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Polish *wydra* and English *otter*

MIKOŁAJ RYCHŁO
JOANNA RETMAN-WIECZÓR

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to trace the development and relationship between Polish *wydra* and English *otter* in a broader Indo-European context. The methodology of the research involves three steps: gathering cognates (to determine the time and place of attestation), identifying morphological structure and describing the sound changes that have occurred in two descending lines of development: one, from Proto-Indo-European **ud-r-eh₂* leading to Polish *wydra*, and the other, from Proto-Indo-European **ud-r-o-* to English *otter*. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the word for 'otter' in Proto-Indo-European must have had distinct masculine and feminine forms and, structurally, represents a substantivized adjective meaning 'aquatic': its root was the zero-grade form of PIE **uod-r/n-* 'water' and the *-r-* suffix used to perform the adjectival function.

Keywords

etymology, Polish-English cognates, Proto-Indo-European, zoonyms

Polski wyraz *wydra* a angielski *otter*

Abstrakt

Celem tego artykułu jest prześledzenie rozwoju oraz związku pomiędzy polskim słowem *wydra* i jego angielskim odpowiednikiem *otter* w szerszym kontekście języków indoeuropejskich. Metodologia obejmuje trzy etapy: zebranie wyrazów pokrewnych (celem określenia czasu i miejsca poświadczenia), zidentyfikowanie struktury morfologicznej oraz opisanie zmian dźwiękowych, które zaszły w ramach procesu przekształcania się praindoeuropejskiego **ud-r-eh₂* w polskie słowo *wydra* oraz praindoeuropejskiego **ud-r-o-* w angielskie słowo *otter*. Przeprowadzona analiza prowadzi do wniosku, że praindoeuropejskie określenie wydry musiało mieć odrębne formy: męską i żeńską, a strukturalnie, słowo to było substantywizowanym przymiotnikiem o znaczeniu 'wodny/wodna'. Śladem po sufiksie przymiotnikowym jest *-r-*, które odnajdujemy również w takich przymiotnikach jak *mokra*, *stara*, *dobra*, *chora*, a rdzeniem musiał być pie. **uod-r/n-* 'woda' w stopniu zaniku.

Słowa kluczowe

etymologia, polsko-angielskie wyrazy pokrewne, praindoeuropejski, zoonimy

1. Introduction

The paper concentrates on the etymological connection between the English word *otter* and the Polish word *wydra*, both of which are descended from Proto-Indo-European **ud-r-o/eh₂*. Over the centuries this ancestral word has undergone numerous sound changes which we wish to recognize and list chronologically in the conclusions. Section 2 focuses on the methodology of the research. In Section 3, we present the linguistic evidence and investigate the time and scope of attestation. Sections 4 and 5 concentrate on the morphological and phono-

logical analyses, respectively. Section 5 is further subdivided into 5.1: sound changes that occurred from Proto-Indo-European to Polish; and 5.2: the phonological developments from Proto-Indo-European to English. Section 6 is devoted to semantic analysis. In the Conclusions, we present a table, which summarizes the findings.

2. The methodology of the research

The methodology of the research is thoroughly described in Rychło (2019) and illustrated with several case studies (Rychło 2012, 2013, 2016, 2018, 2021, Rychło and Witczak 2021). The present section offers the most important principles relevant to the cognates under analysis.

The methodology used in this comparative analysis includes the following research stages:

(1) assessment of the time of attestation,
(2) assessment of the scope of attestation,
(3) the morphological analysis,
(4) the phonological analysis.

Stage 1 consists in confirming that the candidates for cognates have been attested in the compared languages since the earliest period in the recorded histories of both languages. In the case of the pair: Polish *wydra* vs English *otter*, there is no doubt about it, as the word *wydra* is recorded by the *Dictionary of Old Polish* and the English *otter* has been attested since the Early Old English *otr* 'otter' in the Épinal Glossary (Pheifer 1974: 32, line 585). However, in other cases, there are sometimes pairs of words in compared languages which look alike, because one or both of them were borrowed at some point in history.

Stage 2 attempts to determine the prehistory of the cognates at issue. Although there is no way of ascertaining the form of words in written sources before the time of their earliest attestation, it is possible to reconstruct the prehistoric words with

some degree of probability. To this end, it is necessary to compare the corresponding words in the cognate languages starting from the most closely related ones. In the case of Polish *wydra* vs English *otter*, in Section 3, we present an extensive scope of attestation in numerous languages from all the subbranches of Slavic and Germanic. Based on this comparison, there is little doubt that we can reconstruct PSl. **vydra* and PGmc **utra.* Apart from Slavic and Germanic, the cognates are also attested in five other branches: Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Hellenic, Italic and Baltic, which leads to postulating secure Proto-Indo-European archetypes **ud-r-o-* and **ud-r-eh$_2$*.

Stage 3 investigates the structure of each of the cognates at issue. This stage involves the following steps:

A. Determining which morphological material in a pair of words is cognate (shared and inherited).
B. Determining the word-formation processes involved in deriving each of the words under analysis.
C. Revealing the structural meaning of the words in question.

Stage 4 aims at clarifying the phonological differences between the compared words. To this end, an attempt will be made to find out which sound changes have affected each of the compared words, and when these phonological processes occurred. In order to be more convincing, the postulated sound changes should be illustrated with further examples of words (and cognates) which exhibit the same effects.

Apart from the four stages described above, the methodology also includes a semantic connection, which can be illustrated with an investigation of the set of cognates containing Gothic *wopjan*, English *weep* and Polish *wabić* (Rychło 2016). Full details of the analytical methodology are described in Rychło (2019).

3. The linguistic evidence

Cognates can be found in the following languages:

INDO-ARYAN: Sanskrit *udrá-* m. 'aquatic animal', Pali *udda-* m., Prakrit *udda-* n. 'merman, a kind of fish, garment made out of its skin', Waigalī or Wai-alā *udrə-waćalók* 'otter', Pashai (Raverty) *"húl"*, Gawar-Bati *uλ*, Bashkarīk *ūl*, Savi *uλ*, Phalūṛa *ūdr* m., Shina *ŭẓŭ* m., Kashmiri *wŏd°r''* m., Sindhī *uḍru* m. 'glutton'; Lahndā *uddru*, (Jukes) *udr* m. 'otter', Panjābī *uddar* m. 'otter, stupid person', West Pahāṛī Bhadrawāhī dialect of West Pahāṛī, Bhiḍlàī sub-dialect of Bhadrawāhī dialect of West Pahāṛī, Bhalesī dialect of West Pahāṛī *uḍḷ* n. 'otter', Kumaunī, Nepāli *od*, Assamese *ud*, Bengali *ud-biṛāl*, Oṛiyā *oda*, Maithilī, Bhojpurī, Hindī *ūd* m., Marāṭhī *ūd* m. 'a partic. depredating animal, Typus paradoxurus (?)'. There are also several forms with unexplained *dh*: Lahndā *uddhru* m. 'otter', Panjābī *uddhar* m., Oṛiyā *udha*, *odha*, *udhuā*, *odhuā* (Turner 1966: 96, No. 2056).

IRANIAN: Avestan *udrō* 'aquatic animal', Young Avestan *udra-* '(fish) otter', Ossetic (Iron) *wyrd*, (Digoron) *urdæ* 'otter, *Lutra*' (Abaev 1989: 120).

HELLENIC: Greek *ὕδροϛ* (*hýdros*) m. 'water-serpent', *ὕδρα* (*hýdrā*) f. 'water-serpent' (Beekes 2010: 1526).

ITALIC: Latin *lutra*[9] 'otter' (de Vaan 2008: 355).

GERMANIC: Old Norse *otr* 'otter', Old English *oter* 'otter', Middle Low German *otter* 'otter', Old High German *ottar* 'otter' (Orel 2003: 436), Faroese *otur* 'otter', Elfdalian, Ovdalian *uotter*

[9] It is also worth noting that the initial *l* in the Latin word *lutra* is prothetic. There are various explanations concerning its origin. De Vaan (2008: 355) notes three possibilities. He suggests *l* may have been taken from *lavō* 'to wash', from *lupus* 'wolf' (which he finds more likely, as both the otter and the wolf are carnivorous) or from *lūdere* 'to play' (which he connects to playfulness exhibited by the denoted animal).

'otter', Dutch *otter* 'otter', Old High German *otter* 'otter', German *Otter* 'otter' < PGmc. **utra-* (Kroonen 2013: 562).

BALTIC: Lithuanian *ū́dra* 'otter', Latvian *ûdris* 'otter', Old Prussian *wudro* 'otter', Balto-Slavic *úʔdraʔ* 'otter' (Derksen 2008: 534, Derksen 2015: 477, Smoczyński 2018: 1554).

SLAVIC: Russian *výdra* 'otter', Czech *vydra* 'otter', Slovak *vydra* 'otter', Polish *wydra* 'otter', Serbian / Croatian *vȉdra* 'otter', Slovene *vîdra* 'otter', Bulgarian *vídra* 'otter' < PSl. **vỳdra* 'otter' (Derksen 2008: 534, Mańczak 2017: 223).

Outside Indo-European, it is interesting to note that strikingly similar words are attested in the Permic branch of the Uralic family: the Komi language (also known as Zyrian) has the word *vurd* 'otter', which is also found in Permyak and in the Komi-Yazva dialect *vurd*; Another Permic language spoken outside of the region and not a member of the Komi pluricentric language is Udmurt, in which there is a similar word for 'otter', namely *vudor* (cf. Lytkin, Guljaev 1970: 70). The close resemblance of these lexical items can be explained in terms of borrowing. According to Lytkin and Guljaev (1970: 70), Proto-Permic **wurd* is an Iranian loanword, cf. Osset. (Iron) *wyrd*, (Digoron) *urdæ* 'otter, *Lutra*' (Abaev 1989: 120) < Alanic **wurd* < Iranian **udra-* m. 'otter', cf. YAv. *udra-* 'id.', Pahl. *udrak* 'otter'.

The material presented above leads to the following conclusions: reconstructing Proto-Indo-European **ud-r-o/eh₂* is supported by the evidence from seven different branches including Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Hellenic, Italic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavic. Some of the languages attest the word in the masculine, others in the feminine; in Greek we can find both genders: ὕδρος masculine vs. ὕδρα feminine. While some of the oldest cognates preserve the original, structural meaning: 'aquatic animal', the cognates attested later usually show the lexicalized meaning 'otter', e.g. Avestan *udrō* 'aquatic animal', Young Avestan *udra-* '(fish) otter'.

4. Morphological analysis

The aim of this section is to explain the morphological structures of the English word *otter* and the Polish word *wydra*, both of which refer to the same animal (*Lutra lutra*) and both are descended from the common ancestral formation. At the stage of Proto-Indo-European, the main difference lies in the gender (and the related stem vowel): in general, the Germanic cognates show the masculine gender and point to PIE **ud-r-o-*, whereas the Slavic exhibit the feminine and indicate PIE **ud-r-eh*$_2$.

A possible explanation of this difference in gender is that there used to be separate words for the male and female otter. In Latin, there are many such pairs of zoonyms, for example:

(1) *agnus* 'lamb, male' *agna* 'lamb, female'
asinus 'ass, male' *asina* 'ass, female'
cervus 'stag' *cerva* 'hind'
equus 'horse, male; stallion' *equa* 'horse, female; mare'
lupus 'wolf, male' *lupa* 'wolf, female'
ursus 'bear, male' *ursa* 'bear, female'

Of course, it is not only the animals that represent *substantiva mobilia*. Further examples include *deus* 'god'; *dominus* 'master' vs. *dea* 'goddess', *domina* 'mistress'. What is worth emphasizing is that this class of nouns is different from the category of female nouns, in which there is an additional suffix responsible for deriving female nouns, as in Pol. *wilczyca* 'she-wolf' (derived from *wilk* 'wolf') or English *lioness* (from *lion*).

In the case of *otter*, like in Latin examples above, we do not have any female suffix, it is only the feminine declension which distinguishes it from the masculine. There is a similar case in the Polish *kura* 'hen', which shows the feminine declension, as opposed to *kur* 'rooster', which is declined like masculine nouns.

Apart from the last morpheme, there are two more which are shared by the etyma reconstructable on the basis of the lexical

material presented above. The first **ud-* is the root which can also be found in words for 'water':

(2) Polish *woda* 'water' < Proto-Slavic **voda* 'water' ← Proto-Indo-European **u̯ód-r̥-ø* (nom.sg.), **u̯éd-n̥-s* (gen.sg.), cf. Hitt. *u̯ātar*, *u̯itēnaš* 'water', cf. Smoczyński (2018: 1602).

This heteroclitic declension is conventionally abbreviated as: **uod-r/n-*, which is also provided by Derksen (2008: 523) and Kroonen (2013: 575–576):

(3) English *water* < Old English *wæter* (Go. *wato*, gen. *watins* n. 'id.', ON *vatn* n. 'id.', Far. *vatn* n. 'id.', Elfd. *watten* n. 'id.', OFri. *weter* n. 'id.', OS *watar* n. 'id.', Du. *water* n. 'id.', OHG *wazzar* n. 'id.', G *Wasser* n. 'id.') < PGmc. **watar-* ~ **watan-* < PIE **uod-r/n-*.

The root **u̯od-* is the *o*-grade of the basic form **u̯ed-*. It is interesting to note that Germanic retains other derivatives descended from various apophonic grades of PIE **u̯ed-*:

(4) PGmc. **waskan-* 'to wash' (OE *wæscan* > E *to wash*, OFri. *waska*, OS *waskan*, Du. *wassen*, OHG *wascan* > G *waschen*) from **u̯od-ske-*, a *ske*-present (cf. Kroonen 2013: 575).

(5) PGmc. **wēta-* adj. 'wet' (ON *vatr*, OE *wǣt* > E *wet*, OFri. *wēt*) from **u̯ēd-o-*, a *vrddhi*-adjective (cf. Kroonen 2013: 583).

In Slavic, there is also the word for 'bucket':

(6) PSl. **vědrò* 'vessel for water, bucket' (OCS *vědro* 'barrel', Polish *wiadro* 'bucket', Russian *vedró*) from **ued-róm*, Derksen (2008: 518–519).

Apart from the root **u̯ed-*, which in the word for 'otter' assumed the zero-grade **ud-*, the next morpheme is the PIE suffix **-ro-*. According to Matasović (2014: 103), "This suffix was very productive in PIE in adjectival derivation". It is worth noting that in Polish adjectives take on different forms depending on the grammatical gender of the denoted noun. In the case of this suffix, masculine forms end with *-ry* (e.g., *mokry* – masc. 'wet'), feminine forms end with *-ra* (e.g., *mokra* – fem. 'wet') and neuter forms end with *-re* (e.g., *mokre* – neu. 'wet'). Matasović (2014: 103) notes that some of the adjectives created by using the **-ro-* suffix were substantivized (that is, transformed into nouns). To illustrate this process, he mentions the word **věra* 'faith' (from **weh₁ro* – 'true'). At the same time, he underlines that the **-ro-* suffix "is also found in nouns, where no PIE adjectival formations can be posited". Among the examples he mentions "**ydra* 'otter'". However, it seems reasonable to argue that *wydra* was formed on the basis of an adjective. As has already been mentioned, *-ra* is a suffix which appears in a number of adjectives (e.g. *chora* – fem. 'sick', *modra* – fem. 'cerulean'). In this context, its presence makes sense when one takes into consideration the history of the word. Since *wydra* clearly derives from the word for 'water' and used to refer to a group of aquatic animals in general, it seems possible that literally *wydra* was an adjective formed on the basis of the noun for 'water' (its meaning could have been 'aquatic'). Later, the adjective could start to function as a noun (referring to a number of animal species living in water and then, to one, specific species).

5. Phonological analysis

It becomes apparent that both *otter* and *wydra* come from the same word and that their history (as long as the shift of meaning is concerned) is very similar. However, it is also necessary to explain the sound differences between the two words.

5.1. Sound changes that occurred from Proto-Indo-European to Polish

Let us discuss the sound changes chronologically, starting with Proto-Indo-European **ud-r-eh₂*.

5.1.1. Colouring and lengthening by *h₂*

**eh₂* underwent colouring and lengthening, by which the vowel **e* was modified in character by an adjacent laryngeal. In the case of h_2, the preceding **e* was lowered to **a* (cf. Trask 2000: 63).

5.1.2. Winter's Law

The presence of a long vocalism, [y] in Polish *wydra* may seem surprising but, as it has been pointed out by Derksen (2008: 534) and Orel (2003: 436), it can be explained by Winter's law. Winter's law is a law proposed by Werner Winter in 1976. It concerns vowel lengthening in Balto-Slavic. Winter stated that an inherited short vowel stays short "if the syllabic intonation were other than acute, and if the following consonant were other than traditional simple 'media' at the PIE stage". However, if the conditions are different, i.e. if "in acute syllable the vowel preceded a consonant of the sort usually written *d*", the result would be "a long acute vowel" (Collinge 1985: 225). That is why in Polish word *wydra* short [u] would result in [y] and why this change should also be labelled as a regular shift.

5.1.3. Second delabialization of rounded vowels

According to Shevelov (1964: 376), *ū* regularly changed into *y* in Slavic languages. He states that "This change was carried out not earlier than the eighth century, more likely in the course of the ninth century. It was a common Sl fact by the tenth century" (Shevelov 1964: 380). This pattern can be observed in the following examples, in which the languages on

the left preserve the earlier long vowel *ū*, and the Polish cognates (on the right) show the effect of the change (PIE **ū* > Slavic *y*):

(7) Old English *mūs* – Polish *mysz* 'mouse';
Old English *tū*, Latin *tū* – Polish *ty* 'you';
Old English *þūsund* – Polish *tysiąc* 'thousand';
Sanskrit *sūnú-*, Lithuanian *sūnus* – Polish *syn* 'son';
Lithuanian *dūmai*, Latin *fūmus* – Polish *dym* 'smoke'.

5.1.4. Prothesis

Boryś (2005: 717) states that *w* in *wydra* is in fact the prosthetic [v]. Rubach (2009: 73) explains that some of the Slavic languages make use of prosthetic (or prothetic) sounds. He defines them as sounds which appear at the beginning of a word, before vowels, and which were not present in the Proto-Slavic etymon but appeared later, as the language evolved. It might seem that the initial sound in *wydra* has the same source as the initial sound in *woda* and in *water*. Thus, it could be tempting to assume that there is an alternative explanation for the [v] sound in the word *wydra*.

Actually, one of such alternative solutions could emerge after examining the reconstructed forms of this word. As has already been mentioned, Mallory and Adams (1997: 364, 411) suggest **udrós* as the PIE form. Other researchers provide similar reconstructed forms, e.g. **ūdrā* (Boryś 2005: 717) or **ud-r-eh₂* (Derksen 2008: 534). What these forms share is the first sound: [u]. Even though today [u] is a vowel, there is evidence that in the past the situation could be more complicated. As Meier-Brügger (2003: 85) explains, for the PIE high vowel **u*, reconstruction provides the non-syllabic equivalent, that is **u̯*. It is possible that **u* and **u̯* were two allophones of one phoneme. Hence, it is possible that the first sound of **udrós* resembled present-day [w] sound. If that is true, the presence of the [v] sound in the Polish word *wydra* seems to be a result of

a standard process which can be illustrated by a number of examples:

(8) *wax* [wæks] – *wosk* [vɔsk],
will [wɪl] – *wola* [vɔla],
wolf [wʊlf] – *wilk* [vʲilk],
wind [wɪnd] – *wiatr* [vʲjatr̥], etc.

However, one should not reject the prosthetic explanation on this basis, as the claim concerning the prosthetic [v] seems well grounded if one takes into consideration apophony. According to Trask (2000: 2), apophony (in other words 'ablaut') is "variation in the vowel of a root for grammatical purposes" which appears in IE languages. The author proceeds to explain that "In PIE, a root could appear in any of five forms, with any one of the nuclei /e/, /o/, /ē/, /ō/ or Ø (zero), though few if any roots are attested in all five" (Trask 2000: 2).

As has been stated, both *otter* and *wydra* come from the PIE word for 'water', that is **ued-r-* / **ued-n-* (Boryś 2005: 706). Thus, the root should be **ued*. If so, **udrós* represents the zero form (**ud*) of the root. At this point, [u] precedes a consonant and hence becomes a vowel. In Proto-Slavic, with initial *u* (both long and short), the use of prosthetic *v* is regular, e.g.:

(9) Common Slavic **ūx-* > **vūx-* 'louse' (Polish *wesz*),
Common Slavic **ūz* 'up' > **vūz* (Polish *wz-*),
Common Slavic **ūps-* > *vūs-* (Polish *wysoki* 'high, tall'), etc. (Shevelov 1964: 235-248).

5.1.5. The remaining sounds

If we ignore slight and insignificant phonetic details, we might conclude that the remaining sounds pertain unchanged. These include the [r] and the voiced dental plosive [d], which were already present in the PIE times and are still present in Polish *wydra*.

5.2. Phonological developments from Proto-Indo-European to English

Let us examine the changes chronologically.

5.2.1. d > t

The first change affected the [d] sound and resulted in [t]. It can be explained by Grimm's law, which describes consonant shifts which occurred as the Proto-Germanic language developed from the Proto-Indo-European language (Noske 2012: 66, Rychło 2014: 200, Rychło 2017). The law states that the PIE sound [d] changed into [t] and that is exactly what can be observed in the described pair of cognates.

5.2.2. o > a

Another change that can be observed is the shift from **utro-* to **utra-*. This process has been described by Ringe (2006: 145-146) as "Mergers of nonhigh back vowels". He states that Germanic languages lost the contrast between vowels [a] and [o]. This resulted in the fact that "The short nonhigh nonfront vowels [...] appear straightforwardly as PGmc *a". He provides a number of examples to support this claim. Among them, one can find:

(10) PIE **h₂égros* 'pasture' > PGmc. **akraz*,
PIE **h₃ósdos* 'branch' > PGmc. **astaz*,
PIE **órsos* 'arse' > PGmc. **arsaz*,
PIE **ǵómbʰos* 'row of teeth' > PGmc. **kambaz* 'comb',

and many more.

5.2.3 u > o

Ringe and Taylor (2014: 27) have explained that the change of **u* into **o* which can be observed in the word *otter* is a regular,

typical change. This process (that is: lowering of **u* to **o*) has affected the Northwest Germanic area. The process took place when the following criteria have been met:

1) **u* was stressed,
2) "the next syllable contained a nonhigh vowel and no nasal in the syllable coda",
3) **j* did not intervene.

The process, which is sometimes called *a*-umlaut, can also be found in many other English words, among others:

(11) PGmc **duhtēr* 'daughter' > OE *dohtor,*
PGmc **uhsō̄* 'ox' > OE *oxa.*

5.2.4. Apocope

According to Ringe and Taylor (2014: 44–45), one of the sound changes which affected all West Germanic languages is the loss of **a* and **ą* provided that they were unstressed and appeared word-finally or were followed only by **-z*. They state that the described process "affected especially the a-stem sg. endings of the direct cases". Among the examples, they provide is Proto-Germanic **hurną* 'horn' which evolved into Old English *horn*.

It seems that as a result of this change **otra-* turned into **otr*.

5.2.5. Epenthesis

Ringe and Taylor (2014: 327) have also explained the changes which affected the final syllable of the analyzed word. According to them, Proto-West Germanic "loss of word-final short low vowels" led to a number of words ending with CR-clusters. Then, "In word-final Cr-clusters a vowel was always inserted". As an example of words affected by the two processes, the researchers mention *otter*, together with:

(12) PGmc **murþrą* → OE *morþor* 'murder',
PGmc **timrą* → OE *timber* 'timber',
PNWGmc **hlahtraz* → OE *hleahtor* 'laughter' and many more (2014: 327–328).

6. Semantic analysis

As Mallory and Adams (1997: 364) point out, usually, smaller animals "are less strongly reconstructed to PIE antiquity than many of the larger mammals". The word for 'otter' seems to be a unique word in this aspect. The authors claim that it can be "the best" in this regard, as **udrós* (common otter) is clearly derived from the word for 'water'. Also Kroonen (2013: 562) states that "The word is a direct derivation from the IE word for 'water'". According to a number of researchers (e.g., Mallory and Adams 1997: 411, Orel 2003: 436), the word used to convey a broader, less specific meaning. It seems that it used to mean 'aquatic animal' and included a number of species living in water. Later, the meaning has narrowed. Mallory and Adams (1997: 411) believe that the specialization could occur even in the PIE times.

Boryś (2005: 717) states that the Polish word *wydra* comes from the Proto-Slavic word **vydra* which in turn evolved from the word **ūdrā*. He explains that the name comes from the PIE word for 'water' and that in the PIE times, the word referred to animals living in a water environment in general but later, in the Slavic and Baltic languages its meaning narrowed to one species of these animals, i.e. to the otter. In fact, it is not only Slavic and Baltic, which show the narrowing of the meaning, as we have demonstrated in Section 3.

A similar semantic development must have occurred in the Polish word *ziemniak* 'potato', which is derived from the adjective *ziemny* 'relating to earth', which in turn is derived from *ziemia* 'earth'.[10] As in the case of the otter, the name of the

[10] Boryś (2005: 740) interprets Polish *ziemniak* as a calque from German *Erdapfel*. However, only the first element could have undergone the process of loan translation. The structure of the word resembles other de-adjectival

environment (in which the animal lives or the plant grows) was used to denote the name of the species.

7. Conclusions

There is no doubt that Polish *wydra* and English *otter* represent cognates even though they cannot be brought back to identical proto-forms. The Germanic languages clearly indicate the masculine gender descended from Proto-Indo-European *o*-stem, while the Slavic cognates represent the feminine gender pointing to Proto-Indo-European eh_2-stem (later *ā*-stem). This discrepancy in gender must be very old since we can find other Indo-European branches supporting masculine, feminine or both, as was shown in Section 3. Etymologically, the words for 'otter' investigated in the present paper represent a substantivized adjective **ud-r-o-* meaning 'aquatic'. Its root exhibited the zero-grade form of PIE **uod-r/n-* 'water', the *-r-* suffix used to perform the adjectival function (as is still found in Polish *dobry* 'good', *chory* 'ill', *stary* 'old', *szczery* 'frank' etc.).

Table 1

Summary

The Germanic line (leading from PIE to present-day English)		The Slavic line (leading from PIE to present-day Polish)	
*ud-r-o-		*ud-r-eh_2	
*utro-	*d* > *t* (Grimm's law)	*udrā	Colouring and lengthening by h_2
*utra-	Merger of nonhigh back vowels	*ūdrā	Winter's law

nouns which were derived from nouns (first with the suffix *-ny* and then *-ak*): e.g. *kapuśniak* 'cabbage soup', *żołędniak* 'hog fed with acorns', *wieśniak* 'villager' (note the adjectives *kapustny* 'related to cabbage' [Linde 1808: 957], *żołędny* 'related to acorns' [Linde 1814: 1000], *wieśny* 'rural, rustic' [Linde 1814: 225] recorded in Linde).

*otra-	*a*-umlaut	*ydra	Second delabialization of rounded vowels *$\bar{u}$ > PSl. *y
otr	apocope (loss of word-final short low vowel)	wydra	prosthetic v
otter	epenthesis (insertion of a vowel in word-final Cr-clusters)		

The analysis leads to the conclusion that in Proto-Indo-European there must have been distinct masculine and feminine forms for at least this zoonym. As the examples in (1) suggest, there may have been more such names of animals, which should be the subject of future research.

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Mikołaj Rychło
ORCID iD: 0000-0003-1821-7219
Akademia Ateneum w Gdańsku
ul. 3 Maja 25A
80-802 Gdańsk, Poland
Instytut Anglistyki i Amerykanistyki
Wydział Filologiczny
Uniwersytet Gdański
Wita Stwosza 51
80-308 Gdańsk, Poland
mikolaj.rychlo@ug.edu.pl

Joanna Retman-Wieczór
Akademia Ateneum w Gdańsku
ul. 3 Maja 25A
80-802 Gdańsk
Poland
j.retman.144@studms.ug.edu.pl