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Emergence of a Bilingual Grammar: Word Order Differences in Monolingual Basque vs. Bilingual Basque-Spanish Predicative Constructions

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Abstract

This article compares the monolingual Basque predicative constructions with bilingual Basque-Spanish predicative constructions. The speech data for the study were collected in the Greater Bilbao area of the Basque Country between 2005 and 2012. The results suggest that code-switching may trigger the convergence of predicative constructions and have a significant impact on the general word order patterns. The monolingual predicative constructions in the data mostly follow the canonical Basque *sxv* word order (~81%), but the bilingual predicative constructions diverge from this word order in that the predicative element is located in a post-verbal position, as in Spanish (~80%). The Spanish lexical elements seem to be strongly associated with the corresponding Spanish construction, the word order of which is then applied to otherwise Basque predicative constructions. I explain the predominance of the Spanish word order in the bilingual constructions by a combination of processing-related factors and sociolinguistic factors.

Keywords

Basque – Spanish – predicative constructions – convergence

1 Introduction

In the towns, fishing villages and mountain valleys of the Basque Country, the speakers of the language isolate known as *euskara*, Basque, have shared space and linguistic resources with the speakers of vulgar Latin and its descendants for the last two thousand years. The survival of the Basque language in an environment where all the other pre-Romance and even pre-Indoeuropean languages have become extinct is often considered to be an exceptional occurrence. Nevertheless, the long-lasting language contact has left its traces in the language spoken by the Basques: extensive lexical and structural borrowing from Latin, Romance and Castilian Spanish to Basque has been continuous throughout their joint history. Basque has been (and still is) the minority language in the area, not always in numerical terms, but in terms of institutional power that has been in the hands of the non-Basque speakers. Therefore, the bilingualism in the Basque Country has been traditionally unidirectional. The Basque speakers have had to learn Spanish in order to lead their daily lives, whereas the Spanish speakers have had no need or motivation to learn Basque. However, this has been changing during the last forty years, since Spain transitioned from a Spanish nationalist dictatorship with oppressive language policies towards the minority languages to a democracy, and Basque became a co-official language with Spanish in the Basque Autonomous Community. The Basque Country welcomed a new era of language revitalization, which has led to more mutual patterns of second language learning. Particularly in city areas the number of bilingual speakers of Basque and Spanish who have Spanish as their first language now outnumber the native Basque speakers (Basque Government, 2009: 72).

All Basque speakers today are virtually bilingual after their early childhood, and extensive code-switching and borrowing between Spanish and Basque can be observed throughout the Basque Country. Basque is often spoken in *bilingual mode* (Grosjean, 1997) The constructions labelled “Basque” and “Spanish” of the bilingual’s repertoire do not need to be strictly separated for the Basque speaker to be understood. Both can be activated at the moment of linguistic production, unless the speaker feels the need to suppress one set of constructions. They are still both activated to some degree.

The languages are typologically different. Basque is an agglutinating SOV language with an ergative-absolutive system, rich inflectional morphology and a complex auxiliary verb system, whereas Spanish is a mainly fusional Romance language with prepositions, and an SVO word order. Despite this typological distance, Basque has developed shared constructions with Spanish throughout the centuries of co-existence in the same area. Large parts of

Basque phraseology, lexical conceptual structure and lexical connotations have been modelled on the dominant language of the area, Spanish. During the centuries, many of these patterns have become conventionalized¹ to such a degree that their similarity might be visible only for a person coming from another linguistic environment. Most importantly, mutual interference is an ongoing, emergent linguistic phenomenon that can be observed in the everyday speech of the bilinguals in the Basque Country.

This article compares the word order of Basque-Spanish bilingual predicative constructions with the word order of monolingual Basque predicative constructions. The main research question that I ask is *how does code-switching of one word within the predicative construction affect the word order of the construction?* In copular sentences, the Basque predicative construction could be described as [PRED V], whereas its counterpart in Spanish is [V PRED]. They exhibit opposite word orders. We could, therefore, expect there to be a clash when Spanish predicatives are used within Basque structures in bilingual speech production. The word orders of both predicative constructions are represented in the bilingual mind. The speakers' past interactional experiences are reflected in their language use, and their ongoing production is shaped by the need to conform with the current interactional situation (Beckner et al., 2009; Riionheimo and Frick, 2014). The speakers do not only have previous linguistic knowledge of the abstract schematic form of predicative constructions, but also of the words within them. The particular words and constructions that function as predicative elements within these constructions carry with them all the instances of their previous use.

The typological distance of Basque and Spanish does not usually allow for an easy comparison of syntactic phenomena. Yet a comparison of monolingual predicative constructions and bilingual constructions with a Spanish predicative is particularly yielding because the impact of other structural features is minimal. The structural similarity of these constructions allows the speakers to easily detect interlingual connections and find analogies between the elements that comprise the construction. In both languages, the construction consists of a copula verb and a predicative element (and sometimes a subject in nominative/absolutive, morphologically "unmarked" case).

1 I follow the suggestion made by Backus (2014) and reserve the term 'conventionalization' for the community/social level and 'entrenchment' for the individual level of language change. When a linguistic construction becomes more integrated into the cognitive representation of an individual, it becomes more entrenched. When the construction becomes more frequent at the community level, it becomes more conventionalized.

- (1) Basque: [Predicative element COPULA] (Hereafter XV)
 Spanish: [COPULA Predicative element] (Hereafter VX)

Only the constructions with the Basque *da* (third person singular of the verb *izan* 'to be') are examined to keep the comparison as simple as possible. Furthermore, only predicative structures of affirmative sentences will be considered, as the Basque word order in negative clauses changes to (S)VX and the word order contrast between the languages is thus lost. The only distinctive feature between the monolingual and bilingual constructions examined in this study is the insertion vs. non-insertion of a Spanish predicative element.

The structure of the paper is as follows: section 2 will outline the work on Basque word order and predicative constructions as found in both prescriptive and descriptive grammars, followed by a brief description of the Spanish syntax and word order. Section 3 will present the data that this study is based on, and a synopsis of the main findings. Finally, section 4 discusses the implications of the results and interprets them in the light of the usage-based framework. The usage-based approach allows an interpretation in which sociolinguistic factors and grammar are deeply intertwined in the outcome of language contact, as social factors are "a part of the cognitive processes whose end product we understand as grammar(s)" (Babel and Pfänder, 2014).

2 Predicative Constructions in Basque and Spanish

2.1 *Word Order of Predicative Constructions in Basque*

Basque is generally described as having a canonical SOV word order. However, due to the rich morphology of the language, the object can be used both pre- and postverbally, and the word order varies easily according to the information structure of the sentence. A strong grammatical tradition suggests that the Basque word order is free apart from the location of *wh*-words and foci, which are always to be left-adjacent to the verb (Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina, 1993: 13). Arregi (2001: 1) notes that one of the most studied syntactic properties in Basque is its obligatory pre-verbal focus position. This strong tendency can be exemplified with question-answer pairs, where the need to locate the focus in a pre-verbal focus position can result in an OSV word order as opposed to the canonical SOV word order. In both the question and the answer, the focused constituent (the question word and the answer to the question) are located in a pre-verbal position. The following examples (2–6) illustrating this usage in the Ondarroa Basque dialect are from Arregi (2001: 1). The focused elements of the examples are underlined throughout the article.

- (2) Q: *Jon seÑek ikusi rau?*
Jon seÑ-ek ikusi rau
 Jon-ABS who-ERG seen has
 ‘Who has seen Jon?’

A: *Jon Mirenek ikusi rau.*
Jon Miren-ek ikusi rau
 Jon-ABS Miren-ERG seen has
 ‘Miren has seen Jon.’

Euskal gramatika osoa ‘The full Basque grammar’ describes Basque as having an unmarked subject-component-verb word order, in which the verb is located at the end of the sentence. This word order in Spanish or French, the closest referents, would be “not only unusual, but erroneous” (Zubiri and Zubiri, 2000: 623–624). Yet the grammar books also note that the word order in Basque is relatively free. Even a three-word sentence such as *Jon etxean dago* ‘Jon is (at) home’ can be formulated in several different ways, such as sentences 3–6:

- (3) *Jon etxean dago.*
Jon etxe-an dago.
 Jon-ABS home/house-INESS COP
 ‘Jon is (at) home.’

- (4) *Jon dago etxean.*
 Jon-ABS COP home

- (5) *Etxean Jon dago.*
 Home-INESS Jon-ABS COP

- (6) *Etxean dago Jon.*
 Home-INESS COP Jon-ABS
 (Zubiri and Zubiri, 2000: 623)

All these word orders are grammatical, yet the short sentences are not entirely equivalent. Basque grammars make abundant use of the concept of *galde-gaia* ‘what is asked’. The sentences (3) and (6) are answers to the question *Non dago Jon?* ‘Where is Jon?’, so the most important component of the answer is *etxean* ‘home/at home’, which is thus located in a pre-verbal position. If the question would be answered in one word, the word would be *etxean* ‘at home.’ The sentences (4) and (5) answer the question *Nor dago etxean?* ‘Who is at home?’. The answer to that question is clearly *Jon*, which is, therefore, located in a pre-verbal position. In Lambrecht’s (1994) classification of focus types, this

focus closely resembles Argument Focus, in which the focus construction has a clear and transparent meaning in identifying the referent and providing a missing entity in a given situation. Because of this focus position, Basque has been seen as a language with transparent pragmatics. Bellver and Michaelis (1999), however, argue that the one-to-one relationship between a preverbal syntactic position and focal scope is not as clear as previously thought, and that the pre-verbal position cannot be explained in terms of left-movement. They suggest that the preverbal position in Basque acts mostly like a prosodic peak in English, and propose the preferred clause structure as a criterion that syntactic analyses must meet in order to have a sound empirical basis.

Coming back to the examples above, despite all the possible variants of the word order (b-e), it is noteworthy that none of the sentences above begins with the verb *даго* 'is, there is'. According to Trask (1997: 109), because of the preverbal position of *galdegaia* 'what is asked', a finite verb cannot occur in a sentence-initial position in Basque, unless it is a periphrastic verb.²

2.2 Word Order of Predicative Constructions in Spanish

Leonetti (2015: 1) notes that the research on Spanish copular sentences has not considered word order in detail. The unmarked word order of Spanish predicative constructions is *svx*. *vxs* and *vsx* are possible inversion patterns. The order *vsx* is only possible with the copula verb *estar*, 'to be (temporary)', whereas this order is anomalous with the copula verb *ser*, 'to be (permanent)' (Leonetti, 2015). Examples 7 and 8 are from Leonetti (2015).

- (7) *José* *es* *bombero*.
 S V X
 José COP fireman
 'José is a fireman.'

vxs is a possible inversion pattern.

- (8) *Es* *maja* *la chica*
 V X S
 COP nice the girl
 'The girl is nice.'

2 Actual language use is at cross-purposes with this general rule, at least in the historical written documents (Hidalgo, 1995): verb-initial copular sentences were abundantly used in the Basque texts between the 17th and the 20th century, particularly in cases where they are responses to questions. This word order, however, seemed to become less common when approaching the modern times.

Both in the canonical word order SVX and the inversion pattern VXS the predicative is realized post-verbally (as well as in the other possible inversion pattern VSX). These patterns are in direct contrast with the previously examined Basque predicative constructions, in which the predicative element is always described to be in a pre-verbal position.

Dominguez (2002), in her description of focus in Catalan and Spanish, notes that Spanish is subject to the nuclear stress rule, according to which the intonational prominence (focus) is located in the rightmost position of a clause. Stress shift is not an available option for focus marking in Spanish, so the word order changes for the focused element to receive stress, and, through stress, syntactic prominence. The following examples (9–12) from Dominguez (2002) illustrate this phenomenon.

(9) *Tu padre* *vino* *ayer*.
 S V PP
 your father arrive; PST yesterday
 ‘Your father arrived yesterday.’

(10) *Vino* *tu padre* *ayer*.
 V S PP
 Arrived your father yesterday

(11) *Vino* *ayer* *tu padre*.
 V PP S
 Arrived yesterday your father

(12) *Ayer* *vino* *tu padre*.
 PP V S
 Yesterday arrived your father

The underlined elements carry focus and stress. They are all located in the rightmost position. Changing the word order to put different parts of the sentence into focus does not change the fact that the focused constituent is, contrary to Basque, located in a post-verbal position. Nevertheless, the role of prosody and stress in Spanish focus constructions is important information considering the interpretation of the results of this study.

3 The Study

3.1 Data

The examples of monolingual Basque constructions and bilingual Basque-Spanish constructions are examined in two types of conversational data. Dataset one is a bilingual dataset. Twenty-two hours of conversational data with twenty-two Basque bilinguals were gathered to examine Basque-Spanish code-switching. In order to do this, the data were gathered in informal circumstances, such as in bars and at dinner tables, and only the parts that contained code-switching were transcribed. This is why the monolingual sentences must be examined in a different set of data. Dataset two consists of semi-structured interviews where the speakers were discussing code-switching and were therefore very conscious of it. This led to the avoidance of code-switching in dataset two, which is mostly, though not entirely, monolingual. Eight hours of this data with twenty-eight bilinguals have been transcribed in its entirety.

The largely monolingual dataset two contained 304 monolingual Basque predicative constructions with the copula *da*. The bilingual predicative constructions with Spanish predicative elements were 103 in number, and 87 of them were found in the bilingual dataset, whereas 16 bilingual predicative constructions were found in the “monolingual” dataset one.

The data were collected in the Greater Bilbao area of Biscay, Basque Autonomous Community. The age range of the language consultants was from nineteen to fifty-seven. The participants were recruited through the researcher’s social networks. They represented different professional groups and had diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds.

3.2 General Results

Table 1 presents the distribution of the word orders of the monolingual and bilingual predicative constructions with the third person singular copula verb *da* (*izan*) in the analysed data.

As shown in Table 1, of the 304 Basque monolingual predicative constructions, 245 instances follow the word order XV; 59 constructions exhibit the

TABLE 1 The word order of the predicative constructions with the copula *da* in the data

	XV	VX	Total
Monolingual	245	59	304
Bilingual	21	82	103

word order vx. Of the 103 bilingual predicative constructions, 82 follow the word order vx and 21 constructions have the word order xv.

When we compare the word orders of the monolingual and bilingual constructions from the data with the grammatical descriptions of the predicative constructions as outlined in section 2, Basque: PREDICATIVE ELEMENT + COPULA and Spanish: COPULA + PREDICATIVE ELEMENT, we can see that 81% of the monolingual Basque constructions follow the canonical Basque word order, whereas 80% of the bilingual constructions, consisting of the Basque copula *da* and a Spanish predicative, follow the Spanish word order. The difference in the word order patterns is highly significant, $^2(1, N = 407) = 123.15, p < .001$.

In the following two subsections (3.3 and 3.4), I will describe both the monolingual and the bilingual predicative constructions found in the data in more detail. In subsection 3.5, I will break down and analyse the distribution of the word orders according to the sociolinguistic background of the bilingual speakers.

3.3 *Monolingual Basque Predicative Constructions*

Table 1 shows that most instances of the monolingual predicative constructions with the copula *da* follow the canonical Basque word order xv. The following examples of monolingual predicative constructions found in the data are classified under several subgroups to give the reader an idea about the variety of different types of predicative constructions found in the data. The structurally simple examples are discussed first to show how the predicative structures generally behave in the data. Then the more complex examples of predicative constructions will be discussed to highlight the fact that the tendencies are maintained also in a more complicated syntactic environment. Finally, the counterexamples to the general tendency will be discussed along with the reasons, such as the interplay of different monolingual and bilingual constructions, why they go against the tendency. Examining predicative constructions in different types of syntactic environments gives us an insight into the organisation of the constructions in bilingual speakers' cognitive representation.

3.3.1 Simple Predicative Structures

The next two examples show cases of simple predicative constructions with a Basque noun or noun phrase as the predicative element.

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|--|
| (13) | <i>Bere erritmoa</i>
bere erritmo-a
her rhythm-DET
'She's got a very good rhythm.' | <i>oso ona</i>
oso on-a
very good-DET | <i>da.</i>
da
COP |
| (14) | <i>Normalagoa</i>
normal-ago-a
normal-COMPAR-DET
'It's more normal in the world.' | <i>da</i>
da
COP | <i>munduan.</i>
mundu-a-n
world-DET-INNESS |

In both examples, an adjectival predicative precedes the copula verb. (13) follows the canonical Basque word order of the predicative construction, in which a noun phrase subject *bere erritmoa* 'his rhythm' is followed by the predicative adjectival phrase *oso ona* 'very good', and the copula verb is located in the rightmost position. (2) also follows the Basque canonical word order. Note that Basque, like Spanish, is a pro-drop language, i.e., no pronoun is required for 'it/that' in sentences such as (14). The predicative *normalagoa* 'more normal', is located in a pre-verbal position, whereas the PP *munduan*, 'in the world' is placed after the verb. The PP could also be located at the beginning of the sentence, i.e., *munduan normalagoa da* 'it is more normal in the world', but as the word *munduan* is not the focus of the sentence, its position does not have syntactic or semantic relevance regarding the word order of predicative constructions.

As noted earlier, the language contact situation in the Basque Country has lasted for two thousand years. This is visible in loan words such as *erritmoa*, *normalagoa* and *munduan*. In (2), the predicative *normalagoa* carries both the Basque comparative *-ago* and the Basque general determiner *-a*, so the word is completely integrated into Basque also from a morphosyntactic point of view. These lexical items appear in Basque dictionaries such as Elhuyar (2000), and are considered established loans. The constructions, therefore, can be considered monolingual.

3.3.2 Complex Relative Structures

In (15), the predicative structure is rather simple, but the subject is a longer constituent subsuming a relative clause. Such heavy nominal structures are often located in a post-verbal position in Basque, yet the word order in this example is SXV.

- (15) *Eta normalean garailea, ateratzen dena,*
 eta normal-ean garaile-a atera-tzen d-en-a
 and normal.INESS winner.DET come.out-IMPF AUX.INTR-REL-DET
gaztelania da.
 gaztelania da.
 Spanish COP

'And usually the winner, the one that comes out, is Spanish.'³

The predicative can also be a subordinate phrase construction, a syntactical nominalization with the general determiner *-a* that is added to the finite verb. In (16), the determiner is added to the relativized auxiliary *zait* + (*a*) *n* + *a* > *zaidan*. The predicative construction is heavy, yet neatly follows the Basque canonical order xv. The subject pronoun *hau/hori/hura*, 'this/that/that' is dropped.

- (16) *Niri beti gertatzen zaidana da.*
 ni-ri beti gerta-tzen zai-da-n-a da.
 Me-DAT Always happen-IPFV AUX.ABS.SG3-DAT.SG1-REL-DET COP
 'That's what always happens to me.'

3.3.3 Counterexamples

As shown in Table 1, most of the monolingual constructions follow the Basque word order. There are, however, some monolingual constructions in which the word order is vx. The word order vx appears in 19% of the occurrences of monolingual predicative constructions, and the reasons for a post-verbal predicative are worth examining.

In (17), the copula verb precedes a heavy predicative structure. Here *da* seems to have an introductory function of 'it is that', 'that is', even 'I mean'. In these contexts, *da* is often pronounced in an emphatic manner, so that the interlocutor anticipates an explanation. An introductory *da* appears 14 times in the data with the vx word order, not even once with a xv word order.

- (17) *Eta gauzatxo bat esan nahi dut eta da*
 Eta gauza-txo bat esan nahi du-t eta da
 And thing.DIM one say want AUX.TR.3SG-ERG.1SG and COP

3 As an interesting side note related to the topic of this article, this is an illustrative example from the metalinguistic conversations of dataset two: the speaker is talking about the language contact situation in the Basque Country. He sees Spanish as the clearly dominant language of the area and, therefore, the language that seems to "win" both as the chosen medium of interaction in everyday life, and in the bilingual speaker's mind.

vx in the first predicative construction makes the vx word order easily accessible to the speaker for the second predicative construction.

In both (17) and (18), several different factors might trigger the vx word order, both contact-induced and language-internal. These motivations for language change and variation are not mutually exclusive, and *multiple causation* (Thomason, 2001) cannot be ruled out, as contact-induced and language-internal motivations both contribute to the choice of one type of construction over another.

3.4 *Bilingual Basque-Spanish Predicative Constructions*

Compared to the patterns observed in the monolingual data, bilingual constructions behave differently. Of the 103 identified bilingual predicative constructions that consist of Basque copula and a Spanish predicative, 82 (~80%) constructions follow the Spanish word order, with the predicative element placed after the verb. In other words, when a Spanish predicative is inserted, the Basque word order changes to the Spanish word order. Let us consider some examples following the categorization of Section 3.3: from simple predicative structures via complex predicative structures to the counterexamples. The Spanish elements in the examples are bolded.

3.4.1 Simple Predicative Structures

(19) *B-eredua da **bilingüe**, elebiduna.*
 B-eredu-a da **bilingüe** elebidun-a
 B-model-DET COP **bilingual** bilingual-DET
 'B-model is bilingual, bilingual.'

(20) *Eta Gorka⁴ adibidez, Gorka da **chungo**.*
 Eta Gorka adibide-z Gorka da **chungo**
 And Gorka example-INSTR Gorka COP **difficult**
 'And Gorka, for example, Gorka is difficult.'

In (19), the speaker is describing the language models used in the educational system in the Basque Country. He inserts the Spanish word *bilingüe*, 'bilingual', after the Basque copula *da*, then gives the Basque equivalent *elebiduna*. The word order follows the Spanish model svx. In (20), the speaker uses the Spanish colloquial expression *chungo* 'difficult' to describe his friend.

Here the Spanish predicatives *bilingüe* and *chungo* do not take the word-final Basque determiner *-a*, so they are not integrated into the Basque morphosyntactic structure.

4 Names changed.

3.4.2 Basque Elements in the Predicative Noun Phrase

The inserted predicative structure may contain Basque elements. In (21), the speaker is describing the organization of the supporters of the football club Athletic Bilbao and uses the Spanish word, *tesorero* 'treasurer', in an otherwise Basque construction. Despite the Basque locative *-ko* that precedes the Spanish word, the word order follows the Spanish word order *svx*. The speaker seems to flag his switch with a hesitation marker after the insertion.

- (21) *Jon da Peñako tesorero, edo*
 Jon da Peña-ko tesorero edo
 Jon COP Peña-LOC Treasurer or
 'Jon is the treasurer of the club, or...'

In this insertion, the first part of the PP is in Basque, as the Basque locative genitive *-ko* and not the Spanish preposition *de* is used to connect the elements of the PP construction, *peñako tesorero* vs. *tesorero de la peña*. The word *peña* 'supporter/fan club' is used in both Basque and Spanish. The noun *peña* is inserted into to a Basque adposition construction and takes the case marker *-ko*. However, *tesorero* lacks the Basque word-final determiner *-a*, required by the adposition construction, and the predicative construction follows the Spanish word order *svx*. Thus, *tesorero* is not entirely integrated into a Basque morphosyntactic structure.

3.4.3 Predicative Structure with a Complex Copula

Predicative structures also appear in subordinate clauses. Basque subordinate structures are often marked with a suffix attached to the finite verb. In the example below, the causative suffix *(-e)lako* is attached to the copula *da*, i.e., *da + (-e)lako > delako*.

- (22) *Ez dakit, delako la duquesa del Alba.*
 Ez daki-t d-elako la duquesa de-l Alba.
 NEG know.3SG-1SG COP-CAUS the duchess of-DET Alba
 'I don't know, because she is the duchess of Alba.'

The copula *delako* 'because (she) is' and the predicative *la duquesa del Alba* in (10) are located in a subordinate, causative clause. The complexity of the copular verb does not seem to affect the tendency observed in the data. The word order here, as in the vast majority of cases involving Spanish predicatives, is *vx*. The predicative in this example is placed in the final position: the predicative is relatively heavy, and the speakers might have an urge to group all the Basque elements together to facilitate the processing of the two languages at

the same time. The Spanish predicative is inserted in a position where it does not interfere with the otherwise Basque elements, thus making back and forth switching unnecessary.

3.4.4 Contrastive Focus

Some of the predicative constructions observed in the data have a strong contrastive element, meaning ‘not this, but that’. In (23), the speaker is describing a bull tattoo spotted in a bar. The interlocutor suggests that the person might have the tattoo due to his Spanish-nationalist right-wing ideologies, represented by the Spanish conservative party *Partido Popular*, *PP*, a claim that the speaker does not accept. According to her, the bull tattoo is a sign of being lower class, not of right-wing tendencies, so she contrasts these two categories in her response.

- (23) *Hori ez da PPkoa hori da barriobajeroa.*
 hori ez da PP-ko-a hori da barriobajero-a.
 that neg COP PP-LOC-DET that is lower.class-DET.
 ‘That’s not PP-like, that’s lower class.’

Interestingly, the urge to locate the Spanish predicative in a post-verbal position even overrides the need for a contrastive Basque focus. In the case of an emphatic focus position, one would assume that the Basque *galdegaia* ‘what is asked’, were located right before the verb to emphasize the contrastive effect and to give the contrast more prominence. However, this is not the case, and even though the word *barriobajeroa* ‘lower class’ is meant to contrast with *PPkoa* ‘PP-like’, the bilingual construction follows the Spanish model *vx*. Adding the Basque determiner *-a* at the end of the Spanish adjective *barriobajero* does not evoke the need for the canonical Basque word order (*Hori barriobajeroa da*) of the predicative construction. The Spanish order is preferred even in a case that requires a stronger emphasis on the focus.

3.4.5 Counterexamples

Even though the tendency for bilingual predicative constructions to follow the Spanish word order pattern is conspicuous – they comprise 80% of the examples found in the data – there is some variation. In other words, as in the case of monolingual predicative constructions, there are bilingual constructions that deviate from the identified trend. Twenty-one bilingual predicative constructions found in the data follow the Basque word order pattern (S)XV. The low number of counterexamples testifies to the enormous influence of Romance grammar on Basque in general. It is also worth noting that more than half of these counterexamples

involve other constructions that explain the deviations from the tendency. The following examples highlight the interplay of the bilingual and monolingual constructions in the everyday bilingual speech.

In (24), the Basque predicative construction is preceded by an object clause. Note that in the preceding object clause the speaker inserts a Spanish noun phrase as the object and uses the Spanish (s)vx word order. In the predicative construction, however, Spanish adjective *maja* 'nice, pleasant' is inserted in a Basque predicative construction without any change in the Basque xv word order.

- (24) *Gaur bisitatu dut la cajera. Oso maja da.*
 gaur bisitatu du-t la cajera oso maja da.
 today visit.PFV AUX.TR.3SG-ERG.ISG DET cashier very nice COP
 'Today I visited the cashier. She is very nice.'

The Basque quantitative *oso* 'very' might help to maintain the unity of the Basque construction, so that the whole construction is perceived as essentially Basque despite the Spanish insertion. The word order xv occurs in three other constructions with Spanish predicatives preceded by *oso*. No instances of [*da oso PREDICATIVE*] are found among the 42 monolingual and bilingual predicative constructions with *oso* in the data.⁵ The Basque speakers seem to treat the construction [*oso PREDICATIVE da*] as a construction with a fixed word order. Apparently, the insertion of a Spanish adjective does not influence this word order.

Of the twenty-one bilingual predicative constructions that follow the Basque word order xv, nine are replications of the Spanish construction [*es + ARTICLE + N*], for example *es una chorrada/pasada/putada/la hostia*, lit. 'it is a stupidity/an exaggeration/a shame/awesome, etc.' These constructions express stance and pertain to the colloquial register. In their bilingual form they present considerable variation of word order even in the speech of the same speaker. The predicative element of these colloquial constructions is always a Spanish noun, but apart from that they are reproduced in the data in all possible combinations, such as the following examples with the Spanish colloquialisms *hostia* and *pasada*. The constructions that are reproduced here are [*es la hostia*] and [*es una pasada*]. The Spanish unstressed definite article *la* merges with the following word *hostia* to form a chunk, whereas the indefinite article *una* is stressed and often translated by the Basque indefinite article *bat*.

5 There is one case of svx word order in a bilingual predicative construction with the copula verb *izan* in the second person singular, *zu zara oso guay* 'you are very cool!'

(25) Spanish word order, Spanish article.

Da la hostia.
 is DET host, communion wafer
 ‘That’s crazy/awesome.’

Spanish word order, Basque article.

Da pasada bat.
 is exaggeration ONE/INDET
 ‘That’s incredible.’

Basque word order, Spanish article.

Gari la hostia da
 Gari DET.FEM communion wafer is.
 ‘Gari is crazy/awesome.’

Basque word order, Basque article.

Pasada bat da, pasada bat.
 Exaggeration ONE/INDET is, exaggeration ONE/INDET.
 ‘That’s incredible, incredible.’

All possible combinations of the originally Spanish construction [*es* ART N] with the copula *da* are given in (25). Nine bilingual constructions follow the Basque word order, and fourteen follow the Spanish word order vx. These recurrent bilingual constructions could be characterized as partial loan translations of the Spanish construction. They are based on chunks that are memorised and activated as a whole (Backus, 2003). The Spanish noun lexemes within them frequently occur in conventionalized code-switching. For example, the word *pasada* alone appears 19 times in the data (not only in predicative constructions). These Spanish colloquialisms show a higher degree of integration into the Basque lexicon than those Spanish predicatives that are unique occurrences of a code-switched word. The conventionalization, in turn, is likely to strengthen the tendency to follow the Basque word order pattern. Nevertheless, the variation observed here shows that a possible conventionalization process is likely to be ongoing, not fully accomplished. Due to their frequency in colloquial speech, the underlying Spanish chunks are highly entrenched in the speaker’s mental lexicogrammar. This may influence their stability in terms of the Spanish word order pattern and slow the generalization of the Basque word order pattern.

3.5 *L1 and L2 Basque Speakers: an (Un)expected Difference*

In addition to the grammatical factors that affect the placement of the predicative, there is a sociolinguistic factor that seems to affect the distribution of xv and vx word orders in the data: the speaker's linguistic biography. Until the 1980s most bilinguals in the Basque Country had a Basque-speaking family background and few Spanish speakers learned Basque. However, during the last forty years, the numbers of Basque speakers who have Spanish as their L1 have risen considerably, and in city areas such as the Greater Bilbao district they now outnumber native Basque speakers (Basque Government, 2009: 72). In the Basque Country these speaker groups are usually referred to as *euskaldun zaharrak* 'old Basque speakers', and *euskaldun berriak* 'new Basque speakers'. A prototypical old Basque speaker acquires the language at home, whereas a new Basque speaker learns the language through formal education. Among the language consultants in this study, 24 are L1, or old, Basque speakers and 26 are L2, or new, Basque speakers.

The direction of the variable is unpredictable before looking at the numbers. On the one hand, the L2 Basque speakers might model the predicative structures on their L1, Spanish. On the other hand, research investigating code-switching practices of Basque-Spanish bilinguals has shown that the L2 Basque speakers tend to keep their languages more separate than the L1 Basque speakers who learn both languages in informal contexts in the bilingual community. The L1 Basque speakers tend to use their linguistic repertoire more as a whole, and they use more intensive code-switching than the L2 Basque speakers (Lantto, 2012). Therefore, the L2 speakers might also favour the more normative options in this case. Of course, this variable might also be expected to show no difference at all; Larrañaga and Guijarro-Fuentes (2013), for example, found no differences in copula choices in Basque-dominant children and L2 Basque learners.

Table 2 shows the use of the different word orders in monolingual predicative constructions against the pattern of acquisition of Basque. Both groups of speakers favour the Basque word order for monolingual constructions. The difference between the groups is not significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 304) = 0.98, p = 0.322$.

Table 3 shows the use of the different word orders in bilingual predicative constructions against the pattern of acquisition of Basque. We can see that while the L2 Basque speakers slightly favour the Spanish word order in bilingual predicative constructions, i.e., [*da* PREDICATIVE], the L1 Basque speakers strongly favour the Spanish word order in such constructions. The difference in word order patterns is significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 9.17, p = .002$. On the whole, the L1 Basque speakers produce bilingual predicative constructions at a

TABLE 2 The word orders of monolingual predicative constructions

	L1 Basque	L2 Basque	
XV	142	103	245
VX	30	29	59
		Total	304

TABLE 3 The word orders of bilingual predicative constructions

	L1 Basque	L2 Basque	
XV	9	12	21
VX	63	19	82
		Total	103

far higher rate than the L2 Basque speakers, whereas the occurrences of monolingual predicative constructions are similar in the two groups.

4 Discussion

In this article, I have demonstrated that monolingual Basque predicative constructions follow the canonical Basque word order in ~81% of the cases, whereas bilingual predicative constructions with a Spanish predicative element follow the Spanish word order in approximately 80% of the occurrences in the data used for this study. There is thus a strong correlation between the monolingual predicative construction with the Basque canonical word order and the bilingual construction with the Spanish word order. Basque-Spanish bilinguals have a cognitive representation of both the Spanish and the Basque predicative constructions. In theory, they could draw on both in a conversation, even when forming predicative constructions without overt Spanish material. The word order of the bilingual sentences, however, suggests that code-switching strengthens the convergence of syntactic structures, even though in a situation of a long-standing language contact and extensive societal bilingualism large, though not all, parts of the linguistic resources are already shared.

4.1 *Why the Choice of Spanish Word Order Pattern?*

In the overwhelming majority of the bilingual constructions, the inserted Spanish predicative determines the word order of the construction. Most of the

counterexamples to the observed tendencies involve other underlying constructions that affect the placement of the predicative, which highlights the subtle interplay of the monolingual and bilingual constructions both in the speakers' cognitive representation and in their bilingual speech production. In the light of the language contact literature and the context of this particular language contact situation, several factors could be identified that influence the choice of the Spanish word order with a post-verbal predicative. It is not possible to single out only one factor, as they might well all contribute to the general tendency. These are the factors that I would like to highlight in the discussion:

- 1) *Acquisition pattern.* The pattern of language acquisition affects the cognitive organization of the constructions in the bilingual mind. When a bilingual learns a language in an environment where hybrid constructions and bilingual mode are not tolerated and the two languages are strictly compartmentalized, she experiences predominantly monolingual constructions and navigates towards more monolingual constructions in her speech. The constructions of the different subsystems labelled "languages" (defined by normative language authorities) are kept more separate than in the minds of the speakers who have become bilinguals in a less regimented environment.

This is seen in the different distributions of the word orders between L1 and L2 Basque speakers. L1 Basque speakers, who generally have more experience of bilingual speech, show a strong preference towards the Spanish word order for bilingual predicative constructions. Among the L2 speakers, the tendency is more restricted. The results are in line with the code-switching research investigating the two groups of Basque speakers (Lantto, 2012). L2 Basque speakers learn the languages mostly in contexts of "double monolingualism" (Jørgensen, 2005), where adhering to monolingual language norms is encouraged and hybridism rejected. They receive continuous input with the Basque canonical word order. When L2 Basque speakers code-switch, it is seen as proof of a low competence in Basque (Lantto, 2016). Due to the classroom environment and the pressure to prove their linguistic competence, they are used to keeping the languages separate and striving to speak 'pure' Basque. This makes them produce Basque variants more often than the L1 Basque speakers when they combine elements of their repertoire.

The L1 Basque speakers, in turn, receive more input in the minority language outside the classroom in a bilingual community, where Basque is spoken in a bilingual mode and hybrid constructions are tolerated. Many of them have learned to draw on their language repertoire as a whole. They have experienced constant bilingual speech and bilingual constructions throughout their lives, which results in a greater entrenchment of bilingual constructions in

their mental lexicon/grammar and in their wider use in their own bilingual speech. In addition, the L1 Basque speakers' language competence in Basque goes unquestioned by the surrounding society. The language authority granted by the native-speaker status *allows* the native speakers to cross the demarcation boundaries in a way that is not permitted to non-native language speakers (Smith-Christmas and Armstrong, 2014; Lantto, 2016). In this case, the more tolerant attitude towards the hybrid constructions and a richer experience with them manifests in the more frequent use of the Spanish word order patterns in their speech.

- 2) *Social dominance and cognitive representation.* Why, then, would the speakers prefer the Spanish word order in the absence of strict social constraints against hybridity? Contact linguistic research has delivered evidence that the socially dominant language tends to influence the socially less dominant language in a greater degree than vice versa. Despite the success of the revitalization efforts in the Basque Country, Basque still remains a minority language. All Basque speakers are bilingual, whereas the Spanish speakers are not. At the moment of interaction in the minority language, there is no need to suppress the constructions associated with the majority language, as the interlocutor without exception also understands both languages. The monolingual majority language speakers, however, have less tolerance for lapses into the minority language (Matras, 2009), which lends the majority language the character of “a (more) monolingual code”. Spanish influence on Basque is therefore more tolerated than vice versa. As the language consultant in (3) notes, Spanish becomes the “winner”.

The tendency of the socially dominant language to take precedence over the less dominant language can also be explained by the factor of frequency. In the province of Biscay, where 30.3% of the population are classified as Basque speakers and 20.8% as passive Basque speakers. Basque was found to be used in 9.4% of the interactions, whereas Spanish was used in 87.4% (Altuna, 2016). The linguistic items that are used frequently have stronger representations and are easier to access and process (Bybee, 1995; Diessel, 2007; Versloot and Hoekstra, 2016). The bilinguals have both Basque and Spanish predicative constructions in their repertoire. As Spanish is used more, the Spanish construction is repeated more frequently, which leads to a stronger cognitive representation and a deeper entrenchment of this pattern in the bilingual mind. Both frequency and similarity – the analogies that the speakers draw between constructions – contribute to the force of attraction (Versloot and Hoekstra, 2016). The prototypical predicative Spanish and Basque constructions are structurally relatively similar: they consist of a (often dropped pronominal)

subject, a predicative, and a copula verb. The interlingual analogies are easy to find, and the speakers might establish the equivalence cognitively.

- 3) *Online processing and pragmatic dominance.* Placing the Spanish predicative in the final position makes back and forth switching unnecessary and creates linear equivalence. In general, there seems to be a strong tendency for sentence-final code-switching with Spanish in the final position in the Basque Country. Epelde and Oyarçabal (2019) have observed that in both Basque-Spanish and Basque-French code-switching, Spanish and French PPs are usually inserted as embedded language islands located in a post-verbal position, even though according to Basque grammarians this type of constituents should mostly be located before the verb. Aurekoetxea and Unamuno (2011) observed that, even though in bilingual sentences the subordinated phrase can be both Basque or Spanish, the sentence is usually started in Basque and ended in Spanish or, as they conclude, rephrasing Poplack (1980), *euskaraz hasten dut y termino en español* which means 'I start in Basque and finish in Spanish'.

The folk linguistic wisdom in the Basque Country often goes that bilinguals switch from Basque to Spanish, in this direction, because it is just "easier". In situations of language contact, the socially dominant language often becomes also the *pragmatically dominant language* which requires less processing effort. The pragmatically dominant language is "naturally and spontaneously prioritised unless overridden by the selection mechanism" (Matras, 2009: 98). After directing the major processing effort to the first (Basque) part of the utterance, the speaker might have the need to decrease the effort that goes into processing, and "let it go", i.e., switch to the pragmatically dominant language (Spanish). This might contribute to the general tendency of utterance-final code-switching in this particular language contact situation.

- 4) *Prosodic prominence.* Dominguez (2002) notes that the focused constituent in Spanish should be located in the rightmost position. Predicative Spanish words and phrases must be inserted at the end of the utterance because only in this position they can carry prosodic prominence and thus convey focus. Based on the analysed data, I suggest that bilingual speakers strongly associate the Spanish focus/predicative element with the rightmost position: the post-verbal position is part of its cognitive representation, which is then activated at the moment of insertion.

4.2 *Significance of the Findings for Language Change and Questions for the Future*

The analysis of Basque monolingual and Basque-Spanish bilingual constructions in a sample representing the speech of 24 L1 and 26 L2 Basque speakers demonstrates that code-switching affects the word order of the predicative

constructions. However, several questions could not be addressed in this study. The intertwined bilingual and monolingual constructions in the speakers' repertoire affect the placement of the predicative element, as discussed in the counterexamples to the Spanish word order tendency of the bilingual predicative constructions in section 3.4. In these examples, we saw how embedding the Spanish adjectival predicative in the Basque construction [*oso* PREDICATIVE *da*] helps to counter the tendency of the Spanish word order in bilingual constructions. On the other hand, many replications of the partially schematic Spanish constructions of the stance-taking construction [*COPULA* ART *N*] were reproduced with the Basque word order, as the embedded nouns within the replications have a greater degree of conventionalization into the Basque lexicon. However, the extent and dimensions of this interlingual influence are still unexamined. A heavy structure of the predicative element (mentioned in sections 3.3, 3.4) is a possible motivation for a post-verbal placement. The degree of conventionalization of the predicative element in constructions that are partially lexically fixed (section 3.4) is another factor that is interesting within the usage-based framework. The pragmatic impact of particular uses of the construction, such as the introductory function that the copula verb has in some cases (3.3), or the contrastive focus function (3.4), should be studied in detail, and the pragmatic functions of both the copula and the prosody of the sentences should be examined more closely. Further study should also examine the effect of word/phrase insertion on the word order of other construction types than the predicative construction, beginning with different types of focus constructions.

The diachronic dimension of word order convergence is particularly relevant from a usage-based perspective. The recurrent insertion of Spanish predicative elements in code-mixing might be a precursor for the direction of language change in the Basque-speaking bilingual communities. The use of bilingual constructions with the word order [*da* PREDICATIVE] might eventually lead to a generalization of the *VX* word order even in monolingual Basque predicative constructions. If a post-verbal predicative element (in the case of bilingual constructions a Spanish element) is used frequently with a Basque copula, this can lead to a greater conventionalization of a Basque predicative construction with a post-verbal predicative element. This way, the post-verbal predicative would become an entrenched property of the Basque predicative constructions.

Nevertheless, the direction of linguistic change is hard to predict. The canonical word orders of the predicative constructions are still different after the two thousand years that Basque and Spanish have been in contact. The majority of scholars have claimed that the Basque focus structure has transparent

pragmatics. The transparent meaning of the pre-verbal focus that provides the missing entity has proven to be robust in the face of contact with a dominating language. A linguistic unit, a construction, consist of both form and meaning. Even though at the surface level the interlingual connections of the elements of both Basque and Spanish focus constructions can be easily drawn by the speakers – the subject, the copula verb, the predicative element – the underlying meaning of the constructions is slightly different and therefore, more resistant to change.

The sociolinguistic situation in the Basque Country has also changed. Basque used to lack institutional support, but now the previously strict diglossia – Basque for the farmhouse, Spanish for public affairs – is being replaced by a situation where the languages are spoken in the same spaces. The form of bilingualism is also changing. The native Basque speakers have a higher competence in Spanish than they did before and a large part of the Basque speakers nowadays are L2-Basque speakers. In an unregulated situation, the large numbers of L2-speakers and the high bilingual competence of the L1-speakers might lead to a wider use of Spanish constructions, including their word order. However, as discussed in section 4.1, the presence of Basque standard *euskara batua*, nowadays taught in schools and broadcast in the media with its purist norms, provides a continuous input of the Basque canonical word order.

4.3 *Concluding Remarks*

As Bybee notes, “grammar is the cognitive organization of one’s experience with language (2006: 711)”. When using a particular linguistic structure, the speakers rely on all their experience with it from the previous interactions, strengthening its representation and the degree of entrenchment both in their own and in their interlocutor’s repertoire. The differences between the word orders of bilingual and monolingual constructions indicate that lexicon and syntax are not separated from one another, but deeply intertwined in the speaker’s mind. This is also shown in the counterexamples to the documented tendency: when the Spanish words are inserted in partially schematic multiword units (as in examples 24 and 25), they are analysed as parts of the Basque unit, hence the greater occurrence of the Basque word order. The “loose” Spanish lexical elements, in turn, are connected to the syntactic properties of the Spanish schematic constructions in which they are most commonly used, so they activate these properties. This is an example of how bilingual grammar emerges in the interaction.

Matter and pattern replication have been treated as separate phenomena in language contact research (Matras, 2009: 236). Borrowing and code-switching, for example, are considered to deal with overt linguistic material, whereas loan

translations and syntactic interferences are usually seen as replication of covert material (Backus and Dorleijn, 2009). Yet in the case of Basque-Spanish predicative constructions these features of linguistic structure are inseparable. Matter replication (the Spanish predicatives inserted into Basque copular sentences) seem to bring along pattern replication (a change in word order) from the donor to the recipient language.

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