Similarity, equality and the like in North Saami

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Comments welcome!

1 Introduction

This article discusses various linguistic expressions of similarity and related functions in North Saami, the most widely spoken language of the Saami branch of the Uralic language family. After a brief introduction to the relevant characteristics of North Saami (Section 2), Section 3 presents an overview of the expressions for similarity and related meanings such as equatives and functives (role phrases) in the language. In addition to the mainly synchronic observations based on a newspaper corpus, attention is paid to the current language situation where the preposition-like multi-purpose particles dego and nugo ‘as, like; as if; such as’ are – not unlike many other analytical devices characteristic of the neighboring Scandinavian languages – in the process of replacing and sometimes conflating with the originally suffixal and postpositional Uralic morphosyntax of the language. More detailed discussion focuses on two similative morphemes and the range of their use within and outside the concepts and categories that may be labeled as similatives: Section 4 discusses the purposive use of the postposition láhkai ‘like; in the manner of’ and its development to a marker of a multifaceted non-finite verb form in -nláhkai expressing not only similarity, but also purpose and future events. In Section 5, the concept of similatives is extended to “nominal similatives”, i.e. the functions of the suffix -lágan (akin to láhkai) that is used to turn not only nouns but also adjectives into ‘-like’ or ‘-ish’ adjectives and ultimately into semantically analogous ‘kind of’ or ‘-oid’ nouns. Finally, Section 6 summarizes the contributions of the Saami data to our general understanding of the semantic notion of similarity as well as the synchronic and diachronic network of the expressions of similarity and related concepts. (For a quick overview of the constructions and morphemes to be discussed, see Table 2 in Section 6.)
2 North Saami in its context

North Saami is the most widely spoken language of the Saami branch of the Uralic language family, with approximately 15,000–25,000 speakers traditionally living in the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland. North Saami has had an established status as a literary language since the mid-19th century and is nowadays widely used in all kinds of written media and various, yet understandably somewhat limited, domains of the society up to the highest education levels and scholarly discourse. According to the received view, the grammatical structures of the Saami languages belong to the most “Indo-Europeanized” among the Uralic languages; their morphology exhibits a comparatively high degree of fusionality and syntax is in many ways quite similar to that of their Scandinavian neighbors.

On the other hand, the Saami languages are in many ways quite ordinary Uralic languages of Europe. As regards the topic of this article, North Saami has six morphological cases: nominative, genitive-accusative, locative, illative, comitative and essive. The functions of the latter as a so-called functive case – with functional equivalents in Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian and other European Uralic languages – in role phrases has traditionally been kept apart from both equative and similative markers. As for the markers of similarity, adpositions such as lähkai ‘like; in the manner of’ are primarily postpositions, and the non-finite verb form in -nláhkai is only one of the dozen non-finite markers in the language. However, many prepositions, SVO order and analytical clause combining make both the Saami and the neighboring Finnic languages such as Finnish and Estonian often appear morphosyntactically quite close to the language type known as Standard Average European, and the Saami languages can indeed be regarded as belonging to the same northern periphery of the SAE area as the related Finnic languages (cf. Haspelmath 2001). This can also be seen both in the diversity of expressions for similarity and in the ways such expressions are interrelated and coincide with various other semantic functions.

From a more detailed perspective, the geographical position of the Saami languages and especially the current geopolitical position of North Saami has given the language a rather unique position on the typological map of Europe, as one part of the language community is heavily influenced by – and bilingual in – Finnish, whereas the major part lives under the constant influence of Norwegian and Swedish. The structural effect of the present position in between the two genetically and typologically distinct major language types is, quite predictably, that the use of postpositions and non-finite clauses is more prevalent among the Finnish Saami, and less so on the other side of the Finnish-Scandinavian language border (e.g. Ylikoski 2009, Antonsen et al. 2012). In the following sections, the impact of the Scandinavian languages on North Saami will be most evident in the growing use of the particles dego and nugo ‘as, like; as if; such as’ that are becoming increasingly isomorphic with the Scandinavian som in similatives and related functions.
3 Similarity, equality and related meanings in North Saami

The following subsections present a general description and discussion of the similarity and related functions (similative phrases and similative clauses, comparison of equality and inequality, functives or role phrases, and pretense clauses) in contemporary North Saami. If not otherwise specified, all authentic examples come from the corpus of more than ten million words from the North Saami newspapers Min Áigi, Áššu and Ávvir (1997–2011), provided by the Divvun Sámi proofing tools project at the University of Tromsø. All newspapers included in the corpus have been published in Norway, but were written for the North Saami community as a whole, by journalists in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The language of the newspapers can be considered as a relatively neutral genre that quite well represents a language system shared by the language community as a whole, although it must be noted that the literary use of the language does not have nearly as established a status as the neighboring majority languages and, for example, the word order of the newspaper corpus is shown to resemble the word order of the dialect areas under most Scandinavian influence (Antonsen et al. 2012). Although the data comes from a large corpus, this article is a mostly qualitative rather than quantitative description of phenomena whose actual manifestations often occur on various continua that create challenges for exact quantitative analysis. Occasional references to the frequency or rarity of a given phenomenon are thus usually to be understood as relatively vague characterizations.

As for the previous studies on the topics discussed in this article, many of the topics have received little or no attention in earlier grammars or other descriptions of the language. The major exceptions are comparative constructions of inequality that are traditionally covered by grammars of North Saami as well as of other languages. However, there exist no non-prescriptive grammars of present-day North Saami: Of the three most important works on the language, Nielsen’s (1926) classical Lærebok i lappisk is a very comprehensive description of North Saami as spoken in the mostly monolingual core areas of the Norwegian Saami territory about a century ago. The newer descriptions by Sammallahti (2005) and Nickel and Sammallahti (2011) provide faithful accounts of the classical language virtually identical to that described by Nielsen (1926), but leave many of established innovations unmentioned or label them as foreign interference. The following sections are intended to fill such gaps and provide an account of the similatives and related functions in contemporary North Saami.

Before proceeding to the data, a note on terminology is needed. Most of the key concepts are to be understood the way they are presented in the introductory chapter of this volume. However, the use of the terms comparison and comparative is, if not otherwise specified, delimited to the sense of “comparison of inequality” and they are thus separated from other comparatives sensu lato. As a consequence, comparatives of equality can be simply referred to as equatives. On the other hand, whenever the terms comparison or comparison of inequality are (synonymously) used, they refer specifically to the subtype best characterized as “comparison of majority” or “superior comparatives” (Paul is more popular than John) as opposed to “comparison of minority” or “inferior comparatives” (Paul is less popular than John) that fall outside the scope of the present article (see e.g. Cuzzolin & Lehmann 2004).
3.1 Simulative phrases

In North Saami, prototypical simulative phrases can be formed in two ways: with the more or less synonymous multi-purpose prepositional particles *dego* and *nugo* ‘as, like; as if; such as’ (1) or with the postposition *láhkái* ‘like; in the manner of’ and its variants *láhkái* and *ládje* (2). Examples (1a) and (2a) exhibit such simulatives in predicative positions with the copula *leat*, and (1b) and (2b) show that similar phrases also occur in other types of clauses such as those with ordinary content verbs *gahčcat* ‘fall, collapse’ and *coggat* ‘put (clothes) on’:

(1) a. Máret  *leat*  *dego*  *magneahtta*
Máret be.3SG like magnet
‘Máret is like a magnet!’

b. *Buorre*  *mokta*  *gahčai*  *dego*  *gusaseaibi.*
good enthusiasm fall.PST.3SG like cow’s.tail
‘Good enthusiasm went down like a cow’s tail.’

(2) a. Dál  *don*  *leat*  *spiinni*  *ládje*
now 2SG be.2SG pig.GA like
‘You’re like a pig now!’

b. *Olusat*  *ledje*  *dán*  *nieiddaguovtto*  *láhkái*  *coggan*  *asehis*
many.PL be.PST.3PL this.GA girl.couple.GA like dress.PST.PTCP thin
biktasiid.
clothes.PL.GA
‘Like these two girls, many had dressed in light clothes.’

Although the *dego* type (1) is more frequent than the *láhkái* type (2), the two types are more or less freely interchangeable: For example, the simulative phrases in (1) could be replaced with postpositional phrases *magneahtta/gusaseaibbi* *láhkái/ládje* [magnet.GA/cow’s.tail.GA like] or, vice versa, the postpositionals in (2) could be substituted with the phrases *dego* *spiidni* or *dego* *dat* *nieiddaguovtto* with the nouns and pronouns in the nominative case.

As for the morphemes to be discussed throughout the article, *dego* and *nugo* are compound particles consisting of semantically vague particles *de* ‘then’, *nu(vt)* ‘so; thus’ and *go* ‘as; than; when’ and they are still often written as separate words. The elements *láhkái* and *láhkái* go back to the illative form *láhki* ‘mode; manner’, and *láhkái* is thus fully identical with the still productive illative form. On the other hand, the use of *láhki* is quite marginal and mostly restricted to lexicalized compounds or multiword expressions such as *miellaláhki* [mind.mood] ‘(psychological) mood, state of mind’ and *seksuálalaš láhki* ‘sexual orientation’. The form *ládje* appears to be related to the noun *šládja* (~ *lådja*) ‘sort, kind; species’, but in spite of its different material origin, it is fully synonymous with *láhkái* and could thus in a sense be regarded as a variant of that morpheme. Incidentally, both *láhki* and *šládja* have ultimately the same Scandinavian origin (*slag* ‘sort, kind’).¹

¹ Occasional variation in the orthography of other morphemes to be discussed (seammá ~ seamma ‘same’, -lágán ~ -lågan ‘-like’) is related to the rather complex morphophonemic alteration called “allegro shortening” in Saami
3.2 Similatives and functives

Many of the few typological studies that have paid attention to the relations between similatives and related concepts have remarked that it is quite common to see similative markers being used in role phrases as well. From their pan-European perspective, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 324–325) underscore that the use of similative and equative markers as role markers (e.g. French comme, Mainland Scandinavian som) is “a striking SAE feature”, and Creissels (2012: 12) goes on to state that the syncretism of similative and role markers is “extremely common cross-linguistically”. However, the Saami languages have traditionally kept similatives, equatives and role phrases apart from each other, although the situation seems to be changing.

Although the six morphological cases of North Saami make its case inventory the smallest among the approximately thirty Uralic languages of Europe, one of them – the essive in -n – is a relatively specialized case whose functions cover more or less all of those discussed by Creissels (2012) under the label “functive”. He defines the concept as follows: “a noun phrase N in functive role attributes the property of being an N to a participant represented by another noun phrase included in the construction of the same verb, implying that this characterization is linked in one way or another to the event represented by the verb”. Put concretely, most North Saami essive NPs function as secondary predicates that refer to temporary states or activities of one of the main arguments. In copular clauses such as (3a) the use of the essive is thus opposed to permanent states expressed by the nominative.

(3) a. Ole Einar lea iěš golbma jagi leamaš hárjeheaddjin.  
Ole Einar be.3SG REFL three year.GA be.PST.PTCP trainer.ESS  
‘Ole Einar himself has acted as a trainer for three years.’

b. Soai bargaba málesteaddjin báikkálaš restoráŋŋas.  
3DU work.3DU cook.ESS local restaurant.LOC  
‘They work as cooks in a local restaurant.’

However, Saami language purists have occasionally considered it necessary to step forward to explain and defend the traditional use of the essive case against the corrupting influence of the Scandinavian syntax that has extended the use of the similative markers dego and nugo at the expense of the original essive functives (cf. Čállinrávagirji 2003: 84):

(4) a. Nils Johan Gaup dego sámepolitiikkár lea=ge ožžon áššis  
Nils Johan Gaup as Saami.politician be.3SG=indeed get.PST.PTCP issue.LOC stuora fuomášumi,... big attention.GA  
‘As a Saami politician, Nils Johan Gaup has gained much attention in the issue,...’

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studies. The variation seen in this article is only unsettled orthographic reflection of the phonological variation and has no relevance for the present discussion. In short, the orthographical <a> stands for the phoneme /a/, whereas <á> stands for /ɑː/ in the western dialects of North Saami, and for /ɑː/, /æ/ and /æː/ in the eastern dialects.
b. Øystein Sørbye lea nugo psykiáhter sakka beroştan

Øystein Sørbye be.3SG as psychiatrist very care.PST.PTCP

internáhttamánáid eallimis.
dormitory.child.PL.GA life.LOC

‘As a psychiatrist, Øystein Sørbye is very concerned for the lives of boarding school children.’

Analytical functives seen in (4) are absent both in earlier accounts of classical North Saami and later grammars (e.g. Nielsen 1926, Nickel & Sammallahti 2011), and they are still regarded as mostly ungrammatical by the Finnish Saami who regard the essive forms such as sámepolitihkkágin and psykiáhterin as the only truly acceptable way of expressing the intended meaning. However, the use of the more analytical constructions is quite widespread even in the newspaper corpus originally written by language-conscious journalists, and much more so in the contemporary spoken language of the Norwegian and Swedish Saami. On the other hand, dego and nugo are not only replacing but often, in a sense, reinforcing the use of the essive instead. Alternatively, the following construction with both the dego particle and the essive case markers can be characterized as pleonastic:

(5) Dál 20 jagi lea ruovttoluotta dego majoran ja Banak Girdistašuvnna

hoavdan.

commander.PTCP

‘Now, after 20 years, she is back as a major and as the commander of the Banak Air Station.’

Furthermore, (6) is a nice example of the fact that for many language users, the use of the two devices are by and large synonymous:

(6) Muhtomin orru leamen dego Navarsete muhtin dilálašvuodain hupmá dego

sometimes seem.3SG be.PROG as Navarsete some occasion.PL.GA speak.3SG as

Guovddášbellodaga jodiheaddji ja eará diliin fas

Center.Party.GA leader and other occasion.PL.GA in.turn

johtalusministtarin, muitalà Johansen.
transport.minister.ESS tell.3SG Johansen

‘Sometimes it appears as if Navarsete was speaking as the leader of the Center Party in some occasions, and in the other occasions as the Minister of Transport and Communications, Johansen says.’

To be sure, for the proponents of the classical language and for most of those outside the direct influence of Norwegian and Swedish – about one-tenth of the North Saami speakers – phrases such as dego Guovddášbellodaga jodiheaddji and the essive Guovddášbellodaga jodiheaddjin are by no means synonymous but two very different things: Example (6) refers to the Norwegian politician Liv Signe Navarsete in two temporary, distinct yet partially overlapping roles in a society familiar to most speakers of the language – as the Norwegian Minister of Transport and Communications in 2005–2009 and as the leader of the Norwegian Center Party since 2008. As shown by the examples seen thus far, the primary and original interpretation of dego Guovddášbellodaga jodiheaddji would be that of a simulative, ‘like a/the leader of the Center Party’, but in the Norwegian and Swedish
variants of the language, it is also possible to use and understand these words as a role phrase, which is the only intended meaning in the newspaper article published on September 8, 2009. In practice, the sentence is disambiguated with world knowledge that filters out the possible interpretation that the person in question were speaking like the party leader, as she indeed does act as the party leader. However, the concern of language purists is definitely relevant as far as one of their objectives is to maintain uniformity in the public use of the language so that it will at least be understandable across the national borders. Namely, readers residing in Finland will find the intended functive reading of the dego phrase foreign or even completely ungrammatical and are unlikely to know who is the leader of the Norwegian Center Party. In such a context, the only logical interpretation of dego Guovddášbellodaga jodiheaddi would be simulative, even though it would be wrong here.

When speaking of the use of dego in simulative and functive phrases, this element has been vaguely labeled as a particle here, but láhkai/ládje of the simulative phrases (2) was called a postposition. The grammatical and lexical descriptions of North Saami label dego both as a conjunction and as an adverb, but in non-clause phrases such as dego magneahtta ‘like a magnet’ (1a) or even dego majoran ‘as a major’ (5) it might be tempting to analyze dego as a preposition although the traditional North Saami grammar defines adpositions as function words that take genitive-accusative complements. However, dego does not actually govern any of the cases, but can be attached to all cases and even adpositional phrases, e.g. the illative dego majorii ‘like a major’ or dego majora birra [like major.GA about] ‘(e.g. speak) as if about a major’. In fact, this feature makes dego more precise than láhkai phrases in certain contexts. The constructed sentence (7a) has two possible interpretations, but (7b) and (7c) only either one of them:

(7)  a. Máret fákte Jovsseha máná láhkai.
     Máret watch.3SG Jovsset.GA child.GA like
     ‘Máret, watches Jovsset as if she/he was a child.’

     b. Máret fákte Jovsseha dego mánná.
     Máret watch.3SG Jovsset.GA like child(GA)
     ‘Máret, watches Jovsset as if she was a child.’

     c. Máret fákte Jovsseha dego máná.
     Máret watch.3SG Jovsset.GA like child.GA
     ‘Máret, watches Jovsset as if he was a child.’

The postpositional phrase in (7a) may refer to the childlikeness of the subject or the object referents alike, but the dego phrases agree with either the subject NP (7b) or the object NP (7c). Therefore, although the use of dego in both simulative and role functions is occasionally ambiguous (cf. Example 6), the behavior we are seeing here helps to avoid occasional ambiguities in the use of láhkai, on the other hand.
3.3 Comparison of equality and inequality

It was mentioned above that the Saami languages have traditionally kept similatives, equatives and role phrases apart from each other. Despite the emerging similative-functive syncretism just discussed, the equative phrases are still marked quite differently. Instead, the North Saami expressions for equativity closely resemble the way the language codes comparison of inequality, but also both of these exhibit variation between case-marking and more analytical devices, the former technique being evidently more original (Uralic) and the latter one best regarded as a relatively recent outcome of contacts with languages of the SAE type. The following examples capture the essence of the structural similarity between the expressions for both comparison of inequality (8) and that of equality (9):

(8) Henning Berg lei ollu stuo rát go mun, muhto go čuoččastin
Henning Berg be.PST.3SG much big.CMPV than 1SG but when stand.PST.1SG
su gurrii, fuobmájin ahte ii son gal leat
3SG.GA side.ILL notice.PST.3SG COMP NEG.3SG 3SG DPT be.CNG
go moadde sente mu guhkit.
(more.)than couple centimeter.GA 1SG.GA tall.CMPV
‘Henning Berg was much bigger than I, but when I stood by his side, I noticed that actually he is not more than a couple of centimeters taller than I.’

(9) Busse lea 18 mehtera guhku ja lea seamma guhkki go dálá
bus be.3SG 18 meter.GA long.EQD and be.3SG same long as present
busse, muhto sikkobeadle lea veahá erohus, muitala Dean.
bus but inside be.3SG little difference tell.3SG Dean
‘The bus is 18 meters long, as long as the present bus, but there is a difference inside, Dean says.’

The dominant type of comparative constructions – here to be understood in the sense of comparison of inequality (majority/superiority; see the beginning of Section 3) – is the particle comparative, in other words the construction type where a specific comparative particle – go (8) – accompanies the standard noun phrase. As made evident by Stassen (1985, 2011), if viewed from a global perspective, particle comparatives can be regarded as a paradigm example of a typical SAE feature although its distribution covers nearly all the Indo-European languages of Europe, as well as Basque, Hungarian and the Finnic branch of Uralic. However, the rest of the Uralic languages make use of case-marked comparatives, and they are also in use, though not as common, in most of the Saami and Finnic languages as well as in Hungarian (Raun 1960). In North Saami we find the comparative construction of the type mu guhkit (8): this Uralic inheritance is reflected in the use of the genitive-accusative case to mark the standard NP. From a historical point of view, this may be related to typologically more common locational comparatives, as the genitive-accusative has in many ways submerged the earlier partitive (< Proto-Uralic ablative) case (see e.g. Sammallahti 1998: 68; Miestamo 2011: 134–135). Although the frequency of the particle comparative greatly exceeds the use of the genitival (i.e. genitive-accusative marked) comparative, these two types are largely interchangeable: stuo rát go mun could be mu stuo rát, and mu guhkit could be replaced by
guhkit go mun. A third, synonymous option is a locative comparative with the standard NP in the locative case (mus stuorát, mus guhkit ‘id.’).

Equative phrases (9) are formally very similar to comparative phrases in North Saami, as the standard marker is usually the same go in both functions. The parameter marker seamma is otherwise used as a pronominal adjective ‘same’, and one type of literal translation of seamma guhkki go busse ‘as long as the bus’ would thus be “same long than the bus”. Similarity between equatives and comparatives is even more obvious in light of the fact that morphological comparatives are – again, under the influence of the Scandinavian languages – often replaced by periphrastic formations, especially with adjectives of foreign origin such as eanet magnehtalaš go Máret ‘more magnetic than Máret’ as opposed to the traditionally correct magnehtalaččat go Máret [magnetic.CMPV than Máret] “magnetizer than Máret”; compare the corresponding equative phrase seamma magnehtalaš go Máret [same magnetic than Máret] ‘as magnetic as Máret’. However, it is worth noting that the syncretism of equative and comparative standard markers makes North Saami very different from the neighboring Scandinavian (cf. Norwegian comparative mer magnetisk enn Marit, but equative like magnetisk som Marit), and a hypothetical Scandinavism à la *seamma magnehtalaš dego Máret is virtually nonexistent, even though the use of dego is otherwise highly analogous to that of som.

To extend the comparison of comparatives and equatives to less productive yet typologically significant constructions, it can be noted that the genitival comparative mu guhkit [1SG.GA tall.CMPV] in (8) has a kind of counterpart in a set of special equative forms that refer to measurable physical properties and take genitive-accusative complements. They are most often used with noun phrases expressing exact quantities such as in 18 mehtera guhku ‘18 meters long’ in (9), but especially less precise expressions like mu guhku ‘as long as I’ or fatnasa guhku ‘as long as a boat’ in (10) can be seen as genitival equatives on a par with the genitival comparatives; the phrase in question could be replaced by the analytical equative seamma guhkit go fanas [same long.PL as boat] ‘as long (pl.) as a boat’ without changing the meaning of the sentence.

(10) Ammal dat mat bohtet buot maŋimuččat dáidet leat fatnasa
surely it.PL REL.PL come.3PL altogether last.ADV may.3PL be.INF boat.GA
guhku, á rvala 90 jahkáša á Jovsset.
long.EQD consider.3SG 90 year.ADJ Jovsset
‘I suppose the ones [salmon] that come very last might be as long as a boat, the 90-year-old Jovsset thinks.’

In the same vein, the equative phrase sullii Guovdageainnu Samvirkelága stuor ‘about as big as the Guovdageaidnu cooperative store’ of (11) could be replaced by the analytical construction sullii seamma stuoris go Guovdageainnu Samvirkelága:

(11) Stuorát gávpi, Megastore, lea sullii Guovdageainnu Samvirkelága
big.CMPV store Megastore be.3SG about Guovdageaidnu.GA cooperative.GA
stuor ja vuovdá bitkasiid, videofilmmaid, govaid, seangagávnniid,...
big.EQD and sell.3SG clothes.PL.GA video.film.PL.GA picture.PL.GA bedding.PL.GA
‘The bigger store, [Manchester United] Megastore, is about as big as the Guovdageaidnu cooperative store and it sells clothes, videos, pictures, beddings,...’
The forms *guhku* (9–10) and *stuoru* (11) are here glossed as instances of the equative degree of adjectives, but this is a novel approach in Saami linguistics. To my knowledge, of the open class of thousands of adjectives, only eleven adjectives have equative counterparts that end in -u and are morphologically even more uniform than the corresponding comparatives and superlatives. Earlier scholars have labeled such formations as genitive-accusative forms of otherwise non-existent deadjectival nouns (e.g. *gukku* ‘length’ : *guhku* ‘of length’; Nielsen 1926: 205) or as postpositions (Sammallahti 2005: 132, 152–153; Nickel & Sammallahti 2011: 172–193). Support for the latter interpretation may be found in the fact that unlike the positive, comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, equative formations do not reflect for number or case but take preposed genitive-accusative complements expressing the standard of comparison of equality. However, even in the classical North Saami of earlier descriptions phrases of the type fatnasa guhku ‘as long as a boat’ are directly related to the undeniably adjectival phrases like fatnasa guhkkossä ‘id.’ that are traditionally used as adnominal modifiers, e.g. fatnasa guhkkossä luossa [boat.GA long.EQD salmon] ‘a salmon as long as a boat’ (cf. Must 1953–1954: 4). In light of the newspaper corpus, the functional opposition between the predicative (*guhku*) and attributive (*gukkossaš*) formations is not as clear as it may have been earlier, but it is nevertheless still possible to describe the contemporary equative forms on a par with the three established degrees of comparison in North Saami (Table 1).

### Table 1. The North Saami adjectives with equative forms.

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<th>positive</th>
<th>comparative</th>
<th>superlative</th>
<th>equative</th>
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<td>attributive</td>
<td>predicative</td>
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<td>allat ‘high’</td>
<td>alla</td>
<td>alit</td>
<td>alimus</td>
<td>alu</td>
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<td>assaí ‘thick (of flat objects)’</td>
<td>assás</td>
<td>assát</td>
<td>assámus</td>
<td>asu</td>
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<td>čieŋal ‘deep’</td>
<td>čieŋalis</td>
<td>čieŋkalit</td>
<td>čieŋkaleamós</td>
<td>čieŋu</td>
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<td>galljes</td>
<td>galjit</td>
<td>galjimús</td>
<td>galju</td>
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<td>gasit</td>
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<td>govdimmus</td>
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<td>stuoris ‘big’</td>
<td>stuorras</td>
<td>stuorás</td>
<td>stuorámus</td>
<td>stuoru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viiddis ‘wide’</td>
<td>viiddis</td>
<td>viiðáit</td>
<td>viiðámus</td>
<td>viiðdu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All North Saami equative forms are based on adjective stems that can be perceived as those members of antonymic adjective pairs that express a higher degree of a given property, e.g. ‘big’ instead of ‘small’ and ‘long’ instead of ‘short’. Admittedly, the set of synthetic equatives seems closed, and at any rate small, but nevertheless quite remarkable on the linguistic map of Europe (see Section 6). More generally, the present-day variation between SAE-like analytical devices and more original (suffixal and postpositional) Uralic type of comparative and equative phrases is quite similar to that among simulative and role phrases seen in Examples (1–6), although it is equally important to note that none of the grammatical elements to mark simulatives and functives is identical with morphemes signaling comparison of equality or inequality.

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2 Allomorphic variation of certain (positive) attributive, comparative and superlative forms has been omitted by selecting the most common variant in the corpus. There is no formal predicative vs. attributive distinction in the comparative or superlative. Note that the element *-saš* of the attributive form (*-osas*) of the proposed equative degree is etymologically identical with denominal adjectives such as (90)-jakhkäsäs ‘(90)-year-old’ ← *jahki* ‘year’ seen in (10).
3.4 Similative clauses

The next topics to be discussed take us beyond phrase-level phenomena. The concept of similative is relevant on the clause level as well, and it may not be too surprising to see that the similative clause markers are largely the same as those seen in non-clausal similative phrases (1–2) earlier:

(12) *Mo son dasto gualahallá* guovţžąiguin? *Li son gal háleš*
    how 3SG then communicate.3SG bear.PL.COM NEG.3SG 3SG DPT discuss.CNG
    daiguin *dego olbмот háleštit gaskaneaset.*
    it.PL.COM like human.PL discuss.3PL with.each.other.3PL
    ‘How, then, does he communicate with bears? No, he does not discuss with them like people discuss with each other.’

(13) *Diehttelas boazu liiko varas, ruon[á] šattuide juste seamma ládje go mii*
    of.course reindeer like.3SG fresh green plant.PL.ILL just same like as 1PL
    olbмот liikojit varas láibáí.
    human.PL like.3PL fresh bread.ILL
    ‘Of course the reindeer like fresh, green plants just like we people like fresh bread.’

To begin with, in light of the 10-million-word corpus, I must agree with Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 320) who remark that the actual use of similative clauses in general is quite infrequent, apparently due to the relative unimportance of expressing a manner of an action by referring to similar manners in other kinds of actions, and therefore it may sometimes be even more relevant to explicitly negate the similarity of two states-of-affairs, as seen in (12). Similative clauses may be sometimes needed, however, and again, North Saami makes use of two more or less synonymous comparative markers: *dego* of (12) could also replace the words *seammá ládje go* in (13), or, vice versa, those could be used instead of *dego* in (12). The word *dego* – and the synonymous use of *nugo* – can here be analyzed as a conjunction that subordinates the following clause to the preceding one. However, the similative clause marker *seammá ládje go* (13) is less straightforward: It consists of the particle *go* seen in equative and comparative phrases, preceded by the lexicalized, PP-like expression *seammá ládje ‘in the same manner’* and has thus a composed meaning fully analogous to that of *in the same manner as* in English. Not unlike the English expression, *seammá ládje/láhkai go* has a flavor of more explicit meaning, and in fact, it is also sometimes used to mark non-clausal similative phrases (14), and especially in similes to be discussed further below. In spite of the transparent origin of this expression it has grammaticalized to the extent that some writers tend to write it as a single coalesced word:

(14) *Go dát dutkan lea gárvvis, de sáhttá bulvarvara vuovdigoahtit*
    when this study be.3SG ready then can.3SG powder.blood.GA sell.INCH.INF
    dábálaš gáyppis *seamnaláhkaigo eará bulvarmlášiid.*
    ordinary store.LOC ‘same.like.as’ other powder.meal.PL.GA
    ‘After this study has been completed, it will be possible to start selling powdered (dehydrated) blood in ordinary grocery stores like any other powdered meals.’
The main difference between the structure of simulative phrases and simulative clauses is that the postposition lähkai alone does not occur in finite simulative clauses. However, the most original means for combining clauses in Uralic is via non-finite clauses, and many of the non-finite verb forms have their origins in action nominal constructions. Most of them stem from case-marked verbal nouns, but some of them go back to postpositional phrases where the verbal noun functions as the complement to a postposition, and in North Saami one of such verb forms is a multi-faceted non-finite in -nláhkai. Consider (15) that exhibits the still-present original verbal noun construction that has given rise to the new non-finite (16) whose marker (-nláhkai) can no longer be considered as anything else but an amalgamated non-finite suffix of its own:

    3–4 month.ADJ.ESS child babble.3SG speak.VN.GA like
    ‘At the age of 3–4 months, the child babbles in a manner of speaking.’

(16) Go das hávllat eambbo biedganit ja danne oazžu dainna eambbo dušše
    as it.LOC shot.PL more scatter.3PL and therefore get.3SG it.COM more only
    cuigenláhkai siktestit ja dasto roaškalit.
    point.CV.B aim.INF and then fire.off.INF
    ‘[He told that when using a shotgun, there is no need to aim as carefully as with a rifle. This is...] ...because with this [= a shotgun], the shots tend to scatter and therefore one can aim rapidly, more like only pointing (at the target) and then fire off.’

As a whole, the non-finite in -nláhkai is a quite unusual verb form having a large array of syntactic and semantic features that make it impossible to briefly characterize this formation with traditional grammatical labels. More comprehensive descriptions of the morphological, syntactic and semantic development and the many functions of -nláhkai have been presented elsewhere (Ylikoski 2006; 2009: 47–54, 88–95), and although most contemporary occurrences of this verb form are in fact found in certain periphrastic predicates that have little to do with the simulative origin of -nláhkai, the same form is still used in functions that may well be characterized as non-finite simulative clauses (16). On the other hand, the use of the indisputably original construction – the genitive-accusative form of the verbal noun (-mal-eami) as the complement of the postposition lähkai – is quite rare, presumably due to the above-mentioned unimportance of simulative clauses and most of all because of the existence of a specialized non-finite – or simulative converb – for the same purpose. However, the -nláhkai clauses (16) are hardly interchangeable with the finite simulative clauses (12–13) that tend to have subjects different from those of the main clauses, whereas the subject of a simulative -nláhkai clause (16) is always left implicit and is best described as a generic subject (‘one’). This makes -nláhkai quite different from the other simulative converbs I am aware of: Khalilova (2009: 411) and Creissels (2010: 134) provide examples of simulative converbs from Khwarshi and Avar (both Northeast Caucasian), respectively, but only with explicit and otherwise specific subjects. Also the Komi (Uralic) converb in -igmoz, when used as a simulative, may have a subject of its own (ÖKK 2000: 370).3

3 Not unlike -nláhkai, the Komi converb -igmoz contains an element that is historically a simulative postposition, mož ‘like’. Although the authoritative Komi grammar describes -igmoz mostly as a converb of manner, concomitance and simultaneity, Example (i) reflects the original meaning of this verb form (ÖKK 2000: 370):
3.5 Similes and accord clauses

When discussing similative clauses, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 319–321) present brief remarks about the fact that similative clauses very seldom differ from the way European languages express two other conceptually related types of clause combination, namely similes and what the authors call accord clauses. In North Saami, it is especially the similes such as those seen in (17–18) that are identical to similative clauses, most often those with the periphrastic kind of conjunction seammá láhkai go rather than degol/nugo.

(17) ...ja muhtimin fas olmoš vásiha losit äiggj seammá láhkai go

and sometimes again human experience.3SG tough.CMPV time.GA same like as
cakčaseavdnjat čáhpodahtā birrasa.

autumn.darkness darken.3SG environment.GA

‘...and sometimes one experiences tough times like when the darkness of the autumn darkens the environment.’

(18) Justa seammaládje go loddi biebmá čivgaidis, de dat addá

just same.3SG like as bird feed.3SG offspring.PL.GA.3SG so it give.3SG
dasa guhte eanemusat caggá njálmmi.
it.ILL which most.ADV stretch.3SG mouth.GA

‘Just like a bird feeds its young, it [the Saami Parliament] gives to the ones who stretch their mouths most.’

As simile is a rhetorical device used to highlight the message by arousing emotions, it is understandable that the language makes use of the most expressive marker of ordinary similative clauses. Neither is it uncommon that further emphasis is added with the word justa ‘just’ seen in (18).

As for the so-called accord clauses that function as illocutionary adverbials, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 321) remark that in the languages of Europe, they are seldom formally distinct from similatives, despite the “striking semantic difference” between the two concepts. On the other hand, the authors state that languages like e.g. Norwegian and Finnish are exceptional in having special markers (conjunctions slik and kuten, respectively) for accord clauses. In spite of the fact that when looking in more detail, it is evident that both slik and kuten can also be used in ordinary similative clauses, North Saami has a similar tendency to have a special marker for accord clauses. Consider the following example:

(19) Nugo dāvjá lea go muhtin dutki čállá,

as often be.3SG when some researcher write.3SG
de son älgá hui jorbasit.

so 3SG begin.3SG very vague.ADV

‘As often is the case when a researcher is writing, he begins very vaguely.’

(i) Sįjö žergödis tabakyš vižödöm piñjassö da

3SG gape.PST.3SG tobacco.ELA yellow.PST.PTCP tooth.PL.ACC.3SG and

vöv gögörtigmoz šeröktis.

horse neigh.CVB burst.into.laughter.PST.3SG

‘He bared his tobacco-yelled teeth and burst out laughing like a horse neighs.’
In itself, the above sentence is not different from simile clauses, but my corpus shows that an overwhelming majority of accord clauses begins with the conjunction *nugo* (or *nu go*) instead of *dego* which is clearly the most common marker of similatives. Furthermore, the semantic main clause of such sentences is most often marked with a consecutive conjunction *de* ‘so, then’.

Although it is possible to replace *nugo* with *dego*, and omit *de*, it is remarkable that, for example, in a sample of the sentences beginning with the accord clause “As we (all) know,...”, 78 of the total of 94 sentences begin with words *Nugo mii* (*buohkat*) *diehtit*, *de*..., 14 with *Nugo...* but without *de*, and only two begin with *Dego...*.

### 3.6 Pretense clauses

Of the phrase and clause types quite closely related to similatives, the last to be discussed here are the clauses that may be called pretense clauses in accord with Chapters XXX, XXX and XXX in this volume. Again, there are two structural types for clauses with more or less the same functions:

(20) *Eanaš son gahččá vulos dego oinnášii doppe juoga.*

mostly 3SG look.3SG down as.if see.COND.3SG there something.GA

‘For the most part, she is looking down as if she were seeing something there.’

(21) *Oainnát dat ruoh[t]á dego čealluládje, dan lea álki dovdat,*

see.2SG it run.3SG as.if bound.CVB it.GA be.3SG easy recognize.INF

*muti*ala Jovsset.
tell.3SG Jovsset

‘You see, it [a wolverine] runs as if it were bounding, it is easy to recognize, Jovsset says.’

Once again, we see both a finite clause marked with *dego* and the non-finite in -*nláhkai* (*-nládjed*) , but in a rather different form than earlier. In the finite alternative (20), the verb is not in the indicative but in the conditional mood. True, the conditional mood is rightfully labeled according to its main function – where *oinnášii* is best translated as ‘(s/he) would see’ – but here as in certain other functions of the mood it can be characterized as a subjunctive in a more general sense of being an irrealis mood in contrast to the indicative. The interplay between conditional, subjunctive and pretense clauses appears, in fact, quite similar in the English translations of (20) and (21), where the make-believe sense is expressed with the compound conjunction made of *as* (cf. *dego*) and the conditional *if* followed by the past subjunctive *were* (*looking/bounding*).

The non-finite pretense clause in (21) is conceptually different from (20): Although the subject “she” may be pretending to see something, (21) does not present wolverines as pretending to bound, but as running in a manner as if they were bounding. However, it might be possible to extend the notion of pretense clause from the everyday understanding of “pretending” to cover not only the instances of intentional attempts to give a false appearance, but also the instances of unintentional activities that give a false appearance of another type of action. Put concretely, when using a pretense clause the focus does not need to be in the intentions of a person “looking down as if seeing” or the innocence of a wolverine “running as if bounding”, but in the false impressions that both kind of actions may give a human observer. Alternatively, both types could be tagged with a more neutral label *simulative*, the term used in Ylikoski (2009: 50–51, 88–91) that presents more
examples of the simulative -nláhkai also in spoken language samples published since the 19th century.

It is also worth noting that in (21), the particle degó occurs with the non-finite form as well, but this can be regarded somewhat pleonastic; cf. degó and the essive case in (5), and examples without degó in Ylikoski (2009: 88–90). As for the interchangeability of the two types, the non-finite clause in (21) could be replaced by the conditional (dego čelošii [as.if bound.COND.3SG]) without problem, but oainnášii in (20) can hardly be replaced by the corresponding oaidninlädje – the main reason for this limitation may be the fact that many of the -nláhkai forms of transitive verbs have a passive interpretation and furthermore the formation oaidninlähkai/oaidninlädje is very often used in the petrified meaning ‘on display’.

The simulative functions of the non-finite in -nláhkai are further related to even more uses of this verb form. These will be discussed in the following section focusing on the use of the postposition láhkai and the verb form -nláhkai in constructions with purposive and future meanings.

4 Purposive and future functions of láhkai and the non-finite in -nláhkai

In this section, the discussion of the simulative markers láhkai and especially -nláhkai is extended to semantic fields that may be less expectable neighbors of similarity than are the equatives and comparatives discussed above: expressions of purpose and future events. As it turns out, the most important common denominator for similative, pretense, purposive and future clauses seems to lie in the irrealis feature inherent in all these functions. First consider the following examples:

\[(22)\] Rasmussen rávve olbmuid davvin árabut molsut juvllaid
Rasmussen advise.3SG human.PL.GA in.the.north early.CMPV.ADV change.INF tire.PL.GA
\[\] dálvvi láhkai, ii=ge vuordit dassážiigo šaddá dálvesiivu.
\[\] winter.GA for NEG.3SG=and wait.INF until become.3SG winter.conditions
\[\] ‘Rasmussen advises people in the north to change tires for the winter earlier, instead of waiting until winter conditions arrive.’

\[(23)\] Norgalaččat eai leat vel oahppan vuodjit ovála, eai=ge leat
Norwegian.PL NEG.3PL be.CNG yet learn.PST.PTCP ride.INF oval.GA NEG.3PL=and be.CNG
\[\] rähkadan skohteriid ovalaláhkai.
\[\] prepare.PST.PTCP scooter.PL.GA oval.láhkai
\[\] ‘Norwegians have not learned to race oval track yet, and have not tuned their water scooters for an oval track.’

\[(24)\] Almmái ii lean rähkkanan, ii=ge gárvodan
\[\] man NEG.3SG be.PST.CNG prepare.PST.PTCP NEG.3SG=and dress.PST.PTCP
\[\] meahcelálähkai.
\[\] wilderness.láhkai
\[\] ‘The man had neither prepared for nor dressed for the wilderness.’

It is not easy to characterize the semantic functions of the phrases dálvvi láhkai, ovalaláhkai and meahcelálähkai as anything else but purposive, and they all could indeed be replaced with phrases headed by the default purposive postposition várás ‘for (the purpose of)’. On the other hand, it may
be difficult to see obvious connections between these examples and the use of láhkai as a simulative postposition in the first examples in this article. In fact, it appears that not all of the above examples are directly related to the simulative postposition but, rather, they share the same origins in the illative case form of láhki ‘mood, manner’ (see Section 3.1). True, the words dálvvi láhkai are formally nothing but a postpositional phrase in which láhkai takes its complement in the genitive-accusative, and even though ovála in (23) could be either the genitive-accusative or nominative and the original composer of the sentence has written oválaláhkai as one word, there are hardly reasons to think that the formation should be understood as a lexicalized adverb. The orthographical choice may be related to the fact that most of the láhkai sequences in North Saami occur in lexicalized expressions based on a number of indefinite pronouns (i.e. postpositional phrases with pronoun complements) such as earaláhkai ‘in a different way’, iešgudetláhkai ‘in various ways’, mänggaláhkai ‘in many ways’, seammaláhkai ‘in the same way’ and nuppeláhkai ‘in another way’. Formations like these are most often written as single-word forms.

On the other hand, meahcceláhkai in (24) is written like a compound noun composed of the nominative meahcci that takes the form meahcce- if attached to nouns such as láhki ‘mood, manner’, the ultimate origin of all láhkai formations. Therefore, at least meahcceláhkai could be interpreted as originating from having a meaning such as ‘(dressed) in a wilderness-manner; in a manner compatible with wilderness’. The element láhkai in (22–24) is not the illative láhkái, however, and as always, the use of láhkai is not different from that of ládje that is etymologically an opaque form:

(25) Liikká bieggga bággii olbmuid gárvodit čakčaládje.
   nevertheless wind force.PST.3SG human.PL.GA dress.INF fall.ládj
   ‘Nevertheless, the wind forced people to dress as if for the fall.’

In (25), too, the initial part čakča is nominative and clearly different from the genitive-accusative čavčča, although the postpositional phrase čavčča lándje ‘for the fall’ would correspond to dálvvi láhkai ‘for the winter’ (22). The exact analysis of the possibilities of morphological variation seen here falls beyond the scope of this article, but especially the semantic function of čakčaládje in (25) is rather revealing when it comes to simulatives. The sentence refers to a summer festival held in July in weather conditions that forced people to dress in a way similar to the way one is supposed to dress in the fall. In other words, they did not dress for the fall yet, but as if for the fall, and čakčaládje is therefore better labeled as a kind of simulative phrase rather than a true purposive. On the other hand, (24) refers to a man who got lost without having prepared himself properly for the environment as it truly existed. The borderline between purposive and simulative interpretations thus depends on our contextual knowledge and general world knowledge in the same way as world knowledge helps us to differentiate between simulative and functive readings of dego phrases (6).

Apart from the examples describing purposeful ways of dressing, the postpositional phrases in (22–23) must be considered as examples of true purposive phrases that refer to the very purposes of changing tires (to manage the winter) and tuning water scooters (to manage oval tracks). Not unlike with simulatives, the clausal counterpart of the purposive láhkai phrases is the non-finite in -nláhkai:
(26) **Vaikko lei oalle buolaš, de goitge eai orron olbmot** although be.PST.3SG rather frost so nevertheless NEG.3PL seem.PST.PTCP human.PL das berošteame duodieambbo, muhto gal sii ledje=ge it.LOC care.PROG more.than.that but DPT 3PL be.PST.3PL=also **bivvanláiđe** gárvodan! withstand.cold.CVB dress.PST.PTCP

‘Although it was rather freezing, people did not seem to care about that, but they sure had dressed to keep warm!’

(27) **Dán ráðjái eai leat fäll[a]n earágo boraspiriíd mat** this.GA until NEG.3PL be.CNG offer.PST.PTCP other.than beast.of.prey.PL.GA REL.PL loaktin láhkái gòtašit buot lágan bohccuid meheide, make.time.pass.CVB kill.FREQ.3PL all.kind.of reindeer.PL.GA wilderness.PL.ILL beaš[k]ala suhttan Berit Kirsten Gaup.
thunder.3SG angered Berit Kirsten Gaup

‘Up to now they have not offered anything but beasts of prey that keep killing all kinds of reindeer in the wilderness just to pass the time, thunders angry Berit Kirsten Gaup.’

Even though North Saami possesses two other types of non-finite purposive clause markers – the converb in -ndihte and the infinitive in -t expressing especially motion-cum-purpose (Ylikoski 2009) – and Examples (26–27) represent only a fraction of all the functions and occurrences of -nláhkái, they deserve our attention due to the specific kind of relation they, too, have to similatives. The functional similarity of the postpositional phrases and the non-finite clauses is highlighted by Example (26) where the purposive **bivvanláiđe** ‘to keep warm’ functions as an adverbal modifier of the verb **gárvodit** ‘to dress’ just seen in Examples (24–25). Here, too, the interpretation may have a similative flavor “(dressed) in a manner of keeping warm”, but such far-fetched wording rather demonstrates the distance between (26) and true similative clauses seen in Section 3.4.

Example (27) is similar to an interesting phenomenon discussed among the pretense clauses. Just as we saw that when speaking of wolverines that “run as if they were bounding” (21) it is understandable that natural languages extend the use of what are prototypically pretense clauses to instances where someone or something is only unintentionally giving false appearances that can hardly be separated from intentionally misleading impressions without world knowledge that tells, for example, that animals behave less intentionally than humans. Example (27) tells about beasts of prey that are depicted from a human perspective as if they were intentionally behaving agents that keep killing reindeer just for the fun of it, to make the time pass. Although the translation of (27) could include the pretentious conjunction **as if** *(to make the time pass)*, the non-finite verb forms in (26–27) are definitely purposive and not simulative in meaning, and they could easily be replaced by the default purposive clauses, non-finite and finite alike, but not with finite pretense clauses with **dego** ‘as if’ as seen in (20).

The relatively infrequent purposive functions of the converb in -nláhkái may not be a paradigm example of the similative-purposive syncretism described by Treis (this volume), but the above examples are nevertheless rather illustrative of the conceptual continuum between similatives and purposives and an addition to the wide range of possible origins of purposive markers presented by Schmidtke-Bode (2009: 197–198) in his comprehensive monograph on the typology of purpose
clauses. For more examples of the North Saami -nláhkai on this continuum, see Ylikoski (2006, 2009: 90–92).

In Ylikoski (2006, 2009), many of the functions of -nláhkai are discussed from a perspective that takes into account the fact that the verb form often refers to states of readiness or suitability for actions that one of the main clause participants has or is planned to have. This perspective takes us even further from the original similar functions of the form in question:

(28) Várrepre/đeanta lea ovdalís fitmn Dívttasvuonas, Snoas[s] ja
vice.president be.3SG earlier visit.PST.PTCP Dívttasvuodna.LOC Snáase.LOC and
Guovdageaimns ja lea vel fitmnnláhkai dán mánus Porsáŋggu,
Guovdageaidnu.LOC and be.3SG yet visit.CVB this.GA month.LOC Porsáŋgus.LOC
Kárášjoha[=NOC] and Gáivuotna.LOC

‘The Vice President has visited Dívttasvuodna, Snáase and Guovdageaidnu earlier, and she is yet to visit Porsáŋgus, Kárášjohka and Gáivuotna during this month.’

(29) Nuba oalle olu lea vel suddnláhkai.
therefore rather much be.3SG yet melt.CVB

‘Therefore, there is still quite a lot (of snow) to melt.’

In (28–29), the non-finite in -nláhkai occurs with the copula leat with which it seems to form a periphrastic predicate with a future meaning. At first sight, the situation may seem similar to the development of the going to future in English and analogous future constructions in other languages; the most important shared feature between purposives and futures is that purpose clauses have an inherent future time reference with respect to the action described by the main clause. However, the purposive functions of -nláhkai are rather marginal both from the perspective of the whole array of the functions of this form as well as from the perspective of other, more frequent default purposives of North Saami. Furthermore, Schmidtke-Bode (2009: 178–185) describes future constructions originating in purposives as developing from expressions of motion-cum-purpose (such as going + to V) in particular, but the latter function is mostly reserved for the infinitive in -t, and indeed, also in North Saami the most common way to optionally distinguish between the present (non-past) tense and a future meaning is to use future constructions where the verbs bodhitit ‘come’, galgat ‘shall’ and šaddat ‘become’ act as auxiliaries to the lexical verb in the infinitive.

Instead, both the structure and the meaning of the future -nláhkai is quite similar to the English be + to construction in that both can be characterized as devices “expressing futurity, with varied connotations of ‘compulsion’, ‘plan’, ‘destiny’, etc, according to context” (Quirk et al. 1985: 143), and the future meaning of the construction “is particularly emphasized when it is accompanied by still or yet” (ibid., p. 218) – compare the use of vel ‘still, yet’ in both (28) and (29).4 Indeed, the sentences would appear less natural without the adverb that in a sense temporalizes the otherwise vague meaning of the verb form, implying that the ultimate state of affairs has not yet been realized. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that of the all phenomena discussed in the present article,

4 As for the general structure of the copula + -nláhkai future, this fits perfectly into the age-old pan-Saami pattern of the periphrastic perfect (copula + past participle, also seen in Example 28) and progressive (copula + progressive non-finite) that has obviously served as the analogical basis for a new TAM category, although the copula + -nláhkai is also used as a passive (patient-oriented) construction (see Ylikoski 2006, 2009: 47–54, 138–140, 153–154).
especially Examples (27–28) are considered quite odd and even ungrammatical by some native speakers.

5 Similative adjectives and nouns

The above discussion on the similatives and related phenomena in North Saami has had its focus on noun phrases and corresponding clauses. Before pulling the threads together, it is instructive to take a somewhat different perspective on the similarity and look at the use of an element that could be described as the adjectival counterpart of the adverbial lähkai. Just like lähkai goes back to the illative form of láhki ‘mood, manner’, the same noun has also given rise to the adjectival derivatives -lágan (~ -lágán) and -lagaš (~ -lágáš), of which the latter alternative is more transparent in having a relatively productive denominal adjective suffix -š accompanied by ordinary stem alteration, but the former and much more common variant, -lágan, is an opaque derivation whose etymology need not concern us here. It also suffices to say that the slight semantic and areal differences between -lágan and -lagaš portrayed at the beginning of the 20th century (Nielsen 1926: 227; 1934: 480–481) cannot be found in my contemporary language data. Prescriptive grammars and dictionaries have always considered -lágan and -lagaš as suffixes only, but some writers occasionally treat them as orthographically independent words without obvious change of meaning.

5.1 Similative adjectives

Most occurrences of formations ending in -lágan (or -lagaš) are analogous to those with lähkai in that they are fully lexicalized expressions such as seammalágan ‘same kind of’, earalágan ‘different kind of’, iešgudeltlágan ‘various kinds of’, mánggalágan ‘many kinds of’ and nuppelágan ‘another kind of’, and buotlágan ‘all kinds of’ seen in (27). However, the suffix is fully productive and as such mainly used to create denominal adjectives such as countrylágan ‘country-like (of music)’, hoavdalágan ‘boss-like’, vulkánalágan ‘volcano-like’ that are used just like ordinary adjectives: as adnominal modifiers and adjectival predicates. Even the personal pronouns can be turned to adjectives such as moai ‘we (two)’: munno (genitive-accusative) → munmolágan vádjoleaddjit [1DU.GA.like wanderer.PL.] ‘our kind of wanderers’.

Adjectives like this usually refer to similarity of two entities on the same conceptual level (e.g. music X is country-like music, person X is a boss-like person), but occasional deviations such as the metonymic expressions engellágan modji ‘angel-like smile’ and minlágan musihkka [1PL.GA.like music] ‘our kind of music’ are part of natural language whose users scarcely notice a deviation (cf. engellágan nieida ‘angel-like girl’, countrylágan musihkka ‘country-like music’).

As for the formation of -lágan adjectives, the suffix is most often attached to the genitive-accusative forms of nouns, but nominative-based forms also occur (hoavdalágan), and in many word groups it is not possible to distinguish between the two (countrylágan, vulkánalágan, engellágan). The adjectives based on personal pronouns are always based on the genitive-accusative. From a syntactic perspective, -lágan adjectives have some resemblance to similative phrases (Section 3.1) when used as adjectival predicatives following the copula verb:

(30) Siskkil lea visti galmmihanlanjalágan.
inside be.3SG building freezer.room.GA.like
‘From the inside, the building is like a freezer room (“freezer-room-like”).’
Even though some occurrences such as those above could be replaced with the expressions seen in Section 3.1 without significant changes in meaning, they are nevertheless adjectives whose limits do not coincide with láhkai and dego; they cannot be used in adverbial functions seen in Examples (1b) and (2b), for example.

When comparing the similitative morphemes -lágan and láhkai, it can be noted that both of them can also be used in functions that do not change the word-class of the stem or the syntactic functions of the word but only modify its meaning. However, as it would be logically impossible to turn adjectives (instead of nouns) to similitative adjectives, -lágan turns simple adjectives to moderative ones, e.g. álkeslágan ‘quite easy’, divrsslágan ‘quite expensive’, rukseslágan ‘reddish’, vilgeslágan ‘whitish’. This is quite similar to the use of -ish in English, where the denominal derivations express similarity (boyish), but deadjectival ones have moderative meanings (reddish, whitish, and colloquially also e.g. easyish, expensivish). In the same vein, some adverbs such as aiddo ‘just (now, recently)’, dávjá ‘often’ and unnán ‘little, slightly’ may be compounded with láhkai, or, as is more usual with this feature, the variant ládje that likewise softens the simple adverb: aiddoládje ‘quite recently’, dávjáládje ‘quite often’ and unnánládje ‘rather little’. This feature can be seen as one more part in the similarity senso lato characteristic of various expressions with -(n)láhkai, from similarity proper to expressions of pretense and further up to purposive and future clauses seen in Section 4.

5.2 Similitative nouns

After similitative adjectives it is time to take a look at the noun phrases headed by formations with the suffix -lágan, in which the same element is used to derive words that can be characterized as similitative nouns. Most of such formations are denominal, but also adjectives and pronouns may be turned into similitative nouns. Consider first the following examples:

(31) Duiskkagiella lea eanet dárogiela lágan.
    German.language be.3SG more Norwegian.language.GA like
    ‘German language is more like Norwegian (“Norwegian-like”).’

(32) Ollugat goittot fárrejit gávpogiidda, main sáhttá oaidnit
    many.people however move.3PL city.PL.ILL REL.PL.LOC can.3SG see.INF
    surgadis vistelágážiid, main eai leat báljo makkárge bálvalusat.
    miserable house.like.PL.GA REL.PL.LOC NEG.3PL be.CNG barely any.kind facility.PL
    ‘However, many are moving to cities where one can see miserable house kind of things in which there are barely any facilities.’

(33) Juanitas ja márain lea unna ommanláganaš mainna vuššet,
    Juanita.LOC and child.PL.LOC be.3SG small stove.like.DIM REL.COM cook.3PL
    muhto juste dál lea gása nohkan.
    but just now be.3SG gas come.to.an.end.PST.PTCP
    ‘Juanita and the children have a small stove kind of thing to cook with, but it is out of gas at the moment.’
(34) Juova siste, sullii čuohte mehtera Anárjávregáttis, áicen
    blockfield.GA inside about 100 meter.GA Aanaar.lake.shore.LOC notice.PST.1SG
gearbmašlágana.
snake.like.GA

    ‘In the blockfield (rock-covered terrain), about 100 meters from the shore of lake Aanaar, I noticed a snake kind of thing.’

(35) Na’vi álbumot leat olmmošláganat geat orrot má núns.
    Na’vi people be.3PL human.like.PL who.PL live.3PL moon.LOC

    ‘The Na’vi are human kind of things living on a moon.’

In fact, there is or at least seems to have been a formal difference between the adjectives in -lágan and the -lágan nouns. In his classical description of North Saami, Nielsen (1926: 227) does not pay attention to the word classes when describing the formations ending with -lágas, but he makes a distinction between the forms beatnatlágas [dog.GA.like] ‘dog-like’ and beanalágas [dog.NOM.like] ‘good-for-nothing dog’, i.e. something close to ‘dog kind of thing’. Indeed, this observation correlates with the genitive-accusative-based adjectives of (30–31) and nominative-based nouns of (32–35), but nominative-based adjectives such as hoavdalágan ‘boss-like’ as opposed to genitival hoavddalágan also appear in my corpus. Nevertheless, even though the formations seen in (32–35) could also possibly be used as similative adjectives (vistelágás ‘house-like’, ommanlágan ‘stove-like’, gearbmašlágan ‘snake-like’ and olmmošlágan ‘human-like’), here they function just like any nouns, with no features characteristic of adjectives. Instead, they refer to concrete objects and have all morphosyntactic properties typical of nouns: They are inflected for both number (32, 35) and case (32, 34), take adnominal adjectival modifiers of their own (33–34), and in (33), the noun ommanlágan is further derived to a diminutive form usually accompanying the modifier unna ‘small’. True, in principle all North Saami adjectives can be inflected as nouns and head NPs, but in the case of -lágan it would hardly be economical to analyze -lágan nouns as (first denominalized and then renominalized) adjectives in disguise.

From a semantic point of view, -lágan nouns can be labeled as similative nouns on a par with the other similatives – verbal expressions for likeness – discussed in the preceding sections. On the other hand, the semantic functions of -lágan are not uniform, and the concept of similarity must be here understood in the wide sense that also covers phenomena such as those discussed under the label “pretense clauses” (Section 3.6). The referents of the similative nouns vistelágás (32) and ommanlágan (33) are nearly the same as those of their base nouns: Many of the occurrences of -lágan nouns can be interpreted as having pejorative connotations, which, indeed, can scarcely be avoided given the overall states of affairs described in (32–33). Such cases are reminiscent of not only similative phrases and clauses but also pretense clauses that refer to counterfactual situations: The houses of (32) and the stove of (33) are depicted as something that do not appear as true representatives of a house or stove but are rather only incomplete reflections of what they ought to be.

Despite the imperfection of their referents, the -lágan nouns in (32–33) do refer to a certain kind of houses and to something fulfilling the role of a stove. However, this is not the case in (34–35) where the nouns gearbmašlágan [snake.lágan] and olmmošlágan [human.lágan] do not refer to any kinds of snakes or humans but only to something similar to those. Neither are these nouns

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5 Nielsen’s translation to Norwegian: adjectives hundsk, hundaktig vs. NPs ussel hund, hund som ikke duer til noget.
pejorative either: In Example (34), a newspaper is quoting a person who is telling about the way the “snake kind of thing” he noticed in the middle of a rock-covered area turned out to be a moss-covered silver neck ring from the Middle Ages.

Example (35) refers to the movie Avatar that tells the story of the Na’vi, a science fiction species similar to, but definitely different from, the human species. Therefore, in a word, olmmošláganat here are humanoids. This may be the only instance where the -lágan nouns authentically coincide with the international neologisms formed with the suffix -oid that goes back to Greek εἶδος ‘form; type’ (OED s.v. -oid). The use of -oid is mostly limited to scientific vocabulary such as mineraloid, planetoid and virusoid based on Greco-Latinate stems (and, paradoxically, often with very carefully defined meanings), but its semantic essence is in principle quite similar to that of -lágan nouns. Nevertheless, unlike -oid, the North Saami -lágan is such a productive suffix that the word olmmošlágan for humanoids does not require significant creativity from its user, and its novelty most likely goes unnoticed by the recipient, too, as the true meaning of olmmošlágan is plainly ‘human kind of thing’ as a noun or ‘human-like’ as an adjective. To my knowledge, there are no lexicalized -lágan nouns with special meanings in the language, but due to the productivity of the suffix formations such as the unattested affiksalágan for the meaning ‘affixoid’ or fáktálágan for ‘factoid’6 would be understood much less consciously than the corresponding -oid internationalisms are at first sight.

Finally, Example (36) shows that even personal pronouns may be turned to similative NPs (cf. munnlágan vádjoleaddjit ‘our kind of wanderers’ mentioned at the beginning of Section 5.1):

(36) Sii álge gohčodit mu láganiid asfáltasápmelažžan.
    3PL begin.PST.3PL call.INF 1SG.GA like.PL.GA asphalt.Saami.ESS
   ‘They began calling my kind of people “asphalt Saami”.’

Even though the expression mu láganiid is based on the genitive-accusative form followed by an orthographically separate similative morpheme, the more expected appearance would be muláganiid, and it would be impossible to form “similative pronouns” – used like a noun and not an adjective here – based on nominatives (such as *munláganiid).

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6 The depreciative tone of factoid is quite similar to the pejorative meanings of -lágan nouns.
6 Discussion and conclusion

The most common types of North Saami expressions for similarity and related meanings were discussed in Sections 3 and 5, and a summary can be presented in Table 2 in which the more original Uralic types of expressions are contrasted with those more similar to the languages of the SAE type.

Table 2. Expressions of similarity and related functions in contemporary North Saami.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suffixes and postpositions</th>
<th>Preposed particles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functives (role phrases)</td>
<td>N-n (ESS)</td>
<td>dego N ~ N-n (ESS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(nugo N ~ N-n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similative phrases</td>
<td>N(GA) láhkai</td>
<td>dego N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(nugo N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similative clauses</td>
<td>V- nláhkai (CVB)</td>
<td>dego VP/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(nugo, seamma láhkai go VP/S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretense clauses</td>
<td>V- nláhkai (CVB)</td>
<td>dego VP/S (COND)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similes</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>seamma láhkai go S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(degolnugo S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accord clauses</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>nugo S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(dego S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatives (of inequality)</td>
<td>N(GA)/N-s (LOC) A-t (CMPR)</td>
<td>A-t (CMPR) go N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(eanet A go N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatives (comparatives of equality)</td>
<td>(N(GA) A-u (EQD))</td>
<td>seamma A go N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similative adjectives and nouns</td>
<td>N-lágan</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The right-hand column of Table 2 includes a number of particles that correspond to words such as English like, as, than and more, and corresponding analytical devices in most Western European languages. In North Saami, the most important words in this respect are dego and the less frequent but more or less synonymous nugo. Both are traditionally used as markers of similative phrases and as conjunctions introducing similative, pretense, simile and accord clauses. The only remarkable difference between the use of dego and nugo is that the latter is the most common marker of accord clauses that function as illocutionary adverbials and as such conceptually differ from other dego/nugo clauses that can be generally considered as answers to the question “How?”. On the other hand, the most important difference between the standard descriptions of the classical North Saami and contemporary usage is that dego and nugo are also often used instead of – or in addition to – the essive case as a marker of role phrases, here labeled as functives. This is clearly a result of interference from Scandinavian with the functive-similative particle som. However, there are no signs of degolnugo ever being used in the equative constructions: North Saami continues to keep equatives clearly separate from similatives, contrary to the pan-European tendency seen in the data presented by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 327–329). Instead, North Saami uses rather similar devices to mark both comparison of equality and that of inequality.
The middle column of Table 2 presents the suffixal and postpositional equivalents of the preposed particles and conjunctions seen on the right. Interestingly, even though the latter type of constructions outnumber the former type in nearly all of the functions under discussion, the suffixal and postpositional constructions on the left have always received a bit more attention in the descriptions of the language. This may be explained by the fact that they have been considered more original and more like the ones found in other Uralic languages, whereas the preposed analytical particles can be lightly dismissed as less interesting default expressions of the SAE type. However, as the partial cognates of the Saami synthetic equatives in Finnic have not been systematically integrated into their grammatical desictions (see Must 1953–1954), it is quite understandable that formations like guhku ‘as long as’ (9–10) and stuoru ‘as big as’ (11) have been given a typologically unexpected label “postposition” although they clearly fill the slot of predicative equatives in Table 1 (Section 3.3). Therefore, expressions such as (constructed) váríid gievrru [mountain.PL.GA strong.EQD] ‘as strong as mountains’ appear comparable to the Old Irish equative degree of sonairt ‘strong’ in sonartaidir slebe [strong.EQD mountain.PL.ACC] ‘id.’ (O’Connell 1912: 45). Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 283–284) state that among the languages of Europe, synthetic equatives can be found only at the margins of the continent: in Celtic, Uralic and Kartvelian.

In addition to the equative-comparative syncretism, another notable pair are simulative and pretense clauses that pattern quite uniformly. As seen by comparing the examples in Sections 3.4 and 3.6, their main semantic difference seems to lie in the contrast between realis and irrealis modalities. A third, if only emerging, pair consists of non-clausal functives and simulative phrases. As for the influence of neighboring languages and more widespread SAE features in North Saami, and the typology of similatives in general, perhaps the most interesting markers of similatives are the postposition lähkai and especially the non-finite in -nláhkai that does not have parallels in any of the neighboring non-Saami languages.

A typologically less common development of simulative morphemes was discussed in Section 4 that described the use of the non-finite in -nláhkai as a marker of purposives and future events. The relative rarity and semantic explanations of the simulative-purposive syncretism are discussed in more detail by Treis (this volume). As regards the future constructions, it seems possible to observe a somewhat direct relation between the simulative functions and future meanings carried by the same form. Even in the absence of known parallels for a diachronic pathway from simulative to future meanings, with or without a purposive intermediate stage, it is obvious that the future constructions seen in (28–29) ultimately stem from the most original simulative meaning of -nláhkai and the postposition lähkai. Not only do the occurrences of -nláhkai future have connotations of deontic and dynamic modalities, but they specifically refer to states of affairs that are already in the process of taking place or accomplished in the immediate future. In other words, the expected states of affairs (e.g. melting of snow in 29) are near, about to come true, and the subject referent of such a sentence is in a state close to V-ing, much like Máret of (1a) is in a state close to being a magnet.

The last row of Table 2 presents the so-called simulative adjectives and nouns that lack analytical counterparts of the type a snake kind of thing that quite well captures the essence of the simulative noun gearbmašlágan in (34). Although the same form could be used as an adjective (‘snake-like’) as well, the simulative nouns are perhaps typologically and conceptually more interesting in that e.g. gearbmašlágan of (34) does not refer to any kind of snakes in itself, but the noun plainly refers to an entity (here a neck ring) that has once been perceived as something similar to snakes. I am not aware of this kind of “pro-nouns” — that may also be formed from demonstrative and personal
pronouns (36) – having been discussed in theoretical linguistics, but analogous formations can also be found in at least other Uralic languages such as Tundra Nenets (e.g. ńið’a ‘needle’ → ńið’arəxə ‘needle kind of thing; needle-like’, weñeko ‘dog’ → weñekorxa ‘dog kind of thing; dog-like’; Tereščenko 1956: 158).

Like with most of the topics discussed throughout this article, the most valuable perspectives to our general understanding of the synchronic and diachronic network of the various expressions of similarity and equativity are provided by phenomena that distinguish North Saami from the neighboring majority languages that are, in a sense, rivals in the process of leading the language closer to Standard Average European and as well as in splitting the traditional language community with a diminishing number of monolingual speakers.

**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACC</th>
<th>accusative</th>
<th>DU</th>
<th>dual</th>
<th>LOC</th>
<th>locative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>adjective</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>elative</td>
<td>NEG</td>
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<td>adverb</td>
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<td>equative degree</td>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>nominative</td>
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<td>discourse particle</td>
<td>INF</td>
<td>infinitive</td>
<td>VN</td>
<td>verbal noun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corpus**

The newspaper corpus of more than ten million words from North Saami newspapers Min Áigi, Áššu and Ávvir (1997–2011), provided by the Divvun Sámi proofing tools project at the University of Tromsø.

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