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CULTURAL PECULIARITIES OF ENGLISH, GERMAN AND UKRAINIAN ANIMAL IDIOMS

Idioms are a part of everyday communication in many languages in the whole world. We use them in our conversation, read them in books, newspapers and advertisements. We can also hear them in many places because they are an essential part of our lives. Although idioms are not compulsory for our communication and understanding, they make our utterances more interesting and motivating.

In this thesis we would like to show how fascinating the idioms are and how close or distant the connection between English, German and Ukrainian languages is in this area. Our purpose is not to collect quotations from a lot of dictionaries but to introduce a collection of animal idioms and proverbs in English, German and Ukrainian and analyze them. The range of idioms is quite wide so it was decided to choose idioms involving an animal because they seem to be quite illustrative. People and animals are in contact in different ways for ages so we can easily apply their characteristics to express what people are like.

Speaking about animal idioms, the first thing which comes to mind is our pets – cats and dogs. According to fairy tales by Rudyard Kipling dogs were the first animals to be tamed and cats were the last ones. Since ancient times they live under one roof quarreling, fighting and making up. This fact found its reflection in different languages in the form of idioms. There are not many common idioms for English, German and Ukrainian. Some of them are:

➤ *Barking dogs seldom bite.*

Hunde, die viel bellen, beißen nicht.

Бійся пса не того, що гавкає, а того, що лащиться.

➤ *Tired as a dog.*

Wie ein Hund müde sein.

Втомився як собака.

➤ *A cat-and-dog life.*

Wie Hund und Katze.

Як кішка з собакою.

But mostly we can see idioms common for two languages – English and German. In the present day, English became the foreign language number one and penetrates German as well as other languages all over the world. These languages have much in common historically and relationship between them is becoming tighter in the last decades, undoubtedly, thanks to the wide spread of communications technologies and globalization. For example:

➤ *It is pouring cats and dogs.*

Es hagelt Katzen.

➤ *To let the cat out of the bag.*

Die Katze aus dem Sack lassen [2; c. 17].

But let's leave cats and dogs for a while and move further to other animals. For example bears:

➤ *Like a bear with a sore head.*

Ein richtiger Brummbar sein.

Злий як чорт.

➤ *To be as hungry as a bear.*

Hungrig wie ein Bär / Wolf sein.

Голодний як вовк.

As we can see, Ukrainian equivalent loses the original animal characteristic. In English and German the feeling of fear is connected with the huge figure of a bear. Also people can be dangerous in their attempt to satisfy their needs and well-being. In Ukrainian fear and anger are compared to a devil. The second example shows us the similarities between Ukrainian and German and differences between Ukrainian and English. All three cultures compare hunger with a wolf or a bear.

In the next example we will take a look at bees:

➤ *To be as busy as a bee.*

Fleißig wie eine Biene sein.

Бджілка-трудівниця.

It is evident that the bee is a symbol of hard working animals in English, German as well as in Ukrainian.

Let's take a look at the examples with birds:

➤ *To be a rare bird.*

Ein komischer / seltener Vogel sein.

Рідкісна птаха.

➤ *To be a bird of passage.*

Ein Zugvogel sein.

Перелітна птаха.

The bird is used to characterize an unsettled and unreliable person who likes to change his surrounding and cannot be seen very often in all three languages.

There are some interesting idioms with a horse:

➤ *To back the wrong horse.*

Auf falsches Pferd setzen.

Міняти шило на мило.

➤ *Not to look a gift-horse in the mouth.*

Dem geschenkten Gaul sieht man nicht in den Maul.

Дарованому коневі зубів не лічать.

A horse symbolizes a wild and strong animal and these are the features contained in the idioms of the three dealt languages. One can use the strength or resist it. Moreover, a young and healthy horse has perfect tooth and is worth to possess it but sometimes one gets an unwanted gift with imperfections – a horse with bad tooth. In this case, he should not examine the present closely and be satisfied with it [1; c. 42].

The animals uttered in the idioms have very often the same qualities although their appearance differs e.g. *rise with the lark* in English, *mit den*

Hühnern aufstehen in German and *вставати з першими півнями* in Ukrainian. Both birds are known as early risers although they look different. Other similar examples may be *blind as a bat*, *blind wie ein Maulwurf*, *сліпий як крiт*. Both animals do not use their eyes very much but their other features have nothing in common [1; c. 48].

In conclusion, as we can see from different examples, there are only slight differences in the structure and transparency between English and German idioms. Comparing Ukrainian counterparts of English and German idioms, we can observe that Ukrainian idioms use both similar and different animal names. Although Ukrainian belongs to a different language group, there is much in common between these three idiom cultures.

In some cases, it is not easy to find a suitable Ukrainian counterpart of an English or German idioms or proverbs. It would require a deeper investigation to find the answer to this question but as English and German have to co-exist for hundreds of years and always influenced each other, it may be an insoluble task. Ukrainian in its turn was influenced by German during some historical events and is under the influence of both languages now adopting English and German cultural and language peculiarities including idioms.

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