

Scalar and non-scalar equatives in Turkish and in German

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In equative comparison, two entities – individuals or events – are compared with respect to selected properties. Equatives are either scalar relating to a measurable dimension like size or weight, or they are non-scalar relating to properties composed out of multiple dimensions of arbitrary type. In German, scalar equatives are mostly expressed by gradable adjectives, as in (1a) whereas nominal and verbal cases, as in (1b, c), are usually non-scalar. Note that, in adjectival cases, the dimension of comparison is lexically fixed by the adjective – it has to be height in (1a). In nominal and in verbal cases, even though the range of possible dimensions is restricted by the noun or verb, the (multiple) dimensions of the actual comparison are selected by the context – in (1b), for example, Anna's hairdo and Berta's hairdo may be compared with respect to color, curliness, fullness, symmetry, overall length and many others.

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| (1) | a. | Anna ist so groß wie Berta.
'Anna is as tall as Berta.' | adjectival, scalar |
| | b. | Annas Frisur ist so wie die (Frisur) von Berta.
'Anna's hairdo is like Berta's.' | nominal, non-scalar |
| | c. | Anna rennt so wie Berta (rennt).
'Anna runs like Berta does.' | verbal, non-scalar |

Due to their cross-categorical uniformity, German data suggest a uniform semantic analysis. In Umbach (2016) a generalized account of equatives has been proposed based on the idea that the standard marker *wie* in equatives expresses similarity (of hairdos and ways of running as well as of heights).

In Turkish, scalar and non-scalar equatives make use of different standard markers – *kadar* and *gibi*, cf. (2a-c) which appears at first sight similar to the situation in English where scalar equatives are marked by *as* and non-scalar ones by *like*. There is, however, an additional surprising twist: In Turkish the scalar standard marker *kadar* can be used with nouns and verbs indicating a comparison along some scalar dimension. In (3a) Anna's and Berta's hairdo are compared with respect to their length, and in (3b) their running is compared with respect to, e.g., distance or speed. These data suggest that the two standard marker in Turkish select different dimensions: While *gibi* relates to a composition of multiple dimensions, *kadar* picks out a single measurable dimension.

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| (2) | a. | Anna Berta kadar uzun.
A. B. kadar tall.Pres3sg
'Anna is as tall as Berta.' | adjectival, scalar |
| | b. | Anna'nın saç-ı Berta'nın-ki gibi.
A-gen hair-poss.3sg B-gen-Rel like.poss.3sg
'Anna's hairdo is like Berta's.' | nominal, non-scalar |
| | c. | Anna Berta gibi koşuyor.
A. B. like run-pres.3sg
'Anna runs like Berta does.' | verbal, non-scalar |

- (3) a. Anna-nın saç-ı Berta-nın-ki kadar. nominal, scalar
 A.-gen hair-poss.3sg B.-gen-Rel kadar
 ‘Anna’s hair is as long as Berta’s.’
- b. Anna Berta kadar koşuyor. verbal, scalar
 A. B. kadar run-pres.3sg
 ‘Anna runs as fast/long as Berta.’

The contrast between *gibi* and *kadar* in nominal and verbal equative comparison raises a number of intriguing questions:

- Which scalar dimensions are made available by particular nouns/verbs? Do they vary in different contexts?
- Are these dimensions always metrical, or could it be dimensions relating to evaluative adjectives like *iyi* 'good' and *güzel* 'beautiful'?
- As for their grammar, *gibi* and *kadar* can both attach to Nps (2a-c and 3b) and appear as predicates (2b and 3a). What does this flexibility imply for their semantics?

Even though for German (and Polish which behaves close to German) a generalized account of equatives is adequate, this is obviously not the case in Turkish. But the division line is not between gradable adjectives on the one hand and nouns and verbs on the other (as in English), but instead between scalar and non-scalar comparison. From a semantic point of view, that might be reason to assume that there are (at least) two different strategies of comparison, one based on similarity and one based metrics, and that languages differ with respect to which of these strategies they allow for in adjectival, nominal and verbal equatives.

Kennedy, Chris (1999) *Projecting the adjective*. Garland Press, New York.

Umbach, Carla (2016) The meaning of German *wie* in equative comparison. Project description of the DFG project 'Similarity II', UM 100 / 1-3.