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Expressing equality, similarity, and pretense in Even (Northern Tungusic, Siberia)

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, considerable work has been done on the cross-linguistic comparison of comparatives, superlatives, and to a lesser extent, equatives (e.g. Ultan 1972, Heine 1997: 109-130, Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998, Stassen 2005, Henkelmann 2006, Dixon 2008, Gorshenin 2012, Haspelmath 2017), while similatives remain largely understudied. As pointed out by Haspelmath (2017), this is largely due to the lack of descriptions of similative constructions in reference grammars. Providing first-hand data on similatives and related constructions in non-European languages can therefore still fill important gaps in our knowledge of this linguistic domain.

According to the definition of Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998: 278), “equatives express equal extent, and similatives express equal manner”, with the major difference between the two constructions being the expression of quantity vs. quality, respectively. Furthermore, similatives are said to be “usually simple phrases, consisting of a similative marker (‘like’) and a standard, which function as manner adverbials” (ibid: 313). The definition of equative constructions is further refined by Haspelmath (2017: 9): “Equative constructions express situations in which two referents have a gradable property to the same degree” (cf. Henkelmann 2006: 371).

This distinction is relevant in the languages of Europe, which are the focus of Haspelmath & Buchholz’s study. Here, the constructions differ on a formal level: equative constructions tend to mark both the standard and the parameter, whereas in similative constructions only the standard is marked (1). As seen in the German example and its English translation, the standard markers used in equative and similative constructions can be the same or different, with the “overwhelming majority” of Standard Average European languages having identical standard markers in these constructions (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998: 313).

- (1) German¹ (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998: 278, ex. 5)

¹ Abbreviations used in the examples are as follows: ABL = ablative, ACC = accusative, ADJR = adjectivizer, ADVRS = adversative, ALL = allative, ALN = alienable, AUG = augmentative, CAUS = causative, COM = comitative, CONC = concessive, COND = conditional, CVB = converb, DAT = dative, DEST = destinative, DIM = diminutive, DIST = distal demonstrative, DP = discourse particle, ELAT = elative, EMPH = emphatic, EQU = Equative, EX = exclusive, FUT = future, GNR = generic, HAB = habitual, HESIT = hesitative, IMPF = imperfect, IN = inclusive, INCH = inchoative, INDEF = indefinite, INS = instrumental, ITER =

	COMPAREE		PM		STANDARD
(a)	<i>Zürich</i>	PARAMETER	STM	<i>ist</i>	<i>so</i>
		<i>groß</i>			<i>wie</i>
		<i>Wien.</i>			
	Zurich		is		so
		big			
		how			
			Vienna		
		'Zurich is as big as Vienna.'			
	COMPAREE		STM		STANDARD
(b)	<i>Robert</i>			<i>schwimmt</i>	<i>wie</i>
		<i>eine</i>		<i>Ente.</i>	
	Robert		a		how
				duck	
		'Robert swims like a duck.'			

However, as will be discussed in this article², the distinction between an equative construction that expresses equality of gradable, quantitative properties and a simulative construction that expresses similarity of manner is not relevant for Even, a North Tungusic language spoken in northeastern Siberia. Instead, in this language, a large domain of equality of gradable properties, similarity of manner, and similarity of actions and states are expressed by a Simulative³ suffix and/or relational noun. In addition, there is a dedicated marker that expresses equality of measurable properties.

In this paper, I adopt the terminology used by Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998): “comparee” will refer to the element being compared (*Zürich/Zurich* and *Robert* in (1a, b) above), with the “standard” being the item with which the comparee is compared (*Wien/Vienna* and *Ente/duck* in the above examples). The “parameter” – where it is overtly expressed – will refer to the property for which the comparee is being compared to the standard (*groß/big* in (1a)), and the “standard marker” will refer to the lexeme or suffix that marks the standard (*wie/how* and *wie/like* in (1a) and (1b), respectively). Since Even lacks a parameter marker (*so/as* in (1a)), this term is unnecessary in this paper.

2. THE DOMAIN OF EQUALITY AND SIMILARITY IN EVEN

iterative, LIM = limitative, LOC = locative, MED = mediopassive, MULT = multiplicative, NEC = necessitive, NEG = negative, NFUT = non-future, OBL = oblique, PF = perfect, PL = plural, PM = parameter marker, POSS = possessive, PRED = predicative, PRFL = reflexive possessive, PROG = progressive, PROP = proprietive, PROX = proximal demonstrative, PRV = privative, PST = past, PTCP = participle, PTL = particle, PURP = purposive, Q = question, QUAL = qualitative demonstrative, R = Russian copy, REC = reciprocal, REFL = reflexive, RES = resultative, SG = singular, SIM = simultaneous, SML = Simulative, STM = standard marker, TRM = terminative, VR = verbalizer, Y = Sakha (Yakut) copy

² I thank Yvonne Treis and two anonymous reviewers for their comments, which helped me improve the paper.

³ Note that throughout the paper I use capital letters for terms to refer to the Even Equative, Simulative, and Pretense constructions, while lower-case letters refer to the functional concepts (cf. “Rule of Thumb 2” in Croft 2016: 388).

Even is a North Tungusic language spoken in small scattered communities spread over a vast expanse of northeastern Siberia, from the Lena-Yana watershed in the west to the coast of the Okhotsk Sea and Kamchatka in the east. This dispersed settlement pattern has led to a high degree of dialectal fragmentation. Thirteen dialects with up to 24 sub-dialects (“govory” in Russian terminology) are distinguished, with a major distinction between western and eastern dialects (Burykin 2004: 85); mutual intelligibility between peripheral dialects is severely restricted.

Even is an agglutinative language with rich, strictly suffixing morphology and large case complements comprising 12-14 cases (including the unmarked Nominative), depending on the dialect and the description. Subject agreement on verbs is obligatory, but objects are not cross-referenced on verbs. Nevertheless, in spontaneous narratives not only subjects but also objects that are retrievable from the context are frequently omitted. The language is generally head-final (cf. Malchukov 1995: 19), and modifiers precede nouns (2a); however, heavier modifier phrases can also follow the noun (2b). Nominal predicates are unmarked, with the auxiliary *bi-* carrying person and tense marking (3a). However, the auxiliary is omitted for 3SG nominal predicates in present tense (3b). Due to various morphonological processes, suffixes vary in form: the consonants can undergo assimilation to stem-final suffixes, and low unrounded vowels can vary between [a] and [e]. In this paper, phonemes that undergo changes are represented by capital letters when morphemes are shown in isolation; in examples, epenthetic vowels are not glossed separately.

- (2) Lamunkhin Even (RDA_old_remains_traditions_006)
 (a) *akata-n* *bi-hi-n*
 sablja-mdas *iak=kul* *bi-hi-n* ...
 bow-POSS.3SG be-PST-3SG *sabre-SML*
 what=INDEF be-PST-3SG
 ‘there was a bow, there was **something like a sabre**...’
- (b) Lamunkhin Even (RDA_stuck_in_stado_044)
iak=kul *börtölöt*
 i:ge-mdeh-en
 i-hn-e-n
 what=INDEF *helicopter[R]* *sound-SML-*
 POSS.3SG be.audible-LIM-NFUT-3SG
 ‘**something like the sound of a helicopter** was heard’
- (3) Lamunkhin Even (AAK_headmistress_026)
 (a) *bi* *direktor bi-he-m* ...
 1SG *director* be-NFUT-1SG
 ‘**I am the director**...’
- (b) Lamunkhin Even (AXK_svatovstvo_087)
mut *ahikka-ŋa-t* *ahikkan* ...
 1PL *hø:* *iġga* *girl-ALN-POSS.1PL* *very* *good* *girl*
 ‘Our daughter is a **very good girl**...’

The data discussed here come from two geographically widely separated Even dialects: the Lamunkhin dialect spoken in Yakutia, at the westernmost periphery of the language's distribution (referenced in the examples by the abbreviation LAM), and the Bystraja dialect spoken in Central Kamchatka, at the easternmost periphery (indicated by the abbreviation BYS). Not surprisingly, given this geographical separation, the two dialects show considerable differences at all levels: phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax – including in the form of the markers to be discussed here. The Lamunkhin data come from a corpus of interlinearized spontaneous oral narratives numbering ~52,000 words and comprising mainly monologues recorded in the course of four field trips from 36 speakers (24 women, 12 men) between 11 and 78 years old. The Bystraja data, on the other hand, were taken not only from an interlinearized corpus of ~34,000 words recorded in the course of three field trips⁴ from 27 speakers (18 women and nine men) aged 40 to 77 years, but also from elicitation that targeted the domain of similarity, equality and pretense, which was undertaken with four female speakers (aged 64-77 years). This elicitation was performed both with translations from Russian as well as with picture stimuli. In what follows, I indicate whether an example is taken from a narrative (or one of the rare conversations included in the corpora) or from elicitation, and whether the elicitation stimulus was a picture or a Russian sentence. In addition, I compare the Lamunkhin and Bystraja data to descriptions of other Even dialects.

As mentioned above, in contrast to the Standard Average European languages the domain of equality and similarity in Even is not neatly partitioned between equality of gradable properties and similarity of manner. Rather, there is considerable overlap between the expression of equality of gradable and non-gradable properties, similarity of manner, and similarity of actions and states (Table 1), especially when the elicited data from the Bystraja dialect are taken into account (not shown in the table, but see Section 4). This broad domain, which I will here term the “Similative”, is marked by the suffixes *-G(A)č̣in* and *-mdAs* and the relational noun *ureč̣(in)*⁵. Both suffixes occur in the Lamunkhin dialect, where the relational noun is not found with a similative function, while only the suffix *-G(A)č̣in* occurs in the Bystraja dialect together with *ureč̣(in)*. Furthermore, both dialects have a dedicated marker of equality of measurable extent (e.g. equality of size, age, or distance), the nominal *di:(n)-*, and an analytical construction for the expression of pretense⁶. In the Lamunkhin dialect, this is expressed by the suffix *-hmAn* attached to the lexical verb and the auxiliary *ɔ:-* ‘become’ carrying the TAM morphology; in the Bystraja dialect,

⁴ These field trips were funded by the Max Planck Society via the MPRG on Comparative Population Linguistics, the Volkswagen Foundation via the DoBeS grant “Documentation of the dialectal and cultural diversity among Évens in Siberia”, and the CNRS via the research unit Dynamique du Langage. I am furthermore grateful to the LABEX ASLAN (ANR-10-LABX-0081) of Université de Lyon for its financial support within the program “Investissements d’Avenir” (ANR-11-IDEX-0007) of the French government operated by the National Research Agency (ANR).

⁵ Note that in some dictionaries (e.g. Robbek & Robbek 2005: 273) the relational noun is shown as having a long second vowel.

⁶ I here follow the definition of pretense of the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Pearsall 1999: 1133) as an act of “[making] it appear that something is the case when in fact it is not”.

the suffix attached to the lexical verb is *-ssAn* and the TAM-marked auxiliary is *bi-* ‘be’.

Table 1: Forms that express equality, similarity, and pretense in the Lamunkhin and Bystraja dialects of Even (based on the narrative corpora) with a comparison of how Even cuts up the domain in comparison to Standard Average European (SAE)

SAE	Even	Expresses...	LAM	BYS
Equative ⁷	Equative	...Equ. measurable extent	<i>di:-</i>	<i>di:(n)-</i>
	Similative	...Equ. gradable properties	<i>-mdAs</i>	<i>ureč(in)</i>
		...Equ. non-gradable properties		
Similative		...Sim. manner	<i>-G(A)čĭn</i>	<i>-G(A)čĭn</i>
?		...Sim. actions and states	<i>-mdAs</i>	
?	Pretense	...Pretense	<i>-hmAn ɔ:-</i>	<i>-ssAn bi-</i>

As can be seen from the table, in the narrative corpora there appears to be a functional distinction between the Similative markers in the two dialects: in the Lamunkhin corpus, *-G(A)čĭn* expresses mainly similarity of manner, and *-mdAs* expresses equality of gradable and non-gradable properties as well as similarity of actions and states, while in the Bystraja corpus equality of gradable and non-gradable properties is expressed by the relational noun *ureč(in)*, and similarity of manner and actions/states is expressed by *-G(A)čĭn*. However, this division is not clearcut, since a few examples of *-G(A)čĭn* expressing equality of properties and two examples of *-mdAs* expressing similarity of manner are found in the Lamunkhin corpus. Furthermore, in the data elicited with the picture stimuli in the Bystraja dialect, the suffix *-G(A)čĭn* expresses the equality of gradable and non-gradable properties interchangeably with *ureč(in)* (Section 4).

In what follows, I first present the “Equative of measurable extent” *di:(n)-* (Section 3), then I discuss the various uses covered by the Similative suffixes and relational noun (Section 4), and finally I describe the “Pretense” constructions (Section 5). Section 6 provides a brief overview of Similative and Equative constructions in other Tungusic languages, and the paper ends with conclusions in Section 7.

3. EQUATIVE

Although the marker of measurable extent *di:(n)-* has a narrower range of meanings than those subsumed under the term “equative” by Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998) and Haspelmath (2017), I will here for simplicity’s sake call it

⁷ Note that Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998: 298-301) discuss the presence of specialized “quantitative equative markers” in some languages of Europe. These basically express equal amounts of something (“as much/many as”), but can in some languages also be used to express equality of degree with quantifiable adjectives. In this function, they resemble the Even Equative.

the “Equative” (glossed EQU). This standard marker is a noun⁸ originally meaning ‘size’ (Cincius 1975: 202), which functions as the head of the Equative construction, with the dependent standard agreeing in person and number⁹ (4):

- (4) BYS, elicited
- (a) *min* *di-wu*
- 1SG.OBL EQU-POSS.1SG
‘as big as I’
- (b) *in* *di-š*
- 2SG.OBL EQU-POSS.2SG
‘as big as you’
- (c) *me:n* *di-ji*
- REFL EQU-PRFL.SG
‘as big as oneself’

While the basic form is *di-*, in the Bystraja dialect the 3SG possessed form *di:-n* (where *-n* is the 3SG possessive suffix) seems to be in the process of lexicalizing as the Equative marker. This can be seen from the fact that in constructions with a 3SG standard the agreement is generally marked by an additional 3SG possessive suffix (5a), and also by the fact that there is variation in the form obtained when the Equative modifies a direct object (5b, c). The accusative-marked possessive 3SG form *di:-we-n* (5b) is expected for the vowel-final form *di:-*, while *dimen* (5c) results out of the assimilation of the accusative suffix *-we* to the stem-final *-n* of *di:n-*.

- (5a) BYS, elicited (RME_picture_church_tree)
- cerkov* *išu-ri* *ašukut* *mø:*
- di:n-ni***
- church[R] almost tree grow-IMPF.PTCP
- EQU-POSS.3SG
- ‘The church is almost [as high as] the growing tree.’
- (5b) BYS, elicited (RME_translation_from_Russian)
- bi* *it-ti-wu* *muran* ***di-we-n*** *ŋin-u*
- 1SG see-PST-1SG dog-ACC horse
- EQU-ACC-POSS.3SG
- ‘I saw a dog as big as a horse.’
- (5c) BYS, elicited (VIA_picture_stimulus_bragging_fish)

⁸ Like other nouns, it can take possessive marking (e.g. (4)) and case marking (e.g. (5b)). Whether it is still used as a noun to simply mean ‘size’ would require further research; no such examples occur in the corpora.

⁹ Note that I have no examples with a plural standard. This is probably due to the semantics of equative constructions: the comparee is compared to a prototypical standard, which is thus unlikely to be plural.

<i>beje-mker</i>	<i>olla-w</i>	<i>oka:t-taki</i>	<i>ollo:t-če-ji</i>
man-AUG		fish-ACC river-ALL	<i>te:leje-d-de-n,</i>
PF.PTCP-PRFL.SG	tell-PROG-NFUT-3SG		go-
“ <i>er</i>	<i>dimen</i>		
	<i>olla-mkar-u</i>		<i>epken-i-</i>
<i>wu</i> ”;	<i>inin-niken</i>		
PROX	EQU.ACC.POSS.3SG	fish-AUG-ACC	catch-PST-
1SG	laugh-SIM.CVB		
<i>gu:n-ni</i>			
say-3SG			
‘A man is telling how he went to the river (to catch) fish, “I caught a fish as big as this ,” he says laughing.’			

In the Lamunkhin dialect, the marker of measurable extent and the proximal demonstrative *er(ek)* have fused to form the dimensional demonstrative *erdin*. That the separate noun *di:-* has suffixed to the proximal demonstrative is clear from the phonological reduction of the Equative marker: it is considerably shorter in the construction with the demonstrative standard than in the construction with the nominal standard (6a), and it is also shorter than the demonstrative root (0.8 times the length of the demonstrative root).

(5d) LAM, narrative (AXK_svatovstvo_034)

<i>mut-tule</i>	<i>kuṇa,</i>	<i>er-din</i>	<i>kuṇa</i>	<i>že</i>
	<i>omolgo</i>	<i>go:ṭne-če</i>		<i>bi-h-ni,</i>
1PL-LOC		PROX-EQU	PTL[R]	child boy
	child	be-NFUT-3SG		say-HAB-PF.PTCP
“‘We have just such a child [a child as old as this], a boy”, she said.’				

In the corpora of spontaneous narratives, the Equative construction with a demonstrative standard occurs far more frequently than the Equative with a nominal standard: in the Lamunkhin dialect, two nominal standards occur with the Equative noun *di:-* ((6a) and (6c) below) as compared to nine examples of the Equative demonstrative (e.g. (5d, 6b)). In the Bystraja dialect, only the construction with the demonstrative standard occurs in the narrative corpus (e.g. (6d)), but elicitation with picture stimuli obtained some examples of constructions with a nominal standard and the Equative noun *di:(n)-* (e.g. (5a, b)). Although originally the noun *di:-* meant ‘size’, in its function as an Equative marker it expresses equality of any measurable dimension: not only size (4, 5a-c, 6a), but also age (5d), time (6b), distance (6c), or amount (6d).

(6a) LAM, narrative (AEK_childhood_072)

<i>tarit</i>	<i>erek</i>	<i>erek</i>	<i>bu:del-u,</i>	<i>čanńik</i>
	<i>erek,</i>			
	<i>mere:či-n</i>			
then	PROX	leg(s)-POSS.1SG	PROX	PROX teapot[R]
	circle-POSS.3SG			

*di-n**o-kan,**begi-dne-nteken*

EQU-POSS.3SG

become-TRM.CVB

freeze-ITER-

MULT.CVB

‘Then this leg of mine became **as big as** the diameter of this kettle, freezing and freezing.’

(6b) LAM, narrative (stado#9_kochevka_039)

er-di-du-n

[...]

*e-le**bi-č̣i-p, ...*

PROX-EQU-DAT-POSS.3SG

PROX-LOC

be-FUT-1PL¹⁰

‘We will be here **at this time** of year (i.e. in spring, the time of the recording), ...’

(6c) LAM, narrative (RDA_shatun_007)

*no**tarak**č̣u:**oskōla**e-duk**di-n,**tar*

but[R]

DIST

house

PROX-ABL

DIST

school[R]

EQU-POSS.3SG

*kolle-kkene-t**č̣ugas*

small-DIM-INS

near

‘but that house is **[as far as]** the school from here, a bit closer (i.e. about 40-50m).’

(6d) BYS, narrative (VIA_tabun47)

*pastux-al**okaŋč̣i-wa:t-ta,**etike:m-u*

herder[R]-PL

be.happy-GNR-NFUT.3PL

old.man-POSS.1SG

say-GNR-NFUT-3SG

“*Aw-gič̣**er**di:n-ni**kokč̣i-ŋ-al-si?”*

where-ELAT

PROX

EQU-POSS.3SG

hoof-ALN-

PL-POSS.2SG

‘The herders are happy, and my old man (i.e. husband) says: “Where did you get **so many** hooves from?”’

The Equative of measurable extent appears to be fairly widespread among Even dialects: Cincius (1975: 202) lists the noun *di:-* ‘size’ as occurring in nine different dialects spread over the entire dialectal distribution of the language. In her description of Even phonology and morphology (Cincius 1947: 236) she describes this form as a postposition that expresses comparison of size and provides examples with pronominal and nominal standards. Grammar sketches of individual dialects do not describe Equative constructions with nominal

¹⁰ Note that the Lamunkhin dialect has lost the distinction between 1PL inclusive and exclusive. Therefore, I gloss 1PL forms for this dialect simply as 1PL, without further specification.

standards; however, Lebedev (1982: 65) says that personal pronouns “can take a number of other forms **characteristic of nouns**, among others [...] the form of comparison formed by the combination of the personal pronoun and the nominal base *di:-* ‘size, stature’ with possessive marking (*hin di:s* ‘as big as you, like you’, *noŋan di:n* ‘as big as he, like he’, etc.)” (my translation and emphasis). The Equative is mentioned in the sections on pronouns in sketches of the Moma, Okhotsk, and Berëzovka dialects,¹¹ with examples of the demonstratives *er(ek)* and *tar(ak)* occurring with the suffix as well as personal pronouns co-occurring with the possessive-marked noun (cf. Lebedev 1978: 77; 1982: 65, 71; Robbek 2007: 579). Lebedev (1982: 71) explicitly states that the forms *er-din* and *tar-din* express a comparison of “size, height, width, volume, etc”.

The Even Equative differs from the equative discussed by Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998) for Standard Average European languages in that the parameter is generally left unexpressed, since this is implicit in the meaning of the marker. However, elicitation with the picture stimuli did obtain one example of an Equative construction with expressed parameter (7).

- (7) BYS, elicited (RME_picture_stimulus_spiders, with prompt)
- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|-------|---------------|--|
| <i>ataki:-mkar</i> | <i>egçen</i> | <i>çu:</i> | | <i>din-ni</i> | |
| spider-AUG | big | | house | EQU- | |
| POSS.3SG | | | | | |
- ‘The spider is **as big as** a house.’

The Equative noun appears to function as the nominal predicate¹² (cf. (5a, 5c)), but it can also function as a modifier (5b-d). As with other modifiers in the Bystraja dialect, the Equative agrees with the head noun (‘dog’ in (5b), ‘fish’ in (5c)) in case and number.

The comparee is attested in subject (e.g. (5a, 5d, 6a, 6c)), direct object (5b, 5c), and temporal adjunct function (6b); whether other functions, such as indirect object, are possible remains to be tested. When the Equative construction functions as the nominal predicate, the constituent order is comparee – standard – standard marker; when the Equative construction functions as modifier, the order is standard – standard marker – comparee in spontaneous utterances. The divergent order in examples such as (5b) might be due to the Russian word order in the translation stimulus, or to the relatively heavy modifier.

Finally, from the current data it appears that the Equative construction with *di:(n)-* is not amenable to negation: all examples occur in affirmative sentences, and attempts at eliciting negative Equatives (‘not as X as’) produced either a Comparative construction (8a) or a Similitive construction (8b). The picture stimulus that prompted utterances (8a) and (8b) showed two men, one approximately 55-60 years old labelled ‘Ruslan’, the other at least 70-75 years old and labelled ‘Mikhail’, with an arrow pointing to ‘Ruslan’ to indicate that he

¹¹ Of these, the Moma and Okhotsk dialects belong to the western dialect group, while the Berëzovka dialect is an eastern dialect.

¹² This needs to be confirmed with 1st or 2nd person comparees as well as in past tense constructions, since, as mentioned in Section 2, in the present tense 3SG nominal predicates are unmarked.

was to be the topic of the sentence. Three speakers spontaneously described the picture with the Comparative construction shown in (8a); the fourth described it as ‘Mikhail is older than Ruslan’, i.e. with a Comparative construction, but with Mikhail as the topic. The utterance in (8b) was obtained after prompting the speaker to say that Ruslan was not as old as Mikhail. The structurally similar example (8c) was obtained in 2008 during elicitation that targeted a domain entirely distinct from that of comparison.

(8a) BYS, elicited (RME_picture_stimulus_Ruslan_Mikhail)

Ruslan *noseyčēn* *Mikhail-duk*
 Ruslan young Michael-ABL
 ‘Ruslan is younger than Michael.’

(8b) BYS, elicited (RME_picture_stimulus_Ruslan_Mikhail, with prompt)

Ruslan *e-š-ni* *bi-š*
 etike:n *Mikhail-gečīn*
 Ruslan NEG-NFUT-3SG old.man be-NEG.CVB
 Michael-SML
 ‘Ruslan is **not as old as** Michael.’

(8c) LAM, elicited (EISh_ClusivityB1a, translation from Russian)

noŋan *hi:* *goroda-mdas*
 egdžen *e-h-ni*
 bi-hikle-j,
 3SG 2SG town[R]-SML
 big NEG-NFUT-3SG be-CONC-PRFL.SG
 hə: *aj,* *adžit=gu*
 very good truth=Q
 ‘Even though it [our village] isn’t as big as your town, it’s very good, isn’t it?’

4. SIMILATIVE

4.1. Comparison of gradable and non-gradable properties

In the narrative corpora, comparison of both gradable and non-gradable properties are generally expressed by the suffix *-mdAs* in the Lamunkhin dialect and by the relational noun *ureč(in)* in the Bystraja dialect (Table 1). However, as mentioned in Section 2, this is not a hard and fast rule: in the Lamunkhin corpus there are a few examples where the suffix *-G(A)čīn*¹³ marks a comparison of gradable property, e.g. (10b). In the data elicited with the picture stimuli in the Bystraja dialect, *-G(A)čīn* occurs interchangeably with *ureč(in)* in the expression

¹³ This is pronounced *-gičīn* in this dialect when following upon consonant-final stems, and not *-gačīn* or *-gečīn* as in the Bystraja dialect and elsewhere, cf. Malchukov (1995: 9, 11).

of comparisons of gradable and non-gradable properties, e.g. (9c). Although a cognate of the relational noun occurs in the Lamunkhin dialect, it is not attested with the same range of meanings (see Section 4.3 and (18) below).

These Similitative markers express equality of gradable properties – both with an expressed parameter (9a-d) as well as with the parameter left unexpressed (10a-d). In spontaneous speech the parameter is left unexpressed far more frequently than otherwise – (9a) and (9b) are the only examples of the Similitative with expressed parameter occurring in my narrative corpora.

(9a) LAM, narrative (EAK_reindeer_herd_337, multiple hesitatives edited out)

...ńan *ńo:čē-mdes* *čulbańa końta-lkan*
bi-wre-n ...
 and flower-SML grue
 jersey[R]-PROP be-HAB.NFUT-3SG
 ‘...and she had a jersey **as green as** a plant...’

(9b) LAM, narrative (ZAS_jubki_Aniwrin_091)

čurita-ńa-l-bu *e-le,* *ne:-ri-w* *egčō:-*
meje *busa-mdas ...*
 beads-ALN-PL-ACC put-PST-1SG PROX-LOC
 big[EMPH]-AUG big.bead[R]-SML
 ‘I put my beads here, one **as big as** a pearl (lit. as big as a big bead)...’

(9c) BYS, elicited (RME_picture_stimulus_mother_daughter)

alińo *no:d* *eken-gečim-i = titte*
 girl pretty mother-SML-PRFL.SG=PTL
 ‘The daughter is **as pretty as** her mother.’

(9d) BYS, elicited (EPA_picture_stimulus_mother_daughter)

kuńa-ńa-n *ek-mi*
urečim-ni *no:d*
 child-ALN-POSS.3SG mother-PRFL.SG similar-POSS.3SG
 pretty
 ‘The child is **as pretty as** her mother.’

(10a) LAM, narrative (TVK_family_050)

inńat-an *honte* *poroda-*
mdas, ...
 fur-POSS.3SG other breed[R]-SML
 ‘Its fur is like [**as short as**] a different breed...’ (sentence continues: ‘...but our kitten, that one also had short fur, this one of ours also has short fur.’)

(10b) LAM, narrative (TVK_pear_story_004)

beje-n *noste* *bej-keken,* *naha:*
at *hawdi-la,*

self[Y]-POSS.3SG young man-DIM very[Y]
 NEG old-PRV
mut-keč̆in. mut *hemeke-t*
 1PL-SML 1PL age.mate-POSS.1PL
 ‘He himself is a young man, not very old, like us [**as old as** us], our age.’

(10c) BYS, narrative (EIA_leaving_Twajan_096)

elekes it-ti-wun tarroč̆in, iak-awu
turki erek
 at.first see-PST-POSS.1PL.EX DIST.QUAL
 what-EMPH sled PROX
č̆u: ureč̆in-ni
 house similar-POSS.3SG
 ‘We saw that for the first time, what on earth is this, a sled like [**as big as**] a house!’ (talking about big busses)

(10d) BYS, narrative (RME_father_farrier_046)

iak = ut meč̆
ureč̆in-ni,
go:-we:t-te
kø:šaŋa
 what=INDEFsword[R] similar-POSS.3SG say-GNR-NFUT[3PL] big.knife
 ‘Something like [**as big/long as**] a sword, it was called koshanga.’ (talking about a special type of knife similar to a machete)

Apart from their use in comparisons of gradable properties, these markers also express similarity of non-gradable properties (11a-d). They thus cover the function of both the “equative” and the “similative” found in Standard Average European languages.

(11a) LAM, narrative (AXK_Sebjan_history_1_117)

ti:k-erep maladžoha-mdah-al e-s-te
bi-he
 now-ADJR youth[R]-SML-PL NEG-NFUT-3PL
 be-NEG.CVB
 ‘(They) weren’t like today’s young people.’

(11b) LAM, narrative (RDA_TPK_names_origins_057)

dila-mdas ija bi-h-ni, Dil-č̆an
oł_ihin
go:-p-če
 head-SML stone be-NFUT-3SG therefore[Y] head-DIM
 say-MED-PF.PTCP
 ‘There is a stone like a head, that is why it is called Dilchan (“little head”).’

(11c) BYS, conversation (JIP_RME_razgovor_202)

iašal-an biena-ri

- ureč̣in-ni*
bi-si-n
 eyes-POSS.3SG become.drunk-IMPF.PTCP **similar**-POSS.3SG
 be-PST-3SG
 ‘His eyes were **like** (those of a) **drunk**.’
- (11d) BYS, narrative (NIG_legend_AIngej_085-086)
- ora:t-tuk* *o:-ri-n* *uŋ-u* *ureč̣čon* [...] *bey*
 herbs-ABL HESIT-ACC medicine **similar**.POSS.3SG.ACC make-PST-3SG
 ‘he made something from herbs ... **like medicine** ...’

4.2. Similarity of manner

In both dialects similarity of manner, with both specific (12b, c) and generic (12a, d) standards, is expressed by the suffix *-G(A)č̣in*, although in the Lamunkhin corpus there are a couple of examples with the suffix *-mdAs* in this function (e.g. (12b)).

- (12a) LAM, narrative (TVK_family_032)
- te:mi* *ńoka-l-gič̣in* *mut* *ńu:k-kič̣in*
irget-te-p *koška-w*
 therefore 1PL Russian-SML Sakha-PL-SML
 cat[R]-ACC raise-NFUT-1PL
 ‘Therefore we keep cats **like Russians, like Sakha**.’
- (12b) LAM, conversation (beseda_0611_NPZ)
- Nogavitsyn* *Edik-č̣en* *ama-mdah-ij* *he:č̣en-gere-n*
 Nogovitsyn Edik-DIM *ořobuna* father-SML-PRFL.SG
 exactly[R] dance-HAB[NFUT]-3SG
 ‘Little Edik Nogovitsyn dances exactly **like his father**.’
- (12c) BYS, narrative (RME_Yakutia038)
- ... *ew-gide-tki* *bi-si-l*
tore-r
ořot-tj-č̣
 PROX-SIDE-ALL be-IMPF.PTCP-PL speak[NFUT]-3PL Oroch-ADJR-INS
mun-gič̣in
 1PL.EX.OBL-SML
 ‘... those who live towards this side speak Even **like us**.’

together man-SML-DIM tell-REC-SIM.CVB whisper-
REC-SIM.CVB
'...talking, whispering with the spirit of water, river, hills **as with a person**,...'

(13c) BYS, conversation (AEI_ASA_muzej2_016)

noņana = ši ečīn *čī:kul-at-*
ti-n *Timofej-*
gečīn *bi-če*
3SG=PTL PROX.QUAL protrude-RES-PST-3SG
Timothy-SML be-PF.PTCP
'it (the doll's finger) used to stick out **like late Timofej's**'

(13d) LAM, conversation (beseda_1653_RDA)

Jeralash-kičīn *ia-čī-nni*
tara
Yeralash-SML HESIT-FUT-2SG PTL
'you'll do something **like in "Yeralash"** (a humorous TV show)

Judging from elicited data from the Bystraja dialect, the standard cannot be a clause either in comparisons of gradable properties (14a) or in comparisons of manner (14b). The alternative construction that is used for such clausal comparison appears to be calqued from Russian, where such comparisons are expressed with the interrogative pronoun *kak* 'how'. This is not only the result of elicitation, however, since a few similar constructions also occur in spontaneous utterances in the corpus, as shown for example by (14c). No examples of such constructions are found in the Lamunxhin corpus.

(14a) BYS, elicited (RME, translation from Russian)

noņan *mergeč* ***om = ka*** *mut*
ereger *ejet-ti-t*
3SG 1PL.IN clever **how=PTL**
always hope-PST-1PL.IN
'He is **as clever as** we had always hoped.'

(14b) BYS, elicited (RME, translation from Russian)

ew *ekn-il-ten*
eres-šort-te
me:r
PTL mother-PL-POSS.3PL chase-GNR-NFUT[3PL]
self-PL
kuņa-ŋ-al-bur
om = ka *bej-el* *eres-šort-*
te
child-ALN-PL-PRFL.PL **how=PTL** man-PL chase-
GNR-NFUT[3PL]
me:r *atika-r-bur?*
self-PL old.woman-PL-PRFL.PL
'Do mothers chase away their children **like men chase away** their wives?'

(14c) BYS, narrative (GIK_life_Anavgaj_086)

<i>om = ka</i>	<i>senokos-tu</i>	<i>tik-ko:t-te-n,</i>
	<i>orat</i>	
	<i>tarakam = te</i>	
how=PTL	haymaking[R]-DAT	grass fall-GNR-NFUT-3SG
	in.those.days=PTL	
<i>tačín</i>	<i>derevja</i>	
	<i>tik-ri-ten</i>	<i>ejdu</i>
DIST.QUAL	trees[R]	fall-PST-3PL
		all
‘And like grass falls during haymaking, the trees were falling everywhere.’		

4.3. Comparison of action or state

When attached to verbal participles, the Simulative expresses a similarity of the action or state to a hypothetical action or state (15a-d). This extension of the simulative is cross-linguistically common: “Finally, [in the sense of] ‘as if (of action or state)’ , most languages have expressions related to those they use as simulative markers (plus some hypothetical marker)...” (Fortescue 2010: 134). It should be noted, however, that this function is fulfilled in Even by the Simulative alone, without any hypothetical marker, as can be seen in the examples.

- (15a) LAM, narrative (RDA_TPK_death_128)
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>koke-čē</i> | <i>bej</i> | <i>čēbe-d-di-mdes</i> |
| | | <i>čēbe-jekte:k-kin</i> |
| die-PF.PTCP man | eat-PROG-IMP.F.PTCP-SML | eat- |
| NEC[Y]-PRED.2SG[Y] | | |
| ‘(You) have to eat (that) as if the deceased is eating.’ | | |
- (15b) LAM, conversation (beseda_0401_0404_RDA)
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>dulakan-dula-n</i> | | <i>bi-d-de-p</i> |
| | | |
| middle-LOC-POSS.3SG | be-PROG-NFUT-1PL | |
| <i>iak = kol,</i> | <i>kovš</i> | <i>do:-la-n</i> |
| | <i>dessi-d-di-mdes</i> | |
| HESIT=INDEF | dipper[R] inside-LOC-POSS.3SG | |
| | lie-PROG-IMP.F.PTCP-SML | |
| ‘we are in the middle (of the mountains) as if (we) are lying inside a dipper’ | | |
- (15c) BYS, narrative (RME_Yakutia041)
- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| ... <i>min</i> | <i>ek-mu</i> | |
| | <i>go:-we:t-ti-n,</i> | |
| <i>olute-w-ri-yčín</i> | | |
| 1SG.OBL | mother-POSS.1SG | say-GNR-PST-3SG |
| | chase-ADVRS-IMP.F.PTCP-SML | |
| <i>tore-r,</i> | | |
| <i>a:mnik</i> | <i>a:mnik</i> | |
| speak[NFUT]-3PL | quickly | quickly |
| ‘.... my mother used to say, they speak as if someone is chasing them, fast, fast.’ | | |

(15d) BYS, conversation (JIP_RME_razgovor_113)

Natalja-w *o:šej-ri-**yčín***
ońa-d-č̣o:t-ta-n, *tarak* *bej-jeken*
 Natalia-ACC tease-IMPF.PTCP-SML write-PROG-GNR-
 NFUT-3SG DIST man-DIM
 ‘He’s writing **as if** to tease Natalja, that (despicable) man.’

Whereas in the Bystraja dialect this function is covered by the suffix *-G(A)čín* (Table 1), in the Lamunkhin dialect it is fulfilled by the suffix *-mdAs*, with *-G(A)čín* occurring only with the verb *go:(n)-* ‘say’ (16). This latter construction can be considered a type of “accord clause”, that is, an illocutionary sentence adverbial. Since accord clauses are rarely formally distinct from simulative clauses in European languages (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998: 320-321), it is interesting to note the formal distinction made by Lamunkhin Even between *-mdAs* to mark simulative clauses and *-G(A)čín* to mark accord clauses. As mentioned above, in her description of the phonology and morphology of Even Cincius (1947: 235-236) exemplifies the suffix *-mdAs* with such comparisons of actions or states (cf. (17c)).

(16) LAM, narrative (EAK_reindeer_herd_441)

a *pr̥o:sta* *bi:* *ečín*
owon
toremen
hupku-č̣i-m,
 but[R] simply[R] PROX.QUAL 1SG Even
 speech.POSS.3SG learn-FUT-1SG
aby-liš-by *go:ni-**wčín-ni***
ńuč̣i-di-č̣ ...
 superficially[R] say-IMPF.PTCP-SML-POSS.3SG Russian-ADJR-INS
 ‘And I will simply learn the Even language, **as they say** in Russian “aby liš by”
 (superficially)...’

In the Lamunkhin dialect, this construction has further extended to an epistemic marker with a meaning of ‘it appears, it seems’ (17a, b) – an extension that is also found in this dialect for the lexeme *uručun* (18), the cognate of the Simulative relational noun *ureč(in)* found in the Bystraja dialect. Similarly, Cincius (1947: 236) describes *-mdAs* as expressing “a comparison with a nuance of assumption” (my translation; cf. 17c). Such extensions of the simulative domain into evidentiality are cross-linguistically well attested (Fortescue 2010: 132-134; see also Rose, this volume).

(17a) LAM, narrative (RDA_lost_tapes_znatoki_073; N. Aralova’s field data)

ta-duk *em-č̣e-**mdes,***
tara
 DIST-ABL come-PF.PTCP-SML PTL
 ‘He **seems** to have come from there.’

- (17b) LAM, narrative (EAK_reindeer_herd_490)
ta-duk *čomkat-tak-u* *honte-I* *bi:*
 DIST-ABL other-PL 1SG think-COND.CVB-POSS.1SG
 NEG-SML-PL
 ‘Apart from that, if I think (about it), there are no others, **it seems.**’

- (17c) Moma or Upper Kolyma dialect¹⁵ (Cincius 1947: 236; my glossing and English translation)
olra-I *ho-č* *urečči-ri-*
mdes-el...
 fish-PL very-INS be.happy-IMPF.PTCP-SML-PL
 ‘**It seems as if** the fish are very happy....’

- (18) LAM, narrative (IVK_memories_173)
tar *od-di-n* *istoria* *tar-it* *uručun*
 DIST story[R] DIST-INS stop-PST-3SG
it.seems
 ‘That story stopped like that, **it seems.**’

The simulative reading is particularly salient when the standard is clearly unrealistic, as in (15a-c), while the epistemic reading may have developed from cases where the standard is realistic, as in (17a, b). However, (17c) shows that constructions with unrealistic standards can also be interpreted with an epistemic reading (assuming that Cincius’ description is correct), while (19) shows that realistic standards can also be used in purely comparative constructions. This was said by a participant of a staged conversation – to make the situation more naturalistic the women were sitting around a table drinking tea, and this could indeed have taken place in a similar manner “at their usual table”.

- (19) LAM, conversation (beseda_0225_RDA)
ečin *obyčnaj* *ostal-la* *otton*
tege-če-d-di-mdes...
 PROX.QUAL DP[Y] usual[R] table[R]-LOC sit.down-
 RES-PROG-IMPF.PTCP-SML
 ‘**As if** [we] are sitting at the usual table...’

¹⁵ Cincius (1947) does not specify the dialectal provenance of her examples. However, in her introduction, she states that among other sources of data she used a published autobiographical story (Tarabukin 1938); she explains in a footnote further on that the examples taken from this story are referenced with “T” plus the page number (Cincius 1947: 56, footnote 1). This is the case for both (17c) and (21). Tarabukin came from the Moma district (https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Тарабукин_Николай_Саввич, accessed 19/12/2016) and can thus be assumed to have spoken the Moma or Upper Kolyma dialect. Both of these belong to the western dialect group (Burykin 2004: 85), like the Lamunkhin dialect, although they are situated further to the east.

5. EXPRESSION OF PRETENSE

Both the Lamunkhin and the Bystraja dialect have dedicated constructions to express “Pretense”: these are the suffix *-hmAn* on the lexical verb plus the auxiliary *ϕ:-* ‘become’ in the Lamunkhin dialect (20a, b) and the suffix *-ssAn* on the lexical verb plus the auxiliary *bi-* ‘be’ in the Bystraja dialect (20c, d).

(20a) LAM, said by local interlocutor to speaker (AEK_childhood_016)

<i>go:-niken</i>	<i>ukčene-hmen</i>	<i>ϕ:-čji-nni</i>	<i>min-teki</i>
say-SIM.CVB	tell- PRETENSE		1SG.OBL-ALL
	become-FUT-2SG		

‘You’ll pretend that you’re telling me.’

(20b) LAM, narrative (ZAS_Bochilikan_etiken_023)

<i>omen</i>	<i>čgor</i>	<i>omen</i>	<i>čgor</i>
one	<i>taŋa-hman</i>	two	one
	<i>ϕ:-nikan</i>		count- PRETENSE
	become-SIM.CVB		

<i>huličan</i>	<i>oka:t-u</i>	river-ACC	<i>daw-ra-n, ...</i>
fox			cross.river-NFUT-
3SG			

‘Pretending to count “one two, one two” the fox crossed the river, ...’

(20c) BYS, narrative (EPA_cannibals_003)

<i>nan</i>	<i>tarak</i>	<i>atika-ŋa-wur</i>	
and	<i>ga-wa:t-ta</i>	old.woman-ALN.DEST-PRFL.PL	
	DIST		
	take-GNR-NFUT[3PL]		

<i>onte-l-dule,</i>	<i>atika-ŋa-ssan</i>	<i>bi-de-wur</i>
other-PL-LOC	old.woman-VR- PRETENSE	be-PURP.CVB-
PRFL.PL		

‘They take a woman from another (clan, tribe) **pretending** to marry her.’

(20d) BYS, elicited (VIA_picture_stimulus_child_doctor)

...	<i>tarak</i>	<i>kuŋa</i>	<i>tara-w</i>	<i>ŋin-u</i>
	DIST	child	DIST-ACC	dog-ACC
	VR-RES- PRETENSE			medicine-

bi-de-ji,

<i>ulgimi-d-de-n</i>
<i>ia-s</i>
<i>en-se-n ...</i>

be-PURP.CVB-PRFL.SG ask-PROG-NFUT-3SG what-
 POSS.2SG hurt-NFUT-3SG
 ‘... That child is **pretending** to heal that dog, he is asking “what hurts” ...’

Note that this construction is also mentioned by Cincius (1947: 188-189), who calls it the “aspect of imitation” and says it expresses the copying or imitation of an action. In the two examples she provides, which are sourced to Tarabukin (1938) and thus come from the Moma or Upper Kolyma dialect (cf. footnote 15), the auxiliary is *bi-* and the pretense suffix is *-sAn*. The construction thus resembles that found in the Bystraja dialect, even though the Moma or Upper Kolyma dialect belongs to the western dialect group, like the Lamunkhin dialect. The suffix *-sAn* is also mentioned among the “logical-grammatical forms”. Interestingly, here Cincius states that *-sAn* “expresses that the **object** or action is merely being imitated, depicted, copied” (Cincius 1947: 236; translation and emphasis mine), and she gives an example of the suffix attaching not only to a verb, but also to a noun phrase⁶ (21). No such examples are found in the Lamunkhin or Bystraja corpora.

(21) Moma or Upper Kolyma dialect (Cincius 1947: 236; my glossing and English translation)

<i>dʒol-ač</i>		<i>ieke-sen,</i>	
	<i>časka-san</i>		<i>bi-wet-te-</i>
<i>p,</i>			
	<i>onij-ač</i>		
stone-INS	pot-PRETENSE	cup-PRETENSE	
	be-GNR-NFUT-1PL.EX	sand-INS	
<i>čaji-ŋa-san</i>		<i>bi-wet-te-p</i>	
tea-ALN-PRETENSE	be-GNR-NFUT-1PL.EX		

‘Our make-believe pots and cups were [made] of stone, our make-believe tea was [made] of sand.’

6. EQUATIVES, SIMILATIVES AND PRETENSE IN OTHER TUNGUSIC LANGUAGES

As mentioned repeatedly above, the forms and constructions to express equality of measurable dimensions, similarity, and pretense appear to be quite widespread in Even as a whole, since they are mentioned in several descriptions. Unfortunately, given the scanty examples, it is impossible to judge to what extent there are dialectal differences in form or function. Nevertheless, it is probably safe to say that the Equative marker *di:(n)-*, the Similative suffixes *-G(A)č̄in* and *-mdAs*, and the Pretense construction with *-hmAn/-ssAn/-sAn* plus auxiliary are found in Even in general.

Two of the forms found in Even, namely *-G(A)č̄in* and the Equative marker *di:-* are also found in Even’s close sister languages, Evenki and Negidal (Nedjalkov 1997: 122, 149, 161, 285 and Cincius 1982: 21, respectively). In

¹⁶ Note the 1PL. subject agreement marking on the verb, which does not come through in the translation.

Evenki, *-G(A)čin* expresses both equality of gradable properties and similarity of manner (Nedjalkov 1997: 285, 161).

Interestingly, both Even and Evenki have grammaticalized constructions to express pretense that do not derive from any of the Similitive constructions and that are not cognate, either. Instead of an auxiliary construction such as that found in Even, in Evenki Pretense is expressed with the suffix *-lAkAn*, e.g. *ǰev-leken-* ‘pretend to have eaten’ < *ǰev-* ‘eat’ or *a:s-leken-* ‘pretend to have fallen asleep’ < *a:sin-* ‘fall asleep’ (Nedjalkov 1997: 267). Unfortunately, Nedjalkov does not give any full examples that would show what other suffixes attach to verbs derived with *-lAkAn* and how they behave syntactically.

Among the Southern branch of Tungusic, a cognate of the Even Equative noun is found in Udihe, where it has the form *di:ŋki-* (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 498). Furthermore, the suffix *-lAŋki* derives adjectives that express a comparison of gradable properties (ibid: 186-187):

- (22a) Udihe (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 187, ex. 289a, glosses adapted)
- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| <i>ei</i> | <i>laŋki-ni</i> | <i>tauxi</i> | <i>mo:</i> | <i>mo:-digi</i> | <i>xaisi</i> | <i>gugda-</i> |
| PROX | 3SG | tree | DIST | also | tree-ABL | high-EQU- |
- ‘This tree is **as high as** that one.’

The Even Similitive suffixes and relational noun do not occur in Udihe; rather, two postpositions express similarity: *bede* ‘like’ and *bubu* ‘similar to’ (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 498). Of these, *bede* appears to express comparisons of (non-)gradable properties:

- (22b) Udihe (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 498, ex. 968, glosses adapted)
- | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <i>bi</i> | <i>bede</i> | <i>solŋgi</i> | <i>ise:-mi</i> | <i>in’ei-we</i> | <i>sul’ai</i> |
| 1SG | SML | orange | dog-ACC | see.PST-1SG | fox |
- ‘I saw a dog that was orange **like a fox (as orange as a fox)**.’

7. CONCLUSION

As this paper has shown, the domain of equality and similarity in Even differs from that found in Standard Average European languages. First of all, the Even Similitive covers both equality of gradable properties as well as comparison of non-gradable properties and manner – functions which in European languages are largely fulfilled by two distinct constructions, the equative and the similitive. Secondly, the Even Equative (as expressed by *di:n-*) covers only a small slice of the meanings expressed by European equative constructions, since it is restricted to the expression of equality of measurable dimensions. Thirdly, the parameter is mostly left unexpressed, both in Equative and in Similitive constructions. In the Equative, the parameter ‘size’ is inherent in the marker, although the precise

meaning (size, distance, age, etc.) can only be deduced from the context. This lack of overtly expressed parameter found in Even is cross-linguistically not rare: as discussed by Haspelmath (2017: 24), “[i]n quite a few descriptions, the examples of degree identity predications do not contain a specific property expression, and it seems that the precise parameter will have to be inferred from the context”. It is thus worth considering whether the definitions of equative constructions posited by Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998) and Haspelmath (2017) are not too heavily influenced by constructions found in European languages.

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