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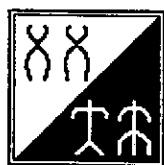
## SIMPLE FORMS

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Winged Word

## WINGED WORD

**1. Definition:** Ww. is the English translation from the Greek ἔπεα πτερόεντα, an expression coined by Homer (*Iliad, Odyssey*). This expression was generally accepted as a technical term for quotations which have become current and widely used within a given culture when, in 1864, the German scholar Büchmann edited a collection of sayings such as

- (1) To be or not to be, that is the question  
(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III, 1)

under the title of *Geflügelte Worte*. In a sense, the term ww. has become a ww. itself since then. Although names like 'familiar quotation', 'famous quotation', or 'household word' may be much more common, the term 'ww.' is known as a technical term in English, too (Taylor 1950), and, in fact, was even used in English before Büchmann made it popular (Jones 1851: XVII). Robert-Tornow, the first editor of Büchmann's world-famous collection after the latter's death, can be regarded responsible for the definition of the ww., which seems to be overall accepted and generally approved: "A customary quotation, a winged word i.e., is a saying, expression, or name, permanently quoted in large circles of the fatherland, in no matter which language, the historical author or literary source of which can be documented" (1895: XV).

**2. Examples and Analysis:** After Büchmann introduced *geflügelte Worte* as a technical term, this name was adopted in many other languages: thus, for example, in Danish we have *bevingede ord* (Arlaud 1878), in Swedish *bevingade ord* (Ahnfelt 1879), or in Russian *krylatoe slovo* (Maksimov 1890). Whereas Homer had in mind only the volatility and movement of a verbalized idea which 'flies' from speaker to listener, Büchmann narrowed the meaning of the term crucially. He termed ww.s only those sayings "which have originated from documentable authors, have become generally known, and are generally used like proverbs" (1864: 1). Thus, he accepts as ww.s "not those, which *might* be quoted, but those, which really are quoted" (1864: 6). - One and the same ww. can, of course, be in use in several cultures; ww.s may show international parallels and may be adopted in the original language. They can and must, however, always be traceable back to a concrete source, which, either written or oral, need not necessarily be known to the user.

The character of a ww. usually seems to have been fixed prescriptively, rather than described and defined theoretically. Consequently, the above-mentioned definition may be challenged on the basis of all three of its essential characteristics: definite author, common

usage, and use over a certain period of time.

(i) Thus, for example, the saying

(2) L'Etat, c'est moi

is generally ascribed to Louis XIV, although this has never been reliably proven. This is to say that a ww. may have been ascribed to a certain author, even though it only characterizes him or her, and was not originally uttered by that person. A phrase may also have been in popular use well before it was ascribed as a ww. to a specific person (Šmeleva 1964: 184). Thus, the ww. turns out to be a category, which seems to be useful for practical rather than scientific purposes (Zajmovskij 1930: 15). Mokienko, who has traced the popular sources of ww.s, criticizes "the simple process by which one identifies the author of one saying or another" (1980: 17), and sees the investigation of the "prototypes of fixed expressions" (1975: 20) and "of the interdependent process of popular speech and literary language" (1980: 17) as being much more important. Büchmann himself (1864: 8) had already admitted that it was "often nearly impossible to distinguish between winged word and a proverb".

(ii) The point of common usage also seems to be questionable and rather a matter of "subjective consciousness" (Röhrich 1973: 15), or, as Afon'kin (1985: 21) puts it, "(...) ein subjektiver Faktor, der von dem Bildungsstand eines konkreten Sprachträgers, seiner Belesenheit, seinem Interessenkreis, mitunter auch von ganz zufälligen Umständen abhängt." General knowledge of ww.s has usually been confined to the educated upper class. Büchmann (1864: 4) admits "that the educated rabble still makes use of the most flat and popular quotations", but that the circle of the audience becomes narrower and more closed depending on the kind of quotation: "Proverbs are the wisdom of the alley (...); quotations, on the other hand, are the nearly exclusive property of the literary educated" (1864: 3f.). Therefore Afon'kin (1985: 21) argues as follows: "Als Hauptkriterium für die Zuordnung eines festen Wortkomplexes zu den geflügelten Worten hat erstens sein von der philologischen Wissenschaft nachgewiesener Ursprung aus einer literarischen oder geschichtlichen Quelle zu gelten."

(iii) Like language in general, ww.s are subject to the laws of lexical variation and meaning change. Therefore, there is not only the predominantly practical problem of which sayings should be included in collections, only topical and current ones, or outdated ones as well. Additional problems arise when the reconstruction of the original saying and its meaning is not sufficient for present comprehension.

In conclusion, one has to say that many problems arise when trying to find a suitable definition of the ww. Because of the weakness of the above-mentioned criteria, it seems most reasonable to work out a

descriptive scheme of the various kinds of ww.s which are usually included in collections. Such a classification scheme provides not only an overall understanding of ww.s within the language system in general, but also demonstrates the boundaries for the inclusion or exclusion of ww.s from collections and from philological consideration.

**3.15. Typology / Related Forms and Transformations:** A typology of ww.s does not exist. Classifications in collections are normally organized according to the origin of the included sayings. Thus, classifications similar to the following are usually obtained:

- a. quotations from native authors;
- b. quotations from foreign authors (translated and original);
- c. Biblical;
- d. historical (oral tradition).

A classification scheme (as indicated in Fig. 2) might have its basis in the syntactical structure and textual function of ww.s. Although Ožegov (1957: 126) maintains that ww.s are marked by their "lack of specific structures", the demonstration of the variety of their form seems to set up a working typology. It clearly shows the *fluent transition* from a ww. to the lexical and phraseological stock of a language, independent of documentable sources (Švarckopf 1966). In addition, the transition from words or phraseologisms to ww.s and vice versa also becomes as apparent as does the transition from words to more complex linguistic units and vice versa (Fig. 1):

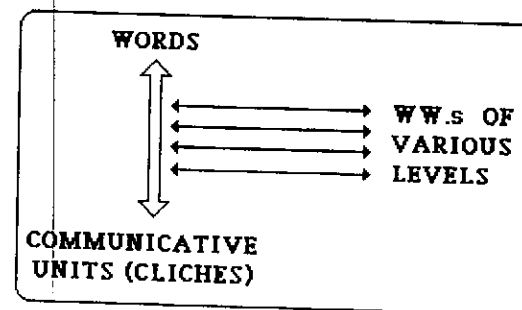


Fig. 1

The whole stock of ww.s can be divided into two major groups according to their role in a given text: either they are signs of objects or single notions which function as a part of a sentence, or they represent complete statements (speech acts) and normally function as sentences; therefore, they can be termed *denominative* and *communicative* (Eckert 1978: 205ff.). Within this general framework, four major types can be

distinguished (see Fig. 2):

(a) The inclusion of *single words* has always been debated, despite the fact that they have always been included in collections. One example would be the word (3) 'grog', referring back to the English admiral Vernon, who, in 1740, ordered his crew not to drink rum pure, but only mixed with water. He, who usually wore a program, or worsted cloak, had been nicknamed 'Old Grog'. - Mikhel'son (1896: IX) accepts single words for inclusion in a collection, referring to the double meaning of the term 'word' (cf. 'word of God'), whereas Seiler (1922: 18) rejects such "contributions to the history of vocabulary" with reference to the "original purpose to collect the stock of quotations". This view is generally regarded as valid. A distinction of the metaphorical use of words or names (Seiler 1922: 18) such as (4) 'Achille's wrath' seems to be useful, since such expressions play an important role in the transition to phraseological units (Mokienko 1975: 114ff.).

(b) *Phraseological units* which function, like words, as signs denoting single objects or notions can take the form of all parts of speech. Mostly, however, ww.s of this level represent nouns, as for example (5) 'tooth of time' (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, V, 1).

(c) Phraseological units representing predicates stand in close relationship to *proverbial sayings*, which, however, are no longer signs of single objects or notions, but signs of situations (Permyakov 1970: 202f.). Ww.s of this level represent open sentences, such as (6) 'to be unable to see the wood for the trees' (Wieland, *Musarion*), as well as \*proverbs, which are verbal clichés, i.e. syntactically complete.

(d) *Quotations proper* are complete speech acts; they are often treated exclusively as ww.s. Sayings like (7) 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II, 1) or (8) 'Knowledge is power' (Bacon, *Religious Meditations*) most obviously demonstrate the fluent transition to genres such as \*aphorism, maxim, sententia, and others.

Textual Function	Grammatical Structure	Type of Ww.
denominative	part of sentence	1. words (one root/compound) a. non-metaphorical b. metaphorical
		2. phraseological units with the structure of word compositions
communicative	sentence (-like)	3. proverbial sayings/proverbs
		4. quotations proper (aphorisms, maxims, sententias, etc.)

Fig.2

4.17. History / History of Interpretation: Systematic collections of ww.s have, of course, only existed since it became interesting to collect quotations and to trace them back to their sources from a philological point of view. Nevertheless, ww.s seem to have existed in antiquity, although a corresponding name for them does not seem to have arisen (Otto 1890; Trencsenyi-Waldapfel 1964). Although there is even an 18th century *Dictionary of Quotations in Most Frequent Use* (MacDonnel 1797), a lot of collections which attempted to trace the sources of familiar quotations were edited in the mid-nineteenth century (Bartlett 1855; Fournier 1855; Grocott 1854; Knox 1856). Büchmann's (1864) collection, however, combined with the first scholarly attempt to find a definition, seems to have had an enormous influence, probably due to the rise of the *Bildungsbürgertum* (i.e. the educated class). Again and again the "educational importance" (Mikhel'son 1896: 1) of ww.s has been emphasized. Nehry (1889: III) called his collection the "basis of literary education", Büchmann (1864: 2) claimed that his book was "suitable for every reader who considers himself entitled to lay not completely unfounded claims to education for himself", and Petsch (1940: 237) stressed that "the instructional and educational effect of 'winged words' on the spirit of the people cannot be overestimated". - The educational intention of ww.s has not continued to such an extent and in such a manner up to the present time.

Whereas works from the first half of this century like Seiler (1922: 15ff.) or Taylor (1931: 34ff.) concentrated on the distinction between ww.s and proverbs, interesting work has been done in particular by Soviet linguists since the 1950's concerning the relationship between ww.s (normally confined to the communicative level) and phraseology

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(Koroleva 1977; Ožegov 1957; Šmeleva 1964; Švarckopf 1966; Mokienko 1975, 1980).

Stave (1968: 230) compares the former and the contemporary use of ww.s, concentrating on the technique of quotation rather than on the form of the ww.: "You knew, who it was by, and you had it in mind word for word. The educational quotation was as fixed as a dogma; a passage, which became a 'sententia', obtained canonical importance; the correct and dignified use of such sententias provided distance and authority for the speaker". At present we rather tend to dismantle and play with this kind of quotation. Its origin becomes more and more untraceable - some ww.s are even drawn from more or less anonymous advertisements. Nevertheless, ww.s in their ordinary form and function are still in use nowadays, perhaps with a less explicitly didactical intent, but they at least continue to serve as a basis for further fragmentation. Ww.s seem to be relatively wide-spread in \*pop-songs; in the 1960's there even existed a famous pop-group called 'Vanity Fair', a name which previously served as the title of a novel by Thackeray (1847), but which was originally used by Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678/84).

8. Collections/9. Bibliography: AFON'KIN 1985; AHN FELT 1879; ARLAUD 1878; BARTLETT 1855; BÜCHMANN 1864; ECKERT 1978; FOURNIER 1855; GROCCOTT 1854; JONES 1851; KNOX 1856; KOROLEVA 1977; MacDONNEL 1797; MAK SIMOV 1890; MIKHEL'SON 1896; MOKIENKO 1975, 1980; NEHRY 1889; OTTO 1890; OŽEGOV 1957; PERMYAKOV 1970; PETSCH 1940; ROBERT-TORNOW 1895; RÖHRICH 1973; SEILER 1922; ŠMELEVA 1964; STAVE 1968; ŠVARCKOPF 1966; TAYLOR 1931, 1950; TRENCSENYI-WALDAPFEL 1964; ZAJMOVSKIJ 1930.

P.G.