Comparison, similarity and simulation in Zaar, a Chadic language of Nigeria
Bernard Caron

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I. Introduction

This paper discusses the linguistic expression of similarity, aka ‘similative’ in Zaar, a Chadic language spoken south of Bauchi State, in Northern Nigeria. As the Zaar similative is related to other functional structures, both morphologically (e.g. equative, simulative), or cognitively (e.g. comparison of superiority, aka ‘comparative’), these will also be included in the discussion. After a presentation of Zaar and its typological characteristics, stressing the fact that the predicative words expressing the standard of comparison in Zaar are essentially verbs, not adjectives (Section 2), the paper does a quick morpho-syntactic survey of the general cognitive operation of comparison (Section 3), showing how the equative, simulative and simulative structures are based on the preposition ɗan, ‘like’ whereas the comparative structure centers on the verb mop, ‘surpass’. Section 4 studies the comparative, while Section 5 focuses on the preposition dan and its morpho-syntactic status in relation with the equative and the similative structures. Section 6 shows how the morphemes dan, ‘like’, the quotative tu, and the particle ku combine to form the simulative marker dan (ku)tu. Finally, Section 7 summarises the contribution of Zaar to the study of comparison and similarity.

II. Zaar, a South-Bauchi Chadic language

Zaar, also known as Saya, is spoken by about 150 000 speakers in the South of Bauchi State (Nigeria), in the Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro Local Government Areas. Together with 30 or so other related languages first identified by (Shimizu 1978), Zaar forms a sub-branch of West Chadic languages named the South-Bauchi languages. Apart from the dominant languages, i.e. English (official national language) and Hausa (dominant all over Northern half of Nigeria), South Bauchi languages are surrounded by Niger-Congo
languages in the West (Izere, Birom); in the East (Jarawan Bantu); in the South (Tapshin, Fyem, Kwanka) and further South-East (Tarok). Two isolates inside South-Bauchi languages are Bankal in the North and Boi in the South.

Four dialects can be distinguished within Zaar, named after the main villages or towns where they are spoken: Bogoro (formerly called the Lusa dialect), Gambar Lere, Marti and Kal. The Kal dialect is very close to what is generally called the Sigidi or Gu:s language, so much so that Gu:s can be conflated with the Kal dialect of Zaar (cf. Caron 2001).

Most Zaar people of the younger generation are Hausa-Zaar bilinguals. They are schooled in Hausa in primary school, before learning English. The Zaar are Christians and use a Hausa translation of the Bible. The older generation are not fluent in Hausa, whereas the younger educated elite, who often hold positions in the administration, police and education, switch comfortably between Zaar, Hausa and English.

From a typological point of view, Zaar shares with its Hausa ‘big brother’ the main characteristics of most Chadic languages: it is a SVO head-first language where TAM is conflated with the exponent of the subject function into a pre-verbal pronominal clitic. Contrary to Hausa, this pre-verbal complex does not include the expression of focus. This same portmanteau morpheme can be omitted in sequential clauses – a phenomenon different from subordination, and appearing in narration to indicate consecutive events – and in Serial Verb Constructions (more on SVC in section 4 on the comparative). Zaar uses prepositions and the genitival modifier follows the noun it modifies. There is no case marking of object and subject. Zaar does not use relative pronouns, but has a relative subordinator dan, different from interrogative pronouns, which will be discussed in Section 7. Qualification is expressed either by a limited set of adjectives referring to age, size and colour, or more commonly by verbal predication, and more precisely by quality verbs. This preference for verbal predication of quality is manifest in comparison.

III. A brief overview of comparison in Zaar

The linguistic expression of similarity, or simulative, is part of the broader conceptual category of comparison. Comparison presupposes an entity, called the comparee, in relation with some property, state or, more rarely, a dynamic state of affairs. The comparee is the argument of a predicative word – most often an adjective – representing a parameter of comparison applied to it, relative to some standard.

"The comparative degree of some predicate – typically an adjective – marks this predicate as applying to its argument (the comparee) to a higher extent than the standard; e.g. smaller. [...] A comparison of equality is one that ascribes to the comparee the same value of the parameter of comparison as to the standard." (Cuzzolin & Lehmann 2000, 1212 ff.)

In the comparative degree, some languages mark a difference between the comparison of superiority (more intelligent than) and the comparison of inferiority (less intelligent than). In Zaar, such a contrast does not exist, and the comparison of minority is expressed through the negation of the comparison of equality (not as intelligent as).

As a consequence, we will focus on the comparison of equality (generally called ‘equative’ in typological studies) and the comparison of superiority, which, likewise, we will call ‘comparative’ for convenience sake.

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3 The name Jar, or Jarawa is misleading since it refers to different populations, speaking different languages: the Jarawan Dutse (Mountain Jars) speak Zarek (Zere, Zarek, Afizere, Ifizere), a Benue-Congo language, and the Jarawan Kogi (Plain Jars), speaking Jáär (Zhar), a Bantu language, commonly called Jarawan Bantu. Finally, the Jerawa are another population, speaking Zele, a Benue-Congo language from the Kainji group (Shimizu 1975).
A good starting point for the typological study of comparison is given by English, with a clear morphology expressing the various logical articulators of comparison, such as (Haskelmath & Buchholz 1998)’s descriptive framework for the study of equatives and similatives, which we will use for this work on Zaar:

(1) **EQUATIVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparee Parameter</th>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>My sister</em> is</td>
<td>as</td>
<td><em>intelligent</em></td>
<td>as</td>
<td>you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same framework can be adopted for the comparative:

(2) **COMPARATIVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparee Parameter</th>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>My sister</em> is</td>
<td>more</td>
<td><em>intelligent</em></td>
<td>than</td>
<td>you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This first dimension of contrast (equality vs. inequality) intersects with the contrast between scalar and non-scalar comparison (Huddleston & Pullum 2008, 1099 ff.), producing the different types of comparison in (3) below:

(3)  equality inequality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>scalar</th>
<th>non-scalar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>equative</strong> (as ... as)</td>
<td><strong>identity</strong> <em>(same as)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>comparative</strong> <em>(more ... than)</em></td>
<td><strong>similative</strong> <em>(like)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>difference</strong> <em>(different from)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This contrast between scalar and non-scalar comparison has been used in the literature, although in different terms, to explain e.g. the difference between equatives and similatives:

“Semantically, the difference between equatives and similatives is not so much that similatives express approximate similarity, while equatives express true equality, but rather that similatives express identity of manner, whereas equatives express identity of degree or extent, or in other words, similatives express quality while equatives express quantity.” (Haskelmath & Buchholz 1998, 313)

These five types of comparison are basically expressed as follows in Zaar:

(4)  equality inequality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>scalar</th>
<th>non-scalar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>equative</strong> : <em>dan</em>, ‘like’</td>
<td><strong>identity</strong> : <em>nambón</em>, ‘one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>comparative</strong> : <em>mop</em>, ‘exceed’</td>
<td><strong>difference</strong> : <em>mari</em>, ‘different’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| similative : *dan*, ‘like’ |

As can be seen in table (4), there is a strong resemblance between the equative and the similative, both expressed through the preposition *dan*, ‘like’, as opposed to the expression of the comparative through the verb *mop*, ‘exceed’, while identity and difference are lexicalised through the use of the numeral *nambón*, ‘one’ and the adjective *mari*, ‘different’ respectively.

The identity of the preposition *dan*, ‘like’ needs further consideration, taking into account the possible links with three other words and their variants: the adverb *dan* (var. *da*), ‘again’; the relative subordinator *dan* (var. *da*), ‘that’; and the deictic adverb *dân* (var. *dání*), ‘there’.

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4 Nasal phonetic variants are common in Zaar; e.g. the variation of the morpheme *kutu/kutun*, ‘as if’. (cf Section 8).
The tonal, morphological and semantic differences between the deictic adverb *ɗán/ɗáni* and the simulative preposition *ɗán*, ‘like’ are too important to consider them to be either variants of the same word or to be otherwise related.

In the same way, although relative markers are often derived from deictic determiners in Chadic languages (Frajzyngier 1996), the falling prosody and the adverbial function of *ɗán* militate against its relationship with the relative subordinator *ɗán*. In Section 7, we analyse the relative and temporal clauses as complements of the preposition, and the relative and temporal subordinator *ɗán* as a grammaticalisation of the simulative preposition *ɗán*, ‘like’.

Finally, the cognitive relationship between repetition and identity or similitude argues in favour of a lexical connexion with the adverb *ɗán/ɗáni* ‘again’:

(5) *Máman sùmì yá do:li gón *ɗán*

má mán su =mi ká dɔ:li -i gón *ɗán*

1PL.FUT come return =1PL.OBJ at open space -INDF QLT again

We will go back to another [tale] again (SAY BC NARR 01 SP1 001).

However, the grammaticalisation path is not clear from the clause-final adverb *ɗán* to the homophonous preposition *ɗán*. The relative scarcity of documentation of related Chadic languages concerning similitude and comparison makes it difficult to get any extra information that would help. The only related lexeme is found in Miya with the verb *ɗám(à)*, ‘equal, reach, be as…’, contrasting with the verb *rà*, ‘exceed’ (Schuh & Ciroma Tilde Miya 2010) There exists no such verb in Zaar, which would contrast with *mop*, ‘surpass, exceed’ (cf. Section 4). It is tempting to imagine that such a verb *ɗán* has existed, and given birth to the preposition *ɗán*, ‘like’ and the homophonous adverb *ɗán*, ‘again’ before disappearing. Unfortunately, nothing more can be said concerning a possible etymology or grammaticalisation path for all the uses of *ɗán*.

Before moving on to the following sections for the study of the comparative (Section 4) and the equative/similative (Section 5), let us see how identity and difference are expressed through the adjectives *nàmbóŋ*, ‘one, single’ (Ex. 6) and *mari*, ‘different’ (Ex. 7):

(6) *Tá wá:ní mì:tsə nàmbóŋ?*

tá waːni mì:tsə nàmbóŋ

3PL.FUT perform INCH burial one

Will they do the same funeral? (SAY BC INT 02 SP2 40).

(7) *Ma ndʒə sè: tò póldi yá dátpi wón mari.*

ma ndʒə sè: tò póldi -dì ká dátpi -i wón mari

fight only if 3SG.SBJV go out CTP at road -INDF QLT different

Fighting must arrive in a different way. (SAY BC INT 05 Morals SP1 149).

### IV. Comparative

The comparative (comparison of superiority) in Zaar is based on the verb *mop*, ‘surpass, exceed’, a labile verb which can be intransitive, monotransitive or ditransitive. The basic transitive use of the verb is exemplified in (8).

(8) *Kàdá: lýá dú: tò móp karfiwá:n.*

kàdá ə: lýá dú: tò móp karfi =wá:n

NEG3 2SG.SBJV drink beer 3SG.SBJV surpass strength 2PL.POS

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5 The verb ‘surpass' is the frequent means in African languages from various families to code comparison of superiority.
Don’t drink more beer than you can stand. [lit. Don’t drink beer so that it should exceed your strength]. (SAY BC INT 05 Morals SP1 035).

The intransitive use of mop expresses set comparison (comparative of absolute superiority):

(9) Gjò: wò mop de déjo?:
gjò: =kanda wò mop de déjo:
which =COP2 3SG.FUT surpass exactly EMPH

Which one will be most suitable? (SAY BC CONV 01 SP2 021-2).

This verb is used in two different strategies for comparison in Zaar: the Serial Verb Construction Strategy, and the ditransitive strategy.

**A. Serial Verb Construction Strategy**

Looking superficially like the equative/similative structure (see Section 5 below), the comparative use of the SVC is exemplified in (10) below:

(10) Ā: wò colák mop kə.
ā: wò īfólák mop kə
ah 3SG.FUT be smooth surpass 2SG.OBJ

Eh, he will look nicer than you. (CONV 02 SP1 111)

Although it appears in the same position as the preposition dan, ‘like’ of the equative/similative structure, mop is a verb: kə in (Ex.10) is a 2nd person singular Object Pronoun, belonging to the paradigm of verb complement pronouns, whereas prepositions in Zaar take Independent Pronouns as complements, e.g. dan kyá:nį, ‘like you’. This comparative structure uses a Serial Verb Construction (SVC) strategy, as characterised in (Aikhenvald & Dixon 2006, 1):

“A serial verb construction (SVC) is a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort. Serial verb constructions describe what is conceptualised as a single event. They are monoclausal; their intonational properties are the same as those of a monoverbal clause, and they have just one tense, aspect, and polarity value.”

In this construction, the first verb (ɡfólák, ‘be smooth’) is the major verb, an intransitive quality verb\(^6\) which functions as the comparative predicate, and expresses the parameter. The second verb (mop, ‘surpass’), is the minor verb, and functions as the standard marker. It is a transitive verb which takes the standard as a direct object. The resulting structure is shown in the table below, with the translation of ‘Mopshi is taller than Döndą’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparee</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Standard Marker</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>PRO V₁</td>
<td>V₂</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mopshi</td>
<td>á lù:</td>
<td>mop</td>
<td>Döndą</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mopshi</td>
<td>is tall</td>
<td>surpass</td>
<td>Döndą</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) There exist ‘true’ adjectives Zaar, but they don’t appear in comparisons where synonymous quality verbs are used, e.g. lar ‘be red’ is substituted for ‘ʒa’, ‘red’.
The subject pronoun of the major verb (Parameter) can be repeated before mop, ‘surpass’ (the second verb, and Standard Marker), e.g. in (Ex.12):

(12)  Kọ ʧi vi:  kọ mop  yeli.

| 2SG:AOR | 2SG:AOR | 2SG:AOR |
|——|——|——|
| eat | speech | surpass |

You are more talkative than a bird. (SAY BC READ 03 Sermon 272)

B. Ditransitive strategy

The ditransitive strategy is the only one available for parameters expressed by non-verbal predicates. The comparative predicator mop remains as the single main verb, with the standard as the first object, and the parameter as the second object.

(13)  Nə gyó: yəŋ ə mop kâmfi ɗayro?:

| COP1 | which | COP2 | 3SG:AOR |
|——|——|——|——|
| surpass | friend | -PL | -INDEF |

Who is more stupid than his friends? (lit. ‘who surpasses the friends (in) madness?’) (SAY BC READ 08 NAR Men-Naar 38)

The resulting structure is as follows:

(14)  Comparee | Standard Marker | Standard | Parameter
       NP | Pro V | NP1 | NP2
Mopši | mop | Dünda | gyaːl
Mopshi surpass | Dœndà | sense

The same structure can be used with a parameter expressed by a nominalised verb:

(15)  Diːla mop Záːki sayátkénì əː.

| COP1 | COP2 | 3SG:AOR |
|——|——|——|
| Jackal | be clever | -NMLZ | EMPH |

Jackal is more clever than Lion (lit. Jackal exceeds Lion in being clever).

The parameter is omitted when it can be contextually recovered, as in (Ex. 16), a question typically concluding tales describing a competition among a group of friends, and for which there exist two varians in the corpus, with and without the parameter kūːskóni, ‘being evil’:

(16)  Nə nú: yəŋ ə mop kâmfi (kūːskóni ə)?

| COP1 | COP2 | 3SG:AOR |
|——|——|——|
| Jackal | be evil | NMLZ | EMPH |

Who is more evil than his friends? (SAY BC READ 09 36)

Mupun, another Chadic language from the Angas family spoken south of Zaar, uses the same structures to express comparison, e.g. (Ex.17) for the Serial Verb Construction strategy:

(17)  naloŋ ret met damuan
Nalong pretty surpass Damuan
Nalon is prettier than Damuan
The second complement of the ditransitive strategy is prepositional in Mupun, e.g. (Ex. 18):

(18)  
\[ \text{damuan met naloŋ n-ret} \]
\[ \text{Damuan surpass Nalong PREP-beauty} \]
\[ \text{Damuan is more handsome than Nalon (Frajzyngier 1993, 247)} \]

V. Equative/Similative structure

A. Equative

The basic structure of the equative is exemplified in (Ex. 19):

(19)  
\[ Tâ:s \text{ Đøndə á njirò dan fèmdì.} \]
\[ \text{hand.POS Đøndə 3SG.AOR be cold like ice} \]
\[ \text{Đøndə’s hand is as cold as ice.} \]

This structure can be represented as follows:

(20)  
\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Comparee} & \text{Parameter} & \text{Standard Marker} & \text{Standard} \\
\text{NP} & \text{Pro V} & \text{Prep} & \text{NP} \\
Tâ:s & Đøndə & á njirò & dan fèmdì \\
\text{Đøndə’s hand is cold like ice} & \\
\end{array}
\]

It should be noted that the equative in Zaar does not use a parameter marker. Due to the dominantly verbal nature of the expression of quality in Zaar\(^7\), the comparative predicate which includes the parameter is a quality verb, e.g. \[ lú:, ‘be tall’; \]
\[ʧolák, ‘be smooth’; \]
\[saɣát, ‘be wise’, etc. \]

B. Similative

In English, the difference between the similative and the equative lies in the absence of parameter marker and the use of \textit{like}, a standard marker that is different from the equative \textit{as}. Since the Zaar similative uses the same standard marker as the equative (i.e. \textit{dan}), and the equative does not have a parameter marker either, the same structure is used for the equative and the similative:

(21)  
\[ A fi ma:nđo dan zâ:ki. \]
\[ \text{He fights like a lion.} \]

The only difference lies in the scalar property of the comparative predicate. If it is scalar (e.g. \textit{lú; ‘be tall’; saɣát, ‘be wise’}), the structure will be interpreted with an equative meaning. It if is non-scalar (\textit{fi ma:nđo, ‘fight’}), it will take a similative meaning. See (Section 6) below for more on this opposition between the similative and the equative.

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\(^7\) There exist ‘true’ adjectives Zaar (cf. (Ex.13), \[ yir ʤì:, ‘black eye’ \]), but they don’t appear in comparisons where synonymous quality verbs are used instead, e.g. \textit{lar} ‘be red’ is substituted for ‘\textit{za}’, ‘red’.
C. Morphological status of the parameter marker ḃān

Dan is followed in Zaar by different types of constituents, i.e. Noun Phrases, Prepositional Phrases and Clauses. If, as a consequence, it is analysed as changing its lexical category with each context, i.e. as preposition or conjunction, this results in a multiplication of the syntactic functions of ḃān. Instead, using Ockham’s razor, and inspired by the discussion of English than by (Huddleston & Pullum 2008, 1103), ḃān is here analysed as a preposition taking NP, PP and S-complements:

(22) NP complement, e.g. Mopfi, a proper noun.

Dandā ā wā: ḃār ḃān Mopshi

Dandā ā wa: ḃār ḃān Mopfi

Dandā danced like Mopshi.

(23) PP complement, e.g. dàgà Pùji, ‘from Tafawa Balewa’

Ri yən dàgà rūwa Zwāl ḃān ā fī: dàgà Pùji

ri -kəni dàgà rūwa Zwāl ḃān ā fī -i:

walk -NMLZ from around Zwal there 3SG.AOR do -RES

dàgà Pùji

like from Tafawa Balewa

The walk from Zwal there, is like from Tafawa Balewa (CONV03 SP1 206)

(24) S (clausal) complement, e.g. ā tūlī:, ‘he arrived’.

Daŋ ā tūlī: ā lən tu volən guŋ ā: fī:.

Daŋ ā tūlī: ā lən tu volən guŋ ā: fī:

like 3SG.AOR reach RES 3SG.AOR go and get

volən - guŋ ā: fī -i:

groundnut POS chief 3SG.CPL do RES

When⁸ he arrived, he found that the King’s groundnuts were ripe. (SAY BC READ 06 NAR Longa 053)

VI. Semantics of the Equative/Similative structure

Depending on the semantic and discursive contexts, the equative/similative structure with ḃān will take various meanings. Phrasal complements will induce equative or similative interpretations (both specific and general), as well as a functive interpretation. Clausal complements will induce similative⁹, accord and substitutive meanings.

At phrase level, ḃān appears in exactly the same structure with equatives and similative functions. The difference is due to the semantic nature of the comparative predicator, i.e. the parameter. A scalar parameter will induce an equative interpretation (Ex. 26 & 27); a non-scalar parameter will induce a similative interpretation (Ex. 28). The opposition specific vs. general depends on the specificity of the standard. See (Ex. 26 & 27) for a contrast between specific and general equatives.

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⁸ See (Section 7.1) for this use of ḃān introducing a temporal adjunct.

⁹ We have no example of the structure being interpreted as a simile, but there is no reason why it should not.
A. Specific equative
In the following example, the scalar parameter is the quality verb lu, ‘be tall’; and the standard is a referential, individual item against which the comparee is set, i.e. Dônda, a person:

Mopshi 3SG.AOR be tall like Dônda

Mopshi is as tall as Dônda.

B. General equative
The following example, a stock Zaar insult, is a general equative where the scalar parameter is the quality verb baŋ, ‘be bitter’. The non-specific standard producing a general equative is ránga, ‘mahogany’, which stands for the abstract, highest degree of bitterness (a synonym of wickedness).

(26)  Ka baŋ dan ránga.
ka 2SG.AOR be bitter like mahogany

You are as wicked as the Devil. (Caron 2005, 9)

C. Similative
In Ex.(27) the similative meanings are produced by the two non-scalar parameters, viz. the action verbs kîtâr, ‘run’ and ɬə, ‘go to’.

DM 2PL.AOR continue running like here up to 2PL.AOR go RES

Dan Wû:r - Viŋ
like mountain POS Vung

then you would start running like here till you go to... like the Vung Mountain (SAY BC INT 03 Calendar SP1 358-360)

The same similative meaning appears when the standard is expressed by a clause:

Dônda ā wâ: ɬâr dan Mopshi wâ: ngîl.
Dônda 3SG.AOR do dance like Mopshi do song

Dônda danced like Mopshi sang.

Here, the clausal complement of the preposition dan exhibits some morphosyntactic reduction with the bare verb wa: appearing without repeating the Subject-TAM complex ā of the matrix clause.

D. Functive
Another function of the structure equative/similative structure is that of role phrase (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998), also called functive (Creissels 2011), where the NP introduced by dan works as a secondary
predication expressing ‘the role or function in which a participant appears’ (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998, 321-4). Only one example of role phrase was found in the corpus:


“I am the one who came (disguised) as an old man and released rabbits for you to follow. (SAY BC READ 12 NAR Kadi gi kitn 063-5)

E. Substitutive

A noticeable case of semantic inversion is observed in substitutive clauses: the preposition dan and the structure of the substitutive clause is identical to that of the simulative. With the proper context, and without changing anything to the structure, the preposition dan takes a substitutive meaning ('instead of'). In the following example, the substitutive interpretation is induced by the 2sg.Aorist ko used with the verb pǎ:r, ‘thank’ instead of the Completive usually associated with this verb:

(30)  Context: [you saw something worthless,] you went and took it too, instead of thanking God [for what you had already.]  

ko liː da ngàpən dàn ko pǎːr ḡoyn
ko ṭə -iː da ngàp -kəni dàn ko pǎːr ḡoyn
2SG.AOR go RES again catch NMLZ like 2SG.AOR thank God

you went and took it too, instead of thanking God (SAY BC READ 05 Song Swari 162)

F. Accord clause

Accord clauses are not distinct formally from other clausal structures using dan as a standard marker, as can be seen in (Ex. 31 & 32) below.


gət -iː lón fi dàn gət -iː fůː =tə
woman -RES go do like woman -DIST tell =3S.OBJ

That woman went and did as that [other] woman had told her. [2012-11 like 21 #19/168]


Dan məná: fu= kə nəː yəː wən myá: sůː like 1SG.REC tell =2SG.OBJ yesterday 1SG.ICPL want
aː: gəmá ləː -m -ni -iː:
2SG.SBJV finish work -PROX -INCH -DIST
kəndá aː: ₇ə .
then 2SG.SBJV go .

As I told you yesterday I want you to finish that job before you leave the town. [2012-11 SIM 12]

Their function as manner rather than temporal adjuncts, or frame-setting topics (cf. Section 7 below) derives only from the semantic or informational context.
VII. Grammaticalisation of the equative/similative structure

When followed by a clausal complement, the semantic drift of the preposition can lead on to more grammaticalised meanings, e.g. when used to introduce temporal adjunct clauses, relative clause, and finally, at discourse level, topics.

A. Temporal adjunct

The preposition dan, ‘like, as’ can function with a clausal complement as a temporal adjunct. The resulting meaning is that of approximate simultaneity between the matrix clause and the adjunct clause.

(33)  *Kotáyá: fí wùr yá lá: pkón dan kò fà:rá ndàyýn à lá: pkóni?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kotáyá:</th>
<th>fí</th>
<th>wuri:</th>
<th>ká</th>
<th>lá:p</th>
<th>-káni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2SG.REM.ICPL</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>how</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>follow</td>
<td>NMLZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dan</th>
<th>kò</th>
<th>fà:rá</th>
<th>ndàyýn</th>
<th>ká</th>
<th>lá:p</th>
<th>-káni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like</td>
<td>2SG.AOR</td>
<td>begin</td>
<td>enter</td>
<td>NMLZ</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>follow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you practice your faith when you converted to Christianity (lit. when you started following)? (SAY BC INT 05 Morals SP2 47)

This temporal transposition of the comparative meaning of dan is quite common in other languages of the world, and is observed e.g. in English *as*, or in French *comme*, as in the opening verse of Arthur Rimbaud’s *Le Bateau Ivre*:

(34)  *Comme je descendais des Fleuves impassibles,*

*Je ne me sentis plus guidé par les haleurs:*

‘As I was floating down unconcerned Rivers,

I no longer felt myself steered by the haulers.’ (Rimbaud 2009, 162)

The discursive function of temporal frame-setting, derived from the semantic interpretation of broad simultaneity, can also be narrowed down to a more precise temporal relationship between two events, such as concomitance, which involves both simultaneity and succession: ‘just as S…; after S, then...’. This occurs very often in the discursive context of a narration, characterised by such TAMs as the Aorist (narrative), or the Remote Past:

(35)  *Dan à túlí:di bafi sáy Zhí: wúl fí tu […]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dan</th>
<th>à</th>
<th>túlí:di</th>
<th>bafi</th>
<th>sáy</th>
<th>Zhí:</th>
<th>wúl</th>
<th>fí</th>
<th>tu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3SG.AOR</td>
<td>reach</td>
<td>RES</td>
<td>CTP</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>3PL.OBJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sé:</th>
<th>zí:</th>
<th>wúl</th>
<th>fí</th>
<th>tu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>then</td>
<td>leopard</td>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>3PL.OBJ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When he [Dog] arrived near them [the monkeys], then Panther told them to… (SAY BC READ 13 NAR Gung-Meer 013-4)

B. Topicalisation and frame-setting

Dan appears with non-clausal complements in left-dislocated position where the resulting phrase functions as a topic. Dan can then be considered as having been grammaticalised into a topic particle, e.g. in (Ex. 36)

---

10 This is not possible e.g. in French where *comme* used in temporal clauses requires the use of imperfective TAM’s, e.g. Present, Imperfect, and Pluperfect.
where *dan* is used with the topic particles *àmá*, ‘but’ and *kàm*, ‘indeed’, to introduce the contrasting topic ‘Godiya’, the name of a young boy taken as an example when discussing the various types of mourning ceremonies:

(36) *Àmá* *ɗan go:diya kàm* [...] *tá wá:ní mi:tsay gyákgýak kûrûm.*

| ámá: | *ɗan go:diya kàm* |
| but like Godiya | indeed |
| tá wa: | -ni mi:ts o-i gyákgýak kûrûm |
| 3PL.FUT | perform INCH burial INDF anyhow only |

But like Godiya on the contrary [...] they would only be wailing. (INT 02 SP1 367-73)

This left-dislocated position is favoured by temporal adjuncts in Zaar as in French (Ex. 34) above. The subordinate clause introduced by *ɗan* appears then before the matrix and functions as a frame-setting adjunct:

(37) *Ɗam míyà: nà:s to yàvi:, kí: yêl lá: áyà: fi wuri:?*

| dá: | míyà: |
| as | ICPL.IMM.1SG tease |
| nà:s | =t o |
| =káy | -i: |
| kí: | yêl lá: áyà: fi wuri: |
| 2SG.IMM | see work 3SG.ICPL.IMM do how |

As I was teasing him about it, did you see what happened? (CONV 01 SP2 106)

C. Relative clause

Finally, the preposition *dan*, ‘like’ has been grammaticalised into the default relative subordinator *dan*, which behaves like the English subordinator ‘that’.

(38) *Mò naï làpwón *dan* má là:yàv.*

| mò | naï | là pwón | *dan* | má | là =káy |
| 1PL.SBJV look for | place some | REL2 | 1PL.FUT go | =ANAPH |

We should look for a place that we will go to. (CONV 01 SP2 028)

Alongside the temporal adjunct structure, this is another extension of the function of the preposition *dan* when it takes a clausal complement. In this case, the resulting prepositional phrase functions as a noun modifier.

It should however be noted that the Zaar relative subordinator *dan* is not a relative pronoun, has no relationship with interrogative pronouns, and does not mark the syntactic function of the modified noun within the relative clause. In (Ex.38) for example, the gap left by the relativised constituent *làp*, ‘place’ is filled by the locative anaphoric pronoun =*káy*. Consequently, although *dan* is used for both equative, simulative and relative structures, Zaar is characterised as using a preposition, and should not be included in the languages using a relative-based strategy.

VIII. Simulation

Before the final section which summarises the findings concerning comparison and similarity in Zaar, this section focuses on another use of the morpheme *dan* when combined with the quotative *tu* and/or another morpheme, *ku*, producing pretense clauses, or simulatives, with the meaning ‘as if…, as though…’. The most exhaustive combination is the form *dan kutu* e.g. (Ex. 39):
(39) [...] vi: dà: mán mba: ɓastə dəŋ kətu mur ɓàzùmì də:lè: kàwèy
vi: dà à: mán mba: ɓas =tə
mouth then 3SG.ICPL come be white POS =3S.OBJ
ɗan kətu mur kə ɓàzùmì də:lè: kàwèy
like as if man POS fasting seriously merely

[...] his mouth had become dry as if he was fasting seriously. (CONV 01 SP2 126)

_Dan kətu_ can be reduced to _ɗan tu_, e.g. (ex. 40) below:

(40) Á fim _ɗan tu_ ma gôngá.
á fi =ma _ɗan tu_ ma gôngá
3SG.SBJ.AOR do =1SG.OBJ like OPN 1SG.FUT vomit

I feel [lit. ‘it does me’] as if I’m going to vomit. (CONV03 SP2 255)

_Dan kətu_ can also be reduced to _kətu_, eg. (ex. 41) below:

kí: yel là: ayà: fi wuri: _kətu_ wò ñgwà:r
2SG.IMM see work 3SG.ICPL.IMM do how as if 3SG.FUT weep

Did you see what he was doing? As if he was going to cry. (CONV 01 SP2 107)

In the combination _ɗan kətu, tu_ is identified as the introducer of reported speech. This morpheme could be a word originally meaning ‘say’ (<*t-*, cf. Hausa _ʧè:_), which has disappeared in Zaar where the verb _wul/wu_ is used instead. _Tu_ is the default reported speech opener. It can appear alone, at the beginning of the sentence, without any other verb:

(42) Ko tə gi: nə ní?: — _Tu_ nə kúŋ ɬù:
kə tə gi: nə ní?: _tu_ nə kúŋ ɬù:
2SG.AOR get DIST COP1 what? OPN COP1 dry meat

What have you found? _He said_ it’s dry meat. (NARR 03 SP1 202)

Or it can follow a verb or phrase expressing an act of speech, thought, opinion, etc.:

(43) Dón tə wiː _tu_ kà:suwa cà: yuːyə ɗangənì.
dón tə wul _tu_ kà:suwa fi: yúkn -i: ɗangənì
because 3PL.AOR say OPN market 3SG.ICPL fill -RES now

Because they say that now the market is really big. (CONV 01 SP2 040)

The quotative _tu_ is also used to introduce a proper noun:

(44) Səm gən _tu_ Kèrèŋkə:she, səm gən _tu_ Dàːgùləw, səm gən _tu_ Vwàːgənì
səm gən _tu_ kərèŋkə:ñe səm gən _tu_ dàːgùləw səm gən _tu_ vwàːgənì
name some OPN Kerenkeshe name some OPN Dagulau name some OPN Vagani

One _was named_ Kerenkeshe, one _was named_ Dagulau, one _was named_ Vagani. (NARR 02 SP1 004)
In the complex morpheme *dan kutu* the notion of simulation is associated more precisely with the morpheme *ku*. *Ku* is never used as an autonomous morpheme in Zaar, and is associated with no other function than the similative. An equivalent can be found in Mupun, a geographically close language belonging to the Angas Chadic family. In Mupun, there are two preposition expressing non-scalar equality comparison: *too*, ‘as’, expressing similarity; and *ko*, ‘as if’, expressing simulation:

(45)  

\[
\text{wu le siap mopun } ^{*}\text{too/ko ngu mopun } sə \]

3M speak Mupun as if person Mupun DEM

He speaks Mupun as if he were a Mupun person. (Frajzyngier 1993, 283)

Another source for the notion of simulation can be traced to the association of *dan*, ‘like’ and *tu*, the reported speech opener. The combination of comparative and quotative as a strategy to express simulation and other related notions (pretense, hypothesis, or irrealis condition), seems to be a straightforward cognitive operation, as exemplified in (Ex.46) taken from Naija (Nigerian English Pidgin):

(46)  

\[
\text{Lai se na ju bi mi, hau ju } f\text{ do dis } tı̅ \text{ pas } sɛf ?}
\]

like OPN COP.EQ 2SG COP.QL 1SG
how 2SG IRR do PROX.SG thing EMPH PTCL

If you were in my place, how would you have done this very thing? (9JA WAR 12 001)

From these observations, it can be inferred that there exist two competing strategies to form pretense clauses in Zaar, which can also be combined: one involving the combination of the similative *dan* and the quotative *tu*, and the other involving the “pure” similative *ku*.

The way the simulative is expressed in Zaar reveals strong tendencies at work all over the language: borrowing from Hausa and other neighbouring languages; fusion between original Zaar strategies and borrowed strategies; and finally, cumulative use of all the available strategies: synonymous morphemes can be used individually or piled up in the same structure.

IX. Conclusion

As a conclusion, the main properties of the expression of similarity in Zaar can be summarised as follows. With reference to the descriptive frame set by (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998), i.e. Comparee – Parameter Marker – Parameter – Standard Marker – Standard, the equative in Zaar does not have a parameter marker. Due to the dominantly verbal nature of the expression of quality in Zaar, the comparative predicate which includes the parameter is a quality verb. The comparison of superiority uses two competing strategies: a Serial Verb Construction Strategy and a Ditransitive Strategy, both based on the verb *mop*, ‘surpass, exceed’. Similitude and equality comparison share the same syntactic frame in Zaar, based on the preposition *ɗan*, ‘like’. There is no difference in Zaar between specific and general equatives or similatives. This same equative/similative structure based on the preposition *ɗan* is used for different functions: role phrases and accord clauses. Surprisingly, in the appropriate context, this simulative preposition can take the substitutive meaning ‘instead of’. Simulation is expressed in various combinations which can involve the simulative *dan* (or its Hausa equivalent *kaman*), with the quotative *tu*, and the specialised morpheme *ku*, probably related to Mupun *ko*. Finally, the simulative structure *ɗan* + clausal complement, has been extended to take on different grammatical functions that are more loosely connected to the original meaning of similarity: time adjunct (‘as, when’); relative clause. When combined with left-dislocation, the structure <*ɗan* NP> is used as a topic, and the structure <*ɗan* S> functions as a frame-setting adjunct.
From a typological point of view, the expression of comparison and similarity in Zaar is quite different from what has been characterised as the “Standard Average European” equivalent (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998, 325-6). The three main differences are (i) the verbal nature of quality in Zaar; (ii) the absence of parameter marker; (iii) the non-relative/interrogative base of the standard marker, which in Zaar is a preposition expressing manner.

Finally, Zaar, a head-initial language, confirms the main typological claim of (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998, 289): “in head-initial languages the order should be ‘parameter - standard marker – standard’, and in head-final languages the order should be ‘standard - standard marker – parameter’.”

References


