

## **From converbs to constructional auxiliaries**

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In many languages, certain lexical verbs acquire a grammatical function when combined with another verb. We use the term constructional auxiliaries (CAUX) for such verbs. This phenomenon has not been studied from a wide typological perspective so far. The aim of the project pursued by the Prague Descriptive Linguistics group is to explore which verbs tend to be used as CAUX, analyse them cross-linguistically, and describe which functions can be expressed by these constructions. We plan to create a typological sample consisting of 100 languages and gather relevant constructions to build a dataset of CAUX and their functions. We are also interested in the cross-linguistic distribution of these functions, whether they are areal or are universal. While members of the team are focusing on languages of their specialization to produce complex intralinguistic analyses of CAUX, the synthesis of typological investigation and individual description is meant to lead to the creation of a relevant comparative concept of constructional auxiliation.

The obvious link to the notion of converbs is that in many languages these constructions are morphologically encoded by forms referred to as converbs. Nevertheless, in languages with different morphological profiles, other morphosyntactic strategies are employed to serve the same function. We believe that treating these constructions together can lead to a typologically meaningful comparative concept, which, in turn, can usefully inform descriptive purposes.

In this talk I will mainly be using data from colloquial Arabic varieties, and thus illustrate a context in which the term converb is traditionally not used (also for morphological reasons), but CAUX frequently appear. I will also show that multiple particular constructions (characterised by different morphosyntactic properties, sometimes close to those of coverbs) can be viewed as instances of constructional auxiliation (with different functions).