

Group A: Equative construction.

Based on Haspelmath & Buchholz (1999)

Equative and similative constructions in the languages of Europe.

H&B's (1999) study deals with constructions expressing equality, i. e., structures such as those exemplified in (1):

(1) Polish

Robert jest tak samo wysoki jak Maria.
Robert is so same tall how Maria
'Robert is as tall as Maria.'

(1) shows a construction expressing a comparison of equality, which is also often called the equative construction.

We will now introduce some terminology that will be useful later on in talking about structural features of equatives in various languages. An equative construction consists of five constituent parts, which are numbered and labelled in (2).

My sister is as pretty as you.
1 2 3 4 5
CMP PAM PARA STM STAN

- 1: CMP comparee
- 2: PAM parameter marker
- 3: PARA parameter
- 4: STM standard marker
- 5: STAN standard

Three parts of the equative construction consist of lexical expressions that may be filled by an open class of elements: The parameter, the standard (which is an adjective in the most basic case), and the comparee.

The two other parts are **functional elements** and are fixed for each language: the parameter marker and the standard marker. Languages differ mainly in the kinds of markers they use. Not all these elements are obligatory in every language and in every type of sentence. In some languages, there is no parameter marker in equative constructions, e.g., in Italian:

(2) *Mia sorella è alta come me.*
my sister is tall how I
'My sister is as tall as I.'

ANALYTIC WORDS comprise just one or a very limited number of formatives or just one lexical root, but they can combine syntactically in the expression of inflectional categories. This is called **PERIPHRASTIC** expression, as in the expression of tense and aspect values by means of auxiliary constructions in European languages, e.g. *he will go*.

The notion of **SYNTHETIC WORDS** is restricted to words with more elaborate formative sequences, but the difference between synthetic and analytic is one of degree. When flexive formatives are involved, synthetic words typically comprise two or three affixes along with a lexical root, e.g. a verb root and affixes expressing aspect, tense and agreement.

Parameter markers

A parameter marker may be synthetic or analytic. If it is synthetic, we speak of an equative degree (analogous to the familiar comparative degree in comparative constructions, e.g. small-er). The equative degree is rare in European languages. It is attested only at the margins of Europe, e.g. in Finno-Ugric:

(3) Estonian

Minu oode on minu pikk-une.
my sister is me tall-EQD
'My sister is as tall as me.' (EQD = equative degree)

Other examples:

(4) Tagalog

Kasing-gaganda sila ng mga artista
EQD-beautiful they GEN PL actress
'They are as beautiful as actresses.'

Analytic parameter markers may be semantically more or less transparent. They often mean something like 'equally, to the same degree, to the same extent':

(5) Icelandic

í Reykjavík er jafn kalt og í Stokkhólmi.
in Reykjavik is equally cold as in Stockholm
'In Reykjavik it is as cold as in Stockholm.'

Typology of standard of equation marker

Further examples

(6) Ancash Quechua

Pani-i-mi qam-naw shumaq.

sister-ISG-DIR you-EQC pretty

'My sister is as pretty as you.' (EQC = equative case)

(7) Greenlandic Eskimo

Ilit-tut utuqqaa-tiga-aq.

thou-EQC be.old-EQD-3SG:IND

'He is as old as you.'

(8) Portuguese

A minha irmã é tão bonita quanta você.

the mysister is so pretty how you

'My sister is as pretty as you.'

Standard markers may also simply be general adpositions, generally meaning 'with'. This type seems to occur mainly when the parameter itself is clearly marked:

(9) Modern Irish

Tá Máire chomhcliste le Liam.

is Máire PAM clever with Liam

'Maire is as clever as Liam.'

Another type of standard marker is represented by nouns originally expressing 'manner' or 'degree'. In Japanese, the noun still exists with that meaning. Literally, sentence (10) means 'Oranges are not apple's degree cheap'.

(10) Japanese (hodo 'degree; limit')

Orenji wa ringo hodo yasuku ari-mas-en.

orange TOP apple STM cheap be-POL-NEG

'Oranges are not as cheap as apples.'

TASK

Consider the standard of equation marker in examples (1)–(5) and (6)–(10).

Your task is to design a typological study of the **morphological expression of the standard of equation marker (i.e. synthetic vs. analytic).**

Which values can this variable take?

Fill out the table providing references to the relevant examples:

EX.	VALUE
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

On the basis of these examples produce a frequency distribution of your sample:

VALUE	FREQUENCY

Abbreviations:

EQC = equative case, EQD = equative degree, GEN = genitive, PAM = parameter marker, POL = polarity, STM = standard marker, TOP = topic