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Introspective data and corpus data

Combination instead of confrontation in the
study of German metaphorical idioms of life[1]

Abstract

This paper examines the applicability of the combination of data types in a study of
German idioms of life with the tools of cognitive metaphor theory. The data sources
for conceptual metaphors were mainly metaphors found in the relevant literature.
These metaphors are of introspective nature to a great extent. The primary data
sources for metaphorical expressions were dictionaries that represent introspective
data, too. These data have been complemented by corpus data. The paper discusses
the problems of introspective and corpus data raised by the study of German idioms
of life. Two case studies demonstrate the advantages of the combination of data and
methods.
Keywords: combination of methods, conceptual metaphors, data types, idioms, multiple motivation

1   Introduction

The problematic status of linguistic data is one of the main issues
that characterizes methodological discussions in current linguistic re-
search. As opposed to the Standard theory of Linguistic Data (SLD),
there are several other proposals which question the relevance and
evidence of merely introspective or merely corpus data. According to
Kertész & Rákosi (2008), there is still much conservatism and little
innovation in many of the existing proposals. The doubt about the
relevance of solely introspective data is also present in cognitive

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[1]   I am grateful to Anna Fenyvesi for improving my English.

metaphor research. Some questions that need to be answered in the future (see Csatár 2008) are the following: What is metaphorical for the language user who is not trained linguistically? How can the linguist avoid their intuition in their own theoretical approach? How can subjective factors be discarded in metaphor identification and in defining the data serving as the corpus? Csatár (2008) proposes a combination of data and methods to avoid the disadvantages of applying only one of them. This paper examines the applicability of the combination of data types in a study of German idioms of life with the tools of cognitive metaphor theory.

2   German idioms of life

The scope of the target domain life includes several metaphorical source domains. The aim of the present idiom-based cognitive linguistic study (the study of German idioms of life, hereafter GIL) has been to answer the following questions: Which source domains are drawn on with the conceptualization of life when German metaphorical idioms are used? How is the field of conceptual metaphors of life structured?

2.1 *Methodology*

The source domains of life and their structure are identified in the following six steps in this study of GIL:

Step 1: Select the target domain to examine (life), define it on the basis of dictionaries, and restrict it on relevant partial aspects.

Step 2: Define the object of study (metaphorical idioms of life), based on the definition of life and idiom.

Step 3: Compile a list of idioms through a full-text search in electronic dictionaries (search for the component "life").

Step 4: Check the list of idioms in the COSMAS corpus by IDS (Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim, Germany) (consultation paradigm).

Step 5: Search for the vocabulary of the target domain (the component "life") in the COSMAS corpus. Search for metaphorical idioms in this corpus arising from such a search (analysis paradigm).

Step 6: Determine conceptual metaphors underlying metaphorical expressions by context analysis. Compare them with conceptual metaphors of life identified by introspective methods. Describe the system of metaphors of life.

These six steps form the methodological base to conduct the study of GIL. The present paper will not demonstrate the detailed accomplishment of these steps. Instead, emphasis is placed on whether that combination of data types, discussed during the six methodological steps, is a promising method.

2.2   Metaphorical conceptualization of life

Life is a frequent target domain of metaphors. Thus, it is a common object of study in several papers on metaphors (Jäkel 2003: 261ff., Kövecses 2005: 184 ff., Lakoff 1993: 219ff.). However, in most cases the aim of the inclusion of metaphors of life is only demonstrative, while no systematic analysis of the metaphors is provided. A comprehensive analysis is given in Lakoff & Turner (1989), but the authors restrict themselves to poetic language. Özcaliskan (2003) discusses metaphors of life and death in the Turkish language, also on the basis of literary texts. Keshavarz & Ghassemzadeh (2008) treat the metaphor LIFE IS A STREAM, also on the basis of poetic language. Shokr Abdulmoneim (2006) discusses the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in the Qur'an.
   According to the relevant literature, 24 possible metaphorical source domains of life can be found (e.g. ADVENTURE, FIRE, LIQUID, HISTORY, GAMBLING GAME etc.). These domains have been mainly investigated by introspective methods. The results of the study of GIL should reveal whether these source domains can be applied to German everyday language use. The source domains will be checked in the COSMAS corpus, that is, by empirical methods of corpus analysis.

2.3   Metaphorical idioms of life

Lakoff & Johnson (2003: 52) emphasize that it is not only words but "a collection of what are called 'speech formulas', or 'fixed-form ex-

pressions', or 'phrasal lexical items'" that belong to the metaphorical expressions structured by metaphorical concepts. In the Anglo-American literature (e.g. Makkai 1972), idioms are defined in a wider sense than in the German literature (e.g. Burger 2007). While in the former every linguistic unit which is fixed and noncompositional can be an idiom (from morphemes to texts), in the latter only lexical units of at least two words are considered idioms, and these seldom go beyond the phrase. Although with some modifications, these two views still hold today. An intermediate position is represented in Dobrovol'skij's (1995: 48) definition of the idiom. Although he regards idioms as irregular (as opposed to Feilke 1998, who considers idioms regular pragmatic units), they are radial categories with prototype effects. According to this cognitive view, which I adopt in this paper, metaphorical idioms are rather at the periphery of the category of the idiom because they are often compositional, they are not opaque, the relationship between the formal and semantic structure is not allomorph, and they usually do not have unique constituents. Even if they are not prototypical idioms, they are indeed idioms because they are reproducible word combinations, they have a relatively fixed structure, a connotative-pragmatic extension of meaning, and often a 'poetic' markedness of the form.

Lakoff (1987) dicussed the way idioms are motivated by conceptual metaphors, proposing that the meanings of many idioms are not arbitrary – a view which contrasts sharply with traditional approaches. Since then several papers have been written about the metaphorical motivation of idioms according to Lakoff (cf., for example, the chapter on idiomaticity in Gibbs 1994). Others adopt a critical attitude towards the motivation of idioms by conceptual metaphors (c.f. Cacciari & Glucksberg 1991, Dobrovol'skij 2007, Keysar & Bly 1999). One of the issues in question is the conscious or unconscious activation of conceptual metaphors with the comprehension of idioms. This issue will not be elaborated on here (cf. Abel 2003). Referring to psycholinguistic experiments, it is assumed that idioms are motivated by conceptual metaphors.

According to Step 2 of the Methodology (cf. 2.1), the preliminary definition of metaphorical idioms of life will be as follows:

> Idioms of life are metaphorical idioms (not one word metaphors or metaphorical compositions) that conceptualize human life based on aspects of existence, duration, process, or lifestyle, purpose in life, everyday life, and way of life.

After defining the object of study, steps 3-6 have been taken.

2.4 Data collection and data types

The study of GIL applies both of the following data types: introspective data and corpus data.

Introspective Data: Conceptual metaphor theory

The work with conceptual metaphor theory in the study of GIL is insofar an application of introspective methods as it is assumed that conceptual metaphors exist. Through the acceptance of the theory it is supposed that metaphorical idioms are motivated by conceptual metaphors. I respond to criticism during the analysis but do not question the existence of conceptual metaphors. It is pointed out that there is psycholinguistic evidence for the existence of conceptual metaphors, but the study of GIL will not go further into the verification of this evidence. It is not the aim of the study to dwell on this question either. Gibbs (2007: 17) calls attention to the importance of empirical methods but also warns that cognitive linguists should not take on the task of psycholinguists:

> What is needed, again, is for cognitive linguists to be more sensitive to some of the important properties of framing experimental hypotheses (e.g., constructing falsifiable hypotheses, considering alternative hypotheses), and trying to articulate their ideas, and empirical findings in ways that may be tested by scholars in other disciplines. This does not mean, however, that cognitive linguists must themselves run out and be something that they are not.

Introspective Data: Metaphorical expressions in German dictionaries

As is well known, most German dictionaries are not corpus based. Unlike English dictionaries, the meanings in entries of German dictionaries are not based on corpora. Two corpus based studies can serve as examples of shortcomings in the definition of idioms in German dictionaries. The German idiom *ins Gras beißen* is not used with the lexicalized meaning 'die' in one quarter of the examined samples but with the meaning 'lose' or 'perish' in sports or in the economy. Also, in one quarter of the examined samples, the German idiom *den Löffel abgeben* is not used with the lexicalized meaning 'die' but with the meaning 'abandon' (cf. Hümmer & Stathi 2006, Stathi 2006). These new meanings have appeared only in the last 20 years, though. They can be, however, considered in future dictionaries.

Since we could not draw on an annotated idiom corpus, the primary data sources for metaphorical expressions were dictionaries, albeit with their shortcomings (Step 3, see above).

Corpus data: Metaphorical idioms of life in the COSMAS corpus

On the one hand, in the study of GIL, the COSMAS corpus serves as a control source to check the list of idioms collected from dictionaries (Step 4, see above). In this method of the consultation paradigm, the introspective data collected primarily from dictionaries are taken as the point of departure. These data have to be checked in the corpus. On the other hand, the COSMAS corpus functions as a primary source for metaphorical idioms of life (Step 5, see above). In this analysis paradigm, vocabulary referring to life as well as metaphorical idioms of life are immediately searched in the corpus. Thus, the corpus data constitute the basic data. The terms consultation paradigm and analysis paradigm, which originate from Steyer (2004: 93f.), have been defined by Sailer (2007: 1067) as follows:

> The linguistic intuition is the starting point in the consultation paradigm and the corpus is used to verify the intuition. The opposite is true of the analysis paradigm, where the corpus methods deliver hypothetical candidates which are evaluated in comparison to linguistic intuitions.

In the study of GIL both methods have been applied due to the fact that they complement each other.

2.5 Problems of data

In this section problems of both introspective and corpus data are discussed with regard to the study of GIL. This list of problems should demonstrate that neither of these two data types is sufficient separately for a reliable analysis.

The problems posed by introspective data on conceptual metaphors

The identification of the conceptual metaphor highly depends on the metalinguistic intuition of the linguist. That is why this often criticized theory is influenced by the theoretical stance of cognitive linguists. In the study of GIL this theoretical stance is shared, and it is assumed that metaphorical idioms are motivated by conceptual

metaphors. Besides various critical views, there is ample psycholinguistic evidence in favor of the existence of conceptual metaphors (see above). As related to life metaphors, Katz & Taylor (2008) verified the existence of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY with semantic and episodic memory recall.

To avoid the problematic status of some conceptual metaphors, the study of GIL made use of Grady's (1997) theory of primary metaphors. Lakoff & Johnson (1999) and Lakoff & Johnson (2003) accepted its significance and revisited their earlier theory. The base of experience is created through this link between source and target domains in life metaphors, too. Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 60ff.) exemplify the need for primary metaphors just by claiming that A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY is a complex metaphor which is set up of the primary metaphors PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS. On the one hand, the advantage of identifying primary metaphors seems thus to be proved, and they reduce the introspective character of conceptual metaphors to some extent. On the other hand, the need of primary metaphors for A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY can be questioned. Ritchie (2006: 52) argues in support of the direct link between purpose and journey, among other things, because of everyday association with journey:

> there are many ways people can experience a confluence between *purpose* and a *journey*. Most journeys are undertaken for a purpose, and activities such as weddings, formal education and marking life *'transitions'* often involve journeys, sometimes short, sometimes extended.

Thus, it seems to be appropriate to leave open the possibility of motivation by experience with conceptual metaphors referred to as complex metaphors (see also the experiments of Katz & Taylor 2008, referred to above). However, the adaptation of primary metaphors can certainly reduce the introspective character of conceptual metaphors, and it makes possible a better description of the structure of life metaphors in the study of GIL.

Problems of introspective data of lexicographic entries

Lexicographic data serve as the primary basis of metaphorical expressions in the study of GIL. In order to compile a list of idioms with conceptual life metaphors, dictionaries created on the basis of cognitive structures would most likely be of help. However, there is no German dictionary of this kind, and neiter is there an English one, to

the best of my knowledge. Baldauf (1997: 251) claims that Lakoff and Johnson go as far as demanding the incorporation of aspects of the way and of the journey in the lexicographic description of love. Indeed, Lakoff & Johnson (2003: 116) write as follows:

> For example, if you look in a dictionary under "love", you find entries that mention affection, fondness, devotion, infatuation, and even sexual desire, but there is no mention of the way in which we comprehend love by means of metaphors like LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LOVE IS MADNESS, LOVE IS WAR, etc. If we take expressions like "Look how far we've come" or "Where are we now?" there would be no way to tell from a standard dictionary or any other standard account of meaning that these expressions are normal ways of talking about the experience of love in our culture.

However, this demand is not impossible at all. Moon (2004) invented a new lexicographic metaphor approach in Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners. In this dictionary there are more than 60 metaphor boxes in which the headword is described also as a metaphorical concept, citing possible source domains and metaphorical expressions.

Life is like a **journey**, and your experiences are like different parts of a journey. Dying is like travelling to another place.

The baby **arrived** just after midnight. ♦ He **came into the world** in 1703. ♦ I **set out** to become a doctor, but it never worked out. ♦ She **went through** life without ever knowing the truth. ♦ It's all been an **uphill** struggle. ♦ We seem to be at a **crossroads**. ♦ His life **took an unexpected direction**. ♦ He **embarked on** a new career. ♦ You've got to **move on** and forget about what's happened. ♦ Will they **go the distance**? ♦ She's well **on the way to** recovery. ♦ They're **over the hill** now. ♦ His grandmother **passed away/on** last year. ♦ They remembered the **departed** in their prayers.

Events in your life are like **games**, with people trying to win, or with things happening by chance.

I'm on a **winning/losing streak**. ♦ You **win some**, you **lose some**. ♦ It's all been **a race against time**. ♦ This is not a **level playing field**. ♦ They're planning to drop out of the **rat race**. ♦ Is he **in/out of the running**? ♦ The election will be a **one-horse race**. ♦ They asked, but their parents wouldn't **play ball**. ♦ This development has been **on/in the cards** for some time. ♦ If you **play your cards right**, you shouldn't have any problems. ♦ The cards were **stacked against** us. ♦ Then they played their **trump card** and we gave in. ♦ We just had a **lucky throw of the dice**. ♦ **All bets are off** – nobody knows what will happen now.

Fig. 1: Metaphor box in the article "life" in Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners

In this metaphor box for "life", metaphorical expressions are organized on the basis of two metaphorical concepts: LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LIFE IS A GAME.

The conceptual metaphor approach has not been adapted to German dictionaries yet. Thus, in German one can only go back to traditional dictionaries. In the study of GIL, traditional phraseological and general dictionaries have been used. A full text search in several electronic dictionaries makes it possible that the search for the component of life does not have to be restricted just to the idiom entries, but it can be expanded to the scope of the whole dictionary (Step 3, see above). In order to be included in my corpus, a reference to life had to be present in the idiom, in the meaning, or in the example, in at least one of the examined dictionaries. The definition of metaphorical idioms of life (see 2.3) helps to identify these idioms in the dictionaries. The identification of idioms is necessary because, in spite of the marking of idioms in dictionaries, they can be placed in various lexicographic positions, due to different idiom definitions in the dictionaries used (cf. Kispál 2005). Those cases have to be excluded when the component life is used in the figurative sense, i.e. when it is metaphorical itself, e.g. *etw. ins Leben rufen* ('establish'), *etw. mit Leben erfüllen* ('animate'), *Leben in die Bude bringen* ('liven things up'). In these cases life is not the target domain but the source domain.

The examined German dictionaries are not corpus based – that is why the dictionary user cannot be sure whether the idioms contained in the dictionary are really used by native speakers or not, or whether the information contained at the idioms is up-to-date. There is no information about frequency of use either. The information stock in German dictionaries mainly rests on the intuition of dictionary writers or on earlier dictionaries, except for documented quotation entries. In this sense the information offered in German dictionaries is not reliable enough for the study of GIL, because of the problem of introspection. A real alternative is to check for such information in a corpus.[2]

Problems of corpus data

To the best of my knowledge, there exist no large annotated corpora for metaphors of German. Considering the type of corpus for the study

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[2] See also Ganzer (2008), who points out several divergences between German dictionaries and corpora, regarding phraseological expressions.

of GIL, two types appear suitable: a special corpus with lots of metaphors of life (e.g. a corpus of biographies and/or horoscopes), or a general corpus with texts of everyday language. The former could possibly contain more metaphors of life than the latter. However, the aim of the study of GIL is to uncover metaphors of life in everyday language. It is not a study of specialized text types. Besides, biographies represent rather a type of literary texts, and, thus, they are hardly suitable for the study. Horoscopes could not constitute a representative corpus for the study of the language of everyday life either. Eventually, the COSMAS corpus, a non-annotated corpus, has been chosen. Although most of the texts of this corpus are news texts, it seems suitable. A problem of this corpus – as a collection of texts containing the language of the press – remains. But the language of press is still closer to everyday language than to literary language. Certainly, in the study of GIL it must be declared that examples originate in news texts.

The question whether this corpus is representative for the study remains. In addition to being news articles, the examined corpus samples are products of written language. However, the study of spoken language is not the purpose of the study of GIL. The examined COSMAS corpus is called corpora of the written language, anyway. Thus, the object of the study of GIL has to be refined as a study of written language in news texts.

Another problematic issue is whether there is a large proportion of regionalisms in the corpus. There is a relatively large number of regional newspapers included in the COSMAS corpus (e.g. St. Galler Tagblatt, Tiroler Tageszeitung, Vorarlberger Nachrichten). The representativeness of the German language is not endangered in the corpus, though. Likewise, it is not the case that the representativity of the corpus examples of the study of GIL is affected. In this way the German language is represented.

The problematic nature of lexicographic data could raise the question whether using only corpus data is a more reliable method. Nevertheless, a consideration of only corpus data would carry the risk for the study to be one sided. For instance, the absence of certain metaphors of life in the COSMAS corpus does not have to mean that they are not used at all in everyday language, since the case may be that they are not preferred in the language of the press but may be used in other text types.

It must be admitted that the demand for empirical bottom-up analyses and, through these, the extension of introspective data of

conceptual metaphors (and lexicographical data) by other (e.g. corpus) data is legitimate (see Stefanowitsch 2006a: 6):

> the focus on the cognitive or conceptual nature of metaphor [...] has led to a certain neglect of detailed, bottom-up analysis, and, in consequence, to a disregard of many aspects of the *linguistic* nature of metaphor [emphasis in the original].

However, one also has to see the boundaries of corpus data in cognitive linguistic studies. The validity of only corpus data can be questioned. It cannot necessarily be considered to be evidence. Rather, the method of extension has to be emphasized. Hence, it is advisable to cautiously apply methods of corpus analysis. The advantages and disadvantages of corpus based analysis have been recognized also by Deignan (2008), who prefers corpus based analysis within the framework of cognitive metaphor theory.

Problems of metaphor identification

The study of GIL is a target domain analysis. In target domain oriented analyses, one of the possible methods of the extraction of metaphors from corpora is a search for the vocabulary of the target domain in context. The possible process of such target domain oriented analysis has been described by Stefanowitsch (2006a: 3) as follows:

> They begin by selecting and searching for lexical items referring directly to target-domain concepts. In a second step, the researcher then identifies those cases where these words are embedded in metaphorical expressions and thus, the metaphorical mappings occuring in the target domain.

In the study of GIL, the mainly introspective analysis has also been complemented by a target domain oriented corpus analysis, together with the need to identify metaphors. Using the methodological terminology of idiom based corpus studies, the method of consultation paradigm has been complemented by the method of analysis paradigm (see 2.4). The former corresponds approximately to corpus illustrated research, and the latter to corpus based research, in the sense of Geeraerts (2006: 38). In the study of GIL, checking the lexicographic data in the corpus constitutes the former (introspective data as basic data), while searching for metaphorical idioms of life in context constitutes the latter (corpus data as basic data).

Identifying lexical items referring to the target domain can be a problematic issue. Namely, in many cases there can be several poten-

tial candidates for the lexical items of a target domain. For example, for the concept HAPPINESS, the lexical items could be the words *happiness* and *joy*; for the concept ANGER the words *anger* und *rage* (cf. Stefanowitsch 2006b). Identifying lexical items referring to LIFE is less problematic though. Choosing the German word *Tod* "death", as antonym for life, has also been considered. But the final decision has been that the word *Leben* "life" can identify the concept LIFE sufficiently. Thus, the search for metaphorical idioms of life is applied for the context of the word *Leben* in the COSMAS corpus (see Step 5).

The identification of metaphors requires, furthermore, the intuition of the researcher (Pragglejaz Group 2007). In this way, intuition interferes with the corpus based method. Thus, such corpus based analysis cannot go free of intuition. The definition of metaphorical idioms of life (see 2.3) is the basis for identifying these idioms in the context of the word *Leben* in the corpus, likewise their identification in dictionaries (as for the identification of metaphorical idioms of life in the dictionaries, see above, under *Problems of introspective data of lexicographic entries*).

Because of the rather large number of instances in the second, corpus based, analysis, an additional survey has been carried out in the form of a COSMAS co-occurrence analysis. This analysis makes it possible to statistically recognize and to systematize conspicuousness in the behavior of words to each other ("Auffälligkeiten im Verhalten von Wörtern zueinander statistisch zu erkennen und zu systematisieren" (Steyer 2003: 33)).

Problems of methodology

Problems of data raise the issue of methodology and, at the same time, problems of methodology. These issues will not be detailed here more specifically, though.

Insufficiency of the corpus-illustrated consultation paradigm (introspective data as basic data) necessitates the extension of this method to the corpus based analysis paradigm (corpus data as basic data). Neither of these methods turns out to be sufficient alone, though. Neither the collection of metaphorical idioms from dictionaries and their additional checking in corpora, nor the direct extraction of metaphorical idioms from corpora seem to provide the one reliable alternative.

The method of the earlier version of the conceptual metaphor theory of Lakoff & Johnson (2003) (only using data of complex concep-

tual metaphors) proved to be problematic. This is why the method of the theory of primary metaphors in addition seems to be useful, in the study of GIL, too.

As for the metaphorical motivation of idioms, additional factors besides conceptual metaphors became necessary during the analysis of the metaphical motivation of idioms. Encyclopedic knowledge, cultural knowledge and symbols have been considered in the study of GIL.

In the following section, two case studies will demonstrate the necessity and effectiveness of the combination of data and methods. Besides, they confirm the multiple motivation of metaphorical idioms.

2.6   Case study 1: Multiple motivation of the German idiom 'auf dem absteigenden Ast sein'

The idiom *auf dem absteigenden Ast sein* "to be headed south" does not have the component *Leben* "life" in the idiom form. It has been admitted to the list of metaphorical idioms of life because of its lexicographic definition in the Duden-DUW: 'in schlechtere Lebensverhältnisse geraten' ('get in worse living conditions') and its metaphorical nature. However, it does not necessarily have to relate to life. In the German learner dictionary LGwDaF, it is defined as follows: ,in einer Situation oder Verfassung sein, die immer schlechter wird' ('be in a situation or a condition which gets progressively worse'). At the same time, this confirms the multifunctional nature and the large interpretational potential of this idiom. This is the case with many other metaphorical idioms of life: life is only one of their several possible target domains. However, this also illustrates the introspective nature and shortcomings of lexicographic data. The corpus data show that, in fact, the definition in LGwDaF is the more precise definition. It can be applied to particular situations or conditions, but it can be referred to living conditions of people as well.

Through the component *Ast* "limb" and the reference to human life using this idiom, there is a link between the life of plants and human life. The conceptual metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS LIFE OF PLANTS or, more generally, the metaphor HUMANS ARE PLANTS is based on depersonification, which is the opposite of personification. Depersonification is present when "referring to something that is animate using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is inanimate" (Charteris-Black 2004: 21). In the metaphor HUMANS ARE PLANTS there

is a depersonification, "in that the source domain is inanimate and the target domain animate" (Charteris-Black 2004: 191).

In the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS LIFE OF PLANTS underlying several metaphorical expressions, the analogical nature of metaphor can be well seen. Just like plants need their basic components (limbs, roots etc.) in order to exist, in a similar manner human life has some basic foundations without which life does not exist or hardly exists (*auf dem absteigenden Ast sein* "to be headed south", *den Ast absägen, auf dem man sitzt* "bite the hand that feeds you", *im Leben verwurzelt sein* "rooted in life"). At the beginning of the life of plants there is the germ period, as germing human life (*keimendes Leben* "germing life*"*) means an emerging life. The blooming period of plants means their most beautiful period. In a similar manner, vitality, liveliness, freshness and youthfulness are accentuated if human life is conceptualized in German as blooming life (*blühendes Leben* "blooming life", *in der Blüte seiner Jahre* "be in prime of life"). Kövecses (2006: 119) also points to the conceptual metaphor THE HUMAN LIFETIME IS THE LIFECYCLE OF A PLANT: "we can find shared generic-level structure in such domains as HUMAN LIFETIME and the LIFE CYCLE OF PLANTS".

The co-occurrence of the German words *absteigen* and *Ast* is relatively frequent. According to the IDS corpus, they are next to each other in 188 cases (date of request: August 2, 2008). In the following sample *der absteigende Ast* signals not only the failure in the sports career of the tennis player Korda but also his existential situation. The decline of Korda's sports career is caused by his period of suffering due to illness.

> Trotz des Endspielerfolges von München <u>war</u> Korda wegen seiner andauern-den Verletzungen schon damals <u>auf dem absteigenden Ast gewesen</u>. Ein hal-bes Jahr später dann begann seine Leidenszeit endgültig, die ihn mit weicher Leiste in zahlreiche Artzpraxen und vor zwei Jahren auf den Operationstisch führte. "Ich war", blickte er zurück, "als Tennisspieler doch schon weg vom Fenster." (Salzburger Nachrichten, [Tageszeitung], 03.09.1997, Statt "weg vom Fenster" ist Korda in Tennis-Schlagzeilen)
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> Despite the success of the end game in Munich, Korda was declining at the time due to his long term injuries. Half a year later, the time of suffering came, taking him to several doctors and, two years later, to surgery with his pelvic injuries. "As a tennis player", he reminisces, "I was written off".

The aspect 'decline in the development of life' is highlighted here, whereas the aspect 'safe basis of life' (through the picture of the *Ast*) is hidden. The latter aspect is more highlighted in the German meta-phorical idiom *den Ast absägen, auf dem man sitzt* "bite the hand that feeds you". The idiom *auf dem absteigenden Ast sein* can be etymologi-

cally explained by a family tree, according to Röhrich (1994). The meaning of this metaphorical idiom is probably not motivated so much by this historical symbol as by conceptual metaphors.[3] Besides the underlying complex conceptual metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS LIFE OF PLANTS (and the metaphors LIFE IS A TREE and CAREER IS A TREE), the motivation of this metaphorical idiom can be traced back to the primary metaphor BAD IS DOWN. The multiple motivation of the German idiom *auf dem absteigenden Ast sein* can be hence summarized as follows:

motivation	source domain	target domain
analogy	absteigender Ast	declining living conditions
BAD IS DOWN	down	bad
vertical orientation	top down motion	
way schema	rearward movement (regression)	
HUMAN LIFE IS LIFE OF PLANTS	life of plants	human life
CAREER IS A TREE	tree	career
symbol	family tree	

Fig. 2: Multiple motivation of the idiom auf dem absteigenden Ast sein

2.7 Case study 2: Multiple motivation of the German idioms 'die Sonnenseite/Schattenseite des Lebens' and 'ein Schattendasein fristen/führen'

The life cycle as the change between light and dark can be one of the motivation links for the idioms *die Sonnenseite / Schattenseite des Lebens* "sunny side/shady side of life", and *ein Schattendasein fristen / führen* "be in a shadowy existence". The positive side of life is conceptualized as life in the sun, the negative side of the life as life in the shadow. It could be obvious that our life experience can help interpreting these idioms. The life cycle of human life could be considered parallel to the life cycle of plants. However, these idioms could be traced back to other aspects as well. Charteris-Black (2005: 50) calls attention to the importance of cultural and social knowledge:

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[3] Symbols can be the basis of conceptual metaphors, though. Kövecses (2002: 59) claims the following: "To understand a symbol means in part to be able to see the conceptual metaphors that the symbol can evoke or was created to evoke". He exemplifies this with the symbol of the Statue of Liberty in New York.

Cognitive linguistic treatment of light metaphors has been traced to the association between light and life (plants rely on a light source) and between darkness and death (it is dark underground where we are buried). However, their origin in universal knowledge overlooks the importance of cultural and social knowledge in influencing the mythical quality of metaphors.

This problematic issue indicates that the metaphorical motivation of these idioms of life could have an introspective character. Charteris-Black (2005) rejects the assumption of the motivational connection with plants. Instead, he claims a cultural and social motivation. As an argument against the connection with plants, he states the following: "This is not necessarily mediated by any knowledge that we may have of the conditions necessary for plant survival – indeed some plants prefer dark and shady locations to light ones" (Charteris-Black 2005: 51). More important is thereby, according to him, the reference to Christian culture: the valuation of light as typically good, and the valuation of darkness as typically bad. This cultural motivation is known in conceptual metaphor theory as POSITIVE IS LIGHT, and NEGATIVE IS DARK. These are primary metaphors because they are based actually on our direct experience with the environment. As related to the idioms of life, they lead to the conceptual metaphors POSITIVE LIFE IS LIGHT and NEGATIVE LIFE IS DARKNESS. Also according to Baldauf (1997: 100), the polar opposition *dunkel/hell* "dark/ light" determines the human life cycle: "Aufgrund der spezifischen Beschaffenheit des Menschen, der Abhängigkeit seiner Existenz und seines Handelns von Licht, determiniert diese Opposition seinen gesamten Lebensrhythmus" ("Due to the special place humans occupy, because of the dependence of people's actions on light, this opposition determines their entire rhythm of life.") (see also life as cycle in German idioms in Kispál 2010).

The cultural motivation of the components *Sonne und Schatten* can be justified via symbols, too. As of the idiom *ein Schattendasein führen*, Röhrich mentions that it can be traced back to the ancient concept of the realm of shadows, among other things.

The multiple motivation of the German idioms *die Sonnenseite/ Schattenseite des Lebens* and *ein Schattendasein fristen/führen* can be summarized as follows:

motivation	source domain	target domain
POSITIVE LIFE IS LIGHT	light	life
cycle schema	light/darkness	positive/negative in life
cultural knowledge	light/darkness	good/bad
POSITIVE IS LIGHT	light	positive
NEGATIVE IS DARK	dark	negative
symbol	sun and shadow for light and darkness	

Fig. 3: Multiple motivation of the idioms die Sonnenseite / Schattenseite des Lebens and ein Schattendasein fristen / führen

2.8   Combination of data and methods

Using the example of the study of GIL, it has been demonstrated that one type of data is not sufficient for a reliable analysis with the tools of cognitive metaphor theory. Using primary metaphors reduces the introspective character of conceptual metaphors. As for metaphorical expressions, looking up the metaphors in dictionaries could seemingly provide an alternative solution. However, the introspective character of lexicographic data in German dictionaries requires their checking in corpora, and, thus, the use of corpus data. Hence, the joint application of lexicographic and corpus data reveals an appropriate solution for the study of GIL.

To reduce the problems of corpus data, the combination of both methods of corpus based idiom research (those of the consultation paradigm and analysis paradigm) have been used in the study of GIL. Applying both methods produced more efficient results.

2.9   Results

As for the metaphorical expressions, 152 metaphorical idioms of life could have been investigated by the combined method of data collection (introspective data and corpus data). As for the conceptual metaphors, 20 metaphors of life underlying the 152 metaphorical idioms have been discovered. The five conceptual metaphors that have the motivation basis for the most idioms of life in German are as follows: LIFE IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS A CONTAINER, LIFE IS A GAME, LIFE IS FOOD, and LIFE IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION.

3   Conclusion

No doubt, as results of corpus based studies, "relevant data can be examined more exhaustively and more systematically than with more introspective/opportunistic methods" (Stefanowitsch 2006a: 6). Frequency data can change proportions for previously postulated conceptual metaphors. Target-domain oriented studies allow us "to identify those mappings and source domains that are significantly associated with a given target domain." (Stefanowitsch 2006a: 7). The study of GIL could identify the mappings and source domains that are associated with the target domain of life, with the combination of data and methods. It has showed also that the source domains resulting from the corpus based analysis of the idioms of life in everyday language are partially distinguished from the source domains resulting from the more introspective analysis of the idioms of life. Hence, the study of GIL has confirmed the effective applicability of the combination of data types. This method has produced more significant and more differentiated results. It has demonstrated that neither of these two data types is sufficient separately for a reliable analysis. Furthermore, the combination method could highlight the multiple motivation of German idioms of life.

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