explorations

Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature

Making lemonade out of lemons: A taxonomy of clichés

Monika Porwoł (*State Higher Vocational School in Racibórz*)

Abstract. Clichés are commonly found in various languages and are a subject-matter for many investigators, who demonstrate favorable and/or disadvantageous analyses of those stereotyped expressions. The main goal of the present paper is to define, characterize and offer for consideration the concept of a cliché as a linguistic phenomenon. The systematization of customary phrases can be conducted with regard to four approaches: primordial, structural, semantic and pragmatic. Undeniably, delineating the cliché as a linguistic category leads to some dilemmas in presenting the taxonomy. Notwithstanding, it is mandatory to indicate its function and significance in (social, artistic, literary, dramatic, cinematic, etc.) communication.

Key words*:* Primordial clichés, structural clichés, semantic clichés, pragmatic clichés

1. INTRODUCTION

It is 'an open secret'[1] to maintain that it is an arduous task to define and categorize clichés. Several scholars (e.g. Ammer 2006; Fountain 2011; Fowler 1994; Kirkpatrick 1996; Partridge 1978) have pointed out to the 'intangible nature' of assertions that have been treated marginally in phraseology – since they are characterized by lack of originality and precision. The term cliché is used to refer pejoratively to words and/or phrases (regarded as having lost their freshness and vigor through overuse in communication). Nonetheless, the phenomenon itself is widely used and popular among users of language.

The present paper is principally connected with defining the concept, as well as identifying and classifying various kinds of clichés. Moreover, a tentative classification of clichés is provided. The main aim, however, is to prove the idea that the study of clichés "pervades theoretical, empirical, and applied linguistics. Like blood in systemic circulation, it flows through heart and periphery, nourishing all" (Ellis 2008, 9).

[1] It is a cliché that became popular in the 19th century. It refers to a situation when a confidential matter is actually well-known by many people. Its origin is associated with the title of a play *Il Pubblico Secreto* translated by Carlo Gozzi (in 1769) from a Spanish play written by Calderon *El Secreto a Voces* [The Noisy Secret].

The material quoted in the present paper comes from the standard sources used by most lexicographers. Chief among them are the clichés collections/dictionaries compiled by Ammer (2006), Fountain (2011), Fowler (1994), Kirkpatrick (1996) and Partridge (1978). There are also references from the Bible (Authorized King James Version, 2010) as well as various literary examples (including works of Keats, Milton, Shakespeare, etc.).

2. DEFINITION OF A CLICHÉ

It is not a novel fact that the origin of this concept pertains to the French language. Partridge (1978) in the Introduction to his work entitled *A Dictionary of Clichés* reports that:

> The origin of the term may help, for, as *Littré* shows, *cliché* is the substantivized participle of *clicher*, a variant of *cliquer*, 'to click'; *clicher* is a 'die-sinkers' term for 'to strike melted lead in order to obtain a cast'; hence, a cliché is a stereotyped expression – a phrase 'on tap' as it were – and this derivative sense, which has been current in France since the early eighties, came to England ca. 1890. (11)

Since the late 19th century, the use of the term has been associated with a tendency towards being original in expressing various ideas. McArthur (1992, 222) explains that many overused statements derive from classical cultures (Greece and/or Rome) as well as much-adored texts (the Bible or Shakespearean plays). The reason why they have become an indispensable part of the language is that they have been valued eminently, because 'they can stop interlocutors thinking of nothing'; 'they provide social lubrication', 'verbal caulking' and 'useful paddling'. Clichés are esteemed for filling an awkward gap in a conversation and, in a way, they are treated as a 'lexical life-jacket'. They have survived, because people continue to use them, despite complaints and criticisms.

3. A TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF CLICHÉS

The systematization of trite wordings can be performed on the basis of linguistic analysis. Apart from primordial bywords, which are anchored on the source and/or the origin of a particular statement, there are: structural expressions (determined by the grammatical form), semantic phrases (determining the meaning) and pragmatic structures (that are manifested in a given context; in actual, linguistic and communicative situations). All these taxonomic levels of clichés may be illustrated on the following diagram:

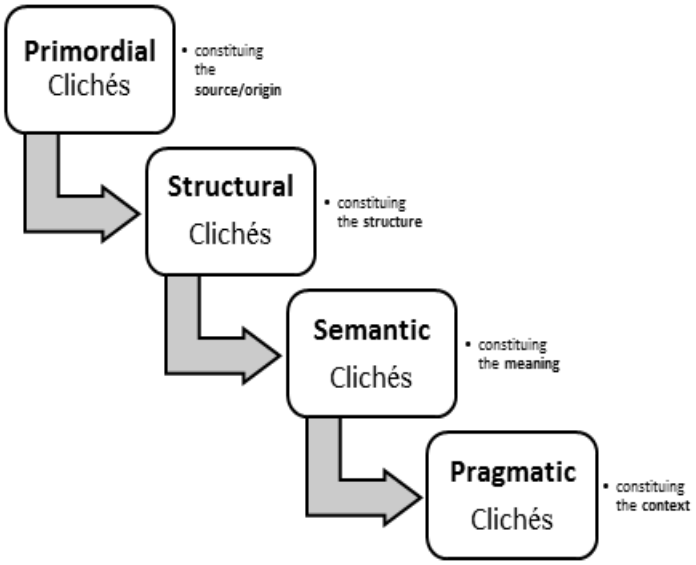

Fig. 1. A tentative taxonomy of clichés

The first criterion in the systematization regards the source/the origin of clichés (i.e. the Bible, mythology, historical events, literature and foreign languages). Therefore, such expressions may be considered as a primordial category (presented in the diagram below):

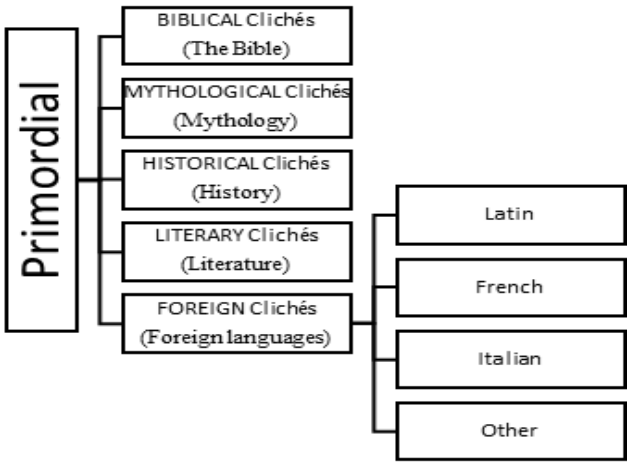

Fig. 2. Primordial clichés

Biblical clichés are the first group of expressions that are based on the collection of sacred writings of the Christian religion (comprising the Old and New Testaments) or the

Jewish religion (comprising only the Old Testament). In accord with the Bible, various trite phrases can be used by language users during daily conversations. In *Deuteronomy*, the following words can be read: 'He kept him as *the apple of his eye*'. The hackneyed theme in italics refers to the fact that the pupil of the eye was once thought to be a solid apple-shaped body. Therefore, *the apple of one's eye* may represent one's favorite, someone who is very much loved and cherished. The cliché *to be all things to all men* is found in *Corinthians* (9:22): "I'm made *all things to all men* that I might by all means save some" and it pertains to someone, who is willing to adapt to be liked (or to please everyone and/or as many people as possible). Another expression: *in the fullness of time*, which conveys a reproach to someone who is considered to be impatient, is written in *Galatians* (4:4): "But when *the fullness of time* was come, God sent forth His son". In many texts or dialogs people refer to *filthy lucre* as to 'sordid gain', 'base profit' or 'dirty money', which appears in: (1) *Timothy* (3:3): "Not given to wine, not greedy of *filthy lucre*, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous"; and (2) 'for *filthy lucre's* sake' (*Titus*, 3:8). *The Vulgate* equivalent for this phrase is: '*turpis lucri* gratia', where 'turpe lucrum' stands for 'disgraceful profit'. In slang, this term is usually applied by upper-class society members (especially Regular Army officers). Another interesting example is *sounding brass* as noise without (much) sense (a braggart; one who speaks much, nonetheless, performs little) in allusion to: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and [=but] have not charity, I am become as *sounding brass*, or a tinkling cymbal" (*Corinthians*, 1:1). The assertion *to cast pearls before swine* offers something of value to those who cannot or will not appreciate it. The saying comes from Jesus' teachings as recorded in the *Gospel of St. Matthew* (7:6): "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither *cast your pearls before swine*, lest they trample them under their feet". It was also a well-known saying by Shakespeare's time ('*Pearl enough for a swine' Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV, Scene II), as well as a cliché known long before Dickens: "Oh, I do a thankless thing, and *cast pearls before swine!"* (Dickens 1848 quoted in Ammer 2006, 62). Other examples ascertained by the study are: *doubting Thomas* (indicating someone who displays incredulity), *manna from heaven* (that refers to a sudden and unexpected advantage; allusion to miraculously sent food by God to the Israelites), *to have a cross to bear* (when someone has to deal with a particular form of distress since the cross symbolizes the Christ's suffering) and so forth.

Mythological clichés, on the other hand, are concerned with legendary stories that depict deities or demigods, as well as the creation of the world and its inhabitants. An *Achilles heel* refers to a weak spot (it pertains to a Greek legend, in which the mother of the Greek hero – Achilles – held him by the heel and dipped him in the River Styx so that he would be invulnerable; only his heel remained unprotected and he was eventually killed be an arrow that pierced his heel). Another example is a *Pandora's box* that illustrates an event, incident, or action that releases distress or misfortune (a source of evil). *To cleanse (or to clean) the Augean stables* means to purge away corruption and/or immorality (especially on a large scale). It is connected with a parable about Hercules, who purified the huge and filthy stables of King Augeas (the Latin proverbial: 'cloacas Augiæ purgare'). Some language users are familiar with overly employed themes of: *Olympian calm or pride* (godlike calm or pride), *to rise Phoenix-like (or like the Phoenix) from the ashes* (that means to spring from the ruins or ashes of one's or its predecessor; the expression was used by Shakespeare in 1591, but it was not a cliché until ca. 1870; from that time forward the fabled bird – the Phoenix – emerges from its ashes to cycles of

renewed life), *in the arms of Morpheus* (that refers to a situation of being asleep), or *halcyon days* (that pertains to extremely quiet and peaceful time; a bird 'halcyon'/'kingfisher' laid its eggs on the sea during a fourteen-day period of calm and good weather; see Kirkpatrick 1996, 82).

There are also historical clichés distinguished, such as: *cross the Rubicon* (to take action from which there is no turning back; a popular expression since the 18th century; it refers to the crossing of the River Rubicon, which separated Italy and Cisalpine Gaul by Julius Caesar in 49 BC; it was done with the aim of invading Italy in defiance of Pompey and the Senate), *the English disease* (pertaining to industrial strikes, class conflict and economic stagnation; it was a common phenomenon in the 1960s and early 1970s in Britain when the trade unions were very powerful), *chain reaction* (a series of events, in which each event causes another one; it was originally used in chemistry and nuclear physics in the 1930s; the expression passed into the general language and became popular in the 1970s), *D-Day* (a day when something important is scheduled to take place; historically it refers to June 6, 1944 when the Allies began their landings in Northern France to stop the advance of the German forces during World War II; 'D' stands for a day and it is simply a military convention used for emphasis; it tends to be used by older people who lived through the war), *Earth the Great Mother* (pertaining to the ground in reminiscence of Terra Mater, the Roman goddess).

Literary clichés are self-explanatory. They originate from the entire body of writings of a specific language, a given period of time, people, etc. Literature is treated as a rich source of expressions, which became common in time. The most notable expressions are ascribed to Shakespeare. *To be or not to be, that is the question* is probably the first exemplification that comes to mind. Whereas, *to come/go full circle*, is applicable to a cycle that is completed (events have run their course and things have returned to their original state), this expression was probably originated by Shakespeare in *King Lear*: "The wheel *is come full circle*" (Act V, Scene III) and it has been used ever since to describe a situation, in which events run their course and things end much as they began. By contrast, a *Gordian knot* assumes solving a very difficult problem by means of force or by evasion. It must be pointed out that Shakespeare 'unlooses this knot' in the first scene of *King Henry V*. It has to be remarked that an intricate knot tied by Gordius (a Phrygian king) was cut through with a sword by Alexander the Great. Undoubtedly, *a foregone conclusion* is Shakespearean as well: "But this denoted *a foregone conclusion*" (*Othello, The Moor of Venice*, Act III). In the 19th and 20th century, the above mentioned expression referred to a conclusion (or end) already known. Hence, it is a conclusion or result taken for granted. Other interesting examples are: *all Greek to me* (something that is completely unintelligible; it derives from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Act I, Scene II), where Casca makes a remark about Cicero's speech: "For mine own part *it was Greek to me*"), *eager for the fray* (ready to fight or struggle, hence, to participate in a game; originally a quotation from Colley Cibber's adaptation (1700) of Shakespeare's *The Life and Death of King Richard III*), *a dim religious light* (pertains to a chiaroscuro/a poor light/dusk; that expression was found in John Milton's *Il Penseroso*, see: *L'Allegro* 1954), "*a thing of beauty is a joy forever*" (found in the first verse of John Keats' *Endymion*, Book I; see: *The Poetical Works of John Keats* 1884 in www.bartleby.com; the passage continues, "Its loveliness increases"; parodied by literary flappers as: "A thing of beauty is a boy forever"), *crocodile tears* (hypocritical tears/ feigned weeping in Francis Bacon, *Essays*, 1612, No. 23: "It is the wisdom of *the crocodiles, that shed tears*

when they would devour"), *be all ears* (to pay close attention; it derives from *Comus* (1634) by John Milton: "*I'm all ear* and took in strains that might create a soul under the ribs of death"), etc.

Foreign clichés pertain to expressions borrowed by means of the contact or dealings with other countries and/or nations. Therefore, the following groups of phrases may be distinguished: (1) LATIN, for instance: *aqua pura* ('pure water'), *in vino veritas* ('truth in wine'; when people have drunk too much they frequently become loose-tongued and divulge information that they would keep secret), *ceteris paribus* (all other things being equal), *deus ex machina* ('god out of a machine'; refers to a person or event that offers unexpected assistance in a difficult or dangerous situation; the origin lies in the ancient Greek theatre, where a god appeared on the stage from a machine to resolve some aspect of the plot), *terra firma* ('firm ground'; a dry land as opposed to the sea; a Latinism is now despised as an outmoded elegancy); (2) FRENCH, for example: *enfant terrible* ('terrible child'; a young person with new and unconventional or startling ideas, who embarrasses older and/or more conventional people by his/her behavior, remarks or attitude; it is difficult to find an appropriate English translation of this phrase, which is the reason why it is commonly used), *cause celebre* ('famous case' refers to a legal trial or case that attracts a great deal of attention; it dates from the middle of the 19th century; presently, it is used by journalists), *coup de grace* ('blow of mercy'; 'a death blow administered to end a wounded person's suffering'; it probably originated in dueling or other sword fighting and had been adopted into English by about 1700 and it was already being used figuratively for the finishing stroke for any kind of enterprise, for example: 'He carefully placed the figures of bride and groom on top of the cake, *the coup de grace* for an artistic creation'; (3) ITALIAN, such as: *al fresco* (in the fresh; in the open air; very common in 1880–1910, but now regarded as an affectation, e.g.: "We dined *al fresco*", *con amore* (with love, zeal, delight, pleasure; with gusto, e.g.: "He performed the unpleasant task *con amore*"), *sotto voce* ('under voice'), *dolce far niente* ('sweet to do nothing'; freely, 'the very pleasant state of idleness', etc.; (4) Spanish: *Hasta la vista*, baby' for the American saying: *See you later, Alligator*).

The next criterion of systematization in the present analysis is the structure of clichés. They may vary structurally, being composed of: (1) a single word, for example: *mantra* (a word or formula to be either recited or sung), *nirvana* (paradise), *Mecca* (a tourist place that attracts people who share the same interest), *guru* (an expert), *Eureka!*[2]' (a Greek exclamation for: 'I have found it!'; announces one's delight at having made a discovery), etc.; (2) a phrase, for instance: (a) Noun Phrases: *the eleventh hour* (the last possible moment), *the missing link* (either a hypothetical primate forming an evolutionary connection between the anthropoid apes and man or anything lacking for the completion of a sequence), *a moot point* (a debatable or doubtful point), *the golden rule* (the most important rule and/or principle in a particular situation); (b) Verb Phrases: *to make ends meet* (to live within the limits of one's income), *to cry wolf* (to give a false alarm), *to keep somebody at arm's length* (to avoid becoming too familiar or friendly with someone), *to leave no stone unturned* (testifying to the thoroughness of some activity; common among journalists, politicians and police officers), etc.; as well as (3) the whole sentences, e.g.:

[2] The exclamation was first made by Archimedes in his bath when he discovered that a body displaces its own bulk in water when immersed.

What you see is what you get (indicates that someone or something is completely straightforward and above board), *When the cat's away the mice will play* (when a person in authority or control is not present, those under his/her authority take advantage and break the rules), *There's something in the wind* (something unknown or unexpected is about to happen), *There's no such thing as a free lunch* (one rarely gets anything for nothing), etc. All the above mentioned points may be presented in a diagrammatic manner:

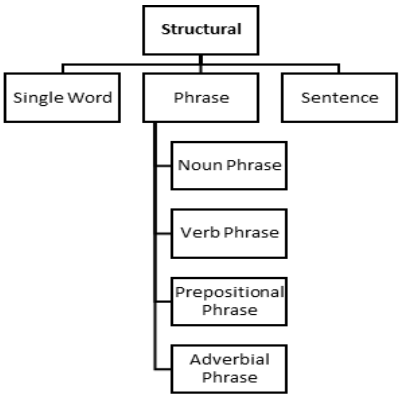

Fig. 3. Structural clichés

As far as the study of linguistic development by classifying and examining changes in meaning of clichés is concerned, the so-called semantic expressions can be recognized as distinct and they are subdivided into the following categories (Figure 4):

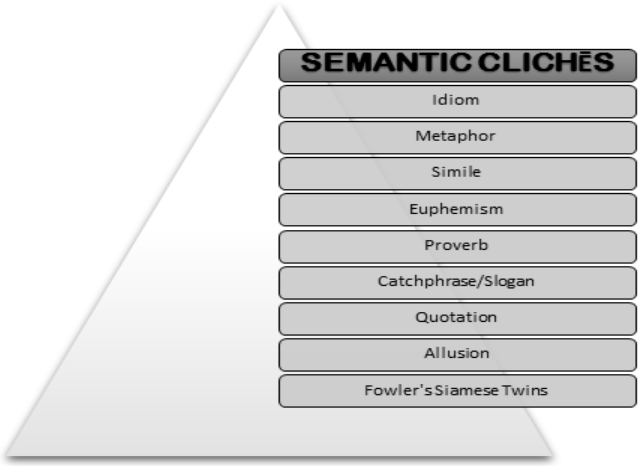

Fig. 4. Semantic clichés

Idiomatic expressions, whose meaning cannot be derived from its constituent elements are quite typical and (when used correctly) they can trigger recognition and acceptance

within the target culture, for example: *a bee in one's bonnet* (pertains to a fixation or obsession about something), *close shave* (regards a narrow and/or often lucky escape from danger), *to add fuel to the fire* (means to inflame or exacerbate a situation involving dispute or hostility), *to make a mountain out of a molehill* (is an idiom cliché meaning to exaggerate the importance or difficulty of something), etc.

Moreover, metaphorical clichés are more vivid and picturesque than other expressions (by means of pertaining to objects or concepts that they do not literally denote). Some of such commonplace sayings regard the human body and senses, e.g.: *a heart-to-heart talk* (is a description of a very intimate, frank and friendly conversation), *to give the cold shoulder* (means to treat with indifference), *to wash one's hands of something* (resembles refusal to take responsibility for something), *to show one's teeth* (is an evidence of malice and hostility), *to smell a rat* (to suspect that something is wrong) or *cannot believe one's eyes* (regards being surprised), etc. Some metaphorical clichés reveal abstract concepts, which are described in terms of color, form, size or temperature, e.g.: *like a red rag to a bull* (presents a source of anger or fury), *the green-eyed monster* (stands for jealousy), *in hot water* (expresses somebody's difficult situation), *castles in the air* (identify unrealistic, fond dreams) and so forth.

In comparison to metaphorical phrases there is a simile category, in which two unlike things are explicitly contrasted, for instance: *avoid like the plague*[3]; (keep clear of contact as much as possible; it is a very old wording that was probably used by St. Jerome and originally pertained to avoiding contact with people suffering from infectious or contagious diseases), *bald as a coot* (entirely bald; originally referring to a water bird with black plumage and a white beak extending to its forehead that gives the appearance of baldness), *cool as a cucumber* (it refers to someone's calmness and self-composure), *good as gold* (when referring to excellent behavior), etc.

Another group of clichés is composed of euphemisms that substitute a mild, indirect or vague expression for an offensive, harsh or blunt one instead (or vice versa), e.g.: *between jobs* (the meaning: unemployed and avoiding to admit the truth), *a delicate condition* (used satirically for pregnancy), *spend a penny* (going to the toilet), *kick the bucket* (it means to die), *economical with the truth* (lying or being less than totally truthful), *get into trouble* (to get pregnant while unmarried), *a happy event* (refers to childbirth), etc.

There is a large province of proverbs as well, for instance: *absence makes the heart grow fonder* (if two people who love each other are separated, the separation is likely to intensify their love), *actions speak louder than words* (what people do is more important than what they say), *blood is thicker than water* (the ties of family are stronger than those of friendship), *cry over spilled/spilt milk* (the folly of spending time regretting something that has been done and cannot be undone), *do not count your chickens before they are hatched* (a warning to people not to put faith in matters/things that they do not yet have or have experienced) and many more.

It is mandatory to point out that catchphrase clichés gained quite a popular appeal and they are frequently discovered in advertising campaigns, films, as well as television programs, for example: *just what the doctor ordered* (whatever is being referred to is actually what is required, suitable or relevant; just as a doctor's prescription), *no names* (a

[3] Interestingly, Fountain (2011) used this particular cliché in the title of his book.

guilty person's unwillingness to give a name to anyone), *dead but won't lie down* (someone has no chance of success, but will not recognize the fact and give up), *Don't call us, we'll call you* (an indication for rejection), *tell that to the marines* (means that only a fool would believe in something), etc.

Quotations and/or misquotations, such as: *Big Brother is watching you* (warning of the power that the authorities have over the society; beware of surveillance) form another category. There are many illustrations of these instances from the Bible and Shakespeare (overlapping the primordial category of trite expressions).

The same situation may be observed with respect to the allusion (i.e. casual reference and/or incidental mentioning) cliché category, which is not only restricted to proverbs and sayings, for instance *the spirit is willing* (meaning that although one would very much like to do something, s/he simply does not feel up to it; it is an allusion to a Biblical passage: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak", *Matthew* 26:41).

The last interesting category are doublet clichés (the so-called Fowler's Siamese Twins), such as: *bag and baggage*, *bits and pieces*, *leaps and bounds*, *odds and ends*, *over and done with*, *safe and sound*, *the dim and distant past*, etc. Kirkpatrick (1996, ix) states that the term Siamese Twins is an adequate one for words linked in pairs and conveying a single meaning. Fowler determined that these expressions are "indivisible because one of the pair is used in an archaic sense and would not be understood if used alone" (Kirkpatrick 1996, ix). Nonetheless, it must be claimed that these commonplace phrases are quite tautological (a synonym or near-synonym is contained for prominence).

Finally, the causal and practical considerations with regard to clichés have to be depicted. Within the domain of the so-called pragmatic clichés, the following groups of expressions can be distinguished:

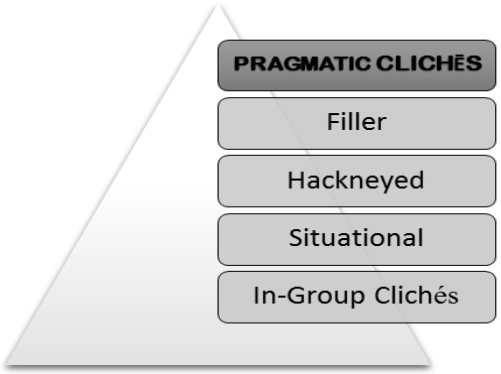

Fig. 5. Pragmatic clichés

Filler clichés are constantly used both in formal and informal speech. The ready-made formulas, such as: *the thing is*, *you know what I mean*, *believe it or not*, *just between you and me*, *needless to say*, *when all is said and done* and so forth; are inserted into daily conversations with neighbors, in gossip between family members, in public speaking of politicians, as well as in the after-dinner chats between various interlocutors. Some scholars call them 'lexical zombies' (Crystal 1995, 186) or 'time-wasters' (Kirkpatrick 1996, xii), because they are placed within 'gap situations', when language users think of

something else to say. Expressions that have been largely emptied of meaning may also imply that the speaker simply wishes to avoid clarity and exactness.

There is also a large group of hackneyed clichés found in tabloid journals, sports commentaries, the jargon of radio and television, as well as talks between members of the general public. A *vicious circle* is one of them and it is indicative of a chain of events, in which the solution of one problem creates another one. The saying itself has been widespread since the middle of the 19th century and it derives from logic (refers to proving one statement by another that itself rests on the first for proof). Other hackneyed wordings are: *whiter than white* (extremely pure), *a fate worse than death* (ironically about rape or seduction that is a great disgrace to a young woman), *when in Rome do as the Romans do* (advocates the advisability of conforming to customs and conventions), *hard and fast rule* (refers to rules that cannot be altered or dispensed with whatever the circumstances), etc.

What is more, situational clichés may be distinguished, which are called verbal Pavlovian responses in occurrences that are bound to inspire unnecessary comment, such as: *when you finished that you can come and do mine*, *it's about to rain now*, *say one prayer for me*, or those funny ones with the word *holy*, e.g.: *holy moley*, *holy cow*, *holy mackerel* or *holy smoke*.

The last category of typical expressions used in pragmatic contexts are in-group clichés, which are used from time to time by all language speakers (who apply them as discursive particles and whose role is as important to the naturalness of the oral production as is the intonation in a language). Examples are actually superfluous, for instance: *find the bright side philosophy* (find more cheerful aspects of life), *you can't cry over something that can't cry over you* (equivalent with *you can't cry over spilled milk*, it provides the following message: do not spend time wallowing in your own misfortune), *make lemonade out of lemons* (be encouraged to face adversity and hardship for a significant breakthrough). It has to be remarked that those everyday phrases vary from group to group and from family to family, because in this manner, people illustrate a typical way of expressing themselves as native speakers.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Having discussed the linguistic aspects of clichés certain conclusions can be drawn. It can be assumed that the phenomenon of stereotyped/hackneyed expressions (i.e. idioms, stock expressions, everyday phrases, the whole or part proverbs, similes, fashionable sayings, etc.) is quite popular and widely used by the members of particular language communities. Due to the fact that linguistic clichés used by the target culture play an important role in the phatic function of communication, they can be analyzed from various angles, for instance: syntactic or semantic meaning, pragmatic dimension of mixing phrases with a particular illocutionary force or by means of linking a commonplace way of thought with the source/origin, etc. Despite the great popularity of clichés, there are various negative opinions as well. Some scholars (e.g. Fountain 2011) claim that those 'banal', 'worn-out' or 'ready-made' formulas are characterized by the lack of accuracy and genuineness. Conversely, an absence of any well-accepted definition and systematization of those stereotyped phrases may enrich the language with new synonyms, help language users to identify with a group (e.g. when applied by advertisers

or politicians), provide a new stage between insensibly impoverished vocabulary and the new imagery of language, etc. It must be remarked that the taxonomy is strictly tentative in this paper, therefore, the study of clichés can be extended or exhibited in a dissimilar manner.

REFERENCES

Ammer, Christine. 2006. *The Facts on File Dictionary of Clichés.* 2nd ed. New York: Facts on File.

Crystal, David. 1995. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dickens, Charles. 1848. *Dombey and Son.* London: Bradbury and Evans. Quoted in Ammer 2006, 62.

Ellis, Nick C. 2008. "Phraseology: The Periphery and the Heart of language." In *Phraseology in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching,* edited by Fanny Meunier and Sylviane Granger, 1-14. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Fountain, Nigel. 2011. *Clichés: Avoid Them Like The Plaque!* London: Michael O'Mara Books.

Fowler, Henry W. 1994. *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. London: Wordsworth Editions Limited.

Keats, John. 1884. *Endymion*. The Poetical Works of John Keats. Accessed February 21, 2014. http://www.bartleby.com.

Kirkpatrick, Betty. 1996. *Clichés: Over 1500 Phrases Explored and Explained*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

McArthur, Tom, ed. 1992. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Milton, John. 1634. *Comus: A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*. The Literature Network. Accessed May 4, 2014. http://www.online-literature.com.

Milton, John and William Blake. 1954. *John Milton L'Allegro with the Paintings by William Blake*. New York: The Heritage Press.

Partridge, Eric. 1978. *A Dictionary of Clichés*. London: Routledge.

Shakespeare, William. 1990. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. New York: Gramercy Books.

The Holy Bible. Authorized King James Version KJV. 2010. Christian Miracle Foundation Press.

AUTHOR'S BIO: Monika Porwoł completed her PhD degree in linguistics at Opole University. She is Lecturer in the Institute of Modern Language Studies at the State Higher Vocational School in Racibórz (*Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Raciborzu*), where she teaches linguistics and translation studies. Her research interests include translation theory and practice, pragmatics, psycholinguistics and cognitive

studies. She is the author of *Strategies and tactics in specialised translation from English into Polish and from Polish into English* (2010) and several papers written both in English and Polish.

E-MAIL: monika-porwol(at)wp.pl