

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

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Overview

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1. CONSTRIDIOMS



PID2019-108783RB-I00: *Gramática de Construcciones y Fraseología. Las construcciones fraseológicas del alemán y el español en contraste a través de los corpus* . (Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation)



Duration: 2020-2025

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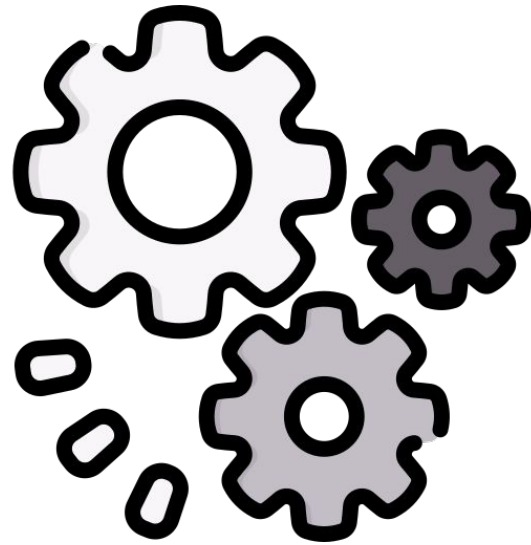
In collaboration with **Institut für Deutsche Sprache** (Mannheim), **Russian Academy of Sciences** (Institute of Linguistics), **Universität Düsseldorf**, **Universität Trier**

2. Research goals



- Elaboration of a thesaurus of German and Spanish constructional idioms in German and Spanish, with special attention to intensifying constructions. Inductive methodology based on corpora (Sketch Engine).
- Creation of a taxonomy based on illocutionary and discursive functions.
- Description of idiomatic semi-schematic constructions paying attention to:
 - ✓ their productivity by virtue of token and type frequency of the slots;
 - ✓ the lexical renewal of the slots and their lexical preferences and restrictions;
 - ✓ the semantic prosody of the collocates and the syntagmatic profile.
- Development of a German-Spanish contrastive methodology for the holistic description of equivalent constructions by means of monolingual and parallel corpora (Mellado Blanco 2019).
- Creation of the website <https://constridioms.es>, where constructional idioms in German and Spanish are compiled and described.

3. Corpus-based methodology



- Use of the esTenTen18 and deTenTen20 monolingual corpus (Sketch Engine, <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>):
 - i. Finding new constructions with different prepositions and intensifying adjectives, for example:
 - [*por* TODO N]: *por toda respuesta, por todo equipaje...*
 - [*mit* ALL N]: *mit aller Kraft, mit aller Macht...*
 - ii. Collocational and frequency analysis of the slots N.
 - iii. Analysis of the syntagmatic profile of the constructions.
- Inductive use of the German-Spanish parallel corpus (<https://www.corpuspages.eu/>):
 - ii. Finding functionally equivalent semi-schematic constructions in the target language.





“Think of it what you like – many researchers in Construction Grammar are genuine language lovers who enjoy nothing more than finding a construction with peculiar non-predictable characteristics, **preferably one that no one has investigated before** . Occasionally, Construction Grammarians even acknowledge their love of ‘**butterfly collecting**’ (Hilferty 2003: 49), though usually they hasten to add that finding generalisations is the ultimate purpose of their endeavors. **Finding constructions is an activity that requires some practice**, although there are people who seem to have a natural talent for sniffing out grammatical oddities. (Hilpert 2019: 14)

4. Previous research



- *Combinaciones fraseológicas del alemán de estructura [Prep. + Sust.]: patrones sintagmáticos, descripción lexicográfica y correspondencias en español* (FFI2013-45769-P).
- Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. State Secretariat for Research, Development and Innovation. Modality 1: R&D Projects, from the State Program for Promoting Scientific and Technical Research of Excellence, Knowledge Generation Subprogram
- DURATION: 2014-2019
- In collaboration with Leibniz Institut für Deutsche Sprache (Leiterin: Kathrin Steyer). PREPCON-Projekt.



Idiom variability in corpora

1. All Phraseological Units (PhUs) are subject to potential **modifications** : ***no mover ni un dedo*** /*ni un pelo/ni un músculo...* ‘not lifting a finger/a hair/a muscle...’
“[...] Cuanto mayor es su fijación, y por ende su institucionalización, **más posibilidades hay de que sufran modificación en el discurso** , y de que tal modificación y su efecto sean reconocidos por los hablantes.”
(Corpas Pastor 1996: 29).
2. There are **PhUs with non-fixed nucleus** : *poner la nota + ADJ / poner la nota + de N.*
3. **PhUs with variants** are not marginal but prevail quantitatively (Montoro del Arco 2004: 593; Penadés Martínez 2015: 134). Example: *Me importa un pepino/bledo/rábano/pimiento...* ‘I care a cucumber/a fig/a radish/a pepper’
 - What are the limits between **PhUs with variants/modifications** and **productive schemata** ?

CONCORDANCE

Spanish Web 2018 (esTenTen18)

phrase **la nota** • 315,762
 16.11 per million tokens • 0.0016%

context [tag="A.*"] (1..1) • 63,833
 3.26 per million tokens • 0.00033%

filter [lemma="poner"] • 2,415
 0.12 per million tokens • 0.000012%

filter not [word="máxima"] • 2,391
 0.12 per million tokens • 0.000012%

Collocations

CHANGE CRITERIA

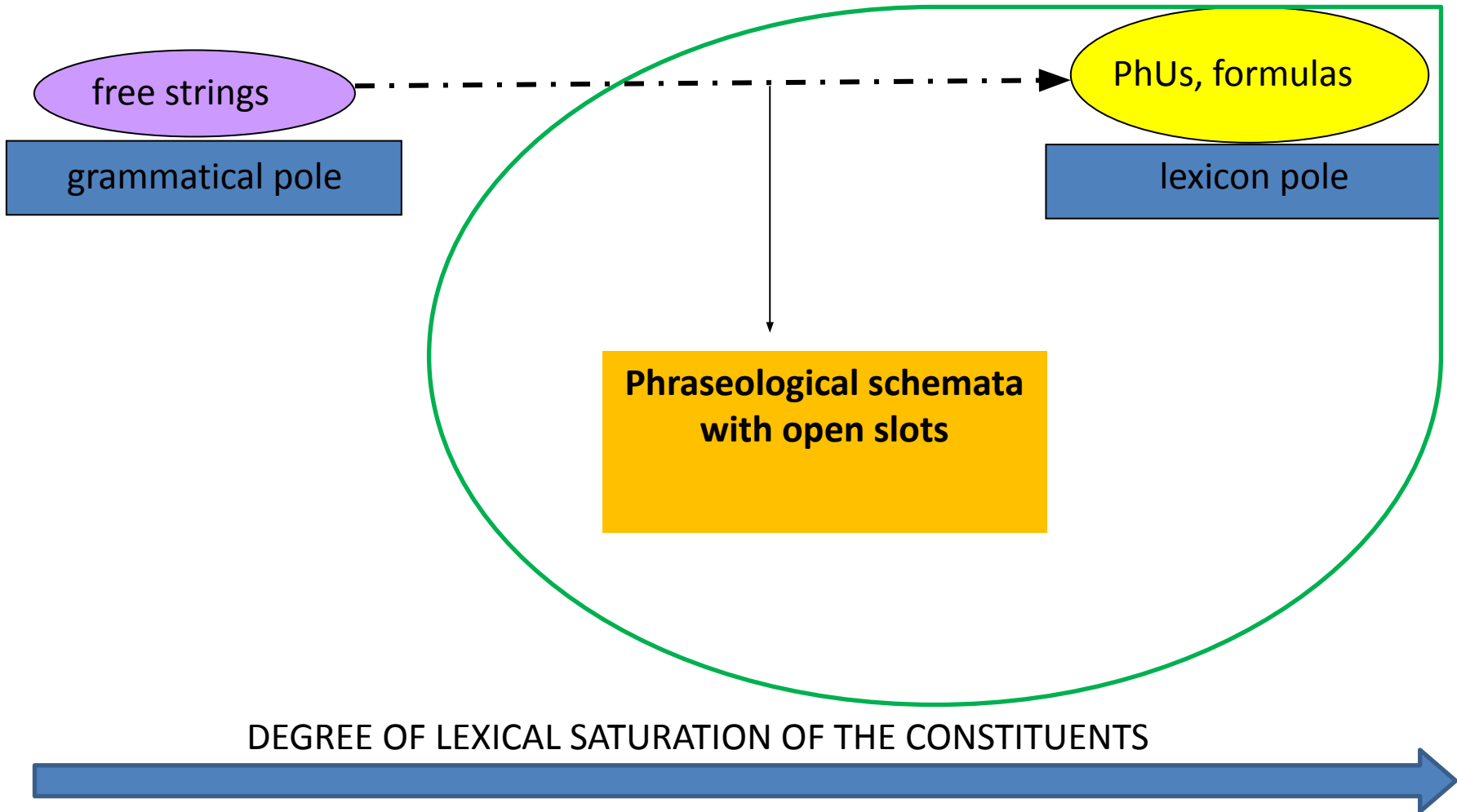
BACK TO CONCORDANCE

	Word	Cooccurrences [?] ↓	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> musical	673	889,411	25.94	12.60	4.63	...
2	<input type="checkbox"/> discordante	134	6,966	11.58	17.27	8.87	...
3	<input type="checkbox"/> final	95	5,552,437	9.68	7.13	-0.84	...
4	<input type="checkbox"/> negativa	85	483,446	9.21	10.49	2.52	...
5	<input type="checkbox"/> alegre	55	198,954	7.41	11.15	3.16	...
6	<input type="checkbox"/> positiva	50	560,594	7.06	9.51	1.54	...
7	<input type="checkbox"/> emotiva	45	53,878	6.71	12.74	4.71	...
8	<input type="checkbox"/> elegante	35	350,082	5.91	9.68	1.70	...
9	<input type="checkbox"/> dulce	34	474,451	5.82	9.20	1.22	...
10	<input type="checkbox"/> romántica	32	127,000	5.65	11.01	3.02	...
11	<input type="checkbox"/> cómica	29	33,526	5.38	12.79	4.73	...
12	<input type="checkbox"/> festiva	26	27,404	5.10	12.93	4.84	...
13	<input type="checkbox"/> exótica	26	28,171	5.10	12.89	4.80	...
14	<input type="checkbox"/> alta	25	3,022,944	4.93	6.08	-1.88	...
15	<input type="checkbox"/> humorística	22	12,987	4.69	13.76	5.55	...
16	<input type="checkbox"/> distintiva	22	25,897	4.69	12.77	4.67	...
17	<input type="checkbox"/> artística	21	364,273	4.57	8.88	0.91	...

	Word	Cooccurrences [?] ↓	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice	
18	<input type="checkbox"/> internacional	19	2,718,679	4.28	5.84	-2.13	...
19	<input type="checkbox"/> picante	19	62,313	4.36	11.29	3.27	...
20	<input type="checkbox"/> diferente	19	1,613,163	4.31	6.59	-1.38	...
21	<input type="checkbox"/> gastronómica	13	98,270	3.60	10.08	2.08	...
22	<input type="checkbox"/> original	13	1,972,936	3.54	5.76	-2.21	...
23	<input type="checkbox"/> especial	12	3,354,562	3.35	4.87	-3.09	...
24	<input type="checkbox"/> flamenca	12	33,303	3.46	11.53	3.46	...
25	<input type="checkbox"/> deportiva	11	464,712	3.30	7.60	-0.37	...
26	<input type="checkbox"/> sexy	11	108,255	3.31	9.70	1.70	...
27	<input type="checkbox"/> curiosa	10	132,236	3.16	9.28	1.28	...
28	<input type="checkbox"/> femenina	10	332,338	3.15	7.95	-0.03	...
29	<input type="checkbox"/> amarga	9	45,929	3.00	10.65	2.61	...
30	<input type="checkbox"/> lúdica	9	43,311	3.00	10.73	2.69	...
31	<input type="checkbox"/> sonora	9	190,066	2.99	8.60	0.62	...
32	<input type="checkbox"/> española	9	1,541,883	2.94	5.58	-2.39	...
33	<input type="checkbox"/> graciosa	9	34,707	3.00	11.05	2.99	...
34	<input type="checkbox"/> triste	8	444,638	2.81	7.20	-0.77	...

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Different degrees of schematicity



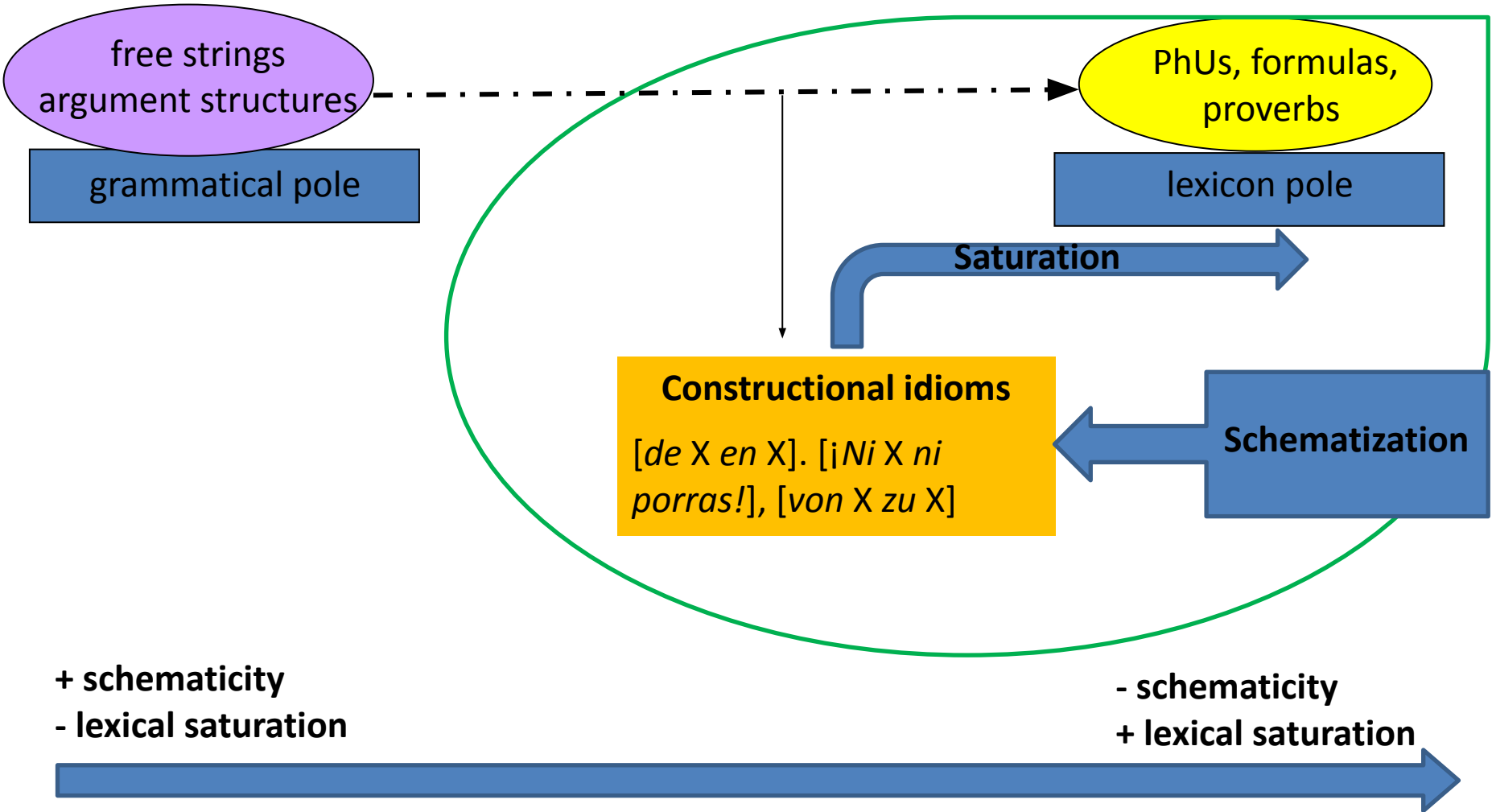
DEGREE OF LEXICAL SATURATION OF THE CONSTITUENTS

Variants and permeability between types of constructions

- Recurrent variants of lexically filled PhUs > semi-schematic constructions
- Recurrent renewal of a type in a partly filled construction > fully filled construction



Lexicon-grammar continuum



CONSTRIDIOMS

5. Are constructions comparable cross-linguistically?



- Radical Construction Grammar by Croft (2001), with its theory on the intra-linguistic specificity of constructions, has negatively influenced the development of a contrastive perspective in CxG (cf. Boas/González-García 2014: 4).
- According to Boas/González-García (2014: 20), **semantics** constitute “the primary basis for comparisons for constructions across languages”, whereas form is secondary.



Classificatory criteria to find a tertium comparationis

- **Point of departure: constructional idioms as form-meaning pairings.**
- **Syntactic criteria :**
 1. Syntagmatic-value constructions
 2. Sentence-value constructions
 - ❖ Types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory. Discussion: Are sentence types constructions? (Finkbeiner / Meibauer 2016; Jacobs 2016)
 - ❖ Echoic constructions
 3. Supra-sentential value constructions (textual): legal sentences, acknowledgments, abstracts (ritualized textual genres) (cf. Stein 1995; Gülich 1997)
- **Semantic-functional criteria:**
 1. Pragmatic value, illocutionary acts: assertive (AFFIRMATION, INSINUATION), directive (ORDER, REQUEST, PETITION, EXHORTATION), commissive (PROMISE, THREAT), expressive (WEIGHING, APOLOGY, CRITICISM, REPROACH).
 2. Aspect: durative, perfective, ingressive, iterative, causal...
 3. Argumentative functions, e.g., in echoic constructions: AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT; APPROVAL/REFUTATION/RELATIVIZATION of the propositional content of the preceding statement.
 4. Intensification, mitigation...
- **Prosodic characteristics** , e.g., constructions linked to irony (Auer 2016)
- **Diamedial level** : domain of use (chats, forums: fictional orality (Koch/Oesterreicher 1985))
- **Diaphasic level** : colloquial, vulgar register...



Compare constructional idioms cross-linguistically

- Analysis of an equivalent construction in **comparable corpora** independently and comparison of results. Study, for example, the productivity, the most frequent types, the syntagmatic profile, the register, etc.
 - Spanish: [ADJ] *hasta* SN_{parte del cuerpo}]: *calado hasta los huesos*
 - German: [ADJ] *bis* PP[N_{Körperteil}]]: *nass bis in die Knochen*

Esteban Fonollosa, M. & P. 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.

- Analysis in **parallel corpora** . Unilateral contrastive method. Induction-based.
 - German: [von X_{sg} zu X_{sg}] □
 - Spanish: [de X_{sg} a X_{sg}], [de X_{sg} en X_{sg}], [de un X_{sg} al otro], [X_{sg} tras X_{sg}]

Dobrovol'skij, D. & C. Mellado Blanco. 2021. *Von Jahr zu Jahr*. Das Pattern [von X_{sg} zu X_{sg}] und seine Entsprechungen im Russischen und Spanischen: eine Korpusstudie. *Aussiger Beiträge* 15,113-138.



[DET + S_{abstracto} *en persona*]
[DET + N_{abstracto} *in Person*]

La verdad es que los agentes de fronteras no es que sean **la simpatía en persona**, pero eso es así en todas partes del Mundo, quizás los sudafricanos fueron más amables. [SkE 6532575568]

(Du bist wirklich **die Kreativität in Person** !!! Nicht nur die vielen Ideen, die Du hast, nein, Du hast auch noch die Zeit, Geduld und Muße, es umzusetzen. [SkE 39866476])



[DET + S_{abstracto} *en persona*]
 [DET + N_{abstracto} *in Person*]

POSITIVO	POSITIVO	NEGATIVO
amabilidad	sabiduría	arrogancia
dulzura	felicidad	desvergüenza
bondad	perfección	ineptitud
belleza	tranquilidad	ineficiencia
elegancia	libertad	
simpatía	honestidad	
ternura	modernidad	
alegría	sensibilidad	
inocencia	responsabilidad	
humildad	positividad	
pureza	discreción	
sencillez	humor	

POSITIVO	NEGATIVO
	O
Ruhe	Teufel
Zuverlässigkeit	Böse
Freundlichkeit	Ungeduld
Liebe	
Unschuld	
Wahrheit	
Coolness	
Gelassenheit	
Güte	
Liebenswürdigkeit	



Discovering new constructions

[N_{abstr} *en persona*] / [N_{abstr} *in Person*]

- Query of the pattern <in Person> in *deTenTen20*
Glücklicherweise gab es **zweisprachige Begleitung** **in Person von Petra Schmidt und Thierry Riat** , welche die diversen Erklärungen [...] dem französischen Publikum näher bringen konnten. [SkE 113477876]
- [N *in Person von* EIGENNAME] □ [N *en la persona de* N_{propio}]
El día 27 de abril de 1988, el expresado Notario llevó a efecto **el requerimiento en la persona de don Clemente** , a quien entregó copia simple del acta, junto con la referida carta, que es del siguiente tenor literal: Barcelona, 25 de abril de 1988. [SkE 12624]

7. On the platform CONSTRIDIOMS



CONSTRIDIOMS

**¡Thank you very much
for your attention!**

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