

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYTICAL DEGREES OF  
COMPARISON

Turaeva Guzal Khursanovna

Karshi state university

**Annotation:** In order to compare some objects and statements we need the structure of the degrees Of Comparison. The structure of the analytical degrees of comparison is meaningfully overt; these forms are devoid of the feature of "semantic idiomatism" characteristic of some other categorial analytical forms, such as, for instance, the forms of the verbal perfect. For this reason the analytical degrees of comparison invite some linguists to call in question their claim to a categorial status in English grammar.

**Key words:** to compare, superlative, elative, analytical degrees, the category of comparison, grammatical change, combination, function, to identify.

Scholars point out the following two factors in support of the view that the combinations of *more/most* with the basic form of the adjective are not the analytical expressions of the morphological category of comparison, but free syntactic constructions: first, the *more/most*-combinations are semantically analogous to combinations of *less/least* with the adjective which, in the general opinion, are syntactic combinations of notional words; second, the *most*-combination, unlike the synthetic superlative, can take the indefinite article, expressing not the superlative, but the elative meaning (i.e. a high, not the highest degree of the respective quality).

The reasons advanced, though claiming to be based on an analysis of actual lingual data, can hardly be called convincing as regards their immediate negative purpose.

Let us first consider the use of the *most*-combination with the indefinite article.



This combination is a common means of expressing relative evaluations of substance properties. The function of the relative *most*-construction in distinction to the function of the superlative *most*-'construction will be seen from the following examples:

The speaker launched *a most significant* personal attack on the Prime Minister. *The most significant* of the arguments in a dispute is not necessarily *the most spectacular* one.

While the phrase "a most significant (personal) attack" in the first of the two examples gives the idea of rather a high degree of the quality expressed irrespective of any directly introduced or implied comparison with other attacks on the Prime Minister, the phrase "the most significant of the arguments" expresses exactly the superlative degree of the quality in relation to the immediately introduced comparison with all the rest of the arguments in a dispute; the same holds true of the phrase "the most spectacular one". It is this exclusion of the outwardly superlative adjective from a comparison that makes it into a simple relative, with its *most*-constituent turned from the superlative auxiliary into a kind of a lexical intensifier.

The definite article with the relative *most*-construction is also possible, if leaving the relative function less distinctly recognizable (in oral speech the relative *most* is commonly left unstressed, the absence of stress serving as a negative mark of the relative). Cf.: I found myself in the *most awkward* situation, for I couldn't give a satisfactory answer to any question asked by the visitors.

Now, the synthetical superlative degree, as is known, can be used in the relative function as well, the distinguishing feature of the latter being its exclusion from a comparison.

Cf.: Unfortunately, our cooperation with Danny proved *the worst* experience for both of us. No doubt Mr. Snider will show you his collection of minerals with the greatest pleasure.

And this fact gives us a clue for understanding the expressive nature of the relative superlative as such — the nature that provides it with a permanent



grammatico-stylistic status in the language. Indeed, the expressive peculiarity of the form consists exactly in the immediate combination of the two features which outwardly contradict each other: the categorial form of the superlative on the one hand, and the absence of a comparison on the other.

That the categorial form of the superlative (i.e. the superlative with its general functional specification) is essential also for the expression of the elative semantics can, however paradoxical it might appear, be very well illustrated by the elative use of the comparative degree. Indeed, the comparative combination featuring the dative comparative degree is constructed in such a way as to place it in the functional position of unrestricted superiority, i.e. in the position specifically characteristic of the superlative. *E.g.:* Nothing gives me *greater* pleasure than to greet you as our guest of honour. There is *nothing* more refreshing than a good swim.

The parallelism of functions between the two forms of comparison (the comparative degree and the superlative degree) in such and like examples is unquestionable.

As we see, the elative superlative, though it is not the regular superlative in the grammatical sense, is still a kind of a specific, grammatically featured construction. This grammatical specification distinguishes it from common elative constructions which may be generally defined as syntactic combinations of an intensely high estimation. *E.g.:* an *extremely important* amendment; a matter of *exceeding* urgency; quite an *unparalleled* beauty; etc.

Thus, from a grammatical point of view, the elative superlative, though semantically it is "elevated", is nothing else but a degraded superlative, and its distinct featuring mark with the analytical superlative degree is the indefinite article: the two forms of the superlative of different functional purposes receive the two different marks (if not quite rigorously separated in actual uses) by the article determination treatment.

It follows from the above that the possibility of the *most*-combination to be used with the indefinite article cannot in any way be demonstrative of its non-



grammatical character, since the functions of the two superlative combinations in question, the relative superlative and the genuine superlative, are different.

Moreover, the use of the indefinite article with the synthetical superlative in the degraded, dative function is not altogether impossible, though somehow such a possibility is bluntly denied by certain grammatical manuals. *Cf.*: He made a *last* lame effort to delay the experiment; but Basil was impervious to suggestion.

Having considered the characteristics of the category of comparison, we can see more clearly the relation to this category of some usually non-comparable evaluative adjectives.

Outside the immediate comparative grammatical change of the adjective stand such evaluative adjectives as contain certain comparative sememic elements in their semantic structures. In particular, as we have mentioned above, here belong adjectives that are themselves grading marks of evaluation. Another group of evaluative non-comparables is formed by adjectives of indefinitely moderated quality, or, tentatively, "moderating qualifiers", such as *whitish, tepid, half-ironical, semi-detached*, etc. But the most peculiar lexemic group of non-comparables is made up by adjectives expressing the highest degree of a respective quality, which words can tentatively be called "adjectives of extreme quality", or "extreme qualifiers", or simply "extremals".

The inherent superlative semantics of extremals is emphasized by the definite article normally introducing their nounal combinations, exactly similar to the definite article used with regular collocations of the superlative degree. *Cf.*: *The ultimate* outcome of the talks was encouraging. *The final* decision has not yet been made public.

On the other hand, due to the tendency of colloquial speech to contrastive variation, such extreme qualifiers can sometimes be modified by intensifying elements. Thus, "the final decision" becomes "a very final decision"; "the ultimate rejection" turns into "rather an ultimate rejection"; "the crucial role" is made into "quite a crucial role", etc.



As a result of this kind of modification, the highest grade evaluative force of these words is not strengthened, but, on the contrary, weakened; the outwardly extreme qualifiers become degraded extreme qualifiers, even in this status similar to the regular categorial superlatives degraded in their relative use.

### **REFERENCE**

1. Dixon, R. M. W. Adjectives. In R. E. Asher (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. ISBN 0-08-035943-42. 1994.
2. Dixon, R. M. W. Adjectives. In K. Brown & T. Miller (Eds.), *Concise encyclopedia of grammatical categories*. Amsterdam: Elsevier. ISBN 0-08-043164-X. 1999
3. Warren, Beatrice. (1984). *Classifying adjectives*. Gothenburg studies in English (No. 56). Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.

