SYNTACTIC THEORY AND BASQUE SYNTAX

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Preface

This volume presents a series of articles dealing with questions of current interest within the field of generative syntax. If syntax has played a central role in the development of linguistic theory in the second half of this century, it seems clear that generative approaches occupy a central position in the area of syntactic research. Actually, it is to a large extent as a result of concerns addressed within the generative paradigm that syntax has emerged as the single most important field in theoretical linguistics. Since the publication of Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* back in 1957, the 'generative enterprise' has managed to provide an appealing research program which has unified and guided the activity of a growing number of linguists.

The generative paradigm found an early echo in the Basque Country, and, for example, the late Mitxelena was among the first linguists, if not the first, to quote Chomsky in Spain. De Rijk's 1968 MIT thesis on Basque relative clauses and the publication of a descriptive generative grammar of Basque in Basque, Goenaga's *Gramatika bideetan*, in 1978 triggered the beginning of what is by now a fully established academic tradition. *ASJU-International Journal of Basque Linguistics and Philology* was also highly responsive to these developments, and already as early as 1972 produced a special issue devoted to American contributions to Basque generative studies.

We believe the present volume comes out at a specially interesting time in the development of both ends of our general topics, syntactic theory and Basque syntax. Since the late 80's, this field seems to have been gaining momentum among Basque linguists, and the quantity and quality of research has experienced a dramatic increase. The surge in generative studies of recent years coincides with a change in approach and emphasis within the theory of syntax. The development of the Principles and Parameters framework has revived interest in the parameters allowed by UG whose setting accounts for interlinguistic variation. This has led recently to a renewed interest in the study not only of related language groups (Romance, Germanic, Slavic, etc.), but also of typologically divergent languages. This new 'comparatist' research strategy has been extremely fruitful, even if we only take into account the sheer mass of data gathered in the last years from widely different languages and which have become standard research material practising linguists must reckon with.

In this context, the purpose of this collection of articles is to present current research framed within this new approach, trying to provide an accurate picture of the types of theoretical concerns and data configurations that spur research in this

field rather than producing a homogeneous volume devoted to a more or less broad topic. Thus, the articles range from particular analyses of very specific data to the consideration of general principles of language design. The core data base is also supplied by a wide variety of languages apart from the usual Germanic and Romance: Basque, of course, but also Quechua, Hungarian, Slovak, etc. The unifying force behind these articles is precisely the same one that guides the efforts of so many linguists today: the presence of a formal research program powerful enough to address the problem of accounting at the same time for the evident diversity found in natural languages and for the also evident underlying similarity.

Why Basque doesn't Relativize Everything

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Introduction

De Rijk (1972a, 1972b) has outlined and extensively discussed what I take to be a classical problem of the A'-Syntax in the tradition of Basque generative studies: the formation of relative clauses. According to his findings, there are two mainstream 'dialects' (where the concept must be understood in a broad, loose sense) with respect to relativization in Basque: in the restricted one, only true "NP"s, i.e. NPs whose morphological information is encoded in the auxiliary verb (= NPs marked ergative, absolutive and dative) can be gaps in the relative clause; in the main dialect, on the other hand, not only these NPs but also some postpositional phrases (locative, ablative, adlative or directional, instrumental) can be relativized; other PPs cannot be gaps. The following data illustrate the generalization:

(1)   Ainhoak Asierrek *e* erosi duen liburua irakurri du.
                                        buy   aux-n book   read   aux
              Ainhoa has read the book that Asier (has) bought

(2)   Ainhoa *e* bizi den   etxea urrun dago hemendik.
                          live aux-n house far   is   here-abl
              The house Ainhoa lives ('in') is far from here

(3)   Ainhoak *e* inglesa irakasten duen   eskola nahiko berria da.
                            English teach   aux-n school quite   new   is
              The school Ainhoa teaches English ('in') is quite new
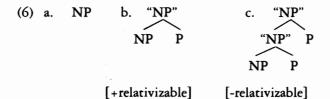
(4)   *Jon *e* ezkonduko den   neska Bilbokoa da.
         get-married aux-n girl   -gen is
         The young woman Jon will get married ('with') is from Bilbao

(5)   *Jonek *e* hizkuntzalaritza ikasten duen jendeak jai bat antolatu du.
          linguistics   learn aux-n people party one
          The people Jon studies linguistics ('with') have organized a party

(1) is grammatical in both systems. Sentences (2)-(3), where the gap (=*e*) in the relative clause corresponds to a locative PP (subcategorized for by the verb in (2), a plain adjunct in (3)), are grammatical sentences only in the main system. (4)-(5), where the gaps correspond to a commitative PP headed by *rekin* 'with' (a complement to the verb in (4) but again an adjunct in (5)), are ungrammatical in both systems. The paradigm is, to my mind, quite straightforward and widely motivated empirically.[1]

De Rijk's (1972a, 1972b) account of the facts posits a deletion rule of the relativized element inside the relative clause under identity with the head of the NP that contains the relative clause. He further observes that the "relativized" phrases have to have the structure in (6a) or (6b); phrases of the structure in (6c) can never be "deleted" (to use de Rijk's terms):

(6) a.   NP   b.   "NP"   c.   "NP"
                              ⟋＼   ⟋＼
                            NP   P   "NP"   P
                                                     ⟋＼
                                                    NP   P

          [+relativizable]   [-relativizable]

[PPs of type (6c) include benefactive, commitative, motivative, and the locative-/ablative/adlative postpositions used with [+human] nouns]

Under current assumptions in grammatical theory (Chomsky 1970, Jackendoff 1977, Stowell 1981), the quoted NPs are in fact PPs whose head is P (note that Basque is a head-final language, cf. Eguzkitza 1986); de Rijk's labeling is forbidden by the Endocentricity Principle of X'-theory.

In this paper I argue that it is the Bounding Theory of the Principles and Parameters approach to language that rules out sentences (4)-(5). In particular, I would like to claim that their ungrammaticality arises as a consequence of violating the Subjacency Condition as formulated, roughly, in Chomsky 1986b. The paper is organized as follows: first, an analysis of Basque relative clauses as involving the presence of an A'-chain headed by a null operator is motivated within the CP hypothesis, a possibility discussed (yet in my opinion not sufficiently exploited) by Ortiz de Urbina (1989) and Oyharçabal (1988, 1989). This analysis presupposes the existence

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(1) Some (few) speakers tend to consider sentences like (2) slightly better than (3); these same speakers are occasionally reluctant to accept isolated examples where an adjunct PP (especially if headed by the ablative and the adlative/directional) is relativized. Nevertheless, my observations confirm that texts written in Standard Basque (journals, newspapers) and most speakers *systematically* relativize adjunct PPs of the type described by de Rijk. His generalization is hence correct.

of lexically null Ps mediating between the operator and the variable (e.g. in (2)-(5)), an assumption which I try to motivate in section 2 following Emonds's 1987 *Invisible Category Principle (ICP)*. The consequences of and apparent problems for the Null Operator Hypothesis (NOH hereafter) are handled in section 3. In section 4, I provide a principled characterization of Subjacency phenomena in Basque, and show how the ungrammaticality of sentences (4)-(5) can be derived from the Bounding Theory with little or no stipulation. Section 5 addresses some predictions that the Subjacency account makes: in particular, the distribution of resumptive pronouns.

Finally, section 6 shows that the empirical coverage of my proposal extends beyond the scope of the data discussed originally by de Rijk himself.

In the remainder of the paper, I assume the correctness of Ortiz de Urbina's (1989) approach to the structure of CP in Basque: both the specifier of C and C precede IP despite the fact that Basque is a head-final language (See Ortiz de Urbina 1989: chp.4 for the motivations). This has the advantage of treating both wh-movement and focus movement (which take place by S-S and trigger V-2 phenomena in Basque) in a unified manner.[2] Unless otherwise stated and for the sake of making the argumentation as simple as possible, Chomsky's (1986b) definitions of θ-marking, L-marking, barrier and the Empty Category Principle are assumed.

1. The Null Operator Hypothesis (NOH)

De Rijk's (1972a, 1972b) deletion rule is no longer acceptable under current assumptions in generative syntax in that it leads to a violation of the Projection Principle (Chomsky 1981); in the best case, that rule does not explain why (4)-(5) should be ungrammatical. Thus some revision is in order.

Intuitively it looks like we must rely on the existence of empty categories (ECs). The Projection Principle and the θ-Criterion require and ensure that the subcategorization frame of the verbs in the embedded relative clause be satisfied at D-Structure and preserved throughout the derivation. If covert, the arguments must be syntactically present by means of some EC. If an adjunct, the category must also be syntactically present for whichever mechanism adjuncts are licensed since *eskolan* 'in the school' is non-pragmatically understood inside the relative clause in (3). The EC in

(2) This is controversial since Ortiz de Urbina has to assume that complementizers originate in a pre-clausal position and are then cliticized to I; if I-to-C movement takes place in an embedded sentence (i.e. one that has an obligatorily overt complementizer), the C position is filled again. For the purposes of this paper, we could as well assume (with Laka and Uriagereka 1987 and Laka 1989) that the structure of CP in Basque is as in (*i*) with the sentence-final complementizer -*n* occupying the C position in a relative clause:

     i. $[_{CP} \text{SPEC} [_{C'} \text{IP C}]]$

Obviously, this position calls for an alternative explanation of the V-2 phenomena in Basque.

(3) θ-marking: "α directly θ-marks β only if they are sisters" (Chomsky 1986b: 14).
       θ-government: "α θ-governs β iff α is an X^0 that θ-marks β, and α, β are sisters" (ibidem: 15).
       L-marking: "α L-marks β iff α is a lexical category that θ-governs β" (ibidem: 15).
       Blocking Category: "γ is a BC for β iff γ is not L- marked and dominates β" (ibidem: 14).
       Barrier: "γ is a barrier for β iff (a) or (b):
a)   if it immediately dominates δ, δ a BC for β;
b) γ is a BC for β, $\gamma \neq$ IP" (ibidem: 14).
       ECP: "α properly governs β if α θ-governs β or antecedent-governs β" (ibidem: 16).