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"Hundreds of Examples of Figurative Language from the 'AAC-Austrian Academy Corpus'"

The issues and methodological questions concerning the corpus-based and corpus-driven analysis of figurative language will be briefly addressed here in relation to specific sources of the text corpora of the "AAC-Austrian Academy Corpus" [www.aac.ac.at]. Generally, a well structured and well selected electronic corpus of literary texts of considerable size offers interesting source material for the study of figurative language and for related phenomena to be investigated by text researchers and literary scholars. These questions can be seen as interdisciplinary research questions of both linguistics and literary studies. Therefore, more general questions of linguistics and corpus linguistics in connection with the use of figurative language can be posed and at the same time specific issues of particular phenomena of figurative expressions in literary texts can be dealt with in some detail. Instead of giving hundreds of examples, which are German language examples and which will be shown at the poster demonstration at the conference, first the rather more general issues will be raised here and some background information will be provided in this paper.

The use of metaphorical constructions and idiomatic multi-word units will be given a particular emphasis in this short study, as the source material is based upon the language of a satirical journal and as it is in a specific relation to the language of the satirical journal of "Die Fackel" ("The Torch") by Karl Kraus. This extensive literary text is full of a great variety of satirical forms and expressions. For this reason it can be used as a research object following a certain combined interest in the study of figurative language and phraseology, in phraseological and figurative language and in phenomena related to the more methodological questions of figurative language as a research topic for corpus research. Moreover, this source represents a focus of interest and is made use of as a starting point for the corpus build-up of the AAC itself and its so-called "Fackel-induced" collection principles, whereby other, more conventional corpus build-up parameters of selection have also been followed.

The AAC was founded several years ago and is a corpus research initiative concerned with establishing and exploring large electronic text corpora and conducting scholarly research in the fields of digital text corpora. The texts that have already been integrated into the collections of the AAC stem from the last 150 years are German language texts of important historical and cultural significance. The historical period covered by the corpus is ranging from the 1848 revolution to the fall of the iron curtain in 1989. In
this period significant historical changes with remarkable influences on the language and the language use in the German speaking areas can be observed. These developments are studied in several research fields by the AAC corpus workgroup.

The AAC has digitized and collected thousands of texts representing an astonishing range of different text types. Among the sources, which cover manifold domains and genres, there are literary journals, newspapers, novels, dramas, poems, advertisements, essays, travel accounts, cookbooks, pamphlets, political speeches as well as plenty of scientific, legal, and religious texts, to name just a few.

The AAC corpus holdings provide a great number of reliable resources and interesting corpus based approaches for investigations into the linguistic and textual properties of these texts with very good examples of figurative language use. Well beyond 400 million running words of text have already been scanned, have been converted into machine-readable text and are being carefully annotated. Basic structural mark-up has been applied to a considerable number of sources and more detailed annotations have been made for several selected texts. The annotation and mark-up schemes of the AAC are based upon XML related standards. A research infrastructure is available that allows corpus-driven annotations and integrations of various texts as well as corpus-based investigations.

Concerning the potential of corpus-based studies in figurative language an emphasis should be given to exemplary corpus based methods for the analysis of specific sources, in this case here of sources within the literary journals collections of the AAC. This source of a satirical literary journal is representing a literary genre that offers a large variety of different forms of figurative language to be studied from various linguistic perspectives of which the area of phraseology is just one good example. The findings provided by this source can be confronted with the findings of the overall corpus holdings of the AAC. Satirical literary texts have certain properties and features that are particularly interesting for the study of figurative language use.

The very text basis of such an exploration into the field of figurative language and related issues is the AAC-FACKEL [www.aac.ac.at/fackel]. This scholarly digital edition of the historical literary journal "Die Fackel" has been developed in collaboration by Hanno Biber, Evelyn Breiteneder, Karlheinz Mörth and other researchers and programmers of the AAC in Vienna and the AAC designer Anne Burdick in Los Angeles. Such a model digital edition allows new ways of philological research and analysis and offers new perspectives for literary studies and linguistics. Hundreds of examples of the specific use of figurative language taken from this text corpus as well as the analytical concepts behind it can be investigated.
The work of the satirist Karl Kraus in its many forms, of which the journal "Die Fackel" is the core, can be regarded as one of the most important contributions to world literature. "Die Fackel" was originally published and almost entirely written by the satirist and language critic Karl Kraus in Vienna from 1899 until 1936. It consists of 37 volumes in 922 numbers, comprising more than 22,500 pages. The electronic text of the entire journal has more than 6 million tokens. It is a source for the history of the time, for its language and its moral transgressions. Karl Kraus covers in a typical and idiosyncratic style in thousands of texts the themes of journalism and war, of politics and corruption, of literature and lying. His influential journal comprises a great variety of essays, notes, commentaries, aphorisms and poems.

The satire of Karl Kraus and his use of figurative language is of particular interest, especially with regard to the use of idioms and other multiword units. An extensive documentation of the use of idiomatic expressions has been given in the "Wörterbuch der Redensarten zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift 'Die Fackel'" [Dictionary of Idioms] which was published in 1999. The second dictionary that followed in 2008 is a text-dictionary of pejorative expressions in "Die Fackel", the "Schimpfwörterbuch zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift 'Die Fackel'" [Dictionary of Invectives]. Both dictionaries that have already been published, and the phraseological dictionary in a special way can offer specific insights into the use of figurative language by the satirist Karl Kraus. The text-lexicographic results are to some extent based upon and can be compared with the corpus results. Idioms, proverbs, lexicalized metaphors, and figurative compounds are of particular interest here.

"Die Fackel", as it is true for juvenalian satire in general, is a cornucopia of different linguistic forms as well as of different forms of figurative language: metaphors, proverbial expressions, slogans, and above all what Karl Kraus called phrases, "Phrasen - those clichés, stock expressions and soundbites which shape popular communication and saturate the media" [Timms, p. 7]. The main method of critique developed by Karl Kraus for which he was to become so renowned and which can be regarded as the quintessence of his activity as a culture, language and media critic is the method of quotation. His work is based upon tens of thousands of quotations and citations of various authors which he exposed by means of recontextualisation, by quoting and reproducing their own words and by very wittingly and accurately commenting upon them. In his polemical and satirical texts the forms of figurative language and his critique of the various forms of metaphorical language use with particular reference to figurative language are important.

The various transformations and creative adaptations of phrases by the author can be investigated not only by means of text-lexicography as has
been done in the Fackellex dictionaries, but also by means of corpus research and by corpus queries. The collection of phraseological units can be used as a key to the figurative language presented on the one side which could be compared with the use of figurative language in other texts from various linguistic domains as to be found in the AAC corpora on the other side. Thus, the corpus-based findings of the use of figurative language in the satirical texts of "Die Fackel" can be confronted with results from the overall corpus holdings of the AAC.

Only some examples of figurative language from the literary journal "Die Fackel" can be given here, whereby specific emphasis will be on figurative phraseological units. As has been indicated, idioms can be regarded as prototypical forms of figurative language. According to Dobrovolskij and Piirainen a "gradual figurativeness" has to be observed with regard to idioms. [Dobrovolskij/Piirainen, p. 25] "We start with the assumption that idioms are the core category of phraseology and that they are prototypical examples of conventional figurative units. This does not mean however, that the figurativeness of every single idiom is perceptible in the same way."

The German idiomatic expression "den Bock zum Gärtner machen" will be used as a starting point for explorations into the field of the highly creative and critical phraseological and metaphorical language use in this satirical journal. The German idiom "den Bock zum Gärtner machen" can be translated into English, according to the online resource www.leo.org, with the following set of possible forms, the last three of which can also be found in the online dictionary www.dict.cc: "to put the fox in charge of the henhouse", "to set a fox to keep the geese", "to set a thief to catch a thief", "to trust the cat to keep the cream". Schemann's and Knight's "German-English Dictionary of Idioms" is suggesting a translation in this form: "to set the fox to keep the geese", where as in Italian the wolf is taking care of the sheep. The literal translation of the German idiom would be: "to have a goat as a gardener".

For the results from the satirical journal "Die Fackel" special attention has to be paid in this respect to the creative adaptations which can to be observed in the use of idioms in the different contexts provided for this unit in the dictionary. The use of the idiom is, as has been observed in many other studies of idioms, dominated to a large extent by these transformations by the creative writer. The normal form is creatively transformed into the following forms, which cannot easily be detected by standard automated corpus query systems, only systematic annotation and possible semi-automatic methods could provide the scholar with reasonable results to be gained from larger corpora. Here are the examples of transformations shown in the list of transformations in the "Wörterbuch der Redensarten" for this idiom ["Wörterbuch der Redensarten", p. 170]:
"den Schmock zum Gärtner machen"
"daß der Bock, der keinen Finger rührt, zum Igel gemacht ward"
"die Gärtner werden die Böcke nicht stören"
"als Bock in den Garten der Republik gesetzt"
"ein bejahrender Bock, der hier zum Gärtner der Fortpflanzung bestellt wurde"
"wo es sich um Sexuelles handelt, den Bock zum Vertrauensmann"
"bei jedem Sprung, den Herr Edschmid dort macht, wo man ihn zum Gärtner der deutschen Literatur bestellt"
"einen Germanisten zum Souffleur zu machen"

In these cases the image inventory of the phraseological unit and the inherent metaphorical potential of the from and the individual segments of the forms are activated. In most cases the satirically productive sexual connotation of the German word "Bock" in the sense of "a dirty old man" is made use of, but also other patterns and rhetorical features are activated.

In comparison to the dictionary the AAC-FACKEL with its sophisticated interface provides the reader with a search mechanism that allows to quickly get access to at least some of these forms that are easier to search for, whereby the user would have to perform several operations in order to find the more complicated forms and especially the creatively adapted ones. In addition, the search mechanism has an option to perform lemma searches and has other linguistically important search parameters.

The AAC corpus research infrastructure and the query system of the overall holdings, termed "AAC Container", provides access to very many texts. For larger collections the results show that in texts from maybe to some extent less literary domains the creative adaptations are somewhat less varied, but nevertheless interesting in a different way. As far as the idiomatic expressions are concerned, the use of the verbal component has to be
observed and the corpus results of such a large diachronic corpus show how the older version of "setzen" instead of "machen" is distributed, but also in which way other verbs, like "bestellen" or "verwandeln" are possible with significant shifts in the meaning and as concerns the combinatorial possibilities of the form. The actual use of the form in various environments can be observed in the results from two simple exemplary queries, which are given at the end of this paper.

The results from the "AAC Container" representing a corpus of thousands of different texts show that also "historical discourse, like literary discourse or figurative language in general" [White, p.6], of which there is a lot present in the texts of the AAC corpora, has comparable qualities and at the same time qualities that are beyond comparison as far as the use of figurative language is concerned. A "tropological analysis" [White, p. 8] like an analysis of the specific features of the use of phraseological units in which the results of a corpus-based analysis of complex literary texts would be compared with the corpus-based results of for example historiographic texts or political texts which are also narrative texts but of a different kind would certainly show interesting results concerning the distribution of the use of very many different forms of creative adaptations of figurative expressions.

References:

AAC - Austrian Academy Corpus: http://www.aac.ac.at


Hans Schemann, Paul Knight: PONS Idiomatik Deutsch-Englisch, German-English Dictionary of Idioms. Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart 1995
... Es machte den Bock zum Gärtner, indem es ...

... Demokratie überantwortete, machte er den Bock zum Gärtner ...

... doch durch diese Bestimmung der Bock zum Gärtner bestellt ...

... Jetzt haben sie den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht, jetzt ...

... Der Pfarrer will den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... Man will den agrarischen Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... nur zu oft ist der Bock zum Gärtner gemacht worden ...

... die Reformler nannten den Bock zum Gärtner ...

... gehabt, daß ich einen solchen Bock zum Gärtner machte! ...

... Wer diesen kapitale Bock zum Gärtner machte, wissen ...

... nicht! muß er annehmen den Bock zum Gärtner der unsterblichen ...

... Leiter der Stabilisierungsaktion heißt den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... Unfallen zu übertragen, bedeutet den Bock zum Gärtner bestellen ...

... Demokratie überantwortete, machte er den Bock zum Gärtner ...

... zu allerletzt, wo man den Bock zum Gärtner setzt ...

... Schlummer hätte man nicht den Bock zum Gärtner machen können!

... zu bestellen, hieß wahrscheinlich den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... Man hatte den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht und ...

... Es hieß, den Bock zum Gärtner setzen, um ...

... zu schützen, wo sie den Bock zum Gärtner machten ...

... sollten, so hieß das den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... zerstören kann, da sie den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... Bisweilen setzte man den Bock zum Gärtner ...

... Werkstätten besaßen; das hieß den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... Das heißt: den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... Just damit aber war der Bock zum Gärtner bestellt und ...

... der Wiener Concordiapresse den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht ...

... lassen, heißt recht eigentlich den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...

... das: man habe geradezu den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht ...

... nicht gewillt, noch einmal den Bock zum Gärtner zu machen ...

... diesem Grunds bestellte Bränd den Bock zum Gärtner, indem er ...

... wie dies gewöhnlich geschieht, der Bock zum Gärtner bestellt wird ...

... Art sucht, macht leicht den Bock zum Gärtner ...

... hat, macht man sonstigerweise den Bock zum Gärtner ...

... damit im wahrsten Sinne den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht ...

... Wir wollen doch nicht den Bock zum Gärtner machen, sondern ...

... daß man in mir den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht hat ...

... Das heißt man den Bock zum Gärtner machen ...
... man hatte mir Recht einen Beob. Rußlands zum österreichischen Gärtner ... 
... Es ist ein bejahter Beob. der hier zum Gärtner ... 
... Es machte dem Beob. zum Gärtner, indem es ... 
... wissen konnte, dass sich der Beob. in einen Gärtner verwandeln ... 
... die Landwirtschaftskammern gefragt werden; der Beob. soll im Ziergarten Gärtner ... 
... Die - 25 765 Beob. als Gärtner. ... 
... Demokratie überantwortete, machte er den Beob. zum Gärtner. ... 
... was soll ich mit dem Beob. ihm etwa zum Gärtner ... 
... doch durch diese Bestimmung der Beob. zum Gärtner bestellt ... 
... Jetzt haben sie den Beob. zum Gärtner gemacht, jetzt ... 
... - Der Pfarrer will den Beob. zum Gärtner machen. ... 
... 1) Das es das Beob. dann mir zum Gärtner ... 
... Man wird den agrarischen Beob. zum Gärtner machen. ... 
... Man kann den Beob. nicht zum Gärtner machen. ... 
... nur zu oft ist der Beob. zum Gärtner gemacht worden ... 
... die Reformier zum klagen den Beob. zum Gärtner. ... 
... zweifellos die Bedeutung hatte, den Beob. als Gärtner einzusetzen. ... 
... gefällt, dass ich einen solchen Beob. zum Gärtner machte! ... 
... Man muss den Beob. nicht zum Gärtner setzen. ... 
... so, als ob sich der Beob. als Gärtner empfiehlt möchte, ... 
... steht fest, die Fabel vom Beob. der zum Gärtner gemacht ... 
... Wer diesem kapitalen Beob. zum Gärtner machte, wissen ... 
... nicht( muß er annehmen) den Beob. zum Gärtner der unverstehenden ... 
... Ob der Beob. nicht doch noch eher ... 
... Der Beob. als Gärtner. ... 
... Leiter der Stabilisierungsaktion heißt den Beob. zum Gärtner machen. ... 
... Unfälle zu übertragen, bedeutet den Beob. zum Gärtner bestellen. ... 
... Demokratie überantwortete, machte er den Beob. zum Gärtner. ... 
... zu alleletzt, Wo man den Beob. zum Gärtner setzt. ... 
... so dann ist, sich den Beob. als Gärtner zu bestellen, ... 
... hübischer kann das Sprichwort vom Beob. der zum Gärtner gesetzt ... 
... Schlimmer hatte man nicht den Beob. zum Gärtner machen können! ... 
... zu bestellen, hiess wahrscheinlich den Beob. zum Gärtner machen! ... 
... Der Beob. wird zum Gärtner bestellen! ... 
... Man hatte den Beob. zum Gärtner gemacht und ... 
... spielt der Beob. als Gärtner eine wunderbar ... 
... Gründe zwängen uns jedoch, den Beob. nicht mehr zum Gärtner ... 
... steht fest, die Fabel vom Beob. der zum Gärtner gemacht ... 
... Ich glaube, dass sich der Beob. nicht wohl zum Gärtner ... 
... Es füeh, den Beob. zum Gärtner setzen, um ...