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## КОНСТРУКЦИИ И ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ТИПОЛОГИЯ\*

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**Аннотация:** В статье обсуждается понятие конструкции и его применимость в лингвистической типологии. Конструкции относятся к конкретно-языковым морфосинтаксическим феноменам. Обобщения о ментальном лексиконе и ментальной грамматике ортогональны типологии конструкций. В то же время утверждения о лингвоспецифичности конструкций и их идиоматичности, по-видимому, несут в себе потенциальный конфликт с типологической программой. Если принимать гипотезу, что логическая основа языка неизменна, то значение большей части конструкций может быть проанализировано в терминах универсального набора примитивов, прямым или косвенным образом отражающих логические категории, таких как значение общего вопроса, верификации, цели, уступки, и неуниверсального компонента, отражающего конкретно-языковое членение семантической структуры. Типология позволяет идентифицировать классы сопоставимых конструкций; межъязыковое сравнение изолированных конструкций, в свою очередь, основывается на предположении, что они могут относиться к одному таксономическому классу, обладая сходной деривацией.

**Ключевые слова:** конструкции, лингвистическая типология, универсалии, межъязыковые категории, семантика, грамматика, параметрический подход

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## CONSTRUCTIONS AND LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY\*

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**Abstract:** This paper reconsiders the notion of construction and its applications in linguistic typology. Constructions are language-specific parts of morphosyntax. Claims about mental lexicon and mental grammar are orthogonal to the typology of constructions. The claims that all constructions are language-specific and all constructions are idiomatic are potentially conflicting. If one accepts the hypothesis that there is no variation in logical structure, the meaning of most constructions can be decomposed into the universal component directly or indirectly based on logical categories, for example, the meaning of yes-no question, the meaning of verification, the meaning of goal, the meaning of concession, and the non-universal component resulting from language-specific partition of semantic structure. Typology provides the diagnostics for classes of comparable constructions, while cross-linguistic comparison of isolated constructions explores the idea that they can belong to the same class if they are derived the same way.

**Keywords:** constructions, linguistic typology, universals, cross-linguistic categories, semantics, grammar, parametrization

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### 1. Introduction: Beyond the terminology

The term ‘construction’ is part of the linguistic jargon. Its perception is facilitated by the existence of schools claiming the name of construction grammar [Goldberg 2016; Rakhilina 2010], likewise the perception of the term ‘structure’ is facilitated by the existence of influential works and schools that identi-

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fied themselves with linguistic structuralism<sup>1</sup>. However, the interpretation of this concept is a matter of agreement.

### 1.1. Morphosyntax and F-constructions

The author of the well-known manual “Introduction to Linguistics”, Anatoly Shaikevich [Shaikevich 2005: 76], defines constructions as ways of combining language signs into complex expressions. He argues it is reasonable to reserve the term ‘construction’ for syntactic expressions: “Let us agree to call rigid constructions ‘models’, and other constructions — ‘constructions’, as before. Then one can draw the boundary between two traditional components of grammar: *morphology* deals with models and their meanings, *syntax* — with constructions and their meanings” [ibid.: 77]. This definition is as good as it gets: it tells the reader that S(yntax) is *S*, M(orphology) is *M*, and constructions pattern with *S*. However, it has a drawback: the author assumes that *M* and *S* operate with non-intersecting sets of rules, each of them corresponding to its representation level. The validity of this assumption can be challenged [Marantz 1997]. Many mechanisms of grammar, e.g., assignment of case, require that *M* and *S* interact. The same holds for the semantics-to-grammar interface. If linguists want to explore how the meaning of goal or concession is expressed in Russian [Kustova 2023 / this volume], Old Russian [Ptentsova 2023 / this volume], or Khwarshi [Volina 2023 / this volume] polypredicative complexes ( $\approx$  ‘goal constructions’, ‘concessive constructions’), they must account both for morphology, e.g., the form of the predicate, case and agreement markers, and for syntax, e.g., word order, clausal structure, selectional restrictions on finite and infinite complements. It is, therefore, better not to ignore morphology in the definition of constructions.

The domain where *M* and *S* interact is *morphosyntax* ( $M \bullet S$ ). Depending on the language model,  $M \bullet S$  can be identified either with  $M \cup S$  or with  $M \cap S$ . Language diversity is captured with either approach. Let us introduce the notion of F-construction, i.e., construction expressing the feature *F*. Linguistic ty-

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<sup>1</sup> It is an open issue whether linguistic structuralism exists as a school in our day. However, this brand is revived with polemic purpose when the adepts of generative, functional, or cognitive linguistics refer to ‘structural notions’ or ‘structural approaches’. A different perspective is displayed by the Universal Decimal Classification (Russian: *UDK*): it recognizes ‘Structure. Structural linguistics’ (81-116) as a branch of linguistics, with subdivision into ‘Prague school’ (81.116.3), ‘Copenhagen school (Loius Hjelmslev)’, ‘Glossematics’ (81.116.4), ‘American structuralism (Zelig Harris)’ (81.116.5.), ‘Tagmemics. Tagmemic grammar (Kenneth Pike)’ (81.116.7), and even ‘Generative linguistics (Noam Chomsky)’ (81.116.6).

pology does not need preliminary consensus about the pool of grammatical features to analyze F-constructions in language  $L$  or all world's languages, cf. the pioneer works in the field entitled 'Typology of causative constructions' [Kholodovich 1969] and 'Typology of resultative constructions' [Nedyalkov 1983]. We claim that two conditions are required: a) one must define  $F$  explicitly as a universal semantic value; b) one must specify what kind of mapping between  $F$  and the grammatical form is licit. Requirement a) implies that  $F$  is mapped to grammar but not identical to the meaning of F-construction in any language, so that the meaning of 'goal' should not be defined circularly via the meaning of F-constructions as 'the meaning expressed by clauses with the complementizer *chtoby* in Russian or clauses with the marker  $\alpha$  in Khwarshi, or clauses with the marker  $\beta$  in language  $L$ '. Requirement b) implies that the definition of F-construction is restrictive, and some texts of  $L$  might not count as causative or resultative constructions even if they contain an element expressing the causative or resultative meaning.

## 1.2. Lexicon, grammar, constructions

Classical language models distinguish *lexicon*, i.e., information stored in the memory, and principles of computation, i.e. *grammar*: this distinction applies to formal and natural languages. The boundary between lexicon and grammar depends on two factors — a) the amount of information the linguist wants to be stored; and b) the complexity of grammatical rules or principles [Grashchenkov 2016]. The frameworks claiming the name of 'construction grammar' give the lie to the idea that all language phenomena are unambiguously classified either with  $G$ (rammar) or  $Lex$ (icon).

Modest constructionists, cf. [Kopotev, Steksova 2016], assume that core language phenomena can be classified with  $G$  or  $Lex$ , but there is a grey zone with complex expressions that pattern both with  $G$  and  $Lex$ . The criteria by which language expressions end up in the grey zone include idiomaticity, since idioms are stored but have the same build as free combinations [Mel'čuk 2023], and size, since idiom chunks are merged into larger parts of structure, hence the identification of constructions with 'microsyntax' [Apresyan et al. 2010: 169–192].

Radical<sup>2</sup> constructionists claim that all complex expressions are idioms with a non-compositional meaning [Goldberg 2016]. All expressions the meaning of

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'radical construction grammar' is coined by Croft [2001], whose own version is nevertheless not radical enough compared with [Jackendoff 2013] and [Goldberg 2016].

which is not predictable are language-specific, which holds both for the elements of *Lex* and for the elements of *G* (under the radical constructionist approach). This program has an anti-universalist message and feeds on the idea that idioms are assembled top-to-down. If most or all complex expressions are idioms, the view that syntactic structure is generated down-to-top [Chomsky 1995] is untenable. The most far-fetched formulation comes from Jackendoff [2013: 78], who argues that since every piece of structure is stored in the memory, there is no theoretically valid distinction between *Lex* and *G*, e.g., between words (=‘lexical constructions’ in terms of Jackendoff), idioms, phrase structure rules and ‘meaningful constructions’.

This position is inconvenient for typology since aprioristic claims like ‘everything in the language is X’ lead back to universal frameworks. Unsurprisingly, even the sympathizers of the constructionist approach from the camp of typologists revert to its modest versions. Haspelmath [2023] defines ‘construction’ in the following way:

“A construction is a conventional schema for creating or motivating well-formed expressions in which there is at least one open slot that can be filled by one or several expressions that belong to the same form-class” [Haspelmath 2023: 11].

This definition, as Haspelmath specifies [ibid.], excludes morphs (on the author’s account, they do not take open slots) and lexical items. Neither does it appeal to the idea that constructions are stored in the mental lexicon *pace* Jackendoff or Goldberg. Haspelmath’s position is close to Shaikevich’s [2005]: constructions are complex expressions with open slots; it makes sense to stipulate that such expressions are characteristic of syntax, not morphology. Both authors assume that constructions bring about form-meaning pairings. One might ask what makes linguists take the existence of such pairings for granted. We suggest two factors are in play. The first one is tradition. It is customary to use labels like ‘impersonal construction’ [Malchukov, Siewerska 2010], ‘pseudocleft construction’ [Ozhogova 2023], ‘cardinal construction’ [Corbett 1993], ‘approximative construction’ [Franks 1994], ‘raising construction’ in Russian, Germanic studies and elsewhere. The second one is the need to adopt a version of the semantics-to-grammar interface. Let us assume that language *L* has *n* constructions, and if *Con<sub>k</sub>* is a construction of *L*, it has the meaning  $m_k \in \{m_1, \dots, m_n\}^{CON}$ . Given that constructions of *L* are linked with unique meanings, one can try the following definition:

- (1) A construction of *L* is a conventionalized part of syntactic structure of *L* that brings a unique form-meaning pairing.

The term ‘conventionalized’ comes from [Croft 2001: 19]. It implies that the partition of semantic structure into the meanings expressed by a variety of constructions is language-specific but does not say anything about the possibility of finding identical constructions in different languages. We address this issue in the following sections.

## 2. Universals and language-specific parts of morphosyntax

Semantics is the tertium comparationis of typology [Croft 2003], and logical semantics is its core. The claims that all constructions are language-specific and all constructions are idiomatic are potentially conflicting.

### 2.1. Logical semantics and variation

All languages are exposed to the same logical structure and presumably have cues for expressing any logical functions and distinctions. However, linguists often fail to show that specific categories are *grammaticalized* or *lexicalized* in *L*. It is not straightforward whether *factivity*, i.e., relation of the subject to the truth of the proposition and the feature of predicates triggering the presupposition by the speaker that the complement of the sentence expresses a true proposition [Kiparsky 1970], is *grammaticalized* in *L* insofar factive versus non-factive clauses always have different syntax in *L*<sup>3</sup> or *lexicalized* in *L* so that *L* has a class of verbs that only combine with true propositions, cf. an attempt to refute the existence of factive verbs in [Hazlett 2010]. We argue it is better to accept the strong null hypothesis that there is no variation in logical structure [Matthewson 2001] than assume an agnostic position that one must get a complete knowledge of the language diversity to tell whether the distinction of factive versus non-factive meanings is universal. The no-variation hypothesis extends to quantification and logical form (LF) of questions. Zimmerling [2023a / this volume] takes a stand to Hamblin semantics. According to this model, an answer to the question is a choice on the set of exhaustive alternatives, and questions of all kinds contain the operator *Q* introducing or manipulating the alternatives. In *wh*-questions and alternative questions, *Q* is straightforwardly

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<sup>3</sup> This issue is touched on by Volina [Volina 2023 / this volume].

identified with *wh*-words and disjunction, but polar (yes/no) questions can be built without overt Q: some languages, including English, do not use *yes-no* particles in polar questions at all<sup>4</sup>. A linguist can consider visualization of Q an interface condition for well-formed questions with Hamblin semantics. Some scholars argue that polar questions lack it and do not introduce a choice between  $p$  or  $\neg p$ . This argument only makes sense if it applies to all languages. The ' $p$  or  $\neg p$ ' meaning is a function of standard logic. Therefore, all polar questions must be uniform across the world's languages and have the same LF.

## 2.2. Logical Form and constructions

It is weird to claim that English and Russian polar questions have different LFs because Russian has a yes-no particle *li* and English lacks it. An approach like this would obscure the description of languages where the yes-no marker is optional. Both (2) and (3) are polar questions in Russian. What differentiates them is not LF but morphosyntax. If the yes-no marker *li* is present, verb movement is obligatory as in (2). If a polar question is marked with prosody alone, as in (3), verb movement is optional. In the notation of (2)–(3), we tag the rising accent HL\*L- with '↗' and put the tag before the accent bearer.

(2) Russian

A: [<sub>PQ</sub> ↗ *Chital*<sub>PST.3SG.M</sub> *li*<sub>PRT</sub> *Ivan*<sub>NOM.SG.M</sub> *etu stat'yu?*]  
 'Did John read that paper?'

B: *Da.* / *Net.*  
 'Yes.' / 'No.'

(3) Russian

A: [<sub>PQ</sub> *Ivan*<sub>NOM.SG.M</sub> ↗ *chital*<sub>PST.3SG.M</sub> *etu stat'yu?*]  
 'Did John read that paper?'

B: *Da.* / *Net.*  
 'Yes.' / 'No.'

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<sup>4</sup> The subject-auxiliary inversion in English questions can be interpreted as evidence for null complementizer. Another proposal of restoring Q in the syntax of polar questions is based on the conjecture that they contain a deleted *or not* part and are alternative questions in disguise. Semantic scholars usually do not stick to this conjecture since the absence of the *or not* part and its presence contribute to different readings.

Russian particle *li* is a 2P element. It requires overt clausal material in the first position, but the correlation between the position of *li* and verb movement is not trivial. Russian licenses questions like (4a-b), where *li* attaches to the focused initial constituent, but they have the LF of alternative, not polar questions, and convey the meaning  $\llbracket ? [_{ALTQ} (p \vee q)] \rrbracket$ .

## (4) Russian

- a.  $[_{ALTQ} \nearrow$  **Voloshinov**<sub>NOM.SG.M</sub> *li*<sub>PRT</sub> *napisal*<sub>PST.3SG.M</sub> *etu*<sub>PROX.ACC.SG.F</sub> *knigu*<sub>ACC.SG.F</sub> < *ili kto-to drugoi* > ?  
 ‘Did Voloshinov write that book < or did someone else do it >?’

- b.  $[_{IQ} \nearrow$  **Voloshinov**<sub>NP1</sub> *li*<sub>PRT</sub> *napisal*<sub>PST.SG.M</sub> *etu*<sub>PROX.ACC.SG.F</sub> *knigu*<sub>ACC.SG.F</sub> *ili Bakhtin*<sub>NP2</sub>], *Bakhtin pod nei ne*<sub>NEG</sub> *podpisalsya*<sub>PST.SG.M.REFL</sub>.  
 ‘Whether Voloshinov wrote that book or Bakhtin did it, Bakhtin did not sign it.’

Thus, the combination of verb movement with the yes-no particle *li* is diagnostic for the meaning  $\llbracket ? [_{PQ} (p \vee \neg p)] \rrbracket$ , which makes (2) a question construction displaying the LF of polar questions. Likewise, (3) is another question construction. Verb movement and rising prosody are widespread cues encoding the meaning of polar questions. A linguist may want to explore whether the distinction between (2) and (3) holds in languages with similar cues, e.g., in English. Example (5) is a standard question derived by auxiliary movement, while (6) is a so-called rising declarative, i.e., structure with the word order and morphosyntax of declarative sentences but prosody and illocutionary force of a polar question.

## (5) English

*Did John read that / any paper?* question; + verb movement

## (6) English

*John read that /\*any paper?* rising declarative; –verb movement

(5) and (6) are question constructions in their own right, and transferring the label ‘rising declarative’ to the overtly similar example (3) does no harm. However, one should not mix up the properties of these constructions. (6) is a pragmatically marked question, where the speaker is biased against *p* and expects the confirmation that  $\neg p$  is true. At the same time, (3) is a neutral polar question: its form does not disclose whether the questioner expects *p* or  $\neg p$ .



Discourse particles like the Russian *razve* ‘X doubts that p’ (in positive polar questions) or ‘isn’t it’ (in negative polar questions) have more complicated meanings than question markers. The lexicographical description of *razve* and its quasi-synonym *neuzheli* contains a ten-page instruction on how to differentiate these items and make them felicitous in the appropriate contexts [Bulygina, Shmelev 1997: 270–281]. Particles *razve* and *neuzheli* are stored in the lexicon, but clauses with *razve* and *neuzheli* can be interpreted as language-specific constructions<sup>5</sup>. Here, we arrive at the puzzle. Since *razve*- and *neuzheli*-constructions are questions, they must have a universal part, notably the meaning of polar question, plus the non-universal (possibly presuppositional) part projected by the lexical meanings of these particles. A straightforward way to solve this puzzle is to assume that semantic components of a construction combine compositionally. Thus, the strong null hypothesis predicting no variation in logical structure leaves little space for the idea that language-specific constructions are idiomatic.

### 3. Identifying constructions and cross-linguistic categories

The parametrization of language diversity requires an apparatus that applies to all languages. A morphological case like superessive is attested in the minority of case languages, and only minority of the world’s languages have morphological case, but definitions of ‘superessive’ and ‘morphological case’ should be uniform. For those authors who insist on the terminological distinction between *comparative concepts*, i.e., descriptive labels originating from observations on some datasets, e.g., Hungarian and Lezgian case systems or on large samples of languages, versus *universal categories* coming from axiomatic theories [Haspelmath 2018], the apparatus of typology mainly consists of cross-linguistic categories. Otherwise, this dispute about the terms reflects the polemics between different schools in typology rather than the relation between typology and other branches of linguistics. A non-linguist would probably treat all comparative concepts as universal, albeit in a different sense than logical functions ‘&’, ‘∨’, ‘→’.

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<sup>5</sup> Note that clauses with *razve* and *neuzheli* are constructions both according to the criterion in (1) since they bring about unique form-meaning pairings and according to the Haspelmath’s definition since discourse particles take propositional arguments and project a structure with open slots that can be filled with different syntactic expressions.

The concept of verb movement comes from axiomatic theories (generative syntax), but if the criteria of diagnosing verb movement are operational, one can parametrize the class of languages with verb movement. Linguistic theories are always motivated by some data, but the statements that the concept of verb movement emerged from studies in German and Dutch syntax, the concept of rheme was initially motivated by Czech word order, and the concept of raising emerged from descriptions of several English constructions contribute little to language theory. The notions of rheme [Mathesius 1939], verb movement [Den Besten 1983, Pollock 1989], argument raising [Postal 1974], backward control [Polinsky, Potsdam 2006] make sense if they are treated as general cross-linguistic categories / universal notions and not as ad hoc labels introducing language-specific data. This does not cancel the need to develop typologies of raising constructions, control constructions, constructions with verb movement, etc.

### 3.1. Multiple partitions of semantic structure

Semantic structure exposed to  $n$  constructions of language  $L$  can be partitioned in many ways. One gets different lists of Russian, Chechen, or Khwarshi constructions in the scenario where a linguist explores the mapping of causal, conditional, and concessive semantics to morphosyntax of these languages, in the scenario where a linguist explores the distribution of control and raising predicates, and in the scenario where a linguist identifies verb constructions as generalized schemes corresponding to thematic verb classes, i.e., activity, perception, modal and phase verbs. Some correlations are expected: modal and phase verbs are often associated with raising / functional restructuring construals, but one has to prove that they hold in  $L$  or a sample of languages.

### 3.2. Constructions and form-meaning pairings

Kustova [Kustova 2023 / this volume] addresses a variety of Russian constructions with the complementizer *chtoby* ‘that, to’. Pretheoretically, this element is often glossed as a goal or irrealis marker. In some cases, *chtoby* is licensed lexically by matrix clause verbs or matrix clause nouns with abstract or concrete semantics (= argument *chtoby*-clauses). In other cases, it is licensed configurationally by the predicate construction (= adjunct *chtoby*-clauses). Kustova argues that there is a grey zone between these poles. While canonic argument and adjunct *chtoby*-clauses are constructions only in the broad sense captured by our definition (1), *chtoby*-clauses from the grey zone presumably conform to more rigid criteria of construction grammar. Of particular interest are construc-

tions she calls semi-goal *chtoby*-clauses. Canonic goal clauses require that the matrix clause has an agreeing agentive subject with complete control over the produced action: *On vernulsya na rodinu, [GC chtoby igrat' v teatre]* ‘He <consciously> **returned** to his home country [GC to play in the theater]’. Semi-goal constructions realize a deviant meaning ‘X has a resource / X wants to get a resource to achieve one’s goal or to make one’s wish come true’. This meaning, as Kustova shows, is contributed by abstract nouns with resource semantics, cf. *predlog* in the meaning ‘excuse’: *On stal iskat' predlog<sup>RESOURCE</sup>, [SGC chtoby rasstat'sya s lyubovnitsej]* ‘He began to look for an **excuse<sup>RESOURCE</sup>** [SGC to break up with his mistress]’. These facts suggest that Russian *chtoby*-clauses have an underspecified meaning, and their final interpretation comes from the interaction of the complement and matrix clauses.

Kustova’s paper provides a fine-grained analysis of event structure and predicative meanings expressed by goal-like clauses sharing the same complementizer. Her analysis waits for typological approbation while Volina [Volina 2023 / this volume] implements the classifications of concessive constructions proposed earlier in [Haspelmath, König 1998] and [Khrakovskii 2024] in the analysis of Khwarshi proper. This practice is well-founded when linguists deal with understudied endangered idioms. In Khwarshi proper, concessive constructions have a generalized marker, converb affix *-lanna*, which is suffixed to the verb of the dependent clause. The linear order of protasis (main clause) and apodosis (embedded clause) is not a constraining factor. However, if a concessive construction combines with the adversative conjunction *henna* ‘but’, the protasis cannot follow the apodosis. Volina argues that Khwarshi concessives are not sensitive to factivity and taxis semantics. This language licenses concessive constructions in contexts of different types. By default, the protasis denotes a single referential situation, but the speakers can also express complex meanings, where the protasis denotes a pair of alternatives: ‘[*p* or  $\neg$  *p*], X will make *q*’, or a set of possibilities: ‘[no matter, how much the candies cost], X will buy them’. Moreover, *wh*-words, cf., *dajcci* ‘how much’ in (7), combine with expressions introducing pairs of exhaustive alternatives. This makes (7) an idiosyncratic Khwarshi construction with alternative semantics.

(7) Khwarshi, after [Volina 2023 / this volume (32)]

[CONC IQ	<i>dajcci</i>	<i>baha</i>	<i>b-eča-lanna</i>	<i>b-eč-aj-lanna]</i>
	how.much	price[ABS]	III-be-CONC	III-be-NEG-CONC

*de kila kampitte-ba l-e:za*  
 I.ERG kilogram candy-PL[ABS] NHPL-take.GNT

‘No matter how much the candies cost, I’ll buy one kilogram’, lit.: ‘How much the candies **cost do not cost**, I buy one kilogram.’

The presence of the *wh*-word *dajcci* ‘how much’ makes it possible to analyze the first clause in (7) as an indirect question since the clause does not contain any overt indefinite markers. This intuition is backed by exhaustive (Hamblin) semantics characteristic of indirect questions [Karttunen 1977]. From the perspective of other languages, the combination of two Hamblin operators — the *wh*-word and the disjunction introducing the ‘*p* or  $\neg p$ ’ expression *b-eča-lanna b-eč-aj-lanna* is pleonastic, but it is difficult to say which one is redundant here.

Ptentsova [Ptentsova 2023 / this volume] discusses a fragment of Old Russian grammar. The function word *ati/oti* has a non-trivial derivation history. It is a clitic word consisting of the additive/adversative proclitic particle *a* ‘and’, ‘but’, and verification enclitic particle *ti* ‘indeed’, ‘really’. The puzzle is that free Old Russian *ti* is primarily used in indicative contexts [Zaliznyak 1993: 299] and typically refers to the real world, while *ati/oti* is an irrealis marker. Its status as a particle or complementizer is less clear. Ptentsova shows that in the Early Old Russian period, one deals with diverse *ati/oti* constructions rather than a uniform construction with a fully grammaticalized complementizer. The optative uses of *ati/oti* are a plausible source of the goal uses of *ati/oti*, while the reverse evolution is unlikely. Canonic optative *ati/oti*-clauses conveying the meaning ‘let it be *p*’ occur in direct speech. Some examples are two-way ambiguous between optative and goal readings: the optative readings can be rendered in Modern Russian via particles *pust’*, *puskai* or *davai*, while the goal reading can be rendered via Modern Russian *chtoby*-clauses. Some contexts exemplify the transition from optative to goal semantics. In (8), an optative reading is excluded.

(8) Old Russian, after [Ptentsova 2023 / this volume (11)]

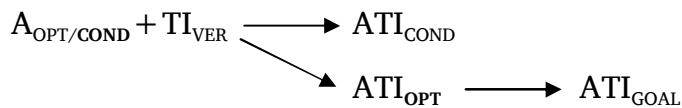
*no vam” dwstoino s”prashivati s” tikhostiyu*  
 but 2PL.DAT worthy.PRED ask.INF with quietness.INSTR.SG

[<sub>GC</sub> *at’ wniem” legko poviedyvati*].  
 COMP 3PL.DIST.DAT easily.PRED respond.INF

‘But you should ask them quietly [<sub>GC</sub> ATI to make it easy for them to answer].’

Several examples show the third facet of *ati/oti*-clauses: they can also express a conditional meaning. This fact is surprising, provided that Old Russian has many other conditional markers, and there are no obvious paths from either optative or goal *ati/oti* to conditional *ati/oti*. Ptentsova assumes that conditional meaning is old and dates back to the period where *a + ti* was a combination of two function elements, with optative/conditional semantics presumably coming from the proclitic *a* alone. This scenario implies the following map of irrealis meanings:

- (9) Semantic map of Old Russian irrealis meanings,  
adapted from [Ptentsova 2023 / this volume]



If Ptentsova's reconstruction is justified, the evolution of the function word *ati/oti* has a single meaning shift *ati*<sub>OPT</sub> 'let it be *p*' → *ati*<sub>GOAL</sub> 'in order to realize *p*' that looks predictable. If the matrix clause subject has semantic control over *p*, the second clause can be interpreted as a planned action, and *ati/oti* is reanalyzed as a goal complementizer.

#### 4. Constructions across the world's languages: Similar or different?

The default hypothesis with cross-linguistic comparison is that two constructions are never identical even if they show similar form-meaning pairings, but they can belong to the same class of constructions. Consequently, the task of linguistic typology is to develop diagnostics for classes of constructions, not for isolated constructions like the alternative concessive construction in Khwarshi in (7) or Old Russian goal *ati*-construction in (8). Linguists occasionally try to guess external parallels to the constructions they describe.

Shushurin [Shushurin 2023 / this volume] shows that two Chechen transitive phase verbs with the meanings 'to start something' and 'to finish something' invariably take transitive complements and explains this condition as transitive concord across the clausal boundary. This mechanism is poorly described, and the author compares the Chechen construction with German long-distance passive. This parallel is extravagant since German is an accusative-nominative language with the category of voice, while Chechen is an ergative language without voice and with quite different morphosyntax. A closely ge-

netically related Nakh language, Ingush, has a similar construction with transitive phase auxiliaries *d.uola.d.u* ‘start something’ and *chaqq.d.oaqq* ‘finish something’. The author of the Ingush grammar, Johanna Nichols, who dubs the Ingush construction ‘transitivity attraction’, assumes that the subject of the phase auxiliary belongs to the complement clause [Nichols 2011: 482-484]. In this case, the Ingush ‘transitivity attraction construction’ can be straightforwardly explained in terms of backward control, i.e. Equi-deletion of the matrix clause subject. Shushurin, however, argues that the agreement controller is located in the matrix clause. In that case, the Chechen ‘transitivity concord construction’ instantiates forward control with Equi-deletion of the complement clause subject. The parallel with German is only possible with the forward control analysis of Chechen (and Ingush) data. There is one more difficulty with the Chechen versus German comparison. The German long-distance passive in sentences like (10) can be interpreted as argument raising from the deepest embedded clause with subsequent restructuring, i.e. removal of the clausal boundary.

(10) German

[<sub>CP</sub> *dass die Lok und der Wagen*  
 that ART.NOM.F.SG loco[F].NOM.SG and ART.NOM.M.SG carriage[M].NOM.SG

[*zu reparieren [versucht wurd-en]]*  
 to repair.INF attempt.PST.PTCP AUX.PST-3PL

‘... that one tried to fix the loco and the railway car’, lit.: ‘that [**the loco and the railway car**]<sub>i</sub> were attempted to repair <sub>-i</sub>’.

An analysis of Chechen and Ingush phase auxiliaries as raising predicates that undergo restructuring (in other terms — *clause union*) has not been proposed so far.

Turning back to Old Russian *ti*-clauses, another remarkable parallel was hinted at by Andrei A. Zaliznyak, who compared the discourse particle *ti* (= *ti<sub>1</sub>*) he discovered in Old Russian with the Arabic particle ‘*inna* ‘verily’, ‘really’ [Zaliznyak 1993: 299]. Both particles are verification markers, but Arabic and Old Russian constructions differ. Arabic ‘*inna* is only used in nominal, i.e., tenseless clauses and changes the morphological case of the NP. Old Russian *ti<sub>1</sub>* is used in verbal and copular, i.e., tensed clauses, and does not change the case form of the clausal subject. Therefore, the observation that neither ‘*inna* nor *ti<sub>1</sub>* combine with the imperative does not prove that Arabic ‘*inna*-clauses and Old Russian *ti<sub>1</sub>*-clauses belong to the same class of constructions. For Arabic ‘*inna*, the ab-

sence of imperative contexts trivially follows from the fact that nominal clauses lack imperative mood, while for Old Russian  $ti_1$ , this constraint is not trivial [Zimmerling 2023b: 140].

## 5. Conclusions

We assessed programmatic claims about constructions and construction grammar and valued them across selected studies in language diversity. Grammatical constructions are always language-specific but not necessarily idiomatic. Semantics is the tertium comparationis of typology, cross-linguistic categories uniformly apply to all languages. If one assumes the strong null hypothesis claiming no variation in logical structure, there is little space for the idea that universal and non-universal components of grammatical constructions interact in a non-compositional way. Claims about mental lexicon and mental grammar are orthogonal to the typology of constructions.

## Abbreviations

III — third agreement class; ALTQ — alternative question; ART — article; AUX — auxiliary; ABS — absolutive; COMP — complementizer; CONC — concessive; COND — conditional; DIST — distal; F — feminine; GC — goal clause; GNT — general tense; INF — infinitive; INSTR — instrumental; IQ — indirect question; LF — logical form; M — masculine; NEG — negation; NHPL — non-human plural; NP — noun phrase; OPT — optative; PL — plural; PQ — polar question; PRED — predicative; PROX — proximal; PRT — particle; PST — past tense; PTCP — participle; REFL — reflexive; SG — singular; SGC — semi-goal clause; VER — verum.

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