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Adelaar, W.F.H.; van, Gijn R.; Haude, K.; Muysken, P.

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Participial clauses in Tarma Quechua

Willem F.H. Adelaar

Leiden University Centre of Linguistics

Abstract

This article discusses a clause-subordinating strategy attested in a Quechua variety spoken in central Peru. A particular type of adverbial clause is headed by a verb containing an affix that normally marks a participle, whereas no case marker is involved. The function and use of such a clause is reminiscent of the absolute construction found in classic Indo-European languages.

Participial clauses in Tarma Quechua¹

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0. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to introduce and discuss a clause-subordinating strategy attested in the dialect of Quechua originally spoken near the town of Tarma, in the province of the same name in the northwestern part of the department of Junín in central Peru.² In this variety of Quechua, a particular type of dependent clauses is headed by a non-finite verb containing the affix *-sha*, which in other contexts functions as the marker of a participle. The function and use of such clauses are reminiscent of the absolute constructions found in the classic Indo-European languages Latin, Greek and Sanskrit, in which the predicate of a dependent clause also has the shape of a participle, whereas both that participle and the subject of the clause are marked for a particular case (ablative in Latin, genitive in Greek and locative in Sanskrit). In Quechua dependent clauses headed by a *-sha* predicate, the subject and the predicate are not case-marked. For this type of clause we have chosen the denomination ‘participial clause’, because they are headed by a nominalized verb that is similar in function to the past participle of the aforementioned Indo-European languages, both in its standard use and in the derived absolute construction. In what follows, we will first provide an overview of the types of dependent clauses that occur in Tarma Quechua. Secondly, we will briefly discuss the different types of nominalization in order to delineate the function of *-sha* as a nominalizer. Finally, we will describe the main characteristics of the participial clause and discuss its relation to clauses based on other subordination strategies such as adverbialization and nominalization, both in terms of morphological valence and semantics.

¹ For the redaction of this article, we gratefully acknowledge the support of the Research Centre of Linguistic Typology of La Trobe University (Victoria, Australia). We are grateful to two anonymous reviewers for useful and constructive remarks.

² The dialect of this area belongs to the Yaru division of the Quechua I branch, as defined in Torero (1970, 1974; see also Adelaar with Muysken 2004).

1. Types of subordination

Two main types of verbal subordination are shared by all Quechua dialects. Firstly, a verb can be subordinated to another verb by means of special adverbializing markers; and secondly, the verb can be nominalized, in which case it is often, but not always, followed by a case marker. Aspect morphology and discourse markers play an accessory role in both construction types. Referential tracking of the subject of the dependent verb can always be achieved by morphological means, either directly, because its grammatical person is indicated on the dependent verb itself, or indirectly, because it is co-referential with the subject of the main verb.

1.1 Adverbial subordination (converbs)

Quechua dependent verbs or converbs³ are characterized by the presence of adverbializing affixes. They exhibit a switch-reference distinction that marks the subjects of the main and dependent clauses as either different or the same. Quechua converbs refer to an event prior to or simultaneous with the event referred to by the verb to which they are subordinated. The latter can be another converb or the main verb in the sentence. The semantic relation between the two verbs (causal, concessive, conditional, temporal) is not explicitly specified but can be narrowed down by means of aspect markers and discourse markers.

The examples (1) and (2) from the Quechua dialect of northern Junín (located northwest of Tarma) illustrate the construction of a converb with a verb to which it is subordinated. In (1), the converb contains the marker *-pti-*, which can only be used when the subjects are different.⁴ The different subjects marker is obligatorily accompanied by inflectional suffixes identifying the person of the subject of the

³ The term converb is not habitual in the linguistic literature on Quechua (but see Bruil 2008). It is common in the literature on Turkic languages (e.g. Nevskaya 2005).

⁴ In our data from the Tarma dialect, the suffix *-pti-* is usually represented as *-tbi-* due to metathesis and subsequent voicing of the second consonant. This modification is a geographically restricted phenomenon that has not been attested in any other variety of Quechua.

dependent clause, as well as the person of a patient when it is a speech act participant. The function of the optional discourse marker *-qa*, which indicates a topic, favors the interpretation of the clause as a previous condition.

- (1) **muna-pti-ki-qa aywa-shun** (Black e.a. 1990: 212)⁵
 want-SU.DS-2S-TO go-IM.4S
 “If (as soon as) you want, we shall go.”

In (2), subordination is indicated by the marker *-r*, which is used when the subjects of the main clause and the dependent clause are identical. (The suffix *-r* can be combined with affixes that indicate the grammatical person of an object, but this is not compulsory and relatively rare.)

- (2) **kiswar-ta aywa-r-qa papa-kuna-ta rantira-ri-n** (Black e.a. 1990: 213)
 Quishuar-AC go-SU.SS-TO potato-PL-AC
 buy-PF-PL-3S
 “As they went to Quishuar, they bought potatoes.”

Converbs can take aspect markers in order to indicate simultaneity or consecutiveness of the events expressed by the dependent clause and the main clause.⁶ In (3), the perfective aspect marker *-ru-* indicates that the event expressed by the dependent clause is prior to the event of the main clause. The verb marked for perfective aspect in the main clause refers to a punctual event.

- (3) **chaka-ru-pti-n-shi yapay tra-ru-n alqu-q(a)**⁷ (San Pedro de Cajas Quechua)⁸

⁵ Special symbols used in the orthography of the Quechua examples are *q* for a voiceless uvular fricative (velar/postvelar in Tarma Quechua), *tr* for a voiceless retroflex affricate, *ch* for a voiceless alveo-palatal affricate, and *sh* for a voiceless alveo-palatal fricative; *y* is a palatal glide; long vowels are indicated with a colon (:). High vowels are lowered to mid in the proximity of an uvular consonant.

⁶ The Tarma dialect has a special marker *-shtin* indicating simultaneity with same subjects. A fixed combination *-ku-q-nuy*, which consists of the agentive nominalization in *-q* accompanied by the aspect marker *-ku-* and the case marker *-nuy*, has roughly the same function.

⁷ The final vowel of some suffixes (such as *-qa*) is not pronounced in word-final position, whereas the original antepenultimate stress is maintained on its original location [alχóχ].

become.dark-PF-SU.DS-3S-HS again arrive-PF-3S dog-TO
 ‘As soon as it had become dark, the dog appeared there again.’

A typical function of converbs in a Quechua discourse is to act as the head in tail-head linkage structures (Thompson and Longacre 1985: 209).

1.2 Nominalization and case

One of the most frequent strategies for constructing dependent clauses in Quechua is based on nominalization. Nominalization assigns a nominal status to a verb and licenses the addition of case markers. Several types of subordination are obtained by combining specific nominalizations with specific case markers. Meanwhile, two types of nominalization retain a personal reference morphology that is typically verbal, because they encode both person of agent and person of patient (see § 2.).⁹

In example (4), the dependent verb is nominalized by means of the suffix *-nqa-* indicating a non-subject oriented ongoing event (‘relative nominalizer’). The locative case marker *-tru:* specifies the link to the main verb. The insertion of the progressive aspect marker *-ya(:)-* in the nominalized verb (again a typically verbal device) indicates the simultaneousness of the two events involved in the sentence.

- (4) **puri-ya-nqa-n-tru:-shi huk warmi-wan tinku-ra:-ri-n**
 (Black e.a. 1990: 207)
 walk-PR-RN-3S-L-HS one woman-C meet-PF-PL-3S
 “While they were walking, they met a woman.”

1.3 Nominalization without case

Apart from the participial construction to be treated below, there is one subordinate construction headed by a nominalized verb without a case suffix. It involves the

⁸ Example sentences with the indication ‘San Pedro de Cajas Quechua’ as well as those that do not carry an indication of their geographical origin (all from the Tarma area) are from our own field data (see Adelaar 1977).

⁹ The encoding of agent-patient combinations in a verb form or a nominalized form is called ‘transition’ in the traditional literature on Quechua under the influence of Spanish colonial grammars from the 16th and 17th century.

subject-oriented nominalizer *-q* (also known as the ‘agentive’) in combination with a verb of motion. The nominalized verb refers to an action that is the purpose of the motion expressed by the main verb (5).

- (5) **yaku picha-q-mi aywa-ya-:** (Black e.a. 1990: 181)
 water clean-AG-AF go-PR-1S
 “I am on my way to clean the water (canal).”

In combination with the auxiliary verb *ka-* (‘to be’) nominalizations can also play a role in the formation of compound tenses and predicative constructions. Examples will be given in the following sections.

2. Types of nominalization

From a morphological point of view, there are five basic types of nominalization in Tarma Quechua, each of them marked by a distinct ending.¹⁰ Leaving aside a number of derived functions, the infinitive (ending *-y*) refers to an event in its abstract sense. The subject-centered agentive (nominalizing ending *-q*) is co-referential with the subject of the base verb to which it is added. As the complement of a perception verb, the agentive nominalizer can also refer to an ongoing event from the perspective of its subject (e.g. ‘I see him/people (while) working’).¹¹ For its use with verbs of motion, see § 1.3 (5). Of the three remaining nominalizers, *-na* (‘future-oriented nominalizer’), *-nqa-* (‘relative nominalizer’) and *-sha* (‘stative nominalizer’), the first one differs semantically from the other two in that it refers to non-accomplished events or to participants in non-accomplished events (instruments, places, etc.). The nominalizer *-nqa-* refers to ongoing and accomplished events, whereas its counterpart *-sha* refers to a participant in an accomplished event or to one of its properties. Finally, *-na* and *-nqa-* nominalizations are typically non-subject-centered, whereas *-sha* is neutral in this respect and exhibits an ergative behavior. On transitive verb bases it is co-referential with the object of the base and on intransitive verb bases with its subject.

¹⁰ Near Tarma a sixth ending of limited distribution is found, *-bashla*. It forms adjectives from verbal bases with the meaning ‘good to’, ‘fit to’.

¹¹ In both cases the nominalized verb in *-q* can be marked for accusative case, assuming the role of object in a matrix clause.

A further dimension to be taken into account when considering the nominalization types of Tarma Quechua is their ability to combine with personal reference markers. In this respect, the relative nominalizer in *-nqa-* and the stative nominalizer in *-sha* occupy opposite poles. The *-nqa-* nominalizer co-occurs obligatorily with a full set of verbal personal reference markers that specify the actor and, when relevant, the patient as well¹²; by contrast, the *-sha* nominalizer takes no personal reference morphology at all. The future-oriented nominalizer in *-na* can co-occur with verbal personal reference markers, but not obligatorily so. The agentive nominalizer in *-q* can also co-occur with verbal personal reference markers but with some restrictions. Note that the verbal subject markers are formally coincident with the nominal possessive markers when co-occurring with nominalizers. With agentive and future-oriented nominalizers, personal reference markers can refer to a possessor, rather than to a subject, even though this is not explicitly visible. A personal reference marker that accompanies an infinitive can only refer to a possessor.

With the exception of the infinitive, Tarma Quechua nominalized verbs of all types are often used as modifiers. Although Quechua normally respects a modifier-head order, nominalized verbs can either precede or follow their heads. The criteria for the selection of either order are basically pragmatic, but the head-modifier order favors a relative clause interpretation for a nominalized verb with its dependents. The use of nominalized verbs is the dominant relativization strategy in Quechua.

We will now discuss the characteristics of the stative nominalization in *-sha* in its regular, non-derived usage. A stative nominalized form refers to a participant in an accomplished event or acts as a modifier to such a participant. This participant is selected on the basis of an ergative interpretation, that is, with transitive bases it coincides with an underlying patient and with intransitive bases with an underlying subject. From a syntactic point of view, there is always an empty slot that can correspond with the subject or with a patient, depending on whether the base is intransitive or transitive, respectively. Nominalized verbs in *-sha* can be used attributively as modifiers to a nominal head (7), (10), (12), adverbially (8),

¹² Note that third person patients are not indicated morphologically, except optionally in combination with the agentive marker *-q* or the subordinator *-r*.

predicatively (with an overt or covert copula verb) (9), or independently as the head of a noun phrase (often accompanied by a determiner or quantifier) (6). In general, nominalized verbs in *-sha* that are used attributively can also be interpreted as relative clauses.

- (6) **rupa-sha** (Black e.a. 1990: 184) [**rupa-** ‘to burn’ (intr.)]
burn-SN
“A burn”. “Something burnt.”
- (7) **misa rura-sha** [**rura-** ‘to make’, ‘to do’ (tr.)]
mass do-SN
“The mass that has been said.” (The name of a village, Misarrurasha).
- (8) **ishkay nana-qa ma:rasta-pita triqni-sha-sh kawa-pa:ku-ra**
[**triqni-** ‘to hate’ (tr.)] (San Pedro de Cajas Quechua)
two sister-TO stepmother-AB hate-SN-HS live-PL-3S.PA
“Two sisters once lived, hated by their stepmother.”

Because it refers to an accomplished event, the stative nominalizer does not normally co-occur with aspect markers.¹³ However, this restriction can be circumnavigated by using the the stative nominalizer in combination with the copula verb *ka-* ‘to be’, which does take aspect markers.

- (9) **manchaka-sha-m ka-ya-nki** (Black e.a. 1990: 182)¹⁴
[**manchaka(:)-** ‘to get frightened’ (intr.)]
get.frightened-SN-AF be-PR-2S
“You are frightened.”

¹³ Utterances in which a stative nominalizer is combined with the perfective aspect marker *-ru-/-ra-* can be treated as instances of a minimal participial clause without subject and patient marking (see, for instance, (20) in § 3).

¹⁴ Historically, the suffix *-sha* was derived from **-shqa*. As a result, it cannot be preceded by the long vowel version of any other suffix or root (see Adelaar 1977: 86-8 for an account of this restriction).

The stative nominalizer in *-sha* does not combine with personal reference markers, and in this respect it holds a complementary position with regard to the relative nominalizer in *-nqa-*.

- (10) **alqu maqa-*sha*** [maqa- ‘to beat’ (tr.)]
 dog beat-SN
 “A dog that has been beaten.”

- (11) **alqu maqa-*nqa-*** [maqa- ‘to beat’ (tr.)]
 dog beat-RN-1S
 “A dog that has been beaten by me.” “A dog that I have beaten”

With intransitive bases, both the stative nominalizer and the agentive nominalizer refer to a subject participant. They differ, however, in that the use of a stative nominalizer emphasizes the accomplished or state-like character of the underlying event, whereas the agentive is associated with ongoing, non-accomplished or past events.

- (12) **punu-*sha* wamra** [punu- ‘to sleep’ (intr.)]
 sleep-SN child
 ‘A child that is asleep/has slept.’
- (13) **punu-*q* wamra** [punu- ‘to sleep’ (intr.)]
 sleep-AG child
 ‘A child that sleeps (now, regularly, soon, once).’

In its overall use and its adjective-like character, the Quechua nominalization in *-sha* is very similar to the past participle of Indo-European languages.

3. The participial clause, a non-standard use of *-sha* nominalization in Tarma Quechua

A different way of subordination based on the nominalization marker *-sha* is amply attested in a substantial corpus of texts obtained in 1970-1971 from a speaker native

to the area southeast of the town of Tarma.¹⁵ It is also found, in a less elaborate version, in folkloric tales from the Tarma region originally published by Vienrich in 1906 (Vienrich 1999). However, this type of subordination has not been attested in data from other documented dialects of the area, for instance, San Pedro de Cajas Quechua (Adelaar 1977) and the northern Junín variety described in Black e.a. (1990), nor has it been recorded in other Quechua-speaking areas further at large. All this seems to indicate that its geographical distribution is very restricted.

The characteristics of this type of subordination can be summarized as follows. Note that the features (b)-(g), (i) listed below are all in conflict with the characteristics of the stative nominalizer in *-sha* as defined in § 2.

- (a) The dependent verb containing the marker *-sha* heads a dependent clause.
- (b) The dependent verb in *-sha* no longer has nominal characteristics. It denotes an event rather than a participant in the event or one of its properties.
- (c) The event denoted by the dependent verb can either be accomplished or ongoing.
- (d) The dependent verb can contain aspect markers.
- (e) The dependent verb can be followed by discourse markers like the head verb in any other dependent clause.
- (f) The dependent clause is interpreted as active even when the verb base is transitive. The ergative behavior associated with stative nominalization in its non-derived use is not found.
- (g) From a syntactic point of view, there are no empty slots. Both the subject and the object position can be filled.
- (h) There is no morphological indication of the subject. The subject can be indicated lexically.
- (i) There is no morphological indication of a patient, except for first person inclusive plural (see § 4 below). Objects can be indicated lexically.
- (j) Lexical subject and patient expressions respect the dominant SOV order of Quechua dependent clauses.

¹⁵ Ignacio Zárate Mallma, originally from the township of Vicora Congas near Tarmatambo.

(k) When both subject and patient are expressed, the latter is marked for accusative case. When only the patient is expressed, accusative case marking is optional.¹⁶

(l) The dependent clause is separated from the main clause by a pause.

Sentences (14) and (15) exemplify (S)OV word order and the presence of accusative case marking in a dependent clause headed by *-sha* (j)-(k); the dependent verb has a transitive base and is interpreted as active (f). Note the presence of the affirmative evidential discourse marker *-m* (e) in (14) and the topical discourse marker *-qa* in (15).

- (14) **mana nuqanchik kuga-ta traqtra-sha-m kiru-nchi ismu-n**
not we[inclusive] coca-AC chew-SN-AF tooth-4P rot-3S
“Our teeth rot if we do not chew coca.”

- (15) **mana chay-ta trura-sha-qa mana-m ima-wan ayga-wan-si**
alichaka-n-chu
not that-AC place-SN-TO not-AF what-IS how.much-IS-AD
get.cured-3S-NE
“If we do not apply that (medicine), it will not get cured by any (other) means.”

In (16), the patient is not marked for accusative case (k). Theoretically, a passive interpretation of the dependent verb, in which the noun *umanchi* would be its subject, is possible. However, one may prefer the interpretation of *umanchi* as an object unmarked for case, an analysis that is more conformable to the absence of ergative behavior registered in a majority of the attested participial clauses. Note that the event to which the dependent verb refers is ongoing, rather than accomplished (c).

- (16) **uma-nchi qibi-sh(a) qitara-ya-nchi qatra-nchi qana-n-tru**¹⁷
head-4P carry.on.the.shoulders-SN lie-PR-4S herb-4P top-3P-L

¹⁶ In Quechua the object of a nominalized verb is usually not marked for accusative case.

¹⁷ Quechua spoken southeast of Tarma exhibits a number of phonological innovations, viz. the voicing of grave stops (/k/ > /g/, /p/ > /b/) and the coincidence of the uvular and glottal-velar fricatives /q/ and /h/ into a velar fricative. The latter is represented as *q* in this article.

“Carrying our head on our shoulders [or: “our head being carried on the shoulders”], we are lying on top of our (medicinal) herbs.”

The following example (17) is taken from one of the animal stories published by Vienrich (1999: 168). Vienrich’s material contains several instances of participial clauses containing both transitive and intransitive predicates. However, it does not contain any example with an explicit object, neither as a syntactically free expression, nor as a morphological marker. In (17), the subject of the subordinate intransitive predicate *rikaka-sha* (from *rikaka(:)*- ‘to become visible’) is different from that of the matrix clause, which is also headed by an intransitive verb (*hama-ra:-ri-n* ‘they rested’). Since the subjects are different, the interpretation of *mana may-pa aywa-na-n-pis rikaka-sha* as a participial clause is the only one possible.

(17) **kiki-n-kuna-sh ushaka-ru-r-qa hama-ra:-ri-n, mikuy-pita wanu-sh(a)-kama mirkapa-n usha-ru-pti-n, mana may-pa aywa-na-n-pis rikaka-sha**¹⁸

self-3P-PL-HS get tired-PF-SU.SS-TO rest-PF-PL-3S food-AB eat-SN-PL

provisions-3P finish-PF-SU.DS-3S, not where-G go-FN-3S-AD be.visible-SN

“After they themselves had become exhausted, they rested, starved to death because they had run out of provisions, there being no way to find out how they should continue.”

4. Aspect in participial clauses

Sentences (18)-(20) exemplify the use of the aspect markers *-ru/-ra-* ‘perfective aspect’ and *-ya(:)*- ‘progressive aspect’ in a dependent clause headed by *-sha* (d). As can be expected, perfective aspect must be associated with accomplished events, whereas the progressive aspect is limited to ongoing events (c). Note that a transitive verb can remain active and transitive notwithstanding the presence of the reflexive marker *-ku-* (f). Only the patient is expressed in (18). In (19) and (20), there is no overt expression of either the subject or the patient. In example (20), the subjects of

¹⁸ Vienrich’s transcription does not consistently show the consonant voicing found in the area near Tarma (see fn. 17). We have adapted Vienrich’s material to the orthography used in this article (replacing *ushia-* with *usha-*, for instance), but we have made no attempt to introduce voicing.

both the dependent clause and the main clause are co-referential. In such cases, the boundary between a participial clause and an attributive modifier may seem to be blurred, but the presence of the perfective aspect marking favors the former interpretation.

(18) **tragi-nchi-ta pagi-ku-ru-*sha* magi-nchi-ta pagi-ku-ru-*sha***

cha: ga-ya-n muña qatra

foot-4P-AC break-RF-PF-SN hand-4P-AC break-RF-PF-SN

for.that be-PR-3S mint herb

“If we break our feet, if we break our hands, then we have the mint plant (at our disposal).”

(19) **chay-wan kuba-ku-ya-*sha*-la-m chay bentu ilari-n**

that-IS rub-RF-PR-SN-DL-AF that wind disappear-3S

“If one keeps rubbing oneself with it, that (evil) wind disappears.”

(20) **qarwashya-ru-*sha* patra-nchik nana-n**

become.yellow-PF-SN belly-4P hurt-3S

“Once they have turned yellow, our bellies hurt.”

5. Participial clauses with an encoded object

The possibility of morphological object encoding is one of the most salient features of the participial clause construction in Tarma Quechua. In a participial clause construction the predicate in *-sha* may contain the personal reference marker *-ma(:)-*. The primary function of *-ma(:)-* is to encode a first person singular (or exclusive plural) patient (1O). However, in a participial clause it refers to a first person inclusive plural patient (4O) with the implication that the subject is third person.

(21) **mé:diku rirgara-ya:-*ma*-sha-m wanu-ku-nchik**

physician watch-PR-4O-SN-AF die-RF-4S

“We die while the physician is watching us.”

- (22) **ushnu pampa shuqu-ra-*ma*-sha-m pasay qarwashya-ru-nchik**
 marshy plain suck-PF-4O-SN-AF completely become.yellow-PF-4S
 “When we have been sucked at by a marshy plain, we end up
 completely yellow.”

In Central Peruvian Quechua dialects, including Tarma Quechua, a first person plural inclusive patient acted upon by a third person is otherwise indicated by a combination of *-ma(:)-* with a subject ending for first person plural inclusive (4S), as in (23).¹⁹ Such a combination may be the source of the divergent use of *-ma(:)-* in participial clauses, in which the predicate retains the inner element (*-ma(:)-*) but rejects the peripheral component (*-nachik*, etc.).

- (23) **mana-m kanan-yubay-chu ima nanay chari-*ma*-sha-s(i) mé:diku**
kuchu-ra-*ma*-nachik u:sha-n-ta-yubay
 not-AF today-CP-NE what pain catch-4O-SN-AD physician cut-
 PF-4O[I]-3S[*4S] sheep-3P-AC-CP
 “It was not like today that, whenever we are caught by some pain, the
 doctor cuts us up as if we were one of his sheep.”

6. A possible model for the absence of ergative behavior in participial clauses

The dialect of northern Junín and southeastern Pasco (Black e.a. 1990), which is closely related to Tarma Quechua, features a compound perfect tense consisting of a nominalized verb in *-sha* followed by the auxiliary verb *ka-* ‘to be’. In this tense, transitive verbs retain an active interpretation, which means that the ergative effect associated with stative nominalization is no longer operative. Even though this compound tense is not found in Tarma Quechua, it may have provided a model for the absence of ergative behavior in participial clauses, either by dialect contact or because such a tense may have existed there at an earlier stage. Again the only personal

¹⁹ A similar combination occurs in southern Peruvian and Bolivian varieties of Quechua, except that the first person object marker is *-wa-* instead of *-ma(:)-*. One may argue that *-ma(:)-/wa-* acts as an inverse marker in this case.

reference suffix that occurs before *-sha* is *-ma(:)-*, which can convey the meaning of a first person plural inclusive patient acted upon by a third person subject (24). The second part of the combination (*-nchi*) is expressed peripherally on the auxiliary verb *ka-*. Unlike *-ma(:)-*, the only other suffix with an inverse function, *-shu-* (3S.2O), is transferred to the auxiliary verb (25).

(24) **papa-ta qu-ma-sha ka-nchi** (Black e.a. 1990: 183)

potato-AC give-4O[I]-SN be-3S[*4S]

“They have given us potatoes.”

(24) **papa-ta qu-sha ka-shu-nki** (Black e.a.1990: 183)

potato-AC give-SN be-2O[I]-3S[*2S]

“They have given you potatoes.”

7. Quechua participial clauses and the Indo-European absolute construction

As we noted in the introduction to this article, the Quechua participial clause exhibits a striking similarity with the absolute constructions of classic Indo-European languages. In (26), an example from Sanskrit, the noun *mūle* ‘root’ and the participle *hate* ‘killed’ together form a dependent clause. Both the noun, which plays the role of a subject, and the participle are marked for locative case.

(26) **mūle hate hatam sarvam** (Gonda 1963: 89)

root.NG.L kill.SN.NG.L kill.SN.NG.NM all.NG.NM

“When the root is killed, everything is killed.”

Gonda (1963) provides the following characterization for the so-called *locativus absolutus* construction (our translation): “...the locative of a noun connected with the locative of a participle that describes an external situation preceding or accompanying the action of the sentence. In German, this construction can be represented by temporal, causal, concessive and conditional dependent clauses.” This semantic characterization of the *locativus absolutus* in Sanskrit appears to be applicable to the Quechua participial clause, but also to the adverbial clauses of that language. As a

matter of fact, it is difficult to draw a semantic division line between Quechua participial clauses, on one hand, and adverbial clauses, on the other.

The parallelism between Quechua participial clauses and the absolute construction of the Indo-European languages is not complete.²⁰ Whereas the latter normally maintain a distinction between active and passive participles, Quechua only uses the closest equivalent of a passive participle, which then loses its (potentially) passive meaning. This loss of ergative behavior is a characteristic of the Quechua participial clause. Another difference, of course, is that the Quechua construction lacks case-marking. Other constituents that lack case marking in Quechua are the subject and the nominal complement of a copula verb, exactly the constituents that require nominative case in the classic Indo-European languages. Therefore, from an Indo-European viewpoint the participial clause of Tarma Quechua could be characterized as a *nominativus absolutus*.

8. Final semantic characterization of the participial clause in Tarma Quechua

As a rule, the semantic relation between a dependent clause based on nominalization and its matrix clause is rather well specified thanks to the presence (or significant absence) of a particular case marker in combination with the choice of a particular nominalizer. By contrast, participial clauses and adverbial clauses share the characteristic that the semantic link with their matrix clause is minimally specified and has to be filled out by the context or complemented by additional aspect and discourse markers.

In contradistinction with adverbial clauses, the identity of the subject in participial clauses can be left unspecified. It may or may not coincide with the subject of the matrix clause. The explicit expression of objects in participial clauses is a frequent feature of relatively recent Tarma Quechua speech, but it does not occur in the folktales brought together by Vienrich in 1906.

²⁰ As in Quechua, Indo-European absolute constructions can take objects, e.g. in Latin *vincente odio metum* 'when hatred overcomes fear' (Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita*, Liber XL: 3).

We may speculate that the main function differentiating fully articulated participial clauses from their adverbial counterparts is semantic backgrounding. Further research is necessary in order to determine whether the difference between adverbial and participial clauses, not attested and apparently not needed in a majority of the Quechua dialects, is anything but stylistic.

Abbreviations: 1, 2, 3 1st, 2nd, 3rd person, 4 1st person plural inclusive, AB ablative case, AC accusative case, AD additive (‘also’), AG agentive nominalizer, AF affirmative evidential, C comitative case, CP comparative (‘like’), DL delimitative (‘just’, ‘only’), DS different subjects, HS hearsay evidential, I inverse, IM imperative mood, intr. intransitive, IS instrumental case, L locative case, NE negation, NG neuter gender, NM nominative case, O object, P possessor, PA past tense, PF perfective aspect, PL plural, PR progressive aspect, RF reflexive, RN relative nominalizer, S subject, SN stative nominalizer, SS same subject, SU subordinator, TO topic, tr. transitive (cf. Adelaar with Muysken 2004).

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