BASQUE SYNTAX

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The most striking and stimulating developments in the formal study of grammar have, in the last quarter century, taken place in the study of syntax. No scholar today can remain unaffected by the developments in what has been called «Transformational» or «Generative» grammar. At no time in the history of linguistics has more effort been expended upon the explication of grammatical problems. The so-called «revolution in linguistics» has released a vast amount of energy to be devoted to the basic problems of grammatical practice. The time-honored basic concepts such as passive-active, grammatical relation, subordination, and, of course, word order had to be reexamined and redefined. No term, no concept, no assumption has been permitted to go unexamined and unquestioned.

The modern syntactician is at pains to define in operative terms those devices that the native speaker of this or that language uses in the generation of grammatical sentences. He makes conscious in a scientific way the «intuition» or «competence» of the native speaker. In this way, he provides the basis for the treatment of all human, natural-language grammars. Rather than merely treating the idiosyncracies of one particular language, he sets out to explain the «language faculty» of all human beings by discovering the system of principles behind all human speech production. This leads to the current preoccupation with Universal grammar.

To the outsider, let us say, to a scholar from one of the historical sciences, linguistics as it is presently practiced must certainly look like a rather peculiar variety of formal philosophy that has equipped itself with a recondite terminology borrowed partly from traditional grammar, partly from formal mathematical philosophy, and also invented partly by some very waggish contemporary investigators. In this latter respect, it cannot be denied that there have been some truly embarrassing excesses.

Because linguistic research occupies the energies of so many minds, there have naturally sprung up a variety of theoretical stances, each of which

to some degree makes universalist claims. We are familiar with these stances under the labels: Extended Standard Theory, Generative Semantics, Relational Grammar, Axiomatic Grammar, Natural Generative Grammar, and several others. All of these various approaches share a common ambition in that they aim at being internally consistent, axiomatic systems created with the hope that the empirical evidence will somehow fit into the proposed system. We must admit that it is good scientific procedure to adopt a plausible point of view and then to follow it to its logical end. This practice has produced an enormous literature as well as a great deal of polemical fun, which only points up the vitality of the discipline.

The goal of contemporary syntactic investigation is often stated by means of the commonplace: «The function of a grammar is to link meaning with sound»[1]. In other terms we must say simply, we seek to determine just how meaning is expressed linguistically. The real link between sound and meaning is the syntactic component. At this point, we must avoid the ancient'philosophical puzzle of just what the «meaning of meaning» is and take it in its ordinary, everyday sense. I shall postpone any further probing into sophisticated semantics until we meet certain concrete points in the course of this paper.

I must note that, from an older point of view, linguistics in its search for the universal properties of the human language faculty has to some extent been diverted from one of its major tasks: the description of the lesser known languages. (It is another commonplace that only a handful of natural languages have ever been described with any degree of adequacy at all.) Basque is one of these lesser known languages. Basque is usually mentioned as an example of an ergative-type language and illustrated by means of a few sentences drawn from Lafitte[2]. Owing to the spate of papers on ergative-type languages in the last five years, at least two of these sentences have achieved a sort of international fame. With these two sentences, any further probing into the nature of Basque grammar ends, for Basque is an exotic language that has the effrontery to live not in some far-distant land, but in the westernmost part of Western Europe. Everybody discourses learnedly about Basque, but only in terms of one isolated grammatical feature. That is worse than total ignorance.

For very definite historical reasons, linguists have developed an antipathy to highly conscious literary texts as evidence. They prefer spontaneous elicitations from native informants, however recorded, and the evidence of their own'introspection. In spite of this common practice and in the face of

1. Renate Bartsch and Theo Vennemann. 1972. *Semantic Structures*. Frankfurt/Main: Athenaum Verlag, p. 3.
2. A glaring example is to be found in Edward Keenan and Bernard Comrie. 1977. «Noun phrase accessibility and universal grammar,» *Linguistic Inquiry* 8, 72. All references to Lafitte with section or page number refer to: Pierre Lafitte. 1963 *Grammaire Basque* (navarro-labourdine littéraire). Bayonne: Amis du musée basque, 2d ed.

the common attitude, I shall draw upon materials from a highly conscious, archaic Basque text. I consider these data as no more artificial and any the less revealing than any other kind of textual evidence. A poet or writer of cultivated prose perhaps will stretch grammaticality to its extreme limits, but no more so than the ordinary speaker when he indulges in verbal play.

In two very important papers, «Is Basque an S. O. V. language?» and «Topic fronting, focus positioning and the nature of the verb phrase in Basque»[3], Rudolf P. G. de Rijk has treated the basic features of Basque syntax from the point of view of the M. I. T. school. He has in great depth discussed some very basic problems with admirable clarity and without the normal terminological obfuscation of that school. I hold the opinion that he was perhaps too careful, much too cautious in accepting the basic S. O. V. order of the Basque sentence. Despite his reservations, we may accept this as a basic fact about Basque grammar--even if we accept it only as a working hypothesis or a simple heuristic device. My own hesitancy has quite another basis. Among the implications of the Greenberg typological theory, is one that predicts that Basque, since it is an S. O. V. language, will in the noun phrase place the adjective before the noun. This is clearly not the case. I am more than a little bit hesitant about swallowing a theory whole, and particularly one that makes false predictions. Any resorts to a spurious theory of history that says that this feature is a remainder of a previous state of being or that says that Basque will turn into an adjective prepositing language carry no conviction[4]. Also the claim that «we do not know enough about all the languages of the world» is a cop-out, for all good theories are based upon incomplete evidence. In my view, the universalists have jumped the gun on this score.

In this paper I would like to undertake a preliminary investigation of one particular aspect of the structure of the Basque sentence. This is related to the treatment of the particles *al, bide, edo, omen,* and *bait-,* which de Rijk has discussed in the first paper mentioned with great clarity[5]. I would like to expand his treatment and approach it from my own particular point of view. These particles belong to what I have designed in my *Prolegomena to a Grammar of Basque* as the Verb Complex. Loosely speaking, the VC contains the lexical verb, the verbal auxiliary, and any accompanying particles and

3.   Rudolf P. G. de Rijk. 1969. «Is Basque an S.O.V. language?» *Fontes Linguae Vasconum* 3, 319-351; and 1978, «Topic fronting, focus positioning and the nature of the verb phrase in Basque,» in *Studies in Fronting,* ed. Frank Jensen. Lisse (Leiden): Peter de Ridder Press, pp. 81-112.

4.   For some particularly incisive criticisms of current typological theory, see N. V. Smith's review of *Syntactic Typology: Studies in the Phenomenology of Language,* ed. W. P. Lehmann. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1978, in *Journal of linguistics* 16 (1980): 150-1964.

5.   de Rijk 1969.

affixes. (I have not disguised the fact that I find the notion of Verb Phrase to be totally dispensable.)[6]

Examples of the VC particles discussed by de Rijk are as follows:

1. *Joan al da*
   «Has he gone?»

2. *Ene gogoa baliaki, maite bide ninduke.* (D V, 13)
   «if she knew my soul, she would no doubt love me.»

3. *Joan edo da.*
   «It is likely that he has gone.»

4. *Zer egiten ote du ontzak egun guzian?*
   «what do you suppose the owl does every day?»

5. *Biziki bizkorra ta zuhurra omen da ontza.*
   «The owl is said to be very alert and wise.»

These particles share a modal notion. Namely, they state the degree of certainty with which the speaker attests to the content of the sentence. We could paraphrase this by saying: The content of what I am saying is neither impossible nor necessary. The semantic content of each particle is a statement of degree of certainty about its being the case that such and such is true. The contrary of these modalities is found in *bait-* by which the uncertainty is erased:

6. *Joan baita.*
   «He has indeed gone.»

Of course, *bait-* has quite another causative usage as a causal connective, which is usually contrasted with the affix *-lakoz* «because»[7]. We can designate these particles as *epistemic modal* particles because they assert only the possibility of the truth of the proposition in the sentence that contains them[8].

The second subclass of particles, *ahal, behar, nahi,* are what I shall for the nonce call *Root-Modals,* for they refer to real states of capability, obligation, and desire. It is my contention that these particles, although their behavior may differ from those in 1-5 above, belong to the same category and must be accountd for as one class in agrammar of Basque. The latter three particles are designated as *semi-auxiliaires* by Lafitte (§654). I suppose that his motivation for this peculiar name is the fact that in French and in English sentences in which these particles are found as part of the VP, they must be translated into French or English by means of a class of verbs generally called Modal

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6. See my *Prolegomena to a Grammar of Basque.* 1979. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B. V., §§2.016 and 2.017. Also see de Rijk 1978: 107-108.

7. See de Rijk 1969: 330.

8. For a discussion of modality in non-technical terms, see Alan R. White. 1975. *Modal Thinking.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. Also see Wilhelm Kamlah and Paul Lorenzen. 1973. *Logische propadeutik.* Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, pp. 179-187.

Auxiliaries, such as NE *can, want, must*. The semantic content of the Basque particles —or semi-auxiliaries— is modal since they refer not to real states of being, but indicate attitudes toward contents that remain virtual. They refer to legal, moral, and potential parameters of a particular content. In very simple terms, «I must go» does not imply that I ever will go. These particles occur in the following examples:

7. *Jaten abal du.*
   «He can eat it.»

8. *Urruntzen abal zen.*
   «He could get away.»

9. *Hek bezala hil behar duk eta ez jakin orduya.* (D. V, 13)
   «Like them, you must die and you do not know the hour.»

10. *Joan behar naiz.*
    «I must go.»

11. *Joan nahi da.*
    «He wants to go.»

With the characteristic categorial freedom of the Basque lexicon, these forms occur often as nouns: *ahala* «capability», *beharra* «necessity», and *nahia* «desire, wish». From the first class of particles under discussion, at least one occurs in nominal form:

12. *Othian jo nahi naizu?*
    «You want to hit me, perhaps?»

There is one major objection to the argument as it appears at this point. The unification of the two classes that I have proposed seems to be nullified by the fact that the two classes behave in quite a different manner in regard to the forms *ez* and *ba*, which indicate «negation» and «affirmation» respectively. The first class is placed after one of these forms and before the verbal auxiliary that is inflected for tense and person, while members of the second class of particles are placed before *ez* or *ba*. (It must be emphasized that I am not discussing the so-called conditional particle, *ba* «if».)

13. *Ex abal du egun guziaz hola jaten.*
    «He doesn't, I hope, eat that way every day.»

14. *Ba abal da bertze holako joiarik?*
    «Are there, I hope, other pearls of this sort?»

15. *Joanes ez othe da Bayona?*
    «Don't you think that John is in Bayonne?»

(Lafitte, §222, defines these as interrogative usages in the «optative» and «dubitative» senses, respectively.)

16. *Ez bide da urruruik ari izan.*
    «He undoubtedly did not work for nothing.»

17. *Ba omen da jende.*
    «There were, it seems, some people.»

18. *Ez omen da fitsik.*
    «It is, they say, nothing at all.»

On the other hand, the second class of modals I have proposed behaves in quite a different fashion.

19. *Ahal ez du egun guziaz hola jaten.*
    «He is not able to eat that way every day.»

20. *Bertzer egin eztazala nahi ez ukeyena.* (D. I, 211)
    «Do not do to others what you do not want done to you.»

21. *Nork beria bertziari eztu nahi partitu.* (D. II, 42)
    «One does not wish to share his own with another.»

The demonstration of the fact that these particles do not belong, for example, to the nominal category in the form of a noun or adjective complement is to be accomplished by the examination of the following future tense formations:

22. *Hartu ahalko du.*
    «He will be able to take it.»

23. *Joan beharko naiz.*
    «I will have to depart.»

24. *Joan nahiko naiz.*
    «I shall wish to depart.»

Uncertainty about such constructions is displayed by the occurrence of sentences such as these.

25. *Eginen ahalko du.*
    «He will be able to do it.»

There is also uncertainty about whether to use the participle (*egin*) or the nominal infinitive (*egiten*) in the future construction.

26. *Egiten ahalko du.*
    «He will be able to do it.»

We can perhaps speak of the *verbishness* of this class of modals. At the same time we can see the motivation behind Lafitte's remarkable term, *semi-auxiliary*. That the class I have proposed consists of verbish modals rather than main verbs is demonstrated by the following fully verbalized occurrences of the same lexical entries:

27. *Lan horren egiterat behartu dugu.*
    «We forced him to do this work.»

28. *Lan hori egin behartu zaio.*
    « It was necessary for him to do this work.»

29. *Diru hortaz nahitua zen.*
    «He was greedy for this money.»

These participial forms can only be derived from entries that are marked «full verb» in the lexicon.

Examination of the materials reveals yet another possible member of this class, *ezin* «cannot, impossible to». It occurs in the following sentences:

30. *Ezin hatxeman dut.*
    « I cannot catch it.»

31. *Ezin hatxemanen duzu.*
    «You will not be able to catch it.»

32. *Bertze biderik ezin date. Hobenari begira!* (D. I, 104)
    «There cannot be another way. Look to the best!»

Like *ahala, beharra, nahia,* this lexical form occurs also as a member of the category N. This is shown in one of Oihenart's proverbs:

33. *Ezina azkarrago da, eziez zina.*
    «Impossibility is stronger than an oath.»

It would indeed be a very attractive notion to classify this particular particle with the second class of proposed modal particles since it does seem to be the simple negation of *ahal.* We discover, however, that its syntactic behavior is quite different from the other members of the class. It is placed in the periphrastic verb complex before any non-finite full verbs. Lacking these, of course, it stands before the inflected verbal form. I shall provisionally set up a third class of modals, which is at this point represented solely by *ezin.*

We can with the materials presented thus far posit a string of categories in the VC of the form:

34. *(ezin)* + (non-finite verb) + (second modal particle) + *(balez)* + (first modal) + finite verb.

This provisional statement indicates that the verb complex is composed of a string of at least six categories. Mere inspection of a Basque text tells us that apparently the categories of this string can be rather freely arranged, or in the current jargon, «scrambled». First of all we note that the structure of the VC is much less rigid than the structure of the NP, which can be formulated in the following fashion:

35. (numeral) + [N ≬ Adj^1... (Adj^n)] + Det. + PP.
    (where is to be interpreted 'either one or the other or both.)

I must remark that this basic order of elements may be assumed whether one assumes with many syntacticians that there is a linear base structure or

one assumes, like the Natural Generative Grammarians, as the base structure a logically formulated semantic representation[9]. Although this is a question of the greatest theoretical importance, discussion of it would neither add to nor detract from the theoretical points being made in this paper.

There is a tacit assumption that any deviation from the basic order of constituents must be motivated either by sentence-internal roles, e.g. *negative displacement,* or by discourse rules, e.g. *topicalization*. One of the prime principles of this sort of investigation is that nothing is really «arbitrary» or left to chance in the act of communication of which any particular sentence is a participant. The mere grammaticality of sentences —which means, in current practice, acceptability by native speakers— provides us only with a modicum of information for the discovery and formulation of rules behind sentence formation. (I need not remind field linguists of all the difficulties and pitfalls encountered in obtaining such elementary materials.) In a very broad sense, «acceptability» or «semantic interpretability» do not guarantee semantic cohesiveness. Displacement or rearrangement of constituents, it must be assumed, is motivated by just this requirement. While the grammatical sentence *an sich* can display a number of interpretable and seemingly interchangeable variants, only a very limited number of these, perhaps only one, will be semantically cohesive. Careful manipulation of the rules of cohesiveness characterize the language use of the clever stylist and the accomplished humorist. Therefore, the discovery and accurate formulation of the rules of semantic cohesion play an important role in the development of a truly explanatory grammar. The two basic rules under this heading are those of *focus* and *topicalization*.

Topic and *Focus* at first sight seem to be confusing terms. Naturally, they may be subject to some misunderstanding. Rudolf de Rijk has at some length clarified the use of these terms for us[10]. I shall attempt to show that the interplay of topic (or *theme*) and focus can account for the otherwise unaccountable «scrambling» of Basque sentence constituents. It is my contention that we need not rely on such undefined parameters as the «intention of the speaker» in order to show the operation of this important interplay. A straightforward sentence-grammar can only describe no matter how accurately, the possibilities of sentence arrangement. It simply states that all these possible strings of the same surface constituents are *in isolation* equally acceptable. I propose that a grammar designed to take into account the linkages within larger segments of discourse than the sentence will be able to explain the appropriateness of this order of elements at a particular point and the inappropriateness of another order at another although the latter in no wise ceases to have the same cognitive content. We need not resort to

9.   This point of view is represented best by Bartsch and Venneman in the work listed in footnote 1.

10.   This point of view is particularly evident in de Rijk 1978,

the extreme measure of declaring inappropriate ordering as «ungrammati-cal»[11].

The notion of the topic of a sentence is a very slippery one. There is no particular test for it in syntactic terms unless it makes its appearance in a limited number of sentences as a «fronted topic,» which de Rijk has described as an «emphatic topic»[12]. According to de Rijk, this syntactic phenomenon is produced by means of a transformational rule. However, the motivation for the application of the rule remains rather ill-defined. He says, «The notion of topic is bound up with the intention of the speaker, as it can be loosely characterized as the noun phrase in an utterance that refers, at least approximately, to what the speaker means to talk about at the moment of his utterance.» Preceding this, he states, «It is the reality referred to by this noun phrase that the sentence is truly about. It is what has been called «psychologi-cal subject» or «theme» in some grammatical traditions»[13]. Such definitions demand the means of a discourse-grammar for their operative application.

I would suggest that a sentence that occurs using such a syntactic device is limited in its occurrence by discourse-bound rules. Although we may examine its properties at length in isolation, we may never determine just why it is where it is. I shall hazard this guess: the speaker by the use of this device introduces in medias res a new topic for further discourse. Therefore, we may speak of an introductory or initiated sentence-type, but one that abruptly turns the discourse to a new topic. With such ideas in mind we can in such cases provide sufficient motivation for its use and at the same time rid our descriptions of «optional» transformations. From my point of view, if the topic occurs in a position that is so-to-speak unremarkable, the notion of topic ceases to be interesting.

The operation of Focus placement is, as de Rijk carefully points out, by far a more important factor in the actual construction of a Basque sentence. The immediate syntactic effect of focus application is stated very simply by de Rijk: «Whatever constituent is focus must immediately precede the verb»[14]. He suggests assuming «that noun phrases can be marked by a syntactic feature *Focus* in underlying structures. At some stage in the derivation, a movement rule, called Focus Positioning, will apply and put all noun phrases marked + *Focus* in front of the verb.»[15] He points out further that «it is impossible to insert any constituent susceptible of bearing focus between the

11. See de Rijk 1978: 104. I would prefer from a textual point of view to speak of «inappropriateness» or «lack of textual coherence».
12. de Rijk 1978: 92-99.
13. de Rijk 1978: 96.
14. de Rijk 1978: 104.
15. de Rijk 1978: 104.

focussed noun phrase and the verb, without thereby a change in focus taking place»[16].

In no manner do I wish to dispute de Rijk's conclusions and earlier those of Donzeaud[17]. In fact, I can only emphasize this important set of contributions to our understanding of the Basque sentence. However, I would like to ask the question: Why is + *Focus* assigned to a particular constituent at some point in the derivation of a sentence? I shall assert that it is dictated by the discourse structure that contains that particular sentence. Of course, this conclusion was anticipated by de Rijk when he discussed the possible permutations of the sentence.

36. *Xavierak eramango du Virginia Renora biar.*
   «Xaviera will take Virginia to Reno tomorrow.»

In this sentence, the placement of the various noun phrases directly before the verb answers a different discourse-determined potential question: who? whom? where? when? (101-104). In one sense, this placement supplies what can be regarded as «new information». In a different kind of discourse, let us say, a simple narrative, focus placement serves quite a different purpose. It determines in parts of the discourse the narrative requirements of «situation», «change», and «progress»[18]. These requirements therefore determine the limits of the verb complex. The interplay of these factors shows us why the perfectly neutral S.O.V. order, which we assume to be basic, occurs rather more rarely than we would expect in real Basque texts. In bare isolated sentences it is difficult to determine the «meaning» of focus and just why the constituents of the verb complex occur precisely where they do.

I have chosen for discussion one sort of discourse, a very simply narrative, because in this form the constituents of the discourse are much more easily visible. A narrative must create its own communicative scene. An accurarely recorded, perhaps very lively, dialogue or conversation leaves out what is obvious to the speakers involved, namely the communicative scene. In addition, even the most accurately written record of a real communicative situation omits one extremely important feature of the natural use of language: *intonation.* The written narrative, on the other hand, must make use of purely syntactic devices to make up for its lack of that specific oral device. A narrative is in the true sense a truly syntactic communicative situation. Therefore, I believe that we can uncover the syntactic facts by discussing focus placement and the placement of the constituents of the verb complex simultaneously.

16. de Rijk 1978: 105.
17. Francoise Donzeaud. 1972. «The expression of focus in Basque,» *Annuario del Seminario de Filología vasca «Julio de Urquijo»* VI, pp. 35-45.
18. See Roland Harweg. 1977. «Textgrammatische Bemerkungen zur Konstitution eines literarischen Textes,» in *Grammars and Descriptions*, ed. Teun A. van Dijk and János S. Petöfi. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gryter, pp. 239-241.

In a little story for children, «The lisping girls and the American», we can discover the elements I have been describing in rather abstract terms[19]. This first sentence reads:

37.   *Ama batek hiru alaba zituen, eta jostunak hiruak.*
      «A mother had three daughters and the three were seamstresses»

This simple initiating sentence sets the background and the topic. The focus is reinforced by the conjoined sentence. The function of this sentence in the narrative is situative for it indicates the state of affairs that had prevailed until the events of the narrative. The focus in this case happens to coincide with the topic. The second sentence specifies more exactly the situation.

38.   *Oso zintzo ta langile ziren, baina hizmotelak zirelako ezin zuten ezkontzeko mutilik aurkitu.*
      «They were quite capable and industrious, but, because they were lispers, they were unable to find any boys to marry.»

Here we find an antitheses stated in the form of focus contrasting with focus: *oso zintzo ta langile,* positive features, contrasted with *hizmotelak,* a very negative feature. Absolute paralellism in the grammatical shape of focused constituents is not required. What is remarkable about the last conjoined sentence is the fact that *ezin,* contrary to the strictures placed upon its occurrence by the prescriptive grammarians[20], behaves in this sentence in the same fashion as do *ahal, behar, nahi.* Curiously, *ezin* is involved in negative auxiliary movement, just as if it were *ez.* Without auxiliary moveement, the order of constituents in this sentence would be: ...*mutilik aurkitu ezin zuten,* rather than the prescribed ...*mutilik ezin aurkitu zuten.*

The initial sentence of the second paragraph places a temporal adverb in the form of an inessive postpositional noun phrase, *egun batean,* in focus position. This switch of focus signals a change in the initial situation.

38.   *Egun batean esan zien amak.*
      «One day the mother said to them.»

This change introduces a subtext. In the subtext the new constituent is focused.

40.   *Gaur gizon amerikanu bat etorriko da jostundegira.*
      «Today an American man will come to the shop.»

A new situation is introduced wherein the focus and topic are one. Further specification of the focus is achieved in the following sentence:

41.   *Oso aberatza da eta ezkontzeko neska baten bila dabil.*
      «He is quite rich and he is coming to look for a girl to·marry.»

19.   Fernando Mendizabal. 1969. *Grammatika Txikia Euskeraz.*Oñate: Talleres Gráficos del Santuario de Aránzazu, pp. 62-63.
20.   Lafitte §657.

Lengthy consideration of purely narrative matters, important as it may be, will lead us far away from the original purpose of this study, an adequate accounting for the placement of the constituents of the VC. I have given only a small sample of the facts of focus placement, showing that it is determined by rules that belong to the realm of text-forming competence. We may speak of the well-formedness of a narrative sequence. This is more than a mere question of «style», «literary training», or «story-telling genius». It is part and parcel of the linguistic competence of the native speaker. Even more significant is the fact that the rules —which we may not define yet— determine absolutely the concrete order of constituents in a particular sentence in a particular text, whatever its genre.

The apparent «scrambling» of elements in a Basque sentence is actually ordered by well-formedness rules that are controlled by factors whose scope is much greater than the individual sentence. Deviation from these rules will interfere with the communicative efficiency of a particular text. Judgment of that text will be dependent not upon esthetic, but upon grammatical criteria.

Focus and the constituents controlled thereby have perhaps received too much of our attention. The real aim of this paper is an accounting for the movements of the constituents of the VC. At this point it is obvious that these demand being conceived of as controlled by movement rules where constituents are removed from one place to another according to the requirements of textual rules. Leaving these as given and understood, let us return to the mechanics of the individual sentences.

In order to account for movements applying to the V and the Aux in Basque sentences, Rudolf de Rijk offered this description of an *Auxiliary Movement rule*[21]:

42.   X — Y — Participle — (Neg./Emph.) (particle) Aux →
     1   2   3   4
     1 4   2 3.

The particles between (Neg./Emph.) and Aux are those that I have classified as Modal 1 particles. This formulation clearly states that in the string between (Neg./Emph.) and Aux all constituents are dominated by the same node, i.e., they move as a unit. This formulation, which de Rijk admits is rough, implies that focus placement takes place after the positioning of the constituents of the verb complex. This formulation accounts for the placement of the auxiliary and the participle in the following sentences.

43.   *Gizona mezatara joan da.*
    «The man has gone to Mass.»

44.   *Gizona ez da mezatara joan.*
    «The man has not gone to Mass.»

21.   Mendizabal, 1969, passim.

45. *Gizona ba da mezatara joan.*
    «The man *has* gone to Mass.»

However, it does not adequately account for the following structure:

46. *Gizona joan da mezatara.*
    «The man has gone to Mass.»

In this case, focus is just where we would expect it according to sentences 44 and 45. Therefore the string marked X in the formulation above must contain an NP as its last element. A reformulation might better read:

47. X + Y(Focus) + Z + Participle +
    1   2   3   4
    Neg./Emph. + (particle) + Aux. → 1 2 5 3 4.
                    5

However, without the emphatic or negative element, the change would have to read:

48. X + Y(Focus) + Z + Participle + (particle) + Aux. →
    1   2   3   4
    1 2 4 3

Even this is unsatisfactory for it does not account for the following sentences:

49. *Ez da gizona mezatara joan.*

50. *Ba da gizona mezatara joan.*

Focus can also apply to the VC. Also this formulation does not account for such sentences as these:

51. *Gizona joan nahi da.*
    «The man wants to go to Mass.»

52. *Gizona joan behar da.*
    «The man has to go to Mass.»

53. *Gizona joan ahal da.*

This would lead us to expect the negations:

54. *Gizona ez da mezatara joan ahal.*

55. *Gizona ez ahal da mezatara joan.*

An examination of one hundred pages or so of simple narrative text[21] revealed that the established patterns of placement of the constituents of the VC were adhered to with marvelous consistency. In contrast to this, I examined all the lines in Dechepare's poems[22] that contain the modals I have

21. Mendizabal, 1969, passim.
22. The numeration of lines of these poems is adopted from Patxi Altuna, 1979, *Etxeparren Hiztegia*. Bilbao: Mensajero The text in modernized orthography is quoted from Luis Mitxelena, ed. 1968. 1545. *Bernat Dechepare. Olerkiak*. San Sebastián: Txertoa.

described as Modals 1 and 2. Contrary to my expectation, that pattern is followed with great consistency even in sentences with ellipses. It remains little affected by the requirements of meter, rhyme, and the «license of the poet». As I pointed out, even the ellipses maintain the basic order.

56. *Hartzaz orbit nadianian, deus ere ezin iretsi.* (D. V, 2)
«When I think of her, (I) can swallow nothing.»

57. *Sekulakoz egon behar hango sugar bizian.* (D. I, 178)
«(They) must stay forever in the living flames down there.»

58. *Hek bezala hil behar duk eta ez jakin orduya.* (D. I, 31)
«Like them you must die and (you do) not know the hour.»

We could reconstruct the finite verb of the last line in this fashion:

58'. *...eta ez duk orduya jakin.*

It would seem that the removal of a noun phrase to a position behind, i.e. to the right of, the participial form, as in 57 and 58, damages the observations on auxiliary movement inasmuch as the participial form does not occur in last position. It would seem that for poetic lines at least the movement transformation proposed in 47 has to be reconsidered an re-framed as:

59. X + Y(Focus) + Z + Participle + (Neg./Emph.) + (particle) + Aux →

1   2   3   4   5
1 2 5 3 4, or, optionally, 1 2 5 4 3.

This is a tiny adjustment. In the case of the poetic line, let us assume that the determining factor is rhyme.

It becomes apparent that the variations in constituent placement of whatever category do not vary a great deal in the poetic line from what we find in a simple narrative prose line. Note these sentences:

60. *Gatzaga edo gaztz-leku bat zegoen Basodian eta haraxe joan nahi izaten zuten basoko pisti guztiek.*
«There was a salt-marsh or a salt lick in B. and all the forest animals wanted to go there.»

61. *Mutil batek oso urrutia joan behar izaten zuen egunero behi-zai.*
«A boy had to go quite far every day to watch his cattle.»

62. *Ez duzue dantzarik egin nahi izan. Eta ni aspertu naizenean orain nahi duzue dantza egin.*
«You did not want to dance. Now when I am tired, you want to dance.»

63. *Eta Xixi'k berak joan behar izan zuen oliopotearen bila.*
«And Xixi himself had to go fetch the oil-pot.»

The occurrence of *behar* and *nahi* without a lexical verb in nonfinite form corresponds roughly in meaning to NE «to have to, must» and «to want to». In these cases the so-called transitive form of the auxiliary verb is required.

64. *Ogia behar dut*.
    « I need / must have bread. »

65. *Ogia nahi dut*.
    « I want bread. »

But:

66. *Ogia ahal dut*

These uses of the two verbs are clearly not modal. *Ahal* does not quite fit here. Unlike the two other modals, it also has another unique feature. It operates both as Modal 1 and Modal 2. Admittedly, the assignment of a member of the lexicon to a particular function is provisional. *Ahal* does not share the same degree of «verbishness» as *behar* and *nahi*, but, on the other hand, it does betray a greater degree of «modalness».

It is, therefore, my purpose to propose a rational account of the placement of Modal 2 within the sentence.

Examination of the materials and consideration of the theoretical point of view adequately demonstrate that focus placement is the center around which the placement of constituents in the realized sentence takes place. Focus assignment is in turn determined by text-grammatical factors. For purposes of short illustration, I chose only one of the many genres of text. I assert that the generation and judgment of well-formedness in text-formation are part of the grammatical competence of the native speaker. Recognition of mere sentence grammaticality and the perception of semantic coherence do not make an appropriate sentence. Misplacement of focus will betray the foreigner (and I am one) even though the sentence is otherwise grammatically correct. Therefore, one of the tasks facing the scientific investigation of Basque syntax is an adequate formulation of a text-oriented grammar. Altube himself was well aware of this problem. I do not claim that the tools provided by current syntactic theory are adequate to the task.

Given the situation where we can only determine the focused constituent after the fact, we can at least describe the mechanics of the placement of other constituents in relationship of this particular constituent.

When we inspect the formulation of the string and constituents upon which Auxiliary Movement and Focus Placement operate, we discover that the rearrangements as stated in 59 are quite inadequate. This can be improved by the addition of Modal 2 as a constituent.

67. X + Y(Focus) + Z + Non-finite Verb + (Modal 2) +
     1   2   3   4   5
    (Neg./Emph.) + (Modal 1) + Finite Verb.
         6   7

Negative-Emphatic Auxiliary Movement changes this order to:

67a 1 2 6 7 5 3 4.

This accounts for sentences 38, 44, 45, 49, 50. It does not account for 19 —unless we make the assumption that (Focus) can also be filled by a constituent of the VC. In that case Ahal = 2 and 5 perforce remains empty. This statement also does not account for 58, which would require the ordering.

67b. 1 2 6 7 5 4 3.

However, this placement of 3 was stated as an optional ordering of 3 in 59.

The apparent contradictions to this formulation in the two conjoined sentences of 59 is resolved when we realize that focus has been placed upon negation in the first sentence and upon the subordinate clause in the second.

What has not been accounted for is the apparent optional stranding of a constituent string as stated in 67b. This also occurs in the case of normal verb-fronting where in the absence of (Neg./Emph.) the entire VC is moved to post-focus position without change of order in the constituents except where focus has been assigned to a constituent of the VC.

67c. 1 2 4 5 6 7 3.

I shall not try your patience further by spelling out the application of these formulations in 67-67c. It is my opinion that, taking into account the facts of Focus Assigment, Neg.-Emphatic Auxiliary Movement, and the presence of null-strings, all features of the sentences are adequately accounted for except these:

a. Fronting of VC without (Neg./Emph.)

b. Stranding of constituent strings after VC.

It is my faith that an adequate text-grammar will contribute to a resolution of these questions. Within this framework the positioning of Modal 2 in any particular sentence is described Only the surficial movements of this constituent have been taken into account.

The most pressing need is a thorough semantic description of the class I name Modal 2. The English translations are barely sufficient to suggest the way to a solution.

I have attempted to point out one small problem in a total description of Basque syntax. I have really posed more questions than I could possibly answer.

LABURPENA

Lan honetan euskal sintasiaren alderdi garrantzitsu batetaz mintzatzen naiz: esaldiaren osagarriak nun kokatzen diren bai Aditz-Konplexuaren barruan eta bai honekin erlazionaturik daudenez gero. Ikutzen ditut lehenbizi partikula hauek: *ahal, behar, bide, edo, omen* eta *bait-*, eta adierazten dut zer toki hartzen duten Aditz-Konplexuaren barruan. Partikula hauek hiru motatakoak dira, gutxienez, banaketa hau egiteko puntu

hauek hartzen ditugula gogoan: nun ezartzen diren *ba* eta *ez* partikulekin erlazionatu-
rik daudenean, aditzaren joko ez-pertsonaleak, eta toki-aldatze negatiboa delakoa.
Edozein euskal testu ikuskatzen badugu, erakutsiko digu testu horrek Aditz-Kon-
plexuaren zatiak libro xamar daudela «sakabanaturik». Gure txosten honetan esaten
dugu komunikaketan ez dagola arrazoi gabeko gauzarik. Beraz, osagarrien toki-
aldatzeak badauka bere zergatia. Esaldi baten gramatikaltasun hutsak, hau da, esaldi
hori euskaldun jatorrek onartua izateak, ezin du adierazi zergatik gertatzen den «saka-
banatze» hori. Ikusi behar da komunikaketaren ingurua.

Nere asmoa zera da, ots, inguru hori zehaztea, *topiku* eta *foku* ideiak azaltzen
ditudala. Esaldiaren barruan diren loturei edo testu luzeago bati gagozkiola, fokua oso
garrantzi aundikoa bilakatzen da. Euskal esaldietako erregelak eskatzen dute, izen
sintagma, *fokuaren* egitekoa betetzen badu, Aditz-Konplexuaren aurretik eta bere
ondoan ipintzea. Toki hori eskatzen du esaldia sortarazten duen «mintzo» -aren egitu-
rak. Bakarrik ageri den esaldi batek, «gramatikala» izan arren, ez du emango argirik
fokuaren esanaiari buruz. Puntu hau porogatzeko, hautatu nuen, nere azalpenerako
aproposa zelako, egitura narratibo arrunt bat, jakin arazten nuela beste mota asko
dagola. Ixinplu arrunt honek erakusten du nahiko ongi «sakabanatze» hori azaletikoa
dela; bainan funtsean euskal esaldi baten osagarriak ongi antolatutako erregela batzuen
arabera daudela jarriak, eta erregela horiek esaldi bakar bat baino askoz gehiago
hartzen dutela.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo se ocupa de un aspecto importante de la sintaxis vasca: el lugar de los
componentes de la oración no sólo dentro del Complejo Verbal, sino en lo relacio-
nado con él. Trato primero del orden de las partículas modales *ahal, behar, bide, edo,
omen,* y *bait-,* dentro del Complejo Verbal. Estas partículas se distribuyen en por lo
menos tres clases considerando su lugar en relación con las partículas positivas y
negativas (*ba* y *ez*), las formas no-personales del verbo y el fenómeno de la regla del
desplazamiento negativo. La observación de cualquier texto vasco nos muestra que los
componentes del Complejo Verbal están «revueltos» con bastante libertad. Se sos-
tiene en esta ponencia que no hay nada arbitrario en el acto de la comunicación. Por
tanto, el desplazamiento de los componentes está plenamente motivado. La pura
gramaticalidad de una oración determinada, e. d. la aceptabilidad por parte de los
hablantes nativos de ejemplos aislados, no puede revelar por qué se da el «revuelto».
Se debe examinar la situación de la comunicación.

Emprendo la tarea de definir la situación, discutiendo las nociones de *tópico* y *foco*.
Cuando se trata de explicar los eslabonamientos dentro de la oración o en trozos más
amplios del discurso, el foco se convierte en algo muy importante. De acuerdo con las
reglas observadas en la oración en vascuence el sintagma nominal con el rasgo de *foco*
se coloca inmediatamente delante del Complejo Verbal. Esta colocación está impuesta
por la estructura del discurso en que se genera la oración. Una oración aislada, por más
«gramatical» que sea, no proporcionará información sobre el significad del foco. Para
demostrar este punto, elegí por razones de exposición una sencilla estructura narra-
tiva, haciendo notar, por supuesto, que hay muchos otros géneros. El examen de este
sencillo ejemplo demuestra suficientemente que el aparente «revuelto» de los com-
ponentes de una oración vasca es en realidad una disposición de esos componentes en
conformidad con reglas de buena ordenación, cuyo alcance es mucho mayor que el de
la oración individual.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail traite d'un aspect important de la syntaxe basque: la place des éléments du discours, non seulement à l'intérieur de l'ensemble verbal, mais aussi dans leurs rapports avec cet ensemble.

J'étudie d'abord l'ordre des particules modales *ahal, behar, bide, edo, omen,* et *bait-*, au sein du Complexe Verbal. Ces particules se divisent au moins en trois catégories selon leur place par rapport aux particules positives et négatives (*ba* et *ez*), les formes non-personnelles du verbe et le phénomène de la norme de déplacement négatif.

L'observation de n'importe quel texte basque nous montre que les éléments du Complexe Verbal se trouvent assez librement «dispersés». On soutient dans cette communication que la disposition du langage n'est nullement arbitraire. Le déplacement des éléments est par conséquent entièrement justifié. Le simple caractère grammatical d'un discours déterminé, c'est à dire le seul fait que des modèles isolés soient acceptés par des locuteurs d'origine, ne permet pas de découvrir comment se fait la «dispersion» des éléments. Il faut examiner le contexte du discours.

J'entreprends de définir ce contexte en discutant les notions de *«focus»* et de *«topique»*. Quand on veut expliquer les enchaînements soit à l'intérieur du discours, soit dans des parties plus vastes du langage, le «focus» devient quelque chose de très important. Selon les règles observées dans le discours en langue basque, le sintagme nominal qui a rang de *focus* se place immédiatement devant l'ensemble verbal. Cette localisation est imposée par la structure du discours au sein duquel apparaît la proposition. Une proposition isolée, si «grammaticalement correcte» soit-elle, ne saurait nous renseigner sur la signification du «focus». Pour le prouver, j'ai choisi, en raison des facilités d'exposition, et tout en notant qu'il existe bien d'autres modèles, une simple structure narrative. L'examen de ce simple modèle suffit à démontrer que l'apparente «dispersion» des éléments du discours en basque correspond en réalité à une disposition qui obéit à des règles de bon ordre dont la portée est bien plus considérable que celles qui régissent la proposition isolée.