

Martina Irsara

Degree and standard markers in English, Italian, and Ladin

A contrastive analysis based on typological findings

Keywords: Comparison; comparatives; equatives; similatives; Badiot; Marou

The English degree and standard markers *as* and *like* occur in equative, similative, and related constructions. Equatives express an equivalent degree of a gradable property (Anne is *as* [= degree marker] tall *as* [= standard marker] Ben), while similatives express similarity of quality or manner (Anne is *like* Ben; Anne sings *like* Ben; *like* = standard marker). 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*). Equative, similative, and related constructions have been studied for several years from different perspectives and in large samples of languages (Haspelmath/Buchholz 1998; Haspelmath 2017). English 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 (Treiss 2018). It is generally known that clauses with *as* and phrasal adjuncts with *like* tend to be distinguished in British formal language.

Based on typological findings in the field of equative and similative constructions (Haspelmath/Buchholz 1998; Haspelmath 2017), this study aims to analyse the level of similarity in the use of degree and standard markers in English, Italian, and Ladin, which is still under-researched in various domains. In particular, it aims to show that the Ladin system varies at a micro-level in Val Badia (South Tyrol, Italy). While the linguistic variety in the upper part of the valley uses the same standard marker with phrasal and clausal complements, namely *sciöch(e)* (like Italian *come*), the variety in the lower part of Val Badia has two standard markers that distinguish between phrasal and clausal complements, namely *desco* and *desch(e)*. There are therefore parallels between English and Ladin (Irsara 2021).

The use of degree and standard markers in English, Italian, and Ladin is studied using data from corpora such as the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, *Italian Web 2016 (itTenTen16)*, and *Tratament Automatch dl Lingaz Ladin (TALL)*. The Ladin data is supplemented by examples from *Le Saltá* (the Mareo community newsletter), and by examples provided orally by speakers of the language. Dictionaries and grammar books have also been consulted.

References

Haspelmath, Martin/Buchholz, Oda (1998): Equative and similative constructions in the languages of Europe. In: Van der Auwera, Johan (ed.): *Adverbial constructions in the languages of Europe*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 277–334.

ICLC-10 2023 - Document Template for Revised Abstracts

- Haspelmath, Martin (2017): Equative constructions in world-wide perspective. In: Treis, Yvonne/Vanhove, Martine (eds.): *Similative and equative constructions: A cross-linguistic perspective*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins (Typological Studies in Language), pp. 9–32.
- Irsara, Martina (2021): Expressing equality and similarity in English, Italian, and Ladin: Interlingual contrastive features and micro-variation. In: *Linguistic Typology at the Crossroads*, 1(1), pp. 47–93. <https://typologyatcrossroads.unibo.it/article/view/13428>.
- Treis, Yvonne (2018): Comparative constructions: An Introduction. In: *Linguistic Discovery*, 16(1), pp. i–xxvi. <https://hal.science/hal-02005012v2>.

Contact information

Martina Irsara

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

martina.irsara@unibz.it