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LINGUISTIC AVATARS OF DEITY IN POLISH AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: This research study addresses the problem of lexicalisation of the idea of God in non-related languages. It considers Polish lexical units (words, phrases, and proverbs) and their English equivalents, revealing isomorphic and allomorphic semantic features of the units under consideration. The study also elucidates the specificity of representing non-material reality by linguistic means of the two languages.

Key words: God, deity, linguistic worldview, lexicon, proverbs, contrastive semantics.

1. Introduction

Every language reflects the way people think and feel as well as what they believe in. It induces various images embodied in linguistics signs. They pertain to a variety of phenomena ranging from those that are down-to-earth to these of a spiritual nature. The present study focuses on the latter end of the spectrum[1], namely the lexicon denoting God, and His divine attributes. Ironic as it may seem, I attempt to capture the notion of God as presented in non-religious sources, i.e. the ones that analyse philosophical, religious, or cultural aspects of deity.

1.1 Materials and methods

The aim of the study is to demonstrate whether God and deity are lexicalised in Polish and English by analogous or dissimilar linguistic means. I start with analysing dictionary definitions of the word *God* and its derivatives (section 2 *Capturing the idea*

of God) in order to establish their semantic (epidigmatic) structure and to find out which of the meanings are considered prototypical in the languages under comparison. Further on, I turn to specialist encyclopaedias (Gaskin 1998; Groff 2007; Harrington 2010; Hill & Rauser 2006; Leftow 2005; Mou 2009; Murguía 2012) with the purpose of systematising different approaches to capturing the notion of God.

The process of defining the semantic content of the terms denoting deity rests on the premise that respective features are ingrained in human cognition as characteristic and necessary to set the notion under consideration apart from neighbouring notions. Those features are also mirrored in the language used by a particular cultural community to describe reality in which its members function on a daily basis. The features are the building blocks of the linguistic worldview encoded in different languages. Hence, linguistic worldview shall be briefly addressed in section 3 titled *The idea of God in linguistic worldview* (Bartmiński 2009; Grzegorczykowa 1990; Levisen & Waters 2017; Panasenko 2014; Pisarek 1999; Tokarski 1998). It will be followed by the presentation in section 4 of the Great Chain of Being (Bartmiński 2009; Goatly 2007; Krzeszowski 1997; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Szwedek 2011) as one of the ways adopted in categorising all living beings and inanimate things. In this hierarchy, God takes the topmost position.

The language people use to describe the reality is embedded in culture and conditioned by the beliefs that particular communities adhere to. As a result, the definitions of various concepts as well as their attributes, God and deity in this case, are reflected in the lexicon. Both the Polish and the English are citizens of the states that belong to the western world, hence the values of western civilisation have shaped their worldview. Nevertheless, some diversity is likely to occur even between neighbouring nations, let alone those, whose languages do not belong to the same language family (Polish and English are just the case). Consequently, certain differences could be expected. The discussion to follow, aims at verifying this claim. Even though the scope of this analysis is limited to a narrow group of lexical items, one can get an insight into

whether the differences in how the concept of God is reflected in the lexicon of the languages under comparison and whether the differences are indeed greater than the similarities.

With the aim of carrying out the comparative semantic analysis, in sections 5 and 6, a sample selected from divinity-related lexis of Polish and English is put to scrutiny; the results are contrasted in order to find out whether the arrays of words, phrases, and proverbs relating to some form of deity in the two languages share a common motivation or whether they are diverse in a significant way. Owing to the fact that religious lexicon is very productive, only those phrases containing the noun *Bóg*, *Boże*, *Bogiem*, *Bogu* (*God*, *gods*) or the adjectives *boży*, *boski*, *boża*, *boskie* (*godly*, *God's*) will be analysed. Set phrases and proverbs related to other forms of deity, such as angels, cherubs, etc., are not considered. The sample is selected from contemporary dictionaries of the Polish language, phraseological dictionaries, and dictionaries of proverbs. The items marked as outdated or obsolete have not been included into the sample.

The analysis starts with the discussion of expressions in Polish, and, when available, their English counterparts are provided, as well as their literal translation. Analogously, proverbs in Polish are discussed together with the meanings they convey, as well as the available equivalents in English and the literal translation.

Obviously, the lexicon of any language is too extensive a collection, which cannot be investigated in a research project of such a limited scope. Nevertheless, an attempt to compare a certain number of expressions in one language (Polish) with the respective number of lexical units in another language (English) is quite manageable. The available data are analysed in sections *God-related lexicon in Polish and English* as well as *Proverbs addressing deity*, with preliminary conclusions drawn in the final section (section 7 named *Concluding remarks*).

2. Capturing the idea of God

Some form of supreme spiritual figure is present in religions and cults all over the world. Irrespective of their religious denomination, people worship some type of deity, which is believed to be omniscient and omnipresent.

The definition provided by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (MWD, s.a.) makes reference to superiority and power, and reads as follows:

> *"1 capitalized: the supreme or ultimate reality: such as*
> *a: the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshipped as creator and ruler of the universe*
> *b: Christian Science: the incorporeal divine Principle ruling over all as eternal Spirit : infinite Mind*
> *2: a being or object believed to have more than natural attributes and powers and to require human worship specifically: one controlling a particular aspect or part of reality*
> *3: a person or thing of supreme value*
> *4: a powerful ruler"*

The online dictionary Lexico.com (*s.a.*) presents God (God (a), *s.a.*) as the creator and a powerful ruler, also worthy of worship:

> *"1. (in Christianity and other monotheistic religions) the creator and ruler of the universe and source of all moral authority; the supreme being.*
> *2. (also **god**)*
> *(in certain other religions) a superhuman being or spirit worshipped as having power over nature or human fortunes; a deity.*
> *2.1 an image, animal or other object worshipped as divine or symbolizing a god.*
> *2.2 used as a conventional personification of fate.*
> *3. (also **god**) a greatly admired of influential person.*
> *3.1 a thing accorded the supreme importance appropriate to a god".*

Similarly, Longman dictionary of contemporary English (2012: 752) foregrounds the aspects of worship and creation. It explains the meaning of God in the following words:

> *"1. **God** the spirit or being who Christians, Jews, Muslims etc. pray to, and who they believe created the universe [...]. In this sense, God is written with a capital letter and without 'the'*
> *2. a male spirit or being who is believed by some religions to control the world or part of it, or who represents a particular quality [...]*
> *4. someone who is admired very much*
> *5. something which you give too much importance or respect to"*

The entry God (God (b), *s.a.*), in the online Oxford English dictionary (*s.a.*) is more extensive and focuses on a number of features ranging from superiority, through divine power, being the creator and ruler, to being an object of worship. It reads as follows:

*   **"A.***
__I.__ In uses relating to polytheism, and senses derived from this.
1. a. *A superhuman person regarded as having power over nature and human fortunes; a god (use in the singular usually refers to a being regarded as male (cf. GODDESS), but in the plural frequently used to refer to male and female beings collectively). Chiefly applied to the divinities of polytheistic systems; when applied to the Supreme Being of monotheistic belief, this sense becomes more or less modified: see sense A. 6b.*
b. *With postmodifying of-phrase or (now archaic) premodifying genitive indicating the department of nature, or human activity of passion, over which a particular god is thought to rule.*
In this use the reference, unless there is indication to the contrary, is usually to classical mythology, the gods of which are often mentioned rhetorically or humorously as mere personifications of qualities or influences.
the god of day*: the sun. **the god of war**: Mars or Ares. **the god of love**: Cupid or Eros. **the god of wine***: Bacchus.*
c. *Prefixed (without article) to the name of a god. Also: prefixed to the name of a person likened to a god (rare).*
2. *An image or object (as a plant or an animal) worshipped as symbolising or constituting the visible habitation of a divinity or as itself possessing divine power; an idol.*
3. *In extended use.*
a. *An adored, admired, or supremely powerful person (opera, rock, sex god).*
b. *An adored or worshipped object; something exercising great or supreme influence.*
4. *In plural.*
a. *__Theatre__. The occupants of the seats in the highest part of the auditorium; that part of the audience occupying the gallery.*
b. *colloquial (originally __Theatre__). With __the__. The seats above the dress circle in a theatre; the gallery. Now also: the upper tier of seats in a stadium. Frequently in **in the gods**.*
__II.__ In uses relating to monotheism, and senses derived from this. (Now usually with initial capital.)
5. *Especially in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: the Supreme Being, regarded as the creator and ruler of the universe.*
a. *Treated as a proper name.*
***b**, With an additional title of epithet. Frequently prefixed to the designations of the Persons of the Trinity, as **God the Father**, **God the Son**, **God the Holy Spirit**.*
6. *A being such as is understood by the name 'God'; a sole divine creator and ruler of the universe.*
a. *As a general concept.*
b. *As opposed to the gods of other faiths (with partial reversion to the general sense: see sense A.1.)*
c. *Chiefly with __of__. Such a being as associated with or embodying a particular quality (as __the God of love__, __the God of mercy__, __the God of vengeance__, etc.) or sphere of life or action (as __the God of nature__, __the God of revelation__, __the God of providence__), or as conceived of in a specified religion or system of thought (as __the God of philosophy__, __the God of pantheism__, __the God of Judaism__).*
B. *int.*
Expressing strong feeling, esp. dismay, disgust, exasperation, or anxiety. Cf. earlier __oh God__, __my God__, etc."

As noted in Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego (Dubisz 2003: 309) 'Bóg' ('God'), is "the highest supernatural being, the creator and master of the universe" (Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska 2013: 204). This sense, similarly to the definitions present in English lexicographic sources, pertains to the interpretation referring to monotheistic religions. Another sense, related to polytheistic religions, designates a being or its image, animal, plant or thing that is worshipped (SJP 1998: 182). Wielki słownik języka polskiego (2018), similarly to the definition provided by the online Oxford English dictionary (*s.a.*), specifies three senses, i.e. 1. in monotheistic religions – the highest supernatural being, the creator, and the master of the universe, 2. in polytheistic religions – a being or its image that is worshipped, 3. figuratively – an individual or object that is worshipped unconditionally.

The above quoted dictionary definitions all point to the powerful features and supreme qualities primarily, though not only, of religious reference. They are based on the way humans perceive and interpret the surrounding reality and the world we live in.

I shall now refer to diverse specialist and expert sources pertaining to religion, philosophy, including philosophy of religion, in an attempt to capture the "universal" concept of God.

Murguía notes in Encyclopaedia of global religion (2012: 469) that

> *"One cultural current in particular that has spanned the entirety of the globe is the notion of God. Perhaps no other figure of worship has reached so extensively into the past of ancient history and geographically throughout all reaches of the world than the idea of God itself. Although there are religions that focus directly on the worship, existence, guidance, or tyranny of God, no tradition could be said to lay exclusive claim to His or Her invention or creation. It is with this notion of theocratic plurality that any religious tradition may hold insight into the concept of God".*

However, he also states that there is little agreement among scholars as to the origins of the idea of God, either religious and / or cultural. Nevertheless, Murguía (2012: 470) points out as follows:

"[...] the very etymology of the word <u>God</u>[2] and the variety of terms by which God is referred to demonstrate the diverse ways of conceptualizing a God-figure. Despite specific names given to the deities of particular institutions of worship throughout history, the actual term <u>God</u>[3] derives from the Proto-Germanic word <u>guthan</u>[4], meaning "to invoke". While some traditions described God through parables and metaphysical concepts, others transformed God into a carnal living being, even developing hagiographies that support the indoctrination of particular beliefs. Still others understood God as a manifestation of nature and followed God's teachings to incur similar attributes within the harmony of life. Yet regardless of the ontological characteristics that distinguished these understandings of God, the geographical, social, and cultural conceptions that undergirded God's existence were the impetus for major wars, stretches of peace, grounds for exploration and conquest, and the establishment of ancient moral codes and ethical strictures".

The same scholar (ibid., 470) also addresses the issue of qualitative and quantitative analysis of the concept in question stating that:

"Interpretations of God can be classified according to a variety of quantitative and qualitative categories. There are at least four primary categorical varieties pertaining to the beliefs in God or gods. Quantitative varieties include monotheism, or the belief in and/or worship of a single god, and polytheism, or the belief in and/or worship of several gods. Parallel categories of these quantitative varieties include henotheism, which is the belief in one god combined with the belief in the possibility of other existing gods, and monolatrism, which denotes the worship of one god while recognizing the existence of other gods".

Despite the fact that various approaches can be adopted to the qualitative or quantitative interpretation of theistic categories, there are some universal attributes that can be identified. These include: omnipresence ("the always present nature of God"), omnipotence ("an all-powerful attribute of God") and omniscience (which "denotes an all-knowing attribute") (ibid., 470).

As noted by Leftow in The shorter Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy (2005: 326), people consider God as the maker, a perfect being.

"We think of God as an ultimate reality, the source or ground of all else, perfect and deserving of worship. Such a conception is common to both Eastern and Western religions. Some trace this to human psychology or sociology: Freud regarded God as a wish-fulfilling projection of a perfect, comforting father-figure; Marxists see belief in God as arising from the capitalist structure of society. Believers, however, trace their belief to religious experience, revealed or authoritative texts, and rational reflection".

Gaskin (1988: 329) emphasises the fact that the philosophical discussion on the existence of God(s) has gone through various stages, some of which include considerations on dogmas of Christian and Islamic theism and, most recently, the scepticism directed at Christian theism.

"Theism[5] is belief in the one and only eternal God who created and sustains all things, who remains active within the creation and has an awareness of, and care for, mankind as a special part of that creation. It is contrasted with deism[6] which is belief in a god (usually regarded as a single god) not otherwise known by revelation (i.e. by means of information revealed by god's messenger or intermediary on earth) who set the materials of the universe in orderly motion, or caused the universe as a whole to exist and be as it is, and thereafter either left everything alone or at least 'takes no care of man' ".

According to Harrington (2010: 66), God is "the God and Father of Jesus Christ – that is, creator, lord and god of all things". In Islamic philosophy, however (Groff 2007: 48), God is perceived as Allah who is pictured in Qur'an as:

*"absolutely unitary and unique, the one true reality and the ultimate source of all value, as well as the creator, sustainer and sovereign of everything that exists. This anticipates later philosophical concepts of the divine, as do the traditional Qur'anic attributes of eternity, omnipotence and omniscience. But the God of the Qur'an is no mere abstract explanatory principle; He is a person in the most robust sense, and His great character comes across powerfully through the many 'beautiful names' attributed to Him in the Qur'an: He is living, willing, hearing, seeing, speaking, grand, majestic, terrible, sometimes even haughty, but also just, merciful, generous, patient, etc. In spite of His radical otherness and **transcendence**, He is also intimately concerned with the affairs of His creatures and intervenes when necessary in the course of human history. The most important of these miraculous interventions is the revelation of the Qur'an itself, which sets forth the divine **law** according to which human beings should live and according to which they will ultimately be judged and rewarded or punished".*

According to Christian philosophy, as outlined by Hill and Rauser (2006: 75), the nature of God can be discussed with reference to

*"(1) **perfect-being theology**, which seeks to analyse the divine nature in the light of the single defining attribute of perfection or **'maximal greatness'**; (2) **creation theology**, which seeks to postulate as features of the divine nature those features that we can see reflected in, or are needed to explain, the world around us; and (3) purely biblical theology, which seeks to attribute to the divine nature only those features that are attributed to God in **special revelation**. Attributes traditionally held to be part of the divine nature are **omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, perfect goodness and eternity**. […] One of the other attributes traditionally ascribed to God is **divine simplicity**. In its strongest form the doctrine of divine simplicity asserts that each of God's attributes is identical with*

each of his attributes, and that God himself is identical with this attribute. In other words, God is his nature".

Chinese philosophy (Mou 2009: 57) does not recognise the existence of God, but religious Buddhism bases its "account of **karma** and **samsara** on the belief that the spiritual deity can exist independently of the physical body".

However, regardless of which interpretation is adopted, some type of the supreme omnipresent, eternal, and omnipotent force is acknowledged. The concept of God, together with the respective attributes, are succinctly summarised in A dictionary of philosophy of religion (2010: 98-99) as follows:

> *"As understood in traditional Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, God is the Creator of the cosmos, omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good, omnipresent, everlasting or eternal, necessarily existent, worthy of worship and incorporeal. Other attributes are sometimes thought to be divine simplicity (God is not made up of parts), immutability (not subject to change), and impassability (not subject to emotions or passions). Theists in these traditions sometimes differ in their treatment of the attributes: Is God outside of time? Does omniscience include knowledge of the future?*
> *"God" is also understood differently in traditions that affirm the unity of God and nature. According to pantheism, God is in some sense everything. In panentheism, the world (or nature or "creation") is thought to exist within God. Some nonrealists treat the concept of God noncognitively and believe "God" does not refer to a creator or some other transcendent being. On their view, talk of God is to be understood as a way of cultivating certain values and feelings such as compassion and loving your neighbor".*

Having concisely outlined the philosophical rationale behind the concept of God let us now focus attention on how it is represented in language and culture. We shall briefly address the linguistic worldview and the conception known as the Great Chain of Being.

3. The idea of God in linguistic worldview

Levisen and Waters note that in European languages the semantic molecule[7] 'God [m]' has been an essential molecule for the vocabulary of Christianity. "Concepts like church and prayer rely on God [m]" (2017: 11). This claim is definitely true of the Polish language, with the phrase – maxim 'Bóg, honor, ojczyzna' ('God, honour,

homeland') present on various emblems and flags. Its presence can be attributed to the linguistic worldview embedded and expressed in Polish.

Bartmiński (2009: 24) states that linguistic worldview is a concept that is defined as:

"a 'picture of the world reflected in a given national language' (Pisarek 1999: 168), a 'conceptual structure fossilised in the system of a given language' (Grzegorczykowa 1990: 43) and a 'set of regularities' in grammatical and lexical structures, manifesting various ways of perceiving the world" *(Tokarski 1998: 10).*

His own "definition of linguistic worldview as a 'set of judgements' reveals its epistemological (interpretive) nature, does not limit it to what is 'fossilised' or closed as a 'structure'". Instead, it "makes room for the dynamic, open nature of the worldview, and does not favour the abstract 'regularity' in grammar and vocabulary" (ibid., 24). He points out that the linguistic worldview is a feature of national language "used by an average speaker of a natural language: the worldview reflects the speaker's needs, aspirations and mentality". He goes on to explain further that it "is 'naive' in the sense of Apresyan, i.e. constructed by a human being, relative to human measure, anthropocentric, but also adapted to social needs and ethnocentric mentality" (ibid., 24). This can be stated of the most common style of any national language – the colloquial one.

The concept is summarised as follows (ibid., 213):

"The linguistic worldview conception is semantic, anthropological and cultural in nature. It is based on the assumption that language codes a certain socially established knowledge of the world and that this knowledge can be reconstructed and verbalised as a set of judgements about people, objects and events. The knowledge results from the subjective perception and conceptualisation of reality by the human mind; it is anthropocentric and relativised to languages and cultures. In contrast to the restrictive structuralist view, the knowledge of the world belongs to the realm of semantics, being entrenched in the very fabric of language, primarily in the meanings of words but also in grammar".

Levitsky (2016: 93) defines the language worldview as "a consciousness-reality image reflected by means of a language, a model of the integrated knowledge of the

conceptual sphere manifested in a language". However, an important type of worldview is the conceptual one, which according to the author, similarly to the language worldview "is constantly changing while reflecting the results of human cognitive and social activity". As succinctly summarised by Panasenko (2014: 170), "the conceptual image of the world results from contemplation, understanding, analysis and assessment of the surrounding social environment by a person as an intermediary between various spheres of human activity". Owing to the fact that language is an inherent human faculty, it is the main tool that is used to verbalise the conceptual imagery.

4. Great Chain of Being

As rightly pointed out by Bartmiński (2009: 40-41), language is a tool, which helps humans to assign values, "values are somehow 'stored' in language, in the meanings of words […] and in their combinations (collocations and phraseological units), as well as in texts, especially stereotyped texts, such as proverbs". While referring to valuation Krzeszowski (1997: 63) points out that "assigning a value is that aspect of conceptualization whereby a semantic structure derives its value through the imposition of a "profile" upon a "base" ". Within this domain, Krzeszowski (ibid., 64) points to two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. While "the horizontal dimension represents *scales* of values at various levels of the hierarchy" (ranging from negative to positive), the vertical dimension is "iconically consistent with the UP-DOWN orientation and depicts the *hierarchy* of values from the lowest to the highest ones". Bartmiński (2009: 39) refers to the vertical arrangement as "hierarchical, based on the experience of reality as a Great Chain of Being, in which God and people are at the 'top', whereas animals, plants and non-organic beings are at 'lower' levels".

As noted by the online Encyclopaedia Britannica (EC, *s.a.*) the Great Chain of Being also known as Chain of Being is the "conception of the nature of the universe". The source further explains as follows:

"The term denotes three general features of the universe: plenitude, continuity, and gradation. The principle of plenitude states that the universe is "full," exhibiting the maximal diversity of kinds of existences; everything possible (i.e. not self-contradictory) is actual. The principle of continuity asserts that the universe is composed of an infinite series of forms, each of which shares with its neighbour at least one attribute. According to the principle of linear gradation, this series ranges in hierarchical order from the barest type of existence to the <u>ens perfectissimum</u>[8], or God".

According to Szwedek (2011: 257), the Great Chain of Being "is a way in which human beings perceive the structure of the world, but only the material world".

As originally noted by Lakoff and Turner (1989) a certain sense of the order of things is taken for granted in language, particularly in proverbs. Lakoff and Turner notice that "proverbs concern people, though they often look superficially as if they concern other things […]. We understand proverbs as offering us ways of comprehending complex faculties of human beings in terms of these other things. To do this, we use the Great Chain of Being" (ibid., 166). Lakoff and Turner (ibid., 166-167) also explain the nature of the model in the following words:

"The Great Chain of Being is a cultural model that concerns kinds of beings and their properties and places them on a vertical scale with "higher" beings and properties above "lower" beings and properties. When we talk about man's "higher" faculties, we mean his aesthetic and moral sense and rational capacity, not his physical characteristics, his animal desires, or his raw emotions. We speak of higher and lower forms of life. The Great Chain is a scale of forms of being – human, animal, plant, inanimate object – and consequently a scale of the properties that characterize forms of being – reason, instinctual behaviour, biological function, physical attributes, and so on".

The Great Chain Metaphor in its basic form is characterised by attributes and forms of behaviour that are hierarchically arranged in the sequence (ibid., 170-171):

<center>*"The Basic Great Chain*</center>
- *HUMANS: Higher-order attributes and behavior (e.g. thought, character)*
- *ANIMALS: Instinctual attributes and behavior*
- *PLANTS: Biological attributes and behavior*
- *COMPLEX OBJECTS: Structural attributes and functional behavior*
- *NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS: Natural physical attributes and natural physical behavior*
Each form of being has all of the attribute types lower on the hierarchy. For example, animals do not have mental and character attributes, but in addition to instinctual attributes they have biological, structural, and natural physical attributes".

Krzeszowski (1997: 66) notes that the Great Chain has two versions, i.e. the basic one and the extended one. The former considers humans as topmost in the hierarchy, whereas "in the extended version human beings are situated below other beings, with God at the top of the hierarchy". Similarly, as noted by Goatly (2007: 148), in line with the long Western philosophical and cosmological tradition "At the top of the hierarchy were purely spiritual beings, God and the angels. Just below them, […] were humans, partly spiritual and partly animal". As further explained by Goatly (ibid.), humans "had the free will to choose between their spiritual nature and their animal nature, and the main feature distinguishing them from animals was their ability to use reason to control their will". Hence, the hierarchy follows the sequence: GOD – ANGELS – MAN – ANIMALS – PLANTS – MINERALS.

Krzeszowski (1997: 67) summarises the positions and features of God within this concept as follows:

"While the highest property of a particular being determines its position on the hierarchy, God as an absolute, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and perfect being, though not conceivable in any human terms, is, at least in some religions, credited with all the properties characterising all lower beings together with an infinity of other properties, probably best summarized in the Old Testament concept of JAHWE "I am who am", i.e. Being in Itself or Ultimate Being".

Thus, the being at topmost level of the Great Chain hierarchy is God with the representative mode of existence in the form of "being in itself" and the highest property signified as "divinity". The model, as the author (ibid., 68) rightly asserts,

"is a product of human everyday experience and reflects our persistent, though not universally accepted, view of the way things are in this world. As such it is a very grossly oversimplified model of reality, constructed from the experiential perspective of a human being endowed with the usual perceptual neuro-sensory apparatus of vision and other senses".

On the basis of the above discussion, the quoted dictionary definitions and expert sources, it is obvious that the designation of God in the conceptions of the universe (c.f., the Great Chain) is that of the topmost position among other beings and things, the supreme power, force, and source of knowledge. This aspect of the worldview is

also embedded in language. The subsequent sections will be devoted to the analysis of phrases, expressions, and later on proverbs in search for underlying meanings and shared imagery.

5. God-related lexicon in Polish and English

The values that a group of people hold dear are expressed in their rich vocabulary. I shall analyse the expressions in Polish and English related to the notion of God. As pointed out in the introductory section dealing with defining the concept, both in English and in Polish God is conceptualised as the supreme power, the maker, or creator; or an entity with highly valued qualities and features (compare the features of gods or goddesses metaphorically attributed to people in Stashko (2017).

The considerations to follow are aimed at determining to what extent the expressions present in the compared languages share the imagery and embedded meanings. An expression in Polish is presented first and it is followed by its literal meaning in English (the translations into English are provided by the present author). The sense of the lexical unit is provided and, wherever available, an equivalent phrase in English is quoted.

The Polish expression ***Bogiem a prawdą*** ('God and truth') means 'frankly speaking, truthfully speaking, really', (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 47). Clearly, it emphasises truthfulness of the expression, thus highlighting the positive connotation of the phrase and the reference made to the truth as if placed in God. In English, there is no reference to God in equivalent collocations and set phrases, i.e. *'to tell the truth'*; *'as a matter of fact'* (WSPA 2004: 66).

Bogu ducha winny / winien (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 47) ('owing the spirit to God') is used with reference to someone who is totally innocent in some respect. In this expression, the absence of sin is stressed, which is one of the features of divinity. The corresponding English expressions, i.e. *'(as) innocent as the day sb / one was born'* or

'(as) innocent as a lamb' (WSPA 2004: 66) make no explicit appeal to God; though the imagery of a lamb is metonymically associated with God (Biedermann 1996: 201-202).

In the expression ***Cały boży dzień*** (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 45) ('all God's day'), the reference is made to the divine feature of infinity, as it renders the meaning 'since early morning till night'; 'all day long' (WSPA 2004: 66). This imagery or reference to God is not present in the English equivalent.

Dopust boży (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 45) ('God's plague') stands for *'divine retribution'* (WSPA 2004: 174) and the above phrases pertain to God and his features; the punishment is sent by the divine force.

Iskra boża (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 45) ('God's spark') is a phrase describing 'exceptional skills, talents, predispositions; vocation, calling', which has no English equivalent associated with the supernatural divine properties; in English its meaning can be rendered by means of the expression *'to have a talent, gift'* (WSPA 2004: 316). The Polish expression might suggest the skills (i.e. 'the spark') are given or the call is voiced by the divine force, while the English phrase highlights the possession of talent by an individual and it is the individual that is foregrounded.

Palec boży (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 46) ('God's finger') refers to some sign, the activity of the supernatural forces, providence. In English, the equivalent phrase is *'the hand of God'* (WSPA 2004: 203). The difference in meaning is not noted; however in the process of metaphorisation a different body part is employed to render the desired sense.

Świata bożego nie widzieć poza kimś (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 46) ('not to see God's world beyond someone') is a phrase that means 'to love someone / something more than anything'. In the corresponding English expression *'to think all the world of sb'* (WSPA

2004: 1111), no reference is made to the Creator or the Maker, unlike in the Polish phrase.

Zapomnieć / zapominać o bożym świecie (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 46) ('to forget God's world') means 'to be so busy or fascinated by something that one forgets about everything; to concentrate on something'. In the English equivalent *'to be oblivious (to the world)'* (WSPA 2004: 66), no reference is made to God – the creator, instead only the world, i.e. the creation, is evoked.

If someone or something is ironically referred to as ***z bożej łaski*** (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 47) ('by God's grace'), this means they are considered to be unskilled, with no talent; 'piteous, pathetic' (WSPA 2004: 453). In English divine grace is not evoked, either literally or figuratively.

An exclamation, which is supposed to warn against doing something or showing fear of something, is ***niech (cię) ręka boska broni*** (Bąba & Liberek 2002: 45) ('let God's hand protect / defend you'). In its English equivalent *'God forbid!'*, God is directly evoked; however, this concept can be also evoked indirectly (metonymically), by naming the place of residence, i.e. *'heaven forbid!'* (WSPA 2004: 65).

Bóg zapłać ('let God pay') is a form of expressing thanks, which is in English worded as *'God bless you'* (WSPA 2004: 66). However, if a job or service is performed ***za Bóg zapłać*** (Dereń et al. 2019: 36) ('for let God pay'), ***robić coś za Bóg zapłać*** (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 23) ('to do something for let God pay'), this means that the remuneration is non-existent. Literally, God is called a prospective bursar, hence no financial compensation can be expected. In English, the meaning of the phrase is *'to do something for free'* (WSPA 2004: 66), with no reference to God.

As noted by Wielki słownik języka polskiego (2018), the exclamation ***Na Boga!*** ('on God') (or its archaic form ***Na miły Bóg!*** ('on kind God') is a way of expressing outrage,

surprise, etc. *'For God's / heaven's sake!'* (WSPA 2004: 66) can be treated as its closest English equivalent. A similar meaning is rendered by the Polish phrases ***na litość boską!*** ('on God's mercy / pity') ***/ na młość boską!*** ('on God's love') / ***na miły Bóg!*** ('on kind God'), which are synonymous with the English expressions *'for the love of God!'* or *'For God's / heaven's sake!'* (WSPA 2004: 65).

Broń (Panie) Boże! ('God defend') ***/ uchowaj Boże!*** ('God save') (WSJP 2018) express the meaning of negation 'absolutely not, not at all' rendered in English as *'God / heaven forbid!'* (WSPA 2004: 66). An alternative in Polish is also ***niech Bóg broni!*** ('let God defend').

A farewell well-wishing formula ***Z Bogiem*** ('with God') ***/ niech Bóg prowadzi*** ('let God lead / guide') (WSJP 2018) has no English equivalent.

The following expressions are used in Polish when intensifying the meaning of an utterance and as a form of an oath or swearing: ***Bóg (mi) świadkiem*** ('God is my witness') ***/ niech mnie Bóg skarze, pokarze*** ('let God punish me') ***/ tak mi dopomóż Bóg*** ('so help me God') ***/ jak mi Bóg miły*** (WSJP 2018). The first two, i.e. ***Bóg (mi) świadkiem / niech mnie Bóg skarze, pokarze***, are equivalent to *'as God is my witness!'*, while a counterpart to ***tak mi dopomóż Bóg*** is *'so help me God!'* (WSPA 2004: 66). The expression ***jak mi Bog miły*** ('as God is dear to me') as well as ***miły Boże*** ('kind God') ***/ na miły Bóg*** ('on kind God'), when used to designate surprise is rendered in English by *'good God!'*, *'my God!'*. However, when these exclamations are used to show outrage, they are equivalent to *'for God's / heaven's sake!'* or *'for the love of God!'* (ibid., 66)[9].

The phrase ***Niezbadane są wyroki boskie*** (WSJP 2018) ('unfathomable are God's judgements') suggests that nothing can be foreseen and anything can happen. In English the meaning is rendered by the phrase *'God works / moves in mysterious ways'* (WSPA

2004: 600). Considerable similarity is observed in the proverb *'All things are possible with God'* (Manser 2007: 7).

No reference is made to God in the English equivalent of the phrase ***Goły / nagi jak go Pan Bóg storzył*** (WSJP 2018) ('naked as God created him'), i.e. *'in his birthday suit'* (WSPA 2004: 66).

If someone is said to feel and look good, fresh, and young, the phrase that can be applied is ***czuć się / wyglądać jak młody bóg*** (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 23) ('to feel / look like a young god'). Numerous phrases designating good looks can be found in English, for instance, as quoted after the online Oxford English dictionary (*s.a.*) *'good looks'*, *'in good looks'*, *'to like the look(s) of'*, *'fresh and fair'*, *'fresh as a rose'*, *'fresh-looking'*, *'fresh-faced'*, *'to fresh-skin'*, *'body beautiful'*, *'beautiful-faced'*, *'beautiful-looking'*, *'beautiful-smelling'*, *'beautiful-minded'*, *'beauty sleep'*, etc. However, no direct equivalent containing the lexeme 'god' is registered in English.

The phrase ***komuś się żyje jak u Pana Boga za piecem*** (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 351) ('someone lives like behind God's stove') describes someone who leads a happy, healthy life and lives comfortably and safely. In the English lexicon, a phrase *'(as) snug as a bug in a rug'* (WSPA 2004: 66) refers to a similar situation, yet no reference to God is made.

Nie mieć Boga w sercu (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 468) ('not to have God in one's heart') is used with reference to someone who is ruthless, or has no conscience (WSPA 2004: 66) and in English 'God' is not evoked.

God is universally believed to be the maker, creator, and giver of life, hence, also the one who has the liberty to take it. This aspect of the worldview is highlighted in the Polish expressions designating someone's death, i.e. ***pójść do Boga*** ('to go to God') ***/ stanąć przed Bogiem*** ('to stand before God') ***/ spocząć w Bogu*** ('to rest in God') ***/ oddać***

Bogu ducha ('to give up spirit to God') */ oddać duszę Bogu* ** ('to give soul to God')
(Kłosińska et al. 2018: 23). In the English equivalent phrase *'to (go to) meet one's
maker'* (WSPA 2004: 66) the lexeme 'God' does not appear, nonetheless His image is
indirectly yet clearly evoked by means of the 'maker'. It might be added in this
connection that a proverb, which originated in the Middle Ages, i.e. ***Bóg widzi, czas
ucieka, śmierć goni, wieczność czeka*** (Kopaliński 2001: 116) ('God sees, time escapes,
death chases, eternity awaits') was frequently used as a motto in panegyrics as well as
etched on gravestones.

The futility of human attempts can be inferred from the expression ***strzelać Panu Bogu
w okno*** (WSJP 2018) ('to shoot into God's window'), which means to miss the aim
while shooting. There is no English equivalent phrase.

The array of phrases and expressions present in Polish and the equivalent English
lexical representation is much more extensive than the selected examples analysed in
the foregoing considerations. The results presented above are far from exhaustive, but
it is representative in the way the analysed languages reflect the manner their speakers
conceptualise reality. The lexicons of the respective tongues also abound in the maxims
testifying to their cultural background and commonly held beliefs. The following
considerations deal with this lexical area.

6. Proverbs addressing deity

Mieder (2004: xi) points to the fact that "the wisdom of proverbs has guided people in
their social interactions thousands of years throughout the world. Proverbs contain
everyday experiences and common observations in succinct and formulaic language",
which makes them easily remembered as well as "ready to be used instantly as effective
rhetoric in oral or written communication". Another feature ascribed to proverbs is that
of brevity; they have also been treated as linguistic representation of human cultural
values and thoughts.

Bartmiński (2009: 33) stresses that proverbs are the shortest texts that are of stereotyped nature.

   "They express the so called 'folk wisdom', general knowledge passed on to individual receivers by the community for pedagogical purposes. They tend to contain universal quantifiers, such as <u>every, no, always, never</u>[10], as is typical of stereotypes [...]. Proverbs are based on typical events and figures from the represented world, which allows one to use them as linguistic evidence in the reconstruction of the worldview".

As universally acknowledged, proverbs are maxims that contain truths pertaining to the lives of the given culture and language community[11]. The present discussion focuses on the concept of God represented in the contrasted languages and reflected in lexical items. The collection of god-related proverbs is a sizeable chunk of the lexicon of numerous languages. The cases of morals, beliefs, religious philosophy, and way of conduct are particularly plentiful in proverbs pertaining to religion (Kochman-Haładyj 2018). In the following discussion, we will consider selected proverbs related to God and divinity in general.

An old Polish proverb ***gość w dom, Bóg w dom*** (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 125) ('guest into the home, God into the home') is a welcoming formula which is used to express hospitality and appreciation for visitors. The English equivalent *'our house is at your disposal'* (WSPA 2004: 275) also expresses hospitality, but there is no reference to divinity in it.

Bóg jest jeden, choć wiar wiele (Dereń et al. 2019: 36) ('God is one even though faiths are many') presents the simplest of truths, namely: there is one God, or god-like being, despite a number of faiths, beliefs, or religious cults. This proverb suggests the monotheistic approach to the interpretation of the unique supernatural force, a single creator, and master: *'God is one, but faiths there are many'* (Kochman-Haładyj 2018: 35).

In a manner similar to the previous proverb, God's power is also highlighted in the maxim ***Człowiek projektuje, Pan Bóg dysponuje*** (Dereń et al. 2019: 36) ('man designs, God orders'), or ***Człowiek strzela, Pan Bóg kule nosi*** (Świerczyńska 2019: 9), ('man shoots, God carries bullets') which stress the futility of human attempts if they are not carried out by the supernatural. The English equivalent is *'Man proposes but God disposes'* (Mieder 2004: 6). The fate of humans is in the hands of God.

Każdy o sobie, a Bóg o wszystkich (Świerczyńska 2019: 10) ('everyone about himself, God about all') is a counterpart of *'every man for himself and God for us all'* (Manser 2007: 78). These proverbs mean that in times of crisis or danger personal survival is in the hands of and the responsibility of each individual, while there is "hope for divine protection for everybody". They are synonymous with *'self-preservation is the first law of nature'*.

God's care and helpfulness are brought to the fore in the Polish proverbs ***Bóg pomaga tym, co sobie sami pomagają*** ('God helps those who help themselves') or ***Pracuj, nieboże, a Bóg ci dopomoże*** ('work, poor thing, and God will help you') (Świerczyńska 2019: 8) whose English equivalent is *'God helps them, that help themselves'* (Mieder 2004: 218). However, this means that individuals are responsible for their own fate and their hard work is more likely to be rewarded. "Those who are self-reliant and make an effort are more likely to get what they want than those who sit back and wait for divine assistance" (Manser 2007: 102).

God's mercy is the core of the proverb ***Kto sie na Boga spuści, tego Bóg nie opuści*** ('who relies on God, God will not leave him') – *'God provides for him, that trusteth'* (Świerczyńska 2019: 10). The fact that anything may happen or nothing is impossible to the divine will is also accentuated in the Polish proverb ***Jak Pan Bóg dopuści, to i z kija wypuści*** (WSJP 2018; Kłosińska et al. 2018: 23) ('if God allows, a stick will bud / sprout'). A related English maxim is *'All things are possible with God'* (Manser 2007: 7).

Gdzie nic nie ma, tam i sam Pan Bóg nie bierze ('where there is nothing, even God himself does not take') testifies to the futility of attempts when one does not have the right means. Contrarily to the Polish proverb, deity is not evoked in the English maxim *'Where nought's to be got, kings lose their scot'* (Świerczyńska 2019: 11).

Even though God is presented as omniscient, omnipresent, and good, he is also the one who punishes people for their misbehaviour and sins. ***Pan Bóg nierychliwy, ale sprawiedliwy*** (Dereń et al. 2019: 36) ('God tardy, but just') is rendered in English as *'God stays long but strikes at last'* (Świerczyńska 2019: 11). A similar imagery is evoked by the maxim ***Boskie młyny pomału mielą, ale dobrze*** (Świerczyńska 2019: 8) ('God's mills grind slowly but well'), whose English equivalents are *'The mill(s) of God grind(s) slowly'*; *'The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind small'* or *'God's Mill grinds slow, but sure'* (Mieder 2004: 51). The interpretation offered by Mieder (ibid) points to justice being done: however slow it may take, it is sure to come.

A particular form of God's punishment is exemplified by the proverb ***Kogo Bóg chce skarać, rozum mu odbiera*** (Świerczyńska 2019: 10) ('whom God wants to punish, he takes away his mind'). As noted by Stone (2006: 187), the counterpart in English is *'whom God would ruin, he first deprives of reason'*. Another variety noted by Manser (2007: 301) is *'whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad'*. Two aspects are important in those maxims: first of all – God is almighty and can do, give, and take, anything; second of all – human mind is crucial in providing for a prosperous, comfortable life.

In order to secure well-off living conditions people need to work and those who are hardworking are helped out by divine power. ***Kto rano wstaje, temu Pan Bóg daje*** (Świerczyńska 2019: 227) ('who gets up early, him God gives') is clearly related to religion, unlike the English counterpart *'the early bird catches the worm'* (Stone 2006: 120). Those who are late to act are at a disadvantaged position and miss the opportunities (Manser 2007: 70).

God is the last resort to many people in times of distress, they are then excessively eager to pray and ask for help: *Jak trwoga, to do Boga* (Dereń et al. 2019: 36) ('when terror, then to God'). The English equivalent is expressed in words *'the danger past and God forgotten'*, which Manser (2007: 51) explains as follows: "people are prone to calling on God in times of trouble, only to forget all about their newly found religious faith as soon as the crisis is past". An equivalent variant reads *'the river past and God forgotten'*.

Despite the punishment people receive from the divine power for their sins, they are not made to endure more than they can stand. Such an observation can be inferred from the proverbs *Komu Bóg pomaga, ten wszystko przemaga* (Dereń et al. 2019: 36) ('whom God helps, he overcomes everything') and its English equivalent *'God fits / makes the back to the burden'*, which suggests that "at times of great adversity we are given extra strength", or "the strongest are destined to suffer the greatest adversity" (Manser 2007: 103). As noted by Manser (ibid), a similar meaning is expressed by the proverb *'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb'*.

Strzeżonego Pan Bóg strzeże (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 519) ('the guarded God guards') is a proverb, which accentuates the necessity for caution, in English rendered as *'better safe than sorry'*. Manser (2007: 25) explains that it is better to take safety measures than risk problems. Unlike in the Polish maxim, God is not called to mind as safeguard.

Human immorality is accented in the Polish proverb *Im bliżej kościoła, tym dalej od Boga* (Świerczyńska 2019: 78) ('the nearer the church, the further from God') and its English equivalent *'The nearer the church, the farther from God'* (Stone 2006: 67). Unfortunately, the interpretation is not favourable either for the church officials or its active members who are often "the least godly in their daily lives" (Manser 2007: 195).

Bogu i mamonie razem służyć nie można (Świerczyńska 2019: 8) ('God and mammon together one cannot serve') and its English equivalent *'You cannot serve God and*

Mammon' (Manser 2007: 314) are of biblical origin (the Gospel of Matthew[12] 6: 24) and mean that "a devout or virtuous way of life is incompatible with the pursuit of material wealth and possessions". Money is thus considered *'the root of all evil'*, which seems to drive pious individuals into the realm of moral destruction.

Panu Bogu świeczkę i diabłu ogarek (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 23) ('candle to God, candle-end to devil') is a proverb describing the situation, in which one is trying to please the opponents. Its English equivalent *'to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds'* (WSPA 2004: 1112) is metaphorically placed in the domain of hunting, versus the Polish religious association. The reference to the two core figures i.e. God and devil is present in the English proverb *'where God builds a church the devil will build a chapel'* (Stone 2006: 187). The meaning that is conveyed by the maxim is the appendage of bad things to any positive undertaking; in other words "any force for good, such as progress or reform, is inevitably accompanied – or closely followed – by something bad" (Manser 2007: 298).

The proverb ***co cesarskie oddać cesarzowi, a co boskie – Bogu*** ('what is Caesar's give back to Caesar, what is God's – to God') has its direct English counterpart, namely: *'render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God which are God's'* (Świerczyńska 2019: 9). As noted by Manser (2007: 232), the proverb is of biblical origin (the Gospel of Matthew 22:21) and its core meaning is "to keep worldly things separate from religion".

Jak Kuba Bogu, tak Bóg Kubie (Kłosińska et al. 2018: 23) ('as Jake (does) to God, so God (does) to Jake') is a case of *'tit for tat'* (WSPA 2004: 66), the revenge can be expected in return for the harm done to someone. Clearly, the English equivalent is not motivated by religious themes.

7. Concluding remarks

Attempting to define deity is a daunting task. The features ascribed to the concept are reflected in its meaning and interpretation. Thus, the worldview embedded in language is tell-tale evidence of what a particular community believes in. Considering the definition of 'God', a valuable observation has been made by Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska (2013: 204-205), who states as follows:

"According to the cognitive definition, which accounts for linguistic facts, God is not only an invisible being more powerful than people but a being that is endowed with many conventional, linguistic-cultural features [...]: he is the creator of people and the world (stworzenie boże 'God's creation'), the giver of fate, happiness and wealth (dary boże 'God's gifts,' co Bóg da 'whatever God gives,' bogdanka (old use) 'a beloved woman,' lit. 'the one given by God'), the one who takes care of people (Opatrzność Boża 'God's Providence'), supports (szczęść Boże!/z Bogiem! 'God bless you!'), helps in difficult situations (zostawić kogoś Opatrzności Bożej 'leave someone to God's Providence'). People are dependent on God''s will (wola boska 'God's will,' niech się dzieje wola Boża/nieba 'let God's will be done,' dopust boży 'dispensation of Providence; scourge'), God being sovereign in his decisions (miłosierdzie boże 'God's mercy'). God is someone who intervenes in a person's life (palec boży 'the hand of God,' lit. 'God's finger,' zrządzenie boskie 'God's decree'), punishes (kara boska 'God's punishment,' sąd boży 'God's Judgment') or rewards (nagroda od Boga/w niebie 'a reward from God/in heaven') but is always ready to forgive sins (pojednać się z Bogiem 'make peace with the Lord'). God is omniscient (Bóg jeden wie 'God only knows') and therefore just (sprawiedliwość boska/boża 'God's justice'). He lives mainly in heaven (coś jest pewne jak Bóg na niebie, lit. 'something is certain as God in heaven'), where he awaits people after they have died (pójść do Boga 'go to God,' stanąć przed Bogiem 'stand before God,' oddać duszę Bogu 'give up one's soul to God')[13]".

God, as presented in the above description, is powerful, merciful, just, but also punishes people, rules over them, and judges their behaviour. All of those aspects of the Polish worldview are evidenced in expressions, phrases, and proverbs copiously noted in various lexicographic sources. In line with the categorisation proposed in the Great Chain metaphor, God is, indeed, pictured in linguistic expressions as all-powerful, superior to humans and all living creatures. The analysed examples in fact confirm the statement quoted earlier from Krzeszowski (1997: 66), namely, "human beings are situated below other beings[14], with God at the top of the hierarchy".

The analyses presented in sections 5 and 6 testify to the fact that both Polish and English share the way in which God is conceptualised to a great extent. Deity is frequently evoked in both discussed languages.

God is present at the beginning and at the end of life. However, as can be noted the latter case is more frequently evoked in Polish (***pójść do Boga / stanąć przed Bogiem / spocząć w Bogu / oddać Bogu ducha / oddać duszę Bogu*** – *'to (go to) meet one's maker'*). Interestingly, in English the aspect of giving life is foregrounded ('the maker') even in the face of departing life. All of the above quoted expressions are euphemistically describing death, however, avoiding to name the unavoidable[15].

God is viewed with reverence (***na litość boską! / na młość boską! / na miły Bóg!*** – *'for the love of God!'*, *'For God's / heaven's sake!'*; ***palec boży*** – *'the hand of God'*), and is considered omnipotent (***Niezbadane są wyroki boskie*** – *'God works / moves in mysterious ways'*; ***Jak Pan Bóg dopuści, to i z kija wypuści*** – *'All things are possible with God'*). He can protect (***Broń (Panie) Boże! / uchowaj Boże!*** – *'God / heaven forbid!'*) and he is helpful (***tak mi dopomóż Bóg*** – *'so help me God!'*; ***Komu Bóg pomaga, ten wszystko przemaga*** – *'God fits / makes the back to the burden'*, *'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb'*). He cares for those who trust him (***Kto się na Boga spuści, tego Bóg nie opuści*** – *'God provides for him, that trusteth'*) and supports those who are resourceful (***Bóg pomaga tym, co sobie sami pomagają***, ***Pracuj, nieboże, a Bóg ci dopomoże*** – *'God helps them, that help themselves'*). God is an everlasting, omniscient force (***Człowiek projektuje, Pan Bóg dysponuje***, ***Człowiek strzela, Pan Bóg kule nosi*** – *'Man proposes but God disposes'*), and is addressed for help in troubled times (***tak mi dopomóż Bóg*** – *'so help me God!'*). However, humans are fallible and tend to forget the helping hand as soon as their condition improves (***Jak trwoga, to do Boga*** – *'the danger past and God forgotten'*, *'the river past and God forgotten'*).

God is just (***Pan Bóg nierychliwy, ale sprawiedliwy*** – *'God stays long but strikes at last'*; ***Boskie młyny pomału mielą, ale dobrze*** – *'the mill(s) of God grind(s) slowly'*, *'the mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind small'*, *'God's Mill grinds slow, but sure'*). Despite the positive connotations, God is also viewed as revengeful. For their sins people are punished (***Kogo Bóg chce skarać, rozum mu odbiera*** – *'whom God*

would ruin, he first deprives of reason', *'whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad'*; ***dopust boży*** – *'divine retribution'*).

While evoking the image of deity, human wickedness is also brought to attention, i.e. insufficient faith and devotion (***Im bliżej kościoła, tym dalej od Boga*** – *'The nearer the church, the farther from God'*), as well as craving material prosperity (***Bogu i mamonie razem służyć nie można*** – *'You cannot serve God and Mammon'*).

While most Polish lexical phrases and proverbs have their equivalents in English, not all of those counterparts evoke the image of deity. Thus, ***Bogiem a prawdą*** means *'frankly speaking, truthfully speaking, really'* and deity is synonymous with truth. ***Bogu ducha winny / winien*** describes someone *'(as) innocent as the day sb / one was born'* or *'(as) innocent as a lamb'* and it is the lack of sins that is highlighted. God as creator and maker of the universe and all living things is presented in the phrase ***Świata bożego nie widzieć poza kimś*** (*'to love someone / something more than anything'*), ***zapomnieć/ zapominać o bożym świecie*** ('to be so busy or fascinated by something that one forgets about everything; to concentrate on something', *'to be oblivious (to the world)'*) and ***cały boży dzień*** (*all day long*). 'Boży świat' and 'boży dzień' employed in the above quoted expressions have come into being through God's making. God offers gifts and talents (***iskra boża*** – *'to have a talent, gift'*), is associated with providing prosperous life (***jak u pana boga za piecem*** – *'(as) snug as a bug in a rug'*), as well as and good looks and health (***czuć się / wyglądać jak młody bóg***). Many Polish welcoming and farewell formulas also enclose divine reference (***gość w dom, Bóg w dom***; ***z Bogiem***; ***niech Bóg prowadzi***).

Obviously, this cannot be considered a conclusive observation, yet a greater presence of Polish expressions in which divine forces are evoked is likely to provide evidence for a more religious outlook and devotion of the Polish people. The community is known for its devoutness and excessively relying on deity. Such frequent reference to God can be attributed to high religiousness resulting, among others, from years of

poverty and subordination in historical times. Poland lost independence and was eradicated from the set of European member states for many years. When there was no one to turn to for help, divine forces were ordinary people's last resort. Those years of dependence from foreign states, lack of freedom, or sovereignty could have resulted in the need to resort in prayers to almighty God for ultimate help. This also accounts for the number of lexical items featuring God and divine powers. Speakers of English, on the other hand, have been, historically, citizens of an influential state; thus they had plenty of self-confidence and trust in their own power. Perhaps, no great reliance on any other entity was necessary.

Being religious cannot be attributed only to poverty or lack of freedom. This is a highly spiritual issue pertaining not only to one's beliefs, values, traditions as well as national culture, but also to the worldview expressed by the language and culture community. Religion is considered quite a significant part of Polish national identity.

As pointed out by Underhill (2011: 6), three dimensions of worldview can be identified; of the language system, of each cultural mindset[16], and of the individual. However, "this subdivision will only serve if it is understood as a means of discerning different conceptions of the relationship between language and thought, between words and worldviews" (ibid.). Those relationships between 'words and worldviews' are expressed by means of linguistic items of a given language.

Despite the fact that in English fewer god-related lexical units are noted, as compared to their Polish variety (as exemplified in the discussion above), both languages share the imagery to a great extent. The differences are not extreme, but the synonymous linguistic means draw on diverse metaphorical extensions (e.g. Polish: ***goły jak go Pan Bóg stworzył*** vs. English: *'in his birthday suit'*; Polish: ***jak u Pana Boga za piecem*** vs. English: *'as snug as a bug in a rug'*; Polish: ***Bogu ducha winien*** vs. English: *'as innocent as a lamb'*). Nevertheless, all of the lexical items conform to the linguistic worldview according to which the core features of divinity, i.e. omnipresence,

omniscience, superiority, and power (whether to reward or punish), are rendered in the semantics of the lexical items.

Notes

1. The term 'spectrum' means here a range of complexity, the continuum starting with the matter-of-fact concepts and ending with those that are of mystical and divine nature.

2. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

3. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

4. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

5. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

6. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

7. According to Levisen and Waters (2017: 11) "A reductive paraphrase is a short explanatory text, composed in semantic primes. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to make recourse to a selection of non-primitive meanings called *semantic molecules*. Marked with the notation [m], these concepts are not simple; that is, they can be semantically decomposed into primes. The claim is that they function as conceptual building blocks, in the analysis of other words".

8. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

9. Compare: Gnezdilova (2017).

10. The underlining has been introduced by the author to reflect the original italicised form.

11. Compare: discussion on knowledge-related proverbs (Uberman 2019).

12. The words come from The Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament and are part of the Sermon on the Mount (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_6:24), which in the translation after the World English Bible read as follows:

No one can serve two masters, for either he
will hate the one and love the other; or else
he will be devoted to one and despise the
other. You can't serve both God and Mammon.

13. The underlinings in the quotation have been introduced by the author to reflect italicised forms in the original source.

14. Other beings: the angels (Goatly 2007: 148).

15. This topic is extensively discussed in Uberman (2018).

16. Cultural mindset, according to Underhill (2011: 7), means "designating the worldview specific to a political regime or religion".

List of abbreviations

EC – Encyclopaedia Britannica

MWD – Merriam-Webster online dictionary

SJP – Słownik języka polskiego

WSJP – Wielki słownik języka polskiego PWN ze słownikiem wyrazów bliskoznacznych

WSPA – Wielki słownik polsko-angielski

sb – somebody

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Résumé

God is the phenomenon that is difficult to define, as deity can be viewed from a variety of angles, including the monotheistic or polytheistic one. Certain features, such as omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, are considered universal for God(s). The divine, supernatural power is considered to be the creator of life superior to all living organisms. The unique features of deity reflected in language also confirm the unparalleled position of God. The linguistic worldview, that is embedded in the language of a particular culture-and-language community, is expressed through

application of particular lexical means. They replicate the beliefs and experiences of such a group. The analysis of the selected part of God-related lexical stock of Polish and English has shown that both language groups, as representatives of the western world, largely share the approach to the description and perception of god. God is perceived from a monotheistic perspective. The image of God that is enclosed in the scrutinised vocabulary is uniform for Polish and English. Both languages encode the supernatural power, God's supremacy over all living creatures, as well as the facility to give and take life. Such attributes of deity as justice, mercy, and grace are also highlighted. The similarities noted between the linguistic avatars of deity in Polish and English by far exceed the differences between the compared languages. The observed presence of intensive reliance on God is noted in more cases in Polish, as compared to English. More frequent instances of turning for help to God in Polish could be explained by the feeling of inferiority caused by years of lack of independence and the need to seek help in the maker as a last resort. Nevertheless, the cultural mindset reflected by the array of the analysed linguistic means, is comparable in Polish and English.