Degree and standard markers in English, Italian, and Ladin:
An analysis based on typological generalisations

Degree and standard markers occur in equative, similative, and related constructions. Equatives express an equivalent degree of a gradable property (*as* parameter *as* standard), while similatives express similarity of quality or manner (parameter *like* standard). Related constructions are accord clauses (*as we all know*), similative clauses (pretended similarity of the type of *as if*), and role phrases (a participant's role or function, *as your teacher*) (Haspelmath & Buchholz, 1998; Treis, 2018).

Equative, similative, and related constructions have been studied over several years from a range of perspectives and in large samples of languages (Haspelmath & Buchholz, 1998; Haspelmath, 2017). A general question guiding this study was whether typological generalisations could help understand the level of similarity in the use of degree and standard markers in English, Italian, and Ladin. In particular, the study wanted to ascertain whether using English as a hallmark could help identify relevant semantic distinctions within the field of equality and similarity comparison in the Ladin variety spoken in the South-Tyrolean valley of Badia (Italy), which remains under-researched in several domains (Irsara, 2021).

Parameter and standard markers in English, Italian, and Ladin were examined using data from corpora such as the *British National Corpus (*BNC*), the English Web* (enTenTen15), the *Italian Web (*itTenTen16 and itTenTen10*), Tratament Automatch dl Lingaz Ladin: corpus lad (*TALL*)*, and *Corpus dl Ladin Leterar* (CLL). The Ladin data was supplemented by samples drawn from *Le Saltá* (information bulletin of the municipality of Mareo), as well as by examples provided orally by speakers of the language. Dictionaries and grammar books were also consulted.

The study highlights cross-linguistic differences, but it also provides additional confirmation of typological tendencies. The equative and similative system of Ladin could be better understood by considering it in comparison to English and Italian. Micro-variation within the Ladin valley under analysis was observed in the study, such as the different use of markers with clausal and phrasal complements. Two different markers are used in the lower part of the valley, unlike Italian and somewhat in line with English, which has been described as rather exceptional among European languages because of its two standard markers *as* and *like*, which make a formal distinction between equative and similative constructions. Overall, it might be maintained in line with Hoeksema (1984) that the comparative construction constitutes a metaphoric microcosm of language, showing commonalities and idiosyncrasies among typologically different and similar languages.

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