

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378593435>

The ways of phraseology are mysterious: Humour and snowclones in Spanish and German Bibleisms from a Construction Grammar perspective

Article in *Proverbium* · February 2024

CITATIONS

0

READS

40

1 author:



[Carmen Mellado Blanco](#)

University of Santiago de Compostela

86 PUBLICATIONS 256 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

“STANDING ON THE
SHOULDERS OF GIANTS”

A Festschrift in honour
of Wolfgang Mieder on the
occasion of his 80th birthday

Saša Babič,
Fionnuala Carson Williams,
Christian Grandl,
Anna T. Litovkina (eds.)

PROVERBIUM



Online Supplement 3: 2024

Online Supplement Series
of
Proverbium
Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship

Edited by
Melita Aleksa Varga and Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt

Volume 3 (2024)

Reviewers:
Dr. Leonard Pon, Associate Professor
Prof. Dr. Aderemi Raji-Oyelade

Cover Design:
Krešendo, Osijek

ISBN 978-953-314-216-6

Published by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek
Copyright (c) 2024 Proverbium and authors

“STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS”

A Festschrift in honour
of Wolfgang Mieder on the
occasion of his 80th birthday

Saša Babič, Fionnuala Carson Williams,
Christian Grandl, Anna T. Litovkina (eds.)



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER UNIVERSITY OF OSIJEK

WOLFGANG MIEDER



Table of Contents

Preface	9
 Proverbs in texts and contexts	
Csaba Földes <i>Formelhafte Sprache in einer deutschsprachigen Monatsschrift: Der „Königsberger Express“</i>	15
Liisa Granbom-Herranen <i>Proverbs from the Bible in Finnish vernacular</i>	35
Dennis F. Mahoney <i>Intertextualität bei Joseph von Eichendorff: Goethe-Reminiszenzen in „Ahnung und Gegenwart“ und Sprichwörterzitate in „Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts“</i>	55
Christoph Schmitt <i>Such- und Auswertungsszenarien von Sprichwörtern und Redensarten in der korpusbasierten digitalen Edition des „Mecklenburgischen Wörterbuchs“</i>	73
Helga Schreckenberger <i>Die Funktion von Sprichwörtern in Theodor Fontanes „L’Adultera“ (1880)</i>	93
Joanna Szczyk <i>Wolfgang Mieder – Celebrity der gegenwärtigen akademischen Welt in den digitalen Vorstellungstexten</i>	111
Georgios Tserpes <i>“Ροδάνι πάει η γλώσσα του/της”: A modern Greek proverbial comparison for chatter or eloquence?</i>	129
 Proverbs and cognitive linguistics	
Sadia Belkhir <i>Emotion and Metaphor in Kabyle Proverbs</i>	149
Izabela Dixon <i>Rust if you must but, more importantly, don’t</i>	167
El Mustapha Lemghari – Abdellah Lemghari <i>Stereotype-based metaphors in wealth proverbs</i>	181

Anna T. Litovkina	
<i>Metaphors of love in proverbs from around the world</i>	199
Maslina Ljubičić	
<i>Siblings and relatives in proverbs: stereotypes and metaphors as part of the European cultural heritage</i>	221
Anita Naciscione	
<i>Creative use of proverbs in discourse</i>	241

Proverbs, rhetoric, media, advertising

Simon J. Bronner	
<i>Psychosomatic speech practices in strength athletics</i>	253
Heinz-Helmut Lüger	
<i>Phraseme und persuasive Kommunikation</i>	
<i>Anmerkungen zur politischen Rhetorik Helmut Schmidts</i>	275
Kathleen Scollins – Brian Minier	
<i>“The dogs of war”: Putin’s paremiological riposte to the West</i>	293
Kateřina řichov	
<i>„Sprichwort ist geil“: Sprichwrter in Werbung, Werbung in Sprichwrtern</i>	311
znur Usta Tuzcu	
<i>The universality of the proverb “the dog barks, the caravan moves on”</i>	333
Damien Villers	
<i>Haters gonna hate: a memetic approach to the birth of a modern proverb</i>	349

Anti-proverbs and modern proverbs

Rita Brdar-Szab – Mario Brdar – Jiayou Xi	
<i>One proverb makes a hundred: Towards the automatic detection of proverbs and anti-proverbs with hyperbolically used large numbers</i>	367
Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt	
<i>„Auf die inneren Werte kommt es an“: Was macht ein modernes Sprichwort aus?</i>	383
Andreas Nolte	
<i>„Noch ist nicht aller Satire Abend!“: Das Mieder’sche ‚Antispruchwort‘ im Werk von Erich Kstner</i>	401

Neal R. Norrick

Once upon a time: Traditional narrative formulas 421

Polina Oleneva

*Conceptualization of money in Russian anti-proverbs:
A cognitive perspective* 437

Proverbs and contrastive linguistics

Sabine Fiedler

„Wir werden diese Brücke überqueren, wenn wir sie erreicht haben“
– Zur Entlehnung von Sprichwörtern aus dem Englischen 457

Vida Jesenšek

Parömiographische Leistungen C. von Wurzbachs 477

Carmen Mellado Blanco

*The ways of biblical quotations are mysterious: Change of register and
snowclones in Spanish and German from a constructivist point of view* 495

Valery M. Mokienko – Harry Walter

Lupus in fabula Paraemiologica Rossica: Der Gang des Wolfes 513

Hilola Ruzieva – Antonio Pamies-Bertrán

The status of women in the family in Uzbek and Spanish proverbs 535

Proverbs and folkloristics

Saša Babič

What is proverbial dog like? 561

Aristeides N. Doulaveras – Minas Al. Alexiadis

The close relationship between proverb and fable aspects of relevant literature ... 577

Joanna Szerszunowicz

The image of a learned man in Polish proverbs 593

Peter Unseth

“There cannot be any one-word proverbs”, but 611

Sabine Wienker-Piepho

„Und willst du nicht mein Bruder sein, dann schlag ich dir den Schädel ein“ –
*Sprichworte, Redensarten und Märchen von Brüderlichkeit und
Schwesterlichkeit im Wandel* 627

Empirical paremiology

Melita Aleksa Varga

The Croatian paremiological lore until the 19th century and the contribution of Josip Kekez to modern paremiography 649

Erzsébet Drahotová-Szabó

Zur phraseologischen Kompetenz ungarischer Lernender im Grundschulbereich 663

Matej Meterc

Slovenian dislike of proverbs and groups of proverbs in relation to familiarity and frequency: a survey and corpus data 681

María del Carmen Ugarte García

Learning from “wrong” answers in proverb surveys 697

Paremiography and paremiology – diachronic view

Abdullaeva Nargiza Erkinovna

Diachronic analysis of paremiography and its main linguistic issues 717

Munzhedzi James Mafela

Social empowerment through proverbs: An evaluation of “Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English” 735

Julia Sevilla Muñoz – Elke Cases Berbel

Spanish paremiology in the 21st century 747

Addenda

Anna T. Litovkina

A giant on giants’ shoulders 763

Rui Soares – Marinela Soares

Wolfgang Mieder and the AIP-IAP: a Special Legacy 779

Christian Grandl

Publication Record (2019–2023) 785

Contributors 801

CARMEN MELLADO BLANCO

THE WAYS OF BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS ARE
MYSTERIOUS: CHANGE OF REGISTER AND
SNOWCLONES IN SPANISH AND GERMAN FROM
A CONSTRUCTIVIST POINT OF VIEW

*Für meinen Freund und Kollegen Wolfgang,
die Weisheit und Großzügigkeit in Person. In Dankbarkeit*

Abstract: The subject of this essay¹ is Bibleisms in German and Spanish which, in addition to their original religious and often moralizing meaning, have, over time, developed additional ironic and/ or humorous semantics. Some of them may undergo, alongside the change of register, a process of constructionalization derived from their lexical variability in discourse. In this way, a high number of *anti-proverbs* (Mieder 1982) can lead to the creation of patterns and the emergence of semi-schematic constructions or snowclones. Using the Sketch Engine corpora *esTenTen18* (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/>), and *deTenTen20* (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/>) the aim of this corpus-based study is to explore the lexical variability of the biblical quotation *No solo de pan vive el hombre/ Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein* (Man shall not live by bread alone) (Matthew 4:4) in Spanish and German in order to uncover a possible phenomenon of constructionalization. Besides, it will also be explained whether the two languages display productivity to the same extent.

Keywords: Biblical Phraseology, Construction Grammar, Spanish-German Snowclones

¹ Study within the framework of the research project *Construction Grammar and Phraseology: German and Spanish Constructional Idioms in contrast through Corpora* (FFI2019-108783RB-100), promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

1. *The emergence of semi-schematic constructions through lexical substitution*

Analogical extensions of phraseological units play an important role in the creation of new patterns, especially through the process of lexical substitution. This is a widespread phenomenon among fully filled or substantive constructions, for example, idioms, quotations and proverbs, which by recurrent variation of their components and a high type frequency (see Section 3) can result in semi-schematic constructions. This interesting phenomenon of constructionalization (Traugott 2007) shows several strands within phraseological units with propositional value, like quotations, proverbs, slogans and the like (Mellado Blanco 2022: 9-11).

Through the modification of proverbs, anti-proverbs can be generated², which are defined by Mieder (2004: 28) as “parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom”. Some formal mechanisms to create anti-proverbs are association, change of homonyms, combination, permutation, abridgement, substitution, and syntactic change. The semantic effects of anti-proverbs can be summarised as: mitigation, apology, conservation, break of metaphor and neogenesis (Litovkina and Mieder 2006: 17–26). An example of an anti-proverb is *Where there’s a will, there’s a lawsuit* (change of homonym *will*, on the basis on *Where there’s a will, there’s a way*). When the number of anti-proverbs relative to a proverb is very high, the conditions are favourable for the emergence of *structural formulas* (Mieder 2004: 85; see also Hrisztova-Gotthardt 2016), *formal schemata* (Mellado Blanco 2012: 186–190), or *Sprichwortmuster* (*proverb patterns*, see Steyer 2019). This happens with Ger. *Reden ist Silber, X ist Gold*, in which it is the usual noun *Schweigen* that is replaced (Mellado Blanco 2018). In

² The term *anti-proverb* was first coined in 1982 by Wolfgang Mieder (Mieder 1982). It became more established with the publication *Twisted Wisdom. Modern Anti-Proverbs* by Mieder and Litovkina (1999). See also Mieder (2022).

this and similar cases, the creative modifications can be reduced to structural formulas.

On certain occasions, even if modifications of a proverb do exist, we cannot speak of a *pattern* because they occur only occasionally. This is the case with the biblical quote in German *Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein*, in which the low degree of variability of the item *Brot* in the *deTenTen20* corpus (Sketch Engine) is not compatible with the existence of a productive semi-schematic construction, unlike what happens in Spanish (see Section 2).

In accordance with Stumpf's (2016: 337) proposal, I distinguish between *modification patterns* (*Modifikationsmuster*), if the substitution of the proverb components is occasional (under 50% of all the instances of the construction), and true *phraseological schemata* (*Modellbildungen*) with open slots to be filled with a variety of types on a regular basis. Although this is an arbitrary division, Stumpf's (2016) study serves as a starting point for other proposals and as recognition of the continuum between occasional creative modifications of phraseological units and new semi-schematic constructions based on lexical substitution.

(2) A very similar phenomenon to structural formulas, but more centred on clichés in journalese, is that of snowclones³, defined by Pullum (2004) as “some-assembly-required adaptable cliché frames for lazy journalists”, of the type *The only good X is a dead X* (schematization of *The only good Indian is a dead Indian*). Another example is *to X or not to X* (from Shakespeare's line *to be or not to be*), with instances such as *to play or not to play*, *to eat* or not to eat meat, produced with a clear playful and in many cases humorous intention (Bergs 2019: 177). Although the term *snowclone* emerged outside of Construction Grammar (CxG henceforth), this type of pattern can be identified as a semi-schematic construction, and thus it has not gone unnoticed by certain construction grammarians. This is the case

³ At <https://snowclones.org/> an extensive collection of snowclones can be found.

with Hartmann and Ungerer (2023), who describe snowclones as “extravagant formulaic patterns that typically have a lexically filled source construction and that exhibit distinctive formal and/ or functional characteristics”. For Traugott and Trousdale (2013: 183), “in a snowclone a fixed specific expression becomes less fixed by virtue of introducing a variable (a formal change), while the original meaning of the micro-construction generalizes”. In any case, snowclones are a type of partially filled construction characterized by (cf. Ivorra Ordines, in press): (i) the existence of a lexically filled source that is culturally known and used; (ii) productivity: a phraseological unit can become productive through lexical substitution of one or more slots; (iii) peculiar (extravagant) formal or functional properties that serve as markers of linguistic innovation and facilitate the memorization of the pattern.

Diachronically, snowclones “arise from lexical constructionalization of a schema after a number of constructional changes” (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 184). Such is the case with the biblical quote *My cup runneth over* (Psalm 23: 5), with the original meaning ‘I have a surfeit of something’, which through a process of constructionalization comes to mean ‘X is beyond capacity’, ‘X is too much’ in the snowclone *My X runneth over*.

In the case of both structural formulas and snowclones, creative formations by analogical extensions often follow patterns of creativity. This is what Philip (2008: 106) argues that non-canonical forms are unpredictable, but they seem to follow systematic tendencies in their variability. Such systematicity usually responds to some kind of motivation with respect to the lexical item that is substituted or modified, either phonologically, semantically and/ or morphologically (Rasulic 2010). Moreover, it is interesting to note that the new constructional meaning builds on the canonical meaning of the phraseological unit, giving rise to a polyphonic semantic effect. Philip (2008: 104) comments on this phenomenon as follows:

[...] whatever element is substituted, its meaning is always read in relation to the canonical phrase. The new element forces the reader to analyse the phrase both compositionally and non-compositionally, and the overall meaning is a combination of the old phrase and the new, and not a new phrase in its own right.⁴ (Philip 2008: 104).

(3) A type of pattern which is different from structural formulas and snowclones is that of patterns that underline proverbs (Peukes 1977). As Mieder (2004: 6-7) notes, “the thousands of proverbs of any language can be reduced to certain structures or patterns”, such as “Better X than Y,” “Like X, like Y,” “If X, then Y,” calling to mind such well-known proverbs as *Better poor with honour than rich with shame*, *Like father, like son*, and *If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again*. In German: *Erst A, dann B* (e.g. *Erst die Arbeit, dann das Vergnügen*), *Lieber A als B* (e.g. *Lieber den Spatz in der Hand als die Taube auf dem Dach*). Structural models of this type can in turn become more productive and license new proverbs or proverb variants (cf. Röhrich and Mieder 1977: 62). According to Lewandowska (2008), the model character of many proverbs described in this way is a reminder, on a semantic level of Permjakov’s 1968 theory of deep semantic models or the logical-semantic universals (“invariants”) which, from a crosslinguistic perspective, provide the basis for the understanding and use of proverbs (cf. Grzybek 2000). In contrast to snowclones and structural formulas, these structural models (*Modelle der Analyse* according to Fleischer 1997: 194) can only be ascertained *a posteriori* through analysing the structural similarity of a lot of different proverbs.

In this work, I focus on schemata (1) and (2), that is, on structural formulas and anti-proverbs, which, from a constructionist perspective, can be considered as the same phenomenon, since they are patterns that arise from lexical variation of phraseological units with propositional value (quotations, proverbs, slogans, and so on) and are predominantly used in publicity and press⁵. In both cases, they

⁴ In CxG, this phenomenon is known as *coercion* (see Michaelis 2004).

⁵ A very different phenomenon is that of *syntactic frames*, referred to as *partially lexically filled constructions* (Goldberg 2006: 5) or *constructional idioms*

are *patterns of coining* (Fillmore 1997) since “a speaker uses existing patterns in the language for creating new resources” (Fillmore 2002). Another reason to consider structural formulas and snowclones as two sides of the same coin is that it is often not easy to differentiate between the various types of phraseological units that give rise to one or other type of phenomenon. To simplify the terminology, I will refer to these semi-schematic constructions as *snowclones*.

2. *Biblical phraseology: The Bibleisms*

Within Phraseology there is a long tradition of studies based on the so-called *Bibleisms* (Gak 1998), both from an intra-linguistic and a contrastive point of view⁶. Biblical phraseology encompasses not only idioms but also proverbs and quotations, although the boundaries between these units are not always well-defined. Thus, biblical quotations, the biblical origin of which the speaker is initially aware, can become proverbs (by definition anonymous and with unknown dating and ultimate origin) when their use becomes widespread in colloquial speech. In other cases, the character of the quotation persists, as noted by Kispál (1998: 378):

Ein Teil der Bibelzitate wird nicht als Sprichwort behandelt, weil bei diesen Zitaten die meisten Menschen noch an die Bibel den-

(Taylor 2016), such as the WXDY (*What's X doing Y?*, cf. Kay and Fillmore 1999). Unlike structural formulas and snowclones, constructional idioms do not arise from variability of a phraseological unit but are originally productive models (*Phraseoschablonen* or *Modelle der Synthese* according to Fleischer 1997: 194), able to generate new units under specific morphological, lexical, and pragmatic conditions. Taylor (2016: 11) defines constructional idioms as “patterns (of varying degrees of productivity and schematicity) for the formation of expressions, but whose syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and even phonological properties cannot be derived from general principles, whether universal or language-specific”.

⁶ Mellado Blanco (2017, 2020) for Spanish-German, Ettinger (1977) for French-German, Funk (1998) for German-Portuguese, Gak (1998) for French-Russian, Kispál (1998) for German-Hungarian, Luque Nadal (2010) for Spanish-English, and Zholobova (2015) for Spanish-Russian.

ken oder weil sie nicht geläufig sind und nicht oft genug verwendet werden. Es ist also oft nicht eindeutig, ob man noch vom Zitat oder schon vom Sprichwort sprechen kann. (Kispál 1998: 378).

In addition, many proverbs inspired by the Bible are used as phraseologisms, as is the case in German with *Wer anderen eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein* (Proverbs 26:27) and *jmdm. eine Grube graben*. Similarly, for the biblical quote *Wer ohne Sünde ist, der werfe den ersten Stein* (John 8:7), the idiom *den ersten Stein (auf jmdn.) werfen* is also observed (Duden 11, 2020: 726). Within biblical phraseology, distinctions can be made (cf. Mellado Blanco 2017; 2020) (1) between literal Bibleisms, taken directly from the Bible, which are more likely to exhibit cross-linguistic equivalence, such as Sp. *Nadie es profeta en su tierra* / Ger. *Ein Prophet gilt nichts in seinem Land* (Luke 4:24); Sp. *Ojo por ojo, diente por diente* / Ger. *Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn* (Exodus 21:24), and (2) situational Bibleisms, inspired by one or more biblical passages but not reproducing a specific biblical passage, such as Sp. *el benjamín de la familia* / Ger. *der Benjamin [der Familie]* (Genesis 4:15); Sp. *el fruto prohibido* / Ger. *die verbotene Frucht* (Genesis 3:6); Sp. *Sodoma y Gomorra* / Ger. *Sodom und Gomorrha* (Genesis 18-19); Sp. *David contra Goliat* / Ger. *David gegen Goliath* (1 Samuel 17); Sp. *el hijo pródigo* / Ger. *der verlorene Sohn* (Luke 15:32); Sp. *predicar en el desierto* / Ger. *ein Rufer / Prediger in der Wüste* (inspired by Isaiah 40:3 “*vox clamantis in deserto*”).

From a contrastive perspective, differences can be observed between German and Spanish, especially in situational Bibleisms, for example, Ger. *die fetten Jahre/ die mageren Jahre / die mageren Jahre*, lexicalized in Spanish as *años de vacas gordas / vacas flacas* (inspired by Genesis 41:1–27). In addition, literal Bibleisms are not always fixed units but can have various versions within each language as a result of different translations of the same biblical passage: Lat. “*queaerite et invenietis*” (Matthew 7:7) is translated into German as *Suche, so findest du* and *Wer sucht, der findet*; in Spanish into *Busca y hallarás* and *El que busca encuentra*. At other times, depending on the biblical passage, we find quotations with little variation. For exam-

ple, the sentence Lat. “ex fructu arbor agnoscitur” (Matthew 12:33) is translated into German as *An den Frucht erkennt man den Baum*, while the variant Lat. “arbor de fructu suo cognoscitur” (Luke 6:44) is translated into German as *den Baum erkennt man an den Früchten*. Contrastive studies on the Bible reveal numerous differences in biblical phraseology, both in terms of form and semantics, as well as lexical and pragmatic aspects. There are many and varied reasons for these divergences (cf. Mellado Blanco 2017). One reason is that translators adapted the original biblical text to their respective languages, adding characteristics of their own cultures. Other differences are due to translation errors, such as Ger. *Säuen Perlen werfen* vs. Sp. *echar margaritas a los cerdos*, because of the incorrect translation of the Greek *márgaron* and Latin *margarita* in the sense of ‘daisy’ rather than ‘pearl’, which was the meaning in classical languages. In addition to this, Bibleisms can also undergo semantic changes over time, as seen in the Spanish idiom *dormir el sueño de los justos* and in German *den Schlaf des Gerechten schlafen*, with different meanings in each language (Sp. ‘fall into oblivion’ vs. Ger. ‘sleep soundly,’ see Duden 11, 2020: 662). An interesting case of contrastive divergence is related to changes in style or register, which will be discussed in Section 3.

3. *The biblical quotation No solo de X vive el hombre in Spanish and Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein in German: A phenomenon of Constructionalization in Spanish*

Given their religious source, one might initially think that biblical quotations are confined to formal registers and pursue a moralistic and/ or euphemistic intention. However, when consulting the corpora (*esTenTen18* for Spanish, see <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>; *deTenTen20*⁷ for German, see <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>) there is a certain

⁷ Due to the number of tokens in the German corpus (20,999,598,683) and the Spanish corpus (19,600,041,678), as well as the textual genres, the *deTenTen20* and *esTenTen18* corpora can be considered comparable corpora.

tendency for biblical quotations to be used colloquially and with a humorous and ironic intention. This phenomenon seems to be more pronounced in Spanish than in German, as evidenced by examples of biblical quotations. *La carne es débil* (Matthew 26: 40) in the *esTenTen18* corpus (with 769 occurrences) is mostly used with clear humorous and dysphemistic references to the sexual sphere⁸. In this context, Ruiz Gurillo (2009: 376) points out that register change is, at the synchronic level, an indicator of irony.

Often, the register change is accompanied by modifications through lexical substitution. These creative modifications of phraseological units are “made by the individual speaker or writer who intends a particular stylistic effect” (Gläser 1998: 130). If these modifications or anti-proverbs become widespread among speakers and exceed the use of the canonical form of the quotation, we are dealing with a phenomenon called a *structural formula* (Mieder 2004: 85) or *snowclone* (see above in Section 1, cf. Stumpf 2016). This is the case with the Spanish biblical quotation *Los caminos de Dios / del Señor son inescrutables* (Romans 11:33), the corpus analysis of which shows the substitution of the constituent *Dios* with other lexemes or nominal phrases in 56% of the 612 occurrences found⁹. This potential for variability leads to postulating the snowclone in Spanish [*Los caminos de X son inescrutables*] (see example 1), linked to a colloquial register and an ironic tone. Modified uses of the quotation also appear in German but in a much more isolated manner (example 2), so it is not appropriate to consider the existence of a snowclone for the biblical quotation *Die Wege des Herrn sind unergründlich*.

- (1) *Los caminos **de las redes sociales** son inescrutables.* [esTenTen18 6443522]
- (2) *Die Wege **der Dateien** sind unergründlich und eine Datenbank*

⁸ Contrary to what happens in Spanish, in German, *das Fleisch ist schwach* (616 occurrences) appears almost exclusively as a biblical quotation and enclosed in quotation marks like *Der Geist ist willig, (aber) das Fleisch ist schwach*.

⁹ Search in *esTenTen18*: *phrase* los caminos right context [lemma=“inescrutable”] (1...5).

ist ein lebendiges Wesen. [deTenTen20 8911327]

From a constructionist framework, it is interesting to note that the change of register or textual genre is considered a trigger for the semantic change of a construction (Schmid 2020: 94). Furthermore, there are authors advocating for the inclusion of style and textual genre parameters as defining features of constructions (Nikiforudou and Fischer 2015; Hoffmann and Bergs 2018). In this context, in the corpus analysis of the biblical quotation *No solo de pan vive el hombre* (Matthew 4:4) in Spanish and *Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein* in German, a change of register towards a colloquial style and a humorous tone is observed (examples 3–5), not only in lexically modified forms (examples 4 and 5) but also in instances without formal modifications (example 3):

- (3) *Conscientes, como éramos, de que **no solo de pan vive el hombre**, agradecemos largamente unas pastas que la gracia de las manos de las monjitas nos pusieron en las nuestras [...].* [esTenTen28 10663487]¹⁰
- (4) *“**No solo de soberanismo vive el hombre**”, destacaba una tertuliana en TVE. No en los tiempos que corren. Convocar elecciones en mitad de legislature tenía el riesto de asumir un doble coste; el económico y el político-emocional.* [esTenTen18 10780921]
- (5) *Das bekannte Zürcher Vegirestaurant Hiltl war zum ersten Mal an der beef, natürlich mit beeflosen und auch sonst fleischlosen Vegi-Delikatessen. **Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Fleisch allein**, er braucht auch Salat.* [deTenTen20 33276342]

The degree of productivity of constructions depends on several factors (Barðdal 2008). Indeed, a semi-schematic construction can be considered productive not only by virtue of a high token frequency, namely, a high number of occurrences (Goldberg 2006: 93). Type fre-

¹⁰ Despite the fact that the canonical form does not show formal variation, there is a change in register (to colloquial) and a remotivation of the literal sense.

quency - or variety of slot fillers in a pattern - is also an indicator of productivity in semi-schematic constructions. In other words, productivity also depends on the number of “different items occurring in the various schematic slots of a construction” (Boas 2013: 247). On top of this, the number of unique instances of each slot, that is, of hapaxes, is likewise a criterion to measure type frequency (Ziem and Lasch 2013: 106; Cappelle 2014; Mellado Blanco 2023).

Table 1 reflects the data from the analysis of token frequency, type frequency, hapaxes, as well as the variability index of the biblical quotation *No solo de pan vive el hombre* in Spanish and *Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein* in German in relation to the total occurrences found.

Table 1. Productivity and variability of the biblical quotation in Spanish and German

biblical quotation	corpus	token frequency	type frequency	hapaxes	variability
<i>No solo de X vive el hombre</i> ¹¹	<i>esTenTen18</i>	1387 occurrences	605 types: 43,61%	490 hapaxes: 35,32%	64,31%
<i>Der Mensch lebt nicht von X allein</i> ¹²	<i>deTenTen20</i>	1051 occurrences	93 types: 8,84%	82 hapaxes: 7,80%	15,41%

¹¹ Search: *phrase* vive el hombre right context [lemma="solo"] (-4...-1).

¹² Search: *phrase* der mensch lebt nicht right context [lemma="allein"] (1...4).

Table 2. Token frequency of the slot filler X in Spanish and German up to type 20

types X	token requeryency	percentage	types X	token frequency	percentage
1. <i>pan</i>	495	35,66%	1. <i>Brot</i>	889	84,59%
2. <i>fútbol</i>	22	1,59%	2. <i>Gleis</i>	35	3,33%
3. <i>vino</i>	14	1,01%	3. <i>Hirn</i>	6	0,57%
4. <i>rumba</i>	12	0,87%	4. <i>Luft</i>	6	0,57%
5. <i>música</i>	10	0,72%	5. <i>Fleisch</i>	5	0,48%
6. <i>cerveza</i>	9	0,65%	6. <i>Buch</i>	5	0,48%
7. <i>foto</i>	8	0,58%	7. <i>Bier</i>	4	0,38%
8. <i>rock</i>	7	0,5%	8. <i>Bit</i>	4	0,38%
9. <i>comida</i>	7	0,5%	9. <i>Wort</i>	3	0,29%
10. <i>amor</i>	7	0,5%	10. <i>Wein</i>	2	0,19%
11. <i>moto</i>	7	0,5%	11. <i>Kunst</i>	2	0,19%
12. <i>carne</i>	6	0,43%	12. <i>Lohn</i>	2	0,19%
13. <i>trabajo</i>	6	0,43%	13. <i>Sex</i>	2	0,19%
14. <i>literatura</i>	5	0,36%	14. <i>Boot</i>	2	0,19%
15. <i>arte</i>	5	0,36%	15. <i>Sport</i>	2	0,19%
16. <i>política</i>	5	0,36%	16. <i>Benzin</i>	2	0,19%
17. <i>cómic</i>	4	0,29%	17. <i>Reis</i>	2	0,19%
18. <i>marvel</i>	4	0,29%	18. <i>Frühstück</i>	1	0,1%
19. <i>juego</i>	4	0,29%	19. <i>Vision</i>	1	0,1%
20. <i>agua</i>	4	0,29%	20. <i>Shaka</i>	1	0,1%

Based on Table 1 and Table 2, it can be inferred that the use of Spanish biblical quotations is significantly commoner in modified form than in unmodified form. In fact, they are mainly used as anti-proverbs, comprising 64.31% of all instances. This is different from what happens in German, where the standard form is used in 84.59% of cases, and there is very little variation (15.41%). When taking into consideration additional parameters such as token frequency, type frequency, and the number of unique occurrences, we can conclude

that only in Spanish can we suggest the presence of a productive language pattern, or snowclone. In Spanish, the structure allows for instances where the speaker intends to be humorous, and there are no restrictions on the meaning of the words used. On the other hand, type frequency in German is quite low. Many of the slot fillers are related to ‘food/ drink’ (see above example 5), indicating limited creativity in this context.

4. Conclusion

The great advantage of Construction Grammar is that variation is approached holistically in terms of productivity, analogy, regularity and schematicity, and the creative play of idioms, quotations, proverbs, and so on, is not interpreted as an irregular phenomenon, but simply as infrequent instantiations of constructions (Mellado Blanco 2022). This explains why no line can be drawn between phraseology and creativity¹³, which leads some authors to consider fixed expressions as constructional frames with lexical flexibility (Rasulic 2010). Far from being conceived of as a destabilising force, creativity is understood in CxG as a manifestation of the playful nature of human beings and as a mechanism of linguistic change by adaptation to the context of use (cf. Hoffmann 2019).

For all the above reasons, GxC constitutes an ideal framework for studying phraseological variation along the lexis-grammar continuum using the resources offered by Corpus Linguistics. I argue that lexically filled constructions, such as proverbs and quotations, offer an interesting field of study in relation to non-canonical individual variants, what in phraseology have traditionally been called “modifications” (Burger 2015: 159–178; Dobrovolskij 2008). As shown in

¹³ For the consideration of formulaic-conventional language and creativity as continuum, not as dichotomy, cf. Ivorra Ordines and López Meirama (in press). Creativity must be related not only to the lexical flexibility of speakers in using idiomatic expressions, but also to the interpretative ability of listeners to decode phraseological sentences that deviate from the canonical form, either in form or content (cf. Moon 1998; Mellado Blanco 2023).

the present essay, frequent modifications of lexically filled constructions¹⁴ can function as a real engine of change and a trigger for the emergence of semi-schematic constructions.

References

- Barðdal, Jóhanna. *Productivity. Evidence from Case and Argument Structure in Icelandic*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008.
- Bergs, Alexander. "What, If Anything, Is Linguistic Creativity?" *Gestalt Theorie*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2019, pp. 173–184.
- Bibel online*. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, <http://die-bibel.de>, retrieved on September 10 2023.
- Biblia online*. <http://www.bibliaonline.net/>, retrieved on September 10 2023.
- Boas, Hans. "Cognitive Construction Grammar". *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar*, edited by Thomas Hoffmann, and Graeme Trousdale, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 233–252.
- Buerki, Andreas. 2018. "Formulaic sequences: a drop in the ocean of constructions or something more significant?" *Formulaicity and Creativity in Language and Literature*, edited by Ian MacKenzie, and Martin A. Kayman, London: Routledge, 2018, pp. 15–34.
- Burger, Harald. *Phraseologie. Eine Einführung am Beispiel des Deutschen*. 5., neu bearbeitete Aufl. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2015.
- Capelle, Bert. "Conventional Combinations in Pockets of Productivity: English Resultatives and Dutch Ditransitives Expressing Excess". *Extending the Scope of Construction Grammar*, edited by Ronny Boogaart, Timothy Colleman, and Gijsbert Rutten, Berlin / New York: De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 251–282.
- Dobrovol'skij, Dmitrij. "Idiom-Modifikationen aus kognitiver Perspektive". *Sprache – Kognition – Kultur. Sprache zwischen mentaler Struktur und kultureller Prägung*, edited by Heidrun Kämper, and Ludwig M. Eichinger, Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2008, pp. 302–322.
- Duden 11. *Redewendungen. Wörterbuch der deutschen Idiomatik*. Berlin: Bibliographisches Institut, 2020.

¹⁴ Let us recall that the study of phraseological units is not currently one of the priorities of CxG, which focus more on semi-schematic and grammatical constructions (cf. Buerki 2018). From my point of view, CxG should reinforce the study of phraseological units, not as static constructions, but as flexible units with great creative potential.

- Ettinger, Stefan. "Wiederholte Rede und Bibelsprache. Bemerkungen zur deutsch-französischen Übersetzung biblischer Zitate". *Linguistica Biblica*, vol. 40, 1977, pp. 1–20.
- Fillmore, Charles J. *Construction Grammar Lecture Notes*, <http://www1.icsi.berkeley.edu/~kay/bcg/lec02.html>, 1997, retrieved on 15 September 2023.
- Fleischer, Wolfgang. *Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997.
- Funk, Gabriela. "A Bíblia como indicador da importancia do provérbio no âmbito de culturas diferentes". *Paremia*, vol. 7, 1998, pp. 97–106.
- Gak, Vladimir G. "Probleme der kontrastiven Phraseologie: Biblische Phraseologismen in der russischen und in der französischen Sprache". *Europäische Phraseologie im Vergleich: Gemeinsames Erbe und kulturelle Vielfalt*, edited by Wolfgang Eismann, Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1998, pp. 237–246.
- Gläser, Rosemarie. "The Stylistic Potential of Phraseological Units in the Light of Genre Analysis". *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, and Applications*, edited by Anthony Paul Cowie, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 125–143.
- Goldberg, Adele E. *Constructions at Work: the nature of generalization in language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Grzybek, Peter. *Die Grammatik der sprichwörtlichen Weisheit von G.L. Permyakov. Mit einer Analyse allgemein bekannter deutscher Sprichwörter*. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2000.
- Hartmann, Stefan, and Thomas Ungerer. "Attack of the snowclones: A corpus-based analysis of extravagant formulaic patterns". *Journal of Linguistics*, 2023, pp. 1–36.
- Hoffmann, Thomas. "Language and Creativity: A Construction Grammar approach to linguistic creativity". *Linguistics Vanguard*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1–8.
- Hoffmann, Thomas, and Alexander Bergs. "A Construction Grammar Approach to Genre". *CogniTextes*, vol. 18, 2018.
- Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina. "Kein Sprichwort ohne Strukturformel? Vorgeprägte syntaktische Schemata in aktuell gebräuchlichen bulgarischen Sprichwörtern". *Yearbook of Phraseology*, vol. 7, 2016, pp. 81–98.
- Ivorra Ordines, Pedro. "Dime con quién te juntas y te dire quién eres. Substantive idioms from Construction Grammar". In *How to do things Corpora*,

- edited by Torsten Leuschner, Jóhanna Barðdal, Gauthier Delaby, and Anaïs Vajnovszki, Springer Nature, in press.
- Ivorra Ordines, Pedro, and Belén López Meirama. “Vete a freír cristales. The interplay of innovation and convention in a constructional idiom of rejection in Spanish”. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, in press.
- Kay, Paul, and Charles J. Fillmore. “Grammatical Constructions and Linguistic Generalizations: The *What’s X Doing Y?* Construction”. *Language*, vol. 75, no. 1, 1999, pp. 1–33.
- Kispál, Thomas 1998. “Biblische Sprichwörter im Deutschen und im Ungarischen”. *Europäische Phraseologie im Vergleich: Gemeinsames Erbe und kulturelle Vielfalt*, edited by Wolfgang Eismann, Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1998, pp. 377–388.
- Lewandowska, Anna. *Sprichwort-Gebrauch heute: ein interkulturell-kontrastiver Vergleich von Sprichwörtern anhand polnischer und deutscher Printmedien*. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008.
- Litovkina, Anna T., and Wolfgang Mieder. *Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify: A Collection of Anti-Proverbs*. Burlington: The University of Vermont – Veszprém: The Pannonian University of Veszprém, 2006.
- Luque Nadal, Lucía. “Las referencias bíblicas en inglés y en español. Estudio culturoológico-contrastivo”. *Odisea*, vol. 11, 2010, pp. 269–283.
- Mellado Blanco, Carmen. “Pragmatische Aspekte der Bedeutung von Sprichwörtern aus dem kognitiven Feld ‘Schweigen’ am Beispiel des Sprachenpaares Deutsch-Spanisch”. *Sprichwörter multilingual. Theoretische, empirische und angewandte Aspekte der moderenen Parömiologie*, edited by Kathrin Steyer, Tübingen: Narr, 2012, pp. 165–204.
- Mellado Blanco, Carmen. “Locuciones y proverbios de origen bíblico: creación y difusión en alemán y español”. *Revista de Letras*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2017, pp. 52–69, <http://www.periodicos.ufc.br/revletras/article/view/31221/71724>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.
- Mellado Blanco, Carmen. “Wenn modifizierte Sprichwörter zu Mustern werden. Eine korpusbasierte Studie am Beispiel von Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold”. *Lexeme, Phrasen... Konstruktionen: Aktuelle Beiträge zur Lexikologie und Phraseologie*, edited by Martina Nicklaus, Nora Wirtz, Marcella Costa, Karin Ewert-Kling and Wiebke Vogt. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2018, pp. 183–203.
- Mellado Blanco, Carmen. “Simbología religiosa y metáforas del CAMINO en la Biblia”. *De aquí a Lima. Estudios fraseológicos del español de España*

- e Hispanoamérica*, edited by Elena Dal Maso, Venecia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2020, pp. 45–64.
- Mellado Blanco, Carmen. “Phraseology, patterns and Construction Grammar. An introduction”. *Productive Patterns in Phraseology and Construction Grammar. A Multilingual Approach*, edited by Carmen Mellado Blanco, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 1–25.
- Mellado Blanco, Carmen. “From idioms to semi-schematic constructions and vice versa: the case of [a un paso de X]”. *Constructions in Spanish*, edited by Evelyn Wiesinger, and Inga Hennecke, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2023, pp. 103–128.
- Michaelis, Laura. “Constructions are patterns and so are fixed expressions”. *Patterns in Language and Linguistics*, edited by Beatrix Busse, and Ruth Möhlig-Falke, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2019, pp. 193–220.
- Mieder, Wolfgang. *Antisprichwörter*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für deutsche Sprache, 1982.
- Mieder, Wolfgang. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Greenwood Press, 2004.
- Mieder, Wolfgang. “There is no such thing as a free lunch: New structures for modern proverbs”. *15th Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, ACTAS ICP21 Proceedings*, Tavira: AIP-IAP, 2022, pp. 157–175.
- Mieder, Wolfgang, and Anna T. Litovkina. *Twisted Wisdom. Modern Anti-Proverbs*. Burlington, VT: The University of Vermont, 1999.
- Mollica, Fabio. “Über das Sprichwort *Keine Antwort ist auch eine Antwort* und die Phrasem-Konstruktion [Kein(e) N1 ist auch ein(e) N1]: formale und semantisch-pragmatische Eigenschaften”. *Lexeme, Phrasen... Konstruktionen: Aktuelle Beiträge zur Lexikologie und Phraseologie*, edited by Martina Nicklaus, Nora Wirtz, Marcella Costa, Karin Ewert-Kling, and Wiebke Vogt, Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2018, pp. 205–222.
- Moon, Rosamund. “Frequencies and Forms of Phrasal Lexemes in English”. *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, and Applications*, edited by Anthony Paul Cowie, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 79–100.
- Nikiforidou, Kiki, and Kerstin Fischer. “On the interaction of constructions with register and genre”. *Constructions and Frames*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2015, pp. 137–147.
- Peukes, Gerhard. *Untersuchungen zum Sprichwort im Deutschen*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1977.
- Philip, Gil. “Reassessing the Canon: *fixed* phrases in general reference”. *Phraseology. An interdisciplinary perspective*, edited by Sylviane Granger, and Fanny Meunier, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008, pp. 95–108.

- Pullum, Geoffrey K. "Snowclones: lexicographical dating to the second". *Language Log*, 2004, http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languageelog/archives/2004_01.html, retrieved on 15 September 2023.
- Rasulic, Katerina. "Long Time, No Buzz: Fixed Expressions as Constructions Frames". *CogniTextes*, vol. 5, 2010, <http://journals.openedition.org/cognitextes/356>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.
- Röhrich, Lutz, and Wolfgang Mieder. *Sprichwort*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977.
- Ruiz Gurillo, Leonor. "La gramaticalización de unidades fraseológicas irónicas". *Dime cómo ironizas y te diré quién eres. Una aproximación pragmática a la ironía*, edited by Leonor Ruiz Gurillo, and Xosé Padilla, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 371–390.
- Schmid, Hans-Jörg. *The Dynamics of the Linguistic System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Sketch Engine Corpora: *deTenTen20* and *esTenTen18*. <https://www.sketch-engine.eu/>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.
- Steyer, Kathrin. "There's no X, only Y. A Corpus-based Study of German and English Proverb Patterns". *Living by the Golden Rule. Mentor - Scholar - World Citizen. A Festschrift for Wolfgang Mieder's 75th Birthday*, edited by Andreas Nolte, and Dennis F. Mahoney, Berlin/Bern: Lang, 2019, pp. 125–140.
- Stumpf, Sören. "Modifikation oder Modellbildung? Das ist hier die Frage – Abgrenzungsschwierigkeiten zwischen modifizierten und modellartigen Phrasemen am Beispiel formelhafter (Ir-)Regularitäten". *Linguistische Berichte*, vol. 247, 2016, pp. 317–342.
- Taylor, John R. Cognitive linguistics. *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistics*, edited by Keith Allan, New York: Routledge, 2016, 455–469.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. "The concept of constructional mismatch and type-shifting from the perspective of grammaticalization". *Cognitive Linguistics*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2007, pp. 523–557.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs, and Graeme Trousdale. *Constructionalization and Constructional Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Ziem, Alexander, and Alexander Lasch. *Konstruktionsgrammatik: Konzepte und Grundlagen gebrauchsbasierter Ansätze*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.
- Zholoboba, Anna 2015. "Manipulación creativa de los bibeísmos fraseológicos en español". *Tonos Digital*, vol. 28.

Copyright (c) 2024 Proverbium and author

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

