

Equative and relative markers: The influence of morphology on the complementiser system

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Introduction

complementiser – strictly speaking, an element that turns the clause into a complement clause (e.g. *that*)

- (1)
 - a. Ralph has already finished the report.
 - b. I know [**that** Ralph has already finished the report].

Clause typing

complementisers associated with clause types such as interrogative, relative, comparative (see e.g. Rizzi 1997):

- (2)
- a. I wonder [**if** Ralph has already finished the report].
 - b. I saw the woman [**that** lives next door] at the supermarket.
 - c. The desk is longer [**than** the office is wide].

Semantic bleaching

complementisers may grammaticalise from other elements

- (3) a. **How** did you open the bottle?
b. I wonder **how** he opened the bottle.
c. %Your Dad once said **how** I had legs like Betty Grable.
(Van Gelderen 2009)

feature loss – *how* no longer specified as [wh], no interrogative interpretation

not accompanied by morphological change

Question

a question for morphology and syntax:

Are complementisers atomic?

Relative clauses

two major possibilities in Standard English:

- (4) a. I saw the linguist **who** lives next door in the park.
- b. I saw the linguist **that** lives next door in the park.

Dialects

many other possibilities in regional dialects

as-relatives:

- (5) so all **as** he had to do were go round in a circle all the time
(Freiburg English Dialect Corpus; Herrmann 2005)

Other *as*-constructions

various similitive constructions:

- (6) a. Ralph is tall, **as** is Peter.
b. Mary is pale, **as** if she had seen a ghost.

degree equatives:

- (7) Ralph is **as** tall **as** Peter.

English *as*-relatives

matrix *all*:

(8) so **all as** he had to do were go round in a circle all the time

all and *as* may even fuse:

(9) **Alls** he needs is a bit of help and that you know.

(ukspok/04: Kjellmer 2008)

Historical patterns

matrix *such*:

- (10) a. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and **such as** are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.
(King James Bible; Ezra 10:3)
- b. Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of **all such as** are appointed to destruction.
(King James Bible; Proverbs 31:8)

“equative relative clauses” – different from ordinary relative clauses

German

(11) hier das Geld **so** ich neulich nicht habe mitschicken können

'Here the money that I recently could not send.'

(Schiller to Goethe 127; Brandner & Bräuning 2013, quoting Paul 1920)

ordinary relative clauses – no matrix *so*, no restrictions on the head

The element *so*

manner deictic element – can be the source of various markers
(König 2015)

- (12)
- a. It was **so** big! [*with a pointing gesture*]
 - b. **So** will ich auch klettern können!
[*with a pointing gesture*]
 - c. It is **so**.
 - d. Es ist **so**.

The element *as*

reinforced form (cf. *just like*) involving the element *all* (König 2015)

all + *so/swa* → OE *eallswa* → *as*

all + *so* → OHG *also* → *als*

no manner deixis proper (linguistic antecedent necessary):

- (13) a. *It was **as** big!
b. *It is **as**.

expectation: combination no longer transparent in complementisers

Similatives

similatives are the basis for other constructions

(14) Ich bin **so wie** du.

examples from Middle English:

(15) a. Se sæ heo onhefð . . . **swa swa** weall

‘The sea rises like a wall.’

(*Vespesian Homilies* 90; Nevanlinna 1993)

b. beoð ofdred of euch mon **alswa as** þe þeof is

‘Be wary of every man just like the thief is.’

(*Ancrene Wisse* 91; Nevanlinna 1993)

Two main directions

Direction 1: similatives → equative relatives → relatives

Direction 2: similatives → degree equatives → comparatives

Direction 1 and so

similatives:

- (16) Se sæ heo onhefð . . . **swa swa** weall
'The sea rises like a wall.'

Direction 1 and *so*

equative relatives:

- (17) Al **such so** sette ben callid contemplatif soules and ravischid in loue of god.
'All who plant are called contemplative souls and are delighted in the love of God.'
(*The Tree and Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost* 60.14)

relative clauses:

- (18) and yrfan hi **swa** hi wyrðe witan
'And let those inherit whom they know worthy.'
(*Charters* 578; Ericson 1931)

same for German *so*

Direction 1 and *as*

similatives:

- (19) beoð ofdred of euch mon **alswa as** þe þeof is
'Be wary of every man just like the thief is.'

Direction 1 and *as*

equative relatives:

- (20) Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and **such as** are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

relative clauses: –

same for German *als*

Direction 2 and so

similatives:

- (21) Se sæ heo onhefð . . . **swa swa** weall
'The sea rises like a wall.'

Direction 2 and *so*

degree equatives:

- (22) seop swa swyde þ hit þriwa wylle **swa swyðe swa** wæter
flæsc
'Cook it until it turns round as fast as water flash.'
(*Peri Didaxeon* 104; Nevanlinna 1993)

comparatives: –

same for German *so*

Direction 2 and *as*

similatives:

- (23) beoð ofdred of euch mon **alswa as** þe þ is
'Be wary of every man just like the thief is.'

Direction 2 and *as*

degree equatives:

(24) Ralph is **as** tall **as** Peter.

comparatives:

(25) Also this erbe haviþ **mo** vertues **as** endyue haþe.
'This herb also has more virtue than endive has.'
(J. Lelamour, ca. 1400; Jäger 2016)

same for German *als*

Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative SO AS	deg. equative	comparative
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Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative	deg. equative	comparative
		SO		
		AS		

Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative	deg. equative	comparative
SO	SO	SO		
		AS		

Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative	deg. equative	comparative
SO	SO	SO	SO	
		AS		

Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative	deg. equative	comparative
SO	SO	SO	SO	
		AS		

Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative	deg. equative	comparative
SO	SO	SO	SO	
		AS	AS	AS

Distribution

relative	equat. rel.	similative	deg. equative	comparative
SO	SO	SO	SO	
	AS	AS	AS	AS

Morphology

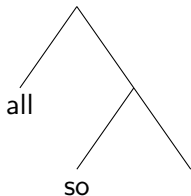
recall: *as* (and *als*) a composite of *all* and *so*

- diachronic perspective: historical composition
- synchronic perspective: transparency problem
- but: bleaching, feature loss would produce other results
- the morphological make-up is decisive: blocking effect

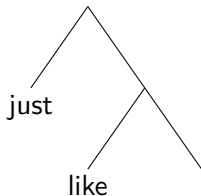
Syntax

original syntactic combination: emphatic modifier + similative element

(26) a.



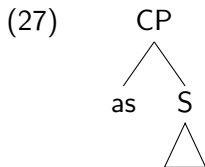
b.



Syntax

no syntactic combination:

- complementiser not modified
- matrix element: renewed modifiers (*just as*)



Morphology

syntactic combination → morphological combination

“today’s morphology is yesterday’s syntax” (Givón 1971)

but: morphology has an effect on syntactic distribution

Theory

- morphological combination cannot be translated (back) into a syntactic combination (cf. “late insertion” in Distributed Morphology, contrary to “early insertion” in Minimalist Morphology)
- Lexicalist Hypothesis – syntactic operations cannot make reference to morphological structure, stronger version: syntax “blind” to morphology (some version present in many approaches)

Theory

some interaction between morphology and syntax – Word Syntax,
e.g. Lieber (1992)

taken up by Lieber & Scalise (2006):

- (28)
- a. over the fence gossip
 - b. old maidish
 - c. my ex-car
 - d. %Clinton_i-ites no longer believe in him_j.

Complementisers

- complex morphological structure has an effect on syntactic distribution
- elements *so* and *as/as* equivalent in most constructions
- constructions showing differences are the farthest away from source constructions
- simple bleaching not an explanation

features?

features associated with morphological components (morphemes or formatives) rather than the entire syntactic unit

Summary

distribution of equative/relative markers in English and German

- systematic differences between *so* and *as/als*
- differences evolved independently
- differences due to morphological structure

→ morphology seems to have an effect on the complementiser system in syntax

Thank you!

Danke!

German data

- (29) a. **sulike** gesidoe **so** he im selbo gecos
'such companions that he chose for himself'
(*Heliand* 1280; Brandner & Bräuning 2013)
- b. **So** ware **so** ich cherte minen zoum . . .
'Wherever I guided my rein . . .'
(*Bairischer Psalm* 138; Brandner & Bräuning 2013, quoting Lühr 1998)
- c. **dër** Sache **sô** ir meintent
'the thing that you mean'
(*Reinfried von Braunschweig*; Brandner & Bräuning 2013, quoting Paul 1920)

German equatives

- (30) a. wart aber ie **sô** werder man geboren [. . .] **sô** von
Norwege Gâwân
'But was there ever born a man as noble as Gawain from
Norway?'
(*Parzival* 651, 8ff; Eggs 2006)
- b. waer er **sô** milt **als** lanc, er hete tugende vil besezzen
'If he were as generous as he is tall, he would have had
many virtues.'
(Walther von der Vogelweide, *Werke* Bd. 1, 118f; Eggs 2006)
- c. dochn was dâ nieman **alsô** vrô **alsô** mîn her Gawein
'but noone was as glad there as my Lord Gawain'
(*Iwein* 2618f; Eggs 2006)