ISSN 1799-2591 (print); ISSN 2053-0692 (online)
Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 16, No. 11, pp. 3810-3820, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1611.14

Research on Certain Structures of Contemporary English Expressing the Concept of Comparison

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Abstract—**The article provides an in-depth examination of the complexities involved in contemporary English language usage when it comes to expressing comparisons, particularly through the lens of examples drawn from English-language fiction. It navigates the nuanced relationship between various methods of introduction and the structural components of comparative design. The discussion emphasizes how particular words and expressions conform to specific syntactic structures, indicating the existence of a sophisticated and intricate system for articulating figurative comparisons within the context of the English language. Moreover, the authors elucidate how the choices made in comparison - ranging from similes and metaphors to more direct forms of comparison -reveal deeper layers of meaning and context in literary works. Overall, the article underscores the importance of understanding the intricacies of language as a tool for effective communication and artistic expression.**

Index Terms—**comparison, metaphor, simile, figurative language, syntactic structures**

I. Introduction

This article delves into the grammatical expression of comparison in contemporary English. The concepts of comparison, metaphor, and trope were present in the works of ancient philosophers, evident in Aristotle's differentiation between metaphor and analogy (Aristotle, 1957; Vázquez, 2013). Historically, the study of comparison has primarily been approached from the standpoint of literary studies and stylistics, with limited investigation into its grammatical structure until recent times (Kytö &Romaine, 1997; Wałaszewska, 2013). Definitions of comparison and simile were found in works on literary criticism and stylistics, as well as in reference works on literary terms (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

Notably, English and American dictionaries typically categorize terms equivalent to the Russian word “comparison” as “Rhet”. Several definitions of comparison from diverse sources were presented, including one stating that “simile expresses a likeness between two things which do not ordinarily belong in the same category” (Abrams & Harpham, 2015; Emirova, 2017).

The most recent studies on comparative constructions provide valuable insight into this problem. Firstly, Alexiadou et al. (2025) offer a great analysis of morphological and syntactic elements necessary for creating comparative constructions, stressing the significance of the syntactical approach in building the compared form. In addition, Kovaliuk (2023) focus on the problem of the influence of speech registers on comparison creation since idioms are typical only for colloquial

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syntax, whereas the formal variety of speech register remains flexible.

Watanabe and Iyeiri (2020) examine the tendency towards the formation of comparative and superlative forms in English, paying attention not only to their stability but also to the factors influencing their use and variation.

Moreover, the influence of dialects on comparative constructions is discussed by Gu (2017). For example, one can consider the significant role played by dialects in constructing comparatives. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) investigate the grammatical structures of comparative constructions.

"In a simile, a comparison between two distinctly different things is 'like' or 'as.'" (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

The technique of imagery, commonly employed in speech, involves comparing two objects or phenomena based on their similarities. This comparison helps clarify and make our thoughts more tangible, as things are best understood through comparison (Shukhratova, 2024). The artistic technique of comparison hinges on three conditions: Comparison of the subject or phenomenon being described, highlighting the relevant feature of the object or phenomenon for a more comprehensive and clear comparison, and identifying a common feature based on which two objects or phenomena are compared (Karamysheva, 2019).

For convenience, we will use the terms "referent of comparison" for the subject of description, «agent of comparison» for the subject involved in the comparison, and "comparison module" for the common feature, also known as "*tertium comparationis"*. While the terms "agent" and "referent" have long been used in linguistics, this article assigns them a different meaning.

Comparison to a certain extent models the process of human cognition, which, as is known, is carried out according to the principle - from the particular to the general, from the simple to the complex, from the unknown to the known. This cognitive function of comparison is closely related to the human ability to identify similarities between objects and interpret relationships between concepts (Emirova, 2017; Vázquez, 2013).

This dialectical law is also applicable to comparison. It is no coincidence that various authors emphasize the role of comparison in explaining relationships between objects and phenomena, as the phenomenon used for explanation may help make a less familiar phenomenon more understandable (Gentner, 1983).

As for the first statement – about the belonging of the agent and the referent to different "classes" – it is difficult to fully agree with him, but it is no less difficult to argue since the authors do not indicate on what basis or at what level the "classes" are distinguished.

In any case, we are not talking here about grammatical subclasses of class words. For verification, we took a thousand examples of figurative comparison with an erroneous sample from five English authors and selected those cases where the reference of comparison is a grammatical subclass of words N with the meaning of "persons" – John, he, the man, etc. After analyzing this material, we insist on the term grammatical subclass, since the allocation of the latter has a formal justification: first of all, the ability to be replaced by the pronoun he. In addition, in approximately 41% of cases, an agent of the same subclass occurs with a referent with the meaning of "person" (Shukhratova, 2024).

II. Methods

In the context of using the sufficiency formula to compute the following expression:

$t = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{P}(1-P)(\frac{1}{n_1}+\frac{1}{n_2})}$

the designated parameters are:

$P_1 = 0{,}95$;

$P_2 = 0{,}59$;

$P = 0{,}82$;

$n_1 = 614$;

$n_2 = 386$.

Upon calculation, the outcome is as follows:

$t = \frac{0{,}95-0{,}59}{\sqrt{0{,}82}(1-0{,}82)(\frac{1}{386}+\frac{1}{614})} = 14$ (Field, 2013; Larson-Hall, 2015).

The calculated t-value suggests that a randomly selected sample size effectively demonstrates, with high definiteness, the comparative occurrence of an agent characterized as a "person" and a non-person agent within the same specified value range (Gries, 2013; Levshina, 2015).

Furthermore, it aligns with other empirical observations indicating that comparisons between the agent and the referent tend to fall within the same grammatical subclass (Biber et al., 1999; Haspelmath, 2010). For instance, when focusing on a subclass of N words representing inanimate objects, our data reveals that the agent and referent fall within the same subclass in 57% of instances (Croft, 2001; Murphy, 2010).

Likewise, our calculations illustrate that expressions by an abstract noun representing the referent align with the agent's subclass in 70% of cases (Langacker, 2008; Taylor, 2002).

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III. Results and Discussion

To verify the sufficiency of the number of examples used, we use calculations based on the "2 × 2 feature conjugacy table" 4, taking as a basis the oppositions: agent – referent and "person" – "non-person"; the corresponding literary examples are given in Table 1, and the results are given in Table 2 (Agresti, 2019; Field, 2013).

Table 1
Distribution of Agent and Referent by Grammatical Subclass ("Person", "Non-Person") With Illustrative Examples

	Agent "person"	Agent "non-person"
Referent "person"	You have treated *me* like a child (Wodehouse, 1935).	...*he* is as helpless as a fly (Maugham, 1963).
Referent "non-person"	Fish can't swim like *me* (Wodehouse, 1935).	..*they* (rooms) are like *booths* in a crowded fair (Maugham, 1963).

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Agent–Referent Combinations Across Grammatical Subclasses

	Agent "person"	Agent "person"	Total
Referent "person"	158	228	386
Referent "non-person"	18	596	614
Total	176	824	1000

We concur with P.V. Palievsky's viewpoint that certain expressions, such as "just like a rectangle, a square has four right angles", should not be categorized as figurative comparisons (Palievsky, 1979; Bredin, 1998). However, it is imperative to recognize figurative comparisons where both the agent and the referent belong to the same grammatical subclass (Croft, 2001; Haspelmath, 2010). This can be effectively illustrated through the following examples: You have treated *me* like a *child..."* (Wodehouse, 1935). ...they are like *booths* in a crowded fair or the *cages* of animals in a circus (Maugham, 1963). *Snobbishness* in like *Death...* (Thackeray, 1959).

By "formal expression", we mean a division of nouns into two categories based on definiteness and indefiniteness. This is illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Definiteness and Indefiniteness Patterns in Comparative Constructions

	A definite agent	An indefinite agent
A definite referent	the N^1 like the N^2	the N^1 like a N^2
An indefinite referent	a N^1 like the N^2	a N^1 like a N^2

Since words of other classes, such as V class, do not have a category of definiteness or indefiniteness, we will exclude them from our analysis. Therefore, the following example will not be considered:

To take money from him was like robbing a child... (Maugham, 1963).

The results of our calculations are very clear, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Quantitative Distribution of Definite and Indefinite Agents and Referents in Comparative Structures

	A definite agent		An indefinite agent		Total	
	Absolute	Relative	Absolute	Relative	Absolute	relative
A definite referent	145	0,21	560	0,79	705	1,00
An indefinite referent	19	0,47	22	0,53	41	1,00
Total	164	0,22	582	0,78	746	1,00

According to the significance formula, the calculated difference "*t"* is approximately 4. Among the four possible permutations involving definite and indefinite agents and a referent, 79% of cases align with a specific variant: a definite referent is an indefinite agent. We assume that the comparative construction of N_1 like an N_2 is nuclear and that the uncertainty in the referent's category is a result of syntactic relations, which are "stronger" than the internal relations of the comparison itself (Fillmore, 1968; Taylor, 2002).

For instance, in the sentence "She has a nose like a pump-handle" (Thackeray, 1959), we tend to infer that the indefinite article of the N-referent "nose" is clarified by its association with the N_1 "HAVE" a N_2 construction. If we choose a comparative construction with a simple transformation, the referent of comparison will gain an indicator of definiteness.

the HAVE a N_2 like a N_3 ⟵ { the N_1 HAVE a N_2 ; the N_2 BE like a N_3 }

In the specific example under consideration, the operation takes the following form:

She has *a* nose like *a* pump-handle. ⟵ { She has *a* (funny) nose. ; *Her* nose looks like a pump-handle. }

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The variations from the initial nuclear structure of the N^1 like a N^2 also involve the pairing of a specific agent with a particular reference.

For instance, the quote "*The* rogue, like *the* artist and perhaps *the* gentleman, belongs to no class..." exemplifies a comparison with a high level of definiteness. This definiteness can be ascertained by several factors, such as when N is used for comparison as a representative of an entire class or when it represents a word expressing a philosophical concept, as demonstrated in the provided example:

He could as little escape her as *the* cause can escape the effect (Maugham, 1963).

Another instance is when a proper name is used for comparison, as shown in the quote: "Fate put him there as it sent Napoleon to St. Helena" (Thackeray, 1959).

Occasionally, a comparison is made to an object that is prominently visible to the interlocutor. This kind of comparison, which involves a specific agent and referent, is defined as emphatically specific. An example of this can be found in the quote: "*She's forty, and as tough and as sour as this bit of lemon peel".*

We respectfully challenge J.G. Birenbaum's classification of comparisons into subject-logical and figurative (Birenbaum, 1966). While Birenbaum situates our presented comparison within the "subject-logical" category, we believe it to be figurative (Jakobson, 1960; Searle, 1979). Furthermore, the certainty of the agent can be constructively determined as exemplified by: "*They are as little their own master as the slaves chained to the benches of a galley"* (Maugham, 1963). If the agent in this example lacked a limiting definition, it would not meet the criteria for certainty (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Jespersen, 1924). We find deviations from the construction of "the N^1 like a N^2" to "a N^1 like the N^2" particularly intriguing. In these cases, the content of the comparisons demands attention (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), as seen in: Even a penny-in-the-slot machine treats you better than *that. ...a* dog would be better off in his kennel with *an* old bone... than *I* was with *her* (Sillitoe, 1961).

"Historians of the social life of the later Roman Empire speak of a certain young man of Ariminum, who would jump into rivers and swim... When his friends said, "You fish!" he would answer, "*Fish* can't swim like *me"* (Wodehouse, 1935).

It is evident from the provided examples that the roles of the referent and the agent appear to have interchanged (Fillmore, 1968; Talmy, 2000). Specifically, in the last example, the description subject pertains to a young man, as opposed to a fish, despite the word "fish" assuming the role of a referent, and "me" serving as the agent. In essence, the formal referent in this context acts as a logical agent, akin to what occurs in passive transformation (Chomsky, 1957; Perlmutter, 1978).

It is postulated that the structure "an N^2 like the $N^{1"}$ should be regarded as a converse transformation of the nuclear construction "the N^1 like an N^2". Alternatively, the construction "a N^2 like the N^{1}" can be represented as (the N^1 like a N^2) + along with an inversion morpheme (Harris, 1951; Mel'chuk, 1988). Additional evidence can be presented to validate the notion that the inverse comparison is a derivative of a nuclear design featuring a specific referent and an indeterminate agent. In two out of the three examples provided, the formal referent is the word "animal", while the agent is a word with the semantic meaning of "faces". This combination of a referent and an agent deviates from the general pattern; out of 1000 continuous examples, 97 examples involve an agent "animal" associated with the referent "person", whereas only five cases entail a comparison of "animal" with "person" (Nida, 1975; Lyons, 1977).

According to Apresyan's terminology, the distinction between the subclasses "person" and "animal" is delineated formally: "person" is denoted by the pronouns "he" and "she", (Apresyan, 1995; Wierzbicka, 1996), but not "it", whereas "animal" encompasses all three pronouns: "he", "she", and "it" It is imperative to discern the (the N^{l} like a N^2) + the inversion morpheme from the structurally analogous construction " a N^1 like the $N^{2"}$ where the use of indefinite and definite determiners is contingent upon situational or constructive factors (Heim, 1982; Kamp, 1981).

"...an inkstand on the center table like *the coffin of a baby..."* (Thackeray, 1959). *Lights* appeared, like "*the blazing eyes of a dragon swooping down to devour its prey"* (Wodehouse, 1935).

We have previously discussed instances of definiteness and indefiniteness arising from situational or constructive conditions, particularly concerning constructions such as "the N^1 like the N^2" and "a N^1 like the $N^{2"}$ (Christophersen, 1939; Wierzbicka, 1996). Now, let us delve into the relationship between the method of introducing comparison and the formal content of comparative construction (Taylor, 2002).

The introducing comparison method involves using a specific functional word or construction to connect an agent and a referent, essentially conveying a comparative connection (Jakobson, 1960). To clarify the concept of comparative turnover, we define it as the segment of the utterance containing the comparison agent and the functional word introducing this agent (Nida, 1975). To delineate the boundaries of comparative construction, you can employ the following techniques (Perlmutter, 1978); a) Identify and highlight the keyword in the sentence, serving as a formal marker of comparison; b) Rearrange the sentence to position the identified functional word as close as possible to the end of the utterance; this, together with the functional word, will constitute the desired comparative construction; c) Substitute a word expressing the comparison module instead of the resulting construction (Mel'chuk, 1988).

Let us use an example to apply these techniques: He was *like* Hitler in the face ^{1} ← → In the face, he was *like Hitler* ← → In the face, he was *ugly* (Sillitoe, 1961; Chomsky, 1957; Lyons, 1977).

Compare

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Well, then – now they are all away, let us frisk at our ease and have at everything, like the bull in the China shop (Thackeray, 1959). In this specific case, to maintain grammatical correctness, it is necessary to position the phrase "like the bull" before the concluding part of the sentence. Consequently, the comparative structure is formulated as "like the bull in the China shop" (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Jespersen, 1924). Comparative phrases can be categorized based on the introductory words as follows (Lyons, 1977; Leech, 2006): Initiated by the functional word "like". Initiated by the functional word "as" (Fillmore, 1968); Introduced by the functional word "as" with a prepositive correlate "as/not so" (Jespersen, 1924); Introduced by the functional word "as" with a postpositive correlate "so"; Introduced by the conjunction "as if" (Chomsky, 1957), Equivalent to the conjunction "as though"; Introduced by the way conjunctions (Harris, 1952); Phrases introduced by the verb "BE" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Searle, 1979); Phrases introduced by the verb ""SEEM"; Expressions introduced by the preposition "of" (Christophersen, 1939); Phrases introduced by the combination of "a sort of" (Wierzbicka, 1996); The construction of *an* N^1 *of a* N^2 from the number of constructions introduced by the preposition "of", where N^2 is the referent, and N1 is the agent (Mel'chuk, 1988); examples where the comparison is expressed in a single word (Jakobson, 1960); Various types of isolated cases, consolidated in Table 5 under the column "other" (Nida, 1975).

Based on the content of the construction, the following distinctions are made: (Talmy, 2000; Taylor, 2002): a. Type N; b. Type AN; c. Prep type N; d. Type N prep. N (phrase); e. Type V (non-finite form); f. Type NV (subordinate comparative).

Table 5 delineates the relationship between the method of introducing comparison and the content of comparative construction. Additionally, the table denotes the frequency of module expression in the statement for various methods of introducing comparison. By using the data from this table, the description of the comparison system can be outlined, with the initial principle of classification based on the method of introduction of comparative construction.

The phrases introduced by the functional word "*like*" in 74% of cases contain either a single word of class N. For example: "I am going to work *like a horse"* (Wodehouse, 1935).

Or a word of class N with an attribute: "Yes", she said, casting away diplomacy "*like the crumpled cake paper she let fall to the floor"* (Sillitoe, 1961).

There are examples when "like" introduces the prepositional construct. For example, in the phrase "*like in Hungary"* (Sillitoe, 1961). When we encounter the structure "like N^1 prep. "N^2", we believe that there are two main cases to consider: The comparison is between one of the two nouns in a comparative form: "she goes parading abroad like Solomon in all his glory..." (Thackeray, 1959); Both nouns in the comparative form are part of the comparison, each having two referents: His *clothes* hung upon *him* like *rags* on a *scarecrow* (Maugham, 1963). From a phrase of this type, two sentences containing a comparison can be derived.

His clothes hung upon him like rags on a scarecrow. ⟨ He (was) like a scarecrow. / His clothes (were) like rags.

The functional word like also introduces phrases that include words of class V: It was like quarrelling with Westminster Abbey (Wodehouse, 1935).

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TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS BY INTRODUCTION METHOD, PHRASE CONTENT, AND FREQUENCY OF EXPRESSED COMPARISON MODULUS

The method of introduction of comparison	phrase content							The number of cases of expressed modulus
	N absolute / relative	A N, Absolute / relative	pr.N, absolute / relative	Npr.N, Absolute / relative	V, Absolute / relative	NV, Absolute / relative	Total	
Like	136 / 0,35	155 / 0,39	2 / 0,01	75 / 0,19	5 / 0,01	21 / 0,05	394 / 1,0	8 / 0,02
As	9 / 0,15	16 / 0,26	5 / 0,08	7 / 0,11	-	25 / 0,40	62 / 1,0	5 / 0,08
as/not so…as	20 / 0,33	14 / 0,23	1 / 0,02	3 / 0,05	-	22 / 0,37	60 / 1,0	60 / 1,00
as…so	-	-	-	-	-	6 / 1,0	6 / 1,0	1 / 0,16
as if	-	-	3 / 0,03	-	15 / 0,13	97 / 0,84	115 / 1,0	12 / 0,10
as though	-	-	1 / 0,02	-	3 / 0,05	58 / 0,93	62 / 1,0	3 / 0,05
the way	-	-	-	-	-	6 / 1,0	6 / 1,0	-
Than	8 / 0,36	5 / 0,23	-	2 / 0,09	2 / 0,09	5 / 0,23	22 / 1,0	22 / 1,0
Be	17 / 0,32	30 / 0,56	-	4 / 0,08	-	2 / 0,04	53 / 1,0	-
Seem	1 / 0,04	5 / 0,19	-	-	20 / 0,73	1 / 0,04	27 / 1,0	-
Of	12 / 0,50	10 / 0,42	-	-	2 / 0,08	-	24 / 1,0	18 / 0,75
a sort of	5 / 0,42	7 / 0,58	-	-	-	-	12 / 1,0	-
N of N	32 / 0,70	14 / 0,30	-	-	-	-	46 / 1,0	-
"Morpholo gic"	74 / 1,00	-	-	-	-	-	74 / 1,0	-
Others	12 / 0,37	10 / 0,27	2 / 0,04	-	-	13 / 0,35	37 / 1,0	4 / 0,11
Total	327	265	14	92	46	256	1000	133
The average weighted by the number of examples	0,33	0,26	0,01	0,09	0,05	0,26	1,00	0,13

The following transformations of phrases into constructs with N occur: It was like quarrelling with Westminster Abbey ←→ It was like a quarrel with Westminster Abbey. “It was like quarreling with Westminster Abbey” becomes “It was like a quarrel with Westminster Abbey”. Special attention should be paid to the ability of “like” to introduce two-part NV turns, with various distributions: ...his paws closed over the box like he'd squash it to nothing (Sillitoe, 1961). It is worth noting that the like NV construction has a stylistic colouring, as it is used exclusively to create a colloquial flavour.

The most common type among the phrases introduced by the functional word “as” is “as NV”, indicating the predominantly allied nature of “as”. Fate put him there *as it sent Napoleon to St. Helena* (Thackeray, 1959).

A careful comparison of the comparative rotations introduced by “as” with the supporting structures may suggest a weakening of the allied character of “as” in comparison. For example, in the vast majority of cases, the reference phrase and comparison use either verbs that are extremely close in meaning or the same ones. I would find him poring over the poems of Mallarme, and he *read* them *as a child reads...* (Maugham, 1963).

In other cases, auxiliary verbs are used to avoid repetition.

I like to see an old aristocrat swelling with pride of race, the descendant of illustrious Norman robbers, whose blood has been pure for centuries, and who *looks down on common Englishmen* as a free-born American *does on a niger.* (Thackeray, 1959).

Turning to the quantitative distribution of comparative constructions introduced by “as”, the combined instances of “as N” and “as AN” constitute 31% of all instances of comparative rotations introduced by “as”. For instance: “I should have treated him as a brother...” (Sillitoe, 1961). “He started buoyantly, but by evening he was *as a punctured balloon”* (Wodehouse, 1935).

The constructions “as N” and “as AN” are synonymous with the constructions “like N” and “like AN”, as exemplified in “I should have treated him as a brother” and “I should have treated him like a brother”. Likewise, they are also homonymous with the constructions “as N” and “as AN” with an indicative function, illustrated in the examples:

(A) “I should have treated him as a brother (as if he were my brother)” and

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(B) “I should have treated him as a brother (because he was my brother)”.

To differentiate these two homonymous constructions formally, we propose the following approach: positioning the referent and the agent as the subject and predicate, respectively. An affirmative sentence indicates an indicative construction, whereas a negative sentence implies a comparative construction. For an indicative construction: N^1 as N^2 ← → BE N. For the comparative construction: N^1 as N^2 ← → N^1 BE not N^2. In our case:

(A) “I should have treated him as a brother”. “He is not (my) brother” (comparative construction);

(B) “I should have treated him as a brother”. “He is (my) brother” (indicative construction). Another method of formally differentiating homonymous constructions in the form of “as N” and “as AN” can be derived from J.G. Birenbaum's indication that the indicative construction is not used with the correlate.

So, for comparative constructions, it is possible to have as N as^1 Adv_m /Aas^2 N (where Adv_m /A_m is the comparison module), which is impossible for indicative constructions.

For example (A): should have treated him *as a brother.* I should have treated him *as *tenderly as a brother.*

Among the structures introduced by “as”, constructions are also mentioned *as prep. N* и *as N^1 prep. N^2.*

I could only drawback in horror *as from a monster of hardly human shape* (Maugham, 1963).

Once upon a time, there was erected in Longacre Square, New York, a large white statue, labelled “Our City” the figure of a woman in Grecian robes holding aloft a shield. Critical citizens objected to it... The sculpture should have represented New York *as a conjurer in evening dress* (Wodehouse, 1935).

Concerning the constructions “as *prep. N* и *as N^1 prep. N^2*”, all that has been stated about “*like prep. N* и *like N^1 prep. N^2*” constructions apply equally.

Phrases with constructions introduced by “as”, which have a prepositive correlate “*as/not so”*, differ from phrases with “like” (without a correlate) in two ways. Firstly, in such sentences, the comparison is necessarily expressed. For example:

Children with cheeks *as red as the apples* in the orchards bobbed curtsies to us at the cottage-doors (Thackeray, 1959).

Cf.: ...woman with cheeks like apples, toiling away from morning to night (Maugham, 1963).

If a comparative phrase is used in conjunction with the words “as” or “like”, the phrase may be placed either before or after the referent it compares, or the phrase may be split into two distinct sentences. In constructions using the format “as^1 Adv_m /A_m as^2 N”, there is a fixed sequence: the referent being compared is the agent of the “as/not so” module, which is expressed through an adverb or adjective. This sequence remains consistent regardless of any linear expansion of the construction.

As with the “*as/not”* so correlate most often (in 66% of cases) introduces the construction *N* or *AN*: She's *as thin as a thread-paper...* (Thackeray, 1959). I felt as happy *as a little child that evening* (Wodehouse, 1935).

The fact that when construction is entered “*as/not so ... as*” there is certainly a comparison module, it makes it possible for the speaker to enhance the effect of comparison, for example, with the help of irony, when the module expresses something opposite to what follows ...Wimpole Street, that is *as cheerful as the Catacombs...* (Thackeray, 1959).

Other artistic techniques used in the turnover introduced as/not so ... as are: expression of several modules with one referent and one agent: *She's forty, and* as tough *and* as sour as this bit of lemon peel. ... of several agents with one referent and one module: ...and she is *as poor as you or I.* (Thackeray, 1959) multiple modules and multiple agents with one referent:

And O, stars and garters! How she would start if she heard that she – she, as chaste as Diana, she, as solemn as Minerva — that she too was a Snob! (Thackeray, 1959).

Then, “as*/not so ... as*” can introduce a structure containing NV: He took and executed orders as automatically as the penny-in-the-slot musical box in the corner took pennies and produced tunes. Phrases of this type should be distinguished from homonymous phrases with the compositional pair “as ... as”, for example: “An understanding, as pleasant as it was new and strange...” (Wodehouse, 1935).

To formally distinguish the above phrases, we propose a test for the exclusion of as^1 Adv_m /$A_{m”}$, correlating as/not so with the subsequent module, for example: Did not take and executed orders *as the penny-in-the-slot musical-box in the corner took pennies and produced tunes*.

The phrase with the compositional pair “as ... as”, as you can see, does not make sense if you omit “as pleasant”.

The designs of as^1 Adv_m /A_m as^2 prep. N^2 и as^1 Adv_m /A_m N^1 prep. N^2:

They are *as fond of gossip in Tahiti as in an English village...*

...he is *as helpless as a fly in a* spider's *web* (Maugham, 1963).

In many cases, N^1 prep. N^2 can be deployed in N^1V prep. N^2. For example, in the sentence:

It is the mother of Rev. F. Hugly, as proud of her son in his white choker as Cornelia of her Jewes at Rome (Thackeray, 1959).

We could not have made a syntactic connection between “Cornelia” and “her jewels” unless it was for the predicative phrase “is proud”, which is part of the supporting clause in the sentence.

In some cases, we may need to highlight phrases that are introduced by the subordinating conjunction “as”, which often has a correlative word “so”.

For example, in the phrase Just *as* we select a number on which to stake our money, *so* do we select a type of girl whom we think we should like to marry. The phrase “just as”, introduces a comparison, while the phrase “so” acts as a correlative to the preceding clause. Such phrases have the following features: The comparative element is always prepositional; The

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comparative phrase has a structure of "as + noun or pronoun + verb"; After "so", the verb in the second clause is often in an emphatic inversion or analytical form. For instance, as he had felt then, so *did he feel* now; Most (84%) comparisons introduced by "as if", follow the pattern "as if + noun". These comparisons compare entire situations or events. For example, it was to make him feel *as if he had been laughing in the cathedral*. He shot forward *as if some strong hands were behind him with a needle* (Wodehouse, 1935).

The main feature of this construction is the use of a verb in the subjunctive mood, which indicates unreality. Another type of construction involves using "*as if V"*, which includes a non-person form of the verb, such as the infinitive, present participle, or past participle. Examples include: And what was our astonishment when Fanny got up *as if to go*\ (Thackeray, 1959). She kept her eyes to herself still, *as if not daring* to look at the old things around her... "No", she said, *as if not interested*. Additionally, there is the construction using "as if the preposition". For instance: He had watched her... stand at the counter *as if in a trance* (Sillitoe, 1961). Both "as if", and "as though" constructions are similar, but there is a slight difference that leads us to divide them into two types. This difference lies in the use of as with "if" compared to "as with though". - I'm *as* indifferent to him *as if* he were a stranger (Maugham, 1963). As *if* is twice as common as *though,* indicating greater mobility and flexibility. *As though*, on the other hand, is more conservative, as indicated by the figures showing the relative frequency of use of *as if* and *as though* in constructions involving the non-verbal element (NV). As if NV is used 84% of the time, while NV is used 93% of the time.

The constructions introduced by way, on the contrary, have only one form - *the way + NV*. These constructions differ from those introduced by as if and as though in that the predicate verb can express both real and hypothetical relations and can therefore take the form of the indicative mood. For example: "You enter these palaces by back-doors. "That was *the way* the Calabasas got their peerage", the misanthropic Ponto said after dinner (Thackeray, 1959).

Phrases introduced by the word "than" have a specific feature. In phrases with comparative turns introduced by "than", the comparison is always expressed by a comparative degree of an adjective or an adverb. Thus, the construction: (Adv_m /A_m)-er than N или (Adv_m /A_m)-r than AN, "N or AN + (Advm/Am)-er than" can be represented as "(Adv_m / A_m) -er than N", for example, "*...blood* is *thicker than water..."* (Wodehouse, 1935). *You* have *no more* spirit *than a mongrel cub* (Maugham, 1963), etc.

These constructions account for 50% of all cases with "than". The next most frequent type is "Adv_m /A_m)-er NV", (23%): *...a dog* would have been *better* off in his kennel with an old bone... *than I was with her* (Sillitoe, 1961). The remaining constructions are "Adv_m /A_m)-er than V и (Adv_m/A_m)-er than N^1 prep. N^2: In the latter case, N^2 is the object of the preposition: A single family has *no more right to build* itself a temple of that sort *than to erect a Tower of Babel* (Thackeray, 1959). He lived in Paris lonelier *than an anchorite in the deserts...* (Maugham, 1963).

In Table 5, comparative phrases with the verb "BE" not introduced by any special functional word are highlighted and referred to as "comparisons" introduced by the verb "BE". However, they differentiate between the referent and agent, which allows us to discuss the presence of comparison, albeit this construction may be on the peripheries of the system. As this comparison is somewhat implicit, it is not explicitly expressed in the module.

The most common comparative structures without the use of "like" include BE N and BE AN, where N represents the agent and BE represents the verb for becoming, being, or remaining in a prior state. The BE (A)N structure can be viewed as an intensified version of the BE (A)N formation. The expressivity of this comparison is further enhanced by the fact that the comparative relation often coincides with the predicative relation that underpins the sentence structure. Love *is* a sickness (Maugham, 1963). The BE N and BE AN structures can also be employed for negative comparisons: *I am not* a racehorse at all... (Sillitoe, 1961). In some instances, we encounter constructions featuring BE NV and BE N^1 prep. N^2. It (beauty) *meant* to him *what God means to the believer...* (Maugham, 1963). Affinities *are the zero on the roulette-board of life* (Wodehouse, 1935). The differences between the structures introduced by the verbs "to be" and "to seem" are slight in terms of construction. Some common features of these structures include: The absence of conjunctions; The presence of comparative and predicative relationships, and an unexpressed subject.

Design differences can be seen in the following ways: If the typical content of a "to be" turn is a noun or adjective, the "to seem" turn typically consists of "seems to be V", with V being an infinitive. For example, "Something *seemed* to twist his heart" (Maugham, 1963). Due to the nature of verbal comparisons, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish the referent from the subject in a sentence, since situations and actions are being compared.

The "seeming" structures do not have an emphatic quality. In some cases, the structures "seems N", "seems AN", and "seems NV" are used. For instance, in the sentence "For what felt like an eternity, George kept staring at her", it is unclear who is acting staring, as the duration of the action is compared to a vague amount of time. To Maud it *seemed a hopeful silence*. It *seemed* to her *that in these few words was contained the kernel of her trouble* (Wodehouse, 1935). The constructions introduced by the preposition "*of"* often have the structure "and a/an": ...you must have something *of an actor* in you... ...her face... gave you an impression *of almost indecent nakedness...* (Maugham, 1963).

Various structures of *V-ing* are observed in linguistic analysis linguistic analysis, various structures of V-ing are observed. The waiter was a tall, stringy man who gave an impression *of having no spine* (Wodehouse, 1935).

These structures involve prepositional phrases introduced by the preposition "of" and the word preceding it, both of which play significant roles in the intended meaning. Two distinct cases have been identified:

a) When the word preceding "of" represents subjective perception, such as impression, idea, or effect, it produces phrases such as "He gave you somewhat *the idea of* a coachman dressed up for the occasion" (Maugham, 1963).

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b) Alternatively, when the word preceding "of" functions as a substantive comparison module, phrases like "George passed through the ocean with the silent *dignity of* a torpedo" (Wodehouse, 1935) are generated. This differentiation can be formalized and articulated through specified transformations. Additionally, comparisons involving the structure of N are juxtaposed with possessive form comparisons. Both categories involve the word preceding the preposition "of" and necessitate distinct transformations for analysis N's $N_m \leftarrow \rightarrow N_m$ BE as that of N_a: ...she led me *a dog's life* (Sillitoe, 1961), a dog's life $_a\rightarrow$ (my) life was as that of a dog. Moreover, a distinct construction, "a sort of A", has been identified, characterized by the absence of the module in the sentence, confinement to N or AN in the phrase's content, and the weakened lexical meaning of the word "sort". She's *a sort of literary onion* (Wodehouse, 1935).

Finally, there is a need to distinguish another construction with the preposition "of", possessing the form N^1 *of* N^2, which differs qualitatively from the aforementioned cases, such as *"the dignity of a torpedo".* In this context, N^1 represents the agent, and N^2 represents the referent. For instance, "The black rose of 'Bert's hand..." (Sillitoe, 1961). Comparisons between these two entities can be accurately expressed using the transformation of " N^1 of $N^2 \leftarrow \rightarrow N^2$ like $N^1$is similar to N^2, "such as" *The black rose of Bert's hand ← → Bert's hand (is) like a black rose*." Such comparisons can often be emphasized, as in "These pigs of chauffeurs!" (Wodehouse, 1935).

It should be noted in a specific instance that there are words that convey the concept of comparison within one term. These words appear to encapsulate the full comparative structure and can thus be described as morphological expressions of comparison. Words expressing comparison can be created through affixation, the addition of suffixes, or word composition. One common suffix used to create such words is "-like" An example of this is the phrase "A *frog-like* croak was the best George could do..." (Wodehouse, 1935).

The base to which the "*-like*" suffix is added is a comparative agent. A word that is formed by adding the "-like" to an adjective refers to a specific referent. Another suffix used for expressing comparison is "-y". This suffix is commonly used to form adjectives from nouns denoting "substance". For example: "They turned to an *oily* grey..." (Wodehouse, 1935). Occasionally, the "*-ly*" suffix can be used to create comparative adverbs: "Well, George had *simply-Simonly* believed all this" (Aldington, 1929).

Sometimes, suffixes such as "*-ic*" and "*-ish*" may be employed: "…angelic mother…" (Thackeray, 1959), "…kittenish moods…" (Aldington, 1929). Comparison can also be conveyed through complex adjectives, where the first element is a substantive serving as the subject of comparison and the second element acts as a modifier. This technique is frequently used to describe colours, such as "*pea-green"* (Thackeray, 1959).

Finally, there is a method by which a subject and referent can be combined to form a complex adjective. This adjective is formed by combining two substantive roots, where the first is the subject and the second is the referent. The suffix "*ed*" is added to create the complex adjective. Interestingly, the second root often refers to a body part.

In the last column of Table 4, we have included data for comparisons that do not follow any of the previous structures, but still meet our definition. This includes instances where comparisons are conveyed through verbs like "suggest", "remind", "resume" (+ N), and so on. For example: "Do you like Broadway, Peggy?". *"Do/like Broadway*? *Does a kid like candy?* Why, don't you?" *Serpent Edith Butler* had stolen his play. Surely *Jeanne* must be touched by his heroism? But no. She was scolding furiously. Suppose *Andromeda* had turned and scolded Perseus after he had slain the sea monster! (Wodehouse, 1935).

Finally, comparisons in the form of literary allusions have also been made, such as in the case of Edith Butler stealing a play from The Serpent or Andromeda turning around and rebuking Perseus after he had killed the sea monster (Wodehouse, 1935).

IV. Conclusion

The relationship between the method of introduction and the structural composition of comparative constructions in the English language is both clear and significant. When comparative phrases are introduced by prepositions or phrases such as "of", "a sort of", and "be", they typically conform to a structure where the elements involved are represented by a singular noun (N) or an indefinite article (AN). This method of introduction emphasizes the notion of similarity or association that the comparison seeks to convey.

On the other hand, expressions that begin with phrases like "as if", "as though", or "the way" often follow a more complex two-part structure. These types of constructions suggest a more nuanced relationship between the elements being compared, highlighting similarities that may not be as direct as those indicated by the simpler forms.

Furthermore, certain formal comparative expressions - such as "as", "as/not so ... as", and "than"- exhibit a dual nature. These words can be employed to introduce comparisons that span a range of content types, moving from noun phrases (N) to noun-verb combinations (NV). Their versatility allows for a wide array of comparative implications, enriching the depth of the comparison being drawn.

This analysis points to the existence of a sophisticated system for articulating figurative comparisons in the English language, and its characteristics reveal several important patterns:

a) The subject and the agent involved in figurative comparisons frequently belong to the same grammatical subclass within the noun category. This suggests a shared quality or characteristic that lends itself to effective comparison.

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b) In the pivotal structure of comparison, the subject is often marked by a level of definiteness - indicating certainty or specificity - while the agent typically embodies a sense of indefiniteness, indicating a more general or vague quality. This distinction enriches the comparison, as it juxtaposes certainty against ambiguity.

c) The language demonstrates a consistent and systematic relationship between the method used to introduce a comparative construction and the structural content that follows. This harmony in language use not only aids in clarity but also contributes to the richness and expressiveness of figurative language in English.

Overall, this detailed exploration underscores the complexity and the refined nature of comparative constructions in English, illustrating how various elements work together to create effective and meaningful comparisons.

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