Standard negation in Chibchan[1]

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ABSTRACT: This paper surveys the form and the position of the negators of declarative verbal main clauses in the Chibchan languages. It attempts to describe the similarities and the differences, and it ventures hypotheses about the diachrony, primarily with an appeal to the Jespersen and Negative Existential Cycles. It sketches if and how the negators fit more general areal patterning, in particular, the Columbian Central American linguistic area.
KEYWORDS: Negation; Jespersen Cycle; Negative Existential Cycle; Columbian Central American linguistic area.

RESUMEN: Este artículo presenta una panorámica de la forma y la posición de los negadores de oraciones principales declarativas en las lenguas chibchas. Pretende describir las similitudes y las diferencias, y propone hipótesis sobre la diacronía, principalmente en relación con el Ciclo de Jespersen y el Ciclo Existencial Negativo. Apunta de qué manera los negadores encajan en mecanismos más amplios de organización areal, en particular en el área centroamericana colombiana.
PALABRAS CLAVE: Negación; El Ciclo de Jespersen; El Ciclo Negativo Existencial; El Área Colombiano-Centroamericana.

1. Introduction

The Chibchan languages show a lot of variation in the expression of negation of declarative verbal main clauses, henceforth, with Payne (1985) and Miestamo (2005), 'standard negation'. This variation concerns both the form and the position of the negative marker. The variation with respect to position, i.e., the question whether the negator is preposed or postposed with respect to the verb, either as an affix or as a particle, is a little surprising, given that the Chibchan languages are hypothesized to be part of a

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Columbian Central American ('CCA') linguistic area (Constenla Umaña 1991), and that this area is supposed to be characterized by the predominance of postposed negation (Constenla Umaña 1991: 111-112, 200). Of the 32 CCA languages that Constenla Umaña (1991) studied, 14 are Chibchan and only eight of these have postposed negation. Of the remaining six languages five have preposed negation and one has both postposed and preposed negation. The languages are listed in Table 1. Here and elsewhere we use the language names of the *Glottolog* (Hammarström et al. 2019) as well as its language codes ('Glottocodes').[2] In Table 1 we add the names that Constenla Umaña (1991) used, when they differ from the *Glottolog* names.

Table 1: The position of the standard negator (Constenla Umaña 1991)

preposed	postposed	preposed and postposed
Maléku Jaíka (male1297) (= Guatuso) Bribri (brig1243) Cabécar (cabe1245) Ngäbere (ngab1239) (= Movere) Bokotá (boko1272) (= Bocotá)	Pech (pech1241) (= Paya) Boruca (boru1252) Teribe (teri1250) (= Teribe-Terraba) Kuna (kuna1280) (= Cuna) Cogui (cogu1240) (= Cágaba) Arhuaco (arhu1242) (= Bíntucua) Tunebo (tune1260) Chibcha (chib1270) (= Muisca)	Rama (rama1270)
5	8	1

For the non-Chibchan CCA languages the feature scores much better: out of 18 non-Chibchan languages 14 have postposed negation. Assuming that the overarching CCA hypothesis is correct, one could conclude that the position of the standard negator is not a good diagnostic for this area. This is also suggested by the absence of this feature in Quesada (2007: 22-31). Furthermore, in a brief section on negation, Quesada (2007: 76-77) says that Chibchan negation can be preposed or postposed and he doesn't comment on the claim by Constenla Umaña (1991). Still, 20 years after Constenla Umaña (1991) proposed the CCA area, he kept the feature in his later work (Constenla Umaña 2012: 421).

In this paper we study the position and form of the standard negator in some detail. We also look at four more Chibchan languages, viz. Barí (bari1297), Chimila (chim1309), Malayo (mala1502) and Sabanero (saba1272), and for some languages we mention dialect differences. Our account is based on existing, language-particular studies. We offer no empirical novelty. The main merit of the paper is two-fold: we offer a synthesis of the available data on negation in the Chibchan family with the aim of a comprehensive comparison, and we present a number of hypotheses, at least for some languages, as to

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[2] The *Glottolog* system is becoming a standard, but that does not mean that it is fully felicitous for Chibchan, as Diego Quesada (p.c.) pointed out to us.

why the negators are preposed or postposed. While the focus is on standard negation, we discuss nominal and existential negation for some languages, the reason being that standard negation is likely to have its origin in these. To make diachronic claims we cannot count on descriptions of earlier stages of the languages. Instead we rely on what typology can tell us about general changes affecting negation, complemented by synchronic comparison of the closely related Chibchan languages. For some issues this method and the amount of available evidence allows for specific hypotheses. For other issues, however, the synchronic descriptions are suboptimal and our proposals remain conjectures, hopefully steering further research.

The term 'nominal negation' is used here for a variety of things. First of all, we include both privative and ascriptive negation strategies. Privative negation is illustrated in pseudo-English (1).

(1) Yesterday he was *without* swimming.
　'Yesterday he didn't swim.'

Under ascriptive negation we allow the more strict 'substantival' negation strategy – *swimmer* in (2a-b) being a noun, but also the 'adjectival' negation strategy – taking the participle in (2c-d) as an adjectival form, and we include both expressions that ascribe a negative property (2b and 2d) and ones that do not ascribe a positive property (2a and 2c).

(2) a. Yesterday he was *not* a swimmer.
　b. Yesterday he was a *not*-swimmer.
　c. Yesterday he was *not* swimming.
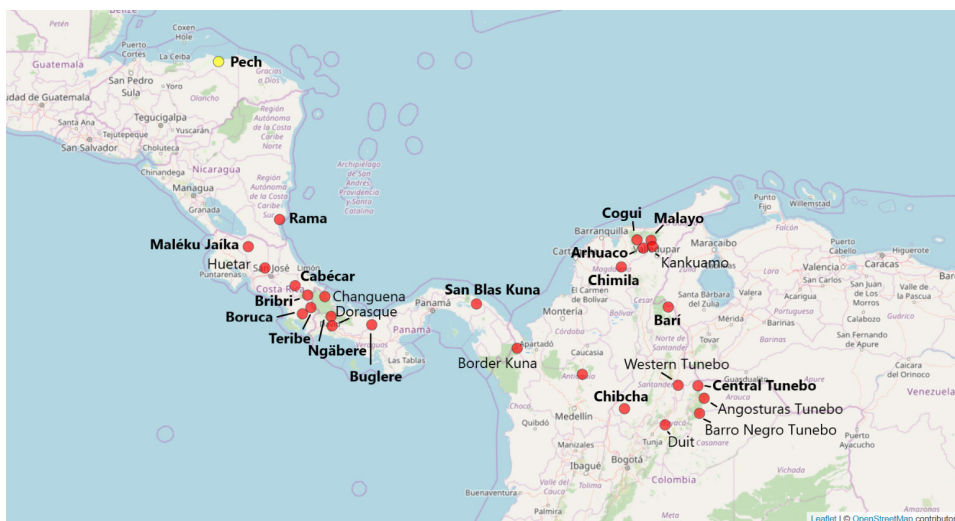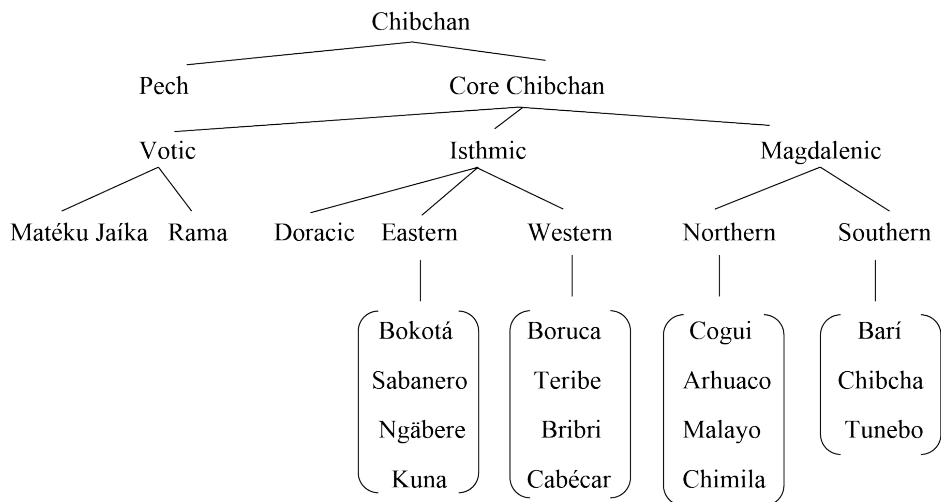　d. Yesterday he was *non*-swimming.
　'Yesterday he didn't swim.'

The reason why we take all of these together is that we often cannot tell them apart. Of course, if we can or if some linguist does try, we will make that clear. The processes in which nominal negation can develop into standard negation are only beginning to be studied (van der Auwera & Krasnoukhova 2020: 109-110; also Michael 2014 for privative negation, and Krasnoukhova & van der Auwera 2019 for ascriptive negation). The development from existential negation to standard negation, the so-called 'Negative Existential Cycle', is better studied (Croft 1991; Veselinova 2014, and Hamari & Veselinova (eds.) 2020), but, as we will see, it is not always easy to separate an existential from a privative negation.

In section 2 we discuss the postposed negators and in section 3 the preposed ones. Section 4 attempts to offer some generalizations, and section 5 is the conclusion. In the rest of the paper we don't give the glottocodes anymore, but for 'Core Chibchan' we will mention the main branch a language belongs to, i.e., Votic, Eastern or Western Isthmic and Northern or Southern Magdalenic. The internal branching of Chibchan in (3) is adopted from *Glottolog*.[3] Glosses and abbreviations, though based on the sources, have

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[3] We disregard Antioquian (anti1242), which *Glottolog* lists as 'unclassified' and for which we have no data. We also have no data for Doracic Isthmic.

been standardized and are meant to reflect our analysis. We retain the orthography of the sources. Map 1 shows geographic location of the Chibchan languages, as given in *Glottolog*. Languages that we discuss in the paper are marked in bold on the map.

(3)

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                              Chibchan
                 ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
               Pech                         Core Chibchan
                               ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
             Votic                          Isthmic                        Magdalenic
        ┌──────┴──────┐        ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐        ┌─────────┴─────────┐
  Matéku Jaíka      Rama    Doracic       Eastern        Western    Northern          Southern
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Eastern	Western	Northern	Southern
Bokotá	Boruca	Cogui	Barí
Sabanero	Teribe	Arhuaco	Chibcha
Ngäbere	Bribri	Malayo	Tunebo
Kuna	Cabécar	Chimila	

Map 1: *Geographic location of Chibchan languages* (Hammarström et al. 2019), base map provided by OpenStreetMap [openstreetmap.org]). Note that the Bokotá and Sabanero varieties are represented on the map with Buglere.

2. Postposed negators

As mentioned above we encounter a great variation in the form of the negation markers. In this section we focus on postverbal negators and consider possible formal correspondences.

2.1 The Boruca suffix -*iˀshi* and possible cognates

2.1.1 Boruca -**iˀshi***, Tunebo* -**ti** *and Barí* -**shi**

We start with negative suffixes in Boruca (Isthmic) and Tunebo and Barí (both Magdalenic), because they are the only ones for which, as far we know, an explicit, though tentative cognancy claim has been made (see below). In Boruca the negator is a suffix -*iˀshi.* It is followed by tense-aspect suffixes and merges with them. For instance, in the present tense -*iˀshi* combines with -*ra* and the merger gives -*iˀsha* (Quesada Pacheco 2018: 128).

(4) Boruca (Quesada Pacheco 2018: 128)
    Át   qui   i   dena-*iˀsha.*
    1SG   DET   3   expect-NEG.PRS
    'I do not expect it.'

According to Quesada Pacheco (2018: 128) it is highly likely ('*muy probable*') that this negator derives from a nominal negator, in particular, an adjectival one (Quesada Pacheco 2018: 70). His argument is that the tense-aspect suffixes[4] are added to the root. In negation, they are added to the root plus the negator, which can thus be seen as a derived root.

(5) Boruca (Quesada Pacheco 2018: 128)
    a. sodíj-ra
       do-PRS

    b. sodíj-*iˀsha*   < sodíj-*iˀsh*-ra
       do-NEG.PRS   do-NEG-PRS

In reality ('*en realidad*') teg-*iˀsha* 'does not speak' is rather 'is not speaking' or 'is lacking in speaking' (Quesada Pacheco 2018: 128). Note that the two paraphrases are not exactly identical: the first is ascriptive and the second is privative.[5] If Quesada Pacheco (2018) is right, we have a standard negator that has a nominal origin or could still be

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[4] Quesada Pacheco (2018: 128) calls these tense-aspect suffixes 'affirmative'. We have two reasons to prefer our terminology. First, these suffixes come in a paradigm with different tense-aspect values (present/ future, imperfect, perfect, plusquamperfect). Second, Quesada Pacheco (2018) contrasts 'affirmative' suffixes with negative ones. However, the negative ones are no less tense-aspect-sensitive than the affirmative ones, so if these suffixes are called 'affirmative', the negative ones would have to be called 'affirmative-negative'.

[5] This illustrates our reason for using the term 'nominal negation' in a wide sense encompassing both negation types.

nominal, and we also have an explanation why the negator is suffixal: this kind of nominal negator is part of the adjectival derivation system and in this system we only have suffixes (Quesada Pacheco 2018: 65). Of course, it is not excluded that this negative suffix is verbal in origin. It is common cross-linguistically that standard negators originate in non-existence verbs (Croft 1991; Veselinova 2014), (cf. also sections 3.1 to 3.3). Tense-aspect suffixes would have belonged to the negative verbal root initially.

Quesada (2004: 367) tentatively suggests that Boruca -*iˀshi* (spelled as -*shi* in Quesada 2004) has cognates in two Magdalenic languages, viz. Tunebo -*ti* and Barí -*shi.* The Tunebo variety in (6) is Central Tunebo.

(6) Central Tunebo (Marquez et al. 1988: 121)
   As   abrá   Bokutra bi-*tí*-bi-ro.[6]
   my   mother Bogotá   go-NEG-PST-3
   'My mother did not go to Bogotá.'

(7) Barí (Quesada 2004: 367)
   Nay   ba-kag-*bishro*-ni.
   1SG   2SG-wait- NEG.PRS -1SG
   'I don't wait for you.'

For Central Tunebo, Marquez et al. (1988: 122, 158) explicitly say that the negator combines with the 'normal' root to build a negative root. The latter is then followed by tense marking, like in Boruca; but, unlike in Boruca, there is also person marking. In Barí, too, tense and person marking follow the negator; there is no claim on whether or not the addition of the negator to the stem makes a 'new' stem. In any case, if the nominal explanation for the suffixal nature of the negator holds for Boruca, it could hold for Barí and Tunebo, too.

Before we look for further cognates, it is of note that the Tunebo situation is a bit more complicated. First, next to the -*ti* strategy, Tunebo also uses a privative strategy, with a privative postposition *bar,* which 'easily verbifies' (Marquez et al. 1988: 62);[7] it is especially used in the future (Marquez et al. 1988: 124).

(8) Central Tunebo (Marquez et al.1988: 124, 124)
   a. Ara   iri   *bar*   kuanjá-ro.
      today   meal   without   woke.up-1
      'I woke up without a meal.'

   b. Asra   kamá-*bar-kera.*
      1SG   sleep-NEG-FUT
      'I will not sleep.'

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   [6] The analysis of -*ro* is not clear. Marquez et al. (1988: 12) say that -*ro* is a first person suffix which can also be used for the first person. For Headland (1994: 38) it is a declarative suffix.
   [7] Headland (1994: 41) treat *bar* as a negative existential, which is, after all, close to what a 'verbified' privative must be ('to be without').

Interestingly, an older account of Rivet (1924: 27-28), for a different dialect, only mentions the *bar* 'without' strategy, and not the *ti* strategy; the latter is mentioned only for prohibitive negation (Rivet 1924: 28).

A second special feature about Central Tunebo is that negation is often 'reinforced' with a suffix *-i* on the constituent before the verb (Marquez et al. 1988: 126).

(9) Central Tunebo (Marquez et al. 1988: 126)
    Ajatra   eb-*i*   bu-*ti*-ro.
    1SG   corn-NEG   tresh-NEG-1
    'I do not tresh corn.'

The *-i* can be seen as a focus or scope marker. It also shows up in some WH-questions, where it arguably also relates to focus or scope.

(10) Central Tunebo (Marquez et al. 1988: 134)
     As   abán   bí-i-ka?
     my   mother   who-?-INT
     'Who is my mother?'

In any case when *-i* occurs in a negative clause, Marquez et al. (1988: 126) treat it as an echo or an enforcer of a kind of 'negative concord' (van der Auwera & Van Alsenoy 2016). If the element should be considered inherently negative, i.e., divorced from the use of what is potentially historically the same marker in WH-questions, then we are not dealing with a postposed negator in (9), but a circumverbal one. Alternatively, if the *-i* marker of the negative clause is not considered inherently negative, then we are dealing with constructional asymmetry, in the sense of Miestamo (2005). In the description of Headland (1994: 41) *-i* alternates with a contrastive suffix *-ra*, but while *-ra* is glossed as contrastive, *-i* is glossed as an inherently negative emphasis marker. Also, there is an example where it follows *-bar*.

(11) Central Tunebo (Headland 1994: 41)
     […]   in   beca   bár-*i*-ra.
             fast return NEG-NEG-CONT
     '[…] I cannot return fast.'

All in all, it seems that *-i* is inherently negative, which then means that a sentence like (9) illustrates a circumverbal negation.

As a final point we note that Boruca belongs to the Isthmic branch of Chibchan, one of the two big branches, and Tunebo and Barí to the Magdalenic branch. This suggests that the *iʔshi/-ti/-shi* strategy is an old one, which existed before the split, possibly 3,200 years B.C. (Constenla Umaña 2012: 419).

2.1.2 *Cogui* -z**hé**/-*ža and Chibcha* -**za**/-**zha**

If Quesada's (2004: 367) suggestion is right, i.e. that Boruca -*iʔshi*, Tunebo -*ti* and Barí -*shi* are cognates, perhaps Cogui -*zhé* (Ortíz Ricaurte1992: 124), -*ža* (Holmer 1953:

334) or ʒa (Oyala Perdomo 2000:785) and Chibcha *-za/-zha* (Quesada Pacheco 2012: 54-55) or *ža/žē/ži* (Preuss 1925: 381) are cognates too.

(12) Cogui (Oyala Perdomo 2000: 785)

Nuʒin	naga-*ʒa*-li-ku-aj	nʒa.
tomorrow	come-NEG-FUT-1SG-NMLZ	is

'Tomorrow I won't come.'

(13) Chibcha (Quesada Pacheco 2012: 54)

Muysca	atabie	abgu-*za*.
person	some	3.kill.ERG.PST-NEG

'He has not killed anybody.'

Judging from example (12),[8] in Cogui the negator precedes tense and person marking, like in Central Tunebo and Barí, thus, in principle, allowing a nominal negator analysis à la Quesada Pacheco (2018). But it wouldn't work for Chibcha, which has the negator after the tense-aspect marking.

Like in Central Tunebo, the Cogui *ʒa* is not the only standard negator. First, there is a *-ki* suffix (Preuss 1925: 382; Holmer 1953: 334; Oyala Perdomo 2000: 78).

(14) Cogui (Oyala Perdomo 2000: 785)

Kaggaba	tua-*ki*	ni-gu-ku.
people	see-NEG	R-do-1SG

'I don't see anyone.'

Second, there are various negative existential strategies with *-lili* and *-gali* (Holmer 1953: 334) or *suñ, suñzē, suñza* and *súngele* (Preuss 1925: 383-384) and yet other forms are mentioned in Celedón (1886: 17-18). It remains unclear whether these strategies count as standard negation strategies or whether they are merely negative existential periphrastic strategies, not unlike what we see in English when we paraphrase 'I don't see anyone' with 'It is not the case that I see anyone'.

(15) Cogui (Holmer 1953: 334)

Bakan	ga-*gali*.
meat	eat-NEG

'He does not eat meat.'

2.1.3 *Terribe* llëme

In Teribe the standard negator is *llëme* and it is not just postposed but 'essentially clausal-final' (Quesada 2000: 103).

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[8] This example is not perfect, for it only shows a periphrastic strategy or an 'indirect' one (in the terminology of Ortíz Ricaurte (1994: 394-395). The other examples in Oyala Perdomo (2000: 785) are not ideal either, for the negators are either *-ki* (14) or *-la* and *-na,* claimed to be 'variants' of *ʒa.*

(16) Teribe (Quesada 2000: 103)

E	ma	wuë	*llëme.*
DEM	fish	eat	NEG

'He doesn't eat fish.'

llëme might decompose into *llë-* and *-me*. Orthographically, *llë-* looks very different from the negators discussed so far, i.e., Boruca *-iʔshi*, Tunebo *-ti* and Barí *-shi*, Cogui *-zhé*/*-ža* or Chibcha *-za*/*-zha*/*ža*/*žē*/*ži*. However, the grapheme *llë-* corresponds to the phoneme /ʒɨ/ (Quesada 2000: 40-41), a correspondence that is better represented in the orthography of the displaced variant of Teribe referred to as 'Terraba'.[9] For Terraba the negator *llëme* is spelled as *ʒíme* (Portilla Cháves 1986: 145, 146, 168, 169, 173). Of course, in Terribe the *llë-* element is not a verbal suffix, different from the previous negators, and it combines with a *-me* element.

We propose that the *llë* part is the grammaticalized form of *llëbo* 'thing', mentioned in three other parts of the grammar. First, it is an indefinite and interrogative pronoun meaning 'something' and 'what' or – the decision is not relevant for our purposes – an indefinite pronoun meaning 'something' that has an interrogative 'what' use in questions (Quesada 2000: 102, 143).

(17) Teribe (Quesada 2000: 143, 102)

a.
Ta	pī-zong	*llë.*
1SG	teach-IMP	something

'Teach me something.'

b.
Pa	shäng	*llë*	shärie?
2SG	POSIT:stand	what	do

'What are you doing?'

Second, *llë* is a partitive marker, making a noun mass and indefinite (Quesada 2000: 52).

(18) Teribe (Quesada 2000: 52)

Dlunna	*llë*	yë-y.
salt	PART[10]	put-1PL.INCL

'We add salt.'

Third, *llë* serves object demotion (Quesada 2000: 145).

(19) Teribe (Quesada 2000: 145)

a.
Tawa	llëbo	yo-no.
1PL.EXCL	things	eat-PRF

'We ate things.'

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[9] Terraba came about after a forced displacement of Teribe speakers in 1695 some 40 kilometres south in present-day Costa Rica (Portilla Cháves 2003: 7, 12).

[10] Quesada's gloss is 'mass', but we prefer a 'partitive' label, being closer to the description.

b. Tawa   yo-no   *llë.*
   1PL.EXCL   eat-PRF   PART
   'We ate.'

Our proposal to identify the *llë* bit of the negator *llëme* as deriving from 'something' would give it yet a fourth place in the grammar.

If the *llë* part derives from 'thing/something', what then is *-me*? Different from *llë-, -me* does not appear much in the grammar. However, the word for 'no longer' is *ame* (Quesada 2000: 104). This makes it plausible to take *me* as a negator. There is furthermore family-internal, Chibchan, evidence: *me* shows up in Bokotá *me* (§3.1), Maléku Jaíka *me* (§3.4) and perhaps in Rama *ma* (§2.1.4).[11] This way *llëme* presumably means 'nothing'.[12] What is left now is to remind us that a development from 'nothing' to 'not' makes sense. We don't have to look further than English or, more generally, West-Germanic. In West-Germanic this development took place in sentences which didn't only contain the 'nothing' word but a standard negator as well. What happened then was that the standard negator disappeared and the 'nothing' word became the new negator (20).

(20) *ne* →   *ne ...*   *not*   →   *not*
    NEG   NEG ... nothing   NEG

In Latin a negative word like 'nothing' changed to a standard negator without the presence of an older negator: the standard negator *ne* merged with *oemum* 'one', becoming 'none', and the resulting *noenum* became the standard negator *non* – (21). This may have happened in Sabanero too – cf. (30b) below.

(21) *ne* →   *ne ... oenum* →   *non*
    NEG   NEG … one   NEG

In both cases, i.e. the Germanic and the Latin case, we can consider the development to be types of 'Jespersen Cycle' (van der Auwera; Krasnoukhova & Vossen 2020) and in both cases 'nothing' goes to 'not' via an intermediate emphatic stage of the marker meaning 'not at all, in no way'. This scenario could also help explain why *llëme* is further to the right than just postposed. In Teribe, adverbials go to the right of the verbal complex (the verb with its arguments) (Quesada 2000: 93).

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[11] A study of all negators, not just standard ones, could show a further distribution. Thus at least Gasso's (1908: 89) study of San Blas Kuna has *me* as the first part of a prohibitive negator *mele.* Forster (2011: 203) has a similar form *melle*.

[12] We find this in the Terraba example (a).
  (a) Terraba (Portilla Cháves 1986: 145)
    Tha   ba   tuɔnõ bɔb khɔŋ ɸírkɔɛ
    1SG   that give   2PL   for   everything
    ga   ɸa   bɔrŋ tuí   ʒímɛ.
    and 2PL 1SG   give nothing
    'I gave you everything and you give me nothing.'

2.1.4 *Pech* **-tVh** *and Rama* **tahma**

If Tunebo *-ti* is a member of the *iʔshi/-ti/shi* cognate set, could Pech *-tVh* be a member too? The full form *-tVh* is emphatic, but this marker usually shows up in a reduced form.

(22) Pech (Holt 1999: 5)
     Pah-*táh*-ari. / Pah-t-ari.
     touch-NEG-1SG.E.PST
     'I didn't touch it.'

This may well be a 'bridge too far', but it is perhaps not farfetched to claim that Pech *-tVh* is related to the postposed negator of Rama (Votic) *taama/tahma*.

(23) Rama (Grinevald 1990: 185)
     Naas   kam-*taama*.
     1SG   sleep-NEG
     'I don't sleep.'

In Pech the vowel of *-tVh* assimilates to the following vowel. If the *taa* of Rama were like *-tVh,* it would be *tah* when followed by *-ma.* Of course, the Rama form is more complicated, as *tVh-* is followed by *-ma.* This *-ma* could be related to the negator *me* in Terribe (§2.1.3), Bokotá (§3.1) and Maléku Jaíka (§3.4) and – coincidence or not, *ma* shows up as a negator in a great many languages of Central and South America (Payne 1990: 77; van der Auwera & Krasnoukhova, Subm; *inter alia*).[13] Since Teribe *llëme* is phonemic /ʒɪme/, it resembles *tVhma.* Of course, this superficial observation begs more questions than it answers.

2.2 Kuna *suli*

The best described dialect of Kuna (Isthmic) is San Blas Kuna. There the main or only standard negator is the clitic *=suli* (Smith 2014: 169) / *chule* (Gassó 1908: 89).[14]

(24) San Blas Kuna (Smith 2014: 169)
     Neg-wagar   bar   an   dako-o=*suli*.
     place-far   anymore   1SG   see-PROS-NEG
     'I will not see the place anymore.'

In Erice (1980: 163) it is stated that *suli* is also a privative postposition, a view supported by Holmer (1947: 163), but the latter also glosses it as an existential negator ('there is not').

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[13] If Ostler's (1997-1998: 207) Tunebo *ba* is the same as the one we have referred to as *bar,* then, according to Ostler (1997-1998: 207), this form is also related to *ma.*

[14] There are similar forms in Border Kuna (Forster 2011: 206; Llerena Villalobos 1987: 86).

(25) San Blas Kuna (Erice 1980: 33)

    Be   *suli*   kege   an   nai.
    2sg   neg   cannot   1sg   go
    'I can't go without you'

The *su-* element shows up in Cogui *suñ, suñzē, suñza* and *súngele.* For these markers Preuss (1925: 382) claims that *-zē* comes from an existential verb *zei̯ši* and *le* from another 'be' verb *gele*. If this is correct, it suggests that *suli* decomposes as neg-ex. It further follows that either San Blas Kuna standard negation is done existentially or, if there was ever a stage when it was not done existentially, San Blas Kuna went through a Negative Existential Cycle.

2.3 Arhuaco and Malayo

Arhuaco and Malayo are two closely related Magdalenic languages. In Arhuaco the standard negator *-u'* on a lexical verb is followed by an auxiliary (Frank 1985: 120-121, 1990: 89-90; Landaburu 1992: 28-29).

(26) Arhuaco (Frank 1985: 8)

    Eima kusarɨ an-a-g-*u'*   nän-na   ni.
    that   deer   nhum.obj-1pl-eat-neg   aux-dist   cert
    'We didn't eat that deer.'

According to Landaburu (1992: 28) the auxiliary is a 'be' verb and the lexical verb is participial. There are five types of participles, each has its suffix (Landaburu 2000: 741). The negator is such a suffix. So, we partially understand why standard negator is postposed: it fits the paradigm of participial suffixes. The 'be' verb seems to serve or have served ascription, as it can mark the subject, as in (27). Its position makes sense too – the language is SOV (Frank 1985: 4)

(27) Arhuaco (Landaburu 1992: 28, 2000: 743)

    Chu   narwin.
    see.neg   be.sg.ass
    'I do not see it'

It appears that the auxiliary is not necessary (Frank 1985: 64, 1990: 47), but it is not clear what the conditions are under which it may be absent (cf. also Miestamo 2005: 290).

In the related language Malayo, there is no auxiliary at all, but not because it is omitted but because it seems to have turned into morphology. The language has three negators sensitive to tense and aspect, viz. *un, -ung, -uní,* and *-ungui* (Trillos Amaya 1999: 49; Williams 1993: 90-91).

(28) Malayo (Trilllos Amaya 1999: 49)

    a. Zhamai-*un*-ka.
       sing-neg-aff
       '(S)he does not sing'

b. Zhamai-*uní*.
  sing-NEG.PFV
  '(S)he did not sing'

We take it that the Malayo initial -*u* in each of the negators is the suffix -*u* from Arhuaco and that what follows, always containing an -*n*, is what remains of the 'be' verb in Arhuaco. But there is no separate ascription anymore, we are just dealing with four standard negators. What we see therefore makes sense as a development from ascriptive negation to standard negation, a scenario that is only recently deserving due attention (Krasnoukhova & van der Auwera 2019).

2.4 Interim conclusion

We have now surveyed the postposed negators of Chibchan. The first thing to note is that there is more than one way that a negator can be postposed to the verb. (29) surveys what we could glean from our sources.

(29) … V …NEG]$_{CL}$ Terraba, Teribe
    V=NEG   Kuna
    -NEG]$_V$ Arhuaco, Rama
    -TA-NEG]$_V$ Chibcha
    -NEG-TA]$_V$ Boruca
    -NEG-PERS.TA]$_V$ Pech
    -NEG-TA-PERS]$_V$ Tunebo, Barí, Cogui
    -NEG.TA-ILL]$_V$ Malayo

First, the negator may be clause-final, in which case it is also, but trivially so, postposed to the verb. Interestingly, this is the only case in which the negator is a particle and we suggested earlier that this marking may still show a lexical origin and may be therefore relatively recent. In Kuna we may have a postverbal clitic. The other cases have verbal suffixes. On a grammaticalization cline a particle is lower than a clitic and the latter is lower than a suffix. Second, the suffixes may or may not be the absolutely final element in the verb. If not, they can be followed by tense-aspect markers or by both person and tense-aspect markers, in either order, or by an illocutionary marker. As for the relative placement of tense-aspect markers and negative suffixes, it seems that the negative suffixes usually precede the tense-aspect markers. This synchronic variation relates, no doubt, to different origins. For Teribe the negator may go back to the negative indefinite pronoun 'nothing', for Kuna to a negative existential verb, for Tunebo, Barí and Cogui to an adjectival negator and for Arhuaco and Malyao to a participial one, which can be taken as adjectival too.
    Second, Boruca -*iˀshi*, Tunebo -*ti,* Barí -*shi*, Cogui -*zhé/-ža* or Chibcha -*za/-zha/ža/ žē/ži* may well be related and with a good deal of hesitation one could think that Pech -*tVh* and the first elements of Teribe *llëme* and Rama *taamma/tahma* are related too. However, the hypothesis that that *llë* is originally 'thing' is far from the nominal negation analysis mentioned for Boruca -*iˀshi*. So while both hypotheses attain a certain plausibility, it is

impossible to unite them in a unified account, possibly because the various forms are not, after all, cognates, but just look-alikes. At least, this undecidedness puts this matter on the agenda for future research.

A third observation relates to Tunebo. We may here find a case where the language has a circumposed maker, if, at least, we may consider the *-i* suffix to be (or have become) inherently negative.

A final observation is that postposed negators are found throughout Chibchan. We find them in Pech, Votic, Isthmic as well as Magdalenic.

3. Preposed negators

3.1 Buglere *mingiale* and *ming*

In the Buglere branch of Eastern Isthmic Chibchan there are two languages, viz. Sabanero and Bokotá. Sabanero is described by Jara (1989) and Quesada (2012), the latter being more extensive. For Quesada (2012) standard negation has four negators, viz. *mingiale*, its two short forms *miniale* and *ming*, and occasionally also *ning* (literally) 'no one' (Quesada 2012: 116-117). The canonical position of the negators is preposed, though not necessarily adjacent to the verb, but rather before the OV verbal complex (Quesada 2012: 117).

(30) Sabanero (Quesada 2012: 118, 124)
    a. Ba   *ming*   salmong   doe   cha   aling.
       2SG   NEG   salmon   bring   1SG   BEN
       'You didn't bring me the salmon.'

    b. Che   maña   *ning*   be   chige.[15]
       3SG   NEG   FUT   come
       'He won't come.'

The long form is also used as an existential negator.

(31) Sabanero (Quesada 2012: 117)
    Gidi   doia   *mingiale*   na.
    and   already   NEG.EX   more
    'And the enemy no longer exists.'

Jara (1989: 116, 135) gives only two negators, viz. one short form *min* for standard negation and one long form *mialen* for existential negation. *mialen* is close to the form that Margery Peña (1993: 82) gives in a dictionary, viz. *miále*, who describes it as a contraction of a negator *míñ* and *iále* glossed in Spanish as 'no haber'. The contraction itself is also glossed as 'no haber'. We take it that the author has *no hay* in mind for the resultant meaning, which in English comes out better as 'not exist'. *iále* probably does not have a

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[15] In the source material the gloss '3SG' corresponds to the complex form *che maña*.

negative meaning itself, but it would express existence only in a negative context, different from the positive *klebi* or a zero 'be' verb, which cannot occur there (Quesada 2012: 117). So *mingiale/mialen* is most likely a univerbation of a negator and an existence verb. Interestingly, though Quesada (2012: 117) writes *mingiale* as one word in the example (31), in the surrounding text it is written as two words.

For Bokotá we find Gunn (1975: 90) mentioning two simple standard negators, *me* as the basic form, illustrated in (32) and *mi* for the future; both are preposed.

(32) Bokotá (Gunn 1975: 91)

Cha	*me*	ñage	bla	lie	dale.
1SG	NEG	can	banana	cook	in.no.way

'I really can't cook banana.'

For *me* Gunn also mentions a negative existential use.

(33) Bokotá (Gunn 1975: 9)

Bla	*me.*
banana	NEG.EX

'There are no bananas.'

What to make of this? We propose that of the two languages Sabanero is the more progressive one, in the sense that it pushed furthest in the Negative Existential Cycle. Next to simple standard negator *min/ming*, corresponding to Bokotá *mi/me,* it developed a dedicated existential negator, which it then started using as a standard negator too.[16] Interestingly, in the prohibitive the *ming iale* negator makes no inroad; it remains the territory of *ming* (Quesada 2012: 98). This makes sense: the imperative is an action-oriented construction, and negative existence is a state-oriented construction. Finally, the Sabanero negator *ning* is intriguing: as mentioned already, *ning* 'no one' is like Latin *non oenum* also 'not one', which turned into the standard negator *non* – another possible manifestation of a Jespersen Cycle.

3.2 Ngäbere *ñaka* and related forms

With Ngäbere we stay in Eastern Isthmic. The language is spoken in Panama but since the 1950's speakers emigrated to Costa Rica. In Panama Ngäbere the default standard negator is *ñaka* (Quesada Pacheco 2008: 64)

(34) Panama Ngäbere (Quesada Pacheco 2008: 64)

Dwana	*ñaka*	nibi	nügueta.
son-in-law	NEG	stay.REC	arrive.IND.ITER

'The son-in-law did not return'

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[16] Quesada (2012: 117) describes *ming* as a reduced form *ming iale.* Another perspective, one that fits our conjecture better, has *ming iale* as an expanded form of *ming.*

There are two longer negators, viz. *ñakare* and *ñäkwäre* (Quesada Pacheco 2008: 65-69). The latter is exclusively used as a negative existential (35c). The former is used both for standard negation – and then it is preposed (35a) – and for an existential negation – and then it follows the constituent in its scope, if expressed, (35b).

(35) Panama Ngäbere (Quesada Pacheco 2008: 65, 66, 68)
 a. Mä *ñakare* törabai ti kwetai.
  2SG NEG want.FUT 1SG eat.FUT
  'You won't want to eat me.'

 b. Siribi *ñakare.*
  work NEG.EX
  'There is no work.'

 c. Kä ki dere, dwana *ñäkwä* nüta,
  day come.REC late son-in-law NEG arrive.REC.ITER
  jädrin naine *ñäkwäre*.
  next.day early NEG.EX
  'It was getting dark, but the son-in-law did not come back, the next day he wasn't there.'

For the Ngäbere of Costa Rica, Murillo Miranda (2016: 77-78) reports similar forms and functions. But there are differences, too. First, standard negation has two additional forms, viz. *ña(n)* and *ñukwä*. In Panama Ngäbere both forms function as an adversative conjunction ('but not'), the short one has a wider conjunctive use ('and not', 'lest') and it also functions as a prohibitive negator. Second, *ñakare* (here *ñagare*) is given a privative characterization – see *tö ñagare* 'fool' but literally 'without idea' in (36) – and only *ñäkwäre* (here *ñukwäre*) is explicitly described as an existential negator. Third, all of them can express negation, the only difference being that *ñagare* and *ñukwäre* carry emphasis.

(36) Costa Rica Ngäbere (Miranda Murillo 2016: 78)
 Jetébe ti gwe Jaime tö *ñagare* meta-i.
 tomorrow 1SG NOM Jaime idea PRIV hit-FUT.REM
 'Tomorrow I will hit that fool Jaime.'

(37) Costa Rica Ngäbere (Miranda Murillo 2016: 78)
 Mä *ñaka/ñagare/ñan/ñukwäre/ñukwä* mütü kwet-e.
 2SG NEG pig eat-PRS
 'You don't eat pig.'

A comparison between the two varieties makes us hypothesize that the Costa Rican variety of Ngäbere is the more progressive one, at least with respect to the most complex form, i.e., *ñäkwäre/ñukwäre*. In Panama it only has an existential use, in Costa Rica it is used as a standard negator, but it is a marked one, for it carries emphasis. Thus, the entry of *ñäkwäre/ñukwäre* into the realm of standard negation allows us to see it as going through a

Negative Existential Cycle. The other complex form *ñakare/ñagare* could be a newcomer too, either also originally an existential negator or perhaps a privative one.

3.3 Bribri *kë* and Cabécar *ká*

With Bribri and Cabécar we move to Western Isthmic. In the account of Jara Murillo (2013: 106-108), Bribri has a preposed *kë* as a standard negation. (38a) illustrates this, and (38b) shows the positive counterpart.

(38) Bribri (Jara Murillo 2013: 107)

    a. Ie'   *kë*   tsö-*kũ*.
       3SG   NEG   sing-IPFV.NEG
       'He won't sing.'

    b. Ie'   tsö-ke.
       3SG   sing-IPFV
       'He will sing.'

A comparison between the negative and the positive version shows that the negative version does not only differ by the presence of the negative *kë*: the verb is different too: the tense aspect marker is not *ke* but *kũ*. This means either of two things: in case there is nothing inherently negative about *kũ,* we are dealing with constructional asymmetry (Miestamo 2005). If *kũ* is inherently negative, however, negation in Bribri is not preposed but circumposed, at least in the imperfective. The latter analysis is the plausible one. It turns out that *kũ* is also a negative existential or stative verb.

(39) Bribri (Jara Murillo 2013:107)

    a. Pë'   *kë̀*   *kũ*   ù   ã.
       people NEG   NEG.EX   home LOC
       'There is nobody home.'

    b. Pë'   tso'   ù   ã.
       people EX   home LOC
       'There is somebody home.'

How this structure needs to be understood is unclear, though. In a 'normal' Negative Existential Cycle a negative existential impinges on standard negation and replaces it. In (39a) there could be two negators. Negative Existential Cycles with two negators are not unknown, but we usually see that the existential negator is added to the standard negator, initially for emphasis, and that it is the newer negator (cf. van der Auwera; Krasnoukhova & Vossen 2020: 15-17). In (39a), however, the existential negator is morphological, and the non-existential one is syntactic, suggesting that the existential one is older.

What makes it more complex still, is that *kë* V-*kũ* doubling is not the only negation strategy. In the perfect, shown in (40), *kë* has constructional asymmetry, with the verb taking up middle morphology, which is not, in any obvious way, inherently negative. Note

that there is paradigmatic asymmetry: the semantic distinction between recent and remote past is neutralized in the negative.

(40) Bribri (Jara Murillo 2013: 108)
    a. Ie'   iné̃.
      3SG   play.PST.REC
      'He played.' (recently)

    b. Ie'   inĩ'.
      3SG   play.PST.REM
      'He played.' (not recently)

    c. Ie›   kè̀   inĩ̀nẽ.
      3SG   NEG   play.M.PST.REM
      'He didn't play.'

What is also puzzling is that the earlier description of the language by Fábrega (1898: 50) identifies the negator as a clause-initial *ki*.

In Cabécar the situation is somewhat similar. At least, there is a preposed particle *ká* and in some tense-aspect settings there is also a negative existential auxiliary *kṹnã*, which is a suppletive form different from the positive existential verb *tsõ* (Margery Peña 1985, 1989).

(41) Cabécar (Margery Peña 1985: 107; 1989: lxviii; 1989: 120)
    a. Yís   *ká*   ttö   ijéwá   ra.
      1SG   NEG   speak.IPF.IND   3PL   with
      'I don't speak with them.'

    b. Bá   chéga   *ká*   *kṹnã*   díglö   ska.
      2SG   friend   NEG   NEG.EX   river   in
      'Your friend is not in the river.'

    c. Yís   kuta   *ká*   ksö   *kṹnã*.
      1SG   sister   NEG   sing   NEG
      'My sister was not singing.'

Sometimes the verb has a nasal negative affix *-nẽ/-nĩ* (Margery Peña 1985: 115), which might derive from the negative existential auxiliary.

(42) Cabécar (Margery Peña 1985: 115)
    Ká   ijéwá   wã   nã́glö   mẽ́-nẽ   yís   ĩã.
    NEG   3PL   ERG.NEG   money   give.PST.REM-NEG   1SG   to
    'They didn't give me money.'

Example (42) also shows that the ergative has a dedicated negative form *wã*, different from the positive *të* and that *ká* is not restricted to the immediate preverbal position. Like

for Bribri, it is not clear whether the markers associated with the definitely negative *ká* show constructional asymmetry or double and even triple exponence.

3.4 Other markers

What is interesting about Maléku Jaíka is that it has two preposed particles, viz. *épe* (also =*pe*) and *éme* (also *em*=and =*me*) and they can also occur together as *epéme,* which tends to make the negation stronger (Constenla Umaña 1998: 26, 163-164)

(43) Maléku Jaíka (Constenla Umaña 1998: 164)
    Epéme   rricuánhe.
    NEG   (3).3ERG.see.R
    'He didn't see it.'

Also of interest is that these particles are not just preposed, but clause-initial (Constenla Umaña 1998: 163). It compares to Teribe in the postposed domain: the Teribe negator is not just postposed but clause-final. Finally, note that we meet *me* again (see §2.1.3 and §2.1.4).

In Chimila (Magdalenic) the negator is *jumma*. Trillos Amaya (1996: 162-163) points out that it sometimes takes a subject marker, and the author sees this as a reason for a tentative hypothesis that *jumma* has a verbal status.

(44) Chimila (Trillos Amaya 1996: 162)
    a. *Jumma*   juŋŋ-a   Maria.
       NEG   walk-IPFV   Maria
       'Maria doesn't walk.'
    b. *Jumma*-na   juŋŋ-a.
       NEG-1SG   walk-IPFV
       'I don't walk'

If *jumma* is a verb, we may perhaps understand its clause-initial position. Chimila is SVO (Adelaar with Muysken 2004: 79), though pronominal subjects appear as verbal suffixes and then the sentence starts with the verb. Also, the final -*a* on the lexical verb, glossed as 'imperfective' by Trillos Amaya (1996), is suspicious: for constructions with auxiliaries Adelaar with Muysken (2004: 76) propose that it might well be a nominalizer.

Finally, we come to Votic Rama. Rama was already mentioned in §2.1.4, because of its postposed *taama/tahma*, but the language also has two preposed particles, viz. *aa* and *yaana* (Grinevald 1990: 183, 190). Neither has to occur immediately before the verb.

(45) Rama (Grinevald 1990: 183, 190.)
    a. Nkiikna-lut   *aa*   uut   kain-i.
       man-PL   NEG   dory   make-T
       'The man doesn't make a dory'

b. *Yaana*   urnga   ma-ni-tang.
   NEG   food   2-1-give
   'I am not going to give you food.'

3.5 Interim conclusion

We can now summarize the findings on proposed negators and compare with what we have observed for postposed negators. Thus, like postposed negators the preposed negators show a fair amount of variation. Just like 'postposed' negators can be clause-final, 'preposed' ones can be clause-initial, cf. Maléku Jaíka *épe, éme, epéme* and Bribri *ki* (in the description of Fábrega 1898). 'Preposed' negators can be adjacent to the verb, but they can also allow other material in between, cf. the negators of Buglere. This is in parallel with the variation in the position of the postposed negator relative to the verbal root. We may also have circumposition, cf. Bribri *kë* V-*kũ* and Cabécar *ká* V *kῖ̃nã*, but it is rather marked, just like it was in the postposed domain. For the postposed domain we appealed to diachrony involving existential negators and a negative indefinite. We do this here too: negative existentials as a source is hypothesized for Sabanero, Bokotá, Ngäbere, Bribri and Cabécar, and an indefinite origin was mentioned for Sabanero *ning* 'not one'.

There are differences too. Thus, we see univerbation of two negators in Maléku Jaíka, and the negator in Chimila might be a verb. The biggest difference is that the preposed negators are nearly all free standing elements, mostly particles and perhaps a verb in one language (Chimila), whereas the postposed ones are nearly all suffixal. This difference is found in South America as a whole (Krasnoukhova & van der Auwera, subm.) and, in fact the world as a whole (Dahl 1979: 94; Dryer 2013). There is yet another difference. The postposed negators seem typical of the Magdalenic branch languages but are, in fact, found in all other branches too. The preposed ones, on the other hand, are concentrated in Votic and Isthmic, and found only in one language outside these branches (Chimila). We will come to this difference in the next section.

4. Overview of the negation markers

Table 2 lists the negation markers discussed in this paper. The languages and families are listed in an order going from the North to the South and from the West to the East.

Table 2: Negation in Chibchan languages

Brench	Language	Preposed		Circumposed	Postposed	
		Clause-initial	Preposed		Postposed	Clause-final
Non-core	Pech				*-tVh*	
Votic	Rama	*yaana*	*aa*		*taama*	
	Maléku Jaíka	*éme* *épe* *epéme*				
West Isthmic	Cabécar		*ká*	*ká .. kuna*		
	Bribri	*ki*	*kë*	*kë ... V- kũ*		
	Teribe					*lléme*
	Boruca				*-iˀshi*	
East Isthmic	Ngäbere		*ñaka*			
	Sabanero		*ming iale*			
	Bokotá		*miale* *me*			
	Kuna				*-suli*	
North Magdalenic	Chimila		*jumma*			
	Cogui				*-zhé* *-ki*	
	Arhuaco				*-u*	
	Malayo				*-u*	
South Magdalenic	Chibcha				*-z(h)a*	
	Barí				*-shi*	
	Tunebo			*-i ...-ti*	*-ti* *-bar*	

As observed in §3.5, preposed negation is mostly found in the North, i.e., in Votic and Isthmic – though not in Pech. If Constenla Umaña (1991: 111) is right, Meso-America is predominantly preposed (though Campbell et al. 1986, van der Auwera 1998 or Munro 2017 do not consider the position of the negator in their analyses of the Meso-America as a linguistic area). Further north is, to wit, North America and for this large area Vossen (2016: 321) argues that it prefers the preposed negation. So it would make 'areal sense' to see the North of Chibchan connecting with Meso-America and North America. Second, postposed negation is found throughout Chibchan (cf. §2.4) but because of the near-absence of preposed negation here, it is more strongly associated with the South. According to Constenla Umaña (1991: 111) the northern part of South America is mixed with respect to the position of negation. So there is no strong areality here. However, it is true that South

America as a whole has an unusually high percentage of postposed negators (Muysken et al. 2014: 305-306; Vossen 2016: 321).

There are several markers that show up both in the North and the South, suggesting that they are very old. Thus, *iʔshi/-ti/shi* forms are mostly Magdalenic, but Boruca is Isthmic and perhaps the *t-* forms in Pech and Rama are cognates, too. *me* and *ma* forms show up in two branches, too. The *k-* forms are essentially West Isthmic, but Cogui has a *ki* form as well. Finally, there are some forms (like Rama *yaana*) that are unique to a language.

5. Conclusion

We described the variation in both the form and the position of standard negators in the Chibchan languages, based on published sources. The clearest result is that the characterization of Chibchan as having predominantly postposed negators is not correct. There is, instead, a great deal of variation. Also, within the set of languages that have either postposed or preposed negators there is a good amount of variation. As an indicator of belonging to the Columbian Central American linguistic area, the position of the standard negators does not fare well. Nevertheless, we have shown that within Chibchan the position of standard negators is not areally random, with the North preferring preposed negators and the South preferring postposed negators. The North-South division is, however, also a genealogical one, with Isthmic in the North and Magdalenic in the South.

The variation in the form and the position of the standard negators, so much is obvious, must relate to different origins. We hope to have shed some light on these origins, not through direct diachronic analysis, but through making sense of synchronic variation, aided by the typological literature on what is known to be pathways for the development of negation. We have made suggestions on the relevance of both the Jespersen and the Negative Existential Cycle. However, much remains tentative or even unclear. In that way, this paper asked as many questions as it provided elements of answers, and it counts as an invitation for further research.

Abbreviations

1	first person	IPFV	imperfective
2	second person	ITER	interative
3	third person	LOC	locative
A	aspect	M	masculine
AFF	affirmative	N-	non-
ASS	assertion	NEG	negation
AUX	auxiliary	NMLZ	nominalization
BEN	benefactive	NOM	nominative
CERT	certitude	OBJ	object
CL	clause	PART	partitive
CONT	contrastive	PERS	person
DEM	demonstrative	PFV	perfective
DET	determiner	PL	plural
DIST	distal	POSIT	position
E	early	PRIV	privative
ERG	ergative	PROS	prospective
EX	existential	PRS	present
EXCL	exclusive	PST	past
FUT	future	R	realis
HUM	human	REC	recent
ILL	illocution	REM	remote
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
INCL	inclusive	T	tense
IND	indicative	V	verb
INT	interrogative		

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