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Title

Collocations as linguistic “individuals”: identifying collocational polysemy for bilingual lexicographic description (Italian-German)

Abstract

As has been shown in several studies, collocations are not independent structures, but are embedded in a highly complex lexical “network” (Lo Cascio 2007, 2012). Their emergence is inextricably linked to semantic-cognitive processes such as metaphorisation, metonymisation and lexical absorption; their components are often characterized by polysemy and activate specific valence schemes inside the collocation (cf. Siller-Runggaldier 2017; Konecny 2021). However, what seems to have been underestimated so far is the fact that collocations in turn represent linguistic “individuals” (Hausmann 2008: 6), i.e. independent lexical units that can have their own combination profiles, can themselves be polysemous (developing sometimes also secondary idiomatic meanings) and – especially in the case of verbal collocations – can give rise to different external valence patterns (cf. Konecny 2018). It is surprising that – apart from some exceptions (cf. Siepmann 2005) – the possible polysemy of collocations seems to have received less attention than in the case of idioms (cf. e.g. Dobrovolskij 2014; Stumpf 2015; Mellado Blanco 2023). This could be due to the fact that collocations in the narrow, base-oriented notion (cf. Hausmann 1984; Ježek 2016) are usually combinations of two concepts and allow for a wider range of variants and modifications, while idioms have an overall meaning as well as a higher degree of fixedness, and it is thus easier to accept that they function in a similar way to single words.

Starting from the collocation profiles of selected nouns in the *itTenTen20* corpus analysed via *Sketch Engine*, this paper aims at showing examples of collocational polysemy and at discussing in which way independent meanings can be distinguished from contextual variants for lexicographic purposes. In addition to considering morpho-syntactic peculiarities and different semantic roles of argument slots, one of the guiding criteria in bilingual lexicography should be the (non-)existence of different equivalents in the target language. On the basis of such criteria, e.g., the following collocational or idiomatic meanings and German lexicographic equivalents could be proposed for combinations consisting of *vita* and *dare* (the most frequent collocator of *vita* in *itTenTen20* within the category ‘verbs with X as object’): 1. *dare la vita a qcn./a un bambino*: jm./einem Kind das Leben schenken; 2. *dare la (propria) vita (per qcn. | qcs.)*: a. sein Leben (für jm. | etw.) geben | opfern, (für jm. | etw.) sein Leben lassen; b. [fig.] (für jm. | etw.) alles geben; 3. *dar vita a qcs.* [fig.]: etw. ins Leben rufen [fig.].

The last part will attempt to hypothesise whether certain groups of collocators or bases favour collocational polysemy and the development of secondary (also idiomatic) meanings. Since the *PhraseBase* project (DiMuccio-Failla / Giacomini 2022) seems to have focussed mainly on verbs so far, special attention will be paid to verb-object collocations and possible links to *PhraseBase* will be pointed out.

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