

Such and *sådan* – the same but different

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Abstract

English *such* has a variety of uses, which nearly always involve the expression of similarity, and *such* can therefore be called a ‘similative’. Swedish *sådan* has very similar uses. However, the two similatives differ strongly with respect to the frequency of some of these uses. Thus *such*, different from *sådan*, rarely functions as a noun or pronoun, compared to *sådan* it more frequently exhibits the so-called ‘intensifying use’ and it has more competition from constructions with *like*, *sort* and *kind* (*sort*, *typ* in Swedish). The study uses three methods: (i) non-corpus analysis based on intuition, scrutiny of existing scholarship and google searches, (ii) analysis of comparable corpora, and (iii) analysis of parallel corpora.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to describe the similarities and the differences between English *such* and Swedish *sådan* and it does so using three different methodologies. The first is that of language-specific scholarship, relying on intuition, previous scholarship and web searches. This method gives us a good analysis of the possible uses of *such* and *sådan* and it tells us that these uses are very similar. The second method uses two language-specific corpora, and it shows which uses are more or less frequent and it tells us that *such* and *sådan* are very different. The third method uses parallel corpora and it discloses what other means the two languages have at their disposal to express *such* and *sådan*. The paper aims to advance the contrastive analysis of *such* and *sådan* and, at a more general level, it is a plea for methodological triangulation.

2. Such and sådan are rather similar

The English word *such* has attracted quite a bit of attention in recent years, in part because it has a great diversity of uses. Some of them are illustrated below. In (1) to (6) we focus on the categorial status of *such* and on word order; in (7) to (9) on meaning. Most examples are easily googlable quotes from famous people. Only for (7) and (9) do we give the URL.

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- (1) Why was I born with *such* contemporaries? (O. Wilde)
- (2) An American has no sense of privacy ... There is no *such* thing in the country. (G.B. Shaw)
- (3) If sex is *such* a natural thing, how come there are so many books on how to? (B. Midler)
- (4) There is no *such* thing as a non-political speech by a politician. (R. Nixon)
- (5) Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation *such* as ours can endure. (J. F. Kennedy)
- (6) Do not seek pleasure as *such*. (A. Lawrence Lowell)
- (7) We wanted to identify the communities with the best *such* opportunities in Mississippi. (<http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/reviews/best-towns-mississippi-young-families/>, June 3 2015)
- (8) I had *such* a great time with the audience. (Lady Gaga)
- (9) If you say “so-and-so is vice president, finance, of *such and such*,” should there be a comma after “finance”? (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Commas/faq0003.html>, June 23 2015)

In (1) *such* could be an adjective or a determiner. In (2), however, *such* would seem to follow a determiner, so it can only be an adjective, but then in (3) *such* precedes a determiner and it cannot therefore qualify as either a determiner or an adjective. In (4) *such* is connected with *as*, but there is a noun in between *such* and *as* and this fact invites an analysis as a discontinuous construction. Yet in (5) *such* joins *as* in the postnominal domain. (6) shows another peculiarity: instead of *such (...) as*, it has *as such*. And if the examples (1) to (5) give reason to think that *such* is indefinite, (7) shows that *such* has a definite use as well. In (8) the adnominal *such* has an ‘intensifying’ function (with *such a great* being equivalent to *a very great*) rather than an ‘identifying’ use – terminology due to Bolinger (1972). The strangest use of all is perhaps *such and such* in (9), which is non-compositional, i.e., it does not first refer to one type of thing and then to another. The diversity of uses has bewildered linguists. Referring to the research literature Wood (2002: 91) writes that “[t]he word *such* causes confusion and disagreement, and stipulations about its category often vacillate between hedges and contradictions” and fifteen years later van der Auwera & Sahoo (2015) argue that it is best to

treat *such* as a category all by itself, a one-member category, which they call ‘similative’, related, of course, to the determiner, the demonstrative and the adjective, but different from all.

The problem of categorizing *such* reappears with the translational equivalents in other languages, esp. Germanic ones: see e.g. Jensen (2013) on Danish, Fretheim (2010) on Norwegian, Demske (2005) on German, van der Auwera & Sahoo (2015) on Dutch, and Leu (2015: 161-165) on Germanic in general. For the Swedish similative *sådan*¹ there is Ekberg (2011a, b), who has pointed out that though *sådan* is normally preceded by the indefinite article *en* or *ett*, Malmö adolescents often leave out the indefinite article, in which case it does not have its normal meaning, translatable with ‘such’, but rather what has been called a ‘recognitional’ use (Himmelman 1996). In this use, illustrated in (10), *sådan* introduces a new discourse referent, though of a type familiar to the hearer.

- (10) du vet jag har *sån* sång
 you know I have such bed
 “you know I have this bed”
 (Ekberg 2011b: 221-223)

Ekberg (2011a, b) also points out that, since the discourse referent of a recognitional uses is new, *sådan* comes close to doing the job of the indefinite article. The English similative does not have this use, only the demonstrative (notice *this* as a translation of *sådan* in (10)).² Another difference between Swedish and English is that with a full form, the one combining the similative and the indefinite article, English has the similative first (*such a*), but Swedish the indefinite article (*en sådan*). So *such* and *sådan* are clearly different. Yet looking back at the illustrations for English, Swedish has counterparts for all of them, except for the postnominal *such as* use illustrated in (5) with *a nation such as ours*,

¹ In the text we will refer to ‘*sådan*’, but it has six forms, all of the indefinite adjectival type, viz. *sådan*, *sådant*, *sådana* and their short forms *sån*, *sånt*, *såna*.

² Interestingly, the Dutch cognate to *such*, viz. *zulk*, does not allow a recognitional use either, but Dutch *zulk* is currently being replaced by the new similative *zo’n* (literally ‘so a’) and *zo’n* does have it (Van Olmen & van der Auwera 2014, Van Olmen 2015).

where Swedish either puts the similative in front of the noun or drops it altogether.

(11) en *sådan* nation som vår ...
 a such nation as ours

(12) en *nation* (**sådan*) som vår ...
 a nation such as ours

Note that the non-decompositional *such* and *such* has a Swedish counterpart too, shown in (13).

(13) Jag heter så och så, jag
 I am.called so and so I
 bor där och där med de
 live there and there with those
 och de familjemedlemmarna och
 and those family members and
 sådana och *sådana* husdjur ...
 such and such pets

“I am called so and so, and I live in such and such a place, with such and such family members and such and such pets and ...”

(http://amandaiunderlandet.ratata.fi/blogg/article-46556-44378-day-1-introduceyourself?offset_46556=825&goto=comments, June 23 2015)

Neither the Svenska Akademiens Grammatik (SAG) nor the Svenska Akademiens Ordbok (SAOB) mentions this use. *Sådan* also has the ‘noun as *such*’ construction and the definite use (both listed in *SAOB* but not in *SAG*³). (14) to (16) illustrate these uses.

³ This definite use requires an adjective that implies uniqueness, both in English and Swedish, either a superlative or a word like *only/enda* and is probably typical for a formal, written register. *SAG* (III, 444) does draw attention to a definite use, claimed to be typical for spoken language, and this example is *Hennes såna buxor är mycket häftigare* “These pants of hers are much cooler”.

- (14) Det är rädsla jag känner men inte för
 it is fear I feel but not for
 situationen som *sådan*
 situation.the as such
 “It is fear I feel but not for the situation as such.”
 (<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=9137145037>, June 23
 2015)
- (15) Det enda *sånt* besök som fungerade
 the only such visit that worked
 för oss var det som reseledaren
 for us was it that guide.the
 styrde upp.
 steared up
 “The only visit that worked for us was one that the guide
 arranged.”
 (<http://www.mintur.se/forum/diskussion.php?save=1&forumDiscussionID=13522&page=1>, September 25 2015)
- (16) Under det tidiga 1990-talet fann man
 under the early 1990-number found one
det första sådana ämnet.
 the first such substance.the
 “In the early 1990s one found the first such substance.”
 (<https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabinoid>, June 23 2015)

Interestingly, in (15) *sådan* takes the ‘normal’ indefinite inflection, but this is not quite felicitous, for the noun phrase is definite, and in (16) *sådan* takes the definite inflection, which it is not supposed to have (*SAG* II, 441). *Sådan* also allows the intensifying use, recognized in both *SAG* and *SAOB* and illustrated in (17).

- (17) *Sådana* *fina* *rosor!*
 such fine roses
 “Such fine roses!”
 (*SAG II*, 447)

To conclude, *such* and *sådan* are rather similar.

3. *Such and sådan are rather different*

Even if *such* and *sådan* have very similar or identical uses, they do not avail themselves of these uses with the same frequency. The frequencies differ, both the overall frequency and the frequency for each use. We investigated the frequencies found in the original fiction parts of the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC) (Altenberg et al. 2001). This corpus has the advantage of containing both original texts and translations, which will prove insightful in section 4. The figures do not, of course, give us a full picture, but it is at least a good start. The results for the overall frequencies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Overall frequencies of *such* and *sådan* (original English and Swedish texts ESPC)

	Absolute frequency	Normalized frequency
<i>such</i>	171 in 340,745 words	5.02 per 10,000 words
<i>sådan</i>	238 in 308,160 words	7.72 per 10,000 words

We thus see that Swedish *sådan* is more frequent than English *such* and this difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.771$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.0001$). The next question is whether this higher frequency is distributed over all its uses or rather due to just a few.

The main uses of both *such* and *sådan* are the adnominal uses, viz. uses (1) to (5) and (7), but not (6) and (9). For English the adnominal uses make up 89% of all uses, for Swedish quite a bit less, viz. 57%. The frequencies of all adnominal uses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Overall frequencies of adnominal uses of *such* and *sådan* (original English and Swedish texts ESPC)

	Absolute frequency	Normalized frequency
<i>such</i>	152 in 340,745 words	4.46 per 10,000 words
<i>sådan</i>	136 in 308,160 words	4.41 per 10,000 words

We see that the normalized numbers are very close and the difference is not, of course, statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.008$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.93$). This means that the higher frequency of *sådan* will be due to one or more of the non-adnominal uses. The uses in question are the nominal and pronominal uses.

- (18) En *sån* skulle man haft när man var
 a such should one had when one was
 grabb. (SW1)⁴
 boy
 One should have had one of these when one was a boy. (SW1T)
- (19) Varför ska vi släpa på tunga trasmattor
 why shall we drag on heavy rag.rugs
 när det finns bra *såna* i
 when it is.found good such in
 plast? (SC1)
 plastic
 Why should we bring in heavy rag rugs when there are good ones
 in plastic? (SC1T)
- (20) *Sånt* som ingen kunnat tänka ut. (KE1)
 such as nobody could think out
 Something that nobody could have come up with. (KE1T)
- (21) Det är vidrigt av dig att säga något
 it is disgusting of you to say something
sådant. (MS1)
 such
 It is disgusting of you to say something like that. (MS1T)

(18) and (19) are unquestionably nominal, and (20) and (21) are arguably pronominal, though *SAG* (II, 444) would consider (20) and (21) to be nominal. The exact categorization is not relevant here and we will just

⁴ The code between brackets refers to a unique text identifier in the ESPC (Altenberg et al. 2001:7). The text identifier in this example stands for the novel *Polismördaren* of Sjöwall & Wahlöö. The translated version has the same text identifier with the addition of the letter T.

refer to these uses as ‘(pro)nominal’ ones. What is relevant is that English cannot translate *sådan* in (18) to (21) with *such*.

- (22) *One should have had a *such* when one was a boy.
- (23) *Why should we bring in heavy rag rugs when there are good *such* in plastic?
- (24) **Such* as nobody could have come up with.
- (25) *It is disgusting of you to say something *such*.

(Pro)nominal *such* does exist though. The *such* in the *such and such* construction of (9) is arguably a case in point. And here are a few more types.

- (26) But some/many *such* have yet to be reported.
- (27) But *such* have yet to be reported.
- (28) There you can buy bags, wallets, and *such*.

The next question is how frequent (pro)nominal *such* and *sådan* are. It turns out that (pro)nominal *such* is very infrequent: in the original fiction subcorpus of English, there is only one attestation of (pro)nominal *such*, viz. the one shown in (29).

- (29) [...] Plato was embraced and absorbed and Aristotle was rediscovered and acclaimed “the Philosopher” by *such* as Aquinas. (JH1)

Swedish *sådan* is very different: in the Swedish subcorpus (pro)nominal *sådan* uses account for no less than 38 % of all uses. It will be remembered that 57 % of all *sådan* uses are adnominal, this leaves us with 43 % non-adnominal uses, and thus nearly all are (pro)nominal.

The strong contrast between (pro)nominal *such* and *sådan* makes sense. English adnominals do not normally ‘go nominal’: they remain adnominal and use the prop word *one*, as in *green ones*. Swedish adnominals go nominal without a prop word, as in *bra såna* (in (19)) or *gröna* in (30), referring, for example, to green apples.

- (30) Ge mig gröna.
 give me green
 “Give me green ones.”

However, what holds for adjectives need not hold for similatives. Thus Dutch adjectives nominalize without prop words, but the similatives rarely nominalize. When one chooses green apples, (31) is perfect, but when one chooses apples of one type rather than another one, (32) is barely acceptable.

- (31) Geef me groene.
 give me green
 “Give me green ones.”

- (32) ?? Geef me zulke.
 give me such
 “Give me those ones.”

The Dutch adjectives are more like the Swedish ones, but the similatives are more like the English ones.

The prominence of (pro)nominal uses is no doubt the biggest difference between *such* and *sådan*. But there are more. In what follows we will focus on the difference between identifying vs. intensifying uses. As pointed out already, English and Swedish allow both uses. (33) and (34) illustrate identification, and (35) and (36) intensification.

- (33) I want to have *such* a hat.

- (34) Jag vill ha en *sådan* hatt.
 I want have a such hat
 “I want to have such a hat.”

- (35) *Such* a wonderful saw!

- (36) En *sådan* fin såg!
 a such fine saw
 “Such a fine saw!”
 (SAG II, 445)

Of course, in some contexts it is not clear which reading is meant. Thus (37) is an example that can only be disambiguated in context, as is shown by Ghesquière & Van de Velde (2011: 786) the pressure could be of a certain type or of a high intensity. Swedish (38) is also vague.

(37) There should be no need for *such* pressure.

(38) Jag hade aldrig tidigare sett en *sådan*
 I had never before seen a such
 avgrund i ett par ögon. (BL1)
 chasm in a pair eyes
 I had never before seen such a chasm in a pair of eyes. (BL1T)

In the English subcorpus the distribution of identifying vs. intensifying uses vs. those that are vague between the two is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Identifying, intensifying and vague uses of adnominal *such* (original English texts ESPC)

Identifying	Intensifying	Vague	Total
101	43	8	152
66 %	28 %	5 %	100 %

When we come to Swedish, the facts are more complicated, for Swedish *sådan* also has the recognitional use, already mentioned for the speech of Malmö adolescent studied by Ekberg (2011a, b), but in our view it is not restricted to this register. (39) is an example from the ESPC.

(39) Det var en *sån* där typiskt skör
 it was a such there typical frail
 gammal röst. (MG1)
 old voice
 It was one of these typical frail old voices. (MG1T)

The distribution of identifying, intensifying, vague and recognitional uses of *sådan* is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Identifying, intensifying, vague and recognitional uses of adnominal *sådan* (original Swedish texts ESPC)

Identifying	Intensifying	Vague	Recognitional	Total
100	21	5	10	136
74 %	15 %	4 %	7 %	100 %

We see that *sådan* intensifies less than *such* (15 % vs. 28 %) and that it *sådan* identifies more (74% vs. 66 %). Furthermore, for the full picture we should also include the (pro)nominal uses in Swedish, which is particularly interesting, because the (pro)nominal uses are all identifying. Table 5 tabulates the identifying uses for (ad/pro)nominal *sådan*.

Table 5. Identifying uses for (pro/ad)nominal *sådan* (original Swedish texts ESPC)

	Identifying	Total
Adnominal <i>sådan</i>	100	136
(Pro)nominal <i>sådan</i>	90	90
(Pro/ad)nominal <i>sådan</i>	190	226

The new figures are those in the last row and the conclusion is clear: *sådan* is more identifying than *such*. The next section will make clear why this is so.

4. Alternatives for *such* and *sådan*

If *sådan* is more dedicated to identification than to intensification, one wonders what other means Swedish has for intensification, more particularly, for exactly that type that *sådan* can express, but does less often than *such*. Here the translations in the Swedish-English Parallel Corpus come in handy. Let us have a look at the translational equivalents of adnominal intensifying *such* in Swedish.

Table 6. Intensifying adnominal *such* translated into Swedish (Swedish translated texts ESPC)

	<i>sådan</i>	<i>så</i>	Other	Total
<i>such</i> + noun	10	3	5	18
<i>such</i> + adjective + noun	5	16	4	25
Total	15	19	9	43
	35 %	44 %	21 %	100 %

When English combines intensifying *such* with a noun and without an adjective, in 3 out of 18 cases, Swedish chooses to intensify an adjective that approximates the meaning of the English noun, and then the intensification happens with *så*, not with *sådan*, as in (40).

- (40) You're *such* a baby. (FW1)
 Du är *så* barnslig. (FW1T)
 you are so childish

In the majority of the cases, however, Swedish too uses an intensifying *sådan*. However, when English combines the intensifying *such* with both a noun and an adjective, Swedish uses the intensifying *sådan* only in 5 out of the 25 cases, as illustrated in (41).

- (41) *Such* a beautiful deep blue they'd made it [...] (DF1)
 De hade lyckats få en *sån* fin blå
 they had managed get a *such* nice blue
 färg på dem [...] (DF1T)
 color on them

The winning strategy combines the adjective and the noun with an intensifying *så*. (42) and (43) are two illustrations.

- (42) He'd never seen *such* a beautiful woman up close, in the flesh.
 (ST1)
 Han hade aldrig sett en *så* vacker kvinna
 he had never seen a so beautiful woman
 på nära håll, inte i levande livet. (ST1T)
 on close hold not in living life

- (43) Then I noticed that in a corner, across from where they ate with *such* innocent relish, [...], was the ghost of their son. (BO1)
- | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|--------|--------------|-------------|------|----------|
| Så | la | jag | märke till | att | i | ena |
| so | laid | I | notice to | that | in | one |
| hörnet, | mitt | emot | dem | där | de | satt |
| corner | mid | across | them | where | they | sat |
| och | åt | med | <i>så</i> | oskuldsfull | | aptit, |
| and | ate | with | so | innocent | | appetite |
| satt | deras | sons | ande, [...]. | | | (BO1T) |
| sat | their | son's | ghost | | | |

The Swedish alternative makes good sense: when the person seen in (42) is a very beautiful woman, this is because she scores high on a scale from less to more beautiful, not on a scale from less of a woman to more of a woman. We can now also explain the puzzle left at the end of the preceding section. *Sådan* is less intensifying than *such*, because when the noun phrase has an adjective, Swedish typically intensifies with *så*. Though this strategy is available in English too, it seems to be relatively infrequent: in our corpus it did not occur at all. (44) is a made-up example.⁵

- (44) He'd never seen *so* beautiful a woman up close, in the flesh.

We have also seen that *sådan* is more (pro)nominal than *such*. Table 7 shows how English translates (pro)nominal *sådan*.

Table 7. Identifying (pro)nominal *sådan* translated into English (English translated texts ESPC)

<i>such</i>	<i>like/sort/kind</i>	Other	Zero	Total
9	39	36	6	90
10 %	43 %	40 %	7 %	100 %

Some translations use *such* and they are all adnominal (see (45) and (46)).

⁵ An anonymous reviewer checked the relative frequency of the *such a* + adjective + noun and *so* + adjective + *a* + noun strategies in the BNC, and found the first one to be ten times as frequent as the second one.

- (45) Hur går sådant till? (AP1)
 how goes such to
 How do *such* things happen? (AP1T)
- (46) Det är för att förleda sådana som jag. (BL1)
 it is for to mislead such as I
 It is done to mislead *such* people as me. (BL1T)
- (47) and (48) illustrate the ‘Other’ and ‘Zero’ categories.
- (47) Om sånt som hör fruntimmer till [...] (GT1)
 about such that belongs women to
 About things that deal with females [...]. (GT1T)
- (48) En sådan som han skulle jag
 a such like him should I
 säkert ha kommit ihåg [...] (BL1)
 definitely have remembered
 But I’m sure I would have remembered him. [...] (BL1T)

In (49)-(51) we illustrate a type where the notion of similarity is not expressed by *such* but by *like*, *sort of* or *kind of*. *Like* goes with a noun and *sort* and *kind* are nouns, at least, to some extent (though with *sorta* and *kinda* we see these constructions acquiring an adnominal status).

- (49) Jag skämtar aldrig om sånt här. (SW1)
 I joke never about such here
 I never kid about things like that. (SW1T)
- (50) Sådant och mycket annat berättar min
 such and much other tells my
 bror. (RJ1)
 brother
 That’s the sort of story my brother tells me. (RJ1T)

- (51) Ni begriper er ju på sånt
 you understand yourself well on such
 här. (SW1)
 here
 You people from National Homicide understand this kind of case.
 (SW1T)

The *like/sort/kind* strategies are no less prominent for the translation of adnominal *such* (see (52) to (54)).

Table 8. Identifying adnominal *sådan* translated into English (English translated texts ESPC)

<i>such</i>	<i>like/sort/kind</i>	Other	Zero	Total
24	47	18	11	100

- (52) En sådan dörr kostar nuförtiden rätt
 a such door costs now rather
 många tusenlappar. (LG1)
 many thousand.bills
 A door like that nowadays costs a pretty penny. (LG1T)
- (53) Vi är inte vana vid såna saker. (SW1)
 we are not used with such things
 We're not used to this sort of thing. (SW1T)
- (54) En sådan båt är det. (JMY1)
 a such boat is it
 That's the kind of boat it was. (JMY1T)

The other way round, Swedish has a *sort/typ* strategy too, but it cannot match the *sådan* strategy.

Table 9. Identifying adnominal *such* translated into Swedish (Swedish translated texts ESPC)

<i>sådan</i>	<i>sort/typ</i>	Other	Zero	Total
61	10	12	18	101
60 %	10 %	12 %	18 %	100 %

- (55) [...], among *such* people as she had never seen, [...] (RDA1)
 [...], bland en sorts människor som hon aldrig
 among a sort people who she never
 förr hade mött, [...] (RDA1T)
 before had met

We can thus say that that similitive *such* has more competition from other similitive markers than Swedish *sådan*.

5. Conclusion

This paper is a demonstration of a three-pronged analysis of the differences and similarities between English *such* and Swedish *sådan*. Methodologically, we engaged in scholarship the way it is done outside the field of corpus linguistics, by essentially relying on intuition, by comparing – and criticizing – the existing language-specific analyses of *such* and *sådan*, and, in this day and age, web googling. We then added strictly corpus-based accounts of *such* and *sådan*, studying their uses both in original texts and in translations. This triangulation allowed us to make clear that the possible uses of *such* and *sådan* are very similar, but their actual uses much less so. They both express similarity and we have called them ‘similitive’, but English *such* is nearly only used adnominally, whereas Swedish *sådan* has prominent (pro)nominal uses as well. Another striking difference is that both have identifying and intensifying uses, the latter is more prominent for *such* than for *sådan*, and when the noun phrase contains an adjective, Swedish prefers to intensify with *så* rather than with *sådan*. Also, only in Swedish do we find the recognitional use. Finally, we have seen that to express similarity *such* has more competition from *like/sort/kind* strategies than *sådan* from *sort/typ* strategies. Concluding the conclusion: the *such* and *sådan* similitives are neither the same nor different: they are ... similar.

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