Coexpression and synexpression patterns in lexical and grammatical typology

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Both lexical and grammatical typology are often concerned with different ways in which languages map meanings onto minimal forms. Very often, for example, we observe that one language has a single polysemous word where another language has two distinct words (e.g. German *Tasche* 'bag; pocket', contrasting with English *bag* vs. *pocket*). Similarly, we often observe that one language has a single polysemous grammatical marker where another language has two distinct markers (e.g. English *to* 'dative; allative', contrasting with Arabic *li* 'dative' vs. *ʔilaa* 'allative').

Such situations form the basis for semantic maps showing **coexpression** patterns: patterns of grammatical coexpression (or **cogrammification**) for grammatical markers expressing notions such as case or tense-aspect (often called "syncretism"), and patterns of lexical coexpression (or **colexification**) for lexical items. As semantic maps summarize cross-linguistic patterns, and the meanings (or functions) whose expression is studied are comparison meanings, a type of comparative concept. "Coexpression diagram" is a more appropriate name a semantic map, because it does not necessarily show polysemy patterns. Polysemy refers to language-particular multiplicity of meanings, whereas coexpression merely records cross-linguistic correspondences.

In addition to coexpression differences, languages also frequently show **synexpression** differences: A minimal form may simultaneously express several meanings that in another language are expressed by two cooccurring forms. For example, German *Handschuh* (lit. 'hand-shoe') corresponds to English monomorphic *glove*, or English *brother-in-law* corresponds to German monomorphic *Schwager*. We can say that German *Schwager* **syllexifies** the meanings 'same-generation male kin' and 'affinal', which are circumlexified in English. In grammatical markers, too, we find **syngrammification** patterns (often called "cumulative" expression), as when Latin has a suffix *-orum* expressing simultaneously plural and genitive (e.g. *libr-orum* 'of the books'). Again, such synexpression patterns make use of comparison meanings, which must be distinguished from language-particular meanings.

Colexification and syllexification patterns have often been called "lexicalization patterns", but the term "lexicalization" is also often used in a diachronic sense. It is therefore better to distinguish the synchronic concept of **lexification** from the diachronic concept of lexicalization.

This paper has a methodological focus, but I will also ask to what extent coexpression and synexpression patterns are cross-linguistically general and how the generalizations can be explained. I will suggest that the limits on coexpression in lexicon and grammar are mostly due to diachronic paths of change, and that the limits on synexpression in lexicon and grammar are mostly due to frequency of use (as greater frequency leads to shorter coding, which often means synexpressed coding).