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Equative and similative constructions in Chibchan languages

Claudine Chamoreau*

1. INTRODUCTION

Equative and similative constructions have been understudied in linguistic literature, contrary to comparative constructions of inequality, which have been studied from areal and typological perspectives, in particular, the comparison of superiority (Andersen 1983; Stassen 1985; Heine 1997; Cuzzolin & Lehmann 2004; Dixon 2008). Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998), Henkelmann (2006) and Haspelmath et al. (2017) have proposed the first typologies of equative and similative constructions. Haspelmath & Buchholz (1998: 278) distinguish both types of constructions and indicate that “equatives express equal extent, and similatives express equal manner”. The former constructions express quantity, that is, “Equative constructions express situations in which two referents have a gradable property to the same degree” (Haspelmath et al. 2017:9), as in *Max is as tall as John*, while the latter structures express quality, as in *Max is tall like John*. This distinction, semantically and formally present in European languages, is not attested in all languages (see Pakendorf, this volume). This is also the case for various languages of the Chibchan family, which consists of sixteen understudied languages spoken in Central America and in the north of South America, from Honduras to Colombia.

The aims of this paper are to offer a first description of equative and similative constructions in twelve of the sixteen extant Chibchan languages and to illustrate two typological particularities within this family. The languages were chosen on the basis of the existence of reliable data (texts and/or grammars). They all share a construction with a similative standard marker and the majority have only one construction for expressing similarity and equality.

So, on the one hand, the construction shared in the Chibchan languages contains a comparee (C), a parameter (P) that is a property, a standard entity (SE) and a standard marker ‘like’ (SM), but no equative degree marker. The SE and SM form a standard phrase (SP). This construction type can be analysed as:

- (1) Max is tall like John
 C P [SM SE]_{SP}

The construction in (1), which is Type 1 in Haspelmath et al.’s (2017) typology, is the basic type in these twelve Chibchan languages. In many languages, this is the sole construction, and it is used for both equative and similative comparison. However, although many Chibchan languages exhibit several features associated with SOV order (Constenla Umaña 2012, Quesada 2007), the constituent order in the standard phrase shows a crucial distinction. In the SP, the standard marker always follows the standard entity, but some languages (Pesh, the Votic languages in the north and the Magdalenian languages in the south) present the expected order for SOV languages, that is, the SP precedes the parameter. An SP has the same position in relation to a parameter as an object does in relation to a verb. But other languages (notably the central Isthmian languages) show the reverse order, that is, the SP follows the parameter and therefore has a different position in relation to a parameter than an object does in relation to a verb. The variation is thus between the standard phrase and the parameter. The Isthmian languages are in contradiction with two generalisations presented in Haspelmath et al. (2017:26-27): Generalisation 2, “If the parameter follows the standard, then the language generally has dominant object-verb order”; and Generalisation 3, “If

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the standard precedes the parameter, then the standard marker generally follows the standard, and if the standard follows the parameter, then the standard marker generally precedes the standard”.

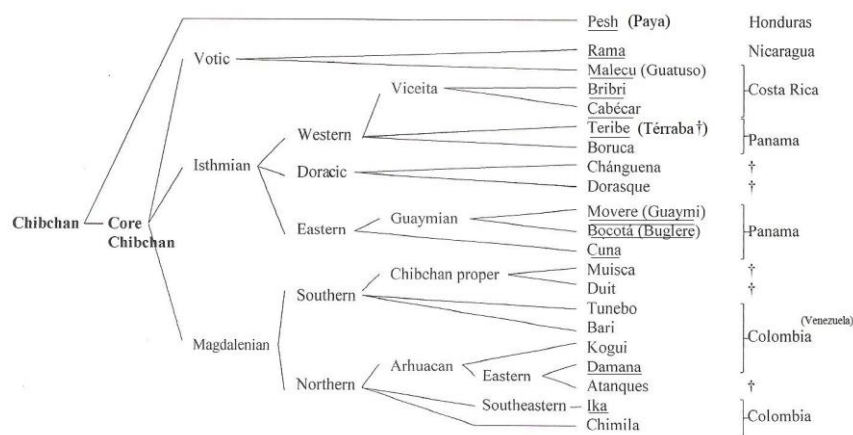
On the other hand, the majority of Chibchan languages under investigation have only one construction for expressing similarity and equality, but four languages have the possibility of distinguishing equality from similarity by using different constructions. In addition to the construction with a marker ‘like’, Malecu, Cabecar, Ika and Pesh have dedicated constructions for the expression of equality.

This paper is organised as follows: Section 2 introduces some of the main morphosyntactic features of Chibchan languages. Section 3 describes the basic construction type with the SP containing a similative standard marker attested in all the languages for expressing similarity and equality. This encompasses two subtypes with a split in constituent order between northern and southern Chibchan on the one hand, and central Chibchan on the other. Section 4 discusses various dedicated constructions in four Chibchan languages for expressing either equative or similative meanings. Section 5 shows the conceptual relations between similative markers and equative, deictic and simultaneity markers and advances hypotheses on the sources of these markers. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. MAIN MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES

The Chibchan family encompasses sixteen living languages (Constenla Umaña 1981, 1991, 2012, Holt 1986, Quesada 2007, Uhle 1890) spoken from Honduras to Colombia (see figure 1). The languages studied in this paper are underlined (in this introduction and in figure 1). Pesh (also known as Paya) is the northernmost of the Chibchan languages, the only one spoken in Honduras, and the only one to be classified as an isolate within the Chibchan family: it does not belong to Core Chibchan. The other languages are distributed across several branches. Rama in Nicaragua and Malecu in Costa Rica constitute the Votic branch (also known as the Pota branch). The Isthmian branch is divided into three sub-branches: Western Isthmian in Costa Rica and Panama (Cabecar, Bribri, Teribe, Boruca), Doracic with two extinct languages (Changuena, Dorasque), and Eastern Isthmian located in Costa Rica and Panama (Costa Rican Guaymi, Panamanian Guaymi, Buglere, Cuna). Finally, the Magdalenian branch is split into two sub-branches located in Colombia (and also in Venezuela for Bari): Southern (Tunebo, Bari and the extinct Muisca, Duit) and Northern (Kogui, Damana, Ika, Chimila and the extinct Atanques).

Figure 1. Chibchan language family (adapted from Constenla Umaña 2012)



Some languages, such as Buglere and Costa Rican Guaymi, have nominative-accusative alignment (known as marked nominative), Teribe (with an inverse morpheme), and perhaps Rama and Cuna (although the available descriptions are unclear). Others, such as Malecu, have ergative alignment. Of the ergative languages some, such as Cabecar, Panamanian Guaymi, Bribri and Damana have split ergativity in TAM, voice or verb type; others, such as Ika, Kogi and Pesh, have split ergativity in NP type or in the free-bound distinction (Quesada 2007:193, Chamoreau 2017a).

All Chibchan languages have SOV constituent order (Constenla Umaña 1991:38, 2012:407, Quesada 2007:29-31) and postpositions. The order within the noun phrase is noun-numeral and genitive-noun. The transitive clauses in (2) show that the NPs that function as subject and object generally precede the predicate. Some languages have rigid OV order while other languages allow OV/VO variation. For example, in Bribri and Cabecar, OV order is constrained but S can either

precede or follow the verb, that is, SOV or OVS (Quesada 1999). In other languages, the OV constraint is not attested and O usually occurs before the verb but may also be attested after it, this movement usually being motivated by information structure as in Pesh for focalisation. Arguments may be case marked as ergative in Cabecar in (2c) or differentially as in Pesh (2a) and Ika (2e) (see Chamoreau 2017a and Frank 1990).²

- (1) Verb-final position in transitive clauses
- (a) Pesh (Isolate ; Chamoreau 2017a:11)
parsiki ye? ka-por-k-er-i
 scorpion small O3PL-stick-K-S3PL-PST
 ‘The scorpions bit the children.’
- (b) Rama (Votic; Craig 1992:115)
sut salpka kws-i
 we fish eat-TNS
 ‘We eat fish.’
- (c) Cabecar (Western Isthmian; González 2012:54)
Wilson te Alicia su-é=wa
 Wilson ERG Alice see-IPFV=DES
 ‘Wilson wants to see Alice.’
- (d) Buglere (Eastern Isthmian; Quesada 2012:26)
gudde siung ngabeg-able
 tiger goat kill-PST.REM
 ‘The tiger killed the goat.’
- (e) Ika (Magdalenian; Frank 1990:3)
José guiadzina wasa-na
 José puma chase-DIST
 ‘José went after a puma.’

In Chibchan languages only oblique and adjunct phrases (X), that is postpositional phrases, are overtly marked for their syntactic function. Depending on the language, grammatical markers can have varying morphological status. We find independent postpositions in Teribe (3) and Costa Rican Guaymi (4), enclitics in Pesh (5) and Damana (6), and suffixes in Ika (7) and Malecu (8).

- (3) Teribe (Isthmian; Quesada 2000:10)
ta be-no sōk u shko
 1SG stay-PFV sit house in
 ‘I stayed in the house.’
- (4) Costa Rican Guaymi (Isthmian; Murillo Miranda 2016:102)
Jamaraga ruga-ba ngobo ben
 friend arrive-EV son with
 ‘My friend arrived with his son.’
- (5) Pesh (Isolate; Chamoreau 2017b:324)
ā=yā=ma ta-suwa=yo a-katif-k-a-ri
 DEM.DIST=LOC=TOP POSS1-grandmother=COM/INS refl-bring.up-k-s1sg-pst
 ‘There, I was raised by my grandmother.’
- (6) Damana (Magdalenian; Williams 1993:34)
inguna zukuatiga=ba nāngui
 trail good=OBL stand
 ‘He is standing on the good road.’

² Abbreviations: 3D: three dimensional noun class , ADV: advancement, ADZ: adverbialiser, AP: antipassive, BEN: benefactive, CAUS: causative, CERT: certainty, COM/INS: comitative/instrumental, COMP: comparative marker, COORD: coordinator, COP: copula, DEIC: deictic, DEM: demonstrative, DES: desiderative, DIST: distal, E: exclusive-absolutive, ERG: ergative, ESS: essive, EV: evidential, EXCL: exclusive, FOC: focus, FT: formative, FUT: future, GEN: genitive, INCL: inclusive, INF: infinitive, INFW: information with proof of witness, IPFV: imperfective, K: unknown function, LOC: locative, MED: medial, MID: middle, NEG: negation, NMLZ: nominaliser, O: object, OBL: oblique, PFV: perfective, PL: plural, POSS: possessive, POSSA: alienable possession, PRO: pronoun, PRS: present, PRTC: participle, PST: past, REA: realis, REFL: reflexive, REM: remote, S: subject, SG: singular, SIM: similitative, ST: sentence terminator, TERM: terminative, TNS: tense , TOP: topic, TPST: testimonial past, VBZ: verbaliser.

- (7) Ika (Votic; Frank 1990:3)
peri-sin *keiwi* *zoža-na-rua*
 dog-with right.away go-DIST-1S
 'I went with my dog.'
- (8) Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:112)
i-yu-to *na-lhai=nh*
 3-with-FUT 1E-speak=REA
 'I will speak with him.'

Examples (3-8) reveal a fact that is relevant for our study: even though the constituent order is usually OV in all these languages (VO is always motivated by information structure), the postpositional phrases occur in different positions. Two tendencies exist: In Pesh (5), Malecu (8), Damana (6) and Ika (7), the PP usually precedes the verb, that is XV, while in the Isthmian languages, Teribe (3) and Guaymi (4), the PP is usually postposed to the verb, that is VX. These tendencies may be modified by information structure.

3. ONE CONSTRUCTION FOR SIMILARITY AND EQUALITY

The twelve Chibchan languages studied in this paper display one construction with a standard phrase for both equative and similative comparison. This is the sole possibility in eight languages (Rama, Bribri, Teribe, Costa Rican Guaymi, Panamanian Guaymi, Buglere, Cuna, Damana). This standard phrase consists of a standard entity and a standard marker, this latter marker uniformly following the standard entity (section 3.1). However, the order between the standard phrase and the parameter shows a variation: the standard phrase may precede the parameter (9) or follow it (10).

- (9) Pesh, Votic and Magdalenian languages
 C [SE SM]_{SP} P
- (10) Isthmian languages
 C P [SE SM]_{SP}

This trait is relevant for the later discussion of constituent order generalisations in Chibchan languages (section 3.2.).

3.1. Basic construction with a standard phrase

The basic construction type with only a similative standard marker is attested in all languages investigated. This construction is used both for similatives, (e.g. *Max is tall like John*), and for equatives (e.g. *Max is as tall as John*). In the majority of Chibchan languages, this construction is the only way to express both meanings (except in languages that will be described in section 4).

This construction type is illustrated in three Isthmian languages below. Here, the suffix *-re* is used for manner and similarity. The constructions are analysed by the different authors as similative constructions, in Costa Rican Guaymi (11), Panamanian Guaymi (12), and Buglere (13).

- (11) Similative construction in Costa Rican Guaymi (Isthmian; Murillo Miranda 2016:42)
mölö-re
 tapir-like
 'like a tapir'
- (12) Similative construction in Panamanian Guaymi (Isthmian; Quesada Pacheco 2008:84)
kwelen-re
 partridge-like
 'like a partridge'
- (13) Similative construction in Buglere (Isthmian; Quesada 2012:174)
joll-able *meng* *kuiang-re*
 arrive-PST.REM seem person-like
 'They arrived, as though they were one person.'

Furthermore, in the two varieties of Guaymi, the *-re* marker is used to form postpositions that express meanings such as 'same', 'like'. In Costa Rican Guaymi, Murillo Miranda (2016:84) indicates that the combination of the suffix *-re* 'like' with *ere* 'much' forms the postposition *erere*, which means 'same/like' (14). The same phenomenon is observed in Panamanian Guaymi, where *-re* may be used alone (12) or in combination with *kwere* 'much', with the resultant postposition *kwere-re*, meaning 'way of, like, as' (15).

- (14) Similitive construction in Costa Rican Guaymi (Isthmian; Murillo Miranda 2016:123)

Ma ngangá ka-re nogwa-gra erere
 2SG daughter sing-PRS bird-PL same/like
 ‘Your daughter sings like the birds.’

- (15) Similitive construction in Panamanian Guaymi (Isthmian; Quesada Pacheco 2008:123)

naira gwe be nõga-ba tõraba-ba kwerere
 3 ERG oyama sow-TPST want-TPST like/as/manner
 ‘He sowed the oyama as he wanted.’

No equative constructions are described in the two works on Guaymi languages. However, in Buglere, the equative construction in (16) contains the postposition *kare*. This marker is clearly related to the suffix *-re* ‘like’ in (13) from Buglere as well as the suffix *-re* ‘like’ found in Guaymi (11, 12). According to Quesada (2012:132), the additive postposition *kare* ‘too, also’ is used in equative constructions in which the two referents, *Maria* and *Pedro* in (16), have a gradable property (speed) to the same degree. Quesada (2012) only mentions the use of *kare* in Buglere equative constructions but not in constructions with a similitive meaning. By contrast, Quesada (2011) shows that *kare* can express similarity (17). One could use ‘likewise’ to translate this term to mirror its morphological structure.

- (16) Equative construction in Buglere (Isthmian; Quesada 2012:132)

Maria blire bliga Pedro kare
 Maria eat rapidly Pedro too
 ‘Maria eats as rapidly as Pedro.’ / ‘Maria eats rapidly, Pedro likewise’

- (17) Similitive construction in Buglere (Isthmian; Quesada 2011:295-297)

cha kle basale ugoba gidi jobe kare
 1SG be tour sand on bathe too
 ‘I am also bathing on the sand (like you).’ / ‘I am bathing on the sand as well.’

The use of the same marker in similitive and equative constructions is also attested in other Chibchan languages, such as Damana. In (18), the suffix *-ia* ‘like’ and the adverbialiser *-ai* are used as derivational suffixes to form the adverb ‘yesterday’, literally ‘like the place inside’. In (19), these two suffixes are used to form an equative construction, according to Williams (1993). Nevertheless, in (19), the similitive meaning also seems possible, cf. the free translation ‘His hair is bright like cotton’.

- (18) Similitive construction in Damana (Magdalenian; Williams 1993:85)

ša-ia-ai
 place.in-like-ADZ
 ‘like the place inside, yesterday’

- (19) Equative construction in Damana (Magdalenian; Williams 1993:148)

na-žē ša židua buruna ia-ai bo
 3S-POSSA hair careful cotton like-ADZ light
k-ə-žā-n-ka kama na-a-á
 ADV-BEN-be-VBZ-3S.PRTC INFW be-PFV-ST
 ‘His hair is as bright as cotton.’ / ‘His hair is bright like cotton.’

In Pesh, the same marker =*kan* is used for similarity and equality but the position of the standard phrase that contains the standard entity and the standard marker differs depending on the meaning. In (20), the similitive marker =*kan* is used as an enclitic after nouns and pronouns to build phrases that express similarity of manner between two entities. The SP *pokupoku=kan* occurs before the parameter *nast* ‘jump’.

- (20) Similitive construction in Pesh (Isolate; Chamoreau 2017b:326)

to? ye?=ma pokupoku=kan nast-i-wa
 DEM.MED small=TOP frog=SIM jump-S3SG-PRS
 ‘That child jumps like a frog.’

In (21), this enclitic is also used for equatives. In this construction, the SP *ūt/ā=kan* ‘fish’ appears after the parameter *tapeh* ‘swim’.

- (21) Equative construction in Pesh (Isolate; Chamoreau 2017b:328)

un-tas=ma tapeh-ber-wa ūt/ā=kan
 EXCL-PRO1=TOP swim-S1PL.EXCL-PRS fish=SIM
 ‘We swim as much as fish.’

Generally, the distinction between similative meaning (20) and equative meaning (21) is made by the position of the standard phrase marked by =*kan*: this occurs before the predicate in similative constructions (20) and after it in equative constructions (21). The parameter is expressed by the predicate (that may be a verbal or a nominal predicate). The latter position is unexpected. The postpredicate position of the equative phrase seems to reflect the need to distinguish between similative and equative phrases because both use the marker =*kan*. If we compare (20) and (21), only the position of the standard phrase makes it possible to distinguish the two construction types. The similative phrase preserves the typical and expected position of the postpositional phrase, while the equative phrase looks like an innovation which does not reflect the constituent order expected in a SOV language.

This pattern is attested in the majority of the examples found in my corpus (Chamoreau 2017b:328-329). Quantitatively (based on 47 tokens), in 52.5% of prepredicate postpositional phrases marked by =*kan*, the phrase can only have a similative meaning; in 17.5%, it can only have an equative meaning; in 30%, both interpretations are possible. As for postpredicate postpositional phrases marked by =*kan*, in 70.2% of instances the meaning is always equative, and in 29.8% the distinction between similative and equative is not clear, either because there are no semantic differences depending on the standard phrase position so both interpretations are acceptable, or because speakers do not establish a difference between them. However, the postpredicate postpositional phrase marked by =*kan* has never been interpreted as having a purely similative meaning. In Pesh, the prepredicate position containing the standard entity and the standard marker that is the standard phrase (20) is most common even though the postpredicate position is possible.

In some Chibchan languages, such as Pesh (20), Rama (22), Malecu (21), Damana (19) and Ika (24) the standard phrase precedes the parameter.

- (22) Similative construction in Rama (Votic; Craig 1992:195)
kiina isii i-kalmk-i nguu-ki
 man like 3-stand.up-TNS house-in
 'He stood up in the house like a man.'
- (23) Similative construction in Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:109)
na-ínhá ø-ri-cuá=nhe
 1E-like 3-REFL-see=REA
 'He looks like me.'
- (24) Similative construction in Ika (Magdalenian; Frank 1990:111)
peri nar-i o a'zina ni
 dog COP-while mad think CERT
 'It gets mad like a dog (does).'

In contrast, in the Isthmian languages, such as Costa Rican Guaymi (14), Panamanian Guaymi (12), Buglere (13), (16) and (17), Bribri (25), Cabecar (26), Teribe (27) and Cuna (28), the standard phrase usually follows the parameter. Variations in the position of the postpositional and standard phrases may exist and are usually determined by information structure (Quesada 2007:195).

- (25) Equative construction in Bribri (Isthmian; Quesada 2007:97)
be? datsi? dör mât k ie? datsi e?s
 2POSS dress be red 3POSS dress like
 'Your dress is as red as hers.'
- (26) Similative construction in Cabecar (Isthmian; Guillermo González Campos p.c.)
jír bá shká yís kái
 today you walk.PFV 1SG ESS
 'Today you walk like me.'
- (27) Equative construction in Teribe (Isthmian; Quesada 2000:139)
Maria e plú Juan dik
 Maria DEM good Juan like
 'Maria, she is as good as Juan.'
- (28) Similative construction in Cuna (Isthmian; Llerena Villalobos 2010:61)
we nekakuepule muulusuli naipe-yoppi
 DEIC village long snake-same
 'This village is long like a snake.'

3.2. Constituent order in similitive and equative constructions

As shown in section 3.1, the basic construction type for expressing similarity and equality in Chibchan languages is a standard phrase which contains a standard and a postposed standard marker. Across Chibchan languages, the standard phrase that contains the standard entity and the standard marker may precede the parameter or follow it. Given that Chibchan languages have verb-final constituent order, the expected order is standard phrase – parameter. This is Haspelmath et al.’s (2017:26-27) Generalisation 2: “If the parameter follows the standard, then the language generally has dominant object-verb order”. Some Chibchan languages, such as Pesh (20), the Votic languages Rama (22) and Malecu (23), and the Magdalenian languages Damana (19) and Ika (24) abide by this generalisation. These languages also support Haspelmath et al.’s Generalisation 3: “If the standard precedes the parameter, then the standard marker generally follows the standard, and if the standard follows the parameter, then the standard marker generally precedes the standard”. In these languages, the standard phrase does indeed precede the parameter.

In contrast, the Isthmian languages, such as Costa Rican Guaymi (14), Panamanian Guaymi (15), Buglere (13, 16, 17), Bribri (25), Cabecar (26), Teribe (27) and Cuna (28), contradict the two generalisations. These languages usually have parameter – standard phrase order, which is in disagreement with Generalisation 2. Furthermore, they do not abide by Generalisation 3 because the standard phrase follows the parameter and the standard marker follows the standard entity.

A crucial issue for Chibchan languages is that the two possible positions of the standard phrase are consistent with the position of the postpositional phrase that follows two different tendencies (as shown in section 2). In Pesh (5) and in the Magdalenian languages (6), (7), the PP usually precedes the predicate, while in Isthmian languages (3, 4), the PP usually follows the predicate. The case of Malecu and Rama, both Votic languages, is noteworthy as the PP generally precedes the predicate, as shown by Malecu in (8). However, Rama also permits the reverse order; in (22) the PP *nguu-ki* ‘in the house’ follows the predicate – even though this position is less frequent (Craig 1992).

A consistent order is clearly mapped in Chibchan languages: PP-verb and SP-parameter orders are used in some languages while verb-PP and parameter-SP orders occur in others. I therefore postulate that: “If a language has different orders for [verb, object], and [verb, PP] then the order of [parameter, SP] follows the pattern for [verb, PP] rather than the pattern for [verb, object]”.

This section has shown that the first type of Haspelmath et al.’s typology, i.e. constructions with only a standard marker, is attested in the twelve Chibchan languages discussed in this paper and is used for expressing both equative and similitive meanings. In certain languages (Rama, Bribri, Teribe, Costa Rican Guaymi, Panamanian Guaymi, Buglere, Cuna, Damana), this construction is the only one used for both meanings; in other languages (Ika, Pesh, Cabecar, Malecu), alternative constructions exist. The data also show the relevance of a property that is part of a larger typological phenomenon, namely that the SP-parameter order corresponds to PP-verb order and not to object-verb order.

4. DISTINGUISHING EQUATIVES FROM SIMILATIVES

Four languages (Ika, Pesh, Cabecar, Malecu) usually use the construction described in section 3 for the expression of similarity and equality but in addition have a dedicated construction for the expression of equality. In this construction, a degree marker occurs. However, a distinction exists between Ika and the other three languages because in Ika the construction with the degree marker is mono-clausal (Section 4.1) while Pesh, Cabecar and Malecu have bi-clausal constructions (Section 4.2).

4.1. Ika: unified degree marker construction for equatives

As shown in example (23) repeated as (29), the Ika construction for similitive meaning only contains the marker *-i* ‘while’ suffixed to the copula *nar*. The equative construction (30) is more complex than the construction used to express similitive meanings because the comparee entity *buru mouga naʔan zeɪ* ‘my two burros’ and the standard entity *múra* ‘the mule’ are expressed in a single conjoined NP unified by the marker *-sin* ‘with’. The predicative parameter *džuma aʔnikua-ža* ‘are strong’ is preceded by the degree maker *dikin* ‘same’. This marker is very likely cognate with the standard marker *dik* ‘like’ in Teribe (27).

- (29) Similitive construction in Ika (Magdalenian; Frank 1990:111)
- | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| <i>peri</i> | <i>nar-i</i> | <i>o</i> | <i>aʔina</i> | <i>ni</i> |
| dog | COP-while | mad | think | CERT |
- ‘It gets mad like a dog (does).’

- (30) Equative construction in Ika (Magdelanian; Frank 1990:73)
buru mouga naʔan zeĩ múra-sin dīkin džuma aʔnikua-ža
 burro two I GEN mule-with same strong 3D.be-MED
 ‘My two burros are as strong as the mule.’ (Lit. ‘My two burros with (and) the mule are equally (same) strong.’)

This Ika equative construction corresponds to Type 3 of Haspelmath et al.’s typology (2017:14), in which there is “an ordinary predicative parameter with an equative degree-marker” but “the comparee and standard referents are unified, i.e. they are expressed as a single conjoined or plural noun phrase”.

4.2. Pesh, Cabecar and Malecu: bi-clausal constructions for equatives

As we have shown above, Pesh uses the similative marker =*kan* in similative (20) and equative (21) constructions, reproduced in (31) and (32), respectively. In these constructions, the position of the standard phrase with the standard entity and the marker =*kan* is usually sufficient to distinguish between similatives and equatives. Nevertheless, when the standard phrase precedes the parameter (31), the equative meaning is also possible for some speakers.

- (31) Similative construction in Pesh (Isolate; Chamoreau 2017b:326)
toʔ yeʔ=ma pokupoku=kan nast-i-wa
 DEM.MED small=TOP frog=SIM jump-S3SG-PRS
 ‘That child jumps like a frog.’ / ‘That child jumps as much as a frog.’
- (32) Equative construction in Pesh (Isolate; Chamoreau 2017b:328)
tapeh-ber-wa ũt/ã=kan
 swim-S1PL-PRS fish=SIM
 ‘We swim as much as fish.’

This is probably why another dedicated construction for expressing equality exists. The construction in question has two juxtaposed clauses (33). The first includes the comparee *jose* and the standard *ugo*, linked by the coordinator *-rih*; both function as the subject of the predicate, as shown by the presence of a third person plural subject suffix on the predicate. The marker of equality =*kan* is encliticised to the numeral as ‘one’ which functions as the nominal predicate of this clause, accompanied by the copular verb. The equality relationship between the comparee and the standard is expressed by the predicate (‘one’). The second clause is juxtaposed with no overt coordinator and contains the gradable property, the parameter, expressed by the adjective *wawista* ‘thin’, also followed by the copular verb. The subject of this clause is the third person plural and refers to the comparee *jose* and the standard *ugo*. This is the syntactic way to indicate the coordination of two clauses in Pesh, the coordinator *-rih* only being used for coordinating noun phrases.

- (33) Equative construction in Pesh (Isolate; Chamoreau 2017b:328)
jose-rih ugo-rih as=kan=r-er-wa wawista=r-er-wa
 José-COORD Hugo-COORD one=sim=be-S3PL-PRS thin=be-S3PL-PRS
 ‘José is as thin as Hugo.’ (Lit. ‘José and Hugo are equal, they are thin.’)

As in Ika, Pesh expresses the comparee and the standard entities as a single conjoined or plural noun phrase, but, contrary to Ika, the Pesh construction is bi-clausal. This is type II in Henkelmann’s description (2006:377), that is, a type with an equative degree as predicate. The Pesh construction constitutes a sub-type of type II in which the two predicates (the parameter and the degree) are related by parataxis (2006:391).

Cabecar displays another strategy in which the construction contains two clauses. As we have shown in (23) repeated in (34) Cabecar uses the standard marker *kái* in similative constructions, see also (35). The equative construction in (36) is bi-clausal, the parameter *shká* that expresses the intensity/distance walked is repeated in each clause. The comparee entity *bá* ‘2sg’ is expressed in the first clause while the standard entity *yís* ‘1sg’ occurs in the second clause. The two clauses are juxtaposed.

- (34) Similative construction in Cabecar (Isthmian; Guillermo González Campos p. c.)
jír bá shká yís kái
 today you walk.PFV 1SG ESS
 ‘Today you walk like me.’

- (35) Similitive construction in Cabecar (Isthmian; Guillermo González Campos p. c.)

<i>jé</i>	<i>dulákléi</i>	<i>uká</i>		<i>nima</i>	<i>kái</i>
DET	boy	swim.IPFV		fish	ESS

‘This boy swims like a fish.’

- (36) Equative construction in Cabecar (Isthmian; Guillermo González Campos p. c.)

<i>jír</i>	<i>bá</i>	<i>shká</i>	<i>yís</i>	<i>shká</i>	<i>kái</i>
today	you	walk.PFV 1SG		walk.PFV	ESS

‘Today you walk as much as me.’

Malecu, a Votic language, displays a construction with the similitive marker *inhá* ‘like’ introduced in (23) and repeated in (37). In this construction, the standard phrase *na-inhá* is made up of the standard *na* first person exclusive singular and the standard marker *inhá*. This standard phrase precedes the parameter.

- (37) Similitive construction in Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:109)

<i>na-inhá</i>	<i>ø-ri-cuá=nhe</i>
1E-like	3-REFL-see=REA

‘He looks like me.’

Malecu also displays a bi-clausal strategy (38). The comparee entity *ton* ‘1sg’ is expressed in the first clause with the parameter *ampenhé* ‘is tall’ while the standard entity *Oyanhqui* ‘Oyanhqui’ occurs in the second clause which is introduced by *ninháfa* ‘also’. The adverb *ninháfa* is a combination of *ninhá* ‘thus’ and the emphatic marker =*fa*. Called an ‘attributive theme’ (Constenla Umaña 1998:148, 192), it occurs at the beginning of a juxtaposed clause (38). In the second clause of the type of construction that begins with *ninháfa*, the predicate may be repeated (39) or the elements that are identical in the two clauses may be deleted in the second clause, for example *i-p-corro-ye unhé* ‘is working’ (40) and *ampenhé* ‘is tall’ (38).

- (38) Equative construction in Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:193)

<i>ton</i>	<i>ampenhé,</i>	<i>ninháfa</i>	<i>Oyanhqui</i>
I	tall.NMLZ	also	Oyanhqui

‘Oyanhqui is as tall as me.’ (lit. ‘I am tall, Oyanhqui [is tall] too.’)

- (39) Juxtaposed construction with *ninháfa* in Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:192)

<i>Oyanhqui</i>	<i>i-p-corro-ye</i>	<i>unhé,</i>	
Oyanhqui	3-AP-hit-FT	walk.NMLZ	
<i>ninháfa</i>	<i>Chimpacá</i>	<i>i-p-corro-ye</i>	<i>unh</i>
also	Chimpacá	3-AP-hit-FT	walk.NMLZ

‘Oyanhqui is working, Chimpacá is working too.’

- (40) Juxtaposed construction with *ninháfa* in Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:193)

<i>Oyanhqui</i>	<i>i-p-corro-ye</i>	<i>unhé,</i>	<i>ninháfa</i>	<i>Chimpacá</i>
Oyanhqui	3-AP-hit-FT	walk.NMLZ	also	Chimpacá

‘Oyanhqui is working, Chimpacá is working too.’

The Cabecar and Malecu bi-clausal constructions used for equative constructions are very briefly reported in Haspelmath et al.’s typology (2017:23) as infrequently attested types. But they are described as conjoined comparative in Stassen’s typology (1985:183-188), polarity schema in Heine’s description (1997:116-118) and paratactic construction (type V) in Henkelmann’s typology (2006:377-378). For equative comparison, they could be described as the juxtaposition of two clauses in which the parameter is repeated in Cabecar and may be deleted in Malecu, as an economic stripping process since it is identical in the two clauses: The comparee appears in the first clause and the standard entity occurs in the second. The equal meaning is not totally implicit as Henkelmann (2006:395) claims because even if the two clauses seems to be parallel to each other, the standard marker *kái* ‘like’ in Cabecar and the expression *ninháfa* ‘also’ are used in the second clause.

The bi-clausal constructions seem to be a common structure for expressing comparison in various Chibchan languages as in older Pesh comparison of equality (41), or in Malecu comparison of superiority (42).

- (41) Older equative construction in Pesh (Isolate; Conzemius 1928:263)

<i>tas=ma</i>	<i>bikti=r-a-wa</i>	<i>pa=ma</i>	<i>bikti=r-u-wa</i>
PRO1=TOP	tall=BE-S1SG-PRS	PRO2=TOP	tall=BE-S2-PRS

‘I am as tall as you.’ (Lit. ‘I am tall, you are tall’.)

- (42) Comparison of superiority in Malecu (Votic; Constenla Umaña 1998:193)
- | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>ton</i> | <i>ampenhé,</i> | <i>epéme</i> | <i>púo</i> |
| I | tall.NMLZ | NEG | you |
- 'I am taller than you.' (Lit. 'I am tall, you (are) not.')

Distinguishing similarity from equality seems not to be relevant in the majority of the Chibchan languages investigated in this study. The distinction has only been found in some of the languages that have been presented in section 4. For the other languages, the descriptions do not report any formal distinction and the free translations include both similitive and equative meanings.

5. SAME FORM IN DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTIONS WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS

This section highlights possible conceptual relations between different constructions with different meanings which use the same form in the Chibchan languages surveyed.

In most languages, the similitive morpheme (same manner) is also used to encode equality (same extent). The relation between standard and equative markers comes from the fact that a conceptual relation exists between similitive and equative. The most probable diachronic hypothesis is that the similitive morpheme has been extended in use from similitive to equative constructions. This statement follows from a general assumption that the equative meaning is a restricted case that should be traced back to the similitive meaning. Pesh is a clear example of this diachronic process (Chamoreau 2017b). Example (43) presents a list of equative standard markers that apparently come from a similitive marker:

- (43) Similitive standard marker - equative standard marker
- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Pesh | <i>kan</i> | 'like, as' |
| Rama | <i>isii</i> | 'like, as' |
| Teribe | <i>dik</i> | 'like, as' |
| Panamanian Guaymi | <i>kwerere</i> | 'like, as' |
| Damana | <i>ia-ai</i> | 'like, as' |
| Costa Rican Guaymi | <i>erere</i> | 'like, same' |
| Cuna | <i>yoppi</i> | 'same, like' |
| Ika | <i>dikkin</i> | 'same, like' |

In Malecu and Buglere, the relation between similitive and equative also exists but the similitive marker occurs with another morpheme. In Malecu, the degree marker *ninháfa* 'also' is formed by the adverb *ninhá* 'thus' plus the emphatic marker *=fa*. In Buglere, *-re* is the similitive morpheme (13) and *kare* is an additive morpheme which possibly contains the similitive morpheme *-re* (16). No etymological explanation is known for the morpheme *ka*. In these two languages, the probable source of one of the morphemes that composes the standard or equative marker is a similitive morpheme (44).

- (44) Markers for which the probable source of one of their components is a similitive marker
- | | | |
|---------|----------------|--------|
| Malecu | <i>ninháfa</i> | 'also' |
| Buglere | <i>kare</i> | 'too' |

Another well-known relation is between standard markers and manner deictics (König 2017). In Bribri, the standard marker *eʔs* in (25) reproduced in (45) comes from the distal demonstrative *eʔ*, which is used to refer to distal entities in space and time that are not accessible to the speakers (46).

- (45) Equative construction in Bribri (Isthmian; Quesada 2007:97)
- | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>beʔ</i> | <i>datsiʔ</i> | <i>dör</i> | <i>mâtk</i> | <i>ieʔ</i> | <i>datsi</i> | <i>eʔs</i> |
| 2POSS | dress | be | red | 3POSS | dress | like |
- 'Your dress is as red as hers.'

- (46) Bribri (Isthmian; Quesada 2007:183)
- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| <i>Pëʔ</i> | <i>eʔ</i> | <i>beʔ</i> | <i>nèwq</i> |
| People | DEM.DIST | 2SG | kill |
- 'Those people kill you.'

Example (22) reproduced in (47) shows that *eʔs* is used in an equative construction (Constenla Umaña et al. 1998:7). The same morpheme is also used in a similitive construction (48). The marker *s* added to the demonstrative *eʔ* could come from the adjectiviser *is* (Constenla Umaña et al. 1998:4).

- (47) Equative construction in Bribri (Isthmian; Quesada 2007:97)
be? *datsi?* *dör* *mâtk* *ie?* *datsi* *e?s*
 2POSS dress be red 3POSS dress like
 ‘Your dress is as red as hers.’
- (48) Similitive construction in Bribri (Isthmian; Constenla Umaña et al. 1998:4)
wëm *e?s* *dör* *bua?*
 man like be good
 ‘He is good like the man.’

The last relation between similitive marker and other meanings in the Chibchan languages addressed in this paper is found in Ika. This language uses the *-i* marker ‘while’ plus a copula for similitive constructions (21, 49):

- (49) Ika (Magdalenian, Frank 1990:111)
gei *nar-i* *kawa* *nin* *uma?-ri*
 fire COP-while COP CERT eye-TOP
 ‘The eyes are like a fire’

This *-i* ‘while’ marker is also used in adverbial clauses with a verb indicating a simultaneously occurring action (50). It seems that in Ika the similitive marker ‘COP-while’ shows the relation between similarity and simultaneity.

- (50) Ika (Magdalenian, Frank 1990:110)
peri-se?-ri *win-was-i* *žun-na*
 dog-ERG-TOP 3S-chase-while go.down-DIST
 ‘The dog went down chasing it’

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that the domains of equality and similarity in various Chibchan languages show formal similarities among the constructions used to express these two meanings. First, in most languages (Rama, Bribri, Teribe, Costa Rican Guaymi, Panamanian Guaymi, Buglere, Cuna, Damana) no formal distinction is made between equality and similarity. Only four Chibchan languages (Ika, Pesh, Malecu, Cabecar) make this distinction. In three of these languages (Pesh, Malecu, Cabecar), equality shows a complex bi-clausal construction. Second, this paper has shown that the most frequent conceptual relation is between similitive markers and equative, deictic and simultaneity markers.

Third, all the Chibchan languages investigated in this paper have a construction with a similitive standard marker to express similitive and equative meanings. In this type of construction, it is interesting to distinguish between the languages that have the expected constituent order for SOV languages, that is, the ones that are consistent with Generalisation 2 and Generalisation 3 in Haspelmath et al. (2017:26-27), from those that do not abide by these generalisations. This distinction reveals a split in the Chibchan family between the northern Pesh, Votic and Southern Magdalenian languages on the one hand and the Central Isthmian languages on the other.

This split is relevant for two reasons. First, cross-linguistically and typologically, the order of verb and object is generally the same as the order of verb and PP (Dryer 2007:89). This is true for Pesh, and the Votic and Magdalenian languages, where we find OV and XV. In contrast, Isthmian languages do not follow this tendency, as object and PP have different positions, that is OV and VX respectively. Nevertheless, in a coherent way, in the languages that have XV, the SP precedes the parameter and in the languages that have VX, the parameter precedes the SP. Thus, beyond Haspelmath et al.’s (2017) two generalisations, the Chibchan languages favour internal constituent order coherence. This leads me to postulate that: “If a language has different orders for [verb, object], and [verb, PP] then the order of [parameter, SP] follows the pattern for [verb, PP] rather than the pattern for [verb, object]”.

Second, at the areal level, the split reveals a geographical particularity. The central Isthmian languages constitute a first subtype. They have VX and parameter-SP constituent order, and they are spoken in Costa Rica and Panama (see figure 1). This VX subtype separates the two areas where the second subtype of languages with XV and SP-parameter order are found. This second subtype regroups the northern Pesh and Votic languages with the geographically distant southern Magdalenian languages. The northern languages are located in Honduras, Nicaragua and north of Costa Rica while the southern languages are located in Colombia. Despite their geographical distance, Pesh, the northernmost of the Chibchan languages, and Ika and Kogi, which are the southernmost, also show some other notable similarities, such as split ergativity governed by a free-bound distinction (Chamoreau 2017a, Quesada 2007).

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