**Such and sådan – the same but different**

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**Abstract**

English *such* has a variety of uses, which nearly always involve the expression of similarity, and *such* can therefore be called a ‘similative’. Swedish *sådan* has very similar uses. However, the two similatives differ strongly with respect to the frequency of some of these uses. Thus *such*, different from *sådan*, rarely functions as a noun or pronoun, compared to *sådan* it more frequently exhibits the so-called ‘intensifying use’ and it has more competition from constructions with *like, sort and kind* (*sort, typ* in Swedish). The study uses three methods: (i) non-corpus analysis based on intuition, scrutiny of existing scholarship and google searches, (ii) analysis of comparable corpora, and (iii) analysis of parallel corpora.

**1. Introduction**

This paper aims to describe the similarities and the differences between English *such* and Swedish *sådan* and it does so using three different methodologies. The first is that of language-specific scholarship, relying on intuition, previous scholarship and web searches. This method gives us a good analysis of the possible uses of *such* and *sådan* and it tells us that these uses are very similar. The second method uses two language-specific corpora, and it shows which uses are more or less frequent and it tells us that *such* and *sådan* are very different. The third method uses parallel corpora and it discloses what other means the two languages have at their disposal to express *such* and *sådan*. The paper aims to advance the contrastive analysis of *such* and *sådan* and, at a more general level, it is a plea for methodological triangulation.

**2. Such and sådan are rather similar**

The English word *such* has attracted quite a bit of attention in recent years, in part because it has a great diversity of uses. Some of them are illustrated below. In (1) to (6) we focus on the categorial status of *such* and on word order; in (7) to (9) on meaning. Most examples are easily googlable quotes from famous people. Only for (7) and (9) do we give the URL.

Why was I born with such contemporaries? (O. Wilde)

An American has no sense of privacy … There is no such thing in the country. (G.B. Shaw)

If sex is such a natural thing, how come there are so many books on how to? (B. Midler)

There is no such thing as a non-political speech by a politician. (R. Nixon)

Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation such as ours can endure. (J. F. Kennedy)

Do not seek pleasure as such. (A. Lawrence Lowell)

We wanted to identify the communities with the best such opportunities in Mississippi. (http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/reviews/best-towns-mississippi-young-families/, June 3 2015)

I had such a great time with the audience. (Lady Gaga)

If you say “so-and-so is vice president, finance, of such and such,” should there be a comma after “finance”? (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Commas/faq0003.html, June 23 2015)

In (1) such could be an adjective or a determiner. In (2), however, such would seem to follow a determiner, so it can only be an adjective, but then in (3) such precedes a determiner and it cannot therefore qualify as either a determiner or an adjective. In (4) such is connected with as, but there is a noun in between such and as and this fact invites an analysis as a discontinuous construction. Yet in (5) such joins as in the postnominal domain. (6) shows another peculiarity: instead of such (…) as, it has as such. And if the examples (1) tot (5) give reason to think that such is indefinite, (7) shows that such has a definite use as well. In (8) the adnominal such has an ‘intensifying’ function (with such a great being equivalent to a very great) rather than an ‘identifying’ use – terminology due to Bolinger (1972). The strangest use of all is perhaps such and such in (9), which is non-compositional, i.e., it does not first refer to one type of thing and then to another. The diversity of uses has bewildered linguists. Referring to the research literature Wood (2002: 91) writes that “[t]he word such causes confusion and disagreement, and stipulations about its category often vacillate between hedges and contradictions” and fifteen years later van der Auwera & Sahoo (2015) argue that it is best to
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treat such as a category all by itself, a one-member category, which they call ‘similative’, related, of course, to the determiner, the demonstrative and the adjective, but different from all.

The problem of categorizing such reappears with the translational equivalents in other languages, esp. Germanic ones: see e.g. Jensen (2013) on Danish, Fretheim (2010) on Norwegian, Demske (2005) on German, van der Auwera & Sahoo (2015) on Dutch, and Leu (2015: 161-165) on Germanic in general. For the Swedish similative sådan¹ there is Ekberg (2011a, b), who has pointed out that though sådan is normally preceded by the indefinite article en or ett, Malmö adolescents often leave out the indefinite article, in which case it does not have its normal meaning, translatable with ‘such’, but rather what has been called a ‘recognition’s use (Himmelmann 1996). In this use, illustrated in (10), sådan introduces a new discourse referent, though of a type familiar to the hearer.

(10) du vet jag har sån säng
you know I have such bed
“you know I have this bed”
(Ekberg 2011b: 221-223)

Ekberg (2011a, b) also points out that, since the discourse referent of a recognition’s use is new, sådan comes close to doing the job of the indefinite article. The English similative does not have this use, only the demonstrative (notice this as a translation of sådan in (10)).² Another difference between Swedish and English is that with a full form, the one combining the similative and the indefinite article, English has the similative first (such a), but Swedish the indefinite article (en sådan). So such and sådan are clearly different. Yet looking back at the illustrations for English, Swedish has counterparts for all of them, except for the postnominal such as use illustrated in (5) with a nation such as ours,

¹ In the text we will refer to ‘sådan’, but it has six forms, all of the indefinite adjectival type, viz. sådan, sådant, sådana and their short forms sån, sånt, såna.
² Interestingly, the Dutch cognate to such, viz. zulk, does not allow a recognition’s use either, but Dutch zulk is currently being replaced by the new similative zo’n (literally ‘so a’) and zo’n does have it (Van Olmen & van der Auwera 2014, Van Olmen 2015).
where Swedish either puts the similitative in front of the noun or drops it altogether.

(11) en sådan nation som vår ...
a such nation as ours
(12) en nation (*sådan) som vår ...
a nation such as ours

Note that the non-decompositional such and such has a Swedish counterpart too, shown in (13).

(13) Jag heter så och så, jag
I am called so and so I
bor där och där med de
live there and there with those
och de familjemedlemmarna och
and those family members and
sådana och sådana husdjur ...
such and such pets
“I am called so and so, and I live in such and such a place, with such and such family members and such and such pets and…”

Neither the Svenska Akademiens Grammatik (SAG) nor the Svenska Akademiens Ordbok (SAOB) mentions this use. Sådan also has the ‘noun as such’ construction and the definite use (both listed in SAOB but not in SAG\(^3\)). (14) to (16) illustrate these uses.

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\(^3\) This definite use requires an adjective that implies uniqueness, both in English and Swedish, either a superlative or a word like only/enda and is probably typical for a formal, written register. SAG (III, 444) does draw attention to a definite use, claimed to be typical for spoken language, and this example is Hennes såna buxor är mycket häftigare “These pants of hers are much cooler”.

(14) Det är rädska jag känner men inte för situationen som sådan.
“It is fear I feel but not for the situation as such.”

(15) Det enda sånt besök som fungerade för oss var det som reseledaren styrde upp.
“The only visit that worked for us was one that the guide arranged.”

(16) Under det tidiga 1990-talet fann man det första sådana ämnet.
“In the early 1990s one found the first such substance.”

Interestingly, in (15) sådan takes the ‘normal’ indefinite inflection, but this is not quite felicitous, for the noun phrase is definite, and in (16) sådan takes the definite inflection, which it is not supposed to have (SAG II, 441). Sådan also allows the intensifying use, recognized in both SAG and SAOB and illustrated in (17).
To conclude, *such* and *sådan* are rather similar.

3. **Such and sådan are rather different**

Even if *such* and *sådan* have very similar or identical uses, they do not avail themselves of these uses with the same frequency. The frequencies differ, both the overall frequency and the frequency for each use. We investigated the frequencies found in the original fiction parts of the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC) (Altenberg et al. 2001). This corpus has the advantage of containing both original texts and translations, which will prove insightful in section 4. The figures do not, of course, give us a full picture, but it is at least a good start. The results for the overall frequencies are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Absolute frequency</th>
<th>Normalized frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>such</strong></td>
<td>171 in 340,745 words</td>
<td>5.02 per 10,000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sådan</strong></td>
<td>238 in 308,160 words</td>
<td>7.72 per 10,000 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We thus see that Swedish *sådan* is more frequent than English *such* and this difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.771$, df = 1, p < 0.0001). The next question is whether this higher frequency is distributed over all its uses or rather due to just a few.

The main uses of both *such* and *sådan* are the adnominal uses, viz. uses (1) to (5) and (7), but not (6) and (9). For English the adnominal uses make up 89% of all uses, for Swedish quite a bit less, viz. 57%. The frequencies of all adnominal uses are shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Absolute frequency</th>
<th>Normalized frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>such</strong></td>
<td>152 in 340,745 words</td>
<td>4.46 per 10,000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sådan</strong></td>
<td>136 in 308,160 words</td>
<td>4.41 per 10,000 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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We see that the normalized numbers are very close and the difference is not, of course, statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.008$, df = 1, $p = 0.93$). This means that the higher frequency of sådan will be due to one or more of the non-adnominal uses. The uses in question are the nominal and pronominal uses.

(18) En sån skulle man haft när man var en boy
One should have had one of these when one was a boy. (SW1T)

(19) Varför ska vi släpa på tunga trasmattor when it is found good such in plast?
Why should we bring in heavy rag rugs when there are good ones in plastic? (SC1T)

(20) Sånt som ingen kunnat tänka ut.
Something that nobody could have come up with. (KE1T)

(21) Det är vidrigt av dig att säga något it is disgusting of you to say something sådant.
It is disgusting of you to say something like that. (MS1T)

(18) and (19) are unquestionably nominal, and (20) and (21) are arguably pronominal, though SAG (II, 444) would consider (20) and (21) to be nominal. The exact categorization is not relevant here and we will just

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4 The code between brackets refers to a unique text identifier in the ESPC (Altenberg et al. 2001:7). The text identifier in this example stands for the novel Polismördaren of Sjöwall & Wahlöö. The translated version has the same text identifier with the addition of the letter T.
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refer to these uses as ‘(pro)nominal’ ones. What is relevant is that English cannot translate sådan in (18) to (21) with such.

(22) *One should have had a such when one was a boy.
(23) *Why should we bring in heavy rag rugs when there are good such in plastic?
(24) *Such as nobody could have come up with.
(25) *It is disgusting of you to say something such.

(Pro)nominal such does exist though. The such in the such and such construction of (9) is arguably a case in point. And here are a few more types.

(26) But some/many such have yet to be reported.
(27) But such have yet to be reported.
(28) There you can buy bags, wallets, and such.

The next question is how frequent (pro)nominal such and sådan are. It turns out that (pro)nominal such is very infrequent: in the original fiction subcorpus of English, there is only one attestation of (pro)nominal such, viz. the one shown in (29).

(29) [...] Plato was embraced and absorbed and Aristotle was rediscovered and acclaimed “the Philosopher” by such as Aquinas. (JH1)

Swedish sådan is very different: in the Swedish subcorpus (pro)nominal sådan uses account for no less than 38 % of all uses. It will be remembered that 57 % of all sådan uses are adnominal, this leaves us with 43 % non-adnominal uses, and thus nearly all are (pro)nominal.

The strong contrast between (pro)nominal such and sådan makes sense. English adnominals do not normally ‘go nominal’: they remain adnominal and use the prop word one, as in green ones. Swedish adnominals go nominal without a prop word, as in bra såna (in (19)) or gröna in (30), referring, for example, to green apples.
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(30) Ge mig gröna.
give me green
“Give me green ones.”

However, what holds for adjectives need not hold for similatives. Thus Dutch adjectives nominalize without prop words, but the similatives rarely nominalize. When one chooses green apples, (31) is perfect, but when one chooses apples of one type rather than another one, (32) is barely acceptable.

(31) Geef me groene.
give me green
“Give me green ones.”

(32) Geef me zulke.
give me such
“Give me those ones.”

The Dutch adjectives are more like the Swedish ones, but the similatives are more like the English ones.

The prominence of (pro)nominal uses is no doubt the biggest difference between *such* and sådan. But there are more. In what follows we will focus on the difference between identifying vs. intensifying uses. As pointed out already, English and Swedish allow both uses. (33) and (34) illustrate identification, and (35) and (36) intensification.

(33) I want to have *such* a hat.

(34) Jag vill ha en sådan hatt.
I want have a such hat
“I want to have such a hat.”

(35) *Such* a wonderful saw!

(36) En sådan fin såg!
a such fine saw
“Such a fine saw!”
(SAG II, 445)
Of course, in some contexts it is not clear which reading is meant. Thus (37) is an example that can only be disambiguated in context, as is shown by Ghesquière & Van de Velde (2011: 786) the pressure could be of a certain type or of a high intensity. Swedish (38) is also vague.

(37) There should be no need for such pressure.

(38) Jag hade aldrig tidigare sett en sådan avgrund i ett par ögon. (BL1)
I had never before seen a such chasm in a pair eyes
I had never before seen such a chasm in a pair of eyes. (BL1T)

In the English subcorpus the distribution of identifying vs. intensifying uses vs. those that are vague between the two is shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying</th>
<th>Intensifying</th>
<th>Vague</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 %</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we come to Swedish, the facts are more complicated, for Swedish sådan also has the recognitional use, already mentioned for the speech of Malmö adolescent studied by Ekberg (2011a, b), but in our view it is not restricted to this register. (39) is an example from the ESPC.

(39) Det var en sån där typiskt skör gammal röst. (MG1)
It was one of these typical frail old voices. (MG1T)

The distribution of identifying, intensifying, vague and recognitional uses of sådan is shown in Table 4.
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Table 4. Identifying, intensifying, vague and recognitional uses of adnominal sådan (original Swedish texts ESPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying</th>
<th>Intensifying</th>
<th>Vague</th>
<th>Recognitional</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We see that sådan intensifies less than such (15 % vs. 28 %) and that it sådan identifies more (74% vs. 66 %). Furthermore, for the full picture we should also include the (pro)nominal uses in Swedish, which is particularly interesting, because the (pro)nominal uses are all identifying. Table 5 tabulates the identifying uses for (ad/pro)nominal sådan.

Table 5. Identifying uses for (pro/ad)nominal sådan (original Swedish texts ESPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Identifying</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adnominal sådan</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pro)nominal sådan</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pro/ad)nominal sådan</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The new figures are those in the last row and the conclusion is clear: sådan is more identifying than such. The next section will make clear why this is so.

4. Alternatives for such and sådan

If sådan is more dedicated to identification than to intensification, one wonders what other means Swedish has for intensification, more particularly, for exactly that type that sådan can express, but does less often than such. Here the translations in the Swedish-English Parallel Corpus come in handy. Let us have a look at the translational equivalents of adnominal intensifying such in Swedish.

Table 6. Intensifying adnominal such translated into Swedish (Swedish translated texts ESPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sådan</th>
<th>så</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>such + noun</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such + adjective + noun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 %</td>
<td>44 %</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When English combines intensifying *such* with a noun and without an adjective, in 3 out of 18 cases, Swedish chooses to intensify an adjective that approximates the meaning of the English noun, and then the intensification happens with *så*, not with *sådan*, as in (40).

(40)  You’re *such* a baby. (FW1)  
  Du är *så* barnslig. (FW1T)  
  you are so childish

In the majority of the cases, however, Swedish too uses an intensifying *sådan*. However, when English combines the intensifying *such* with both a noun and an adjective, Swedish uses the intensifying *sådan* only in 5 out of the 25 cases, as illustrated in (41).

(41)  *Such* a beautiful deep blue they’d made it […]. (DF1)  
  De hade lyckats få en *sån* fin blå färg på dem […]. (DF1T)  
  they had managed get a such nice blue color on them

The winning strategy combines the adjective and the noun with an intensifying *så*. (42) and (43) are two illustrations.

(42)  He’d never seen *such* a beautiful woman up close, in the flesh. (ST1)  
  Han hade aldrig sett en *så* vacker kvinna på nära håll, inte i levande livet. (ST1T)  
  he had never seen a so beautiful woman on close hold not in living life
(33) Then I noticed that in a corner, across from where they ate with such innocent relish, [...], was the ghost of their son. (BO1)

Så la jag märke till att i ena hörnet, mitt emot dem där de satt och åt med så oskuldsfull aptit, and ate with so innocent appetite satt deras sons ande, [...]. (BO1T)

Sat their son’s ghost

The Swedish alternative makes good sense: when the person seen in (42) is a very beautiful woman, this is because she scores high on a scale from less to more beautiful, not on a scale from less of a woman to more of a woman. We can now also explain the puzzle left at the end of the preceding section. Sådan is less intensifying than such, because when the noun phrase has an adjective, Swedish typically intensifies with så. Though this strategy is available in English too, it seems to be relatively infrequent: in our corpus it did not occur at all. (44) is a made-up example.5

(44) He’d never seen so beautiful a woman up close, in the flesh.

We have also seen that sådan is more (pro)nominal than such. Table 7 shows how English translates (pro)nominal sådan.

Table 7. Identifying (pro)nominal sådan translated into English (English translated texts ESPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>like/sort/kind</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Zero</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>such</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>43 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some translations use such and they are all adnominal (see (45) and (46)).

5 An anonymous reviewer checked the relative frequency of the such a + adjective + noun and so + adjective + a + noun strategies in the BNC, and found the first one to be ten times as frequent as the second one.
(45) Hur går sådant till? (AP1)
   How do such things happen? (AP1T)

(46) Det är för att förleda sådana som jag. (BL1)
   It is done to mislead such as I
   It is done to mislead such people as me. (BL1T)

(47) and (48) illustrate the ‘Other’ and ‘Zero’ categories.

(47) Om sånt som hör fruntimmer till […] (GT1)
   about such that belongs women to
   About things that deal with females [...] (GT1T)

(48) En sådan som han skulle jag a such like him should I
   säkert ha kommit ihåg […] (BL1)
   definitely have remembered
   But I’m sure I would have remembered him. [...] (BL1T)

In (49)-(51) we illustrate a type where the notion of similarity is not expressed by such but by like, sort of or kind of. Like goes with a noun and sort and kind are nouns, at least, to some extent (though with sorta and kinda we see these constructions acquiring an adnominal status).

(49) Jag skämtar aldrig om sånt här. (SW1)
   I joke never about such here
   I never kid about things like that. (SW1T)

(50) Sådant och mycket annat berättar min such and much other tells my
    bror. (RJ1)
    brother
    That’s the sort of story my brother tells me. (RJ1T)
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(51) Ni begriper er ju på sånt you understand yourself well on such här. (SW1) here You people from National Homicide understand this kind of case. (SW1T)

The like/sort/kind strategies are no less prominent for the translation of adnominal such (see (52) to (54)).

Table 8. Identifying adnominal sådan translated into English (English translated texts ESPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>such</th>
<th>like/sort/kind</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Zero</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(52) En sådan dörr kostar nuförtiden rätt a such door costs now rather många tusenlappar. (LG1) many thousand.bills A door like that nowadays costs a pretty penny. (LG1T)

(53) Vi är inte vana vid såna saker. (SW1) we are not used with such things We’re not used to this sort of thing. (SW1T)

(54) En sådan båt är det. (JMY1) a such boat is it That’s the kind of boat it was. (JMY1T)

The other way round, Swedish has a sort/typ strategy too, but it cannot match the sådan strategy.

Table 9. Identifying adnominal such translated into Swedish (Swedish translated texts ESPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sådan</th>
<th>sort/typ</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Zero</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>101 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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(55) [...], among such people as she had never seen, [...] (RDA1)
[...], bland en sorts människor som hon aldrig
among a sort people who she never
förr hade mött, [...] (RDA1T)
before had met

We can thus say that that similative such has more competition from
other similative markers than Swedish sådan.

5. Conclusion
This paper is a demonstration of a three-pronged analysis of the
differences and similarities between English such and Swedish sådan.
Methodologically, we engaged in scholarship the way it is done outside
the field of corpus linguistics, by essentially relying on intuition, by
comparing – and criticizing – the existing language-specific analyses of
such and sådan, and, in this day and age, web googling. We then added
strictly corpus-based accounts of such and sådan, studying their uses both
in original texts and in translations. This triangulation allowed us to make
clear that the possible uses of such and sådan are very similar, but their
actual uses much less so. They both express similarity and we have called
them ‘similative’, but English such is nearly only used adnominally,
whereas Swedish sådan has prominent (pro)nominal uses as well.
Another striking difference is that both have identifying and intensifying
uses, the latter is more prominent for such than for sådan, and when the
noun phrase contains an adjective, Swedish prefers to intensify with så
rather than with sådan. Also, only in Swedish do we find the
recognitional use. Finally, we have seen that to express similarity such
has more competition from like/sort/kind strategies than sådan from
sort/typ strategies. Concluding the conclusion: the such and sådan
similatives are neither the same nor different: they are … similar.

References
Swedish Parallel Corpus. Manual of the enlarged version.”
http://www.sol.lu.se/engelska/corpus/corpus/espc.html
Such and sådan – the same but different


