**Fourth questionnaire**

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

Contact: Dr. Elisabeth Piirainen ([elisabeth.piirainen@outlook.com](mailto:elisabeth.piirainen@outlook.com))

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to ask you once more for your cooperation with the project “Widespread idiomatic and formulaic constructions”. Below, you will find five new *idiomatic patterns* (22–26). Are there parallels in your native language (multiword units of a similar syntactic structure and core meaning but lexically different)?

In addition, there are four *constructional phrasemes* (27–30) suspected of being widespread across many languages. If you know similar phraseme constructions in your language, please write these parallels down. Also, I’d like to ask you for some examples. If these constructions are a bit difficult, please don’t worry—just write what comes to mind.

Thank you very much!

Elisabeth Piirainen

**(22) English *to have two strings to one’s bow / to have a second string to one’s bow***

‘to have more than one plan or skill that you can use if the first does not succeed’

Variants:

*to have several strings to one’s bow*

*to have more than one/another string to one’s bow*

**Structure**: [to have two/several Xes in/on the Y]

**German** *zwei/mehrere Eisen im Feuer haben* “to have two/several irons in the fire”

((The English “parallel idiom” is a false friend: *to have two/several irons in the fire* ‘to be busy with more than one interest at the same time’))

**French** *avoir plusieurs cordes à son arc* “to have several strings to one’s bow”

Your language: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(23) English *to pour money down the drain*** ‘to waste one’s money’

**German** *das Geld zum Fenster hinauswerfen* “to throw the money out of the window”

**French** *jeter l’argent par les fenêtres* “to throw the money from the windows”

**Russian** *бросать деньги на ветер* “to throw money in the wind”

Your language: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**(24) German** *den Senf nach der Mahlzeit bringen* **“to bring the mustard after the meal”**

*mit dem Salz nach dem Essen kommen* **“to come with the salt after the meal”**

‘to come up with an idea, with a proposal when the matter is ended long ago; to be very late, to come when everything is about to end’

**Structure** [to bring X aftertemp Y]

[to come with X aftertemp Y]

(English *to come with the spoon after dinner* (dated))

**Russian** *прийти/приехать к шапочному разбору* “to come when it’s time to collect the hats”

Your language: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(25) German** *nicht alle Tassen im Schrank haben***“not to have all cups in the cupboard”**‘to be stupid, not to be in one’s mind’

*nicht alle Nadeln an der Tanne haben* “not to have all needles on the fir”

*nicht alle Speichen am Rad haben* “not to have all spokes on the wheel”, etc.

**Structure** [not to have all Xes in/on the Y]

**English** (different structure): *not to have all one’s marbles* ‘not to be in one’s right mind’

**Russian** (different structure): *у кого-л. не все дома* “not everyone is at home with someone”

Your language: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(26) English *to trust a wolf to watch over sheep***

***to put the wolf in charge of the sheep***

‘to allow a person, who seems to be able to do much harm in a given field of activities, to do just these things’

**AmE** *to leave a fox to guard the henhouse*

*to put the fox to guard the henhouse/the chickens*

**German** *den Bock zum Gärtner machen* “to make the buck to the gardener”

**French** *enfermer le loup dans la bergerie* “to enclose the wolf in the sheepfold”

**Russian** *пускать козла в огород* (different structure): “to let the he-goat into the kitchen-garden”

Your language:

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**(27) German** *er ist kein großer Musiker/Redner/Autofahrer/… vor dem Herrn***“he is no/not a big musician/speaker/driver … before the Lord”**

*er ist kein großer Musiker/Redner/Autofahrer/… unter der Sonne* **“he is no/not a big musician/speaker/driver … under the sun”**

**Structure** [sb. is not a big X before the Lord]

[sb. is not a big X under the sun]

(X = a person who is not particularly good in the area concerned)

Your language:

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(28a) German** *großzügig/nett/freundlich/ … ist was anderes* **“generous/nice/friendly/ … is something else”**

‘comment if someone is not at all generous/nice/friendly/ ...’

*schmackhaft/kühl/ordentlich/ … ist was anderes* **“tasty/cool/neat/ … is something else”**

‘comment if something is not at all tasty/cool/neat/ ...’

**French** *généreux/gentil/amical/ … est autre chose*

*savoureux/frais/soigné/ ... en est une autre*

**Structure** [Xadj is something else] (X = usually a positive property)

Your language:

Example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(28b) German** *Sauberkeit/vernünftige Planung/Erfolg/ … ist was anderes*

“cleanliness/reasonable planning/success/ … is something else”

‘comment on a situation or condition in which there is a lack of cleanliness/reasonable planning/success/ …’

**French** *propreté/planification raisonnable/succès/ ... est autre chose*

**Structure** [Xnoun is something else] (X = usually a positive property)

Your language

Example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(29) English *a* *giant of a man* ‘a very tall man (like a giant)’**

*a beast of a car* ‘a very strong and fast car’

*an idiot of a driver* ‘a very stupid driver’

**German** *ein Baum von einem Mann* “a tree of a guy”

**Dutch** *en boom van een vent* “a tree of a guy”

**Structure** [a X(noun) of a Y(noun)]

This construction was often the subject of research. It is known in the Germanic languages and it will be interesting whether it is also widely used in other languages.

X and Y have something comparable, often evaluative, like a metaphor. X and Y are used mostly with the indefinite article.

Your language

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**(30) English *I read and read*** ‘I’m reading all the time’

*he eats and eats (and doesn’t put on weight)*

*we discuss and discuss and cannot find a solution*

**German** *ich lese und lese* “I read and read”

*wir suchen und suchen (und finden es nicht)* “we search and search (and don’t find it)”

**French** *nous cherchons, cherchons* “we search, search”

**Spanish** *leo y leo* “I read and read”

**Russian** *Я всё читаю и читаю* “I still read and read”

Your language

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Thank you very much!**