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SELECTED ENGLISH IDIOMS AND SIMILES WITH FARM ANIMAL ZOONYMS AS THE SOURCE DOMAIN AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS IN SERBIAN

Abstract: This paper presents an exploration of figurative comparison expressions featuring farm animal zoonyms in the English language and their possible equivalents in Serbian. Farm animal idioms are integral to linguistic discourse, contributing to the richness and diversity of language use. Their complexity often necessitates a deep understanding of cultural and contextual factors for their accurate interpretation, highlighting the potential for cross-cultural comparative studies to enrich our understanding of idiomatic expressions. These expressions transcend mere linguistic curiosities and play a vital role in meaning construction and imagery formation within discourse.

The paper provides an overview of expressions divided into five categories according to the type of farm animal used as the source domain: bovines (cows and their male counterparts, bulls and oxen), equi (horses and mules), pigs, sheep and poultry, and attempts to assign an equivalent phrase in Serbian, comparing the usage between the two languages, in order to shed some light on the intricate interplay between language, culture, and cognition in the realm of idiomatic figurative expressions involving farm animals.

Key words: farm animal metaphors, farm animal idioms, figurative comparison expressions, English, Serbian.

1. Introduction

Figurative language is an essential part of everyday human communication, used in virtually all languages of the world. Figurative comparisons allow individuals to expressively draw parallels and highlight similarities or differences between two or more things. One source domain that has been used extensively in English to convey figurative comparison is farm animal zoonyms. A zoonym, as used in this paper, is any term which refers to a specific animal species, and farm animal zoonyms refer to those species that have been domesticated and used by humans for food and labour, such as cows, pigs and horses.

Farm animal zoonyms have been utilised in comparison phrases for centuries, with many phrases having become deeply ingrained in the English language, to the point of becoming dead metaphors or idioms. The use of comparison phrases has not only become a fundamental part of the English language but has also given rise to a rich body of linguistic research. The study of comparison phrases has been a topic of interest for many scholars, with linguists, anthropologists, and cognitive scientists exploring the underlying mechanisms that enable humans to create and comprehend such phrases.

One area of research has focused on the role of the conceptual metaphor in the creation of comparison phrases. A conceptual metaphor refers to the process by which abstract concepts are mapped onto more concrete, physical domains. The use of farm animal zoonyms in comparison phrases relies on the mapping of abstract qualities usually related to humans onto the physical traits and behaviours of farm animals.

The recipient must be able to map the source domain onto the target domain in the way the speaker intended, which is not always a given, especially if the same source domain is used in their native language and culture in a dissimilar meaning. Many figurative comparison phrases have their origins in specific cultural contexts and reflect the values and beliefs of those cultures, which can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, distrust, or even (un)intentional mockery. In Western cultures, the pig is often associated with negative qualities such as filth, greed, and gluttony, so eyebrows may be raised by a literal translation of an idiom from some Eastern cultures, such as China and Vietnam, where the pig is considered a symbol of prosperity, abundance, and good luck. Understanding the cultural significance of these phrases in the source and target language is an important aspect of a translator's skill set and can provide insight into the ways in which language reflects and reinforces cultural norms and values.

Comparison phrases also have a significant application in language learning and teaching. They can be a useful tool for language learners, as they provide a way to expand their vocabulary and develop their understanding of figurative language. Additionally, the study of comparison phrases can help language teachers to design effective language teaching materials and activities that integrate cultural and linguistic knowledge.

This paper will explore the use of farm animal zoonyms in English figurative comparison phrases, examining their origins and cultural significance, and try to provide their equivalents in Serbian. Ultimately, the aim is to contribute to the ongoing conversation around the role of language and culture in shaping our understanding of the world around us. Accepting the unlikelihood that all possible target phrases can be listed and examined, the paper will focus on a selection deemed most interesting for the subject matter at hand.

2. Insights from Linguistic Theories

The exploration of figurative expressions employing animals in English reveals intricate connections between language, cognition, and cultural symbolism. These expressions, often referred to as animal metaphors, rely on the conceptual mapping of attributes from the animal domain onto various human experiences and qualities.

At the core of understanding animal metaphors lies the Conceptual Metaphor Theory put forth by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). According to this theory, metaphors are not merely linguistic embellishments, but fundamental cognitive mechanisms rooted in embodied experiences, i.e. abstract concepts are often understood through more concrete and tangible domains. Animal metaphors exemplify the metaphorical mapping process, wherein attributes of animals serve as source domains that facilitate the understanding of abstract concepts in target domains.

Lakoff and Turner's (1989) framework, under the "GREAT CHAIN OF BEING" metaphor, indicates the cognitive processes that enable the transformation of animal attributes into linguistic expressions, facilitating the communication of complex ideas through familiar imagery. Lakoff and Turner distinguished 'between two versions of the Great Chain, one basic and one extended' (1989:p.167), where the extended one 'concerns the relation of human beings to society, God, and the universe' (1989:p.167), further noting that:

'One of the most elaborate domains in which we understand the nonhuman in terms of the human is the domain of animal life. There we have well-elaborated

schemas characterising what animals are like, and we usually understand their characteristics metaphorically in terms of the characteristics of human beings. [...] We understand their attributes in terms of human character traits. We think of them, react to them, and treat them as we would a person with such traits.

Animals act instinctively, and different kinds of animals have different kinds of instinctive behaviour. We comprehend their behaviour in terms of human behaviour, and we use the language of human character traits to describe such behaviour. Cleverness, loyalty, courage, rudeness, dependability, and fickleness are human character traits, and when we attribute such character traits to animals we are comprehending the behaviour of those animals metaphorically in human terms.' (pp.193–194)

Fauconnier and Turner (2002) introduced the theory of conceptual blending, elucidating how novel meanings can emerge through the blending of distinct mental spaces. This theory helps explain the creativity and novel interpretations inherent in expressions like *when pigs fly*. Animal metaphors often involve the blending of animal attributes with human experiences, showcasing the cognitive flexibility of language users.

Animal-related expressions also carry cultural and semiotic significance. Eco delved into the cultural symbolism of animals, highlighting their role as signifiers in conveying deeper meanings (1976). Animal metaphors tap into culturally shared knowledge and values, and their interpretations can vary across societies. In *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (1984), Eco emphasises how animals hold symbolic significance across cultures and how the choice of specific animals in idiomatic expressions can reflect cultural values, attitudes, and historical contexts.

Animal metaphors are inherently pragmatic, serving specific communicative purposes. Sperber and Wilson's *Relevance Theory* (1986) sheds light on how speakers choose expressions that optimise relevance in context, and animal metaphors often serve this purpose by conveying complex meanings in succinct and engaging ways.

Scholars such as Eve Sweetser (1990) have explored the interplay between metonymy and metaphor. Sweetser's work highlights how animal-related expressions can incorporate both metonymic and metaphorical elements, allowing for a layered and nuanced understanding of figurative language.

Cognitive linguists like Ronald W. Langacker (1987) explore the cognitive processes underlying language. Animal metaphors tap into shared human experiences and cultural knowledge, fostering quick comprehension and efficient

communication. The concept of “image schemas,” as explored by Langacker, helps explain how physical experiences with animals contribute to abstract metaphorical expressions.

Kovecses discusses generalisations that are made when employing ‘source domains that have to do with the concept of ANIMAL’ (2010:p.152), building on the Great Chain of Being metaphor framework, which ‘explains why and how a number of seemingly unrelated conceptual metaphors fit together in a coherent fashion’ (2010:p.154).

A prevalent conclusion for most linguists dealing with figurative expressions is that the same metaphor might not carry the same connotations in different linguistic and cultural contexts, highlighting the importance of cultural factors in interpretation.

3. Material

What follows is a range of figurative comparison expressions in English motivated by farm animals, selected to illustrate the variety and scope of underlying meanings relating to humans and human behaviour, from a list compiled from the *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (1997) by Christine Ammer, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (1998), and the *Corpus of News on the Web* (abbreviated to NOW for convenience) (Davies, 2016). While some of these phrases are fully transparent and a definition was almost redundant, others require consulting one of the referent dictionaries for more insight into their etymology, usage and meaning. The sentences with examples of usage were taken from the NOW corpus.

The earliest domesticated farm animals are believed to be sheep, goats, and pigs. These animals were among the first to be selectively bred and kept by humans for various purposes, such as food, milk, wool, and labour. The domestication of these animals occurred around 10,000 years ago in different regions of the world, including the Near East, Asia, and Europe (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).

The use of animal similes in language and communication predates written history and can be found in ancient texts and oral traditions. It's likely that the early domestication of farm animals played a significant role in the development of these similes. As humans began to interact closely with these animals on a daily basis, they would have observed their behaviours, characteristics, and traits, which they then used as metaphors to describe various aspects of human life.

3.1. Bovines

As one of the first types of animals to be domesticated, bovines are among the most familiar and recognisable animals to people in many parts of the world, essential for agriculture, transportation, and sustenance. Some expressions come from their behaviour, others from their physical traits.

A *cash cow*, to begin with, is a part of a business that generates stable and ample profit, drawing meaning from the steady daily production of milk by a dairy cow:

1. *ESPN has been a cash cow for Disney for a long time, but is caught between declining cable subscribers and increasing fees paid to sports leagues.* (NOW: 23-07-13 IN, theprint.in)

In Serbian, the literal translation *krava muzara* has been noted in use, but mainly through non-professional translation (such as subtitles for English language video content), so it still might sound awkward to most Serbian speakers. It thus might be better to use the already established *zlatna koka* (\approx *golden hen*), as a more prevalent expression for the same context. It is interesting to note that both phrases use farm animals.

When someone is referred to as a *sacred cow*, it means that they are held above criticism, immune to their mistakes or so well-connected that they get away with things others wouldn't. The Serbian equivalent also uses an animal, the endangered polar bear, in *zaštićen kao polarni medved* (\approx *as protected as a polar bear*).

The simile *like a saddle on a cow*, attributed to Joseph Stalin's remark on imposing communism on Poland (Davies, 1982:p.411), is used to denote something that is an ill-fitting or useless combination. The slightly profane *kao piletu sise* (\approx *like tits on a chicken*) would do a similar job in Serbian.

An overly calm and unaffected demeanour in a person may be likened to the passive and rather uneventful life of a dairy cow, using the simile *as stolid as a cow*. In Serbian, one may use *miran² kao bubica* (\approx *as calm as a little bug*) to express a somewhat similar meaning, though indifference may be better expressed with *ravno mu sve do mora* (\approx *to him, it's all flat all the way to the sea*).

The brawn and relatively large size of bovine males, brought about positive similes, such as *as healthy/strong as a bull/ox*:

2. *Traore is someone we know all about. Lightning quick, strong as an ox, but lacking end product.* (NOW: 22-01-03 GB, tbrfootball.com)

²For brevity and simplicity, expressions in Serbian used in this paper, where both the masculine and the feminine form can be used, will be presented in the masculine form.

which have direct counterparts in Serbian (*zdrav/jak kao bik/vo*). The same features are also associated with the horse in both languages.

The English *bull in a china shop* and Serbian *slon u staklari* (\approx *elephant in a glass factory*), denoting a clumsy person that often knocks things over and/or produces a loud noise while moving in their environment, seem to have the same origin, as some or other variations of the phrases which can be found in over 30 European languages (Kovačević, 2019).

3.2. Equi

Horses and their hybrids have been very valuable farm animals for thousands of years, so it is no surprise here either that they motivate a lot of figurative expressions in many languages.

In addition to the already mentioned similes for strength and health, shared with bulls and oxen, the physical prowess of horses and its usefulness for farming yielded some other expressions.

In both English and Serbian, to *work like a horse* (\approx *raditi kao konj*) is to work very hard, with little to no rest. Unlike some other labour animals, horses were often fed mid-work using feedbags, which motivated the phrases *eat like a horse* and *as hungry as a horse*. These comparisons do not seem to be present in Serbian, which prefers *može vola pojesti* (\approx *he could eat a whole ox*) for the former and *gladan kao vuk* (\approx *as hungry as a wolf*).

Since horses have been used for transporting people (both individually as riders and in groups in carriages) and goods as well, their agility and speed are referenced when saying that someone is *as fast as a horse*. Serbian equivalents are most frequently not animal related, as in *brz kao munja/metak/vjetar* (\approx *as fast as a lightning / a bullet / the wind*), but zoonyms are still present – *brz kao kobra/lasica/zec* (\approx *as fast as a cobra/weasel/rabbit*).

Owing to their speed, horses were also used for entertainment, in racing and gambling. This domain is the source for the expression *backing / betting on the wrong horse*, which is used when one supports an entity which then under-performs in a given context, such as an individual in an election. Serbian does not seem to have a direct equivalent, while the phrase *igrati na pogrešnu kartu* (\approx *play the wrong card*) provides a loosely similar meaning. Further along the same note, a *one-horse race* is any type of contest where all but one candidate have negligible chances at winning.

Something that irretrievably loses its value has been referred to as a '*dead horse*' since the 1600s (Ammer, 1997:p.78) and any attempts to reinvigorate it, by

extension, as *beating/flogging a dead horse*. In Serbian, the futility of insisting on an activity beyond its reasonable usefulness can be expressed with *On i dalje po svom!* (\approx *He keeps trying/doing it his way!*).

The hybrid between a female horse and a male donkey, the mule, has been used as a labour animal for five millennia, owing to their many advantages over horses, in terms of resilience and robustness. One of the differences is said to be that they are much more cautious and will often do what they want or what they think is safe, not what you want them to do, and once they plant their feet, they cannot be jolted into action by a stick or whip as horses can. This brought them a reputation of being obstinate and motivated the expression *as stubborn as a mule* (\approx *tvrdoglav kao mazga*) in both English and Serbian.

3.3. Pigs

Perhaps undeservingly, the pig has somewhat of an unfavourable reputation. Pigs do not gorge themselves even when they have constant access to food, but their energetic and indiscriminate eating habits became associated with gluttony. Burrowing with their snouts in the dirt looking for food, and rolling around in mud merely to cool off and get rid of skin parasites, they are almost always dirty when you look at them, which, however justified, inspired the stereotype of a filthy animal. These characteristics were then transposed into figurative expressions to portray people, and more often than not, the comparison is not a favourable one.

For example, in English, if one *makes a pig of oneself* or *pigs out*, they have overeaten:

3. *My visits to Bangkok usually involve a whirl of activity. There are all those malls to visit, amazing bookshops to browse in, food courts in which I can make a pig of myself, and endless temples and monuments to marvel at.* (NOW: 22-08-19 US, Hindustan Times)

4. *For two decades ANC office-bearers at all levels of government have pigged out on food and cars and overseas trips at taxpayers' expense.* (NOW: 19-09-11 ZA, biznews.com)

while Serbian has an almost identical equivalent in *najesti se kao prase* (\approx *to eat one's fill like a pig*).

The simile *as fat as a pig* needs little elaboration, denoting an overweight person by evoking the anatomy and rotund figure of the animal. Unsurprisingly, Serbian offers a direct equivalent in *debeo kao svinja*, with an option to reference elephants instead of pigs.

It is usual in the context of commercial farms that pigs do not have constant access to food, but are rather fed intermittently, which often sends them into a competitive frenzy when the meal arrives. This might be the motivation behind the phrase *go hog wild*, which is used for intense exhibitions of excitement, and for *road hog*, i.e. someone who unnecessarily takes up more than one lane while driving a vehicle. There do not seem to be equivalent expressions in Serbian.

When someone is *like a pig in clover*, it means that they are in a highly favourable situation, much like pigs when they are left to graze in a clover field, one of their favourite meals. In Serbian, *kao bubreg u loju* (\approx *like a kidney in fat*) is what you would say for someone with the same level of content and fortune.

3.4. Sheep

As another widespread species of farm animals in most of the world, sheep found their way into the core of human culture and are today a ubiquitous part of modern human languages. The use of sheep-based metaphors in language draws upon the unique characteristics of these animals and their historical roles in human societies. Several notable phrases have emerged from the world of sheep husbandry, each carrying distinct cultural and symbolic origins. Sheep and lambs are referenced multiple times in the Bible, and some of the phrases used there have found their way into probably all languages of the Christian world, and beyond.

The first example is the phrase *to separate the sheep from the goats*, originating from the Gospel of Matthew (25:32) when Jesus prophesises ‘that the sheep (that is, the compassionate) will sit on God’s right hand (and find salvation), and the goats (the hard-hearted) will sit on the left (and be sent to damnation)’ (Ammer, 1997:p.924). It has been used in English to differentiate between good and bad members of a group, as in:

5. *The other day President Sirisena officially launched the new rubbish collection scheme from his Paget Road residence. Armed with bags and coloured rubbish bins adorning the background, President Sirisena was given a lesson in separating one lot of rubbish from the recyclable. Politically such a lesson should come in handy especially when some day he has to separate the sheep from the goats in the cabinet.* (NOW: 16-11-05 LK, The Sunday Times Sri Lanka)

and while the Serbian version of the Bible uses a direct translation of the phrase in the same passage, it is not common beyond its biblical context.

The phrase *wolf in sheep’s clothing* is a widely recognised idiom used to describe individuals or entities that appear benign on the surface but conceal malevolent

intentions or characteristics. This expression also comes from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 7:15), where it warns against false prophets who outwardly resemble sheep but inwardly are akin to ravening wolves. It is frequently employed in literature, politics, psychology, and everyday language to denote deceptive behaviour, symbolising the act of feigning virtue to gain trust or access. In the Serbian variant, *vuk u jagnećoj koži*, lamb is used instead of sheep.

Lambs have motivated a number of other English expressions with strong biblical roots, including *as gentle/innocent/meek as a lamb* and *like a lamb to the slaughter*. In Serbian, gentleness is expressed by comparison to snowflakes, cotton or silk, while innocence is likened to children and babies, and it's not lambs and slaughter, but sheep and shearing, in *mirno kao ovce na šišanje*.

The idiom *black sheep* refers to an individual who is considered odd, deviant, or different from the rest of a group or family. This phrase can be traced back to the traditional association of black sheep with something uncommon or undesirable in sheep farming, being 'less valuable than white ones because it was more difficult to dye their wool different colours' (Ammer, 1997:p.107). The anomaly of black fleece in contrast to white ones established a metaphor for non-conformity. Serbian offers a direct equivalent in *crna ovca*, though it is unclear whether it originated separately with the same motivation or (in)directly through translation or a shared origin³.

Originating in English law, the phrase *might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb* suggests that if one is already facing severe consequences, they might take further and bigger risks with less concern. The expression refers to stealing either a valuable sheep or a less valuable lamb, as both acts carried similar, if not the same, punishment. Over time, the metaphor of the phrase extended beyond risky activities into everyday uses, for when things do not go as planned, and you embrace the new circumstances and indulge further. The Serbian equivalent uses rhyming in *kad je bal, nek je maskenbal* (*≈ if we're having a ball, it might as well be a masquerade*).

3.5. Poultry

Another greatly influential group of farm animals are the domestic fowls. Drawing from the behaviours and characteristics of chickens, ducks and geese, English has come up with expressions to convey a wide range of meanings and emotions.

³ Possibly another biblical reference, to Genesis 30:32, where Jacob discusses which part of the flock to take as wages for shepherding, and proposes 'removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every *black lamb*, and the spotted and speckled among the goats'.

For starters, the expression *like a chicken with its head cut off* describes someone who is acting in a frantic, panicked, disoriented, and/or uncontrolled manner, often in response to a stressful or chaotic situation. It reflects the fact that a chicken usually exhibits erratic movements for more than several seconds after decapitation due to residual nerve activity. In Serbian, the decapitated being is a housefly: *kao muva bez glave*.

A *chicken-hearted* individual, also simply named *chicken*, is one that displays a lack of bravery, i.e. a coward. Interestingly enough, the regular Serbian word for *coward* is in fact the name of another bird, the cuckoo bird – *kukavica*, likely because of their practice of leaving their offspring in the care of other birds.

The expression *no spring chicken* is employed to describe an individual, usually female, who is no longer young or is past their prime. It is often used humorously or playfully to acknowledge someone's age or to highlight the fact that they may not possess the vigour or vitality associated with youth. The expression likely originated from the idea that chickens raised in the spring are considered tender and desirable, while those raised later in the year may be tougher and less desirable. Slavic languages are generally believed to be more blunt and direct than English, and the Serbian equivalent of this phrase is one that reinforces this belief, with *[ti si već] stara koka* (\approx [*you're already*] *an old hen*).

Speaking of hens, when someone is very angry, then they are *mad as a wet hen*, which, 'first recorded in 1823, is puzzling, since hens don't really mind water' (Ammer, 1997:p.652). Interestingly enough, the Serbian phrase *kao pokisla kokoš* (\approx *like a wet hen*) is used to describe an individual as sad and downcast.

Ducks are also very prolific motivators for idiomatic expressions. A *dead duck*, for instance, has two, albeit related, meanings. One is to refer to someone in a hopeless and doomed situation, and the other for a person, usually a statesman, who has lost political authority, although it can be expanded to denote to any kind of a person who has lost influence and power in a given context, and is related to the expression *dead horse*. The expression *sitting duck*, although not coming from the world of farming, but from hunting, has been profaned to the point of becoming a completely dead metaphor, denoting something that is an easy target. There does not seem to be a direct equivalent or any kind of animal metaphor for any of these phrases in Serbian, and a translator would have to resort to using expressions from other domains.

The *ugly duckling*, on the other hand, is a well-known character from the eponymous fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, and when used figuratively for a person in both English and in Serbian (*ružno pačē*), it describes someone whose

path follows the plot of the fable, starting out unpopular, unattractive or untalented, only to overcome adversities and grow into the opposite, overshadowing those who were unsupportive.

4. Conclusion

The exploration of idiomatic figurative expressions used for comparison to human beings offers a glimpse into the intricate interplay between language, culture, and cognition. Such expressions motivated by farm animals showcase how language often draws on everyday experiences and observations to convey abstract ideas and emotions. Their origins vary, but they collectively reflect the rich tapestry of figurative language in the English lexicon.

Although there are English idioms with animal names without a proper equivalent in Serbian, there are those with the same or sufficiently similar motivation. It is then of interest to further explore which of those have a shared origin – such as from old Greek sources, the Bible etc., having entered these languages either directly or indirectly, and if there are some that have been transferred into Serbian directly from English.

Of those that have a different motivation, it might be interesting to look for the causes in cultural and experiential differences when dealing with specific animals.

Further exploration of cross-cultural idiomatic expressions could yield valuable insights, and future, larger studies may benefit from more extensive and diverse datasets, as well as interdisciplinary collaborations spanning cultural studies, psychology, and semiotics.

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IZABRANI FRAZEOLOGIZMI I PRIDJEVSKA POREĐENJA SA NAZIVIMA ŽIVOTINJA NA FARMI U ENGLSKOM I NJIHOVI EKVIVALENTI U SRPSKOM JEZIKU

Rezime

Ovaj rad predstavlja figurativna poređenja sa nazivima životinja na farmi u engleskom jeziku i njihove potencijalne semantičke ekvivalente u srpskom. Frazeologizmi i poređenja sa životinjama sastavni su dio lingvističkog diskursa, te doprinose bogatstvu i raznovrsnosti upotrebe jezika. Često njihova kompleksnost traži pomnije razumijevanje kulturoloških i kontekstualnih faktora kako bi se pravilno tumačili i shvatili, pa pružaju mnogo mogućnosti za međukulturološka komparativna istraživanja, koja produbljuju naše razumijevanje frazeologizama. Ovi izrazi prevazilaze lingvističku znatiželju, te imaju značajnu ulogu u konstrukciji značenja i formiranju slika u diskursu. Predstavljen je pregled izraza podijeljenih u pet kategorija, prema tipu životinja koje motivišu preneseno značenje: goveda (krave, bikovi i volovi), rod konja (konji i magarci/mazge), svinje, ovce i perad, uz ponuđene značenjske ekvivalente u srpskom jeziku, te uz poređenje upotrebe u ova dva jezika,

kako bi se dodatno rasvijetlila zamršena interakcija jezika, kulture i spoznaje u domenu frazeoloških figurativnih poređenja sa nazivima životinja na farmi.

► *Ključne riječi:* metafore sa životinjama na farmi, frazeologizmi sa životinjama na farmi, figurativna poređenja, engleski, srpski.

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Appendix 1.

List of English Comparison Idioms and Similes with Farm Animal Terms

- chicken feed
- a chicken and egg situation
- count one's chickens
- go to bed with the chickens
- like a headless chicken / like a chicken with its head cut off
- chicken-hearted
- spring chicken
- chickens come home to roost
- mad as a wet hen
- a hen party
- scarce as hen's teeth
- cash cow
- holy cow
- sacred cow
- till the cows come home
- like a saddle on a cow
- as stolid as a cow
- bull in a china shop
- bull artist (from bullshit artist)
- as healthy as a bull
- as strong as a bull
- like a bull at the gate
- take the bull by the horns
- kill the fatted calf
- calf love
- dead duck

- get one's ducks in a row
- lame duck (as lame as a duck)
- like water off a duck's back
- sitting duck
- take to (like a duck to water)
- ugly duckling
- as sure-footed as a goat
- get someone's goat
- separate the sheep from the goats.
- goose egg
- kill the goose that lays the golden eggs
- gone goose
- cook someone's goose
- sauce for the goose
- wild goose chase
- as silly as a goose
- as fast as a horse
- as healthy as a horse
- as hungry as a horse
- as strong as a horse
- back the wrong horse
- beat a dead horse
- cart before the horse
- change horses in midstream
- charley horse
- dark horse
- eat like a bird (horse)
- from the horse's mouth
- hold one's horses
- if wishes were horses
- look a gift horse in the mouth
- one-horse race
- on one's high horse
- war horse
- wild horses couldn't drag
- work like a beaver (horse)
- you can lead a horse to water

*Selected English Idioms and Similes with Farm Animal Zoonyms
as the Source Domain and their Equivalents in Serbian*

- horse around
- horse of a different/another color
- horse sense
- horse trading
- as stubborn as a mule
- as strong as an ox
- as fat as a pig
- in a pig's eye
- like pigs in clover
- make a pig of oneself
- when pigs fly
- pig in a poke
- go hog wild
- go whole hog
- high off the hog
- road hog
- cast pearls before swine
- as timid as a rabbit
- quick as a bunny
- black sheep
- hanged for a sheep
- separate the sheep from the goats
- wolf in sheep's clothing
- as silly as a sheep
- as gentle as a lamb
- as innocent as a lamb
- as meek as a lamb
- hanged for a sheep (as a lamb)
- in two shakes (of a lamb's tail)
- like a lamb to the slaughter