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Annual Buchanan Lecture – **Abstract**

Phraseology as a Mirror of Culture

– A Survey with Examples in Esperanto, English and German

The phrasicon, i.e. the inventory of idioms, phrases, proverbs, catchphrases and other items of pre-fabricated speech stored in a speaker's mental lexicon, is one of the most fascinating and at the same time most difficult parts of language. Phraseological units are interesting because of their colourful authenticity and the insight they provide into a language community's culture and history. Due to their frequently cryptic meanings and nuanced connotations, these units are problematic, especially for foreign learners. This lecture takes Esperanto as a starting point. On the basis of origins, Esperanto phraseology can be classified into three groups: First, many phraseological units have entered the language from various other languages. This group includes classical loan translations especially from the Bible or Greek mythology (e.g. *Sizifa laboro*) as well as ad-hoc loans introduced by speakers from their mother tongues more or less spontaneously (e.g. “*karaj, ni ne reinventu la radon*”). Secondly, there is a set of planned, i.e. consciously created, phraseological units. Most go back to Zamenhof, the creator of the language, who published an Esperanto Proverb Collection (*Proverbaro Esperanta*) in 1910. An example is *mankas klapo en lia kapo* (*ProvE* No. 439). Thirdly, there are phraseological units having their origin in the language and the cultural life of the speech community itself (e.g. *Jam temp' está; Ne krokodilu*). These are especially interesting, as they can only be understood by Esperanto speakers on the basis of their sociocultural knowledge and background. This rebuts the thesis that a planned language necessarily ‘lacks culture’. The lecture will compare the phraseology of Esperanto with those of other languages, especially English and German, and also address the impact that English has on the phraseology of other languages due to its function as a global lingua franca.

Publications by Fiedler related to the topic of the lecture include the following books:

(1999) *Plansprache und Phraseologie. Empirische Untersuchungen zu reproduziertem Sprachmaterial im Esperanto*. Frankfurt/M.: Peter-Lang-Verlag

(2002) *Esperanta Frazologio*. Rotterdam: UEA

(2004) *Ilustrita Frazologio (with illustrations by Pavel Rak)* (2nd edition 2009). Dobřichovice: KAVA-PECH

(2007) *English Phraseology. A Coursebook*. Tübingen: Narr

(2012) *Englische Redewendungen und Sprichwörter in der Praxis*. Leipzig: Engelsdorfer Verlag

(2014) *Gläserne Decke und Elefant im Raum – Phraseologische Anglizismen im Deutschen*. Berlin: Logos.