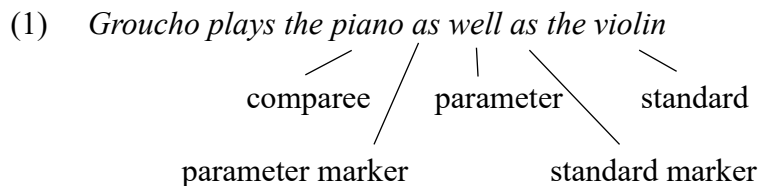


'Wellness' equatives and their extensions in English *as well as* in Dutch and German¹

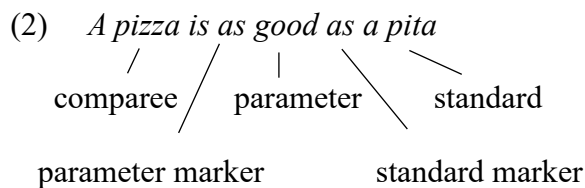
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Introduction

In this paper we study a peculiar type of 'wellness' equatives, i.e., constructions that express that something, the 'comparee', is compared to something else, 'the standard of comparison', and in which they are equal with respect to a parameter of 'wellness' (or 'goodness'). Thus the example in (1) can mean 'Groucho plays the piano and the violin equally well'. The terms 'comparee', 'parameter' and 'standard', 'parameter marker' and 'standard marker' are taken from Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998).



(2) is another example, one in which English does not use *well* but *good*.



Our focus is on what could be called the 'extended meanings' of such constructions, like when *as well as* in (1) expresses addition and amounts to *and*, or when *as good as* expresses approximation, as in (3).

(3) *Our agreement was as good as dead*

¹ This paper was kicked off when Daniel used an *as well as* construction when we were discussing *neither ... nor*. It was then presented at the ninth Germanic Sandwich conference in April 2024. Thanks are due to the Lancaster audience as well as to Hartmut Haberland (Roskilde), Anna Kisiel (Leuven), Tom Koss (Antwerp) and Iker Salaberri (Vitoria Gasteiz) and no less to three reviewers.

We also deal with the relation between what must be considered the older, literal meanings and the extensions. The perspective is furthermore a cross-linguistic one: we compare the English constructions with their counterparts in Dutch and German. We describe the differences between the three languages with a particular interest in whether Dutch could in some sense be considered intermediate between English and German. The intermediacy hypothesis has been around since at least Van Haeringen (1956) and has inspired a considerable body of research, some in support of the Van Haeringen hypothesis, some not (see Van Olmen 2025). We will see in which camp the ‘wellness’ equatives can be accommodated.

The study is corpus-based and uses the Sketch Engine *TenTen* corpora. Sketch Engine, founded by Adam Kilgarriff and Pavel Rychlý, is an online corpus tool² and the *TenTen* corpora used (Jakubíček et al. 2013) are text collections that were crawled from the web recently (2020-2022). On the negative side, web crawling collects materials that are of variable acceptability and from different varieties. For our data, however, we have no evidence that false or unreliable hits give us a distorted picture of present-day usage, but regional differences or preferences may well remain undetected. On the positive side, the corpora are enormous. The approximate sizes of the corpora, expressed in words, are 52 billion for English, 5 billion for Dutch and 16 billion for German.

The theme of this issue of *Linguisticae Investigationes* is ‘Similatives: Semantic sources, pathways, and types of usage’. In section 1 we relate our ‘equative’ study to the ‘similarity’ theme. We also explicitly relate the current work to the body of knowledge that derives from Van Haeringen’s intermediacy hypothesis. Section 2 deals with *as well as* and *as well* constructions and their counterparts in Dutch and German. In section 3 we turn to *as good* constructions, and in section 4 we focus on *just as well* constructions. Section 5 is the conclusion.

1. Similative and equative constructions, polyfunctionality, and three West-Germanic languages

It is well known that equative constructions are semantically very close to what Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) call ‘similative’ constructions, as illustrated in (4) (see also Fuchs 2004, Bužarovska 2005, and Giomi 2022).

(4) *Groucho talks like Zeppo*

In English the similative construction is formally different from the equative construction, such as the one in (5): (4) uses *like* as the standard marker, but (5) uses *as*.

² See <https://www.sketchengine.eu/> (last accessed 12/09/2024).

(5) *Groucho talks as fast as Zeppo*

Yet, semantically, at least some similatives can be seen as a kind of equatives, and some equatives can be seen as a kind of similatives. This is shown in the paraphrases in Table 1.

	Groucho talks like Zeppo	Groucho talks as fast as Zeppo
equative paraphrase ³	in some respect the way in which Groucho talks is <i>the same</i> as the way in which Zeppo talks	with respect to speed, the way in which Groucho talks is <i>the same</i> as the way in which Zeppo talks
similative paraphrase	Groucho and Zeppo are <i>similar</i> with respect to the way in which they talk	Groucho and Zeppo are <i>similar</i> with respect to the speed with which they talk

Table 1. The relation between equative and similative constructions

Unsurprisingly, in some languages this similarity is reflected in the form: in German, for instance, the standard marker is *wie* for both similatives and equatives, and *so* can (or must) appear in both.

(6) *Groucho spricht (so) wie Zeppo*
 Groucho speaks So like Zeppo
 (Groucho speaks like Zeppo)

(7) *Groucho spricht so schnell wie Zeppo*
 Groucho speaks so fast like Zeppo
 (Groucho speaks as fast as Zeppo)

The key difference, it seems to us, between ‘similative’ and ‘equative’ constructions like (4) and (5)⁴ is that the former do not express the parameter. In (4) it is

³ That an equative paraphrase can serve both equatives (in the strict sense) and similatives was already clear in Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 278) – we add the italics:

These paraphrases show that equatives express *equal* extent, and similatives express *equal* manner.

⁴ Table 1 only concerns the adverbial constructions *like Zeppo* and *as fast as Zeppo*. Equatives and similatives can also be expressed with adjectives, as with the equative *same* in (a) or the similative *such* in (b).

(a) *Groucho's attitude is the same as Zeppo's*

94 understood to be the manner of speaking but we do not know what aspect of the
 95 manner is at issue here.

96 The starting point of this paper are equatives in the strict sense, but we only
 97 deal with the ones in which the parameter could be called ‘wellness’, such as those
 98 illustrated in (1) and (2). These ‘wellness’ equatives are interesting because they
 99 can express other meanings. Thus, as pointed out already, (1) can also mean that
 100 Groucho plays the piano and that he additionally plays the violin, without any
 101 estimate of how well he plays them.

102

(8) *Groucho plays the piano as well as the violin*

a. Groucho is as good at playing the piano as at playing the violin

Equality

b. Groucho plays the piano and also the violin

Addition

103

104 The paraphrase in (8b) shows that ‘addition’ comes close to coordination, and we
 105 will investigate whether or not *as well as* can be seen as a coordinator. Another term
 106 for ‘additive’ is ‘segregatory’, employed by Quirk et al. (1985: 953). We will use
 107 ‘additive’, but more important than the choice of a term is to distinguish the
 108 ‘additive’/‘segregatory’ meaning from the ‘combinatory’ meaning, illustrated in (9),
 109 which allows *and*, but not *as well as*.

110

(9) a. *Mary and John got married*

b. **Mary as well as John got married*

intended reading: Mary got married to John

111

112 *As good as* is polyfunctional, too. In (3), repeated below, it does not express
 113 equality in a strict sense, but similarity, and even a high degree of similarity.

114

(3) *Our agreement was as good as dead*

115

116 The agreement is not really dead, but very similar to being dead, perhaps because
 117 it is very close to being dead or perhaps because the practical implications of the
 118 agreement, though still in force, are very similar to those of an agreement that is
 119 really dead. Interestingly, the fact that a literal equality expression here expresses
 120 similarity again testifies to the closeness of equality and similarity. To reflect that
 121 the similarity has to be high, we will use the term ‘approximative’.

(b) *I like such an attitude*

There are few studies on *same*-like markers (but see Filipović & Hawkins 2016), but *such*-like markers are studied better (see e.g. van der Auwera and Sahoo 2015 and Van Olmen 2019). Also, *as good as* allows both adjectival and adverbial uses.

122 Semantic extensions of equative constructions have been studied before,
 123 especially in Treis and Vanhove (Eds.) (2017), but the types we study here have
 124 remained under the radar, at least from a cross-linguistic point of view.

125 Our cross-linguistic perspective is a limited one: we only deal with English,
 126 Dutch and German, and then nearly exclusively with the present-day languages. We
 127 thus cannot aim at typological or diachronic generalizations, but we can instead
 128 engage in fine-grained analysis, allowing us to relate the findings to the renewed
 129 interest in the study of the differences between these languages. The renewal started
 130 at a conference in Berlin in 2005, which celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the
 131 publication of Van Haeringen's (1956) *Nederlands tussen Duits en Engels* 'Dutch
 132 between German and English'. This conference had proceedings, with the same title
 133 as Van Haeringen's (Hüning et al. 2006) and proved to be the start of recurring
 134 conferences with the same focus. Before the Berlin renewal and independently of
 135 this research, Hawkins (1986) had prominently focussed on the contrastive study of
 136 English and German, itself renewed in König and Gast (2018, with a first edition in
 137 2007) and in Hawkins (2018). This research line was occasionally reinforced by the
 138 addition of Dutch (e.g. van der Auwera et al. 2012). After nine so-called 'Germanic
 139 Sandwich' conferences there is no over-all evaluation of the Van Haeringen
 140 hypothesis, but it is our impression that Dutch is equally likely to be intermediate
 141 as it is not to be. This impression is also supported if we have a look at the negative
 142 counterpart of additive *as well as* (van der Auwera and Van Olmen 2025). The
 143 closest negative counterpart to (8b) is (10).

144
 (10) *Groucho plays neither the piano nor the violin*

145
 146 Straightforward equivalences in Dutch and German are shown in (11a) and (11b),
 147 respectively.

148
 (11) a. *Groucho speelt noch piano noch viool*
 b. *Groucho spielt weder Piano noch Violin*
 Groucho plays neither piano nor violin
 (Groucho plays neither the piano nor the violin)

149
 150 Dutch can indeed be considered intermediate between English and German, if we
 151 consider the first two properties shown in Table 2, with Dutch siding with English
 152 for the first property, but with German for the second one. With respect to the last
 153 two properties, however, Dutch is the odd one out.

154

Dutch sides with	English	<i>neither</i> and <i>nor</i> and <i>noch</i> and <i>noch</i> have an initial (etymologically negative) <i>n</i> -; the German marker <i>weder</i> does not have this <i>n</i> -
	German	German <i>noch</i> and Dutch <i>noch</i> are morphologically similar; there is no such form in English
Dutch sides with neither English nor German		in each pair, i.e., <i>neither</i> – <i>nor</i> and <i>weder</i> – <i>noch</i> , the two markers are morphologically different; in Dutch <i>noch</i> serves twice
		in each pair, the first markers, i.e., <i>weder</i> and <i>neither</i> , are morphologically similar; Dutch <i>noch</i> is different

Table 2. Some similarities

Dutch is also not intermediate relative to the fact that only Dutch allows various constructions with an originally equative construction (see van der Auwera and Van Olmen 2025). (12) illustrates some of these. We gloss the *evenmin* form with its etymological meaning, viz. *even* ‘equally’ and *min* ‘little’.

- (12) *Groucho speelt* { *piano evenmin als* } *viool*
Groucho plays { *piano equally.little as* } *violin*
{ *piano (net) zo min als* }
{ *piano just so little as* }
{ *evenmin piano als* }
{ *equally.little piano as* }
{ *(net) zo min piano als* }
{ *just so little piano as* }
{ *geen piano en evenmin* }
{ *no piano and equally.little* }
{ *geen piano en* } *viool evenmin*
{ *no piano and* } *violin equally.little*
- (Groucho plays neither the piano nor the violin)

So Dutch has an abundance of originally equative constructions for negative addition. This begs the question of whether Dutch could similarly stand out in the domain of ‘positive’ equative-based addition.

2. *as well as*

We have already pointed out that English (8) has two readings, an equative and an additive one. The equative reading is the compositional one and, judging from the entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), it is the original one: whereas the additive reading is attested from the 1200s, the equative reading is found in Old English (*OED* s.v. *well* adv. & n., P.3.a and P.3.b). The equative reading is also

175 richer, in the sense that the equative meaning entails the additive one, but not the
 176 other way round. When Groucho plays two instruments equally well, he plays both,
 177 but when he plays two instruments, it does not follow that he plays them equally
 178 well. These two readings are not equally prominent. In a sample of 100 random *as*
 179 *well as* attestations in the English *TenTen* corpus there were only two clear equative
 180 uses. (13) is one of them.

181

(13) *Yes practicality could be an issue – I assume the developers addressed
 this as well as they were able*

182

183 It is to be noticed that the standard of comparison is not an action different from the
 184 addressing of the issue: it is instead the best possible way of addressing the issue.
 185 The other example has the same property.

186

(14) [...] *so that the dial mask will fit as well as it can*

187

188 One example, shown in (15), could be read either way.

189

(15) *I could do that in accessors as well as in generators*

190

191 The best Dutch and German counterparts to (8) that employ the etymological
 192 counterparts of *as well*, viz. *zowel* and *sowohl*, respectively, are shown in (16).

193

(16) a. *Groucho speelt zowel piano als viool*
 b. *Groucho spielt sowohl Piano als auch Violin*
Groucho plays so.well piano as also violin
(Groucho plays the piano as well as the violin)

194

195 In section 2.1 we discuss the differences between English, on the one hand, and
 196 Dutch and German, on the other hand. In section 2.2 we turn to the differences
 197 between Dutch and German. Section 2.3 is the conclusion.

198

199 2.1. English *as well as* vs. Dutch *zowel als* and German *sowohl als auch*

200

201 The comparison between English (8), on the one hand, and Dutch and German (16a-
 202 b), on the other hand, shows the following differences. First, the Dutch and German
 203 variants are not ambiguous: they only have the additive meaning. This difference
 204 should not be exaggerated, though. In English the additive meaning is the dominant
 205 one. This suggests a diachronic scenario of the weakening of a meaning that has
 206 come to completion in Dutch and German, but not quite in English. Also, the *as*
 207 *well / zowel / sowohl* is then no longer a parameter marker followed by a parameter.
 208 This first difference is related to a second one: the Dutch and German counterparts
 209 to *as well* are written as one word, making it less easy to take them as independently

210 expressing their literal meanings, i.e., that of a parameter marking and a parameter.
 211 The third difference is that in Dutch and German the ‘as well’ parts and the second
 212 ‘as’ are separated. The construction is best analysed as correlative addition, with
 213 *zowel / sowohl* in correlation with *als / als*. English has a correlative additive
 214 construction too: (17) is a 1982 example from the OED (s.v. *well* adv. & n., P.3.a).
 215

(17) *An independent Jewish-Christian gospel that was used as well by the
 author of the Gospel of Thomas as by Tatian*

216
 217 For Dutch and German, the opposite question suggests itself: do the languages
 218 allow the non-correlative additive variants? The corpus examples in (18) show that
 219 the answer is positive for both languages.
 220

- (18) a. *De vrouw zowel als de draak zijn buiten
 the woman so.well as the dragon are outside
 zichzelf
 themselves
 (The woman as well as the dragon are beside themselves)*
 b. *Sie waren schön, die Sängerin sowohl als auch
 they were beautiful the Singer so.well as also
 die Gouvernante
 the Governess
 (They were beautiful, the singer as well as the governess)*

221
 222 To get a sense of the frequencies of the correlative versus non-correlative
 223 additive variants, we searched the *TenTen* corpora for *as well / zowel / sowohl* X *as*
 224 */ als / als (auch)* Y and X *as well as / zowel als / sowohl als (auch)* Y – with the
 225 queries for both X and Y limited to determiner plus noun combinations, to keep the
 226 output manageable. For each set of results, we then checked how many hits of a
 227 random sample of 200 attestations were relevant. Cases such as (19) were excluded,
 228 since *als* in *zowel als* introduces a ‘factive’ phrase (Creissels 2014).⁵

⁵ Creissels (2014: 606) defines ‘factive phrase’ as follows:

1. A factive phrase is either a noun phrase headed by a noun N normally used to refer to concrete entities (animate beings or concrete things), or the combination of such a noun phrase with an adposition.
2. A factive phrase is syntactically a direct dependent of the verbal head of the clause.
3. A factive phrase does not refer to a participant identifiable as an N and distinct from the participants referred to by the other noun phrases in the construction of the same verb, but predicates the property of fulfilling the role of an N, taking one of the participants as its argument.

229

- (19) *De drone kan zich in de lucht zowel als*
 the drone can itself in the air so.well as
een helikopter als een vliegtuig voortbewegen
 a helicopter as an airplane move
 (The drone can move in the air both like a helicopter and an airplane)

230

231 Note also that there appears to be no real semantic difference between *as well X as*
 232 *Y* and *X as well as Y*: of the correlative sample, just three cases were rejected
 233 because they did not convey addition and, of the non-correlative one, only four. The
 234 proportions of relevant hits were extrapolated to the total numbers, giving us the
 235 estimated absolute frequencies and relative frequencies per one million words in
 236 Table 3.

237

		English	Dutch	German
correlative	#	195	130,852	170,645
	/1 million	0.004	22.22	9.74
	words			
non- correlative	#	222,039	724	792
	/1 million	4.25	0.12	0.05
	words			

238

239 Table 3. Correlative vs. non-correlative additive constructions in English, Dutch
 240 and German

241

242 It is evident from these numbers that English strongly prefers the non-correlative
 243 construction and Dutch and German heavily favor the correlative one.⁶ This third
 244 difference could be related to the first one, in the sense that the correlative
 245 constructions trigger the additive reading. For what the *OED* (s.v. *well* adv. & n.,
 246 P.3.a) calls the 'early use' of *well*, it mentions that the additive meaning was
 247 available only for correlative constructions. Similarly, the Dutch and German
 248 constructions in (16) are correlative and they only allow an additive reading.

⁶ Interestingly, the English correlative cases also tend to occur in texts that have an archaic tone (e.g. of a religious or legal nature). The Dutch and German non-correlative instances, by contrast, can easily be found in texts that sound very modern, as in (18).

249 A fourth difference setting English apart from Dutch and German, also shown
 250 in Table 3, is that the additive construction, correlative or not, is considerably less
 251 frequent in the former than in the latter. This can probably be attributed at least in
 252 part to the existence of *both X and Y* in English – which, with determiner plus noun
 253 combinations, has a relative frequency of 11.27 instances per one million words. A
 254 fifth difference is that only English has an additive construction in which the *as well*
 255 *as* constituent comes first. This is illustrated in (20).
 256

- (20) *As well as cutting down on jagged edges, this reduces the amount of
 pixel shimmer [...]*

257
 258 Sixth, only English has an additive *as well* construction without *as* – see (21).
 259

- (21) *Interest was also expressed about doing some of the smaller stones
 there as well*

260
 261 Seventh, only English can use *as well* predicatively, with the meaning ‘fortunate’,
 262 a use which is more typical for *just as well*, to be discussed in section 4. Example
 263 (22) comes from the *OED* (s.v. *well* adj. & n., A.2.b.ii),
 264

- (22) *It was as well he got on with the major-domo for Snotters was a
 petulant wee man*

265
 266 The uses in (20) and (22) are rare. In a random 100 hit sample of *as well*
 267 constructions, they do not occur. The use of bare *as well*, though, without a second
 268 *as*, accounts for 21/100 cases. The majority (75/100) are non-correlative additive
 269 ones – 4 cases are impossible to interpret.

270 There are still more differences that set English apart. The by now eighth
 271 difference is that English *as well as* is frequently accompanied by one or more
 272 commas and occasionally by brackets, as illustrated in (23) and (24).
 273

- (23) [...] *we recommend institutions establish a work schedule, as well as
 a routine of inspection [...]*

274
 (24) *Nature-Throid (= as well as all other thyroid USP products) has never
 received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval*

275
 276 This kind of separation is much less common in German and nearly absent from
 277 Dutch. We checked this for sentence-initial determiner plus noun combinations with
 278 – for Dutch and German – optional commas after *zowel/sowohl* and before *as well*
 279 *as* after *als/als (auch)* and – for English – optional commas before and after *as well*

280 *as*.⁷ This search revealed that English features commas in 51.38% of cases, German
 281 in 12.47% and Dutch in just 1.82% – all nearly exclusively before *as well as/als/als*
 282 (*auch*).⁸

283 A last issue concerns the question whether the additive markers can be seen as
 284 coordinative conjunctions. Consider the Dutch example in (25), which the
 285 *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst (ANS)* ‘General Dutch Grammar’ (Instituut
 286 voor de Nederlandse Taal 2023) uses to show that the verb that agrees with two
 287 singular noun phrases combined by *zowel als* can be both singular and plural.

288

- (25) *De man zowel als de vrouw waren/was op de*
 the man so.well as the woman were/was on the
hoogte
 height
 (The man as well as the woman were/was informed)

289

290 We find this variation in English and German too. When the verbal agreement is
 291 plural, *zowel ... als /as well as /sowohl ... als (auch)* can be seen as a coordinating
 292 conjunction. It is less clear how one should treat it when the verbal agreement is
 293 singular. For English, Quirk et al. (1985: 761, 982-983) see this as a reason to treat
 294 *as well as* as something that is not quite a coordinator, but rather a ‘quasi-

⁷ The restriction to determiner plus noun combinations was mainly a way to avoid too many irrelevant hits and the sentence-initial requirement a way of limiting the number of hits to make the comparison more straightforward. The various positions of the optional commas, finally, should cover all places where a comma could appear.

⁸ There are no German or Dutch corpus examples of the use of brackets rather than commas. Including the former option for English gives us 50.03% of cases with commas and 2.62% with brackets, of which (23) and (24) are respective examples. See (a) and (b) for examples with commas from Dutch and German respectively.

- (a) *Zowel de start, als de finish van de openingsrit*
 so.wel the start as the finish of the opening stage
liggen in Utrecht
 lie in Utrecht
 (The start, as well as the finish of the opening stage are in Utrecht)

- (b) *Sowohl die Haushaltsgröße, als auch der Wohnort*
 so.well the household size, as also the place.of.residence
werden analysiert
 are analyzed
 (Household size as well as place of residence are analyzed)

coordinator’.⁹ According to Biber et al. (2021), plural agreement shows that the meaning of *as well as* ‘approaches that of coordination’ and according to Huddleston & Pullum (2012: 1316-1317) there are simply two *as well as* constructions: when *as well as* goes with plural agreement, it is a coordinator, but when it goes with singular agreement, *as well as* is taken to make an ‘adjunct’. For German, Eisenberg (2006: 207) sees no reason to deny *sowohl ... als auch* the status of ‘coordinator’. For Eisenberg, coordinators are allowed to make the coordinated constituents appear before the verb jointly or individually. In the latter case the verb takes singular agreement, and this is what we find with *sowohl ... als auch*. But in both cases *sowohl ... als auch* is considered to be a coordinator.

To get an idea of verbal agreement in the three languages, we searched the *TenTen* corpora for X *as well as* Y, with and without commas, and *zowel / sowohl X als / als (auch) Y* at the start of a sentence, with both X and Y as determiner plus singular noun combinations, and followed by a singular or plural verb. The results are given in Table 4.

	English		Dutch	German
	no commas	with commas		
singular	2,166 67.31%	837 69.40%	3,384 31.38%	1,645 11.42%
plural	1,052 32.69%	369 30.60%	7,400 68.62%	12,755 88.58%
Σ	3,218	1,206	10,784	14,400

Table 4. Verb agreement

What we see is that English prefers the singular, by a ratio of 2 to 1 – and that commas don’t matter. In Dutch and German, by contrast, the plural is preferred, as has been noted, for Dutch in the *ANS* (Section 25.11.2.2.4) and for German in Drosdowsky (1984: 655). So if we take plural verb agreement to be an indication of the construction’s status as a coordinating conjunction, then the Dutch and German ones are more deserving of that status than the English one. This analysis would fit with the fact that, in English, unlike in Dutch and German, the second component tends to be separated from the rest of the clause as an aside and perhaps with the fact that the former have developed further and are exclusively additive.

⁹ Another reason is that *as well as* phrases can occur in clause-initial position, as illustrated in (20), and of which Quirk et al (1985: 982) state that ‘they clearly have a prepositional or subordinating role, and have the mobility of adverbials’.

324 2.2. Dutch *zowel als* vs. German *sowohl als*

325

326 The preceding section showed that the Dutch and German equative wellness
327 constructions are very similar. We now turn to the difference between Dutch and
328 German.

329 First, Table 3 shows not only that Dutch basically sides with German, but also
330 that the additive construction based on ‘as well as’ is far more established in Dutch
331 than in German (it is about twice more frequent in the former than in the latter).
332 One aspect possibly distinguishing the languages is that the German correlative
333 construction allows a lot of variation in its second component, as is illustrated in
334 (26) to (30).

335

- (26) *Im Allgemeinen hielten sich die Gebete – sowohl*
in general held themselves the prayers so.well
die persönlichen wie die Familiengebete – an
the personal like the family.prayers on
die Gepflogenheiten der Kirche
the customs of.the church
(In general, the prayers - personal as well as family prayers - adhered to
the customs of the church)

336

337

- (27) *Zu den bedeutendsten zählen sowohl die Stämme der*
to the most.important count so.well the tribes of.the
Bajau, der Bisaya und der Murut.
Bajau of.the Bisaya and of.the Murut
(The most important ones include the Bajau, Bisaya as well Murut
tribes)

338

- (28) *Sowohl technische Problematiken, ästhetische Fragen oder*
so.well technical problems esthetic questions or
Produktionsschwierigkeiten können hier GEMEINSAM
production.difficulties can here together
diskutiert [...] werden
discussed become
(Technical problems, aesthetic questions as well production difficulties
can be discussed TOGETHER here)

339

- (29) *Somit ergibt sich für Informationstechnik (IT) sowohl*
 thus results itself for information.technology IT so.well
als Ziel wie auch als Waffe eine zunehmende
 as target like also as weapon a increasing
 Bedeutung
 meaning
 (This means that information technology (IT) is becoming increasingly
 important both as a target and as a weapon)

340

- (30) *Dies gilt sowohl für die Spa-Anbieter zu Hause,*
 this applies so.well for the spa-providers at home
sowie im Urlaub
 so.like in.the vacation
 (This applies to spa providers at home as well as on vacation)

341

342

As (31) to (33) show, Dutch too exhibits variation in this regard.

343

- (31) *Wij voeren voor zowel particulieren alsmede*
 we carry for so.well private.individuals as.with
zakelijke klanten vervoersopdrachten uit
 commercial clients transport.orders out
 (We carry out transport order for private individuals as well as
 business clients)

344

- (32) *[...] een vorm van maatschappelijke participatie die naar*
 a form of social participation that to
de mening van zowel trajectbegeleider en deelnemer
 the opinion of so.well project.counselor and participant
past bij de mogelijkheden [...]
 fits at the possibilities
 ([...] a kind of social participation that, in the opinion of the program
 counselor as well as the participant, suits what is possible [...])

345

- (33) *Fraai model welke zowel bij een casual of*
 beautiful model which so.well at a casual or
chique look is te dragen
 chic look is to wear
 (Beautiful model that can be worn with a casual as well as a chic look)

346

347

348

349

A search for *sowohl/zowel* X followed by one or two unspecified words and then Y – with both X and Y again being determiner plus noun combinations – gives us the options and the numbers for German and Dutch in Table 5. Note that these lists do

not include options with a frequency lower than 100 (e.g. *ebenso wie* ‘just.so as’, which occurs just ten times).

German		Dutch	
<i>als auch</i>	168,764	<i>als</i>	130,852
<i>wie auch</i>	9,450	<i>en</i>	4,427
<i>wie</i>	4,144	<i>als ook</i>	1,087
<i>und</i>	4,034	<i>alsook</i> ¹⁰	582
<i>als</i>	1,881	<i>alsmede</i>	269
<i>sowie</i>	343	<i>of</i>	162
<i>auch</i>	275		
<i>also auch</i>	243		
<i>und auch</i>	239		
<i>oder</i>	221		
<i>aber auch</i>	152		

Table 5. Variation in the second component

It is clear from Table 5 that there exists considerably more variation in German than in Dutch. However, this variation in German is not enough to explain why, as we observed in Table 3, the “standard” Dutch construction is so much more frequent than the “standard” German one (i.e., 22.22 cases per one million words versus 9.74): the German alternatives only add up to a relative frequency of 1.09 cases per one million words (the Dutch ones amount to 1.11).¹¹

Second, when we discussed the occurrence of commas – and brackets – we noted that German is more tolerant than Dutch. For sentence-initial determiner plus noun combinations German allowed them in 12.47% of all cases and Dutch only in 1.82%. Third, Table 5 showed that German allows more plural agreement than Dutch – 88.58% vs. 68.62%.

Two more differences between Dutch and German are interesting. First, German has *als auch* as the most frequent variant. A similar construction occurs in Dutch, in two versions even, viz. *als ook* and *alsook*, but both are marginal: *ook* only appears in 1.26% of *als* cases. Conversely, the German sample has very few instances with only *als* instead of *als auch*: *auch* is found in 98.90% of the relevant *als* cases. This is reflected in Eisenberg (2006: 205), but not in the somewhat older Drosdowski ((ed.) 1984: 373), Engel (1988: 745) and Zifonun (1997: 2398), which

¹⁰ We could have put *alsook* and *als ook* together, assuming that these constructions here function in the same way.

¹¹ Anna Kisiel (p.c.) raised the question whether some of these constructions have a preference for either singular or plural agreement. This remains to be investigated, but this could be difficult, given that some of these patterns are not frequent and they would also need to occur in subject positions preceding finite verbs.

374 take *auch* to be optional. This suggests that the ousting of bare *als* is a recent
 375 phenomenon. Second, *wie auch* is the second most frequent variant and *wie* on its
 376 own is in fact more frequent than *als* on its own: this appearance of *wie* is part of a
 377 more general pattern of *wie* encroaching on *als* (see Eggs 2006). Nothing
 378 corresponds to this in Dutch. As a final remark, the prominence of the additive
 379 marker *auch* accords well with the fact that *sowohl ... als/wie auch* only has an
 380 additive reading and one might assume this prominence to have played a role in
 381 the change, for *sowohl ... als/wie auch*, from an equative to an additive reading.
 382 However, Dutch *zowel ... als* only has the additive reading too, English *as well as*
 383 strongly prefers it, and neither has made something parallel to *auch* as good as
 384 obligatory.

385

386 2.3. A conclusion

387

388 When we compare the three languages, we see three constellations: (i) in some
 389 respects Dutch and German wellness equatives behave in the same way, and both
 390 are different from the English ones; (ii) in other respects Dutch wellness equatives
 391 differ from the German and English ones, and Dutch can be seen as intermediate;
 392 and (iii) in yet other respects, Dutch wellness equatives are again different from
 393 both German and English ones but German can be seen as intermediate. Table 6
 394 gives the details of these three constellations.

395

Dutch sides with German and against English		additive reading only
		univerbation
		no preposing of the second component
		nothing corresponds to bare <i>as well</i>
		nothing corresponds to predicative <i>as well</i>
Dutch sides with neither	Dutch is intermediate	plural agreement
		variation in the second component
German nor English	Dutch is not intermediate	least separation by commas and brackets
		highest dominance of correlatives over non- correlatives

396

397 Table 6. Similarities between Dutch, German and English wellness additives

398

399 When we take a diachronic perspective, we could say that unlike English, both
 400 Dutch and German show a more or less completed change from an equative marker
 401 to an additive marker. In some respects, German can be said to have gone furthest:
 402 with the dominance of plural agreement, the additive marker is closest to being an
 403 additive conjunction. If we assume that the non-correlative use is the oldest one,
 404 then Dutch has also been a ‘winner’, judging its fondness for correlative uses.

English has been innovative too: bare *as well* developed out of *as well as*, with the first attestations of the former in 1384 and of the latter in Old English (*OED* s.v. *well* adv. & n., P.2 & P.3.b). Dutch and German do not show a similar development, and they never developed anything corresponding to predicative *as well*, the use illustrated in (22) (of which the first attestation takes us to 1649 – *OED* s.v. *well* adj., 2).

411

412 3. *as good as*

413

414 Next to *as well as*, English also has *as good as*. The counterparts exist in Dutch and
415 German too, and all three can be used as equatives.

416

- (34) a. *Pita is zo goed als pizza*
b. *Pita ist so gut als Pizza*
pita is so good as pizza
(Pita is as good as pizza)

417

418 German also has an alternative with *wie*, illustrated in (34c).

419

- (34) c. *Pita is so gut wie Pizza*
pita is so good like pizza
(Pita is as good as pizza)

420

421 The variant with *wie* is the more frequent one. We come to this conclusion as
422 follows. The overall frequency of *so gut wie* (21.17) is higher than that of *so gut als*
423 (0.25) – in the whole of the *TenTen* corpus. Based on 100 random attestations, the
424 equative uses of *so gut wie* are low compared to those of *so gut als* – 16 % as against
425 70 %, but 16 % of the overall frequency of *so gut wie* is still higher than the 70 %
426 of the overall frequency of *so gut als*. This is shown in Table 7.

427

	<i>so gut als</i>	<i>so gut wie</i>
A: overall frequency of all uses per million words	0.25	21.17
B: percentage of equative uses in random sample (100 hits)	70 %	16 %
C: estimated frequency of equative uses per million words	0.17	3.38

428

429 Table 7. Frequencies of the equative uses of *so gut als* and *so gut wie*

430

431 An important remark on Table 7 is that the majority of the 70 equative uses of *so*
432 *gut als* (viz. 55) do not mark the standard as something specific, like pizza in (34),
433 but as something that is possible, nearly always (in 50 of the 55 cases) with the set
434 phrase *so gut als möglich* ‘as good as possible’.

435

- (35) *Jeder macht es eben so gut als er kann*
 everyone makes it thus so good as he can
 (Everyone does it as well as they can)

436

- (36) [...] *die Unterhaltung kam so gut als möglich in Gang*
 the conversation came so good as possible in going
 ([...] the conversation got going as well as possible)

437

438 *So gut wie* does not have this profile: *so gut wie möglich* is attested only once.

439 The above examples are all non-correlative. Correlative constructions also
 440 occur. (37) is a Dutch example.

441

- (37) [...] *die zo goed de weg weet te vinden naar de*
 who so good the way knows to find to the
politiek in Den Haag als mensen van de
 politics in Den Haag as people of the
BES-eilanden
 BES-islands
 ([...] who knows his way into the politics of Den Haag as well as
 people from the BES islands)

442

443 Note that a non-correlative construction need not have the parameter immediately
 444 following the word *good/goed/gut*. In (38) *good* is part of a noun phrase (in
 445 particular, a ‘BIG MESS’ construction with degree modification in front of an
 446 indefinite noun phrase – see Sommerer 2022).

447

- (38) *As good a place as any to start is Dr. Uffe Ravnskov's site "The
 Cholesterol Myths"*

448

449 We take such cases as non-correlative, for the second *as* still directly follows the
 450 first *as* constituent.

451 For samples of 100 *as good*, *zo goed* and *so gut* cases we isolate the equative
 452 uses. Table 8 shows the proportions of non-correlative vs. correlative cases.

453

	equative		other	Σ
	non-correlative	correlative		
<i>as good</i>	47	2	51	100
<i>zo goed</i>	8	8	84	100
<i>so gut</i>	with <i>wie</i>	7	84	100
	with <i>als</i>	1	99	100

Table 8. Non-correlative vs. correlative equative uses of *as good*, *zo goed* and *so gut*

We see that English *as good* prefers the non-correlative structure, a pattern which we also saw for *as well*. For Dutch *zo goed* and German *so gut* there is no clear preference and it makes no sense to compare *zo goed* or *so gut* with *zowel* or *sowohl* for the latter have no equative uses.

As was already made clear with English (3), repeated below, and as is clear from Table 8, the equative use is not the only use of *as good as*, and the same is true for the Dutch and German counterparts.

(3) *Our agreement was as good as dead*

In (3) *as good as* expresses approximation. In English the approximative reading is rare: there is only one example in a random sample of 100 *TenTen* attestations of *as good as*. There are three attestations that allow both an equative and an approximative reading. This is the case in (39): the F16s could either be just as good as new ones or only approximately so (though the approximative reading is more likely).

(39) *U.S. official: Upgraded F-16s for Taiwan as good as new*

We also looked at 100 corresponding attestations in the Dutch and German *TenTen* corpora – see Table 9. For Dutch *zo goed als* the approximative uses, as in (40) form the majority, and the remaining uses, such as (41), are equative ones.

(40) *Helaas kan ik zo goed als nooit de telefoon aannemen [...]*
 unfortunately can I so good as never the telephone
 receive
 (Unfortunately, I can hardly ever answer the phone [...])

479

- (41) *De drugtesters zijn dan ook niet zo goed als*
 the drug.testers are then also not so good as
ze zelf promoten
 they themselves promote
 (The drug testers are therefore not as good as they advocate)

480

481 There are two attestations where an additive reading is possible. (42) is one of them.

482

- (42) [...] *deze mensen vindt men overal. In Dortmund*
 these people finds one everywhere in Dortmund
en in Stuttgart net zo goed als in
 and in Stuttgart just so good als in
Villingen-Schwennigen
 Villingen-Schwennigen
 ([...] one finds these people everywhere. In Dortmund and in Stuttgart
 and just as much as in Villingen-Schwennigen)

483

484 In both *zo goed als* is preceded by *net*. We will discuss the effect of *net* in section
485 4.486 German *so gut wie* patterns very much like *zo goed als*, except that the
487 preference for the approximative use, as in (43), over the equative one, as in (44),
488 is still stronger in German.

489

- (43) *Für meine Begriffe wird so gut wie alles*
 for my concepts becomes so good like everything
im bundesrechtlichem Sinne abgehandelt
 in.the federation.legal sense dealt
 (In my opinion, almost everything is dealt with in the federal law sense)

490

- (44) *Auf der hintern Dreierbank sitzt man zwar*
 on the rear three-seater.bench sits one however
nicht ganz so gut wie auf den Einzelsitzen
 not fully so good like on the individual.seats
 (Sitting on the rear three-seater bench isn't quite as comfortable as on the
 individual seats)

491

492 For *so gut als* the dominant use is equative and there are many uses that are not
493 equative or approximative. Thus the use in (45) is irrelevant, more precisely

494 functive, and it is found in 16 cases.¹² The use in (46) seems additive – there were
 495 three cases.

496

- (45) *Wenn David Attenborough wirklich so gut als Sprecher*
 if David Attenborough really so good as speaker
ist, [...]
 is
 (If David Attenborough is really as good as a speaker [...])

497

- (46) [...] *so daß Demosthenes die thebanische Volksversammlung*
 so that Demosthenes the Theban assembly
so gut als die athenische leitete
 so good as the Athenian led
 ([...] so that Demosthenes led the Theban assembly as well as the
 Athenian one)

498

499 Table 9 gives an idea of frequencies. We see that German *so gut als* is closer to
 500 English *as good as*: the equative use is dominant, and the approximative is
 501 marginal.

502

	approximative	equative	approximative or equative	additive	irrelevant
<i>as good as</i>	1	95	3	0	1
<i>so gut als</i>	8	70	0	3	19
<i>zo goed als</i>	71	25	0	2	0
<i>so gut wie</i>	84	16	0	0	0

503

504 Table 9. The uses of *as good as*, *so gut als*, *zo goed als* and *so gut wie*

505

506 From a comparative perspective, German can be considered intermediate, due

¹² (a) is one of the functive attestations, but it also illustrates a correlative additive *so gut ... wie*.

- (a) *Im Vers können "Zeit" wie "Freund Hein" unbestreitbar*
 in.the verse can "Zeit" like Freund Hein undeniably
beide so als Nominative wie als Akkusative durchgehen
 both good as nominative like as accusative pass
 (In verse, "Zeit" and "Freund Hein" can undeniably both pass as nominatives as
 well as accusatives)

507 to its having two constructions.
508

German sides with	English	English <i>as good as</i> and German <i>so gut als</i> have few approximative uses
	Dutch	Dutch <i>zo goed als</i> and German <i>so gut wie</i> have many approximative uses

509

510

511

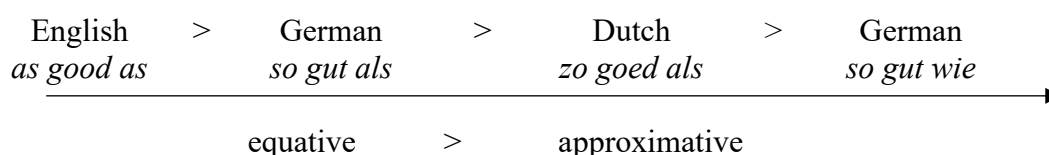
Table 10. Some similarities

512 But German is also an outlier, in that Dutch and English do not have a counterpart
513 to *wie*.

514 When we compare the equative and the approximative uses, we take it that the
515 equative use is the oldest one. According to the *OED* (s.v. *good* adj., P.4.b.i), for
516 instance, the approximative use dates back to the mid to late 1300s, while equative
517 uses can already be found in Old English (e.g. *OED* s.v. *good* adj., I.1.a and I.3.c).
518 Each language then developed semantically weaker non-equative uses. We see both
519 approximative and additive uses, though most prominently, the approximative one.
520 For ‘well’ constructions there was also a change from equative to non-equative
521 ones, but there the latter are only additive. In both the ‘good’ and the ‘well’ changes,
522 English is the conservative language and, for different reasons, neither German nor
523 Dutch can be said to have gone the furthest. For the ‘well’ constructions, in some
524 respects, German went furthest, but in other respects Dutch went furthest. For the
525 ‘good’ constructions, German wins if we only consider *so gut wie*, but if we only
526 look at the most direct counterpart of *as good as* and *zo goed als*, i.e., if we only
527 consider *so gut als*, then Dutch can be said to have gone further.

528

529



530

531

532

Figure 1. A diachronic perspective

533 4. *just as well, net zo goed / even goed and genau/eben so gut*

534

535 In this section we study *just as well* and its counterparts in Dutch and German. *Just*
536 *as well* is interesting: (i) it has a different profile from that of *as well*, and (ii) its
537 most natural counterparts in Dutch and German do not employ *wel/wohl* but
538 *goed/gut*. Let us first look at English.

539 First, we have seen that *as well* allows two readings. To go back to example
540 (1), either Groucho plays the piano and the violin equally well or he just plays both
541 instruments and there is no indication of the quality of his playing these instruments.

542

(1) *Groucho plays the piano as well as the violin*

543

544 The most frequent reading is the additive one. This is different when *as well as* is
545 preceded by *just*. (47) only has the equative reading.

546

(47) *Groucho plays the piano just as well as the violin*

547

548 This makes sense: the addition of *just* stresses the equality and thus the weakening
549 from equality to addition is less likely. The addition of *at least* has the same effect.

550

(48) *Groucho plays the piano at least as well as the violin*

551

552 In a random sample of 100 *TenTen* attestations 81 *just as well* cases have the
553 equative interpretation rather than the additive one.

554

555 Second, for *as well* constructions, the majority (at least 75/100) mark the
556 standard of the comparison, like *the violin* in (1) – see the discussion following
557 example (21). This is again different for *just as well* – the standard is marked in
558 only 34/100 cases. This is surprising. On the one hand, the addition of *just* focusses
559 on the comparison, but, on the other hand, not mentioning the standard deflects the
560 focus. However, in all the cases that do not express the standard in the slot following
561 *just as well*, the standard is clear from the context. In (49) the standard of *could fast*
562 *break just as well* is *the Sonics*, mentioned earlier in the sentence.

(49) *They could play defense every bit as suffocating as the Sonics, could*
fast break just as well, but were more athletic and with Dr. J, had a
better halfcourt offense.

563

564 In (50) the standard is *soybeans and corn*.

565

(50) *Martin Country is well-known for its soybeans and corn, but one local*
man said there's potential for another crop that can do just as well
here: hemp

566

567 But keeping the standard implicit can also bleach the equality into addition. For
568 example, in (51) the implicit standard is probably to stay awake and the meaning is
569 probably not that going to bed is really exactly the same as staying awake. So a
570 paraphrase with *also* seems fine.

571

(51) *(might just as well go to bed -- it's getting late...) Nighty-night, all!*

572

573 There is then also a sense of indifference or alternation. Whether or not the speaker
574 goes to bed or stays awake does not matter for his companions. And, pragmatically,

575 because the speaker advances the ‘going to bed’ alternative, it will count as a
576 suggestion.

577 Of the 66 cases without a parameter, there are 20 in which *just as well* is used
578 as a predicate to an explicit or implicit impersonal pronoun. *Just as well* then means
579 ‘fortunate’ or ‘lucky’ (*OED* s.v. *well* adj. & n., A.2.c.ii) or ‘good even if not expected
580 or intended’ (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/just%20as%20well>,
581 last accessed 17/07/2024).

582

(52) *Just as well you are a geologist then, not a speleologist, if you can't
spell!*

583

(53) *These blackholes are very unstable and can "explode" or a better
description would be "evaporate", which is just as well since if they
did not they might start to consume the Earth if created in a lab!*

584

585 (52) says that it is fortunate that the hearer is a geologist. In (53) the explosion or
586 evaporation of the blackholes does not seem to be a good thing, yet it is actually
587 good because it would not then constitute a danger for the Earth. As mentioned
588 already and illustrated with example (22), this use exists for *as well* too, but it is not
589 prominent,

590 Table 11 shows the frequency of the various uses for *just as well*. For the
591 attestations with an explicit standard marker, we distinguish between the non-
592 correlative model, as in (47), and the correlative model, as in (54).

593

(54) *Finding a golf ball that works just as well around the green as it does
off the tee can be a challenging feat*

594

	<i>just as well as</i>	<i>just as well ... as</i>	<i>just as well</i>
equative	25	9	46
‘good even if’	0	0	20

595

596

Table 11. The uses of *just as well*

597 Note that *just as well as* is much more frequent than *just as well ... as*. In this respect
598 *just as well* is like *as well*.

599 The second reason why *just as well* is interesting is that the ‘natural’
600 counterparts in Dutch and German do not use the ‘well’ words but the ‘good’ words.
601 Admittedly, the *TenTen* corpora contain attestations of the literal counterparts *net*
602 *zowel* and *genau so wohl*, as is shown in Table 12.

	<i>just as well</i>	<i>net zowel</i>	<i>genau sowohl</i>
/ million words	2.14	0.01	< 0.01

Table 12. The frequencies of *just as well*, *net zowel* and *genau so wohl*

But some of the *net zowel* and *genau sowohl* attestations are false hits. In (55) *genau* does not go with *sowohl* but with *was*, and in (56) *net* has clausal scope.

- (55) [...] *zumindest bis klar wird, was genau die*
 at.least until clear becomes what exactly the
USA als auch Moskau anbieten
 USA as also Moscow offer
 ([...] at least until it becomes clear what exactly the USA as well as
 Moscow offer)

- (56) *Daardoor zullen de tanden net zowel aangetast*
 therefore will the teeth just so.well damaged
worden door bananen als door snoep
 become by bananas as by candy
 (Therefore the teeth will actually be damaged by bananas as well as by
 candy)

The absolute number for the Dutch attestations of *net zowel* is 42. Eliminating the false hits brings the number down to 32 and these examples look like (57), which we consider to be of dubious grammaticality.¹³

- (57) *Onderweg liep alles gesmeerd, net zowel met*
 along.the.way ran everything oiled just so.well with
onze scooters als met ons zelf
 our scooters as with us self
 (Along the way everything sent smoothly, with our scooters as well
 as with ourselves)

The data for German are similar, with only 15 of the 46 attestations which seem to use *genau sowohl* like *just as well*.

As mentioned already, Dutch and German do have constructions corresponding to *just as well*, but these do not use *wel/wohl* but *goed/gut*. The closest counterparts

¹³ The fact that *net* is so infrequent with *zowel ...als* is remarkable when one compares the additive construction to its negative counterpart with *zomin*, as in (12). This construction can occur without *net*, but it is an extremely infrequent option (see van der Auwera & Van Olmen 2025: 36). The likely reason is that, as a minimizer, *net* is semantically compatible with negative addition but strange with positive addition.

are *net zo goed* and *genauso gut* and *genau so gut*.¹⁴ Of the two German variants, *genauso gut* is more frequent than *genau so gut* (3.89/million vs. 0.87/million in the *TenTen* corpus). In German both constructions allow both *als* and *wie*, but *wie* is the more frequent option¹⁵ and below we report only on *wie*. In both Dutch and German, they are equative, with context-dependent tones of addition and indifference; some mark the parameter, either in a non-correlative or correlative way, and some do not mark the parameter. The ‘good even if’ construction of English is, however, not found in Dutch or German. Tables 13 to 15 show the frequencies of the different types in, again, 100 random *TenTen* attestations. (58) is a Dutch *net zo goed als* type, (59) is a German *genau so gut ... wie* type, and (60) is a Dutch *net zo goed* type.

	<i>net zo goed als</i>	<i>net zo goed ... als</i>	<i>net zo goed</i>
equative	14	13	73

631

632

Table 13. The uses of *net zo goed*

633

	<i>genauso gut wie</i>	<i>genauso gut ... wie</i>	<i>genauso gut</i>
equative	30	13	57

634

635

Table 14. The uses of *genauso gut*

636

637

	<i>genau so gut wie</i>	<i>genau so gut ... wie</i>	<i>genau so gut</i>
equative	19	23	58

638

639

Table 15. The uses of *genau so gut*

640

641

- (58) [...] *dat weet jij net zo goed als ik*
 that know you just as good as I
 ([...] you know that just as well as me)

¹⁴ There is also *even goed* and *ebenso gut*, which correspond, at least superficially, to English *equally well*, but we will leave these out of account. We also do not study Dutch *vrijwel*, literally ‘free-well’, which has an approximative meaning close to that of *zo goed als* (Zwarts 1985).

¹⁵ For the non-correlative construction the frequencies are the following: *genauso gut* with *wie* has 0.58/million and *genauso gut* with *als* has 0.04/million and *genau so gut* with *wie* has 0.16/million and *genau so gut* with *als* has 0.01/million.

642

- (59) *Sie können uns mit dem Auto genau so gut*
 you can us with the car just so good
erreichen wie mit den öffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln
 reach like with the public means.of.transport
 (You can reach us by car just as well as by public transport)

643

644

- (60) [...] *maar het komt net zo goed voor dat*
 but it comes genau so good For that
ideeën tevoren gestolen worden
 ideas early stolen become
 ([...] but it happens as well that ideas get stolen early)

645

646 Interestingly, the Dutch *net zo goed* strategy is much more frequent than the German
 647 *genauso gut* and *genau so gut* combined. In the *TenTen* corpora, the German
 648 construction has a relative frequency of 4.76/million but the Dutch one a frequency
 649 of 10.27/million. The latter is also much higher than the frequency of *just as well*
 650 with 2.14/million.

651 When we compare the three languages we see that Dutch can side with German
 652 as well as with English and that it can also go its own way.

653

Dutch sides with	English	<i>just as well</i> and <i>net zo goed</i> mark the standard with the etymon <i>als</i> ; the German marker is overwhelmingly <i>wie</i>
	German	only English has the ‘good even if’ use only in English is the non-correlative use much more frequent than the correlative one
	neither English nor German	Dutch <i>net zo goed</i> is much more frequent than <i>just as well</i> and <i>genau so gut</i>

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Table 16. Some similarities

657 The three languages are alike though in that the addition of *just/net/genau* decreases
 658 the need for parameter marking.

659 Of the two uses of English *just as well* we assume that the predicative one is
 660 the more recent one. The *OED* (s.v. *well* adj. & n., A.2.c.i) gives 1810 as the oldest
 661 attestation. We do not know how old the equative use is: it does not get a separate
 662 mention in the *OED*, for the equative use is only a combination of equative *as well*
 663 and *just* meaning ‘precisely’. However, since equative *as well* has been around since
 664 at least 1384 and the ‘precisely’ use of *well* has been around since at least 1551, it
 665 is plausible to think that equative *just as well* occurred earlier than 1810, the year
 666 of the first attestation of the predicative use.

A question that deserves answering is why English features ‘well’ and Dutch and German ‘good’ in expressions meaning ‘just as well’. Part of the answer may well be that, generally, Dutch *goed* and German *gut* are more flexible than English *good* and that Dutch *wel* and German *wohl* are more restricted than English *well*, with *goed* and *gut* doing the work that is distributed more evenly over English *good* and *well*. Also in the predicative use, the meaning of *well* is characterized as ‘advisable, desirable, fortunate, lucky’ and, crucially, those meanings appear to be present for its predicative use from Old English onward (*OED* s.v. *well* adj. & n., A.2.a). A look at historical dictionaries of Dutch (<https://ivdnt.org/woordenboeken/historische-woordenboeken/> (last accessed 28/08/2024), by contrast, suggests that *wel* never had the meanings that gave rise to *just as well* and that *goed* did develop them (from Early Middle Dutch onward). This requires further study, which should include German, for which an even more cursory look at a dictionary (<https://www.dwds.de/d/wb-etymwb>, last accessed 23/09/2024) suggests that German is similar to Dutch in this respect.

5. Conclusion

If we compare the three languages, we see that Dutch and German usually pattern in similar ways and that English stands out. From a diachronic perspective and relative to *as well as* and its counterparts, it is German that has shown most innovation: it has progressed furthest in the change from an equative marker to an additive marker and even a conjunction, and it shows most variation in the parameter marker, though this has the consequence that *sowohl (...) als* is less established than *zowel (...) als*. In the change from an equative to an additive marker English has gone least far. Yet in two other respects, it is English that is the more innovative language. Only English has developed the bare *as well* use, only English has developed *just as well* – though Dutch and German have caught up with *zo goed als / so gut als/wie* – and only English has developed the predicative ‘good even if’ use. To a minor extent, Dutch too is more innovative, probably most clearly in its fondness of *net zo goed*, yet there is nothing like the ‘explosion’ of constructions for negative addition (illustrated in (12)). These claims about German, Dutch or English showing innovation are diachronic claims, but they are not supported by diachronic corpus work. This still needs to be undertaken. Yet, even at this stage, it seems that in the domain of wellness equation the three languages share an inheritance, with words for ‘well’ and ‘good’, and that they spent their inheritance in similar but not identical ways. And ... there is no clear sense in which, in the domain of ‘wellness’ equatives, Dutch is intermediate relative to English and German.

Corpora

https://app.sketchengine.eu/#dashboard?corpname=preloaded%2Fententen21_tt31
https://app.sketchengine.eu/#dashboard?corpname=preloaded%2Fnlnten20_tt3
https://app.sketchengine.eu/#dashboard?corpname=preloaded%2Fdetenten20_rft3

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800

801 **Abstract**

802

803 This is a study of English (*just*) *as well (as)* and *as good (as)* constructions and their
 804 counterparts in Dutch and German. These constructions can express an equative
 805 meaning, which is the oldest meaning, as well as 'extended' meanings, like
 806 coordination, with *as well as* functioning like the coordinator *and*, or
 807 approximation, with *as good as*. The study is based on the *Sketchengine TenTen*
 808 corpora for each of the three languages. The findings are evaluated relative to the
 809 influential 'Germanic Sandwich' hypothesis that Dutch is intermediate between
 810 English and German. It is argued that, in most respects, Dutch and German pattern
 811 alike, and that, from a diachronic perspective, each language has shown innovation.

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813

814 **Keywords:** equative, simulative, additive, approximative

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