

IDIOMS WITH A VIABLE LITERAL INTERPRETATION
IN GERMAN ADVERTISEMENTS

Jennifer McKenna

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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In German Advertisements**

Jennifer McKenna

University of St Andrews

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

August 2004



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Abstract

An idiom is a set phrase which is relatively syntactically and semantically fixed, and which produces striking stylistic and rhetorical effects. Advertising is a discourse type which is particularly rich in idioms: around half of all the German advertisements examined from *Stern* magazine and the *RTL* television channel contain at least one idiom. The idioms tend to occur in prominent, emphatic textual positions, and approximately half of the idioms which appear are modified in some way. The modifications typically produce deliberately creative effects, suggesting that idioms are not as invariable as has previously been thought.

The most common type of idiom incorporated into German advertisements are idioms with not only the definitive figurative interpretation, but also a lexically, syntactically, and semantically feasible literal interpretation. These idioms are consequently referred to in this dissertation as "idioms with a viable literal interpretation" (abbreviated to "VLI idioms" in the text). Their literal sense tends to evoke strong mental imagery, which makes them a useful device for the visually restricted print medium in particular: approximately 42% of all the idioms in the magazine advertisements examined (as opposed to around 16% of all the idioms in the television advertisements) are VLI idioms. It is the uniformity of the mental imagery evoked by VLI idioms which highlights the fact that, contrary to traditional thinking, idioms are conceptual rather than linguistic in nature. Indeed, an idiom may be defined as the linguistic expression of general conceptual metaphors. The viable literal meaning of VLI idioms also makes them ideally suited to modification: around 70% of the VLI idioms in the magazine advertisements, and just over 88% of the VLI idioms in the television advertisements, are modified in some way. Nearly all of these modifications involve punning on the idiom's literal sense by means of the idiom's co-text and/or the advertisement's visual element.

In short, linguists have hitherto underestimated the ubiquity and significance of idioms, especially with regard to the frequency with which they are modified. VLI idioms in particular are an important – but thus far overlooked – feature of German magazine and television advertisements.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr Christopher Beedham, who started the ball rolling for me when I took his linguistics course as an undergraduate at the University of St Andrews. His kicks up the backside have helped me to get my brain into gear, ensuring that I actually went the whole nine yards with this labour of love. His pearls of wisdom, dispensed with seemingly all the (herbal) tea in China, were always just what the doctor(al student) ordered. His proficiency with a fine-tooth comb has been greatly appreciated, and he has bent over backwards to offer me support and advice throughout my time at St Andrews.

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Abbreviations and Notations

The focus of this research is idioms which have both a figurative meaning and a feasible literal meaning. In this dissertation such idioms are called "idioms with a viable literal interpretation", which is abbreviated to "VLI idioms" in the text.

German idioms appearing in this dissertation are given in italics. The English translations offered for German idioms are mainly paraphrases and explanations. These translations are presented in single quotation marks, and with a literal rendering of the idiom given in square brackets if it differs significantly from the translation offered, e.g. *in Hülle und Fülle* [lit. 'in cover and wealth'] 'in abundance'. However, if an English idiom exists which is largely synonymous with the German idiom as regards syntax, lexicon, semantics, and pragmatics, the English idiom is offered as a translation in an attempt to recreate the stylistic and rhetorical flavour of the German. In such a case the English idiom is preceded by the symbol \approx , and any further explanations of the idiom's meaning are introduced with the abbreviation "i.e.", for example, *Berge versetzen* \approx 'to move mountains', i.e. to achieve the near impossible. Where there is an English idiom synonymous in sense with the German idiom but differing with respect to, for instance, its lexical components it is introduced with the phrase "similar in sense to the English idiom ...", e.g. *was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr* [lit. 'what little Hans does not learn, Hans learns never more'] 'if one does not learn something as a child, one can never learn it as an adult', similar in sense to the English proverb "you can't teach an old dog new tricks".

All translations of citations and advertisements are mine, unless otherwise stated.

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Introduction

An idiom may be defined as:

a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit. From a semantic viewpoint, the meanings of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the 'idiomatic' expression as a whole. From a syntactic viewpoint, the words often do not permit the usual variability they display in other contexts. (Crystal 1991:170.)

Examples of German idioms include: *im siebenten Himmel sein* ≈ 'to be in seventh heaven', i.e. to be extremely happy; *jmdm. die Sprache verschlagen* [lit. 'to steal someone's speech'] 'to really surprise someone'; and *alle/viele Wege führen nach Rom* ≈ 'all/many paths lead to Rome', i.e. there is more than one way to achieve a certain goal.

It is because of their semantic and syntactic idiosyncrasy that idioms tend to be regarded as linguistic anomalies, but they are in actual fact a common feature of everyday language. They are familiar, informal, concise, evocative set phrases which inject a specific style and tone into any text in which they are used. Advertising is the discourse type used in this dissertation for the analysis of idioms because it is extremely rich in idioms. Since advertisements are "deliberate and consciously articulated messages" (Dyer 1982:13) in which every word is carefully selected and used to create a specific effect, the use of an idiom in an advertisement is particularly significant. Because more idioms are modified in German advertising texts than in any other text type (cf. e.g. Černyševa 1980 and Wotjak 1992), an analysis of the modification of idioms in advertising provides important insights into the semantic and syntactic (in)flexibility of idioms, as well as into their creative potential. Magazine and television advertising as primarily visual media are the focus of this dissertation in order to ascertain the ways in which the visual component of an advertisement interacts with its linguistic component. Advertisements from *Stern* magazine are compared with advertisements from the *RTL* television channel to determine whether the advertising medium affects the uses and functions of idioms.

One explanation for the seeming prevalence of idioms in advertising is the fact that they often evoke strong mental images, which allow the idiom – and hence the advertisement as a whole – to be remembered more efficiently and comprehensively. The vivid mental imagery associated with idioms shows that idioms are actually the linguistic expression of general conceptual metaphors, and not just "dead metaphors" as has been traditionally thought. Mental imagery tends to stem from the literal sense of (a component word of) an idiom. Idioms are by definition expressions with a primarily figurative interpretation, but a certain type of idiom possesses a valid literal meaning alongside their figurative meaning. I call such idioms "idioms with a viable literal interpretation" (henceforth "VLI idioms"). Examples of VLI idioms are *auf der Straße sitzen* [lit. 'to sit on the street'] 'to be unemployed' or 'to be homeless', and *die Nase in alles stecken* [lit. 'to stick one's nose into everything'] 'to be nosy about things which do not concern you'. In German advertising the use of VLI idioms seems to be widespread, presumably because the activation of their literal sense functions so effectively as the basis for attention-grabbing and memorable wordplay.

Why study idioms?

Idioms are generally overlooked in language teaching materials and grammars.¹ The definitions of only a small proportion of the most common idioms can be given in dictionaries because of space constraints. Specialist idiom dictionaries only began appearing in any significant number towards the start of the 1960s, such as Engeroff and Lovelace-Käufer (1959), and Taylor and Gottschalk (1960), but even today these are relatively few in number. Perhaps idioms are neglected in language reference books because they are extremely difficult to define and characterise exactly and absolutely.

¹ German grammars which contain no reference at all to idioms include: Wells (1997) *Handbuch zur deutschen Grammatik*; Zifonun et al. (1997) *Grammatik der deutschen Sprache*; Duden: *Der Duden in 12 Bänden*, Bd. 4: *Grammatik der deutschen Gegenwartssprache* (1998); Dreyer and Schmidt (2000) *Lehr- und Übungsdeutsch der deutschen Grammatik*; Hall and Scheiner (2001) *Übungsgrammatik DaF für Fortgeschrittene*; and Helbig and Buscha (2001) *Deutsche Grammatik. Ein Handbuch für Ausländerunterricht*. Some German grammars written in English which make no mention whatsoever of idioms are: Durrell (1983) *Hammer's German Grammar and Usage*; Fox (1990) *The Structure of German*; and Buck (1999) *A Concise German Grammar*.

Perhaps this oversight is due to the fact that they are associated mainly with – and hence connote – spoken language, and as such are typically regarded as informal, colloquial, and sometimes clichéd expressions. Perhaps the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic idiosyncrasies of idioms mean that they are considered too complex for learners of a foreign language to cope with. Or maybe the fact that sometimes "figurative language is viewed, at best, as an ornament and, at worst, as a subterfuge" (Pickens, Pollio and Pollio 1985:482) is the reason behind their omission from pedagogical grammars. Yet idioms are not merely linguistic flourishes and curiosities. Idioms are a prominent and pervasive linguistic phenomenon, the study of which allows a better understanding of human language, thought, culture, and society.

Idioms as insight into human language

Idioms provide important, and often unique, insights into language. In particular, idioms highlight how the boundary imposed by many linguists between lexis and grammar is in fact an artificial one. Traditionally language has been separated into its various different levels (e.g. lexicon, syntax, semantics) for the purposes of research, with the grammar and the lexicon of a given language subsequently being treated as two distinct entities. Idioms are, however, an "intermediate component" of language, which blurs the borderline between lexis and grammar (Altenberg and Eeg-Olofsson 1990:19). Lexis and grammar are, in fact, inextricably linked, if not actually "the same phenomenon looked at from different ends" (Halliday 1991:57). Their interdependence is obvious when it is recognised that:

as communicators we do not proceed by selecting syntactic structures and independently choosing lexis to slot into them. Instead, we have concepts to convey and communicative choices to make which require central lexical items, and these choices find themselves syntactic structures in which they can be said comfortably and grammatically. (Francis 1993:142.)

The indivisible nature of lexis and grammar is not a recent concept:

Introduction

A general and vague idea exists that the study of a given language should proceed on a double basis: lexicology, or the study of words, and grammar, or the study of their mutations and combinations. A little reflection, however, will convince us that this is far from being a true and logical conception of the problem. It will be found that the two subjects are bound up with each other and interdependent, and that they can only be differentiated by doing violence to each. The words themselves and their attendant phenomena cannot be separated except by invoking the arbitrary. (Palmer, 1917:32, quoted in Anderson 2003:88.)

In simple terms, idioms may be defined as "a lexical component in a grammatical framework" (Everaert et al. 1995:2). The study of idioms therefore allows linguists "die Grenze zwischen Grammatik und Lexikon zu revidieren oder gar aufzuheben" 'to revise or even remove the boundary between lexis and grammar' (Helbig 1988:163).

In America in the 1930s Bloomfield took a form-oriented approach to the analysis of language, reputedly deeming meaning too vague a concept to research scientifically. He focused on the grammar of language, considering the lexicon to be merely an appendix to the grammar. Chomsky, following the same line of reasoning around twenty years later, claimed that "grammar is best formulated as a self-contained study independent of semantics" (Chomsky 1957:106). In his book *Syntactic Structures*, published in 1957, Chomsky introduced the method of what subsequently became known as "generative grammar", whereby a linguist constructs formal grammars in an attempt to explain language acquisition, comprehension and use. An issue central to Chomsky's generative grammar is that of "universal grammar", which he characterises as "a general theory of linguistic structure that aims to discover the framework of principles and elements common to attainable human languages" (Chomsky 1986:3). He thus draws a distinction between "core language" and the "periphery" (Chomsky 1986:147). The core consists of regular grammatical items and rules which are prevalent in all languages, and therefore considered "universal" features of language as a whole. In contrast, the periphery comprises all the grammatical elements and constructions which are exceptions to the core. Idioms as supposedly linguistic anomalies with their irregular syntax and semantics are accordingly consigned to the periphery of language. However, "there are simply too many idioms and fixed expressions for us to simply disregard them as phenomena on the margin of language" (Jackendoff 1995:156), which indicates that the separation of lexis from grammar, particularly within the framework of generative grammar, is

unnatural and problematical.²

Idioms in a text tend not to convey purely factual information, but rather communicate messages about the language user as well as the context of the text. They can indicate the language user's attitude towards both the text and the intended recipient of the text (cf. section 2.3.3). Furthermore, they often serve as an indicator of register and discourse type. Idioms in a text may intensify – or even create – a particular style and tone, usually rendering a text more colloquial and familiar. As a result:

idioms are often used by both journalists and politicians as shorthand ways of expressing opinions or conveying ready-made evaluations. ... Idioms help speakers and writers to be fluent and to get their opinions across fluently ... to create a sense of 'camaraderie' with the people they are speaking to or writing for: idioms make language seem more lively and interesting, more friendly and informal. (*Collins COBUILD* 1995:vi-vii.)

For all these reasons idioms are a common feature of advertisements. "In der Werbesprache werden Phraseologismen bewußt und kontrolliert gesetzt" 'Idioms are used in the language of advertising consciously and in a controlled manner' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:101) in order to subtly communicate a particular opinion ("this product is fantastic") and, more importantly, to make a text more appealing to its audience.

Idioms as a reflection of thought processes

"If one tried to imagine human life without language, one would have an amorphous mass of prelinguistic 'thought'" (Beedham 1995:48). Language is not just a medium of

² Mel'čuk provides an interesting definition of an idiom with regard to generative grammar:

One of the first definitions of idioms I heard in my life was the following one by David Hays. "Do you know what an idiom is?" he asked me one day in the early 1960s. I started to mumble something, but he interrupted me with a regal gesture: "An idiom is what we beat Chomsky with!" I had trouble understanding why we should beat Chomsky in the first place, let alone with idioms or other similar implements, but Hays' meaning was clear: A syntax-gearred linguistic theory is not a very appropriate framework to deal with idioms. Idioms have an internal syntactic structure, so that they do undergo syntactic processing, but not *qua* idioms: on the surface, they are treated by syntactic rules the same way that all free phrasemes are. (Mel'čuk 1995:168, fn 1.)

communication. It is a vehicle for thought, serving as the instrument with which humans conceptualise the world and perceive reality:

There is an 'outside world' beyond our bodies which we call real: there are 'brute facts' that one bumps into. But we perceive these 'realities' through the spectacles of our languages, and there is no other way of perceiving them. (Hawkes 1972:81.)

The formal structures of language therefore act as "reflections of conceptual organization, categorization principles, and processing mechanisms" (Gibbs 1995:105). At the same time, the structure of a given language to some extent actually influences thought processes:

We cut up nature, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, BUT ITS TERMS ARE ABSOLUTELY OBLIGATORY; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees. (Whorf 1956:213-214.)

Idioms may be explained in terms of the relationship between language and thought. Idioms are a particular type of figurative language. One important role played by figurative language in discourse is "to facilitate the comprehension and communication of abstract concepts by representing them in concrete form" (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1995:43). In other words, "language uses concrete, familiar entities to explain and describe abstract phenomena" (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994:530). Makkai observes that with idioms "well-known, ordinary words are ... recombined to describe a technological innovation, an abstract concept", and consequently regards this use of literal language to understand and explain abstract concepts as a "characteristic of idiomaticity" (Makkai 1978:421). In idioms "every-day objects, familiar to everyone, are invoked as familiar images, starting from concrete experiences and concrete meanings" (Makkai 1978:429). As a result, "the semantic structure of many common idioms is constituted by concrete (literal) actions that serve as a vehicle for abstract (figurative) mental states and events" (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1995:43).

Idioms are therefore illustrations of what is now known as Kant's "als ob" 'as if' principle. The "als ob" principle encapsulates the reasoning outlined in Kant's (1781) work, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in that it asserts that the mind has a tendency to interpret abstract categories in terms of sensuously perceptible objects (Kant 1970). Kant maintains that in the brain, "very abstract categories could not be applied unless other, more concrete or ostensive, concepts were also applied" (Wilkerson 1976:98). Abstract categories consequently appear in the mind – and subsequently in language – as concrete objects or material processes or properties. Defining idioms then in terms of Kant's "als ob" principle: idioms generally comprise literal (concrete) language used figuratively to explain abstract phenomena.

The relationship between the literal and figurative meanings of words and idioms may be explained by the "Fabricius-Kovács/Kronasser phenomenon", which states that "meaning will always change from the concrete toward the abstract" (Makkai 1978:430). Literal language tends gradually to take on (additional) figurative senses, as is the case with the idioms *ein heißes Eisen* [lit. 'a hot iron'] 'a delicate or controversial issue or situation', similar in sense to the English idiom "a hot potato", and *das ist ein dicker Hund* [lit. 'that is a fat dog'] 'that's a bit much', i.e. a comment about an unpleasant or unacceptable situation. Makkai refers to this linguistic shift from the concrete to the abstract as "Multiple Re-Investment", and observes that "the more frequent a word is in literal use, the more often it will be found in combinations which then take on a specialized, non-predictable meaning" (Makkai 1978:421). It is this "Multiple Re-Investment" which explains why familiar, concrete words which occur regularly in everyday, literal language are the most likely words to form the basis for idioms. An illustration is the relatively common noun "Schwein" 'pig', which is the focus for idioms such as: *kein Schwein* [lit. 'no pig'] 'nobody'; *Schwein haben* [lit. 'to have pig'] 'to be lucky'; *mit jmdm. Schweine gehütet haben* [lit. 'to have tended swine with someone'] 'to be on familiar or good terms with someone'; *den Schweinen wird alles Schwein* [lit. 'to the pigs everything becomes pig'] 'a corrupt character sees badness in everything'; *bluten/schreien wie ein (gestochenes) Schwein* ≈ 'to bleed/squeal like a stuck pig', i.e. to bleed/squeal a lot; *schwitzen wie ein Schwein/ein Schweinebraten* ['to sweat like a pig/joint of pork'] ≈ 'to sweat like a pig', i.e. to sweat a lot; *der innere Schweinhund* [lit. 'the inner pig-dog'] 'inner weakness'; *eine*

Schweinerei sein [lit. 'to be a pigness'] 'to be a messy business, or a disgrace, or a scandal'; and *im Schweinsgalopp* [lit. 'at the pig's gallop'] 'very quickly' (Duden 2002).

In short, idioms may be thought of as a bridge between both language and thought, and between the concrete and the abstract. Idioms involve words (language) with conventional literal meanings (thought) combining to form set phrases (language) which take on a new figurative sense (thought). This figurative meaning (thought) generally describes (language) an abstract phenomenon (thought), namely an emotion, attitude, or a philosophical concept. Idioms thus involve metaphor, and indeed, there is substantial evidence to suggest that idioms are in actual fact the linguistic representations of basic conceptual metaphors. This idea is discussed in detail in chapter 3. Idioms also provide a better understanding of the ways in which language is processed in the brain. There is evidence to suggest that idioms are recognised and understood significantly faster than both their more literal paraphrases, and literal language in general (Swinney and Cutler 1979a and 1979b; Ortony et al. 1978; Gibbs 1985, 1986; Paivio 1986). This faster processing time, which consequently indicates less mental processing effort, is probably due to the fact that the meaning of idioms is determined partly by analysis of the phrase's component words, and partly by direct retrieval from the mental lexicon (Cacciari and Tabossi 1988). The processing of idioms is examined further in chapter 4.

Idioms as a representation of (and influence on) culture and society

Language represents, conceptualises and reproduces reality in a culturally-specific manner:

The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. ... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Whorf 1956:134.)

Language is thus a mechanism crucial in initially deciding how the world in general – and culture in particular – is interpreted, and which subsequently contributes to the formation of a collective cultural identity. Culture may be understood as:

the ability of members of a speech community to orientate themselves with respect to social, moral, political, and so on values in their empirical and mental experience. Cultural categories (such as Time and Space, Good and Evil, etc.) are conceptualized in the subconscious knowledge of standards, stereotypes, mythologies, rituals, general habits, and other cultural patterns. (Teliya et al. 1998:57.)

Every language is a reflection and extension of a particular "Weltansicht" 'world-view' (Weisgerber 1929). A given speech community's cultural "Weltansicht" is influenced greatly, and perhaps even dictated, by the language it uses. For instance, two people with similar characters may be described in German as being *aus dem gleichen Holz geschnitzt* [lit. 'carved from the same wood'], and in English as "cast from the same mould". The two idioms reveal how differently the two speech communities view the concept of personality. The German idiom evokes an image of a sculptor carving a block of wood, which suggests that German speakers (subconsciously) consider the human character to be relatively fixed and unyielding to start with (i.e. at birth), before being shaped by events and experiences. In contrast, the English idiom stimulates the image of a liquid being poured into a mould to create a particular shape, and thus implies that English speakers (subconsciously) regard a person's character as being pliant and malleable to begin with (analogies based on Teliya et al. 1998).

Phraseology in general may be viewed as "the language of culture", and idioms in particular as succinct linguistic representations of cultural information (Teliya et al. 1998:75).³ Proverbs are especially revealing as regards a speech community's social and cultural history, largely due to the fact that:

Le proverbe est puisé à un fonds commun de sagesse représentant la tradition, ... il donne des conseils reconnus vrais, qui servent le long de la voie-vie de l'homme. ... Il renvoie à une vérité commune et reconnue par tout le monde.

the proverb is drawn from a communal source of wisdom representing tradition, ... it gives advice recognised as sound, which is useful to man in his daily life. ... It refers to a general truth which is recognised by everyone. (*Le Proverbe.*)

³ Phraseology is the study of the manner in which words and phrases are used (Teliya et al. 1998).

As a result, proverbs, with their obvious descriptive and prescriptive pragmatic functions, may be described as "direct cultural signs" (Teliya et al. 1998:57). All in all, idioms both reflect and influence the culture of a speech community because they communicate a condensed world-view in an appealing form:

In Redewendungen [wird] kondensierte Welterfahrung (und Einstellungsmarkierung) [genutzt], die den Stempel des allgemein Akzeptierten, der Autorität wie auch der Volksnähe trägt, um eine längere Argumentation zu sparen, sie zu vereinfachen und die Plausibilität des Ausgedrückten anschaulich-expressiv zum Ausdruck zu bringen.

In idioms a condensed world-experience (and indicator of opinion), which bears the stamp of the generally accepted, of authority, and of the popular touch, is used to dispense with and simplify a long argumentation, and to convey the plausibility of what is being communicated in a clear and expressive manner. (Wotjak 1992: 169.)

Chapter 1 of this dissertation defines idioms in general terms, outlining their characteristics and highlighting the difference between idioms and collocations. It is only through an investigation of specific idioms in context (i.e. in actual texts), however, that the uses, functions, and linguistic potential of idioms can be truly understood. The discourse of advertising is the context within which idioms are analysed in this dissertation. In chapter 2 advertising as a general concept is considered before an examination of the style of language used in advertisements, with regard in particular to the roles and functions of idioms in advertising. The chapter ends with a discussion of the various ways in which idioms are modified lexically, syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically, and suggests reasons why idioms are modified to such an extent in advertising texts in particular. Chapter 3 opens with a general discussion of metaphor, then summarises the functions of metaphor in advertising, before examining in greater detail why the uniformity of mental imagery serves as proof of the conceptual metaphors underlying idioms. Chapter 4 discusses literal and figurative meaning, and suggests how the meaning of an idiom is understood. Chapter 5 outlines and analyses the findings of my own research into the frequency, textual position, and modification of idioms in German advertisements. The reasons behind their use, textual functions, and the stylistic effects produced by idiom modification are also examined.

The overall aim of this dissertation is to determine whether idioms are actually as significant a feature of advertising as would appear to be the case, or whether as familiar, colourful phrases which stand out from more literal language they just seem to be so pervasive. An analysis of the uses and functions of idioms in advertisements allows an evaluation of the importance of the role played by idioms – particularly VLI idioms – in German magazine and television advertising.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Idioms

Es gibt nichts Hemmenderes als Gemeinplätze und Redensarten. Jede Redensart ist die Fratze eigener Gedanken, ein „Mitesser“ im Zellengewebe des Denkers.

There is no greater hindrance than clichés and idioms. Every idiom is the grotesque face of one's own thoughts, a "blackhead" in the tissue cells of the thinker. (Morgenstern 1918:95, quoted in Pape 1985:10.)

It is through idioms that the truly creative nature of human expression reveals itself. Idioms are the poetry of daily discourse. (Johnson-Laird 1993:ix.)

1.1 Introduction

Idioms are difficult to define precisely (section 1.2). They are set phrases consisting of two or more words with a figurative meaning (section 1.3). Unlike collocations, however, which are also a special co-occurrence of words, idioms entail a specific stylistic and/or rhetorical effect (section 1.4). The problem of defining an idiom is solved in part by examining the typical characteristics of an idiom (section 1.5), as well as by differentiating the various types of idioms (section 1.6).

1.2 Definition of an Idiom

There exists a wide variety of definitions of idioms. At the most basic level an idiom is "a multi-word unit which, if taken literally, can disinform the unprepared ill-decoder" (Makkai 1978:415). Most definitions, however, highlight the semantic complexity and syntactic rigidity of idioms:

Kennzeichen der idiomatischen Verbindung ist, dass ihre Bedeutung nicht oder nur teilweise aus den Einzelbedeutungen ihrer Bestandteile erschlossen werden kann und dass sie in der Regel eine feste, nur begrenzt veränderbare Struktur hat.

Characteristic of an idiomatic word combination is that its meaning cannot, or can only partly, be reconstructed from the individual meanings of its components, and that it has as a rule a fixed, only slightly variable structure. (*Duden*, Bd. 11. 2002:7.)

Idiom as a more general concept may be defined as "linguistic usage that is grammatical and natural to native speakers of a language" (*Collins English Dictionary*). In order to speak a (foreign) language idiomatically (i.e. fluently and naturally), (non-native) speakers must incorporate set phrases, namely collocations and idioms, into their speech and writing correctly: "The accurate and appropriate use of ... expressions which are in the broadest sense idiomatic is one distinguishing mark of a native command of language and a reliable measure of the proficiency of foreign learners" (Cowie, Mackin and McCaig 1983:x). Yet idioms are one of the most difficult features of a language for non-native speakers to initially understand and subsequently reproduce (Burger 1973; *Collins COBUILD* 1995:iv). "Such are the semantic and structural problems posed by idioms that many students view them with the trepidation of a man approaching a well-planted minefield" (Cowie, Mackin and McCaig 1983:x). Problems with understanding and using idioms correctly arise from the fact that idioms embody "the idiosyncratic turns of phrase which are shaped in popular discourse, and which are not available to a speaker who has learned a language by rule rather than in ordinary conversation" (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994:493). It may even be claimed that "erst wenn man über die Redensarten einer Sprache Bescheid weiß und sie verwendet, also die Idiomatik beherrscht, wird man zum wirklichen Kenner und Könnner dieser Sprache" 'only when one knows and uses the idioms of a language, and thus masters idiomaticity, does one become a true authority and expert on this language' (Görner 1979:10). Idioms are only one – but probably the most important – type of linguistic feature which allows a language user to speak (or write) idiomatically. The difference between the terms "idiom" and "collocation" may be explained thus: "The basis of both is the habitual and, therefore, predictable co-occurrence of specific words, but with *idioms* signifying a narrower range of word combinations than *idiomaticity*" (Fernando 1996:30).

The difficulty in defining an idiom exactly is reflected in the numerous terms used to express the concept of a fixed sequence of words: "feste Phrasen" and "feste Wortkomplexe" 'fixed phrases'; "Gemeinplätze" 'clichés'; "Idiome", "Idiomatik", and "idiomatische Wendung" 'idioms'; "Kollokationen" 'collocations'; "Phraseolexeme", "Phraseologismen", and "phraseologische Wortbildung" 'phraseological expressions'; "Redensarten" and "Redewendungen" 'idioms'; "Sprüche" 'sayings'; and "Sprichwörter" 'proverbs' (German terminology from e.g. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982, Fleischer 1982, Wotjak 1994). Corresponding terms in English include: cliché;

(habitual) collocation; complex unit; compound word; conventional/formulaic/frozen/idiomatic/polylexical/prefabricated expression; dictum; fixed phrase/syntagm; (speech) formula; idiom; frozen/lexical/set phrase; language chunk; lexical solidarity/unit; locution; phrasal lexeme; phraseme; phraseolexeme; phraseological unit; phraseologism; polyword; proverb; ready-made utterance; turn of phrase; and word combination/complex.⁴

1.3 Idioms and Collocations on the Word–Sentence Continuum

From a syntactic perspective idioms may be regarded as "phenomena larger than words, which are like words in that they have to be learned separately as individual facts about pieces of the language, but which also have grammatical structure" (Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988:501). Although by definition they comprise more than one word, idioms are not necessarily whole sentences, unless they are proverbs. The concepts of word and sentence are by no means absolute. Rather, they can be viewed as the part of a syntactic continuum, on which the notion of word shades into the notion of sentence (Beedham 1995:24-5). At one end of the continuum is the canonical word such as "Apfel" 'apple' or "helfen" 'help', while at the other end is the freely reproducible sentence. Between these two endpoints lies a broad range of multiword expressions that behave as single lexical units.⁵ Collocations are located on the continuum one stage along from the word, and are "the habitual co-occurrence (or mutual selection) of lexical items" (Crystal 1987:417). Collocations are set phrases like "eine Entscheidung treffen" 'to make a decision', where "treffen", which usually means 'to meet', is the verb habitually used in conjunction with the noun "eine Entscheidung" 'a decision'. The verb "fällen" also occurs with "eine Entscheidung" to give the sense 'to come to a decision', but no others. It would sound unidiomatic to a native speaker of German to use any other verb with the noun "Entscheidung".

Next in line on the continuum come idioms, for example *mit Kind und Kegel* [lit. 'with child and skittle'] 'with the whole family', and *die Katze aus dem Sack lassen* ≈ 'to let the cat out of the bag', i.e. to tell a secret. Syntactically speaking, there seems

⁴ To avoid confusion, the term "idiom" is the main one used throughout this dissertation.

⁵ A lexical unit or lexeme is a word or vocabulary item, whereby words are "the smallest meaning-bearing units of a language which are relatively independent and stable, and freely reproducible" (Beedham 1995:23).

to be little difference between collocations and idioms, in that they are both fixed expressions comprising two or more words. From a pragmatic perspective, however, idioms tend to be used consciously "to produce a specific meaning or effect in speech or writing" (Sinclair 1991:172). Collocations, on the other hand, do not function as "optional stylistic adornments on the surface of a text; they are essential for effective communication" (Howarth 1998:186). The difference between idioms and collocations is explored further in the following section. Next on the word-sentence continuum is the whole sentence idiom. This category comprises proverbs such as *alte Liebe rostet nie* [lit. 'old love never rusts'], similar in sense to the English proverb "true love never dies". Such expressions tend to occur as complete sentences but, like words, cannot be broken down into smaller sections without losing some of their original meaning. The continuum then ends with the novel free word combinations of ordinary sentences, which are created from scratch by language users.

1.4 The Difference between Idioms and Collocations

There is much disagreement about the distinction between idioms and collocations. While some linguists consider collocations to be a type of idiom (e.g. Makkai 1972), others view idioms as a kind of collocation. A collocation may be described in the broadest sense as "an order of mutual expectancy" since words appear together in set phrases not as an accidental juxtaposition, but because they habitually co-occur (Firth 1957:12). This means that idioms are necessarily collocations (but not vice-versa).

Idioms and collocations may be differentiated on the basis of their semantics:

In principle, we call co-occurrences idioms if we interpret the co-occurrence as giving a single unit of meaning. If we interpret the occurrence as the selection of two related words, each of which keeps some meaning of its own, we call it a collocation. (Sinclair 1991:172.)

Following this line of thought, idioms can be seen as "a special subclass of collocations, to wit, those collocations with a non-compositional, or opaque semantics" (van der Wouden 1997:9).⁶

⁶ Semantic compositionality concerns the degree to which the individual meanings of the component words of a phrase contribute to the phrase's overall meaning (discussed further in section 1.5.3).

Idioms and collocations can also be contrasted on a pragmatic level, i.e. in terms of how and why they are actually used in everyday communication. Collocations are "similar to idioms in that they involve relatively fixed sequences of words, but differ in that they are not recognised culturally or stylistically as expressions in themselves" (Gledhill 1999:225). Pragmatically speaking, collocations may be perceived as "simply a restriction of expression" (Gledhill 1999:227), whose function in language is merely to facilitate communication. A collocation is fundamentally the accepted way of expressing a particular idea or event in a given language. Idioms, on the other hand, imply a deliberate choice of phrase, even though a speaker may not necessarily be aware of his or her specific reasons for using this particular phrase. Using an idiom involves a stylistic decision, since "every idiom has a non-idiomatic synonym on the semantic level" (Strässler 1982:85). The concept could be expressed by a different, more literal, phrase. For example, "er starb" 'he died' is a stylistically neutral expression, whereas choosing to use the idiom *zur ewigen Ruhe eingehen* [lit. 'to go into everlasting peace'] ≈ 'to go to eternal peace', i.e. to die, allows the discussion of a delicate or taboo subject in a considerate and tactful manner. Indeed, as with the idiom *das Zeitliche segnen* [lit. 'to bless the transitory'], which conveys the idea 'to die', idioms which are elevated in style and formal in tone are frequently used as euphemisms (Fleischer, Michel and Starke 1993:152). In contrast, *ins Gras beißen* [lit. 'to bite into the grass'] "to die", similar in sense and tone to the English idiom "to bite the dust", may be deemed too informal, insensitive, or even rude if used in an inappropriate context.

The distinction between collocations and idioms thus relates primarily to the level of stylistics: collocations are neutral in terms of style, whereas idioms are stylistically marked (see section 1.5.4).

1.5 The Characteristics of Idioms

As the above definitions of idioms illustrate, idioms have conventionally been characterised on the basis of both their semantic complexity, and their lexical and syntactic fixedness. More recently, however, research (cf. eg. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982, Gibbs et al. 1989, Wotjak 1994) has indicated that:

In bezug auf das Kriterium der Stabilität von [Phraseolexemen] – sowohl hinsichtlich der syntaktischen Beziehungen als auch hinsichtlich der lexikalischen Konstituenten – ist zu akzentuieren, daß es sich nicht, wie lange Zeit angenommen, um eine starre Invarianz und syntaktische Begrenztheit handelt.

With regard to the criterium of the stability of idioms – both in terms of syntactic relations and in terms of lexical constituents – it should be stressed that it is not a matter of rigid invariance and syntactic restrictions, as has long been assumed. (Wotjak 1994:4.)

Despite the fact that idioms are not actually as semantically opaque and as lexically and syntactically invariant as has previously been maintained, it is still these features which distinguish them from free word combinations. The main lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics of idioms may be described as:

- 1) (relative) Lexical invariance
- 2) (relative) Syntactic inflexibility
- 3) (relative) Semantic non-conventionality and non-compositionality
- 4) Stylistic and/or rhetorical function
- 5) (general) Cross-linguistic non-parallelism
- 6) Institutionalisation

1.5.1 Lexical invariance

An idiom is a standard combination of words that functions as a single, complete lexical unit. All idioms are therefore subject to lexical invariability to some extent, meaning that the lexical items in an idiom cannot be replaced, omitted, added to, or changed as readily as in a free word combination. Fleischer maintains that:

Mit der Idiomatizität hängt es zusammen, daß dem Austausch der phraseologischen Komponenten in der Regel weit engere Grenzen gesetzt sind als in einer freien syntaktischen Wortverbindung. In vielen Fällen ist ein solcher Austausch überhaupt nicht möglich; es liegt eine lexikalisch-semantische Stabilität vor.

Idiomacity is connected with the fact that as a rule much stricter limits are imposed on the substitution of the phraseological components than in a free syntactic word combination. In many cases such a substitution is not even possible at all; there is lexical-semantic stability. (Fleischer 1982:41.)

Be that as it may, Burger, Buhofer and Sialm consider the „Festigkeit“ der Wortverbindung" "fixedness" of the word combination' in an idiom to be a matter of degree (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:2). In the case of extreme lexical fixedness, no lexical elements in an idiom can be changed in any way without modifying the meaning of the whole expression. An example of this "unveränderbare lexikalische Form" 'invariable lexical form' would be the idiom *zwei Fliegen mit einer Klappe schlagen* [lit. 'to hit two flies with one swat'] 'to achieve two things at the one time', similar in sense to the English idiom "to kill two birds with one stone". Substituting synonyms to create phrases like "zwei Mücken mit einer Klappe schlagen" 'to kill two midges with one swat' or "zwei Fliegen in einer Hand fangen" 'to catch two flies in one hand' would result in a loss of the expression's figurative meaning, and hence its status as an idiom. Other idioms, however, permit certain lexical modification. The idiom *auf die schiefe Bahn geraten* [lit. 'to stray onto the crooked path'] 'to behave badly or immorally', similar in sense to the English idioms "to stray off the straight and narrow" and "to go crooked", is still recognised as an idiom even when the verb "geraten" 'to end up unexpectedly at a certain location' is replaced by the similar verb "kommen" 'to come'. In contrast again, some idioms display relative lexical flexibility. Such phrases are actually more like "eine phraseologische Wortverbindung mit einem festen Gerüst" 'a phraseological word combination with a fixed framework' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:3). An illustration of such a framework would be the idiom *X um X* 'X by X', into which various nouns can be substituted, e.g. *Schritt um Schritt* 'step by step' or *Stunde um Stunde* 'hour after hour'.

1.5.2 Syntactic inflexibility

Idioms do not obey the normal syntactic rules of word usage and combination. Although idioms do not function as a single syntactic unit, they are ultimately syntactically inflexible, losing the typical versatility of free word combinations. Behind the basic syntactic rigidity of idioms is the assumption that modifying the syntactic form of a phrase automatically entails a change in its meaning (Bolinger 1977:x). The principle that form and meaning are inextricably linked was first outlined at the start of the twentieth century by de Saussure in his theory of the linguistic sign. Since idioms are considered to be multiword units which behave like single lexical items, altering an idiom's internal syntax would necessitate a change in

the phrase's meaning. Such syntactic (and subsequently semantic) modifications would mean that the phrase was no longer an idiom, i.e. a set phrase with a fixed (figurative) meaning. However, the syntactic inflexibility of idioms is a matter of degree, and idioms are not as syntactically rigid or frozen as traditionally believed.

As Burger, Buhofer and Sialm point out, in "freie Syntagmen" 'free syntagms' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:3) such as "Der Mann war fröhlich und freundlich" the order of the adjectives is immaterial. In contrast, if the order of the adjectives in the idiom *klipp und klar* [lit. 'clip and clear'] 'clearly, plainly' are switched the phrase is no longer an idiom. Sometimes it is the "paradigmatische Möglichkeiten" 'paradigmatic possibilities' of an idiom's form which are restricted, i.e. the forms that the idiom may take. As illustration, when *wetten, dass ...* '(I) bet you that ...' is used as an idiom, the verb "wetten" 'to bet' only ever occurs in the infinitive. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) therefore conclude that in many cases the normal rules of word usage and combination do not apply to idioms, which are subject to relative syntactic conformity. Idioms can only appear in a limited number of syntactic constructions and still retain their intended (figurative) meaning. Indeed, a sequence of words is only recognised as an idiom once the sequence becomes lexically and syntactically fixed: "idiomatization may be described as a form of lexicalization (the fixing of originally free patterning)" (Geeraerts 1989:83).

There is, however, as previously mentioned, growing evidence to suggest that idioms are more syntactically flexible than has been traditionally perceived (e.g. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982; Fleischer 1982; Wotjak 1992; Dobrovolskij 2001). This flexibility is especially true of idioms containing verbs, which often allow modifications to their person, number, and tense. The idiom *die Nase rümpfen* ≈ 'to turn one's nose up', i.e. to express contempt or disdain, can appear as *er rümpft die Nase* 'he turns his nose up', *sie rümpften die Nase* 'they turned their noses up', and so on. As Palmer (1976) points out, however, even idioms with relative structural flexibility are still subject to some degree of grammatical restriction. Changing the idiom "to kick the bucket" into the past tense does not create the utterance "he kick the bucketed"; the verb, and only the verb, can be inflected ('he kicked the bucket') (Palmer 1976:41ff). In the idiom *ein offenes Ohr haben* [lit. 'to have an open ear'] 'to be willing to listen' the verb can be modified (e.g. *er hatte ein offenes Ohr*), but the noun cannot without affecting – or even losing – the phrase's figurative sense (as would be the case with the unidiomatic "er hat offene Ohren"). As a result, it can be

concluded that although idioms do not necessarily function as a single syntactic or structural unit, they are nevertheless relatively syntactically inflexible.

1.5.3 Semantic non-conventionality and non-compositionality

Idioms have historically been regarded as semantically complex since in general "the meaning of an idiom is not a function of the meaning of its parts" (Wasow, Sag and Nunberg 1983:107). An idiom possesses a figurative meaning above and beyond its literal meaning. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm observe that with idioms:

ihre Gesamtbedeutung, die Bedeutung, die sie als lexikalisierte Einheit haben, entspricht nicht der Summe der Bedeutungen der einzelnen Wörter, aus denen sie bestehen.

their overall meaning, the meaning which they have as a lexicalised unit, does not correspond to the sum of the meanings of the individual words that they consist of. (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:3.)

For instance, the idiom *rot werden* does not just mean 'to go red', but carries the supplementary, more specific sense of 'to go red in the face, due to embarrassment'. Furthermore, an idiom often has a modified – or completely new – meaning to the interpretation which the idiom's component words would initially suggest. The idiom *jmdm. den Kopf waschen* does not mean 'to wash someone's head', but rather 'to tell someone exactly what you are thinking'. Wotjak goes so far as to assert that the component words of an idiom almost entirely forfeit their usual meanings when they combine to form an idiom:

[Phraseolexeme sind] relativ stabile Verbindungen von Wörtern/Wortgruppen, deren wendungsinterne (Gesamt-)Bedeutung von der wendungsexternen der Einzelkonstituenten in freier Wortverbindung differiert. Wendungsintern geben die Wörter mehr oder weniger weitgehend ihre eigene Bedeutung auf, um in Kooperation eine neue, transponierte, idiomatisierte phraseologische Bedeutung ... zu konstituieren.

Idioms are relatively stable combinations of words/word groups whose internal phrase (overall) meaning differs from the external phrase meaning of the individual components in a free word combination. Internal to the phrase, the words more or less largely give up their own meanings in order to constitute in cooperation a new, transposed, idiomatic phraseological meaning. (Wotjak 1994:3.)

This "semantic eccentricity" (Botelho da Silver and Cutler 1993:129) is often referred to as the semantic non-conventionality and/or non-compositionality of an idiom. Semantic conventionality refers to the process of examining the individual (conventional) literal meanings of an idiom's component words in order to work out the expression's overall figurative meaning. Semantic compositionality concerns the practice of analysing an idiom's known figurative meaning in order to relate its overall sense to the literal interpretations of its composite parts. Semantic conventionality and compositionality are two similar concepts, which differ mainly with regard to whether they involve "building up" or "breaking down" an idiom's meaning (Reagan 1987:420). "Building up" involves figuring out an idiom's overall meaning by examining its component parts; hence the idiom's component words are the starting point for determining the meaning. "Breaking down" entails recognising how the overall sense of an idiom relates to its component words, by using the (already known) overall meaning of the idiom as a starting point for the analysis. It follows that "building up" (i.e. working out) an idiom's meaning must take place before it is possible to "break down" the relationship between the phrase and its components. In short, "building up" an idiom's overall meaning by considering the (conventional) meanings of its component parts concerns semantic conventionality, while "breaking down" an idiom's overall meaning to examine how it relates to its (composite) parts refers to compositionality. Semantic conventionality concerns a speaker's ability to divulge and predict an idiom's overall (figurative) meaning by examining the individual meanings of its component words, but always with regard to the particular context in which the idiom appears (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994:498). In contrast, semantic compositionality involves an analysis of the way in which an idiom's overall meaning relates back to the meanings of the component words, without recourse to context. The idiom's overall meaning is already known, and is taken as the starting point for the analysis.

Even though "idioms have a semantics that is different from what would be created if the regular rules of semantic interpretation were applied" (Everaert et al. 1995:6), many idioms are in fact semantically conventional and compositional, if somewhat idiosyncratic. While an idiom may be made up of words whose individual literal meanings do not make sense when combined, such as *ein Gesicht wie drei/sieben/zehn/vierzehn Tage Regenwetter machen* [lit. 'to make a face like three/seven/ten/fourteen days' rainy weather'] 'to look sad or morose', similar in sense

to the English idiom "to have a face as long as a month of Sundays", some kind of relationship may in fact exist between the semantics of the component words and the overall (figurative) meaning of many idioms. As proof of the fact that with idioms "parts of an idiom should be assigned interpretations, contributing to the interpretation of the whole idiom", Nunberg, Sag and Wasow cite the idiom "to leave no stone unturned" (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994:500). Introducing an adjective to nuance the phrase can modify this idiom, thereby creating a new idiom such as "to leave no legal stone unturned". They point out that if the word "stone" did not possess an individual meaning as a component of the idiom, it could not actually be modified in such a manner. The authors conclude that "the pieces of many idioms have identifiable meanings which interact semantically with each other" (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994:503), i.e. many idioms are semantically conventional and compositional.

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm refer to the concepts of semantic conventionality and compositionality as semantic "Motivierbarkeit" 'motivatability' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:4). The authors differentiate three different levels of semantic motivation: idioms may be "motivierbar" 'motivated', "teilmotivierbar" 'partly motivated', or "unmotivierbar" 'unmotivated'. Motivated idioms can be either "direkt motivierbar" 'directly motivated' or "metaphorisch motivierbar" 'metaphorically motivated'. In a directly motivated idiom like *Dank sagen* 'to say thank you' the overall meaning of a phrase is related to the literal meanings of all its component words. Gibbs takes this definition one step further, stating that a directly motivated idiom is an idiom whose "parts have meanings, *either literal or figurative*, that contribute independently to the phrase's overall figurative interpretation" (Gibbs 1993b:62, my emphasis). Gibbs et al. describe idioms in which "each of the components [relates] in some way to its idiomatic referent", i.e. directly motivated idioms, as "normally decomposable" (Gibbs et al. 1989:59), while Stock and Ortony term directly motivated idioms "analyzable idioms" because their meaning can be ascertained by analysing their "constituents that map directly onto their respective idiomatic referents" (Stock and Ortony 1993:234). An example of a directly motivated idiom would be *die größten Rosinen aus dem Kuchen picken* [lit. 'to pick the biggest raisins out of the cake'] 'to secure for oneself the best parts of an object or situation', where "die größten Rosinen" maps onto the concept of "the best parts", "aus dem Kuchen" corresponds to the idea of "an object or situation", and "picken" relates to the concept of extracting or securing something for oneself.

Metaphorically motivated idioms require an interpretation which goes beyond the literal meanings of the component words. The idiom *das fünfte Rad am Wagen sein* [lit. 'to be the fifth wheel on the cart'] makes sense when rendered literally, but the full figurative meaning of the phrase ('to be useless, superfluous, in the way', or 'to play gooseberry', i.e. to be the unwanted third person in the company of a couple) only becomes clear by thinking about the phrase metaphorically. Gibbs et al. (1989) use the term "abnormally decomposable idioms" to refer to metaphorically motivated idioms, which they define as idioms in which "each individual part refers not to the idiomatic referent, but only to some metaphorical relationship between the individual part and the referent". In other words, with the metaphorically motivated idiom "to carry a torch for someone", i.e. to be in love with someone (unrequitedly), "we can identify the figurative referent in the idiom ... only by virtue of our knowledge that the torch is a conventional metaphor for warm feelings" (Gibbs et al. 1989:59).

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's second level of semantic motivation involves partly motivated idioms, so called because the overall (figurative) meaning of a partly motivated idiom can be linked to some – but not all – of the meanings of the idiom's component words. For example, *in Hülle und Fülle* [lit. 'in cover and wealth'] means 'in abundance', indicating that the idiom receives part of its overall sense from the lexical element "Fülle" 'wealth'. Finally, in complete contrast to directly motivated idioms are unmotivated idioms. These are simply "idioms whose individual parts do not contribute individually to the figurative meaning of the expression" (Gibbs et al. 1989:59). Unmotivated or "non-decomposable" idioms (term from Gibbs et al. 1989) such as *ins Fettnäpfchen treten* [lit. 'to step into the little fat bowl'] 'to displease or annoy someone (by being tactless)' account for the conventional definition of idioms as semantically non-conventional and non-compositional. As a result, unmotivated idioms are often referred to as "pure or classical idioms" (Moon 1998:79).

Attesting to the fact that idioms are not as semantically non-conventional and non-compositional as has been traditionally thought is Wasow, Sag and Nunberg's (1983) finding that the more semantically compositional an idiom's meaning is, the more syntactic flexibility an idiom exhibits. Gibbs et al. expand upon this conclusion, observing that "those idioms that are decomposable with the meanings of the individual components contributing to the idioms' figurative interpretations, will be

viewed as both syntactically versatile and lexically flexible" (Gibbs et al. 1989:65).⁷ The example they give of a "lexically flexible" idiom is "to button your lip", i.e. to be quiet, which is still perceived as an idiom even if modified to create "to fasten your lips". In contrast stands the "lexically frozen" idiom "to kick the bucket", i.e. to die, which loses its status as an idiom if changed to "to boot the pail" (Gibbs et al. 1989:58). Gibbs et al. (1989) point out that the extent to which a particular idiom can be syntactically modified and still be recognised as an acceptable idiom is based on language users' perceptions of the semantic motivation of that idiom:

speakers make assumptions about the way in which parts of idioms contribute to their figurative interpretations as wholes. Speakers' intuitions of the syntactic versatility of idioms should be affected by their assumptions regarding the analyzability or decomposability of these figurative phrases. (Gibbs et al. 1989:59.)

It is important to note, however, that although there is an undeniable correlation between the semantic decompositionality and the syntactic flexibility of an idiom, "compositionality, however, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for an idiom to be varied" (Glucksberg 1993:13). In fact, "the constraints of general world knowledge, together with the rules of discourse and conversation, seem as important for idiom flexibility and productivity as are more formal linguistic factors such as compositionality" (Glucksberg 1993:14).

Despite the fact that the overall meaning of many idioms is based to some extent on the (literal or figurative) meanings of their individual component words, idioms are by no means as semantically transparent as more literal words and phrases. Idioms can therefore be characterised as being relatively semantically non-conventional and non-compositional.

1.5.4 Stylistic and/or rhetorical function

All idioms perform certain stylistic and/or rhetorical functions. Since all idioms may be expressed with more literal words, using an idiom entails a deliberate choice of phrase, although the speaker may not be aware of the reason behind their selection of

⁷ In general, linguistic researchers test the syntactic versatility of an idiom by attempting to passivize the expression, while lexical flexibility is analysed by substituting an idiom's component words with various synonyms.

this particular expression. Idioms serve as "additional semantic markers which are associated with the value judgements of a speech community (i.e. a class or social group) or of an individual speaker or writer" (Gläser 1998:129). In other words, idioms convey information which is supplementary to the denotation (i.e. the literal and figurative meanings) of the phrase. Idioms are often expressive, in that they may impart a certain tone (perhaps taboo, jocular, or euphemistic) to a text. Furthermore, idioms can function as stylistic devices by indicating – or even creating – a particular textual style (e.g. colloquial or literary) and register (e.g. medical, legal, or journalistic). In addition, many idioms play a specific rhetorical role, namely that of performing "illocutionary acts".⁸ "Illocutionary acts" are speech acts "such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, etc., i.e. utterances which have a certain (conventional) force" (Austin 1975:109). Proverbs in particular tend to communicate a strong sense of warning or advice.

1.5.5 Cross-linguistic non-parallelism

An idiom may be defined as:

a group of words which has a special connotation not usually equal to the sum of the meanings of the individual words, and which usually cannot be translated literally into another language without the special meaning being lost. (Hartmann and Stork 1972:106-7.)

Because idioms are characterised by lexical, syntactic and semantic peculiarities, problems often arise when attempting to translate an idiom into another language. They may therefore be described as displaying "non-equivalence" (Palmer 1976:103) or "cross-linguistic non-parallelism" (Dobrovolskij 1999:204). Idioms have traditionally been believed to have exact counterparts in other languages, but this is far from the case. Differences in the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of supposedly corresponding idioms in different languages mean that few idioms actually possess

⁸ The concept of "illocutionary acts" is part of the "Speech Act" theory, which was conceived by J.L. Austin in the 1950s and developed by J.R. Searle the following decade (cf. Searle 1969). Austin maintains that "to *say* something is to *do* something; or ... *by* saying something or *in* saying something we are doing something" (1975:12), i.e. to speak is to act. For example, an utterance may describe something, order someone to do something, praise someone, and so on.

exact synonyms. Often when an idiom appears to have an idiomatic equivalent in another language the similarities between the idioms are down to "accidental parallels, to borrowing processes, to genetic factors, or even to the universal nature of conceptualization of the given entities" (Dobrovol'skij 1999:203).

As regards syntactic non-equivalence, Dobrovol'skij (1999:207ff) uses supposedly parallel German and Russian idioms to highlight syntactic cross-linguistic differences in source language and target language idioms. For example, a source language idiom may allow passivization, but repeating the process for the target language idiom renders it grammatically incorrect. As illustration he compares the German idiom *jmdm. das Fell über die Ohren ziehen* [lit. 'to pull someone's skin over the ears'] with the Russian idiom regarded as its translation equivalent: "drat'/sodrat' tri škury kogo-libo" [lit. 'to take off three skins from someone']. Both idioms convey roughly the same sense as the English idiom "to pull the wool over someone's eyes", i.e. to deceive someone. While the German and the English idioms may be relatively easily passivized (*ihm wurde das Fell über die Ohren gezogen*; "the wool was pulled over his eyes"), the Russian idiom cannot, and must instead be used in a construction like "S nego sodrali tri škury" 'they took three skins off him'.

From a semantic point of view, non-equivalence in the meanings of supposedly synonymous idioms may be due to the source language idiom and the target language idiom being "false friends", i.e. looking or sounding similar on the surface but actually possessing different senses. For example, the German idiom *einen dicken Schädel haben* [lit. 'to have a thick skull'] means 'to be stubborn', whereas the English translation equivalent "to have a thick skull" means to be stupid. On other occasions it is discrepancies in the mental images evoked by supposedly parallel idioms which makes them non-equivalent. Mental images are "the visual images that people associate with idioms" (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1995:45). An idiom may be used in a source language text because its mental image is especially suited to – or perhaps creates a pun upon – the context in which the idiom occurs. It then follows that using a target language idiom with a different mental image results in a loss of appropriateness, or the pun simply not working in the target language translation. An example is the German idiom *nicht alle Tassen im Schrank haben* [lit. 'to have not all the cups in the cupboard'] 'to be slightly mad or eccentric', which evokes a specific mental image of cups in a cupboard. Dobrovol'skij cites a newspaper article in which this idiom was actually used (Dobrovol'skij 1999:213):

Dass er noch alle Tassen im Schrank hat, stellte der Mannheimer Fotograf Hartmut Suckow über Jahr und Tag unschwer fest: Da sein Atelier genau gegenüber dem neuen Theaterhaus liegt, machte sein Geschirr alle baulichen Kraftakte bei der Sanierung scheppernd mit.

The photographer from Mannheim, Hartmut Suckow, has for years been easily able to confirm that *he still has all his cups in his cupboard*: since his studio is situated directly opposite the new theatre, his crockery has continually clinked in unison with all the building work going on during the renovations. (*Mannheimer Morgen*, 22.05.1989; my emphasis.)

In this example, the German idiom is particularly suited to the context in which it occurs (i.e. an anecdote about crockery rattling in a cupboard). A pun is therefore created by activating the (normally disregarded) literal meaning of the idiom, but the humour of the pun is lost in the English translation. Even if a roughly equivalent English idiom such as "to still have all your marbles" were used, the mental image evoked by the English idiom would not tie in with the context of this particular newspaper article.

With regard to pragmatics, disparities in source language and target language idioms may be traced back to differences in, for example, the degree of idiom familiarity and/or textual frequency. Using the obsolete Russian idiom "ubit' bobra" [lit. 'to shoot a beaver'] 'to make a bad mistake' to translate the familiar, colloquial German idiom *einen Bock schießen* [lit. 'to shoot a ram'] 'to make a mistake' would achieve very different stylistic effects than those intended in the source language text (Dobrovol'skij 1999:215ff).

Dobrovol'skij concludes that "for translation adequacy it is totally irrelevant whether a given [source language] idiom is translated into [the target language] by an idiom, a word or a free word combination" (Dobrovol'skij 1999:205). However, idioms tend to infuse a text with a unique style, register, fluency and metaphorical flavour often not associated with their more literal paraphrases. Therefore, if a near-equivalent idiom exists in another language, it should be used in translation wherever possible, provided of course that the meanings, mental images, syntax, contexts, and rhetorical functions of both the source language and target language idioms are not significantly undermined.

1.5.6 Institutionalisation

Idioms are institutionalised in the sense that they are set phrases which are accepted and used widely by a given linguistic community. An idiom can thus be defined as a "lexicalized, reproducible bilexemic or polylexemic word group *in common use*, which has relative syntactic and semantic stability" (Gläser 1998:125, my emphasis), or as:

eine Verbindung von zwei oder mehr Wörtern dann, wenn (1) die Wörter eine durch die syntaktischen und semantischen Regularitäten der Verknüpfung nicht voll erklärbare Einheit bilden, und wenn (2) *die Wortverbindung in der Sprachgemeinschaft, ähnlich wie ein Lexem, gebräuchlich ist.*

a combination of two or more words where (1) the words form a whole unit not completely explainable by the normal syntactic and semantic regularities of the combination, and where (2) *like a single lexeme, the word combination is common in the speech community.* (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:1, my emphasis.)

1.6 The Classification of Idioms

There are countless different ways in which linguists divide idioms into subcategories and term these groupings accordingly. Classifications have previously been made on the basis of the semantic, lexical, syntactic, grammatical, pragmatic and functional characteristics of idioms. It is Fleischer's (1982) and Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) classifications which in this dissertation are taken as the basis for a classification of the types of idioms found in German magazine and television advertising (outlined in chapter 5).

1.6.1 Fleischer

Fleischer (1982:74ff) offers a largely syntax-oriented classification of idioms by distinguishing the categories of:

- 1) substantivische Phraseologismen 'nominal idioms'
- 2) adjektivische Phraseologismen 'adjectival idioms'
- 3) adverbiale Phraseologismen 'adverbial idioms'
- 4) verbale Phraseologismen 'verbal idioms'

He also mentions other types of set phrases, which he feels are not idioms in the strictest sense, but may nevertheless be described as idioms. These idioms can be roughly categorised as:

- 5) kommunikative Formeln 'communicative formulae'
- 6) Phraseoschablonen 'phraseological templates'
- 7) Termini 'terms'
- 8) Maxime, Sprichwörter 'maxims, proverbs'
- 9) „Geflügelte Worte“ "winged words"

1.6.1.1 Substantive, adjectival, adverbial, and verbal idioms

Examples of a nominal idiom include: *armer Schlucker* [lit. 'poor swallower'] 'poor devil'; *ein Schaf/Kalb mit fünf Beinen* [lit. 'a sheep/calf with five legs'] 'something impossible', *eine Fahrt ins Blaue* [lit. 'a journey into the blue'] 'a journey with no clear destination or purpose'. An adjectival idiom is an idiom like *frisch/neu gebacken* [lit. 'freshly/newly baked'] 'in a new job or situation' (e.g. *frisch gebackener Doktor*), or *zum Brechen voll* [lit. 'full to breaking'] 'very full', (e.g. *ein zum Brechen volles Zimmer*), similar in sense to the English idiom "full to bursting". *Um Haaresbreite* ≈ 'by a hair's breadth', i.e. very close, *unter vier Augen* [lit. 'under four eyes'] 'between two people only', and *auf Schusters Rappen* [lit. 'on the shoemaker's black horse'] 'on foot', similar in sense and tone to the English idiom "on Shanks's pony", are all examples of adverbial idioms. Examples of verbal idioms would be: *das Hasenpanier ergreifen* [lit. 'to seize the hare-banner'] 'to flee'; *den Drehwurm haben* ['to have the turn-worm] 'to be dizzy'; and *ein Haar in der Suppe finden* [lit. 'to find a hair in the soup'] 'to find fault with something' or 'to discover an unforeseen disadvantage'.

1.6.1.2 Communicative formulae

Communicative formulae, also known as "Routineformeln" 'routine formulae' (e.g. Hemmi 1994), are set phrases which are usually associated with speech. They represent the preferred and conventional ways of conveying specific information, and perform various pragmatic roles in everyday conversational situations. Fleischer, Michel and Starke point out that communicative formulae "repräsentieren keinen Begriff, sondern fungieren als textgliedernde, kommunikationssteuernde, einstellungsindizierende Signale" 'do not represent a concept, but rather function as

signals which organise a text, steer communication and indicate opinion' (Fleischer, Michel and Starke 1993:154). The authors believe the pragmatic functions of communicative formulae to be primarily social, listing the various social functions as:

Kontaktfunktion (Guten Tag!), Verstärkung der Verhaltenssicherheit des Sprechers (Zustimmung: Ganz meine Meinung!), Vorstellung (Sehr erfreut!), Reparatur (Tut mir leid!) und Konventionalitätsfunktion (Frohe Ostern!).

contact function (Hello!), reinforcement of the speaker's confidence in their behaviour (agreement: I agree completely!), introduction (Pleased to meet you!), repair (I'm sorry!) and function of convention (Happy Easter!) (Fleischer, Michel and Starke 1993:154.)

Westheide also observes that communicative formulae may function as "gesprächsorganisierende Mittel" 'methods of organising conversation', such as when they indicate turn taking (e.g. "ich komme zu Wort" [lit. 'I'm coming to the word'] 'it's my turn to speak'), and as "gambits", i.e. as comments communicating a particular point of view (Westheide 1989:192ff). Gambits may be "Aufmerksamkeit signalisierend" 'signalling attention' ("ja, natürlich" 'yes, of course'); "Bitte um Klärung" 'a request for clarification' ("wie meinst du das?" 'what do you mean by that?'); or "Einstellungskundgabe" 'expressions of opinion' ("bist du sicher?" 'are you sure?' and "das meine ich auch" 'I agree'). In addition, he maintains that communicative formulae often make stylistic points: "wie geht's?" 'how are you?', for example, is much more common, informal, and familiar in tone than "wie ist Ihr wertees Befinden?" [lit. 'how is your esteemed health?']. Communicative formulae may also perform "Sprechakte" 'speech acts', as is the case with the phatic use of "herrlich heute" '(it's a) lovely day' or conversely "was für ein Sauwetter!" [lit. 'what a pig-weather'] 'awful weather!', where the purpose of uttering the phrase is to establish communication with another person, as opposed to instigating a debate on the meteorological conditions of the day.

Wotjak (1994), Hemmi (1994), and Gläser (1998) all consider communicative formulae to be important enough to be included in their own particular classifications of idiom types.

1.6.1.3 Phraseological templates

Phraseological templates constitute syntactic frameworks into which various lexical items may be slotted, such as *X ist X* 'X is X' (e.g. *Urlaub ist Urlaub* 'a holiday is a holiday', *tot ist tot* 'dead is dead', *geschenkt ist geschenkt* 'a gift is a gift') or *von X nach Y* 'from X to Y' (e.g. *von Nord nach Sud* 'from north to south', *von Ost nach West* 'from east to west').

1.6.1.4 Terms

This category of fixed word combinations involves terminology like "rechter Winkel" 'right-angle', "pädagogische Lesung" 'educational reading', and "das gelbe Trikot" 'the yellow jersey (for the leading cyclist)'. "Onymische Wortgruppen" 'onymic word groups' such as "Schwarzes Meer" 'Black Sea' and "der Zweite Weltkrieg" 'the Second World War' are also included in this category.

1.6.1.5 Maxims and Proverbs

A maxim is "eine allgemeine Lebensregel, Grundsatz des Wollens und Handelns" 'a general rule for living, principle of wishes and behaviour' which is not bound to a specific context (Fleischer 1982:86). As illustration is the maxim *seien Sie ganz Sie selbst* ≈ 'just be yourself. Proverbs may be defined as "feste Satzkonstruktionen mit lehrhafter Tendenz, die sich auf das praktische Leben bezieh[en]" 'fixed sentence constructions with an educational tendency, which apply to practical life' (Fleischer 1982:80). As a "self-contained syntactic entity that is used as a speech act to prescribe, proscribe, emphasize, or comment on the topic" (Honeck and Kibler 1985:394), a proverb embodies "la sagesse ou la verve de la communauté" 'the wisdom or wit of the community' (Guiraud 1973:27), revealing thereby "the shared beliefs and values – and perhaps prejudices – of a community" (Wise 1997:137).

The main sources of proverbs are the traditional and collective wisdom of a society, and religious teachings like the Bible, the Talmud, and the Koran. Other derivations include famous literary works, learned individuals (e.g. Aesop, Confucius, King Solomon, Hippocrates, Ovid, Erasmus, Rousseau, Voltaire, Napoléon, Goethe), and foreign language borrowings, particularly Latin. Many Latin proverbs are not in

fact translated and appear in their original form, for example *carpe diem* 'seize the day' and *in vino veritas* 'in wine, there is truth', which gives them the flavour and weight of antiquity (*Le Proverbe*). Indeed, the earliest written record of proverbs is from the ancient Sumerian civilisation and dates from around 4000 B.C. (*Proverbs for Teenagers*).

Since a proverb may be regarded as "the concentrated wisdom of a people, springing automatically from everyday life" (Rothwell 1909:v), they often take common experiences as their subject matter. Rothwell stipulates the twelve main themes of proverbs at the start of the twentieth century as: battle and war; food and drink; farming and related jobs; animals; emotions and human nature; religion; clothing; Nature; wealth and royalty; bodily functions and body parts; women, men, and relationships; and foreigners. Rothwell's observations from nearly a century ago highlight the fact that proverbs, like all language, are subject to the laws of linguistic growth and decay. Since they reflect the culture and social values of a language community, many proverbs become obsolete because they are no longer relevant to daily life. However, novel proverbs dealing with new experiences appear constantly. For instance, proverbs and sayings on the subject of modern technology have gradually replaced proverbs about farming, which parallels how the focus of modern Capitalist society has shifted over the past century. The website *Proverbs – Save the Proverbs* lists the following examples:

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single click.
Fax is stranger than fiction.
Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to use the Net and he won't bother you for weeks.
Home is where you hang your @.
Oh, what a tangled website we weave when first we practice.
The e-mail of the species is more deadly than the mail.
The geek shall inherit the earth.
Too many clicks spoil the browse.
What boots up must come down.
Windows will never cease.
You can't teach an old mouse new clicks.

It is interesting to note that these new proverbial expressions are essentially old sayings reworked to achieve a punning effect. The modification of proverbs – particularly as regards punning – within the context of advertising is dealt with in more detail in chapters 2 and 5.

1.6.1.6 "Winged words"

"Winged words" are either recognisable extracts from another medium (e.g. films, plays, songs, poems, books, or television programmes) or famous quotations. The term "winged words" was coined by Homer in his *Iliad* to describe words which are so eloquent and apt that they are often repeated, and thus pass from person to person as quickly as if they had wings. The exact source of such "winged words" may or may not be known, but as long as they are recognised as quotations they bring to a text certain associations by evoking the style, register, tone, and/or context of the original excerpt.

1.6.2 Burger, Buhofer and Sialm

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) syntactic-semantic categorisation of idioms derives from Pilz's (1978) system of classification. Pilz's categorisation seems overly simplistic, however, since it deals with syntax and semantics as two distinct categories, leading Burger, Buhofer and Sialm to create a combined classification of the various types of idioms: the "strukturesemantische Mischklassifikation" 'structural-semantic mixed classification' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:30ff).

The authors base their purely semantic classification of idioms on the criteria of semantic "Motiviertheit" 'motivation' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:23, cf. section 1.5.3), while their purely syntactic categorisation of idioms reflects the syntactic function of a particular idiom in a given clause or sentence. They list four main subgroups of syntactically differentiated idioms: "Phraseologismen, die kleiner sind als ein Satzglied" 'idioms that are smaller than a constituent'; "Phraseologismen in der Rolle eines Satzgliedes" 'idioms in the role of a constituent'; "Phraseologismen in der Rolle zweier oder mehrerer Satzglieder" 'idioms in the role of two or more constituents'; and "Phraseologismen in der Rolle eines ganzen Satzes" 'idioms in the role of a whole sentence' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:23).⁹ The authors firstly characterise sub-constituent idioms as "Phraseologismen in der Rolle von Konjunktionen, Präpositionen, Adjektiven – meist in prädikativer Stellung; wir

⁹ A "constituent" is a word, phrase or clause forming part of a larger construction (Crystal 1987:412).

sprechen dann von „konjunkionalen, präpositionalen ...“ Phraseologismen" 'Phraseological units in the role of conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives – mostly in predicative position; we speak then of "conjunctive, prepositional ..." idioms' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:23). A sentence comprises two principal components, the subject and the predicate. The subject of a sentence may also be referred to as the "topic", while the predicate is the "comment", that is, what is said about the topic (Crystal 1987:84). Examples of idioms which belong to this subcategory include: *an Hand von* 'with'; *im Laufe* 'in the course of' (idioms as prepositions); and *fix und fertig sein* [lit. 'to be quick and ready'] 'to be exhausted' or 'to be at the end of one's tether', i.e. to have had enough (idiom as an adjective).

Idioms in the role of a constituent, or "satzgliedwertige Phraseologismen" 'constituent-size idioms' may function as an adverb, the subject, the object, or the predicate (where no object is present) of a sentence. Examples of idioms in this subgroup would be: *mit Fug und Recht* 'with complete justification' (adverb); *Hinz und Kunz* 'anyone and everyone', similar in sense to the English idiom "every Tom, Dick and Harry" (subject); *sich nicht lumpen lassen* 'to be generous'; and *nicht leben und nicht sterben können* [lit. 'to be unable to live or die'] 'to be poor or unable to survive', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be unable to keep body and soul together" (both predicates). If idioms in the role of two or more constituents contain a verb, as is the case with *an Mutters Rockzipfel hängen* [lit. 'to hang on to mother's skirt-tail'] 'to be dependent on one's mother', similar in sense to the English idiom "to hang on to mother's apron strings", they may be termed "verbale Phraseologismen" 'verbal idioms'. Idioms which function as a whole sentence may be either context-bound or exist independently of the context. "Feste Phrasen" 'set phrases' is the term used by Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) to describe context-bound whole-sentence idioms such as *das geht auf keine Kuhhaut* 'that's incredible or outrageous'. In contrast, "Sprichwörter" 'proverbs' are a-contextual idioms like *Morgenstund' hat Gold im Mund* [lit. 'morning hour has gold in its mouth'] 'it is better to get up early and get on with things' or, more generally, 'the person acting promptest is the most successful', which is similar in sense to the English proverb "the early bird catches the worm".¹⁰

¹⁰ "-stund'" is a truncated form of "Stunde" 'hour', which has been shortened to rhyme with "Mund" and to create a more regular rhythm in this proverb.

In their definitive classification of idioms, which they refer to as a "strukturesemantische Mischklassifikation" 'structural-semantic mixed classification', Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982:30ff) identify nine different – but by no means absolute – categories of idioms:

- 1) "Phraseologische Ganzheiten" 'phraseological whole units'
- 2) "Phraseologische Verbindungen und bevorzugte Analysen" 'phraseological combinations and preferred co-occurrences [lit. 'analyses']'
- 3) "Modellbildungen" 'model forms'
- 4) "Phraseologische Vergleiche" 'phraseological comparisons'
- 5) "Streckformen des Verbs" 'extended forms of the verb'
- 6) "Zwillingsformeln" 'twin formulae'
- 7) "Phraseologische Termini" 'phraseological terms'
- 8) "Feste Phrasen" 'set phrases'
- 9) "Sprichwörter und Gemeinplätze" 'proverbs and platitudes'

In addition to these nine different subcategories of idioms the authors examine two further types of idioms, which they describe as "Sonderfälle" 'special cases' or 'exceptions' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:42). These special cases, "„Geflügelte Worte“" "winged words" and "Kinegramme" 'kinegrams', are not included in the structural-semantic classification of idioms because they are idioms which cannot be identified solely on the basis of their syntax or semantics.

1.6.2.1 Phraseological whole units

This first subcategory of idioms comprises idioms performing the syntactic role of at least two constituents, or functioning syntactically as whole sentences. The classification involves both semantically unmotivated and metaphorically motivated idioms, meaning that understanding the overall (figurative) sense of a phraseological whole unit by analysing the literal interpretations of its component words is either difficult (if not impossible), or requires the language user to think beyond the literal (i.e. metaphorically). This category of idioms is referred to as the "phraseologische Klasse par excellence" 'the archetypal phraseological class' since the idioms it encompasses tend to exhibit the characteristics used conventionally to define idioms, i.e. they are syntactically fixed, and semantically non-conventional and non-compositional (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:31). Examples include the semantically opaque *an jmdm. einen Narren gefressen haben* [lit. 'to have eaten a fool

on someone'] 'to dote on someone', and the metaphorically motivated *etw. auf die lange Bank schieben* [lit. 'to push something onto the long bench] 'to put something off'.

1.6.2.2 Phraseological combinations and preferred co-occurrences

The second subclass of idioms given by Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) consists of syntactically fixed word combinations. Phraseological combinations are expressions such as *blinder Passagier* [lit. 'blind passenger'] 'stowaway', while preferred co-occurrences are collocations like "sich die Zähne putzen" 'to brush one's teeth' and "die Telefonnummer wählen" 'to dial a telephone number'. From a semantic perspective preferred co-occurrences tend to be motivated (i.e. semantically conventional and compositional to some degree). Furthermore, they are set phrases in which a given noun combines with a particular verb, for no rational (semantic) reason other than that this is the accepted way of phrasing a particular idea. Phraseological combinations, on the other hand, are in general only partly motivated. In the example *blinder Passagier* the noun's usual (literal) meaning (i.e. "passenger") contributes to the figurative sense of the whole expression, whereas the adjective takes on a new, more specific, meaning when used in this particular idiom: "blinder" 'blind' here has the sense of 'unseen by anyone'. Pragmatically speaking, these two types of word combinations have very different textual functions. Using preferred co-occurrences in a text simply facilitates communication, whereas phraseological combinations are chosen deliberately to produce a specific stylistic effect. As a result, preferred co-occurrences may be regarded as collocations, while phraseological combinations are a particular type of idiom.

1.6.2.3 Model forms

Model forms are synonymous with Fleischer's (1982) "Phraseoschablonen" 'phraseological templates'. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) point out in addition that the meaning (and pragmatic application) associated with a particular syntactic template may change, however, according to the specific lexical items it contains, as is the case with the most common model form, *von X zu Y*. While *von Tag zu Tag* [lit. from day to day] means 'every day', *von Mann zu Mann* [lit. from man to man]

means 'man-to-man', i.e. 'between two men', and is normally used to describe a frank and face-to-face conversation.

1.6.2.4 Phraseological comparisons

Phraseological comparisons are comparisons like *saufen wie ein Loch* [lit. 'to drink like a hole'] 'to drink (alcohol) abundantly or excessively', similar in sense to the English idiom "to drink like a fish", which are familiar to a given language community. Phraseological comparisons are usually semantically transparent (i.e. motivated), but often the quality chosen for comparison may not be typical of the object in the idiom, or the reason for the comparison may not be obvious, as is the case with *frieren wie ein Schneider*, which literally means 'to freeze like a tailor', i.e. to be extremely cold. Phraseological comparisons are mainly integrated into a text in order to intensify or bring colour to a description, and they often create a humorous tone, especially when well-known analogies are modified to produce "ironische Umkehrungen der Ausgangsform" 'ironic reversals of the original form' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:36). For instance, sardonic variations on the familiar simile *klar wie Kristall* 'as clear as crystal' have been coined to produce new versions of the original idiom: *klar wie dicke Tinte/Schuhwische/Mehlsuppe/Kloßbrühe* 'as clear as thick ink/shoe polish/gruel/dumpling soup', similar in sense and tone to the English idiom "as clear as mud/pea soup". These variations change the original idiom's meaning from 'straightforward, easily understood' to the opposite sense of 'complex, incomprehensible'. Phraseological comparisons can provide an interesting insight into a particular culture, and for this reason play an important role in (cross-linguistic) contrastive linguistics. As an example, different cultures use different similes to emphasise the idea of physical strength. While in German a person may be *stark wie ein Bär* 'as strong as a bear', in English they are "as strong as an ox", and in French "fort comme un Turc" 'as strong as a Turk'.

1.6.2.5 Extended forms of the verb

Extended forms of the verb are termed "light verbs" by Everaert et al. (1995), and "paraphrasal verbs" by Gläser (1998). This type of idiom consists of a noun and a verb (e.g. *jmdm. Hilfe bieten* 'to help') where the noun is also available in the form of

a basic verb ("jmdm. helfen" 'to help someone'). Burger, Buhofer and Sialm note that extended forms of the verb appear in two basic syntactic structures: either as a "Verb + (Artikel) Substantiv im Akk." 'verb + (article) noun in accusative' such as *Lob zollen* 'to accord someone praise', or as a "Verb + Präpositionalphrase" 'verb + prepositional phrase', like *zur Durchführung gelangen* 'to be implemented' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:37). With extended forms of the verb there is always "ein einfaches Verb, das als (ungefähres) Synonym der Kette gelten kann" 'a simple verb which can serve as a (rough) synonym of the chain' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:37). This simple verb can be ascertained by looking at the noun in the construction, since the noun is the main semantic component of the whole idiom. Thus, *Lob zollen* could be paraphrased as "jmdn./etw. loben" 'to praise someone/something', and *zur Durchführung gelangen* as "etw. durchführen" 'to implement something'.

1.6.2.6 Twin formulae

Many twin formulae comprise one word repeated and connected by a preposition or conjunction, like *Schulter an Schulter* 'shoulder to shoulder' or 'side by side'. Others involve two different words from the same part of speech, e.g. two nouns or two adjectives, joined usually by a conjunction (but occasionally by nothing at all) such as *auf Gedeih und Verderb* [lit. 'on prosperity and ruin'] 'unconditionally' or 'unquestioningly', similar in sense to the English idiom "for better or for worse". Twin formulae may be semantically non-conventional and non-compositional to some extent, as is the case with the idiom *Krethi und Plethi*. It is difficult to translate this idiom literally into modern German (or English), but the phrase is similar in meaning to the English idiom "the world and his wife", i.e. absolutely everyone, although slightly more elevated stylistically.¹¹ Like model forms or phraseological templates, twin formulae possess a rigid syntactic structure with variable lexical elements. The difference in the categories lies in the fact that twin formulae tend to be more poetic in

¹¹ According to volume 11 of the *Duden* dictionary, *Redewendungen und sprichwörtliche Redensarten*, the source of this idiom may be traced back to the Bible (Samuel 2, 8:18), in which King David's bodyguards are described as a fearsome rabble, consisting of "*Krether und Plether*". "Krether" and "Plether" (in English 'Kerethites' and 'Pelethites') are thought to be the names of two different rather unsavoury peoples, based on ancient Hebrew terms meaning 'executioners' and 'sprinters'.

style, tone, and/or register than model forms. They may demonstrate alliteration (e.g. *Gift und Galle spucken* [lit. 'to spit poison and gall'] 'to be extremely angry'), assonance (e.g. *Jahr und Tag* [lit. 'year and day'] 'many years'), and rhyme (e.g. *Lug und Trug* 'lies and deception'). Twin formulae are consequently "ein willkommenes Stilmittel" 'a welcome stylistic device' in literature (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:38), and in advertising texts in particular, as is shown in chapter 5.

Everært et al. (1995) refer to twin formulae as "irreversible binominals". Rather than highlighting the poetic features of twin formulae, they observe that these idioms are syntactically fixed constructions in which the order of the lexical elements cannot be switched around without losing the fluency and rhythm of the idiom, or even losing the idiomaticity of the phrase altogether (e.g. if the order of the nouns in the idiom *mit Schimpf und Schande* [lit. 'with insult and disgrace'] 'in disgrace' is reversed to "mit Schande und Schimpf" the phrase sounds strange or even incorrect). Everært et al. (1995) go on to refer to twin formulae which function as a kind of semantic shorthand as "specializations". Specializations, or "quasi-idioms" (Mel'čuk 1995), are twin formulae in which the overall sense of the fixed expression encompasses the literal senses of the idiom's two component words, plus an additional sense. The specialization *Kaffee und Kuchen* 'coffee and cakes' includes the sense 'usually enjoyed in the afternoon'.

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) also point out the existence of "Drillingsformeln" 'triple formulae' and "Vierlingsformeln" 'quadruple formulae', although these types of idioms are less common. The rhythmic *heimlich, still und leise* [lit. 'secret, silent and quiet'] 'quietly' or 'secretly', would be an example of a triple formula. The quadruple formula *frisch, fromm, fröhlich, frei* [lit. 'fresh, devout, merry, free'], originally the motto of a 19th century sports club, has retained the sense 'cheerfully' or 'gaily', but tends nowadays to be used ironically.

1.6.2.7 Phraseological terms

Phraseological terms are typically nominal, constituent-size phrases with directly motivated semantics. However, phraseological terms entail a "nicht ableitbare Spezialisierung der Gesamtbedeutung" 'non-deducible specialisation of the whole meaning', i.e. a more specific meaning not predictable from an analysis of the idiom's component words (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:38). They perform a referential

function by denoting a particular individual, institution, situation, object or action in a given extra-linguistic system, such as politics, science or sport. "Das Rote Kreuz" 'the Red Cross' and "(die ehemalige) Deutsche Demokratische Republik" '(the former) German Democratic Republic' are both phraseological terms.

1.6.2.8 Set phrases

Set phrases are the penultimate subgroup of idioms discussed by Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982). These idioms form whole sentences and are context-dependent, as is the case with the set phrase *da liegt der Hase im Pfeffer* [lit. 'there lies the hare in the pepper'] 'that is the cause of the problem' or 'that is the crux of the matter'.

1.6.2.9 Proverbs and platitudes

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) describe proverbs and platitudes as whole-sentence idioms which express a kind of "Volksweisheit" 'folk wisdom'. These idioms function as "allgemeine Aussagen oder Urteile, mit denen eine gegebene Situation erklärt, eingeordnet, beurteilt wird" 'general statements or judgements, with which a given situation is explained, categorised, assessed' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:39). In contrast to set phrases, proverbs and platitudes are a-contextual. Semantics may be used to differentiate between proverbs and platitudes: proverbs may be characterised as metaphorical, whereas platitudes are non-metaphorical in meaning. Furthermore, proverbs perform the rhetorical function of providing a metacomment on a state of affairs by looking at it from a different perspective. Platitudes, on the other hand, tend to state the obvious in order to sum up a situation, and play a mainly phatic role, i.e. they are used to establish social contact rather than to convey a specific meaning.¹² An example of a proverb would be *viele Hunde sind des Hasen tod* [lit. 'many dogs are of the hare dead'] 'one person cannot do much against many'. Platitudes may be either "Quasi-Tautologien" 'quasi-tautologies', where elements of the phrase are repeated, like *was sein muss, muss sein* ≈ 'what will be, will be', or "Truismen"

¹² The phatic function of language, discussed by Jakobson in his (1960) article *Linguistics and Poetics*, is examined within the framework of the general functions of language in chapter 2, section 2.3.3.

'truisms' such as *man lebt nur einmal* ≈ 'you only live once' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:40).

1.6.2.10 "Winged words"

Despite the fact that Fleischer (1982) and Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) seem reluctant to categorise "winged words" as idioms in the truest sense, both Wotjak (1994) and Gläser (1998) include this type of set phrase in their respective classifications of idioms.

1.6.2.11 Kinegrams

The term "Kinegramme" was coined by Burger (1976) to describe "sprachliche Repräsentation außersprachlichen (kommunikativen) Verhaltens" 'the linguistic representation of extra-linguistic (communicative) behaviour' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:56). For instance, a nod of the head is a gesture which is accepted by some speech communities to convey the meaning "ja" 'yes'; this gesture and its corresponding affirmative sense are expressed in language by the verb "nicken" 'to nod'. The kinegrams classified by the authors as idioms are those which form set phrases, describing in a specific combination of words a physical action which conveys a particular emotion or attitude. For example, the idiom *die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlagen* literally translates as 'to clap the hands over the head'. This physical gesture expresses the (extra-linguistic) emotion of horror, which is matched by the semantically equivalent English idiom "to throw your hands up in horror". However, it is immaterial whether the physical action actually occurs or not, since a given kinegram has a particular standard meaning associated with it by convention. In some cases the emotion may have originally been communicated through an action, which was in turn verbalised by a kinegram, but gradually the expression has become purely figurative. The action may no longer take place, but the meaning of – or reason for – the gesture remains associated with the expression. The kinegram thus relates directly to the original feeling or attitude, rather than to the corresponding non-linguistic action which communicates this emotion. An example of such a kinegram would be the idiom *vor jmdm. auf dem Bauch liegen/kriegen/rutschen* [lit. 'to lie/crawl/slide on the belly before someone'] 'to grovel to someone'. Indeed, in

some cases it would be physically difficult or impossible for the action to occur, as is the case with the idioms *jmdm. auf dem Kopf/auf der Nase herumtanzen/herumtrampeln* [lit. 'to dance/trample around on someone's head/nose'] 'to take advantage of someone' or 'to easily defeat someone', similar in sense to the English idiom "to walk all over someone", and the vulgar *jmdm. in den Arsch kriechen* ['to crawl into someone's backside'] 'to flatter someone' or 'to be obsequious to someone', similar in sense and register to the English idiom "to kiss someone's backside". In these cases the kinegram is entirely metaphorical in meaning. Kinegrams in which the physical action may still take place (e.g. *die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlagen*) are referred to as "echte Kinegramme" 'real kinegrams'. In contrast, "unechte Kinegramme" 'unreal kinegrams' are the more metaphorical expressions where the associated gesture does not actually occur such as *jmdm. in den Arsch kriechen* (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:59).

1.7 Idioms in German Advertising

This chapter has looked at idioms which have been taken out of context, which has allowed idioms to be defined, characterised, and classified in general terms. It is only through a pragmatic analysis of specific idioms in context (i.e. in actual texts), however, that the uses, functions, and linguistic potential of idioms can be understood properly. Advertising is a discourse type which is extremely rich in idioms. Since advertisements are "deliberate and consciously articulated messages" (Dyer 1982:13) in which every word is carefully selected and used to create a specific effect, the use of an idiom in an advertisement is of particular significance. Furthermore, more idioms are modified in German advertising texts than in any other type of text (cf. e.g. Černyševa 1980 and Wotjak 1992). Examining the diverse ways in which idioms are modified in advertisements therefore provides interesting insights into the syntactic, semantic, lexical, and pragmatic flexibility of idioms. The following chapter begins with a discussion of advertising as a general concept, before looking in detail at how and why idioms are used – and, perhaps more importantly, modified – in German advertisements.

Chapter 2: Advertising and the Language of Advertisements

Mephistopheles grants a boon: eternal life, youth, prowess, togetherness, unfulfilled dreams. His price is always something. When it is such a small thing as a pack of cigarettes, or a soft drink, or a lipstick, why should we not take a chance? (Gossage 1967:367.)

Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you are doing, but nobody else does. (Britt, *New York Herald Tribune*, 30/11/56; quoted in Dexter 1998:130.)

2.1 Introduction

Advertisements are ubiquitous in modern consumer society. Section 2.2 looks at advertising in general terms, while section 2.3 focuses more specifically on the language of advertisements. Idioms in particular as familiar, colourful, memorable set phrases are an important feature of advertising language, and are often modified in order to inject humour, novelty, and surprise into an advertisement (section 2.4).

2.2 Advertising: General Concepts

Advertising may be defined as:

a paid form of non-personal communication about an organisation and its products that is transmitted to a target audience through a mass medium such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, direct mail, public transport, outdoor displays, catalogues or the Internet. Individuals and organizations use advertising to promote goods, services, ideas, issues, and people. (Dibb et al. 2001:464.)

A brief examination of the history, types, objectives, design, approaches, themes, features, and reputed effects of advertising, together with a detailed analysis of the various components of a typical advertisement, will help to gain a better understanding of "the dominant, popular, near-ubiquitous discourse of the postmodern consumer society and culture" (Kelly 1995:169).

2.2.1 The history of advertising

The first accounts of advertising date from around 350B.C. Ancient Greek texts describe oral advertising in that they portray town criers wandering through city streets shouting information about local businesses. A letter from that era, which is arguably the earliest record of written advertising, details a prostitute wearing sandals with studded soles, which produced an imprint in the sandy roads reading "follow me" in Ancient Greek. Texts dating from the Roman Empire also mention oral advertising: Aulus Gellius satirises the smooth patter of the snake-charmer, tooth-puller, and quack doctor, while Horace and Martial both describe town criers and tradesmen bellowing at passers-by to attract their attention.¹³ The excavation of Pompeii, the Italian city buried by an eruption of the volcano Vesuvius in 79A.D., has revealed perfectly preserved examples of written announcements for the town's businesses, and for events such as gladiatorial competitions in Rome. These advertisements are carved into and painted onto the town's buildings, statue bases, and columns. One inscription in particular, found on a white-washed wall in the town, translates from the Latin as: "I marvel, O wall, that you have not collapsed under the weight of all the idiocies that sprawl all over your surface", revealing that even two thousand years ago advertising had its critics (Schuwer 1966:10).

Advertising involved primarily oral communication before the development of the primitive printing press in Germany in 1540, but as the printing industry flourished, the popularity of written advertising grew. The first formal newspaper advertisement appeared in Florence in 1597, and the subsequent spread of newspaper advertising meant that businessmen could now convey information to a wider audience and – more importantly – control their own publicity, rather than hoping for trade based on praise by word of mouth. Newspapers and magazines were the main media used for advertising until the invention of radio and television in the first half of the twentieth century, which allowed oral advertising to thrive once more.

¹³ The initial attention-grabbing function of advertising is highlighted by the etymology of the German and English verbs meaning "to advertise": "werben" derives from "sich wenden" 'to turn', and both "sich wenden" and the English "to advertise" derive from the Latin "advertere" 'to turn towards' or 'to turn one's attention to'.

2.2.2 Types of advertising

An advertisement may be categorised in terms of the particular message it communicates. The most predominant type of advertising in society is "commercial consumer advertising" promoting a specific service or brand of product which is offered by one particular business (Dyer 1982:4). In contrast to commercial consumer advertising is non-profit making "public service advertising", which usually takes the form of either an announcement on behalf of a charitable organisation, or a government-funded campaign aimed at promoting the welfare of the general public (e.g. by discouraging smoking). "Trade" or "industrial advertising" is targeted at businesses and professionals, and is consequently confined to professional journals and commercial publications (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:11). Finally, "institutional" or "corporate advertising" publicises "a concept, an idea, a philosophy, or the goodwill of an industry, company, organisation" (Boone and Kurtz 1989:576). Institutional advertising is designed to create a favourable image for a company, rather than to influence product sales directly. Its function is "to make us think of these private corporations as benevolent, public-spirited and socially responsible", and for this reason is often referred to as "prestige advertising" (Dyer 1982:4). The research in this dissertation involves mainly commercial consumer advertising, but also includes examples of public service and prestige advertising.

2.2.3 Objectives of advertising

Ultimately, "es geht immer um's Geld" 'it's always about the money' (Hartwig 1983:11), since advertisements are fundamentally "a means of separating people from their money" (White 1993:202). In order to encourage consumers to buy a specific brand of product, advertisements attempt to:

increase brand familiarity, communicate brand attributes and benefits, develop an image and personality for the brand, associate specific feelings with the brand, link the brand to a reference group such as peers and experts, and directly influence action. (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:xiv.)

The aims of advertising also include differentiating a particular brand from its market competitors by accentuating the brand's (alleged) unique attributes, and sustaining brand loyalty among present consumers of the brand. Maintaining product visibility in the media reminds existing customers of the advantages of using the particular brand advertised. Since this kind of "reminder advertising" (Dibb et al. 2001:486) tries to make consumers more resistant to the allure of competing brands, it has sometimes been described as "inoculative advertising" (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:352).

All these goals are related to the main purpose of an advertisement, which is to stimulate consumer desire for the brand advertised, and to subsequently persuade the consumer to make a particular purchasing decision. Increased sales of a brand reduce possible fluctuations and an overall decline in the sales of a product, thereby raising a company's profit margin. In short, the primary objective of advertising involves:

convincing the possible customer that the product advertised is the far best choice. The purpose is to create an atmosphere or even an obsession that it is not possible to live outside the borders stipulated by the determined advertising campaign (i.e. without the determined product) any more. (Vondráček 1998:355.)

2.2.4 The design of advertisements

The specific design – that is, the form and content – of an advertisement is dictated by three main factors: the characteristics of the audience it is aimed at; the medium or media in which the advertisement is to appear; and the features of the product the advertisement promotes.

All advertisements are conceived with a specific target audience in mind. A target audience may be defined in terms of both demographics and psychographics. Demographics reflect "the vital statistics about the human population, its distribution, and its characteristics", and involve considerations such as age, gender, family status, education, occupation, race and ethnicity, religion, and geographic location (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:144). Psychographics, on the other hand, indicate "all the psychological variables that combine to shape our inner selves", including: leisure activities; interests; personal opinions, needs, values, and attitudes; personality traits; decision processes; and general buying behaviour (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:153). Identifying the typical characteristics of the average consumer in the target

audience allows the advertiser to incorporate into an advertisement language and images presumed to appeal to the whole target audience.¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that the intended audience of an advertisement is not necessarily the actual recipient of the advertising message, since the advertiser cannot directly control who watches, reads, and/or hears the advertisement. Choosing the appropriate medium for the presentation of an advertising message is one way of attempting to determine the actual receiver of the advertisement.

Advertising appears in a variety of media: in newspapers, magazines, and mail sent directly to the potential customer's home; on radio, television, billboards, and the Internet; at the cinema; and in and on the outside of public transport. There is also a growing trend for "ambient advertising", whereby advertisers look for innovative places and ways to communicate their message. Examples of successful ambient advertising include: advertisements for Clorets breath-freshening mints on the lids of curry takeaway boxes; the use of the Puma logo on Linford Christie's contact lenses during the 1996 Olympic Games; and attaching Vaseline Intensive Care roll-on deodorants to the hanging grab-straps on the London Underground (Dibb et al. 2001:481).

The form and content of an advertisement is influenced greatly by the medium in which it is presented. Because this research focuses on the relationship between the visual elements of an advertisement and the literal and figurative senses of idioms in the text (see chapter 5), the German visual media of magazines and television are of central importance. There are various benefits of – as well as drawbacks to – both advertising media. Television may be considered "the right-brain medium" since it engages the creative right hemisphere of the brain, whereas a magazine is "a left-brain medium", which involves the logical left hemisphere of the brain (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:181-2). As a result, television advertising tends to use artistic, emotionally stimulating language and images, while magazine advertisements consist of more factual text. Television is the most effective and influential medium for mass-marketing products since it reaches a large audience, addressing the consumer directly in the comfort of his or her own home. Television advertising also allows

¹⁴ The term "advertiser" means "the individual or team whose task it is to make the product known to a large public", while the term "consumer" refers to "any member of this public who pays at least some attention to the ad or commercial, irrespective of whether they buy the product" (Vorlat 1985:286).

frequent repetition of an advertisement, and delivers its message with great impact, using both audio and visual techniques like music and motion. Television advertising is subject to time constraints, with the result that the advertising message must be simple and concise. The resulting (over-)simplification of language and ideas, and the tremendous expense number among the disadvantages of advertising through the medium of television. Furthermore, television advertisements have a high mortality rate due to the fact that people bore quickly of a repeated message. A television advertisement is often "communication directed at an unresponsive (and often uninterested) audience that may not fit the advertiser's target market characteristics" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:320).

In comparison, magazine advertising allows a relatively specific audience to be targeted in terms of both audience demographics and interests, especially in magazines with specialist subjects such as fashion, health, or leisure activities. Magazine advertisements are not subject to time constraints in the same way as the broadcast media are, so they can include more detail and long explanations about product benefits. They also enjoy a longer life span because magazines tend to be read slowly over the course of a few days, and may be subsequently passed on to family and friends. The use of the written word guarantees preservation of the message though time, and advertisements in print can also be reread to eliminate any comprehension difficulties. More importantly, the reader has sufficient time to interpret and reflect on the advertising message, and since reading is generally a solitary activity, the advertisement has the reader's undivided attention. People exhibit much more mental activity during the process of reading than when they lounge in front of the "low-involvement medium" of television (Packard 1981:224). The consumer is more likely to understand and remember an advertising message which they have actively interpreted (i.e. read) than one which they have passively received (i.e. watched on television). However, magazine advertising can sometimes seem slightly out of sync with current affairs as all advertisements must be submitted well in advance of the magazine publication date. Crucially, magazine advertisements are unable to evoke the affective and personal aural channel of communication, and consequently have to work harder to achieve innovative, creative effects.

With regard to the way in which product features influence the design of an advertisement, goods may be regarded as either "serious" or "trivial" purchases to a certain degree. Serious purchases include major durable, rarely bought goods like

cars, freezers, and computers, whereas trivial acquisitions relate to day-to-day convenience items such as bread and milk. Between the two extremes of serious and trivial purchases are occasional convenience goods like furniture polish, minor luxuries such as aftershave and perfume, and minor durable goods like hairdryers and food processors (White 1993:59). Products may also be classified slightly differently, as either "high involvement" or "low involvement", where the degree of involvement reflects the amount of consideration put into purchasing a particular item. In addition, an item may be described as either a "thinking" or a "feeling" product according to whether the consumer uses his or her reason or emotion to evaluate its worth. Typical "high involvement-thinking" goods are insurance, cars, and domestic appliances, while "high involvement-feeling" products are namely cosmetics, jewellery, and fashion clothing. Personal hygiene and household cleaning products are examples of "low involvement-thinking" goods, whereas beer, cigarettes, and food are types of "low involvement-feeling" products (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:245-247). The decision to buy "high involvement" and "thinking" goods demands considerable deliberation, not least because these items tend to be occasional purchases, and are thus relatively expensive. Advertisements promoting these items consequently make rational appeals to the consumer, which contain factual information and logical arguments. In contrast, "low involvement" and "feeling" products are more likely to entail the impulsive buying of everyday, comparatively inexpensive items. Hence, advertisements for such goods incorporate emotional appeals to the audience, which manipulate the consumer's feelings.

2.2.5 Approaches of advertising

Advertising objectives are achieved by using various types of appeal to the consumer. The appeal is "the basic motivational or persuasive technique used in an advertisement" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:266). Advertisements strive to stimulate both "kognitive Vorgänge" 'cognitive processes' and "emotionale Vorgänge" 'emotional processes' within the viewer/reader (Hemmi 1994:29). Emotional processes relate to the feelings and emotions evoked spontaneously by an advertisement, while cognitive processes elicit a rational reaction (i.e. an opinion based on thought) from the consumer.

Rational appeals entail "reasoned argument based on product qualities, price, comparison with other products, description or demonstration of benefits, and utility" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:267). They may also revolve around a testimonial, where an expert or a trustworthy, influential celebrity recommends the product advertised. A rational appeal offers mainly practical details about a good or service, and uses logical, persuasive arguments to reassure the consumer that if he or she decides to buy the product advertised, he or she has made an informed decision. Emotional appeals, on the other hand, produce a strong instinctive reaction from the consumer towards the publicised product. Emotional appeals may play upon either positive or negative emotions: an advertisement may amuse, entertain, and arouse generally positive feelings about the advertised item, or else highlight the consumer's worries, fears and insecurities, concluding nevertheless that buying the particular product advertised can solve all problems. Packard maintains that all emotional appeals are based on eight basic human needs: the desire for emotional security; the reassurance of self-worth; the hope of ego-gratification; the call for creative outlets; the demand for love objects; the longing for a sense of power; the need for a sense of roots; and the wish for immortality (Packard 1981:66-73).

Similarly, Dyer contends that emotional appeals exploit: the hope of fulfilling personal dreams; the need for love and romance; the wish for a successful career; the concepts of self-importance and pride; feelings of personal guilt; the worry of being lonely or socially ostracised; and the fear of old age (Dyer 1982:92ff). Along the same lines, Hantsch notes that the most successful "emotionale Wirkungsstrategien" 'strategies for emotional effect' are:

Versprechung der Hebung des sozio-ökonomischen Status; Appell an das Selbstgefühl; Spiel mit dem Eskapismusverlangen und die Ausrichtung nach bestimmten Leitbildern genereller Gültigkeit.

The promise of a rise in socio-economic status; appeal to self-esteem; playing upon the desire for escapism, and the orientation towards certain models of general validity. (Hantsch 1972:147.)

As a general rule, when a product offers primarily "utilitarian" (i.e. practical) benefits, the advertising message tends to be based on a rational, informational appeal to the consumer. If, however, the uses of an item are more "hedonic" (i.e. providing sensory or intellectual gratification), the advertisement generally makes emotional,

affective appeals (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:448). Ideally, an advertisement should combine a rational and emotional approach since "it is necessary to arouse an emotional response, but an ad still needs a rational hook describing the tangible end benefits the product will fulfil" (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:225).

2.2.6 Themes of advertising

As well as making basic rational and emotional appeals, advertisements commonly explore several general themes in an attempt to persuade the consumer to purchase the brand advertised. The main themes of advertising may be described as either "product utility themes" or "personalising themes" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:273-4). Product utility themes are themes like the (beneficial) consequences of using the brand, the efficacy of the product, processes of production, scientific "proof", and value for money. Examples of personalising themes would be the personification of the product, emotional reaction to the brand, and self-transformation through use of the product. Advertisements involving personalising themes usually have as their subject matter: happy families; rich, luxurious lifestyles; important people, celebrities, and experts; glamorous places; art, culture, and history; Nature and the natural world; beautiful women; humorous situations, events, and people; childhood; and the realm of fantasy (Dyer 1982:92ff).

2.2.7 Features of advertisements

Advertising may be regarded as "our society's master storyteller" in the sense that all advertisements entertain, express values, demonstrate behaviour, or suggest solutions to daily problems (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:457). Because of the time and space constraints placed on advertisements, this storytelling aspect of advertising necessitates the use of stereotypical people, places, situations, events, and attitudes. This stereotyping, or "reductivism" (Kelly-Holmes 2000:68), is a typical feature of advertising, but if taken too far may result in advertisements being perceived as bigoted, racist, or sexist, which is a standard criticism of advertising.

Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (1992) maintain that the most successful advertisements incorporate both words and pictures. The full meaning of an advertisement comes from "eine Einheit von Bild und Text" 'a unity of picture and

text' (Hantsch 1972:137) or "a combination of verbal and visual messages" (Davis and Walton 1983:3). Visuals in an advertisement create impact and thus often function as an attention-getting device, aiding recall of the advertisement, and (in theory) subsequently of the brand advertised. Pictures can also communicate intangible concepts, such as emotions and mood, much more quickly and effectively than words (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:408; Dibb et al. 2001:500). Visuals can "Aufmerksamkeit erregen, das Interesse fesseln, den Wunsch nach dem Angebot wecken oder verstärken" 'attract attention, hold interest, awaken or intensify the desire for the offer' (Hartwig 1983:59). Yet moving the consumer to actually purchase a product "das geht nur und allein durch eine in Sprache gebrachte Aufforderung" 'only ever happens through an invitation made with language' (Hartwig 1983:59). For this reason the text of an advertisement may be considered "the logic", while the image acts as "the emotion" (Myers 1994:136). Barthes (1977) examines how a text and a picture interact, defining the relationship between these two elements as either an "anchorage" or a "relay" relationship. Words and sentences inherently have many possible interpretations, as do images. However, in an "anchorage" situation, the text's sole purpose is to narrow down the possible choices of meaning presented by the image. "The text *directs* the reader through the [meanings] of the image ... remote control[ing] him towards a meaning chosen in advance" (Barthes 1977:39-40). "Anchorage" can also occur when the picture guides the reader towards the preferred interpretation of the text. In contrast, in a "relay" scenario "text ... and image stand in a complementary relationship" (Barthes 1977:41). The text and picture work in unison to convey the meaning of the message, and are of equal importance. Advertising exploits both the "anchorage" and the "relay" relationship between language and image.

A further important aspect of advertising is its foregrounding of connotational meaning (Cook 1992:214). The denotation of a word is "the literal, dictionary definition of a word, its barest factual meaning", whereas its connotational meaning is based on "the associations the word creates" (Goddard 1998:123). "In advertising there is almost no denotative communication" (Dyer 1982:130) because an advertisement rarely – if ever – tells the consumer directly to buy a particular product. Instead, an advertisement uses suggestive images and text to create and convey a certain image or idea, which then attempts to encourage the advertisement's reader/viewer to buy the brand advertised. In short, it tends to be the connotations of

the advertisement's visual and verbal elements which actually sell the product. Consequently, "the product should be advertised as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself" (Hepner 1964:435). In fact, "we no longer buy oranges, we buy vitality. We do not buy just an automobile, we buy prestige" (Packard 1981:15), and "one does not buy books, but the joys of knowledge and romance, not things but enjoyment, utility and advancement in social life and business" (Hepner 1964:435). In other words, advertising "does not try to tell us that we need its products as such, but rather that the products can help us obtain something else which we do feel that we need" (Vestergaard and Schröder 1985:29). This tendency in advertising to promise emotional benefits from the use of a product, thereby disregarding the practical uses of the product, has been referred to as "the corruption or distortion of use values" (Haug 1986:65). In modern society "material goods are used to attain non-material goals" (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:559) and, as a result, the technique behind most advertising is to "translate statements from the world of things into a form that means something in terms of people" (Williamson 1978:12). Products are portrayed in advertisements:

als Bestätigung eines bestimmten Lebensstandards, als Wunderdroge für Schönheit, Sauberkeit, Gesundheit, als Mittel totaleren Erlebens, Partizipation an erfüllter Existenz, Lebenselixir, Wunder.

as confirmation of a particular standard of living; as a wonder-drug for beauty, cleanliness, health; as a means of more total experience, of participation in a fulfilled existence, the elixir of life, wonder. (Riha 1972:170.)

In this way, goods become "semanticised" (Barthes 1967:41), i.e. given a (connotational) meaning above and beyond their actual practical (denotative) function. "The objects that we use and consume cease to be mere objects of use; they become carriers of information about what kind of people we are, or would like to be" (Dyer 1982:6). By connecting socially desirable values and feelings with commodities, advertising links "possible *unattainable* things with those that *are* attainable, and thus reassures us that the former are within reach" (Williamson 1978:31).

Finally, perhaps the most definitive and significant feature of advertising is the style of language it typically uses. The language of advertising, or "adese" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:412), is discussed further in section 2.3.

2.2.8 The effects of advertising

It is important to note that an advertisement which attempts to fulfil the basic objective of advertising – "die Aufforderung zum Kauf" 'the invitation to buy' (Hemmi 1994:26) – does not necessarily provoke the desired reaction from the hearer/viewer of the advertising message. With regard to the actual effects of advertising, the prominent American advertiser, Martin Mayer, recognises that "only the very brave or the very ignorant (preferably both) can say exactly what it is that advertising does" (quoted in Myers 1994:188). At the level of the individual consumer an advertiser hopes to "inform, persuade and entertain" the potential customer, but quite often may simply "bore, annoy and offend" (Dibb et al. 2001:480). However, many advertisers adhere to the maxim that any reaction from the audience is better than none, since "gefährlich ist nicht der erheiterte – oder der wütende – Leser, gefährlich ist nur der lauwarmer Konsument" 'it is not the amused – or furious – reader that is dangerous, only the lukewarm consumer' (Hartwig 1974:95).

Many factors influence the consumer's attitude towards an advertisement. "Peripheral" factors include the feelings evoked automatically by the advertisement, the mood of the viewer/reader, and his or her attitude towards both advertising in general, and towards the particular advertiser. "Central" factors, on the other hand, involve the viewer/reader's perceptions of the executional characteristics, and the credibility of the advertisement. In short, "peripheral" factors relate to the consumer's involuntary responses to an advertisement, while "central" considerations refer to the cognitive processing of the advertisement (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989:48ff). A person's response to an advertisement is based on a combination of his or her senses, reason, and emotions. The senses determine what is perceived about the brand advertised; reason influences what is believed about the product; and emotions dictate what is felt about the publicised brand. As illustration, White outlines three different responses to an advertisement for Persil washing-up liquid: "It can be used to clean dishes" (senses–perceived); "It will get my dishes really clean because the washing powder cleans my clothes" (reason–believed); and "I can trust it to get my dishes clean" (emotions–felt) (White 1993:77).

Advertisers spend substantial time and money in an attempt to make their advertisements stand out from the "clutter" (Boone and Kurtz 1989:588) of the thousands of competing advertising messages. Ideally, a memorable advertisement

should encourage the consumer to also remember the brand it publicises. Although simply remembering a particular brand is by no means a guarantee that the consumer will go out and purchase it, people are more likely to buy an item whose name they are familiar with (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:191). Many advertisements make no impact whatsoever on the consumer, since people have "selective perception", which allows them to screen out irrelevant or unwanted information (Boone and Kurtz 1989:591). As a result, people tend to switch off (mentally and often literally if the advertisement is televised) when an advertisement appears. If an advertisement is actually noticed, people may subsequently either recall the advertisement in detail, or simply recognise it when they see it again (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:410). Likewise, consumers may have either an "explicit" or an "implicit memory" of a particular product (White 1993:58). An explicit memory of a brand involves relatively detailed recall of the specific brand name and features, whereas implicit memory generates a more vague impression of familiarity with the brand, which could be described as the "I know I've seen it somewhere before" effect" (White 1993:58). In general, advertising hopes to stimulate detailed recall and explicit memory, but tends to rely more realistically on advertisement recognition and implicit memory of the brand.

Turning now to the impact of advertising on society, advertisements have been analysed from economic, political, philosophical, religious, sociological, historical, behavioural, managerial, academic, and model-building (i.e. involving research and statistics) perspectives (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:24). Advertising remains "a controversial subject about which scholars, intellectuals, and businesspeople form strong and often contradictory opinions" (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:25). It is difficult to ascertain the actual influence of advertising on a grand scale, but there is nevertheless widespread conjecture and controversy over the reputed effects of advertising on society. Indeed, "it is difficult to think of another contemporary institution that has come under such sustained attack from so many different angles" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:17).

Critics of advertising maintain that advertisements portray people and places in a stereotypical way. These stereotypes subsequently encourage the perpetuation of sexist and racist ideas, with the result that advertising manipulates basic social values and attitudes. Children are particularly receptive to the detrimental role-models and negative influences of advertising:

The manipulation of children's minds in the field of religion or politics would touch off a parental storm of protest and a rash of Congressional investigations. But in the world of commerce children are fair game and legitimate prey. (Packard 1981: 135.)

Advertising is believed to channel people's emotions and subconscious thoughts, or their "unthinking habits" (Packard 1981:11), in order to "make people buy things they do not want" (White 1993:55). This control is exerted through the use of ambiguous and persuasive language whose message is "never really clear, intelligible or communicable" (Schuwer 1966:101). Advertising language can therefore be denounced as "a tissue of lies and misrepresentations" (Schuwer 1966:7) or "puffery", a word coined in the seventeenth century to express the tendency of advertising language to describe products "with subjective opinions, superlatives, or exaggerations; vaguely and generally, stating no specific facts" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:40). Even as far back as 1843 Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish essayist and historian, objected to the "all-deafening blast of puffery" prevalent in British society (quoted in Turner 1965:55). More specifically, it is often the consumer's negative emotions and anti-social feelings which advertising exploits in order to influence a purchasing decision: "advertising plays on our fears, insecurities and anxieties by constantly reminding us that our lives could be better if only we were to buy this or that" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:30). Indeed:

The sale of billions of dollars' worth of products hinges to a large extent upon successfully manipulating ... our guilt feelings, fears, anxieties, hostilities, loneliness feelings, inner tensions. (Packard 1981: 54.)

Advertisements promote social disgruntlement, because "advertising helps to keep the masses dissatisfied with their mode of life, discontented with the *ugly things* around them. Satisfied customers are not as profitable as discontented ones" (Ewen 1976:39). Marxists even contend that advertising functions as a political tool, serving as a means of controlling the general population and strengthening the barrier between social classes. Such critics profess that an advertisement's "deceitful promises of material pleasure" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:17) are actually a way of enabling "multinational capitalistic monopolies to batten on the working classes" (White 1993:55).

Supposedly as a result of advertising, society has become "greedy, materialistic and wasteful", believing that "private acquisition is the only avenue to social success and happiness" (Dyer 1982:3). Advertising seems to advocate the consumption of material goods as an acceptable and rewarding lifestyle. If the Moral Majority, a right-wing religious organisation in the United States, is to be believed, advertising threatens the basic Christian way of life since it "celebrates the blasphemous ideology of secular humanism" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:17).¹⁵ Although churches and schools, the traditional promoters of spiritual doctrines, are subject to careful scrutiny from society, "there is little social accountability for [advertising's] operations" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:31-2). Additional criticisms of advertising focus on the arts and the social environment. Advertising may be perceived as a kind of "prostitution of the arts" due to the fact that it borrows – and often vulgarises – specific features and styles of music, literature, photography, illustration, and film (White 1993:204). As regards damage to the social environment, many people consider advertisements to cause excessive noise and visual pollution.

In the defence of advertisements, the term "advertising" is overly vague and general:

'Advertising' as it is too often used, is a blanket term covering everything from the postcard in the newsagent's window selling a second-hand pram to an expensively produced commercial appearing five times a night on national television. To say, therefore, that 'advertising does this' or 'advertising does that', is nonsense. (White 1990:2.)

Defenders of advertising insist that advertisements are an economic necessity. The competition between brands and products generated by advertising encourages constant improvement in the quality and choice of goods, which consequently raises the general standard of living in consumer society. More jobs are created as advertising stimulates the production of goods and services, with advertising thereby

¹⁵ A religious pamphlet entitled *Cunningly Devised Fables*, produced in October 2002 by the Gospel Hall in St Andrews, Scotland, even goes so far as to equate the false promises of advertising with the serpent's temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden:

How often the human mind has been misled through the art of deception. Some with no conscience have been known to devise lies to further their own end at the expense of others. Much of the advertising world is a good example of this. How often great claims are made regarding the product, but after the purchase is made the buyer discovers he has been fooled by a fable! ... Cunningly devised fables are nothing new! ... Eve heard the first one as it flowed from the serpent's lips.

facilitating the general economic expansion of society. Advertising ensures the survival of important social and cultural institutions since it is the main source of financial support for today's media, as well as for innumerable sporting and cultural events.

Advertising explores the universal themes and experiences of human existence, and in this way overcomes linguistic and cultural barriers. Advertising has created a new global culture, but one which simultaneously allows national characteristics to be maintained and celebrated (Cook 1992:15). It provides a record of a society's cultural and economic history, since "advertising tells us in miniature a great deal about an entire civilization, its actual material life and interlocking collective fantasies" (Atwan, McQuade and Wright 1979:preface). Moreover, in an educational setting, advertising serves as a stimulus for the discussion of:

the most urgent issues of our time: the destruction of the environment, the wealth gap (within and between countries), the choice between socialism and capitalism, the growth of world culture, the struggle between feminism and patriarchy, the status of art and popular culture, the consequences of mass communication and high technology. (Cook 1992:17.)

Advertising highlights and allows the examination of society's:

most serious concerns: interpersonal and family relations, the sense of happiness and contentment, sex roles and stereotyping, the uses of affluence, the fading away of older cultural traditions, influences on younger generations, the role of business in society, persuasion and personal autonomy. (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:1.)

Advertising also offers a valid source of entertainment and humour. In fact, "it has been said with some justice that commercials are the best thing on television" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:2). Advertisements are a source of fascination, as illustrated by the number of television programmes today showing the most creative, shocking, and amusing advertisements from across the world. A nation-wide opinion poll in 2002 carried out by the British *Sunday Times* newspaper and the British television channel, Channel 4, even generated the production of a television programme entitled *The 100 Greatest TV Ads*. The programme counted down the British public's favourite television advertisements of all time, and examined the creative ideas and techniques behind them. As "advertising increasingly takes on the role of an entertainment form with artistic aspects" (Jameson 1985:112),

advertisements may be perceived as "blurring the distinction between 'high art' and 'commercial forms'" (Kelly 1995:168), and perhaps even as "the official art of the advanced industrial nations of the west" (Dyer 1982:1). The British magazine *Heat* views advertisements as a valid form of modern art, publicising a recent exhibition on advertising (*Rewind: Forty Years of Design and Advertising*, showed in 2003 in London's Victoria and Albert Museum) with the quip: "Ads. They're the new art, you know" (*Heat*, 02/11/02). Advertising represents for many people an introduction to – or even the only means of access to – visual creativity. Its pervasive and imaginative use of rhythm and rhyme have been paralleled with that of verse, with the result that advertising may be characterised as emphasising the "poetic" function of language. (See section 2.3.3 for more on the functions of language.)

In response to the criticism that advertising pressurises people to buy products which they neither want nor need, an advertiser:

kann keine *Befehle* zum Kaufen oder Konsumieren erteilen, da er sich nicht gegenüber dem Empfänger in einer Machtposition befindet, von der aus er ein Nichtbefolgen des Befehls mit Sanktionen bedrohen könnte.

cannot issue a *command* to buy or consume, since he does not hold a position of power over the [advertisement's] receiver, from which he could threaten a refusal to obey the command with sanctions. (Flader 1972:113.)

The reader/viewer of an advertisement simply cannot be forced to make a purchasing decision:

Werbung kann nichts befehlen, sondern nur empfehlen, zureden, raten, anpreisen, rühmen, anbieten, loben, einladen, anregen, anreizen, hinweisen, animieren, ermuntern, entflammen, begeistern, interessieren, informieren, hinlenken, hinführen, ja zur Annahme des Angebots oder zum Kauf dringen oder drängen, mehr nicht. Und sie soll gar nicht kommandieren.

Advertising cannot order anything, but rather can only recommend, persuade, advise, extol, boast, offer, praise, invite, suggest, encourage, emphasise, animate, stimulate, excite, inspire, interest, inform, steer, guide, even urge or push for the acceptance of the offer or a purchase, but no more. And it is not meant to command anything. (Hartwig 1983:201.)

Along the same lines, but focusing specifically on the advertising of tobacco, an advertisement from the British American Tobacco (Germany) Company refutes

allegations that advertising cigarettes manipulates – or even forces – people to start smoking:

Eine Anzeige, ein Plakat oder ein TV-Spot [kann] Nichtraucher zum Rauchen [nicht] bewegen ... Wo kein Bedürfnis besteht, kann Werbung auch keines wecken, selbst wenn dies noch so oft behauptet wird. Doch das ist auch gar nicht ihre Aufgabe. Vielmehr soll sie die beworbene Marke begehrt machen und ihren Marktanteil erhöhen.

An advertisement, poster or TV commercial cannot persuade non-smokers to smoke ... If no desire exists initially, then advertising cannot create it, even though this is still so often claimed. And anyway, that is not even its task. Rather, it is supposed to make the advertised brand popular and increase its share of the market. (*Stern*, 19/11/01.)

Advertising executive Bruce Morrison, speaking before the U.S. Federal Trade Commission in 1971, pointed out that although advertising may "cultivate dormant or previously unperceived ideas", it cannot simply conjure up the desire for a particular product if the consumer ultimately does not need or want the product. Morrison ends his statement with the challenge: "To anyone who believes he can truly manipulate consumers, I would offer this humble advice: try it" (quoted in Moskin 1973:38). In short, there is a marked difference between manipulation – "outright deception through lying" – and the persuasive intent of advertising, "allowable exaggeration and embellishment – what is known in the trade as 'puffery'" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:44). "People are perfectly free to ignore advertisements" (Dyer 1982:4), since "die Kommunikanten der Werbung sind mündige Partner und keine Konsumidioten" 'the communicative participants in advertising are partners of mature judgement and not consumer idiots' (Hartwig 1983:201).

As regards the claim that advertising renders society excessively materialistic, Williams points out that the consumer attitude to goods is both "rational", focusing on the "utility" of products ("what they can do for us"), and "irrational", relating to the "symbolism" of goods ("what they mean to us") (Williams 1980:183). The modern consumer pays more attention to product symbolism than utility, with the result that, technically, society could be considered as not materialistic enough:

If we were sensibly materialist, ... we should find most advertising to be of insane irrelevance. Beer would be enough for us, without the additional promise that in drinking it we show ourselves to be manly, young at heart or neighbourly. (Williams 1980:185.)

Censure levelled at advertising for promoting materialism and immorality is essentially criticism of these traits in society itself:

Objections directed at advertisements, the industry and its alleged social impacts are often indirect attacks on the so-called materialistic ethos of industrial society, or on capitalism in general as a social system; these are critiques of society masquerading as critiques of advertising. (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:33.)

Consequently, as Hennig reasons:

Wir können der Werbung nicht übelnehmen, daß sie unsere geheimen Wünsche aufspürt und unsere Schwächen erkennt – z.B. unsere Eitelkeiten, unser Erfolgsstreben, unser Sicherheitsbedürfnis – und die ausnutzt.

We cannot hold against advertising the fact that it unearths our secret desires and recognises our weaknesses – e.g. our vanity, our striving for success, our need for security – and exploits them. (Hennig 1971:44.)

In short, advertisements are such a pervasive and visible feature of modern society that the criticism of advertising may be regarded as a starting-point from which to effectively address the broader social problems which it reflects and highlights.

2.2.9 The components of an advertisement

There are clearly identifiable elements in a (German) print advertisement:

- 1) "die Schlagzeile" 'the headline'
 - 2) "der Hauptteil des Werbetexts" 'the copy body'
 - 3) "der erste Satz des Werbetexts" 'the first sentence of the copy'
 - 4) "der letzte Satz des Werbetexts" 'the last sentence of the copy'
 - 5) "der Untertitel" 'the subhead(line)'
 - 6) "die Illustration" 'the illustration'
 - 7) within the illustration "die Sprechblase" 'the speech-bubble'
 - 8) around the illustration "die Bildunterschrift" 'the caption'
 - 9) "der Slogan" 'the slogan'
 - 10) "das Slogo" 'the slogo'
 - 11) "die Signatur" 'the signature'
 - 12) "das Kleingedruckte" 'the small print'
- (Terminology from Nusser 1975 and Hartwig 1983, and from consulting German native speakers.)

Not all of these components are necessarily present in all magazine advertisements, but virtually all print advertising contains at least a slogan and the company logo.

"Die vorangestellte Schlagzeile" 'the introductory headline' (Hemmi 1994:166), sometimes referred to as "the hook", occurs towards the top of a print advertisement and is "the initial piece of attention-seeking verbal language used to draw the reader in" (Goddard 1998:106). In order to make it stand out from the rest of the advertisement copy, which is "the verbal portion of an ad" (Dibb et al. 2001:499), the headline tends to be a larger sized or a differently coloured or shaped font than the general text. Since the headline is often the only part of the copy which people glance at, it should "die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers wecken und auf ihn einwirken" 'attract the attention of the reader and have an effect on him' (Sowinski 1979:72):

The headline must flag down the target reader, and pull him or her into the body copy, offering a reward for reading on. This is best achieved by headlines that appeal to the reader's self-interest (e.g. by offering free, useful information), are newsy, *offer new twists on familiar sayings*, and/or evoke curiosity (e.g. by asking a quiz-like question). (Beltramini and Blasko 1986, quoted in Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:376; my emphasis.)

"New twists on familiar sayings" refers of course to the modification of idioms, and reworked idioms are a relatively common feature of the headlines of print media (see chapter 5). Creative, ambiguous headlines with puns, questions, or puzzles are categorised as "indirect headlines", whereas informative headlines summarising the product benefit are known as "direct headlines" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:423).

The copy body is the main block of text of an advertisement. Its main function is to inform and persuade the consumer to purchase the brand advertised: when a person reads a print advertisement "the headline catches their eye, but the copy wins their heart" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:425). In general, the style of the copy may be "straightforward" (simple and factual), "narrative" ("used to tell a story"), or "dialogic" (where the reader "listens in" on a conversation) (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:426). Copy may be either short and concise, containing only one or two key ideas, or else relatively long and detailed, particularly when a "high involvement-thinking" product is promoted with a rational appeal to the consumer. The copy body is often broken up with one or more subhead(line)s, which are in a larger font than the general copy, but smaller than the headline. Subheads usually encapsulate the main ideas of the advertising message, rendering the text easier on the eye and less daunting a prospect for the indifferent reader.

Most advertisements contain an illustration of some description, be it a photograph, drawing, cartoon, graph, or table. The illustration creates an immediate impression with various colours, shapes, and eye-catching people, places, and objects. Pictures often communicate a message faster than text, which must be deciphered word by word, sentence by sentence. Illustrations are often more effective at expressing abstract concepts and emotions, and "it is the power of the visual image which makes an advertisement easy to remember and creates an effective impact" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:407). The "key visual" of an advertisement is "a dominant image around which the commercial's message is planned" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:253). It is important that the key visual and the headline of an advertisement complement each other so that "a reader who only looks at the headline and main visual can 'get the message' without having to read a word of the body copy" (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:377). As discussed in chapter 5, magazine advertisements frequently incorporate headlines or slogans containing (modified) idioms, and where these idioms may be interpreted both literally and figuratively, the literal sense of the phrase is often depicted in the key visual.

The slogan or "tagline" of a print advertisement may be defined as "a memorable phrase which sums up the concept or key point of the ad" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:425), or as "the phrase which comes at the end of the advertisement and encapsulates the message" (Rees 1997:5).¹⁶ More specifically, a slogan is:

eine oft formelhaft kurze, graphisch (oder sprecherisch) und bedeutungsmäßig meist isoliert erscheinende Textzeile, die in der Regel längere Zeit benutzt wird, damit diese Aussage und der Produktname bei vielen im Gedächtnis haftenbleiben.

a short, often formulaic line of text, which usually appears set apart graphically (or orally) and in terms of meaning, and which as a rule is used many times so that this statement and the product name stick in many people's memory. (Sowinski 1979:81.)

Slogans tend to be differentiated from the advertisement as a whole:

¹⁶ The term "slogan", coined around the sixteenth century, derives from the Gaelic "*sluagh-ghairm*" 'war-cry', thereby characterising the slogan's succinct message and prosodic style, as well as suggesting the advertiser's zeal in communicating the advertising message ("buy our brand").

Sie setzen sich ab durch den Ort, an dem sie im Gesamtbild plaziert sind, durch einen besonderen Drucktyp, durch Kürze. Sie sind zumeist isolierte Flecken, auf die das Auge fällt. ... Nur Slogans und Markenname dagegen sollen erinnert werden, der Kunde soll sie wiedererkennen und wiederholen können. Darum müssen sie kurz und einprägsam sein und der Zunge schmeicheln.

They are set apart by the position in which they are placed in the overall picture, by a special font, by their brevity. They are for the most part isolated spots, which catch the eye. ... Only slogans and product names, however, should be remembered; the customer should be able to recognise them again and repeat them. They should therefore be short and catchy, and flatter the tongue. (Klotz 1963:98.)

While the general role a slogan plays is "Aufmerksamkeit erregen, das Produkt darstellen, sich vom Empfänger leicht einprägsam lassen und die Kaufentscheidung auslösen" 'to attract attention, to present the product, to make itself easily remembered by the receiver, and to trigger the decision to buy' (Flader 1972:105), its primary function is to increase the memorability of the whole advertisement, and subsequently of the product it promotes. For this reason slogans often incorporate the brand name, and rely heavily on alliteration, rhyme, and a regular rhythm. (Modified) idioms and puns are also common in slogans because the effect of surprise or humour produced by such linguistic creativity promotes interest in and recall of both the slogan and the advertising message (see chapter 5). The four main characteristics of the advertising slogan may be summarised as: "Einfachheit, Kürze, Wohlklang, Rhythmus" 'simplicity, conciseness, melodious sound, rhythm'. A slogan's "Einfachheit" is a prerequisite for the "Akzeptanz" 'acceptance' of an advertisement; its "Kürze" ensures the advertisement's "Behaltenkönnen" 'memorability'; its "Wohlklang" increases the advertisement's "Wirksamkeit" 'effectiveness'; and its "Rhythmus" enhances the advertisement's "Volkstümlichkeit" 'popular appeal' (Hartwig 1974:120).

As is the case with the advertising message in general, in slogans "der materielle Zweck wird zum ideellen hinstilisiert, er wird zumindest verkleidet" 'the material goal is stylised as non-material; it is at the very least disguised' (Klotz 1963:97). Dr Johnson, an eighteenth-century literary critic and humorist, noted that advertisements "gain attention by magnificence of promises, and by eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetic. *Promise, large promise is the soul of an advertisement*" (quoted in Turner 1965:30). This comment is particularly true of the slogan, which leads Rees to suggest that the collective noun for slogans should be "a

boast of slogans" (Rees 1997:7). A slogan as "das Prunkstück der Werbung" 'the showpiece of advertising' (Hartwig 1974:117) makes all kinds of promises about the brand it promotes. As illustration, a slogan may vouch for a product's: "Sicherheit" 'security' (e.g. "Citroën. Fahren ohne Gefahren" 'Citroën. Drive without danger'); "Wohlbefinden" 'well-being' (e.g. "Rauche, staune, gute Laune. Players" 'Smoke, be amazed, good mood. Players'); "feste Koalition von Seele und Leib" 'the secure fusion of soul and body' (e.g. "Koche mit Liebe – Koche mit Eto" 'Cook with Love – Cook with Eto'); and "gesellschaftliche Sonderstellung" 'social exclusivity' (e.g. "Universal Genève – eine Uhr, die nicht jeder trägt" 'Universal Genève – a watch not worn by everyone' (Klotz 1963:97).¹⁷ Slogans use various styles of appeal to make such promises to the consumer. The tone of a slogan may be: "befehlend" 'commanding' (e.g. "Wähl auch du: CDU" 'You vote too: CDU'); "belehrend" 'informative' ("Ata wirkt auf milde Weise" 'Ata works in a mild way'); "behauptend" 'making a claim' ("Bier macht den Durst erst schön" 'Only beer makes it good to be thirsty'); "im vertraulichem Parlando" 'in familiar parlance' ("Ja – die Seife Fa" 'Yes – Fa soap'); "einweihend" 'initiating' ("Die Großen der Gegenwart tragen Rolex-Uhren" 'The great men of today wear Rolex Watches'); or "euphorisch mitreißend" 'euphorically infectious' ("Unser köstliches Getränk – Milch" 'Our exquisite drink – milk') (Klotz 1963:99).

Because of the concise form, rhetorical features, universally relevant themes, and didactic tone of slogans, they may even be regarded as a modern form of proverb:

Der Slogan [begründet] seine Glaubwürdigkeit dadurch, daß er auch klanglich, rhythmisch und syntaktisch sich anerkannten und vertrauten Sprüchen und Formulierungen angleicht. ... Die Syntax folgt dem Modell des Sprichworts: entweder kurze prägnante Aussagesätze oder mehrgliedrige Gefüge.

The slogan strengthens its credibility by the fact that it assimilates accepted and familiar sayings and phrases in its sound, rhythm and syntax. ... The syntax follows the model of the proverb: either short, succinct statements or constructions with several parts. (Klotz 1963:99.)

It is in fact the proverbial form and tone of a slogan which is the most likely reason for its impact on the consumer:

¹⁷ The translations of slogans given here are largely literal, and do not attempt to reproduce the stylistic and rhetorical features of the originals.

Die Schlagkraft des Slogans liegt in seiner Kürze, seiner grammatischen Beweglichkeit, seinem klanglich-rhythmischen Schlupf. Sie machen ihn als *prima vista* überschaubar, einprägsam und wiederholbar. ... Dem Muster des Sprichworts folgend, ist er scheinbar rund und bestätigt, gibt er vermeintlich ein Fazit wieder, das aus Erfahrungen gewonnen ist, die jedermann teilt.

The power of the slogan lies in its succinctness, its grammatical flexibility, the flow of its sound and rhythm. These features make it on first hearing understood, remembered and repeated. ... Following the pattern of the proverb, it appears to be well-rounded and endorsed, and is supposed to convey a general consensus that is gained from experiences shared by all. (Klotz 1963:102.)

Many advertisers model advertising slogans on the form and style of proverbs in order to appeal to the consumer. Sometimes advertisers go one step better, using an actual proverb or idiom – often in a lexically, syntactically, semantically, and/or pragmatically modified form – as the basis for an advertising slogan, or indeed for an entire advertisement (see chapter 5).

Whereas the slogan acts as a kind of catchphrase for one particular product in an advertisement (campaign), the slogo is a phrase which always accompanies and identifies a company name or logo, such as or the holiday company Travel24's "Urlaub *Zum Greifen Nah*" 'Holidays Within Reach', which is based on the idiom *zum Greifen nah* [lit. 'near to the grasp'] 'nearby'. The signature usually appears at the very end of an advertisement and identifies the sponsor, so tends to be distinctive and easily recognised. It contains the name of the product or company, often written in an unconventional font or style, and often the company logo. The small print is simply the information in a smaller font than the rest of the text which appears at the end of an advertisement. This usually contains further detailed information about the service or product offered, and/or disclaimers from the company advertising the product.

The individual components of a television advertisement are not quite so easily identifiable, mainly because an advertisement in broadcast media does not appear in a complete, written, readily analysable form. Furthermore, television advertisements contain both spoken and written text, and it is difficult to know whether to consider these individually or as part of the whole advertising text. In general, the spoken word takes precedence over the written word in television advertising, primarily in terms of quantity. Yet the written word performs one essential function: emphasis. Writing in a (German) television advertisement tends to be superimposed on the visuals, and either highlights the product, brand, and/or

company name, or reiterates important aspects of the advertising message already mentioned orally. Terminology for the components of German magazine advertising may also be applied to a German television advertisement, and the elements of a television advertisement may be categorised as:

- 1) "der Spotanfang" 'the ad beginning', i.e. the first (spoken or written) sentence of the copy
- 2) "das Spotende" 'the ad ending', i.e. the last (spoken or written) sentence of the copy
- 3) "die Spotmitte" 'the ad middle', i.e. all the remaining (spoken and/or written) copy
- 4) "die Schlagzeile" 'the headline', i.e. the main attention-grabbing (spoken or written) sentence
- 5) "der Untertitel" 'the subheadline', i.e. the (spoken or written) phrase or sentence which is emphasised in order to break up the copy
- 6) "die visuellen Elemente" 'the visuals', i.e. mainly the pictures, but also any writing appearing on the television screen
- 7) "der Slogan" 'the slogan', i.e. the (spoken and/or written) catchy expression towards the end of the advertisement which summarises the ad message
- 8) "das Slogo" 'the slogo', i.e. the phrase always associated with the particular product or company advertised
- 9) "das Logo" 'the logo', i.e. the product or company logo
- 10) "das Kleingedruckte" 'the small print'

(Terminology from Hemmi 1994:167 and from consulting German native speakers.)

2.3 The Language of Advertisements

Advertising language can be described as "loaded language" in that it "aims to change the will, opinions, or attitudes of its audience" (Leech 1966:25). The language of advertising, however, differs significantly from other types of loaded language such as political speeches and religious sermons. For instance, most kinds of loaded language call upon moral and ethical principles to achieve their usually non-material goals, which are namely to win people's approval and support, and to encourage them to adopt a certain outlook or lifestyle. In contrast, there is a purely economic motive behind advertising. Advertising appeals to basic human drives like the need for food and clothing, or the desire for success and happiness, in order to realise its material objective (i.e. to persuade the consumer to buy the product advertised).

2.3.1 Advertising language as communication

If communication is defined as "the transmission of a message from sender to receiver", marketing communication (i.e. advertising) may be thought of as "the transmission from a sender to a receiver of messages dealing with buyer-seller relationships" (Boone and Kurtz 1989:536). Advertising serves as:

a paid, ongoing, non-personal communication from a commercial source such as a manufacturer or retailer. It communicates messages about a product, service, or company that appear in mass media such as television, magazines or radio. (Assael 1990:439.)

Put simply, "Werbung ist geplante öffentliche Kommunikation zum Zweck einer ökonomisch wirksamen Information, Persuasion und Entscheidungssteuerung" 'advertising is planned public communication with the objective of information, persuasion and decision-steering in an economically effective way' (Haseloff 1969:158).

Hemmi lists the main elements of the advertising communication process as: "Sender, Botschaft, Medium, Empfänger" 'sender, message, medium, receiver' (Hemmi 1994:24). This terminology is based on both Bühler's (1965) "Organon-Modell" 'instrumental model' of language (outlined in section 2.3.3), and Jakobson's (1960) summary of the six factors present in every speech event:

The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to; ... a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee; ... and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. (Jakobson 1960:353.)

Jakobson's model for general communication may be applied to advertising communication. The context of a given advertisement relates to its physical context, i.e. the other advertisements and the magazine articles/television programmes surrounding it. Context also involves the opinions and personal circumstances of the reader/viewer, i.e. his or her attitude to the product publicised and to advertising in general, and whether he or she wishes – and, more importantly, could afford to – buy the product advertised. An advertisement's message is the meaning (i.e. the incentive to buy) which the advertiser wishes to convey to the consumer. The contact refers to

the actual place (i.e. the actual magazine/television set) where the advertisement appears. The emotional and intellectual bond which the advertiser tries to establish with the reader/viewer may be viewed as an additional type of contact. The language and visual images of the advertisement are its code. With regard to the addresser and addressee, however, advertisements are unlike most everyday communication, in which a single person represents the message source, sender, and addresser combined, while the addressee tends to also be the receiver of the message. In contrast, an advertisement's addresser is neither the source nor the sender of the advertising message, and the addressee is not necessarily the receiver of the message. The source of an advertising message refers to where the message actually originates, i.e. to the specific company producing a particular brand. The company employs an advertiser to convey its message in an appealing and effective way, with the result that the advertiser may be considered the message sender. Technically speaking, the advertiser is not the actual addresser, since the actor or spokesperson in the advertisement performs this role. The addressee in advertising communication would be the intended target audience, selected on the basis of demographic and psychographic considerations, but the actual receiver of the advertisement is anyone who reads it in a magazine or watches it on television.

2.3.2 The roles of advertising language

Language can play many parts in communication:

We use language to express our emotions, to inform our interlocutors of facts of which they were not previously aware, to influence people's actions or thoughts, to talk about language, to chat with friends about nothing in particular, or to tell stories and make jokes. (Vestergaard and Schröder 1985:16.)

The main roles of advertising language include:

- 1) "Ausmalen" 'painting a picture', i.e. setting the scene for the advertisement
- 2) "Erzählen" 'narrating', i.e. telling the story of the advertisement
- 3) "Berichten" 'reporting', i.e. offering "objective" information about the product
- 4) "Beschreiben" 'describing', i.e. describing the practical and emotional benefits of the brand
- 5) "Herausstellen" 'emphasising', i.e. highlighting important features of both the advertisement and the product

- 6) "Klarmachen" 'explaining', i.e. explaining how the product will change the consumer's life
- 7) "Nachweisen" 'proving', i.e. providing "evidence" of the product's uses and advantages
- 8) "Begründen" 'justifying', i.e. offering reasons to purchase the brand
- 9) "Appellieren" 'appealing', i.e. appealing to the advertisement's reader/viewer (Hartwig 1983: 149-184.)

More specifically, the language of advertising allows:

- 1) Produktbenennung
- 2) Imagebildung (Beseelung des Produkts)
- 3) Produktbeschreibung
- 4) Herstellung einer Beziehung zwischen Produkt und Umworbene(n) (Besitzwunsch)
- 5) Optimierung des Erinnerungswertes
- 6) Produktkauf

- 1) Naming the product
- 2) Creating an image (animating the product)
- 3) Describing the product
- 4) Establishing a relationship between the product and the advertisement addressee (the desire to possess)
- 5) Optimising memorability
- 6) [Stimulating] purchase of the product (Grassegger 1985:142.)

Advertising also uses language to initially attract the consumer's attention to an advertisement, and subsequently, it is hoped, to the brand featured in the advertisement. The language of advertising tends to be informal, unusual, familiar, surprising, shocking, or humorous to accomplish this task.

2.3.3 The functions of advertising language

If the roles of advertising language refer to the practical uses to which language is put in an advertisement (i.e. *how* language is used), the functions of advertising language relate more to the advertiser's reasons for using a language in a particular way (i.e. *why* language is used the way it is). The functions of advertising language may be considered in terms of both Bühler's (1965) [1934] "Organon-Modell" 'instrumental model' of language, and Jakobson's outline of "the constitutive factors in any speech event" (Jakobson 1960:353).

Bühler's *Sprachtheorie*, first published in 1934, describes language as an instrument (an "Organon") which is used by people. The "Organon-Modell" comprises three language functions: "Darstellung" 'representative', "Ausdruck" 'expressive', and "Appell" 'conative' (Bühler 1965:28). "Darstellung" refers to the function of language whereby there exists "eine Zuordnung der Lautzeichen zu Gegenständen und Sachverhalten" 'an *assignment* of sound signs to objects and states of affairs' (Bühler 1965:29), i.e. words (arbitrarily) designate the concrete objects and abstract concepts of reality. The "Ausdruck" function of language relates to its "Abhängigkeit vom Sender, dessen Innerlichkeit es ausdrückt" 'dependence on the sender, whose inner state it expresses' (Bühler 1965:28), i.e. language communicates information about the speaker's personal situation and opinions. In contrast, language's "Appell" function describes its "Appell an den Hörer, dessen äußeres oder inneres Verhalten [sie] steuert" 'appeal to the hearer, whose inner or outer behaviour [it] directs' (Bühler 1965:28), i.e. speakers use language to influence the attitude and behaviour of their listeners.

Jakobson's summary of the main functions of language (Jakobson 1960:353-357) corresponds to the six components of verbal communication he lists, as detailed in section 2.3.1. Jakobson's model is based to a certain degree on Bühler's "Organon-Modell" and thus comprises the "referential", "emotive", and "conative" functions of language (analogous to Bühler's "Darstellung", "Ausdruck" and "Appell" functions respectively). The referential function of language, whereby language designates a phenomenon existing in the outside world, relates to the context. The emotive function, through which the speaker expresses his or her own emotions and attitude to the message they are communicating, focuses on the addresser. The conative function, on the other hand, is oriented towards the addressee. Under the conative function, communication is directed at a person in order to obtain a specific reaction, i.e. to influence the addressee's emotions, beliefs, and actions. In addition to these three basic functions of language, Jakobson outlines three further functions: "phatic", "metalingual", and "poetic". Contact between the speaker and hearer stresses the phatic function of language (terminology from Malinowski). Phrases like the German "Herrlich heute!" 'Lovely day!' allow people to communicate not to exchange information, but rather to simply establish contact and prolong communication with each other. The code is related to the metalingual function, which involves clarifying that the communication is effective with phrases like the

German "Was meinen Sie mit ...?" "What do you mean by ...?". Finally, the message is linked to the poetic function of language, which is not just confined to literary texts, but is present in all language use. Certain words and phrases are chosen both for their meaning, and for their poetic features like regular rhythm and rhyme. Caesar's declaration: "Veni, vidi, vici" 'I came, I saw, I conquered', for example, sounds appealing and is particularly memorable because it comprises three di-syllabic words which exhibit both alliteration and assonance (Jakobson 1960:358).

Applying Bühler's (1965 [1934]) and Jakobson's (1960) models for general communication to advertising communication, it may be concluded that while advertising language certainly performs the "Darstellung" or representative function of language, its primary function is the "Appell" or conative function. Every advertisement involves "nicht nur Informationsaustausch, sondern auch eine das Reaktionsverhalten der Empfänger steuernde Funktion" 'not only an exchange of information, but also the function of guiding the responsive behaviour of the receiver' (Haseloff 1969b:221). Advertising language may thus be regarded as superficially "informational" since it provides the consumer with basic information about product characteristics, but as fundamentally "transformational" in that advertisers are attempting to alter consumer opinion and behaviour (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:50). In order to reinforce this transformational or conative function of advertisements advertisers typically place particularly strong emphasis on the poetic function of language by using stylistic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and wordplay.

2.3.4 Features of advertising language

"Werbejargon" 'advertising jargon' (Grosse 1966:79) or "adese" may be defined as "formula writing that uses clichés, generalities, stock phrases and superlatives" (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:412). The language typical of advertising makes an advertisement instantly identifiable: "man erkennt Werbesprache auf den ersten Blick als Werbesprache" 'one instantly recognises advertising language as advertising language' (Hartwig 1974:80). Advertising language tends to be "condensed, allusive, conversational, or poetic" in style (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:232), and "generally informal and colloquial. Sentences are usually simply constructed and short. Imperative clauses are frequent" (Dyer 1982:144).

Dyer examines in particular the lexical items incorporated into the language of English advertisements (Dyer 1982:149ff), and concludes that the universal qualities of advertising language are specifically: an abundance of adjectives and adverbs; the coining of new words, for example "flavoursome"; and the emotive use of verbs and nouns, as with the slogan: "Playtex. The first bra to understand the facts of life" (i.e. the noun "bra" is personified to allow it to perform the usually human activity of understanding something). Deliberate misspelling, as in the familiar catchphrase "Beanz Meanz Heinz", is often used in adese to attract attention to – and to subsequently aid recall of – the brand advertised. Unusual letters of the alphabet – namely x, k, z, and q – are used for these reasons, as is illustrated by the brand names "Dettox", "Kleenex", "Kodak", "Heinz" and "Q-Tips". Simplified, phonetic spellings of words like "Drive-Thru" and "Bar-B-Q" have become so common in advertisements that they almost function as acceptable variant spellings (Myers 1994:39). Elliptical comparatives, such as in the claim that "The new Chevrolet has more legroom" (than what?), are also extremely prevalent in advertising jargon (Geis 1982:139).

With regard to the grammar of advertising language adese frequently contains disjunctive syntax. As a result "the message is of an abnormally simple nature", since minor and non-finite clauses appear as independent sentences. In ordinary prose the slogan "Addis. The paintbrush with the name you know. Addis." would sound stilted because of the unnaturally short, one-word sentences, but "chopping up" the syntax provides the utterance with more focal elements, thereby emphasising the brand name (Leech 1966:90). Advertising language occurs mainly in the present tense and the active voice to convey the idea of the "eternal truth" of the advertising message (Vestergaard and Schröder 1985:35). Imperatives (e.g. "Try new Anadin Paracetamol."), rhetorical questions (e.g. "Ever wonder what BHS has in store for you?"), and vocatives (e.g. "Working hands of America, let the healing begin. Neutrogena Hand Cream.") as methods for making a suggestion to the consumer are further common features of adese (Geis 1982:139).

While on the one hand advertising language entails "Wahrheit und Klarheit" 'truth and clarity' (Hartwig 1974:49), on the other hand it involves "die linguistische Gaukelei" 'linguistic trickery' (Hantsch 1972:151), i.e. inventive and unusual language. Advertising language thus achieves a:

delicate compromise between the opposed tendencies of conformity and unorthodoxy: between following a prescribed path of advertising clichés and exercising the freedom to deviate from it, and even, on occasion, to deviate from the rules of the language itself. (Leech 1966:4.)

Because a given product is available on the market in an ever-increasing number of various brands, it is becoming more and more difficult to differentiate between these brands on the basis of their physical qualities or benefits alone. Put simply, the different brands of a product are "functionally equivalent" (Aaker, Batra and Myers 1993:203). When brand uniformity is the case, an advertiser often integrates creative language into an advertisement, following the principle that "if we like an ad we are predisposed to being less critical about what the ad is saying" (MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch 1986:132). As Crompton advises: "when you have nothing to say, use showmanship!" (Crompton 1987:36), and for this reason "technical fireworks" (White 1993:85) like bright colours and eye-catching people, places, and objects, as well as music, loud noises, and movement, are often incorporated into advertisements. Using technical devices in conjunction with rhetorical devices such as metaphor, hyperbole, humour, and figurative language focuses the reader/viewer's attention on the advertisement's form rather than on its content (usually vague or outrageous promises) and purpose (manipulation of the consumer). Glossing over the advertisement's content and emphasising its form allows the advertiser to avoid making direct – and generally untrue – claims that buying his product will make the consumer younger, happier, or more attractive or successful, but rather merely implies through suggestive imagery and language that this is the case. The advertiser can therefore deny any responsibility for the consumer's deductions that simply buying a certain (material) product will make all his or her (non-material) wishes come true. In this way "advertisers get consumers to do their dirty ideological work for them, and keep their own hands clean" (Pateman 1983:200). Technical and linguistic creativity allows an advertisement to be perceived as original and imaginative, which subsequently encourages the consumer to regard the product promoted as distinctive and unique. The consumer's positive attitude towards the advertisement is subsequently associated with the brand advertised. This process, whereby "a characterless product is imbued with desirable qualities through links with another entity, effect or person", is termed "fusion" (Cook 1992:105).

Creative language particular to adese comprises for the most part rhetorical devices, figurative language, and wordplay. Rhetorical devices occur as either "formal" or "phonological schemes" (Leech 1966:186). The main type of formal scheme, or "prosodic patterning" (Cook 1992:121), is regular rhythm. The written, spoken, or sung language of an advertisement tends to possess a definite, poetic-like metre, since "rhythm is very important to advertisers. It allows people to remember things more easily, and can convey and induce all sorts of emotions" (Dyer 1982:151). Another kind of formal scheme is parallelism, which involves the repetition of syntactic patterns. For example, in the opening line of an advertisement for Sunny D orange juice: "I found a way to be a good mother and still be a great mom", "good mother" and "great mom" function as graphological parallels (Cook 1992:134). The purpose of formal schemes in advertisements is to "heighten the emotional tone of the message, giving insistent emphasis to points of strategic importance" (Leech 1966:190). Phonological schemes have "an undefined 'ritualistic' quality about them which makes people want to repeat them" (Leech 1966:189), which renders a text easier to remember and repeat. Alliteration, assonance, sibilance, onomatopoeia, and rhyme are the principle varieties of phonological scheme.¹⁸

Figurative language occurs as standard in adese, and may be defined as "language that means more than what it literally says" (Myers 1994:123). The function of figurative language in advertising is to attract and hold the consumer's attention, as well as to inject a sense of creativity and stylistic richness into the advertisement. Metaphor, similes, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, and idioms are all types of figurative language. A metaphorical expression is a comparison in which the meaning of one phrase is transferred across to another. Metaphor "sets up a pattern of similarity between two referents, as if they were the same thing. X is described in terms of Y" (Myers 1994:125). Chapter 3 looks at the concept of metaphor in more detail. A simile is also a comparison, but one which includes in the phrasing the words "like" or "as (if)". The equivalent words in German similes are "wie" or "als (ob)". With personification, an object or abstract idea or quality is either represented in the form of a person, or has human characteristics

¹⁸ Alliteration involves the repetition of consonants in two or more words. Assonance entails the recurrence of vowels, and sibilance the specific repetition of the consonant "s" to evoke a hissing sound. Onomatopoeia describes a word such as "pop" or "bang", whose sound imitates the concept it designates. Rhyme refers to the effect created when the sound of the last syllable of two or more words is the same.

attributed to it. The difference between synecdoche and metonymy may be explained as follows: synecdoche describes the literary technique whereby "the name of a part of something is used to refer to the whole", whereas metonymy "takes something related to stand for the whole" (Myers 1994:127). For instance, in the synecdochial expression "to need a hand", it is actually (physical) assistance from the whole person, (as opposed to from just one hand) which is required. Referring to the Queen as "the Crown" is an illustration of metonymy because a symbol of royalty (a crown) is used to signify the entire concept (the Queen).

Wordplay is a further common feature of innovative advertising jargon. Zeugma, where a single word is made to co-occur with two or more different words to produce a different sense with each, is one kind of wordplay which is frequently used with comic effect. The quip: "She went home in tears and a sedan chair" (Wales 1989:445), and the advertising slogan for Heinz Spicy Pepper Sauce: "Delicious with Chinese, with Italian, with French, with caution" (Cook 1992:140), are examples of zeugma. The most familiar type of wordplay is the pun, which is "ambiguity unashamed of itself" (Attridge 1988:141). Puns involve the use of polysemy, homonyms, homophones, and/or paronyms. Polysemy applies to one word with several related meanings, such as "head" referring literally to the body part; alluding figuratively to rationality; figuratively designating the top/start/leader of something (e.g. of a table/a queue/an organisation respectively). "Where there's a will, there's a disgruntled relative" is an example of a pun depending on polysemy. Homonymy concerns one word with two or more unrelated meanings. For example, the noun "book" describes a written work, but as a verb "to book" has the senses: to reserve and pay for a ticket; to arrange an appointment; to take the name of a rule-breaking player in a sports match; or to charge with a crime a person who has violated the law. The pun "A miss is as good as a mile, but some misses are better two miles away" (based on the proverb "A miss is as good as a mile" i.e. a failure is a failure no matter by how narrow a margin) revolves around the homonym "miss", which can mean both "a failure" and "an unmarried woman or girl". Homophony pertains to different words which have the same sound, but discrepant meanings and/or spellings, like "bear" and "bare". An example of a pun based on homophones would be: "The good die young, but the old dye for various reasons". Paronyms involve sound similarity rather than exact equivalence (as is the case with homophony). "Matri-money is the root of all

evil" (from the proverb "Money is the root of all evil") is an example of a pun on paronyms. (All the above examples of puns are taken from Litovkina 2002.)

Puns are incorporated into advertisements to attract and retain the potential customer's attention because they by definition surprise and amuse. This attention-getting function of wordplay is essential: magazine readers require on average between 35 and 40 seconds to read properly and understand the pictures and text of one advertisement, yet spend on average less than two seconds looking at an advertisement. Around 95% of the information contained in a magazine advertisement is therefore ignored or dismissed (statistics from Kroeber-Riel 1988 and 1989, quoted in Hemmi 1994:35). An Oxford University survey conducted on the behaviour of television viewers during commercial breaks found that 20% of viewers leave the room in the first few seconds, more than 10% "zap" to another channel, and just over 30% turn the sound off and "do something more interesting" like have a conversation. All in all, almost two thirds of the viewing public ignores television advertising (statistics from Krönig 1993:25, quoted in Hemmi 1994:35). Puns "are in fact much more of a labour-saving device than many of the products they seek to promote" (Tanaka 1994:64). Puns are highly economical – and hence particularly welcome in expensive television advertising – since they are in effect "two meanings for the price of one word or phrase" (Redfern 1984:130). Puns initially confuse the reader/hearer of an advertisement, resulting in a need for additional mental effort to make sense of the pun's ambiguity. The extra cognitive processing is thought to promote better recall of the phrase in which the pun occurs, and subsequently of the whole advertisement and brand. Working out a pun provides a kind of intellectual satisfaction, which may lead the consumer to consider the advertisement – and thus the product – in more congenial terms. There is also a tendency to discuss clever or unusual advertisements, generating free word-of-mouth advertising for the brand. Because puns are not serious in nature they work on the mood of the consumer, thereby aiming to disarm consumer scepticism about the product advertised.

Wordplay in advertising occurs frequently with idioms. The general nature of the modification of idioms is examined in section 2.4.3. This research focuses on wordplay involving the literal and figurative interpretations of VLI idioms in German magazine and television advertising, as discussed in chapter 5.

2.4 Idioms in Advertising

Most advertising language consists of "a simple, personal, and colloquial style, and a familiar vocabulary" (Leech 1966:28). To be effective advertising copy must:

Prefer the familiar word to the unfamiliar. Prefer the concrete word to the abstract. Prefer the simple word to the complex. Prefer the short word to the long. (de Voe 1965:649, quoted in Leech 1966:71.)

Advertising language embodies "einfache, konkrete, der Alltagssprache sehr nahe Sprache" 'simple, concrete language, very similar to everyday speech' (Hantsch 1972:150). The most interesting aspect of these descriptions of advertising language in general is that they could all be applied equally as effectively to idioms in particular. Because idioms embody many of the fundamental characteristics of advertising language, they are tailor-made for the discourse of advertising.

2.4.1 Key research on idioms in German advertising

There has for centuries been great interest – on the part of both linguists and the general public – in the meanings and origins of figurative language such as "winged words" and proverbial expressions. Büchmann in Germany in the 1860s, and Dr Brewer in England in the 1870s, were the first to compile comprehensive dictionaries providing an essentially diachronic analysis of the more traditional, syntactically and semantically fixed idiomatic expressions found in oral communication, namely proverbs and well-known quotations.

However, important (synchronic) research into the forms and functions of idioms in advertising texts only began to appear in the 1960s. In this era the typical advertising text comprised merely a "Werbeslogan" 'advertising slogan', while proverbs were the main type of idiom of interest to linguists. Research into German adese from this time therefore focuses mainly on the use of proverbs in advertising slogans. In this regard Hain concludes that "dem Städter begegnet das Sprichwort in ganzer oder verstümmelter Gestalt in den Werbesprüchen der Wirtschaft" 'the city-dweller encounters the proverb in its complete or distorted form in the advertising slogans of the business world' (Hain 1963:40, quoted in Hemmi 1994:13). Likewise, Herles finds that proverbs, with their conventional forms and time-honoured

meanings, are incorporated frequently into advertising slogans, leading him to describe advertising language as "ein ausgeprägter Traditionsträger" 'a distinct bearer of tradition' (Herles 1965:68, quoted in Hemmi 1994:13).

Mieder (1992) looks at the functions and modification of proverbs in political reports, newspaper headlines, and advertisements in German magazines. The use of proverbs in these discourses encourages: "bessere Einprägsamkeit" 'better memorability'; "Überzeugungskraft" 'persuasive power'; and the evocation of "positive Assoziationen" 'positive associations' (Mieder 1992:31-9). Mieder surmises that the proverb in modern language use occurs mainly in modified form, and for this reason suits "die Erfordernisse des modernen Lebens" 'the demands of modern life' (Mieder 1992:5).

Bebermeyer and Bebermeyer (1977) widen the examination of proverbs in German advertising to encompass other types of idiomatic set phrase such as pure idioms and quotations. They also analyse the ways in which idioms are modified in advertising: namely through the substitution of different words into an idiom, and through the expansion of an idiom by adding new lexical items. The authors round off their analysis with the prediction of an "Ausuferung" 'flood' of advertisements containing modified idioms in the late 70s and early 80s (Bebermeyer and Bebermeyer 1977:40).

Koller (1977) investigates idioms in advertisements, political reports, crime reports, and readers' letters in German newspapers between 1972 and 1975. He concentrates on both the functions and the usage (with particular regard to modification) of idioms in these different discourse types. Koller maintains that idioms in advertising perform the same functions as those in political reports: "Übertragung" 'communication'; "Anbiederung" 'sweet-talking'; "Vereinfachung" 'simplification'; "Argumentation-Ersparung" 'saving argumentation'; "Unschärfe" 'vagueness'; and "Anschaulichkeit" 'vividness' (Koller 1977:179). He also highlights the widespread use of wordplay with idioms in German adese, detailing modifications to the forms and meanings of various idioms (Koller 1977:181-7). In particular, Koller emphasises the trend in advertising for the linguistic co-text and/or the non-linguistic context (i.e. the picture) to evoke the literal sense of an idiom. This practice still occurs frequently in modern advertising (see chapter 5).

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's highly influential (1982) *Handbuch der Phraseologie* categorises the various types of idioms in the German language, and

subsequently lists the different kinds of modifications these idioms undergo in actual texts. The authors analyse the use of idioms in advertisements from German magazines and newspapers (mainly from the women's magazine *Brigitte*) from 1980, and find that around half of the advertisements contain at least one idiom. Of these idioms, around half again are modified (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:91). Of particular relevance to this research is their finding that "Modifikationen der Semantik durch Kontext oder Bild sind deutlich häufiger als Veränderung des Wortlautes (Verhältnis ca. 3:1)" 'modifications of the semantics through the context or picture are noticeably more common than the alteration of the wording (in a ratio of approx. 3:1)' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:91).

Dittgen (1989) examines the creative wordplay with idioms in German newspaper and magazine headlines and advertisements, in graffiti, and in the titles of German films, books, and songs. Like Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982), he concludes that the instances where an idiom's semantics are modified through its co-text and/or context greatly outnumber the cases where its internal syntax is altered (Dittgen 1989:168).

Grassegger (1989) investigates the use and functions of idioms in Austrian television advertisements over a six-month period between 1987 and 1988. He finds that only 5% of these advertisements contain idioms (Grassegger 1989:145). Where modifications occur, more than half of the alterations involve an activation of the literal sense of the idiom by the co-text or context (Grassegger 1989:147). Grassegger therefore deems the consensus in phraseological research that idioms are a pervasive feature of advertising language to be a "Fehleinschätzung" 'mistaken evaluation'. He believes this overestimation of the frequency of idioms in adese to be due to the "Aufmerksamkeit erregende Effekt" 'attention-grabbing effect' of idioms (Grassegger 1989:153). Because idioms are more memorable than non-idiomatic expressions – which is one of the main reasons that they are incorporated into advertisements in the first place – the reader/viewer merely feels that he or she has read/seen more idioms than is actually the case.

Wilss (1989) focuses on the functions and modification of idioms in orally based discourses such as the Bible, the mass media, politics, and advertising. He lists the main functions of idioms in these discourses as: "Aufmerksamkeitsverstärker" 'attention intensifiers'; "Waffen einer aggressiven Gesellschaftskritik" 'weapons of an aggressive social criticism'; and "Selbstprofilierung des Autors" 'the author making a

name for himself' (Wilss 1989:70-2). For Wilss, idiom modification involves: "Substitution" 'substitution' (the most common type of modification); "Hinzufügung" 'addition'; "Kürzung" 'reduction'; and "Permutation" 'permutation' (in the sense of 'reordering' the idiom components) (Wilss 1989:149ff).

Burger's (1991) article is a follow-up to Grassegger's (1989) analysis, and as such examines the use of idioms in Swiss, Austrian and West German television advertisements. In keeping with Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982), he finds that nearly 50% of these advertisements contain at least one idiom, and that around 15% of these commercials contain several idioms. Burger assigns the small proportion of idioms in adese found by Grassegger to the fact that Grassegger does not take idioms like "Routineformeln" 'routine formulae', "Modellbildungen" 'model forms', and "Geflügelte Worte" 'winged words' into consideration when carrying out his research (Burger 1991:31).

Wotjak (1992) examines the use and modification of idioms in German magazine headlines, cartoons, and advertisements, as well as in the "Wendesprache" 'reunification language' and "Demosprüche" 'demonstration sayings' from the time of the German reunification. "Demosprüche" may be defined as "spontaner und flüchtiger zu Sprüchen geronnener Volkswitz" 'spontaneous and impulsive folk wit which has crept into sayings' (Lang 1990:12, quoted in Wotjak 1992:164), like "*wo ein Willy ist, ist auch ein Weg*" from the proverb *wo ein Wille ist, ist auch ein Weg* ≈ 'where there's a will there's a way', i.e. one can achieve anything if determined enough (Wotjak 1992:168-9). "Ein Willy" is a pun on "eine Wille", and alludes to Willy Brandt, the West German chancellor from 1969 until 1974 who strove for political and social reconciliation with Eastern Europe. Wotjak bases her classification of idiom modification types on Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) categorisation, which she alters as necessary to better suit the particular discourse types she analyses (Wotjak 1992:133-161, see section 2.4.3.1 for details). Wotjak concludes that on average 35% of all idioms used are modified, although this figure varies with individual texts and discourse types.

Fleischer, Michel and Starke (1993) analyse various discourse types, including advertising, in order to ascertain the basic stylistic features of modern German. With regard to Grassegger's finding that only 5% of the television advertisements analysed contain idioms, the authors point out that frequency of occurrence is not the only factor in establishing the importance of idioms in advertisements. A single idiom can

determine the whole style and tone of a text (Fleischer, Michel and Starke 1993:153). They also note that idioms in modern texts tend to be modified, and that these idiom modifications involve primarily: "Substitution" 'substitution'; "Expansion" 'expansion'; "Reduktion" 'reduction'; or "Kontamination" 'contamination' (i.e. the amalgamation of two idioms) (Fleischer, Michel and Starke 1993:154-8). The authors conclude that "die Modifikation von Sprichwörtern ist wie die von Phraseologismen heute ein kennzeichnendes Merkmal ihres Gebrauches" 'the modification of proverbs, like [the modification of] idioms [in general], is today a characteristic feature of their use' (Fleischer, Michel and Starke 1993:163).

Hemmi (1994) compares idioms in three different media – print, radio, and television – in order to investigate the extent to which the advertising medium affects the uses and modification of idioms. She finds that 78.7% of print, 62.8% of radio, and 45.7% of television advertisements contain at least one idiom, and therefore concludes that the use of idioms in adese is medium-specific (Hemmi 1994:64). Furthermore, print advertising displays the highest proportion of modified idioms (Hemmi 1994:217), probably because written advertisements may be analysed and reviewed more slowly and carefully than advertisements in the electronic media. Idiom modifications in printed texts are therefore more likely to be perceived, understood, and appreciated by the consumer.

Sabban (1998a) looks at how idioms with figurative and literal interpretations are used in German newspaper and magazine advertising, and observes that the literal sense of idioms is the basis for much wordplay. She points out that idioms are particularly suited to wordplay and humour:

Because of their complex semiotic make-up, and the subtle syntactic, semantic and pragmatic requirements for their proper use, [idioms] react most sensitively to minute changes in their context and can thus be exploited for certain communicative purposes. (Sabban 1998a:314.)

Sabban (1998b) examines the creative modification of idioms in French as well as German press advertisements. She outlines the pragmatic effects of idiom alteration as rendering the tone and style of the text more original, witty, and inventive. Idiom modification thus reflects positively on the message sender, and elicits positive responses (e.g. surprise, humour) from the message receiver. Sabban concludes that idiom modification serves as "ein kreativer, die üblichen

Ausdrucksmittel überschreitender Sprachgebrauch" 'a creative use of language which exceeds the usual method of expression' (Sabban 1998b:358).

2.4.2 The roles and functions of idioms in advertising language

Idioms are used in diverse ways and for various reasons in advertising language.

2.4.2.1 "Sprachökonomisch" phrases

Idioms are common in advertisements because they are typically "sprachökonomisch" 'economical with language' (Grassegger 1985:142), i.e. they comprise simple, condensed language. Perhaps more importantly, idioms possess a "semantic surplus value" (English term from Geeraerts 1989:97):

Phraseologismen haben gewissermaßen einen semantischen Mehrwert: ihre Bedeutung geht über ihre nicht-phraseologische Entsprechung insofern hinaus, als man mit dem Gebrauch von Phraseologismen immer bestimmte Einstellungen ausdrückt.

Idioms have in a way a semantic added value: their meaning goes beyond their non-idiomatic equivalent in so far as particular attitudes are always expressed through the use of idioms. (Kühn 1985:43.)

Idioms contain not just condensed language, but also concentrated information about the sender and the addressee of the message: "when using an idiom the speaker conveys more information than its semantic content. He either establishes a social hierarchy or he tests the hearer's opinion in this matter" (Strässler 1982:116). In addition to the basic "Darstellung" 'representative' function of language, idioms therefore also perform the "Ausdruck" 'emotive' and "Appell" 'conative' functions of language (as discussed in section 2.3.3).

2.4.2.2 Stylistic devices

Idioms are stylistic devices which are used to produce a specific stylistic effect such as a humorous or informal tone, or to introduce memorable features such as rhyme, alliteration, or a regular rhythm into the text. Advertising often indulges in "light-hearted codeplay in a public domain once provided by poetry" (Cook

1992:226). Codeplay involves playing with language, shifting the focus from the content (i.e. the meaning) to the form (i.e. the choice of expression) of communication. Codeplay, which highlights poetic features or "phonological regularities" (Leech 1966:29), like alliteration, metrical rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, is extremely common in advertising language. Hartwig uses the rhetorical devices of alliteration, a regular rhythm, and bathos (cf. in particular the first sentence of the following citation) in order to emphasise his point that German advertising frequently incorporates poetic features, since:

Das Dichten ist des Deutschen Lust. Es ist sicher kein Zufall, daß unsere beliebtesten Kinderbücher, *Max und Moritz* und *der Struwwelpeter*, nur Reime enthalten, daß unser größtes Bühnenwerk, *Faust*, ein Versdrama ist, und daß unser deutscher Musiker, Richard Wagner, seine Operntexte in besonderer Gedichtform verfaßte.

Germans take great joy in poetry. It surely cannot be coincidence that our best-loved children's books, *Max and Moritz* and *Struwwelpeter*, contain only rhyme, that our greatest dramatic work, *Faust*, is a drama in verse, and that our most German musician, Richard Wagner, wrote his opera texts in a special poetic form. (Hartwig 1983:109.)

Idioms in general could be described as "Say-me memes" (Blackmore 1999:84), that is, eye- (or ear-)catching sequences of words.¹⁹ Proverbs in particular, with their definitive rhythm and rhyme, stand out from standard language, and are consequently easy to remember and repeat. Idioms in advertising thus help to heighten the poetic quality – and consequently the catchiness – of an advertising text, thereby performing the "Einprägsamkeitserhöhungsfunktion" 'function of increasing memorability' (Wotjak 1992:169).

¹⁹ Blackmore uses the term "meme" to refer to "units of cultural information", and points out that some memes are more interesting than others: "The point is you are less likely to want to pass on some boring thing you heard about the health of your neighbour's rose bushes than a rumour about what your neighbour was doing behind them" (Blackmore 1994:84). She subsequently describes "Say-me memes" as the particularly interesting units of cultural information which roll off the tongue and are consequently more likely to be passed on from person to person. Advertisements therefore incorporate as many "Say-me memes", i.e. idioms, as possible in order to encourage the consumer to remember and repeat the advertising message.

2.4.2.3 Rhetorical devices

Idioms also function as rhetorical devices, performing "illocutionary acts", like promising, requesting, or offering advice, approval, or criticism. Because idioms are not simply phrases which convey straightforward factual information, they consequently fulfil "die gegenwärtige Kommunikationsbedingung mit einem minimalen Textanteil eine maximale Wirkung zu erzielen" 'the requirements of modern communication to achieve the maximum effect with the minimum amount of text' (Hemmi 1994:169).

2.4.2.4 Creating an atmosphere of familiarity and informality

Idioms tend to be "allgemein verständlich" 'readily comprehensible' (Grassegger 1985:142), i.e. easily recognised and understood by most people. Familiar language is crucial in advertisements since "words used frequently in everyday language are more easily comprehended and remembered" (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:383). Idioms are incorporated into advertisements because, as familiar language, they "create an atmosphere of intimacy and informality" (Cook 1992:177). This sense of intimacy, which is reinforced by the ubiquitous use of the pronoun "you" to address the consumer directly, is however actually "false familiarity" (Marcuse 1968:23). The advertiser and reader/viewer are not involved in two-way communication, nor do they know or ever meet each other. Idioms "repräsentieren im allgemeinen eine sehr bildhafte Ausdrucksweise und gehören zum großen Teil in die Umgangssprache, ja oft sogar in den Bereich einer derben Sprechweise" 'in general represent an extremely vivid mode of expression and for the most part belong to colloquial language, indeed often even to the sphere of a coarse way of speaking' (Görner 1979:10). The fact that idioms tend to be rather informal and colloquial in style, tone, and register serves to heighten the familiar, relaxed atmosphere the advertiser strives to create.

2.4.2.5 Imitating speech

Because of their conciseness, familiarity, and informality idioms are typical features of everyday speech. As a result many advertisements use idioms in an attempt to emulate the relaxed, friendly style of spoken communication, following the premise

that "colloquial [language] better serves those who communicate to the public at large" (Geis 1982:123). People are more likely to respond favourably to a suggestion ("buy this product") put to them in language and a style of communication which they are familiar and comfortable with. For this reason there is a "tendency in advertisements to return to pre- or quasi-literate forms of communication" (Cook 1992:55). In television advertisements in particular, there is an obvious preference for the use of song and speech, rather than writing, to convey a message. "There is certainly an intentional transfer of the spoken mode to the written mode" (Leech 1966:63), primarily because speech represents a faster and more personal way of conveying information than writing. Indeed, advertisements in general may be perceived as a kind of "secondary orality" since, even when printed, they imitate personal, spoken communication (Cook 1992:24).

Yet the language of advertisements, whether written or spoken, is not actually impromptu, informal communication.

In der Umgangssprache machen wir uns naturgemäß keine Gedanken darüber, ob die Wörter, die wir verwenden, passend oder unpassend, richtig oder falsch sind, wenn sie nur ungefähr das ausdrücken, was gemeint ist. Anders liegt es beim Geschriebenen und Gedruckten.

With colloquial language we naturally do not give much thought as to whether the words that we use are suitable or unsuitable, right or wrong, when they just express roughly what is meant. It is different with writing and print. (Hartwig 1974:128.)

Both writing and speech in advertisements have been carefully considered and deliberately constructed:

Die Sprache der Werbung [ist] nie ein Produkt spontaner Redeäußerung, sondern das Ergebnis einer mehrwöchigen bis mehrmonatigen Planung. ... Auch gesprochene Texte in Radio- oder Fernsehwerbung sind immer Produkt langwieriger und kostspieliger Vorarbeiten.

The language of advertising is never the product of spontaneously spoken remarks, but is rather the result of several weeks' or several months' planning. ... Even spoken texts in radio or television advertising are the products of lengthy and costly groundwork. (Hemmi 1994:26.)

All speech in advertisements has at some point been scripted and recorded on paper: "die Sprache der Werbung ist an das Papier gebunden; sie hat keine

Sprechwirklichkeit" 'the language of advertising is bound to paper; it is not realistic speech' (Grosse 1966:79). Be that as it may, several techniques can be used to help spoken language in advertisements echo actual speech as authentically as possible. Scripted speech may contain pauses, hesitations, repetition, and *prosiopesis*.²⁰ Dialogue in advertisements, like spontaneous conversation, involves the speakers taking turns, and follows a logical thematic progression, often incorporating interruptions and interjections. "Paralanguage" refers to "the aspects of communication that surround and support our verbal communication" (Goddard 1998:15), or to "the meaningful behaviour accompanying language" (Cook 1992:60). Paralinguistic features such as gesture, facial expressions, modifications in voice pitch and intonation, and changes in the conversation pace and volume are a common way of making scripted speech sound like natural speech. Writing uses its own type of paralanguage to try to recreate the features of spoken language, namely incomplete sentences, and punctuation like exclamation and question marks. A certain font may also symbolise an aspect of spoken communication. For example, a child's speech patterns may be evoked by a font which looks like childish handwriting. Regional accents are often conveyed by a phonetic spelling of words.

It is important to note that language does not simply involve the straightforward dichotomy of speech and writing. The various spoken and written forms may be differentiated in terms of the degree of thought or "planning" behind them. "More planned writing" is typified by legal documents, while "less planned writing" describes informal communication such as e-mails. "Less planned speech" includes informal chats, whereas "more planned speech" encompasses scripts and speeches (Goddard 1998:49). Advertising in general is based on meticulous planning. Magazine advertisements epitomise "more planned writing", while television advertisements comprise mainly "more planned speech", with elements of "more planned writing". However, advertisements continually strive to achieve the style and tone of "less planned" communication by incorporating features of informal, spontaneous speech. "Less planned" writing and speech seem more familiar and friendly, and therefore appeal more effectively to the reader/viewer of an

²⁰ The term "*prosiopesis*" was coined by Jespersen to describe the peculiarity of speech whereby a person "begins to articulate, but produces no audible sound until one or two syllables after the beginning of what he intended to say" (Jespersen 1924:310), for instance asking "v'you found it?" instead of "have you found it?".

advertisement. In order to give the impression of being "less planned" messages, print and broadcast advertisements frequently imitate spoken communication by incorporating actual speech (i.e. scripted monologues and dialogues) into the general text, and by reproducing the intimate, relaxed style of speech. Accordingly, the incorporation of idioms into scripted speech in advertisements helps it to sound more authentic, while the use of idioms throughout the (spoken and written) copy renders the style and tone of the whole advertisement more natural, accessible, and appealing.

2.4.2.6 Concrete language for abstract concepts

As discussed in the general introduction, idioms tend to comprise literal, concrete language, which is used figuratively to express abstract concepts. Abstract ideas are generally much more difficult to grasp and define than the concepts of concrete, tangible objects:

Ein Stuhl ist ein Stuhl, darüber braucht man nicht lange nachzudenken, aber was Schönheit ist, oder Fortschritt, darüber kann man sehr verschiedener Meinung sein, und solche Begriffe wecken höchst unterschiedliche Gefühle.

A chair is a chair, one does not need to think about it for very long, but one can hold very different views on what beauty or progress is, and such concepts evoke highly variable feelings. (Hartwig 1974:45.)

Understanding abstract ideas and philosophical language thus requires extra mental processing effort, which may lead the indifferent and uninterested reader/viewer to simply ignore advertisements containing complex concepts and language. By using idioms, however, the advertiser is able to express potentially complex concepts in simple, concrete language which is understood by everyone, thereby alienating fewer potential customers. Furthermore, concrete phrases are better remembered than abstract phrases (Kusyszyn and Paivio 1966, discussed in Richardson 1980:101ff), meaning that idioms incorporated into an advertisement help to increase the memorability of the text.

2.4.2.7 Summarising and eliciting agreement

A further important function of idioms in adese is "Schlußfolgerung" 'conclusion', since many idioms provide a means of signalling "thematische Geschlossenheit" 'thematic unity' or 'thematic completion' (Sabban 1998b:284). Drew and Holt carried out an analysis of telephone conversations in English between friends and family members, and found that idioms are repeatedly used to "summarise and hence terminate the topic about which the speakers have thus far been talking" (Drew and Holt 1995:119). In an informal speech situation speakers incorporate idioms into their conversation to indicate that they are "giving their assessments of what has been talked about", and to emphasise that "they are no longer offering further information" (Drew and Holt 1995:125). Idioms are hence the key element in "the topic termination/transition sequence", in which "the topic of conversation thus far is thereby brought to an end, and a new topic is subsequently introduced" (Drew and Holt 1995:120). Although non-idiomatic expressions may also allow speakers to summarise, close, and change a conversation topic, "certain characteristics of idioms render them particularly adept at fulfilling this role" (Drew and Holt 1995:126). For instance, there is a "special vividness associated with the meanings that idioms have" (Chafe 1968:125), which renders them particularly emphatic. Moreover, idioms are set phrases which tend to incorporate roughly the same words in approximately the same order every time they are used. As a result, idioms are often perceived as clichéd expressions, and therefore present an especially effective means of signalling that the speaker has no new information to offer on the subject.

Perhaps even more relevant to the analysis of idioms in adese is Drew and Holt's finding that in conversations an idiom frequently acts as "a device through which a participant brings a topic to a close or attempts to do so, in circumstances where he or she may doubt the alignment or affiliation of the other [participant]" (Drew and Holt 1995:131). Advertisers must overcome widespread scepticism – and even open hostility – from the general public in order to communicate their message persuasively. Idioms are particularly effective at overcoming opposition because:

Redensarten sind formelhafte Ideologien, die genau deshalb unbedacht und unbesehen akzeptiert werden. ... Konventionell gefestigte Sprachformen [bieten] offenbar Selbstverständlichkeiten in einfachster Weise [dar] und daher können mit allgemeinem Einverständnis rechnen.

Idioms are stereotyped ideologies, which for precisely this reason are accepted unthinkingly and indiscriminately. ... Conventionally established language forms [present] apparently self-evident truths in the simplest way and therefore can reckon on general acceptance. (Grassegger 1989:143.)

Put simply, "Redensarten als formelhafte Ideologiewiedergabe ersparen Argumentation und geben Handlungsanweisungen" 'idioms as formulaic representations of ideology save on argumentation and provide recommendations for behaviour' (Wotjak 1992:169). For this reason speakers, sensing that their conversation partners do not share their opinions, may use "multiple idioms to finally elicit agreement" (Drew and Holt 1995:130). Idioms in advertisements thus serve as "an intersubjectively available interactional device for topic termination" (Drew and Holt 1995:125), and perform "eine Einverständnisherstellungs- und -bestätigungsfunktion" 'the function of producing and confirming agreement' (Grassegger 1989:143).

2.4.2.8 Providing mental imagery

A key reason for the use of idioms in advertising is the fact that many idioms evoke specific mental images, which are simply the mental pictures associated with an idiomatic expression. It has been shown that "mental imagery seems to facilitate acquisition and retention of verbal material" (Hoffman and Honeck 1980:11; see also Paivio 1986). Thus idioms, as linguistic expressions stimulating the production of mental imagery, encourage recall of the phrase in which they occur, and subsequently (ideally) of the whole advertisement and the brand featured. Often, where an idiom is used to summarise a fundamental idea of the advertisement, the mental image of this idiom may be illustrated and expanded upon in the advertisement's visuals (see chapter 5). Some print advertising contains few or no visuals, perhaps because of space or budget constraints. Idioms evoking mental images are therefore particularly important in such advertisements to inject some kind of imagery into the advertisement, and to subsequently increase memorability of the advertisement message:

When a visual image is used as a "memory peg" for the message, a person's retention of the ideas associated with the visual is significantly higher than it is if the verbal information is presented alone. (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:293.)

Mental imagery is explored further in chapter 3, while chapter 4 looks at the interpretation of idioms in the brain.

2.4.2.9 Allowing wordplay

If the national stereotypes are to be believed, "German consumers like their advertising to be straightforward, factual and informative" (White 1993:218). Supposedly, "the British like humour, especially irony and puns. But you have to change this for the Germans and the Swedes, who say that they don't buy from clowns" (Simon Anholt, a multi-lingual copywriter, quoted in Tanaka 1994:62). This is, however, an untrue, sweeping generalisation. German advertising, like advertising in any language and from any nation, may be instructive and serious, but can also be inventive, creative, and full of witty wordplay. Wordplay with idioms involves lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic modification. Modified idioms in advertisements perform essential functions: they heighten the sense of informality and familiarity; create the effects of surprise and humour; and increase the memorability of the advertisement. The initial "Überraschungseffekt" 'effect of surprise' (Hemmi 1994:218) experienced when a modified idiom is perceived catches the reader/viewer's attention and heightens his or her interest in the rest of the advertisement. Surprise then leads "zum berühmten Aha-Erlebnis, zum befreienden Lachen des plötzlichen Verstehens" 'to the famous "Aha"-experience, the liberating laugh of sudden understanding' (Hemmi 1994:218). Indeed, "man soll nie vergessen, daß die Gesellschaft lieber unterhalten als unterrichtet sein will" 'one should never forget that society would rather be entertained than lectured' (Hartwig 1974:95), and:

da humorvolle Werbetexte besser gefallen, wird zusätzlich die Bereitschaft gesteigert, die Werbebotschaft mehrmals bewusst wahrzunehmen und sich einzuprägen.

since humorous advertising texts are more enjoyable, the likelihood is also increased of the advertising message being consciously perceived and making an impression many times over. (Hemmi 1994:218.)

Idioms are especially suited to modification and wordplay since "die Polylexikalität ist ein Appell an die Fragmentierung, die Fixiertheit an die Variabilität, die Figuriertheit an die Literalisierung" 'their polylexicality invites fragmentation [into their different meanings], their fixedness invites variation, their figurativeness invites literalisation' (Gréciano 1987:196). In other words, the very features which define a phrase as an idiom (i.e. its literal and figurative meanings, and its lexemic and syntactic rigidity) are the features which can be manipulated most effectively as wordplay. Punning on idioms in advertisements often involves the activation of an idiom's literal meaning, with language alone or else through a skilful interaction of the text and the picture (see chapter 5). The use of creatively modified idioms in advertising is particularly effective, since "nirgends ist Neues nötiger als in der Werbung" 'nowhere is novelty more important than in advertising' (Hartwig 1974:23).

2.4.3 The modification of idioms

Burger points out that:

Für große Teile der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur, wie auch für *die Sprache der Werbung* und bestimmte Bereiche der Presse, scheint es charakteristisch zu sein, daß Idiome ‚gebrochen‘, verfremdet, leicht abgewandelt werden.

It seems to be characteristic of a large proportion of modern literature in German, as well as of *the language of advertising* and certain areas of the press, that idioms are 'broken', used in an unusual way, and slightly modified. (Burger 1973:97, my emphasis.)

Especially prevalent are advertising "Schlagzeilen und Slogans, die im Sprachschatz vorhandene Redewendungen in Werbeparolen ummünzen" 'headlines and slogans which re-coin idioms existing in the vocabulary into advertising catchphrases' (Hartwig 1974:123).

2.4.3.1 How idioms are modified

The modification of idioms is possible because "manche Phraseologismen [haben] einen „harten Kern“ und eine „weiche Peripherie“" 'many idioms have a "hard core"

and a "weak periphery" (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:68). For this reason an idiom may still be recognised and understood even when changed syntactically and/or semantically. Sometimes modifications to an idiom allow it to better fit the specific context in which it occurs; other times modifications are made deliberately for creative effect. With this in mind, Burger, Buhofer and Sialm draw a distinction between "Varianten" 'variants' and "Modifikationen" 'modifications' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:68ff). While variants evolve from the alteration of an idiom's syntax and/or semantics, "ihre Abweichungen vom konventionalisierten Gebrauch [kommen] nicht durch bestimmte stilistische Intentionen zustande" 'their deviations from the conventional usage do not occur due to stylistic intentions' (Hemmi 1994:45). Modifications, on the other hand, entail the deliberate modification of an idiom on a specific occasion by a particular person with a specific stylistic effect in mind.

Dobrovol'skij categorises three different types of idiom modification: "standardmäßige Modifikationen" 'standard modifications', equivalent to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Variationen"; "kreative Modifikationen" 'creative modifications', comparable to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Modifikationen"; and "fehlerhafte Abweichungen vom Standard" 'incorrect deviations from the standard' (Dobrovol'skij 2001:273). There is great leeway for the lexical, syntactic, and semantic modification of an idiom: "In Redewendungen sind grammatikalische Fehler akzeptiert, Wortruinen und inhaltliche Verbindungen sind hier oft zu finden, die in der „normalen“ Sprache völlig nichtssagend sind" 'in idioms grammatical mistakes are accepted; ruined words and context links which are completely meaningless in "normal" language are often found here' (*Redewendungen*1). Nevertheless, the alteration of an idiom may be deemed "fehlerhaft" 'incorrect' if a set phrase is changed in a way which seems unnatural or fundamentally wrong to a native speaker.

As regards the standard modification of idioms, the main types of modifications are: "strukturelle Varianten" 'structural variants'; "strukturelle Synonymie/Antonymie" 'structural synonymy/antonymy'; "phraseologische Serien" 'phraseological series'; and "Konversiven" 'conversives' (Dobrovol'skij 1988:161ff). A structural variant would be *jmdm. kein Haar/Härchen krümmen* [lit. 'to bend not a hair/tiny hair on someone'] ≈ 'to not harm a hair/even the smallest hair on someone's head'. *Jmdn. zum Besten haben/halten* [lit. 'to have/hold someone for the best'] 'to tease someone, especially by telling them something which is not true', similar in

sense to the English idioms "to pull someone's leg" and "to wind someone up", and *auf dem aufsteigenden/absteigenden Ast sitzen* [lit. 'to sit on the rising/descending branch] 'to become more/less successful', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be on the way up/down", are examples of structural synonymy and antonymy respectively. Phraseological series are modifications of the type *ein lockerer/lustiger/komischer Vogel* [lit. 'a relaxed/merry/funny bird'] meaning 'a lively character' with the first two adjectives, and 'an odd character' when "komisch" is used. Conversives involve the substitution of similar "neutrale" 'neutral' verbs (Dobrovolskij 1988:173), as is the case with *unter Dach und Fach sein/bringen/kommen* [lit. 'to be/bring/come under roof and compartment'] 'to be completed successfully', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be signed and sealed". In contrast, the creative modifications of idioms can take basically any form. To be properly understood and appreciated, however, they must be recognised by the message receiver as a deliberate modification by the message sender:

Der abgewandelte Phraseologismus muß bekannt sein (Sprachkompetenz), das „Abwandeln“ darf nur so geschehen, daß das Abgewandelte noch erkennbar bleibt ... Weiter muß die Abwandlung so gestaltet sein, daß sie im Kontext einen Sinn ergibt; ihre Absichtlichkeit muß erkennbar sein.

The modified idiom must be familiar (language competence), the "modification" may only occur so that the modified idiom remains recognisable ... Furthermore, the modification must be carried out in a way that results in a meaning in context; its intentionality must be recognised. (Sandig 1986:142.)

The fundamental method of categorising idiom modification as "fehlerhaft, kreativ oder standardmäßig" is in fact the "„projizierte Intention“ des Sprechers" 'the "projected intention" of the speaker' (Dobrovolskij 2001:273).

Turning now to actual examples of the lexical, syntactic, and semantic modification of idioms, "es gibt kaum eine Veränderung eines Phraseologismus, die in irgendeinem Kontext nicht möglich und durchaus sinnvoll wäre" 'there is hardly a single modification of an idiom which would not be possible and perfectly meaningful in some context or other' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:68). Burger, Buhofer and Sialm provide a comprehensive list of the fourteen main "Modifikationstypen" 'modification types' which idioms may undergo (1982:68-91):

- 1) "Lexikalische Substitution" 'lexical substitution'
- 2) "Hinzufügung eines Adjektivs" 'addition of an adjective'
- 3) "Determinativkomposition" 'determinative compound'
- 4) "Hinzufügung eines Genitivattributs" 'addition of a genitive attribute'
- 5) "Abtrennung" 'separation'
- 6) "Verkürzungen" 'contractions'
- 7) "Koordinierung" 'co-ordination'
- 8) "Wechsel Affirmation ↔ Negation" 'affirmation ↔ negation change'
- 9) "Verweise im Kontext" 'reference in the context'
- 10) "Verletzung der semantischen Selektionsbedingungen" 'violation of the semantic selectional constraints'
- 11) "Verletzung der textlinguistischen Bedingungen" 'violation of the text-linguistic requirements'
- 12) "Häufung, Kontamination, Katachrese" 'accumulation, contamination, catachresis'
- 13) "Metasprachliche Kommentierung" 'metalinguistic commentary'
- 14) "Phraseologismus als textstrukturierendes Prinzip" 'idiom as text-structuring principle'

Lexical substitution in idioms may refer to standard modification like the replacement of a semantically neutral verb with a more descriptive verb, such as when "bleiben" is substituted for "sein" in the idiom *auf der Lauer sein* 'to lie in wait', producing *auf der Lauer bleiben* 'to remain lying in wait'. Lexical substitution may also entail more creative modification. As illustration, instead of the idiom *ein Herz und eine Seele sein* [lit. 'to be one heart and one soul'] 'to be the best of friends' or 'to have the same ideas and opinions', similar to the English idiom "to be of one heart and mind", Brecht offers:

Wir haben eine Vergangenheit und eine Zukunft
Ein Herz und ein Sparkassenbuch
Und jede macht nur, was für die andere gut ist,
Nicht wahr, Anna?

We have a past and a future
A heart and a savings book
And each of us does only what is good for the other,
Isn't that true, Anna?
(Brecht, *Gedichte III*:135, quoted in Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:71; my emphasis.)

The addition of an adjective involves idioms which are modified to provide further information and increased vividness, such as *mit dem politischen Feuer spielen* 'to play with political fire', i.e. to behave in a risky way as regards politics, and *ein besorgtes Auge auf jmdn. werfen* [lit. 'to throw a worried eye at someone'] 'to glance

worriedly at someone'. Determinative compounds are also formed by a lexical addition to an existing idiom, but in this case a compound noun is formed, for example *mit allen Fußballwassern gewaschen sein* [lit. 'to be washed with all the football-waters'] 'to be very knowledgeable and canny with regard to football', and *jmdm. einen Strich durch die Wahlrechnung machen* [lit. 'to put a line through someone's election-account'] 'to ruin someone's election plans'. Similarly, the addition of a genitive attribute relates to extending an existing idiom, but here a noun phrase in the genitive is added, as exemplified by the newspaper headline "*Träume einer internationalen Entspannung sind Schäume*" [lit. 'dreams of an international relaxation are foam'] 'dreams of an international détente have come to nothing'.

The separation of the component words of an idiom serves the purpose of emphasising a particular part of the expression. For instance, *sein Kreuz tragen* ≈ 'to bear one's cross' may appear as *das Kreuz, das ich trage*, i.e. to bear one's own emotional burden, to convey the sense 'the (particular) cross which I bear'. Whereas separation entails rearranging the component parts of an idiom and thereby lengthening the set phrase, contraction describes truncated idioms. Contractions are particularly common in journalistic headlines and advertising slogans, where brevity and conciseness is essential. Examples include the newspaper headlines: "*Wasser auf die Mühle der IRA*" 'grist to the IRA mill' (or perhaps even 'ammunition for the IRA', used figuratively), where the verb is simply omitted (from the idiom *Wasser auf jmds. Mühle sein* [lit. 'to be water on someone's mill'] 'to be something which can be turned to someone's advantage', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be grist to someone's mill"); and "*Währungsreform auf der langen Bank*" 'currency reform [takes] a back seat' (from the idiom *etw. auf die lange Bank schieben* [lit. 'to push something onto the long bench'] 'to put something off').

Co-ordination refers to the co-ordination of "partiell identischer Phraseologismen mit Tilgung der identischen Elemente" 'partially identical idioms with deletion of the identical elements' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:78). For example, the sentence "*Er hat ein Auge auf Emma und die Flinte ins Korn geworfen*" 'he glanced at Emma and threw in the towel' involves a co-ordination of the two idioms *ein Auge auf jmdn. werfen* [lit. 'to throw an eye at someone'] 'to glance at someone' and *die Flinte ins Korn werfen* [lit. 'to throw the shotgun into the corn'] 'to give up', similar in sense to the English idioms "to throw in the towel", or "to lose your nerve". The verb "werfen" 'to throw' is common to both idioms, so is omitted in

the first idiom. (Unfortunately, the humorous effect of this particular co-ordination is lost in translation, since the near-equivalent English idioms require two different verbs, "to glance at someone/something" and "to throw something".)

With an affirmation ↔ negation change an idiom which is normally positive is made negative, or vice-versa. As illustration, the proverb *einem geschenkten Gaul sieht/schaut/guckt man nicht ins Maul* [lit. 'one doesn't look a nag which has been received as a present in the mouth'] ≈ 'never look a gift horse in the mouth', i.e. accept something unquestioningly and gratefully, may become *er sieht dem geschenkten Gaul sehr genau ins Maul* 'he looks right into the gift horse's mouth'.

Reference in the context pertains to an idiom in context, where Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) use the term "Kontext" 'context' to refer to both the linguistic co-text and the non-linguistic context. The basic structure of the idiom is rarely changed (and any alterations involve standard modifications), but the idiom's semantics are modified when the idiom is related to the surrounding co-text and context. For example, an advertisement for Lux soap claims that "Das ungeschminkte Gesicht eines Stars sagt die ungeschminkte Wahrheit über Lux mit Feuchtigkeitscreme" 'the makeup-free face of a star tells the unvarnished truth [lit. 'the makeup-free truth'] about Lux with moisturiser'. "Ungeschminkte" 'makeup-free' possesses a more figurative sense ('unvarnished, unembellished') as a component of the idiom *die ungeschminkte Wahrheit*, but because the literal interpretation of the adjective ('makeup-free') also occurs earlier in the text, both the literal and figurative senses of "ungeschminkte" ('makeup-free' and 'unembellished' respectively) are evoked by the subsequent use of the idiom. The idiom therefore seems tailor-made for the subject of the whole text. Similarly, an advertisement for cheese slices explains "wie sich *ein armes Würstchen* in einen herzhaften Imbiß verwandelt" 'how a poor little sausage transforms itself into a hearty snack' (i.e. by adding a cheese slice and a bread roll). The idiom *ein armes Würstchen* is normally used figuratively in the sense of 'a poor soul', but here the literal interpretation ('a poor little sausage') is emphasised by the co-text (i.e. the reference to an "Imbiß" 'snack') and context (i.e. the photograph of a sausage as the key visual of the advertisement). A pun on both the literal and figurative senses of the idiom is thereby created, adding humour to the advertisement. Modifications of the type reference in context are looked at in detail in chapter 5, with regard in particular to how an idiom's literal meaning may be activated by an advertisement's visuals.

Violation of the semantic selectional requirements concerns an abuse of an idiom's semantic restrictions, as is the case with the advertising slogan for a Minolta photocopier: "Der Kopierer, der *aus einer Mücke einen Elefanten macht*" 'the photocopier which makes a mountain out of a molehill'. The use of this particular idiom (perhaps more in its literal than its figurative sense) alludes to the photocopier's facility for producing an enlarged copy. However, the idiom *aus einer Mücke einen Elefanten machen* [lit. 'to make an elephant out of a mosquito'] 'to make a big deal out of something unimportant', similar in sense to the English idiom "to make a mountain out of a molehill", normally takes a human subject. For this reason this particular modification to the idiom is a violation of the phrase's semantic selectional restrictions, but using "der Kopierer" 'the photocopier' as the subject personifies the photocopier, thereby making the product more appealing to the consumer. In contrast, violation of the text-linguistic requirements involves idioms which undergo a:

Herauslösen aus dem textuellen oder situationellen Zusammenhang, in den sie normalerweise eingebettet sind, eventuell Hineinstellen in einen textlinguistisch bzw. pragmatisch „unsinnigen“ Zusammenhang.

removal from the textual or situational context in which they are normally embedded, and perhaps even insertion into a text-linguistically or pragmatically "nonsensical" context. (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:86.)

For instance, the set phrase "siehe oben" 'see above' (i.e. 'refer back to something written previously') tends to appear only in written texts, and would thus sound unusual if uttered in a conversation or speech by a speaker wishing to refer again to a point already made. Such a use of "siehe oben" in spoken German would consequently be termed a violation of the text-linguistic requirements.

The category accumulation, contamination, catachresis in fact describes three different types of idiom modification. Accumulation does not entail the actual syntactic or semantic modification of individual idioms, but rather is applied to a text which contains an accumulation of various idioms. Idiom accumulation is considered to be a kind of modification because it renders a text stylistically marked, in that a particular style and tone (e.g. an informal style and a humorous tone) is created by the abundance of idioms. With contamination two distinct idioms are fused together to form one new expression, as has happened with *aus der Reihe fallen* [lit. 'to fall out of the row']. *Aus der Reihe fallen* derives from the idioms *aus der Reihe tanzen* [lit. 'to

dance out of the row'] 'to not fit in with the norm' (similar in sense to the English idioms "to march to a different drum" or "to dance to a different beat"), and *aus dem Rahmen fallen* [lit. 'to fall out of the framework'] 'to be different'. *Aus der Reihe fallen* combines both the senses of its two component idioms to produce an intensified meaning like 'to be extremely different'. Idiom contamination may result from either incorrect modification (i.e. the speaker simply confuses two idioms), or creative modification. Catachresis involves "ein „Bildbruch“" 'an "image violation"' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:86), as highlighted by the sentence "ein Kopf kann erst frei denken, wenn er nicht mehr *alle Hände voll zu tun hat*" 'the head can only think freely when it no longer has its hands full'. Because another body part is mentioned first ("Kopf" 'head'), the literal sense of "Hände" 'hands' is evoked. Thus the mental picture conjured up by this particular sentence is of a head with hands, which is a bizarre image. As a result, the idiom *alle Hände voll zu tun haben* [lit. 'to have all hands full to do'] 'to be very busy' (similar in sense to the English idiom "to have one's hands full") sounds strange and perhaps even incorrect in this context because "ein Kopf" does not actually have "Hände". Thus, like contamination, catachresis may be either incorrect idiom modification, or creative modification in so far as a particular stylistic effect is achieved (e.g. humour or the personification of an object).

Metalinguistic commentary relates to certain words and phrases – or indeed to graphological features such as italicised font and quotation marks – which are included in a text in order to underline the deliberate use or modification of an idiom. Such metacommunicative words and symbols may be termed "Indikatoren" 'indicators' (Wotjak 1992:126). Examples of such indicators include: "wie man so (schön) sagt" 'as the saying goes' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:89); "berühmt" 'famous' (e.g. "*die berühmte Stecknadel im Heuhaufen suchen*" 'to look for the proverbial/famous needle in the haystack', i.e. to look for something which is extremely difficult or impossible to find); and "salopp gesagt" 'as they say in slang' (e.g. the rather crude "*ihm ging, salopp gesagt, der Arsch mit Grundeis*" [lit. 'his backside went with ground-ice'] 'to put it crudely, he was scared shitless'). In the case of idioms with both literal and figurative senses indicators may help to clear up any possible confusion between the two possible interpretations, or to highlight one particular sense (usually the literal) in order to emphasise a pun. The literal interpretation is stressed with indicators such as: "im wahrsten Sinne (des Wortes)" 'in the truest sense (of the word)'; "wörtlich (genommen)" '(taken) literally'; and

"buchstäblich" 'literally', e.g. "dem Skifahrer buchstäblich *Steine in den Weg legen*" [lit. 'to literally put stones in the path of the skier'] 'to literally put obstacles in the skier's path'. Meanwhile, indicators like "im übertragenen Sinne" 'in the figurative sense', "sprichwörtlich" 'proverbial' e.g. "*ein sprichwörtlicher Elefant im Porzellanladen*" ≈ 'a proverbial bull [lit. 'elephant'] in the china shop', i.e. a clumsy or tactless person, and "im sprichwörtlichen Sinne" 'in the proverbial sense' emphasise the figurative meaning of idioms with several interpretations. (All examples of indicators from Wotjak 1992:126-133 unless otherwise stated.)

Finally, in extreme cases a text may be seen to "aus einem Phraseologismus ganze Textabschnitte oder gar ganze abgeschlossene Texte zu „entwickeln“" "develop" an entire section of text or even entire self-contained texts from one idiom' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:90). On this occasion the type of modification relates not to the idiom itself, but instead to the way in which the idiom determines the style and content of the rest of the text. This kind of idiom modification is hence termed "Phraseologismus als textstrukturierendes Prinzip" 'idiom as text-structuring principle'.

Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) categorisation of the types of modification idioms which are subjected to serves as the basis for Wotjak's (1992) classification. Wotjak, however, clearly discriminates between modifications to an idiom's "wendungsintern" 'internal phrase' and "wendungsextern" 'external phrase' components, i.e. between alterations to the syntax and/or semantics of the idiom itself, and changes to the linguistic co-text and non-linguistic context surrounding the idiom. Her classification (1992:134-159) of the ten different types of "wendungsintern" modifications to idioms comprises:

- 1) "Substitution" 'substitution'
- 2) "Expansion" 'expansion'
- 3) "Reduktion" 'reduction'
- 4) "grammatische Modifikationen" 'grammatical modifications'
- 5) "Wechsel von Negation ↔ Affirmation" 'negation ↔ affirmation change'
- 6) "Abtrennung" 'separation'
- 7) "Koordinierung von identischen Elementen" 'co-ordination of identical elements'
- 8) "Wortspielerische Verschmelzung/Kontamination von Phraseologismen" 'fusion/contamination of idioms as wordplay'
- 9) "Ersetzen von Nonverbalem durch Verbales" 'replacement of nonverbal with verbal'

10) "Ersetzen/Ergänzen von Verbalem durch Nonverbales" 'replacement/supplementation of verbal with nonverbal'

Substitution involves the substitution of one idiom component for another, and is thus equivalent to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) category of "Lexikalische Substitution". Expansion concerns the addition of a new lexical component to an idiom, and accordingly serves as a more general category combining Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Hinzufügung eines Adjektivs", "Determinativkomposition", and "Hinzufügung eines Genitivattributs". Reduction pertains to the removal of an idiom component, and is therefore similar to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) concept of "Verkürzungen". The fusion or contamination of idioms as wordplay conveys Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) concept of idiom modification through "Kontamination", but with the added distinction that these modifications are for creative reasons, namely wordplay. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) modification types termed "Wechsel Affirmation ↔ Negation", "Abtrennung", and "Koordinierung" are incorporated directly into Wotjak's (1992) classification.

Wotjak (1992) adds three new categories of internal idiom modification to her categorisation. Grammatical modifications cover minor grammatical alterations such as: changes from singular to plural, and vice-versa, e.g. *ein starkes Stück* [lit. 'a strong piece'] 'an outrage/impudence' becomes *starke Stücke* 'outrages'; and from definite to indefinite articles and vice-versa, or even the omission of an article altogether, e.g. *jmdn./etw. in den Dreck ziehen* ≈ 'to drag someone/something through the mud', i.e. to say something bad about someone/something, becomes *jmdn./etw. in einen Dreck ziehen* with the approximate sense 'to drag someone/something through a spot of mud'. Further types of grammatical modifications include: the formation of diminutives, e.g. *den Stab über jmdn. brechen* [lit. 'to break the rod over someone'] 'to condemn someone' becomes *das Stäbchen über jmdn. brechen* [lit. 'to break the little rod over someone'] with the milder sense 'to tick someone off'; nominalization, e.g. *mit jmdm. Pferde stehlen können* [lit. 'to be able to steal horses with someone'] 'to be able to have great fun with someone' appeared as "*Partner zum Pferdestehlen gesucht*" 'Wanted: partner for fun and games' in a personal column in a German newspaper (quoted in Wotjak 1992:151); and "Steigerung" 'intensification' through the use of comparatives and superlatives, e.g. *eine glückliche Hand haben* [lit. 'to have

a lucky hand'] 'to be lucky' becomes *die glücklichste Hand haben* 'to be the luckiest' (all examples from Wotjak 1992:149-151).

The replacement of the nonverbal with the verbal refers to the modification of an idiom containing nonverbal components in order to allow it to appear in writing. For example, the idiom *mir steht's bis hier* [lit. 'it stands to me up to here'] ≈ 'I've had it up to here', i.e. to have had enough of something, is usually accompanied by the gesture where the hand is held flat, level with the face, to signal "hier" 'here'. When writing this idiom, instead of gesture a phrase like *mir steht's bis zur Nase/zum Hals* ≈ 'I've had it up to the eyeballs [lit. nose/throat]' must represent "hier". Conversely, where the replacement or supplementation of the verbal with the nonverbal occurs, a nonverbal item (namely a picture) replaces, contradicts, or reinforces an idiom (component). For instance, in order to mark the closing-down of a popular German restaurant, *Eule* magazine published a photograph of a spoon with the caption "Für immer abgegeben" 'given up forever'. The photograph represents the idea of "ein Löffel", so the text and the picture combine together to form the idiom *den Löffel abgeben* [lit. 'to give up the spoon'] 'to die' (Wotjak 1992:157).²¹ The literal sense of the idiom seems particularly apt to describe the closing of a restaurant, and thereby creates a pun. In a different example, a cartoon with the caption "Wir haben den Urlaub in vollen Zügen genossen" 'we thoroughly enjoyed our holiday' depicts a family in holiday clothes squashed into a train crammed with people (Wotjak 1992:156). Here, the drawing (i.e. the nonverbal) supplements the textual meaning by evoking the literal sense of the idiom *etw. in vollen Zügen genießen* [lit. 'to enjoy something in full trains'] 'to really enjoy something'.²² In short, the replacement or supplementation of the verbal with the nonverbal relates to the modification of (the semantics of) an idiom by its surrounding (non-linguistic) context, and for this reason may be regarded as corresponding to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Verweise im Kontext". However, it is important to note that the category "Verweise im

²¹ This is in fact a perfect example of Barthes's (1977) concept of the "relay" relationship between text and picture, where the language and picture work together to convey the overall meaning of the text (cf. section 2.2.7).

²² This example illustrates Barthes's (1977) concept of the "anchorage" relationship between text and picture. The picture guides the reader towards a specific interpretation (here the literal sense) of the text (cf. again section 2.2.7).

Kontext" is a broader category as it also includes the modification of idioms through the accompanying (linguistic) co-text.

With regard to external modifications, Wotjak (1992) considers Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) categories of "Häufung", "Metasprachliche Kommentierung", and "Phraseologismus als textstrukturierendes Prinzip" to all be types of alterations to an idiom's external components, i.e. to an idiom's co-text and context.

2.4.3.2 Why idioms are modified in advertising

The question arises: why exactly are idioms modified in advertisements? Helson's (1959) "Adaption Level Theory" states that "people become so habituated to a stimulus that it is no longer noticed" (quoted in Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:368). Because advertisements promote relatively few new products, and tend eventually to become over-exposed when seen too often, the consumer's "adaption level" is met comparatively quickly. People simply become used to – and eventually bored of – an advertisement, and therefore ignore it. Magazine readers often give advertisements only a cursory glance before flicking past them. Similarly, television viewers are prone to "zapping" the television with the remote control to change the channel when the ad break starts, to "grazing" or sampling bits of different programmes on other channels until the ad break is over, and to "zipping" or fast-forwarding through the ad breaks on video-recorded programmes (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992:238). The principle solution to avoiding the alienation of potential customers is to "include stimuli within an ad that deviate from the consumer's adaption level" (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:369). The modification of an idiom in a key phrase in an advertisement, such as the headline or the slogan, is one such way of injecting originality into an advertisement.

Modified idioms help to pique the reader/viewer's interest since "if an ad departs from expectation it will attract attention" (Cook 1992:222). As regards advertising language in general, "die Diktion ist herausfordernder geworden, oft witzig und gern auf irgendeinen Überraschungseffekt bedacht, der die Aufmerksamkeit erweckt" 'the style has become more provocative, often humorous and frequently geared towards some surprise effect that grabs the attention' (Grosse 1966:80). Modified idioms, particularly when used as puns, attract attention because

they frustrate initial expectations, and subsequently inject the elements of surprise and humour into a text. "One way of provoking the consumer's attention and curiosity is to present him with something surprising and unexpected, and this can be done as well by the unorthodox use of language as by any other means" (Leech 1966:27). Idiom modification is the epitome of "the unorthodox use of language" as it involves the manipulation of expressions which are by definition set phrases.

Advertisers also incorporate modified idioms into texts in order to achieve certain effects on the reader/viewer of an advertisement. Firstly, the conscious manipulation of standard set phrases helps to deflect the consumer's attention away from the message content to the message form of an advertisement. Secondly, when manipulating idioms, especially to create puns, the advertiser must make assumptions about the reader/viewer's general knowledge, as well as about his or her cognitive and linguistic capabilities. In this way, the advertiser establishes a bond with his audience by attempting to signal "Gemeinsamkeit in der Interaktion" 'common ground in the interaction' (Sabban 1998b:359). The advertiser stimulates the consumer's interest, while flattering the reader/viewer by presuming that he or she will notice – and, more importantly, understand – the reason for the modification of the idiom, or joke behind the idiom as a pun. By presenting himself as a clever, unconventional, and entertaining communicator, the advertiser is attempting to impress the consumer, and to create thereby a positive image for the product advertised: "der Sprecher kann sich erhoffen, originell und kenntnisreich zu wirken und Eindruck auf den Hörer zu machen" 'the speaker can hope to appear witty and knowledgeable, and to make an impression on the hearer' (Sabban 1998b:164). Winning the consumer's approval and trust constitutes an important step towards persuading the consumer to actually buy the product advertised.

In short, through the modification of idioms, "der Sprachgebrauch wird individualisiert, er wird zum Signal für Originalität, Wissen und Geschicklichkeit im Jongelieren mit der Sprache" 'linguistic usage becomes individualised, it becomes a signal for originality, knowledge and skill in juggling with language' (Sabban 1998b:18). Idiom modification ensures continued innovation in language, and can therefore be paralleled with the linguistic creativity prevalent in literature and poetry: "man denkt an den informationsstarken Innovationseffekt eines Durchbruches syntaktischer Regeln, der bei Analysen der poetischen Sprache eine große Rolle spielt" 'one thinks of the powerfully informative and innovative effect of breaking

syntactic rules, which plays a big role in the analysis of poetic language' (Hantsch 1972:137). Indeed, if linguistic conventions can be regarded as "das Gefängnis der Sprache" 'the prison of language' (Pape 1985:11), then:

we might go so far as to say that breaking the rules and conventions of linguistic usage is a necessary condition of literary achievement. The rules and conventions limit the means of expression and therefore the range of ideas, emotions, and experiences that can be expressed. (Leech 1966:175.)

Idioms may be modified not only for the sake of deliberate linguistic inventiveness, but also simply "um vielbenutzte, abgegriffene Vokabeln zu vermeiden" 'in order to avoid frequently used, hackneyed vocabulary' (Hartwig 1983:71). As Pape, paraphrasing Kraus, comments so succinctly, idiom manipulation serves as a means of refreshing clichéd language by helping "die von der Journaille zur Allerweltshure gemachte Sprache wieder zur Jungfrau zu machen" 'to turn the language made a common whore by journalists into a virgin once again' (Pape 1985:12).

2.5 Idioms, Advertising, and Metaphor

The main reason that advertisers incorporate idioms into advertising texts is to recreate the style and tone of informal, spoken language. Idioms abound in everyday speech because they are the linguistic expression of general conceptual metaphors which structure human thought. Idioms are also a useful device in advertising because they tend to evoke mental images, which allow an idiom – and hence an advertisement as a whole – to be understood and recalled more effectively. The following chapter discusses metaphor as a general concept, and then examines how uniformity in the mental images evoked by idioms demonstrates the metaphorical basis of idiomatic expressions.

Chapter 3: Metaphor and Mental Imagery

But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of similarity of dissimilars. Through resemblance, metaphor makes things clearer. (Aristotle 1952a:1459a; quoted in Kittay 1987:2.)

3.1 Introduction

Metaphor is fundamentally conceptual, rather than linguistic, in nature. An idiom is the linguistic expression of a general conceptual metaphor, as opposed to merely a "dead metaphor" (section 3.2). The cognitive basis of metaphor is examined in depth in sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, and a pragmatic approach to the Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor is outlined in section 3.6. The analysis of metaphors in actual texts allows the general functions of metaphors to be understood (section 3.7), which may be applied to the discourse of advertising in particular in order to ascertain the specific roles played by metaphor in advertisements (section 3.8). The discussion then turns to the mental imagery evoked by most idioms, the uniformity of which highlights the fact that conceptual metaphors underlie most idioms (section 3.9). The mental images associated with idioms play a key role in advertising because they render the advertising message as a whole more vivid, colourful, and memorable (section 3.10).

3.2 Idioms and Dead Metaphors

Idioms have conventionally been regarded as merely dead metaphors, which exist in the mental lexicon as frozen semantic units (i.e. as words or stock phrases with fixed, seemingly arbitrary meanings). Dead metaphors are concepts and expressions which are metaphoric in origin, but which lose their metaphoricity over time (i.e. their figurative sense is recognised as their only possible or main meaning, and the reason behind the metaphor is no longer recognised). Such is the case with the verb "to consider", which is now taken to literally mean "to think carefully about" without

recognition of the fact that this meaning was originally the verb's figurative sense.²³ The originally figurative meaning of a dead metaphor has thus in a way come to be perceived as its literal meaning since its metaphorical nature is rarely taken into account. An idiom has traditionally been categorised as a dead metaphor because its figurative meaning is often regarded as its only possible meaning, while its literal meaning is forgotten or overlooked. Moreover, an idiom's meaning is usually deemed to be arbitrary and non-compositional because the link between the idiom's overall (figurative) meaning and the individual (literal) meanings of the component words is often bypassed.

The meaning of many idioms, however, is at least partially motivated, i.e. the individual meanings of the component words of many idioms systematically contribute to the phrase's overall figurative interpretation (as discussed in chapter 1). A language user may thus work out to a certain extent the (figurative) meaning of an idiom by (tacitly) analysing the phrase's component words. Furthermore, unlike with dead metaphors, most people are in fact (subconsciously) aware that an idiom is an expression used metaphorically, especially when the figurative meaning can be contrasted with the expression's literal meaning, which in the context tends not to make sense semantically, syntactically, and/or pragmatically. Where an idiom has a feasible literal meaning – i.e. is a VLI idiom – the metaphorical nature of the phrase's figurative interpretation is particularly apparent. Although many idioms can be interpreted relatively easily without the need to understand their metaphorical origin, it does not mean that the idiom's metaphorical basis is obsolete, making the phrase a dead metaphor. The fact that an idiom's metaphoricity is considered subconsciously actually means that the idiom is not a dead metaphor, but rather very much alive:

The mistake [of regarding idioms as dead metaphors] derives from an assumption that the things in our cognition that are most alive and most active are those that are conscious. On the contrary, those that are most alive and most deeply entrenched, efficient and powerful are those that are so automatic as to be unconscious and effortless. (Gibbs 1993b:59.)

²³ The verb "to consider" derives from the Latin "considerare" 'to look at the stars'. 'To consider' in the sense of 'to think carefully about' was initially the verb's figurative sense, based on people's tendency to look upwards (towards 'the stars') when thinking hard about something.

The term "dead metaphor" is actually rather misleading because dead metaphors still play an active part in cognition:

To speak oxymoronically, dead metaphors have lived on. They have become dead through continual use, but their continual use is a clue that they satisfy some semantic need. (Searle 1993:88.)

Indeed, "part of the evidence that conventional metaphors exist as live aspects of cognition is their occurrence in novel, poetic creations" (Gibbs 1993b:59).

In short, an idiom is not a dead metaphor, but rather the linguistic expression of a conceptual metaphor (cf. e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Gibbs 1993b). At this point it is worthwhile widening the discussion to the concept of metaphor in general, before returning in section 3.9 to the subject of conventional conceptual metaphors as the basis for many idioms.

3.3 Changing Attitudes Towards Metaphor

Metaphors were for millennia regarded as merely a rhetorical device. They were considered from a purely linguistic standpoint and deemed to be a "decorative additive to language, to be used in specific ways, and at specific times" (Hawkes 1972:8). They were even regarded as an "an abuse of language" (Hawkes 1972:30) by many who believed that:

All the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement; and so indeed are perfect cheats: and therefore, however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or of the person that makes use of them. (Locke 1690, quoted in Honeck and Hoffman 1980:48.)

Even today, for those who believe in the superiority of scientific fact and literal language, metaphors seem to be:

rather unimportant, deviant, and parasitic on "normal usage". ... Metaphors characterize rhetoric, not scientific discourse. They are vague, inessential frills, appropriate for the purposes of politicians and poets, but not for those of scientists because the goal of science is to furnish accurate (i.e., literal) descriptions of physical reality. (Ortony 1993:2.)

For centuries, even when their cognitive aspect was actually recognised, metaphors were still on the whole undervalued as merely "sugar on the pill of logic" (Hawkes 1972:25), i.e. a means of (linguistically) illustrating and embellishing a point, without constituting an intrinsic (cognitive) part of the argument. By the latter half of the twentieth century, however, the understanding of metaphor had evolved. It was realised that "the underlying principles governing metaphor are of a general psychological sort and are thus not specifically linguistic" (Saddock 1993:42). This "Cognitivist Theory", developed in Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, defines metaphor as a means of conceptual categorisation, rather than as simply a rhetorical flourish. Linguistic metaphors are simply an expression of conceptual metaphors: "metaphor is fundamentally conceptual, not linguistic, in nature. Metaphorical language is a surface manifestation of conceptual metaphor" (Lakoff 1993:244). The fact that "metaphor is pervasive in language is an aspect of its prominent place in the structure of thought itself" (Kittay 1987:326). A metaphor is thus not really a "figure of speech", but rather a "figure of thought" (Hoffman and Honeck 1980:5).

3.4 The Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor

The Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor states that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:3). In other words, metaphor "is not fanciful 'embroidery' of the facts. It is a way of *experiencing* the facts. It is a way of thinking and living" (Hawkes 1972:39). Much of the Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor is credited to Lakoff and Johnson, but Lakoff cites Reddy's (1993) article (originally published in 1979), *The conduit metaphor: A case of frame conflict in our language about language*, as the first to prove conclusively:

that the locus of metaphor is thought, not language, that metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualising the world, and that our everyday behavior reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience. (Lakoff 1993:204.)

According to Reddy:

(1) language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another; (2) in writing and speaking, people insert their thoughts or feelings into the words; (3) words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts or feelings and conveying them to others; (4) in listening or reading, people extract the thoughts or feelings once again from the words. (Reddy 1993:170.)

Put simply, "the speaker puts ideas (objects) into words (containers) and sends them (along a conduit) to a hearer who takes the ideas/objects out of the words/containers" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:10). Lakoff and Johnson surmise that Reddy's "conduit metaphor" is structured by the complex conceptual metaphor:

IDEAS (OR MEANINGS) ARE OBJECTS.
LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS.
COMMUNICATION IS SENDING.
(Lakoff and Johnson 1980:10.)

As a result, there are countless expressions in English reflecting this conceptual metaphor, LANGUAGE IS A CONDUIT, such as:

Try to get your thoughts across better.
Whenever you have a good idea practice capturing it in words.
Try to pack more thoughts into fewer words.
The sentence was filled with emotion.
His words carry little meaning.
Your words are hollow – you don't mean them.
Can you actually extract coherent ideas from that prose?
It is very difficult to put this concept into words.
The passage conveys a feeling of excitement.
Mary poured out her sorrows.
(Reddy 1993:166-168 and 189-201.)

As the LANGUAGE IS A CONDUIT metaphor illustrates, the Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor is based on the assumption that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5). For example, we understand having an argument in terms of having

a (verbal) battle with someone. We consider the person we argue with to be our opponent; we attack his or her position while defending our own; we may gain or lose ground; arguments often involve the sequence attack, defence, counterattack; we may take a new line of attack to make our point; and arguments may be won or lost, or a truce called. Indeed, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is reflected by a variety of linguistic expressions, namely:

Your claims are indefensible.
He attacked every weak point in my argument.
His criticisms were right on target.
I've never won an argument with him.
He shot down all of my arguments.
Buttress your argument.
(Examples from Lakoff and Johnson 1980:4 and 105.)

Thus, "the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualise one mental domain in terms of another" (Lakoff 1993:203).²⁴ For instance, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY "can be understood as a mapping (in the mathematical sense) from a source domain (in this case, journeys) to a target domain (in this case, love)" (Lakoff 1993:206-7). The lovers correspond to travellers; the relationship corresponds to the travel vehicle; the lovers' common goals correspond to their common destinations on the journey; and difficulties in the relationship correspond to impediments to travel. Thus, the term "metaphor" in contemporary metaphor research:

has come to mean "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system." The term "metaphorical expression" refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping (this is what the word "metaphor" referred to in the old theory). (Lakoff 1993:203.)

Examples of the linguistic realisation of the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY include: "They embarked on a relationship"; "Our relationship has hit a dead-end street"; "We're stuck in a rut"; "Our marriage is on the rocks"; and "We may have to go our separate ways" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:44-5 and Lakoff 1993:206-209).

²⁴ "Mental domains" may be understood as simply "familiar categories of daily experience" in the mind (Winner and Gardner 1993:433).

Cognitivist Theory regards metaphors as the organising, structuring concepts which underlie language, as opposed to the individual linguistic utterances which are merely specific examples of (conceptual) metaphors. While conceptual metaphors are essentially "un *procès*" 'a *process*', linguistic metaphors (i.e. metaphorical expressions) are in fact "le *résultat*" 'the *result*' of the conceptual process (terminology from Polzin 1998:1). As evidence that metaphor belongs primarily to the realm of thought is the fact that metaphors are rarely found in dictionaries, which are essentially records and explanations of the words and phrases of a language. For example, dictionary entries for "love" include:

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. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:115.)

If it is indeed the case that "there is no natural language known whose speakers do not employ metaphor" (Cooper 1986:164), then this must be because the main feature common to all human languages is their status as reflections and extensions of the human conceptual system.

3.5 Types of Metaphor

Metaphors are all inherently conceptual, but are expressed through language or even image. Taking as an example the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, Lakoff observes that "we are not consciously aware of the metaphorical images, but they are part of the power and horror we experience when we see them" (Lakoff 2001:1-2). He explains the metaphorical images as follows:

The image of the plane going into South Tower of the World Trade Center is metaphorically an image of a bullet going through someone's head, the flame pouring from the other side blood spurting out. Tall buildings are metaphorically people standing erect. Each tower falling was a body falling. (Lakoff 2001:1.)

Further conceptual metaphors conveyed through the powerful images of the terrorist attack include CONTROL IS UP and A SOCIETY IS A BUILDING. With CONTROL IS UP,

giving rise to metaphorical expressions such as "to have control over the situation" and "to be on top of things", the toppling of the towers signified a loss of control. Based on this CONTROL IS UP conceptual metaphor, the Twin Towers were also perceived as symbols of the power of the United States, so the falling of the towers represented the whole nation's loss of power (Lakoff 2001:2). As regards the A SOCIETY IS A BUILDING conceptual metaphor, if a society's "foundation" is not "solid", it may "crumble" and "fall". Since the World Trade Center was symbolic of Western Capitalist society as a whole, "when it crumbled and fell, the threat was to more than a building" (Lakoff 2001:3).

There are three main types of conceptual metaphor: "structural", "orientational", and "ontological" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:14ff; 25ff). With "structural" metaphors one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another, like ARGUMENT IS WAR and LOVE IS A JOURNEY. In contrast, an "orientational" metaphor "does not structure one concept in terms of another, but instead organises a whole system of concepts with respect to one another" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:14). Orientational metaphors derive their name from the fact that they mostly involve spatial orientation (e.g. UP-DOWN), as is the case with the orientational metaphors HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN; HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP, SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN; and GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN. Metaphorical expressions conveying the HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN orientational metaphor include: "You're in high spirits", "I'm depressed", and "He's really low these days". The HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP, SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN metaphor is expressed by phrases like "He's at the peak of health", "He's in top shape", "He fell ill", and "He came down with the flu". Statements such as "Things are looking up", "Things are at an all-time low", and "We hit a peak last year, but it's been downhill ever since" are derived from the GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN orientational metaphor (examples from Lakoff and Johnson 1980:15-16). As regards "ontological" metaphors, on the other hand, our experiences with physical objects and substances (especially our own bodies) provide a basis for understanding abstract concepts like emotions and ideas. Ontological metaphors in this way allow us to relate to concepts and experiences of which we may not have much direct personal experience. An example of an ontological metaphor would be INFLATION IS AN ENTITY, which produces expressions like: "We need to combat inflation", "Inflation is backing us into a corner", "Buying land is the best way of

dealing with inflation", and "Inflation makes me sick" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:26).

Viewing inflation as an entity:

allows us to refer to it, quantify it, identify a particular aspect of it, see it as a cause, act with respect to it, and perhaps even believe that we understand it. Ontological metaphors like this are necessary for even attempting to deal rationally with our experiences. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:26.)

Conceptual metaphors (and the metaphorical expressions deriving from them) may be described to a certain degree as either original or long-established. New metaphors may be labelled "novel" or "creative" metaphors (terms from e.g. Lakoff 1993; Polzin 1998), while older metaphors may be referred to as "conventional" (e.g. Gibbs 1993b; Lakoff 1993), "established" (Cooper 1986:130), "standardised" (Sperber and Wilson 1986:236), or "lexicalised" metaphors (Polzin 1998:4). Creative conceptual metaphors originate when a parallel is drawn for the first time between two as yet unconnected conceptual domains, revealing thereby previously unrecognised similarities between two conceptual domains. Black even goes so far as to contend that "it would be more illuminating in some of these cases to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing" (Black 1962:37). In contrast, conventional metaphors are well established conceptual metaphors, and as such "elles peuvent véhiculer des valeurs et des connotations sans que nous nous en apercevions" 'they can convey values and connotations without us being aware of it' (Polzin 1998:4). An example of a conventional metaphor would be KNOWING IS SEEING, resulting in metaphorical expressions like "I see what you're getting at", "his claims aren't clear", and "this passage is opaque" (Lakoff 1993:237).

3.6 A Pragmatic Approach to the Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor

Thought and language are by no means two distinct entities. Metaphor serves as "the omnipresent principle of language" (Richards 1936:93) because language reflects our whole conceptual system, and metaphor is intrinsic to our thought processes. Yet language may also influence thought to a certain degree (cf. the general introduction). The Cognitivist Theory of Metaphor, however, tends to overlook the considerable impact language has on conceptual metaphors, despite the fact that "die

Metaphernkompetenz ist Teil unserer gedanklichen wie sprachlichen Fähigkeiten" 'metaphoric competence is part of both our intellectual and linguistic abilities' (Osthus 1998:1).

Once a general conceptual metaphor is expressed in language it gains a context and a co-text, which may affect its basic meaning. Communicating a general conceptual metaphor through language may render it more explicit, as the context and/or co-text surrounding a given metaphorical expression usually narrows, expands, or modifies the sense of the general conceptual metaphor. Metaphorical expressions may therefore be described as "context-driven" (Honeck et al. 1980:148), since they are identifiable only by means of – and are understandable primarily in relation to – their context and co-text. This is because:

linguistic communication is more a matter of finding one's way in a context than of exchanging messages in some abstract code which is determined a priori and independently of contexts. (Bosch 1985:143.)

As a result, fully understanding and appreciating conceptual metaphors necessitates:

a *pragmatic* analysis of their uses in specific texts in specific situations. The "locus" of metaphor thus partly shifts back to language, in particular to its *parole* side. (Musolff 1999:290.)

A metaphorical expression is a specific utterance, behind which lies a definite speaker intention since, by speaking, a speaker intends to convey a particular message. While a sentence is an abstract entity, and thus a feature of "langue" (i.e. language as a system), an utterance is an event in actual time, and thus a characteristic of "parole" (i.e. actual language use) (terminology from de Saussure 1983).²⁵ The meaning of a sentence may be consequently regarded as the general meaning of words, sentences, and expressions (i.e. the basic dictionary-given meaning of a word or phrase), whereas the meaning of an utterance is "what a speaker means by uttering words,

²⁵ The difference between "langue" and "parole" can be summarised as follows:

Langue is the system or structure of language, the grammar, the rules; *parole* is the realisation of the system in actual speech, the use of language (i) within a given situation, (ii) at a given time, and (iii) in a given place. *Langue* is social, being a feature of a language community; *parole* is a feature of the individual. *Langue* is abstract; *parole* concrete. *Langue* contains the essential and the possible, whereas *parole* contains the accidental and the actual. (Beedham 1995:44.)

sentences, and expressions" on a specific occasion (Searle 1993:84). The meaning of a given metaphorical expression (i.e. the utterance meaning) is therefore always "speaker's utterance meaning" (Searle 1993:84).²⁶

All this means that "the proper domain for an account of metaphor is pragmatics, not semantics" (Morgan 1993:127), since in order to ascertain the uses and functions of conceptual metaphors, they must be examined as conveyed through metaphorical expressions in actual contexts. The context for metaphor in this dissertation is that of advertising. The general functions of metaphor are examined in the following section, while the functions of metaphor in advertising are discussed in section 3.8.

3.7 The Functions of Metaphors

The role metaphor plays in thought and language is a complex one:

It is not indirectness ... And it is not mere convenience, a lazy inclination to use metaphor because an equally effective literal utterance would be too much work. Surely its purpose is more than the enjoyment of puzzle solving. [It is not] something to be eliminated as quickly as possible, to get down to the literal meaning that the metaphor covers up. (Morgan 1993:134.)

Conceptual metaphors and their associated metaphorical expressions fulfil both cognitive and aesthetic functions (terminology from Cooper 1986:40):

The main and one serious purpose of metaphor is to describe entities (objects and persons), events, qualities, concepts or states of mind more comprehensively, concisely, vividly, and in a more complex way, than is possible by using literal language. The second purpose of metaphor is to please, sometimes aesthetically, to entertain, to amuse, often to draw attention to a technical and 'physical' subject (to 'humanize' matter), and therefore to clarify, often conceptually. (Newmark 1985:295.)

²⁶ In order to emphasise the point that metaphor concerns utterance rather than sentence meaning, Davidson even goes so far as to claim that a speaker's intention in using a metaphor is comparable with a speaker's intention in telling a lie: "lying, like making a metaphor, concerns not the meaning of words, but their use" (Davidson 1978:42, quoted in Levin 1993:115). That is, when a speaker tells a lie, he is aware that what he is saying is false, but intends for the hearer to take it as true; similarly, when a speaker uses a metaphorical expression, he is aware that what he is saying is false, but intends for the hearer to take it as true, but in a metaphorical sense.

Cognitive functions are related to the general conceptual nature of metaphor, whereas aesthetic functions describe primarily the additional stylistic and rhetorical functions of metaphor, achieved when a conceptual metaphor is conveyed through language as a metaphorical expression.

3.7.1 Cognitive functions of metaphors

3.7.1.1 The abstract to concrete function

"The primary function of metaphor is to provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:154). More specifically, metaphors help to better understand the abstract in terms of the concrete, in that they allow "an explanation of something abstract, vague or problematic in terms of more concrete or more familiar or 'simpler' experiences" (Musolff 1999:293). Metaphor may therefore be characterised as having "directionality", meaning that "we tend to structure the less concrete and inherently vaguer concepts (like those for the emotions) in terms of more concrete concepts, which are more clearly delineated in our experience" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:112). As illustration of the fact that "we typically conceptualise the nonphysical *in terms of* the physical" are the sentences:

Harry is in the kitchen.
Harry is in the Elks.²⁷
Harry is in love.
(Lakoff and Johnson 1980:59.)

These sentences refer to three different domains of experience: spatial, social, and emotional respectively. Because the spatial nature of the "in" of "Harry is in the kitchen" can be experienced physically and directly, it is easier to grasp the social and emotional aspects of "in" in the other two sentences. Metaphor is hence in a way the mind's attempt to "battle against solipsism" (Cooper 1986:166).

²⁷ The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in the United States of America is a patriotic organisation founded in 1868, which promotes national and civic pride with the slogan "God Bless America!". The order primarily raises funds for charities such as war veterans, anti-drug campaigns, and scholarships. (Information from <http://www.elks.org>.)

3.7.1.2 The heuristic function

The fact that metaphor is so effective in explaining difficult concepts in terms of more straightforward, direct experiences means that metaphors possess "einen heuristischen Wert" 'a heuristic value' (Homburger 1994:35, quoted in Polzin 1998:5):

Metaphor is a primary way in which we accommodate and assimilate information and experience to our conceptual organization of the world. In particular, it is the primary way we accommodate *new* experience. Hence it is the source of our capacity to learn. (Kittay 1987:39.)

Metaphor is "a catalyst for a change in understanding" (Verbrugge 1980:96), since "metaphors lead us to experience the world in novel ways. By causing a reorganization of our conceptual frameworks they institute new meaning" (Johnson 1980:65). In teaching and in scientific research in particular, metaphor functions as "one of the central ways of leaping the epistemological chasm between old knowledge and radically new knowledge" (Petrie and Oshlag 1993:583):

in science, metaphor is needed because we can conceive more than we can say. Metaphor is needed to communicate about new concepts or experiences. Metaphor is needed in order to conceive and recognise similarities, and for that reason may be the only way we *can* talk about new concepts. (Hoffman 1985:338.)

Furthermore, since incorporating metaphors into scientific analysis and explanations entails describing the novel in terms of the familiar, this lends new scientific theory "un certain élément de stabilité et de pérennité" 'a certain element of stability and permanence' (Polzin 1998:6). The fact that well-known concepts and expressions can be applied again and again to new theories and concepts also helps to confirm assumptions that the ideas already held are indeed correct. As a result:

Metaphor in all societies will have a 'normative' and reinforcing aspect, as well as an 'exploratory' one. It will be as much concerned with what we know as it is with what we don't know; it will retrench and corroborate as much as it will expand our vision. (Hawkes 1972:88.)

A metaphor created specifically for the purpose of explanation and investigation may be described as a "generative metaphor", which performs "the 'meta-pherein' or 'carrying over' of frames or perspectives from one domain of

experience to another" (Schön 1993:137). In constructing a generative metaphor, "*A* and *B* are initially perceived, named, and understood as very different things – so different that it would ordinarily pass as a mistake to describe one as the other" (Schön 1993:141). However, the comparison of *A* and *B* is a metaphor rather than a mistake, since "every instance of metaphor making is an instance of SEEING-AS" (Schön 1993:141). A metaphor involves seeing *A* as *B*, whereas a mistake would mean claiming that *A* actually is *B*. When a metaphor is used heuristically, our understanding of both the concepts involved changes. All in all, since "strange words simply puzzle us [and] ordinary words only convey what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh" (Aristotle 1952b:1410b, quoted in Hawkes 1972:10).

3.7.1.3 Creativity

Metaphor has been shown to be "at the centre of our creative thought" (Kittay 1987:39). Creative conceptual metaphors offer "a new understanding of our experience. Thus, "they can give new meaning to our pasts, to our daily activity, and to what we know and believe" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:139), encouraging a person to look at the world from a different perspective. Creative conceptual metaphors revitalise thinking, and the creative metaphorical expressions which they generate do the same for language. When inventive conceptual metaphors and imaginative metaphorical expressions are effective, they reflect positively on the person who has conceived and/or uses them in a given situation.

3.7.1.4 The "spotlight" function

Musolff states that the main function of prominent metaphors in German and English political discourse "seems to be similar to that of 'spotlights' which focus the attention on specific aspects of the problem under discussion" (Musolff 2001:14), and this can be said to some degree of all metaphors. Metaphors may be characterised as:

des 'filtres conceptuels' qui contribuent à faire ressortir plus vivement certains aspects de l'objet caractérisé métaphoriquement et qui en suppriment d'autres. Elles produisent donc des effets focalisateurs et idéologiques, en présentant les objets caractérisés dans une lumière déterminée.

'conceptual filters' that help to bring out more vividly certain aspects of the metaphorically characterised object, and that suppress other aspects. They thus produce focusing and ideological effects, by presenting the characterised objects in a specific light. (Polzin 1989:6, summarising Pielenz 1993.)

It may thus be claimed (metaphorically!) that:

metaphor is a solar eclipse. It hides the object of study and at the same time reveals some of its most salient and interesting characteristics when viewed through the right telescope. The object is linguistic meaning. Metaphor obscures its literal and commonplace aspects while permitting a new and subtle understanding to emerge. Thus, metaphor highlights the capacity of language users to create and understand novel linguistic combinations that may be literal nonsense. (Paivio and Walsh 1993:307.)

As example of the fact that a metaphor highlights only certain features of the phenomena in question is the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY discussed previously. The metaphor underlines the similarity of lovers to travellers in the sense that their relationship (the vehicle) carries them through life as they try to achieve their goals (reach common destinations) and avoid or overcome problems (obstacles on the journey). Characteristics of the conceptual domains of love and travel which are not similar or relevant are "filtered out" (i.e. rejected or overlooked by the mind): since a passport and ticket are not prerequisites to embarking on a relationship, and wearing comfortable shoes does not necessarily make a relationship more enjoyable, the brain ignores these potential analogies when it processes the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor.

When a conceptual metaphor is communicated through a metaphorical expression it is not just specific characteristics of the concepts being paralleled which are accentuated. The fact that a metaphor is used at all makes the utterance stand out from the rest of the text, drawing attention thereby to the particular people and/or objects featured in the metaphor. Moreover, the specific ideas and attitudes of the speaker/writer which are conveyed by the metaphor are also emphasised (see section 3.7.2.2).

3.7.1.5 The "shorthand" function

"Metaphors are used to communicate a complex patterned set of properties in a shorthand which is understood by the members of a speech community who share

relevant mutual knowledge" (Glucksberg and Keysar 1993:422). A metaphorical expression tends to state the initial, general link between two conceptual domains, but it is generally left to the reader/hearer's common sense and imagination to work out exactly how and why this may be true. For example, with the statement "Sam is a pig", the expression immediately encourages the reader/hearer to think of Sam in a derogatory way as a kind of animal, but it is subsequently up to the reader/hearer to ascertain whether Sam is dirty, greedy, bad-mannered, or all of the above. A metaphorical expression may therefore be regarded as functioning "as a kind of shorthand expression" (Musolff 1999:292) for all the connotations of the entire conceptual metaphor. The metaphorical expression introduces the similarity, and the reader/hearer must subsequently work out "the 'etc.' aspect" (Ortony 1980:78), i.e. the full sense and inference of the metaphor. In this way, a metaphor is:

both economical in terms of processing effort and communicatively profitable in that it yields a range of implicatures, which make it more informative and appealing to the reader than any other formulation would be. (Musolff 1999:292.)

For this reason metaphors are particularly suited to the discourse of advertising, which is subject to stringent time and space constraints (see section 3.7.1.5).

3.7.1.6 Increased memorability

"Metaphor functions to describe, to explain something in a particularly apt, memorable, and new way" (Winner and Gardner 1993:429). Conceptual metaphors are particularly vivid and concise, and consequently extremely memorable. They are also remembered and recalled more effectively than more literal language because of "the greater number of encoding possibilities for metaphors, due to the presence of two semantic domains from which to construct associations to stored knowledge and interpretations of the input for storage in memory" (Harris, Lahey and Marsalek 1980:177). Moreover, many conceptual metaphors are particularly striking because they (and the metaphorical expressions – especially idioms – which they generate) evoke mental images. Imagery tends to "fuse" the two or more conceptual domains in a metaphor; for example, the quip "My doctor is an elephant" may stimulate a mental picture of an elephant in a white laboratory coat wielding a stethoscope (Riechmann

and Coste 1980:183). Unusual or humorous mental images like this render a metaphorical expression – and thus the conceptual metaphor it communicates – more memorable than literal language. Mental imagery is explored further in section 3.9, and the role it plays in idiom interpretation and recall is examined in chapter 4.

3.7.2 Aesthetic functions of metaphors

3.7.2.1 Extra communicative effect

Metaphors often provide an "increase in contextual effects, the communicative 'added value'" to a text (Musolff 1999:292). As an example, Musolff cites Chancellor Kohl's attempt in 1997 to ingratiate himself with the younger electorate by referring to himself tongue-in-cheek as a political dinosaur:

Kritik an seiner langen Amtszeit ließ Kohl nicht gelten: 'Wenn die Dinosaurier wieder in sind bei den Jungen, dann laßt uns auch mit Dinosauriern in die Schlacht ziehen!'

Kohl wouldn't accept any criticism of his long stay in office: "If Dinosaurs are again popular with young people, well, then let's march into battle with Dinosaurs! (Musolff 1999:292, quoting the *BILD*-Zeitung of 27 April 1999; Musolff's translation.)

The Chancellor's use of this particularly vivid metaphor in a self-deprecating way creates an "extra communicative effect" (Musolff 1999:292), namely the injection of humour and irony into the text, in order to win the affection of the German voters.

3.7.2.2 Specific viewpoint

The use of a metaphor "often implies a specific perspective and bias" (Musolff 2001:13) (i.e. it performs Bühler's "Ausdruck" and Jakobson's "emotive" function of language, see section 2.3.3). As a result, metaphorical expressions resist adequate paraphrase since a full appreciation of them "requires identification of an attitude or viewpoint – but such an attitude or viewpoint is not something which could figure in a paraphrase of the metaphor" (Cooper 1986:163). As illustration, Cooper quotes the comment of an opera singer's husband: "I've married a regular ticket to the opera" (Cooper 1986:162). Trying to paraphrase this comment results in something like: "I've

married someone who gets me in to see operas regularly and for free". What is missing from the paraphrase, however, is the sense of the husband's cynical and perhaps disparaging attitude to his wife and her particular profession.

3.7.2.3 The conative function

Metaphorical expressions tend to convey a speaker/writer's attitude, and may therefore be used to elicit a particular emotion in the hearer/reader of the utterance (i.e. they may perform Bühler's "Appell" and Jakobson's "conative" function of language, see again section 2.3.3) (cf. e.g. Newmark 1985; Paivio and Walsh 1993; Osthus 1998). Both conventional and novel metaphorical expressions can introduce into a text an element of, for example, humour, irony, surprise, shock, drama, familiarity, nostalgia, or even simply "Lesevergnügen" 'reading enjoyment' (term from Osthus 1998:1). To give some idea of the conative capacity of metaphors, consider the following examples from Searle, who uses the abbreviations (MET) to stand for "a metaphorical expression" and (PAR) to mean "a possible paraphrase of the metaphor":

- (MET) Sally is a block of ice
- (PAR) Sally is an extremely unemotional and unresponsive person
- (MET) I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole (Disraeli)
- (PAR) I have after great difficulty become prime minister
- (MET) Richard is a gorilla
- (PAR) Richard is fierce, nasty, and prone to violence.
- (Searle 1993:87.)

It cannot be denied that in each instance some conative effect is lost when the above metaphors are paraphrased.

3.7.2.4 Creating rapport

Metaphor may also be regarded as a means of enhancing "social interaction" (term from Cohen 1979, quoted in Cooper 1986:40) or "creating rapport" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:231). Using a metaphor "cultivates an intimacy" between the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader of a text (Cooper 1986:40), since "the utterance of a metaphor may be viewed as a signal that the speaker takes his hearers to belong

to a subset distinguished by a bond of intimacy" (Cooper 1986:158). A metaphorical expression "effects a familiarity or 'intimacy' between speakers, and between them and their world. Metaphor helps to make people 'at home', and this, in a certain sense, is why it is so pervasively engaged in" (Cooper 1986:140). Metaphors are thus comparable to jokes because they have a "latent" function which is often more important than their "patent" function (terms from Cooper 1986:167). The "patent" function of a joke is to make people laugh, whereas its "latent" function is to promote an atmosphere of rapport between those who "get" the joke. With respect to metaphor, the patent function would be to make people understand one thing in terms of another, whereas the latent function would be to flatter the hearer/reader by assuming that he or she will understand why the metaphor works. Applying this concept to idioms whose literal and figurative meanings are punned upon, the patent function of making a joke is often not as important as the latent function, which involves making the speaker/writer feel that by understanding the pun, he or she has connected in some way with the speaker/writer. This ability to create a rapport with the hearer/reader is one of the reasons that metaphors are often found in advertising, and that punning on the literal and figurative meanings of idioms, which are a particular type of metaphorical expression, occurs time and again in advertisements (see chapter 4).

3.8 The Functions of Metaphors in Advertising

Because metaphors "invite comparison between two things which appear to be dissimilar but which, they suggest, have a shared meaning", it may be claimed that "metaphor is the very heart of the basic communicative form used in advertising" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:289). Advertising tries to persuade the consumer that the features of an advertisement (e.g. humour, sexiness) are actually characteristics which the brand also possesses or inspires, and that the appealing world that it portrays (e.g. a luxurious lifestyle full of beautiful people) is a world which the consumer too can enjoy, but only if the brand advertised is bought. Advertisements may thus be described as:

imaginative creations or artful representations of possible worlds, and they strive mightily to redescribe reality, by taking familiar components of everyday life – recognizable people, indoor and outdoor settings, and social situations – and conjuring up scene after scene full of hypothetical interactions between these components and a product. (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990:289.)

Since "the context-driven character of metaphors localises their functions within the context" (Honeck et al. 1980:150), the function of a given metaphor in a specific advertisement depends on the overall function (e.g. information, persuasion, warning) of that particular advertisement. Be that as it may, metaphor is employed in advertisements for several general reasons: to evoke positive associations; to involve the consumer; and to allow the advertiser to avoid making any explicit claims about the brand advertised.

Metaphor in advertising is used most frequently in headlines and trade names (Vorlat 1985). Trade names refer to, identify, and differentiate a particular brand, but in addition "the advertiser intends the trade name to evoke a load of associations which carry a message about the product, and, generally, the consumer understands it this way" (Vorlat 1985:265). Metaphor occurs particularly often in perfume advertisements, specifically as the brand name. This is perhaps due to the difficulty of pinning down the actual characteristics of a fragrance: terms describing smells almost always do so with regard to their cause (e.g. "the smell of coffee") and effect ("a nauseating smell") (Sperber 1984:115), and to the fact that smells are recognisable, but not recollectable, so in recalling a smell, a visual image associated with it is normally conjured up (Sperber 1984:117). Perhaps this is one of the reasons that most perfume or aftershave advertisements rely so heavily on imagery, and employ little or no linguistic message apart from the brand name. By using metaphor in brand names like "Magie Noire", "Opium", "Rive Gauche", and "L'Amour Fou" for fragrances (examples from Vorlat 1985:267), the advertiser hopes that the mysterious and alluring associations evoked activate the consumer's unconscious wishes and desires, influencing him or her to actually buy the brand.

If it takes the consumer a split-second longer to process the meaning and significance of a (usually creative or novel) metaphorical expression, the advertiser has succeeded in drawing the consumer into the advertisement, thereby retaining his or her attention for longer. In addition, since "metaphor obscures meaning, avoids direct statement" (Lerman 1983:87), by using a metaphor an advertiser can deny that

he ever intended to convey any unrealistic assumptions which the consumer may have made about the product. Of direct relevance to this research is the finding that "in headlines, metaphorization appears, i.e. as *punning on idioms*" (Vorlat 1985:263, my emphasis). This particular use of idioms within the context of advertising is explored further in chapter 5.

3.9 Mental Imagery as Proof that Idioms are based on Conceptual Metaphors

The language user's tacit knowledge of the metaphorical basis of idioms is revealed by the existence and uniformity of mental images evoked by idioms (Lakoff 1987:447ff; Gibbs and O'Brien 1990). Indeed, "the meanings of many idioms are motivated by speakers' tacit knowledge of the conceptual metaphors underlying an idiom's meaning" (Gibbs and O'Brien 1990:35). The mental images evoked by many idioms are simply "the visual images that people associate with idiomatic expressions" (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1995:45), or "the conventional images of idioms that are unconscious and automatic" (Gibbs and O'Brien 1990:38). Mental imagery in general may be described as "mental pictures that can be viewed by an inner eye in the same way that real pictures or scenes are viewed by the real eye" (Hoffman and Honeck 1980:23). Whereas "perception" involves "our real eyes", "mental imagery" makes use of "our mind's eye" (Lakoff 1987:444-5). Lakoff terms "unconscious, automatic, and apparently effort-free" mental images as "conventional rich images", because they are "rich" in detail and "conventional" in the sense that "they appear to be pretty much the same from person to person in the same culture" (Lakoff 1987:446). For example, the "conventional rich image" of a person eating pizza usually entails:

a wedge-shaped slice of a round pizza, with the point going in the mouth first, and probably not with a clean bite but rather with the cheese pulling away in its usual stringy fashion. (Lakoff 1987:447.)

Lakoff (1987) remarks that conventional rich images are intrinsic to both the formation of new idioms and to understanding established stock phrases. He subsequently refers to idioms with typically associated conventional rich images as "imageable idioms" (Lakoff 1987:447). An example of a conventional rich image evoked by an imageable idiom would be the mental image stimulated by the English

idiom "to keep someone at arm's length", i.e. to avoid becoming friendly or emotionally involved with someone:

- The arm is oriented forward with respect to the body, perhaps a little to the side. It is never oriented backward, or upward, or downward, though these are all logical possibilities.
 - The arm is chest high.
 - The hand is usually open (though some have it making a fist).
 - The open palm is facing away from the subject; it is never facing toward the subject.
 - The angle of the hand relative to the forearm is roughly 90 to 135 degrees.
 - The arm muscles are tense, not lax.
 - The person being kept at arm's length is facing toward the subject.
- (Lakoff 1987:447.)

The fact that many imageable idioms evoke similar mental images – and consequently are shown to have similar meanings – proves that they are based on conventional conceptual metaphors. As illustration is the experiment conducted by Gibbs and O'Brien (1990:39ff) on the mental images produced by the idioms "to blow your stack", "to let off steam", "to flip your lid", and "to hit the ceiling" (all meaning 'to become extremely angry'). A total of 80% of the subjects questioned described a mental image involving some force causing a container to release pressure in a violent manner. This consistency in mental imagery is due to the fact that the above imageable idioms are all based on the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER (Lakoff 1987:387-88). Repeating the experiment for a wide range of idioms, it was found that subjects provide consistent responses to questions about the physical characteristics of the objects in mental images, as well as to questions about the causes, intentionality, manner, consequences, and reversibility of events. On average, 75% of subjects' mental images comprise similar general images. As Lakoff observes, "since associated images are hardly ever consciously taught or consciously learned, it is remarkable that there is any uniformity at all" (Lakoff 1987:451).

The fact that mental images derive from conventional conceptual metaphors goes some way to explaining this consistency. Conceptual metaphors are based on how the mind categorises objects and events since "in order to understand the world and function in it, we have to categorize, in ways that make sense to us, the things and experiences that we encounter" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:162). Indeed:

Most categorization is automatic and unconscious, and if we become aware of it at all, it is only in problematic cases. In moving about the world, we automatically categorize people, animals, and physical objects, both natural and man-made. ... We categorize events, actions, emotions, spatial relationships, social relationships, and abstract entities of an enormous range: governments, illnesses, and entities in both scientific and folk theories, like electrons and colds. (Lakoff 1987:6.)

Objects and experiences are generally categorised in terms of "prototypes" or "best examples" (Lakoff 1987:41, quoting Rosch's 1973, 1975 and 1977 work on categorisation). For example, a robin is perceived as a more "prototypical" (i.e. representative of the category) bird than are chickens, penguins, ostriches, and emus. Conventional conceptual metaphors – and hence the mental images which derive from conceptual metaphors – are based on "prototypes". While there is some degree of consistency in the mental images stimulated by literal expressions such as "to spill the peas", idioms like "to spill the beans", i.e. to tell a secret, produce much more specific and uniform mental images. This is because idioms are more likely to evoke prototypical objects, events and states since they are more directly motivated by conceptual metaphors than are literal expressions (Gibbs and O'Brien 1990:57). For this reason metaphorical expressions (i.e. idioms), rather than literal expressions, may be regarded as "assertions of categorization" (Glucksberg and Keysar 1993:401).

It is interesting to note that although "people have strong conventional mental images for idioms due to the conceptual metaphors motivating the *figurative* meaning of idioms" (Gibbs and O'Brien 1990:35, my emphasis), mental images "tend to reflect the *concrete* actions and events denoted by an idiom's component words" (Cacciari and Glucksberg 1995:53, my emphasis again). In other words, the fact that mental images evoked by idioms, which are figurative expressions, tend to be based on the literal sense of the phrase is further indication that idioms – and imageable idioms in particular – may be considered to act as a bridge between literal and figurative language, and between concrete and abstract thought.

3.10 How the Mental Imagery of Idioms Benefits Advertising

Mental imagery tends to render an idiom easier to comprehend, to store in the mental lexicon, and to recall. "Associated images have an important cognitive function. They make sense of the idioms, and therefore make them easier to understand, learn, remember, and use" (Lakoff 1987:452). Put slightly differently:

Imagery verbessert also die Speichermöglichkeiten und ermöglicht darüber hinaus die Erhöhung der Bedeutungshaltigkeit und führt dadurch zu einer Verbesserung des Verständnisses.

Imagery thus improves the storage potential [of idioms] and in addition allows an increase in meaning retention, and leads thereby to an improvement in understanding. (Häcki-Buhofer 1989:167.)

Häcki-Buhofer concludes after an experiment on mental imagery that imageable idioms are remembered more effectively than their literal paraphrases: thirty minutes after hearing a list of imageable idioms and their literal synonyms, adult subjects recalled 60% of the idioms but only 42% of the literal paraphrases, while child subjects recalled 58% of the idioms but only 33% of the literal expressions (Häcki-Buhofer 1989:172). Thus:

The elaboration of verbal material by the construction of mental images is known to affect long-term or secondary memory. ... Mental imagery not only improves memory performance, but also makes the stored material less vulnerable to forgetting. (Richardson 1980:72.)

Mental imagery improves both the accuracy and the speed with which phrases are retrieved from memory (Macht and Scheirer 1975; Hoffman and Honeck 1980; Richardson 1980; Paivio 1986), and is especially effective in aiding the understanding and recollection of idioms (discussed further in the following chapter). Metaphorical expressions in general – and idioms in particular – evoke especially vivid images "because of their emotional content and because of the bizarre or surreal character of the meaning they often suggest when taken literally" (Hoffman and Honeck 1980:11). As a result, imageable idioms are particularly suited to the genre of advertising, where encouraging a consumer to actually remember an advertisement – and subsequently the brand advertised – is half the battle won.

3.11 How Mental Imagery Relates to Literal Meaning and Affects Meaning Processing

Mental images tend to derive from the literal rather than the figurative sense of (a component word of) an idiom. The mental imagery evoked by an idiom allows the meaning of the phrase to be mentally processed and recalled more efficiently and effectively. The next chapter opens with a general discussion of the relationship between literal and figurative meaning, then examines the way in which VLI idioms in particular (i.e. idioms with both a figurative sense and a viable literal interpretation) are understood.

Chapter 4: Idiom Meaning and Interpretation

If natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist. They are a feature of discourse that frustrates any simple logical account of how the meanings of utterances depend on the meanings of their parts. (Johnson-Laird 1993:vii.)

4.1 Introduction

The meaning of a sign (i.e. a word or picture) is always determined to some extent by factors external to the sign, i.e. by both its co-text and its context (section 4.2). Within the sign both literal and figurative meanings may exist side by side (section 4.3). With respect to idioms in particular, the figurative meaning is often the preferred – or indeed only possible – interpretation of the phrase. A VLI idiom, however, possesses in addition to its figurative meaning a lexically, semantically, and syntactically viable literal interpretation (section 4.4). The Configuration Hypothesis outlined in section 4.5 explains how the overall (figurative) meaning of an idiom is understood when the initial literal compositional analysis of the phrase's component words results in a direct retrieval of the idiom's figurative interpretation from the mental lexicon. With regard to VLI idioms specifically, the literal interpretation of the phrase remains possible, and it is only a pragmatic analysis of the idiom (i.e. an examination of its co-text and context) which indicates whether the literal or figurative meaning is preferred (section 4.6). The viable literal interpretation of VLI idioms is the basis for vivid mental imagery, which results in idioms being "dually coded", i.e. stored in the brain as both verbal and non-verbal information. This dual-coding helps VLI idioms to be understood and recalled more efficiently and comprehensively than more literal language, which means that VLI idioms are a useful device in advertising (section 4.7).

4.2 Meaning as a General Concept

In the latter half of the nineteenth century de Saussure founded the science of semiology, which involves an analysis of "the role of signs as part of social life" (de Saussure 1983:15). One principle of semiology is the idea that a linguistic sign (by which he means a word) always comprises a "signifiant" 'signifier' (i.e. its form) and a

"signifié" 'signified' (i.e. its meaning). By the start of the twentieth century, C.S. Peirce had developed the study of semiotics, which is related to the science of semiology, but not the same discipline:

De Saussure, ... representing the earlier Continental tradition, emphasises the *social* aspects of the sign in his use of the word *semiology*. Charles Sanders Peirce, ... one of the first American semioticians, on the other hand, uses the term *semiotics* for what he refers to as "the logic of *general meaning*". Therefore, the two terms – semiology and semiotics – originally refer to and emphasise two distinct ways of studying and viewing diverse aspects of the sign as they are reflected in two different scholarly traditions. (Tobin 1990:24, quotation from Peirce 1931b:227; my emphasis.)

Peirce widens the concept of the sign to include pictures as well as words, pointing out that signs carry meaning in (usually a combination of) three different ways:

the first is the diagrammatic sign or *icon*, which exhibits a similarity or analogy to the subject of discourse; the second is the *index*, which like a pronoun demonstrative or relative, forces the attention to the particular object intended without describing it; the third (or symbol) is the general name or description which signifies its object by means of an association of ideas or habitual connection between the name and the character signified. (Peirce 1931a:194-5.)

The iconic meaning of a sign entails "the relationship of resemblance between a signifier and a signified" (e.g. the way a photo resembles the person, place or thing represented). A sign's indexical meaning concerns "a relationship of result or association between a signifier and a signified" (e.g. a picture of smoke can indicate fire; a drawing of or an allusion to the Eiffel Tower suggests France or, more specifically, Paris). The symbolic meaning of a sign relates to "an arbitrary or conventional relationship between signifier and signified" (e.g. the way the written word "apple" is related to the actual object; the fact that a rose conveys the concepts of love and passion) (definitions all from Myers 1994:210-2; examples from Dyer 1982:124). An advertisement (as a sign) has a primarily indexical meaning. The advertiser uses attractive, suggestive images and seductive, evocative language (as signifiers) in the hope that the consumer will associate the advertisement's appealing features with the product being promoted (the signified). This indexical meaning is usually an artificially constructed one, however, since the signifiers are usually related to the signified only because the advertiser alludes that this is the case (i.e. the

purchase of the product advertised does not necessarily result in, for example, the happy family or successful career described by the advertisement's visuals and/or text).

The meaning of a sign can rarely be fully understood in isolation from the context in which it is found:

There is no such thing as a meaning ... in itself, independent of any people. When we speak of the meaning of a sentence, it is always the meaning of the sentence to someone, a real person or a hypothetical member of a speech community. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:184.)

A sign tends to appear in conjunction with other text and/or images, i.e. a sign always occurs in a specific context. There is always a particular background behind a sign's use, namely where and why it appears, who is using it, and to whom it is addressed. As a result, the meaning of a sign is always influenced to some extent – or even entirely determined – by its (linguistic) co-text and non-linguistic context. The meaning of a word or phrase, or indeed of a picture, may thus be defined as comprising both its "semantic meaning" (i.e. its conventional, a-contextual denotation) and its "pragmatic force" (i.e. what meaning is intended and understood by the people involved in the specific communication act) (Cook 1992:180).

4.3 Literal and Figurative Meaning

Many words and phrases – and idioms by definition – are often described as having a figurative meaning as well as a literal meaning.²⁸ The literal meaning of a word is its basic dictionary-given definition, whereas its figurative meaning goes above and beyond its literal meaning, since "speaking figuratively consists ... of saying (utterance meaning) what you mean (intended meaning) by not meaning what you say (sentence meaning)" (Steinmann 1973:224, quoted in Honeck 1980:33). The literal meaning of a word has conventionally been regarded as its fundamental, general, objective, and "true" meaning, while its figurative meaning is viewed as an additional,

²⁸ A variety of seemingly synonymous terms for "figurative meaning" exists: "phraseological meaning", "metaphorical meaning", and "idiomatic meaning". For simplicity, the term "figurative meaning" is used in this dissertation to refer to the non-literal interpretation.

peripheral, subjective, and somewhat fanciful interpretation. Recent linguistic theory, however, has proven as incorrect:

the centuries-old belief that literal language is a veridical reflection of thought and the external world whereas figurative language distorts reality and only serves special rhetorical purposes. (Gibbs 1993:254.)

The realisation that the literal meaning is not necessarily the more important or preferred meaning comes mainly from the understanding that the concept of literalness is somewhat oversimplified and idealised. Indeed, at least five different interpretations of the notion of "literal" can be identified:

- 1) Conventional literality: ordinary conventional language, contrasting with e.g. poetic language, exaggeration, approximation, embellishment, excessive politeness, and indirectness
- 2) Subject-matter literality: language which is the usual way of talking about a particular topic
- 3) Nonmetaphorical literality: directly meaningful language, in which one word or concept is never understood in terms of another word or concept
- 4) Truth-conditional literality: language capable of "fitting the world", i.e. of referring to existing objects, and which can be judged as objectively true or false
- 5) Context-free literality: where the literal meaning of an expression is its meaning in a "null" context.

(Examples 1-4 taken from Lakoff 1986:292, and example 5 from Gibbs 1993:257.)

Consequently, literalness and figurativeness should not be regarded as two distinct concepts. Instead:

literal and figurative might be the endpoints of a continuum along which one can situate different types of expressions, according to their level of literality, idiomaticity, or metaphoricity. (Cacciari 1993:31.)

The meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence may thus be described as much more than either literal or figurative:

A [word or] sentence can in fact be literal, metaphorical, vague, indeterminate, anomalous, polysemous, indirect, ambiguous, and so forth. The literal-metaphorical dimension is only but one of many, and also a rather controversial one. (Cacciari 1993:30-1.)

4.4 Literal and Figurative Meaning in Idioms

Although purely figurative or purely literal meanings are rare, a general distinction may nevertheless be made between figurative and literal language, as long as the concepts of literalness and figurativeness are not regarded as absolutes. With idioms in particular, the boundary between literal and figurative meaning becomes somewhat blurred:

Metaphors and idioms of various kinds pose a special problem for theories of language because they are commonly used and understood despite the fact that they are literally anomalous. (Paivio 1986:234.)

The literal meanings of an idiom's component words do not usually make (literal) sense when combined to form the idiom, with the result that the words' individual literal meanings must often be disregarded altogether. For this reason, unlike with most language, where the literal sense provides the basic meaning of a word or phrase, an idiom's figurative sense is generally its most common meaning. To cloud the issue further, speakers tend to (mis-)use the terms "wörtlich" and "literally" not to instruct their audience to interpret an utterance literally, but rather for emphasis or to add colour to their story: "the speaker's intention is not usually to get his subsequent words interpreted literally, but to get them taken seriously, even when they are metaphorical or hyperbolic" (Cooper 1986:22). For example, *er ging wörtlich an die Decke* [lit. 'he went literally to the ceiling'] ≈ 'he literally hit the roof' more often than not means 'he became really angry' (i.e. the figurative sense), as opposed to 'he physically hit the actual ceiling' (i.e. the literal sense).

The literal meaning of many idioms may not make complete (literal) sense, e.g. *Stein und Bein schwören* [lit. 'to swear stone and leg'] 'to assert emphatically', similar in sense to the English idiom "to swear blind". Be that as it may, a large number of idioms (i.e. VLI idioms) can in fact be assigned a meaningful literal interpretation, as is the case with *jmdn. im Regen stehen lassen*, meaning literally 'to leave someone to stand in the rain', but normally used in the figurative sense of 'to leave someone in a difficult situation without helping them'. With such idioms the figurative meaning has generally been learned and habitually associated with the phrase as a whole, whereas the literal meaning is compositional, being derived from the (literal) meanings of the idiom's individual component words.

4.5 The Mental Processing of Idioms

There are three prominent psycholinguistic hypotheses on the lexical representation of idioms: the "Idiom List Hypothesis"; the "Lexical Representation Model"; and the "Idiom Decomposition Model" (outlined by Everaert et al. 1995:9-11). According to the Idiom List Hypothesis, idioms are stored in and accessed from a special vocabulary list distinct from the brain's general lexicon. The Lexical Representation Model, on the other hand, characterises idioms as being stored as holistic entries in the same mental lexicon which stores all other lexical items (cf. e.g. Swinney and Cutler 1979a and 1979b). In contrast to this again is the Idiom Decomposition Model, which states that since some idioms are "decomposable" (i.e. the idiom's overall meaning is based to a certain degree on the individual meanings of the expression's component words), the brain works out the idiom's meaning rather than simply storing it in the mental lexicon (cf. e.g. Gibbs 1980). Related to these three hypotheses are various theories on how exactly idioms are processed in the brain. The "Direct Access/Direct Look-up Model", which is based on both the Idiom List Hypothesis and the Lexical Representation Model, asserts that an idiom's meaning is retrieved directly, and as a whole, from memory. In comparison, the "Compositional Model", derived from the Idiom Decomposition Model, considers idioms to be processed in the same way as literal language, i.e. through a pragmatic analysis of the idiom in an actual context (terminology from Glucksberg 1993:4).

Many factors determine the way in which – and, indeed, how quickly and correctly – the brain processes an idiom. Interpreting an idiom is "eine Frage ... des Kontexts und des individuellen sprachlichen Gedächtnisses" 'a question ... of context and individual linguistic memory" (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:216). Also playing an important role is the idiom's "frequency of occurrence" (Colombo 1993), i.e. how often the idiom is encountered in general language. Familiar idioms seem to be simply retrieved from the mental lexicon, whereas unfamiliar idioms must be analysed and processed systematically in the brain (Cronk and Schweigert 1992). It is generally agreed that the "direct access" of a phrase from the mental lexicon is a speedier process than a compositional analysis of a phrase's component words; familiar idioms are thus processed faster and more accurately than unfamiliar idioms.

A further consideration is an idiom's semantic "transparency" (Colombo 1993) or its "conventionality" (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994), which is simply how

straightforward it is to work out the idiom's meaning from its component words. Semantically transparent idioms allow a more effective compositional analysis than semantically opaque idioms, and are consequently understood more easily (Cacciari and Tabossi 1988). Another influence on idiom interpretation is semantic "compositionality" (Everaert et al. 1995), or the degree to which an idiom's overall meaning relates to the meanings of its component words. It has been suggested that while semantically decomposable idioms are analysed for meaning in a compositional manner (i.e. as in the Compositional Model), non-decomposable idioms are retrieved directly from the mental lexicon (i.e. as in the Direct Access Model). As a result, well known non-decomposable idioms tend to be processed relatively quickly and effortlessly: "Because non-decomposable idioms are seen in a small number of syntactic constructions, these phrases are more easily lexicalized, like long words, and can be easily accessed and understood" (Gibbs et al. 1989:66; cf. also Gibbs, Nayak and Cutting 1989). A final factor which plays a part in idiom processing is its "degree of frozenness", meaning "the extent to which an idiom can undergo syntactic and morphological operations while at the same time retaining its idiomatic meaning" (Flores D'Arcais 1993:80). The more syntactically and semantically frozen (i.e. invariable) an idiom is, the more likely it is to be stored as a complete phrase in the mental lexicon (Gibbs and Gonzales 1985). In short, the brain seems to interpret different kinds of idioms in different ways. An amalgamation of the Direct Access Model and the Compositional Model is the most likely explanation for the processing of idioms: "people may comprehend many idioms by using a combination of composition and direct-access strategies, perhaps operating in parallel" (Gibbs et al. 1989:67).

The most convincing theory of idiom processing is the "Configuration Hypothesis", introduced by Cacciari and Tabossi (1988), and developed by Tabossi and Zardon (1993 and 1995), which combines the Direct Access Model and the Compositional Model. This approach states that "idiomatic expressions may be mentally represented and processed not as words, but rather as configurations of words whose meaning becomes activated whenever sufficient input has rendered the configurations recognizable" (Tabossi and Zardon 1995:274). With regard to the mental processing of a given word, each letter of the word is not actually examined individually and systematically. Instead, the brain searches for a matching entry in the mental lexicon (i.e. it attempts a direct look-up of vocabulary) after noting carefully

the first and last letters of a word, but merely glancing at the letters in between (i.e. it carries out a rough compositional analysis of the word) (Smyth et al. 1987:2ff).²⁹ Likewise, the brain processes phrases and sentences by examining their component words in clusters rather than individually, paying most attention to the most important and distinct word groups, namely the "content words", i.e. the nouns and verbs (Smyth et al. 1987:168). Thus, when processing an idiom the brain analyses the phrase as a whole, picking out the most significant words (usually the content words), and performing thereby a compositional analysis of the group of words. Since an idiom is by definition "a configuration of words" (i.e. a particular fixed combination of specific words), the brain quickly finds a match (i.e. a meaning) in the mental lexicon for that particular co-occurrence of content words (i.e. the idiom). All this means that:

linguistic processing and idiom look-up can occur in parallel, but idiom look-up cannot begin until the idiom itself is recognised as a configuration, that is, as a unitary expression with a meaning beyond that of its constituents. (Glucksberg 1993:6.)

According to the Configuration Hypothesis, the overall (figurative) meaning of an idiom is associated with a certain word configuration, and these are stored together in the mental lexicon. An idiom is processed by means of compositional analysis – and therefore literally – until the "idiom key" is reached. This "key" is "the point in the string after which the probability of the fragment to continue idiomatically is very high, even though a different, literal completion still may be possible" (Tabossi and Zardon 1993:156). Put slightly differently, the idiom key is "the point in the string that one becomes aware of the possibility of being presented with an idiom (Tabossi and Zardon 1993:147). The key is therefore the "recognition point of the idiom" (Cacciari and Tabossi 1988:679), i.e. the specific part of the idiom which renders the phrase identifiable as an idiom. Once the key has been identified,

²⁹ This mental processing method is exemplified by an e-mail I received in September 2003, which was circulating its way round offices in the UK and the USA, informing people that:

Aoccdrnig to rneet rsecreah at Cmgbrdiae uvtiersniy, it dneos't mtetar in waht oedrr the ltetres in a wrod are; the olny iprmoatnt tinhg is taht the fsrit and lsat lttrees are in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can siltl udrtsnaned it wotuhit a plorebm. Tihs is bcuesae we do not raed erevvy lteetr by istlef, but rehtar the wrod as a wlohe. Istnreiteng, ins't it?

the whole word configuration is recognised and the figurative meaning of the idiom is simply retrieved directly from the mental lexicon. In some idioms the key is a single word (e.g. "Amok" in *Amok laufen* ≈ 'to run amok', i.e. to run around in a frenzy; and "Hutschnur" in *das geht mir über die Hutschnur* [lit. 'that goes over my hatstring'] 'that's going too far'). In other idioms a string of words acts as the key, and it is the specific co-occurrence of these words which brings into play the figurative sense (e.g. "Ohren spitzen" in *die Ohren spitzen* [lit. 'to sharpen the ears'] 'to listen closely' or 'to eavesdrop', similar in sense to the English idiom "to prick up the ears"; and "den Stier bei den" in *den Stier bei den Hörnern fassen/packen* ≈ 'to take the bull by the horns', i.e. to act decisively and courageously in dealing with a problem).

The Configuration Hypothesis explains the processing of all kinds of idioms. Once the key is recognised, there is a "Bedeutungswechsel" 'change in meaning' (Hemmi 1994:48) from the literal to the figurative sense. With most idioms, when the figurative meaning of the idiom is retrieved from the mental lexicon the brain dismisses the literal meaning entirely. This rejection of the literal sense usually occurs by the time the end of the idiom is reached (Cacciari and Tabossi 1998), usually because the literal interpretation of the idiom is syntactically or semantically flawed. However, one particular type of idiom, a VLI idiom, retains both the literal and figurative senses of the phrase as viable interpretations, even after the recognition of the key.

4.6 The Mental Processing of VLI Idioms: A Pragmatic Approach to the Configuration Hypothesis

VLI idioms by definition possess "eine doppelte Interpretierbarkeit" 'a double interpretability' (Hemmi 1994:48), i.e. they may be understood in both figuratively and literally. Three different theories have in the past been put forward to explain the way in which the brain processes these contrasting interpretations. The oldest and most basic is the "Literal First Hypothesis" (term from Cronk and Schweigert 1992:132). This hypothesis asserts that:

man [versteh] zunächst einmal wörtlich, dann feststellt, daß es nicht so gemeint sein kann und schließlich in einem Transferprozeß auf die gemeinte metaphorische Bedeutung kommt.

one [interprets] first of all literally, then realises that it cannot be meant like that, and finally arrives through a process of transference at the intended metaphorical meaning. (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:212.)

The literal meaning of a VLI idiom is interpreted first; if, and only if, this literal interpretation is rejected, the figurative meaning is considered (cf. e.g. Bobrow and Bell 1973). In such a case the literal meaning may be thought of as "defective", and "defectiveness" is indicated by "obvious falsehood, semantic nonsense, violations of the rules of speech acts, or violations of conversational principles of communication" (Searle 1993:103). The Literal First Hypothesis recommends that "where the utterance is defective if taken literally, look for an utterance meaning that differs from sentence meaning" (Searle 1993:103) (i.e. a figurative rather than a literal meaning). The second view, the "Figurative First Hypothesis" (term from Cronk and Schweigert 1992:132), states that the brain instantly processes the figurative meaning of a VLI idiom, while the expression's literal sense is considered, if at all, as a kind of afterthought (cf. e.g. Gibbs 1980). The third theory, the "Simultaneous Processing Hypothesis" (term from Cronk and Schweigert 1992:132) proposes that the literal and figurative meanings of VLI idioms are interpreted in the brain in parallel.

There is much disagreement over which of these theories is correct. For example, Gibbs is not convinced by the Literal First Hypothesis:

Listeners and readers do not switch from a literal to a nonliteral mode of processing when comprehending idioms. Instead, they rely on a fast unconscious process whereby they seek to discover the independent meanings of the parts of the idioms and combine these to recognise what idioms mean as wholes. These meanings are not necessarily the literal meanings of the words in idioms, but, instead, may merely reflect figurative interpretations of different words and word combinations in context. (Gibbs 1995:112.)

Cacciari (1993) points out that the Figurative First Hypothesis cannot be entirely correct either, since with unfamiliar idioms the processing stage involving the literal sense of idioms cannot be simply bypassed. People presented with an unfamiliar idiom try to ascertain its meaning by firstly looking for another idiom which is similar to some extent, and if this approach fails, they consider the literal meanings of the component words to try to derive a possible meaning. For example, *die Karre aus*

dem Dreck ziehen translates literally as 'to pull the old banger out of the mud', so the idiom's overall (figurative) sense of 'to sort something out' or 'to save the day', i.e. to solve a problem, may consequently come to mind. Only when the literal sense provides no clues do people turn to the figurative meaning which one or more of the idiom's component words may possess. As illustration, from knowing that the word "schwarz" 'black' figuratively conveys the idea of evil or general negativity, it may be possible to guess at the sense of *jmdn. auf die schwarze Liste setzen* [lit. 'to put someone on the black list'] 'to notice someone as being disloyal or untrustworthy', similar in sense to the English idiom "to blacklist someone".

Again, the Configuration Hypothesis is the most likely explanation for the processing of VLI idioms. With most idioms the literal interpretation is dismissed once the recognition of the key prompts the retrieval of the idiom's figurative meaning from the mental lexicon. With VLI idioms, however, the literal sense remains a plausible interpretation, since it is semantically and syntactically viable. Thus, additional pragmatic factors must be considered in order to determine which sense – literal or figurative – is ultimately accepted. The main pragmatic factor influencing the eventual selection of the figurative over the literal interpretation is the idiom's context (Popiel and McRae 1988). A further pragmatic consideration is the familiarity of a VLI idiom (i.e. the familiarity of its figurative meaning) (Cronk and Schweigert 1992). The importance of familiarity can be illustrated with the German VLI idiom *jmdm. das Blaue vom Himmel (herunter)versprechen* [lit. 'to promise someone the blue of the sky'] 'to promise someone the impossible', similar in sense to the English idiom "to promise someone the moon". Although the literal interpretation of the idiom is syntactically acceptable, and semantically feasible at a stretch (i.e. in the sense of reassuring someone that there will be blue, cloudless skies), *das Blaue vom Himmel* is not actually a word combination used in everyday German to refer literally to good weather (Sabban 1998a:315). "The wording *das Blaue vom Himmel* is bound to the idiomatic expression and, if presented in isolation, is likely to evoke the idiom immediately" (Sabban 1998a:316). The phrase is more familiar with its figurative interpretation (i.e. as an idiom), and it is this (figurative) familiarity which generally prompts the brain to select the figurative sense over the literal sense. In short, the Configuration Hypothesis applied in conjunction with pragmatic considerations – namely the idiom's context and familiarity – provides the most plausible account of how the brain processes VLI idioms.

4.7 The Efficiency of the Mental Processing of VLI Idioms: The "Dual-Coding Approach"

The brain is divided into two hemispheres, the left and the right hemispheres, which are connected by a fibre tract called the "corpus callosum". In right-handed people the left hemisphere of the brain performs logical, abstract, and conceptual thinking, and processes verbal information. The right hemisphere performs creative, intuitive, and imaginative thinking, and processes pictorial information. In left-handed people, the situation is reversed: logical thinking and verbal processing occur in the right hemisphere, while creative thinking and imagery processing take place in the left hemisphere (cf. e.g. Paivio 1986, Gleitman 1991:38ff). One brain hemisphere usually dominates, i.e. people are either more logically minded and respond better to language than images, or they are more creatively oriented and favour pictorial stimuli (Hansen 1981, quoted in Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:389).³⁰ Relating these facts to advertising, readers/viewers tend to be more affected by (since they process more effectively) either the (written and/or spoken) language or the pictures of an advertisement.

VLI idioms, being also "imageable idioms" (Lakoff 1987:447) (i.e. idioms which evoke a particular mental image, cf. section 3.9), involve both language and imagery, and thus appeal to most people regardless of which brain hemisphere dominates. The imageability of VLI idioms stems from the fact that it is generally the literal meaning of an idiom's component words which constitutes its mental image: "Die wörtliche Bedeutung von Idiomen, die meist nur in einem absurden Kontext vorstellbar ist, ist es, die „uns viele Idiome bildhaft erleben läßt“ "it is the literal meaning of idioms, which is usually only conceivable in an absurd context, that "allows us to experience many idioms pictorially" (Pape 1985:2, quoting Schweizer

³⁰ The "Stroop effect" demonstrates that reading is an automatic skill by contrasting the word for a colour (e.g. "red") with the ink colour in which the word is printed (e.g. blue ink) (Stroop 1935, discussed in Gleitman 1991:296). When a person is shown the word "RED" and asked: "What colour are the letters?" they automatically read the word, and may consequently find it difficult to override their linguistic-based response to the question (i.e. "red") to produce the correct visually-based response (i.e. "blue"). A variation on the Stroop Test helps to ascertain which brain hemisphere dominates in an individual: in general, when asked to answer the above question immediately and without thinking, people with a logical-language hemisphere bias tend to reply "red", whereas people with a creative-imaginal hemisphere bias usually respond "blue" (Hansen 1981, quoted in Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990:389).

1978:5). Since VLI idioms by definition all possess a syntactically and semantically valid literal sense, they all stimulate a vivid mental image, which corresponds to their literal interpretation.

Because VLI idioms incorporate both language and imagery, they are "dually-coded" (term from Paivio 1986), i.e. processed by both the left and the right hemisphere of the brain. Paivio's (1986) research concerns the encoding, organisation, storage, and retrieval of both linguistic and non-linguistic information. More specifically, his "Dual-Coding Approach" refers to the verbal and imagery processing systems (or "codes") working in conjunction. In general, the verbal and the non-verbal processing systems are "structurally and functionally distinct" (Paivio 1986:54). With regard to structural distinctiveness, language is organised and constrained sequentially, explaining, for example, why it is harder to recite the alphabet or a poem backwards than forwards. Imagery, on the other hand, "ensures processing flexibility" since it is processed synchronously, and is thus free of such sequential constraints (Paivio and Walsh 1993:323). This means that language evoking vivid imagery (i.e. a VLI idiom) is processed more effectively. As regards functional distinctiveness, either processing system can be active without the other. Of particular relevance to this research is the finding that "imaginal and verbal codes are functionally independent in the strong sense that activation of both can have additive effects on recall" (Paivio 1986:77). The activation of both the verbal and the non-verbal processing systems can take place because both systems are also functionally interconnected, i.e. activity in one system can initiate activity in the other. When the verbal and the non-verbal processing systems are active in parallel "dual-coding" occurs.

Non-verbal information is of central importance to the Dual-Coding theory, because "imagery contributes specifically to the speed of accessing long-term memory" (Paivio and Walsh 1993:327). As illustration, when retrieving the concept "house" from long-term memory, it is faster, easier, and more accurate to construct a mental image corresponding to the term (e.g. a mental picture of a building with windows, a door, a roof, a chimney with smoke coming out, a garden, etc.) than it is to explain the concept in words. The relative ease with which imagery is processed and remembered improves the memorability of language which evokes strong images (i.e. VLI idioms): "Memory studies have shown that the availability of nonverbal images increases verbal recall" (Paivio and Walsh 1993:321). Since "imagery is more likely to be evoked and used with objects or pictures as stimuli than with words as

stimuli, and with concrete than with abstract words" (Paivio 1986:68), imagery and concrete nouns are the most effective "conceptual pegs" for language (Paivio and Walsh 1993:324).³¹ This means that a VLI idiom's vivid mental image, which is often based on a concrete noun within the phrase, acts as an extremely effective conceptual peg for the whole idiom.

In short, research has shown that the brain processes VLI idioms faster and more precisely than phrases with literal interpretations only (cf. e.g. Gibbs et al. 1989). The Dual-Coding Approach seems the likely explanation for the quicker processing and recall of VLI idioms: VLI idioms are processed and stored by both hemispheres of the brain because they are figurative linguistic expressions containing concrete words which thus evoke strong mental images. Both hemispheres of the brain working in conjunction ensures that the phrase is processed more efficiently than information (linguistic or imaginal) processed by one brain hemisphere alone.

4.8 Why The Interpretation of VLI Idioms Benefits Advertising

One reason for the prevalence of VLI idioms in advertising, which is limited in terms of both time and space, is their faster and more efficient processing and recall. The following chapter looks at the general roles and functions of idioms in German magazine and television advertising, focusing specifically on VLI idioms.

³¹ A "conceptual peg" is simply a mental trigger for the storage and retrieval of associated information.

Chapter 5: Idioms in German Magazine and Television Advertising

5.1 Introduction

The empirical research undertaken in this dissertation focuses on the use of VLI idioms in German magazine and television advertising. During the course of a general linguistic analysis of the roles and functions of idioms in German advertisements, it was discovered that VLI idioms constitute an intrinsic part of this discourse type. Not only do they appear relatively frequently and in prominent positions in advertising texts, but they are also incorporated into advertisements in novel and creative ways. Moreover, VLI idioms occur more often in magazine advertisements than in television advertisements. This finding suggests that VLI idioms perform very specific linguistic functions related specifically to the requirements of magazine advertising, namely that of imitating spoken language and creating strong visual images which are subsequently associated with the text as a whole.

VLI idioms have never before been investigated as a discrete category of idioms in any discourse type. They tend to be subsumed into the general categories of nominal and verbal idioms, even though VLI idioms by definition exhibit one key characteristic which sets them apart from other idioms: the fact that they possess a syntactically and semantically viable literal meaning in addition to their figurative sense.

Part 1 of the chapter outlines the methodology behind this research, beginning with a description of the linguistic corpus (section 5.2), which posed several potential experimental problems (section 5.3). The various classifications used as the basis for this research are outlined in section 5.4 before the general findings of the research undertaken in this dissertation are discussed in detail in Part 2 of the chapter. Idioms in German magazine and television advertising are analysed in terms of their frequency (section 5.5), textual position (section 5.6), and modification (section 5.7). Part 3 of the chapter focuses specifically on the use and functions of VLI idioms in German advertising (section 5.8).

Part 1: Methodology

5.2 The Linguistic Corpus

The corpus of magazine advertisements was compiled from issues of *Stern* magazine dated from 8th November 2001 (edition number 46 of that year) until 29th August 2002 (edition number 36). Every third edition in this period was examined; fifteen issues in all.³² The first ever edition of *Stern* appeared on 1st August 1948, published by Gruner & Jahr AG & Co.³³ Each edition sells approximately 1.5 million copies per week, making *Stern* Germany's most popular weekly magazine. *Stern* has a readership of an estimated 7.22 million people, which is around 11.2% of the German population aged 14 and over. The magazine deals with topics such as current affairs, travel, politics, the economy, culture, the environment, celebrity news, and lifestyle issues like health and beauty. Each edition of *Stern* magazine contains on average 203 pages, with advertisements being differentiated from magazine articles with the title "Anzeige" '(magazine) advertisement' where necessary.

The television advertisements were recorded from the television channel *RTL* between 9am and 5pm one day every fortnight from 9th November 2001 until 22nd November 2002. Thirty days' worth of advertisements were recorded in total.³⁴ *RTL* was founded in 1984 and is currently Germany's most popular television channel with 14.3% of the general viewing public tuning in.³⁵ More specifically, *RTL* attracts the largest proportion of all the 14–49 year-old German television viewers. Since this age group is the target audience of most advertisers, this goes a long way to explaining the relatively large amount of advertising on this particular channel. *RTL* features mainly news and current affairs programmes, quiz shows, soap operas, sitcoms, chat shows, and films in the evening. Advertisements occur primarily in the middle of programmes, rather than before and after programmes. Advertising spots are set apart

³² See Appendix 1 for the exact issue dates of all the magazines analysed.

³³ All facts and figures were provided by *Stern*'s publicity department after contacting them at info@Stern.de.

³⁴ Again, Appendix 1 lists the exact dates on which all the television advertisements were recorded.

³⁵ All data from *RTL*'s website <http://www.RTL.de> in the section entitled "Über RTL".

clearly from programmes with the written announcement "Werbung" 'advertising' at the start of every ad break.

5.3 Potential Problems with the Corpus

Advertising campaigns run for weeks and even months at a time, with the result that the same advertisements tend to appear in consecutive editions of *Stern* magazine and in successive *RTL* ad breaks on consecutive days. In an attempt to eliminate overlaps in the corpus, every third edition of *Stern* was analysed and television advertisements were recorded every fortnight from *RTL*. Even though advertisements for the *RTL* corpus were collected more frequently over a longer time period, fewer different advertisements were amassed in total than with the magazine corpus. This is because approximately half of the pages of *Stern* magazine comprise advertisements, whereas only around a quarter of *RTL*'s transmissions feature advertising. There is much more repetition of the same advertisements on television than in magazines because televised advertising campaigns have in general a longer life cycle than print advertising campaigns. Moreover, only the larger, wealthier companies can afford the relative expense of televised advertisements, so television advertising is dominated by a much less diverse range of companies and products, and consequently advertisements.

With regard to the idioms found in the corpus, four main problems arose. The first difficulty involved ascertaining which expressions actually constituted idioms. As pointed out in chapter 1, there exists no exact definition for an idiom. Instead, idioms possess certain characteristics such as relative syntactic fixedness, an ability to be paraphrased more literally, and certain stylistic and/or rhetorical effects (cf. section 1.5). In order to determine whether a phrase could be categorised as an idiom, German language and idiom dictionaries were consulted, the checklist of idiom characteristics outlined in section 1.5 was referred to, and six native speakers were asked their opinions.³⁶

³⁶ The main dictionaries consulted were: Görner (1979) *Redensarten*; Albrecht (2001) *Zitate und Sprichwörter*; Geer (2001) *Sprichwörter und Zitate*; Duden: *Das Große Buch der Zitate und Redewendungen* (2002); *Der Duden in 12 Bänden*, Bd. 11: *Redewendungen und Sprichwörtliche Redensarten* (2002); and Griesbach and Schulz (2003) *1000 deutsche Redensarten*.

Secondly, pinpointing the exact sense of the idioms found proved difficult as different dictionaries sometimes gave varying – and occasionally conflicting – definitions. The German native speakers consulted often offered interpretations of a given idiom which differed either from that of the dictionaries or from each other's understanding of the phrase. Moreover, the nuance of an idiom may change with the context in which it occurs. In order to provide a working definition for a given idiom in this dissertation, the explanation offered in the *Duden* (2002) dictionary *Redewendungen und Sprichwörtliche Redensarten* is used, subject to agreement from the majority of the native speakers consulted. Any contrasting definitions from other dictionaries, the native speakers, and/or the idiom's co-text and/or context are included where necessary.

Thirdly, translating the idioms into English was problematic as the temptation has traditionally been to translate a source language idiom by an idiom which is supposedly equivalent in the target language (cf. section 1.5.5, summarising Dobrovol'skij 1999). As stated in the preface, the English translations of German idioms given in this dissertation are in general paraphrases and explanations of the expression. Nevertheless, if an English idiom exists which is largely synonymous with the German idiom as regards syntax, lexicon, semantics, and pragmatics, the English idiom is offered as a translation in order to retain the stylistic and rhetorical flavour of the German.

Finally, categorising the various types of idioms created the biggest problem since, from a morpho-syntactic perspective, all idioms could be classified as nominal, verbal, or adverbial idioms. With regard to the *Stern* advertisements 17.52% (i.e. 79 idioms) of the corpus comprises nominal idioms, 67.63% (i.e. 305 idioms) verbal idioms, and 14.85% (i.e. 67 idioms) adverbial idioms. In the *RTL* advertising 25.96% (i.e. 27 idioms) of the corpus is made up of nominal idioms, 54.81% (i.e. 57 idioms) verbal idioms, and 19.23% (i.e. 20 idioms) adverbial idioms. The slightly higher percentage of verbal idioms in the corpus of magazine advertisements may be due to the need for dynamic, action-inducing language in the visually static medium of print. However, the three all-embracing categories of nominal, verbal, and adverbial idioms would not provide much detailed information on the wide range of idiom features, nor allow an understanding of the diverse ways in which various kinds of idioms are used in advertising. It is therefore worthwhile using a different method of categorisation in order to highlight the most distinctive types of idioms which play key roles in

advertising texts. The classifications of idiom types given by Fleischer (1982, outlined in section 1.6.1) and Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982; discussed in section 1.6.2) are used as the basis for the research in this dissertation, but although comprehensive, these classifications are heterogeneous since they combine syntactic, semantic, and functional categories of idioms.

This heterogeneity means that many idioms in the corpora could realistically belong to more than one category. For example, the idiom *mit spitzer Feder* [lit. 'with a pointed feather'] '(to write something) cruel or malicious' (similar in sense to the English idioms "with a deadly pen" or "with a pen dipped in vitriol") can be considered to be both an adverbial idiom and a VLI idiom. Since VLI idioms are the focus of this research, all the idioms found in the corpus were shown to native speakers to ascertain whether they had an acceptable literal interpretation. If so, they were classified first and foremost as VLI idioms. Where possible, other categories were favoured over the rather general syntactic categories of nominal, verbal, and adverbial idioms in order to provide more information on the various forms and functions of idioms found in the corpora. As a result, the classifications used in this dissertation are by no means absolute, and it could be argued that a given idiom belongs to an additional or a different subcategory than the one in which it has been placed for the purpose of this research. Consequently, the statistics quoted throughout this research should be taken more as an indication of the frequency and roles of VLI idioms in German advertising than as precise, unequivocal empirical data.

5.4 The Classifications Used in this Research

Three main classifications form the basis of this research: the different types of idioms (section 5.4.1); the textual positions in which the idioms in the magazine and television advertising corpora occur (section 5.4.2); and the various types of modifications performed on the idioms (section 5.4.3).

5.4.1 The classification of idiom types

Idioms in this research are categorised in the following way:

- 1) Nominal idioms
- 2) Verbal idioms
- 3) Adverbial idioms
- 4) Paraphrasal verbs
- 5) Syntactic frameworks
- 6) Parallel formulae
- 7) Idiomatic comparisons
- 8) Proverbs and proverbial expressions
- 9) Idiomatic "winged words"
- 10) VLI idioms
- 11) Idiomatic advertising jargon

This classification of idioms derives primarily from Fleischer's classification (1982:73ff) and Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's categorisation (1982:30ff). Categories are also taken from Hemmi (1994:61-3), and Wotjak (1994:622ff). Further concepts and terminology are borrowed from Everaert et al. (1995), Mel'čuk (1995), and Gläser (1998). As discussed in the previous section, this classification of idiom types is somewhat heterogeneous in that it comprises: 6 morpho-syntactic categories (nominal idioms, verbal idioms, adverbial idioms, paraphrasal verbs, syntactic frameworks, parallel formulae); 1 semantic-functional category (idiomatic comparisons); 2 functional-historical classification (proverbs and proverbial expressions, idiomatic "winged words"); and 1 genre-specific category (idiomatic advertising jargon). The category of VLI idioms combines all of the above classification types.

The first three categories of idioms used in this dissertation are taken directly from Fleischer (1982). Fleischer's categories of nominal idioms, verbal idioms, and adverbial idioms correspond to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) two categories of "Phraseologische Ganzheiten" 'phraseological entities' and "Phraseologische Verbindungen und bevorzugte Analysen" 'phraseological combinations and preferred analyses'. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) concept of preferred analyses has, however, been omitted in this research because it involves basic collocations like "sich die Zähne putzen" 'to brush one's teeth' rather than idioms with a specific stylistic and/or rhetorical function.

The category of nominal idioms in this dissertation also encompasses "onymische Wortgruppen" 'onymic word groups' (Fleischer 1982:74-5), but only

where they are idiomatic onymic word groups, as is the case with *der Blaue Planet* ≈ 'the Blue Planet', i.e. Earth, and *Die Goldenen Zwanziger* ≈ 'The Golden Twenties', i.e. the 1920s. Onymic word groups in the widest sense are simply proper nouns, and could hence be regarded as synonymous with "Phraseologische Termini" 'phraseological terms' such as "Das Rote Kreuz" 'the Red Cross' and "Die ehemalige Deutsche Demokratische Republik" 'the former German Democratic Republic' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:38ff). Yet unlike straightforward phraseological terms, idiomatic onymic word groups may theoretically be paraphrased and the concept expressed with a different, more literal, expression (e.g. "die Erde" 'Earth' or "die wunderbaren Zwanziger" 'the wonderful 1920s', respectively). Moreover, idiomatic onymic word groups produce a definite stylistic effect, which is not the case with phraseological terms. For example, the phrase *Die Goldenen Zwanziger* has a certain rhythm to it, while the use of the term conveys the speaker/writer's sense of nostalgia for the era. Consequently, idiomatic onymic word groups are included in this categorisation, whereas phraseological terms which are fundamentally proper nouns are not.

Verbal idioms are simply idioms containing a verb, like *jmdm./für jmdn. ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln sein* [lit. 'to be to someone a book with seven seals'] 'to be something one knows very little about or does not really understand', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be a closed book", and *(bis) über die Ohren verliebt sein* [lit. 'to be up to over the ears in love'] 'to be completely in love', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be head-over-heels in love". "Kinegramme" 'kinegrams' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982) have been amalgamated into other categories since only three examples were found in the whole (*Stern*) corpus: *Hand aufs Herz* ≈ 'hand on heart', i.e. truthfully; *den Daumen senken* [lit. 'to sink the thumb'] 'to show disagreement with or disapproval of something', similar in sense to the English idiom "to give something the thumbs down"; and *die Nase rümpfen* ≈ 'to wrinkle/turn one's nose up', i.e. to show disapproval or disdain. The categories of nominal idioms (*Hand aufs Herz*) and verbal idioms (*den Daumen senken*, *die Nase rümpfen*) were chosen over that of VLI idioms because the literal sense of a kinegram is a linguistic representation of its initial figurative, gestured sense. This means that although the literal meaning of a kinegram is perfectly acceptable in terms of syntax and semantics, its literal and figurative senses are inextricably linked as opposed to two different meanings, as is the case with VLI idioms.

Adverbial idioms are idioms which are based on an adverb or which can be used as an adverb, such as *auf allen vieren* ≈ 'on all fours', i.e. on hands and feet.

Paraphrasal verbs (term from Gläser 1998) correspond to Fleischer's (1982) "Funktionsverbgefüge" 'function verb constructions', and Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) category "Streckformen des Verbs" 'extended form of the verb'. Unlike most (verbal) idioms, paraphrasal verbs are extremely semantically conventional and compositional, and are hence often considered to be merely collocations. They qualify as idioms, however, because they produce a specific style and tone in a text (e.g. a literary style or a formal tone), and are thus used deliberately when the basic verb form would normally be the standard choice of expression. An example of a paraphrasal verb would be *etw. zur Entfaltung bringen* 'to bring something into being, to develop something', which is an extension of the simple verb form "etw. entfalten" 'to develop something'.

Syntactic frameworks are synonymous with Fleischer's (1982) "Phraseoschablonen" 'phraseological templates', and Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) classification of "Modellbildungen" 'model forms'. The term "syntactic framework" has been introduced to functionally distinguish this kind of idiom from "parallel formulae", which are equivalent to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Zwillingsformeln" 'twin formulae'. While syntactic frameworks are idioms like *Schritt für Schritt* ≈ 'step by step' with a regular rhythm and obvious repetition, parallel formulae display more poetic features such as assonance, alliteration, and rhyme. *Bei/in Wind und Wetter* [lit. 'in wind and weather'] 'whatever the weather', similar in sense to the English idiom "in all weathers", and *Kopf und Kragen risikieren* [lit. 'to risk head and collar'] 'to risk one's life', similar in sense to the English parallel formulae "to risk life and limb", are examples of parallel formulae. "Irreversible binomials" (Everaert et al. 1995) such as *der Erste und Einzige sein* ≈ 'to be the one and only', and "specializations" (Everaert et al. 1995) or "quasi-idioms" (Mel'čuk 1995) like *Kaffee und Kuchen* 'coffee and cakes (taken usually in the afternoon)' have been incorporated into the category of parallel formulae because they are fixed, rhythmic phrases in which the order of the words cannot be reversed without it sounding odd.

Idiomatic comparisons correspond to Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Phraseologische Vergleiche" 'phraseological comparisons', and are simply expressions of the kind *schlau wie ein Fuchs sein* ≈ 'to be as cunning as a fox', i.e.

very cunning, and *wie in Stein gemeißelt* [lit. 'as if chiselled in stone'] 'as if something is permanent, unchangeable, or law', similar in sense to the English idiom "as if set in stone".

The subcategory proverbs and proverbial expressions is based on Fleischer (1982), and is an amalgamation of Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) classifications "Feste Phrasen" 'set phrases' and "Sprichwörter und Gemeinplätze" 'proverbs and platitudes'. The category comprises full-clause or full-sentence idioms, which may be either context-bound set phrases like *wo die Liebe hinfällt* 'where love falls', i.e. a comment about a surprising or unusual couple, or a-contextual proverbs and truisms. A proverb is an expression of "Volksweisheit" 'folk wisdom' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:39) such as *wahre Schönheit kommt von innen* 'true beauty comes from within', i.e. it is only a good character which is truly beautiful. A truism, on the other hand, like *Leben ist schön* ≈ 'life is good', is more of a cliché, and often functions as merely a conversational filler. A final kind of proverbial fixed expression is a maxim (Fleischer 1982, Gläser 1998), which is an a-contextual general principle or rule of conduct such as *arbeiten um zu leben, und nicht leben um zu arbeiten* ≈ 'work to live, don't live to work', i.e. don't dedicate your life to work but rather view work as a financial necessity which enables you to enjoy the other things in life.

Idiomatic "winged words" are famous quotations or recognisable titles of/extracts from literature, films, plays, music, television programmes, or works of art. Although mentioned as a "Sonderfall" 'special case' by Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982:42) and as a peripheral type of idiom by Fleischer (1982), Hemmi (1994), Wotjak (1994), and Gläser (1998) all feel nevertheless that "winged words" are significant and prevalent enough to be included in a classification of idiom types. Only idiomatic "winged words" have been included in this research, however, i.e. recognisable set phrases rather than individual words or proper nouns, such as the children's book title *Die Drei Schweinchen* ≈ 'The Three Little Pigs', and the Lutheran slogan advocating the role of women as *Kinder, Kirche, Küche* 'children, church, kitchen', which was later adopted in Nazi Germany.

VLI idioms have been deliberately included as a separate subcategory of idioms because their uses and functions in German magazine and television advertising is the focus of this research. VLI idioms have a syntactically and semantically viable literal interpretation as well as their characteristic figurative sense. Examples include: *etw. über den Haufen werfen* [lit. 'to throw something over the

heap] 'to mess something up'; *eine lahme Ente sein* \approx 'to be a lame duck', i.e. to be someone or something in need of help or support; and *die Puppen tanzen lassen* [lit. 'to let the puppets dance'] 'to live it up'.

The concept of idiomatic advertising jargon is taken from Wotjak (1992) who incorporates "Werbepprüche" 'advertising sayings' into her classification of idioms, having created the category specifically for the analysis of idioms in advertising. The category in this dissertation encompasses familiar adese used in many advertisements, but has been restricted to advertising jargon which is idiomatic (i.e. to set phrases with a certain stylistic and/or rhetorical force which are typical of advertisements). An example of idiomatic advertising jargon would be *24 Stunden am Tag, 365 Tage im Jahr* '24 hours a day, 365 days a year', i.e. all year round, which has a catchy rhythm due to the lexical, syllabic, and syntactic parallels between the two halves of the idiom separated by the comma. Wotjak (1992), Hemmi (1994), and Gläser (1998) observe that well-known slogans like "Katzen würden Whiskas kaufen" 'Cats would buy Whiskas' are often quoted and parodied, and are therefore a kind of modern-day catchphrase or even proverb. However, advertising slogans are not actually traditional folk wisdom, but rather expressions dreamed up by particular advertisers which deliberately imitate the form and style of proverbs. Advertisers hope that the consumer will therefore perceive the advertising message, which provides subjective opinions and recommendations (i.e. "this product is the best on the market, so buy it"), as a proverbial expression which offers objective advice or warning, or communicates a general truth. As a result, advertising slogans are not included in the category of idiomatic advertising jargon in this dissertation.

Although used in Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982), Fleischer (1982), and Wotjak (1994), "kommunikative Formeln" 'communicative formulae' are not incorporated into the categorisation of idiom types in this research. Communicative or routine formulae are expressions like "Guten Tag!" 'hello!', "das meine ich auch" 'I agree', and "Tut mir leid" 'I'm sorry'. They perform many roles in (mainly spoken) language: acting as conventions such as greetings and farewells in everyday spoken conversation; organising conversation and ensuring that it flows smoothly; making stylistic points; functioning as "Sprechakte" 'speech acts'; as gambits to signal a particular point of view; and providing contextual detail (see section 1.6.1.2). However, unlike idioms, routine formulae are the conventional, preferred, and usually only ways of conveying specific information in language.

5.4.2 The classification of the textual positions of idioms in an advertising text

In the texts of the *Stern* magazine advertisements and the *RTL* television advertisements idioms appeared in the:

- 1) Headline ("die Schlagzeile")
 - 2) Copy body ("der Hauptteil des Werbetexts" in magazine advertisements; "die Spotmitte" in television advertisements)
 - 3) First sentence of the copy ("der erste Satz des Werbetexts" in *Stern*; "der Spotanfang" in *RTL*)
 - 4) Last sentence of the copy ("der letzte Satz des Werbetexts" in *Stern*; "das Spotende" in *RTL*)
 - 5) Subheadline ("der Untertitel")
 - 6) Illustration/visuals ("die Illustration" in *Stern*; "die visuellen Elemente" in *RTL*)
 - (7) Speech-bubble ("die Sprechblase")
 - (8) Caption ("die Bildunterschrift")
 - 9) Slogan ("der Slogan")
 - 10) Slogo ("das Slogo")
 - 11) Product name ("der Produktname")
- (German terminology from Nusser 1975, Hartwig 1983, Hemmi 1984, and from consulting German native speakers. Cf. also section 2.2.9.)

Since television advertisements never contain either captions external to the visuals or speech-bubbles (although occasionally thought-bubbles may appear for a character in an advertisement), these categories have been omitted in the classification of idiom positions in the *RTL* corpus.

5.4.3 The classification of types of idiom modifications

The various types of syntactic and semantic modifications to an idiom are categorised in this dissertation in the following way:

A) Internal Modifications

- 1) Lexical substitution
- 2) Expansion
- 3) Reduction
- 4) Separation
- 5) Grammatical modification
- 6) Affirmation ↔ negation change
- 7) Semantic modification through the context:
 - a) Activation of literal meaning through the co-text
 - b) Activation of literal meaning through the illustration/visuals
 - c) Activation of literal meaning through both the co-text and illustration/visuals

B) External Modifications

- 8) Accumulation
- 9) Metacommunicative commentary

This classification of idiom modification types is derived by combining Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982:68ff) and Wotjak's (1992:134ff) categorisations (as discussed in section 2.4.3.1). Wotjak (1992) makes the important distinction between changes to an idiom's "wendungsinterne" 'internal phrase' components (i.e. the syntax and semantics of the expression), and modifications to an idiom by means of its "wendungsexterne" 'external phrase' elements, namely the idiom's co-text and the context of the advertisement.

The categories of lexical substitution, separation, affirmation ↔ negation change, accumulation, and metacommunicative commentary are all taken directly from Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) (termed "lexikalische Substitution", "Abtrennung", "Wechsel Affirmation ↔ Negation", "Häufung", and "metasprachliche Kommentierung", respectively).

The category of reduction, which is synonymous with Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) classification "Verkürzungen" 'contractions', is taken from Wotjak (1992). Wotjak's terminology ("Reduktion") is adopted rather than Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's in order to contrast this category with that of "Expansion" 'expansion' (Wotjak 1992). The expansion classification encompasses Burger, Buhofer and Sialm's (1982) "Hinzufügung eines Adjektivs" 'addition of an adjective', "Determinativkomposition" 'determinative compound', and "Hinzufügung eines Genitivattributs" 'addition of a genitive attribute' to form a more general category.

The subcategory of grammatical modifications is taken directly from Wotjak (1992) ("grammatische Modifikationen"). Eight main types of grammatical

modifications to an idiom are identified in this research: from singular to plural, or vice versa; from definite to indefinite article, or vice versa, or even the complete omission of an article altogether; the use of a diminutive; nominalisation; the use of comparatives or superlatives; the omission or substitution of a function verb such as "haben" 'to have' or "sein" 'to be'; the omission or substitution of a conjunction; and changes to punctuation, syntax, or spelling.

The final category of internal modification, semantic modification through the context, applies primarily to VLI idioms. Semantic modification relates to the activation of an idiom's literal meaning, which a language-user usually (subconsciously) disregards in favour of the idiom's more common figurative interpretation. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm (1982) introduce this concept in their category "Verweise im Kontext" 'reference in context', but use the term "context" to refer to both the idiom's linguistic co-text and its non-linguistic context (in the sense of any illustration appearing with the idiom). Although Wotjak (1992) makes no explicit reference to co-text, she infers the distinction between co-text and non_linguistic context with her category "Ersetzen/Ergänzen von Verbalem durch Nonverbales" 'replacement/supplementation of verbal with non-verbal', which involves a picture evoking the literal meaning of an idiom. Because the activation of a VLI idiom's literal meaning – particularly by means of the illustration in an advertisement – is the focus of this research, the classification used in this dissertation comprises three subcategories to differentiate between co-text and non-linguistic context: activation of literal meaning through the co-text, activation of literal meaning through the illustration/visuals, and activation of literal meaning through both the co-text and illustration/visuals.

No idioms in either corpus were subjected to modifications of the form "Koordinierung (partiell identischer Phraseologismen mit Tilgung der identischen Elemente)" 'co-ordination (of partially identical elements with deletion of the identical elements)' or "Kontamination" 'contamination' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982), so these categories have been omitted from the classification of modification types used in this dissertation.

Part 2: General Research Findings

There now follows a detailed discussion of the findings of my research on idioms in actual German magazine and television advertisements. The *Stern* and *RTL* advertising corpora were each analysed in order to ascertain what percentage of German advertisements contains idioms (section 5.5). The textual position of idioms was also examined (section 5.6), as was the degree and type of modification to the idioms in advertising texts (section 5.7). VLI idioms are discussed in brief throughout these sections, but analysed in depth as a discrete category of idioms in Part 3 (section 5.8). In addition to the description of how each idiom is used in the advertisements discussed, an explanation of why the idiom may have been incorporated into the text is also attempted, based on section 2.4.2 on the roles and functions of idioms in advertising. Furthermore, all the advertisements containing idioms in the *Stern* and *RTL* corpora were shown to German native speakers to ascertain the various effects of the use – and, if applicable, the modification – of idioms in advertising. Where an idiom is modified, possible motives for this modification are suggested, in keeping with section 2.4.3.2 on the reasons for the modification of idioms in advertising.

5.5 The Frequency of Idioms in Advertisements

5.5.1 *Stern*

Each issue of *Stern* magazine comprises on average 203 pages, of which approximately half are advertisements. The corpus of magazine advertisements consists of 763 different advertisements in total. Of these, 53.60% (i.e. 409 advertisements) contains at least one idiom. 373 different idioms exist in the *Stern* corpus, and these idioms occur 451 times altogether.³⁷

³⁷ Appendix 2 comprises a full list of all the idioms found in both the *Stern* and the *RTL* corpora.

5.5.1.1 VLI idioms

As the bar chart in Table 1 shows, the most common type of idiom found in the *Stern* corpus is VLI idioms: 188 of the 451 idioms (41.69%) are idioms with both a figurative meaning and a syntactically and semantically feasible literal meaning.³⁸ Although the activation of the literal meaning of a VLI idiom in an advertisement is the focus of this research, an advertisement may in fact incorporate only the figurative sense of a VLI idiom, leaving the idiom's literal sense, although viable, inactivated. In such cases the necessity of a pragmatic analysis of idioms (or more specifically, the importance of co-text and context) is highlighted since the reader can work out which of the idiom's meanings – the literal or the figurative, or even both interpretations – is relevant to the particular advertisement only by examining the idiom's co-text, as well as the general context of the advertisement.

The feasible literal sense of the VLI idiom *wissen wie der Hase läuft* [lit. to know how the hare runs] 'to know what's going to happen' remains inactivated in an advertisement for the Deutsche Telekom telephone directory. The advertisement shows the notoriously grumpy German literary critic, Marcel Reich-Ranicki, sitting in a chair and clutching the directory (*Stern* 25/04/02, p.133; see Figure 5.1 at the end of the chapter).³⁹ The headline is presented as direct speech from Reich-Ranicki: „Meist weiß man nach 30 Seiten, wie der Hase läuft. Hier steht auf Seite 300 noch was Neues“ “Normally you know after 30 pages what's going to happen next. Here on page 300 there's still something new”. The VLI idiom is used here to create the

³⁸ Since this research examines how often idioms occur in all the advertisements of the corpora as opposed to merely how many different idioms appear, all calculations are based on how many times idioms occur altogether. For simplicity, where a single idiom is found in, for example, two different advertisements by two different companies promoting two different products, this total is referred to as "2 idioms" as opposed to the more accurate "1 idiom appearing twice". Although an idiom occurring as part of a company's slogan in several advertisements is theoretically the same idiom used in the same way by the same advertiser every time, it is counted as separate occurrences of the idiom because it appears in the separate advertisements in conjunction with different texts and visuals. In short, the *Stern* corpus will be described as containing 451 idioms, but this technically means "451 different occasions where an idiom occurs" rather than "451 different idioms".

³⁹ For the purpose of emphasis and variety, advertising text in general, and company names in particular, occur in advertisements in a variety of styles: in different fonts, colours, and sizes, sometimes entirely in upper case letters, and sometimes lacking capital letters altogether. Nevertheless, text and company names are given in a standardised form when cited in this dissertation. Unless otherwise stated, all italics in the advertisement extracts have been introduced by me in order to emphasise idioms contained within the text.

impression that the carefully constructed, written headline is actually natural, spontaneous speech, and that the literary critic is speaking in a register that the general public understands and is comfortable with. The use of a recognisable person in the advertisement to endorse the telephone directory sheds a positive light on the product, and the fact that it is the normally scathing Reich-Ranicki who is singing the praises of the book injects humour into the advertisement. The idiom also evokes a specific mental image of a hare running through a field, which allows the expression – and thus the whole advertising message – to be processed and remembered more effectively (cf. sections 3.9 and 3.10 for a general discussion on mental imagery, and section 4.7 for an outline of how mental imagery renders a VLI idiom more memorable).

More often than not, however, the literal sense of a VLI idiom is deliberately evoked in advertising. An advertisement for the Toyota Corolla Limited features at the top of the page a picture of a young boy eating pizza, while the rest of the page contains a photograph of the car advertised (*Stern* 08/11/01, p.53; Figure 5.2). The headline above the boy reads: "Einmal mit mehr drauf" 'One with more on top' (i.e. extra pizza toppings), and this is echoed by the headline above the car, which puns: "Einmal mit mehr drin" 'One with more inside' (i.e. added extras inside the car as detailed in the copy). The copy begins:

Schmackhafte Angebote erkennt man schon an den Zutaten. Der Toyota Corolla Limited bringt deshalb zahlreiche Extras wie Klimaanlage und Audiosystem mit CD-Radio serienmäßig. Bei einem Preisvorteil von DM 2.100,- dürfte selbst verwöhnten Genießern *das Wasser im Munde zusammenlaufen*. Lassen Sie sich einen kleinen Vorgeschmack nicht entgehen – Ihr Toyota Händler arrangiert gern eine Probefahrt.

Delicious offers are recognisable by the ingredients alone. The Toyota Corolla limited therefore provides as standard countless extras like air-conditioning and a sound system with CD-player and radio. With a price benefit of DM2100 the mouths of even discriminating connoisseurs may well water. Don't miss out on a little foretaste – your Toyota dealer will be pleased to organise a test-drive.

The advertisement uses the extended metaphor of the car as a delicious meal (the pizza of the illustration) in order to stimulate desire for the car, and perhaps even to convey the idea that just as an appetite for food is a basic and enjoyable human need, so too is an "appetite" for the car advertised. The VLI idiom at the centre of the

metaphor, *jmdm. läuft das Wasser im Mund(e) zusammen* [lit. 'to someone runs the water in the mouth'] ≈ 'the mouth waters', means literally that someone is salivating at the thought of food, and figuratively and more generally that someone is excited at the prospect of something. The literal sense of the idiom is reinforced by the illustration, the headlines, and words in the copy body like "Schmackhafte Angebote" 'delicious offers', "Zutaten" 'ingredients', "verwöhnten Genießern" 'discriminating connoisseurs', and "Vorgeschmack" 'appetiser'. The evocative and enticing language borrowed from the field of food and cookery is intended to tempt the reader to take an interest in – and ultimately buy – the car advertised.

The most frequently occurring VLI in the *Stern* corpus is *den Überblick behalten* [lit. 'to keep the overview'] 'to maintain an overview' or, more literally, 'to be able to see everything' since this idiom is the slogan for *Stern* magazine itself. VLI idioms are examined in detail in section 5.8.

5.5.1.2 Verbal idioms

Verbal idioms are the second most frequent kind of idioms found in the magazine corpus: 87 occur in total (19.29% of the whole corpus). The verbal idiom *gut aufgehoben sein* [lit. 'to be well lifted up'] 'to be well looked-after', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be in good hands", appears in a series of advertisements from the insurance company VHV Versicherungen. The idiom, written as "[Gut aufgehoben]", is both the slogan and headline in all three advertisements. The first advertisement shows three boys playing football; the second is of several car drivers stuck in a traffic jam; and the third presents three families boating on a lake (*Stern* 18/07/02, p.171; Figure 5.3). In each advertisement square brackets are superimposed around one individual/family, with the idiom *Gut aufgehoben* 'In good hands' written near them, while the rest of the people in the photograph have the description "versichert" 'insured' written below them. There is little text, and all the advertisements are in black and white. The only splash of colour is the yellow ink used for the square brackets, part of the company's logo, and the headline, which means that the text most emphasised is the verbal idiom. Using an idiom tends to render a text more colloquial in style, and even though the idiom *gut aufgehoben* sounds more elevated in tone than the rather blunt "versichert", it is conversely an expression characteristic of everyday, informal language. The idiom as a phrase

contrasting with the solitary word "versichert", in conjunction with the reassuring familiarity of the idiom, helps to convey the impression that with this company the client receives a little more care and attention for their money.

5.5.1.3 Parallel formulae

42 parallel formulae can be found in the *Stern* corpus (9.31% of the whole corpus). The slogan of an advertisement for the Trilogy diamond ring claims: "Trilogy. Ein Diamant für Ihre Vergangenheit, Ihre Gegenwart und Ihre Zukunft" 'Trilogy. A diamond for your past, your present and your future' (*Stern* 31/01/02, p.98; Figure 5.4). The triple formula *die Vergangenheit, die Gegenwart und die Zukunft* 'the past, present and future' is particularly apt as the slogan for this product because the ring comprises three diamonds (hence the product name "Trilogy"). Moreover, the three references to time (past, present, and future) in the idiom provide a sense of continuity, which allows the advertisement to allude to the idea of everlasting love (but only if the ring is bought!).

The parallel formula *nach wie vor* [lit. 'afterwards as before'] 'still' is present in the penultimate sentence of an advertisement for Ernest & Julio Gallo wine: "Beim Beschneiden und Veredeln hängt die Qualität *nach wie vor* vom Können und eigenen Ermessen ab" 'With the trimming and cultivating the quality depends now as before on skill and personal judgement'. By choosing this idiom over the more literal paraphrase "(immer) noch" 'still' the advertiser conveys the sense of continuity and longevity both by simply using a longer expression, as well as by mentioning explicitly the concepts of the past ("vor" 'before'), present, and future ("nach" 'afterwards'). The last sentence of the copy declares that "Absolut entscheidend sind dabei *das Auge fürs Detail* und die Fertigkeit, mit dem Messer umzugehen" 'Absolutely crucial in this case are an eye for detail and skill with a knife'. Thus a phrase containing concrete nouns (*ein/das Auge für etw. haben* ≈ 'to have an eye for something') is used to express an abstract idea (i.e. having a good understanding of something or the ability to do something), which helps the concept to be understood and remembered more easily. The parallel formula *nach wie vor* together with the verbal idiom *das Auge fürs Detail* allows the advertising message to be communicated in familiar, straightforward, concrete language.

An advertisement for Siemens information and communications systems features a spokesman for the German bank, SchmidtBank (*Stern* 29/08/02, p.16). The headline and the first three sentences of the copy are supposedly his direct speech, and are therefore contained within quotation marks. The first sentence reads: „Als Systemhaus ist man Dienstleister – ohne Wenn und Aber“ “As the systems department we are service providers – without any ifs or buts”. The parallel formula *ohne Wenn und Aber* is used here to reinforce and lend conclusiveness to the statement preceding it (especially since the idiom itself means 'without any excuses, arguments, objections, or doubts'), which makes the whole text sound authoritative. Moreover, the idiom injects the tone and style of natural, spontaneous speech into what is actually carefully planned, written text. (The headline, „Geld spielt eine Rolle – auch für Professionellen IT-Service“ “Money plays a part – even for professional IT-services”, also contains an idiom for this purpose.)

For the same reason the "Drillingsformel" 'triple formula' *heute, morgen, immer* 'today, tomorrow, always' makes up the subheadline „Ich liebe schöne Sachen. Heute, morgen, immer“ “I love beautiful things. Today, tomorrow, always” in an advertisement for the Bank Commerzbank (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.107). The idiom helps the written text sound like speech, which is intended to make the tone of the advertising message from what is potentially a faceless, intimidating corporation more relaxed, personal, and therefore appealing.

All the parallel formulae in the corpus display definite poetic features, making them eye- and ear-catching phrases which are easier to recall. The subheadline „Kraft in Hülle und Fülle“ “Strength in abundance” [lit. 'in cover and wealth'] in an advertisement for the Volvo S60 is an example of a parallel formula with rhyme (*Stern* 27/06/02, p.54), while the travel company Travelchannel.de uses an alliterative irreversible binomial in its advertisement to offer "Informationen zu *Land und Leuten*" 'Information on a country and its inhabitants' [lit. 'country and people'] in the last sentence of its advertisement copy (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.48). Similarly, the text of an advertisement for the ITS travel company urges: "Investieren Sie in *Sonne, Strand und Meer*" 'Invest in sun, sand and sea' with an irreversible trinomial displaying sibilance (*Stern* 18/07/02, p. 173).

5.5.1.4 Proverbs and proverbial expressions

6.65% of the corpus (i.e. 30 out of the total 451 idioms) is made up of proverbs and proverbial expressions. The first sentence of an advertisement for Bundeswertpapiere (government bonds) sets the tone for the rest of the text by stating that "*Dem Mutigen gehört die Welt*" 'Fortune favours the brave' (*Stern* 27/06/02, p.32). The proverb *dem Mutigen gehört die Welt* [lit. 'the world belongs to the brave'] 'one can achieve anything by being brave', is a bold statement intended to make the reader more open to the rest of the advertising message, and to encourage the reader to act decisively and wisely (by investing in government bonds). Simply using a proverb in the first place creates the impression that the advertisement is offering a piece of good advice as opposed to merely attempting to persuade the reader to spend his or her money.

For the same reason, the proverb *weniger wäre mehr* ≈ 'less is more', i.e. doing too much can spoil something, appears as the headline "*Weniger ist oft mehr!*" 'Less is often more!' in an advertisement for the JVC GR-DVP1 video camera (*Stern* 04/04/02, p.106). "Wäre" 'would be' as the conditional form of the verb "sein" 'to be' is changed to "ist oft" 'is often' to make the language of the advertisement more decisive and familiar. The only other text apart from the brand name claims that the product is "*Der kleinste Digital-Camcorder der Welt*" 'The smallest digital camcorder in the world', with the effect that the proverb as the focus of the advertisement emphasises the advertising message that this video camera is better than a larger model precisely because of its small size. Proverbs and proverbial expressions are present in many advertisements because they are rhetorical devices performing illocutionary acts such as offering advice or warning. Proverbs are therefore especially suited to advertising, which often dresses up the advertising message (i.e. "buy this product") as friendly suggestions in order to sell the products promoted. Proverbs and proverbial expressions are often used in advertising as the basis for creative and humorous wordplay, a trend which is looked at in more detail in section 5.7.

5.5.1.5 Syntactic frameworks

Approximately 5.77% of the corpus (i.e. 26 idioms) is taken up by syntactic frameworks. The most common framework is X *für* X 'X after X' or 'every X', which

occurs 9 times in total. This construction is used primarily with reference to time: *Tag für Tag* appears in the slogan for a tyre manufacturer as "Kléber denkt an Sie, *Tag für Tag*" 'Kléber thinks of you, day after day' (*Stern* 06/06/02, p.117); and in the copy of an advertisement for Magnettrans Forte magnesium supplements as "Für maximale Vitalität. *Tag für Tag*" 'For maximum vitality. Day after day' (*Stern* 29/11/01, p.87). The slogan of an advertisement for the magazine *Wirtschaftswoche* reads: "Nichts ist spannender als Wirtschaft. *Woche für Woche*" 'Nothing is more exciting than the economy. Week after week' (*Stern* 20/12/01, p.34), while the first sentence of an advertisement advocating the use of oil heating encourages: "Regen Sie sich nicht *Monat für Monat* über die Energiepreise auf" 'Don't be troubled month after month by energy prices' (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.9).

The copy of an advertisement for Feridence holiday company advises the reader: "Und *legen* damit den Grundstein, um *Jahr für Jahr* günstige Ferien machen zu können: in erstklassigen Apartments an 56 traumhaften Destinationen in Europa und Nordamerika ..." 'And in this way lay the foundations for taking low-cost holidays year after year: in first-rate apartments in 56 dream destinations in Europe and North America ...' (*Stern* 08/08/02, p.157). The idiom *Jahr für Jahr* is here found in conjunction with the VLI idiom *den Grundstein zu etw. legen* ≈ 'to lay the foundations for something', i.e. to make a start on something, or to set a precedent for something. The Feridence company offers holidays to house-sitters, and the idea of holidaying in another person's home (as opposed to in, for example, a caravan or a tent) is reinforced by highlighting the literal sense of the idiom (i.e. to literally lay the foundations of a building) in both the co-text (through the references to apartments) and the context (a photograph of a luxurious house). Two idioms in one sentence gives the text a familiar, colloquial tone, which is intended to make the advertisement sound like friendly advice in order to appeal to the consumer.

The *X für X* construction is also used spatially, occurring twice as *Schritt für Schritt* 'step by step'. The first sentence of an advertisement for the Internet site Sheego.com advises: "*Echte Schönheit kommt meistens ganz von selbst, Schritt für Schritt ...*" 'True beauty mostly comes from you yourself, step by step ...' (*Stern* 16/05/02, p.97). Again the literal sense of the idiom *Schritt für Schritt* is punned upon since the company provides sports equipment. The advertisement slogan claims that "Laufen macht schön" 'Running makes you beautiful', and the rest of the text describes jogging equipment and sportswear, while the illustration comprises a

photograph of an attractive young woman in a tracksuit looking tired (but exhilarated) after a jog. The proverb *wahre Schönheit kommt von innen* 'true beauty comes from within' has here been modified in order to render the idiom more informal in style, thereby echoing actual speech, and to convey a new approach to the old idea that beauty is on the inside: your inner strength (beauty) can help you to push your body to its limits in order to achieve external beauty. An advertisement for *Stern* magazine's Internet guide professes that their instructions teach the reader "*Schritt für Schritt von A bis Z*" 'Step by step from A to Z' (*Stern* 10/01/02, p.81). This whole sentence is made up of two idioms in sequence (the parallel formula *von A bis Z* means 'from A to Z', i.e. everything), which allows the text to recreate the style of speech. Moreover, the idioms are both completely monosyllabic, meaning that the sentence sounds very rhythmic and is therefore easily remembered.

The headline in an advertisement for the insurance company Victoria contains an idiom with a catchy rhythm to emphasise its promise to the reader of "*Geld, Geld und nochmals Geld*" 'Money, money, and more money', i.e. lots of money (*Stern* 29/08/02, p.102). Syntactic frameworks such as X, X *und nochmals* X, X *für* X, X *auf* X (e.g. *Schlag auf Schlag* 'blow after blow') (*Stern* 27/06/02, p.34), and X *über* X (e.g. *Fragen über Fragen* 'question after question') (*Stern* 31/01/02, p.77) all allow repetition of lexical elements within the phrase. This stylistic device not only draws the phrase to the reader's attention, but also renders it more memorable. Furthermore, the repetition of nouns provides a sense of accumulation, which allows the form of the expression to echo its meaning: using, for example, *Woche für Woche* 'week after week', i.e. every week (*Stern* 27/06/02, p.138), instead of the more basic "jede Woche" 'every week' means that the text contains more words, making it sound longer and thus seeming to convey a longer period of time. In general, syntactic frameworks involve repetition, injecting thereby a sense of familiarity into a text. Repetition as a stylistic device encourages the reader to notice and recall more effectively the idiom in which it occurs, and thus subsequently the whole advertising text.

5.5.1.6 Nominal idioms

The corpus contains 24 nominal idioms altogether (5.32% of the entire corpus). 9 of these 24 nominal idioms (37.5%) are idiomatic onymic word groups. The first sentence of an advertisement from the Egyptian tourist board invites the reader to visit

"*das Land der Pharonen*" 'the land of the Pharoahs' (*Stern* 29/11/01, p.25). The idiom evokes the history and culture of the country, and hence functions as a kind of shorthand for the concepts the advertiser wishes to convey. Moreover, the colourful idiom gives the text a more distinctive, descriptive tone than the effect created by simply using the proper noun "Ägypten" 'Egypt'. The text of an advertisement for the Mercedes-Benz A-Class claims that the car contains "mehr Ladevolumen für *vierbeinige Begleiter* und Gepäck" 'more load capacity for four-legged friends and luggage', with the photograph of two Labradors clearing up any doubt that the 'four-legged friends' ("*vierbeinige Begleiter*") are dogs (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.11). Here the idiom makes the text seem more personal, relaxed, and even humorous than would be the case if only the noun "Hunde" 'dogs' had appeared.

5.5.1.7 Idiomatic advertising jargon

The next most common type of idiom found in the corpus is idiomatic advertising jargon. 19 examples of idiomatic advertising jargon occur altogether (4.21% of the corpus). *Der/die/das X von morgen* 'the X of tomorrow', i.e. of the future, appears most frequently (5 times in total) as: "... *die Computerleistungen von morgen*" 'the computer performances of tomorrow' (last sentence of advertisement for Dmc² technology, *Stern* 06/06/02, p.83); "Ergreifen Sie heute *die Chancen von morgen*" 'Seize today the chances of tomorrow' (last sentence of an advertisement for Fidelity Investments private healthcare, *Stern* 20/12/01, p.40); "*Die Legende von morgen*" 'The legend of tomorrow' (headline of an advertisement for the MG TF car, *Stern* 16/05/02, p.137); "... *unsere Kellermeister von morgen*" '... our vintners of tomorrow' (copy body of Rheinhessenwein wine company, *Stern* 16/05/02, p.63); and "*Das Internet von morgen ...*" 'The Internet of tomorrow ...' (first sentence of an advertisement for Tiscali Internet company, *Stern* 18/07/02, p.126).

Another example of idiomatic advertising jargon is the phrase X [*tun*] *wie die Profis* 'to do X like the professionals', i.e. with skill or extremely well. This idiom appears in the first sentence of the advertisement promoting the Canon EOS 3000 camera: "Mit der Canon Spiegelreflexcamera *machen Sie Fotos wie die Profis*" 'With the Canon Mirror-reflex camera you can take photos like the professionals' (*Stern* 08/11/01, p.194). Idiomatic advertising jargon is used because it is familiar language

specific to the discourse of advertising, and therefore sparks recognition and recall within the reader's mind.

5.5.1.8 Adverbial idioms

Adverbial idioms are found in the *Stern* corpus 14 times (3.1% of the whole corpus). The most common adverbial idiom is *rund um die Uhr* ≈ 'around the clock', i.e. at all times during the day or night, which occurs a total of 5 times. This idiom is used because it sounds more poetic than a more literal paraphrase like "jederzeit" 'at any time', but yet is a phrase using concrete language to express the abstract concept of time. Furthermore, it evokes the specific mental image of a clock ("Uhr"), which serves to fix the phrase in the memory.

5.5.1.9 Idiomatic "winged words"

In total 11 idiomatic "winged words" appear in the corpus (2.44%). Figure 5.5 shows an advertisement for Sonne Internet provider carrying the headline "*Und es ward Licht*" 'And there was light', which is an excerpt from Genesis 1:3 detailing the command that God gave to create sunlight on earth (*Stern* 08/11/01, p.24). The advertisement's illustration features the word "Sonne" 'sun' within a circle. The background of the advertisement is entirely black, with the only colour being yellow (representing the theme of sun and light) for the website address and around the word "Sonne" in order to emphasise these elements in particular. Thus the Biblical quotation, whose source is intimated by the use of the archaic form "ward" for "wurde" 'became', is an allusion to the sun, further highlighting the name of the company advertised. The fact that the company advertised is in this way associated with the Bible lends an elevated tone to the text, and the sense of tradition, respectability, reliability, truth, and wisdom created by quoting the word of God is transferred to the company.

The quotation *die Bretter, die die Welt bedeuten* [lit. 'the boards which symbolise the world'] 'the stage' from Schiller's 1785 poem *An Die Freude* occurs in a modified form in the headline for an American Express credit card advertisement: "Willkommen auf *den Brettern dieser Welt*. Und im guten Buchladen" 'Welcome to the boards of this world. And to a good book shop' (*Stern* 31/01/02, p.113; Figure

5.6). The advertisement's illustration comprises a photograph of a boxing ring, with the crowd and an exasperated referee urging on two boxers sitting in their corners reading *Faust* instead of fighting. "Die Bretter" 'the boards' is therefore used here with a novel meaning to imply that the boxing ring is also a certain kind of performance stage, and to refer literally to the (boards of the) boxing ring. The idiom is elevated and formal in style and tone, perhaps in keeping with the routine formula "willkommen (zur/bei/in) ..." 'welcome (to) ...' which would probably be used by the boxing announcer to welcome the audience to the boxing match. The fact that the idiom occurs in an innovative form and sense lends originality to the advertisement, thus reflecting positively on the product being promoted.

Idioms occur throughout the advertising text, the first sentence of which reads: "Ob Sie lieber *Body oder Geist* bilden, mit der American Express Card können Sie überall *nach Lust und Laune* zuschlagen: in guten Sportgeschäften, im Buchhandel, in der Boutique oder beim Ticket-Vorverkauf" 'Whether you prefer to improve your body or mind, with the American Express card you can let fly as the mood takes you: in good sports shops, in a bookshop, in the boutique or at the ticket sales'. The phrases *Body oder Geist* 'body or spirit', "in guten Sportgeschäften" 'in good sports shops', and "im Buchhandel" 'in a bookshop' further emphasise the irony and humour of the illustration which features boxers (stereotypically extremely physical, no-nonsense sportsmen) reading *Faust* (Goethe's high-brow literary work exploring the relationship between the body and the soul). The advertisement's theme of linking the physical with the spiritual is consequently an attempt to elevate the product (a credit card) to a less materialistic level (i.e. the credit card can be used to buy things in order to improve the human mind and body). The two parallel formulae *Body und Geist* (derived from *Körper/Leib und Geist/Seele* 'body and soul') and *nach Lust und Laune* [lit. 'according to desire and mood'] 'however/whenever one likes' (similar to the English idiom "as the mood takes you"), create a sense of parallelism (compounded by the fact that the two boxers in the photograph are actually the same person reading the same book). Furthermore, the inclusion of several idioms allows familiar language to set the tone for the advertisement copy, thereby attracting the reader's attention, helping him or her to remember the content of the advertisement, and creating the impression that because the language is recognisable the advertising message is thus also a well-known concept.

5.5.1.10 Paraphrasal verbs

6 paraphrasal verbs occur in the various magazine advertisements (1.33% of the whole corpus). An advertisement for Tiger Balm pain relief gel ends with the sentence "Millionen Menschen rund um den Globus *schicken ihm Vertrauen*" 'Millions of people around the globe put their faith in it' (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.67; Figure 5.7). Using the paraphrasal verb *jmdm. Vertrauen schicken* [lit. 'to give trust as a gift to someone'] 'to place trust in someone' rather than the more basic "jmdm./einer Sache vertrauen" 'to trust someone/something' allows the advertiser to personify the product since the verb takes a human indirect object. The extended form of the verb also brings the verb "schicken" 'to give as a gift' into play, which ties in well with the advertisement's illustration showing two hands extending from oriental robes offering the product directly to the reader. The oriental origins of Tiger Balm is highlighted through the Chinese symbol of the logo, the clothing of the model in the illustration, and the reference to "die Gelehrten des fernen Ostens" 'the scholars of the Far East'. Since the paraphrasal verb *jmdm. Vertrauen schicken* could almost be described as a more polished and refined way of expressing the concept of trusting someone, the idiom conforms with the stereotype of the politeness and respectfulness of Oriental people.

5.5.1.11 Idiomatic comparisons

The idiom type which is found least frequently in the *Stern* corpus is idiomatic comparisons. Only 4 appear altogether (0.89%). The advertisement for the Internet server Freenet.de contains a modified version of the idiomatic comparison *reden, wie einem der Schnabel gewachsen ist* [lit. 'to talk as your beak has grown'] 'to talk freely, naturally, and without reservations' (*Stern* 06/06/02, p.86; Figure 5.8). The second sentence of the copy reads: "Wir *chatten, wie uns der Schnabel gewachsen ist*" 'We chat freely and easily'. The more generic verb "reden" 'to talk, chat' has been substituted by the newer, colloquial verb "chatten" because "chatten" is jargon connected with the Internet. This lexical substitution allows the idiom to better suit its context, as well as making the advertiser – and hence the product promoted – seem more innovative and up-to-date. The idiom fits the informal tone and colloquial style of the whole text, which is created by the supposed direct speech ("wir" 'we') from the

subjects of the advertisement, together with the use of several colloquial expressions like "Gottseidank" 'thank God' and "Teufel auch!" 'Damn it all!'. Moreover, the idiom comes across as rather incongruous and therefore humorous when related to the advertisement's illustration in which three rather morose-looking old men in party-hats sit around an empty grave doing anything but chatting freely. Furthermore, it is perhaps no coincidence that the gentleman on the right of the picture has a rather large nose which resembles a beak ("der Schnabel"), thereby reinforcing the strong mental image evoked by the idiom of a human face growing a beak. The concrete mental image associated with the idiom allows the expression to be understood and remembered more effectively.

The whole advertisement is based on the related religious themes of heaven and earth, God and the devil, and life and (old age and) death, which are epitomised in the illustration showing the three men sitting in a graveyard, practically in a grave (physically and metaphorically). The slogan reads: "Um über Gott und die Welt zu reden, müssen wir nicht *zum Teufel gehen*" 'In order to talk about God and the world we don't have to go to the devil'. The literal interpretation of the idiom *geh/scher dich zum Teufel!* (similar in sense to the English idiom "go to hell!") is suggested by the unusual syntactic modification of the phrase: 'going to the devil' may here be understood as dying (and subsequently going to hell). In addition, the copy includes the expressions *Himmel und Erde* 'heaven and earth', and the aforementioned "Gottseidank" and "Teufel auch!". Basing the advertisement on these universal themes, and making the older generation the subject of the advertisement opens up to a wider, older audience the concept of the Internet, which is often considered to be modern technology used only by – and thus directed solely towards – the young. The Internet also seems less complex and abstract a concept thanks to the humour of the advertisement and to the association of the product with these universal themes.

The (modified) verbal idiom *geh zum Teufel!* in the slogan, the adverbial idiom *rund um die Uhr* ≈ 'around the clock' in the subtitle in the top right-hand corner, the parallel formula *Himmel und Erde* 'heaven and earth', and the idiomatic comparison *chatten, wie uns der Schnabel gewachsen ist* all combine to produce the effect of an accumulation of idioms.⁴⁰ This injects a sense of thematic and linguistic

⁴⁰ As discussed in Wotjak (1992), the accumulation of idioms is a type of modification external to idioms. Types of internal and external modifications to idioms are examined further in section 5.7.

unity into the advertisement, and also leads the reader to regard the advertisement (and therefore the product advertised) as clever, creative, and inventive.

5.5.2 RTL

Approximately 240 hours of the television channel *RTL* was analysed, of which nearly a quarter comprised advertisements (around 57.5 hours of advertisements in total). Altogether, 212 different advertisements constitute the corpus of television advertising. Of these, 41.51% (i.e. 88 advertisements) contains at least one idiom. 86 different idioms appear in the *RTL* corpus, and these idioms occur 104 times in total.⁴¹

5.5.2.1 Idiomatic advertising jargon

The most common type of idiom found in television advertisements is idiomatic advertising jargon (again, see Table 1). 18 examples in total exist in the corpus (approximately 17.30%).⁴² One kind of idiomatic advertising jargon which occurs only in the *RTL* corpus is the formula *der/die/das X-ste Y seit es Z gibt* 'the X-est Y since Z began'. An advertisement for Milka chocolate features a young boy living in an alpine cabin enjoying some of the chocolate, then hiding the rest of it on a mousetrap in a cupboard in order to keep his friends from stealing it when they come to stay (*RTL* 12/04/02). The next shot shows the outside of the cabin at night, with the sound of the mousetrap going off and an exclamation of pain. The next morning the boy examines all his friends' fingers to find the culprit, but everyone's hands are uninjured. He then notices his grandfather looking guilty and attempting to hide his bandaged hands behind his newspaper. At this point the voiceover reads the slogan, which also appears on the screen in writing above a close-up of the trademark purple Milka cow: "Milka. *Die zarteste Versuchung seit es Schokolade gibt*" 'Milka. The tenderest temptation since chocolate began'. The advertisers perhaps chose this idiomatic advertising jargon as their slogan – and sole item of text – in order to

⁴¹ A video of all the *RTL* advertisements discussed in this chapter may be obtained by contacting the Department of German, The University of St Andrews.

⁴² As explained in Fn. 35 "18 idioms" actually means "idioms appearing on 18 different occasions" rather than "18 different idioms".

establish the appropriate tone and style (i.e. that of an advertisement trying to sell a product) right at the end of what would otherwise seem simply to be a heart-warming (and even overly sentimental) anecdote.

A second illustration of this particular type of adese also takes the form of the slogan spoken at the end of the advertisement: "Aktion-Mensch Lotterie. *Die beste Geschenkidee seit es Weihnachten gibt*" 'Aktion-Mensch Lottery. The best gift idea since Christmas began' (RTL 07/12/01). The visuals comprise a man moving through a town full of people hurrying around doing Christmas shopping. The man moves in a relaxed fashion (slow-motion film is used for his movements) because he has already bought his Christmas presents (a year's supply of monthly lottery tickets), whereas the rest of the people in the advertisement bustle around searching frantically for presents (highlighted by the double-speed film). The advertising jargon contrasts with the more informative content and tone of the voiceover, which gives facts like "Zwölf mal die Chance auf 500,000 Euro. Siebzigtausend Gewinne monatlich" 'Twelve times the chance of 500,000 Euros. Seventy thousand winners every month'.

5.5.2.2 VLI idioms

VLI idioms are the (joint) second most frequently occurring type of idiom in the RTL corpus. 17 out of the total 104 idioms are VLI idioms (16.35%). An advertisement for Wrigleys Extra chewing gum features a young man holding a packet of the gum who is standing in a busy street, looking around for someone (RTL 29/03/02). Several pretty girls pass by and he smiles hopefully at all of them, but is disappointed. Finally he notices across the road a woman's hand holding a packet of the same gum, but when he looks up at her face he becomes overawed by her sexiness. He therefore gives his chewing gum to an older, less attractive man sitting nearby who has just finished eating, and he walks away. The girl then notices the gum in the older man's hand, walks towards him and smiles, and the man looks amazed but delighted. Right at the moment when the young man first notices the girl, the voiceover begins and explains the rest of the action as it happens:

Wenn ein Blinddate plötzlich mal *eine Nummer zu groß* wird, kann ein Ausweg sein jemandem zu erzählen, dass Wrigleys Extra nach dem Essen gefährliche Kariessäuren im Mund neutralisiert und dadurch das Kariesrisiko um bis zu vierzig Prozent reduziert. Wrigleys Extra. Das Extra für gesunde Zähne. Natürlich Zuckerfrei.

If a blind date suddenly becomes too hot to handle, an escape can be to tell someone that Wrigleys Extra after eating neutralises harmful plaque acid in the mouth, and reduces the risk of plaque by up to forty percent. Wrigleys Extra. The Extra for healthy teeth. Naturally sugar-free.

The figurative sense of the VLI idiom *eine Nummer zu groß werden* [lit. 'to become a number too big'] 'to be too difficult' as the first sentence of the text attracts the viewer's attention because it is a familiar, colloquial phrase. The phrase contrasts in tone and style with the dental jargon in the rest of the advertisement ("Kariessäuren" 'plaque acid', "Kariesrisiko" 'risk of plaque', "gesunde Zähne" 'healthy teeth'), making the idiom a device to interest the viewer in the advertising message before hitting him or her with the rather dry and more complex technical language and scientific "fact" ("bis um zu vierzig Prozent reduziert" 'reduced by up to forty percent'). As is the case with the VLI idiom *wissen wie der Hase läuft* [lit. to know how the hare runs] 'to know what's going to happen' discussed in section 5.5.1.1, the viable literal interpretation of the idiom *eine Nummer zu groß werden* ('to be a size too big' in clothing) is not activated in this particular context. This means that both *wissen wie der Hase läuft* and *eine Nummer zu groß werden* have been categorised as VLI idioms on semantic rather than pragmatic grounds, that is, on the basis that their literal sense could be used and understood by native speakers in some (theoretical) context, even though on this particular occasion it is only their more familiar figurative sense that is activated.

5.5.2.3 Verbal idioms

17 verbal idioms appear in the corpus of television advertisements (16.35% of the total corpus). A parody of slushy romantic films is the style of the advertisement for Cesar dog food which appears in time for Valentine's Day (RTL 01/02/02). The advertisement begins with a scene accompanied by a cheesy soundtrack in which two dogs in a field notice each other, seem to fall in love, then run in slow-motion towards each other. The advertisement ends with a shot of the two dogs side by side inside a

big pink heart superimposed on the screen. The first sentence of the voiceover asks: "*Bis über beide Ohren verliebt?*" 'Head-over-heels in love?'. The mental image of ears which is associated with the literal meaning of the verbal idiom *bis über beide Ohren verliebt sein* [lit. 'to be up to over both ears in love'] 'to be completely in love' is emphasised by the advertisement's visuals where one of the dogs shows that it has "fallen in love" by widening its eyes and twitching its ears just as the voiceover pronounces the word "Ohren" 'ears'. This allows the idiom to encapsulate the theme of the whole advertisement (love). The idiom also simplifies the advertising message ("if you love your dog, buy it Cesar dog food") in familiar and colloquial language. The visual pun on the literal sense of the idiom – and indeed the tone of the whole advertisement – is humorous, which increases the chances of the viewer responding positively to and remembering the advertising message.

The (spoken) text of an advertisement for the meteorological Internet website *wetter.de* (RTL 16/08/02) states:

Schöne Aussichten. Wetter.de. Ihr Online Wetter. Ständig aktuell. Für alle Orte in Deutschland und für Ihren Urlaub in der Sonne und im Schnee. Und jetzt neu: auch per SMS auf Ihr Handy. Wetter.de. *Wir machen gutes Wetter.*

The outlook is fine. Wetter.de. Your online weather. Continually up-to-date. For all towns and villages in Germany and for your holiday in the sun and in the snow. And now new: also by SMS to your mobile. Wetter.de. We make good weather.

The advertising slogan "*Wir machen gutes Wetter*", which is both spoken and written, is a modification of the verbal idiom (*bei jmdm.) gut Wetter machen* [lit. 'to make good weather at someone'] 'to make someone feel favourably towards you'. The literal sense of the idiom is emphasised both by the co-text ("Schöne Aussichten" 'Outlook fine', "Wetter" 'weather', "Sonne" 'sun', "Schnee" 'snow') and context (pictures of weather maps and charts), and by the fact that the declining adjective "gutes" 'good' is used instead of the "gut" of the idiomatic phrase. Since the literal meaning of the idiom is especially suited to the advertisement's theme of weather it seems more (semantically and pragmatically) appropriate than the expression's figurative sense, but using as the slogan and last sentence of the advertisement a phrase which is (syntactically) recognisable as an idiom produces certain stylistic effects. The language is familiar to the viewer and therefore easily understood and remembered, while the idiom as a whole acts as a kind of *finalé* to the advertisement,

summing up the theme of the advertising message and providing a conclusive statement to end the advertisement. The modification of idioms, particularly with regard to the activation of the literal meaning of an idiom's component words, is discussed further in section 5.7.

5.5.2.4 Proverbs and proverbial expressions

13.46% of the *RTL* corpus (i.e. 14 idioms altogether) comprises proverbs and proverbial expressions. The advertisement for Nivea Q-10 moisturiser contains the proverb *aus den Augen, aus dem Sinn* ≈ 'out of sight, out of mind', i.e. if you cannot actually see something then you do not think about it (*RTL* 19/07/02). The advertisement shows several older, carefree-looking ladies smiling and posing for the camera, while the authoritative male voiceover describes in detail the benefits of the cream ("verbesserte Faltenreduktion" 'improved wrinkle reduction'). The proverb is emphasised by the fact that it is the only comment from any of the female models throughout the advertisement: "*Aus den Augen, aus dem Sinn!*". Here the function of the proverb is to summarise in a concise form the advertising message ("Nivea Q-10 will reduce wrinkles, and if you can't see them you don't need to worry about them"). The concrete mental image of eyes ("Augen") evoked by the literal sense of the proverb makes the idiom easier to recall, and is reinforced by the advertisement's visuals in which one of the models points to laughter lines around her eyes. The proverb performs the illocutionary function of offering advice (here about skincare), which is the approach taken by most cosmetic manufacturers to sell their product. The familiar wording of the expression, spoken by a woman, contrasts with the more technical language employed by the male voiceover with the result that the proverb catches the viewer's attention, and is subsequently processed and remembered more efficiently.

5.5.2.5 Parallel formulae

Parallel formulae occur 13 times (12.5% of the whole corpus). The parallel formula *klein, aber fein* 'small but good' (similar in sense to the English parallel formula "short and sweet") is modified to form the slogan for Merci Pur chocolates: "*Klein und fein und Merci Pur*" 'Small and good and Merci Pur' (*RTL* 02/08/02). The idiom *klein,*

aber fein suggests that being small is usually perceived as a negative quality ('small BUT good'), but in this instance the smallness of the chocolates is presented instead as a product benefit by changing the "aber" 'but' to "und" 'and'. The idiom is used as the slogan because of its catchy rhythm and rhyme, which attract the viewer's attention and make the slogan – and consequently the product name – stick in the consumer's memory. The slogan stands out from the rest of the advertisement's text because it is spoken by an authoritative male voiceover, whereas all other speech comes from a woman talking directly to the camera (and thus straight to the viewer) in a relatively natural and informal way about what she likes about the chocolates.

The parallel formula *nach und nach* [lit. 'after and after'] 'gradually' occurs in the middle of the (spoken) text of an advertisement for Eunoia Langzeit-Multivitamin (RTL 04/01/02). The advertising message claims that ordinary vitamin complexes release vitamins into the body all at once, with the result that "Versorgungslücken" 'supply gaps' occur. In contrast, Eunoia multivitamins "geben die meisten Vitamine *nach und nach* ab und schließen diese Lücken" 'release most of the vitamins gradually and close these gaps'. The idea of continuity and renewal is reinforced by the repetition of "nach" in the parallel formula *nach und nach*, which is used in favour of the more literal synonym "allmählich" 'gradually'.

5.5.2.6 Idiomatic "winged words"

Idiomatic "winged words" occur in the RTL corpus 9 times altogether (8.65% of the whole corpus). A series of advertisements for Quam mobile phone company have as their slogan "„*Ich habe einen Traum*“" "I have a dream", the famous quotation from Martin Luther King's 1968 speech for racial equality. Six different versions of the advertisement appear altogether, and the advertisements occur in every other slot in a series of three within one advertisement break. Each time, the slogan appears in writing in English at the end of the advertisement: "Quam. i have a dream", with the English emphasising the source of the original quotation. The "I" is written in lower case letters, which further highlights the slogan, and also makes the "I" seem less definite, thereby suggesting that the dream of the advertisement's "I" (i.e. the character speaking) could apply to more than one person (i.e. the viewer as well). The first example shows a woman standing in a supermarket queue, looking rather fed-up as the boy serving her gets tangled up in the till receipt. "Her" voice announces: "*Ich*

habe einen Traum. Nie mehr einkaufen gehen 'I have a dream. To never go shopping again'. The headline "24-h-shopping per handy" '24-hour shopping by mobile' then appears on the screen. The second example features a nervous young man standing at the front of a large, almost empty lecture hall. The professors at the back of the hall examining him appear distinctly unimpressed, and "his" voice declares: "*Ich habe einen Traum. Immer die richtige Antwort finden*" 'I have a dream. To always find the right answer'. On the screen the headline "Internet per handy" 'Internet on your mobile' comes into view. In the third instance a young woman sitting in a busy Internet café looks delighted as she receives a personal e-mail. Her happiness turns to annoyance as she notices the man beside her reading the message over her shoulder, and "she" remarks: "*Ich habe einen Traum. Emails lesen, wo immer ich will*" 'I have a dream. To read e-mails wherever I like'. The headline "Emails auf Handy" 'E-mails to your mobile' appears in writing on the screen (all three examples from *RTL 29/03/02*). The idiom, being familiar to most viewers, thus catches the attention, and is easily processed and remembered.

Using the quotation as the basis for the whole advertising campaign associates the advertisements (and thus the product) with Martin Luther King, thereby elevating the wishes of the advertisements' subjects (and the product) to the level of significance of Martin Luther King's ideal. The viewer who is aware that, for example, the mundane wish of never again having to queue in a supermarket is in no way as important as the desire for racial equality, may find the advertisements humorous, and hence more appealing. Recognising the quotation also gives the viewer a certain intellectual satisfaction, which flatters him or her, and makes the viewer consequently more receptive to the advertising message.

5.5.2.7 Syntactic frameworks

Syntactic frameworks make up 6.73% of the entire corpus (i.e. 7 out of the 104 idioms). Kinder Schoko-Bons (chocolates) are advertised by an advertisement playing out the scenario of a group of children visiting a vintage car show (*RTL 13/09/02*). The owner of one car refuses to let the children near his vehicle because they are eating chocolate, which might make a mess of his car seats. The children and the adult accompanying them point out that the chocolate sweets do not in fact melt in the hand, so he tries one and appears to find it delicious. The direct speech of the

characters in the advertisement has a rhythmic quality to it and rhymes. The only voiceover comes at the end of the advertisement with the announcement of the slogan: "Kinder Schoko-Bons. *Bon für Bon für Bon* eine kleine Extraportion Milch" 'Sweet after sweet after sweet a little extra portion of milk'. The use of the extended syntactic framework *X für X für X* 'X after X after X', instead of the shorter, more common *X für X*, reinforces the idea of quantity which the advertiser hopes to associate with the product (i.e. lots of sweets in each bag; lots of milk in each sweet). The repetition of the word "Bon" 'sweet' not only emphasises the product advertised, but also catches and holds the viewer's attention, and ensures that the product is better remembered.

The same syntactic framework occurs in an advertisement for Whiskas Lifecare cat food (RTL 12/04/02). The visuals portray a young boy returning home to be greeted by his cat, then the boy as a teenager doing the same. As a young man, however, he cannot find his cat, which leads both him and the viewer to assume that the cat has died. The voiceover comments on the action: "Schön einen Freund zu haben, der immer da ist. *Jahr* [shot of the boy and his cat] *für Jahr* [teenager and cat] ... *für Jahr?* [young man looking depressed when his cat does not appear]" 'It's nice to have a friend who is always there. Year after year ... after year?'. The cat eventually materialises, however, much to the young man's delight, and the spoken text goes on to imply that the cat has lived so long because it has been fed on Whiskas Lifecare. Again, the idiom *Jahr für Jahr für Jahr* as an extended form of the syntactic framework *X für X* conveys the idea of continuity. Moreover, the formula is very much in keeping with the kind of speech used in television advertising, which permits more repetition than print advertising. The reason behind this is that the consumer must actively read magazine advertisements, but is often merely a passive recipient of television advertising. Television advertisements, which are dominated by the visuals and tend to rely on spoken rather than written text, therefore need repetition as a stylistic device to break through the viewer's indifference and boredom. Readers, on the other hand, as active information processors, are more likely to notice and become irritated by repetition – and hence by the advertisement as a whole – when it occurs in writing. Another idiom is present in the advertisement: the (written and spoken) slogan at the end of the advertisement: "*Lang lebe die Katze*" 'Long live the cat', which is a parody of the idiomatic "winged word" *Lang lebe der König/die Königin!* 'Long live the King/Queen!'. Using as the company slogan this idiom pertaining to royalty aggrandises the household pet, suggesting that the company really cares about cats.

5.5.2.8 Idiomatic comparisons

The *RTL* corpus contains only 4 idiomatic comparisons (3.85% of the corpus). The idiomatic comparison *wie im Flug* [lit. 'as if in flight'] 'very quickly' is present in the (spoken) text of an advertisement for Spalt Liqua Migräne headache tablets (*RTL* 01/03/02). The advertisement starts with a scene in which the camera moves slowly along a coastline shrouded in mist. After the voiceover explains the painkilling power of the headache tablets the scene changes to a beautiful sunny coastline. As the camera pans swiftly along the coast and then moves upwards towards an inviting home on the cliffs the voiceover comments: "So ist Migräne-Kopfschmerz *wie im Flug* vorbei" 'In this way migraine headache passes in a flash' The visuals of the advertisement illustrate the literal sense of the idiomatic comparison as the camera movements create the sense of flying. In this way the advertisement works as a single linguistic and visual unit, making it easier to process and remember. The idiom uses concrete language ("im Flug") to express the abstract concept of time passing, as well as explaining in simple, familiar terms the (alleged) medical effects of the painkillers (i.e. curing migraines very quickly).

5.5.2.9 Adverbial idioms

3.85% of the corpus comprises adverbial idioms. The idiom *rund um die Uhr* ≈ 'around the clock', i.e. at all times during the day or night, occurs in 4 different advertisements.

5.5.2.10 Nominal idioms

Only 1 nominal idiom can be found in the entire *RTL* corpus (0.96% of the whole corpus). In an advertisement for Schwäbisch Hall home investment company an animated, humanised fox, which appears in every advertisement for the company, relaxes in front of an open fire in a beautiful house and tells the viewer: "Nichts ist so beruhigend wie die Zukunft *in den eigenen vier Wänden*" 'Nothing is as comforting as the future in your own four walls' (*RTL* 12/04/02). The nominal idiom *in den eigenen vier Wänden* means literally 'in one's own four walls'; the meaning is expanded to refer more figuratively to 'a home of one's own'. The idiom's theme and associated

mental image of walls of a building complements the advertising message ("invest with our company to secure a home of your own"), especially when taken in conjunction with the (literal meaning of the) slogan "*Auf diese Steine können Sie bauen*" 'You can build on these stones', i.e. our company is a solid foundation for your investment. For emphasis the slogan is printed on the fox's t-shirt underneath the company logo of four bricks, and is both spoken and written at the end of the advertisement. The slogan evokes the VLI idiom *auf Sand/Stein bauen* ≈ 'to build on sand/stone', i.e. to base something on weak/solid foundations, which derives from the Biblical parable of the foolish man building his house upon sand while the wise man built his house on rocks. The implication behind the slogan is that prudent people choose to invest and (even quite literally) "build" for the future with Schwäbisch Hall. The Biblical origins of the idiom lend the slogan a tone of time-honoured wisdom which encourages the consumer to trust in (and therefore invest in) the company. The VLI idiom as the company slogan provides the advertisement with a sense of thematic unity and conclusion.

The fact that both the literal and figurative meanings of the VLI idiom and the nominal idiom *in den eigenen vier Wänden* are activated makes the idioms seem a particularly apt and clever choice for the advertising text, which consequently reflects positively on the advertiser and the company being promoted. Moreover, the concrete mental images stimulated by the idioms allow the phrases to be processed and recalled more easily. The informal, familiar tone of the nominal idiom contrasts with the rather dull informative content of the rest of the advertising message (information about rates of interest and a list of banks where further information can be acquired), with the result that this expression together with the VLI idiom as the company slogan are the ones best remembered from the whole advertisement.

5.5.2.11 Paraphrasal verbs

The least common type of idiom found in the corpus of *RTL* television advertisements is paraphrasal verbs; none are present at all.

5.5.3 Frequency of idioms: Discussion of results

VLI idioms are the most frequently occurring type of idiom in German magazine advertisements, and are one of the most common types of idiom found in German television advertising. This is because idioms in general – and VLI idioms in particular – are especially suited to the tone and style of the discourse of advertising, which favours familiar, informal phrases comprising simple, concrete language. Furthermore, the semantically and syntactically viable literal sense of VLI idioms is often used as the basis for wordplay in advertisements. Wordplay injects humour, surprise, and creativity into an advertisement, reflecting positively on the product being promoted. Moreover, VLI idioms are imageable idioms in that they evoke a specific mental image, usually based on (a component word of) their literal interpretation. This allows the idiom – and hence the advertisement as a whole – to be processed, remembered, and recalled more effectively.

The most common type of idiom appearing in television advertising is idiomatic advertising jargon, which is, however, not so common in magazine advertisements. Idiomatic advertising jargon comprises well-known set phrases which create an overall impression of familiarity, making the reader/viewer consequently more comfortable with the language of the advertisement and hence more receptive towards the advertising message. Idiomatic advertising jargon also acts as a kind of advertising shorthand, since it involves recognisable fixed expressions which require less mental processing time and effort than new and unfamiliar language. Furthermore, the fact that idiomatic advertising jargon is almost unique to the discourse of advertising serves to remind the consumer that they are reading or watching an advertisement, whose function is fundamentally to sell a product. These functions of idiomatic advertising jargon help to explain why idiomatic adese is present to a much larger extent in television advertising than in magazine advertising. Advertising space is cheaper in magazines, which permits advertisers to use relatively long, detailed copy which is generally read by consumers at quite a leisurely pace. In contrast, television advertisements are much more constrained by time than magazine advertisements, with the result that television advertisements must communicate their message in a comparatively short length of time. All spoken and written text in television advertisements must therefore be familiar, concise, relevant, and memorable: idiomatic adese fulfils all these criteria. Moreover, idiomatic advertising

jargon is by definition advertising jargon, which may seem rather overused and clichéd. Although magazine advertisements often imitate the informal tone and style of speech, written language is in general considered to be more elevated and eloquent in tone than spoken language since it can be constructed carefully over time, with unsatisfactory phrases being reformulated. Repetition and the use of hackneyed phrases is thus much more common and acceptable in speech than in writing, so idiomatic adese is as a result more typical of television than magazine advertisements.

Verbal idioms are the second most common type of idioms in both the *Stern* and the *RTL* corpora of advertisements. This is due to the fact that the verb which is the focal point of the idiom by definition expresses or suggests an action or movement, which is intended to be instrumental in prompting the reader/viewer to actually go out and buy the product advertised. In addition, verbal idioms tend to comprise simple literal language used figuratively to express complex abstract concepts (e.g. the verbal idiom in the *RTL* advertisement functioning as the slogan for Frolic pet food: "Frolic. *Bringt Farbe ins Leben*" 'Frolic. Brings colour into your life', explains the abstract idea of excitement, vitality, and joy through the concrete noun "Farbe" 'colour'). Incorporating verbal idioms into advertising texts therefore attempts to prevent the inattentive or apathetic reader/viewer from becoming alienated completely by complex concepts or language. Many verbal idioms also stimulate concrete mental images, thereby encouraging a better understanding and recall of the phrase, and subsequently of the advertising text.

Parallel formulae are incorporated into advertisements because their poetic features distinguish them from ordinary text, thus helping to catch the reader/viewer's attention and making the advertising language – and subsequently the advertising message – more memorable. With their poetic features like rhyme and alliteration, these idioms are particularly suited to and evocative of spoken language. Hence, a relatively large number are present in the *Stern* advertisements, which often attempt to echo the style of speech. Nevertheless, parallel formulae do not represent as significant a percentage of the *RTL* corpus as might have been expected, perhaps because they are literary devices which can be found in, for example, poetry, and as such may sound too elevated and contrived for the "everyday speech" of television advertisements.

Proverbs and proverbial expressions perform the illocutionary function of offering advice or warning, and are consequently found relatively frequently in both

advertising corpora. Since advertisers use the approach of offering friendly advice or gentle warnings as one of the main selling techniques in advertisements, proverbs with their rhetorical function are ideally suited to the discourse of advertising. These expressions appear more often in the *RTL* corpus than in the *Stern* corpus, however, probably due to the fact that television advertising is generally constrained by time, making proverbs and proverbial expressions ideally suited to advertising in this particular medium. Proverbs, truisms, and maxims are by definition fixed expressions conveying traditional wisdom handed down over time, and the familiarity of these expressions means that the concepts behind them can be communicated in succinct, easily processed, and memorable language. Moreover, different emphasis is placed on direct selling by the two media. Magazine advertising with its longer copy can afford to be much more subtle than television advertising in its selling technique, which means that fewer expressions with an overt illocutionary function are required. Readers as active interpreters of the advertising message may take offence – and hence respond less favourably towards the product advertised – if they feel that they are being lectured or manipulated, whereas passive television viewers need to be targeted more directly with instructive, persuasive language such as that of proverbial expressions.

Because of the time constraints placed on television advertising, idiomatic comparisons and idiomatic "winged words" feature much more often in the *RTL* corpus than in the *Stern* corpus. The well-known and evocative language of idiomatic comparisons and idiomatic "winged words" takes less time to process mentally, is easier to remember, and creates an overall impression of familiarity. Idiomatic comparisons allow one concept to be explained in an expressive yet succinct way by being compared to another concept. Likewise, idiomatic "winged words" also act as a kind of reference to another concept, but rather than specifying another concept with a similar characteristic these idioms allude to the original source of the idiom. In short, idiomatic comparisons and idiomatic "winged words" combine two concepts in one expression, and are therefore tailor-made to be the condensed language required in television advertising.

Syntactic frameworks allow the repetition of language to be integrated into the advertising copy, which renders the text more memorable. Since repetition is more acceptable in speech than in writing, syntactic frameworks occur slightly more frequently in the corpus of television advertisements than is the case with the corpus

of magazine advertisements. Syntactic formulae are not particularly common to advertising, perhaps because with their rigid syntactic structure there is little scope for modification of the idiom, which is a standard feature of advertising, as discussed in section 5.7.

Nominal idioms can be found relatively often in magazine advertisements, but rarely in television advertisements. This finding is perhaps connected with the need for extra imagery in magazine advertising to act as a both a visual and a memory stimulus. A nominal idiom is a set phrase constructed around a noun, which is usually the part of language which evokes the mental image associated with an idiom. There is thus not so much call for nominal idioms in television advertising since this medium is already based essentially on visual images. Moreover, television as a medium is much more dynamic than magazines, essentially because it contains moving images. These moving images are described more effectively by verbs than by nouns, and verbs in general are better suited to the fast-paced style and lively tone of most television advertising.

Adverbial idioms do not make up a substantial proportion of either corpus, primarily because they are relatively uncommon in language in general. Where they do occur they tend to function as small stylistic flourishes.

Few paraphrasal verbs appear in magazine advertisements and none at all in television advertising. This is probably due to the fact that the extension of a verb into a noun-plus-verb form renders it more literary in style and elevated in tone, which is not in keeping with the generally informal tone of advertising. Paraphrasal verbs do occur in a couple of *Stern* advertisements which are more sophisticated in style and tone, but paraphrasal verbs in the primarily spoken language of television advertising would sound contrived and rather obscure. Furthermore, increasing the word count in the text of a television advertisement is not in keeping with the medium's demand for brevity and clarity of expression.

5.6 The Textual Position of Idioms in Advertisements

5.6.1 *Stern*

As Table 2 illustrates, idioms tend to occur mainly in prominent textual positions in magazine advertisements: as the headline, the subheadline, and in the first and last sentences of the copy body.

5.6.1.1 Copy body

33.26% of all the idioms (i.e. 150 idioms) in the *Stern* corpus appear within the main body of the advertising text. The copy of an advertisement for *Stern Extra* magazine's six-part series on healthy eating (*Stern* 10/01/02, p.68) reads:

Wir sagen Ihnen, was Sie essen können und wo Sie es bekommen. Fleisch, Fisch, Wild und Geflügel aber auch Gemüse & Co. wird von uns *unter die Lupe genommen*. Außerdem: leckere Rezepte, Tipps, Links, Adressen und Bücher.

We tell you what you can eat and where you can find it. We place meat, fish, game and poultry, as well as vegetables and the like, under the microscope. In addition: delicious recipes, tips, links, addresses and books.

The verbal idiom *etw./jmdn. unter die Lupe nehmen* [lit. 'to take something/someone under the magnifying glass'] 'to examine something/someone closely' is used here in the body of the text to add colour to what would otherwise be simply two lists. Furthermore, the mental image of examining something with a magnifying glass, which is evoked by the literal sense of "unter die Lupe", emphasises the advertising message that the various types of food will be analysed scrupulously. The concrete mental image allows the idiom – and consequently the advertisement as a whole – to be understood and recalled more effectively.

5.6.1.2 Headline

100 out of the total 451 idioms in the corpus of magazine advertisements (22.17% of the whole corpus) are found in the advertising headline. The headline of an advertisement for Ver.di trade union asks: "*Die erste Million ist die Schwerste?*" 'The

first million is the hardest?' (*Stern* 14/03/02; Figure 5.9). Turning the well-known quotation from a statement of fact into a question helps the advertisement to catch the reader's attention by suggesting that earning a million (Euros, or perhaps American dollars) is in actual fact not necessarily as difficult as the well-known quotation would suggest. The slogan "Wir bieten drei" 'We offer three' tempts the reader to continue reading further in order to find out exactly what the advertisement is offering. The copy explains the reference to the idiom: you don't have to be a millionaire to feel (financially) secure since three million people (hence the "drei Million" of the slogan) already enjoy a sense of safety in numbers as members of Ver.di trade union. As familiar language the idiomatic quotation encourages the consumer to read the advertisement in full. The twist on the original sense of the quotation produces a creative and innovative advertisement which is aimed at eliciting a favourable response from the reader.

5.6.1.3 First sentence of the copy

18.41% of the idioms in the *Stern* corpus (i.e. 83 idioms) make up the first sentence of the main text of the advertisement. The Vodafone D2-Sun tariff is promoted through an advertisement featuring a man lying in a hammock on a sunny balcony and talking into a mobile phone (*Stern* 25/04/02, p.177; Figure 5.10). The whole theme of the advertisement is sunshine and warmth, in keeping with the product name. The headline "Sonnenuntergang" 'sunset' is placed in the sky to indicate the time of day where the man is, while the second headline "Sonnenaufgang" 'sunrise' is written over the phone in his hand to suggest the time of day where his conversation partner is. The first line of the copy claims: "Ab jetzt *haben* Sie die Sonne immer *in der Tasche* – mit D2-Sun" 'Now you can always have sunshine in the bag – with D2-Sun'. The literal meaning of the VLI idiom *etw. in der Tasche haben* ≈ 'to have something in the bag', i.e. to have accomplished something, is punned upon in this advertisement in order to communicate the idea that a person with a Vodafone mobile phone can in a sense always have "die Sonne" 'the sun' (i.e. a mobile phone with the D2-Sun tariff) in their pocket or bag ("die Tasche"). The final sentences of the advertisement also contain an idiom, *jmdm. wird warm ums Herz*: "Da wird einem doch ganz warm ums Herz. Oder?" 'It just warms your heart, doesn't it?'. The idioms at the start and end of the copy instil a colloquial, relaxed style and tone into the advertisement, which is

reinforced by the photograph of a man lying with his feet up. The concrete nouns "Tasche" 'bag' or 'pocket' and "Herz" 'heart' in the idioms function as memory pegs for the advertising message.

5.6.1.4 Last sentence of the copy

51 idioms (11.31% of the corpus) are located in the last sentence of the advertising copy. The nominal idiom (and kinegram) *Hand aufs Herz* ≈ 'hand on heart', i.e. truthfully, appears in the last sentence of an advertisement for the Fiat Punto car (*Stern* 08/11/01, p.124; Figure 5.11). The headline above an aerial view of the car reads: "Für gewöhnlich *riskier ich Kopf und Kragen*, leb mit blauen Flecken und hol mir schnell auch mal 'ne Beule" 'As a matter of routine I risk life and limb, live with bruises and even get the odd bump', which initially makes the reader think that the speaker is referring to what happens when he or she drives the Punto. The copy body, however, comments:

Huch, eine tollkühne Äußerung von Stefan E., 31, Trapezkünstler ohne Netz und doppelten Boden. Trotz seines Wagemuts besitzt er aber den neuen Fiat Punto. Eigenartig, denn der Punto ist vor kurzem als sicherster seiner Klasse ausgezeichnet worden. Also *Hand aufs Herz*, Stefan, warum fährst du den neuen Fiat Punto?

Ooh, a bold remark from Stefan E., 31, trapeze artist without a net and a false-bottomed floor. In spite of his daringness he actually owns the new Fiat Punto. Strange, since the Punto has recently been awarded safest in its class. So hand on heart, Stefan, why do you drive the new Fiat Punto?

The two idioms reinforce the informal style of the advertising text, and help to create the impression that the text is actually the direct speech of two "speakers" (Stefan E. and the omniscient "speaker" of the copy body) communicating directly with the reader. Features of direct speech are imitated: elision ("riskier", "leb", "hol" "'ne"); the use of modal particles ("auch", "mal"); speech noises ("huch"); colloquial expressions ("blaue Flecken", "also"); and of course idioms. The colloquial speech addressing the reader directly at the start and end of the advertisement conveys the impression that the reader is listening to friends chatting with him or her, which makes the reader ultimately more receptive to the advertising message. The parallel formula *Kopf und Kragen risikieren* [lit. 'to risk head and collar'] 'to risk one's life' (similar in sense to

the English parallel formula "to risk life and limb"), and the nominal idiom *Hand aufs Herz* stimulate mental images associated with the human body ("Kopf" 'head', "Kragen" 'collar' i.e. a neck, and "Herz" 'heart'). This imagery aids recall of the advertisement, as well as tying in neatly with the theme and subject of the advertisement as a whole: it is the human body which would be damaged in an accident both on a trapeze and in an unsafe car. The fact that the final (main) sentence evokes the image of a heart, which symbolises life, reminds the reader that driving the safest car available (i.e. supposedly the Fiat Punto) should be a matter of life and death.

5.6.1.5 Subheadline

The subheadlines of the advertisements in the *Stern* corpus contain 22 idioms in total (4.88% of the corpus). An advertisement for the magazine *Living at Home* contains the subheadline: "Gastlichkeit: *Keine Feier ohne Eier*" 'Entertaining: No party without eggs', and goes on to explain that the magazine provides ideas for "die schönsten Osterdekorationen" 'the most attractive Easter decorations' (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.85). The modified idiom appearing here derives from the proverbial expression *keine Feier ohne Meier* [lit. 'no party without Meier'], which is a comment about a person who turns up at any (and every!) social occasion, similar in sense to the English idiom "no show without Punch". The wordplay is effective thanks to the fact that "Feier" 'party', "Meier" 'Meier' (proper noun), and "Eier" 'eggs' all rhyme, and the innovative, humorous effect created by the pun amuses the reader and makes him or her more favourably disposed towards the advertisement as a whole. The noun "Eier" also evokes the concrete mental image of eggs, which renders the idiom more memorable. The use of a proverbial expression with its associated illocutionary function is particularly apt in an advertisement for a magazine, whose main aim is precisely that of providing advice through its articles.

5.6.1.6 Slogo

Idioms occur as slogans in the corpus of magazine advertisements on 21 different occasions (4.66% of the corpus). The slogan for the technology company Dmc² states: "*Die Zukunft steckt im Detail*" 'The future lies in the detail', which is a modified

version of the proverb *Der Teufel steckt im Detail* ≈ 'the devil is in the detail', i.e. an idea may be fine in principle but poses problems when looked at in detail (*Stern* 18/07/02, p.31). Using an already familiar phrase as the company slogan increases the chances that the company name will be remembered in conjunction with the expression. Modifying the idiom shows the advertiser – and thus the product being promoted – to be innovative and creative. In this particular instance, the idiom's tone is changed from that of admonition to that of optimism by means of the simple lexical substitution of "Zukunft" 'future' for "Teufel" 'devil'. As a result, the slogan based on the modified idiom is enhanced by the familiarity of the language and general acceptance of the advice behind the proverb, but it manages to avoid the pessimistic warning tone and negative connotations of the devil which are usually associated with the idiom.

5.6.1.7 Slogan

Idioms are present in the slogans of 2.22% of all the magazine advertisements (i.e. 10 idioms appear in slogans). The advertising campaign for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper involves a series of advertisements featuring a well-known artistic accomplishment (a blown-up photograph of naked models, *Stern* 04/04/02, p.57, Figure 5.12; a large replica of the Eiffel Tower with an immense pink cowboy hat resting on its tip, *Stern* 16/05/02, p.184, Figure 5.13). Sitting somewhere near the main piece is (supposedly) its creator, whose face is buried inside the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper. The only text in the whole advertisement is the product name, the slogan ("Zeitung für Deutschland" 'Newspaper for Germany'), the artist's name and profession ("Helmut Newton, Fotograf" 'Helmut Newton, photographer'; "Wim Wenders, Regisseur" 'Wim Wenders, director'), and the slogan written between square brackets somewhere near the artwork: "[Dahinter steckt immer *ein kluger Kopf*.]" 'There's always a clever person behind it'. The "dahinter steckt immer" of the slogan refers both figuratively to the artwork (i.e. someone is the brains behind it, its creator) and literally to the newspaper (i.e. someone is actually sitting behind it), while the verbal idiom *ein kluger Kopf sein* [lit. 'to be a clever head'] 'to be a clever or capable person' is used (with the function verb "sein" 'to be' omitted) both in its normal idiomatic sense and more literally (i.e. the actual head of a clever person is hidden behind the newspaper). The fact that the slogan is printed in small font inside brackets

makes it seem like almost an aside, or a secret that the advertiser is sharing with the reader. As a result the reader has to concentrate and look that little bit harder to physically see the slogan which explains the advertisement, so that when he or she finally does understand the pun it feels like a greater achievement, ensuring that the slogan sticks in his or her mind. The pun introduces humour into the advertisement, which is a key device for eliciting a positive response from the reader. Furthermore, the idiom's mental image of a head is the main motif for the advertisements, as reinforced by the illustrations: the newspaper readers' heads are concealed; the heads of the models are partially missing from or obscured in the photograph; and the cowboy hat perched on top of the Eiffel Tower, which is a visual allusion to Wim Wenders as the director of the film *Paris, Texas*, is obviously headwear. This concrete image as the basis for the whole advertising campaign serves as an extremely effective memory stimulus.

5.6.1.8 Speech-bubble

7 idioms in total (1.55% of the *Stern* corpus) appear in the speech-bubbles of the illustration of an advertisement. An advertisement for the Passat car begins with the headline: "Autos sprechen. Was sagt Ihres?" 'Cars speak. What does yours say?', then proceeds to "quote" the different comments supposedly made by cars (e.g. „Hey, mein Besitzer ist jung, dynamisch und sehr erfolgreich in seinem Beruf“ "Hey, my owner is young, dynamic and very successful in his job") (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.99; Figure 5.14). One particular speech-bubble reads: „Achtung, mein Besitzer ist ein Kämpfer. Er hat Ellenbogen. Er setzt sich durch“ "Watch out, my owner is a fighter. He's assertive. He pushes his way to success". The modified version of the idiom used here derives from the VLI idiom *keine Ell(en)bogen haben* [lit. 'to have no elbows'] 'to be unable to assert oneself'. The colloquial tone of the idiom fits the style of direct speech, and by modifying the idiom from its normal negative to the affirmative sense the advertiser draws attention to the expression. The original idiom is still understood, but the modification brings its literal sense also into play. The associated mental image of a man elbowing his way through to the front of a queue or crowd makes the entire advertising message more memorable.

5.6.1.9 Illustration

0.66% of the corpus (i.e. 3 idioms) comprises idioms occurring in the advertisement's visual element. The illustration of an advertisement for Brother office technology shows a photograph of a worried-looking man sitting in – but struggling to get out of – the rim of a giant bottle of ink (*Stern* 10/01/02; Figure 5.15). The headline above him offers: "Laser-Lust statt Tinten-Frust!" 'Laser-joy instead of ink-frustration!', i.e. Brother's laser printers and fax-machines rather than the old-fashioned, messy, and unreliable inkjet technology. The advertisement illustration is a depiction of the literal sense of the VLI idiom *in der Tinte sitzen* [lit. 'to sit in the ink'] 'to be in a difficult situation'. The fact that more mental effort is required of the reader to understand the idiom means that the reader is more likely to remember the advertisement and product promoted, and to feel flattered that he or she has actually understood the visual pun on the literal interpretation of the idiom. The idiom's literal interpretation is ideally suited to the theme and subject matter of the advertisement. The visual pun brings humour to the advertisement, which attracts and retains the reader's attention. The fact that the visuals portray the mental image evoked by the literal sense of the VLI idiom reinforces both the image and the phrase, making the advertisement as a whole unforgettable. The humour is especially important since the body of the advertisement copy mainly lists facts and statistics about the products available, using plain, informative language.

5.6.1.10 Caption

Idioms are also found in the captions explaining the illustrations of 3 of the magazine advertisements (0.66% of the corpus). An advertisement for Rheinhessenwein wine company proudly invites the reader to visit the area to see for him- or herself the vineyards of the Rheinhessen (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.171). The illustration shows five people smiling towards the camera, and the caption elaborates: "Fünf von vielen Winzerinnen und Winzern, deren Tore immer offen sind für interessierte Weinfreunde" 'Five of many winegrowers, whose gates are always open to interested wine-lovers'. The idiom *jmds. Tür ist immer offen* \approx 'someone's door is always open', i.e. someone is always available and approachable, has been modified here by substituting "Tore" 'gates' for "Tür" 'door' in order to activate the literal sense of the

idiom in order to communicate the advertising message that the reader can actually visit the vineyards of the winegrowers. The routine formula of the last sentence, "Herzlich willkommen!" 'A hearty welcome!', reinforces both the figurative and literal interpretations of the idiom.

5.6.1.11 Product name

Only 1 idiom appears in the *Stern* corpus as the name of a particular product. The parallel formula *Essen und Trinken* \approx 'food and drink' appears (with the conjunction "und" 'and' represented by the ampersand) as the name of the German magazine *Essen & Trinken*.

5.6.2 RTL

As with the corpus of magazine advertisements, idioms tend to appear in the *RTL* corpus in emphatic positions: as the slogan, in the first and last sentences of the main copy, and as the slogan (again, see Table 2).

5.6.2.1 Copy body

Approximately 40.39% of the *RTL* corpus (i.e. 42 idioms) comprises idioms found in the main body of the advertisement text. An advertisement for Nutella chocolate spread features the German World Champion skier, Martina Ertl (*RTL* 12/04/02). Her voiceover states:

Bungee ist gut für die Angst vor der Abfahrt. Brüder, Brüder sind gut für die Ellbogen. Downhill ist gut für das Gleichgewicht. Heimat ist gut, um *auf dem Teppich* zu bleiben. Und Nutella ist gut für die Seele.

Bungee-jumping is good for those who are scared of the fear of setting off. Brothers, brothers are good for the elbows. Downhill sport is good for balance. Home is good for keeping your feet on the ground. And Nutella is good for the soul.

The copy is accompanied by visuals which explain each statement: a shot of her bungee-jumping; a scene of her as a child fighting with her brothers to get at the Nutella; shots of her cycling, skating, and skiing downhill; scenes of her playing with

her dog in an alpine pasture, then talking to an old man in national costume; a shot of her enjoying bread spread thick with Nutella. The literal sense of the VLI idiom *auf dem Teppich bleiben* [lit. 'to remain on the carpet'] 'to remain down-to-earth' is alluded to in the scene of her rolling around playfully in a field with her dog, which reinforces the mental image evoked by the idiom of someone standing on a carpet or floor. The inclusion of the colloquial language of the idiom in the copy reinforces the idea that the text is Martina Ertl's own speech as opposed to what is in fact carefully scripted language.

5.6.2.2 Slogo

18 idioms in total (17.31% of the corpus) occur in the slogos of the television advertisements analysed. An advertisement for Wasa crispbread starts with a shot of a healthy, good-looking young man sitting at the kitchen table reading a newspaper and enjoying Wasa crispbreads (RTL 01/02/02). The radio is playing quietly in the background, but the words of the music are indistinguishable. The man's dishevelled-looking, podgy flatmate mooches into the kitchen and starts to fry some bacon. The fat in the pan catches fire, so he beats the pan with a tea-towel to try to extinguish the flames, and then eventually thrusts the pan under the cold tap. He brings the pan containing the cold, sodden, frazzled bacon to the table, picks up a piece of bacon and looks at it. His flatmate smiles and offers his crispbreads by pushing his plate towards his friend. The fire-fighting flatmate looks at the crispbreads in disgust and proceeds to eat the bacon. The slogo appears in writing on the screen and is simultaneously announced by the voiceover: "Wasa. *Du bist, was du isst*" 'Wasa. You are what you eat.' The proverbial expression *du bist, was du isst* ≈ 'you are what you eat', i.e. eat healthily or your body will suffer for it, is highlighted by the fact that it is the only (spoken and written) text in the entire advertisement. The slogo is the key to the advertisement since it interprets the action which has just taken place, and performing this function through a proverbial expression with its connotations of age-old, sound advice makes the slogo seem more important and credible. Furthermore, using a proverbial expression to provide the final (and indeed only) comment on a humorous sketch produces a contrast in tone between the visuals and the text, which adds to the humour, but which also conversely lends the slogo more impact and authority. The humour of the advertisement, encapsulated by the

proverbial slogo, catches and holds the viewer's attention, entertains the viewer, and is consequently very memorable.

5.6.2.3 Last sentence of the copy

Idioms are present in the last sentences of 13.46% of the *RTL* advertisements (i.e. in 14 idioms altogether). In an advertisement for Terzolin anti-dandruff shampoo a nervous-looking man gets into a lift and stands in the middle of a group of people (*RTL* 10/05/02). The arrows in the lift signalling that the lift is moving downwards seem to point to his shoulders, and the women on either side of him look at him in disapproval. The voiceover elaborates: "Mit Schuppen fühlt man sich, als ob einen alle ansehen" 'With dandruff you feel as if everyone is looking at you'. The (spoken) copy then goes on to explain that using Terzolin shampoo gets rid of dandruff completely, with the result that: "So hat man kein Problem, um *im Mittelpunkt* zu stehen" 'This way you don't have a problem being the centre of attention'. This last sentence of the copy is spoken over visuals showing the man racing to get into the lift, where he now looks much happier standing again in the middle of the crowd, with the lift arrows this time pointing upwards, and the women on either side of him looking at him admiringly. The literal sense of the VLI idiom *im Mittelpunkt stehen* [lit. 'to stand in the middle point'] 'to be the centre of attention', which is activated by the visuals, acts as the basis for the whole advertisement. Having the idiom explaining the visual pun as the last sentence of the copy encourages the viewer to think back to the first scene again to check whether the man was also "im Mittelpunkt" then, thereby allowing the advertisement (message) to be reviewed and hence better remembered.

5.6.2.4 First sentence of the copy

12 idioms (11.54% of the corpus) appear in the first sentences of the corpus of television advertisements. The first sentence of the copy of an advertisement for Bio Wertkost organic produce is presented as the direct speech of an organic farmer: "Hier bei uns auf dem Land *lassen* wir der Natur *freien Lauf*" 'Here in the countryside we give nature free rein' (*RTL* 19/07/02). The advertisement revolves around a mother and daughter enjoying the tour given by the farmer around his organic farm, picking apples and breathing in the smell from milk churns, before going to a supermarket and

actually buying organic fruit and vegetables. The VLI idiom *jmdm./einer Sache freien Lauf lassen* [lit. 'to let someone/something have free run'] 'to give someone/something considerable freedom' (similar in sense to the English VLI idiom "to give someone/something free rein") is emphasised by the shots accompanying the first sentence of the advertisement in which free-range chickens wander freely around the farmyard, and the daughter runs through a field. The idiom is particularly suited to the theme of the advertisement of farming without interfering unnecessarily with nature since "a free run" is literally given to the farm animals. Using an idiom in the first sentence of the copy – especially an idiom which is emphasised by the pun on its literal meaning – sets the informal, friendly tone for the whole advertisement and serves as an attention-catching introduction to the advertising message.

5.6.2.5 Slogan

12 idioms (11.54% of the corpus) appear in the slogans of advertisements in the *RTL* corpus. Der General Duo-Aktiv floor cleaner is advertised with the slogan "*Doppelt glänzt besser*" 'Double gleams better', which is both written on the screen and spoken by the voiceover at the very end of the advertisement (*RTL* 24/05/02). The advertisement features various shots of the product in action as it cleans a floor and thereby makes a couple look very happy. The idiom in the slogan is a modified version of the proverb *doppelt (genäht) hält besser* [lit. '(sewn) doubly holds better'] 'do something extra carefully to prevent it needing redone later' (similar in sense to the English proverb "a stitch in time saves nine"). The "doppelt" 'double' of the slogan is a reference to the product name (Duo-Aktiv), the strength of the product ("Die Neuheit mit Doppelkraft" 'The innovation with double strength'), and the actual product, which comprises two differently coloured layers of fluid which must be mixed together in the bottle by shaking it before use. The substitution of the idiom's "hält" 'holds' for the slogan's similar sounding "glänzt" 'gleams' tailors the slogan specifically to the subject and theme of the advertisement. Using a proverb as the slogan helps to summarise and conclude the advertising message in a knowing and advisory tone, while the modification of the proverb encourages the viewer to regard the slogan, the advertisement, and consequently the product as innovative.

5.6.2.6 Headline

2 idioms (1.92% of the corpus) are found in the headline of the advertisements in the corpus of television advertisements. The headline "*Hoffnung ist Macht*" 'Hope is power' appears in writing on the screen and is announced simultaneously by the voiceover of an advertisement for the German television-movie *Lenya* (RTL 15/03/02). The advertisement comprises mainly excerpts from the film, with brief narration from the voiceover. The headline derives from the proverb *Wissen ist Macht* ≈ 'knowledge is power' and has been modified to suit the context of the advertisement. The film is about a young girl in the Middle Ages training as a warrior in order to protect her village from thieves and murderers, but rather than gaining courage from "Wissen" 'knowledge', she and the villagers find strength in the "Hoffnung" 'hope' that she can defeat the outlaws. Using a proverb as the headline – especially a modified proverb – attracts the viewer's attention and sets the tone for the voiceover throughout the advertisement, which passes comment on the events of the film. Furthermore, the bold, concise headline contrasts with the fast action and narration of the rest of the advertisement showing scenes from the film, and thus remains in the viewer's mind.

5.6.2.7 Visuals

1 idiom occurs in the visuals of 2 different advertisements for the same product (and is therefore counted as 2 idioms, which is 1.92% of the corpus). An advertisement for Spee washing powder starts with two disagreeable older women sneering at a young man's washing and suggesting that only an expensive washing powder will remove the dirt (RTL 02/08/02). The company logo, an animated fox with human characteristics and a penchant for speaking in rhyme, pops up and advises the young man: "Hey! Diese Tanten sind passé. Wer schlau ist, der wäscht heut' mit Spee" 'Hey! These old biddies are passé. The clever people wash today with Spee'. In addition, the slogo at the end of the advertisement, which is both spoken by the fox and written on the screen, promotes: "Spee. Die schlaue Art zu waschen!" 'Spee. The clever way to wash!'. The repetition of the adjective "schlau" combines with the character of the cartoon fox to evoke the idiomatic comparison *schlau wie ein Fuchs sein* ≈ 'to be as sly as a fox', i.e. to be extremely cunning or clever.

Although the word "schlau" in the text may prompt the viewer to think of the idiom, it is the visuals which contain the basis for the comparison (i.e. the fox), and which ultimately evoke the idiom. In short, the word "schlau" by itself would not necessarily call the idiom to mind, whereas a picture of a fox alone automatically connotes the characteristic of cunningness, thereby evoking the idiom. Leaving it to the viewer to make the necessary mental leap in order to understand the idiom encourages the viewer to become an active interpreter – as opposed to merely a passive recipient – of the advertisement. The viewer is as a result more likely to remember the advertising message ("Spee washing powder washes clothes cleaner for less money"). Moreover, the advertiser flatters the viewer by implying that he or she is intelligent and linguistically competent enough to perceive the idiom. The viewer thus feels pleased with him- or herself for actually understanding the reference, and consequently tends to respond more favourably towards the advertisement as a whole and the product being promoted.

5.6.2.8 Product name

1.92% of the *RTL* corpus (i.e. 2 idioms) is also made up of idioms as product names. The idiom *eins, zwei, drei* [lit. 'one, two, three'] \approx 'in a trice', i.e. very quickly, has been adapted to form the name of the shoe-polish Erdal *Eins-Zwei-Drei* Glanz ('Erdal One-Two-Three Shine') (*RTL* 24/05/02). Here the first letters of the numbers in the triple formulae appear in the upper case, and the punctuation is changed from commas to hyphens in order to make the idiom more suitable for use as a proper noun. This particular idiom has been chosen as the product name in order to stress how simple and easy the product is to use (like counting "eins, zwei, drei"), and so that the familiarity of the expression helps the product name to stick in the viewer's mind.

The Disney animated film *The Emperor's New Groove* is called in German *Ein Königreich für ein Lama* 'A Kingdom for a Llama', which is a pun on the well-known quotation from Shakespeare's *Richard III*: "My Kingdom for a horse!" (in German: "*Mein Königreich für ein Pferd!*") (*RTL* 05/07/02). Accompanied by excerpts from the film the voiceover summarises the plot:

Ein verwöhnter König wird in ein Lama verhext. Jetzt muss er lernen, *auf den eigenen vier Hufen zu stehen*. Erstmal geht es *drunter und drüber*. Doch wie verwandelt man sich wieder zurück? Disney's *Ein Königreich für ein Lama*. Ab Donnerstag auf Video und DVD.

A spoiled king is turned into a llama. Now he must learn to stand on his own four hooves. Everything's topsy-turvy to begin with. But how can he change himself back again? Disney's *Ein Königreich für ein Lama*. From Thursday on video and DVD.

The familiarity of the idiom means that the product name strikes a chord with the consumer, who is more likely to buy a product which they remember hearing something about. The substitution of the noun "Lama" 'llama' for the "Pferd" 'horse' of the original "winged word" allows the idiom to fit the specific context in which it occurs. Furthermore, the humour of the rather absurd modification of the idiom, especially when contrasted with the serious and sombre source of the original quotation, suggests to the viewer that the whole film is funny. The fact that the creatively and amusingly modified idiom is actually the product name helps the product to stick in the viewer's mind, particularly as a shot of the product with the film title clearly visible occurs right at the end of the advertisement just as the product name is announced by the voiceover.

The second idiom in the copy, *auf den eigenen vier Hufen stehen*, deriving from the idiom *auf den eigenen zwei Beinen stehen* [lit. 'to stand on one's own two legs'] 'to be independent' (similar in sense to the English idiom "to stand on one's own two feet") has also been modified in an amusing way in order to suit the product it promotes. The literal sense of the idiom is played out in the visuals, which show the king as a llama attempting to walk on his four new hooves. The third idiom present, *drunter und drüber* 'upside-down' or 'topsy-turvy', is also reinforced by the visuals in which one of the cartoon characters slips, falls, and rolls down a hill in a cart, while another character knocks over a table. The alliteration and rhythm of this parallel formula makes the phrase more memorable. The accumulation of the three idioms renders the tone of the advertisement extremely informal and light-hearted, which is in keeping with the nature of the product it promotes. Moreover, the puns on two of the idioms adds to the humour of the advertisement, and consequently to the film itself.

5.6.2.9 Subheadline

No idioms at all appear in the subheadlines of any of the television advertisements analysed.

5.6.3 Textual position of idioms: Discussion of results

Idioms perform different functions in advertisements according to where exactly they are found. Idioms as the headline – particularly when they are subject to creative, innovative modifications or involve humorous puns – grab the reader/viewer's attention, arousing his or her interest in order to encourage him or her to read/watch more of the advertising message. They also act as a recall cue for the advertisement as a whole. Idioms in the first sentence of the copy body serve as an introduction to the advertising message, presenting it in simple, familiar, informal language which appeals to the reader/viewer. Idioms as the last sentence of the copy body summarise and conclude the advertising message, as well as providing a sense of thematic and linguistic unity, since they are a common way of ending a conversation (see section 2.4.2.7). A well-known idiom in this position may also create an impression of finality and certainty, which anticipates the reader/viewer's questioning of the advertising message. Idioms as the subheadline summarise the main points of the advertising message in an eye-catching position, thereby attracting the consumer's attention and allowing him or her to quickly grasp the gist of the advertisement. When the copy body contains idioms the informal tone and speech-like style of the text is reinforced. Idioms are often used here in order to contrast with – and thus provide a welcome break from – dry, factual and/or statistical information.

Idioms in an advertisement's illustration/visuals make the reader/viewer work a little harder to recognise and process the idiom, which is by definition a linguistic, not a visual, phenomenon. The reader/viewer then feels pleased that he or she has understood the idiom, and consequently responds more favourably towards the advertising message. The extra mental effort involved also means that the phrase, and thus the advertisement as a whole, is more likely to be remembered. The slogan as the final prominent piece of advertising text presents the main argument in favour of buying the product being promoted. Slogans containing idioms are more striking, memorable, and emphatic because the language they contain is already familiar, and

quite often ear- (or even eye-)catching when the idioms comprise poetic devices such as rhyme and alliteration. Using a recognisable expression as the slogan also gives the impression that the slogan is a widely accepted truth, thereby lending the entire advertisement a sense of veracity. These effects are intensified by the frequent repetition of the idiom which occurs when an idiom serves as a company's slogan, and is therefore present in every advertisement produced by the company. Similarly, using an idiom as the actual name of the product advertised increases the likelihood of the product being remembered. Idioms are used in speech-bubbles in a written advertisement's illustration in order to recreate the style of actual speech, hence addressing the reader in informal, appealing language. Idioms in a print advertisement's caption explain the illustration in familiar terms, and focus attention on the advertisement's visual element.

Idioms occur most often in the copy body of both magazine and television advertisements. This is mainly due to the fact that the copy body tends to comprise the greatest quantity of words, and so it is statistically probable that most idioms will be found in this part of the advertisement. It is therefore perhaps more revealing to examine the other positions in which idioms appear in advertising texts. In the *Stern* corpus idioms occur primarily in significant textual positions in advertisements: the headline, the first and last sentences of the copy body, and the subheadline. Idioms in the *RTL* corpus also appear in prominent textual positions in the advertisements: predominantly in the slogan, the first and last sentences of the copy body, and the slogan. Idioms are found frequently in the headline and subheadline of magazine advertisements, but rarely in these positions in television advertisements. This is because television advertisements have less time and space in which to communicate their message, so the emphasis is placed on their visuals. There is consequently less spoken and/or written text in a television advertisement, with the result that often only the most important features of an advertisement – the advertising slogan and the company slogan – are included, while elements such as the headline and subheadlines, which are organisational devices suited to more lengthy written texts, may be omitted completely.

It is also interesting to note the specific types of idioms which occur in the different elements of an advertisement (see Tables 3 and 4). Of greatest significance are the findings that proverbs and idiomatic "winged words" are found primarily in the headlines of magazine advertisements, while in television advertisements proverbs

appear most often in company slogans, and idiomatic "winged words" are present mainly in the advertising slogan. Proverbs and "winged words" are the most easily identifiable types of idioms because they comprise extremely recognisable language, and are the most lexically, semantically, and syntactically fixed idioms. Proverbs representing age-old, conventional wisdom, and "winged words" as particularly famous quotations or titles of/excerpts from literature and the like, convey the impression that the ideas communicated by the phrases are generally accepted by the linguistic community. Precisely because of their familiarity, proverbs and idiomatic "winged words" are used in the headlines of advertisements in the *Stern* corpus in order to attract the reader's attention, and to create an atmosphere of wisdom and truthfulness right from the start of the advertisement. For the same reasons, proverbs as the company slogans in the *RTL* corpus imply that the company can be trusted. Idiomatic "winged words" as the advertising slogans are extremely familiar phrases, ensuring that the slogans will be processed more easily and recalled more effectively by the viewer.

5.7 The Modification of Idioms in Advertisements

51.88% of all the idioms found in the corpus of magazine advertisements (i.e. 234 idioms) and 47.11% of the idioms occurring in the corpus of television advertisements (i.e. 49 idioms) have been modified. As regards the „projizierte Intention“ des Sprechers" 'the "projected intention" of the speaker' (Dobrovolskij 2001:273; cf. section 2.4.3.1) behind the modification of idioms in this selection of advertisements, 7.26% of all the modified idioms in the *Stern* corpus (i.e. 17 idioms) and 2.04% of the modified idioms in the *RTL* corpus (i.e. 1 idiom) were modified in a "standardmäßig" 'standard' way, i.e. without changing them in a deliberate, innovative way. 217 of the modified idioms (92.74%) in the magazine advertisements and 48 of the modified idioms (97.96%) in the television advertisements were modified in a "kreativ" 'creative' manner. None of the idioms in either corpus were modified in a "fehlerhaft" 'incorrect' way, as would be expected from the meticulously planned, carefully worded texts of advertising.

Examples of the internal modification type categorised as "separation", and of the external modifications described as "accumulation" and "metacommunicative commentary", do actually occur in these advertising corpora, but the idioms

displaying such features were more aptly placed in one of the other categories of modification. Thus, although illustrations of these modification types will be given, these three classifications are not included in the statistical analysis of the corpora.

5.7.1 *Stern*

As Table 5 shows, the most common types of modifications to idioms in the *Stern* corpus are the activation of (a component of) an idiom's literal meaning through both its co-text and illustration, the activation of an idiom's literal meaning through its co-text alone, grammatical modification, and lexical substitution.

5.7.1.1 Activation of the literal meaning through both the co-text and illustration

35.47% of all the idioms modified in the *Stern* corpus (i.e. 83 idioms) involve the activation of the literal meaning through both the idiom's co-text and the advertisement's illustration. It is mainly VLI idioms which undergo this type of semantic modification, but it may also occur with other types of idioms. For example, an entire evening of films and programmes on *RTL* featuring the Muppets is advertised with the headline: "Muppets *bis in die Puppen!*" 'Muppets until late!' (*Stern* 25/04/02, p.43; Figure 5.16). The literal sense of the word "Puppen" 'dolls/puppets' in the adverbial idiom *bis in die Puppen* [lit. 'until in the dolls/puppets'] 'until late at night' is activated through both the advertisement's photograph of the most popular Muppets, and the co-text's reference to "Miss Piggy, Kermit und Konsorten" 'Miss Piggy, Kermit and the gang'.

As this example demonstrates, the literal sense of an idiom may be evoked by depicting in the illustration merely one component word of the idiom ("Puppen"). Quite often, however, the literal meaning of the idiom is activated by illustrating the literal sense of the whole idiom, as is the case with the headline for the Land Rover Discovery: "Wir *schicken Sie in die Wüste – Rückfahrchein inklusive*" 'We're sending you into the desert – return ticket included' (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.167; Figure 5.17). The idiom *jmdn. in die Wüste schicken* [lit. 'to send someone into the desert'] usually has the figurative sense of 'to give someone the heave-ho', i.e. to dismiss or get rid of someone, but here the literal sense is activated both by the advertisement's illustration of a Land Rover speeding through a desert, and by the co-text's assurance

"Rückfahrschein inklusive" and explanation in the subheadline that buying the car guarantees a free "Fahrerlehrgang in der Wüste" 'driving lesson in the desert'.

Evoking the literal sense of an idiom in an advertisement, especially when the idiom occurs in a prominent position such as the headline, ensures that the phrase is processed by both the visually and linguistically orientated hemispheres of the brain (cf. section 4.7). The idiom – and hence the advertising message as a whole – is consequently processed more quickly and remembered more effectively than a more literal expression would be. When the literal sense is emphasised by both the advertisement's illustration and the idiom's co-text this effect is reinforced on both the visual and linguistic levels. Furthermore, the wordplay involved in activating the literal sense of an idiom often injects humour and creativity into an advertisement, which entertains the reader and encourages him or her to respond more favourably to the advertisement as a whole.

5.7.1.2 Activation of the literal meaning through the co-text

The second most dominant type of idiom modification in the corpus of magazine advertisements is the activation of an idiom's literal sense through its co-text: 46 idioms in total (19.66%) were subjected to such modification. The travel company ITS urges readers to head south in winter since "Dort genießen Sie mit einem ITS Urlaub jede Menge Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten und können *sich frischen Wind um die Nase wehen lassen*" 'There on an ITS holiday you will enjoy a whole range of opportunities and can see the world' (*Stern* 29/08/02, p.103). The literal sense of the VLI idiom *sich frischen Wind um die Nase wehen lassen* [lit. 'to let fresh wind blow around one's nose'] 'to travel the world' is evoked by the word "Meeresbrise" 'sea breeze' in the next line of the copy body: "Wo Sie die schönsten Plätze mit Meeresbrise finden, steht im neuen ITS Winterkatalog 2002/2003" 'The new winter catalogue 2002/2003 tells you where you can find the best places with a sea breeze'. Again, the activation of the literal sense of the idiom allows the phrase, and subsequently the entire advertising message, to be recalled more efficiently. The amusing concrete mental image evoked of a breeze blowing around a person's (large) nose also helps the advertisement to stick in the reader's mind.

5.7.1.3 Grammatical modification

33 idioms in the corpus (14.10% of the whole corpus) have been subjected to grammatical modification. The most frequent types of grammatical modifications are: the omission of a function verb, e.g. "Schluß mit Teuer!" 'An end to expense!' (from the idiom *Schluß mit etw. machen* 'to put an end to something') as the subheadline for the car magazine *D&W* (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.68); and changing a normally singular noun to plural, or vice versa. The first sentence of the copy body of a *Stern* advertisement offers the Air-Tek C3800-8B Touch-Screen calculator as a free gift to new subscribers to *Stern* as "Ein Dankeschön, das gerade kühle Rechner berührt" 'A thank-you which will excite even cool customers' (*Stern* 10/01/02). The idiom *ein kühler Rechner sein* [lit. 'to be a cool arithmetician'] 'to be cool, calm and collected' usually occurs in the singular, but is used here in the plural to emphasise that the advertisement is addressing as many readers as possible. Both the photograph of the calculator, and the description in the body copy of the calculator's functions, create a pun on the literal sense of the expression, which makes the advertisement as a whole more appealing and memorable.

Punctuation changes are also a common kind of grammatical change. The punctuation of the proverbial expression *wie der Vater, so der Sohn* ≈ 'like father, like son', i.e. a son's attitude, behaviour, or character is often like that of his father, is modified in an advertisement for DWS pension plan to give the headline: "*Wie der Vater, so der Sohn?*" 'Like father, like son?', which is reinforced in the illustration by a photograph of a father and his young son shaving (*Stern* 06/06/02, p.45). The modification of the idiom's punctuation suggests that the advertisement copy is actually about to contradict this traditional wisdom, which therefore piques the reader's interest and encourages him or her to read the rest of the advertising text.

5.7.1.4 Lexical substitution

Approximately 12.4% of the *Stern* corpus (i.e. 29 idioms) has been modified by substituting one or more of the idiom's component words. An advertisement for the company NABU NRW, which installs technology to allow homes to use rain as their main source of household water, contains the headline: "*Regen bringt Segen!*" 'Rain brings success!' (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.88; Figure 5.18). On this occasion the noun

"Regen" 'rain' has been substituted for its homonym "sich regen" 'to move' in order to pun on the proverb *sich regen bringt Segen* [lit. 'to move brings blessing'] 'hard work brings a reward', thereby making the idiom more suited to the context in which it occurs. The creativeness and humour of the modified idiom attracts the reader's attention, allowing the advertisement as a whole to seem more innovative, just like the technology it promotes.

The proverb *wenn zwei sich streiten, freut sich der Dritte* [lit. 'when two argue, the third rejoices'] 'a third person always benefits from two people arguing' is modified in two different ways in the advertisements of the *Stern* corpus. In the first instance an advertisement for two kinds of Meggle butter ("Alpenbutter 'Alps-butter') and "Joghurtbutter" 'Yoghurt-butter') carries the slogan: "*Wenn zwei gut schmecken, freut sich der Dritte*" 'When two taste good, the third rejoices' (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.128; Figure 5.19). The advertisement's illustration emphasises the idea of "zwei" 'two' by showing the two types of butter spread by two knives on a slice of bread, as well as a product shot of the two different butters in their packaging. "Der Dritte" 'the third' is presumably the person eating the butter, or perhaps the piece of bread on which the butter is spread. The concept of three is further reinforced by the only other section of text (apart from the website address) which claims: "Im Test: 33 Marken Butter 3 mal beste Testnote 1,7" 'In a test: 33 brands of butter, 3 times the best test result 1.7'. Modifying the proverb to fit the context again catches the reader's eye and injects humour into the text.

In the second instance an advertisement for the publishing company My Favourite Book describes 20 different scenarios presented almost as subheadlines in 20 different boxes, then suggests why the reader should publish the written work in each case (*Stern* 16/05/02, p.172; Figure 5.20). For example, the text in the last box offers: "Sie haben eine Ode an Ihre Katze geschrieben? Verlegen wir" 'You've written an ode to your cat? We'll publish'. The proverb *wenn zwei sich streiten, freut sich der Dritte* is in one box modified to read: "*Wenn zwei sich schreiben, freut sich der Dritte*. Wir drucken Ihre Briefe" 'When two people write to each other, the third person rejoices. We'll publish your letters'. The substitution of the similar sounding "sich schreiben" 'to write to one another' for "sich streiten" 'to argue' allows humour to be injected into the advertisement by means of wordplay. Two further idioms appear in this advertisement, which allows the advertisement as a whole to be regarded as undergoing an external modification described as the accumulation of idioms. One

scenario containing the VLI idiom *jmdm. etw. schriftlich geben* [lit. 'to give something to someone in writing'] 'to tell someone something which one is sure of' suggests: "Ihr Chef ist ein Scheusal? Geben Sie es ihm doch schriftlich" 'Your boss is a monster? Give it to him in writing'. The literal sense of "schriftlich" 'in writing' is evoked here by the co-text in order to coincide with and pun on the general theme of the advertisement. Another scenario uses the kinegram *den Daumen senken* [lit. 'to sink the thumb'] 'to show disagreement with or disapproval of something' (similar in sense to the English kinegram "to give something the thumbs down"): "Ein Verlagslektor hat mal wieder den Daumen gesenkt? Glück gehabt" 'A publishing editor has given you the thumbs down again? You're in luck'. The accumulation of idioms reinforces the informal, familiar style and tone of the whole advertisement, which encourages the reader to consider the company to be a friendly, approachable firm which would be happy to publish any manuscript, no matter how trivial the subject matter or bad the writing style.

5.7.1.5 Activation of the literal meaning through the illustration

24 idioms in total (i.e. 10.26% of the corpus) have their literal sense evoked by the advertisement's illustration. The slogan of an advertisement for West cigarettes claims that, even though the cigarettes are "Lights" (i.e. contain less nicotine), they are still "*Stärker, als die Polizei erlaubt*" 'Stronger than the police allow' (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.61; Figure 5.21). The comparative adjective "stärker" 'stronger' has here been substituted for the usual "dümmer" 'more stupid' of the idiom *dümmer sein, als die Polizei erlaubt* [lit. 'to be more stupid than the police allow'] 'to be really stupid'. Moreover, the literal sense of the idiom (i.e. the police forbidding something) is played out in the advertisement's illustration where a policewoman holds a giant box of the cigarettes at gunpoint. The logo on the box even looks like two people emerging from a doorway with their hands up. The literal meaning of the idiom conveys the idea of disobeying the law, and in this way encourages the reader to disregard the obligatory warning on every cigarette box and in the copy of every advertisement: "Die EG-Gesundheitsminister: Rauchen gefährdet die Gesundheit" 'The EC Minister for Health: Smoking is dangerous to health'. The modification in such a prominent position attracts the reader's attention and encourages him or her to read the whole advertising message in order to get the pun. Furthermore, the humour

of the lexical substitution of one of the idiom's component words, together with the pun on the idiom's literal sense, makes smoking seem like a cool, defiant activity rather than a potentially lethal, antisocial habit.

5.7.1.6 Reduction

7 idioms in the *Stern* corpus (i.e. 2.99% of the corpus) are modified by truncating the phrase. The magazine *Handelsblatt* is advertised with the slogan: "*Weniger Spreu. Mehr Weizen*" 'Less chaff. More wheat' (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.145; Figure 5.22). This reduced form of the VLI idiom *die Spreu vom Weizen trennen* ≈ 'to separate the wheat from the chaff', i.e. to differentiate the good from the bad, is highlighted by the large, bold font of the expression, its prominent position, the lack of much other text in the advertisement, and the distinctive modification of the age-old, familiar idiom. The punctuation introduced to turn the idiom into two separate sentences, along with the omission of articles and the verb "trennen" 'to separate', renders the idiom more dramatic and emphatic, and therefore more eye-catching. The new boldness and starkness of the idiom makes the slogan – and consequently the claim about the content of the magazine – seem irrefutable.

5.7.1.7 Expansion

The expansion of an idiom occurs 6 times in the corpus of magazine advertisements (i.e. 2.56% of the whole corpus). An advertisement for *Flora* gardening magazine contains the headline: "Der Frühling *steht vor der Gartentür*. Ich geh mal raus und lass ihn rein" 'Spring is at the garden gate. I'll go out and let it in' (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.17; Figure 5.23). The expansion of the noun "Tür" 'door' in the idiom *vor der Tür stehen* [lit. 'to stand at the door'] 'to be about to happen' (similar in sense to the English idiom "to be just around the corner"), to form "Gartentür" 'garden door' helps the idiom to better suit the context and theme of the advertisement. In addition, the expansion activates the literal sense of the VLI idiom, which makes the expression easier to recall. The literal interpretation of a second VLI is also evoked: the idea of using hand-held gardening tools is conveyed by the subheadline's *im Handumdrehen* [lit. 'in the turning of the hand'] 'in no time', i.e. very quickly. Idiomatic advertising jargon, *schnell und einfach* 'quick and easy', occurs in the text as well, and this

accumulation of idioms perpetuates the informal, colloquial style (e.g. "ich geh mal raus und lass ihn rein") of the advertisement.

An advertisement for the financial magazine *Der Vermögensberater* has as its illustration a photograph of the following edition's front cover (*Stern* 25/04/02, p.36; Figure 5.24). The picture on the cover is of a large walnut with the inscription "Riesters Rente" 'Riester's pension' on it, while a fist looks just about to smash the nut open. The headline reads: "So *knacken* Sie die Renten-Nuss" 'How to crack the pension-nut', while the explanation of the article content, "Jetzt Geld vom Staat sichern" 'Now secure money from the state', is given as a subheadline. The headline is a modified version of the idiom *eine harte Nuss zu knacken haben* \approx 'to have a hard nut to crack', i.e. to have a difficult problem to solve. The illustration evokes the literal sense of the VLI idiom, making the phrase and consequently the magazine cover more memorable. The original idiom's syntax and semantics are not only extended ("Nuss" 'nut' becomes "Renten-Nuss" 'pension-nut', and the sense is widened to include the literal meaning), but its syntax also undergoes reduction (the function verb "haben" 'to have' and the adjective "harte" 'hard' are omitted). The extensive modification of the idiom makes the headline – and hence the magazine promoted – sound innovative and clever, thereby encouraging the reader to buy the product.⁴³

5.7.1.8 Affirmation \leftrightarrow negation change

6 idioms (2.56% of the corpus) are modified by changing positive constructions to negative constructions, or vice versa. The headline for *Bildung* magazine changes the negative phrasing of the proverb *was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr* [lit. 'what little Hans does not learn, Hans learns never more'] 'if one does not learn something as a child, one can never learn it as an adult' (similar in sense to the English proverb "you can't teach an old dog new tricks") to the affirmative: "*Was Hänschen lernt, kann auch Hans noch lernen!*" 'What young Hans learns, old Hans

⁴³ Although the VLI idioms *vor der Tür stehen* and *eine harte Nuss zu knacken haben* can both be categorised as undergoing modification of the type activation of the literal sense through the co-text and/or context, they have here been classified as being subjected to lexical expansion because the modification is of key importance in tailoring the idioms to suit the particular themes of the advertisements. The fact that more than one type of modification is applicable to these VLI idioms again highlights the fact that the categories used in the various classifications throughout this dissertation are by no means absolute.

can learn too!' (*Stern* 06/06/02, p.176; Figure 5.25). The large font and prominent textual position of the phrase makes the idiom stand out from the rest of the text, and the fact that the headline comprises an amusing modified version of a well-known proverb draws further attention to the expression – and subsequently to the whole advertising message – as the reader tries to ascertain the reason for the idiom modification.

5.7.1.9 Separation

The holiday company AIDA advertises its sea cruises with the first two sentences of the copy, which state: "Jeder *genießt* so, wie er will. Aber immer *in vollen Zügen*" 'Every person enjoys things just as they like. But always to the full' (*Stern* 10/01/02, p.93). The component words of the idiom *etw. in vollen Zügen genießen* [lit. 'to enjoy something in full characteristics/trains'] 'to enjoy something to the full' are in this instance separated over two distinct sentences. This modification helps to emphasise the literal meaning of the VLI idiom's "Zügen", here taken to mean 'trains', since trains are a particularly suitable concept to include in an advertisement for a travel company. The advertisement promotes a sea cruise around the Spanish isles with return flights, so using an idiom which includes the mental image of trains makes the company seem as if it offers even more ways to travel than it actually does in this advertisement.⁴⁴

5.7.1.10 Accumulation

The accumulation of idioms in one text is classified as a modification external to the idiom. An advertisement for a book by Marcus Koch, *Erfolgsrezepte vom BörsenKoch*, contains 6 different idioms (*Stern* 08/11/01, p.34; Figure 5.26). The last sentence of the copy addresses the reader directly: "Sie lesen, auf welche Informationen er achtet und lernen die Investmentszene *mit den Augen eines Profis sehen!*" 'You will read about which information he pays attention to, and learn to

⁴⁴ Again, the VLI idiom *etw. in vollen Zügen genießen* can also be described as having its literal sense activated by the idiom's co-text. It is classified primarily as undergoing separation, however, because it is such a striking example of this particular type of modification.

regard the investment scene with a professional eye!'. Here the verbal idiom *etw. mit anderen/neuen Augen sehen* [lit. 'to see something with different/new eyes'] 'to see something from a different perspective' has undergone lexical substitution to create the modified version *etw. mit den Augen eines Profis sehen*, which alludes to the adese X [tun] *wie die Profis* 'to do something like the professionals'. The reviews from various German newspapers and magazines provide the remaining idioms. The *DM-Online* critique uses a verbal idiom in the sentence "Koch war zur rechten Zeit am rechten Ort" 'Koch was in the right place at the right time'. The *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* review features an onymic word group in "Heute gilt der 29-jährige Journalist als Guru der Generation Geld" 'Today the 29-year-old journalist is a guru for the Money Generation'. The *Handelsblatt* review contains the last three idioms: the VLI idiom in "...und wirft auf gewohnt informative Art den Blick hinter die Kulissen der Wall Street" '...and in his usual informative way takes a peek behind the scenes at Wall Street'; and the two VLI idioms in the final sentence of the whole text: "Er ist live vor Ort und kann sich ein Bild von der Investmentszene machen" 'He is right on the spot and can paint a picture of the investment scene'. The accumulation of idioms in this advertisement gives the whole text the feel of spoken German, which is a style characteristic of book reviews in the press. The familiar, informal language appeals directly to the reader, and creates the impression that the direct quotations from the book reviews are simply friendly advice recommending the product (as opposed to an overt command to buy the book).

Idioms may also be accumulated not just within a single text, but also within a series of texts, as is the case with the advertising campaign for the bank Deutsche Ausgleichsbank. The brightly coloured illustrations of three different advertisements in this campaign show cartoon figures depicting in each instance the literal interpretation of a VLI idiom found either in the headline or in the first sentence of the copy. The first advertisement (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.91; Figure 5.27) features one character rolling a ship's wheel towards another character, while the first sentence of the copy asks: "Wollen Sie selbst *das Steuer in die Hand nehmen*, wenn der Senior in den Ruhestand geht?" 'Do you want to take the helm yourself when the boss retires?'. The form of the idiom given here is a combination of the VLI idioms *das Steuer in der Hand haben* [lit. 'to have the helm in the hand'] 'to be in charge' (similar in sense to the English idiom "to be at the helm"), and *etw. in die Hand nehmen* [lit. 'to take something into the hand'] 'to take charge of something' (similar in sense to the English

idiom "to take matters into your own hands"). A second advertisement shows a cartoon character taking a long stride in large boots (*Stern* 16/05/02, p.37; Figure 5.28). The first sentence of the copy declares: "Wenn Sie mit Ihrer Firma zukünftig *größere Sprünge machen* wollen, *steht Ihnen die DtA gerne zur Seite*" 'If you want in the future to take bigger steps with your company, the DtA will gladly stand by you'. There are actually versions of two different VLI idioms present in this sentence: *große Sprünge machen* [lit. 'to make great leaps'] 'to make great progress', and *jmdm. zur Seite stehen* ≈ 'to stand by someone(s side)', i.e. to help or support someone. The third advertisement contains an illustration of a character balancing precariously on the tip of a pyramid while a second character brings him another pyramid with a flat rather than a pointed top (*Stern* 27/06/02, p.203; Figure 5.29). The headline reads: "Wer *an die Spitze* will, braucht eine grundsolide Basis" 'He who wants to reach the pinnacle needs a solid basis' (from the VLI idiom *an der Spitze sein* ≈ 'to be at the top').

All the idioms in these examples have been modified slightly to make them sound more dynamic in order to suit the go-getting theme and style of the advertisement, which is aimed at galvanizing the reader into action (i.e. making career decisions which will require financial support from the DtA bank). In the first advertisement the verb construction "in die Hand nehmen" instead of "in der Hand haben" suggests movement; in the second advertisement the comparative adjective "größere" 'bigger' rather than the usual "große" 'big' of the idiom conveys the impression of achieving more; and in the last advertisement movement is again indicated by changing "an der Spitze sein" to "an die Spitze [gehen]". The activation of the VLI idioms' literal interpretations through the advertisements' illustrations also aid processing and recall of the advertising message.

5.7.1.11 Metacommunicative commentary

The function of metacommunicative commentary is to emphasise the use of an idiom, and/or to differentiate between the literal and figurative senses where necessary (see section 4.6). Three different examples of metacommunicative commentary exist in the *Stern* corpus. In an advertisement for Premiere World television channel (*Stern* 16/05/02, p.77) the headline reads:

Die Bibel sagt:
Geben ist seliger als nehmen.
Wir sagen:
Greifen Sie trotzdem zu.

The Bible says:
It is better to give than to receive.
We say:
Nevertheless help yourself.

The metacommunicative phrase "Die Bibel sagt:" 'The Bible says:' introduces and thereby highlights a quotation from the Bible, which has subsequently become a proverb, *Geben ist seliger als nehmen* ≈ 'it is holier to give than to receive' (similar in sense to the English proverb "it is better to give than to receive"). The "Greifen Sie trotzdem zu" 'But just get stuck in' of the headline encourages the reader not to exercise any selflessness and generosity, thereby disregarding the traditional advice of the proverb *Geben ist seliger als nehmen* 'It is better to give than to receive', by watching as many programmes on the television channel advertised as he or she wishes. Contrasting "Die Bibel sagt:" with "Wir sagen:" 'We say:' creates a kind of "them-and-us" scenario from which the reader infers that the advertiser is on the side of the reader and wants to give something (i.e. a wide selection of television programmes and subsequent viewing pleasure) to him or her, as opposed to the Bible which advocates the less enjoyable course of action (i.e. giving rather than receiving). The reader is thus more favourably disposed towards the advertising message.

An advertisement for the Mitsubishi Carisma contains the caption under a photograph of a Mitsubishi racing car: "Nürburgring, 26./27.5.2001: Intern. ADAC 24 h-Rennen. Mehr als 200 starten in der „Grünen Hölle“: Starker 6. Platz Mitsubishi Carisma EVO VI" 'Nürburgring 26-27/5/2001: International ADAC 24-hour race. More than 200 starters in the "Green Hell": a sound 6th place from the Mitsubishi Carisma EVO VI' (*Stern* 31/01/02, p.84). The quotation marks around the onymic word group alert the reader to the fact that the expression is a figurative phrase.

The Volvo S80 with its unique technology of a speakerphone installed into the dashboard is advertised with the headline: "Wohin Sie auch wollen ... Sie *haben freie Hand*" 'Wherever you want to go ... you have a free hand' (*Stern* 27/06/02, p.179; Figure 5.30). The literal meaning of the VLI idiom *freie Hand haben* ≈ 'to have a free hand', i.e. to be able to act as one sees fit, is activated in order to emphasise the main

selling point of the car (i.e. the fact that the driver can speak on the phone while keeping his or her hands on the steering wheel). The copy body goes on to list the other attractive features of the car, and concludes with the sentence: "Und das wird Ihnen jetzt nun wirklich *die Sprache verschlagen*" 'And that will now really leave you speechless'. The literal sense of the verbal idiom *jmdm. die Sprache verschlagen/rauben* [lit. 'to steal someone's speech'] 'to leave someone speechless', or even 'flabbergasted', is evoked by the co-text of the advertisement in order to convey the idea again that the speakerphone removes the need to communicate through hand-held mobile phones whilst driving. This activation of the literal interpretation is reinforced by the use of the word "wirklich" 'literally'. As is normally the case with most metacommunicative words (e.g. "sprichwörtlich" 'proverbial(ly)', "buchstäblich" 'literal(ly)', and "wörtlich" 'literal(ly)'), the advertiser does not actually intend for the phrase to be taken literally, but rather includes the word "wirklich" as an intensifier.

5.7.2 RTL

As illustrated in Table 5, modifications to idioms in the corpus of television advertisements involve primarily the activation of (a component of) an idiom's literal meaning through the visuals, lexical substitution, the activation of an idiom's literal meaning through its co-text and visuals, and grammatical modification.

5.7.2.1 Activation of the literal meaning through the visuals

The most common type of modification in the *RTL* corpus involves the activation of an idiom's literal sense through the visuals: 18 idioms in total (36.73% of the whole corpus) are subjected to this type of modification. The first scene of an advertisement for Dash washing powder shows a large, wrinkled piece of blue silk. A steam iron glides effortlessly through the creased material, smoothing out the wrinkled fabric to form the words "Braun empfiehlt Dash" 'Braun recommends Dash' (*RTL* 16/08/02). The scene is suggestive of a ship sailing through a choppy blue sea, and this image is reinforced by the slogan spoken at the end of the advertisement: "Braun und Dash. Da geht's *mit Volldampf* durch Ihre Bügelwäsche" 'Braun and Dash. Go full-steam ahead through your ironing'. The literal sense of the nautical VLI idiom *mit Volldampf gehen* ≈ 'to go full-steam ahead', i.e. to do something enthusiastically or thoroughly, is

further reinforced in the final scenes when the box of Dash washing powder turns into an iron which puffs out steam just as the slogan containing the VLI idiom is spoken. The pun on the literal meaning of the idiom is the basis for the advertising message, making the text (and hence the advertisement and the products promoted) seem particularly clever and imaginative. The concrete mental image associated with the idiom (i.e. a large ship travelling swiftly through the sea, with steam pouring from its funnels) is played out in – and thus reinforced by – the visuals, which means that the idiom and the advertisement as a whole are easier to remember and recall.

An advertisement for Hanuta biscuits features an attractive young woman and man dressed in medieval garb having a sword-fight in the middle of a field (RTL 30/08/02). Two men looking like Musketeers ride up on horseback and start to comment on the action. The girl overhears them and challenges them, so one of the Musketeers pretends he was actually talking about the biscuit advertised. He throws her one, which she catches on the end of her sword. She takes a bite, then offers it seductively to the young man with whom she was duelling. As he bites into the biscuit still in the girl's hand, one of the Musketeers jokes: "Hey, da frißt er ihr aus der Hand!" 'Hey, he's eating out of her hand!'. The visuals activate the literal sense of the Musketeer's comment, which comprises the VLI idiom *jmdm. aus der Hand fressen* ≈ 'to eat out of someone's hand', i.e. to be under someone's control or influence. The pun on the idiom's literal meaning adds humour to the advertisement, making it more appealing and memorable.

5.7.2.2 Lexical substitution

The next most frequent type of modification is lexical substitution. 24.49% of the corpus (i.e. 12 idioms) undergoes this type of modification. An advertisement for Knorr packet sauce shows a woman cooking steaks and pouring the sauce on top (RTL 12/04/02). The female voiceover, supposedly the woman cooking, describes the content of the sauce in an inviting way ("Frische Sahne dazu. Mit drei Pfeffersorten fein abgestimmt. Mmm... rahmig, pfefferig" 'Fresh cream. Balanced perfectly by three sorts of pepper. Mmm... creamy, peppery'), before announcing "Knorr. Essen gut. Alles gut" 'Knorr. Food's good. Everything's good'. The company slogan is both written and spoken at the end of the advertisement, and is a modified version of the proverb *Ende gut, alles gut* 'it doesn't matter what happens so long as everything turns

out well in the end' (similar in sense to the English proverb "all's well that ends well"). The lexical substitution of "Essen" 'food' or 'to eat' for the idiom's usual "Ende" 'end', together with the phrase's punctuation change to create two shorter sentences, makes the company slogan sound rather dramatic and therefore more memorable. Having a proverb as a slogan also projects an impression of tradition and trustworthiness onto the company and the products it produces.

5.7.2.3 Activation of the literal meaning through both the co-text and visuals

7 idioms altogether (14.29% of the corpus) are modified by evoking their literal sense through both the phrase's co-text and the advertisement's visuals. An advertisement for Odol Plus mouthwash shows a man brushing his teeth, dressed in a t-shirt and chinos, but cut in half vertically from his head down (RTL 27/09/02). He then leaves his flat and gets into a lift, while the other half of his body, dressed in a navy suit, gets into an adjacent lift. As the two halves emerge from the lift in the building's reception they join together to form one whole man. An attractive woman gets up to greet him and kisses him. The voiceover, which starts right at the beginning of the advertisement, explains the visuals:

Zähneputzen allein ist nur der halbe Job. Odol Plus für gesundes Zahnfleisch sorgt für die andere Hälfte. Odol Plus mit den Wirkstoffen von Kamille und Salbei beugt durch seine antibakterielle Wirkformel Reizungen und Entzündungen am Zahnfleisch vor. Damit Ihre Mundpflege *keine halbe Sache bleibt*. Zähne putzen und Odol Plus.

Merely brushing your teeth is only half the job. Odol Plus for healthy gums takes care of the other half. Odol Plus with its active ingredients, camomile and sage, prevents with its antibacterial formula gum irritation and inflammation. So that your oral hygiene does not keep doing things by halves. Brush your teeth and Odol Plus.

The literal meaning of the "halbe Sachen" 'half things' aspect of the verbal idiom *keine halben Sachen machen* [lit. 'to do no half things'] 'to do something properly', similar in sense to the English idiom "to not do things by halves", is activated here by both the advertisement's visuals and the idiom's co-text ("der halbe Job" 'half the job', "die andere Hälfte" 'the other half'). The idiom is in fact the basis for the advertisement's theme, and the fact that the idiom is modified semantically and grammatically (i.e. the normally plural "keine halben Sachen" of the idiom is made

singular, while the more unusual "bleiben" 'to remain' is substituted for the function verb "machen" 'to make') ensures that the advertisement sticks in the viewer's mind.

5.7.2.4 Grammatical modification

Around 12.25% of the entire corpus of television advertisements (i.e. 6 idioms) undergoes grammatical modifications. As with the *Stern* corpus, the most common types of modification are the omission of function verbs, and the changing of a singular noun to plural, or vice versa. An advertisement for Spanish oranges begins with shots of children enjoying various cakes and biscuits (*RTL* 16/08/02). The voiceover comments: "Kinder lieben süße Sachen mit viel Zucker und viel Fett" 'Children love sweet things with lots of sugar and lots of fat'. The scene then changes to children enjoying eating and playing with oranges, as the voiceover asks: "Wie wäre es mit frischen Orangen und Klementinen? Die sind süß, mit viel Vitamin C und Ballaststoffen. Für kluge Köpfe" 'What about fresh oranges and clementines? They're sweet, with lots of vitamin C and fibre. For clever people'. In this example the verbal idiom *ein kluger Kopf sein* [lit. 'to be a clever head'] 'to be clever or capable' is accompanied by a shot of a boy holding a large picture of half an orange on top of another boy's head, so that it looks like the top half of the boy's head is actually a large orange. The idiom has been changed from singular to plural to apply to both the children in the scene, and the literal sense of "Kopf" 'head' is activated by the visuals. The pun on the literal meaning of the idiom, emphasised by the voiceover's slight pause after the word "für", adds humour to the advertisement, which fits in well with the theme of children having fun eating oranges, and ends the advertisement on a positive note.

5.7.2.5 Reduction

Reduction is applied to 2 of the idioms in the *RTL* corpus (4.08% of the corpus). An advertisement for Charmin toilet paper features the cartoon bear habitually associated with the brand making a hammock between two trees out of the toilet paper (*RTL* 02/08/02). After his exertions he is so hot and sweaty that he dives into a nearby pool. He emerges dripping from the water and jumps onto the toilet paper hammock, which does not break, even though he is soaking wet and very heavy. The voiceover praises

the strength of the toilet paper, and the company slogo, "Bei Nässe *bärenstark*" 'Even when wet as strong as a bear', is both spoken and written on screen at the end of the advertisement. The adjective "bärenstark" 'bear-strong' is a reduction of the idiomatic comparison *stark wie ein Bär sein* [lit. 'to be strong like a bear'] 'to be very strong', similar in sense to the English idiom "to be as strong as an ox". The idiom is the basis for the company's motif, the cuddly Charmin bear, and using a version of the idiom *stark wie ein Bär sein* helps to explain the concept "very strong" in familiar, colourful, more memorable language. Idiomatic comparisons by definition provide supplementary, colourful information about the concept they describe (e.g. "stark" 'strong', but "wie ein Bär" 'as a bear'). Reducing as far as possible the form of an idiomatic comparison while retaining the original idea behind it (i.e. the basis for comparison, which may be considered its content) seems a natural adjustment in keeping with the condensed style demanded by television advertising. The complete idiom is nevertheless evoked in the viewer's mind.

5.7.2.6 Expansion

Two idioms (4.08% of the corpus) are expanded in the corpus of television advertisements. In an advertisement for C&A clothing store an attractive, smartly dressed woman walks down a street on a beautiful sunny day (*RTL 07/06/02*). As she notices a handsome young man sitting on a motorbike not far from her, thunder is heard and it starts to rain. To the accompaniment of a dramatic soundtrack she starts to undress until she is walking down the street in her underwear. The man on the motorbike turns towards her, stands up and looks longingly at her. A car horn sounds and the scene reverts suddenly to the woman, fully clothed, walking past the man. She smiles to herself, and the viewer then realises that he or she has just been privy to the woman's fantasy. The voiceover headline explains: "*Lingerie für Tag und Nachträume*" 'Lingerie for day- and night-dreams'. The nouns of the idiomatic parallel formula *Tag und Nacht* 'day and night' have here been extended lexically to encompass the concept of "Träume" 'dreams'. The modified parallel formula is particularly apt for describing the product advertised (underwear which is suitable for any occasion at any time of the day), and the unusual compound "Nachträume" helps to make the headline – and consequently the product – stand out in the viewer's mind.

5.7.2.7 Affirmation ↔ negation change

Again, 4.08% of the corpus (i.e. 2 idioms) was subjected to modification of the type affirmation ↔ negation change. An advertisement for Raffaello sweets begins with shots of beautiful young things arriving by yacht at an island paradise (*RTL* 02/08/02). The men are dressed in business suits with the trouser legs rolled up, jackets slung casually over their shoulders and ties loosened, while the women wear swimsuits with shirts over the top. The group is shown enjoying themselves, drinking chilled champagne and eating the Raffaello sweets. The visuals correspond with the headline of the voiceover, "*Ohne Schlips. Ohne Kragen. Ohne Schokolade*" 'Without tie. Without collar. Without chocolate': a man takes off his tie and lets the breeze take it away at "ohne Schlips"; a woman slips out of her shirt at "ohne Kragen"; and another woman bites into a sweet at "ohne Schokolade". The parallel formula *mit Schlips und Kragen* [lit. 'with tie and collar'] 'dressed formally', similar in meaning to the English parallel formula "in shirt and tie", has on this occasion been changed from an affirmative to a negative expression (i.e. "mit" 'with' has been replaced by its antonym "ohne" 'without'). This modification, together with the separation of the idiom into two distinct sentences, emphasises that the normal components of the idiom have been changed. The unanticipated and unusual modification to the idiom serves to introduce the unexpected "ohne Schokolade", that is, the surprising fact that the sweets do not actually contain chocolate, but are delicious and indulgent nevertheless.

5.7.2.8 Separation, activation of the literal meaning through the co-text, accumulation, and metacommunicative commentary

The separation of an idiom's component words did not occur in the *RTL* corpus, and no idioms in the entire corpus of television advertisements had their literal meaning evoked by the co-text alone. No examples of either type of external modification, either accumulation or metacommunicative commentary, were found in the *RTL* corpus.

5.7.3 Modification of idioms: Discussion of results

Around half of all the idioms present in both the *Stern* and *RTL* corpora are modified in some way. It is not at all remarkable that no instances of "fehlerhaft" 'incorrect' modifications to idioms occur in either corpus since advertisements are texts that are meticulously planned, researched, and checked before they are printed or broadcast. The relatively few "standardmäßig" 'standard' modifications serve primarily to make the idiom more suited to its particular context. The large proportion of "kreativ" 'creative' modifications to idioms involves mainly wordplay, which draws the reader/viewer's attention initially to the advertisement. Wordplay injects humour, surprise, innovation, and creativity into an advertisement in an attempt to make the advertisement stand out from the huge volume of advertising the consumer is bombarded with on a daily basis. If a consumer is surprised, amused, and/or impressed by – or even just notices – an advertisement, he or she is more open to the advertising message it contains. Furthermore, innovative, clever advertisements reflect positively on the product and company being promoted.

Lexical substitution of one or more of an idiom's component words tailors the phrase to its specific context. Lexical substitution as one of the most obvious types of modification draws attention to the modified phrase, and consequently to the whole advertising text. Lexical substitution is particularly suited to wordplay, and is thus the primary means of injecting humour into many advertisements. Expansion helps an idiom better fit its context. Reduction of an idiom means that the shorter, more condensed expression is better suited to the concise style of advertising. Separation of an idiom's component words makes the reader of an advertisement do a kind of mental double-take in order to fully understand the idiom, which ensures that the phrase is remembered more clearly. Grammatical modification involves mainly minor, "standardmäßig" changes to an idiom, serving again to tailor the idiom to the advertisement's style, tone, and theme. An idiom which has undergone an affirmation ↔ negation change stands in striking contrast to the original idiom, and as a result is a particularly successful way of attracting attention to the advertisement.

Semantic modification usually acts as the basis for wordplay, whose purpose is to surprise and/or amuse the reader/viewer. The activation of an idiom's literal meaning through the co-text, illustration/visuals, or a combination of both, evokes strong mental imagery which allows the idiom – and hence the entire advertising

message – to be processed and recalled more effectively. When the illustration/visuals alone activate the literal meaning, the reader/viewer is forced to make the mental leap required to understand the idiom. This helps to secure the expression in the readers/viewer's mind, as well as flattering him or her by assuming that he or she is clever enough to have made the connection to begin with. When both the illustration/visuals and the co-text evoke the literal interpretation, the wordplay – and thus the creativity of the advertiser behind it – is highlighted, helping to differentiate the advertisement from the hundreds of others encountered by the reader/viewer on a daily basis. The accumulation of idioms in an advertisement produces an extremely striking effect, making the overall style and tone of the text very informal, familiar, and appealing. The idioms are emphasised by their proximity to one another, reinforcing the linguistic dexterity of the advertiser, which reflects positively on the product being promoted. Metacommunicative commentary also emphasises the ingenuity of the advertiser in using a particular idiom by ensuring that the reader/viewer notices and "gets" the idiom in the first place.

Lexical substitution is common in both the *Stern* and the *RTL* corpora because it is one of the simplest and most effective types of modification to make. Grammatical modification also occurs relatively frequently in both magazine and television advertisements since it serves as a means of tweaking an idiom to make it particularly suited to its context rather than as a way of achieving a dramatic stylistic effect. Syntactic frameworks undergo no modification at all, and idiomatic advertising jargon very little modification (and then only in the *RTL* corpus), because these idioms by definition already incorporate lexical substitution. Similarly, paraphrasal verbs, which are present only in the *Stern* corpus, have in a way already been subjected to modification (e.g. "jmdm. helfen" 'to help someone' is turned into *jmdm. Hilfe bieten* 'to provide help for someone'), so they have not been modified again in the advertisements examined.

The activation of an idiom's literal meaning through its co-text and/or illustration/visuals is an extremely popular type of modification in print advertising because it allows additional imagery to be incorporated into an advertisement which contains relatively few appealing, memorable images compared to televised advertisements. In the *RTL* corpus the activation of an idiom's literal meaning through an advertisement's visuals, as well as by a combination of its co-text and the advertisement's visuals, is also very common since such a modification serves as the

basis for humorous, attention-grabbing wordplay. In contrast to the findings for the *Stern* corpus, however, the activation of an idiom's literal meaning by its co-text alone is practically non-existent. This result may seem surprising initially, but when the fact that television advertising is dominated by visual images rather than language is taken into consideration, it is perhaps not so remarkable. Furthermore, since television advertisements are severely constricted by time, the advertiser does not usually have the leeway to pun on the literal sense of the idiom with long-winded co-text alone, meaning that the advertisement's visuals, sometimes in conjunction with one or two suggestive words in the text, must evoke the literal sense of the idiom in a fast and easily understood way.

Unlike with the *Stern* corpus, neither the accumulation of idioms nor metacommunicative commentary appears in the *RTL* corpus. Again, this finding can be attributed to the need for condensed, concise language in television advertising. The separation of an idiom's component words does not occur in television advertising either, possibly because the advertiser cannot run the risk of a passive, uninterested viewer missing the connection between two parts of an idiom in different sections of the text. Advertisement readers are more actively engaged in processing an advertisement text, so overlooking and being confused by this type of modification is less likely to happen in print advertisements.

It is also interesting to examine the individual types of idioms with regard to how frequently they are modified (see Tables 6 and 7). In the *Stern* corpus the most commonly modified types of idioms are: idiomatic comparisons (75%, i.e. 3 out of 4 idioms); VLI idioms (69.68%, i.e. 131 out of 188 idioms); proverbs and proverbial expressions (67.74%, i.e. 21 out of 31 idioms); and idiomatic "winged words" (63.64%, i.e. 7 out of 11 idioms). In the *RTL* corpus the types of idioms modified most often are: VLI idioms (88.24% i.e. 15 out of 17 idioms); idiomatic comparisons (75%, i.e. 3 out of 4 idioms); proverbs and proverbial expressions (71.43%, i.e. 10 out of 14 idioms); and verbal idioms (64.71%, i.e. 11 out of 17 idioms).

The textual positions in which these individual types of idioms tend to be found should also be taken into consideration (cf. Tables 3 and 4) in order to ascertain whether the modifications of idioms tend to be highlighted by their textual positions. In the *Stern* corpus most VLI idioms, proverbs, and idiomatic "winged words" appear in the advertisement headline and first sentence of the copy. In the *RTL* corpus idiomatic comparisons are generally made in the visuals, proverbs and proverbial

expressions are found most often in the company slogo, idiomatic "winged words" tend to make up the advertisement slogan, and VLI idioms are common in the last sentence of the copy. It can therefore be concluded that modified idioms appear in prominent textual positions in advertisements, which serves to make the modifications even more striking.

It is also revealing to analyse the specific kinds of modification which the individual idiom types are subjected to (again, see Tables 6 and 7). The most revealing findings are namely that in the *Stern* corpus nearly half of the modified proverbs and proverbial expressions undergo lexical substitution, and that around 79% of all the modified VLI idioms have their literal meaning activated in some way. Of greatest significance in the data for the *RTL* corpus are the findings that all of the modified VLI idioms have their literal sense evoked, while nearly three-quarters of the modified proverbs and proverbial expressions, and all of the modified idiomatic "winged words", sustain lexical substitution. Proverbs and proverbial expressions, together with idiomatic "winged words", are the most lexically, syntactically and semantically fixed idioms, and are consequently particularly striking when modified in an obvious way. The defining feature of VLI idioms is the fact that they have a viable literal meaning, so playing on this is an obvious choice of modification type for the advertiser.

Part 3: VLI Idioms in German Advertising

5.8.1 Activation of the literal meaning of VLI idioms

As outlined in section 2.4.1, previous research has found that idioms occur frequently and in prominent textual positions in German television, print, and radio advertising. Burger, Buhofer and Sialm observe that around half of the advertisements in German newspapers and magazines contain at least one idiom. Of these idioms, around half again are semantically, syntactically, or pragmatically modified (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:91). In particular, the authors declare that "der interessanteste Befund ist ... die Tatsache, daß die Wortverbindung in irgendeiner Weise auch *wörtlich* verstanden werden kann" 'the most interesting finding ... is the fact that the word combination can also be understood *literally* in some way' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:94, my emphasis). In other words, in many German print advertisements the literal sense of VLI idioms, which is normally disregarded or overlooked, is actually brought into play, and thereby emphasised. Of further significance to this research is their conclusion that "*Modifikationen der Semantik durch Kontext oder Bild* sind deutlich häufiger als Veränderung des Wortlautes (Verhältnis ca. 3:1)" '*Modifications of the semantics through the context or picture* are noticeably more common than the alteration of the wording (in a ratio of approx. 3:1)' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:91, my emphasis again). In many cases it is the advertisement's visual element which illustrates – and thus (re-)activates – the literal sense of a VLI idiom.

The practice of depicting the literal meaning of a VLI idiom by means of illustration is not a recent trend, however, nor is it limited to the genre of advertising. Pieter Bruegel's 1559 painting *Die Niederländischen Sprichwörter* (Figure 5.31, reproduced from Stechow 1969:61) portrays the literal interpretation of around 120 Flemish VLI idioms, many of which are still common, familiar expressions and proverbs. For example, as Figure 5.32 illustrates, in the lower central section of the picture a woman has managed "to throw a blue cloak over her husband's shoulders", i.e. to cuckold her husband; a man proceeds "to fill in the well after the calf has drowned" (similar in sense to the German idiom *den Brunnen zudecken, wenn das Kind hineingefallen ist* [lit. 'to cover up the well when the child has fallen in'] 'to take

preventative measures only when it is too late', and the English idiom "to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted"); and another character is seen "to throw roses to the pigs" (roughly equivalent in meaning to the German *Perlen vor die Säue werfen* ≈ 'to cast pearls before swine', i.e. to waste time and effort offering something valuable to an unappreciative recipient).⁴⁵ The purpose of Bruegel's 1559 painting was to condemn the sinful behaviour of the inhabitants of the chaotic, topsy-turvy world (hence the upside-down globe on the left of the painting), and by satirising people behaving foolishly the artist conveys his serious message through (grotesque) humour.

Another work incorporating pictorial representations of the literal senses of VLI idioms is Griesbach and Schulz's (2003) dictionary, *1000 deutsche Redensarten*. For example, Figure 5.33 illustrates the literal interpretation of the idiom *jmds. rechte Hand sein* [lit. 'to be someone's right hand'] 'to be someone's closest and most trustworthy or invaluable assistant' (similar in sense to the English idiom "to be someone's right-hand man"). Figure 5.34 is a visual pun upon the literal sense of *das Kriegsbeil begraben* [lit. 'to bury the tomahawk'] ≈ 'to bury the hatchet', i.e. to end an argument. The literal meaning of *jmdm. auf den Schlips treten* [lit. 'to stand on someone's tie'] 'to hurt someone's feelings' is highlighted in Figure 5.35. Figure 5.36 portrays the literal sense of *sich mit fremden Federn schmücken* [lit. 'to decorate oneself with other people's feathers'] 'to claim all the glory for oneself'. Figure 5.37 is based on the literal interpretation of *jmdm. Honig um den Mund/ums Maul schmieren* [lit. 'to smear honey round someone's mouth/gob'] 'to flatter someone' (similar in sense to the English idiom "to butter someone up"). Figure 5.38 shows the literal sense of *unter dem Pantoffel stehen* [lit. 'to stand under the slipper'] 'to be dominated by one's wife', which is similar in sense to the English idiom "to be under the thumb".

In short, because all VLI idioms are imageable idioms, they are particularly suited to advertising in the (German) visual media. A VLI idiom is an especially effective advertising device when the mental image evoked by its literal sense is portrayed in the advertisement's visuals, thereby allowing the idiom to act as the basis for wordplay.

⁴⁵ For a comprehensive list of all the idioms (translated and explained) in Bruegel's painting see Hughes and Bianconi 1969:91-3.

5.8.2 VLI idioms in the *Stern* and *RTL* corpora

The frequency, textual position, and modification of VLI idioms in German magazine and television advertising are examined in detail in sections 5.8.2.1, 5.8.2.2, and 5.8.2.3, respectively. Section 5.8.2.3 focuses specifically on modification involving the activation of a VLI idiom's literal meaning through the phrase's co-text and/or the advertisement's illustration/visuals, which is a particularly common feature of German advertisements. An attempt is made to explain the pervasiveness of VLI idioms by outlining the functions of VLI idioms in German advertising (section 5.8.3).

5.8.2.1 Frequency

As discussed in section 5.5, VLI idioms are one of the most common types of idioms present in both the *Stern* and the *RTL* corpora. 188 VLI idioms occur in the corpus of magazine advertisements, and 17 in the corpus of television advertisements, meaning that 41.69% of the *Stern* corpus and 16.35% of the *RTL* corpus is made up of VLI idioms. In total, 763 magazine advertisements and 212 television advertisements were analysed in the course of this research. 24.64% of all the magazine advertisements examined contained VLI idioms (i.e. 188 VLI idioms were present in the 763 advertisements), and 8.02% of all the television advertisements evaluated comprised VLI idioms (i.e. 17 VLI idioms were found in the 212 advertisements).

The finding that VLI idioms appear in magazine advertisements significantly more often than any other type of idiom, as well as the fact that a far larger proportion of VLI idioms occurs in the *Stern* corpus than in the *RTL* corpus of advertisements, can be explained by the imageability of VLI idioms. Imagery is a device essential in advertising due to its function as a memory stimulus. Consequently, television advertisements are dominated by visual images, with language tending to interpret and reinforce the action which is taking place in the visuals. Magazine advertisements, on the other hand, can generally contain only one or two static images, so the advertising text plays a much more important role. By incorporating VLI idioms into the text the advertiser infuses the advertisement with a greater amount of memorable (mental) imagery than would be the case with more literal, non-imageable language.

5.8.2.2 Textual position

As Table 8 shows, most VLI idioms in magazine advertising occur in the body of the advertisement copy, the headline, and the first and last sentences of the advertisement text. VLI idioms in television advertising tend to be located in the copy body, first and last sentences of the copy, and the company slogan (see Table 9). Disregarding the findings that most VLI idioms appear in the copy body (since the copy body tends to comprise the greatest number of words it is statistically most likely that idioms will occur here), it is apparent that VLI idioms are generally found in emphatic, eye-catching positions in magazine and television advertisements.

It is often the case that in a print advertisement the only elements a reader notices and remembers as he or she glances at an advertisement are the illustration and the headline, while the only features which penetrate the consciousness of the viewer of a television advertisement are the visuals, the slogan and/or the company slogan (Boone and Kurtz 1989:593). VLI idioms are therefore incorporated primarily into these specific elements of magazine and television advertisements in order to increase the noteworthiness and memorability of the advertisements. Because wordplay involving a VLI idiom is frequently the entire basis for an advertisement's theme, style and tone, placing the (modified) phrase in an advertisement's most prominent position ensures that the reader/viewer actually detects and understands the pun.

5.8.2.3 Modification

VLI idioms are the second most commonly modified type of idiom in the *Stern* corpus (69.68% of all the VLI idioms in the magazine advertisements are modified), and the most frequently modified type of idiom in the *RTL* corpus (88.24% of all the VLI idioms in the television advertisements are modified). As revealed in Tables 10 and 11, the most common type of modification which VLI idioms undergo in magazine and television advertising is semantic modification through their context. 78.63% of the modified VLI idioms in the *Stern* corpus (54.79% of the total number of VLI idioms), and 100% of the modified VLI idioms in the *RTL* corpus (88.23% of all the VLI idioms) have their literal meaning evoked by the idiom's co-text, the advertisement's illustration/visuals, or a combination of the two.

5.8.2.3.1 Activation of a VLI idiom's literal meaning through its co-text

The VLI idiom *die Weichen (für etw.) stellen* [lit. 'to switch the points' (on a railway track)] 'to set the course', i.e. to show the way to proceed with something, appears in a magazine advertisement promoting the German national rail company, Deutsche Bahn (*Stern* 16/05/02, p.67; Figure 5.39). The idiom occurs in the body of the advertisement's verbose, informative copy: "Deshalb *stellt* die Bahn bereits heute *die Weichen für* ein zukunftsweisendes, viel effizienteres Verkehrssystem" 'Even today the railway network is therefore already setting the course for a forward-looking, much more efficient transport system'. Towards the end of the copy the text also declares: "Wir bringen unsere ganze Kraft und Kompetenz ein, brauchen aber auch die entsprechenden *politischen Weichenstellungen*" 'We are putting all our power and ability into it, but we also need the relevant political course-setting'. Here the idiom is both reduced (*die Weichen für etw. stellen* becomes the condensed *Weichenstellungen*) and expanded (the semantic modifier "politischen" 'political' is added) to better suit the context in which it occurs.

The literal sense of the idiom, taken from the technical jargon of rail transport, is evoked by the nature of the company behind the advertisement (Deutsche Bahn), the whole theme of the advertisement (rail travel), and various technical words and phrases throughout the copy (e.g. "Loks" 'engines', "Wagen" 'carriages', "Schienennetz" 'rail networks', and "Bahnhöfe" 'train stations'). The punning on the VLI idiom's literal meaning provides a welcome respite from the rather formal style, sober tone, and factual, statistical content of the whole advertisement, which may otherwise seem unnecessarily serious or even boring to an indifferent reader. Other examples of VLI idioms which have their literal meaning evoked by their co-text have already been discussed in, for instance, sections 5.7.1.9 (*etw. in vollen Zügen genießen*) and 5.7.1.2 (*sich frischen Wind um die Nase wehen*).

In the *Stern* corpus 30.01% of all the semantic modifications to VLI idioms take place through the co-text alone. In striking contrast to this statistic is the finding that no VLI idioms at all in the *RTL* corpus have their literal meaning evoked just by their co-text. As explained in section 5.5.3, television advertising is dominated by visual images, and the time constraints placed on television advertisements means that the literal interpretations of VLI idioms must be activated quickly and clearly primarily by these important visuals.

5.8.2.3.2 Activation of a VLI idiom's literal meaning through the illustration/visuals of the advertisement

Sometimes when a VLI idiom's literal interpretation is brought into play it is the phrase's entire sense which is illustrated through the illustration/visuals. An advertisement in *Stern* promoting the monitoring of European beef carries the headline "*Grünes Licht für Rindfleisch-Etikettierung*" 'Green light for beef-labelling' (*Stern* 08/11/01, p.130; Figure 5.40). The literal sense of the VLI idiom *grünes Licht geben* ≈ 'to give the green light', i.e. to give the go-ahead for something, is evoked by the advertisement's illustration, which shows a green light with a silhouette of a cow on it. The bold image conveys the advertising message in simple terms, which avoids the complex, long-winded jargon which is stereotypically associated with EU regulations.

In an *RTL* advertisement for the electrical goods shop, Expert, the scene begins with two salesmen sliding an old lady along a table (*RTL* 21/06/02). The voiceover explains: "Es soll Geschäfte geben, da wird eine alte Dame *über den Tisch gezogen*" 'There are apparently shops where old ladies are taken to the cleaners'. Humour is injected into the advertisement by depicting in the visuals the literal sense of the whole VLI idiom *jdn. über den Tisch ziehen* [lit. 'to pull someone over the table'] 'to rip someone off, i.e. to use dishonest means to make someone spend a lot of money. Modifying the VLI idiom in this way to amuse the viewer right at the start of an advertisement is an effective way of catching his or her attention and ensuring his or her interest in the rest of the advertising message. The humour of the advertisement also allows positive feelings to be associated with the company being promoted.

Another *RTL* advertisement for the insurance company *Württembergische* features the same visual image throughout the entire advertisement: a silhouette of a couple standing with their child on a rock in the middle of a choppy sea (*RTL* 29/03/02). The voiceover asks: "Sorgen Sie jetzt für Ihre Zukunft selbst vor? Sichern Sie sich in sieben Jahren bis zu 10,933 Mark staatliche Forderung. *Württembergische. Der Fels in der Brandung*" 'Are you now looking after your own future? Secure for yourself over seven years government payments of up to 10,933 German Marks. *Württembergische. The rock in the breakers*'. The literal sense of the whole VLI idiom *ein Fels in der Brandung sein* [lit. 'to be a rock in the surf'] ≈ 'to be a rock', i.e. to be a person who can be relied upon in a bad situation, is here illustrated by the advertisement's visuals. The company slogan, "*Der Fels in der Brandung*", is both

spoken and written at the end of the advertisement, contrasting with the factual information of the previous sentence, and providing thereby a striking summary of – and conclusion to – the advertising message. The omission of the function verb "sein" 'to be' makes the slogan more dramatic, while the substitution of the definite for the indefinite article ("der" 'the' for "ein" 'a') conveys the impression that the company advertised is not just one of many, but rather the only company that can be depended upon. The VLI idiom may have been specifically chosen as the company slogan because it contains the word "Fels" 'rock' or 'cliff' in order to coincide with – and therefore fix in the viewer's mind – the company name, *Württembergische* ("Berg" meaning 'mountain'). Simply by describing the company in terms of a VLI idiom which normally refers to a person, the advertiser attempts to humanise the company, and consequently make it seem more approachable and trustworthy.

At other times when a VLI idiom's literal sense is activated by an advertisement's illustration/visuals, it is just one of the phrase's component words which is depicted in the illustration/visuals. *P.M.* magazine is promoted in the *Stern* corpus by an advertisement featuring a picture of UFOs heading towards Earth (*Stern* 04/04/02, p.161; Figure 5.41). The illustration is explained by the subheadline: "Ufos: eins von 60 Themen im neuen P.M." 'UFOs: one of 60 topics in the new P.M.'. On the whole there is very little written text in the advertisement resulting in the headline "*Haben wir noch alle Tassen im Schrank?*" 'Do we still have all our cups in the cupboard?' (or a more idiomatic English translation would perhaps be: "Do we still have all our marbles?") being highlighted. The VLI idiom *nicht alle Tassen im Schrank haben* [lit. 'to not have all the cups in the cupboard'] 'to be slightly mad' is further emphasised by phrasing it as a question rather than the usual direct statement of the idiom. The literal sense of the VLI idiom is evoked by the word "Tassen" 'cups' of the phrase having one of its related (figurative) senses featured in the advertisement's illustration (i.e. "eine fliegende Untertasse" 'a flying saucer'). The visual pun on the literal interpretation of the VLI idiom injects humour into the advertisement and thereby encourages the reader to buy *P.M.* magazine.

Occasionally an advertisement's illustration/visuals evokes the literal meaning of a VLI idiom by merely suggesting – as opposed to overtly portraying – the phrase's literal sense. An advertisement in *Stern* for Heinz tomato ketchup contains a life-size photograph of a Heinz sauce bottle on a table beside some other condiments (04/04/02, p.173; Figure 5.42). The light, stark colours of most of the advertisement

contrast sharply with the colourful red ketchup in the sauce bottle. The familiar label on the bottle provides the only text in the entire advertisement, reading: "Hängt sehr an *weissen Westen*" 'Really sticks to white waistcoats'. The idiom *eine weiße Weste haben* [lit. 'to have a white waistcoat'] 'to have a clean slate', i.e. to have done nothing dishonourable or illegal, is further emphasised by the modifications it undergoes: the omission of the function verb "haben" 'to have'; the change from the singular to the plural (*eine weiße Weste* becomes *weiße Westen*); and of course the semantic modification. Nowhere in the illustration is a white waistcoat shown, but the literal sense of the idiom is activated nevertheless by the vivid red of the ketchup in the bottle, which is renowned for staining light-coloured clothes. Moreover, the idiom's figurative meaning ('a clean slate') simply does not make sense in the context, so the reader naturally focuses on the idiom's literal interpretation. The wordplay of the advertisement does thus not directly involve the idiom's figurative sense, but rather calls for the reader to merely recognise the phrase and acknowledge that it usually occurs with a (figurative) meaning different to the (literal) meaning alluded to on this particular occasion. The pun on the VLI idiom's literal interpretation and complete incongruity of the idiom's more common figurative meaning therefore ensures the memorability of the already visually striking advertisement, and consequently of the product being promoted.

Other VLI idioms in the *Stern* corpus whose literal senses have been activated by an advertisement's illustration have also been examined in, for example, sections 5.7.1.5 (*dümmer sein, als die Polizei erlaubt*) and 5.7.1.10 (*das Steuer in der Hand haben, an die Spitze gehen, and große Sprünge machen*). Cases of VLI idioms in the *RTL* corpus with their literal interpretation evoked by the advertisement's visuals have been discussed in sections 5.6.2.3 (*im Mittelpunkt stehen*) and 5.7.2.1 (*jmdm. aus der Hand fressen*) among others. In the *Stern* corpus 17.48% of all the semantic modifications of VLI idioms involve the illustration alone. In the *RTL* corpus this figure rises to 73.33%. Again, this discrepancy can be explained by the primacy of the visual element in television advertising.

5.8.2.3.3 Activation of a VLI idiom's literal meaning through both the idiom's co-text and the illustration/visuals of the advertisement

As with the activation of a VLI idiom's literal sense through the illustration/visuals, the co-text and illustration/visuals together can evoke a VLI idiom's entire literal meaning by highlighting the idiom's component words to various degrees. In some instances the literal sense of the whole phrase is played upon, as is the case with the magazine advertisement for the florist Fleurop (Interflora in the UK) (*Stern* 14/03/02, p.167; Figure 5.43). The illustration features a photograph of a blue sky with a rainbow across it, while the headline states: "*Aus heiterem Himmel* kommen die schönsten Überraschungen" 'The nicest surprises come out of the blue'. Here the literal interpretation of the whole VLI idiom *aus heiterem Himmel* [lit. 'out of the clear sky'] \approx 'out of the blue', i.e. unexpectedly, is activated by the illustration alone, and reinforced by the one sentence of the copy: "Gerade bei Aprilwetter lässt ein bunter Fleurop-Strauß gleich wieder die Sonne scheinen" 'Even in April weather a colourful Fleurop bouquet immediately makes the sun shine again'. Evoking the literal sense of the VLI idiom allows an eye-catching, appealing picture of beautiful weather to be included, as well as phrases like "lässt ... die Sonne scheinen" 'lets ... the sun shine' which stimulate positive associations.

The *RTL* advertisement for Centrum vitamins begins with a young woman using a bow to fire an arrow at a target (*RTL* 18/01/02). The arrow shoots right through the centre of various pieces of fruit before hitting the target's bullseye. The first sentence of the voiceover accompanying the scenes asserts: "Eine ausgewogene Ernährung ist heute mehr denn je von zentraler Bedeutung" 'A balanced diet is today more than ever of central importance'. Both the opening visuals and co-text evoke the literal sense of the VLI idiom *im Mittelpunkt stehen* [lit. 'to stand in the middle point'] 'to be the centre of attention', which occurs as the company slogan spoken right at the end of the advertisement: "Centrum. Denn Ihre Gesundheit *steht im Mittelpunkt*" 'Centrum. For your health takes centre stage'. The company name (Centrum), as well as the last scene of the advertisement showing two vitamin containers in the middle of the screen, surrounded by text such as "Weltweit die Nr. 1" 'Worldwide the No. 1', "Nur in Ihrer Apotheke" 'In your pharmacy only', and "Komplett von A bis Zink" 'Complete from A to Zinc', also reinforce the literal sense of the VLI idiom. The parallel formula *von A bis Z* \approx 'from A to Z', i.e. from the start to the end, has been

modified to produce *von A bis Zink* 'from (vitamin) A to Zinc', which is spoken in the voiceover, written on the product container, and reproduced on-screen for emphasis. The modification tailors the idiom to the particular content of the advertising message, and by introducing a more literal interpretation of the idiom helps to suggest that all the viewer's vitamin and mineral requirements are met by just one product. Evoking the literal sense of the VLI idiom *im Mittelpunkt stehen* gives the advertisement thematic unity, which makes the advertisement easier to recall, and again suggests that the product, like the advertisement, is complete.

Other advertisements activate a VLI idiom's literal sense by playing directly upon most, but not all, of the phrase's component words. An advertisement in *Stern* for Reisebank holiday company contains a photograph of an apple with a bite taken out of it (*Stern* 08/08/02, p.40; Figure 5.44). The headline explains the illustration: "Bevor Sie beim Reisepreis nach New York in einen sauren Apfel beißen..." 'Before the travel price to New York leaves a sour taste in your mouth...'. The illustration portrays the literal sense of the VLI idiom *in den sauren Apfel beißen* [lit. 'to bite into the sour apple'] 'to do something unpleasant', but only the idea of biting into an apple is depicted explicitly. The concept of sourness in the idiom's literal interpretation is merely alluded to by the text's intimation that trips to New York are usually horribly expensive, and by the contrast with the phrases "frisches Obst" 'fresh fruit' and "Sie werden auf den Geschmack kommen" 'You'll get a taste for it'. The (literal sense of the) VLI idiom is particularly suited to the theme of the whole advertisement (i.e. travel to New York, "The Big Apple"), and is therefore used as an extended metaphor throughout the text. Punning on the idiom's literal meaning catches the reader's attention by means of humour, while leaving the introductory headline incomplete entices the reader to look at the rest of the copy ("... schauen Sie sich unsere aktuellen Last-Minute-Reiseangebote und Flüge einmal genauer an" '...take one more good look at our current last-minute holidays and flights').

The *Stern* advertisement for the ZVA (the Zentralverband der Augenoptiker 'the Central Association of Opticians') has as its illustration a photograph of two shiny red tomatoes, side by side (*Stern* 16/05/02, p.187; Figure 5.45). The text is written in increasingly small letters like on an optician's eye-test chart. The headline asks: "Tomaten auf den Augen?" 'Feel like you've got tomatoes for eyes?', a modified version of the VLI idiom *Tomaten auf den Augen haben* [lit. 'to have tomatoes on one's eyes'] 'to not notice something'. Assuming that the reader's reply is in the

affirmative, the text advises: "Dann ist Sehberatung beim Augenoptiker genau das, was Sie brauchen" 'Then an eyesight test at the optician's is exactly what you need'. The illustration clearly depicts the idiom's component word "Tomaten" 'tomatoes', but the phrase's "auf den Augen" 'on the eyes' aspect is only suggested by the position of the tomatoes and by the overall theme of the advertisement, as opposed to explicitly illustrated.

Sometimes it is just one word of a VLI idiom whose meaning is manipulated in the co-text and illustration/visuals in order to activate the whole literal sense of the expression. The illustration in a *Stern* advertisement for Aventis, an international company offering products and advice to combat rheumatoid arthritis, shows a woman laughing as she cuts a young boy's hair (*Stern* 18/07/02, p.135; Figure 5.46). The headline reads: "Damit auch mit Rheuma *vieles leichter von der Hand geht*" 'So that even with rheumatism many things can be done more easily'. The first sentence of the copy body states: "Jeder Mensch möchte gerne immer *alles im Griff haben*" 'Every person would really like to always have everything well within their grasp', while the last sentence promises: "Damit jeder sein Leben *selbst in die Hand nehmen kann*" 'So that everyone can take their life into their own hands'. All three expressions are VLI idioms: *leicht von der Hand gehen* [lit. 'to go easily from the hand'] 'to happen easily'; *alles im Griff haben* [lit. 'to have everything in the grasp'] 'to have something under control'; and *etw. (selber) in die Hand nehmen* [lit. 'to take something (oneself) into the hand'] 'to take control of something oneself. The photograph depicting a manual activity in conjunction with the advertisement's co-text discussing the theme of rheumatoid arthritis, as well as the accumulation of the VLI idioms, all serve to illustrate the literal sense of the word "Hand" which is the focus of each of the three idioms. The emphatic position of the idioms reinforces the puns on the literal meanings of each phrase, which sums up the subject matter and helps to lighten the tone of the advertisement.

In other instances the literal meaning of a VLI idiom is evoked by an advertisement's co-text and illustration/visuals simply alluding to, rather than explicitly referring to or depicting, the phrase's literal sense. A *Stern* advertisement for Smart used-car dealer contains a photograph of a disgruntled young man scowling at a gleaming, perfect-looking car (*Stern* 21/02/02, p.162; Figure 5.47). The advertisement text explains that he is unhappy about the colour of the car, but promises: "Bei diesem Problem *zeigen wir Ihnen nicht die rote Karte, sondern die*

Möglichkeit, die Bodypanels auf Wunsch auch auszuwechseln" 'If this is the problem, we won't give you the red card, but rather the opportunity to change the body-panels as you wish'. The literal sense of the VLI idiom *jmdm. die rote Karte zeigen* [lit. 'to show someone the red card' (i.e. send them off in a football match)] 'to punish someone for their bad behaviour' is suggested both by the co-text discussing car colours and by the illustration of the young man with a red and white football supporter's scarf round his neck looking in disgust at the blue car. The activation of the literal sense of the idiom injects humour into the advertisement, implying in this way that the company behind the advertisement is friendly and accommodating (even to the point of satisfying the consumer's whim to change the colour of their used car).

A magazine advertisement for the Passat V6 4MOTION features a photograph of the car's shiny, state-of-the-art gearstick which allows both automatic and manual gear changes (*Stern* 06/06/03, p.194; Figure 5.48). The headline puns: "Und wieder die Frage: Delegieren oder *selber in die Hand nehmen*?" 'And yet again the question: Delegate, or take matters into your own hands?'. Just in case the reader misses the pun, the first sentence of the copy rephrases the question: "Schalten oder schalten lassen?" 'Change gear yourself or have it changed automatically?'. The literal sense of the VLI idiom *etw. (selber) in die Hand nehmen* of physically taking hold of something in your hand (here the gearstick, in order to change gears) is implied by the illustration and the co-text, but not shown or stated outright. The pun on the idiom's literal meaning again adds humour to the advertisement, which helps to fix the unique selling point of the car (the automatic/manual gearbox) in the reader's memory.

Other VLI idioms whose literal meaning is activated by the idiom's co-text and the advertisement's illustration/visuals have already been looked at in, for example, sections 5.6.1.9 (*in der Tinte sitzen*), 5.7.1.1 (*jmdm. in die Wüste schicken*), 5.7.2.1 (*mit Volldampf gehen*), and 5.6.2.8 (*auf den eigenen zwei Beinen stehen*, or in this case, *auf den eigenen vier Hufen stehen*). 52.43% of the VLI idioms which are semantically modified in the *Stern* corpus, but only 26.67% of the semantically modified VLI idioms in the *RTL* corpus, have their literal sense activated by a combination of their co-text and the advertisement's illustration/visuals. Once more, the dominance of the visual aspect in television advertising is probably the reason behind the advertiser relying less on the co-text to activate the literal sense of VLI idioms in the *RTL* advertisements.

5.8.3 Understanding the results: The functions of VLI idioms in German magazine and television advertising

It is important to note at this point that in most cases an advertiser may not actually be consciously aware of the functions of a VLI idiom in an advertisement, nor would he or she necessarily even be able to articulate what exactly a VLI idiom is. The fact that a VLI idiom is at face value simply a vivid, colourful, "catchy" phrase which seems to conjure up a certain (mental) image, and which people subsequently seem to find easier to recall, is reason enough for an advertiser to incorporate the idiom into the advertisement copy.

This research has shown that VLI idioms are found relatively frequently in German magazine and television advertising. VLI idioms tend to appear in a modified form, with modification mainly involving the activation of their literal meaning through the idiom's co-text and/or the advertisement's illustration/visuals. There are several reasons for the prevalence of VLI idioms in German advertising. The familiar, generally concrete language of VLI idioms allows the advertiser to create an informal, relaxed atmosphere which is less likely to annoy or offend the consumer than a sales pitch in complex, contrived language which confuses or alienates them. A reader/viewer who is addressed in the style and tone of his or her own everyday language feels more at ease, and is therefore more receptive to the advertising message. VLI idioms are characteristic of speech rather than writing, and are therefore a particularly effective way of recreating the style of natural speech in the written advertisements of the print media. Since writing is in general considered to be a more formal way of communicating than speech, using VLI idioms in magazine advertisements helps the advertiser to establish the casual, relaxed tone typical of advertising. Furthermore, VLI idioms serve as concrete language used figuratively to explain abstract phenomena, which means that advertisers can incorporate them into a text to act as a kind of shorthand for more complicated concepts. This function of VLI idioms is particularly important in a discourse which demands brevity and clarity of expression.

It has been shown that the brain processes fastest phrases with both a figurative and a literal interpretation (i.e. a VLI idiom), as opposed to just a literal sense (Ortony et al. 1978; Swinney and Cutler 1979; Gibbs 1986; Gibbs et al. 1989). More specifically, the brain processes familiar VLI idioms used *figuratively* (e.g.

"Because he slept late and did not study for the exam, John was *in deep water*", i.e. in trouble) (Cronk and Schweigert 1992:140) most quickly and effectively. As a result, highlighting the idiom's literal sense causes the brain to do a kind of double-take, with the result that extra mental effort is required to understand how and why exactly this literal interpretation is being used. Although the literal sense of a VLI idiom tends to be syntactically and semantically acceptable, it is not usually pragmatically viable.⁴⁶ The figurative sense, on the other hand, is pragmatically sound. It can therefore be concluded that the literal and figurative interpretations "are not of equal 'weight'" (Sabban 1998a:315), that is, even though a literal interpretation may be possible, the brain is more likely to ultimately select the figurative sense. Consequently, using the literal sense of a VLI idiom despite – and in many advertisements precisely because of – its pragmatic inconsistency "involves some kind of 'twisting' of the linguistic means: it runs counter to linguistic habits and most probably is not the first to come to the recipient's mind" (Sabban 1998a:316). This "twisting" of linguistic conventions thus attracts attention to the utterance (and thereby to the whole text), surprising and often amusing the reader/viewer.

It is for this very reason that in a significant number of German advertisements the literal sense of a VLI idiom is a pivotal feature of the advertisement, usually as the basis for wordplay. All idioms set up expectations on the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels, and are therefore ideal candidates for humorous manipulation (Norrick 2002), but VLI idioms are particularly suited to wordplay because a literal interpretation is so unusual and unanticipated. As discussed in section 2.3.4, puns are incorporated into advertisements as "Sprachspiel, das primär Aufmerksamkeit erregen soll" 'wordplay, which is intended primarily to attract attention' (Burger, Buhofer and Sialm 1982:93). Puns also allow the advertiser to inject an element of humour into an advertisement, ensuring that the advertisement is a source of "infotainment", which is simply information presented in an entertaining way. Furthermore, because there are so many similar products saturating the market, "the producer tries to distinguish himself from rival companies not so much by the qualities of his *product*, but by the *style* of advertising" (Sabban 1998a:318).

⁴⁶ In contrast, non-VLI idioms usually seem syntactically and semantically unusual – or even incorrect – at first (i.e. literal) glance. However, once the figurative sense is activated and accepted, the apparent problem of syntactic or semantic (literal) inconsistency is resolved.

Wordplay can therefore be described as drawing attention away from the content of the advertisement to its form. Advertisers hope that a humorous, innovative text and illustration/visuals (advertising form) will differentiate the advertisement – and consequently the particular brand promoted – from the huge number of advertisements present at any one time, thereby glossing over the fact that the product advertised is fundamentally the same as competing brands (advertisement content). A clever, creative, funny advertisement reflects positively on the advertiser (and subsequently on the product itself and the company supplying the product), while the potential customer is more likely to respond positively to a message which stimulates and amuses them. In addition, humour and wordplay allow the company supplying the product advertised to communicate specific information about itself, as well as to convey its (supposed) attitude towards the reader/viewer.⁴⁷ By employing an advertiser to produce a funny, creative advertisement a company is attempting to portray itself as likeable and innovative. Devising clever, amusing advertisements also indicates that the company is trying hard to win the reader/viewer's approval, while at the same time flattering the reader/viewer by assuming that he or she will actually understand the joke. This illustrates both the company's and the advertiser's ultimately deferential attitude towards the consumer.

VLI idioms, being also strong imageable idioms, involve both language and (mental) images. Incorporating a VLI idiom into an advertisement is a way to ensure that the advertisement copy engages (and that the advertising message subsequently reaches) most readers/viewers. The imageable nature of VLI idioms is emphasised further when the advertisement's illustration/visual element depicts the phrase's literal sense. Since it is the literal interpretation which tends to trigger the mental image associated with the idiom, the advertisement's illustration/visuals can often be seen as a portrayal and extension of the idiom's mental image. In short, VLI idioms appeal to most consumers: the mental image – particularly when it is depicted and thereby accentuated in the advertisement's illustration/visuals – encourages people with a creative–imaginal hemisphere bias to read the phrase with which the images are associated; people with a logical–language hemisphere bias automatically process the idiom, but the vivid, image-evoking language reinforces the message.

⁴⁷ These are the "Ausdruck" 'expressive' and "Appell" 'conative' functions of language respectively (terms from Bühler 1965, as discussed in section 2.3.3).

Because VLI idioms are phrases involving both language and imagery, they are consequently "dual-coded" expressions (as discussed in section 4.7). "Dually-coded items will be remembered better than unitarily coded items" (Paivio 1986:142), that is, the consumer is more likely to recall a VLI idiom faster and more accurately than a literal phrase. This is simply because:

Wörter, die Bilder hervorrufen und deshalb auch imaginal verarbeitet werden, anders, schneller und besser verarbeitet werden und auch anders, schneller und besser wieder verfügbar sind.

Words which evoke images and which are therefore also processed imaginally are processed differently, faster, and better, and are also recalled differently, faster, and better. (Häcki-Buhofer 1989:167.)

The use of a dually-coded VLI idiom in an advertisement thus helps to ensure that the text – and thus the advertising message as a whole – will be remembered more clearly.

To conclude, VLI idioms in advertisements allow the advertising message to be communicated in a concise, familiar, colourful, and appealing way. VLI idioms as imageable idioms ensure that the advertising text is processed, remembered, and recalled faster and more accurately. VLI idioms used as the basis for wordplay, especially when their literal sense is evoked by the advertisement's illustration/visuals, catch the attention of the bored or indifferent reader/viewer. Creative, humorous advertisements elicit a more favourable response from the consumer, reflect positively on both the advertiser and the company promoting the product, and help to differentiate the product – and the company behind it – from similar products in an over-saturated market.

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Frequency of Idioms in German Advertising

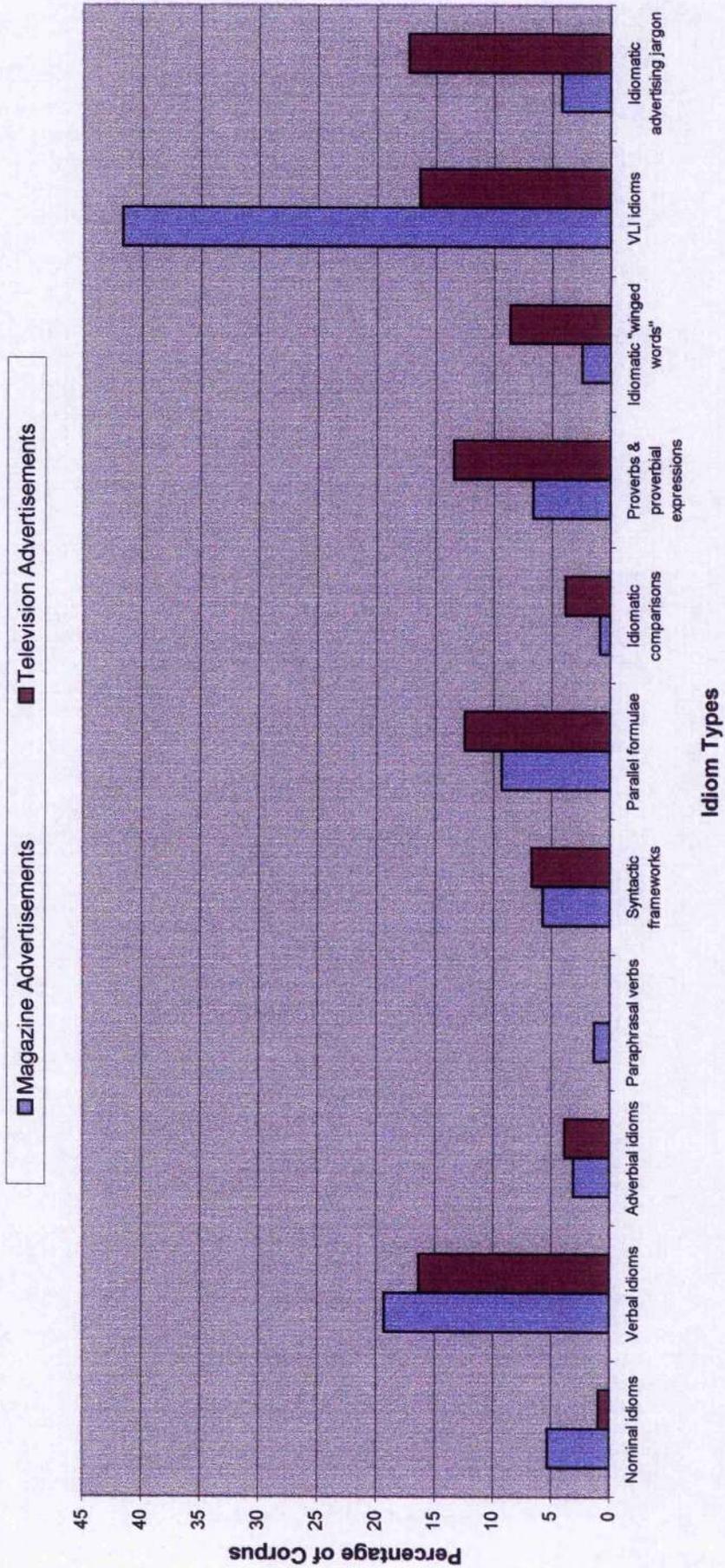


Table 1
The frequency of idioms in German advertising

Textual Position of Idioms in German Advertising

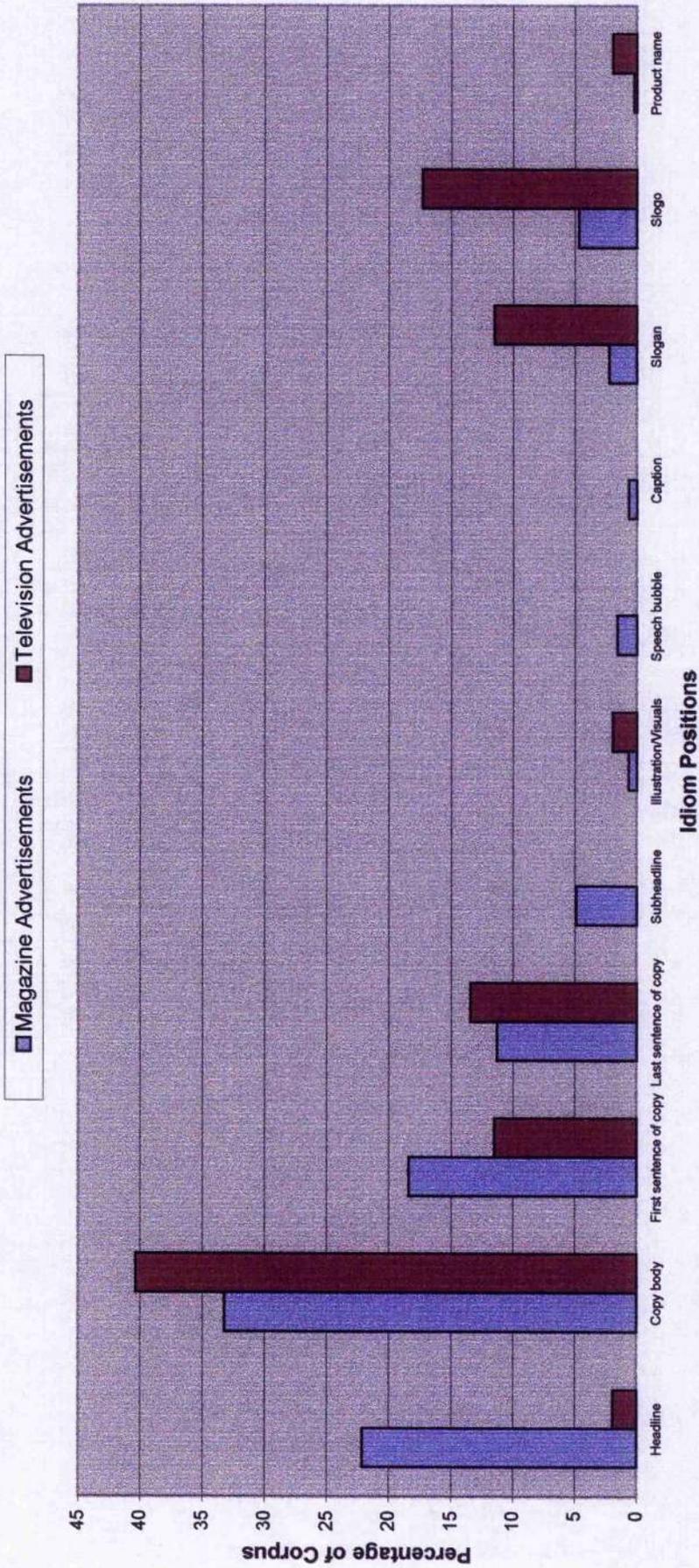


Table 2
The textual position of idioms in German advertising

<i>Stern</i>	Nominal idioms	Verbal idioms	Adverbial idioms	Paraphrasal verbs	Syntactic frameworks	Parallel formulae	Idiomatic comparisons	Proverbs & proverbial expressions	Idiomatic "winged words"	VLI idioms	Idiomatic advertising jargon	Total
Headline	5	17	3	0	4	3	1	14	9	43	1	100
Copy body	9	29	5	4	11	17	2	1	0	65	7	150
First sentence	7	7	0	0	8	12	1	7	2	37	2	83
Last sentence	2	18	2	2	1	2	0	1	0	16	7	51
Subheadline	0	6	2	0	0	4	0	4	0	5	1	22
Illustration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Speech bubble	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	7
Caption	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Slogan	0	3	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	10
Slogo	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	13	0	21
Product name	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	24	87	14	6	26	42	4	30	11	188	19	451

Table 3
The textual position of idioms in the *Stern* corpus

<i>RTL</i>	Nominal idioms	Verbal idioms	Adverbial idioms	Paraphrasal verbs	Syntactic frameworks	Parallel formulae	Idiomatic comparisons	Proverbs & proverbial expressions	Idiomatic "winged words"	VLI idioms	Idiomatic advertising jargon	Total
Headline	0	1	0	n/a	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Copy body	0	10	1	n/a	6	7	1	2	0	8	7	42
First sentence	1	2	0	n/a	0	4	0	0	0	4	1	12
Last sentence	0	1	3	n/a	0	0	0	1	0	2	7	14
Subheadline	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visuals	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Slogan	0	1	0	n/a	0	1	0	2	6	0	1	12
Slogo	0	2	0	n/a	0	0	1	8	2	3	2	18
Product name	0	0	0	n/a	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	1	17	4	n/a	7	13	4	14	9	17	18	104

Table 4
The textual position of idioms in the *RTL* corpus

Modification of Idioms in German Advertising

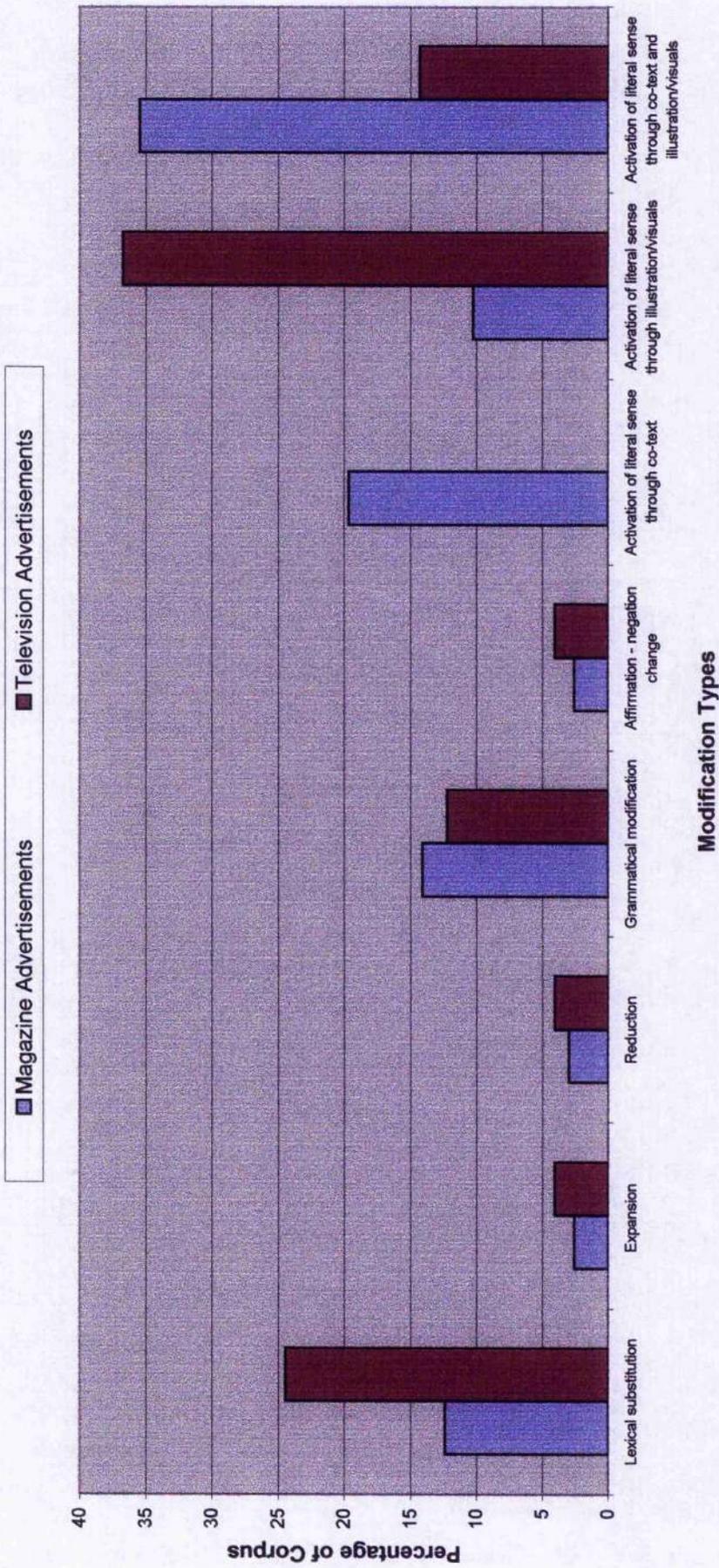


Table 5
The modification of idioms in German advertising

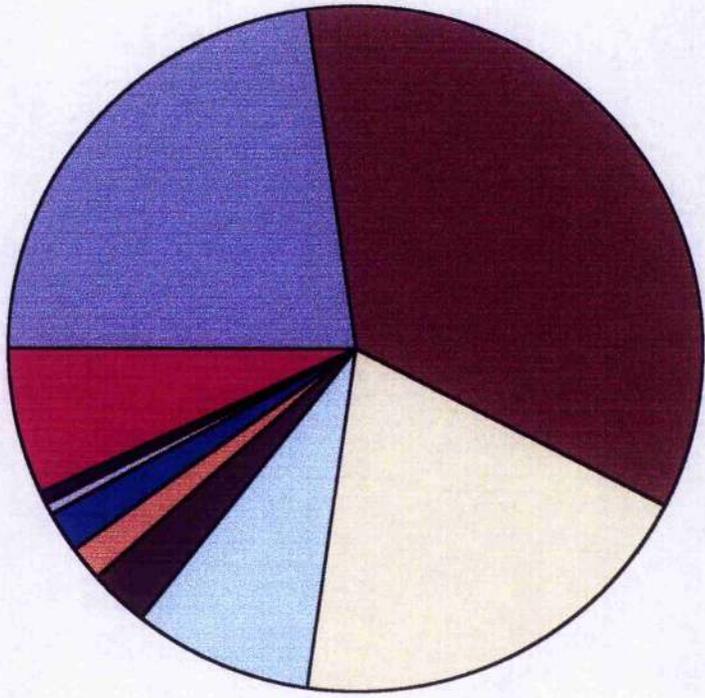
<i>Stern</i>	Nominal idioms	Verbal idioms	Adverbial idioms	Paraphrasal verbs	Syntactic frameworks	Parallel formulae	Idiomatic comparisons	Proverbs & proverbial expressions	Idiomatic "winged words"	VLI idioms	Idiomatic advertising jargon	Total
Lexical substitution	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	10	2	12	0	29
Expansion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	6
Reduction	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	7
Grammatical modification	4	14	1	0	0	2	0	3	2	7	0	33
Affirmation ↔ negation change	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	6
Activation of literal sense through the co-text	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	46
Activation of literal sense through the illustration	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	18	0	24
Activation of literal sense through both co-text & illustration	2	5	3	0	0	2	0	6	1	54	0	83
Total	10	51	5	0	0	6	3	21	7	131	0	234

Table 6
The modification of idioms in the *Stern* corpus

<i>RTL</i>	Nominal idioms	Verbal idioms	Adverbial idioms	Paraphrasal verbs	Syntactic frameworks	Parallel formulae	Idiomatic comparisons	Proverbs & proverbial expressions	Idiomatic "winged words"	VLI idioms	Idiomatic advertising jargon	Total
Lexical substitution	0	1	0	n/a	0	0	0	7	3	0	1	12
Expansion	0	0	0	n/a	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Reduction	0	1	0	n/a	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Grammatical modification	0	2	0	n/a	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	6
Affirmation ↔ negation change	0	1	0	n/a	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Activation of literal sense through the co-text	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activation of literal sense through the visuals	0	3	0	n/a	0	0	2	2	0	11	0	18
Activation of literal sense through both co-text & visuals	0	3	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	7
Total	0	11	0	n/a	0	5	3	10	3	15	2	49

Table 7
The modification of idioms in the *RTL* corpus

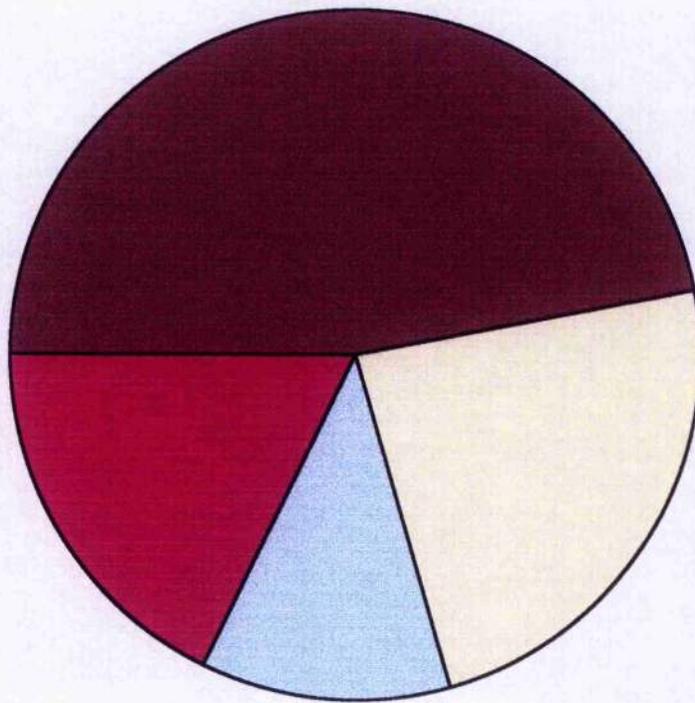
Textual Position of VLI Idioms in German Magazine Advertising



■	Headline
■	Copy body
□	First sentence of copy
□	Last sentence of copy
■	Subheadline
■	Illustration
■	Speech bubble
□	Caption
■	Slogan
■	Slogo

Table 8
The textual position of VLI idioms in German magazine advertising

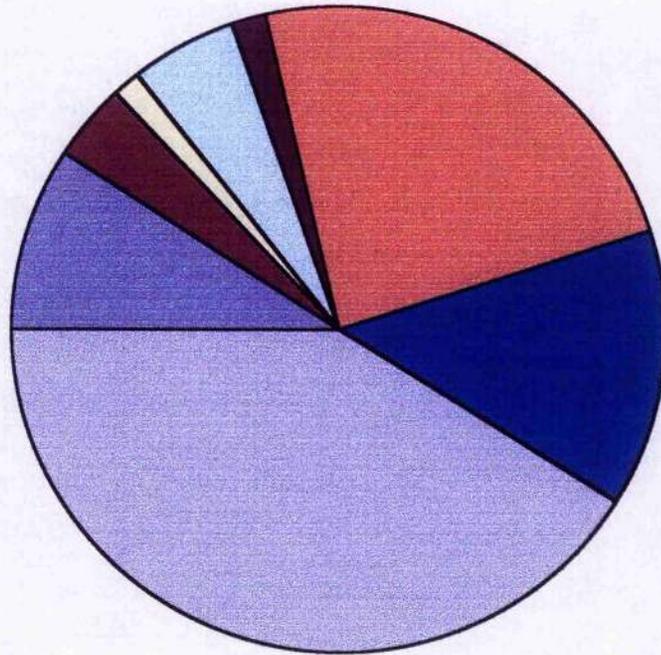
Textual Position of VLI Idioms in German Television Advertising



- Copy body
- First sentence of copy
- Last sentence of copy
- Slogo

Table 9
The textual position of VLI idioms in German television advertising

Modification of VLI Idioms in German Magazine Advertising



- Lexical substitution
- Expansion
- Reduction
- Grammatical modification
- Affirmation - negation change
- Activation of literal sense through the co-text
- Activation of literal sense through the illustration
- Activation of literal sense through both the co-text and illustration

Table 10
The modification of VLI idioms in German magazine advertising

Modification of VLI Idioms in German Television Advertising

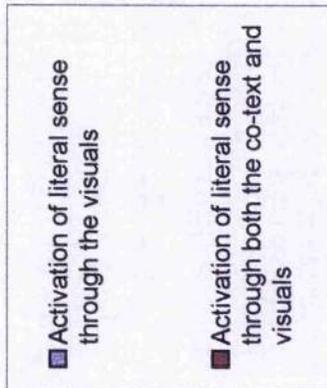
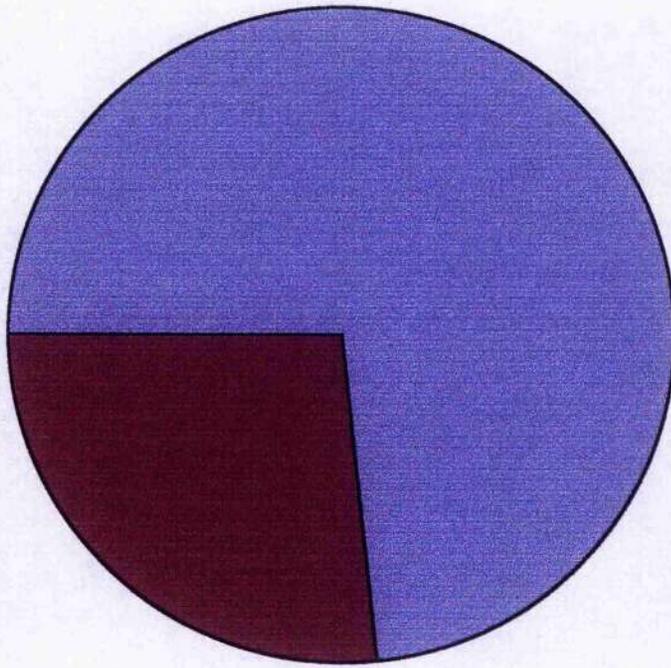
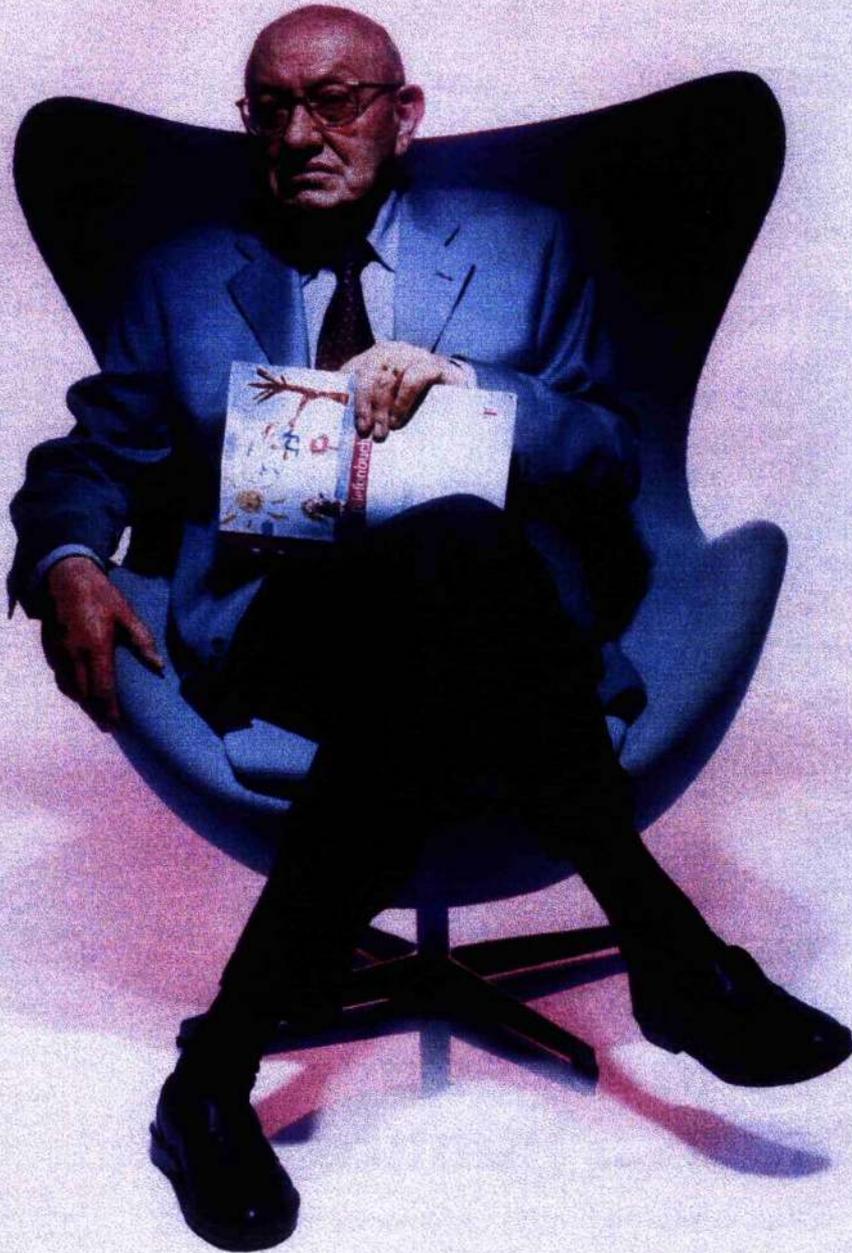


Table 11
The modification of VLI idioms in German television advertising

„Meist weiß man nach 30 Seiten,
wie der Hase läuft. Hier steht auf
Seite 300 noch was Neues.“



Damit es spannend bleibt, werden jährlich rund 30 % des Telefonbuchs neu geschrieben. Man kann es als Sachbuch lesen oder als Gesellschaftsroman, in dem sich jeder wiederfindet – sofern er drinsteht. Ihr Name fehlt noch? Rufen Sie kostenlos unter 0800 33 01000 an, und die Telefonbuchverlage tragen Sie ein.

Deutsche
Telekom **T**

Figure 5.1
wissen, wie der Hase läuft

Einmal mit mehr drauf.



Einmal mit mehr drin.



Der Toyota Corolla limited.

Ihr Preisvorteil:
2.100,- DM*
 (1.075 Euro)

Schmackhafte Angebote erkennt man schon an den Zutaten. Der Toyota Corolla limited bringt deshalb zahlreiche Extras wie Klimaanlage und Audiosystem mit CD-Radio serienmäßig mit. Bei einem Preisvorteil von DM 2.100,-* dürfte selbst verwöhnten Genießern das Wasser im Munde zusammenlaufen. Lassen Sie sich einen kleinen Vorgeschmack nicht entgehen. Ihr Toyota Händler arrangiert gern eine Probefahrt. Nur auskosten müssen Sie selbst! Der Toyota Corolla 1,4 linea sol limited ab 15.300,- €** (29.924,20 DM), attraktive Angebote der Toyota Kreditbank GmbH und der Toyota Leasing GmbH bei Ihrem Toyota Händler. Weitere Informationen unter 0180/5 35 69 69 (0,24 DM/min) oder www.toyota.de

* im Vergleich zur unverbindlichen Preisempfehlung des Basismodells. ** Unverbindliche Preisempfehlung der Toyota Deutschland GmbH zzgl. Überführung.

Nichts ist unmöglich.  **TOYOTA**

Figure 5.2
 jmdm. läuft das Wasser im Mund zusammen

versichert

Gut aufgehoben

versichert

VHV Family Plus: schützt alles, was Ihnen lieb und teuer ist. **Kombinieren Sie wie Sie wollen.** Zum Beispiel eine Privat-Haftpflichtversicherung mit einer Unfall- und Hausratversicherung. Dafür geben wir Ihnen sogar **zusätzlich 10% Rabatt.**

Interessiert? www.vhv.de oder Infotelefon (0180) 22 32 180.

VHV 
VERSICHERUNGEN

[Gut aufgehoben]

Figure 5.3
gut aufgehoben sein



Ein Diamant ist immer einmalig.

Sie verliebten sich.

Sie lieben sich.

Sie werden einander immer lieben.



trilogy

Ein Diamant für Ihre Vergangenheit,
Ihre Gegenwart und Ihre Zukunft.

www.trilogy.com

Figure 5.4
die Vergangenheit, die Gegenwart und die Zukunft

Und es ward Licht.



Geh jetzt ins Netz. Mit Sonne - nie mit dem echten Festpreis.
Dort kannst du für 79,- DM Monat online sein, sooft du willst.
Infos und Start-CD unter

www.sonnet.de

Hotline: 0 800 88 88 88 4

Figure 5.5
Und es ward Licht

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do more

AMERICAN EXPRESS

Figure 5.6
die Bretter, die die Welt bedeuten; Körper und Geist; nach Lust und Laune

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Tiger Balm wirkt

schmerzlindernd
und entzündungshemmend.

Außergewöhnliche Wirkvielfalt
durch konzentrierte Pflanzenkraft

Die Gelehrten des fernen Ostens wußten schon vor
Jahrtausenden den unterschiedlichsten Leiden mit den Mitteln
der Natur wirkungsvoll zu begegnen. Die besondere Kombination
pflanzlicher Wirkstoffe verleiht Tiger Balm ein außergewöhnlich
breites Anwendungsspektrum – von Erkältungsbeschwerden bis
hin zu rheumatischen Erkrankungen. Millionen Menschen rund
um den Globus schenken ihm Vertrauen.

Tiger Balm. Balsam gegen den Schmerz.

Tiger Balm® ROT. Bei Schmerzzuständen in Muskeln und Gelenken bei rheumatischen Erkrankungen, bei Arthrose, Neuralgie, Ischias, Hexenschuß, Bandscheiben- und Kreuzbeschwerden, Muskelverspannungen, bei Sportverletzungen wie Prellungen, Zerrungen, Verstauchungen. Bei Erkältungsbeschwerden. Zu Risiken und Nebenwirkungen lesen Sie die Packungsbeilage und fragen Sie Ihren Arzt oder Apotheker.

Erkältungs-
beschwerden

rheumatische
Erkrankungen

Prellungen
Verstauchungen
Zerrungen

Muskel-
verspannungen

Figure 5.7
jmdm. Vertrauen schenken

2,5

rund um die Uhr inklusive
Telefongebühren.

**Um über Gott
und die Welt zu reden,
müssen wir
nicht zum Teufel gehen.**



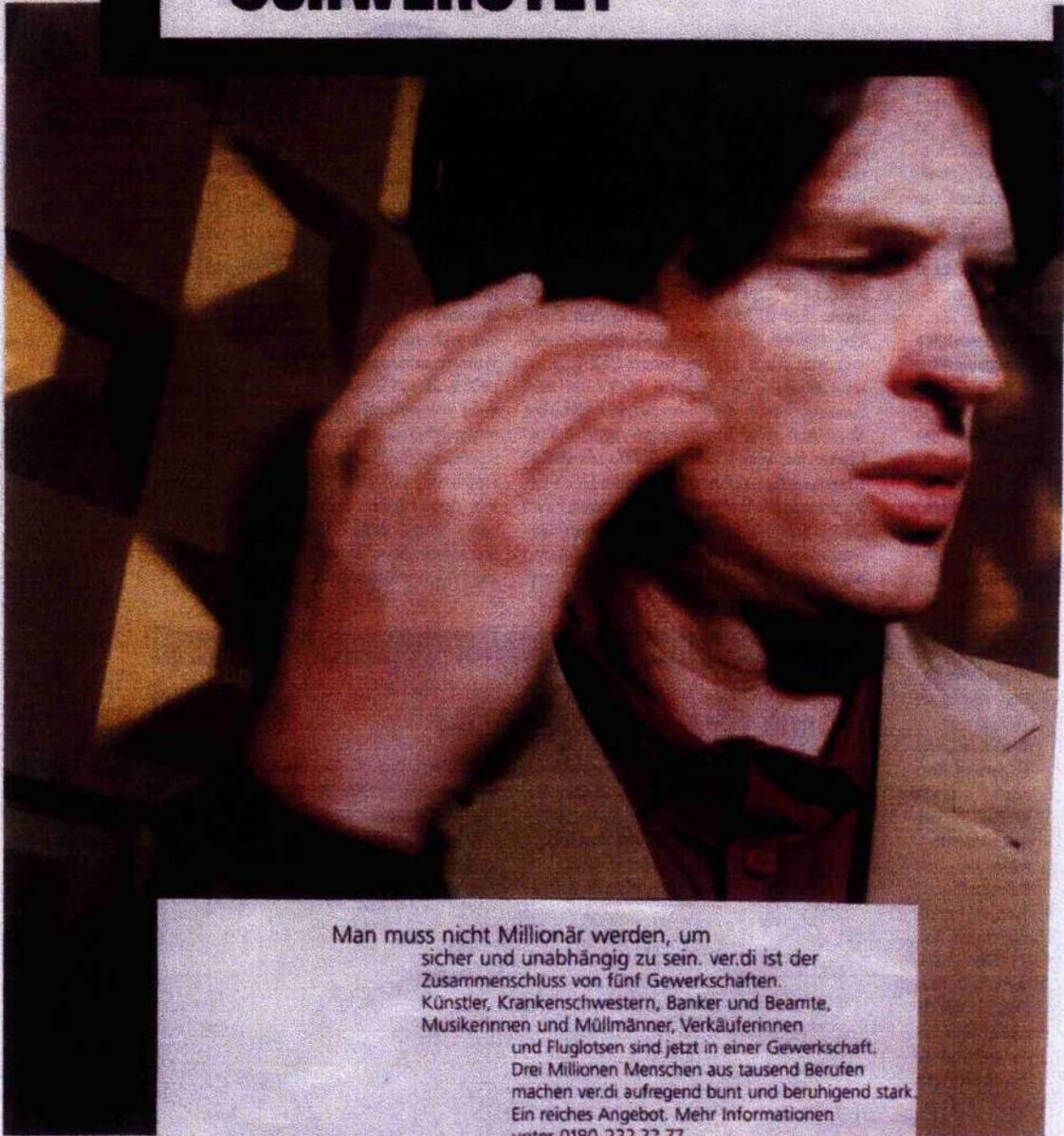
Wozu auch? Wir chatten, wie uns der Schnabel gewachsen ist. Und zwar bei freenet: unserem neuen Onlinedienst für fessalnde Gespräche zwischen Himmel und Erde. Und das zum Sorglos-Tarif von 2,5 Pfennig die Minute. Inklusive Telefongebühren. Inklusive verführerischer Angebote, für die wir Gottseidank alt genug sind. Und solchen, bei denen wir am liebsten wieder zwanzig wären. Teufel auch!

freenet.de

normal ist das nicht!

Figure 5.8
*reden, wie einem der Schnabel gewachsen ist; geh zum Teufel!; Himmel und Erde;
rund um die Uhr*

DIE ERSTE MILLION IST DIE SCHWERSTE?



Man muss nicht Millionär werden, um sicher und unabhängig zu sein. ver.di ist der Zusammenschluss von fünf Gewerkschaften. Künstler, Krankenschwestern, Banker und Beamte, Musikerinnen und Müllmänner, Verkäuferinnen und Fluglotsen sind jetzt in einer Gewerkschaft. Drei Millionen Menschen aus tausend Berufen machen ver.di aufregend bunt und beruhigend stark. Ein reiches Angebot. Mehr Informationen unter 0180-222 22 77.

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WIR BIETEN DREI.



Figure 5.9
die erste Million ist die Schwerste

www.d2

Sonnenuntergang.

Sonnenaufgang.

D2_Sun

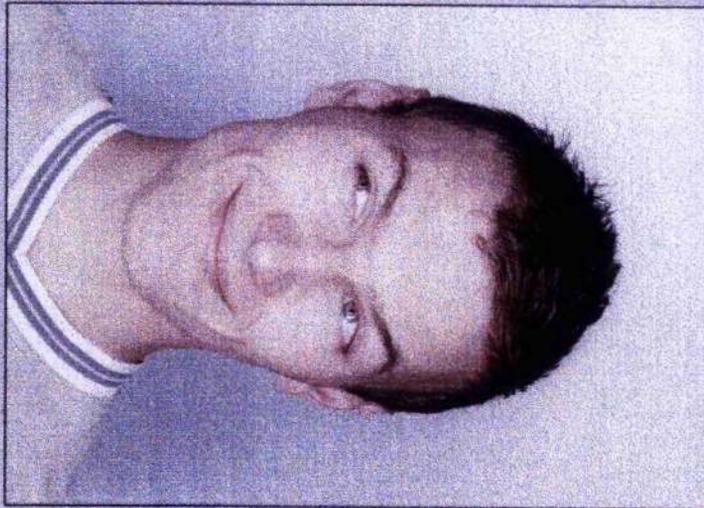
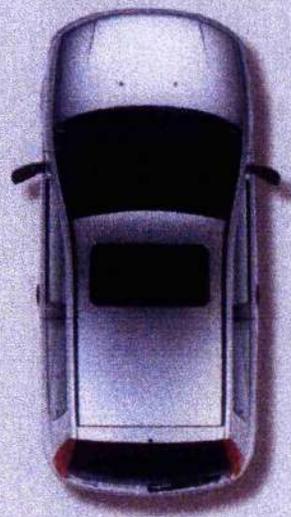
Ab jetzt haben Sie die Sonne immer in der Tasche – mit D2-Sun, dem neuen Einsteigertarif von D2 Vodafone. Damit telefoniert man schon ab 9,95 DM Basispreis plus 10.– DM Mindestumsatz im Monat.* Da wird einem doch ganz warm ums Herz. Oder?



D2_live dabei

Figure 5.10
etw. in der Tasche haben; jmdm. wird warm ums Herz

**FÜR GEWÖHNLICH RISKIER
ICH KOPF UND KRAGEN,
LEB MIT BLAUEN FLECKEN
UND HOL MIR SCHNELL
AUCH MAL 'NE BEULE.**



Huch, eine tollkühne Äußerung von Stefan E., 31, Trapezkünstler ohne Netz und doppeltem Boden. Trotz seines Wagemuts besitzt er aber den neuen Fiat Punto. Eigenartig, denn der Punto ist vor kurzem als Sicherster seiner Klasse ausgezeichnet worden. Also Hand aufs Herz, Stefan, warum fährst du **den neuen Fiat Punto?**



Figure 5.11
Hand aufs Herz; Kopf und Kragen riskieren



Figure 5.12
ein kluger Kopf sein

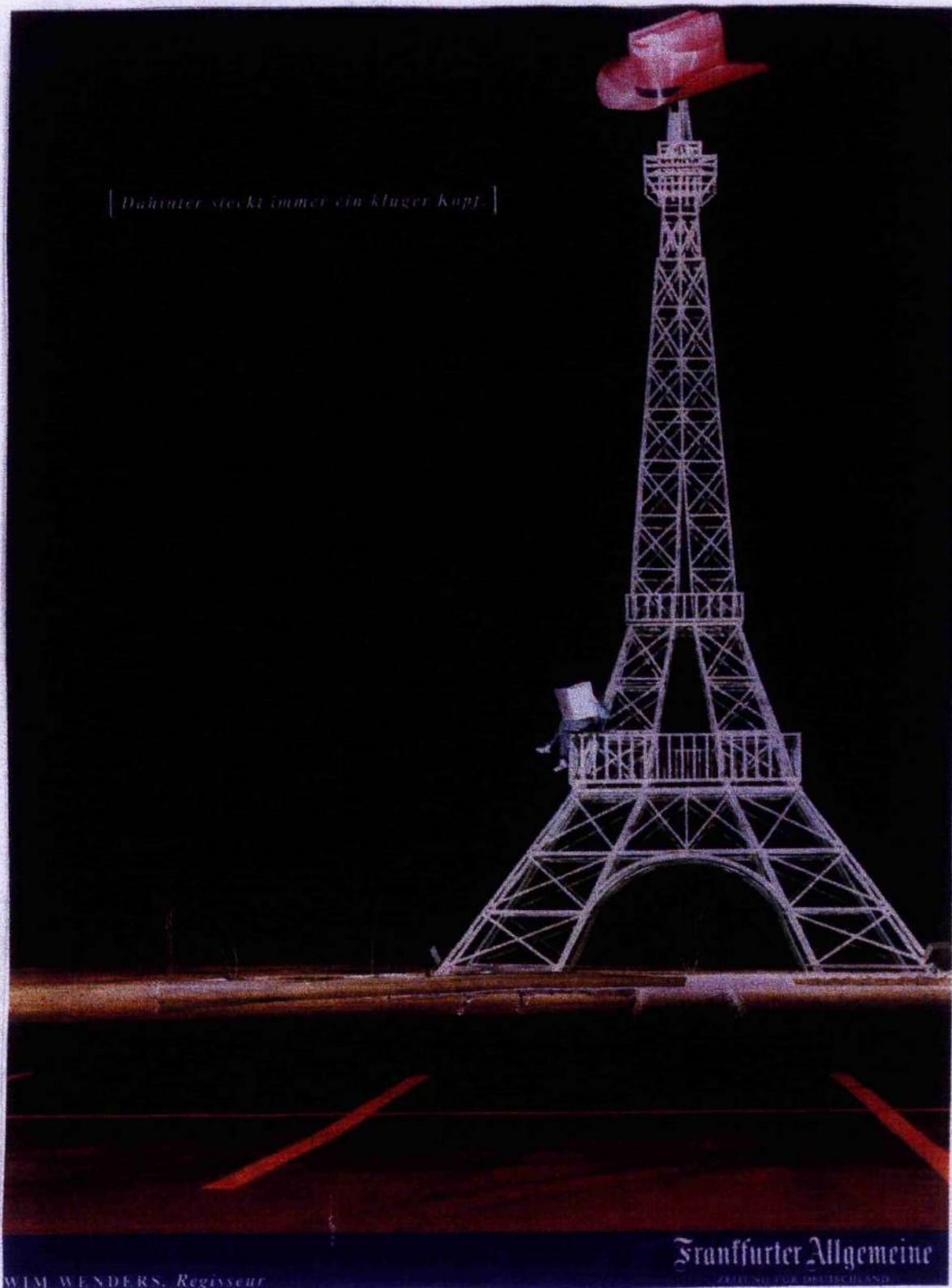


Figure 5.13
ein kluger Kopf sein

MANCHE AUTOS SAGEN:
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DYNAMISCH UND SEHR ERFOLGREICH
IN SEINEM BERUF.“

MANCHE AUTOS SAGEN:
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ER HAT ELLENBOGEN. ER SETZT SICH DURCH.“

MANCHE AUTOS SAGEN:
„ÜBRIGENS: MEIN BESITZER HAT GELD.
NICHT EIN BISSCHEN GELD.
ER HAT RICHTIG VIEL GELD.“

MANCHE AUTOS SAGEN:
„GUTEN TAG. MEIN BESITZER IST SPORTLICH
UND FAHRT GERN NACH ITALIEN IN DIE FERIEN.“

UND EIN AUTO SAGT:
„MEIN BESITZER IST ERWACHSEN.
ER KANN DENKEN. ER KANN SPRECHEN.
WOFÜR BRAUCHT ER EIN AUTO,
DAS ANDEREN ERZÄHLT, WER ER IST?“



Der Passat 

Figure 5.14
keine Ellbogen haben

Laser-Lust statt Tinten-Frust!



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Setzen Sie gleich auf die attraktiven Brother Laser-Lösungen. Diese arbeiten zuverlässig für Sie, produzieren saubere Ausdrücke, sind einfach in der Handhabung und besonders wirtschaftlich dank Long-Life Toner serienmäßig. Wie das innovative Brother MFC-9070: Ein schneller 10-Seiten Laserdrucker mit 8 MB Speicher, professionellem Laserfax, Kopierer- und Scanner-Ausstattung. Platzsparend in einem Gerät für jeden Arbeitsplatz. Für nur € 599,00*/DM 1.171,54* inkl. URA inkl. MwSt. Oder das neue Laserfax Brother FAX-8070P. Mit Dual Access, großem Rufnummernspeicher, beleuchtetem Display und Navigations-Tasten. Für nur € 449,00*/DM 878,17* inkl. URA inkl. MwSt.

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Figure 5.15
in der Tinte sitzen

MUPPETS BIS IN DIE PUPPEN!

Feiern Sie Wiedersehen mit Miss Piggy, Kermit und Konsorten:

Am 1. September bei Super RTL:

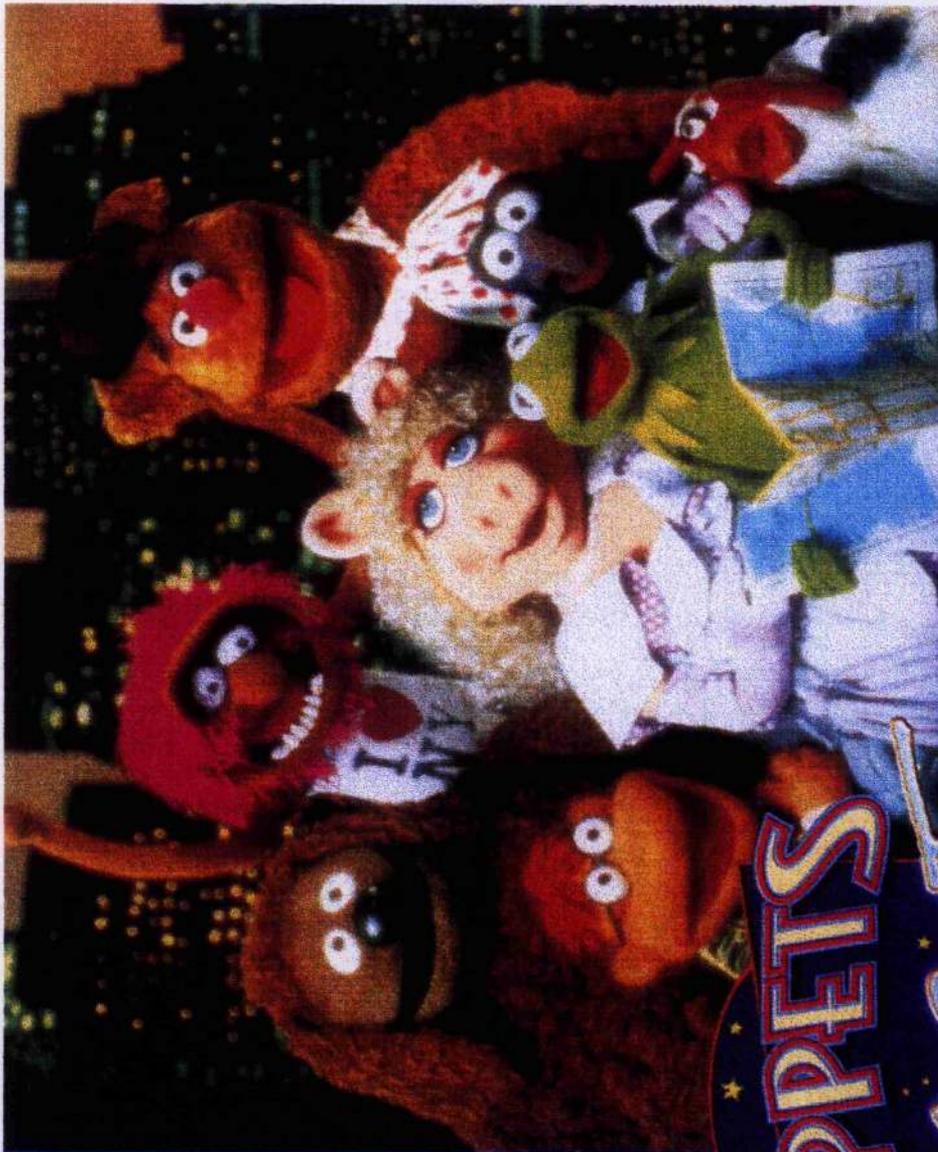
★ ab 20.15 Uhr

„Muppets erobern Manhattan“

★ anschließend weitere

Muppet Specials und die legendäre

„Muppets-Show“.



MUPPETS Special NACHT



Figure 5.16
bis in die Puppen



**WIR SCHICKEN SIE IN DIE WÜSTE –
RÜCKFAHRSCHEIN INKLUSIVE.**

DER LAND ROVER DISCOVERY. JETZT INKLUSIVE FAHRERLEHRGANG IN DER WÜSTE.

Wenn Sie sich bis zum 31.12.2000 für einen neuen Land Rover Discovery aus dem Lagerbestand der Land Rover Deutschland GmbH entscheiden, ist für Sie ein Fahrerlehrgang in der Wüste im Preis inbegriffen. Dort können Sie sich mit der exzellenten Off Road-Technik des Discovery vertraut machen. Zum Beispiel mit dem permanenten Allradantrieb, damit Sie nirgendwo stecken bleiben. Oder mit seiner elektronischen Traktionskontrolle, damit Sie nirgendwo durchdrehen. Also, kommen Sie bei uns vorbei. Land Rover Infoline: 01805/23 26 00*. www.landrover.de



DISCOVERY

Abbildung zeigt Sonderausstattung. Den Land Rover Discovery erhalten Sie ab DEM 61.500,- / EUR 31.444,45 unverbindliche Preisempfehlung ab Lager Land Rover.

Figure 5.17
jmdn. in die Wüste schicken

Regen bringt Segen!

Wer „Himmelswasser“ auffängt und nutzt, handelt doppelt klug: er schont unser Trinkwasser und spart gleichzeitig ganz irdische Gebühren.

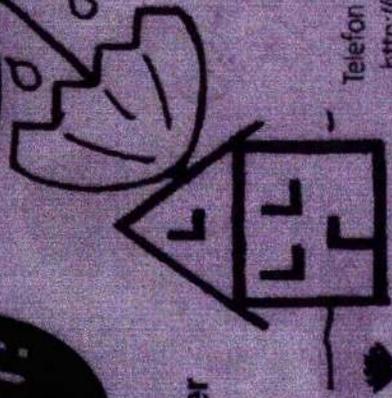


Infos rund um die Regenwassernutzung in Haushalt und Garten bei:

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Merowingerstraße 88 · 40225 Düsseldorf

(bitte 5,- DM in Briefmarken beilegen)



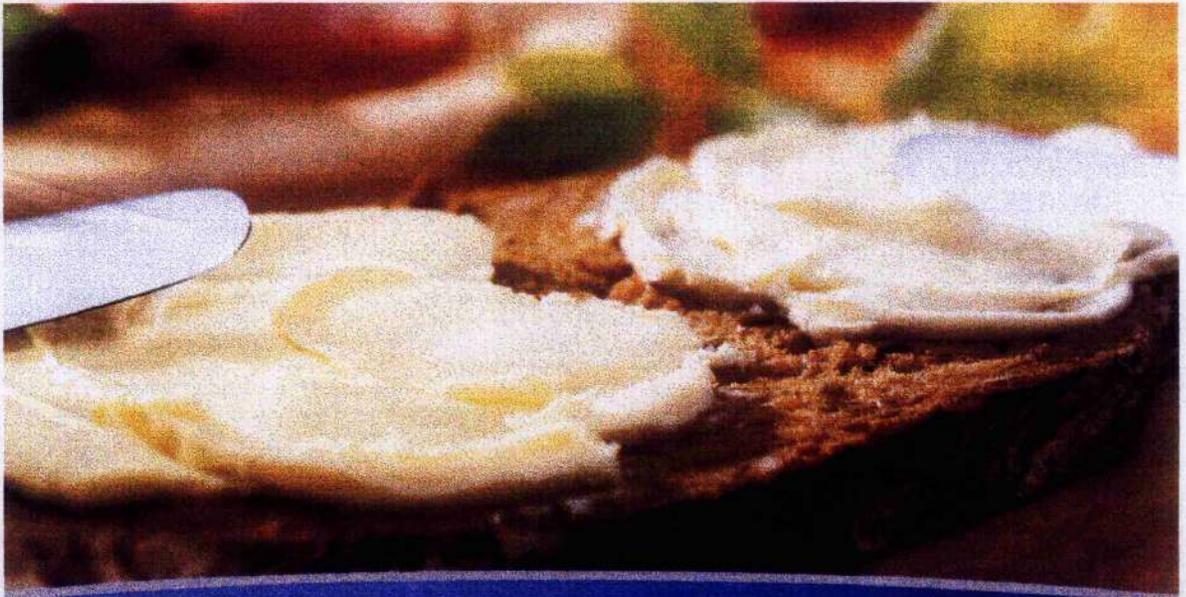
Telefon 02 11 / 15 92 51 - 0

<http://www.nabu-nrw.de>

Spendenkonto: 102 11 1 010

(BLZ 301 602 13)

Figure 5.18
sich regen bringt Segen



Wenn zwei gut
schmecken, freut
sich der Dritte.

STEFANO WASSNER
GUT (Note: 1,7)
im Test: 33 Marken Butter
3 mal Beste Testnote 1,7
test Markt 4/2008
www.test.de



www.meggle.de

Figure 5.19
wenn zwei sich streiten, freut sich der Dritte

Sie haben immer noch den Daumen senken? Schießen Sie einfach los!	Sie schreiben Tagebuch? Wie wäre es eigentlich mit Drucken?	Ihr Daumen ist immer noch senkrecht? Dem können wir abhelfen.	Ihr Chef ist ein Scheusal? Geben Sie es ihm doch schriftlich.	Sie haben immer noch den Daumen senken? Raus damit.
Sie haben den Sinn des Lebens entdeckt? Das geht alle an.	Wie wär's mit Schreiben?	Ihr Geschäfts- partner hat Sie betrogen? Rächen Sie sich mit einem Buch.	Wir drucken Ihre Briefe.	Sie möchten mal so richtig belchten? Die Nation freut sich schon darauf.
Ihre erste Million gemacht? Leisten Sie sich jetzt ein eigenes Buch.	Sie werden Dr. phil., und Ihre Disserta- tion sucht einen Verlag? Her damit.	Glück gehabt.	Sie haben Ihre erste Million gemacht? Leisten Sie sich jetzt ein eigenes Buch.	Her mit der ganzen Story.
Wieder auf Ihre Jugend- sünden gestoßen? Das ist ein Knüller.	Schreiben Sie doch eins.	Sie haben als Vorstand fünf Firmen saniert? Bitte um Ihr Rezeptbuch.	Als Buch lebt es weiter.	Männer und Frauen passen doch zusammen? So was liest man gern.
Ihre Manuskripte sind über den Haufen? Wir drucken sie alle.	Sie sitzen auf einer Menge alter Manu- skripte? Hintern hoch!	Sagen Sie mal was dazu.	Sie möchten verschlungen werden? Schreiben Sie ein Kochbuch.	Verlegen wir.

Internet zu Hause sind, können Sie...
Premierenbandes „100 noch...“

Schutzgebühr von 15 Euro (per...
favourite book“, Postfach 103...

Wir machen aus Ihrem Manuskript
einen Markenartikel.

„My
favourite
book.“

Figure 5.20
wenn zwei sich streiten, freut sich der Dritte; jmdm. etw. schriftlich geben;
den Daumen senken

Stärker, als die Polizei erlaubt.

AMERICAN BLEND

West

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DIE GESUNDHEIT

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Die EG-Gesundheitsminister: Rauchen gefährdet die Gesundheit. Der Rauch einer Zigarette dieser Marke enthält 0,6 mg Nikotin und 7 mg Kondensat (Teer). (Durchschnittswerte nach ISO.)

Figure 5.21
dümmer sein, als die Polizei erlaubt

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| Handelsblatt
Substanz entscheidet

Figure 5.22
die Spreu vom Weizen trennen

Balkonseison. Rankgerüste. Tomaten veredeln. Gehölz-Schnitt. Zimmerpflanzen.

Der Frühling steht vor der Gartentür. Ich geh mal raus und lass ihn rein.

Mit FLORA wird Ihr Garten noch schöner: mit 16 Seiten Praxistipps, schönen Pflanzen und tollen Gärten, alles zum Nachmachen.

FLORA AUS FREUDE AM GARTEN.

FLORA Schnell & Einfach
 Neu: Die FLORA-Schnell & Einfach-Themen für Gartenfreude im Handumdrehen.

Figure 5.23
vor der Tür stehen; im Handumdrehen; schnell und einfach

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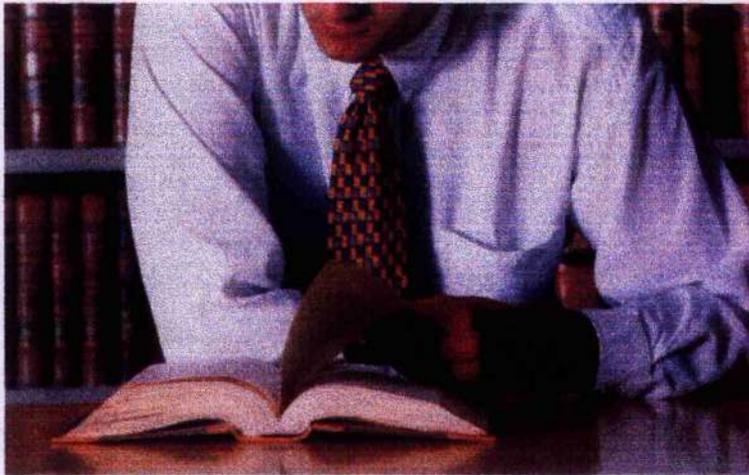
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Holen Sie sich jetzt die neue Ausgabe des *Vermögensberaters* und sichern Sie sich Experten Tipps zu allen Fragen rund um Kapitalanlage, Versicherung, Steuern und Rente. Das clevere Finanzmagazin der Deutschen Vermögensberatung bietet geldwerte Informationen und Lesespaß. Und wenn es um Ihre persönlichen Finanzstrategien geht, sind unsere mehr als 25.000 Vermögensberater Ihre kompetenten Partner. Auf den weltweit größten eigenständigen Finanzvertrieb verlassen sich schon über 3,5 Millionen Kunden. Rufen Sie jetzt an und bestellen Sie unter Telefon 040 46 88 32 15 ein kostenloses Probeheft.

Früher an Später danken!

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Internet: www.dvag.de

Figure 5.24
eine harte Nuss zu knacken haben



Jetzt im Handel

Was Hänschen lernt, kann auch Hans noch lernen! **Bildung.**

Warum sollen wir nie aufhören, uns zu bilden? a) Weil schlaue Menschen attraktiver sind. b) Weil Lernen Glücksgefühle im Gehirn auslöst. c) Weil man eine Million Euro gewinnen kann. d) Weil es uns in der Informationsgesellschaft weiterbringt. **Auflösung: im neuen GEO WISSEN.**

GEO WISSEN
HEFT 111

BILDUNG
 Wie das Lernen wieder Spaß macht

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DIE WELT VERSTEHEN MIT GEO

Figure 5.25
was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr

Börse hautnah!

Markus Koch fasziniert mit seiner Live-Berichterstattung von der Wall Street in New York täglich ein Millionenpublikum. In seinem brillanten Erstlingswerk verknüpft er die eigene Erfolgsgeschichte mit den rasanten Abläufen der Leitbörse. Sie lesen, auf welche Informationen er achtet und lernen die Investimentszene mit den Augen eines Profis sehen!

Erfolgsrezepte vom BörsenKoch

"Seine eigene Story ist nicht nur spannend, sondern auch lehrreich für Anleger. Schließlich hat auch Markus Koch einmal von Null angefangen. Er liefert hochaktuelles Praxiswissen und erläutert, wie es im Investmentgeschäft zugeht, wer die Märkte bewegt."

DM-Online

Koch war zur rechten Zeit am rechten Ort. Heute gilt der 29-jährige Journalist als Guru der Generation Geld – mit sprühendem Charme und trockenem Humor avancierte Koch zum ersten deutschen Börsen-Popstar. Die frühe Biografie des Aufsteigers ist mit den bemerkenswertesten Einsichten eines Insiders durchmischt.

Mitteleuropäische Zeitung

"Markus Koch kennt die Anlegerszene. Jetzt vermittelt er dem Leser, wie seine Karriere amerikanischen Stils an der Wall Street begann, und wirft auf gewohnt informative Art den Blick hinter die Kulissen der Wall Street. Der immense Vorteil von Markus Koch: Er ist live vor Ort und kann sich ein Bild von der Investimentszene machen."

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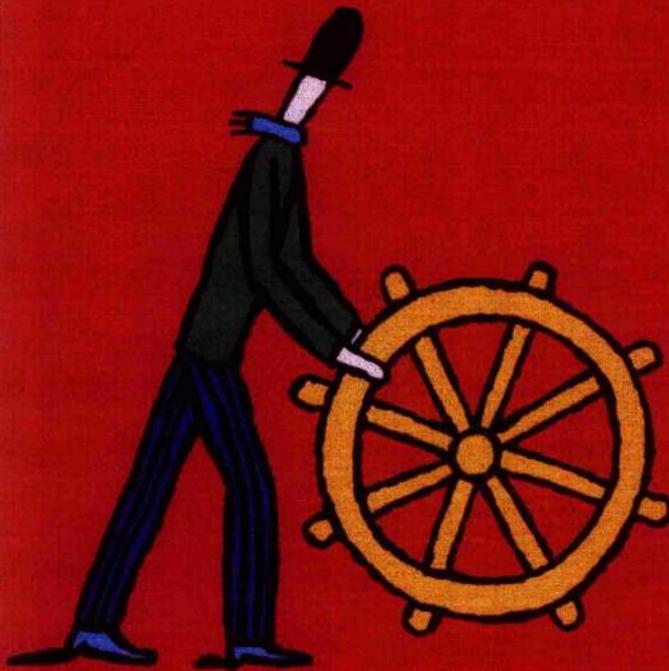
e-Mail _____

Unterschrift _____

BORSE
ONLINE
edition

Figure 5.26
etw. mit anderen/neuen Augen sehen; X [tun] wie die Profis; zur rechten Zeit am rechten Ort sein; die Generation Geld; einen Blick hinter die Kulissen werfen; vor Ort sein; sich ein Bild von etw. machen

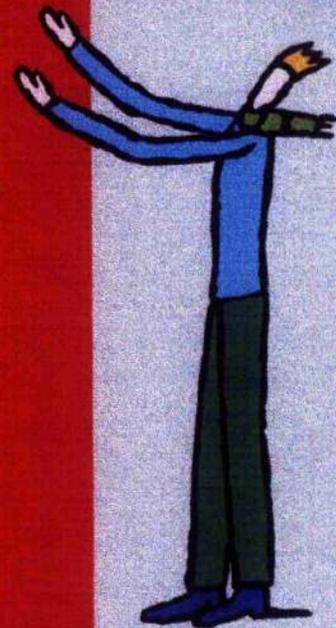
Zu Betriebsübernahmen steuern wir gerne etwas bei.



Wollen Sie selbst das Steuer in die Hand nehmen, wenn der Senior in den Ruhestand geht? Dann kommen Sie zur DtA. Wir beraten Sie umfassend und unterstützen Sie mit günstigen Krediten bei der Finanzierung. Falls Sie einen fremden Betrieb übernehmen wollen, helfen wir Ihnen, den richtigen zu finden. Umgekehrt bieten wir diesen Service natürlich auch Unternehmern, die einen geeigneten Nachfolger suchen.

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DIE GRÜNDER- UND MITTELSTANDSBANK

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Wir fördern Zukunft.

Figure 5.27
das Steuer in der Hand haben/etw. in die Hand nehmen

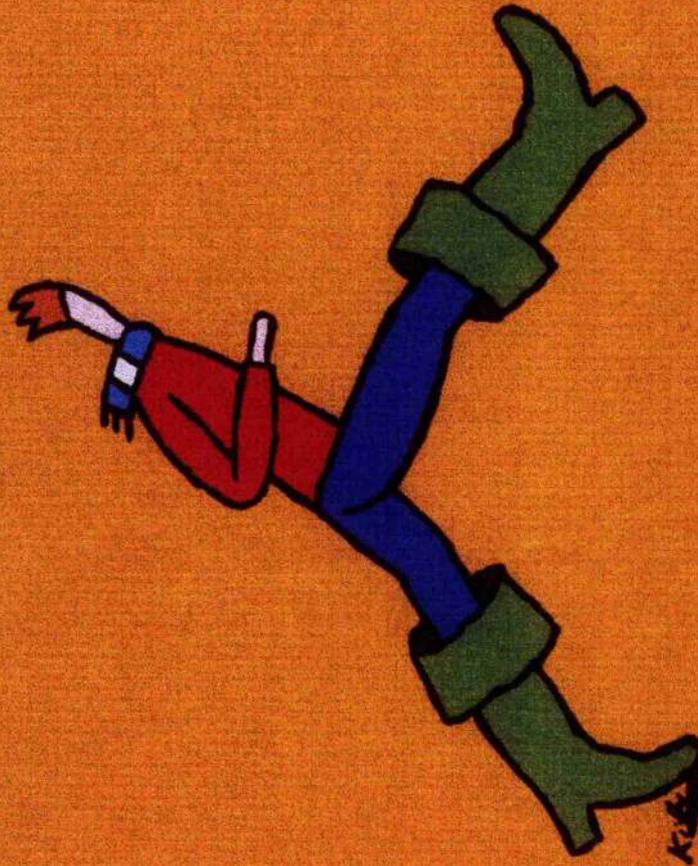
Wir helfen jungen Unternehmen, über sich hinauszuwachsen.

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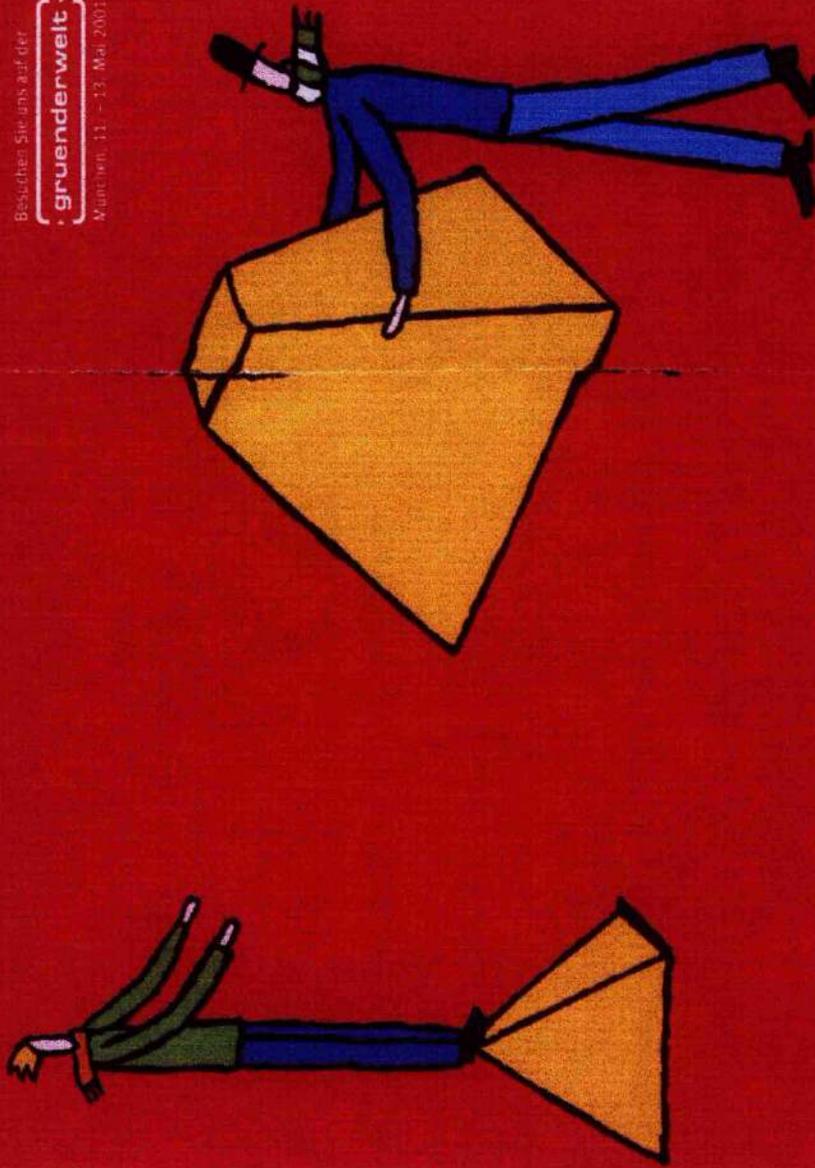
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Wir fördern Zukunft

Figure 5.28
große Sprünge machen; jmdm. zur Seite stehen

Wer an die Spitze will, braucht eine grundsolide Basis.

Besuchen Sie uns auf der
gruenderwelt
München, 11. - 13. Mai 2001



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Wir heben den Zukunft

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Figure 5.29
an der Spitze sein

VOLVO

for life

WOHIN SIE AUCH WOLLEN...



...SIE HABEN FREIE HAND.



VOLVO S80 Wer sich viel vornimmt, sollte sich ganz auf seine Ziele konzentrieren können. Deshalb haben wir als einer der ersten Automobilhersteller den Volvo S80 serienmäßig mit GSM-Telefon und integrierter Freisprecheinrichtung ausgerüstet. Damit die Hände auch da bleiben, wo sie hingehören: am Lenkrad. So können Sie von nun an ungestört alles sagen, was Sie wollen. Typisch Volvo S80, mit seiner einmaligen Verbindung von Sicherheit und exklusivem Komfort. Unser Einstiegsmodell erhalten Sie schon ab 55.546,- DM (28.400,- €)* zzgl. Überführungskosten. Und das wird Ihnen jetzt nun wirklich die Sprache verschlagen.

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Auf Wunsch auch inkl. Rundum-Sorglos-Paket Volvo PRO – dem professionellen Full Service von Volvo.

Figure 5.30
freie Hand haben; jmdm. die Sprache verschlagen



Figure 5.31
Die Niederländischen Sprichwörter, Bruegel (1559)
Dahlem Museum, Berlin (Reproduced from Stechow 1969:91)



Figure 5.32
Detail from *Die Niederländischen Sprichwörter*, Bruegel (1559)



Figure 5.33
"Er ist die rechte Hand des Chefs" (Griesbach and Schulz 2003:73)

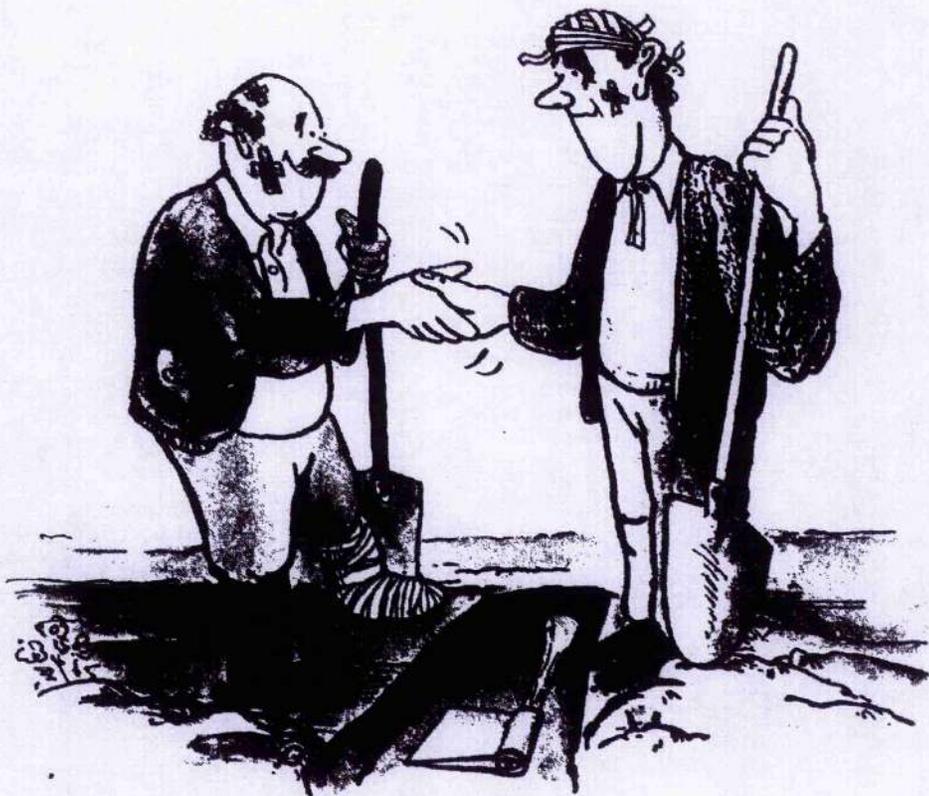


Figure 5.34
"das Kriegsbeil begraben" (Griesbach and Schulz 2003:114)

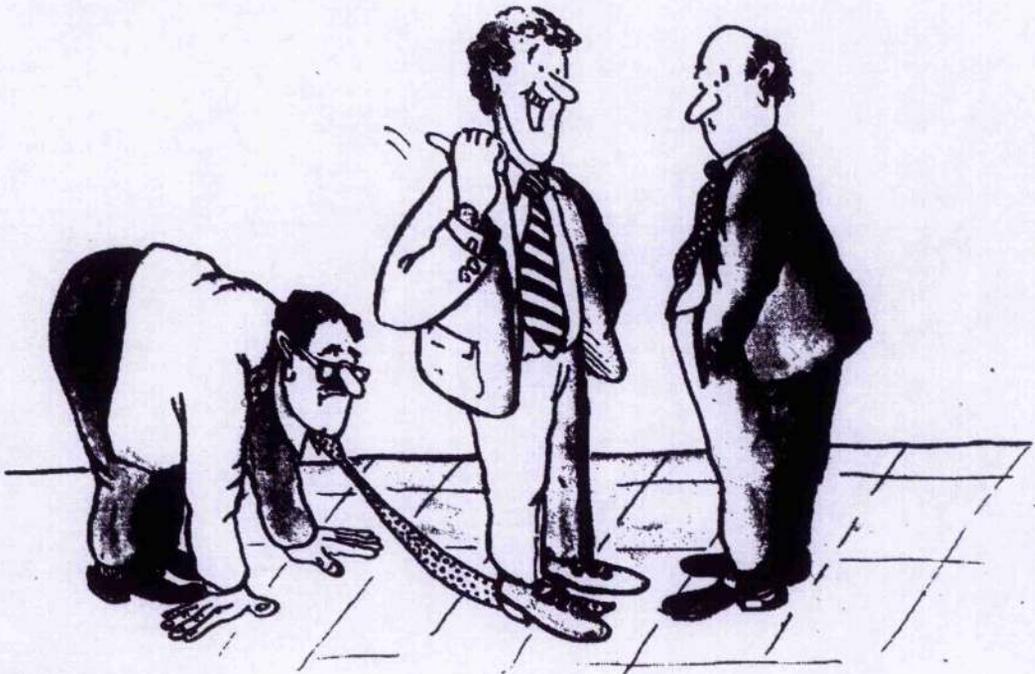


Figure 5.35
"Habe ich ihm etwa auf den Schlips getreten?"
(Griesbach and Schulz 2003:175)

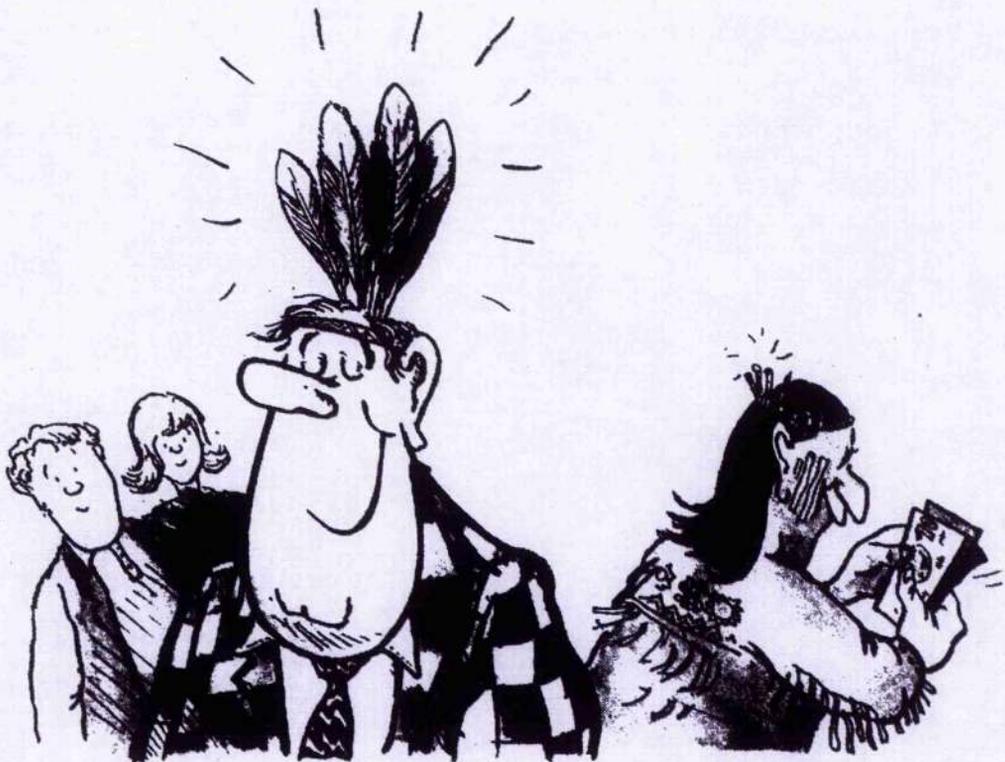


Figure 5.36
"sich mit fremden Federn schmücken" (Griesbach and Schulz 2003:33)

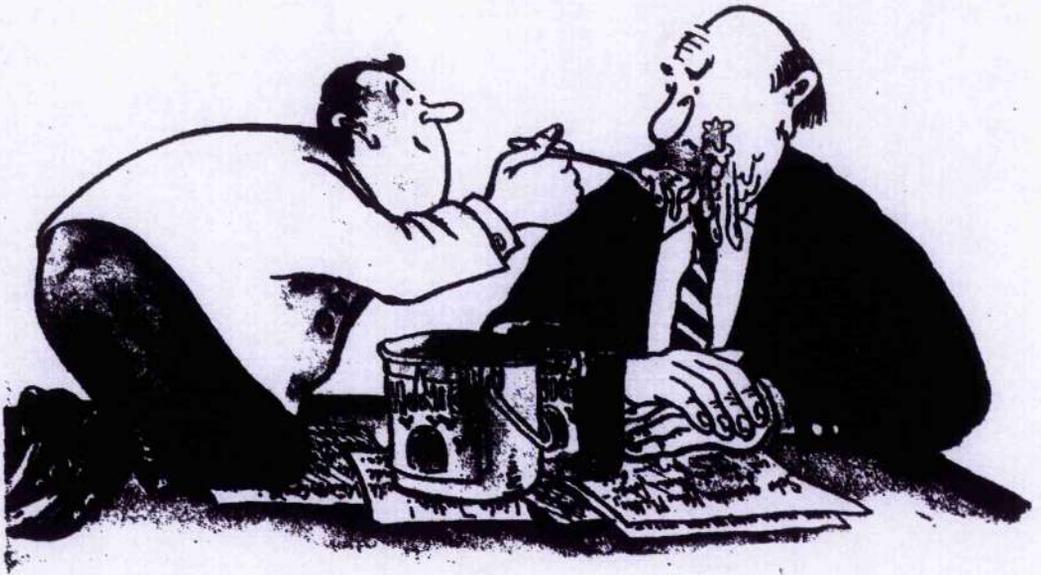


Figure 5.37
"jemandem Honig ums Maul schmieren" (Griesbach and Schulz 2003:91)

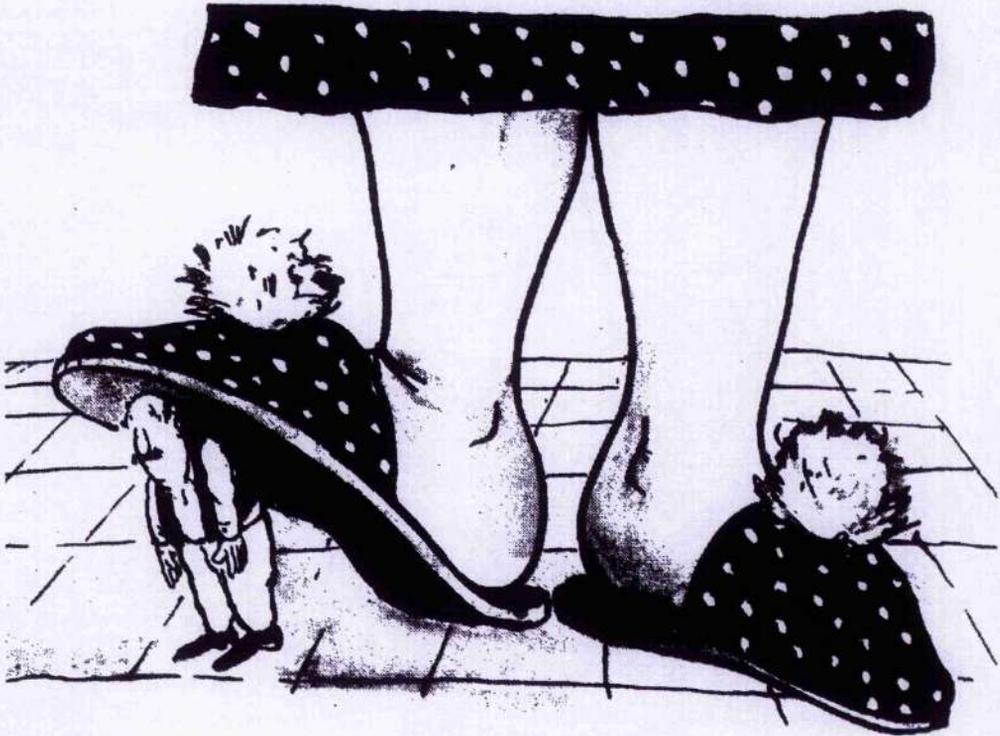


Figure 5.38
"... und zu Hause steht er unterm Pantoffel"
(Griesbach and Schulz 2003:146)

Alle reden davon, den Standort Deutschland zu stärken. Hier ein Beispiel, wie gehandelt wird.

Im Transitland Deutschland droht der Verkehrseinbruch. Deshalb muss Schienenverkehr einen deutlich größeren Stellenwert erhalten. Die Bahn startet eine beispiellose Offensive mit Investitionen und Innovationen.

Eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für weiteres Wachstum und mehr Beschäftigung ist die reibungslose Mobilität von Menschen und Gütern. Das stößt im Transitland Deutschland in der Mitte Europas zunehmend an die Grenzen. Von Ost nach West, von Nord nach Süd wollen hier alle durch.

Bis 2015 wird das Transportaufkommen um 60 Prozent steigen.

Alle Experten sind sich einig, dass ein Großteil davon auf die Schiene entfallen muss. Wenn wir nichts unternehmen, wird sich der LKW-Verkehr verdoppeln. Deshalb stellt die Bahn bereits heute die Weichen für ein zukunftsweisendes, viel effizienteres Verkehrssystem. Zudem ist – bei einer so umfassenden Aufgabe – gesellschaftliches, politisches und unternehmerisches Umdenken gefordert.

Jahrzehntelang wurde der Schienenverkehr vernachlässigt. Wir sind mitten in einer Aufholjagd.

Bei öffentlichen Investitionen hatte die Straße über Jahrzehnte Vorfahrt. Das künftige Verkehrswachstum wird jedoch so dramatisch sein, dass es selbst bei weiterem Ausbau der Straßen nicht bewältigt werden kann. Die Konsequenz: Die Bahn steht vor einer großen Aufgabe – bei gleichzeitig hohem Nachholbedarf. Diese Herausforderung haben wir angenommen.

Die Bahn setzt ein gewaltiges Modernisierungsprogramm um.

Die erste Stufe der Bahnreform ist abgeschlossen. Rund 100 Milliarden Mark hat die Bahn bereits zwischen 1994 und 2000, vorrangig in die Erneuerung von Infrastruktur und Fuhrpark, investiert – ein gewaltiger Kraftakt, aber immer noch viel zu wenig. Bis 2005 werden deshalb nochmals insgesamt 79 Milliarden Mark investiert. Ein spürbarer Beitrag für die Konjunktur, wie Wirtschafts-sachverständige sagen. Die Bahn investiert in neue Loks und Wagen im Personenverkehr, ins Schienennetz und in Bahnhöfe.

In fünf Jahren wollen wir das Unternehmen Deutsche Bahn hochmodern und profitabel machen.

Parallel zu unserem Investitions- und Modernisierungsprogramm treiben wir den Wandel des Unternehmens voran – hin zu einem kundenorientierten und wettbewerbsfähigen Dienstleistungskonzern. Viele hundert Einzelprojekte verbessern die Produktivität, senken Kosten und optimieren die Qualität – für immer attraktivere Angebote und Preise im Wettbewerb.

Die Bahn hat schon vieles erreicht. Wir sind deutlich leistungsfähiger geworden.

Die Produktivitätssteigerungen seit der Bahnreform 1994 entsprechen etwa einer Milliarde Mark jährlich. Seit 1993 stieg die Verkehrsleistung im Personen- wie im Güterverkehr um jeweils rund 19 Prozent. Diese Leistung wird heute mit etwa der Hälfte der damaligen Belegschaft erbracht. Wir sind überzeugt, auch die künftigen Herausforderungen zu meistern.

Unser Erfolg ist nicht nur wichtig für uns, sondern richtungweisend für Deutschland.

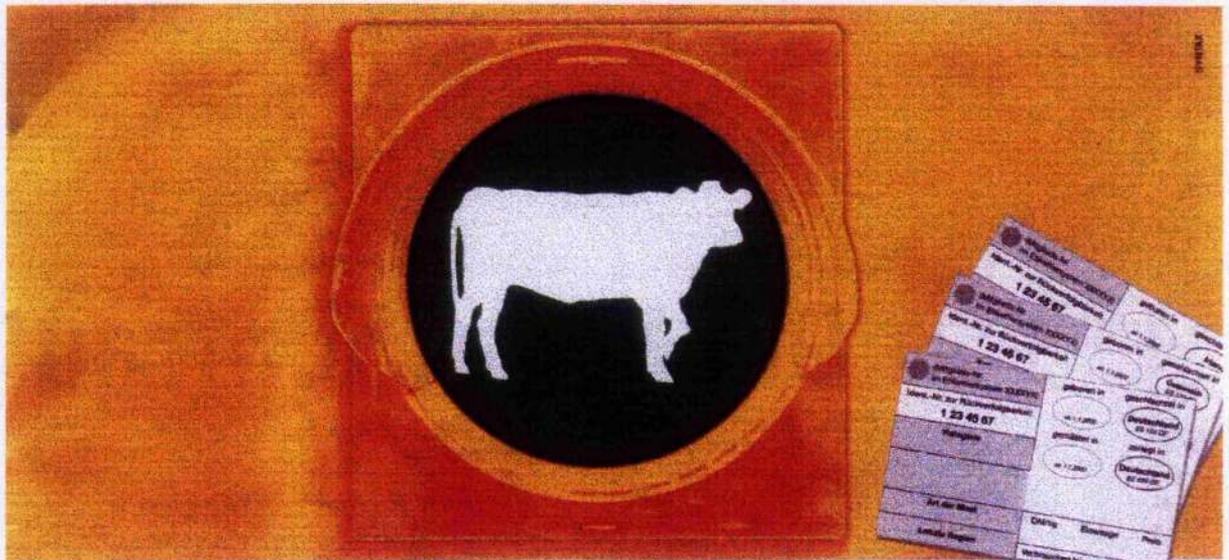
Wir bringen unsere ganze Kraft und Kompetenz ein, brauchen aber auch die entsprechenden politischen Weichenstellungen. Nur in engem Schulterschluss mit der Politik und einer gesicherten Organisationsstruktur kann die Bahn ihre Systemvorteile durchsetzen. Und damit optimal zu einer nachhaltigen ökonomischen, gesellschaftlichen und ökologischen Entwicklung beitragen. Die Bahnreform ist auf zehn Jahre angelegt. Diese Zeit muss man der Bahn auch lassen.

Informationen unter www.bahn.de/fakten

Die Verkehrsleistung im Personenverkehr stieg im letzten Jahr um 2,1 Prozent – im Güterverkehr sogar um 12,8 Prozent. Seit 1993 konnte die Verkehrsleistung insgesamt um 19 Prozent ausgeweitet werden.

Die Bahn 

Figure 5.39
die Weichen für etw. stellen



Grünes Licht für Rindfleisch-Etikettierung



Egal, in welchem Land der Europäischen Union ein Kalb geboren wird, spätestens 20 Tage nach der Geburt erhält es einen Eintrag in die Datenbank, zwei **Ohrmarken mit einer Kenn-Nr.** und einen **Rinderpass**. Damit ist das Tier kontrollierbar über Transportwege und Aufzuchtstätten bis hin zum Schlachthof.

Auch auf dem weiteren Weg bis zur Fleischtheke wird die Herkunft dokumentiert: Mit Angabe des Landes für **Geburt und Mast (Pflicht ab 1.1.2002)**, sowie **Schlachtung und Zerlegung**. Eine **Ident.- bzw. Referenz-Nr.** sichert die Kontrolle für eine lückenlose Rückverfolgbarkeit.

DIESE INFORMATION IST VON DER EUROPÄISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFT FINANZIERT

Ab 1.9.2000 muss Rindfleisch dokumentiert sein: Entweder mit einem **deutlichen Schild an der Ladentheke** oder dem aussagekräftigen **Etikett** auf der SB-Packung. Unabhängig von den vorgeschriebenen tierärztlichen Kontrollen.

Informationen an der Fleischtheke oder über
Info-Büro Rindfleisch-Etikettierung,
Planegger Straße 33, 81241 München
www.rindfleisch-etikettierung.de



Europäisches Rindfleisch.
Aus kontrollierter Herkunft.
Damit Sie wissen,
was auf den Teller kommt.

Figure 5.40
grünes Licht geben

**Haben wir noch alle
Tassen im Schrank?**

Ufos: eins von 60 Themen im neuen P.M.

P.M.
Wissen kommt an.

P.M.
Die Akte Alien

Jetzt im Handel.

Figure 5.41
nicht alle Tassen im Schrank haben



Figure 5.42
eine weiße Weste haben



Aus heiterem Himmel kommen die schönsten Überraschungen.

Gerade bei Aprilwetter lässt ein bunter Fleurop-Strauß gleich wieder die Sonne scheinen.

FLEUROP

Gründe gibt's genug.



0800-0 11 42 11

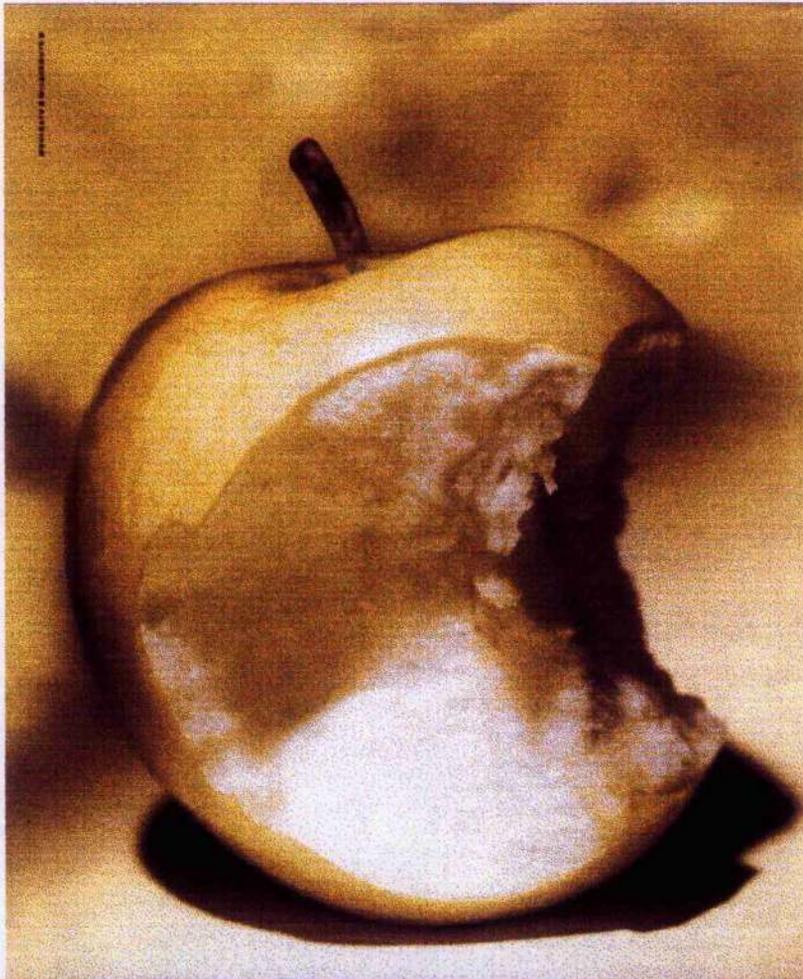
0800-FLEUROP

www.fleurop.de

wap.fleurop.de

Persönliche Bestellung und Beratung in rund 7.000 Fachgeschäften · Lieferung in über 140 Länder · 24-h-Bestellservice über Internet und Fleurop-Service-Telefon
Blumen werden innerhalb weniger Stunden pünktlich und persönlich überreicht · 8,- Euro Auslandspauschal · Preisgarantie

Figure 5.43
aus heiterem Himmel



Bevor Sie beim Reisepreis nach New York in einen sauren Apfel beißen...

...schauen Sie sich unsere aktuellen Last Minute Reiseangebote und Flüge einmal genauer an. Da bekommen Sie den Big Apple für wenig mehr, als Sie monatlich für frisches Obst aufwenden. Und genauso günstig geht es weiter. Ausgesuchte Städtereisen, preiswerter Familien- oder Badeurlaub - Sie werden auf den Geschmack kommen. Buchen Sie an 365 Tagen im Jahr in ausgewählten ReiseBank-Geschäftsstellen in Bahnhöfen, unter www.reisebank.de oder über unsere „SvorFlug“ Hotline 01803166 9933 (12 Pf./Min.).

Mit der **Reise Bank** fahren Sie besser!

Figure 5.44
in den sauren Apfel beißen

Tomaten



Dann ist Sehberatung

beim Augenoptiker genau das,

was Sie brauchen. Er prüft Ihre Sehschärfe mit der aktuellen Technologie.

Sie werden sehen, er ist der richtige Ansprechpartner für gutes Sehen. Schauen Sie doch bald bei ihm vorbei.

www.zva.de
Zentralverband der Augenoptiker



SEHBERATUNG BEIM AUGENOPTIKER

WIR TESTEN, MESSEN, PRÜFEN. ÜBER 9000 MAL IN DEUTSCHLAND

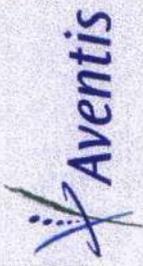
Figure 5.45
Tomaten auf den Augen haben

Wir entwickeln innovative Arzneimittel zur Behandlung von Rheuma.

Damit auch mit Rheuma vieles leichter von der Hand geht.

Jeder Mensch möchte gerne immer alles im Griff haben. Aber über 5 Millionen Menschen in jeder Welt stillt dies schwer. Eislächse Bewegungen, die normalerweise keine große Anstrengung bedeuten, sind für sie sehr schmerzhaft. Diese Menschen leiden unter rheumatoider Arthritis. Aventis, ein weltweit führendes Pharma-Unternehmen, bietet bereits heute innovative Basis-therapeutika, die Symptome lindern, ein Fortschreiten der Krankheit verzögern und damit Folgeerkrankungen verringern. Unsere Forschungsprogramme setzen ihr besonderes Wissen und die Möglichkeiten neuer Technologien zur Entwicklung wirksamer Antirheumatika. Denn wir betrachten es als eine große Herausforderung, nicht nur die Symptome, sondern langfristig die Ursachen von Rheuma zu bekämpfen. Damit jeder sein Leben selbst in die Hand nehmen kann.

Aventis, Spezialist für Präparate, ist ein Unternehmen in Paris, Frankreich und hat Niederlassungen in www.aventis.com



Our Challenge is Life

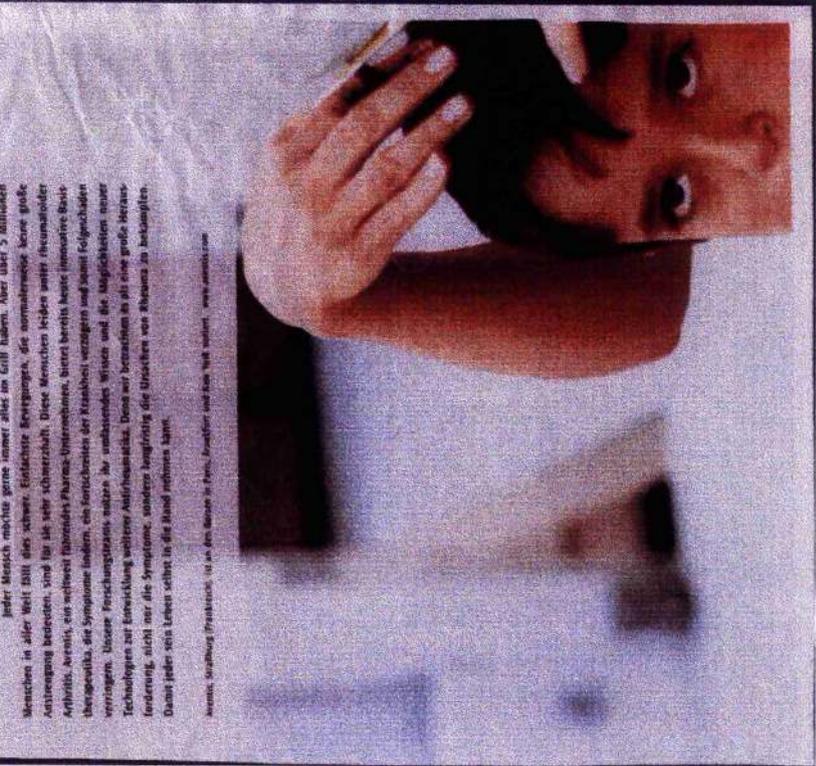
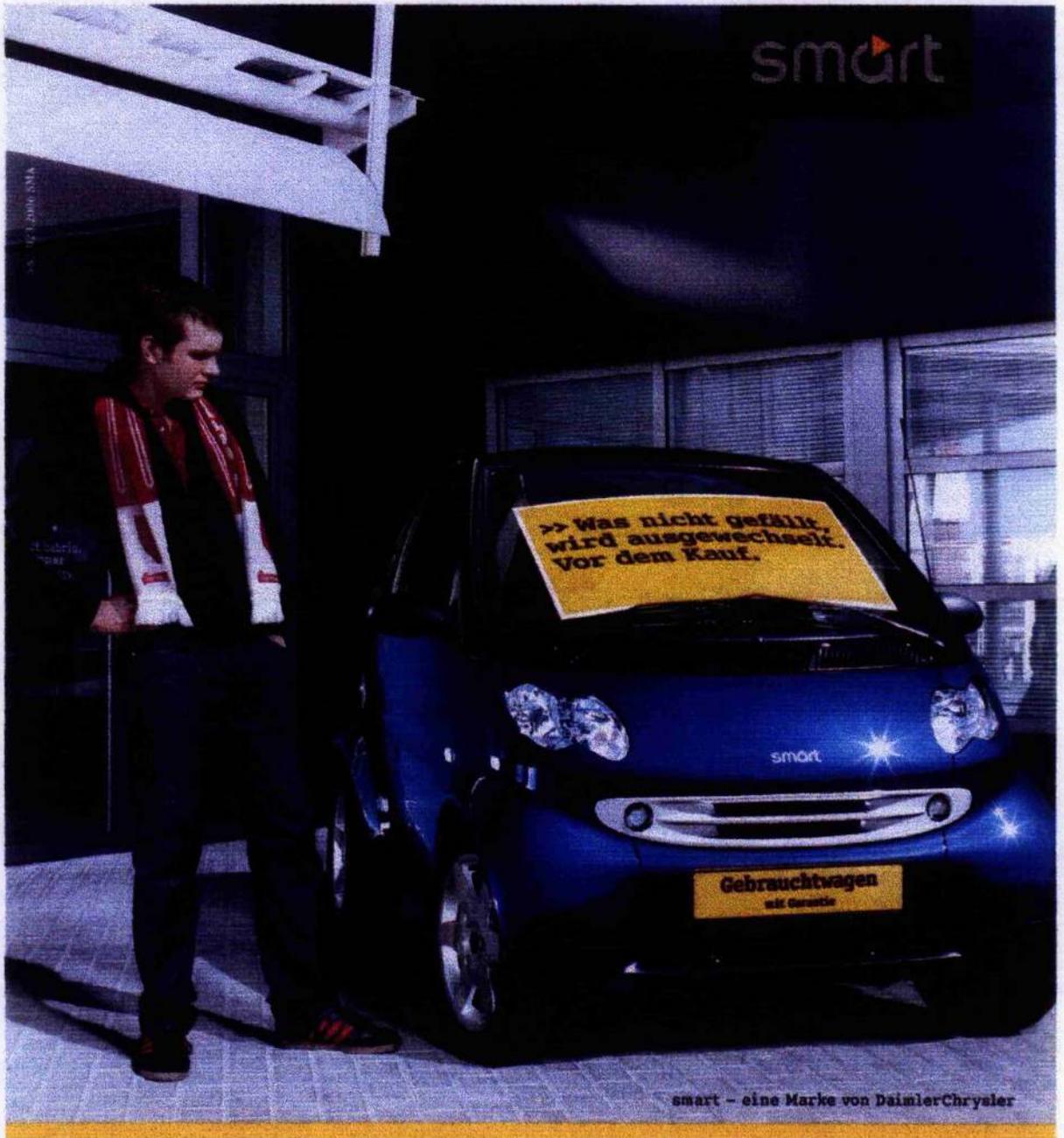


Figure 5.46
leicht von der Hand gehen; alles im Griff haben; etw. selber in die Hand nehmen



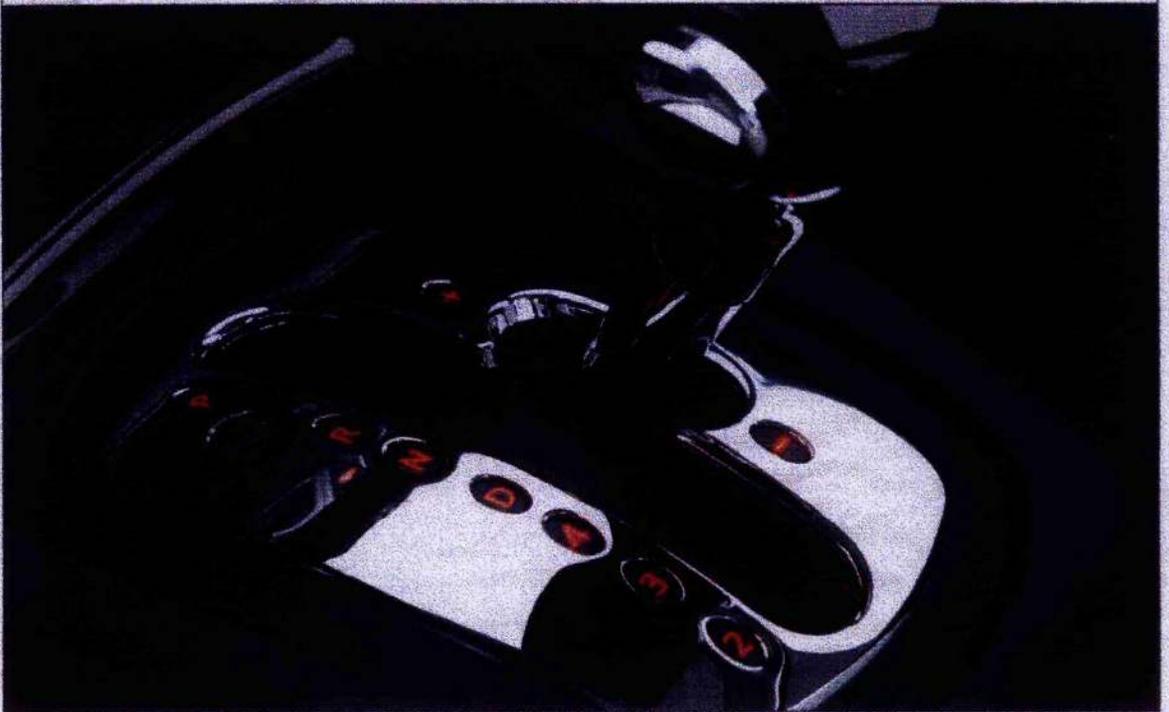
smart – eine Marke von DaimlerChrysler

Jahres- und Gebrauchtwagen

>> Mit manchen Dingen kann man einfach nicht leben. Zum Beispiel mit einem gebrauchten smart, dessen Vorbesitzer eine Farbe ausgesucht hat, die Ihnen unter keinen Umständen gefällt. Bei diesem Problem zeigen wir Ihnen nicht die rote Karte, sondern die Möglichkeit, die Bodypanels auf Wunsch auch auszuwechseln. Schauen Sie jetzt im nächsten smart Center vorbei. Mit einer Garantie (gemäß unseren Bedingungen) bis zu 24 Monaten wird einer unserer jungen Gebrauchten garantiert Ihren Geschmack treffen. Mehr dazu unter: www.smart.com oder 01802/2802 (6,2 Cent/Anruf aus dem nat. Festnetz).

Figure 5.47
jmdm. die rote Karte zeigen

Und wieder die Frage: Delegieren oder selber in die Hand nehmen?



• Schalten oder schalten lassen? Das 5-Stufen-Automaticgetriebe mit tiptronic ermöglicht beides. Nicht weniger variabel ist die Ausstattung: Von Ledersitzen bis zum Satelliten-Navigationssystem lässt sich fast jeder Wunsch erfüllen. Dabei ist

der Passat V6 4MOTION bereits serienmäßig sehr gut ausgestattet. Selbst eine Diebstahlalarmanlage mit Innenraumüberwachung ist an Bord. Weitere Informationen gibt es bei Ihrem Volkswagen Partner oder im Internet: www.volkswagen.de



Der Passat



Figure 5.48
etw. selber in die Hand nehmen

Summary and Conclusion

Said a tiger to a lion as they drank beside a pool, "Tell me, why do you roar like a fool?"

"That's not foolish," replied the lion with a twinkle in his eyes. "They call me king of all beasts because I advertise."

A rabbit heard them talking and ran home like a streak. He thought he would try the lion's plan, but his roar was but a squeak.

A fox came to investigate, and had his lunch in the woods.

The moral: When you advertise, be sure you've got the goods!

(Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992:196.)

Ultimately it is the quality of a product which affects its sales figures. Nevertheless, advertising plays a key role in shaping the consumer's attitude towards a particular product, which may in due course influence him or her to purchase the brand. Both strong, attractive visual images and evocative, appealing language are crucial in determining the success of an advertisement. The research outlined in this dissertation has shown that idioms as well-known, informal, colourful phrases are particularly suited to the demands of advertising for succinctness and vividness, and are consequently a relatively common feature of the language of German advertisements. An idiom is a set phrase with relative lexical invariance, syntactic inflexibility, and semantic non-conventionality and non-compositionality (i.e. the overall figurative meaning of the idiom is not merely the sum of the meanings of the phrase's individual component words). Idioms perform definite stylistic and/or rhetorical functions, and are institutionalised within a given speech community. Contrary to popular belief, an idiom tends not to have exact synonyms in other languages.

There are several different types of idioms. The three main subcategories of idioms, classified in terms of their textual function, are: nominal idioms (e.g. *der vierbeinige Begleiter* ≈ 'four-legged friend', i.e. a dog); verbal idioms (*bis über die/beide Ohren verliebt sein* [lit. 'to be up over the/both ears in love'] 'to be head-over-heels in love'); and adverbial idioms (*bis in die Puppen* [lit. 'until into the dolls'] 'until all hours', i.e. very late). Further types of idioms include: paraphrasal verbs (*jmdm. Vertrauen schenken* 'to place your trust in someone'); syntactic frameworks (*X über X*, e.g. *Fragen über Fragen* 'question after question'); parallel formulae (*bei/in Wind und Wetter* [lit. 'in wind and weather'] 'in all weathers', i.e. whatever the weather); idiomatic comparisons (*stark wie ein Bär sein* [lit. 'to be as

strong as a bear'] 'to be very strong'; proverbs and proverbial fixed expressions (*aller guten Dinge sind drei* ≈ 'all good things come in threes', i.e. three good things happen at once); and idiomatic "winged words" (*die Bretter, die die Welt bedeuten* [lit. 'the boards which mean the world'] 'the stage', from Schiller's *An die Freude*). Idiomatic advertising jargon (e.g. *der/die/das X von morgen* ≈ 'the X of tomorrow') is a further type of idiom, which relates specifically to the discourse type of advertising. This dissertation focuses on the use and functions of VLI idioms in particular, which are idioms with both a figurative sense, and a lexically, syntactically, and semantically viable literal interpretation (e.g. *Tomaten auf den Augen haben* [lit. 'to have tomatoes on the eyes'] 'to not notice something', and *den Grundstein zu etw. legen* ≈ 'to lay the foundations for something', either (literally) a building or (figuratively) a course of action).

Defining, characterising, and categorising an idiom mainly involve a general analysis of idioms from a "langue" perspective, i.e. in the abstract and removed from context. Building upon this approach, an examination of specific idioms in actual texts, i.e. from a "parole" perspective, provides a full understanding of the uses, functions, and linguistic potential of idioms.⁴⁸ Advertising texts were investigated in this dissertation because they are comparatively rich in idioms. It was found that 53.6% of all the *Stern* magazine advertisements analysed, and 41.51% of all the *RTL* television advertisements examined, contain at least one idiom. The idioms tend to occur in prominent textual positions, such as in the headline and subheadline in the print advertisements and in the slogan and company slogo in the television advertisements, which serves to emphasise the phrases.

Idioms are incorporated into advertisements for many reasons. They are well-known, succinct phrases which allow the advertiser to imitate the familiar and informal tone and style of everyday speech. They are valuable devices for summarising the advertising message and eliciting agreement from the reader/viewer. Idioms create definite stylistic and rhetorical effects, which help to counteract the time and space constraints placed on advertisements. They are phrases which communicate more complex abstract concepts through literal language, which tends to be the origin for the mental imagery associated with most idioms. The fact that VLI idioms are

⁴⁸ Cf. section 3.6 for an outline of the difference between "langue" and "parole".

idioms which evoke particularly vivid mental imagery (i.e. are "imageable idioms") is one explanation for their prevalence in advertising, especially in print advertising, which is relatively restricted in terms of imagery: 41.69% of the *Stern* corpus of idioms and 16.35% of the *RTL* corpus of idioms is made up of VLI idioms (i.e. 24.64% of all the magazine advertisements and 8.02% of all the television advertisements examined comprised VLI idioms).

The uniformity in the mental imagery evoked by (mainly VLI) idioms highlights the language user's (tacit) understanding of the metaphorical basis of idioms. Idioms are in fact the linguistic expression of general conceptual metaphors. As illustration, the English VLI idioms "to let off steam", "to flip your lid", and "to hit the ceiling/roof", meaning 'to become extremely angry', all derive from the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER. The mental image evoked by, for example, the VLI idiom "to hit the ceiling" (which is typically an image of a red-faced, irate person, their body rigid with anger and their fists clenched by their sides, possibly with steam coming out of their ears, hurtling upwards towards the ceiling) is based on a literal interpretation of the idiom's component words. Because VLI idioms incorporate both language and imagery, they are "dually-coded", i.e. processed by both the left and the right hemisphere of the brain, which allows them to be understood and recalled more effectively and efficiently than phrases with more literal interpretations only.

The pervasiveness of VLI idioms in advertising highlights the interdependence of literal and figurative meaning. VLI idioms are phrases comprising literal, concrete words, which are usually used figuratively, but whose literal sense is often punned upon in advertisements. VLI idioms are the second most commonly modified type of idiom in the *Stern* corpus (69.68% of all the VLI idioms in the magazine advertisements are modified), and the most frequently modified type of idiom in the *RTL* corpus (88.24% of all the VLI idioms in the television advertisements are modified). The most common type of modification that VLI idioms undergo in magazine and television advertising is semantic modification through their context, whereby their literal interpretation is punned upon in the idiom's co-text and/or the advertisement's illustration/visuals. In total, 78.63% of the modified VLI idioms in the *Stern* corpus (54.79% of the total number of VLI idioms), and 100% of the modified VLI idioms in the *RTL* corpus (88.23% of all the VLI idioms), are modified in this

way. Punning on VLI idioms draws the reader/viewer's attention initially to the advertisement and injects humour, surprise, and innovation into the text. Because (VLI) idioms are by definition set phrases, any modification to their form or meaning is particularly striking. Creative, clever advertisements reflect positively on the product and company being promoted, and impress the reader/viewer, making him or her more likely to view the product advertised in a favourable light.

Around half of all the idioms in the German advertisements examined had been modified in some way: 51.88% of all the idioms found in the *Stern* magazine corpus and 47.11% of the idioms appearing in the *RTL* television corpus display lexical, syntactic, and/or semantic modification. This finding is significant because it suggests that idioms are not as invariable as has traditionally been believed. Dictionaries and pedagogical grammars rarely discuss idioms as a general linguistic phenomenon, let alone the frequency with which – and the diverse ways in which – they may be modified. Since idioms function as an essential device for helping speech and writing to sound more fluent and natural, the omission in language teaching of material on the uses and modification of idioms is surely a serious oversight. In short, linguists have underestimated the ubiquity and importance of idioms, in particular with regard to the frequency with which they are modified. More specifically, punning on the literal sense of VLI idioms, which is so widespread in German advertising, has been almost completely overlooked.

In conclusion, perhaps the prevalence of idioms in German advertising is a reaction to the increase in anglicisms appearing in German advertisements today. Idioms as easily recognisable, well-established stock phrases stand in welcome contrast to unusual, unfamiliar foreign words. Furthermore, innovative, inventive idiom modification demonstrates the creative potential of German, promoting thereby a sense of pride in the national language. Or perhaps idioms are incorporated frequently into advertising because they are simple, yet expressive, catchy phrases which are ideally suited to modification. Idioms may thus be manipulated easily to suit the tone and style of an advertisement, or to produce certain stylistic and rhetorical effects. Future research on idioms could examine empirically the degree to which the reader/viewer of an advertisement perceives the specific modifications of idioms within advertisements, or whether he or she is merely aware of the overall

Summary and Conclusion

effect (of e.g. humour) produced by the modification. With regard to VLI idioms specifically, an examination of the extent to which the reader/viewer appreciates the activation in an advertisement of the phrase's literal sense could prove particularly revealing. Whatever the motivations behind the use of idioms in advertisements, it is apparent that idioms are perfect vehicles for the linguistic creativity essential to advertising. Since advertisers are forced to come up with inventive ways of differentiating similar products in an over-saturated market, it may well be that the skilful manipulation of language in general – and of idioms in particular – will in the future become an increasingly common feature of advertising.

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**Appendix 1: Issue dates of all magazine advertisements
analysed and dates of all television advertisements recorded**

Stern corpus

(1) Edition number 46: 08/11/01
(2) 49: 29/11/01
(3) 52: 20/12/01
(4) 3: 10/01/02
(5) 6: 31/01/02
(6) 9: 21/02/02
(7) 12: 14/03/02
(8) 15: 04/04/02
(9) 18: 25/04/02
(10) 21: 16/05/02
(11) 24: 06/06/02
(12) 27: 27/06/02
(13) 30: 18/07/02
(14) 33: 08/08/02
(15) 36: 29/08/02

RTL corpus

(1) 09/11/01
(2) 23/11/01
(3) 07/12/01
(4) 21/12/01
(5) 04/01/02
(6) 18/01/02
(7) 01/02/02
(8) 15/02/02
(9) 01/03/02
(10) 15/03/02
(11) 29/03/02
(12) 12/04/02
(13) 26/04/02
(14) 10/05/02
(15) 24/05/02
(16) 07/06/02
(17) 21/06/02
(18) 05/07/02
(19) 19/07/02
(20) 02/08/02
(21) 16/08/02
(22) 30/08/02
(23) 13/09/02
(24) 27/09/02
(25) 11/10/02
(28) 25/10/02
(29) 08/11/02
(30) 22/11/02

Appendix 2: List of all idioms in the *Stern* and *RTL* advertising corpora

The number of times that the idiom occurs in the corpus is given in brackets after each idiom. The letter M is used to indicate that the idiom has been modified. Where an idiom appears more than once, the number after the M indicates the number of times it has undergone modification. The symbol < means "derived from".

Stern

1) Nominal idioms

ägyptische Finsternis (1; M)
der vierbeinige Begleiter (1)
der Blaue Planet (1)
auf den ersten Blick (2; M-1)
auf den zweiten Blick (1)
der beste Freund des Menschen (1)
die Generation Geld (1)
die goldene Ära des Rock 'n' Roll (1)
die grüne Hölle (1; M)
das Land der Pharaonen (1)
aus aller Herren Länder(n) (1)
Hand auf's Herz (1; M)
ein Mann von Welt (1; M)
Menschen wie du und ich (1)
der Schwarze Freitag (1; M)
zum Teufel (1; M)
die eigenen vier Wände (5; M-3)
jede Wette (1)
über allen Zweifel erhaben (1)

2) Verbal idioms

(bei jmdm.) gut/schlecht aufgehoben sein (4; M-4)
jmdm. die Augen (für etw.) öffnen (1; M)
sich die Augen rot weinen (1; M)
ein Auge für etw. haben (1; M)
den/seinen (eigenen) Augen/Ohren (nicht) trauen (1; M)
jmdn./etw. mit anderen/neuen Augen (an)sehen (3; M-3)
jmdn. in seinen Bann schlagen/ziehen (1)
auf (den) eigenen (zwei) Beinen stehen (1; M)
das Beste aus etw. machen (1; M)
im Bilde sein (1; M)
ruhig(es) Blut behalten (1)
den Bogen heraushaben (1)
jmdm./für jmdn. ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln sein (1)
den Daumen senken (1)

ganz in seinem Element sein (1)
den Geist aufgeben (1)
ins Gewicht fallen (1; M)
im Grunde (genommen) (1)
nichts Halbes und nichts Ganzes sein (1; M)
sich (wie) zu Hause/zuhause/daheim fühlen (4; M-4)
alles, was das Herz begehrt (1)
jmds. Herz gewinnen/Herzen gewinnen (2)
jmds. Herz/alle Herzen im Sturm erobern (1)
jmdm. am Herzen liegen (1)
jmdm. wird warm ums Herz (1; M)
im sieb(en)ten Himmel sein/sich wie im sieb(en)ten Himmel fühlen (1; M)
sich hören lassen (1; M)
den Horizont erweitern (1; M)
jmdn./etw. unter einen Hut bringen (1; M)
(im) Klartext reden/sprechen (2; M-2)
ein kluger Kopf sein (2; M-2)
jmdm. den Kopf kosten (1; M)
den Kopf voll haben (1; M)
sich etw. in den Kopf setzen (1; M)
sich über etw. den Kopf zerbrechen (1; M)
auf seine Kosten kommen (1)
etw. außer Kraft setzen (1)
jmdm. zur Last fallen/liegen (1; M)
Liebe auf den ersten Blick sein (1; M)
jmdn./etw. (scharf) unter die Lupe nehmen (2; M-1)
der/die Mühe wert sein (2; M-2)
die Nase rümpfen (1)
das kostet Nerven (1)
(die) Nummer eins sein (1)
auf Nummer Sicher gehen (1)
(bis) über die/beide Ohren verliebt sein (1)
etw. zu Papier bringen (1; M)
auf etw. pfeifen (1)
mit jmdm./etw. kurzen Prozess machen (1)
etw. auf den Punkt bringen (1)
jmdm. Rede und Antwort stehen (1)
zur Ruhe kommen (1)
zur Sache kommen (1)
mit jmdm./etw. Schluss machen (3; M-3)
jmdm. ein Schnippchen schlagen (1; M)
etw. auf die Seite schaffen/bringen (1; M)
jmdm. die Sprache verschlagen/rauben (1; M)
jmdm. auf die Sprünge helfen (1; M)
zur Stelle sein (1)
jmds. Stern geht auf/ist im Aufgehen (1; M)
in den Sternen (geschrieben) stehen (1)
unter Strom stehen (1)
ein starkes Stück (sein) (1)
etw. im Sturm erobern (1)

sich in Szene setzen (1)
geh/scher dich zum Teufel! (1; M)
(ein/kein) Theater machen (1; M)
ein windiger Typ sein (1; M)
jmdn. beim Wort nehmen (1)
ein Zeichen/Zeichen setzen (1; M)
die Zeit ist reif (für etw./etw. zu tun) (1)
zur rechten Zeit am rechten Ort sein (1)

3) Adverbial idioms

letzten Endes (1)
nach Herzenslust (1)
auf der ganzen Linie (1; M)
mit links (1; M)
der Nase nach (1; M)
aufs Neue (1)
im Nu (1)
bis in die Puppen (1; M)
rund um die Uhr (5)
auf allen vieren (1; M)

4) Paraphrasal verbs

eine Entscheidung treffen (< *sich für etw. entscheiden*) (1)
etw. zur Entfaltung bringen (< *etw. entfalten*) (1)
in Erfüllung gehen (< *sich erfüllen*) (1)
Hilfe bieten (< *jmdm. helfen*) (1)
einen Unterschied machen (< *sich von etw. unterscheiden*) (1)
jmdm. Vertrauen schenken (< *jmdm./einer Sache vertrauen*) (1)

5) Syntactic frameworks

X auf X
(*Schlag auf Schlag*) (1)
X für X
(*Gang für Gang*) (1)
(*Jahr für Jahr*) (1)
(*Monat für Monat*) (1)
(*Schritt für Schritt*) (2)
(*Tag für Tag*) (2)
(*Tröpfchen für Tröpfchen*) (1)
(*Woche für Woche*) (1)
(*ein/eine*) X ist (*ein/eine*) X (*ist* Y)
(*Ein Auto ist ein Auto*) (1)
(*Ein Motorrad ist ein Motorrad*) (1)
(*Riesling ist Riesling ist Unsinn*) (1)

X und X

(mehr und mehr) (1)

(weniger und weniger) (1)

X, X und nochmals X

(Geld, Geld und nochmals Geld) (1)

X über X

(Fragen über Fragen) (1)

von (dem/der/den) X bis (zum/zur/zu den) Y

(von mild bis fruchtig) (1)

(vom Speicherchip bis zum Komplettsystem) (1)

(vom Stern bis zum Trabant) (1)

(von der kurzfristigen Kapitalanlage bis zur Altersvorsorge) (1)

(von der Straße bis zum mächtigsten Paten) (1)

von X nach Y

(von Nord nach Süd) (1)

(von Ost nach West) (1)

von X zu X

(von Alm zu Alm) (1)

(von City zu City) (1)

6) Parallel formulae

von A nach B (3)

von A bis Z (3; M-3)

(auf diese) Art und Weise (2)

eins, zwei, drei (1; M)

der Erste und Einzige (sein) (1)

Essen und Trinken (hält Leib und Seele zusammen) (1)

ganz und gar/ganz und gar nicht (1)

Gehen und Stehen (< wie geht's, wie steht's?; wo man geht und steht) (1; M)

grün und blau (< jmdn. grün und blau schlagen; jmdm. wird es grün und blau vor Augen) (1)

Gut und Böse (< im Guten wie im Bösen) (1)

heute, morgen, immer (1)

von heute auf morgen (1)

Himmel und Erde (< den Himmel auf Erden haben; jmdm. den Himmel auf Erden versprechen) (1; M)

hin und wieder (1)

in Hülle und Fülle (1)

Kaffee und Kuchen (1)

Kopf und Krage riskieren/wagen/aufs Spiel setzen/verlieren (1)

Körper/Leib und Geist/Seele (< mit Leib und Seele) (1)

kreuz und quer (1)

Land und Leute (1)

Leben und Tod (< es geht um Leben und Tod; auf Leben und Tod) (1)

Licht und Schatten/Dunkel (< wo Licht ist, ist auch Schatten) (1)

lieb und wert/teuer (< jmdm. lieb und wert/teuer sein) (1)

nach Lust und Laune (1)

mehr oder weniger/minder (2)

nach wie vor (1)
Sonne, Strand und Meer (1)
Tag und Nacht (1)
Traum und Realität (< *Traum und Realität nicht voneinander trennen können*) (1)
und, und, und (1)
die Vergangenheit, die Gegenwart und die Zukunft (1)
voll und ganz (1)
vor, während und (da)nach (1)
weit und breit (1)
ohne Wenn und Aber (1)
bei/in Wind und Wetter (1)

7) Idiomatic comparisons

sich wie gerädert fühlen/wie gerädert sein (1; M)
platt wie eine Briefmarke/eine Flunder/ein Pfannkuchen sein (1; M)
reden, wie einem der Schnabel gewachsen ist (1; M)
wie in Stein gemeißelt (1)

8) Proverbs and proverbial expressions

aller guten Dinge sind drei (1)
Ehre, wem Ehre gebührt (1)
keine Feier ohne Meier (1; M)
frisch gewagt ist halb gewonnen (1; M)
geben ist seliger als nehmen (1)
die Geschmäcker sind verschieden (1)
wahre Größe/Schönheit kommt von innen (2; M-2)
was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr (1; M)
der Klügere gibt nach (1; M)
Leben ist schön (1)
wo die Liebe hinfällt (1)
dem Mutigen gehört die Welt (1)
Reden ist silber, Schweigen ist gold (1; M)
sich regen bringt Segen (1; M)
jede Sekunde zählt (1)
sicher ist sicher (1)
die Sonne bringt es an den Tag (1; M)
der Teufel steckt im Detail (1; M)
wie tief kann man sinken? (1; M)
wie der Vater, so der Sohn (1; M)
wer die Wahl hat, hat die Qual (1; M)
alle/viele Wege führen nach Rom (2; M-2)
weniger wäre mehr (1; M)
Wünsche werden wahr/Wirklichkeit (1; M)
Zeit ist Geld (1; M)
Zeit ist kostbar (1; M)
wenn zwei sich streiten, freut sich der Dritte (2; M-2)

9) Idiomatic "winged words"

- die Bretter, die die Welt bedeuten* (quotation from Schiller's 1785 poem, *An die Freude*) (1; M)
die Drei Schweinchen (fairy tale) (1; M)
Kinder, Kirche, Küche (Lutheran doctrine summarising the roles of women in society, adopted by Third Reich) (1)
das Geheimnis des ewigen Lebens (1)
Und es ward Licht (Genesis 1:3) (1; M)
er/sie liebt mich, er/sie liebt mich nicht (...) (child's rhyme) (1; M)
im Osten geht die Sonne auf, und im Westen unter (1)
„Das ist ein kleiner Schritt für den Menschen, ein großer Sprung für die Menschheit“
(Neil Armstrong, first moon landing on 20th July, 1969) (1; M)
die erste Million ist die Schwerste (1; M)
Studie in Weiß (painting by German artist, Heinz Voss) (1; M)
die Stunde der Wahrheit (1)

10) VLI idioms

- Alarm schlagen* (1; M)
in den sauren Apfel beißen (1; M)
jmdn. aus der Bahn schleudern/werfen (1; M)
am Ball bleiben/sein (2; M-2)
Berge versetzen (können) (1)
sich ein Bild von jmdm./etw. machen (1; M)
einen Blick hinter die Kulissen werfen (1; M)
den Boden unter den Füßen verlieren (1; M)
auf dem Boden bleiben (1; M)
jmdn. an Bord bringen (1; M)
jmdm. Brief und Siegel (auf etw.) geben (1; M)
die Chemie stimmt (1)
unter einem Dach leben/wohnen/hausen (3; M-3)
dümmel sein, als die Polizei erlaubt (1; M)
an jeder Ecke (1)
an allen Ecken (und Enden/Kanten) (1; M)
keine Ell(en)bogen haben (1; M)
eine lahme Ente sein (1; M)
sich durch nichts erschüttern lassen (1; M)
Fachchinesisch sprechen (1; M)
auf eigene Faust (1; M)
mit spitzer Feder (1; M)
eine gute Figur machen (2; M-2)
etw. in die Finger bekommen/kriegen (1; M)
ein großer/dicker Fisch (1)
(das sind) kleine Fische (1; M)
ein Fremdwort sein (2; M-1)
die Früchte ernten (1)
aus den Fugen gehen/geraten (1)
die Funken fliegen (1)

Gas geben (2; M-2)
auf etw. Gewicht legen (1)
zum Greifen nah(e) (5; M-5)
einer Sache Grenzen setzen (1)
(weit) über die Grenzen gehen (1)
etw. im Griff haben (1; M)
etw. in den Griff bekommen/kriegen (1)
es ist alles im grünen Bereich (1; M)
einer Sache auf den Grund gehen/kommen (1)
den Grundstein zu etw. legen (2; M-2)
bis zum Hals/bis über den Hals (1; M)
freie Hand haben (1; M)
aus erster Hand (1)
aus zweiter Hand (1)
jmdn./etw. in der Hand haben (3; M-3)
etw. in (seinen) Händen halten (1)
etw. (selber) in die Hand nehmen (2; M-1)
in guten Händen sein (1)
(leicht/gut/flott) von der Hand gehen (1; M)
etw. zur Hand haben (1)
alle/beide Hände voll zu tun haben (1; M)
mit ein paar Handgriffen (1; M)
im Handumdrehen (4; M-4)
sehen/wissen, wie der Hase läuft (1)
etw. über den Haufen werfen (1)
jmdm. unter die Haut gehen (1; M)
jdms. Herz schlägt höher (1)
auf Herz und Nieren prüfen (1; M)
das Herz eines Löwen haben (1)
aus heiterem Himmel (2; M-2)
zum Himmel schreien/stinken (1; M)
jmdm. die gelbe/rote Karte zeigen (1; M)
etw./eine Menge auf dem Kasten haben (2; M-2)
den Kinderschuhen entwachsen/die Kinderschuhen ausziehen (1; M)
in die Knie gehen (1; M)
jmdm. den Kopf verdrehen (1)
etw. im Kopf haben (1; M)
ein kühlen Kopf bewahren (2; M-2)
es kribbelt jmdm. im Bauch (3; M-1)
es kribbelt jmdm. in den Fingern (1; M)
hinter die Kulissen (1; M)
den richtigen Kurs einschlagen (1; M)
die Kurve kriegen (1; M)
jmdm./einer Sache freien/ihren Lauf lassen/geben (1)
das Licht am Horizont (1; M)
grünes Licht geben (1; M)
jdn./etw. in einem rosigen Licht sehen (1)
Lorbeeren pflücken/ernten (1; M)
im Mittelpunkt sein/steht (3; M-2)
in aller Munde sein (2; M-1)

vor jmds. Nase (1)
 eine harte Nuss/harte Nüsse zu knacken haben (2; M-2)
 vor Ort sein (5; M-1)
 der wunde Punkt (1; M)
 die Puppen tanzen lassen (1; M)
 dumme Pute (1; M)
 ein kühler Rechner sein (1; M)
 die Rechnung geht (nicht) auf nach allen Regeln der Kunst (1)
 jmdn. im Regen stehen lassen (1; M)
 außer der Reihe (2)
 eine Rolle spielen (2; M-1)
 rot sehen (1; M)
 am Ruder sein (1; M)
 auf Sand/Stein bauen (2; M-2)
 Schlagzeilen machen (1; M)
 jmdm./einer Sache den letzten Schliff geben (1; M)
 die Schnauze voll haben (1; M)
 jmdm. etw. schriftlich geben (1; M)
 die ersten Schritte (1)
 den ersten Schritt tun (2; M-2)
 einen großen Schritt tun/machen (1; M)
 (mit jmdm./etw.) Schritt halten (1; M)
 ein Schritt in die richtige Richtung sein (1; M)
 schwarz auf weiß (1; M)
 an der Schwelle stehen (1; M)
 in Schwung sein (1; M)
 auf jmds. Seite stehen/sein (1; M)
 jmdm. [mit Rat und Tat] zur Seite stehen (1)
 auf der sicheren Seite sein (1)
 im Spiel sein (1)
 etw. auf's Spiel setzen (1)
 an der Spitze sein/stehen (1; M)
 die Spreu vom Weizen trennen (2; M-1)
 dabei springt nichts heraus (1; M)
 große Sprünge machen (1; M)
 jmdm. bleibt die Spucke weg (1)
 keine Spur/nicht die Spur (von etw.) (1)
 jmdm. auf der Spur sein (1; M)
 jmdn. auf die Spur bringen (1; M)
 schnell aus den Startblöcken kommen (1; M)
 auf jmdn./etw. stehen (1)
 nach den Sternen greifen (1; M)
 unter dem Strich (1; M)
 sich an die Strippe hängen (1; M)
 tief in die Tasche greifen müssen (1; M)
 etw. (schon) in der Tasche haben (1; M)
 nicht alle Tassen im Schrank haben (1; M)
 in der Tinte sitzen (1; M)
 Tomaten auf den Augen haben (1; M)
 jmdm. die Tür zu etw. öffnen (1; M)

auf Touren kommen (1; M)
den Trumpf/noch einen Trumpf in der Hand haben (1; M)
jmds. Tür ist immer offen (1; M)
sich eine Tür offen halten (1; M)
vor der Tür stehen (1; M)
mit der Tür ins Haus fallen (1)
den Überblick behalten (7; M-1)
den Vogel zeigen (1)
jmdm. läuft das Wasser im Mund(e) zusammen (1; M)
seinen (eigenen) Weg/eigene Wege gehen (2; M-2)
die Weichen (für etw.) stellen (2; M-1)
eine reine/saubere/weiße Weste haben (1; M)
sich den/frischen Wind um die Nase/Ohren wehen/pfeifen lassen (1; M)
jmdn. in die Wüste schicken (1; M)
etw. in vollen Zügen genießen (1; M)

11) Idiomatic advertising jargon

erleben Sie die ganze Welt des/der X
 (*erleben Sie die ganze Welt des Novotels*) (1)
freundlich zur Umwelt sein (1)
immer und überall (1)
der/die/das X des Jahres
 (*der Kino-Event des Jahres*) (1)
der/die/das X Ihres Lebens
 (*der Urlaub Ihres Lebens*) (1)
der/die/das X von morgen
 (*die Chancen von morgen*) (1)
 (*die Computerleistungen von morgen*) (1)
 (*das Internet von morgen*) (1)
 (*die Kellermeister von morgen*) (1)
 (*die Legende von morgen*) (1)
X [tun] wie die Profis
 (*Fotos machen wie die Profis*) (1)
schnell und bequem (1)
schnell und einfach (2)
24 Stunden am Tag, 365 Tage im Jahr (2)
7 Tage pro Woche (2)
die Zukunft des/der X
 (*die Zukunft des Internets*) (1)

RTL

1) Nominal idioms

die eigenen vier Wände (1)

2) Verbal idioms

auf (den) eigenen (zwei) Beinen stehen (1; M)

dick(e) kommen (1; M)

Farbe ins Leben bringen (1)

alles, was das Herz begehrt (1; M)

Kind im Herzen bleiben (1)

seinen eigenen Kopf haben (1; M)

den Kopf voll haben (1; M)

ein kluger Kopf sein (1; M)

(bis) über beide/die Ohren verliebt sein (1; M)

keine halben Sachen machen (1; M)

mit jmdm./etw. Schluss machen (2; M-1)

wetten, dass ... (1)

(bei jmdm.) gut Wetter machen (1; M)

es ist höchste/allerhöchste Zeit (für etw./etw. zu tun) (2; M-1)

am Zug sein (1)

3) Adverbial idioms

rund um die Uhr (4)

4) Paraphrasal Verbs

[no examples found]

5) Syntactic frameworks

X auf X

(Wunsch auf Wunsch) (1)

X für X (für X)

(Bon für Bon für Bon) (1)

(Jahr für Jahr für Jahr) (1)

(Krüger für Krüger) (1)

von X zu X

(von Handy zu Handy) (1)

vom/von der/von (den) X bis (zum/zur/zu den) Y

(von morgens bis abends) (1)

(vom Bausparen bis zur Altersvorsorge) (1)

6) Parallel formulae

von A bis Z (1; M)
drunter und drüber (1)
eins, zwei, drei (1; M)
klein, aber fein (1; M)
Körper/Leib und Geist/Seele (< mit Leib und Seele) (1)
kreuz und quer (1)
Leben und Tod (< es geht um/es ist eine Sache auf Leben und Tod; auf Leben und Tod) (1)
nach Lust und Laune (1)
nach und nach (1)
mit Schlips und Kragen (1; M)
Tag und Nacht (1; M)
vor, während und (da)nach (1)
bei/in Wind und Wetter (1)

7) Idiomatic comparisons

stark wie ein Bär sein (1; M)
wie im Flug (1)
schlau wie ein Fuchs sein (2; M-2)

8) Proverbs and proverbial expressions

aus den Augen, aus dem Sinn (1; M)
doppelt (genäht) hält besser (1; M)
einmal (ein/eine) X, immer (ein/eine) X
(Einmal Wagner – Immer Wagner) (1; M)
Ende gut, alles gut (1; M)
Wissen ist Macht (1; M)
du bist, was du isst (1)
Leben ist, was man daraus macht (1; M)
arbeiten um zu leben, und nicht leben um zu arbeiten (1; M)
wahre Größe/Schönheit kommt von innen (1; M)
seien Sie ganz Sie selbst (1; M)
jede Sekunde zählt (3)
so ist/lebt man heute (1; M)

9) Idiomatic "winged words"

Lang lebe der König/die Königin! (2; M-2)
Mein Königreich für ein Pferd! (Shakespeare's Richard III, Act V, Scene 4) (1; M)
„Ich habe einen Traum“ (Martin Luther King, 28th August, 1963) (6)

10) VLI idioms

die Augen aufhalten/aufmachen/aufsperrren/auftun (1; M)
es ist alles im grünen Bereich (1)
ein Fels in der Brandung (sein) (1; M)
auf jdn./etw. fliegen (1; M)
jmdm. aus der Hand fressen (1; M)
im Handumdrehen (1; M)
die Hauptrolle spielen (1; M)
jmdm./einer Sache freien/ihren Lauf lassen/geben (1; M)
im Mittelpunkt stehen (2; M-2)
eine Nummer/ein paar Nummern zu groß werden (1)
auf Sand/Stein bauen (2; M-2)
auf dem Teppich bleiben (1; M)
jd. über den Tisch ziehen (1; M)
mit Volldampf gehen (1; M)
seinen (eigenen) Weg/eigene Wege gehen (1; M)

11) Idiomatic advertising jargon

die neue Generation X
(*die neue Generation eines Pflegewaschmittels*) (1; M)
der/die/das X des Jahres
(*das Duell des Jahres*) (1)
(*der Family Capuccino des Jahres*) (1)
der/die/das X des Lebens
(*das Spiel des Lebens*) (1)
X für das Leben
(*Lecithin für das Leben*) (1)
schnell und bequem (1)
24 Stunden am Tag, 365 Tage im Jahr (1)
7 Tage pro Woche (1)
typisch X
(*typisch Pfanni*) (1)
(*typisch Tempo*) (1)
(jetzt) überall/da, wo es X gibt
(*jetzt überall, wo es Handcreme gibt*) (1)
der/die/das X-ste Y der Welt
(*die beliebtesten Zeichentrickfilmfiguren der Welt*) (1)
(*die gefährlichsten Piraten der Welt*) (1; M)
(*das kleinste Raumspray der Welt*) (1)
(*die saubereste Diesel der Welt*) (1)
(*die schwereloste Pralinen der Welt*) (1)
der/die/das X-ste Y, seit es Z gibt
(*die beste Geschenkidee, seit es Weihnachten gibt*) (1)
(*die zarteste Versuchung, seit es Schokolade gibt*) (1)