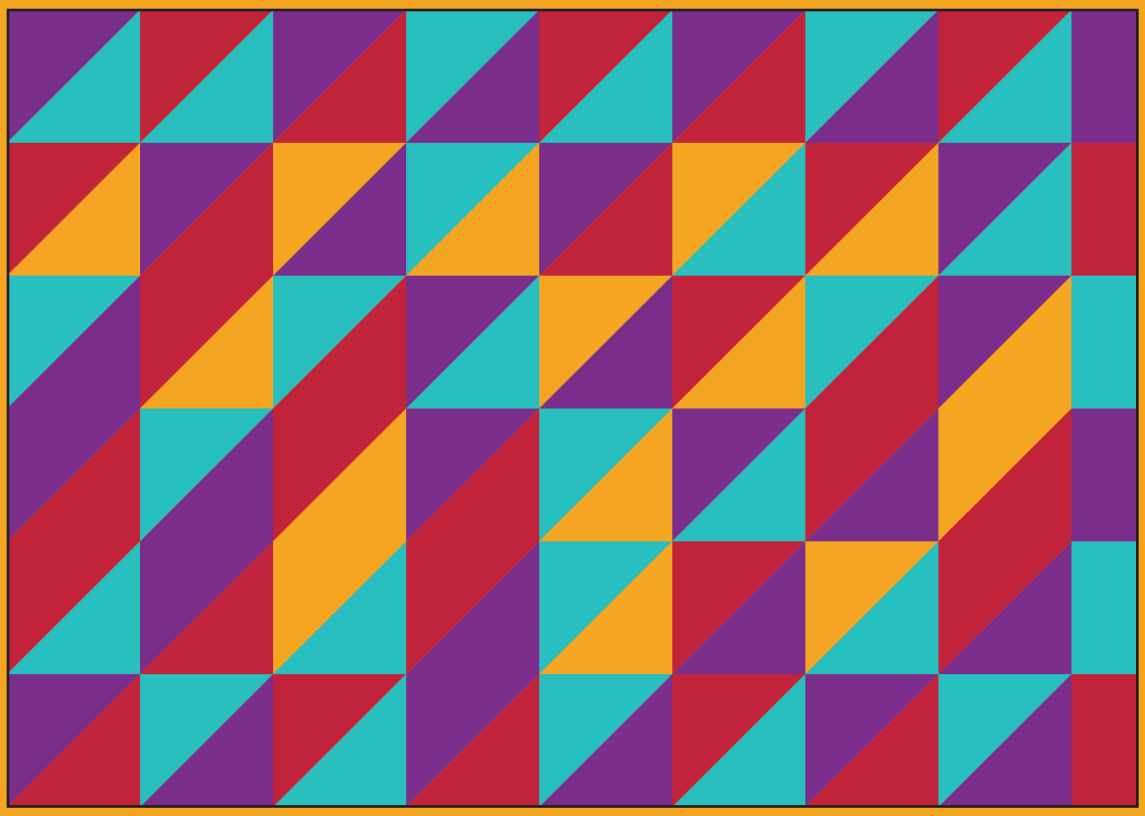
Phraseology in Action:

Theoretical Insights and Practical Approaches to Constructional Idioms, Idioms, Proverbs, and More

Edited by Fabio Mollica, Carolina Flinz, and Rita Luppi



Milano University Press

Contents

Title page	5
Colophon	6
Table of contents	7
Introduction	11
Section 1: Constructional Idioms and Phraseology	15
Die Phrasem-Konstruktion [alles andere als X] und ihre Entsprechungen im Spanischen	17
WhIAW constructional idioms in Spanish and German. A corpus-based study	31
Ich biege mich vor Lachen! / ¡Me parto de la risa! Crosslinguistic Analysis of Verbal Fillers i.	47
Russian constructional idioms of the pattern: independent infinitive + noun in Dative	61
Section 2: Metaphor and Metonymy in Phraseology	77
Metaphorical, metonymic and metaphthonymic character in Spanish verbal phraseological uni.	79
Metaphors of Genitive Prepositions in Idioms of the Bosnian Language	97
The role of polysemy in the motivation of idioms: A contrastive approach	109
Section 3: Pragmatics and Discourse Markers	125
Proper Names in Phraseme Constructions	127
Pragmatèmes de l’affichage informatif : acte illocutionnaire et analyse contrastive français-es.	149
Left outside: nominal operators in German and French	161
The pragmatic meaning of (que) es/era broma in Spanish: a discourse marker?	175
Section 4: Diachronic Phraseology and Variation	189
„Die Amerikaner kochen auch nur mit Wasser“. K.F.W. Wanders Sprichwortbild der Vereini.	191
Sprichwortrelationen und Sprichwortfamilien	227
Phraseological units and their variants in a specific German-language egodocument of Slovak.	241
A diachronic study of the phrase We are in a completely different place today in Danish	253
Variantenbildung in der Phraseologie aus historischer Perspektive	267
Section 5: Phraseology in Texts and Genres	281

Contents (continued)

A Contrastive Study of Phraseological Units in English, French and Italian Political Discourse 283
Idiomatic expressions in Feigned, Jargon-like Colloquial Orality 297
Titsch, Töitschu, Deutsch! Walser idioms in the Aosta Valley 321

Phraseology in Action

Theoretical Insights and Practical Approaches to Constructional Idioms, Idioms, Proverbs, and More

edited by Fabio Mollica, Carolina Flinz, Rita Luppi

Milano University Press

Phraseology in Action: Theoretical Insights and Practical Approaches to Constructional Idioms, Idioms, Proverbs, and More / edited by Fabio Mollica, Carolina Flinz, Rita Luppi. Milan: Milano University Press, 2026.

ISBN 979-12-5510-446-9 (PDF)

ISBN 979-12-5510-449-0 (EPUB)

DOI 10.54103/milanoup.233

This volume, and Milano University Press publications in general, unless otherwise specified, are submitted to an external refereeing process under the responsibility of the Milano University Press Editorial Board. The published works are evaluated and approved by the Editorial Board, and must be compliant with the Peer review policy, the Open Access, Copyright and Licensing policy and the Publication Ethics and Complaint policy as reflected in MilanoUP publishing guidelines (Linee Guida per pubblicare su MilanoUP).

The present work is released under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 - CC-BY-SA the full text of which is available at the URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/

This and other volumes of Milano University Press are available in open access at: https://libri.unimi.it/index.php/milanoup

© The Authors for the text 2026

© Milano University Press for this edition

Published by Milano University Press
Via Festa del Perdono 7 – 20122 Milano
Web Site: https://milanoup.unimi.it
e-mail: redazione.milanoup@unimi.it

General note on figures and tables

Unless otherwise indicated, figures and tables have been prepared by the author(s) of the chapter in question. The Editor is committed to striving to satisfy all copyright requirements concerning graphics, images and tables for which it has not been possible to identify the type of licence used.

Table of contents

Introduction 9

Fabio Mollica, *Carolina Flinz*, *Rita Luppi*

SECTION 1: CONSTRUCTIONAL IDIOMS AND PHRASEOLOGY

Die Phrasem-Konstruktion [*alles andere als* X] und ihre Entsprechungen im Spanischen 15

Maricel Esteban-Fonollosa, *Herbert J. Holzinger*

WhIAW constructional idioms in Spanish and German. A corpus-based study 29

Pedro Ivorra Ordines, *Ana Mansilla Pérez*

Ich biege mich vor Lachen! / ¡Me parto de la risa! Crosslinguistic analysis of verbal fillers in hyperbolic expressions of sensation: German [(*sich*) *vor Lachen* V] and Spanish [V *de* (*la*) *risa*] 45

Nely M. Iglesias Iglesias

Russian constructional idioms of the pattern: independent infinitive + noun in dative 59

Larissa Naiditch, *Anna Pavlova*

Section 2: Metaphor and Metonymy in Phraseology

Metaphorical, metonymic and metaphthonymic character in Spanish verbal phraseological units based on the noun *cabeza*: a classification proposal and analysis 77

Silvia Cataldo

Metaphors of genitive prepositions in idioms of the Bosnian language 95

Azra Hodžić-Čavkić

The role of polysemy in the motivation of idioms: a contrastive approach 107

Nicole Mazzetto

Section 3: Pragmatics and Discourse Markers

Proper names in phraseme constructions 125

Paola Maria Cotta Ramusino, *Anna Pavlova*

Pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif : acte illocutionnaire et analyse contrastive français-espagnol 147

Mélody Rodríguez Cebrián

Left outside: nominal operators in German and French 159

Martine Dalmas

The pragmatic meaning of *(que) es/era broma* in Spanish: a discourse marker? 173

Alicia Silvestre Miralles

Section 4: Diachronic Phraseology and Variation

„Die Amerikaner kochen auch nur mit Wasser". K.F.W. Wanders Sprichwortbild der Vereinigten Staaten 189

Wolfgang Mieder

Sprichwortrelationen und Sprichwortfamilien 225

Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt, *Zoltán Gotthardt*

Phraseological units and their variants in a specific German-language egodocument of Slovak provenance from the mid-19th century 239

Martin Braxatoris, *Anita Braxatorisová*

A diachronic study of the phrase *We are in a completely different place today* in Danish 251

Irene Simonsen

Variantenbildung in der Phraseologie aus historischer Perspektive 265

Tamás Forgács

Section 5: Phraseology in Texts and Genres

A contrastive study of phraseological units in English, French and Italian political discourse 281

Saša Bjelobaba, *Lidija Orešković Dvorski*

Idiomatic expressions in feigned, largon-like colloquial orality 295

Tiziana Roncoroni

Titsch, Töitschu, Deutsch! Walser idioms in the Aosta Valley 319

Luisa Giacoma

Introduction

Fabio Mollica
Università degli Studi di Milano
https:/orcid.org/0000-0001-5885-068X

Carolina Flinz
Università di Pavia
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8973-2827

Rita Luppi
Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8357-3119

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c760

This volume brings together nineteen contributions that map the current state of phraseological research across a wide range of languages, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches. The volume is organized into five thematic sections, each reflecting a distinct, yet interconnected dimension of phraseology as a discipline.

The first section, *Constructional Idioms and Phraseology*, is devoted to the intersection of Construction Grammar and phraseological theory. It includes contributions examining partially or fully fixed constructions, whose meaning cannot be derived compositionally from their parts. **Maricel Esteban-Fonollosa and Herbert J. Holzinger** analyze the German construction [*alles andere als* X] and its Spanish equivalents, shedding light on the mechanisms of intensifying negation and the behaviour of slot fillers. **Pedro Ivorra Ordines and Ana Mansilla Pérez** adopt a corpus-based approach to study WhIAW (e.g., *¿Qué cojones haces aquí?*) constructional idioms in Spanish and German, exploring their pragmatic functions and the typology of vulgar, euphemistic, and creative slot fillers. **Nely M. Iglesias Iglesias** examines hyperbolic expressions of laughter in German and Spanish, i.e., constructions such as [*sich vor Lachen* V] and [V *de* (*la*) *risa*], tracing the crosslinguistic preferences for reflexive verbs and embodied conceptualizations of affect. **Larissa Naiditch and Anna Pavlova** round

off this section with a detailed analysis of Russian phraseme constructions based on the pattern independent infinitive + dative noun, focusing on their semantics, pragmatics, and morphology.

The second section, *Metaphor and Metonymy in Phraseology*, explores the cognitive mechanisms underlying figurative language. **Silvia Cataldo** offers a classification of Spanish verbal phraseological units containing the noun *cabeza*, proposing a cline from purely metaphorical to purely metonymic expressions, with a range of intermediate stages. **Azra Hodžić-Čavkić** investigates the role of genitive prepositions — particularly *od* ('from'/'of') — in Bosnian idiomatic constructions, showing how spatial separation serves as a conceptual basis for abstract meanings through the metaphor ABSTRACT IS CONCRETE. **Nicole Mazzetto** focuses on the synchronic motivation of French idioms. She assesses the extent to which polysemy functions as a motivational device by comparing the responses of native French speakers with those of Italian speakers unfamiliar with French through a qualitative questionnaire.

The third section, *Pragmatics and Discourse Markers*, addresses phraseological units that perform functions beyond the propositional content of utterances. **Paola Maria Cotta Ramusino and Anna Pavlova** examine the role of proper names in phraseological constructions, highlighting their referential, metaphorical, and symbolic dimensions as well as their contribution to the expressive power of phrasemes. **Mélody Rodríguez Cebrián** analyzes 40 informative pragmatemes in French and Spanish (such as *chien méchant* / *perro peligroso*). She identifies two primary illocutionary acts (representative and directive) and shows how cultural references may diverge even between typologically close languages. **Martine Dalmas** investigates nominal operators in German and French of the type NP/N + utterance constructions (e.g., conclusion: ...), arguing that their left-peripheral position and prosodic marking confer on them the status of discourse markers through a process of pragmaticalization. **Alicia Silvestre Miralles** focuses on the Spanish expression (*que*) *es/era broma* ('just kidding'), analyzing its degree of formal fixation, its discourse position, and its mitigating function, and discussing whether it can be classified as a discourse marker.

The fourth section, *Diachronic Phraseology and Variation*, brings together contributions that privilege a historical and/or variational perspective. **Wolfgang Mieder** reconstructs the transatlantic dimension of Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander's *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon,* tracing the collector's sustained engagement with American proverb traditions and, in particular, with Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack*. **Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Zoltán Gotthardt** address the theoretical and practical challenges of documenting intralingual and interlingual proverb relations, including variants, modifications, and equivalents, and illustrate how so-called proverb families can be constructed in a multilingual database. **Martin Braxatoris and Anita Braxatorisová** examine a German-language egodocument of Slovak

provenance written by Samuel Ferjenčík in the nineteenth century. They draw on Conventional Figurative Language Theory to analyze the author's deliberate selection and modification of phraseological units. **Irene Simonsen** conducts a diachronic corpus analysis of the Danish phrase *vi er et helt andet sted i dag* ('we are in a completely different place today'), documenting its rise in organizational crisis communication from 2010 onwards and its subsequent conventionalization as a cliché within an ironic meta-discourse. **Tamás Forgács** closes the section with a systematic taxonomy of variant formation in Phraseology from a linguistic-historical perspective, illustrating with Hungarian and German examples the most recurrent types of phraseological changes: component replacement, addition or omission of components, structural-type shifts (such as the shortening of a proverb into an embeddable phraseme or, conversely, the expansion of a phraseme into a proverb) and changes in word order, especially in twin forms.

The fifth and final section, *Phraseology in Texts and Genres*, investigates the role of phraseological units in specific communicative contexts. **Saša Bjelobaba and Lidija Orešković Dvorski** examine domain-specific political phraseological units in English, French, and Italian. They analyze borrowing tendencies and propose a classification of phraseological equivalents based on idiomaticity, compositionality, and the level of equivalence of individual components across the three languages. **Tiziana Roncoroni** investigates idiomatic expressions in Erich Kästner's *Emil und die Detektive* (1929), demonstrating how feigned orality and sociolectal features are constructed through the deliberate use of colloquial and jargon-like phrasemes. **Luisa Giacoma** presents materials from the research project "WaLys Isole di cultura", devoted to the documentation of idioms in Titsch and Töitschu, the two variants of Walserdeutsch spoken in the Lys Valley (Aosta), arguing that idioms serve as privileged repositories of the linguistic and cultural heritage of this endangered Alpine community.

Together, these contributions testify to the vitality and breadth of contemporary phraseology. They cover a wide spectrum of languages, from the major European ones to minority and endangered varieties, and draw on diverse methodologies, from corpus linguistics and cognitive semantics to historical philology and ethnolinguistics. The volume as a whole reflects a discipline that is increasingly attentive to the dynamic interplay between form, meaning, use, and cultural memory in the study of formulaic language.

Section 1:
Constructional Idioms and Phraseology

Die Phrasem-Konstruktion [*alles andere als* X] und ihre Entsprechungen im Spanischen[1]

Maricel Esteban-Fonollosa
Universitat de València
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3535-0513

Herbert J. Holzinger
Universitat de València
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9421-4952

DOI : 10.54103/milanoup.233.c761

ABSTRACT

Dieser Artikel, der im Rahmen des Forschungsprojekts CONSTRIDIOMS (Mellado Blanco, 2021) entstand, besteht aus zwei Hauptteilen. Im ersten Teil wird die Phrasem-Konstruktion [*alles andere als* X] aus einer korpuslinguistischen Perspektive analysiert. Phrasem-Konstruktionen (in der Terminologie von Dobrovol'skij, 2011) bestehen aus lexikalisch fixierten Komponenten (*alles andere als*), enthalten aber auch mindestens eine offene Stelle (X), die variabel gefüllt werden kann. Syntaktisch wird X überwiegend als Adjektiv realisiert (*alles andere als einfach*), deutlich seltener als Nominalphrase. Aus diesem Grund konzentriert sich die vorliegende Studie auf Realisierungen mit Adjektiven als Slotfüller. Die freie Stelle wird vor allem von positiv konnotierten Adjektiven besetzt. Die Konstruktionsbedeutung kann als eine intensivierende Negation von X beschrieben werden. Im zweiten Teil untersuchen wir mögliche Entsprechungen im Spanischen. Wir identifizierten als solche [*todo menos* ADJ], [*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ] und [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ]. Diese Konstruktionen werden eingehend untersucht und mit ihrem deutschen Gegenstück kontrastiert.

Schlüsselwörter: Phrasem-Konstruktion; Korpusanalyse, kontrastive Analyse Deutsch – Spanisch.

1 Diese Arbeit entstand im Rahmen des Forschungsprojekts PID2019-108783RBI00 *Gramática de Construcciones y Fraseología. Las construcciones fraseológicas del alemán y el español en contraste a través de los corpu*s unter der Leitung von Carmen Mellado Blanco. Das Projekt wurde durch das spanische Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Innovation und FEDER-Gelder finanziert.

ABSTRACT

This article, which was developed as part of the research project CONSTRIDIOMS (Mellado Blanco, 2021), consists of two main parts. In the first one, the partially filled construction [*alles andere als* X] is analysed from a corpus linguistic perspective. Partially filled constructions or *Phrasem-Konstruktionen* (in the terminology of Dobrovol'skij, 2011) consist of lexically fixed components (*alles andere als* 'anything but'), but also contain at least one open slot (X), which can be variably filled. Syntactically, X is predominantly realized as an adjective (*alles andere als einfach*), significantly less often as a nominal phrase. For this reason, the present study focuses on realizations with adjectives as slot fillers. In this position, primarily positively connoted adjectives occur. The constructional meaning can be described as an intensifying negation of X. In the second part, we explore possible equivalents in Spanish. We identified as such [*todo menos* ADJ], [*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ] and [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ]. These constructions are examined in detail and contrasted with their German counterpart.

Keywords: partially filled constructions; corpus analysis; contrastive analysis German – Spanish.

1. Einleitung

Dieser Beitrag gliedert sich wie folgt: Nach einer kurzen Einleitung wird die verwendete Methodologie beschrieben. Als Hauptteile folgen in Abschnitt 3. die intralinguale Analyse der Phrasem-Konstruktion [*alles andere als* X] und in 4. die kontrastive Gegenüberstellung, in der spanische Äquivalente besprochen werden. Abschließend wird ein Fazit gezogen.

Unter einer Phrasem-Konstruktion (Ph-K.) (Dobrovol'skij, 2011) versteht man ein lexikalisch teilspezifiziertes Phrasem, das neben lexikalisch festen Bestandteilen mindestens eine Leerstelle (Slot) aufweist, die im Diskurs dem Kontext entsprechend lexikalisch gefüllt wird. Diese Erscheinung wurde in der deutschen Phraseologieforschung schon früh erkannt und unter Bezeichnungen wie *Modellbildung* (Burger, Buhofer und Sialm, 1982) oder *Phraseoschablone* (Fleischer, 1982) behandelt, kann aber erst in letzter Zeit mithilfe von Korpusanalysen systematisch erforscht werden (Stein und Stumpf, 2019; Steyer, 2013)[2]. Bei Ph-K. handelt es sich um Konstruktionen, im Sinne von Goldberg (2006), „die als Ganzes eine lexikalische Bedeutung haben, wobei bestimmte Positionen in ihrer syntaktischen Struktur lexikalisch besetzt sind, während andere Slots darstellen, die gefüllt werden müssen" (Dobrovol'skij, 2011, 114). Bei der hier untersuchten Ph-K. [*alles andere als* X] bildet *alles andere als* den festen Teil, während die Leerstelle X lexikalisch variabel besetzt werden kann. Ph-K. befinden sich im Lexikon-Grammatik-Kontinuum in einer zentralen Position zwischen den beiden Polen und stehen in einem Übergangsbereich zwischen Lexikon und Grammatik, der für die Forschung ein großes Interesse darstellt.

2 Zum Forschungsstand siehe Mellado Blanco, Mollica und Schafroth (2022).

2. Methodologie

Wir folgen den in Mellado Blanco und Steyer (2018, 266) dargelegten Kriterien, dass Äquivalenz „zumindest zum Teil korpusbasiert zu ermitteln sein" müsse und nur „die rekurrenten prototypischen Textäquivalenzen" in Betracht gezogen werden können.

Methodologisch stützen wir uns auf die unilaterale Vergleichsmethode (Kątny, Olszewska und Socka, 2014). Dabei bildet die Ausgangssprache das Bezugssystem für die Zielsprache. Die Analyse läuft in drei Schritten ab: (i.) Im 1. (intralingualen und semasiologischen) Schritt werden die Bedeutungen, sowie verallgemeinerte Funktionen der grammatischen Erscheinungen ermittelt; (ii.) im 2. (interlingualen und onomasiologischen) Schritt sucht man nach Äquivalenten der im 1. Schritt eruierten Sememe (Übersetzung); (iii.) im 3. (semasiologischen und intralingualen) Schritt können die ermittelten Äquivalente (Formen) auf ihre Bedeutung und Verwendung in der Zielsprache hin untersucht werden (Kątny, Olszewska und Socka, 2014, 10).

Ausgehend vom Äquivalenzbegriff (dazu Näheres in Mellado Blanco, 2015a, 2015b, 2019) werden für die Äquivalenzauswahl der Ph-K. funktional-kommunikative Kriterien angesetzt. Nach Dobrovol'skij (2014, 207) können funktionale Äquivalente als Einheiten definiert werden „die sich in ihrer lexikalisierten Semantik und im Idealfall auch in ihrer bildlichen Bedeutungskomponente maximal ähnlich sind und die in analogen Situationstypen ohne Informationsverlust gebraucht werden können". Im Falle der Ph-K. rückt das pragmatische Potenzial der Konstruktionsbedeutung mit in den Fokus der Äquivalenzauswahl (Mellado Blanco, 2019, 76).

Funktionale Äquivalenz ist unter folgenden Aspekten zu betrachten (Mellado Blanco, 2019; Mellado Blanco und Steyer, 2018):

1. Äquivalenz ist aus lexikografischer Sicht in einer Zwischenposition zwischen der Äquivalenz auf der System- und der Textebene anzusiedeln.
2. Äquivalenz muss zumindest zum Teil korpusbasiert zu ermitteln sein.
3. Äquivalenz kann nicht alle in den Texten aufgefundenen möglichen Übersetzungslösungen berücksichtigen, sondern nur die rekurrenten prototypischen Textäquivalente.
4. Äquivalenz muss die syntaktischen und semantischen Restriktionen und Präferenzen in beiden Sprachen sowie die Syntagmatik in Betracht ziehen.

Als monolinguale Korpora des Spanischen und des Deutschen dienen uns jeweils das *esTenTen18* und das *deTenTen20* der Plattform Sketch Engine. Es handelt sich um zwei vergleichbare Referenzkorpora einer Größe von fast 17 Milliarden Tokens, die vor allem Texte aus dem Internet enthalten, die sich teilweise durch „schriftliche Mündlichkeit" auszeichnen.

Das kostenfrei zugängliche Parallelkorpus PaGeS (Parallel Corpus German/Spanish) ist ein bilinguales Parallelkorpus, das aus zwei Hauptteilen besteht:

1. Dem Kernkorpus: Originaltexte in Deutsch und Spanisch und deren veröffentlichte Übersetzungen:
   a) Es umfasst eine Sammlung von 178 Werken, überwiegend Belletristik (80%), sowie Sachtexte verschiedener Gattungen (Essays, Ratgeberliteratur, biographische und populär-wissenschaftliche Texte).
   b) Die enthaltenen Werke wurden nicht vollständig, sondern nur in Auszügen aufgenommen.
   c) Es enthält ca. 38 Millionen Tokens.
2. Dem Zusatzkorpus: insgesamt über 90 Millionen Tokens. Es beinhaltet:
   a) Europarl v7, das die ausführlichen Sitzungsberichte des Europäischen Parlaments von 1996 bis 2011 enthält.
   b) Ted-Talks, das die deutschen und spanischen Übersetzungen der Transkriptionen von 2859 TED-Vorträgen von 2006 bis 2020 sammelt.

3. Intralinguale Analyse von [*alles andere als* X]

3.1 Quantitative Daten und Syntax

Wie oben schon erwähnt, wird der Slot vornehmlich von Adjektiven und adjektivisch gebrauchten Partizipien besetzt, weshalb in diesem Beitrag nur diese Art von Slotbesetzung behandelt wird. Eine gezielte CQL-Suche [word="alles-|Alles"] [word="andere"] [word="als"] [tag="ADJ.*"] ergab nach Bereinigung 142.069 Tokens, die sich auf 954 Types verteilen. Dabei entfallen auf den umfangreichsten Type *alles andere als einfach* 9.620 Treffer. Die zehn produktivsten Adjektive sind *einfach, gut, leicht, begeistert, optimal, selbstverständlich, langweilig, sicher, rosig* und *schön*. Weitere Adjektive und Details können über die von unserer Forschungsgruppe entwickelte Plattform CONSTRIDIOMS (https://constridioms.es/) eingesehen werden.

Syntaktisch gesehen steht die Ph-K. in einem prädikativen Gebrauch, meist mit dem Verb *sein* (Beispiel (1), aber auch weiteren kopulaähnlichen Verben (siehe dazu etwa Dolińska, 2012), wie etwa *sich gestalten* (Beispiel (2)).

(1) Ordnung im Tarifdschungel. Einen passenden Handytarif zu finden, ist *alles andere als einfach*. [SkE 170790][3]

(2) Seitdem ist die Gemeinde auf der Suche nach einem adäquaten Nachfolger für die verantwortungsvolle Position. Doch die gestaltet sich anscheinend *alles andere als leicht*. [SkE 20530490]

3 In den zitierten Textstellen erscheint das gefundene Konstrukt fett gesetzt und die Belege werden mit der Dokumentennummer gekennzeichnet.

Wie prädikativ gebrauchte Adjektive im Allgemeinen streben die Konstrukte dem Satzende zu. Nur in sehr seltenen Fällen (1,9 %) findet man sie zur besonderen Hervorhebung satzeinleitend (3):

(3) *Alles andere als einfach* ist auch das Bestimmen verschiedener Tierpräparate und hier vor allem die Unterscheidung von Baum- und Steinmarder. [SkE 19052220]

Die Konstrukte weisen einen hohen Grad innerer Festigkeit auf, modifizierende Elemente zwischen *alles andere als* und dem Adjektiv sind sehr selten.

3.2 Semantik und Pragmatik

Die semantische Prosodie der Adjektive ist vornehmlich positiv, sowie teilweise neutral. Negativ konnotierte Adjektive treten mit ca. 10 % eher selten auf und sind meistens im unteren Frequenzbereich zu finden. In der oben angeführten Auflistung der 10 häufigsten ist mit *langweilig* nur eines vertreten.

Es handelt sich überwiegend um evaluative Adjektive (Sauereisen, 2018), also qualifizierende Adjektive, die eine Einschätzung oder Bewertung ausdrücken. Sehr oft weisen sie auch ein Antonym auf.

Das prototypische Konstrukt *alles andere als einfach* möge zur Veranschaulichung der Entstehung der Konstruktionsbedeutung dienen. Das Adjektiv *einfach* befindet sich semantisch auf einer Skala mit zwei Polen und einem Zwischenbereich zwischen ihm und seinem Antonym *schwierig*. Die wörtliche, kompositionelle Bedeutung von *alles andere als einfach* besagt zunächst einmal, dass *einfach* als Bedeutung ausgeschlossen wird. Die vom Sprecher beabsichtigte Bedeutung entsteht indirekt durch die Verneinung des Gesagten, das Gegenteil ist gemeint. Es handelt sich also um eine Litotes. Die Litotes wird in der Forschung sowohl mit Intensivierung als auch mit Abschwächung (Mitigation) in Verbindung gebracht (dazu etwa Gerhalter, 2021; Neuhaus, 2016, 2019; Torrent, 2014). In der Folge wird aber gezeigt, dass bei der untersuchten Ph-K. stets eine Intensivierung stattfindet.

Im hier untersuchten Fall wird das Gesagte als Gemeintes kategorisch ausgeschlossen und die intendierte Bedeutung in die gegenteilige Richtung gelenkt. Durch die strikte Ablehnung und Zurückweisung einer Bedeutung wird der semantische Fokus zum gegensätzlichen Pol hin verschoben, es kann regelrecht zu einer Bedeutungsumkehrung kommen. *Alles andere als einfach* kann also vom Sprecher als *schwierig* oder sogar *sehr schwierig* intendiert sein (grauer Bereich in Abb. 1).

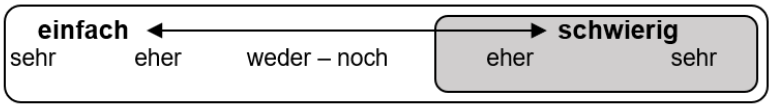


Abb. 1. Konstruktionsbedeutung von *alles andere als einfach*

Wie weit entfernt von *einfach* die intendierte Bedeutung anzusiedeln ist, wird auch stark von Kontext und Kotext mitbestimmt. Der Sender legt sich aufgrund der indirekten Aussage semantisch nicht genau fest und lässt dem Empfänger Interpretationsspielraum. In vielen Fällen trägt der Kotext zur genaueren Bedeutungsbestimmung bei, wie in Beispiel (1), wo *Tarifdschungel* zu verstehen gibt, dass es sehr schwierig ist.

Es handelt sich um eine subjektive Bewertung von Seiten des Senders, der durch den erhöhten Verarbeitungsaufwand der syntaktisch und semantisch komplexen Verneinung seiner Aussage die Aufmerksamkeit des Empfängers auf den Ausdruck zieht. Im Vergleich zu einer stets möglichen Verneinung durch *nicht* ist eine syntaktisch und semantisch komplexe Negation vorhanden, die pragmatisch gesehen die illokutive Funktion der Intensivierung hinzufügt, wodurch auch eine stärkere emotionale Beteiligung des Senders (Albelda Marco, 2007) zum Ausdruck kommt.

Epistemische verstärkende Adverbiale wie *wirklich, sicher, tatsächlich, echt* weisen darauf hin, dass der Sender den Wahrheitsgehalt der Aussage bestätigt und somit noch mehr Gewicht auf das emphatische Negieren des Adjektivs legt, um die perlokutive Kraft zu erhöhen und den Empfänger von seiner Aussage zu überzeugen.

Wie oben erwähnt, weisen etwa 10 % der Adjektive negative Prosodie auf. Auch bei ihnen kommt es zu einer verstärkenden Negierung, die auch oft im Kotext (teilweise durch Antonyme) explizit gemacht wird (kursiv gesetzt):

(4) Das Buch ist *packend, spannend* und *alles andere als langweilig*. [SkE 25294256]

(5) Der Telekom geht es *alles andere als schlecht*. *Im Gegenteil*: sie macht *Riesengewinne*. [SkE 26569565]

Die oft als prototypische Litotes angesehene doppelte Verneinung (Neuhaus, 2019) zeigt sich etwa bei durch das Präfix *un-* negierten Adjektiven oder Adjektiven auf *-los*. In ganz wenigen Fällen findet man sogar [*alles andere als nicht* ADJ].

(6) Um seine Familie durch den Winter zu bringen, verdingt sich Charles in einem Steinbruch. Die Arbeitsbedingungen sind *alles andere als ungefährlich*. Bei einer Explosion kommt Charles' neuer Freund Ken Peters ums Leben. [SkE 2443255]

(7) Jetzt weiß ich vielleicht, dass mein Verhalten *alles andere als nicht gerechtfertigt* ist und war, dass ich ein eigentlich offener Mensch wäre...aber niemand kann mir die Gedanken, die Kontrolle oder meine innere Verzweiflung nehmen. [SkE 20557630]

Nicht evaluative Adjektive wie etwa Farbadjektive sind sehr selten. Auch in diesen Fällen findet eine intensivierende Verneinung statt:

(8) Zu allem Übel mussten wir am Morgen feststellen, dass es regnete und der Himmel *alles andere als blau* war. [SkE12637056]

Insgesamt validiert die Produktivität, die hohe Zahl an Tokens und Types, den Status des Musters als Form-Bedeutungspaar und deutet auf eine starke kognitive Fixierung hin (vgl. Iglesias Iglesias, 2021, 32f.). Es bestätigt sich auch die Aussage von Ivorra Ordines und Mellado Blanco (2021, 43): „je produktiver eine phraseologische Konstruktion ist, desto näher ist sie im Normalfall an der kompositionellen Bedeutung der einzelnen lexikalischen Bestandteile". Insgesamt erweist sich die Semantik im Zusammenhang mit allen genannten Adjektivgruppen als konstant.

4. Kontrastiver Teil

4.1 Quantitative Daten und Syntax

Nach der Analyse der Ph-K. [*alles andere als* ADJ] im Deutschen werden mögliche Äquivalenzen im Spanischen durch die oben beschriebene unilaterale Methode anhand des bilingualen Parallelkorpus PaGeS untersucht. Das Korpus zeigt eine Vielfalt äquivalenter Ausdrücke, von denen nur drei aufgrund ihrer Frequenz und ihrer semantisch-pragmatischen Merkmale für eine eingehende Analyse ausgewählt worden sind, nämlich [*todo menos* ADJ], [*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ] und [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ]. Tabelle 1 zeigt die Frequenzen dieser zu untersuchenden Konstruktionen (fett gedruckt).

Tabelle 1. Quantitative Aufstellung der Übersetzungen von [*alles andere als* ADJ] (PaGeS)

Übersetzungen von [*alles andere als* ADJ]	Treffer (PaGeS)
[*todo menos* ADJ]	**23**
[*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ]	**15**
[*no precisamente/muy* ADJ]	10
[*todo lo contrario que* ADJ]	**6**

Es ist interessant anzumerken, dass die Ph-K. [*no precisamente/muy* ADJ] unter den vorgeschlagenen Übersetzungen gefunden wurde, die als eine Entsprechung der Konstruktion [*nicht gerade* ADJ] betrachtet werden kann (Esteban-Fonollosa, 2024). Sie verhält sich semantisch etwas anders und wird deshalb hier nicht näher analysiert, aber man kann von einer Konstruktionsfamilie sprechen, deren Mitglieder über gemeinsame semantisch-pragmatische Merkmale verfügen, die sich durch einen litotischen Charakter auszeichnen, sei es explizit oder implizit, begleitet von einer intensivierenden Funktion.

Nach der Identifizierung im bilingualen Parallelkorpus von äquivalenten Konstruktionen im Spanischen werden diese im monolingualen Korpus *esTenTen18* der Sketch Engine-Plattform untersucht. Tabelle 2 zeigt, dass die Ergebnisse in beiden Korpora in dem Sinne übereinstimmen, dass die Frequenz von [*todo menos* ADJ] höher ist als die von [*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ]. Auffällig ist allerdings die deutlich niedrigere Frequenz der Ph-K. [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ] v. a. im monolingualen Korpus.

Tabelle 2. Quantitative Analyse der äquivalenten Ph-K

Äquivalente von [*alles andere als* ADJ]	*PaGeS*	*esTenTen18*
[*todo menos* ADJ]	23	7.902
[*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ]	15	2.433
[*todo lo contrario que* ADJ]	6	29

Ebenso findet man Treffer, in denen keine äquivalente Konstruktion zu identifizieren ist. Zum einen stellt man grammatikalische Komponenten wie Negationsadverbiale wie *tampoco*, *nada*, *en absoluto* (Beispiele 9–11) fest:

(9a) »Ich bin mir auch *alles andere als sicher*«, pflichtete Tom ihr bei. »Nur leider ist es völlig egal, was wir denken.« [0059, 3, 6]
(9b) —Yo *tampoco* estoy seguro —la secundó Tom—. Solo que, por desgracia, da igual lo que pensemos. [0059, 3, 6]

(10a) »Wo denken Sie hin? Das ist *alles andere als einfach*. Ein schrecklicher Ausfall für die Klinik. [0038, 5, Neuer Tag,...]

(10b) —¡Menuda ocurrencia! No es *nada* fácil. Una terrible pérdida para la clínica. [0038, 5, Nuevo día,...]

(11a) Aber Sedem schien *alles andere als beleidigt* zu sein. [0039, 5, Derivate]

(11b) Sin embargo, Sedem no parecía ofendido *en absoluto*. [0039, 5, Derivados]

Zum anderen sind phraseologische Einheiten zu finden, wie die Beispiele (12)–(14) zeigen:

(12a) Als er ihr zuzwinkerte, verschwand sie kichernd hinter Fenoglios Rücken, der immer noch *alles andere als freundlich* dreinblickte. [0016, 3, Fenoglio]

(12b) Cuando éste le guiñó un ojo, desapareció con una risita ahogada tras la espalda de Fenoglio, que seguía con *cara de pocos amigos*. [0016, 3, Fenoglio]

(13a) Stefan Siebenlist war *alles andere als erfreut*, als er Pia durch den Ausstellungsraum seines Möbelgeschäfts kommen sah. [0025, Jahreszeiten, Donnerstag...]

(13b) A Stefan Siebenlist no le hizo *ni pizca de gracia* ver entrar a Pia en la sala de

exposición de su establecimiento de muebles. [0025, Las estaciones del año, Jueves 22 ...]

(14a) Die jüngsten Drohungen von Herrn Ecevit sind dieser Sache *alles andere als dienlich*. [Europarl, 16/07/1997]

(14b) Las últimas amenazas del Sr. Ecevit *hacen un flaco favor* a este asunto. [Europarl, 16/07/1997]

Die gefundenen Übersetzungen stellen keine funktionalen äquivalenten Konstruktionen im Sinne einer Entsprechung zwischen Form und Bedeutung dar. Dennoch verfügen die phraseologischen Einheiten manchmal über intensivierende Komponenten.

4.2 Semantik und Pragmatik

Bei der Analyse des Slots der äquivalenten Konstruktionen im Spanischen kann man feststellen, dass, genau wie in der deutschen Konstruktion [*alles andere als* ADJ], die semantische Polarität des Adjektivs ebenfalls prototypisch positiv oder neutral ist. In diesem Sinne sind die häufigsten Adjektive in der Konstruktion [*todo menos* ADJ] *bonito*, *fácil*, *normal*, *guapo*, *tranquilo*, *agradable*, *sencillo*, *convencional*, *bueno* y *discreto*; in [*cualquier cosa menos* ADJ] sind es *fácil*, *normal*, *simple*, *sencillo* und *inocente*; und in [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ] sind es *bueno*, *sencillo*, *exaltante*, *fácil* und *óptimo*, die teilweise mit den prototypischen im Deutschen übereinstimmen. Die Konstruktionsbedeutung kommt wie im Deutschen zustande (siehe Abb. 2).

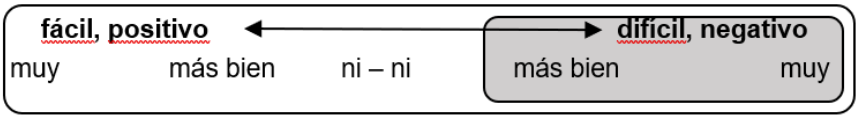


Abb. 2. Konstruktionsbedeutung der spanischen Äquivalente

So wie bei der deutschen Konstruktion bezeichnet der Sprecher etwas durch seinen Gegensatz mit einem Element negativer Semantik wie *menos* oder *contrario* (s. Beispiele (15), (16). Im Deutschen kann man feststellen, dass das negative Element entweder explizit im Slot ADJ (z.B. als Präfix) erscheint oder außerhalb der Konstruktion selbst auftritt, sei es durch eine negative Partikel oder ein Adverb negativer semantischer Polarität:

(15a) Shahla ist *alles andere als unschuldig*.« [0059, 3, 75]

(15b) Shahla es *cualquier cosa menos inocente*. [0059, 3, 75]

(16a) Der Befund ist leider *alles andere als positiv*. [Europarl, 17/04/1996]

(16b) Y, en este aspecto, el balance es *cualquier cosa menos positivo*. [Europarl, 17/04/1996]

Demzufolge behauptet der Sprecher in Beispiel (15b) nicht nur, dass Shahla nicht unschuldig ist, sondern diese Aussage wird durch die Konstruktion verstärkt. Ebenso wird in Beispiel (16b) ausgedrückt, dass der Befund nicht positiv ist, sondern durch die Intensivierung, die die Konstruktion mit sich bringt, wird nahegelegt, dass er (sehr) negativ ist.

Ebenso findet man diese negierende und intensivierende Funktion in den für die Konstruktion [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ] ermittelten Instanzen. In den Beispielen (17a) und (17b) wird implizit ein Szenario angedeutet, das zwischen *fácil* und *difícil* schwanken könnte. Der verstärkende Charakter der Konstruktion führt uns genau zu der Interpretation eines Szenarios als *difícil*, obwohl eine objektive Interpretation, z. B. bei einer Verneinung mit *nicht*, also ohne die pragmatische Intensivierung der Konstruktion, uns dazu bringen könnte, an eine neutrale Situation zu denken.

(17a) Das war gerade auch in bezug auf die gemeinsame Agrarpolitik *alles andere als einfach*, wie Sie sich vorstellen können. [Europarl, 15/05/1998]

(17b) Como se podrán imaginar, en relación con la Política Agrícola Común esto fue *todo lo contrario que sencillo*. [Europarl, 15/05/1998]

(18a) Sie sollte *alles andere als diplomatisch* sein. [Europarl, 05/05/1999]

(18b) Quería ser *todo lo contrario que diplomática*. [Europarl, 05/05/1999]

Bei der spanischen Konstruktion [*todo lo contrario que* ADJ] ist eine erhebliche Variation in den Frequenzen der Slotfüller zu beobachten, was auf ein erhöhtes Maß an intendierter sprachlicher Kreativität seitens der Sprecher hindeutet, wenn diese eher selten gebrauchte Konstruktion im Diskurs aktualisiert wird.

Abschließend ist noch darauf hinzuweisen, dass wir aufgrund unserer Intuition auf eine weitere mögliche Äquivalenz gestoßen sind, die durch Suche im monolingualen Korpus bestätigt wurde, nämlich der Ph-K. [*para nada* ADJ]. In ihren Untersuchungen haben bereits Fuentes Rodríguez (2000), Anaya (2020) und Padilla (2023) bei der Sequenz *para nada* als Diskursmarker im Rahmen der Makrosyntax eine intensivierende Bedeutung festgestellt, die mit unserer Analyse der Ph-K. parallel läuft. Die Einbeziehung ihrer Studien geht allerdings über das Ziel des vorliegenden Kapitel hinaus.

5. Fazit und Ausblick

In dieser Studie wurde die Ph-K. [*alles andere als* ADJ] untersucht und ihre Entsprechungen anhand des deutsch-spanischen Parallelkorpus PaGeS analysiert. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass diese Ph-K. eine Vielzahl von Äquivalenzen aufweist, sowohl in Bezug auf die Konstruktion als auch auf andere formale Alternativen, die im Vergleich zur Originalkonstruktion an pragmatischen Nuancen verlieren.

Methodologisch betrachtet hat sich das Parallelkorpus PaGeS als wichtiges Werkzeug zum Auffinden verschiedener Ph-K. bestätigt. Allerdings haben wir festgestellt, dass auch die Intuition der Forschenden unverzichtbar ist. Andere Äquivalente wurden entdeckt, die im Parallelkorpus nicht erfasst sind [*para nada* ADJ] und Fokus weiterer Beiträge werden sollen.

In weiterführender Forschung wäre es sinnvoll, die Analyse auf andere Strukturen der Slotbesetzung zu erweitern, wie den Fall [*alles andere als* NP] wie in *alles andere als eine leichte Aufgabe*, oder [*alles andere als* V] wie in *das kann alles andere als überzeugen*. Ein weiteres Forschungsdesiderat ist die Ausarbeitung der Konstruktionsfamilie der Litotes im Deutschen und im Spanischen.

Die in dieser Studie durchgeführte Analyse trägt mit zum Aufbau der Online-Plattform CONSTRIDIOMS bei, ein bilingualer deutsch-spanischer Thesaurus von vornehmlich verstärkenden Ph-K. Eine der Hauptaufgaben dieser Plattform besteht darin, derartige Ph-K. lexikalisch zu erfassen (was in der Regel in bestehenden Nachschlagewerken nicht der Fall ist) und zu beschreiben.

Literatur

Albelda Marco, Marta. 2007. La intensificación como categoría verbal plena: revisión y propuesta. Una aplicación al español coloquial. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Anaya Revuelta, Inmaculada. 2020. „La expresión "para nada" y su evolución en el español oral. La información del uso en los diccionarios". Revista de Investigación Lingüística 23: 193–217.

Burger, Harald, Annelies Buhofer, und Ambros Sialm. 1982. Handbuch der Phraseologie. Berlin [etc.]: de Gruyter.

CONSTRIDIOMS. Construcciones fraseológicas del alemán y el español. https://constridioms.es/

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2011. „Phraseologie und Konstruktionsgrammatik". In Konstruktionsgrammatik III. Aktuelle Fragen und Lösungsansätze, herausgegeben von Alexander Lasch und Alexander Ziem, 111–130. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2012. „Phrasem-Konstruktionen in Parallelkorpora". In Idiome, Konstruktionen, „verblümte rede": Beiträge zur Geschichte der

germanistischen Phraseologieforschung, herausgegeben von Michael Prinz, and Ulrike Richter-Vapaatalo, 327-340. Stuttgart: Hirzel.

Dolińska, Justyna. 2012. Zur Klassifizierung der Prädikative. Dissertation, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena. https://d-nb.info/1022011448/34

Esteban-Fonollosa, Maricel. 2024. „La traducción de la lítote: Análisis contrastivo alemán-español de la construcción fraseológica [*nicht gerade* X]". In Cruzando puentes, editado por Belén López Sañudo, Ferran Robles i Sabater, 103–121. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Fleischer, Wolfgang. 1982. Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache. Leipzig: VEB.

Fuentes Rodríguez, Catalina. 2000. „Para nada". Español actual, 73: 82–84.

Gerhalter, Katharina. 2021. „El silencio no es precisamente una de sus virtudes ... Diachronie und Pragmatik der Konstruktion [Negation + Exaktheits-Fokusadverb + X] im Französischen, Portugiesischen und Spanischen". In Konstruktionsgrammatische Zugänge zu romanischen Sprachen, herausgegeben von Anja Hennemann und Hans-Jörg Döhla, 171–213. Berlin. Frank & Timme.

Goldberg, Adele. 2006. Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Iglesias Iglesias, Nely M. 2021. „Produktivität und Kreativität sprachlicher Muster. Am Beispiel der Phrasemkonstruktion [DET *nächste* N *kommt bestimmt*]. Phraseme und ihr kommunikatives Potential". Beiträge zur Fremdsprachenvermittlung, Sonderheft 28: 21–40.

Ivorra Ordines, Pedro, und Carmen Mellado Blanco. 2021. „Más tontos que el novio de la Chelo. La intensificación de la estulticia en foros y chats por medio de comparaciones creativas: Una aproximación desde la Gramática de Construcciones". Estudios Románicos 30: 39–58. https://doi.org/10.6018/ER.471241.

Kątny, Andrzej, Danuta Olszewska, und Anna Socka. 2014. „Kontrastivität in der Linguistik und ihre Dimensionen". Studia Germanica Gedanensia 31: 9–23.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. 2015a. „The notion of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural equivalence in the field of Phraseology". International Journal of Lexicography 28(3): 385–390. (Special Issue: Phraseology and Dictionaries; guest editor: Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij).

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. 2015b. „Parámetros específicos de equivalencia en las unidades fraseológicas (con ejemplos del español y el alemán)". *RFULL* – Revista de Filología de la Universidad de La Laguna 33: 153–174.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. 2019. „Phrasem-Konstruktionen Deutsch – Spanisch: ein korpusbasiertes Beschreibungsmodell anhand ironischer Vergleiche". Yearbook of Phraseology 10 (1): 65–88. https://doi.org/10.1515/phras-2019-0005

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. 2021. „Proyecto de investigación CONSTRIDIOMS. Las construcciones fraseológicas del alemán y el español en contraste a

través de los corpus“. *LinRed* <https://www.linred.es/informacion_pdf/LR-informacion25-22052021.pdf >

Mellado Blanco, Carmen, und Kathrin Steyer. 2018. „Auf der Suche nach Äquivalenz. Lexikalisch geprägte Muster kontrastiv: Deutsch – Spanisch“. In *Sprachliche Verfestigung*. Wortverbindungen, Muster, Phrasem-Konstruktionen, herausgegeben von Kathrin Steyer, 265–284. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen, Fabio Mollica, und Elmar Schafroth. 2022. „Phrasem-Konstruktionen in der heutigen Forschung: ein Überblick“. In Konstruktionen zwischen Lexikon und Grammatik. Phrasemkonstruktionen im Deutschen, Italienischen und Spanischen, herausgegeben von Carmen Mellado Blanco, Fabio Mollica, und Elmar Schafroth, 1–19. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter.

Neuhaus, Laura. 2016. „On the relation of irony, understatement, and litotes“. Pragmatics & Cognition 23(1): 117–149. https://doi.org/10.1075/pc.23.1.06neu

Neuhaus, Laura. 2019. Linguistik der Litotes im Deutschen. Syntax, Semantik und Pragmatik einer ‚nicht uninteressanten‘ Redefigur. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter.

Padilla Herrada, María Soledad. 2023. La negación reactiva en el español actual: una aproximación desde la Macrosintaxis. Peter Lang.

PaGeS - Parallel Corpus German Spanisch. https://www.corpuspages.eu/corpus/search/search

Sauereisen, Britta. 2018. Adjektive zwischen Syntax, Semantik und Kognition. Eine sprachvergleichende kognitive Analyse anhand des Deutschen und Türkischen. Dissertation. Stuttgart. https://elib.uni-stuttgart.de/bitstream/11682/10094/4/Sauereisen-Diss01.pdf

Sketch Engine https://www.sketchengine.eu/

Stein, Stephan und Sören Stumpf. 2019. Muster in Sprache und Kommunikation. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Steyer, Kathrin. 2013. Usuelle Wortverbindungen. Zentrale Muster des Sprachgebrauchs aus korpusanalytischer Sicht. Tübingen: Narr.

Torrent, Aina. 2014. „La figura de la lítotes en los sistemas fraseológicos del español y del alemán desde el punto de vista de la traductología“. In Kontrastive Phraseologie, Deutsch-Spanisch. Sprachkontraste und Sprachbewusstsein, herausgegeben von Carmen Mellado Blanco, 23–37. Tübingen: Edition Julius Groos im Stauffenburg Verlag.

WhIAW constructional idioms in Spanish and German. A corpus-based study

Pedro Ivorra Ordines
University Center of Defence (Zaragoza)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2353-1002

Ana Mansilla Pérez
University of Murcia
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4264-1159

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c762

ABSTRACT
This study contributes to the field of contrastive linguistics in the context of Construction Grammar. Adopting a corpus-based methodology (esTenTen18 for Spanish and deTenTen20 for German, in Sketch Engine), the objective of the study of the WhIAW constructional idioms (e.g., *¿Qué cojones haces aquí?*, *lit.* 'What bollocks do here', meaning 'What the heck are you doing here', or *Was zum Teufel machst du hier?*, *lit.* 'What to hell do you here?', meaning 'What the hell are you doing here') in Spanish and German is twofold. First, to explore the "pragmatic point" of the constructions, taking into account their illocutive function(s) and their inherent incompatibility between form and interpretation (cf. Kay and Fillmore, 1999). Second, to describe the nature of the slot fillers by means of the use of vulgarisms and euphemisms, borrowings from other languages, and hapax and creative language use.

Keywords: constructional idioms; WhIAW; contrastive approach; pragmatic point; slot fillers; corpus-based study.

1. Introduction

Contrastive approaches have received a major impetus in the last few years in the context of Construction Grammar (Boas, 2010; Boas and Gonzálvez-García, 2014), particularly in the intersection with Phraseology. This development is evident in the growing number of recent publications on the topic (Cotta Ramusino and Mollica, 2020; Ivorra Ordines, in press; Mellado Blanco, 2022; Mellado Blanco, *et al.*, 2022; among others). Construction grammarians indeed found in the notion of "grammatical construction" a useful theoretical tool for conducting holistic descriptions of formal as well as semantic-functional

idiosyncrasies. It helps reveal parameters that might remain hidden when analysing a single language. As Boas and Gonzálvez-García (2014, 20) argue, the semantic description –including discourse-pragmatic factors– "can be regarded as a first step towards a tertium comparationis that can be employed for comparing and contrasting the formal properties of constructional counterparts in other languages."

In studies on contrastive constructional idioms, scholars have proposed various parameters for identifying a *tertium comparationis* that serves as the basis for contrastive analysis (Esteban-Fonollosa and Ivorra Ordines, 2023; Mansilla Pérez, 2020). For example, Mellado Blanco, *et al.* (2022) show how comparing and contrasting the constructional idioms [$NP_{subject}$ (no) NP_{object} IMPORTAR $NP_{\{tabooed\ or\ of\ little\ value\ object\}}$] in Spanish, [$NP_{subject}$ (non) NP_{ind_object} IMPORTARE/FREGARE $NP_{\{tabooed\ or\ of\ little\ value\ object\}}$] / [(non) IMPORTARE/FREGARE $NP_{\{tabooed\ or\ of\ little\ value\ object\}}$ *di* NP] in Italian and [$NP_{subject}$ INTERESSIEREN NP_{Object} (*einen/nicht/keinen*) $NP_{\{tabooed\ or\ of\ little\ value\ object\}}$] in German is possible. These semi-schematic patterns share a comparable structure, allowing for a parallel analysis of their slots.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the contrastive analysis to the constructional idioms under study, in which two subsections can be distinguished. On the one hand, the meaning pole of both constructional idioms in Spanish and German is outlined, shedding light on their pragmatic point. On the other hand, the nature of the slot fillers is scrutinized from a contrastive point of view. To this end, three different aspects are described, i.e. the use of vulgarisms (and, consequently, euphemisms), borrowings from other languages and creative language use. Section 3 summarizes the main findings and points to further research lines.

2. WhIAW[1] interrogative constructional idioms in Spanish and German

WhIAW constructions have been under study for a few decades already (Akiyama, 2014; Fillmore, 1985; Martin, 2021; Schafroth, 2022; Schoonjans, 2023; Stefanowitsch, 2011; Pesetsky, 1987; among others) and can be attested in most of the European languages: Eng. *what the fuck / the hell / the devil* / etc. *are you doing here?*; Germ. *was zum Teufel / zum Kuckuck / zum Hölle* / etc. *machst du hier?, lit.* 'what to hell / to cuckoo / hell / etc. do you here', meaning 'what the hell / devil / hell are you doing here'; Fr. *mais que diable / merde / bordel* / etc. *fais tu ici?*, *lit.* 'but what devil / shit / worehouse / etc. do you here', meaning 'what the devil / shit / heck are you doing here?'; It. *ma che cazzo / diavolo / cacchio / cavolo* /etc. *fai?, lit.* 'but what dick /devil / heck / cabbage do', meaning 'what the

1 Term coined by Stefanowitsch (2011, 189).

fuck / devil / heck / on earth are you doing?; Sp. *¿qué demonios / cojones / mierda* / etc. *haces aquí?, lit.* 'what devils / bullocks / shit / etc. do here', meaning 'what the devil / fuck / shit are you doing'; among others. The use of this type of constructions is intricately tied to a cathartic function for the speaker, in that it serves to alleviate stress stemming from a situation characterized by confusion, disagreement, or surprise.

Methodologically speaking, we used the corpus esTenTen18 for Spanish and deTenTen20 for German (Sketch Engine), and adopted the CQL query, which is very useful in this case because it allows to detect discontinuous patterns. Since the construction had many slots to be filled, we ran a random query filling the pronoun slot *Qué* 'what' in Spanish and *Was* 'what' in German together with a random number of taboo words. We thus could observe which were the most prototypical verbs in both languages, i.e. *ser* 'to be', *hacer* 'to make' and *significar* 'to mean' in Spanish and its correspondences in German, *sein* 'to be', *machen 'to make'* and *sollen* 'to be meant to', correspondingly.

Although our core analysis centers on constructions with *qué* in Spanish and *was* in German for reasons of space and focus, it is important to note that different interrogative pronouns can fill in the interrogative-pronoun slot. Spanish, for example, shows attested instances of *¿Por qué carajos le ocultaba* que se veía con Jane?[2] (esTenTen18, 3100930380) and *¿Cuándo cojones* nos van a dejar en paz?[3] (esTenTen18, 464881082), while German allows for examples such as *Warum zum Teufel* gerade Watt?[4] (deTenTen20, 39381671) or *Wo zum Kuckuck* waren sie?[5]. In the case of German, Schoonjans (2025, 330) shows that the most frequently interrogative pronoun is *was* 'what', followed by *wo* 'how' and *warum* 'why'. The author, however, notes that the unequal distribution among the interrogative pronoun slot fillers may be due to the productive distribution among the IAW groups. For example, [*zu* X] appears 48.36% with the interrogative pronoun *was* 'what', which is an indicator that some IAW phrases are more strongly attracted to particular interrogative pronouns than others are.[6]

It must be noted that the German discontinuous pattern has two slots between the pronoun and the verb, whereas in Spanish there is only one (compare examples 3 and 4). What departs the Spanish construction from the German one concerning the nature of the slot fillers is that the Spanish lexical items constitute improper interjections outside of the construction that have undergone

2 *Lit.* 'Why dicks him hiding that seeing with Jane?', meaning 'What the heck was he hiding he was seeing Jane'.

3 *Lit.* 'When bullocks us go to leave in peace?', meaning 'When the fuck are they going to leave us in peace?'.

4 *Lit.* 'Why to hell even Watt?', meaning 'Why the hell Watt?'.

5 *Lit.* 'Where to cuckoo were they?', meaning 'Where the devil were they?'.

6 Future studies should explore how productive the different interrogative pronouns are in Spanish and other languages.

a process of pragmaticalization. Once these are inserted within the constructional idiom under study, another process of pragmaticalization takes place, in that the meaning of the improper interjections is diluted in favor of the constructional meaning (Herrero Ruiz de Loizaga, 2023). On the contrary, the slot fillers in German already constitute idioms:

(1) *Zum Teufel*![7] Guckt man drei Minuten nicht aufs Handy, prasseln oftmals zirka 189 neue Nachrichten mit 95 Tippfehlern pro Satz auf einen ein. (deTenTen20, 15406294926)

'*Damn it*! When you don't look at your phone for three minutes, often around 189 new messages with 95 typos per sentence come flooding in.'

In the following, we will delve into the pragmatic aspects evoked by the WhIAW constructions in German and Spanish, as well as the nature of their slot fillers, placing special emphasis on certain parameters that are of interest at a contrastive level, namely (a) the use of vulgarisms, (b) borrowing from other languages, and (c) hapax and creativity.

2.1. Pragmatically speaking

The case study presented here concerns the construction corresponding to the syntactic pattern "*Qué* $X_{\{taboo.word\}}$ V" in Spanish (examples 2–3) and its German equivalent WhIAW construction (examples 4–5) (cf. Stefanowistch, 2011), as exemplified by the following occurrences from the esTenTen18 and deTenTen20 corpus (Sketch Engine), respectively.

(2) –*¿Qué carajo haces aquí a estas horas?*[8] –preguntó el menor tan pronto vio a su hermano plantado en la entrada. (esTenTen18, 47569530)

'*"What the hell are you doing here at this hour?"* The younger one asked as soon as he saw his brother standing at the entrance.'

(3)¿Qué diablos significa esto?[9] –pregunta el hombre, atontado. (esTenTen18, 24363696)

'*"What the hell does this mean?"* the man asks, bewildered.'

(4) Genauso wie ich dachte, ich sitz im falschen Film, als klar wurde, dass Uhura und Spock ein Pärchen sind. Was zur Hölle soll das denn?[10] (deTenTen20, 13816138)

'Just as I thought I was in the wrong movie when it became clear that Uhura and Spock are a couple. *What the hell is that supposed to be?'*

7 *Lit.* 'To hell'.
8 *Lit.* 'What bullock do here at these hours?'.
9 *Lit.* '*What devils means this?'*.
10 *Lit.* 'What to hell mean that then?'.

(5) Dann sah er wie Kakashi auf ihn zu gestürmt kam Sanji??? sagte er erstaunt und blieb stehen. Was zum Teufel machst du denn hier?[11] (deTenTen20, 950143)

'Then he saw Kakashi rushing towards him. Sanji??? He said, surprised, and stopped. *What the hell are you doing here?*'

These two patterns constitute a clear example of a 'marginal' Argument Structure Construction, in that they are "constructions that never give rise to a fully schematic schema but remain partly lexically filled and considerably more restricted in their meaning" (Hoffmann 2020). These can also be characterized according to what Goldberg (2019, 63) informally labels "niche constructions", i.e. argument structure constructions with a concrete meaning that are highly productive within their specific domain of use (cf. Colleman, 2020; Perek, 2016).

The "*Qué* X_{taboo_word} V" construction in Spanish as well as the WhIAW construction in German are two-argument-structure interrogative constructions that typically serve to intensify and usually accommodate two-participant verbs in its V position. Intensification here functions pragmatically to heighten emotional involvement, stance, or speaker commitment. As such, it plays a central role in shaping the illocutionary force of the construction. In line with a constructionist perspective, intensification constitutes a conventionalized pragmatic function associated with a specific formal pattern (cf. Finkbeiner, 2019), so that these constructions embody intensified speaker evaluation and stance marking, reinforcing their use in contexts of emotional escalation (example 1), rhetorical questioning (examples 3 and 5), or face-threatening acts (example 2).

Their interpretation is pragmatically or discursively marked, whether because they express a certain attitude of the speaker –usually negative– towards the context, or they have a particular discursive status. To put it differently, the speaker is not completely neutral about the propositional content of the sentence, but explicitly favors a certain interpretation (Escandell Vidal, 1999, 3985). Depending on their context of use, these constructions have an illocutive function of SURPRISE, in which the speakers express their astonishment when finding out that his brother was at the entrance (example 2) or seeing Kakashi running towards him (example 5), as well as DISAPPROVAL or DISAGREEMENT (examples 3–4) with what has happened. This is in harmony with the fact that "unlike normal *wh*-questions, *wh-the-hell* sentences are used generally when the speaker has some particular attitude about them (being impatient, annoyed, etc.)" (Huang, 2004, 208).

The difficulty or impossibility of obtaining a response characterizes the nature of these constructions, which places them close to rhetorical questions. Indeed, the unknown introduced by the interrogative pronoun is not accessible

11 *Lit.* 'What to hell do you then here?'.

to the speaker within the discourse universe (Sánchez López, 2019, 521), leading to an opposite polarity response that is often perceived as discourteous. On top of that, the absence of elements of the sentence that could be clarifying –i.e., cannot be deduced from the context– makes these expressions irregular, since they go against the expectations of the speaker (Stein and Hernández 2007, 302). Whether directed at an interlocutor (examples 1, 2 and 4) or oneself (example 3), these constructions challenge one's image and contribute to hostile conversational dynamics –of reproving nature. In any case, these kinds of inquires represent hostile conversational tactics that disqualifies them from constituting a statement that is, in fact, a request for confirmation of information rather than a question strictly speaking (cf. Kay and Fillmore, 1999 on the *What's X doing Y?* construction).

2.2. The nature of the slot fillers

This study departed from the assumption that the patterns under study are a type of constructions: constructional idioms, i.e. pairings of form and meaning with lexically filled elements, while other constitute slots that must be updated in discourse (cf. Dobrovol'skij, 2011). Constructional idioms thus occupy an intermediate position between the lexicon pole –comprising lexically filled constructions– and the grammar pole –made up of grammatical constructions with no lexical specification. They comprise instances that are more or less close to the lexicon pole depending on their frequency, conventionality and idiomaticity (Ivorra Ordines, in press). Consequently, a corpus-based analysis enables the description of how slots are lexically filled in the discourse, along with the semantic constraints that constructions adhere to. Table 1 shows the twenty most frequent types of the constructional idiom "*Qué* X_{taboo_word} V" in Spanish, together with their token frequency, and their corresponding representation in percentages within the sample.

Table 1. Twenty most frequent types of the constructional idiom "*Qué* X_{taboo_word} V" in Spanish

Types	**Tokens**	**%**
demonio(*s*) 'demon'	3352	29.33%
diablos 'devil'	1868	16.34%
coño(*s*) 'cunt'	1393	12.19%
carajo(*s*) 'fuck'	982	8.59%
cojones 'testicles'	829	7.25%
narices 'nose'	795	6.95%

rayos 'darn'	671	5.87%
mierda(*s*) 'shit'	508	4.44%
leche(*s*) 'milk'	239	2.09%
puñetas 'shit'	187	1.63%
diantre(*s*) 'heck'	115	1%
hostias 'damn'	57	0.49%
...	55	0.48%
puta(*s*) 'bitch(es)'	51	0.44%
pollas 'dicks'	23	0.21%
caramba(*s*) 'goodness'	21	0.18%
chingados 'fucked up'	21	0.18%
corno(*s*) 'damn'	21	0.18%
porras 'heck'	20	0.17%

From Table 1, we can observe that the Spanish construction exhibits limited lexical diversity, with a highly skewed frequency distribution among its slot fillers. Specifically, the ten most frequent types account for nearly 90% of all occurrences, comprising a small, conventionalized set of taboo terms. The most common fillers –*demonios* 'demons' (29.33%), *diablos* 'devils' (16.34%), *coño*(*s*) 'cunt(s)' (12.19%), and *carajo*(*s*) 'dick(s)' (8.59%)– highlight the dominance of religious and sexual references, which are often used in exclamatory interjections to express intense emotion such as anger, surprise, or frustration. Many of these terms function as conventionalized expletives in colloquial Spanish, reinforcing the idiomatic and formulaic nature of the construction. Additionally, the presence of body-related words (*cojones* 'bollocks', *nariz* 'nose', *pollas* 'dicks') and euphemistic expressions (*rayos* 'lightnings', *diantres* 'oh, hell', *caramba* 'damn') further illustrates how the construction integrates both strong and softened taboo language.

Table 2. Twenty most frequent types of the constructional idiom WhIAW in German

Types	**Tokens**	**%**
zum Teufel 'to the devil'	219	43.4%
zur Hölle 'to the hell'	165	32.7%
zum Geier 'to the vulture'	44	8.7%
zum Henker 'to the executioner'	35	6.9%
zum Kuckuck 'to the cuckoo'	9	1.8%

in aller Welt 'all over the world'	4	0.8%
um Himmelswillen 'for goodness' sake'	4	0.8%
in Gottes Namen 'in God's name'	4	0.8%
verdammt nochmal 'damn it'	4	0.8%
bei allen Höllen 'by all hells'	4	0.8%
verflucht noch mal 'damn it'	3	0.6%
in Beliars Namen in Beliar's name'	1	0.2%
bei Andrastes brennendem Arsch 'by Andraste's burning ass'	1	0.2%
in allen drei Teufels Namen 'in all three devil's names'	1	0.2%
zu Fick 'to fuck'	1	0.2%
bei Barte Gurombalos 'at Barte Gurombalos'	1	0.2%
um alles in der Welt 'for all the world'	1	0.2%
bei Bellums Bart 'at Barte Bellums'	1	0.2%
bei Ariels Licht 'by Ariel's Light'	1	0.2%
beim Schläfer 'by the sleeper'	1	0.2%

Table 2, for its part, presents the twenty most frequent types of the constructional idiom WhIAW in German, together with their token frequency, and their corresponding representation in percentages within the sample. The German construction shows a clear preference for conventional expressions. The most frequent fillers are *zum Teufel* 'to the devil' with 43.4% and *zur Hölle* 'to the hell' with 32.7%, together accounting for over three-quarters of all occurrences. Other moderately frequent idioms like *zum Geier* 'to the vulture', *zum Henker* 'to the executioner', and *zum Kuckuck* 'to the cuckoo' reflect familiar but less dominant alternatives. A long list of rare and often creative variants –including humorous, fictional, or religious references *in Beliars Name* 'in Beliar's name', *Bei Ariels Licht* 'by Ariel's light', or *Zu Fick* 'to fuck'– demonstrates the construction's creative flexibility. These low-frequency expressions reveal the construction's capacity for emotional nuance, and cultural references.

Contrastively speaking, it can be observed that nearly 90% of the types detected in German fall within the religious sphere, and hapax legomena are only recorded when vulgarisms or lexical items related to the sexual domain are used. Interestingly, both languages share the figure of the devil, which appears in first place (*demonio/diablo*, *Teufel*). Notably, in German, there is a tendency to use literary or mythological figures or characters (*Gurombalo*, *Ariel*, *Andraste*...). In contrast, in Spanish, there is a marked use of vulgarisms, terms from the scatological contexts, or dysphemisms such as *coño* 'cunt', *cojones* 'testicles', *carajo* 'fuck'.

Against this background, we explore three different parameters –i.e., the use of vulgarisms, borrowings from other languages, and nonce instances and creative language use– to observe similarities and discrepancies between the Spanish and German slot fillers.

a. The use of vulgarisms

Among the most prototypical and recurrent lexical items in Spanish, there are *coño* 'pussy' (1393 occurrences), *carajo* 'fucking' (982 occurrences) or *cojones* 'bollocks' (829 occurrences), among others. These express the highest degree of rejection and can be seen as salient because "the utterance type they instantiate has an inherent attention-grabbing potential" (Schmid, 2020, 79)[12]. On the contrary, slot fillers such as *diablo/demonio* 'devil' have lost their expressive load and nature of taboo element. This is in harmony with the idea that different degrees of aggressivity can be observed (compare examples 6 and 7).

(6) *¿Qué demonios pasa?*[13] ¿Sabes lo preocupado que he estado?¡Has estado dos semanas encerrado! (esTenTen18, 1054280414)

'*What the heck is going on*? Do you know how worried I've been? You've been locked up for two weeks!'

(7) Ana se enamora de su circunstancia en cada momento. *¿Qué coño significa eso de enamorarse de lo que uno hace en cada momento?*[14] (esTenTen18, 5245502064)

'Ana falls in love with her circumstances at every moment. *What the hell does it mean to fall in love with what one does at every moment*?'

In the case of German, there are very few attested occurrences belonging to the sexual domain, constituting in most cases nonce instances, since these elements are not widely used in German. Even if these vulgar elements are desemanticized in the language and have lost their rude character, it is not very common to find them in the German constructional idiom, in which the scatological domain predominates (cf. Esteban-Fonollosa and Ivorra Ordines, 2023). An example of vulgarism is *Fotze* 'pussy' (example 8), in which an ironic component is observed, with a clearly offensive and aggressive load that is only attested once in corpora. Besides, the playful reelaboration of such a statement is aimed at creative effects to say something memorable, or "to draw special

12 It is noteworthy noting that violations of expectations can happen for many reasons. In this context, the fact that the slot fillers have high token frequency contributes clarity to differentiating between extravagance and expressivity. Expressive language emphasizes what is conventional or entrenched, while extravagant expressions often involve noticeable departures from the norm and usually constitute nonce occurrences (cf. Ivorra Ordines and López Meirama, 2025).

13 *Lit.*, "What devil happens?'.

14 *Lit.,* "What pussy means that of falling in love of what ones does in each moment?'.

attention to some aspect of the constructions we choose to use" (Goldberg, 2019, 142).

(8) Und wer sich jetzt denkt: „*Was zur verfickten Fotze meiner durchgefickten Hure von Mutter soll denn das jetzt!?*"[15], der hat genau verstanden auf welcher Ebene sich der Humor von „Bad Santa 2" abspielt. (deTenTen20, 44133120)

'And whoever is thinking right now, '*What the fucking cunt of my fucked whore of a mother is this now*!?' has understood exactly on what level the humor of 'Bad Santa 2' operates.'

Besides being slot fillers of emphatic nature, these are swearwords that denote entities or beings that should not or cannot be named without causing offense, hence they are often replaced by euphemisms. Using slot fillers that should not be spoken to mark a response that cannot be given is still a curious way of putting lexicon at the service of syntax (Sánchez López, 2019, 525). Among the mechanisms of euphemisms, there is the lexical substitution of *demonio* 'demon' by means of *diantres* 'the hell' (example 9) or the use of an abbreviation with asterisks, in which the lexical items *Scheiße* 'shit' and *Ficken* 'fuck' are avoided (examples 10 and 11, respectively).

(9) *¿Qué diantres hacía un treintañero a las ocho y pico de la mañana de un sábado paseando por la Casa de Campo con un ramo de flores*? (esTenTen18, 21238596)

'*What on earth was a thirty-something doing at eight-something in the morning on a Saturday, walking around Casa de Campo with a bouquet of flowers*?'

(10) Wie werden solche Kapazitäten in der Realität erreicht?! Grüße Muuu. *Was für eine sch**** soll das denn werden?*[16] (deTenTen20, 39461638)

'How are such capacities achieved in reality?! Regards, Muuu. *What kind of crap is this supposed to be?*'

(11) Mir fiel wortwörtlich die Kinnlade runter. *"WAS ZUM FI ** IST DAS?!"*[17], ich scrollte durch die Bilder. (deTenTen20, 10458018)

'Literally, my jaw dropped. '*WHAT THE F*** IS THIS*?!' I scrolled through the pictures.'

These euphemistic slot fillers allow for a certain intensification of the interrogative particle without being words generally considered offensive, and can be used, with a gradualness difficult to specify, in less vulgar registers or relatively more formal situations. Such euphemistic use, however, aligns with the idea

15 *Lit.,* 'What the fucking cunt of my fucked whore mother is this supposed to mean?'.

16 *Lit.,* 'What the sh**** is this supposed to be?'.

17 Euphemistic mechanisms can be accompanied by the use of capital letters, which is an indicator of greater emphasis to signal expressivity (cf. Ivorra Ordines and López Meirama, 2025). *Lit.,* 'What the fu**… is that?'.

that "a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning, and […] that the various lexical and syntactic variants that the construction exhibits correlate with a variation in their intensity" (Bolinger, 1968, 127).

b. Borrowings from other languages

Although not used in everyday language with high frequency, these constructional idioms borrow lexical items from English, French or Italian. In the realm of German phraseology, the presence of the English construction "what the fuck X" is more noticeable, while in the Spanish-speaking context, it is more prominent in Latin American Spanish and less so in Peninsular Spanish. The consulted websites confirm this fact, as the majority of examples comes from Mexico, Argentina, or Uruguay (example 13).

(12) Highlight Ihnen ist schon klar, dass das tatsächlich in der Realität mit Millionen von Menschen gemacht wurde. *Was zum fuck ist daran lustig?*[18] (deTenTen20, 15245481)

'Highlight: Are you aware that this was actually done in reality with millions of people? *What the fuck is funny about that*?'

(13) *¿Qué fuck*[19] *hiciste cuando me trajeron aquí, te fuiste a buscar bitches?*[20] –Pregunté con media sonrisa una vez que me separé. (esTenTen18, 47651526)

"'*What the fuck did you do when they brought me here, did you go look for bitches*?" I asked with a half-smile once I pulled away.'

These examples are a clear proof that there are no *a priori* language boundaries in the input/output or in the overall cognitive principles governing the organization of constructional networks. This is in harmony with one of the main tenets of Diasystemic Construction Grammar, insofar as the grammatical description of a language in a multilingual context "must include structures of all languages or varieties involved, and the social establishment and individual acquisition of such a system must be inherently multilingual" (Höder, 2014, 140).

18 *Lit.,* 'What the fuck is funny about that, damn it to hell?'.

19 The use of *fuck* is not incidental, since it can be inferred from the example that we are dealing with a visit to a whorehouse. This highlights the importance of adopting a sociocultural approach to the study of linguistic creativity, since some creative language use can be primed by the immediate context (cf. Hoffmann, 2022; Ivorra Ordines and López Meirama, 2025).

20 *Lit.,* 'What fuck you did when me brought here, you went to find bitches?'.

c. Hapax and creativity

A relevant factor that affects the productivity of the Spanish and German constructions is the presence of hapax legomena, which often involves constructs showcasing creative language use (Ivorra Ordines, 2023; Ivorra Ordines and López Meirama, 2025). One of the most striking morphological procedures is blending, in that in (example 14) *cojoños* emerges as the result of the blend of the words *cojones* 'testicles' and *coño* 'pussy', leading to a more intensified construct, since both words already constitute intensifying lexical items.

(14) ¿Qué cojoños estás haciendo en la categoría de "*Qué cojoños hacéis con la música*"[21]? (esTenTen18, 14263100)

'What the hell are you doing in the "*What the hell are you doing with the music*" category?'

Another creative mechanism, in the case of German, is the more-or-less productive use of the subschema [*bei* X*s Bart*], which yields numerous nonce instances (cf. Schoonjans, 2023, 2025). This phenomenon could be seen as a way of innovatively using new schemas within the more abstract construction, while adding new uses. Creations, in this regard, are not created ex nihilo but the outcome of constructs within the constructional network (Goldberg, 2019).

(15) *Was beim Barte Gurombalos*[22] *ist hier los, verdammt nochmal?!* [23] (deTenTen20, 43876580)

'*What in the name of Gurombalos' beard is going on here, damn it?*'

These examples constitute clear examples of the fact that intensification is an important characteristic of both constructions, and in those cases where the construction has lost its intensifying effects, the speaker tries to find new ways to counteract such a wear-off. Here lies the tension between convention and innovation (cf. Ivorra Ordines and López Meirama, 2025).

3. Concluding Remarks

This paper aligns with the current trend of adopting a constructionist approach to the study of constructional idioms from a contrastive perspective, shifting towards a more holistic description of linguistic phenomena across languages. With the notion of constructional idiom as a dynamic theoretical entity at hand, the semi-schematic constructions "*Qué* $X_{\text{taboo word}}$ V" in Spanish (e.g.,

21 *Lit.,* 'What testicles-pussy do with the music'.

22 This alludes to the name of a character of a comic.

23 *Lit.,* 'What by Gurombalo's beard is going on here?'.

¿Qué cojones haces aquí?, *lit.* 'What bullocks you do here?, meaning 'What the hell are you doing here?') and WhIAW in German (e.g., *Was zum Teufel machst du hier?*, *lit.* 'What to hell do you here?, meaning 'What the hell are you doing here?') are pragmatically described. In a second step, special attention is given to the nature of their slot fillers, which in Spanish they constitute improper interjections that have undergone a process of pragmaticalization (and another process of pragmaticalization once inserted in the construction), and in German they are phrasemes with expressive value. Here the interest lies in the widely use of vulgarisms in Spanish and German, the borrowings from other languages, and the creative language use.

Further research, in this context, may point to other parameters that can be crucial to uncover more similarities and differences between Spanish and German constructional idioms (also other pairs of languages), as well as to the exploitation of the contrastive unilateral methodology (as within the context of the research project Constridioms: https://constridioms.es/) to find more constructions in the source/target language[24] –which can ultimately lead to a redefinition of the notion of constructional idiom in terms of formal and semantic/pragmatic properties.

Acknowledgements

This research was carried out within the framework of the research project "Creativity through the lens of Construction Grammar: a corpus and AI-based repository of constructional idioms in German, Spanish and English (CREACONSTRIDIOMS)" (PID2024-161338OB-100), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and led by Carmen Mellado Blanco. The research was also funded by the European COST-Action CA22115 "Building a Multilingual Repository of Phraseme Constructions".

24 Of special interest could be the subschema [*bei* X *Bart*] 'by the beard of X' in German (e.g., *Was beim Barte des Merlins nochmal, hast du vor?*, *lit.* 'What by Merlin's beard again, you plan', meaning 'What on Merlin's beard again do you intend to do?' (deTenTen20, 43834117)), which could help us find more semi-schematic constructions in Spanish (e.g., [*por las barbas de* X]: *¡¡¡Pero por las barbas de Kerry King, cómo se pueden decir tantas soplapolleces en tan poco texto!!!*, *lit.* 'But for the beards of Kerry King, how can be told much bullshit in so little text', meaning 'But by the beards of Kerry King, how can so much nonsense be said in so few words!!!' (esTenTen18, 12634967)).

References

Akiyama, Joshua. 2014. "Wh-the-hell as a polarity-insensitive, speaker-oriented domain restrictor". Proceedings of SALT 30: 334–354.

Boas, Hans. 2010. Contrastive Studies in Construction Grammar. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Boas, Hans, and Francisco Gonzálvez-García. 2014. Romance Perspectives on Construction Grammar. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Bolinger, Dwight. 1968. "Entailment and the Meaning of Structures". Glossa 2: 119–127.

Cotta Ramusino, Paola, and Fabio Mollica. 2020. Contrastive Phraseology: Languages and Cultures in Comparison. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholar Publishers.

Colleman, Timothy. 2020. "The Curious Case of Ditransitive Pity, or the Productivity of an Unproductive Pattern". Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik 70 (3): 337–358. https://doi.org/10.1515/zaa-2022-2068

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2011. "Phraseologie und Konstruktionsgrammatik". In Konstruktionsgrammatik III. Aktuelle Fragen und Lösungsansätze, edited by Alexander Lasch, and Alexander Ziem, 111–130. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Escandell Vidal, Victoria. 1999. "Los enunciados interrogativos. Aspectos semánticos y pragmáticos". In Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española, coordinated by Violeta Demonte Barreto and Ignacio Bosque, 3929–3992. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

Esteban-Fonollosa, Maricel and Pedro Ivorra Ordines. 2023. "Hasta los huesos, bis in die Knochen. Construcciones fraseológicas somáticas en contraste a través de corpus". Revista de Filología Alemana 31: 145–165. https://doi.org/10.5209/rfal.88457

Fillmore, Charles J. 1985. "Syntactic Intrusions and The Notion of Grammatical Construction". Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society 73–86.

Finkbeiner, Rita. 2019. "On the Role of Pragmatics in Construction Grammar". Constructions and Frames 11(2): 171–192.

Goldberg, Adele. 2019. Explain me this: Creativity, Competition and the Partial Productivity of Constructions. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Herrero Ruiz de Loizaga, Francisco J. 2023. "Elementos intensificadores de las palabras interrogativas". Estudios de Lingüística Universidad de Alicante. No. 39: 85–108. https://doi.org/10.14198/ELUA.22034

Höder, Stefan. 2014. "Constructing diasystems. Grammatical organisation in bilingual groups". In The sociolinguistics of grammar, edited by Tor A. Åfarli, and Brit Mæhlum, 137–152. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.154.07hod

Hoffmann, Thomas. 2020. "Marginal Argument Structure constructions: the [V the Ntaboo-word out of]-construction in Post-colonial Englishes". Linguistics Vanguard. No: 6 (1). https://doi.org/10.1515/lingvan-2019-0054

Hoffmann, Thomas. 2022. "Constructionist approaches to creativity". Yearbook of the German Cognitive Linguistics Association. 10(1): 259–284. https://doi/10.1515/gcla-2022-0012/html

Huang, James. 2004. Between syntax and semantics. New York: Routledge.

Ivorra Ordines, Pedro. In press. Comparative constructional idioms in Spanish, English and French: A contrastive usage-based approach. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Ivorra Ordines, Pedro. 2023. "Por mí como si te operas. Constructional idioms of rejection from a constructionist approach". Yearbook of Phraseology 14: 89–120. https://doi.org/10.1515/phras-2023-0005

Ivorra Ordines, Pedro, and Belén López Meirama. 2025. "Vete a freír cristales. The interplay of convention and innovation in a constructional idiom of rejection in Spanish". Review of Cognitive Linguistics 23 (2): 596–633. https://doi.org/10.1075/rcl.00176.ivo

Kay, Paul, and Charles J. Fillmore. 1999. "Grammatical constructions and linguistic generalizations. The What's X doing Y? construction". Language 75(1): 1–33. https://www.jstor.org/stable/417472

Martin, Joshua. 2021. "D-Linking and the Semantics of Wh-in-Situ". Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America 6(1): 448–462.

Mansilla Pérez, Ana. 2020. "Gramática de construcciones y fraseología contrastiva alemán-español". In Das Leben in einem Rosa Licht sehen- Ver la vida de color de rosa. Festschrift für Rosa Piñel, edited by Isabel García *et al.* 221–233. Bern: Peter Lang.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. 2022. Productive Patterns in Phraseology and Construction Grammar. A Multilingual Approach. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen, Fabio Mollica and Elmar Schafroth. 2022. "Das interessiert mich einen X! Die intensivierende Konstruktionsfamilie der absoluten Interesselosigkeit im Spanischen, Italienischen und Deutschen". In Konstruktionen zwischen Lexikon und Grammatik. Phrasem-Konstruktionen monolingual, bilingual und multilingual, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, Fabio Mollica, and Elmar Schafroth, 283-368. Berlin: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110770209-011

Perek, Florent. 2016. "Using distributional semantics to study syntactic productivity in diachrony: A case study". Linguistics 4(1): 149–188. https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2015-0043

Pesetsky, David. 1987. "Wh-in-situ: movement and unselective binding". In The representation of (in)definiteness, edited by Eric J. Reuland, and Alice G.B. Ter Meulen, 98–129. Cambridge: MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v6i1.4981

Sánchez López, Cristina. 2019. "¿Qué demonios…? o las interrogativas malsonantes en español". In Estudios de la Lexicología, Lexicografía y Gramática en Honor a Manuel Álvar Ezquerra, edited by Carmen Cazorla Vivas, María Ángela García Aranda, and María Pilar Nuño Álvarez, 515–529. Madrid: Editorial Axac.

Schafroth, Elmar. 2022. "Phraseoschablonen interlingual – aus synchroner und diachroner Perspektive". In Konstruktionsgrammatik VII. Wandel im Sprachgebrauch, edited by Alexander Lasch, and Alexander Ziem, 79–105. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Schoonjans, Steven. 2023. Eine Typologie der IAW-Phrasen in Ergänzungsfragen. Linguistische Treffen in Wrocław 23: 151–164. https://doi.org/10.23817/lingtreff.23-9

Schoonjans, Steven. 2025. On the internal and external productivity of IAW Phrases in German. In How to do things with corpora. Methodological issues and cases studies on grammar, edited by Torsten Leuschner, Anaïs Vajnovszki, Gauthier Delaby, and Jóhanna Barðdal, 313–351. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2020. The dynamics of the linguistic system: usage, conventionalization, and entrenchment. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stein, Nancy L. and Marc W. Hernández. 2007. Assessing understanding and appraisals during emotional experience. In Handbook of Emotion Elicitation and Assessment, edited by James A.Coan and John J. B. Allen, 298–317. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stefanowitsch, Anatol. 2011. "Keine Grammatik ohne Konstruktionen: Ein logisch-ökonomisches Argument für die Konstruktionsgrammatik". In Sprachliches Wissen zwischen Lexikon und Grammatik, edited by Stefan Engelberg, Anke Holler, and Kristel Proost, 181–210. Berlin: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110262339.181

Ich biege mich vor Lachen! / ¡Me parto de la risa! Crosslinguistic Analysis of Verbal Fillers in Hyperbolic Expressions of Sensation: German [(*sich*) *vor Lachen* V] and Spanish [V *de* (*la*) *risa*]

Nely M. Iglesias Iglesias
University of Salamanca
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7117-0002

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c763

ABSTRACT

The overarching aim of this study is to document and analyze prevalent verbal fillers within a bilingual constructicon, applying onomasiological principles to trace their semantic and pragmatic nuances. It focuses on the German construction [*sich vor Lachen* V] and [*vor Lachen* V] and its Spanish equivalents [V *de risa*] and [V *de la risa*], uncovering both shared and divergent cognitive-linguistic mechanisms across the two languages. The analysis reveals a strong crosslinguistic preference for reflexive verbs —particularly in Spanish— and highlights the role of morphological variation, such as verb prefixation, in shaping the range of constructions available in German. By exploring the figurative and often embodied nature of these microconstructions, the study sheds light on how speakers conceptualize and express affective experiences through language. The semantic domains from which these fillers emerge reflect deeply rooted cultural and cognitive models, offering insight into how language mediates emotion. These findings are particularly relevant for language learners and translators, as they reveal subtle crosslinguistic differences affecting both comprehension and production. Ultimately, the study underscores the essential role of crosslinguistic research in fostering intercultural communication within the fields of Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies.

Keywords: crosslinguistic phraseological studies; constructional idiom/phraseme; language and emotions; German; Spanish.

1. Introduction

Laughter is a fundamental, innate emotional expression in humans, typically associated with joy —a sentiment considered to be cross-culturally universal. Its potential health benefits also make it a promising therapeutic tool. However, in extreme cases, laughter may manifest as a disorder known as

pathological laughter, which occurs independently of emotional state and can —even if only figuratively— lead to death: one can 'die of laughter'.[1] As this expression illustrates, although it may originate in a literal context, it is more frequently used figuratively, serving a distinctly hyperbolic and intensifying function —as in the German *Ich biege mich vor Lachen!* or the Spanish *¡Me parto de la risa!* (literally, 'I'm bending over with laughter')— an aspect that will be explored further in this study.

Hyperbole functions not only as an expressive and intensifying device in emotional communication (Gonzálvez-García, 2020, 155) in both Spanish and German, but is also intrinsically tied to human cognition and the ways in which we perceive and process the world around us. This suggests that hyperbole is an innate and essential resource in both the expression and comprehension of human experience (Gonzálvez-García, 2012, 259). Accordingly, the presence of similar forms across different languages can often be attributed to the activation of shared cognitive processes —although cultural differences and language-specific conventions may also lead to divergent or unique idiomatic realizations.

Setting aside extreme cases such as pathological or therapeutic laughter, Moshöbel (2015, 81) defines laughter as "a double-structured bodily sign".

> On the one hand, laughter can be read as an unintentional indicator of the mood, the attitude and the feeling of the laughing person, while on the other hand it may also be assumed that laughter is deliberately used for a communicative purpose, for instance to cement a friendship, to distance oneself from someone, or to degrade someone. (Moshöbel, 2015, 81)

Laughter is an expression of a universally recognized emotion that serves various communicative functions. For this reason, it is unsurprising that the concept of 'laughter', particularly the action of 'laughing', is realized through multiple linguistic forms (cf. also Moshöbel, 2015, 95ff.), most of which are predominantly idiomatic, as noted above.

Starting from the German language, in the Digital Dictionary DWDS, the following five constructs are listed as idiomatic multiword expressions ('Mehrwortausdruck' = MWA)[2] under the nominalised infinitive *Lachen* ('to laugh') and as such they are lemmatised on the macrostructure: *sich ausschütten vor Lachen* ('to spill out with laughter'), *sich vor Lachen kringeln*, *sich vor Lachen wegschmeißen* ('to curl up from laughter'), *sich vor Lachen wegwerfen* ('to throw oneself

1 See, for example: https://www.planet-wissen.de/gesellschaft/psychologie/lachen/pwiepathologischeslachen100.html [Accessed: 02.05.2025].

2 For more information, see the following explanatory video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c93rs30-z6g [Accessed: 02.05.2025]. Regarding multiword expressions, cf. also Steyer (2013), and Steyer (2018). This researcher refers to them as *usuelle Wortverbindungen* ('usual word combinations'), and, if applicable, *Muster* ('patterns').

away with laughter'), *zum Lachen in den Keller gehen* ('to go to the cellar to laugh'). The first four constructs could be interpreted as instantiations of the hyperbolic-intensifying phraseological construction [*vor Lachen* V] ('[V (oneself) from laughing]'). In addition to the idioms already mentioned, the dictionary user is provided with a whole range of other synonymous or similar-meaning multiword expressions in the DWDS, such as *sich kringelig lachen* ('to laugh in a curly way'), *sich dumm und dämmlich lachen* ('to laugh oneself stupid and dimwitted'), *sich vor Lachen kaum noch halten können* ('to hardly be able to hold oneself from laughter'), *sich kaputtlachen* ('to laugh oneself to pieces/to laugh oneself broken') und *aus vollem Halse lachen*[3] ('to laugh with full throat'), to name only a few.

As expected, the bilingual phraseological dictionary *Idiomatik Deutsch-Spanisch* (Schemann *et al.*, 2013) includes a higher number of entries: *sich ausschütten vor Lachen* ('to spill out with laughter'), *sich biegen vor Lachen* ('to bend oneself with laughter'), *sich gar nicht mehr einkriegen können vor Lachen* ('to not be able to get oneself in anymore due to laughter'), *sich gar nicht mehr/nicht halten können vor Lachen* ('to not be able to hold oneself (anymore) due to laughter'), *sich krümmen vor Lachen* ('to bend oneself with laughter'), *sich kugeln/kringeln vor Lachen* ('to curl up with laughter'), *(fast) platzen vor Lachen* ('to (almost) burst with laughter'), *schreien vor Lachen* ('to scream with laughter'), *sich schütteln/(schütten) vor Lachen* ('to shake with laughter'), *sich wälzen vor Lachen* ('to roll over with laughter'), *wiehern vor Lachen* ('to neigh with laughter'), referring each of them onomasiologically to the lemma *sich den Bauch halten vor Lachen* ('to hold one's stomach from laughing'), as well as *weinen vor Lachen* ('to cry with laughter') —one of its senses also refers to it—, *prusten vor Lachen* ('to chuckle with laughter'), and finally, *vor Lachen (fast/…) ersticken* ('to (almost/…) choke with laughter') (Schemann *et al.*, 2013, 532f.). Contrasting the data, indeed, these lemmas are all present in the analyzed corpus *deTenTen20* as instantiations (see Table 1).

Thanks to these internal cross-references within a formally semasiological dictionary, certain relationships are also established on an onomasiological level (cf. Mellado Blanco, 2009, 2010). This lexicographical practice has played a significant role in shaping the development of our research, first within the CONSTRIDIOMS project (cf. Mansilla, 2018, 217ff.) and now in our ongoing project, CREA-CONSTRIDIOMS. Indeed, as Schemann (2009) emphasizes, it is essential to establish a semantic network grounded in synonymy. These are not words sharing identical meanings, but rather ones whose meanings are very similar or nearly equivalent (Schemann, 2009, 109ff.). From the perspective of Construction Grammar —which posits the pairing of form and meaning in

3 For a detailed analysis of this construct in particular, cf. Iglesias Iglesias and Alonso Santos (2022).

each type of construction, that is, in every significant lexical unit[4]— such a semantic network constitutes the *constructicon*.

Returning our focus to the object of study, beyond laughter and its expressions in both German and Spanish, a physical and/or psychological sensation can be hyperbolically conveyed through the more abstract constructions [*vor* $N_{Sing\{Gefühlsempfindung\}}$ V] and [V *de* (ART_{sing}) $S_{sing\{sensación\}}$], respectively. These are extremely productive macroconstructions in both languages, often of an idiomatic nature, such as in the following German multiword expressions: *vor Kälte sterben* ('to die of cold'), *vor Langeweile umkommen* ('to perish of boredom'), *sich vor Lachen biegen* ('to bend oneself with laughter'), *sich den Bauch vor Lachen nicht halten können* ('to be unable to hold one's stomach from laughing'), *vor Angst in die Hosen scheißen* ('to shit one's pants out of fear'). In this sense, at a lower level of abstraction, [*vor Lachen* V], that is, the preposition *vor*, followed by the nominalized infinitive and a given verb, could be classified as a mesoconstruction, while each of the concrete verbal instantiations, presented in the following section, would be considered the corresponding microconstructions (cf. Ivorra Ordines and Alonso Santos, 2022). The terms macroconstruction, mesoconstruction, and microconstruction are used to establish a hierarchical order among the semantic-conceptual and linguistic-cognitive relationships —form-meaning pairs— of each construction within the constructicon (cf. Mollica and Stumpf, 2021).

2. Quantitative analysis of the microconstructions in German and in Spanish: [*sich vor Lachen* V] and [*vor Lachen* V] as well as [V *de risa*] and [V *de la risa*]

This section focuses on the detailed analysis of the verbal slot in each of the two languages, with the objective, from a semantic-pragmatic standpoint, of identifying the linguistic-cognitive strategies utilized to achieve hyperbolic intensification within the construction.

While the previous studies (cf. Iglesias Iglesias and López Meirama, 2024; López Meirama and Iglesias Iglesias, 2022) focused on nominal slots, the present work will focus on verbal slots, particularly on monolexemic verbs without complements. In both languages, the use of the nominalized infinitive *Lachen* in German and the noun *risa* in Spanish, as well as the verb *sterben* in German and its Spanish equivalent *morir* —very often used as reflexive verb *morirse*—, is highly frequent: German *vor Lachen sterben* (literally, 'of laugh/laughter die') and Spanish *morirse de (la) risa* (literally, 'to die of (the) laughter'). Besides their high frequency of use, it is also notable that:

4 Cf., among many other authors, Goldberg (2006), and Mellado Blanco and Iglesias Iglesias (2022, 376).

i. The verbs *sterben*, as well as *morirse*, can be used in conjunction with many nouns —in German: *vor Lachen* ('laughter')/*Hunger* ('hunger')/*Angst* ('fear')/ *Langeweile* ('boredom')/*Durst* (`thirst')/*Kälte* ('cold')/… *sterben*; in Spanish: *morir(se) de la risa* (`laughter')/*del susto* ('fright'; 'scare')/*de vergüenza* ('shame')/…' and also the construction without article *morir(se) de hambre* ('hunger')/*miedo* ('fear')/*risa* ('laughter')/*frío* ('cold')/*envidia* ('envy')/…', while other verbs exhibit a much more restrictive usage (cf. López Meirama and Iglesias Iglesias, 2022, and Iglesias Iglesias and López Meirama, 2024).

ii. The nominalized infinitive *Lachen* in German and the noun *risa* in Spanish is indeed used in conjunction with a wide range of often reflexive verbs belonging to different stylistic levels in both languages: *(sich) vor Lachen biegen*, *ausschütten*, *krümmen*, *schütteln*, *kringeln*, *wegschmeißen*, *bersten* etc.; *halten* is mostly used in combination with a negation and a modal verb: *sich vor Lachen nicht halten können* (or, depending on the modal verb, without negation and possibly with the accusative complement *den Bauch* ('the stomach'): *sich den Bauch vor Lachen halten müssen* ('having to hold one's stomach from laughing'), *sich den Bauch nicht vor Lachen halten können* ('not being able to hold one's stomach from laughing'), etc.

iii. Due to their typically non-compositional meaning and their fixedness, the construction can be considered a constructional idiom or a constructional phraseme (cf. Goldberg, 2006, 4f., and Mollica and Stumpf, 2021), even though syntactically it generally exhibits no particularities.

iv. Given their high intensity and/or expressiveness, it's crucial to consider the diverse registers that correspond to each microconstruction, precisely marking the differences in usage. While some instances may maintain a neutral tone, the majority lean towards informality, occasionally reaching vulgarity or coarseness, and including certain dysphemisms.

2.1 Most frequent monolexematic verbal fillers of the German constructions [*sich vor Lachen* V] and [vor Lachen V]

The quantitative analysis of the German Web 2020 corpus (*deTenTen20*), consisting of a total of 20,999,598,683 tokens, yields 2,743 results in terms of verbal slots; the verbs are detailed in Table 1. The use of lowercase letters was also considered, as there is often uncertainty regarding the normative spelling of nominalized infinitives. The Corpus Query Language used was as follows: CQL [word="vor" | word="Vor"] [word="Lachen" | word="lachen"] [tag="V.*"]. As can be observed, reflexive verbs (left side of Table 1) are more common in use than non-reflexive ones (right side of Table 1).

Table 1. Verbal fillers of the microconstructions [*sich vor Lachen* V] and [*vor Lachen* V]

[*sich vor Lachen* V]		**[*vor Lachen* V]**	
biegen ('to bend')	208	*sterben* ('to die')	93
krümmen ('to curl')	176	*weinen* ('to cry')	69
halten (`to hold') (of which 76: + *den Bauch* ('the stomach'))	174	*zusammenbrechen* ('to collapse')	47
ausschütten ('to spill out')	137	*brüllen* ('to yell')	33
schütteln ('to shake')	137	*platzen* ('to burst')	31
kringeln ('to coil')	128	*heulen* ('to howl')	27
kugeln ('to roll into a ball')	102	*umfallen* ('to faint')	27
wegschmeißen(/wegschmeissen5) ('to throw away')	89	*bersten* ('to burst')	22
wälzen ('to roll over')	17	*ersticken* ('to choke')	16
verschlucken ('to choke')	15	*umkippen* ('to kip over')	11
wegwerfen ('to throw away')	14	*beben* ('to tremble')	11
bepissen ('to piss on')	12	*einkriegen* ('to pull oneself together')	10
ausschütteln ('to shake out')	10	*losprusten* ('to chuckle'), *losbrüllen* ('to roar'), *toben* ('to rage'), *umhauen* ('to knock over'), *wiehern* ('to neigh'), *schreien* ('to scream'), *zerplatzen* ('to burst'), *explodieren* ('to explode'), *pissen* ('to pee'), *quieken* ('to squeak'), *krähen* ('to crow'), *quietschen* ('to squeal'), *rollen* ('to roll'), *kreischen* ('to screech'), *zerbrechen* ('to break'), *prusten* ('to chuckle'), *grölen* ('to bellow'), …	below 10
einnässen ('to wet'), *zerreißen* ('to tear'), *verbiegen* ('to bend'), *festhalten* ('to hold'), *zerkugeln* ('to double up'), *kullern* ('to tumble'), *winden* ('to twist'), *wegpacken* ('to pack away'), *durchschütteln* ('to shake thoroughly'), *bepinkeln* ('to pee on'), *abrollen* ('to unroll'), *wegschreien* ('to scream away'), *wegbrüllen* ('to yell away'), *wegrollen* ('to roll away'), *überschlagen* ('to somersault'), *weghauen* ('to hit away'), *in die Hosen machen* ('to make in the pants'), *ver-/ein/-anschiffen* ('to pee'), …	below 10		

2.2 Most frequent monolexematic verbal fillers of the Spanish microconstructions [V *de risa*] and [V *de la risa*]

The search with a comparable corpus of Spanish, namely the Spanish Web 2018 corpus (*esTenTen18*), with a total of 19,593,089,777 tokens, yields the following results. The construction [V *de risa*], whose CQL corresponds to [tag="V.*"] [word="de"] [word="risa"], yields a total of 30,775 results, while the construction with the article, [V *de la risa*] (CQL: [tag="V.*"] [word="de"] [word="la"] [word="risa"]), only yields 13,721 results. Compared to German, in the case of the equivalent constructions in Spanish, first, it is striking that the vast majority of verbs updated in usage are reflexive (left side of Table 2),

5 This is the standard orthographic variant in Swiss German.

at an approximate ratio of 1 to 5.5 (cf. López Meirama and Iglesias Iglesias, 2022); the ending *-se* actually corresponds to the form of the reflexive pronoun. Second, it should be noted that although both microconstructions are very common, the one without article clearly predominates in usage. In any case, significant differences are not observed with regard to the verbal fillers; perhaps it is only worth noting the differences in the frequency of usage of the verbs *mondarse* and *ahogarse*.

Table 2. Verbal fillers of the microconstructions [V *de risa*] and [V *de la risa*][6]

[V *de risa*]		**[V *de la risa*]**	
morirse ('to die')	6096	*morirse* ('to die')	3236
partirse ('to split')	5091	*cagarse* ('to shit')	1404
cagarse ('to shit')	4550	*partirse* ('to split')	1381
matarse ('to kill oneself')	1918	*matarse* ('to kill oneself')	1169
llorar ('to cry')	937	*llorar* ('to cry')	908
desternillarse ('to crack up')	641	*ahogarse* ('to choke')	570
troncharse ('to burst out')	472	*mearse* ('to pee oneself')	378
mearse ('to pee oneself')	438	*desternillarse* ('to crack up')	257
estallar ('to burst')	355	*doblarse* ('to bend over')	162
mondarse ('to peel oneself')	179	*troncharse* ('to burst out')	149
retorcerse ('to twist')	162	*estallar* ('to burst')	113
descostillarse ('to unrib oneself')	95	*retorcerse* ('to twist')	106
doblarse ('to bend over')	93	*descostillarse* ('to un-rib oneself')	105
reventar ('to burst')	93	*revolcarse* ('to roll around')	86
revolcarse ('to roll around')	85	*orinarse* ('to pee oneself')	75
explotar ('to explode')	64	*explotar* ('to explode')	64
ahogarse ('to choke')	47	*atragantarse* ('to choke oneself')	59
orinarse ('to pee oneself')	32	*mondarse* ('to peel oneself')	55
rodar ('to roll')	26	*reventar* ('to burst')	52
atragantarse ('to choke')	15	*descojonarse* ('to crack up')	18
descojonarse ('to crack up)	13	*rodar* ('to roll')	14
hacer caer ('to make fall')	3	*hacer caer* ('to make fall')	8

2.3 Main properties of the verbal fillers in German and in Spanish

Many of the verbs, in their literal use, correspond in both languages either to a more or less objective description or to a metaphorical —and in most cases metonymic— interpretation of psychophysiological (re)actions provoked

6 Cf. López Meirama and Iglesias Iglesias (2022).

by laughter, i.e. caused by forceful contractions of the diaphragm. In fact, up to fifty facial muscles are involved in the facial expression of laughter (mainly around the mouth, that may be accompanied by lacrimal secretions), but laughter can set in motion up to three hundred different muscles throughout the body, including the abdominal wall, head, neck, back, shoulders, arms, hands and/or legs. It is precisely this physiological knowledge that speakers make use of to express their emotions and/or subjective sensations related to laughter. Together with the metaphorical and/or metonymic-hyperbolic reinterpretation by a given community of speakers, they constitute one of the starting points, serving as motivation in the formation of the semantic domains, which will be further explored in the following section.

3. Crosslinguistic Qualitative Analysis

Any translational process grounded in the constructionist principle of the pairing of form and meaning should begin with a crosslinguistic semantic analysis, based on the onomasiological systematization of linguistic material. In this way, the speaker, drawing from a concept within their semantic domain, can select the most suitable equivalent based on its meaning, while also considering its form, and vice versa (cf. Mellado Blanco and Iglesias Iglesias, 2022). Consequently, beyond denotative meaning, in translation to another language, each connotative nuance can be taken into account.

German and Spanish share five out of the seven semantic domains with an intensifying function: (1) TO DIE, (2) DESTRUCTION, (3) ROTATION IN ARC FORM, (4) LAMENT, and (6) EXCRETION, the latter standing out for its scatological and vulgar register.

The semantic domains (5) UNPLEASANT SOUNDS, consisting exclusively of constructs with verbal fillers of onomatopoeic origin, and (7) TO FALL / TO BE OUT, are exclusive to German. In these cases, the degree of interlinguistic equivalence is lower or even nonexistent, meaning that the form is likely to be given less consideration.

Table 3 presents the results of the verbal fillers, components of the German construction [*sich vor Lachen* V] and/or [*vor Lachen* V], alongside their equivalent verbal fillers in Spanish, components of the constructions [V *de risa*] and/or [V *de la risa*].

Table 3. Onomasiological distribution of verbal fillers in laughter constructions in German and Spanish[7]

SEMANTIC DOMAINS	GERMAN	SPANISH
(1) TO DIE	*sterben* ('to die'); *ersticken* ('to suffocate')	*morirse* ('to die'), *matarse* ('to kill oneself'); *ahogarse* ('to choke')
(2) DESTRUCTION (potentially accompanied by a bang)	*platzen* ('to burst'), *zerplatzen* ('to burst apart'), *bersten* ('to shatter'), *explodieren* ('to explode'); *zerbrechen* ('to break apart'); *zusammenbrechen* ('to collapse')	*estallar* ('to burst'), *reventar* ('to burst/to explode'), *explotar* ('to explode'); *partirse*, *desternillarse*, *troncharse*, *mondarse*, *descojonarse* ('to split one's sides/to crack up')
(3) ROTATION IN ARC FORM	*sich krümmen* ('to bend'), *sich nicht halten können* ('to not be able to hold oneself'), *sich kringeln* ('to curl up/to twist'), *sich kugeln* ('to roll into a ball'); *sich wälzen* ('to roll over')	*retorcerse*, *doblarse* ('to twist/to bend'); *revolcarse* ('to roll over'); *rodar* ('to roll')
(4) LAMENT	*weinen* ('to cry'), *heulen* ('to howl')	*llorar* ('to cry')
(5) UNPLEASANT SOUNDS (human/animal/object nature)	*brüllen* ('to roar'), *losbrüllen* ('to bellow'), *schreien* ('to scream'), *greischen* ('to shriek'), *grölen* ('to bawl'); *wiehe*m ('to neigh'), *quieken* ('to squeal'), *krähen* ('to crow'); *quietschen* ('to squeak')	—
(6) EXCRETION (scatological: very informal or vulgar register)	*sich bepissen*, *sich pissen* ('to piss oneself')	*cagarse* ('to shit oneself'), *mearse*, *orinarse* ('to piss/pee oneself')
(7) TO FALL / TO BE OUT	*umfallen*, *umkippen* ('to topple over/to tip over'); *sich wegschmeißen* ('to throw oneself away'); *sich ausschütten* ('to spill oneself')	—

The following taxonomy offers a metonymic classification of the most frequent verbal fillers occurring in the constructions [*(sich) vor Lachen* V] in German and [V *de (la) risa*] in Spanish. It is based on the semantic domains to which these verbs belong and on the underlying conceptual mechanisms by which speakers link bodily or emotional responses to the experience of laughter. In line with previous research (cf. Gonzálvez-García, 2020, and Mollica and Stumpf, 2021), the taxonomy captures metaphorical and metonymic mappings grounded in embodied experience and cultural convention.

The classification also reflects the varied expressive strategies —ranging from physiological effects to animalistic or scatological expressions— used to hyperbolically intensify laughter-related constructions. This taxonomy organizes the verbal fillers according to conventional metonymic mappings between physiological, behavioral, or expressive responses and the intensity of laughter. It highlights

7 Cf. López Meirama and Iglesias Iglesias (2022).

how speakers exploit embodied knowledge and social norms to construct hyperbolic meaning (cf. Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, and Kövecses, 2000).

Table 4. Metonymic taxonomy of verbal fillers in laughter constructions in German and Spanish

No.	Metonymy	Description	German Verbs	Spanish Verbs
i	EFFECT-FOR-CAUSE	A physiological or emotional consequence stands metonymically for its cause —intense laughter.	*sterben*, *ersticken*	*morirse*, *matarse*, *ahogarse*
ii	DESTRUC-TION-FOR-INTEN-SITY	Physical rupture or explosive action represents the over-whelming force of laughter.	*platzen*, *bersten*, *zerplatzen*, *explo-dieren*, *zerbrechen*, *zusammenbrechen*	*estallar*, *reventar*, *explotar*, *partirse*, *desternillarse*, *troncharse*, *mondarse*, *descojonarse*
iii	MOTION-FOR-REAC-TION	Bodily movements or contortions serve as a metonymic expression of laughing fits.	*sich kringeln*, *sich kugeln*, *sich krümmen*, *sich wälzen*, *sich nicht halten können*	*retorcerse*, *revolcarse*, *doblarse*, *rodar*
iv	EMO-TION-FOR-PHYSI-CAL REACTION	Expressions of crying or lament represent the physical extremes provoked by laughter.	*weinen*, *heulen*	*llorar*
v	SOUND-FOR-RE-SPONSE	Animalistic or uncon-trolled human sounds evoke the audible and unrestrained nature of laughter.	*brüllen*, *losbrüllen*, *schreien*, *greischen*, *grölen*, *wiehern*, *quieken*, *krähen*, *quietschen*	—
vi	EXCRE-TION-FOR-EXCESS	Scatological verbs reflect the loss of bodily control as a hy-perbolic consequence of laughter.	*sich bepissen*, *sich pissen*	*mearse*, *orinarse*, *cagarse*

4. Concluding Remarks

Particularly when it comes to conveying sensations and/or emotions — which are inherently abstract, or at least seemingly difficult to articulate in words— speakers display a remarkable capacity to express them, often through figurative means. The constructional idioms examined in this study are a clear manifestation of this phenomenon, with verbal fillers standing out for their origins in highly diverse source domains. Notably, these domains only partially overlap in the two languages under investigation. The semantic groupings and verbal slot fillers are considerably more varied in German, partly due to the flexibility introduced by verbal prefixation.

The overarching objective of this study was to catalogue the most frequent verbal fillers within a bilingual constructicon, employing onomasiological principles to shed light on the semantic composition of various microconstructions. Through a crosslinguistic onomasiological approach, as outlined in Section 3, speakers can access a spectrum of microconstructions that are closely aligned in both form and function. These linguistic choices are shaped not only by the communicative situation but also by stylistic and rhetorical preferences, as observed by Iglesias Iglesias and Alonso Santos (2022). For learners of a second language and in translation contexts, this onomasiological mapping offers crucial support for both comprehension and productive use of L2 constructions.

In addition to these semantic insights, the metonymic taxonomy presented in Table 4 highlights how figurative extensions —particularly those grounded in physiological, behavioral, and expressive correlates of laughter— function as conceptual mechanisms to hyperbolically express emotional intensity. These metonymies serve as cognitive bridges, linking involuntary bodily responses (e.g., shaking, choking) with communicative aims such as the exaggerated expression of amusement. In this sense, hyperbole operates as a central rhetorical strategy: it not only amplifies the affective charge of the construction but also reinforces its pragmatic effectiveness. The observed patterns suggest a convergence of figurative strategies across languages, even where the concrete lexical realizations differ.

Ultimately, the figurative meanings embedded in these constructions, rooted in diverse source and metonymic domains, provide a window into alternative ways of understanding and conceptualizing human experience across languages and cultures. In our exploration of linguistic complexity, studies such as this one guide us toward a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and the cognitive underpinnings of language use —both essential for advancing linguistic theory and improving practical language skills.

Acknowledgements

This research is being conducted within the framework of the research project PID2024-161338OB-I00: 'CREA-CONSTRIDIOMS. Creativity from the perspective of Construction Grammar: A repository of constructional idioms in German, Spanish and English based on corpora and AI'. The project, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, is being carried out by the research group FRASESPAL (https://frasespal.com/ [Accessed: 02.09.2025]), under the direction of Carmen Mellado Blanco (University of Santiago de Compostela). Specifically, this paper draws upon the study conducted by López Meirama and Iglesias Iglesias, in October 2022, during a workshop held within the project CONSTRIDIOMS.

References

DWDS (Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache). https://www.dwds.de

Goldberg, Adele E. 2006. Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199268511.001.

Gonzálvez-García, Francisco. 2012. "La(s) Gramática(s) de Construcciones". In Lingüística Cognitiva, edited by Iraide Ibarretxe Antuñano and Javier Valenzuela Manzanares, 249–280. Barcelona: Anthropos.

Gonzálvez-García, Francisco. 2020. "Metonymy Meets Coercion. The Case of the Intensifiers of Nouns in Attributive and Predicative Constructions in Spanish". In Figurative Thought and Language, edited by Annalisa Baicchi, 151–184. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Iglesias Iglesias, Nely M. 2012. "Korpusgestützte semantischpragmatische Beschreibung der Emotion Schadenfreude". In Kontrastive Emotionsforschung spanisch – deutsch, edited by Petra Eberwein, Aina Torrent Lenzen, and Lucía Uría Fernández, 119–140. Aachen: Shaker Verlag.

Iglesias Iglesias, Nely M. In press. "Schadenfreude Revisited: Eine korpusbasierte kontrastive Untersuchung der Emotion 'Schadenfreude'". Nuevos estudios de traducción e interpretación en la combinación alemán-español (working title), edited by Beatriz de la Fuente Marina, Andrea Fernández Vivanco, and Susana Schoer-Granado, Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca.

Iglesias Iglesias, Nely M., and Alejandro Alonso Santos. 2022. "*aus vollem Herzen lachen* vs. *aus vollem Herzen unterstützen*. Kontrastive korpuslinguistische Analyse des Konstrukts [*aus vollem Herzen*]". In Aktuelle Trends in der phraseologischen und parömiologischen Forschung weltweit. Volume II, edited by Anna Gondek, Alina Jurasz, Marcelina Kalasznik, and Joanna Szczęk, 297–307. Hamburg: Dr. Kovač.

Iglesias Iglesias, Nely M., and Belén López Meirama. 2024. "La expresión hiperbólica de las sensaciones en español y alemán: análisis de las construcciones fraseológicas [*morir(se) de* (ART) $\text{Ssing}_{\{\text{sensación}\}}$] y [*vor* $\text{NSg}_{\{\text{Gefühlsempfindung}\}}$ *sterben*]". Quaderns de Filologia – Estudis Lingüístics 29: 157–176. https://doi.org/10.7203/QF.29.28891.

Ivorra Ordines, Pedro, and Alejandro Alonso Santos. 2022. "Las construcciones fraseológicas en contraste. Estudio basado en corpus de la construcción resultativa [*sich kaputt* V] y sus equivalentes en español". Workshop paper, University of Santiago de Compostela, October 14–15.

Kövecses, Zoltán. 2000. Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

López Meirama, Belén, and Nely M. Iglesias Iglesias. 2022. "La expresión hiperbólica de las sensaciones en español y alemán: análisis de las construcciones fraseológicas [*morir(se) de* (ART) $\text{Ssing}_{\{\text{sensación}\}}$] y [*vor* $\text{NSg}_{\{\text{Gefühlsempfindung}\}}$ *sterben*]". Workshop paper, University of Santiago de Compostela, October 14–15.

Mansilla, Ana. 2018. "Das Wörterbuch 'Idiomatik DeutschSpanisch' (2013) aus der Sicht muster-und formelhaften Sprachgebrauchs". In Sprachliche Verfestigung. Wortverbindungen, Muster, Phrasem-Konstruktionen, edited by Kathrin Steyer, 203–221. Tübingen: Narr.

Mellado, Carmen, Patricia Buján, Claudia Herrero, Nely Iglesias, and Ana Mansilla (eds.). 2010. La fraseografía del siglo XXI. Nuevas propuestas para el español y el alemán. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. 2009. "Einführung. Idiomatische Wörterbücher und Metaphraseografie: zwei Realitäten eine Herausforderung". In Theorie und Praxis der idiomatischen Wörterbücher, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, 1–20. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen, and Nely M. Iglesias Iglesias. 2022. "Traducir y descubrir construcciones". In La traducción y sus meandros: diversas aproximaciones en el par de lenguas alemán-español, edited by Iris Holl and Beatriz de la Fuente Marina, 361–378. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca. https://doi.org/10.14201/0AQ0320361378.

Mollica, Fabio, and Sören Stumpf. 2021. "Families of Constructions in German". In Productive Patterns in Phraseology and Construction Grammar. A Multilingual Approach, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, 79–106. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Moshöbel, Andrea. 2015. "*vor freude lachen*, *one herze lachen*, *vor lachen sterben* – Zu Zeichenhaftigkeit und Semantik von *lachen* im Frühneuhochdeutschen". Zeitschrift für Semiotik 37 (1–2): 81–107.

Schemann, Hans. 2009. "Zur Anlage idiomatischer Wörterbücher – einige Maximen und Reflexionen". In Theorie und Praxis der idiomatischen Wörterbücher, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, 101–117. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Schemann, Hans, Carmen Mellado Blanco, Patricia Buján, Nely Iglesias, Juan P. Larreta, and Ana Mansilla. 2013. Idiomatik Deutsch-Spanisch. Hamburg: Buske.

Steyer, Kathrin. 2013. Usuelle Wortverbindungen. Zentrale Muster des Sprachgebrauchs aus korpuslinguistischer Sicht. Tübingen: Narr.

Steyer, Kathrin, ed. 2018. Sprachliche Verfestigung. Wortverbindungen, Muster, Phrasem-Konstruktionen. Tübingen: Narr.

Russian constructional idioms of the pattern: independent infinitive + noun in Dative

Larissa Naiditch
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9807-9893

Anna Pavlova
Universität Mainz, Germany
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4843-5778

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c764

ABSTRACT

In this article, we examine some Russian phraseme constructions whose main elements consist of a syntactically independent infinitive and a noun (or personal pronoun) in the dative case. Due to the abundance of idiomatic constructions of this type in Russian, we have focused on just four, grouping them into two pairs of similar-looking constructions and analyzing each pair in detail. We approach the selected phenomena from the perspective of construction grammar, specifically as phraseological-syntactic units. We focus on their semantics, pragmatics, and morphology. Semantics and pragmatics are considered as an integrated complex. Among morphological features, we are particularly interested in the categories of animacy/inanimacy, grammatical tense, and verb aspect. Additionally, we try to find out whether the dative noun is an obligatory or an optional part of the construction. Our goal is to describe the general essential features of these phrasemes and highlight the differences between similar-looking constructions. In doing so, we rely on typical linguistic research methods, especially on the methods of Construction Grammar.

Keywords: phraseme construction; infinitive construction; slot; filler; anchor; pragmatics.

1. Introduction

This article has been prepared as part of a project concerning a special kind of phraseological units further called phraseme constructions (PhC).

They are linguistic patterns with idiomatic meaning that usually have one or more fixed syntactic and semantic elements (anchors), as well as one or several

open positions (slots) that are filled with lexemes (fillers) during the text production. For example: *What a beauty you are! / What a scoundrel you are! / What a snake she is!* with a general pattern: *What a N smb is/are/was/were!*

This phenomenon was first described in Soviet linguistics (Švedova, 1960; Šmelev, 1977) but has been studied in more detail much later (Baranov and Dobrovol'skij, 2024, 175–196; Bast, Janda *et al.*, 2021; Melikjan, 2016).

Our research is generally aimed at the creation of a Russian-German explanatory dictionary of PhC which in turn is a part of a new project concerning such idioms in several European languages[1]. The bi- and multilingual dictionary of PhC has theoretical as well as practical goals. It will be useful for linguists and translators, as well as language and translation teachers.

In our study we make extensive use of corpus linguistics, as well as of all possible sources, written and oral[2]. Thus, a vast corpus of PhC was collected and then classified and described with the help of semantic, pragmatic, morphologic, prosodic, and stylistic analysis.

In this paper, the Russian material is described. In the research presented here the close examination of Russian grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and phraseology was important. The main emphasis of the paper is the description of the corresponding examples from the point of view of a pattern consisting of anchors and fillers, with their stable parts and variations. Such research is especially relevant in the framework of rather new direction of linguistics, *Construction Grammar,* and of the research of cross points between grammar and phraseology (Dobrovol'skij, 2016, 2017).

The specific topic of this paper is the PhC whose main element is an independent infinitive accompanied by the dative case of a noun with the semantics of the agent (Dative-Infinitive Constructions, DIC). In our Dictionary, there are ca. 20 PhC-lemmas of type DIC.

This kind of PhC is rather common in Russian and has no direct parallels in English or German. For this reason, not to mention the linguistic and cultural problems of phraseological units in translation, an exact rendering of the constructions in question into other languages is impossible. The task of translators, especially those who work with fiction, is to find a rendering of a construction that is close to the corresponding Russian expression in style and meaning. For example, consider this passage from "The Master and Margarita" by M. Bulgakov, where a modal verb is used in translation: *И главное, и поделать ничего нельзя было: не ругаться же с душевнобольным?!* In the German translation by Thomas Reschke: *Das Schlimmste war, er konnte nichts machen, er konnte doch nicht*

1 S. Project COST Action CA 22115 „A Multilingual Repository of Phraseme Constructions in Central and Eastern European Languages (PhraConRep)", Action CA22115 - COST.

2 To facilitate readability, we do not provide information about the sources of the examples used in the text.

über einen Geisteskranken herziehen! In the English translation by Michael Glenny: *The worst of it was that he could not answer back; one mustn't swear at a lunatic!*

In our research on DIC constructions (as with the execution of our dictionary project in general), we primarily rely on various methods of Construction Grammar. In this article, we present the results of the methods employed.

All of DIC constructions have a modal meaning (obligation, necessity, permission, possibility, etc.) with several nuances of semantics and pragmatics. E.g., such idioms as *тебе решать* '*you have to decide*' ('*it's up to you*'), *тебе платить* '*you have to pay*', etc., have a meaning of duty ('you must'), whereas the sentence *Не драться же с начальством* '*One cannot fight with the bosses*' means that 'an action does not pay off, is senseless, or inappropriate'.

It is important to take into account that most PhC's have almost exclusively pragmatic-oriented meaning: they express illocutions. This observation also applies to the DIC patterns. The seemingly exclusive modal meaning always goes hand in hand with their pragmatic functions. Therefore, in our dictionary a distinction deliberately is not made between semantics and pragmatics.

Some patterns in the DIC category are very similar to each other, which pose particular challenges for learning Russian. Sometimes the difference between two PhC's consists in intonation, word order, or "little words", i.e., particles. Similar construction patterns can form groups of two or three. Cf.: *Тебе только лимоны есть!* (literally: 'you only have to eat lemons!', real meaning: 'you have stomach problems, and it's bad for you to eat lemons' as ironic remark) – *Тебе бы только лимоны есть!* (literally: 'you would only eat lemons!', real meaning: 'There's nothing you like more than lemons').

Such groups of PhCs, although similar in form, but differing in semantics deserve special attention. Two groups of such construction pairs were chosen here for closer consideration. Our analysis is aimed at revealing the semantics, morphology, usage possibilities of these constructions. The difference between the corresponding similar PhC will be demonstrated. The focal points of our particular interest are: the category of animate/inanimate reference, grammatical tense, and verb aspect. Furthermore, it is important to investigate whether the dative argument in the construction is always obligatory or sometimes optional. Many observations regarding time, animacy, and verb aspect in relation to DIC have been formulated in this article for the first time.

Unfortunately, prosody cannot be investigated within the scope of this short article.[3]

3 Cf. about this subject: Pavlova and Svetozarova (2017, 462–476).

2. Previous Research on the Dative-Infinitive Constructions

A recent typological overview of the syntactic functions of the infinitive in Slavic languages is provided by Shcherbii *et al.* (2023). Although not focused on modality or phraseme-like constructions, this study outlines the structural positions and functional distribution of infinitival forms across Slavic, offering a useful point of departure for more specific investigations.

The infinitive sentences were treated in several crucial Russian grammars (Grammatika russkogo jazyka, 1954, 43–57; Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, 372–377; Padučeva 2017), several articles on this subject have also appeared in the last decades.

In Zolotova and Durin (1994), several Russian constructions with independent infinitive are classified according to their modal meaning, e.g., intentional, optative, epistemic, etc.

In Maurice (1996, 313), it is claimed that in Russian, infinitive constructions with the independent infinitive are better preserved than in all other Slavic languages. The relative resistance of the modal infinitive in Russian during history is also due to the fact that in Russian, the dative is very productive for naming an agent-experiencer.

The newest research (Padučeva, 2017) in the most prestigious modern Russian grammar, "Corpus Grammar", defines this construction as follows: "Independent infinitive is an infinitive not subordinate to anything". The following examples are given:

(1) Мне завтра рано вставать. 'I must get up early tomorrow.'

(2) Не разобраться нам в извивах новой экономической политики.
'We cannot understand the twists and turns of the new economic policy'.

Typical for this pattern is the dative case of noun or pronoun denoting the actor. If it is missing it is assumed (syntactic ellipsis).

Thus, the dative of noun as actor in Russian infinitive sentences is not always assigned lexically, but is a built-in part of a syntactic pattern itself (Zimmerling, 2018, 8). It can be considered as a kind of subject of the phrase or its subject-like element (Zimmerling, 2009; Zimmerling and Trubicyna, 2015, 71–80).

For classification and description of infinitive sentences in Russian cf. Israeli (2013, 2014, 2016), where the taxonomy and the grammatic and semantic peculiarities of infinitive–dative constructions have been described.

In Maurice (1996), we find a similar approach to the one we are applying: Modality is considered here in connection with the illocutions of the corresponding speech acts in which infinitive constructions with independent infinitive occur. From this perspective, new types of modalities emerge, such as the

possibility of carrying out the action (V^{inf}) and advice to do it, possibility and criticism at the same time, etc.

Our approach is characterized by pointing to the phraseological aspects of material examined and the description of them as anchors–fillers models. The question is raised of general semantics of the corresponding pattern itself (the anchors with empty slots, i.e., without fillers) and the meaning of fillers, as well as the limits of the filler's variation. The meaning of the examples themselves is, of course, also analyzed. As already mentioned, a distinction is not made between semantics and pragmatics.

The PhC's being considered in the chapters 3 and 4 belong to colloquial language. They are used primarily in dialogues as a response to some event; they reflect somebody's opinion expressed in highly emotional way. These PhC's usually don't start a text, being a part of a dialogue, like scene of a play.

3. Group 1: [*ну*] *не* V^{inf} *же* [*Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$/N^{dat}] and *не всё же* [*Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$/N^{dat}] V^{inf}

3.1 [*ну*] *не* V^{inf} *же* [Pron$^{pers\ dat}$/N^{dat}]. Prototypic example: Не спать же (нам) на полу *'One cannot, of course, sleep on the floor.'*[4]

Semantics: Modality of inadmissibility, impracticality of a certain action V, or the evaluation of this action as senseless, inadequate, inappropriate, sometimes too labor-intensive, i.e., having explicitly negative consequences. PhC, thus, conveys indirect (negative) evaluation, even if the construct does not reveal semantically evaluative words. For example: *Не спать же на полу* 'One (we, he, she etc.) cannot, of course, sleep on the floor' means, among other things, that sleeping on the floor is bad or inconvenient and that it should be self-evident and obvious to any person of sound judgment.

The upcoming or recommended improvement of the situation is often, but not always, mentioned in the left or in the right context. E.g., for the sentence above: *Купи кровать* 'Buy a bed'.

In relation to the speech moment, the construct corresponds to any temporal layer – past, present, or future. It may happen that the action V (yet) has not occurred (including in narratives about the past), and the speaker expresses his opinion about it in advance as a common-sense statement. Another example: *Не драться же с начальством* 'It is impossible to fight with the bosses' has a common-sense meaning. The particle *же* (zhe) reinforces the impression of the speaker's conviction of its correctness and the obviousness, simplicity of

4 This type of sentence was described by Israeli (2016, 329) as the "Infinitive constructions with *же*". As already stated, we analyze the corresponding construction from another point of view, which does not contradict her detailed research.

the expressed assessment of what is happening. This semantic suggestiveness allows us to consider this PhC as a trigger for presupposition.

The construct can be used as justification (reason) for making an alternative decision: *Решили взять такси: не идти же пешком* 'We decided to take a taxi: it was of course impossible to walk'. The decision may also relate to inaction: *Мы ничего не могли сделать: не звать же соседей на помощь* 'We couldn't do anything: it was futile to call neighbors for help'.

If PhC is used as a description of the reason for a past decision, it is as if it were made in the present, and the recipients were involved in what happened. However, a more narrative version with the verb *было* 'was' (past, 3rd person, neuter gender) is also possible: *Не спать же нам было на полу* 'We could not of course sleep on the floor'. In this version, the effect of involving the recipient in the narration disappears.

If the filler – a noun or a personal pronoun in the dative – is not used, then the construct becomes a common-sense remark or can relate to the speaker or to the actor. E.g.: *Не стоять же в очереди* = 'I (we etc.) don't want to stand in line / it is futile to stand in line.' But even in this case, the speaker prompts their conversation partner to agree, presenting their opinion as something self-evident.

The noun in dative can be attributed to both animate and inanimate objects: *Не лежать же мне весь день на диване* / *Не лежать же вещам в шкафу годами* 'I do not want to lie on the couch all day' / 'These things should not lie in the cupboard for years'.

However, in spite of a formal reference to an inanimate object, there is an implicit decision about this object by a living being: *Не лежать же вещам в шкафу годами* means that somebody decided to get rid of these things. In the idiom based on this PhC *Не пропадать же добру* 'Don't let things go to waste', the formal agent is the referent of the word *добро* ('good', 'things', 'personal belongings'), but the chief acting person is a human being or an animal making the corresponding decision. For this reason, non-normative phrases like **Не синеть же морю* 'The sea should not shimmer blue' or **Не возвышаться же горам* 'The mountains should not rise' (cf.: *Не возводить же здесь гору* 'We cannot erect a mountain here' would be a completely normal and plausible sentence) are considered. Interestingly, with certain additions, non-normative phrases like **Не лить же дождю* 'It can't rain'[5] can become acceptable and permissible, e.g.: *Не лить же дождю вечно* 'Rain cannot persist indefinitely'. The addition of the adverb *вечно* changes the logic: the phrase becomes evaluative, with the evaluation given from the perspective of human experience. For the same reason, the phrase *Не замерзать же воде на морозе* can be interpreted as meaningful only if one assumes that the speaker intends to bring a bowl of water from outside

5 In English, this sentence with modal meaning is acceptable, but the Russian original sentence is a nonsense.

(where it is freezing) into the house to prevent the water from freezing (‚Let the water not freeze in the frost'). It is impossible to interpret this statement as an assertion that water cannot freeze in the frost; such an interpretation would render the phrase nonsensical.

Grammar: The verb in the infinitive is predominantly in the imperfective aspect. As for perfect verb in this construction, "it is on the verge of becoming obsolete" as A. Israeli (2016, 330–331) stated. *Не прогнать же тебе его, коли он был прежде меня и ты его любишь* (Dostoevsky. The Gambler, 1866) ('You could not possibly throw him out, if he was [your lover] before me and you love him'.) (ibd.) The perfect form is also usual in the phraseological expression *не разорваться же* + pronoun dat. meaning 'it is impossible for somebody to be in several places or to do several works at once'.

The infinitive can be a part of a collocation: for example, *Не звать же на помощь* – 'It was futile to call for help'; *Не падать же перед ним ниц* – 'We wouldn't want to kneel before him' or even an idiomatic expression: *Не ждать же у моря погоды* – 'It is impossible to wait forever', literally: 'Not to wait for the good weather at the sea'.

A filler-noun or pronoun in the dative case indicating the agent, when used in the present tense, is optional: *Не спорить же с ним* = *Не спорить же мне с ним* 'I cannot argue with him'. However, when used with the verb *было* ('was') and denoting past, the dative agent is usual: *Не спать же нам было на полу* 'We could not/ didn't want to sleep on the floor'. The dative agent is obligatory in cases when it concerns inanimate objects: *Не лежать же этим тряпкам здесь вечно* 'These rags really can't lie around here forever.'

Conclusions: The noun in dative is in this type of PhC often omitted: sometimes because of the common-sense meaning of the action; however, in many cases a certain person is implied but is not named by a noun or a pronoun. PhC can refer to an animate, as well as to inanimate subject expressed by the dative case. But even in the latter its illocutive part and the following implicit decision-making is connected with a living being. The anchor *же* is obligatory and is used immediately after the infinitive.

3.2 *не всё же [Pron$^{pers\ dat}$/N^{dat}] V^{inf}*. Prototype example: *Не всё же тебе на полу спать. Пора кровать купить*. 'You can't forever sleep on the floor. It is time to buy a bed.'

Semantics: As in 3.1 an activity or an event must be replaced by another. Often, the construct has an admonitory-reasoning and/or condemning character: the habitual activity, according to the speaker, is somehow worse than the new one. In other cases, the construct is used as an explanation, a reason to justify the need for different types of activities than those named in the filler. The filler V should be chosen in such a way that its meaning is situationally antonymous to the designation of any other type of activity mentioned in

the immediately left or right context. Often, phrases are used that semantically represent exaggerations (hyperbole) from a realistic perspective. For example, the construct *Не всё же Дюма и Гарри Поттера читать!* 'One really can't read only Dumas and Harry Potter forever!' means that somebody, probably a child, must read serious literature. Similarly, *Не всё же тебе в коротких штанишках ходить* 'you don't always have to wear short pants' means 'you must become a grown-up'.

Often, an improvement in the situation has already occurred (e.g., a boy who used to only wear shorts has been given long pants), and the construction serves as justification or affirmation of this new situation, explaining the action of the person who changed the previous situation (in this case, by giving the pants).

The dative case of a noun can be attributed to both animate and inanimate objects. Phrases like *Не всё же цветам цвести* 'The flowers really can't bloom forever' or *Не всё же доллару падать* 'The dollar exchange rate really can't fall indefinitely' are correct. But also here, like for the similar construction 3.1., there is a thinking person who makes the corresponding decision or estimation of a situation. In terms of frequency, phrases whose content implies the presence of consciousness on the part of the agent performing the action, prevail for this PhC.

Grammar: The verb in infinitive is of the imperfective aspect. Optionally, a personal pronoun or (less frequently) a noun in the dative case, indicating the agent, can be included in the construct. If the agent is represented by a noun denoting an inanimate object, then the dative filler is mandatory. A new type of activity (proposed, recommended, or simply replacing the previous one) is sometimes mentioned in the left context and sometimes in the right.

Conclusions: The noun in dative is often omitted: sometimes because of common-sense meaning of the action. In many cases a certain person is implied but is not named by a noun or a pronoun. PhC can refer to an animate, as well as to an inanimate subject expressed by the dative case.

3.3 Comparison of two similar PhC 3.1 and 3.2

Both construction patterns can include animate as well as inanimate objects as agents, and in both, the dative filler is mandatory when the agent is an inanimate referent. The use of inanimate nouns as "dative agents" in 3.1 as well as in 3.2 presupposes that the decision to do something or the estimation of something is made by a thinking and decision-making subject. Indirectly, these PhC's therefore refer exclusively to living beings.

The verb aspect for both patterns is an imperfective one.

In spite of the grammatical and semantic similarity of the PhC 3.1 and 3.2, there are several differences. The 3.2 type conveys the semantics of prolonged action: the particle *всё* means *'always', 'all the time'*. The speaker decides that this

action has to be interrupted or stopped or explains why the situation has been changed.

Pattern 3.1 can be used not only in the present but also in the past tense, while for PhC 3.2, the past tense is not allowed. For 3.1, the dative filler is mandatory when using it in the past tense.

4. Group 2: *N^{dat}/Pron$^{pers\ dat}$ только V^{inf}* and *N^{dat}/Pron$^{pers\ dat}$ бы только V^{inf}*

4.1 *N^{dat}/Pron$^{pers\ dat}$ только V$^{inf.}$* Prototype examples: *Тебе только шоколад есть с твоим диабетом.* Literally: '*You have only to eat chocolate with your diabetes*', real meaning: '*You should not eat chocolate because of your diabetes*'.

Semantics[6]. Skepticism, irony, warning, pseudo-advice corresponding to the danger of doing something. Somebody (agent, expressed with dative case of a noun or a pronoun) lacks sufficient competence or the right to do something (V), according to the speaker. Or somebody is not allowed, or it doesn't suit him to do something. PhC often implies an implicit refusal to act, e. g.: *Мне только на телефонные звонки отвечать!* 'I have nothing better to do than to take phone calls'. It is often used ironically in situations where the undesirable action has already occurred or is only being planned. E. g.: *С твоей изжогой только лимоны жрать на голодный желудок!* 'With your heartburn you should only eat lemons on an empty stomach!'.

The PhC often includes illocutions of concern, worry for someone, arising from empathy, sympathy, or a sense of responsibility: beneath the grumbling dissatisfaction lies concern. Thus, in the example *Тебе только тяжести таскать!* (literally: 'It suits you only to carry heavy things!'; real meaning: 'You should not carry heavy things!') is expressed not only, and even not so much, dissatisfaction as concern and the wish to prevent the addressee from undermining his /her already weak health.

Speakers can direct their skeptical remark towards themselves (self-criticism), for example: *Мне с моей нервной системой только учителем работать!* ,With my nervous system, I should only be a teacher!'

In the meaning we describe here, only human beings and animals can be referred to the dative-noun.

Grammar: The PhC can relate to the present and the future. The irony is expressed by 1) the particle *tol'ko* (*только*); 2) intonation, 3) the construction itself,

6 The same pattern can have other meanings; it is polysemous. Here, we are considering only one of three meanings that appears to us as the first and primary. The other meanings can be looked up in our Dictionary once it is published.

4) logic, semantics of contradiction between a starting point and the action V. The Dative-Anchor is optional, but it is used abundantly.

Conclusions: The agent in dative is optional but frequent. PhC can refer only to a person (animated subject) who executes the action V. The verb V is imperfective. The PhC is suitable only for the present or future.

4.2 PhC *N*^{dat}*/Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$ *бы только V*^{inf} *N*^{dat}*/Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$ *только бы V*^{inf}. Prototype examples: a) *Тебе бы только шоколад есть! 'Your wish is to eat only chocolate'*; b) *Тебе только бы спорить! 'You always want to argue.'*

Two versions of word order are available: Beside this, there is a variant with another (synonymic) anchor: ***N***^{dat}***/Pron***$^{pers\ dat}$ ***лишь бы V***^{inf} (*лишь* instead of *только*). The rearrangement of *бы* and *только* is allowed (*только бы* / *бы только*), while the word order variation with *лишь* and *бы* is not allowed; their word order is fixed.

Semantics[7]: Criticism, ironic pointing to constant misbehavior or to bad habits and actions of somebody. The meaning of the PhC is "constant predisposition to some action as a favorite" (Grammatika russkogo jazyka, 1954, 53, paragraph 1067). In Israeli (2014, 146) this construction is called "disparaging statement". The PhC expresses dissatisfaction with someone's behavior, actions, or intentions: someone performs an action or expresses an intention without considering its possible negative consequences or the fact that the action is not justified by circumstances and therefore inappropriate, condemnable, or unjust.

The construct is often addressed to the second person (interlocutor) but can also be directed towards somebody else. The agent is usually explicitly expressed in the dative case: *Тебе лишь бы что-нибудь сказать!* 'You always want to say something'. *Тебе бы только своих Битлов слушать!* 'You have only one desire – to listen to The Beatles!'

Grammar. As in patterns above, the PhC is related to present and to future. The grammar of the PhC is close to optative. It is possible that the action did not take place, it is only a wish of a person to whom the speech is directed or the one who is being spoken about.

The construct can include the designation of the agent in the dative case (*him, you, a proper name, etc.*), but this anchor is optional. The slot V is filled with an infinitive or an infinitive group of a verb of any aspect: *Тебе бы только спорить!* – imperfective / *Тебе бы только поспорить!* – perfective, although the imperfective aspect is more common. The anchor *бы* by (or *б b*) is frequent but can be omitted in the combination with *только*, and then this construction becomes a homonym of the construction 4.1. Cf.: *Тебе бы только спорить!* = *Тебе*

7 This PhC is polysemic, but we consider here only one of its three meanings. The meaning we describe here is comparable to that of PhC 4.1.

только спорить! In the combination with *лишь*, the particle *бы* is mandatory: *Тебе лишь бы спорить!*

The particle бы (*by*) in this PhC is not a feature of the Russian subjunctive mood (soslagatel'noe naklonenie); rather, it is part of the construction itself.

Conclusions: This PhC can only refer to living beings. Both verbal aspects are allowed in the infinitive, although the imperfective aspect is more typical. The PhC can not be related to past.

4.3 Comparison of two similar constructions 4.1. and 4.2

Both PhCs express a negative evaluation of an action that has already happened or is currently being planned. The illocutions conveyed by both PhCs are comparable. However, 4.1. can express concern and empathy in addition to criticism and displeasure, while 4.2. only conveys some kind of criticism.

The actual meaning of the anchor *только* is not identical in 4.1. and 4.2: in 4.1., the particle *только* does not preserve its restrictive meaning 'only'. In 4.2, however, its lexical meaning can still be felt: the opponent is accused of having nothing better to do than V / not coming up with anything better than V, fulfilling only an inappropriate action and not something else, more useful.

Finally, it must be noted that the possibility of exchanging *только* with *лишь* is exclusively possible in PhC 4.2., while 4.1. does not exhibit such synonymy. This is probably related to the points mentioned above: the lexical meaning of both particles ('restriction') is more clearly noticeable in 4.2., hence the possibility of interchange.

5. Concluding Remarks

We have examined some Russian non-finite phraseme constructions, characterized by a syntactically independent infinitive and a noun or a personal pronoun in the dative case (Dative-Infinitive Constructions, or DIC). Since there are many such non-finite clauses in Russian, we focused on two pairs of similar-looking PhC in order to highlight differences among individual pair members:

– Group 1, consisting of the patterns 3.1. *[ну] не* V^{inf} *же* [*Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$/N^{dat}] and 3.2. *не всё же* [*Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$/N^{dat}] V^{inf}
  Prototypic examples: 3.1. *Не спать же (нам) на полу* '*We cannot, of course, sleep on the floor*' and 3.2. *Не всё же тебе на полу спать.* '*You could not forever sleep on the floor.*'
– Group 2, consisting of the patterns 4.1. N^{dat}/*Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$ *только* V^{inf} and 4.2. N^{dat}/*Pron*$^{pers\ dat}$ *бы только* V^{inf}
  Prototypic examples: 4.1. *Тебе только шоколад есть с твоим диабетом.* 'You have only to eat chocolate with your diabetes' = 'You should not eat

chocolate because of your diabetes'. 4.2. *Тебе бы только шоколад есть!* 'You want to eat only chocolate'.

The sentences based on these constructions are (formally) impersonal syntactically. The verb in all analyzed constructions is of the imperfective aspect, exclusively or most likely (cf. Melnikova, 2018)[8]. The noun (or pronoun) in dative expresses the agent who executes the action $V^{inf.}$. The dative-agent is often not mentioned (omitted), but it remains a built-in part of the construction.

All constructions considered here are associated with usage in the present, even when the narrative in which such a construct is used reports events from the past. This allows these constructs to be employed as stylistically marked means for a present reference, shaping the corresponding passages as if the recipient is directly involved in the situation.

The auxiliary particles in the anchor position play an important role in the patterns of the constructions. In the constructions examined, in anchor positions, the particles *только* or *лишь* are present, which, as part of the non-finite clauses, either contribute their own meaning to the pattern or lose it altogether. Thus, the sememe of restriction shines through as a relic. The particle *бы* in 4.2. is not a feature of the Russian subjunctive mood (soslagatel'noe naklonenie); rather, it is part of the construction itself.

The semantics of modality (necessity, possibility, cause, allowance, recommendation etc., expressed indirectly) is present in each PhC of the type DIC.

Presumably, it is precisely due to the modal semantics (necessity, possibility, estimation) that all the PhC of the DIC type considered here, as well as others, tend towards the interpretation 'animate agent is meant'. Even when a dative object is mentioned that does not represent a person or an animal (such as *дождь* 'rain' in the sentence *Не лить же дождю вечно* – 'Rain cannot persist indefinitely', 'The rain must stop at some point'), the speaker's opinion is implied in this statement because only a conscious person can decide whether the rain must stop soon or not.

It can be observed that, while in the case of animate dative objects, it mostly involves internal modality (i.e., the agent mentioned in the dative must, can, wants, etc., perform action V), in the case of inanimate dative objects, it involves external modality: the speaker expresses an opinion that the situation should unfold in a certain way (could, must, might, etc.).

The category of 'animacy' does not have specific grammatical markers; it belongs to the type of 'hidden' grammatical categories.

The modal meaning is never the only one in the non-finite clauses; it is enriched by various illocutions that can already be described at the pattern level.

8 However, this does not necessarily mean that in all DIC constructions, the verb in the infinitive is exclusively imperfective. There are counterexamples in this regard that we have not investigated here.

The irony in 4.1 does not have parallels in 4.2. There are semantic and pragmatic nuances. Whereas 4.1 can express concern and empathy in addition to criticism and displeasure, 4.2 only conveys displeasure, anger and criticism expressed, however, in rather mild form: several examples seem to be directed to children.

Generally, we have shown numerous examples where phraseological units can be used as syntactic elements having their own meaning. Being syntaxemes, they have their own semantics: as, e.g., in the following examples:

– a statement of an action's inappropriateness*: 'to sleep on the floor'*;
– an ironic advice (anti-advice) pointing to a future harm entailed by an action: *'to eat chocolate even if it is harmful'*;
– critical (disparaging) statement of somebody's wish, habits, or permanent behavior: 'to eat always only chocolate';
– reason, justification or affirmation of a new situation, explaining the action of the person who changed the previous situation.

It is evident that these constructions are situated on the border between the syntax and the phraseology. Typically, the corresponding general semantics remains in their anchor (frame) structure even with empty slots and becomes developed after adding the fillers.

Because of their closeness to phraseology, i.e. to the lexical layer of language, PhC constructions convey a more concrete situation than the syntactic ones, which are more abstract. The PhC of type DIC can be imagined as a scene of a play. We often can reconstruct the situation on the basis of one sentence.

The examples above belong to colloquial style, they stimulate speaker's creativity (Pavlova, Naiditch and Pöppel, 2022). The cited sentences are vivid, well suitable to dialogue, full of humor and irony.

It became evident that the considered PhC's do not have literal correspondences in other languages, e.g., in English and German. In each individual case, translators propose purely individual solutions. In translations, there is generally active use of modal verbs, which is typical of translations of Russian infinitive constructions. The examples form a challenge for translators. Thus, our research will be useful for translators, as well as for teachers and students of Russian. At the end, Maurice's prophecy would be appropriate:

> If the observed development were to continue in this form, individual sentence types would solidify more and more. The tense paradigm would likely completely disappear in declarative sentences. Individual sentence types would become increasingly phraseologized. Thus, eventually, the modal existential sentence would only be possible with a strictly defined group of nouns in the dative position. *Было* might still persist in certain interrogative sentences. (Maurice, 1996, 313).

This prediction aligns well with our observations presented in this article.

References

Baranov, Anatolij N., and Dmitrij O. Dobrovol'skij. 2024. Očerki obščej i russkoj frazeologii. Moskva: Jazyki slavjanskoj kul'tury.

Bast, Radovan *et al.* 2021. The Russian Constructicon. An electronic database of the Russian grammatical constructions. https://constructicon.github.io/russian/.

Grammatika russkogo jazyka. Bd. II. Sintaksis. 1954. Moskva: Nauka, 43–57.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij O. 2016. "Grammatika konstrukcij i frazologija: točki peresečenija". Voprosy jazykoznanija 3: 7–21.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij O. 2017. "Grammatika konstrukcij i frazeologija". Izvestija RAN. Serija Literatury i jazyka 76, 1: 5–14.

Israeli, Alina. 2013. "Dative-infinitive constructions in Russian. Taxonomy and semantics". In Contemporary Studies in Slavic Linguistics, edited by Irina Kor Chahine, 199–224. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Israeli, Alina. 2014. "Dative-infinitive БЫ constructions in Russian. Taxonomy and semantics". In New Insights into Slavic Linguistics, edited by Witkoś J., Jaworsky, 141–159. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Israeli, Alina. 2016. "Dative-infinitive constructions with the particle ЖЕ in Russian. Taxonomy and semantics". Slavic and East European Journal 2(60): 307–336.

Maurice, Florence. 1996. Der modale Infinitiv in der modernen russischen Standardsspache. München: Otto Sagner.

Melikjan, Vadim Ju. 2016. Slovar' ékspressivnych ustojčivych fraz russkogo jazyka. [The dictionary of Russian expressive idioms]. Moscow: Flinta. (In Russian).

Melnikova, Anna. 2018. "The aspectual distribution and modal licensing in Russian infinitival constructions". Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America 5(1): 631–642.

Padučeva, Elena V. 2017. "Konstrukcija s nezavisimym infinitivom" [Construction with the independent infinitive]. Russkaja korpusnaja grammatika. http://rusgram.ru (In Russian).

Pavlova, Anna V., Larissa E. Naiditch, and Ludmila Pöppel. 2022. "Est' kreativnost' i kreativnost'. O granjach i granicach kreativnosti voblasti frazeologizmov-konstrukcij". [There is creativity and creativity. On the faces (facets) and boundaries of creativity in the field of phraseological constructions]. Anzeiger für Slavische Philologie, XLIX, 9–41. (In Russian).

Pavlova, Anna V., and Natalija D. Svetozarova. 2017. Frazovoe udarenie v fonetičeskom, funkcional'nom i semantičeskom aspektach. [Phrasal stress in phonetic, functional, and semantic aspects]. Moskva: Flinta. (In Russian).

Shcherbii, Nataliia *et al.* 2023. "Syntactic Functions of the Infinitive in Slavic Languages". Ad Alta: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research 13(2): 87–95.

Šmelev, Dmitrij N. 1977. Sovremennyj russkij jazyk. Leksika. [The Modern Russian Language. Lexicon]. Moscow: Prosveščenie. (In Russian).

Švedova, Natalia Ju. 1960. Očerki po sintaksisu russkoj razgovornoj reči. [Essays on Syntax of Russian colloquial speech]. Moskva: Akademija Nauk. (In Russian).

Zimmerling, Anton V., Marija V. Trubicyna. 2015. "Dativnye i sentencial'nye podležaščie v russkom jazyke: ot vnutrennich sostojanij k obščim suždenijam". Rhema. Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta 4: 71–104.

Zimmerling, Anton V. 2009. "Dva tipa dativnych predloženij". Moldovan A. M. (ed.), 'Slovo – čistoe vesel'e…' . In honor of Alexander Borisovič Pen'kovskij. Moskva: Jazyki Slavjanskoj Kul'tury, Studia philologica, 471–489.

Zolotova, Galina A., and Jean Durin. 1994. Les phrases infinitives en russe. La Revue russe 7: 77–92.

Section 2:
Metaphor and Metonymy in Phraseology

Metaphorical, metonymic and metaphthonymic character in Spanish verbal phraseological units based on the noun *cabeza*: a classification proposal and analysis

Silvia Cataldo
University of Alicante
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9449-9222

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c765

ABSTRACT
The present contribution focuses on metaphoricity and metonymicity related to the field of phraseology. Its more specific aim is to classify a series of Spanish verbal phraseological units (PUs) which contain the noun *cabeza* in order to observe the relationships between metaphoricity, metonymicity and literality of the conceptualisations at their root. The classification proposed is based on the consultation of different studies in the field of conceptual metaphor and phraseology (related to the mental mechanisms of associative comprehension and to the characteristics of the PUs, with special attention to their potential idiomaticity); it comprehends completely metaphorical and completely metonymical expressions at two extremes and intermediate stages of interaction between metaphor and metonymy with the possible presence of literal elements within the PU. The analysis of 131 expressions previously compiled by Baran À Nkoum (2018) (some of which are repeated due to their polysemic value), has shown a higher incidence of metaphoricity with respect to metonymicity and a dominance of metaphorical PUs where the element *cabeza* is metonymically conceptualised and refers to the brain or the intellectual faculties of humans. The results of the analysis carried out also suggest the validity of the proposed classification for possible future phraseological studies.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor; metonymy; metaphthonymy; phraseology; Spanish.

1. Introduction

Metaphor, metonymy and phraseological units (hereafter abbreviated to PU for the singular and to PUs for the plural form) are three intrinsically and reciprocally linked concepts, considering that idiomaticity represents one of the possible characteristics of PUs (i.e. fixed expressions already available in the

language with a predetermined and recognised meaning) (Corpas Pastor, 1996). Since the last century, research in the field of cognitive metaphor and phraseology has experienced an important increase. Nevertheless, despite the numerous studies and approaches, the complexity of human thought, the continuous evolution of languages and their internal variety still motivate to observe and explain the network of relationships between the mechanisms of mental association and their manifestation in languages. Determining the relationship between PUs' underlying metaphorical and metonymical conceptualisations and possible literal values is exactly the purpose of the present study, which is based on the analysis of 131 somatic PUs containing the noun *cabeza* and collected by Baran À Nkoum (2018).

2. Theoretical framework

The conception of metaphor as a pure figure of speech characterised past eras until the first decades of the 20th century, when scholars such as Richards (1936), Black (1955, 1962) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) some years later, recognised its cognitive dimension and described it as a conceptual mechanism in which a source domain, usually concrete and related to physical experience, transfers some of its properties to a target domain which is usually abstract (Black, 1955, 286–287; Black, 1962, 38–40; Lakoff, 1993, 245; Richards, 1936, 93–94, 119). When in Spanish a person is said to be a *loro* ('parrot') on the assumption that he/she talks a lot, for example, the human being is understood in terms of a bird and the only property of the bird that is activated in the conceptual transference is its loquacity. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) attempts to show that a high number of conceptualisations in human thought is conventional at a general level; however, at a more specific level those conceptualisations can differ from culture to culture and from language to language, giving rise to lexicalised or creative linguistic uses (Lakoff, 1993, 208). When the involved domains are somehow related (e.g. cause and effect, container and contained element) those result in a specific type of metaphor: metonymy. In this regard, Deignan and Potter (2004, 1240) distinguish between metaphors, if there is some distance between the interacting domains, and metonymy, if the transfer takes place within the same semantic field. With regard to conceptual metonymies concerning the emotional sphere, Kövecses (1986) notes that some emotions are often understood and expressed through the physiological effects they provoke (e.g. anger is conceived as internal pressure, redness of the face, agitation, body heat, etc.). Conceptual metonymies usually derive from logical correlations between two realities, such as part and whole, place and event, institution and responsible person (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 59). Goossens (1990, 336) notes that metaphors and metonymies can interact, giving rise to phenomena he calls *metaphthonymies*, with

three possible combinations of conceptualisations: (i) a reality conceived in metonymic terms is inserted into a metaphorical expression (metonymy within metaphor), (ii) a metaphor is inserted into a metonymy (metaphor within metonymy) and (iii) a metaphor derives from a metonymy (metaphor from metonymy). In some cases, a certain ambiguity can be perceived, which makes it difficult to identify a conceptualisation as a metaphor, a metonymy or a specific combination of them.

The analysis of the figurative uses detected in two chapters of the Italian novel *Venuto al mondo* by Margaret Mazzantini (Cataldo, 2019) has shown a constant presence of metaphors (from this point on, in this paragraph, the term metaphor is used as hypernym and refers also to metonymy) in the language and in communications: these can be novel in thought as well as in the language or conventional in the mind and expressed freely or through lexicalised uses; furthermore, it is possible and common to manipulate conventional and lexicalised uses in order to create new images. From a linguistic point of view, conventional and lexicalised metaphors can consist, on the one hand, in a polysemous word or in a word which has a figurative value in all its meanings (with the Spanish verb *derramar*, 'to spill', for example, the spreading of a liquid is conceptualised through the allusion to *rama*, 'the branch') and, on the other hand, in a syntagmatic expression or in a complete sentence (paroemia). The latter constitute two types of PUs, which are characterised by fixity (they are stable in the language), lexicalisation (their meaning is shared among the speakers of a language), pluriverbality (they consist of at least two elements), possible variation (they can have alternative fixed and lexicalised formulations) and possible idiomaticity (they usually have a non-compositional meaning) (Castillo Carballo, 1997-1998, 70–75). In this respect, Corpas Pastor (1996, 19–32) points out that the meaning of PUs is usually figurative and Castillo Carballo (1997-1998) observes that idiomaticity can characterise the whole expression or just a part of it if some components maintain their literal meaning. Moreover, the meaning of a whole expression is strongly connected to its metaphorical motivation, due to the interaction between the literal and the metaphorical dimensions in the mental lexicon of human beings (Corpas Pastor, 2001, 32–33). Although the interest in the mechanisms of conceptualisation of reality among scholars arose decades ago, research in this field is still vital. González (2023), for example, carries out a study on metaphors and metonymies that characterised the way of thinking in the COVID-19 pandemic and in the quarantine. The fact that research is still being done on these topics demonstrates the need to explain the cognitive mechanisms behind constructions of meaning. At the same time, the consolidation of research in phraseology in recent decades highlights the important role it plays in human communication (Mogorrón and Gómez, 2024, 2) and the need to explore it in depth.

3. Analysis

This third section contains the main aspects of the analysis carried out: the methodology, which has led to the definition of a set of different typologies of metaphorical/metonymic PUs; the classification of the PUs collected by Baran À Nkoum (2018); the results observed.

3.1 Methodology

The aim of the present study is to determine how metaphors and metonymies appear in PUs and how they can interact and also relate to possible literal uses. On the basis of the research consulted and commented in the theoretical framework of this contribution, the existence of eight typologies of PU has been supposed:

1. Metaphorical PUs: the whole set of the expression's components delineates an image. For example, through the gesture described in the expression *darse alguien de cabeza contra las paredes* (literally: 'to bang the head against the walls'; PU 35 of the analysis) Spanish speaking people conceptualise the idea of making an effort that does not lead to any results.
2. Metaphorical PUs with literal elements: at least one component of the expression retains its literal meaning while the others manifest a metaphorical association. For example, in *tener alguien la cabeza como una bola de billar* (literally: 'to have the head like a billiard ball'; PU 133 of the analysis), the literal meaning of the head is preserved, but its bald aspect is evoked through the image of a billiard ball; in this way, a part of the human body with a special feature is linked to an object of a similar shape and surface.
3. Metonymic PUs: the whole set of the expression's components delineates an image that is somehow related to the general literal content. The PU *doblar alguien la cabeza* (literally: 'to bend the head'; PU 44 of the analysis) in its meanings of dying or obeying, shows the conceptualisation of an event or a behaviour by referring to a natural and spontaneous reaction that a person may have in these situations.
4. Metonymic PUs with literal elements: at least one component of the expression retains its literal sense while the others manifest a metonymic association. For example, in *tener alguien una idea en la cabeza* (literally: 'to have an idea in the head'; PU 138 of the analysis), there is a metonymic relationship between the head as a container and the mind as the contained element, while the rest of the expression requires a literal interpretation.
5. *Metaphthonymic* PUs: the whole set of the expression's components delineates an image in which metaphoric and metonymic mechanisms interact. In *bajar alguien la cabeza* (literally: 'to lower the head'; PU 27 of the analysis), for example, two conceptualisations coexist and overlap: on the one hand, the idea of a person accepting a situation when there is no other choice is

conveyed in metonymic terms through the description of a head's movement that shows acceptance; on the other hand, the expression can be considered metaphorical because its meaning refers to a mental attitude or a choice that does not involve any body movement.

6. Metaphorical PUs with metonymic elements: at least one component of the PU constitutes a conceptual metonymy, while the others manifest a metaphorical association. In the expression *írsele a alguien algo de la cabeza* (literally: 'something goes out of someone's head'; PU 65 of the analysis), for example, the fact of forgetting something is conceptualised as information that goes away, but within this image there is a logical relation between the head as container and the mind as contained element.
7. Metonymic PU with metaphorical elements: at least one component of the PU represents a conceptual metaphor, while the others show a metonymic association. In this case, no example can be proposed from the analysis carried out. However, it is possible to explain how this PU typology appears through other Spanish expressions such as *subírsele a alguien el alcohol al coco* (literally: 'alcohol goes up to somebody's coconut') whose use has been observed on the internet as a more colloquial variant of *subírsele a alguien algo a la cabeza* (literally: 'something goes up to someone's head'; PU 111 of the analysis) and which refers to having reduced mental faculties because of alcohol consumption. On the one hand, the metaphorical character of this expression concerns the association between the coconut and the head, with the conceptualisation of the head in terms of fruit, probably due to a similarity of form. On the other hand, this metaphorical association appears in a metonymic context, considering that when someone drinks alcohol, this reaches the blood in the veins and consequently flows into the brain.
8. *Metaphthonymic* PUs with literal elements: at least one component of the expression retains its literal meaning, while the others show a *metaphthonymic* association. Also in this case, no expressions for this typology were found in the analysis carried out. An example which does not derive from this study could be *subírsele a alguien los humos al cerebro* (literally: 'smokes go up to somebody's brain'). Here, the brain retains its literal value, but is part of an image that is partially metonymic and partially metaphoric: on the one hand, anger is conceptualised in terms of body heat, which is a common physical result of this feeling; on the other hand, the idea of body heat undergoes a further level of abstraction, in which it turns into fire that produces smoke.

Once defined this eight possible scenarios, the classification of the 131 Spanish verbal somatic PUs based on the noun *cabeza* compiled by Baran À Nkoum (2018) has been carried out: each expression has been examined and associated with one of the above-described typologies; in case of polysemic

PUs, the same expression has sometimes been ascribed to more than one typology depending on each single meaning and the connection between the literal and figurative sense. Moreover, those PUs or meanings which have not been considered idiomatic have not been included in the analysis (for example, the expression *tirarse alguien de cabeza al agua* with the meaning of throwing oneself headfirst into the water, and the PUs *levanter alguien la cabeza* and *erguir alguien la cabeza* when they refer to the body movement of raising the head).

3.2 Classification of the PUs examined

This section presents the classification of the analysed PUs. The adscription of each expression to a specific typology is the result of a careful reflection that considers the literal value and the figurative meaning of the PUs. Nevertheless, the analysis admits a certain degree of subjectivity, taking into account that the distinction between metaphorical, metonymic and literal value is not always clearly definable and, in many cases, it is not easy to determine the weight of metaphorical, metonymic and literal uses within a same PU. The typology that has given rise to most doubts is that of metonymic PUs, because sometimes the logical relationship between the figurative and the literal meaning of the expression is not direct and it is necessary to go beyond a level of abstraction in order to recognise it. As an example, *arrojarse los trastos a la cabeza* (literally: 'to throw things at each other'; PU 26 of the analysis) describes a violent action that people may commit during a fierce fight; however, this image can be used to describe a non-physical argument, which implies that somebody could perceive it as metaphorical rather than metonymic, or even *metaphthonymic* due to this overlapping of perceptions. With regard to metonymic PUs, the association between feelings such as anger and worry and increased body temperature has been considered as a cause-effect relationship, as this could be a physical reaction to mental stress.

The following is the list of the examined expressions numbered as in the reference study. Next to each one there are indicated the literal meaning in brackets and the figurative meaning or meanings given by the author. It should be made clear that it is not always easy to propose a literal translation, since some formulations and the use of certain prepositions could make the image evoked by the expression unclear or ambiguous.

17 - *Abrir alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('to open someone's head'): to seriously wound someone in the head.

18 - *Actuar alguien con cabeza* ('to act with head'): to act consciously.

19 - *Agachar alguien la cabeza* ('to bend down the head'): synonym of PU 27.

20 - *Alzar alguien cabeza* ('to raise head'): synonym of PU 69.

21 - *Alzar alguien la cabeza* ('to raise head'): 1) to get out of poverty or misfortune; 2) synonym of PU 69 (meaning 2).

22 - *Andar alguien con la cabeza baja* ('to walk with the head down'): to look thoughtful or dreamy.

23 - *Andársele a alguien la cabeza* ('someone's head goes out'): someone is disturbed or weak and has the impression that everything he/she sees is moving around him/her.

24 - *Andar alguien de cabeza* ('to walk headfirst'): to have too much to do without knowing how to deal with it; to be too busy or to have too many worries.

25 - *Apostar alguien la cabeza* ('to bet the head'): 1) to affirm with conviction, to be sure of something; 2) to be in serious danger.

26 - *Arrojarse dos personas los trastos a la cabeza* ('two people throw things at each other's head'): synonym of PU 139.

27 - *Bajar alguien la cabeza* ('to bend down the head'): 1) to bend down the head (literal meaning); 2) to bow the head in a sign of respect; 3) to bend down the head due to shame or dishonour, to be embarrassed or humiliated; 4) to show obedience; 5) to listen to another person's warnings without complaining; 6) to accept or be patient when there is no other option.

28 - *Bullirle a alguien algo en la cabeza* ('something boils in someone's head'): to have a fixed but not well-defined idea in mind.

29 - *Calentarse alguien la cabeza* ('to warm up the head'): 1) to worry too much about something or to think about something intensely or for a long time; 2) to meditate on something.

30 - *Calentar alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('to warm up someone's head'): 1) to annoy, tire or worry somebody with heavy and insistent conversations; make someone think too much; 2) to make a person conceive misleading ideas; 3) to tell someone stories in order to make him/her angry at someone else; 4) to ask for something insistently and continuously.

31 - *Cargársele a alguien la cabeza* ('someone's head loads'): to feel heaviness and dullness in the head.

32 - *Comer alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('to eat someone's head'): to convince someone with certain ideas by taking advantage of his/her good faith or naivety; to harass someone.

33 - *Comerse alguien la cabeza* ('a person eats his/her own head'): synonym of PU 29 (meaning 1).

34 - *Conservar alguien la cabeza* ('to keep the head'): to be sane, lucid.

35 - *Darse alguien de cabeza contra las paredes* ('to bang the head against walls'): 1) to bang the head against the walls, out of desperation; 2) to rush into a business with damage; to use useless means to achieve a certain purpose; to become angry or desperate for having lost a great opportunity; 3) to make futile and desperate efforts.

36 - *Dar alguien en la cabeza a alguien* ('to hit someone on his/her head'): to intentionally do something contrary to what another person expects or desires.

37 - *Dar alguien un (buen) lavado de cabeza a alguien* ('to give someone a (good) head washing'): to scold or reprimand someone.

38 - *Dar alguien vueltas a la cabeza a algo* ('to turn the head around something'): to think intensely about something, usually in search of a solution.

39 - *Darle a alguien vueltas la cabeza* ('someone's head turns'): to feel dizzy, upset; to have a feeling of loss of balance.

40 - *Decir alguien todo lo que le pasa por la cabeza* ('to say everything passes through the head'): to lack moderation or prudence in what someone says.

41 - *Dejar alguien la cabeza como un bombo a alguien* ('to leave someone's head like a drum'): synonym of PU 30 (meaning 1).

42 - *Dejarse alguien cortar la cabeza por alguien* ('somebody leaves his/her head be cut off for someone'): to be at someone's complete disposal; to be able to do anything for someone.

43 - *Descomponerse a alguien la cabeza* ('someone's head is decomposing'): synonym of PU 95 (meaning 1).

44 - *Doblar alguien la cabeza* ('to bend the head'): 1) to die; 2) to comply, to obey; 3) synonym of PU 27 (meaning 6).

45 - *Echar alguien cabeza* ('to throw head'): synonym of PU 29 (meaning 1).

46 - *Echarse alguien de cabeza a un pozo* ('to dive headfirst into a well'): to act foolishly

47 - *Embotarse alguien la cabeza* ('someone blunts his/her head'): synonym of PU 95 (meanings 1 and 2).

48 - *Encajar alguien algo en la cabeza a alguien* ('to put on something on someone's head'): synonym of PU 79 (meaning 1).

49 - *Encasquetar alguien algo en la cabeza a alguien* ('to put on something on someone's head'): synonym of PU 79 (meaning 1).

50 - *Enderezar alguien la cabeza* ('to straighten the head'): synonym of PU 71.

51 - *Entrar alguien de cabeza en una cosa* ('to enter headfirst into one thing'): to get deeply involved in something.

52 - *Erguir alguien la cabeza* ('to straighten the head'): synonym of PU 71.

53 - *Escarmentar alguien en cabeza ajena* ('to learn from another's head'): learn from other people's mistakes.

54 - *Hacer alguien adobes con la cabeza* ('to make adobe bricks with the head'): synonym of PU 44 (meaning 1).

55 - *Meter alguien la cabeza debajo del ala* ('to put the head under the wing'): to disappear in the face of dangers; do not want to see reality or to face it.

56 - *Hacer alguien cabeza* ('to make head'): to be the principal in a business or a group of people, to be the one who holds the power, to head something.

57 - *Hacer alguien ir de cabeza a alguien* ('to make someone go headfirst / with the head'): synonym of 143 (meaning 1).

58 - *Hacer alguien levantar la cabeza a alguien* ('to make someone raise his/her head'): to heal someone.

59 - *Hacer alguien perder la cabeza a alguien* ('to make someone lose his/her head'): to make someone fall in love.

60 - *Hacerse alguien un bolo en la cabeza* ('someone makes a skittle in his/her head'): synonym of 95 (meanings 1 and 2).

61 - *Hincharle alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('to swell someone's head'): 1) to increase someone's anger; 2) to praise with exaggeration, to say nice things to please someone.

62 - *Ir alguien cabeza abajo* ('to go head down): to get ruined by degrees.

63 - *Ir alguien de cabeza por algo/alguien* ('to go headfirst / with the head for something/somebody'): 1) someone is very busy or desperate because he/she does not have enough time to get something done; 2) to want one thing very much; 3) to do everything possible to please or serve someone.

64 - *Ir alguien con la cabeza gacha* ('to go with the head down'): to feel ashamed.

65 - *Írsele a alguien algo de la cabeza* ('something goes out of someone's head'): to forget

66 - *Írsele a alguien la cabeza* ('someone's head goes away'): 1) to start suffering from dizziness; 2) to go mad.

67 - *Jugarse alguien la cabeza* ('someone stakes his/her own head'): synonym of PU 25.

68 - *Lanzarse alguien de cabeza en algo* ('to pounce headfirst on something'): to do something without thinking about it.

69 - *Levantar alguien cabeza* ('to raise head'): 1) to finally get out of poverty or a bad situation; 2) to recover from illness, to regain strength or energy; 3) in conditional sentences it is used to express the astonishment caused in a deceased person by things in the present.

70 - *Levantar alguien algo de su cabeza* ('someone raises something from his/her own head'): to pretend or invent something.

71 - *Levantar alguien la cabeza* ('to raise the head'): 1) to raise the head upright (literal meaning); 2) to adopt the attitude of someone who is not humiliated or who considers that he/she has nothing to be ashamed of; 3) to come back to life.

72 - *Llevar alguien la cabeza alta* ('to hold the head up'): to feel proud, to show satisfaction

73 - *Liarse alguien la manta a la cabeza* ('someone wraps the blanket on his/her own head'): 1) to decide to act after much hesitation; to make a hasty decision or to act thoughtlessly; 2) to make a decision without thinking about the consequences.

74 - *Llenar alguien la cabeza de aire a alguien* ('to fill someone's head with air'): synonym of PU 30 (meaning 2).

75 - *Llenar alguien la cabeza de pájaros a alguien* ('to fill someone's head with birds'): synonym of PU 30 (meaning 2).

76 - *Llevar a alguien algo de cabeza* ('someone brings somebody something on his/her own head'): synonym of 143 (meaning 1).

77 - *Llevar alguien algo en la cabeza* ('to carry something on the head'): to receive damage instead of what was expected.

78 - *Metérsele a alguien algo en la cabeza* ('something gets into someone's head'): to figure something out with little or no basis and stubbornly believe it to be true or possible.

79 - *Meter alguien algo en la cabeza a alguien* ('to put something in someone's head'): 1) to convince someone of something; to make someone understand something, overcoming with work his/her ineptitude; 2) to make something become a fixed idea or an obsessive aspiration

80 - *Meter alguien la cabeza debajo del ala* (repeated in PU 55 and therefore not included in the analysis).

81 - *Meter alguien la cabeza en un puchero* ('to put the head in a pot'): expression employed when someone maintains his/her opinion with tenacity and stubbornness although he/she has made a notorious mistake.

82 - *Meterse alguien de cabeza en algo* ('to get headfirst into something'): to do something without thinking about it.

83 - *No caberle a alguien algo en la cabeza* ('something does not fit in someone's head'): to be unable to conceive or understand something.

84 - *No entrarle a alguien algo en la cabeza* ('something does not get into someone's head'): synonym of PU 83.

85 - *No levantar alguien cabeza* ('someone does not raise head'): 1) to be unable to get out of a difficult or bad situation; 2) to be unable to recover from illness; 3) to be very busy, especially in reading and writing.

86 - *No levantar alguien la cabeza de alguna ocupación* ('someone does not raise his/her head from an occupation'): to be engrossed in doing something.

87 - *No tener alguien (mucha) cabeza* ('someone does not have (much) head'): not to have much intelligence, not to be very judicious.

88 - *No tener alguien donde volver la cabeza* ('someone has no place to turn his/her head to'): to be abandoned, helpless.

89 - *No tener alguien la cabeza bien sentada* ('someone does not have the head well seated'): to be thoughtless.

90 - *No tener alguien más que una idea en la cabeza* ('someone does not have more than an idea in the head'): synonym of PU 138.

91 - *Olerle a alguien la cabeza a pólvora* ('someone's head smells like gunpowder'): to be in danger of violent death.

92 - *Pagar alguien con su cabeza* ('someone pays with his/her own head'): to pay with one's own life; to cost a lot of money.

93 - *Partirse alguien la cabeza* ('someone break his/her own head'): synonym of PU 29 (meaning 1).

94 - *Pasársele a alguien algo por la cabeza* ('something goes through someone's head'): to get an idea.

95 - *Perder alguien la cabeza* ('someone loses his/her own head'): 1) to lose serenity and control due to an attack of fear, anger, passion, etc.; 2) to go mad, to act unthinkingly; 3) to faint or lose consciousness; 4) to be blindly in love with someone.

96 - *Poner alguien a precio la cabeza de alguien* ('to put a price on someone's head'): to promise a sum of money to capture or kill someone.

97 - *Poner alguien la pistola en la cabeza de alguien* ('to put a gun to someone's head'): to force someone to do something without giving them any other choice.

98 - *Poner alguien sobre su cabeza a alguien* ('someone puts somebody on his/her own head'): to consider it admirable.

99 - *Ponerse alguien algo en la cabeza* ('someone puts something in his/her own head'): synonym of PU 78.

100 - *Poner alguien la cabeza como un bombo a alguien* ('to make someone's head be like a drum'): to become heavy-headed or dazed.

101 - *Quebrantar alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('to break someone's head'): 1) to humble someone's pride, to subdue someone; 2) synonym of PU 30 (meaning 1).

102 - *Quebrarse alguien la cabeza* ('someone breaks his/her own head'): synonym of PU 29 (meaning 1).

103 - *Quitar alguien algo de la cabeza a alguien* ('to take something out of someone's mind'): to make someone stop thinking something.

104 - *Quitarse alguien algo de la cabeza* ('someone takes something out of his/her own mind'): to stop being obstinate about a thing; to erase a thing from thought.

105 - *Rascarse alguien la cabeza* ('someone scratches his/her own head'): to express hesitation, doubt.

106 - *Romper alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('to break someone's head'): 1) to hurt someone's head; 2) to tire someone with stupid speeches.

107 - *Romperse alguien la cabeza* ('someone breaks his/her own head'): synonym of PU 29 (meaning 1).

108 - *Sacarle alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('someone takes the head out to somebody'): expression employed when a person is noticeably taller than another person.

109 - *Sacar alguien la cabeza* ('to take the head out'): 1) to show up; 2) expression employed when a shy person begins to dare to speak or do something.

110 - *Sentar alguien la cabeza* ('to sit the head'): expression employed when someone who was turbulent and disorderly becomes judicious.

111 - *Subírsele a alguien algo a la cabeza* ('something goes up to someone's head'): 1) to get dizzy from drinking, to get drunk; 2) to become too conceited and lose the usual serenity.

112 - *Subírsele a alguien la sangre a la cabeza* ('the blood goes up to someone's head'): to get angry, irritated.

113 - *Subírsele a alguien los humos a la cabeza* ('the smokes go up to someone's head'): to be very angry.

114 - *Tener alguien la cabeza de chorlito* ('to have the head of a plover'): synonym of PU 117 (meaning 2).

115 - *Tener alguien la cabeza (muy) metida en los hombros* ('to have the head (very) deep in the shoulders'): to get angry about something.

116 - *Tener alguien la cabeza a las once* ('to have the head at eleven'): synonym of PU 117.

117 - *Tener alguien la cabeza a pájaros* ('to have the head to birds'): 1) to be a dazed person or a person with poor judgement; 2) to be an unresponsible person or to be distracted; 3) to be a frivolous person.

118 - *Tener alguien la cabeza llena de serrín* ('to have the head full of sawdust'): to be stupid.

119 - *Tener la cabeza bien amueblada* ('to have a well-furnished head) ': synonym of PU 131.

120 - *Tener alguien la cabeza al revés* ('to have the head upside down'): to be disorientated.

121 - *Tener alguien la cabeza como un bombo* ('to have the head like a drum'): 1) to be dazed by intellectual overwork; 2) to be bald.

122 - *Tener alguien la cabeza como un colador* ('to have the head like a strainer'): to forget easily.

123 - *Tener alguien la cabeza como una bola de billar* ('to have the head like a billiard ball'): to be bald.

124 - *Tener alguien la cabeza como una olla de grillos* ('to have the head like a pot of crickets'): to be dazed.

125 - *Tener alguien la cabeza cuadrada* ('to have a square head'): to be very stubborn; to have an inflexible mentality.

126 - *Tener alguien la cabeza llena de aire* ('to have the head full of air'): synonym of PU 118.

127 - *Tener alguien la cabeza en la luna* (t'o have the head in the moon'): to be distracted.

128 - *Tener alguien la cabeza dura* ('to have a hard head'): 1) to be a clumsy person; 2) to be stubborn.

129 - *Tener alguien la cabeza en otra parte* ('to have the head elsewhere'): to be distracted, to be inactive, to dream.

130 - *Tener alguien la cabeza hueca* ('to have an empty head'): to be a thoughtless, weak and unstable person; to be unintelligent, clumsy.

131 - *Tener alguien la cabeza sobre los hombros* ('to have the head on the shoulders'): to be a very judicious and responsible person.

132 - *Tener alguien la cabeza en su sitio* ('to have the head in the right place'): synonym of PU 131.

133 - *Tener alguien la cabeza trastornada* ('to have the head in a mess'): to be disorientated.

134 - *Tener alguien (muy) mala cabeza* ('to have a (very) bad head'): 1) to be forgetful; 2) to act without considering the consequences.

135 - *Tener alguien poca sal en la cabeza* ('to have little salt in the head'): synonym of PU 118.

136 - *Tener alguien mucha cabeza* ('to have a lot of head'): synonym of PU 131.

137 - *Tener alguien poca cabeza* ('to have little head'): to have no judgement.

138 - *Tener alguien una idea en la cabeza* ('to have an idea in the head'): 1) to be stubborn; 2) to have a thought and avoid making it known.

139 - *Tirarse dos personas los trastos a la cabeza* ('two people throw things at each other's head'): to argue or fight.

140 - *Tirarse alguien de cabeza al agua* ('to dive headfirst into the water'): to dive headfirst into the water (literal meaning).

141 - *Torcer alguien la cabeza* ('to twist the head'): 1) to get a disease; 2) to die.

142 - *Tornar alguien cabeza a algo o alguien* ('someone returns his/her head to something or somebody'): to pay attention to someone or something.

143 - *Traer a alguien algo de cabeza* ('someone brings somebody something on his/her own head'): 1) to give someone a lot of work or worries; 2) to exasperate someone, to contradict him/her or to make him/her angry; 3) synonym of PU 59.

144 - *Traer alguien algo o alguien sobre su cabeza* ('to carry something or somebody on the head'): to think very highly of someone or something.

145 - *Venirle a alguien algo a la cabeza* ('something comes into someone's head'): to come to mind.

146 - *Volver alguien la cabeza a alguien* ('someone turns his/her head to somebody'): 1) to refuse to greet someone; 2) to refuse to help someone at a difficult time.

147 - *Volvérsele a alguien la cabeza* ('someone's head goes back to him/her'): synonym of PU 95 (meaning 2).

The expressions listed above are now classified according to the underlying conceptualisation. The information offered for each typology only includes the number under which the PU appears in Baran Á Nkoum's list (2018) and, in the presence of polysemous PUs, the number of the meaning selected for that typology (or the meaning explained if it does not have a corresponding number in the original set) in brackets.

(i) Metaphorical PUs (30 expressions):
21 (1), 24, 25 (1, 2), 35 (2 [meaning: to rush into a business with damage], 3), 36, 37, 38, 42, 46, 51, 54, 55, 56, 62, 63 (1, 2, 3), 67, 68, 73 (1, 2), 76, 77, 81, 82, 85 (1), 86 (1), 97, 98, 101 (1), 109 (2), 143 (1, 2, 3), 144.

(ii) Metaphorical PUs with literal elements (6 expressions):
17, 92 [meaning: to cost a lot of money] 106, 108, 121 (2), 123.

(iii) Metonymic PUs (22 expressions):
19 (2, 3, 4, 5), 20 (3), 22, 27 (2, 3, 4, 5), 29 (1, 2), 35 (1, 2 [meaning: to become angry]), 44 (1, 2), 50 (3), 52 (3), 64, 69 (3), 71 (3), 72, 90 (1), 105, 109 (1), 111 (1), 112, 115, 138 (1), 141 (2), 146 (1).

(iv) Metonymic PUs with literal elements (10 expressions):
18, 53, 87, 95 (1, 2), 96, 133, 134 (1, 2), 136, 137, 138 (2).

(v) *Metaphthonymic* PUs (21 expressions):
19 (6), 20 (1, 2), 21 (2), 26, 27 (6), 28, 44 (3), 50 (2), 52 (2), 58, 69 (1, 2), 71 (2), 85 (2, 3), 86, 88, 91, 113, 139, 141 (1), 142, 146 (2).

(vi) Metaphorical PUs with metonymic elements (62 expressions):
23, 30 (1, 2, 3, 4), 31, 32, 33 (1), 34, 39, 40, 41 (1), 43 (2), 45 (1), 47 (1, 2), 48 (1), 49 (1), 59, 57 (1), 60 (1, 2), 61 (1, 2), 65, 66 (1, 2), 70, 74 (2), 75 (2), 78 (1, 2), 79 (1, 2), 83, 84, 89, 92 [meaning: to pay with one's own life], 93 (1), 94, 95 (3, 4), 99, 100, 101 (2), 102 (1), 103, 104, 106 (2), 107 (1), 110, 111 (2), 114 (2), 116, 117 (1, 2, 3), 118, 119, 120, 121 (1), 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128 (1, 2), 129, 130, 131, 132, 135, 145, 147 (2).

(vii) Metonymic PUs with metaphorical elements:
no expressions have been found.

(viii) *Metaphthonymic* PUs with literal elements:
no expressions have been found.

3.3 Results

As the presented classification shows, the most common conceptualisations are metaphorical with metonymic elements (62 PUs), followed by fully metaphorical PUs (30) and by *metaphthonymic* (21) and metonymic (22) PUs. A smaller portion of PUs includes metonymic expressions with literal elements (10) and metaphoric expressions with literal elements (6). The possibility of finding metonymic PUs with metaphorical elements and *metaphthonymic* PUs with literal elements has not been confirmed in this analysis (which does not necessarily

imply the non-existence of these two typologies, since, in the methodological section, two examples not included in this study have been provided). These numbers suggest a general tendency to activate conceptualisation mechanisms in the mind based on the substitution of domains that do not have real and logical relationships with each other. The fact that most of the metaphorical PUs present metonymic elements is probably a feature of the group of expressions examined based on the noun *cabeza*: as dictionaries show, this not only represents the upper part of the body, but can also metonymically refer to the brain (with a container-contents association) and consequently designate the function of this organ, which is responsible for the intellectual faculties of human beings.

4. Conclusions

The conclusions derived from the analysis concern two essential aspects: the possibility and forms of interaction between metaphorical and metonymical conceptualisations and the incidence of these different forms of interaction in Spanish verbal PUs based on the noun *cabeza* and compiled by Baran à Nkoum (2018). On the one hand, it has been observed that the interaction between metaphorical and metonymical mental associations constitutes a set with two extremes (total metaphoricity and total metonymicity) that move towards each other and meet in a central stage in the form of *metaphthonymies*. A parallel axis represents the literal dimension and shows the alternation of components within a PU that require literal interpretation and absence of literally interpretable elements. Literalness also presents intermediate degrees. This idea could be illustrated as follows:

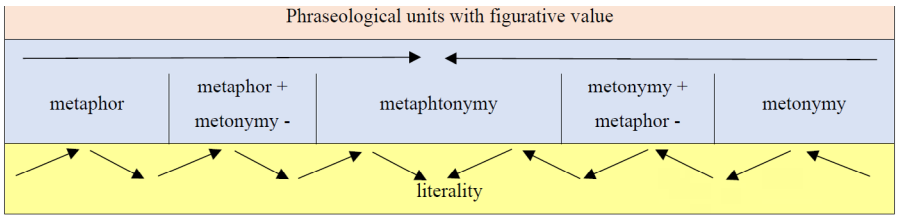


Fig. 1. Possible manifestation of metaphoricity, metonymicity and literalness in figurative PU

This image shows that PUs can be completely metaphorical on the one hand and completely metonymic on the other hand and that, between these two extremes, there is a level of predominance of metaphoricity or metonymicity until obtaining an analogous weight of these two within a PU. At the same time,

literalness is an independent value which can be present (or perceived) together with the figurative character of an expression or not. The numbers indicated in the results of the analysis show a general tendency to activate in the mind conceptualisation mechanisms based on the substitution of domains that do not have logical and real connections with each other. The relevance of metaphorical PUs with metonymic elements could be a specific feature of the group of expressions examined, as *cabeza* is commonly used as synonym of brain and referred to intellectual faculties.

The illustration presented could be considered valid even in a more general perspective, since it potentially reflects the nature of any other PU. It could therefore be used as a basis for further analyses of metaphoricity, metonymicity and literalness in the field of phraseology. Finally, this study could serve as a reference for research in other fields, such as contrastive linguistics or translation.

References

Baran À Nkoum, Patricia. 2018. La cabeza en las locuciones verbales españolas. Locuciones somáticas y correspondencias francesas. Centro Virtual Cervantes.

Black, Max. 1955 "Metaphor". Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 55(1): 273–294. https://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/55.1.273

Black, Max. 1962. Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501741326

Castillo Carballo, and María Auxiliadora. 1997-1998. "El concepto de unidad fraseológica". Revista de Lexicografía 4: 67–79. https://doi.org/10.17979/rlex.1998.4.0.5652

Cataldo, Silvia. 2022. "Lenguajes metafóricos en el texto literario. Tipologías de usos figurados, jerarquías y concatenaciones de conceptualizaciones. Ejemplos de La palabra más hermosa de Margaret Mazzantini". In Desarrollos teóricos y aplicaciones en la lingüística actual, edited by Adrià Pardo Llibrer *et al.*, 29–40. Valencia: Universitat de València.

Corpas Pastor, Gloria. 1996. Manual de fraseología española. Madrid: Gredos.

Corpas Pastor, Gloria. 2001. "Corrientes actuales de la investigación fraseológica en Europa". Euskera 46(1): 21–49.

Deignan, Alice, and Liz Potter. 2004. "A corpus study of metaphors and metonyms in English and Italian". Journal of Pragmatics 36(7): 1231–1252. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2003.10.010

González, Daniela Soledad. 2023. "Metáforas y metonimias de la pandemia de COVID-19 y la cuarentena". Semas 2(3): 89–112.

Goossens, Louis. 1990. "Metaphtonymy: The Interaction of Metaphor and Metonymy in Expressions for Linguistic Action". Cognitive Linguistics 1(3): 323–342. https://doi.org/10.1515/cogl.1990.1.3.323

Kövecses, Zoltan. 1986. Metaphors of Anger, Pride and Love - A lexical approach to the structure of concepts. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/pb.vii.8

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. Metaphors we live by. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, George. 1993. "The contemporary theory of metaphor". In Metaphor and thought, edited by Andrew Ortony, 202–251. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173865.013

Mogorrón Huerta, Pedro, and Adelina Gómez González-Jover. 2024. "Variación(es), enseñanza y traducción: investigación(es) en fraseología". Onomázein 14: 1–6.

Richards, Ivor Armstrong. 1936. The Philosophy of Rhetoric. London: Oxford University Press.

Metaphors of Genitive Prepositions in Idioms of the Bosnian Language

Azra Hodžić-Čavkić
University of Sarajevo
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7617-6358

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c766

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the semantic role of prepositions in idiomatic constructions, with a particular emphasis on genitive prepositions in the Bosnian language. When embedded in idioms, prepositions activate their full metaphorical potential, often shaping or intensifying the figurative meaning. Genitive prepositions—especially *od* ('from'/'of')—are among the most semantically diverse in Bosnian, typically conceptualized as expressing *detachment from a source*. Despite their variety, these prepositions share a common conceptual base rooted in spatial separation. The study examines how idioms formed with genitive prepositions generate abstract meanings through conceptual metaphors. Examples include: *odvajati od usta* ('to separate from the mouth') as *ablocation* – 'to save'; *ne biti od jučer* ('to not be from yesterday') as *abtemporal* – 'to be experienced'; *topiti se od miline* ('to melt from delight') as *abcausative* – 'to feel joy'; and *od sveg srca* ('from the bottom of one's heart') as *abmodal* – 'wholeheartedly'. In each case, the genitive noun is defocused and functions as a reference point rather than a spatial anchor. These idioms are metaphorically structured via the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT IS CONCRETE, allowing abstract experiences to be mapped onto spatial schemas, thereby reinforcing the figurative power of language.

Keywords: idioms; ablocation; abtemporal; abcausative; abmodal.

1. Introduction

Complex idiomatic units involve the integration of at least two predications. This integration does not result in a mere additive combination of individual meanings, but instead gives rise to a novel, composite semantic structure, cognitively encoded within a distinct conceptual profile. This emergent structure may be understood as a type of *trajectory*, as it is characterized by prominent features of conceptual dynamism and movement.

When a preposition participates as one of the elements contributing to the development of idiomatic meaning, it introduces an entire network of meanings—both invariant and contextually variant. In the case of the genitive case

and its associated prepositions, their frequency of usage appears to correlate with their semantic richness and complexity.

Nonetheless, the organization of language—and the genitive case within it—suggests a consistent pattern in which invariant meanings can be inferred from their variant realizations. Among genitive prepositions, the preposition *od* stands out as semantically central and particularly versatile. Its core conceptual schema is based on the notion of *separation*, allowing it to encode a range of spatial, temporal, and abstract meanings within idiomatic expressions.

2. The Genitive Case in Bosnian: Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Forms

The challenges associated with analyzing the meaning of the (prepositional) genitive stem from multiple factors. As Feleško (1995, 16) observes, "in various contextual variants, it can express an unusually wide array of meanings between which it is often difficult to establish a distinct boundary". This semantic fluidity complicates attempts at consistent categorization.

Palić (2016, 17) argues that the core meaning of the genitive case should be sought in its non-prepositional usage. He emphasizes the necessity of conceptualizing both variant and invariant uses of the genitive in terms of its *ablative function*, which is unique to this case in the Bosnian language and constitutes one of its defining features.

Among the genitive prepositions, *od* ('of'/'from') holds a central position. Its meaning closely corresponds to that of the genitive case itself (Palić, 2016, 20), as it encodes the notions of *movement away* and *separation* (see Figure 1). Notably, the conceptual *origin* signaled by this preposition does not necessarily represent a physical or spatial point; rather, its interpretation is metaphorically grounded. According to the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT IS CONCRETE, such spatial schemas serve as the foundation for understanding abstract relations, enabling metaphorical extensions beyond the literal domain of space.

Fig. 1. Basic meaning of genitiveablative in the Bosnian language

3. Genitive prepositions in idioms

Genitive prepositions occur with notable frequency and appear to be the most numerous among prepositional idioms in the Bosnian language. According to Palić (2016), the genitive case is associated with as many as five hundred prepositions, which supports the expectation that the genitive maintains a prominent position within idiomatic constructions as well.

Idioms incorporating genitive prepositions exhibit the highest degree of semantic branching within the network of idiomatic meaning. The examples extracted from our corpus enumerate a variety of genitive prepositions alongside their corresponding meanings. These meanings are grounded in a localist-oriented theoretical framework, which posits that all so-called non-dimensional (i.e., abstract) meanings are derived from basic dimensional (i.e., spatial) ones.

It is also conceptually suggestive that the inherent structure of idioms parallels the semantic structure of the genitive case and its central meaning. Idioms are composed of lexical units that semantically diverge from their literal referents—mirroring the genitive's core conceptual schema of *separation* or *movement away* from a source.

4. Corpus

Given the underdeveloped state of corpus linguistics within Bosnian linguistics (Bosnistics), and the limited availability of comprehensive corpora—such as the OSLO and bsWaC corpora, along with the SMS corpus of the Bosnian language—we were compelled to manually compile a custom corpus for the purposes of this study.

The following literary works were selected as representative sources for extracting idiomatic expressions containing genitive prepositions:

EUKB: Kukavica, Edin Urjan. *Beš*. Sarajevo: Autor, 2013.

ZKS: Ključanin, Zilhad. *Spas*. Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2012.

IHS: Horozović, Irfan. *Sokolarov sonet*. Sarajevo: Stav, 2016.

Despite the relatively small size of the compiled corpus, we posit that the findings presented in this paper reflect broader patterns in the conceptual organization of genitive prepositional idioms in Bosnian—patterns that, due to limitations of scope, are not fully addressed in this study. The observed tendencies are assumed to be consistent with the use of genitive prepositions in other idiomatic expressions as well.

5. Discussion

Our analysis has identified eighteen prepositions that govern the genitive case in Bosnian idiomatic constructions. These prepositions include: *od*, *do*, *preko*, *van*, *iz*, *s(a)*, *iza*, *poput*, *ispod*, *na kraj*, *oko*, *kod*, *pored*, *u*, *bez*, *umjesto*, *između*, and *za* (Eng. *from*, *to*, *over*, *out*, *from*, *with*, *behind*, *like*, *under*, *at the end of*, *around*, *at*, *beside*, *in*, *without*, *instead of*, *between*, *for*).[1]

In this section, we focus on the preposition *od* (Eng. *of*) and examine a selection of its semantic realizations. The preposition *od* most frequently appears in its prototypical, spatially motivated sense—denoting the movement of a trajector away from a landmark. While its core meaning is grounded in spatial separation, this ablative function is conceptually extended to encompass a wide spectrum of metaphorical meanings.

Idiomatic expressions reveal the difficulty of delimiting the full semantic potential of the genitive preposition *od*. Certain idioms appear to diverge significantly from the original spatial schema—such as *od sveg srca* (lit. Eng. *with all one's heart*)—yet still conform to the broader conceptual framework of genitive-ablative semantics. These expressions continue to instantiate the underlying cognitive schema of *separation from a source*, albeit in abstract domains such as emotion or modality. Our corpus analysis has yielded multiple distinct semantic roles expressed by the preposition *od*, which will be systematically presented in the following section.[2]

5.1 Ablocation[3]

The idiom *odvojiti od usta* (EUKB, 74) [lit. Eng. *to separate from the mouth*], which conveys the meaning 'to save up excessively, to put something aside with great effort'[4] (Matešić, 1982, 725), exemplifies the conceptual category of *ablocation*, i.e., the act of separating something from a source. This construction represents a scenario of separation that is metaphorically framed as a physical displacement of an *unspoken trajectory*. The trajectory itself is not overtly expressed, but it is cognitively grounded in the genitive landmark *usta* ('mouth'), which metonymically signifies sustenance and, by extension, existence.[5]

1 It should be noted that some of these prepositions do not govern the genitive case in other languages, highlighting language-specific patterns of case-preposition alignment.

2 The list of identified meanings remains far from exhaustive, indicating the need for further investigation into the semantic potential of genitive prepositions within idiomatic constructions.

3 The term *ablocation* constitutes a neological blend of the terms *ablative* and *location*, reflecting its conceptual grounding in spatial separation from a source.

4 It is most commonly employed in contexts that involve expressions of empathy or emotional identification.

5 This conclusion is derived from the lexical semantics of the noun *mouth*, which, through metonymic projection, represents the act of eating—an activity that is conceptually associated with the maintenance of life and, by extension, existence.

The conceptual trajectory is tightly anchored to the landmark *mouth*, evoking the basic life function of eating as a prerequisite for survival. The act of refraining from eating—*removing from the mouth*—is thus reinterpreted as symbolic of financial restraint. Through this imagery, the idiom constructs a mental model in which saving emerges from self-denial and deprivation. The idiom thus activates both metaphorical and metonymic processes, forming a composite conceptual mechanism that Goossens (2003) terms *metaphtonymy*—a blend of metaphor and metonymy operating simultaneously.

In the given example, the *schematic concept of separation* is clearly manifested, as it encompasses both the notion of spatial distancing from the genitive landmark (i.e., the noun in the genitive case) and the dynamic component introduced by the verb of motion *to separate*. The distancing is thus not only implied conceptually, but also explicitly reinforced lexically. In *Figure 2*, the genitive landmark is represented with dashed lines to illustrate the possibility that the act of separation may entail a transformation or alteration of the landmark itself.[6]

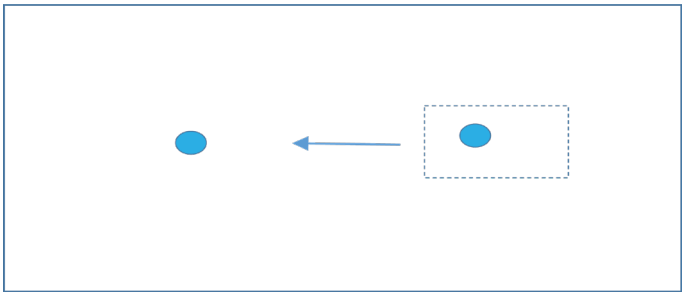


Fig. 2. Profile of the idiom *odvojiti od usta*

As the action of separation continues over time, the quantity of separated items increases. This accumulation is cognitively processed through the conceptual metaphor TIME IS SPACE, which is made possible by the prototypical and highly generalized character of the spatial domain as a source domain in conceptual structuring. Lexically, this interpretation is supported by the use of the progressive aspect of the verb *odvajati* ('to be separating'), which is visually represented by a black temporal trajectory arrow in Figure 3.

Within this conceptual framework, the spatial distribution of the separated items varies: some are positioned farther from the landmark, others remain closer to it, some maintain direct contact, while others are even conceptualized

6 The mental image of reduced food intake is readily accessible and conceptually salient, serving as a concrete basis for the abstraction of frugality and self-restraint.

as being located *within* the landmark itself. These variations illustrate the flexible spatial-semantic structuring enabled by the genitive-ablative construction.[7]

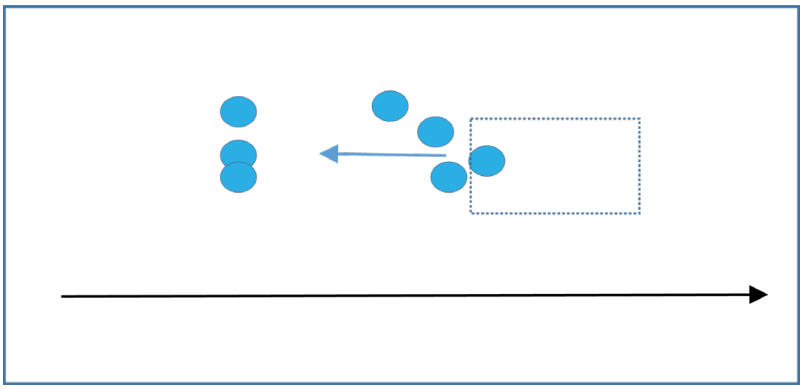


Fig. 3. Profile of the idiom *odvajati od usta*

It becomes evident that the only stable element within this idiomatic structure is the position and meaning of the preposition *od*. It consistently retains its core function, even outside idiomatic contexts, thereby representing the central and prototypical expression of the genitive-ablative relation in the Bosnian language.

5.2 Abtempora[8]

In the idiom *ne biti od jučer* (ZKS, 133) [lit. Eng. *to not be from yesterday*], which conveys the meaning 'to be experienced' (Matešić, 1982, 24), *time* as a conceptual domain is prototypically construed through spatial mapping. The *trajectory*—metaphorically representing the subject's experiential development—is separated from the *landmark yesterday*, which functions as a temporal anchor associated with naïveté or inexperience. This separation reflects the metaphor UNDESIRABLE IS LESS, wherein the notion of *yesterday* is culturally encoded with negative connotations.

A *linear conceptualization of time* plays a crucial role in enabling the metaphor TIME IS AN OBJECT THAT MOVES. Through conceptual integration with the metaphor DESIRABLE IS MORE (TIME), the idiom expresses the idea of accumulated experience: the trajectory moves away from a fixed, conventional

7 This conceptualization is closely linked to strategies of financial management, wherein the act of withholding or saving is framed as a deliberate, structured process of resource allocation over time.

8 The term *abtemporal* is a neological blend of the elements *ablative* and *temporal*, denoting a conceptual category grounded in the metaphorical separation from a specific temporal reference point.

temporal reference point—*yesterday*—which is metaphorically reinterpreted as a site of cognitive immaturity or lack of insight.

This interpretation is further reinforced by the use of the negated copulative verb *ne biti* ('not to be'), which syntactically distances the subject from the referent. Although the lexeme *yesterday* denotes a conventional time point on the timeline, its metaphorical function in the idiom is decoupled from the *deictic center*[9] (i.e., speaker-oriented reference) and instead aligned with a *cultural center*,[10] where *yesterday* symbolically encodes outdatedness or inferiority in knowledge.

In Figure 4, the idiomatic meaning is visually rendered through the interaction of conceptual elements: the *landmark yesterday* is shown as a fixed point on the timeline (solid line),[11] while the preposition *od* ('from') functions as a metaphor of *separation* or *departure* from that temporal anchor. The trajectory itself—representing the subject's experience—is positioned beyond this point, outside the idiom's literal profile, and is supported by the syntactic presence of the copulative verb,[12] symbolized as a bidirectional arrow with strong lines, indicating its structural and interpretative significance.

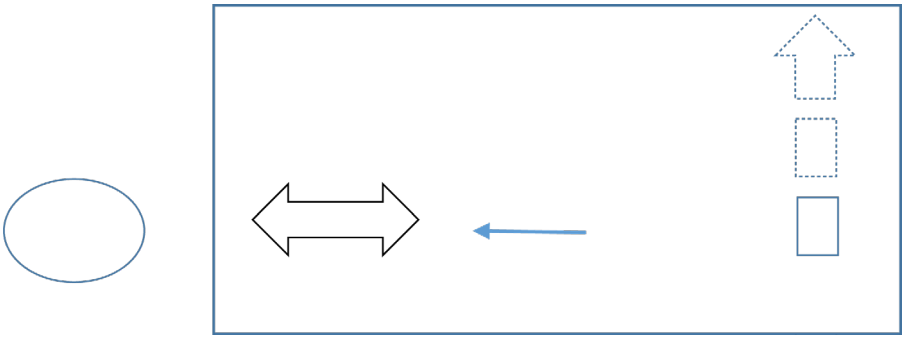


Fig. 4. Profile of the idiom *ne biti od jučer*

9 If interpreted literally, it would yield a referential meaning equivalent to "the day before today."

10 This is not unexpected, as idioms often function as *axiological markers* within a given culture. They reflect and reinforce cultural self-perceptions—particularly the tendency of societies to view themselves as historically continuous, venerable, and rooted in antiquity.

11 Other temporal reference points remain in the background as *potential anchors*, conceptually available but not activated within the idiomatic construction.

12 The copulative verb *to be* functions as an equative verb, establishing a semantic correspondence between the subject and the trajectory. In its negated form, as in the idiom *ne biti od jučer*, it plays a crucial role in constructing the idiomatic meaning by explicitly denying the identification of the subject with the temporal landmark *yesterday*, thereby reinforcing the notion of experiential distance.

5.3 Abcausative[13]

The idiom *topiti se od miline* (EUKB, 297) [lit. Eng. *to melt out of pleasure*], meaning 'to feel great joy' (Matešić, 1982, 338), exemplifies the *abcausative* construction—where the trajectory is metaphorically construed as moving away from the landmark *milina* ('pleasure'), thereby signaling the initiation of a process. This construction corresponds to a cause-and-effect schema, in which the *starting point is equated with the cause from which the consequence arises*, just as physical movement and its result originate from a spatial source (Palić, 2016, 65).[14]

In this sense, the *causal origin* (i.e., *pleasure*) is conceptually compatible with the original ablative schema of separation. The nature of causation here is grounded in a *linear model of event progression*, where the passage of time is understood metaphorically as movement through space—a projection enabled by the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT.

In Figure 5, the abcausative structure is visually represented by several symbolic elements: the leftward-pointing arrow denotes the abcausative function; the landmark is shown as filled with the causal force (*milina*); and an upward-pointing thick black arrow illustrates the *intensity scale*, indicating that the landmark possesses sufficient affective force to generate a result. This result is lexically expressed by the verb *to melt*,[15] which, in the figure, is represented by the conventional black rightward-pointing arrow denoting *temporal predication*.

The *trajector*, as the experiencer of the process, is conceptually affected by the landmark—*pleasure*—which is understood not merely as a state but as an active, potent source of transformation. Through the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT IS CONCRETE, the abstract emotional state (*milina*) is reified and assigned *metonymic force*, functioning as the proximate cause of a psychosomatic reaction. Thus, the idiom fuses metaphorical and metonymic mechanisms to encode experiential and affective nuance.

---

13 The term *abcausative* is a neological blend of the terms *ablative* and *causative*, denoting a conceptual configuration in which the source functions simultaneously as the point of origin and the cause of a resulting process or state.

14 "[P]ri čemu se polazište izjednačuje s uzrokom iz kojeg proizlazi posljedica kao što iz polazišta proizlazi kretanje i njegov rezultat" (Palić, 2016: 65).

15 "The target concept can then be structured according to the structure of the source concept, so that the source can influence the lexicalized meaning" (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2010, 74). The action of *melting* is inherently vivid and image-rich, providing a highly salient visual metaphor for affective dissolution or emotional intensity.

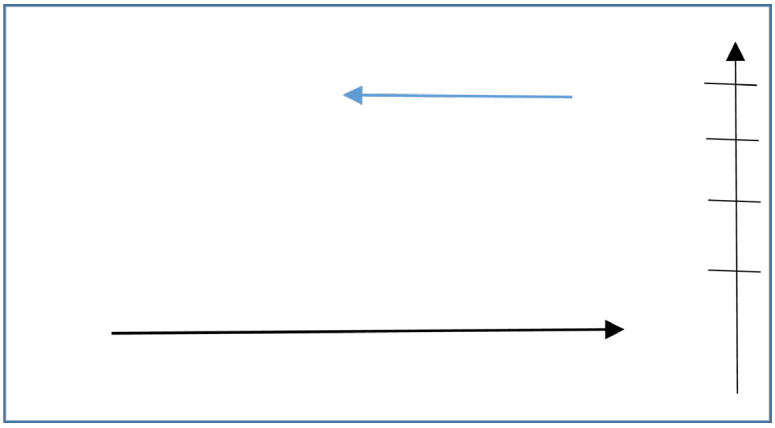


Fig. 5. Profile of the idiom *topiti se od miline*

5.4 Abmodal[16]

The idiom *od [sveg] srca* (IHS, 65) [lit. Eng. *from the bottom of the heart*], meaning 'gladly' or 'wholeheartedly' (Matešić, 1982, 632), exemplifies the *abmodal* construction—where the *mode* of performing an action is metaphorically grounded in spatial structure. This "metaphor of way" (Palić, 2007) implies that the action is executed in a single, unambiguous manner, thereby excluding alternative modes of realization. It establishes a direct link between *manner* and *spatial configuration*, reflecting how perception and modality are often conceptualized through spatial categories.

In this idiom, the *heart* functions as a *prototypical source of benevolence*, cognitively construed as a space filled with positive content. Its metaphorical status as a *container of emotional energy* allows for the interpretation of that energy as radiating outward—akin to a wave—toward the trajector, thus affecting the action itself.

The idiomatic meaning is therefore shaped by the *positive axiological connotation* of the heart as a cultural symbol of sincerity and goodwill. Through the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT IS CONCRETE, emotional intent is spatially represented and projected as an active force, capable of influencing the modality of the event structure. The heart, as the landmark, is not merely symbolic but spatially and causally functional within the idiom's semantic architecture.

16 The term *abmodal* is a neological blend of the elements *ablative* and *modal*, denoting a conceptual structure in which the manner of an action is metaphorically construed as emerging from a source. For further discussion of the concept of *ablocation*, cf. Belaj and Tanacković Faletar (2014); Pranjković (2001).

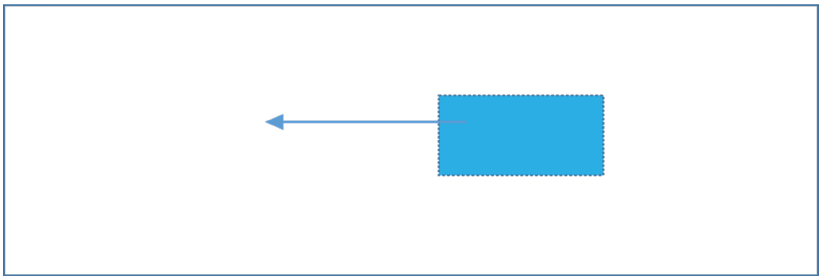


Fig.6. Profile of the idiom *od [sveg] srca*

6. Concluding Remarks

The connection between members of the same semantic category is organized through a *chain of meaning*, a conceptual mechanism that links various realizations of a central schema. The idiomatic data analyzed in this study demonstrate that *space functions as the underlying conceptual domain* behind all genitive-ablative meanings in the examined idioms of the Bosnian language. This is made possible by the status of *space* as a *supracategory*—not only in these idioms but across broader semantic systems—that systematically enables the metaphorical projection of movement from a source.

The findings underscore that a preposition always operates as part of a construction endowed with its own predicational structure. In many cases, the preposition—particularly those governing the genitive case—activates a rich network of spatially motivated meanings, which in turn facilitate the emergence of *conceptual mechanisms*, such as metaphor and metonymy.

Idioms formed with *prepositional genitive constructions* express a wide range of metaphorical meanings, including but not limited to *ablocation*, *abtemporal*, *abcausative*, and *abmodal. These meanings are conceptually grounded in space as a primary cognitive* category. The noun in the genitive case is consistently defocused, functioning as a *reference point* (Palić, 2016, 21)—sometimes even as a *cultural reference point*—rather than as a concrete spatial entity. This abstraction is licensed by the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT IS CONCRETE, which allows for the reification of non-material domains.

Moreover, many of these idioms simultaneously activate the metaphor TIME IS SPACE, further demonstrating the depth of spatial structuring in idiomatic conceptualization. The interaction of *conceptual metaphor* and *metonymy* within these idioms confirms their status as complex constructions, ideally suited to reveal the dynamic interplay of cognitive, cultural, and linguistic processes. As such, they

exemplify the capacity of language to function not merely as a communicative tool but as a continuum of meaning shaped by cognition and culture.

References

Belaj, Branimir. 2010. "Prostorni odnosi kao temelj padežnih značenja – shematičnost i polisemija hrvatskoga prijedložno-padežnog izraza od + genitiv". In Sintaksa padeža, zbornik radova znanstvenoga skupa, Drugi hrvatski sintaktički dani, edited by Matea Birtić-Dunja Brozović-Rončević, 15–33. Zagreb - Osijek: Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje – Filozofski fakultet.

Belaj, Branimir-Goran Tanacković Faletar. 2017. Kognitivna gramatika hrvatskoga jezika (knj. II). Sintaksa jednostavne rečenice. Zagreb: Disput.

Dobrovol`skij, Dmitrij. 2000. "Idioms in contrast: a functional view". In Las lenguas de Europa: Estudios de fraseología, fraseografía y traducción, edited by Gloria Corpas Pastor, 367–388. Granada: Comares.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij and, Elisabeth Piirainen. 2005. "Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Idiom Analys". Jezikoslovlje 6: 7–35.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij, and Elisabeth Piirainen. 2010. "Idioms: Motivation and Etymology". Yearbook of Phraseology 1: 73–96.

Feleško, Kazimjež. 1995. Značenja i sintaksa srpskohrvatskog genitiva. Beograd: Vukova zadužbina - Matica srpska: Orfelin.

Goosens, Louis. 2003. "Metaphtonymy: The interaction of metaphor and metonymy in expression for linguistic action". Cognitive linguistics 1-3: 323–340.

Hodžić-Čavkić, Azra. 2022. "Idiomske skupine s egocentričnom orijentacijom". In Zbornik sa Sarajevskih filoloških susreta VI, edited by Halid Bulić, and Munir Drkić, 155–173. Sarajevo: Bosansko filološko društvo.

Matovac, Darko. 2014. "The semantics of the preposition po in Croatian language". Croatica et Slavica Iadertina 10: 3–29.

Matovac, Darko. 2017. Prijedlozi u hrvatskome jeziku. Značenje, prostorni odnosi i konceptualizacija. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada.

Palić, Ismail. 2007. Sintaksa i semantika načina. Sarajevo: Bookline.

Palić, Ismail. 2016. Genitiv, prostor i prostorne slike (leksikon prijedloga). Sarajevo: Bosansko filološko društvo.

Pranjković, Ivo. 2001. Druga hrvatska skladnja: Sintaktičke rasprave. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada.

The role of polysemy in the motivation of idioms: A contrastive approach

Nicole Mazzetto
University of Freiburg

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c767

ABSTRACT
Traditionally described as a cognitive phenomenon based on the conceptual links between the compositional and idiomatic meanings of idioms (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2005, 87), the synchronic motivation of idioms is rarely analyzed with regard to their polysemy (cf., e.g., Dobrovol'skij, 2007). Considering that polysemy stands as a motivational device in lexicology (Marzo, 2013), this contribution aims to investigate the potential role that polysemy plays in the synchronic motivation of French idioms. Due to the importance of the perception of native speakers in the study of synchronic motivation (cf., e.g., Koch and Marzo, 2007; Rettig, 1981; Umbreit, 2015), this contribution will analyze the potential influence of polysemy on the motivation of French idioms by means of a qualitative questionnaire. Twelve French idioms, six of which are polysemous, will be motivated by native French speakers and native Italian speakers, who are not familiar with the French language. By comparing the types of conceptualization provided by both groups of speakers, it will be possible to empirically demonstrate the impact of polysemy on the synchronic motivation of idioms and to observe how polysemy-based motivation manifests itself in phraseology.

Keywords: phraseology; polysemy; synchronic motivation.

1. Polysemy and synchronic motivation

The synchronic motivation of idioms is traditionally described as a cognitive phenomenon based on the conceptual links between the compositional and idiomatic meanings of idioms (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2005, 87). Nevertheless, this definition does not correspond to that of lexical motivation, i.e. the synchronic motivation of lexical units in general:

> [A] lexical item L_1 (lexeme, word, idiom) expressing a concept C_1, is motivated with respect to a lexical item L_2 expressing a concept C_2, if there is a cognitively relevant relation between C_1 and C_2 paralleled by a recognizable formal relation between the *signifiants* of L_1 and L_2 […]. (Koch, 2001, 1156)

Although idioms are part of the lexicon (cf., e.g., Cruse, 1986; Mejri, 1997), the criteria on which their motivation relies differ from those determining the

motivation of lexical units in general. In addition to being composed of two dimensions (formal and cognitive)[1], lexical motivation implies several motivational processes, such as extrinsic motivation, which occurs when a lexical unit is motivated via a formally different lexical unit, and polysemy-based motivation. As suggested by Marzo (2008, 174), polysemy-based motivation takes place when a lexical unit (for ex. *souris* 'computer device') is motivated via a formally identical lexical unit (here, *souris* 'small rodent') by means of a formal relation (here, formal identity) and a cognitively relevant relation (here, metaphorical similarity). In this article, we will focus on polysemy-based motivation, which is not contemplated as a motivational process in phraseology. Considering that idioms can be polysemous as well[2], the absence of studies regarding this motivational process in the field of idioms might be related to different factors. Firstly, research on the synchronic motivation of idioms is mainly based on one motivational process, that is the relation between the compositional and idiomatic meanings of idioms. Secondly, several studies have paid close attention to the role of cultural specifics in the motivation and semantic dimension of idioms (cf., e.g., Mejri, 2018; Pamies, 2011; Piirainen, 2011), even though extralinguistic knowledge is only one of the possible levels of knowledge that participates in conceptualization. In addition to extralinguistic knowledge, the levels of knowledge that participate in the conceptualization of lexical units are sememic knowledge, such as the meaning of the lexical units and their lexical field, and lexical knowledge, which includes, among others, information about polysemy (Blank, 1997, 55–75).

The main goal of this study is to show that polysemy can act as a motivational process in phraseology as well. Due to the importance of investigating synchronic motivation in an empirical way (cf., e.g., Detry, 2008 and 2014; Radden and Panther, 2004; Ramonda, 2017; Rettig, 1981; Schröder, 1981), the potential impact of polysemy on the motivation of idioms will be studied by means of a qualitative survey, which aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the conceptualization provided by native speakers. By recognizing the limitations of approaches solely based on the introspection of linguists, some works (Marzo, 2013, 76–79; Marzo and Rube, 2006, 154; Marzo and Umbreit, 2016, 426–427; Umbreit, 2011, 274) highlight that the study of motivation requires a speaker-based approach, which allows for the consideration of native speakers' linguistic consciousness.

> [S]peakers are able to establish synchronic relations between words both morphologically and conceptually as well as to give reasons for these relations based on their

1 The absence of a formal dimension in the synchronic motivation of idioms lies outside the scope of this article and, therefore, it won't be further discussed.

2 According to Moon (1998, 187), an idiom is polysemous when it has two or more idiomatic meanings.

> implicit or even explicit knowledge of word-families and their structure. Their ideas about motivated or opaque words in their language directly reflect their average linguistic knowledge. These capacities even be more fruitful for investigating motivation than the introspection used by professional linguists, who might consider more words as motivated than non-linguists or who might motivate them differently from non-linguists due to their linguistic expertise. (Umbreit, 2011, 274)

2. The empirical study

The potential role played by polysemy in the synchronic motivation of idioms will be explored by means of a qualitative survey[3]. By focusing on French idioms, the questionnaire is composed of two versions, each of which is addressed to a different group of speakers:

- a French version, which is conducted with native French speakers;
- an Italian version, which is conducted with native Italian speakers, who are not familiar with the French language.

The selection of the idioms for the questionnaire was based on two factors: their polysemous or monosemic status and their existence in French or both in French and Italian. As indicated in Table 1, twelve idioms were chosen as stimuli: six polysemous idioms existing in French and six monosemic idioms, three of which exist only in French, whereas the remaining three exist both in French and Italian.

In both versions of the survey, the selected idioms were presented together with one of their idiomatic meanings and an example of use. As far as the Italian version is concerned, French idioms were literally translated into Italian. After providing information about their knowledge of the idioms[4], participants were asked to further explain their motivation using their own words[5]. Alternatively, participants could mark idioms as semantically opaque. In total, 100 participants took part in the survey: 50 native French speakers and 50 native Italian speakers[6].

---

3 The survey is implemented by means of SosciSuvey.de. It was online from March to April 2023. Participants were recruited via personal contacts, cultural institutions, and online forums.

4 In the section about the knowledge of the idiom, participants have been presented with following options (translated from French and Italian into English by the present author): 1. "Yes, I know the expression with the indicated meaning.", 2. "Yes, I know the expression, but with a different meaning", 3. "No, I do not know this expression."

5 More precisely, French and Italian participants were asked to answer the following question (translated from French and Italian into English by the present author): "In your opinion, why does [idiom] mean [idiomatic meaning]?".

6 Among the native French speakers, 88% are between 18 and 35 years old, 10% are between 36-60 years old, and 2% are older than 60. 80% are women, 12% are men, and 8% identified as "Other". As far as the native Italian speakers are concerned, 50% are between 18 and 35 years old, 42% are between 36-60 years old, and 8% are older than 60. 74% are women and

Table 1. List of the stimuli included in the questionnaire

Polysemous idioms	Monosemic idioms	
Existing in French	Existing in French	Existing in French and Italian
avoir la banane, lit. 'to have the banana', meaning 'to be fit' *perdre pied*, lit. 'to lose foot', meaning 'to lose control of the situation/oneself' *coup du lapin,* lit. 'hit of the rabbit', meaning 'trickery, betrayal' *dormir sur ses deux oreilles*, lit. 'to sleep on one's two ears', meaning 'to sleep deeply and calmly' *sucrer les fraises*, lit. 'to add sugar to strawberries', meaning 'to be doddering, senile' *loup de mer*, lit. 'wolf of sea', meaning 'experienced and capable person'[7]	*ne pas avoir les yeux dans sa poche*, lit. 'not to have the eyes in one's pocket', meaning 'to be nosy, to observe everything' *casser sa pipe*, lit. 'to break one's pipe', meaning 'to die' *bête comme ses pieds*, lit. 'stupid as one's feet', meaning 'very stupid'	fr. *avoir les pieds sur terre*/it. *avere i piedi per terra*, lit. 'to have the feet on ground', meaning 'to be realistic and practical' fr. *mener une vie de chien*/it. *fare una vita da cani*, lit. 'to lead a dog's life', meaning 'to lead a miserable life' fr. *le mouton noir*/it. *la pecora nera*, lit. 'the black sheep', meaning 'a member of a group who is different from the rest and is considered as negative'

The choice of stimuli is directly linked to the hypotheses of this study. As Section 3 will show, the analysis focuses on the types of conceptualization (*motivational categories*) used by the French and Italian speakers to motivate the idioms. The potential role played by polysemy in native speakers' conceptualization will be investigated on the basis of the following hypotheses:

- Polysemous idioms show a higher level of discrepancy in motivational categories than monosemic idioms;
- Monosemic idioms existing in French and both in French and Italian show a similar level of discrepancy in motivational categories;
- The motivational categories with a high level of discrepancy used by French participants to motivate polysemous idioms are related to the other idiomatic meaning(s) of theirs.

The confirmation of the first hypothesis would suggest that native speakers employ a different type of knowledge to motivate polysemous idioms in comparison with monosemic idioms. Considering that the potential discrepancy between motivational categories can be caused by cultural factors, the second hypothesis aims at narrowing the impact of cultural factors on motivation and,

26% are men. Due to space limitations, other personal data about participants, such as the region where they live, is not provided.

7 Although *loup de mer* exists also in Italian (it. 'lupo di mare'), the two idioms are not equivalent. Firstly, *lupo di mare* has a lower frequency than *loup de mer* according to *Sketch Engine* (*frTenTen*). Secondly, *lupo di mare* has only one idiomatic meaning ('experienced sailor'), whereas loup de mer means '(type of) fish', '(eatable) flesh of this fish', 'seal', 'experienced sailor', and 'experienced and capable person'.

thus, suggesting the potential participation of other types of knowledge in the motivational processes. In this regard, the third hypothesis will show that the type of knowledge responsible for the confirmation of the first hypothesis is lexical knowledge, which includes information about the polysemy of lexical units (cf. Section 1).

3. The comparison between types of conceptualization: Analysis and discussion of the data

In the analysis of the collected data, only valid answers[8] have been taken into account. Answers providing the same motivational partner, i.e. the concept through which the stimulus is motivated, and the same activated knowledge have been grouped under the same motivational category[9]. In order to identify statistically significant differences in the motivational categories provided by the French and Italian speakers, the p-value will serve as the main indicator. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the discrepancy in a certain motivational category is considered as statistically significant[10].

In the next paragraphs, the results of the empirical study will be presented and discussed with regard to the above-mentioned hypotheses (see Section 2). Due to space limitations, we will mainly focus on the categories showing a statistically significant discrepancy used by the French speakers and the types of knowledge on which they are based.

3.1 Monosemic idioms existing in French and Italian

In the first group of idioms, only one motivational category shows a statistically significant discrepancy, namely OPPOSITION BETWEEN UP AND DOWN in *avoir les pieds sur terre*. Nevertheless, this category plays a fundamental role in the conceptualizations provided by both groups of speakers: it is used by 71.11% of the French speakers and 45.83% of the Italian speakers.

3.2 Monosemic idioms existing in French

The idiom *ne pas avoir les yeux dans sa poche* shows a statistically significant difference in the category POCKET AS A PRIVATE AND INTIMATE PLACE. Even if this category is employed by most Italian speakers (47.62%), it appears to be

8 Invalid answers do not provide useful information with regard to the goals of the study. For instance, answers are labeled as invalid if participants motivate another idiom or another idiomatic meaning of the indicated idiom.

9 Motivational categories are composed of at least two answers. The answers that do not belong to any motivational category are grouped under the category "Other". In addition, answers containing two distinct types of conceptualization are split into two answers.

10 In the Annexes 1, 2, and 3, the p-value is marked with an asterisk when it indicates a statistically significant discrepancy.

dominant among French speakers' answers too: more than 23% of the French speakers have motivated the idiom via this category. An interesting case of statistically significant difference is represented by *casser sa pipe*: DEATH/ILLNESS CAUSES FALLING, WHICH CAUSES A BROKEN PIPE is the most used category by the French speakers, but it is absent among the conceptualizations provided by Italian participants. This result might be the consequence of a semantic blending[11] between *casser sa pipe* and the formally similar idiom *se casser la pipe*, lit. 'to break the pipe', meaning 'to fall'. In addition, the results from a pilot study conducted with 70 French speakers, who were required to indicate the idiomatic meaning of a set of idioms and to motivate them, show that *casser sa pipe* might not be monosemic: while the meaning 'to die' was mentioned by most participants (85.96%), 3.51% of them indicated 'to fall' as the idiomatic meaning of the idiom. Thus, the monosemic status of this idiom remains uncertain.

3.3 Polysemous idioms

In *avoir la banane*, the category SMILE (SHAPE OF THE BANANA) INDICATES HAPPINESS, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ENERGETIC/FIT PEOPLE, which is used by 60.87% of the French speakers, is clearly related to the other idiomatic meaning of the idiom, that is 'to smile, to be happy'. This explains why this category is not used by the Italian participants, most of whom (26.00%) opt for a category based on the resemblance between the shape of the banana and the shape of a fit body (ANALOGY BETWEEN THE SHAPE OF A BANANA AND A FIT BODY). The same can be said for *perdre pied*, whose other meaning 'to lose contact with ground in the water' is at the basis of LOSING CONTACT WITH GROUND IN WATER (TO DROWN) IS LIKE LOSING CONTROL OF THE SITUATION/ONESELF. This category is used by most French speakers (36.36%), while it is absent among Italians' answers, the majority of whom (41.30%) compensate for the lack of lexical knowledge by using the category WITHOUT FOOT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO WALK/TO GO ON.

In *coup du lapin*, polysemy influences the choice of motivational categories in two different ways: the idiomatic meaning 'whiplash injury' is not only responsible for the metaphor between the betrayal and this type of injury (BETRAYAL IS LIKE A WHIPLASH INJURY, used by 13.95% of the French speakers and absent among Italian participants' answers), but it also guarantees the activation of specific knowledge, namely the method to kill rabbits. In fact, the physical point at which the whiplash injury occurs roughly corresponds to the physical point at which the deadly blow is inflicted on rabbits. In this regard, the category BETRAYAL AS A METHOD TO KILL RABBITS is used by 46.51% of the French speakers, while only 4.00% of the Italian speakers employ it.

11 Blends are defined by Cutting and Bock (1997, 58) as "[…] the replacement of an element related to one speech plan by an element related to another speech plan, resulting in an utterance that does not exactly match either one". For an insightful analysis of blends, cf. Harley (2001).

Although present, the impact of the polysemy of *dormir sur ses deux oreilles* on its motivation is less visible. Directly related to the other meaning 'to feel safe, worry-free', the category LACK OF DANGER/FEELING SAFE MAKES PEOPLE SLEEP DEEPLY/CALMLY is used by 25.93% of the French speakers and 7.84% of the Italian speakers. A quick analysis of Italian phraseology could explain why this category is also used by Italian speakers: the existence of several formally and semantically similar idioms in Italian, such as *dormire con un occhio solo*, lit. 'to sleep with only one eye', meaning 'to be constantly vigilant, living in constant fear of being attacked, even when sleeping' could have led participants to activate the concepts of DANGER and FEAR.

In the motivation of *sucrer les fraises*, it is possible to observe that the category ADDING SUGAR MAKES HANDS SHAKE, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE, used by only 10.42% of the French speakers, is based on the other meaning of the idiom, that is 'to tremble in an uncontrollable way'. Nevertheless, the category showing a statistically significant discrepancy is ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ADDING SUGAR TO SWEET FOOD AND BEING DODDERING/SENILE, which is not linked to the polysemy of the idiom. The weak role played by the polysemy-based category in motivation can be explained by considering the data about the knowledge of the idiom. Since the majority of the French speakers affirmed not to know the indicated idiom (68.63%)[12], relevant knowledge about the polysemy of the idiom could not be used by most French speakers to motivate it. Thus, this condition led them to activate the same type of knowledge as Italian speakers.

In the last polysemous stimulus, *loup de mer*, the only motivational category showing a statistically significant difference (EXPERIENCED PERSON AS A WOLF), which is largely used by both groups of speakers (French speakers: 25.53%; Italian speakers: 52.38%), is based on the compositional meaning of the idiom. Nevertheless, the impact of other meanings of the idiom on its motivation is major. In fact, 10.64% of the French speakers employ the category EXPERIENCED PERSON AS A TYPE OF FISH, which is based on the meaning '(type of) fish'. EXPERIENCED PERSON AS AN EXPERIENCED SAILOR is the most common category among the French speakers' answers (31.91%) and the second most common one among the Italian speakers' conceptualizations (28.57%), in whose native language *lupo di mare* exists with the idiomatic meaning 'experienced sailor'. Therefore, the absence of statistical significance among polysemy-based categories is the result of the fact that polysemy plays a crucial role not only among the types of motivation provided by the French speakers, but also among those provided by Italian participants. Moreover, the discrepancy in EXPERIENCED PERSON AS A WOLF can be explained by considering that, contrary to the Italian

12 Apart from those who did not know the idiom, 21.57% of the French speakers knew the idiom with the indicated meaning and 9.80% of them knew the idiom, but with a different meaning.

speakers, French participants could use an additional polysemy-based category (EXPERIENCED PERSON AS A TYPE OF FISH) to motivate the idiom.

3.4 General observations

In light of the collected data, it is possible to compare the results with the initial hypotheses (Section 2). The number of motivational categories showing a statistically significant discrepancy is higher among polysemous idioms (10 in total) than monosemic idioms (3 in total[13]). In addition, no major difference is observed among the results in monosemic idioms: monosemic idioms existing in French present 1 category showing a statistically significant discrepancy, while monosemic idioms existing in French and Italian have 2, including *casser sa pipe*. The analysis of the statistically significant motivational categories among polysemous idioms proves that polysemy is responsible for most differences between conceptualizations, confirming the third hypothesis of the study. In fact, all categories showing a statistically significant discrepancy mostly used by the French speakers are built upon polysemy-based motivation. On the other hand, the categories showing a statistically significant difference mostly used by the Italian speakers are based on the compositional meaning of the idiom, which, contrary to polysemy, is accessible even to those who do not know French. With the exception of *loup de mer*, Italian participants tend to activate encyclopedic knowledge to motivate the idioms, thanks to which they compensate for the lack of lexical knowledge about their polysemy.

4. Conclusion

In spite of the limited number of stimuli, the comparison between the answers provided by both groups of participants has shown that polysemy has a significant impact on the types of conceptualization provided by the French speakers. The presence of additional idiomatic meanings can lead to the activation of specific concepts, which are absent or not relevant among the conceptualizations provided by those speakers who do not know the analyzed idioms. Our empirical data have not only proven that answers mostly differ when speakers motivate polysemous idioms, but also that polysemy is generally responsible for the motivational categories showing a statistically significant discrepancy used by French participants.

Moreover, it can be observed that polysemy-based motivation manifests itself in different ways in phraseology. Firstly, the idiomatic meaning can act as a motivational partner, as in *loup de mer*: when using the categories EXPERIENCED PERSON

13 Considering that the monosemic status of *casser sa pipe* is uncertain, the number of motivational categories showing a statistically significant discrepancy among monosemic idioms could be set at 2.

AS A TYPE OF FISH and EXPERIENCED PERSON AS AN EXPERIENCED SAILOR, participants do not motivate the idiom through its compositional meaning, but instead via two of its idiomatic meanings. Secondly, the idiomatic meaning can serve as an intermediary step in the process of conceptualization. For instance, the motivational category SMILE (SHAPE OF THE BANANA) INDICATES HAPPINESS, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ENERGETIC/FIT PEOPLE in *avoir la banane* is built as a chain of associations, which starts from the compositional meaning and, mediated by the idiomatic meaning 'to smile, to be happy', reaches the other idiomatic meaning of the idiom. More precisely, the shape of the banana is compared to the shape of the smile, which occurs when being happy, which, in turn, is associated with being energetic and fit. Thirdly, polysemy can be responsible for the activation of specific knowledge, as in the motivational category BETRAYAL AS A METHOD TO KILL RABBITS of *coup de lapin*. The information about the traditional method to kill rabbits is activated by the idiomatic meaning 'whiplash injury'.

The results of this study suggest that, contrary to what the definition of phraseological motivation states (cf. Section 1), the motivation of idioms is not solely based on the cognitive links between their compositional and idiomatic meanings. In fact, polysemy meets the necessary conditions for being considered an additional motivational device in phraseology. In line with Matlock's thesis (1998), we believe that polysemy deserves more attention in phraseology, as it can notably influence the way native speakers conceptualize and motivate idioms.

References

Blank, Andreas. 1997. Prinzipien des lexikalischen Bedeutungswandels am Beispiel der romanischen Sprachen. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Cruse, David A. 1986. Lexical Semantics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cutting, J. Cooper, and Kathryn Bock. 1997. "That's the way the cookie bounces: Syntactic and semantic components of experimentally elicited idiom blends". Memory & Cognition 25: 57–71.

Detry, Florence. 2008. "Pourquoi les murs auraient-ils des oreilles?: Vers un apprentissage par l'image des expressions idiomatiques en langue étrangère". Synergies Espagne 1: 205–218.

Detry, Florence. 2014. "Image, image, quelle motivation renfermes-tu?: iconicité et apprentissage cognitif des expressions idiomatiques en FLE". Çédille: revista de estudios franceses 10: 143–160.

Dobrovol'skij, Dimitrij, and Elisabeth Piirainen. 2005. Figurative language: Cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Dobrovol'skij, Dimitrij. 2007. "Cognitive approaches to idiom analysis". In Phraseologie / Phraseology: ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen

Forschung [Vol. 2], edited by Harald Burger, Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij, Peter Kühn, and Neal R. Norrick, 789–818. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Harley, Trevor. 2001. The Psychology of Language. Hove/New York: Psychology Press.

Koch, Peter, and Daniela Marzo. 2007. "A two-dimensional approach to the study of motivation in lexical typology and its first application to French high-frequency vocabulary". Studies in Language 31(2): 259–291.

Koch, Peter. 2001. "Lexical typology from a cognitive and linguistic point of view". In Language Typology and Language Universals [Vol. 2], edited by Martin Haspelmath, Ekkehard König, Wulf Oesterreicher, and Wolfgang Raible, 1142–1178. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Marzo, Daniela, and Verena Rube. 2006. "What do you think where words come from? Investigating lexical motivation empirically". In The VIIIth International Conference Cognitive Modelling in Linguistics. Proceedings [Vol. 1], edited by Valery D. Solovyev, Vera Goldberg, and Vladimir Polyakov, 152–161. Moskau: Kazan State University.

Marzo, Daniela, and Birgit Umbreit. 2016. "Investigating lexical motivation in French and Italian". In The lexical typology of sematic shifts, edited by Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, and Päivi Juvonen, 423–455. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.

Marzo, Daniela. 2008. "What is iconic about polysemy? A contribution to research on diagrammatic transparency". In Naturalness and Iconicity in Language, edited by Klaas Willems, and Ludovic De Cuypere, 167–187. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Marzo, Daniela. 2013. Polysemie als Verfahren lexikalischer Motivation: Theorie und Empirie am Beispiel von Metonymie und Metapher im Französischen und Italienischen. Tübingen: Narr.

Matlock, Teenie. 1998. "What Is Missing in Research on Idioms?". The American Journal of Psychology 111(4): 643–48. https://doi.org/10.2307/1423557

Mejri, Salah. 1997. Le figement lexical. Descriptions linguistiques et structuration sémantique. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de Manouba Série Linguistique.

Mejri, Salah. 2018. "La phraséologie : cotexte, contexte et contenus culturels". Lublin Studies in Modern Languages And Literature 42(4): 11–38. http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2018.42.4.11

Moon, Rosamund. 1998. Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English. A Corpus-Based Approach. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Pamies, Antonio. 2011. "À propos de la motivation phraséologique". In Linguo-cultural competence and phraseological motivation, edited by Antonio Pamies, and Dimitrij Dobrovol'skij, 25–39. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag.

Piirainen, Elisabeth. 2011. "Idiom motivation from cultural perspectives: metaphors, symbols, intertextuality". In Linguo-cultural competence and phraseological

motivation, edited by Antonio Pamies, and Dimitrij Dobrovol'skij, 65–74. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag.

Radden, Günter, and Klaus-Uwe Panther. 2004. "Introduction: Reflections on motivation". In Studies in Linguistic Motivation, edited by Klaus-Uwe Panther, and Günter Radden, 1–46. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Ramonda, Kris. 2017. "The role of encyclopedic world knowledge in semantic transparency intuitions of idioms". English Language & Linguistics 23: 31–53. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674317000284

Rettig, Wolfgang. 1981. Sprachliche Motivation: Zeichenrelationen von Lautform und Bedeutung am Beispiel französischer Lexikoneinheiten. Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

Schröder, Marianne. 1981. "Zur Rolle des Motivationsbegriffes für Wortbildungskonstruktionen und feste Wortverbindungen". Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift. Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe 30(5): 453–458.

Umbreit, Birgit. 2011. "Why multiple motivation is a cognitively justified phenomenon". In Motivation in grammar and the lexicon, edited by Klaus-Uwe Panther, and Günter Radden, 269–286. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Umbreit, Birgit. 2015. Zur Direktionalität der lexikalischen Motivation: Motiviertheit und Gerichtetheit von französischen und italienischen Wortpaaren auf der Basis von Sprecherbefragungen. Tübingen: Narr.

Annex 1: Data about monosemic idioms existing in French and Italian

Motivation category/partner	French	Italian	p-value
avoir les pieds sur terre, lit. 'to have the feet on ground', meaning 'to be realistic and practical'			
OPPOSITION BETWEEN UP AND DOWN	71.11%	45.83%	0.02391*
GROUND AS A SOURCE OF STABILITY AND REALISM	24.44%	39.58%	0.1806
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GROUND AND PRACTICAL JOBS	2.22%	6.25%	0.656
Other	0.00%	8.33%	0.1421
Opacity	2.22%	0.00%	0.9741
mener une vie de chien, lit. 'to lead a dog's life', meaning 'to lead a miserable life'			
DOG EXPERIENCES POOR TREATMENT	59.26%	64.41%	0.7121
DOG IS SUBMITTED TO HUMANS	16.67%	8.47%	0.3009
DOG AS A HARD WORKER/EXPLOITED	14.81%	15.25%	1
Other	3.70%	3.39%	1
Opacity	5.56%	8.47%	0.8125
le mouton noir, lit. 'the black sheep', meaning 'a member of a group who is different from the rest and is considered as negative'			
WHITE IS THE TYPICAL COLOR OF SHEEP	72.41%	68.42%	0.7912
BLACK IS NEGATIVELY CONNOTATED	22.41%	24.56%	0.9588
BLACK FUR HAS BAD REPERCUSSIONS ON THE MARKET	0.00%	5.26%	0.2359
Other	1.72%	1.75%	1
Opacity	3.45%	0.00%	0.4833

Annex 2: Data about monosemic idioms existing in French

Motivation category/partner	French	Italian	p-value
ne pas avoir les yeux dans sa poche, lit. 'not to have the eyes in one's pocket', meaning 'to be nosy, to observe everything'			
POCKET AS A DARK/CLOSE SPACE	53.85%	30.95%	0.06278
POCKET AS A PRIVATE AND INTIMATE PLACE	23.08%	47.62%	0.03844*
Opacity	23.08%	21.43%	1
casser sa pipe, lit. 'to break one's pipe', meaning 'to die'			
DEATH/ILLNESS CAUSES FALLING, WHICH CAUSES A BROKEN PIPE	30.43%	0.00%	0.0001611*
A BROKEN PIPE IS LIKE A BROKEN LIFE	15.22%	30.43%	0.1361
BREAKING ONE'S PIPE IS AN OLD HABIT CONNECTED WITH DEATH	8.70%	2.17%	0.3577
SMOKING IMPLIES BREATHING, WHICH IMPLIES BEING ALIVE	4.35%	8.70%	0.6728
A DEAD PERSON DOES NOT NEED TO SMOKE	2.17%	10.87%	0.2052
THE INABILITY OF SMOKING CAUSES DEATH (DUE TO NICOTINE ADDICTION)	4.35%	0.00%	0.4747
Other	4.35%	8.70%	0.6728
Opacity	30.43%	39.13%	0.5114
bête comme ses pieds, lit. 'stupid as one's feet', meaning 'very stupid'			
OPPOSITION BETWEEN BRAIN AND FEET	62.50%	45.28%	0.1072
FOOT IS NEGATIVELY CONNOTATED	17.86%	15.09%	0.8964
Other	5.36%	3.77%	1
Opacity	14.29%	35.85%	0.0171*

Annex 3: Data about polysemous idioms existing in French

Motivation category/partner	French	Italian	p-value
avoir la banane, lit. 'to have the banana', meaning 'to be fit'			
SMILE (SHAPE OF THE BANANA) INDICATES HAPPINESS, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ENERGETIC/FIT PEOPLE	60.87%	0.00%	2.45E-07*
BANANA AS AN ENERGETIC SOURCE	28.26%	18.00%	0.3411
YELLOW IS POSITIVELY CONNOTATED	6.52%	2.00%	0.5509
ANALOGY BETWEEN THE SHAPE OF A BANANA AND A FIT BODY	0.00%	26.00%	0.0006244*
PHALLUS (SHAPE OF THE BANANA) IS ASSOCIATED WITH BEING ENERGETIC/FIT	0.00%	10.00%	0.08131
ANALOGY BETWEEN BANANA'S AND TRAINED MUSCLES' CONSISTENCY	0.00%	6.00%	0.271
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN BANANA, AS AN EXOTIC FRUIT, AND WEALTHY CLASS	0.00%	4.00%	0.5121
Opacity	4.35%	34.00%	0.0007081*
perdre pied, lit. 'to lose foot', meaning 'to lose control of the situation/oneself'			
LOSING CONTACT WITH GROUND IN WATER (TO DROWN) IS LIKE LOSING CONTROL OF THE SITUATION/ONESELF	36.36%	0.00%	2.29E-02*
THE ABSENCE OF A FOOT ENTAILS LACK OF STABILITY/BALANCE	29.55%	26.09%	0.896
THE ABSENCE OF A FOOT MAKES PEOPLE FALL	15.91%	6.52%	0.2797
WITHOUT FOOT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO WALK/TO GO ON	13.64%	41.30%	0.00706*
FOOT AS A MEAN OF MEASUREMENT	0.00%	10.87%	0.07345
Other	4.55%	4.35%	1
Opacity	0.00%	10.87%	0.07345
coup du lapin, lit. 'hit of the rabbit', meaning 'trickery, betrayal'			
BETRAYAL AS A METHOD TO KILL RABBITS	46.51%	4.00%	4.99E-03*
BETRAYAL IS LIKE A WHIPLASH INJURY	13.95%	0.00%	0.02102*
ANALOGY BETWEEN BETRAYER'S AND RABBIT'S BEHAVIOR	6.98%	50.00%	1.85E-02*
ANALOGY BETWEEN BETRAYER'S AND RABBIT'S AGILITY	2.33%	12.00%	0.171

ANALOGY BETWEEN THE SURPRISE EFFECT DUE TO A BETRAYAL AND A MAGIC TRICK	4.65%	2.00%	0.8943
Opacity	25.58%	32.00%	0.6521
dormir sur ses deux oreilles, lit. 'to sleep on one's two ears', meaning 'to sleep deeply and calmly'			
IF BOTH EARS COVERED, NO NOISE CAN BE HEARD/DISTURB THE SLEEP	42.59%	35.29%	0.5714
LACK OF DANGER/FEELING SAFE MAKES PEOPLE SLEEP DEEPLY/CALMLY	25.93%	7.84%	0.02794*
A COMFORTABLE POSITION IN BED MAKES PEOPLE SLEEP DEEPLY/CALMLY	18.52%	29.41%	0.2799
Other	1.85%	3.92%	0.9599
Opacity	11.11%	23.53%	0.1532
sucrer les fraises, lit. 'to add sugar to strawberries', meaning 'to be doddering, senile'			
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ADDING SUGAR TO SWEET FOOD AND BEING DODDERING/SENILE	29.17%	54.17%	0.02277*
ADDING SUGAR TO SWEET FOOD AS A MEANINGLESS HABIT	14.58%	16.67%	1
ADDING SUGAR MAKES HANDS SHAKE, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE	10.42%	0.00%	0.06616
Other	4.17%	4.17%	1
Opacity	41.67%	25.00%	0.1296
loup de mer, lit. 'wolf of sea', meaning 'experienced and capable person'			
EXPERIENCED PERSON AS AN EXPERIENCED SAILOR	31.91%	28.57%	0.9112
EXPERIENCED PERSON AS A TYPE OF FISH	10.64%	0.00%	0.0864
EXPERIENCED PERSON AS A WOLF	25.53%	52.38%	0.01713*
Opacity	31.91%	19.05%	0.2536

Section 3:
Pragmatics and Discourse Markers

Proper Names in Phraseme Constructions

Paola Maria Cotta Ramusino
University of Milan
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5016-7568

Anna Pavlova[1]
University of Mainz
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4843-5778

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c768

ABSTRACT
This study examines the roles of proper names (PNs) in phraseological constructions (PhCs), focusing on their semantic, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions. PNs serve referential, metaphorical, and symbolic functions, enriched by cultural specificity and pragmatic effects. The research highlights semantic constraints in slot-filling and explores variability in name forms. Findings emphasize PNs' unique contribution to the expressive power of PhCs, offering insights for linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic analysis.

Keywords: phraseme constructions; proper names.

1. Introduction

Phraseme constructions (PhCs), also referred to as phraseological constructions, syntactic phrasemes, or syntactic idioms, represent a category of phraseological units identified by a specific structure (Dobrovol'skij, 2011, 114, 2012, 328; Fleischer, 1997, 130–134; Mel'čuk, 2021, 2023; Mellado Blanco, Mollica and Schafroth, 2022, 1; Pavlova and Alekseyeva, 2022, 54; Pavlova, 2024, 197–198).These lexically open phraseme constructions are made up of a fixed and entrenched syntactic structure and slots that can be filled with lexemes or phrase components (allowing for flexibility in text production). As an example, consider the syntactic phrasemes:

1 This article is the result of close collaboration between the two authors, whose names appear in alphabetical order. For academic attribution only, Paola Cotta Ramusino is responsible for Sections 1, 3, 4.1.1, 4.2 and Anna Pavlova for sections 1.1, 2, 4, 4.1.2. Section 5 (Conclusions) was jointly authored.

– N V what N V
  e.g.: *I said what I said; He sees what he sees*;
– that N of a N
  e.g.: that rascal of a boy; that scoundrel of a husband

The words *what*, *that*, and *of* act as anchors, while N and V represent slots that can be filled with different words (N – nouns, V – verbs) in a relatively adaptable way during text production. These PhCs hold a distinct meaning as a pattern.

The slots are filled according to specific morphological and semantic rules. Some patterns admit the use of different parts of speech as fillers, whereas others allow only certain parts of speech as fillers: some slots allow nouns and verbs (e.g. *N V what N V*), others only nouns (e.g. *that N of an N*).

1.1 A brief state of the art

The concept of syntactically fixed but lexically open schemata has been a subject of inquiry for a significant period, with considerable diversity not only in terms of terminology but also in terms of the research focus. The initial attempts to investigate and describe PhCs can be traced back to Soviet phraseology research. Natalija Švedova (1960, 269–279) was likely the first to describe this linguistic phenomenon using the term "phraseologised constructions" (in Russian, "frazeologizirovannye postroenija"), thus drawing attention to their existence in the Russian language. Ten years later, in her work *Grammar of the modern Russian literary language* (in Russian, *Grammatika sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*), she elaborated on various aspects of the syntax for certain PhCs, which she referred to as "phraseologised structural schemata" (in Russian, "frazeologizirovannye strukturnye schemy") (Švedova, 1970).

Subsequently, PhCs were incorporated into Russian phraseology research under different terms, such as "phraseoschemata" (in Russian, "frazeoschemy") by Dmitrij Šmelëv (1977, 327–330), "syntactic phraseologisms" (in Russian, "sintaksičeskije frazeologizmy"), and "phraseologised sentences" (in Russian, "predloženija frazeologizirovannoj struktury") by Alla Veličko (Veličko, 1996, 2016), "phraseme-constructions" (in Russian, "frazeologizmy-konstrukcii") by Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij (2011, 2016), "syntactic phrasemes" (in Russian, "sintaksičeskije phrasemy") by Leonid Iomdin (2010) within the context of his studies on microsyntax, and by other linguists.

From the point of view of Construction Grammar, a construction is any conventionalized form-meaning pair. In his seminal work, Charles Fillmore defined a syntactic idiom as a phrase or construction whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of its individual parts. Rather, it must be learned as a whole. Fillmore proposed that syntactic idioms are a significant aspect

of language that should be studied alongside traditional syntactic structures (Fillmore, 1988; Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor, 1988; Kay and Fillmore, 1999).

In her seminal 1995 work, Adele Goldberg develops a constructional approach to argument structure, demonstrating that constructions are meaningful form-meaning pairings that actively contribute to sentence interpretation beyond the lexical items they contain. She argues that constructions are the fundamental units of grammar, rather than individual words or abstract rules. In her subsequent works (2006, 2013), Goldberg explores the role of constructions in language use and acquisition, focusing on how speakers generalize usage patterns from specific instances. She posits that constructions form the building blocks of language, acquired through exposure to language use.

In recent years research on PhCs has been going on in different languages and inter-linguistically, especially in the CxG theoretical frame (cf. Dobrovol'skij, 2011, 114–119, 2016, 10–14, 2018, 11–12; Finkbeiner, 2021, 2022; Janda *et al.*, 2020; Mellado Blanco, 2022; Schafroth, 2023; Steyer, 2013, 25–32; Ziem, 2014, 2018). As the number of PhCs under study continues to grow, the methodology for their description is also undergoing a period of development. It is usually not sufficient to merely discuss verbs, nouns, or adjectives as potential slot-fillers. In a number of instances, it is necessary to identify particular semantic or grammatical categories of words that would be permitted, as opposed to those that would not be permitted, for the purpose of slot-filling. For instance, only animate nouns may serve as slot-fillers, or only masculine (but not feminine), singular (but not plural), and so on. Word class is not the appropriate level at which a researcher of PhCs should stop, if the goal is to describe a construction in a way that enables its accurate and active use by language learners and translators. For the creation of an active-type dictionary, it is essential to continuously examine the limits of our freedom in slot filling, approach these limits, and see what would happen if these limits were exceeded. These limits can be both of a morphological and a semantic or pragmatic nature.

2. The COST Project

An international group of approximately 100 scholars is currently developing two similarly structured online dictionaries of phraseological constructions (PhCs), hosted on the GitHub platform. One is a Russian-German dictionary, and the other is a German multilingual dictionary with Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Croatian, Hungarian (and others) as target languages from Eastern and Central European regions. Each dictionary aims to capture and describe about 300 PhCs.

Each PhC is treated as a lemma and described from a holistic perspective, encompassing semantics and pragmatics, morphology, syntax, and phonetics (including prosody). Every entry is accompanied by textual examples illustrating

usage, register, style, synonyms, homonyms, and paronyms. Examples of PhCs in the original language are derived from a variety of textual sources, including but not limited to: text corpora, journalistic and literary texts, blogs and social networks, films and series, videos and oral everyday dialogues or video interviews. An integral component of the dictionary article is a table presenting additional examples and their (preferably) published translations in target languages. A commentary is provided by the respective dictionary article author for each translation.

In addition, each target language is accompanied by a set of general observations and practical recommendations for translators. Most translation examples are drawn from parallel text corpora, while others come from translated books and journalistic texts that also function as parallel sources.

A distinctive feature of this project – consistent with the core tenets of Construction Grammar, which underpins our approach – is that no distinction is made between the semantics and pragmatics of PhC patterns. Pragmatics is closely intertwined with semantics to the extent that they can hardly be distinguished. From our perspective, they should not be separated. In the "Meaning" section of the dictionary article, both semantic and pragmatic aspects of the corresponding lemma are described.

The aim is to create a PhC dictionary of an active type for both scientific and didactic purposes: foreign language learners and translators should be empowered by the dictionary articles to not only passively recognize and understand the corresponding PhCs in the text but also to use them in their own texts.

Our primary goal is to highlight the importance of a detailed description of slot-filling, in order to move beyond 'word class' as the default measure for identifying possible fillers, both in morphological and semantic terms.

The present paper is thus a part of the aforementioned project and aims to examine the function of proper names in phraseme constructions employed as slot fillers. To our knowledge, no studies on proper names in PhC research have been published to date. This topic is closely related to other areas of research, including individual reference, metaphor and cultural specificity dimensions.

The present study is limited to an examination of the names of living beings, with a particular focus on anthroponyms – first names, hypocoristic forms, last names and also patronymics, the latter of which is a distinctive feature of Russian culture: the patronymic follows the first name and, together with the first name, forms a polite full form of addressing an adult person.

We will use PhCs from the Russian-German dictionary as our material, focusing only on the Russian examples. Translation aspects will not be addressed in this article.

For the purposes of this study, we do not aim to provide in-depth analyses of individual phraseme constructions. Detailed discussions of meaning, morphology, possible synonyms, and related features of specific PhCs – such as

those found in dictionary entries – are beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we present a selection of key features for each construction, offering concrete examples representative of broader classes. Our focus lies on the use and function of proper names, and we propose criteria for classifying PhCs based on proper names as slot fillers.

As this is not a corpus-based study, we do not engage with the issue of frequency in detail. However, we do offer a number of observations and provide some empirical evidence where relevant.

3. A brief profile of Proper Names (PNs)

A linguistic universal category (Hockett, 1958, 311–313), PNs have been discussed in many disciplines other than linguistics. However, their function and status have been investigated on a theoretical level by many linguists (cf. Pierini, 2008 for a brief overview of the state of the art). The referential function is arguably the most apparent, although it is not necessarily the most significant; indeed, it often contributes little to the description or meaning of the individual (O'Rourke and Diego Balaguer, 2020). They are similar to deictics in that they identify a referent, but they differ from them in that they are not dependent on situational context (Lyons, 1977, 214; Van Langendonck, 2007, 169–171; Pierini, 2008, 44). As with nouns, they are an open category, exhibiting a number of grammatical features (such as the plural and gender, as well as inflection in Russian), as well as derivational morphology (e.g. hypochoristic forms). They lack lexical meaning, and according to Lyons, they lack meaning *tout-court*: "It is widely, though not universally, accepted that proper names do not have sense" (Lyons, 1977, 198), although this is less and less accepted: in a cognitive approach[2], it has become clear that the reference of PNs to their referents is not direct; rather, a PN refers to the mental image of the referent in our consciousness. As the number of individuals who are aware of a particular referent increases, so too does the extent of their conceptualization of that person. Furthermore, the activation of associations in consciousness is enhanced when the sound of a proper name is heard. "In contrast to common names, the connotative meaning of a proper name is richer, indicating the distinction between a proper name and a common name at both the conceptual and referential levels" (Fonjakova, 1990, 23).

In addition to their denotative function, they may also yield a connotational one by selecting certain properties pertaining to an individual referent or encyclopedic knowledge about it. Thanks to their connotational level, PNs also

2 The cognitive processing of PNs may differ from the processing of general language. There is evidence suggesting that PNs are processed in a distinct mental mechanism (Aleksieieva, 2021; O'Rourke and Diego Balaguer, 2020; Reszegi, 2023).

develop a metaphorical function, allowing them to convey abstract or figurative meanings that extend beyond their direct referential function (Brozović and Žic Fuchs, 2005; Jeshion, 2015). The metaphorical usage of a name may be context-dependent and may involve associations with the qualities or characteristics typically associated with the person bearing that name. If the connotative potential has a national or local character, its decoding relies mainly on shared knowledge (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2005, 245–247).

On this basis, PNs demonstrate a capacity for diachronic motivation, as evidenced by the persistence of cultural, linguistic, social, geographic, and ethnic identity markers. PNs frequently encompass cultural nuances and are interwoven with cultural references, reflecting naming conventions, traditions, and historical or social significance within a particular culture (Corazza, 2017, 2021; Szerszunowicz, 2017). Indeed, PNs possess a multitude of connotative meanings and serve as cultural identifiers of texts (Sato, 2016, 1). This is particularly noteworthy in the context of phraseological units, which best exemplify the interrelationship between language and culture. Thus, the use of PNs in PhCs can result in the creation of expressions that hold cultural, historical, or contextual significance.

4. Function of PNs in the PhCs

In the preceding section, we defined two key functions of PNs: the referential-denotative and the metaphorical. With regard to the referential-denotative function, PNs are not confined to denoting individual, specific, concrete entities; rather, they may also be used to refer to entire groups of referents sharing the same designation, particularly in the case of people. For instance, a group of individuals bearing the first name *Naum* or *Miriam* may be referred to as *Naums* or *Miriams*, respectively. Proper names may at times function purely as formal designations, devoid of descriptive content. To provide an illustration, when a young mother is selecting a name for her newborn daughter, she may state, "Irina appeals to me." (cf. the "polyreferential view" in Delgado, 2019).

Moreover, given that PNs are capable of encapsulating entire concepts that extend beyond their denotative function, it is possible for many of them to become generic symbolic names due to their connotational aura. Indeed, a considerable number of onyms possess a potential for connotation, which has been actualized over time through the process of anthonomasia. This process is usually not instantaneous but requires a considerable period of time. The concepts behind PNs can become increasingly known as, for example, the corresponding referent becomes more widely known and popular. As more people associate a particular proper name with certain characteristics, the number of individuals with similar conceptual knowledge grows. For example, many people, regardless of their native languages, know that the Greek philosopher Socrates was

known as very wise, thus, it takes only a small step to compare a wise person to Socrates and metaphorically refer to them as (a) Socrates.

However, many PNs metaphors, via anthonomasia, are culture-specific. For instance, every Russian speaker would likely understand what qualities might be implied by the PN metaphor 'Ostap Bender' (cleverness, resourcefulness, creativity in matters of deceit). Still, this metaphor remains meaningless for people belonging to other cultures, as the popularity of the novels *Zolotoj telënok* ("The Golden Calf") and *Dvenadcat' stul'ev* ("The twelve chairs") by Ilja Il'f and Evgenij Petrov, featuring the main character Ostap Bender, is incomparably higher in Russia than in any other country or culture.

PNs can also evolve into generic nouns on a metonymic basis: the proper name is transferred to the residents, employees, or the corresponding entity. Proper names of poets are often transferred to their works, for example, the question "Do you know Kafka?" actually means "Do you know the works of Kafka?" In our classification, we do not differentiate between metaphorical and metonymic use of PNs: the main thing is that the proper name is used in the function of a generic name.

Besides, proper names can be used in additional and very specific functions depending on the particular phraseological construction.

The following subsections present a comprehensive typology of the possible functions that PNs may fulfil in PhCs.

4.1 Referential use

4.1.1 Context-dependent PNs

– X_1 на $X_{1\ loc}$

e.g. *Вор на воре* (lit. A thief upon a thief) / *Колдобина на колдобине* (lit. A bump upon a bump)/ *Мошенник на мошеннике сидит и мошенником погоняет* (lit. A swindler sits on another swindler and calls him a swindler)/ *Таня на Тане* (lit. Tanja upon Tanja)

(1) У моей сестры в классе было 9 Тань. Таня на Тане.

Lit. In my sister's class there were 9 Tanjas. Tanja upon Tanja.

'My sister had 9 girls named Tanja in her class. It was Tanjas everywhere!'[3]

In this PhC, which denotes a considerable quantity of a given entity (for instance in the class there are a lot of schoolgirls named Tanja), the PNs are employed as identifiers for individual persons or animals, thus providing a unique reference for each. The deictic and referential function is dependent on the situational context.

3 Here and in the following examples, the English equivalents may be somewhat unsatisfactory or appear inaccurate; however, this is largely due to a lack of true equivalence in most cases.

– И не кто-нибудь, а X

(2) Мне помогли. И не кто-нибудь, а мой коллега Ивашин.
'They helped me. And not just anyone, but my colleague Ivašin'.

This PhC emphasizes the importance of X in contrast to all other members of the same referential class, generalized by the indefinite pronoun *-нибудь* ('any'). These other members are portrayed in a pejorative or contemptuous manner, as if unworthy of comparison with the referent X, who thereby acquires specific and individualized referentiality. That is the reason why PNs often occur in this PhC as concrete singular reference. For example:

(3) Вера обручилась. И не с кем-нибудь, а с Константином Меладзе.
'Vera got engaged. And not just with anyone, but with Konstantin Meladze'.

– Я тебе/вам не N ("а N")!

(4) Я тебе не Настя, а Настасья Викторовна!
'To you, I am not Nastja, but Nastas'ja Viktorovna!'

This PhC is frequently employed as a negative reaction to a verbal stimulus, as below:

(5) Я тебе не такси!
'I am not your taxi!'

as a response to a request for a ride. Evaluative semantics predominates when, in the preceding context, the speaker is asked to act against their beliefs, for example:

(6) Я тебе не доносчик!
'I'm not an informer for you!'

as a response to a request to talk about the behavior of a third person.

This PhC can be used to express refusal in a variety of contexts. It may serve to reject a specific action, protest against a demand or proposal, or signal unwillingness to continue a conversation in which the interlocutor attempts to dictate the terms. At its core, it conveys a refusal to perform a particular action. The use of PNs typically conveys a slight shift in meaning and pragmatic significance. It indicates to the interlocutor that they are dissatisfied with the form

of address or the way in which their name is pronounced by the interlocutor. As in example (4), where the speaker intends to re-establish a certain degree of distance with the interlocutor, typically by indicating that they do not accept a familiar or overly casual mode of address.

The PN can also be employed in this PhC in a metaphorical sense, thanks to anthonomasia. In this case, the proper name is understood as a generic designation for a specific type of person or object, or alternatively, as a collective name for a complex of properties. For instance:

(7) Я тебе не Мата Хари!
'I'm not Mata Hari for you!'
(Meaning: 'I am not a spy').

– (а/ну,) вот и N!

(8) А вот и Виктор!
'There's Viktor finally!'

This PhC states the appearance in the field of vision of a certain object N (usually long-awaited and anticipated) or the establishment of the fact of the presence of this object in proximity to the perceiver through auditory or other sensory sensations. The phrase construct draws the interlocutor's attention to the named filler object and (usually) suggests joy at seeing this object, either for the speaker or the listener. Even if the phrase's addressee did not expect to see anyone or anything, the phrase construct conveys the idea that N is someone or something long-awaited and even eagerly anticipated. In other words, the phrase construct has a suggestive effect.

4.1.2 Descriptive use: salient attribute or property of the referent of the name are referred to

– Это вам/тебе не X
'to/for you it is not X'

(9) Это тебе не Марья Геннадьевна.
'With this person something would be more difficult (or easier) than with Mar'ja Gennad'jevna'.

This PhC also functions as a presuppositional trigger: the communication partner should know Mar'ja Gennad'evna's character or her special qualities, which are hinted at here.

– Как X, так Y [а как X', так Y']
  'as soon as X, then Y [but when X', Y']

There can be different combinations of X and Y: firstly, both elements may be a common noun (*Как еврей, так со скрипкой* 'If it's a Jew, then with a violin'), second, a phrase (*Как деньги нужны, так «мамочка», а как помочь, так уже исчез* 'When they need money, it's 'Mommy,' but when it's time to help, they've already disappeared'), thirdly an infinitive verb (*Как убирать, так сразу Таня* 'When it's time to clean, it's always Tanja's job').

As filler Y, a proper name can certainly be used, but in the role of the first filler (X) it is rather unlikely. Only in very specific contexts can a proper name be used, e.g.: *Как* Таня*, так замужем* 'As soon as I meet a woman called Tanja, she is always already married'.

– всем N' $^{\text{dat pl}}$ N' $^{\text{nom sg}}$

  e.g. *Всем учителям учитель*
  'The best teacher (of all teachers)'

This PhC indicates that the individual in question is regarded as exemplary or distinguished within their respective field, even when compared to other professionals in the same category. From an illocutionary perspective, it can be defined as a compliment conveying a positive assessment.

In this PhC PNs are used as identifiers for groups of persons with the same name (group, non-individual reference):

(10) Всем Маринам Марина!
'The best Marina of all Marinas'

If the filler is a PN, the construction implies that a person with that name is better or excels in some criterion among people with the same name. Of course, in this case, the construction is merely a figure of speech: its hyperbolic nature is evident, as is the playful, humorous effect, since the criterion 'name' for grouping people into one category is artificial, deliberate, and humorous against the semantics of this phraseological construction.

– N_{gen} нам только не хватало!
'That's all we needed!' (ironic)

This construction is used when the speaker anticipates a highly unfavorable potential outcome. It also appears in dialogue as an objection or an expression of annoyance, typically directed either at the interlocutor or a third party. It conveys that something already said or done is problematic – but that things could get even worse, namely N. Alternatively, it may indicate that what has just occurred is already undesirable, and that the suggestion made by the interlocutor or a third party would only worsen the circumstances. The construction is expressive and charged with palpable negativity. Этого нам только не хватало! ('That's all we needed!') is an ironic phrase with a clearly negative evaluative tone. It conveys that a difficult or unpleasant context is made even more burdensome by an additional complication, signaling strong disapproval or irritation.

(11) Ильи нам только не хватало!
'Il'ja – that's all we needed!'

In instances where a proper name occupies the slot, it may be employed to refer to a person, as illustrated in (11). It would be preferable for the speaker if the specific individual, identified as Il'ja, were not in this situation. Nevertheless, a proper name may also be employed to refer to the entity itself, that is to say, solely the name itself, without any additional qualifiers. To illustrate, one might posit that "*I Ильи нам только в семье не хватало!*" The grandmother states, 'We only lacked an Il'ja in the family!' at a time when the entire family is engaged in the process of selecting a name for the newborn. It is evident that the aforementioned utterance does not pertain to the newborn infant, who has not yet been assigned a name. Instead, it is a reference to the name *Il'ja*, which the grandmother in question has expressed discontent with for reasons that are not entirely clear.

– Есть N' и N'

(12) Есть писатели и писатели
'There are writers and writers'

This construction signifies that not all objects that are logically associated with a particular class are identical. The common noun designates the object as a representative of the entire category of similar objects that share a single class due to the coincidence of their essential features. The potential identity of members of this set, which is denied in the construct, is emphasized using

identical forms of the recurrent noun filler. The construction suggests that even when two or more objects or phenomena share the same name, they are not entirely identical.

This construct implies, among other things, that a common noun has both non-referential and referential uses, and that there may be a kind of conflict between these uses.

PNs appear to be unsuitable as fillers in this particular phatic construction. Moreover, it is generally accepted that only countable nouns can fulfil this role. In this construction, both fillers typically refer to two members of a specifically named set. It is claimed that the elements of the set do not necessarily have to be completely identical. However, examples demonstrate that abstract, uncountable nouns can also act as fillers (for instance, 'There is evil and evil'), as well as proper names – the latter in very specific meanings, typically atypical for proper names:

(13) Есть Михалковы и Михалковы.

'There are Michalkovs and Michalkovs'.

The proper name as a filler (N') can perform two specific functions. If the filler is used in the plural and implies general reference (for example, 'There are Tanjas and Tanjas'), the construction signifies that individuals with disparate characteristics may be referred to by the name Tanja. In instances where specific referents are intended, as in (13), the construction indicates that the concrete representatives of the family bearing this surname are dissimilar to each other.

When used in the singular with an individual-specific reference, the phrase may signify that the referent exhibits disparate behaviours or actions in varying contexts. Alternatively, it may indicate that the same person can be perceived in different ways at different stages of their life and work. E. g.:

(14) Есть Михалков и Михалков: Михалков времён фильма «Пять вечеров» и Михалков времён фильма «Сибирский цирюльник». И это словно бы два разных режиссёра.

'There is Michalkov and Michalkov. There is Michalkov the director of *Five Evenings* and that of *Siberian Barber*. As if they were two different film directors.'

– N' больше, N' меньше

(15) Морщинкой больше, морщинкой меньше, какая разница?

'A wrinkle more, a wrinkle less, what difference does it make?'

This PhC expresses indifference: the exact number of referents of the filler N' does not matter (only for this specific situation or generally, always). In most cases, an explicit commentary on the same illocutionary force of irrelevance or indifference appears in the right-hand context, and less frequently in the left. Typical examples include: "What's the difference?", "What does it change?", or "Who cares?" "Who is interested in this?"; 'Who is worried about it?'; "Big deal!"; "It doesn't matter". Such a comment enhances the meaning of the construction. However, the filler is self-sufficient, so the construction is often used without such additions in the context: the idea of irrelevance already arises from it alone. One of the most frequent constructions is the anaphoric phrase 'One more, one less'.

Though not frequently, one can find PNs in this construction e.g. *Васей больше, Васей меньше* 'One Vasilij more, one Vasilij less', implying either the name 'Vasilij' itself (for example, there are already seven people named Vasilij in the room, the eighth doesn't count), or the speaker uses a linguistic play effect, designating a person by their name as if it were a common noun. Thus, it usually emphasizes a sense of contempt towards that specific person named Vasilij.

4.2 Figurative use: metaphors, metonymies, similes, hyperboles

– N (из Pron $_{Gen}$) ещё тот/та/те!

(16) Хозяйка из меня ещё та!
'I am not a good housewife'

This PhC provides a critical evaluation, indicating that the assessed subject fails to meet the established criteria or expectations for objects of this class. Both inanimate objects and living beings can be the subject of evaluation. However, it is observed that fillers, which are referents of living beings, occur with greater frequency.

In this PhC PNs are employed exclusively in a metaphorical or metonymic capacity:

(17) Шекспир из него ещё тот.
'His poetry is not that of Shakespeare'

One can imagine proper names in the role of fillers only in the names of roles (metonymy): *Татьяна из неё ещё та!* 'She plays Tat'jana, well, so and so'; *Онегин из него ещё тот!* 'He plays Onegin, well, so and so': someone is trying to portray (in a movie, on stage) characters from well-known literary works or historical personalities. Similar things could be said about someone who tries their luck in painting, poetry, sports, and other enjoyable hobbies of life, e. g.:

Шекспир из него ещё тот 'His poetry is not that of Shakespeare' or *Модильяни из него ещё тот* 'His painting falls miles short of Modigliani (He's far from being a real Modigliani – though he clearly thinks he is).'

– Это ли не X?

(18) Это ли не подло?
'Isn't that just mean?'

This PhC conveys an evaluative stance that the speaker invites the listener to consider and potentially align with. Simultaneously, it performs an act of suggestion, exerting a subtle persuasive force. Typically, the construction follows a brief narrative or situation, which the speaker then assesses while implicitly seeking the listener's agreement or reaction. It often takes the form of a rhetorical question or dramatic exclamation, lending the utterance a heightened emotional tone. Therefore, PNs may be employed as slot fillers, either metaphorically or metonymically, provided that the filler is understood to carry an evaluative meaning. To illustrate, consider the following example:

(19) Это ли не король Лир?
'Isn't that just like King Lear?'

The phrase "Isn't this just like King Lear?" implies a comparison with the behaviour or situation of King Lear, suggesting a sense of dramatic or tragic irony. The phrase conveys the idea that the person's actions or circumstances are similar to those of King Lear, particularly in terms of generosity, ingratitude or misfortune.

– Тоже мне, N!
N, indeed!

(20) Тоже мне адвокат!
'What a lawyer!'

This PhC expresses disapproval, criticism, or distrust towards a second or third person — primarily regarding their claims to a specific social role, professionalism, acknowledgement of competence in a particular field, or rights to do or say something (for example, lecturing someone).

(20) can be said to a person who is a lawyer, and in this case, the assessment is directed at their professional activity: 'a bad, useless lawyer'. However, the same phrase can be uttered towards someone who, for instance, is defending

another person without being a lawyer. In this case, the person is metaphorically assessed as a 'lawyer' with mockery and disrespect. The evaluation, once again, is negative.

In the role of fillers, PNs can also be used, but only metaphorically, for example:

(21a) Тоже мне, Цицерон!
'Cicero, indeed'

Or directed at a person who has just delivered an impassioned speech:

(21b) Тоже мне, Грета Гарбо!
'Greta Garbo, indeed!'
(Meaning: 'So, are you trying to play Cicero/Greta Garbo here? If yes, your playing is bad').

This PhC, if used with proper names – often those of literary characters or well-known figures – serves to highlight the evident mismatch between a person's portrayal and the qualities of the named referent, or to signal the inappropriateness of a particular action in the given context (Baranov and Dobrovol'skij, 2024, 178).

– N отдыхает!
  N is resting!

(22) Гёте отдыхает!
'Goethe is resting'
(meaning: 'Goethe cannot hold a candle to you').

This construction, which occurs with high frequency and almost exclusively with PNs, expresses strong appreciation for someone's talent, professionalism, or the exceptional quality of a result. The praise is conveyed through an indirect comparison with a well-known personality, whose name simultaneously reflects the speaker's evaluation of that figure and invokes their widely recognized abilities. For example, (22) implies that someone writes better poetry than Goethe himself – used here as a benchmark for poetic excellence. Occasionally, the slot may also be filled with a generic label (e.g., *Античные философы отдыхают* 'Even the Ancient Philosophers couldn't compete with you'), though PNs remain the more typical choice in this PhC.

The comparison is made in favor of the compared element: the anchor-verb *rests* here means 'cannot serve as a basis for comparison'. The construction functions as a rhetorical figure, marked by imagery and hyperbole. PNs are often used as fillers with a metaphorical function, and the entire phraseological construction itself can also be interpreted as a metaphor.

An interesting aspect is the referential nature of the filler noun: it reflects both specific-individual and general referential assignment**.** For instance, the name *Stanislavskij* in the construction *Stanislavsky is taking a rest!* simultaneously refers to the concrete historical figure Konstantin Stanislavskij and evokes associations related to him (in this case, the "Stanislavskij system", the theory of the actor's full immersion into the character being portrayed on stage), while at the same time functions in its metaphorical meaning – 'any very talented person who understands theatrical art and can transform into a role', thus fulfilling the role of general reference.

The semantics and pragmatics of this construction rely on a complex interplay between direct reference and figurative meaning, which makes such expressions powerful tools of discursive influence. Thus, the construction demonstrates how a concrete, real-world referent can be used as a tool for metaphorical disparagement, which, in turn, serves as a powerful means of glorifying another, unnamed subject in the phraseological construction. This linguistic mechanism makes it a valuable object of study within the frameworks of phraseology, pragmatics, referential theory, and onomastics.

5. Concluding Remarks

This study has examined the functions and roles of PNs within phraseological constructions (PhCs), emphasizing their semantic, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions. The PN serves as a semantic and pragmatic component of particular significance, and its role in such constructions reveals several noteworthy features. While the referential function may appear primary, it is not the most relevant unless integrated with denotative, connotative, and symbolic dimensions. It is clear that the semantics of PNs imposes certain constraints, and not all phraseme constructions permit fillers of this type. The analysis highlights the distinctive value of PNs as slot fillers in PhCs, demonstrating their capacity to convey referential and metaphorical meanings that go beyond those of generic nouns. The main findings are summarized below.

1. **Referential and Context-Dependent Use** – PNs in PhCs often perform a referential function, identifying specific individuals or groups while reflecting situational or contextual relevance. Examples illustrate how PNs establish a sense of individuality, such as emphasizing unique traits or re-establishing relational boundaries.

2. **Metaphorical and Connotational Use** – Many PhCs leverage the symbolic and cultural connotations of proper names to express abstract or figurative meanings. For instance, names of well-known figures or characters are used metaphorically to convey certain traits or evoke cultural associations, often serving as a shortcut to complex ideas.
3. **Cultural Specificity** – The metaphorical use of proper names often reflects cultural nuances, with the interpretative value of a PN depending on the shared knowledge within a cultural or linguistic community. Certain names carry connotations that are accessible only to individuals familiar with specific cultural or historical contexts.
4. **Pragmatic Implications** – The use of proper names in PhCs can introduce specific pragmatic effects, such as irony, humor, or emphasis, it can also be used to re-establish relational distances.
5. **Semantic Constraints** – The inclusion of PNs as fillers in PhCs entails both semantic and pragmatic constraints, as not all constructions are compatible with this type of filler. The study identifies several typologies and classification criteria, including distinctions between referential and metaphorical uses, as well as between individual and collective referents.
6. **Variability in Name Forms** – The study also discusses the potential for classifying PhCs based on the form of the name used (e.g., first name, full name, nickname) or the frequency of name repetition within a construction. These classifications reveal further layers of complexity in the interaction between PNs and phraseological patterns.

This research underscores the multifunctionality of PNs in PhCs and their capacity to enrich the expressive potential of language. By exploring the interplay between semantics, pragmatics, and cultural specificity, the study provides a foundation for further investigations into the role of PNs across different languages and phraseological contexts.

These findings not only refine the semantic categorization of PhCs involving PNs but also point to promising directions for future research. Upcoming studies could investigate the interaction between these constructions and cognitive salience or narrative framing, particularly in multilingual settings. In applied linguistics, our classification may serve as a valuable tool for teaching pragmatic competence in L2 instruction, illustrating how proper names can evoke culturally shared scripts and stereotypes. Finally, cross-cultural investigations might explore whether–and how–similar constructions arise in other languages, especially those with different conventions surrounding name usage or referential humor.

Acknowledgements

This paper was created within the framework of the COST Action CA 22115 'A Multilingual Repository of Phraseme Constructions in Central and Eastern European Languages (PhraConRep),' see Action CA22115 - COST.

References

Aleksieieva, Natalia. 2021. "Associative Identification of Proper Names: A Cognitive Approach". Wisdom 2(18): 194–203. DOI: 10.24234/wisdom.v18i2.507.

Brozović Rončević, Dunja, and Milena Žic Fuchs. 2005. "Metaphorical processes as the basis of proper names". Quaderni Internazionali di Rivista italiana di onomastica: RIOn International Series 1: 33–44.

Baranov, Anatolij, and Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij. 2024. Očerki obščej i russkoj frazeologii. Moskva: Jazyki slavjanskix kul'tur.

Corazza, Eros. 2017. "Proper names: Gender, context sensitivity, and conversational implicatures". In Reference and Representation in Thought and Language, ,ed by María de Ponte and Kepa Korta, 20–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Corazza, Eros. 2021. The Pragmatics and Cognition of Naming. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Delgado, Laura. 2019. "Between singularity and generality: the semantic life of proper names". Linguistics and Philosophy 42: 381–417.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2011. "Phraseologie und Konstruktionsgrammatik". In Konstruktionsgrammatik III. Aktuelle Fragen und Lösungsansätze, edited by Alexander Lasch, and Alexander Ziem, 110–130. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2012. "Phrasem-Konstruktionen in Parallel-Korpora". In Idiome, Konstruktionen, „verblümte rede". Beiträge zu Geschichte der germanistischen Phraseologieforschung, edited by Michael Prinz, and Ulrike Richter-Vapaatalo, 327–340. Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2016. "Grammatika konstrukcij i frazeologija". Voprosy jazykoznanija 3: 7–21.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 2018. "Sind Idiome Konstruktionen?" In Sprachliche Verfestigung. Wortverbindungen, Muster, Phrasem-Konstruktionen (=Studien zur Deutschen Sprache, 79), edited by Kathrin Steyer, 11–23. Tübingen: Narr.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij, and Elisabeth Piirainen. 2005. Figurative Language: Cross-Cultural and Cross-Linguistic Perspectives. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Fillmore, Charles J. 1988. "The Mechanisms of Construction Grammar". Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society 14: 35–55.

Fillmore, Charles J., Kay, Paul, and Mary C. O'Connor. 1988. "Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of *let alone*". Language 64(3): 501– 538.

Finkbeiner, Rita. 2021. "Konstruktionen an der Grammatik-Pragmatik Schnittstelle". Linguistische Berichte 265(1): 5–37.

Finkbeiner, Rita. 2022. "'Kein ZDF-Film ohne Küsse im Heu.' Kein X ohne Y zwischen Lexikon, Grammatik und Pragmatik". In Konstruktionen zwischen Lexikon und Grammatik: Phrasem-Konstruktionen monolingual, bilingual und multilingual, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, Fabio Mollica, and Elmar Schafroth, 55–82. Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110770209-003

Fleischer, Wolfgang. 1997. Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Fonjakova, Ol'ga. 1990. Imja sobstvennoe v xudožestvennom tekste. Leningrad: LGU.

Goldberg, Adele E. 1995. Constructions. A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.

Goldberg, Adele E. 2006. Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goldberg, Adele E. 2013. "Constructionist Approaches". In The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar, edited by Thomas Hoffmann, and Graeme Trousdale, 15–31. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195396683.013.0002.

Hockett, Charles F. 1958. A course in modern linguistics. New York: Macmillan.

Iomdin, Leonid. 2010. "Sintaksičeskie frazemy: meždu leksikoj i sintaksisom". In Teoretičeskie problemy russkogo sintaksisa. Vzaimodejstvie grammatiki i slovarja, edited by Jurij Apresjan, Igor' Boguslavskij, Leonid Iomdin, and Vladimir Sannikov, 141– 190. Moskva: Jazyki slavjanskix kul'tur.

Janda, Laura, Mihail Kopotev and Tore Nesset. 2020. "Constructions, their families and their neighborhoods: the case of 'durak durakom' 'a fool times two'". Russian Linguistics 44: 109–127. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11185-020-09225-y.

Jeshion, Robin. 2015. "Referentialism and predicativism about proper names". Erkenntnis 80: 363-404. DOI: 10.1007/s10670-014-9700-3.

Kay, Paul, and Charles J. Fillmore. 1999. "Grammatical constructions and linguistic generalizations: The 'What's X doing Y?' Construction". Language 75: 1–33.

Lyons, John. 1977. Semantics: Volume 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mel'čuk, Igor. 2021. "Morphemic and Syntactic Phrasemes". Yearbook of Phraseology 12: 33– 74. https://doi.org/10.1515/phras-2021-0004

Mel'čuk, Igor. 2023. General Phraseology. Theory and Practice. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen. "Phraseology, patterns and Construction Grammar: An introduction". In Productive Patterns in Phraseology and Construction Grammar: A Multilingual Approach, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, 1– 26. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2022.

Mellado Blanco, Carmen, Fabio Mollica and Elmar Schafroth. 2022. "Phrasem-Konstruktionen in der heutigen Forschung: ein Überblick". In Konstruktionen zwischen Lexikon und Grammatik: Phrasem-Konstruktionen monolingual, bilingual und multilingual, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, Fabio Mollica, and Elmar Schafroth, 1– 18. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110770209-001.

O'Rourke, Thomas, and Ruth Diego Balaguer. 2020. "Names and their meanings: A dual-process account of proper-name encoding and retrieval". Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews 108: 308–321. 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2019.11.005

Pavlova, Anna. 2024. "It is what it is': Phraseme Constructions Repository". In I fraseologismi schematici. Questioni descrittive e teoriche, edited by Federica Casadei, and Sabine Elisabeth Koesters Gensini, 197– 214. Roma: Aracne.

Pavlova, Anna, and Maria Alekseyeva. 2022. "Syntactic Phraseological Constructions: Theoretical Interpretation from the Perspective of Bilingual Lexicography". Philological Class (27)2: 52– 67.

Pierini, Patrizia. 2008. "Opening a Pandora's Box: Proper Names in English Phraseology." Linguistik online 36(4): 43–58.

Reszegi, Katalin. 2023. "Proper names in cognitive onomastics: Meaning and categorization of proper names." Onomástica desde América Latina 4(1): 1–32. DOI: 10.48075/odal.v4i1.30589

Sato, Eriko. 2016. "Proper Names in Translational Contexts". Theory and Practice in Language Studies 6: 1–10.

Schafroth, Elmar. 2023. "Familienähnlichkeiten und Konstruktionsfamilien: Begriffsbestimmungen und Analysen". In Konstruktionsgrammatik IX. Konstruktionsfamilien im Deutschen, edited by Fabio Mollica, and Sören Stumpf, 27–54. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Steyer, Kathrin. 2013. Usuelle Wortverbindungen. Zentrale Muster des Sprachgebrauchs aus korpusanalytischer Sicht. Tübingen: Narr.

Šmelëv, Dmitrij N. 1977. Sovremennyj russkij jazyk: Leksika. Moskva: Nauka.

Švedova, Natalija Ju. 1960. Očerki po sintaksisu russkoj razgovornoj reči. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR.

Švedova, Natalija Ju. 1970. Grammatika sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka. Moskva: Nauka.

Szerszunowicz, Joanna. 2012 "Connotations and Schemata in Phraseology (on the example of the Polish unit 'druga Japonia')". In Aspects of English Studies in the 21st Century Linguistic and Cultural, edited by Ai Inoue, and Taakaki Kanzaki, 398–427. Tokyo: Kaitakusha.

Van Langendonck, Willy. 2007. Theory and Typology of Proper Names. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Veličko, Alla V. 1996. Sintaksičeskaja frazeologija dlja russkix i inostrancev: Učebnoe posobie. Moskva: Filologičeskij fakul'tet MGU im. M. V. Lomonosova.

Veličko, Alla V. 2016. Predloženija frazeologizirovannoj struktury v russkom jazyke. PhD Thesis. Moskva.

Ziem, Alexander. 2014. "Konstruktionsgrammatische Konzepte eines Konstruktikons". In Grammatik als Netzwerk von Konstruktionen. Sprachwissen im Fokus der Konstruktionsgrammatik, edited by Alexander Lasch, and Alexander Ziem, 15–34. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Ziem, Alexander. 2018. "Construction Grammar meets phraseology". Linguistik online (90) 3(18): 75–114. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.13092/lo.90.4316

Pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif : acte illocutionnaire et analyse contrastive français-espagnol

Mélody Rodríguez Cebrián
Defense University Center of Zaragoza
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7264-2473

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c769

RÉSUMÉ

Le décodage des pragmatèmes varie non seulement selon leur forme linguistique, mais aussi selon des éléments extralinguistiques. Les caractéristiques pragmatiques des pragmatèmes fournissent les informations nécessaires pour décoder l'intention illocutoire de l'émetteur et permettent l'effet performatif sur le récepteur. L'objectif de cette étude est de vérifier l'acte illocutoire primaire de 40 pragmatèmes informatifs apposés et de déterminer si deux langues romanes, le français et l'espagnol, présentent un usage similaire dans la transmission de l'intention illocutoire de l'émetteur. Cet article s'inscrit dans le cadre de la théorie des actes de langage et propose une analyse pragmatique et contrastive de pragmatèmes informatifs tels que *Chien méchant*, en français, ou *Perro peligroso*, en espagnol. L'analyse de la forme linguistique et des informations extralinguistiques fournies par les pragmatèmes permet d'identifier deux actes illocutoires : les actes représentatifs et les actes directifs. La comparaison français-espagnol révèle que, même si les pragmatèmes informatifs semblent similaires, les références culturelles peuvent ne pas coïncider dans les deux langues.

Keywords: pragmatèmes; illocutionary acts; directive acts; behavioural pragmatemes.

ABSTRACT

The decoding of pragmatemes varies not only according to their linguistic form but also according to extralinguistic issues. The pragmatic aspects of pragmatemes provide the information required to decode the illocutionary intention of the sender and allow for the performative effect on the receiver. The objective of this study is to verify the primary illocutionary act of 40 informative affixed pragmatemes and to verify whether two Romance languages, French and Spanish, follow a similar use of conveying the sender's illocutionary intention. This article follows the Speech Act Theory and offers a pragmatic and a contrastive analysis of informative pragmatemes such as *Chien méchant*, in French, or *Perro peligroso*, in Spanish. The analysis of the linguistic form and the extralinguistic information provided by the pragmatemes enables to identify two illocutionary acts : representative and directive acts. The French-Spanish comparison

reveals that even if informative pragmatemes seem to be similar, the cultural references may not coincide in both languages.

Keywords: pragmatèmes; illocutionary acts; directive acts; behavioural pragmatemes.

1. Introduction

Des énoncés tels que *Chien méchant* ou *Sol mouillé* font partie d'un ensemble de pragmatèmes apposés sur un support écrit qui véhiculent une information utile pour l'action comportementale du destinataire. Introduit par Mel'čuk (1993), le concept de pragmatème se différencie des autres unités phraséologiques grâce au figement pragmatique qui le rend dépendant de la situation d'énonciation, comme *À tes souhaits* est figé comme réponse à un éternuement. D'autres auteurs, comme Blanco et Mejri (2018) ou González-Rey (2021), ont contribué à l'élargissement des études à propos des pragmatèmes en mettant toujours l'accent sur l'autonomie syntactique et le figement pragmatique lié à la situation d'énonciation. González-Rey (2021, 103) affirme que le pragmatème est "un énoncé récurrent et ritualisé, employé dans une situation concrète et chargé d'implicites langagiers et comportementaux". Cette auteure propose la division entre pragmatèmes conversationnels, si ceux-ci impliquent une situation conversationnelle (p. ex., *Je vous en prie* ou *Tu parles !*), et ceux qui sont comportementaux, s'il s'agit d'induire le destinataire à exécuter une action comportementale (p. ex., *Stop* ou *Ne pas déranger*) (González-Rey, 2021, 109–115). Dans le deuxième groupe, elle dénomme *pragmatèmes comportementaux apposés* les "énoncés entièrement conventionnels, ritualisés et universellement admis, impliquant une communication unilatérale (sur affiches, panneaux, etc.), liés à l'écrit, accolés à des supports susceptibles d'être reconnus de tout le monde" (González-Rey, 2020, 47) qui visent l'exécution d'une action par le destinataire, par exemple, les énoncés inscrits sur des affiches publicitaires (p. ex., *Soldes*) ou des panneaux d'interdiction (p. ex., *Défense de fumer*). Auteures comme Dostie et Jobin-Tessier (2021) ont proposé des études pragmatiques sur ce type de pragmatèmes, concrètement sur ceux qu'elles appellent les pragmatèmes de l'affichage (semi) public, par exemple, *Gare au chien* ou *Attention à nos enfants*. Et d'autres auteurs comme Vorobey (2011) ou Blanco (2013) ont proposé des études contrastives qui incluent des exemples de pragmatèmes de ce type.

Le côté pragmatique joue un rôle essentiel dans le processus de codage et de décodage de ces pragmatèmes qui sont présents dans notre vie courante. L'opacité qui peut découler des pragmatèmes selon leur degré d'ancrage dans la situation d'énonciation peut les rendre plus référentiels et dénotatifs ou plus inférentiels et connotatifs (González-Rey, 2021, 115). Cela implique de tenir compte des informations qui dépassent le cadre purement linguistique. Les indices extralinguistiques de la situation d'énonciation du pragmatème apportent

l'information nécessaire pour décoder le message, extraire l'intention de l'émetteur et rendre possible l'effet performatif associé aux pragmatèmes comportementaux, comme le montre González Rey dans son étude de 2020. En ce qui concerne l'analyse contrastive, la compositionnalité de ces unités n'est pas vue comme une difficulté. Néanmoins, Blanco et Mejri (2018, 175) soulignent que la proximité linguistique de deux langues, comme le français et l'espagnol, n'est pas garante de l'absence de variations dans la représentation d'une situation similaire. Ainsi, la composante pragmatique de ce type d'entités comporte une difficulté supplémentaire à l'établissement de la valeur référentielle et des correspondances langagières.

Malgré l'intérêt d'étude, ces pragmatèmes écrits à support dédié qui visent l'exécution d'une action comportementale, ou pragmatèmes comportementaux apposés d'après González-Rey (2021), ont été relégués au second plan dans les études phraséologiques. C'est dans cet état des choses que nous proposons l'étude pragmatique et contrastive d'un ensemble de pragmatèmes comportementaux apposés appartenant à l'affichage informatif en français et en espagnol (p. ex., *Hors service* et *Fuera de servicio*, respectivement). Notre première hypothèse de travail suggère que les pragmatèmes comportementaux de l'affichage informatif impliquent d'autres actes illocutionnaires différents à ceux purement informatifs. Notre deuxième hypothèse prévoit un usage similaire mais non pas identique des pragmatèmes comportementaux dans chaque langue d'étude. D'une part, l'analyse pragmatique des différents composants des pragmatèmes comportementaux favorisera le repérage des différents types d'actes sous-jacents impliqués. D'autre part, l'analyse contrastive des pragmatèmes en français et en espagnol et les informations associées facilitera l'observation de l'équivalence entre les pragmatèmes des deux langues et permettra de vérifier si la conception d'une taxinomie commune est possible.

2. Méthodologie

Cet article comprend l'analyse de 40 pragmatèmes comportementaux apposés de l'affichage informatif qui ont été sélectionnés d'un corpus bilingue français-espagnol de pragmatèmes comportementaux apposés créé par nos soins[1]. Ce corpus a été constitué à partir de relevés systématiques de 480 énoncés apposés sur des affiches dans l'espace public (panneaux, vitrines, portes, transports, etc.), collectés dans deux pays représentatifs pour chaque langue: la France et l'Espagne. Les données ont été récoltées en contexte réel, principalement en milieu urbain, entre 2022 et 2023. Les propriétés pragmatiques et situationnelles de ces entités phraséologiques exigent une délimitation d'usage de

1 Ce corpus de pragmatèmes comportementaux apposés a été créé pour notre recherche doctorale soutenue en novembre 2024 (Rodríguez-Cebrián, 2024).

la langue. Une même situation dans deux pays francophones ou hispanophones peut restreindre un pragmatème différent, par exemple, selon qu'il s'agit de la France ou du Québec ou selon qu'il s'agit de l'Espagne ou de la Colombie.

Parmi l'ensemble des données, nous avons retenu 20 pragmatèmes en français de France et 20 en espagnol d'Espagne, en nous limitant aux énoncés dont la forme linguistique implique un acte illocutionnaire représentatif, selon la typologie de Searle (1975a). Cette typologie distingue cinq catégories fondamentales : les assertifs ou représentatifs (énoncés qui décrivent l'état du monde, comme informer, affirmer, constater), les directifs (qui visent à faire faire quelque chose à l'interlocuteur, comme ordonner ou demander), les promissifs, les expressifs, et les déclaratifs. Dans le cadre de cette étude, nous nous sommes concentrés sur les énoncés représentatifs qui visent à décrire un état du monde, à informer, constater ou affirmer un fait. Ceux-ci sont fréquents dans les affichages informatifs non interactifs, souvent à visée descriptive ou informative (par exemple : *Ouvert*, *Zone de silence* ou *Eau non potable*).

L'analyse s'est fondée sur la théorie des actes de parole développée par Austin (1962) et prolongée par Searle (1969, 1975a). Selon cette approche, tout énoncé linguistique accomplit un acte au moment de son énonciation : il ne s'agit pas seulement de transmettre une information, mais aussi d'agir sur le plan communicatif. Trois actes se distinguent dans cette approche : l'acte locutoire (le contenu linguistique), l'acte illocutoire (l'intention communicative) et l'acte perlocutoire (l'effet sur le destinataire). Searle (1975b) introduit en outre une distinction nécessaire pour notre analyse : l'acte illocutoire primaire (l'intention principale du locuteur) et l'acte illocutoire secondaire (l'acte formulé littéralement). Les énoncés représentatifs peuvent transmettre un acte primaire littéralement ou d'une façon indirecte (actes de parole indirects) de façon que l'interlocuteur est amené à l'inférer à partir du contexte.

Cette théorie nous a permis de repérer les actes illocutionnaires primaires véhiculés par chaque énoncé, ainsi que les contraintes situationnelles et extralinguistiques (support matériel prototypique, lieu d'énonciation et conventions socioculturelles) qui conditionnent leur emploi.

Les pragmatèmes français de l'affichage informatif retenus pour l'analyse sont les suivants: *Soldes*, *Chien méchant*, *Ouvert*, *Nous sommes complets*, *Je reviens dans 5 minutes*, *Carte bleue acceptée à partir de 5€*, *Menu du jour*, *Fait maison*, *Hors service*, *Sol mouillé*, *Zone de silence*[2], *Eau non potable*, *L'heure silencieuse*, *Vous êtes sous vidéoprotection*, *Bébé à bord*, *Toilettes*, *Prochainement au cinéma*, *Angles morts*, *Espace sans tabac*

2 Ce pragmatème correspond au français de la Belgique. Bien que le corpus ait été constitué à partir de pragmatèmes émis dans la France, nous avons choisi d'inclure *Zone de silence*, caractéristique dans les trains de la Belgique. Cette exception est due à sa forte équivalence fonctionnelle avec le pragmatème espagnol *Coche en silencio* émis dans certaines voitures des trains à grand vitesse. Cette inclusion permet de souligner une réponse pragmatique similaire à une même situation communicative, même en l'absence d'un équivalent standardisé dans la France.

et *Entrée gratuite*. Pour l'espagnol, nous avons retenu les pragmatèmes dont la forme linguistique ou la situation d'énonciation semble équivalente : *Rebajas* (lit. 'Soldes'), *Perro peligroso* (lit. 'Chien dangereux'), *Abierto* (lit. 'Ouvert'), *Aforo completo* (lit. 'Capacité maximale atteinte'), *Vuelvo en 5 minutos* (lit. 'Je reviens dans 5 minutes'), *Tarjeta de crédito para compras superiores a los 5€* (lit. 'Carte bancaire pour achats supérieurs à 5 €'), *Menú del día* (lit. 'Menu du jour'), *Casero* (lit. 'Fait maison'), *Fuera de servicio*, (lit. 'Hors service'), *Suelo mojado* (lit. 'Sol mouillé'), *Coche en silencio* (lit. 'Voiture en silence'), *Agua no potable* (lit. 'Eau non potable'), *La hora silenciosa* (lit. 'L'heure silencieuse'), *Zona de videovigilancia* (lit. 'Zone de vidéoprotection'), *Bebé a bordo* (lit. 'Bébé à bord'), *Aseos* (lit. 'Toilettes'), *Próximamente en cines* (lit. 'Prochainement au cinéma'), *Ángulo muerto* (lit. 'Angle mort'), *Espacio sin humo* (lit. 'Espace sans fumée) et *Entrada gratuita* (lit. 'Entrée gratuite').

L'analyse a été menée de façon qualitative et contrastive. Dans un premier temps, nous avons examiné pour chaque pragmatème le contenu propositionnel et l'acte illocutionnaire qu'il véhicule. Dans un second temps, nous avons confronté les résultats entre les deux langues afin d'identifier des convergences et divergences pragmatiques entre les deux langues et cultures.

3. Les pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif

3.1 Analyse pragmatique

Tout pragmatème comportemental est composé d'un signe linguistique, une intention de l'émetteur et un effet attendu sur le destinataire. Premièrement, en ce qui concerne les caractéristiques formelles de l'énoncé, ces pragmatèmes comportementaux de l'affichage informatif sont des énoncés composés par des lexèmes (p. ex., *Toilettes*, *Ouvert*, en français et *Aseos*, *Abierto*, en espagnol), des syntagmes (p. ex., fr. *Entrée gratuite*, es. *Entrada gratuita*) et même des propositions (p. ex., *Nous sommes complets*).

Deuxièmement, l'acte illocutionnaire est transmis non seulement par l'énoncé mais aussi par des indices extralinguistiques. Le contenu propositionnel de ces énoncés pragmatémiques effectue des actes de parole représentatifs de façon que, suivant la proposition de Searle (1975a, 354), le locuteur représente le monde avec les mots et exprime une proposition qui peut être évaluée en termes de vérité ou de fausseté. Ces énoncés pragmatémiques représentent sémantiquement des états (p. ex., fr. *Sol mouillé*, es. *Suelo mojado*), des propriétés (p. ex., fr. *Eau non potable*, es. *Agua no potable*) et des activités (p. ex., fr. *L'heure silencieuse*, es. *La hora silenciosa*). Il y a deux énoncés qui présentent un acte de parole promissif, les énoncés *Je reviens dans 5 minutes*, en français, et *Vuelvo en cinco minutos*, en espagnol, inscrits sur une affiche montrée dans la porte d'un commerce. Néanmoins, selon les postulats de Searle (1975b) il y a des énoncés qui disent ce qu'ils disent mais ils transmettent également des informations supplémentaires.

Ainsi, l'analyse de l'acte illocutionnaire ne peut se limiter qu'à l'observation du contenu propositionnel de l'énoncé. Il est indispensable de tenir compte des indices extralinguistiques qui complètent l'énonciation des pragmatèmes. Ces indices sont apportés par les coordonnées situationnelles (temps, lieu, événement, action, état et entité) (Blanco et Mejri, 2018) et par les caractéristiques du support d'écriture (couleurs, formes et pictogrammes). Les indices extralinguistiques et pragmatiques véhiculent, indirectement, un acte illocutionnaire directif qui est associé à l'exécution d'une action comportementale du destinataire. Par exemple, le pragmatème *Chien méchant* transmet les caractéristiques d'un animal pour dissuader le destinataire d'accéder à un endroit privé et le pragmatème *Sol mouillé* décrit l'état du sol pour empêcher une personne de glisser. De plus, à première vue, quelques énoncés comme *Eau non potable* et *L'heure silencieuse* présentent une structure similaire, à savoir un syntagme nominal composé d'un nom et d'un adjectif. Toutefois, leur valeur sémantique diffère. *Eau non potable* désigne une propriété stable et inhérente du référent (l'eau), tandis que *L'heure silencieuse* renvoie à une action ou une règle contextuelle : l'instauration temporaire d'un état de silence. En ce sens, nous considérons qu'il s'agit d'une activité programmée plutôt qu'une propriété intrinsèque. Cette interprétation est renforcée par l'usage contextuel de ce pragmatème dans les espaces publics (notamment les supermarchés), où il délimite un intervalle d'action déterminé.

Ainsi, ces pragmatèmes entraînent deux intentions : porter l'information du contenu propositionnel à la connaissance du destinataire et conduire le destinataire à l'exécution (ou non-exécution) d'une action.

Troisièmement, ce type de pragmatèmes est émis de façon que le destinataire puisse se servir de l'information de l'énoncé pour exécuter ou ne pas exécuter une action. Pour que l'effet se produise, le destinataire doit reconnaître l'intention du locuteur. Au-delà de l'information transmise par les énoncés, les indices extralinguistiques doivent lui montrer les intentions réelles. En reprenant l'exemple mentionné ci-dessus, après la lecture de l'affiche informative contenant le pragmatème *Chien méchant*, le destinataire devrait décoder le message et décider de ne pas entrer dans la propriété concernée. Dans ce cas, les indices sont liés à la localisation spatiale de l'affiche (placée généralement sur une porte d'entrée ou une grille d'une propriété privée), à la composition de l'affiche (par exemple, l'image d'un chien et le pictogramme d'interdiction) et aux connaissances encyclopédiques du destinataire ("le chien de cette propriété est méchant ; un chien méchant peut attaquer, spécialement, les personnes qu'il ne connaît pas ; ce chien ne me connaît pas, donc il peut m'attaquer"). Ainsi, avec l'énonciation de ce pragmatème l'émetteur peut, même si son chien n'est pas méchant, obtenir un effet et dissuader le destinataire d'exécuter une action, concrètement pénétrer dans sa propriété. Dans le cas du pragmatème *L'heure silencieuse*, nous considérons qu'il s'agit d'une tentative de l'émetteur pour induire le destinataire à s'adhérer à cette activité programmée.

3.2 Analyse contrastive français-espagnol

En ce qui concerne la structure du signe linguistique, la plupart des énoncés présentent des structures correspondantes dans les deux langues : des lexèmes comme les substantifs *Rebajas*, en espagnol et *Soldes*, en français, ou comme les adjectifs *Abierto* et *Ouvert* ; des syntagmes nominaux (p. ex., es. *Agua no potable*, fr. *Eau non potable*), adverbiaux (p. ex., es. *Próximamente en cines*, fr, *Prochainement au cinéma*) et prépositionnels (p. ex., es. *Fuera de servicio*, fr. *Hors service*) ; et des propositions (p. ex., es. *Vuelvo en 5 minutos*, fr. *Je reviens dans 5 minutes*). Néanmoins, il y a trois paires de pragmatèmes qui ne présentent pas la même structure dans les deux langues. La paire pragmatémique *Casero*, en espagnol, et *Fait maison*, en français, présentent tous les deux une base adjectivale, mais le premier pragmatème le fait en tant que lexème et le deuxième en tant que syntagme adjectival. Deux autres binômes présentent une différence de forme qui implique l'usage d'un syntagme nominal en espagnol (*Aforo completo* et *Zona videovigilada*) et d'une proposition en français (*Nous sommes complets* et *Vous êtes sous vidéoprotection*[3]).

Quant à l'analyse contrastive du contenu propositionnel seulement deux paires de pragmatèmes présentent une différence à ce niveau. La première est celle composée par *Vous êtes sous vidéoprotection*, en français, et son équivalent en espagnol *Zona videovigilada*. Dans le premier cas, l'énoncé représente l'état situationnel du destinataire, alors que, dans le pragmatème espagnol, l'énoncé décrit plutôt les propriétés d'un espace[4]. L'autre paire qui présente une différence dans l'information transmise par le contenu propositionnel est *Espace sans tabac* et *Espacio sin humo*. Le contenu est similaire mais il n'est pas complètement identique. En français, l'énoncé fait référence à la substance qui est fumé tandis qu'en espagnol l'énoncé évoque la substance dérivée de l'action de fumer.

Chaque binôme pragmatémique suit le même schéma illocutionnaire et présente la même intention et le même effet dans les deux langues. Tous les énoncés analysés ont une forme littérale représentative, en ce qu'ils décrivent ou informent d'un état de choses (p. ex. *Sol mouillé*, *Zone de silence*, *Eau non potable*). Toutefois, ils transmettent une intention illocutoire primaire[5] de type directif indirectement, c'est-à-dire ils visent à influencer le comportement du destinataire sans le formuler explicitement (par exemple, pour le pragmatème *Zone de silence* l'intention de l'émetteur est demander de ne pas faire du bruit). Jusqu'à ce point-là, l'analyse montre un degré de correspondance élevé entre les

3 Un autre pragmatème espagnol *Por su seguridad usted está siendo grabado* présente la même structure linguistique et le même contenu propositionnel que le pragmatème français. Cependant, nous avons sélectionné *Zona videovigilada* comme pragmatème équivalent en espagnol à cause de la familiarité et récurrence de ce pragmatème.

4 Voir note de bas de page numéro 4.

5 Dans la théorie des actes de parole, Searle (1975b, 60–62) fait référence aux actes illocutionnaires primaires (l'intention principale du locuteur, même si elle n'est pas formulée littéralement) et les secondaires (l'acte de parole transmis littéralement par l'énoncé).

pragmatèmes des deux langues (p. ex., fr. *Sol mouillé*, es. *Suelo mojado*). Néanmoins, dans quelques pragmatèmes il y a des indices culturels très marqués qui sont associés à certaines coordonnées situationnelles[6] d'émission qui varient selon chaque langue. Les pragmatèmes *Soldes-Rebajas*, *Menu du jour-Menú del día* et *Zone de silence-Coche en silencio* montrent des différences particulièrement intéressantes. Les coordonnées temporelles d'émission des pragmatèmes *Soldes*, en France, et *Rebajas*, en Espagne, ne sont pas identiques. En Espagne ni les dates ni la durée de cette activité sont fixées par l'État, mais choisies par chaque commerçant selon sa convenance[7], tandis qu'en France ces périodes sont règlementées et fixées par l'État[8]. Ensuite, une autre paire qui présente des différences temporelles est *Menu du jour* et *Menú del día*. Tous les deux concernent une même activité sociale mais les horaires concernés dans chaque pays ne correspondent pas. En France ce repas peut commencer vers 12h alors qu'en Espagne c'est plutôt vers 14h, de façon que les convives peuvent trouver une ou même deux heures de décalage associées à ce pragmatème. Une autre différence culturelle est la mention aux différents plats qui composent le menu et qui apparaissent sur l'ardoise où s'inscrit le pragmatème. Généralement, en France ce pragmatème fera référence à l'entrée, le plat principal et le dessert ou fromage, tandis qu'en Espagne la distribution concernera plutôt un premier plat, un deuxième plat et un dessert ou café. Ainsi, dans chaque pays ce pragmatème est restreint par des coordonnées temporelles et culturelles différentes. Le troisième cas correspond au pragmatème *Coche en silencio* qui apparaît sur des affiches dans certains trains AVE ("Alta Velocidad Española"). En Espagne ce pragmatème présente des restrictions très particulières parce qu'il n'est pas valable pour toutes les compagnies ferroviaires, ni pour tout type de trains, ni pour tout type de ticket de voyage (Renfe, s. d.). En ce qui concerne la France, nous n'avons pas trouvé une équivalence pour ce pragmatème vu que cet espace n'est pas proposé dans les trains français. Cependant, en français nous pouvons trouver le pragmatème *Zone de silence* qui est employé dans certains trains de la Belgique où ces espaces commencent à être testés (Bonnemé, 2023).

4. Discussion

Nous nous sommes posé un double objectif avec l'étude des pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif qui sont restreints par une situation d'énonciation et apposés sur un support d'écriture. D'une part, l'analyse de l'intention visée par

6 Nous suivons les coordonnées situationnelles auxquelles sont liés les pragmatèmes exposées par Blanco et Mejri (2018).

7 España. Jefatura del Estado, Real Decreto-ley 20/2012, de 13 de julio, de medidas para garantizar la estabilidad presupuestaria y de fomento de la competitividad.

8 France. République Française, LOI n° 2019-486 du 22 mai 2019 relative à la croissance et la transformation des entreprises.

l'émetteur avec l'énonciation d'un pragmatème de l'affichage informatif et, d'autre part, l'analyse de l'équivalence entre les pragmatèmes du français et de l'espagnol.

L'analyse pragmatique des pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif dévoile l'apparition d'une intention additionnelle au-delà de l'information. Tous ces pragmatèmes présentent un acte illocutionnaire littéral et secondaire transmis par le signe linguistique et, en plus, un acte illocutionnaire primaire et non formulé explicitement visé par l'émetteur du pragmatème. L'acte illocutionnaire littéral de tous ces énoncés est représentatif d'une réalité sauf dans un cas où nous avons trouvé des énoncés avec un acte promissif où l'émetteur s'engage à exécuter une action future (fr. *Je reviens dans 5 minutes*, es. *Vuelvo en 5 minutos*). Cependant nous considérons comme pertinent de garder ces énoncés comme pragmatèmes informatifs puisqu'ils apportent une information nécessaire pour le destinataire. Ainsi, chacun des énoncés analysés apporte une information à propos d'un état, d'une propriété, d'une activité ou d'une action future de l'émetteur. Cela justifie la pertinence de ces énoncés sous le groupe des pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif. Néanmoins, grâce à l'analyse pragmatique, ces pragmatèmes montrent un acte illocutionnaire primaire et non littéral différent de l'acte véhiculé par l'énoncé. Ces pragmatèmes ne sont pas émis simplement pour renseigner les lecteurs, mais pour qu'ils puissent exécuter (ou ne pas exécuter) une action. Le locuteur représente l'état du sol (p. ex., *Suelo mojado*) pour que le destinataire ne marche pas sur une surface et qu'il ne glisse pas. Un énoncé informe des propriétés d'une substance (p. ex., *Eau non potable*) pour empêcher une personne de la boire. Avec le pragmatème *Je reviens dans 5 minutes* l'émetteur informe le destinataire de son intention de revenir pour que ce dernier puisse décider d'attendre ou de revenir plus tard. D'autres pragmatèmes informent de certaines activités (p. ex., *L'heure silencieuse*) pour que le destinataire puisse décider d'adhérer à leur déroulement. Cet acte illocutionnaire primaire directif justifie leur pertinence sous le groupe des pragmatèmes comportementaux. Ainsi, nous pouvons conclure que tous les pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif possèdent une intention illocutoire autre que le simple fait d'informer et véhiculent, finalement, des actes illocutionnaires directifs indirects.

L'analyse contrastive de ces énoncés en français et en espagnol montre que les actes illocutionnaires secondaires et primaires coïncident dans les deux langues: un acte représentatif et un acte directif, respectivement. Cependant, certains pragmatèmes montrent des différences qui correspondent à la forme du signe linguistique, aux coordonnées situationnelles d'émission des pragmatèmes et aux caractéristiques culturelles associées qui varient selon la langue. Cela met en valeur la composante pragmatique de chaque pragmatème qui met l'accent non seulement sur la langue, mais sur le pays ou la culture où un pragmatème est employé. Cette analyse conclut que pour envisager une classification bilingue des pragmatèmes du français et de l'espagnol le point principal n'est pas

l'énoncé tel quel, mais toutes les informations implicites qui dérivent de l'usage du pragmatème dans chaque culture.

Le vaste ensemble de pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif existant dans les deux langues nous a obligé à en sélectionner un nombre réduit qui peut présenter des limitations dues à la sélection arbitraire. Nous avons délimité notre recherche aux pragmatèmes apposés de l'affichage informatif dans une tentative de nous focaliser sur un seul sous-groupe de ces pragmatèmes. Les pragmatèmes choisis sont employés en France, ce qui complète l'étude de Dostie et Jobin-Tessier (2021) des pragmatèmes de l'affichage (semi-public) du français du Québec. Néanmoins, les résultats de notre étude contribuent à l'élargissement des connaissances du domaine pragmatémique, en général, et des pragmatèmes apposés de González-Rey (2020), en particulier.

En définitive, tous ces pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif sont des pragmatèmes comportementaux qui véhiculent un double acte illocutionnaire : un acte représentatif littéral et secondaire et un acte directif non littéral et primaire qui vise à guider l'action comportementale du destinataire. Les pragmatèmes analysés présentent un même schéma illocutionnaire en français et en espagnol, mais ni la forme, ni le contenu de l'énoncé, ni les implications culturelles de production associées au pragmatème de chaque langue ne sont toujours identiques. La classification français-espagnol et toute autre classification bilingue des pragmatèmes de l'affichage informatif doit partir de l'identification de l'intention de l'émetteur et de la vérification des caractéristiques de la situation qui impose au pragmatème l'usage culturel propre chaque langue.

Références

Austin, John Langshaw. 1962. How to Do Things with Words. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Blanco, Xavier. 2013. "Équivalents de traduction pour les pragmatèmes dans la lexicographie bilingue Français-Espagnol". Lexicographica 29, 5–28.

Blanco, Xavier, et Salah Mejri. 2018. Les Pragmatèmes. Paris : Classiques Garnier.

Bonnemé, Romane. 2023. "Des compartiments silencieux testés jusqu'au 31 mai par la SNCB". RTBF, 24 janvier 2023. https://www.rtbf.be/article/des-compartiments-silencieux-testes-jusqu-au-31-mai-par-la-sncb-11141912

Dostie, Gaétane, et Nathanielle Jobin-Tessier. 2021. "Pragmatèmes de l'affichage (semi)public. Gare au chien mais surtout … Gare au chat". In La théorie Sens-Texte. Concepts clés et applications, édité par Sébastien Marengo, 157–181. Paris : L'Harmattan.

González-Rey, María Isabel. 2020. "Une approche constructionniste de la composan pragmatique des pragmatèmes: Le cas des pragmatèmes 'apposés'". Romanica Olomucensia 32(1) : 29–50. https://doi.org/10.5507/ro.2020.002

González-Rey, María Isabel. 2021. La nouvelle phraséologie du français. Toulouse : Presses Universitaires du Midi.

Mel'čuk, Igor. 1993. "La phraséologie et son rôle dans l'enseignement/apprentissage d'une langue étrangère". Études de Linguistique Appliquée 92 : 82–113.

Renfe. s. d. "Coche en silencio". Consulté le 29 mars 2024. https://www.renfe.com/es/es/viajar/el-viaje/a-bordo/coche-en-silencio

Rodríguez-Cebrián, M. (2024). Pragmatemas comportamentales fijados en francés: propuesta taxonómica y glosario en línea. Tesis doctoral, Universidad de Murcia.

Searle, John R. 1969. Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, John R. 1975a. "A taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts". In Language, Mind and

Knowledge, édité par Keith Gunderson, 344–369. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4166848

Searle, John R. 1975b. "Indirect Speech Acts". In Syntax and Semantics, édité par Peter Cole et Jerry L Morgan 3, 59–82. Nueva York : Academic Press.

Vorobey, Maria. 2011. "French-Spanish-Russian pragmatemes dictionary". In Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Meaning-Text Theory, édité par Igor Boguslavsky, et Leo Wanner, 287–294. Barcelona : Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Left outside: nominal operators in German and French

Martine Dalmas
Sorbonne University
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9161-7537

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c770

ABSTRACT

Building upon previous research on German, and on French, constructions of the type ‹ NP/N + UTTERANCE › are analysed. These constructions are used semantically and pragmatically for the discursive evaluation of an argument and contribute to the structure of the discourse. Placing these nouns in initial position, in advance of the sentence frame, signals the discursive or argumentative interpretation of the following statement, as does the prosodic break and the graphic marking (colon or dash, e.g. *conclusion*: ...) and means that these words are significantly similar to text operators. On the basis of an extended concept of grammar, the construction can be seen as a discourse marker.

The starting point of the study is German, which has a larger number of forms used in this way. A comparison with French shows how differences can be explained which are not system related. These are related to usage, but also to the semantics of the nouns. The use of this construction in certain types of texts and communication is related to the progression of the text, and through a certain degree of routinization (Detges and Waltereit, 2016) these nouns have developed a new (discursive) status.

Keywords: left periphery; pragmaticalization; nominal operators.

1. Introduction

The construction of sentences can be visualized as consisting of a number of "fields", and we shall be concerned here primarily with what will be termed here "outer field", which fulfils similar functions in both German and French[1]. These fields play an important role at both the textual and interactional level, both in the structuring of information and in the expression of attitudes or cognitive and discursive processes by the speaker. What we will call the "left outer field"[2] has a special function in the context of the present study, which is

1 In French syntax, the term "fields" (*champs*) is rarely used, but there is also work on the "detachment" in the left periphery (e.g. Charolles, 2005, 2009; Combettes, 1998, 2005) or "addition" (*ajout*) in the right periphery (e.g. Authier-Revuz and Lala, 2002; Berrendonner, 2002; Deulofeu, 2021).

2 Terms such as *Herausstellung* or *Linksversetzung* denote other operations and positions (the *Vorvorfeld* or the *Vorfeld*), cf. e.g., Averintseva (2007); Frey (2004, 2005a, 2005b); this study is

concerned with the utterance-initial position of a nominal component located on the left periphery, i.e. outside the sentence frame proper, but belonging to the utterance, and marked by a prosodic break or by punctuation (a colon or a dash, e.g. *Fazit:* ...).

Previous work on German[3] and French has shown that a similar syntactic-semantic feature occurs in both languages (cf. e.g., the operator-scope structures in Fiehler, 2012, or constructions of the type ‹ noun + utterance › in Rossari and Cojocariu, 2008 and Rossari, 2007, 2011a). Here we shall examine nouns in the construction ‹ NP/N: + utterance ›, and their role will be analyzed morphologically as well as semantically and pragmatically. This brief study is limited to nouns which are used to characterize the sentence following at the metadiscursive level (e.g. *Fazit*, *Frage*, …). Certain nouns occur particularly frequently with this function in this position (e.g. *Fazit*, *Grund*).

The analysis is based on corpora of written language[4], in which a part has characteristics of spoken language (conceptual orality)[5], and on corpora of spoken language, which have been written down[6].

Since the construction is relatively productive, the list of nouns occurring in this position is still open and we cannot claim to deal with all possible relevant lexical items here. Nevertheless, an analysis of the most frequent occurrences and their contexts is relevant in order to describe the semantics of the nouns used, which can be with or without a preceding article and/or adjective. The discursive role of this construction and its patterning in certain contexts (text and discourse types) will then be determined on the basis of our observations. Finally, we shall examine how the use of such words in this construction has become fixed and the status of some of the most frequent nouns will be discussed.

---

concerned with the "left outer field" – which belongs to the left sentence periphery and is sharply separated here from the *Vorvorfeld*, cf. Wöllstein, ²2014.

3 In German, few authors have looked at nouns in the left outer field. Most work on the *linkes Außenfeld* focuses on the use of adverbial, verbal or participial forms (*mit anderen Worten, kurzum; guck mal; ehrlich gesagt*, ...), cf. e.g., Günthner, 2017; Imo, 2016. In oral language, where the notions of "sentence" and "field" are irrelevant, the term "beginning of a turn" is used, cf. e.g., Blühdorn, Foolen and Loureda, 2017.

4 These are press articles from the German Reference Corpus (DeReKo) of the Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache: "W-Archiv der geschriebenen Sprache" (W-öffentlich - all public corpora of the W Archive (with new acquisitions).

5 These are Wikipedia discussions from the German Reference Corpus (DeReKo) of the Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache, which exhibit features of orality although they are written. Archiv: EuroGr@mm-WPD-DE-DISC - Wikipedia Diskussionen (deutsch – TreeTagger); Korpus: Wiki_DE_DISC-öffentlich - öffentliche deutschsprachige Wikipedia-Diskussionen [2002-2011, 246.028.026 words]. On the notion of "conceptual orality" cf. Koch and Oesterreicher, 1985.

6 These are parliamentary plenary protocols (1949–2021), from the German Reference Corpus (DeReKo) of the Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache. Archiv W-öffentlich, Korpus: Plenarprotokolle [507.738.346 words].

2. Nouns and contexts

2.1 Binary structure

The analysis deals with a range of different forms which are realized in different ways (with or without an article, an adjective, a possessive). What they have in common is that they occur in initial position in a binary structure and their projective force. Such nouns focus attention on the following sentence and their meaning points to its role in the argument being presented. The following three examples give an initial insight into the use of such introductory nouns:

(1) Ein sinnvoller Pakt würde am Inflationsproblem, also an der Geldwertstabilität nach innen und nach außen, ansetzen. Das ist aber in dieser Konstruktion nicht gewährleistet. *Fazit*: Der Stabilitätspakt in der vorliegenden Form ist definitiv nicht zielführend. (Bayerischer Landtag, 10.12.2003)

(2) Das Ganztagsschulprogramm des Bundes kann in Brandenburg nicht wie erforderlich umgesetzt werden. Auch hier ist Brandenburg erneut Schlusslicht. *Der Grund*: Es fehlt an den entsprechenden Lehrerstellen, die das Land zu finanzieren hat. (Landtag Brandenburg, 30.08.2005)

(3) Wir haben ein schwieriges Thema auf der Tagesordnung. Finanzausgleich ist ja keine leichte Sache. Wenn dazukommt, dass die Decke insgesamt ziemlich kurz ist und deshalb durch Hin- und Herschieben mal ein Arm, mal ein Bein herausguckt, wird es insgesamt nicht leichter. (Bischoff [SPD]: *Hauptsache*, wir frieren nicht!) (Landtag Brandenburg, 26.06.2006)

These extracts from parliamentary debates have the same structure. In all three cases the noun points to the central proposition of the following sentence. In the first example (1) we have a summarizing conclusion (*Fazit*), and the second (2) is about how the impossibility of implementing a school policy programme in Brandenburg can be justified (*Grund*). The third case (3) is about the highlighting of an important issue which must not be lost sight of (*Hauptsache*). This occurs in the course of a dialogue during an interjection, with the speaker picking up the metaphor of a blanket (for fiscal equalization used as a protective measure) which had been used by the previous speaker in a humorous way.

2.2 Forms

The following examples show (formal) differences typical of the use of nouns in functions of this kind. Some nouns are commonly used without an article as in (4):

(4) Für seine Studie hat Stephan Frettlöhr 150 Unternehmen aus den Branchen Auto, Stahl, Pharma, Energie, Chemie und Telekommunikation untersucht, die zusammen jeweils 60 % des Marktes beherrschen. *Ergebnis*: „Der Personalbedarf schrumpft." (VDI Nachrichten, 18.08.2006; Der Alptraum vom menschenleeren Büro)

However, most nouns are only or also used with the definite article or a possessive, as in (5) and (6):

(5) Als er sich im 1934 gedrehten Film "Es geschah in einer Nacht" auszog, um ins Bett zu gehen, trug er – unfassbar für diese Zeit – KEIN Unterhemd! Millionen Männer taten es ihm im echten Leben nach – und verzichteten ab sofort ebenfalls auf ihre Unterhemden. *Die Folge*: Ganze Unterhemdfabriken gingen pleite! (Diskussion: Clark Gable, Wikipedia 2011)

(6) Ich fasse kurz zusammen: Stärkung der Patientenorientierung, qualitative Verbesserung der Versorgung von Patienten und Pflegebedürftigen sowie die Erhaltung des solidarischen Krankenversicherungssystems bis hin zur Ausschöpfung der Wirtschaftlichkeitsreserven, was eine noch größere Aufgabe darstellt. (Beifall bei der SPD sowie bei Abgeordneten des BÜNDNISSES 90/ DIE GRÜNEN - Dr. Michael Luther [CDU/CSU]: Alles Blabla!)
Mein Fazit: Wir haben viel für die Menschen erreicht. (Deutscher Bundestag 29.11.2001)

and quite frequently with an attributive adjective:

(7) Eine aktuelle Studie der schwedischen Zentralbank hat 200 Wahlen in Europa ausgewertet. *Das eindeutige Ergebnis*: Die Kürzungspolitik der Regierungen in Europa hat rechtsextreme Parteien stark gemacht. (Deutscher Bundestag, 02.02.2024)

(8) Er geht nach dem Motto: Wir können nicht fair, wir können nur billig.
Logisches Ergebnis: Ausgebildete Lehrkräfte verlassen das Land und gehen anderswohin. (Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen, 23.03.2001)

Modal adjectives (*möglich, vermutlich, mutmaßlich*) also occur in the relevant NPs:

(9) Schon andere Biografen haben über Chanels Liebschaft mit dem deutschen Diplomaten Hans Günther von Dincklage und die "Operation Modellhut" berichtet, bei der Chanel gegen Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs auf einer Reise nach Madrid Winston Churchill geheime Gespräche mit deutschen Funktionären vorschlagen sollte. *Vermutliches Ziel*: ein Separatfrieden mit Großbritannien. (Wikipedia-Diskussion 2011)

The noun *Hauptsache*, which is also being used with a slightly different meaning here[7], is generally used without an article. It may also be noted that *Hauptsache* is often followed by a comma, in contrast to other nouns, which are usually followed by a colon. Compare (3) and the following example:

7 With the discursive use of *Hauptsache* at the beginning of the sentence, without an article and separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma, further argumentation is excluded. The noun primarily has an interactive function. Cf. Finkbeiner, 2018 and Robles Sabater, 2021.

(10) - Tja, liebe Grüne, da kommen Sie beinahe 22 Jahre zu spät. Egal. *Hauptsache,* die Landesbediensteten bekommen endlich ihren gerechten Mindestlohn. (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, 22.03.2012)

Both Finkbeiner (2018, 153–155) and Robles Sabater (2021, 194) show how the form *Hauptsache* has nowadays become fully established and hardly ever competes with other lexical alternatives[8]. In this respect this noun behaves in a different way to the nouns listed above, in that it seems to have progressed further on its way to becoming a discourse marker, i.e. to have reached a further stage of grammaticalization[9].

2.3 Frequency and reduction

The context of use, i.e. the form of the discourse and the text type, plays an important role in the choice of noun. A search in the Deutsches Referenzkorpus (DeReKo) shows the predominance of *Fazit* (426)[10], *Ergebnis* (245), *Folge* (174) and *Grund* (152) in the parliamentary minutes. The frequency in the Wikipedia discussions is similar, except that there the noun *Grund* is in second place. The following tables give figures for the most frequent nouns:

Table 1. Parliamentary minutes

Fazit	426
Ergebnis	245
Folge	174
Grund	152
Ziel	75
Fakt	26
Tatsache	20
Hauptsache	12
Schlussfolgerung	12
Ursache	8
Folgerung	3

Table 2. Wikipedia Discussions

Fazit	463
Grund	206
Ergebnis	81
Folge	56
Tatsache	43
Ziel	40
Schlussfolgerung	34
Ursache	14
Fakt	12
Folgerung	12
Hauptsache	9

It is noticeable that in actual usage the nominal component is reduced simply to a simple noun in this construction ‹ NP/N: + utterance ›. Apart from the lexeme *Hauptsache*, which clearly has a different status, some nouns occur frequently in this reduced form: *Fazit, Grund/Hauptgrund, Ergebnis, Konsequenz.*

8 *das Wichtigste* is less used in this context.

9 Grammaticalization is a gradual process that tends to follow the principle of unidirectionality.

10 Although these figures refer to the absolute and not the relative frequency, they are an important indicator for comparison.

(11) Also mir gefällt das erste Foto wesentlich besser. *Grund*: Auf dem zweiten Foto scheint der Porträtierte in einem Sessel mehr zu liegen als zu sitzen. Dadurch erscheint der Oberkörper unnatürlich verkürzt, das gilt insbesondere für die Oberarme. (Wikipedia-Diskussion, 2019)

The reduction to the noun leads to a certain stability in respect of the lexemes involved, which in this construction come close to the text operators, which are otherwise mostly adverbial. In the next section we will discuss the discourse function and the status of these nouns in more detail.

3. Interpretation of this construction

3.1 Projective force and pragmasemantic function

The fact that the noun is in first position in the binary construction and thus topologically (graphically and prosodically) separated from the rest of the utterance has a projective force. The reader's attention is directed to the following sentence, with the semantic content of the noun providing an indication of the discursive status of the sentence. The position of the noun thus contributes to the structuring of the discourse.

The most frequent lexemes (*Fazit*, *Schlussfolgerung*) are used to mark a concluding comment with which the speaker communicates their personal view, points to a logical implication or draws a conclusion. In other cases, we have a justification (*Grund, Hauptgrund, Annahme; Ursache*) or a reference being made to a conclusion which arises from a set of connected facts (*Ergebnis, Resultat, Konsequenz*). Nouns which serve to support a previous statement also occur in this position. This can be an illustration which emerges from reference to specific individual cases (*Beispiel*, *Ausnahme*), or a subjective, argumentative evaluation of the subsequent facts (*Vorteil*, *Nachteil*)[11].

References to evidence also serve to support an argument. Interestingly, the nouns *Fakt* and *Tatsache*, which otherwise usually occur in a matrix sentence (*Fakt/Tatsache ist, [dass] ...*), occur relatively rarely on their own. When the noun *Fakt* is used in this construction, it may occur in the context of a series, in which case it is marked accordingly:

(12) Bigbug21, Sie begreifen das Maßgebliche bei Ihren Handlungen und Ihren Erklärungen einfach nicht:
1. Fakt: am 15.04.09 15:55 habe ich das Foto ICE 3 bei Einfahrt in den Schulwaldtunnel bei Wikipedia hochgeladen und wie folgt lizenziert.
2. Fakt: Diese Datei wurde unter den Bedingungen der „Creative Commons Na-

11 According to Fiehler (2012, 35–36), evaluative lexemes do not count as operators, as they primarily refer to the facts and not to the quality of the utterance. However, we include them in the analysis here because they play a clear argumentative role.

mensnennung-Weitergabe unter gleichen Bedingungen Deutschland"-Lizenz (abgekürzt „cc-by-sa") in der Version 3.0 veröffentlicht, mit der Maßgabe: Lizenz cc-by-sa V. 3.0 unter Nennung meines Namens (Wolfgang Pehlemann) direkt unter Bild und Sicherstellung der Weitergabe nur unter diesen Bedingungen. (Wikipedia-Diskussion, 2009)

Tatsache can also occur with reference to a series:

(13) Behauptung 4, um die Wählerinnen und Wähler, Bürgerinnen und Bürger zu verunsichern: Am Flughafen Köln/Bonn finden europaweit die meisten Nachtflüge statt. *Tatsache*: Am Flughafen Frankfurt finden weit mehr Nachtflüge statt. *Weitere Tatsache*: In Leipzig ist das Nachtflugverhalten ähnlich groß wie in Köln/Bonn. Ich weiß nicht, woher Sie Ihre Zahlen haben. (Sitzung des Parlaments Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen am 25.06.2009. Plenarprotokoll, Düsseldorf)

In both examples the access to a "fact" (*Tatsache*) was used to refute an attitude or the assertion by a third party.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the fixed combination *und Tatsache* has become established. This introduces a statement which serves to further confirm a conclusion from the preceding statement. In such contexts this phrase is in competition with the modal adverb *tatsächlich*, see (14):

(14) Amtlich bestätigt! Keine Diskussion! Die Menschen haben einfach keine Ahnung von Statistik!
Und Tatsache: Computer, Fotoausrüstung, Stereoanlage sind billiger denn je. Aber dafür sind Dienstleistungen, Reinigung, Autoreparatur, Restaurantbesuch, Gas und Strom unglaublich teuer geworden. Das Statistische Bundesamt nennt das dann "Wahrnehmungspsychologie" […] (PBR/W07.00838 Sitzung des Parlaments Bundesrat am 09.11.2007. Plenarprotokoll, Berlin)

In the next section the discursive function of these nouns as indicators of the argumentative status of the sentence is discussed in more detail.

3.2 Discursive perspective

Most of the nouns in initial position in the above examples summarize the logical or evidential status of the content presented in the following sentence, with some containing an evaluation. As a result, they contribute significantly to the argumentative orientation of the utterance and its discursive function in the textual context. Indirectly, they serve a variety of frequent operations and strategies, such as support, justification, conclusion and confirmation. Their frequency and the use of reduced forms can be traced back to this role.

As indicated above, this use means that these nouns are very similar to operators, and the construction ‹ NP/N: + utterance › can be considered a case

of "operator-scope structure" as described by Fiehler, 2012. Operators, in this sense, make a statement about one or more aspects of the utterance in their scopus (Fiehler, 2012, 35), i.e. operators fulfil an explicit function of denotation at the metacommunicative level. These authors consider that the term "operator" can refer to different lexical and syntagmatic forms, i.e. verbal as well as nominal, adverbial or prepositional units. Although the specific nouns are only mentioned in passing by the authors cited. Fiehler (2012, 36) refers to the use of *Frage:* in the section "Verdeutlichung des Handlungstyps"), all the other nouns discussed here fulfil similar metacommunicative functions.

Aside from the metacommunicative function, using nouns or a reduced NP focusses on a specific perspective within the argument of the following sentence. For example, the word *Grund* leads to an explanation which is to be understood as a justification, *Fazit* introduces a summary which, depending on the context, is to be interpreted as an evaluation or as a conclusion, and the words *Fakt* and *Tatsache* point to a conclusion which is to be interpreted as a confirmation or even as an affirmation.

The question now arises as to whether one should go one step further on the basis of how these words are used and include these lexicalized nominal forms in the category of discourse markers. This will depend on how we are to define a discourse marker, and this will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Grammaticalization

Discourse markers have been understood and defined in different ways and in many ways that is still the case. Attempts to categorize them as a word type have not been fully successful, at least in respect of German (cf. Imo, 2012)[12]. However, if the term "discourse marker" is interpreted functionally (as is the case with the term "operator" used here), then the question of the part of speech does not arise, or it arises in a different way.

Auer and Günthner, 2005, for example, take a functional view when they re-analyse the use of certain adverbs or conjunctions, imperatives, matrix clauses as 'discourse markers' (e.g. *jedenfalls, nur, weil, sag mal, ich mein* ...). Shifting the function of these words to the level of discourse brings in some very different forms, of different origins, but what they all have in common is the reference to the speech act and this thus also implies an interactional component.

The question of the grammaticalization of such forms is not easy to answer, either, since they have developed formally in different ways. Auer and Günthner

12 This also applies to the French equivalent "marqueurs discursifs" (cf. e.g., Dostie, 2004). Paillard (2017, 17–18), who also considers other languages, uses the term, but distinguishes six classes from the outset: "En fonction de la composante en jeu, nous distinguons six grandes classes de MD : quatre classes en relation avec la notion de dire (MD point de vue, MD catégorisant, MD écran, MD particule), une classe en relation avec la notion de vouloir dire et, enfin, une classe en relation avec l'espace (inter)subjectif."

(2005, 348–356) come to the conclusion that an extended concept of grammar and grammaticalization would be necessary in order to interpret the newly developed discourse markers as grammaticalized forms. They regard grammar as a 'general structuring principle for verbal communication', referring to Traugott's concept of grammar (Traugott, 2003), which also includes pragmatic phenomena and considers it as a complex, conventionalized knowledge system with which language participants can communicate on the basis of forms and structures which have become routine.

Broadening the perspective on the basis of an extended concept of grammar opens the way for a more coherent description of "discourse markers", and structures such as binary operator-scope constructions can also be included in this description. If we follow Imo's suggestion (Imo, 2012, 83) of defining discourse markers as constructions, the structure analysed here with a variety of lexical nominal fillings becomes clearer. The noun, or the reduced NP, which has a specific function within the discourse, introduces a projector construction and determines its status within the argument of the discourse. The meaning and function of the noun is linked to the construction, although whether this justifies a distinct status for such nouns as 'discourse markers' may be debatable. However, because of the obligatory utterance-initial position and the clear discourse reference, and because the list of candidates for the N-slot is limited, we would argue at this point in favour of such an approach. The interpretation is simplified by the fact that the position of these elements is fixed and their function has become standardized (Ewert-Kling, 2012, 112).

The procedure is similar in French – with different lexical material and possibly different writing and speaking practices. In the last chapter we will describe some French examples and make cross-linguistic comments.

4. Comparative aspects

As the French nouns in the construction analysed here have already been described (cf. Rossari, 2011; Rossari and Cojocariu, 2008), we will limit ourselves here to two aspects that are relevant for cross-linguistic comparison.

4.1 Semantic similarity and grammatical constraints

In French, the nouns *raison*, *conclusion* or (more rarely) *bilan* are used to indicate the status of the following sentence, as do *cause* and *résultat*, which have much the same meaning as the German nouns (*Grund*, *Schluss(folgerung)*, *Fazit*; *Ursache*, *Ergebnis*, *Resultat*). As in German, they may be used with or without an article, which testifies to the degree of grammaticalization:

(15) *Le résultat* / *Résultat* : je me suis énervée et n'ai rien obtenu.
Ma conclusion : / *Conclusion* : il faut toujours surveiller les travaux.

Any differences between languages in respect of this construction can be explained either by usage[13] or as the result of constraints in the language system which have an effect on the following construction[14].

(16) *La raison* : il n'y avait pas assez de participants.

4.2 Dialogue-like structure, rhetorical dimension

Works on French have pointed out that the construction ‹ N: + utterance › can be traced back to structures which are similar to a dialogue.[15] In the context of a monologue, the presentation as a question enables the speaker to reinforce the relevance of the following statement (explanation, justification, confirmation, etc.).

(17) Sur le marché de la bière sans alcool, toutes présentaient jusqu'ici un taux d'alcool de 0,5 % au moins. Et aucune n'avait vraiment le goût de la bière. *La raison ?* Personne n'avait encore réussi à trouver la bonne technique de brassage d'une vraie bière sans alcool (un vrai goût de bière et 0,0 % d'alcool). (*Le Soir*, 06.02.2017)

In both languages this structure, which seems to be more frequent in French, can lead towards the standardization of signposts within the presentation of an argument.

5. Conclusion

In the dynamics of a type of language production which is oriented towards the addressee, the construction ‹ N/NP + utterance › can be characterized as follows:

- Placing these nouns or NPs in question in initial position is linked to their projective force in that they signal the discursive-argumentative status of the following utterance.
- Given their semantic function within the discourse and their reduction to a simple noun or to a minimal NP, these forms come close to what may be considered as discourse markers.

13 This affects the frequency and the coining of certain forms. An interesting example is the noun *moralité*, used without an article. It marks an (only slightly moralizing) conclusion and has little to do with 'morality', in contrast to the complex form *(la) morale de l'histoire* (with a slightly different meaning). In German, we most often find *die Moral von der Geschicht'* and there is no direct equivalent for *moralité*.

14 See nouns in subject position that do not occur without an article in French: **Raison / La raison est qu'il n'y avait pas assez de participants.*

15 Cf. Rossari (2011b); Rossari and Cojocariu (2008).

– The strength of the nominal forms is variable, and this testifies to different degrees of lexicalization. An obvious hypothesis which will require detailed diachronic investigation is that this construction, the origins of which are clearly rhetorical, has emerged from a dialogue-like structure.
– It is also clear that the successful use of this construction to support an argument in certain types of text and communicative structures has become normalized to a certain extent.

References

Auer, Peter, and Susanne Günthner. 2005. "Entstehung von Diskursmarkern im Deutschen". In Grammatikalisierung im Deutschen, edited by Torsten Leuschner *et al.*, 335–362. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.

Authier-Revuz, Jacqueline, and Marie-Christine Lala. 2002. Figures d'ajout, phrase, texte, écriture. Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle.

Averintseva, Maria. 2007. "Links und rechts vom Satz: Satzperipherien im Deutschen und ihre Rolle im Diskurs". In Linguistik und Didaktik. Beiträge der Tagung 'Tradition und Zukunft der Germanistik'. Bd. 2, edited by Mari Tarvas *et al.*, 137–149. Tallinn: TLÜ Kirjastus.

Berrendonner, Alain. 2002. "Les deux syntaxes". *Verbum* 24 1-2: 23–35.

Blühdorn, Hardarik, Ad Foolen, and Óskar Loureda. 2017. Diskursmarker: Begriffsgeschichte – Theorie – Beschreibung. Ein bibliographischer Überblick. In Diskursmarker im Deutschen. Reflexionen und Analysen, edited by Hardarik Blühdorn *et al.*, 7–47. Verlag für Gesprächsforschung: Göttingen.

Charolles, Michel. 2005. "Les adverbiaux en position préverbale : portée cadrative et organisation des discours". Langue française 148: 9–30.

Charolles, Michel. 2009. "Les cadres de discours et leurs frontières". In Frontières : du linguistique au sémiotique, edited by Dominique Delomier, and Marie-Annick Morel, 143–162. Lambert-Lucas: Limoges.

Combettes, Bernard. 1998. Les constructions détachées en français. Paris: Ophrys.

Combettes, Bernard. 2005. "Les constructions détachées comme cadres de discours". *Langue française* 148: 31–44.

Detges, Ulrich, and Richard Waltereit. 2016. "Grammaticalization and Pragmaticalization". In Manual of Grammatical Interfaces in Romance, edited by Susann Fischer, and Christoph Gabriel, 635–658. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter.

Deulofeu, José. 2021. "Les relations complexes entre dépendance syntaxique et statut de périphérique". Verbum 43-2: 331–365.

Dostie, Gaetane. 2004. Pragmaticalisation et marqueurs discursifs. Analyse sémantique et traitement lexicographique. Bruxelles: De Boeck-Duculot.

Ewert-Kling, Sabine. 2012. "Grammatikalisierungs- und funktionale Routinisierungstendenzen von LD und RD im gesprochenen europäischen Französischen und Spanischen". *Vox Romanica* 71: 109–130.

Fiehler, Reinhard. 2012. "Wo fängt der Satz an? Operator-Skopus-Strukturen in gesprochener und geschriebener Sprache". In Satzeröffnung. Formen, Funktionen, Strategien, edited by Colette Cortès, 31–44. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Finkbeiner, Rita. 2018. "Wie soll die Grammatikschreibung mit Konstruktionen umgehen?". In Grammatiktheorie und Grammatikographie, edited by Eric Fuß, and Angelika Wöllstein, 139–176. Tübingen: Narr.

Frey, Werner. 2004. "Notes on the syntax and pragmatics of the German Left Dislocation". In The Syntax and Semantics of the Left Periphery, edited by Horst Lohnstein, and Susanne Trissler, 203–233. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Frey, Werner. 2005a. "Zur Syntax der linken Peripherie im Deutschen". In Deutsche Syntax: Empirie und Theorie, edited by Franz Josef D'Avis, 147–171. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.

Frey, Werner. 2005b. "Pragmatic properties of certain German and English left peripheral constructions". Linguistics 43.1: 89–129.

Günthner, Susanne. 2017. "Diskursmarker in der Interaktion – Formen und Funktionen univerbierter *guck mal-* und *weißt du*-Konstruktionen". In Diskursmarker im Deutschen. Reflexionen und Analysen, edited by Hardarik Blühdorn *et al.*, 103–130. Verlag für Gesprächsforschung: Göttingen.

Imo, Wolfgang. 2012. "Wortart Diskursmarker?" In Nicht-flektierende Wortarten, edited by Björn Rothstein, 48–88. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.

Imo, Wolfgang. 2016. "Diskursmarker: grammatischer Status – Funktionen in monologischen und dialogischen Kontexten – historische Kontinuität". Arbeitspapierreihe 'Sprache und Interaktion' 65. Accessed July 31, 2025.

https://arbeitspapiere.sprache-interaktion.de/65-wolfgang-imo-062016/.

Koch, Peter, and Wulf Oesterreicher. 1985. "Sprache der Nähe – Sprache der Distanz. Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Spannungsfeld von Sprachtheorie und Sprachgeschichte". Romanistisches Jahrbuch 36: 15–43.

Paillard, Denis. 2017. "Scène énonciative et types de marqueurs discursifs". Langages 207: 17–32. Accessed July 31, 2025. https://doi.org/10.3917/lang.207.0005.

Robles Sabater, Ferran. 2021. "Vom Matrixsatz zum Diskursmarker: die Grammatikalisierung von *Hauptsache*". Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas 16: 185-199. Accessed July 31, 2025. https://doi.org/10.4995/rlyla.2021.14161.

Rossari, Corinne. 2007. Les moyens détournés d'assurer son dire. Paris: PUPS.

Rossari, Corinne. 2011a. "L'émergence de constructions nominales comme marqueurs de discours". In Marqueurs discursifs et subjectivité, edited by Sylvie Hancil, 51–70. Rouen: Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre.

Rossari, Corinne. 2011b. "Sites périphériques et traces de dialogisme". In Du système linguistique aux actions langagières, edited by Gilles Corminbœuf, and Marie-José Béguelin, 427–442. Bruxelles: De Boeck-Duculot.

Rossari, Corinne, and Corina Cojocariu. 2008. "Constructions of the type *la cause/la raison/la preuve* + utterance: grammaticalization, pragmaticalization, or something else?". Journal of Pragmatics 40, 8: 1435–1454. Accessed July 31, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.03.012.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2003. "Constructions in grammaticalization". In The handbook of historical linguistics, edited by Brian D. Joseph and Richard D. Janda, 624–647. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wöllstein, Angelika. [2]2024. Topologisches Satzmodell. Heidelberg: Winter.

The pragmatic meaning of *(que) es/era broma* in Spanish: a discourse marker?

Alicia Silvestre Miralles
University of Zaragoza
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2923-9424

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c771

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to contribute to the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic characterization of the expression "(*que*) *es/era broma*" (meaning 'just kidding'), considering the extent to which it can be understood as a Spanish discursive marker (Portolés and Martín Zorraquino, 1999). The data are drawn from the Diachronic Corpus of Spanish, the Corpus of 21st Century Spanish, and the Reference Corpus of Current Spanish. The analysis focuses on the expression's degree of formal fixation, the previous situational, contextual, or textual referent, its position in the discourse (preceding pause, postponement, periphery), its mitigating value, and its pragmatic meaning. We observed that its postponed appearance after a sentence, discourse, or situation modifies the whole previous expression, creating a new meaning and inviting the recipient to reconsider the information within a *non-bona fide* frame, one which mitigates its initial literal impact. An updating of the information is thus produced, and this new content is re-framed as humorous (Attardo, 1991, 2001 and 2006; Attardo and Raskin, 1991) and involves attenuation or mitigation.

Keywords: discourse markers; reformulation; periphery; attenuation/mitigation; pragmatics.

1. Characterization of *(que) es/era broma* as a discourse marker

In recent decades, a pragmatic approach to the study of Spanish discourse markers has been common (Briz, 1994; Briz, Pons Bordería and Portolés, 2008; Cortés, 1995a, 1995b, 1998; Jørgensen, 2019; Jørgensen and Martínez, 2007; Martín and Portolés, 1999; Nadal *et al.*, 2016; Pons Bordería, 2000; Portolés, 1993, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2016). According to the definition proposed by Martín Zorraquino and Portolés Lázaro (1999, 4057), discourse markers are

> invariable linguistic units, do not have a syntactic function within the framework of sentence predication – they are, hence, marginal elements – but have a similar

role within the ongoing discourse: that of guiding the inferences made during communication, this according to their different morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties[1].

In the following sections *(que) era/es broma* ('just kidding') will be characterized as a discursive marker of Peninsular Spanish, and its pragmatic meaning will be analysed and discussed using material from three corpora.

The classification of discourse markers provided by Martín Zorraquino and Portolés Lázaro (1999) does not include *(que) era/es broma* in any of its five types, these being: information structurers, connectors, reformulators, argumentative operators and conversational markers. It seems that it has a rectifying meaning, because it reorients the interpretation towards a comic framework. It might also be interpreted as counter-argumentative connector, since it links two elements of the discourse, the second of these suppressing or mitigating some inference that arises from the first. However, *(que) era/es broma* usually occurs in sentence-final position and we found no examples of it followed by explaining expressions.

Given that it includes a conjugated verb (*es/era*), the phrase does not adopt the usual form of a conjunction or connector, although we might bear in mind that "discursive connectors can be coordinating or subordinating conjunctions, but also adverbs, interjections or voices that belong to other paradigms" (RAE, NGLE, § 30.12b).

(Que) era/es broma fulfils entirely the following identifying characteristics of discourse markers (Martín Zorraquino and Portolés, 1999):

a. They have prosodic limits in the form of clauses (intonation or commas).
b. They cannot receive specifiers or adjuncts. There are certain linguistic forms/contexts that often accompany *(que) era/es broma*, such as *oye, que no, que era broma, ¿eh?* Yet, one of the formal restrictions indicating its high degree of fixation is its appearance with inserted elements (e.g.: **que es/ era mera broma*).
c. They usually relate to the entire sentence or the sequence of constituents they affect, and hence they do not depend syntactically on the core verb of the sentence. So, *(que) es/era broma* can anaphorically affect elements of discourse at various lexical and syntagmatic levels: specific lexical units, sentences, sequences. Then, it carries the meaning 'que *eso* que acabo de decir *(o una parte de eso)* ha de ser tomado en broma y no en serio' (lit. 'that which I've just said (or part of it) has to be taken jokingly and not seriously').
d. They behave autonomously and can appear independently and alone in a single speech turn, with the omitted subject *(eso) era broma* referring to something mentioned in the immediately preceding context.

1 All translations our own.

e. Semantically, they do not carry a referential or denotative meaning, but rather a procedural one: they guide the inferences that must be made from the two discursive members that they connect (Blakemore, 1987, 2002; Portolés, 1998, 2004).

The following characteristics of discourse markers are also partially met:

a. At the syntactic level, *(que) era/es broma* has autonomy with respect to the sentence or paragraph. Its position tends to be fixed (at the end of an utterance or paragraph) and separate from the fragment to which it refers. It has clear intonational pauses before and after, often marked by punctuation. Few examples can be found in which there is no subsequent pause because there is an addition of something like "*que era broma lo de tu tía*" (lit. 'it was a joke that stuff about your aunt'). The extrapredicative character of discourse markers is generally marked by pauses in intonation, and commas in writing (Martín Zorraquino, 2015, 41), thus lending them suprasegmental autonomy. In this way *(que) era/es broma* is similar to a peripheral connector, as it can modify a simple statement, a paragraph, or an entire text.
b. Discourse markers are morphologically invariable. The presence of *que* is not constant, sometimes being used and sometimes omitted. Furthermore, we can find the expression in the present or in the past (*es/era*). In both cases, it refers to a past time immediately prior to what has just been said. The absence of other variables with other tenses or other verbs seems to suggest that it is a morphologically fixed, practically a lexicalized structure.
c. Coordination with other markers is possible, *(que) era/es broma* can be found in expressions like *oye, que no, que era broma, ¿eh?* Although less common, it also admits negation: *(que) no era/es broma*. In this case its pragmatic value changes.

Semantically, the opposition in the linguistic system between *en serio* (meaning 'really') and *en broma* does not occur in a clearly dichotomous way. *En broma* appears marked as an expression used in humorous environments with the intention of making people laugh. Both *en broma* and *en serio* maintain their first literal meaning, so that the utterance remains transparent. As for syntagmatic combinations, *en serio* tends to be preceded by *no, ahora* or the combination of both; meanwhile, *es broma* and *si era broma* appear, but not *en broma*. *Es broma* emphasizes the humorous context in which it appears and helps the recipient in drawing the appropriate inferences so that the humorous outcome can be reached. Its appearance serves to indicate that the preceding argument must be interpreted in a humorous way[2]. Ruiz Gurillo (2015, 2019a) claims that both are

2 "Prior to the activation of such inferences and the resolution of the incongruity, the listener/reader has to understand that their speaker/writer has adopted a humorous mode" (Ruiz Gurillo, 2019b, 1231–1232). According to Shilikhina (2017, 117) there are four traits

"discursive marker idioms" (Ruiz Gurillo, 2015, 193); she also notes that, unlike *en serio*, the variant *es broma* is not found in the DFDEA (2004) (Ruiz Gurillo, 2015, 195[3]) with a meaning close to the literal, and its main component (*serio, broma*) is semantically transparent. She argues that its uses are broader than the adverbials included in specialised grammar books, and that *es broma* emphasizes the humorous context in which it appears, along with phraseological markers, which also help to achieve appropriate inferences in humorous texts (Ruiz Gurillo, 2015, 196). *Es broma* is considered a humorous element that can be inserted into the classic "serious premise - humorous conclusion" structure. Consequently, *es broma* acts both as a marker and as a humorous element.

2. Pragmatic characterization of *(que) es broma*

Theories on the analysis of verbal humour underline the need for a shared framework for the effective development of a humorous sequence. Without this complicit interpretation, that text or message could turn out to be absurd, offensive, or irrelevant.

(Que) es/era broma expresses the speaker's attitude and leads to a rereading and reinterpretation through marks or indicators of typical verbal humour (ambiguity, polysemy, etc.). When placed at the end of a fragment of speech, it modifies that fragment substantially. This contributes to the effect of surprise, in that it initially activates a literal or linear reading, then immediately introduces a second, comic one. Both readings can coexist, (see *Script-Based Semantic Theory of Humour*; Raskin, 1985), or the recipient chooses one of them. The joke implicit in the fragment is realized only when *(que) es/era broma* appears and denies the truth of what has just been said, reframing it in a comic or informal way.

However, there are other contexts in which it contains a value of mitigation or attenuation: when the speaker perceives that something he has said has not been formulated correctly and the interlocutor is not receiving the message with the intended interpretation, be it due to an ambiguous word, a lack of tact, some sort of inadequacy in terms of style or register, etc. In this case, to lessen the possible negative impact on one's own image and that of the recipient, the

---

of humour: an additional cognitive effort, humorous discourse as a playful scenario, an attenuated degree of cooperation, and the use of explicit reaffirming expressions (humorous elements or 'marks') of that scenario, especially: "I'm kidding/joking", but only when it is considered necessary to do so, that it, this expression is not uttered in all cases.

3 *En serio* adds an argument or clarification in a humorously constructed environment, opening a parenthesis to the serious mode in a text that has been conceived, constructed, and prepared in a humorous mode (Ruiz Gurillo, 2015, 207). *Es broma* emphasizes the humorous context, its purpose is to mark the humorous mode when the text develops. *En serio* contains an argumentative instruction to interpret the following phrase, whereas *es broma* directs its argument towards the immediately preceding fragment, indicating that it must be interpreted in a comical way, thus opening a parenthesis in the serious mode.

addition of the expression *(que) es broma* automatically removes the character of truth and seriousness from what has been said and softens the impact, often eliminating it: fundamentally it mitigates the potential inadvertent offense in the initial statement.

Non-bona fide is "a mode in which the speaker is not committed to the truth of what is being said and the hearer is aware of this non-commitment" (Raskin, 2007, 99). In the case of *(que) es broma*, the listener is not aware of the speaker's non-commitment, that is, that the frame is humorous. There may not have been enough humorous elements, or some element of the context or verbalization offer ambiguous interpretations. As a mitigating mechanism, the expression appears in response to the perception, by the sender, of a facial gesture or an uncomfortable attitude of the recipient. The speaker decides to emphasize the *non-bona fide* condition through this marker, reinforcing the actual meaning. The listener transforms the information he considers reliable (*bona fide*) into *non-bona fide* (NBF), and thus perceives the humorous meaning. Even if he detects one or more violations of the principle of cooperation, or its maxims, he cognitively steps back and reinterprets the text as a joke.

3. Analysis of examples

This analysis draws on data from the Reference Corpus of Current Spanish (CREA) Spain section (Royal Spanish Academy), the Diachronic Corpus of Spanish (CORDE), and the Corpus of 21st Century Spanish (CORPES XXI).

We have selected paragraphs rather than just sentences, in order to have sufficient context for interpretation. We excluded from the search criteria those cases without previous pause, or which did not modify the interpretation of the preceding material, as it happens in the negative versions: *que no es era broma*.

The study corpus largely comprises texts from Peninsular Spanish, although there are also some examples from other territories: USA (17), Mexico (14) Peru (3) and Argentina (2).

For the expression *es broma*, CREA yields 70 cases from 61 documents. Of these, 12 can be classified as mitigators and 46 have the adverb *no* in front, without a comma: *no es broma*. 11 are of Spanish origin and one from Mexico.

CREA yields 18 cases of *era broma* from 16 documents. Of these, two can be described as mitigators (one from Spain; one from Argentina) and 11 have the adverb *no* in front, without a comma: *no es broma*, as a negative version.

CORDE yields 78 cases of *es broma* from 62 documents. Of these, six can be classified as mitigators, of which three are from Spain, two from Guatemala, and one from Colombia; 37 have a negative version.

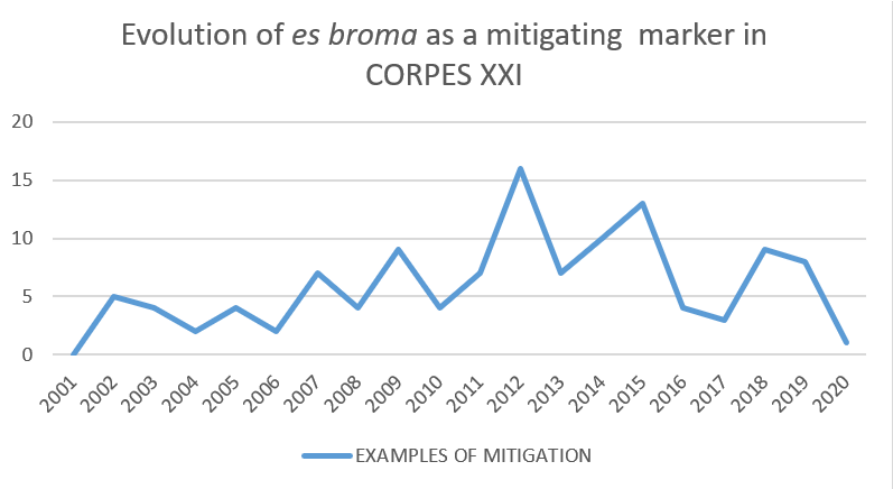
CORDE yields 20 cases of *era broma* from 16 documents. Of these, two can be classified as mitigators and six have negative version.

In CORPES XXI *es broma* appears 284 times, from 235 documents. Of these, 113 can be classified as mitigators and 122 have negative version: *no es broma*. Of these 113, a total of 92 come from Spain, 14 from Mexico, two from Chile, two from Argentina, and one each from Peru, Colombia and Costa Rica. We discarded one case from Chile and five from Spain because they were repeated.

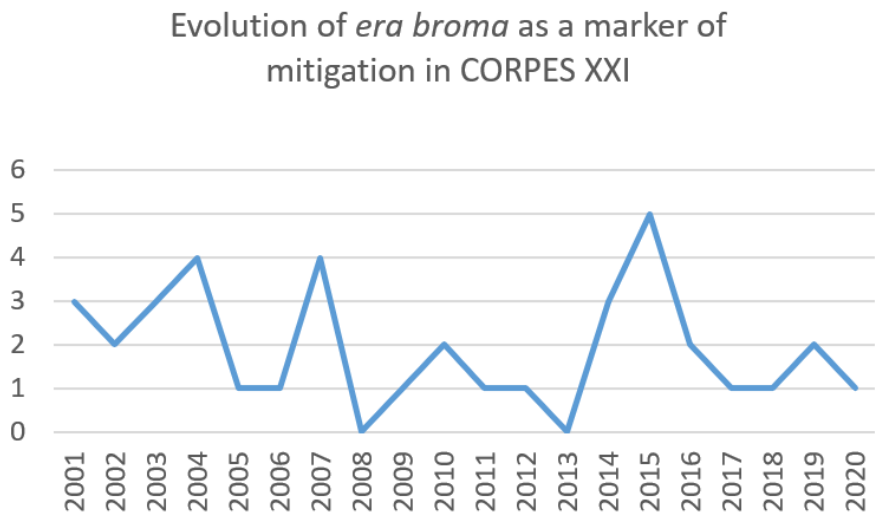
CORPES XXI yields 85 cases of *era broma* from 75 documents. Of these, 37 can be classified as mitigators, the majority coming from Spain (25); there are also three from Mexico, three from Chile, two from Uruguay, two from Venezuela, and one each from Argentina and Peru. There are 21 cases of negative version. There is also an observable increase in frequency of occurrence over time. One case from Uruguay was discarded because it was repeated.

Analysis of distribution shows that the mitigating value has gained presence over time and continues to do so, compared to its negative version, which decreases. Consider the data for the year 2001–2020:

Graph 1. Evolution of *es broma* as a marker of mitigation in CORPES XXI

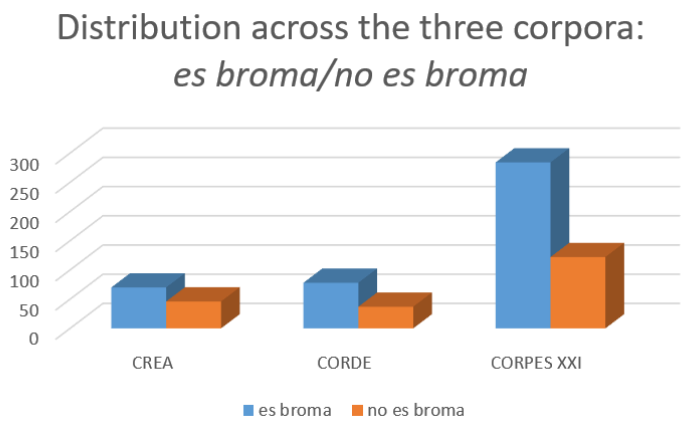


Graph 2. Evolution of *era broma* as a marker of mitigation in CORPES XXI

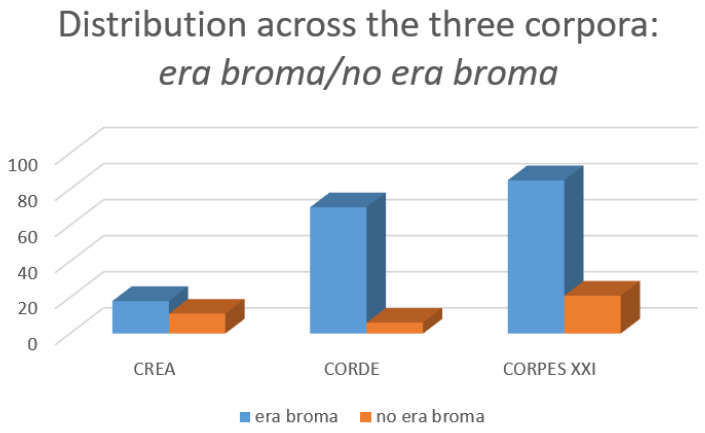


Regarding the proportion of negative variants in the present and past, the number of cases seems quite high; however, if we consider these proportionally, we note that in CORPES XXI they have decreased considerably:

Graph 3. Distribution across the three corpora: *es broma/no es broma*



Graph 4. Distribution across the three corpora: *era broma/no era broma*



(Que) es broma occurs in CREA 70 times (61 documents) between 1976–2004; in CORDE it appears 78 times (62 documents) for 1657–1972; and in CORPES XXI just five times (four documents) for 2001–2020. We left aside those in which the expression follows a verb of diction or thought, because in such cases we are just dealing with a mere substantive completive proposition.

Table 1. Number of concordances of *es broma* per corpus and time period

CORPUS	*(que) es broma.* Not a marker	*(que) es broma.* Marker	TIME PERIOD
CORDE	78	6	1657–1972
CREA	70	12	1976–2004
CORPES XXI	284	119	2001–2020

CREA yields 18 cases of *(que) era broma* from 16 documents between 1977–2002, CORDE yields 20 cases from 16 documents for 1878–1971.

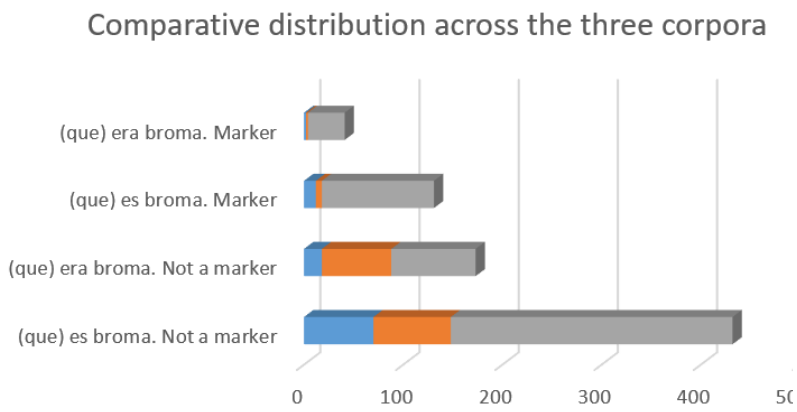
Table 2. Number of concordances of es broma per corpus and time period

CORPUS	*(que) era broma.* Not a marker	*(que) era broma.* Marker	TIME PERIOD
CORDE	20	2	1878–1971
CREA	18	2	1977–2002
CORPES XXI	85	37	2001–2020

With a verb in either the present or past, the increase in use as a mitigating marker has increased considerably over the last 20 years in proportion to trends from the 17th century onwards.

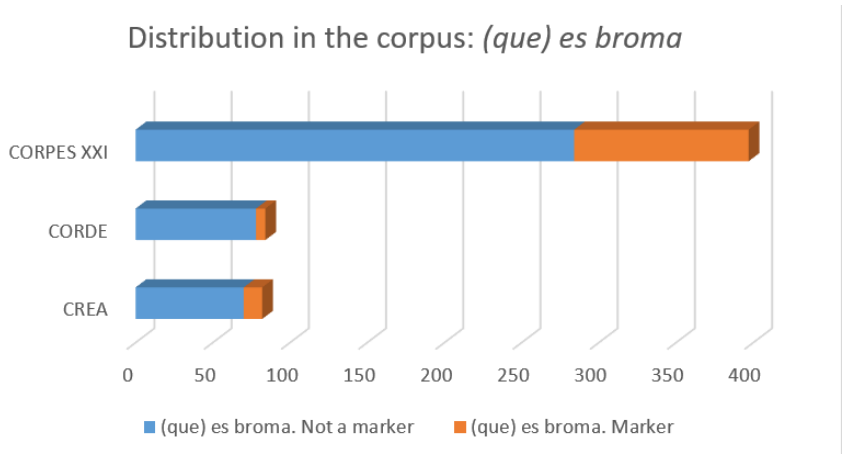
Regarding the distribution of the use of the expression as a mitigating marker, the CORPES XXI data show a notable increase.

Graph 5. Comparative distribution across the three corpora



The mitigating use once again stands out notably in the last two decades (2000–2020) compared to the two previous time frames.

Graph 6. Distribution in corpus: *(que) es broma*



Graph 7. Distribution in corpus: *(que) era broma*

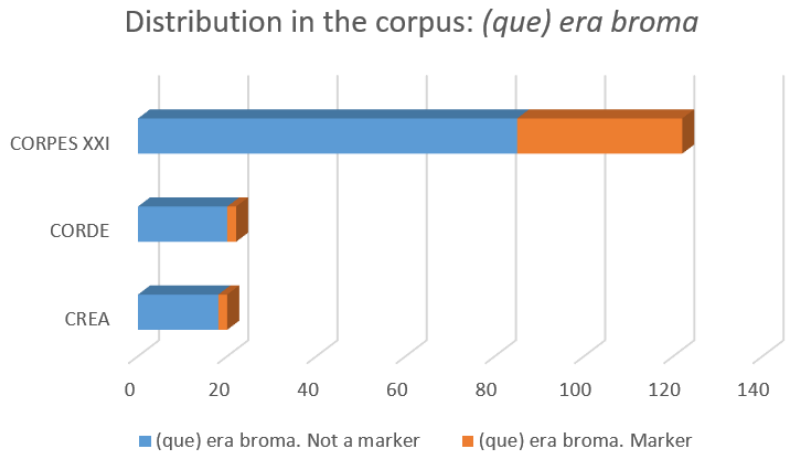


Fig. 1. Extract of *que es broma* in CORDE

Fig. 2. Selection of examples from CORPES XXI

The qualitative analysis shows that the previous pause is brief with respect to what it completes, and in most cases is a comma, although there are also full stops (12), a colon (1), and an intonational pause. It is possible to find nouns such as *hombre* on the left (4) and on the right (9). To the right of the expression, we can find either a full stop, an explanatory apposition that disambiguates the joke, an affectionate nickname such as *tonta* (3), a snide laugh (8) or an insult such as *por Dios* (5), *gilipollas* (7), *coño* (11). Reiteration of the marker is frequent (10) as well as emphatic elements *que no, que no*, denying (16) or rectifying (1).

Whereas the examples recorded here are drawn from written sources, they show a high degree of orality: 17 reproduce something said in direct speech, so we can plausibly claim that it appears more frequently as a marker in oral environments.

4. Conclusions

We have described the increasing appearance of the discourse marker *(que) es/era broma* in examples from three corpora of Spanish. The values of this marker express a rectifying pattern, mitigating a threat or an instance of inappropriateness, by reformulating or correcting the intention inferred. It confirms the mitigating politeness (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1996, 53–60) used to balance the image of the listener and the speaker (Hernández Flores, 2002). Some paraphrases for the expression might be: "por favor, no tomes en serio lo que he dicho" (lit. 'please don't take what I said seriously'), "no te ofendas" (lit. 'do not be offended'), "no pretendía ofenderte" (lit. 'I did not pretend to offend you', meaning 'no offence intended'), "disculpa mi imprecisión o inadecuación lingüística" (lit. 'excuse my imprecision or linguistic inadequacy'). It remains open to research whether the expression has similar values in other languages: *just kidding/joking* in English, *que és broma* in Catalan, *sto scherzando* in Italian, *Je blague/ Je rigole/ Je plaisante* in French, *estou brincando/ brincadeira* in Portuguese, etc.

References

Attardo, Salvatore, and Victor Raskin. 1991. "Script theory revis(it)ed: Joke similarity and joke representation model". Humor 4(3–4): 293–347.

Attardo, Salvatore. 2001. Humorous texts: a semantic and pragmatic analysis. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Attardo, Salvatore. 2006. "Cognitive linguistics and humor". HUMOR 19(3): 341–362.

Blakemore, Diane. 1987. Semantic constraints on relevance. Oxford: Blackwell.

Blakemore, Diane. 2002. Relevance and linguistic meaning: The semantics and pragmatics of discourse markers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Briz Gómez, Antonio. 1994. "Hacia un análisis argumentativo de un texto coloquial: la incidencia de los conectores pragmáticos". Verba. Anuario Galego de Filoloxía 21: 369–395.

Briz Gómez, Antonio. 2004. "Cortesía verbal codificada y cortesía verbal interpretada". In Pragmática sociocultural: análisis del discurso de cortesía en español, edited by Diana Bravo, and Antonio Briz, 67–93. Barcelona: Ariel.

Briz, Antonio, Pons S. Salvador, and José Portolés. 2008. Diccionario de partículas discursivas del español. http://www.dpde.es.

Briz, Antonio. 2010. "La cortesía al hablar español. III Jornadas de Formación de Profesores de ELE en China". Suplementos SinoELE 3: 1–22.

Briz Antonio, and Marta Albelda. 2013. "Una propuesta teórica y metodológica para el análisis de la atenuación lingüística en español y portugués. La base de un proyecto en común (ES.POR.ATENUACIÓN)". Onomázein 28: 288–319.

Cortés Rodríguez, Luis. 1995a. "Bibliografía: marcadores del discurso (I)". Español Actual 63: 63–82.

Cortés Rodríguez, Luis. 1995b. "Bibliografía: marcadores del discurso (II)". Español Actual 64: 75–94.

Cortés Rodríguez, Luis. 1998. "Marcadores del discurso y análisis cuantitativo". En Los marcadores del discurso, edited by María Antonia Martín Zorraquino, and Estrella Montolío Durán, 143–160. Madrid: Arco Libros.

Hernández Flores, Nieves. 2002. La cortesía en la conversación española de familiares y amigos; la búsqueda del equilibrio entre la imagen del hablante y la imagen del destinatario. Aalborg: Institut for Sprog Internationales Kulturstudier, Aalborg Universitet. Edice.

Jørgensen, Annette Myre. 2019. "La atenuación mediante la partícula discursiva ¿eh? en el lenguaje adolescente de Madrid". Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies 10(1): 1–13.

Jørgensen, Annette Myre, and Juan Antonio Martínez López. 2007. "Los marcadores del discurso del lenguaje juvenil de Madrid". Revista Virtual de Estudos da Linguagem-Revel, 5(9): 1–19.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Catherine. 1996. La conversation. París, Francia: Seuil.

Loureda, Oscar, and Esperanza Acín. (coords.). 2010. Los estudios sobre marcadores del discurso en español hoy, Madrid: Arco Libros.

Martín Zorraquino, M.ª Antonia, and José Portolés Lázaro. 1999. "Los marcadores del discurso". In Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española, directed by Ignacio Bosque and Violeta Demonte, Tomo 3, 4051–4214. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

Nadal, Laura *et al.* 2016. "El significado procedimental y las partículas discursivas del español: una aproximación experimental". Revista Signo 49(1): 52-77.

Pons Bordería, Salvador. 2000. "Los conectores". In ¿Cómo se comenta un texto coloquial?, edited by Antonio Briz Gómez, 193–220. Barcelona: Ariel.

Pons Bordería, Salvador. 2013. "Un solo tipo de reformulación". Cuadernos AIspI. Estudios de Lenguas y Literaturas hispanas 2: 151–170.

Porroche Ballesteros, Margarita. 2005. "Sobre los adverbios enunciativos españoles: caracterización, clasificación y funciones pragmáticas y discursivas fundamentales". Revista Española de Lingüística 35: 495-522.

Portolés Lázaro, José, and M.ª Antonia Martín Zorraquino. 1999. "Los marcadores del discurso". In Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española, directed by Ignacio Bosque, and Violeta Demonte, cap. 63, 4051–4213. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

Portolés Lázaro, José. 1993. "La distinción entre los conectores y otros marcadores del discurso en español". Verba. Anuario Galego de Filoloxía 20: 141–170.

Portolés Lázaro, José. 2001 [1998]. Marcadores del discurso. Barcelona: Ariel.

Portolés Lázaro, José. 2004. Pragmática para hispanistas. Madrid: Síntesis.

Portolés Lázaro, José. 2016. "Marcadores del discurso". In Enciclopedia de lingüística hispánica, edited by Javier Gutiérrez-Rexach, 689–699. London/New York: Routledge.

Raskin, Victor. 1985. Semantic Mechanisms of Humor. Reidel: Dordrecht.

Raskin, Victor. 2007. "The sense of humor and the truth". In The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic, edited by Willibald Ruch, 95–108. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter,

Real Academia Española and Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española. 2009. Nueva gramática de la lengua española (NGLE). Madrid: Espasa.

Real Academia Española (RAE). Banco de datos (CORPES XXI) [en línea]. Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI (CORPES). http://www.rae.es

Real Academia Española (RAE). Banco de datos (CORDE) [en línea]. Corpus diacrónico del español. http://www.rae.es

Real Academia Española (RAE). Banco de datos (CREA). Corpus de referencia del español actual. http://www.rae.es

Real Academia Española (RAE). Diccionario de la lengua española. 23.ª ed., [versión 23.5 en línea]. https://dle.rae.es

Ruiz Gurillo, Leonor. 2015. "Phraseology for humor in Spanish. Types, functions and discourses". Lingvisticae Investigationes 38(2): 191–212.

Ruiz Gurillo, Leonor. 2019a. "De bromas y veras en los monólogos de Buenafuente", V Congreso Nacional de Comedia. Madrid, UAM, 28-29 de marzo de 2019.

Ruiz Gurillo, Leonor. 2019b. "En modo humorístico: habilidades metapragmáticas en discursos de humo". In Estudios lingüísticos en homenaje a Emilio Ridruejo, edited by Antonio Briz *et al.*, 1231–1242. Valencia: Universitat de València.

Shilikhina, Ksenia. 2017. "Metapragmatic markers of the bona fide and non-bona fide modes of communication". In Muzeum Historyczne M St Warszawy (eds.): Humorous Discourse, edited by Wladyslaw Chlopicki, and Dorota Brzozowska, 107–130. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Section 4:
Diachronic Phraseology and Variation

„Die Amerikaner kochen auch nur mit Wasser“. K.F.W. Wanders Sprichwortbild der Vereinigten Staaten

Wolfgang Mieder
University of Vermont

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c772

ABSTRACT

Der Beitrag beleuchtet die bislang wenig beachtete transatlantische Dimension im Werk des Parömiographen Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander (1803–1879), dessen *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* bis heute als unübertroffenes Standardwerk gilt. Entgegen einer möglichen nationalen Engführung erweist sich Wanders Sammlung als international vergleichend angelegt und ideologisch klar liberal-demokratisch fundiert. Bereits in seiner frühen, später vergessenen Studie *Das Sprichwort* (1836) reflektiert Wander die Migration von Sprichwörtern und verweist explizit auf die Vereinigten Staaten als künftigen Schmelztiegel sprichwörtlicher Traditionen. Besonderes Augenmerk gilt dabei Benjamin Franklin, dessen *Poor Richard's Almanack* und Essay *The Way to Wealth* Wander nachweislich rezipiert hat. Zahlreiche von Franklin popularisierte oder geprägte Sprichwörter finden Eingang in Wanders Lexikon, teils mit expliziten Quellenverweisen. Der Beitrag zeigt, wie Wander amerikanische Sprichwortweisheiten in den deutschen Kontext integriert und zugleich kritisch kommentiert, etwa in seinem politischen *Sprichwörterbrevier*. Damit wird Wander nicht nur als akribischer Sammler, sondern als reflektierter Parömiologe sichtbar, dessen Interesse an der amerikanischen Sprichworttradition früh einsetzt und über Jahrzehnte anhält.

Schlüsselwörter: Parömiographie; Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander; Benjamin Franklin.

ABSTRACT

The article sheds light on a hitherto largely overlooked transatlantic dimension in the work of the paremiographer Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander (1803–1879), whose *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* remains to this day the unsurpassed standard reference work in the field. Far from reflecting any narrowly national focus, Wander's collection proves to be conceived in an international comparative perspective and grounded in a clearly liberal-democratic outlook. Already in his early and later forgotten study *Das Sprichwort* (1836), Wander reflects on the migration of proverbs and explicitly points to the United States as a future melting pot of proverbial traditions. Particular attention is given to Benjamin Franklin, whose *Poor Richard's Almanack* and essay *The Way*

to Wealth Wander demonstrably drew on. Numerous proverbs popularized or coined by Franklin found their way into Wander's lexicon, in some cases with explicit source references. The article shows how Wander integrates American proverbial wisdom into the German context while also commenting on it critically, for instance in his political proverb breviary. Wander thus emerges not merely as a meticulous collector, but as a reflective paremiologist whose interest in the American proverb tradition began early and continued over decades.

Keywords: paremiography; Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander; Benjamin Franklin.

1. Einleitung

Mit Recht könnte man fragen, was der große Parömiograph Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander (1803–1879), dessen einmaliges fünfbändiges *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* (1867–1880) nach wie vor als unübertroffenes Standardwerk Geltung hat, möglicherweise mit Amerika am Hut gehabt haben könnte? Schlägt man dann auch nur eine mit zwei eng gesetzten Spalten bedruckte Seite auf, wird eindeutig klar, dass diese gewaltige Sammlung von weit über 250.000 Sprichwörtern, sprichwörtlichen Redensarten und Vergleichen, Sagwörtern (Wellerismen) und mehr gleichzeitig eine internationale Fundgrube darstellt, die sprichwörtliche Belege aus vielen europäischen Sprachen vergleichend heranzieht und besonders für die deutschen Texte auch historische Quellenangaben bietet. Zweifelsohne hat dieses Lebenswerk nichts mit Deutschtümelei zu tun. Dazu war Wander ein viel zu engagierter sowie liberaler Pädagoge, der sich in zahlreichen sozialpolitischen Schriften für eine demokratisch ausgerichtete Weltordnung eingesetzt hat, was ihn wiederholt bis zu seiner Amtsenthebung am 3. Juli 1850 als Lehrer in Schwierigkeiten gebracht hat (Geppert, 1987, 220–231). Seine kämpferische Natur gegen die reaktionäre Politik seiner Zeit hat ihm den Spitznamen „der rote Wander" eingebracht (Ruysch, 1892). Sprichwörtlich hat sich seine fortschrittliche Einstellung in seinem unter dem Pseudonym N.R. Dove herausgegebenen Buch *Politisches Sprichwörterbrevier. Tagebuch eines Patrioten der fünfziger Jahre, zur Charakteristik jener Zeit* (1872) niedergeschlagen, das ich 1990 mit einer Einleitung nachdrucken konnte. Darin setzt sich Wander auf aphoristische und auch antisprichwörtliche Weise in 1206 knappen Paragraphen mit gängigen Sprichwörtern auseinander, denen er ironisch oder satirisch widerspricht. Verallgemeinernd stellt er unter Nr. 1050 seiner beachtenswerten Streitschrift fest:

> Es dürfte schwerlich ein Volk geben, das demüthigere, vertröstendere und auf die lange Bank schiebendere Sprichwörter besitzt, als das deutsche. Welche Menge von Entsagungs- und Kasteiungssprichwörtern hat es aufzuweisen: „Man muß mit den Wölfen heulen!" – „Zeit bringt Rosen." – „Man muß sich nach der Decke strecken." – „Hunger ist der beste Koch." – „Der Kluge gibt nach." – „Klein bei-

> geben macht gutes Spiel“ etc. Lauter Sprüchelchen, welche die Seele hübsch zusammen ziehen und dämpfen und welche Milch und Blut eines kräftigen Strebens gerinnen machen. (Dove [Wander], 1872, 224)

Wander war offensichtlich nicht nur ein tatkräftiger Parömiograph, sondern von vornherein ein belesener Parömiologe, der gleich zu Anfang seiner Beschäftigung mit Sprichwörtlichem die erste und später vergessene deutschsprachige Sprichwörterkunde vorgelegt hat: *Das Sprichwort, betrachtet nach Form u. Wesen, für Schule u. Leben, als Einleitung zu einem großen volksthümlichen Sprichwörterschatz* (1836; vgl. Pilz, 1979). Weder Friedrich Seiler in seinem Buch *Deutsche Sprichwörterkunde* (1922) noch Lutz Röhrich und ich in unserem Band zum *Sprichwort* (1977) kannten diese Studie, und ich werde es nie vergessen, dass mein Freund Peter Lang, der bekannte Schweizer Verleger, mir im Jahre 1983 die Gelegenheit gab, meine neue Reihe zur „Sprichwörterforschung“ mit dem Nachdruck von Wanders Überblick zu eröffnen.

Von Interesse ist nun, dass Wander sich schon 1836 Gedanken darüber gemacht hat, wie es wohl um Sprichwörter in den Vereinigten Staaten beschaffen sein mag:

> So wie sich Menschen, Thiere und Gewächse verpflanzen lassen, so die Sprichwörter. Sie werden endlich an neuen Orten heimisch. Unsere deutschen Auswanderer legen in Amerika eine lebendige Sammlung deutscher Sprichwörter an; und in Botanybai [Botany Bay, Australien] wird es gewiß englische, so wie in Cayenne [Guinea] französische Sprichwörter geben. Nordamerika wird den buntesten Sprichwörterschatz besitzen. In der Sammlung amerikanischer Sprichwörter des [Benjamin] Franklin hab' ich fast lauter alte Bekannte gefunden. (Wander, 1836, 168)

An zwei anderen Stellen erwähnt Wander spezifischer „Franklin's Sprichwörter oder die Weisheit Richards“ (Wander, 1836, 23, 69–70), was sich einmal auf die über tausend in den von Franklin herausgegebenen fünfundzwanzig Bänden des *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1733–1755) und zum anderen auf seinen berühmten in zahlreiche Sprachen übersetzten Essay „The Way to Wealth“ (1758, Mieder, 2004, 216–224) bezieht, der aus rund hundert ausgewählter Sprichwörter besteht. Wander wird also bereits zu dieser Zeit eine der deutschen Übersetzungen gekannt haben, die zuerst 1794 und etliche Male danach bis 1894 erschienen sind. Die meisten übersetzten Sprichwörter tauchen in Wanders *Lexikon* auf, und bei elf Texten verweist Wander ausdrücklich auf Franklin:

> Zeitig zu Bett und früh aus dem Bett macht den Menschen gesund, reich und weise. (Wa,I,1237,Früh,14) (Mieder, 1993, 88–134)
> Dreimal wandern [umgezogen] ist so viel wie einmal abbrennen. (Wa,IV,1779,Wandern,2)
> Was man gethan haben will, muss man selber thun, was nicht, einem Diener be-

fehlen. (Wa,IV,1177,Thun,266)
Ein Nagel erhält ein Eisen, das Eisen ein Ross, das Ross den Mann, der Mann eine Burg und die Burg das ganze Land. (Wa,III,860,Nagel,12)
Oft ein wenig macht ein mehr. (Wa,V,186,Wenig,33)

Ein Pfennig, erspart, ist auch gewunnen: „Gib Acht auf die kleinen Ausgaben", sagt der weise Franklin. (Wa,III,1269,Pfennig,103)

Ein kleiner Leck versenkt ein grosses Schiff. (Wa,II,1868,Leck,1-2)

Narren geben Feste und die Klugen essen den Braten, sagt der arme Richard. (Wa,III,909,Narr,713)

Ein Bauer auf dem Pferd ist grösser als ein Edelmann auf der Erd. (Wa,V,919,Bauer(der),488)

Wer wissen will, wie theuer ein Thaler ist, der muss einen borgen. (Wa,IV,1136,Thaler,61)

Wer nicht auf verständigen Rath hört, dem juckt der Rücken, sagt der arme Richard. (Wa,III,182,Rath,374)

Siebzehn der in „The Way to Wealth" enthaltenen Sprichwörter haben nach detaillierter Nachforschung als von Franklin erfundene und also authentisch amerikanische Weisheiten zu gelten (Mieder, 2015). Davon sind jedoch heute wohl nur diese drei noch geläufig: „Laziness travels so slowly, that poverty soon overtakes it", „Three removes are as bad as a fire" und „There will be sleeping enough in the grave" (Mieder, Kingsbury und Harder, 1992, 364, 505 und 546) Erwähnt sei schließlich noch, dass das international verbreitete Sprichwort „Time is money" nicht von Benjamin Franklin stammt, der es aus einer Londoner Zeitschrift vom Jahre 1719 in seinen *Poor Richard's Almanack* für das Jahr 1751 ohne Quellenangabe übernommen hat (Villers und Mieder, 2017; vgl. auch Dove [Wander], 1872, 184–185; Paczolay. 1997, 427–429). All dies habe ich in meiner detaillierten Studie „‚Early to Bed / Früh zu Bett'. Parömiographische Vermittlung zwischen Benjamin Franklin und K.F.W. Wander" (2021) herausgearbeitet und hier nur ganz knapp erwähnt, um Wanders anhaltendes Interesse an der amerikanischen Sprichworttradition hervorzuheben.

2. K. F. W. Wanders Amerikainteresse

Wie dem auch sei, hat sich Wanders schicksalhafter Lebensweg so gestaltet, dass sein Interesse an den Vereinigten Staaten so verfestigt wurde, dass sich Amerikanisches als beachtliches Leitmotiv durch alle Bände seines *Sprichwörter-Lexikons* zieht. In seiner 1864 verfassten autobiographischen Schrift „Wie es mir in den letzten zehn Jahren erging. Ein Beitrag zu den ‚Leiden und Freuden eines Schulmeisters' im sechsten Jahrzehnt des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts" (Hohendorf, 1979, II, 197–219) schreibt er:

> Meine Gesundheit war durch unausgesetzte politische und religiöse Beschuldigungen, Verdächtigungen, Anfeindungen, Verfolgungen, Anklagen, Kämpfe usw. so erschüttert, daß der Arzt mir es zur Pflicht machte, wenigstens auf ein halbes Jahr den Schreibtisch zu verlassen und die Umgebung gründlich zu wechseln, was nur durch eine Reise geschehen konnte. (Hohendorf, 1979, II, 199)

So verließ Wander am 8. August 1850 seinen Heimatort Hirschberg und reiste über Dresden, Leipzig und Braunschweig vorerst nach Hamburg und schließlich weiter nach Bremen, wo er sich am 21. August auf dem Segelschiff „Adolphine“ einschiffte und am 2. Oktober 1850 in Baltimore ankam. Hier arbeitete er als Hauslehrer für einen aus Wien ausgewanderten Offizier und reiste mit dessen Familie über Washington in die Südstaaten, wo er die schändliche Sklaverei kennenlernte. Mit seinem verdienten Geld trat er dann nach Weihnachten eine lange Bildungsreise an, die ihn nach Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo (Niagarafälle), Albany, New York, Philadelphia und schließlich zurück nach Baltimore führte, wo er auf der „Orion“ die Heimreise nach Bremen begann. In Hirschberg traf er nach einem Jahr am 23. August 1851 wieder ein. Wenn er sich auch mit dem Gedanken einer Auswanderung beschäftigt hatte und durchaus „Achtung vor der Organisationsgabe, dem zukunftsfrohen Unternehmungsgeist und dem Fleiß der Amerikaner hatte, konnte er sich für die Lebensart in den Vereinigten Staaten jedoch nicht erwärmen“ (Hofmann, 1961, 71). In einem Beitrag über „Soziale Zustände Nordamerikas“, den er im November 1850 in Baltimore verfasst hatte und der in der von ihm herausgegebenen Zeitschrift *Pädagogischer Wächter* im Februar des folgenden Jahres erschienen ist, schreibt er enttäuscht: „Amerika ist das Land des Egoismus; erst kommt jeder selbst, und dann kommt er noch zweimal“ (Hohendorf, 1979, II, 172). Dennoch sind seine beiden Söhne Hugo und Kuno 1853 mit seinem ebenfalls politisch verfolgten Bruder Karl Traugott Ehrenfried Wander (1810–1854) nach Amerika ausgewandert, wo ihr Onkel, der eine Stelle als Prediger in Ohio gefunden hatte, bereits ein Jahr später gestorben ist (Bergmann, 1880, XIII–XIV). Sein aus Amerika zurückgekehrter Sohn Hugo hat sich schließlich um das enorme Werk seines Vaters gekümmert, das außer dem *Lexikon* mehr als 50 selbständige pädagogische, schulpolitische und politische Schriften sowie über 4000 Aufsätze und Beiträge in Volkskalendern, Zeitungen und Zeitschriften umfasst (Eichler, 1954, 15). Erwähnt und betont sei auch, dass seine Frau Charlotte (gest. am 21. Januar 1871 nach fast 50jähriger Ehe) ihren „workaholic“ Mann stets unterstützt hat und sich um ihre drei Söhne (der älteste Sohn Oskar ist bereits 1853 gestorben) gekümmert hat, und zwar natürlich auch während seiner einjährigen Amerikareise.

Als ein massives Hauptwerk hat ein als Resultat dieser Reise verfasstes Buch mit seinem interessanten und aufschlussreichen Titel zu gelten: *Auswanderungs-Katechismus. Ein Rathgeber für Auswanderer, besonders für Diejenigen, welche nach*

Nordamerika auswandern wollen (1852). Gerne erinnere ich mich daran, als ich das Buch etwa 1977 in einer Bibliothek im Staate Wisconsin entdeckte und voller Begeisterung eine Kopie machte. Zehn Jahre später erklärte sich erneut Peter Lang bereit, das 365 Seiten umfassende Buch mit einer langen Einleitung von mir als Nachdruck herauszubringen. Es wird niemanden überraschen, dass mir als deutscher Immigrant in meiner Wahlheimat Amerika damit ein großer Wunsch in Erfüllung ging! Der als Handbuch gedachte Katechismus behandelt in der Form von 660 Fragen und Antworten die hauptsächlichen Aspekte der Auswanderung: Amerika, Land, Volk, Einrichtungen und Zustände, Auswanderung, Einschiffung, Auswandererschiff, Ankunft, und Ausschiffung, Niederlassung und Leben im Lande. Das informationsreiche und kulturgeschichtlich ungemein wichtige Buch beruht auf Wanders eigenen Erlebnissen und Beobachtungen auf seiner Amerikareise 1850/51 sowie gründlichen Nachforschungen, die zahlreiche statistische Tabellen, Briefzitate und Belege aus Auswanderungszeitungen und anderen Auswanderungsschriften einschließen. Bei aller Materialfülle ist Wander bestrebt, ein ehrliches, unvoreingenommenes und informationsreiches Amerikabild zu repräsentieren, und zwar ohne jemanden für oder gegen die Auswanderung zu überreden (Hohendorf, 1979, I, 42–45):

> Der Zweck dieses ‚Auswanderungs-Katechismus" ist nicht, irgend Jemand zur Auswanderung anzureizen, aber er will diese eben so wenig bekämpfen. Die Auswanderung ist jetzt zur Nothwendigkeit geworden, worüber in keiner Richtung ein Zweifel obwaltet. Der „Auswanderungs-Katechismus" will, ohne ein anderes Interesse als das der Sache selbst, d.h. das wirkliche Wohl der Auswandernden, im Auge zu haben, belehrend wirken. Sollte er den Einen oder Andern, der sich in Folge berauschender Berichte schon mit dem Gedanken einer Auswanderung vertraut gemacht hätte, schwankend machen und zum Hierbleiben bestimmen, so halte ich dies für keinen großen Schaden, als wenn er umgekehrt ein Leben verhieße, was dort, für den deutschen Einwanderer wenigstens, nicht zu finden ist. […] Der „Auswanderungs-Katechismus" will, daß alle Die, welche durch eine Auswanderung ihre Lage nicht verbessern können, wol gar verschlechtern würden, hier bleiben, er will die Auswanderung auf Die beschränken, welche durch dieselbe für sich und die Ihrigen eine bessere Zukunft gründen können. (Wander, 1852, VII und XII)

Nun gut, natürlich gibt es auch eine knappe Antwort auf die Frage nach den englischen Sprachkenntnissen:

> 329) Hilft die Kenntniß der englischen Sprache viel zu einem guten Fortkommen?
>
> Außerordentlich. Man kann ohne Uebertreibung die Behauptung aufstellen, daß ein mittelmäßiger Arbeiter mit Kenntniß der englischen Sprache, wäre sie auch nur eine unvollkommene, eher und ein besseres Unterkommen findet,

als ein weit geschickterer Arbeiter, dem diese Kenntniss fehlt. Man sollte daher überall Gelegenheit geben, sich wenigstens in Besitz einiger Vorkenntnisse zu setzen; und alle Auswanderer sollten vorher etwas Englisch lernen, falls sie sich nicht als Farmer in einer deutschen Gegend niederlassen, oder mit einer ganzen Gesellschaft eine deutsche Kolonie bilden wollen. (Wander, 1852, 168–169)

Verständlicherweise spielt Sprichwörtliches in dem *Auswanderungs-Katechismus* keine Rolle, wohl aber erinnert sich Wander in seinem umfangreichen Vorwort zu seinem *Deutschen Sprichwörter-Lexikon* daran, dass er „in den Vereinigten Staaten Amerikas im Verkehr mit den Deutschen viel[e] Sprichwörter vernommen“ hat, die er „bisher in keiner deutschen Sammlung gefunden“ hatte (Wander,1867–1880, I, VII). Das mögen mit nach Amerika genommene mundartliche Sprichwörter gewesen sein oder aber auch neu formulierte Texte beziehungsweise lehnübersetzte englische oder gar amerikanische Sprichwörter. Diese während seines Amerikaaufenthalts betriebene Sprichwortforschung hat Wander während der folgenden drei Jahrzehnte fortgesetzt, wobei er etliche Texte in Büchern, Zeitschriften und Zeitungen, wie etwa die im Quellenverzeichnis angeführten Publikationen *Das Philadelphier Wochenblatt* und *Der Wächter am Erie* [See], gefunden haben mag. Hier ist ein großartiges Beispiel aus dem Umkreis der Pennsylvanien Deutschen, das bereits eine Vermischung des deutschen Dialekts mit dem Englischen erkennen lässt (Fogel, 1929):

Er weiss, wie a Sattel gefikst[1] un a Zâm getrimmt[2] sein muss. (*Pennsylv.-deutsch*)
1) Vom englischen *to fix* = befestigen, das aber in Amerika die Bedeutung des Herstellens, Vollendens, in Ordnung bringen hat.
2) Das englische *trim* = putzen, zurechtmachen, schön ausstatten. – Sinn: Er hat Erfahrung, er versteht die Sache, besonders in dem Sinne wenn durch einen günstigen Eindruck, wohlgefällige Entscheidung, ein bestimmter Zweck erreicht werden soll. Es ist eine wesentliche Eigenthümlichkeit des sogenannten Pennsylvania-deutsch, das Englische mit deutschen Biegungssilben zu versehen und dann als deutsch zu gebrauchen. So bildet man aus dem englischen *to move* = bewegen, wegschaffen u.s.w. das deutsche Wort „muffen“ für Wohnungswechsel. Man mufft, wenn man umzieht. (Wa,V,310,Wissen,*547)

Hier ist noch ein Beispiel solcher Sprachvermischung:

Den letzten Dime[1] in Slings vertrinken. (*Nordamerika*)
1) Sprich: Deim; Silbermünze von 10 Cents in den Vereinigten Staaten. 1/10 Dollar. (Wa,I,603,Dime, [*1])
Ein Sling ist ein Gin- Getränk mit Eis.

Nicht immer gibt Wander solche sprachlichen Erklärungen, wie zum Beispiel im Fall von „Er hat nur einen Fehler, das Loch unter der Nase. (*Pennsylvanisch-deutsch*)“ (Wa,I,959,Fehler,*41), einer Redensart, die er aus einer deutschen

Zeitung aus Pennsylvanien zitiert. Hier wird es sich um eine Lehnübersetzung der englischen Redensart „to have a hole under the nose" handeln, die sich in diesem Beleg ironisch auf jemandes großspurige Gesprächigkeit beziehungsweise dessen großen Mund beziehen wird. Einige weitere pennsylvaniendeutsche Lehnübersetzungen bezeugen, dass Wander, als an Dialekten ungemein interessierter Parömiograph, sein besonderes Augenmerk auf solche Redensarten ausgerichtet hatte:

> Es ist eine frische Hand. (Pennsylvanien)
> [to be a fresh hand]
> Neu in der Sache. "Ich bin wol eine frische Hand, aber ich will fortfahren zu schreiben." (Der Morgenstern, Doylestown, Pennsylvanien, vom 17. Juli 1850) (Wa,II,322,Hand,*745)
>
> Mit jemand im heissen Wasser sein.
> [to be in hot water]
> Um ein gespanntes, widerwärtiges Verhältnis auszudrücken. So heisst es in dem zu Pittsburg[h] erscheinenden Volkstribun vom 23. Sept. 1850, Nr. 40: „Unser Mayor ist stets in heissem Wasser mit seinen Untergebenen." (Wa,IV,1832,Wasser,*758)
>
> Wunder hören niemals auf.
> [Wonders never cease]
> Sagt ein altes Sprichwort. So schreibt man aus Orwigsburg [in] dem Friedensboten vom 26. Juni 1851. (Allentown, Pennsylvanien.) (Wa,V,450,Wunder,28)

Diese Belege hat sich Wander offensichtlich während seiner Aufenthalte in Pittsburgh und Philadelphia notiert, was sich als überzeugender Beweis für seine unermüdliche Feldforschung erweist. Wie intensiv Wander sich mit der amerikanischen Kultur nach seinem Amerikaaufenthalt weiterhin beschäftigte, geht aus mehreren Sprichwortkommentaren hervor, die er in seinem bereits erwähnten politischen Tagebuch aus den Jahren 1857 bis 1862 notiert hat:

> 749 Daß auch die journalistischen Bäume selbst dann nicht in den Himmel wachsen, wenn Zeitungsstempel und Kautionen aufgehoben sind und die uneingeschränkte Preßfreiheit herrscht, hat die Erfahrung vielseitig bewiesen. Wer es nicht glauben will, darf nur in die Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerika's gehen, wo er Gelegenheit findet, sich von der Richtigkeit der obigen Behauptung zu überzeugen. (Dove [Wander], 1872, 165; zu dem „Baum"-Sprichwort vgl. Mieder, 2022)
>
> 751 „Lügen haben kurze Beine"; aber, was schadet das! Kommt nicht ein Hase mit seinen viel kürzeren Beinen weiter als ein Ochs? Mit der Lüge kommt man besser fort als mit der Wahrheit; die letztere befördert zwar auch das Fortkommen, aber man kommt damit höchstens in's Gefängniß oder als Flüchtling nach Amerika [etwas autobiographisch]. Mit der Lüge dagegen erwirbt man sich Gunst

und Gnade und kommt dadurch zu Aemtern und Orden. Die Wahrheit reden daher auch nur Kinder und Narren. (Dove [Wander], 1872, 165)

In seinem *Deutschen Sprichwörter-Lexikon* geht Wander zuweilen ähnlich vor, um die Bedeutung eines deutschen Sprichwortes zu erklären. Diese Bezüge auf Amerika sind im Prinzip nicht nötig, aber Wander hat eine gewisse Vorliebe dafür:

Ist das Wort erst aus Paul's Munde, dann bellen es schon Peter's Hunde.
Wenn ein gescheiter Gedanke ausgesprochen ist, dann meint jeder, er hätte ihn auch gehabt. Wenn Amerika entdeckt ist, erscheint es jedem als eine Kleinigkeit, es aufzufinden. (Wa,V,414,Wort,376)

Sein Haus auf einem Pulverkeller bauen.
Dies thut z.B. der, welcher mitten unter der Herrschaft der Gesetze die Herrschaft der Gewalt behaupten will. Jemand wandte diese Redensart auf die Amerikaner in den Vereinigten Staaten an, die mitten in der Freiheit die Sklaven erhalten wollten. (Wa,II,424–425,Haus,*661)

Wie man die Heiligen kennt, so ehrt man sie.
Es gibt wol keinen Nordamerikaner, der nicht den Namen Washington mit tiefer Verehrung ausspricht. Niemand hat auch in seinem ganzen Verhalten weniger Dünkel und Selbstsucht bewiesen, als der Begründer der Vereinigten Staaten, und dennoch sind gerade in den letzten Jahren seines öffentlichen Lebens die ärgsten Spottlieder voll Verleumdungen in Schenken und Strassen gegen ihn gesunden worden. (Vgl. *Europa und Deutschland von Amerika aus betrachtet*, von *Gottfr. Duden*, Bonn 1833.) (Wa,II,469,Heiliger,138)

Hier könnte man wohl mit Berechtigung fragen, was dieser erklärende Kommentar in diesem Lexikon zu suchen hat? Aber Wander besteht auf solchen „Ausschweifungen“, die ihm als Pädagogen wohl auch die Gelegenheit geben, sein kulturhistorisches Wissen unterzubringen. Eine weitere mit George Washington zusammenhängende Redensart mag dies ganz besonders verdeutlichen:

Wir müssen Bruder Jonathan um Rath fragen.
Nach *Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms* stammt diese Redensart von Jonathan Trumbull (der Aeltere), Gouverneur des Staats Connecticut zur Zeit des Unabhängigkeitskampfes. Um das Jahr 1850 erzählte der *Norwich Courier* den Ursprung der Redensart nach Aussage eines damals achtzigjährigen Bürgers, der thätigen Antheil an dem Revolutionskampfe genommen hatte, in folgender Weise. Als General Washington nach seiner Ernennung zum Befehlshaber der Armee im Befreiungskriege nach Massachusetts kam, um es zu organisiren und Vorkehrungen zu treffen zur Vertheidigung des Landes, fand er, dass grosser Mangel an Munition und andern nothwendigen Dingen war. Durch einen feindlichen Angriff in

> solcher Lage konnte die Sache auf einmal eine hoffnungslose werden. Bei einer Berathung, die er mit den Offizieren hielt, bemerkte er: „Wir müssen Bruder Jonathan darüber fragen", dem es auch gelang, Rath zu schaffen und Hülfe zu gewähren. In Fällen wie dieser soll sich Washington öfter mit den obigen Worten an jenen, durch seltene Umsicht und hohen praktischen Verstand ausgezeichneten Mann gewandt haben. Die Redensart wurde in der Folge bei den Bürgern der Union allgemein verbreitet und da dieselben sich als Muster praktischen Verstandes betrachten, so wurde „Bruder Jonathan" ein Synonym für die ganze Nation. Ein Artikel über die Ausdrücke: „Yankee", „Bruder Jonathan" und „Onkel Sam" findet sich im Feuilleton des *Baltimore Wecker*, Nr. 165 vom 18. Jan. 1853. Vgl. auch *K. Andree, Geographische Wanderungen, Dresden 1859, I, 163*. (Wa,II,1025,Jonathan,*1, Bartlett, 1849, 49–50; vgl. Knortz, 1899, 222)

Auch wenn „Brother Jonathan" als Verkörperung Neuenglands und auch der USA allgemein weniger geläufig geworden ist, zeigt sich Wander hier als informierter Sprach- und Kulturhistoriker. Von erheblicher Bedeutung ist auch, dass er John Russell Bartletts wiederholt aufgelegtes Standardwerk *The Dictionary of Americanisms* (zuerst 1849) kannte und in diesem Fall den darin enthaltenen Text mehr oder weniger in deutscher Übersetzung wiedergegeben hat. Das zeigt sich auch in seiner sehr langen Beschreibung des Spitznamens „Uncle Sam" als Bezeichnung der amerikanischen Regierung, die weit über eine eng gedruckte Spalte hinausreicht (Wa,IV,1421–1422,Unce Sam,*1–*2; Bartlett 1849, 362), wo er offensichtlich Bartletts Buch und andere Quellen übersetzt und paraphrasiert hat. Man sieht daran, dass Wander ein breit gefächertes Phraseologieverständnis hatte, das Volksausdrücke jeder Art einschloss. Hier wird deutlich, dass Wander sich als Wissensvermittler zwischen Deutschland und Amerika sah, und auf Amerika bezogen sieht man hier, dass er sicherlich auch deutschsprachige Leserinnen und Leser seines *Lexikons* in den Vereinigten Staaten im Sinn hatte.

3. Thomas Jefferson und Abraham Lincoln

Thomas Jefferson kommt auch einmal zu Wort, und zwar auf interessante Weise. Erwartungsgemäß findet man im *Lexikon* das Sprichwort „Verschiebe nicht auf morgen, was du heute thun kannst" (Wa,IV,1580,Verschieben,1). Doch dann findet man an anderer Stelle folgende Variante:

> Man muss nicht auf morgen verschieben, was man heute thun kann.
> Dies Sprichwort steht unter den zehn Geboten, die sich der im Jahre 1826 verstorbene Präsident der Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas, Thomas Jefferson, als Lebensregeln aufgestellt hatte, als erstes obenan. Die übrigen neun, von denen einige ebenfalls sprichwörtlichen Charakter besitzen oder mit deutschen Sprichwörtern sinnverwandt sind, lauten: „Mit dem, was du selbst thun kannst, bemühe nie andere. Verfüge nie über Geld, ehe du es hast. Kaufe nie unnütze Sachen, weil sie billig sind. Hochmuth kostet mehr als Hunger, Durst und Kälte. Man bereut

nie, zu wenig gegessen zu haben. Nichts ist mühsam, was man willig thut. Oft verursachen jene Uebel, die nie eintraten, Kummer und Sorgen. Betrachte alles von der guten Seite. Wenn du zornig bist, so zähle zehn, ehe du sprichst, bist du sehr zornig, so zähle hundert.“ (*Allgemeine Modenzeitung, Leipzig 1870, Nr. 41, S. 651.*) (Wa,III,727,Morgen(Adv.),8)

Indem Wander hier vom „sprichwörtlichen Charakter“ sowie „sinnverwandten“ deutschen Sprichwörtern spricht, zeigt er sich, wie könnte es anders ein, als kundiger Parömiologe. Erneut ist auch wieder festzustellen, dass er offensichtlich immer auf der Suche nach Sprichwörtlichem war und Bücher, Zeitschriften und Zeitungen durchforschte.

Natürlich darf auch Abraham Lincoln, sicherlich der bedeutendste amerikanische Präsident, nicht fehlen. Seine Reden und Briefe sind mit volkssprachlichen Texten angefüllt, und wenn heutzutage Sprichwörter wie „A house divided against itself cannot stand“, „Right makes might“, „Don't change horses in mid-stream“ und die sprichwörtliche Triade „Government of the people, by the people, for the people“ auftreten, so meistens zusammen mit dem Hinweis auf Lincoln (Mieder, 2000). Er hat diese Texte auch tatsächlich in bedeutenden Reden benutzt, aber er war keineswegs der Urheber. Bekanntlich sind solche Zuschreibungen fragwürdig, wie der große amerikanische Parömiologe Archer Taylor vor fast hundert Jahren bemerkte: „all ascriptions to definite persons must be looked upon with suspicion“ (Taylor, 1931, 38). So sind keine schriftlichen Belege für die Redensart „to have more pegs than holes“ bei Lincoln zu finden, und doch ist sein Name damit verbunden (Tarbell, 1906, III, 61):

Es sind keine holes für neue pegs.
(*Nordamerika*)
Diese Redensart ist während des Krieges der Union gegen den Aufstand der Sklavenstaaten entstanden. Es wird erzählt, der Präsident Lincoln habe, angegangen auch einigen deutschen Offizieren Commandos im Heere zu ertheilen, in seiner witzigen Weise geantwortet, es fehlt zu Zeit an holes für neue pegs. Diese Antwort, sofort durch die Presse in der ganzen Union verbreitet, wurde bald eine stehende Redensart in Bezug auf Anstellungen im Staatsdienst. So heisst es in *K. Heinzens Pionnier* (Boston) vom 22. Juli 1863, S. 6: „In der Schlacht bei Gettysburg wurden durch Tod und Verwundung zwei Corps-Commandos vacant, also zwei holes für neue pegs.“ (Wa,II,738,Höhle,*4)

Großartig, wie Wander hier gleich einen englisch-deutsch gemischten Beleg aus einer deutschsprachigen Zeitung in Boston zitiert. Lexikographisch gesehen, ist ihm jedoch vielleicht ein kleiner Fehler unterlaufen. Gewiss, englisch „hole“ ist etymologisch mit deutsch „Höhle“ verwandt und kann auch diese Bedeutung haben. In der vorliegenden Redensart bedeutet „hole“ jedoch „Loch“ und hätte vielleicht unter diesem Substantiv aufgenommen werden sollen.

Erwähnt werden soll ebenfalls, dass Wander auch Lincolns geflügeltes Wort „With malice toward none; with charity for all" aus seiner kurzen doch unvergeßlichen zweiten Antrittsrede vom 4. März 1865, wenn auch etwas verdreht, registriert hat (Shapiro, 2021, 494). Diese humane Botschaft am Ende des furchtbaren Bürgerkrieges hat Wander gleich zweimal in unterschiedlicher Übersetzung aufgenommen:

> Allen wohltun und keinem wehe.
> Charity to all with malice to none. So lautet der Sinnspruch am Denkmal des Präsidenten Lincoln, das sich auf dem Unions-Square in Neuyork befindet. (Wa,V,345,Wohlthun,1)

> Gütig gegen alle, ungerecht gegen keinen.
> Die Inschrift an dem Denkmal des Präsidenten Lincoln, Union Square, Neuyork, lautet: Charity to all, with malice to none. (Wa,V,1390,Gütig,*2)

4. Sklaven und Indianer

Es verwundert nicht, dass Wander sich auf Abraham Lincoln bezieht, denn er hat von Deutschland aus ja miterlebt, wie der Bürgerkrieg unter diesem unerschütterlichen Präsidenten ein Ende der Sklaverei brachte. Diese aber hatte er besonders auf seiner Reise durch einige Südstaaten in der Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts kennengelernt und eingehend beschrieben (Hohendorf, 1979, II, 175 und 202). In seinem bereits erwähnten als Tagebuch verfassten *Politischen Sprichwörterbrevier* aus den Jahren zwischen 1857 bis 1862 steht folgender Text mit einer zusätzlichen Anmerkung versehen, die Wander 1872 bei der Drucklegung erklärend hinzugefügt hat:

> 214) Von den Negern kann man im eigentlichen Sinne sagen, daß „sie in einer schlechten Haut stecken," weil man ihnen grade in Folge der Farbe derselben die Menschenrechte abspricht. Die Kaukasier dagegen „stecken in einer guten Haut," denn die Weiße derselben macht sie zu Herren der Schwarzen.*)
> *) Der Vf. hat hier die damaligen Zustände in den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerika's im Auge, die sich seither auch in erfreulicher Weise geändert haben. Damals genügte allerdings eine bloße dunkle Hautfarbe, um in den Südstaaten so lange für unfrei gehalten zu werden, bis auf das Zweifelloseste der Beweis der persönlichen Freiheit geführt war. D.H. (Dove [Wander], 1872, 51)

Hier ist noch ein interessantes Sprichwort aus einer deutschsprachigen Zeitschrift von 1870, wofür ich im Englischen nur „Slaves work under the whip" im Internet finden konnte. War es nur in der deutschen Presse Amerikas geläufig? Wie dem auch sei, der von Wander angegebene Kontext zeigt, dass sich die Situation der ehemaligen Sklaven um 1870 verbessert hatte:

Der Neger im Süden arbeitet blos unter der Peitsche eines Herrn.
Dies Sprichwort der Sklavenbesitzer in den Südstaaten der nordamerikanischen Union ist schon jetzt, obgleich die Neger erst wenige Jahre frei sind, gründlich widerlegt. Das *Montgomery State Journal* berichtet (1869) aus Alabama: „Unsere Neger haben im letzten Jahre sehr gut gewirtschaftet. Viele derselben haben auf eigene Faust Ackerbau getrieben, sich Land erworben und gute Ernten erzielt. Das Ergebnis ist Selbstvertrauen, Zufriedenheit und das Bestreben ihres eigenen Glücks Baumeister zu werden. Sie haben das alte Sprichwort: ‚Der Neger im Süden arbeitet blos unter der Peitsche eines Herrn‘, als erlogen widerlegt.“ (*Wächter am Erie, Cleveland vom 13. Jan. 1870, Nr. 26.*) (Wa,III,980,Neger,2)

Stereotypisch ist selbstverständlich ebenfalls der nächste sprichwörtliche Vergleich, obwohl „schwarz“ in einer Bedeutungserweiterung dann auch auf eine schlechte Einstellung hinweist:

Er ist schwarz wie ein Schornstein geboren. (*Nordamerika*)
Zunächst um anzudeuten, dass in einem Neger unvermischtes afrikanisches Blut sei, dann aber auch zur Bezeichnung von Gesinnung und Charakter. (*Wochenblatt der Neuyorker Staatszeitung vom 24. Jan. 1863*) (Wa,IV,425,Schwarz,*59)

Doch da ist noch folgender Text, wofür ich ebenfalls kein englischsprachiges Äquivalent im Internet finden konnte. Immerhin drückt dieser deutschsprachige Beleg eine positive Einstellung aus:

Neger sind auch Menschen.
Sagten in Nordamerika die, welche für Aufhebung der Sklaverei waren, gegenüber den Vertheidigern derselben. (Wa,III,980,Neger,3)

Wie schäbig auch die ursprünglichen Einwohner (Native Americans) behandelt wurden, geht aus folgender Redensart hervor, die auf einer als humorvoll verstandenen Volkserzählung beruht. Sie zeigt nur zu deutlich, wie man die Indianer misshandelt und vertrieben hat, was Wander als sozialpolitisch eingestellter Mensch anprangert:

Er hat nicht ein einziges mal zu mir Truthahn gesagt.
[He never said turkey to me]
Dies amerikanische Hinterwalds-Sprichwort soll folgenden Ursprung haben: Ein Weisser und ein Indianer gingen eines Tags miteinander auf die Jagd, kamen aber nachher überein, die Jagdbeute am Abend miteinander zu theilen. Der Weisse hatte ein Rebhuhn, der Indianer einen Truthahn geschossen. Wie soll man dies theilen? fragte der Letztere; das gibt nur zwei Wege, antwortete der Weisse: Entweder bekomme ich den Truthahn und du nimmst das Rebhuhn, oder du nimmst das Rebhuhn und ich bekomme den Truthahn. Der Wilde liess sich dies noch einmal wiederholen und rief dann aus: He never said turkey to me. Endlich theilten sie so, wie Weisse stets mit den Rothhäuten getheilt haben: der Weisse nahm beide

Stücke und versprach, sich das nächste mal mit ihm auszugleichen. Obiges Sprichwort wird angewandt, wenn sich jemand von einem andern auf eine schlaue Weise übervortheilt glaubt. (Vgl. *V.W. Hochbach, Aus Amerika, Leipzig 1856, S. 103 fg.*) (Wa,IV,1351,Truthahn,*4; vgl. Rees, 2006, 654)

Diese Geschichte, die auch in einer stereotypischen Variante mit einem Englishman und einem Irishman im Staate Virginia aufgezeichnet wurde (Bacon und Parsons, 1922, 302–303), wird heutzutage nicht mehr erzählt, und so ist man sich im allgemeinen auch nicht bewusst, dass die so beliebte Redensart „to talk turkey" in der Bedeutung von „ernsthaft sprechen" oder „zur Sache kommen" wohl auf diese Anekdote zurückgeht (Mieder, 1992, 120).

Schließlich folgen hier noch zwei deutschsprachige Sprichwörter, die ein stereotypisches Bild der ursprünglichen Bewohner (Native Americans) Nordamerikas enthalten. Für den ersten Text, der eine Anspielung auf den „Truthahn"-Beleg sein könnte, habe ich die ursprüngliche Quelle finden können, aber der zweite Beleg war weder im Deutschen noch im Englischen aufzufinden. Es ist anzunehmen, dass Wander ihn in einer deutschen Publikation gefunden hat:

Hilf mir den Indianer betrügen, und ich gebe dir die Hälfte.
Zur Charakteristik des Verhaltens der Nordamerikaner gegen die Eingeborenen, die zu übervortheilen, verdrängen, ja zu vernichten, vielen als Aufgabe gilt. (Globus) (Wa,II,961,Indianer,[1])
Anonym, „Der Indianerkrieg in Nordamerika." *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, 12 (1867), 122–124.

Ein Pferd lernt eher tanzen als ein Indianer arbeiten. (*Nordamerika*)
Der Indianer hasst und verachtet die Arbeit als Erniedrigung des Mannes; und wenn er, von Noth getrieben, wirklich einmal zu arbeiten versucht, so hält er nur wenige Tage dabei aus. (Wa,III,1292,Pferd,286)

Hier möchte man aus heutiger Sicht sagen, dass Wander diesen Stereotyp vielleicht hätte auslassen können, denn es ist ja keineswegs erwiesen, dass er besonders geläufig war. Aber als Parömiograph wollte Wander so vollständig wie möglich sein und Werturteile seinen Leserinnen und Lesern überlassen. Weit positiver ist natürlich die zweimal aufgenommene Redensart, bei der es sich um eine Lehnübersetzung von „to smoke the pipe of peace" handelt:

Die Friedenspfeife mit einem rauchen.
Sie haben die Friedenspfeife (noch nicht) miteinander geraucht.
Diese Redensarten beziehen sich auf die Form, unter der die Indianer Nordamerikas Frieden schliessen, was eben dadurch geschieht, dass man mit dem Gegner eine Pfeife raucht. Der Stein aber, den die Indianer zur Friedenspfeife verwenden, wird nur in einem einzigen Steinbruche Minnesotas, im Red pipe stone valley, 100

englische Meilen westlich von St.-Paul gefunden. (Vgl. *Wagner und Scherzer, Reisen in Nordamerika, Leipzig, 1854, III, 43.*) (Wa,I,1213,Friedenspfeife,*1–*2)

Man sieht, mit welcher anthropologischer Umsicht Wander solche Belege verzeichnet hat und sich auf diese Weise als sprachkultureller Vermittler erweist.

5. Stereotypische Redensarten über Amerika

Diesbezüglich ist von Interesse, dass Wander auch einen redensartlichen Stereotyp, und zwar gleich in zwei Varianten, verzeichnet hat, den deutsche Einwanderer über besonders reiche Amerikaner in Umlauf gesetzt haben. Dabei geht es um die Wortbildungen „Stockfischaristokrat“ und „Stockfischnabob“, die mit Bezug auf Wander in Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1957), Bd. 10,3, Sp. 96 und Sp. 98 auftreten. Bei dem ursprünglich aus dem Indischen herrührenden Wort „nabob“, das im Englischen bis heute auftritt, handelt es sich um eine sehr reiche und einflussreiche Person. Doch hier nun die beiden Texte mit Wanders vorzüglichen Erklärungen:

Er ist ein Stockfischaristokrat.
Spott auf solche Amerikaner, die durch Stockfischfang u. dgl. reich geworden sind und sich nun, ohne die entsprechende Bildung zu besitzen, an europäische Höfe, in Adels- und höhere Bildungskreise drängen. In der Gartenlaube (1860) heisst es : „Die deutschen Blätter Nordamerikas haben sich schon oft darüber lustig gemacht, dass die dortigen Thran- und Stockfischaristokraten, d.h. die reich gewordenen Kaufleute, während ihrer Reisen in Europa, sich gern an die Höfe drängen und für vornehme Leute gelten wollen. Von diesem Knack- und Protzenthum sagt einer unserer Landsleute: ‚Diese amerikanischen Faulenzer, die sich Europa aus dem Eisenbahnwagen betrachten und sich vierzehn Tage in Paris aufhalten, diese stoischen Republikaner, diese Käsekrämer, Landschwindler, Seifenfabrikanten, Schweins- und Wallfischthranhändler stürzen sich zu Füssen des Menschen, der in den Tuillerien wohnt. Welcher Hohn, wenn wir an den alten [Benjamin] Franklin denken!‘“ (Wa,IV,873,Stockfisch,[*1])

Er ist ein Stockfischnabob.
So, oder Makrelen-, Petroleum- u.s.w. Nabobs nennt man in Nordamerika scherz- oder spottweise diejenigen, welche durch Stockfisch-, Makrelenfang u.s.w. oder durch Ausbeuten von Erdölquellen reich geworden sind. (Wa,IV,874,Stockfischnabob,[*1])

An diesen heute nicht mehr kursierenden Wendungen spürt man deutlich, dass das Leben für Einwanderer nicht leicht war, und dass man wohl auch mit Neid auf die wohlhabenden Amerikaner schaute, die sich scheinbar alles leisten konnten. Hierzu gehört noch das Sprichwort „Ein Stockfisch kommt aus Amerika und bleibt ein Stockfisch“ (Wa,IV,872,Stockfisch,3), das Wander

ohne Kommentar zitiert. Es scheint auszudrücken, dass die amerikanischen „Stockfische", die nach Deutschland kommen, unverbesserlich sind.

Natürlich gibt es auch positive Stereotype, und man kann sich denken, wie total überrascht ich war, als ich tatsächlich folgendes wohl doch nur unter deutschen Einwanderern bekanntes Sprichwort betreffs meines Staates Vermont in Wanders *Lexikon* entdeckt habe:

> Vermont ist ein guter Staat der Abkunft.
> Vermont gehört zu den Neuenglandstaaten, die man als die Staatenmutter bezeichnet, und es ist einer der reinsten derselben. Man nimmt nämlich an, dass von Neuengland aus und durch die Neuengländer die Bildung neuer Staaten der Union erfolge, und das obige Sprichwort hebt besonders Vermont als tüchtigen, fruchtbaren Abkunftsstaat hervor. […] Der Neuengländer sei überall vom Hause weg zu finden, und er verkomme auch bei seiner Auswanderung nicht [viele Vermonter zogen als Bauern in den Mittleren Westen]. In diesem Sinne findet nun auch das obige Sprichwort seine Erklärung. (Vgl. *Neuyorker Staatszeitug vom 4. Nov. 1863, S. 7.*) (Wa„IV,1672,Vermont,[1])

Doch damit nicht genug! Wander weiß sogar in seinem *Auswanderungs-Katechismus* die Etymologie der Namen der verschiedenen Staaten zu erklären, darunter Vermont als vierzehnter Staat: „Vermont wurde von seinen Bewohnern in ihrer Unabhängigkeitserklärung vom 16. Januar 1777 seiner ‚grünen Berge' halber nach dem Französischen ‚vert mont' genannt" (Wander, 1852, 4).

Von Interesse ist ebenfalls, dass Wander den folgenden politischen Slogan von circa 1840 in sein *Lexikon* aufgenommen hat, der übrigens von dem amerikanischen Politiker James Farley (1888-1976) mit Bezug auf Präsident Franklin D. Roosevelts erster Wiederwahl am 4. November 1936 zu „As Maine goes, so goes Vermont" umgestaltet wurde, da nur diese beiden Staaten nicht für Roosevelt gestimmt haben (Shapiro, 2021, 263):

> Wie Maine geht, so geht auch die Union.
> Dies nordamerikanische Sprichwort spricht den Erfahrungssatz aus, dass in der Regel die Wahlen für die Unionsregierung in der Richtung ausfallen, in der die Wahlen für die Regierung des Staats Maine ausgefallen sind, sodass also die Partei, die in Maine gesiegt hat, sich dem Glauben hingibt, auch in den Unionswahlen zu siegen. In einer andern Zeitung finde ich als amerikanisches Sprichwort: „As Pennsylvania goes, the Union goes"; was der Grösse des Staats wegen angemessener erscheint. (Wa,III,351,Maine,[1])

Und wie erwartet, zitiert der so umsichtige Wander dann später auch die gerade erwähnte strukturgleiche Umformulierung mit Pennsylvanien:

> Wie Pennsylvanien geht, so geht die Union.
> *Schles. Zeitung, 1868, Nr. 495.*

Es gilt als ein altes amerikanisches Sprichwort, dass das Wahlergebnis Pennsylvaniens eine Art Vorbedeutung für den Ausfall der Wahlen in anderen Staaten ist. (S. – Maine) (Wa,III,1209,Pennsylvanien,[1])

In der Tat ist diese Variante seit etwa 1855 gängig, aber da heutzutage nun einmal Kalifornien eine ungemein wichtige Rolle spielt, wäre Wander sicherlich nicht überrascht gewesen, eine dritte und moderne Neuformulierung vorzufinden. Wir haben „As California goes, so goes the nation“ in unserem *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (2012) mit einem Frühbeleg aus dem Jahre 1940 und folgendem Kommentar registriert: „The ‚California‘ proverb often refers not just to electoral politics but to fashions and fads of various kinds” (Doyle, Mieder und Shapiro, 2012, 32). Sollten sich diese Konstellationen in der Zukunft verschieben, wird es gewiss zu weiteren Varianten auf der Basis dieser eingängigen Strukturformel kommen.

6. Deutsche Lehnübersetzungen aus dem Amerikanischen

Es gibt immer wieder redensartliche Belege, die deutlich als Lehnübersetzungen aus dem Angloamerikanischen in den deutschen Sprachschatz der Einwanderer eingedrungen sind. Sicherlich sind sie bis in das frühe zwanzigste Jahrhundert mit einiger Frequenz unter deutschsprachigen Menschen gängig gewesen. Doch wie allgemein bekannt, hat der Erste Weltkrieg dann sehr viel dazu beigetragen, dass die deutsche Sprache in Schulen, Kirchen und eben auch Familien in Amerika sehr stark nachgelassen hat. Damit sind die folgenden Redensarten über weitere Jahre hinweg verlorengegangen, so dass ihre Registrierung in Wanders *Deutschem Sprichwörter-Lexikon* sozusagen ein historisches Denkmal darstellt. Dafür nun eine Reihe Beispiele, wofür ich in eckigen Klammern jeweils die sich dahinter verbergende ursprünglich englische Redensart angebe. Da Wander gewiss John Russell Bartletts *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1849) kannte (seine Erklärungen ähneln zuweilen mehr oder weniger direkten Übersetzungen daraus), verweise ich wo möglich auf dies bedeutende Sammlung:

Das kann einen philadelphischen Advocaten in Verlegenheit setzen. (*Nordamerika*) [That beats a Philadelphia lawyer]
Ein amerikanischer Advocat hat mehr Schwierigkeiten zu überwinden, um sich in seinem Fache auszuzeichnen, als irgendein Advocat in der Welt, weil er nicht nur die englischen Gesetze, sondern auch die Statuten jedes Staats der Union kennen muss. Für die scharsinnigsten in der Beweisführung und die tüchtigsten in wissenschaftlicher Rechtskenntnis gelten die Rechtsanwälte Philadelphias. Ihr Ruf ist in dieser Hinsicht so begründet, dass er zu obigem Sprichwort [Redensart] Veranlassung gegeben hat. (Wa,I,33,Advocaten,*29)

Es ist (war) nicht alles in Apfelkuchenordnung.

[To (not) be an apple-pie order; Bartlett 1849, 12]
Um Fehler, Mängel, Verstösse bei Festen, Aufzügen, im Hauswesen, in der Verwaltung zu bezeichnen. Unter den Deutschen in Nordamerika gebräuchlich. Man isst dort bekanntlich viel Apfelkuchen. Bei jedem Festessen hat er seinen bestimmten Platz in der Reihe. (Vgl. *Baltimore Wecker, 1853, Nr. 234.*) (Wa,I,110,Apfelkuchenordnung,[*1])

Den unrechten Baum anbellen.
[To bark up the wrong tree; Bartlett 1849, 24]
In Nordamerika um ein Verfehlen des Ziels auszudrücken. Von der Jagd entlehnt, bei welcher ein Hund ein Eichhörnchen oder ein anderes Wild bis an einen Baum verfolgt, vor welchem er bellt, bis der Jäger kommt; zuweilen bellt er aber vor dem unrechten Baume. *Engl.*: To bark up the wrong tree. (Wa,I,283,Baum,*266)

Es ist ein politischer Blechs[ch]mied
[To be a political blacksmith]
So nennt man in der Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas diejenigen, welche für Zwecke ihrer Partei, besonders während der Wahlbewegung, dem Volke blauen Dunst vorreden: „Leute mit einigem Schamgefühl würden Anstand nehmen, sich so zu prostituiren, aber die politischen Blechschmiede genirt das nicht.“ (*Wächter am Erie vom 9. September 1867, S. 2.*) (Wa,V,1012,Blechschmied,[1])

Er wusste nicht, ob seine Büchse Hinteraugen habe oder nicht. (*Nordamerika*)
[As certain as this gun has got hind-sights]
(Wa,V,1077,Büchse,*41)
Möglicherweise hat Wander diese Redensart in folgendem Buch entdeckt: George Friedrich Ruxton, *Leben im fernen Westen.* Aus dem Englischen von W.B. Lindau. Dresden: Rudolf Kuntze, 1852, S. 42. Zuerst auf Englisch: *Life in the Far West.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849, S. 33.

Ich muss daran denken, auf welcher Seite mein eigenes Brot mit Butter bestrichen ist. (*Nordamerika*) – *Breslauer Zeitung 1865, Nr. 185, S. 1062.*
[To know on what side one's bread is buttered]
Um zu sagen: Ich bin mir selbst der Nächste, mein Vortheil, meine Rettung geht vor. (Wa,V,1126,Denken,*193)

Am Draht ziehen. (*Nordamerika*)
[To pull the strings]
Aus politischem Parteitreiben Gewinn suchen. „Die Wortführer sprachen von einer Vereinigung der Parteien; aber es war nicht eines jeden Wunsch, denn da könnten sie ja nicht am Draht ziehen, wenn sie wollten.“ (*Neuyorker Staatszeitung, vom 19. November 1863, S. 5.*) (Wa,V,1187,Draht,*7; vgl. auch noch „Drahtzieher“, Wa,I,682,Drahtzieher,1)

Den Elephanten gesehen haben. – *Steffens, Volkskalender, 1855, S. 50.*
[To see the elephant; Bartlett 1849, 290]

To have seen the elephant, bedeutet in Amerika etwas versucht haben, was vielleicht mit grossen Schwierigkeiten verbunden war und doch ohne Erfolg blieb. (Wa,V,1228,Elefanten,*27). Vgl. dazu den gerade erschienenen Aufsatz meines Parömiologiefreundes Charles Clay Doyle, „‚To See the Elephant‘: Meanings of the Proverbial Phrase, and Its Age.“ *Proverbium*, 39 (2022), 58-85.

Faul bis zum Kerngehäuse.
[Rotten to the core]
Der Amerikaner in den Vereinigten Staaten wendet diese sehr treffende Redensart an, wenn er den Zustand durchdringender Schlechtigkeit und Fäulnis bezeichnen will; sie wird zur Zeit häufig auf die Handels- und Geschäftsverhältnisse angewandt. (*Philadelphia, Sonntags-Journal, Nr. 9 vom 27. Januar 1878*) (Wa,V,1250,Faul,*45)

Auf der Fenze sitzen.
[to sit on the fence; Bartlett 1849, 130]
In Nordamerika will man damit sagen, dass jemand keiner von den scharf hervortretenden Parteien angehöre, weder inner- noch ausserhalb des eingezäunten Feldes sich befinde, sondern eine neutrale oder zuwartende Stellung eingenommen hat. (Wa,I,981,Fenze,*2)
Vgl. auch „Auf dem Zaune reiten“. In Nordamerika soviel, als in politischen Dingen sich neutral halten. (Wa.V,511,Zaun,*83; Bartlett 1849, 398)

Er ist ein Fenzenbrecher.
[To be a fence breaker]
Mit diesem Namen bezeichnet man in den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas eigentlich diejenigen Kühe oder Ochsen, welche die Neigung besitzen, Fenzen zu durchbrechen, um zum Genuss der geschützten Feldfrüchte zu gelangen. Thiere dieser Art können für einen ganzen Umkreis sehr gefährlich werden, da die ganze übrige Heerde ihnen dann folgt, sobald die Bresche eröffnet ist. Man sucht sie daher soviel als möglich auszumerzen; denn wenn man ihnen auch die Augen bedeckt, so nützt dies nicht viel. Uneigentlich wird das Wort auf kühne Vorgänger, auf Bahnbrecher, auf Personen angewandt, welche Schwierigkeiten überwinden, sich durch Hindernisse nicht abschrecken lassen. (Wa,I,981,Fenzenbrecher,[*1])
Vgl. die neuere Redensart „to break through the glass ceiling“.

Glänzende Hochzeit, schlechte Ehe.
[Brilliant nuptials, wretched marriage]
In Nordamerika liebt man Hochzeiten, wie solche in Deutschland, ja ganz Europa üblich sind, nicht. Durch das obige Sprichwort wird das sehr verbreitete Vorurtheil, das man gegen glänzende Hochzeiten hat, ausgesprochen. Brilliant nuptials, wretched marriage, heisst es; und wiewohl der Amerikaner nicht abergläubisch ist, so sucht man doch das Omen zu vermeiden. Wenn überhaupt eine Hochzeitfeier stattfindet, so pflegen nur die Aeltern und Geschwister daran teilzunehmen. (Ueber amerikanische Hochzeiten vgl. *Frauen im Amerika* von *Dr. Kolatschek, Wien 1864.*) (Wa,II,696,Hochzeit,19)

In der Tat schreibt Adolf Kolatschek in seinem Buch *Die Stellung der Frau in Amerika*. Wien: Carl Schönewerk, 1864, S. 105: „Brilliant nuptials, wretched marriage, – glänzende Hochzeit, schlechte Ehe – heißt es". Es sei aber vermerkt, dass ich das englische Sprichwort nirgends habe finden können.

Eine hänfene Krawatte ist (hier) leicht zu haben. (*Nordamerika*)
[To put on a hemp cravat]
Wer in den Verdacht kommt, mit dem Feinde in strafbarer Beziehung zu stehen, kann leicht gehängt werden. Aus der Zeit des Kriegs der Union mit dem Rebellenstaaten. (*Breslauer Zeitung, 1865, Nr. 185, S. 1062.*) (Wa,II,1587,Krawatte,1)

Das sind hölzerne Muskatenüsse.
[To be wooden nutmeg]
So sagt man in Nordamerika um auszudrücken, das ist Betrug, Täuschung, Schwindel. Daher entstanden, dass ein speculativer Geschäftsmann aus einem der Neuenglandstaaten, wenn ich nicht irre, Connecticut oder Massachusetts, eine Ladung künstlich nachgemachter, aus gewöhnlichem Holze gedrechselter Muskatennüsse in einem südlichen Staat der Union verkauft hat. . Eine gute Anwendung wurde von dieser Redensart neulich gemacht. Nach der Einnahme vom Fort Pulaski durch die Unionstruppen im Jahre 1863 sagte ein gefangener Krieger des conföderirten Heeres zu einem nordstattlichen Soldaten aus Connecticut: „Bei allen unsern Fehlern haben wir doch noch keine hölzernen Muskatennüsse fabricirt", worauf der Yankee kaltblütig erwiderte, indem er auf eins der riesigen Wurfgeschosse (Projectile) deutete, welche die Mauern der Rebellenfeste zertrümmert hatte: „Wir machen sie auch jetzt nicht mehr aus Holz, sondern aus Eisen." (*Neuyorker Staatszeitung vom 9. Nov. 1863.*) (Wa,III,788,Muskatennuss,*2)

Das ist (befindet sich) in einer Nussschale.
[To be in a nutshell]
In der Beantwortung der Frage, warum zur Zeit die Kohlenpreise in Nordamerika so bedeutend in die Höhe gehen, heisst es: „Die wahre Schwierigkeit befindet sich in diesem Falle in einer Nussschale, es wird nach mehr Kohle gefragt, als am Markt ist." (*Wochenblatt der Neuyorker Staatszeitung, vom 21. Nov. 1863, S. 5.*) (Wa,III,1079,Nussschale,*7)

Es war Peter Funk.
[It was Peter Funk; Bartlett 1849, 248]
Auch: das hat Peter Funk gethan, Peter Funk hat gefehlt u.s.w. – Peter Funk ist keine wirkliche Person. In Nordamerika bezeichnet man damit den Mann, der bei Versteigerungen, besonders bei den sogenannten Mock-Auctionen, im Einverständniss mit dem Verkäufer bietet, um die Verkaufsgegenstände durch Anreizung der Käufer in die Höhe zu treiben. (*Über Land und Meer, XXXIV, 841.*) (Wa,V,1651,Peter Funk,[*1])

Auf dem Salzfluss rudern (fahren)
[To row up the Salt River]

In den Vereinigten Staaten, um eine politische Niederlage zu bezeichnen. (To row up Salt River.) Der Salt River in Kentucky [Arizona] ist wegen seines gewundenen Laufs und seiner vielen seichten Stellen sehr schwer zu befahren. (Wa,III,1856,Salzfluss,[*1])

Auf den Stump gehen.
[To go on the stump; Bartlett 1849, 340 –341]
In Nordamerika von politischen Redners, die zur Zeit der Staats- oder Unionswahlen herumreisen, um in Versammlungen für den Candidaten der Partei zu sprechen. (Wa,IV,941,Stump,*1)

Der Teufel muss nicht alle schönen Melodien haben.
[The devil must not have all the good music (tunes)]
Ein Methodist legte schönen, weltlichen Melodien geistliche Texte unter, und als man ihn deshalb tadelte, sagte er: „Soll mir etwa der Teufel alle schönen Sangweisen wegschnappen?“ (Wa,IV,1071,Teufel,286)

Wenn der Teufel als Köder an einem Haken hängt, so stiehlt ein Yankee den Haken, ohne dass der Teufel es merkt.
[If you baited a hook with the devil, a Yankee would steal the hook without the devil knowing it]
Das Sprichwort ist eine Übersetzung aus Junius Henri Browne, *Four Years in Secessia: Adventures Within and Beyond the Union Lines*. Hartford, Connecticut: O.D. Case, 1865, S. 72 –73.

Es sind Todtenköpfe (dead heads)
[To be a dead head; Bartlett 1849, 396]
So nannte man auf der Weltausstellung von Philadelphia diejenigen Besucher, die Freibillets zum Eintritt besassen, also nicht zahlten [auch ganz allgemein Personen, die nicht bezahlen]. (*Vereinigte Staaten-Zeitung 14. Juni 1876*.) (Wa,V,1772,Todtenkopf,*3)

Besonders hervorgeheben sei folgende Darstellung der Redensart „Er ist gut ab“ (To be well off), wo Wander doch tatsächlich gleich drei weitere Redensarten hinzufügt, die die verschiedenen Stufen des so angestrebten Reichtums enthalten (Mieder, 2020, 155–184). Es war dieser doch sehr stark verbreitete Materialismus in den Vereinigten Staaten, der Wander zu dem Entschluss zu seiner Rückkehr nach Deutschland bewogen hat:

Er ist gut ab.
[To be well off; Bartlett 1849, 378]
Eine amerikanische Redensart, welche eine gewisse Stufe auf der Erwerbs- und Wohlstandsleiter bezeichnet. Die unterste Stufe wird durch die Redensart bestimmt: Er macht sein Leben [to make a living], d.i. er verdient so viel als er zu seinem Lebensunterhalte braucht. Verdient er etwas mehr, so sagt man: Er macht gut aus [to be well-to-do]. Auf einer höheren Stufe steht derjenige, welcher schon

gut ausgemacht hat; von ihm heisst es: Er ist gut ab. Eine wieder höhere Stufe ist: Er macht Geld; er hat so viel übrig, dass er Kapital anlegt. Dann heisst es: Der Mann ist so und so viel werth [To be worth a certain amount]. (Vgl. *Atlantische Studien. Von Deutschen in Amerika, Göttingen 1853, II, 24.*) (Wa,II,183,Gut(Adj.),*271)

Es überrascht, dass Wander nirgends das Sprichwort „Geld regiert die Welt" heranzieht, denn darum dreht es sich doch in dieser warnenden Aussage in seinem *Auswanderungs-Katechismus*: „Ganz wie im alten Europa, und wenn möglich noch ausschließlicher, ist hier [in Amerika] das Geld der Götze, den alle Menschenherzen anbeten, liegt das ganze Volk vor diesem goldnen Kalbe auf seinen Knien, und kein Mittel, keine Handlung entehrt, die zum Besitz des Mammons führen" (Wander, 1852, 35). Dazu gehört schließlich noch das wohl als Sprichwort zu geltende „Smart hat die rechte Art", worin sich nach Wander die amerikanische Mentalität verbirgt (Mieder, 2019), der er ambivalent gegenüberstand:

Smart hat die rechte Art.

Nämlich die richtige amerikanische Art, die darin besteht, das Streben nach Gewinn zur ausschliesslichen Triebfeder aller Handlungen zu machen. Nirgends in der Welt verdient der gesamte Verkehr der Gesellschaft so sehr den Namen eines Wettrennens nach dem goldenen Kalbe als in der Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas. Der Ausdruck „Smart" ist daher dort geboren. Smart muss der Mann sein, wenn er nicht in dem Wühlen und Wogen des täglichen Treibens unter die Füsse kommen und zertreten werden will. Ist er smart, dann ist er von der rechten Art. Das Wort ist durch ein einziges deutsches Wort [durchtrieben? geschickt?] gar nicht zu übersetzen, weil die Sache selbst in Deutschland gefehlt hat. Es kann ebenso gut Lob als Vorwurf enthalten. Ein smarter Mann kann thätig, rührig, pfiffig, verschmitzt, heute Wohlthäter, morgen Spitzbube, er kann zu allem fähig sein; doch stets so, dass die heilige Hermandad [spanische Polizei] ihn nie fassen und der blinden Themis [griech. Göttin des Rechts] zur Sühne überliefern kann. (Vgl. *Wächter am Erie vom 28. Nov. 1873.*) (Wa,IV,549,Smart,[1])

Es fällt auf, dass mehrere dieser Belege sowie andere hier nicht zitierte erst in dem 1880 erschienenen fünften Band des *Lexikons* mit seinem umfangreichen Nachtrag, also etwa ein Jahr nach dem Tode Wanders, auftreten. Es ist ein eindeutiger Beweis dafür, dass Wander sich bis zuletzt um deutschsprachige Sprichwörter und Redensarten aus den Vereinigten Staaten gekümmert hat und von vornherein „Zusätze und Ergänzungen" geplant hat, die mehr als die Hälfte des fünften Bands einnehmen.

7. Deutsches Sprichwortgut in Amerika

Das zuletzt genannte Sprichwort beruht auf der Meinung deutscher Einwanderer und ist in englischer Übersetzung nicht aufzufinden. Natürlich aber hat Wander noch bedeutend mehr sprichwörtliche Texte gefunden, die nicht Entlehnungen aus dem Englischen sind, sondern im Deutschen der

Vereinigten Staaten ihren Ursprung haben. Wie allgemein verbreitet sie waren, ist heutzutage schwer feststellbar. Trotz zeitaufwendiger Nachforschungen in Publikationen und im Internet habe ich nur in den seltensten Fällen zusätzlich zu Wander noch einen Beleg finden können. Allerdings ist es mir gelegentlich gelungen, für einen von Wander ohne Quellenangabe registrierten Beleg eine gedruckte Vorlage zu finden. All dies zeigt erneut Wanders ungemein vielfältige Belesenheit und darüber hinaus, sein unglaubliches redensartliches Sprachgefühl. Dass wir diese deutschsprachigen Texte überhaupt haben, verdanken wir Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander, der als Parömiograph willens war, auch möglicherweise kaum sprichwörtlich gewordene Texte in sein *Lexikon* aufzunehmen. Wenn Parömiographen nicht bereit sind, bisher nicht erfasstes Sprichwortgut aufzunehmen, kommt die Sprichwortforschung nicht weiter. Das gilt selbstverständlich ganz besonders für moderne Sprichwörter und Redensarten.

Doch hier nun Beispiele für Texte, die scheinbar nur unter Deutschen in den Vereinigten Staaten mehr oder weniger bekannt waren, die nicht mehr im Sprachgebrauch sind, und die es auch nicht geschafft haben, sich in Deutschland anzusiedeln. So groß war die Rückwanderung aus Amerika nicht, um das außer in ganz seltenen Fällen zu ermöglichen. Dennoch sind folgende Sprichwörter, Redensarten und Sagwörter (Wellerismen) selbstverständlich von großem sprach- und kulturhistorischem Interesse, die auch etwas über die Weltansicht der Immigranten erkennen lassen:

Drohnen und Bären lassen sich gern von andern ernähren.
Von den Aemterschnappern in den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas. (*Baltimore Wecker, 1853, Nr. 274*) (Wa,I,669,Drohnen,2)
Hier ist von Interesse, dass Joh. Ph. Glock dieses Sprichwort dann aus Wanders *Lexikon* in eine kleine Liste aufgenommen hat: *Die Symbolik der Bienen und ihre Produkte in Sage, Dichtung, Kultur, Kunst und Bräuchen*. Heidelberg: Weiß'sche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1891, S. 258 (Nr. 5).

Drohnen und Bären schaden dem Korbe. (*Nordamerika*)
(Wa,I,669,Drohnen,3)

Ich bin fix und fertig, sagte das Beefsteak zum Koch. (*Deutsch-amerik.*)
(Wa,I,1044,Fix,2)
Vielleicht hat sich bei der Formulierung dieses Sagwortes (Wellerismus) ein sogenannter Deutschamerikaner an die in der Heimat so beliebte Spruchform erinnert.

Einem die Fliegen verjagen. (*Nordamerika*)
Scherzhaft für: ihn durchbläuen. Man erzählt nämlich, der Richter Lynch in Virginien habe einen Angeklagten, der nicht gestehen wollte, an einen Baum binden, ihn auskleiden und ihm etwa zwanzig Hiebe auf den blossen Rücken geben las-

sen, welchen Voract er blos als ein Fliegenvertreiben betrachtet habe, weil es dann – besser komme. (Wa,I,1068,Fliege,[*1])

Nichts gegen das Gesetz, sagt der Amerikaner. (*Deutsch-amerik.*)
(Wa,I,1616,Gesetz,78)
Dazu habe ich durch das Internet folgenden Beleg ausfindig machen können: „Und wenn uns der Kap'tän hier findet oder der Steuermann, - da nützt es nichts, und ich rühre kein Glied. Denn nichts gegen das Gesetz! sagt der Amerikaner"; vgl. Wilhelm Stade, „Eine neue Seegeschichte," *Hausblätter*, 3 (1858), S. 192–224 (hier S. 197).

Gott versteht alles, wenn wir es auch nicht verstehen, sagte die Nonne, als sie aus einem lateinischen Brevier betete.
Der methodistische Reiseprediger *P.A. Mölling* erzählt in seinen *Reiseskizzen* (*Galveston 1858, S. 65*), gesammelt auf einer Reise durch die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika: Auf dem Bahnzuge von Madison (Indiana) fand ich mich inmitten eines halben Dutzend Nonnen, die kleine lateinische Gebetbücher zum Vorschein brachten. Ich fragte eine derselben, ob sie das Latein verstehe, worauf sie mit irischem Dialekt erwiderte: ‚Das kommt gar nicht darauf an, Gott wisse alle Dinge, und so versteht er ja auch, was wir beten.'" (Wa,II,48,Gott,1104)
Erneut ein Sagwort! Hat Wander sich diesen Wellerismus zusammengereimt?

Sich von einem Grünhorn betrügen lassen.
In Amerika nennt man die erst Eingewanderten Grüne oder Grünhörner. Da ihnen noch nicht Erfahrungen über die Verhältnisse des Landes zur Seite stehen, so überträgt man die Bezeichnungen überhaupt auf alle, die auf einem gewissen Platze, in einem Fache, Amte, Verhältniss neu, unerfahren und ohne Kenntniss sind. (Vgl. *Die Grünen* in: *Atlantische Studien. Von Deutschen in Amerika*, Göttingen 1853, II, 16 fg.) (Wa,II,160,Grünhorn,[*1]; Bartlett 1849, 164)

Wie die Haut, so die Braut.
In den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas durften vor dem Bürgerkrieg nur Gleichfarbige eine Ehe eingehen. (Wa,II,441,Haut,98)
Für dieses leider nur zu wahre Sprichwort konnte ich weder im Amerikanischen noch im Deutschen auch nur einen Beleg finden.

Der Herr von Hunker ist ein alter Junker. (*Nordamerika*)
Aus dem nordamerikanischen Parteileben. Mit dem Worte „Hunker" wurde um das Jahr 1850 die alte Demokratie bezeichnet; und die neu eingewanderten Deutschen wollen mit dem Sprichworte sagen, dass die Hunkerpartei veraltete überwundene Ansichten vertrete. „Der Herr von Hunker ist ein altes Haus, bildet eine angesehene Familie und hat Einfluss, weil er Geld im Beutel hat. Was sieht man an dem Herrn von Hunker, der zu respectiren wäre, wenn er einsähe, dass seine Zeit längst begraben und seine Leute längst unter der Erde sind." (*Baltimore Wecker, 1853, Nr. 274*) (Wa,II,924,Hunker,[1])

Ich will ihm das klar machen wie ein Glas reinen Whisky. (*Nordamerika*) – *Breslauer Zeitung, 1865, Nr. 185, S. 1063.*) (Wa,II,1368,Klar,*21)
Hierfür habe ich noch einen ebenfalls aus 1865 stammenden Beleg finden können: „Sie verstehen sich nicht auf amerikanische Praxis. Wir haben hier unsere eigenen Wege, und ich will Ihnen das klar machen, wie ein Glas reinen Whisky.“ Anonym, „Im Schlepptau. Eine Episode aus dem Krieg in Nord-Amerika.“ *Illustrierte Unterhaltungs-Blätter für Familie und Haus*, 6 (1865), S. 394–395 (hier S. 396).

Des Klienten Hoffnung ist des Advocaten Futter. (*Nordamerika*)
(Wa,II,1393,Klient,[1])
In dem in Amerika spielenden Roman *Der Pedlar* habe ich das Sprichwort gefunden: „Sie kennen den alten Spruch: Des Klienten Hoffnung ist des Advocaten Futter“. Vgl. Otto Ruppius, *Gesammelte Werke*. Berlin: Franz Duncker, 1874, S. 365. Ein englischer Vorläufer war nicht auffindbar.

Die Krippe frei machen für ander Vieh. (*Nordamerika*)
Sagt man in den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas, wenn der neue Präsident die Beamten, falls sie nicht seiner Partei angehören, entlässt, um die Staatsämter mit Männern seiner Ansichten zu besetzen. (Wa,II,1635,Krippe,*17)

Zwei Kühe zugleich melken. (*Nordamerika*)
Nach verschiedenen Seiten zu gewinnen suchen. „Käme eine Vereinigung der Parteien zu Stande, dann könnten sie (die Wortführer, Drahtzieher) nicht die demokratische und republikanische Kuh zu gleicher Zeit melken.“ (*Neuyorker Staatszeitung vom 19. Nov. 1863, S. 5.*) (Wa,II.1692,Kuh,*634)

Mist aus sechsunddreissig Gruben.
So nannte man in den fünfziger Jahren in den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas die Zusammenstellung von Mittheilungen aus den verschiedenen deutschen Vaterländern. (Wa,III,672,Mist,*82)
Wander muss diese kritische Verallgemeinerung unter deutschen Einwanderern während seines Aufenthalts in Amerika gehört haben. Es sei aber darauf hingewiesen, daß es sich dabei wohl ursprünglich um ein Zitat aus dem 26. Kapitel von Heinrich Heines *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen* (1844) handelt: „Es war, als fegte man den Mist / aus sechsunddreißig Gruben.“ Heinrich Heine, *Werke in einem Band*, hrsg. von Walther Vontin. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1966, S. 586.

Wenn ich dich nur näher gehabt hätte, du würdest anders pfeifen, sagte Sam zum Eichhörnchen, das, als er es auf drei Schritt gefehlt hatte, lustig auf einen Baum sprang. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,III,865,Nahe,5)
Hier dürfte es sich um ein Sagwort (Wellerismus) handeln.

Es ist mir einerlei, wie ich gerufen [genannt] werde, nur nicht zu spät zum Mittagstisch. (*Nordamerika*)
(Wa,III,1762,Rufen,3)
Diesen Beleg habe ich in Friedrich Gerstäckers Erzählung „Ein Name. Skizze“

(1857) gefunden: „Die Amerikaner sagen zwar: ‚Es ist mir einerlei, wie ich gerufen werde, nur nicht zu spät zum Mittagessen!' Die Amerikaner sind aber auch entsetzlich materielle Menschen und würden sich ebenso gut glücklich und zufrieden fühlen, wenn sie Bratwurst hießen." Vgl. F.W. Hackländer und Edmund Hoefer (Hrsg.), *Hausblätter*. Stuttgart: Adolph Krabbe, 1857, Bd. 4, S, 454–469 (hier S. 459). Gerstäcker war von 1837–1843 in den Vereinigten Staaten, wo er vielleicht so etwas Sprichwörtliches gehört hat. Ich habe es allerdings auf Englisch nirgends finden können.

Ein ganzes Gericht Schuhnägel verschlucken.
Schuhnägel stehen für eine kräftige Sorte von Pillen. „Die Deutschen (in den Vereinigten Staaten) hatten schon mehr als ein Gericht Schuhnägel (Ungebührliches seitens der Yankees) verschluckt." (*Wochenblatt der Neuyorker Staatszeitung vom 10. Okt. 1863.*) (Wa,361IV,Schuhnagel,*1)
„Schuhnägel" steht für etwas Unverdauliches, wie aus zwei weiteren heute nicht mehr gebräuchlichen Redensarten hervorgeht: „Er isst keine Schuhnägel" (etwa: er lässt sich nichts gefallen) und „Er kann Schuhnägel verdauen (etwa: er kann viel vertragen) (Wa,IV,361,Schuhnägel,*2–*3). Die deutsch-amerikanische Redensart drückt im Unterschied dazu aus, dass jemand Schlimmes hinnehmen muss.

Ein Südländer kann vier Yankees dreschen, aber ein Deutscher drischt beide. (*Nordamerika*)
Ein im Bürgerkriege zwischen den Nord- und Südstaaten (1860) und zwar in den letzteren entstandenes Sprichwort, das die Tapferkeit der Südländer gegenüber der Bevölkerung des Nordens hervorhebt, aber die Deutschen noch darüber stellt. (Wa,IV,956,Südländer,[1])
Es ist mir nach etlichen Versuchen gelungen, in etwa dieses stereotype und längst verschollene Sprichwort, wenn es das einmal tatsächlich war, in einer Glosse mit dem Titel „Deutsche Hiebe" zu entdecken: „Einer der Helden von Fort Donnelson erzählte unlängst in einem Salon, ein Südländer könne jederzeit vier Yankee's dreschen – aber die Deutschen seien ihnen ebenbürtig." *Familienschatz. Unterhaltungsblatt zum Bayerischen Kurier*, 6 (16. April 1862), S. 124.

Das wirkt wie Lion's powder[1] auf die Wanzen. (*Nordamerika*) – *Heinzen, Pionier, Boston, 22. Juli 1863, S. 6.*
1) Ein in den nordamerikanischen Zeitungen angepriesenes Wanzenvertilgungsmittel.
(Wa,V,277,Wirken,*3)
Hier geht es also scheinbar um das wirkungsvolle Lion's Powder, dessen Name eine Zeitlang redensartlich gewesen sein muss.

Zu erwähnen ist noch folgendes längst vergessenes Sprichwort, wobei es überrascht, dass Wander es ohne jeglichen Kommentar aufgenommen hat:

Der Humbug ist gross und Barnum ist sein Prophet. (*Nordamerika*)
(Wa,V,1452,Humbug,3)

Wer soll das heute noch verstehen, obwohl das Wort „Humbug“ (Blendwerk, Täuschung, Schwindel; Unsinn, Aufschneiderei) im Deutschen bekannt geworden ist. Auch ist die englische Redensart „to be humbug“ auf Deutsch als „Es ist Humbug“ geläufig. Und ja, sie steht mir einer soliden Erklärung in Wanders *Lexikon*:

Es ist Humbug.
Wort und Redensart sind zwar nordamerikanischen Ursprungs, aber zur Zeit schon über die ganze gebildete Erde verbreitet, wenigstens in Deutschland, das in einem so lebhaften Wechselverkehr mit Nordamerika steht, allgemein bekannt. Darüber, was man dort durch die Redensart: It is all humbug, bezeichnet; vgl. *Hausblätter*, Stuttgart 1867, III, 307. Gehört nun aber auch das Wort den Amerikanern an, die Sache selbst ist auch in der Alten Welt bekannt. Eine neuere Form des amerikanischen Schwindels, aber vom Humbug verschieden, heisst Bogus. (Vgl. *Feuilleton der Schlesischen Zeitung*,1858, Nr. 219,) Zur Naturgeschichte des Humbugs vgl. *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, Berlin 1868, Nr. 4. (Wa,II,816,Humbug,*2; Bartlett, 1949, 184)

Nun gut, und Wander registriert sogar noch ein deutschsprachiges „Humbug“-Sprichwort aus Amerika:

Wer vom Humbug lebt wird durch den Humbug umkommen.
Sprichwort der Deutschen in Nordamerika. (Wa,II,816,Humbug,1)

Alles klar und verständlich, aber was hat es nun mit dem „Humbug/Barnum“ Sprichwort auf sich. Hier hätte Wander unbedingt erklären müssen, dass es sich um den damals bekannten amerikanischen Schausteller, Geschäftsmann und Politiker Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810–1891) handelt, der sich einen Namen für seine witzigen sowie einsichtsvollen Pointen erworben hatte. Das geht auch aus Wanders Reaktion auf ein heute kaum noch bekanntes Sprichwort in seinem *Politischen Sprichwörterbrevier* hervor:

665) „In einer alten Kirche geschehen mehr Wunder als in einer neuen“. In unsern Tagen geben aber die neuen Kirchen, was Wunder betrifft, den alten nichts nach; es geschehen deren soviel und so außerordentliche, daß selbst Barnum in New-York, der in den Vereinigten Staaten als der König des Humbugs betrachtet wird, damit nicht concurriren kann.
(Wander, 1872, 144; für das Sprichwort vgl. Wa,II,1341,Kirche,89)

Mit dieser Information ergibt das Sprichwort „Der Humbug ist gross und Barnum ist sein Prophet“ dann schon Sinn. Über eine langwierige Internetsuche ist es mir gelungen, den längeren Erklärungsversuch „Humbug und Barnum“

aufzufinden, der anonym in *Atlantische Studien. Von Deutschen in Amerika.* 2 Bde. Göttingen: Georg Heinrich Wigand, 1853, 4–25 erschienen ist. Gleich am Anfang heißt es: „‚Aber was ist denn eigentlich Humbug, wer ist Barnum'. Humbug ist groß und Barnum sein Prophet […] Der Humbug ist die Poesie des Amerikaners, durch ihn wird ein Gegenstand gewissermaßen in Verse gebracht und in Musik gesetzt; er ist der Rhythmus und die Melodie zur Alltäglichkeit des amerikanischen Lebens". Diese Zeilen sind auch in einigen deutschsprachigen Zeitschriften erschienen, und es ist anzunehmen, dass Wander das Sprichwort darin entdeckt hat und eben einmal vergessen hat, seine Quelle niederzuschreiben. Dass er die beiden Bände kannte, geht aus einer Quellenangabe zu „Sich von einem Grünhorn betrügen lassen" (vgl. hier weiter oben).

In der Tat beruft sich Wander immer wieder auf deutschsprachige Zeitungen und Zeitschriften in Amerika, die ihm jemand, vielleicht sein ausgewanderter Sohn Kuno, zugeschickt hat. Oder aber er hat Gewährspersonen in den Vereinigten Staaten gehabt, obwohl er in den Mitarbeiterverzeichnissen in den fünf Bänden seines *Lexikons* niemanden aus den USA erwähnt. Noch knapp ein Jahr vor seinem Tode lag ihm eine amerikanische Zeitungsnotiz vor, die ihn dazu anregte, die längst international verbreitete Redensart „Das ist O.K." in die Ergänzungen zu seinem letzten Band aufzunehmen. Hier muss ich gestehen, dass ich bis vor einigen Wochen nach fünfzigjähriger Arbeit mit meiner „Wander-Bibel", wie ich sein *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* mit Ehrfurcht und Anerkennung nenne, nicht auf diesen Beleg gestoßen war. So habe ich auch nicht darauf hingewiesen, als ich vor vielen Jahren „eine Bibliographische Skizze zum Ursprung von ‚O.K.' (Okay)" zusammengestellt hatte (Mieder, 1985, 109–113). Es ist viel zum Ursprung von okay geschrieben worden, und Präsident Andrew Jackson, der von 1829-1837 amtierte, wird zuweilen als Urheber genannt. Auch gibt es etliche Theorien, dass es griechische und sogar deutsche Herkunftsmöglichkeiten gibt. Fest steht, dass der Frühbeleg am 23. März 1839 von dem Journalisten Charles Gordon Greene in der Zeitung *Boston Morning Post* verwendet wurde, und zwar in der Bedeutung von O.K. = oll korrect (umgangssprachlich für all correct). Doch hier nun Wander, der sich erneut als großer sprachkultureller Vermittler herausstellt:

> Das ist O.K.
> Den amerikanischen Brauch, etwas recht Gutes, ganz Tadelloses mit O.K. zu bezeichnen, erklärt eine neuyorker Zeitung so: Vom Präsidenten Andrew Jackson, bekannt unter dem Beinamen Old Hickory, der sich ebenso wenig wie der alte Blücher um die Orthographie bekümmerte, erzählt man sich folgende Anekdote: Als er einmal ein ihm zur Durchsicht und Genehmigung vorgelegtes Schriftstück dem Secretär zurückgab und dieser ihn fragte, was denn die daruntergesetzten Buchstaben O.K. zu bedeuten hätten, antwortete Jackson: „Was denn anders als die Abkürzung von ‚all correct.'" Davon soll der obige Sprachgebrauch in Nordamerika herrühren. (*Philad. Sonntags-Journal vom 20. October 1878.*) (Wa,V,1639,O.,*2)

Vielleicht haben Rückwanderer die Redensart „Das ist O.K.“ nach Deutschland gebracht, aber natürlich haben auch deutsche Bücher über Amerika und Beiträge in deutschsprachigen Zeitungen und Zeitschriften aus den Vereinigten Staaten, die in deutschen Publikationen nachgedruckt wurden, dazu beigetragen.

8. Sprichwörtliches über Amerika

Damit ist zum Schluss die Frage erreicht, welche Sprichwörter Wanders *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* ganz allgemein über Amerika und Amerikaner enthält. Da sind einmal mehrere Sprichwörter und Redensarten, die sich auf die Auswanderung beziehen. Bei den folgenden „Pfütze“-Belegen spielt sicherlich ein wenig der Volkshumor mit:

> Er hat einen kleinen Ausflug über die grosse Pfütze gemacht.
> Scherzhaft von jemand, der eine Reise nach Amerika oder Australien gemacht hat, also über den atlantischen oder grossen Ocean. (Wa,V,861,Ausflug,[*1])

> Er ist glücklich über die grosse Pfütze.
> Von Auswanderern oder Reisenden, die in Amerika, Australien u.s.w. gesund angekommen sind. (Wa,III,1339,Pfütze,*21)

> Er ist über die grosse Pfütze gegangen.
> Von einem, der nach überseeischen Ländern (Amerika, Australien) ausgewandert ist. (Wa,III,1339,Pfütze,*22)

Hinter folgendem ohne Kommentar verzeichnetem Sprichwort verbirgt sich vielleicht ein gewisser Galgenhumor, vor allem dann, wenn man an junge Männer denkt, die zur Zeit des Revolutionskrieges als Soldaten nach Amerika zogen:

> Ist in Hessen nichts mehr da, ziehn wir nach Amerika.
> (Wa,II,625,Hessen,5)

Zu erwähnen ist auch dieses Sagwort (Wellerismus), das auf ironische Weise zum Ausdruck bringt, dass manche Auswanderer aus politischen und auch kriminellen Gründen nach Amerika gingen:

> Die Steckbriefe auch? fragte Johann seinen Herrn, welcher verlangte, ihm alle Briefe nachzusenden, da er auf ein Jahr nach Amerika reise.
> (Wa,V,1746,Steckbrief,[*1])

Man denkt unwillkürlich bei diesem Text ohne Quellenangabe und Kommentar auch an Wander, der als politisch Verfolgter ein Jahr seine Heimat

verlassen musste. Zu Wanders eigenem Schicksal passen natürlich auch die folgende Redensart und das nur zu wahre Sprichwort die er gewiss auch auf sich selbst bezogen hat:

Er ist nach Amerika gegangen.
In dem Sinne: er ist geflüchtet, hat sich in Sicherheit gebracht, wie man sonst sagte: er hat ein Asyl (Altar, Kirche) aufgesucht. (Wa,V,750,Amerika,*5)

Mit der Wahrheit kommt man nach Amerika, sagt der Deutsche. – *Anzeiger des Westens in St. Louis.*
Nämlich der deutsche Flüchtling, der durch sie zur Reise genöthigt wird. (Wa,IV,1753,Wahrheit,186)

Von Interesse ist ebenfalls ein Sprichwort, das darauf hinweist, dass Einwanderer einige Jahre brauchen, um sich den amerikanischen Lebensgewohnheiten anzupassen. Es handelt sich also sozusagen um ein Warnsprichwort:

Wer nach Amerika geht, ist drei Jahre blind.
Magazin für Literatur des Auslandes, 1867, Nr. 30, S. 413–416.)
„Oft schon haben wir, und stets vergeblich, versucht, uns die seltsame Gestaltung der amerikanischen Culturverhältnisse zu erklären, bis wir endlich den Schlüssel dazu in einem wohlbekannten Sprichwort entdeckt: Wer nach Amerika geht, ist drei Jahre blind.“ (Wa,V,750,Amerika,4)
Wie „wohlbekannt“ das Sprichwort wirklich war, sei dahingestellt, aber ich habe den von Wander angegebenen Zeitungsbricht im Internet finden können und füge hier noch einige weiterführende Zeilen an, wo Wander abgebrochen hat: „Nicht der Wirbel des heißen Lebens, wo alle Leidenschaften ungedämpft ihre Wirkung üben, nicht die Ueppigkeit des Klima's und des Bodens, nicht das Gemenge der Rassen und Nationen blenden den Ankömmling, sondern das Vorurtheil, der unbewußte Widerstreit zweier entgegengesetzter Lebensprinzipien verwirren seine Erkenntniß.“

Erwartungsgemäß gab es in Deutschland Stimmen, die sich gegen die große Auswanderungswelle um die Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts wandten. Interessant ist dabei, dass sich folgendes Sprichwort aus solcher kritischen Sicht gegen die bereits in Amerika lebenden Deutschen wendet, die als gefühllos hingestellt werden:

Deutschland läuft in Amerika ohne Herz herum. (*Deutsch-amerik.*)
Wird von den dort eingewanderten Deutschen gesagt, denen Leute, welche das dortige Leben nur aus (schlechten) Büchern kennen, Herzlosigkeit zuschreiben. Wer indess selbst einen unbefangenen Blick hineingethan hat, wird wissen, dass die Deutschen auch dort ihr Herz behalten haben. (Wa,I,581,Deutschland,3)

Offensichtlich spricht Wander in diesem einsichtsvollen Kommentar aus eigener Erfahrung in Amerika, der sicherlich auch nur zu bereit war, diese beiden Sprichwörter und Redensarten aufzunehmen, die man satirisch gegen solche Besserwisser einsetzen könnte:

> Wenn Amerika entdeckt ist, dann will's jeder finden.
> (Wa,I,68,Amerika,2)

> Er will Amerika entdecken.
> Zu spät mit etwas kommen; etwas anbieten, was längst bekannt ist. (Wa,V.759,Amerika,*6)

Für jemanden, der aus fürsorglicher Umsicht seinen voluminösen und informationsreichen *Auswanderungs-Katechismus* herausgegeben hatte, gehören auch diese zwei Sprichwörter zu einem nützlichen Bild Amerikas. Das erste Sprichwort ist selbstverständlich ironisch zu verstehen, denn ohne Arbeit ist in dem Land der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten kein Geld zu machen:

> In Amerika liegt das Geld (noch immer) auf der Strasse, man muss es nur aufzuheben wissen.
> (Wa,V,750,Amerika,3)

> In Amerika macht man eine Stunde in vierzig Minuten.
> Sprichwort der Deutschen in Nordamerika, um zu sagen, dass der dortige Arbeiter theils infolge grösserer Anstrengung, theils infolge geeigneter Werkzeuge und einer bessern Form mehr leistet als der hiesige, dass er in derselben Zeit mehr vor sich bringt oder zu demselben Geschäft weniger Zeit braucht als in Deutschland erforderlich ist. (Wa,I,68,Amerika,1)
> Der folgende im Internet aufgefundene Paragraph mag Wander als Quelle gedient haben: „Bekannt ist ja das Sprüchwort: ‚In Amerika macht man eine Stunde in vierzig Minuten‘. Man will damit sagen, daß man zu den Geschäften weniger Zeit braucht als hier in Deutschland, aber daß man sich auch ungleich mehr quälen muß, um in kürzerer Zeit etwas vor sich zu bringen. Daher kommt es, daß man drüben die Arbeiten wie die Genüsse eines ganzen Lebens auch in zwei Dritttheile der uns gestellten Frist zusammendrängt, und daß die Menschen in Folge davon früher alt werden“; Edmund Spieß, *Die Evangelische Allianz und ihre Generalversammlung in New-York vom 2. bis 10. Oktober 1873* (Jena: Mauke's Verlag, 1874), S. 235. Die in Deutschland erfasste Redensart „es ging ganz amerikanisch“ bedeutet etwas Ähnliches, indem sie sich auf die hektische Arbeitsweise in Amerika bezieht (Dingeldein, 1983, 68)

Man denkt unwillkürlich an das bekannte „Schaffe, schaffe, Häusle baue“, und tatsächlich gilt bis heute für Einwanderer das sogenannte arbeitsreiche „first generation syndrom“, um in der neuen Wahlheimat Fuß zu fassen und vorwärtszukommen. Die meisten sind auch schön alt geworden und haben nichts bereut!

9. Fazit

Sicher aber sollten alle an Auswanderung denkende Leute davor gewarnt sein, dass auch in Amerika das alte deutsche Sprichwort „Gebratene Tauben fliegen einem nirgends ins Maul" gilt. Nur hat sich mit direktem Bezug auf die Vereinigten Staaten ein besonderes Sprichwort herausgebildet, das durchaus wiederbelebt werden könnte:

> Die Pfannkuchen gehen in Amerika auch nicht auf Stelzen. – *Steffens, Hausfreund, 1846, S. 321.*
> Wer dort gebratene Tauben essen will, muss sie auch zuerst schiessen. (Wa,III,1249,Pfannkuchen,4)

Das heißt ganz einfach „Ohne Fleiß kein Preis!" und wohl auch, dass die beiden Anfangszeilen „Amerika, du hast es besser / Als unser Kontinent" aus Goethes Gedicht „Den Vereinigten Staaten" (1826) nicht völlig der Wahrheit entsprechen (Mieder, 2011, 223–234). Besser aber passt das bekannte Sprichwort „Es wird überall mit Wasser gekocht" (Wa,IV,1805,Wasser,157) auf die amerikanische Situation, wie Wander sie erlebt und beschrieben hat, und wie sie in lehnübersetzten und neuen Sprichwörtern und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Deutschamerikaner umliefen. Manche sind durch zurückgekehrte Auswanderer und durch Bücher und Zeitschriften auch in Deutschland verbreitet worden, ohne jedoch besonders geläufig zu werden. In Amerika sind die deutschsprachigen Phraseologismen längst verschwunden, wobei das Pennsylvaniendeutsche noch eine Ausnahme darstellt. Dass Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander eine beachtliche Anzahl mit willkommenen Erläuterungen in sein *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* aufgenommen hat, ist ein Beweis dafür, dass er als Parömiograph auch Vermittler der deutsch-amerikanischen Sprachkultur war. Sein Amerikabild, das in seinen umsichtigen Erklärungen und in seinem *Auswanderungs-Katechismus* erscheint, war informativ und ausgeglichen, teilweise positiv aber auch kritisch, und so ist festzustellen, dass er Amerika ambivalent gegenüberstand. Vor allem war er überzeugt, dass die Vereinigten Staaten nicht das perfekte gelobte Land waren, sondern ein Land mit vielen Problemen aber großer Hoffnung. Das kommt in diesem letzten Sprichwortbeleg zum Ausdruck:

> Die Amerikaner kochen auch nur mit Wasser.
> Sprichwort nach Deutschland zurückgekehrter amerikanischer Auswanderer, deutscher Amerikamüder, auch dortiger Deutschamerikaner. (Wa,I,68,Amerikaner,[1])

Noch einmal zeigt sich Wander hier als großer Parömiograph und Parömiologe, der nicht nur dieses kulturgeschichtlich so bedeutende Sprichwort registriert hat, sondern der in seinem Kommentar auf seine Verbreitung und

Verwendung auf beiden Seiten des Atlantiks hinweist. Das deutschsprachige Sprichwort ist heutzutage eher selten anzutreffen, und in Amerika hat es sich als englische Lehnübersetzung erst gar nicht etablieren können. Und doch dürfte es im Sinne des von mir so bewunderten Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wanders sein, wenn ich meinen amerikanischen Mitmenschen das Sprichwort „Americans also cook only with water“ ans Herz lege.

Einige zusätzliche Belege aus Wanders *Lexikon*:

Ein politischer *Blaustrumpf*. (Wa,V,1012,Blaustrumpf,*2)

Es war ein *Bulle* gegen den Kometen. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,V,1082,Bulle (der),*19)

Um die Wette *Dreck* fressen. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,V,1190,Dreck,*234)

Aus *Deutschmann*'s Haus kommt nichts heraus. (Wa,V,1130,Deutschmann,[1])

Der *Esel* von Chat[t]anooga. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,I,876,Esel,8566)

Er wäre *fähig*, Spermöl zu verfälschen. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,I,915,Fähig,[*1])

Gleichheit vor dem Gesetz. (Wa,V,1354,Gleichheit,*11)

Einem blinden *Hund*e seinen Bissen stehlen. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,II,886,Hund,*1540)

Wer schoss den *Hund*? (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,II,897,Hund,*1758)

Die *Hunkerei* ist vorbei. (*Deutsch-amerikan.*) (Wa,II,924,Hunkerei,[*1])

Hunkereier legen (*Deutsch-amerikan.*) (Wa,II,924,Hunkereier,[*1])

Etwas auf den *Kalender* setzen. (Wa,II,1114,Kalender,*19)

Das *Klötzerrollen* beginnt. (Wa,II,1407,Klötzerrollen,[*1])

Kein *Komet* ohne Schweif, kein Licht ohne Schatten, keine Rose ohne Dornen und kein Neger ohne Gestank. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,V,1512,Komet,8) – gemeiner Stereotyp!

Es ist ein *Landhai*. (Wa,V,1536-1537,Landhai,[*1])

Einen *lynchen*. (Wa,III,297-298,Lynchen,[*1])

Er ist nicht sauber überm *Nierenstück*. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,III,1028,Nierenstück,[*1])

Vgl. Die Dialektfassung „er isch nitt sufer über's nierestück, *es ist ihm nicht zu trauen, er ist nicht unbescholtenen charakters*“ mit Verweis auf Wander in Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Leipzig, S. Hirzel, 1889, Bd. 7, Sp. 834.

Den linken *Ochsen* zuerst aufjochen. (Wa,III,1108,Ochs,*353)

Es werden *Röhren* gelegt. (Wa,III,1710,Röhre,*5)

Es ist immer dieselbe *Sauce*. (Wa,IV,23,Sauce,*14)

Er ist so *schlecht* als ein freier Nigger. (Wa,IV,230,Schlecht,*40) – schlimmer Stereotyp!

Puh, da sitzt der *Truthahn*. (*Nordamerika*) (Wa,V,1777,Truthahn,*7)

Vorwärts mit den Truppen. (Wa,IV,1708,Vorwärts,*22)

Warten bis das Gras wächst. (Wa,IV,1791,Warten,*101.

Wenn der *Yankee* sechs Tage lang seinen Nächsten betrogen hat, so betrügt er am siebenten Gott. (Wa,V,477-478,Yankee,[1])

Einem den *Yankee-Doodle* pfeifen. (Wa,V,478,Yankee-Doodle,[*1])

Literatur

Bacon, A.M., und Elsie C. Parsons. 1922. „Folk-Lore from Elizabeth City County, Virginia". Journal of American Folklore 35: 250–327.

Bartlett, John Russell. 1989. The Dictionary of Americanisms. New York: Bartlett & Welford, 1849. Nachdruck New York: Crescent Books.

Bergmann, Joseph. „Nachwort [Kurzbiographie K.F.W. Wander]". In Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander, Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. 5 Bde. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1867-1880. Nachdruck Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964. Bd. 5, V–XIV.

Dingeldein, Heinrich J. 1983. „‚Amerika' in der deutschen Sprache. Anmerkungen zu sprachlichen Spuren eines kulturellen Kontakts". Der Sprachdienst 27: 65–76.

Dove, N.R. (eig. Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander). 1990. Politisches Sprichwörterbrevier. Tagebuch eines Patrioten der fünfziger Jahre, zur Charakteristik jener Zeit. Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1872. Nachdruck herausgegeben von Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang.

Doyle, Charles Clay. 2022. „‚To See the Elephant': Meanings of the Proverbial Phrase, and Its Age". Proverbium 39: 58–85.

Doyle, Charles Clay, Wolfgang Mieder, und Fred R. Shapiro, (Hrsg.). 2012. The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Eichler, Ernst (Hrsg.). 1954. Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander, 1803-1879. Berlin: Volk und Wissen.

Fogel, Edwin Miller. 1995. Proverbs of the Pennsylvania Germans. Lancaster, Pennyslvania: The Pennsylvania-German Society, 1929. Nachdruck herausgegeben von Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang.

Geppert. Oskar. 1987. Der freisinnige Schulmann Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander. Diss. Universität Gießen.

Hofmann, Franz. 1961. Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander. Berlin: Volk und Wissen.

Hohendorf, Gerd (Hrsg.). 1979. Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander. Der Kampf um die Schule. Bildungspolitische und pädagogische Schriften. 2 Bde. Berlin: Volk und Wissen.

Knortz, Karl. 1899. „Amerikanische Sprichwörter und Redensarten". In Karl Knortz, Folkloristische Streifzüge, 210–223. Oppeln: Georg Maske.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1985. Sprichwort, Redensart, Zitat. Tradierte Formelsprache in der Moderne. Bern: Peter Lang.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1992. English Expressions. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1993. Proverbs Are Never Out of Season. Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age. New York: Oxford University Press. Nachdruck New York: Peter Lang, 2012.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2000. The Proverbial Abraham Lincoln. An Index to Proverbs in the Works of Abraham Lincoln. New York: Peter Lang.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2011. „Wie anders wirkt dies Zitat auf mich ein!“ Johann Wolfgang von Goethes entflügelte Worte in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen. Wien: Praesens Verlag.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2004. Proverbs. A Handbook. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Nachdruck New York: Peter Lang, 2012.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2015. „Different Strokes for Different Folks”. 1250 authentisch amerikanische Sprichwörter. Bochum: Norbert Brockmeyer.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2019. „Right Makes Might“. Proverbs and the American Worldview. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2020. The Worldview of Modern American Proverbs. New York: Peter Lang.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2021. „‚Early to Bed / Früh zu Bett‘. Parömiographische Vermittlung zwischen Benjamin Franklin und K.F.W. Wander“. *Linguistische Treffen in Wrocław* 19: 219–263.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2022. „‚Die Bäume wachsen nicht in den Himmel‘: Überlieferung, Verwendung und Bedeutung eines Sprichwortes“. *Linguistische Treffen in Wrocław*, 21: 165–203.

Mieder, Wolfgang, Stewart A Kingsbury, und Kelsie B. Harder, (Hrsg.). 1992. A Dictionary of American Proverbs. New York: Oxford University Press.

Paczolay, Gyula. 1997. European Proverbs in 55 Languages with Equivalents in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese. Veszprém: Veszprémi Nyomda.

Pilz, Klaus Dieter. 1979. „Wer ist der Begründer der wissenschaftlichen Sprichwortforschung? Versuch einer Richtigstellung. In memoriam Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander (27.12.1803 – 4.6.1879)“. Muttersprache 89: 201–207.

Rees, Nigel. 2006. A Word in Your Shell-like. 6,000 Curious & Everyday Phrases Explained. London: HarperCollins.

Röhrich, Lutz, und Wolfgang Mieder. 1977. Sprichwort. Stuttgart: Metzler.

Ruysch, Otto. 1892. Der „Rote Wander“. Ein Lebensbild K.F.W. Wanders. Mit Benutzung seines handschriftlichen Nachlasses, Prozeßakten und anderer Quellen. Hamburg: Voelkner.

Shapiro, Fred R. 2021. The New Yale Book of Quotations. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Seiler, Friedrich. 1967. Deutsche Sprichwörterkunde. München: C.H. Beck, 1922. Nachdruck München: C.H. Beck.

Tarbell, Ida Minerva. 1906. The Life of Abraham Lincoln. 4 Bde. New York: Lincoln History Society.

Taylor, Archer. 1985. The Proverb. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931. Nachdruck herausgegeben von Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang.

Villers, Damien, und Wolfgang Mieder. 2017. „‚Time is Money': Benjamin Franklin and the Vexing Problem of Proverb Origins". Proverbium 34: 391–404.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1983. Das Sprichwort, betrachtet nach Form u. Wesen, für Schule u. Leben, als Einleitung zu einem großen volksthümlichen Sprichwörterschatz. Hirschberg: E.F. Zimmer, 1836. Nachdruck herausgegeben von Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1988. Auswanderungs-Katechismus. Ein Rathgeber für Auswanderer, besonders für Diejenigen, welche nach Nordamerika auswandern wollen. Glogau: Flemming 1852. Nachdruck herausgegeben von Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1964. Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. 5 Bde. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1867-1880. Nachdruck Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Sprichwortrelationen und Sprichwortfamilien

Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt
Geschäftsstelle fide, Bern (Schweiz)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9983-5184

Zoltán Gotthardt
Unabhängiger Forscher, Bottmingen (Schweiz)
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5671-4051

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c773

ABSTRACT

Die Annotation stellt einen zentralen Schritt im Prozess der Sammlung und Dokumentation von Sprichwörtern dar. Während des Annotationsprozesses werden Sprichwörter mit Begleitinformationen in Bezug auf ihre spezifischen Merkmale wie z. B. ihre Sprache, die in ihnen vorkommenden Schlüsselwörter oder ihre syntaktische Struktur versehen. Auf diese Weise werden die einzelnen Items in Relationen zueinander gesetzt. Bestimmte intra- und interlinguale Relationen basieren jedoch nicht auf solchen expliziten Merkmalen; sie müssen zunächst identifiziert und klar definiert werden. Dazu zählen u.a. folgende Relationen: (1) Sprichwortlemma und ihre orthographischen, grammatischen, lexikalen, regionalen sowie dialektalen Varianten, (2) traditionelles Sprichwort und seine (innovativen) Modifikationen sowie, (3) totale und partielle interlinguale Äquivalente. Die vorliegende Studie widmet sich der Frage, wie diese Relationen in theoretischen Arbeiten definiert und in gedruckten sowie digitalen Sprichwörterbüchern gehandhabt werden. Zudem wird aufgezeigt, wie derartige Relationen in einer mehrsprachigen Sprichwortdatenbank hergestellt und visualisiert werden können. Zu diesem Zweck werden sogenannte Sprichwortfamilien gebildet, denen Items angehören, die in bestimmten Hinsichten als miteinander „verwandt" gelten. Anhand ausgewählter Beispiele wird veranschaulicht, dass diese „Verwandtschaft" mehrdimensional ist und dass die Grenzen zwischen den verschiedenen Sprichwortfamilien fließend sind.

Schlüsselwörter: inter- und intralinguale Sprichwortrelationen; Sprichwortfamilien; mehrsprachige Sprichwortdatenbank.

ABSTRACT

An essential step in the process of collecting and documenting proverbs is their annotation. During the annotation process, proverbs are provided with supplementary information relating to their specific characteristics, such as their language, the

keywords they contain, and the syntactic structure on which they are based. In this manner, the individual items are placed in relation to each other. However, certain intra- and interlingual relations are not based on such explicit features; first, they must be identified and clearly defined. These include the following relations: (1) proverb lemma and its orthographic, grammatical, lexical, regional, dialectal, and other variants, (2) traditional proverb and its (innovative) modifications, and (3) total and partial interlingual equivalents. The present study is dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of how these relations are defined in theoretical works and handled in both printed and digital proverb dictionaries. It also illustrates how such relations can be established and presented in a multilingual proverb database. To achieve this, so-called proverb families are built that contain items considered related in specific aspects. Selected examples are used to demonstrate the multidimensionality of these relationships.

Keywords: inter- and intralingual proverb relations; proverb families; multilingual proverb database.

1. Einleitung und Zielsetzung

Im Rahmen diverser wissenschaftlicher Publikationen haben Hrisztova-Gotthardt und Gotthardt das theoretische Konzept einer multifunktionalen mehrsprachigen Sprichwortdatenbank[1] vorgestellt (vgl. Hrisztova-Gotthardt, 2010; Hrisztova-Gotthardt und Gotthardt, 2020, 2023). Diese internetbasierte Sprichwortdatenbank versteht sich als ein flexibles und multifunktional verwendbares lexikographisches Tool, das Parömiographen ermöglichen soll, den aktuellen Sprichwortschatz verschiedener Sprachen zu erfassen, detailliert zu beschreiben und seine fortwährenden Veränderungen möglichst zeitnah und wirklichkeitsgetreu zu dokumentieren.[2] Zum einen können in der Datenbank relevante lexikographische Informationen zu den registrierten Sprichwörtern gespeichert werden: ihre Herkunft, Bedeutung, syntaktische Struktur, ihre orthographischen, morphologischen, syntaktischen und lexikalischen Varianten sowie synonyme und antonyme Sprichwörter, fremdsprachige Äquivalente, Modifikationen etc. (Hrisztova-Gotthardt, 2010, 109–166). Zum anderen bietet die Datenbank die Möglichkeit, Belege für den aktuellen Gebrauch dieser Sprichwörter sowie für die Verwendung ihrer Modifikationen in Form von Texten, Bildern und Videoclips strukturiert abzulegen und mit verschiedenen Begleitinformationen und Kommentaren in Bezug auf Quelle, Bedeutung,

1 Das ursprüngliche Konzept für die mehrsprachige, internetbasierte Sprichwortdatenbank wurde von Hrisztova-Gotthardt in den Jahren 2007–2008 während eines einjährigen Forschungsaufenthalts am Deutschen Seminar der Universität Basel entwickelt. Derzeit befindet sich die praktische Umsetzung des weiterentwickelten Konzepts in Arbeit. Der Prototyp wird aktuell weiter ausgearbeitet und ist der Öffentlichkeit noch nicht zugänglich.

2 Laut Mieder (2004, 128, 150; 2018, 23) besteht eine der wichtigsten Aufgaben der modernen Parömiographie darin, den zum gegebenen Zeitpunkt aktuellen Sprichwortgebrauch innerhalb der jeweiligen Sprach- bzw. Kulturgemeinschaft zu dokumentieren.

Gebrauchskontext bzw. -situation, Medium der Veröffentlichung, pragmatische Funktionen, nationale oder regionale Verbreitung und Art der Transformation zu versehen (vgl. Hrisztova-Gotthard und Gotthardt, 2023). Auf diese Weise kann ein umfangreiches Korpus aktuell gebräuchlicher Sprichwörter und ihrer Varianten und Modifikationen entstehen, das anschließend zur Beantwortung etlicher parömiologischer Fragestellungen benutzt werden kann.

In den oben genannten Studien wurde u.a. über einzelne wichtige Phasen und Schritte in der praktischen Umsetzung des Sprichwortdatenbank-Konzepts berichtet. Einer dieser Schritte umfasst das Annotieren der in der Datenbank registrierten Sprichwörter. Während des Annotationsprozesses werden Sprichwörter mit Begleitinformationen in Bezug auf ihre spezifischen Merkmale wie etwa ihre Sprache, die in ihnen vorkommenden Schlüsselwörter und die syntaktische Struktur, auf der sie basieren versehen. Auf diese Weise werden einzelne Items in Relationen zueinander gesetzt. So können z.B. alle in der Datenbank vorhandenen deutschen Sprichwörter, die auf der Sprichwortformel *Wer A, (der) B* aufbauen, miteinander verknüpft und nach Bedarf abgefragt werden (s. Abb. 1).

Abb. 1. Deutsche Sprichwörter, die auf der Sprichwortformel *Wer A, (der) B* aufbauen

Bestimmte intra- und interlinguale Relationen lassen sich jedoch nicht automatisch aufgrund solch expliziter Merkmale herstellen und müssen erst erschlossen werden. Dazu gehören u.a. folgende Relationen:

– Sprichwortlemma bzw. Nullvariante eines Sprichwortes (vgl. Grzybek, 2012, 149) und die dazugehörigen orthographischen, grammatischen, lexikalischen, regionalen und dialektalen Varianten;
– traditionelles Sprichwort und seine innovativen Modifikationen bzw. Antisprichwörter (vgl. Mieder, 1982) sowie
– totale und partielle interlinguale Äquivalente.

In diesem Zusammenhang setzt sich die vorliegende Studie zum Ziel der Frage nachzugehen, wie diese Relationen in theoretischen Arbeiten dargestellt und in gedruckten bzw. digitalen Sprichwörterbüchern gehandhabt werden. Ferner soll demonstriert werden, wie solche Relationen in der mehrsprachigen Sprichwortdatenbank hergestellt und visualisiert werden können. Zu diesem Zweck werden sogenannte Sprichwortfamilien gebildet, denen Items angehören, die in einer oder in mehreren Hinsichten als miteinander ‚verwandt' gelten. Darüber hinaus soll anhand von ausgewählten Beispielen aufgezeigt werden, dass diese ‚Verwandtschaft' in der Regel mehrdimensional ist.

2. Intra- und interlinguale Sprichwortrelationen

Im Folgenden wird auf die drei weiter oben genannten Sprichwortrelationen sowie auf ihre Darstellung bzw. Handhabung in gedruckten und digitalen Sprichwörterbüchern näher eingegangen.

2.1 Sprichwortlemmata und Sprichwortvarianten

Zahlreiche Sprichwörter sind in mehreren Varianten verbreitet. Dementsprechend ist bei der Erstellung von Sprichwörterbuch-Artikeln sowie beim Annotieren von Einträgen in Sprichwortatenbanken die Festlegung des sog. Sprichwortlemmas und seiner zu fixierenden orthographischen, morphologischen, syntaktischen und lexikalischen Varianten eine der ersten Aufgaben, die es zu bewältigen gilt (vgl. Kispál, 2007, 418). Da jedoch die Frage nach der Festigkeit bzw. Fixiertheit von Sprichwörtern bislang wenig erforscht worden ist, beruht die Bestimmung des Lemmas, d.h. der bekanntesten und am häufigsten gebräuchlichen Form des jeweiligen Sprichwortes in der Regel auf einer subjektiven Entscheidung, es sei denn, es werden quantitative Aspekte berücksichtigt (vgl. Grzybek, 2012, 136–137). Als ein positives Beispiel in diesem Zusammenhang kann das *Magyar közmondástár* (‚Ungarisches Sprichwörterbuch') von T. Litovkina (2005) angeführt werden, in dem die Unterscheidung zwischen Lemma und Varianten auf vorausgehenden empirischen Untersuchungen gründet. Allerdings musste T. Litovkina aus Platzgründen diese Unterscheidung in einer recht komprimierten und schwer interpretierbaren Form präsentieren. So wird z. B. das Sprichwort *Minden zsák megtalálja a foltját* (lit. ‚Jeder Sack findet seinen Flicken'), welches das ungarische Pendant zu *Jeder Topf findet seinen Deckel* ist, folgendermaßen aufgezeichnet, wobei in den eckigen Klammern

eine lexikalische Variante und in den runden Klammern die weglassbare Komponente angegeben wird:

(1) *Minden zsák megtalálja [megleli] a (maga) foltját.* (vgl. T. Litovkina, 2005, 666)

Aus dem Eintrag ist nicht sofort ersichtlich, welche Form die meist gebräuchliche respektive die bekannteste ist und welche Formen als (Neben)Varianten existieren.

Des Weiteren musste T. Litovkina – ebenfalls aus Platzgründen – darauf verzichten, alle ihr bekannten Varianten eines Sprichwortes aufzulisten, insbesondere im Fall von Items, bei denen nicht nur einzelne lexikalische Komponenten variieren, sondern auch die Wortstellung im Satz bzw. die ganze Satzstruktur (T. Litovkina, 2005, X).

Im Gegensatz zu gedruckten Sprichwörterbüchern können in digitalen Nachschlagewerken — wie dies am Beispiel des *Sprichwörterbuch in OWID* dargelegt werden kann – sowohl die Sprichwortlemmata für die jeweiligen Sprichwörter als auch zahlreiche Varianten dieser Proverbien auf eine klare und nachvollziehbare Art und Weise dokumentiert werden. Das Lemma oder die Nullvariante eines Sprichwortes wird aufgrund von Häufigkeitsanalysen im *Deutschen Referenzkorpus* ermittelt. Jene Varianten, die eine gewisse Rekurrenz im *Deutschen Referenzkorpus* aufweisen, werden entweder als ‚Formvarianten' oder unter der Rubrik ‚Ersetzung von Komponenten' aufgeführt. Als Formvarianten gelten „formale Systemvariante einzelner SW-Komponenten oder des ganzen Sprichworts (z.B. morphologische oder grammatische Varianten, Schreibvarianten)" (s. https://www.owid.de/wb/sprw/hilfe/hinweise.html):

(2) Sprichwort: *Eine Krähe hackt der anderen kein Auge aus.*
[Grammatische] Formvariante: *Eine Krähe hackt der anderen nicht die Augen aus.*
(https://www.owid.de/artikel/401641)

(3) Sprichwort: *Ende gut, alles gut.*
[Orthographische] Formvariante: *Ende gut – alles gut.*
(https://www.owid.de/artikel/401702?pos=20)

Diese Variantenart entspricht der von Grzybek definierten „Modifikation ersten Grades", die dann entsteht, wenn ein Wort weggelassen oder ersetzt wird bzw. wenn sich orthographische, morphologische oder syntaktische Änderungen vollziehen, die keinerlei Auswirklungen auf die Semantik des jeweiligen Sprichwortes haben (Grzybek, 2012, 149).

Unter die Angabe ‚Ersetzung von Komponenten' fallen jene „Varianten […], bei denen eine lexikalische Komponente durch eine oder mehrere andere ersetzt wird" (s. https://www.owid.de/wb/sprw/hilfe/hinweise.html):

(4) Sprichwort:	*Der Zweck heiligt die Mittel.*
Ersetzung von Komponenten:	*Der Zweck heiligt alle Mittel.*
	Der Zweck heiligt jedes Mittel.
	Der Erfolg heiligt die Mittel.
	Der Scheck heiligt die Mittel.

[…]
(https://www.owid.de/artikel/401623)

Es sei an dieser Stelle kurz angemerkt, dass die Varianten *Der Erfolg heiligt die Mittel* und *Der Scheck heiligt die Mittel* in Grzybeks Klassifizierungssystem den Status einer „Modifikation zweiten Grades" erhalten hätten, bei der das Sprichwort durch die Ersetzung einer lexikalischen Komponente eine Bedeutungsabwandlung erfährt (Grzybek, 2012, 149). Im *Sprichwörterbuch in OWID* erfolgt zwar keine formale Trennung zwischen Varianten, bei denen die Bedeutung des Sprichwortes unverändert bleibt und solchen, bei denen sie abgewandelt wird, es wird jedoch im Kommentar zu diesen zwei Varianten festgehalten, dass „[d]iese Ersetzung, in der die Sprichwortbedeutung abgewandelt wird, […] in den Korpusbelegen so häufig vor[kommt], dass es eine eigene Variante rechtfertigt".

2.2 Traditionelle Sprichwörter und ihre Modifikationen

Zu den von Grzybek als „Modifikationen zweiten Grades" (s. Abschnitt 2.1) definierten Varianten eines traditionellen Sprichwortes zählen u.a. die sogenannten Antisprichwörter, d.h. die (oft humoristischen) „Parodien, Verfremdungen und Variationen von traditionellen Sprichwörtern" (s. Röhrich und Mieder, 1977, 114–115). In Sammlungen, in deren Fokus die Dokumentation dieser Art von Modifikationen steht (vgl. für das Deutsche Mieder 1982, 1985, 1989, 1998, 2017, 2022), werden in der Regel unter dem Originalproverb seine Abwandlungen mit den dazugehörigen Kontextbelegen aufgelistet. Wenn jedoch das sogenannte Antisprichwort als Ergebnis der Kontamination zweier (*Gut Ding kommt selten allein* ← *Gut Ding will Weile haben* + *Ein Unglück kommt selten allein*)[3] oder sogar dreier (*Kriege haben kurze Beine, denn wer einmal kriegt, dem glaubt man nicht und nichts ist so fein gewonnen* ← *Lügen haben kurze Beine* + *Wer einmal lügt, dem glaubt man nicht* + *Es ist nichts so fein gesponnen, es kommt doch ans Licht der Sonnen*)[4] Sprichwörter entstanden ist, erweist es sich als schwierig, all diese Verknüpfungen im gedruckten Buch systematisch zu erfassen und aufzuzeigen. Zu diesem Zweck wäre das Datenbankformat geeigneter, zumal es ermöglicht, das Antisprichwort in Relation zu all jenen Proverbien zu setzen, auf die es sich bezieht.

3 Das Beispiel stammt aus T. Litovkina *et al.* (2021, 126).
4 Das Beispiel stammt aus T. Litovkina *et al.* (2021, 132).

2.3 Interlinguale Äquivalente

Die Äquivalenz von Sprichwörtern diverser Sprachen ist eine weitere Relation, die in gedruckten und digitalen Sprichwörterbüchern sowie in Sprichwortdatenbanken hergestellt werden kann und muss. Gedruckte mehrsprachige Sprichwörterbücher wie jene von Strauss (1994) oder Paczolay (1997) enthalten zwar ein äußerst reiches Material und gelten aus lexikographischer Sicht als recht gut organisiert, listen jedoch sowohl totale als auch partielle Pendants[5] zu jeweils einem englischsprachigen „Leitsprichwort" auf, ohne näher auf den Grad der Äquivalenz einzugehen. In der Datenbank der *Sprichwort-Plattform*[6] hingegen werden „in den jeweiligen Artikeln Kommentare mit der wortwörtlichen Übersetzung eingefügt", „wenn es sich nicht um eine 1:1-Entsprechung [um ein totales Äquivalent von dem jeweiligen deutschen Sprichwort – Anm. der Autoren] handelt" (vgl. http://www.sprichwort-plattform.org/sp/Vorwort):

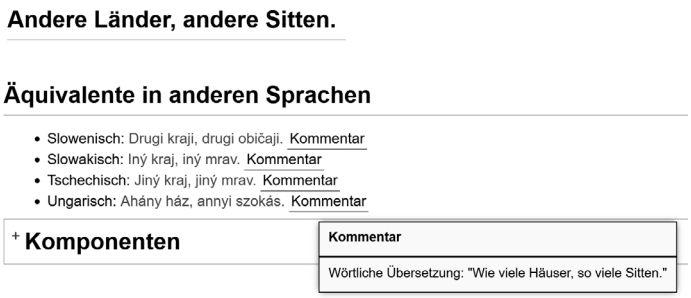


Abb. 2. Darstellung von interlingualen Sprichwortäquivalenten in der *Sprichwort-Plattform* (http://www.sprichwort-plattform.org/sp/Andere%20L%C3%A4nder%2C%20andere%20Sitten)

In einer Sprichwortdatenbank können äquivalente Sprichwörter aus diversen Sprachen ebenfalls miteinander verknüpft werden, wobei auch die Möglichkeit besteht, den Grad der Äquivalenz zu definieren. Ferner können identische

5 Unter totaler Äquivalenz wird in der Phraseologie und Parömiologie eine Übereinstimmung in Inhalt und Ausdruck verstanden, die partielle Äquivalenz setzt dafür lediglich eine Übereinstimmung im Inhalt und keine Übereinstimmung im Ausdruck voraus (Eismann, 1995, 103f.; Albertson und Korhonen, 2004, 20).

6 Die Internet-Lernplattform namens *Sprichwort-Plattform* ist das wichtigste Ergebnis des Projekts *SprichWort*, das zwischen 2008 und 2009 von der Europäischen Kommission mitfinanziert wurde. Die sogenannte *Sprichwort-Datenbank* stellt eine der drei Grundkomponenten der *Sprichwort-Plattform* dar. In der Datenbank sind 300 aktuell gebräuchliche deutsche Sprichwörter mit ihren parömiologischen Systemäquivalenten in den Sprachen Slowakisch, Slowenisch, Tschechisch und Ungarisch gespeichert.

Modifikationen von interlingualen Äquivalenten nicht nur mit dem jeweiligen Originalsprichwort, sondern auch miteinander in Relation gebracht werden (s. Abschnitt 3).

3. Erfassen von Relationen in der Sprichwortdatenbank

Wie bereits im Abschnitt 1 kurz erläutert, werden jene Sprichwörter, die in die mehrsprachige Sprichwortdatenbank aufgenommen werden, mit Labels versehen, die u.a. folgende Begleitinformationen über die einzelnen Items liefern:

- Sprache (z. B. Bulgarisch, Deutsch bzw. Schweizerdeutsch, Englisch, Ungarisch);
- wichtige Schlüsselwörter und die thematische Gruppe, der sie angehören (z. B. *Auge* und *Menschliche Körperteile*) oder
- syntaktische Struktur (z. B. einfacher Aussagesatz und zugrunde liegende Sprichwortformel *A macht B*).

All diese Label kennzeichnen Merkmale, die bestimmte Sprichwörter gemeinsam haben und aufgrund deren diese Sprichwörter gruppiert oder gefiltert werden können. In einem nächsten Schritt sollen jene Proverbien miteinander verknüpft werden, zwischen denen Relationen bestehen, die zuerst erschlossen werden müssen wie z.B. Sprichwortlemma und Sprichwortvarianten, Originalsprichwort und seine (humoristischen) Modifikationen sowie interlinguale Äquivalente.

Die ersten zwei Arten von Relationen können meist aufgrund von formalen (Oberflächen-)Merkmalen ermittelt werden: Die Unterschiede zwischen zwei Items sind entweder auf das Auslassen, Hinzufügen oder Ersetzen einer (oder mehrerer) Komponente(n) bzw. eines Teilsatzes oder auf orthographische, morphologische oder syntaktische Abweichungen zurückzuführen (s. Tab. 1).

Tab. 1. Arten von Variation bzw. Transformation von Sprichwörtern

Art der Variation bzw. Transformation	Sprichwortlemma und Sprichwortvariante[7]	Originalsprichwort und Modifikation[8]
Omission	*Der Krug geht so lange zum Brunnen, bis er bricht.* → *Der Krug geht zum Brunnen, bis er bricht.*	*Was ich nicht weiß, macht mich nicht heiß.* → *Was ich nicht weiß, macht mich heiß.*
Addition	*Alles hat ein Ende.* → *Alles hat ein Ende, nur die Wurst hat zwei.*	*Unrecht Gut gedeihet nicht.* → *Unrecht Gut gedeihet nicht selten.*

7 Die Beispiele stammen aus dem *Sprichwörterbuch in OWID*.

8 Die Beispiele für modifizierte Sprichwörter (Antisprichwörter) stammen aus T. Litovkina *et al.* (2021).

Art der Variation bzw. Transformation	Sprichwortlemma und Sprichwortvariante[7]	Originalsprichwort und Modifikation[8]
Substitution	*Alle Wege führen nach Rom.* → *Viele Wege führen nach Rom.*	*Geld regiert die Welt.* → *Sex regiert die Welt.*
Orthographische Abweichung	*Ende gut, alles gut.* → *Ende gut – alles gut.*	*Neue Besen kehren gut.* → *Neue Besen kehren gut?*
Morphologische Abweichung	*Aus den Augen, aus dem Sinn.* → *Aus dem Auge, aus dem Sinn.*	*Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glänzt.* → *Es ist nicht alles golden, was glänzt.*
Syntaktische Abweichung	*Der Appetit kommt beim Essen.* → *Mit dem Essen kommt der Appetit.*	*Hunde, die bellen, beißen nicht.* → *Hunde, die beißen, bellen nicht.*

Das von T. Litovkina *et al.* (2021) entwickelte Modell, das diverse Arten von Transformationen erfasst, die zur Entstehung von sprichwörtlichen Modifikationen (Antisprichwörtern) führen, kann beim Herstellen der Relation zwischen den Varianten eines Sprichwortes auf der einen und dem Originalsprichwort und seinen Modifikationen auf der anderen Seite angewandt werden. Auf diese Weise können jene Items miteinander verknüpft werden, die aufgrund von recht großen Ähnlichkeiten in ihrer Oberflächenstruktur als Varianten eines und desselben Sprichwortes klassifiziert werden können. Sollen Angaben zur Gebrauchsfrequenz oder zum Bekanntheitsgrad der einzelnen Varianten vorliegen, kann zugleich auch das Lemma oder die Nullvariante für diese Sprichwortfamilie bestimmt werden. Darüber hinaus können mithilfe des besagten Modells sprichwörtliche Modifikationen in Relation zum Originalsprichwort und auch zueinander gesetzt werden. Dadurch kann eine Sprichwortfamilie gebildet werden (s. Abb. 3).

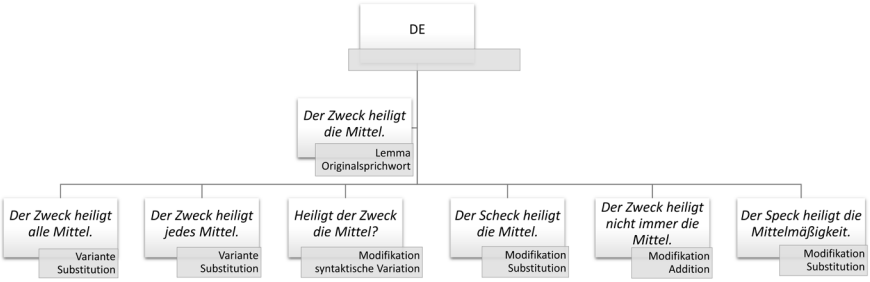


Abb. 3. Sprichwortfamilie mit Varianten und Modifikationen

Die interlinguale Äquivalenz stellt eine weitere Art von „Verwandtschaftsverhältnis“ dar. In der Sprichwortdatenbank können äquivalente Sprichwörter aus mehreren Sprachen in Relation zueinander gesetzt werden. Ferner besteht die Möglichkeit, identische Modifikationen dieser Proverbien miteinander zu verknüpfen (s. Abb. 4).

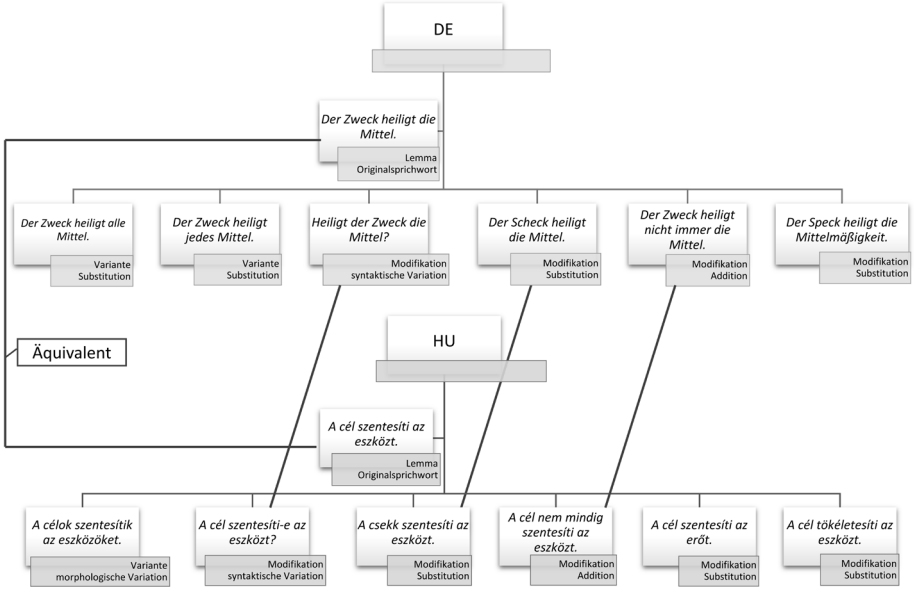


Abb. 4. Sprichwortfamilie mit Varianten und Modifikationen

Der Grad der Äquivalenz kann ebenfalls erfasst werden; totale und partielle interlinguale Äquivalente können als solche gekennzeichnet werden (s. Abb. 5).

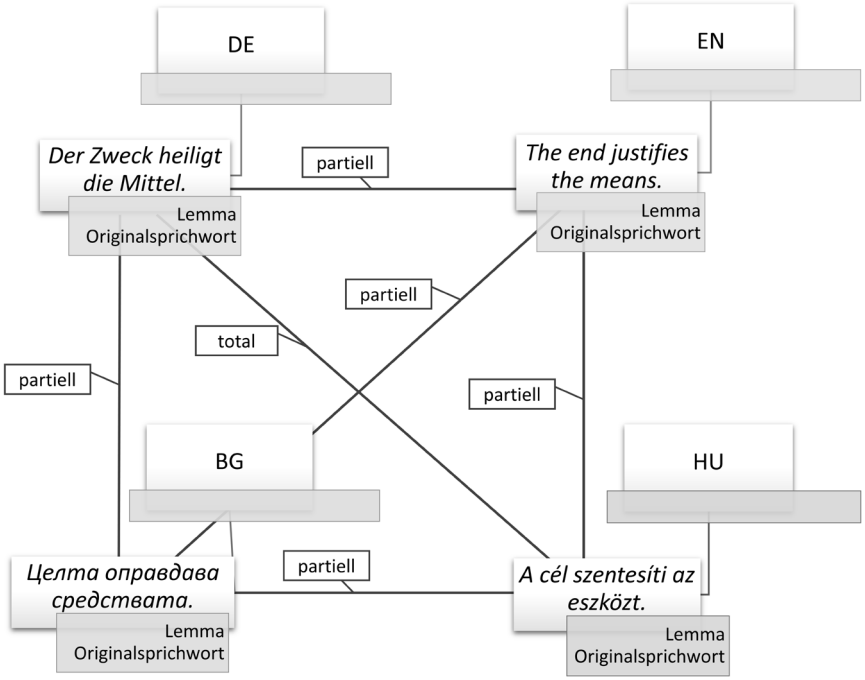


Abb. 5. Grad der Äquivalenz

4. Mehrdimensionalität der Sprichwortrelationen

Wie im Abschnitt 3 dargelegt, werden die in der Datenbank registrierten Sprichwörter mit Labels versehen, die für sie typische Merkmale anzeigen. Sprichwörter, die während des Annotationsprozesses das gleiche Label erhalten haben, gelten in einer bestimmten Hinsicht als „miteinander verwandt". Demzufolge können identische Labels als Indikatoren für eine nähere oder fernere Verwandtschaft zwischen Sprichwörtern aufgefasst werden. Je höher die Anzahl gemeinsamer Labels ist, desto mehr Dimensionen umfasst das Verwandtschaftsverhältnis. Beispielsweise besteht bei Proverbien, die u.a. dieselbe Sprache (Deutsch), dieselbe syntaktische Struktur (einfacher Aussagesatz) und dieselben Schlüsselwörter (*Zweck* und *Mittel*) haben, ein mindestens dreidimensionales Verwandtschaftsverhältnis, das darauf hindeuten kann, dass es sich bei den betroffenen Items um Varianten eines und desselben Sprichwortes oder um ein traditionelles Sprichwort und seine Modifikationen handeln könnte. In diesem Sinne können die gemeinsamen Labels dazu verhelfen, potenzielle Relationen zwischen in der Datenbank bereits ausführlich dokumentierten und

neu aufgenommenen Sprichwörtern schnell und direkt zu erschließen und somit neue Sprichwortfamilien zu bilden oder die bereits bestehenden Familien um neue Items zu erweitern.

5. Ausblick

In Anlehnung an die obigen Ausführungen fokussiert sich der nächste Entwicklungsschritt des Sprichwortdatenbank-Projektes auf das Erschließen und Herstellen von weiteren Relationen, die zwischen den in der Datenbank bereits registrierten Items bestehen.

Damit diese Relationen noch präziser definiert und dargestellt werden können, werden zusätzliche Labels eingeführt, die kennzeichnen, ob das jeweilige Sprichwort:

- eine Bedeutungsabwandlung durchlaufen hat,
- wortwörtlich oder metaphorisch zu interpretieren ist,
- als humoristisch bezeichnet werden kann usw.

Auf diese Weise kann der Grad der Verwandtschaft von Sprichwörtern noch näher bestimmt und dargestellt werden.

Ferner soll im Rahmen künftiger Studien der Frage nachgegangen werden, wie sich die Dynamiken bei der Entwicklung sprichwörtlicher Einheiten möglichst transparent und zeitnah in der Datenbank abbilden lassen. Sprichwörter durchlaufen nämlich verschiedene Wandlungsprozesse: Während einige traditionelle Einheiten an Aktualität verlieren und aus dem (aktiven) Sprachgebrauch verschwinden, entstehen neue bzw. moderne Sprichwörter, die aktuelle Erfahrungen und veränderte Sichtweisen zum Ausdruck bringen (vgl. Földes und Hrisztova-Gotthardt, 2016, 96). All diese Entwicklungen müssen entsprechend dokumentiert werden.

Aus Sicht der Datenbank ist jedoch ein bestimmter Wandlungsprozess von besonderem Interesse, nämlich jener, bei dem ein ursprüngliches Lemma allmählich durch eine Variante verdrängt wird, die im modernen Sprachgebrauch eine deutlich höhere Rekurrenz aufweist und somit als gängiger gilt. Da dies sowohl intra- als auch interlinguale Relationen innerhalb der Datenbank betrifft, müssen geeignete Mechanismen entwickelt werden, um solche Variantenverschiebungen systematisch zu erfassen und relational konsistent abzubilden.

Literatur

Albertson, Andrea, und Jarmo Korhonen. 2004. „Zur Darstellung von Sprichwörtern in deutsch-schwedischen Wörterbüchern". In Res humanae proverbiorum et sententiarum. Ad honorem Wolfgangi Mieder, herausgegeben von Csaba Földes, 15–26. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Eismann, Wolfgang. 1995. „Pragmatik und kulturelle Spezifik als Problem der Äquivalenz von Phraseologismen". In Von der Einwortmetapher zur Satzmetapher, herausgegeben von Rupprecht Baur, und Christoph Chlosta, 95–119. Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer.

Földes, Csaba und, Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt. 2016. „Kulturelles Wissen in Dynamik. Veränderungen im sprachlichen Weltbild Deutschsprachiger – am Beispiel moderner Sprichwortformen (wie Anti- bzw. Nach-Sprichwörter)". Zeitschrift für mitteleuropäische Germanistik 6(2): 95–114.

Grzybek, Peter. 2012. „Proverb Variants and Variations: A New Old Problem?". In Proceedings of the Fifth Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, herausgegeben von Rui J. B. Soares, und Outi Lauhakangas, 136–152. Tavira: IAP.

Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina. 2010. Vom gedruckten Sprichwörterbuch zur interaktiven Sprichwortdatenbank. Überlegungen zum linguistischen und lexikographischen Konzept mehrsprachiger Sprichwortdatenbanken. Bern: Peter Lang Verlag.

Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina, und Zoltán Gotthardt. 2020. „Mehrsprachige Sprichwortdatenbank als unterstützendes Tool für die parömiologische Forschung". In Deutsche Phraseologie und Parömiologie im Kontakt und im Kontrast I. Studia Phraseologica et Paroemiologica, Band 2, herausgegeben von Anna Gondek *et al.*, 231–243. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač.

Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina, und Zoltán Gotthardt. 2023. „Im Schnittfeld von digitaler Lexikographie und modernem Sprachgebrauch: Mehrsprachige Sprichwortdatenbank". In Phraseology, constructions and translation. Corpus-based, computational and cultural aspects, herausgegeben von Jean-Pierre Colson, 9–20. Louvain: Presses universitaires de Louvain.

Institut für deutsche Sprache. Das Deutsche Referenzkorpus (DeReKo). https://www.ids-mannheim.de/digspra/kl/projekte/korpora/

Institut für deutsche Sprache. Sprichwörterbuch in OWID. https://www.owid.de/wb/sprw/start.html

Kispál, Tamás. 2007. „Sprichwörtersammlungen". In Phraseology, Volume 1, herausgegeben von von Harald Burger *et al.*, 414–423. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197136-039

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1982. Antisprichwörter. Wiesbaden: Verlag für deutsche Sprache.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1985. Antisprichwörter. Band II. Wiesbaden: Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1989. Antisprichwörter. Band III. Wiesbaden: Quelle & Meyer.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 1998. Verdrehte Weisheiten. Antisprichwörter aus Literatur und Medien. Wiesbaden: Quelle & Meyer.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2004. Proverbs. A Handbook. Wesport, Connecticut: Greenwood Folklore Handbooks.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2017. „Entkernte Weisheiten". Modifizierte Sprichwörter in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen. Wien: Praesens Verlag.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2018. „'Neue Zeiten, neue Weisheiten': Plädoyer für eine Parömiographie und Parömiologie moderner Sprichwörter". In Einblicke und Rückblicke: Beiträge zur deutschen Phraseologie und Parömiolgie aus intra- und interlingualer Sicht, Band I, herausgegeben von Anna Gondek, Alina Jurasz, und Joanna Szczęk, 17–34. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren GmbH.

Mieder, Wolfgang. 2022. „Hinterfragte Weisheiten": Modifizierte Sprichwörter in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen. Wien: Edition Praesens.

Paczolay, Gyula. 1997. European Proverbs in 55 Languages with Equivalents in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese. Veszprém.

Röhrich, Lutz, und Wolfgang Mieder. 1977. Sprichwort. Stuttgart: Metzler.

Sprichwort-Plattform. http://www.sprichwort-plattform.org/.

Strauss, Emanuel. 1994. Dictonary of European Proverbs. London: Routledge.

T. Litovkina, Anna. 2005. Magyar közmondástár. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó.

T. Litovkina, Anna *et al.* 2021. Anti-Proverbs in Five Languages. Structural Features and Verbal Humor Devices. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Phraseological units and their variants in a specific German-language egodocument of Slovak provenance from the mid-19th century

Martin Braxatoris
Institute of Slovak Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5278-8261

Anita Braxatorisová
Ľ. Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9502-2725

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c774

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the issue of the conventionalisation of selected figurative and non-figurative locutions and their variants within a specific German-language egodocument of Slovak origin from the 19th century, the author of which is Samuel Ferjenčík, a prominent figure in Slovak intellectual circles. A thorough textual analysis of the document, discovered on the premises of Ferjenčík's former rectory and comprising 908 entries on 155 manuscript pages, sheds light on Ferjenčík's stylistic preferences and rhetorical strategies. Using Conventional Figurative Language Theory (CFLT) as a theoretical framework, the study examines Ferjenčík's deliberate selection and modification of phraseological units to enhance stylistic competence. By analysing the content of the document, the research reveals different categories of figurative and non-figurative elements, each of which offers an insight into Ferjenčík's literary environment and communicative intentions. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of linguistic conventions and stylistic preferences prevalent in the 19th-century German-language discourse.

Keywords: Conventional Figurative Language Theory; phraseological units; German-language egodocument; 19th-century stylistic conventions; rhetorical strategies.

1. Introduction

Samuel Ferjenčík was a Slovak Evangelical (Lutheran) priest, writer, meteorologist and pomologist, known for his acquaintance with Johann Wolfgang Goethe. He wrote numerous homiletic works, treatises, newspaper articles and scientific texts on various topics including meteorology and pomology. He

was actively involved in organising church and school life, making him one of the most influential intellectual figures in the contemporary Slovak context. In 1842, he co-presented the Slovak Petition to the Throne protesting against the situation of nationalities in the Kingdom of Hungary. His personality is a striking example of the multi-currents in the Slovak national movement. In this context one can point to tensions in the author's biography: on the one hand, active advocacy for the linguistic and national rights of Slovaks in Hungary, and on the other hand, speaking out from the patriotic Hungarian positions against the Slovak movement in the revolutionary years of 1848/1849.

His manuscript of notes and excerpts was discovered in his former rectory and was dated to the 1840s. Its genre can be characterised as a special type of egodocument in which the personality of the author is constantly present through the application of a specific selection and modification key (cf. Baggerman and Dekker, 2018, 93; Dekker, 2002, 7; Presser, 1958; Presser, 1969, 277–282). The document provides an important key to understanding the attitudes of its author in the 1840s. It is a German-language document, intended for private use, containing 908 entries on 155 manuscript pages. The entries were notes from Ferjenčík's reading, which served to record formulations that he considered stylistically well-formed, expressive and worth recording; due to their persuasive power, he probably could have used them in his arguments before the state and church dignitaries, at church councils and congresses, in preparation of his own writings, articles, sermons etc. Formulations taken from other sources are usually (with only a few exceptions) cited or adapted without reference to a source. As part of the research, the reconstruction of the document source base was performed, with the recognition of textual matches in potential source documents playing a key role.

Rhetorical imitation was already a central element of ancient rhetorical practice, which promoted the direct imitation of the teacher or his models (the works of established artists) in the process of education (Fantham, 1978, 1). Imitation of Ciceronian style was widespread in humanistic contexts, including the written imitation of stylistic elements (words, idioms and other phrases) and entire passages on other topics, in order to enrich one's own stylistic set of instruments (cf. Lábaj, 2018). The principle of imitation also became part of later pedagogical concepts. For example, the method proposed for the study of foreign languages by John Amos Comenius in Didactica magna (1657) involves transcribing, adapting and paraphrasing discourses expressed in a varied and elegant style, observing and collecting noteworthy passages, and translating idioms (Comenius, 1967, 208–209). In order to achieve stylistic and rhetorical goals and competencies, expressive words and phrases were adopted. They inherently include figurative elements; innovative metaphors, but also idiomatic units (conventional figurative units; see below), as well as figurative units conventionalised in terms of contemporary literary communication. This also

applies to Ferjenčík's manuscript, which contains a number of phraseological units of which idioms are particularly relevant, having traditionally played a key role in the imitation and refinement of style.

In the study of the above-mentioned document, the concept of intertextuality plays a central role (on various forms of intertextuality, cf. e.g., Miola, 2004, 13–25). Ferjenčík often chose expressive formulations with a particular stylistic effect (regardless of their thematic load) and inserted into them units for which he was looking to make a convincingly strong statement. In order to create rhetorically convincing formulations on the topic of his interest, the author not only took entire passages from the source texts, but he also often transferred parts of the original works into new contexts by replacing elements, omitting original ones, or adding new ones. He used sources from various newspapers and magazines, including Allgemeine Zeitung, Allgemeine Kirchen-Zeitung, Gemeinnützige Blätter zur Belehrung und Unterhaltung and Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland. He quoted and paraphrased numerous contemporary German-language authors and German-language texts by ethnic Slovak and Czech authors. The manuscript also contains passages of foreign texts translated into German and updated ideas of earlier German authors.

2. Theoretical framework

We have chosen Conventional Figurative Language Theory (CFLT) to interpret the application of figurative elements, although other approaches (e.g. Ďurčo, 2022) could also be applied to some extent. CFLT deals with units of the figurative lexicon (conventional figurative units) and was introduced by Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2022 [2005]; Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2018). The theory proposes two heuristic criteria for distinguishing between figurative and non-figurative units: image requirement and additional naming (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2022, 13). The first criterion is based on the fact that the content plane of a figurative unit not only consists of a pure "meaning", but also includes traces of the literal reading underlying the actual meaning (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2022, 13–14). Figurative units (idioms, figurative compounds and one-word metaphors) potentially possess two conceptual levels: they can be interpreted at the level of their literal reading, and at the level of their figurative meaning, both of which can be activated simultaneously (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2018, 6). The second criterion implies that a unit of figurative language is not the only way to say what is meant. Usually, there is already a more direct and cognitively simple expression denoting approximately the same entity, so the figurative units are additional means for naming it (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2022, 21).

It is important to note that indirectness of naming is not based on pragmatic conventions, but on the established lexical meaning of linguistic units (cf. Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2022, 26). The indirect naming denotes an approximately same, but not completely identical entity: the difference lies in the image component in the sense of the first criterion. Thus, its figurativeness does not have only a stylistic background (in the sense of a choice from an inventory of expressions with varying degrees of "normality" that convey the same information from different pragmatic points of view; cf. Lotman, 1970, 27; Rosengren, 1972, 13–16), but above all a lexical-semantic basis, as the figurative component is considered an important element of the lexicalised meaning of a figurative unit (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2018, 7). Defining the imagery of an expression on the basis of the dual relationship between its literal and indirect interpretation opens the door to connections with correlated cognitive procedures; it has been experimentally confirmed that cognitive processing of ambiguous expressions is more complex, assuming that at the unconscious level each of the meanings of an ambiguous stimulus is processed, with the subsequent active rejection of irrelevant information and selection of a meaning suitable for further cognitive activity (Filippova, 2006; Filippova and Chernov, 2013; Kudel'kina, 2008, 275). According to CFLT, the specificity of figurative naming with transparent motivation lies in the varying degree of simultaneous activation (and thus involvement in further cognitive activity) of both lexicalised meanings as (albeit unequally) relevant.

Expressivity, which is often associated with figurativeness and built upon it, has a purely stylistic-pragmatic basis, although in our case it is born out of phenomena of a lexical-semantic nature. There is no doubt that imagery is stylistically and rhetorically relevant; words and phrases that can be interpreted both literally and figuratively are often associated with greater expressiveness compared to their more direct and simpler correlates (if such "neutral" correlates exist). Rhetorical devices that are subject to the imitation of (expressive and elegant) style in Ferjenčík's book of notes and extracts usually fall into the category of figurative units too. Figurativeness, however, is not a necessary characteristic of expressive expressions as part of an expressive and elegant style, or even of rhetorical devices, as already indicated by the general remarks made by the authors of CFLT. According to them, tropes and various figures of speech can be figurative, but they do not have to be; they are somehow deviant from what may be called the "normal", "neutral" or "standard" mode of speaking because they are indirect and/or expressive to a certain extent, but figurativeness is not their necessary characteristic (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2022, 28). Although there is no equivalence relation between stylistic devices on the one hand and figurativeness on the other, the correlation between these classes of expressions is evident: a large part of tropes and figures of speech have (though not necessarily) a figurative nature that underlies their stylistic and rhetorical expressiveness.

Besides figurativeness, another definitional property of conventional figurative units is that they are conventionalised, i.e. they are elements of the mental lexicon, unlike freely created figurative expressions (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2018, 6). This feature distinguishes them from innovative or occasional metaphorical compounds and one-word metaphors that are in general figurative, but not necessarily conventional (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2018, 6). In this context, the question of conventionality criteria arises. This is because, despite their diverse integral properties, the size, composition and structure of the mental lexicon of different language users vary (cf. e.g., Trautwein, 2019 for a more detailed discussion). Literary conventions often anchor certain figurative expressions as separate elements of the mental lexicon of competent participants in literary communication. The investigation of the degree of conventionalisation is commonly based on the use of corpora capturing linguistic practice. Also in the case of literary-conventional figurative units, linguistic, specifically literary communicative practice can be used to determine the degree of conventionalization. The assessment of this degree should be placed within an interdisciplinary dialogue.

3. Inventory of figurative lexical items in Ferjenčík's manuscript

The interoperability of biographical knowledge and textual research focused on Ferjenčík's manuscript confirms the thesis that figurative units possess two conceptual levels that can be activated simultaneously. The link to literal reading is obvious when the selection of units used to increase the level of stylistic competence reflects the author's interest in meteorology 'stürmischen Zeit', 'Die Zeit ist düster', 'Geschichte eines Orkans in einem Glase Wassers', etc.), agriculture and pomology ('Wurzeln freilich tiefer', 'Über uns Allen wird der Rasen grünen', 'hier ist die Wurzel aller ächten Klarheit').

3.1 Figurative and conventionalised elements

These include phraseological units in the narrow sense of the word (Burger, 2015; Burger *et al.*, 2007; Fleischer, 1982). This means that they have all the properties of such kind of phraseological units and are lexicographically processed in relevant phraseological dictionaries, primarily e.g. Röhrich (1973) or Schemann (2011) Wander (1987): *trägt keinen Heller*[1]*, … soll bei uns zu Hause sein*[2]*,*

1 István Széchenyi, A Kelet népe (Pozsony: Wigand, 1841), 325.
2 Röhrich (1973, 399); Schemann (2011, 246); Wander (1987b, 421).

stürmischen Zeit[3]*, nur einigermaßen am Herzen liegt*[4]*, sei treu der Muttermilch, die ihr gesogen*[5]*, in den Schoß der römischen Kirche zurückzuziehen*[6].

3.2 Figurative and literary conventionalised elements

This category includes phrases or sentence constructions that exhibit reproducibility, relative stability and a certain level of figurativeness. This means that at least one of their components is used in a figurative sense, while it is not a phraseological unit in the narrow sense of the word, because the structure is not treated in dictionaries. These expressions often occur repeatedly in the press or in literary and philosophical works of the time (cf. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm, 1982), which means that, based on intertextuality, they could be conventionalised phrases from the point of view of their readers.

Very often they contain an allusion to a phrase, to ancient Greek and Latin mythology, to the Bible, or to a literary or philosophical work, etc. The decoding of these allusions presupposed a high level of literary competences among the readers of the time: *Wer die Gunst der Najaden*[7] *sucht*, *darf die der Hygea*[8] *nicht verscherzen*[9]; *Die Zeit ist düster*[10]; *Es ist ein eigenes Ding mit dem Menschengeschlecht*[11]; *wenn Leidenschaft es irre führt*[12]; *Dort ist gutes Blut, wo man lacht*[13]; *Das Vernünftige verhallt leider wirkungslos in den Regionen, wo die Leidenschaft herrscht*[14]*; Über uns Allen wird der Rasen grünen*[15].

---

3 Schemann (2011, 1006).

4 Röhrich (1973, 415), Schemann (2011, 348).

5 Variation of "*etw. mit der Muttermilch einsaugen*" cf. Röhrich (1973, 646); Schemann (2011, 560); Wander (1987b, 424).

6 Schemann (2011, 724) *in den Schoß der Kirche zurückkehren*.

7 It is an allusion to the ancient Greek mythology. "Allgemeine Medicinische Central-Zeitung." February 20, 1878, 171. "Oesterreichische Badezeitung. Organ für die Interessen der europäischen Kurorte und des Kurpublikums." April 5, 1876, 3.

8 Hygieia or Hygeia or rarely Hygiea is the ancient Greek goddess of purity and health.

9 "Allgemeine Zeitung München" June 18, 1841, 1350. Saphir, Moritz Gottlieb. Der Humorist. May 13, 1842, 387.

10 "Kemptner Zeitung." 1841, 375. "Sächsische Dorfzeitung: Anzeiger für Stadt und Land ...," 1844, 22.

11 It is an allusion to Goethe´s statement *„Es ist ein einförmiges Ding um das Menschengeschlecht"* from *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*.

12 "Augsburger Postzeitung." November 4, 1841, 2., "Allgemeine Zeitung." November 4, 1841, 2461., "Allgemeine Kirchen Zeitung." 1846/25, 339. Schemann (2011, 384) sees the word *irreführen* as idiomatic.

13 It may be an allusion to the idiomatic phrase *„Gutes Blut machen"* in Röhrich (146). "Allgemeine Zeitung München." January 24, 1841, 190., "Aschaffenburger Zeitung." January 21, 1841, 3., "Der Bayerische Landbote." January 24, 1841, 107.

14 "Allgemeine Zeitung München." October 28, 1840, 2412., "Augsburger Postzeitung." October, 28, 1840. The sentence contains two repeating structures in contemporary press and literary works: *„verhallt (leider) wirkungslos"* in Christian Friedrich Handel, Christian Gottlieb Scholz, and Karl Gottlieb Roehricht, Pädagogische Hand- und Taschen-Bibliothek für Ältern, Lehrer und Erzieher (Hennings: Neiße, 1833), 423. Laons Fuchs von Schwaß, Mein Glauben und Hoffen

3.3 Figurative elements with a questionable degree of conventionality

These are non-fixed and non-conventionalised word combinations, syntagms or complete sentences where at least one component is used in a metaphorical sense, for example, *Jahrhunderte alte Mißbräuche gut zu machen*[16]. Here we also find allusions to literary works, e.g. *sich für einen Titanensohn halten*[17].

3.4 Figurative and innovative elements

We include here those phrases or sentence constructions that exhibit a certain level of figurativeness, that is, at least one component is used figuratively, but the overall structure is not conventionalised. These phrases come often from established phraseological expressions in the same figurative sense. This way we can consider them an allusion to a phraseological unit (Mlacek, Ďurčo *et al.*, 1995): *Die Schminke der Jahrhunderte darauf gepinselt.*[18]*, auf den alten Geigen abgespielt wird*[19]*, Es betrifft nur die Geschichte eines Orkans in einem Glase Wassers*[20].

---

sammt Stimmenaus der kathol. Kirche zu meiner Vertheidigung. (St. Gallen, 1836.), 398. "Rheinbayern: eine vergleichende Zeitschrift für Verfassung, Gesetzgebung, Justizpflege…" 1831, 179. *Leidenschaft herrscht* in Karoline Auguste Ferdinandine Fischer, Die Honigmonathe. Brief. Reinhold an Olivier. (Posen und Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Kuhn, 1802), 61–69. Joseph von Márton, Lexicon trilingue Latino-Hungarico-Germanicump (Wien: Universität zu Wien, 1823), 909. J. Hörner, Homiletisches Repertorium über die sonn-und festtäglichen Evangelien des ganzen Jahres (Magdeburg: bei Wilhelm Heinrichshofen, 1830), 156.

15 In Röhrich (1973, 1177) we find the phraseological unit related to the expression of death: *der grüne Rasen deckt ihn.* The sentence occurs in the following sources: "Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung." April 4, 1841, 746. Anonymus, Aufzeichnungen eines nachgeborenen Prinzen aus der nachgelassenen französischen Handschrift (Stuttgart, Tübingen: J. O. Gottascher Verlag, 1841), 97. Alexander von Pusztay, Thronfolge und die pragmatische Sanction in Ungarn (Pressburg: Franz Eblen von Schmidt, 1849), 156.

16 Since the word *"gutmachen"* is perceived by Schemann (2011, 293) as idiomatic, we classified the word combination among figurative expressions with a questionable degree of conventionality, as we found it only in one journal, namely in "Allgemeine Zeitung München." November 5, 1841, 2467.

17 "Allgemeine Zeitung München." Juny 18, 1841, 1348. Possible allusion to Greek mythology, to Goethe's work Prometheus from the 18th century.

18 The phrase may derive from phraseological units where the word "Schminke" in English "make-up" occurs as a component of the following idiom with the meaning to embellish (https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/schminken), to whitewash a problem "*hilft kein Pudern und kein Schminken*" (Röhrich, 1973, 204; Schemann, 2011, 631) or "*Einem Schminke vormachen.*" (Wander, 1987d, 278).

19 According to Röhrich (1973, 314), the German saying "the old violin" used to stand for "the old song, the old lyre". At Wander (1987a, 1444) in means the preference of something old or traditional.

20 Heinrich Zschokke, Eine Selbstschau: Das Schicksal und der Mensch (Aarau: Verlag von Heinrich Remigins Sauerländer, 1842), 308. It is a lexical modification of the phraseological unit *Sturm im Wasserglas: viel Lärm um nichts.* cf. Röhrich (1973, 1047). At Wander (1987d, 949) and Schemann (2011, 823) we find the following variant *der/ein Sturm im Waserglase/Wasserglas (sein).*

3.5 Conventional and non-figurative elements

These are non figurative phraseological units in the broad sense corresponding to the main properties of phraseological units of stability, reproducibility and polylexia (Burger, 2015; Burger *et al.*, 2007; Drahota-Szabó, 2021; Fleischer, 1982). This category includes primarily winged words from Latin which have already been conventionalised on an international level: *dolce far niente, primum desiderium, misera contribuens plebs* or proverbs like *Besser spät als niemals*[21]. The elements of this group do not occur as frequently as those belonging to the other groups.

4. Concluding Remarks

The objective of Ferjenčík's journal of notes and extracts was to acquire active stylistic competence by excerpting, imitating and adapting German sentences expressed in high and expressive style, including idioms and other figurative units. Considering the representation of figurative expressions, and also the share of imagery in the stylistic qualities of the excerpted or imitated passages, the figurativeness of speech can be identified as a key characteristic and prerequisite of good style as a goal towards which the author of the manuscript was aiming. The interdisciplinary treatment of figurativeness in Ferjenčík's book of notes and extracts confirms the thesis that figurative expressions retain a link to their literal reading in addition to their figurative lexical meaning. This is evident in phrases that the author has written out for his interest in meteorology: in their literal reading, they thematise meteorological phenomena, even though the motivated (figurative) meaning has a general validity. During the processing of the material, a number of interpretive problems related to determining the degree of conventionalisation has emerged: a wide range of figurative expressions are characterised by literary conventionality (and thus can be considered a separate part of the mental lexicon of competent participants in contemporary literary communication); for a number of elements, the degree of conventionalisation was questionable. The academic literature discusses numerous theoretical works on conventionalisation, lexicalisation, and the mental lexicon; however, further discussion of specific criteria seems to be necessary.

In today's society, in addition to traditional lexicographic and ethnological research, we also employ corpus analysis, discourse analysis, and questionnaires. When investigating the conventionalisation of word combinations and sentence structures of the previous centuries, we encounter a significant challenge despite the substantial progress in digitizing literary, philosophical, and other written works, including periodicals. The mere fact that a particular word combination or sentence structure is demonstrably conventionalised today (not only

21 cf. Wander (1876a, 332).

through introspection by language users) does not automatically imply that it held the same status during the time of the examined author. Our basis for assuming conventionality relies on repeated occurrences in written documents from that era. Interestingly, there have been cases where we discovered more extensive sources containing certain word combinations only from several decades later periods.

Acknowledgements

The paper is an output of the project VEGA 2/0136/21 Literary historical, cultural historical and editorial study of a manuscript of Samuel Ferjenčík's book of recordings.

References

Baggerman, Arianne, and Rudolf Dekker. 2018. "Jacques Presser, Egodocuments and the Personal Turn in Historiography". The European Journal of Life Writing, VII: 90–110.

Burger, Harald. 2015. Phraseologie. Eine Einführung am Beispiel des Deutschen. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Burger, Harald, Annelies Buhofer, and Ambros Sialm. 1982. Handbuch der Phraseologie. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Burger, Harald, Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij, Kühn, Peter, and Neal R. Norrick, (eds.). 2007. Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung. 1. Halbband. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Comenius, John Amos. 1967. The Great Didactic. Translated into English and edited with biographical, historical and critical introductions by M. W. Keatinge, M.A. New York: Russell & Russell.

Dekker, Rudolf. 2002. "Introduction". In Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in its Context since the Middle Ages, edited by Rudolf Dekker, 7–20. Hilversum: Verloren.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij, and Elisabeth Piirainen. 2018. "Conventional Figurative Language Theory and idiom motivation". Yearbook of Phraseology 9: 5–30. https://doi.org/10.1515/phras-2018-0003

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij, and Elisabeth Piirainen, 2022. Figurative Language Cross-Cultural and Cross-Linguistic Perspectives. 2nd edition, revised and updated. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Drahota-Szabó, Erzsébet. 2021. Deutsche Phraseologie aus intra-und interlingualer Perspektive. Imst: Alphabet Wörterbuchverlag.

Ďurčo, Peter. 2022. Ustojchivye slovosochetanija: sopostavitebnyj i korpusno-lingvisticheskij analiz. Brno: Tribun EU.

Fantham, Elaine. 1978. "Imitation and Evolution: The Discussion of Rhetorical Imitation in Cicero De Oratore 2. 87–97 and Some Related Problems of Ciceronian Theory". Classical Philology, No. 1: 1–16.

Ferjenčík, Samuel. s.a. Poznámková kniha S. Ferjenčíka [Book of notes of S. Ferjenčík]. Archive of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia, Jelšava.

Filippova, Margarita Georgievna. 2006. "Issledovanie neosoznavaemogo vosprijatija (na materiale mnogoznachnyh izobrazhenij)". In Jeksperimental'naja psihologija poznanija: kognitivnaja logika soznatel'nogo i bessoznatel'nogo, edited by V.M. Allahverdov, 165–187. Sankt-Peterburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta.

Filippova, Margarita Georgievna, and Roman Vasil'evich Chernov. 2013. "Psihologicheskie i psihofiziologicheskie korreljaty vosprijatija dvojstvennyh izobrazhenij". Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta 3: 21–33.

Fleischer, Wolfgang. 1982. Phraseologie der deutschen Sprache. Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut Leipzig.

Kudel'kina, Natal'ja Sergeevna. 2008. "Vosprijatie mnogoznachnoj informacii kak predmet psihologicheskogo issledovanija". Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta 4: 268–276.

Lábaj, Ivan. 2018. "Imitatio Ciceroniana podľa Jána Sambuca". Ideológia v premenách času v pamiatkach gréckej a latinskej tradície : zborník príspevkov z medzinárodnej konferencie, edited by Ľudmila Buzássyová, Erika Juríková, and Jana Grusková, 229–239. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave.

Lotman, Jurij Mihajlovich. 1970. Struktura chudozhestvennogo teksta. Moskva: Iskusstvo.

Miola, Robert S. 2004. "Seven Types of Intertextuality". In Shakespeare, Italy, and Intertextuality, edited by Michele Marrapodi, 13–25. Manchester: Manchester UP.

Mlacek, Jozef, and Ďurčo, Peter *et al.* 1995. "Frazeologická terminológia." Accessed 15. March, 2024. https://www.juls.savba.sk/ediela/frazeologicka_terminologia/. Jazykovedný ústav Ľudovíta Štúra Slovenskej akadémie vied. 1995.

Presser, Jacques. 1969. Uit het werk van dr. J. Presser: Feestbundel aangeboden aan professor dr. J Presser bij zijn afscheid als hoogleraar aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam. Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak/Van Gennep.

Presser, Jacques. 1958. "Memoires als geschiedbron". In Winkler Prins Encyclopedie VIII. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 208–210.

Rosengren, Inger. 1972. "Style as choice and deviation". Style 1: 3–18.

Trautwein, Jutta. 2019. "The mental lexicon in acquisition. Assessment, Size & Structure." PhD diss., Humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Potsdam.

Dictionaries

Röhrich, Lutz. 1973. Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten. Band 1. Aal bis mau mit ca. 300 Abbildungen. Dritte Auflage. Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder KG.

Röhrich, Lutz. 1973. Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten. Band 2. Maul bis zwölf mit ca. 300 Abbildungen. Dritte Auflage. Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder KG.

Schemann, Hans. 2011. Deutsche Idiomatik. Wörterbuch der deutschen Redewendungen im Kontext 2. Auflage, mit vollständig überarbeiteter Einführung. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1987a. Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. A bis Gothem. Augsburg: Weltbild.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1987b. Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Gott bis Lehren. Augsburg: Weltbild.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1987c. Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Lehren bis Satte (der). Augsburg: Weltbild.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1987d. Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Sattel bis Wei. Augsburg: Weltbild.

Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. 1987e. Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Weib bis Zwug. Augsburg: Weltbild.

A diachronic study of the phrase *We are in a completely different place today* in Danish

Irene Simonsen
University of Southern Denmark
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8865-4858

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c775

ABSTRACT

This study conducts a diachronic analysis of the Danish phrase *vi er et helt andet sted i dag* (lit. 'we are in a completely different place today'), aiming to understand the communication needs driving its prevalent usage. The phrase's initial appearance in Danish media dates to 1987, but a notable increase in usage is observed from 2010. This surge is linked to Danish organisations, especially banks, utilising the phrase in crisis communication as a "image restoration strategy" (Benoit 1997, 179; Benoit and Pang, 2007, 248). The study questions the phrase's classification, considering terms like *Wortverbindungsmuster* (Steyer, 2013), *Klischee*, *Idiomatischer Satz* (Stein and Stumpf, 2019), and *situational manipulator* (Szczygłowska, 2023; Wray, 2002). It also explores its origin as a "phraseological Anglicism" (Fiedler, 2023, 58). Using the Danish corpus Infomedia, the research spans 2000–2022, analysing lexical fixedness, thematic domain, style, discourse practice, and mediality (Dalmas *et al.*, 2015). Special focus is given to the phrase's use in apology contexts and an associated meta-discourse. The findings indicate that the phrase's evolution typifies key phraseological processes. Its increasing usage has led to lexical fixation in economic discourse, becoming an integral part of apology rhetoric (Lewicki, Polin and Lount, 2016). Concurrently, its establishment in this domain spawns an ironic meta discourse, reducing it to a cliché.

Keywords: phraseology; diachronic analysis; organisational apology; crisis communication.

1. Introduction

This article presents a diachronic, intra-linguistic analysis of the Danish phrase *vi er et helt andet sted i dag*, translating to 'we are in a completely different place today'. The study investigates the marked increase in frequency and diversity of this phrase's application in Danish media over the past two decades. Initially appearing in a regional newspaper in 1987[1], the phrase experiences only

1 This initial example is employed by a municipal cultural committee chairman who confronts a group of protesting citizens, asserting: "Tænk, hvis de kræfter, I har sat ind på det her, var

sporadic usage until the early 2000s. The analysis highlights its pronounced prevalence in the latter half of the 2010s, particularly within a distinct discourse context: the issuing of apologies by organisations, notably banks, to the Danish public. This phenomenon suggests that the phrase has evolved into both a reflection and a marker of a distinct communication practice or culture within this context. The increasing use and context of this phrase raise key questions for this study, including if it has become a fixed phrase through lexicalisation, the timeline and dynamics of this process, and the cultural communication needs driving its use. The research aims to explore the relationship between language evolution and cultural communication dynamics. The article begins by defining the object of study and the theoretical framework applied. It then details the data and methodology used. The results section is structured in two parts: initially, it explores lexical fixedness, stylistic register, mediality, and thematic domains; subsequently, it delves into examples from an apology discourse and the associated meta-discourse. It concludes by synthesising the findings.

2. Object of study and applied theory

The phrase that the study examines consists of a nexus, a locative adverbial (*et helt andet sted*, lit. 'a completely different place'), and a temporal adverbial (*i dag*, lit. 'today'). Individually, these adverbials carry idiomatic meanings. Historically, *det andet sted* ('the other place') has served as a circumlocution or euphemism for something one would prefer not to mention directly, such as *hell* or *the toilet* (ODS). In contemporary Danish, like English, *i dag* ('today') can mean "in the current time we live in; at this point in time as opposed to in the past" (DDO). When combined, the nexus and adverbials appear to take on a new meaning, which can be succinctly described as being, at the time of speaking, on the other side of a (drastic) change, in a new state, and in a new era.

In delineating the object of study, the paper adopts the framework of Steyer's (2013) concept of *usuelle Wortverbindung*, which translates to 'usual co-occurrences of words'. These are characterised by Steyer as functional units employed in executing distinct communicative tasks and are defined by their frequency of usage (Steyer, 2013, 337). Steyer distinguishes between *Wortverbindungen* ('co-occurrences'), which are comprised of fixed lexical elements, and *Wortverbindungsmuster* ('co-occurrence patterns'), characterised as polylexical, lexically partially specified structures with fixed components and open slots for variable elements (Steyer, 2013, 42–50, 338).

---

blevet sat ind i en positiv retning. Så havde vi stået *et helt andet sted i dag*" ('Imagine if all the effort you've put into this had been directed positively. Then we would be *in a completely different place today.*' (- *Vi var nok for hurtige til at tage buskortene*, Vejle Amts Folkeblad, p. 23, 9.3.1987. https://labs.statsbiblioteket.dk/smurf/; accessed 20.5.2023. Emphasis added).

Additionally, this study incorporates the concept of the *idiomatischer Satz* ('idiomatic sentence') as developed by Finkbeiner (2008), and Stein and Stumpf (2019), defining it as a syntactically fixed, semantically idiomatic, and pragmatically constrained unit (Stein and Stumpf, 2019, 78). The term *idiomatischer Satz* emphasises that it primarily concerns a fixed expression in terms of form and meaning. Conversely, a concept that emphasises the pragmatic assessment of the language's effect in the situation is Wray's concept of a "situation manipulator" (Wray 2002, 88; cp. Szczygłowska, 2023). While Wray (2002) defines *situation manipulator* as formulaic sequences that "influence the hearer in some way or another", the relevant subtype here includes those used to "get the hearer to do something, feel something, or think something, to the benefit of the speaker's physical, emotional, or cognitive needs", which encompasses the apology (Wray, 2002, 88–89). The paper also examines the notion of *Klischee* (Stein and Stumpf, 2019, 76), referring to phrases or buzzword-like constructions that become ineffective through overuse and attract linguistic criticism.

Moreover, the analysis extends to the origins of the specific expression under scrutiny, potentially characterised as a "phraseological Anglicism", as discussed by Fiedler (2023, 58). The significant influence of English on Danish, including its phraseology, has been well-documented (Gottlieb, 2020; Sørensen, 1995, 1997). Investigating the phrase in question may provide insights into the motivations for integrating loan translations from English into Danish.

The degree of lexicalisation is intrinsically associated with the concept of *Musterhaftigkeit* (Stein and Stumpf, 2019, 19; Steyer, 2013, 39) – 'patterning' or 'patternedness'. This term encompasses characteristics such as recurrence, conventionality, historicity, and reproducibility, which are indicative of a word's or phrase's adaptability across various situations and its potential transformation within individual and social usage (Stein and Stumpf, 2019, 19). Such a characterisation necessitates a diachronic exploration of frequency and fixedness, as well as of the practical application of the term under investigation. In the context of this study, the pragmatic approach proposed by Dalmas *et al.* (2015) for the analysis of adjectives is particularly pertinent. Their methodology focuses on discerning unique attributes of adjectives through five distinctive parameters: lexical preferences, thematic domains, stylistic register, discourse practices, and mediality (Dalmas *et al.*, 2015, 13). This approach is aligned with a usage-based view, which is essential for examining the phrase in question.

The employment of the phrase within the specific discourse practice of apology, as observed in the selected material, has steered the theoretical orientation towards corporate communication, encompassing crisis communication and, more precisely, the genre of apology. Consequently, this study is informed by rhetorical communication theories, with a primary focus on Benoit and Pang's image repair theory (Benoit, 1997; Benoit and Pang, 2007). Benoit and Pang (2007) highlight that an image repair effort may become essential when an

organisation faces an attack threatening its image. They posit two fundamental prerequisites for defining such an attack: firstly, an offensive act must have occurred, and secondly, the accused must bear responsibility for that act (Benoit and Pang, 2007, 246).

Image repair theory delineates five strategies to mitigate image threats: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing the offensiveness of the event, corrective action, and mortification (Benoit and Pang, 2007, 248). Notably, the strategy of mortification involves attempts to rehabilitate an image by soliciting forgiveness or issuing apologies (Benoit and Pang, 2007, 248). Of particular interest for the analysis of the phrase *we are in a different place today* is this fifth strategy. According to Lewicki *et al.* (2016, 183), the apology genre can include up to six components: an expression of regret, an explanation of the misconduct, acknowledgment of responsibility, a declaration of repentance, an offer to repair the harm, and a request for forgiveness. The declaration of repentance is described as "a statement in which the violators express their promise to not repeat the offense" (Lewicki *et al.*, 2016, 183). This framework informs the analysis of the phrase in question, providing a lens through which its usage in the context of apology can be understood and its efficacy in crisis communication can be assessed.

3. Data and methodology

In the study, I utilised Infomedia, a comprehensive Danish media database that archives content from 2,648 national and local media sources dating back to 1990. These cover a broad range of media types, including 21 national daily newspapers, 88 regional and local daily newspapers, and 466 local weekly newspapers. Additionally, it contains 655 magazines, 14 news agencies, 1,236 online sources, 30 TV broadcasts, 124 radio programmes, and 14 other sources (Infomedia, 10.1.2023). My search spanned the period from January 1st, 2000, to December 31st, 2022. During the search, I focused on the phrase *et helt andet sted i dag* (lit. 'a completely different place today'). This query yielded 1,501 hits. To refine the dataset, I filtered out duplicates and instances where the phrase was used in a literal sense, ultimately narrowing the results down to 489 relevant occurrences.

Following the initial data collection, I employed a coding methodology based on Dalmas' five criteria to analyse the usage of the phrase. These criteria include lexical fixedness, stylistic register, thematic domain, mediality, and discourse practice. Emphasising a bottom-up, data-driven approach as advocated by Steyer (2013), I developed sub-categories directly derived from the observed data patterns.

4. Results

Quantitatively, there is a consistent increase in the use of the phrase over the examined period. In the first years of the period, from 2000 to 2009, it is used on average only 3 times annually. In the years 2010–2017, it averages 17 times annually, and in the years 2018–2022, it averages 65 times per year, with a peak in 2022 of a total of 82 occurrences.

Lexical fixedness. Regarding lexical fixedness, two different syntactic patterns can be observed in the material. The first is a simple pattern consisting only of a nexus with a finite verb and subject, plus the two lexical anchors. The finite verb is in the present tense. This simple pattern may be expanded with optional adverbs, but fundamentally consists of four slots:

Table 1. Simple pattern[2]

1	2			3	4	
vi	*er*	*heldigvis*	*også*	*et helt andet sted*	*i dag*	*end da krisen ramte*
'we'	'are'	'fortunately'	'also'	'in a completely different place'	'today'	'than when the crisis hit'
Subject	Finite verb	Disjunctive adverbial	Conjunctive adverbial	Locative adverbial	Temporal adverbial	Comparative clause/adverbial
Obligatory	Obligatory	Optional	Optional	Fixed	Fixed	Optional

The second pattern includes, as a mandatory element, a conditional clause, nexus with a verb in the conditional mood, and the two lexical anchors. This pattern can be expanded with a variety of adverbs and can consist of up to 11 components when fully developed:

Table 2. Expanded pattern[3]

1		2	3			2b	4	5		
Hvis Vesten havde udfaset sin dybe afhængighed af fossile brændstoffer inden Putins invasion	*(så)*	*ville*	*vi*	*nok*	*(også)*	*være*	*et helt andet sted*	*i dag*	*(end vi er)*	*både sikkerhedspolitisk, klimapolitisk og økonomisk*
'If the West had phased out its deep dependence on fossil fuels before Putin's invasion'	'(then)'	'would'	'we'	'probably'	'(also)'	'be'	'in a very different place'	'today'	'(than we are)'	'in terms of security, climate policy and economics'
Conditional clause/adverbial	Conjunction	Subject	Finite verb	Disjunctive adverbial	Conjunctive adverbial	Non-finite verb	Locative adverbial	Temporal adverbial	Comparative clause/adverbial	Conditional adverbial
Obligatory	Optional	Obligatory	Obligatory	Optional	Optional	Obligatory	Fixed	Fixed	Optional	Optional

Quantitatively, 84% of the occurrences follow the simple pattern, while 16% follow the expanded pattern.

An analysis of the subject forms within the dataset reveals that the most commonly occurring subject is the first-person plural pronoun 'we' (43%). Following this, the second most prevalent category comprises nominal elements in the third-person singular. These subjects exhibit considerable diversity, ranging from geographical entities such as a city, a state, *EU* ('the European Union'),

2 JP Aarhus, 17 March 2022; Børsen.dk, 31 October 2017.

3 Information.dk, 7 September 2022.

Europa ('Europe'), or *verden* ('the world'), to concrete nouns within an economic context, including industry, company, and product. Additionally, abstract nouns like *idé* ('idea'), *diskussion* ('discussion'), *debat* ('debate'), and *virkeligheden* ('the reality') are also represented.

In terms of verb usage, the verb *at være* (*to be)* emerges as the most frequently employed (79%). Accompanying this primary verb are others such as *at ligge* ('to lie'), *at sidde* ('to sit'), and *at se sig selv* ('to see oneself')[4], which predominantly signify a state or position. A smaller subset of verbs is observed that denote initiation or inception, exemplified by *at begynde* ('to begin') and *at starte* ('to start'*):*

(1) Men alligevel peger det på muligheder, som vi ikke har haft før. De unge *begynder et helt andet sted i dag*. Der er 100 ting, man kan blive, og somme tider kan man være 50 ting på en dag. ('But still, it points to opportunities we haven't had before. Young people *start from a completely different place today*. There are a hundred things one can become – and sometimes, you can be fifty things in a single day.') (Morsø Folkeblad, 23 April 2008)[5]

On the opposite end, verbs that imply a metaphorical conclusion or culmination, such as *at ende* ('to end') or *at havne* ('to end up'), are also found:

(2) Selv er han ikke i tvivl om, at han *var havnet et helt andet sted i dag*, hvis ikke han som ung havde haft Fyns Motor Sport og Højbjergbanen til at brænde ungdommens vildskab af på. ('As for himself, he has no doubt that he *would have ended up in a completely different place today* if, as a young man, he hadn't had Fyns Motor Sport and the Højbjerg track to burn off the wildness of youth.') (Fyensstiftstidende.dk, 13 October 2001)

These verbs play a crucial role in highlighting the development or significant transformation conveyed by the phrase.

In the realm of adverbial variation, a distinction can be made among three functional categories of adverbs: a) disjuncts, b) conjuncts, and c) adjuncts:

(3) Vi er i Verdo (a) *heldigvis* et helt andet sted i dag. ('We are, at Verdo, (a) *fortunately* in a completely different place today. (Jyllands-Posten, 29 August 2022)

(4) Derfor står verden (b) *også* et helt andet sted i dag (c) *end i 1930'erne*. ('That's why the world is (b) *also* in a completely different place today (c) *than it was in the 1930s*.') (Politiken, 7 February 2009)

4 Den allerstørste udfordring i fremtiden *ligger* et helt andet sted i dag (lit. 'The biggest challenge in the future lies in a completely different place today'), Horsens Folkeblad, 2 June 2007. Hvis jeg ikke havde haft det [opmuntring], så havde jeg *siddet* et helt andet sted i dag (lit. 'If I hadn't had that [encouragement], I would sit in a completely different place today'), Sn.dk, 23 August 2018. Jeg kan jo *se mig selv* et helt andet sted i dag (lit. 'I can clearly see myself in a completely different place today'), Seoghoer.dk, 28 September 2021.

5 Emphasis added. All examples have been translated by the author, with partial assistance from Google Translate and ChatGPT.

Disjuncts, such as 'fortunately', serve to convey the speaker's attitude toward the content of the statement. These adverbs are intriguing because they not only express the speaker's certainty in making the statement but also the value they attribute to its content. This aspect is especially relevant in evaluative utterances.

A semantic categorisation of the phrase reveals a nuanced distribution across three scenarios. Firstly, it is predominantly employed to denote positive developments, constituting over 80% of its usage. This usage highlights transitions to more favorable states resulting from specific actions, underscoring improvements or advancements from initial conditions.

(5) Tænker vi tilbage på de bekymringer, som verden havde til den skrøbelige økonomiske genopretning ved årets start - især risikoen for inflation i Asien og for gæld i Europa - ja, så står vi et helt andet sted i dag. ('If we think back to the concerns the world had about the fragile economic recovery at the beginning of the year – especially the risk of inflation in Asia and debt in Europe – well, then we are in a completely different place today.') (Berlingske, 17 March 2011)

Secondly, about 10% of its application depicts negative developments, portraying deteriorations or setbacks due to improper actions, thus emphasising a decline from the original state:

(6) – Danionics skulle have indgået en alliance om produktion af batterier i Asien meget tidligere. Var det sket, er jeg overbevist om, at selskabet havde været et helt andet sted i dag, mener Rune Møller. ('Danionics should have formed an alliance for battery production in Asia much earlier. Had that happened, I'm convinced the company would have been in a completely different place today, says Rune Møller.') (Computerworld Top 100, 24 September 2004)

Finally, a smaller portion, approximately 7.5%, falls into the category of neutral observation, representing objective acknowledgments of change:

(7) Vi kommer fra et mediemarked, hvor man tidligere i høj grad hørte til hos ét medie som læser, men vi er et helt andet sted i dag. ('We come from a media landscape where people used to belong primarily to a single outlet as readers, but we are in a completely different place today.') (Mediawatch, 7 October 2015)

Observed over time, the use of the phrase to signify positive development predominates.

Stylistic register. Regarding the stylistic register, at first glance, the diaphasic range within the analysed texts appears to be rather limited: they are all press-related texts, ranging from a press interview to an editorial. However, it is noteworthy that a significant portion of the examples featuring the phrase are in direct speech (cp. ex. 8), accounting for 65%. Additionally, 13% are in indirect

speech (cp. ex. 9). This suggests that the phrase is predominantly associated with spoken language. Several texts, especially about organisations, are press releases from these entities, often directly adopted by the media. These texts frequently use direct, possibly fabricated, CEO quotations to add a personal, immediate, and emotional tone (cp. ex. 8).

(8) – Jeg er et helt andet sted i dag, end jeg var dengang, siger en smilende Thomas Raunsbæk, direktør i Scandi Byg, til Licitationen - Byggeriets Dagblad. ('– I'm in a completely different place today than I was back then, says a smiling T.R., CEO of Scandi Byg, to Licitationen, the construction industry magazine.') (Licitationen. Byggeriets Dagblad, 29 October 2018)

(9) Fordi den moderne lighedsdiskussion ifølge Mette Frederiksen er et helt andet sted i dag. ('Because, according to Mette Frederiksen, the contemporary discussion about equality is in a completely different place today.') (Jyllands-Posten, 26 March 2012)

Over time, the phrase's use in direct speech has increased, accounting for 50% of its occurrences by the study's end, indicating a shift towards more personal and immediate communication, and a preference for spoken over written contexts.

Mediality. The media analysis shows the phrase is most common in national newspapers (both print and online) (39%), followed by local/regional newspapers (29%), and then in trade journals (18%), with clear temporal variations. From 2011 to 2015, the phrase appeared more in national than in local/regional newspapers, a trend that intensified by 2019. Starting in 2015, it also began to feature in national radio and TV broadcasts. From 2013, its use in local/regional newspapers steadily increased, nearly matching national newspaper levels by 2022. The phrase's usage in trade journals, especially in economics, marketing, financial regulation, and compliance, notably surged in 2018. Since there is no available calculation of the quantitative distribution of Infomedia's database content – only a listing of the number of included media types – the correlation between these percentages and the underlying data volume remains uncertain. However, this distribution may reflect differing editorial orientations and communicative functions across media types. The relatively high frequency in national newspapers suggests that the phrase often features in politically or rhetorically charged narratives that aim to frame developments in evaluative terms. In contrast, its growing use in local and regional outlets may point to a more pragmatic adoption of the phrase in community-based reporting, where it is used to highlight change over time or local progress. The increase in trade journals further indicates that the phrase is not limited to general public discourse but has found relevance in professional and regulatory contexts, especially where strategic positioning or transformation is emphasised.

Thematic domains. In examining the thematic domains of the phrase's usage, a fundamental dichotomy emerges between contexts related to the private and social spheres. Quantitatively, approximately 13% of instances fall into the former category, while a significant majority, about 87%, pertain to the latter. In private contexts, the phrase captures personal transformation stories, charting progress from negative to positive states, such as illness to health, abuse to recovery, crime to reintegration, and extremism to democratic citizenship. In contrast, the social sphere covers a wider range of themes across five domains: economy, politics, culture, sports, and health. Within these, the economic domain is preeminent, accounting for nearly 40% of the phrase's occurrences. Political themes, often dominated by discussions on climate change, the European Union, and the conflict in Ukraine, represent 19%. Cultural topics, which include diverse subjects such as film, music, education, food, and IT/digitalisation constitute about 18% of instances. Additionally, sports emerge as a distinct category, linking to 9% of the phrases. Concurrently, the health domain gains prominence in 2020 and 2021, a trend likely attributable to the coronavirus pandemic. The economic domain shows a particularly marked rise in usage around 2017, peaking in 2019, followed by a slight decline in 2020 and 2021, before experiencing renewed growth in 2022. This pattern coincides with increasing public and political attention to high-profile money-laundering cases involving major Danish banks[6]. In this context, the phrase is frequently used to signal awareness of the need for reform and accountability, often framing the financial sector as an area that has either moved – or is expected to move – to "a completely different place". These functions are examined in more detail in the following section.

5. Examples from two discourse practices

In analysing articles pertaining to private organisations (26%, n: 127), a distinction emerges between two primary communication strategies: corporate branding or face-protective communication (6%, n: 28), and crisis communication aimed at image restoration (20%, n: 99).

Corporate branding or face-protective texts typically portray a positive status quo within an organisation as the culmination of a period of growth or prosperity. This narrative serves to distance the current, more developed and trustworthy state of the organisation from its less developed past. These texts

6 Two illustrative examples are Danske Bank's 2018 acknowledgment of serious deficiencies in anti-money laundering compliance related to approximately EUR 200 billion in transactions through its Estonian branch (Danske Bank, 2018, 6), and Nordea Bank Denmark's 2016 police report for failing to maintain adequate anti-money laundering procedures (Finanstilsynet, 2016).

primarily focus on aspects such as economic consolidation, product development, and the establishment of collaborations.

Conversely, texts centered on image restoration explicitly refer to a previous negative position or situation. These may include public criticism, employment issues, or economic difficulties faced by the organisation. Notably, 11% (n: 55) of all texts analysed fall under the apology genre, with 9% (n: 43) involving banks as the apologising entity[7]. In these contexts, the phrase crystallises into a fixed form, typically employing the first-person plural subject and a finite verb, exemplified by the condensed expression "we are in a completely different place today". Furthermore, this phrase begins to embody the meaning attributed by Lewicki *et al.* (2016) to the declaration of repentance in an apology. It signifies not only a distancing from the organisation's past but also an expression of a morally integrity-based change within the organisation. An illustrative example can be seen in the communication from a publicly criticized bank that was charged with violating anti-money laundering legislation in 2018:

> (10) «Vi har fejlet og ikke gjort det godt nok. Det vil vi gerne undskylde for. Der er nok nogle kunder og danskere, som ikke har hørt det ordentligt endnu, og til dem vil vi gerne sige, at vi godt ved, at vi ikke har levet op til omverdenens og vores egne forventninger, og derfor siger vi undskyld,» siger Jesper Nielsen, adm. direktør i Danske Bank siden den 1. oktober i år […] Sagen har presset jeres troværdighed ned til et historisk lavpunkt. Hvad gør I ved det? «Vi kan godt forstå, at det forholder sig sådan. Det sker, når man ikke lever op til folks forventninger, hvilket vi ikke har gjort. Derfor forsøger vi nu – ud over at sige undskyld – at forklare, at *vi er et helt andet sted i dag*.» ("'We have failed and have not done well enough. We would like to apologize for that. There are probably some customers and Danes who haven't properly heard this yet, and to them we want to say that we are fully aware we haven't lived up to the expectations of the public or our own – and that is why we say sorry," says Jesper Nielsen, CEO of Danske Bank since October 1 this year.[…] The case has driven your credibility to a historic low. What are you doing about it? "We understand why that is the case. It happens when you don't meet people's expectations – which we haven't. That's why, in addition to apologising, we are now trying to explain that *we are in a completely different place today*.'") (Jyllands-Posten 12 October 2018)

The example displays three characteristics identified by Lewicki *et al.* (2016): expression of regret, acknowledgment of responsibility, and declaration of repentance, which the phrase is used as a concluding point on. This binding to a particular genre reinforces the routine formulaic nature of the phrase and emphasises its importance in the context of organisational apology communication.

7 In addition to Danish banks and credit companies (Danske Bank, Nordea, Sydbank, Arbejdernes Landsbank, Danmarks Nationalbank, Nykredit), the phrase is also used in a Danish context in connection with Swedbank, Deutsche Bank, and the ECB.

From 2017, a development in the usage of the expression can be observed, as it is used as a metareference to apologies from banks. This development signifies the rise of a new discourse, which can be characterised as the critical citations or discussions of the phrase within analytical journalism. The phrase is dismissed with the words, *det lyder ikke overbevisende* (lit. 'that doesn't sound convincing' (Berlingske, 6.3.2019); it is labeled *papegøjesnak* (lit. 'parrot talk', see below) or derided as *a mantra,[…] gentaget til hudløshed* ('a mantra repeated ad nauseam' (lit.: 'skinlessness')) (Weekendavisen, 23.11.2018). This trend suggests that the phrase is increasingly perceived as a cliché:

(11) Men, for nu at citere den *papegøjesnak*, som Nordeas kommunikationsfolk åbenlyst har instrueret bankens chefer på samtlige niveauer i alle geografier om at klamre sig til, når talen falder på hvidvask: '*Vi er et andet sted i dag.*' Ja. *I er i sandhed et helt andet sted.* […] storbankernes eksistentielle krise er langtfra forbi. Ingen ved, hvor eller hvornår den ender. Men vi ved, at det er *'et helt andet sted' end i dag.* ('But, to quote the *parrot talk* that Nordea's communications team has clearly instructed the bank's executives at all levels and in every geography to cling to whenever the subject of money laundering comes up: *'We are in a different place today.'* Yes. *You truly are in a completely different place.* […] The existential crisis of the big banks is far from over. No one knows where or when it will end. But we do know that it will be *'a completely different place'* than today.') (Jyllands-Posten, 4 May 2019)

6. Conclusion

This diachronic analysis of the Danish phrase *vi er et helt andet sted i dag* ('we are in a completely different place today') reveals that, following its initial appearance in the Danish press in 1987 and only sporadic use until around 2010, the phrase undergoes a fixation process. This process establishes it as both a simple and an extended pattern, which can be aptly described as co-occurrence patterns (Steyer, 2013). However, with its integration into the specialised discourse in the economic domain, especially in the latter half of the period, it increaseingly seems to assume some of the characteristics that define both an idiomatic sentence (Finkbeiner, 2008) and a situational manipulator (Wray, 2002). The concise, lexicalised form becomes an expression of remorse, serving as a face-saving mechanism and linked to the genre of organisational apology. It can be observed that the negative connotations historically attributed to "the other place" give way to associations of a positive development. This establishment, however, is met with responses in the analytically critical press, which creates a metadiscourse in which quotation and repetition act as markers of irony, thereby reducing the phrase to a recognisable cliché (cf. ex. 11 above). Fiedler (2023) questions whether our repertoires of phrases are becoming increasingly similar due to English borrowings. Regarding the phrase in question, a simple search in the TenTen2020 corpora on Sketch Engine shows that it is used in both

British and American English, (Swiss) German, and French, similarly to its use in Danish. It could be a topic for further investigation to see if the phrase has undergone the same development in these languages as it has in Danish.

References

Benoit, William L., and Augustine Pang. 2007. "Crisis communication and image repair discourse". In Public Relations: From Theory to Practice, edited by Tricia L. Hansen-Horn, and Bonita D. Neff, 244–261. London: Pearson.

Benoit, William L. 1997. "Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication". Public Relations Review 2: 177–186.

Dalmas, Martine, *et al.* 2015. "Bewertung durch Adjektive". Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik, 45(177): 12–29.

Danske Bank. 2018. "Report on the Non-Resident Portfolio at Danske Bank's Estonian branch, 2018".

https://danskebank.com/-/media/danske-bank-com/file-cloud/2018/9/report-on-the-non-resident-portfolio-at-danske-banks-estonian-branch.pdf

DDO. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab. Den Danske Ordbog. (n.d.) Tid. In *Den Danske Ordbog*.

https://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=tid

Fiedler, Sabine. 2023. "Contrastive analyses of phraseological Anglicisms". In Book of Abstracts, Europhras 2023: New Trends in Phraseology. 58. Università degli Studi di Milano.

Finanstilsynet. 2016. Redegørelse om inspektion i Nordea Bank Danmark A/S (hvidvaskområdet)

('Report on inspection at Nordea Bank Danmark A/S (anti-money laundering area)'). 17.06.2016. https://www.finanstilsynet.dk/tilsyn/inspektion-og-afgoerelser/2016/jun/nordea_hvidvask_170616

Finkbeiner, Rita. 2008. Idiomatische Sätze im Deutschen. Syntaktische, semantische und pragmatische Studien und Untersuchungen ihrer Produktivität. Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis.

Gottlieb, Henrik. 2020. Echoes of English. Berlin: Peter Lang.

Infomedia https://infomedia.dk/mediearkiv/

Lewicki, Roy J., Beth Polin, and Robert B. Lount. 2016. "An Exploration of the Structure of Effective Apologies". Negotiation and Conflict Management Research 9(2): 177–196.

ODS. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab. Sted. Ordbog over det danske Sprog.

https://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?query=sted

Stein, Stephan and Sören Stumpf. 2019. Muster in Sprache und Kommunikation. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Steyer, Kathrin. 2013. Usuelle Wortverbindungen. Tübingen: Narr.

Szczygłowska, Tatiana. 2023. "'We have a duty to…' A contrastive multi-corpus study of situation manipulators in the English-Polish language pair". In Book of Abstracts, Europhras 2023: New Trends in Phraseology. 178–179. Università degli Studi di Milano.

Sørensen, Knud. 1995. Engelsk i dansk – er det et must? Copenhagen: Munksgaard.

Sørensen, Knud. 1997. A Dictionary of Anglicisms in Danish. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.

Wray, Alison. 2002. Formulaic Language and the Lexicon. Cambridge University Press.

Variantenbildung in der Phraseologie aus historischer Perspektive

Tamás Forgács
University of Szeged
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8285-9019

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c776

ABSTRAKT

Phraseologischer Wandel verläuft durch morphologische und semantische Veränderungen schon während der Entstehung von Phraseologismen. Aber auch bereits lexikalisierte Einheiten können sich später noch ändern. Der Wandel kann sowohl ihre Bedeutung betreffen (Polysemierung oder Änderung der konnotativen Bedeutung), noch häufiger ist aber die Form der Einheiten betroffen. Der Artikel nimmt aus sprachhistorischer Perspektive die wichtigsten Typen bzw. Ursachen der Variantenbildung kurz unter die Lupe und veranschaulicht sie durch Beispiele aus dem Ungarischen und Deutschen. Am häufigsten ist der Austausch von Komponenten. Die entstandenen neuen Varianten werden eine Weile parallel zu den älteren gebraucht, mit der Zeit können jedoch etliche Formen veraltet klingen oder sogar aus dem Gebrauch verschwinden. Weiterhin kann sich in manchen Wortverbindungen die Zahl der Komponenten ändern (Weglassen bzw. nachträglicher Einschub von Komponenten). Manchmal kommt es zur Veränderung des strukturellen Typs einzelner Phraseologismen. Dabei entsteht durch die Abkürzung eines früheren Sprichworts ein in den Satz einzubettendes Phrasem oder umgekehrt: ein Phrasem wird zu einem Sprichwort ausgebaut. Zu den Veränderungen der Form gehört noch der Wandel der Wortfolge in gewissen Ausdrücken, vor allem in Zwillingsformen.

Schlüsselwörter: Sprachwandel; phraseologischer Wandel; Variantenbildung bei Phrasemen.

ABSTRACT

Phraseological change occurs through morphological and semantic changes even during the formation of phraseologisms. However, even units that have already been lexically fixed can change later on. The change can affect their meaning (becoming polysemous or change in connotative meaning), but more often it is the form of the units that is affected. From a linguistic-historical perspective, this article briefly examines the most important types and causes of the formation of variants, and illustrates them with Hungarian and German examples. The replacement of components is the most common change. The new variants that come into being in this way are used in parallel with the older ones for a while, but over time, some forms may become outdated or even disappear from use. Besides, the number of components may change in some

word combinations (omission or subsequent insertion of components). Sometimes the structural type of individual phraseologisms changes, too. Consequently, by the shortening of an earlier proverb, a phrase which can be embedded into a sentence is created, or vice versa: a phrase is expanded into a proverb. The change of word order in certain expressions, especially in twin forms, also belongs to changes in form.

Keywords: language change; phraseological change; variant formation in phraseologisms.

1. Einleitung

Phraseologischer Wandel findet schon während der Bildung fester Wortverbindungen statt und geht mit verschiedenen morphologischen und semantischen Begleiterscheinungen einher (vgl. Forgács, 2007, 196–227 und Forgács, 2021, 219–270). Aber auch bereits lexikalisierte Einheiten können sich verändern. Die Veränderungen können sich auch auf die Semantik der Phraseme auswirken (Polysemierung oder Veränderung der konnotativen Bedeutung), aber häufiger betrifft die Veränderung die Form der Einheiten. In meiner Arbeit werde ich kurz auf die wichtigsten Arten und Ursachen dieser formalen Variation eingehen und sie mit Beispielen aus dem Ungarischen und Deutschen illustrieren.

2. Variantenbildung während der primären Phraseologisierung

Primäre Phraseologisierung ist der Prozess, durch den eine freie Wortverbindung zu einem festen Wortkomplex wird. Phraseme mit ähnlicher Bedeutung können jedoch aus mehreren unterschiedlichen freien Wortverbindungen entstehen, wenn sie strukturell und konzeptionell identisch oder einander sehr ähnlich sind (vgl. Bierich, 2012, 102–103). Varianten können also schon auf dieser Ebene entstehen. Im Zuge der Entwicklung der schriftsprachlichen – insbesondere der lexikografischen – Norm überleben aber nur bestimmte Varianten, während andere mit der Zeit verschwinden.

In den meisten Fällen ist es nicht einfach festzustellen, ob jede Variante aus einem anderen freien Syntagma entstanden ist oder ob einige von ihnen sich durch den Austausch bestimmter Elemente der früher entstandenen Phraseme entwickelt haben. Sehen wir uns zunächst die folgenden Beispiele an:

(1)

ung. erős vki, mint a bika / bivaly / ló / medve / oroszlán oder
erős, mint Sámson / Herkules / Toldi Miklós

'stark wie ein Stier / Büffel / Pferd / Bär / Löwe oder
stark wie Simson / Herkules / Miklós Toldi'

dt. stark (sein) wie ein Bär / Baum / Löwe / Pferd / Tier oder
stark wie Simson / ein Türke

In diesen Fällen wird sowohl den Tieren als auch den Personen, die dem Vergleich unterliegen, ein mächtiger Körper und große Kraft zugeschrieben, so dass sie alle in der Lage sind, die Kraft der verglichenen Person auszudrücken. Somit konnten diese Ausdrücke unabhängig voneinander entstehen. Es ist jedoch nicht auszuschließen, dass die eine oder andere dieser Wendungen durch die Ersetzung der substantivischen Komponente eines früher entstandenen Vergleiches ist. Interessant ist auch, dass es Unterschiede von Sprache zu Sprache geben kann. So kann z. B. im Ungarischen ein komparativer Phraseologismus mit der Bedeutung 'stark wie ein Baum' nicht verwendet werden, ebenso wie im Deutschen die Vergleiche mit der Bedeutung 'stark wie ein Ochse/Stier' nicht vorkommen, obwohl *Ochse* und *Stier* auch dort als stark und fleißig gelten, vgl. *schuften / arbeiten wie ein Ochse / Stier.*

3. Variantenbildung durch sekundäre Phraseologisierung

Im Falle der sekundären Phraseologisierung werden gewisse Komponenten bereits bestehender phraseologischer Einheiten verändert, was auch zur Variation führen kann. Dieser Austausch kann sich auch auf die Bedeutung der Äußerung auswirken, z. B. wenn Komponenten mit entgegengesetzten Bedeutungen in den Ausdruck eingeführt werden (z. B. *leichten/schweren Herzens*) oder eine aktionale Reihe entsteht (z. B. *in Schwung sein ~ in Schwung kommen ~ etw. in Schwung bringen ~ aus dem Schwung kommen* usw.), aber in den meisten Fällen handelt es sich um den Austausch synonymer Komponenten, deren Verwendung letztlich zu Varianten mit nahezu identischer Bedeutung führt. Varianten können auch dadurch entstehen, dass Komponenten mit der Absicht der Tabuvermeidung ersetzt werden, oder eine Komponente durch volksetymologische Remotivation ausgetauscht wird oder zwei ähnliche Ausdrücke kontaminiert werden. Variationen können sich auch durch das Weglassen gewisser Elemente oder das Hinzufügen eines zusätzlichen Elements zu einem Ausdruck ergeben. Varianten können weiterhin auch auftreten, wenn sich der strukturelle Typ des Ausdrucks ändert, d. h. wenn eine Redewendung zu einem Sprichwort wird oder umgekehrt, weiterhin wenn bestimmte Ausdrücke mit einer anderen Wortfolge verwendet werden können. Im Folgenden werde ich diese Typen kurz unter die Lupe nehmen.

3.1 Austausch der Bestandteile von Phrasemen

Am häufigsten werden substantivische Komponenten ausgetauscht, wie in den folgenden ungarischen und deutschen Ausdrücken mit der Bedeutung 'nichts wert sein':

(2)

ung. (egy) garast / (fa)batkát / petákot / babot / paszulyt / vasat sem ér (vmi)
lit. 'keinen Groschen / kein Holzgeld / keinen Heller / keine Bohnen / keinen Eisen wert sein'
dt. keinen roten Heller / keinen Schuss Pulver / keinen Knopf/Deut wert sein

Aber auch Bestandteile mit einem anderen Wortartwert oder sogar in Form eines Nebensatzes können ausgetauscht werden:

(3)

ung. tiszta / fehér, mint a patyolat
lit. 'weiß/sauber wie Leinen'; Bedeutung 'weiß/sauber wie Schnee'
dt. Das hast du ja toll / schön / sauber hingekriegt!
dt. durch die Finger sehen / schauen / gucken
dt. jmd. weiß, wie der Hase läuft /
dt. jm. weiß, wo Barthel den Most holt

Unser letztes Beispiel ist auch deshalb interessant, weil es ziemlich undurchsichtig ist: Es gibt mehrere unterschiedliche Erklärungen dafür, was die Komponenten *Barthel* und *Most* in der Wendung, die zuerst in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts datiert werden kann, genau bedeuten könnten. Einige glauben, dass der Ausdruck niederdeutschen Ursprungs ist und *Barthel* nichts anderes als der Storch ist, und die Person, auf die sich der Ausdruck bezieht, weiß, woher dieser die *Mäuse*, d.h. die *Kinder* holt. Es gibt aber auch die Meinung, dass es sich bei *Barthel* um einen Schultheißen von Heilbronn handelt, der illegal Wein aus dem Keller des Ratshauses beschaffen hat. Eine plausiblere Erklärung ist jedoch, dass der Begriff gaunersprachlichen Ursprungs ist, und in der Wendung die jiddischen Ausdrücke *Barsel* 'Brecheisen' und *Mäuse* 'Geld' zu suchen sind (vgl. Röhrich, 1991, 155–157). Vielleicht sind gerade wegen dieser Opakheit weitere Varianten durch Lexemtausch entstanden, vgl. *wissen, wo der Opa / Bauer den Most holt* (redensarten-index.de). Hier wurde die unklare Komponente *Barthel* eindeutig im Zuge der sekundären Phraseologisierung durch *Opa* bzw. durch die phonetisch ähnlich klingende, aber semantisch eindeutige Komponente *Bauer* ersetzt.

Ähnliche Varianten finden sich auch in Sprichwörtern, z. B.

(4)

dt. Alte Ziegen lecken auch gerne Salz.
Alte Kühe lecken auch gerne Salz.
Alte Katzen knabbern auch Milch.
Alte Mäuse fressen auch gerne frischen Speck.

Auch in diesen Fällen ist es oft schwierig zu entscheiden, ob die Varianten bereits bei der primären Phraseologisierung (aufgrund der gleichen Betrachtungsweise) oder durch eine spätere Komponentensubstitution im Rahmen der sekundären Phraseologisierung entstanden sind. Nach Burger und Linke (1998, 750–751) ist diese Art des Komponentenwechsels besonders häufig bei somatischen Phrasemen, siehe einige deutsche Beispiele:

(5)

einem etwas unter die Augen sagen → einem etwas ins Gesicht sagen
einem das Fenster unter Augen zuschlagen → einem das Fenster / die Tür vor der Nase zuschlagen
einem die Worte im Hals verdrehen → einem das Wort im Mund verdrehen/umdrehen

Die Varianten leben eine Weile neben den alten, aber im Laufe der Zeit werden einige der Formen in der Regel obsolet und verschwinden häufig aus dem phraseologischen System, wie das z. B. im Falle der oben erwähnten ungarischen Phrasemen mit der Bedeutung 'wertlos' passiert ist. Von den angeführten Varianten sind nämlich *paszulyt* bzw. *babot sem ér* 'keine Bohne wert sein' nicht mehr gebräuchlich, nur die Formen *garast* / *(fa)batkát* / *petákot* / *vasat sem ér*, lit. 'keinen Groschen, kein Holzgeld, keinen Heller, kein Eisen wert sein', Bedeutung 'völlig wertlos sein' sind noch geläufig.

3.2 Komponentenwechsel wegen Tabuisierung

Die Absicht, (Sprach)Tabus zu vermeiden, kann auch zum Austausch von Phrasembestandteilen führen. So kann es vorkommen, dass neben stilistisch als 'derb' geltenden Phrasemen salonfähigere, euphemistische Varianten erscheinen. So findet man z. B. im Ungarischen für das obszöne ungarische Phrasem *más f@..val veri a csalánt*, lit. die Brennnessel mit dem Penis eines anderen schlagen, Bedeutung 'jmd. anderer büßt für seine Handlungen'. Der Phraseologismus hat eine „feinere" Variante *más farkával veri a csalánt*, lit. 'die Brennnessel mit dem Schwanz eines anderen schlagen', Bedeutung 'dgl.', in der die derbe Komponente *f@sz* 'Pimmel, Penis' durch die salonfähigere *farok* 'Schwanz' ersetzt wurde. Neben diesem gibt es aber eine noch „subtilere" Variante: *más dárdájával veri a*

bozótot, lit. 'den Busch mit dem Speer eines anderen schlagen', Bedeutung 'dgl.'. In diesem wurden beide substantivischen Komponenten durch salonfähigere Lexeme ersetzt, aber die Ähnlichkeit des zugrundeliegenden Bildes macht die Beziehung zwischen den Phrasen klar erkennbar.

Das zweite Beispiel führt uns zu dem Typ, bei dem die durch Tabuisierung geschaffene okkasionelle Form zu einer usuellen Variante wird und mit der Zeit kodifiziert wird vgl.

(6)

ung. benne van a szarban
lit. 'jmd. ist in der Scheiße'; Bedeutung 'jmd. hat ernste Schwierigkeiten'
kihúz a szarból
lit. 'jmdn. aus der Scheiße ziehen'; Bedeutung 'jmdn. aus der schwierigen Lage befreien'

Für diese gibt es heute schon kodifizierte Varianten, in denen *szar* 'Scheiße, Kot' durch die Lexeme *kakaó* 'Kakao' bzw. *szoaré* 'Gesellschaftsabend, Soiree' ersetzt wurden:

(7)

benne van a kakaóban
lit. 'jmd. ist im Kakao'
kihúz vkit a szoarából
lit. 'jmdn. aus der Soiree ziehen'

Ein ähnlicher tabuvermeidender Komponentenwechsel hat sich übrigens in diesem Zusammenhang auch im Deutschen vollzogen, vgl.

(8)

jemanden durch den Kakao ziehen
Kakao in der Hose haben
im Kakao sitzen.

3.3 Komponentenwechsel durch volksetymologische Remotivation

Es kommt auch häufig vor, dass einige Komponenten einer phraseologischen Einheit durch Volksetymologie umgedeutet werden, wodurch sich die Form der Komponenten ändert. Ein gutes Beispiel für dieses Phänomen ist die deutsche Wunschformel *Hals- und Beinbruch!*, die ironisch verwendet wird, wenn man jemandem Erfolg bei einem Unterfangen oder einer Prüfung wünscht. Etymologen haben herausgefunden, dass es sich dabei um die hebräische Glücksformel *hazlóche un bróche* (< *hazlachá* 'Glück', *b'racha* 'Segen') handelt, die

sowohl im Hebräischen als auch im Jiddischen noch verwendet wird. Da seine Motivation im Deutschen jedoch nicht klar war, wurden seine Bestandteile im Laufe der Zeit durch klangähnliche deutsche Lexeme ersetzt. Der Wechsel wurde möglicherweise auch durch die abergläubische Vorstellung unterstützt, dass die Kräfte, die das Schicksal kontrollieren, dazu neigen, Wünsche in Wünsche mit entgegengesetzten Vorzeichen zu verwandeln. Somit soll man, um jemandem etwas Gutes zu wünschen, ihm etwas Schlechtes wünschen (vgl. Röhrich, 1991, 633).

Ein ähnliches Beispiel ist die deutsche Wendung *Abgemacht, Seife* 'in Ordnung, einverstanden', die vor allem im Berlinischen verwendet wird. Ihre substantivische Komponente wird in der Literatur meistens von dem französischen Klischee *C' est fait* 'es ist (ab)gemacht' abgeleitet: Das unmotivierte Element wurde auch hier volksetymologisch zu *Seife* umgedeutet. Röhrich wirft übrigens auch die Möglichkeit einer weiteren Erklärung auf: Seiner Ansicht nach könnte *Seife* aus dem hebräischen Lexem *Sela* umgedeutet wurden, das ebenfalls 'es ist gemacht' bedeutet, und durch die biblische Formel *Abgemacht, Sela* ins Deutsche gelangt ist (1991, 1459 bzw. 1464).

Es handelt sich jedoch nicht immer um die remotivierende Ersetzung von Fremdwörtern, sondern auch von Elementen, die zum internen Wortschatz gehören, aber veraltet sind. Ein schönes Beispiel ist der deutsche Ausdruck *jmdn. mundtot machen* 'jmdn. zum Schweigen bringen'. Es stammt ursprünglich aus dem Juristenjargon und geht eigentlich auf das alt- bzw. mittelhochdeutsche Substantiv *munt* zurück, dessen Bedeutung 'Schutzschild, Schutzmacht' ist und etymologisch mit dem lateinischen *manus* 'Hand' verwandt ist. So bedeutete der Ausdruck *mundtot machen* ursprünglich 'jmdn. unter Vormundschaft stellen, ihm seine Autonomie entziehen'. Außerhalb des juristischen Jargons wurde das Element *munt* jedoch bald mit dem Wort *mund* verbunden, wodurch sich dann auch seine Bedeutung änderte: *jmdn. mund tot machen*, d. h. 'jmdm. das Recht zu sprechen entziehen, ihn zum Schweigen bringen' (vgl. Röhrich, 1991, 1060).

Ein ähnliches Beispiel aus dem Ungarischen ist noch *tudja a dürgést*, lit. 'den Balzgesang kennen', Bedeutung 'wissen wie der Hase läuft', dessen Bestandteil *dürgés* ursprünglich ein Jagdbegriff war, der den Gesang des Auerhahnes während der Paarungszeit bezeichnete, da es zu dieser Zeit einfacher war, die unvorsichtigen Vögel zu erlegen. Da der Begriff jedoch für die breitere Sprachgemeinschaft, die mit der Motivation hinter dem Phrasem nicht vertraut waren, unbekannt war, wurde das Wort immer häufiger zu *dörgés* 'Donner' umgedeutet, was suggeriert, dass man mit dem *Donner* vertraut ist. Im Gegensatz zum vorangegangenen deutschen Beispiel ist der alte Ausdruck jedoch nicht verschwunden, sondern die beiden Versionen leben nebeneinander.

3.4 Komponentenwechsel durch Kontamination

Der Vorgang der Kontamination ist bei Lexemen wohlbekannt. Dies kann spontan geschehen, als Folge einer bloßen Assoziationsstörung, aber die daraus resultierende Variante kann auch zu einem usuellen Lexem werden (z. B. ung. *csokor* x *bokréta* → *csokréta* 'Blumenstrauß', dt. *Stagnation* x *Inflation* → *Stagflation* usw.). Ähnliche Prozesse spielen sich aber auch bei phraseologischen Einheiten ab. In der mündlichen Kommunikation ist es durchaus nicht selten, dass jemand bestimmte Bestandteile zweier Ausdrücke – meist mit gleicher oder ähnlicher Bedeutung – okkasionell zu einer neuen Wendung zusammenschmilzt. Auch hier handelt es sich in der Regel um einen assoziativen Fehler, aber auch schriftlich kann das vorkommen, und bei wiederholtem Auftreten kann es dazu führen, dass diese veränderte Form einiger Phraseme schließlich usuell wird und als neue Variante neben der vorherigen erscheint.

So hört man zum Beispiel im Ungarischen immer häufiger die Form *vaj van a füle mögött*, lit. 'Butter hinter den Ohren haben', Bedeutung 'etw. Unerlaubtes, Unrechtes, eine Straftat o. Ä. begangen haben', die auf einer falschen Zusammenführung der Redewendungen *vmi van a füle mögött* 'etw. hinter den Ohren haben' und *vaj van a fején* 'Butter auf dem Kopf haben' beruht.

Ein weiteres Beispiel für dieses Phänomen ist im Ungarischen der Ausdruck *kiküszöböli a csorbát*, lit. 'die Scharte beseitigen', Bedeutung 'den Fehler beseitigen', der aus *kiköszörüli a csorbát* 'die Scharte (wieder) auswetzen' und *kiküszöböli a hibát* 'den Fehler beseitigen' entstanden ist.

Unsere obigen Beispiele sind wiederholt belegbar, was zeigt, dass diese okkasionellen Wortverbindungen ebenso wie die bewusst durch Modifikation geschaffenen Varianten im Laufe der Zeit einen gewissen Grad der Standardisierung erreichen können.

Ähnliche Beispiele finden sich auch im Deutschen. Mihajlo Havrisch (o. J.) hat eine Untersuchung in fünfzig großen ein- und zweisprachigen deutschen Wörterbüchern der letzten drei Jahrhunderte durchgeführt, und behauptet, dass die Zahl der durch eine solche Kontamination entstandenen phraseologischen Einheiten im Deutschen mehr als neunhundert beträgt. Ihm zufolge entstehen solche Neologismen meist in der mündlichen Kommunikation (in diesem Fall sind ihre Verfasser nicht bekannt), aber sie werden manchmal auch bewusst von Journalisten oder Schriftstellern geschaffen, vor allem als Stilmittel zur Steigerung der Ausdruckskraft. Allerdings handelt es sich bei den meisten publizistischen Beispielen von Havrisch nur um eine gelegentliche, okkasionelle Form, daher vermute ich, dass die erwähnten neunhundert kontaminierten Phraseologismen größtenteils in diese Kategorie fallen und keine standardisierten Formen sind.

Gleichzeitig gibt es aber im Deutschen zweifellos auch Fälle von phraseologischer Kontamination, die inzwischen Teil des Sprachsystems geworden sind und aus okkasionellen Formen zu usuellen Varianten aufgestiegen sind.

Ein solches Beispiel ist die Redewendung *das kommt mir böhmisch vor*, die aus einer Mischung der sinngleichen Redewendungen *das kommt mir spanisch vor* und *das sind für mich böhmische Dörfer* entstanden ist. Ein ähnliches Beispiel ist das Klischee *wie ein geölter Blitz*, das eine Kombination der Ausdrücke *es geht wie geölt* und *wie der Blitz* ist (vgl. Havrisch, 1).

3.5 Änderung der Anzahl der Komponenten

Eine weitere Möglichkeit der Entstehung von phraseologischen Varianten ist, dass die Anzahl der Komponenten in manchen Ausdrücken verändert werden kann. Das kann bedeuten, dass man der bisherigen Struktur bestimmte Bestandteile hinzufügt oder umgekehrt bestimmte Bestandteile weglässt.

In alten Texten finden sich in mehreren Phrasemen Zusätze und Einschübe, die in der heutigen Sprache nicht zur standardisierten Form der betreffenden Einheit gehören und heute als Modifikationen zu betrachten wären. Unter den historischen Belegen von Burger und Linke (1998, 747) finden sich zusätzliche Adjektive (*sich ein gutes Herz fassen* – heute: *sich ein Herz fassen*; *auf neue Sprünge bringen* – heute: *jmdm. auf die Sprünge helfen*) oder Erweiterungen der substantivischen Komponenten (*auf sandt kadt/stoub und aschen buwend* – heute: *auf Sand bauen*).

Natürlich ist es auch bei diesen alten Belegen schwierig, mit Sicherheit zu sagen, ob ein Phrasem mit zusätzlichen Elementen im Vergleich zur heutigen Form den damaligen Sprachgebrauch (Usus) widerspiegelt oder ob es sich um eine bewusste, okkasionelle Modifikation handelt. Nur wenn dasselbe zusätzliche Element in unabhängigen Quellen zu belegen ist, kann man mit relativer Sicherheit behaupten, dass man es mit einer erweiterten Version des betreffenden Phrasems zu tun hat.

So scheint beispielsweise in dem heutigen deutschen Vergleich *gesund wie ein Fisch im Wasser* die Komponente *im Wasser* eine neuere Einfügung zu sein. Wie Jesko betont, ist dieses Element in den älteren Belegen nicht überall zu finden, z. B. *er wurd zuhant als gesunt als ein fisch* (2007, 1101). Das Phrasem kommt auch in Fritschs Deutsch-Englischem Wörterbuch von 1716 ohne die adverbiale Ergänzung vor: *gesund und frisch als ein fisch*. Als dessen erweiterte Form entstanden später Varianten wie *ër wart gesunt rêht als ein visch, / dër vert in einem wâge* (= in einer Woge, d. h. in einer Welle), vgl. DWb 3, 1679), aber auch: *gesund wie ein fisch im teiche* oder *so gesund wie en fisk im water* (vgl. Jesko, a. a. O.).

Ein schönes Beispiel für eine Erweiterung eines Phrasems ist die deutsche Wendung *jmdm. sind die Hände gebunden* (genauso im Ungarischen: *vkinek meg van kötve a keze*). Im Deutschen hat der Ausdruck jedoch eine erweiterte Variante: *jmdm. sind die Hände und Füße gebunden*. Die Komponente *Füße* wird hier vermutlich verwendet, um die Aussagekraft des Ausdrucks zu erhöhen und die Machtlosigkeit der betreffenden Person noch stärker zu betonen.

Ähnliche Beispiele finden sich auch im Ungarischen. Eine Erweiterung findet man z. B. in der längeren Variante des Glückwunsches *Bort, búzát,*

békességet 'Wein, Weizen und Frieden', dem als zweiter Teil noch hinzugefügt wird: *szép asszony feleséget* 'ein schönes Weib als Ehefrau' (vgl. O. Nagy, 1976, 96). Prinzipiell könnte diese längere Version natürlich die ursprüngliche Form und der erste Teil eine gekürzte Version davon sein, aber der prosodische Charakter (Alliteration) und die Dreiteilung des ersten Teils machen es wahrscheinlicher, dass dieser ein selbständiges Phrasem war, und die erweiterte Version nur als Ergänzung dazu geschaffen wurde.

Die Umkehrung dieses Prozesses, d. h. das Verschwinden eines zuvor vorhandenen Bestandteils aus der phraseologischen Konstruktion, kann man im Falle der deutschen Wendung *aus dem Stegreif* 'improvisiert, ohne Vorbereitung' beobachten. Diese hatte früher die Bedeutung 'in Eile, aus dem Steigbügel, d. h. ohne vom Pferd abzusteigen' und kam im Frühneuhochdeutschen in Form eines vollständigeren Phrasems vor. Bei Luther finden wir z. B. die folgende Form: *aus dem stegreiff sich neeren*, lit. 'aus dem Steigbügel heraus sich ernähren'. Der Ausdruck bezieht sich auf jemanden, der sich – wie die Raubritter – auf der Straße stehend ernährt (vgl. Jesko, 2007, 1101).

Das Verschwinden einer früheren Komponente ist vermutlich auch bei der ungarischen Redewendung *résen van*, lit. 'auf der Spalte sein', Bedeutung 'auf der Hut sein, Acht geben' zu beobachten. Der vollständigere Ausdruck *résen van a füle*, lit. 'sein Ohr ist auf der Spalte', Bedeutung 'jmd. gibt Acht, lauscht' findet sich in älteren Texten und wird oft in der Imperativform verwendet. Diese umfassendere Form wird auch von Hadrovics (1995, 167) belegt: Most van ideje, hogy *résen legyen fülünk*, lit. 'jetzt ist es an der Zeit, dass unsere Ohren auf der Spalte sind', Bedeutung 'jetzt sollen wir aber richtig aufpassen'. Diese vollständigere Form macht uns klar, wie sich die heutige Bedeutung der Redewendung entwickelt haben kann: Derjenige, dessen Ohren auf einer Spalte (in der Wand) sind, lauscht offensichtlich neugierig oder misstrauisch. Die ursprüngliche Form der Redewendung wurde jedoch bis zur Mitte des l9. Jahrhunderts verkürzt, allerdings – wie O. Nagy schreibt (1979, 400) – nur in der Umgangssprache, während in einigen Dialekten die vollere Version auch später noch in Gebrauch war.

3.6 Änderung des strukturellen Typs des Phraseologismus

Es ist nicht selten, dass ein Sprichwort abgekürzt und in eine Redewendung umgewandelt wird, oder umgekehrt: Eine Redewendung wird durch Hinzufügen bestimmter Elemente in ein Sprichwort umgestaltet.

Ein gutes Beispiel für diesen Prozess ist im Ungarischen die Änderung der Form des Sprichworts *Nem jó (nagy) urakkal egy tálból cseresznyézni*, das eine Spiegelübersetzung aus dem Deutschen ist: *Es ist nicht gut, mit großen Herren Kirschen essen*. Im heutigen Ungarisch kommt dieses Sprichwort relativ selten vor bzw. nur in einer abgewandelten Form als Redewendung: *nem jó vele egy tálból cseresznyézni*, lit. 'es ist nicht gut, mit ihm Kirschen aus einer Schüssel zu essen', die so viel bedeutet: 'mit ihm ist nicht gut auszukommen'. Früher waren jedoch

beide Varianten gut bekannt, wie auch das Stichwort *cseresnye* (!) in der großen Sammlung von Margalits zeigt, die zahlreiche Belege aus früheren Sammlungen enthält (1896, 104). Im heutigen Deutsch wird auch nur diese kürzere Variante des Sprichworts gebraucht, aber in früheren Texten ist auch hier die längere Version zu belegen: *Mit großen (hohen) Herren ist nicht gut Kirschen essen: sie schmeißen (spucken) einem die Kerne (Steine) ins Gesicht* (vgl. Röhrich, 1991, 844).

Es lassen sich weitere ähnliche Beispiele finden. Seit langem wird sowohl im Ungarischen als auch im Deutschen eine Redewendung mit der Bedeutung 'voreilig handeln, sich auf ein Ergebnis freuen, das man noch nicht erreicht hat' verwendet, vgl. ung. *előre iszik a medve bőrére* bzw. dt. *die Bärenhaut verkaufen, bevor man den Bären hat*. Diese Redensart, die in vielen Sprachen der Welt vorkommt, da sie durch einen mittelalterlichen Schwank sehr verbreitet war, hat in den meisten Sprachen auch eine sprichwörtliche Variante: *Man soll die Bärenhaut nicht verkaufen, bevor man den Bären gefangen hat*.

Es stellt sich auch hier die Frage, welche Form früher da war: die Redewendung oder das Sprichwort? Da hier die erwähnte Anekdote, in der der zu erlegende Bär die Jägerburschen warnt, beim nächsten Mal nicht auf seine Haut zu trinken, im Hintergrund ist, könnte man meinen, dass zuerst die Satzform existierte. Aber das ist keineswegs sicher, denn die Vorstellung, dass 'jemand sich auf etwas freut, das noch gar nicht ihm gehört', ist eine Art kognitives Modell, das in vielen Varianten in unterschiedlichen Sprachen vorkommt, vgl. z. B. die älteren ungarischen Wendungen *meg sem fogta a madarat, máris kopasztja*, lit. 'er hat den Vogel noch nicht in der Hand, schon rupft er ihn' oder *háló előtt fog halat*, lit. 'Fisch fangen ohne das Netz auszuwerfen'.

3.7 Änderungen der Wortfolge in Phrasemen

Zu den formalen Veränderungen gehören auch topologische Veränderungen, d. h. Veränderungen der Wortfolge in bestimmten Ausdrücken. Die vielleicht auffälligsten Beispiele hierfür finden sich in den sog. Zwillingsformeln, die früher häufig unterschiedliche Wortstellungsvarianten besaßen.

Das ist zum Beispiel auch bei der deutschen Zwillingsform *Hab und Gut* der Fall, die früher auch eine Variante *Gut und Hab* hatte. Burger (2012, 9–10) führt eine Reihe weiterer Beispiele an, in denen gepaarte Formeln, die heute meist mit einer einzigen Wortfolge auftreten, noch mit beiden Wortfolgen zu belegen sind, z. B.

(9)

breit unde wît ~ wît unde breit 'weit und breit'
dort unde hie ~ hie unde dort 'hier und dort'
hof unde hûs ~ hûs unde hof 'Haus und Hof'

Ähnliche Beispiele findet man auch im älteren Ungarischen, vgl. z. B.

(10)

nappal éjjel
lit. 'Nacht und Tag' → heute: éjjel-nappal, lit. 'Tag und Nacht'
(vgl. Hadrovics, 1995, 98)
rívás sívás
lit 'Weinen und Gejammer' → heute: sírás-rívás, lit. 'Gejammer und Weinen' (vgl. Hadrovics, 1995, 89)
talpától tetéig(len)
'vom Fuß bis zum Kopf' → heute: tetőtől talpig, lit. 'vom Kopf bis Fuß' (vgl. Hadrovics, 1995, 99)

4. Zusammenfassung

In dieser Arbeit konnte ich nur einen kurzen Abriss über die Entstehung von phraseologischen Varianten geben. Ich hoffe jedoch, dass selbst mit diesen wenigen Beispielen die Komplexität des sprachlichen Wandels, einschließlich der Variantenbildung, innerhalb des phraseologischen Systems präsentiert werden konnte.

Es soll aber noch einmal betont werden, dass die Unterscheidung zwischen phraseologischen Varianten und modifizierten Formen nicht einfach ist. Wir haben z. B. gesehen, dass es in älteren Texten Phraseme gibt, die gegenüber der heutigen Form bestimmte Zusätze enthalten. Ob es sich dabei jedoch um Varianten der Grundform handelt oder ob sie bereits zu ihrer Zeit eine Abweichung von der Grundform darstellten, ist kaum zu entscheiden. Theoretisch lässt sich leicht formulieren, dass die phraseologischen Modifikationen okkasionelle Abweichungen von der Grundform sind, aber in der Praxis ist die Unterscheidung zwischen Modifikation, Variante, Fehler und zufälliger Kontamination oft sehr schwierig, und die Entscheidung ist häufig eine reine Ermessensfrage des Forschers (vgl. auch Dräger, 2012, 208–209).

Literatur

Bierich, Alexander. 2012. Zur Entwicklung der russischen Phraseologie im 18–20. Jahrhundert. In Aspekte der historischen Phraseologie und Phraseographie, herausgegeben von Natalia Filatkina, Ane Kleine-Engel, Marcel Dräger, and Harald Burger, 83–112. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.

Burger, Harald, and Angelika Linke. 1998. Historische Phraseologie. In Sprachgeschichte. Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und ihrer Erforschung, herausgegeben von Werner Besch, Oskar Reichmann, and Stefan Sonderegger, 1–4. 2. Aufl. Bd. 1, 743–755. Berlin/ New York: De Gruyter.

Burger, Harald. 2012. Alte und neue Fragen, alte und neue Methoden der historischen Phraseologie. In Aspekte der historischen Phraseologie und Phraseographie, herausgegeben von Natalia Filatkina, Ane Kleine-Engel, Marcel Dräger, and Harald Burger, 1–20. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.

Dräger, Marcel. 2012. Plädoyer für eine diachrone Perspektive in der Phraseographie. In Aspekte der historischen Phraseologie und Phraseographie, herausgegeben von Natalia Filatkina, Ane Kleine-Engel, Marcel Dräger, and Harald Burger. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 193–226.

Forgács, Tamás. 2007. Bevezetés a frazeológiába. Segédkönyvek a nyelvészet tanulmányozásához 69. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó.

Forgács, Tamás. 2021. Történeti frazeológia. A történeti szólás- és közmondáskutatás kézikönyve. Segédkönyvek a nyelvészet tanulmányozásához 218. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó.

Hadrovics, László. 1995. Magyar frazeológia. Történeti áttekintés. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Havryš, Mychajlo. (o. Jahr). Phraseologische Kontamination – Fehlleistungen oder wirksames stilistisches Mittel? https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/197271913.pdf

Jesko, Friedrich. 2007. Historische Phraseologie des Deutschen. In Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung, herausgegeben von Harald Burger, Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij, Peter Kühn, and Neal R Norrick, 1–2., Berlin/New York: De Gruyter. 2: 1092–1106.

Margalits, Ede. 1896. Magyar közmondások és közmondásszerű szólások. Budapest: Kókai Lajos.

O. Nagy, Gábor. 1976. Magyar szólások és közmondások. 2. Aufl. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.

O. Nagy, Gábor. 1979. Mi fán terem? Magyar szólásmondások eredete. 3. Aufl. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.

redensarten-index.de https://www.redensarten-index.de/suche.php?suchbegriff=wissen+wo&bool=relevanz&gawoe=an&sp0=rart_ou&sp1=rart_varianten_ou

Röhrich 1991 = Röhrich, Lutz. 1991–1992. Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten 1–3. Freiburg/Basel: Herder Verlag.

Section 5:
Phraseology in Texts and Genres

A Contrastive Study of Phraseological Units in English, French and Italian Political Discourse

Saša Bjelobaba
University of Zagreb
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1768-5133

Lidija Orešković Dvorski
University of Zagreb
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7688-0276

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c777

ABSTRACT

Political discourse is pervasive in the media and plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of political processes and phenomena. Although media texts dealing with political issues are expected to inform citizens in a clear and unbiased manner, this type of discourse is often characterised by a high degree of expressiveness and the frequent use of attention-seeking devices. For the sake of comparability, this study focuses on domain-specific political phraseological units (PUs), namely those referring explicitly to political issues and phenomena. The aim of the paper is to examine political PUs in English, French and Italian from a contrastive perspective, with particular attention to language contact, in order to identify patterns of borrowing, and to identify the tendencies in language borrowing. It also proposes a classification of phraseological equivalents across the three languages based on idiomaticity, compositionality, origin, and the degree of equivalence of individual components. The analysis shows that French phraseological influence was more prominent in the past, whereas English currently exerts a particularly strong influence. Italian influence on English and French political phraseology is also attested; however, such borrowings vary in their degree of entrenchment and are typically restricted to Italy-specific political contexts.

Keywords: phraseological units; political discourse; English; French; Italian.

1. Introduction

The field of phraseology is characterised by a strong interdisciplinary dimension, as phraseological units (PUs) can be analysed from a wide range of perspectives (e.g., stylistic, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, cultural, cognitive,

historical, language teaching, and contrastive). Although pervasive across all domains of language, this branch of linguistics has only relatively recently become established as an autonomous discipline. An outline of what would eventually become phraseology was first proposed in 1909 by the French linguist Charles Bally, who was the first to recognize PUs as multiword units whose meaning does not correspond to the sum of their constituent elements. Inspired by Bally's work, the Russian linguist Viktor Vinogradov introduced the term *phraseological unit* in 1946 and established phraseology as a distinct linguistic discipline (González Rey, 2021, 22–23).

Nevertheless, phraseology remained undervalued and was long considered marginal, despite ongoing research in different parts of the world. This marginalisation may be attributed to the fact that the discipline's subject matter resists strictly linguistic analysis, in the sense that a comprehensive analysis of PUs involves pragmatic factors, including elements of extralinguistic knowledge. Consequently, a certain degree of interdisciplinarity is required in order to account for all relevant aspects of PUs as linguistic constructions shaped by the cultural context of a given speech community. The marked increase in interest in this field over recent decades has been driven largely by advances in corpus linguistics. As a result, a range of diverse approaches has emerged, leading to the proliferation of heterogeneous terminology referring to the basic unit of phraseology. Whereas *phraseme* is commonly used within European tradition, there remains considerable variation in terminology (e.g., *phraseologism, phraseme, phraseological item, fixed expression*, or *multiword lexical unit*) according to Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2022, 36–38). Given this terminological diversity, the present study adopts the term *phraseological unit*, as it is both widely used in contemporary research and relatively neutral in its connotations.

2. Fuzzy Boundaries of Political Discourse

Political discourse, as a specialised form of communication, is characterised by strategic language use, ideological positioning, and rhetorical persuasion. It is typically associated with institutional settings and professional actors – politicians, officials and commentators – but its scope extends far beyond this core. Political discourse has increasingly permeated public, informal, and media spheres, giving rise to what may be described as "fuzzy boundaries" between political and non-political domains.

A growing body of research has examined the linguistic features of political discourse, including metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2011) and framing strategies (Lakoff, 2004). Phraseological units (PUs), however, remain a relatively underexplored category in this context. While several studies have analysed their rhetorical use in political speeches and media texts within individual languages (Baghana *et al.*, 2021, 129–141; Cortelazzo, 2024, 49–61; Musolff, 2016), there

is still a lack of systematic research on domain-specific PUs across multiple languages. This gap is particularly evident when considering how PUs circulate across domains and languages, and how their idiomaticity and cultural embeddedness affect cross-linguistic equivalence.

This section therefore examines the fuzzy boundaries between general and political phraseology, focusing on how PUs – whether originating in political discourse or borrowed from other domains – are employed for expressive, persuasive, and attention-seeking purposes. A lack of clear-cut boundaries between general and domain-specific political PUs can be explained by two main factors.

First, the political domain is inherently intertwined with issues that extend beyond institutional politics, such as elections, party competition, and government activity. Politicians, activists, journalists, and commentators address a wide range of topics affecting different areas of social life, and are therefore required to communicate about phenomena that go beyond narrowly defined political concerns. Moreover, as politics is intrinsically linked to disagreement (Heywood, 2013, 1–26), political communication tends to provoke – either intentionally or accidentally – emotional responses among both engaged citizens and those affected by political decisions (Lakoff, 2004). As a result, PUs are widely used in political discourse regardless of their origin, provided that they effectively convey ideas or evoke emotional reactions. It is therefore unsurprising that newspaper headlines frequently rely on idiomatic PUs, which are more likely to attract attention than expressions whose meaning can be inferred solely from their denotative components. Some PUs that are well entrenched in the political discourse of one language have close counterparts in others, for example:

Rishi Sunak and Jeremy Hunt '*at loggerheads*' over tax cuts (Wright and Swinford, 2024)
Législatives 2022 : Macron et Mélenchon, l'affrontement *à couteaux tirés* (Gatinois and Carriat, 2022)
Meloni e Schlein *ai ferri corti* su tutto. Ma gli staff si parlano per il duello tv (Meli, 2024)

The communicative function of the PUs *at loggerheads*, *à couteaux tirés* and *ai ferri corti* is comparable across English, French and Italian. The extralinguistic contexts of these headlines are also highly similar, as they depict conflict between political actors. The notion of disagreement is intensified through the PUs whose etymology originates in the domain of armed confrontation involving cold weapons. Such processes are common in political discourse more broadly, not only in media reporting. The use of non-political PUs by political actors for rhetorical or explanatory purposes thus contributes to blurring the boundary between domain-specific and general phraseology.

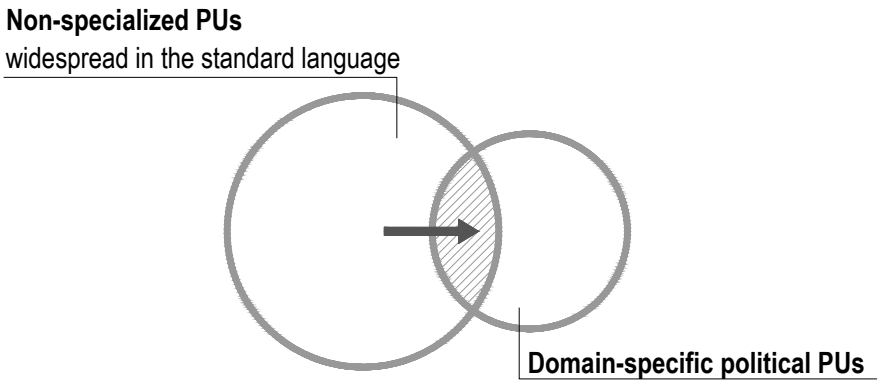


Fig. 1. The diffusion of non-specialized PUs into political discourse
Source: Authors' own elaboration

A second factor contributing to this fuzziness is the permeability of standard language to domain-specific political PUs. As political concepts become more widely known and socially relevant, PUs originating in political discourse tend to enter general usage and gradually lose their domain specificity. This process is often driven by extensive media coverage. Political catchphrases provide a particularly clear example of the deliberate use of PUs to reach a broad audience, especially potential voters. As noted by Baghana *et al.* (2021, 134), "politicians, resorting to the use of idioms, can covertly express their attitude to a particular event or phenomenon and voice their goals and plans". Today, the dissemination of such expressions is further amplified by social media and word-of-mouth communication. The coinage of political catchphrases is often associated with individual political figures or their communication teams, for example *Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime* (former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair); *Mon adversaire, c'est le monde de la finance* (former French President François Hollande); *Il potere logora chi non ce l'ha* (former Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti). Such artful and often witty uses of language aim to communicate complex ideas in a concise and rhetorically effective manner. Figure 2 illustrates the diffusion of domain-specific PUs into the general phraseological repertoire of a language.

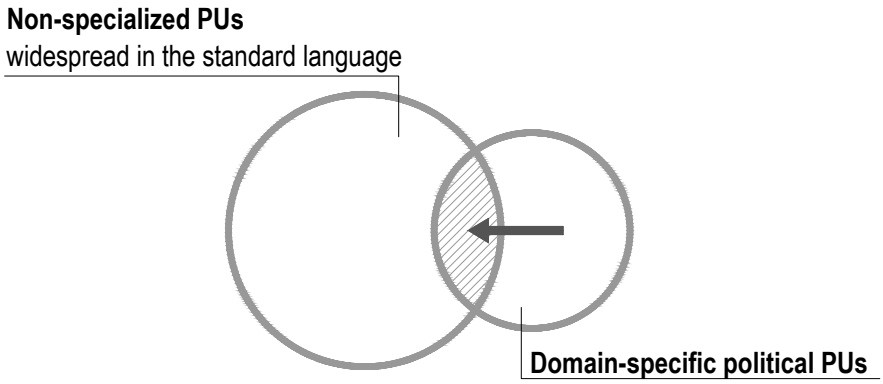


Fig. 2. The diffusion of domain-specific PUs into general phraseological repertoire
Source: Authors' own elaboration

Political discourse may be approached from different perspectives, depending on the definition of politics as a specific domain of human activity. From a narrow perspective, "political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, mostly politicians, the group of people who are being paid for their (political) activities, and who are being elected or appointed (or self-designated) as the central players in the polity" (van Dijk, 1997, 12–13). However, since discourse inherently involves interaction, it is necessary to enlarge the scope of political discourse and take into account all actors in the realm of politics, notably political journalists, who function as key intermediaries between professional politicians and the wider public.

3. Scope of Research, Research objectives and Hypotheses

The main objective of this paper is to identify patterns in the occurh1rence of PUs in selected texts pertaining to political discourse, based on an analysis of corpora drawn from English, French and Italian newspapers. For the purposes of this study, a multilingual newspaper corpus was manually compiled by the authors. It comprises articles published between 2000 and 2024 in nine newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and *The Telegraph* (United Kingdom); *Le Monde*, *Libération*, and *Le Figaro* (France); and *Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (Italy). The selection of sources was guided by their national prominence and, to some extent, their ideological diversity. The articles were selected on the basis of thematic comparability, focusing on the same or similar political events, which allows for a more consistent cross-linguistic comparison. Texts were retrieved from official newspaper websites and online archives and subsequently converted into plain text format. PUs were identified manually

through close reading of the articles. The key criterion for inclusion was domain specificity, meaning that only PUs directly related to political contexts and phenomena were considered. Particular attention was paid to expressions occurring across multiple languages or recurring within a single language, as these were taken to indicate salience within political discourse. Whenever possible, occurrences were cross-checked against phraseological dictionaries in all three languages. However, only a relatively small proportion of PUs attested in the corpus are recorded in existing lexicographic resources. The corpus comprises approximately 120 articles in English, French, and Italian. Owing to copyright restrictions, it is not publicly available; however, it constitutes a coherent and representative dataset for examining cross-linguistic patterns in contemporary political discourse in British, French, and Italian print media.

In analysing newspaper texts, it is necessary to make a distinction between non-specialized PUs that are widespread in standard language and domain-specific political PUs. The former tend to exhibit a higher degree of equivalence in English, French and Italian than the latter. For example, *la possibilité d'une autre voie* corresponds to *the possibility of another path* in English and *la possibilità d'un'altra via* in the Italian version[1].

An important methodological insight emerged during the corpus-based identification of political PUs. The initial intention to include only expressions attested in English, French and Italian phraseological dictionaries (Cowie, Mackin and McCaig, 1983; Fergusson, 2002; Parmentier, 2006; Pittàno, 2009; Quartu and Rossi, 2012; Rey and Chantreau, 1990) was ultimately abandoned, as the corpora revealed a substantial number of idiomatic expressions and domain-specific PUs not captured in traditional lexicographic sources. This finding underscores the importance of corpus-based approaches, particularly when dealing with politically contextualized and culturally specific phraseology.

Based on the results of our previous research on English loanwords in French and Italian daily newspapers (Varga, Orešković Dvorski and Bjelobaba, 2011, 71–84), which indicates a strong influence of the English language, the following hypotheses are proposed: (H1) contemporary English exerts a significant phraseological influence on French and Italian; and (H2) phraseological units of French and Italian origin are comparatively rare in the political discourse of the other two languages.

1 French *le Conseil a ainsi incarné la possibilité d'une autre voie, celle du dialogue entre ces deux pays*; English *the Council offered the possibility of another path, a path of dialogue between the two countries*; Italian *il Consiglio incarnava la possibilità d'un altra via, quella del dialogo*.

4. Degrees of Idiomaticity of Domain-Specific Political PUs

On the basis of the corpus analysis, two poles of a continuum can be identified, forming the basis for the classification of domain-specific political PUs. One pole can be labelled as a lack of idiomaticity, with full reliance on compositionality as the primary criterion for identification of PUs. At the other end lies full idiomaticity, which results in semantic opacity and makes interpretation less transparent. In this respect, not all PUs can be considered idioms, as noted by Weinrich:

> A phraseological unit that involves at least two polysemous constituents, and in which there is a reciprocal contextual selection of subsenses, will be called an idiom. Thus some phraseological units are idioms; others are not. (Weinreich, 1969, 42)

Within political discourse, the functions of non-idiomatic and idiomatic units can be clearly distinguished. Elspaß points out that non-idiomatic units play an important role in the grammatical cohesion and textual organisation, whereas idiomatic units contribute significantly to stylistic expression (Elspaß, 2002, 106). This observation also applies to other types of political texts, including newspaper reporting.

As Table 1 shows, the selected English, French and Italian PUs are characterised by a high degree of compositionality and a correspondingly low degree of idiomaticity. From a cross-linguistic perspective, this category of PUs exhibits full semantic equivalence, resulting in a high degree of similarity across the three languages.

Table 1. Non-idiomatic political PUs 1

NON-IDIOMATIC POLITICAL PUs		
ENGLISH	**FRENCH**	**ITALIAN**
class struggle	lutte des classes	lotta di classe
freedom of speech freedom of expression	liberté de parole liberté d'expression	libertà di parola libertà di espressione
civil disobedience	désobéissance civile	disobbedienza civile
fiscal conservatism	conservatisme fiscal	conservatorismo fiscale
politically correct	politiquement correct	politicamente corretto

The continuum between idiomaticity amd compositionality is further illustrated by the examples in Table 2. In this case, the PUs included are still largely compositional but display a moderate or low degree of idiomaticity, resulting in only partial semantic equivalence across languages. Therefore, when it comes to cross-linguistic analysis, there is a high (e.g., *Head of State, Chef d'État, Capo di Stato*) or moderate (e.g., *welfare state, état-providence, stato sociale – sistema previdenziale*) level of similarity. These examples also demonstrate that different donor languages may be involved in the formation of equivalent expressions.

Table 2. Non-idiomatic political PUs 2

NON-IDIOMATIC POLITICAL PUs		
ENGLISH	**FRENCH**	**ITALIAN**
welfare state	état-providence	stato sociale (sistema previdenziale)
Head of State	Chef d'État	Capo di Stato
go through to a second ballot	être en ballotage	andare al ballottaggio

The PUs presented in Table 3 are characterised by high levels of non-compositionality and idiomaticity, yet they display full semantic equivalence across the three languages. This results in a high degree of cross-linguistic similarity, which facilitates intercultural communication.

Table 3. Idiomatic political PUs 1

IDIOMATIC POLITICAL PUs 1		
ENGLISH	**FRENCH**	**ITALIAN**
the silent majority	la majorité silencieuse	la maggioranza silenziosa
the fifth column	la cinquième colonne	la quinta colonna
the fourth estate (power)	le quatrième pouvoir	il quarto potere
a hot potato	une patate chaude	una patata bollente
white-collar crime	le crime en col blanc	il crimine (reato) dei colletti bianchi
witch hunt	chasse aux sorcières	caccia alle streghe

The PUs listed in Table 4, by contrast, exhibit only partial semantic equivalence, despite their high degree of both non-compositionality and idiomaticity. Their interpretation may therefore not be immediately transparent to speakers of another language. For example, *keyboard warrior*, *internaute agressif/agressive*, *leone da tastiera* are pragmatically equivalent, rather than directly semantically equivalent. Their meanings converge at the level of pragmatic interpretation

rather than through direct correspondence between lexical components such as *warrior*, *agressif*, and *leone*, which share the feature of 'readiness to attack'. A particularly noteworthy example is provided by *neck and neck*, *au coude à coude*, *testa a testa*. They are structurally extremely similar, yet at the level of content there are differences in the idiomatic use of different body parts (necks, elbows, heads) for the identical communicative purpose. This variation illustrates how idiomatic meaning is constructed through culturally embedded metaphorical associations, often linked to the domain of competition.

Table 4. Idiomatic political PUs 2

IDIOMATIC POLITICAL PUs 2		
ENGLISH	**FRENCH**	**ITALIAN**
culture war	guerre culturelle	scontro tra culture
keyboard warrior	internaute agressif/agressive	leone da tastiera
hung parliament	parlament sans majorité	parlamento sospeso
test the waters	tâter le terrain	tastare il terreno
champagne socialist	membre de la gauche caviar	radical chic (esponente della sinistra al caviale)
bleeding-heart liberal	libéral au cœur tendre / grand cœur	buonista, politicamente corretto (radical chic)
neck and neck	au coude à coude	testa a testa
landslide victory	raz-de-marée électoral / victoire écrasante	vittoria schiacciante / valanga di voti

5. Political Phraseology in Cross-Linguistic Contact

Political systems, rules and conventions of political behaviour vary from country to country. For this reason, concepts lexicalized through PUs that are absent or less common in other linguistic and cultural contexts require neological solutions to fill lexical gaps. As there is a lack of research on cross-linguistic contact in the field of phraseology, particularly with regard to domain-specific PUs, the following section adresses this aspect of contrastive analysis.

Table 5. Phraseological borrowing from French

PHRASEOLOGICAL BORROWING FROM FRENCH		
FRENCH	**ENGLISH**	**ITALIAN**
une main de fer dans un gant de velours	an iron hand/fist in a velvet glove	(con) pugno di ferro in guanto di velluto
retourner sa veste	turn one's coat; be a turncoat	cambiare bandiera
être plus royaliste que le roi	be more Catholic than the Pope (himself)	essere più realista del re

The etymology of the French political PU *une main de fer dans un gant de velours* (Table 5) can be traced back to the nineteenth century and is attributed to the king of Sweden and Norway Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, who claimed that the French people needed to be governed by an iron hand in a velvet glove, i.e., that the king's power over people should be strong and relentless in character, yet diplomatic and gentle in form. The effectiveness of this metaphor allegedly crafted by a political figure from the past is reflected in the fact that both English and Italian equivalents preserve its core semantic components. Interestingly, in other cases the structure of the PU has remained intact, while certain elements undergo semantic modification in English (*royaliste>Catholic*; *le roi>the pope*).

As Table 6 indicates, phraseological borrowing from Italian mostly concerns rather recent political phenomena conceptually anchored in specifically Italian political contexts. As the English and French equivalents of *governo tecnico* and *mani pulite* are mainly used in reference to Italian political reality, they are rendred either as close translations or as unadapted borrowings. The witty catchphrase *Piove, governo ladro!*, which is widely used in Italian everyday conversation on politics, is included in the analysis despite the absence of direct borrowing into English and French. This example is illustrative of the fact that phraseological equivalence may sometimes be identified within temporally and culturally specific contexts. *Thanks, Obama!* in contemporary US English functions as a sarcastic expression used to attribute blame for unfavourable developments in society, thus showing a functional rather than formal equivalence.

Table 6. Phraseological borrowing from Italian

PHRASEOLOGICAL BORROWING FROM ITALIAN		
ITALIAN	**ENGLISH**	**FRENCH**
governo tecnico	"technical" government technocratic government	gouvernement « technique » gouvernement d'experts
Mani pulite	Mani pulite	Mani pulite
Piove, governo ladro!	Ø (Damned government!) Thanks, Obama!	Ø (Il pleut. Maudit gouvernement!)

Corpus analysis confirms our prediction that English currently exerts the strongest cross-linguistic phraseological influence. Table 7 provides selected examples of three types of phraseological borrowing from English, namely the French and Italian calques (semantic loans) that are used to refer to the concept of *lame duck*; non-idiomatic, yet more transparent and explanatory equivalents of *running mate*, and an example for widely used unadapted borrowings such as *spin doctor*.

Table 7. Phraseological borrowing from English

PHRASEOLOGICAL BORROWING FROM ENGLISH		
ENGLISH	**FRENCH**	**ITALIAN**
lame duck	canard boiteux	anatra zoppa
running mate	candidat(e) à la vice-presidénce	candidato/a alla vicepresidenza
spin doctor	"spin doctor"	"spin doctor"

6. Conclusion

As an integral component of political discourse, PUs play an important role in conveying carefully framed messages, shaping emotional responses, and reflecting the cultural heritage of a given speech community. A contrastive analysis of domain-specific political PUs in English, French and Italian shows that cross-linguistic similarity is not determined solely by idiomaticity and compositionality, nor is it necessarily the result of language contact. Structurally and functionally similar PUs in the three languages may instead be the outcome of parallel or independent development within each linguistic system.

This study reveals a dynamic interaction between general phraseology and domain-specific political PUs. Yet the tendency of the latter to be diffused beyond the boundaries of political discourse is not adequately reflected in existing phraseological dictionaries. A more systematic inclusion of such items would contribute to a more comprehensive representation of contemporary phraseological usage. Given that politics permeates everyday life and constitutes a frequent topic of public communication, this domain warrants greater lexicographic attention.

From the perspective of language contact, French phraseological influence used to be more pronounced in the past, whereas English currently exerts a particularly strong influence. This imbalance may be attributed to the fact that political events occurring in some English-speaking countries, notably in the USA, receive more international media coverage than those in French and Italian contexts. There is Italian influence on English and French political phraseology; however, such borrowings vary in their degree of entrenchment in the two

languages and their use tends to be limited to Italy-specific political contexts. These observations broadly support H1 and H2. Future research could usefully extend the analysis to additional languages in order to further substantiate these conclusions and provide a more comprehensive account of domain-specific political phraseology and cross-linguistic transfer.

References

Baghana, Jeroma *et al.* 2021. "English idioms peculiarities in political discourse (Based on British and American media)". Lingue 14(2): 129–141. https://doi.org/10.18355/XL.2021.14.02.10

Charteris-Black, Jonathan. 2011. Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cortelazzo, Michele A. 2024. La lingua della neopolitica. Come parlano i leader. Roma: Treccani.

Cowie, Anthony Paul, Ronald Mackin, and Isabel R. McCaig. 1983. Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English, Volume 2: Phrase, Clause & Sentence Idioms. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij, and Elisabeth Piirainen. 2022. Figurative Language Cross-Cultural and Cross-Linguistic Perspectives. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Elspaß, Stephan. 2002. "Phraseological units in parliamentary discourse" In Politics as text and Talk: Analytic approaches to political discourse, edited by Paul Chilton, and Christine Schäffner, 81-110. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Fergusson, Rosalind. 2002. Cassell's Dictionary of English Idioms. London: Cassell.

Gatinois, Claire, and Julie Carriat. "Législatives 2022 : Macron et Mélenchon, l'affrontement à couteaux tirés". Le Monde, June 17, 2022. https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2022/06/17/legislatives-2022-macron-et-melenchon-l-affrontement-a-distance-et-a-couteaux-tires_6130717_823448.html

González Rey, Isabel. 2021. La nouvelle phraséologie du français. Toulouse: PUF.

The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, Le Monde, Libération, Le Figaro, Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, and Il Fatto Quotidiano. 2000-2024. Custom Newspaper Corpus Compiled by the Authors. Unpublished corpus.

Heywood, Andrew. 2013. Politics. 4th ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lakoff, George. 2004. Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Meli, Maria Teresa. "Meloni e Schlein ai ferri corti su tutto. Ma gli staff si parlano per il duello tv". Corriere della sera, February 12, 2024. https://www.corriere.it/politica/24_febbraio_12/meloni-schlein-ferri-corti-tutto-ma-staff-si-parlano-il-duello-tv-7a577cde-c9e6-11ee-a2d5-30582b9148f4.shtml

Musolff, Andreas. 2016. Political Metaphor Analysis: Discourse and Scenarios. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Parmentier, Michel. 2006. Dictionnaire des expressions et tournures calquées sur l'anglais. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Pittàno, Giuseppe. 2009. Dizionario dei modi di dire. Frase fatta capo ha. Dizionario dei modi di dire, proverbi e locuzioni di italiano. Bologna: Zanichelli.

Quartu, Monica, and Rossi, Elena. 2012. Dizionario dei modi di dire della lingua italiana. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli Editore.

Rey, Alain, and Sophie Chantreau. 1990. Dictionnaire des expressions et locutions. Paris: LR.

van Dijk, Teun Adrianus. 1997. "What is Political Discourse Analysis?". Belgian Journal of Linguistics 14(1): 11–52.

Varga, Dražen, Lidija Orešković Dvorski, and Saša Bjelobaba. 2011. "English Loanwords in French and Italian Daily Newspapers". SRAZ LVI: 71–84.

Weinreich, Uriel. 1969. On Semantics. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Wright, Oliver, and Steven Swinford. "Rishi Sunak and Jeremy Hunt 'at loggerheads' over tax cuts". The Times, February 29, 2024. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rishi-sunak-and-jeremy-hunt-at-loggerheads-over-tax-cuts-kxp0lpt35

Idiomatic expressions in Feigned, Jargon-like Colloquial Orality

Tiziana Roncoroni
University of Bergamo
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4968-0337

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c778

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of idiomatic expressions—defined as multi-word combinations with fully or partially non-compositional meanings—in colloquial, jargon-like language within *Emil und die Detektive* (Kästner, 1929). Idiomatic expressions are shown to support key functions of feigned orality and sociolectal features, contributing to dynamic and realistic text passages, clearly characterizing the characters, and rendering the style more creative, ironic, and colloquial. Additionally, idiomatic expressions help to establish in-group identity and are often pragmatically significant. The protagonists exhibit varying degrees of language variation and formal modifications of their idiomatic expressions. As hypothesized, the main features of the analyzed idiomatic expressions overlap with strategies employed for the acquisition of phrasemes.

Keywords: idiomatic expressions; feigned orality; children's literature; *Emil und die Detektive*.

1. Topic, Research Questions, Assumptions

This study examines idiomatic expressions—a subset of phrasemes—within the context of feigned orality (*fingierte Mündlichkeit*, Goetsch, 1985), specifically focusing on their use in colloquial language that approximates jargon as exemplified in Kästner's *Emil und die Detektive* (1929).

The following sections introduce the three core components of the topic: (i) the novel itself, (ii) feigned orality, and (iii) phrasemes. Subsequently, I will address the three primary aspects of the research question (1–3).

(i) *Emil und die Detektive* narrates the story of Emil Tischbein, a secondary school student from Neustadt who travels to Berlin to visit relatives. During his journey, his money is stolen; however, he manages to apprehend the thief with assistance from a group of Berlin children and hand him over to the police. The novel is part of a broader modernization movement in children's

literature during the Weimar Republic—characterized by adopting motifs and narrative techniques from adult literature and reflecting aspects of modern society such as technological advancements, urbanization, and increased traffic (cf. Schellheimer, 2010). Kästner is often regarded as a representative of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* ('New Objectivity') in children's literature (Schellheimer, 2010). Despite this modernist stance, Kästner's characters embody values like work ethic, integrity, reason, and discipline—values resonant with young readers but arguably not reflective of Berlin's social reality at that time (cf. Springman, 1991). His moralistic approach encourages critical reflection among readers (cf. Boarini, 2015). The language employed is described as "eine sehr interessante und originelle, milieu- und lebensechte Sprache, die den Kindern abgelauscht wirkt, sehr natürlich und lebendig und von unnachahmlicher Prägnanz und Klarheit ist" (Sahr, 1994, 34–35).[1] Kästner aims to depict stylized everyday speech typical of street children from a metropolis—modern and cheeky rather than regional dialectal (cf. Schellheimer, 2010, 83). Consequently, colloquial expressions—including teenage slang and idiomatic expressions—are prevalent throughout the novel (cf. Boarini, 2015, 274; Richter-Vapaatalo, 2006, 260–262). These characteristics underscore the importance of idiomaticity alongside diaphasic and diastratic variation. Children's literature by Kästner exemplifies how employing idiomatic expressions becomes a stylistic principle (Burger, 1998, 165–166), making *Emil und die Detektive* an ideal textual basis for this investigation.

(ii) Feigned orality refers to language in literary texts that mimics conceptual orality—at the proximity pole or near it—as defined by Koch and Oesterreicher (1985). It involves stylized proximity language characterized by an author-specific selection of features (cf. Nicklaus and Rocco, 2018, 425; Reinhardt, 2017, 464–465; Schwitalla and Tiittula, 2009). Elements typical of authentic spoken language are exaggerated or used ironically; certain features such as overlaps or co-construction are omitted when deemed unsuitable.[2] Feigned orality serves functions including suggesting immediacy or closeness between characters or narrator and audience, modulating dramatic effects, creating irony, situating characters geographically or socially, and characterizing behavior and relationships (cf. Czennia, 2004, 508–509). When analyzing dialogues among children specifically—and colloquial language more broadly—additional linguistic features must be considered, such as jargon or low diastratic markers that mark them as sociolects or diaphasic varieties.

1 'A very interesting and original milieu- and life-like language that seems overheard by children—natural, lively—and characterized by unparalleled conciseness and clarity' (my translation).

2 In empirical works, the characteristics of spoken language are used as a standard for comparison, particularly the linguistic features that encode the highest proximity (cf. Fiehler, 2009; Schwitalla, [4]2012).

(iii) By *phrasemes*, I mean linguistic units functioning as single semantic entities that typically possess three main characteristics—even if to different degrees (cf. Burger [5]2015, 17–20, 26):

(a) Multi-part structure: They consist of at least two free morphemes.[3] I therefore exclude single-lexeme words with non-literal meanings.[4]

(b) Fixity: They are stable expressions—retrieved holistically (as evidenced by psycholinguistic studies), structurally fixed regarding component order and potential modifications, semantically constant in meaning or speech act function—and frequently used.

(c) Idiosyncrasy: The combinations of the components are unpredictable (cf. Schafroth, 2023, 234),[5] yet often conventionalized or idiomatic to varying degrees.[6] In the case of idiomaticity, the meaning of one or more morpheme(s) of the phraseme is not the literal one. Since idiomatic expressions—in their traditional definition—contain two or more morphemes, the phraseological meaning is not compositional (i.e., it cannot be derived from the literal meaning of the morphemes), if at least the meaning of one morpheme is idiomatic.[7]

This paper focuses exclusively on idiomatic phrasemes—that is, those whose meaning cannot be derived solely from that of their constituent parts, as just mentioned; I will call them *idiomatic expressions*, since this term is common in English studies on phraseology. Idiomatic expressions are particularly relevant to the present research question (see Section (2)). Moreover, as Fleischer ([2]1997) emphasizes in his typology based on the prototype approach, idiomaticity is central to phraseology.

The following issues (research questions) will be addressed:

(1) The role of idiomatic expressions in realizing feigned orality and jargon-like colloquial language—for example: their relationship with text effects such as humor or emphasis (cf. Heringer, 2020, 50; Richter-Vapaatalo, 2007, 229; Section (2) of this paper).

---

3 According to this wording, no clarification is needed as to whether these should be lexical words or grammatical words. Phrasemes therefore also include word combinations consisting only of grammatical words such as *an sich* ('as such'; 'by itself'; cf. Burger [5]2015, 15–16; Fleischer, [2]1997, on the other hand, takes the opposite view).

4 For a discussion of this issue, cf. Burger ([5]2015, 36–37); Fleischer ([2]1997, 170, 249).

5 Burger ([5]2015, 26), conversely, refers to this as 'anomalies' at various levels.

6 Thus, phraseology is always idiosyncratic. Moreover, idiomaticity is supposed to play an extremely important role in the language in general (cf. Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor, 1988; Taylor, 2012, 71–72).

7 Of course, idiomaticity is not limited to phraseology, but also concerns other linguistic elements (e.g., metaphors), figurative language use (including one-word lexemes), allusions, culturally given and pragmatic connotations and reinterpretations, etc. (cf. Carobbio, 2023; Schafroth, 2023).

It is assumed that idiomatic expressions closely related to the children's world (featuring anchor words from their everyday life, and belonging to groups like somatisms, kinegrams, animalisms, but also comparative idiomatic expressions) will play a particularly important role. Therefore, these subgroups will be examined in greater detail (see the investigation categories in Section (3)).

(2) A comprehensive characterization of all idiomatic expressions within dialogues is the objective, encompassing situation-specific, group-specific, and function-specific features (cf. Ehrhardt, 2011, 162; Fleischer, [2]1997, 125–130; Sabban, 2007; Schafroth, 2023). This analysis also aims to determine whether idiomatic expressions are used more frequently by children versus adults, and predominantly in in-group conversations among children (or adults).

(3) The potential relationship between specific features of the idiomatic expressions within dialogues and strategies aimed at facilitating their acquisition by young readers.

In the specialist literature, strategies are postulated that serve to promote and accelerate the acquisition of phraseology by children reading children's literature (so-called procedures for enhancing comprehensibility–*Verfahren der Verständlichmachung*). These include the introduction, embedding, and explanation of idiomatic expressions, possibly also a metalinguistic characterization, the clustering of idiomatic expressions, modifications, and paraphrases (cf. also Finkbeiner, 2011, 63–64; Richter-Vapaatalo, 2007, 103, 134). Additionally, consideration of the children's conceptual framework plays a role in selecting suitable idiomatic expressions.

Specifically, I assume that there are interplays and interactions between the features of the idiomatic expressions found in the dialogues and these methods.

In the following sections, I first discuss theoretical frameworks concerning phrasemes' roles in literary texts alongside feigned orality and language variation (2). In (3), I comment on the procedures and the categories for the empirical analysis. Section (4) presents results. Section (5) offers conclusions addressing the research questions (RQs).

2. Theoretical Background

Numerous studies have demonstrated that phrasemes—across their various forms, usages, and functions—possess significant potential to characterize texts and text types in a profound manner. Černyševa (1980, 93 ff.) first introduced the concept of the *text-creating potential* (*textbildendes Potenzial*) of phrasemes, which was subsequently elaborated by Dobrovol'skij (1980, 1987), Fleischer ([2]1997), and Sabban (2004). In this context, Sabban examines the frequency

of specific groups of phrasemes within particular text genres, as well as their distinctive features—such as their characteristics, functions, and effects—in different texts (cf. Sabban, 2007, 237).

In literary texts, phrasemes are often characterized by pronounced conspicuousness: They tend to exhibit varying degrees of idiomaticity and are frequently employed creatively (cf. Eismann, 2007). They contribute significantly to the text's style (cf. Sandig, 2007, 159).[8] The stylistic features associated with phrasemes include their degree of idiomaticity just mentioned, connotative markers, as well as their potential for chaining and modification (cf. Sandig, 2007). Marked phraseological usages also play a role; these include phenomena such as the cumulative use of phrasemes, networks and contamination (i.e., fusion of different phrasemes), and decompositions (where individual constituents are reactivated within the textual context with their denotative meanings).[9] Given these considerations, this study focuses on idiomatic expressions and also takes modifications and marked usages into account.

One fundamental contribution of idiomatic expressions to literary texts is their role in dialogue: They help make dialogues more reflective of spoken language. Idiomatic expressions convey succinct messages, evoke associations, and facilitate playful language use (cf. Heringer 2020, 50). Consequently, they enhance the entertainment value and create a humorous, witty, relaxed, and direct effect that characterizes individual protagonists while improving perceived authenticity (cf. Richter-Vapaatalo, 2007, 229). Frequent modifications—such as allusions, wordplay, or irony—further reinforce these effects (cf. Heller and Zinesi, 2023). Moreover, idiomatic expressions function as indicators of situation-, domain-, group-, or function-specific characteristics (cf. Donalis, 2009, 99; Ehrhardt, 2011, 162) fulfilling pragmatic tasks associated with feigned orality. This focus on pragmatics stems from the understanding that idiomatic expressions are not only used to refer to objects or situations but also serve performative functions—such as speech acts (cf. Ehrhardt, 2011, 158).

Since the novel under analysis features children as the main characters and includes dialogues rich in language variation, it is essential to consider three additional aspects:

(1) Domains of language variation: Certain sociolectal elements and proximity to jargon contribute to geographical and social localization. These features help to typify characters while conveying a sense of realism and immediacy—thereby creating an illusion of orality (cf. Czennia, 2004, 508–509).

8 Here, *style* is understood as a set of characteristics that influence the overall meaning or tone of a text or conversation (cf. Sandig, 2007, 158).

9 For empirical studies on these phenomena, cf. Heller and Zinesi (2023).

(2) Multiple dimensions of variation: Feigned orality encompasses more than diastratic, diaphasic and diamesic features mentioned previously; it can also be marked diatopically or diachronically—for example: differentiating between older versus younger speakers.

(3) Types of colloquial language:
i) A diatopically and diastratically neutral variety, close to standard colloquial speech or spoken standard language (for German, cf. Schneider, Butterworth and Hahn, 2018).
ii) A diastratically marked variety with substandard elements or slang indicators—near-jargon colloquial language.
iii) A diatopically marked variety resembling dialectal speech—near-dialect colloquial language (cf. Cinato and Amico di Meane, 2019, 22).

All these dimensions are interconnected and contribute to the intricate landscape of language variation associated with feigned orality, particularly in the idiomatic expressions employed within dialogues in literary texts.

3. Procedure and Categories for Analysis

Methodologically, I first identified all idiomatic expressions within the dialogues, compiled them into an Excel spreadsheet, and applied filters to facilitate analysis. The following categories—derived from established typologies—were considered:[10]

– Partial idioms/partially idiomatic expressions (*Teilidiome*, see examples (1) and (2)) and full idioms/fully idiomatic expressions (*Vollidiome*, see examples (3) and (4)): These are partially or fully idiomatic expressions; in some cases, they are metaphorical partial idioms or full idioms,[11] as illustrated by all these four examples.

(1) Jemandem die Taschen volllügen ['to feed someone a pack of lies'; 'to lie through one's teeth'][12]

10 This article deals with German idiomatic expressions and is therefore grounded in fundamental typologies within the German scholarly community specialized in phraseology, primarily as proposed by Harald Burger and Wolfgang Fleischer (among others).

11 These adhere to the following criteria: (A) They possess at least two readings. (B) One reading must be literal, and the other figurative (i.e., concretely imaginable). (C) The readings are mutually exclusive (disjunctive). (D) They are motivated (transparent), meaning that the metaphorical connection—the shift in meaning from a concrete to an abstract domain—can be established (cf. Burger, ^{5}2015, 64–65, 83, 92–93).

12 Examples (1) to (7) are taken from Hornáček Banášová *et al.* (2025). The English translations are my own; when available, an idiomatic translation is provided. Examples (8) to (10), as well as those pertaining to the classes of the cross-classification, are my own.

(2) Einen Streit vom Zaun brechen ['to make a mountain out of a molehill']
(3) Jemandem einen Korb geben ['to give someone the brush-off']
(4) Jemandem etwas in die Schuhe schieben ['to pass the buck']

As demonstrated by these examples, partially idiomatic expressions contain only one component—or more than one, but not all—with a metaphorical meaning. Conversely, fully idiomatic expressions have all components understood in a metaphorical sense. Both types fall under the category of nominative idiomatic expressions (which refer to objects or processes and are embedded within sentences) and are part of the referential idiomatic expressions (cf. Burger, [5]2015, 32).

– Propositional phrasemes (*propositionale Phraseme*): These form a subset of referential idiomatic expressions but differ from the nominative ones in that they make statements about objects or processes—thus functioning as complete sentences (cf. Burger, [5]2015, 32). Examples include fixed phrases explicitly linked to specific contexts (*feste Phrasen*) such as

(5) Jemandem geht ein Licht auf ['the light bulb goes on for someone']
(6) Das Eis ist gebrochen ['the ice has been broken']

and general statements (topical formulas—*topische Formeln*) such as proverbs (*Sprichwörter*, example (7)), or commonplaces (*Gemeinplätze*, example (8)).

(7) Morgenstunde hat Gold im Munde ['the early bird catches the worm']
(8) Der Mensch ist, was er isst ['you are what you eat']

– Communicative phrasemes (*kommunikative Phraseme*): These are formulas—thus characterized by their formulaic nature—and express speech acts. They can be equated with pragmatic idiomatic expressions that manage recurring communicative situations (cf. Filatkina, 2007, 142).[13] Function is considered the best practical criterion for a clear classification (cf. Filatkina, 2007, 144). The pragmatic functions of these idiomatic expressions are postulated by Fleischer ([2]1997, 218), and a detailed typology of functions is proposed by Lüger (2007, 450–451). Functions are understood here as specific ways in which idiomatic expressions influence the communication process to support the speaker's intentions in both the illocutionary sense (the intended effect) and the perlocutionary sense (the

13 Cf. also the concept of communicative formulas in Stein (2004, 263). This term was already employed in the first German handbook of phraseology (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm, 1982, 105).

actual effect produced).[14] They can be situation-dependent (*Routineformeln*, example (9)) or situation-independent (*Gesprächsformeln*, example (10)); in the latter case, they primarily consist of reactions and comments made during conversations:

(9) Hals und Beinbruch! ['break a leg!']
(10) Das ist der Hammer! ['That's a real shocker!']

Additionally, certain classes of the cross-classification intersect with children's language use and are relevant for analysis:

- Animalisms: Idiomatic expressions involving animals conveying qualities or behaviors. Traditionally, they do not belong to the usual typologies of phrasemes, but are classified as a category by Heringer (2020). Examples are *jemandem einen Bären aufbinden* ('to pull someone's leg'; 'to feed someone a line') and *den Löwenanteil bekommen* ('to get the lion's share').
- Somatisms: Expressions referring to body parts or physical states used metaphorically—e.g., *jemandem das Herz brechen* ('to break someone's heart') or *etwas auf Herz und Nieren prüfen* ('to scrutinize something thoroughly').
- Kinegrams: Expressions involving physical actions or images—e.g., *mit strahlender Miene* ('with a beaming face').
- Pair formulas: Fixed word pairs with specific meanings—e.g., *Schwarz und Weiß sehen* ('to see black and white') or *hoch und heilig versprechen* ('sworn on high').
- Comparative idiomatic expressions: Phrasemes drawing comparisons to highlight traits—e.g., *stark wie ein Löwe* ('strong as a lion') or *schnell wie der Blitz* ('fast as lightning').

I initially annotated the following categories (Analysis 1—relevant to RQ 2):

- Speaker: The person speaking in the turn containing the idiomatic expression.
- Addressee: The person addressed by the speaker.
- Interlocutors: The speaker-addressee constellation—who is speaking to whom.[15]

14 For instance, there are various types of formulas, including polite formulas (e.g., greeting formulas), scolding and swearing formulas, commentary formulas (expressions that indicate doubt, rejection, criticism, or astonishment), and stimulus formulas (such as requests, threats, and warnings).

15 The chapter of the novel in which the idiomatic expression occurs, along with its cotext and broader context, was also annotated. However, these annotations are not included in the analyses presented here.

These indicators facilitate the reconstruction of the communicative context in which the idiomatic expressions are utilized; they enable an examination of whether children use these expressions more frequently than adults and whether they appear more often in peer-to-peer interactions. Furthermore, annotating which character employs specific idiomatic expressions highlights usages that characterize the characters in the novel and reflect their individuality.

In a second step (Analysis 2—relevant to RQs 1, 2 and 3), I annotated:

- Degree of idiomaticity.
- Markedness at the level of language variation.
- Category based on typologies outlined above.

In subsequent steps, I further annotated:

- Possible communicative functions and pragmatic uses (Analysis 3—relevant to RQ 2).
- Formal and semantic modifications (Analysis 4—relevant to RQ 1 and 2).
- Anchor words[16] and strategies aimed at facilitating reader comprehension (Analysis 5—relevant to RQ 3).

To ensure objectivity, only idiomatic expressions listed in the Duden 11 Dictionary (^{2}2002) were included for detailed analysis. Recognition and annotation were performed manually.

4. Main Findings

This section presents the results of the analysis, including quantitative data and illustrative examples for qualitative insights. All idiomatic expressions identified in the dialogues of the novel (a total of 93) were included in Analysis 1. For Analyses 2, 3, 4, and 5, only those expressions listed in the Duden 11 Dictionary (^{2}2002)—a total of 67 out of the 93—were considered.

4.1 Speakers, Addressees, and Interlocutors (Analysis 1)

The evaluation of speakers and addressees encompassed all 93 occurrences of idiomatic expressions within the dialogues and is summarized in Tables (1) to (3).

16 Heringer (2020) emphasizes the importance of anchor words and utilizes them to categorize idioms.

Table 1. Speaker[17]

Speaker		
Adult	24	26%
Child	69	74%
Total	93	100%

Table 2. Addressee

Addressee		
Adult	28	30%
Child	61	66%
Oneself	4	4%
Total	93	100%

Table 3. Interlocutors

Interlocutors		
Adult to adult(s)	16	17%
Adult to child(ren)	8	9%
Child to adult(s)	12	13%
Child to child(ren)	53	57%
Child to oneself	4	4%
Total	93	100%

Of the 93 idiomatic expressions identified throughout the dialogues, 69 (74%) are used by children, whereas only 24 (26%) are used by adults (see Table (1)). This provides clear evidence that idiomatic expressions predominantly serve to characterize children's feigned orality.[18] Furthermore, since many idiomatic expressions are directed toward other children, they can be interpreted as sociolectal features associated with in-group interactions. Specifically, 57% of these expressions are addressed to children, while only 17% are used by adults addressing other adults (see Table (3)).

Qualitatively, it is noteworthy that nearly all idiomatic expressions within children's turns (64 out of 69) are uttered by four main characters: Emil, Pony, Gustav, and the so-called Professor. This supports Kästner's intention to

17 The longer the shades of gray in the boxes representing the percentages in this (and subsequent) table(s), the higher the frequency.

18 However, it should be noted that dialogues among children clearly predominate in the novel.

characterize these protagonists through a language marked by idiomatic expressions. As will be further discussed in Section (4.5), each character's idiomatic usage exhibits distinct features that contribute to their individual profiles.

4.2 Idiomaticity, Markedness, and Categorization (Analysis 2)

This section presents the main findings of Analysis 2, which pertain to idiomaticity and markedness in relation to the dimensions of language variation, as well as the categorization within phraseme typologies.

Determining the degree of idiomaticity can be complex; sometimes it is preferable to distinguish simply between non-idiomatic phrasemes and those with varying degrees of idiomaticity. Following Burger ([5]2015, 33), I classified certain expressions as weakly idiomatic. For example:

(11) Sich aus der Affäre ziehen ['to get out of a tight spot']
(12) Tag und Nacht ['night and day']

In example (11), the metaphorical meaning hinges on spatial/movement concepts associated with *ziehen* ('to pull'), which is pervasive in German but not exclusively phraseological;[19] thus, its idiomaticity is considered weak. In example (12), literal and figurative meanings can coincide depending on the context; in the novel's usage on page 95, ambiguity persists. Consequently, this expression was also classified as weakly idiomatic.

Quantitative data reveal that 83% of all examined expressions exhibit clear idiomaticity—divided evenly between total and partial idiomaticity:

Table 4. Degree of idiomaticity

Degree of idiomaticity		
Full	27	40%
Partial	29	43%
Weak	11	16%
Total	67	100%

Table (5) shows the results of checking the markedness as to the dimensions of language variation in Duden 11.

19 For example, this is evident in studies on the so-called *Alltägliche Wissenschaftssprache* ('daily scientific language'), cf. Ehlich (1999) and Heller (2012).

Table 5. Marked forms based on dimensions of language variation

Markings relating to linguistic variation		
Diachron: archaic	1	1%
Diaphasic: colloquial	48	67%
Diaphasic: colloquial after modification	5	7%
Diaphasic: colloquial and humorous	3	4%
Diaphasic: obscene	1	1%
Diastratic: military	1	1%
Diatopic: Berlin	1	1%
None	12	17%
Total	72	100%

The total refers to markings, not to idiomatic expressions.
In a few cases, one idiomatic expression is associated with more than one marking.

The analysis shows that 83% of these idiomatic expressions are marked for language variation dimensions. The most prominent dimension is the diaphasic one, with 67% of the idiomatic expressions classified as colloquial and an additional 5% as colloquial and humorous. For example:

(13) Aber mir hat doch wer, der einen großen Umhängebart trug und die Kinder *wie seine Westentasche kannte*, ausdrücklich erklärt, das gefiele ihnen nicht! (8) ['But someone who wore a big beard and *knew* the children *like the back of his hand* expressly told me that they didn't like it!'][20]

This partially non-compositional comparative phraseme is marked as colloquial in Duden 11.

Furthermore, five idiomatic expressions are not inherently colloquial but become so after formal modifications—for instance example (14), which features a partially non-compositional communicative formula conveying encouragement:

(14) *Nur keine Bange*, junge Frau! (32) ['*Have no fear*, young lady!' (42)]

20 In this and all subsequent examples, the analyzed idiomatic expression is in bold. The translation of this example—unlike those of the subsequent ones—is my own, as the English version used to obtain the translations does not include the prologue from the original version from which this example is derived. The translations of the other examples are by W. Martin (official English translation of the novel, edition 2007). The page numbers in the original text and the translation are enclosed in brackets.

This expression abbreviates a longer phraseme *(jemandem wird/ist angst und bange*—'someone becomes scared or frightened'). The shortening—a typical feature of spoken language—,[21] along with Emil playfully addressing his mother as *junge Frau*, emphasizes colloquial tone. His mother's meta-linguistic reply further reinforces this effect: *und sei vor allem zu den anderen Leuten nicht so frech wie zu deiner Mutter* ('And don't be a smart-aleck with other people like you are with your mother!', on the same pages).

The categorization results based on Burger's classes are summarized in Table (6).

Table 6. Categorization of idiomatic expressions based on the classes proposed by Burger

Categorization of idiomatic expressions (classes by Burger)		
Kommunikative Phraseme (communicative phrasemes)	6	9%
Modellbildungen (schematic patterns)	6	9%
Referentiell - nominativ - Teilidiome (partial idioms)	32	48%
Referentiell - nominativ - Vollidiome (full idioms)	20	30%
Referentiell - propositional - feste Phrasen (fixed phrases)	3	4%
Total	67	100%

A striking observation concerns referential idiomatic expressions: There is a predominance of nominative types—particularly partial idioms—which account for 48% of all cases. Conversely, propositional idiomatic expressions are marginal—only about 4%, consisting solely of fixed phrases;[22] no topic formulas such as proverbs or commonplaces were identified. The remaining expressions are either communicative phrasemes or schematic patterns (*Phraseoschablonen*, following Schafroth's terminology (2024)), both constituting about 9%.

Special classes such as somatisms, kinegrams, and animalisms proved particularly relevant. Collectively, these three groups account for approximately 69% of all analyzed idiomatic expressions belonging to special classes (see Table (7)).

21 The Collins German Dictionary lists the idiomatic expression *nur keine Bange!* in its short form as being informally marked, meaning 'don't worry' (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english/bange, last accessed on July 19th 2025).

22 Qualitatively, only two instances involve non-idiomatic usage.

Table 7. Categorization of idiomatic expressions based on the special classes proposed by Burger and Fleischer

Categorization of idiomatic expressions (special classes by Burger and Fleischer)		
Animalisms	4	11%
Comparative phrasemes	6	17%
Form-meaning pairs	4	11%
Kinegrams	10	29%
Somatisms	10	29%
Twin formulas	1	3%
Total	35	100%

Examples include a colloquial idiom that is used as a communicative formula conveying fear and negative associations that also functions as a somatism (15), a colloquial partial idiom that also qualifies as a kinegram (16), an animalism being an idiom and serving as a communicative formula expressing surprise (17), and a colloquial, modified idiom functioning as a communicative formula conveying criticism that is also a kinegram (18).

(15) *Mir stehen die Haare zu Berge*, obwohl ja alles längst vorüber ist (127) ['*It makes my hair stand on end*, even though it's all over now' (152)]
(16) Mein Enkel Emil *ist* erst *auf 'nen Sprung* beim Reichspräsidenten! (82) ['My grandson Emil went to pay a visit to the president!' (100)]
(17) »[…] Das meiste Geld hat man, in seinem Anzugfutter eingenäht, wiedergefunden. Lauter Tausendmarkscheine.« »*Du kriegst die Motten*«, sagte Pony Hütchen (123). ["[…] Most of the money was subsequently found hidden in the lining of his jacket. All in thousand-mark bills." "*Get outta here!*" said Pony the Hat (146)]
(18) »Na Mensch, *fall nur nicht gleich vom Stühlchen*«, sagte der Junge (63) ["Hey man, *settle down!*" said the boy (78)]

4.3 Communicative Functions (Analysis 3)

The examples above ((15), (17) and (18)) illustrate how special classes serve pragmatic functions within dialogue. Overall, 26 out of the 67 analyzed idiomatic expressions (39%) fulfill specific communicative purposes and are classified as communicative formulas in terms of their use in context, irrespective of their formal phraseological category. This high percentage underscores the vital role played by idiomatic expressions with pragmatic intent. The functions include criticism, warnings, requests/pleas/encouragements (e.g., example (14)), positive excitement or surprise. In (19), Petzold, one of the children, warns his friends not to be cheeky or loud before leaving the group. To express this, he uses a fully non-compositional communicative formula conveying warning:

(19) *Macht euch ja nicht mausig*, ihr Saukerle! Ich gehe sowieso (90). ['*Don't be so arrogant*, you idiots. I'm going anyway' (110)].

Most cases involve stimulus formulas directed at the addressee (15 instances), followed by commentary formulas focused on the speaker (11 instances). Almost all of these expressions convey positive feelings; neither polite nor scolding formulas were observed.

4.4 Modifications (Analysis 4)

Formal modifications occurred frequently—about 34% of cases—while semantic modifications were less common (18%). The percentages of the types of formal modifications are summarized in Table (8).

Table 8. Formal modifications of idiomatic expressions

Formally modified component		
Predicate	1	4%
Preposition	1	4%
Structure (reduction)	9	39%
Substantive	5	22%
Verb	7	30%
Total	23	100%

Typically, either nouns or verbs within the idiomatic expressions are modified. Example (20) features a partial idiom with noun modification:

(20) Aber wozu soll der Junge *die Ferien* hier *totschlagen*? (24) [But why should the boy *spend his vacation* here, boring himself to death? (32)][23]

In its canonical form recorded in the Duden 11 Dictionary, the noun is *Zeit*: *die Zeit totschlagen* ('to kill time'). Here, *totschlagen* ('to kill') is used metaphorically with reference not to time in general, but to holiday time (*Ferien*—'holidays'). As observed in the word profile in DWDS (*Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*) of *totschlagen* ('to strike dead'), this idiomatic expression allows for some variation, but the semantic field of time is predominant (*Zeit* and related compounds, but also, for example, *Langeweile*—'boredom'). The nouns (direct objects) in the collocation with the highest logDice[24] (>2) are, in order of frequen-

23 Choosing a collocation (that is, a non-idiomatic but rather an idiosyncratic phraseme, namely *to spend his vacations*) results in the English version losing the idiomaticity, creativity, and emotional intensity of the original German idiomatic expression. However, this loss is compensated by the subsequent explanatory addition *boring himself to death*, which reintroduces the concept of death.

24 *LogDice* is the natural logarithm of the *Dice* coefficient, a statistical measure used to evaluate and compare word associations or collocations within corpora. Higher *logDice* scores indicate stronger associations and are useful for identifying significant collocations.

cy: *Mücke* ('mosquito'), *Fliege* ('fly'), *Gendarm* ('gendarme')—these three admit a literal interpretation—*Langeweile* ('boredom'), *Rezensent* ('reviewer'), *Zeit* ('time'), *Lebenszeit* ('lifetime'), *Ratte* ('rat'), *Freizeit* ('free time'), *Wartezeit* ('waiting time'). When considering the absolute frequency, the value of *Zeit* is significantly higher than the others, as it confirms the importance of *Zeit* for the unmodified form of the idiomatic expression.

Example (21) involves modification of the verb in a partially idiomatic, colloquial and humorous expression conveying warning:

(21) Wenn wir den Bruder entwischen lassen, *nennen wir uns alle* von morgen ab *nur noch Moritz* (66) [If we let our friend over there get away, *we'll all be wearing permanent dunce caps* after tomorrow (83)]

Jemandem Moritz lehren ('to give/to teach someone a lesson') undergoes modification and the verb becomes *nennen* (*sich Moritz nennen*—'to call someone Moritz').[25] This change shifts both meaning and role constellation, by modifying the denoting and denoted entities (someone–another person à we–ourselves).

Structural reduction was common—39%—reflecting spoken language features, exemplified by (22):

(22) Mensch, das reinste Theater. *Zum Quietschen*. Also, hört zu! (91) [It's like in the movies, bud. *Totally wild*. Listen to this (111)]

This rapid incipit emphasizes the emotional involvement of Gustav, who is about to tell his peers about his hotel raid in search of the thief, through shortened forms typical in colloquial speech. The colloquial, partially idiomatic and schematic pattern, which is used as a communicative formula conveying positive excitement, is a shortened form of the usual phraseological construction [*es ist zum* X], i.e.: *zum Quietschen* ('it is squeaky').[26]

4.5 Characterization of the Protagonists Through Idiomatic Expressions

A qualitative analysis focusing on four main characters—Emil, Pony, Gustav, and the so-called Professor, those who primarily employ idiomatic expressions—revealed differences in their use of modifications and markedness levels within their language profiles (Table (9)). These variations contribute to their individual characterization through distinctive linguistic patterns.

25 To fully understand the meaning of this idiomatic expression, it is important to note that, within the German-speaking cultural context, the proper name *Moritz* is associated with a childlike, naïve soul—likely referencing a character created by the German caricaturist and painter Oberländer (1845–1923). Cf. the entry in the DWDS (https://www.dwds.de/wb/Moritz?o=moritz) and in the Duden online Dictionary (https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Moritz_Naivling) (both last accessed on July 2nd, 2025).

26 Here, X represents a nominalized verb or verbal noun.

Table 9. Use of idiomatic expressions by the four main characters

	Emil	Pony	Gustav	Professor
Idiomatic expressions (total)	17	14	20	13
Marked in relation to the levels of linguistic variation	6	12	14	6
Modified	6	7	3	1

As shown in the table, all four characters frequently use idiomatic expressions; however, their usage patterns differ. Pony (the only girl in the novel) and Gustav employ significantly more colloquial or Berlin-marked idiomatic expressions, whereas Emil predominantly uses neutral expressions. The idiomatic expressions used by the Professor, the son of a judge, are also more neutral in terms of language variation than those of his friends. Emil enjoys playing with language and modifies about one-third of the idiomatic expressions he employs. Similarly, half of Pony's idiomatic expressions are modified; notably, Pony—the only girl in the novel—uniquely exhibits both high levels of language variation and modification simultaneously.

4.6 Anchor Words and Strategies to Facilitate Comprehension (Analysis 5)

Seventy-five percent of the idiomatic expressions feature anchor words related to children's everyday experiences, serving as aids in phraseme acquisition for young readers. This deliberate use of anchor words is evidenced not only by the high percentage, but also by their diversity: 44 different anchor words were identified. Many refer to body parts—such as *Auge* ('eye'), *Buckel* ('hunchback'), *Haare* ('hair'), *Kopf* ('head'), *Mund* ('mouth'), *Nase* ('nose'), and *Schädel* ('skull'). Children are familiar with other words through their daily routines: *Berge* ('mountain'), *Geld* ('money'), *Hose* ('trousers'), *Jacke* ('jacket'), *Ohrfeige* ('slap'), *Sprung* ('jump'), *Stuhl* ('chair'), and *Tinte* ('ink').

Nearly half of the idiomatic expressions (40%) contain linguistic elements within their co-text that support decoding. As shown in Table (10), these strategies vary.

Table 10. Strategies for explicitly supporting phraseme acquisition

Strategy to support phraseme acquisition		
Accumulation	19	70%
Implicit explication	1	4%
Metalinguistic comment	2	7%
Vocabulary	5	19%
Total	27	100%

The primary strategy involves accumulating multiple idiomatic expressions within a single context—used in 70% of cases. In example (23), the colloquial partial idiom *etwas ausfressen* ('to do something wrong') appears alongside two other idiomatic expressions: *jemanden hoppnehmen* ('to catch someone') and *scharf auf jemanden sein* ('to be keen on someone'; 'to be hot for someone'). This clustering provides idiomatic support through contextual reinforcement.

(23) »Sag's doch dem Schupo dort. Der nimmt ihn hopp.« »Ich mag nicht. Ich *habe* bei uns in Neustadt *was ausgefressen*. Da sind sie nun vielleicht scharf auf mich […]« (64) ["Tell the patrolman over there. He'll bust him for sure." "I'd rather not. I *pulled some stuff* back in New Town. They may have it in for me […]" (79–80)][27]

The interpretation is supported not only by the two idiomatic expressions mentioned, but also by a lexical choice—*Schupo* ('patrolman').[28] Idiomatic expressions with lexical cues that aid interpretation in the co-text accounted for 19% of the 67 idiomatic expressions analyzed, as illustrated in example (24), too. This passage features a partial idiom that is diatopically marked (regional: Berlin) and used as a communicative formula conveying an order:

(24) »Also, ich finde die Sache mit dem Dieb <u>knorke</u>. <u>Ganz große Klasse</u>, <u>Ehrenwort</u>! Und, Mensch, wenn du <u>nischt</u> dagegen hast, helfe ich dir.« »Da wär ich dir <u>kolossal</u> dankbar!« »*Quatsch nicht, Krause*! Das ist doch klar, daß <u>ich</u> hier <u>mitmache</u>. Ich heiße Gustav.« »Und ich Emil.« (64) ["Listen, this thing with the robber is <u>cool</u>. It's <u>awesome</u>, actually! So unless you have a problem with it, I'd like to help out." "Wow, <u>that would be great of you</u>!" "*It's no big deal*. <u>Of course I'm game</u>. By the way, my name is Gus." "And I'm Emil." (80)]

The underlined words and expressions in example (24) possess characteristics that clearly facilitate correct interpretation: They are lexical exaggerations typical of teenage slang (e.g., *ganz große Klasse*—'awesome,' *Ehrenwort*—omitted in the official English translation, *kolossal*—'great'), terms used by teenagers at that time (e.g., *knorke*—'smashing'/'swell,' marked as dated slang in the Collins German Dictionary), colloquial synonyms (*mitmachen* for *teilnehmen*—'to take part in'), or forms with regional connotations (<nischt> for <nicht>, which encodes Berlin pronunciation [nɪʃt] instead of the standard [nɪçt]). These linguistic devices create an appropriate setting for the scenes described—the first meeting and the beginning of a friendly alliance between the protagonist Emil and Gustav from Berlin.

27 In this and the following example, accompanying phenomena that support the acquisition of phrasemes—such as other idiomatic expressions or words with appropriate connotations—are underlined.

28 According to the Collins German Dictionary, *Schupo* (an abbreviation of *Schutzpolizist*) is a (archaic) colloquial term meaning 'cop' in English.

5. Conclusions

The primary aim of this study was to examine the use of idiomatic expressions within the feigned colloquial and, to some extent, jargon-like orality in *Emil und die Detektive* (Kästner, 1929/1935). Given Kästner's prominence as an author of children's and youth literature where idiomatic expressions, irony, colloquialisms, and teenage slang are particularly frequent, the analysis focused on all fully or partially idiomatic expressions present in the dialogues. The overarching goal was to address three research questions (RQs) and test related hypotheses:

- RQ1. What role do idiomatic expressions play in creating feigned, jargon-like colloquiality?
  I hypothesized that idiomatic expressions closely related to the children's world—featuring anchor words from their everyday life, somatisms, kinegrams, and animalisms—as well as metaphorical and other idiomatic expressions, including comparative idioms, would be particularly significant. To address this question, I analyzed all dialogues in the novel both quantitatively and qualitatively. The idiomatic expressions were classified according to the main and special classes of the usual typologies. Additionally, I annotated the degree of idiomaticity, any modifications, and marked features related to language variation dimensions.
- RQ2. How are these expressions characterized in terms of situation-, group-, or function-specific features?
  This question aimed to determine whether idiomatic expressions were used more frequently by children and within in-group conversations. To achieve this, I annotated contextual information for each idiomatic expression, including the speaker, the addressee, and the correspondence between them. The analysis also incorporated data collected for RQ1 to provide a comprehensive characterization. Furthermore, examining the communicative functions of the idiomatic expressions offered insights into their situational and social roles.
- RQ3. How do the features of the idiomatic expressions identified in relation to RQ1 and RQ2 relate to strategies for facilitating phraseme acquisition among young readers?
  For this purpose, I took into account the children's conceptual framework. I hypothesized that interactions exist between the features of these expressions and the strategies for aiding comprehension and acquisition (introduction, embedding or explanation of phrasemes, clustering patterns, modifications, and paraphrases). To explore this relationship, I annotated the strategies in the co-text.

The quantitative and qualitative analyses of all 93 idiomatic expressions within the dialogues (or the 67 listed in the Duden 11 Dictionary, depending on the analysis) yielded the following results:

- RQ1. The analysis revealed that idiomatic expressions significantly support the depiction of feigned orality and sociolectal elements within the novel. Their use imbues the text with dynamism and authenticity, closely mirroring everyday speech. While many expressions were modified—often playfully or ironically—they rarely approached jargon or teenage slang levels. Instead, they contributed to a colloquial tone that enhanced character depth without resorting to overt slang.
- RQ2. The quantitative data demonstrated that idiomatic expressions predominantly occur in peer-to-peer interactions, reinforcing group affiliation. They also serve as markers of sociolectal identity, especially among children. Notably, individual characters exhibited different degrees of language variation and modification (cf. also Richter-Vapaatalo, 2006, 262): Pony, the only girl in the novel, displays frequent use of marked and modified idioms—a possible sign of emancipation and linguistic independence that were not so self-evident at that time. Gustav's idiomatic expressions also show high levels of markedness and modification. Emil, by contrast, mainly uses neutral forms but enjoys playful modifications—reflecting his lively personality. The Professor, being a judge's son, employs more neutral idioms with fewer modifications. A common denominator was the pragmatic relevance of the analysed idiomatic expressions, indicated by the high percentage of communicative formulas.
- RQ3. Phraseme acquisition was eased by features of the idiomatic expressions. A significant percentage (75%) of the idiomatic expressions featured anchor words rooted in children's daily experiences—such as body parts (*Auge*, *Nase*), common objects (*Stuhl*, *Jacke*), or familiar concepts (*Geld*, *Berge*). These anchor words serve as cognitive cues facilitating comprehension and acquisition. Furthermore, many expressions included lexical elements from colloquial or regional varieties (e.g., Berlin dialect), which provide contextual clues for interpretation. For example, regional slang (*knorke*, *nischt*) and colloquial intensifiers help young readers understand the intended meaning. Additionally, co-textual accumulations and repetitions of idiomatic expressions eased understanding.

Such strategies align with Burger's (1997, 237) concept of *schonend-vermittelnder Gebrauch* ('gently mediating use'). However, as the use of idiomatic expressions in the dialogues is particularly playful and tongue-in-cheek (*spielerisch-"augenzwinkernd"*, Burger 1997, 240), even adult readers enjoy the formulations. Of course, these are merely initial insights that warrant further investigation.

Addressing this research question in detail would require a more comprehensive theoretical framework and a dedicated article.

This study represents an initial exploration. Future investigations could examine cross-cultural and linguistic variations, longitudinal development of phraseme comprehension in children, or experimental approaches to assess how such texts influence language acquisition.

References

Analysed Novel and Translation

Kästner, Erich. 1929. Edition 1935. *Emil und die Detektive*. Zürich: Atrium Verlag.

Kästner, Erich. 1929. *Emil and the Detectives*. Translated by W. Martin. 2007. Woodstock/New York: The Overlook Press.

Scientific references

Boarini, Francesca. 2015. "Ambiguità onomastica e traduzione. Il caso italiano di Emil und die Detektive di Erich Kästner". il Nome nel testo. Rivista internazionale di onomastica letteraria 2015 (XVII): 273–283.

Burger, Harald. 1997. "Phraseologie im Kinder- und Jugendbuch". In Wortbildung und Phraseologie, edited by Rainer Wimmer, and Franz-Josef Berens, 233–254. Tübingen: Narr.

Burger, Harald. 1998. Phraseologie – Eine Einführung am Beispiel des Deutschen. Berlin: Erich Schmidt (= Grundlage der Germanistik 36).

Burger, Harald. 2015 [/1998]. Phraseologie. Eine Einführung am Beispiel des Deutschen. Berlin: E. Schmidt.

Burger, Harald *et al.* 1982. Handbuch der Phraseologie. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Carobbio, Gabriella. 2023. "Ironie und Phraseologie am Beispiel des Romans Der Zimmerspringbrunnen und seiner Übersetzung ins Italienische". trans-kom 16(2): 317–333.

Černyševa, Irina I. 1980. Feste Wortkomplexe des Deutschen in Sprache und Rede. Moskau: Vysšaja Škola.

Cinato, Lucia, and Isabella Amico di Meane. 2019. "Tradivario. Variazione socio-geografica e traduzione: pratiche, strategie e tendenze nella coppia di lingue tedesco-italiano sull'esempio di due casi studio". In Passaggi, transiti e contatti tra lingue e culture: la traduzione e la germanistica italiana, edited by Raul Calzoni, and Manuela Caterina Moroni, 15–32 (= Studi Germanici, Quaderni dell'AIG 15).

Collins German Dictionary. Collins Unabridged German to English and English to German online dictionary. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english

Czennia, Bärbel. 2004. "Dialektale und soziolektale Elemente als Übersetzungsproblem." In Übersetzung – Translation – Traduction. Ein Internationales Handbuch zur Übersetzungsforschung. An International Encyclopedia of Translation Studies. Encyclopédie internationale de la recherche sur la traduction." Volume 1, edited by Harald Kittel, 505–512. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 1980. "Zur Dialektik des Begriffs der textbildenden Potenzen von Phraseologismen". Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung 33: 690–700.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. 1987. "Textbildende Potenzen von Phraseologismen". Linguistische Studien ZISW/A 164: 69–85.

Donalis, Elke. 2009. Basiswissen Deutsche Phraseologie. Tübingen: Francke.

Dudenredaktion, edited by. [2]2002. Redewendungen. Wörterbuch der deutschen Idiomatik. Mannheim: Dudenverlag (= Duden 11).

Duden online Dictionary. https://www.duden.de/

Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache (DWDS). https://www.dwds.de/r

Ehlich, Konrad. 1999. "Alltägliche Wissenschaftssprache." Informationen Deutsch als Fremdsprache 26(1): 3–24.

Ehrhardt, Claus. 2011. "Phraseologie und kommunikatives Handeln. Anmerkungen zum Gebrauch von pragmatischen Phrasemen in Internetforen". In Phraseologismen in Textsorten, edited by Hartmut E. H. Lenk, and Stephan Stein, 155–176. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.

Eismann, Wolfgang. 2007. "Phraseme in literarischen Texten". In Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung, edited by Harald Burger *et al.*, 316–329. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Fiehler, Reinhard. 2009. "Gesprochene Sprache." In Die Grammatik. 8., überarbeitete Auflage, edited by Dudenredaktion, 1165–1244. Berlin: Dudenverlag (= Duden 4).

Filatkina, Natalia. 2007. Pragmatik – Stilistik – Rhetorik der Phraseme. In Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung, edited by Harald Burger *et al.*, 132–158. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Fillmore, Charles J., Paul Kay, and Mary Catherine O'Connor. 1988. "Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions. The case of let alone". Language 64: 501–538.

Finkbeiner, Rita. 2011. "Phraseologieerwerb und Kinderliteratur. Verfahren der 'Verständlichmachung' von Phraseologismen im Kinder- und Jugendbuch am Beispiel von Otfried Preußlers Die kleine Hexe und Krabat". Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik 41(162): 47–73.

Fleischer, Wolfgang. 1997 [/1982]. Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Goetsch, Paul. 1985. "Fingierte Mündlichkeit in der Erzählkunst entwickelter. Schriftkulturen". Poetica 17: 202–218.

Heller, Dorothee. 2012. Wissenschaftskommunikation im Vergleich: Fallstudien zum Sprachenpaar Deutsch–Italienisch. Frankfurt a.M.: Lang.

Heller, Dorothee, and Alice Zinesi. 2023. "Vernetzung und Modifikation von Phrasemen in Text und Übersetzung". trans-kom 16(2): 255–276. https://www.trans-kom.eu/bd16nr02/trans-kom_16_02_04_Heller_Zinesi_Vernetzung.20231220.pdf

Heringer, Hans Jürgen. 2020. Idiomatik: Eine Einführung. Brey: mykum Verlag.

Hornáček Banášová, Monika *et al.* 2025. Germanistik digital. Phraseologie digital im DaF-Germanistik-Studium – ein Lehr-/Lernmaterial. https://gedi.germanistik-ucm.eu/phraseologie/

Koch, Peter, and Wulf Oesterreicher. 1985. "Sprache der Nähe – Sprache der Distanz". Romanistisches Jahrbuch 36: 15–43.

Lüger, Heinz-Helmut. 2007. "Pragmatische Phraseme: Routineformeln". In Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung, edited by Harald Burger *et al.*, 444–459. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Nicklaus, Martina, and Goranka Rocco. 2018. "Fingierte Mündlichkeit und Übersetzen". Lebende Sprachen 63(2): 393–429.

Reinhardt, Michaela. 2017. "Fingierte Mündlichkeit und poetische Sprachgestalt im Theatertext." In Handbuch Sprache in der Literatur, edited by Anne Betten, Ulla Fix, and Berbeli Wanning, 462–483. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Richter-Vapaatalo, Ulrike. 2006. "Beobachtungen zur Phraseologie in fünf frühen deutschen Kinderbuchklassikern". In Wörter-Verbindungen. Festschrift für Jarmo Korhonen zum 60. Geburtstag, edited by Ulrich Breuer, and Irma Hyvärinen, 259–274. Frankfurt am Main *et al.*: Lang.

Richter-Vapaatalo, Ulrike. 2007. 'Da hatte das Pferd die Nüstern voll'. Gebrauch und Funktion von Phraseologie im Kinderbuch. Frankfurt am Main *et al.*: Lang.

Sabban, Annette. 2004. "Zur Rolle der Phraseme für die Konstitution und Funktion des Textes. Ein Beitrag zum Konzept der textbildenden Potenzen". In Wortverbindungen – mehr oder weniger fest, edited by Kathrin Steyer, 238–261. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Sabban, Annette. 2007. "Textbildende Potenzen und Phraseme." In Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung, edited by Harald Burger *et al.*, 237–252. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Sahr, Michael. 1994. 5x Kinderbücher im Unterricht. Möglichkeiten im Umgang mit Kinderliteratur in der Grundschule. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider.

Sandig, Barbara. 2007. "Stilistische Funktionen von Phrasemen". In Phraseologie. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung, edited by Harald Burger *et al.*, 158–175. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Schafroth, Elmar. 2023. "Das phraseologische und das kreative Prinzip in der Sprache. Sprachproduktion und Translation". trans-kom 16(2): 233–254. https://www.trans-kom.eu/bd16nr02/trans-kom_16_02_03_Schafroth_Prinzip.20231220.pdf

Schafroth, Elmar. 2024. "Phraseoschablonen". In Konstruktionen, Kontexte, Gattungen, edited by Felix Tacke, and Anja Hennemann, 27–54. Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Schellheimer, Sybille. 2010. Las traducciones al castellano y al catalán de Emil Und Die Detektive. Un estudio descriptivo. Master's thesis. Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Schneider, Jan Georg, Judith Butterworth, and Hahn, Nadine. 2018. Gesprochener Standard in syntaktischer Perspektive. Theoretische Grundlagen – Empirie – didaktische Konsequenzen. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Schwitalla, Johannes. 2012 [/1997]. Gesprochenes Deutsch. Eine Einführung. Berlin: Erich Schmidt (= Grundlage der Germanistik 33).

Schwitalla, Johannes, and Tiittula, Liisa. 2009. Mündlichkeit in literarischen Erzählungen. Sprach- und Dialoggestaltung in modernen deutschen und finnischen Romanen und deren Übersetzungen. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Springman, Luke. 1991. "A 'Better Reality': The Enlightenment Legacy in Erich Kästner's: Novels for Young People". The German Quarterly 64(4): 518–530.

Stein, Stephan. 2004. "Formelhaftigkeit und Routinen in mündlicher Kommunikation". In Wortverbindungen – mehr oder weniger fest, edited by Kathrin Steyer, 262–288. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Taylor, John. 2012. The mental corpus. How language is represented in the mind. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Titsch, Töitschu, Deutsch! Walser idioms in the Aosta Valley

Luisa Giacoma
Aosta Valley University
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7783-9216

DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.233.c779

ABSTRACT
Walserdeutsch is an Alemannic language that spread through the Alps with the migration of the Walser people during the Middle Ages. Today, it is seriously threatened with extinction due to the small number of speakers and to being besieged by other languages. The Walser of the Lys Valley speak two variants of German, *Titsch* and *Töitschu*, which date back to the 13th century. The linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of this German-speaking area in a region with strong Romance roots, the Valle d'Aosta, has been the subject of numerous studies, but only a few of them deal with Walser idioms. The research project *WaLys Isole di cultura: lo scrigno walser dell'Alta Valle del Lys*,'WaLys Islands of culture: the Walser treasure of the Upper Lys Valley', launched at the University of Aosta Valley in 2022, describes the *Titsch* and *Töitschu* idioms and compares them with those of German. Within the lexicon, idioms were chosen as the object of this study because they preserve and hand down the words, knowledge and traditions of a people. This paper presents some of the materials developed within the framework of this project.

Keywords: Titsch; Töitschu; Walserdeutsch; Walser; phraseology.

1. The Upper Lys Valley: a linguistic island

The Germanic language minorities[1] in Italy are mainly located along the Alpine arc, in the north, in the regions of Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. In the Upper Lys Valley of the Valle d'Aosta, there are Walser communities in the municipalities of Issime, Gressoney-Saint-Jean and Gressoney-La-Trinité.

The Upper Lys Valley constitutes a Germanic linguistic island within the Romance area (Zürrer, 1982, 51), i.e., a portion of territory in which the inhabitants or most of them, historically resident, have continued to hand down and protect their own language, in this case *Walserdeutsch*, which differs from

1 Cf. Caria (2018); Gilardino (2005); Telmon (1992); Zinsli (1968).

the official language of their town or surrounding geographical regions. The Walser of the Lys Valley are immersed in a context that, in addition to Italian and French[2], has contact with the Franco-Provençal variety of the municipality of Gaby, located between Issime and Gressoney-Saint-Jean.

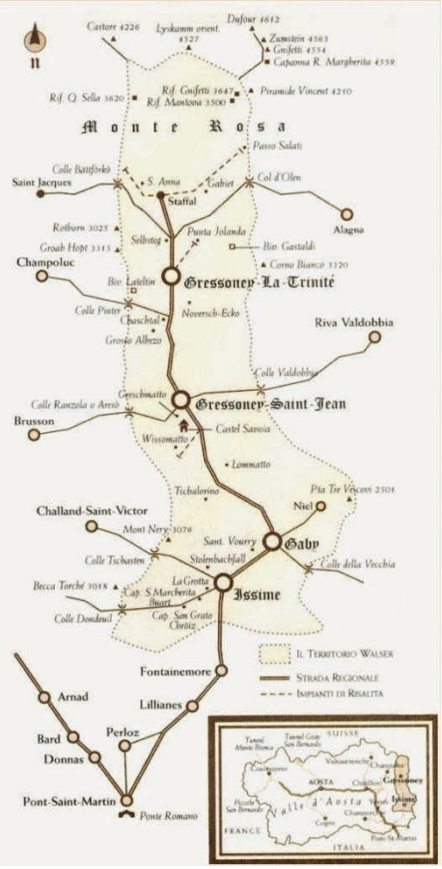


Fig. 1. Map of the Gressoney Valley with the upper Lys Valley highlighted[3]

Also contributing to the definition of a linguistic island is the connection of this alloglot community with its area of origin, which is particularly evident in the case of *Titsch*, and more nuanced in *Töitschu*. For historical reasons, *Titsch* has evolved over time in a similar way to German, thanks to the continuous trade with Switzerland, while *Töitschu*, slightly further downstream, has remained as it was in the past, although influenced more by the neighbouring

2 The two official languages of the Aosta Valley, which is a bilingual region.

3 Sessarego and Giacoma (2023, 8).

Romance languages. *Titsch* and *Töitschu* are protected by Constitutional Law No. 2 of 1993, Art. 40bis.

1.1 (Walser)deutsch, *Titsch* and *Töitschu*

German is today the third official language of the Upper Lys Valley, recognised by Regional Law No. 47 of 19/08/1998. However, its use dates back much earlier. In particular, it was the families of Walser origin, who continued to live between the Gressoney Valley and the large German-speaking centres (Bern, Zurich in Switzerland, and Augsburg, Munich in Germany), who made use of German for work purposes. The 'Rial Mercantile School' was established for young people in 1815 to train them in German as future entrepreneurs, merchants, notaries, secretaries, and priests (Rizzi, 2003).

Characteristic of this area is *Walserdeutsch*, a language of Alemannic origin that has extended across the centuries through the recovery of texts, documents, and testimonies, but also through the tradition of folk song and theatre.

This language takes concrete form in the *Titsch* of Gressoney and the *Töitschu* of Issime[4]. Although these municipalities are only a few kilometres apart, territorial continuity is interrupted by the municipality of Gaby, with consequences for the evolution of the local language.

Table 1 presents some words in *Titsch* and *Töitschu* compared with German, their *Dachsprache*.

Table 1. Comparison of *Titsch*, *Töitschu* and German

Titsch	Töitschu	German
e/en	eis	eins
isch	z'eisch	das Eis
ds tiar/tier	tag z'tschemes	das Tier
ds gras	z'gras	das Gras
der wold/woald	by woald	Der Wald

2. Walser idioms

Every language or dialect comprises idioms that often carry a double meaning. Alongside the compositional meaning, which derives from the sum of the meanings of the individual constituents, there is a second meaning, idiomatic or figurative, taken as a whole.

4 Cf. Dal Negro (2004); Gaeta *et al.* (2019); Giacalone Ramat (2007); Zürrer (2009).

Idioms are the part of vocabulary that most expresses the culture of a people, conveyingways of thinking, traditions, customs and, more generally, the Weltanschauung of a population. They also derive from experiences shared and reinforced over time and sometimes provide teaching. Usually, idioms are difficult to render in another language, with the sole exception of internationalisms that take the same fact as a model (total equivalence), as in the case of the *Töitschu Wénn d'chatzu ischt awek, d'möisch tanzun* 'when the cat is away the mice will play' (German: *wenn die Katze aus dem Haus ist, tanzen die Mäuse (auf dem Tisch)*; Italian: *quando il gatto non c'è, i topi ballano*). When switching from one language to another, a similar idiom is sought (*partial equivalence*). There are also idioms that have no equivalents in other languages and, therefore, recourse is made to a substitution or explanation, especially when they contain elements of the territory and culture typical or exclusive to the people who coined them (zero equivalence), such as *Töitschu I meje dꞃchinn wéllje nümmi wissu van dar schul, un dꞃchü vam dorre hoei* 'in May, the children no longer want to know about school and the cows about dry hay'.

The Walser linguistic minority also has in its linguistic heritage a series of more or less typical idioms, both in *Titsch* and in *Töitschu*, which over time, through research and testimony, have been recorded in writing for their preservation and safeguarding. It is noticeable that some of them, the more purely local ones, use elements related to the mountain context. For example, there are idiomatic expressions referring to nature, animals, fruit, or even Lys[5], or others referring to everyday village life, i.e., family, community, work. A series is dedicated, for example, to weather and climate, useful for managing work in the pasture or in the fields. For example, *Wenn d'mòrbenò treit fackse en z'loch, z'wätter leidet*, 'if the groundhog brings wild hay to the burrow, the weather gets worse'. This event occurs in autumn, a time when the groundhog prepares for hibernation.

3. Research projects on the *Titsch* and *Töitschu* idioms

The project titled *D'Òberteilera chéemen énger o arrivurun d'greschuneiara? Last call per il patrimonio idiomatico titsch e töitschu* is the natural continuation of the FICO! *Fraseologia In Contesto* project (Giacoma, 2019) carried out at the Department of Human and Social Sciences of the University of Valle d'Aosta in 2018, which in turn evolved from *Frasi fatte e ... disfatte* (Giacoma, 2017), undertaken in 2015 and 2016 in Germany, at the Technische Universität Dresden.

The aims of the projects on the *Titsch* and *Töitschu* idioms were not only to create a collection of drawings representing idioms that would be useful for teaching purposes, but also to define a methodological setting for the realisation

5 Name of the river that flows through the valley it is named after.

of these drawings and to make young pupils more aware of the richness of the idiomatic heritage of both their mother tongue and the languages they learn.

The FAR3 research training project, funded for two years (June 2021-May 2023) by the European Social Fund, as part of the Youth Plan, has in its title *D'Oberteilera chéemen énger o arrivurun d'greschuneiara*? 'Last call per il patrimonio idiomatico titsch e töitschu', two Walser idioms that have no equivalent in any other language. Two rare pearls that we feel obliged to save before it is too late. In fact, the entire idiomatic heritage of the Walser of the Lys Valley is strongly threatened by extinction given the scarcity of speakers, especially among the new generations. When it came to outlining the research project, it was decided to focus on the idioms of *Titsch* and *Töitschu*, since idioms are an important part of every language (hence: idiomatic) and its linguistic competence. Through them, words, knowledge, and traditions of a people are preserved and passed on.

The aim was to contribute to the preservation of the Walser language and culture of the Upper Lys Valley, to spread knowledge of it, and to increase its prestige; therefore, this project was initiated in the Aosta Valley, particularly in the Upper Lys Valley, which has been home to the Walser community for centuries, in collaboration with the primary schools of Gressoney-La-Trinité, Gressoney-Saint-Jean, and Issime, their teachers, and the Walser Kulturzentrum of Gressoney-Saint-Jean, with a focus on the idioms in *Titsch* and *Töitschu*.

The aim of the research was to describe the semantics, syntax, and pragmatics of each idiomatic expression repertorised and, in cooperation with the schools, to create prototypical usage situations that the children illustrated with a drawing. Subsequently, the drawings, adequately commented on to explain the use of the idioms in context, were accompanied by a literal translation and an idiom in Italian and German. The cards thus prepared formed a collection made available to the public through conferences, exhibitions, meetings, and publications.

3.1 Project phases

The project therefore developed over several phases. The initial phase was dedicated to the collection of Walser idioms that can be found to date, mainly drawing on the texts preserved in the Library of the Walser Kulturzentrum in Gressoney-Saint-Jean. A total of 1,087 Walser idioms were collected, in *Titsch* and *Töitschu*.

This was followed by a collaboration phase with the primary schools in the municipalities of the Upper Lys Valley, in which pupils were involved in the creation of some drawings, representing both the literal and idiomatic meaning of a selection of the idioms. A total of 62 were chosen, equal to the number of pupils who participated in the project.

The next phase was devoted to the creation of the comment cards for the idioms through careful metalinguistic research work involving not only *Titsch*

and *Töitschu* but also their roof language, German. When all the drawings were finished and collected, a concise description of each graphic representation was added to the cards of each idiom. We realised, in fact, their usefulness, as it is not always immediate for everyone to grasp the details of a drawing or to unequivocally understand the illustrative intentions of the person who made the drawing. Sometimes, cultural additions are necessary to fully understand a design.

At the same time, the organisation of an exhibition took place in Gressoney-Saint-Jean between 4 July and 31 August 2022 at Villa Deslex, where the Walser Kulturzentrum is located. After Gressoney-Saint-Jean, the exhibition moved to Issime (1-18 September 2022), in the Maison Vallaise building, and then to the Bruno Salvadori Regional Library in Aosta (24 April-22 May 2023).

The exhibition proved to be an excellent dissemination tool[6] to involve adults and children, residents, and tourists. The project was also presented at numerous phraseology conferences[7]. In addition, a book containing materials from the exhibition was made available to those who were unable to visit it (Sessarego and Giacoma, 2023).

3.2 Illustrations

The German verb *illustrieren* 'illustrate', like its Italian equivalent *illustrare*, mean both 'to show with images' and 'to explain'. This example makes one think about how important it is to explain something using an image. Images, which have long since entered education, first had a purely illustrative value, whereas they have now increasingly become tools for the transmission of knowledge and an integral part of language learning processes. Initially, these were static images introduced as early as 1658 by Comenius to facilitate foreign language learning. The success of his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* was such that it had many emulators and sanctioned the introduction of images in foreign language teaching. Hence, the idea of illustrating idioms with drawings, one for the compositional meaning and one for the idiomatic meaning. To illustrate *Titsch angleitz wie es ejerkoch* 'dressed like an omelette', an initial drawing was produced showing a child dressed in a yellow omelette (compositional meaning):

6 In March 2023, the project was also the subject of a RAI report aired during the Aosta Valley TGR.

7 We mention here the following international conferences: the '8th International Congress of Phraseology and Paresthology. Phraseology and paremiology: models and dynamics', Catholic University of Milan, 14-16 September 2022; "Beyond Borders | Jenseits der Grenzen. German-speaking Minorities in Italy and around the World. German-speaking Minorities in Italy and around the World. Deutschsprachige Minderheiten in Italien und in der Welt", University of Trento, 6-8 October 2022; „Europhras 2023. New Trends in Phraseology: Languages and Cultures in Comparison", University of Milan, 29 May-1 June 2023.

Fig. 2. Illustration of compositional meaning

A second drawing represents the idiomatic meaning, that indicates a haphazard way of dressing, without chromatic order, i.e., without a thought-out and chosen combination of colours, but by casually juxtaposing pieces and accessories. In the drawing, we see four quadrants represented. In the two upper quadrants, we have all the garments that can be worn: skirt and trousers, for the lower part of the body, and sweater and sweatshirt, for the upper part. In the two lower quadrants, we have on the left the sum of the garments and on the right a girl dressed in them, who therefore appears dressed without having selected what to wear.

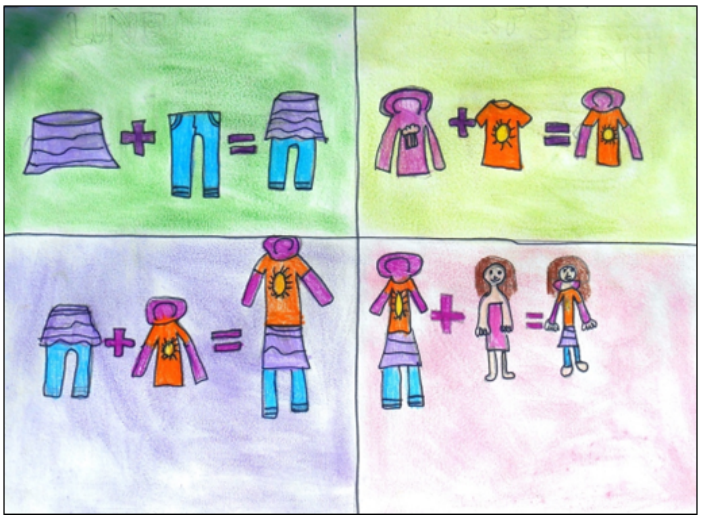


Fig. 3. Illustration of idiomatic meaning

3.3 Comment cards

The most innovative part of the project described here is certainly the integration of information by means of an accompanying card for each pair of images. The card is divided into seven parts[8]:

1. The title of the card consists of the citation of the idiom preceded by the language *Titsch* or *Töitschu*. Ex.:
   Titsch: ***angleitz wie es ejerkoch***
2. A translation into Italian. Ex.:
   Italian: *Vestito come una frittata* 'Dressed like an omelette'.
3. A translation into German. Ex.:
   Deutsch: *Angezogen wie ein Eierkuchen* 'Dressed like an omelette'.
4. The explanation of compositional meaning. Ex.:
   (It is) dressed like an omelette, i.e., with beaten egg.
5. The explanation of the idiomatic meaning. Ex.:
   In the omelette one can put, besides eggs, countless other foods or even leftovers; to be dressed as an omelette means, therefore, to put on clothes of various kinds and colours without a precise matching criterion.
   The idiomatic meaning contained in this phrase indicates a haphazard way of dressing, without chromatic order, i.e., without a thought-out and chosen combination of colours, but by casually juxtaposing pieces and accessories.
6. Pragmatics - explanation of the prototypical usage situation: Ex.:
   This idiom is used when one wants to indicate that a person is overdressed and casual, and generally with a negative aesthetic result.
7. Synonyms, antonyms, proverbs and idioms of the same semantic area or simple curiosities. Ex.:
   Synonyms:
   - *Vestito alla carlona* 'dressed shabbily': (fig.) with little care, carelessly, in a messy manner (Quartu and Rossi, 2012, 74)
   - *Vestito da Arlecchino* 'dressed like Arlecchino': (fig.) dressed in many colours, even with patches, even in a funny way (Quartu and Rossi, 2012, 22).

Curiosity:

There is a saying in spoken Italian '*fare una frittata*', with the figurative meaning of making a mess. The image derives from the fact that when eggs are broken, they cannot be put back together again.

8 The text of the card is originally in Italian/German, but here it is translated into English.

3.4 An example of card

Below is a card for the *Töitschu* idiom *Cheen va chu chalb*, which shows the importance of the information it contains, especially in cases of zero equivalents in Italian and German[9].

Töitschu: Cheen va chu chalb **Italian:** *Da mucca diventar vitello* 'From cow to calf' **Deutsch:** *Von der Kuh aufs Kalb kommen* 'From cow to calf'
Explanation of compositional meaning: From cow to calf.
Explanation of idiomatic meaning: The idiomatic meaning of this phrase highlights the anomaly of regression in nature. According to what occurs in reality and the natural evolutionary development of life, the calf grows up and becomes an adult bovine. This saying indicates the reverse process: the adult bovine goes back in time and becomes young again. Going backwards is an indication of regression, degrowth, i.e., that reverse process whereby, instead of improving and advancing, one regresses and returns to lower levels.
Pragmatics - explanation of the prototypical usage situation: This idiom is used when one wants to indicate regressing, going backwards. In life, living beings have an evolution. They are born, grow, grow old, and die. The physical process is only in this direction: the reverse process is not envisaged by nature. The meaning of this phrase, therefore, refers to the mind or behaviour: to become small again, to regress, or to behave like a being of a lower age.
Synonyms, antonyms, proverbs and similar: **Synonyms:** *Andar vitello e tornar bue* 'To go calf and come back an ox': (fig.) to become stupider than before (Quartu and Rossi, 2012, 438) *Da cavallo ad asino* 'From horse to donkey': (fig.) about a strong regression, something that deteriorates or falls sharply in prestige, fame, privileges, etc. (Quartu and Rossi, 2012, 82) *Fare come i gamberi* 'Make like a shrimp': (fig.) go backwards, hence worsen, regress in general (Quartu and Rossi, 2012, 168). **Antonyms:** *Fare passi da gigante* 'Make giant strides': (fig.) improve, progress very fast (Turrini *et al.*, 1995, 234).

9 The text of the card is originally in Italian/German, but here it is translated into English.

Fig. 4. Illustration of compositional meaning. In the drawing, we see an adult cow and a calf alongside. An arrow indicates the transition (transformation) from the first to the second

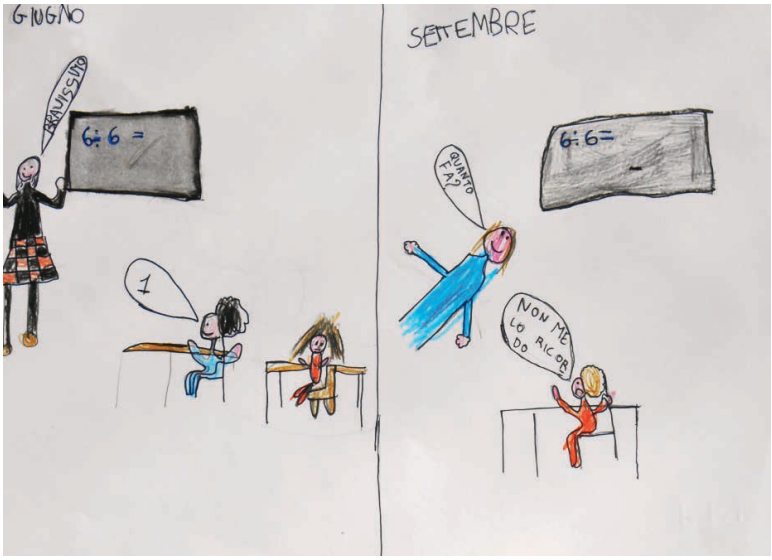


Fig. 5. Illustration of idiomatic meaning. In the drawing, we see the same situation represented at two different times. On the left, it is June and the child answers the teacher's question correctly. On the right, it is September and the child can no longer answer the same question correctly

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be said that a language, in order to be 'alive', must be handed down from where it is spoken to subsequent generations. When its use is, on the other hand, reduced or eroded by stronger and more widespread languages, we speak of a language at risk of extinction (cf. Dal Negro, 2004; Zürrer, 2009). In particular, dialects and minority languages are the most threatened forms, because they are often replaced by stronger languages in schools, politics, the media and, more generally, in public life. In the specific case of the Upper Lys Valley, *Titsch* and *Töitschu* are an important example of linguistic minorities at risk because they are 'besieged' by Italian, French and German. The presence of languages of Germanic origin in a region such as Aosta Valley, where Italian-French bilingualism prevails, cannot fail to arouse curiosity in the linguistics scholar. The small enclave of Gressoney and Issime, of Walser origin, must not risk losing the knowledge of its roots, of its language; therefore, it is necessary for the younger generations to be aware of their culture and the language that conveys it. The project presented here seeks to shine a spotlight on the Walser idiomatic heritage, involving the new generations through a playful-didactic activity in the school environment to allow them to get to know their own culture and origins better while having fun. Idioms, repertorised, illustrated, and enriched with descriptive cards acquire new life and, with it, a greater chance of survival.

References

AA.VV. 2007. Spréchwòrte òn Gseité òf Titsch vòn Greschòney. Centro Studi e Cultura Walser - Walser Kulturzentrum Gressoney-Issime. Aosta: Tipografia Valdostana.

Burger, Harald, *et al.*, Hrsg. 2019. Phraseologie. Phraseology. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Caria, Marco. 2018. Le isole linguistiche germanofone d'Italia. Alghero: Edicions de l'Alguer.

Dal Negro, Silvia. 2004. The Decay of a Language: The Case of a German Dialect in the Italian Alps. Bern/New York: Peter Lang.

Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij and Piirainen, Elisabeth. 2009. Zur Theorie der Phraseologie: Kognitive und kulturelle Aspekte. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag.

Favre, Luciana and Squindo, Elide. 2022. ZGreschòneytitscha. Gròndsetzléché Grammaték. Fondamenti di grammatica del titsch di Gressoney. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Fleischer, Wolfgang. 1982. Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache. Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut.

Gaeta, Livio *et al.* 2019. Conservazione e innovazione nelle varietà walser: i progetti DiWaC e ArchiWals. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Giacalone Ramat, Anna. 2007. "I proverbi di Gressoney". In Spréchwòrté òn gseité òf titsch vòn Greschòney, edited by AA.VV. (Walser Kulturzentrum), 18–19. Aosta: Tipografia Valdostana.

Giacoma, Luisa. 2016. "L'ultradizionario fraseologico: una banca dati multimediale e contesto-situazionale di espressioni idiomatiche dell'italiano". In Versprachlichung von Welt. Il mondo in parole. Festschrift zum 60. Geburstag von Maria Lieber, edited by Simona Brunetti *et al.*, 623–636. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag.

Giacoma, Luisa. 2017. "Frasi fatte e… disfatte: il progetto Emergenza Italiano su espressioni idiomatiche e didattica". In Fraseologia e paremiologia: passato, presente, futuro, edited by Cosimo De Giovanni, 411–425. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Giacoma, Luisa. 2019. "FICO! Fraseologia In COntesto". In Phraséodidactique: de la conscience à la compétence, edited by Geneviève Henrot Sostero, and Ma. Isabel González-Rey *Repères DoRiF* n. 18. DoRiF Università.

https://www.dorif.it/ezine/ezine_articles.php?art_id=425.

Giacoma, Luisa and Annachiara Sessarego. 2021. "Lo scrigno plurilingue dell'Alta Valle del Lys". In Éducation et Sociétés Plurilingues 51: 17–27.

Giacoma, Luisa. 2020. "Visual Representation of Idioms in Phraseodidactics: An Unexploited Potential". In Contrastive Phraseology: Languages and Cultures in Comparison, edited by Paola Cotta Ramusino, and Fabio Mollica, 499–516. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Gilardino, Sergio Maria. 2005. Walsersprache n. 1 - La lingua dei Walser: lo stato attuale delle conoscenze. Primo incontro di studio, Aosta, 2-3 dicembre 2005 – Progetto Interreg III B Spazio Alpino "Walser Alps". Aosta: Le Château Edizioni.

Pittano, Giuseppe. 1992. Frase fatta capo ha. Dizionario dei modi di dire, proverbi e locuzioni. Bologna: Zanichelli.

Quartu, Bruna Monica and Rossi, Elena. 2012. Dizionario dei modi di dire della lingua italiana. Milano: Hoepli.

Rizzi, Enrico. 2003. I Walser. Anzola d'Ossola: Fondazione Enrico Monti.

Ronco, Imelda and Musso, Michele. 2007. Éischemgseiti les dictons van a voart. Associazione Culturale Augusta di Issime. Aosta: Tipografia Valdostana.

Sessarego, Annachiara. 2020. La Valle di Gressoney e i Beck-Peccoz: La trasformazione di un territorio da rurale a turistico attraverso le vicende di un'antica famiglia walser. Tesi di laurea magistrale.

Telmon, Tullio. 1992. Le minoranze linguistiche in Italia. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Turrini, Giovanna *et al.* 1995. Capire l'antifona. Dizionario dei modi di dire con esempi d'autore. Bologna: Zanichelli.

Zinsli, Paul. 1968. Walser Volkstum in der Schweiz, in Vorarlberg, Liechtenstein und Piemont: Erbe, Dasein, Wesen. Frauenfeld: Huber.

Zürrer, Peter. 2009. "Dialetti walser in contesto plurilingue". In Gressoney e Issime in Valle d'Aosta, Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Phraseology in Action:

Theoretical Insights and Practical Approaches to Constructional Idioms, Idioms, Proverbs, and More

Edited by Fabio Mollica, Carolina Flinz, and Rita Luppi

This volume provides an extensive overview of contemporary phraseology research, comprising nineteen contributions that span various languages, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. Topics explored include constructional idioms, metaphor and metonymy, discourse markers, diachronic change, and the use of phraseological units in various textual and cultural contexts. By bringing together corpus-based studies, cognitive and pragmatic analyses, historical perspectives, and research on minority and endangered languages, the volume highlights the richness and diversity of formulaic language. Overall, it demonstrates the ongoing value of phraseology in providing insights into the relationship between language, culture, and communication.

ISBN 979-12-5510-446-9 (PDF)
ISBN 979-12-5510-449-0 (EPUB)
DOI 10.54103/milanoup.233