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Title

A construction-based repository of constructional idioms in German and Spanish

Abstract

Research on phraseological phenomena has received a major impetus in the last two decades, especially with a shift toward the intersection with Corpus Linguistics and Construction Grammar, as can be attested in recent numerous publications (Ivorra Ordines 2021; Mellado Blanco 2022; Mellado Blanco, Mollica and Schafroth 2022; Mellado Blanco and Gutiérrez Rubio 2020, among others). Against this background, the primary objective of our research project *Constructional idioms in German and Spanish in contrast through corpora* is to detect and describe constructional idioms in German and their equivalents in Spanish using a corpus-based methodology.

Constructional idioms, characterized by their semi-schematic nature, their pragmatic value, and often non-compositional meaning, occupy an intermediate space along the syntax-lexicon continuum. Despite their prevalence, they have been overlooked in linguistic research and traditional dictionaries (cf. Mellado Blanco 2020; Penadés Martínez 2021). An example with a noun phrase structure would be the German construction [DET N_i *der* N_i], with an intensifying attributive meaning, as can be attested in instances such as *die Nacht der Nächte* ‘the night of nights’ or *das Spiel der Spiele* ‘the game of games’. This semi-schematic pattern would correspond to the constructions [DET N_i *de* N_i] or [*un* N_i *de* N_i] in Spanish, with examples such as *la red de redes* ‘the network of networks’ and *un rey de reyes* ‘a king of kings’, respectively.

Using the www.constridions.es/de platform, the objectives of the present talk are (cf. Mellado Blanco 2021):

- Show a holistic description of semi-schematic constructions based on the deTenTen20 for German and esTenTen18 for Spanish from Sketch Engine (<https://app.sketchengine.eu/>), in harmony with Sinclair’s word usage pattern and the research project PhraseBase. Quantitative data related to type and token frequency will be of great importance, as well as structural and pragmatic characteristics (especially its illocutive function). In this context, the lexicon-grammar continuum will play a major role in the analysis of certain constructions, especially in those cases which can license idioms, as well as low-frequent types.
- Study the creative potential of semi-schematic constructions, so that learners would “be able to rely on the same cognitive derivations as a native speaker in order to successfully comprehend, store and actively access words” (DiMuccio-Failla & Giacomini 2022: 495).
- Develop a contrastive methodology based on parallel corpora (PaGes, <http://corpuspages.eu/>) as well as ChatGPT, in those cases where parallel corpora are insufficient. The description of the semi-schematic constructions in German and their equivalents in Spanish will be conducted at different levels. Interesting relationships between constructions can be established among the Spanish equivalents, allowing us to define families of constructions with similar pragmatic meanings.

References

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