

Semantic transparency in Lowland Ecuadorian Quechua morphosyntax¹

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Abstract

In this paper the properties of Lowland Ecuadorian Quechua, a possibly pidginized variety from this Andean indigenous language family, are evaluated in the light of the semantic-transparency hypothesis. It is argued that the typological perspective created by looking at a wider range of languages brings some of the basic ideas developed for creole languages into focus.

1. Introduction

One of Pieter Seuren's contributions to the field of creole studies has been the idea that creoles somehow represent semantically transparent structures, as a result of their special history. Together with the late Herman Wekker, Seuren has particularly elaborated this idea in their joint 1986 paper. The dimensions of semantic transparency proposed by Seuren and Wekker (1986: 64) are uniformity, universality, and simplicity. Furthermore, Pieter Seuren has repeatedly stressed the importance of typological considerations, most recently in his *Western Linguistics* (1998).

In this brief paper I will start to illustrate the workings of the principle of semantic transparency for the possibly pidginized Quechua of the Amazonian lowlands of eastern Ecuador, Lowland Ecuadorian Quechua (LEQ). This variety has been described by Leonardi (1966) and Mugica (1967) and is represented in texts gathered by Oberem and Hartmann (1971), but the present paper is based mostly on my own fieldwork in Arajuno (Tena province). Quechua is spoken (by more than eight million speakers) mostly in rural areas of the highlands of Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador, but small pockets of speakers are also found on the slopes of the Amazon basin of Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Quechua is

a language family with an internal differentiation comparable to that of the Romance languages. Generally the family is split up into two parts, QI and QII (Parker 1963; Torero 1964). In this paper I am concerned with the QII branch, which includes southern and northern (but not central) Peru, as well as Bolivia and Ecuador. As said before, I will focus on the LEQ variety, spoken by about ten thousand speakers.

2. The spread of Quechua to the Ecuadorian Amazon

The spread of Quechua to Ecuador is somewhat of a mystery. (I will use the term Quechua here to refer to all varieties of the language family, even though in Ecuador the language is often referred to as Quichua.) The geographical extension of the use of Quechua to the Ecuadorian highlands could be explained by referring to the Inca Empire, which in the highlands occupied a territory roughly coinciding with the Quechua-speaking region. For LEQ no such obvious explanation can be found, and it is not clear that the explanation is correct for the highlands. The Incas only occupied the Ecuadorian highlands for slightly over one generation, and it was not possible to impose Quechua during this time sufficiently for the language to survive and expand in the colonial period. For this reason, scholars like Torero (1975) assume that there was a pre-Incaic use of Quechua as a “lingua franca” in northern Peru and Ecuador (cf. the debate in the journal *Revista Andina*; Torero 1984, 1985). A careful study of the effects of the rapid expansion of Quechua on the character of the language itself, from being a pre-Incaic lingua franca and Incaic conquest language to a general peasant language in the colonial era, and a comparison of the different varieties of highland Quechua yield interesting conclusions suggesting gradual pidginization or restructuring in Quechua. We may profitably study the emergence of the modern jungle dialects as the last phase in this process.

Since the existence of a substantial group of Quechua native speakers in pre-Inca Ecuador remains doubtful (cf. Hartmann 1979), and since the Incas themselves did not enter the jungle, LEQ cannot be much older than the sixteenth century. To account for the spread of LEQ, a number of possibly complementary theories have been put forward:

Missionaries. The missionary theory, held by Oberem and Hartmann (1971) and many others, claims that Quechua was brought into the Oriente, the Amazonian lowland jungles, by Catholic missionaries. In favor of the missionary theory speaks the type of settlement policy that the priests adopted. The strategy of bringing Indians from different

language groups together in *reducciones*, structured settlements along the rivers, may have been a powerful tool in imposing one language, Quechua, as the general one. However, this theory has three shortcomings.

First, the fact that the missionaries used Quechua does not imply necessarily that they introduced it. It is equally likely that there was already some knowledge of Quechua as a contact language in the areas near the Andean slopes. From what we know of the effectiveness of language engineering, it is improbable that a whole region would adopt a language in which a few missionaries preached. We would have to assume that the Indians underwent a process of language shift so that they could confess.

Second, the linguistic evidence speaks against the missionary theory, I think. Note that the missionaries would have had to have been virtually native speakers of Quechua, not only controlling the grammar perfectly, but having a complete command of the vocabulary. While terms referring to jungle animals and plants are mostly of non-Quechua origin, all of the vocabulary relating to food preparation, domestic and social activities, etc., is the same as that of highland Quechua. If the priests had learned Quechua from a book, they would not have known all this vocabulary, since there was no large published word list, as far as we know, let alone dictionary, of Ecuadorian Quechua until the late nineteenth century, namely Cordero (1955 [1890]) (Muysken 1999). In addition we would have to assume LEQ to be much more conservative than it is. The grammars available of Ecuadorian Quechua in the colonial period reflect a more Peruvian type of Quechua (cf. Nieto Polo 1964 [1753]).

Finally, we would expect LEQ to be more heavily hispanicized if it had been introduced as a second language of missionaries. Actually, it has been influenced by Spanish less than most highland varieties (Muysken 1986: 423–443). Its vocabulary does contain Spanish items, but its syntax and morphology show virtually no Spanish influence.

Trade. The trade-language theory is suggested by Oberem (1973: 258). At the time of the Spanish conquest Quechua was already widespread as a trade language, at least among the Quijos of the northern part of the Ecuadorian Amazon basin. That is not surprising because the Quijos maintained frequent contacts with traders from the highlands, who used Quechua at least as a lingua franca. Oberem goes on to say that colonial administrators and landowners would have continued contacts with the Quijos in Quechua. This may well be true, but it certainly does not explain, alone or even together with the missionary theory, the acceptance of LEQ by the Quijos and by numerous other groups as a native language.

Refugees. To account for the emergence of LEQ, one has to postulate pockets of Quechua speakers already present in the lowlands of the Oriente, at least from the early colonial period on. Without fluent speakers present, Quechua would never have spread and LEQ would never have had the extensive highland vocabulary. These speakers may have been traders or groups dislocated during or after the Spanish conquest. There are several known instances of groups of highland Indians fleeing into the jungle.

Demography. Another element to be considered is the depopulation occurring in the Amazon basin after the Spanish conquest, as argued by Sweet (1971). The Indian population of the region was reduced by possibly as much as 90%. As a result of the demographic decline, tribal groups that were endogamic and culturally separate before were forced to mix and reorganize. Many different small groups of Indians were forced to disband, and they formed new, more stable communities in which the peasant language of the Andean highlands was adopted. It is quite possible that during this large-scale reshuffling of people and cultures, Quechua emerged as the lingua franca in some areas and eventually became the native language of newly formed tribal groups.

Traders, missionaries, and refugees may have contributed to the fact that it was Quechua and not some other language that survived and expanded. The most important factor, in my view, in accounting for the emergency of LEQ is the demographic decline and cultural reorganization of the jungle tribes, the other factors being secondary. In fact, this process is still going on. A century ago, Záparo was one of the most important languages in the Ecuadorian jungle, and now few if any speakers are left. There is evidence that the surviving Záparos have switched to Quechua (Louisa Stark, personal communication). Likewise, more and more speakers of Waorani are becoming bilingual in LEQ and Waorani.

Before embarking on the list of specific LEQ features that point to its having undergone a process of pidginization, I should make my claim more precise, distinguishing it from other claims about language mixing in Quechua. First of all, Parker (1972: 115) remarks, "The major fragmentation [in Quechua] appears to occur in Ecuador, where in my opinion the process of creolization with other Indian languages is the cause of the diversity."

Given the fact that what Parker terms the fragmentation, dialect diversification, of Ecuadorian Quechua is largely on the phonological level and is analyzable in terms of fairly natural phonological rules, there is no need to claim Amerindian substrate. Whatever processes have led to the differences between LEQ and its antecedent forms, there is no

compelling reason so far to appeal to substrate languages (Záparo, Waorani, Shuar, etc.) to explain them. However, more detailed work in this area is desperately needed.

Second, several scholars have referred to different Quechua dialects as creoles because of heavy Spanish influence. In my own work I have discussed relexification processes in *Media Lengua* in the context of the study of creolization (Muysken 1981). Whatever the merit of these claims for specific Sierra dialects, they do not apply to LEQ, which has undergone little influence from Spanish.

Neither other Amerindian substrate nor Spanish superstrate influence is at stake here, but rather autonomous pidginization in Quechua, as a result of the historical discontinuity in the transmission of the Quechua linguistic tradition after the Spanish conquest. In terms of Givón (1979), not a particular substrate (e.g. Záparo or Spanish) is involved in the emergence of LEQ, but rather a universal one (i.e. universal processes of language development). Different Amazonian languages as well as Spanish have contributed specific lexical terms to LEQ, but they have not affected its basic structure.

3. Linguistic features of LEQ and its relation to highland varieties

Let us turn to the ways in which LEQ differs from dialects of Quechua supposedly similar to the varieties from which LEQ was derived. This is not easy, since the varieties closest to the hypothetical ancestor of LEQ, spoken along the central and northern coast of Peru (Torero 1975), have died out. They are represented in the earliest grammar and word list of Quechua (Santo Tomás 1560a, 1560b). I will postpone to a later publication a detailed comparison of this source with the Ecuadorian materials. One possible alternative, the Quechua spoken in Cuzco, the Inca capital, appears to have undergone Aymara influence particularly in its phonology. I will nonetheless use Cuzco Quechua here as a basis for comparison, particularly since phonology will not play an important role in what is to come.

Ecuadorian Quechua differs in several ways, sometimes radically, from related Peruvian varieties. In some sense, the language represents a pidginized or at least koineized version of its putative ancestors. Before starting on a systematic comparison, consider first a LEQ sentence illustrating a number of diagnostic features in which it differs from its Southern Peruvian counterpart:²

- (1) libachi-nga ra-u-ni [mana uqui-manda ñawpa pajta-mu-jpi]
hit-FU.NOM do-PR-1 not brother-ABL before reach-CIS-DS
'I am going to beat you if you don't get here before your brother.'
- (2) [mana wawqi-yki-q ñawpay-ni-n chaya-mu-qtí-yki-qa]
not brother-2-GE before-EU-3 arriva-CIS-DS-2-TO
maqa-sqayki
beat-FUI > 2
'I am going to beat you if you don't get here before your brother.'

In (2) a number of person markers are present (italic in the gloss) that are absent in (1). The morphological future of (2) has been replaced by a periphrastic construction in (1), involving auxiliary *ra-* 'do'. Also, note that in the Peruvian case the conditional clause precedes the main verb, while in LEQ it follows the main verb. However, the LEQ sentence is not characterized by the absence of morphology as such.

In Table 1 are listed a number of the features separating the two sets of varieties; here the LEQ features hold for all or most of the Ecuadorean Quechua varieties. In at least half the cases, the Ecuadorean form represents a simplification of the Peruvian antecedent forms. There are two further important changes: (a) from reflexive to progressive, shown in (3), and (b) from inchoative to reflexive, shown in (4).

- (3) the suffix *-ku*

<i>reflexive</i>	<i>progressive</i>
riku-ku-n	riku-ku-n
see-RE-3	see-PR-3
's/he sees her/himself'	's/he is seeing'

- (4) the suffix *-ri*

<i>inchoative</i>	<i>reflexive</i>
riki-ri-n	riku-ri-n
see-INC-3	see-RE-3
's/he begins to see'	's/he sees her/himself'

Let us now consider in more detail how LEQ is related linguistically to highland dialects of Ecuadorean Quechua. First of all, the basic observation is that phonologically, lexically, and morphologically it is very closely related to highland dialects. Second, there is some evidence that LEQ has emerged fairly early in the history of Ecuadorean Quechua. Syntactically, LEQ shares with the southern highland dialect of Saraguro the absence of the *yalli* serial verb comparative (Muysken 1977). This comparative is an innovation in Ecuadorian Quechua and has been attested from 1750 onward (Nieto Polo 1964 [1753]). The generality of

Table 1. Morphosyntactic and phonological features that distinguish Southern Peruvian Quechua from Ecuadorian Quechua

	Peru	Ecuador
a. 1st person plural	ñuqayku ñuqanchis	ñukanchis
b. benefactive	-paq	-pak
genitive	-pa/-p	-pak
c. nominal possessives	-y/-yki/ -n/-nchis	0
d. adverbial subordination	-pti/-spa	-kpi/-spa
e. object marking		
3su-1ob	-wa	(-wa)
1su-2ob	-yki	
3su-2ob	-su-nki	
3su-1plob	-wa-nchis	
f. verbal plural	-n-ku	-n-kuna
g. comparative	aswan	yalli

this construction in Ecuadorean Quechua, coupled with its absence in two peripheral dialects, Saraguro (extreme south) and LEQ (east), allows us to date LEQ as having emerged before 1750.

Phonologically, LEQ has several conservative features as well:

i. It has preserved the palatalized *l* in words such as *allku* ‘dog’. It shares this feature with the dialect of Saraguro in the south. Sierra dialects bordering on lowland EQ have evolved in this respect:

- (5) Imbabura ž
 Cotopaxi š
 Tungurahua č
 Chimborazo ž
 Saraguro lʲ LEQ lʲ

ii. One variety of LEQ, L (in the terminology of Orr and Wisley [1965] from Limoncocha), has maintained the consonant sequence *čk* in words such as *achka* ‘much’. It shares this feature with the dialects of Tungurahua and Chimborazo, but not with other dialects, including the LEQ T (= Tena) dialect) and LEQ B (= Bobonaza) dialect:

- (6) Imbabura č
 Cotopaxi šk LEQ T, LEQ B šk
 Tungurahua čk }
 Chimborazo čk } LEQ L čk
 Saraguro cik

iii. LEQ has not participated in the vowel-change rule of the neighboring dialects, which has resulted in raising some instances of *a* to *i* or *u*, in words such as *kunun* ‘now’ and *yachik* ‘witch’, derived from *kunan* and *yachak*.

(7)	Imbabura	kunan	LEQ	kunan
	Cotopaxi	}	kunun	
	Tungurahua			
	Chimb.North			
	Saraguro	kunan	LEQ	kunan

In addition to these conservative features, which it shares with different Sierra dialects but in each case with a different one, and which point to a common origin for all dialects involved, LEQ also has a number of innovative traits, some of which it shares, again, with different Sierra varieties. The shared innovations include the following:

iv. Metathesis of *kt* clusters in words such as *utku* ‘hole’, a process that occurs in the B and T varieties of LEQ and in the Sierra varieties of Cotopaxi and Pichincha, which border on B and T.

v. Deletion of initial glides in the T variety of LEQ and in the immediately adjacent Sierra dialect of Salasaca (Tungurahua), resulting in *ira* from *wira* ‘fat’, *ikuna* from *yaykuna* ‘enter’, etc.

Altogether we can establish a number of isoglosses intersecting with each other, linking LEQ for a number of conservative traits to various Sierra dialects, some distant, some neighboring, and, for some very specific innovations, to dialects in its immediate vicinity.

Finally, some varieties of LEQ have undergone specific developments not shared by any Sierra dialect. An example is the weakening and even deletion of the initial consonants in a number of suffixes in certain contexts:

(8)	LEQ	T	Cotopaxi	Chimborazo
	yaku-ra	yaku-da	yaku-ta	‘river’ (acc.)
	yaku-i	yaku-bi	yaku-pi	‘in the river’

This feature could be said to be a further extension of the voicing of these consonants in central Ecuadorian Sierra dialects such as Cotopaxi.

The overall picture is fairly clear, however: LEQ emerged before 1750 as an offshoot of a general early variety of Ecuadorian Quechua, and it has developed separately but shares a number of specific innovations with neighboring dialects, pointing to frequent highland–lowland contacts even in the recent period.

4. The role of semantic transparency

The application of Seuren and Wekker's *semantic-transparency principle* to the situation of LEQ as the result of massive language shift to Quechua, concomitant with colonization and drastic population decline in the Amazon basin, implies an appeal to three basic principles:

- uniformity: the maximum uniformity in the treatment of semantic categories;
- universality: the minimum of reliance on language-particular rules;
- simplicity: the minimum of processing in proceeding from semantic analyses to surface structures, and vice versa.

From a structural point of view, a number of aspects of LEQ are relevant to these three principles. It presents many features that may be attributed to pidginization and creolization:

a. There are no morphophonemic adjustment rules such as the vowel-lowering rule in sequences of verbal suffixes, such as exist in a southern variety like Ayacucho (Parker 1965) or Cuzco. There we find

- (9) apa-cha-ri-yka-pu-wa-y (-yku > -yka before -pu)
 take-DIM-INC-INT-BEN-1ob-IM
 'Please take them for me.'
- (10) kumpaña-ri-ka-mu-sun (-ku > -ka before -mu)
 accompany-INC-RE-CIS-1plFU
 'Let us go and accompany them.'

The absence of these alternations in LEQ can be viewed in terms both of uniformity — each affix always has the same form — and of simplicity — there need not be a processing rule “undoing” the vowel lowering in perception and accomplishing it in production.

Similarly, the alternations in the form of the evidential markers *-mi* and *-si* (depending on whether they follow a vowel or a consonant) are absent in LEQ:

- (11) a. Peru
 ima-n/ima-paq-mi (-mi > -n after a vowel)
 what AF what for AF
- b. LEQ
 ima-mi/ima-ba-mi
 what AF what for AF
 'What?/For what?'

Again, both uniformity and simplicity are served by this change.

b. There is loss of nominal person marking. In Peruvian Quechua we have the following four markers:

(12)	<i>nominal</i>		<i>verbal</i>	
	-y	'my'	-ni	'I'
	-yki	'your'	-nki	'you'
	-n	'her/his'	-n	'(s)he'
	-nchik	'our'	-nchik	'we'

These parallel the verbal person markers and are mostly identical to them. However, in Ecuador (including LEQ), the nominal markers have been lost. Thus we have the following paradigm:

(13)	<i>Peru</i>		<i>Ecuador</i>
	(qan) puri-nki		(kan) puri-ngi
	(you) walk-2		you walk-2
	'you walk'		'you walk'
	(qan-pa) mama-yki		kan-pak mama
	(you-GE) mother-2		you-GE mother
	'your mother'		'your mother'

The nominal markers were lost gradually, and one by one. Earlier sources even in the twentieth century, like Leonardi (1966), still mention some of them. They were lost in the following order (Muysken 1999):

(14)	y '1s' > n '3s' > nchik '1pl' > yki '2'
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This order may well be explained by appealing to phonetic salience and frequency (in that order): the nonsalient *-y* and *-n* were lost first, frequent and salient *-yki* maintained longest. This in spite of the fact that *-yki* is not identical to the second person verbal marker *-nki*, which leads to a violation of the principle of uniformity.

It is not easy to explain the disappearance of the nominal person markers in LEQ on the basis of the principles of uniformity and simplicity. It may be possible to appeal to universality, minimal reliance on language-particular rules, if we assume that morphologically expressed nominal person marking is less frequent in the languages of the world than verbal person marking. However, the nominal paradigm in southern Quechua is used to mark not only nouns but also subordinate and nominalized verbs, and these uses have disappeared as well (see also [1]–[2] above):

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------|--|
| (15) | <i>Peru</i> | <i>Ecuador</i> |
| | puri-na-yki-ta yacha-ni | puri-na-ta yacha-ni |
| | walk-FU.NOM-2-AC know-1 | walk-FU.NOM-AC know-1 |
| | 'I know that you will walk.' | 'I know that I/you/(s)he/we/they will walk.' |

Thus an appeal to universality is problematic here, since in many languages verbs with subordinate status do receive person marking.

Another problem with an appeal to universality is that the more general distribution of a particular pattern requires an explanation in itself.

c. There has been a reduction in the inventory of suffixes. Typical examples are the drop from 17 to seven derivational suffixes on the verb and the merging of benefactive *-pak* and genitive *-pa* case. While the general loss of derivational affixes could be evaluated in terms of simplicity, the merger of the two cases goes against the principle of uniformity in the expression of semantic categories.

d. A periphrastic future/modal on the basis of a nonrealized nominal form of the lexical verb and the auxiliary *ra-* 'do' emerged:

- | | |
|------|---|
| (16) | libachi-nga ra-u-ni mana uqui-manda-s ñawpa pajta-mu-jpi |
| | hit-FU do-PR-1 not bother-ABL-IND before arrive-CIS-DS |
| | 'I am going to hit you if you do not get here before your brother.' |
| (17) | rima-hua-ca-mi hacienda-yuj dueño cunan |
| | speak-1ob-PA-AF farm-owning boss now |
| | shamu-nga ra-u-ni |
| | come-FU.NOM do-PR-1 |
| | 'The landowner said to me that he was going to come now.' |

It is not easy to interpret this in terms of uniformity: other temporal and aspectual categories are expressed by affixes in Peruvian Quechua as well as in LEQ. Neither does simplicity yield much right away, unless there is independent evidence that periphrastic expressions are always easier to process than affixes. Universality may be invoked since inchoatives/future tenses/modals are often expressed periphrastically. However, generally the verb 'go' is used in this context rather than 'do'. Indeed, there is an inchoative suffix in LEQ and other Ecuadorian varieties based on the combination agentive + 'go': *-kri*, which has developed from a similar periphrastic construction:

- | | | | |
|------|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| (18) | puri-k ri-n | > | puri-kri-n |
| | walk-AG go-3 | | walk-INC-3 |
| | 's/he goes a walker' | | 's/he begins to walk' |

e. We also encounter the development of a periphrastic construction involving the complementizer *ni + sha* 'saying':

- (19) riku-u-ni yura-ma pishku-una tiya-nau-nga-chu ni-sha
 see-PR-1 tree-to bird-PL be-PL-3FU-Q say-SS
 'I am looking at the trees to find out if there are any birds' (lit.
 'saying: will there be any birds').

While forms like *ni-sha* are used in many Quechua varieties to mark quotative complements, the extension to other types of complements, including those of verbs of thinking and wishing, is specific for LEQ. It resembles the use of the verb 'say' in many Caribbean creoles and thus may be explained in terms of the principle of universality; however, there is little relation to either simplicity or uniformity.

f. The subordinator *-pti-* has been reinterpreted as *-k-pi* 'agentive-locative' and extended to other nominalizers, yielding *-shka-pi* and *-na-pi*. This change can well be explained in terms of uniformity, in the sense that the component elements of *-k-pi* are also productive independent suffixes in LEQ, part of productive paradigms.

g. The verbal plural marker *-n-ku* has been replaced with *-n-kuna*. This change can be viewed as the result of uniformity, since *-kuna* is also the nominal plural. In addition to the *-n-kuna* plural, there is a plural form of intransitive verbs involving *-nau*, the reciprocal affix, here meaning conjoint action:

- (20) puri-nau-n
 walk-REC-3
 'they walk'

h. The forms *ñuqayku* '1st person plural exclusive' and *ñuqanchis* '1st person plural inclusive' have been replaced with a single form, *ñukanchis*, and the inclusive/exclusive distinction has been lost. It is hard to relate this change either to simplicity in the sense meant by Seuren and Wekker (1986) or to uniformity.

i. The object-marking system has been considerably reduced in LEQ and related varieties. To comprehend that the pattern of reduction is not random, consider the set of Quechua person markers in Peru and in LEQ, shown in Table 2.

A perusal of the forms that have survived shows that (i) the first person plural inclusive/exclusive distinction has been lost throughout the paradigm; (ii) the only object forms that have survived are those that

Table 2. *Quechua person markers*

	Peru	LEQ	
Subject marking	-ni	-ni	1s
	-nki	-ngi	2s
	-n	-n	3
	-y-ku		1p excl
	-n-chis		1p incl
		-nchi	1p
	-nki-chis	-ngichi	2p
	-n-ku	(-nau..)-n n-kuna	3p
Subject + object marking			
YKI = 1s-2s			
	-yki	-	1s-2s ^a
	-yki-ku	-	1p excl-2s
	-yki-chis	-	1s-2p
WA = 1ob			
	-wa-nki	-wa-ngi	2s-1s
	-wa-n	-wa-n	3s-1s
	-wa-nki-ku	-	2s-1p excl
	-wa-nki-chis	-wa-ngichi	2p-1s
	-wa-n-ku	-	3s-1p excl
WA-NCHIS			
	-wa-nchis	-	3s-1p incl
	-wa-nchis-ku	-	3p-1p incl
SU-NKI			
	-su-nki	-	3s-2s
	-su-nki-chis	-	3s-2p
	-su-nki-ku	-	3p-2s

a. 1s-2s means 1s subject/2s object, etc.

can be fitted into the scheme {OBJECT}-{SUBJECT}-{SUBJECT PLURAL}. The syntagmatically irregular forms involving *-yki*, *-wa-nchis*, and *-su-nki* have disappeared.

There is no space here to discuss the reinterpretation of the suffix *-ku* from 'reflexive' to 'progressive', the shift in meaning of the suffix *-ri* from 'inchoactive' to 'reflexive', and several other changes. The data so far already provide a complex picture of reduction and simplification. Nonetheless, morpheme counts (for 100 words of text) suggest that Amazon Quechua is morphologically less complex than, for example, Cuzco Quechua (Peru) but certainly has not lost all of its morphology; see Table 3.

Table 3. *Morpheme/word proportions in two Quechua varieties*

	Traditional narrative	Syntactic field notes
Peru	2.01	2.54
LEQ	1.74	2.20

The fact that so many affixes have survived at all in pidgin/creole varieties of languages such as Quechua, as well as in Swahili, for instance, possibly has to do with their agglutinative character. In addition, the relevant substrate languages, such as Shuar (Jivaroan), are suffixal in nature.

5. Concluding remarks

This essay has been a first attempt to extend the domain of the notions uniformity, simplicity, and universality to typologically more diverse languages. While simplicity and uniformity carry us some (though not all) of the way toward an explanation, the notion of universality deserves more critical scrutiny, and possibly redefinition, in my view. However, it is clear that the framework of semantic transparency lifts pidgin and creole studies above the descriptive level, while remaining firmly rooted in what we know about the workings of language.

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Notes

1. Correspondence address: TCLA, Universiteit Leiden, Postbus 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands. E-mail: muysken@rullet.leidenuniv.nl.
2. The following abbreviations are used in glosses:

ABL	ablative, 'from'
AC	accusative
AF	affirmative
AG	agentive
BEN	benefactive
CIS	cislocative, toward speaker
DIM	diminutive
DS	different-subject switch reference
EU	euphonic element

FU	future
FU.NOM	nominalizer with future interpretation
GE	genitive
IM	imperative
INC	inchoative
IND	indefinite
INT	intensive
LO	locative
NEG	negation
PA	past
PL	plural
PR	progressive aspect
RE	reflexive, medial
SS	same-subject switch reference
TO	topic
1 > 2	first person subject, second person object

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