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On Politeness and the Expression of Socially Valued Behaviour in Tarma Quechua Verbs

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1 Introduction

Politeness and hierarchical differences in society are seldom reflected in the lexicon or in the morpho-syntactic structure of Quechuan languages.¹ As a consequence, Quechua discourse may be perceived as straightforward and unvarnished. Quechua speakers appear to be aware of this as they often mention the absence of euphemisms and stylistic embellishment as distinctive traits of their culture. This does not mean, however, that Quechua speakers are insensitive to issues of politeness and socially valued behaviour in language use. As observed by Aikhenvald (2010: 105, 158–159; 2012: 190), some South American languages use delayed imperatives as a means to express politeness. Such usage is also found in Quechuan languages, in which future tense forms may be interpreted as delayed imperatives suggesting a reduced urgency and thereby an overtone of politeness. In addition, Weber (1989: 132) points out, in connection with Huallaga Quechua, that the verbal derivational affix *-yku-* (historically a directional marker denoting inward motion) can be used as an indication of politeness in imperative constructions. Nevertheless, most Quechuan languages do not have dedicated verbal affixes that unambiguously refer to a notion of politeness. The observed politeness effect is often indirect and bound to imperative contexts. In many cases the utterances at issue are open to other interpretations as well.

As members of strictly organized rural communities, Quechua speakers occasionally do feel the need to emphasize that their actions are in accordance with the rules and expectations that hold these communities together. For instance, conversations must not be interrupted or terminated without

1 Quechuan languages are spoken today by more than 7,000,000 inhabitants of the South American countries Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The data discussed in this chapter are all from Peru, which has the largest Quechua-speaking population (ca. 4,000,000). They were mostly collected in 1971 and 1974.

the explicit consent of a speech partner. In Andean Spanish such consent is obtained through phrases such as *con (su) permiso* ‘with (your) permission’, to which the addressed person may respond with *sigan no más* ‘just go ahead!’ With their high dependence on morphology, Quechuan languages use morphological rather than lexical resources for the purpose of obtaining social consent. Morphological markers, however, are rarely used to this end alone. They normally have well-defined semantic or syntactic functions which can be extended to the societal applications in question.

The following pages deal with the occurrence of the directional affixes *-rgu-* (< **-rku-*) ‘upward motion’ and *-y(g)u-* (< **-yku-*) ‘inward motion’, focussing on their derived use as markers of socially valued behaviour and politeness in Tarma Quechua. Tarma Quechua belongs to the Quechua I subdivision of the Quechuan language family, also known as Central Peruvian Quechua.² Tarma Quechua is spoken by a declining number of speakers in villages situated in the western and southern surroundings of the provincial capital of Tarma in the Peruvian department of Junín.³ It is part of a dialect complex known as North Junín Quechua or Yaru (Chirinos 2001).

2 Historical Background and Context

As established and reconstructed by Parker (1973: 22–23), the Quechuan language family, at an earlier stage of its development, featured a set of four verbal derivational affixes referring to direction: **-rku-* UP, **-rpu-* DOWN, **-rqu-* OUT, and **-yku-* IN.⁴ These four reconstructed directional affixes can still be found throughout Quechua I in sets of verb roots consisting of lexicalized combinations of a non-productive root element with a directional affix, notably in

2 The division into two main branches of the Quechuan family was established by Parker (1963) and Torero (1964); cf. Adelaar (2013) for an assessment of its continued validity. The denominations Quechua I and II were introduced by Torero.

3 A salient phonological characteristic of Tarma Quechua is that velar and labial stops in word-internal position, unless preceded by a nasal consonant, have become voiced before a vowel. A notable exception (among several others) is that the consonant in the element *-ku-*, denoting ‘reflexive’ and related meanings has remained unvoiced. This exception holds both for *-ku-* itself and for its derivatives *-baku-*, *-baku-*, *-naku-*, *-raku-*, etc.

4 In Quechua I and in southern Peruvian Quechua II all word-internal verbal affixes with a canonical form ending in *-u-* have allomorphs ending in *-a-* (for instance, *-yka-* instead of *-yku-*). These allomorphs occur before a specific set of other verb-internal affixes, such as *-çi-* ‘causative’, *-mu-* ‘cislocative’, and *-pu-* ‘beneficiary’. In Quechua I this rule of vowel lowering also extends to non-adjacent affixes when an intervening affix is affected.

ya.rku- 'go up', *ya.rpu-* 'go down', *ya.rqu-* 'go out', and *ya.y(k)u-* 'go in'. There are also a few isolated cases of defective roots combining with only one or two of the directional affixes, for instance, *ša.rku-* 'rise', 'stand up' and *ša.y(k)u-* 'halt', 'stand still' (but cf. *šaya-*, *-ša:ku-* 'stand').

In all the Quechuan daughter languages, directional affixes have undergone radical semantic changes due to their tendency to develop into grammatical markers denoting aspect, tense, or modality. As a result, the original directional affixes for IN and OUT are still productive from a formal point of view but have obtained new, non-directional meanings throughout the Quechuan family. By contrast, the 'vertical' directional affixes for UP and DOWN (Hintz 2011: 188) have been preserved with their original directional meanings in Quechua I, but are no longer in use as productive affixes in Quechua II.⁵

It should be noted that the two directional affixes for UP and DOWN are not exclusively found with motion verbs. They can also be attached to bases that do not refer to a change of location, as, for instance, in *ana-rbu-* 'look down' and *ana-rgu-* 'look up'. In other cases a previous motion to a lower or higher place may be implied, as in *punu-rbu-* 'sleep in a lower place' from *punu-* 'sleep'.

The non-directional semantics of the original directional affixes for IN, OUT, and UP which have been attested in Quechua I are notoriously elusive, as is clearly visible in the linguistic literature dedicated to the verbal morphology of the different dialectal varieties. Fairly elaborate treatments of the directional affixes and their non-directional derivations can be found in Cerrón-Palomino (1976) for Huanca Quechua; Hintz (2011) for South Conchucos Quechua; Parker (1973) for Ancash Quechua; Sayk (1974) for Junín Quechua (closely related to Tarma Quechua); and Weber (1989) for Huallaga Quechua.

3 Aspectual Interpretation of the Non-directional Use of Directional Markers

In the Northern Junín varieties of Quechua I, as well as in the highly conservative Pacaraos variety formerly spoken in the Upper Chancay valley on the Pacific slopes of the Andes, the directional affix **-rqu-* 'outward motion' has developed into a straightforward perfective aspect marker *-r(q)u-* (*-ru-* in Tarma Quechua and most of northern Junín). The semantics of this highly frequent

5 For a more detailed account of historical developments affecting the directional affixes in Quechua I, see Adelaar (2006) and Hintz (2011).

aspect marker are typically those of a perfective aspect category as defined in the literature, including such semantic components as punctual, completive, and resultative (see Comrie 1976). In Tarma /North Junín Quechua this perfective aspect marker has come to function in a system of binary opposition with the equally ubiquitous progressive aspect marker *-yka(:)-* (*-ya(:)-* in Tarma Quechua). The two are mutually exclusive and occupy the same slot in the order of affixes.

One might assume that this state of affairs would leave little room for two more ex-directional affixes to occupy part of such a closely knit aspectual system, but this is not necessarily the case. In his study of aspectual frontiers in South Conchucos Quechua, Hintz (2011: 27–32) provides an insightful overview of the aspectual features, most of them related to perfective or completive meaning, which appear to unite all the ex-directional affixes in transformation (even including the semantically conservative ‘downward motion’ affix *-rpu-*). In the following paragraph we will explore how different meaning components interact in the case of the ‘upward motion’ affix *-rgu-* and its non-directional derivatives in Tarma Quechua.

4 Non-directional Derivatives of the ‘Upward Motion’ Affix *-rgu-* in Tarma Quechua: Consecutiveness and Social Act

In addition to the inherited ‘upward motion’ interpretation, two more semantically distinct applications of the affix *-rgu-* (< **-rku-*) can be found in Tarma Quechua. One of them, a wide-spread formation throughout Quechua I, is limited to subordinate verbs in hierarchically complex sentences. It consists of a subordinate verb containing the affix *-rgu-* in what is normally the so-called ‘same subjects’ (SS) form used in a switch-reference relationship with a superordinate verb. Occasionally, examples of the ‘different subjects’ (DS) form have also been attested in similar constructions in Quechua I varieties (Weber 1989: 127). In the SS form, the highly frequent ending *-rgu-r* (*-rku-r* in most of Quechua I, *-lku-l* in the Huanca varieties of southern Junín) is formally composed of the upward motion marker *-rgu-* and the Quechua I ‘same subjects’ subordinate (adverbial) marker *-r*.⁶ Semantically, this combination indicates that an action expressed by the subordinate verb immediately precedes the event expressed by the main verb in time. It can be translated into English approximately as ‘immediately after doing so’, ‘having done so’, etc.

⁶ Note that the suffix sequence in question can be interrupted by other affixes, because the

The function of this ‘sequential’ application of *-rgu-* is clearly aspectual. It occupies the same affix order slot as the perfective aspect marker *-ru-* and cannot be combined with it. The semantic difference between the two options resides in the fact that the interpretation of sequential *-rgu-* is more explicitly temporal than that of *-ru-*. There can be no doubt that the sequential application of *-rgu-* justifies its classification as separate from the directional affix *-rgu-* (cf. Adelaar 1977: 131–132). It can easily be combined with the same marker *-rgu-* in its upward motion function, as in (1):

- (1) *kača-rgu-rgu-r*
 let.go-UP-SEQ-SS.SUB
 ‘after letting it [the balloon] go upward’⁷

The second non-directional application of the affix *-rgu-* is a lot more complex and elusive than the preceding one, as can be inferred from the numerous different and often conflicting interpretations that are found in the literature. Among the authors who sought to unify these semantic interpretations under a single heading, Parker (1973: 23–26; 1976: 126) opted for ‘action without resistance’ in Ancash-Huailas Quechua, whereas Hintz (2011: 30, 132) refers to ‘mutual consent’ in South Conchucos Quechua. The semantic interpretation that emerges for non-directional, non-sequential *-rgu-* in Tarma Quechua (and in neighbouring San Pedro de Cajas Quechua) is that of a socially motivated activity which seeks to harmonize the interests of an addressee with those of the speaker and the community. This interpretation, to which we have referred as ‘social act’ (Adelaar 1977: 145), appears to be close to the notion of mutual consent as defined by Hintz. It also comes close to a general notion of politeness as expressed in many of the world’s cultures.⁸

order of affixes in the Quechua verb has to be respected. Hence sequences such as *-rga-či-r* in *muyu-rga-či-r* ‘after having turned into ...’ or *-rga-mu-r* in *ša-rga-mu-r* ‘having come here’.

7 The following glosses and abbreviations are used in this chapter: 1, 2, 3 first, second, third person; A actor; ABL ablative case; ACC accusative case; ASS assertive [evidential]; CISL cislocative (‘hither’); CONC concessive; DOWN downward motion; DS different subjects; FUT future [tense]; IMPER imperative [mood]; IN inward motion; INCL inclusive (first + second person); NEG negation; NMLZ nominalizer; OUT outward motion; P patient; PLUR plural, pluractional; POINT direction pointed at; POSS possessor; PRES present [tense]; PROGR progressive [aspect]; REFL reflexive; RESTR restrictive (‘just’, ‘only’); SEQ sequential [aspect]; SOC social act; Sp. Spanish; SPEC special care; SS same subjects; STAT stat(iv)e; SUB subordinator; UP upward motion; VBLZ verbalizer.

8 Weber (1989: 124, 154) mentions two examples in which Huallaga Quechua *-rku-* indicates politeness in imperatives.

All in all, it should be observed that *-rgu-* in its social act interpretation is not frequently found in narrative texts, so a field researcher remains highly dependent on elicitation for the collection of critical examples. Some straightforward examples, for which a directional interpretation is excluded, are presented below.

The first example (2) is a classic invitation to drink according to the customary habits of the community.

- (2) *upya-[ku-]rgu-šun*
 drink-[REFL-]SOC-1A.INCL.IMPER
 ‘Let us have a drink together [if it appeals to you]!’

The following examples (3a–c) are based on the verb *mali-* ‘try’, ‘taste’, taking into account that tasting local food is seen as a sign of respect for the community’s traditional habits.

- (3) a. *mali-ku-rgu-y*
 try-REFL-SOC-2A.IMPER
 ‘Try a bit of this [we are sure you will like it, and it will please us if you do]’
- b. *mali-ku-rgu-nki*
 try-REFL-SOC-2A.FUT
 ‘You will have to try this [we would not want you to miss it]’
- c. *mali-ka-rga-:ri-čun* *kay miku.y-ta*⁹
 try-REFL-SOC-PLUR-3A.IMPER this food-ACC
 ‘Let them taste this food [they really should try it]!’

Example (4) illustrates a combination of *-rgu-* ‘upward motion’ and *-rgu-* ‘social act’. Such combinations of formally identical affixes are considered to be perfectly grammatical, although they do not occur often.

- (4) *kača-rgu-rgu-šax*
 let.go-UP-SOC-1A.FUT
 ‘I shall release it [the balloon], with your permission.’

9 The plural marker *-:ri-* is one of the affixes that trigger vowel lowering from *-u-* to *-a-* in Tarma and North Junín Quechua (cf. footnote 4).

Example (5) illustrates an action in the interest of one's fellow villagers. Note that the affix *-rgu-* in its 'social act' function is combined with the progressive aspect marker *-ya(:)-*, which excludes the possibility of a perfective aspect interpretation in this case.

- (5) *marga-n-pita rima-rgu-ya-n*
 village-3POSS-ABL speak-SOC-PROGR-3A.PRES
 'He is speaking about his village [on behalf of his people].'

The following example (6) is from San Pedro de Cajas Quechua. This Quechua dialect differs from Tarma Quechua, *inter alia*, by the absence of voicing, although it has essentially the same morphology.

- (6) *ka-rku-y*
 be-SOC-2A.IMPER
 'Please stay [you are welcome with us]!'

5 Non-directional Derivative of the 'Inward Motion' Affix *-y(g)u-* in Tarma Quechua: Special Care

The derivational affix *-y(g)u-* (< **-yku-*), which was reconstructed as a directional affix of inward motion for an earlier stage of the language, is occasionally used in Tarma Quechua in utterances referring to a direction. This direction is usually pointed out by the speaker and has no particular relationship with inward motion. A possible example is (7):

- (7) *xita.ra-yu-y*¹⁰
 lie.down-POINT-2A.IMPER
 'Lie down over there!'

However, the most frequent application associated with *-y(g)u-* in Tarma Quechua is not directional. It refers to activities that can be performed in a short

10 We use the symbol *x* for the velar fricative sound resulting from the merger of glottal/velar *h* and uvular *q* in Tarma Quechua. Most Quechuan varieties in Northern Junin retain this distinction.

The verb base *xita.ra(:)-* is a lexicalized combination of *xita-* 'throw' with the affix *-ra(:)-* denoting state or condition; cf. Andean Spanish *estar echado* 'to lie'.

period of time and without much waste of energy, but with special care and attention.¹¹ A suitable English translation could be ‘for a while’, ‘for a moment’. It is often used in requests in which the speaker asks an addressee to perform a task that should not take much time, but which is nevertheless important to the speaker. Since such requests are usually made in the speaker’s interest, they imply a certain amount of politeness, especially in imperative constructions, as suggested by our use of ‘please’ in the translation of examples (8), (9), and (10).

(8) *rixi-ya-mu-y*
 know-SPEC-CISL-2A.IMPER
 ‘Please go and make his acquaintance!’

(9) *šuya-[ra-]ya-ma-y*
 wait-[STAT-]SPEC-1P-2A.IMPER
 ‘Please wait for me for a little while!’

(10) *riya-yu-y*
 wake.up-SPEC-2A.IMPER
 ‘Please wake him up for a moment!’

The following examples (11) and (12) illustrate possible uses of *-y(g)u-* in non-imperative contexts.

(11) *mana-m rima-yu-na-ču*
 not-ASS speak-SPEC-FUT.NMLZ-NEG
 ‘He is not to be spoken to [be careful not to address him].’

(12) *rirga-yu-ya-n*
 look-SPEC-PROGR-3A.PRES
 ‘He is having a look at what there is [for instance, when inspecting merchandise].’

11 The notion of ‘impact’ that has been associated with this affix in the literature on other Quechuan varieties (e.g. Weber 1989: 134) does not seem to apply to Tarma Quechua.

6 Verbal Plural Marking as a Criterion for the Distinction between Homophonous Categories

Like most Quechuan languages belonging to the southern part of Quechua 1, Tarma Quechua has more than one way to express plural of actor, and occasionally plural of patient, in a verb form. If a verb contains no aspect markers, no affix *-ku-*, nor one of its derivatives ending in *-ku-*, plural can be indicated by means of the affix *-ba:ku-*.¹²

By contrast, the perfective aspect marker *-ru-*, a reflex of the reconstructed directional marker **-rqu-* for outward motion, requires a plural marker *-ri-*, which also triggers the lowering of a preceding vowel *-u-* to *-a-* within a chain of verbal affixes. Hence, the pluractional equivalent of the perfective aspect marker *-ru-* is *-ra:ri-*. Note that the plural marker *-ri-* is also the only possible option in combinations with sequential *-rgu-*.

The other directional and ex-directional affixes obligatorily take the plural marker *-ri-*, under the same conditions, whenever they are preceded by the affix *-ku-* or one of its derivatives ending in *-ku-* (cf. example (3c)). By contrast, when these affixes are not preceded by *-ku-*, both types of plural marking are theoretically possible.

There is, however, a tendency, if not an obligation, for real directionals to take the *-ba:ku-* plural and for ex-directionals with non-directional meanings to take the *-ri-* plural. This same tendency was registered by Sayk (1974: 50) for the Junín area. These two options are illustrated in (13, 14).

- (13) *ana-rga-ba:ku-y*
look-UP-PLUR-2A.IMPER
'Look upward [plural]!'

- (14) *mali-rga-ri-y* *mamala-guna učuk=učuk-la-ta-si*
taste-SOC-PLUR-2A.IMPER lady-PLUR a.little²-RESTR-ACC-CONC
'Please taste it ladies, even just a little bit!'

Example (15) from San Pedro de Cajas is remarkable because it features a combination of both *-rku-* 'social act' and *-yu-* 'special care' with the plural marker *-ri-*. The affixes are preceded by *-ku-*, which in this case is not the reflexive marker but a verbalizer. This has no consequence for the obligatory selection of *-ri-* as a plural marker.

¹² Obviously, the affix *-ba:ku-* itself contains an element *-ku-*, but this fact is no longer relevant for a synchronic analysis of the language.

- (15) *lunči-ka-rka-ya-ri-la-y*
 afternoon.tea(Sp.*lonche*)-VBLZ-SOC-SPEC-PLUR-RESTR-2A.IMPER
 'Just enjoy your [customary] afternoon tea [for a moment]!'

7 Conclusion

In spite of the absence of verbal affixes denoting politeness in earlier stages of development of the Quechua language group, a modern dialect variety such as Tarma Quechua has proven able to exploit the ongoing transformation of the inherited directional markers in order to create space for a grammatical expression of politeness and socially motivated conduct. Both the original markers denoting upward and inward motion are now used to express a certain amount of politeness. The question of whether or not the suffix *-rgu-* in its social act interpretation should be considered as synchronically separate from its directional ancestor can be answered positively on the basis of their tendency to associate with different plural markers. Although both social act *-rgu-* and special care *-y(g)u-* have acquired features akin to perfective aspect and the ability to replace the perfective aspect marker *-ru-* in specific constructions, they are not part of the aspect system themselves, because they can also occur in environments that are not compatible with perfective aspect.

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