

Comparative constructions in Guajiro/Wayuunaiki*

Construcciones comparativas en guajiro/wayuunaik

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ABSTRACT

We describe comparative structures like *Müliashi ma'i Luuka nuulia Kamiirü* 'Lucas is poorer than Camilo' in Guajiro/Wayuunaiki within a typological approach. Dixon (2004) proposes a prototypical comparative scheme using the notions of (in the English translation): COMPAREE *Lucas*, STANDARD OF COMPARISON *Camilo*, PROPERTY or PARAMETER (*is*) *handsome*, INDEX *-er* and MARK *than*. In the basic comparative construction of Guajiro, the PARAMETER is commonly a stative verb (and less frequently active verbs and adverbs) with the COMPAREE as subject. Although the INDEX can be zero, its presence frequently ensures a comparative reading with active verbs, where it can even have two exponents (in the verbal morphology and as an adverb). The INDEX is thus a discontinuous property with several exponents, one of which may even be suffixed to the MARK. The direct object can be the COMPAREE, while another object is the STANDARD. The subjective conjugation seems to be employed more often than the objective conjugation in comparative structures. The comparison of equality requires a biclausal construction where the PARAMETER is expressed as the verb of a clause with the COMPAREE as subject, and the verb *maa* heading a second clause with the STANDARD as subject. The comparison of inequality is formed by simple negation of the predicate. The expression of superlativity uses three strategies: a comparative construction with the STANDARD specified as a large/total set, a cleft construction, or the mere absence of the STANDARD but presence of INDEX (for absolute superlatives). When comparing two PARAMETERS in one PARTICIPANT, the INDEX is suffixed to the MARK. Finally, we examine correlative comparisons.

Key words: Comparison, comparative, superlative, typology, Arawak languages.

RESUMEN

Se describen las estructuras comparativas como *Müliashi ma'i Luuka nuulia Kamiirü* 'Lucas es más pobre que Camilo' en guajiro/wayuunaiki dentro de un acercamiento tipológico. Dixon (2004) propone un esquema comparativo prototípico que utiliza las nociones de (en la traducción

española): COMPARADO *Lucas*, ESTÁNDAR DE COMPARACIÓN *Camilo*, PROPIEDAD o PARÁMETRO (*es*) *pobre*, ÍNDICE *más* y MARCA *que*. En la construcción comparativa básica del guajiro, el PARÁMETRO es comúnmente un verbo estativo (menos frecuentemente verbos activos y adverbios) con el COMPARADO como sujeto: Aunque el ÍNDICE puede ser cero, frecuentemente su presencia asegura una lectura comparativa con verbos activos, donde puede incluso tener dos exponentes (en la morfología verbal y como adverbio). El ÍNDICE es así una propiedad discontinua con varios exponentes, pudiéndose sufixar a la MARCA. El objeto directo puede ser el COMPARADO, siendo otro objeto el ESTÁNDAR. La conjugación subjetiva parece emplearse más a menudo que la conjugación objetiva en estructuras de comparación. La comparación de igualdad utiliza una construcción biclausular donde el PARÁMETRO se expresa como verbo de una cláusula cuyo sujeto es el COMPARADO, con el verbo *maa* encabezando una segunda cláusula cuyo sujeto es el ESTÁNDAR, formándose la comparación de desigualdad mediante simple negación del predicado. Para expresar superlatividad se usan tres estrategias: una construcción comparativa con el ESTÁNDAR especificado como conjunto grande/total, una construcción hendida, o la simple ausencia de el ESTÁNDAR pero presencia de el ÍNDICE (superlativos absolutos). Al compararse dos PARÁMETROS en un PARTICIPANTE, el ÍNDICE se sufixa a la MARCA. Finalmente examinamos las comparaciones correlativas.

Palabras clave: Comparación, comparativo, superlativo, tipología, lenguas arahuacas.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Guajiro or Wayuunaiki is an Arawak language spoken by about 400,000 people in the northernmost tip of South America, in Venezuela and Colombia. The Arawak language family is one of the most widespread groups in South America, having members as far as Brazil and Peru. Within the family, Guajiro is closely related to near-extinct Paraujano/Añú, and a little less closely related to Lokono (or Arawak proper). Although it is also related to the Arawakan languages of the Río Negro basin (Baniwa, Piapoko, Yavitero, Warekena, Kurripako, Baré, etc.), the differences in morphological and syntactic structures are striking. Some of these differences are probably due to areally diffused patterns (Cf Aikhenwald 1999, 2002) in these languages. Guajiro has various dialects, with almost non-existent problems of mutual intelligibility. The Guajiro people seem to have had great mobility in the past, and this mobility is increasing due to migration to urban centres like Maracaibo. The main dialect division is between Abajero and Arribero dialects, the main difference being the shape of the ubiquitous 3rd person feminine prefix (*sü-* versus *jü-*), as well as the corresponding pronoun (*shia* versus *jia*). There are also minor differences in the vocabulary. The traditional Guajiro society has had a stratified, pastoralist backbone for around five centuries (from cattle originally stolen from the Spaniards). Wealth is traditionally measured on the basis of the numbers of heads of cattle in the herds, and cattle, along with precious and semi-precious stones, has been used to make payments for offence compensation and brides (1).

2. TYPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISATION

Guajiro is a polysynthetic language with head-marking morphology. Guajiro is agglutinating with little fusion, but in most cases such ‘fusion’ seems to be explainable in terms of transparent phonological processes. It only has 11 prefixes. Of these, 7 are person/number/gender prefixes which can be used with active verbs, nouns and prepositions: *ta-ya’lajü-in* ‘I bought it’, *ta-japiü* ‘my hand’, *ta-maa* ‘with me’. They also appear in personal pronouns *ta-ya* ‘I/me’. These prefixes

always cross-reference the object of a preposition in a prepositional phrase: *nii-maa Luuka* ‘with Lucas’, and the possessor in a possessive noun phrase: *nii-tiina Luuka* ‘Lucas’ arm’. There is also 1 person/number/gender prefix *a-* used for zero or unspecified. There are 2 productive derivational prefixes *ka-* ‘ATTRIBUTIVE’ and *ma-* ‘NEGATIVE’ which are mainly used to derive (positive and negative) possessive verbs from nominal themes, and a fossilised one *pa-* ‘DUAL’. There are dozens of suffixes. The verb can exhibit a very particularly complex morphological structure, where one or more of the following categories can be represented: arguments, tense, valency (passive, causative), modality, and an impressive array of other categories such as desiderative, collaborative, permansive, untimely, counter-expectancy, immediacy, here/there, celerity, excess, additional, augmentative, diminutive, fiction, transient, etc. Due to this complexity, in Guajiro any transitive verb can literally have thousands of forms, and very complex forms are not rare. Guajiro verbs can also have dozens of infinitives, which are not just citation forms, based on themes of increasing complexity.

The open classes are nouns and verbs. Loanwords are generally adapted to the phonology and morphology of the language. In Guajiro there does not seem to be a class of adjectives. There are around 6 adjective-like words (*laülaa* ‘old’, *mulo’u* ‘big’, etc.) that do not take a verbal suffix when used in the general tense, but which take normal verbal morphology elsewhere. There are no verbless clause complements. Nouns used in the predicative slot behave as stative verbs and take all the appropriate elements of verbal morphology. There is no copula, although there is a verb *eewaa* ‘be, exist’ which behaves like any other stative verb and has no special functions in the language. As there is no copula, no copula complement structure is possible.

Nouns are divided into two neat classes: alienable nouns and inalienable nouns. The latter are basically body-parts and kinship terms, as well as some cultural items and most deverbal nouns. They are always possessed and do not need additional morphology to indicate possession other than the indication of the possessor (even in an indefinite form): *tatiina* /ta-tüna/ [1S-arm] ‘my arm’. With alienable nouns the possessor is also indicated with the person/number/gender prefixes, but an additional lexically-specified possessive suffix *-se* ∞ *-in* ∞ *-ya*, the first being the most productive: *tachajaruutase* /ta-chajaruuta-se/ [1S-machete-POSS] ‘my machete’. There is not an absolute or unpossessed form for inalienable nouns, as in other Arawak languages. However, Guajiro has developed a very singular procedure for indicating impersonal/indefinite possession, which is parallel to the formation of infinitives for verbs, with the root preceded by the indefinite prefix: *a-japü-ü* ‘(someone’s) arm’.

Grammatical relations are marked by means of one set of 7 person/number/gender prefixes (*ta-* 1S, *pü-* 2S, *nü-* 3SM, *jü-/sü-* 3SF, *wa-* 1P, *jü-/ja-* 2P, and *na-* 3P) or by means of several sets (used according to tense/aspect) of 3 gender/number suffixes (for example: *-shi* M, *-sü* F, *-shii* P for the general tense). Verbs can be divided into two neat classes: active verbs and stative verbs. The former are always prefixed, the latter are never prefixed. This means that stative verbs cannot participate in constructions where the prefixes are required. All stative verbs are intransitive and can be equated with inaccusative predicates. Active verbs can be further divided into transitive and intransitive verbs. But active intransitive verbs are easily transitivised through causativisation or incorporation. It is important to stress that the same verbal roots can show up in stative, active intransitives and active transitive verbs.

There are two conjugations: subjective and objective. The subjective conjugation can be used with all types of verbs (stative, active intransitive and active transitive), in both transitive or intransitive clauses. This conjugation only marks the subject, be it A, or S with one of the gender number suffixes in agreement with it: *Atunkeechi Piipa*. ‘Pipo will sleep’; *Aya’lajeechi Piipa*

awarianta. ‘Pipo will buy booze’. The objective conjugation behaves more or less as in Finno-Ugric languages, as it requires that the object be specific. In this latter conjugation, the prefix will refer to A and the suffix will refer to O: *Jüya’lajeechi [Tareesa]_A [chi kaa’ulakai]_O*. ‘Teresa will buy the goat’.

The order of the clause constituents is basically one in which the verb is initial, while the order of the other constituents varies: VS, VAO, VOA. In pragmatically-marked contexts, both S and A, as well as O, can be fronted, with the corresponding intonational break. However, it seems to be the case that due to the influence of Spanish, the rigid verb-initial pattern is losing its obligatoriness.

3. THE PROTOTYPICAL COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTION

For the description of Guajiro comparatives, we shall be following the model suggested by Bob Dixon, who has presented a prototypical comparative scheme (Dixon, 2004:2-3) in which there are Participants (the Comparee and the Standard of Comparison), a Property or Parameter, an Index and a Mark, as illustrated in [01]:

[01] COMPAREE	INDEX	PARAMETER	MARKS	TANDARD
John	is more	handsome	than	Felix

3.1. The Parameter

Following Dixon’s classification of schemes of comparison, Guajiro has a basic Type A2 comparative construction. The properties expressed in some languages by adjectives are expressed in Guajiro by words going into the same slot as verbs (2). In most cases, the PARAMETER is a stative verb [02]. This stative verb, in many respects, behaves in the same way as any active verb in a non-comparative construction [03].

Verb		Subject	Oblique	
[02] PARAMETER	INDEX	COMPAREE	MARK	STANDARD
Müliashi	∅	Luuka	nuulia	Kamiirü.
mülia-shi		Luuka	nü-ulia	Kamiirü
poor –M		Lucas	3M-from	Camilo
Lucas is poorer than Camilo.				

Verb	Subject	Oblique	
[03] Ayonnajüshi	Luuka	sümaa	tawala.
a-yonnaja-shi	Luuka	sü-maa	ta-wala
0-dance -M	Lucas	3F-with	1S-sibling
Lucas dances with my sister.			

They exhibit almost all the morphological and syntactic properties of verbs: they will be clause-initial, exhibit all the inflection as in [04], be negated in the same fashion [05], etc.

[04] Mülieechi Luuka nuulia Kamiirü.
 mülia-ee-chi Luuka nü-ulia Kamiirü
 poor –FU-M Luuka 3M-from Camilo

Lucas will be poorer than Camilo.

[05] Nnojoleechi müliain Luuka nuulia Kamiirü.
 nnojolu-ee-chi mülia-in Luuka nü-ulia Kamiirü
 not.be –FU-M poor –CS Lucas 3M-from Camilo

Lucas will not be poorer than Camilo.

When pragmatic conditions arise, as the COMPAREE is the subject, it can be fronted [06] and given the appropriate intonational contour.

[06] COMPAREE ↑ PARAMETER INDEX MARK STANDARD
 Wayuukai chii, müliashi Ø nuulia Kamiirü.
 wayuu -ka-li chi mülia-shi nü-ulia Kamiirü
 person-SP-M DEM.M poor -M 3M-from Camilo

As for this man, he is poorer than Camilo.

It is not clear whether we should postulate verbless clause complements, as the very few unsuffixed ‘adjectives’ like *laülaa* ‘old’, *mulo’u* ‘big’, etc., as well as nouns in the predicative slot, show up without gender/number suffixes only in the general (present/past) tense, as seen in [07-08]. In the remaining tenses, all other elements of morphology suitable for stative verbs will be present [09].

[07] Laülaa taya nuulia Luuka.
 laülaa taya nü-ulia Luuka
 old I 3M-from Lucas

I am older than Lucas.

[08] Wayuu ma’i Kamiirü juulia jiakana.
 wayuu ma’i Kamiirü jü-ulia jia-ka-na
 person much Camilo 2P-from ye -SP-PL

Camilo is more Guajiro than you all.

[09] Laülaajeechi Kamiirü juulia Jusepiina.

laülaa-ee-chi Kamiirü jü-ulia Jusepiina

old -FU-M Camilo 3F-from Josefina

Camilo will be older than Josefina.

3.2. The Index

The INDEX in Guajiro comparative constructions can be zero. But although optional, it is frequent and sometimes crucial when choosing between a comparative and a non-comparative reading. It can even be double, appearing as a modifier within the predicate, both in the morphological structure of the verb (the suffix *-lee* ~ *-le'e* 'TOTALLY') and as the independent adverb *ma'i* ~ *ma'in* 'much/very', as in [10]. Other elements, such as emphatic *-ya* can accompany the predicate in the verb morphology [11]. It is probably better to analyse the index as a discontinuous property having several exponents, rather than as a modifier within the predicate. In fact, in Guajiro it can even be suffixed to the MARK [12].

[10] PARAMETER+INDEX¹ INDEX² COMPAREE MARK STANDARD

Mülialeeshi ma'i Luuka nuulia Kamiirü.

mülia-lee-shi ma'i Luuka nü-ulia Kamiirü

poor -TOT-M much Lucas 3M-from Kamiirü

Lucas is poorer than Camilo.

[11] PARAMETER+INDEX¹ INDEX² COMPAREE MARK STANDARD

Mulo'ule'eya ma'i Luuka nuulia Kamiirü.

mulo'u-lee-ya ma'i Luuka nü-ulia Kamiirü

bog -TOT-EMP ma'i Lucas 3M-from Camilo

Lucas is bigger than Camilo.

[12] PARAMETER INDEX¹ COMPAREE MARK+INDEX² STANDARD

Ayurulaashi ma'i Luuka nuuliale'eya chi nuwalakai.

a-yurulaa-shi ma'i Luuka nü-ulia-lee-ya chi nü-wala -ka-li

0-grow -M much Luuka 3M-from-TOT-EMP DEM.M 3M-sibling-SP-M

Lucas has grown up more than his brother.

This suffix *-lee* 'TOTALLY' is not restricted to this function, as it shows in a number of non-comparative structures [13-15] to indicate completeness (full achievement) of the predicate.

[13] Atunkaleejeenaya waya piichipa'amüin.

a-tunka-lee-ee-na-ya waya piichi-pa'a-müin
0-sleep-TOT-FU-PL-EMP we house -area-to(wards)

We will sleep at home finally.

[14] Wattaleeshia o'unuin atpanaakai.
watta -lee-shi-ya a-'una-in atpanaa-ka-li
distant-TOT-M -EMP 0-go-CS rabbit -SP-M

The rabbit went away completely.

[15] O'unusu wayuukoluirua; taya makataleeka alijunama'ana.
a-'una-sü wayuu -ka-lü-irua taya makata-lee-ka alijuna-ma'ana
0-go-F person-SP-F -PLU I remain-TOT-SP creole -among

The Guajiros went away; it was me the one who remained among creoles wholly.

This adverb *ma'i* 'much/very' is also frequent in non-comparative structures [19]. One of the most common uses of *ma'i* is that of reinforcing of the augmentative suffix—*shaana*, which is commonly attached to verbs of all types [17-19].

[16] Kamaneesü **ma'in** tü talüinyuukolu.
ka-manee -sü ma'in tü ta-lüinyuu-ka-lü
AT-kindness-F much DEM.F 1S-sister.in.law-SP-F

My sister-in-law is very kind.

[17] Jashichishaanashi **ma'in** jümüin samutkoo.
jashichi-shaana-shi ma'in jü-müin samulu -ka-lu
angry-AUGMEN-M much 3F-to(wards) vulture-SP-F

He was indeed very angry with the vulture.

[18] Talatashaanashi taya aka te'rüichipain pia.
talata-shaana-shi taya aka ta-'ra-i-chi-pa -in pia
happy-AUGMEN-M I as 1S-see-I-M-TER-CS you

I am very happy indeed because I have just seen you.

- [19] Ni'rashaanain piichikalü jümaa lumakalü.
nü-'ra-shaana-ni piichi-ka-lü jü-maa luma-ka-lü
3M-see-AUGMEN-CS house-SP-F 3F-with shelter-SP-F

He saw the house and the shelter very well.

3.3. The Mark

The STANDARD alongside its MARK constitutes a prepositional phrase in which the preposition *ouliaa* 'from' has a person/number/(gender) prefix which agrees with the following NP if there is any: 1S *toulia*, 2S *puulia*, 3M *nuulia*, 3F *suulia/juulia*, 1P *woulia*, 2P *joulia/juulia*, 3P *noulia*. But the NP, that is, the STANDARD, need not be expressed by means of a full NP, as in [20]. However, the STANDARD is always present in this prefix (even if it takes the infinitive form *ouliaa* 'from/than someone'). In this case, STANDARD and MARK can be interpreted as being amalgamated in the same word.

- [20] PARAMETER INDEX COMPAREE STANDARD+ MARK

Mülialeeshi ma'i Luuka nuulia.
mülia-lee-shi ma'i Luuka nü-ulia
poor –TOT-M much Lucas 3M-from

Lucas is poorer than him.

This preposition is amply used outside the comparative construction, where *ouliaa* can have a wide range of meanings mostly within the ablative range [21-23] (3).

- [21] Nnojoishi yalejeeyaaain **juulia** ja'waliirua.
nnojolu-shi yala-jee-yaa-ni jü-ulia ja'wali-irua
not.be -M there-from-IRR-CS 3F-from night-PLDR

He didn't go away from his wife during the nights.

- [22] Jamüshi pu'luwajakalaka kaa'ulakana **juulia** Jusepiina?
jama-shi pü-'luwaja-kalaka kaa'ula-ka-na jü-ulia Jusepiina
how-M 2S-steal-CONSEC goat-SP-PL 3F-from Josefina

Why did you steal the goats from Josefina?

- [23] Akanajünüsü **nuulia** Luuka süpüshi tü nünneetshekalü.
a-kanaja-na-sü nü-ulia Luuka sü-püshi tü nü-nneerü-se-ka-lü

0-win -PASS-F 3S-from Lucas 3F-part DEM.F 3S-money -POSS-SP-F

Part of his money was won from Lucas (by someone).

Ouliala can also be used with more idiosyncratic meanings, including a negative meaning of exclusion, in certain contexts [24-26].

[24] Ko'utushi wayuukai **nuulia**.

ko'uta-shi wayuu -ka-li nü-uliala

silent-M person-SP-M 3S-from

The man become quiet before him. (ie He didn't speak to/before him.)

[25] Mojune'e pia, tayeechi washitka **puulia!**

moju-ne'e pia taya-ee-chi washirü-ka pü-uliala

poor-LIMI you I-FU-M rich-SP 2S-from

You just stay poor, I will be me the one to become rich (leaving you behind in poverty)!

[26] Ojo'looichi taya **juulia** ashajaa.

a-jo'laa-i-chi taya jü-uliala a-shajaa

0-cease -I-M I 3F-from 0-write-INF

I have just stopped writing. (I have just desisted from writing.)

These various meanings of *ouliia* can be found alongside the comparative use in [27].

[27] Ma'aka müle'uyuule **toulian**, taka'inraa **ouliälü**,

ma'aka müle'u-yuu-le ta-uliala-n ta-ka'inraa a-ulialü

be.thus big -COL-HYP 1S-from-PR 1S-retreat 0-from-F

If they were bigger than me, I would keep them away,

onjulaashi taya **juulia**.

a-njulaa-shi taya jü-uuliala

0-hide-M I 3F-from

I would hide from them.

One of the most important functions of *ouliia* is that of introducing subordinate final clauses in the negative (like English LEST). In this case, the third person feminine form *suulia/juulia* ‘from it’ is used. When both clauses have the same subject (S1=S2), an infinitive form is used in the subordinate clause [28]. If they have different subjects (S1≠S2), then a subordinating suffix *-in* is used and the verb of the subordinate clause must have a person/number prefix if it is an active verb [29].

[28] Waraitüshi taya waneepia jotpünaa wopukolu,
waraita-shi taya waneepia jü-tpünaa wopu-ka-lü
walk-M I always 3F-border road-SP-F

I always walked along the edge of the road,

juulia e’naa jutuma wayuu.
jü-ulia a-’ra-na-a jü-tuma wayuu
3F-from 0-see-PASS-INF 3F-by person

so as not to be seen by the people. (S1=S2)

[29] Kakulaatsesü juulia jikerojüin mürülü julu’upünaa.
Ka-kulaala-se-sü jü-ulia jü-keroja-in mürülü jü-lu’u-pünaa
AT-fence -POSS-F 3F-from 3F-enter -CS animal 3F-inside-TRANS

It had a fence so that the animals couldn’t get inside. (S1≠S2)

3.4. An Active Verb as Parameter

We have seen that in Guajiro the PARAMETER is normally a stative verb. But the PARAMETER can also be an active, both intransitive [30] and transitive [31].

[30] A’tunkaleeshi ma’in Kamiirü nuulia Luuka.
a-tunka-lee-shi ma’in Kamiirü nu-ulia Luuka
0-slep -TOT-M much Camilo 3M-from Lucas

Camilo slept more than Lucas.

[31] Ekaleeshia ma’in taya jime nuulia Jusee.

a-ka -lee-shi-ya ma'in taya jime nü-ulia Jusee

0-eat-TOT-M-EMP much I fish 3S-from José

I ate more fish than José.

As the preposition *ouliaa* can also have a negative meaning, in certain contexts the construction can be ambiguous between a comparative reading and a non-comparative reading. Thus, the above sentences could also be interpreted as: [30] 'Camilo slept without Lucas./Camilo slept, but Lucas didn't'. and [31] 'I ate fish and left José nothing./I ate fish but José didn't.'

As both verbs proper and adjective-like verbs can function as predicate heads expressing the PARAMETER, the possibility of being the parameter in a comparative construction cannot be used a criterial property for distinguishing between verbs and adjectives as different word classes, as it is in other languages.

However, active verbs, and in particular transitive ones, seem to require the presence of the (single or multiple) expression of the index in order to disambiguate (not fully) in favour of a comparative reading [32]. Moreover, the subjective conjugation seems to be preferred over the objective conjugation for expressing comparison.

[32] Eküsü ma'i Jusepiina nuuliale'eya chi wayuukai.

a-ka -sü ma'i Jusepiina nü-ulia-lee-ya chi wayuu-ka-li

0-eat-F much Josefina 3M-from-TOT-EMP DEM.M person-SP-M

Josefina eats more than the man.

3.5. Comparison with Implicit Standard

We have seen that following Dixon's classification of schemes of comparison, Guajiro has a basic Type A2 comparative construction. But Guajiro also has a Type A2-si comparative construction. In Guajiro the STANDARD need not be stated because it can be implicit in the comparative construction if its identity can be retrieved from information already present in previous clauses in the discourse. The presence of the discontinuous INDEX makes this reading straightforward [33-35].

[33] Analeeshi ma'in liiwurokai chi.

ana-lee-shi ma'in liiwuro-ka-li chi

good-TOT-M much book -SP-M DEM.M

This book is better (than the others we are talking about).

[34] Mulo'ule'eya ma'in tepia.

mulo'u-lee-ya ma'in ta-pia

big –TOT-EMP much 1S-house

My house is bigger (than Camilo’s house).

[35] Cho’ujaashi tamüin wanee ama eekai kakuwaleein **ma’in**.

cho’ujaa -shi ta-müin wanee ama eekai ka-kuwa –lee-in ma’in

necessary-M 1S-for one horse which AT-speed-TOT-CS much

I need a faster horse (than the one I have now).

3.6. A Marginal Type of Comparison

Guajiro also has a marginal Type E comparative construction. This is due to the fact that in Guajiro there is a general, almost unrestricted process of noun/preposition incorporation whereby the head of a possessive noun phrase, the possessee noun [36], or the head of a prepositional phrase, the preposition [37], can be incorporated into the verb. In the first case, we will have cases of the so-called ‘possessor raising’, as the complement of the possessee noun phrase (the possessor left behind) has ascended from constituent of the phrase to constituent of the clause or argument of the verb (as an object, inheriting the grammatical relation of the original phrase), as in [38]. In the second case, we will have cases of the so-called ‘applicative’, as the complement of the prepositional phrase has gone up in the grammatical hierarchy. It was an oblique in an intransitive clause, but now it is the object of a transitive clause (the valency of the verb has increased), as in [39].

[36] [Tachotooin]_{av0} [nukuluutse Luuka]₀.

Ta-chotoo-ni nü-kuluulu-se Luuka

1S-cut-CS 3M-textile-POSS Lucas

I cut Lucas’ fabric.

[37] [Ayonnajüshi]_v [taya]_s [jümaa Jusepiina]_{OBL}.

a-yonnaja-shi taya jü-maa Jusepiina

0-dance -M I 3F-with Josefina

I danced with Josefina.

[38] [Tachotoo akuluutsechi]_{av0} [Luuka]₀.

ta-chotoo a-kuluulu-se-chi Luuka

1S-cut 0-textile-POSS-M Lucas

I cut Lucas’ fabric.

[39] [Tayonnaja **amaalü**]_{av0} [Jusepiina]₀.

ta-yonnaja a-maa-lü Jusepiina

1S-dance 0-with-F Josefina

I danced with Josefina.

Being an unrestricted process, preposition incorporation can also happen in prepositional phrases headed by *ouliaa*. This takes place mainly with active intransitive verbs, which become transitive due this incorporation, as in [41], [43] and [45], related to [40], [42] and [44], respectively. In this case, we would expect that the PARAMETER would be the head of the predicate with the MARK (the incorporated *ouliaa*) being integrated with it. However, in these cases the favourite reading will always be one in which the second term is excluded, rather than a comparative one (“>” = “is the preferred meaning over”):

[40] Awataashi ma’i Jusee nuulia(le’eya) chi ka’lairakai.

a-wataa-shi ma’i Jusee nü-ulia-lee-ya chi ka’laira-ka-li

0-run -M much José 3M-from-TOT-EMP DEM.M tiger-SP-M

José ran more than the tiger.

[41] Nuwataa__ouliachi Jusee chi ka’lairakai.

nü-wataa a-ulia-chi Jusee chi ka’laira-ka-li

3M-run 0-from-M José DEM.M tiger-SP-M

José ran and/but the tiger didn’t. > José ran more than the tiger.

[42] Atunkushii ma’i naya woulia(le’eya).

a-tunka-shii ma’i naya wa-ulia-lee-ya

0-sleep-P much they 1P-from-TOT-EMP

They slept more than us.

[43] Natunka__ouliachii waya.

na-tunka a-ulia-chii waya

3P-sleep 0-from-P we

They slept and/but we didn’t. > They slept more than us.

[44] Ayonnajüshi ma'i taya juulia(le'eya) Jusepiina.
 a-yonnaja-shi ma'i taya jü-ulia-lee-ya Jusepiina
 0-dance -M much I 3F-from-TOT-EMP Jusepiina

I danced more than Josefina.

[45] Tayonnaja__ouliälü Jusepiina.
 ta-yonnaja a-ulia-lü Jusepiina
 1S-dance 0-from-F Jusepiina

I danced and/but Josefina didn't. > I danced more than Josefina.

The reason for this preference of a non-comparative reading may be due to the fact that it is not possible to insert any material between the initial person/number prefix and the closing gender/number suffix when the preposition *ouliaa* (or indeed any other preposition) is incorporated (indicated here by the underscore “__”). This means that it is also not possible to have the expression of the INDEX *ma'i*, which tends to block a non-comparative reading with transitive verbs. This matter needs further investigation.

4. THE BICLAUSAL COMPARISON OF EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY

Guajiro also has a Type F comparative construction, that is, a bi-clausal comparison. In Guajiro three homophonous verbs *maa* exist. The first *maa* is translated as ‘say’, the second *maa* is an untranslatable auxiliary which takes the inflection certain verb themes cannot take, the third *maa* is the stative verb ‘be thus/such/in this manner’. This third verb *maa* is used in various combinations with what appears to be a fossilised form of the preposition *aka* ‘with (INSTRUMENTAL)’ in the expression of comparison of equality. These are bi-clausal constructions because the PARAMETER is expressed as the predicate of a first clause with the COMPAREE as its subject, while the verb *maa* heads the second clause with the STANDARD as its subject, as illustrated in [46]. This construction, used only in what traditional grammars call ‘comparative of equality’, is the inverse of Pilagá (Vidal, 2001:350-352), where there is a verb *ena'am* ‘be like’ which has the COMPAREE as its subject.

[46] PARAMETER INDEX COMPAREE MARK			STANDARD	
Clause 1			Clause 2	
Verb		Subject	Verb	Subject
Käüsishi	ma'in	Luuka	müshi	aka Kamiirü
kaüsi-shi	ma'in	Luuka	ma-shi	aka Kamiirü
fat -M	much	Lucas	be.thus-M as	Camilo

Lucas is as fat as Camilo. (Lucas is fat, Camilo is like this.)

As in the majority of languages, a difference is made in Guajiro between a grammatical construction for ‘more than’ and a grammatical construction for ‘the same as’. For the former, Type A2 is regularly used. For the latter, some form of the stative verb ‘be thus’ is used in various combinations with *aka*. The comparatives where the verb *maa* is used are the so-called ‘comparatives of equality’. This verb *maa* and the erstwhile preposition *aka* are very frequently contracted to *ma’aka* and *müinka*. It deserves to be mentioned that these contracted forms (with *müleka*) are also the ones which are equivalent to *if* in conditional clauses.

[47] Kaüsishi ma’in Luuka **ma’aka** Kamiirü
 kaüsi- ma’in Luuka ma’aka Kamiirü
 shi
 fat-M much Lucas be.thus.as Camilo

Lucas is as fat as Camilo.

However, both parts will recover their independent status if the verb has to be used with tensed forms other than the general tense, or having other suffixes [48]. This verb *maa* also shows up accompanying the coordinating conjunction *oo’ulaka* ‘and’.

[48] Koisü nüto’uta oo’ulaka **müsüya** tü nu’upünaautakalü,
 ka-oli -sü nü-ta’uta oo’ulaka ma -sü-ya tü nü-’upünaauta-ka-lü
 AT-hair-F 3S-skin and be.thus-F-EMP DEM.F 3S-complexion-SP-F

His skin and his complexion were hairy,

mashaanasü aka joi wüchii.
 ma-shaana-sü aka jü-oli wüchii
 Be.thus-AUGMEN-F as 3F-hair bird

very much like the hair (feather) of birds.

Comparatives of inequality are formed by simple negation of the predicate. This negation can be accomplished either with the auxiliary negative verb *nnojoluu* and the main verb receiving the common subordinating suffix *-in* [49, 50], or with derived negative verbs using the prefix *ma-*.

[49] **Nnojoishi** ma’in **mamainain** Luuka müin aka Kamiirü.
 nnojolu-shi ma’in mamaina-in Luuka ma-in aka Kamiirü
 not.be -M much insane -CS Lucas be.thus-CS as Camilo

Lucas is not so insane as Camilo.

[50] Luuka **nnojoishi** ma’in **mulo’usheyuuin** müinka Kamiirü.

Luuka nnojolu-shi ma'in mulo'usheyuu-in müinka Kamiirü

Lucas not.be-M much tall-CS be.thus.as Camilo

Lucas is not so tall as Camilo.

In elicitation and in texts, no examples were found in which an equivalent of 'less' could be pinpointed. All the forms with 'less X than' were given as Type A2 comparatives in which the predicate is a negative one (that is, instead of the STANDARD being 'fast', it is rather 'slow'):

[51] Makuwasai püliikü nuulia ama.

ma-kuwa -sa-li püliikü nu-ulia ama

NG-speed-NA-M donkey 3M-from horse

The donkey is less fast than the horse. (The donkey is slower than the horse).

5. THE SUPERLATIVE

In English, although the comparative and superlative forms seem to belong to the same morphological paradigm (and their analytic versus synthetic shapes appear to be decided by the same phonological restrictions), their syntactic behaviour is different. One of the main elements of the superlative is the inclusion of the definite article in the construction which expresses it. But European languages differ on whether the INDEX in the superlative is the same (Spanish, Italian, French, etc.) or different (English) from the INDEX used in the comparative. It is clear that both constructions are semantically very close, and it is common for languages to have a common construction for both, the standard in the superlative specified as 'all' (Dixon, 2004:25).

Three strategies appear to be in use in Guajiro. One of them, illustrated in [52-54], is just the same comparative construction with the STANDARD somehow specified as a large (perhaps total) universe/set, with the same MARK *ouliia*. This is roughly equivalent to the relative superlative of Romance languages.

[52] Jutpunale'eya Kamiirü **juulia** jupushuwa'a wayuukoluirua.

jutpuna-lee-ya Kamiirü jü-ulia jü-pushuwa'a wayuu -ka-lü-irua

tall-TOT-EMP Camilo 3F-from 3F-totality person-SP-F -PLU

Camilo is the tallest among all the Guajiro. (Camilo is taller than all the Guajiros.)

[53] Anasü pünülia, anasü **suulia** anüliee eekai eein.

Ana-sü pü-nülia ana-sü sü-ulia a-nülia-a eekai ee-in

Good-F 2S-name good-F 3F-from 0-name-INF whatever exist-CS

Your name is good, it is the best name there is.

[54] Pūlashi ma'i Jesucristo **suulia** eekai ein.
 pūla-shi ma'i Jesucristo sü-ulia eekai ee-in
 mighty-M much Jesus-Christ 3F-from whatever exist-CS

Jesus is the most powerful of all.

A second strategy implies a cleft construction. This strategy clearly mirrors the strategies of European languages using the definite article. In Guajiro the article appears as the specifier without gender/number as *-ka* [55, 56], or marked for masculine, feminine and plural as *-ka-i*, *-ka-lü*, *-ka-na*, respectively [57]. This set of three complex forms is known in Guajiro grammars as 'the article' (the feminine form has several variants: *-kalü* ~ *-kat* ~ *-kaa* ~ *-kolu* ~ *-koo*). This strategy can be used for both absolute and relative superlatives.

[55] Nia mulo'usheyuuka ma'in Luuka.
 nia mulo'usheyuu-ka ma'in Luuka
 he tall-SP much Lucas

Lucas is the tallest. (The one who is very tall, that is Lucas.)

[56] Nia nütünajutuka ma'i Luuka, Kamiirü.
 nia nü-tünajutu-ka ma'i Luuka Kamiirü
 he 3M-friend-SP much Lucas Camilo

Camilo is Lucas' best friend. (The one who is Lucas' [best] friend, that is Camilo.)

[57] Jierü anasüchonkaa, jia Tareesa.
 jierü ana -sü-chon-ka-lü jia Tareesa
 woman good-F-DIMI-SP-F she Teresa

Teresa is the most beautiful woman. (The woman who is the pretty one, that's Teresa.)

For relative superlatives, the STANDARD can be specified in terms of spatial relationships, most commonly with the help of prepositions such as *alu'uu* 'inside' [58] and *a'akaa* 'among' [59].

[58] Shiaja'a tü jierü ku'lamiakalü anasüchonkoo ma'in
 shia-ja'a tü jierü ku'lamia-ka-lü ana -sü-chon-ka-lü ma'in
 she -EMPH DEM.F woman yougster-SP-F good-F -DIMI-SP-F much

She is the most beautiful young lady (= She is the beautiful young lady)

sulu'u shipishuwa'a reinokoo.

sü-lu'u sü-pishuwa'a reino-ka-lü

3F-inside 3F-totality kingdom-SP-F

in the whole kingdom.

[59] Kamiirü nia mulo'usheyuukai ma'in na'akajee wayuu nepishuwa'a.

Kamiirü nia mulo'usheyuu-ka-li ma'in na-'aka -jee wayuu na-pishuwa'a

Camilo he tall-SP-M much 3P-among-from person 3P-totality

Camilo is the tallest among all the Guajiro. (Camilo, he is the tall among all Guajiros.)

Finally, when no STANDARD is expressed but an INDEX is present [60], it is common to obtain readings as absolute superlatives.

[60] Jutpanale'eya Luuka.

jutpuna-lee-ya Luuka

tall-TOT-EMP Lucas

Lucas is the tallest.

6. OTHER SCHEMES OF COMPARISON

What can be a parameter in Guajiro? We have seen that the most common case of parameter involves a stative verb with an adjectival-type meaning. However, as seen above in Section 3.4, the other verb types, active intransitives and active transitives, are also attested in this function.

Sometimes the object of a transitive verb can be the COMPAREE with another object (perhaps with some sort of ellipsis assumed) acting as the STANDARD, as in [61].

[61] Te'raajüin niikat Lucas nuulia nüshikai.

ta-'raaja-in nü-i -ka-lü Lucas nü-uulia nü-shi-ka-li

1S-know-CS 3M-mother-SP-F Lucas 3M-from 3M-father-SP-M

I know Lucas' mother more than (I know) her father.

An adverb can also be the parameter, as in [62, 63].

[62] Atunkamaatüshi pia **maalü** woulia.

a-tunka-maata-shi pia maalü wa-ulia

0-sleep-IMMED-M you early 1P-from

You went so sleep earlier than us.

[63] Ekatüjülia taya **palajana** puulia.

a-ka-tüjü-li-ya taya palajana pü-ulia

0-comer-ANTIC-M -EMP I firstly 2S-from

I had already eaten earlier than you.

In all the cases examined thus far, a single property is evaluated in terms of the different degrees it shows in minimally two participants. But there are instances of two properties being compared in terms of the different degrees they show in just one participant. The second property, being the complement of the preposition, exhibits the common suffix *-in* rather than gender/number suffixes. Notice also that in the examples we have in [64, 65], the MARK has the manifestation of the INDEX suffixed to it (*juuliale'eya*) (4).

[64] **Anashi** ma'i Luuka juuliale'eya **washirüin.**

ana -shi ma'i Luuka jü-ulia-lee-ya washirü-in

good-M much Lucas 3F-from-TOT-EMP rich-CS

Lucas is more honest than (he is) rich.

[65] **Wayuu** ma'i Luuka juuliale'eya **alijunain.**

wayuu ma'i Luuka jü-ulia-lee-ya alijuna-in

person much Lucas 3M-from-TOT-EMP creole-CS

Lucas is more Guajiro than creole.

There are also instances of two properties expressed clausally being compared in terms of the different degrees they show in just one participant. However, the tendency seems to be for the second clause to show up in a nominalised form, in the infinitive [66] or in the deverbial instrumental noun with *-ya* [67].

[66] **Yootüshi** ma'i Luuka juuliale'eya tü **naa'inrakaa.**

yooto-shi ma'i Luuka jü-ulia-lee-ya tü nü-a'inra-ka-lü

talk -M much Lucas 3F-from-TOT-EMP DEM.F 3M-do/make-SP-F

Lucas speaks more than he does (Lucas speaks more than what he does/his doing).

- [67] Nike'eja__aa'inchi ma'i taya Luuka juuliale'eya **nükaliijia.**
 nü-ike'eja a-a'in-chi ma'i taya Luuka jü-ulia-lee-ya nü-kaliija-ya
 3M-bother 0-soul-M much I Lucas 3F-from-TOT-EMP 3M-help-NLR

Lucas bothers me more than he helps (me) (literally: his help).

Another possibility is to have both clauses nominalised, as in [68], where the notional subject as the possessor.

- [68] Anasü **jiyonnajia** Jusepiina juulia **ji'yataaya.**
 ana -sü jü-yonnaja-ya Jusepiina jü-ulia jü-'yataa-ya
 good-F 3F-dance -NLR Josefina 3F-from 3F-work -NLR

Josefina dances better than she works (Josefina's dancing is better than her working).

Ambiguity can arise whenever the comparison involves some sort of ellipsis, as the reduced element can have different readings. This happens particularly when the object of a transitive verb can be interpreted as the COMPAREE as well as the STANDARD, as [69] illustrates.

- [69] Te'raajüin niikat Lucas nuulia nüshikai.
 ta-'raaja-in nü-i-ka-lü Lucas nü-uulia nü-shi-ka-li
 1S-know-CS 3M-mother-SP-F Lucas 3M-from 3M-father-SP-M

I_A know [Lucas' mother]_O more than (I_A know) [her father]_O OR [his father]_A (does).

The ambiguity tends to disappear in those cases where the gender/number of the object is marked on the verb, as is the case in [70], where the feminine object marker *-rü* makes us expect the feminine object 'Lucas' mother', rather than 'Lucas' father'.

- [70] Te'raajeerü niikat Lucas nuulia nüshikai.
 ta-'raaja-ee-lü nü-i-ka-lü Lucas nü-uulia nü-shi-ka-li
 1S-know-FU-F 3M-mother-SP-F Lucas 3M-from 3M-father-SP-M

I_A will know [Lucas' mother]_O more than (I_A will know) [her father]_O.

7. CORRELATIVE COMPARISON

Correlative comparisons, where the same comparative morphology is present, occur in English, where *more/-er* can appear with the article in two clauses as in *The more I run, the healthier I feel*; or in Spanish, where the first clause is introduced by *mientras* ‘while’ and the second clause has the comparative *más* ‘more’ as in *Mientras más corro, más saludable me siento*.

Constructions equivalent to the correlative constructions of Indo-European languages have been detected, where the same comparative morphology is present (use of *maa* ‘be.thus’, *-lee* ‘TOTALLY’, *ma’i* ‘much’, etc.). Notice that in one strategy the suffix *-yaa* ‘IRREALIS’ accompanies the verb *maa* ‘be.thus’ (71-73).

[71] **Mayaasü** nikashaanain Luuka, kaüsiüleeshi ma’in.
 ma -yaa-sü nü-ka-shaana-in Luuka, kaüsi-lee-shi ma’in
 be.thus-IRR-F 3M-eat-AUGMEN-CS Lucas fat -TOT-M much

The more Lucas eats, the fatter he gets.

[72] **Mayaasü** ma’in piyonnajüin, mariaawashaanaleesü pia.
 ma -yaa-sü ma’in pü-yonnaja-in mariaawa-shaana-lee-sü pia
 be.thus-IRR-F much 2S-dance-CS dizzy-AUGMEN-TOT-F you

The more you dance, the more lightheaded you get.

[73] **Mayaasü** te’rüin ma’in pia, aisü ma’in pia tapüla.
 ma-yaa-sü ta-’ra-in ma’in pia ali-sü ma’in pia ta-püla
 be.thus-IRR-F 1S-see-CS much you dear-F much you 1S-for

The more I see you, the more I love you.

However, alternative forms occur which are introduced by *wanaa jümaa* ‘whenever, simultaneously with’ (literally ‘equal/simultaneously with it’), as the examples in [74-76] show.

[74] **Wanaa jümaa** niküin ma’i Luuka, kaüsiishi ma’i.
 wanaa jümaa nü-ka-in ma’i Luuka, kaüsi-shi ma’i
 equal 3F-with 3M-eat-CS much Lucas, fat-M much

The more Lucas eats, the fatter he gets.

[75] **Wanaa jümaa** piyonnajüin ma’i, mariaawashi ma’i pia.
 wanaa jü-maa pü-yonnaja-in ma’i, mariaawa-shi ma’i pia
 equal 3F-with 2S-dance-CS much dizzy-M much you.

The more you dance, the more you get dizzy.

[76] **Wanaa jümaa** te'rüin ma'i pia, müliashi ma'i taya pii'ree.
wanaa jümaa ta-'ra-in ma'i pia, mülia -shi ma'i taya pü-i'ree
equal 3F-with 2S-see-CS much you suffer-M much I 2S-cause

The more I see you, the more I love you.

Yet another construction, illustrated in [77], involves a conditional clause (usually the first) as one of the clauses.

[77] **Teküle** ma'i juriicha, jemetüsü ma'i jaa'in tamüin.
ta-ka-le ma'i juriicha, jemeta-sü ma'i jü-a'in ta-müin
1S-eat-HYP much friche tasty-F much 3F-soul 1S-to(wards)

The more I eat *friche*, the more tasty it seems to me. (If I eat *friche*, ...)

8. RELATIVISATION OF THE STANDARD

In Keenan & Comrie (1977) a proposal was presented of an Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) in relative clauses. Languages were said to vary in terms of which grammatical relations could be relativised. Taking “>” as “it is more accessible than”, this AH predicts SUBJECT > DIRECT OBJECT > INDIRECT OBJECT > OBLIQUE > GENITIVE > OBJECT OF COMPARISON. It also predicts that a given language will relativise a continuous stretch of this AH.

In Guajiro, noun phrases having all sorts of grammatical functions exhibit a surprising capacity for being relativised. Thus is due to the fact that incorporation moves noun phrases up in the scale, so that they end up in one of the two positions which can be directly relativised, namely, SUBJECT and OBJECT. All positions in the hierarchy other than subject and object are formally expressed by means of a phrase whose head can be incorporated to the verb, as shown schematically in [78].

[78] INDIRECT OBJECT: nü-müin Kamiirü ‘to/for Camilo’
OBLIQUE: nü-maa Kamiirü ‘with Camilo’
GENITIVE: nü-shi Kamiirü ‘father of Camilo’
OBJECT OF COMPARISON: nu-ulia Kamiirü ‘than Camilo’

Thus, all the positions in the AH can be relativised in Guajiro (discussion and additional examples can be found in Álvarez 1994), even the object of comparison, that is, the STANDARD of comparative constructions, as in [79, 80].

[79] Te'raajüin chi wayuu [mamainakai ma'in oulia Jusepiina]_{RC}.

ta-'raaja-in chi wayuu mamaina-ka-li ma'in a-ulia Jusepiina
 1S-know -CS DEM.M person insane -SP-M much 0-from Josefina

I know the man [that Josefina is more insane than him].

[80] Te'raajüin chi wayuu [jutpünakai ma'in **oulia** Jusepiina]_{RC}.
 ta-'raaja-in chi wayuu jutpüna-ka-li ma'in a-ulia Jusepiina
 1S-know -CS DEM.M person tall -SP-M much 0-from Josefina

I know the man that Josefina is taller than him.

Perhaps because it is pragmatically very marked, this type of relativisation is difficult to arise and we have obtained them only through elicitation. This difficulty has nothing to do with the possibility of incorporating *ouliaa* to the verb and using the complex verb it in relative clauses. I must be remembered that this preposition is amply used outside comparative constructions, where *ouliaa* can have a wide range of meanings mostly within the ablative range. The examples in [81-83] illustrate this interplay of incorporation and relativisation where *ouliaa* is involved.

[81] Awataashi Jusee nuulia chi ka'lairakai.
 a-wataa-shi Jusee nü-ulia chi ka'laira-ka-li
 0-run-M José 3M-from DEM.M tiger-SP-M

José is running away from the tiger. [no incorporation]

[82] Nuwataa__ouliachi Jusee chi ka'lairakai.
 nü-wataa a-ulia Jusee chi ka'laira-ka-li
 3S-run 0-from José DEM.M tiger -SP-M

José is running away from the tiger. [INCORPORATION OF *ouliaa*]

[83] Pu'uta__naa'in chi ka'laira [nuwataakai **oulia** Jusee]_{RC}.
 pü-'uta nü-a'in chi ka'laira nü-wataa-ka-li 0-ulia Jusee
 2S-kill 3M-soul DEM.M tiger 3S-run -SP-M 0-from José

Kill the tiger from which José is running away. [INCORPORATION+RELATIVISATION]

In [81] we have one such use of *ouliaa*, with 'the tiger' as oblique, while in [82] the preposition has been incorporated to the verb and 'the tiger' has become the object. In [83] we have a relative

clause ‘from which José is running away’ modifying ‘the tiger’. Thus, most of these cases are interpreted as being used in the other senses of *ouliaa*.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The lexical components used in the comparative constructions encountered in Guajiro are clearly related to other components of the language and used in non-comparative constructions. However, it should be stressed that, although Guajiro has both an augmentative suffix *-shaana* and a diminutive suffix *-chon*, these seem to play no special role in comparative constructions. Particularly interesting is the use of the preposition *ouliaa* as mark. This preposition is used, beyond the ablative range of meaning, as a kind of general negator (as in final clauses). It is as if the STANDARD of comparison did always imply negative evaluation, even absence of the property. This creates a certain level of ambiguity in a good number of comparative constructions.

The Guajiro comparative constructions do not seem to involve elements borrowed from Spanish, the national language with which it is in contact. Spanish forms like *más*, *menos*, *que*, etc. do not seem to have ever been used to that effect. If calque has been the source of some of these constructions, we cannot ascertain that this has been the case. The fact that the verb *maa* and the erstwhile preposition *aka* are very frequently contracted to *ma'aka* and *miinka* may be due to Spanish influence, where invariable *como* ‘as’ exists.

The traditional Guajiro society has had a stratified, pastoralist backbone for around five centuries. Wealth is measured on the basis of the size of the herds, and cattle, along with precious and semi-precious stones, has been used to make payments for offence compensation and brides. A well-developed numbering/counting system has evolved, although it is being eroded by the Spanish number system. It is assumed that these comparative mechanisms have been in use in the Guajiro language for a long time.

Notes

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1. The phonemic inventory of Guajiro is relatively simple, with values very similar to those of Latin America Spanish (the special cases are indicated in parentheses): VOWELS: **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**, **ü** (central high vowel); CONSONANTS: **p**, **t**, **k**, ' (glottal stop), **j** (glottal fricative), **s**, **sh** (voiceless alveopalatal fricative), **ch** (palatal affricate), **m**, **n** (realised as velar before velar consonants and word-finally), **l** (lateral flap), **r** (trill), **w** (as in English), **y** (as in English). Double vowels represent long vowels, while double consonants are hetero-syllabic. The assignment of stress is fully predictable. The stressed syllable is the second syllable if the first syllable is light: *a.pá.la.si.raa* ‘to lay down’, *ka.shá.ja.laa* ‘to have writings’. If the first syllable is heavy (that is, it has a long vowel, a diphthong, or is checked), then this very initial syllable receives stress: *áa.sha.ja.waa* ‘to speak’, *éi.sa.la.waa* ‘to lie down’, *ón.ju.laa.sii* ‘she hid herself’. If at the beginning of a word there is a short vowel followed by a glottal stop, the syllable containing such

vowel does not count for stress assignment and the two former rules are applied from the second syllable: (*sha*').*wa.táa* 'to be standing', (*a*').*la.ká.jaa.sü* 'she cooks'.

2. For the interlinear glosses I have used the following abbreviations:

0: zero person/indefinite	DE: desiderative	INTE: intentional future
1P: 1 plural	DEM.F: demonstrative feminine	IRR: irrealis
1S: 1 singular	DEM.M: demonstrative masculine	LIMI: limitative
2P: 2 plural	DEM.P: demonstrative plural	M: masculine
2S: 2 singular	DIMI: diminutive	NA: negative augment
3F: 3 singular feminine	ECCE: presenter 'behold'	NG: negative derivative
3M: 3 singular masculine	EMP: emphatic	NLR: nominaliser
3P: 3 plural	EMPH: emphasis	PASS: passive
ANTIC: anticipative	EXCLAM: exclamation	PL: plural
AT: attributive	F: feminine	PLDR: pluraliser
AUGMEN: augmentative	FU: future	POSS: possessive
AUX: auxiliary	HABI: habitual	RC: relative clause
CAU: causative	HYP: hypothetical	SP: specifier
COL: collective	I: imminent	TER: terminated
CONSEC: consecutive	IMMED: immediate	TOT: total
CS: common gender/number	INF: infinitive	TRANS: transient

3. In Jusayú & Olza (1986:282) we read that *ouliaa*: "... indica rechazo, exclusión. Sirve para indicar comparación no unitiva sino distanciadora. *Ana'sü tepi'a júlia pipi'akalü* mi casa es mejor que la tuya (mi casa es buena la tuya no)... el término que sigue a *júlia* queda excluido de lo que se afirma del primero."

4. No inherently comparative lexemes, that is, lexemes in which there is fusion of PARAMETER and INDEX, have been detected in Guajiro. The verb *alataa* '(sur)pass', in its forma *alanawaa* [61, 62] very often requires *ouliaa*.

Nuu'ulakajün numüralu'uirua **alanaasü** **suulia** pütchikaa.

nü-u'ulakaja-ni nü-müla -lu'u -irua a-lanaa -sü sü-ulia pütchi-ka-lü

3S-imitate -CS 3S-throat-inside-PLUR 0-surpass-F 3F-from word -SP-F

He imitates voices which surpass words. (Verse from José Ángel Fernández's *Iitakaa*)

Alanaasü sujutu **suulia** piama shikii woliwarü.

a-lanaa -sü sü-jutu sü-ulia piama sü-kii woliwarü

0-surpass-F 3F-value 3F-from two 3F-head bolívar

Its price surpasses the twenty bolivars.

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