The degree proform *so* in German

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Besides other uses, *so* in German can be used as a demonstrative pronoun referring to a degree. Like other demonstratives, degree *so* has deictic and anaphoric uses, illustrated in (1).

(1) Peter ist (auch) so groß.
     Peter is (also) SO tall
     'Peter is that tall (too).'

In this talk I argue that *so* used as parameter marker in scalar equatives like (2) is also the degree proform illustrated in (1).

(2) Peter ist so groß wie Paul.
     Peter is SO tall   how Paul.
     'Peter is as tall as Paul.'

Following Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), I take the morphological make-up of equatives as guiding line and propose a semantic analysis of equatives in German as correlative constructions. The standard clause headed by the degree interrogative pronoun *wie* is analyzed as a free relative clause that is interpreted as a definite description (e.g. Dayal, 1995). This degree is then cataphorically picked up by the demonstrative degree pronoun *so* in argument position.

In support of this analysis, three empirical facts are discussed that are puzzling under the standard degree operator analysis of equatives but can be explained under the correlative analysis: (i) measure phrases cannot be used as standard, (ii) negative expressions can occur in in the standard, whereas (iii) negative polarity items cannot.

References: • Dayal, V. (1995): Quantification in correlatives. In: Bach, Jelinek, Kratzer & Partee (eds.): *Quantification in Natural Languages.* Kluwer Academic Publishers: 179-205. • Haspelmath, M. & Buchholz, O. (1998): Equative and similative constructions in the languages of Europe. In Auwera (ed.): *Adverbial constructions in the languages of Europe*. Berlin: de Gruyter: 277-334.