Concession. A typological study

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10 Conclusion

The main focus of this study has been on the systematic correlation between the semantic subtypes of concessive clauses of the general format given in (1) on the one hand, and the way in which they are expressed formally across the languages of the world on the other hand.

(1) Although $p$, $q$

The presentation of the general overview of the semantic and formal properties of concessive constructions in Chapters 3 and 4 provides us with a number of interesting facts. In Chapter 5 I formulated six hypotheses for the purpose of testing these facts on a sample of languages.

The first two hypotheses were related to the different clause-combining strategies used in concessive constructions: subordination, adverbial linking and coordination. I argued in Chapter 6 that in order to be able to generalize across concessive linkers with multiple functions, such as English although and though, an overall distinction has to be made between non-coordinators (NC) and coordinators (C), labelling subordinators (S) and adverbial linkers (AL) as non-coordinators as opposed to coordinators.

Through the third hypothesis in Chapter 7 I explored the patterning of syndetic and asyndetic concessive constructions. I made the claim that asyndesis is limited

![Figure 6. Distribution of clause combining strategies](image)
to the domain of coordination and that, therefore, concessive constructions which lack an overt linker and any type type 'hidden' marking (cf. Chapter 7), are to be considered coordinate constructions.

The results arrived at in Chapters 6 and 7 may be summarized as in Figure 6. In it, the clause-combining strategies found in concessive constructions are given in combination with their typological distribution. Asyndetic linking is more likely to occur towards the right of the hierarchy, therefore at the higher semantic levels. Within the group of syndetic constructions coordinating constructions are more likely to occur towards the right of the hierarchy and within the group of non-coordinating constructions, finally, adverbial linking is more likely to be found towards the right of the hierarchy.

A possible explanation for these facts may be found in what Lehmann (1988: 216) labels as the common functional denominator which underlies various continua, namely the elaboration–compression continuum.

Of the six continua discussed by Lehmann only three are relevant for this discussion. First of all Lehmann discusses the hierarchical downgrading of clauses on the basis of a continuum. While at the starting pole of the continuum there is no hierarchical relation between the two clauses of a complex construction, there is, however, a clear hierarchical relation between them at the end pole, where the subordinated clause has been downgraded to a particular, explicit constituent within the main clause. The constructions at the starting pole are considered paratactic and the ones at the end pole embedded. Consider (2) and (3) with which Lehmann exemplifies a paratactic complex construction at the starting pole, and an embedded one at the end pole, respectively:

(2) I was trimming a boomerang, there you came up.

(3) Latin (Indo-European)

Romanos iubet [sententiam ut dicant suam]

'He orders the Romans to give their opinion.'

Claiming that a subordinate construction must be part of a higher construction, Lehmann points out that there is room for a range of subordinated constructions between the starting pole and the end pole. Thus, the subordinate syntagm may either bear a dependent relation to the main clause, it may be subordinate to the main clause as a whole or to some constituent of the main clause, etc.

(4) weak

coordination downgrading of

strong

subordinate clause embedding

The second continuum discussed by Lehmann concerns the multiplicity of syntactic levels between the morpheme and the paragraph. The main idea is that the lower the syntactic level, the more tightly the subordinated clause is integrated into the main clause. This idea corresponds with the assumption made in Section 3.4.4.1

1 See my own discussion on parataxis and hypotaxis in Section 4.2.1.
and in Chapter 7 that a concessive clause becomes less and less integrated into its main clause and more and more coordinate-like the higher the semantic level is to which it pertains.

(5) high sentence \[\rightarrow\] syntactic level \[\rightarrow\] low word

The last continuum discussed by Lehmann concerns explicitness of linking. The opposite poles in this continuum obviously are syndesis and asyndesis, as exemplified in (6):

(6) maximal syndesis \[\rightarrow\] explicitness of linking \[\rightarrow\] minimal asyndesis

Table 14a in Section 7.1 shows us that if a language exhibits asyndetic linking, it is most likely to do so at the highest semantic level, the text level. In more than half of the cases where asyndetic linking takes place at the text level coordinating strategies may be used at the speech act level. Keeping in mind Lehmann's continua and the data of Chapter 7, one could postulate a syndesis–asyndesis continuum containing a non-coordination–coordination continuum. And within this continuum one could subsequently postulate a subordination–non-subordination continuum. The relation between the various continua, which reflects the facts given in Figure 6, is represented in (7).

(7) Content > Epistemic > Illocutionary > Text

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Hypotheses 4 and 5 in Chapter 8 have been dedicated to the formal expression of dependent and independent verb forms and the morphological expression of concession. The data have shown us that these hypotheses do not directly predict possible patterns of dependent and independent verb forms at the various semantic levels in subordinate concessive constructions nor of the use of bound or unbound concessive morphology within these constructions.

On the basis of Hypothesis 6 in Chapter 9 I finally explored the distribution of concessive linkers. It was argued that in the history of a language a concessive linker may assume new functions and lose old ones, but only as long as as they form contiguous categories in the semantic level hierarchy. The outcome of the application of Hypothesis 6 to the data of the sample languages furnishes convincing evidence for a cross-linguistic correlation between the expression of concessive linkers and the semantic levels to which they apply. This is represented by the fan in Figure 7, which can be folded and unfolded in several directions, thus symbolizing the loss of old functions and the acquisition of new ones.

A possible explanation for this phenomenon may be found in the dynamic paradigm discussed by Croft (1990: 258–9). Croft (1990: 256) points out the fact that one
of the most important characteristics of functional-typological explanation is the major role given to diachronic explanation. Diachronic explanation may account for exceptional synchronic phenomena of a language system which is dynamic and unstable, not fixed and static. The cognitive competence of speakers to take in dynamic processes enables them to understand the variation in the language they use and influence it in such a way that the language will change in the long run. As Croft (1990:258) points out, many linguists in the functional–typological approach, including Givón (1982), Haiman (1985) and Hopper (1987), have presented the foregoing argument in different words. What these linguists basically propose is to reduce synchrony to diachrony by analysing intralinguistic as well as cross-linguistic variation. The synchronic language system is in a constant state of flux and, as
Croft states, the study of this phenomenon may well be the heart of what may turn out to be a new linguistic paradigm, the dynamic paradigm. Within this paradigm all sorts of linguistic variation will be studied: cross-linguistic (typology), intra-linguistic (sociolinguistics and language acquisition) and diachronic (historical linguistics). The dynamic paradigm is based on the assumption that the underlying factors in all types of linguistic variation are basically the same, and that especially all sorts of external factors play a significant role in linguistic explanation.

The partial conclusions drawn at the end of Chapters 6–9 may now be combined in Figure 8, which brings together and shows the interaction of the basic starting points for the assessment of the data: clause-combining strategies and concessive linkers. In Figure 8 the general hierarchy is represented in the middle, while the relevant clause-combining strategies are projected above and the relevant linkers below this hierarchy. This figure may not only be used to summarize the typological facts, it also helps to systematically describe a concrete system of concessive constructions. In this figure the relevant clause combining strategies are projected on the Amharic concessive linkers at the four semantic levels. Thus, we can see that $b(i)-\text{V-im}$ is a subordinator at the content, epistemic and speech-act
level and that *tiyy-V-m* is a subordinator at the content and epistemic level. Furthermore *nagar gin* and *lāṇāgāru* are adverbia l linkers at the epistemic and the speech act level and the text level, respectively. Finally, *gin* is a coordinator at the epistic, speech-act and textual level.

Let me return, finally to the starting point of this work: the theory of Functional Grammar and its treatment of concessive constructions, as described in Chapter 2.

The results of the typological investigation show us that expression rules for grammars of individual languages with the FG framework operate within universal limits. This may be represented as in Figure 10.

Thus, the theory has provided us with the notional categories which have proved to be relevant for the formal expresssion of concessive constructions from a cross-linguistic perspective. But at the same time the results of this cross-linguistic investigation allow us to restrict the operation of the expression rule component within this theory for the constructions investigated in this study.