

Towards a contrastive usage-based constructionist methodology for a cross-linguistic comparison of constructions

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This paper presents a programmatic outline of a systematic approach to contrastive linguistic research within Construction Grammar(s) (CxG(s)). We address a number of theoretical and applied problems in Contrastive Construction Grammar, including the following: (1) Defining and empirically and reliably determining constructions across languages, (2) granularity and scope questions with special focus on different levels of abstraction and/or complexity, (3) methodological issues involving reliance on comparable datasets for efficient comparison and contrast, and (4) constructional polysemy and meaning extensions across languages. Drawing on data from different languages we discuss several options for solving the problems raised above. More specifically, we adapt Boas's (2010) proposal to use semantic frames (modelling the meaning side of constructions) as a *tertium comparationis* to show how different layers between forms, meanings and/or functions interact with each other across different types of constructions in their respective constructicons (Fillmore *et al.*, 2012), thus setting up the basis for a roadmap for future studies in Contrastive Construction Grammar.

Keywords: cross-linguistic, contrastive, semantic frame(s), constructicography, English/German/Spanish

1. Introduction

This paper explores new ways of comparing and contrasting constructions across languages by combining insights from both Contrastive Linguistics (CL) and Construction Grammar(s) (CxG(s)),¹ which have each been employed for differ-

1. We use the label "Construction Grammar(s)" because there is no mainstream Construction Grammar but rather a family of constructionist approaches (Goldberg, 2013; Van de Velde, 2014: 143; Butler and González-García, 2014; Van Trijp, 2024: 312, 2025).

ent types of linguistic analyses for multiple decades. More specifically, we propose an outline towards a usage-based contrastive methodology that will allow for a more rigorous methodology by systematically employing corpus data for analysis. Our proposal differs from previous contrastive approaches couched in constructional terms in that it is not limited to analyzing just specific pairs of languages and/or specific types of constructions in these languages. Instead, it aims to discuss how the same systematic methodology should be applied across different pairs of languages as well as different types of constructions.

While both CL and CxG(s) have existed side-by-side during the 1980s and 1990s, it was only in the early 2000s that researchers started exploring ways of systematically combining insights from both approaches (see Boas, 2003, 2010a; González-García, 2010). On the one hand, contrastive linguistics typically compares elements (words, structures, rules) between languages, while on the other hand CxG(s) enables the direct comparison of “constructions” – form-meaning pairings – between languages, illuminating cross-linguistic similarities and differences in a systematic usage-based way. This integrative approach is used for describing and explaining how constructions differ or align across languages, with implications for language typology, language learning, translation, and syntactic theory. In addition, CL brings a rigorous, data-driven, cross-linguistic perspective to CxG(s), helping to build a more nuanced, empirically grounded, and cognitively plausible theory of how constructions work across the world’s languages.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a necessarily brief historical overview of the development of Contrastive Linguistics (CL). Then, we discuss how insights from CxG(s) have informed a number of different analyses that touch on contrastive issues, including Boas (2003), González-García (2010, 2017), Hasegawa *et al.* (2010), Boas and González-García (2014), Gilquin (2015), Boas and Ziem (2018a, 2018b), Dux (2020), Schafroth (2020), De Knop (2024), Franceschi (2024), and Horsch and Boas (2025), among others. Section 3 discusses several theoretical and applied problems in Contrastive Construction Grammar (henceforth ConCxG). Section 4 outlines the cornerstones of a programmatic strategy for fine-tuning the methodology of contrastive analysis for CxG(s) that employs concepts from constructicography (Fillmore *et al.*, 2012; Lyngfelt *et al.*, 2018; Boas *et al.*, 2019; Diessel, 2023; Boas, 2025a) to propose concrete steps towards finding solutions to the four problems mentioned above. Focusing on contrastive data from a variety of languages including English, French, German, Slovak and Spanish, we discuss a variety of different options for solving the problems raised above. More specifically, we adapt Boas’s (2010a) proposal to use semantic frames as a TC to show how different layers between forms, meanings and functions interact with each other across different types of constructions (e.g., word order constructions, argument structure constructions,

voice constructions, etc.) in their respective constructions (Lyngfelt, 2018). This discussion sets up the basis for a roadmap for future studies in ConCxG.

2. The emergence of Contrastive Construction Grammar

After Fillmore and his associates proposed in a variety of publications since the late 1980s what has become known as Berkeley Construction Grammar (Fillmore, 1987; Fillmore *et al.*, 1988[2003], Fillmore and Kay, 1993), several different versions of CxG emerged that each take a slightly different interest in the study of language (for an overview, see Fillmore, 2013). These include, among others, Cognitive Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 1995, 2006, 2019; Boas, 2013), Sign-Based Construction Grammar (Sag, 2012; Boas and Sag, 2012), Radical Construction Grammar (Croft, 2001, 2013, 2022), Embodied Construction Grammar (Bergen and Chang, 2013), and Fluid Construction Grammar (Steels, 2013). For current purposes, the main differences between these different “flavors” of CxG concern how formal or cognitive the approach should be, whether universal categories exist, how much emphasis one is to place on neural/embodied aspects, and whether the goal is psychological reality or computational precision. At the same time, these different versions of CxG all agree that constructions (form-meaning/function pairings) are the fundamental building blocks of language, that grammar exists on a continuum from specific to abstract, and that there’s no strict division between lexicon and syntax (see Boas *et al.*, 2024).

While CxG(s) emerged as an alternative to the then mainstream generative transformational grammar approach (Chomsky, 1981) during the 1980s, another approach to linguistic analysis had already established itself and evolved since the 1950s, namely Contrastive Linguistics (CL). Lado’s seminal (1957) work, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, established contrastive analysis as a systematic comparison of two languages and cultures to predict areas of language learning difficulty. During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a shift towards incorporating more sophisticated linguistic models into CL, expanding contrastive studies beyond phonology and syntax to include semantics, pragmatics, and discourse.

The rise of corpus linguistics enabled contrastive analysis to leverage large, parallel and comparable text collections, supporting more nuanced and data-rich investigations of real language use in contrast. A central study during this next phase of CL was James (1980), who sought greater methodological rigor, emphasizing the importance of a clear *tertium comparationis* (TC) – a common frame of reference for valid cross-language comparison. James stressed “comparing like with like,” arguing that only against a common background can true linguistic differences be isolated and understood. His work addressed both formal

and functional aspects and introduced the need to combine contrastive and error analysis for a fuller picture of language learning and interference. Subsequently, Krzeszowski (1990) refined CL by expanding the types of equivalence (e.g., statistical, translation, pragmatic) that can serve as a TC. He insisted that CL is not restricted to genetically related languages and highlighted its relevance for translation studies and cross-cultural understanding. Krzeszowski's ideas equipped researchers with a nuanced "metalanguage" for contrastive inquiry, broadening the discipline's scope and theoretical rigor.

In 2010, the first author of this paper proposed to combine insights from CL with CxG(s) to develop a methodology for systematic comparisons of linguistic structures of two languages (Boas, 2010a). Based on his earlier research on parallel linguistic structures in English and German (Boas, 2002, 2003), the impetus for this approach was the observation that Croft's (2001) Radical CxG was "too radical" in the sense that it proposed "only" language-specific categories, which, in a way, makes comparisons between languages extremely cumbersome. In Boas's (2010a) view, a comparative and contrastive approach to constructions in multiple languages should take meaning/function – not the form side of a construction – as its point of departure. To achieve this goal, Boas's contrastive constructional approach uses semantic frames (Fillmore, 1982, 1985) as a TC (a basis for comparison), and not syntactic categories. This means that instead of starting with the syntactic forms of constructions and trying to match them across languages, researchers first identify the semantic frame or meaning that a construction expresses and then examine how different languages realize that meaning through their respective constructions at different levels of abstraction and schematicity. More specifically, Boas (2010a) proposes to first identify which patterns in a pair of languages are language-specific and then to determine which patterns appear across languages. During this process, it is important, according to Boas (2010a), to understand how similar communicative functions are realized through different constructional means in different languages and to capture both language-specific properties and cross-linguistic generalizations.

For example, Boas (2010a: 9–10) discusses the various syntactic patterns associated with a particular sense of the English verb *to announce* evoking the `Communication_statement` frame.² Based on Boas (2002), he points out "that *announce* is quite flexible in how it allows the different perspectives of a communication event to be expressed. This semantic flexibility is reflected by the various syntactic realizations of Frame Elements" (Boas, 2010a: 9) of the `Communication_statement` frame, including the following:

- (1) They announced the birth of their child.

2. See <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/frames/Statement>

- (2) The document announced that the war had begun.
- (3) The conductor announced the train's departure over the intercom.

When discussing different German translation equivalents of these three examples, Boas (2010a: 9–10) shows that German requires different verbs as translation equivalents for each of the three perspectives taken on the *Communication_statement* frame by English *announce*, see Table 1.

Table 1. A selection of syntactic frames of *announce* and corresponding German verbs, based on Boas (2002: 1370) (Boas, 2010a: 10)

1.	speaker	TARGET	message	
	NP.Ext	announce.v	NP.Obj	
		<i>bekanntgeben, bekanntmachen, ankündigen, anzeigen</i>		
2.	medium	TARGET	message	
	NP.Ext	announce.v	Sfin_that.Comp	
		<i>bekanntgeben, ankündigen, anzeigen</i>		
3.	speaker	TARGET	message	medium
	NP.Ext	announce.v	NP.Obj	PP_over.Comp
		<i>ankündigen, ansagen, durchsagen</i>		

To this end, Boas (2010a: 9) demonstrates that “when *announce* occurs with the syntactic frame [NP.Ext__NP.Obj] to realize the Speaker and Message Frame Elements, German requires *bekanntgeben, bekanntmachen, ankündigen, or anzeigen* (the choice is largely stylistic in nature). Each of these German verbs comes with its own specific syntactic frames that express the semantics of the *Communication_statement* frame.”³ Similarly, the other two syntactic patterns associated with *announce* in Table 1 require different German verbs as translation equivalents than the first syntactic pattern. These observations lead Boas (2010a: 9) to propose that “semantic frames are in principle a useful tool for cross-linguistic constructional analysis”.

Based on Boas’s (2010a) emphasis on meaning-based comparisons over form-based comparisons, the papers in his edited volume (Boas, 2010b) each reference

3. Spanish also allows for some lexical variation in this frame, making use of *anunciar* ‘tell, make public’ and, to a lesser extent, *proclamar* ‘to declare winners, names’: *El Kensington Palace anunció la llegada del varón*, ‘Kensington Palace announced the arrival of a boy’ (G AR ar.cine.yahoo.com)/*César proclamó a Cleopatra reina de Egipto*, ‘Caesar proclaimed Cleopatra queen of Egypt’ (G CL e-mas.co.cl).

a well-described constructional phenomenon in English and then describe and analyze its constructional counterpart in other languages, including Finnish (Leino, 2010), Japanese (Hasegawa *et al.*, 2010), Russian (Gurevich, 2010), Spanish (González-García, 2010), Swedish (Hilpert, 2010), and Thai (Timyam and Bergen, 2010). What unifies these analyses is that they take a specific English construction as a point of departure for describing and analyzing its counterpart in another language. Based on a mix of corpus-based methods as well as intuitions, these analyses also show nicely how specific differences between English and other languages are due to typological differences such as Russian having more morphological cases than English or cultural differences such as Finnish having a specific semantic frame capturing a native speakers' knowledge about the concept of "sauna" (see Leino, 2010).

While each of the contributions in Boas (2010b) focuses on contrastive issues from a constructional point of view, there is little mention of how the insights from each of these individual studies can be applied to developing a broader contrastive constructional framework that can be applied across different types of constructions in different types of languages. In the remainder of this paper, we aim to propose a number of programmatic steps towards developing such a broader framework of ConCxG. In the following section we first review some theoretical and empirical issues in ConCxG over the past 15 years, then we turn to an outline of what such a future broader framework should look like.

3. Theoretical and empirical issues in Contrastive Construction Grammar

Since 2008, several groups of construction grammarians have started projects for creating databases for entries of grammatical constructions, in parallel to lexical databases such as Berkeley FrameNet for English (for details, see Fillmore *et al.*, 2003; Fillmore and Baker, 2010; Boas, 2017; Boas, 2021; Boas *et al.*, 2024) and (lexical) FrameNets for other languages, including Brazilian Portuguese, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Swedish (see the contributions in Lyngfelt *et al.*, 2018 as well as Borin and Lyngfelt, 2025). The basic idea, first laid out by Fillmore (2008) and Fillmore *et al.* (2012), is to compile an (eventually) comprehensive repository of construction entries specifying all the relevant aspects of a construction's form and meaning/function.

This approach to linguistic analysis, constructicography, can be defined as "a blend between Construction Grammar and Practical Lexicography" (Boas *et al.*, 2019: 41). Over the last decade, several research groups have started accumulating databases of constructions, which have primarily relied on prior constructional

research. However, as Boas *et al.* (2019: 41) argue, constructicography has also contributed to its “mother theory” of CxG(s), “since the effort to build coherent formalized computational resources forces constructionist analysis to go beyond describing families of constructions into the enterprise of describing a coherent construction grammar of a language.”⁴

While the constructicon projects of different languages typically differ with respect to their corpora and tools used for data extraction, description, analysis, and compilation of construction entries, most constructicon projects for other languages have typically taken English construction entries as a starting point. One such approach for German proposed by Boas and Ziem (2018a, 2018b) deals with empirical, theoretical, and methodological issues involved in the creation of a comprehensive database of German constructions. More specifically, the authors present one of the first systematic attempts to create a comprehensive constructicon for German, tackling both practical issues (like how to format entries and which corpus to use) and theoretical questions (like how German constructions should be represented and organized in a network).

One of the key questions addressed by Boas and Ziem (2018b) is whether and how it is possible to identify corresponding constructions in English and German. Their case study starts with a discussion of English constructions, pointing out that, for example, many word order constructions in German are systematically different because of the V-2 constraint on where the finite verb is placed in a sentence (see Webelhuth, 1992; Haider, 1993; Müller, 2005). Comparing the various types of English and German word order constructions, Boas and Ziem (2018a: 4) find that it is difficult to posit, as in generative frameworks, that one basic word order from which other word orders are derived, because “there are no *a priori* empirical criteria for determining what types of constructions are more basic than others, or what types of constructions should be derived from “basic” constructions.” This insight leads them to suggest that the grammar of English and German have different types of word order constructions organized in different types of networks in their respective constructicons.⁵ Based on their comparison of some systematic (typological) differences between English and German, Boas

4. See Boas (2025a) for a proposal detailing a systematic workflow of corpus annotation and analysis that allows researchers to compile a complete inventory of construction entries for a corpus. According to Boas (2025a), this constructicon can then be used to conduct research on how construction entries combine (the “grammar”).

5. Boas and Ziem (2018a: 4–8) also discuss other systematic differences between English and German. For example, they show that the topological field model of German syntax has several advantages for modeling German word order constructions but that the same model does not work well for English. Another difference they discuss is the case system of German that encodes a variety of different grammatical functions in many different word order combinations, which makes German word order a lot more flexible than English.

and Ziem (2018b) outline a proposal, based on Boas's (2010a) use of semantic frames and grammatical constructions as TC, that seeks to identify a continuum of constructional equivalences between grammatical constructions of the two languages. More specifically, the authors establish a continuum of constructional correspondences with two opposite ends, namely close correspondence and low correspondence, with a medium point on the continuum that they label partial correspondence, as detailed in the following subsection.

3.1 Continuum of constructional correspondences

In their discussion of how to establish constructional correspondences between English and German constructions, Boas and Ziem (2018b) compare three specific types of constructions in English and German ranging from quasi synonymous and structurally homologous ones, such as the *just_because_doesn't_mean* construction, to constructions with more or less language-specific characteristics, such as the family of exclamative constructions (D'Avis, 2013; Michaelis, 2001; Ziem and Ellsworth, 2016) and the *way*-construction (Goldberg, 1995: 199–218; Oya, 1999).

Based on prior analyses of the semi-idiomatic English *just_because_doesn't_mean* (JBDM) construction (Hirose, 1991; Bender and Kathol, 2001; Hilpert, 2007; Kanetani, 2011), Boas and Ziem (2018b) identify its German counterpart as the *nur_weil_heisst_das_[noch_lange]_nicht* (NWHN) construction that exhibits very similar idiosyncratic syntactic properties that are paired with a very similar range of meanings as in the following examples.

- (4) *Nur weil für den Aufbau eines*
 Only because for DEF.ACC.SG.M build.up INDEF.GEN.SG.M
Konstruktikon-s groß-e Anstreng-un-gen nötig sind,
 Constructicon-GEN.SG big-PL effort-NMLZ-PL necessary be.PRS.3PL
heißt das nicht, dass dies un-möglich ist.
 mean.PRS.3SG DEM.N NEG COMP DEM.N NEG-possible be.PRS.3SG
 "Just because the development of a constructicon requires a lot of effort does not mean that it is impossible."

In reviewing the different syntactic and semantic properties of the two constructions, Boas and Ziem (2018b: 205) find that the "JBDM construction exhibits the same range of meaning variation as its German counterpart. The grammatical properties of the JBDM and the NWHN construction are also very similar."

Based on their discussion of the English JBDM construction and its German counterpart the NWHN construction, Boas and Ziem (2018b: 206) point out that constructional pairs such as these exemplify one end of the continuum of con-

structional correspondences, i.e. these constructions are basically near similar in two languages and should thus be considered as constructional equivalents.⁶

The second class of constructions on the continuum of constructional correspondences is somewhere in the middle of both ends of the continuum, according to Boas and Ziem (2018b). These are pairs of constructions in two languages that both share a specific set of properties while at the same time differing in several properties. As an example of this class of constructions, the authors discuss and compare and contrast the family of exclamative constructions in English and German, which “allow to express a speaker’s surprise with regard to any kind of perceived entity, including events, situations, and objects the speaker comes across” (Boas and Ziem, 2018b: 206), as in *What a huge car!* (German *Was für ein riesiges Auto!*). Based on a review of prior research on exclamatives by Michaelis (2001), Rett (2009), D’Avis (2013), as well as Ziem and Ellsworth (2016), Boas and Ziem (2018b: 206) point out that, while the range of semantic variation of exclamatives in English and German is roughly the same, there are some language-specific differences on the form-side as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 summarizes some of the key syntactic differences between exclamative constructions in English and German discussed by Boas and Ziem (2018b: 208–209), such as: (1) German has verb-first exclamatives while English does not (see (i) and (ii) in Table 2); (2) Fronted sub-clauses initiated by complementizers as in (iii) and (iv) are possible in German, but not in English; (3) German allows exclamatives with an obligatory particle as in (v) (leaving out the particle would turn it into a regular declarative clause), while English does not; (4) Certain lexical categories are missing in a construction in one language but turn up in the other, as in (vi), where only the German *What_NP* exclamative entails the preposition *für* (‘for’).

While there are these systematic syntactic differences between exclamative constructions in English and German, there are also various homologous constructions without any differences, according to Boas and Ziem (2018b: 209), such as (1) *NP_as_exclamative* construction, e.g. *Ein schöner Tag!* (‘A beautiful day’),

6. More recently, Horsch and Boas (2025) discuss a similar case of constructional equivalence between the English correlative construction (CC) (e.g. *The less talking there is here, the sooner I will fall asleep*) and its counterpart in Slovak. The authors point out that the CC in both languages are very similar when it comes to their form, meaning, and pragmatics. Employing a corpus-based analysis of CCs in English and Slovak, Horsch and Boas (2025) show that similar statistically significant cross-clausal associations hold across the two subparts of CCs (*The X ... the Y*) in both English and Slovak. They also discuss the structures of the constructional networks in both languages and conduct a covarying-collexeme analysis (Stefanowitsch and Gries, 2005) to test for the entrenchment of meso-constructions in Slovak. For an analysis of the Spanish correlative construction, see Horsch (2024).

Table 2. Cross-linguistic variations of exclamative constructions (Boas and Ziem, 2018b: 208)

Cross-linguistic variation	German example	English counterpart
Verb position	(i) Ist das ein schöner Tag!	*Is this a nice day! What a nice day!
	(ii) Was für ein schöner Tag (das ist/ist das)!	*What a nice day is this! What a nice day this is!
Sub-clause initiated by complementizer	(iii) Dass das Wetter so herrlich ist!	??That the weather is so beautiful! This is such a beautiful weather!
	(iv) Wenn das kein voller Erfolg ist!	??If this is not a great success! This is such a great success!
Obligatory particle	(v) Das ist aber ein schnelles Auto!	*But this a fast car! What a fast car this is!
Lexical gap	(vi) Was für ein schöner Tag (das ist)!	*What for a nice day (this is)! What a nice day (this is)!
	(vii) Als wäre es Frühling!	*As it were spring! As if it were spring!

(2) *Wh_NP* construction with *what/welch* (e.g. *What a beautiful day!// Welch ein schöner Tag!*), (3) *AP_as_exclamative* constructions (e.g. *Beautiful!//Schön!*), (4) *comparative_as_exclamative* constructions initiated by *such (so)* (e.g. *Such a beautiful day!//So ein schöner Tag!*), and (5) *WXYDY* constructions with nominal focus elements (e.g. *What’s my diary doing on your desk?//Was macht mein Tagebuch auf deinem Schreibtisch?*).

Besides these “mixed” constructional equivalence between English and German exclamative constructions on the form side, Boas and Ziem (2018b: 209–210) also discuss similarities and differences on the meaning side of the constructions. For example, the ability to include particles such as *aber* ‘but’ and *vielleicht* ‘maybe’ in German exclamatives without the option of a corresponding English counterpart shows that on the meaning side it is possible to express surprise more overtly in German than in English. The partial syntactic and semantic overlap between English and German exclamative constructions lead Boas and Ziem (2018b: 210) to the conclusion that they exhibit only partial correspondence

and should thus be “located in the middle field of the continuum of construction correspondences”.

Boas and Ziem (2018b: 211) discuss the English *way*-construction and its German counterparts as an example of a constructional pair that is on the other end of the continuum of constructional correspondence, i.e. there is no clear constructional correspondence in German of the English *way*-construction. The authors point out that while the English *way*-construction as in *They laughed their way off the stage* has relatively few restrictions on the types of verbs that can fuse with it (see Jackendoff, 1990; Goldberg, 1995; Israel, 1996), its German counterpart is different. Boas and Ziem (2018b: 211–212) review Oya (1999), who shows that German uses a reflexive construction to encode the semantics that comes close to the English *way*-constructions as in *Sie lachten sich von der Bühne* (‘They laughed themselves off the stage’): (i) Only activity verbs can fuse with the *way*-construction and the German reflexive construction; (ii) the motion expressed by the *way*-construction is often metaphorical rather than literal, and (iii) there is often an implication that the agent is overcoming some type of obstacle when moving in order to get to a specific goal.⁷

Despite these similarities when it comes to semantic restrictions, there are some significant differences between the English *way*-construction and the German reflexive construction that is used to express a parallel meaning, according to Boas and Ziem (2018b: 212–213). First, while the English *way*-construction can be used to express a non-causal meaning as in *They were clanging their way up and down the narrow streets*, in which the motion and the sound emission run parallel, this does not work in German (see **Sie klapperten sich die schmalen Straßen rauf und runter*). Second, the English *way*-construction also allows for a means interpretation (besides the manner interpretation above) as in *Paul elbowed his way through the crowd*, while the German reflexive construction does not, i.e. to express the means semantics of the English *way*-construction, German requires a construction different from the reflexive (see *Paul benutzte seine Ellbogen, um durch die Menschenmenge zu kommen*).

The comparison of the different meanings of the English *way*-construction shows that it is polysemous between at least two different readings (manner and means), each of which is realized in German by two different types of constructions. Boas and Ziem (2018b: 212) take this insight to argue that a construction of English should thus have (at least) two different construction entries for each of the English *way*-constructions and that each of the English *way*-constructions has a different German counterpart. As for the German reflexive construction, the

7. For an analysis of exclamative constructions in Spanish, see Villalba (2015) and references therein. See also González-Romero (2022) on the Spanish *way*-construction counterpart.

authors point out that English also has a reflexive construction and that it shares some of the form-meaning properties of its German counterpart.

This observation leads Boas and Ziem (2018b) to dig deeper into the distribution of English and German reflexive constructions. They find that both the English and German reflexive constructions describe an activity with a terminal end point. The PP in English and German reflexive constructions do not encode a path because “in both languages the constructions do not permit indirect anaphoric references to the respective path argument” (compare *Peter danced himself through the hall. ??It led straight to the exit door* and *Peter tanzte sich durch den Saal. ??Er/Es führte direkt zur Ausgangstür*) (2018b: 213–214). Based on this observation and a brief discussion of anaphoric reference, Boas and Ziem (2018b: 2014) come to the conclusion that

[...] the English reflexive construction and its German counterpart feature very similar characteristics, both syntactically and semantically. Most importantly, both trigger a manner interpretation and do not allow a means interpretation. While, however, in English there is also a *way_manner* construction that shares most features with the reflexive construction, there is no such alternative in German.

Based on their discussion of how the English *way*-construction with its means and manner interpretation is realized in German, Boas and Ziem (2018b: 214) come to the conclusion that “they are very different when it comes to the specific constraints regulating the fusion of verbs and constructions, and these constraints are construction- and language-specific.”

Boas and Ziem’s (2018b) proposal regarding a continuum of constructional equivalence discussed in the previous paragraphs has been adopted by other analyses. For example, Boas *et al.* (2019) compare how construction resources for different languages such as Brazilian Portuguese, English, German, Japanese, and Swedish are compiled and why. While the details of their discussion regarding different corpora, formats, and other resources is not of direct interest to our discussion, there are some interesting insights regarding cross-linguistic comparisons of constructions for different languages. More specifically, Boas *et al.* (2019) point out that one needs to consider systematic typological differences between related constructions when determining how the semantics of a given concept is encoded by different forms of different constructions in different languages. They observe that when constructions are mapped across languages, they may not involve the same kinds of elements, and even similar elements can distribute meaning differently. By way of illustration, Swedish encodes manner in the verb and path in an adverbial, while Spanish reverses this pattern, placing path in the verb and manner in an adverbial (Boas *et al.*, 2019: 71–72).

To address this problem, Boas *et al.* (2019) briefly discuss a unidirectional linking approach between construction entries in different languages but come to the conclusion that such comparisons are rather time-consuming. Instead, they pick up on Boas's (2009) idea from multilingual lexicography to use semantic frames for linking meanings of lexical units across different languages and point out that the meanings of many constructions can be represented by semantic frames as well. This leads Boas *et al.* (2019: 73) to propose that

[...] to the extent that semantically related cxns in different languages can be linked to the same semantic frames, they can thereby be linked to each other. Such a connection requires (a) a meaning similarity that may be characterized in terms of a frame, (b) a frame entry capturing this meaning, and (c) that the same frame definition is employed for the languages in question.

Following a discussion of how the meanings of several different constructions in different languages such as the ditransitive, imperative, and gapping constructions can be modelled with semantic frames, Boas *et al.* (2019: 73) come to the conclusion that

[...] some cxns may be linked via frames and others may not, whether due to properties of cxns or due to a lack of appropriate frame entries. Furthermore, the frame relation is limited not only to the meaning/function of the cxns but also to certain aspects of the constructional meaning/function. It is therefore desirable to also develop other means to connect cxns in different languages.

To this end, the authors propose adopting comparative concepts of the kind employed in language typology (e.g. Haspelmath, 2010; Croft, 2022). According to Boas *et al.* (2019: 73), comparative concepts “are theoretical constructs designed specifically for the purpose of comparing linguistic structures across languages, without any presumption of cross-linguistic descriptive categories.”

Subsequent research by Willich (2022) and Boas (2025b) builds on Fillmore *et al.*'s (2012: 332–368) discussion of different types of constructions and how to represent their meanings with semantic frames. More specifically, Boas (2025b) points out that while the meanings of some constructions such as the *way*-construction, which evokes the Motion frame, can be represented by semantic frames that are also evoked by lexical units, other constructions such as the subject-predicate construction do not carry any identifiable meaning pole and thus do not require any representation of meaning in terms of semantic frames. Whether certain constructions such as the subject-auxiliary construction carry any meaning at all is also subject to debate, as Fillmore (1999) and Goldberg (2006) show (see also Section 3.2 for further discussion on the issue of the meaningfulness of constructions). Overall, the representation of meanings of construc-

tions in a single language remains an unsettled issue, since there is as of yet no coherent meaning inventory of constructions, let alone the frames or other knowledge structures with which they are associated. We expect future research in Con-CxG to provide a fruitful testing ground for the representations of different types of meanings of constructions and how they play out across different languages.

3.2 Granularity issue(s)

An important aspect that we need to consider in a contrastive constructionist analysis is the (right) level of granularity when comparing and contrasting two constructions in two languages. In this connection, as Hoffmann (2022: 196) reminds us, “constructional generalizations can occur at varying degrees of schematicity (Hilpert, 2013: 201–203) – even for a set of similar constructions such as the argument structure constructions”. In this connection, it is particularly instructive to bring to the fore the four-fold distinction proposed in Traugott (2008a: 30, 2008b: 236) between (i) macro-constructions (i.e. form-meaning correspondences defined by structure as well as function), (ii) meso-constructions (i.e. sets of constructions with a similar behavior), (iii) micro-constructions (i.e. individual construction types), and (iv) constructs (i.e. the empirically attested tokens).

Moreover, Traugott’s micro-constructions are fairly compatible with Croft’s (2003: 59–65) distinction between verb-class and verb-specific constructions and Boas’s mini-constructions (2008a: 127). These three proposals agree on the premise that it is possible and indeed desirable to state generalizations at different levels of abstraction (i.e. verb-specific, verb-class specific, and schematic generalizations).⁸ Also implicit in these proposals is the idea that the construction grammarian should aim at a right balance between robust generalizations and item-specific properties, a statement which also holds true for contrastive construction analysis. Boas (2008b: 32) argues that, when we analyze a surface syntactic pattern, we should first look for the most abstract form-meaning pairing that explains it. Only if that fails should we search for more specific constructions, keeping in mind how general constructions and verb-specific mini-constructions relate to one another.

The bottom-up analysis proposed for a constructional analysis of a particular language is also invoked for a cross-linguistic analysis, which is central to Con-CxG (Boas, 2010a, 2010b). The virtues of the frame-constructional model in this domain basically boil down to the fact that a contrastive frame-semantic analysis

8. See also Boas (2011) for a network of resultative constructions with different levels of abstraction and granularity.

helps identify cross-linguistic constructional patterns more effectively. By using semantic frames as a shared basis of comparison (a TC), researchers can map how different languages organize and express meanings in their lexicons and syntax.⁹

As Boas (2010a: 10) acknowledges, the type of contrastive frame-semantic analyses proposed here do not take issue with Croft's (2001, 2013) contention that constructions are language-specific. However, they differ from Croft's position in at least two important respects: (i) they suggest a more careful approach that initially only compares and contrasts constructions between pairs of languages, and (ii) while acknowledging the useful insights offered by the notions of semantic and syntactic space and the mapping between the two, no attempt is made to identify some type of "universal" conceptual space without first having carried out a thorough analysis of all languages (on this point see also Boas, 2020).

For current purposes, the level of granularity can also be seen to depend on at least three different yet related factors: (i) the framework (or, to be more precise, the specific flavor of CxG) used, (ii) the type(s) of linguistic items/phenomena scrutinized, and (iii) the purpose of the contrastive analysis. Regarding the first factor, it should be borne in mind that different 'flavors' of CxG take different stands on the definition of constructions as well as their formalization (see Van Trijp, 2024: 315; Butler and González-García, 2014; Boas *et al.*, 2024: 169; Van Trijp, 2025). In addition, the survey reported in Boas *et al.* (2024: 180) shows that "not all constructionists agree on the exact formulation of a number of key concepts of CxG" (including its formalism). Additionally, another aspect should be mentioned that impinges on the real translability of the different flavors of CxG, namely, the stance taken on the existence of defective and/or meaningless constructions.¹⁰ CCG and other cognitively-influenced versions of CxG make the strong claim that there are no meaningless constructions (Goldberg, 2006: 166–182; Hilpert, 2019: 50–57; Hoffmann, 2022: 258; Cappelle, 2024: 53–59 and Leclercq and Morin, 2025: 56 for further discussion). By contrast, Fillmore *et al.* (2012: 327–329) include, for instance, the Subject-Auxiliary-Inversion construction (*Will you stay?*) among what might be considered "constructions without meaning". Moreover, Jackendoff and Audring (2020: 197, fn. 2) openly accept

9. However, as Horsch and Boas (2025: 19) observe, it still remains an open question whether the meanings of all constructions can be modelled through semantic frames. See also Willich (2023) and Boas (2025b).

10. In Jackendoff's Parallel Architecture (Jackendoff, 2002; Jackendoff and Audring, 2020), "defective constructions" are constructions whose internal structure is incomplete in one or more of the parallel components of grammar — phonology, syntax, or semantics. They are "defective" in the sense that one tier of structure is missing or only partially specified, while the others are fully represented. A case in point would be, for instance, the sequence *fa-la-la*, which could be considered a purely phonological construction, with no syntactic and semantic effects.

the existence of purely syntactic constructions, such as verb-particle combinations (*look up the information/look the information up*), instances of support *do* (*I do not like ham*) or *that*-complementizer (*I think that it's raining*).¹¹

Regarding the second factor, the type of linguistic phenomena that can be contrasted within a contrastive constructionist analysis, two important considerations are in order: first, language is seen as a massive network of interrelated constructions of varying degrees of generality/specificity and morphosyntactic complexity (ranging from morphemes to more complex patterns such as the covariational conditional construction (*The sooner, the better*) (Goldberg, 2024: 223). Second, construction grammarians conceive the relationship between semantics and pragmatics in terms of a continuum, comprising a relatively wide number of aspects ranging from lexical semantics to discourse pragmatics, including textual and register considerations. Specifically, Goldberg (2019: 7) defines a construction as follows: “A construction is an emergent cluster of lossy (imperfect) memory traces that align within our high-dimensional conceptual space on the basis of shared form, function, and contextual dimensions.” (see, however, Ungerer and Hartmann, 2023: 5–11 for a critical exhaustive discussion of the Goldbergian definitions of a construction).¹²

The function pole of a construction in CCG is taken to include “any conventional aspect of meaning, information structure, rhetorical influence, register or speaker attitude” (Goldberg, 2024: 221). However, in keeping with Schmid (2020: 292) and Hoffmann (2022: 43), more integrative definitions of constructions have been proposed in which the form pole not only encompasses morphological and syntactic information, but also phonological/phonetic information on the grounds that most phonological elements are understood to be form-function pairs which convey social meaning (see further Leclercq and Morin, 2025: 57–58 and Morin, 2026).¹³ Some construction grammarians have gone as far as to suggest a totally open-ended anatomy of a construction on the grounds that

[...] [u]ntil sufficiently demonstrated otherwise, it is therefore more prudent to avoid restrictions on the kind of information that can or should be in a construction, as long as the construction serves the language user's goals.

(Van Trijp, 2024: 321).¹⁴

11. The discussion of the existence of meaningless constructions has been so far restricted to English. The reader is referred to Michaelis and Lambrecht (1996) and Goldberg (2006, 2024: 222) for important theoretical and descriptive qualifications on meaningless constructions.

12. This definition supersedes the original definition proposed in Goldberg (1995: 1) and the usage-based extension of the term formulated in Goldberg (2006: 5).

13. This criticism holds for the Goldbergian definitions of a construction. Croft (2001: 18), however, includes phonological information in the form-pole of a construction.

This suggestion is fully at home with the holistic desideratum of constructionist analyses in general and contrastive constructionist analyses in particular (see further Schafroth, 2020: 132–135). With the above observations in mind, it is clear that a contrastive constructionist analysis can accommodate the analysis of linguistic items and phenomena falling under the rubric of microlinguistics (e.g. lexis, syntax, semantics, morphology, phonology) as well as macrolinguistics (e.g. pragmatics, textual analysis, etc.) (James, 1980: 61).

Finally, the specific purpose(s) of the contrastive analysis must also be taken into account. Thus, the level of granularity of the analysis may be influenced by the type of information required for a specific purpose, such as teaching, translating, bilingual analysis, etc. (James, 1980: 61). For recent developments of pedagogical implementations of CxG(s), see Herbst (2016, 2020), González-García (2019), Boas (2022) and De Knop (2025), among others.

4. Towards a more systematic methodology for Contrastive Construction Grammar

In line with the key theoretical insights of CxG(s) outlined in the previous pages together with some insights into the workflow of a contrastive analysis (see e.g. Chesterman, 1998; Connor and Moreno, 2005: 155; Oksefjell Ebeling and Ebeling, 2020: 99, *inter alios*), we propose the following seven programmatic strategies for developing a systematic methodology for arriving at a more fine-tuned Con-CxG (the details of each of the following points need to be worked out by future research).

The first point, as discussed in the previous section, concerns the identification of comparable linguistic units and phenomena that represent not only perceived differences but also similarities of any kind between form and meaning/function in the languages under scrutiny (Chesterman, 1998; Tekin, 2012, 61 f.). This is fully at home with the shared assumption among construction grammarians that constructions are by and large form-function correspondences (without discarding the existence of meaningless constructions, see Willich, 2022; Boas, 2025b; Leclercq and Morin, 2025).

14. In addition, it has also been suggested that the inclusion in a construction's anatomy of detailed information concerning the mapping of morphosyntactic realizations onto their inherent semantico-pragmatic properties may prove very useful to enhance the explanatory power of a Goldbergerian constructionist account, while also helping to inform pedagogically-friendly applications/implementations of CCG to maximize the explicit input when teaching construal in the L2 classroom (González-García, 2019, 2020: 114).

The second point concerns the collection and retrieval of relevant data from a variety of different corpora and the use of various methodological tools (see Schönefeld, 2011), especially to avoid the potential shortcomings of just one type of corpus data (for details, see Horsch and Boas, 2025: 41, 43). Altenberg and Granger (2002) emphasize this point by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of different types of multilingual corpora, including comparable corpora, unidirectional translation corpora and bidirectional translation corpora. More specifically, they make the point that contrastive studies should consider data from all these different types because “they should be seen as complementary sources of cross-linguistic data” (see also Chesterman, 1998). Finally, the question of the relevance of the data, as will be recalled, depends on factors directly contingent on the granularity of analysis, such as (i) the specific flavor of CxG used, (ii) the type(s) of linguistic items/phenomena scrutinized, and (iii) the purpose of the contrastive analysis.

Thirdly, we propose that qualitative and quantitative data analyses should be conducted with an eye on usage-based aspects (e.g. frequency, collocational behavior, discourse functions, register variation, etc). More specifically, we argue that qualitative analyses are necessary, among other things, to unveil the semantico-pragmatic and discourse-functional hallmarks of constructions. Quantitative analyses provide useful insights into (token/type) frequency, variation and productivity. Specifically, the collostructional analysis proposed in Stefanowitsch and Gries (see Gilquin and Gries, 2025 for an updated version; Horsch and Boas, 2025) is useful to determine, among other things, which verbs are statistically attracted to a specific construction in a given language. It is assumed that both types of analysis are complementary and thus necessary to provide a principled account of items/constructions of a linguistic system within their communicative context(s).

The fourth point concerns the juxtaposition of data analyses with a view to providing robust morphosyntactic, semantic and discourse-functional constraints and, if possible, also discerning vertical relations as well as horizontal relations (e.g. alternations, family resemblance/polysemy, overlaps, etc.) in the constructions.

Specifically, a robust contrastive construction-based analysis requires the analyst to identify the relevant internal connections that render a construction a coherent pairing of form and meaning/function, and then to determine how these connections converge or diverge across languages. By default, this entails a multi-layered analytical procedure. Before any contrastive (or cross-linguistic) comparison can be undertaken, the analyst must first delineate the full set of intra-constructional relations in each language under scrutiny (although this may be open to revision in the light of the scope, granularity and/or purpose of the

analysis, as argued in 3.2). In the programmatic account sketched in this paper, this involves examining how (1) formal properties — such as syntactic configuration, morphological marking, argument structure, and relevant word-order constraints — interact with (2) semantic structure, including the semantic frame(s) invoked, participant-role mappings, relevant tense, aspect, mood marking, causal or spatial relations, and scalar or evaluative components, etc.; (3) pragmatic and discourse-functional characteristics, such as information-structural roles, register or genre restrictions, interactional functions, including illocutionary force; and (4) the construction's lexical profile, including typical verb classes, preferred slot fillers, collocational patterns, and semantico-pragmatic constraints, among other relevant aspects. The aim of this stage is to specify what makes the construction internally coherent in each language under investigation.

Because constructions form part of a broader network rather than existing in isolation, the analyst must also situate each construction within its language-specific constructional inventory. This includes identifying (i) the more specific configurations that instantiate the construction(s), (ii) the more abstract schemas it participates in, (iii) neighboring constructions with which it overlaps, and (iv) competing constructions occupying the same functional domain. This step ensures that the analysis accurately reflects each language's internal organization and avoids misleading one-to-one correspondences.

Only once these networks have been established for each of the two languages under scrutiny can a contrastive, constructionist analysis proceed. Such an analysis involves examining how the same dimensions — formal, semantic, pragmatic, and lexical — align or diverge in (parallel or translation) corpora. The comparison must be carried out *dimension by dimension*, using the categories identified independently for each language. It is only on the basis of such a bottom-up, usage-based comparison that well-founded abstract generalizations can be proposed on empirical grounds within a contrastive, constructionist analysis.

The fifth point is the determination of and accounting for the different motivation(s) (whether cognitive, typological, sociolinguistic, etc.) underlying and driving the similarities/differences detected among the items/constructions scrutinized. This point is also directly relevant to the issue of how to proceed with the process of deriving more abstract or general constructions. Our position in this respect is that, in contrastive constructional analysis, deriving higher-level, cross-linguistic generalizations should proceed in a bottom-up, empirically grounded manner. This aligns with usage-based constructionist work, which emphasizes that “lower-level schemas, expressing regularities of only limited scope, may on balance be more essential to language structure than high-level schemas representing the broadest generalizations.” (Langacker, 2000: 3). Once cross-linguistic correspondences have been identified, abstraction is warranted

only when (i) both languages exhibit a stable form-meaning/function pairing (even if fully compositional, in line with usage-based constructionist accounts), (ii) the proposed schema reflects recurrent attested patterns, and (iii) language-specific peculiarities are not being artificially incorporated. The overarching aim is to ensure that any abstract construction posited – at whatever level of generality – is genuinely motivated by usage in both languages rather than imposed analytically. While this point is probably geared towards more typological issues, we propose not to lose sight of the broader typological discussions, which should always be kept in mind when conducting contrastive analyses.

Sixth, the analysis can be improved by taking additional empirical and theoretical factors into account. Before going into specific ways of operationalizing contrastive constructional research, some preliminary observations are in order regarding the usefulness of translation corpora and bidirectional parallel corpora so as to identify relevant constructional pairs as well as to detect cross-linguistic correspondences and differences, respectively.¹⁵

Translation corpora provide insight into how different languages encode the same communicative situations, making them especially useful for identifying correspondences between constructions. Once a construction has been selected in one language (e.g. caused-motion, resultative, ditransitive) and all its occurrences in the corpus have been retrieved, it is possible to examine how translators systematically convey the same meaning in the other language. At a higher level of delicacy, this may enable the analyst to discover (i) direct equivalents (i.e. the same constructional pattern used in both languages), (ii) functional equivalents (i.e. different formal configurations sharing the same meaning/function), (iii) asymmetries in the inventory of constructions available for each language (i.e. one language uses a construction which the other language lacks), and (iv) lexical preferences (which lexical elements, especially verbs and nouns, tend to fill the slots). An important advantage of translation corpora for contrastive constructionist research is that, because the sentences are aligned across languages, the corpus makes it possible to observe how particular form-meaning/function configurations are re-expressed in authentic cross-linguistic usage.

In addition to translation corpora, bidirectional parallel corpora, which contain translations from L₁ to L₂ and *vice versa*, are also especially powerful for a contrastive constructionist analysis, since translation direction strongly influences what the analyst can actually detect in the corpus data. Specifically, bidirectionality ensures, among other things, the avoidance of translation bias (i.e. translators

15. See Oksefjell, Ebeling and Ebeling (2020: 102–103) and Granger and Lefer (2020: 167–168) for further discussion of the main advantages and disadvantages of these corpora for contrastive constructionist research.

often “calque” structures from the source language), thus preventing the analyst from thinking that, say, the L2 uses a given construction more than it actually does. Moreover, bidirectionality can also help unveil natural preferences regarding, for instance, how speakers of L2 naturally express the same meanings as in L1, thus enabling the analyst to establish constructional correspondences as well as contrastive/cross-linguistic differences safely (i.e. without the interference of translation artifacts).

With the above observations in mind, one should consider how to proceed systematically when conducting contrastive constructionist analyses. Following Boas (2025a), who compares different methodologies for implementing a systematic research paradigm for the (constructional) syntax of English, we see, in principle, two options.

The first option is phenomenon-based and basically follows the “traditional” way of most constructionist analysis, that is, the researcher decides which type(s) of construction(s) to analyze, then finds and extracts data on the distribution of that construction (typically in corpora) and proposes a constructional analysis using a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods. This is the approach followed by several constructionist researchers, see the contributions in Boas (2010b) and Horsch (2024) as well as Horsch and Boas (2025).

The second option, following a proposal developed by Boas (2025a) for English (see Figure 1 below), follows a full-text analysis of parallel corpora. This method, which we think might turn out to deliver more theoretical and methodological insights than the first option, starts with a full-text annotation of the first sentence in two languages (step 1 in Figure 1), let’s call them language A and language B, in a parallel corpus. Following Goldberg’s (1995) classic definition of a construction, we identify for the first sentence in language A all of the constructions (step 2 in Figure 1) and compile construction entries for each of them (because the constructicon does not yet have any entries) as in steps 3–9 in Figure 1, which we store in a construction repository, the constructicon, for language A, as in step 10 in Figure 1. Then, we follow the same procedure for the first sentence in language B, which will result in a list of construction entries that will be stored in the constructicon for language B.

The result of this workflow as depicted in Figure 1 will be for the first sentence of the parallel corpus for language A a complete inventory of construction entries needed for licensing the first sentence in language A. In addition, we will have a complete inventory of construction entries needed for licensing the first sentence in language B in the construction for language B. An open question at this point is how to link the various construction entries in the constructicon for language A needed for licensing the first sentence (and any others down the pipeline) in language A with those construction entries in the constructicon for language B that

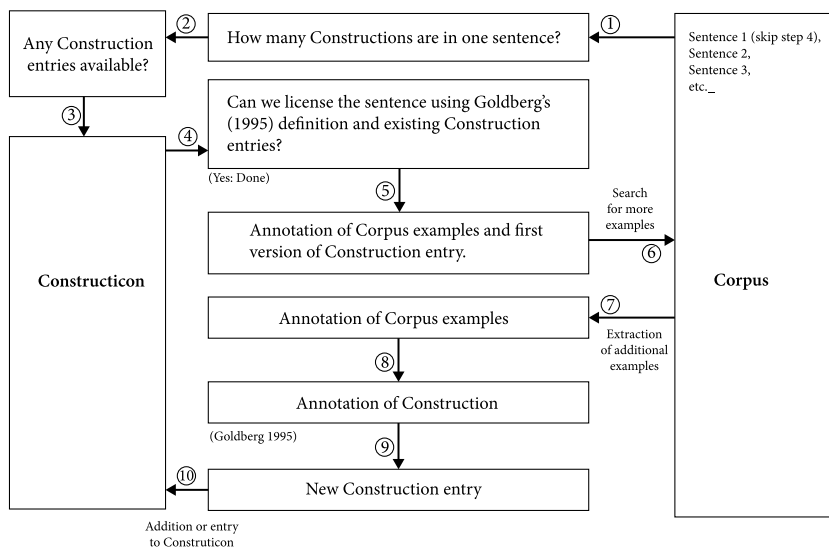


Figure 1. Systematic methodology for discovering constructions and compiling construction entries (Boas, 2025a: 62)

are needed to license the first sentence in language B. Based on our discussion in Section 3 above, we tentatively propose that the details of how the construction entries are linked to each other will depend on a variety of different factors, such as the meaning and function of the two constructions under consideration as well as the contexts in which they appear in. More specifically, we suggest that the type of links to be established between construction entries in a parallel constructionicon will also depend on the level of specificity and schematicity of the constructions under consideration. For example, lexical constructions such as English *go blank* and Spanish *quedarse en blanco* (lit. ‘to stay in white’) (i.e. ‘to be suddenly unable to remember something’/ ‘to stop showing any images, writing, etc.’) are very specific pairings of form with meaning/function. That is, depending on the extent of their polysemy networks (i.e. different senses of the same word), we will find almost an identical overlap between two lexical constructions (see Fillmore and Atkins, 2000). In cases where we deal with more schematic constructions with less meaning (see Boas, 2025b), establishing such a link between construction entries in two languages might prove more difficult, as Boas’s (2003) discussion of resultatives in English and German illustrates.

Once we have created construction entries for all of the constructions needed to license the first sentences in both language A and B (and having linked them to each other, the details of which need to be worked out), we move on to the second sentences in the parallel corpus, repeating the same steps 1–10 in Figure 1 as with

the first sentence for languages A and B. The only difference is that before we posit a new construction entry we first look at the existing list of construction entries to see whether (a) a construction entry for the specific construction under consideration already exists, or whether (b) the “new” construction that does not have a construction entry yet can be compositionally licensed by two or more existing construction entries in the constructicon. After completion of this procedure for the second sentence, we proceed to the third sentence in the parallel corpus and continue until we arrive at a complete inventory of construction entries for languages A and B that are needed for licensing all of the sentences (constructs) in the parallel corpus.

Our brief discussion of how to apply Boas’s (2025a) proposal regarding a systematic workflow for the constructional syntax of English to a contrastive approach shows that many details need to be worked out, especially when it comes to linking construction entries between languages A and B. However, given previous research on ConCxG by Boas (2003, 2010a), Boas and Ziem (2018b), and Boas *et al.* (2019), we think that applying the methodology outlined above to an actual parallel corpus will show its usefulness, especially given prior initiatives to conduct contrastive analyses of parallel corpora at the lexical level by Ellsworth *et al.* (2006) and the ongoing initiative of the Global FrameNet group to conduct parallel annotations of Ted Talks in multiple languages (see www.globalframenet.org).

5. Conclusions and outlook

In this paper, we proposed a systematic approach to contrastive linguistic research within CxG(s) that explores new ways of comparing and contrasting constructions across languages by combining insights from both CL and usage-based, cognitively-influenced versions of CxG. Against the backdrop of a brief historical overview of the development of CL as well as of the main contributions of CxG(s) to the linguistic analysis of contrastive issues, we have outlined the cornerstones of a strategy for fine-tuning the methodology of contrastive analysis for CxG(s) that employs concepts from constructicography (Fillmore *et al.*, 2012; Lyngfelt *et al.*, 2018; Boas *et al.*, 2019; Diessel, 2023; Boas, 2025a).

Specifically, we argued that this methodology provides concrete steps towards finding solutions to four of the problems that a contrastive constructionist analysis is faced with, namely, (i) defining and empirically and reliably determining constructions across languages, (ii) granularity and scope matters, with special focus on different levels of abstraction and/or complexity, (iii) methodological issues involving reliance on comparable datasets for efficient comparison and contrast, and (iv) dealing with constructional polysemy and meaning extensions

across languages. Drawing on contrastive data from a variety of languages including English, French, German, Slovak and Spanish, we adapt Boas's (2010a) proposal to use constructions as a TC to show how different layers between forms, meanings and functions interact with each other across different types of constructions (e.g., word order constructions, argument structure constructions, voice constructions, etc.) in their respective constructicons. Additional highlights of this proposal are that it is fully at home with a continuum of constructional equivalence (Boas and Ziem, 2018b), while also foregrounding the need to take into account systematic typological differences between related constructions when determining how the semantics of a given concept is encoded by different forms of different constructions in different languages (Boas *et al.*, 2019).

A number of important theoretical and applied issues, however, await further research, such as the following: (i) finding alternative yet compatible ways of modelling the meanings of constructions which cannot yet be modelled through semantic frames (Willich, 2023; Boas, 2025b; Horsch and Boas, 2025); (ii) determining how to empirically and systematically proceed with cases of meaningless constructions (Jackendoff and Audring, 2022), particularly in relation to the TC, (iii) the need to further fine-tune the methodology and workflow of ConCxG to ensure (even more) a right, consistent balance among the different factors impinging on the level of granularity (i.e. the specific flavor of CxG used, the type(s) of linguistic items/phenomena scrutinized as well as the purposes of the contrastive analysis) and, last but not least, (iv) reinforcing the synergies between typological/cross-linguistic constructionist research and contrastive constructionist research, with special focus on "conceptual space" (Croft, 2001, 2013, 2022).

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