

Comparatives, Superlatives, and Equatives

Comparatives

Comparative constructions in Balti are formed differently for adjectives and adverbs. There are distinctive comparative markers for comparing subjects to a *standard*; the adjective or adverb in the construction is referred to as the *quality*. Balti comparative sentences using adjectives require the comparative marker /pat̪e/ while comparative sentences using adverbs require a separate comparative marker /-pa/ and either /tale/ ‘more’ or /junt̪e/ ‘less’.

Comparatives with Adjectives

The comparative marker /pat̪e/ is used to construct comparative sentences with adjectives. Normal adjective order is expressed as follows:

- (1) muhamad liaxmo ts^ho-k^han in
Muhammad good cook-AGNR COP
‘Muhammad is a good cook.’

In order to make this sentence into a comparative sentence, one adds the comparative marker /pat̪e/ before the quality being compared (in this case, ‘good’), but after the subject, like so:

- (2) muhamad pat̪e liaxmo ts^ho- k^han in
Muhammad CMPR good cook-AGNR COP
‘[Between Vanessa and Muhammad,] Muhammad is a better cook.’

Note that in (2), the standard to which the subject is compared *Vanessa* is implied but omitted.

Comparatives with Adverbs

Adverbs in comparative constructions may be modified using either positive or negative adverbs. In either case, a comparative marker /pa/ is placed on the standard within the sentence. The quality in positive constructions is the adverb /tale/ ‘more’:

- (3) ŋa Muhammad-pa tale las bet
1SG Muhammad-CMPR more work do.PRS
‘I do more work than Muhammad.’

Here, the negative adverb is /junt̪e/ ‘less’:

- (4) ŋa muhamad-pa junt̪e las bet
1SG Muhammad-CMPR less work do.PRS
‘I do less work than Muhammad.’

Note that the most typical word order for Balti comparatives is *subject-standard-comparative-quality*.

Superlatives

Both adverbs and adjectives may be used in structures with the superlative construction /gaŋma pat̪e/, which roughly translates as ‘than all’.

- (5) muhamad gaŋma pat̪e liaxmo ts^ho- k^han in
Muhammad all CMPR good cook-AGNR COP

‘Muhammad is the best cook.’ (*Muhammad is a good cook better than all.*)

(6) gaṇwej joqbu gaṇma patee rgasnitean jut
 first book all CMPR interesting COP
 ‘The first book is the most interesting’ (*The first book is more interesting than all.*)

(7) gaṇma patee teuktjele muhamad drul-en jut
 all CMPR quietly Muhammad run-PTCP AUX
 ‘Muhammad runs the most quietly.’

Superlative structures may also be created without use of the comparative marker /patee/. An alternative structure uses only /gaṇma/ ‘all’ plus the definite marker /-po/:

(8) maj-i nuṇ-po gaṇma-po faṛim jut
 Maya-GEN house-DEF all-DEF far COP
 ‘Maya’s house is the farthest away.’

As elsewhere, word order in comparative Balti sentences is somewhat flexible, though the comparative marker must always be ordered before the adjective. In the case of negative superlatives, the negation marker follows the adjective, as in (9):

(9) gaṇma patee rgasnitean met po xsumi-resi joqbu in
 all CMPR interesting NEG DEF third-turn book COP
 ‘The third book is the least interesting’ (*Of all, the third book is not the most interesting.*)

Equatives

Equative sentences with adjectives use the equality marker /d̥ʒox/, while sentences equating adverbs use a modified version, /d̥ʒox-bjese/.

Equatives with Adjectives

In equative sentences with adjectives, the equative marker /d̥ʒox/ is used. As with both comparative and superlative structures, this marker is placed before the quality, but after the standard:

(10) vanesa muhamad d̥ʒox liaxmo jut
 Vanessa Muhammad EQT good COP
 ‘Vanessa is as good as Muhammad.’

(11) ŋa d̥ʒesika d̥ʒox liaxmo jut
 1SG Jessica EQT good COP
 ‘I am as good as Jessica.’

(12) vanesa muhamad d̥ʒox tʰanmo jut
 Vanessa Muhammad EQT tall COP
 ‘Vanessa is as tall as Muhammad’

Equatives with Adverbs

Similarly, equatives with adverbs use the construction /d̥ʒox-bjese/ after the standard.

(13) ŋa muhamad d̥ʒox-bjese las bet
 1SG Muhammad EQT-do.PTCP work do.PRS
 ‘I work as much as Muhammad.’

(14) ŋa d̄ʒesika d̄ʒox-bjese druled
1SG Jessica EQT-do.PTCP run.PRS
'I run as much as Jessica runs.'

(15) vanesa d̄ʒesika d̄ʒox-bjese kule druled
1SG Jessica EQT-do.PTCP slow run.PRS
'Vanessa runs as slow as Jessica runs.'