

Language-internal and cross-linguistic considerations in ConstructiCon organization – the example of motion constructions in the Swedish ConstructiCon

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ConstructiCons, in the sense relevant here, are inventories of construction descriptions (for an overview, see Borin & Lyngfelt, to appear). While they are mainly developed as language-specific resources, there are also ongoing efforts to align constructiCons for different languages. This paper is concerned with the somewhat conflicting considerations that (may) arise when a constructiCon is designed for both language-internal and cross-linguistic purposes, based on experiences from the Swedish ConstructiCon.

In order to avoid language bias, cross-linguistic alignment of constructiCons requires some kind of language-neutral base of comparison. This, in turn, means that construction entries have to be associated with two kinds of overall structures:

- on the one hand, the constructiCon resource they belong to, which should be organized according to the language it is designed for,
- on the other hand, the structure of whatever is used as a base of comparison, which should be suited for cross-linguistic application.

The model employed for construction alignment is MoCCA (Model of Comparative Concepts for ConstructiCon Alignment; MoCCA, 2023; see also Lyngfelt et al., 2022, to appear; Laviola et al., to appear). MoCCA combines the set of typology-based comparative concepts in Croft (2022) with the semantic frames of FrameNet 1.7¹ (Ruppenhoffer et al., 2016), connecting constructions within and across languages via the comparative concepts, including frames, they match.

Ideally, a constructiCon may be organized to fit both language-internal and cross-linguistic conditions to the extent that they are analogous. When they are not, language-internal concerns take precedence, and cross-linguistic application is secondary. We will address this optimization problem from the viewpoint of the Swedish ConstructiCon² (cf. Lyngfelt et al., 2018, to appear), exemplified by the treatment of Swedish motion constructions.

Swedish is a so-called satellite language (cf. Olofsson, 2018; Slobin, 1996; Talmy, 2000), typically expressing manner of motion by the verb and path of motion by adverbial satellites, as illustrated in (1). Such properties are straight-forwardly accounted for in both MoCCA and Swedish grammars. A diverging feature, on the other hand, is the fake reflexive in (1). From a Swedish viewpoint it is clearly a reflexive pronoun, whereas it does not qualify as a reflexive in MoCCA due to its lack of reflexive semantics. This and other points of divergence between Swedish and MoCCA, and their treatment in the Swedish ConstructiCon, will be the main focus of the talk.

- (1) Joel skyndade sig iväg till bussen.
Joel hurry.PAST REFL3 off to bus.DEF
'Joel hurried off to the bus.'

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¹ FrameNet. <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/> [Accessed 2023-01-14]

² Svenskt konstruktikon ['Swedish ConstructiCon']. <https://spraakbanken.gu.se/konstruktikon> [Accessed 2023-01-14]

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