Similative, equative, and comparative constructions in Beja (North-Cushitic)

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Abstract
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1. Introduction

Beja (*beḍawije=t*) is a Cushitic language of the Afroasiatic phylum mainly spoken in Eastern Sudan by some 1,100,000 speakers, and in Northern Eritrea by some 60,000 speakers (there may be a few speakers left in Southern Egypt). It is the sole member of the Northern Cushitic branch and it is grammatically and lexically quite distant from other Cushitic languages, even from Afar and Saho, the closest and neighboring East-Cushitic languages, or Agaw (Central Cushitic), its other closest Cushitic relative (see Cohen 1988: 267).

Beja is verb-final and predominantly head-final and has three nominal core cases: nominative, accusative and genitive; pronouns have in addition dative and ablative cases. The most common similative marker *=i:t ~ =t / =e:t*, which varies for number, is not analyzed as a case marker, but as an enclitic postposition because, unlike nominal cases, it also attaches to verbs.

Even though most men in Sudan are bilingual to various extents with Sudanese Arabic (this is far less the case for women), or with Tigre in Eritrea, it must be noted that none of the constructions discussed in this chapter is related to Arabic or Tigre. It is also noteworthy that the strategies used by Beja are only distantly related to other genetically or areally related languages of the North-East African area, as the discussion in the relevant sections will show.

As similative constructions often share forms with comparative and equative constructions across languages (see e.g. Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998; Henkelmann 2006), and because the discussion of similative constructions is embedded in a general discussion on how comparison is expressed in language, this chapter starts with an overview of the morphosyntax, typology and origin of comparative (section 2) and equative (section 3) constructions. Section 4, discusses the similative constructions along the same lines, and section 5 the functional and categorial extensions of all these constructions: role phrases (or functives), similes, accord clauses, pretense clauses, and adverbials.

This study is based as much as possible on the data I recorded during several fieldwork sessions in Sudan between 2000 and 2011. Part of the data, annotated and sound-indexed, is accessible online at http://corpafroas.tge-

adonis.fr/Archives/. These data are supplemented by elicitations[1] and examples from Roper (1928) and Reinisch (1893) when necessary.

2. Comparative construction

2.1 Morphosyntax

In Beja, comparison of inequality only encompasses the expression of relative and absolute superiority. For relative superiority, an enclitic comparative morpheme =*ka* marks both the standard NP and the parameter NP (i.e. the comparative predicate in Stassen's (1985) terminology) of the comparative of relative superiority, unlike other Cushitic languages in which only the standard NP can be marked. The word order is thus STANDARD, STANDARD MARKER, PARAMETER, PARAMETER MARKER. Stassen (1985: 27-28) specifies that this double marking is infrequent cross-linguistically.[2] The standard NP is in the genitive case. The parameter NP, being the predicate, behaves like any nominal predicate, i.e. is inflected with the nominal copula or followed by a 'be' verb. The usual indefinite article in the accusative case is added on the comparative marker, not directly on the noun or the adjective.

(1) *i=tak-i=ka*   *aḍami=ka=b*   *akaj-eː*
     DEF.M.**GEN**=man-**GEN.SG=CMPR**   young=**CMPR**=INDF.M.ACC   be-CVB.SMLT[3]
     'While I was younger than the man…' (BEJ_MV_NARR_15_leopard_046)

If the standard is a pronoun, the ablative case is used instead of the genitive:

(2) *áne*   *barisók=ka*   *abukāti=ká̄=b=i*
     1SG.NOM   2SG.M.**ABL**=CMPR   eloquent=**CMPR**=INDF.M.ACC=COP.1SG
     'I am more eloquent than you' (Roper 1928: 29)[4]

The comparative construction may also be encoded with a degree verb *hayis* 'be preferable'. In this case, the parameter marker =*ka* is only added to the (last element of the) standard NP (see Reinisch 1893: 85):

(3) *Hámmad-i*   *ō=gáw-i=ka*   *Abdallá-y*
     H.-GEN.SG   DEF.SG.M.ACC=house=GEN.SG-COMP   A.-GEN.SG

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[1] The excerpts from the online corpus (Vanhove 2012a) all start with BEJ_MV_NARR. Those taken from my unpublished data have just a one-word title and a figure, e.g. "gambler 016". Elicited material is cited as "elicitation MT". Elicited material was kindly sent to me via internet in 2012 and 2013 by my Beja colleague Mohamed-Tahir Hamid Ahmed from the Sudan University for Sciences and Technology in Khartoum. The online data were recorded in Sinkat from Ahmed Abdallah Hamid and his mother, and the unpublished data from several consultants, males and females, speaking various varieties (from Wagar, Sinkat, Erkowit, Port-Soudan). My deepest gratitude is due to all of them. The financial support of the LLACAN (UMR 8135, CNRS-INALCO) and the ANR project CorpAfroAs is kindly acknowledged.

[2] Stassen (1985: 28) specifies that he "ha[s] not succeeded in finding an explanatory principle on the basis of which the presence or absence of this [parameter marker] marking can be predicted. […] Therefore I will not indicate systematically whether or not a given language requires morphological marking of the comparative predicate".

[3] Converbs have no person index in Beja. In this utterance without an overt lexical or pronominal subject, hence no overt comparee, the comparee is only understood from the context, hence the translation with a 1st person subject pronoun.

[4] Roper's system of transcription is retained. Affix and clitic boundaries are added for sake of clarity. Glosses are mine.

> $\bar{u}=g\acute{a}\hat{u}$ *hanyís*
> DEF.SG.M.NOM=house   be_preferable\IPFV.3SG.M
> 'Abdallah's haus ist schöner als das von Mohammed' (Reinisch 1893: 85)[5]
> 'Abdallah's house is nicer than that of Mohammed'

(4) $had\bar{a}=b$ $\bar{a}y\bar{a}n\acute{a}\text{-}\boldsymbol{i}=\boldsymbol{ka}$ *yās* *ḍehǽni hanyīs*
     lion=INDF.M.ACC   dead-**GEN.SG=CMPR**   dog   alive   be_preferable\IPFV.3SG.M
     'a live dog is better than a dead lion' (Roper 1928: 192)

The construction of absolute superiority is less complex than the relative one. There is no standard of comparison, hen no standard marker; the marker *=ka* occurs only once, on the parameter:

(5) $i=karas$ $w=\text{?}akir\text{-}a=\boldsymbol{ka}=b$ *ʃibib-na*
     DEF.M=thorn   DEF.SG.M=be_strong-CVB.MNR=**CMPR**=INDF.M.ACC   look-IMP.PL
     'Look for the sharpest thorns!' (BEJ_MV_NARR_16_Prophet_Fox_Crow_103)

The comparative marker can also attach to a finite verb form in order to encode the comparison of two events. In the sole example I have found so far, a nominal copula is added to the finite verb (after *=ka*), a construction which encodes various deontic modalities (Vanhove, in press):

(6) $ḍimi\text{-}a$ *lə'af hoi né-d'e,*   *i=kárai*
     stink-CVB.MNR   bait   3ABL   1PL-put\PFV   DEF.SG.M=hyaena
     $\varepsilon\acute{i}ni=\boldsymbol{k\acute{a}}=b=u=i=t$
     come\IPFV.3SG.M=**CMPR**=COP.3SG=CSL=COORD
     'we will put stinking bait in it (sc. the trap) so-that-he-shall-come-superlatively, the hyaena.' (Roper 1928: 106)

It is not obvious from Roper's translation to understand what the above utterance means, but Beja speaker's today understand it as follows: two implicit events are compared, one with a bait and one without; the former is considered to be better than the latter in order to fulfill the act of coming that is wished, i.e. attracting the hyaena. A proper English translation would thus be, keeping the modal value of the construction: 'It would be better if we would put stinking bait in it (rather than not put any) in order to attract the hyaena'.

2.2 Typology and origin

Taking the encoding of the standard NP as the basis for his categorization, Stassen (1985: 28; 2011) proposes a binary division between (i) 'derived-case comparatives', where the case of the standard NP patterns with that of the comparee, and (ii) 'fixed-case comparatives' which are independent of the case of the comparee. Beja clearly fits in the latter type, since the standard NP is not dependent on the case of the comparee as shown in ex. 2 where the comparee is a subject pronoun in the nominative case.

On this dichotomy, Stassen further builds a four-dimension typology based on the correlation between formal means of encoding the standard NP in comparative constructions and the types of temporal (consecutive and simultaneous) clause chaining, namely deranked *vs.* balanced clauses. 'Conjoined Comparatives' and 'Particle Comparatives' belong to the derived-case category; 'Adverbial Comparatives' and 'Exceed Comparatives' (or 'direct object' comparatives) belong to the fixed-case

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[5] Reinisch's system of transcription is retained, his morpheme breaks are adapted to the general system. Glosses and English translation are mine.

category. Adverbial Comparatives are further divided into Separative, Allative and Locative types on the basis of the meaning of the standard marker. Since Beja has a fixed-case comparative construction, and is also primarily a deranking language with anteriority and simultaneity converbs,[6] it illustrates well Stassen's (1985: 101) Universal 1B: "If a language has a fixed-case comparative, then that language is deranking". Going further into Stassen's typology, it is clear that Beja does not belong to the Exceed Comparative type. But it remains to be proved, as Stassen claims (1985:117), that it belongs to the other fixed-case type, i.e. the "canonical" adverbial type which has "an overt parallelism in surface structure" with the consecutive chain, since the marker =*ka* today has neither locational value, nor consecutive or simultaneous value in temporal clauses,[7] Stassen's parameters for the establishment of the typology. In fact, synchronically, the comparative marker is homophonous with the enclitic universal quantifier 'each, every, all', which has a general distributive function.

(7)   *oːn*   *w=ʔaːʃoː=joː=**ka***
       PROX.SG.M.ACC   DEF.SG.M=fish=POSS.3SG.ACC=DISTR
       All his fishes (BEJ_MV_NARR_02_farmer_151)

So the question of a possible polysemous interpretation of =*ka* as a universal quantifier and a comparative marker needs to be discussed, in the light of typological data, and in comparison with other Cushitic languages. The use of universal quantifiers is indeed attested in comparative constructions in other languages. For instance in modern Mon, an Austroasiatic language (Jenny, this volume), *ʔɒt* 'all' is used on its own as the parameter marker for the encoding of absolute superiority. Jenny shows that this morpheme is in fact a reanalysis and a reduction of the Old Mon extended comparative construction of superlative degree with the standard marker **nor*, an ablative preposition, and the quantifier *ʔɒt*. This origin recalls Germanic languages in which universal quantifiers also reinforced comparative markers: e.g. in Old English *all* was added to *swá*, the demonstrative degree word, a reinforcement which later on fused as *also > asle > als > as* (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 293). More important as comparative evidence for Beja, this reinforcement is also attested in a Central Cushitic language, Agaw, where the quantifier -*gi* 'all' can be added to the comparative marker -*ta* (Hetzron 1978: 126). -*gi* is cognate to the universal quantifier -*ək* / -*ək'* / -*k'ə* 'all' of three other Central Cushitic languages, Bilin, Xamtanga and Kemant (Appleyard 2006: 22), and these are explicitly related to the Beja morpheme =*ka* by Appleyard (2006: 23). Thus, even though Cushitic languages do not provide a strict parallel of a syncretism between comparative markers and universal quantifiers, there is some evidence that a cognate form of the Beja universal quantifier is also used in a comparative construction, albeit in addition to a dedicated

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[6] Beja also has balanced constructions, i.e. temporal embedded clauses with no deranking of the predicate.

[7] <mark>Stassen's (1985: 117) argument does not refer to converbs but to a construction which is actually of the iterative type, and where the verb form is wrongly interpreted as a deranked relative verb type (it is just a balanced clause with a finite verb form, also found in independent clauses).</mark> I have not been able to trace Stassen's example (the mention of the source for Beja is missing in the 1985 publication, and the one in the WALS concerns Kemant, a central Cushitic language, where there is no reference to Beja in the section on comparative constructions). His comparative example comes from Reinisch (1893: 85).

comparative morpheme. One could also add that Kambaata, an East-Cushitic language, has an ungrammaticalized absolute comparative construction with the universal quantifier (not cognate with the Beja form) in the ablative case used in a periphrastic construction with a relative clause:

(8) *Án   kifíl-a   yóo   hor-íchchi-n   qeráa'rr-u-a.*
       1SG.NOM class-M.OBL COP1.3.REL   all-M.ABL-N   tall-M.PRED-M.COP2
       I am the tallest in the class. [lit. "I am tall from all who are in the class."]
       (Kambaata; Treis 2008: 121)

Now, the ablative morphemes in Mon and Kambaata point to a frequent source of comparative markers, also attested in European languages, e.g. in Latin (Stassen 1985: 27).[8] In the domain of Cushitic, this is attested for instance in Somali, an East-Cushitic language: the preposition *ká*, cognate to the Beja morpheme, marks both the comparative and the ablative, but not the universal quantifier, which is *ba* 'each' (Saeed 1993: 191-2; 201; 282). In Beja also, the quantifier is unrelated to the ablative which is an enclitic postposition *=iː / =eː* with nouns and an infix *-s-* with pronouns.[9] It should be noted though, that *=ka*, like in Somali, is also reported for Beja with an ablative meaning by Reinisch (1893: 75; 1895: 134) 'von, aus, seit' [from, since], but he only provides examples with the temporal reading 'seit' (since). He also specifies that "[d]ie postposition […] wird im Beḍauye fast nur mer in der comparation gebraucht" [The postposition is almost only used for comparison]. The ablative meaning of *=ka* is mentioned neither in Roper (1928) nor in Hudson (ms.), neither is it found in my data. So, dialectal differences, and a diachronic semantic evolution from an ablative to a comparative meaning, cannot be entirely ruled out for Beja. The ablative meaning could thus be the missing link between the universal quantifier and the comparative marker. Typological, comparative and diachronic evidence from the languages discussed above all point to an indirect link between the universal quantifier and the comparative construction, often via an extended construction, even in the case of Modern Mon which has lost the old ablative marker. In Beja it seems to be historically a more straightforward link. Thus neither these languages nor Beja synchronic data challenge Stassen's typology and his inclusion of Beja in the Separative sub-type of the Location type, an areal feature of North and North-East Africa (Stassen 2011). A further evidence of the affiliation of Beja to the Separative type lies in the ablative case of pronominal standards (see ex. 2 above). Still Beja is not a direct but only an indirect corroboration of the SOV privileged type, since the comparative marker is not cognate to a marker of consecutive temporal clause, but to a deranked temporal clause with an unrelated converb. Recalling that Beja has an anteriority temporal converb, this language is nonetheless one more illustration of Stassen's Universal 2B: "If a language has an adverbial comparative, then that language has absolute deranking." It also complies with his Universal 3A based on the precise meaning of the adverbial comparative construction: "If a language has a Separative Comparative, then it must have an absolutely deranked anterior consecutive construction."

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[8] See also Heine & Kuteva (2002: 329). The universal quantifier is not included in their list of nine sources for comparative markers.
[9] The *s* morpheme is also added to NPs after the ablative postposition and before enclitic possessive pronouns (Appleyard 2007: 456).

3. Equative construction

Beja has three constructions which depend on the categorical status of the parameter and its overt or covert expressions. One construction exclusively encodes the comparison of equality by combing a locative element and a noun meaning 'extent, limit'. In addition the comparative construction (section 2 above) and the similative construction (section 4 below) can also be used as an equative construction. Section 3.1 presents the morphosyntax of the exclusively equative construction, 3.2 and 3.3 provide examples of the latter two. Section 3.4 discusses the typology of the first construction.

3.1 Morphosyntax of the locative and "extent" construction

When the parameter of equative constructions is a noun, the encoding of equal extent contains two unrelated markers: the parameter marker is the plural locative postposition =*eːb* 'in', and the standard marker is a noun which varies for gender with the standard of comparison: *haddiː=b* (M), *haddiː=t* (F) (also used with the singulative suffix -*aːj*) or *kallaj* (M), *kallaj=t* (F) 'extent, limit'. These meanings are in line with the semantics of the construction. The standard and the standard marker form a possessive construction in which the marker is the head and the standard NP the possessed, marked in the genitive case. The Beja constituent order is COMPAREE - PARAMETER - PARAMETER MARKER - STANDARD - STANDARD MARKER, the reverse of the comparative construction.

(9)   *baruː*   *i=migʷmid=eːb*   *i=san=i*
       3SG.M.NOM   DEF.M=length=**LOC.PL**   DEF.M=brother=3SG.M.**GEN.SG**
       hadd-aːj=i
       extent-**SING**=COP.3SG.M
       'He is as tall as his brother' (lit. he is in the length of his brother's extent)
       (elicitation MT)

As (9) above shows, the Beja equative construction can make up a verbless clause. In this case, the use of the enclitic copula marking the standard marker as a predicate is optional (cp. ex. 9 and ex. 11 below). Pragmatic or syntactic constraints are not understood yet.

Equative constructions of this type can also be limited to the overt encoding of the comparee and the standard, with an ellipsis of the parameter, which is understood from the context as an adjective. So far only the ellipsis of size adjectives is attested.

(10) *galābáˊ=b*   *irh-án*   *mék-i*   *kállaî*   (or *háddī=b*)
       hyaena=INDF.M.ACC   see-PFV.1SG   donkey-**GEN.SG**   extent   (**limit=INDF.M.ACC**)
       'I saw a hyaena as big as a donkey' (lit. I saw a hyaena the extent of a
       donkey) (Roper 1928: 20)

The above construction is syntactically a correlative relative clause without a relative marker with an indefinite object head (Vanhove 2012b: 60). It is noteworthy that the modifier (i.e. the standard) 'donkey' is not adjacent to the head noun 'the hyaena' (i.e. the comparee), contrary to the rule with other modifiers of the head of relative clauses. This word order is in fact consistent with Beja verb-final word-order: the standard of the equative construction is also the relative clause predicate, whose canonical position is clause final.

Below is one more example in a verbless sentence without a copula and without the parameter:

(11)   *te = 'ót = i*   *te = 'ot = iók*   *háddī = t*
      DEF.F=girl=POSS.1SG.NOM   DEF.F=girl=2SG.**GEN**   extent=**INDF.F**
      'My daughter is as big as your daughter' (lit. My daughter (is) the extent of your daughter) (Roper 1928: 20)

The absence of the parameter is also reported in various languages by Haspelmath et al. (this volume), and also for Kambaata (East-Cushitic), whose construction contains a noun meaning "extent" like in Beja:

(12)   *Faars-í*   *qax-á*   *firiix-áyyoo'u*
      horses-M.**GEN**   extent-M.ACC   gallop-3M.PROG
      He is galloping as fast as a horse. (Kambaata; Treis 2008: 216)

3.2 Morphosyntax of the comparative-based construction

Reinisch (1893: 85) signals a construction in which the comparative marker is used instead of the previous construction. The use of this construction is semantically and syntactically constrained: it is restricted to utterances in which the comparee and the standard NP refer to the same entity; the comparee and the standard have two constituents each: they consist either in a possessive construction or a noun + an adjective; the head of the standard NP is encoded as an enclitic dummy noun. As in the canonical comparative construction, the predicative parameter also bears the comparative marker. I have no instances of this construction in my own data.

(13)   *Abdallä́-y*   *ū = réû*   *Hammad-i = ná́-y = ka*
      A.-GEN.SG   DEF.SG.M=cattle   H.-GEN.SG=thing-GEN.SG=**CMPR**
      gú́d-a = ká́ = b = u
      be_numerous-CBV.MNR=**CMPR**=INDF.M.ACC=COP.3SG
      'Abdallah's vih ist zalreicher als das von Mohammad' (Reinisch 1893: 85)
      'Abdallah's cattle is as numerous as that of Mohammad'

3.3 Morphosyntax of the similative-based construction

The identity of equative and similative markers is well attested cross-linguistically (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 315). In Beja this polysemy is morphosyntactically constrained. When the parameter is an overtly expressed adjective, the similative marker (cf. section 4) is added to the standard NP; the parameter adjective is unmarked:

      COMPAREE

(14)   *i = ká́m = i*   *ū = űni*   *on*
      DEF.M=camel=POSS.1SG.NOM   REL.DEF.M=1SG.GEN   PROX.SG.M.ACC
      STANDARD   STANDARD MARKER   PARAMETER
      i = kām   *= īt*   *= ók*   *erá́b = i*
      DEF.M=camel   =**SIM.SG**   =POSS.2SG.M.ACC   white=COP.3SG
      'my camel is as white as your camel' (lit. my camel which is mine is white like your camel) (Roper 1928: 20).

(15)   *gala:ba: = b*   *irh-an*   *me:k = i:t = ho:k*   *win*
      hyaena=INDF.M.ACC   see-PFV.1SG   donkey=**SIM.SG=OBJ.2SG**   big
      'I saw a hyaena as big as a donkey' (lit. I saw a hyaena (which is) big like a donkey) (elicitation MT)

(16)   *t = ʔot = i:*   *t = ʔot = i:t = ho:k*   *win = t = i*
      DEF.F=girl=POSS.1SG.NOM   DEF.F=girl=**SIM.SG=OBJ.2SG**   big=INDF.F=COP.3SG

'My daughter is as big as your daughter' (lit. my daughter is big like the daughter) (elicitation MT)

NB: Ex. (15) and (16) show the extended form of the similative marker with the object bound pronoun (see section 4).

3.3 Typology

The discussion about the origin of the similative-based construction is left for section 4 on similative constructions. This final subsection is limited to a discussion of the typological profile of Beja mainly with respect to the "locative/extent" construction, and to a lesser extent to the other two types of constructions, since they are less problematic.

It is noteworthy that the Beja equative "locative/extent" construction does not fully correspond to any of the equative types as defined in Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) and Haspelmath ==et. al== (this volume).

Their type 1 (Haspelmath and Buchholz, 1998: 290) is the relative-based equative construction for which they explicitly state that "is not at all widespread in non-European languages, and … must therefore be considered as an important characteristic feature of the European *Sprachbund*". Example (10) showed an instance where the equative construction is to some extent parallel to a correlative clause construction without a relative marker. Still the comparison with the European type does not fully hold since the Beja standard marker is not a relative marker.

Beja obviously does not pattern either with Haspelmath and Buchholz's type 2 where the "constructions are primarily characterized by a parameter marker" while "the standard marker is a conjunction that carries very little meaning of its own" (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 292-293), since the parameter marker can be omitted when the parameter adjective is covert and since the standard marker has a still transparent nominal meaning, is not a conjunction and is obligatory.

Of course it does not pattern with their type 3 where the constructions are exclusively characterized by a standard marker.

It does not fully correspond either to any of the 6 types which emerged from Haspelmath ==et al.'s== (this volume) worldwide sample. Nevertheless it is semantically akin to their "secondary reach equative" type, which involves verbs 'to equal' or 'to reach'. The difference is syntactic, since in Beja a possessive noun phrase with a head noun meaning 'extent, limit' is involved.

Moreover, although Beja is an OV language and is predominantly head-final, the constituent order of this particular equative construction, with the parameter preceding the standard and a marker on both components, does not comply either with that of European head-final languages whose order is STANDARD - STANDARD MARKER - PARAMETER (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 289), nor with that of European head-initial languages which is PARAMETER - STANDARD MARKER - STANDARD. The atypical Beja construction may be linked to the fact that this language is not a strict head-final language, and that there are a number of morphosyntactic remnants of a previous head-initial constituent order (e.g. the proclitic definite article). Keeping in mind Haspelmath and Buchholz's (1998: 296) typological generalization, "If a language is head-final and therefore the standard precedes the parameter, then it will tend not to have a parameter marker", it is noteworthy though that the polyfunctional comparative- and similative-

based constructions comply with the expected word-order since in both cases the standard precedes the parameter.

4. Similative constructions

The comparison of equal manner is encoded with two similative constructions. The most frequent one is similar to the equative construction in section 3.3 where the parameter is an overtly expressed adjective. The second one is very marginal and partly patterns with the comparative construction in section 2.

4.1 The similative marker

4.1.1 Morphology

The primary similative construction is marked by an enclitic standard marker $=i{:}t \sim =t$ (SG) / $=e{:}t$ (PL) which agrees in number with the standard NP. There are two allomorphs in the singular, $=i{:}t$ after a consonant, and $=t$ after a vowel; plural is marked by a vocalic ablaut: $=e{:}t$ ($=je{:}t$ after a vowel).

This marker may be reinforced by the 2nd person singular *object* bound pronoun (not by the possessive bound pronoun although the marker often cliticizes to an NP) which is enclitic to the similative marker. The pragmatic and/or grammatical rules which license the occurrence of the object pronoun on the similative marker are still unclear.

4.1.2 Syntax of similative phrases

The similative morpheme is used in similative phrases where the standard is an NP or a pronoun to which it cliticizes, such as in (17) to (21):

(17) *ti=takat=t=i:t=ho:k*　　　　　*kʷinh-e:ti:t*
　　 DEF.F=woman=INDF.F=**SIM.SG=OBJ.2SG**　speak-CVB.ANT
　　 'After I have spoken like a woman …' (gambler 016)

(18) *rabʔi=jo:*　　　　　*dilib-a*　　　*o:n*　　　*ani=t*
　　 young_camel=POSS.3SG.ACC　sell-CVB.MNR　PROX.SG.M. ACC　1SG.NOM=**SIM.SG**
　　 'He has sold his camel like me' (Mismar 008)

(19) *gibit-ti*　　　　*dʔ-i:ti:t*　　*e:n*
　　 drink_milk-CVB.CSL　do-CVB.ANT　PROX.PL.M.ACC
　　 e:=jam=e:t
　　 DEF.PL.M.ACC=water=**SIM.PL**
　　 'and he gulped the milk down like water' (thief 028-029)

(20) *ba:b=u:n-i*　　　　*jha:*　　*e:n*　　　　*e:=giriʃ*
　　 father=POSS.1PL.NOM-VOC　VOC.SG.M　PROX.PL.M.ACC　DEF.PL.M.ACC=money
　　 o:n　　　　*amsi*　*i=bhar=ib*　　　*ti-ngi:d=e:k*
　　 PROX.SG.M.ACC　today　DEF.M=sea=LOC.SG　2SG.M-throw\IPFV=if
　　 i=girʃ=e:t=wa[10]　　　　　*raba=ka=wwa*　　*i=bhar=ib*
　　 DEF.M.GEN=money=**SIM.PL**=COORD　male=CMPR=COORD　DEF.M=sea=LOC.SG
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(= 'majority, most')
　　 i:-gid=ho:k　　　*a-ndi*
　　 FUT-throw=OBJ.2SG　1SG-say\IPFV

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[10] The article (invariable for number) is in the genitive case because 'money' is also the standard of the comparative of superiority. See section 2.

'Daddy! Today, if you throw this money into the sea like most of the money, I'll throw you into the sea!' (father 011)

(21) *baru:*   *haɖa:j = t(= ho:k)*   *fina:j-i:ni*
    3SG.M.NOM   lion=**SIM.SG(=OBJ.2SG)**   beat-3SG.M.IPFV
    'He fights like a lion' (elicitation MT)

The similative morpheme also cliticizes to the temporal adverb *su:r* 'before'. In this case the morphology is more complex, and includes the addition of a linker *-n* between the host and the marker.[11] Moreover, the use of the extended similative morpheme with the 2nd person object bound pronoun is compulsory. The similative marker itself is in the plural form (like with grammaticalized adverbs, see below section 5.3.1):

(22) *o:n*   *su:r-n = e:t = ho:k*   *ma:jʔa = o:*   *dʔ-i:ti:t*
    PROX.SG.M.ACC   before-L=**SIM.PL=OBJ.2SG**   light=POSS.3SG.ACC   do-CVB.ANT
    'after he has put the light on like before…' (BEJ_MV_NARR_17_shoemaker_263-264)

(23) *o:n*   *su:r-n = e:t = ho:k*   *miski:n*   *ak-e:ti:t*
    PROX.SG.M.ACC   before-L=**SIM.PL=OBJ.2SG**   poor   be-CVB.ANT
    'he became poor like before and…' (BEJ_MV_NARR_02_farmer_135-136)

4.1.2 Syntax of similative clauses

When the standard is a clause, i.e. a manner adjunct, the similative marker is enclitic to the verb form of the clause and is embedded into the comparee clause, i.e. between the subject and the verb as in (24) below. As with similative phrases the marker may be reinforced by the object pronoun.

(24) *a:n*   *a: = kna*   *[far-n = e:t(= ho:k)]*
    PROX.PL.M.NOM   DEF.PL.M.NOM=owner   jump-PFV.1PL=**SIM.PL(=OBJ.2SG)**
    far-i:n
    jump-AOR.3PL
    'They themselves were jumping like we had jumped' (elicitation MT)

4.1.3 Origin of the similative marker

The origin of this marker is obscure, and only tentative hypotheses can be made. The first one lies in the comparison with the Agaw (Central Cushitic) comparative marker *-ta* (Hetzron 1978: 126). This would involve a non-problematic loss of the final vowel, but does not explain the origin of the long vowels of the Beja morpheme. Now, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) explain that relative constructions are a frequent origin of comparative and similative constructions in European languages. In Beja, one could relate the plural form to the "general embedding suffix" *=e:* (Appleyard 2007) used in relative clauses, but the problem is that a similar explanation does not hold for the singular morpheme since there is no "embedding suffix" *=i:*. In order to explain the origin of the long vowels, a second hypothesis is needed, based on another frequent origin of comparative markers, i.e. ablative morphemes. There is in Beja an ablative postposition *=i:* (SG) / *=e:* (PL) identical to the vowels of the similative morpheme. It thus could be that the Beja similative marker goes back to a combination of a comparative morpheme *t* preceded by an ablative morpheme, a combination

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[11] Note that in Kambaata (East-Cushitic) a highly multifunctional (both pragmatically and grammatically) morpheme *-n*, which also functions as a linker, is commonly added to adverbs (Treis 2008: 260).

which is also not uncommon cross-linguistically for the expression of comparative (see above section 2.2) and similatives.

As for the extended form with the enclitic 2SG.OBJ pronoun, the use of an object pronoun instead of a possessive pronoun could indicate that the construction first developed with the encoding of similative clauses before spreading to similative phrases. But to the best of my knowledge such a pronominal reinforcement of a similative marker, which includes a reference to a (fictional) addressee, has not been recorded yet in other languages. Nevertheless, even if the origin of this extension of the similative marker is not a manner, quality or degree deictic, as is often the case for the source of similative and comparative markers (König, this volume), it is interesting to note that the use of a pronoun referring to the addressee also resorts to the functional domain of deixis.[12]

4.2 The comparative strategy: similative clauses

4.2.2 Morphosyntax

The second Beja similative construction is based on the combination of the comparative strategy with the dummy noun =na 'thing' in its feminine indefinite form with the article =t, the inherent gender of the dummy noun, followed by the enclitic copula, and the comparative marker =ka. This construction of identity of manner is similar to the comparative-based construction which expresses identity of degree or extent discussed in section 3.2 (ex. 13), but instead of attaching to a noun, =na cliticizes to a verb form and refers to an event, not to an entity. This seems to be a rare construction, which occurs only once in my spontaneous data[13]:

(25) geː suːr sak-ani=**naː=t=i=ka**   tʔa diːseːt
    truly before do-IPFV.1SG=**thing=INDF.F=COP.1SG=CMPR** now slowly
    dʔam hoːj a-mri
    taste 3ABL 1SG-find\PFV
    'so, slowly, I really began to feel confident about it again like I did before'
    (NOT 'more than before') (lit. I slowly found the taste [= became confident],
    it is as the thing that I did before) (BEJ_MV_NARR_03_camel_207-209)

4.2.2 Typology

The identity of similative and comparative constructions is attested in other languages, and described as being the overwhelming majority in Standard Average European by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 313), sometimes even when the comparative construction encodes absolute superiority as e.g. in dialectal German: cp. *Er ist größer wie ich* 'he is taller than me' (lit. he is taller like me), as against standard German *Er ist größer als ich*, and *Er läuft wie ich* 'he runs like me'. Note however that the case of Beja is not a strict identity of the two constructions since there is the addition of a dummy noun to the comparative marker to form the similative construction.

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[12] Another possibly interesting typology parallel may be the Bambara postposition *yé* mentioned by Creissels (2011: 16): it functions as a benefactive and a functive and is "also used to encode the addressee of speech verbs and the recipient of some transfer verbs".

[13] This is not a speech error; this utterance was correctly understood and accepted by other Beja speakers.

5. Extensions of comparative, equative and similative constructions

The extension of these three constructions to several other related functional domains is a widespread phenomenon cross-linguistically (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998; Creissels 2010). I will thus now examine if this is the case in Beja by looking at each of the functional domains identified so far in the literature, and will list the attested extensions and other means of encoding.

5.1 Functive constructions (role phrases)
"Role phrases express the role or function in which a participant appears." (Haspelmath and Buchholz, 1998: 321).

In his description and analysis of syncretisms and grammaticalization paths in which functive (or role phrase) markers are involved, Creissels (2011) mentions, among other things, the syncretism with similative markers as a quite frequent phenomenon. Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 321-324 also mention it as a frequent extension of equative morphemes. The term 'functive', taken up from Haspelmath (2011), is defined as follows:

> [A] noun phrase N in functive role attributes the property of being an N to a participant represented by another noun phrase included in the construction of the same verb, implying that this characterization is linked in one way or another to the event represented by the verb. (Creissels 2011: 1)

Creissels further specifies that "this term refers to a possible function of cases, postpositions or multifunctional grammatical words that have other functions", that the "notion of noun phrase in functive role […] is not purely semantic" and that these NPs

> have a direct link with the verb, or a link mediated at most by an adposition. This condition excludes in particular constructions in which the same meaning is expressed by means of formulations such as by way of N, in one's capacity/nature/quality of N. (Creissels 2011: 3)

Role phrases are very rare in my spontaneous data, so in order to facilitate cross-linguistic comparison I resorted to elicitations mainly based on Creissels's (2011) paper.

The similative-functive polysemy is attested in Beja with the short and the extended forms of the similative marker =*i:t* ~ =*t* / =*e:t*.

(26) *ara:w=i:t* *i-nfari:d*
   friend=**SIM.SG** 3SG.M-talk\IPFV
   'he is talking as a friend' (elicitation MT)

(27) *ara:w=i:t=ho:k*   *a-nfari:d=ho:k*
   friend=**SIM.SG**= **OBJ.2SG.M** 1SG-talk\IPFV=OBJ.2SG.M
   'I am talking to you as a friend' (elicitation MT)

Beja also uses the locative strategy, well attested cross-linguistically: the functive marker is the plural locative postposition =*e:b* 'in', which I recall, is never used as a similative marker but as a parameter marker in equative constructions. This use of the locative corresponds to the well attested

grammaticalization path: locative > functive mentioned in Creissels (2011: 21-22).

(28) *i=mhallaga imbareː   karaːmaː=t=eːb   dhaːj firʔ-a*
    DEF.M=money 3PL.M.ACC alms=INDF.F=**LOC.PL** DIR go_out-IMP.SG.M
    'Give them this money as an alms!' (BEJ_MV_NARR_13_grave_086-088)

The locative morpheme as functive marker also occurs in appositive constructions. Note that unlike most languages, e.g. English, the NP has to be definite in Beja:

(29) *i=ʤnaːj=eːb   baruː   suːr   winneːt*
    DEF.M-kid=**LOC.PL** 3SG.M.NOM before plenty
    afam-aː=b=i
    behave-CVB.MNR=INDF.M.ACC=COP.3SG
    'As a child, he was very quiet' (lit. In (the nature of) the child, he was very quiet) (elicitation MT)[14]

In most cases, role phrases are not marked by a special functive or similative marker, and many transitive verbs just trigger a nominal object in the accusative case: Beja simply has recourse to a participant role, the object argument, which is used with a low degree of definiteness. Contrary to the above locative construction, the nominal object never occurs with the definite article. It is either a bare form, as is often the case for functives (Creissels 2011: 3), or a noun with the indefinite enclitic article. It may occur with a possessive pronoun as in (31) and (32), but in this case the noun does not bear the definite article.

(30) *ahmad reːwiːgaː=b   ʃagaːm-iːni*
    Ahmed shepherd=INDF.M.**ACC** work-3SG.M.IPFV
    'Ahmed works as a shepherd' (elicitation MT)

(31) *xadaːmi=joːk   kʷaːs-a=heːb*
    servant=POSS.2SG.M.**ACC** create-IMP.SG.M=OBJ.1SG
    'Take me as your servant!' (elicitation MT)

(32) *imbaroːsi   baːb=i   w=iː-ktiːni*
    3SG.M.ABL   father=POSS.1SG.**ACC**   REL=AOR.1SG-know
    'It is him whom I knew as my father' (elicitation MT)

Creissels (2011: 7-8) mentions that transformative phrases can be viewed as functive phrases in the scope of a verb encoding a transformation event. In Beja the transformative polysemy is not attested, and the language uses instead a purpose clause as in (33):

(33) *aneːb   j-hajid=heːb   mesaːʔid=oː   ba=i-kta*
    1SG.ACC 3SG.M-choose\PFV=OBJ.1SG assistant=POSS.3SG.M.ACC OPT=3SG.M-be
    mijaːd
    PURP
    'He chose me as his assistant' (lit. 'so that I'd be his assistant') (elicitation MT)

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[14] The temporal reading of the English clause was translated by a temporal clause:
ʤina:=b i:-kt=ho:b baru: winne:t afam-a:=b=i
child=INDF.M.ACC AOR.3SG.M-be=when 3SG.M.NOM plenty behave-CVB.MNR=INDF.M.ACC=COP.3SG
'When he was a child, he was very quiet' (elicitation MT)

Concessive identification, another value of functives (Creissels 2011: 6; 15) is unambiguously expressed by a conditional clause as in (34) and Beja does not use the similative, equative or comparative construction for this purpose:

(34) *miderris ti-kati=jeːk ti-ʃboːbi-ja*
       teacher   2SG-be\IPFV=**if** 2SG-be_good\IPFV-M
       'As a teacher, you would be good' (lit. 'if you were a teacher') (elicitation MT)

5.2 Pretense clauses

On the contrary, pretense clauses, i.e. simulative clauses, are strictly identical to the similative construction with the marker *=iːt ~ =t / =eːt* and, just as similative constructions, they can also optionally be marked with the bound 2SG.M object pronoun:

(35) *girba   tak=iːt(=hoːk)*
       stranger   man=**SIM.SG(=OBJ.2SG.M)**
       'As if he were a stranger!' (elicitation MT)

5.3 Similes and accord clauses

On the other hand, similes, i.e. propositional adverbials, and accord clauses, i.e. illocutionary adverbials, only partly use the same structural means as similative constructions: they share with them the similative marker *=iːt ~ =t / =eːt*, but it is added to a relative clause with the "embedding suffix" *=eː* and the dummy noun *=na* 'thing'. It also differs slightly morphologically since the variant *=t* after vowels is not used in this case, and a glide is inserted before the full singular marker:

(36) *uː=faːr   i-tibn=iːb*
      DEF.SG.M.NOM=flower   DEF.M-darkness=LOC.SG
      balam-iː=eː=naː=jiːt   uː=dhaj
      be_dry- IPFV.3SG.M=**REL=thing=SIM.SG**   DEF.SG.M.NOM=people
      oː=mbʔi   kass=oː: gaːl   mhiːn   eː-stʔi-n=eːk
      DEF.SG.M.ACC=day all=3SG.M.ACC   one   place   3SG-sit\IPFV-PL=if
      eːnharoːj-eːn
      be_depressed-3PL.IPFV
      'As the flower withers in the dark, people become depressed if they stay indoors all day long' (lit. the flower in darkness that is like drying, (elicitation MT)

(37) *suːr   n-eːn=eː=naː=jiːt*
      before   1PL-say\PFV=**REL=thing=SIM.SG**
      'As mentioned before' (lit. 'as we said before') (elicitation MT)

5.3 Adverbials

The grammaticalization of the similative morpheme into an adverbial marker, another recurring phenomenon across languages, such as in English *-ly*, whose origin goes back to *like*, or in several Cushitic languages such as Libido (Crass, this volume) or Kambaata (Treis 2008: **) occurred in Beja only to a limited extent.

5.3.1 Adverbializer

In Beja, most adverbs are best defined negatively as a category of independent words which have in common that they cannot be determined by an article (even if some are historically derived from nouns with an article or a demonstrative) nor be inflected for case or TAM, and cannot be used as predicate.

Nonetheless, there is a very small closed set of adverbs which seems to have been formed with the similative enclitic marker in its plural form =*e:t*. Two of them are clearly derived from adjectives or stative verbs: the manner adverb *di:se:t* 'slowly' (< *dis* '(to be) small'), and the degree adverb *winne:t* 'plenty' (< *win* '(to be) big'); the third one has no corresponding base form: *ʔa:bire:t* 'anyway'.

5.3.2 Causal adverbial clause

The use of the similative marker has not been extended to explicative identification ('since he/she is an N'), an attested extension of functives in other languages of the world (Creissels 2011: 6). Explicative identification is instead expressed by a clause with the simultaneity converb form of the verb *ak* 'be' and an object NP:

(38) *faransa:wi:=t* **aka-je:** *ti=bḍa:wji da:je:b hadi:d-ti:ni*
French=INDF.F **be-CVB.SMLT** DEF.F=Beja well speak-3SG.F.IPFV
'For a French woman, she speaks Beja well' (lit. 'while being French')
(elicitation MT)

Nevertheless, in one instance attested in the corpus with the temporal adverb *su:r* 'before', an ungrammaticalized explicative value seems to have extended to the clause, and the similative marker behaves as a marker of a causal adverbial clause. In (39), the scope of the similative marker is not the temporal adverb to which it is cliticized, but the whole clause. The 2nd person bound object pronoun is not used in this case:

(39) *o:n* *su:r-n=e:t* *ja* *ʔar* *jha:na*
PROX.SG.M.ACC before-L=**SIM.PL** VOC child\PL VOC.PL
adara-na *abʃir di-na* *in=ho:n*
jump-IMP.PL EXCL say-IMP.PL say\PFV.3SG.M=OBJ.1PL
abʃir n-e:n *adara-na*
EXCL 1PL-say\PFV jump-1PL.PFV
'Since before he had told us 'Boys, jump and say yippee!' we said 'yippee!' and we jumped.' (Ababda 020)

9. Conclusion

From a synchronic point of view, Beja shows some formal overlap between comparative, equative and similative constructions, even if limited and constrained. From a diachronic point of view, the similative morpheme seems to be partially related to a comparative morpheme, in addition to an ablative morpheme, two strategies that are largely attested cross-linguistically, either on their own or in combination.
Typologically, genetically and areally these three constructions show a number of features, some of them specific, at times marginally, some shared fully or partially with other languages, both synchronically and diachronically.
Concerning first the origin of the comparative marker =*ka*, there is some comparative evidence that it could be related to the universal quantifier =*ka*, via a stage as an ablative marker. In any case both functions are possible sources of comparative markers cross-linguistically, but the former as derived from the latter. Beja would just illustrate the ablative grammaticalization scenario once more. As regards the typology of the comparative construction, Beja fits well in the general pattern of case-fixed separative comparative constructions as defined by Stassen (1985).

Regarding the markers of the equative construction, even if unrelated to each other (a common construction cross-linguistically), they depart from the attested typology (Haspelmath, this volume) insofar as the standard marker is not a verb but a noun meaning 'extent, limit', albeit semantically in line with the "to reach" verbal type constructions. On the other hand, the parameter marker coincides with a widespread strategy, the use of a locative postposition. Another specificity of the Beja construction is its constituent order (PARAMETER - PARAMETER MARKER - STANDARD - STANDARD MARKER) which does not comply with the order usually attested for head-final languages, and does not fully coincide either with the word order for head-initial languages (PARAMETER - STANDARD MARKER – STANDARD). It most probably reflects a diachronic syntactic change in word order.

Noteworthy also of Beja is the fact that two of the equative constructions are not synchronically encoded with the same structural means as the similative construction. More peculiar is the extended similative marker with the "phatic" strategy (the 2SG.M bound object pronoun), unrecorded so far in other languages. Still it resorts to the domain of deixis, a frequent source of similative and comparative markers.

From a genetic and areal point of view it is also noteworthy that the grammaticalization of the similative marker has not progressed very far (unlike in related Cushitic languages of the Ethiopian Language Area, see Treis, this volume). It is limited to an adverbializer for three (frequent) adverbs, and did not develop into a complementizer and/or a clausal purpose marker.

As for the extensions of the equative and similative markers, it should be recalled that both are used to mark role phrases, although unfrequently. Beja clearly favors other constructions. Only in a few cases, the similative morpheme encodes functive phrases and pretense. But the values of transformative and concessive identification are expressed with other formal means. Conversely simulative clauses, similes and accord clauses fully pattern with similative clauses.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative	EXCL	exclamation	OPT	Optative
ACC	accusative	F	feminine	OBJ	object
ANT	anteriority	FUT	future	PFV	perfective
AOR	Aorist	GEN	genitive	PL	plural
CMPR	comparative	IMP	imperative	PROX	proximal
COORD	coordination	INDF	indefinite	PURP	purposive
COP	copula	IPFV	imperfective	REL	relative
CSL	causal	L	linker	SG	singular
CVB	converb	LOC	locative	SIM	similative
DEF	definite	M	masculine	SMLT	simultaneity
DIR	directional	MNR	manner	VOC	vocative
DISTR	distributive	NOM	nominative		

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