  
[people think like this:]

sometimes people say words like *all*

when they want to say something like *many*

sometimes people say words like *many*

when they want to say something like *some*

sometimes people say words like *none*

when they want to say something like not *many*

It is not good to speak like this (Wierzbicka 2006: 30).

One way to be accurate is to stick to facts, which are 'stubborn' and provide 'hard evidence'. Judging by the dates provided by proverb dictionaries, it seems that proverbs used before the eighteenth century did not pay much attention to facts. As Wierzbicka (2006: 41) observes, the meaning of the word 'fact' itself was originally different from what it is today. Facts were not objective, they referred to things done or performed, which can be illustrated by such collocations found in Shakespeare as '*his facts*'. During the Enlightenment, however, proverbial language seems to have absorbed many empirical values, which is evidenced in the content of new sayings which appeared at the time. Wierzbicka mentions the saying *Facts are facts*, and a careful inspection of the major collections of English and American proverbs brings a longer list of proverbs with the word 'fact' as their component, for example:

- (1) *Facts speak for themselves* (Mieder 1989: 37)
- (2) *Facts are stubborn things* (ODEP, ODP, MPPE, DAP)
- (3) *Facts speak louder than opinions* (MPPE, DAP)
- (4) *A single fact is worth a shipload of argument* (DAP)
- (5) *Facts are better than theories* (DAP)
- (6) *Facts don't lie* (DAP)
- (7) *No ideal is as good as a fact* (DAP)
- (8) *One fact is stronger than a dozen texts or pretexts* (DAP)
- (9) *If it ain't the matter of fact, it's the point of view* (DAP).

The Anglo respect for empirical evidence is also visible in those English proverbs which stress the value of figures, such as (10) *Figures don't lie* (MPPE, DAP). Still, however, facts are given top priority as the proverb (11) *Figures are not always facts* (DAP) suggests. The respect for facts is connected with respect for reason, illustrated in such proverbs as

- (12) *Better die than turn your back on reason* (DAP)  
 (13) *A man without reason is a beast in season* (DAP)  
 (14) *Reason is the life of the law* (DAP)  
 (15) *Reason succeeds when force fails* (DAP)  
 (16) *There is reason in all things* (ODEP, DAP)  
 (17) *Reason rules all things* (ODEP).

Polish proverbs with the word 'fact' (Pol. *fakty*) are much more difficult to find. Krzyżanowski's (1969–1978) monumental collection of Polish proverbial language does not list any such proverbs and neither does M. Arct's (1935) dictionary of foreign expressions and proverbs used in Polish, even though the latter does include the word 'fakt', giving Latin as the source of the borrowing. The complete absence of proverbs dealing with facts from these collections suggests that either the authors failed to include such proverbs or that the respect for facts is not particularly characteristic of Polish tradition.

The Enlightenment, which seems to have played a vital role in the process of shaping 'Anglo' cultural scripts, was considerably less influential in Poland, where Baroque and Romanticism were received with greater enthusiasm (Hryniewicz 2007: 46). Baroque and Romanticism gave priority to spontaneity and emotions over rational thinking and long-term planning. This attitude is reflected in the numerous variants of the Polish proverb (18) *Gdzie serce każe, tam rozum iść musi* ('Reason has to follow in the heart's footsteps') and the famous proverbial quotation from the Polish Romantic writer, Adam Mickiewicz, (19) *Miej serce i patrzaj w serce* ('Have a heart, and look in the heart'). The relatively little importance of reason in making decisions is illustrated in the sarcastic proverb (20) *Mądry Polak po szkodzie* ('A Pole is wise after the event'), which is still very common in Polish. It seems that the Anglo-American proverbial advice (21) *Let your heart rule your head in matters of affection* (DAP) in Polish is extended to matters other than affection.

Admittedly, among traditional Polish proverbs there is one with the word 'figure' in it: (22) *Za cyfrę nie stoi* (literally 'It isn't a figure', meaning 'it's worthless'). This proverb is no longer used, largely because of its archaic form, and it is difficult to determine its frequency in earlier centuries. The fact that only one such proverb is recorded in the collection (NKPP) which contains, for example, 107 proverbs and proverbial expressions with the word 'heart' may suggest that the belief it expressed was not particularly widespread.

## 2.2. PERSONAL AUTONOMY

The value of personal autonomy, another pattern central to Anglo culture, is summarized by Wierzbicka (2006: 53) in the form of the following script:

[people think like this:]  
when I do something it is good if I do it because I want to do it,  
not because someone else wants me to do it.

Other cultural scripts related to it include the script of the avoidance of imposition on other people and the dislike of being imposed on, which Wierzbicka explains as follows:

[people think like this:]  
no one can say to another person:  
"I want you to do this  
you have to do it because of this"  
[people think like this:]  
no one can say to another person:  
"I don't want you to do this  
you can't do it because of this" (2006: 52).

The value of personal autonomy and the dislike of imposition are reflected in the proverb (23) *An Englishman's house is his castle* (ODEP, ODP) and its variant (24) *A man's home is his castle* (DAP). The cultural pattern summarized in this proverb partly explains the not overly enthusiastic attitude towards guests found in English proverbs, for example:

- (25) *A constant guest is never welcome* (DAP)
- (26) *The unbidden guest is always a pest* (DAP)
- (27) *Fish and guests smell after three days* (ODP, DAP, MPPE)
- (28) *A house filled with guests is eaten up and ill spoken of* (DAP).

The Anglo script of non-imposition in relation to guests is also present in the proverb (29) *Welcome the coming, speed the parting* (DAP, MPPE). Polish tradition, in contrast, requires the host to try and persuade the parting guests to stay longer. One of the neutral proverbs about guests included in DAP is (30) *Show no preference among your guests*, which reflects the Anglo ideal of equality and tolerance.

Collections of traditional Polish proverbs do not contain any proverbs similar in meaning to (24) *A man's home is his castle*. Polish tradition seems

to be significantly different in this respect: Polish proverbs emphasize the eagerness of Poles to open the door of their houses to anyone who knocks at it. Even though the equivalent of the Latin proverb (27) *Fish and guests smell after three days* is found in collections of Polish proverbs, proverbs of this type are outnumbered by those which praise hospitality. This attitude is symbolized in the traditional proverb (31) *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom* ('A guest in your house is like God in your house'), which is probably the most widely recognized proverb about guests in Poland. Other proverbs illustrating this attitude are, for example, (32) *Polska cnota każdemu otworzyć wrota* ('It is a Polish virtue to open the door to everyone who knocks at it'), (33) *Sam nie jedz, a gościowi daj* ('If you don't have much to eat, give what you have to your guests, don't eat it yourself'), (34) *Zastaw się a postaw się* ('Be generous with your guests even if you have to borrow money to host them'), and (35) *Gościowi należy się pierwsze miejsce* ('Guests deserve the best seats').

The script of the avoidance of imposition discussed above is related to the scripts of sincerity concerning the value of presenting one's feelings honestly. The Anglo scripts of sincerity are summarized by Wierzbicka in the following way:

[people think:]  
 when I say something to other people  
 it is good if these people think that I feel something good  
 (Wierzbicka 1999: 242),

and:

[people think:]  
 it is good  
 if a person says something  
 because this person doesn't want another person to feel something bad  
 (Wierzbicka 1999: 155).

This attitude is exemplified in the following proverbs:

- (36) *If you can't say something nice, don't say anything* (DAP)
- (37) *If you can't say something good about someone, don't say anything at all* (DAP)
- (38) *If you cannot speak well of a person, don't speak of him at all* (DAP)
- (39) *Speak well of everyone if you speak of them at all* (DAP)
- (40) *Speak not rather than speak ill* (DAP).

Another related script formulated by Wierzbicka is

[people think:]  
 when I feel something  
 I don't always want people to know what I feel  
 (Wierzbicka 1999: 266).

This script is reflected in the proverbs:

- (41) *You can think what you like, but don't say it* (DAP)  
 (42) *One may think what he dare not speak* (DAP).

Neither of these proverbs has equivalents in Polish. The Polish script of sincerity is entirely different:

[people think:]  
 it is bad  
 when a person wants other people to think  
 that this person feels something  
 if this person doesn't feel this  
 (Wierzbicka 1999: 244).

This script gives importance to expressing one's feelings or opinions honestly regardless of other people's reaction to them. In fact, there are no proverbs in Polish with the word 'nice' (Pol. *miły*) in them, except for those in which 'nice' is used ironically to mean 'not nice', e.g. (43) *Miły jak sól w oku* ('Nice as salt in your eye').

### 3. ANGLO CULTURAL SCRIPTS IN CONTEMPORARY POLISH

As demonstrated above, many English and American proverbs illustrate some characteristic patterns of Anglo culture which are absent from traditional Polish culture and Polish proverbial language. However, with the growing exposure of Polish people to the English language and Anglo-American ways of thinking, some Anglo values are being absorbed into the Polish mentality. The adoption of new cultural patterns is evidenced inter alia in the borrowing of English proverbs into Polish. As already mentioned, the most comprehensive collection of Polish proverbs and proverbial expressions, the four-volume *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich* edited by Krzyżanowski, was published in the years 1969–1978. Naturally then, it does not include any of the expres-

sions which became common in Polish during the last two decades, when the exposure of Polish people to the English language and Anglo-American culture became considerably greater than it had been before. The more recent proverb collections (e.g. Stefańska-Jokiel 2006) also concentrate on traditional proverbial wisdom and fail to include any new proverbs.

The frequency of the selected proverbs in one of the largest (40 million words) corpora of contemporary Polish available (<http://korpus.pwn.pl>) seems unjustifiably low, which is why the analysis presented in this section is based on the author's corpus of Internet sources containing excerpts from texts in which the selected proverbs were used. The choice of the proverbs resulted from the author's earlier observation of their use in everyday conversations among Poles, in Polish newspapers, magazines and television programmes. The corpus was compiled between 1 December 2006 and 1 March 2007 from the results of Google searches for the occurrences of these sayings in Polish Internet sources. The Internet sources include online versions of newspaper articles, political, economic and social commentaries, speeches of Polish politicians, various Internet forums, and advertisements. Wherever possible, care has been taken to ensure that the texts' authors were native speakers of Polish living in Poland. Because the number of search results in some cases reached thousands of not always relevant examples, to make the data more manageable, the study was limited to the first 120 results in each case. It needs to be admitted that a study based on Internet sources has its limitations and shortcomings. First of all, it only allows the language of those people who use the Internet to be examined. According to the NetTrack report published in 2006 ([gospodarka.gazeta.pl](http://gospodarka.gazeta.pl)), there are over 8 million Internet users in Poland (in a population of 38 million people), 76 per cent of whom are people between the age of 15 and 39. Secondly, it is impossible to establish the degree or source of English influence in the case of individual users. Some of them may have spent several years in an English-speaking country, which might have affected their linguistic choices. Nevertheless, limited as it is, the present study helps to verify and objectify, at least to some extent, the impressionistic findings of the author and, perhaps, it may serve as a point of reference for future research in this area.

Polish has recently borrowed a number of English proverbs, which may result from the tendency observed by Norrick (1985) to signal one's

membership in and identification with a certain community by citing proverbs from their stock. This appears to have happened in Nigeria when Nigerians learnt English and adopted western ways (Obelkevich 1994) and is probably happening in Poland at the moment. For instance, the Polish calque of the English proverb (45) *Don't judge a book by its cover* (DAP, MPPS) / *You can't tell a book by its cover* (ODP) (*Nie oceniaj książki po okładce*) can frequently be heard in contemporary Polish, even though there is a well-known equivalent of this proverb among traditional Polish proverbs. Many proverb borrowings illustrate the exposure of Poles to popular English and American culture, or economic changes in Poland related to the change from communism to capitalism in 1989. Such proverbs include (46) *Gentlemen prefer blondes* (MPPS, DAP), (47) *Diamonds are a girl's best friends* (Doyle 1996), (48) *It takes two to tango* (Mieder 1989, 1993; Doyle 1996; ODP), (49) *The murderer [criminal] returns to the scene of the crime* (MPPS), (50) *There's no such thing as a free lunch* (ODP). The first three are included in the dictionary of famous quotations used in Polish compiled by Markiewicz and Romanowski (2005), the other two do not seem to have been recorded by any Polish dictionary of quotations or proverbs, but they are frequent in Internet sources, newspapers and television programmes.

Other proverb borrowings, discussed below, seem to indicate significant changes in the ways of thinking of Polish people, which are caused by the increasing exposure to western and Anglo ways.

### 3.1. RESPECT FOR FACTS AND FIGURES

The majority of recent proverb borrowings into Polish concern the cultural scripts associated with what Wierzbicka (2006) considers to be the most characteristic Anglo pattern, i.e. the respect for facts and the associated ideal of accuracy and precision. As already mentioned, collections of traditional Polish proverbs do not include any proverbs with the word 'facts' in them; however, a Google search for their Polish versions returns numerous examples of their use in contemporary Polish. The Polish equivalent of (6) *Facts don't lie* (*Fakty nie kłamią*) has 31 occurrences in the corpus used here, (2) *Facts are stubborn things* (*Fakty są uparte*) has 32 occurrences, and, the most frequent of these, (1) *Facts speak for themselves* (*Fakty mówią za siebie*) appears 102 times. In addition to the calques of English proverbs, contemporary Polish has developed a saying about

facts which is not included in any major Anglo-American proverb collections and which is even more frequent than the proverbs quoted above, i.e. (51) *Z faktami/o faktach się nie dyskutuje* ('facts cannot be disputed') evidenced 118 times in the author's corpus. This saying seems to have been formed as analogy to the Latin proverb (52) *De gustibus non est disputandum* (*Taste cannot be disputed*). Sayings about the importance of facts do not (yet) have the status of proverbs in Polish, probably because since the 1970s there has been no attempt to compile a revised research-based collection of Polish proverbs, but the presence of (2) *Facts are stubborn things* (*Fakty są uparte*) in Polish is acknowledged by its inclusion in Markiewicz and Romanowski's (2005) collection of famous quotations used in Polish. This particular saying is attributed to the eighteenth century English writer Eustace Budgell (1686–1737), and its appearance in the eighteenth century is consistent with Wierzbicka's view that the Anglo respect for facts originated at that time.

Proverbs about facts are used in a variety of contexts in Polish; they appear in articles about cancer and other diseases, in political and economic commentaries, forums of car owners, a text about the cost of book publication, multilingualism among children, Chopin's life, on-line shopping, and many others. The sources where they appear include Internet sites of Polish newspapers, such as *Gazeta Wyborcza*, magazines, e.g. *Goniec Podhalański*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Znak*, institutions of tertiary education (*Politechnika Poznańska*), libraries, websites of political parties (*Samoobrona*), and various Internet forums. The wide thematic range of the texts in which these proverbs are used suggests that the conviction about the importance of facts is widespread among Polish Internet users, and possibly also in a larger section of Polish society.

As in the case of proverbs with the word 'facts' as their component, contemporary Polish as evidenced in the author's corpus of Internet sources provides numerous occurrences of the Polish version of the proverb (10) *Figures don't lie* (*Liczby nie kłamią*). It has 120 occurrences in the corpus and, similar to the proverbs about facts, it is used in a variety of contexts, such as historical texts, texts about the rate of unemployment in Poland, homelessness, emigration of Poles to EU countries, road accidents, and sports events. In addition to the proverb (10) *Figures don't lie*, the collocation *fakty i liczby* ('facts and figures') is very common in the sources analyzed here. It is often used in the headlines of articles describing various institutions, universities, companies or political parties.

Proverbs are not the only Polish linguistic items with the word 'fakt' as their component. There are also many phraseologisms, such as *fakt dokonany* ('an event which has taken place and nothing can be done about it'), *fakt faktem*, *to fakt* ('it is a fact that'), *fakt prasowy* ('a lie presented in the media as a fact'), *nagi, goły fakt* (lit. 'a naked fact': 'just the fact'), *po fakcie* ('after the event'), *postawić kogoś przed faktem dokonanym* ('to let someone know that something has been done, without asking that person's opinion/permission first'), *suchy fakt* ('a fact given without a word of comment').<sup>1</sup>

The relatively high number and frequency of such expressions in contemporary Polish suggests that the Anglo 'respect for facts' is evidenced in Polish as well. Its presence may perhaps be attributed to the exposure of Poles to the English language and Anglo-American culture. The global economy, which Poland joined after the collapse of communism in 1989, is increasingly based on knowledge and involves rational thinking and long-term planning, which may have made Poles value empirically verifiable data more than they did in the past. Being part of the global economy entails familiarity with and acceptance of the rules that govern it: rules which in many instances involve the command of English and the acceptance of 'Anglo' ways.

### 3.2. RESPECT FOR PRIVACY AND PERSONAL AUTONOMY

As mentioned earlier (2.2), the proverb (24) *A man's home is his castle* may probably be taken to express the Anglo respect for personal autonomy and non-imposition on other people. The data from contemporary Polish analyzed here show numerous occurrences (110) of the Polish variant of (24) *A man's home is his castle* (*Mój dom jest moją twierdzą*). The texts in which it occurs often include comments on the changing attitudes of Polish people towards their homes. In the past, it was customary among Poles to pay frequent unexpected visits to their friends and acquaintances, and now, when people spend more time at work, have less free time, and use mobile phones, such unexpected (and, increasingly, also expected) visits are becoming less welcome. In 1999, the Polish singer Kazik

<sup>1</sup> Listed after: *Wielki słownik frazeologiczny PWN z przysłowiami*. Warszawa 2005.

Staszewski popularized the Polish version of the proverb (24) *A man's home is his castle* when he used it as the title of one of his songs. The proverb has also been used in advertisements of insurance companies and companies offering alarm systems and, in 2006, it was adopted by the members of the Polish parliament as a slogan intended to seek approval for their project of the changes in the criminal code concerning self-defence. Their aim was to guarantee every person in Poland the right to defend their homes, even if acting in self-defence resulted in serious harm to the intruder. The need for such legal changes cannot be explained by the increase in crime rate in Poland. According to police reports ([www.policja.pl](http://www.policja.pl)), the crime rate in Poland has decreased systematically since 2002, and in 2006 it was the lowest since 1989 (when police forces were created to replace the communist militia), while the rate of crime detection was the highest. The reaction of many Polish people to the project of such changes was enthusiastic, which is also evidenced in the Internet sources analyzed here. It seems likely that the widespread conviction that the home should be a safe and well-guarded place is a reaction to the feeling of insecurity frequently experienced by Poles under communist rule when most people did not own the flats they lived in and the militia could enter their homes at all times and for no good reason. There was no room for personal autonomy in communist times and now, that Poles finally have some autonomy, as well as their private property, they do not want anyone to intrude on it and they want to have the legal means to defend it. The adoption of the proverb (24) *Mój dom jest moją twierdzą* ('my home is my castle') by members of the Polish parliament seems to support Obelkevich's observation that "[t]hrough proverbs, social norms are internalized and – the distinction is not a rigid one – enforced" (Obelkevich 1994: 217).

So far, there is no "proverbial evidence" of the adoption of the Anglo script of sincerity in Polish. The proverb (36) *If you can't say something nice, don't say anything* has no counterpart among Polish proverbs or proverbial expressions. As Hryniewicz (2004) and Kłoskowska (2005) notice, the constant diffusion of cultural elements between nations has its limits because some cultural elements are less prone to it than others. The Anglo values adopted in Polish seem to be those originating in public life, whereas the script concerning sincerity belongs to a more personal sphere, deeply rooted in the Polish mentality, which is probably why it is less likely to change.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Proverbial language illustrates cultural scripts encoded in languages, and changes in proverbial language seem to provide evidence for cultural changes that societies experience. English, together with its cultural heritage, is the language of global economy, science and popular culture. The spread of English around the world involves the spread of cultural patterns associated with it. The most significant cultural script connected with 'Anglo' culture, 'the respect for facts and empirical evidence' is now evidenced in Polish proverbial language. It is visible in the adoption of such proverbs as (2) *Facts are stubborn things*, (1) *Facts speak for themselves*, (10) *Figures don't lie*. Likewise, the borrowing of the proverb (24) *A man's house is his castle* into Polish may suggest identification with or acceptance of the Anglo 'respect for privacy and personal autonomy'. The appearance of this proverb in the society whose traditional proverbs encouraged and praised opening the door to anyone who knocked, and among people who were for many years deprived of personal autonomy under communist rule, is noteworthy. If Obelkevich (1994) is right in claiming that proverbs help to internalize social norms, the use of English proverbs in Polish both testifies to and enforces the adoption of English and American ways and cultural patterns by an increasing number of people in Poland.

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## CULTURAL SCRIPTS IN ENGLISH AND POLISH PROVERBS: TRADITION AND INNOVATION

### Summary

The aim of this paper is to investigate the reflection of selected cultural scripts in Anglo-American and Polish proverbs. The analysis concentrates on the way proverbs reflect two characteristic patterns of 'Anglo' culture identified by Anna Wierzbicka in her book *English: Meaning and Culture* (2006), i.e. 'the respect for facts' and 'the value of personal autonomy', and the cultural scripts associated with them. The study is based on proverb collections and the author's corpus of texts with proverbs compiled from Polish Internet sources. Limited as a study based on such sources inevitably is, it does, nevertheless, demonstrate that proverbs do reflect cultural norms. It also shows that some culture specific Anglo-American proverbs are now used in Polish (e.g. *Facts are stubborn things*, *Figures don't lie* or *A man's home is his castle*), thus providing evidence that the influence of English and American ways on Polish goes beyond the level of individual words and expressions.

## SKRYPTY KULTUROWE W POLSKICH I ANGIELSKICH PRZYSŁOWIACH: TRADYCJA I ZMIANY

### Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza treści kulturowych zawartych w przysłowiaach polskich i angielskich. Przysłowia odzwierciedlają normy kulturowe i, jak twierdzi Obelkevich (1994), pomagają je kształtować, dzięki czemu stanowią bogate źródło wiedzy na temat systemów wartości używających je społeczeństw. Przytoczone tu angielskie i polskie skrypty kulturowe zaczerpnięte zostały z prac Anny Wierzbickiej (m.in. *English: Meaning and Culture*, 2006). Za jedną z najbardziej charakterystycznych cech kultury „Anglo” uznała Wierzbicka oświeceniowy „szacunek dla faktów” i racjonalnego myślenia, widoczny w licznych angielskich przysłowiaach dotyczących faktów, np.: *Facts speak for themselves*, *Facts are stubborn things*, *Facts speak louder than opinions*, *Facts don't lie*. Polskie zbiory przysłów, np. *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich* (1969–1978) pod red. J. Krzyżanowskiego, nie odnotowują przysłów ze słowem *fakt*, być może dlatego, że epoki, które w dużej mierze ukształtowały kulturę polską, tj. barok i późniejszy romantyzm kładły większy nacisk na emocje niż rozum, co ilustruje np. nie mające odpowiednika w angielszczyźnie przysłowie *Gdzie serce każe, tam rozum iść musi* i Mickiewiczowskie *Miej serce i patrzaj w serce*. Niektóre z wymienionych tu angielskich przysłów mają jednak swoje odpowiedniki we współczesnej polszczyźnie, np. *Fakty nie kłamią*, *Fakty mówią za siebie*, co może znaczyć, że autorzy *Nowej księgi...* nie dostrzegli ich przysłowiowego charakteru, lub że upowszechniły się one dopiero po jej opublikowaniu, ilustrując wpływ kultury anglo-amerykańskiej na kulturę polską. Przysłowia ukazują także ambiwalentny stosunek Polaków do bycia miłym jako wartości kulturowej (np. *Miły jak sól w oku*), co wyraźnie kontrastuje z zachętą do bycia miłym, którą znajdujemy w anglo-amerykańskich przysłowiaach (np. *If you can't say something nice, don't say anything*).