Comparing similarity demonstratives and similarity adjectives with respect to gradability

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This talk starts from the analysis of German *so* and English *such* as *similarity demonstratives* expressing similarity (instead of identity) to their demonstration targets (Umbach & Gust 2014). This analysis differs from, e.g., Anderson & Morzycki (2015) in assuming that demonstration targets are (token) individuals (instead of kinds). On the other hand, the similarity classes created by *so/such* (e.g. the class of haircuts similar to Claire's) may constitute kinds created ad hoc.

This analysis allows comparing *so/such* to adjectives expressing similarity, e.g. *ähnlich/similar* and *gleich/same*, which are at first sight equivalent in meaning, see (1), but on a closer look differ in a number of respects. Most prominently, while *ähnlich/similar* are gradable, neither *so/such* nor *gleich/same* are, see (2).

Speaker points to Claire's haircut:
(1)   a. Anna hat auch so einen Haarschnitt / einen ähnlichen Haarschnitt / den gleichen Haarschnitt wie dieser da.
       b. Anna has also such a haircut / a similar haircut / the same haircut.

(2)   a. Annas Haarschnitt ist diesem ähnlicher /*mehr so ein Haarschnitt / *diesem mehr gleich als/wie der von Berta.
       b. Anna's haircut is more similar to this one /*more such a haircut / *more the same haircut than/as Berta's.

It will be argued in the talk that in the case of *gleich/same* non-gradability is a matter of the adjectives' content while in the case of *so/such* it relates to the fact that the relation of similarity is due to their nature as demonstratives. From this point of view, *so/such* are in fact closer to pro-forms than to two-place predicates of similarity.

References: • Anderson, C. & Morzycki, M. (2015): Degrees as Kinds. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 33(3), 791-828. • Umbach, C. & Gust, H. (2014): Similarity demonstratives. *Lingua* 149, 74-93.