Connective Constructions in the World’s Languages
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CONNECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS
IN THE WORLD’S LANGUAGES:
A FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH

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SEDYL, CNRS – INALCO - IRD

A partir de l’étude de 60 langues, en développant les travaux de Clairis et al., nous élaborons une typologie des structures syntaxiques (constructions connectives) qui permettent de satisfaire un besoin communicationnel général : l’attribution d’une qualité, l’identification et la classification. Nous définissons les constructions connectives par la disjonction entre le noyau syntaxique et le noyau sémantique, ce qui les distingue des constructions nucléaires. Syntaxiquement les constructions connectives peuvent prendre la forme d’une connexion directe entre le qualifiant et le qualifié, d’une connexion via un connecteur non verbal ou d’une connexion via un verbe. Plusieurs de ces possibilités peuvent être utilisées dans une langue donnée. Nous proposons de classer les langues en cinq types sur la base des combinaisons possibles entre ces stratégies.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper explores a specific domain in language communication: the attribution of a quality, identification and membership from the perspective of the syntactic constructions that express it crosslinguistically. In order to satisfy communication needs in the field of attribution, languages use syntactic resources which converge on many levels, but which also show specific constraints. Most frequently, the syntactic means used to establish attribution are not specialized. Rather, the languages adapt their general syntactic resources to the specificities of attributive constructions.

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1.1. The theoretical framework

This study furthers reflections on copula clauses and non-verbal predication spanning the 20th century, beginning with Meillet\(^1\) and Benveniste\(^2\) and more recently with the functional-typological studies by Stassen\(^3\) and Pustet\(^4\) based on the traditional parts of discourse in which ‘predicate’ is a logical-semantic term.

We present here a functionalist approach, following Babiniotis & Clairis\(^5\) (1999) and Clairis et al.\(^6\). In this framework, a “connective syntax” was opposed to a “nuclear syntax”. We suggest here a more elaborate definition of the two types of constructions, connective vs. nuclear, based on the disjunction or conjunction of the syntactic nucleus (the receiver of all the syntactic determinations) and the semantic nucleus (center of semantic specifications).

In the “nuclear constructions”, the syntactic nucleus is also the center of the semantic specifications.

Figure 1. Nuclear constructions: Conjunction of the syntactic and the semantic nucleus

1st participant
(Subject) → Syntactic nucleus ← Other participants
(Object, Circumstantial, etc.)

Semantic specifications

In contrast, in the “connective constructions”, a syntactic connection (direct or indirect) is established between two units, semantically corresponding to a “qualified” and a “qualifier”. In this case, the syntactic nucleus is different from the center of the semantic specifications (see in detail Figures 2-5).

In the first study by Babiniotis & Clairis (1999), based on Modern Greek, the so-called “connective syntax” was restricted to the verbal connectors. Verbal connectors included the traditional “copulas”, “semi-copulas” and, more controversially, full-lexical verbs. In Clairis et al. (2005), the study was extended to 10 more languages, and non-verbal connective constructions were added. Connective syntax thus came to cover all the processes used by languages to express quality, identification and membership\(^7\), and which form a complete sentence.

One of the outcomes of the 2005 pilot study was a continuum of connective constructions, ranging from direct connection to

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connections using non specialized verbs (definitions and examples in § 3-6):

Table 1. The connective strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct connection</th>
<th>Non-verbal connectors</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) specialized</td>
<td>a) connective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) non-specialized</td>
<td>b) non-connective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than one of the various connective strategies are generally used in one language. Based on the possible combinations of connective strategies crosslinguistically, five types of languages are suggested in this paper (see § 7). Moreover, this study shows that the use of the available strategies in a language is determined by constraints relative to the types of predicates, the types of clauses and the TMA markers involved (see § 6).

1.2. Corpus

This paper is based on a sample of 60 languages, including the 11 languages of the pilot study which were based on first-hand
data (Clairis et al. 2005), and completed by data available in grammatical descriptions. As can be seen in the Map 1, the sample includes languages from a wide range of families: Africa (9), Asia (13), Eurasia (2), Europe (11), Australia and Oceania (11), North America (9), South America (7).

Map 1. The Language Sample

2. TYPES OF UNITS INVOLVED IN CONNECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

We observe that not all types of units can be used as qualified units and qualifiers but that most units are specialized in one use or the other. Costaouec\(^9\) establishes a hierarchy depending on the frequency of the various units used as predicates or qualified units (slightly modified here):

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Table 2. The hierarchy of the types of units used as predicates and qualified units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most frequently predicates</th>
<th>Predicates or qualified units</th>
<th>Always qualified units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stative predicates</td>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>Nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numerals</td>
<td>Proper nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indefinites</td>
<td>Personal pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrogatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This syntactic hierarchy reflects a semantic specialization where the most definite, specific units – expressed by personal pronouns and proper nouns¹⁰ – are obligatorily qualified units. On the contrary, units expressing generic qualities, such as stative predicates and adjectives, are most frequently used as predicates. Nouns, on the other hand, can be used either as predicates or qualified units, with equal frequency.

3. DIRECT CONNECTION IN THE WORLD’S LANGUAGES

3.1. Definition

“Direct connection” includes all cases where a syntactic relation is established between a predicate and a qualified unit with no other item involved.

¹⁰ French proper nouns in sentences such as *C’est un Casanova* ‘He’s a Casanova’ can be analyzed as nouns (transfer between syntactic classes) since they can be determined by an adjective *C’est un vrai Casanova* ‘He’s a real Casanova’, something not possible in their use as ‘true’ proper nouns.
Martinique French Creole (Creoles)

(1.)  i  bel
    3SG handsome
    ‘He’s handsome.’ (Jeannot-Fourcaud 11 : 128)

This connection is established between two non-verbal units which together form a complete sentence (Clairis et al. 200512). But it can also occur between a non-verbal unit and a stative predicate, or between a non-verbal unit and a unit with mixed characteristics, as is often the case in languages with weak “noun-verb” opposition (“predicative adjectives” with verbal, non-verbal or mixed encoding in Stassen 200813). The qualifier unit is both the predicate and the syntactic nucleus of the sentence, i.e. it is the bearer of the language’s syntactic determiners (TMA, adverbs), restricted in some languages, and its semantic role is to qualify another unit (see Figure 2):

Figure 2. Direct connection

Qualified unit  ←→  [Predicate (syntactic nucleus)
                        (adjective, noun, stative predicate…)]

Semantic specification


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Direct connection appears to be a very frequent strategy crosslinguistically, having very rich means distinguishing it from adjectival constructions.

### 3.2. Main or secondary strategy

Direct connection can be the main strategy in some languages, i.e. the strategy used for the most unmarked contexts:

**Tseltal (Mayan)**

(2.) Bijteswanej –on

teacher B1

‘I am a teacher.’ (Polian\(^{14}\))

Frequently, direct connection is the main strategy but has restrictions that require the use of other strategies. For example, in Hungarian direct connection is the main strategy but it is restricted to either connections between nouns, between a noun and an adjective or between a noun and the third person pronoun (for the other grammatical persons, a connecting verb is necessary).

**Hungarian (Uralic)**

(3.) Ön tanár

3SG professor

‘He is a professor.’

or ‘You (Respectful) are a professor.’ (Nyéki\(^{15}\))

It can be a possible but secondary option, i.e. a marked strategy from a pragmatic viewpoint (e.g. exclamation):


\(^{15}\) Lajos Nyéki, 1988, *Grammaire pratique du hongrois d’aujourd’hui*, Gap, OPHRYS–POF.
Chechen (Nakh-Daghestanian)

\[(4.) \quad \text{ish} \beta \alpha \hat{h} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{iljexwo} \]

impressive PROX DEM singer

‘Impressive this singer!’ (Guérin\(^{16}\): 70)

It can also appear in specific constructions, as in Kryz (Authier 2009\(^{17}\)), or in Breton where it is only used in dependant clauses:

Breton (Indo-European)

\[(5.) \quad \text{pemp} \quad \text{buoc’h} \quad \text{he} \quad \text{d-oa} \quad \text{ha} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{treut} \]

five cow 3SG.F 3SG-be/PST and 3PL thin

‘She owned five cows and all of them (were) thin.’

litt. ‘Five cows was her own and they thin.’ (Avezard & Costaouec\(^{18}\): 115)

In some languages direct connection is impossible (i.e. Korean, Koh\(^{19}\) 2005).

3.3. Types of units

Following are some examples of the types of qualified and qualifier units involved in direct connections (Qualified item-Predicate):

**Proper Noun-Noun**

Moroccan Arabic (Afro-Asiatic)

\[(6.) \quad \text{hmed} \quad \text{muælfi} \]

‘Ahmed is a teacher.’ (Chatar-Moumni 2005\(^{20}\))

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\(^{18}\) Cécile Avezard & Denis Costaouec, 2005, Syntaxe connective en breton, in *Typologie de la syntaxe connective*, p. 91-106.

\(^{19}\) Huong-Won Koh, 2005, Syntaxe connective en coréen. In *Typologie de la syntaxe connective*, p. 107-123.

In *La Linguistique*, 2010/1.
Noun-Noun
Hungarian (Uralic)
(7.) Barát–om mérnök
friend-POSS1 engineer
‘My friend is an engineer.’ (Nyéki 1993)

Noun-Adjective
Yuwaalaraay (Australian)
(8.) burul nhama dhayn
big that man
‘That man is big.’ (Williams 1980: 69)

Personal pronoun-Noun
In some languages, direct connection can be established between a clitic and a non-verbal unit. In Curnow (2000) this is analyzed as an “inflectional copula construction”:

Pipil (Uto-Aztecan)
(9.) ni–ta:kat
1SGSUBJ -man
‘I am a man.’ (Campbell 1985: 54)

21 Lajos Nyéki, 1988, Grammaire pratique du hongrois d’aujourd’hui, Gap, OPHRYS–POF.

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**Personal pronoun-Static predicate**

Kambera (Austronesian)

(10.) \[Na\ tau nuna] k na₃₃ hansu  
  ART person DEI.3S 3SN- be.good  
  ‘That person (there) is a good (person).’ (Klamer 1998²⁵: 92)

**Personal pronoun-Adjective**

Zapotec (Oto-Manguean)

(11.) gasgh =ba’
  black =3AN
  ‘It is black.’ (Sonnenschein 2005²⁶: 35)

**Noun-Static predicate**

Gbanzili (Niger-Congo)

(12.) ndongó-ni? ŋì nzélë
  pepper-DEF.DEM 3SG AOR/be.strong
  ‘The pepper is hot.’ (Rombi & Thomas 2006²⁷: 55)

**Equative constructions**

A specific direct connection strategy is the equative structure. We use this term here not as a semantic term but rather to refer to a symmetric syntactic construction where the qualified unit is first presented, then qualified:

Deuri (Sino-Tibetan)

(13.) la popô-wâ su popô
  this tree-TH high tree

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‘This tree is a high tree.’ (Jacquesson 200528: 110)

3.4. Identification of direct connections vs. nuclear and adjectival constructions

Crosslinguistically, we observe that direct connections are distinct from the adjectival constructions through a variety of strategies:

**Word order**

Nashta (Indo-European, Adamou 200529: 175)

direct connection  adjectival use

(14.a)  
    taifa  guljama  
    family  big

(14.b)  
    guljama  taifa  
    big family

‘The family is big.’  ‘big family’

**Predicate marker**

In Deuri, a predicate marker on the qualifier indicates a connective construction:

Deuri (Sino-Tibetan, Jacquesson 200530: 111)

direct connection  adjectival use

(15.a)  
    la  popô–wâ  su–i  
    this tree-TH  high-P

(15.b)  
    su  popô
    high tree

‘This tree is high.’  ‘high tree(s)’

---


In *La Linguistique*, 2010/1.
Other uses of the predicate marker:

(16.) la mosi-ya ko-i
    this man-TH come-P
    ‘This man is coming.’

**Non-predicate marker**

In Palau, direct connection is distinct from adjectival use for which the marker ęl is required:

Palau (Austronesian)
direct connection

(17.) Ak smécher
    PREFSUJ be.ill
    ‘I am ill.’ (Lemaréchal 1991\(^31\): 62)

adjectival use

(18.) Blái ęl bêchés
    house * new
    ‘A house which is new…’ (Lemaréchal 1991: 144)

**Negation marker**

In Nêlêmwa a specific negation marker, kio, can be an indication of connective use:

Nêlêmwa (Austronesian)

(19.) kio pânaat ‘It’s not a stone.’ (Bril 2002\(^32\): 91)

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Case marker
In Russian an adjective can be predicate in a direct connection with a pronoun or a noun, in which case the qualified unit is marked by the nominative case and the predicative adjective can be unmarked:

Russian (Indo-European)
(20.) otec gord rezultatami
father.NOM proud.PR-ADJ.SG.M results.INST.PL
‘Father is proud of the results.’ (Avgustinova 2006: 7)

In other sentences, both the predicate (noun or adjective) and the qualified pronoun are marked by the nominative case:

Russian (Indo-European)
(21.) on durak | tolstyj
he.NOM.SG.M fool.NOM.SG.M | fat.NOM.SG.M
‘He is a fool / fat.’ (Avgustinova 2006: 2)

In some constructions, the genitive case is used:

Russian (Indo-European)
(22.) on vysokogo rosta
he.NOM.SG.M high.height.GEN
‘He is of a high height (i.e. tall).’ (Avgustinova 2006: 2)

In adjectival constructions, the adjective must be marked by the nominative case:

Russian (Indo-European)
(23.) gordyj otec
proud.NOM.SG.M father.NOM
‘a proud father…’ (Avgustinova 2006: 8)

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Personal pronoun
In Arawak (Patte 2008: 58-63) two personal pronoun paradigms exist: the first for agents of active verbs (lu in the example below); the second for patients and in stative predicates (i/no in the examples below):

Arawak (Arawakan)
(24.) lu–fara no
3SGM-kill 3SGF
‘He kills her.’ (Patte 200834: 59)

Arawak (Arawakan)
(25.) halekhebe–ka i
happy-ACC 3SGM
‘He’s happy.’ (Patte 2008: 62)

TMA markers
In Sikuani, future and iterative markers are suffixed in verbal predication (-ena and -biaba) but are independent in connective constructions (respectively tsane and tsabiani):

Sikuani (Tupian)
direct connection
(26.) tahawihanû tsane
‘He will be my usual commercial partner.’ (Queixalós 200035: 33)
nuclear use
(27.) huna–ena
‘He will grump.’ (Queixalós 2000: 33)
(NB: Different personal paradigms also distinguish the two predication types).

35 Francesc Queixalós, 2000, Syntaxe sikuani, Louvain, Peeters, Selaf 382.
Intonation

Little evidence is available for this strategy, probably due to lack of case studies. In Niger-Congo languages, different intonation patterns are realized depending on whether the utterance is a complete predicate or an incomplete sentence, a phenomenon also known as “predicative lowering”. This general strategy is found in all types of sentences, and can also serve to distinguish between a complete predicative sentence and an incomplete adjectival construction. For example in Langi:

Langi (Niger-Congo, Dunham 200536: 117)

(28.a) mbūri yaani ndudi
    ‘My small goat.’

(28.b) mbūri yaani ndudi
    ‘My goat is small.’

Derivational processes

In Bijogo the stative predicate in the adjectival construction receives a suffix -a or -ɛ:

Bijogo (Niger-Congo) (Segerer 200237: 169)

(29.) kɔ-tɛɲ kɔ-ɲɔy    ‘The meat is cooked.’
(30.) kɔ-tɛɲ kɔ-ɲɔy-ɑ ‘the cooked meat’

36 Margaret Dunham, 2005, Eléments de description du langi, langue bantu F. 33 de Tanzanie, Louvain-Paris-Dudley, Peeters, Selaf 413.

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4. NON-VERBAL CONNECTORS IN THE WORLD’S LANGUAGES

41. Definition

Non-verbal connectors play the role of syntactic bridges between the predicate and the qualified unit but do not receive any syntactic determination (e.g. TMA markers):

![Connection through a non-verbal connector](image)

Qualified unit ← Non-verbal connector (Syntactic bridge) → Predicate (syntactic nucleus) (adjective, noun…)

Semaphore specification

Non-verbal connectors can be specialized to connective constructions:

Nanafwe (Niger-Congo)

(31.) ƙòfi ti jàswá
Koffi SP. CON. boy
‘Koffi is a boy.’ (Bohoussou & Skopeteas 2005: 160)

Or non-specialized (also used e.g. as a personal pronoun, demonstrative, locative, etc.):

Moroccan Arabic (Afro-Asiatic)

(32.) ânà hüwa əl mueallím
1SG 3SG DEF teacher
‘I am the teacher.’ Litt.: I him the teacher (Chatar-Moumni 2005: 65)

4.2. Specialized connectors

Specialized connectors are very rare crosslinguistically and appear to be areal (found mostly in Africa, with some in Asia). For example, in Nanafwe, \textit{tì} is a specialized connector with no other use (in other Niger-Congo languages it can be a demonstrative):

\begin{verbatim}
Nanafwe (Niger-Congo)
(33. ) jàswá-n ti kpâ
   boy-DEF SP.CON.  good
‘The boy is good.’ (Bohoussou & Skopetæs 2005\textsuperscript{40}: 161)
\end{verbatim}

The use of specialized connectors is limited by various constraints depending on the use of TMA markers. Specialized connectors can be restricted to interrogative sentences or may only appear with specific types of qualified units. For example, in Koto and Zura, two Gula dialects, one finds a connector, dubbed a “predicative particle” \textit{ā}, specialized in interrogative connective sentences:

\begin{verbatim}
Gula (Nilo-Saharan)
(34. ) sē ā dè' gē wà
   2PL PRED who PL INT
‘You, who are you?’ (Nougayrol 1999\textsuperscript{41}: 65)
\end{verbatim}

In Yemeni Arabic connection is frequently effected via two specialized connectors, namely \textit{gad} “declarative” and \textit{fād} “durative”, which receive the personal pronoun (subject):

\begin{verbatim}
39 Nizha Chatar-Moumni, 2005, Syntaxe connective en arabe marocain, 
   \textit{Typologie de la syntaxe connective}, p. 55-72.
40 Amani Bohoussou & Stavros Skopetæs, 2005, Syntaxe connective en 
   Paris, CNRS Editions.
\end{verbatim}

In \textit{La Linguistique}, 2010/1.
Yemeni Arabic (Afro-Asiatic)
(35.) ʕād-i marat-ak
    PART-3SGF wife-2SGM
    ‘Is she still your wife?’ (Naïm 2009\textsuperscript{42}: 175-176)

With these connectors, negation is marked by \( mā...f \) and not by the \( mi/u\) or \( māf \) used in direct connection.

Time can be lexically marked (e.g. by an adverb), but the grammatical expression of past needs connection via the verb \( kān ‘be’:\)

Yemeni Arabic (Afro-Asiatic)
(36.) mā ḡad kān-\( f \) msallīh
    NEG PART be.3SGM-NEG arm.\textsc{ptcp}
    ‘He was not armed.’ (Naïm 2009: 175-176)

4.3. Non-specialized connectors

Some non-verbal units, having full lexical meaning in other contexts, can be employed as connectors: personal pronouns, demonstratives, focus particles, relative pronouns, presentatives and locatives. Non-specialized connectors generally add a focalization effect to the sentence.

**Personal pronouns**

In Moroccan Arabic \textit{hūwa} ‘him’ can be employed as a connector (loosing its properties as a pronoun) with additional focus as compared to direct connection:


In \textit{La Linguistique}, 2010/1.
Moroccan Arabic (Afro-Asiatic)
(37.) ḍānā ḫūwā ʾal muʾallīm
1SG 3SG DEF teacher
‘I am the teacher.’ Litt.: ‘I him the teacher’ (Chatar-Moumni 200543: 65)

Demonstratives
Likewise the demonstrative ṭā (formerly the imperative of the verb ‘see’), when employed as a connector receives the third person singular pronoun and introduces the notion of concomitance:

Moroccan Arabic (Afro-Asiatic)
(38.) ḥmād ṭā-h muʾallīm
Ahmed see/IMP-3SG.M teacher
‘Ahmed is (at the moment) a teacher.’ (Chatar-Moumni 2005)

Focus particles
Another case of non-verbal units used in connective structures is the Tseltal focus particle ja’, used with definite nouns (indefinite nouns can be connected directly):

Tseltal (Mayan)
(39.) Mach’a-Ø =a me =to
who-B3 =DIST DEM:DIST =DEIC
/ Ja’-Ø j-pat.xujk’ -Ø
/ FOC-B3 A1-neighbor -B3
‘Who is that?’ / ‘This is my neighbor.’ (Polian 200644: 214)

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**Relative pronouns**
In some Gula dialects the relative pronoun *nǝ́* can introduce predicative adjectives:

Gula (Nilo-Saharan)

(40.)  
\[ \text{déb} \quad \text{nǝ́} \quad \text{ná} \quad \text{náb'} \]

somebody  DEF  PRED  tall

‘It’s somebody tall.’ (Nougayrol 1999\(^45\): 66)

**Presentatives**
Some non-specialized connectors can be used in specific equative structures such as the presentative *ko* in East Futunan:

East Futunan (Austronesian)

(41.)  
\[ \text{ko} \quad \text{lona} \quad \text{igoa} \quad \text{ko} \quad \text{Fakagalo} \]

PRED  his  name  PRED  Fakagalo

‘His name is Fakagalo.’ (Moyse-Faurie 1997\(^46\): 129)

**Locatives**
In Pulaar the locative *woni* is used in cases of focalization:

Pulaar (Gaawore) (Niger-Congo)

(42.)  
\[ \text{Hammo} \quad \text{woni} \quad \text{dimo} \]

Hammo  FOC-PRED  noble

‘It’s Hammo who is noble.’ (Sow 2003\(^47\): 99)

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5. CONNECTION VIA A VERB

5.1. Definition

Following Babiniotis & Clairis (1999), as well as Clairis et al. (2005)\(^{48}\), the present study of connective constructions also includes the full lexical verbs.

Figure 4. Connection via a verb

 Qualified unit $\longleftrightarrow$ Connective Verb or Non-connective Verb (Syntactic nucleus) $\leftarrow$ Predicate

In the present study we distinguish two categories of verbs which participate in connective constructions:

a) connective verbs, traditionally known as copulas:
   a verb of the type ‘to be’ or ‘to become’ or a verb with full lexical meaning (‘to stand’, ‘to see’, etc.) but frequently used with the meaning ‘to be’;

   Zapotec (Oto-Manguean)

   \(43.\) n-ak=be maestro
   STAT.be=3INF teacher
   ‘They are teachers.’ (Sonnenschein 2005\(^{49}\): 178)

b) non-connective verbs:
   verbs not specialized in connective constructions and adding lexical meaning to the attribution of quality (‘to work as’, ‘to elect’, etc.).

\(^{48}\) Christos Clairis et al., 2005, _Typologie de la syntaxe connective_.
\(^{49}\) Aaron Huey Sonnenschein, 2005, _A Descriptive Grammar of San Bartolomé Zoogocho Zapotec_, Munchen, Lincom GmbH.

In _La Linguistique_, 2010/1.
Spanish (Indo-European)

(44.) Actúa en tanto que presidente de la república
‘He acts as president of the republic.’

This is a simplification of the categories proposed in Babiniotis & Clairis (1999) and Clairis et al. (2005) which distinguish four levels: “connective verbs” (‘to be’, ‘to become’ copulas), “quasi-connective verbs” (for some verbs taking different case markings in Greek), “nuclear-connective verbs” (for transitive connective verbs) and “non-connective verbs” (for intransitive connective verbs). In practice though, this has proved to be far too complicated for a large scale typological project.

5.2 Connective verbs

Connective verbs can 1) be the only strategy used in a language, 2) be a secondary strategy with some specific constraints involved (e.g. TMA markers), or 3) be impossible in the language. Syntactically and semantically the use of a connective verb requires the presence of a predicate. In some cases, the predicate’s determinations are restricted when used in nuclear constructions. Morphological factors can also help identify the predicate in some languages, for example the gender and number markers which agree with the subject in French.

‘To be’, ‘to become’
The most well known strategy, although not necessarily the most frequent one crosslinguistically, is connection via a verb of the type ‘to be’ or ‘to become’, traditionally called a copula. In most studies ‘to be’ is not considered a real verb and therefore is dubbed copula or verb copula. The meaning of this term, from the Latin copula, shows that it is mostly considered for its syntactic role in connecting two units. The reason for this is that ‘to be’ frequently has no specific lexical meaning.
Various analyses have been proposed in the rich literature on the status of copulas. For Sapir\(^{50}\) and Bally\(^{51}\) the nucleus in the case of a ‘to be’ copula verb is a complex formed by the copula verb and the predicate. This is partially Martinet’s analysis\(^{52}\) who identifies a “complex predicate” for constructions involving a “full copula” (like ‘to become’), but who considers, like Meillet\(^{53}\), that ‘to be’ is an “empty copula” which serves only to establish the connection between the two members. Lyons\(^{54}\) also considers that the copula verb is only a recipient for TMA markers. The verb ‘to be’ is a semantically empty verb generated by the grammatical rules of the language and used as a link between the subject and the predicate in traditional logic. This is the approach followed by Dik\(^{55}\) (p. 132), for whom the copula is no more than a grammatical device, and by Givón who names copular verbs “dummy verbs”, acting as the syntactic head of the verb phrase but carrying a reduced lexical-semantic load (Givón\(^{56}\): 119). On the contrary, for Benveniste\(^{57}\) (p. 157) a sentence with ‘to be’ is a verbal sentence just like all other verbal sentences. This is the approach we follow here (see for a detailed discussion Clairis et al. 2005): a verb, be it a “copula” or not, is a unit belonging to a syntactic class with specific determinations (i.e. TMA) and which functions as a syntactic nucleus.


Here are some examples of connective verbs found crosslinguistically:

**Basque (Basque)**

(45.) Etxe hori eder- ren- a house DEM2/ABS(Ø) beautiful- most- DEF/ABS(Ø) d- u- k 3ABS- be- AL.MASC

‘This house is the most beautiful.’ (Coyos 2005: 94)

**Ixcatec (Oto-Manguean)**

(46.) ?i²na³na³ ša²ña²–ku¹–na³ na²?mi¹ 1SG be-ACC-1SG priest

‘I am already a priest.’

(Fernández de Miranda 1961, glosses by Costaouec)

Quite often, the connective verb intervenes when TMA markers are required, i.e. as a complementary strategy. For example, in Mankon the verb bé ‘to be’ is used when temporal specification is needed or with negation:

**Mankon (Niger-Congo)**

(47.) à lō mb⁶lé suúŋé 1SG P₀-AUX C[-F]-be bird-ME

‘It was a bird (that made this noise).’ (Leroy 2007: 331)

Verbs like ‘to be’ or ‘to become’ generally serve to qualify the subject; in causative constructions, it is possible to qualify an object:

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59 Maria Teresa Fernandez de Miranda, 1961, *Diccionario ixcateco*, Mexico, Instituto nacional de antropología e historia.


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Ubykh (Northwest Caucasian)

(48.) \( \text{a } -\text{gi}Z\text{a}-\text{š} -\text{qa} \)

he was tall

‘He was tall.’ (Dumezil 1931\(^{61}\): 22)

Ubykh (Northwest Caucasian)

(49.) \( \text{a } -\text{gi}Z\text{a}-\text{n}a-\text{š} -\text{qa} \)

they made.be tall

‘They made him tall.’ (Dumezil 1931: 22)

Example of the so-called ‘dynamic copula’, ‘to become’:

Ubykh (Northwest Caucasian)

(50.) \( \text{yedänä } \text{t`ıt} -\text{λ}Oyusa-nə \text{ašqa} \)

very man.hero became

‘He became a hero.’ (Dumezil 1931: 22)

In Nahuatl, some superlative verbs, such as *mo-cem-aquia* ‘to be, to fully become’ can also be used in connective constructions (in this case the predicate follows the verb, contrary to the other types of predicative constructions):

Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan)

(51.) \( \text{Mo-cem-aqui } \text{nextic} \)

to.be.totally grey

‘It is fully grey.’ (Launey 1994\(^{62}\): 112)

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Verbs with full lexical meaning also used as copulas

Among the connective verbs, we will mention the case of intransitive verbs which have also developed uses as connective verbs. For example in Australian languages, posture verbs –‘sit’, ‘lie’, ‘stand’- as well as motion verbs e.g. ‘go’- (Dixon 2002: 22-23) have developed a “copula” meaning ‘to be’. This is also the case in Papuan languages where the verbs ‘say’ and ‘hit’ also function as connective verbs:

Kewa (Papuan)
(52.) ni kadipi te-a
I red say-3SG.PRES
‘I am red.’ (from the sun)
(Franklin 1981 cited in Dixon 2002)


Connective verbs are very frequently non-specialized. For example in Thulung (Sino-Tibetan) the native “copula” verb, bumu ‘to be, to live, to stay’ is used in connective, locational, existential and possessive functions, and as an auxiliary to form

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aspectual constructions such as progressives (Lahaussois 2002: 174-178). Moreover, Güldemann shows that ‘to be’ or ‘to become’ verbs are often used as quotative markers across the languages.

5.3 Non-connective verbs

Non-connective verbs are mostly used in nuclear constructions and although they are not specialized in connective constructions, they can be used as such. In their connective use, they add extra lexical meaning to the connection between the predicate and the qualified unit. As nuclear verbs, they can be either intransitive or transitive, or both. Non-connective verbs usually show a change in meaning when used in connective constructions as well as a change in valency, requiring an additional predicate: e.g. *Il passait pour le maître du pays* ‘He was considered the country’s master’ is distinct from the intransitive verb ‘passer’ as in *Il passe dans la rue* ‘he’s walking by in the street’. Moreover, non-connective verbs accept complementary determination such as adjectives, something not possible in their nuclear uses e.g. *Il part furieux* ‘He leaves furious’. This category is rarely taken into consideration in descriptive studies and was the most difficult to document.

French (Indo-European)

Connective use

(53.) *Il passait pour le maître du pays*

‘He was considered the Master of the country.’ (Clairis et al. 2005: 30)

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Nuclear intransitive use
(54. ) Il passe dans la rue ‘He’s passing by on the street.’

Nuclear transitive use
(55. ) Passe-moi le sel ‘Pass me the salt.’

**Intransitive nuclear verbs used in connective constructions**
Intransitive verbs may be used in connective constructions introducing a subject predicate:

Nashta (Indo-European)
Connective use
(56. ) izljä-va-m kutʃabaʃia
come.out-imperfective-1SG village.president
‘I’m elected village president.’ (Adamou 2005: 177)

Nuclear use
(57. ) izljä-va-m vonka
come.out-imperfective-1SG outside
‘I’m going out.’ (Adamou 2005: 177)

Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan)
(58. ) Chipac-pōl icac
resplendent to.be.standing.up
‘He’s standing up quite resplendent.’ (Launey 1994: 112)

Basque (Basque)
(59. ) Pepita neskame
Pepita/ABS(Ø) servante/ABS(Ø)
joa- n z- e- n
go- ACC 3SG/ABS- be- PAST
‘Pepita became a maidservant.’ (Coyos 2005: 82)

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Transitive nuclear verbs used in connective constructions (subject predicate)

One of the observations made in Clairis et al. (2005) was the fact that connective constructions can also be transitive, contrary to the traditional distinction between transitive and intransitive predication (Stassen 1997) or transitive, intransitive and copula clauses (Curnow 2000, Dixon 2002: 1). Clairis et al. propose calling these verbs “nucléo-connectifs”, in order to stress their ability to combine both nuclear and connective characteristics. In this case, a transitive verb can be the nucleus governing a subject and an object at the same time. Here are some examples of transitive verbs with a subject predicate:

French (Indo-European)

Connective use

(60. ) Ces enfants constitueront la société de demain.

‘These children will form the society of tomorrow.’ (Guérin 2005\textsuperscript{72}: 147)

Nuclear use

(61. ) Il constitue péniblement la dot de sa fille.

‘He is painstakingly constituting his daughter’s dowry.’

Nanafwe (Niger-Congo)

Connective use

(62. ) ɔ̀ swàn kòfí

3SG learn Koffi

‘His name is Koffi.’ (Bohoussou & Skopet eas 2005\textsuperscript{73}: 164)

\textsuperscript{71} Jean-Baptiste Coyos, 2005, Syntaxe connective en basque. \textit{Typologie de la syntaxe connective}, p. 73-89.

\textsuperscript{72} Françoise Guérin, 2005, Syntaxe connective en français, \textit{Typologie de la syntaxe connective}, p.138-153.


In \textit{La Linguistique}, 2010/1.
Nuclear use
(63.) ɔ̀ swàn ānglê
3SG learn English
‘S/he learns English.’ (Bohoussou & Skopeteas 2005: 164)

Turkish (Altaic)
Connective use
(64.) Köpek güzel görün –üyor
dog beautiful be.seen PRES.PROG.
‘The dog seems beautiful.’ (Divitcioglu-Chapelle 2005: 205)

Nuclear use
(65.) Köpeğ -i gör –üyor –um
dog -ACC. see -PRES.PROG. -1SG
‘I see the dog.’ (Divitcioglu-Chapelle 2005: 205)

The transitive verb ‘to do’ in the middle voice:
Purepecha (Purepecha)
(66.) pedru ú–kur̃i–fa–ti atʃati
Pedro do-MIDDLE.VOICE-prog.-ASS.3 man
‘Pedro is becoming a man.’ (Chamoreau 2005: 193)

Transitive nuclear verbs with an object or subject predicate
Transitive verbs, in their connective uses, can introduce a subject or an object predicate depending on their diathesis, i.e. active/passive, active/reflexive, active/middle voice alternations.


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Figure 6. Connection via a transitive verb

Thus in accusative languages such as French or Greek, these verbs, in the passive voice, may directly take an attribute function (of the subject) as a specific function, obligatorily expressed or not:

French (Indo-European)

Attribution of a quality to the subject (passive voice):
(67.) Paul est élu président (par ses collègues).
‘Paul is elected president (by his colleagues).’ (Clairis et al. 2005: 28)

On the contrary, in the active voice, i.e. with a different orientation, these same verbs may take an attribute of their object (obligatory with some verbs, optional with others):

French (Indo-European)

Attribution of a quality to the object (active voice):
(68.) Ses collègues ont élu Paul président.
‘His colleagues elected Paul president.’ (Clairis et al. 2005: 29)

76 Christos Clairis et al., 2005, Typologie de la syntaxe connective.

In La Linguistique, 2010/1.
Korean (Korean)
Attribution of a quality to the subject (passive voice):

(69.) pol -i banzaŋ -iro
Paul-AGENT class.delegate-PREDICATE
pop -hi -ʌt -da
elect- -PAST-DECLARATIVE
PASSIVE
‘Paul is elected class delegate.’ (Koh 2005\textsuperscript{78}: 116)

Attribution of a quality to the object (active voice):

(70.) uri –ga pol –il (banzaŋ –iro)
1PL-AGENT Paul-AGENT class.delegate-PREDICATE
pop –at –da
elect-PAST -DECLARATIVE
‘We elected Paul (class delegate).’ (Koh 2005: 116)

Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan)
Attribution of a quality to the subject (reflexive construction)

(71.) Ti-piltōntli ti-mo chīhua-z
2SG-child P2(SUBJ.)-P2(OBJ.) to.make
‘You will transform yourself into a child.’ (Launey 1994\textsuperscript{79}: 112)

\textsuperscript{78} Huong-Won Koh, 2005, Syntaxe connective en coréen. In \textit{Typologie de la syntaxe connective}, p. 107-123.

Adpositions

Quite often non-connective verbs require an adposition when used in connective constructions. It is important to distinguish between comparative sentences and attributive sentences, as the same adposition may be used in both cases. Relative constraints should also be taken into consideration, e.g. the use of a definite article. In the following example, the definite article can only be used in the comparative structure:

French (Indo-European)

(75. ) *Louis travaille comme enseignant.*
‘Louis works as a teacher.’

(76. ) *Louis travaille comme un enseignant.*
‘Louis works like a teacher.’ (in the same way)

In some cases, both constructions (with or without the adposition) are possible with no change in meaning:
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Breton (Indo-European)

(77.) he zo wet labur
3SGF AUX go.PRF work
ba n gɛʁ gɪʃ matǝs bein
in INDEF farm as servant small
‘She went to work in a farm as a maidservant.’
(Avezard & Costaouec 2005: 101)

The equivalent sentence is also possible without an adposition:

Breton (Indo-European)

(78.) he zo wet matǝs bein ba ker
3SGF AUX go.PRF servant small in farm
‘She went as a maidservant in a farm.’
(Avezard & Costaouec 2005: 101)

Examples of non connective verbs which require an adposition:

Greek (Indo-European)

(79.) δυλέρσε ɛ'ki ɔs εγγοδι'γɔς
worked.3SG there as site.foreman.NOM
‘He worked there as site foreman.’
(Babiniotis et Clairis 2005: 52)

6. CONSTRAINTS IN THE USE OF THE VARIOUS CONNECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

The connective strategies presented above are most frequently used in parallel in a given language, though it is rare to find them all in a single language (in our sample 5/60). In general, one of the processes is the main strategy, used in temporally and pragmatically unmarked sentences. When the need for extra

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80 Cécile Avezard & Denis Costaouec, 2005, Syntaxe connective en breton, in *Typologie de la syntaxe connective*, p. 91-106.

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grammatical (aspectual, temporal, person), pragmatic (focus) or lexical information is involved, a second strategy is used. Strategies are also highly dependant on the type of predicate (definite vs. indefinite, stative predicate vs. noun) and on the clause type (negative, interrogative, affirmative, dependant clause).

**Predicate types**

Various constraints are found in the world’s languages depending on the types of predicates. Specific qualified units, such as personal pronouns and proper nouns, behave differently from generic units, such as indefinite nouns and plural nouns.

For example, in Pulaar direct connection is only possible with personal pronouns:

Pulaar (Gaawoore) (Niger-Congo)
(80.) o pullo
       3SG Pular
‘He’s a Pular.’ (Sow 2003: 87)

Other types of qualified units require the connector yo:

Pulaar (Gaawoore) (Niger-Congo)
(81.) Aamadu yo Pullo
       Amadou    PRED   Pular
‘Amadou is a Pular.’ (Sow 2003: 87)

In Nanafwe on the contrary, direct connection is impossible for personal pronouns and plural nouns (Bohoussou & Skopeteas 2005: 159).

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Restrictions related to the person can also be found. For example, in Kamayura the copula is restricted to use with the first and second persons only:

Kamayura (Tupian)

(82.) paje ere-ko
Shaman 2SG-Copula
‘You are the shaman.’ (Seki 2000\textsuperscript{83}: 158)

Indeed, third person pronouns behave differently in a general manner: for example Stassen (1997) and Eriksen (2005)\textsuperscript{84} observe that there are no languages in which zero copula contructions are licensed for first person but not third person pronouns (Eriksen 2005: 27).

Definite and indefinite nouns as well as plural nouns also may behave differently and require different strategies: this is the case in Tseltal where definite nouns may take the non-verbal connector (also used as a focus marker) while indefinite nouns require direct connection. In Moroccan Arabic, whenever a predicate is determined by a definite article for example, the presence of the article turns the qualifier into an apposition:

Moroccan Arabic (Afro-Asiatic, Chatar 2005\textsuperscript{85}: 64)

\begin{itemize}
  \item[(83.a)] ḥmed muˤəllîm
  Ahmed teacher
  ‘Ahmed is a teacher.’
  \item[(83.b)] ḥmed ᵐˤə l muˤəllîm
  Ahmed DEF teacher
  ‘Ahmed, the teacher…’
\end{itemize}

However, in cases of topicalization, the predicate can be determined by the definite article:

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item L. Seki, 2000, Gramática do Kamaiurá, São Paulo, Editora de Unicamp.
  \item Nizha Chatar-Moumni, 2005, Syntaxe connective en arabe marocain, Typologie de la syntaxe connective, p. 55-72.
\end{itemize}

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Moreover, in French, non connective verbs used with an adposition (comme) take on comparative meaning when a definite article determines the noun: *Il travaille comme un enseignant* ‘He works like a teacher’ vs. *Il travaille comme enseignant* ‘He works as (a) teacher’.

We should also mention that it is common for predicative adjectives to behave differently in a given language and have to be constrained in the connective strategies in which they can be involved. For example in Bijo go (Niger-Congo, Segerer 2002: 168), predicative adjectives are obligatorily linked to one sort of strategy: while -koto ‘old’, of verbal origin, can be directly connected, -títit ‘small’, requires the use of a copula -nam ‘be’.

**TMA markers**

One of the most well known constraints in connective constructions concerns the use of TMA markers. In many languages direct connection is favoured when temporal and aspectual stability is involved but is no longer possible with all or some TMA markers (in the present study 20 languages out of 60). As Eriksen (2005: 27), following Stassen (1997), observes if a language accepts a zero copula construction in the past it will also accept it in present.

Such is the case in Hungarian, where no TMA markers are allowed in direct connection:

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Hungarian (Uralic)
(85.) Barát–aim mérnök–ök
friend-POSS1/PL engineer-PL
‘My friends are engineers.’ (Nyéki 1983\textsuperscript{88} : 54)

In Turkish on the other hand, the predicate (here an adjective) can receive a present or a past tense marker but for the future the connective verb ol- ‘to be/become’ is necessary:

Turkish (Altaic)
(86.) ev güzel–miş
house pretty-PAST.EVID
‘(It is said that) the house was pretty.’
(Divitciglu-Chapelle 2005\textsuperscript{89})

(87.) ev güzel ol–acak
house pretty be-FUT
‘The house will be pretty.’ (Divitciglu-Chapelle 2005)

The “tensedness” criterion was first put in relation to the non-verbal predication by Stassen (1997). This observation was developed by Eriksen (2005)\textsuperscript{90} relating tensedness to the use of a copula. Eriksen points in his study that tensless languages generally don’t require a copula since in a tensless language a sentence doesn’t need to be about a point in time. On the contrary, in tensed languages, in which “all sentences must be assertions about a point in time” (Eriksen 2005: 63), a copula is usually required for adjectival and nominal predicates.

\textsuperscript{88} Lajos Nyéki, 1988, Grammaire pratique du hongrois d’aujourd’hui, Gap, OPHRYS–POF.

\textsuperscript{89} Elif Divicioglu-Chappelle, 2005, Syntaxe connective en turc, Typologie de la syntaxe connective, p. 199-211.

Clause types

It appears that connective strategies are frequently related to the type of clause: declarative, negative, or interrogative clause. For example, in Kryz (Nakh-Daghestanian) various connectors are specialized for each type of sentence: declarative -ya, interrogative -y(i)/-i, negative -da (Authier 2009).91

In Thulung (Sino-Tibetan), the “copula” tsha borrowed from Nepali cannot be used in interrogative sentences following the restrictions also valid in Nepali (Lahaussois 2002: 179).

Likewise, in Badaga (Pilot-Raichoor 1991: 569-572) direct connection is the main strategy except for negated predicates which require a copula.

Eriksen (2005) observes that the so-called “tensed” languages use one negation marker while “tenseless” languages may or may not use a specific negator for nominal predicates. Indeed, in several languages, specific negators are used in connective constructions. Vesselinova (2007) also notes that negation can be expressed for some languages in the same way in declaratives, nominal sentences and existential sentences but it is common to observe that a specific negation is needed for each type of clause or for some of them.

For example, in Hayu (Sino-Tibetan), the negation marker varies according to the different uses of /no(t)/ ‘to be, to exist’: the nominal negation /maaŋ/ is used with the “copula”, while the verb

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negation /ma/ is used for the existential (Michailovsky 1988\textsuperscript{95}: 134-138).

7. LANGUAGE TYPES BASED ON THE COMBINATION OF THE CONNECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Based on the combination of the connective strategies within a language we propose five types of languages:

**Type A**: Direct Connection (9 languages)
This language type usually occurs in “tensless languages” or, in other terms, languages with a weak verb-noun opposition:
- Araki, Berber, Mwotlap, Palau, Sakalava (Malagasy), Sikuani, Tagalog, Uldeme, Yurakaré.

**Type B**: Direct Connection, Non-verbal connection possible (6 languages)
Type B includes languages that use direct connection as their main strategy but also that have the possibility to use a non-verbal connector as a secondary strategy:
- Arawak (Guyana), East Futunan, Nêlêmwa, Tseltal, Nanafwe, Martinique French Creole.

**Type C**: Direct Connection, Verbal Connection under constraints (22 languages)
This language type includes the so-called “tensed languages” that may express a permanent quality through direct connection as long as it concerns an unmarked tense such as present or aorist. But, when further TMA precision is needed, those languages require a verb:
- Kambera, Qawasqar, Tehuelche, Nengee, Badaga, Cree Montagnais, l'\textquoteright{s}aka, Bijogo, Deuri, Classical Nahuatl, Hungarian, Ixcatec, Kalaallisut, Kamayura, Nashta, Purepecha, Russian, Tinumiisut, Turkish, Wambaya, Yuwaalariaay, Zapotec.

\textsuperscript{95} Boyd Michailovsky, 1988, \textit{La langue hayu}, Paris, CNRS Editions.
Type D: Verbal Connection, Direct Connection marginal or impossible (16 languages)

This category includes the languages that function mainly with verbal connection and may use direct connection in specific contexts such as exclamative sentences. Otherwise, direct connection is not possible:

- Basque, Breton, Chechen, French, Georgian, Hayu, Japanese, Korean, Kryz, Modern Greek, Romani, Saami, Spanish, Thulung, Ubykh, Welsh.

Type E: All possible (7 languages)

For some languages a wide range of connective strategies is available and naturally each strategy responds to specific pragmatic needs (e.g. focus):

- Mankon, Qiang, Gbanzili, Gula, Yemeni Arabic, Langi, Moroccan Arabic.

Languages with direct connection as a main strategy are the majority. Moreover, the most common type in our sample is Type C, for languages that use direct connection as an unmarked strategy but require a verb for extra TMA markers. The second most frequent strategy concerns the almost exclusive use of verbal connection, Type D.

8. CONCLUSION

Based on a sample of 60 languages belonging to a wide range of stocks, this study presents the various syntactic processes used crosslinguistically to express the attribution of a quality, identification and membership: direct connection, specialized non-verbal and non-specialized connectors, and full lexical verbs, both intransitive and transitive.

More than one of these strategies can be found in a given language. The choice of a strategy depends most frequently on the type of unit, clause type, use of TMA markers other than present
or aorist, and the need to add pragmatic focus or an additional lexical argument.

Based on the uses of the three connective strategies five language types have been identified:

Type A Direct connection
Type B Direct connection, non-verbal connector possible
Type C Direct connection, verbal connection under constraints
Type D Verbal connection, direct connection marginal or impossible
Type E All possible

We believe it would be useful if future language descriptions were to include a chapter on connective constructions, which would examine all the means available in the language and the relevant constraints applying to them.

Abbreviations

1 first person; 2 second person; 3 third person; A1 1st person singular/ergative (Tseltal); ABS absolutive; ACC accomplished; ADJ adjective; AL addressee; AOR aorist; ART article; ASS assertive; B1 1st pers. sg. / absolutive (Tseltal); B3 3rd pers. sg. / absolutive (Tseltal); COP copula; D dual; DEF definite; DEM or DEM2 demonstrative or demonstrative type 2; DEIC deictic; DIST distal; EVID evidential; F feminine; FOC focalizer; FUT future; GEN genitive; IMP imperative; INDEF indefinite; INST instrumental; INT interrogative; M or MASC masculine; N neutral; NEG negation; NOM nominative case; NPRED non predicate marker; PART predicative particle; PL plural; PRD-ADJ predicate adjective; PRED or P or SP or SPEC.PRED predicate marker; PREFSUJ subject prefix; PRES present; PROG progressive; PROX proximal; PST or PAST past; PTCP participle.

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