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Collapse of genitive and benefactive case in Ecuadorian Quechua?

Pieter Muysken

Linguistics, Radboud University, Netherlands/Stellenbosch University
E-mail: p.muysken@let.ru.nl

Abstract

In Ecuadorian Quechua the markers for genitive and benefactive case have become indistinguishable in form: both are basically *-pak*. This squib discusses the issue whether there has also been a merger in the underlying representation, or whether they should be kept apart at the level of the grammatical system.

Keywords: Quechua, case, genitive, benefactive, Ecuadorian Quechua

In Ecuadorian Quechua the markers for genitive and benefactive case have become indistinguishable in form: both are basically *-pak*. This paper tries to answer the question how this came about and whether it is purely morphological phenomenon or a change in the underlying structure as well.

The Quechua languages, including Peruvian prestige varieties such as Cuzco Quechua, distinguish between two case markers or postpositions¹: benefactive *-paq* and genitive *-pa/-q* (< **p*)/*-q-pa*. In Cuzco Quechua the form *-paq* is a benefactive or purposive²:

(1) *Pi-paq-taq* *chay punchu-ta-ri* *awa-sha-nki*
Who-BEN-EMP that poncho-ACC-CNTR weave-PR-2SG
“For who are you weaving that poncho?” (Cusihuaman 1976: 135)

(2) *allin runa ka-na-y-paq-mi* *eduka-ku-sha-ni*
good person be-NMLZ-1SG-BEN-EVI educate-RFL-PR-1SG
“I am educating myself to be a good person.” (Cusihuaman 1976: 135)

¹ This paper is respectfully dedicated to Johan Oosthuizen, and hopes to achieve some of the precision, interest in grammatical variation, and depth of insight that characterize his work. The data in this paper are based mostly on fieldwork carried out in June 2016 and 2017, with the support of the Netherlands NWO Language in Interaction consortium, which is gratefully acknowledged here. The consultants that contributed to this paper are too numerous to mention here, but I want to thank them for their time and interest in contributing the data from their different varieties.

² Purposive uses are with an infinitival nominalization, as in *miku-y-paq* [ear-INF-BEN] ‘in order to eat’. See (13) below.

The genitive form *-pa* occurs primarily in attributive nominal constructions, and co-occurs in the DP with the nominal possessive suffix *-n* on the possessed element:

- (3) *[añas-pa t'oqo-n-mi] chahay-qa*
 fox-GEN hole-3SG-EVI yonder-TOP
 "That over there is the hole of a fox." (Cusihuaman 1976: 136)

It is clear that the possessor and possessed element in (3) form a constituent. The possessor agreement marker and the genitive case marker co-occur.

In Ecuador, there have been a number of changes in the syntactic and morphological features of in particular the genitive case marker.³ Most importantly, the possessor agreement marker has been lost in Ecuadorian Quechua. This marker is not only lost in direct possession constructions, as in (5.a), but also in nominalizations, as in (5.b), and in disjoint subject switch reference constructions, as in (5.c).

- | | Peru | | Ecuador |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| (4) | a. <i>mama-yki</i>
mother-2SG
"your mother" | (5) | a. <i>kan-pak mama</i>
you.SG-BEN mother
"your mother" |
| | b. <i>riku-sqa-yki</i>
see-NMLZ-2SG
"that you have seen" | | b. <i>(kan) riku-shka</i>
(you.SG) see-NMLZ
"that you have seen" |
| | c. <i>riku-pti-yki</i>
see-DS-2SG
"if you see" | | c. <i>(kan) riku-kpi</i>
(you.SG) see-DS
"if you see" |

Thus a single morphological change has had important grammatical consequences, leading to a broad range of grammatical differences between the Ecuadorian and the Peruvian varieties of Quechua (Muysken 1977). The loss of nominal agreement may have been a trigger in Ecuador for reanalyzing genitive *-pa* as a case marker similar to the other ones, which do not occur in the specifier position of a DP.

The second change, as noted, is that in many contexts, genitive *-pa* has become indistinguishable in form from benefactive *-pak*. This is schematized in (6):

- | (6) | Cuzco | Ecuador |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>genitive</i> | -pa/-q/-q-pa | -pa/-pak |
| <i>benefactive</i> | -paq | -pak/pa |

It is quite possible that the collapse of the genitive / benefactive distinction is motivated in part by the loss of nominal possessive marking as sketched in (4)-(5).

³ It should be kept in mind that the Peruvian Quechua opposition between /q/ and /k/ has disappeared in Ecuadorian Quechua. We just have /k/ in this cluster of varieties.

A second reason that the two forms may have collapsed is that in Peruvian Quechua, the form *-pa* occurs after consonants, as in *Xwan-pa* [John-GEN] and the form *-q* after vowels, as in *Maria-q* [Mary-GEN]. The same alternation is found in the evidential markers *-mi/-m* ‘firsthand knowledge’, and *-si/-s* ‘hearsay’, which are clitics. This suggests that *-pa/-q* is also a clitic. I will simply refer to this form as a *-pa* however. After a monosyllable like *pi* ‘who’ the genitive is *-q-pa*, as in *pi-q-pa* ‘whose’. The alternation between the different clitic forms is not found in Ecuador.

Third, it is also quite probable that it is triggered by the morpho-phonological changes sketched in (7), particularly the loss of final consonants in suffixes, as in (7.b). The actual forms of *-pak* differ in different varieties of Ecuadorian Quechua because of four morpho-phonological processes:

(7)	process	context	examples
a.	p → b, w	In suffixes / mostly after vowels and nasals, depending on the variety	-pa > -ba, -wa
b.	k → ∅	/ #CV__##, i.e. word-finally, in contexts not requiring stress	-buk > -bu; -mun > -mu; -rik > -ri; -tik > -ti
c.	a → u	/ obligatory in different suffixes that end in a consonant and optionally in final closed syllables of lexical items	-man > -mun; -bak > -bak > -buk; -wan > -un
d.	CVC → ∅∅C	/ in some suffixes	-buk > k; -pish > -sh

Thus *-pak* can be realized as *-pak*, *-bak*, *-wak*, *-pa*, *-ba*, *-wa*, *-puk*, *-buk*, *-pu*, *-bu*, *-k* in different varieties and different contexts (also related to stress). The rich dialect variation of Ecuadorian Quechua reveals a considerable amount of underlying grammatical unity in many areas. Below, we will see, however, that is unity may be apparent.

The collapse of genitive and benefactive has been treated as grammatical in earlier studies (Muysken 1977: 19; Cole 1982: 113, 115): the simple collapse of two case categories. However, it is not obvious that this is the right analysis. There are several differences between the genitive and the benefactive that remain.

First, the genitive can only occur in pre-nominal contexts, while benefactive always occurs outside the noun phrase:

- (8) a. *kan-pa wasi*
you-GEN house
‘‘your house’’
- b. **kay wasi kan-pa-mi*⁴
this house you-GEN-EVI
‘‘This house is yours.’’

⁴ This ungrammaticality holds in those varieties that have a true genitive, as in Cañar, argued below.

- c. *kay wasi-ta kan-manrura-ni*
 this house-AC you-BEN make-1SG
 “I build this house for you.”

Second, genitive case can be combined with a locative in the ‘place of’ construction:

- (9) a. *Johan-ba-man ri-xu-nchi*
 Johan-GEN-DIR go-PR-1PL
 “We are going to Johan’s (place).”
 b. **Johan-bak-ta riku-nchi*
 Johan-BEN-ACC see-1PL
 “We see this (thing meant) for Johan.”

Third, genitive *-pak* can be absent in many varieties with first person singulars and optionally plurals:

- (10) a. *ñuka-∅ mama*
 I mother
 “my mother”
 b. *ñukunchi-∅ yaya*
 we father
 “our father”

This possibility is never available in benefactive constructions.

In one variety, Guamote, the genitive appears to be maintained with first person⁵:

- (11) *ñuka-pa tanda-ta miku-ngi, ñuka-ka kan-ba-ta miku-sha*
 I-GEN bread-ACC eat-2SG I-TOP you-GEN-ACC eat-1FU
 “You eat my bread, I will eat yours.”

In contrast, in a different variety, Saraguro, the possessive first person is actually a reduced form:

- (12) *Ñuka sisa-ta randi-ni ñu warmi-man*
 I flower-ACC buy-1SG my wife-BEN
 “I buy flowers for my wife.”

The strongest evidence that there has not been a wholesale collapse of the benefactive and genitive cases comes from dialect variation, as shown in (13), where data from six varieties are shown, three highland and three lowland dialects⁶.

⁵ It *should* be noted that the cases found involve contrastive possession marking.

⁶ My data set actually includes systematic data for at least ten varieties, but these data suffice to make the point.

(13)	Guamote	Cañar	Salasaca	Coca	Canelos	Tena
<i>Attributive possession</i>	pak/pa	pa	bu(k), k	pa	wa	wa
<i>Predicative possession</i>	pak	∅	buk	k	wak	k
<i>Locative genitive</i>	pak+C	pa+C	bu+C	pa+C	wa+C	pak+C
<i>Stative benefactive</i>	pak	∅	(bu)k, guk	pa	rayku	(ba)k
<i>Active benefactive</i>	pak	ma	mu(n)	rayku	rayku	k-ta
<i>Purposive infinitive</i>	ngapak	ngapa	nga(b)u(k)	ngawa	ngawa	ngawa

In all varieties attributive possession ('my house') is marked with a reflex of *-pa* or *-pak*. Predicative possession ('the house is mine') cannot be marked in Cañar, which has a grammatical gap here. In all other varieties a form with some emphasis requiring a final consonant *-k* occurs. Locative genitives take the same suffixes as attributive genitives, but then combined with a locative case marker. Stative benefactives ('the house is for Johan') cannot be marked in Cañar, but in varieties with this category we find a form similar to the genitive or an entirely different suffix, *-rayku* 'because of, for the sake of'. This same *-rayku* appears in active benefactives ('I build a house for Johan') in several varieties, others use a dative case here, *-ma/-mu(n)*, or a genitive-like form *-k* combined with an accusative to mark that it is VP-internal rather than NP-internal. Finally, purposive infinitives ('in order to eat') are with a *-pa/-pak* form in all varieties, in a 'frozen' combination with the nominalizing suffix *-nga-*. Thus there is no unified global category genitive/benefactive. Rather, the benefactive category is expressed in various ways in the different varieties, depending on the specific context.

This squib has tried to demonstrate two things: (a) it always pays to look below the descriptive surface; (b) grammatical micro-variation can be revealing of more complex underlying patterns.

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