MULTI-VERB CONSTRUCTIONS IN ECUADORIAN QUECHUA

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This paper presents the array of multi-verb constructions found in central Highland varieties of Ecuadorian Quechua, notably Salasaca Quechua. These varieties are characteristic for all of Ecuador. There are more differences than is currently known, even if these differences are relatively small. The differences with other varieties of Quechua are larger. Using a number of diagnostic criteria, it is shown that the multi-verb constructions differ in the degree to which they are syntactically integrated.

1 Introduction

In this paper I present and analyze the different constructions in Ecuadorian Quechua in which two verbs combine to form a complex predicate. After giving an overview of the main subordination strategies in the Quechua languages, illustrated with data from Peruvian varieties, I present the Ecuadorian Quechua case, drawing but expanding substantially on my (1977) dissertation. Unless specifically mentioned otherwise, the data will be drawn from the central varieties of Ecuadorian highland Quechua, notably Salasaca Quechua.

So far mostly phonological differences have been discovered between the different highland varieties of Ecuadorian Quechua; morphosyntactically, they share a great many features, and distinguish themselves as a block from Peruvian varieties of Quechua. The differences are a consequence of the history of the spread of Quechua to Ecuador originally as a second language during the Inca and early Colonial periods (cf. e.g. Muysken 1977). I have not as yet found very many differences in the grammar of the different varieties of Ecuadorian Quechua, although theoretically they could differ in several ways. In

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Muysken (2010b) gives an overview of the predicate/complement combinations found in different varieties.

Looking at multi-verb constructions in Ecuadorian Quechua, seven main types can be distinguished: (a) Verbal derivational suffixes, such as -naya causative and -chi desiderative; (b) Various types of infinitival verb clusters; (c) Various auxiliary constructions with ka- ‘to be’, involving past habitual, past potential or irrealis, and stative-like passive; (d) Complements of movement verbs, originally agentive marked; (e) Complements derived from quotatives; (f) Co-verb sequences; (g) A single bare serial verb in the comparative construction.

I will discuss these types one by one, using a number of diagnostic features which potentially reveal the degree to which these multi-verb constructions have undergone internal restructuring or reduction from full clausal complements. These diagnostic features include:

(i) Processes of phonological reduction and fusion; (ii) Placement of evidential markers internal to the complement or adjunct; (iii) Absence of subordination marking of the complement; (iv) Case marking inside of the complement; (v) Case marking of the complement as such; (vi) Freedom of positioning of the object of the complement verb; (vii) Person marking on the main verb; (viii) Placement of evidential markers on the second predicate; (ix) Order of predicate and complement; (x) Position and interpretation of object marking; (xi) Scope of negation; (xii) Selectional possibilities of the embedded predicate.

Taking these features as analytic tools, I then briefly discuss the historical development of these multi-verb constructions and the relations among them, before turning to the theoretical and typological implications of these multi-verb constructions in the South American context.

2 Subordination in the Quechua Languages

Altogether, two main types of subordination can be found in the Quechua languages: nominalization and adverbial subordination. Both subordination types are marked with suffixes on the verb. Typically the subordinate clause precedes the main clause, but there are exceptions to this.

Nominalization is illustrated in (1). Morphologically, it is characterized by the presence of both a nominalizing suffix and a case marker, and in this case as well as many others, person marking, on the verb. There are several nominalizers, which may be succinctly characterized