**Third questionnaire**

**Project “Widespread Idiomatic and Formulaic Constructions”**

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Dear Colleagues,

Below, you will find eight new *idiomatic patterns* (13-19) and two *constructional phrasems* (20-21) suspected of being widespread across many languages. Are there parallels in your native language (multiword units with almost the same syntactic structure and core meaning)? If so, I would ask you to please write these parallels down.

For the two constructional phrasemes I’d like to ask you for some examples. These constructions may be a bit difficult? Please don’t worry: just write in what comes to mind.

Thank you very much!

Elisabeth Piirainen

**(13) English *(to be) like a bee in clover / (to be) like a pig in clover***

**German** *leben wie die Made im Speck* to “to live like the grub in the bacon”

**French** *vivre comme un coq en pâte* “to live like a chicken in pastry”

**Czech** *žít jako prase v žitĕ* “to live like the pig in the rye”

‘(to live/be/…) in abundance’

[(to live/be/…) like X in Y]

X = an animal, Y = its preferred food

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(14) German *die Flinte ins Korn werfen*** “to throw the shotgun into the grain”

**Croatian** *baciti koplje u trnje* “to throw the spear into the thorns”

**Finnish** *heittä kirveensä kaivoon* “to throw one’s ax into the well”

‘to give up quickly, to despair’

[to throw X in/into Y]

X = object (tool, weapon) – Y = place from which one cannot get X back

((Different constructions are English *to throw in the towel*, French *jeter l’éponge* “to throw up the sponge”. These idioms are not meant here.))

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(15) German *vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste kommen***“to come from the hundredth to the thousandth”

***vom Hölzchen aufs Stöckchen kommen***“to come from the little (piece of) wood to the little stick”

**Russian** *(перескакивать) с пятого на десятое* “(to jump) from the fifth to the tenth”

‘to digress more and more from the topic’

[to come from X to Y]

X and Y belong to the same semantic class, Y being smaller

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(16) English *to have a bone to pick with someone* /**

[AmE]***to have a crow to pluck with someone***

**German** *mit jmdm. ein Hühnchen zu rupfen haben* “to have a chicken to pluck with someone”

**French** *avoir un compte/des comptes à régler avec quelqu’un* “to have an account to pay with someone”

‘to have cause for making a complaint to someone; to have an unpleasant issue or grievance to be discussed with someone; tohave to dispel a disagreement with someone’

[to have a Xnoun-acc to Yverb-inf]

Xnoun and Yverb belong to the same frame/scenario: crow – pluck

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(17) English *to send someone from pillar to post***

**German** *jemanden von Pontius zu Pilatus schicken* “to send someone from Pontius to Pilate”

**Dutch** *iemand van bakboord naar stuurboord zenden* “to send someone from port to starboard”

‘to refer someone from one place (at one authority or the like) to the other’

[to send sb. from X(place/person) to Y]

X and Y belong to the same frame

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(18) English *to add one’s twopence/tuppence (worth)***

**German** *seinen Senf dazugeben* “to add one’s mustard to sth.”

**French** *ajouter/mettre son grain de sel à qq chose* “to add/put one’s grain of salt in sth.”

**Russian** *вставить свои пять копеек* “to put one’s five kopecks in”

‘to interfere with something or insert one’s opinion’ and/or ‘to add a small amount of information to the discussion’

[to put/add one’s X to something]

X = something of little value (substance, coin)

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(19) English *to sell like hot cakes***

**German** *weggehen/sich verkaufen wie warme Semmel* “to go out/to sell like hot rolls”

**French** *se vendre comme des petites pains* “to sell like small rolls”

**Russian** *разлетаться как горячие пирожки* “to run out like hot pies”

‘to sell very quickly, to be snapped up’

Parallels in your language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(20) English *I’ll eat my (old) hat if I’m wrong / if it is not true / if …***

**German** *ich fresse einen Besen / ich will einen Besen fressen, wenn* “I’ll eat a broom if …”

**French** *je mangerai mon chapeau si …* “I’ll eat my hat if …”

‘there is no doubt about it, it is absolutely true (what I told you / what will happen / …’ or: ‘I don’t believe it at all’

[I (will) eat – nounacc – if]

the noun denotes something which is normally not intended for human consumption

Is there a parallel construction in your language?

Please add an example

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**(21a) English *him – a teacher?***

***me – a driver?***

**German** *du und ein Lehrer/ …?* “you and a teacher/ …?”

*Paula und eine Autofahrerin/ …?* “Paula and a driver?/ …”

**French** *Vous – un enseignant / ...?* “you *–* a teacher?/ …”

*lui – un chauffeur/ ...?* “he *–* a driver?/ …”

**Spanish** *¿Yo – professor/ …?* “me *–* professor?/ …”

‘he/me/Paula is certainly not a great/good/real teacher / driver / … I cannot imagine that! Exclamation of wonder’

‘you are/ she is/ certainly not a good … X!’

[noun/pronoun *–* and – a X?] / [noun/pronoun *–* a X?]

Is there a parallel construction in your language?

Does the construction contain the word “and”? Is the word “and” obligatory?

Please create some examples.

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**(21b) German *ich und schlafen/ …?* “I and sleep/ …”** ‘I will certainly not sleep/ …’

**French** *moi ? dormir ?* “I ? sleep ?”

*lui ? chanter ?* “he ? sing ?” ‘he will certainly not sing’

**Spanish** *¿Yo – dormir?* “I ? sleep ?”

English ---

[noun/pronoun – (and) – Verbinfinitive?] ‘he will certainly not do that. I cannot imagine that! Exclamation of wonder’

Is there a parallel construction in your language?

Does the construction contain the word “and”? Is the word “and” obligatory?

Please create some examples.

**Thank you very much!**