Similar but different: the functions of the Mojeño Trinitario root expressing similarity

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mojeño Trinitario, an Arawak language spoken in Bolivia, uses the root *kuti* to express similarity in five different constructions, all involving some qualitative comparison. This root shows the two major functions of similative predicate and marker of similarity (as a preposition), but is also used in a verbal compound, as a clause dependency marker, and as an epistemic marker. On the basis of a first-hand corpus of spontaneous texts, this paper aims to disentangle the versatility of the similative root *kuti* in its forms and uses. The paper starts by describing the two core functions of similative predicate and similative preposition, two syntactic functions that are marked with different forms (with or without prefixes). It also describes non-canonical forms used for the same two core functions. The paper goes further in describing other functions of *kuti*. While five constructions are identified, the parts of speech that *kuti* belongs to in each of these constructions is subject to discussion. Possible diachronic paths from the original verbal function illustrated in (1) are sketched throughout the paper.[1]

(1)   v-**kuti**=richu   j-ma-ni   pak-chicha-no.
        1PL-**be_like**=RESTR   DEM-NH.PL-PROX   dog-EMP-PL
        'We are just like these poor dogs.' {text10.031}

[1] Abbreviations: A most agent-like participant of a transitive clause; ACN.NZ action nominaliser; ACT active; ART article; CAUS causative; CLF classifier; CONC.MOT concomitant motion; DEM demonstrative; DESP despective; EMP empathy; EXI existential; F feminine (singular); FREQ frequentative; FUT future; GEN.PAT.NZ general patient nominaliser; GPN generic possessive noun; H human; HAB.A.NZ habitual agent nominaliser; INTENS intensive; IPFV imperfective; IRR irrealis; MID middle; MOT.PRES motion.presentational; NEG negation; NH non-human; NP noun phrase; NVIS non-visual; O most patient-like participant of a transitive clause; PFV perfective; PL plural; PLURACT pluractional; POSS possessed form of the noun; POT.LOC potential location; PREP preposition; PRIV privative; PRO pronoun; PROG.GRAD progressive gradual; PROX proximal; RESTR restrictive; RPT reportative; S unique participant of an intransitive clause; SG singular; TAME tanse aspect mood evidentiality; VBZ verbaliser.

1.1. A grammatical overview of Mojeño Trinitario

Mojeño is an Arawak language of lowland Bolivia, belonging to the South Arawak branch (Aikhenvald 1999: 67). The first variety to be described was spoken in the Jesuit missions in the 17th and 18th century (Marbán 1702). Nowadays, two dialects are still spoken, Ignaciano (Olza Zubiri et al. 2002) and Trinitario (Rose 2015b), while two others are moribund or extinct (Rose 2010). This paper deals with the Trinitario variety, for which Rose (2015b) offers a grammatical sketch.

For a basic typological profile of Mojeño, it is an agglutinating language, with a large number of suffix and enclitic slots and fewer prefix slots, on both nouns and verbs (2). Note that lexical and grammatical morphemes display several surface forms, due to a rich system of morphophonemic rules and a pervasive syncope process specific to the Trinitario dialect (Rose 2014b, 2019).

(2)   wi=po   n-a-k-uch-ku-'-vi=yre.
         NEG=PFV   1SG-IRR-CAUS-go_out-CLF-ACT-2SG=FUT
         'I will not take you out of it.' {text8.040}

In Mojeño Trinitario, both nouns and verbs can be used as arguments and predicates without additional morphology: nouns can be used as predicates without overt marking, and verbs can sometimes be nominalised without overt marking. These two word classes differ only statistically in how much they are used in each major function: nouns are most often used as arguments, and verbs as predicates. For this reason, even though nouns and verbs share a large amount of their morphology, I use morphological combinatorics as a defining criterion for nouns and verbs. Nouns are defined as the lexical class that can combine with both person prefixes (for possessors - on the subset of possessible nouns, as in (3)) and person suffixes (for the sole argument of nominal predicates, as in (4)). Transitive verbs are defined as the lexical class that also combines with both person prefixes (for A) and person suffixes (for O), but furthermore takes the active suffix *-ko ~ -cho ~ -'o* (5). Intransitive verbs combine with person prefixes only; among them, active verbs (6), but not stative verbs (7), take the active suffix.

(3)   **n-**ousa
        1SG-village
        'my village'

(4)   'jiro-**nu**=po.
        man-1SG=PFV
        'I was a man then.'

(5)   **n-**echji-**ko-'e**.
        1SG-talk_to-ACT-2PL
        'I am talking to you.'

(6)   **n-**ute-**k**=po.
        1SG-come-ACT=PFV
        'I just came.'

(7)   **n-**uuna.
        1SG-be_good
        'I am good.'

There is moreover a slight distinction in the paradigm of person prefixes that nouns and verbs can take (see Table 1). Third person prefixes on nouns must always be semantically specified for humanness, number, gender of the referent, and gender of the speaker (see Rose 2015a: for more details on the paradigm). For a third person S/A, verbs can take either one of these semantically specified prefixes, or the non-specified third person prefix *ti-*. This prefix is normally found on intransitive verbs for S, and on transitive verbs for A when O is a first or second person (see Rose 2011b for further details). Also note that there is no third person suffix in Mojeño Trinitario.

Table 1. Mojeño Trinitario person paradigms

	PREFIXES	SUFFIXES
1SG	*n-*	*-nu*
2SG	*p-*	*-vi*
1PL	*v-*	*-(wok)ovi*
2PL	*a-*	*-'e*
3M(SG.H) speaker♂	*ma-* (~ *mu-*)	
3M(SG.H) speaker♀	*ñi-*	
3F(SG.H)	*s-*	
3PL(H)	*na-*	
3NH(SG/PL)	*ta-*	
3	*ti- (ty- ~ t-)* only on verbs	

The last part of speech that is relevant for this paper is the preposition. There is one crucial and very polyfunctional preposition in Mojeño Trinitario: *ye'e*. It inflects with a person prefix agreeing with its complement, and its most frequent form is *te* (or *te'*), a reduced form of *ta-ye'e*, where *ye'e* takes the third person non-human prefix *ta-* (8).

(8)   p-su-kro   Pransiska   **te'**=po   s-ousa.
        DEM-F-POT.LOC Francisca   **3NH:PREP**=PFV 3F-town
        'Francisca is already in her town.' {elicited}

As for syntax, the basic order of constituents is SVO, as in (9). There is no case marking but arguments are obligatorily indexed on the predicate (Rose 2011b).

(9)   ene takepo ma   t(y)-siso 'chane   ma-m=po   ma   'chane.
        and then   ART.M 3-black person   3M-take=PFV ART.M   person
        'And then the black man took the (lost) man.' {text8.045}

Finally, two peculiarities of the morphosyntax of Mojeño Trinitario must be mentioned. First, as hinted above, almost all parts of speech can be turned into non-verbal predicates: nouns (4), adjectives, adverbs, numerals, as well as prepositional phrases as in (8) (Rose 2018). Second, TAME morphology can be

found on all major parts of speech, not only on the various types of predicates, but also (though more rarely) on non-predicative elements like nouns, adverbs, and the preposition *te* (as in (8) Rose 2017b).

1.2. Methodology and terminology: when equality and similarity merge

This study was realised within the research program of the French *Fédération Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques* focusing on *Equality comparison and similarity*, coordinated by Yvonne Treis and Claudine Chamoreau. This research project aimed at a better description of the expression of comparison of equality, similarity and simulation in the languages of the world, to complement the existing scarce typological literature on the topic (Haspelmath et al. 2017; Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998; Fortescue 2010). Project members were offered a questionnaire in order to gather the relevant information to describe this semantic domain.

   The basic terminology used for the comparative domain is that of comparee, standard of comparison, and parameter of comparison (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998: 279). In comparisons of equality, the comparee is presented as identical to the standard on a specific quantitative dimension (the parameter). In constructions expressing similarity, the comparee is presented as equivalent to the standard on a qualitative parameter that can be multidimensional.

   The research on comparison of equality, similarity and simulative in Mojeño Trinitario that led to this chapter is strictly based on an existing corpus of more than six hours of (semi-)spontaneous speech, and additional sentences elicited either on the basis of visual stimuli or in sessions aiming at a better understanding of the texts and the morphosyntax. No elicitation was carried out with the specific purpose of collecting additional data on the comparative domain. The research proceeded in two steps. The first was to fill in the questionnaire. The major results of this step can be summarized in two statements.

   Firstly, no clear example of comparison of equality on a unambiguously quantitative scale occurs in my current corpus of Mojeño Trinitario.[2] To counter any possible shortcoming of my Mojeño Trinitario corpus as a particular sample of speech, I decided to check the other major Mojeño Trinitario corpus available, the translation of the New Testament (NTM 2002). To do this, I started by looking for comparisons of equality in a French online version of the New Testament. It contained only four sentences with the canonical comparison of equality *aussi…que*. None of these were translated in the Mojeño Trinitario

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[2] In discussions following a preliminary presentation of this study in a meeting of project members on 2 February 2015, the best possible candidates for comparison of equality were considered to actually be cases of similarity, and in all cases, the parameter was considered to be more qualitative than quantitative. Moreover, these examples make use of the construction used for canonical similative constructions. The lack of comparisons of equality is not very surprising, since I had reached the same conclusion when investigating my corpus of Teko (a.k.a. Emérillon, a Tupi-Guarani language on which I have done intensive research (Rose 2011a)).

version with an equality meaning. The absence of comparisons of equality in the Mojeño Trinitario texts highlights the fact that comparison of equality is not a semantically active domain in Mojeño Trinitario. This does not mean that Mojeño Trinitario speakers do not have means to express a comparison of equality, but that they do not spontaneously construct this kind of comparison.

Secondly, similarity is often expressed in speech, with various constructions all involving the root *kuti*. It occurs 73 times in texts, and 23 times in elicited examples. Since similarity is an active semantic domain in Mojeño Trinitario, and is semantically close to equality, the distinction between the two semantic functions of comparison of equality and similarity may not be relevant in individual languages. The form *kuti* is used in diverse functions, among which are the core functions of similative predicate and similative marker. In the end, the high frequency and versatility of *kuti*, on top of the absence of comparison of equality in the corpus, called for focusing on *kuti*.

The second step of the research, presented in the remainder of the chapter, is centered on the individual study of the diverse occurrences of the similative root *kuti* in terms of parts of speech, syntactic functions, and semantic and pragmatic effects. The core functions of *kuti* at the level of the clause, i.e. as a similative predicate and a similative preposition, are first described in Section 2. Section 3 then presents its other two functions, at the level of complex sentences and discourse. The main functions of *kuti* are summarised in Table 2. The similative words involving *kuti* show considerable formal variety in these functions, which makes identification of parts of speech problematic. Possible diachronic pathways between the functions of *kuti* are put forward throughout the chapter.

Table 2. The functions of the similative root *kuti* in Mojeño Trinitario

Function	Section
similarity verb	2.1
similarity verb compound	2.2
similarity preposition	2.3
similarity subordinator	3.1
epistemic marker	3.2

A phonological note may be useful for the reader. The basic form *kuti* shows three phonological realisations: *kuti*, *kut* and *kti*. They result from general principles of the language: phonotactics (*i* is lost before a vowel) and rhythmic syncope (either *u* or *i* can be lost in prosodic positions that are not metrically strong (Rose 2019)). This is not crucial for our present concern.

2. THE SIMILATIVE ROOT *KUTI* AT THE CLAUSE LEVEL: EXPRESSING SIMILARITY BETWEEN TWO ENTITIES

This section presents three similative constructions involving the root *kuti* used as a similative verb (2.1), as part of a verb compound (2.2), and as a similative preposition (2.3). Three types of non-canonical examples are then discussed (2.4). In all cases, *kuti* expresses similarity between two entities.

2.1. Kuti *as a similative verb*

Kuti is a verb root meaning 'be like, resemble' used as the main predicate of a simple clause in 21 examples in my corpus, like examples (10) to (13).

(10) eñi   wo   ñ(i)-a-**kti**=i'i   p-su   ñi-yeno   ñi   viya RT.
      PRO3   NEG   3M-IRR-**be_like**=IPFV   DEM-F   3M-wife   ART.M   Mr RT
      'He hasn't been like the wife of Mr RT.' {text20.034} [about two people being tricked by native Trinitario speakers when wanting to learn the language]

(11) v-**kuti**=ripo   eto   sorare.
      1PL-**be_like**=PFV   NH   animal
      'Now we are like animals.' {text25.107} [about the loss of traditional culture]

(12) wo   n-a-**kuti**-vi.
      NEG   1SG-IRR-**be_like**-2SG
      'I am not on the same level as you.' (lit. I am not like you) {elicitation}

(13) v-**kut**=poojik=ripo   ta-ye'e,   'chope-ni-s-ra-wokovi.
      1PL-**be_like**=FREQ=PFV   3NH-PREP   big-eat-ACT-ACN.NZ-1PL
      'We are like them (dogs), we are big eaters.' {text29.048}

In clauses with a verbal predicate *kuti*, similarity is expressed as schematised in Table 3. The comparee is the subject of *kuti*, and the standard its object, except in (13) in which the standard is introduced by the inflected preposition *ye'e*.

Table 3. Verbal predicate function of *kuti*

comparee	A (NP or person prefix)
marker of similarity	transitive verbal predicate *kuti*
standard	O (NP or person suffix, or adverb), (*te*) NP
parameter	separate clause, or additional NP

In these constructions, *kuti* is a predicate and shows the behaviour of predicates in terms of negation, valency-changes and combination with TAME and other morphology. Among predicates, it is best analysed as a verb, because only verbs are used as predicates with subject person prefixes. However, *kuti* is an atypical verb. Like transitive verbs, it takes two arguments in the AVO order as in (10), and encodes a third person subject with the set of semantically specified prefixes, like *ñi-* for third person human singular masculine by a female speaker in (10) (see Table 1 for the person prefixes). Like stative intransitive verbs, *kuti* lacks the active suffix *-ko* and makes use of the irrealis prefix *a-* (12) rather than the irrealis suffix *-a* (Rose 2014a). It also sometimes takes an oblique object introduced by the preposition *te*, rather than a direct object, as in (13). Consequently, *kuti* is one of the very few verbs that share properties of both transitive and stative intransitive verbs.

The verb *kuti* can occur with the generic patient nominalizer *-giene* used for object nominalisation (14).[3] The comparee is then expressed by the article before the nominalised verb, and the standard is expressed by the possessive prefix.

(14) no   v-**kut**-gieñ-ono
      ART.PL 1PL-**be_like**-GEN.PAT.NZ-PL
      'our fellows' (lit. those that are like us) {text24.045}

The parameter of similarity can be left completely implicit as in (12) and (14) or can be inferred from the surrounding text as in (10) and (11). It can also be explicit, and is then expressed either by an independent clause as in (13) or (16) or by an adjunct NP within the clause as in (15). It is noteworthy that, in these three examples, the parameter of similarity is expressed via a nominalised form of a verb, derived with the action nominaliser *-ira* in (13), the general patient nominaliser *-giene* in (15), and the habitual agent nominaliser *-ra'i* in (16). In (15), the nominalised verb is the head of an adjunct NP, i.e. an NP that is structurally optional and independent from the argument structure of the predicate, but it is not introduced with a preposition like most other adjuncts are. In (13) and (16), the nominalised verb is used as a nominal predicate: it is not preceded by an article, takes a person suffix for its subject in (13), and the irrealis prefix typical of verbal predicates in (16).

(15) na-**kuti**=richu   eno t-komeri-ono   to   na-etko-gne.
      3PL-**be_like**=RESTR 3PL 3-speak_Spanish-PL ART.NH 3PL-know-GEN.PAT.NZ
      '(Now it is necessary that we make our kids go to school), they are equal to the non-indigenous people in their knowledge. (lit. They are just like they who speak Spanish their knowledge)' {text22.045}

(16) s-a-echji-k-ra'=po,   s-a-**kti**=po   p-ju-ena   parawa.
      3F-IRR-speak-ACT-HAB.A.NZ=PFV   3F-IRR-**be_like**=PFV   DEM-NH.SG-DIST   macaw
      '(preceding sentence: we should have killed that macaw and had the foreign woman eat it for her to be talkative) may she be talkative, like that macaw. {text29.051-052}

In two examples, the predicate *kuti* shows a particular discourse use. It is found sentence-initially; its subject *ta-* 3NH is coreferent with an NP in the preceding clause,[4] and its object follows and serves as a new topic for the

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[3] The noun *ikti* 'measure' (presumably *ikuti* before rhythmic syncope) is formally similar to the verb *kuti* 'be like'. The derivation is not a regular process: there is no nominalising prefix *i-* in the language. The noun *ikti* can be verbalised through a regular process into *ikti-cho* 'to measure'.

[4] A reviewer suggested that the subject in these two examples could be a dummy element. It is a fact that a non-human person prefix is actually used impersonally elsewhere in the language. Nevertheless, I argue that in the two examples under study, the subject (the comparee) is a specific entity. In fact, a particular noun phrase can be identified in the preceding discourse as a possible antecedent for the person prefix. The noun phrase is non-human, therefore requiring the form *ta-* of the person prefix. Moreover, in the case of (17), the referent of this noun phrase is still active in the following stretch of discourse, where it is referred to by a noun phrase with a demonstrative.

following stretch of discourse, like *to 'chini* 'the jaguar' in (17). In this topic switch, *kuti* highlights the analogy between the previous topic and the new topic, 'the puma' and 'the jaguar' in the case of example (17).

> (17) ta-**kuti**   to   'chini, juiti   tajna=po   to   'chin-ina.
>   3NH-**be_like** ART.NH jaguar today   NEG.EXI.NH=PFV ART.NH jaguar-IRR
>   [Context: discussion on the danger of meeting a snake, or a puma] 'It is like the jaguar, today, there are no jaguars (that show up, but these pumas are numerous).' {text30.053}

2.2. Kuti *in a verb compound*

One textual example shows a particular construction where the verbal root *kuti* is part of a verbal compound that incorporates a verb stem *echji-ko* 'speak' nominalised with the action nominalizer *-ira* (18).[5] The construction has been verified through elicitation (19).

> (18) abogado-no, roktoro-no, ma-**kut**-echji-s-ra=a'i   ema   'chane.
>   lawyer-PL   doctor-PL   3M-**be_like**-speak-ACT-ACN.NZ=IPFV PRO.M man
>   'The man was speaking like lawyers and doctors.' {text22.038}

> (19) n-**kut**-echji-s-ra-vi.
>   1SG-**be_like**-speak-ACT-ACN.NZ-2SG
>   'I speak like you.' {elicitation}

This incorporation of the parameter as a nominalised verb form within the similative predicate must be related to the fact that, in the more basic construction with *kuti* as a similative predicate (as described in Section 2.1), the parameter can be expressed as a nominalisation that is either an adjunct or a nominal predicate, as in (13), (15) and (16). In (18) and (19), the parameter is nominalised as well, but is furthermore incorporated into the similative predicate. Table 4 presents the schema of this similative construction. It is not comparable to other nominal incorporation in transitive verbs: these either incorporate an object (and valency-decreasing is involved) or a noun referring to part of the object (expressing location).

Table 4. Incorporating *kuti*

comparee	S (NP and/or person prefix)
marker of similarity	V1 root *kuti*
standard	O (NP or person suffix)
parameter	nominalised V2 root

2.3. Kuti *as a preposition*

Kuti is unambiguously a preposition expressing similarity in 21 textual examples in my corpus, among which are examples (20) to (24).

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[5] The active suffix *-ko* is realised /s/ in this example: /o/ deletes before the /i/ of the nominalizer *-ira*, and /k/ is realised /s/ between a front vowel and an /i/.

(20) eto   ma-nok=po   to   ta-em'i=i'i   ma   'chane=ri'i,
     PRO.NH 3M-make-PFV ART.NH 3NH-shape=IPFV ART.M human=IPFV
     kuti   j-ma-ni   estatua.
     like   DEM-NH.PL-PROX   statue
     'From this he made the shape of a human being, like these statues.'
     {text6.043}

(21) je'chu ty-uuná-pa'i   onogi **kuti** plasa,   plantacione.
     truly 3-be.good-CLF:ground there **like** square   plantations
     'Truly the ground is clean as a square, or a plantation.' {text20.027}

(22) ene ta-nosjii'i to   'moyo t-sok-ra'i,   **kuti**… manje'e…
     and 3NH-keep   ART.NH child 3-defecate-HAB.A.NZ **like**   um
     mocheó   to…   manje'e… na-soko   **kuti** to   wray-'a.
     sickness.sp ART.NH um   3PL-defecate **like** ART.NH chicken-CLF:egg
     'And the boy kept having diarrhea, like, like… um… mocheó[6], the… um…
     they defecate like chicken eggs.'{text30.125}

(23) wo'i=ji paku-mir-ina eñi ñi   ñi-chicha=ri'i
     NEG=RPT dog-face-IRR 3M   ART.M 3M-son=IPFV
     kut=ri'i'i=ji   no kristiano-no.
     like=IPFV=RPT PL human_being-PL [Context: about a baby born from a
     human father and a dog-faced mother] 'He wasn't dog-faced, his son, like the
     human beings.' {text19.127}

(24) t-k-epia   eto kolcha […]tyompo eto achu-chicha
     3-MID-make 3NH blanket and   3NH hammock-EMP
     kut-giene   j-ma-ni.
     like-INTENS DEM-NH.PL-PROX
     'And they were making blankets, and small hammocks like
     these.'{text25.065}

In these examples, *kuti* is not the predicate and does not take any person affix.
It can be described as a preposition, preceding the NP that expresses the standard
(Table 5). It can carry morphological material like TAME as in (23) and the
intensifier *-giene* as in (24), that should not be confused with the homonymous
nominaliser presented in Section 2.1. The comparee always precedes the
preposition: it can be a noun as in (20), a person prefix as in (21), a situation
described by a predicate as with the first *kuti* in (22), or be implicit as with the
last *kuti* in (22). The standard is an NP that always directly follows the
preposition. When it lacks a determiner as in (21), the non-referential noun
constitutes a generic standard that is, an abstract category rather than a specific
referent (i.e. 'square' and 'plantation' stand for any square or plantation rather than
an invividual 'square' or 'plantation').

Table 5. Prepositional function of *kuti*

comparee	NP or person marker on predicate
marker of similarity	preposition *kuti*
standard	NP
parameter	predicate

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[6] Mochéo is a kind of sickness.

In the grammar and texts of Old Mojeño by Marbán (1702), the verb *kuti* 'be like' and the nom *ikuti* 'measure' are both found, systematically with a prefix for subject or possessor, respectively. In this source, there is not a single occurrence of *kuti* without a prefix. Comparison of modern Mojeño Trinitario and Old Mojeño thus indicates that the predicate function of *kuti* precedes its function and form as a preposition. The best argument for the grammaticalisation of *kuti*, from an Old Mojeño verb into a Mojeño Trinitario preposition, is the absence of a person prefix in its prepositional function. The loss of the person prefix in this process of grammaticalisation is discussed in the next section. As suggested by a reviewer, the presence of a similarity marker *como* in Spanish, a language in contact with Mojeño for several centuries, may have influenced the development of *kuti* as a preposition. This is possible but difficult to prove.

In four examples, the preposition *kuti* expresses the analogy between a previous topic and a new topic, a discourse use already observed for the verb *kuti* in (17). The preposition is then sentence-initial, and the NP it introduces serves as a new topic for the following clause, as in (25). The comparee is to be found in the previous discourse.

> (25) pi'a, **kuti** p-no-kni u-sam-giene nasiano-no,
> look **like** DEM-H.PL-NVIS 1PL-listen-GEN.PAT.NZ Ignaciano-PL
>
> t-echji-ri-k-wo-no, ta-etna=ripo t-komeri-ono, ene?
> 1PL-speak-PLURACT-ACT-MID-PL 3NH-be_used=PFV 3-speak_Spanish-PL tag
> [Context: a couple discussing the fact that their children have got used to speaking Spanish] 'See, it's like those that we listen to (on the radio), the Ignacianos, they speak, they are used to speaking Spanish, right?' {text 28.087}

2.4. Non-canonical cases

Beside the canonical uses of *kuti* as either a verbal predicate or a preposition expressing similarity, a large number of examples in my corpus are less straightforward in terms of structural analysis. They may point to stages preceding and following the grammaticalisation of the verb *kuti* into a preposition.

First, there are three examples where *kuti* looks formally like a predicate, with a person prefix, but does not seem to function syntactically as a main clause predicate. I see these examples as a bridging context for a reanalysis of a similative predicate into a similative preposition. In example (26), *kuti* is clearly uttered in the same prosodic unit as the preceding verb. In example (27), if *kuti* was a predicate, we would expect it to carry the irrealis prefix *a-* (and due to subsequent change through syncope, the form would be *takti* as in (28)). In this example, the pronominal subject of *kuti* is not coreferential with the subject of the preceding clause (the fabric) but with the preceding noun in a prepositional phrase: it forms a parenthetic clause. In (28), the similative construction is used as a way of providing an example, a common use of similarity markers (Fuchs 2014: 162 on exemplification). Examples (26-28) provide an intermediary step

between the use of *kuti* as a main clause predicate described in 2.1 and as a similarity marker described in 2.3.

(26) vi-uch-ru-ru-pue-ko   v-**kuti**   to   'chepi.
1PL-go_out-PLURACT-?-CLF:ground-ACT   1PL-**be_like**   ART.NH   worm
[Context: talking about moving out in flood time] 'We are leaving (our land) like earthworms.' {text36.022}

(27) p-epia-k-a   to   j-mimr-ina   ta-**kuti**   to   m-miro.
2SG-make-ACT-IRR ART.NH   2SG-mask-IRR   3NH-**be_like**   ART.NH 1SG-face
'Make a mask that looks like my face.' {text8.037}

(28) ty-uuna   vino=ri'i   eto   attaji   s-mu'i=yo   su   'seno
3-beautiful fine_fabric=IPFV ART.NH fabric   3F-dress=FUT   ART.F   woman
te   to   piesta, t(a)-a-**kti**   'chochu Trinra-m'i.
3NH:PREP ART.NH festival 3NH-IRR-**be_like** future   Trinidad-CLF:environment
'The fine fabric is nice, the fabric used for the dresses of the women for the festivals, like the coming holiday of Trinidad.' {texte25.103}

Second, there are two examples of *kuti* (with the intensifier -*giene*) used with a non-specified third person prefix, as normally found on an intransitive verb. In these examples, there is a topic shift, as in (29), and it is less clearly two particular entities that are being presented as similar. The historical source actually also provides one example where Old Mojeño *kuti* takes the non-specified third person prefix *ti-* and is translated as a preposition:[7] *ticuti* 'Sp. assi como' (Marbán 1702: 147).

(29) ene eto na-ko'chopo ene t-**kuti**-giene   to   t-giwo
and 3NH 3PL-resent   and   3-**be_like**-INTENS   ART.NH   3-rain

ta-yuuti-ko   sache t-giwo   aa   t-giw-tara.
3NH-complete-ACT day   3-rain   ah   3-rain-DESP
[Context: About people who complain about sunless weather]. 'And they are resenting it (the bad weather), so for example (lit. it's like) when it rains the whole day: "ah, it is raining like hell".' {text25.160}

Third, there are ten examples where *kuti* must be analysed as a predicate (for lack of any other predicate in the clause), even though it lacks a person prefix as in (30) to (33). This analysis as a predicate accounts for the presence of TAME morphology and the plural marker on the preposition *kuti* in (31) and (32). In all respects but the absence of a person prefix, this construction is similar with that involving *kuti* as a verbal predicate. The comparee precedes *kuti*; the standard follows it, and is, in some cases like (31), introduced by the preposition *te*. The parameter can be expressed as an adjunct noun phrase, like *to taep'a* in (30). The flexibility of *kuti* in terms of presence and selection of a person prefix (cf. example (29) with *t(i)-* above) is remarkable, because no other verbal predicate ever shows without a person prefix. The instability of the person prefix on *kuti*

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[7] It is important to note that the translations given in Marbán's 1702 dictionary are not to be trusted in terms of grammatical analysis. For example, Old Mojeño verbal forms cited with a first person marker are usually translated with a Spanish infinitival verb form.

provides a missing link for the deletion of the person prefix in the process of its grammaticalisation into a preposition.

(30) ene   eto   to   na-sapriy'e   eno
      and   3NH   ART.NH   3PL-cigar   3PL
      kut=chujch=eji   waka-echko-pa   to   ta-ep'a.
      like-RESTR-RPT   cow-excrement-CLF:mass   ART.NH   3NH-smell
      'And their cigars were smelling just like cow dung.' (lit. And their cigars were just like cow dung the smell) {text30.087}

(31) **kut**=po   te   v-enrijí=yore.
      like=PFV   3NH:PREP   1PL-bait=FUT
      '(the meat that we prepared as travel food, cooked and minced) it looked like fishing bait' {texte25.049}

(32) **kuti**-on=ri'i   charusi.
      like-PL=IPFV   bird.sp
      'They (the young men) look like birds (with their hair sticking out because of gel)' {text29.038}

(33) j-ma-ni   na-ejare-cho   ta-chicha-ra-gra   o   eto-puka j-ma
      DEM-NH.PL-PROX   3PL-name-VBZ   3NH-son-?-DIM   or   3NH-SPEC DEM-NH.PL
      kuti   ta-ejgi   to   kjiure.
      like   3NH-tail   ART.NH   crocodile
      [Context: talking about part of a plant] 'These are called shoots or it could be what looks like crocodile tail.'{text30.027}[8]

To sum up, the non-canonical attestations of the similarity predicate presented in this section provide some indications on how the predicate *kuti* may have grammaticalised as a preposition. First, the examples of *kuti* as a predicate that does not function as the main predicate of the sentence provide a bridging context for its functional reinterpretation as a preposition. If the translation of *ticuti* in Marbán's (1702) dictionary is correct, this reinterpretation may have already started at that point in time. Second, examples of the predicate *kuti* with either the non-specified third person *ti-* (rather than one of the semantically specified third person prefixes) or without a prefix show the instability of the person prefix on this root. According to Olza et al. (2002: 187), in Ignaciano, the closest extant variety of Mojeño, the third person subject prefix *ti-* can be elided before a consonant. The instability of the prefix on the predicate *kuti* may have facilitated its grammaticalisation into a preposition.

3. THE SIMILATIVE ROOT *KUTI* BEYOND THE CLAUSE: EXPRESSING SIMILARITY BETWEEN TWO SITUATIONS

The root *kuti* has extended its functions beyond the clause. It serves the function of subordinator in complex sentences (3.1), and that of epistemic marker in discourse (3.2). In these uses, it still expresses similarity, but between two situations rather than two entities.

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[8] In (33), *kuti* is directly preceded by a determiner. It is the predicate of a relative clause in which relativisation is only marked by the presence of a determiner.

3.1. Kuti *used as a subordinator*

In six examples in my corpus, *kuti* differs from the verb *kuti* 'be like' in not taking a person prefix and from the preposition *kuti* 'like' in introducing a clause rather than a noun phrase. It can be considered as an emerging subordinator linking two clauses, thus expressing the similarity between two situations as in (34) and (35).

(34) esu   p-su-ka   'seno   p-yeno=yore   p-echpojri-i=yore
      PRO.F DEM-F.SG-PROX woman 2SG-wife=FUT   2SG-take_care-PLURACT=FUT
      kuti s-itswo=yre   esu   p-pórape   p-yeno.
      as_if 3F-change=FUT PRO.F   2SG-brother 2SG-wife
      'This woman will be your wife, you will take care of her, as if she was becoming your older sister, your wife.' {text19.123}

(35) ta-ke=pripo   to   yusa t-omuire
      3NH-be_so=PROG.GRAD ART.NH   owl 3NH-also
      kuti   oni   ta-ponojo-k=poo'i.
      as_if thus 3NH-chase-ACT=CONC.MOT.IPFV
      'The owl arrived as if it was chased.' (lit. as if it was chasing it) {text18.040}

These two clauses are the comparee and the standard, and the parameter is to be interpreted in context (Table 6). The standard is either a real or a fictive situation, and is sometimes marked as irrealis. Comparison to a fictive situation is labeled the 'as if' function by Fortescue (2010).

Table 6. Subordinating use of *kuti*

comparee	clause 1
marker of similarity	subordinator *kuti*
standard	clause 2
parameter	context

It is for now unclear whether the subordinating use has arisen as an extension of the preposition *kuti*, a common type of polycategoriality (Rose 2006), or through a grammaticalisation path of the similative predicate, parallel to that resulting in the preposition. The first path is supported by (36), where the second clause is nominalised by the preposed determiner. The second path is supported by (37), where *kuti* retains person markers (and the standard is introduced with a preposition).[9]

(36) Najina,   **kut**=ri'i=ji   to   m-chicha-re-wokow=ri'i
      NEG.EXI.H.PL **as_if**=IPFV=RPT ART.NH   PRIV-son-POSS-1PL=IPFV
      te   p-jo   v-ye'e   seguro.
      3NH:PREP   DEM-NH.SG 1PL-GPN   insurance
      [Context: talking about her children not being covered by their insurance]
      'None of them, it is as if we had never had children on our insurance.' {text37.058}

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[9] This subordinating use of *kuti* is reminiscent of the grammaticalisation of the subordinator *tajicho* 'because' from the verb *jicho* 'to make' with a non-human person prefix *ta-*.

(37)   w-a-tpii=po   onogi, t-a-**kti**=richu
       1PL-IRR-go straight=PFV there   3NH-IRR-**be_like**=RESTR
       te   to   vi-uch-ko=po.
       3NH:PREP   to   ART.NH 1PL-go_out-ACT=PFV
       [after a flood] '(when our houses have dried, we will go back), we will go
       there directly, just like we left (without help, by our own means)' (lit. we will
       go there directly, it will be just like when we came out) {text23.015-23.016}

3.2. Kuti *expressing epistemicity*

Finally, my corpus contains nine examples with a sentence-initial use of *kuti*,
found primarily in descriptions made in direct speech, or in descriptions of
stimuli as in (41). The comparee is left implicit: it is the state of affairs referred
to, found either in the speech act situation or in the stimuli to be described. The
standard is the propositional content of the clause following *kuti*. In these
examples, *kuti* is used to suggest a description that is possibly true for the state of
affairs to be described, based on sensory evidence (visual or auditive as in (40)).
This sentence-initial use of *kuti* therefore has an epistemic reading: it contributes
to the expression of the speaker's subjectivity, namely the likelihood that the
state of affairs expressed by the clause is true. *Kuti* is then translated as 'it seems,
it looks as if/like', in (38) to (41). The sentences would be grammatical if *kuti*
was omitted, and have the same propositional content, but then they would be
read as non-modified assertions.

(38)   ene   to   ma-dejkuvri-k-'o=yre=e'i   eto   to   'iyo
       and   ART.NH 3M-discover-CLF:inside-ACT=FUT=PFV 3NH   ART.NH monkey

       "**kuti**   no-kñ-ojo-o'i   'chani-ono te   p-ju-ena   m-peno…"
       it_seems H.PL-NVIS-EXI-IPFV   person-PL 3NH:PREP DEM-NH.SG-DIST 1SG-house
       'And he was going to discover him inside, the monkey (said): "it seems there
       is someone in my house".' {text18.025}

(39)   tajina   wo   une-na,   **kut**-chujcha=eji   'yoru.
       NEG.EXI.NH   NEG   water-IRR   **it_seems**-RESTR=RPT   fog
       [Context: describing a lake] 'There was no water, it seemed there was only
       fog.' {text24.119}

(40)   **kut**-chujcha   no-kro-po   'chane?
       it_seems-RESTR   H.PL-POT.LOC-MOT.PRES   person
       [Context: when hearing a noise outside] 'It seems someone is coming.'
       {text35.037}

(41)   t-etere-ko   **kuti**-m'i   ta-jóra-cho   te   to   ma-siri.
       3-jump-ACT   **it_seems**-CLF.looks 3NH-wound-VZ 3NH:PREP ART.NH 3M-nose
       'It (a rat) jumped, it looks like it hurt (the boy) on the nose.' {text18.025}

In this construction, schematised in Table 7, *kuti* can be analysed as a
sentence-initial epistemic marker. If *kuti* was to be analysed as a non-verbal
predicate in this construction, then its subject would always be either impersonal
or anaphoric, and its object would be whatever follows *kuti*.

Table 7. Epistemic use of *kuti*

comparee	state of affairs in the speech act situation, or in the stimuli
marker of similarity	sentence-initial epistemic marker *kuti*
standard	clause
parameter	none

Examples (42) and (43), where the standard is expressed as an NP or a prepositional phrase introduced by *te*, actually constitute a bridging context between this supposedly original predicative use of the preposition *kuti* with some epistemic interpretation and the epistemic use of *kuti* sentence-initially.

(42) **kuti** to t-ko-oyo-k-ovi, como será?
like ART.NH 3-CAUS-be_scared-ACT-1PL how can it be
[Context: about being recorded] 'It seems it scared us, how can that be?'
{text28.073}

(43) takepo ty-uch-ji-k=po to kjowo,
after 3-go_out-CLF:mass-ACT=PFV ART.NH deer
ene **kuti** te to ta-yooko=pripo ma 'moperu.
and **like** 3NH:PREP ART.NH 3NH-carry=PROG.GRAD ART.M boy
'Afterwards the deer went out (from the woods) and now it looks like it's carrying the boy.' (Sp. Después salió el ciervo y como que lo llevó alzandolo al niño) {text11.027}

The epistemic value of *kuti* is reinforced by the use of the demonstratives *nokñi* and *nokro* as existential predicates in (38) and (40), and of the classifier *-m(u)'i* in (41). Demonstratives formed with *-kñi* are used for entities that the speaker localises via non-visual evidence, but feels that this evidence is reliable enough to assert their localisation. Demonstratives in *-kro* are also used for entities for which localisation the speaker has non-visual evidence, and for which the evidence is not reliable enough to strongly assert their localisation (see Rose 2017a for a description of the epistemic values of Mojeño Trinitario demonstratives). The classifier *-mu'i* generally conveys the concept of the 'environment' (spatial or temporal), and sometimes more specifically refers to the 'looks' of a referent.

In examples (38) to (41), *kuti* has gained an epistemic meaning and functions as a modal particle. It has undergone pragmaticalisation, i.e. grammaticalisation resulting in discourse markers or particles, and this through a semantic process of subjectification, by which its meaning has become increasingly based on the speaker's subjective attitude toward the proposition (see Diewald 2011 for definitions of pragmaticalization and subjectification). In Spanish, the impersonal use of the similative verb *parecer* has an "epistemic perceptual commitment" reading (Fernández de Castro 1999: 197-199). In French, the similarity marker *comme* shows a modal adverb use in sentences as in *il grimpait comme magiquement* (he was climbing as though (lit. like) magically), where *comme* expresses an approximation that could be translated as 'almost' and lessens the

argumentative force of the statement (Moline 1996). It is possible that the Spanish epistemic use of *parecer* has provided a model for the parallel pragmaticalisation of the Mojeño Trinitario similative verb.

4. CONCLUSION

The primary contribution of this research is that the expression of similarity is much more central in Mojeño Trinitario than the expression of comparison of equality. It may even be the case that there is no specific construction for the expression of equality in this language, while the expression of similarity is frequent and diverse. Similarity is always expressed with the root *kuti*.

The second contribution lies in the methodology used to solve the descriptive puzzle of the various forms and functions of *kuti*. It has risen to the challenge of describing 73 textual attestations showing some shared features but also considerable variation in form and function. To summarise, the root *kuti* is used in five different constructions that share the following features:

   i.   the similarity marker contains the form *kuti*;
   ii.   the comparee precedes the similarity marker;
   iii.   the standard follows the similarity marker;
   iv.   the preposition *te* is sometimes used as a standard marker;
   v.   the parameter (if any) is optionally expressed. It can be either
           interpreted from the surrounding text or be explicitly expressed in an
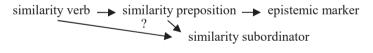   adjunct NP, often made off a nominalized verb.

This chapter has demonstrated a systematic methodological approach to the description of the versatile root *kuti*, used in different parts of speech, with different forms, and with many examples being ambiguous in terms of analysis. Each occurrence of *kuti* has been classified as belonging to one of five similative constructions, that vary in terms of the syntactic nature and function of the comparee and the standard, and of the morphosyntactic properties of the similarity marker (Table 8). The form of the similative words involving *kuti* essentially varies in terms of presence/absence of a person prefix, and selection of a third person prefix between either the non-specified third person prefix *ti-* or one of the set of semantically specified third person prefix (see Table 1 for the paradigm). The form *kuti* is analysed as belonging to different parts of speech depending on the construction: verb root, preposition, subordinator, and epistemic marker. It is also found as the first root in a verb compound, a construction that is not accounted for in Haspelmath et al.'s (2017) typology of the expression of similarity. In this construction, the similarity marker and the parameter are the two verbal formatives of a verb compound (see Section 2.2). To the five constructions presented in Table 8, one must add non-canonical forms of the predicative function of *kuti* described in Section 2.4.

Table 8. Constructions involving the similative root *kuti* in Mojeño Trinitario

Function	Comparee	Standard	Person prefix	Parts of speech	Textual examples (/73)	Section
Similarity between two entities	A (NP or person prefix)	O (NP, person suffix, or adverb)	present	verb	21	2.1
	A (NP or person prefix)	O (NP, person suffix)	present	V1 in a verb compound	1	2.2
	NP or person prefix	NP	absent	preposition	21	2.3
Similarity between two situations	clause	clause	absent	subordinator	6	3.1
	state of affairs in the context	clause	absent	epistemic marker	9	3.2

The third contribution of this chapter is a diagnosis of the diachronic development of the domain of similarity in Mojeño. Contemporary Mojeño Trinitario shows a polycategorial root *kuti* (which functions as a verb, a preposition, a subordinator, and an epistemic marker) where Old Mojeño had only a verb *kuti* 'be like' (Marbán 1702). It is therefore obvious that the tentacles of *kuti* spread out from its original function of verb of similarity (Figure 1). The three other categories of preposition of similarity, subordinator and epistemic marker are emerging categories. The large number of non-canonical uses (17/73) points to this as an on-going change. It is very likely that this predicate has started to grammaticalise into a preposition, and that its use as subordinator has also emerged, from either the predicate or the preposition. Pragmaticalisation has then led to its emergent use as an epistemic marker.

Figure 1. Likely grammaticalisation paths of *kuti*

The possible grammaticalisation paths that *kuti* may have followed are already accounted for in the literature. Verbs may develop into adpositions and subordinators (Heine & Kuteva 2007: 71, 81) and examples involving verbs expressing similarity are attested (Heine & Kuteva 2002: 258; Lord 1993: 151 sqq.). Prepositions can also develop into subordinators (Rose 2006; Harris & Campbell 1995). Finally, similarity markers can be used at the discourse level (cf. the quotative use of 'like' in English), and more specifically as epistemic markers (Fortescue 2010; Pakendorf, this volume). In all of these uses, *kuti* preserves its core meaning of similarity, as found in the encoding of comparison, analogy, or approximation. It is intrinsically associated with what Fortescue (2010) calls the "conceptual category" of similitude.

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