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ERGATIVITY IN BASQUE*

Abstract

The currently held view that Basque, like many other ergative languages, is ergative only in morphology but accusative in syntax is shown to be superficial. On the morphological level, Basque represents the rather rare type of both nominal and verbal ergativity without any split. Syntactically, it functions ergatively as far as overt marking of grammatical relations reaches. Beyond, there is no grammaticalized ergative or accusative syntax. What is unmarked is neutral. The semantic interpretation of neutral constructions depends largely on pragmatic probability. In narrative texts, in fact, pragmatic probability leads to a statistical predominance of "accusative" sequences. But in contrast to languages like English, in Basque such statistical preferences never have crystallized into rigid syntactic patterns. The conclusion scan be drawn that speculations about "deep" accusativity of most, if not all, ergative languages are premature.

1. Introduction

In recent years, ergativity has become one of the most intensely discussed topics in general linguistics. Like a kind of antiworld, it continues to fascinate a great many linguists whose mother tongue is some Western Indo-European, and therefore accusative, language. Relationships seem to stand on their heads; most basic grammatical categories look like the exact mirror-images of what a speaker of Standard Average European (SAE) has been accustomed to since his earliest childhood. The attracting force of ergativity is not only its appeal for those interested in linguistic diversity (or even relativity); it is also a challenge for those who are convinced of the "profound unity underlying language". In other words, it has become an issue of major interest in the field of syntactic typology as well as in the domain of the search for universals. The mere existence of an apparently irreducible "antiworld" in language structure is welcomed as an argument in favour of linguistic relativism; and it constitutes a serious difficulty which has to be overcome if the program of linguistic universalism is to take shape.

The main point in the following discussion will be to show that a great deal of current universalist argumentation is superficial insofar as it disregards

an important part of existing linguistic diversity. On the other hand, it will be shown that a level of abstraction can be reached where the real differences of observable structures appear as external manifestations of universal principles and dimensions.

Empirically, the following considerations are mainly based on a study of ergativity in Basque. Although Basque offers the best documented and most readily accessible ergative system for Western European linguists, and although it was among the very first languages where ergativity was found (in the last decades of the 19th century), a thorough investigation of the role ergativity plays in Basque still remains to be done. Basque is a prototypical representative of ergative structuring. It belongs to the rather rare type without any of the splits currently found. If there is any language (outside the Northwest- and Northeast-Caucasian languages) where ergativity seems to be "pure" at first sight, it is Basque. General considerations about a linguistic type should start from such apparently "pure" representatives, rather than from languages where the mixture of other typological ingredients is evident from the very outset.

Occasionally, other ergative and accusative languages will be taken into consideration for comparative and contrastive purposes. The study of languages of the third type, which is still being called "active" (according to Klimov and many others), or better "dual" (according to a recent proposal by Lazard), lies outside the scope of the present paper. A deepened investigation into the nature of active systems is indeed one of the most urgent tasks of typological research, but this matter is left for other occasions. Arguments brought forward in the present paper take no linguistic structure other than ergative and accusative into account.

The thesis that ergativity is a rather superficial phenomenon-, limited in scope to morphology and with little, if any, incidence upon deeper strata of syntax, seems to have been widely accepted among linguists. This position was formulated by such outstanding scholars as Anderson (1976), Keenan (1976), and Comrie (1978)[1], and it has been restated ever since in quite a number of contributions. According to the prevailing consensus, languages with an ergative syntax as their overall pattern are the exception, Dyirbal being the case inevitably referred to.

Dyirbal is indeed an exceptional language, and this for at least two quite independent reasons: it shows no verbal agreement, only a system of voice; and its syntax is better known than that of most other ergative languages, thanks to the well-known pioneering work of Dixon (1972). As already pointed out by Comrie (1978: 393), this penetrating study by Dixon has revolutionized our views on ergativity. In an earlier paper[2] I suggested that the exceptional impression we have of Dyribal might be due to ignorance or lack of documentation of other languages; since we know relatively little about the syntax of many ergative languages outside Australia, all kinds of generalization still seem premature. The fact that Dyirbal was the first language whose syntax

was closely scrutinized paradoxically led to the somewhat hasty conclusion that Dyirbal must be a typological extreme, most other ergative languages being far less "exotic". There is a danger that such a conclusion may be motivated not so much by the results of broad empirical research but rather by the strongly felt need to harmonize the highly divergent structures found in some non- Indo-European languages with the more familiar ones of Standard Average European. We must be sure that the hypothesis about "deep accusativity" of most ergative languages is not merely an attempt to "discuss away" – consciously or unconsciously – all that does not fit into the patterns of languages of the accusative type. What is needed are individual studies of as many ergative (or partially ergative) languages as possible, with special regard to the domains as yet relatively little explored. The present discussion of Basque should be considered as one step in this direction.

What we are lacking is not only empirical work. There are serious gaps in theory, too. As was mentioned before, Dyirbal has some important typological properties of its own. The question must be raised, then, whether or not the so-called "deep ergativity" of this language has something to do with such properties. It would be a natural consequence to ask whether the presumable "deep accusativity" of so many other languages bears some relation to typological features different from those of Dyirbal. Up to now, most contributions dealing with the "depth" of ergativity fail to consider the interconnections between the different categories building up the system of a language as a whole. Surely the depth of ergativity depends on many factors, not only on morphological ("superficial"?) ergative marking. The discovery and evaluation of such factors will be a prerequisite for any serious discussion of this issue in the future.

It is not only lack of empirical data and of holistic, or integrated, thinking that makes most current approaches insufficient. Up to now, the very basis of such notions as "syntactic ergativity" remains unclear. Does it make sense to measure such totally distinct things as "coding properties" and "behaviour and control properties" with the same parameter of *ergativity* vs. *accusativity*? And if it does, how should the differences between these levels be accounted for? Does not the distribution of universal (or at least general) and of idiosyncratic factors vary considerably as we move up or down the hierarchy of linguistic structures? Questions such as these must be answered, albeit tentatively, before the discussion on syntactic typology can be advanced.

We must avoid the pitfalls of our own linguistic habits and must not let Indo-European models bias our views on truly "foreign" languages. A language must be considered as a whole and not as a conglomeration of isolated features; and when transferring such notions as "ergativity" into other domains than those for which they were originally conceived, this should be made explicit and the consequences carefully weighed. Only the fulfilment of these three conditions

(at least!) can lead to a better understanding of the nature and extent of ergativity in language.

As for Basque, it must be said that some linguists at least have expressed their disagreement with the currently held view that this language, too, is syntactically purely accusative. This has been done most clearly by Terence Wilbur (1979: 161):

> *The whole question is treated in an arbitrary and doctrinaire manner by Keenan and Comrie. The treatment of Basque material is cavalier and shocking. Anderson and Keenan and Comrie try to set up as absolute metaphysical realities the traditional terms, subject and object, by means of a set of complex syntactic properties, tortuous to follow.*

Van Valin has repeatedly used materials from Basque in order to support his views[3], which read as follows (1980: 326):

> *The claim that most languages exhibiting ergative morphology are syntactically accusative and therefore typologically identical (syntactically) to English and German is based on a superficial similarity which masks much more fundamental differences.*

Although less trenchant in his wording, Gunter Brettschneider (1979), too, warns against simply equating Basque syntax with the familiar accusative patterns.

On the other hand, an outstanding bascologue of the quality of de Rijk has pronounced himself very clearly in favour of the deep accusativity of Basque.[4] For him, the case marked with ABS/*trans* is nearly irrelevant for syntactic processes, whereas "subject" (=ABS/*intrans* +ERG) is of crucial importance for quite a number of transformations.

In traditional grammatical literature on Basque, the question was usually neglected altogether. If it was mentioned at all, the point of reference used to be Schuchardt's theory of the "passivity of the Basque verb"[5], as is implicitly the case in the following passage in the standard reference grammar of Pierre Lafitte (1979[1944]: 342):

> *On a conclu à la passivité de tout le verbe basque. Cette théorie ingénieuse est une simple interprétation sans portée pratique, quoique très à la mode chez les bascologues. Nous n'avons pas cru devoir l'adopter dans cette grammaire.*

It is impossible and unnecessary to trace here the history of the various attempts to account for the ergativity of Basque morphology since the end of the 19th century. Of course, this fascinating history is of crucial importance for the

general history of ergativity and its gradual discovery, but it need not detain us here. The only thing to be kept in mind is the fact that traditional grammarians consider the ergativity problem a theoretical issue, and not a question of practical relevance. In any case, in all the rich grammatical literature on the various dialects of Basque, there is not the slightest mention of anything referring to ergativity in syntax.

Before turning to the main problem, namely the "depth" of ergativity in Basque syntax, a rapid survey of ergativity in morphology is necessary.

2. Morphology

As has been mentioned before, Basque is somewhat atypical insofar as its ergativity shows no split, at least no split of the types currently found in the world's languages. Dixon has listed the logical possibilities of split (1979: 133s).[6] A rapid glance is sufficient to show that nothing in the morphology of Basque bears any resemblance to one of the 14 types of this inventory.

First, there can hardly be any disagreement on the complete absence of split according to the semantic nature of the noun. All NPs end with case suffixes structured upon one invariable ergative paradigm. This applies to NPs ending with nouns or with adjectives, and it applies likewise to NPs consisting of all kinds of pronouns, including personal pronouns of the first and second person. Every NP is treated in exactly the same manner, regardless of its internal structure. There are no selection restrictions, either for the ergative or for the absolutive case. In this respect, Basque differs not only from most Australian languages, but also from Tongan, a number of Sino-Tibetan languages of the Himalaya, Yasin Burushaski, and the Kartvelian languages.

There is no split according to the semantic structure of the verb, such as it exists in many Polynesian languages. The existence of such a split has never been postulated for Basque, and it would surely be absurd to do so. There are four verb classes in Basque: intransitive monovalent, intransitive bivalent, transitive bivalent, and transitive trivalent. Superficially, intransitive bivalent verbs might give the impression of behaving like their counterparts in accusative languages; but the second valency calls for the dative, and not for something resembling an accusative. It is impossible, then, to claim that intransitive bivalent verbs are "accusative", as has been done for their counterpart in Ubykh, a northwest-Caucasian language (cf. Tchekhoff 1978: 106-132). Ubykh does not have a special dative case, only a general oblique case, so that the wrong impression of an accusative-ergative split according to verbal valence could arise. In Basque, such a postulate is impossible. This confirms once more what has been argued by the present author with regard to Ubykh: intransitive bivalency has nothing to do with accusativity (cf. Bossong 1982). In addition it should be noted that the. verbal systems of Basque and of the three Northwest-Caucasian languages (Circassian, Abkhaz-Abaza, and Ubykh) show quite a

number of striking resemblances in their overall patterns and in many details of formal realization (cf. Paris 1979).[7] The third group of splits in Dixon's inventory, namely tense/aspect splits, is more complicated. The problem which arises in this connection is inevitably mentioned in all grammatical and linguistic treatments of the Basque verb, but as yet no satisfying solution has been proposed.[8] It will therefore be discussed here in some detail.

In the paradigm of the past tense, bivalent transitive verbs containing a reference to a third person patient mark the agent through prefixes, similar to the patient of the present tense, but unlike the ordinary marking of the agent, which is generally marked by a set of suffixes. Since the marking of transitive patient is identical with that of intransitive subject (agent =patient) in an ergative language like Basque, this state of affairs seems to indicate a temporal split of ergativity insofar as the verb system generally functions ergatively, except in the past with third-person patient, where it seems to follow an accusative pattern.

If this conclusion were true, Basque would display a split which is not only unusual but even directly opposed to the patterns normally found in ergative languages of type 2 (Trask 1979). Split according to tense is widespread, the most generally known instances being Armenian, Indo-Iranian languages like Yaghnobi, Semnâni, and many others, the Western Indo-Aryan languages including Hindi, Neo-Aramaic dialects, and Georgian. But in all these cases, it is the present system which occupies the accusative part of the split, and it is the past tenses which function ergatively. As Bechert (1977) has convincingly shown, there are good semantic and pragmatic reasons for such a distribution: when describing ongoing actions, the speaker centers his attention upon the actor, whereas for accomplished actions it is the result, i.e. the patient, that comes to his mind first. It is natural, therefore, that, if any difference is made, present tenses make the actor the preferred topic, and past tenses the patient. Up to now, no language has been cited where a tense-conditioned split would yield a result other than is found, for example, in Hindi.

Nevertheless, if the aforementioned interpretation of the Basque data were correct, this would in fact constitute a unique exception to a universal rule. Is it correct, then? This seems unlikely, either synchronically or diachronically. The arguments in favour and against this opinion will now be expounded systematically.

Seemingly accusative marking of the agent is found only in connection with third person patients. For all other cases, i.e. for all combinations containing a patient of the first or second person, the situation is as it would be expected in an ergative verbal system: the patient receives exactly the same marking as the intransitive "subject" ($NP_{ABS/t} = NP_{ABS/i}$ [P = S]). Some examples[9] including only singular forms will illustrate this point:

NON-AUX

erama "carry" (trans);   joan   "go" (intr)

(1)   a.   *nind.erama.Ø.n*
          "he carried me"   *nin.joa.n*
  b.   *nind. erama.ka.n*   "I went"
          "thou carriedst me"

(2)   a.   *hind.erama.Ø.n*
          "he carried thee"   *hin.joa.n*
  b.   *hind.erama.da.n*   "thou wentst"
          "I carried thee"

AUX

e(d)uki "have" (trans)   izan "be" (intr)

(3)   a.   *nind.u.Ø.en*
          "he had me"   *nint.za.n*
  b.   *nind.u(k)a.n*   "I was"
          "thou hadst me"

(4)   a.   *hind.u.Ø.en*
          "he had thee"   *hint.za.n*
  b.   *hind.u.da.n*   "thou wast"
          "I had thee"

The third person singular absolutive originally had no prefix. Since Benveniste (1966 [1946]) it is a well-known fact that third persons tend to be zero-marked. Note that in the above examples, third person ergatives indeed remain unmarked. This original state of affairs has been preserved in only one Basque dialect, namely Bizcayan. All other dialects mark third singular absolutive by means of the prefix *z-*, which has been generalized from the auxiliary *zan* "he was". (Note that in *zan*, *z-* belongs to the root; it must have been reinterpreted as a prefix.) As a result, we obtain the following figure in Guipuzcoan and Labourdin:

NON-AUX
(5)   *zerama.Ø.n*   :   *z-i.joa.n*
     "he carried him"   "he-went"

AUX
(6)   *z.u.Ø.en*   :   *(Ø)z(.)a.n*
     "he had him"   "he was"

Compare with this the corresponding forms in Bizcayan:

NON-AUX
(7)   *Ø.ero.Ø.y-an*   :   *Ø.yoya.n*
       "he carried him"   "he went"

AUX
(8)   *Ø.eb.Ø.an* (< *euan*)   :   *Ø.za.n*
       "he$_i$ has him$_j$"   "he was"

        In Bizkayan the situation is unambiguously clear: the first *Ø* of the transitive (which refers to "him$_j$") corresponds structurally to the only *Ø* of the intransitive. We could note this in the translation by writing "he$_j$ went/was". In this dialect, the verb is as ergative in the third person as it is in the first and second persons.
        In the other dialects, the same structure results if *zan* is interpreted synchronically as *z.an* (or perhaps as *z.za.n*, with obligatory phonetic reduction of *zz > z*), and not as *Ø.za.n*, an interpretation which is without doubt the correct one in a diachronic, perspective.
        Up to this point, everything functions as ergatively as in the paradigms of the present tenses. The difficulty arises with verb forms containing a reference to first and second person agents and third person patients. Instead of expected forms like

(9)   *zerama.da.n*
       "I carried him" (G/L)
or

(10)   *Ø.ero.da.n*
       (same meaning) (B),

the following paradigm is found:

NON-AUX
(11)   a.   *n.erama.n*   (cf. *narama* "he carries me")
                   "I carried him"
       b.   *h.erama.n*   (cf. *harama* "he carries thee")
                   "thou carriedst him"
AUX
(12)   a.   *n.u.en*   (cf. *nau* "he has me")
                   "I had him"
       b.   *h.u.en*   (cf. *hau* "he had thee")
                   "thou hadst him"

Superficially, then, the ergative marker of the past agrees, not with the ergative marker, but with the patient marker of the present which is, at the same time, the absolute marker in all tenses. Identical marking of S and A is the definitional criterion of accusativity, and it could be argued, consequently, that a part of the past paradigm in Basque is accusative. In my opinion, however, this argument does not stand up under close examination, not in synchrony, and much less in diachrony.

First of all, it must be stressed that ergativity or accusativity consists in equal treatment of S/P or S/A respectively over a substantial part of the whole paradigm, and not in some isolated instances alone; and that such equal treatment occurs under the same circumstances. The material identity of prefixed *n-* and *h-* masks some profound differences which become immediately evident when the corresponding paradigms are resumed and confronted, as shown in Table l.

The subparadigm A (PAST/[+ P 3]) has two forms in common with S/P (PRES), but it also shares one form with A (PAST/[–P3]). In no way can it be equated to S/P (PRES) as a whole. Although the material identity of *n-* and *h-* is of course not fortuitous, in a strictly synchronic description it is best accounted for as a purely formal accident. The best solution for such a description would be to consider the two lines S/P (ABS) and A (ERG) as representing two wholly independent grammatical categories, inside of which there is some allomorphic variation. It is here proposed that the difference between *-t* and n_2- be considered an instance of synchonically unmotivated allomorphism, in exactly the same way the difference between n_1- and *nind-* has always been accounted for.

Note that the whole analysis given here presupposes that a form like *zuen* be indeed interpreted as was proposed in the preceding section, i.e.

Table 1.   Paradigms of present and past

	PRES	PAST [-P 3]	PAST [+P 3]
S/P (ABS)	*n-/ h-/ d-*	*nind-/ hind-*	*Ø-~z**
A (ERG)	*t-/ -k~-n* **/ *-Ø*		*n- / h- / -Ø*

*Dialectal variation (*Ø-*:B; *z-*:G,L,S,N).
**Gender variation (*-k*: masculine; *-n*: feminine).

(α)   z   .   u   .   Ø   .   en
        ABS . STEM . ERG . PAST

The logic of the system does not appear if this point is not kept in mind. Of course, there is a natural tendency to interpret this form differently:

(β)   *z*   .   *u*   .   *Ø*   .   *en*
       ERG . ABS . STEM . PAST

zuen is the intersection point of two different paradigms,[10] namely *nuen/huen/zuen* (like *nau/hau/du*) on the one hand and *ninduen/hinduen/zuen* (< **uen*) (like *nintzan/hintzan/zan*) on the other. Although the formal similarity between *nuen* and *zuen* today is greater than that between *ninduen* and *zuen* (or *eban*), the description of the system is far more logical and coherent if *zuen* is considered as belonging primarily to the subparadigm *ninduen/hinduen/zuen*, i.e. if analysis (α) is adopted. This follows, let it be stressed again, from purely synchronical considerations.

The ergative interpretation of subparadigm A (PAST/[+ P3]) is further supported by other important facts. On the morphological level, the rules of pluralization and the use of specific pluralizers fully confirm the preceding analysis. The ergative -Ø is pluralized by the means of *-te*, as it normally is; the opposition of

(13) *zuen*   vs.   *zuten*
       "he had him"   "they had him"

follows exactly the pattern of, for example,

(14) *du*   vs.   *dute*
       "he has him"   "they have him"

In the same way, the absolutive *Ø-* is pluralized by means of *-it-*, as usual. Compare the analogy of, for example,

(15) *nuen*   vs.   *nituen*
       "I had him"   "I had them"
and
(16) *dut*   vs.   *ditut*
       "I have him"   "I have them"

This state of affairs is also found with the pluralization of first and second persons, but this point is not directly relevant to the present discussion.

By far the strongest argument in favour of an ergative-absolutive interpretation of the A (PAST/[+P3]) paradigm, which up to this point has only been justified by morphological reasoning, comes from syntax: despite the formal resemblance of *nuen* "I had him" and *nintzan* "I was", the corresponding

NPs take exactly the same ergative and absolutive endings as always. Explicit pronominalization of the cited verb form would yield the following picture:

(17) *nik bera nuen*   vs.   *ni nintzan*
      "I had him"   "I was"

behaves exactly like

(18) *nik bera dut*   vs.   *ni naiz*
      "I have him"   "I am"

     In other words, the partial morphological similarity of the A (PAST/ [+ P3]) and the S/P (PRES) paradigm has no impact whatsoever on the syntactic behaviour of the sentences where they occur. This fact confirms once more the interpretation given above. The special verbal marking of the transitive agent in the past has nothing to do with partial accusativity of the verbal case-marking system. By no means can it be argued that it constitutes a special kind of split. It is a formal accident without any consequence for the system; it must simply be considered as an idiosyncratic case of allomorphism.

     Before concluding this portion of the paper, a few remarks should be added concerning the diachronic interpretation of this allomorphism. How can this apparently strange distribution of markers be explained?

     The main reason seems to be that Basque finite verb forms tend not to be "naked", i.e. prefixless. Of course, diachronic reasoning a posteriori is always somewhat speculative, but there are good arguments supporting this view.

     Non-finite verb forms do not require that their stems be introduced by some prefix. (Numerous instances of such forms will be found in subsequent sections, so no example will be given here.) In contrast to that, the stems of finite verb forms are almost always preceded by some prefix, or a series of prefixes. Even if there is already a personal prefix (or an element diachronically reinterpreted as such), the affirmative particle *ba-* frequently precedes the whole verb form, not only if the affirmation receives special emphasis, but also if the verb stands alone or at the beginning of the sentence. In answer to a question like

(19) *Al dakizu?*
      "Do you know?"

you cannot simply reply

(20) *Dakit*;

instead the affirmative *ba-* must be used:

(21) *Badakit*.
      "I know."

What is true in synchronic syntax applies equally to diachronic morphology. It has already been pointed out that the *z-* of *zan* "he was" spread analogically to other forms of third person past which originally were prefixless; only Bizcayan continues to preserve the ancient state of affairs. This is by no means an isolated phenomenon-. According to the well-known universal tendency mentioned above, third persons were generally unmarked in Basque. They continue to be unmarked if Ø happens to follow the stem, as e.g. in *nau-Ø*, "he has me". But if Ø occurs at the beginning of the verb, it has almost always been replaced by a special prefix: *z-* in the past (from *zan* "he was"); *d-* in the present indicative (from *du*, originally third person singular of a verb *eduki* where *d-* belongs to the stem); *l-* in the conditional (from *al* (G, B)/*ahal* (L, S), "possible; interrogative verbal prefix"); and *b-* in the imperative (perhaps from a pronoun **bu* or **bi* which is not directly attested but which occurs in forms like *bere* "his").[11] This phenomenon-, which might be termed "zero replacement of verb-initial third person marking" or simply "third person zero replacement", seems to be of relatively recent origin, as can be inferred from its allomorphic variability and from the fact that it has only incompletely been accomplished in Bizcayan. The latter dialect also shows that the analogous spread of *z-* in the past was probably the last innovation in this process.

Before third person zero replacement had reached the past tense, a combination of third person patient with third person agent yielded a form with two zero marks, one preceding and the other following the verb stem. To a certain extent, this seems to have been acceptable, as the maintenance of such Bizcayan form as *eban*, *eukan*, *eroyan* shows. But what must have been intolerable was the combination of a marked first or second person agent in post-stem position with an unmarked third person patient (Ø in the pre-stem position). This is probably the reason why instead of logical **eudan* "I had him",[12] we find the form with a prefixed agent marker (*neban*) even in Bizcayan. The morphophonemic rule leading to this result is easy to formulate for Bizcayan: if there is a combination of a positively marked suffix and a Ø-marked prefix, the suffix takes the place of the Ø prefix (with the corresponding morphological alternations *–t → n-*; *-k~n → h-*, etc.). Schematically,

Ø   .STEM. X   →   X.   STEM
ABS   ERG   ERG

For the other dialects, the situation is more complicated because of the previous change Ø > *z-*. Synchronically, we may write it analogously as a morphophonemic rule like the preceding one:

$$z \quad .\text{STEM.} \quad X \rightarrow \quad X. \quad \text{STEM}$$
$$\text{ABS} \qquad\qquad \text{ERG} \qquad\qquad \text{ERG}$$

Diachronically, it is evident that the latter became grammaticalized before the change $\emptyset \rightarrow z$- took place. Synchronically, it is unmotivated, but its diachronic motivation is evident. The rule of third person zero replacement still obtains in Bizcayan. In the other dialects it was active at a given moment in history; of late, it has been replaced by a now functionally opaque "z-marking replacement rule". Synchrony reflects diachronic evolution inside dialects and across dialect boundaries.

As a result of the foregoing discussion, the conclusion can be drawn that not only is there no split whatsoever in the ergativity of Basque, but this language represents the ergative type with a purity rarely found among the world's languages. On the level of morphology, not the slightest trace of accusativity can be detected.. Ergativity dominates as the organizing principle without any mixture. As has become obvious from all that has been said, this holds true for nominal and verbal morphology alike. Not only can no split in nominal and verbal morphology be found; there is no split BETWEEN nominal and verbal morphology either. This type of split is not included in Dixon's aforementioned inventory. It is frequently found in Papua-New Guinean languages, the most frequently cited example being Enga.[13] In splits of this type, it is always the noun which is inflected ergatively, whereas verbal conjugation follows an accusative pattern. No further demonstration is necessary that in Basque nominal and verbal morphology are in perfect agreement; both are totally ergative.

3. Syntax

Until now, only "coding properties" have been considered. We shall turn now to the main subject of this contribution: syntactic ergativity, i.e. "behaviour and control properties" (Keenan 1976).

In the linguistic literature on this subject there is universal agreement that the syntactic type of a language can be determined mainly, or even exclusively, by checking the behaviour of NPs when undergoing coreferential deletion. It seems difficult, indeed, to think of another criterion for distinguishing both types beyond the domain of morphological marking: either S and A, or S and P behave alike when being deleted under the condition of coreference. What else could be taken as a parameter? The criterion of "marked vs. unmarked word order" of non-deleted NPs would be a possible candidate,[14] but this is so fuzzy a field, and subjectivity plays such a dominant role, that it seems advisable not to consider it, at least provisionally.

Thus we are left with coreferential deletion as the only workable criterion. It plays a role inside as well as outside the limits of the complex sentence, both in subordination and in coordination. Semantic coreference is important in building up subordinate constructions, and it is crucial for text constitution. Syntactically, it manifests itself in NP deletion strategies and their necessary counterparts, the strategies used to keep the identity and function of the deleted NP recoverable.

Let us start, then, with a systematic analysis of coreferential NP deletion in subordinate constructions.

3.1. Subordination

First of all, it must be stressed once more that in Basque all three main argument functions (first/second/third argument) are fully marked in the noun as well as in the verb. As for deletion, this has the following consequences: if only the NP as such is deleted, with the verb remaining in its personal form, the function(s) of the deleted NP(s) continue to be explicitly marked in the verb. Consequently, the only recoverability problem which might arise concerns not function but IDENTITY: if two or more third person arguments of the same number are deleted, there is no formal means to make clear which verbal marker agrees with which of the deleted NPs, as in the following examples:

(22) *Ikusi duenean, gizonak otsoa eraso du.*
      "When he saw him, the man attacked the wolf."
(23) *Ikusi ditutenean, gizonek otsoak eraso ditu(z)te.*
      "When they saw them, the men attacked the wolves."

Here it is not unambiguously clear whether it is the man/ the men who saw the wolf/ the wolves or the wolf (wolves) who saw the man (men). Of course one would normally interpret these sentences in the sense of coreference between NPs with identical function, so that *man* is the agent and *wolf* the patient in both the embedded and the matrix sentence. The same "normal" interpretation would apply to the following sentences:

(24) *Ikusi duenean, otsoak gizona eraso du.*
      "When he saw him, the wolf attacked the man."
(25) *Ikusi ditutenean, otsoek gizonak eraso ditu(z)te.*
      "When they saw them, the wolves attacked the men."

Here, too, one would normally expect that identical NPs have the same function across the border of the embedded clause and interpret the deleted *wolf* (*wolves*) as agent, and *man* (*men*) as patient. But this is not necessarily the case; there is only a statistical probability, no strict rule. The referential identity of the

deleted NP remains unclear as long as two (or more) equally entitled candidates occur in the main clause.

The sentences become structurally unambiguous only if the two third person NPs differ in number, and also of course if the verb form contains a reference to a person other than third. For instance,

(26) *Ikusi dutenean, gizonek otsoa erasu dute.*
"When they saw him, the men attacked the wolf."
(27) *Ikusi nuenean, otsoak erasu ninduen.*
"When I saw him, the wolf attacked me."

Sentences such as the examples just cited are constructed and therefore highly artificial. The theoretically existing structural ambiguities have very little practical relevance. Even if no special disambiguation device is used, context and pragmatic probability are in general sufficient to make the identity of arguments recoverable, as in the following example:

(28) *Ikusi duenean, gizonak ogia jan du.*
"When he saw it, the man ate the bread."

Normally, nobody would expect the bread to see the man (except perhaps in a fairy tale).

From what has been said, it can easily be inferred that relative clauses should be expected to behave in exactly the same manner. The finite verb in the embedded clause contains the full set of (ergatively structured) pronominal affixes, one of which refers to the head noun in the matrix sentence (or more precisely, to the deleted NP^e coreferential with the head NP^m [where <e> means "embedded" and <m> "matrix"]). This reference remains ambiguous as long as there is more than one verbal affix which can equally refer to the head noun, i.e. as long as there are at least two possible coreferential relations. This is the case if the two (or more) functions present within the finite verb form of the embedded clause are in the same person and number. Since only third persons can be combined with one another, this applies only to combinations of two (or more) third person singular or third person plural affixes. In all other cases, the coreferential relation between the deleted NP inside the relative clause and the head noun in the matrix sentence is unambiguous. This holds true for any combination including at least one affix of the first or second person, as well as for combinations of third person singular with third person plural affixes.

Some examples will illustrate this regularity [note: [NP Ø] means "deleted NP (antecedent of relative clause)"]:

(29) a.   *gizonaØ etorri da →*
          "the man has come"

     b.   [NP Ø] *etorri dan gizona*
          "the man who has come"
                              (ABS/i [*d-*] → NP Ø)
(30) a.   *gizonaØ   ikusi dut*
          "I have seen the man"
     b.   [NP Ø] *ikusi dudan gizona*
          "the man whom I have seen"
                              (ABS/t [*d-*] → NP Ø)

(31) a.   *gizonak ikusi nauØ*
          "the man has seen me"
     b.   [NP Ø] *ikusi nauØen gizona*
          "the man who has seen me"
                              (ERG [-*Ø-*] → NP Ø)
(32) a.   *gizonari liburuak eman dizkiot*
          "I have given the man the books"
     b.   [NP Ø] *liburuak eman dizkiodan gizona*
          "the man to whom I have given the books"
                              (DAT [-*o-*] → NP Ø)

In all these cases, the syntactic function of the deleted NP is clearly
marked in the verb (by *d-/ -Ø-/ -o-* respectively). The marking is unambiguous
insofar as only one of the verbal affixes corresponds to the deleted NP in person
and number. But compare the following examples:

(33) a.   *gizonak ikusi duØ*
          "the man has seen him"
     b.   *gizonaØ ikusi duØ*
          "he has seen the man"
     c.   [NP Ø] *ikusi duØan gizona*
          either "the man who has seen him"
          or "the man whom he has seen"
                              (ERG [-*Ø-*] or ABS/t [-*d-*] → NP Ø)

(34) a.   *gizonaØ ekarri dioØ*
          "he has brought the man to him"
     b.   *gizonak ekarri dioØ*
          "the man has brought him to him"
     c.   *gizonari ekarri dioØ*
          "he has brought him to the man"

d.   [NP Ø] *ekarri dioØn gizona*
       either "the man whom he has brought to him"
       or "the man who has brought him to him"
       or "the man to whom he has brought him"
                    (ABS/t [*d-*] or ERG [-*Ø-*] or DAT [-*o-*]→ NP Ø)

Although the FUNCTION of the deleted NP is recoverable by means of one of the verbal affixes, its IDENTITY remains unclear since more than one of these affixes can refer to it. Of course, the probability for threefold ambiguity is very low in real communication, but cases of twofold ambiguity occur rather frequently. However, context and pragmatic probability will normally be sufficient to make clear who sees whom. Moreover, if one or two of the possible candidates for relativization are explicitly mentioned, there is no more doubt about the identity of the deleted NP, either.

(35) a.   [NP Ø] *emakumeak ikusi duØan gizona*
             "the man whom the woman has seen"
      b.   [NP Ø] *emakumeaØ ikusi duØan gizona*
             "the man who has seen the woman"

(36) a.   [NP Ø] *emakumeak aurrari ekarri dioØn gizona*
             "the man whom the woman has brought to the child"
      b.   [NP Ø] *aurraØ emakumeari ekarri dioØn gizona*
             "the man who has brought the child to the woman"
      c.   [NP Ø] *emakumeak aurraØ ekarri dioØn gizona*
             "the man to whom the woman has brought the child"

With any of the functions expressed by the verbal affixes, there is not the slightest trace of a restriction of NP accessibility. Intransitive and transitive absolutives, ergatives, and datives are equally accessible to relativization. There is no difference among them. With respect to relativization, neither S + A nor S + P is specially privileged. Therefore, it is pointless to speak of syntactic accusativity or syntactic ergativity in the formation of relative clauses, such as is found, for example, in French (relative pronoun *qui* [NOM] vs. *que* [ACC]), or in Ubykh (verbal affixes *a-*, *y-*, Ø [ABS] vs. -*d*- [ERG]). Basque is ergative as far as its morphology marks case distinctions. Beyond that it is neutral.

A few remarks on relativization of functions other than those expressed in the verb must be added. Restrictions on NP accessibility only begin to work at a very low level in the case hierarchy. Locatives, for instance, can be relativized as freely as absolutives, ergatives, and datives, although they bear no special mark in the verb form (as they do, for example, in Ubykh and the other Northwest-Caucasian languages). The function performed by the deleted NP[e] is

not explicitly stated. It must be inferred from its meaning solely on the grounds of pragmatic probability. In cases[15] like

(37) *nagoen etxea*
      "the house in which I am being (where I am)"
      (lit. "the house which I am")

(38) *noan herria*
      "the town to which I am going"
      (lit. "the town which I go")

the corresponding locative meaning is obvious:

(39) *etxea̲n nago.*
      "I am in the house."

(40) *herri̲ra noa.*
      "I am going to the town."

Explicit pronominal marking becomes compulsory only if no such relationship can be deduced from the context: [16]

(41) *bere alaba ezagutzen dudan gizona*
      "the man whose daughter I know"
      (lit. "the man which I know his daughter")

(42) *berentzat lan egiten dudan gizona*
      "the man for whom I work"
      (lit. "the man which I work for him")

Up to this point our concern has mainly been with the recoverability of the IDENTITY of deleted NPs. The problem of recoverability of FUNCTION arises if not only the NP is deleted, but also the corresponding case-agreement markers of the verb. This is the case with all non-finite verb forms, of which three are basic in Basque: verbal stem; verbal noun, and participle. In the following sections, no attempt will be made to describe in detail the nature and use of these three basic forms and their multiple derivations. Only the consequences of their being non-finite will be considered.

The fundamental rules of Basque in this respect are easy to formulate, much easier in fact than those for English. , The system is logical and coherent, but of a type which differs greatly from the habitual structures found in Western Indo-European languages. There seem to be two principles underlying that system. In an informal way they may be written as follows:

A.   Every NP accompanying a non-finite verb form can but need not be deleted; if maintained, it can but need not be genitivized.
B.   Formal valence is assigned to the verb exclusively through personal affixes. As a corollary, non-finite forms as such are neither formally transitive nor intransitive, neither monovalent nor bi- nor trivalent.

Note that both these principles have consequences which go far beyond the domain of the present discussion.

The first part of principle A is all-pervading in Basque; it applies to finite verb forms, too. It is only the second part of principle A which is restricted to non-finite forms.

At first sight, principle B seems to have practical consequences only in connection with non-finite verb forms. A closer examination reveals, however, that it also governs the behaviour of finite forms. This point will be discussed later on in connection with the problem of voice. According to what has been said, the first part of principle A can be reformulated as follows:

A'.   Every NP accompanying a verb form can but need not be deleted.

If starting from the verb itself, NPs can be viewed as optional comple-ments of what is already contained in the verb. The verb, which is the kernel of the sentence, is "autonomous" in the sense of André Martinet. NPs are but *expansions nominales* with respect to this kernel, helping to narrow down its sense if necessary.

If principle A' is applied to finite verb forms, no major problem arises for a speaker of Standard Average European, except that he will find as an integrated part of the verb all that he is accustomed to express by independent pronouns:

(43) a.   *Martiñek untzia ikusten du.*
             "Martin sees the ship."
       b.   *Martiñek ikusten du.*
             "Martin sees it."
       c.   *Untzia ikusten du.*
             "He sees the ship."
       d.   *Ikusten du.*
             "He sees it."

Problems begin in connection with non-finite verb forms because, in contrast to most other European languages, their behaviour is likewise governed by principle A'. Let us start with an example adapted from *Auñemendiko lorea*, one of the three novels of Domingo Agirre. This novel, like *Kresala*, but in

contrast to *Garoa*, is written in Bizcayan. For the purposes of this chapter, the examples have been translated from Bizcayan into Guipuzcoan/ Batua; the differences are merely phonetical and lexical, not syntactical.[17]

(44) *Olesik egin gabe, iñork ikusi gabe, gizategi handi batean sartzen naiz.*
"Without calling [=making calls], without being seen by anybody, I enter into a great living-room."

Both *egin* "do" and *ikusi* "see" are semantically transitive. Both are used impersonally. The syntactic environment is exactly the same. In both cases, "I" is coreferentially deleted (it is coreferential with the intransitive subject of *naiz* "I am"). But this deleted NP has two different functions; it is ergative (transitive agent) in the first clause, and absolutive (transitive patient) in the second one. The corresponding full sentences would be:

(45) (*Nik*) *ez dut olesik egiten*
"I do not call." [=make calls]
and

(46) (*Ni*) *ez nau iñork ikusten*
"Nobody sees me."

All that is indispensable remains undeleted: *olesik* (partitive of *oles* "cry, call"; the partitive may fill the functional slot of the absolutive in negative sentences)[18] and *iñork* (ergative of *iñor* "anybody"). As can easily be seen, undeleted NPs keep their original case endings even if the verb loses its personal affixes. This can be imitated in SAE in the first case, i.e. if the subject is deleted and the object maintained:

(47) a. *Without making a noise, I enter.*
b. *Ohne ein Geräusch zu machen, trete ich ein.*
c. *Sans faire de bruit, j'entre.*

But this is less obvious in the second case, i.e. if the object undergoes coreferential deletion with the subject kept in its place. The following sentence is fully acceptable in English:

(48) *Without anybody seeing me, I enter.*

(Note, however, that pronominalization is necessary: a sentence like

(49) *?Without anybody seeing, I sneaked in.*

would hardly be universally acceptable!) In German and French, on the other hand, such a formulation is excluded:

(50) a.   *Ohne jemand (mich) zu sehen, trete ich ein.
      b.   *Sans personne (me) voir, j'entre.

     Regardless of whether there is a pronoun or not, the resulting sentences are totally ungrammatical.
     In SAE, coreferential deletion in impersonal constructions only works if the NP to be deleted is the SUBJECT of the non-finite verb. Of course, most patients can be subjects if the verb first undergoes passivization. Consequently, the sentence of Agirre is translated as follows into Spanish:

(51) Sin llamar, sin ser visto por nadie, penetro en una gran sala.

Evidently, in this form, the sentence can also be rendered in English, German, and French. All these languages can be said to be syntactically accusative: only subjects can undergo coreferential deletion without special devices; if objects are to be treated alike, the verb must first be passivized. In contrast to this, in Basque "subjects" and "objects", i.e. ergatives and absolutives, are treated alike. Both are equally deletable if the context permits it. There is no hierarchical priority of "subjects" (A) over "objects" (P) in this respect.
     Accusativity and ergativity are defined in terms of identical marking and/or behaviour of "intransitive subjects" (S) with As and Ps. It almost needs no further demonstration that principle A' also applies to sentences with intransitive verbs.
     From a sentence like

(52) (Ni) ez naiz sartzen gizategi handian.
      "I do not enter the great living-room."

the following one can be derived without any problem:

(53) Gizategi handian sartu gabe, oles egiten dut.
      "Without entering the great living-room, I am calling."

Accordingly, Ss, Ps, and As, although marked in their own special way, do not differ in their BEHAVIOUR. Whether a NP is deleted or not does not depend on its "subjecthood" or some other syntactic property, but only on the context and the pragmatic probability deriving from it. Therefore, it does not make sense to speak of syntactic accusativity with respect to deletion. It must be stressed that to speak of syntactic ergativity does not make sense either. Basque is neutral with respect to syntactic behaviour. It is as ergative as it can be on the level of

morphological marking, but its syntax shows neither specifically ergative nor specifically accusative traits (if by "syntax" we mean syntactic behaviour under such special circumstances as coreferential NP deletion). All this follows quite naturally from the above-mentioned principles. If (a) only finite verb forms are clearly marked as to their valence, if (b) every NP can but need not be deleted, and if (c) every non-deleted NP keeps its original case marking even with non-finite verb forms, then it is clear that ergativity can only reach as far as case is overtly marked. Case is marked overtly in NPs whenever they occur overtly; it is marked in the verb whenever it is finite. In other words: there is ergativity exactly as long as there is either (at least one) undeleted NP or a conjugated verb. Only if both disappear (via deletion or non-finiteness), does ergativity vanish, too: it has no support left in morphology, and there are no specific syntactic restrictions grouping together neither S and P, nor S and A.

This thesis, which contradicts most current opinions on Basque in particular and on the syntax of ergative languages in general, will be illustrated now by some further examples.

In his standard grammar of literary Labourdin, Lafitte quotes a series of sentences with the partitive ending added to the participle. This form has various meanings, but this does not interest us here. The only point to be stressed is deletion of NPs.

First, it must be noted that deletion does not operate if there is no coreference: if non-e of the NPs of the embedded clause is coreferential with an NP from the matrix clause, then non-e can be deleted. This holds true for intransitive as well as for transitive sentences:

(54)   *Lagunak joanik jarri zen.*[19]
       "When his friends had gone, he sat down."
       ("The friends having gone, he sat down.")

(55)   *Aita ahalge zen semeak ohointza hori eginik.*
       "The father was ashamed that his son had committed this theft."
       ("The father was ashamed of the son having committed this theft.")

As the literal translations in parentheses show, such "absolute" constructions are not totally foreign to English, either. In German, this would be impossible in both cases; French would allow for it in connection with an intransitive verb (Lafitte translates, *ses compagnon-s étant partis, il s'assit*); but of course, **Le père avait honte de son fils ayant commis ce vol* is impossible.

Note, besides, that in SAE the existing coreference is made explicit by means of the corresponding possessive adjectives: *his friends* and *his son*. As is usually the case in Basque, this explicit marking is omitted because it is unnecessary: if *aita* and *semea* occur inside the same sentence, it stands to

reason that both are in genetic relationship of the first degree; the theoretical possibility that *aita* is someone else's father than *semea*'s is excluded. Basque marks relations redundantly (e.g. the basic relations in independent sentences are marked both on the verb and on the noun), but on the other hand, it also shows a high degree of economy. Contextual and pragmatic probability rather than grammaticalized mechanisms make clear whether there is coreference or not. With respect to adnominal determiners (*bere semea* "his son" would be grammatical, but is not used), the same principles obtain as with respect to the basic nominal arguments of the verb.

If there is coreference, such nominal arguments are left out in the embedded clause. In this respect, intransitive absolutives (S), transitive absolutives (P), and ergatives (A) undergo exactly the same treatment [note that $\equiv$ means "coreference" and $\rightarrow\emptyset$ "coreferential deletion"]:

(56) *Herrira etorririk etxe batean sartu naiz.*
      "Having reached the village, I entered a house."

$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_S \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$

(57) *Orhoit naiz kanpoan lo eginik.*[20]
      "I remember having slept in the open."

$$/NP^m_S \equiv (NP^e_A \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$
$$/ \quad - \quad \equiv NP^e_P \qquad /$$

(Note that "sleep" is transitive in Basque: *lo egin* means "to make sleep"!)

(58) *Damu dut zu laidostaturik.*[21]
      "I am sorry for having insulted you."

$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_A \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$
$$/ \quad - \quad \equiv NP^e_P \qquad /$$

("To be sorry" is also transitive: *damu ukan* means "to have repentance".)

(59) *Heiek onharturik baizen ez dut lana hasi nahi.*[22]
      "Unless they approve it, I do not begin this work."

$$/NP^m_P \equiv (NP^e_P \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$
$$/NP^m_A \equiv NP^m_A \qquad /$$

(60) *Bazkaltiarrek galdeginik, bi kobla ematen zituen.*
      "After the guests had asked him, he gave two coplas."

$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_P \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$
$$/NP^m_P \equiv NP^e_A \qquad /$$

Almost all possible combinations occur in these few examples: A ≡ (S→∅), S ≡ (A→∅), P ≡ (P→∅), and A ≡ (P→∅). Not only are there no restrictions concerning the NP in the main clause; there is no constraint limiting NP deletion in the embedded clause, either. The translation reveals that, in

English, Ss and As are deletable, whereas Ps are not; English, therefore, is a true representative of the syntactically accusative type. In Basque, everything overtly marked is marked ergatively; what is unmarked is definitely unmarked and behaves neither ergatively nor accusatively.

Another set of examples contains the participle plus the postposed particle *ez geroz-*, whose meaning is comparable to the English *since* (temporal and causal). Again, intransitive subjects, transitive patients, and transitive agents are treated alike. In the following examples, this is shown with respect not to deletion but to maintenance of the NPs.

(61) *Nere osaba hilez geroz, oso bakar naiz.*[23]
      "Since my uncle died, I am completely alone."

$$/- \equiv NP^e_S/$$

(62) *Aitak erranez geroz, sinets zazu.*
      "Since your father says it, believe it!"
      (lit. "Since father saying, believe it!")

$$/\quad - \equiv NP^e_A \qquad /$$
$$/NP^m_P \equiv (NP^e_P \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$

(63) *Lan han hasiz gero(z), ezin dut to egin.*
      "Since I began this work, I cannot get to sleep."

$$/NP^m_P \equiv NP^e_P \qquad /$$
$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_A \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$

Note that in a syntactically accusative language like English, coreferential deletion of S and of A is possible, whereas it is impossible for P:

(63') *Having begun this work, I cannot sleep.*

but

(62') **Your father saying, believe it!*

In the latter case, a pronoun must be used in English, but not in Basque.

Concessive constructions ending with *-ik ere* or with *arren* yield still another set of examples:

(64) *Etsaiaren aurrean gelditurik ere, ez dugu zergatik bildur izan.*[24]
      "Although standing in front of the enemy, we have no reason [lit. "do not have why"] to be afraid."

$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_S \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$

(65) *Otsoa ikusi arren, gizonak etzuen fusilla hartu.*
"Although seeing the wolf, the man did not take his gun."

$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_A \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$
$$/NP^m_P \equiv NP^e_P \qquad /$$

(66) *Otsoak ikusi arren, gizonak ez du iges egin.*
"Although the wolf saw him, the man did not run away."

$$/ \quad - \equiv NP^e_A \qquad /$$
$$/NP^m_A \equiv (NP^e_P \rightarrow \emptyset)/$$

(Note that "run away, flee" is transitive in Basque, "make running.")

In the latter case, coreferential deletion is only possible in English if the verb is passivized. In Basque again there is no difference between A and P; both can be deleted if the context is pragmatically appropriate.

As a conclusion of this section, an example taken from the most celebrated work of classical Basque prose, Axular's *Gero*, will be cited.

(67) *Horrela zaude deus ere egin gabetarik, eritasunak har, heriotzea ethor eta infernurat joan.*[25]
"So you stay without doing anything, until illness takes you, death comes to you, and you go to hell."
[lit. "So you stay something even without doing, illness taking, death coming, and to hell going.")

There is one finite verb in this sentence (*zaude* "you stay"), the "subject" of which is coreferential with the deleted NPs of the four non-finite verbs. These non-finite verbs are in the so-called root form which sounds somewhat archaic today if used in this way. The deleted NPs are all in different syntactic functions: ERG ("you do"), ABS/t ("illness takes you"), DAT ("death comes to you"), and ABS/I ("you go"). The same statement is valid for the non-deleted NPs: They are in the ABS/t, ERG, ABS/i and DIR, respectively. The four subordinate clauses would read as follows as main sentences:

(68) *Deus ere ez duzu egiten.*
"You do not do anything."

(69) *Eritasunak hartzen zaitu.*
"Illness takes you."

(70) *Heriotzea ethortzen zaizu.*
"Death comes to you."

(71)   *Infernurat zoaz* (*joaten zare*).
       "You go to hell."

Correspondingly, we obtain the following picture:

$NP^m_S \equiv$ $(NP^e_A \rightarrow \emptyset)$
$NP^m_S \equiv$ $(NP^e_P \rightarrow \emptyset)$
$NP^m_S \equiv$ $(NP^e_{DAT} \rightarrow \emptyset)$
$NP^m_S \equiv$ $(NP^e_S \rightarrow \emptyset)$

$- \equiv$ NP^e_P
$- \equiv$ NP^e_A
$- \equiv$ NP^e_S
$- \equiv$ NP^e_{DIR}

No better evidence could be found for the main thesis of this chapter, namely that NP deletion in Basque is completely unrestricted and governed only by the condition of coreferentiality, and of course by contextual and pragmatic factors. Behaviour and control properties with respect to NP deletion in subordinate sentences are found to be neutral. They show neither ergativity nor accusativity. Everything which CAN be ergative, is ergative; and everything which cannot is not specifically ergative, but it is not specifically accusative either.

At this point of the discussion it is necessary to add an analysis of those types of complement clauses which are usually quoted as evidence for the presumed syntactic accusativity of Basque. Most examples cited in order to support this hypothesis contain either volitional or jussive complements. They are of the kind *I want to hit him* or *I command/ask you to hit him*.

In both these cases, deletion obeys the laws of accusativity in English: what are deleted are intransitive subjects or transitive agents, never transitive patients (unless the infinitive is passivized). If the corresponding Basque material is scrutinized, it seems in fact as if syntactic functions are treated in the same way in this language, too. Consequently, a handful of sentences of these types is regarded as sufficient proof for the claim that Basque is deeply accusative (Anderson 1976, for example).

The whole question must be viewed against the background of subordinate constructions in Basque in general. It is not enough to quote two or three isolated examples in order to "prove" so far-reaching a hypothesis as that of the allegedly accusative syntax of Basque. It may be motivated primarily by an attempt to return to the Indo-European categories of "subject" and "direct

object" their lost universality! In reality, volitional and jussive complements are but one aspect of a highly complex and multidimensional matter.

The different types of subordination reviewed so far have shown no syntactic grouping of S and A, or of S and P. Why does a grouping of S and A, but not of S and P, seem to manifest itself in the case of volitional and jussive complements? It will be argued here that this is not due to our well-known "subject" raising its head in an otherwise consistently ergative language, but simply to pragmatic probability. Pragmatic probability refers to the higher or lower frequency of specific configurations of entities and events in the extralinguistic world. It is an undeniable fact, for instance, that actions are far more frequently performed by human, or at least animate, actors than by inert materials such as stones, earth, or wood. And such facts undeniably have an important impact on the formation of grammatical categories in human language. But it is not necessarily the case that every high or low frequency of configurations crystallizes into inflexible grammatical laws. It can simply manifest itself as greater or lesser text frequency of the corresponding syntactic constructions. Note, moreover, that the opposition between fully grammaticized categories and mere text frequencies is not clear-cut, but rather gradient and transitional.

It seems, in fact, as if something of this kind is found in Basque with regard to the allegedly accusative behaviour of volitional and jussive complements. The grouping together of S and A is a pronounced tendency, but not an entirely rigid law. Although in most cases NP deletion in volitional and jussive complements applies to S and A but not to P, this should not be regarded as something comparable to the syntactic notion of "subject" of Western Indo-European languages. Rather, it is a natural consequence of the general rules which in previous sections have been shown to govern the syntax of Basque. It has repeatedly been stressed that everything which can be inferred from the context is omissible in Basque. In cases like the *gabe*, *ez geroz*, and *arren* constructions analyzed in the preceding section, inference from the context is semantically neutral. There is no special preference for A over P, or for P over A to be selected for deletion. In contrast to this, such a preference exists for volitional and jussive complements. It exists, not for linguistic reasons, but for reasons of pragmatic probability in the sense outlined above. In complements of this kind, the grouping of S and A is preferred UNIVERSALLY, i.e. independently of the idiosyncratic structures of a given individual language.[26]

The common semantic denominator of volition and request is intentionality: intention concerning one's own actions in the case of volition, someone else's actions in the case or request. Intentionality always implies a certain amount of agentivity. Something on which an intention can be directed must always be something which can be influenced, or brought about, by an agent of some sort. Even a wish like *I want to be left in peace* implies some

potential agents which are requested to abstain from any action liable to disturb the speaker.

Most naturally and most frequently, volition concerns an action to be carried out by the one who expresses the wish. In a normal situational context, utterances like

(72) *I want to go.*
(73) *I want to see you.*
(74) *I want to give him the book.*

are more likely to be expected than, for example,

(75) *I want to suffer.*
(76) *I want to be seen by you/ I want you to see me.*
(77) *I want to be given the book by him/ I want him to give me the book.*

The syntactic categories of English fit perfectly well into this pragmatic probability pattern. Constructions where the one who wishes and the one who carries out the wish coincide are formally less marked than those where this is not the case. Markedness reflects frequency: the more frequent, the less marked, and vice-versa.

However, there is not only frequency, but also a crystallized grammatical law: coreferential deletion is only possible with "subjects". If something other than S or A happens to need to be deleted, a diathetical transformation is necessary: an "object" must previously be transformed into a syntactic "subject" before deletion can take place. Passivization is necessary in a language which, like English, possesses special syntactic categories like "subject".

No such category exists in Basque. There are no voices in the Indo-European sense either. The frequency distribution just outlined has the consequence that (intransitive and) transitive agents are preferred over patients for coreferential deletion. Normally, the intentionality contained in a wish bears on the actions of the one who utters it. Therefore, in sentences like

(78) *Joan nahi dut.*
      "I want to go."

(79) *Zu ikusi nahi zaitut.*
      "I want to see you."

(80) *Zuri liburua eman nahi dizut.*
      "I want to give you the book."

coreference of the one who wishes and the (intransitive or transitive) agent is almost inevitably the least marked construction, because it is the most frequent and natural one.

On the other hand, coreference with the patient sometimes occurs in fact, and it can be expressed in Basque by a construction containing a non-finite verb. It stands to reason, however, that such a construction should be more marked in some respect than the more natural one where the person who wants and the person who acts are identical. In Basque this higher degree of markedness manifests itself by the fact that the coreferent patient is usually expressed by a pronoun in order to counterbalance the strong natural tendency to identify the author of the wish with the author of the action. It does not manifest itself by the ungrammaticality of non-finite verb forms as it does for example in German, French, or Spanish; non-finite constructions are possible although, of course, finite constructions are also frequently used. Furthermore, in all cases where there is no deletion of the author of the action (coreferential within the author of the wish), the verbal noun must be used instead of the participle. Whether or not this is to be interpreted as a higher degree of markedness remains an open question. I am inclined to deny it. Be it as it may, the point to be stressed is that in volitional and jussive complements with a non-coreferential agent, non-finite clause formation is possible. The deletional behaviour of NPs in such clauses would be the only serious candidate for supporting the claim that Basque is syntactically accusative.

Some examples will help to make this clear:

(81) *Koldo joatea nahi dut.*
      "I want Koldo to go."

(82) *Zuk Koldo ikustea nahi dut.*
      "I want you to see Koldo."

(83) *Koldok zuri liburua ematea nahi dut.*
      "I want Koldo to give you the book."

Up to this point, everything functions normally according to the basic principles outlined above. Since there is no coreference, the actor NP of the embedded clause cannot be deleted; it bears its original, i.e. ergative, case marking.

The only slightly deviating behaviour is found with transitive patients. They are normally marked pronominally even though they are coreferential with an NP of the main sentence.

(84) *Nahi dut Koldok ni ikustea.*
      "I want Koldo to see me."

Here the use of *ni* is almost obligatory. The sentence would sound strange and incomplete if this pronoun were omitted, in spite of its coreference with *-t* in *dut*.

(85) *Koldok nahi du Martinek ikustea.*
(86) *Koldok nahi du Martinek bera ikustea.*
      "Koldo wants Martin to see him."

According to one consultant, the pronoun *bera* is preferred for the sake of clearness, but it is not absolutely necessary. Even if omitted, its coreference with *Koldo* remains clear.

In this case, transitive patients behave like an oblique NP:

(87) *Koldok Martin beregana etortzea nahi du.*
      "Koldo wants Martin to come to him."

(88) *Nahi dut Koldo neregana etortzea.*
      "I want Koldo to come to me."
      (Normally, the pronouns *beregana* and *neregana* are obligatory in such sentences.)

If coreferential with an NP^m_A, an NP^e_S and an NP^e_A are normally deleted, whereas an NP^e_P is normally pronominalized. Although morphologically ergative, such NPs seem to show an accusative behaviour. Do they really?

Viewed against the background of what has been outlined so far with respect to the structure of Basque in general, the answer must be negative. The special behaviour of NP^e_P in volitional and jussive complements with non-finite verbs is simply a device to counterbalance the natural expectancy of the hearer to identify the author of the wish/ request with the author of the action wished/ requested. It is a device to underline that the speaker has a less "natural" relationship in mind, namely the identity of the author of the wish/ request with the OBJECT of the action wished/ requested. While leaving obvious relationships to the discretion of the HEARER, Basque obliges the SPEAKER to make less obvious relationships clear by appropriate means. Pronominalization of $NP^m_A \equiv NP^e_P$ in volitional and jussive complements, as distinguished from the deletion $NP^m_X \equiv (NP^e_S, NP^e_A \to \emptyset)$, is a case in point. Here, too, Basque follows its own fundamental principles.

It would only lead to confusion to postulate a category as "deep subject" (in an accusative sense) on the grounds of such scanty evidence as this. On the contrary, such a claim would put things upside down. Basque is as deeply ergative as it makes sense to speak of ergativity; if there is some seeming accusativity in the case just outlined, this is quite a superficial phenomenon-. It

is the expected surface effect of a deeply rooted regularity in a special type of semantic and pragmatic context. What is essential is not the surface effect (behavioural accusativity) but the underlying regularity (deletion controlled by pragmatic probability). The similarity of English and Basque with respect to deletability and pronominalization in non-finite volitional and jussive complements is not due to the "deep accusativity" of Basque but to the fact that, in this special context, an accusative-looking pattern naturally arises from the very premises of the syntactic system of Basque.

At this point of the present discussion, these premises might be reformulated as follows:

C. Mark ergatively everything to be marked!
D. Leave unmarked or omit everything which needs no marking!

The first imperative of D normally applies to verbs, the second one to NPs. In volitional and jussive complements containing $NP^m_A \equiv NP^e_P$, the problem arises that marking is unnecessary with respect to identity (the coreferential relationship between the NPs will usually be recoverable without any problem), but necessary with respect to function: the patient function is unexpected for such an NP for pragmatic reasons. The only natural consequence, then, will be to add the corresponding nominal marker (absolutive endings) to a nominal substitute, i.e. a pronoun.

The conclusion can be drawn that everything in deletional behaviour can be interpreted inside the framework of genuinely Basque syntax. There is no need whatsoever to postulate a discrepancy between (ergative) morphology and (accusative) syntax. There is no SAE "subject" either in "deep" or in "shallow" structure (assuming for a moment that these localistic metaphors were meaningful!). Basque forms a unitary and consistent system on all levels. It need not be measured with the yardstick of SAE. Explanations in syntax which start from the clustering of typological features within a given individual language should be preferred over hasty equations of properties which, although superficially similar, have a quite different typological background. There MUST be universals, of course, but great care should be taken not to look for them on too superficial a level of analysis. "Subject-of" is not a universal of human language.

The cluster of typological features characteristic of Basque comprises, among many other things, the polypersonality of verbal conjugation and a separation, for the overwhelming majority of verbs, of verbal meaning and verbal function. The latter is expressed in the auxiliary, the former in one of the nominal forms of the stem. Only a handful of verbs continue to show a synthetic conjugation of their own. For the sake of simplicity, this small group of

conjugated verbs will be disregarded in the following discussion. Its inclusion would not essentially alter the arguments brought forward here. One would simply have to say "personal affixes" instead of "conjugated auxiliary". The basic pattern is the same for the immediate combination of stem and affix and for the combination mediated by the means of a special auxiliary.

As has already been mentioned (see principle B), in Basque the verbal stem itself is neutral with respect to valence. Claude Tchekhoff would say that the Basque verb is "non-oriented".[27] *Jaten* is indifferent with respect to the opposition of "eating" and "being eaten". Only the addition of an auxiliary brings about a specific valency, but without essentially changing the meaning of the verbal stem. *Jaten du* means "there is an action of eating, with two third person participants, one who is eating and another one who is being eaten". In the same way, *jaten ari da* means "there is the action of eating, with one third person participant"; since it makes little sense to say of somebody that he is busy with being eaten, the latter sentence will normally be interpreted as "he is (busy with) eating".

The expression of valence in the conjugated auxiliary is complete. Of the three primary syntactic relations, all can (and normally must) be marked by the corresponding verbal affixes. In principle, any verb stem can be used with any auxiliary, be it mono-, bi-, or trivalent. Of course, many combinations of stem and auxiliary occur rarely, if ever, because they are of low pragmatic probability. But there are no specific grammatical or lexical constraints on valence such as are commonly found in most Western Indo-European languages.

It seems, therefore, to make little sense to speak of voice in Basque.[28] There are indeed phenomena which superficially resemble passive and even antipassive transformations. The sentence just cited (*jaten ari da*) could remind the observer of antipassive; and a sentence like *ikusi da* "he has been seen" has the appearance of a passive. But in Basque, sentences like these can by no means be considered to be specially marked; they are not secondary since they are not derived from something else. The fact that they can be formed does not result from a transformational mechanism, as is always the case with voice; it simply is a consequence of the structural principle just outlined. Any verb stem can take any auxiliary, provided that the result is meaningful in terms of pragmatic probability.

Thus, Basque has no true diathetical oppositions. It does not need them since argumental relations are expressed in the polypersonal verb form. In SAE languages, verbal agreement exists only with respect to one function: the subject. Accordingly, this function is privileged: it is more accessible to certain syntactic processes, more likely to be the topic, etc.; and it is obligatory. Any NP which semantically is not the subject but which needs to be used as a (syntactic) subject in specific contexts must be transformed; likewise, deletion of unnecessary subjects also needs previous transformation of verbal voice.

Such a motivation for diathetical transformations is lacking in Basque.

There is no specifically privileged subject function. Verbal agreement exists for all three main functions alike. All of them can be topic, all of them are accessible to relativization and other syntactic processes. And if the overt expression of the obligatory primary argument of the transitive verb (the absolutive) is unnecessary in a given utterance, the intransitive auxiliary is used instead of the transitive one. There is no functional need either for promotion or for demotion. A language with a non-oriented verb stem and a polypersonal auxiliary like Basque could make no use of voice.

Let it be stressed again: in my opinion, to speak of voice is only justified if there is a markedness relation; a diathetical transform is derived from something which is simpler in form and primary in function. Such is the case with the Latin passive as well as with the Dyirbal antipassives; but this criterion does not apply to the change of the auxiliary in Basque. The transitive and the intransitive auxiliary have equal rights: neither can be said to be derived from the other. Given the non-orientedness of the verb stem, two different intransitive constructions may correspond to one transitive one: *estimatu du* "he estimated him" yields *estimatua da* "he was estimated",[29] just as *jaten du* "he eats it" yields *jaten ari da* "he eats". But neither is the first one a true passive, nor the second one a true antipassive.

In addition, in my opinion, it makes little sense to speak of "antipassive" in the case of the English construction *he eats*, either. In English, too, there is no markedness relation between transitive and intransitive verb forms in this case. The term "antipassive" has become somewhat fashionable in linguistics, but great care should be taken not to quote under the same heading constructions of quite different nature. In English, what has hastily been labeled "antipassive" is not the result of a diathetical transformation but simply the intransitive use of a predominantly transitive verb. On the other hand, English undoubtedly has a passive; it is necessary because English has a monopersonal conjugation, and since it is an accusative language. In Basque, too, a predominantly transitive verb can be used intransitively, be it as a "pseudo-passive" or a "pseudo-antipassive". But no diathetical transformation applies.

From the typological clustering just outlined, the observable features of Basque can logically be deduced. What emerges is a coherent picture which can tentatively be summarized as follows:

– Argument functions are fully marked in the noun as well as in the verb.
– Everything which is marked shows ergative structuring.
– There is no voice. The verb stem as such is neutral; transitivity and intransitivity are brought about by verbal affixes (be they mediated through the corresponding auxiliaries or not).

– Everything which is recoverable can be deleted: NPs as such, or the finite parts of the verb. If overt ergative marking disappears, the opposition between ergativity and accusativity is neutralized.

Let us add a few remarks on typological comparison. The clustering of features found in Basque seems to be quite usual among the world's ergative languages. Although there is no strict implicational relation between ergativity and polypersonal conjugation, there seems to be a strong tendency for these two features to be coupled. Some very clear and well-known examples are the Northwest-Caucasian languages; the PaleoSiberian languages; Sumerian; the Mayan languages. Whether or not all these languages present an overall picture resembling that of Basque still remains to be investigated in detail, but it already seems that a behavioural type of the Basque kind is not at all unusual.

Dyirbal seems to be exceptional, not so much because it has a mythical "deep ergativity", but mainly because it lacks polypersonal verbal conjugation. Since there are no agreement markers, neither the identity nor the function of a deleted NP is recoverable. In such a system, voice oppositions are functionally highly motivated. Given that Dyirbal is mainly ergative (with a strong mixture of accusativity in the pronominal system) it seems natural that the diathetical transformation functions upon the ergative mode, i.e. with an opposition of a basic form vs. one or several antipassives.

Later on, it will be shown that this is not the only reason for the exceptional character of Dyirbal syntax. At this point of the discussion it is sufficient to stress once more that not only hypothetical universals, but also, and even more so, the specific clustering of typological features within the given language should be taken into account when attempting to explain the structures of syntactic behaviour.

3.2 Coordination

Up to this point, only deletion in subordinate constructions has been considered. In accordance with the program outlined in the initial section, the moment has come to look at NP deletion related to the coordination of independent sentences.

The starting point of the following considerations will be a modified version of Dixon's system of "topic chains". Within a given text (by this is meant any linguistic utterance containing more than one independent sentence), coherence is reached mainly through the constancy of certain NPs beyond the border of one individual sentence. In current terminology, such NPs are said to be coreferential. As in the case of embedding, in textual coordination deletion is one of the most common formal means for expressing coreference. And, like subordinational deletion, coordinational deletion leads to the problem of the recoverability of identity and function of the deleted NP. In this section, only the

problem of recoverability of function will be taken into account. If the recoverability of identity is threatened within a given text, deletion simply does not take place but the NP will be repeated. Thus, the latter problem has little practical relevance and seemingly no influence at all on the formation of grammatical categories.

Concerning the recoverability of function, two main parameters must be considered: the identity or non-identity of function in the preceding (p) and the following (f) sentence; and the primary or secondary character of this or these function(s). This yields four logically possible transition types: identical transition of primary functions; non-identical transition from primary to secondary; non-identical transition from secondary to primary; and identical transition of secondary functions. Schematically:

$$NP^p_I \equiv NP^f_I$$
$$NP^p_I \equiv NP^f_{II}$$
$$NP^p_{II} \equiv NP^f_I$$
$$NP^p_{II} \equiv NP^f_{II}$$

Given that in accusative systems, NOM is primary and ACC secondary, whereas in ergative systems the distribution is ABS vs. ERG, this abstract scheme can be formally realized in the following twofold way:

$$NP^p_{NOM} \equiv NP^f_{NOM} \qquad / \qquad NP^p_{ABS} \equiv NP^f_{ABS}$$
$$NP^p_{NOM} \equiv NP^f_{ACC} \qquad / \qquad NP^p_{ABS} \equiv NP^f_{ERG}$$
$$NP^p_{ACC} \equiv NP^f_{NOM} \qquad / \qquad NP^p_{ERG} \equiv NP^f_{ABS}$$
$$NP^p_{ACC} \equiv NP^f_{ACC} \qquad / \qquad NP^p_{ERG} \equiv NP^f_{ERG}$$

If semantics is to be taken into consideration, the parameter of transitivity must be integrated into this scheme. ACC and ERG only occur with transitive verbs; their semantic value is constant, i.e. PAT and AG. On the other hand, NOM and ABS can occur with transitive as well as with intransitive verbs. They have their proper semantic value only in combination with transitive verbs ($NP_{NOM/t}$ = AG; $NP_{ABS/t}$ = PAT), whereas in connection with intransitive ones they are semantically neutralized. Both NOM and ABS can correspond to AG as well as to PAT ($NP_{NOM/i}$ = $NP_{ABS/i}$ = AG/PAT). It is justified, therefore, to use a simplified notation if only ergative and accusative systems are considered. In accordance with widespread usage, the convention of writing S for [$NP_{NOM/i}$ = $NP_{ABS/i}$ = AG/PAT] will be adopted in the following, where necessary. Likewise, [$NP_{NOM/t}$ = NP_{ERG} = AG] can be abbreviated as A, [NP_{ACC} = $NP_{ABS/t}$ =PAT] as P.

On the formal level, then, we obtain the following scheme of possible transitions in accusative and ergative systems:

1. $NP^p_{NOM/i} \equiv NP^p_{NOM/i}$ / $NP^p_{ABS/i} \equiv NP^f_{ABS/i}$

2. $NP^p_{NOM/t} \equiv NP^f_{NOM/i}$ / $NP^p_{ABS/t} \equiv NP^f_{ABS/i}$

3. $NP^p_{NOM/i} \equiv NP^f_{NOM/t}$ / $NP^p_{ABS/i} \equiv NP^p_{ABS/t}$

4. $NP^p_{NOM/t} \equiv NP^f_{NOM/t}$ / $NP^p_{ABS/t} \equiv NP^f_{ABS/t}$

5. $NP^p_{NOM/i} \equiv NP^f_{ACC}$ / $NP^p_{ABS/i} \equiv NP^f_{ERG}$

6. $NP^p_{NOM/t} \equiv NP^f_{ACC}$ / $NP^p_{ABS/t} \equiv NP^f_{ERG}$

7. $NP^p_{ACC} \equiv NP^f_{NOM/i}$ / $NP^p_{ERG} \equiv NP^f_{ABS/i}$

8. $NP^p_{ACC} \equiv NP^f_{NOM/t}$ / $NP^p_{ERG} \equiv NP^f_{ABS/t}$

9. $NP^p_{ACC} \equiv NP^f_{ACC}$ / $NP^p_{ERG} \equiv NP^f_{ERG}$

Semantically, the two scales follow opposite directions because of the semantic mirror symmetry of accusativity and ergativity:

1.   S => S   /   S => S
2.   A => S   /   P => S
3.   S => A   /   S => P
4.   A => A   /   P => P
5.   S => P   /   S => A
6.   A => P   /   P => A
7.   P => S   /   A => S
8.   P => A   /   A => P
9.   P => P   /   A => A

     1-4 correspond to the transition type $NP^p_I \equiv NP^f_I$; 5-6 belong to the type $NP^p_I \equiv NP^f_I$, NP^f_I, 7-8 to the type $NP^p_{II} \equiv NP^f_I$, 9 is the only representative of the type $NP^p_{II} \equiv NP^f_{II}$.

     In Indo-European languages, there is a strong tendency to make a distinction between 1-4 and 5-9. There are different formal realizations of such a break. In Latin, for instance, the P function is frequently marked by passivization, whereas the S and A functions remain unmarked (i.e. in the active voice). Most Romance languages, such as Spanish and Italian, make little use of the passive; the breaking point manifests itself as a difference of behaviour with respect to pronominalization. In the S and A functions, pronouns only occur if special emphasis is intended, but in the P function, they are obligatory. At any rate, there is a twofold distinction of textual transition types, the main distinctive parameter being the semantic function of the individual NP and not so much the nature of the transition as such.

     Dyirbal is specific not only insofar as it is ergative; it also shows the peculiarity of a fourfold division. The basic form (which is the unmarked one) stands for relations of the types 1-4, the *ŋay* transformation stands for 5-6, the *ŋura* transformation for 7-8; for 9, a combination of both, i.e. the *ŋay-ŋura* transformation is used. Consequently, not only-the semantic function of the NP as such, but also the nature of the transition plays a role in assigning one of these

transformations to the verb. From 1-9 there is an increasing degree of markedness in this language.

At this point in the discussion, no further examples of different marking systems will be cited. Instead, let us look at the semantic functions and their respective occurrence probability. In the following considerations on probability, explicit reference is made to narrative texts in a broad sense, namely in the sense of speaking about actions performed by, and events affecting, living beings. To report actions and events is probably the most frequent linguistic activity of man; it is certainly among the most fundamental ones. It should be expected, therefore, that peculiarities found in narrative texts will have a stronger impact upon the formation of grammatical categories than other textual classes. If any text frequency pattern manifests itself in the grammatical structure of a given language, this will almost inevitably be a pattern found in narrative, not in, for example, argumentative texts.

As in all textual classes, in narration, too, there must be a certain number of constant or recurring elements in order to ensure that the laws of textual coherence are not violated. The most probable candidates for this textual function are human (or at least living) protagonists, normally those which push forward the narrated events by their own activity, or those which are described or characterized by the narrator. Such protagonists necessarily show a certain degree of (potential or actual) agentivity. We might conclude, then, that in narrative texts a high degree of agentivity is coupled with high probability of textual recurrence. Acting protagonists are more likely chosen as topics in topic chains than, say, inert things acted upon. The more agentive a given NP is, the more likely it will be constant across sentence borders, and the more likely it will undergo coreferential deletion. Accordingly, if text frequency acts upon grammar, then more agentive NPs should be expected to be more easily deletable. Since S is semantically neutral, such an expectancy would mean that A is preferred over P with respect to coreferential deletion. In particular, if for deletion there is an alternative between formal markedness and unmarkedness,[30] then a system where A is unmarked but P marked is more plausible from a semantic and pragmatic point of view than the opposite system.

In an accusative language of the Western Indo-European type, no problem arises in this respect: agentive NPs are more topic-worthy; active verb forms are more frequent than passive verb forms; and passive voice is morphologically marked with respect to the active. For narrative texts at least, formal markedness, text frequency, and semantics are in accordance. The resulting systems are functionally motivated and do not suffer from internal contradictions. (Such contradictions make themselves felt if textual classes other than narrative are taken into account.)

In a "deep" ergative system like that of Dyirbal, there is a strong discrepancy between the three parameters just mentioned: semantics, text frequency, and formal markedness do not agree. The most frequent transition

pattern, namely A =>A, is most heavily marked (*ŋay+ŋura*). The natural flow of storytelling is constantly encumbered by the necessity to use the most complicated of all diathetical transformations for such natural sequences as "He first shot a bird and then speared a kangaroo", or "I shall write a letter and then have dinner".

The voice transformations of Dyirbal do not fulfill some elementary functional requirements of narration. Perhaps Dyirbal syntax would have allowed for especially elegant formulations of scientific or juridical arguments! Be this as it may, the fact must be stressed that consistent antipassivization leads to a non-iconic relationship between morphological marking and semantically based text frequency in at least one fundamental textual class. Textual coreference, i.e. coreference across sentence boundaries, favors accusativity, not ergativity.

In Basque, marking functions in the text as it has been shown to function inside the sentence. What must be marked is marked ergatively; what is left unmarked shows neither ergative nor accusative behaviour. Any NP can be coreferentially deleted, be it in the absolutive or in the ergative case. Its function will normally be recoverable by means of the polypersonal conjugated affixes of the verb. If the function is not recoverable, deletion does not take place. The probabilistic tendencies just outlined have influenced the structure of many languages, including most of SAE, but not Basque. If there are statistical preferences concerning text frequency in Basque, this has had an impact neither upon its laws of syntactic behaviour nor upon its morphology. On the other hand, it is easy to show that text frequencies of the expected kind also exist in Basque. In order to prove this, I have analyzed a number of topic chains in the above-mentioned novel of Domingo Agirre, amounting to 30 independent sentences.[31] This is, of course, too small a sample on which to base far-reaching conclusions; nevertheless, it seems improbable that the analysis of a much greater corpus of narrative prose would yield substantially different results.

In fact, the proportions of the different transition types correspond exactly to what has been expounded in theory. For 30 transitions between S, A, and P, a relative majority of 12 belongs to type 9. The second rank is held by transitions between absolutives: six transitions belong to type 1 and one to type 4. Unequal transitions leading to agents are still relatively frequent: five occurrences of type 5 and one of type 6. The least frequent transition is non-identity leading to patients: four occurrences of type 7 and one of type 8. There are no occurrences of types 2 and 3.

From this picture it becomes clear that, generally speaking, A is frequently involved in coreferential relations, whereas P only rarely occurs in such constructions. It is significant that transitions from or to P never occur in connection with S (2 and 3), and occur only once in connection with A (6 and 8, respectively). On the other hand, all combinations of S and A occur much more than once: six times S => S; five times S => A; four times A => S; and 12 times

A => A. All in all, there are only three transitions (=10%) including P, whereas no less than 21 transitions (=70%) include A.

In other words, although morphologically unmarked, the absolute of the transitive verb (P) only rarely undergoes coreferential deletion; and although morphologically marked, the ergative frequently does so. Morphological markedness relations have no influence upon syntactic behaviour. There are no rules forbidding deletion of either P or A if necessary. But text frequency is in contradiction to morphological marking insofar as the marked ergative is far more frequently deleted than the unmarked transitive absolute. At the level of text constitution and of coordinate deletion of coreferent NPs, an accusative system seems to be more natural than an ergative one. Markedness is iconic with respect to deletion frequency in accusative but not in ergative systems. This can be shown even in Basque, despite its consistent ergativity on the morphological level: A and S are more frequently deleted than P.

Does this mean, then, that Basque is syntactically accusative on the level of textuality? In the light of the foregoing discussion, such a claim does not make sense. There is no specific level of syntactic rules where deep accusativity could manifest itself. There are some statistical tendencies which seem to be in accordance with some deeply rooted universal preferences in narrative texts, but there are no clear-cut laws ruling out less frequent combinations. Everything remains possible. Deletion of P occurs less frequently simply because patients are less probably chosen as topics in narrative discourse, but not because they undergo some "deep accusativity constraint". In Basque, marking goes as far as it does; beyond that, the only law to be obeyed is pragmatic probability:

As a conclusion of this section, a few typical topic chains in the analyzed novel of Agirre will be quoted textually. Subordinate clauses and insertions of all kinds are of course omitted. The analysis is limited to the bare main thread of the narration. Note that omissions are not specially indicated. The original Bizcayan (of the text) is left unaltered.

l.   *Amandok artu eban Euskal-errirako bidea.*
        "Amando took his way to the Basque country."
        =>
2.   *Eldu zan Auñemendiraiño.*
        "He arrived at Auñemendi."
        =>
3.   *Aserre to zer-esan andiak idoro zituan.*
        "He found much anger and maledictions."
        =>
4.   *Olango gauzak entzùn zituan.*
        "He heard such things."
        =>

5.   *Lenengo euskaldunak prankotarren lurreko mugetan billatu zituan.*[32]
       "He met with the first Basque at the frontier of the land of the Franks."

Such a succession of events is quite normal in narrative prose. The protagonist remains constant. He performs a series of actions, expressed partly by intransitive and partly by transitive verbs. In English, coreference is expressed by the means of pronominalization; in Basque the same function is fulfilled by deletion. In English, NPs with the functions S (sentence 2) and A (sentences 1, 3, 4, 5) are treated alike. In Basque, too, deletion applies likewise to S (intransitive absolutive) and A (ergative). As a result of the structure of this language, no special voice transformation is necessary in order to make transitions between ABS and ERG possible.

The quoted sequence can be summarized as follows:

coreference: $NP^1_{ERG} \equiv NP^2_{ABS/i} \equiv NP^3_{ERG} \equiv NP^4_{ERG} \equiv NP^5_{ERG}$
transition type: 7   5   9   9

Another sequence reads as follows:

6.   *Gelditu zan Mendiolan Riktrudis.*
       "Riktrudis remained in Mendiola."
7.   *Erregiña bat legez zan.*
       "She was like a queen."
8.   *Baeukan laguntasun on bat Pedro Mari-gaz, baiña gurasorik ez.*
       "She had good company in the person of Pedro Mari, but no parents."
9.   *Auzokoak eta erritarrak erruki eben,*
       "The neighbors and peasants pitied her",
10.   *bere gurasoen aideak maite [eban].*[33]
       "the relatives of her parents loved her."

This can be schematized in the following way:

coreference: $NP^6_{ABS/i} \equiv NP^7_{ABS/i} \equiv NP^8_{ERG} \equiv NP^9_{ABS/t} \equiv NP^{10}_{ABS/t}$
transition type: 1   5   8   4

In English, a different pronominal form must be used for S/A (sentences 6, 7, 8) and for P (sentences 9, 10). In Spanish, no pronoun at all is needed for S/A, but pronominalization is obligatory for P; by grouping together S and A as opposed to P, Spanish can be said to be syntactically accusative. In Basque, there is no pronoun, either with transitions of the types 1, 5, 7, 9, or with transitions of the types 4, 6, and 8.

In text constitution, the ergative morphology of the verb remains what it is, and syntactic patterns are governed by the concrete necessities of the context, not by some "deep" layer of specific syntactic rules. Transitive absolutives are deleted less frequently than either intransitive absolutives or ergatives, but if they ARE, deletion is carried out in exactly the same way. On the level of text constitution, too, the assumption that Basque is "deeply" accusative is based on an optical illusion: language-independent frequency distributions are taken for strict rules of syntax.

3.3.   Remarks on nominalization

At this point of the discussion, some remarks on nominalization are in order. This will lead to the final conclusions on the place of ergativity and accusativity in language in general.

From Moravcsik (1978) to C. Lehmann (1982), it has repeatedly been pointed out not only that most ergative languages contain some accusativity, but also that most accusative languages show a certain amount of ergative structure. As Lehmann (1982: 64) has put, it, "What is a pervasive structure-organizing principle in one language ... cannot remain totally alien and irrelevant to another linguistic system". We have shown that even in such an overwhelmingly ergative language as Basque, a slight hue of accusativity tinges the domain of coreferential deletion in text constitution. It is only a hue. Neither a rule nor a restriction is involved; only a statistical preference can be observed. Nevertheless, this statistical preference does exist, and it must clearly be accounted for as the effect of a pragmatic probability related rather to textual class than to language-specific features.

Something similar can be observed with respect to the often-quoted case of *genitivus obiectivus* and *subiectivus* in overwhelmingly accusative languages. It has often been noticed that the absolute predominance of *genitivus obiectivus* in connection with nominalized transitive verbs is in fact an ergative trait.[34] Since intransitive verbs have only one argument, the genitive in nominalized constructions can only be S. Of the two arguments of the transitive verb, P is preferred over A as a genitive in nominalized constructions. This phenomenon has been described so often that no further demonstration or illustration is necessary here.

The same rule, or better, the same statistical tendency can be observed with respect to noun incorporation. Here, too, P is preferred over A in connection with transitive verbs. In many cases, P is the only possible candidate for incorporation. As I have shown in another contribution,[35] in languages such as German and modern Persian it is possible to transform transitive constructions like

(89)   *Der Hund trinkt Wasser.*

Sag âb mixorad.

into compounds of the type

(90) *Wasser-trinken*
      âb-xordan

but not of the type

(91) **Hund-trinken*
      *sag-xordan

In German, and probably in many other languages too, there is a boundness hierarchy with respect to the relation between the nominalized verb itself and its adnominal adjuncts. In connection with intransitive verbs, such an adjunct cannot but refer to S:

(92) a. *Chomsky redet.*   →
      b. *die Chomsky-Rede/*
      c. *die Rede Chomskys/*
      d. *die Rede von Chomsky*
      e. *die Chomsky'sche Rede*

But in connection with transitive verbs, "close" adjuncts preferrably represent P, whereas "loose" adjuncts are neutral or tend to represent A:

(93) a. *Chomsky interpretiert Humboldt.*
      b. *die Humboldt-Interpretation Chomskys/*
         (**die Chomsky-Interpretation Humboldts*)
      c. *die Interpretation Humboldts von Chomsky/*
         (*? die Interpretation Chomskys von Humboldt*)
      d. *die Chomsky'sche Interpretation von Humboldt/*
         (**die Humboldt'sche Interpretation von Chomsky*)[36]

If, in the second transform, we replace the unspecific genitive preposition *von* by the "ergative" marker *durch*, then **die Interpretation Chomskys durch Humboldt* will be definitely excluded.

The conclusion to be drawn can be formulated as follows: the closer the connection between verb and argument in nominalizations, the more ergative its behaviour. Note that this is a statistical tendency, and not a strict rule. If only one of the two arguments of the transitive verb is present, both interpretations are possible, although the ergative one is preferred; the composition type of

Sprachbeschreibung
Tatortbeschreibung
Bildbeschreibung

is certainly more productive than the type of

Grammatikerbeschreibung
Zeugenbeschreibung
Kritikerbeschreibung

Nevertheless, compounding with A instead of P remains possible.

This is reminiscent of the state of affairs found with respect to coordinate deletion in Basque: there are neatly marked tendencies, but neither strict rules nor restrictions. The propensity of German toward the ergative grouping of S and P in composition and nominalization has not been grammaticalized. It seems to be the natural effect of a language-independent tendency in word building, just as the propensity of Basque toward the accusative grouping of S and A in coordinate deletion has been interpreted as the effect of a language-independent tendency in the constitution of narrative texts. What is a grammaticalized rule in one language may very well manifest itself as a frequency distribution pattern in the lexicon, or on the level of textual occurrence, in another language.

In Basque, genitivization of one adjunct of nominalized verbs is also possible (see part two of rule A above). Geographically, it occurs most frequently, though not exclusively, in the Eastern dialects, and especially in those of France. The effect of genitivization lies in emphasizing the nominal character of the nominalized verb, whereas preserving the original case-marking results in emphasizing its original verbal nature. Although this question must still be thoroughly investigated, it can be said that genitive adjuncts mostly represent either S or P, i.e. that this domain of Basque grammar is organized ergatively.[37] Nevertheless, transformation of the ergative (=A) into the genitive is not excluded. Although less frequent, it is possible on the condition that only one of the arguments of the transitive verb be present in the clause. This point can be illustrated by simply quoting three examples from Lafitte's grammar of Labourdin:

(94) *aitaren jitea*
    "father's arrival"
    (lit. "the coming of father") $/NP^m_{ABS/i} \rightarrow NP^e_{GEN}/$

(95) *aitaren ikustean*
    "when seeing father"
    (lit. "in the seeing of father") $/NP^m_{ABS/t} \rightarrow NP^e_{GEN}/$

(96)   *aitaren egite hori*[38]
       "this action of father"
       (lit. "this doing of father")   /NP$^m_{ERG}$ → NP$^e_{GEN}$/

The second construction (P→GEN) is by far the most frequent one. A few additional examples:

(97)   *Ez du zure ikuste beharrik.*
       "He does not need to see you."
       (lit. "your seeing")

(98)   *Letra hunen sinatzerat nindoan deitu nuzunean.*
       "I was going to sign this letter when you called me".
       (lit. "the signing of this letter")

(99)   *Haren sendatzerat ari da.*[39]
       "He is [attempting] to heal him".
       (lit. "his healing")

(100) *Partidaren ikustera joaiteko baimena ez zuten ardiesten.*[40]
       "They did not obtain permission to go to see the match."
       (lit. "the permission of the going to the seeing of the match")

Genitivization in connection with nominalized verbs is predominantly, though not exclusively, ergative. The conclusion must be drawn that this statistical propensity toward ergativity has nothing to do with the particular ergative structuring of the Basque language as a whole; rather it must be considered as something parallel to the tendencies toward the *genitivus obiectivus* in Latin, patient-compounding in German and Modern Persian, object incorporation in many languages, and so on. Ergative behaviour on this level of syntax is not specifically influenced by language-particular ergative morphology. It is the effect of general, or even universal, language-independent tendencies whose status is comparable to the general, or universal, inclination. toward accusativity in text constitution.

It seems that in fact there are two apparently symmetrical tendencies in language, two counterbalanced "pulls"[41] as Seiler would call it: one "pull" toward accusativity and another one toward ergativity. These "pulls" seem to have to do primarily with linguistic levels, ranks, or strata; in short, with the hierarchical organization of human language. As a conclusion of the whole article, a few considerations on these two antagonistic tendencies and their place in language will be added. It goes without saying that this highly complex matter needs much more empirical research and theoretical reflection. Only a sketchy

outline of what still has to be elaborated in detail can be given in the following pages.

4.   Conclusion: ergativity, accusativity, and the stratification of language

For the following considerations, the point of departure is a simplified hierarchical or stratificational model of language which must include at least the following levels:

text
complex sentence
kernel sentence[42]
phrase
complex word

It should be stressed that this model is deliberately left unelaborated. For the purposes of the present section it is sufficient to keep in mind a skeletal hierarchy of the kind proposed. A hierarchy containing many more levels defined in a rigorous manner can be found in Heger 1976.

Clauses can be described as kernel sentences which are hierarchically demoted in order to be able to fulfill functions inside complex sentences[43]. Below the level of the complex word, there are several hierarchical steps, such as word and moneme. Likewise, inside the text level (defined as any succession of at least two independent sentences) many subdivisions can be made. As for the present discussion, none of these refinements bears any relevance.

In a simplified hierarchy of this kind, the level of kernel sentence functions as the pivot. It constitutes the center separating lower from higher units. What seems to be essential in this respect is the notion of assertion which applies to the finite predicate of the kernel sentence. Assertion does not apply to complex words and phrases, although they may contain an assertable predicative nucleus. Assertion is presupposed in the subordinate clauses building up complex sentences; and it applies to each of the sentences (kernel or complex) which are strung together to form the text. Simplifying to the extreme, one might say that below the level of kernel sentences no assertion takes place; and that over this level asserted predicates are combined (be it that assertion becomes implicit, as in the case of subordination, or remains explicit, as in the case of text constitution). In the lower part of the hierarchy, propositional concepts are gradually built up without assertion; in its upper part, originally asserted propositions are linked together.

In the formation of lower units, it can be expected, therefore, that the relation between the predicate and its argument(s) is the essential factor; in the higher units, combinational patterns will be dominant, the most important of these patterns being coreference of arguments. Below and beyond the central

pivot of kernel sentences, two different constructive principles apply: the "principle of predicate-argument construction"; and the "principle of argumental coreference", i.e. the constancy of certain arguments across a string of combined predicates.

The main thesis of this section is that the principle of predicate-argument construction preferably tends toward ergativity, whereas the principle of argumental coreference shows a strong bias toward accusativity. The reasons for both these tendencies have already been outlined in the preceding paragraphs of this paper. Let us briefly repeat the main points here.

I. Ergative and accusative structures agree insofar as there is only one argument function with the monovalent verb (in contrast to, for example, the active type). The behaviour of monovalent verbs and their respective arguments cannot be taken, therefore, as a base for distinguishing ergative and accusative patterns.

II. Of the two arguments of the bivalent verb, patients are more closely connected with the predicate than agents. The verbal nucleus is determined primarily by P, and only secondarily by A.
Close connection manifests itself as unmarkedness, loose connection as markedness. This means that P should be unmarked, and A marked. This leads to the conclusion that the principle of predicate-argument construction naturally leads to ergativity.

III. In the most frequent and most basic discourse types, of the two arguments of the bivalent verb, agents are more likely to be constant across a string of connected clauses and sentences. A is preferred over P for establishing coreferential relations.
High-frequency of coreference manifests itself as unmarked behaviour with respect to deletion; arguments which are less often selected for coreference will behave more markedly in this respect. This means that A shows unmarked and P marked behaviour.
All this leads to the conclusion that the principle of argumental coreference naturally leads to accusativity.

These theoretical conclusions are fully confirmed by overwhelming empirical evidence. I do not think it to be an oversimplification to state this in the following way: if there is any ergativity in a predominantly accusative linguistic system, it will be in the domain of word formation (the level of complex word) and phrase building; if, on the other hand, anything resembling accusativity is found in an otherwise coherent ergative system, this will be the case in the domain of coreferential deletion, be it inside the complex sentence or in the constitution of texts.

The ergative and the accusative patterns are two equally logical possibilities following from the premises of verbal valence and its predominant role in human language. But whereas there are clear tendencies toward one of these possibilities in the upper and in the lower parts of the hierarchy, the pivot level of kernel sentences seems to be indifferent in this respect. This is reflected in the distribution of patterns as evidenced by multilateral language comparison: most languages seem to be predominantly ergative in word formation and phrase structure, and predominantly accusative in clause subordination and text constitution; but on the level of the kernel sentence such a statistical tendency, which in fact does exist, is far less marked. Although not equal to accusative marking, ergative marking of case in the noun, or of agreement in the verb, or of both, is indeed widespread. It has been estimated to obtain for one-third of the world's languages, which might well prove to be too little. In any case, the statistical predominance of the accusative type can well be accounted for in the theoretical framework just outlined.

There are two counterbalanced forces, two opposite analogical pressures acting upon the formation of case marking in kernel sentences: from below, it is drawn toward ergativity, from above toward accusativity. The predominance of accusativity, albeit slight, seems to indicate that the factor of coreferential deletion and text constitution is on the whole somewhat stronger.[44]

I think this theory also explains the split between nominal and verbal case marking as it is found in various parts of New Guinea. In those languages, it is always the verb which functions accusatively, and the noun which is structured on an ergative pattern, never the other way around. The noun is, according to the valence theory, dominated by the verbal predicate; inside the kernel sentence it fulfills a subordinate function as one of the arguments of the verb. On the other hand, the conjugated verb is at the top of the dependency hierarchy; if it enters into relationships, it does so with other finite verbs of coordinate sentences. According to all that has been said here on the principle of argument-predicate construction and the principle of cross-sentential coreference, it seems natural that, if there is a split between noun and verb, accusativity and ergativity are distributed as they are. This fact is also reflected in the typological distribution of nominal and verbal ergativity in cross-linguistic comparison: purely nominal ergativity (e.g. Gurung, Tongan, Dyirbal, and so on) is found far more frequently than purely verbal ergativity; for this latter type, Abkhaz and the Mayan languages are the only well-known examples.

Let us conclude with a final remark on Basque. As has been shown, all overtly marked NPs and Vs are marked ergatively. This applies mainly to the level of kernel sentence, but it is in principle independent of the hierarchy of linguistic levels. As far as grammaticalized mechanisms are concerned, NPs and Vs which receive no overt marking are neutral with respect to the opposition of ergativity and accusativity. There ARE the expected statistical tendencies in Basque, too – if marking is left out in composition, or in nominalization with an

argument genitive, the results mostly resemble ergative patterns; if marking is left out by coreferential deletion in subordination and coordination, the results are more likely to resemble accusative patterns. But neither of these tendencies has been grammaticalized. In both cases the opposite remains possible, too. Basque is a kind of "antiworld" to what we are accustomed to in SAE, not only because of its deeply rooted ergativity but also because of the limited extent to which syntactic patterns have been grammaticalized. In every respect, this unique language merits far more attention from general linguistics than it has received until now.

Appendix: list of abbreviations

B: Bizcayan	i: intransitive
G: Guipuzcoan	t: transitive
L: Labourdin	
N: Navarrese	e: embedded
S: Souletin	m: matrix
	p: preceding
	f: following

I: primary argument function (NOM in accusative/ABS in ergative systems)
II: secondary argument function (ACC in accusative/ERG in ergative systems)
≡: is coreferent with

1. Anderson is most trenchant in his wording: "The notion of subject in ergative languages is, despite the morphological indications which appear to indicate otherwise, essentially the same as that in accusative languages" (Anderson 1976: 23). Comrie is somewhat more careful in his 1978 contribution: "The majority of languages that are morphologically ergative are not syntactically ergative; in the majority of ergative languages ergativity seems to be a relatively superficial phenomenon-" (Comrie 1978: 346). He formulates still more cautiously some years later, after the publication of Dixon (1979): "there seems to be a general bias in language ... towards nominative-accusative syntax" (Comrie 1981: 114). As is well known, the distinction between "coding properties" and "behaviour and control properties" was formulated for the first time by Keenan (1976: 324).
2. See Bossong (1982: 220f), and also Bossong (1980: 49).
3. Together with Foley, van Valin has repeatedly developed this idea; compare van Valin (1977); Foley and van Valin (1977); van Valin and Foley (1980). I fully agree with their thesis that Basque is, in their terminology, a role-dominated language.
4. Especially in de Rijk (1978: 84). But note that in the same article he is compelled to admit that there is nothing resembling "the subject noun phrase as in the traditional analysis of English or Dutch sentences" (de Rijk 1978: 107).
5. From one of his earliest articles on Basque (1888: 2290 up to his short but monumental masterwork of 1923, Schuchardt has constantly defended this view.
6. A deepened discussion of splits is found in Trask (1979); also compare Bossong (1982: 228f; 1984).
7. A discussion of these points can be found in Bossong (1982). Note that I do not agree with Mrs. Paris's thesis that the verbal system of Circassian is not ergative.
8. In his monumental *Morfología vasca*, Azkue assumes that "esta gran anomalía sea producto de lo que en Física llaman *atracción del vacío*" (Azkue 1969[1923-1925]: III, 556). This comes close to what will be proposed here, but Azkue did not elaborate his idea in detail. Heath

interprets the verbal forms in question as a kind of antipassive (1976: 208). In my opinion, this interpretation does not make sense (see below). Also compare Brettschneider (1979: 383).

9. In the preparation of this article, the following grammars and descriptions were used: Allières (1979); Altube (1975[1929]); Arotçarena (1976); Azkue (1969[1923-1925]); Basterrechea (1981); Campión (1977[1884]); Lafitte (1979[1944]); Lopez Mendizabal (1977[1949]); N'Diaye (1970); Omaechevarria (1959); Rotaetxe (1978); Sagüés (1980); Txillardegi (1978); Umandi (1955); Villasante (1979, 1980, 1983); Zamárripa y Uraga (1956). The immediate source of the illustrative sentences is only indicated if it is literally taken from a grammar or a literary work. The sentences which I constructed myself were checked by my consultants.

10. I would like to thank Koldo Mitxelena (personal communication) for having directed my attention to this point.

11. This diachronic explanation, taken from Omaechevarria (1959), seems plausible to me, although his views are not shared by some bascologists. The etymology of third person prefixes is not relevant to the topic of this contribution, so it will not be discussed in detail here.

12. In fact, such "logical forms" are reported to exist. Azkue notes that in various parts of Biskaya, the forms *ekigun/ekizun/ekizuen* ("we knew it"/"thou knewest it"/"ye knew it") are preferred over the more widespread ones *gekian/zekian/zekien*; even forms like *esan eutsagun* instead of *esan geutsan* ("we said it to him") seem to occur (Azkue 1969[1923-1925]: III, 557). I could not find any trace of this use in other descriptions.

13. See Li and Lang (1979). Another well-known example is Hua as described in Haiman (1979, 1980).

14. An example from Galgadungu (Pama-Nyungan) is analyzed in Blake (1976: 485).

15. The following examples are formed in accordance with Villasante (1979: 84f).

16. The problem of sentences like the following ones is treated more in detail in Altube (1975[19291: 135-140).

17. The Bizkayan original reads as follows: "Olesik egin baga...; iñok ikusi barik, ... gizategi andi batean sartuten naz" (Agirre 1966[1898]: I, 10).

18. The most thorough study on the Basque partitive is de Rijk 1972.

19. In Guipuzcoan, the sentence would be "lagunak joaten eserri zan". This and the following examples are taken from Lafitte (1979[1944]: 231).

20. In Guipuzcoan, a construction with a conjugated verb would be preferred: "... lo egin duela/dudala".

21. In Guipuzcoan, the complement clause would be in the absolutive: "damu det zu naigabetu izatea".

22. In Guipuzcoan, the first clause would be "aiek onartu gabe".

23. In Guipuzcoan, *gero* does not take the instrumental case ending (*hil ez gero*). The following examples are adapted from Lafitte (1979[1944]: 229).

24. This example is adapted from a stylistically rather unusual sentence of Hiriart-Urruty, cited in Villasante (1979: 196): "guhaur gelditurik ere, etsaiari buruz, ez dugu zeren izi".

25. Quoted according to Lafitte (1979[1944]: 208).

26. This argument looks similar to what is expounded in Dixon (1979) about "potential agents" in imperatives, jussive complements, and the like. But note that I do not derive from facts such as these a universally valid notion of "subject".

27. Compare Tchekhoff (1978: 410. If non-orientation leads to syntactic ambiguity, this is called "availability" (*disponibilité*) of the verbal predicate; see Tchekhoff (1978: 43f, 1979). This idea is ultimately an elaboration of an idea expressed in Martinet (1975[1962]).

28. The problem of voice in Basque is highly controversial. Heath (1976), for instance, claims that Basque has a passive as well as an antipassive. Bollenbacher (1977) assumes a passive voice for Basque. De Rijk (1978: 84f) argues against this point of view. Most traditional grammars list some intransitively used "transitive verbs" under the heading of passive (see Lafitte 1979[1944]: 342f, for example), but this is due to translation influences from *erdera*, as has been shown by Brettschneider (1979: 380. In a more recent contribution, Brettschneider clearly states that "en euskara no hay una oposición entre 'construcción activa' y 'construcción pasiva' sino un solo tipo básico de oración" (Brettschneider 1981: 232). Also compare the references given in the preceding note.

29. This example is adapted from Orwell (1982: 8).

30. The problem of formal vs. functional markedness is discussed in more detail in Bossong, "Zur Entwicklungsdynamik von Kasussystemen", *Folia Linguistica Historica* 6 (1985), 285 - 321.

31. The sample contains the following passages of Agirre (1966[1898]: I, 116, 1-23; II, 44, 15-46, 23; 11, 54, 18-56, 3; 11 96, 1-98, 7).

32. This is the thread of narration of the passage Agirre (1966[1898]: II, 98, 1-98, 7).

33. This is the thread of narration of the passage Agirre (1966[1898]: II, 44, 15-46, 23).

34. See, for example, Moravcsik (1978: 252); Comrie (1978: 3750; C. Lehmann (1982: 62).

35. See Bossong 1985, § 2.4.1). Some analogous examples can be found in Moravcsik (1978: 267f).

36. These examples have been adapted from Bossong (1979: 43).

37. Villasante writes: "De hecho et caso posesivo sólo se usa cuando se trata del complemento del nombre verbal" (Villasante 1980: 196). Heath, too,

suggests that genitivization is only possible with objects: "the TO of a transitive infinitive clause is genitivized, while TS's and IS's are unaffected" (Heath 1972: 48). Statements such as these seem exaggerated, since genitivized transitive agents do in fact occur, although only rarely.

38. All these examples are taken from Lafitte (1979[1944]: 211).

39. These examples are taken from Lafitte (1979[1944]: 213, 351).

40. This example is taken from Jean Etchepare's *Buruchkak*, as quoted in Allières (1979: 116).

41. In Seiler's theory this notion is connected with the idea of the operational dimension as a structural principle of language. Whether or not the question of stratified distribution of ergativity and accusativity can be treated within the framework of Seiler's theory must still be examined.

42. Note that the use of the term "kernel sentence" should not make the reader believe that I have a special inclination toward generativism in general, let alone toward Chomsky's 1957 model in particular!

43. This idea has been elaborated in Bossong (1979); the common denominator of all cases of subordination has been termed "blockage of assertion" (*Assertionsblockierung*).

44. Compare the following quotations which reflect a view widely agreed upon: "Ergativsprachen sind vermutlich deshalb in der Minderzahl, weil Agensthematisierung natürlicher ist als Patiensthematisierung" (Sasse 1978: 244); "The [accusative] language gravitates back toward *reuniting the agent with the topic*, which I have suggested is the most 'normal' situation in human discourse" (Givón 1979: 65; italics in the original); "There seems to be a general bias in language ... towards nominative-accusative syntax.... There is a natural correlation between agent and topic" (Comrie 1981: 114). This is certainly not wrong, but it is only half the truth. If there are forces acting upon the formation of linguistic categories, they never occur in isolation. In a given domain, there is always an interplay of at least two more or less counterbalanced tendencies. If not, diachronic change would soon come to an end!

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