

A contrastive study of similes in English and Norwegian

A corpus-based analysis of features of the English similes *like a/an + noun*
and *as + adjective + as + noun* and their most frequent translation
correspondences in the Norwegian language

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Abstract

Within the framework of the present study, simile, which is a special kind of metaphor, is investigated both on the syntactic and conceptual levels.

The starting point of the research are two English simile frames: *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N* which are first of all established as most frequent mutual translation correspondences with the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* and *like ADJ som N*. These four structures are then further investigated in terms of vehicles they operate with: noun vehicles in all four similes and adjective vehicles in the *as ADJ and N* and *like ADJ som N*.

According to the modern theory of metaphor, developed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980, conceptual domains (or vehicles, as they are referred to in this study) are tethered to personal or cultural experiences, and therefore are different on individual and cultural level. However, in the course of this study a lot of similarity is being observed between conceptual domains (vehicles) in English and Norwegian similes which were analyzed by grouping them into categories of generic meaning. As the analysis showed, the two sets of similes in English and Norwegian most frequently operate with the same groups of noun vehicles (“nature”, “human”, “man-made objects”). The *as ADJ as N* and *like ADJ som N* similes are also found to operate most frequently with the same types of adjectives denoting evaluation, color and size.

The results of the study can be of practical significance to the developers of machine translation software, researchers in the field of phraseology, translation, contrastive studies and cross-cultural communication and development of corpora.

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List of abbreviations:

ADJ – adjective

CA – contrastive analysis

BNC – British National Corpus

BNC-BYU – British National Corpus, Brigham Young University interface

ENPC – English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus

LBK – Leksikografisk bokmålskorpus

MC – mutual correspondence

N – noun

1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

The aim of the present thesis is to perform a detailed study of two simile frames in an English-Norwegian contrastive perspective. The starting point of the research is two English similes: *like a/an N* [noun] and *as ADJ* [adjective] *as N* [noun]. The investigation is carried out on the basis of the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus, the British National Corpus and the Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål.

The questions I seek answers to are:

1. What are the most frequent translation correspondences of the English *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N* in the Norwegian language?
2. Are the English *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N* the most frequent translation correspondences for their Norwegian counterparts?
3. How high is the mutual correspondence between the most frequent translation correspondences of the two similes in English and Norwegian?
4. What is the distribution of main groups of noun vehicles in the *like a/an N* simile and how does it correspond with the distribution for its Norwegian counterpart?
5. What is the distribution of main groups of noun and adjective vehicles in the *as ADJ as N* simile and how does it correspond with the distribution for its Norwegian counterpart?

Obtaining answers to the above mentioned questions should enable me to test the following hypothesis: on the structural side English and Norwegian will display a lot of similarity in constructing a simile; however, being different language systems, they will operate with different groups of vehicles.

According to Johansson, contrastive analysis is “the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences” (2007:1). My study, which is based on three different corpora, is actually a mix of contrastive analysis and translation studies. The relationship between the two is very well described by Hoey and Houghton in their article *Contrastive analysis and translation* (1998) as bidirectional, where

“the translation of specific pieces of text may provide the data for CA [contrastive analysis]” (1998:49), while contrastive analysis in its turn “may provide explanations of difficulties encountered in translation” (ibid.). According to them, “translation as a source of data for CA is strictly unavoidable” (Ibid). In this regard Johansson also claims that:

As translation shows what elements may be associated across languages, it is fruitful to base a contrastive study on a comparison of original texts and their translations (2007:3).

The combination of both the translation and the contrastive approach in my study made it possible to analyze the two languages based on the features brought out through translations while at the same time provide me with an opportunity to supplement this analysis with insights provided by the comparative approach.

1.2 Background

In the history of every science there are turning points that revolutionize the approach and take it to the next level. I believe that the creation of corpora and the possibilities it gave to linguists and language researchers revolutionized the science of linguistics. The appearance of the first computer corpus, the Brown Corpus, in the 1960s was received with a lot of skepticism from the adherents of generative grammar – the dominating approach in linguistics developed by Noam Chomsky, which attempts to give a set of rules to correctly predict which combinations of rules will form grammatical sentences and the morphology of a sentence (Wikipedia, entry for “Generative grammar”). However, linguists of all persuasions have quickly realized what amazing research possibilities on a lot, if not to say all, levels of language the corpora provided them with. According to Charles Meyer, “corpora [...] have succeeded in opening up new areas of research and bringing new insights to traditional research questions” (2002:11). Stig Johansson, one of the key persons behind the creation of the English-Norwegian parallel corpus, connects this growing interest for corpus studies partly with “...the growing preoccupation among language researchers with the study of

language in use” and partly with “the new possibilities of analyzing large amounts of text using computers” (2004:60). The practical applications of corpora are numerous:

- Lexicography, for example, for compiling dictionaries;
- Foreign language teaching;
- Language research;
- Development of machine translation software, such as, for example, Google Translate, for which, according to Franz Josef Och, one of the key figures behind the development of this statistical machine-translation service, “...a solid base for developing a usable statistical machine translation system for a new pair of languages from scratch, would consist in having a bilingual text corpus (or parallel collection) of more than a million words and two monolingual corpora of each more than a billion words” (Wikipedia, entry for “Google Translate”)

I for one still remember my first thesis paper, my first comprehensive linguistic research, in the end of my five year study pursuing the Specialist degree in Translation and Translation Studies. It was five years ago in year 2007 and noone has heard of corpora at our faculty of foreign languages at our small University in a Russian province – Astrakhan State University. My objective was to investigate the concept of identity in the American linguoculture. After having studied corpus linguistics at the University of Oslo and having performed an extensive corpus-based language research myself, I often go back in my thoughts to that first paper and imagine what I could have done differently and how many more opportunities in my research I would have had only if I had corpora at my disposal. The methodology was somewhat similar to the methodology of the present paper and I was going to investigate everything starting from perception and ending with the lexical environment of the word “identity” in the American variety of the English language based on newspapers, periodicals and polling. Back at that time I considered myself very lucky to live in the age of computers and internet, which enabled me to create a solution for sampling research data – I signed up for the electronic editions of New York Times and Washington Post, providing me with access to their archives where I searched for occurrences of “identity” in the articles. I often think about how relevant the Corpus of Contemporary American English would have been for my research back then, how it would have enabled me to sample larger and more varied data from a lot of other newspapers and periodicals in just seconds, how it would be able to provide me with more insights by allowing to study the development of the concept of “identity” in a chronological

cut. Having this experience I can clearly see all the advantages and possibilities that corpus linguistics is adding to the toolbox of a contemporary language researcher.

1.3 Methodological approach

1.3.1 Overview of the analyses carried out

In order to be able to answer the questions posed in 1.1., I carry out the following analyses:

Analysis 1: To sample and analyze the translations of the English *like a/an N* simile into Norwegian; establish the most frequent translation correspondence. Corpus: the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus; tools: excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 2: To sample and analyze the translations of the most frequent Norwegian correspondence of the English *like a/an N* simile into English; establish the most frequent translation counterpart. Corpus: the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus; tools: excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 3: To establish mutual correspondence (cf. Altenberg 1999, and section 3.1.3) between the two constructions which have been found to be each other's most frequent translation counterparts in analyses 1 and 2, using Altenberg's formula.

Analysis 4: To sample and analyze noun group vehicles by their generic meanings in the English *like a/an N* simile; establish the most frequent groups of nouns by generic meanings being used in the simile. Corpus: the British National Corpus; tools: AntConc 3.2., excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 5: To sample and analyze noun group vehicles by their generic meanings in the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile; establish the most frequent groups of nouns by generic meanings being used in the simile. Corpus: the Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål; tools: AntConc 3.2., excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 6: To compare the results of the analyses in 4 and 5.

Analysis 7: To sample and analyze the translations of the English *as ADJ as N* simile into Norwegian; establish the most frequent translation correspondence. Corpus: the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus; tools: excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 8: To sample and analyze the translations of the most frequent Norwegian correspondence of the English *as ADJ as N* simile into English; establish the most frequent translation counterpart. Corpus: the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus; tools: excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 9: To establish mutual correspondence between the two constructions which have been found to be each other's most frequent translation counterparts in the analyses 7 and 8, using Altenberg's formula (cf. section 3.1.3).

Analysis 10: To sample and analyze adjective group vehicles by their semantic meanings in the English *as ADJ as N* simile; establish the most frequent groups of adjectives by semantic meanings being used in the simile. Corpus: the British National Corpus; tools: AntConc 3.2., excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 11: To sample and analyze adjective group vehicles by their semantic meanings in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* simile; establish the most frequent groups of adjectives by semantic meanings being used in the simile. Corpus: the Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål; tools: AntConc 3.2., excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 12: To compare the results of the analyses in 10 and 11.

Analysis 13: To sample and analyze noun group vehicles by their generic meanings in the English *as ADJ as N* simile; establish the most frequent groups of nouns by generic meanings being used in the simile. Corpus: the British National Corpus; tools: AntConc 3.2., excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 14: To sample and analyze noun group vehicles by their generic meanings in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* simile; establish the most frequent groups of nouns by generic meanings being used in the simile. Corpus: the Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål; tools: AntConc 3.2., excel spreadsheet.

Analysis 15: To compare the results of the analyses in 13 and 14.

Analysis 16: To compare the results of analysis 6 with those of analysis 15.

1.3.2 Corpora and computer-aided tools in the contrastive analysis

In my study of similes in English and Norwegian I have worked with three corpora: the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC), the British National Corpus (BNC, Brigham Young University interface) and the Lexicographic corpus of Norwegian bokmål (LBK).

Figure 1.1: The key characteristics of the corpora used in the study: ENPC, BNC and LBK

Corpus	Number of words (million)	Content					Established	Latest version
		Writ-ten	Spo-ken	Orig-inal	Trans-lated	Multi-lingual		
ENPC- The English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus	2.6	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	▪ 1994	▪ 2001
BNC- British National Corpus (BYU Interface)	100	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	▪ 1991	▪ 2007
LBK- Lexicographic corpus for Norwegian bokmål	70	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	▪ N/A	▪ In development

In this section I will describe each of the three corpora and my experience of working with them, but first of all let us take a quick look into what is actually a corpus. So what actually constitutes a corpus? In a nutshell, a corpus is an electronic collection of texts. However, an electronic library is also a collection of texts, which basically any individual can compile and use for reading. Texts compiled in a corpus, on the other hand, are not meant for reading. Corpora are meant for studying the language. In order to be able to fulfill that purpose it has to be possible to perform manipulations of them. For that purposes the texts are usually tagged by different parameters: author, genre, date, parts of speech etc. A corpus often has an inbuilt search engine, which makes it possible to search for different words or constructions in order to test hypotheses, check occurrences and validate rules of usage. Corpora can be

monolingual (for instance, the British National Corpus, or the Corpus of Contemporary American English) and multilingual (for example, the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus).

The English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus

The ENPC is an aligned parallel corpus created to enable contrastive analysis and translation studies. It contains 100 original and 100 translated texts making up 2.6 million words in total. A feature that makes the ENPC unique is that it can be used both as a translation corpus and as a comparable corpus, i.e. in the comparison of original texts from two different languages (Johansson, Ebeling and Oksefjell, 2002:5). I used the ENPC as a translation corpus, primarily because one of my goals was to establish most frequent translation correspondences of the two English simile constructions which I used as a starting point. Data from the ENPC allowed me to see how the original simile frame was changed under translation.

My experience of working with the ENPC has been positive. The tagging is accurate and the options for entering various search queries are quite numerous, allowing setting restrictions such as register (fiction or non-fiction), language, specific requirements to the searched elements in the filter box and other options such as for instance expanded context. Below are some examples of my search strings in the ENPC:

Figure 1.2: Search string for the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile frame in non-fiction texts in the ENPC

The screenshot shows the PerITCE search interface. At the top, it says 'PerITCE (PerITCE v1.06, by Lars Wilhelmsen)'. The search parameters are as follows:

- Enter search:** som
- Find s-unit:** (empty)
- Filters:** ENPC/Non-Fiction, Norwegian, Original
- Options:**
 - Hide tags:
 - Direct speech:
 - Position: 0
 - Context: 0 / 0
 - Number of hits to display per page: Default
 - Sort output by matched word:
- and/not +/- <filter>**: AND +1 en|ei|et
- and/not <filter>**: (empty)
- and/not <filter>**: (empty)
- Submit search** button

Figure 1 shows the search query used for extracting instances of the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile frame in non-fiction texts which was in the next stage complemented by the same data from fiction texts. The filter box contains a restriction requesting the corpus to search for instances of *som* which are immediately followed by an indefinite article *en*, *ei* or *et*. This search query returned 248 results, and although the results technically matched the query flawlessly, they still had to be processed manually to eliminate non-instances, such as *som en gang + verb* etc., for example:

(1N) Blomster **som en gang vokste** i min barndoms have omkranset graven, og der støtten skulle ha stått, lot jeg sette opp en ungpikakt som det gav meg en inderlig glede å tenke på at jeg ville komme til å hvile under. (ENPC, FC1)

Figure 1.3: Search string for the English *as ADJ as N* simile frame in non-fiction texts in the ENPC

The image shows a screenshot of the PerITCE search interface. The title is "PerITCE" with a subtitle "(PerITCE v1.06, by Lars Wilhelmsen)". The search query is "as". The interface includes several sections: "Enter search:" with the text "as"; "Find s-unit:" which is empty; a section with three dropdown menus: "ENPC/Non-Fiction", "English", and "Original"; an "Options:" section with checkboxes for "Hide tags" (checked) and "Direct speech" (unchecked), and input fields for "Position: 0" and "Context: 0 / 0"; a dropdown for "Number of hits to display per page: Default"; a checkbox for "Sort output by matched word:" which is unchecked; a section for "and/not +/- <filter>" with two input fields containing "|AND +2 as" and "|AND +3 a|an"; a section for "and/not <filter>" with two empty input fields; and a "Submit search" button at the bottom.

The figure above shows the search query used for extracting instances of the English *as ADJ as N* simile frame in non-fiction texts. There are two filters applied to this search:

- the first one requests the ENPC to search for all instances of *as* [random word] *as*, i.e. allowing for one random word to take place between the two,

- the second filter asks for an indefinite article *a* or *an* to occur after *as*, thus ensuring that it will be a noun (which in some cases is preceded by an adjective).

The search returned 12 matches, which were further processed to eliminate non-instances such as *as well as*, *as long as* etc.

Though studying language through translations is, as Johansson puts it, a good way to “bring out features of the individual languages that might be difficult to see otherwise” (2004:78), he has a very good point in the following:

...as translations represent a special use of the language that may differ in important ways from the language of original texts in the target language, it is important to control for translation effects (Ibid.)

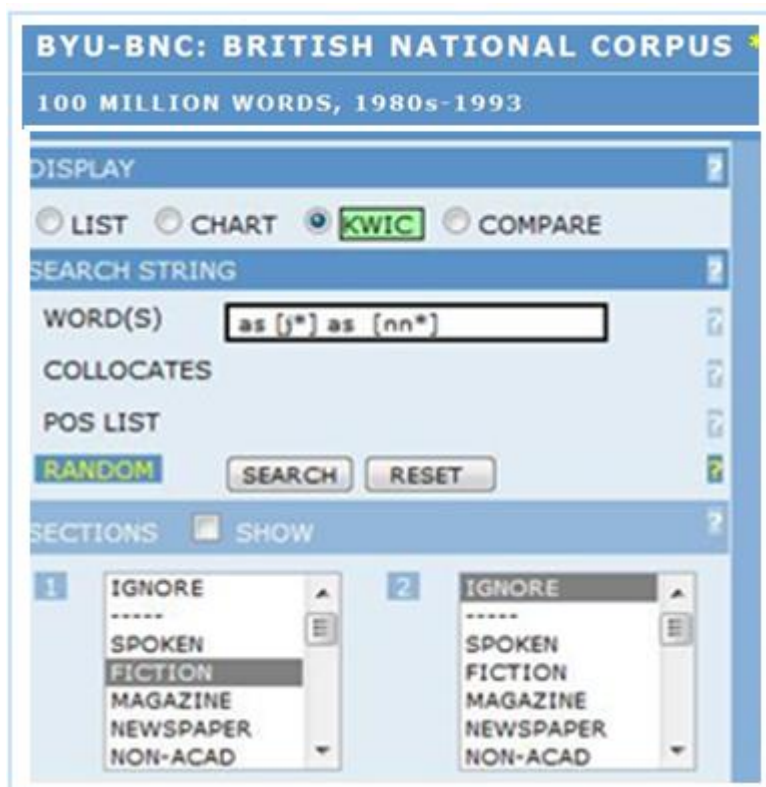
Taking into consideration a number of other limitations translation corpora have, including the fact that normally there is only one translation for each text (Johansson, 2004:64), Johansson suggests supplementing studies with translation corpora by larger monolingual corpora in order to get a more trustworthy representation of the languages under study. Following his advice, I have decided to supplement my research with samples from two monolingual corpora – English and Norwegian – in order to gain more insights into the two languages.

The British National Corpus

The second corpus that I have used in my work is the British National Corpus (BNC). The BNC is a general synchronic 100 million word monolingual corpus, containing samples of written and spoken languages from a variety of sources (1970s-1993). The corpus contains 4049 texts, the distribution between the written and the spoken parts of the corpus is 90% to 10% respectively (BNC User Reference Guide). The corpus was created to enable reference book publishing, academic linguistic research, language teaching, speech processing and information retrieval. (BNC User Reference Guide). In the BYU (Brigham Young University) interface of the BNC one can search for exact words or phrases, wildcards or parts of speech, their collocates in any combination of registers. In addition it offers four options for

displaying the results: list, chart, KWIC (key word in context) and compare words. I have chosen to work with the BNC-BYU primarily due to its free availability and the number of additional options it provides such as storing one's queries and possibility of making customized word lists, which I have found to be very useful. I have used this corpus for my analysis of noun and adjective vehicles in the simile frames under study to get information about the distribution of such vehicles by groups of generic meanings and semantic groups. The figure below exemplifies one of the searches I performed in the BNC.

Figure 1.4: Search string for the English *as ADJ as N* simile frame in fiction texts in the BNC



The Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål

The third and last corpus that I have used in the present study is the Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål (original name in Norwegian: Leksikografisk bokmålskorpus, hereafter referred to as the LBK). The LBK, which is currently under construction, as per today contains 70 million words (the target is 100 million words) from both original and translated Norwegian texts across different genres such as fiction, non-fiction, newspapers and periodicals and TV (Veiledning i bruk av Leksikografisk bokmålskorpus). The corpus offers a

number of search features, such as searching by genre, author, type of text (translation vs. original), randomizing, it allows restricting the search output to a certain number of instances etc. However, not all features are available at the moment due to the construction issues, so that for instance I was not able to restrict my search to original texts only and had to eliminate instances extracted from translated texts manually. Below is the figure showing one of my searches in the LBK:

Figure 1.5: Search string for the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* in fiction texts in the LBK

The screenshot shows the LBK search interface. At the top right, the text 'LBK' is displayed. The main search area contains a search string: 'like' followed by an 'interval:' field with 'min' and 'max' options, then 'valg >' and 'adjektive'. This is followed by another 'interval:' field with 'min' and 'max' options, then 'valg >' and 'substantiv'. There are also '+' and '-' buttons for adding or removing phrases. Below the search string are buttons for 'add phrase' and 'delete phrase'. The interface also includes options for 'Regular expressions' (unchecked), 'Search within' (set to 's'), 'Hits per page' (1000), 'Max results' (1000), 'Randomize' (checked), 'Skip tot. freq.' (checked), and 'Context' (set to 'word' with 7 characters on either side). On the right side, there are buttons for 'Search corpus', 'Reset form', 'Vis tekster', 'Lagre subkorpus', and 'Velg subkorpus'. The bottom section contains various filters for 'tittel', 'samling', 'type', 'issn/isbn', 'utgiver', 'utgivelsessted', 'utgivelsesår', 'kategori' (with a list of categories including AV0%, TV0%, SA0%, and UP0%), 'emne' (with 'SK0%: Skjønnlitteratur' selected), 'kategori (detaljer)', 'navn', 'fødested', 'type', 'kjønn', and 'fødselsår'.

AntConc3.2

In addition to the three corpora I have used AntConc3.2, a freeware concordance program by Laurence Anthony of Waseda University, Japan. AntConc provides tools to analyze word clusters, n-grams, collocates, frequencies and keywords. My objective with using AntConc was to help me sort through large amounts of data extracted from the BNC and the LBK. For example, in one of the uses I searched for 5-word clusters with *som* as a left-side collocate. Using AntConc allowed me to decrease the time required for processing the data by quickly and efficiently taking out the word clusters that I was looking for (not just being able to see

those word clusters, as for instance possible with KWIC view, but to actually take them out of the context) and subject them to further analysis and scrutiny.

Sobering facts and limitations for corpora and automated text processing

Catherine Ball in her article “Automated Text Analysis: Cautionary Tales” (1994), points out some major pitfalls of corpora and automated text analysis and advises a researcher of language to be careful and perhaps even skeptical about his/her results. I would like to give a summary of Ball’s cautionary statements, which I have also tried to take into consideration while performing my analysis:

- “...the results of the analysis hold true for the corpus, and can only be generalized to the extent that the corpus is a representative sample” (1994:295). I agree with this statement, particularly because when a corpus is compiled a lot of thought is given to its content, i.e. what is going to be included in the corpus and what is not going to be included, which basically means that the selection of texts for a corpus is to a certain degree influenced by those involved in this selection process.
- “...it is vital to consider the sampling methods employed and whether the samples are likely to be representative with respect to the phenomena under investigation” (Ibid.) One could not perhaps agree more with this statement – sampling methods are crucial indeed and one has to be fully aware of the limitations the chosen methods impose on one’s data. In my study I tried to stay fully aware of such limitations at all times and interpret my results with a grain of salt. At the same time such limitations are unavoidable, if not to say necessary, because otherwise we would just try to square the circle. My samples in the present research bear the following limitations: first of all I had to restrict my search strings to a preposition (for example, *like* for English, *som* for Norwegian) followed by an indefinite article. The advantage that this restriction provided me with was that it secured a noun following the article (although in some cases preceded by an adjective), thus extracting instances that matched the simile structure I was looking for: *like a/an noun*. On the other hand, I always have to keep in mind what I have missed out – all the instances of similes where *like* is followed by a definite article or a noun in a plural form or without an article. Another limitation is the choice of register. For example, I have dealt with fiction and non-fiction for the translation corpus and only fiction for analyzing the distribution of vehicles by generic

meanings and semantic groups in the monolingual corpora. For a deeper investigation it would clearly be beneficial to include spoken language into the sample. However not all corpora include this genre, for example the ENPC does not have it, hence it is a limitation. A third limitation is the sample size. In the case of the ENPC the corpus size is a limitation in itself being only 2.6 mill words, so that in sampling data from that corpus I had to go for everything I could get. When working with larger corpora, such as the BNC and the LBK I have tried to come up with a sample size that would first of all be as representative as possible, while at the same time reasonable in terms of being possible to process manually. So my solution in this regard was to extract 1000 random instances for each of the searches. All in all, I have analyzed over 5000 instances of simile from all the three corpora or, to be precise, 5288.

- "...precision errors often lead to a narrowing of the search criteria, which in turn may lead to a decrease in recall" (Ibid.). This indeed is an issue, and my research is not an exception. Corpora of our day and age, though a significant technical progress has been made since Catherine Ball wrote her article almost 20 years ago, are not, and perhaps will never be "trained" to recognize idiomaticity in a language and retrieve samples which contain such idiomaticity. In the case of my study for instance, though the corpora's search engines accurately retrieved precisely what I asked for, i.e. a preposition followed by an indefinite article, which is as close as we can describe a simile in more technical terms rather than linguistic, the samples still contained non-instances of the type. The clearest example in this regard is perhaps the case of extracted instance of *like a cup* type, which is flawless in terms of matching the search criteria, however it is irrelevant for my study, because as the expanded context showed, in 99% of cases it was a part of such phrase as *would you like a cup of coffee*. After manual processing of the search outputs, out of 5288 instances originally retrieved from the three corpora only 2418 instances or 46 % were found relevant and could be studied further.

In the end of the article Ball comes to the conclusion that even taking into consideration all these limitations one should not be discouraged to use various tools for automated text analysis, however, she suggests that "they be used with a full awareness of their limitations, and that they be coupled with or replaced by manual methods when appropriate" (1994:301). Following her advice, I have supplemented my methodology by creating an excel file to additionally process my search outputs. This tool was very helpful for a number of purposes:

sorting out and elimination of non-instances of the type, including elimination of instances from translated texts extracted from the LBK, and automated statistical calculations which were later used as input for graphical representations of the results.

Figure 1.6: Summary of experiences of working with the ENPC, the BNC and the LBK

Corpus	Pros	Cons
ENPC- The English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurate tagging ▪ Translation counterpart for all text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complex search string syntax ▪ Lack of spoken texts ▪ Limited (2.6 mill. words)
BNC- British National Corpus (BYU Interface)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive (100 mill. words) ▪ Fast computation time ▪ Flexible, e.g., 4 ways to display the results in the BYU interface (List), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monolingual
LBK- Lexicographic corpus for Norwegian bokmål	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive (70 mill. words) ▪ Easy to define search strings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impossible to filter original text ▪ Monolingual ▪ Slow computation (often hangs)

2 Theoretical background

This chapter provides the theoretical background for my research.

In the first part of this chapter (2.1) I discuss the relationship between simile and metaphor, which for many decades has been a much debated issue in linguistics and the philosophy of language, while in the second part (2.2) I look into different theories of metaphor reflecting the approaches to its study undertaken in various periods of time. Understanding the relationship between simile and metaphor before discussing theories of metaphor is necessary because it explains how theories of metaphor are relevant with regard to simile.

2.1 Relationship between simile and metaphor

Even though simile is a much less investigated means of figurative language than metaphor, the two go hand in hand in that by studying one we are in a way studying the other one at the same time. Both metaphor and simile are forms of comparison, which means that both have a third element with which something is compared. The most basic difference between them lies in how the comparison is carried out; simile usually operates with such specific markers as “like a”, “as...a”, “as...as a” etc., while metaphor can be created both with such markers and without them. Generally speaking, a simile is a metaphor, but not all metaphors are similes.

Metaphor is a broader term. In a literal sense metaphor is “an imaginative way of describing something by referring to something else which is the same in a particular way. For example, if you want to say that someone is very shy and frightened of things, you might say that they are a mouse” (Collins Cobuild, 2008). From a philosophical point of view, metaphor is the way of perceiving and shaping the world around us.

The opposition between metaphor and simile was first established by Aristotle. He suggested that the two patterns differ rather insignificantly, though he himself preferred the former one:

The simile, as has been said before, is a metaphor, differing from it only in the way it is put; and just because it is longer it is less attractive. [<http://rhetoric.eserver.org/aristotle/rhet3-10.html>]

The understanding of metaphor as an elliptical or compressed simile is common even in our day and age. As David Cooper says, similes are metaphors with the only difference that they use words such as “like” and “as” (Cooper, 1986:184). In other words, a simile makes the comparison explicit.

The associations that arise when we compare one object to another are rather individual, they are developed and reinforced under the influence of one’s background knowledge, specific worldview and intentions. This idea was convincingly proved by Edmund Husserl, a famous philosopher, in his *Logical investigations*, where he says that “perception is an act that determines, but does not embody meaning” (Husserl, 2001:198). As a rule, we cannot identify all the aspects of metaphorical meaning that become prominent in each particular case, which does not allow us to oppose metaphor to simile.

Although Donald Davidson polemicizes with the idea that metaphor is an elliptic simile, he agrees that metaphor and its corresponding simile convey the same meaning:

We can learn much about what metaphors mean by comparing them with similes, for a simile tells us, in part, what a metaphor merely nudges us into noting. Suppose Coneril had said, thinking of Lear, “Old fools are like babes again”; then she would have used the words to assert a similarity between old fools and babes. What she did say, of course, was “Old fools are babes again,” thus using the words to intimate what the simile declared. Thinking along these lines may inspire another theory of the figurative or special meaning of metaphors: the figurative meaning of a metaphor is the literal meaning of the corresponding simile (Davidson, 1991:498).

Davidson develops this theory saying that:

The simile says there is a likeness and leaves it to us to pick out some common feature or features; the metaphor does not explicitly assert a likeness, but if we accept it as a metaphor, we are again led to seek common features (not necessarily the same features the associated simile suggests; but that is another matter) (Davidson, 1991:500).

The fundamental idea that Davidson advocates in his work *What metaphors mean* is that the meaning of a metaphor is equal to the meaning of the words used in it, i.e. metaphors do not

contain any figurative meaning but only a literal one. This proposition allows him to state that,

The most obvious semantic difference between simile and metaphor is that all similes are true and most metaphors are false. The earth is like a floor, the Assyrian did come down like a wolf on the fold, because everything is like everything. But turn these sentences into metaphors, and you turn them false; the earth is like a floor, but it is not a floor ... (Davidson, 1991:501).

However, there is another understanding of relations between metaphors and similes. Max Black called the aforementioned theory “a comparison view of metaphor” while he himself adopted “an interaction view”. The latter is bound to advocate a complex system of unfolding the meaning hidden in a metaphor which does not *always* add up to the literal meaning of the words. Thus Black tends to distinguish between metaphor and simile, saying that the former only *implies* some meaning while the other, being a literal paraphrase, *explicitly states* the meaning and therefore is rather boring. However, he admitted that “the line between some metaphors and some similes is not a sharp one” (Black, 1954:285).

John Searle, who has dedicated much of his work to the study of language and speech acts, comes to the conclusion that both the “comparison view” and the “interaction view” are inadequate to provide a proper understanding of metaphor. However, he tends to differentiate between metaphor and simile. To prove his point he states that:

1. there are many metaphors that do not correlate with similes in meaning;
2. even if such correlation can be established, the “truth conditions” in a metaphorical statement and the corresponding similarity statement would be different (Searle, 1979:80)

In his analysis of the polemics between the two fundamental theories of metaphor and simile, Searle goes even further and comes to distinguishing between “figurative similes” and “literal statements of similarity”:

Figurative similes need not necessarily commit the speaker to a literal statement of similarity (Searle, 1979:91)

As we can see, there are many views on the nature of metaphors and similes, and there is apparently no uniform definition of either. I myself tend to believe that similes are part of metaphorical constructions and that they have some structural and semantic peculiarities in conveying metaphorical meaning. It is not metaphor that should be comprehended as some type of elliptical simile, but simile should be counted among various metaphorical constructions.

The most obvious difference between the two lies in the parallel “implicit – explicit”, while metaphor is an implied comparison between two unlike things, a simile is an explicit one.

According to Moon, similes are “essentially frames with fossilized lexis” (1998:150). Fiedler classifies them as “stereotyped comparisons”, which are “structurally fixed and conditional” (2007:43). Fiedler distinguishes between two major frames of the “stereotyped comparisons”: “(as) + adjective + as + noun phrase” and “(verb) + like + noun phrase”, where “the intensifying figurative noun phrases may vary” (Ibid.).

Kay Wikberg provides a more accurate definition of simile which also takes into account the difference between simile and metaphor:

A simile can be defined as a figurative expression used to make an explicit comparison of two unlike things by means of the prepositions *like*, (*as*) ... *as* or the conjunctions *as*, *as if*, *as though*. (Wikberg, 2008:128)

According to Patrizia Pierini (2007:21), simile is used in the discourse just as much as metaphor. Pierini with reference to Fromilhague (1995) describes similes as figures of speech with a “tripartite structure” comprised of:

”topic”, or comparandum, (the entity described by the simile); ”vehicle”, or comparatum, (the entity to which the topic is compared), accompanied by a comparison marker; ”similarity feature(s)” (the properties shared by topic and vehicle), which can be expressed explicitly or left unsaid. (Pierini, 2007:23).

The approach that I have adopted in this thesis is that similes are metaphors with syntactic markers, such as *like a*, *as...a*, *as if* etc. These markers make it much easier to identify all the instances of the use of similes in the corpus while it may become a bit of a problem for the analogous study of metaphors since the latter ones cannot easily be searched for and thus require a different method of elicitation.

To sum up, there are two main differences between metaphor and simile:

1. simile is a structurally fixed construction,
2. simile makes an explicit comparison, while metaphor makes an implicit one.

As for my personal view, simile is a metaphor which is much more convenient in terms of its study through corpora. Metaphor suffers from lack of investigation through various corpora because it is rather difficult to think of a suitable search string that would capture it. Simile data, on the other hand, can be adequately sampled in the corpora. Basing ourselves on the idea that simile represents a special type of metaphor, we can conclude that by conducting a corpus study of simile we are at the same time investigating metaphor.

2.2 Theories of metaphor

2.2.1 Aristotle: metaphor is the property of words

The roots of metaphor as a notion take us back more than 2000 years. The origin of the term is assigned to Aristotle and is connected to his understanding of art as imitation of life. From Greek the word “metaphor” translates as “transfer” (Dictionary.com). The definition of metaphor by Aristotle is as follows:

Metaphor is the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion. (Aristotle, Poetics, Part XXI, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.mb.txt>)

In other words, Aristotle's metaphor is a comparison of two things which are alien, or unrelated, to each other. It is a conceptual phenomenon which is a result of manipulation of different types.

It was also Aristotle who was the first to emphasize the importance of mastering metaphor for becoming a great public speaker. In his *Poetics* we read:

...the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances. (Aristotle, *Poetics*, Part XXI, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.mb.txt>)

Aristotle, the forefather of metaphor as a concept, laid the foundation for a powerful tradition of metaphor which has been dominating for thousands of years. This tradition is known as classic. It rests on type hierarchy (genus to species, species to genus, etc.) and views metaphor not as a part of everyday human communication, but rather as a privilege of public speakers.

2.2.2 Lakoff and Johnson: metaphor is the property of concepts

Aristotle's, or the classic, view of metaphor as a device reserved for rhetoric was finally challenged by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980. In their shared work *Metaphors we live by* they treat metaphor as being part of daily language and thought. This approach to metaphor has become known as the cognitive approach. Sometimes it is also referred to as the modern approach.

In a way Lakoff and Johnson's work is a Copernican turn in the theory of metaphor as it has changed the focus from metaphor as a property of words to metaphor as the property of concepts. It means that metaphors are not only literary patterns but ways in which we perceive the world around us. Lakoff and Johnson were brought together by the common interest in metaphor and quickly discovered that they both found the traditional views of metaphor unsatisfactory. Johnson for one had obtained evidence that metaphor is widely used in everyday life and thought of ordinary people, not just of those for whom the art of writing or

giving public speeches is a profession. Thus, their major argument is that the process of human thinking is largely metaphorical in itself.

By changing the focus of how metaphor is viewed, Lakoff and Johnson at the same time expanded its definition – it has become more than just a figure of speech. They have convincingly proved that metaphor is integrated in the speakers' perception of the world.

All in all, their theory of conceptual, or cognitive, metaphors rests on the following arguments (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003: 4-14):

- 1) metaphors are a part of everyday life, thought and experience;
- 2) metaphors are an inevitable and unconscious part of the process of human thinking;
- 3) metaphors provide a foundation for our conceptual system, it is a property of concepts rather than words;
- 4) metaphors are widely used in the life of ordinary people, most of the time without them even noticing it;
- 5) abstract concepts, such as *love*, *argument*, *idea* etc., are incomplete without metaphor even though they have a literal core.

In their work Lakoff and Johnson categorize conceptual metaphors (which are, following their approach, represented by capital letters in the present work) as structural, orientational and ontological. They speak of structural metaphors when “one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003:15). For example, we can comprehend an aspect of arguing in terms of battle: Your claims are *indefensible*; He *attacked every weak point* in my argument; His criticisms were *right on target* etc. (Ibid: 5).

Oriental metaphors are called so because most of them have to do with spatial orientation. They are “the kind of metaphorical concept that organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another”. Thus, we can say that HAPPINESS IS UP (I'm feeling *up*; My spirits *rose*; You're in *high* spirits etc.) while SADNESS IS DOWN (I'm feeling *down*; I'm *depressed*; My spirits *sank* etc.) (Ibid: 15-16).

Finally, ontological metaphors are “ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances”: INFLATION IS AN ENTITY (We need to *combat inflation*; *Inflation makes me sick* etc.) (Ibid: 26-27).

Another claim made by Lakoff and Johnson is that metaphors are created on the basis of personal and cultural experience and to know a metaphor one has to have the same experience or knowledge as the creator of the metaphor. They write:

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003:5)

This statement is sometimes interpreted as saying that an adequate perception of a metaphor by the receiver is impossible without having the same set of conceptual mappings. Based on my education and experience in translation and cross-cultural communication I agree with this view. Contrastive studies of languages also provide some supporting evidence. Very often translating idiomatic language from one culture to another requires, or recommends, transformation. The most obvious reason for this is that a translator always tries to adapt the idiomaticity of one culture to another in order for it to be adequately perceived by the target audience. When this happens, an idiomatic concept can be said to be reloaded with a new experience, recharged with new concepts, which are closer and clearer to the audience. Let us now take a look at an example from the ENPC with English and Norwegian as source and target languages, respectively:

(2E) She came rushing out of the house screaming **like a banshee** and set her wretched husband off in sympathy. (ENPC, MW1)

(3N) Hun stormet ut av huset mens hun skrek **som et vilt dyr** og satte i gang sympatireaksjoner hos mannen. (ENPC, MW1T)

As we can see, the comparative element, or in Lakoff and Johnson's terms – base domain, “banshee” in the original English text was by the translator rendered as “vilt dyr” (wild animal/beast). As to reasons for such a rendition we could perhaps speculate that it was somehow necessary in order for the simile to perform its communicative purpose and be adequately perceived by the Norwegian target audience. As banshee, a female spirit in Irish

mythology, is usually seen as an omen of death,¹ it has more chances of being adequately perceived by an English-speaking reader. We can make a highly probable supposition that this cultural point represents a lacuna to a Norwegian perceiver, thus its "wild animal" counterpart in the Norwegian translation has basically served the same purpose and helped avoiding confusion.

The work of Lakoff and Johnson is considered to be the major break-through which at the same time revived the interest in metaphor. First of all, it suggested a new approach to defining metaphor. Secondly, it showed that metaphor is the basis of language and thought, and not just language, and should be studied interdisciplinarily. Finally, the significance of this work is also suggested by the fact that it has established the second traditional view of metaphor after Aristotle.

Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor is particularly interesting in the context of my thesis because one of my main hypotheses is that in constructing a simile, different language systems operate with different groups of vehicles, or what Lakoff and Johnson would call a "base domain". This hypothesis is tested on two languages, English and Norwegian.

2.2.3 Other views: Richards, Goatly, Kovecses, Ortony and Steen

However, the field also has other major contributors, including Ivor Richards, Andrew Goatly, Zoltan Kovecses, Andrew Ortony and Gerard J. Steen, the views of whom will be discussed briefly below.

Ivor Richards' definition of metaphor as a comparison between two things which is accomplished by "carrying over of a word from its normal use to a new use" (Richards, 1929:221) supports the traditional classic view of metaphor. However, it was he who first tried to expand the terminological side of the theory. In particular, he suggested a useful set of terms for elements by which a metaphor operates: topic (tenor), vehicle and ground. Tenor is the thing that the metaphoric word or phrase refers to, while vehicle is the metaphoric word or phrase. In the metaphor "The man is a lion" the tenor is "the man" and the vehicle is "a lion". Ground is the quality that one refers to when using a particular vehicle in relation to the tenor.

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/banshee>

It means that if we call somebody “a lion” we may want to stress their braveness, fierceness or voracious appetite etc. (courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellibst/lsl21.html).

Goatly's *The Language of metaphors* (1997) is his attempt to find the middle ground for metaphor study, which until then was viewed from the positions of either a generative or functional tradition. His ambition is to develop “a functionally oriented linguistic theory of metaphor which cross-fertilizes pragmatic theory with the Hallidayan analysis of register, to produce a more adequate model for metaphorical interpretation in particular, and communication in general” (Goatly, 1997:4). In applying this approach, Goatly shows that metaphor and language are closely connected, but should be viewed in contrast with metaphor and thought.

Kovecses undertakes a study of metaphors in terms of their universality for all people. While some metaphors are derived from culture and may require some research in order to be understood, others seem to be understood and accepted in other cultures without any problems. In *Metaphor: A practical introduction*, the author (Zoltan Kovecses) raises a very interesting question: are there conceptual metaphors that are universal for all cultures and languages? Kovecses draws parallels between English, Chinese and Hungarian, which represent three unrelated languages and cultures, and finds out that the concept of HAPPINESS employs such concepts as UP, LIGHT and A FLUID IN A CONTAINER in all of them, thus following Lakoff and Johnson in terms of conceptual mappings. Strikingly, all the three languages seem to “...conceptualize happiness metaphorically in such similar ways” (Kovecses, 2002:165). He suggests the following reasons for this:

- 1) it is accidental;
- 2) this is a result of language borrowings;
- 3) the appearance of similar metaphors in cultures is encouraged by some “universal motivation” (Ibid).

Kovecses himself supports the third view and carries on looking for common conceptual ground in other languages as well.

Kovecses's hypothesis implies that conceptual metaphors have common conceptual grounds in many cultures. While adding to Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphors being tethered to experiences, personal or cultural, it at the same time contradicts it, implying

that conceptual metaphors are based on universal drivers and are thus equally received within cultures.

According to Kovecses, each metaphor has three levels at which it can be analyzed: the “supraindividual” level, the individual and the “subindividual” ones. The “supraindividual” level is based on the conventionalized metaphorical expressions of any language that can be collected from dictionaries, thesauri, books, magazines, newspapers etc. Kovecses claims that most of the linguistic studies of metaphor are conducted at this very level.

Analyzing the interdependence of the “supraindividual” and the individual levels, Kovecses raises a rather interesting question: do all the conventionalized metaphors really exist in the minds of individual speakers? To answer this question Kovecses cites Ray Gibbs who conducted a psycholinguistic research on metaphors (1990). Gibbs asked people to form mental images of different anger-related idioms. In the majority of cases people described anger as a hot fluid in a container that explodes because of too much pressure in it. This finding convincingly proved the existence of conventional metaphors in people’s conceptual systems.

However, there is no complete match between the “supraindividual” and the individual levels. Kovecses hypothesizes that this comes from the fact that the individual level is not only the level at which people use the conventional metaphors that are appropriate in a given situation, but also the one at which individuals can create metaphors of their own (Ibid: 305-308).

The “subindividual” level, as Kovecses sees it, is exactly the level at which

... the conceptualization of a conceptual domain (the target) by means of another conceptual domain (the source) is made natural and motivated for speakers (Ibid).

In other words, the “subindividual” level is the “location” of the universal drivers that motivate our understanding of metaphors taken from no matter what language. Kovecses states that one of the most obvious drivers is the one that deals with human physiology. He says:

Bodily experiences are often correlated with certain abstract or subjective experiences which give rise to conceptual metaphors that we find natural and well motivated (Kovecses, 2002:309).

To illustrate his point, Kovecses uses the example of ANGER IS A HOT FLUID metaphor. He cites the studies conducted in this field (Ekman et al., 1983) which show that many abstract domains such as emotions are often associated with various bodily changes.

For example, anger has been shown to be correlated with an increase in skin temperature, blood pressure, and other autonomic nervous system (ANS) activities. These changes make anger different from other emotions, which are characterized by a different ANS profile. These studies provide independent (i.e., nonlinguistic) motivation for the existence of the ANGER IS A HOT FLUID metaphor... (Kovecses, 2002:310).

However, this does not imply that all conceptual metaphors are motivated by human experience. Many of them have their motivation from “perceived structural similarity” and objective similarity, as Kovecses puts it. These two types of motivation can complement each other. But we should not forget that each culture has its unique view of the world and, thus, the “subindividual” level of metaphor is only partially universal, concludes the scholar.

Andrew Ortony emphasizes the connection between metaphor and thought. In his work *Metaphor and Thought* he presents various opinions of different scholars (Black, Lakoff, Searle, Paivio and Walsh etc.) about metaphors and expresses his own view on some of the issues. For instance, he contemplates on the role of such features in metaphors and similes as integration, relation and similarity. He writes:

Similarity is involved because the two terms in a metaphor share attributes. Relation is implicated, because a metaphor may take advantage of common relations, and also because of its involvement in integration. Integration is significant because of the emergence of something new, presumably a result of integrating certain aspects of the parts (Ortony, 2002:342).

As Ortony sees it, similarity is the most important concept of the three. He also adds that, from his point of view, the concept of integration presents a much underdeveloped issue while the one of relation gets more attention than it really deserves. The integration “gives rise to a gestaltlike representation” (Ibid:343) or, in other words, it represents the disparate parts of a metaphor as a coherent whole. The big question about the integration concerns its nature – whether it is rooted in the imagery system or in the linguistic one. It may seem rather logical that the integration is processed in the imagery system, but if so, where do the abstract concepts that have practically no image-evoking value lie? They should be processed primarily in the linguistic system but this does not always achieve coherence of the disparate parts.

Speaking of the concept of relation, Ortony criticizes Paivio and Walsh’s approach. In his chapter *The Role of Similarity in Similes and Metaphors* we read:

Relation, without doubt, plays a role in metaphors, as it does in language in general, but I am not convinced that the distinction between similarity metaphors and proportional metaphors, which Paivio and Walsh raise, is a very fruitful one, in spite of its illustrious origins. When metaphors involve common relations, as they do in proportional metaphors, their essential structure seems to be the same as that of similarity metaphors. Typically, similarity metaphors have two terms – the first term, often called the *topic*; and the second term, often called the *vehicle*. A similarity metaphor such as “The man is a sheep”, gains its currency from the fact that there is something in common between the topic (man) and the vehicle (sheep). In a proportional metaphor the only difference is that the topic and the vehicle refer to relations rather than to objects. Thus, relations are no more nor less important to the nature of metaphors than are objects (Ortony, 2002:343).

Gerard J. Steen in his *Finding Metaphor in Grammar and Usage* makes an attempt to create a methodological guide on how to distinguish, collect and analyze metaphors in language. Basing himself on the cognitive approach, Steen especially emphasizes the difference between grammar and language usage.

Steen claims that English grammar has a lot of “resources” for metaphor. He illustrates his point, saying:

This [metaphor] may be found at all levels of linguistic organization: morphology (*brain-drain, frogman*), vocabulary (*defend, attack, support*), phraseology (*treading the water, holding your breath*), and more schematic constructions (such as the conventionalized metaphorical use of ditransitives, as in *He gave me a headache*) (Steen, 2007:5).

As for finding metaphors in usage, Steen makes a reservation that distinguishing between grammar and usage is rather difficult because “grammar is derived from usage” (Ibid:6). However, he states that usage can create novel metaphors, drawing the example of the word *tsunami*.

... a conventional metaphorical expression for a great quantity in English is *floods*, but when the terrible tsunami had hit a great part of Asia in 2004, it did not take long for *floods* to be replaced by *tsunami* as a more vivid expression in many instances of language use, revitalizing the conventional metaphorical idea that may have motivated it. A Dutch newspaper report on a film festival, for instance, signaled “a tsunami of documentaries” within two weeks of the disaster itself (Ibid.).

This brief and selective outline of metaphor theories that emerged at different periods of time shows the vigorous development of metaphor studies. While some issues remain debatable, there is one thing everyone seems to agree upon – metaphor is no longer just a linguistic matter. Contemporary research on metaphor now spans across philosophy, cognitive linguistic, psychology and many other fields of science. As Gibbs puts it in his preface to *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, “the state of art in metaphor studies is a rich, colorful mosaic of ideas and research activities” (Gibbs, 2008:12).

3 Analysis

This chapter presents a detailed study of two simile frames in an English-Norwegian contrastive perspective. The starting point of the research is two English similes: *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N*.

I first of all establish the most frequent Norwegian counterparts for both of the structures by studying their translations from English into Norwegian, then I study the most frequent Norwegian correspondences by analyzing them and their English translations, and finally I analyze the noun and adjective vehicles in both Norwegian and English constructions. My main hypothesis is that a) on the structural side English and Norwegian will display a lot of similarity in constructing a simile, however b) being different language systems, they will operate with different groups of vehicles, or what Lakoff and Johnson would call a “base domain”. With regard to a) I, for example, expect that the most frequent translation counterpart of the English *like a/an N* in Norwegian will be *som en/ei/ et N*. With regard to b) I believe that *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N* will operate with noun vehicles different from those with which their Norwegian correspondences will operate.

3.1 Contrastive analysis of the English *like a/an N* simile

This section deals with the analysis of the English *like a/an N* simile, its translation into Norwegian, translation of its most frequent Norwegian correspondence into English and analysis of noun group vehicles in both English and Norwegian pair of similes (cf. Analysis 1-6, as outlined in section 1.3.1).

3.1.1 Translation of the English *like a/an N* simile into Norwegian

To begin with, I performed a search of *like a/an N* similes in the ENPC, both the fiction and non-fiction parts. My search query left me with 250 occurrences from fiction texts and 56 occurrences from non-fiction texts.

Then I processed all of the examples manually – I had to carefully read each of them and decide whether they qualify as similes or not. As it turned out, out of 306 original hits 285 instances turned out to be similes. I decided to investigate both the so-called simple similes (3-gram similes that have a single noun as a vehicle) and elaborated similes (multi-gram similes with extended nominal groups).

Most of the cases found in the ENPC easily fall into one category or the other, see examples below:

(3E) "You look **like a gypsy**," he says at last. (ENPC, ABR1) – **Simple simile**

(4E) Edward was standing upright now and clinging to Macon's knees, **like a toddler scared of nursery school**. (ENPC, AT1) – **Elaborated simile**

I also decided to improve my initial classification of simple and elaborated similes. After a thorough observation, I came to the conclusion that simple similes are not necessarily the ones that have a single noun as a right-side collocate of “like a/an”, but the ones that do not have an attribute to the noun. Let us have a look at some examples to clarify this.

(5E) In fact, by the end of the story — or as much of it as I'm in a position to tell — Natalie was looking less like a heroine and more **like a call girl**, but that 's life, isn't it? (ENPC, FW1)

(6E) With her centre-parted hair drawn back into a slide at her neck, with her small pale mouth and rounded cheeks, Lily looked **like a Charlotte Brontë governess** and dressed as if immolation were her personal choice. (ENPC, DF1)

First of all, if we compare examples (5E) and (6E), we will see that both of them have more than one word after “like a/an” and at first sight it may seem that in both situations we have a

head noun and an attribute to it (meaning a word that characterizes the noun): *a call girl, a Charlotte Brontë governess*. However, the principal difference between the two would be that the first phrase can be found as a whole in a dictionary, which means that, roughly speaking, the two words function as a compound, as one meaningful unit, while the second collocation is absolutely occasional and is not found in English monolingual dictionaries:

Call girl *noun* a female prostitute who accepts appointments by telephone (Oxford Dictionary, 2005).

Thus, I interpret the simile in example (5E) as simple and the one in example (6E) as elaborated. Some other instances illustrating my point would be:

(7E) Perhaps in a worn coat and a knitted hat **like a tea cosy**, sitting on a curb, with two plastic bags filled with her only possessions, muttering to herself. (ENPC, MA1)

Tea cosy *noun* a thick or padded cover placed over a teapot to keep the tea hot (Oxford Dictionary, 2005).

(8E) The bat slashed and bit at him, slicing open the skin of the dog's sensitive muzzle in a long, curving wound that was shaped **like a question mark**. (ENPC, SK1)

Question mark *noun* a punctuation mark (?) indicating a question (Oxford Dictionary, 2005).

All in all, I have found twelve analogous extracts that I have classified as simple similes, though they contain more than one word after “like a/an”.

Another point that I would like to make regarding my classification of simple and elaborated similes is illustrated in examples (9E) and (10E):

(9E) They were a match: both tall, generously built, dark **like a pair of gypsies**, always in colourful clothes. (ENPC, DL1)

(10E) It was **like a kind of magic**, turning shit into gold, or so she now tells us. (ENPC, MD1)

These similes I have also classified as simple ones but on different grounds than the previous examples. From my point of view, in these two cases we cannot speak of elaborated similes because the union words *pair* and *kind* directly following *like a/an* become meaningless if we cut off the rest after them - we will not be able to understand what is being compared to what: *like a pair*, *like a kind*. The meaning, the image, so to say the essence of the similes is kept in the head nouns *gypsies* and *magic* which can operate in the similes independently, so we can say *like gypsies* and *like magic*.

As for elaborated similes, they can be of indefinable size – up to a whole clause:

(11E) She felt **like a cobra which has swallowed a donkey and finds it too large to digest and too awkward to spit out**. (ENPC, FW1)

However, we should not confuse a simple simile that has some additional information given as a specification with an elaborated one:

(12E) Natalie carried some kind of female aura around with her; she carried it **like a suitcase**: it was fixed to her and yet not part of her, a burden and a delight. (ENPC, FW1)

In this example, the information that is given after the colon, is not part of the simile, though it is related to the collocate *suitcase*. So, it is a simple simile. Comparing examples (11E) and (12E), we observe that the simile *like a suitcase* presents an independent image, while *like a cobra* would evoke different associations rather than *like a cobra which has swallowed a donkey and finds it too large to digest and too awkward to spit out*.

While working with the data provided by the ENPC I noticed some extracts that contained two simple or two elaborated similes – examples (13E) and (14E) respectively, some extracts that contained both a simple and an elaborated simile – example (15E) and some extracts that were taken from the same source text and that used the same simile – examples (16E) and (17E).

(13E) When she marched — Miss Trunchbull never walked, she always marched **like a stormtrooper** with long strides and arms swinging — when she marched along a corridor you could actually hear her snorting as she went, and if a group of children happened to be in her path, she ploughed right on through them **like a tank**, with small people bouncing off her to left and right. (ENPC, RD1)

(14E) Shaped **like an E without the central crosspiece**, or **like a rectangle missing one long side**, the house stood unadorned beyond this great plain of stone. (ENPC, RR1)

(15E) I felt I might cry for ever, whereupon Stu shouted "Wensleydale!" and I just howled some more, **like a jackal**, **like a pathetic pye-dog**. (ENPC, JB1)

(16E) Soon after Gill met him — that 's my wife, Gillian — she said to me, "You know, your friend talks **like a dictionary**." (ENPC, JB1)

(17E) Then Gillian said that thing about Oliver talking **like a dictionary**, and he did his scene on the beach and we all laughed. (ENPC, JB1)

These observations are important when counting the number of similes for the statistics. Thus, example (13E) would count as two simple similes and example (14E) as two elaborated ones, similarly with example (15E) – it would count as one simple and one elaborated simile.

I would also like to comment on some more examples:

(18E) I pictured the postman, emptying out his mail pouch like a wastepaper basket, escaping on foot then before the inhabitants of the building swarmed over him like bugs. (ENPC, SG1)

In example (18E) we find two simple similes: *like a wastepaper basket* and *like bugs*. The first one is classified as a simple simile because *a wastepaper basket* is a set phrase that is found in English dictionaries. The second one – *like bugs* – though formally it does not fall into the category of *like a/an N* simile, it is a modification of it, with the only proviso that it uses the plural of *a bug*. I have decided to include this simile in my research.

(19E) But on good days it still feels like a vacation, an evasion. (ENPC, MA1)

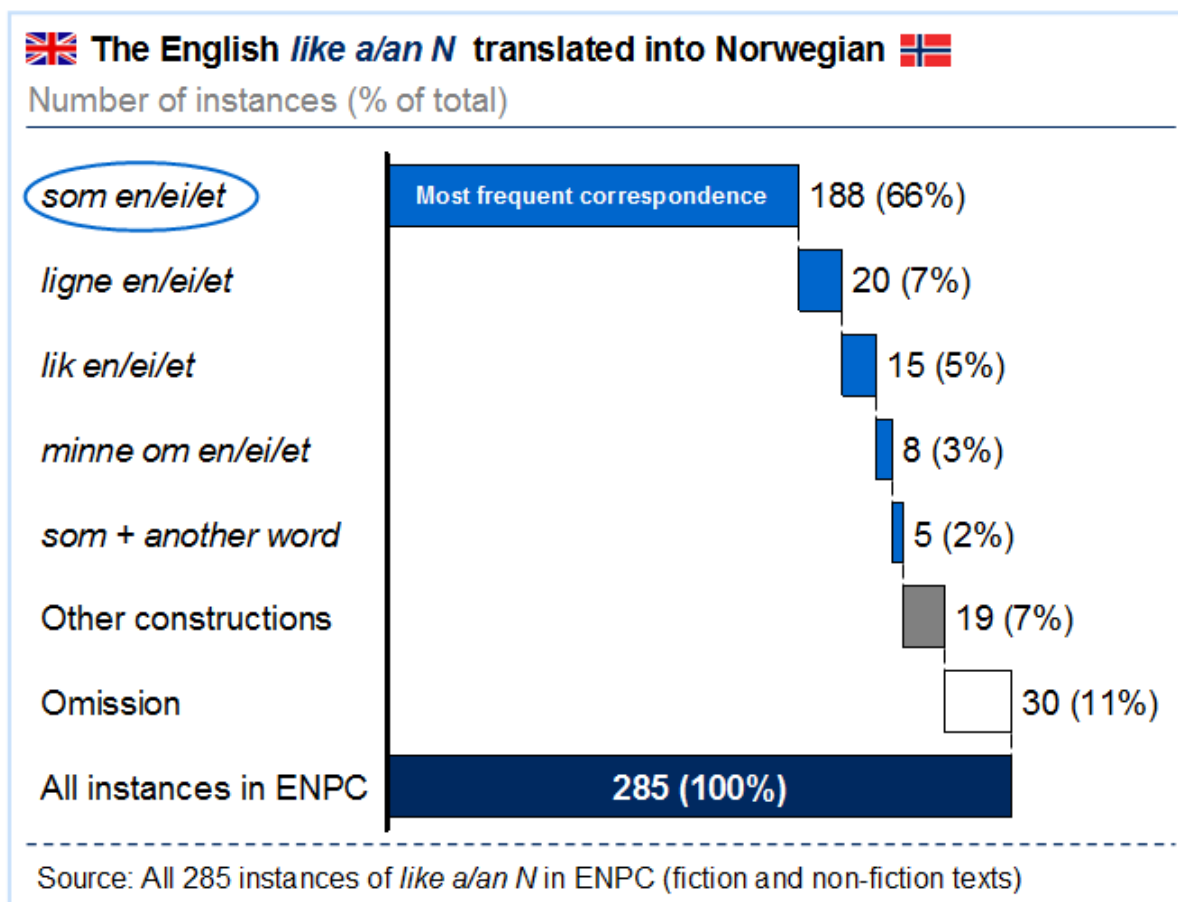
Example (19E) also contains two simple similes, though in the second case the word *like* is omitted. However, the understood simile is *like an evasion*.

Finally, I have to mention the cases where, despite the formal compliance with *the like a/an N* construction, we do not deal with a simile and therefore do not include such instances in the investigation, e.g. in example (20E) where *like* is a verb rather than the preposition *like*.

(20E) Well, maybe "blossom" is an exaggeration, but I told Gillian one or two of Oliver's jokes, and we talked about being apprehensive over coming to the group, and then it emerged that she was half-French, and I had something to say about that, and the estate agent tried to bring in Germany but we weren't having any of it, and before I knew where I was I had half-turned my shoulder to exclude the other chap and was saying, "Look, I know you've only more or less just arrived, but you wouldn't like a spot of supper would you? (ENPC, JB1)

To sum up, I found 285 relevant examples of simple and elaborated similes (both in fiction and non-fiction texts) to investigate in the present study.

Figure 3.1: Norwegian translation correspondences of the English *like a/an N* simile



As can be seen from Figure 3.1., the most frequent correspondence of the English *like a/an N* is the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N*, i.e. the most frequent way of translating a simile of the *like a/an N* type is by a direct structural transfer (188 out of 285 instances, or 66%). The next most frequent way of rendering a simile is, according to the obtained results, omission (30 instances out of 285, or 11%). It is followed by such constructions as *ligne en/ei/et N* (20 instances out of 285, or 7%), *lik en/ei/et N* (15 instances out of 285, or 5%), *minne om en/ei/et N* (8 instances out of 285, or 3%) and *som + another word* (5 instances out of 285, or 2%).

Below are some examples of how English similes of the *like a/an N* type were translated into Norwegian by the structurally parallel construction *som en/ei/et N*.

Simple similes:

(21E) "You look like a gypsy," he says at last. (ENPC, ABR1)

(21N) "Du ser ut **som en sigøyner**," sier han til slutt. (ENPC, ABR1T)

(22E) Luke was in his pram downstairs and everyone fussed over him, and the older children carried him around **like a doll**. (ENPC, DL1)

(22N) Luke lå i barnevognen nedenunder, og alle dullet med ham, og de eldre barna bar ham rundt **som en dukke**. (ENPC, DL1T)

(23E) In fact, by the end of the story — or as much of it as I'm in a position to tell — Natalie was looking less **like a heroine** and more **like a call girl**, but that 's life, isn't it? (ENPC, FW1)

(23N) Sant å si, på slutten av historien — eller så mye av den som jeg er i stand til å berette — så Natalie mindre ut **som en heltinne** og mer **som en callgirl**, men sånn er livet, ikke sant? (ENPC, FW1T)

(24E) Looks **like a sort of hospital** to me. (ENPC, OS1)

(24N) Jeg synes at det ser ut **som et sykehus**. (ENPC, OS1T)

Elaborated similes:

(25E) She felt **like a cobra which has swallowed a donkey and finds it too large to digest and too awkward to spit out**. (ENPC, FW1)

(25N) Hun følte seg **som en kobra som har slukt et esel og finner ut at det er for digert til å fordøye og for vanskelig å spytte ut**. (ENPC, FW1T)

(26E) Either way, it was a new lease of life, and she felt that she could bounce out of the confines of her own past **like a rubber ball full of spring**. (ENPC, MD1)

(26N) Uansett så livnet hun til igjen, og hun følte at hun kunne hoppe ut av sin egen fortid **som en gummiball full av sprett**. (ENPC, MD1T)

(27E) Then, **like a dog at the master's table**, he watched her swallow a couple of hard-boiled eggs, a schnitzel, a ham sandwich, half a cold chicken and some rounds of garlic sausage. (ENPC, BC1)

(27N) **Som en hund ved sin herres bord** så han henne sette til livs et par hardkokte egg, en schnitzel, et skinkesmørbrød, en halv kald kylling og flere skiver pølse med hvitløk. (ENPC, BC1T)

(28E) The distinctive display of each different species of bird is **like a language that carries several important messages.** (ENPC, ML1)

(28N) Hver fugleart har gjerne sin helt spesielle adferd i parringsleken. Det er **som et språk som bærer med seg viktige signaler og budskap.** (ENPC, ML1T)

Below are some examples of how *like a/an N* was translated into Norwegian by constructions other than *som en/ei/et N*.

(29E) He shoveled out the middle of the mountain till it was **like a volcano** and then he dropped in a big lump of butter, and covered it up. (ENPC, RDO1)

(29N) Han gravde ut midten av haugen så den **lignet en vulkan** og så slapp han en stor smørklump oppi og dekket over. (ENPC, RDO1T)

(30E) It is shaped **like a ladder twisted into a helix**, the rungs available in four different molecular parts, which constitute the four letters of the genetic code. (ENPC, CSA1)

(30N) Det **ligner en stige som er vridd til en spiral**. Trinnene ser vi i fire ulike molekyldele som utgjør de fire bokstavene i den genetiske kode. (ENPC, CSA1T)

(31E) As an inspired afterthought, he piled books in back at the left **like a staircase**, putting firmly in place a geometric boundary to the painting where none had been formerly, a vertical parallel to the head and hat of Aristotle and to the bust of Homer in between. (ENPC, JH1)

(31N) Som ved et beåndet innfall stablet han opp bøker i bakgrunnen til venstre, **lik en trapp**, og satte dermed en markert geometrisk grense hvor det ikke hadde vært noen tidligere, en loddrett parallell til Aristoteles' hode og hatt og til Homers byste imellom. (ENPC, JH1T)

(32E) Edward was standing upright now and clinging to Macon's knees, **like a toddler scared of nursery school.** (ENPC, AT1)

(32N) Edward stod rett opp på to nå og klynget seg til Macons knær, **lik en liten unge som var redd for barnehaven.** (ENPC, AT1T)

(33E) Alice, weeping out loud, blubbering, went stumbling about outside the enormous iron fence, **like a fence around a concentration camp,** thinking that last summer... (ENPC, DL2)

(33N) Alice gråt åpenlyst der hun snublet omkring langs det kjempemessige gjerdet som kunne **minne om gjerdet rundt en konsentrasjonsleir,** og hun husket sommeren... (ENPC, DL2T)

My analysis shows that *ligne en/et/ei N*, *lik en/et/ei N* and *minne om en/et/ei N* are more frequently used in the translation of elaborated similes (22 cases out of 30 instances) rather than of simple ones (21 out of 255 instances). I assume that the complexity of the image that must be rendered in an elaborated simile drives translators to seek other ways of translation rather than a simple use of the construction *som en/et/ei N* which, as we can see, does not always fit the context.

I would also like to mention some cases when the *like a/an N* similes were translated into Norwegian with the help of the word “som” but formally I could not classify these instances as the use of the construction *som en/et/ei N*.

(34E) I pictured the postman, emptying out his mail pouch **like a wastepaper basket,** escaping on foot then before the inhabitants of the building swarmed over him like bugs. (ENPC, SG1)

(34N) Jeg så for meg at postbudet tømte veska **som om den var en papirkurv** og tok bena fatt før beboerne svermet over ham som fluer. (ENPC, SG1T)

(35E) The other showed a muffled figure in Marseille dragging a mobile radiator on its wheels through the snow at the end of a rope, **like a man taking an angular and obstinate dog for a walk.** (ENPC, PM1)

(35N) Det andre var av en godt innpakket skikkelse i Marseille som trakk en mobil radiator på hjul etter seg i et tau, **som om det var en firkantet, sta hund han skulle lufte.** (ENPC, PM1T)

As we can see, the *like a/an N* similes were translated by *som om*. The major difference between the two structures is that in the former we use a noun as a right side collocate of *like* whereas in the latter, which can be generally translated into English as *as if*, we use a whole clausal construction that significantly increases the number of words and the complexity of the sentence.

I would like to comment on example 35 separately as here we can observe a slight alteration of the initial image used in the simile. In the English original the author makes a comparison using the image of the man, while in the Norwegian translation we see that the comparison is made with the image of the dog as a starting point, i.e., if in English the man is the main “character” of the simile, in Norwegian he becomes a “supporting character”. In other words, there has been a shift of focus in going from English into Norwegian.

However, I believe that in all of the cases presented above the principal idea of the similes was rendered successfully in the Norwegian language. This, to my mind, makes it possible to single out “*som om*” as an independent pattern that can be used in translating *like a/an N* similes into Norwegian.

During the analysis I have also come across some other instances of the use of the word “*som*” in Norwegian translations of the simile in question. I would like to give some more examples.

(36E) But on good days it still feels **like a vacation, an evasion**. (ENPC, MA1)

(36N) Men på gode dager føles det ennå **som å være på ferie, som å lure seg unna**. (ENPC, MA1T)

(37E) RISLEY IN RETROSPECT, it says; just the last name, **like a boy**. (ENPC, MA1)

(37N) Eller ikke plakat, snarere en løpeseddel i skrikende fiolett og grønnyanser med svart skrift: RISLEY RETROSPEKTIVT, står det; bare etternavnet, **som for en gutt**. (ENPC, MA1T)

In the translation of example 36 we can see the use of infinitive constructions instead of nouns after “*som*”.

In example 37 basing him/herself on the context the translator decided to change the initial idea of the simile slightly and add “for” after the word “som” to make the situation clearer for the reader.

(38E) "I will order," said Utz, who waved his napkin, **like a flag of truce**, at the head-waiter. (ENPC, BC1)

(38N) "Jeg skal bestille," sa Utz, han vinket på hovmesteren med servietten, **som med et hvitt flagg**. (ENPC, BC1T)

In this case due to the structure of the sentence that the translator decided to use, *som med et hvitt flagg* instead of *som et hvitt flagg*. However, the meaning of the simile is not altered in any way.

Finally, I would like to have a look at the examples of a complete omission of similes in the Norwegian translations. I classified the following extracts as not representing any patterns that could render the idea of comparing one thing to another.

(40E) One of the policemen came over and pounded on the door with his fist, shouting "Police" very positively which had the desired effect **like a reflex**. (ENPC, DF1)

(40N) En av politimennene kom bort og banket på døren med neven.

"Politiet," ropte han mektig bestemt, **og det fikk nesten automatisk den tilsiktede virkning**. (ENPC, DF1T)

(41E) Perhaps in a worn coat and a knitted hat **like a tea cosy**, sitting on a curb, with two plastic bags filled with her only possessions, muttering to herself. (ENPC, MA1)

(41N) Tenk om jeg plutselig så henne sitte på en kant langs fortauet, kanskje i slitt kåpe og **strikkelue**. Alt hun eier, bærer hun med seg i to plastposer. Hun mumler for seg selv. (ENPC, MA1T)

(42E) He was never dwarfed by the landscape — the fields, the buildings, the white pine windbreak were as much my father as if he had grown them and shed them **like a husk**. (ENPC, JSM1)

(42N) Omgivelsene fikk ham aldri til å virke liten, det var han som ruvet i landskapet — åkrene, husene, furuholtet var en del av begrepet far. (ENPC, JSM1T)

(43E) First, I must stop thinking **like a salesman** and not do any kind of pushy selling. (ENPC, AH1)

(43N) For det første måtte jeg slutte **å tenke salg**, ikke prøve å fremskynde ting. (ENPC, AH1T)

(44E) I stretched out a hand to the nearest and found that it was a casing with a dial face, plus a head **like a microphone on a lead**. (ENPC, DF1)

(44N) Jeg grep den nærmeste og oppdaget at det var en liten kasse med viser og skala, pluss **en ledning med mikrofon i enden**. (ENPC, DF1T)

(45E) She was wearing what looked **like a crepe de chine dress in lilac, with shoulder pads and glass buttons**, a big orchid corsage pinned to her left shoulder. (ENPC, SG1)

(45N) Hun var iført **en lilla kjole i crêpe de chine med skulderputer og glassknapper**, med store pynteorkideer festet på den venstre skulderen. (ENPC, SG1T)

(46E) The landscape is dotted with stately trees and, nestling within its woodlands, the tranquil surface of Virginia Water reflects its leafy surroundings **like a mirror**. (ENPC, SUG1)

(46N) Den er full av gamle, flotte trær, og Virginia Water med sin rolige overflate, speiler den frodige vegetasjonen som omkranser innsjøen. (ENPC, SUG1T)

(47E) A university, **like a father**, looks upright and decent on the outside, but underneath, somewhere, you have the feeling that it and he are doing something demonic. (ENPC, ROB1)

(47N) **Faren og universitetet** kunne se anstendige ut på overflaten, men bak overflaten et sted har du følelsen av at noe demonisk foregår. (ENPC, ROB1T)

In the two following extracts we can see the use of the semantically vague word *et/en slags* (“a kind of”) that does not qualify as a simile or comparison and thus represents an omission in my research. I would like to add that although *et/en slags* appears to be rather unclear in terms of its meaning, the image as a whole is more concrete in Norwegian than in English.

(48E) Lily was in the third stockroom pushing a brown cardboard box around on a thing **like a tea-trolley**, collecting bags of strings of beads and checking them against a list. (ENPC, DF1)

(48N) Hun var i det tredje lagerrommet, hvor hun skjøv en brun pappkartong omkring på **et slags trillebord**, plukket sammen poser med perlekjeder og krysset dem av på en liste. (ENPC, DF1T)

(49E) So there had to be a great deal of paternal petting and plying of the handkerchief (for Mary-Jim had not so far left the convent that she could be depended on to have one with her) and at last something **like a story** emerged. (ENPC, RDA1)

(49N) Det ble nødvendig med mange faderlige kjærtegn og bruk av lommestørkleet (for det var ikke så lenge siden Mary-Jim var ferdig på skolen at man kunne stole på at hun gikk med lommestørkle), og etter en stund fikk han **en slags historie** ut av henne. (ENPC, RDA1T)

In some cases of omission we can see that the image itself was lost but the general idea represented in the simile was still conveyed.

(50E) Still grinning **like a Cheshire cat**, I tossed my pencil way up into the air and tried to catch it. (ENPC, TH1)

(50N) **Jeg lo med hele ansiktet** og slengte blyanten opp i luften og prøvde å fange den igjen. (ENPC, TH1T)

(51E) Harold was nodding ruefully, but grinning **like a maniac**, grinning just the way everyone else was, except Ken LaSalle, but Ken's wife had left him at Christmas, gone off to get a job in the Twin Cities. (ENPC, JSM1)

(51N) Og Harold nikket slukøret, men **smilte alt han kunne**, smilte som alle de andre, unntatt Ken LaSalle. Men kona til Ken hadde reist fra ham ved juletider, stukket av til Minneapolis og tatt seg jobb, så det bedrøvelige oppsynet hans behøvde ikke å bety noen ting. (ENPC, JSM1T)

(52E) "We just **got on like a house afire**. (ENPC, AT1)

(52N) "Vi kom **så fint ut av det med hverandre**. (ENPC, AT1T)

(53E) Linda was just born when I had my first miscarriage, and for a while, six months maybe, the sight of those two babies, whom I had loved and cared for with real interest and satisfaction, affected me **like a poison**. (ENPC, JSM1)

(53 N) Linda var nyfødt da jeg hadde den første aborten min, og lenge — et halvt års tid eller så — **tålte jeg ikke synet av de to små**, som jeg hadde vært så glad i og tatt meg av med omsorg og kjærighet. (ENPC, JSM1T)

There is one instance when a simile was translated descriptively.

(54E) The floaters may propel themselves through the planetary atmosphere with gusts of gas, **like a ramjet or a rocket**. (ENPC, CSA1)

(54N) Flyterne kan bevege seg gjennom planetatmosfæren ved å slippe ut gass, **og bruke det samme prinsippet som vi finner i jetmotorer og raketter**. (ENPC, CSA1T)

As my results show, the most frequent counterpart of the *like a/an N* frame in the Norwegian language is *som en/ei/et N* (188 instances out of 285, or 66%), while the second most frequent way of rendering a simile into Norwegian is by omission (30 instances out of 285, or 11%) followed by *ligne en/ei/et N* (20 instances out of 285, or 7%). Another interesting observation to share in this regard is that *ligne en/ei/et N*, *lik en/ei/et N*, *minne om en/ei/et N* are more frequently used for translation of elaborated similes rather than simple ones (used in 22 cases out of 30).

While the reasons for rendering a simile into another language by a structurally parallel construction (as in the case of *like a/an N* and *som en/ei/et N*) are clear: first of all, both English and Norwegian syntax allows it, second of all – why complicate something when it can be simplified, one cannot help but wonder about the reasons for omitting similes. Following Edwin Gentzler (2001) and conventional translation theories, I can suggest that omission of metaphors in translation (or similes for that matter) in most cases is done with considerations to the target culture (2001:139), represented by the receivers of the translated text, i.e. in order to adapt an image or a concept which does not exist in the culture of the receiving audience or, in the translator's opinion, too difficult for that target audience to comprehend without some form of adjustment.

3.1.2 Translation of the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile into English

Having established that the most frequent translation correspondence of the English *like a/an N* frame is the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile, I performed an analogous study for the Norwegian construction. My search in the ENPC left me with 489 examples in fiction texts and 248 in non-fiction ones. After a careful sorting I was left with 346 and 129 similes respectively, 475 similes in total. My approach to identifying similes was the same as for the English frame, therefore I did not include in my research the examples where “som” operates as a conjunction and not as a comparison (55N-55N) and where “som” is part of the constructions *så ADJ som N* and *like ADJ som N* (57N-58N):

(55N) Så sent som i 1956 het det i rapporten fra den engelske Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce at det måtte være utenkelig at man innførte arverett for barn som en gift mann fikk med en annen kvinne enn sin hustru, "for it could not fail to result in a blurring of moral values in the public mind. (ENPC, LSPL1)

(56N) Menneskene betjener seg av rester fra det som en gang var sivilisasjonen. (ENPC, JEEH1)

(57N) Du kan godt si at en filosof forblir like tynnhudet som et lite barn hele livet. (ENPC, JG1)

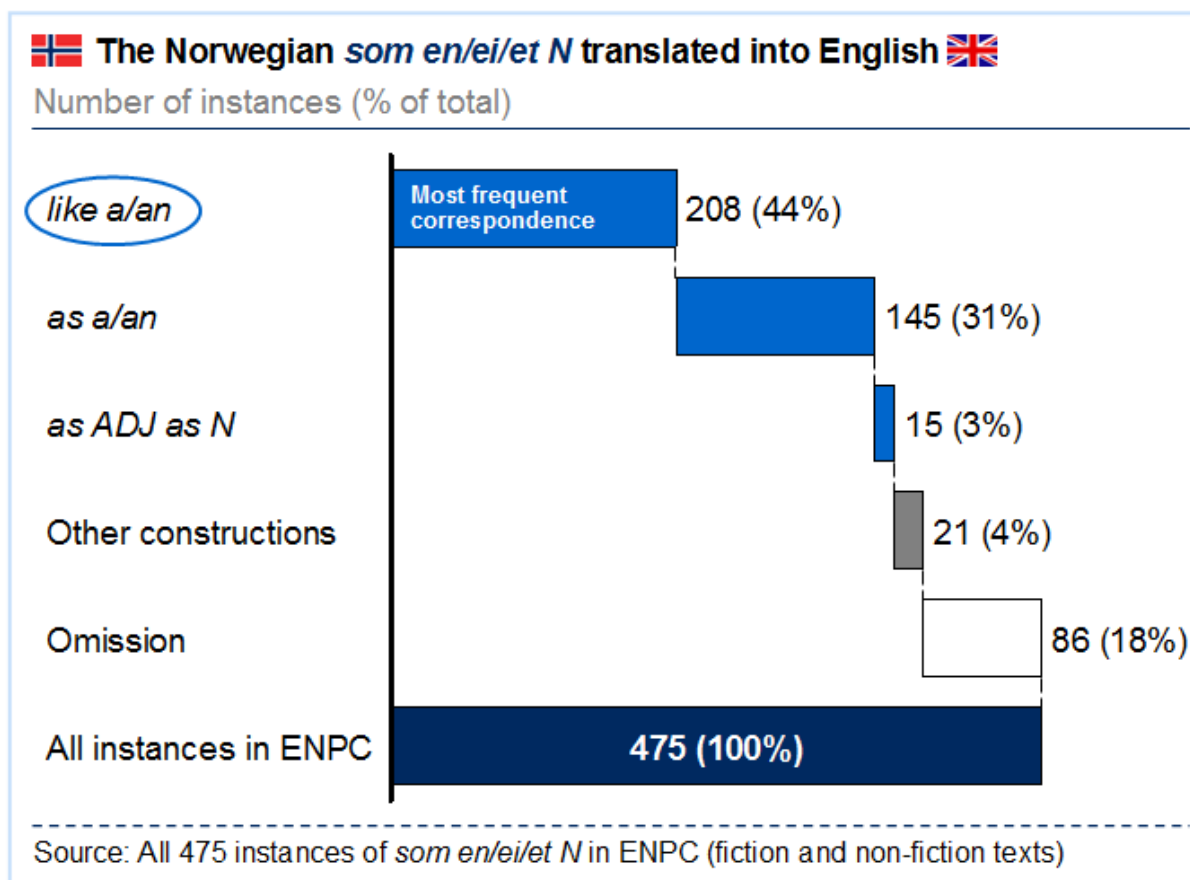
(58N) Hun stod så nær varmen at ansiktet var som en rød og glinsende fullmåne. (ENPC, TTH1)

In analyzing the Norwegian originals I also applied my initial differentiation between simple and elaborated similes. Thus, I considered all examples in which *som en/ei/et* was followed by only one word as simple similes, and the ones with more than one word after the aforementioned construction as elaborated similes. Out of 475 similes, 301 (63%) turned out to be elaborated and only 174 (36%) simple.

(59N) Mens bronse føltes som et nederlag, føltes gull som en dobbelt seier for Wasmeier som dermed tok Tysklands annen — og første i alpint, mens Tommy Moe satte sølv eikeløv rundt sin gullmedalje fra utfor. (ENPC, KB1) – **Simple simile**

(60N) I ettertid blir det tyske felttoget i Norge vurdert som en — for sin tid — usedvanlig vellykket og dristig aksjon. (ENPC, UD1) – **Elaborated simile**

Figure 3.2: English correspondences of the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile



The figure above provides an overview of the obtained results: the most frequent translation correspondence of the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* is the English *like a/an N* – 44% of studied cases (208 instances out of 475), followed by *as a/an N* - 31% (145 instances out of 475) and omission – 18% (86 instances out of 475).

My analysis also showed that out of 208 total instances 88 simple similes (50.6%) and 120 elaborated ones (40%) were translated into English with *like a/an N*. Below are some examples of translating *som en/ei/et N* with *like a/an N*:

(61N) Hildegun begynte med stemmeøvelsene, hun satt i vinduskarmen og mekret **som en sau**. (ENPC, BV1)

(61E) Hildegun began her voice exercises; she sat in the window-sill and bleated **like a sheep**. (ENPC, BV1T)

(62N) Det tunge vindpustet fra sjøen gikk **som et sukk** gjennom skogen. (ENPC, BV1)

(62E) The heavy breath of wind from the sea passed through the forest **like a sigh**. (ENPC, BV1T)

(63N) Negeren var også en artig fyr, litt sjenert, han strøk av seg toppluen og fulgte Jorunn **som en skygge** inn i leiligheten når hun hentet barnet. (ENPC, BV1)

(63E) The Negro was also a polite chap, a bit shy, he would remove his woollen hat and follow Jorunn **like a shadow** into the flat when she came to fetch the baby. (ENPC, BV1T)

(64N) Maria lyttet med halvåpen munn, som om hun fikk med seg mer på den måten, mens Jenny strammet leppene og haken rynket seg **som en tørket frukt**. (ENPC, BV1)

(64E) Maria would listen with her mouth half-open as if she kept better control of herself that way, while Jenny would purse her lips and her chin would wrinkle **like a dried fruit**. (ENPC, BV1T)

(65N) **Som en fugleunge når den må prøve vingene for første gang**, tenkte hun og så kjærlig på den vesle kajakken med de lubne beina under. (ENPC, MN1)

(65E) **Like a fledgling testing its wings for the first time**, she thought, and looked lovingly at the small kayak with the chubby legs beneath it. (ENPC, MN1T)

(66N) Den ene hånden krummet seg rundt den sammenrullede avisen, den andre lå ved foten av ølglasset, **som et felt bytte**. (ENPC, GS1)

(66E) One of his hands was crooked round the rolled-up newspaper, while the other lay at the foot of his beer-glass **like a dead rabbit**. (ENPC, GS1T)

The second most frequent pattern to translate the Norwegian similes was the use of the word “as” – 145 instances in total (31%). For the simple similes I have counted 51 relevant instances, and for the translation of the elaborated similes “as” was used in 94 instances.

(67N) Hun hadde vel tatt det **som en fornærmelse**, og fått faren til å kaste meg på dør for frekkhet og misunnelse. (ENPC, MN1)

(67E) She would probably have taken it **as an insult** and got her father to throw me out because of impudence and envy. (ENPC, MN1T)

(68N) Klarøyd, glatt i huden og tynn **som en sild**. (ENPC, EHA1)

(68E) Clear-eyed, smooth-skinned and thin **as a rail**. (ENPC, EHA1T)

(69N) Kanskje så hun også mor **som en utilnærmelig dronning i et hemmelighetsfullt rike fjernt fra vår verden**. (ENPC, MN1)

(69E) Maybe she too saw Mother **as an unapproachable queen in a secret realm far from our world**. (ENPC, MN1T)

(70N) Han ville ha et sjal etter sin mor, han ville gi det til sin kone **som et minne om sin barndom**. (ENPC, KA1)

(70E) He wanted a shawl left by his mother, to give to his wife **as a remembrance of his childhood**. (ENPC, KA1T)

It was quite surprising to observe that the third most popular way of translating was to omit the simile – 86 instances in total (18%). As for the simple similes, 25 of them were omitted in the English translations. The translations of the elaborated similes showed an even larger number of omissions – 61 out of 301.

(71N) Brian var der **som en katevind rundt halsen på ham**, og de hoppet rundt og danset og lo om hverandre. (ENPC, TTH1)

(71E) Brian **threw himself around Patric's neck**, and they hopped and danced and laughed around and around each other. (ENPC, TTH1T)

(72N) Den kalde luften slo imot ham **som et gufs** i ansiktet. (ENPC, TTH1)

(72E) The cold air **hit** his face. (ENPC, TTH1T)

(73N) Patric slo seg mot kanten av en av tønnene, og kjente at det brant **som en ildkule langt inne i hodet.** (ENPC, TTH1)

(73E) Patric bruised himself against the edge of one of the barrels, and **his head felt feverish and heavy.** (ENPC, TTH1T)

I also found several examples where the construction *som en/ei/et N* was translated into English with *as ADJ as N*. 15 similes, or 3%, were translated in this way (11 simple and 4 elaborated ones).

(74N) Tilbake var en illsint unge, med en tunge giftig **som en huggorms.** (ENPC, MN1)

(74E) What was left was an ill-tempered brat, with a tongue **as poisonous as an adder's.** (ENPC, MN1T)

(75N) Fast bestemt på alt mulig **som en trettenåring.** (ENPC, JM1)

(75E) **As stubborn in everything as a thirteen-year-old.** (ENPC, JM1T)

(76N) **Som en strikkepinne rundt livet,** med kunstferdig oppsatt hår, og tre underskjørt på en gang. (ENPC, HW2)

(76E) With three layers of petticoats, **a waist as thin as a knitting needle,** and hair piled elaborately on her head. (ENPC, HW2T)

Finally, I have come across some other ways of translation – *seem, resemble, the way, as if* etc. They were used in the translations of 21 similes, or 4% (6 simple and 15 elaborated).

(77N) Personlig tror jeg ikke det, men den lille bortgjemte menigheten i dalen sto for ham **som en straffedom.** (ENPC, JW1)

(77E) "Personally I don't believe that, but coming to the forgotten little congregation in the valley seemed to him a punishment. (ENPC, JW1T)

(78N) Disse gikk han og sugde på hele dagen som en slikkmunn suger på drops. (ENPC, EG1)

(78E) He was rarely without one in his mouth, relishing it the way a child does a lollipop. (ENPC, EG1T)

(79N) Det var som et trykk var opphevet, jeg kunne puste fritt, kunne være meg selv. (ENPC, EHA1)

(79E) As if some pressure had been removed. I could breathe freely, could be myself. (ENPC, EHA1T)

The most important conclusion that I was able to draw from this analysis is that *som en/et/ei N* and *like a/an N* are each other's most frequent correspondences in the Norwegian and English language systems. Careful analysis displayed the following results: in the rendering of *like a/an N* simile frame from English into Norwegian (total sample for analysis comprised 285 simple and elaborated similes from the ENPC) 66% were translated by *som en/ei/et N*. In the other direction 44% (or 208 instances out of 475 instances in the total sample) of the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* were translated by *like a/an N*.

3.1.3 Mutual correspondence of *like a/an N* and *som en/ei/et N*

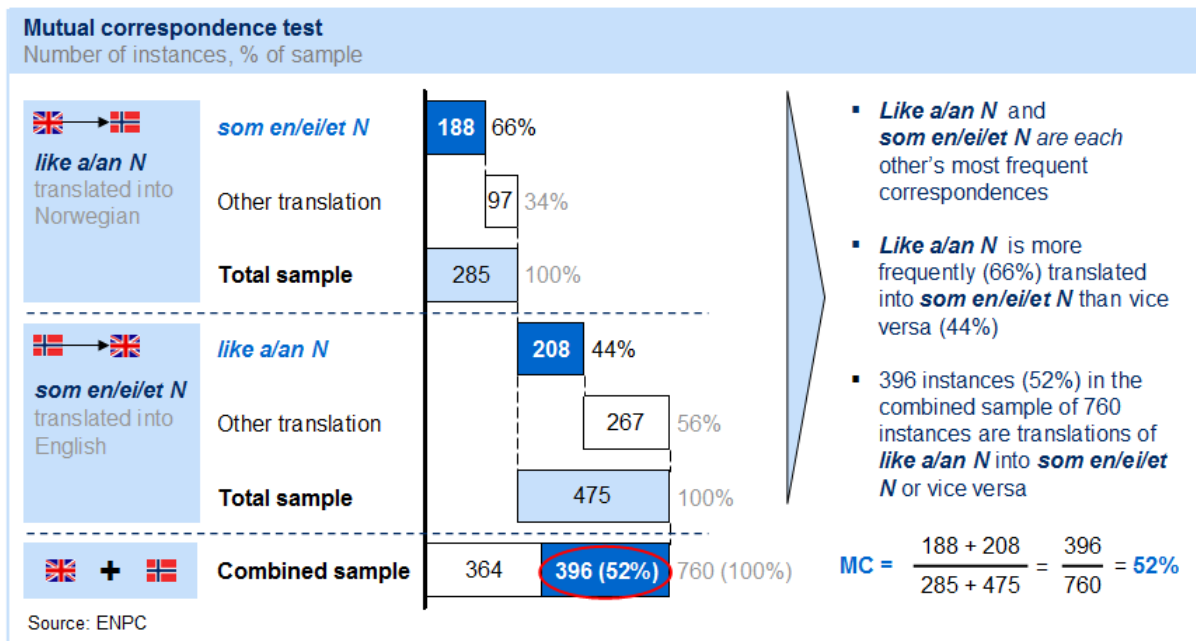
In this section I performed a mutual correspondence test to establish "the degree of similarity between two constructions in different languages" (Ebeling, 2000:25). According to Altenberg, mutual correspondence (MC) is "the frequency with which different (grammatical, semantic and lexical) expressions are translated into each other" (1999:78). I have used Altenberg's formula for calculating the MC between the two constructions described by Altenberg (1999).

Figure 3.3: Altenberg's formula (Altenberg, 1999:78).

The image shows a mathematical formula for mutual correspondence (MC) enclosed in a double-bordered box. The formula is:
$$\frac{(A_t + B_t) \times 100}{A_s + B_s}$$

"where A_t and B_t are the compared items (A and B) in the translated texts and A_s and B_s – the compared items in the source texts" (Altenberg, 1999:78).

Figure 3.4: Mutual correspondence of the English *like a/an N* and the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N*



The result we can see is 52 % in MC.

Summing up this part of analysis we can clearly see that English and Norwegian has displayed a lot of structural similarity in constructing a simile which is first proved by the fact that *like a/an N* and *som en/ei/et N* showed to be each other's most frequent counterparts in translation and then supported by their quite high mutual correspondence with the score above 50%. It would be interesting to look at the other correspondences in more detail, but that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

3.1.4 Analysis of noun group vehicles in the English *like a/an N* simile

The objective of the present part of my research is to analyze noun group vehicles in the English simile *like a/an N*.

For this purpose I chose to use the BNC (BYU interface) in order to get a broader sample.

The following restriction was applied to the extraction of my data: sample size of 1000 random instances, fiction texts only. For processing my data I used AntConc3.2 (hereinafter

AntConc). The choice of register is not fortuitous as due to specifics of this genre (use of idiomatic language etc.) it should be able to provide me with a representative sample.

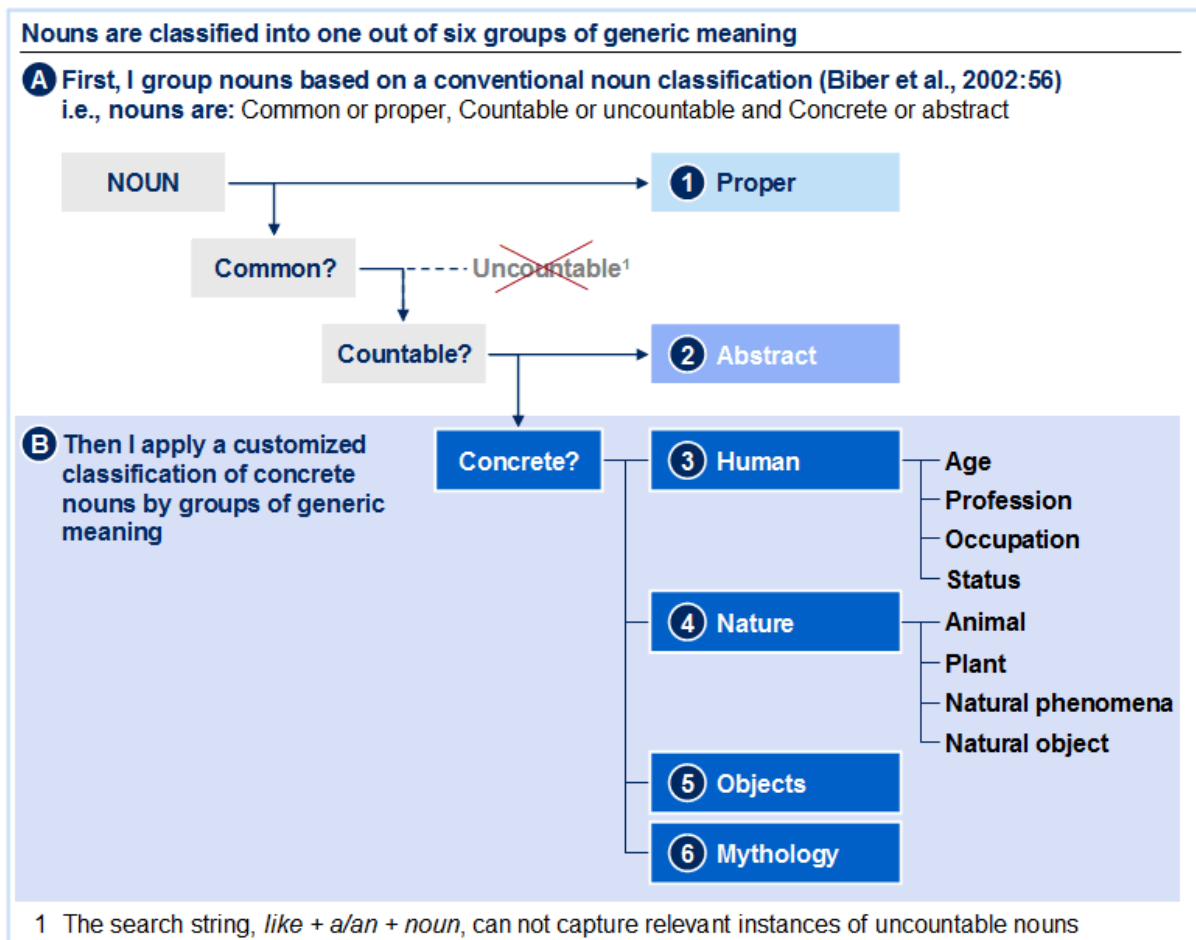
In the BNC (BYU) my search string was defined as *like [at*]*, i.e. *like* followed by an article, with genre option set to fiction. The search returned two groups of results: *like a* and *like an*. After manual processing I was left with 453 relevant instances (out of 1000 random instances).

After my data was extracted and processed to get a refined sample to work with, I proceeded to analyze right-side collocates of the *like a/an N*. In a similar study which I have carried out in 2010 (Karpova 2010) my approach to classifying the vehicles was two-fold: they were first classified based on a conventional classification provided by Biber et al. (2002:56) and then based on my custom classification of nouns by their generic meanings i.e. human, object, nature etc. In the present study I was interested only in classifying my vehicles by their generic meanings, because I wanted to be able to provide an answer to the following question: do the English and Norwegian language systems operate with different groups of vehicles (base domains) or do they share the same grounds for metaphoric comparisons?

The classification scheme applied here is based on the classification I developed in 2010, however I elaborated on it a bit:

- Proper nouns: *an Alice* (like an Alice in Wonderland)
- Abstract notions: *invasion, nightmare, bad dream* etc.
- Human (sub-categories: age, occupation, status, profession): *baby, infant, old lady, queen, peasant, servant* etc.
- Nature (sub-categories: animal, plant, natural phenomenon, natural object): *flower, owl, wasp, brood mare, beached whale, oak, whirlpool, thunderstorm, stone, sun* etc.
- Man-made objects: *bazooka, bracelet, bullet, book*, etc.
- Mythology: *banshee, phantom, fairy princess, angel, zombie* etc.

Figure 3.5: Classification of nouns applied in the present study



Let us take a closer look at some examples from the English sample.

The “**PROPER NOUNS**” category consists of vehicles which denote a unique entity or a proper name of a well-known fiction character or person with whom the comparison is being made, e.g. *as like an Alice* (in Wonderland), *like a Cheshire cat*, etc. There were no instances in this category in the English sample.

The “**ABSTRACT NOTION**” category comprises vehicles denoting concepts, ideas, feelings/emotions or something that is conceived in the mind, e.g. *like a war*, *like a dream*, *like an insult* etc.

(80E) He hardly comprehended what had been happening; the reality and unreality merged together **like a nightmare** or a melodrama. (BNC-BYU, GUS) - **classified as category “abstract notion”**

(81E) Yesterday seemed like a bad dream, but when he went downstairs, he saw the covered picture. (BNC-BYU, A0D) - **classified as category “abstract notion”**

“HUMAN”/”AGE” – in this category I have grouped vehicles that denote human beings in different time periods of life with regard to physical and/or mental development, i.e. such similes are *like a child, like an infant, like an old man* etc.:

(82E) Three o'clock in the morning, bopping through a weird limb-jerking dance routine, and she looks like a child at playschool. (BNC-BYU, J13) – **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

(83E) “It's ridiculous, but I feel like a teenager, all fumbling hands and no control.” (BNC-BYU, H8F) - **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

(84E) “No,” she said.”He's like an old baby. Mischievous and clever. He cares about nothing”. (BNC-BYU, GUM) - **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

(85E) He stumped like an old man. It hurt Melanie to look at him. (BNC-BYU, FRC) - **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

“HUMAN”/”PROFESSION” comprises vehicles denoting human beings with regard to their vocation or business. Examples here are such similes as *like a peasant, like a shopkeeper, like a clerk*. Metaphoric comparison is based on peculiar characteristics assigned to people of a certain trade/profession.

(86E) He had never been an impressive priest -- dispensing sacraments, sermons and whist-drive announcements with the same patient ennui, like a weary shopkeeper who has forgotten why he ever started to sell. (BNC-BYU, GVT) - **classified as “human”, sub-category “profession”**

(87E) She was crazy about these clothes, delighted to have found an outfit she could wear every day, wanting, like a Chinese peasant, never to have to think about what to put on. (BNC-BYU, C8E) - **classified as “human”, sub-category “profession”**

(88E) The verdict was delivered with such casual brutality that I flushed with the shame of it -- being kicked out like a clerk caught pinching pennies from the till. (BNC-BYU, CHG) - **classified as “human”, sub-category “profession”**

“HUMAN”/“OCCUPATION” comprises vehicles that denote human beings with regard to activity into which a human being is engaged which also describes his/her lifestyle, i.e. such similes as *like a maniac, like an alcoholic, like a hippie* etc.

(89E) It was only too apparent, as Olga tore into him about the disgrace she would suffer, that, like a hippie, he cared nothing for the kind of life his parents led; he did not share their values or ambitions. (BNC-BYU, CDN) – **classified “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

(90E) And so he can make his profits and feel like a philanthropist at the same time. (BNC-BYU, C8S) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

(91E) If sometimes, when I canvassed for other people at elections, addressed envelopes, drafted manifestos, I felt like an alcoholic sneaking a secret drink, this was a purely subjective analogy. (BNC-BYU, CEX) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

The **“HUMAN”/“STATUS”** sub-category groups vehicles that denote human beings with regard to their position in social or professional relation to other human beings, i.e. such similes as *like a mother, like a sister, like a lord* etc.

(92E) "It's very lucky," said my mother, " that you love one another so much. After all, you've known him all your life. He's always been like a brother to you. Not exactly a whirlwind romance." (BNC-BYU, H0F) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

(93E) She treated me like a daughter, with affectionate pride, complimenting me on my dress and asking about my children. (BNC-BYU, CEX) - **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

(94E) **Like a mother** scolding her lost child, I thought, after he's come back safe: just like Perkin with Mackie. (BNC-BYU, ADY) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

(95E) Surrounded by gale-jangled remnants of the vitreous bubble, Daak sat like a lord and looked down, grinning, as they approached. (BNC-BYU, F9X) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

“NATURE”/“ANIMAL” consists of vehicles which denote all living things other than human beings: mammals, insects, fish, etc.

(96E) For a big man, he always seemed to move so silently, like a cat hoping to catch a mouse. (BNC-BYU, H9V) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(97E) A young doctor, making an emergency call in Bal Lane, had seen him trudging home at 2.30 in the morning, looking like a drowned rat. (BNC-BYU, GW3) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(98E) But let me do it in my own time, and don't make me feel like a brood mare. (BNC-BYU, CEH) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(99E) Ed and Johnny were sporting foolish party hat and blowing those paper things that uncurl like a chameleon's tongue and go baarrp. (BNC-BYU, HTU) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(100E) When the great gate of Newgate slammed behind them, Cranston leaned against it, gasping for clean air, his great body quivering like a beached whale's. (BNC-BYU, H98) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

“NATURE”/“PLANT” consists of vehicles denoting all sorts of vegetation: herbs, flowers, trees, bushes etc., i.e. *like a rose, like an oak tree, like an apple tree* etc.

(101E) A prayer, like a flower opening. (BNC-BYU, H8R) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*plant*”

(102E) She smelt like a rose too, the old woman thought. (BNC-BYU, CDY) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*plant*”

(103E) 'A camellia, my dear. D' you know, the tree hasn't flowered properly for six years. Now it's such a sight! Pink all over like an apple tree in May! (BNC-BYU, AC5) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*plant*”

“NATURE”/“NATURAL PHENOMENON” groups vehicles denoting all nature-driven phenomena, such as *hurricanes, whirlpools, fogs* etc.

(104E) Hopelessness and reluctance are blown away like a fog and the dumb solitude where they crept, a place desolate as a crack in the ground, opens like a rose and stretches to the hills and the sky. (BNC-BYU, EWC) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural phenomenon*”

(105E) I feel as if my mind is whirling madly, like a hurricane. (BNC-BYU, FPB) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural phenomenon*”

(106E) The idea hit her like a thunderbolt and she spun round, heading back towards the main entrance, remembering that there was an enquiries desk there. (BNC-BYU, G0P) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural phenomenon*”

(107E) It floated mockingly through his sleep and came like a mirage between his eyes and the daylight. He saw them laughing carelessly together, ruttish and brutal in their casual coupling. He saw their tangled limbs relax and slide into sleep, arms trailing. (BNC-BYU, A7J) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural phenomenon”**

The “NATURE”/“NATURAL OBJECT” sub-category represents all objects that are not man-made, i.e. including similes such as *like a stone, like a twig, like a cloud* etc.

(108E) He broke a man's arm a year ago, snapped it like a dried twig behind his back. (BNC-BYU, C7T) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural object”**

(109E) Outside on the footpath he stood like a stone reading the letter. (BNC-BYU, A6N) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural object”**

(110E) The keys crashed to the floor next to Gedanken; the piece of paper followed, slowly fluttering from side to side like a snowflake. (BNC-BYU, FNW) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural object”**

(111E) Did you sleep well?' He was scrutinizing her openly in return. ' Like a log.' (BNC-BYU, C8D) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural object”**

The “MAN-MADE OBJECTS” category comprises vehicles denoting all kinds of man-made objects as opposed to the previous sub-category “natural objects”, i.e. such similes as *like a wheel, like a pen, like a doll* etc.

(112E) His hand was closed loosely over it. Like a bracelet! he thought. (BNC-BYU, HGV) - **classified as category “object”**

(113E) He talks like a mill-wheel. (BNC-BYU, A0N) - **classified as category “object”**

(114E) Her anger sliced through him **like a knife**. (BNC-BYU, ACW) - **classified as category “object”**

The “**MYTHOLOGY**” category represents vehicles denoting objects and creatures of imaginary world, myths, fairy tales and other kinds of folk art, e.g. *like a banshee, like an elf, like a zombie* etc.

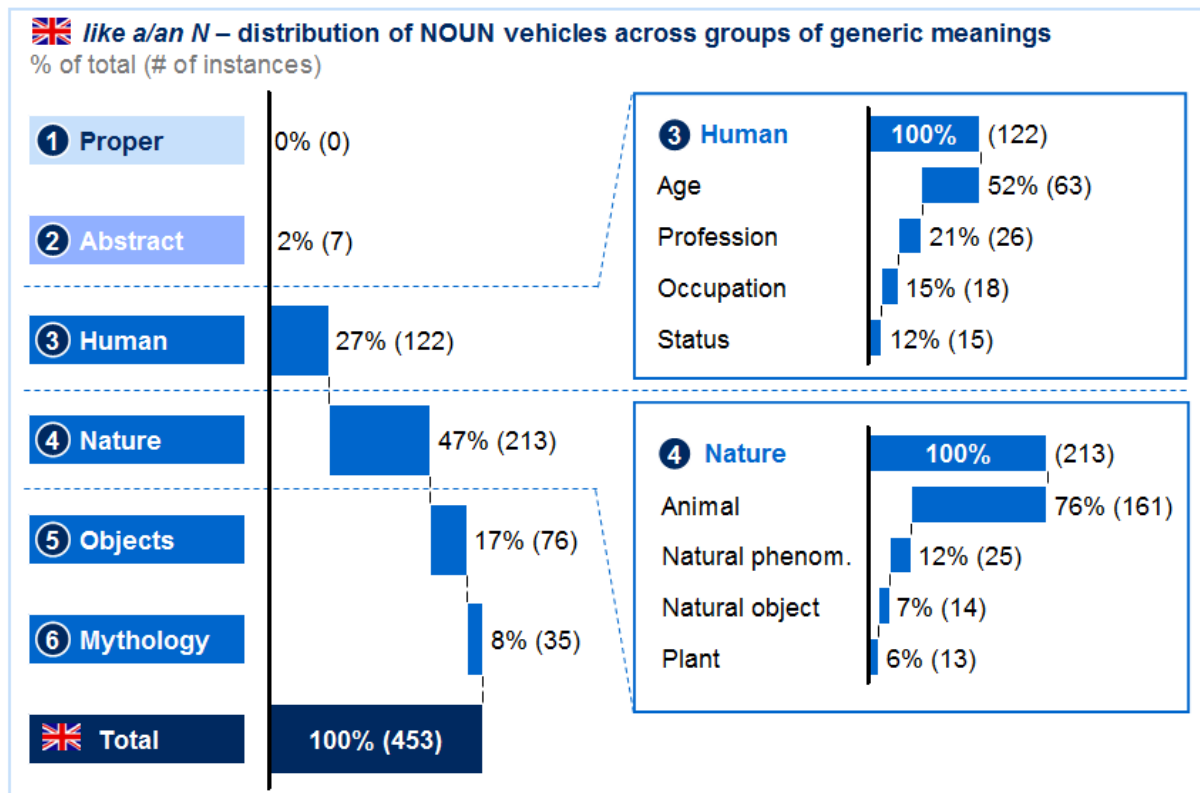
(115E) His shadow was strewn off to his right **like a capering phantom** as he kicked his steed northwards from the walls of the Rorim towards the ever-rising hills that surged out of the Dale into a heather-thick rampart of blue and purple heights beyond. (BNC-BYU, GWF) - **classified as “mythology”**

(116E) She looks **like an angel** and she's a slut.... (BNC-BYU, FAB) - **classified as “mythology”**

(117E) She doesn't answer but keeps walking, me standing **like a zombie** watching the action. (BNC-BYU, G02) – **classified as “mythology”**

As we can see from the figure below, “nature”, “human” and “man-made objects” are the three largest categories of generic meanings in the English sample with 47% (213 instances out of 453), 27% (122 instances out of 453) and 17% (76 instances out of 453) respectively. The leading sub-categories within “nature” are “animal” with 76% (161 instances out of 213) and “natural phenomena” with 12% (25 instances out of 213). The distribution within the “human” category is as follows: “age” is the largest sub-category with 52% (63 instances out of 122) followed by “profession” with 21% (26 instances out of 122):

Figure 3.6: Distribution of noun vehicles for the English *like a/an N* simile, grouped by generic meanings



3.1.5 Analysis of noun group vehicles in the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile

The objective of the present section is to analyze noun group vehicles in the Norwegian simile *som en/ei/et N*. For this purpose I have used the Lexicographic Corpus for Norwegian bokmål (LBK).

In the LBK I searched for *som [interval] en + som [interval] ei + som [interval] et*, i.e. three search boxes within the same search query, sample size set to 1000 random instances of fiction texts. Then I first of all had to eliminate instances from translated texts. This was done manually in my excel spreadsheet. After this procedure I was left with 702 instances which represented a collection of original Norwegian samples. Then the data was extracted into a text file and opened in AntConc where I further searched for 5-word clusters (since I also wanted to capture elaborated similes) with *som* as a left-side collocate. The extracted data was then again processed manually to identify cases of simile and eventually I was left with 284 relevant instances.

After the data had been collected and processed, I proceeded to analyze right-side collocates in the *som en/et/ei N* simile type, i.e. what noun is used in the simile. I used the same classification scheme as in the case of the comparable English data.

“PROPER NOUNS”:

(118N) Hun var fra det tykkeste, det besteborgerligste Kensington , men hun hadde tapt sitt hjerte til Spania - hun kunne danse flamenco som en Carmen. (LBK, SK01OIPa01) – **classified as category** “*proper nouns*”

(119N) Judith skriver så lenge hun ser dem , skriver lenge etterpå , mens Julian får Francescas annenfiolin til å låte som en stradivarius. (LBK, SK01OIPa01) – **classified as category** “*proper nouns*”

(120N) Da kjenner Herman at det begynner å bli varmt , han sitter ved siden av radiatoren , det er snart så varmt at hodet hans kommer til å smelte som en diplomis. (LBK, SK01SaLa02) – **classified as category** “*proper nouns*”

“ABSTRACT NOTION”:

(121N) Det var som en besettelse, han satte meg i brann. (LBK, SK01HaEs04) - **classified as category** “*abstract notion*”

(122N) Han tok en pause som varte i det som føltes som en evighet, før han med overdreven tydelighet fortsatte. (LBK, SK01AnBi01) - **classified as category** “*abstract notion*”

(123N) Jeg tar faktisk tilbudet som en fornærmelse. (LBK, SK01ChTr01) - **classified as category** “*abstract notion*”

“HUMAN”/”AGE”:

(1124N) Jeg ser Frank Capras og Howard Hawks filmer på samme måte som et barn ser opp til sine foreldre ... (LBK, SK01AaSt01) – **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

(125N) Hun sovnet inntil mitt bryst som et pikebarn. (LBK, SK01BeBe01) - **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

(126N) Jeg er stolt , jeg er kry som en unge. (LBK, SK01AgSu01) - **classified as a category “human”, sub-category “age”**

“HUMAN”/”PROFESSION”:

(127N) Så løftet han foten , forsiktig som en arkeolog nå, den ble hengende litt igjen. (LBK, SK01SaLa01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “profession”**

(128N) Den luringen ... jeg beveget meg mot utgangen, men var så svimmel at jeg gikk med brede skritt, som en matros, for ikke å falle. (LBK, SK04JeVi01) - **classified as “human”, sub-category “profession”**

(129N) Hun var presis som en kirurg. (LBK, SK01TvCh01) - **classified as “human”, sub-category “profession”**

“HUMAN”/”OCCUPATION”:

(130N) Som en villmann hyttet han inn i halvmørket med en blåkald neve. (LBK, SK01BrTo01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

(131N) Hun følte seg som en bløffmaker og en elendig skuespiller. (LBK, SK01KnSv01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

(132N) Denne gangen lusker jeg meg ut som en tjuv. (LBK, SK01EeHa02) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

(133N) Jeg bestemte meg for å leve i skogen som en eremitt, en persona non grata, frem til krigen tok slutt eller jeg fant en vei ut av landet eller ble kastet ut i psykosen eller drept. (LBK, SK01RiJo01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “occupation”**

“HUMAN”/“STATUS”:

(134N) Ikke at ekteskapet deres hadde holdt uansett, at de gikk så langt som å gifte seg og få barn, det bare ble sånn , for han var hele tiden mer som en bror for henne , selv om hun en stund hadde ønsket at det ikke var tilfelle . (LBK, SK01KrBe02) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

(135N) Han rakk de butte armene frem som en mor etter et druknende barn. (LBK, SK01AuKu01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

(136N) Opplevelsen var uforglemmelig fordi han omtalte alt som en bestefar. (LBK, SA03PaKa01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

(137N) Hun er som en datter for Rameshwar. (LBK, SK01EiEl01) – **classified as “human”, sub-category “status”**

“NATURE”/“ANIMAL”:

(138N) Hun summet rundt som en bie og opparbeidet reserver, både i forhold til folk , med hyggelige bemerkninger og postkort til jul , og i form av halve okser og lam i leid fryserihylle på Aktien og kasser med epler og sekker med poteter i kjelleren om høsten. (LBK, SK01LiTo01) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(139N) Han stod på et ben med brystet hevet, øynene lysende av overlegenhet og gol som en hane, han humpet rundt med hendene på ryggen og nikkende hodet, stoppet opp og kikket mistenksomt på henne med de svarte øynene sine, skrek som en kråke, før han sluttet med å gni seg kurrende som en due inntil henne. (LBK, SK01KnKa01) – **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(140N) Jeg spreller som en fisk på bunnen . (LBK, SK01BoKa01) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

(141N) En mor , hun er som en , som en løvinne ... (LBK, SK01NiRa01) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “animal”**

“NATURE”/”PLANT”:

(142N) Naturen er som en blomst som folder ut sine blader og kronblader. (LBK, SK01GaJo02) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “plant”**

(143N) En by har kanskje samme struktur som et tre i matematisk forstand, foreslo Petter. (LBK, SK01LaTo01) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “plant”**

(144N) Hun folder seg ut som en rose, sier han og viker ikke tilbake for en poetisk klisjé. (LBK, SK01FaKn02) – **classified as “nature”, sub-category “plant”**

“NATURE”/”NATURAL PHENOMENON”:

(145N) Når verket er ferdig, elsker forfattere å si at det kom som en flom. (LBK, SK01NiTo01) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural phenomenon”**

(146N) Jeg kjente kvalmen komme rullende som en flodbølge. (LBK, SK01MeJa01) - **classified as “nature”, sub-category “natural phenomenon”**

(147N) Og Norgun ble fjorten og vill som en orkan. (LBK, SK01LiMa01) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural phenomenon*”

(148N) Du strøk forbi meg som en vind i regnet, jeg gikk etter deg, men fant deg aldri igjen. (LBK, SK01ErEr01) – classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural phenomenon*”

“NATURE”/“NATURAL OBJECT”:

(149N) I full sving med arbeidet kunne likevel leden brått komme over ham som en sky som formørket himmelen. (LBK, SK01BjKe01) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural object*”

(150N) Kanskje hadde han ventet en vanskelig avskjed, mannen som inntil i går aldri hadde sett denne kvinnen som på så uventet vis hadde gitt seg hen til ham, han strålte iallfall som en sol etter at Ingrid hadde sagt disse ordene. (LBK, SK01DaAr02) - classified as “*nature*”, sub-category “*natural object*”

“MAN-MADE OBJECTS”:

(151N) Jeg var spiss som en blyant. (LBK, SK01AgSu01) - classified as category “*man-made object*”

(152N) En skygge, skarp som en kniv, splittet lyset. (LBK, SK01BjKe01) - classified as category “*man-made object*”

(153N) Men Mørket lyttet ikke, det var Ricardo og meg han var ute etter , han tok enda et skritt mot oss , sparket Anita til side - som en filledukke traff hun nettingdøren og ble liggende ubevegelig. (LBK, SK01BriT01) - classified as category “*man-made object*”

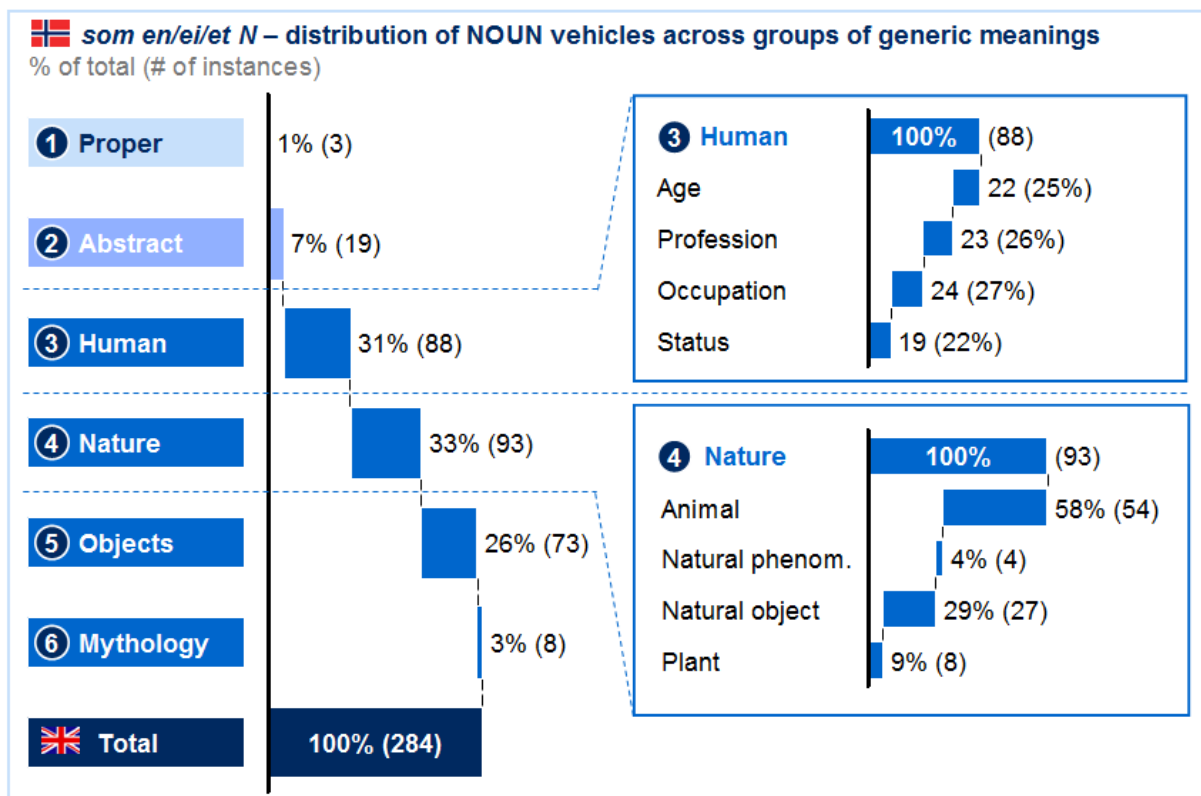
“MYTHOLOGY”:

(154N) Han ser ut som en engel, så lyst hår, så fin hud. (LBK, SK01ArIn01) - **classified as “mythology”**

(155N) Vi glemmer ikke den tause flokken av mørke frakker som sto på land og betraktet dykkeren med den store , uhyggelige hjelmen som med jevne mellomrom steg opp av et hull i isen som en draug... (LBK, SK01AlKa03) – **classified as “mythology”**

(156N) Hun hadde kraft og kondis som jeg jo bare kunne drømme om , hun var tretti centimeter kortere , nesten tretti kilo lettere og likevel så godt trent og sterk i den lille kroppen at jeg egentlig burde gått ned på knærne og tilbedt henne som en gudinne. (LBK, SK01SwKu01) - **classified as “mythology”**

Figure 3.7: Distribution of noun vehicles in the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile, grouped by generic meanings



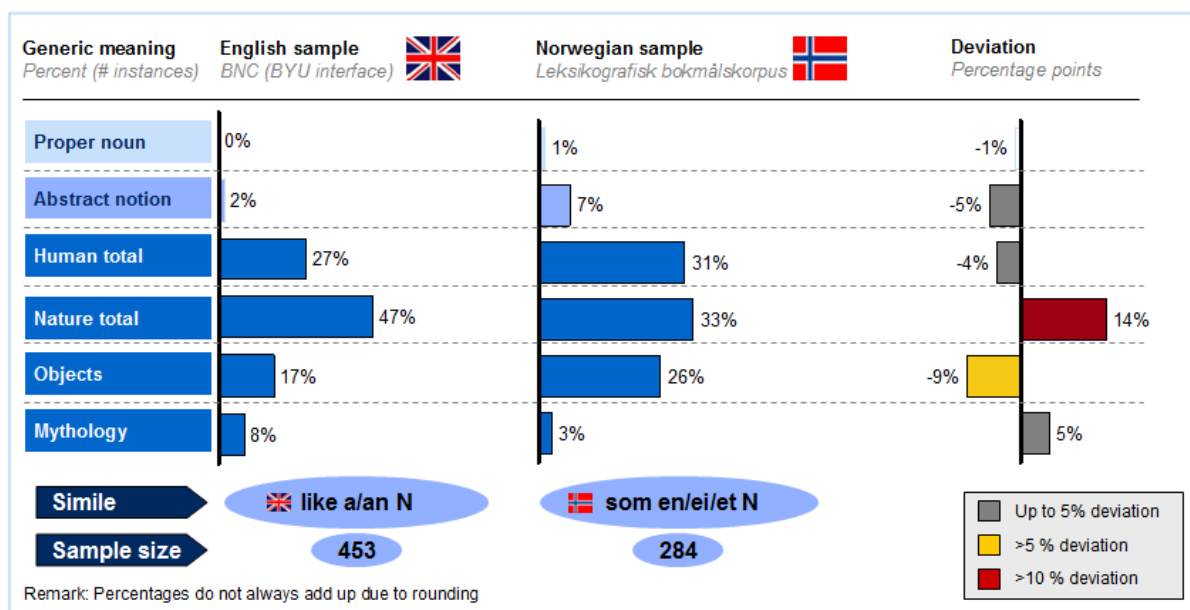
As we can see from the figure above, in the Norwegian sample the distribution analysis revealed the following results: “nature” (33%, or 93 instances out of 284), “human” (31%, or 88 instances out of 284), and “man-made objects” (26%, or 73 instances out of 284) are the top three categories. Within the “nature” category the sub-category of “animal” is the largest

one with 58% (54 instances out of 93) of share, followed by “natural objects” with 29% (27 instances out of 93), while within the “human” category the sub-categories of “occupation”, “profession” and “age” follow very closely one after another in their distribution: “occupation” 27% (24 instances out of 88), “profession” 26% (23 instances out of 88), “age” 25% (22 instances out of 88).

3.1.6 Comparison of noun vehicles in the English *like a/an N* and the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* by their distribution across generic meanings

As we found out, both English and Norwegian similes of the *like a/an N* type operate with nouns the majority of which belong to the “human”, “nature” and “objects” categories of classification by generic meanings. This means that both in the English and the Norwegian language comparisons of the kind *like an infant*, *like a child*, *like an old woman*, *like a mother*, etc. are very common, making reference to human beings in different levels of maturity, development, professional belonging or status, and comparisons like *like a tiger*, *like an elephant*, *like an eagle*, *like a whirlpool*, *like a stone* and many others, pointing out various prominent qualities of a comparandum by comparing it with a comparatum from the world of animals, birds, natural phenomena or objects of the nature.

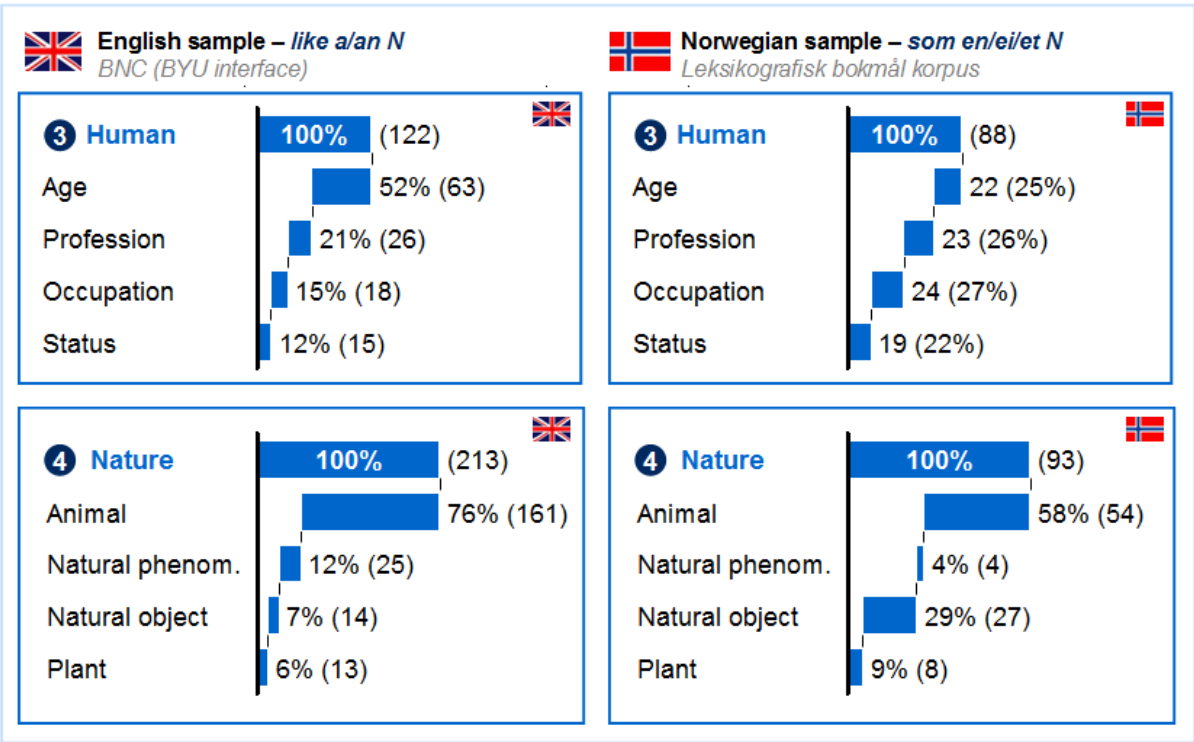
Figure 3.8: Comparison of the English and Norwegian samples



In fact, as the analysis in the figure above shows, these three categories are by far the most frequent ones with 47% (“nature”), 27% (“human”) and 17% (“objects”) in the English sample and 33% (“nature”), 31% (“human”) and 26% (“objects”) in the Norwegian sample. Based on these results one can perhaps say that the two languages have a very similar picture of the world, share a lot of common experiences and observations which are the major drivers for choosing vehicles in idiomatic comparisons.

The sub-distribution within the “nature” category, which is the largest category in both of the samples, reveals that the “animal” sub-category is the largest one in both *like a/an N* and *som en/ei/et N*. There is, however, a deviation – the “animal” sub-category seems to be more frequent in the English simile (its result is by 17% higher than that of the Norwegian simile).

Figure 3.9: Sub-distribution of nouns by groups of generic meanings within the “human” and the “nature” categories



All in all, based on the analysis carried out I can conclude that both the English *like a/an N* and the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* operate with the same types of vehicles.

Let us consider for instance the word *cow* in the English idiomatic language. What meaning does it have? What is the connotation of comparing someone with a cow in the English or Norwegian culture? According to Collins Cobuild dictionary, “if someone describes a woman as a cow, they dislike her and think that she is unpleasant or stupid” (Collins Cobuild, 2008) – it has a negative, offensive connotation. According to the Norwegian Bokmål- og Nynorskordboka, a cow (“ku” in the Norwegian language), besides its direct meaning of an animal, also refers to a “klosset person” – a clumsy person. Let us look at some examples from the corpora:

(157E) I felt like a cow being fattened to produce full-cream milk, then stuck on a milking machine.' It was impossible to do anything, as there was always either a baby or a machine attached to me. It became increasingly frustrating, while the health visitor and the NCT person began to regard me, unfortunately, as something of a professional challenge. (BNC-BYU, H07)

(158E) You choose to marry this rank cabbage? This walking midden? Have I raised you like a cow, for the slaughter? I forbid it. I don't give my permission. That's an end. I've said my say.

(159N) Han er en fet faen. Diger som en ku. Oppfører seg som en fordømt sjeik. (LBK, SK01StOI01)

Now compare this perception of a cow with how it is being treated in the Indian culture, where a cow has a very important role, being the vehicle of several deities or a wish-fulfilling Kamadhenu.

From that point of view we can perhaps conclude that using similar types of vehicles in constructing an allegorical comparison indicates proximity of languages and cultures.

3.2 Contrastive analysis of the English as ADJ as N simile

In this part of my analysis I investigated how the *as ADJ as N* simile frame operates. The set of tools I used are the same as the ones outlined in section 3.1.: the ENPC, the LBK and the BNC (BYU), AntConc 3.2. and MS excel for manual data processing. My approach is as follows (cf. Analysis 7-15, section 1.3.1):

- establish and analyze the most frequent translation correspondences of *as ADJ as N* in Norwegian;
- calculate the mutual correspondence of these two constructions based on Altenberg's model (1999);
- analyze noun and adjective vehicles in both English and Norwegian.

3.2.1 Translation of the English *as ADJ as N* into Norwegian

First of all I am now going to establish and analyze the most frequent translation correspondences of *as ADJ as N* in the Norwegian translations, extracted from the ENPC. My search string with *as* in the main search box and *and + 2 as* in the first filter box and *and + 3 a/an* in the second filter box allows me to perform a very accurate search sampling all four-word clusters where *as* takes the first and the third positions, second place reserved for any word where later on I am going to look for an adjective and the fourth position is restricted to the indefinite article *a/an* setting the following word to be a noun. The search query performed in both the fiction and non-fiction parts of the corpus returned 262 and 12 occurrences respectively, amounting to 274 in total which were further processed manually. Eventually I was left with 28 relevant instances I could further work with. Below are some examples of irrelevant instances that were eliminated during manual processing:

(160E) "Yes," Mrs P. said, "he was a gifted painter as well as a singer. (ENPC, OS1) – *as well as* is a conjunction having the meaning of “in addition to something”

(161E) From the beginning of the third stage and for as long as a member State has a derogation, paragraph 1 shall apply by analogy to the exchange rate policy of that Member State. (ENPC, MAAS1) – *as long as* is a conjunction having the meaning of “provided that”

(162E) An ache, which he was not old enough or bold enough to recognize as boredom, would seize him **as soon as** the cloth was once more gathered into its folds, and the rest of the weekend had to be endured. (ENPC, AB1) – ***as soon as* is a conjunction having the meaning of “immediately”**

(163E) **As far as he** was concerned, nothing had changed. (ENPC, AB1) – ***as far as* is a conjunction having the meaning of “in his opinion”**

Out of my 28 relevant instances 23 were classified as simple similes,

(164E) Alice lay **as stiff as a rod**, staring at the shadowed ceiling where lights from the cars in the road fled and chased, her ears assaulted, her mind appalled. (ENPC, DL2) – **simple simile**

(165E) When Mr. Wormwood arrived back from the garage that evening his face was **as dark as a thundercloud** and somebody was clearly for the high-jump pretty soon. (ENPC, RD1) – **simple simile**

while the remaining 5 – as elaborated ones:

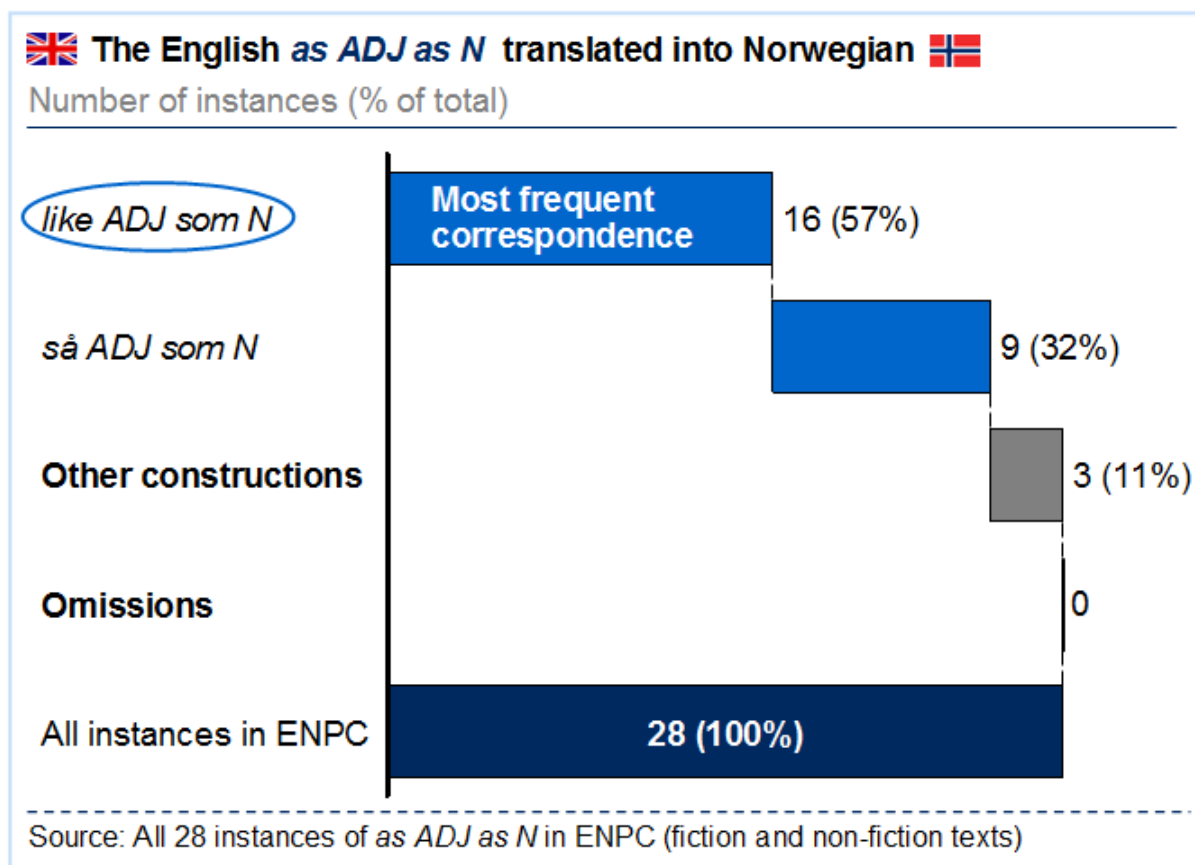
(166E) Their son's old room was neatly made up, **as sleek as a room [in a Holiday Inn]**. (ENPC, AT1) – **elaborated simile, i.e. the bracketed fragment is crucial for understanding the comparison *as sleek as a room*, which does not make sense otherwise**

(167E) No, just a quiet entry — or **as quiet as a [roval] entry** can ever be — of a very stout, shortish man in uniform and a blaze of orders, and a lady of great beauty, wearing enough jewels, thought the Senator, to finance a railway. (ENPC, RDA1) – **elaborated simile, i.e. the adjective in front of the noun vehicle *entry* modifies it as a comparison domain**

(168E) If the wind comes up, it brings you a smell **as tangible as dust [stinging in your nose]**. (ENPC, ABR1) – **elaborated simile, i.e. the participial construction in the brackets modifies the noun vehicle *dust* turning it into a specific sensation that makes *dust* tangible – the feeling of it stinging in one’s nose.**

I got the following results with regard to the most frequent Norwegian translation correspondences of the *as ADJ as N* simile:

Figure 3.10: Norwegian translation correspondences of the English *as ADJ as N* simile



As we can see from the figure, the most frequent counterpart of *as ADJ as N* in the Norwegian translations is *like ADJ som N* with 16 occurrences out of 28 (57%):

(169E) Stone **as lived-in as old clothes**. (ENPC, ABR1)

(169N) Stein **like velbrukt som gamle klær**. (ENPC, ABR1T)

(170E) If the wind comes up, it brings you a smell **as tangible as dust stinging in your nose**. (ENPC, ABR1)

(170N) Hvis det blåser opp vind, får den en lukt, **like håndgripelig som støv, til å prikke deg i nesen**. (ENPC, ABR1T)

(171E) He wasn't sure how it had happened, but lately pita had grown to seem **as American as hot dogs**. (ENPC, AT1)

(171N) Han visste ikke hvordan det var gått til, men i det siste så det ut til at pita var blitt **like amerikansk som hot dogs**. (ENPC, AT1T)

Så ADJ som N has been established as the second most frequent translation counterpart of *as ADJ as N*, with 9 out of 28 occurrences (32%):

(172E) Their son's old room was neatly made up, **as sleek as a room in a Holiday Inn**. (ENPC, AT1)

(172N) Sønnens gamle værelse var pent gjort i stand, **så sirlig som et hotellrom**. (ENCP, AT1T)

(173E) No, just a quiet entry — or **as quiet as a royal entry** can ever be — of a very stout, shortish man in uniform and a blaze of orders, and a lady of great beauty, wearing enough jewels, thought the Senator, to finance a railway. (ENPC, RDA1)

(173N) Nei, bare en rolig inntreden — eller **så rolig som en kongelig inntreden** kan være — en liten, meget tykkfallen mann i uniform med et dryss av medaljer, og en strålende vakker dame som bar nok smykker, tenkte senatoren, til å finansiere en hel jernbane. (ENPC, RDA1T)

(174E) Our valley hibernated, and I missed the sounds which marked the passing of each day almost **as precisely as a clock**... (ENPC, PM1)

(174N) Dalen vår hadde gått i vinterdvale, og jeg savnet de lydene som daglig markerte tiden nesten **så presist som en klokke**... (ENPC, PM1T)

(175E) Buying a loaf of bread became an expedition lasting nearly two hours — into Ménerbes and back without seeing a single moving vehicle, the white humps of parked cars standing **as patiently as sheep** by the side of the hill leading up to the village. (ENPC, PM1)

(175N) Innkjøp av et brød ble en to timers ekspedisjon — inn til Menerbes og tilbake igjen uten å se et eneste kjøretøy i bevegelse. De hvite klumpene av parkerte biler sto **så tålmodige som sauer** langs bakken som førte opp til landsbyen. (ENPC, PM1T)

(176E) It works on the principle that the pursuer will not be able to change direction **as efficiently as the prey**. (ENPC, DM1)

(176N) Den er basert på prinsippet om at forfølgeren ikke greier å forandre retning **så effektivt som byttet**. (ENPC, DM1T)

Finally, the last three cases represent other patterns including transformation of the simile construction or replacement with another simile frame or a set idiomatic expression:

(177E) **As cold as hell**. (ENPC, ABR1)

(177N) Kaldt **som faen**. (ENPC, ABR1T)

(178E) Alice lay **as stiff as a rod**, staring at the shadowed ceiling where lights from the cars in the road fled and chased, her ears assaulted, her mind appalled. (ENPC, DL2)

(178N) Alice lå stiv **som en stokk** og stirret opp i taket, der lys fra billykter flyktet og jagde hverandre, ørene hennes prøvde å lukke seg mot angrepet, hun prøvde å lukke seg, i avsky. (ENPC, DL2T)

(179E) He's **as cool as a cucumber**, thought the Senator, but he did not find himself particularly cool after he had read what was written, in a very fine hand, on the document — for it could not be otherwise described. (ENPC, RDA1)

(179N) **Han er en kald fisk**, tenkte senatoren, men selv var han ikke særlig kald etter at han hadde lest det som var skrevet med vakker håndskrift i dokumentet — for annerledes kunne man ikke betegne det. (ENPC, RDA1T)

As we can see, the most frequent correspondence of English *as ADJ as N* is Norwegian *like ADJ som N*. However we have to keep in mind that this conclusion is limited to the present research data: the sample size (only 28 instances) does not allow making any far-reaching conclusions.

3.2.2 Translation of the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* into English

As was established in 3.2.1, the most frequent correspondence of the English *as ADJ as N* simile in Norwegian is the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* construction. In this section analyze how *like ADJ som N* is translated into English.

In response to my search query (in my search string I have used only one filter restriction – and *and +2 som* with *like* in the main search box in order to be able to capture all the cases without the indefinite article as well and by doing so to get a bigger sample) and after manual processing was left with 17 relevant instances out of 83 from both fiction and non-fiction. Out of those 17 instances 16 were translated with *as ADJ as N*:

(180N) I det samme kommer Tjukkens ansikt til syne, han kikker fram bak speilet og ser ut på Herman, og Tjukken har en sånn trist farge i øynene, nesten **like trist som Damen med maurene**. (ENPC, LSC1)

(180E) He peeks out from behind the mirror and sees Herman, and Fats has one of those sad colors in his eyes, almost **as sad as the Lady with the Fleas**. (ENPC, LSC1T)

(181N) Var jeg **like skrøpelig som kaffekoppen** som knapt tålte en fingers vekt? (ENPC, LSC2)

(182E) Was I **as fragile as the bone china cup** that barely tolerated a finger's pressure? (ENPC, LSC2T)

(183N) Hun så i samme retning bortover stranden og var **like dekorativ som et maleri fra århundreskiftet**. (ENPC, OEL1)

(183E) She looked in the same direction along the beach which was **as decorative as a painting from the turn of the century**. (ENPC, OEL1T)

(184N) Helen, kjære Helen, tenkte Reber, nå fraværende, fremdeles hvit som talkum i ansiktet, for øyeblikket **like urørlig som en skulptur**. (ENPC, OEL1)

(184E) Helen, dear Helen, thought Reber, now absent, her face still white as talcum, for the moment **as immobile as a sculpture**. (ENPC, OEL1T)

(185N) Han smilte ofte, men smilet forsvant **like fort som vårskyene foran sola**.(ENPC, MN1)

(185E) He smiled often, but the smile vanished **as quickly as the spring clouds before the sun**. (ENPC, MN1T)

(186N) Hun kjente ulykken nærme seg, **like raskt som uværsskyer samler seg på himmelen**.(ENPC, MN1)

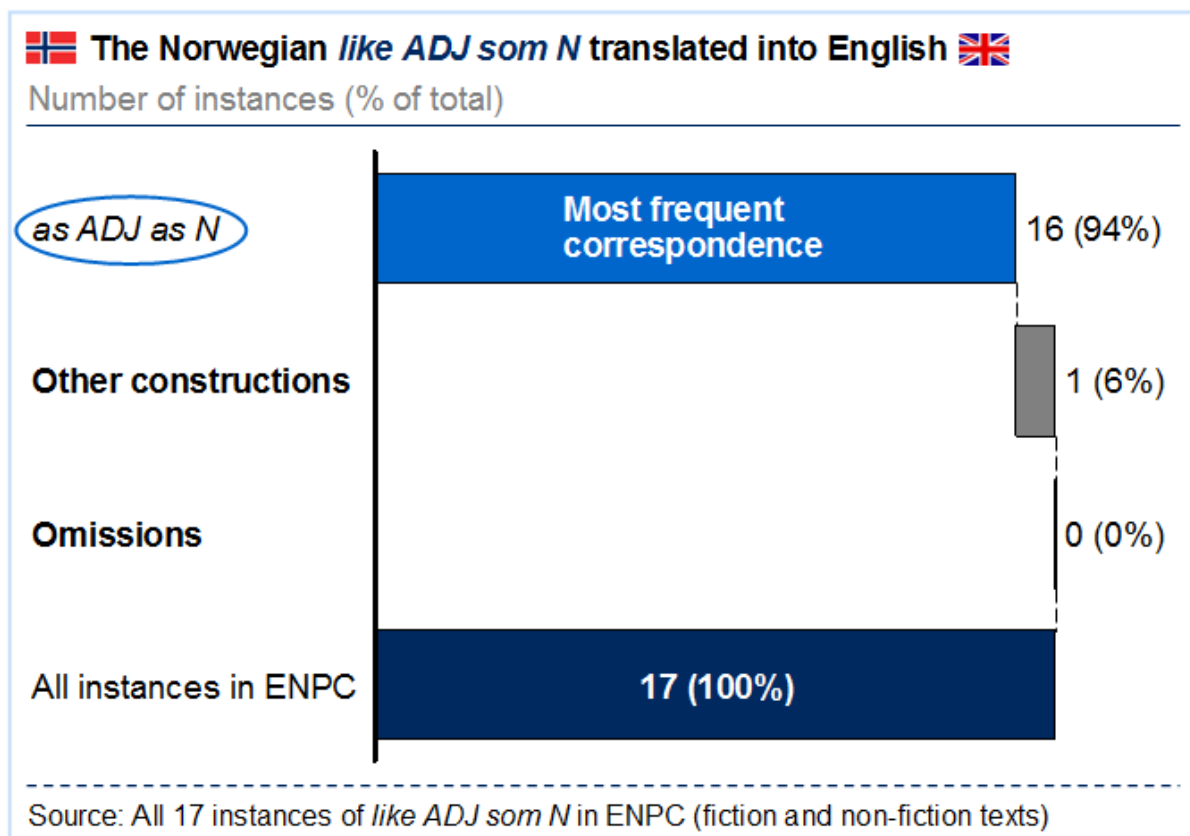
(186E) She felt disaster approaching, **as swiftly as storm clouds gather in the sky**. (ENPC, MN1T)

while in the one remaining case the simile construction was rendered by a set idiomatic expression:

(187N) Vårt forslag om å bryte er **like ufruktbart som såkorn på stengrunn**. (ENPC, KT1)

(187E) Our suggestion to break off **falls on deaf ears**. (ENPC, KT1T)

Figure 3.11: English translation correspondences of the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* simile

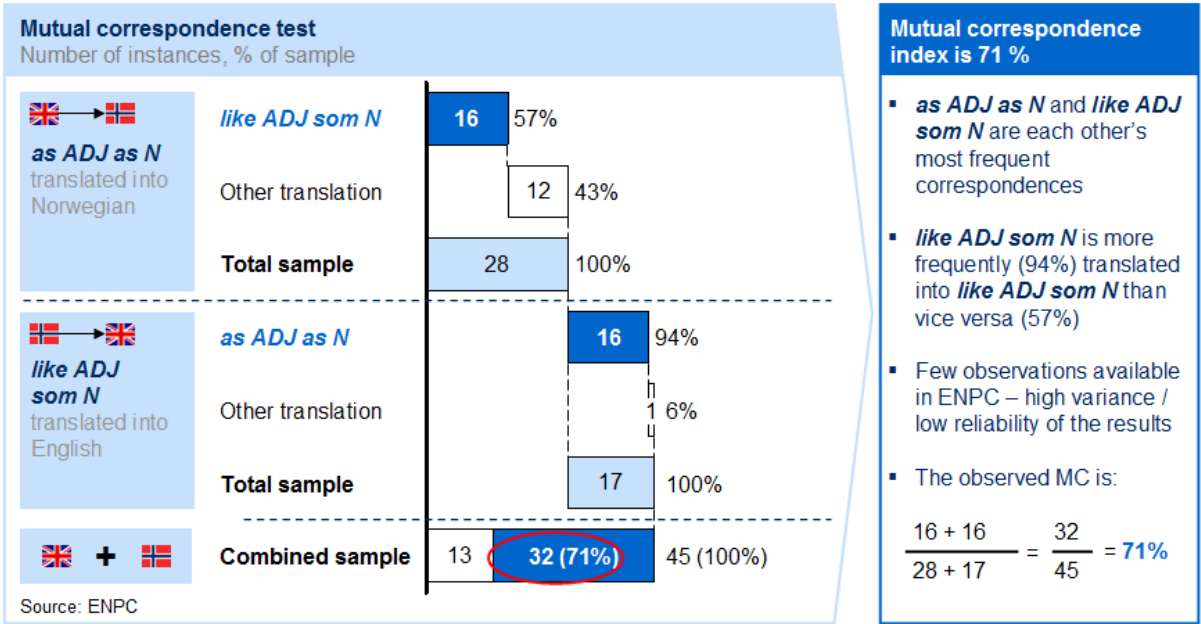


As we can see from the figure above, the most frequent translation correspondence of the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* is the English *as ADJ as N*. However, again, this sample is far too small to draw any conclusions. Nevertheless, I can say that in the course of this research where the ENPC was used as the main source of material I found out that *as ADJ as N* and *like ADJ som N* are each other's most frequent translation correspondences in English and Norwegian.

3.2.3 Mutual correspondence of the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*

A mutual correspondence test by Altenberg's formula shows the following result for these two constructions:

Figure 3.12: Mutual correspondence of the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*



This result shows a high mutual correspondence of the two constructions (71%), which once again mathematically suggests that they are good cross-linguistic equivalents. This statement of course goes as far as we accept the limitations imposed by the sample size and should be tested again on the basis of a larger parallel English-Norwegian corpus.

3.2.4 Analysis of adjective group vehicles in the English as *ADJ as N*

The *as ADJ as N* simile frame differs from the *like a/an N* simile in the way that it operates with two different parts of speech as vehicles – adjective and noun – while the other one operates only with nouns.

My analysis of adjectives in the *as ADJ as N* simile is built upon a traditional classification of semantic categories of adjectives adopted from Biber et al. (2002:197).

Figure 3.13: Classification of semantic categories of adjectives by Biber et al. (2002:197)

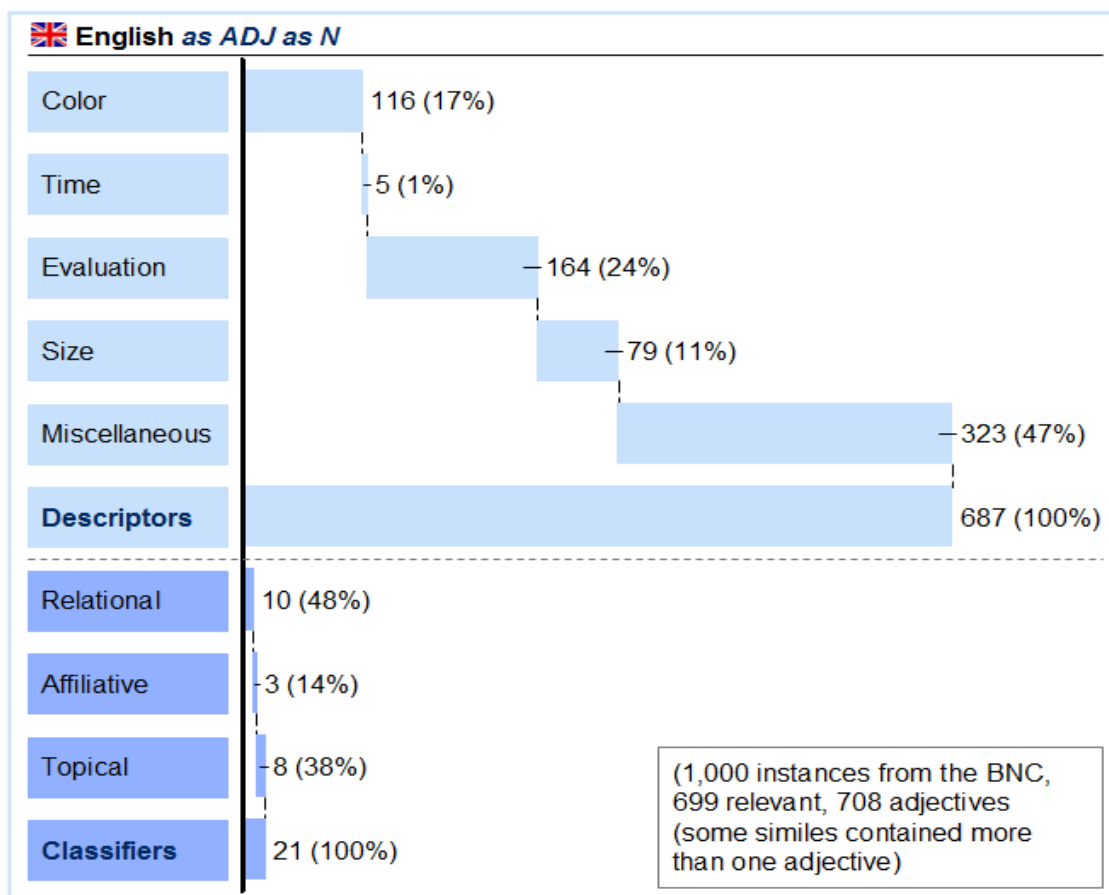
Adjectives are classified into one out of eight semantic groups		
Super class	Sematic Groups	Examples
Descriptors¹	① Color	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black ▪ Red ▪ Green
	② Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Big ▪ Long ▪ Thin
	③ Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chronology ▪ Age ▪ Frequency
	④ Evaluative/emotive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Judgement ▪ Emotion ▪ Emphasis
	⑤ Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cold ▪ Strong ▪ Empty
Classifiers	⑥ Relational/classificational/restrictive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete ▪ Standard ▪ Original
	⑦ Affiliative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chinese ▪ American ▪ African
	⑧ Topical/ other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal ▪ Medical ▪ Official

1 Some adjectives can be both classifiers and descriptors based on the context

- First of all the adjectives are classified as either descriptors or classifiers;
- Further, they fall into one of the following groups under the descriptors category: color (for adjectives describing color), size (for adjectives describing size, quantity or extent), time (chronology, age and frequency), evaluation (judgment, emotion, emphasis), miscellaneous (cover a lot of other characteristics); or into one of the following groups under the classifier category: relational/classificational/restrictive (referent in relation to other referents), affiliative (national or social group of a referent), topical/other (define subject area of a noun).

For the purposes of the present investigation I sampled 1000 random sentences from the British National Corpus. After manual processing to eliminate non-instances, I was left with 708 relevant instances. Out of this sample 687 instances of adjectives, or 97%, were classified as descriptors, while only 21 instances, or 3%, of the adjectives were categorized as classifiers (further distributed by the following sub-groups: relational, affiliative, topical). The figure below represents the results of the analysis and is followed by some examples from the BNC:

Figure 3.14: Distribution of adjective vehicles across semantic groups in the English *as ADJ as N*



“DESCRIPTOR” / “COLOR”:

(188E) Marissa, a tall cool girl with hair as dark as night, had been not only obviously very clever, but also -- alas -- very beautiful. (BNC-BYU, JXX) – **the adjective *dark* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-group “color”**

(189E) She watched him gazing amorously at those twin orbs, as white as marble, and as plump as pigeons.' (BNC-BYU, FPX) – **the adjective *white* in the first simile is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-group “color”**

(190E) Everything now is set in ice, mast-high, floating by, as green as emerald, as green as her eyes. (BNC-BYU, ADA) – **the adjective *green* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-groups of “color”**

“DESCRIPTOR” / “SIZE” includes adjectives denoting extent, quantity:

(191E) The scales across Fenna's shoulders and haunches were as large as dinner plates, and thick, heavy and dry -- they changed colour in different lights, from dull pewter through to a dark red, the colour of dried blood, or the murky green of the lower waters of the Amazon River. (BNC-BYU, A6J) – **the adjective *large* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-groups of “size”**

(192E) No wonder they're all as big as hares and smell like princes! (BNC-BYU, EWC) – **the adjective *big* is a descriptor, sub-group of “size”**

(193E) Then they'd be as thick as thieves again. (BNC-BYU, GUF) - **the adjective *thick* is a descriptor, sub-group of “size”**

“DESCRIPTOR” / “TIME” includes adjectives denoting chronology, age, frequency:

(194E) Isabel lowered her hands and held them out to him in an invitation that was as ancient as womanhood (BNC-BYU, HH1) – **the adjective *ancient* is a descriptor, sub-group of “time”**

(195E) Necromunda seemed almost as remote as childhood (BNC-BYU, CJJ) – **the adjective *remote* is a descriptor, sub-group of “time”**

(196E) Nguyen Seth was as old as Death. (BNC-BYU, CH0) – **the adjective *old* is a descriptor, sub-group of “time”**

“**DESCRIPTOR**” / “**EVALUATION**” includes adjectives denoting judgment, emotion, emphasis:

(197E) When she asked him if they had really been as beautiful as angels , he had told her abruptly to look at the portraits, just as now, sensing that she had been hounded out of the house, he had given her something to do, a task to occupy her hands and head. (BNC-BYU, H8X) – **the adjective *beautiful* is a descriptor, sub-group of “evaluation”**

(198E) The OEO Agent was clever and courageous, but not complicated: as long as I'm useful to her, Ace thought, and do what she wants, she'll be as nice as pie. (BNC-BYU, F9X) – **the adjective *nice* is a descriptor, sub-group of “evaluation”**

(199E) Leo, bless him, was as ugly as sin; and James had been referred to by more than one gossip columnist as a sex symbol. (BNC-BYU, CKB) – **the adjective *ugly* is a descriptor, sub-group of “evaluation”**

“**DESCRIPTOR**” / “**MISCELLANEOUS**” includes all other adjectives that do not fit into any of the previous sub-groups:

(200E) Outside, the sky was dusky-black and the air as warm as wool. (BNC-BYU, FS8) – **the adjective *warm* is a descriptor, sub-group of “miscellaneous”**

(201E) Well don't I know just the place we'll be made as welcome as Christmas! (BNC-BYU, HTN) – **the adjective *welcome* is a descriptor, sub-group of “miscellaneous”**

(202E) Painters are as superstitious as fishermen. (BNC-BYU, HWP) – **the adjective *superstitious* is a descriptor, sub-group of “miscellaneous”**

In the category of descriptors the largest sub-group is “miscellaneous” (323 instances out of 687, or 47%), followed by “evaluation” (164 instances out of 687, or 24%) and “color” (116 instances out of 687, or 17%).

In the category of classifiers, the sub-group of relational adjectives is by far the largest with 19 instances out of 21, while the remaining 2 instances are equally split between the sub-groups “affiliative” and “topical”, each being represented by one instance.

“CLASSIFIER” / “RELATIONAL”:

(203E) The reasons for it were as old and as primal as mankind itself. (BNC-BYU, JY7) – **the adjective *primal* is a classifier, sub-group of “relational”**

(204E) The two men are as different as chalk and cheese. (BNC-BYU, HTX) – **the adjective *different* is a classifier, sub-group of “relational”**

(205E) That made money in a way as important as guns -- if they could find enough. (BNC-BYU, FRJ) – **the adjective *important* is a classifier, sub-group of “relational”**

“CLASSIFIER” / “AFFILIATIVE”:

(206E) They're really about as Christian as headhunters. (BNC-BYU, CHG) – **the adjective *Christian* is a classifier, sub-group of “affiliative”**

“CLASSIFIER” / “TOPICAL/OTHER”:

(207E) Jealousy, he thought was as physical as fear; the same dryness of the mouth, the thudding heart, the restlessness which destroyed appetite and peace. (BNC-BYU, G3E) – **the adjective *physical* is a classifier, sub-group of “topical”**

An interesting observation came up during this analysis with regard to which semantic groups of descriptive adjectives tend to usually occur with which groups of nouns.

The adjectives of the “evaluation” group seem to occur most often with the following categories of nouns: proper nouns (in 44 cases out of 164, or 27%), nouns of the “human” group of generic meaning (in 37 cases out of 164, or 23%), abstract nouns (in 30 cases out of 164, or 18%). This means that you are more likely to see adjectives denoting evaluation together with proper nouns or nouns denoting a human:

(208E) They were as ugly as sin and they had no conversation, and he missed them already. (BNC-BYU, FYY).

In the example above the evaluative adjective *ugly* in the simile of *as ADJ as N* type is used together with an abstract noun *sin*. This kind of combination (evaluative adjective + abstract noun) is observed in 18% cases when an adjective and a noun of the mentioned groups occur together in a simile.

(209E) His kitchens and dining room were open once more and he was bustling about, as jolly as Mr Fezziwig, envisaging happy hordes of merry luncheon-takers. (BNC-BYU, H8A)

In the example above the evaluative adjective *jolly* is used together with a proper noun *Mr Fezziwig*, referring to a character from Charles Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, who is portrayed as a happy and foppish man. Such a combination when an evaluative adjective occurs together with a proper noun has been observed in 27% of cases.

(210E) 'You think they drink this much?' Mrs smiled at her husband.' They are **as bad as sailors**, Colonel,' she said. (BNC-BYU, H9N)

In the example (210E) the evaluative adjective *bad* is used together with the noun *sailors* which belongs to the generic group of "human". Such an occurrence has been observed in 23% of cases.

In the group of adjectives denoting color, which is the largest group after evaluative adjectives (116 instances out of 708, or 17%) the adjectives displayed the following "preferences" in terms of nouns: in 62% of cases (or 72 occurrences out of 116) they occurred together with a noun from the generic group of "nature":

(211E) And you show it by putting in for a transfer behind my back,' he roared, his face **as black as thunder**. (BNC-BYU, FPX)

(212E) Billy looked terrible. His face was yellow, and in contrast his eyes were **as red as rubies**. (BNC-BYU, B3J)

In the two examples above the adjectives denoting color *black* and *red* are used in a simile together with the nouns *thunder* and *rubies* which belong to the generic group of "nature". This is a very common combination and according to the observation sample of 116 instances it occurred in 62% of cases.

(213E) Ewen went as white as paper, and jerked upright in his chair. (BNC-BYU, CKF)

(214E) As she stood there, swaying slightly, her cheeks as pale as parchment, she was aware that Vass was gesturing towards the sofa and inviting her in a tone of mock-concern, 'Why don't you take a seat? You look a little shaken. (BNC-BYU, H97)

In the examples above the adjectives of color, *white* and *pale*, are used together with the nouns from the generic group of “man-made objects”. Such combinations (adjectives of color + man-made objects) were observed in 30% of analyzed cases.

In the last significant group of adjectives – adjectives of size – I have observed the following trends: in most cases (28 out of 79, or 35%) such adjectives occurred together with the nouns of the “nature” group, followed by combinations with the nouns of the “man-made objects” group (23 out of 79, or 29%) and of the “human” group (17 out of 79, or 21%):

(215E) And rats as big as cats! I was astonished by the power with which my German crashed out of me, as if in millennial anger at having been silenced for so long. (BNC-BYU, FYV)

(216E) They walked along corridors so narrow that they had to turn sideways, and through corridors as wide as barns. (BNC-BYU, F9X)

(217E) We're as thick as thieves, the pair of us. (BNC-BYU, AN7)

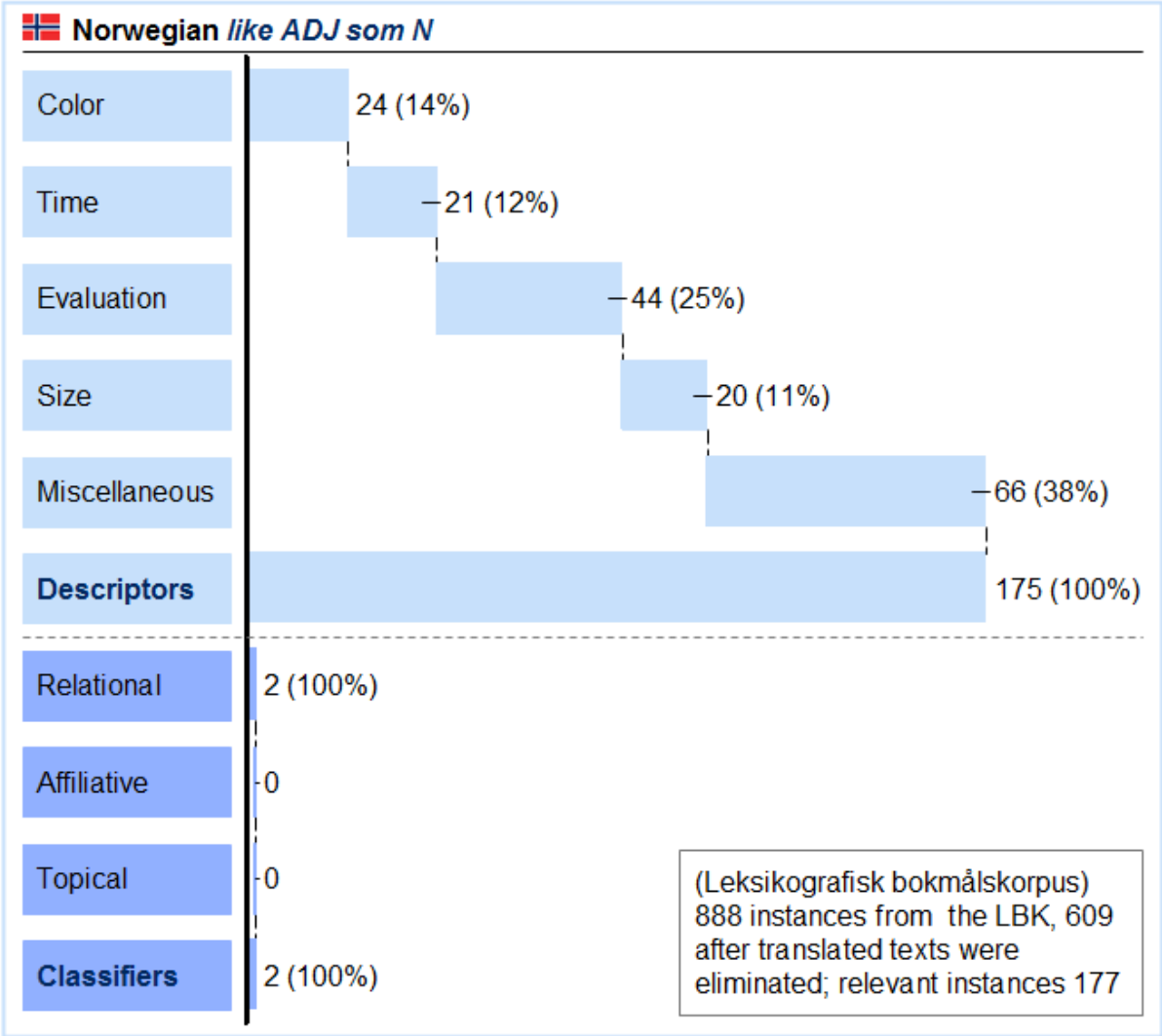
3.2.5 Analysis of adjective group vehicles in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*

In this section I analyzed the adjective group vehicles in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* simile.

First of all I sampled the data from the LBK. My ambition was to get a sample of 1000 instances, however the search returned only 888. After manual processing to eliminate the

translated texts, the sample size decreased to 609 instances, and then, having further processed the remaining results in AntConc and my excel spreadsheet, I was eventually left with 177 relevant examples. The adjectives were analyzed using the same semantic categories as applied to the adjectives in the previous section. Out of 177 adjectives 175 (99%) were defined as descriptors and only 2 instances were classifiers:

Figure 3.15: Distribution of adjective vehicles across semantic groups in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*



Below are some examples from the LBK:

“DESCRIPTOR” / “COLOR”:

(218N) Han forsøkte å sparke avtrykket i stykker, ville at det skulle være like hvitt som snøen rundt, men støvlesnutene bare gled over isen. (LBK, SK01HeLe01) – **the adjective *hvitt* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-group “color”**

(219N) Tom og Eva var like mørke som nord-afrikanerne, men hjernene var hvite. (LBK, SK01BaOI02) – **the adjective *mørke* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-group “color”**

(220N) Øynene hennes var ikke gyllenbrune lenger; de var like røde som haikjeften. (LBK, SK01BrEI01) – **the adjective *røde* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-groups of “color”**

“DESCRIPTOR” / “SIZE” includes adjectives denoting extent, quantity:

(221N) Blikket så at skyskraper etter skyskraper skal rase ned i asfalten , at et sprutregn av knust vindusglass skal hagle ned over forskremte dødelige, at et maksimalt folkekaos skal oppstå i gatene, at dødsbranner like høye som skyskraperne selv skal sleike luften. (LBK, SK01BeBe01) – **the adjective *høye* is a descriptor, belonging to the sub-groups of “size”**

(222N) Tornadoer og tordenbyger, regnskurer med dråper like digre som knyttnever. (LBK, SK01BIKi01) – **the adjective *digre* is a descriptor, sub-group of “size”**

(223N) Jeg var like fersk som en bolle på morrakvisten, det eneste jeg gjorde var å skrive rapporter like lange som romaner i den saken der. (LBK, SK01DaKj01) - **the adjective *lange* is a descriptor, sub-group of “size”**

“DESCRIPTOR” / “TIME” includes adjectives denoting chronology, age, frequency:

(224N) En gang var øya en spydspiss ut mot verden , et sted der tepper fra Calcutta og kokosnøtter fra Brasil hadde vært **like vanlig som krumkaker til jul**. (LBK, SK01BaLi01) – **the adjective *vanlig* is a descriptor, sub-group of “time” (denotes frequency)**

(225N) ...disse dagene, som nå var blitt **like fjerne som barndommen hans** ... og på ny denne susingen...(LBK, SK01JaRo02.1777) – **the adjective *fjern* is a descriptor, sub-group of “time”**

(226N) Gode låter var **like sjeldne som flygende tallerkener**. (LBK, SK01KjJa02) – **the adjective *sjeldne* is a descriptor, sub-group of “time”**

“DESCRIPTOR” / “EVALUATION” includes adjectives denoting judgment, emotion, emphasis:

(227N) Jeg drømmer om at sønnen min skal gå på alle de riktige skolene og å bli like smart og **like flink som Jonas Gahr Støre**, og gjerne enda flinkere, og gjerne mindre arrogant...(LBK, SK01AaSt01) – **the adjective *flink* is a descriptor, sub-group of “evaluation”**

(228N) Men smedlærlingen var **like listig som slangen** ... (LBK, SK01AlKa02.2390) – **the adjective *listig* is a descriptor, sub-group of “evaluation”**

(229N) Hun kom fram til klosteret og klatret opp på det forlatte alteret, der hun fødte en liten gutt **like vakker som fullmånen**. (LBK, SK01AlRa01) – **the adjective *vakker* is a descriptor, sub-group of “evaluation”**

“DESCRIPTOR” / “MISCELLANEOUS” which, as has been mentioned previously, includes all other adjectives that do not fit into any of the previous sub-groups:

(230N) Alle løftene hennes om at hun aldri, aldri, aldri ville svikte meg var **like falske som øyenvippene hennes**. (LBK, SK01AnFr01) – **the adjective *falske* is a descriptor, sub-group of “miscellaneous”**

(231N) I bakgrunnen var det utelyd, like ubestemmelig som fargen på gulvteppet. (LBK, SK01BaGu01.148) – **the adjective *ubestemmelig* is a descriptor, sub-group of “miscellaneous”**

(232N) Kjærligheten føles like sterk som lojalitet. (LBK, SK01BiGa01.4753) – **the adjective *sterk* is a descriptor, sub-group of “miscellaneous”**

The largest sub-group in the category of descriptors is “miscellaneous” (66 instances out of 175, or 38%), followed by “evaluation” (44 instances out of 175, or 25%) and “color” (24 instances out of 175, or 14%). The smallest sub-groups are “time” (21 instances out of 175, or 12%) and “size” (20 instances out of 175, or 11%)

The two instances where the adjective was seen as a classifier were both of the relational type.

“CLASSIFIER” / “RELATIONAL”:

(233N) Utfordringen var like åpenbar som nedlatenheten. (LBK, SK01FaKn02.4177) – **the adjective *åpenbar* is a classifier, sub-group of “relational”**

(234N) ...kontakt med et annet menneske er like viktig som mat og drikke. (LBK, SK01KjJa01.7900) – **the adjective *viktig* is a classifier, sub-group of “relational”**

As I mentioned earlier in this section, the sub-groups of affiliative and topical classifiers were not represented in the sample extracted from the LBK.

In the end of this section I would also like to discuss some interesting observations with regard to combinations of descriptive adjectives and nouns.

Descriptive adjectives of evaluation were observed together with nouns of the “nature” group in 27% of cases (12 instances out of 44), with nouns of the “human” group in 23% of cases

(10 instances out of 44) and with abstract nouns in 18% (8 instances out of 44). Below are some examples from the LBK:

(235N) Hun kunne være **like slø som reven** som hadde mange utganger til hiet. (LBK, SK01PeBe02.351) – **adjective of evaluation *slø* (Eng. cunning) + noun of the “nature” group *reven* (Eng. fox)**

(236N) Tror du jeg lar meg omvende **like lett som lakeiene mine**? (LBK, SK01AIRa01.8698) – **adjective of evaluation *lett* (Eng. easy) + noun of the “human” group *lakeinene* (Eng. servants)**

(237N) Formiddagen ligger utover Storehavn og Skolebakken, **like fersk som øyeblikket når Helena kommer**. (LBK, SK01BiGa01.4555) – **adjective of evaluation *fersk* (Eng. fresh) + noun of the “abstract” group *øyeblikket* (Eng. moment)**

Descriptive adjectives of color seem to go most often together with the following groups of nouns: nouns of the “man-made objects” groups in 54% of observed cases (13 instances out of 24) and nouns of the “nature” group in 33% of cases (8 instances out of 24):

(238N)...ut med et lite smil og øyne **like hvite som kjolen** (LBK, SK01AxSu02.719) – **adjective of color *hvite* (Eng. white) + noun of the “man-made objects” group *kjolen* (Eng. dress)**

(239N)...hennes samvittighet er **like blank som aluminiumsfolien** som maten de selger er pakket inn (LBK, SK01KnCa01.3254) – **adjective of color *blank* (Eng. clear) + noun of the “man-made objects” group *aluminiumsfoljen* (Eng. aluminium foil)**

(240N) Noen strategisk plasserte lyskastere dynker sentralbyggets søyler, innskrift og kuppel i rosa, **like rosa som kirsebærene** i iskrembaren han passerer i sidegaten like etterpå. (LBK, SK01ThTh01) – **adjective of color *rosa* (Eng. pink) + noun of the “nature” group *kirsebærene* (Eng. cherries)**

The adjectives of time, which is the third largest group in the category of descriptive adjectives (miscellaneous set aside), show the following pattern: combinations with nouns of the “human” and “nature” groups share equal 28% (6 instances out of 21 in each of the combinations), combinations with proper nouns in 24% (5 instances out of 21):

(241N) Hun er like gammel som politikonstabelen. (LBK, SK01BjKe03.3330) – **adjective of time gammel (Eng. old) + noun of the “human” group politikonstabelen (Eng. police constable)**

(242N)...kvinner er intet nytt, det er like gammelt som kloden selv! (LBK, SK01LaBr02.1175) – **adjective of time gammelt (Eng. old) + noun of the “nature” group kloden (Eng. globe)**

(243N) Ali skulle peke seg ut som et bestandig punkt i ørkenen, like bestandig som Kheops, hadde jeg tenkt. (LBK, SK01NiTo03) – **adjective of time (frequency) bestandig (Eng. eternal) + proper noun Kheops (Eng. Cheops)**

The category of time is closely followed by the category of size in the Norwegian sample which shows the following combination patterns with nouns: combinations with nouns of the “nature” and “object” groups have an equal share of 35% each (7 instances out of 20 in each of the cases):

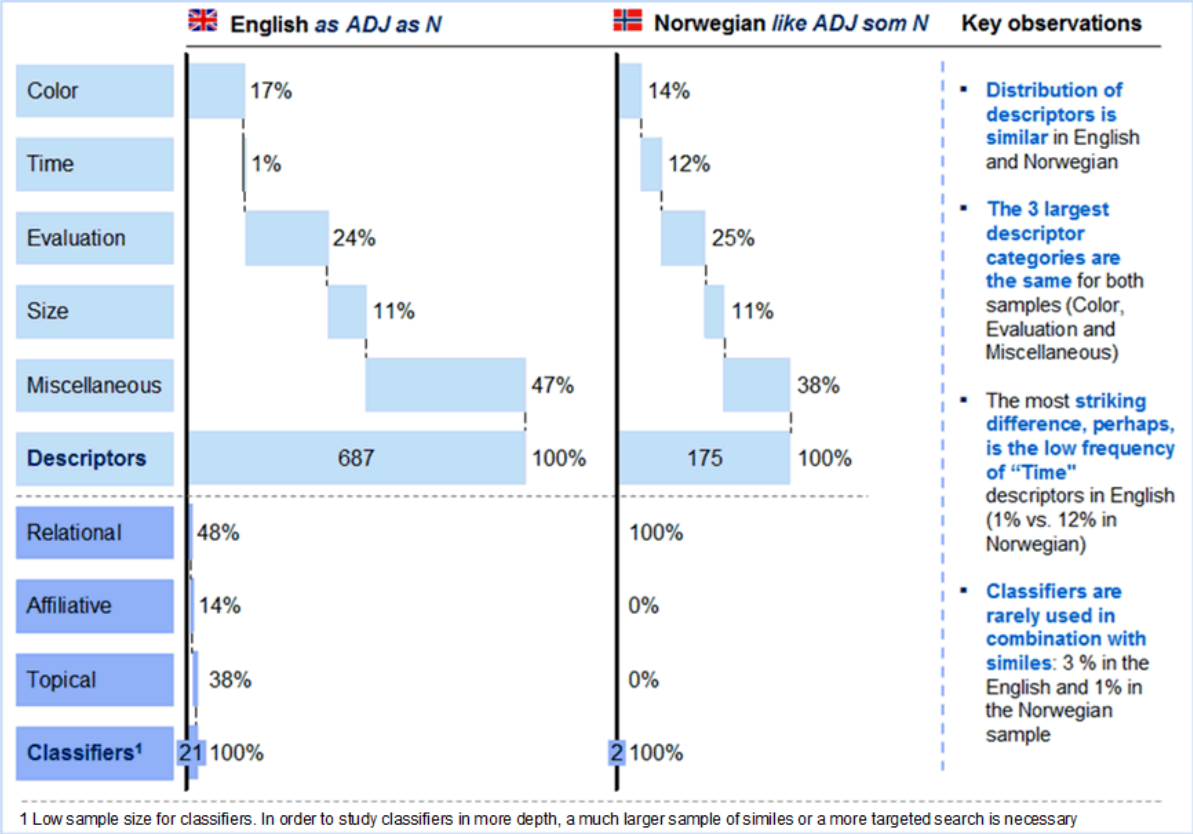
(244N) Jeg har kjent meg like mett som sjøer i høstregn... (LBK, SK01AaSt01) – **adjective of size (extent) mett (Eng. full) + noun of the “nature” group sjøer (Eng. sea)**

(245N)...de sa at ballene hans var like store som tennisballer etterpå. (LBK, SK01DaTo01.2952) – **adjective of size store (Eng. large) + noun of the “object” group tennisballer (Eng. tennis balls)**

3.2.6 Comparison of adjective group vehicles in the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*

As the analyses carried out in the two previous sections show, both the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* operate mostly with descriptive adjectives – in both samples the categories of descriptors are dominant with 97% (687 instances out of 708) in the English sample and 99% (175 instances out of 177) in the Norwegian sample. The figure below provides a comparative overview:

Figure 3.16: Comparison of adjective vehicles classified by semantic groups in the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*



Within the category of descriptors there is a good match between the samples from the two languages in terms of further distribution by semantic groups:

- The largest group is represented by miscellaneous adjectives: 47% (323 occurrences out of 708) in the English sample and 38% (66 occurrences out of 175) in the Norwegian sample. As we know, this group comprises adjectives that did not fit in any of the other four groups (adjectives of evaluation, color, size and time). Because it is a mixture of all sorts of adjectives that denote everything else besides evaluation, color, size or time, it is very difficult to analyze this particular group without a further breakdown into a custom-made classification. This task, however, is beyond the scope of my research since I choose to restrict myself to the conventional classification provided by Biber et al.
- The second largest group in both the English and Norwegian samples is the adjectives of evaluation: 24% (164 instances out of 708) in English and 25% (44 instances out of 175) in the Norwegian sample.
- The “evaluation” group in both English and Norwegian samples is followed by the group of adjectives denoting color: 17% (116 instances out of 708) in the English sample and 14% (24 instances out of 175), which is the third largest group in both samples.

In both English and Norwegian samples adjectives denoting size comprise 11% (79 instances out of 708 in the English and 20 instances out of 175 in the Norwegian) of the share, while the results for the “time” adjectives show a big gap: 1% (5 occurrences) in the English sample against 12% (20 occurrences) in the Norwegian sample.

3.2.7 Analysis of noun group vehicles in the English as *ADJ as N simile*

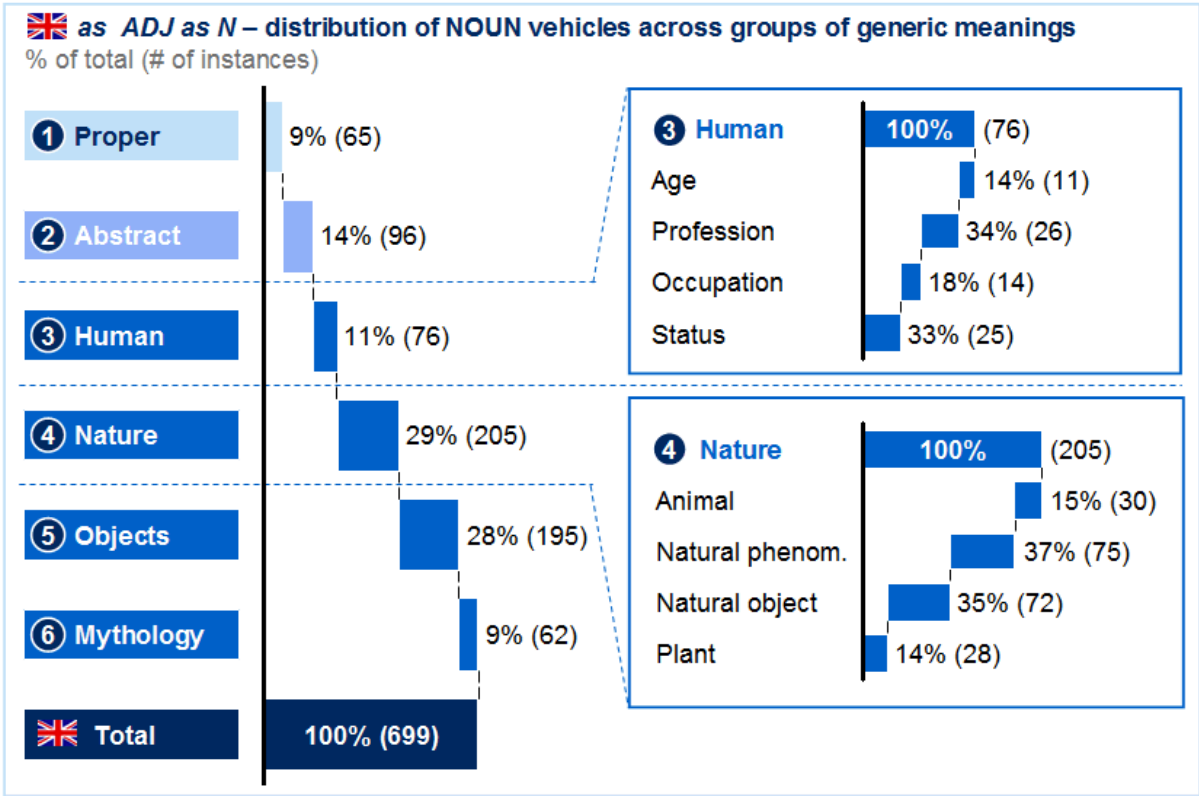
For the analysis of noun group vehicles in the English *as ADJ as N simile* I used the same sample of 1000 instances from the BNC as for the analysis of adjective vehicles. Out 1000 instances extracted from the corpus 699 were found to be relevant nouns. The same classification as first described in 3.1.4 was used.

As shown in the figure below, the largest group of nouns within this distribution is the “nature” group scoring 29% (or 205 instances out of 699) with the following sub-distribution:

“natural phenomena” 37% (75 instances out of 205), “natural objects” 35% (72 instances out of 205), “animals” 15 % (30 out of 205), “plants” 14% (28 out of 205).

The “nature” category is followed by the category of “man-made objects” which displayed 28% frequency (195 instances out of 699) in the studied sample.

Figure 3.17: Distribution of noun vehicles for the English simile *as ADJ as N*, grouped by generic meanings



Below are some examples from the BNC:

(246E) And added my own selfish after-thought that the whores in Paris were the most skilled in the world, whilst cups of claret were as cheap as water there! (BNC-BYU, HU0) – **noun of the “natural objects” group**

(247E) And the sleeper opened her eyes, which were as blue as periwinkle, or the summer sky, and the little tailor, because he knew this was what he must do, bent and kissed the perfect cheek. (BNC-BYU, APR) – **noun of the “animal” group**

(248E) His black eyes turned as cold as stone. (BNC-BYU, H94) – **noun of the “natural objects” group**

(249E) No matter how carefully he sliced each shovelful in an arc out on the wind, there were certain unpredictable gusts that lifted the grains and blew them back towards the tractor so that by evening his clothes were filthy with lime, his face and hands as white as chalk, accentuating the inflamed red round his eyes. (BNC-BYU, A6N)

(250E) The small eggs, when she held them, one by one, in her hand and against her cheek were as chill as glass. (BNC-BYU, H7H)

(251E) The house was as quiet as death, as the inside of a skull; but the year was 1953, I was an atheist and an absolute non-believer in spiritualism, ghosts and all that mumbo-jumbo. (BNC-BYU, G13)

(252E) For three years now, I've carried this pack with me from place to place -- a penance, a mortification, a burden that weighed as heavy as sin -- thinking never again to open it, never again to be asked to take out my chisel or swing my mallet. (BNC-BYU, HTN)

The category of abstract nouns is followed by the “human” category of 11 % (76 instances out of 699) with the following sub-distribution: “profession” 34% (26 instances out of 76), “status” 33% (25 instances out of 76), “occupation” 18% (14 instances out of 76) and “age” 15% (11 instances out of 76):

(253E) As far as I am concerned novelists are almost as redundant as psychiatrists because both species have the same irredeemable impertinence. (BNC-BYU, ADA) – **the “human” category, the “profession” sub-category**

(254E) I admit Victor is evasive at times, but we have known one another since early childhood, we are as close as brother and sister... (BNC-BYU, HGS) – the “human” category, the “status” sub-category

The remaining two groups are “mythology” (9% or 62 instances out of 699) and proper nouns (9% or 65 instances out of 699):

(255E) I mean, ' he went on, ' it's almost as bad as Zacharias Wrench.' (BNC-BYU, CAB)

(256E) When she asked him if they had really been as beautiful as angels, he had told her abruptly to: look at the portraits, just as now, sensing that she had been hounded out of the house, he had given her something to do, a task to occupy her hands and head. (BNC-BYU, H8X)

3.2.8 Analysis of noun group vehicles in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N simile*

To carry out the analysis in the present section I used the same sample from the LBK as in section 3.2.5, which after processing provided me with 177 relevant instances. The same classification was applied to the nouns as in the previous section and the distribution revealed the following results:

The largest group of nouns in the sample belong to the “nature” group – 32% (56 instances out of 177) with the following sub-distribution: “natural objects” 45% (25 instances out of 56), “animals” 32% (18 instances out of 56), “natural phenomena” 13% (7 instances out of 56) and “plants” 11% (6 instances out of 56).

(257N) Alle horer jeg hadde ligget med før hadde vært like lidenskapelige som gråstein, like ekstatisk som frosne hamburgere. (LBK, SK01BeBe01.307) – noun of the “natural objects” group *gråstein* (Eng. granite)

(258N) Det kom et brev fra borgermesteren i Aleppo, som erklærte at det var dukket opp en hær i horisonten, mongoler, ...**like destruktive som termitter**, **like systematiske som maur**, **like slemme som afrikanske veps**. (LBK, SK01AlRa01) – **all the nouns: *termitter* (Eng. termitts), *maur* (Eng. ants), *veps* (Eng. wasps) belong to the “animal” sub-category**

(258N)...å vente på begivenheter som inntreffer **like sjeldent som stjerneskudd på himmelen**. (LBK, SK01MiJo01) – **noun of the “natural phenomena” group *stjerneskudd* (Eng. shooting star)**

The category of “nature” is followed by the category of nouns denoting “man-made objects” with 25% of total share (44 instances out of 177):

(260N) ...ansiktet hennes nå; det var nesten **like hvitt som kjolen** (LBK, SK01BrEl01.1938)

(261N) Jeg skal si deg det, at han var **like bleik som lakenet**. (LBK, SK01FoKa01)

The next category in terms of frequency contains the nouns having the generic meaning of “human” – 17% (30 instances out of 177) with the following sub-distribution: “age” 60% (18 instances out of 30), “profession” 20% (6 instances out of 30), “status” 13% (4 instances out of 30) and “occupation” 7% (2 occurrences out of 30):

(262N) Selv bodde han **like spartansk som datidens hærførere**. (LBK, SK01EgEy01.504) – **category of “human”, sub-category of “profession”**

(263N) De musiserte ikke **like godt som guttungene** ... (LBK, SK01BlKi01.987) – **category of “human”, sub-category of “age”**

The category of “human” is closely followed by the category of abstract notions – 16% (29 instances out of 177):

(264N) Celleplan 7 er like **hvit som samvittigheten**, og samvittigheten bevarer selv de dypeste skårene... (LBK, SK01CaPe01.9275)

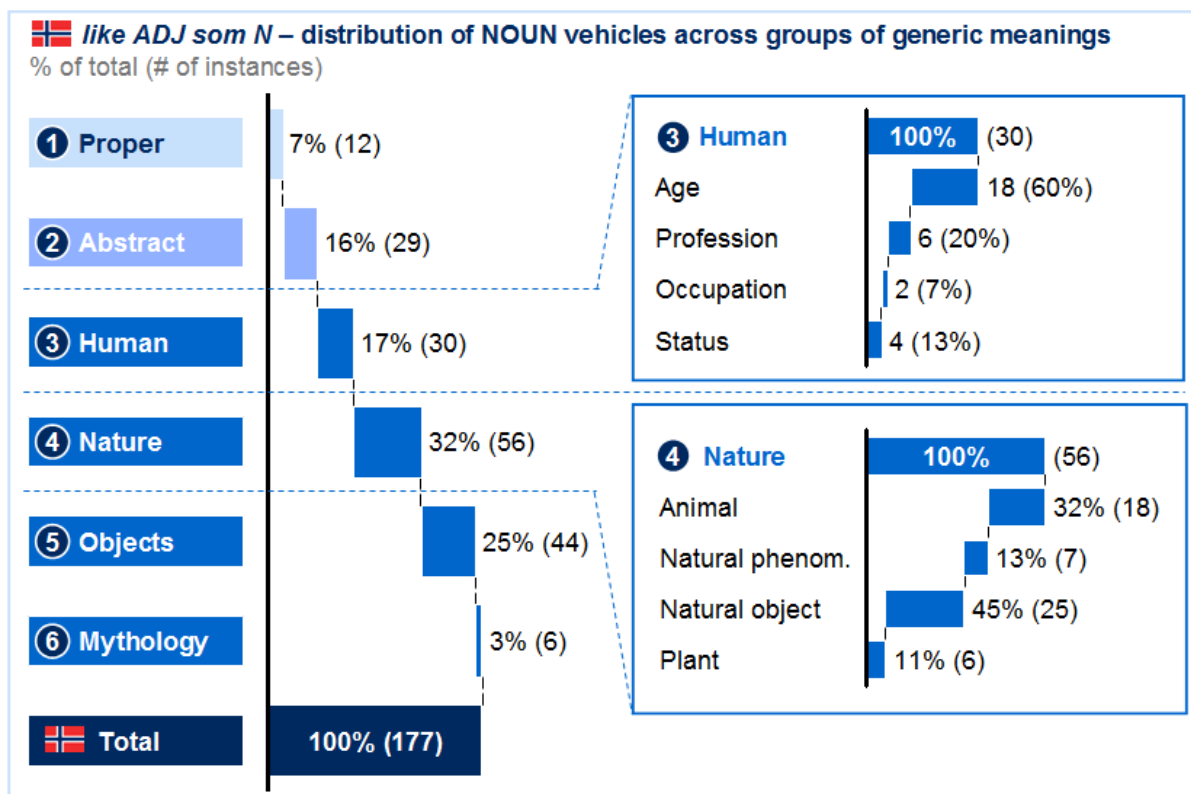
(265N) Underlig er det, kanskje **like ubegripelig som tyngdekraften**... (LBK, SK01GaJo01.521)

The remaining two categories are the smallest ones: proper nouns with 7% of total share (12 instances out of 177) and nouns of the “mythology” category with only 3% (6 instances out of 177):

(266N) Jeg er nå **like gammel som Tor Ulven** var da han døde. (LBK, SK01AaSt01.1789) – category of proper nouns

(267N) Venezia skal bli en forhistorisk legende like **fjern som legenden om Atlantis**... (LBK, SK01BeBe01.784) – category of “mythology”

Figure 3.18: Distribution of noun vehicles for the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* simile, grouped by generic meanings



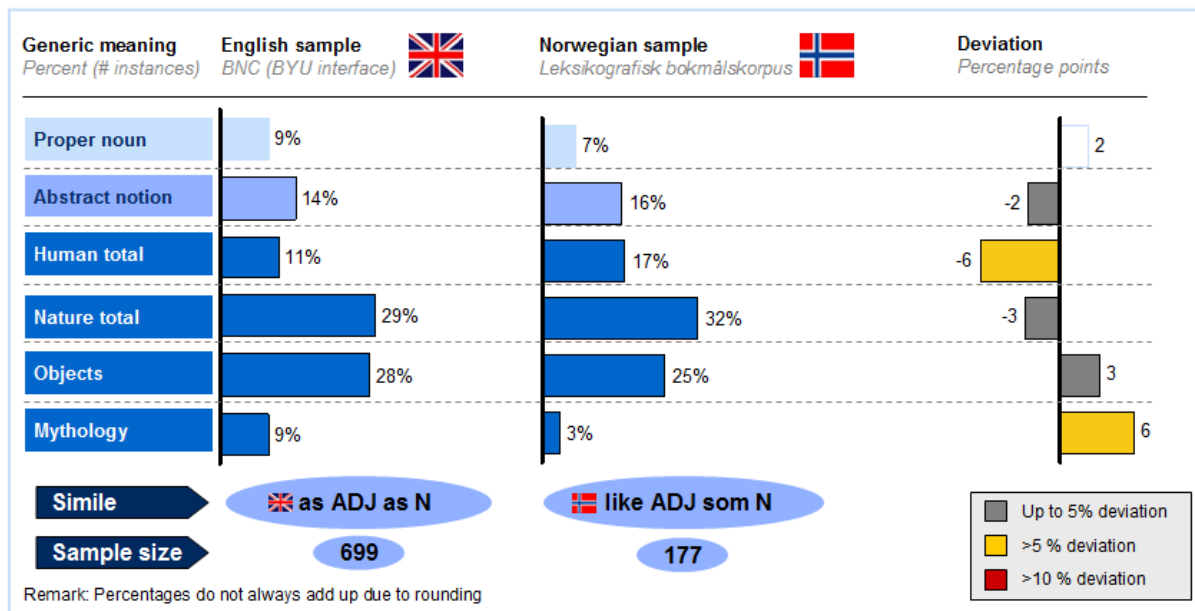
3.2.9 Comparison of noun vehicles in the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* by their distribution across generic meanings

The comparison of the results derived from the English and the Norwegian samples shows that the two largest categories in both of the samples are “nature” and “man-made objects”: in the English sample the share of the “nature” category is 29% (205 instances out of 299), while in the Norwegian it is 32% (56 instances out of 177). The share of “man-made objects” in the English sample is 28% (195 instances out of 699) and 25% in the Norwegian sample (44 instances out of 177).

If we zoom into the “nature” category which as we know has several sub-categories (“natural phenomena”, “natural objects”, “animals” and “plants”), we can see that even though the top three sub-categories are the same in both samples, the distribution between them is different. In the English sample nouns of the “natural phenomena” sub-category are in the lead with 35% of the total share, followed by “natural objects” – 34% and “animals” – 15%. In the Norwegian sample the top sub-category within the “nature” category is “natural objects” with 45%, followed by “animals” – 32% and “natural phenomena” 13%. The practical implication of these statistical results is that in constructing a simile of the *as ADJ as N* type both languages use nouns from the “nature” generic meaning category as their most frequent noun vehicles. However, they so to say “prefer” to operate with different sub-categories: while English “prefers” nouns denoting natural phenomena, Norwegian tends to make a choice in favor of those denoting natural objects.

The third place in the frequency of use in the English *as ADJ as N* simile belongs to nouns denoting abstract notions (14%) while it belongs to nouns denoting “humans” (17%) in the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*.

Figure 3.19: Comparison of noun vehicles distribution in the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*



3.2.10 Comparison of noun vehicles in the English *like a/an N* and the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* and the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*

First of all let us compare the results of noun vehicles distribution in the English similes *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N*. As we remember, the data for both of the samples was extracted from the BNC: 453 instances for the *like a/an N* simile (cf. section 3.1.4) and 699 instances for the *as ADJ as N* simile (cf. section 3.2.7).

The comparison of noun vehicles with which the two above mentioned English constructions seem to operate most often reveals that the most “popular” category of generic meanings for both of them is “nature”: in the *like a/an N* simile the noun vehicle belongs to that category in 47% of cases, while in the *as ADJ as N* simile it belongs to the “nature” category in 29% of occurrences.

Another category of generic meaning which is common for both similes is “man-made objects”: its share in the *like a/an N* simile is 17% and it takes third place in the top three

categories for this sample, while the share of the nouns denoting man-made objects in the *as ADJ as N* simile is 28% and it has second place in the top three categories for this sample.

The categories of generic meaning which are different for the two similes in terms of their position in the top three categories for each of the similes are “human” (27% and second place in the top three most frequent categories of generic meanings for the *like a/an N* simile) and “abstract” (14% and third place in the top three most frequent categories of generic meanings for the *as ADJ as N* simile).

Let us now make a similar comparison for the Norwegian similes *som en/ei/et N* and *like ADJ som N*. The data for investigating noun vehicles in these two similes was extracted from the LBK: 284 instances for the *som en/ei/et N* simile (cf. section 3.1.5) and 177 instances for the *like ADJ som N* (cf. section 3.2.8).

The comparison reveals that the three most frequent categories of nouns by generic meanings for the both similes are “nature”, “human” and “man-made objects”. Out of the three categories the most frequent one for both samples is “nature”: 33% for the *som en/ei/et N* simile and 32% for the *like ADJ som N* simile. The “human” category has 31% in the distribution for the *som en/ei/et* simile and is on the second place in terms of frequency, while in the sample for the *like ADJ som N* simile this category with its 17% is on the third place in terms of frequency. The category of man-made objects, which is also common for both similes, has 26% and third place in the top three for the simile *som en/ei/et N* and 25% and second place in the top three for the simile *like ADJ som N*.

From a general perspective we can see that “nature” is the most frequent category of noun vehicles across all the four samples from both of the languages.

4 Summary

In the first chapter of this thesis I outlined a number of research questions (cf. section 1.1). Now I would like to revisit these questions and provide answers to them.

1. What are the most frequent translation correspondences of the English *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N* in the Norwegian language?

As established in sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.1, the most frequent translation correspondence of the English *like a/an N* is the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile and the most frequent translation correspondence of the English *as ADJ as N* is the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*.

2. Are the English *like a/an N* and *as ADJ as N* the most frequent translation correspondences for their Norwegian counterparts?

Yes. As established in sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.2, the most frequent translation correspondence of the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* simile is the English *like a/an N* and the most frequent translation correspondence of the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* is the English *as ADJ as N*.

3. How high is the mutual correspondence between the most frequent translation correspondences of the two similes in English and Norwegian?

The mutual correspondence test revealed 52% mutual correspondence between *like a/an N* and *som en/ei/et N* (cf. section 3.1.3) and 71% mutual correspondence between *as ADJ as N* and *like ADJ som N* (cf. section 3.2.3).

4. What is the distribution of main groups of noun vehicles in the *like a/an N* simile and how does it correspond with the distribution for its Norwegian counterpart?

The analysis of noun vehicles by generic categories showed that both of these similes most frequently operate with noun vehicles belonging to the “nature” and the “human” categories: 47% and 27% for each of the categories respectively in the English sample and 33% and 31% in the Norwegian one (cf. sections 3.1.4 – 3.1.6).

5. What is the distribution of main groups of noun and adjective vehicles in the *as ADJ as N* simile and how does it correspond with the distribution for its Norwegian counterpart?

The analysis of noun vehicles for the two similes revealed that the English *as ADJ as N* simile and its most frequent translation correspondence, the Norwegian *like ADJ som N*, most frequently operate with nouns of the “nature” and “man-made objects” categories. In the English simile the share of the “nature” nouns is 29% and the share of nouns denoting “man-made objects” is 28%, while in the Norwegian the results is 32% for the “nature” nouns and 25% for the “man-made objects” nouns (cf. sections 3.2.7 – 3.2.9)

The analysis of the adjective vehicles by semantic groups in the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* (cf. sections 3.2.4 – 3.2.6) showed that first of all descriptive nouns are by far the most common to be used in these similes and, secondly, within the group of descriptive nouns the most frequent sub-groups for both the English and Norwegian similes (the “miscellaneous” sub-group set aside) are “evaluation” (24% in the English sample and 25% in the Norwegian one) and “color” (17% in the English sample and 14% in the Norwegian one).

In addition the following was established: in the English sample, the adjectives denoting evaluation occurred most frequently with proper nouns (in 27% of cases) and “human” nouns (in 23% of cases), while in the Norwegian sample the evaluative adjectives occurred most frequently together with nouns of the “nature” category (in 27% of cases) and “human” nouns (in 23% of cases). The adjectives of color in the English sample were observed together with the nouns of the “nature” group (62%) and the “man-made objects” group (30%). The same type of adjectives in the Norwegian sample were in most cases observed together with the same categories of nouns: together with “man-made objects” in 54% of cases and together with nouns of “nature” in 33% of cases.

Besides, the cross-analysis of noun vehicles between the English *like a/an N* and the Norwegian *som en/ei/et N* and the English *as ADJ as N* and the Norwegian *like ADJ som N* revealed that the most frequent group of nouns by generic meanings for all of them is the “nature” one.

5 Conclusions

My hypothesis presented in section 1.1 says that a) on the structural side English and Norwegian will display a lot of similarity in constructing a simile, however, b) being different language systems, they will operate with different groups of vehicles, and based on the obtained results we can conclude that a) English and Norwegian displayed high degree of structural similarity in constructing a simile (*like a/an N* vs. *som en/ei/et N* and *as ADJ as N* vs. *like ADJ som N*, which were previously established as each other's most frequent translation counterparts); and b) English and Norwegian, though being two different language systems, generally operate with the same groups of noun and adjective vehicles in the similes of the *like a/an N* and the *as ADJ as N* types.

With the regard to the b) conclusion I would like to revisit my section on theories of metaphor (2.2.2 – 2.2.3). In the end of section 2.2.2 I said that Lakoff and Johnson's theory is of particular interest in my study, because one of my main hypothesis is that Norwegian and English, being two different languages systems, would operate with different conceptual domains, i.e. groups of vehicles, in constructing a simile (or metaphor for that matter, since by the end of section 2.1. my personal conclusion was that simile is metaphor). As we know, according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003) conceptual domains are tethered to personal or cultural experiences, and therefore are different on individual and cultural level. However, in the course of my study I saw a lot of similarity between conceptual domains (noun vehicles) in English and Norwegian which I analyzed by grouping them into categories of generic meaning – noun vehicles in both of the languages allowed being easily grouped according to one common classification, but not only that - my analysis also showed that the two sets of similes in English and Norwegian most frequently operate with the same groups of vehicles ("nature", "human", "man-made objects"). In considering possible reasons for this I revisited Kovecses's theory of metaphor, outlined in 2.2.3, in which he discusses the reasons for the appearance of similar metaphors in different cultures: it is either accidental, or is a result of language borrowings, or encouraged by some "universal motivation" (cf. 2.2.3). In my opinion and based on the results of this study I would say that such a phenomenon, as what we saw with regard to similes in English and Norwegian, can partly be explained by language borrowings and partly by some common drivers (I would prefer to be careful here and not call them "universal drivers") that the two cultures share.

When it comes to the question of practical significance of the results obtained in my study, I can see them useful in several areas:

1. Translation studies and development and improvement of machine translation software (particularly relevant for such engines as Google Translate which is based on statistical models);
2. Phraseology and contrastive studies (a lot of insights and interesting observations I collected in this work provide grounds for further investigation and analysis);
3. Development of corpora (particularly the translation type of corpora, which as shown in my study is of special interest in terms of contrastive analysis);
4. Cross-cultural communication and studies (as we saw, Norwegian and English have a lot in common on the conceptual level).

In conclusion of my work I would like to share some of my ideas for further investigation:

- Establish popularity of similes in English and Norwegian through monolingual corpora. Which of the two languages is more metaphorical and why?
- Study noun and adjective vehicles in the English and Norwegian similes through translation corpora. What kind of transformations can occur?
- Break down the sub-group of "miscellaneous" adjectives into a more comprehensive classification. How can these adjectives be classified and how do they interact with noun vehicles in the simile of the *as ADJ as N* type?

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