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THE ENGLISH SIMILATIVE CONSTRUCTION: A FORMAL DESCRIPTION IN THE CONSTRUCTION GRAMMAR APPROACH

When linguistic accounts describe the English similative construction, they tend to concentrate on its most prototypical formal variant, exemplified with the sentence *Susy is like her sister*. Nevertheless, linguistic data from the selected linguistic literature and *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* indicates many other expressions that code this construction. This paper attempts to compile and describe these expressions, grouping them into formal categories, whose semantic and formal structure is represented using the Construction Grammar formalism. Based on this formal examination, I will propose a formal taxonomy of the English similative construction, describing the taxonomic relations between higher level and lower level formal categories.

Keywords: similative construction, COMPAREE, STANDARD, PARAMETER, similative marker

1. Introduction

The English similative construction represents a situation that construes $entity_1$ and $entity_2$ as similar with respect to some property or manner e.g. *My sister is like me* or *Fatmir sings like a nightingale*. This paper aims to describe the formal expressions that realise this construction, based on the data extracted from the selected linguistic literature and *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (henceforth COCA).

The article is organised as follows: Section 1 offers an introductory overview of the similative construction, characterising its three formal categories, along with different formal expressions that code the COMPAREE and the STANDARD within them. Section 2 delineates two constructions that bear

formal resemblance to the similative construction but express different meanings. Section 3 describes two constructions that can be categorised as more peripheral members of the similative construction. Section 4 discusses the formal variants in which the similative marker might appear. Section 5 examines the formal expressions that code the PARAMETER outside the argument structure of the similative construction. Section 6 presents a formal taxonomy of the English similative construction, within which the taxonomical relations between higher level and lower level categories are described.

2. The similative construction: an overview

In typological linguistics, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 278) introduce the term "similative construction" to describe a construction that expresses similarity, in particular "the sameness of manner" or quality, as seen in sentence (1). A similar definition is proposed by Irsara (2021: 48) in her typological account, where she states that similative constructions pertain to "similarity of quality or manner."

1) He sings **like a nightingale.** (H&B 1998: 319)

Earlier linguistic accounts, such as Ultan (1972), categorise the similative construction as a subtype of the equative construction, mostly marked by the "as_1…as_2" structure, as shown in sentence (2):

2) Robert is **as tall as Maria**. (H&B 1998: 277)

According to Haspelmath and Buchholz, the conceptual structure of the equative construction (EC) and the similative construction (SC) encompasses three obligatory semantic components, namely the 'COMPAREE' ($entity_1$), the 'PARAMETER' (property or manner), and the 'STANDARD' ($entity_2$). The formal distinction between these constructions lies in their characteristic functional elements: the EC includes the 'parameter marker' as_1 and the 'standard marker' as_2, whereas the SC features the 'similative marker,' whose prototypical formal expression is the function word *like*. For illustration, consider the following sentence:

3)	**My sister**	**is**	**like** **me**	(H&B 1998: 319)
	COMPAREE		similative marker	STANDARD

In sentence (3), the COMPAREE and the STANDARD are coded as noun $phrase_1$ and noun $phrase_2$, respectively. The grammatical morpheme *like* functions as the most prototypical similative marker. We will introduce the term 'similative phrase' [*like* NP_2] to refer to the *like*-prepositional phrase, which subsumes the similative marker and the STANDARD.

We have determined that the PARAMETER is an obligatory semantic component, as seen in the equative construction in sentence (2), where the PARAMETER is coded as the gradable adjective *tall*. In contrast, the similative construction in sentence (3) does not contain a formal expression for the PARAMETER. According to Haspelmath and Buchholz, the equative construction necessitates a formal realisation of the PARAMETER, which is absent in the argument structure of the similative construction. However, Irsara (2021) offers a different perspective, arguing that the principal formal distinction between the two constructions lies in the expressions coding the standard marker, namely as_2 in the EC and *like* in the SC. She argues that the similative construction can incorporate an explicit PARAMETER, expressed as the semantic structure 'PARAMETER *like* STANDARD' and coded as 'Adj *like* NP,' as shown in the sentence "Roberto was healthy and strong like me" (p. 66). Irsara indicates that the semantic difference between the equative structure '*as* Adj *as* NP' and the similative structure 'Adj *like* NP' is that the former expresses quantitative comparison, relating to an equal degree or quantity, whereas the latter represents qualitative comparison, concerning an attribute or manner. This observation allows us to categorise the equative construction as a quantitative comparison and the similative construction as a qualitative comparison. Based on Henkelmann (2006: 374), where the Adj *like* NP structure is described as an equative construction, we will treat this structure as an equative variant rather than the similative construction, given the explicit formal coding of the PARAMETER. (see Section 3.1).

The formal description in this paper is based on the theoretical model proposed by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) and their argument that the PARAMETER is absent from the argument structure of the similative construction. Despite this formal absence, shown in sentence (3), I will suggest that the PARAMETER is conceptually present as the 'IMPLICIT PARAMETER,' representing an attribute or manner inferred from the context or specified outside the argument structure.

2.1. Formal expressions of the like-similative construction

While examining sentences in the literature and the corpus, we can isolate three formal variants expressing the similative construction, such as: (1) – the 'monoclausal similative construction' (MSC), e.g. *My sister is like me*; (2) – the 'biclausal similative construction' (BSC), e.g. *She writes like her brother talks* (H&B 1998: 280); and (3) – the 'phrasal similative construction' (PSC), e.g. *a memory like an elephant*. We will represent their semantic and formal structure using the Construction Grammar formalism proposed by Goldberg (1995), for whom the construction is a form-meaning pair.

2.1.1. The monoclausal similative construction

From the corpus search, we can identify four formal structures that realise the monoclausal similative construction, including: (1) NP_1 COPULAR VERB *like* NP_2, (2) CLAUSE *like* NP, (3) NP_1 ACT *like* NP_2, and (4) NP_1 TREAT NP_2 *like* NP_3. These structures exhibit differences in the grammatical function fulfilled by the *like*-similative phrase and, within the CLAUSE *like* NP structure, use a different formal expression to code the COMPAREE. In this description, we adopt the expanded terminology of Haspelmath and Buchholz, as proposed by Musik (2022), which indicates the distinct formal exponents realising the COMPAREE and the STANDARD.

2.1.1.1. NP_1 COPULAR VERB like NP_2

This variant occurs as the copulative sentence pattern (S P Cs), where the predicator is coded as a copular verb, whereas the COMPAREE and the STANDARD are coded as noun $phrase_1$ and noun $phrase_2$, respectively. Musik (2022) terms these as 'NOMINAL COMPAREE' and 'NOMINAL STANDARD.' We can notice that the NOMINAL COMPAREE functions as the subject, whereas the *like*-similative phrase serves as a subject complement:

4) My sister **is like me**.
5) You **sound like such terrific people**. (COCA)
6) You **look like a scared rabbit.** (COCA)

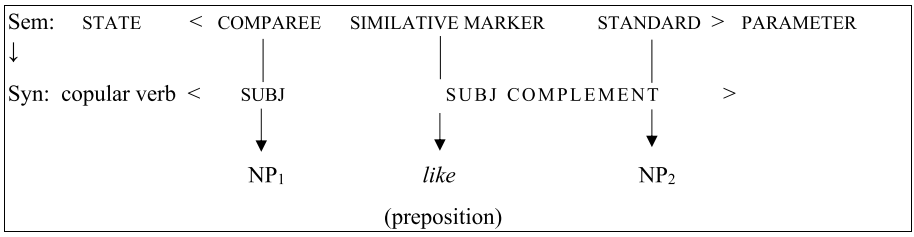

Fig.1: The NP_1 COPULAR VERB *like* NP_2 structure.

2.1.1.2. CLAUSE like NP

Realised as the intransitive or the transitive sentence pattern, this variant entails the COMPAREE coded as a finite clause, termed 'PROPOSITIONAL COMPAREE' (Musik 2022), along with an optional manner adverbial, marked with a *like*-similative phrase, which subsumes the NOMINAL STANDARD:

7) They look like us. They **talk like us**. They live down the hallway from us. (COCA)
8) Your satellites work **like clockwork.** (COCA)
9) Have some fries. You eat **like a bird.** (COCA)

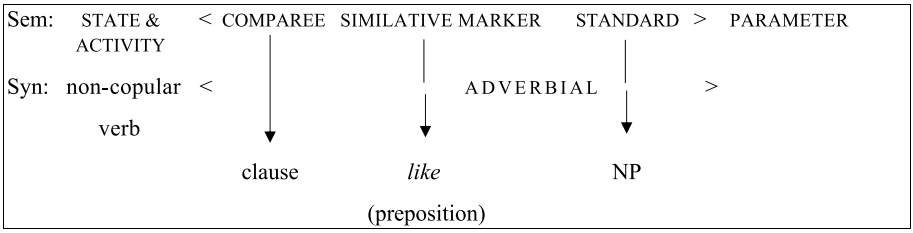

Fig.2: The CLAUSE *like* NP structure.

As seen in the corpus, this variant realises a number of idiomatic similatives. We have not encountered idiomatic similatives where the STANDARD would occur as a (reduced) clause, which implies that the nominal form of the STANDARD is conventionalised. For instance, sentence (8), which comprises the idiomatic similative phrase *like clockwork*, would not appear with the *like*-clause *like clockwork does*, though such a formal extension is grammatically correct. We shall propose that the conceptual process motivating such form is the conceptual metonymy THE CAUSE FOR THE PROPOSITION. Bierwiaczonek (2016: 17) defines the CAUSE as "involving direct or indirect causation of an event." In this case, the NOMINAL STANDARD, as the CAUSE instigating an event, functions as a reference point that gives access to an implicit proposition, the target. For instance, in sentence (8), the NOMINAL STANDARD *clockwork* gives access to the implicit proposition *clockwork works*.

2.1.1.3. NP_1 ACT like NP_2

Within this variant, expressed as an intransitive predicate-complement sentence pattern (S P C_p), the predicator and the complement, taken together, form a semantic whole. The NOMINAL COMPAREE and the NOMINAL STANDARD co-occur with the predicator *act* or *behave*, whereas the predicate complement is marked by a *like*-similative phrase, as in sentences (10)–(11):

10) You **act like an idiot**. (COCA)
11) You **behave like an animal**. (COCA)

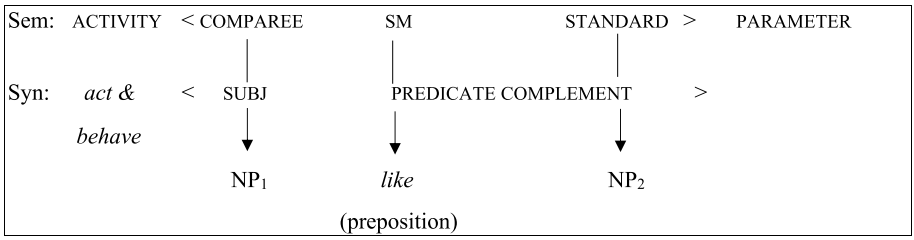

Fig.3: The NP_1 ACT *like* NP_2 structure.

2.1.1.4. NP_1 TREAT NP_2 like NP_3

Within this complex transitive sentence pattern (S P O_d C_o), the subject and direct object designate the AGENT and PATIENT, respectively. The object complement is coded as the *like*-similative phrase, which encompasses the NOMINAL STANDARD. Without the object complement, the predicator *treat* would change its meaning from 'to behave towards' into 'to cure:'

12) You treat death **like a lover.** (COCA)

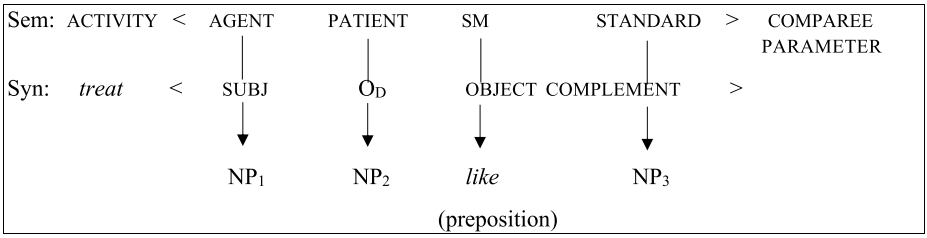

Fig.4: The NP_1 TREAT NP_2 *like* NP_3 structure.

I will suggest that within this structure, there is no explicit formal expression that codes the COMPAREE, which occurs as the conceptual IMPLICIT COMPAREE relating to $activity_1$ – 'the AGENT treating the PATIENT.' For instance, in sentence (12), the IMPLICIT COMPAREE represents $activity_1$ *your treating death*, where *your* and *death* designate the AGENT and PATIENT, respectively. Through the conceptual metonymy THE STANDARD FOR THE ACTIVITY OF TREATING THE STANDARD, the NOMINAL STANDARD, as a reference point, gives access to implicit $activity_2$ 'an AGENT treating the STANDARD,' the target. Expressed as this structure, the similative construction construes $activity_1$, the IMPLICIT COMPAREE, and $activity_2$, accessed through the NOMINAL STANDARD, as similar with respect to the IMPLICIT PARAMETER relating to manner. Thus, in sentence (12), we construe $activity_1$ *your treating death* as similar to implicit $activity_2$ *one treating a lover* with respect to the PARAMETER relating to some manner.

2.1.1.5. The partly-idiomatic MSC

Certain monoclausal similatives comprise an idiomatic, lexically-filled *like*-similative phrase. They exhibit the structure NP_1 COPULAR VERB *like* NP_2, as in sentences (13)–(14), or CLAUSE *like* NP, as in sentences (15)–(16):

13) The twins are **like two peas in a pod.** (Cambridge Online Dictionary)
14) Ronnie was **like a breath of fresh air** in a way. (COCA)
15) Your satellites work **like clockwork.**
16) After spending 10 years in England, I learned to drink **like a fish**. (COCA)

Sometimes idiomatic similatives encompass the 'PARAGON STANDARD,' i.e. the NOMINAL STANDARD representing the 'paragon' defined as "an individual member who represents either an ideal or its opposite" (Lakoff 1987: 87). Sentences (17)–(18) show that the PARAGON STANDARD is coded as a proper noun, which might relate to a human paragon, e.g. *Michael Jordan* and *Elvis*:

17) He's like **Michael Jordan**. He's like a rock. (COCA)
18) Uncle Jesse can sing **like Elvis**. (COCA)

2.1.2. The biclausal similative construction

In examining the corpus, we can isolate two formal structures that encode the like-BSC, such as: (1) $CLAUSE_1$ *like* $CLAUSE_2$ and (2) NON FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ COPULAR VERB *like* NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$.

2.1.2.1. $CLAUSE_1$ like $CLAUSE_2$

Within the structure $CLAUSE_1$ *like* $CLAUSE_2$, $clause_1$ and $clause_2$ express the PROPOSITIONAL COMPAREE, $proposition_1$, and the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD, $proposition_2$, respectively. This structure might occur as the transitive sentence pattern (S P OD), as in sentence (19), or the intransitive sentence pattern (S P), as in sentences (20)–(21). In these patterns, the *like*-clause functions as an optional manner adverbial. Sometimes the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD is coded as reduced $clause_2$, where the predicator occurs as the pro-form *do* or a stranded auxiliary verb, as in sentence (21):

19) Underdogs know irony **like they know air and water**. (COCA)
20) She writes **like her brother talks**. (H&B 1998: 280)
21) He writes **like she does**.

In comparison to idiomatic similatives, which restrict the NOMINAL STANDARD, the corpus search shows that unidiomatic similatives with the PROPOSITIONAL COMPAREE might occur as the biclausal $CLAUSE_1$ *like*

$CLAUSE_2$, as in sentence (22), or the monoclausal CLAUSE *like* NP, as in sentence (23):

22) He writes **like she does**.
23) He writes like

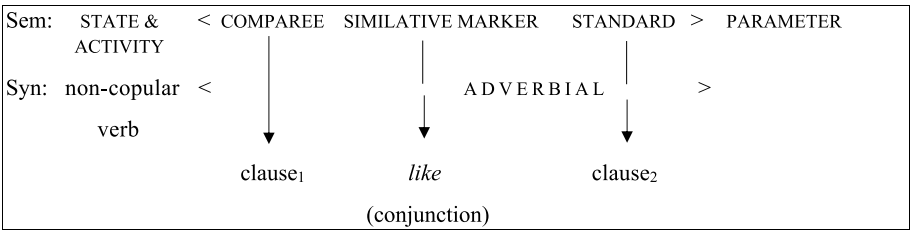

Fig. 5: The $CLAUSE_1$ *like* $CLAUSE_2$ structure.

2.1.2.2. NON FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ COPULAR VERB like NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$

In addition, the biclausal similative construction is expressed as the NON FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ COPULAR VERB *like* NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$ structure, wherein the COMPAREE and the STANDARD occur as non-finite $clause_1$ and non-finite $clause_2$, respectively. In sentence (24), the COMPAREE and the STANDARD are coded as gerundial clauses, termed the 'GERUNDIAL COMPAREE' and the 'GERUNDIAL STANDARD.' Sentence (25) contains the INFINITIVAL COMPAREE expressed as the *to*-infinitive clause. The observation from the corpus is that the GERUNDIAL COMPAREE co-occurs with the GERUNDIAL STANDARD, as in sentence (24), whereas the INFINITIVAL COMPAREE occurs with the GERUNDIAL STANDARD, as in sentence (25). We have not found sentences which would contain the INIFINITIVAL STANDARD:

24) **Painting outdoor murals** is like **playing hardball.** (COCA)
25) **To sing like a canary** is like **being a major tattletale. (**COCA)

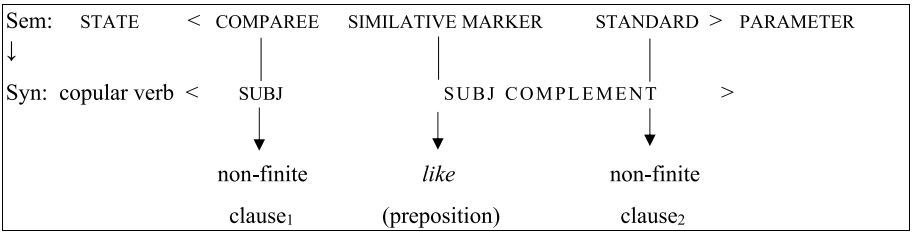

Fig. 6: The NON FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ COPULAR VERB *like* NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$ structure.

2.1.3. The phrasal similative construction

Exhibiting the structure NP_1 *like* NP_2, the PSC instantiates a 'Noun-Headed Construction,' i.e. a syntactic construction whose head noun functions as a 'constitutive element,' which determines a morphosyntactic and semantic characteristics of a given construction (Bierwiaczonek 2016). The head noun, the NOMINAL COMPAREE, occurs with a prepositional postmodifier, the *like*-similative phrase comprising the NOMINAL STANDARD, as seen in sentences (26)–(28):

26) I have **a memory like an elephant.**(COCA)
27) I gave her **a necklace like mine**. (COCA)
28) You're a smart girl with **a neck like a swan.** (COCA)

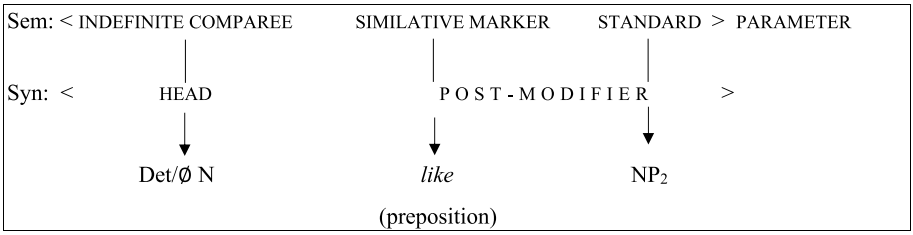

Fig.7: The NP_1 *like* NP_2 structure.

In the corpus, we can observe the tendency that the PSC occurs within a transitive sentence pattern, expressing the 'possession schema,' which designates a relation between the POSSESSOR and the thing possessed, the THEME (Radden and Dirven 2007). For instance, in sentence (29), the POSSESSOR is coded as the subject, whereas the THEME occurs as the phrasal similative construction, functioning as a direct object:

29) I have **a memory like an elephant.**

2.1.3.1. The idiomatic PSC

Fillmore et al. (1988: 505) distinguish the 'substantive idiom,' a lexically-filled idiom with a more or less specified lexical composition, and the 'formal idiom,' namely a lexically-open syntactic pattern intended for unpredictable semantic or pragmatic purposes, which often serves as a basis for the substantive idiom. When we consider sentences (30)–(32), we can notice that the idiomatic PSC functions as a substantive idiom:

30) You'd better remind him about the party – he's got **a memory like a sieve!** (COCA)
31) Thank you. I have **a memory like an elephant.** (COCA)
32) You have **a nose like an elephant's trunk!** (COCA)

3. The similative construction or not?

In the corpus, certain sentences contain the function word *like* and therefore resemble the similative construction at first glance. However, on closer examination, their semantic and formal structure corresponds to different constructions. We will refer to them as the 'equative *like*-construction' and the 'pseudo-similative construction.'

3.1. The equative like-construction

We have determined that the similative construction entails the IMPLICIT PARAMETER. Nevertheless, COCA sentences (33)–(34), which resemble monoclausal similatives, seem to contradict this fact since they occur with the PARAMETER coded as an adjective and adverb:

33) Robert was **tall like Yvette.** (COCA)
34) Vending machines flowed by **slowly like conveyor belt sushi.** (COCA)

As previously mentioned, Henkelmann (2006) categorises sentences such as (33)–(34) as an equative construction, which we will refer to as the 'equative *like*-construction' (henceforth ELC). This construction represents a more peripheral equative variant, characterised by the absence of the parameter marker as_1 and the inclusion of the standard marker *like* instead of the prototypical as_2, which results in a structure similar to the *like*-similative construction.

To confirm our claim that the ELC is a peripheral instance of the equative construction, consider COCA sentences (35)–(36), which illustrate that the idiomatic EC *as stubborn as a mule* might alternatively occur as the idiomatic ELC *stubborn like a mule*:

35) "You're **as stubborn as a mule**!" (COCA)
36) I can be **stubborn like a mule**. (COCA)

In the sentences above, both EC and ELC represent corresponding meanings, though the ELC seems to be less emphatic. They occur with different frequencies in COCA, which returns 41 instances of the EC *(as) stubborn as a mule* and 3 instances of the ELC *stubborn like a mule*.

3.2. The pseudo-similative construction

When we consider sentence (33), restated here as (37), the similative phrase *like Yvette* functions as an optional disjunct expressing additional information, delimited by a comma in writing or intonation in speech. This phrase can appear in the final position, as in sentence (37), or in the initial position, as in sentence (38):

37) Robert was tall, **like Yvette.**
38) **Like Yvette**, Robert was tall.

We can assume that sentences (37)–(38) instantiate a peripheral similative construction, wherein the PARAMETER occurs as a gradable adjective, the subject (*Robert*) serves as the NOMINAL COMPAREE, whereas the nominal complement of the *like*-prepositional phrase (*Yvette*) designates the NOMINAL STANDARD. It appears that, through the conceptual metonymy PARTICIPANT FOR PROPOSITION, the nominal complement *Yvette* serves as the reference point, which gives access to the implicit proposition, *Yvette was tall*, the target. In sentences (37)–(38), the implicit proposition, *Yvett was tall*, and the clausal proposition, *Robert was tall*, relate to an identical situation, involving two different participants *Robert* and *Yvette*.

Therefore, rather than construing *Robert* and *Yvette* as similar in height, we should presume that *Yvette* was tall for a female, whereas *Robert* was tall for a male. Thus, concerning height, we compare *Yvette* and *Robert* with the implicit social norm for female and male at that time, without specifying whether their height was similar or different. While the similative construction construes the COMPAREE and STANDARD as similar, sentences (37)–(38) compare entity_1 with social norm_1 and entity_2 with completely different social norm_2.

Among four degrees of comparison, Ultan (1972) distinguishes the comparison in 'positive degree,' wherein an entity is compared with an implicit social norm in a given environment, e.g. "John is tall" (p.120), and the comparison in 'equative degree,' where entity_1 and entity_2 are more or less equal or similar concerning some attribute, e.g. "John is as tall as George" (p.120). We can observe that sentences (37)–(38) relate to the comparison in positive degree rather than comparison in equative degree.

For this reason, we will treat them as the 'pseudo-similative construction,' i.e. comparison in positive degree, whose structure comprises the *like*-disjunctive phrase. Here, situation_1 and identical situation_2 involve entity_1 and different entity_2, which both exhibit the same attribute with respect to the norm in their different social environments.

4. The similative construction: more peripheral instances

I will suggest that two other constructions exhibit an identical conceptual structure to the *like*-similative construction, thereby allowing us to regard them as more peripheral members. Within their formal structure, the similative marker is coded as the subordinating conjunction *as* or the complex subordinating conjunctions *as if* and *as though*.

4.1. The as-similative construction

The conceptual and formal structure of this construction, expressed as $CLAUSE_1$ *as* $CLAUSE_2$ corresponds to the biclausal similative construction $CLAUSE_1$ *like* $CLAUSE_2$ with the difference that the subordinating conjunction *as* functions as a similative marker. In the *as*-construction, entailing the PROPOSITIONAL COMPAREE and the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD, the *as*-clause functions as a manner adverbial, as seen in sentence (39):

39) He uses statistics **as a drunk uses a lamppost**, for support rather than illumination. (Huddleston 2002: 1149)

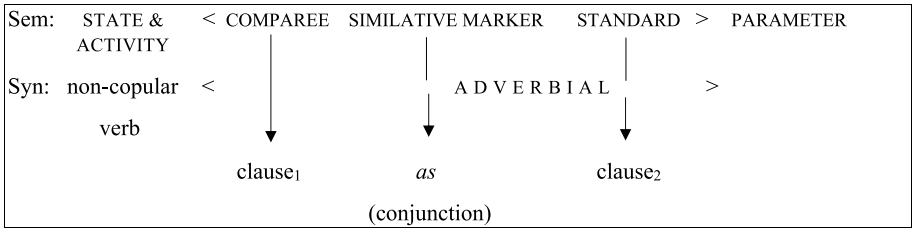

Fig.8. The *as*-similative construction.

4.2. The hypothetical similative construction

From the corpus data, we can identify four formal structures that encode the hypothetical similative construction, where the similative marker appears as the complex subordinating conjunctions *as if* and *as though*, along with the less prototypical subordinator *like*. Consider sentences (40)–(43), which show three monoclausal structures that realise this construction: (1) NP COPULAR VERB *as if* CLAUSE, as in sentences (40)–(41); (2) NP ACT *as if* CLAUSE, as in sentence (42); and (3) NP TREAT NP *as if* CLAUSE, as in sentence (43). In each case, the monoclausal structure functions as a matrix clause embedding the subordinate *as if*-clause, involving the NOMINAL COMPAREE and the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD:

40) Models always look **as if they were stuffed**. (COCA)
41) Halley Keiacides looked **like she wanted to argue**, but then nodded and left. (COCA)
42) You act **as if you 're not (inaudible)**. (COCA)
43) I treat people **as if they were telephones.** (COCA)

Corpus data show instances of the biclausal hypothetical similative construction, exhibiting the structure CLAUSE *as if* CLAUSE, where the PROPOSITIONAL COMPAREE co-occurs with the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD, functioning as an optional clausal manner adverbial:

44) He squinted at them **as if they gave off light.** (COCA)

Based on the corpus search, we assume that the most common structure is monoclausal NP COPULAR VERB *as if* CLAUSE, which instantiates a copulative sentence pattern, wherein the predicator tends to occur as a 'sensory copular verb' – i.e. *feel*, *look*, *smell*, *sound*, *taste* (Biber et al. 1999). Therefore, we shall consider this structure as a prototypical instance of the hypothetical similative construction, whose semantic and formal dimension is represented below:

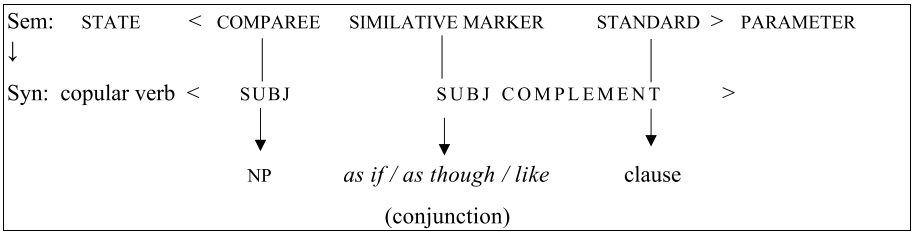

Fig.9. The NP COPULAR VERB *as if* CLAUSE structure.

4.2.1. The HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD

The hypothetical similative construction entails the HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD, i.e. a conceptual category of the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD that construes a situation as counterfactual, allowing for varying degrees of probability regarding factual occurrence. Compare sentence (45), where the PROPOSITIONAL STANDARD grounds situation in reality, with sentence (46) involving the HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD to construe the situation as counterfactual:

45) **She writes** like **her brother talks**. (H&B 1998: 280)
46) **She acts** as if **she hated me**. (Huddleston 2002: 1152)

The HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD construes a situation with the probability of factual occurrence ranging from close to remote. Therefore, I suggest that two kinds of the HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD should be distinguished, namely the CLOSE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD and the REMOTE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD. Quereda Rodriguez-Navarro (1993) provides a basis for the conceptual and formal characterisation of the HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD. He describes the dichotomy in the English tense system between the 'remote form' and the 'non-remote form,' which correspond to the past tense and present tense forms, respectively. Building on this, I will propose that the remote forms designate the REMOTE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD, whereas the non-remote forms designate the CLOSE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD.

For Quereda Rodriguez-Navarro (p.79), when the speaker chooses the tense, they construe a conceptual distance of a situation with respect to a temporal or epistemic meaning. The remote form concerns a conceptually distant situation, which relates to the past time or, with epistemic meaning, an improbable or impossible hypothetical situation, e.g. in the sentence *If he **came** tomorrow, we **could have** a party* (p. 81) the remote forms *came* and *could have* indicate a marginal likelihood of occurrence. The non-remote form, on the other hand, construes a situation as conceptually close, within the speaker's perspective. It can relate to the present time or the future time, predicted at the moment of an utterance and thus conceptually close. With the epistemic meaning, unlike the remote form, the non-remote form construes a situation as less hypothetical, with a high likelihood of occurrence, which could even reflect reality, as in the sentence *If he **comes** tomorrow, we **can have** a party* (p. 81), where the non-remote forms *comes* and *can have* construe the situation as more probable to occur.

For example, sentence (47) involves the CLOSE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD, referring to a probable or factual situation, whereas sentence (48) incorporates the REMOTE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD, which construes a proposition as counterfactual or hypothetical:

47) She acts as if **she hates me**. (CLOSE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD)
48) She acts as if **she hated me**. (REMOTE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD)

Huddleston (2002) argues that when the main predicator in the hypothetical similative construction is in the preterite (past tense), then the predicator in the subordinate clause is coded as the irrealis *were* or simple preterite with other verbs, marking modal remoteness, as in sentence (49). Alternatively, the predicator in the subordinate clause might occur in the perfect preterite, which indicates a backshift or past time, as in sentence (50). He notes that the irrealis *were* or simple preterite is preferable to perfect preterite in informal spoken English:

49) **He was treated** as if **he were a Commonwealth citizen**. (Huddleston 2002: 1152)
50) **He was treated** as if **he had been a Commonwealth citizen**.

5. The similative marker

Most linguistic accounts, including Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), focus on the similative construction in which the similative marker is realised as the function word 'like.' In this section, we direct attention to formal expressions, other than the prototypical 'like,' that also serve this function.

5.1. Grammatical similative markers

The examples cited so far contain the 'grammatical similative marker' (henceforth GSM), whose function is fulfilled by a grammatical morpheme, a function word, such as the preposition *like*, as in sentence (51) or the subordinating conjunctions marked in bold, shown in sentences (52)–(54):

51) My sister is **like**
52) She writes **like** her brother talks.
53) He uses statistics **as** a drunk uses a lamppost, for support rather than illumination.
54) Models always look **as if** / **as though** they were stuffed.

5.2. Lexical similative markers

In addition to the GSM, the similative construction might occur with the lexical similative marker (henceforth LSM). From the grammatical perspective, we shall distinguish the similative verb (e.g. *resemble*), the similative noun (e.g. *similarity*), the similative adjective (e.g. *similar*), and the similative adverb (e.g. *similarly*). They represent the similative meaning and function as lexical similative markers. We will group them into four distinct categories, such as: (1) the V-LSM, (2) the Adj-LSM, (3) the Adv-LSM, and (4) the N-LSM.

5.2.1. The V-LSM

To begin with, we need to examine situational contexts where the similative verb might appear. In Radden and Dirven (2007), situations fall into two general categories – events and states. While events represent 'dynamic situations' which "involve changes and hence are heterogeneous," states designate 'static situations,' which "do not involve changes and hence are homogeneous" (R&D 2007: 177). For instance, the sentence *Ann cuddled the baby* (p. 178)

represents an event, whereas the sentence *Ann lives with her parents* (p. 178) designates a state. Consider sentence (55) which illustrates the V-LSM coded as the similative verb *resemble*:

55) John **resembles** Mary. (Dixon 2005: 361)

Sentence (55) predicates the similarity between the COMPAREE and the STANDARD, which Radden and Dirven (p. 191) would describe as an unbounded 'relational indefinite lasting state,' i.e. a timeless condition that could potentially change in the future. Based on their account, we can categorise the similative verb as a stative verb that construes a situation as a relational indefinite lasting state.

Yet, when used in the progressive aspect, the similative verb *resemble* expresses a temporary state. Consider sentence (56), which evokes a restricted viewing frame, focusing on the phases marking an increasing physical resemblance between the COMPAREE and the STANDARD:

56) He is **resembling** his father more and more. (R&D 2007: 193)

From a formal perspective, Biber et al. (1999) distinguish the 'single-word lexical verb' (e.g. *resemble*) and the 'multi-word lexical verb' (e.g. *take after*), further dividing the latter into (1) the prepositional verb, (2) the phrasal verb, and (3) the multi-word verb construction. Sentences (57)–(60) below serve as examples compiling the inventory of English V-LSMs:

Single-word lexical verb

57) John **resembles**
58) Human cycle **mirrors** cycle of catastrophe. (COCA)

Prepositional verb

59) He **takes after** his mother (in being deeply religious). (Dixon 2005: 170)
60) You **remind me of** my wife. (COCA)

Biber et al. (1999) indicate another similative verb in their account. They view the predicator *look like* as a prepositional verb, illustrated in the sentence *It just looks like the barrel* (p. 414), where *the barrel*, functioning as a prepositional object, designates the NOMINAL STANDARD. In this paper, we will consider the copular *look* as a single-word verb, followed by a *like*-similative phrase serving as a subject complement. The similative construction allows for all kinds of such verbs that do not designate the V-LSM but combine with the *like*-GSM, e.g. *sing like*, *sound like*, *drink like*, etc.

From sentences (57)–(60), we can discern two transitive structures that encompass the V-LSM. Within the first structure – NP_1 SIMILATIVE VERB NP_2 – NP_2 designating the NOMINAL STANDARD might function as a direct object, with a single-word similative verb, as in sentences (57)–(58), or as

a prepositional object, with the prepositional verb *take after*, as in sentence (59). The second structure – NP_1 REMIND NP_2 *of* NP_3 – exemplifies the transitive predicate-complement sentence pattern, where the prepositional complement pertains to the predicator *remind* rather than the direct object. The nominal complement of the *of*-PP designates the STANDARD.

Besides, the V-LSM may occur within the biclausal similative construction, exhibiting the structure NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ SIMILATIVE VERB NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$, which encompasses the GERUNDIAL COMPAREE or the INIFINITVAL COMPAREE and the GERUNDIAL STANDARD, as seen in sentence (61):

61) **Being kissed by Zelig** resembles **being licked by an elephant**. (Dixon 2005: 170)

For some, another possible V-LSM could be the single-word verb *reflect*, which seems to denote the similative meaning, just like the verbs *resemble* and *mirror*. However, as seen in sentences (62)–(63), this verb expresses more demonstrative than similative meaning and thus should not be treated as the V-LSM:

62) I'm an idealist and a perfectionist, and I want my looks to **reflect** the world within me and how I feel. (COCA)
63) The size of the dump **reflects** the enormity of the damage caused by the storm. The debris just keeps coming. (COCA)

5.2.2. The Adj-LSM

To describe the similative adjective, we refer to Biber et al. (1999: 508-509), who distinguish two general conceptual categories for adjectives. These are categorised as (1) 'descriptors,' coded as gradable adjectives relating to some property, and (2) 'classifiers,' characterised by non-gradable adjectives that delimit and sometimes characterise the referent of a noun phrase (e.g. ***criminal*** *law*). Classifiers further subdivide into three subcategories: (1) 'relational,' which delimit and describe one referent in relation to another, e.g. *average*, *similar*, *standard*; (2) 'affiliative,' indicating the nation or faith of a referent, e.g. *American* or *Christian*; (3) 'topical' and other, providing explicative information that restricts the reference of a head noun, e.g. *chemical*, *environmental*, *sexual*.

While examining sentences (64)–(68), we can notice that similative adjectives function to express similarity between the COMPAREE and the STANDARD. This observation allows us to categorise the Adj-LSM as a 'relational classifier adjective':

64) John is **similar** to his cousin. (Dixon 2005: 90)
65) Grad school is **akin** to a religious cult. (COCA)

66) Prior year is **comparable** to most recent data. (COCA)
67) To sit with a novella is **analogous** to watching a play or a longish movie. (COCA)
68) # musical mannerisms are **parallel** to cannibalism... # (COCA)

From sentences (64)–(68), we can notice that the Adj-LSM is coded as a predicative adjective that occurs with a phrasal complement, the *to*-prepositional phrase. In this case, the preposition *to* functions as a standard marker.

The Adj-LSM occurs within the monoclausal structure NP_1 COPULAR VERB SIMILATIVE ADJ *to* NP_2, where it might co-occur with the NOMINAL COMPAREE and the NOMINAL STANDARD. In addition, we can observe the Adj-LSM in the biclausal similative construction NON FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ COPULAR VERB SIMILATIVE ADJ NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$, wherein the GERUNDIAL COMPAREE, or the INFINITIVAL COMPAREE, co-occur with the GERUNDIAL STANDARD, as in sentence (67).

In addition, the corpus study returns sentences where the Adj-LSM appears within the phrasal similative construction, exhibiting the structure NP_1 SIMILATIVE ADJ *to* NP_2:

69) Among the objects is an unusual five-stringed biwa, **a traditional Japanese instrument similar to a lute**. (COCA)

5.2.3. The Adv-LSM

The formal expression coding the similative adverb is a non-gradable manner adverb, serving as a 'manner adjunct' (Quirk et al.) or 'circumstance adverbial' (Biber et al.). These adverbs provide additional information concerning a state or activity, including details related to time, location or manner:

70) I essentially train **similarly to** a triathlete with longer cardiovascular needs.

We can observe that the Adv-LSM occurs within the monoclausal structure CLAUSE SIMILATIVE ADV *to* NP, where the PROPOSITIONAL COMPAREE co-occurs with the NOMINAL STANDARD, whose form cannot be expanded to a clause. We will assume that the cognitive explanation for such a co-occurrence is the conceptual metonymy THE CAUSE FOR THE PROPOSITION, where the NOMINAL STANDARD, the CAUSE, gives access to the implicit proposition. For instance, in sentence (70), the NOMINAL STANDARD gives access to the proposition *The way in which a triathlete with longer cardiovascular needs trains*.

In addition, the Adv-LSM can be identified as a non-gradable derivational adverb, formed by attaching nominal bases with the *-style* or *-fashion* derivational suffixes (Quirk et al. 1985: 438). Examples of such adverbs include *cowboy-style* and *spider-fashion*, as shown in the sentences below:

71) They killed him **cowboy-style**. (COCA)
72) He climbs up walls **spider-fashion**. (Macmillan Online Dictionary)

Bauer and Huddleston (2002: 1667) argue that when some affixes are attached to a base category or 'primary category,' in particular suffixes, new words belonging to a different resultant grammatical category are formed. For example, they describe the suffix *-ness* which changes an adjective into a de-adjectival noun through the process of 'nominalisation,' e.g. wet_{ADJ} + *ness* → $\text{wetness}_{\text{N}}$. On this basis, when the nominal primary category attaches the suffixes *-style* or *-fashion*, the resultant category becomes a denominal adverb through the process of 'adverbialisation.'

Notice that sentences (71)–(72) exhibit the structure CLAUSE NOUN-SUFFIX, wherein the nominal bases, *cowboy* and *spider*, designate the NOMINAL STANDARD, whereas the derivational suffixes *-fashion* and *-style* function as suffixal GSMs.

Alternatively, we can interpret *cowboy-style* and *spider-fashion* as nominal compounds. In their classification, Bisetto and Scalise (2005) distinguish the attributive compound, which might occur as an adjective-noun compound (e.g. *blue cheese*) or a noun-noun compound (e.g. *snail mail*), with a non-head noun indicating an attribute of the nominal head. Attributive compounds are further divided into endocentric compounds, which contain a head constituent, and exocentric compounds, which lack a head constituent. Under this classification, *cowboy-style* and *spider-fashion* would be categorised as attributive N-N compounds. These compounds are exocentric, as their meanings do not stem from the individual nominal constituents. Instead, they relate to a manner of performing an activity that is characteristic, in some respect, of the entities they refer to.

5.2.4. The N-LSM

While examining the corpus data, we can discern four similative nouns that predominantly function as N-LSMs, such as: *similarity*, *resemblance*, *affinity*, and *likeness*. To characterise the similative noun, we shall consider Radden and Dirven (2007: Ch 4), especially their cognitive description of the abstract noun. They argue that most abstract nouns, or 'reified things,' are based on relational concepts, which, through the conceptual shift known as 'reification,' are converted into things. The reification involves an 'ontological metaphor,' which allows us to comprehend relational concepts and situations in terms of things. The reified thing might pertain to an 'episodic situation,' i.e. an event or state of limited duration in time (e.g. *war*, *attack, disease*) or a 'steady situation,' namely a timeless state (e.g. *peace*, *happiness*), along with an event considered steady (e.g. *information*, *advice*, *help*). Episodic situations involve the ontological metaphor EPISODIC SITUATIONS ARE OBJECTS and occur as count nouns.

Steady situations, on the other hand, are stated as the ontological metaphor STEADY SITUATIONS ARE SUBSTANCES, coded typically as mass nouns. We are now in a position to categorise the similative noun as an abstract noun referring to some steady situation, since similarity or resemblance, as attributes, relate to a timeless state.

From a formal perspective, similative nouns occur with a post-head complement, coded as the prepositional phrase, whose most common head is the preposition *to*. The corpus study returns sentences showing that the N-LSM occurs within three general formal structures expressed by the transitive object-complement sentence pattern, where the similative noun functions as a direct object, whereas the prepositional phrase as an object complement, as seen in the sentences below:

NP_1 BEAR DET / Ø SIMILATIVE NOUN *to / with* NP_2

73) The Pro-bending Tournament **bears a resemblance to** the NCAA March Madness Men's and Women's Tournaments in regard to the elimination-based style of play. (COCA)
74) This test **bears a striking similarity to** the performance scales of the WAIS-R. (COCA)
75) It **bears affinity with** Derrida's notion of difference. (COCA)

NP_1 HAVE DET / Ø SIMILATIVE NOUN *to* NP_2

76) These programs **have similarities to** both email and chat rooms. (COCA)
77) In the book series, The Wheel of Time by Robert Jordan, Sauron **has a resemblance to** the main antagonist, Shai'tan. (COCA)

NP_1 SHOW SIMILATIVE NOUN *to* NP_2

78) Indeed, early stages of romantic love **show similarities to OCD**, including symptoms of anxiety, stress, and obtrusive thinking... (COCA)
79) They also **show affinities to the frescoes** at Lavardin and Meobecq. (COCA)

We have established that similative nouns denote steady situations, coded as mass nouns. Nevertheless, while examining the sentences above, we note their tendency to appear as count nouns. Radden and Dirven argue that most abstract notions in English are reified as substances, but even so, we might construe them as objects when we want to comprehend them in a "variety sense." For instance, when we code the similative noun as a count noun in plural (e.g. *similarities*), we predicate that the COMPAREE and the STANDARD exhibit two or more common domains of the IMPLICIT PARAMETER. Notice that, while similative nouns reified as objects can mark whether one or more domain of the IMPLICIT PARAMETER is expressed, other similative markers cannot indicate the number

of domains relating to the IMPLICIT PARAMETER, as in the sentence *John is **similar to** his cousin*. To do so, they need to incorporate the PHRASAL PARAMETER or the CLAUSAL PARAMETER, as in the sentence *He's **similar** to Martin **in size and shape**, though less likely to float*, where the PHRASAL PARAMETER *in size and shape* expresses two different domains of the PARAMETER.

The fourth structure identified in the corpus is the genitive construction NP_{GEN} SIMILATIVE NOUN *to* NP_2 which designates a possessive relation between the POSSESSOR and a thing possessed, the THEME. The possessive relation is marked by the genitive suffix *'s* or the possessive pronoun. Consider sentences (80)–(81) for illustration:

80) But at the very same time, she is struck and frightened by **Osvald's likeness to his father**. (COCA)
81) They say **his similarity to Dean** is what appeals to them**.** (COCA)

These examples show that the genitive structure is coded as a complex noun phrase, wherein the genitive premodifier designates the NOMINAL COMPAREE, the head noun serves as the N-LSM, whereas the nominal complement of the *to*-PP represents the NOMINAL STANDARD.

5.3. The phrasal similative marker (P-SM)

In their account of the manner adjunct, Mittwoch et al. (2002: 671) describe a 'manner prepositional phrase.' As seen in sentences (82)–(84), this phrase is structured with the governing preposition *in*, followed by an NP complement headed by the nominals such as *manner*, *way*, *style*, or *fashion*, which we term as 'manner nominals' in our terminology:

82) Unaffected by criticism, Moller continued to work **in the dragon style** until his death in 1937. (COCA)
83) Classes are conducted **in seminar fashion**, and the level of instruction is comparable to that in regular college courses. (COCA)
84) Kelly was trying to get Mr. Trump to lash out **in a misogynist way**. (COCA)

What follows from the sentences above is that the P-SM occurs within the monoclausal structure CLAUSE *in* NP MANNER NOMINAL, wherein the pre-head nominal complement designates the NOMINAL STANDARD (e.g. *the dragon*, *seminar*), whereas the nominal head functions as a lexical similative marker.

5.4. The similative marker: a formal taxonomy

Our investigation so far has shown that the similative marker can be realised by a number of different formal expressions. These can be organised into the following taxonomic tree (hierarchy):

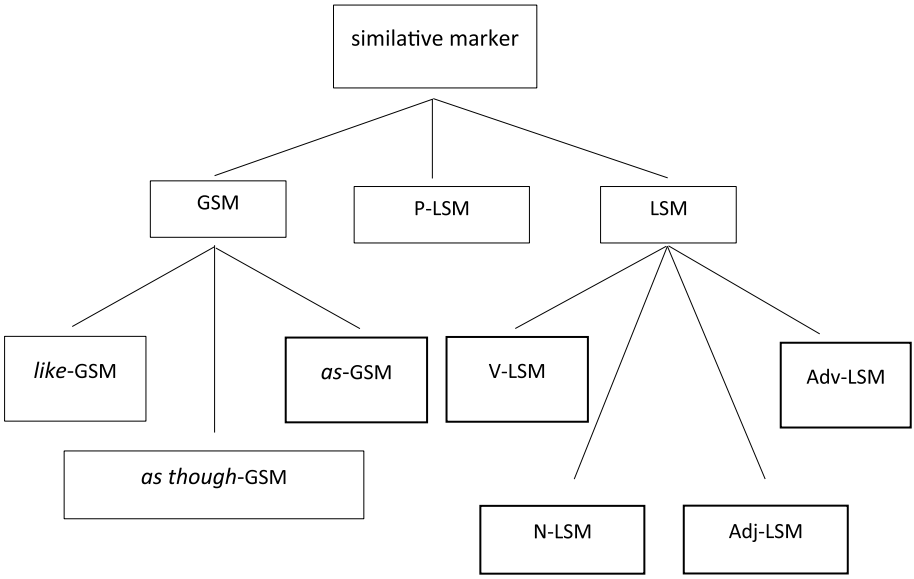

Fig. 10. The similative marker: a formal taxonomy.

6. The PARAMETER in the similative construction

We have determined that the salient formal characteristic of the similative construction is an optional formal coding of the PARAMETER, which occurs conceptually as the IMPLICIT PARAMETER. Nevertheless, there are cases where the PARAMETER might be expressed as an optional adjunct outside the argument structure of the similative construction, where it appears as the PHRASAL PARAMETER or the CLAUSAL PARAMETER.

6.1. The PHRASAL PARAMETER

In principle, the PHRASAL PARAMETER (henceforth PH-P) is coded as a prepositional phrase, whose structure mostly consists of the prepositional head *in* followed by a nominal or gerundial complement. When the similative

construction incorporates the V-LSM, then the PHRASAL PARAMETER occurs in the final position, as in sentence (85):

85) He **takes after** his mother (**in being deeply religious**). (Dixon 2005: 170)

With the Adj-LSM, the PHRASAL PARAMETER might occur in the middle position, between the similative adjective and the standard marker *to*, as in sentence (86), or in the final position, as in sentence (87):

86) This Richard is **similar in appearance** to Oswald Mosley, the leader of Britain's home-grown Fascist movement during the 1930s. (COCA)
87) He's **similar** to Martin **in size and shape**, though less likely to float. (COCA)

Alternatively, the PH-P can be identified in the initial position when expressed as a complex preposition (e.g. *in terms of X*) or a deverbal preposition (e.g. *concerning*, *regarding*):

88) **In terms of accuracy**, then, hash searches are like dog sniffs but even better. (COCA)
89) **Concerning accuracy**, then hash searches are like dog sniffs but even better. (COCA)

6.2. The CLAUSAL PARAMETER

For Halliday (2004 Ch.7), two clauses form a 'clause complex' when they interrelate through (1) the degree of interdependency, or 'taxis,' and (2) 'logico-semantic relation.' He categorises the taxis into the 'parataxis' and the 'hypotaxis' which determine different degree of interdependency between 'primary clause$_1$' and 'secondary clause$_2$' and form jointly a 'clause nexus.' The parataxis relates to autonomous clauses of equal status that form a meaningful whole as an individual unit, where primary clause$_1$ designates an initiating element, whereas secondary clause$_2$ represents some continuation, e.g. "Kukul crouched low to the ground and moved slowly" (p. 373). The paratactic relation between two autonomous clauses entails some logical symmetry between them. By contrast, the hypotaxis marks a non-symmetrical relation between clauses of unequal status, where clause$_1$ designates a dominant element, whereas clause$_2$ is dependent on the dominant; hence the distinction between dominant clause$_1$ and dependent clause$_2$, e.g. "I breathe when I sleep" (p. 384).

Halliday (2004: 380) categorises the logico-semantic relation into (1) 'expansion,' encompassing elaboration, extension, and enhancement, e.g. (elaboration) *John didn't wait;* ***he ran away***, and (2) 'projection,' wherein secondary clause$_2$ establishes primary clause$_1$ as an 'idea' or 'locution,' e.g. (locution) *John thought to himself:* ***'I'll run away'***. Depending on which taxis interrelates clause$_1$

and clause$_2$, Halliday distinguishes (1) the paratactic expansion and paratactic projection and (2) the hypotactic expansion and hypotactic projection.

Sometimes the similative construction occurs with the CLAUSAL PARAMETER. That is, it includes 'core clause$_1$,' involving the COMPAREE, the similative marker, and the STANDARD, and 'elaborating clause$_2$,' which represents the CLAUSAL PARAMETER. On a formal level, as we can see in sentences (90)–(91), the CLAUSAL PARAMETER is expressed as a finite clause:

90) Anne's like your father, **they're careless.** (COCA)
91) I'm like my dad; **we both file the important things away for safekeeping**. (COCA)

In sentences (90)–(91), elaborating clause$_2$ (in bold) provides a 'paratactic elaboration' elucidating the PARAMETER. Halliday (2004) distinguishes 'clarification,' i.e. the subcategory of paratactic elaboration, wherein secondary clause$_2$ elucidates or comments on primary clause$_1$, as seen above, where elaborating clause$_2$ elucidates the PARAMETER relating to core clause$_1$. Halliday notes that primary clause$_1$ and secondary clause$_2$ are often appositive (or juxtaposed), which finds reflection in sentences (90)–(91), wherein elaborating clause$_2$ is in apposition to core clause$_1$.

In sentences (92)–(93), intonation pause and, hence, punctuation separates core clause$_1$ from elaborating clause$_2$. In some cases, however, a subordinating conjunction or a preposition introduces elaborating clause$_2$, which indicates the hypotactic relation between dominant core clause$_1$ and dependent elaborating clause$_2$. For instance, sentence (92) consists of core dominant clause$_1$ (*FrogPad is like Apple*) followed by the subordinating conjunction (*in that*) introducing elaborating dependent clause$_2$ (*it's innovative*), which serves as an adverbial clause of reason:

92) FrogPad is like Apple **in that it's innovative**. (COCA)
93) These guys are like gods **because they're so tall**. (COCA)

7. The English similative construction: a formal taxonomy

We have determined that the similative construction occurs in three formal variants, such as: (1) the monoclausal similative construction, which might incorporate an idiomatic *like*-similative phrase; (2) the biclausal similative construction; and (3) the phrasal similative construction, which might instantiate the substantive idiom.

We shall assume that the monoclausal similative construction represents the most prototypical formal category. When we consider the formal structures discussed in this paper, most of them exhibit a monoclausal form, wherein the

similative marker might occur in all formal variants, except for the *as*-GSM, incorporated into the biclausal similative construction. Moreover, when we consider linguistic accounts such as Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) or Huddleston (2002), they tend to present the examples illustrating the monoclausal similative construction, in particular the monoclausal structure NP_1 COPULAR VERB *like* NP_2.

Based on our formal examination, we will propose a formal taxonomy of the English similative construction, shown in Figure 11. Within this taxonomy, formal characteristics descend from more schematic, higher-level categories towards lower-level categories, whose formal structure is more specified. To describe relations between constructions within our taxonomy, we refer to Goldberg (1995: Ch3), who describes 'inheritance links' that capture different relations holding between constructions. Among four kinds of inheritance links, the 'polysemy link' and the 'metaphorical extension link' pertain to semantic relations between constructions, whereas the 'subpart link' and the 'instance link' relate to both semantic and syntactic relations; thus, they are relevant to our formal taxonomic network. The subpart link occurs when $construction_2$ occurs as an independent subpart of $construction_1$, for instance, the subpart link relates the intransitive motion construction with the caused-motion construction. By contrast, the instance link occurs when $construction_2$ constitutes a more specified instance ('special case') of more general $construction_1$. We can conclude that, within our taxonomy, instance links (marked as arrows) interconnect higher-level categories and lower-level categories, exhibiting a more specified formal structure.

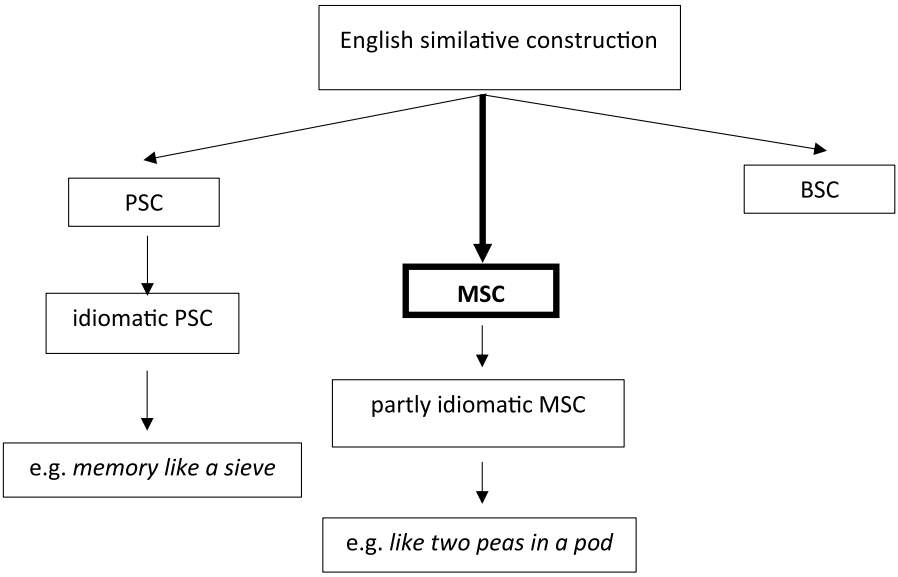

Fig. 11. The English similative construction: a formal taxonomy.

8. Conclusions

The similative construction incorporates three obligatory semantic components – the COMPAREE, the PARAMETER, and the STANDARD – along with the similative marker. What differentiates the similative construction from other comparative constructions is an absent formal representation of the PARAMETER, which occurs conceptually as the IMPLICIT PARAMETER.

We have distinguished three formal categories of the *like*-similative construction, such as: (1) the monoclausal similative construction, expressed as four structures, namely (a) NP_1 COPULAR VERB *like* NP_2, (b) CLAUSE *like* NP, (c) NP_1 ACT *like* NP_2, and (d) NP_1 TREAT NP_2 *like* NP_3; (2) the biclausal similative construction, $CLAUSE_1$ *like* $CLAUSE_2$ and NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_1$ COPULAR VERB *like* NON-FINITE $CLAUSE_2$; and (3) the phrasal similative construction NP_1 *like* NP_2. Furthermore, our concern was the equative-*like* construction and the pseudo-similative construction, whose formal structure resembles the similative construction, due to the inclusion of the function word *like*, whereas meaning corresponds to the equative construction and comparison in positive degree, respectively. We've described two more peripheral members of the similative construction category – the *as*-similative construction and the hypothetical similative construction – within which the similative marker is coded as the subordinating conjunctions *as* and *as if* / *as though*. The hypothetical similative construction entails the HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD, divided into the CLOSE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD or the REMOTE HYPOTHETICAL STANDARD.

The similative marker divides into the following three categories: (1) grammatical similative marker, (2) lexical similative marker, and (3) phrasal similative marker. The preposition *like* and the subordinating conjunctions *as*, *as if*, *as though*, and *like* function as grammatical similative markers, whereas the similative verb, similative adjective, similative adverb, and similative noun function as lexical similative markers.

Sometimes the PARAMETER in an adjunct function might appear outside the argument structure of the similative construction, where it occurs as the PHRASAL PARAMETER, coded as a prepositional phrase, or the CLAUSAL PARAMETER, coded as a clause.

We have proposed a formal taxonomy of the similative construction, which encompasses three formal categories, such as: (1) the prototypical monoclausal similative construction, (2) the phrasal similative construction, and (3) the biclausal similative construction. Within this taxonomy, higher-level categories are interrelated with lower-level categories through instance links. Idiomatic similatives are expressed as a phrasal similative construction, where they function as the substantive idiom, or a partly idiomatic monoclausal similative construction, which consists of an idiomatic *like*-similative phrase.

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